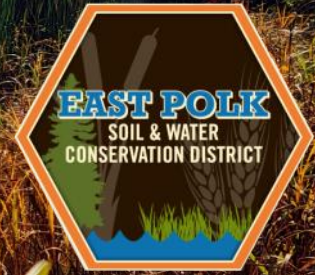


December 2023

Fall Newsletter

Official Newsletter of East Polk Soil and Water Conservation District



Tree Program Update

When to Order

2024 Order forms will be **Available** within this Newsletter as well as a downloadable PDF on our website! Orders can be submitted from NOW until February 16th 2024! Late orders will be accepted until the end of April but will be limited to remaining stock and as First Come First Serve until stock is sold out. Tree Order Pick is usually schedule in Early May depending on the spring thaw. Anyone who has placed an order will be contacted when the pick up dates are set-up.

New Species *Quantities will be limited*

Black Chokeberry

Zone: 3 to 8 | Height: 3 to 8 feet | Width: 2 to 6 feet | MN Native

Culture: Plant in full sun; tolerates partial shade. Adaptable - sandy to clay soils. Soil pH 5.1-6.5; tolerates higher. Poorly-drained to well-drained; moist to wet soils. Tolerant of salt and compacted soil

Description: Black chokeberry is an adaptable shrub native to Minnesota with hardiness and wide tolerance to a variety of soil textures, densities, pH levels and moisture conditions. Because of suckering and its tolerance to wet soils, this species is typically used in mass planting, in naturalized and woodland gardens, for erosion control, in windbreaks and in excessively wet soils. In spring, it has showy white flower clusters. In autumn, leaves change from green to vibrant tones of red, orange and purple. Black chokeberry can also be used as an edible fruit crop although the fruit is too astringent to eat raw. The high-antioxidant fruit is used in baking and to make jams, jellies, syrup, tea, juice and wine. Fruit can persist into winter and serves as a food source for birds and other wildlife.

Sand Cherry

Zone: 3 to 8 | Height: 4 to 6 feet | Width: 5 to 6 feet | Polk County & MN Native

Culture: Preferring full sun, it adapts to heat and can be used in hot, dry areas of the landscape. Well-drained soil is preferable, but it will adapt to most soils, including clay.

Description: The Sand Cherry is valued in the landscape for its rugged constitution and ornamental attributes. The Sand Cherry produces abundant white spring flowers, leaves that are an attractive gray green, a heavy crop of juicy black berries, outstanding red fall foliage and nice semi-horizontal spreading habit. This is one of the hardiest of deciduous shrubs. Provides fruit for numerous songbirds and are edible and can be eaten fresh, dried or in jellies and jams. The shrub creates good roosting and loafing cover for songbirds and game birds, and nesting cover for songbirds. Occasionally browsed by deer. Native to northern Great Plains. The Sand Cherry is rarely bothered by insects or diseases. This is a relatively low maintenance shrub, and is best pruned in late winter once the threat of extreme cold has passed. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Resource: University of Minnesota | Urban Forestry Outreach & Research

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Special points of interest

- Two new species are being offered this upcoming tree sale!
- The Clearwater One Watershed One Plan is offering funding for conservation practices in upper Polk County. Find out what projects the East Polk Soil and Water Conservation District are doing under this funding.
- Cameron Lake Shoreline Stabilization Project Update.
- Observe Polk County's Recent Year Trends in Precipitation.
- Noxious Weed Alert! Wild Parsnip is spreading quickly in Polk County. Learn about the health risks when you come in contact with these noxious weeds and how it spreads.

One Watershed, One Plan (1W1P)

