



Opdahl's Honored as 2019 Outstanding Conservationists



The Pope SWCD would like to congratulate this year's Pope County Outstanding Conservationists, Donald and Shari Opdahl. Donald and Shari Opdahl were recently honored as outstanding conservationists at the annual meeting of the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, December 8-10, 2019 in Bloomington, Minn. They were selected by the Pope Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) for the award and were also honored by Pope County at the November 19, 2019 board meeting.

Kaley Poegel 2019 Outstanding Teacher

The Pope and Stevens SWCDs would like to congratulate this year's Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation District's Outstanding Teacher Kaley Poegel. Kaley was recently honored at the annual meeting of the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, December 8-10, 2019 in Bloomington, Minn. Each year, the state's SWCDs may recognize a K-12 educator or professional teacher who has created innovative conservation education activities for reaching students. She was nominated by the Pope and Stevens Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) for the award. She was also honored by Pope County at the December 17, 2019 board meeting.



Pope SWCD provides services including tree planting, grass seeding, mowing, and rental services. They also provide materials for seeding projects and trees. Contact the SWCD for your spring planting and maintenance needs. An order form can be found online at www.popeswcd.org or call 320-634-5327.



Buffer Program Updates

Buffer implementation on public waters and ditches has been drawn out past its deadline of November 1, 2017 for public waters and November 1, 2018 on public ditches due to weather. Pope County was in the 90 percentile of parcel compliance before the 2015 buffer law was signed. Since then landowners have been implementing buffers on their properties and Pope County is 99.9% compliant on the 4,445 parcels requiring buffers.

Throughout 2019 Pope SWCD had contact with 156 landowners to discuss various pieces of the buffer requirements on their property. There are 22 parcels left to come into compliance. These parcels are working with the Pope SWCD on alternative practices or weather circumstances. Of these, 3 parcels are public ditches and 19 are public waters. The parcels that are not compliant by the spring of 2020 will begin the enforcement process with the county or watershed district, depending on who is the enforcing agency of the public water/ditch. The goal of the Pope SWCD office is to provide technical assistance to those landowners in order for them to achieve compliance.

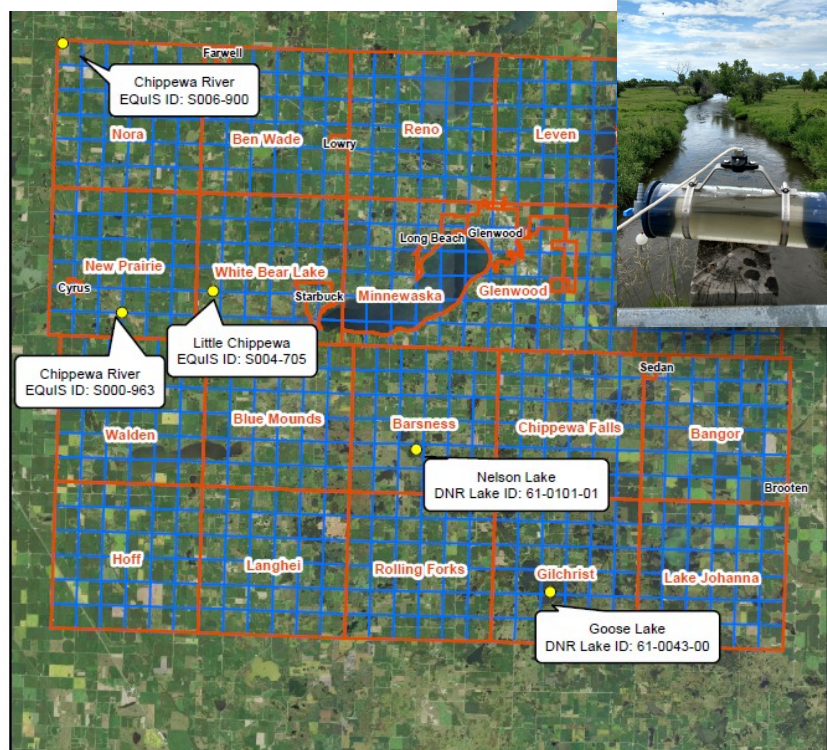


Surface Water Assessment Monitoring

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) awarded Pope SWCD a Surface Water Assessment Grant to monitor and collect samples for water quality on 3 stream and 2 lake sites which are shown to the right on the map.

