

# ITASCA SWCD

# 2023

Welcome to the Fall/Winter addition of the ITASCA SWCD Newsletter. We had an exciting year in 2023. In these pages you will read fantastic articles on the expertise our staff has showcased all year. Just because the weather is changing and snow will be about us don't forget to reflect on how to make next year better than your last project results. Learning is what makes us strive to be better. Conservation on!

*Best wishes for the New Year!  
The staff and supervisors at the District.*



*Treasure the footprints we leave behind.*

## Best Winter Quotes

"The color of springtime is in the flowers, the color of winter is in the imagination." "One kind word can warm three winter months." "In seed time learn, in harvest teach, in winter enjoy." Xavier University.

## Recipe for Kindness

- ◆ 1 Pinch of Laughter
- ◆ 1 C. of Cheerfulness
- ◆ Sprinkle of Compliments
- ◆ 1 TBSP of Smiles
- ◆ Kind Word Notes

We all have exposure to the community in our work and personal lives. Please keep the Kindness Recipe in our hearts.

# Wetlands

By Waylon Glienke, Wetland Specialist.

Itasca SWCD takes the reigns with regulating wetland impact within the borders of Itasca County. We mold our conservation practices off of the Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act (WCA). The State recognizes 8 different types of wetlands:

## Type 1 – Seasonally Flooded Basin

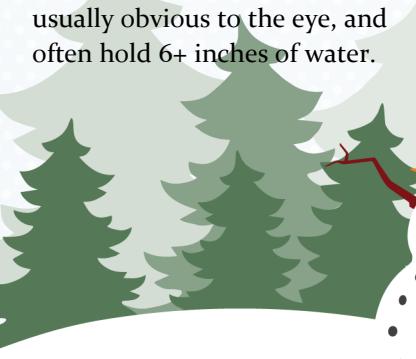
These wetlands are typically most visible during the spring or during a wet spell in the summer. These wetlands are often dry enough to mow in the summer! However, a type 1 wetland will harbor enough hydrology to support the growth of plants with high moisture level tolerances.

## Type 2 – Fresh Wet Meadow

These wetlands are typically identified by low-growing grasses, rushes, and sedge, however there may be a few broadleaf plants mixed in as well. These wetlands are often times found along lakeshore, and stream/river bank. The soils in these wetlands are typically saturated the majority of the year

## Type 3 – Shallow Marsh

Shallow Marshes are viewed as the typical ‘wetland’. These consist of cattail, bulrush, arrowhead, and other common ‘wetland’ vegetation. These are usually obvious to the eye, and often hold 6+ inches of water.



## Type 4 – Deep Marsh

Very similar to the previously defined Type 3 Shallow Marsh. However, the Type 4 Deep Marsh has a water depth of 6 inches to three feet of water. These wetlands will harbor hydrophytes such as lily pads, northern milfoil, bladderwort, and duckweed.

## Type 5 – Shallow Open Water

These wetlands are often times classified as public water lakes in Minnesota, and are typically a hot spot for waterfowl hunters. These wetlands hold up to 10ft of water and are dominated by both submergent and emergent wetland vegetation.

## Type 6 – Shrub Swamp

Wetlands with woody shrubs such as willow, and alder growing vigorously, and underlined with rushes, sedges, and low-growing grasses. These wetlands typically hold no deeper than 6 inches of water.

## Type 7 – Wooded Swamp

These are forested wetlands commonly consisting of ash or cedar trees. These wetlands can be somewhat dry, or hold up to 6 inches of water. Commonly these wetlands have very little plant growth at the forest floor due to lack of sunlight from a thick canopy.

## Type 8 – Bog

These are unique wetlands consisting of acidic peat soils. Peat is partially decomposed remains of plants. The water table is typically near the surface of these wetlands year-round. Vegetation found here is exclusive to bogs, such as sphagnum moss, cranberry, Labrador tea, leatherleaf, and tamarack trees.

Contact Waylon for assistance in identifying these wetlands, their boundaries, navigating the State wetland law permitting process, and administration of the Mn Buffer Law Program in Itasca County.