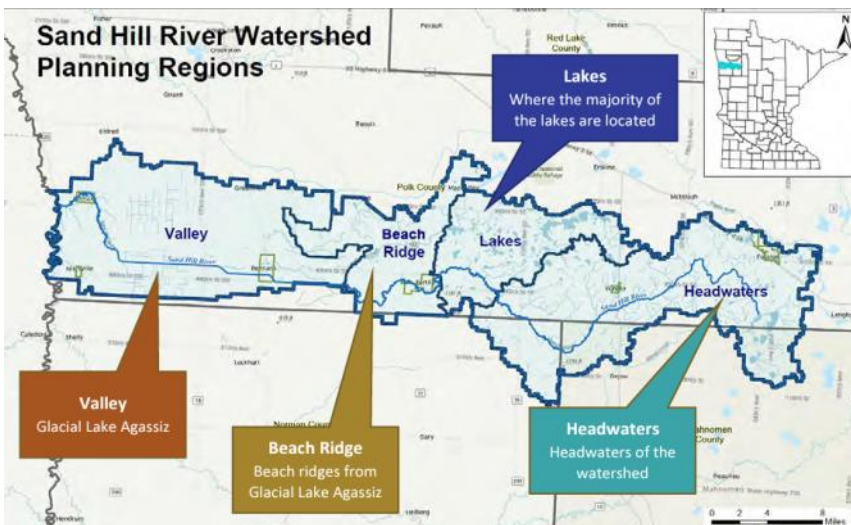
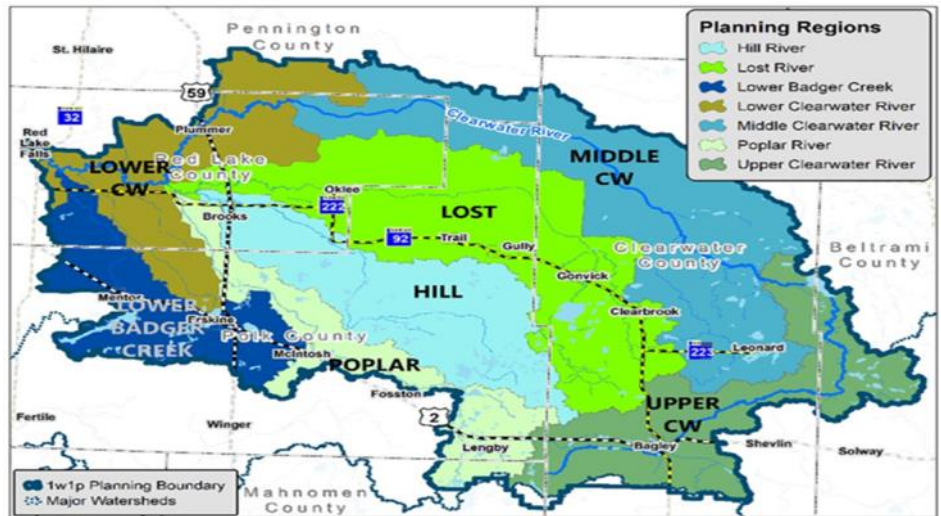
Program Purpose:

The purpose of this program is to develop comprehensive water management plans that follow watershed boundaries that guide the watershed managers (local counties, soil and water conservation districts, and watershed districts) as they work to protect and restore the watershed's unique resources. The planning process for the 1W1P grants starts with public kickoff meetings. At these meetings, participants learned about the watershed, the planning process, and provided valuable input on their specific resource concerns. The public input gathered from the kickoff meetings is compiled and added to the priority resource concerns gathered from the state agency planning partners. These plans are locally led resulting in priorities and goals being specific to each watershed. Once the planning process is completed the Implementation Grants are disbursed and run on a two-year cycle. What this means is consistent funding for projects and practices that help reach the goals laid out in each watershed's 1W1P. East Polk SWCD is a partner in two 1W1P and more information can be found below.

Clearwater 1W1P:

The Clearwater River 1W1P was developed in 2021-2022 and is on the first round of funding. Planning Partners includes staff from Clearwater SWCD, East Polk SWCD, Red Lake SWCD, Pennington SWCD, Red Lake Watershed District, along with Clearwater, Polk, Red Lake, and Pennington County's. The complete plan can be found at:

<https://www.rldwatersheds.org/clearwater1w1p>



Sand Hill River 1W1P:

The Sand Hill River 1W1P is currently being developed with an anticipated date for funding being Spring of 2024. Planning Partners includes staff from West Polk SWCD, East Polk SWCD, Norman SWCD, Mahnommen SWCD, Sand Hill River Watershed District, along with Polk, Norman, and Mahnommen County's. The draft plan can be found at: <http://www.sandhillwatershed.org/1W1P.html>

<http://www.sandhillwatershed.org/1W1P.html>

1W1P Continued

Funding:

What does this mean for landowners?

We have a stable source of funding for projects! Right now, we have funding and are completing projects in the Clearwater Watershed with the funding for the Sand Hill River Watershed anticipated for spring of 2024. Project requests can be submitted by stopping into the office and providing general information on your project and completing an Engineering Request Form.

