

FEBRUARY 2025

WRIGHT SWCD NEWS

Winter Newsletter of Wright Soil & Water Conservation District

Be Nice To Our Ice

The Keep It Clean campaign addresses the growing problem of garbage and waste left on the ice by anglers, campers and recreationists through education, legislation and enforcement. The Keep It Clean bill was signed into law in May 2023, making it illegal to place garbage and waste on or under the ice on Minnesota's lakes and rivers.



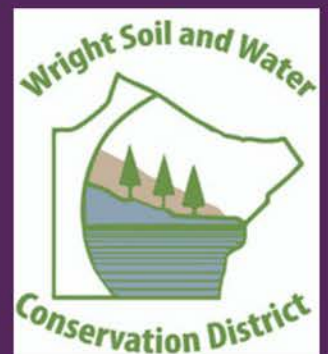
The law states that not only do you need to take your trash with you when you leave the lake but now you can no longer leave it on the ice while fishing. It needs to be in a shelter, a bag or a vehicle. Garbage of any type (wood blocking, insulation, food waste, rubbish, cigarette filters, debris from fireworks, offal, the body of a dead animal, litter, sewage etc.) is covered in this law and failure to comply with the cleanup requirements can result in fines.

It's important to remember that every little effort adds up! One tip is to use a black or colored garbage bag that shows up against the white snow. Secure your trash you take off the ice. Have a plan on where you will deposit the trash after leaving the ice. Some resorts offer garbage services or look for local year-round RV Dump Stations. This is your responsibility!



Table of Contents

- Indian Lake Gully Stabilization Project.....02
- WCA Exemptions at a Glance - De Minimis.....03
- Zebra Mussel Harvesting.....04
- 2025 Tree Price List.....05
- How the District is Using Drones.....06
- SWCD Supervisors.....07
- SWCD New Staff.....08
- Winter Salt Week.....08



Indian Lake Gully Stabilization Project



The initial phase of this project involved installing two Water & Sediment Control Basins upstream of the gully in the fall of 2023. The primary goal of the first phase was to control the rate of water before it enters the gully, which helps the producer keep their valuable topsoil on their field, while also maintaining existing drainage.



Long term this project will stabilize the gully and prevent sediment from entering Indian Lake.

Phase II, completed in early Fall 2024, consisted of bringing the landowner's driveway up in elevation to act as an embankment then diverting water underground to the gully. Next, we shaped the gully as to keep the water in the center and then armored 700 ft of the gully with class III riprap.



Reductions:

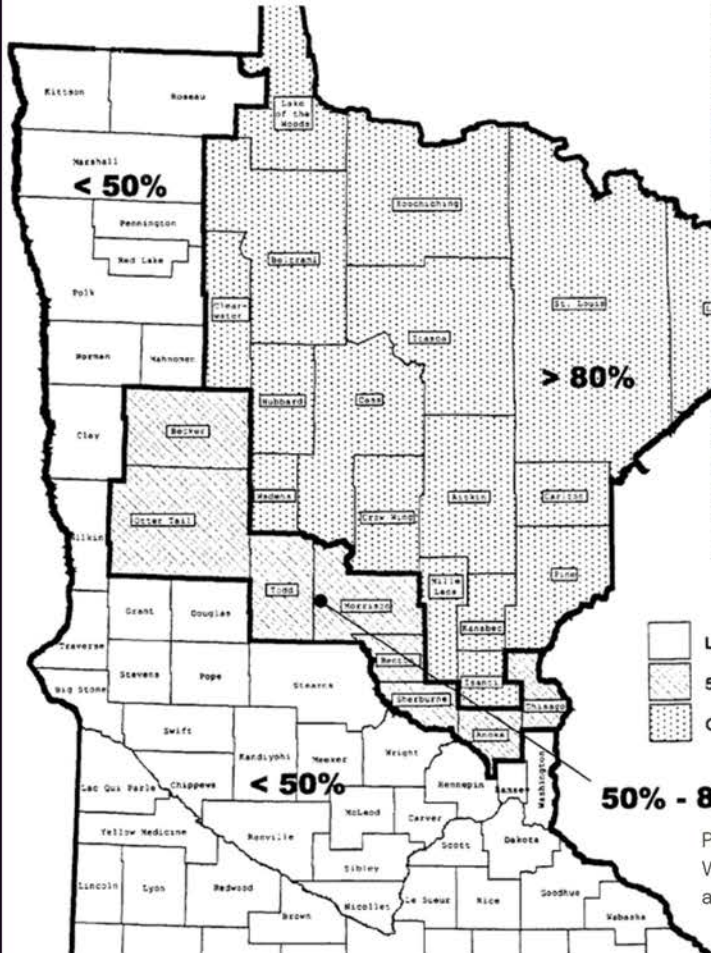
- Sediment 134.21 tons per year
- Phosphorus 186.07 lbs. per year

