

BWSR Update (July 9, 2020)

Legislative Update – Special Session (June 12-June 19)

Made little progress on key legislative issues; did not reach agreement on police reform, supplemental budgets, or COVID19 local funding distribution

- **Bonding Bill**
 - No legislative action taken
 - Contains:
 - MN CREP (funding)
 - Local Roads Wetlands Replacement Program (cash and bonding)
- **Environmental and Natural Resources Omnibus Bill**
 - No legislative action taken
 - Contains
 - Creating a soil and water fund
 - SWCD supervisor per diem increase
 - Delaying default approvals for local land use authorities (15.99)
 - Environmental and Natural Resources Trust Fund appropriations
 - MN CREP-specific outreach (grant) extension
- **Small Environmental Bill**
 - Passed and signed into law by Governor
 - Contains
 - 1-year extension (to June 30,2021) to expiring Environmental and Natural Resources Trust Fund projects
 - BWSR has submitted our specific extension request for impacted LCCMR projects

CREP

A “CREP Information and Batching Periods” announcement was posted on March 19, 2020.

- Batching Period 20-03
 - June 22 – August 10 (may be adjusted as necessary in response to COVID-19 and as funding allows)

CREP Outreach Grants

- Extension granted during Special Session. June 30, 2021
- Working on new grant agreements.

CREP Contact: Sharon Doucette or Dusty Van Thuyne

Open Grants

FY21 Competitive Clean Water Fund

- Open dates: June 29 – August 17 at 4:30pm
 - Available Grants:
 - Projects and Practices
 - Projects and Practices Drinking Water (up to 20% of P&P funds)
 - Multipurpose Drainage Management
 - Exact funding is unknown at this time
 - Hope to take action at December BWSR Board meeting (December 17, 2020)

FY21 Area Technical Training Team Grants

- Deadline: July 17, 2020 at 4:30pm via email to TTCP Coordinator Jon Sellnow
 - \$40,000 total with up to \$5,000 per area technical training team
 - Application should come from an SWCD or the TSA (w/ letter of support from the ATTT) w/in the Area Technical Training Team membership

One Watershed, One Plan

FY21 Planning Grants

- Still moving ahead – unsure at exact dollar amount, but up to \$1.5 Million
- 9 applications – likely can fund 5-7
- Hope to take action at the August BWSR Board meeting (August 26, 2020)

Training

The 2020 training schedule has been developed. Be sure to watch for emails and check the Training Calendar and/or the Technical Training and Certification Program pages.

- Training Calendar - <https://bwsr.state.mn.us/training-calendar>
- Technical Training and Certification Program (TTCP) - <https://bwsr.state.mn.us/technical-training-and-certification-program>
- Tech Talks – most Mondays at 1pm thru 2020: <https://bwsr.state.mn.us/tech-talks>

2020 Soil Health Bus Tour

- Was scheduled for August 2020. Postponed until 2021

2020 BWSR Academy

- Still being planned.

Open Meeting Law and COVID-19

Holding meetings via telephone or other electronic means

- <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/13D.021>

Emergency meetings

- <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/13D.04>

If you have questions about Open Meeting Law requirements, please contact the Data Practices Office by email at info.dpo@state.mn.us or by phone at 651-296-6733 or 800-657-3721. Or contact your respective Association.

BWSR Board Conservationist

Jill Sackett Eberhart

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- Cell 507-317-1680

NOTES:

- BWSR staff will continue teleworking

BWSR Board Meeting

- There was no April BWSR Board meeting.
- There was no May BWSR Board meeting.
- The June BWSR Board meeting will be June 24, 2020.
- The August Board Tour has been canceled. The **Board meeting will be August 26.**

New BWSR Board Appointments:

- Jayne Hager Dee (Northfield, MN) – SWCD Representative. Replaces Steve Sunderland
- Ted Winter (Fulda, MN) – Citizen Member. Replaces John Ditmore



Greater Blue Earth River Basin Alliance

DATE: JULY 10, 2020
TO: GBERBA MEMBERS
FROM: KAY GROSS and DAVID BUCKLIN, GBERBA COORDINATORS
SUBJECT: COORDINATOR REPORT GBERBA TECHNICAL AND POLICY MEETINGS

MN Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program

Update on progress made in areas 5 and 6 – See Certification Specialist Reports. Over 580,000 acres and over 850 certified producers statewide!

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.

For 2020, the cover crop acre limits are removed. At this point the 50% cost share rate will continue.

GBERBA staff has requested and received an extension of this grant due to 2019 weather conditions and the Covid-19 outbreak. The new end date of the grant will be August 31, 2021.

