

Conservation News

2016 Annual Report Publication

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Melissa Behrens
Soil Conservation Technician

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Matt Rose

Pope County Ag Inspector

Barry Bouwman
(320) 634-7793 Office
(320) 424-0194 Cell

Pope SWCD/NRCS Office

1680 Franklin Street N
Glenwood, MN 56334
(320) 634-5327
www.popeswcd.org

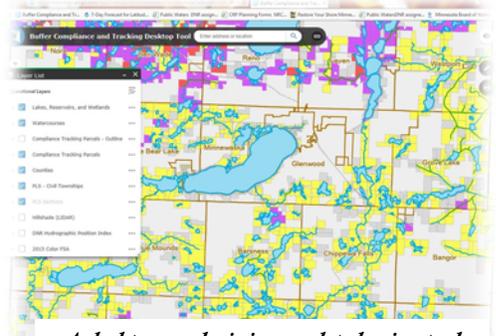
BUFFER INITIATIVE LAW IMPLEMENTATION

By Jessica Oldakowski

As we kick off the New Year, we tend to look back on our previous year's achievements. One of those achievements is the continued work done by the state, local agencies, counties, and landowners in regards to the 2015 Minnesota Buffer and Soil Loss Law. This past year has been filled with progress. The Department of Natural Resources released the official Buffer Map and the Board of Water and Soil Resources have been creating tools and guidance documents for local agencies such as Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) and Watershed Districts for effective and consistent implementation.

Here at our Pope SWCD office, I have completed a county wide desktop analysis. Each parcel that is requiring a buffer was reviewed in order to find initial compliance based on aerial maps. **The next steps are to meet with landowners about their parcels, provide technical assistance such as field verification and staking, and compliance validation checks.** I will be sending waves of letters to landowners who have parcels that need further review or assistance. **Please schedule an appointment to meet with me if you receive a letter.** If you do not receive a letter but would still like to check on your buffer requirements I will ask that you also schedule an appointment.

Going through the initial desktop analysis and data review, I found that, with some margin of error, Pope County is sitting quite well. Most landowners when they have come in to visit about buffers realize that they already have the majority of the required buffer width and only need to add a small acreage. Many of these sites are less than an acre that is to be added for full compliance. Overall, **Pope County is 93 percent compliant.** With roughly only 300 parcels to review, a possible 6 percent may be falling short of the buffer requirement. The state of **Minnesota, based on initial review, is 80 percent compliant.** We, as Minnesotans, have been doing great conservation work and are already good stewards of the land. There is just a little bit of last minute work to fully button up the buffer initiative for improving water quality and enhancing habitat.



A desktop analysis is completed using tool called BuffCat by SWCD staff across the state.

BONANZA VALLEY GROUNDWATER PLAN COMPLETE



The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) completed the ground water management plan for the Bonanza Valley Groundwater Management Area in October of 2016. The DNR has also had the first meeting of the Advisory Team in early 2016. The entire plan can be accessed on the DNR's website at: <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/gwmp/area-bv.html>. The Pope SWCD will also include a link on their website at www.popeswcd.org.

REINVEST IN MINNESOTA PROGRAM

In September of 2016, there were 60 RIM easements that were inspected as part of the annual routine inspections; no issues were found. Folder updates in the local and state office were completed. Please remember that it is always important to bring in a recorded deed when there is a change in ownership. This ensures that the current landowner receives the necessary paperwork and assistance with their easement.

There were several landowners that stopped in the office to discuss possible Conservation Plan changes and vegetative cover enhancements. There were two easements that fully executed those changes and one that created a plan to implement in the spring of 2017. Interest in implementing grazing as a way to manage the old vegetation debris, invasive species and enhance the native species on the land was high this past year. If there are any questions about requirements, management, or desired changes to your RIM easement, please contact Jessica Oldakowski.



