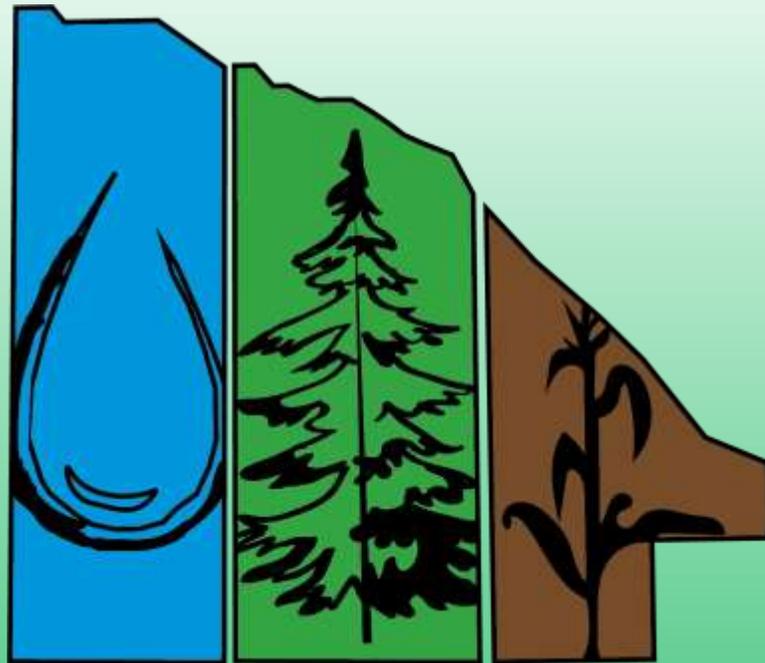


# 2019

# Annual Report



Lac qui Parle  
Soil and Water Conservation District



# 2019 Annual Report

## Lac qui Parle Soil and Water Conservation District

### Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide conservation opportunities for landowners of Lac qui Parle County through creative stewardship, protection programs and utilization of the resources to foster soil and water quality improvement in the community.

### Introduction

The Lac qui Parle Soil Conservation District received its charter from the State of Minnesota April 19, 1950. At that time it was made up of 4 Townships in the southeastern part of the County and shared an office and a U.S.D.A. employee (District Conservationist) with the Yellow Medicine Soil Conservation District in Clarkfield. Both Districts grew to include all Townships and Cities within their respective Counties and the office split, the Yellow Medicine District remaining in Clarkfield and the Lac qui Parle District opening in Madison with a U.S.D.A. District Conservationist in each office.

Agency names change, personnel changes and programs change but the underlying purpose of helping landowners manage private land and helping local units of government manage public lands by planning and installing practices to protect natural resources continues. Staff provides education, technical assistance and channels financial assistance to individuals, the County, cities and townships.

The SWCD continues to cooperate with the United State Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service under a Memorandum of Understanding whereby full-time technical assistance and administration is furnished to the SWCD by the NRCS Field Staff in Madison and additional staff located in the area and state offices. The Lac qui Parle SWCD is co-located in the USDA Ag Service Center with the NRCS and Farm Service Agency at 122 8th Ave South, Suite 1, Madison, Minnesota.

## SWCD Board and Staff

### District Supervisors

Michael Croatt, Chair

*Lake Shore, Madison, Hantho, and Cerro Gordo*

Rosemary Weber, Vice-Chair

*Augusta, Mehurin, Manfred, Garfield, and Freeland*

Ed Radermacher, Treasurer

*Yellow Bank, Agassiz, Walter, Perry, and Arena*

Daryl Schutte, Secretary

*Hamlin, Riverside, Providence, and Maxwell*

Amy Bacigalupo, PR&I

*Lac qui Parle, Baxter, Ten Mile Lake, and Camp Release*



### District Staff

Chessa Frahm, District Manger

Sheri Laechelt, Program Assistant

Rhyan Schicker, Resource Specialist

Quintin Peterson, Resource Specialist

## Tree Program



shrubs and trees, and laid 15,133 feet or 2.9 miles of conservation fabric.

The District promotes planting and establishing pockets of native woody species throughout the county with the general purpose of helping to establish cover, food, and habitat for indigenous and migrating wildlife. Plantings can take many forms such as, shelterbelts, windbreaks, living snow fences, and assist with energy use reductions and aesthetics throughout the county. In 2019, the SWCD assisted 47 landowners, helping them select proper species based on their soil types, prevailing winds, shade tolerance, and conservation goals. The district's conservation efforts assisted with the installation of 9 new plantings, provided landowners with 3289

## Grass Program



The Lac qui Parle SWCD sold and planted native grass seed for use in buffers, CRP, easements, and urban areas. This program helps to promote conservation and the value of native grasses for reduced soil loss and improved water quality as well as benefiting native pollinators and wildlife. In 2019, the SWCD sold over 2,800 lbs of seed, planted 550 acres of native grasses, and directly assisted 68 landowners with establishment.

## State Cost-Share



State cost-share is provided to landowners in Lac qui Parle County to implement structural and non-structural erosion control and nutrient management practices across the county. In 2019, the SWCD assisted landowners with the installation of water and sediment controls basins and grade stabilization structures.