Projects include but are not limited to:

- Water & Sediment Control Basins (WASCOBs)
- Grade Stabilizations
- Side Water Inlets
- Cover Crops
- Shoreline Restorations
- Rain Gardens
- Well Sealings

Structural projects (WASCOBs, Grade Stabilizations, & Side Water Inlets) will be taken as a first come first serve basis but may be prioritized further based on the East Polk SWCD Cost Share Policy which states that prioritization will be given to projects that fall within a targeted area determined in the 1W1P and the location in regard to an impaired or nearly impaired watercourse.



Cost Share Rates:

Structural Practices are eligible for 75-90 percent cost share based on prioritization.

Cover Crops rates are \$40/acre up to 80 acres per applicant. Please contact the SWCD for more information on our Cover Crop Program Policy and Contract.

Shoreline Restorations and Raingardens are eligible for 75 percent cost share.

Well Sealings are set at 50 percent cost share.

The East Polk SWCD Board of Supervisors has the discretion to set the cost share percentage based on the policy set around each program.

General Cost Share Information:

If you think you have a project that you would like to pursue funding, the first step is to discuss the project with the East Polk SWCD staff, fill out a Cost Share Application, and complete any additional program specific forms.

Work cannot begin on projects until the Cost Share Application has been approved by the East Polk SWCD Board of Supervisors. We are not able to fund projects that have already been completed. Once the Application has been approved work may begin on the project. Once the project is completed invoices for actual expenses are submitted to the East Polk SWCD and payment is approved by the Board or Supervisors.

Cameron Lake Shoreline Stabilization Project

In the Clearwater River Watershed Cameron Lake, located in Erskine, is listed in the 1W1P as a lake impaired for nutrients and is prioritized for restoration. Cameron Lake is included in the East Polk SWCD 's lake monitoring program. Data from that monitoring program has shown Cameron Lake to have high levels of Total Phosphorus and Chlorophyll-a and the transparency of the water is very low. What this means is the water quality of Cameron Lake is very poor.

One of the biggest concerns the SWCD has on Lake Cameron is the erosion and sloughing of the bank on the southeast side of Cameron Lake, see Figure 1. The southeast shoreline of Cameron Lake has been prioritized due to the aggressive wave action on this section causing undercutting of shoreline. Data was collected this past summer and landowners were asked to provide information on erosion happening on their property. Shoreline erosion can have negative impacts on water quality and the Cameron Lake Shoreline Stabilization Project is a priority in the Clearwater 1W1P. The East Polk SWCD Staff, assisted by the Northern Technical Service Area's (TSA) Engineering Staff, completed surveying on majority of the lots on the southeast side of Lake Cameron this past summer. This was the first time that the East Polk SWCD has surveyed this area of concern and the data collected during this site visit will be critical to tracking erosion. It is anticipated that the Northern TSA Engineer will have the shoreline restoration designs and cost estimates completed this winter and construction is anticipated for 2025. All landowners that chose to participate in this project will be eligible for cost share through the Clearwater 1W1P funding.



Figure 1: Cameron Lake Shoreline Stabilization Project

Water and Sediment Control Basins (WASCOB)

Water and Sediment Control Basins (WASCOBs) have been a common practice at the East Polk Soil and Water Conservation District for many years. Since 2011 the East Polk SWCD has installed 133 water and sediment control basins in the Sand Hill River Watershed District. These projects have reduced erosion and nutrient pollution into the Sand Hill River by 5,540 tons of sediment – the equivalent of 426 dump truck loads – and 4,120 pounds of algae-causing phosphorus. WASOCBs are used to correct gully erosion and use a combination of earth embankments, or dikes, settling ponds, and a tile outlet to trap sediment and reduce downstream runoff.

Gully erosion usually occurs with heavy rainfall or spring runoff events that cause the soil to wash away downstream through unprotected fields as shown in Figure 1. The WASCOB design starts well above the eroded area with the settling pond and embankment or dike structure. The settling pond and dike structure is designed to hold water from a 10-year rain event in that specific area. Once the settling pond is full its job is to allow the sediment and nutrients to settle out of the water before the water travels through a Hicken Bottom tile intake and down the tile to the outlet. Water in the settle pond is designed, on average, to drain within 24-48 hours after the rain event. A typical project can range from one WASCOB to several that are tied together. These projects are so popular because they allow producers to correct gully erosion, keeping the soil in the field, and in most cases the original gully area can be farmed through after project installation. The only land lost to producers is the embankment and the areas around the tile intake.

For more information about Water and Sediment Control Basins contact:

Marea—District Technician
218-563-2777
schommer.eastpolk@gmail.com

Figure 1: Gully Erosion. Photo credit: East Polk SWCD.

