

2020 ANNUAL REPORT

DOOR COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT

A. Mission Statement:

The Door County Soil and Water Conservation Department is created under the authority of Chapter 92 of Wisconsin Statutes. Chapter 92 gives the SWCD the responsibility for the administration of the County soil and water conservation program and the authority to exercise the powers granted to the Land Conservation Committee. The legislative declared policy of the State in Chapter 92 is to halt and reverse the depletion of the State's soil resources and pollution of its waters. The mission of conservation and environmental advocacy is the standard by which SWCD programs are developed and implemented.

B. Summary of Responsibilities:

The SWCD has a responsibility, and directive under Chapter 92, to promote land uses and programs which advance conservation and the protection of Door County's natural resources.

C. Program Summary:

Agricultural Performance Standards and Animal Waste Storage: SWCD administers Door County Code Chapter 23 which establishes minimum standards for agricultural operations to protect ground and surface water quality and permit requirements for animal waste storage facilities.

Conservation practices: SWCD uses federal, state, and local funding sources to provide technical and cost share to landowners/operators for a wide range of conservation practices to protect and improve ground and surface water quality such as buffers, grassed waterways, nutrient management, manure storage, barnyard and feed storage runoff control systems, and well abandonment.

Invasive Species: SWCD maintains a lead role in the Door County Invasive Species Team (DCIST), a collaboration of natural resource professionals, community leaders and interested citizens who seek to halt the invasion of exotic non-native plants.

Nonmetallic Mine Reclamation: SWCD administers Door County Code Chapter 36 to ensure nonmetallic mining sites will be properly reclaimed in accordance with State Administrative Code and Statutes.

Technical Assistance: SWCD maintains staff with diverse expertise in natural resources who provide technical reviews and onsite inspections of proposed projects for the Land Use Services Department as well as other technical assistance to the public.

Water Quality Protection and Improvement: SWCD works cooperatively with a variety of partners to protect and improve ground and surface water quality including identification of pollution sources at beaches (with Public Health), restoration of Dunes Lake (multiple partners), drawdown of the Forestville Millpond (with Facilities and Parks), surface water quality monitoring (multiple partners), private well testing program (with Public Health), and watershed planning (multiple partners).

Wildlife Damage Abatement & Claims: Landowners who experience wildlife damage to crops can enroll in the program to be eligible for assistance, claim payments, and/or abatement reimbursements.

Wisconsin Working Lands Initiative/Farmland Preservation Program: SWCD ensures participants in this program meet state conservation standards to remain eligible for tax credits and inspects operations once every four years.

D. Goals / Objectives Achieved in 2020:

- 2021 – 2030 Door County Land and Water Resource Management Plan developed with public input and approved by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture Trade and Consumer Protection on February 9, 2021.
- New grants secured to provide cost share to install agricultural best management practices and expand invasive species program efforts.
- Continued collaboration with Public Health and University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh on the county-wide groundwater quality study to educate homeowners about the importance of testing their well water quality.
- Promoted water quality and natural resource protection through multiple programs. The following are examples of completed activities, not an exhaustive list:

2020 Accomplishments	
29	Compliance notifications under Ch. 23, Door Cty Code
2	Animal waste permits issued
67	Operation and maintenance inspections of installed agricultural practices
19	New agricultural practices installed (such as feed storage runoff control, manure storage, grassed waterway, well abandonment)
30	Acres of riparian buffers (new and re-enrolled in program)
95 %	Cropland acres under nutrient management plans
26	Audits of cropland fields during manure spreading
62	Miles stream corridor surveyed for priority invasive species
192	Acres of priority invasive species inventoried
91	Acres of priority invasive species controlled
1.1	Acres of early detection invasive species controlled
105	Landowner contacts for invasive species
50	Nonmetallic mine inspections under Ch. 36, Door Cty Code
3	New nonmetallic mine reclamation permits under Ch. 36, Door Cty Code
33	Technical reviews for land disturbance permits
19	Storm Water Plan reviews and approvals
6	Streams in Kayes-Larson Watershed monitored monthly for water quality
4	Months of intensive water quality monitoring of Geisel Creek
295	Private wells sampled for bacteria and nitrate
10	Enrollments in the wildlife damage abatement program
49	Deer donated
10	Inspections for the farmland preservation program
20	Certificates of compliance issued for the farmland preservation program
10	Acres dredged at Dunes Lake

