



# LOWER MINNESOTA RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT

## Executive Summary for Action

Lower Minnesota River Watershed District Board of Managers Meeting  
Wednesday, March 16, 2022

### **Agenda Item**

#### **Item 4. G. – Receive and file Annual Report from the Scott County Water Education Partnership**

### **Prepared By**

Linda Loomis, Administrator

### **Summary.**

As part of the agreement between the Scott Soil and Water Conservation District, the LMRWD is a partner to the Scott County Water Education Program or SCWEP. The 2021 Annual Report from the partnership is attached for the Board's information.

If Managers have any questions, please let me know.

### **Attachments**

Scott Clean Water Education Program 2021 Annual Report

### **Recommended Action**

Motion to receive and file the Scott Clean Water Education Program 2021 Annual Report

# Scott Clean Water Education Program 2021 Annual Report



Prepared By:

Shelby Roberts, SCWEP Coordinator  
Scott Soil and Water Conservation District

## Background

The Scott Clean Water Education Program (SCWEP) started in 2010 to educate Scott County residents consistently and effectively on the topic of clean water. The program’s goal is to make clean water choices second nature for all who live and work in Scott County. SCWEP has incorporated the goal into marketing materials using the theme of “Clean Water Starts with Me!”

## 2021 Highlights

### Webinars

In 2021, SCWEP offered a raingarden, native prairie, shoreline, and winter maintenance webinar on the online Zoom platform. This marked the second year SCWEP offered an online education platform. The platform allowed SCWEP to deliver educational tools to Scott County citizens safely and effectively.

The workshops were promoted through social media, online blogs, and submissions to local papers and community calendars. Registration for the workshops was made simple by linking an on-line registration tool, Eventbrite.com, with the SCWEP webinar account.



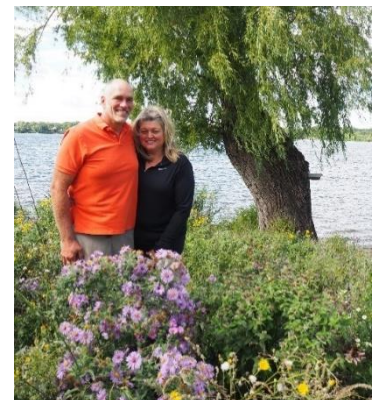
2021 Workshop attendance:

- 28 participants at the Raingarden
- 20 participants at the Native Prairie webinar
- 12 participants at the Shoreline webinar
- 5 participants at the Winter Salt Reduction webinar

### Conservation Leaders Program

Every year conservation leaders are recognized in Scott County to illustrate local ways of changing behavior in conservation.

Jerry and Susan Mealman were chosen for the 2021 Conservation Leaders of the Year for their accomplishments in lakeshore stabilization. In 2018 they installed a native buffer across 133’ of their Spring Lake shoreline and planted a 150sq. ft. raingarden to prevent unfiltered runoff into the lake. This year Mealmans joined their neighbors and added 800 sq ft of pollinator habitat for the Rusty Patched Bumblebee through the Lawns to Legumes Demonstration Neighborhood program.



The Mealmans are an excellent example of what urban residents can do to protect the environment.

## Conservation in the Classroom



SCWEP holds youth education as a high priority, and hosts Conservation in the Classroom (CIC) to enable conservation lesson delivery to any 5-8 grade Scott County school at any time of the year. The five CIC lessons offered focus on forestry, wildlife, soil health, the water cycle, and conservation. The lessons are taught by staff from the Scott SWCD and can be delivered in classrooms or outside on school grounds.

In May of 2021, the Scott SWCD partnered with the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community (SMCS) and Raven Stream Elementary to host forestry lessons for 330 elementary students. The lesson included a webinar on Minnesota forestry and concluded with a tree planting demonstration with the students. The dirt used for planting was donated from the SMSC organics recycling facility.

## Lawns to Legumes

The Scott SWCD was awarded a Lawns to Legumes grant in early 2020. With the grant, a new branch of the natural landscaping program was launched. Lawns to Legumes brings a new meaning to the idea of partnering in conservation. The program involves gathering neighbors in close proximity of each other to work together and create unique pollinator habitat called a “Demonstration Neighborhood”.