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.

Grant Amendment Agreement has been approved to extend the expiration date to 12-31-2020.

One Watershed One Plan Planning Grants, Watonwan and Blue Earth Watershed

The Watonwan 1W1P Planning Project has moved into the Plan 60 day comment period. 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. GBERBA staff are researching the costs and procedure of writing of a new GBERBA Joint Powers document. The new document would allow for the Watonwan, Le Sueur, and Blue Earth Watersheds to participate if the individual watersheds 1W1P boards see a benefit to do so. **The Le Sueur Watershed has submitted an application to BWSR for a Planning Grant.**

In addition, we are looking for committee members to help update the GBERBA Joint Powers Agreement.

Minnesota Conservation Corps Position

The Minnesota/Iowa Conservation Corps program has rescinded the Covid suspension of M/ICC services. Ashley is back in the office and in the field helping with the **MN Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program.**

Resignation

Josh Votruba has taken another position in the Kanabec SWCD office. Thanks for your work, and good luck Josh!

KAY GROSS: Administrative Coordinator
DAVID BUCKLIN: Technical Coordinator
KARI CLOUSE: Financial Coordinator

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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
July 7th, 2020

Workload:

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

AREA 6	Applications	Assessments	Certifications
Blue Earth SWCD	14	12	7
Brown SWCD	10	6	3
Faribault SWCD	27	22	13
LeSueur SWCD	14	9	5
Martin SWCD	12	7	5
McLeod SWCD	9	7	4
Nicollet SWCD	1	1	1
Renville SWCD	16	10	8
Sibley SWCD	3	3	3
Waseca SWCD	11	11	5
Watonwan SWCD	13	9	7
Total	130	97	61

Certified produces 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.**

MAWQCP Numbers as of 7-6-20

- 915 producers certified
- 631,528 acres certified
- 1,874 new practices installed or planned to be installed
- Sediment delivery to surface waters reduced by 37,669 tons per year
- Soil loss reduced by 105,676 tons per year
- Phosphorus loss reduced by 46,676 lbs. of P per year
- 14 Soil Health Endorsements
- 14 IPM Endorsements
- 13 Wildlife Endorsements

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Greater Blue Earth River Basin

June 30th, 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
- Working to line up phone assessments and program reviews.
- Doing field verifications

Events:

- June 23rd -Hwy 14 Soil Health Tour Zoom
- June 25th - Virtual MARL graduation Zoom
- July 1st- Virtual Agronomy Tour
- July 23rd - MN Ag Water Quality Partner Training via Microsoft Teams

Program Updates and Information:

- **JULY 23rd** Virtual Program Training for Partners
- Endorsements for Integrated Pest Management (IPM), Wildlife Habitat, & Soil Health available for certified producers.
 - Endorsement information now added to my Year to Date Numbers
- Grant applications still available for up to **\$5,000 75%** cost-share through the MDA for producers
- MAWQCP has certified over **906 farms**, including over **627,951 acres** with **1,864 new BMP's**
- Estimated benefits include: **37,664 tons** of TSS reduced per year, **105,611 tons** soil reduced per year, **46,671 lbs** Phosphorous reduced per year, **38,087 CO_{2-e} tons** per year
- **14** Soil Health Endorsements, **14** Integrated Pest Management Endorsements, **12** Wildlife Endorsements

YEAR TO DATE NUMBERS

Area 5	Applications	Assessments Completed	Actively Pursuing Cert.	Certifications	Endorsements		
					IPM	Soil Health	Wildlife
Cottonwood	35	33	1	15	0	0	0
Jackson	33	32	0	18	2	2	0
Lac Qui Parle	6	6	0	4	0	0	0
Lincoln	21	19	0	7	1	0	1
Lyon	16	14	0	8	0	0	0
Murray	17	14	1	10	0	0	0
Nobles	14	14	0	10	0	0	0
Pipestone	42	39	2	18	0	0	0
Redwood	35	34	1	22	1	1	0
Rock	21	16	1	12	0	0	0
Yellow Med.	28	28	1	15	0	0	0
Totals	268	249	7	139	3	2	1

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Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program

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



July 8th 2020

Workload:

- Assisting Herman and Danielle with mapping assessed fields in the MAWQCP mapping tool and assessment tool
- Attend producer meetings with Herman and Danielle

Projects and Events:

- Work with MAWQCP and contacting newly certified producers
- RIM inspections with Hannah
- Ditch inspections with Hannah and Lee
- Groundwater modeling training with ModelMuse for MODFLOW6

Upcoming Events:

- Continue work with MAWQCP mapping and assessment tool
- Continue working on certification reviews

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