Total Project Costs: \$198,148.50




- Indian Lake Improvement District - \$49,537.13
- Wright County Grant - \$148,611.37

MN Wetland Conservation Act Exemptions at a Glance - De Minimis

The overall purpose of the MN Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) is to achieve no net loss in the quantity, quality, and biological diversity of Minnesota's existing wetlands. WCA takes a step further with its purpose to include increasing the quantity, quality, and biological diversity of Minnesota's wetlands by restoring or enhancing diminished or drained wetlands. Despite these lofty goals, there is some fine print in the rule worth highlighting. There are several "exemptions" that exist within rule that allow exceptions to the requirement to replace wetland impacts. For example, there are exemptions for utility work, forestry, agricultural drainage, and even duck blinds. There are various conditions that must be met for a project to qualify for an exemption, usually limiting the size of allowable impact, the type of wetland to be impacted, and erosion control measures associated with the work, for example. One of the most commonly used exemptions is the "de minimis" exemption.



An example of a qualifying de minimis exemption. The landowner would like to impact approximately 1,000 sf of wetland within the red area for a trail crossing.

-  Less than 50% Area
-  50% - 80% Area
-  Greater than 80% Area

Pre-statehood wetland areas showing percentage of remaining wetlands. Wright County is located within the "Less than 50% Area" resulting in a smaller amount of allowable de minimis impact for a project.

De minimis is a legal term meaning something too small to be meaningful or to take into consideration. Within the context of WCA, this is applied as wetland impacts that are small enough in area not to require replacement. Given the time and cost associated with replacing wetland impacts, the de minimis exemption provides flexibility to avoid this process for some projects. For example, the construction of driveways to access building sites oftentimes qualifies for this exemption. De minimis amounts of wetland impact vary depending on factors such as the wetland type, location in the state, and whether the wetland is in a shoreland zone as defined by county ordinance. If, for example, a landowner is proposing to impact a wetland located near the shoreline of a lake, the area of allowable wetland impact can be as small as 20 square feet. On the other hand, for a project located in the middle of a field outside of the shoreland zone, it can be as high as 10,890 square feet. In Wright County, de minimis amounts range from 20 square feet up to 2,178 square feet. A de minimis exemption can only be applied once per project. This is intended to prevent a landowner from using the de minimis exemption repeatedly, resulting in a much larger area of wetland impact than what is intended by the rule. Given the nuance in determining the applicable de minimis amount for a project we encourage landowners to contact their local government unit (<https://www.wrightswcd.org/rules-regulations> - Wright County LGU contact map) to discuss before proceeding with the work.



Zebra Mussel Harvesting in Wright County

Zebra mussels may readily proliferate Minnesota Lakes but the one place we can't get them to grow is in the laboratory. Researchers at the Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Institute at the University of Minnesota have zebra mussels in laboratory so they can study their lifecycle and genome. They hope to develop new treatment options for zebra mussel infestations and determine best management practices for water-based equipment transport.