The program had overwhelming success. In 2021, nine neighbors banded together and installed fourteen native plantings including lakeshore buffers, pollinating lawns, tree & shrub plantings, and pocket plantings. The plantings total just over 7500 sq. ft. of new native habitat that together create an even greater nesting area for Minnesota’s state bee: the Rusty Patched Bumblebee.



## Scott WMO/SWCD Conservation Tour



Every year, the Scott SWCD and the Scott Watershed Management Organization (SWMO) host a fall conservation tour highlighting important and relevant projects and conservation topics. This year the tour focused on groundwater sustainability, with an emphasis on groundwater quality and quantity.

22 people attended the tour, including local representatives and senators, members of the Scott County Watershed Planning Commission, SWCD Supervisors, and the 2021 Conservation Leaders.

Stops included a tour of the New Prague Wells and Filtration Plant, a demonstration of a MNDNR groundwater observation well reading, and presentations on groundwater status and outlooks. Speakers at each stop included Frank Bisek, Travis Scheffler, Jon Utecht, Jesse Krzenski, Shelby Roberts, and Meghan Darley

This annual event allows county officials to view conservation projects throughout Scott County first-hand and see how dollars are being spent. It is also a chance to give them a better understanding of the importance of conservation, showing them that, over time, real changes are being made in the county.

## Outdoor Education Days

2021 hosted the 35<sup>th</sup> annual Outdoor Education Days. This year 1,145 third through sixth graders from 15 schools—including schools from Belle Plaine, New Prague, Shakopee, Savage, and Jordan—were part of the fall outing. The weather cooperated extremely well with the event, and no rain days were needed this year.

The six OED stations focused on forestry, wildlife, the water cycle, pond macro-invertebrates, conservation, and agriculture. The Scott SWCD premiered a new station at the 2021 event: Agriculture. The station was a great success, with high ratings from presenters and teachers. The stations were taught by staff from the Scott SWCD, Prior Lake-Spring Lake Watershed District, and Three Rivers Park District. At the end of each day, CLIMB Theatre put on a production about recycling and composting.



The Scott SWCD received \$1,000 from MVEC Operation Roundup Grant for waters for students and lunches for presenters. The Scott SWCD provided bussing grants to classrooms at Eagle View Elementary and Oak Crest Elementary. Outdoor Education Day remains the main activity that SCWEP utilizes to directly reach Scott County youth.

## News Releases

SCWEP continues to promote information, activities, and relevant news through various print publications available to Scott County citizens. This year SCWEP published 17 water-related articles to the county-wide Scott County SCENE newspaper. In addition, events, informational articles, and workshops continued to be promoted on partner's social media platforms, websites, and other local papers including those a part of SWNewsmedia.

## Partners

Members of the SCWEP partnership believe more can be accomplished by working together toward our common goal. By collaborating, we eliminate overlapping programs, prevent inconsistent and duplicative messaging, and achieve similar outcomes at lower costs. In 2021, SCWEP partners included:

- Scott County
- Scott Watershed Management Organization
- Scott Soil and Water Conservation District
- Prior Lake-Spring Lake Watershed District
- Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization
- Lower Minnesota River Watershed District
- Spring Lake Township
- Credit River Township
- Jackson Township
- Louisville Township

SCWEP also collaborates with other agencies, organizations and clubs implementing outreach programs with similar goals and objectives in Scott County. This collaboration achieves an even greater level of consistency, reach and cost effectiveness. In 2021, these agencies included:

- Scott County Library System
- Prior Lake Association
- Cedar Lake Improvement District
- O’Dowd Lake Association
- Spring Lake Association
- Scott County School System
- Three Rivers Park District
- Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community

# Accomplishments

Every year, SCWEP’s work plan lists initiatives and activities that the partnership aims to complete within the calendar year. The annual report is a chance to reflect on what was accomplished based off the initial planned trajectory. Individual items may shift along the way, but the message of “clean water starts with me” always remains at the heart of everything SCWEP accomplished.

In 2021, SCWEP saw a great deal of success amid the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of the proposed activities were accomplished and involved both in-person and virtual audiences across all three of SCWEP’s targeted groups. Tabling events resumed in the fall and provided a great outlet for outreach.