### One Watershed, One Plan

By Matt Gutzmann, Water Resource Specialist

The Mississippi River- Grand Rapids Watershed has its headwaters about 30 minutes north of Nashwaulk and extends south toward McGregor and includes parts of Itasca, Aitkin, Carlton, Cass, and St. Louis counties. While water planning has traditionally been focused on water within the county border, this planning has now transitioned to within the watershed. The Mississippi River- Grand Rapids Watershed started this water planning process at the beginning of 2023 and the final plan will hopefully be finished in 2024.

This planning process has helped identify conservation opportunities in the watershed and will also be used as a guide for maintaining and improving water quality for the next 10 years! Itasca SWCD has taken on the role of planning coordinator for this group effort that includes multiple counties, SWCDs, townships, and the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe.

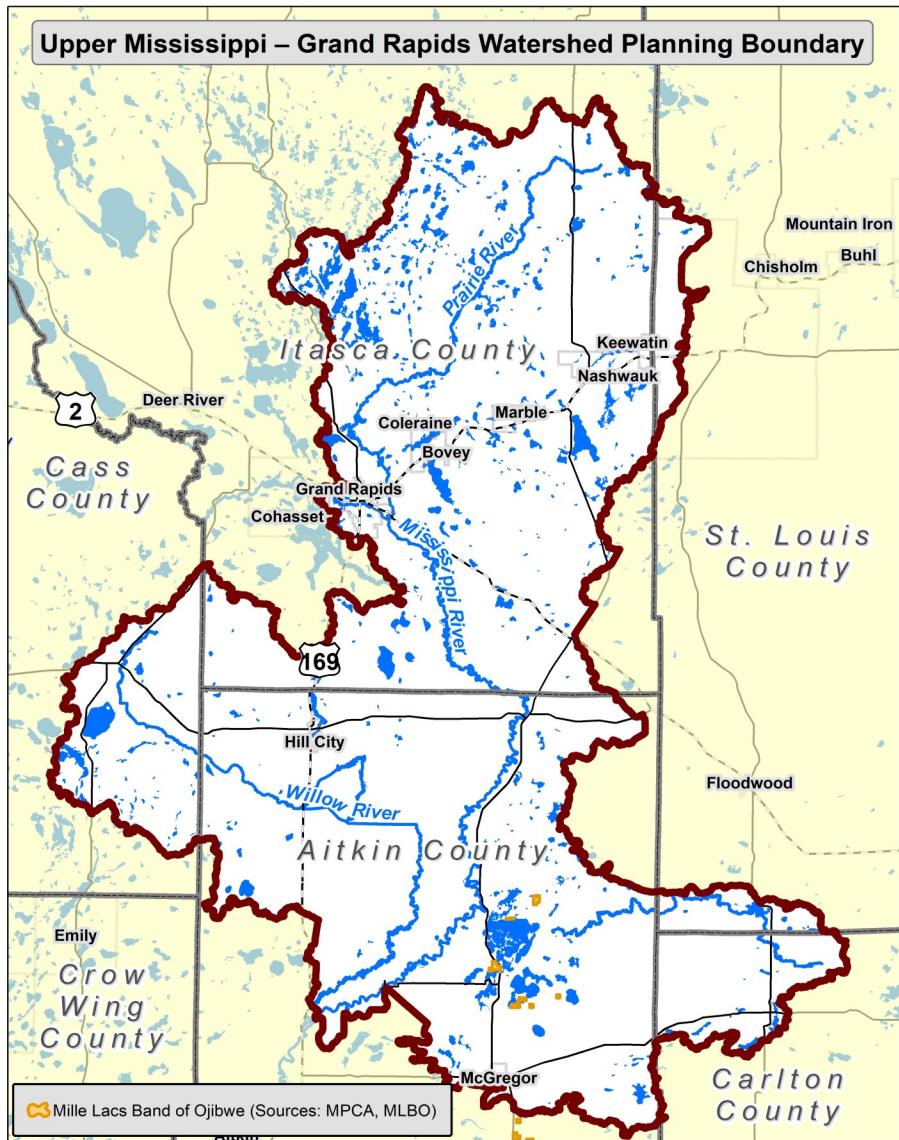
Speaking of watershed planning, the Mississippi River Headwaters watershed has completed its planning process and is in the process of utilizing grant funding from the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources. These projects are helping to maintain and improve water quality within the Mississippi Headwaters which include improving stormwater runoff management, helping landowners acquire Mn DNR Woodland Stewardship Plans, reducing soil erosion, and helping reduce salt use in the winter months.