Throughout the sampling season, May through September, there was a schedule with parameters to collect. These parameters included: Total Phosphorus, Chlorophyll-A, Chloride, Hardness as CaCO₃, Total Suspended Solids, and E. coli. These were analyzed by RMB Labs in Detroit Lakes after samples were collected. Secchi tube, specific conductance, temperature, pH, and dissolved

oxygen reading were taken by staff at the stream as field data. These locations were chosen by MPCA to study lake trends and to analyze a stream stretch for possible impairments. This grant and study are conducted over two years, 2019-2020. An Interim Report and 2019 data were submitted to MPCA for review. The final report and assessment will be completed by MPCA after the 2020 season data is submitted. If you have questions on this program contact Jessica at the Pope SWCD 320-634-5327.



Legend

● MPCA_SWAQ_MonitoringSites.shp

Date: 12/14/2018



2019 Educational Events

Minnewaska Career Day

Community Expo

Middle Sauk Water Fest

Glacial Hills Day

Conservation Day

Water Fest

Legislative Days

Poster Contest

BBE Science Fair

Rosholt Field Day

Gobblers of Glacial Ridge Event

Pope County Pheasant Restoration Event

(2) Annual Township Meetings

Stewardship Week

Grazing Tour

Outstanding Teacher Presentation at County Board Meeting

Annual Report to County Board

Irrigation Clinic

Nitrate Clinic at the Fair

County Fair Booth

Budget Appropriation Meeting to County Board

Outstanding Conservationists Presentation at County Board Meeting

Minnesota Erosion Control Association Presentation

(2) Testified at Capitol

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

The CREP program is still available for those who are interested or who want to learn more about the easement potential on their property. This program is where the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP at 15-year contract) and Re-invest in Minnesota (RIM-perpetual easement) come together creating the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). Pope SWCD is able to work through scenarios with landowners who may be interested. Since CREP has CRP as part of the program, the land enrolling needs to be currently farmed with cropping history that would meet the CRP criteria, along with other sets of criteria for each program. The CREP acres are focused on wetland restoration, vegetated buffers, and wellhead protection areas.

Throughout 2019, there were 8 landowners interested in learning more about the CREP program and how it could work on their property. One site was established in 2019 which included a wetland restoration with the CRP sign up 51. This easement has 17.1 acres enrolled. It will be constructed and seeded in the spring of 2020.

IRRIGATION CLINIC TO BE HELD **March 10th 9 AM-2:45 PM**

Minnewaska House (24895 Highway 28, Glenwood, MN 56334)

Pre-register by February 28th to Pope SWCD 1680 Franklin Street North, Glenwood, MN 56334 or 320-634-5327

Cost includes meal- \$10 in advance or \$20 at the door

Topics include: Introducing Regenerative Ag to Your Conventional Operation, The Basics of Soil Health, Irrigation Water Quality Research in Central Minnesota, Irrigation Variable Rate Technology

Sponsors include: Eagle Bank, NutraDrip Irrigation, Bonanza Valley State Bank, Glenwood State Bank, AgCountry Farm Credit, Klimek Bros Well Drilling, Midwest Machinery

Cooperative Weed Management Program

Pope SWCD was awarded a \$12,000 grant through the Minnesota Department of Agriculture in their Noxious Weed and Invasive Plant program. This was a one-year grant that focused on noxious invasive terrestrial weeds within the Pope-Swift Cooperative Weed Management Area.

A main focus was on the treatment of county and township road rights-of-way. The targeted invasive species in those locations were wild parsnip, leafy spurge, and plumeless thistle. Eleven miles of road rights-of-way were treated. Common Tansy was also targeted but the timing of the weather did not allow for treatment. This spot will be treated again in 2020.

State highways were monitored with the growth of infestation sites and when and where MnDOT treated areas. Another main focus was assisting landowners with the control of plumeless thistle on pastureland. Landowners entered into contracts for 75% cost share not to exceed \$500 to treat plumeless thistle. There was a lot of interest in this cost-share program. Pope SWCD had 7 contracts planned for plumeless thistle treatment, with one also having wild parsnip on the property. However, the fall of 2019 was wet and 2 contracts were completed.

There were 7 Weed of the Week articles printed in local newspapers and Agralite Magazine and a featured article on Emerald Ash Borer. Pope SWCD staff also conducted on site visits with landowners for weed ID and to assist in treatment/management plans to control or eradicate the identified noxious weed.

