

2021 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, and meet the goals and objectives established in the [2021-2030 Land and Water Resource Management Plan](#).

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 2021:

- Collaborated 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 in the Town of Sevastopol. Approximately four acres of open water and ½ acre of encroaching cattails were dredged in 2021. Since 2016 an estimated 16.5 acres of lake bed has been dredged. The overall depth of inner Dunes Lake increased by approximately 2 to 3 feet, and an estimated 2,100 pounds of legacy phosphorus was removed from the system.
- Obtained an online viewer for LiDAR and derivative layers, such as closed depressions, for use in conservation planning and making information available to the public: <https://www.co.door.wi.gov/1110/LiDAR-OnlineViewer>
- Promoted water quality and natural resource protection through multiple programs. The following are examples of completed activities in 2021, not an exhaustive list:

2021 Accomplishments	
39	Compliance notifications under Ch. 23, Door County Code
3	Animal waste permits issued
71	Operation and maintenance inspections of installed agricultural practices
15	New agricultural practices cost shared and installed (such as feed storage runoff control, manure storage, grassed waterway, well abandonment)
273	Acres of cover crops cost shared
10.6	Acres of riparian buffers (new and re-enrolled in program)
91%	Cropland acres under nutrient management plans
25	Audits of cropland fields during manure spreading
11,469	Acres monitored for priority, early detection, and other invasive species
288	Acres of priority invasive species inventoried
153	Acres of invasive species controlled
1.1	Acres of early detection invasive species controlled
448	Landowner contacts for invasive species
53	Nonmetallic mine inspections under Ch. 36, Door County Code
18	Technical reviews for land disturbance permits
21	Storm Water and Impervious Surface Plan reviews and approvals
6	Streams in Kayes-Larson Watershed monitored monthly for water quality
216	Private wells sampled for bacteria and nitrate
12	Enrollments in the wildlife damage abatement program
36	Deer donated
3	Inspections for the farmland preservation program
24	Certificates of compliance issued for the farmland preservation program

E. Knowledge Sharing 2021:

- 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.
- Outreach and education to the public about invasive species included: 237 hours of Clean Boats Clean Waters at priority boat launches providing inspections for 858 boats, 8 educational press releases and interviews, 53 media posts, 8 educational presentations/training sessions, 1 volunteer day, 448 one-on-one contacts and 2767 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

	2020	2021
Approved Budgeted Expenditures	\$1,422,225.00	\$1,401,933.00
Actual Expenditures	\$1,296,149.99	\$1,000,072.99
Budgeted Revenues	\$948,384.00	\$930,647.00
Actual Revenues	\$813,365.94	\$525,025.07
Actual Levy Appropriation	\$482,784.05	\$475,047.92

Grants Used in 2021:

DNR Aquatic Invasive Species – LMPN	\$12,371.23
DNR Aquatic Invasive Species – CBCW	\$3,348.00
DNR Aquatic Invasive Species - Control	\$9,353.52
DATCP Soil & Water Resource Management Staffing	\$144,315.00
DATCP Land & Water Resource Management	\$119,724.29
DNR Wildlife Damage Claims Program	\$21,058.32
US Forest Service GLRI 2019 (Invasive Species)	\$17,116.82
US Forest Service GLRI 2020 (Invasive Species)	\$18,026.48
Michigan State MNFI (Invasive Species)	\$1,783.05
NFWF SOGL (Invasive Species)	\$44,976.69
NFWF Phosphorus Reduction	\$35,084.57
DNR Multi-Discharger Variance	\$11,788.55
WLWCA Great Lakes Committee (Springs monitoring)	\$888.00
Door County Medical Center (Groundwater)	\$1,000.00

Revenue from Liability Accounts:

Nonmetallic Mine Program	\$32,570.93
SWCD Special Fund	\$3,298.73
Water Pollution	\$30,731.38

Donations Used in 2021:

Green Printing Donations	\$8,102.00
Invasive Species	\$3,851.01
Dunes Lake	\$.50

G. Other Accomplishments: N/A

H. Issues, Concerns and Restraints:

- Following COVID-19 public health recommendations, some SWCD staff teleworked for portions of 2021. This modified typical interactions with landowners, operators, and partners but not in a way that substantially impacted project progress.
- Program demands and natural resource protection needs continue to expand while fiscal and staffing resources remain limited. One Conservationist position was vacant for part of 2021. The new hire is being trained and advancing their skills.
- 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.

I. Goals and Objectives for 2022:

- Follow the 2021-2030 Land and Water Resource Management Plan, available online at: <https://www.co.door.wi.gov/DocumentCenter/View/2900/Door-County-Land-and-Water-Resource-Management-Plan-2021-2030>
- Control non-native *Phragmites*, targeting 85% of known populations on private properties, using ARPA funding. The goal is to enter into a five-year contract with a professional contractor to cover the duration of the five-year project.
- Partner with UW-Oshkosh, Door County Public Health, and other relevant entities to finalize the sampling design and begin landowner outreach for the screen of “emerging” contaminants in groundwater samples collected from private wells.