

# NOBLES SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT



2020

Annual Report

The Nobles Soil and Water Conservation District was organized in 1954 as a legal charter insured by the Secretary of State. State. The District is governed by a five-member Board of Supervisors who is responsible for directing all District activities and establishing operational policies. Each supervisor is elected for a 4-year term. Each supervisor lives in a different geographic area of the District and represents that portion of the District. By utilizing a combination of available local, state and federal assistance, the District directs conservation programs to service the resource management needs of all those who live within Nobles County.

The District cooperates with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation District under a Memorandum of Understanding whereby full-time technical assistance on soil survey, engineering, agronomy, biology, woodland conservation and administration is furnished to the District by the Natural Resources conservation District's field, area and state office staff. The Nobles SWCD share the Agriculture Service Center at 1567 McMillan St., Worthington Minnesota, with several USDA agencies.

## District Supervisors

Rick Nelsen, Chairman	Seward, Graham Lakes, Elk and Hersey Townships
Lynn Darling, Vice-Chairman	Bloom, Summit Lake, Dewald & Worthington Townships
Ken Wolf, Secretary	Westside, Olney, Grand Prairie & Little Rock Townships
Jim Knips, Treasurer	Leota, Wilmont, Lismore, & Larkin Townships
Paul Langseth, PR & I	Lorain, Ransom, Bigelow, & Indian Lake Townships

## District Staff

John Shea, District Manager  
Sabrina Raddle, Accountant/Administrative Assistant  
Catelyn LaCour, Farm Bill Technician  
Scott Runck, District Technician

## Meeting Schedule

Meetings are held the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 7:30 a.m.

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“Protecting our soil and water resources and promoting their  
wise use”

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## Southwest Prairie Technical Service Area

Russell Hoogendoorn, Engineer  
Michael Skoglund, Engineering Technician  
Ben Matthys, Engineering Technician  
Tom Foerster, Engineering Technician

## Natural Resource Conservation Service

Nathan Blankers, Soil Conservationist  
Cheryl Heard, District Conservationist  
Paul Spartz, Civil Engineer

## Heron Lake Watershed District

Jan Voit, District Administrator  
Catherine Wegehaupt, District Technician  
Jim Buschena, Board Member  
Mark Bartosh, Board Member  
Harvey Kruger, Board Member  
Bruce Leinen, Board Member  
Wayne Rasche, Board Member

## Kanaranzi-Little Rock Watershed District

John Shea, Executive Secretary  
Bill Jansma, Board Member  
Jerry Brake, Board Member  
Coleen Gruis, Board Member  
Layton Gruis, Board Member  
Adam Henning, Board Member

## Okabena-Ocheda Watershed District

Dan Livdahl, District Administrator  
Casey Ingenthron, Board Member  
Steve Bousema, Board Member  
Rolf Mahlberg, Board Member  
Jay Milbrandt, Board Member  
Jeff Rogers, Board Member

# Annual Report

## Tree Program

The Nobles SWCD sold a variety of tree and shrub species native to Minnesota. Producers purchased the trees to plant into windbreaks, for urban and rural conservation and for wildlife food and habitat. Through the annual tree program, the Nobles SWCD is able to promote conservation practices and the value of forestry resources in preventing soil loss and improving water quality. In 2020, the District sold over 6,800 trees and assisted 14 landowners with tree planting. More than 1165 tree mats were sold and over 13,500 feet of matting was installed in 2020.



## AgBMP Loan Program

During 2020, the Nobles SWCD in conjunction with the Nobles County, Fulda Credit Union, First National Bank, Compeer Financial and First State Bank Southwest worked with local landowners to obtain MN Department of Agriculture AgBMP Loans. During 2020, over \$206,118.86 worth of loans were dispersed related to conservation tillage, ISTS, and Ag waste management.

## State Cost-Share

The State Cost-Share program is a viable source of funds that provides financial incentives to landowners that wish to install conservation practices on their land. In addition to the State Cost-Share program, landowners were given an opportunity to participate in various other cost-share or financial incentive programs, such as the Federal EQIP program and the State Revolving Loan Program. The SWCD and NRCS provide technical assistance for the survey, design, and installation of water quality practices. The SWCD received \$17,383.00 for FY 2020 allocations.

