

Excess Nutrients - Adm.

2022: Administrative work continued as described above in the description. Efficiencies are constantly being implemented to aid field staff in spending more time meeting with landowners, providing conservation technical assistance.

Training time was spent by our Administrative Assistant at BWSR Academy learning more on pay equity and separation of duties in fiscal management. She also attended a two-day administrative training session. Very specific to her position she learned more on records retention, updates to the grant's manual and more tips on social media use.

Outreach Activities: She also led in hosting an open house at our office for private well nitrate testing. Thirty wells were tested with only one testing over 5 and one testing over 10 ppm, the safe standard. She has also been a great asset in our Snake River Watershed planning outreach, aiding in this outreach prep. work. She is our main website and Facebook updater, helping to get the word out on our great SWCD activities.

Riparian Zone Management – Technician

During 2022 our Conservation Technician left us in January and a new technician started in June. This position predominantly works on providing technical assistance to landowners throughout Kanabec County. Site visits have been conducted on a variety of land uses over multiple concerns from shoreland erosion to livestock prescribed grazing component practices. Design work was completed on a shoreland restoration project on Fish Lake but very high bids came in for the project. Additional grant funds were not warranted for allocation to the project, so this project is at a standstill. A prescribed grazing pipeline was designed for installation in 2023. A different, previously designed livestock prescribed grazing pipeline was installed (other funding source) on the north side of Quamba Lake. A new cover crop project was developed, planned, seeding plan generated, contracted and ready for fall 2022 installation until the weather set this back till 2023. Project development continued on a livestock access lane for an operation which is working on prescribed grazing throughout their operation. This is planned for installation in 2023, as the landowners had other unexpected costs in 2022. An unused private well was sealed without funding assistance.

Project development continues on the most extreme shoreland erosion site on Fish Lake. The stake holders here include Kanabec County and the land owner and the MN Dept. of Transportation (DOT). We continue to have local in-kind funds dedicated to this project. Currently the project is in the hands of the local highway dept. and they are trying to work with MN DOT to get the project listed on their maintenance projects.

Currently we are seeking funds and conducting research for the purchase of a no-till drill for rent to help increase the amount of land planted using no-till for cash grain, pasture, hay land or conservation cover plantings.

Administrative time was spent on time tracking, board preparation, partner, staff and board meeting attendance and partnering with NRCS.

Much time was spent on training as our new technician is coming to us with an ag. teaching background. Conservation training is needed to bring her up to speed. She has really hit the ground running in attending some of the following trainings: a week-long conservation technical training on conservation planning and practices, various conservation webinars, plant materials, seeding plans and a soil health tour in North Dakota to get her up-to speed in understanding first hand the importance of soil health practices. At BWSR Academy she learned a bit more on conservation economics, soils, shoreland restoration, ArcGIS and how to sell conservation, making connections with landowners.

Outreach time was spent in preparing for and communicating our SWCD activities at our local county fair. All staff aided in the outreach of our newly funded Reinvest in MN conservation easement sign-up. Incredible interest has been shown for enrolling land into easements. We have already created a back-log for seeking the next round of funding.

Soil Erosion - District Mgr. / Community Projects

2022: Outreach time was spent on pursuing an internal load treatment on Ann Lake. This would help address the high phosphorus release from the lake bottom sediment during times of low oxygen levels. This entailed a stake holders meeting in March and a letter to state agency personnel to help address a few remaining questions on how we may be able to complete a treatment. A full treatment on Ann Lake could bring the lake within meeting water quality standards. Other outreach time was spent in continuing to communicate our Snake River Watershed planning efforts to the public and partners and helping in our nitrate well testing open house and at our county fair.

We were able to apply for and receive a Lawns to Legumes Demonstration Neighborhood grant. So, this will be a focus now prior to our Snake River Watershed plan implementation funding arriving.

Training time was spent on continued education in agriculture while maintaining her Certified Crop Advisor Status. This knowledge comes in handy in relating to and selling conservation to farmers. At BWSR Academy she learned about skills in selling conservation, watershed implementation, diversity and inclusion and unique big projects and how to manage them. Time was also spent in training of our new technician in our various SWCD activities and conservation measures.