## Education and Outreach



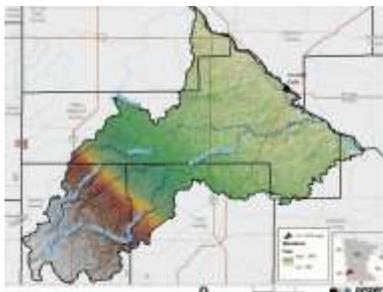
Each year the SWCD participates in many educational events. This year the SWCD presented about prairie grasses, aquatic invasive species, wetlands, water quality, and shoreland management to audiences ranging from 2nd grade to adults. The biggest event of the year is the annual South-west Minnesota Environmental Fair where approximately 1,800 students from area schools attended the two-day event to learn about a wide range of conservation topics. This year, the event was moved to Shetek Environmental Learning Center near Slayton. A new website was created for the event. <https://environmentalfair.org/>

## Buffers



The SWCD continues to provide planning and planting assistance to landowners to meet compliance standards for the Minnesota Buffer Law. The SWCD planted buffers for approximately 22 landowners and gave guidance to over 100 landowners while installing around 110 acres of vegetated buffers in 2019. The SWCD is working closely with Lac qui Parle County and the Lac qui Parle Yellow Bank Watershed District and to ensure landowners are in compliance with the Minnesota Buffer Law.

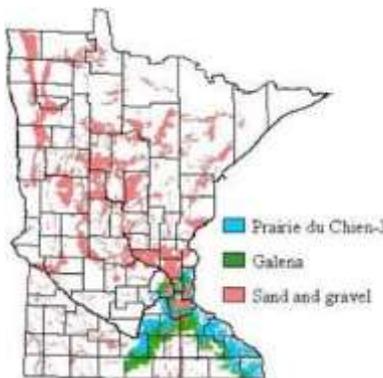
## [Water Planning](#)



Lac qui Parle County continues to work to meet the goals of the Comprehensive Local Water Management Plan along with the Yellow Medicine River One Watershed, One Plan Goals. In 2019, the SWCD sealed 21 wells helping to protect our groundwater resources. The SWCD hosted a nitrate testing clinic for landowners in Lac qui Parle County with private well systems during the Lac qui Parle County Fair. 12 landowners took advantage of the free testing opportunity.

The SWCD participates in the Yellow Medicine One Watershed, One Plan technical and policy committees. SWCD technical staff provide input on priorities and practices to improve the water quality of the Yellow Medicine River. The watershed of Lac qui Parle Judicial Ditch 26 is included in this watershed plan.

## [Monitoring Programs](#)



The SWCD participates in the DNR well observation network. Staff members monitor nine wells located throughout Lac qui Parle County. Information gathered is provided to DNR to help make better informed decisions about projects impacting groundwater. The SWCD also supports volunteers in the rain gauge monitoring network. For more information about becoming a rain gauge monitor, contact Sheri at the SWCD office.

## [Aquatic Invasive Species](#)



Lac qui Parle SWCD partners with Yellow Medicine and Big stone counties AIS Prevention to carry out educational events, monitoring and prevention awareness to keep AIS out of our local waterways. This year staff was able to create and run an aquatic robotics program created by UMN Extension and 4-H where students build robots and use them in our waters to locate native and invasive species. Between winter and summer months staff presented at 12 events, including ice fishing tournaments, the county fair, and 3 in school presentations ,reaching roughly 600 children and 300 adults.

## [AgBMP Loan Program](#)



The AgBMP Program provides low-interest loans to farmers and rural landowners for the purpose of water quality improvement projects. Eligible projects may include septic system upgrades, conservation farm equipment, manure handling equipment, and engineered water quality improvement practices. The SWCD administers the program locally in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture and local lenders. In 2019, the SWCD authorized more than \$568,000 in loan funds.

# 2019 Outstanding Conservationist



Luke and Ali Peterson of Dawson were named the 2019 Outstanding Conservationist. Luke and Ali operate a 180 acre organic farm raising einkorn, emmer, flax, oats, wheat, corn and soybeans. The Petersons have farmed for 8 years. Luke and Ali have worked with the SWCD to plant and establish hazelnuts, cover crops and pollinator habitat. The Petersons understand the value of conservation for their farm, family, and community. When asked why they care about conservation Luke says “its for the kids and the future“. Thank you Luke and Ali for your efforts!



## Partner Agency Boards and Staff

### Natural Resources Conservation Service

Burton Hendrickson, District Conservationist

### Pheasants Forever

Sara Reagan, Farm Bill Biologist

### Lac qui Parle—Yellow Bank Watershed District

Darrel Ellefson, Chair  
David Craigmile, Secretary  
David Ludvigson, Treasurer  
Trudy Hastad, Administrator  
Mitch Endersen, Watershed Coordinator  
Jared Roiland, Ditch Inspector

### Upper Minnesota River Watershed District

Amber Doschadis, Coordinator

### Lac qui Parle County

DeRon Brehmer, Commissioner  
Todd Patzer, Commissioner  
Ben Bothun, Commissioner  
John Maatz, Commissioner  
Roy Marihart, Commissioner



Lac qui Parle  
Soil and Water  
Conservation District