Pope SWCD applied for a grant for 2020 for the Pope-Swift CWMA with the MDA Noxious Weed program. There is a cost-share waitlist created for the 2020 season if funds become available again. If interested, landowners are encouraged to stop in before the spring to be added to the contact list.

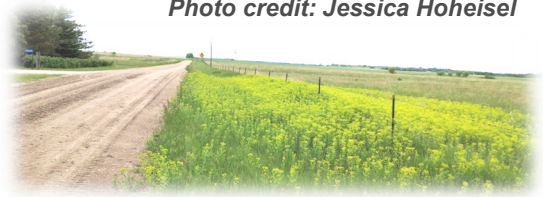


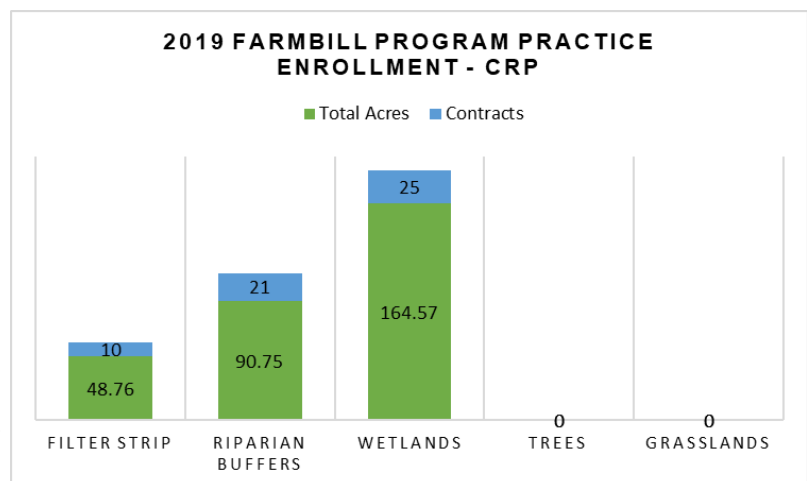
Photo credit: Jessica Hoheisel

Pictured Above: Leafy Spurge

CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM UPDATES

In 2019, the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) was successful in enrolling new and re-enrolled land. Sign-Up 52 was the first CRP sign up under the 2018 Farm Bill and with that came some challenges including: reduced CRP practices, limited nationwide acres, and a shorter sign-up period. This sign up still followed 2014 Farm Bill policies as new 2018 Farm Bill policies had not been released. Sign-Up 52 also offered the option for a 1-year extension for contracts that were under 15 years. A total of 56 contracts that equaled 304.08 acres were able to be enrolled. The types of contracts that were able to enroll included: 10 filter strips (48.76 acres), 21 riparian buffers (90.75 acres), and 25 wetlands (164.57 acres). Sign-up 52 has been similar to previous sign-ups at end of Farm Bill 2014 where they are focused on water quality and therefore the program did not have tree and grassland practices available.

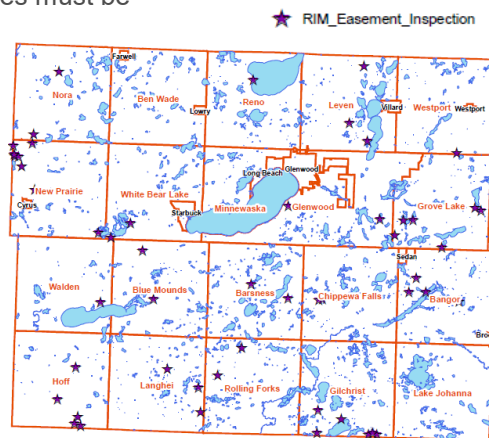
The new Continuous sign-Up 53 and General Sign-Up 54 has recently opened with new Farm Bill 2018 policy. The General Sign-Up 54 goes from Dec 9, 2018 through February 28, 2020. Pope SWCD will continue to work with landowners as these sign-ups continue in the new year. Thanks to everyone who continues to participate and show interest in the CRP program. If you have any questions about the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) please call 320-634-5327.