In the next few years, all of the watersheds in Itasca County will be participating in their own One Watershed One Plan.



# Mississippi River Grand Rapids

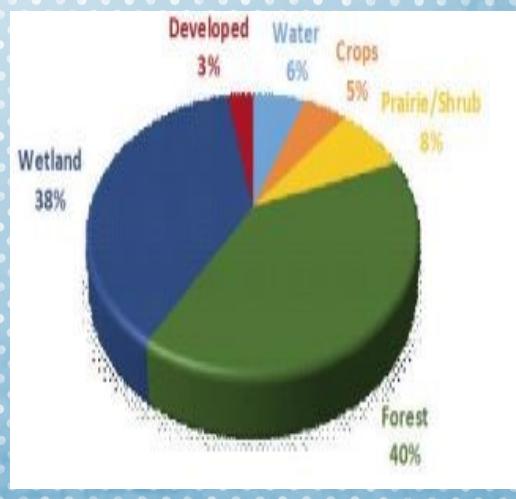
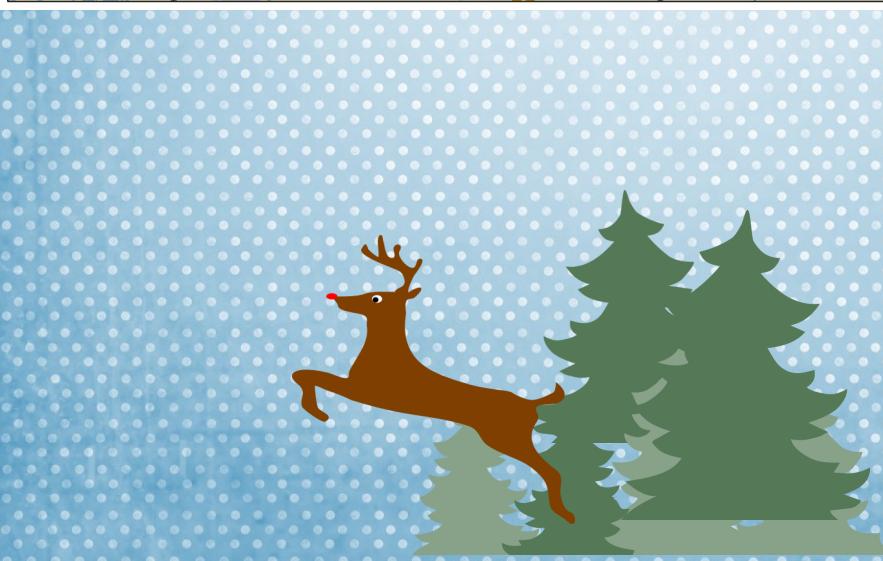
## Watershed 1W1P



The Upper Mississippi Grand Rapids watershed covers over 2,000 square miles of area, contains almost 2,000 miles of river and stream, and 625 lakes greater than 10 acres. There are also 79 lakes that produce wild rice, and 48 lakes are cold water fisheries that help support a healthy trout population.

### Land use in the watershed:

- 56% forested
- 27% grass and wetland
- 7% agricultural
- 7% water
- 3% urban





## Aquatic Invasive Species often are not easy to spot

By Bill Grantges, AIS Program Manager.

Finding a new Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) before it has time to become established gives us the best chance to eradicate it. Aquatic Invasive Species are not always easy to spot. In the fall when we remove our boats, docks, boat lifts, swimming platforms and other equipment from our waters is a great time to check for anything suspicious that has attached itself since the last time you inspected everything. When was the last time you inspected your equipment? When was the last time you took a good close look at your property's shoreline and lake bottom in the shallow waters near shore?

Everyone who owns shoreline property should familiarize themselves with that shoreline and its adjacent waters. Next Spring before you install your lake gear back into the water, take a good look at what will be underwater. Familiarize yourself with what is 'normal'. Do the same thing for your shoreline and the shallow waters off your property. What does the lake bottom look like? Is it sandy, covered with stones, are there any underwater structures like a sunken log or large rocks ?

# AIS

For more information call:

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[Www.itascaswcd.org](http://www.itascaswcd.org)



Why is it so important to be familiar with your lake gear, shoreline, and shallow lake bottom? It's important to know so that you will be able to notice when something has changed. Start the healthy habit of inspecting the underwater portions of your lake equipment often.