SHORELINE RESTORATION PROGRAM

There was an abundance of landowner interest in restoring private shoreline to a more natural state in 2015-2016. Pope SWCD was able to cost-share 3 fairly large projects with the Department of Natural Resources Aquatic Habitat Grant. Two projects are located on Lake Minnewaska and the third project is located on Lake Amelia. A total of 10,600 square feet of lakeshore has been planted with native plants that include grasses, sedges, and flowering plants. Landowners assisted the staff of Pope SWCD to accomplish these wonderful looking restoration projects. The previous year's restoration projects were inspected and have established wonderfully. Continued maintenance by landowners and assistance from Pope Soil and Water will ensure that the plants set roots and continue to grow. These restoration sites are and will continue to improve water quality by reducing soil erosion and provide habitat and a food source for many animals and insects.

Currently, the DNR is no longer offering an Aquatic Habitat Grant. However, for certain projects there may be other means to financially assist with a shoreline restoration. Pope SWCD will continue to look for other ways to assist landowners on creating a natural shoreline for habitat and erosion control. We can also assist with planting plans or any other questions or concerns that you may have about your lake or river stretch. Call Jessica Oldakowski or Holly Kovarik for more



PLAN NOW FOR SPRING TREE PLANTINGS

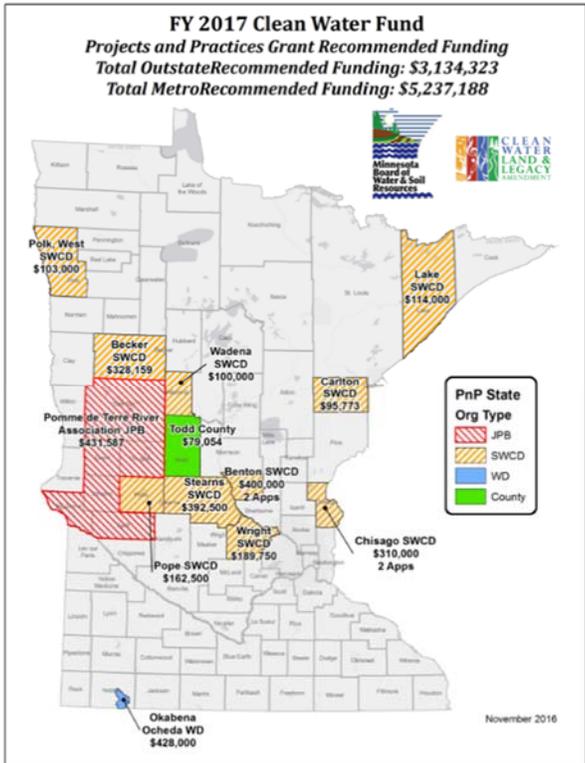
CALL TO ORDER NOW!

SOME AVAILABILITY LIMITED

ORDER FORMS ON OUR WEBSITE



PAUL AND BARB KOUBSKY NAMED OUTSTANDING CONSERVATIONISTS



D. Gary Reents (Pope SWCD Board member), Keith Nygaard (Pope SWCD Board member), Barb and Paul Koubsky, Holly Kovarik (Pope SWCD staff) and Gordy Wagner (Pope County Commissioner)

POPE SWCD HAS BEEN AWARDED FUNDING FOR THE LAKE EMILY WATERSHED PROJECT AREA IN 2017. THESE FUNDS ARE AVAILABLE FOR EROSION AND SEDIMENT CONTROL PROJECTS.

No-Till Drill Available to Rent



The Pope SWCD offers a complete package of services and products to aid in implementing native grass plantings enrolled in conservation programs and for seeding buffers. Call today to set up a time to meet with staff to discuss your project and provide an estimate. Ask for Kelly!

SALES PROGRAM

Pope SWCD provides services including tree planting, grass seeding, and rental services. They also provide materials for seeding conservation projects and trees for various tree practices. Contact the SWCD for your spring planting needs.