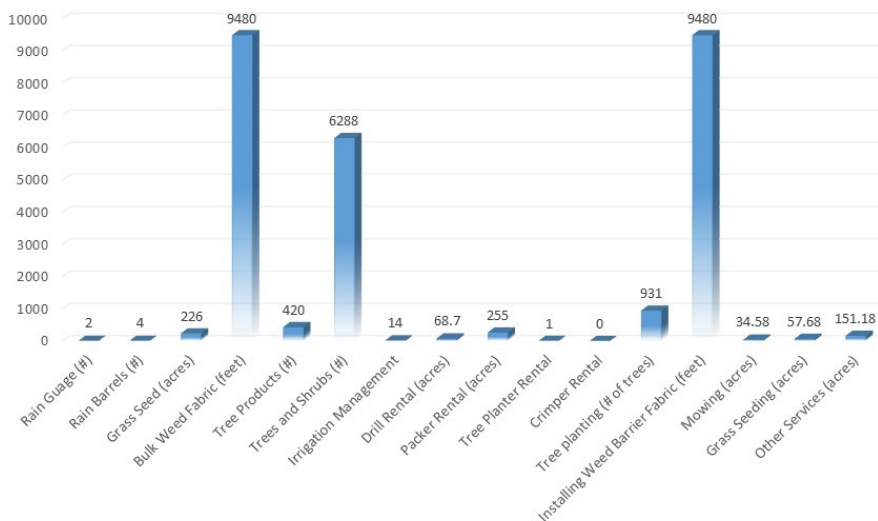
Reinvest In Minnesota Program

Annual inspections of 57 RIM Easements were conducted. Several easements needed updates to the conservation plan. If a landowner has a desire to change the vegetation or locations of practices, it is possible to do so with an accepted conservation plan amendment. The first step is to meet with the Pope SWCD staff and create a mutually agreed upon conservation plan for the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) to approve. After full approval the change may occur.

Food plots can be allowed but there is a size limit based on the easement acreage and location changes must be approved prior. A few landowners were interested in upgrading the vegetation to a more diverse species mix. Only some of these have begun the process to upgrade cover. This includes seeding additional flower species into the mix with grasses. Depending on the type of vegetation upgrade, timing of the year, and funding through the state, there may be financial assistance to a landowner who is interested in the development of enhancing their easement. Contact the SWCD for more information.



2019 SALES PROGRAM BY ITEM QUANTITY



Pope SWCD administers the Wetland Conservation Act. In 2019, 131 contacts were made including 17 official decisions. These decisions included: 21 boundary and type determinations, 4 potential violation investigations, and 2 no-loss applications.

Minnesota Ag Water Quality Certification Program

The Minnesota Ag Water Quality Certification Program is a program available through the Minnesota Department of Agriculture but assisted by Soil and Water Conservation Districts across the state. Each producer that signs up works one on one with a certification specialist and our Pope SWCD staff. Pope County has 22 operations certified currently with 12,768 acres.

In 2019, a total of 2,268 acres were certified including 3 farm operations. The program on a statewide level, has 820 producers and 558,354 certified acres.