## Wetland Conservation Act Program

The Nobles SWCD assists cities, townships, citizens, and county departments in the administration of the Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act. Nobles SWCD staff provides technical and administrative

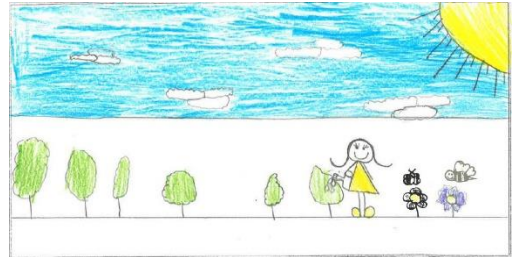


assistance for wetland related activities throughout Nobles County. Common activities involved with the program include tile and drainage applications as well as wetland banking. The Nobles SWCD has continued its commitment to ensure that staff is adequately trained and updated on current wetland rules and policy. In 2020, Nobles SWCD worked on over 300 landowner drainage requests.

## Environmental Education

Environmental Education is an important part of our SWCD office. Classes and materials are offered to school and churches throughout Nobles County.

- Second Grade Arbor Day Presentations
- Fifth Grade Environmental Learning Area Tours in Adrian and Worthington
- Ecology Bus Presentations
- Fifth and Sixth Grade Environmental Fair



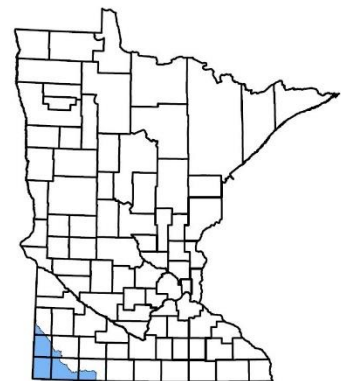
## Local Capacity

The Nobles SWCD received \$136,373 from the state to use towards Local Capacity. The District was able to provide staff education and equipment for fieldwork, but they were also able to set an additional \$77,073.48 of the funds for cost-share contracts.

- Leased a Gator Side-by-Side for SWCD staff to use in the field. Field activities included: buffer checks, survey and design, field visits and tree plantings.
- Staff and Board Education
- Staff Classification Update/Job Classification Survey
- Set aside an additional \$77,073.48 for cost-share projects.

## Missouri River Watershed - One Watershed, One Plan

The Missouri River Watershed One-Watershed One Plan brings 6 counties, 6 Soil and Water Conservation Districts and 2 Watersheds together to develop a comprehensive plan that will address water management in the Missouri River Watershed. Prior to this evolutionary process each public entity developed their own strategic water plan. This new process will build off these existing local water management plans and priorities as well as align the local water planning process on major watershed boundaries. The Missouri River Watershed One Watershed-One Plan will be locally led and utilize state strategies towards prioritized, targeted and measurable implementation plans. The plan was accepted by the Board of Water and Soil Resources in 2019. A Joint Powers Board was created for the Missouri River area to help with implementing the plan. As of today, 27 projects have been approved, 7 of them already completed. The amount of funds encumbered to date is \$522,350.75.





## Buffer Legislation

The Nobles SWCD have been working with the landowners who have received notification that they are not in compliance with the Buffer Law. These landowners have a few different options and the SWCD's job is to help landowners and operators determine what option fits into their operation best while getting the parcel compliant with the state law. Nobles SWCD has received \$35,000 from the state to compensate the hours of work required by the SWCD to help landowners become compliant and to check to make sure they are staying compliant. Nobles SWCD would really like to see 100% compliance by the end of 2021.

## Summit Lake 11

In 2015, the District acquired 277 acres of RIM property in Section 11 of Summit Lake Township. In 2017, a wetland restoration was completed throughout the 277 acres. All 13 wetland basins were restored, with the largest nearing 65 acres. A water control structure was installed during the restoration to better hold the water off the county tile that runs near the property. No projects were completed on the Summit Lake 11 site in 2020. The structure is holding water and is currently being managed to prevent flooding downstream during spring runoff.

## Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

Minnesota is implementing a Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) that will directly address resource problems with strategic, long-term solutions. Five Minnesota agencies have come together to support MN CREP. Landowners who choose to voluntarily enroll in the CREP will not only provide significant progress for the state's water quality goals and habitat needs but will also be part of a national model for local-state-federal partnerships. In 2020, the SWCD enrolled four contracts into the CREP program. CREP is a great opportunity for Landowners to receive compensation for lands that may otherwise be unproductive; however, it also allows landowners to create permanent wildlife habitat, leaving a legacy in their tracks.

