



# Greater Blue Earth River Basin Alliance

**DATE:** MAY 8, 2020  
**TO:** GBERBA MEMBERS  
**FROM:** KAY GROSS and DAVID BUCKLIN, GBERBA COORDINATORS  
**SUBJECT:** COORDINATOR REPORT GBERBA POLICY MEETING

## **MN Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program**

Update on progress made in areas 5 and 6 – See Certification Specialist Reports. Over 500,000 acres certified! GBERBA has the Area 5 and 6 MAWQCP administrative contract approved through 2021. The Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program is launching three new endorsements in addition to 10-year certification a farmer or landowner receives in the program. The endorsements are for soil health, integrated pest management, and wildlife.

## **2017 MPCA 319 Grant - Cover Crops and Alternative Tile Intakes**

An Implementation Policy Paper for the grant titled "Greater Blue Earth River Basin TMDL Implementation" has been developed and reviewed at the Technical meeting. This guidance document will be posted on the GBERBA website. Cover crops: \$50.00 dollars per acre maximum, 50% cost share maximum (\$25.00 ac.), 80-acre size maximum per owner. Prioritization required. Alternative intakes: Rock and pattern tile. \$500.00 maximum and 50% cost share. These are federal dollars and require state or local match. Perforated risers, broom and other water quality intakes: \$200.00 maximum and 50% cost share. These are federal dollars and require state or local match. The grant amendment has been completed and all remaining cost share for projects including Alternative intakes, Side inlets, and Cover crops will be at 50% cost share. **Grant End Date 8-31-2020**  
**For 2020 the cover crop acre limits are removed. At this point the 50% cost share rate will continue. GBERBA staff will request an extension of this grant due to 2019 weather conditions and the Covid-19 outbreak.**

## **2017 CWF Grant- Multipurpose Drainage Management**

Multipurpose Drainage Management - \$301,200: Projects for this Drainage Grant will need to be located in public ditch sheds. **GBERBA member entire counties are eligible.** Priority parameters are developed to identify the eligible ditches. A guidance policy sheet is online. A grant Work Plan Revision has been approved by the BWSR to allow for CAP 130 Drainage Water Management plans and for Structures for Water Control. Work plan revisions and updates have been completed and are being reviewed by Board Conservationist. **Grant Amendment Agreement has been approved to extend the expiration date to 12-31-2020.**

## **One Watershed One Plan Planning Grants, Watonwan Watershed**

The Watonwan 1W1P Project is in full swing completing the plan language and reviewing plan sections. The Watonwan Policy Committee voted to further research GBERBA as the fiscal and reporting agent for the 1W1P Watonwan. The GBERBA Policy board has agreed to revise the Joint Powers Agreement to allow inclusion of 1W1P duties. Watonwan Watershed Policy Committee will be meeting on Wednesday, May 20 and will give their updates from each SWCD and County Board with the final decision on fiscal agent that day.

## **Minnesota Conservation Corps Position**

**The Minnesota/Iowa Conservation Corps program has decided to suspend AmeriCorps member field operations in Minnesota beginning on Friday, March 27 and effective through at least Monday, May 4.**



# Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program

South Central MAWQCP Certification Specialist  
Serving the Counties of: Blue Earth, Brown, Faribault, LeSueur, Martin, McLeod, Nicollet, Renville, Sibley, Waseca, Watonwan



Greater Blue Earth River Basin Alliance



Herman Bartsch  
AREA 6 MAWQCP CERTIFICATION SPECIALIST  
April 17th, 2020

**Workload:**

- Working with producers and SWCDs to complete assessments and certifications
- Assisting producers with MDA Grant Applications
- Cover Crop Plans
- Practice Plans
- Program Promotion
- Program Reviews
- Endorsements
- Field Verifications

AREA 6	Applications	Assessments	Certifications
Blue Earth SWCD	13	12	7
Brown SWCD	10	6	3
Faribault SWCD	28	16	13
LeSueur SWCD	13	8	4
Martin SWCD	10	6	5
McLeod SWCD	9	7	4
Nicollet SWCD	1	1	1
Renville SWCD	15	9	8
Sibley SWCD	3	3	3
Waseca SWCD	11	11	5
Watonwan SWCD	12	8	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>59</b>

Certified producers will be given "high priority" for Conservation Stewardship Program funding through NRCS.

Producers continue to use the MDA \$5,000 grant to install conservation practices that will address water quality concerns and help them gain certification.

MAWQCP is beginning to offer **three new endorsements** in addition to certification. Endorsements will recognize producers who are going above and beyond in the areas of **soil health, integrated pest management, and wildlife.**

The **Regional Conservation Partnership Program** with NRCS has been renewed for another **five years and nine million dollars.** This program offers a pot of EQIP money that producers can use to install conservation practices to help them become certified. Only certified producers, or those seeking certification have access to these funds.