	<u>2016</u>
Rain Guage (#)	6
Rain Barrels (#)	8
Grass Seed (acres)	539.18
Bulk Weed Fabric (feet)	21051
Tree Products (#)	1241
Trees and Shrubs (#)	27819
Irrigation Management	12
Drill Rental (acres)	635.2
Packer Rental (acres)	127
Tree Planter Rental	0
Crimper Rental	1
Tree planting (# of trees)	8965
Installing Weed Barrier Fabric (feet)	20991
Mowing (acres)	223.36
Grass Seeding (acres)	169.97
Other Services (acres)	117.5

WETLAND CONSERVATION ACT

Pope SWCD is the local government unit that was delegated the responsibility for WCA in Pope County. There were 169 contacts made in 2015 on various requests including wetland mitigation, site reviews, violations, plat reviews, restoration orders, training, and general implementation of program. This is funded by the State and County provided match for implementing this program. There were two boundary or type determinations, 1 replacement plan, 4 ag wetland bank exemptions, and 1 wetland banking application. There were also 4 sites investigated that were potential violations.

COOPERATIVE WEED MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

This year the Pope-Swift Cooperative Weed Management Area program was focused on treatment of chronic areas, in particular, those that are infested with Wild parsnip and Plumeless thistle. Township road right of ways throughout Pope and Swift counties were targeted utilizing chemical treatments. These sites are part of a Treatment Plan created for a 2-3 year treatment regime. Other sites were chemically sprayed to treat Leafy spurge, Wild parsnip, Plumeless thistle, and Common tansy. One infestation of Leafy spurge was treated biologically with the release of a small collection of Leafy spurge beetles. Follow up will be required on this site.

Public education was achieved with Weed of the Week articles published in local newspapers, featured articles, newsletters and a booth at the Pope County Fair. Jessica Oldakowski-Pope SWCD, Barry Bouwman- Pope Land and Resource Management and Tom Orr- Swift SWCD fielded questions from landowners throughout the growing season and went on many site visits. If you ever have any questions or concerns about a particular weed or need assistance identifying what you think may be a noxious weed please feel free to contact Jessica Oldakowski at the Pope SWCD office, 320-634-5327. Treatment plans can also be created with a landowner if one is required for weed control success. Barry Bowman is also assisting landowners with creating a pasture treatment plan and can be contacted at 320-634-7791.

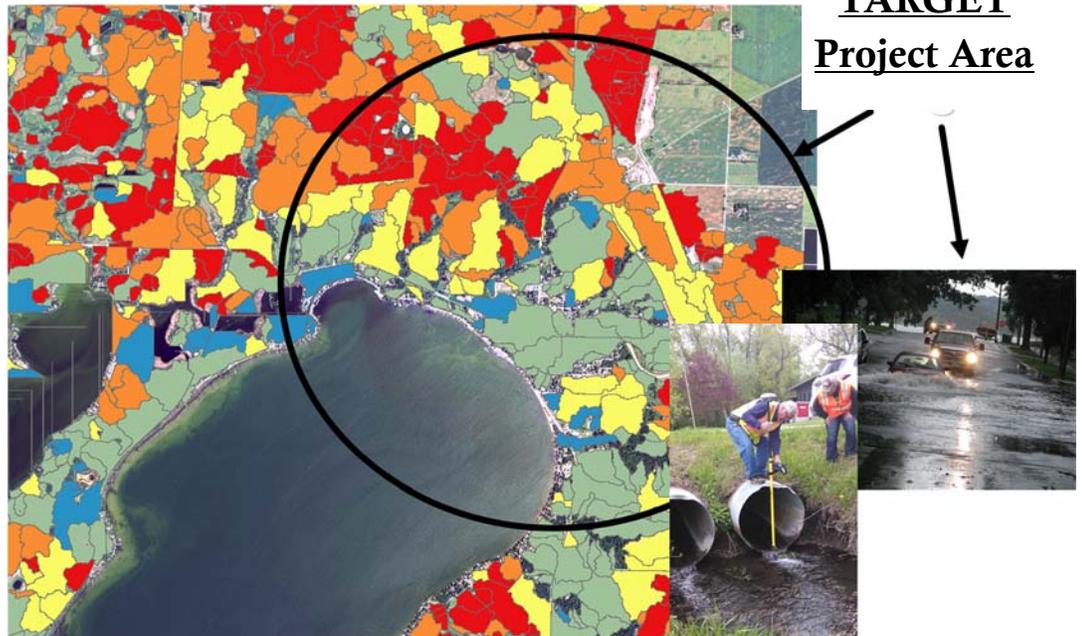
Many identified sites of noxious weeds in Pope and Swift counties have remained. However, there are a good number of sites that have decreased in weed population. It is the goal of the CWMA program to continue to treat chronic noxious weed sites and assist landowners with these issues in order to reduce the size of the infestations as well as the overall infestation sites.