**AIS may not be obvious and easy to find like it is in this photo:**



If you notice something new, call us and we will come out and identify what you have found. The only chance we have of eradicating a new AIS is to find it early before it has a chance to establish itself. Sadly, this Fall, four lakes in Itasca County were discovered to have previously unknown AIS in them. Three of the lakes, Jussie, Turtle, and Trout (Coleraine) had zebra mussels in them that were established and had spread to other parts of the lake. We cannot do anything to remove them. One lake, Dora, had starry stonewort discovered in it. As far as we can tell, the infestation in Dora is confined to a 100 sq. foot area. We are pulling the starry stonewort by hand and closely monitoring the site in the future. There is a good chance that we will have eradicated it due to its early discovery.

**Look in corners and in tight spaces.**



Itasca SWCD has a full time staff with over 29 years of experience working with AIS. We train continuously and stay up to date on all AIS, not just in our area, but in the surrounding states and provinces as well. Give us a call or shoot us an email if you have any questions or find something new. We can stop the spread of AIS if we all do our part. As watercraft owners you are familiar with "Clean Drain Dry." Thank you for following it. Please add to it a good knowledge of what is normal for your water equipment, shoreline, and nearshore lake bottom. If an AIS is found early enough, we can eradicate it !

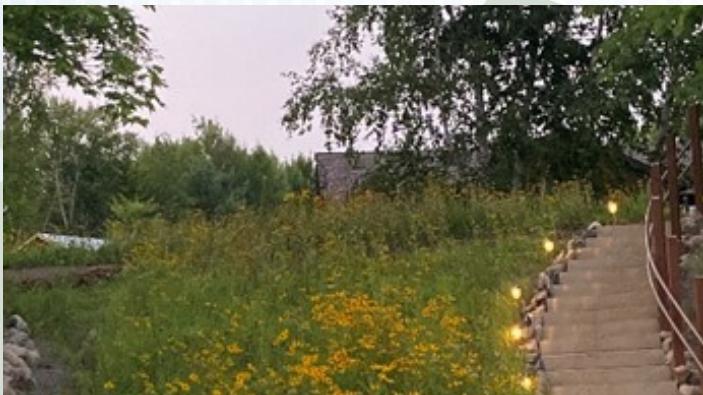
**Stopping the spread of AIS is as easy as Clean Drain Dry.**



## Walking the Land and Waters with Austin Steere, Projects Coordinator

### Conservation Practices

Austin Steere, Projects Coordinator, is able to answer landowner's questions about shoreland, stormwater, pollinator plantings, forestry and conservation easements. Austin will work with landowners to help implement best management practices to mitigate problems that negatively affect the soil, water, wildlife and recreational resources that are located within Itasca County. We also provide education opportunities to schools, communities, and the general public. Itasca SWCD provides many services for landowners with shoreland erosion and stormwater runoff problems.



Pictured is a shoreline stabilization and buffer planting project one year after installation.

### Conservation Practices (continued)

Austin performs site visits to assess the problem and works with the landowners to come up with feasible practices that mitigate the problem. We also have State funds that help landowners offset the total cost of these practices getting implemented. These practices help protect and preserve our pristine lakes of Itasca County by reducing soil erosion, phosphorus and nitrogen loading, and other pollutants from entering the water.



Pictured is a stormwater runoff mitigation and pollinator habitat project. This project will treat stormwater runoff before it enters the lake and also serves as great habitat for pollinators in the area.

## Walking the Land and Waters with Austin Steere, Projects Coordinator



This picture shows the beauty of a heavily forested area that is protecting and improving the water quality. Forestry and water quality go hand in hand, a healthy forest leads to good water quality.

### Itasca SWCD's Native Tree & Plant Sale

Itasca SWCD's native tree and plant sale is scheduled to start taking orders in early 2024. We offer a variety of native trees, fruiting shrubs, tall grasses, wildflowers, seed mixes and browse prevention products. Many of the native stock will work well in raingardens, shoreline restoration projects and pollinator plantings. Itasca SWCD has knowledgeable staff to help you select plants appropriate for your planting site based on soil type, light conditions and moisture. Please call the district office for more information.



Pictured is a pollinator planting that used one of the native seed mixes we offer at our annual plant sale.