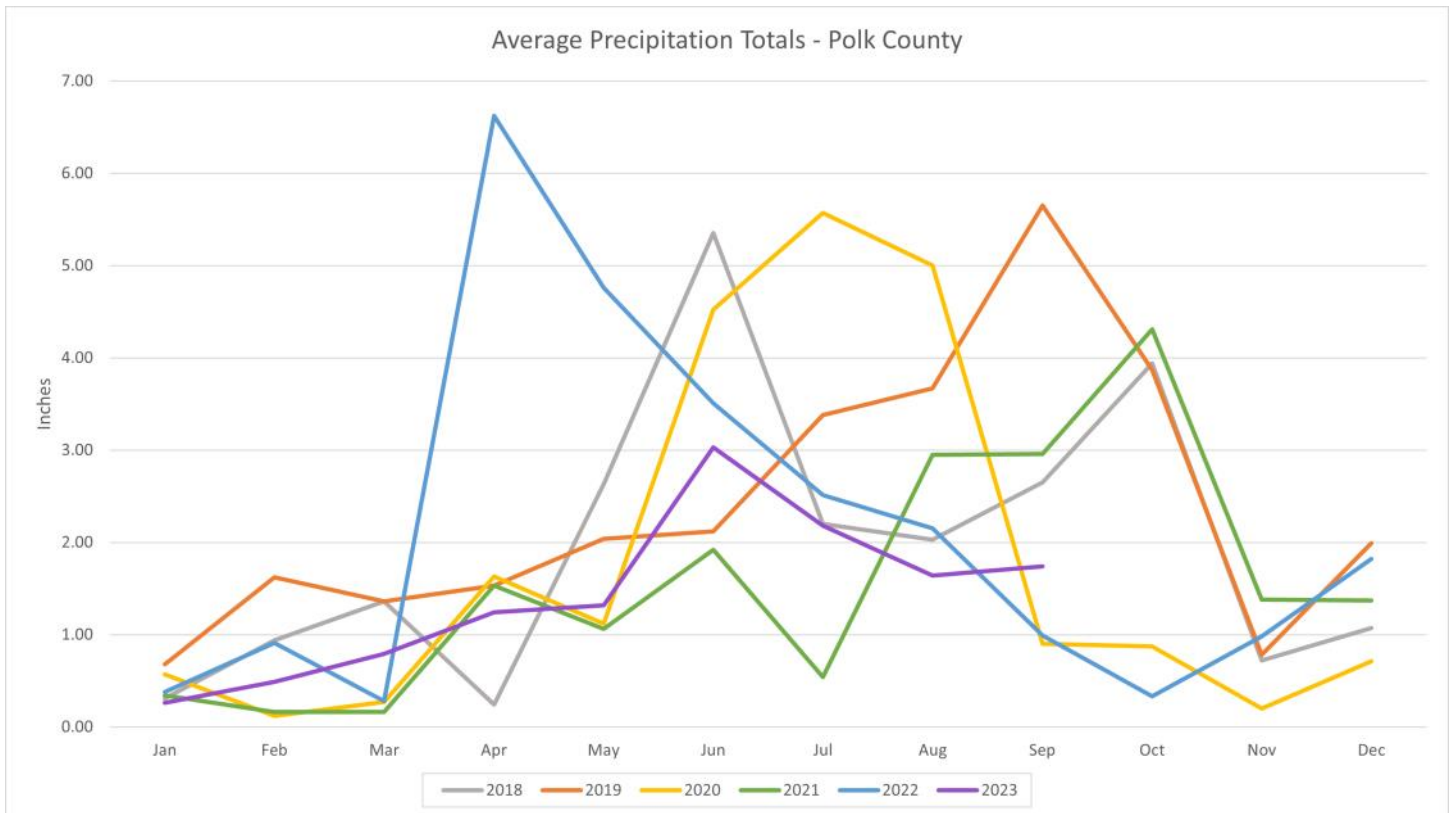


Figure 2: Installed WASCOB with Hicken bottom. Photo credit: East Polk SWCD.

Local Rainfall Trends

MNgage is a volunteer-driven precipitation observation program that began in the late 1960's in the Twin Cities and gradually expanded across the Minnesota in the 1970's. The program is administered by the DNR Minnesota State Climatology Office. East Polk SWCD's rainfall monitor volunteers are spread across the county in 8 different townships including Columbia, Lessor, Garfield, Queen, Knute, Woodside, Rosebud and Tilden. Volunteers monitor rainfall and snowfall events daily and then they send in their data to the East Polk SWCD at the end of the month. The data gets updated on the Minnesota State Climatology website.