CITY OF GLENWOOD STUDY

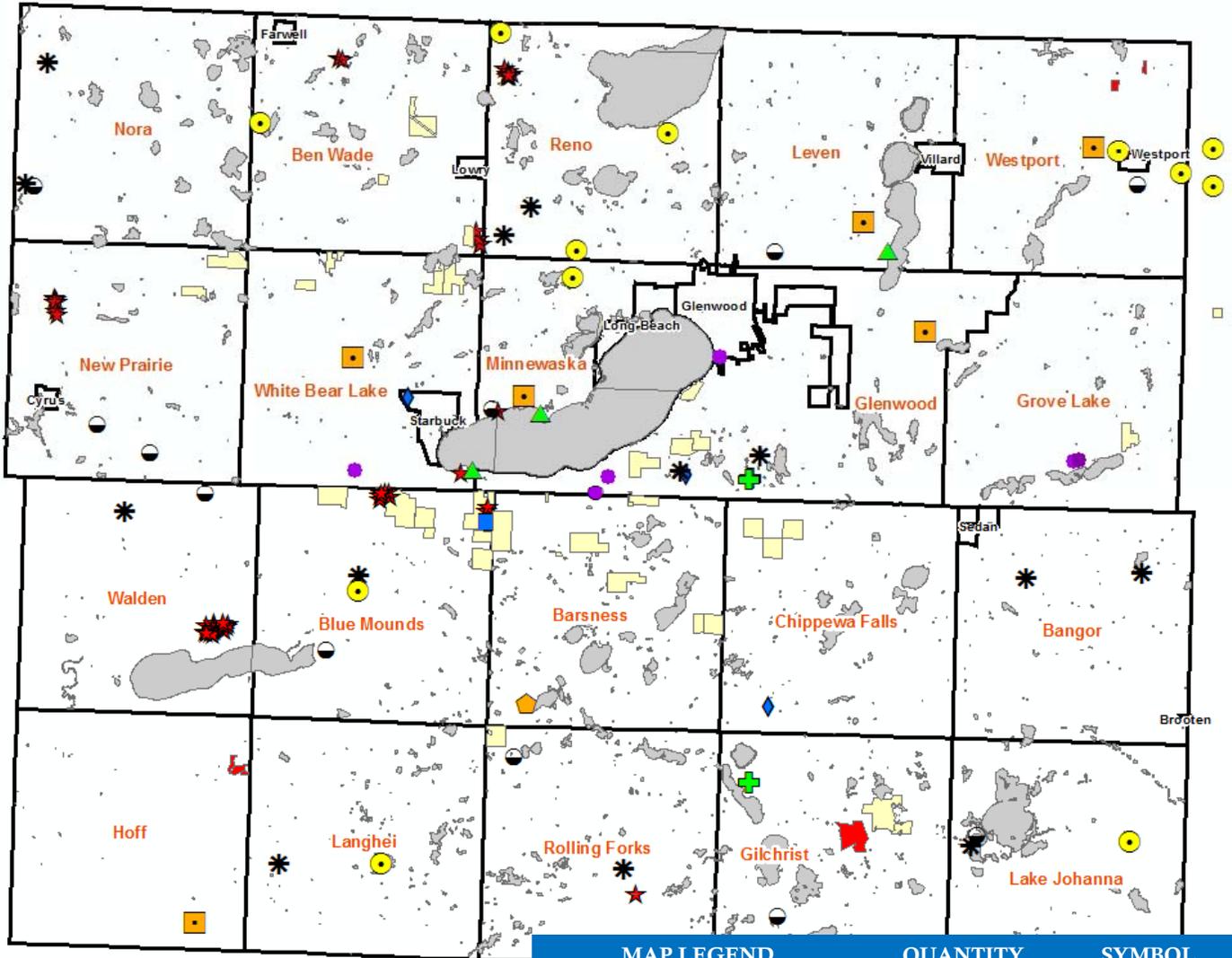
Pope SWCD has been working with the City of Glenwood and contracted with Houston Engineering to complete a hydraulic and hydrology study of the stormwater conveyance system through the city. This project was funded by a Clean Water Land and Legacy Amendment grant. The analysis will help identify where projects should be implemented to help with water quality concerns affecting Lake Minnewaska.