MAWQCP Numbers as of 4-13-20

- 860 producers certified
- 587,812 acres certified
- 1,809 new practices installed or planned to be installed
- Sediment delivery to surface waters reduced by 37,595 tons per year
- Soil loss reduced by 105,053 tons per year
- Phosphorus loss reduced by 46,535 lbs. of P per year
- 10 Soil Health Endorsements
- 12 IPM Endorsements
- 8 Wildlife Endorsements

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# Greater Blue Earth River Basin

April 29, 2020



DANIELLE EVERS

AREA 5 MAWQCP CERTIFICATION SPECIALIST

Serving the Counties of: Cottonwood, Jackson, Lac Qui Parle, Lincoln, Lyon, Murray, Nobles, Pipestone, Redwood, Rock, & Yellow Medicine

**Projects and Workload:**

- Continuing to “meet” with producers for assessments, mapping, & uploading documents for state verification
- Assisting producers in submitting MAWQCP Cost-Share Grant Applications
- Working on program promotion, and story map participation
- Contacting producers about endorsements
- Working to line up phone assessments and program reviews.
- Doing field reviews

**Events:**

- March 30<sup>th</sup> – Zoom MN Ag Water Quality ACS Meeting
- ???

**Program Updates and Information:**

- Endorsements for Integrated Pest Management (IPM), Wildlife Habitat, & Soil Health available for certified producers.
  - Endorsement information now added to my Year to Date Numbers
- **WRE dollars available** for 30 year & permanent easements. Please contact me if you know of an interested producer.
- The MAWQCP RCPP EQIP has been renewed!!!
- Grant applications still available for up to **\$5,000 75%** cost-share through the MDA for producers
- MAWQCP has certified over **866 farms**, including over **592,018 acres** with **1,815 new BMP's**
- Estimated benefits include: **37,599 tons** of TSS reduced per year, **105,094 tons** soil reduced per year, **46,543 lbs** Phosphorous reduced per year, **37,687 CO<sub>2-e</sub> tons** per year
- **12** Soil Health Endorsements, **13** Integrated Pest Management Endorsements, **9** Wildlife Endorsements

### YEAR TO DATE NUMBERS

Area 5	Applications	Assessments Completed	Actively Pursuing Cert.	Certifications	Endorsements		
					IPM	Soil Health	Wildlife
Cottonwood	33	31	1	14	0	0	0
Jackson	33	27	1	17	2	2	0
Lac Qui Parle	6	6	0	4	0	0	0
Lincoln	20	17	0	6	1	0	1
Lyon	16	14	1	7	0	0	0
Murray	14	13	0	10	0	0	0
Nobles	14	14	0	10	0	0	0
Pipestone	42	38	2	18	0	0	0
Redwood	35	34	1	22	0	0	0
Rock	20	16	2	10	0	0	0
Yellow Med.	27	27	2	11	0	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>

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# Greater Blue Earth River Basin Alliance

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**DATE:** May 8, 2020

**NAME:** Josh Votruba  
Cottonwood SWCD Watershed Technician

**Topics:** Past Events, Upcoming Events, Working on

**Past Events:**

- Apr 10 – GBERBA Executive Meeting (WebEx)
- Apr 15 – Watonwan 1W1P Steering Team Meeting (WebEx)
- Apr 22 – GBERBA Technical Meeting (WebEx)
- Apr 22 – Watonwan 1W1P Steering Team Meeting (WebEx)
- Apr 29 – Watonwan 1W1P Steering Team Meeting (WebEx)

**Upcoming Events:**

- May 27 – GBERBA Technical Meeting (WebEx)

**Working on:**

- *Watonwan River One Watershed, One Plan:* Assisted the Watonwan 1W1P Steering Team with consolidating the Steering Team & Stage Agency comments for the draft of the Watonwan River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan. The Steering Team and Stage Agency representatives had the opportunity to review and comment on the first full draft of the plan. On the April 15, April 22, and April 29 Steering Team Meetings the Steering Team discussed changes needed to the draft plan and clarified comments made on the draft plan.
- *GBERBA Grant 37 Cover Crops:* Continue to work with landowners within Cottonwood County on the GBERBA cover crop cost-share. In addition, recently I have attended various cover crop meetings and have met with Cottonwood County landowners to discuss the possibility of starting a cover crop group in Cottonwood County.
- *MDM Grant 39:* Continue to assist GBERBA with MDM Grant Reporting.



## Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program

Agriculture and Water Outreach Corpsmember  
Conservation Corps of MN & IA  
Ashley Broussard



Greater Blue Earth River Basin Alliance



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April 16th 2020

### **Workload:**

- Assist Herman and Danielle with mapping assessed fields in the MAWQCP mapping tool and assessment tool
- Contact producers to get their stories added to the MAWQCP Story Map
- Level 1 certification reviews
- Online MAWQCP and agriculture related trainings

### **Projects and Events:**

- Working on MAWQCP stories and contacting newly certified producers
- Mapping and assessing new applicants for MAWQCP
- Level 1 Certification reviews

### **Upcoming Events:**

- Continue assisting Herman and Danielle with mapping assessed fields in the MAWQCP mapping tool and assessment tool
- Continue collecting MAWQCP stories and contacting producers
- Working with Herman to do field verifications while maintaining social distancing

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