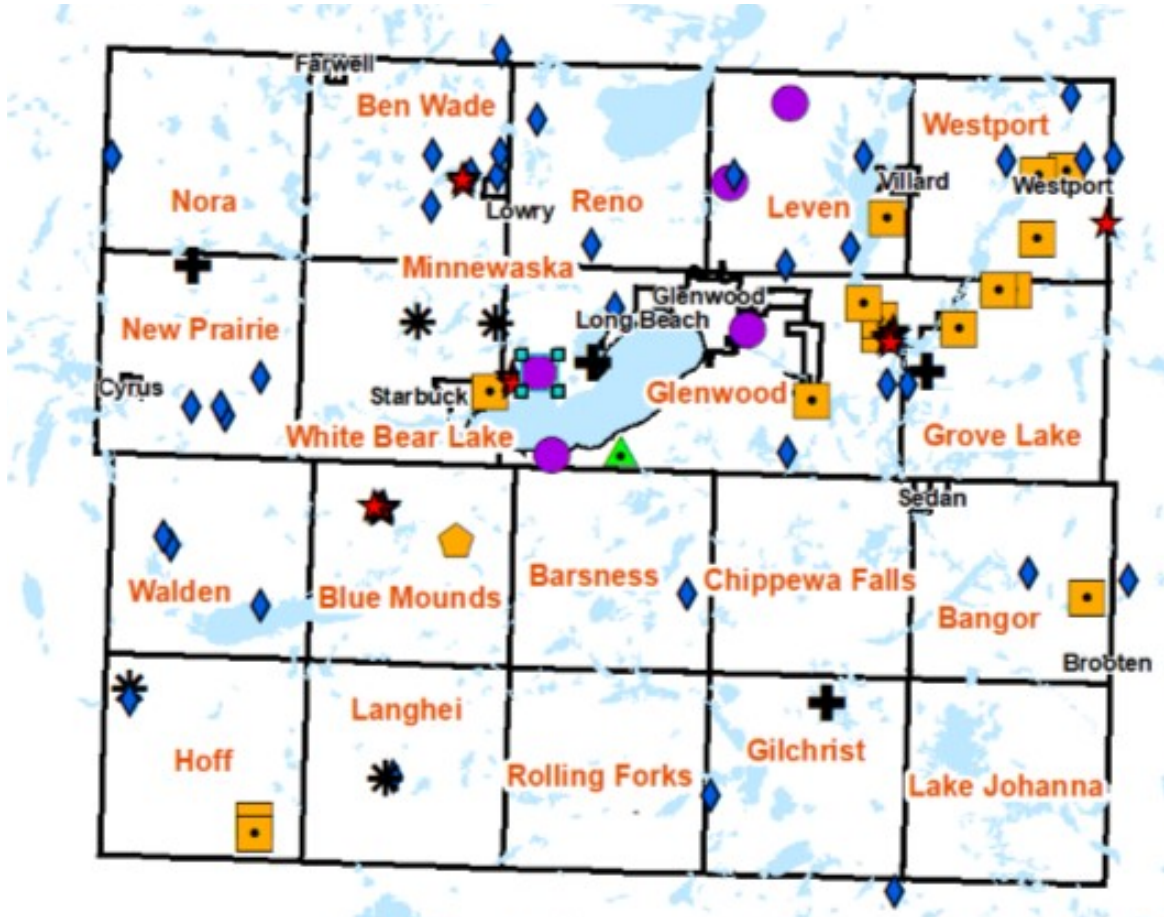
- 1,743 new practices
- 37,180 Tons of Sediment saved per year
- 45,941 Pounds of Phosphorus saved per year

We are taking applications for the program Call 320-634-5327 to get started.



2019 Projects Completed

Pope SWCD/NRCS continues to work on erosion, feedlot updates, grazing, and other engineered practices. The workload remains high and state project funds are potentially available in the Lake Emily and City of Glenwood project areas. In addition, Pope SWCD coordinates with watershed partners on other special project funds to assist landowners. The NRCS continues to administer federal programs for project implementation. The Pope SWCD has also completed the work on the City of Glenwood which includes P8 and SWMMM models. All landowners are encouraged to stop in to visit with staff about funding options.



Other Activities include:

Observation Well Monitoring	25 Wells
Precipitation Monitoring	15 Count
Rosholt Farm Research Facility	40 Acres
Grazing Projects	15 Count
Cover Crops	7 Count
Wetland Restoration	2 Count
Conservation Stewardship Program	32 Count

Map Legend	Quantity	Symbol
Structures	24 Count	★
Well Sealing	5 Wells Sealed	●
Grass/Drill/Packer/Buffers	35 Sites	◆
Mowing	4 Sites	✚
Tree Plantings	4 Sites	✱
Irrigation Management Service	15 pivots	■
Grassed Waterway	1 Site	⬠
Grade Stabilization Structure	1 Site	▲

Financial Information

The Pope SWCD is not a taxing authority and depends on funding support from the County and other partners to leverage technical assistance and cost share dollars. The 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. The Pope SWCD leverage \$33 of local, state, and federal funding per county \$1 provided in 2019.

The Pope SWCD has increased funding and research at the Rosholt Research Farm in 2019 and has 5 separate research trials.

This financial information is unaudited. The Pope SWCD annually is required to complete an audit. The audited financial statements for 2019 will be made available once the audit is complete.