The Pope SWCD staff will then work with individual property owners to implement projects within the city to help with these water quality concerns. The information will also be helpful to the City in determining what projects to implement for flooding improvements.

The entire city stormwater conveyance system was surveyed this past year. A full report should be available by the end of 2017 and then projects will be sought within the City in order to apply for state funding to implement in 2018 and beyond. Watch for more details in 2018 or give us a call today if you would like to learn more (320) 634-5327, ask for Holly.



2016 PROJECTS COMPLETED



MAP LEGEND	QUANTITY	SYMBOL
STRUCTURES	47 Count	★
FEEDLOT PROJECT	1 Site	⬡
ALTERNATIVE ROCK INTAKES	1 Site	⬢
SHORELINE RESTORATIONS	3 Sites	▲
WELL SEALING	6 Wells Sealed	●
MINNESOTA AG WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION	10 Farms Certified 5,573 Acres	▭
GRAZING PROJECTS	3 Sites	◆
COVER CROPS	3 Sites	▴
GRASS PROJECTS	11 Sites	◐
TREE PROJECTS	12 Sites	✱
IRRIGATION MANAGEMENT	6 Sites/11 Pivots	◻
DRILL RENTALS	12 Sites	●
OTHER	3 Sites	⊕

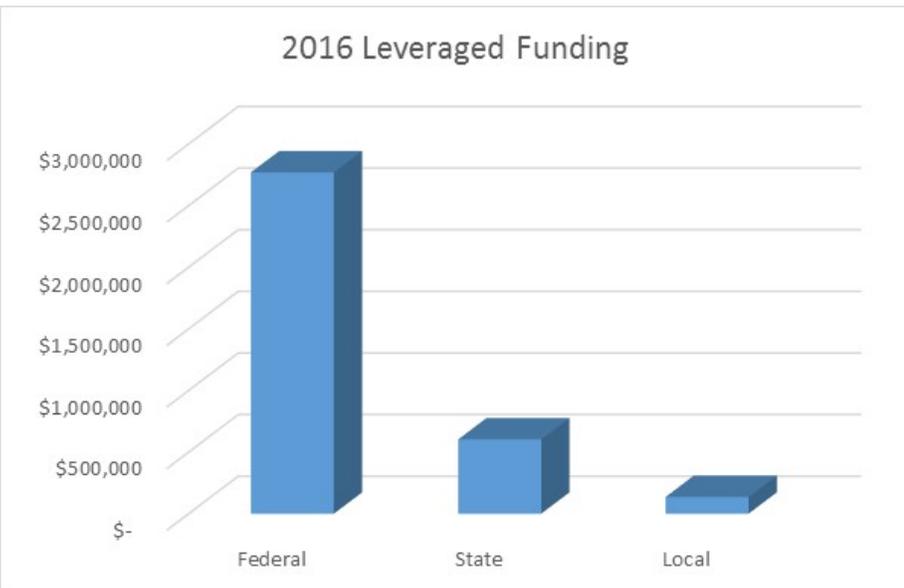
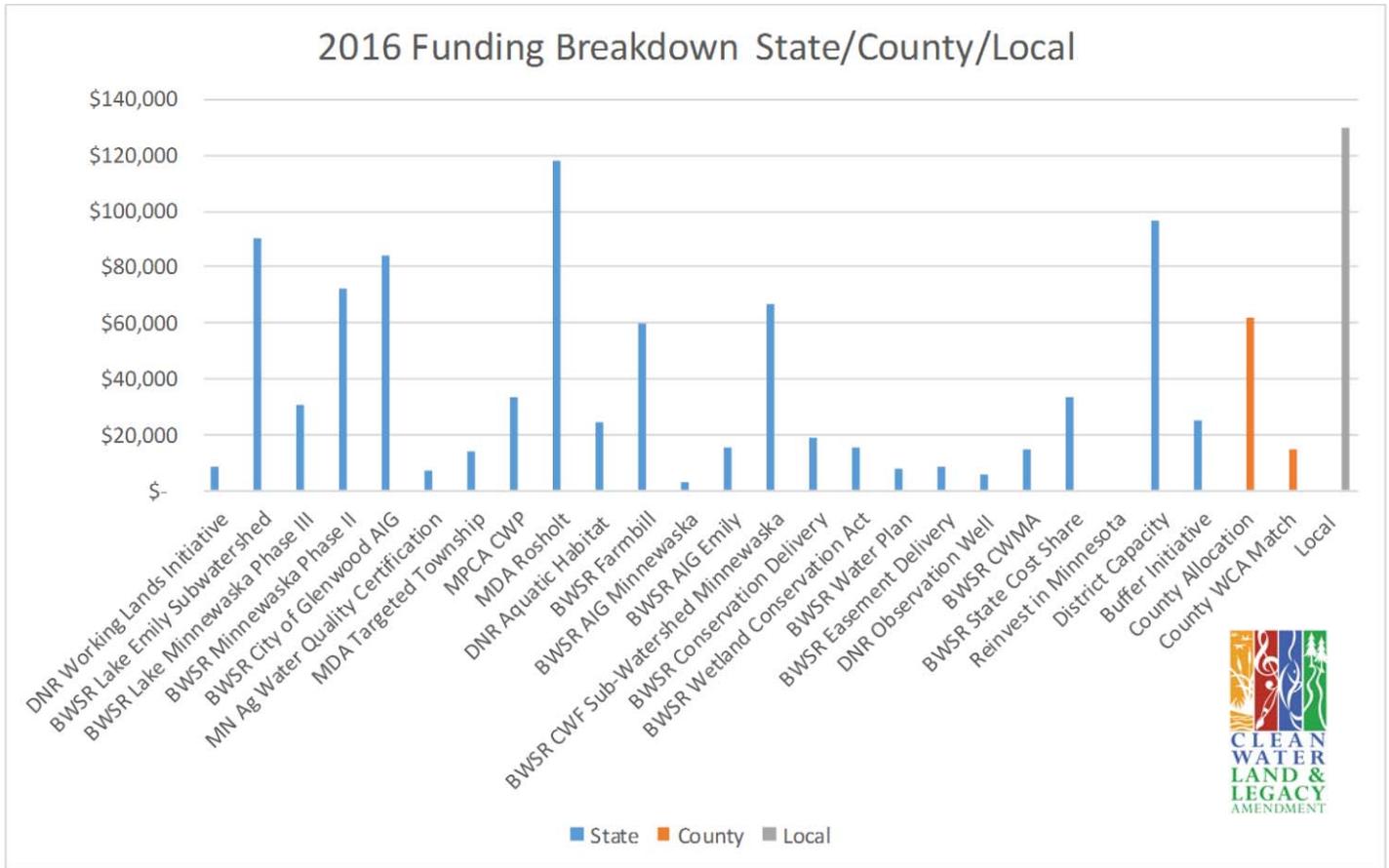
Other Practices:

Monitored 23 Observation Wells for groundwater level



FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Pope SWCD receives funding from a variety of sources for programs and project implementation. The SWCD is not a taxing authority and depends on funding support from the County and other partners. The Pope SWCD works very closely with Federal partners to leverage and provide technical assistance for Pope County landowners. The Pope SWCD receives funding from Pope County in the amount of \$77,100 which supports staff costs for all programs and \$15,000 of this amount is used specifically to implement the Wetland Conservation Act. This financial information represents all funding including cost share to landowners. Most of the funding from federal and state sources are for landowner projects and cost share assistance.



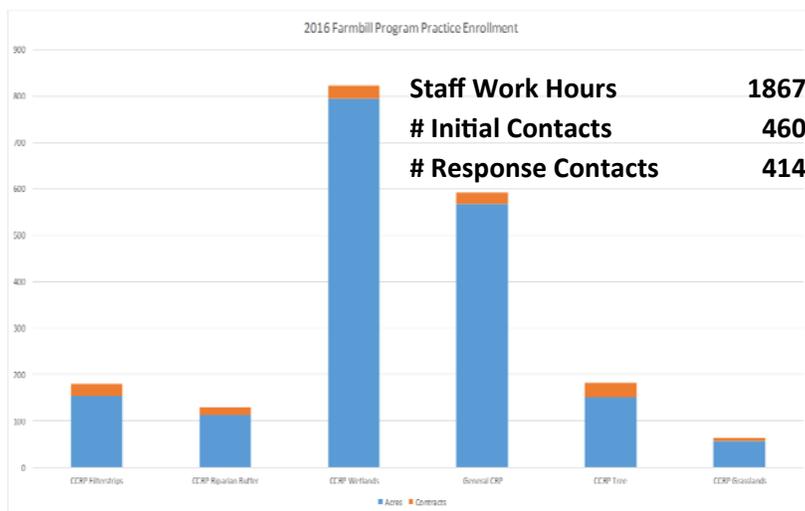
POPE SWCD EDUCATION PROGRAMS



2016 Educational Events

- Pope/Douglas Co Feedlot meeting
- Poster Contest (BBE, Minnewaska, Glacial Hills)
- County Commissioner Meeting
- Glacial Hills Education Day
- Villard Amelia Leven Lake Association Meeting
- Community Expo
- Rosholt Field Day
- HRA Board of Directors Meeting
- Water Fest
- Conservation Day
- County Commissioner Meetings
- Planning Commission Meeting
- Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts
- Irrigation Clinic
- Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation District
- Board of Water and Soil Resources Academy
- County Commissioner Meeting
- Township Annual Meeting Winter
- Township Annual Meeting Summer
- Glacial Hills Education Day Fall
- Stewardship Week

FARMBILL PROGRAM



POPE SOIL & WATER



CONSERVATION DISTRICT

1680 Franklin St North
Glenwood, MN 56334

Pope SWCD and USDA prohibits discrimination in all their programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex (including gender identity and expression), marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, political beliefs, genetic information, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program.

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IMPORTANT DATES

Board Meetings are held the **third Tuesday of each month at 7am.**
The public is welcome to join us.

March 29	Board Meeting
April 18	Board Meeting
May 16	Board Meeting
June 20	Board Meeting



SWCD BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Randy Pederson, D.Gary Reents, Tom Talle, Mike Billehus, and Keith Nygaard



SWCD STAFF

Nicole Brede (Farmbill Technician), Holly Kovarik (Manager), Jessica Oldakowski (Technician), Kelly Erickson (Technician)