We are in need of Volunteers! This program is critical for observing precipitation behaviors in Polk County. Multiple organizations analyze this data for predicting future changes in our weather pattern. We are currently seeking volunteers in Columbia, Queen and Garfield Townships. If you would like to volunteer for the Rainfall Monitoring program, please call Jenna Simonson at 218-563-2777 or stop by our office at 240 SW Cleveland Ave, McIntosh, MN 56556.



The chart above displays Polk County's average precipitation totals for each month. Current totals can be seen in comparison to the previous 5 years. The large spike in precipitation in March—May 2022 that resulted in spring flooding. 2021 also display the lack of precipitation in June and July which lead to a drought in our county during that year.

WILD PARSNIP

MN NOXIOUS WEED ALERT

Information provided in partnership with Duluth CISMA



CAUTION!

Hazardous to Health—Public Safety Risk

- Causes phytophotodermatitis- when human or animal skin comes in contact with plant sap in the presence of sunlight, it can cause severe rashes, blisters, and skin discoloration.
- Can cause blindness if sap gets in eyes.
- Can cause similar burns on the exposed skin of pets or livestock. It can cause internal damage to livestock that eat wild parsnip or hay containing it.

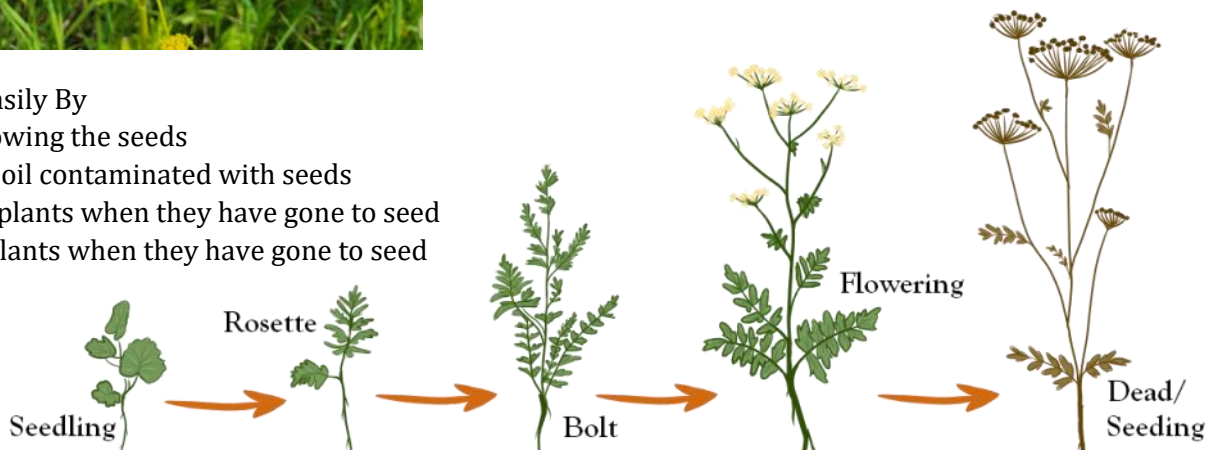
WHAT IS IT?

Wild Parsnip is a Non-native and is an aggressive biennial/ perennial plant. Originally native to Europe and Asia. It was introduced to North America by European settlers and grown as a root vegetable. Over time, it escaped from cultivation and is now common throughout the U.S. including MN. The highest populations in the state are in the southeast region. **Wild Parsnip is legally regulated in Minnesota.**

WHERE IS IT COMING FROM?

Spreads Easily By

- Wind blowing the seeds
- Moving soil contaminated with seeds
- Mowing plants when they have gone to seed
- Haying plants when they have gone to seed



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www.eastpolkswcd.org

East Polk Soil and Water Conservation District

Our Mission

Our purpose is to assist landowners in applying proper practices for the conservation of soil erosion, land resource planning and development, utilization and management of the waters of the area, preserving our natural areas and the fish and wildlife which inhabit them.

A Resource for Landowners

We partner with County, State and Federal assets to bring dollars back to the community for water and soil health.

We strive to build win-win scenarios for private landowners, the surrounding watersheds, and for our natural resources.

Keep the Land Productive

While protection of natural resources is our focus, we also understand that private and working lands need to be used by landowners for landowners. We promote conservation practices that provide resource production at the same time.