Unfortunately, once zebra mussels are in captivity, they slowly die and will not successfully reproduce. While Minnesota Zoo biologists try to solve that problem, researchers need a constant supply of zebra mussels. This is where Wright SWCD came in. There are 33 waterbodies in Wright County that are considered infested with zebra mussels, so we volunteered to help find locations to harvest specimens. It was harder than we thought...

Locations must be:

- 1)Publicly accessible
- 2)Wadable
- 3)Unaffected by ice-scour
- 4)Have multiple age classes present

Thankfully, we found a location that fit the bill. If you think you might know a location feel free to share with Alicia O'Hare alicia.ohare@mn.nacdnet.net.



Alicia O'Hare (above left) and Ben Minerich (above right) from Minnesota Zoo, collecting Zebra Mussel covered rocks from a lake outlet in Wright County.



Zebra mussels on a rock with a dime for scale.

2025 Tree Price List



Wright Soil & Water Conservation District

311 Brighton Ave S. Suite C
Buffalo, MN 55313
763-682-1970

Email: eric.mattson@usda.gov
wrightswcd.org/tree_program.html

The Wright SWCD Tree Program offers inexpensive bareroot tree seedlings each spring. Order soon, supplies are limited!

ONLINE ORDERS DUE Monday, April 14th

Bare Root Seedlings sold in bundles of 25

| | Species | Size | Price |
|-------------------|---|--------------------|---------|
| Shrubs | Aroniberry (McKenzie) | 18-24" | \$40.00 |
| | Bladdernut | 18-24" | \$40.00 |
| | Dogwood, Redosier | 18-24" | \$40.00 |
| | Elderberry, American | 12-18" | \$40.00 |
| | Hazelnut, American | 12-18" | \$40.00 |
| | Honeysuckle, Dwarf Bush | 12-18" | \$40.00 |
| | Lilac, Common Purple | 12-18" | \$40.00 |
| | Nannyberry | 18-24" | \$40.00 |
| | Rose, Meadow | 18-24" | \$40.00 |
| Small Deciduous | Apricot | 18-24" | \$40.00 |
| | Dogwood, Pagoda | 18-24" | \$40.00 |
| | Hawthorn, Washington | 12-24" | \$40.00 |
| | Hoptree | 18-24" | \$40.00 |
| | Mountain Ash, Showy | 12-18" | \$40.00 |
| Large Deciduous | Birch, Paper | 18-24" | \$40.00 |
| | Cherry, Black | 18-24" | \$40.00 |
| | Cottonwood, Male only | 18-24" | \$40.00 |
| | Oak, Black | 12-18" | \$40.00 |
| | Oak, White | 12-18" | \$40.00 |
| | Maple, Black | 12-18" | \$40.00 |
| | Maple, Sugar | 18-24" | \$40.00 |
| Conifers | Tuliptree | 18-24" | \$40.00 |
| | Fir, Balsam | 10-15" (2-1) | \$40.00 |
| | Fir, Douglas | 10-20" (2-1) | \$40.00 |
| | Pine, Red | 7-14" (2-1) | \$40.00 |
| | Pine, White | 7-14" (2-1) | \$40.00 |
| | Spruce, 'Black Hills' | 7-14" (2-1) | \$40.00 |
| | Spruce, White | 10-16" (2-1) | \$40.00 |
| Variety Pack | Fruiting 10 Pack- 2 each of: Allegheny Serviceberry, American Plum, Domestic Apple, Thimbleberry, Sand Cherry | | \$40.00 |
| Native Seed Mixes | Savanna - 25-60% tree cover | covers 1,000 sq ft | \$65.00 |
| | Pollinator - dry/mesic | covers 1,000 sq ft | \$65.00 |
| Native Plant Kits | Backyard Rain garden Kit - 6 species, 36 plants | | \$70.00 |
| | Short & Dry Garden Kit - 6 species, 36 plants | | \$70.00 |