E. Knowledge Sharing 2020:

- One-on-one visits with landowners and operators to identify management and conservation practices to meet minimum agricultural standards and prohibitions and go beyond to protect ground and surface water quality.
- Partnered with Northeast Wisconsin Technical College to host Nutrient Management Farmer Education class in Sturgeon Bay and Green Bay and provided one-on-one assistance to landowners/operators; helping 14 farms write their own plans covering almost 5,500 cropland acres.
- Outreach and education to the public about invasive species included: 221.5 hours of Clean Boats Clean Waters at priority boat launches providing inspections for 860 boats, 9 educational press releases & interviews, 57 media posts, 6 educational presentations/training sessions, 3 volunteer days, 105 one-on-one contacts and 490 direct mailings to landowners.
- Several educational presentations about SWCD programs and natural resource issues in Door County to a wide variety of audience ages from high school students through learning in retirement.

F. Department Budget Status

Approved 2020 Budget	\$1,422,225.00	Actual 2020 Budget	\$1,296,149.99
2020 Levy Appropriation	\$473,841.00	2019 Levy Appropriation	\$454,320.00
2020 Budgeted Revenue	\$948,384.00	2020 Actual Revenue	\$813,365.94
		2019 Actual Revenue	\$378,905.91

Grants Used in 2020:

DNR Aquatic Invasive Species - Education	\$26,482.61
DNR Aquatic Invasive Species - Control	\$26,963.77
DNR PEDIP Invasive Species	\$1,469.68
DNR Notice of Discharge	\$191,299.18
DATCP Soil & Water Resource Management Staffing	\$143,964.00
DATCP Land & Water Resource Management	\$129,099.17
DNR Wildlife Damage Claims Program	\$16,423.50
WI Coastal Management (Invasive Species)	\$34,272.00
WI Coastal Management (Dunes Lake)	\$100,000.00
US Forest Service (Invasive Species)	\$12,776.57
NFWF SOGL (Invasive Species)	\$13,903.48
NFWF Phosphorus Reduction	\$29,316.12
Community Foundation	\$1,000.00

Revenue from Self-funding Accounts:

Erosion Control Netting	\$1,279.97
Tech Support Funds	\$12,553.74
Shoreland Zoning	\$1,000.00
Nonmetallic Mine Program	\$35,953.44

Donations Used in 2020:

Invasive Species	\$4,264.85
Dunes Lake	\$1,000.00

G. Other Accomplishments:

2020 was the first year since 2012 that all Conservationist positions were filled for the entire year. Stable staffing allows for program continuity, helps build long-term relationships with landowners, and allows staff to advance skill sets to meet conservation needs within the county.

H. Issues, Concerns and Restraints:

- COVID-19 public health recommendations led to staff teleworking for portions of the year and modifying typical interactions with landowners, operators, and project partners. Despite these challenges, SWCD completed planned work projects and met or exceeded all grant deliverables.
- SWCD has successfully pursued grants to provide cost share to landowners and fund staff. However the short term nature of 2-3 year grants requires a continual investment of time to apply for and manage multiple programs, each with a unique set of requirements and reporting expectations.
- Program demands and natural resource protection needs continue to expand while fiscal and staffing resources remain limited.

I. Goals and Objectives for 2021:

- Collaborate with partners to complete the restoration dredging of Dunes Lake. Dunes Lake is a unique shallow water, marl lake habitat and is part of the Lake Michigan Shivering Sands Area Coastal Wetland. To protect spawning fish and nesting birds, the project will resume after August 15th and will target 4 acres of open water and 4 acres of cattail encroached areas. Project completion is expected by mid-November 2021.
- Build upon existing natural resource protection programs and identify new revenue sources to support them.
- Expand groundwater quality study with Public Health and University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh to consider other community-wide sampling event in addition to the annual fall sampling event.