Draft

Profit & Loss Statement 2019

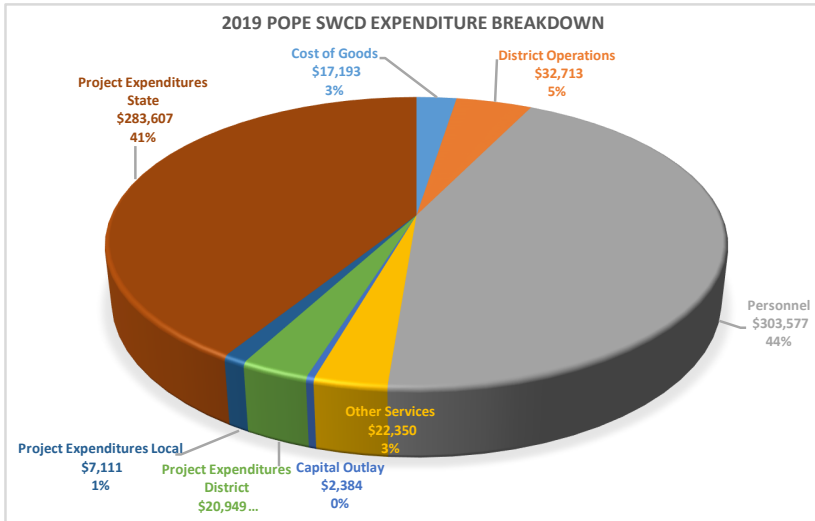
Revenue

County	\$	104,689
Local	\$	15,627
State	\$	560,945
Charges for Services	\$	38,293
Other	\$	8,466
Total	\$	728,020

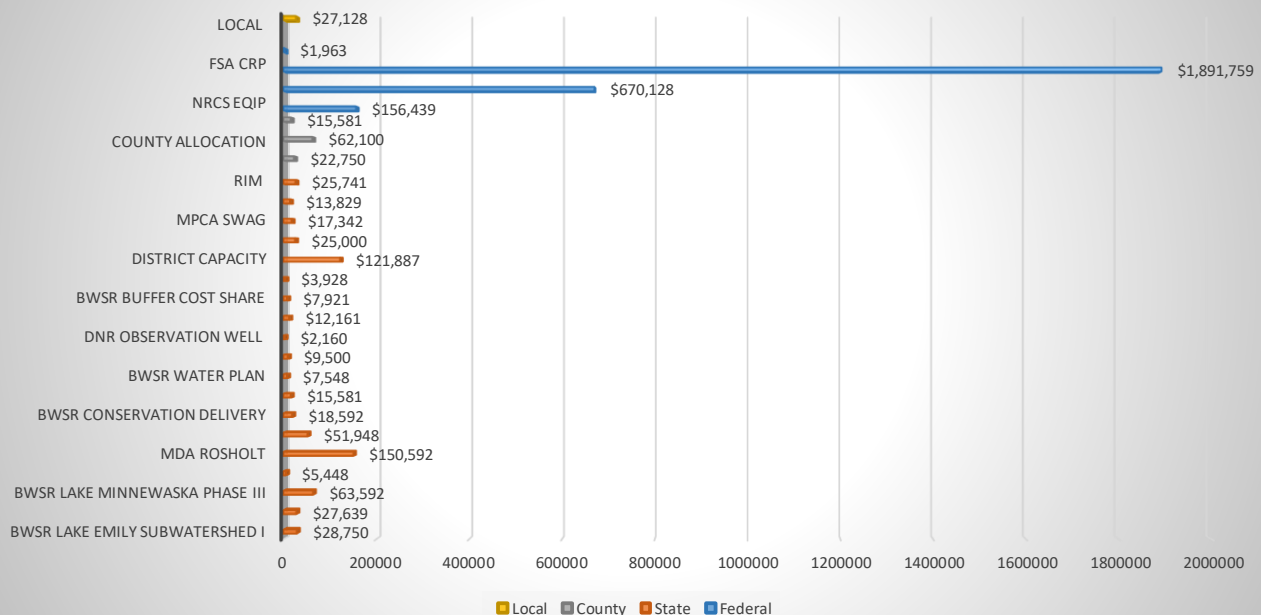
Expenditures

Cost of Goods	\$	17,193
District Operations	\$	32,713
Personnel	\$	303,577
Other Services	\$	22,350
Capital Outlay	\$	2,384
Project Expenditures	\$	20,949
Project Expenditures	\$	7,111
Project Expenditures	\$	283,607
Total	\$	689,884

Excess Revenue Over \$ 38,137



2019 State/County/Local SWCD Fund Sources



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.

February 18	Board Meeting
March 17	Board Meeting
April 21	Board Meeting
May 19	Board Meeting



2020 SWCD BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Keith Nygaard, Tom Talle, Randy Pederson, D. Gary Reents,
Randy Mitteness



SWCD STAFF

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