NEW ONLINE STORE

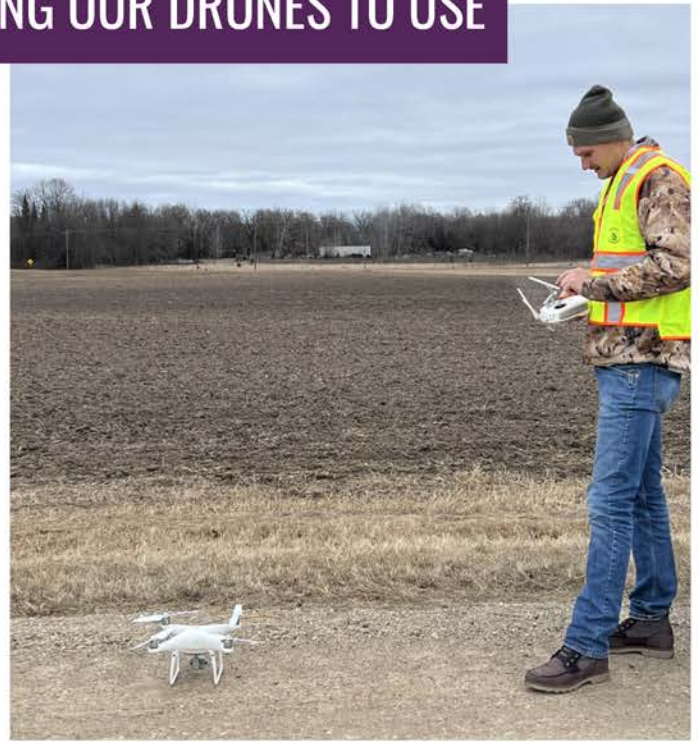
Use QR code:



HOW THE DISTRICT IS PUTTING OUR DRONES TO USE

Since 2019, the Wright Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) has been utilizing drone technology for conservation purposes. Originally purchased to help conduct spot checks on past conservation projects during the growing season, we learned quickly the applications were endless: the ability to provide a bird's-eye view to understand concerns across the landscape, before and after pictures of projects, and create promotional videos.

The SWCD has two certified drone pilots; Andrew Grean and Charlie Bean, both are equipped with the proper training and knowledge to fly a drone safely. Prior to each flight, a certified team member seeks permission from the landowner to fly the drone over their property. Starting in 2024 the SWCD now can use a drone to survey. This means topographic surveys can be done faster and more efficiently without sacrificing accuracy.



Charlie Bean (right) with our DJI Phantom 4 drone.



Drone photos before, during, and after construction of a Streambank Project at Otsego County Park.