The 2021 SCWEP Work Plan targeted and customized its “Clean Water Starts with Me!” campaign to three general audiences:

1. Agriculture/Rural Landowners
2. Urban and Lakeshore Residents
3. Community Groups like Schools and Government.

Appendix 1 details the assembly of ongoing activities by targeted audiences SCWEP completed in 2021.

Appendix 2 details the assembly of events by targeted audiences SCWEP participated in during 2021.

## Unimplemented planned events

Occasions happen where a planned activity is unable to be executed the year it was planned. In 2021, the SCWEP partnership worked within community gathering restrictions surrounding the COVID-19 Pandemic. As a result, planned tabling events at Celebrate Jordan, Garden Fever, and Prior Lake Wellness Expo were unable to take place. This led to a decrease in outreach materials like brochures, flyers, and Smart Salting cups.

The planned video demonstrating the steps for raingarden construction has been partially filmed, but not completed.

## MS4 Activity

The 2021 Work Plan was designed to ensure member compliance with the educational requirements of their respective Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plans. There are six minimum control measures (MCMs) defined in the MS4 Permit, including:

1. Public Education and Outreach
2. Public Participation and Involvement
3. Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination
4. Construction Site Storm Water Runoff Control
5. Post Construction Storm Water Management in New and Redevelopment
6. Pollution Prevention/Good Housekeeping for Municipal Operations

Many SCWEP activities helped partners comply with the MCM1 requirements. Data used for MS4 reporting can be found in the appendix.

# Budget

## What was budgeted

Funding Agency	General Program Staff/Supplies	Chloride & Bacteria Grant Staff Time (WBIF FY19)*	Chloride & Bacteria Grant Materials (WBIF FY19)*	K5-8 Education Enhancements (WBIF FY21)	Total
SWMO	\$42,820	\$20,000	\$5,000	\$40,000	\$107,820
PLSLWD	\$3,500	-	-	-	\$3,500
LMRWD	\$1,300	-	-	-	\$1,300
VRWJPO	\$1,300	-	-	-	\$1,300
SL TWP	\$2,000	-	-	-	\$2,000
MVEC	\$1,000	-	-	-	\$1,000
<b>Grand Total:</b>					<b>\$115,920</b>

\*SWMO is the grantee for these initiatives on behalf of the Minnesota River South WBF Partnership

## What was spent

Funding Agency	General Program Staff/Supplies	Chloride & Bacteria Grant Staff Time (WBIF FY19)	Chloride & Bacteria Grant Materials (WBIF FY19)	K5-8 Education Enhancements (WBIF FY21)	Total
SWMO	\$42,820	\$12,432.98	\$2,175.59	\$3,819.00	\$61,247.57
PLSLWD	\$3,055	-	-	-	\$3,055
LMRWD	\$1,581	-	-	-	\$1,581
VRWJPO	\$1,300	-	-	-	\$1,300
SL TWP	\$2,000	-	-	-	\$2,000
MVEC	\$1,000	-	-	-	\$1,000
<b>Grand Total:</b>					<b>\$70,183.57</b>



## Outcomes, Evaluation and Reporting

The SCWEP goal – to make clean water choices second nature for all who live and work in Scott County – was reviewed throughout the year. Outcomes were evaluated primarily by number of participants and following-up with program participants. We also tracked follow-up requests for additional information and technical assistance in SWIMS database.

A large part of the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Program (SWPPP) requires identification and documentation of best management practices that will be undertaken to reduce the discharge of pollutants from the MS4 to the maximum extent practicable. A few of the metrics used to measure the impact of marketing strategies include:

- Number of participants at specific SCWEP hosted events or workshops
- Number of direct mailings, brochures and flyers distributed
- Number of submitted press releases articles
- Number of requests for technical assistance
- Number of best management practices completed through a partner organization

Staff recorded and quantified the above metrics to assess the success or benefit of each marketing strategy. Additionally, staff provided evaluations after educational workshops and outreach events (when applicable) to gauge how well-presented topics were understood, how much project excitement was felt, and if adjustments to curriculum were recommended. Once results were received, staff used feedback from the surveys to modify content and presentations as needed.

Evaluation was and continues to be an important component in understanding the effectiveness of reaching our goal of the “Clean Water Starts with Me!” campaign.