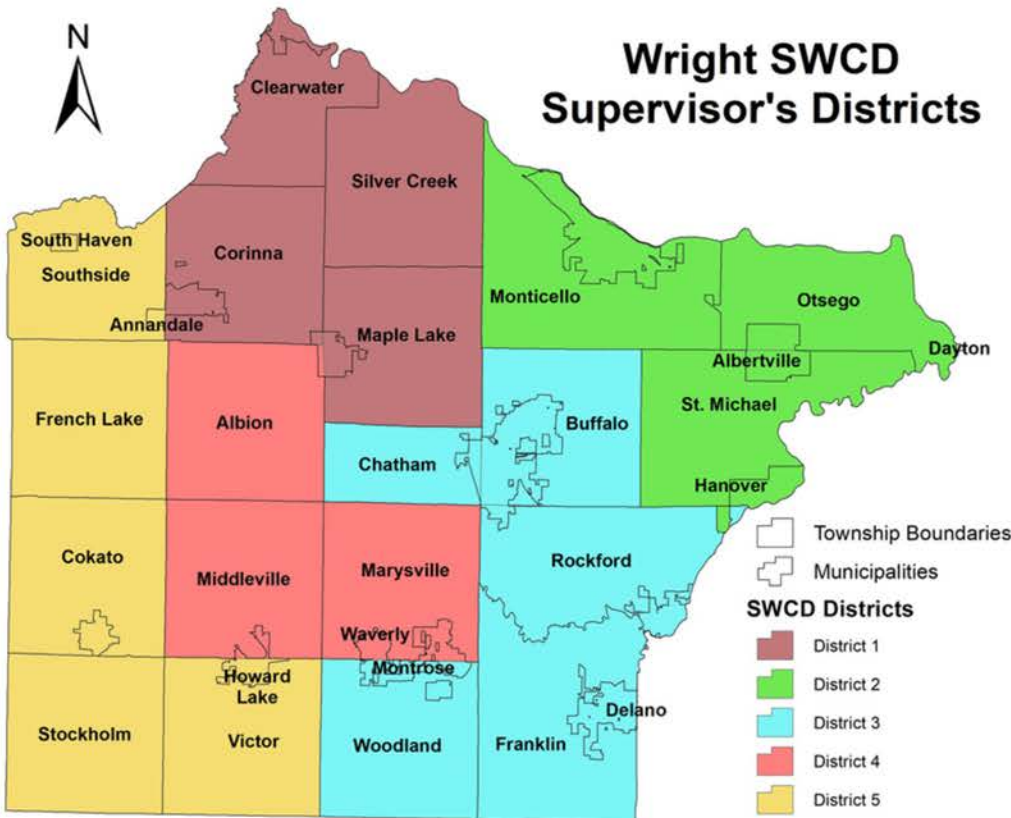
Drone photos of carp removal at Little Waverly Lake and field day event at Mike Young's farm.

SWCD Supervisors

The Wright SWCD's Board is comprised of five Supervisors who are elected by nomination districts on the county wide general election. Supervisor terms are staggered every four years. Supervisors receive a per diem of \$75 per board meeting and meet once a month to set goals, policies, and priorities for the District.



Back Row (left to right): Bill Daluge – Supervisor, Duane Dahlman – Vice Chair, Mike Zieska – Secretary/Treasurer. Front Row (left to right): Kris Olson – Supervisor, Chris Uecker – Chair.



District 1
Mike Zieska

Annandale, Clearwater,
Corinna, Silver Creek,
Maple Lake

District 2
Kris Olson

Albertville, Monticello,
Otsego, St. Michael,
Hanover

District 3
Bill Daluge

Buffalo, Chatham, Rockford,
Delano, Franklin, Montrose,
Woodland

District 4
Chris Uecker

Albion, Middleville, Montrose
Marysville, Waverly, Howard Lake

District 5
Duane Dahlman

Southside, South Haven,
Annandale, French Lake,
Cokato, Howard Lake,
Stockholm, Victor

New Staff



Samantha Kaml
Natural Resources Engineer

Samantha started with us at the beginning of November as our Natural Resources Engineer. Her main focus is to design and implement Best Management Practices to prevent soil erosion and sedimentation in Wright County.

She obtained her Bachelor's Degree in Environmental Engineering from St. Cloud State University. Samantha has a stormwater background from her previous work experience. She is excited to make a positive environmental impact by helping address sediment management issues with local landowners and other critical areas near our freshwater habitats.

Winter Salt Week - January 27-31, 2025 Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

Did you know that the ~404,000 tons of chloride-containing salt we scatter on our paved surfaces across Minnesota each year ends up in our lakes, streams, and drinking water, causing permanent pollution? With smart salting practices and new technologies, public agencies and private businesses are reducing salt use by 30-70% all while maintaining top-notch safety.

You don't need much salt to be safe



A mug's worth of salt is enough for a typical home's driveway or sidewalk.

15°F

Most deicing salt doesn't work when it's really cold. Use sand instead for traction.



10 sidewalk squares

m MINNESOTA POLLUTION CONTROL AGENCY



311 BRIGHTON AVE SOUTH, SUITE C
BUFFALO, MN 55313
763-682-1933 ext. 3