CLEARWATER SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT | SUMMER 2025

Clearwater's Conservation Chronicles

Photo by: Chester Powell

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How are Your Trees Growing?

Did you or your little one attend Clearwater SWCD's Watch 'em Grow program as a first grader years ago?

Did you/they plant the tree?

How tall is the tree now?

Clearwater SWCD has been developing the Watch 'em Grow program for Clearwater County's first graders since 2014, and we are so curious to see how your trees are doing! We'd love to see your pictures of your trees planted from our program with you alongside them. If you'd like a chance to be in our newsletter, please send any pictures and the year planted to our email: ClearwaterSWCD1954@gmail.com. We're excited to see how they're doing!

Watch 'em Grow!

First Graders Learn About Planting Trees

First grade classes at Bagley Elementary and Clearbrook-Gonvick Schools had the chance to learn about planting trees while taking home a Sand Cherry tree of their very own.

First graders learned about what a tree needs to become successful, how pollinators have an impact on trees and the food they produce. They also learned how to take care of their own trees. First graders were able to plant their own tree in a peat pot with potting soil and received informational handouts about their trees, pollinators, and planting steps (along with some snacks, of course!).

Every spring before school lets out, Clearwater SWCD holds our annual Watch 'em Grow educational program for the first graders in Clearwater County.

Rain Barrels

Helping the Environment One Class at a Time

This spring on April 10th Clearwater SWCD hosted a Rain Barrel Education class at Bagley's Community Education room. Participants were instructed on how a rain barrel works and the environmental benefits of conserving rainwater. Staff explained how to install one on the participants own property and how to maintain rain barrels throughout the year. Each participant was then able to construct their own rain barrel with provided supplies with the help of SWCD staff. The class was successful, and every participant was able to take home their fully constructed rain barrel after the class!

A rain barrel captures water from rooftops and collects it in order to use it for gardening uses. Collecting water runoff from roofs can reduce the amount of water that can damage lawns and therefore prevent soil erosion. Rain barrels can help entire communities by reducing storm runoff which can accumulate pesticides, fertilizers and pet waste that can harm local natural bodies of water. Natural debris like sticks and leaves can also collect in the runoff and clog storm drains when it heavily rains. With rain barrels you can save money on water bills and conserve water during droughts.

A special thank you to the Bagley Public School Community Education for allowing us to put on this rain barrel class, NRCS for helping, and Corrie Uhlir & Shelley Sutton for sending in pictures of their completed rain barrels at home!

Keep an eye out for more community education classes during the year through our website, Facebook and Bagley's community education brochure.

Unused and Abandoned Well Sealing

Cost Share Available!

Unused and abandoned wells pose an uninterrupted avenue for the risk of pollutants to infiltrate aquifers and drinking water systems. Unused wells are found all throughout Clearwater County and Minnesota for a variety of reasons. Whether it is an abandoned homestead or when a well is found to no longer keep up with water supply demand and a new well is needed, the sealing of these old wells is strongly encouraged.

Clearwater SWCD has been offering cost share reimbursement for the sealing of unused wells for decades. For a landowner to be eligible for cost share reimbursement a few simple steps are required. Prior to any work being completed, a landowner needs to provide the SWCD with a quote for the well sealing services from a licensed well sealing company. Quotes are commonly found to be in the $800-$1200 range. In addition to the quote, an application needs to be completed with the SWCD office. Following the application the landowner will then work with the well drilling company to have the well sealed and state notification paperwork completed. Once completed, the landowner is to provide the SWCD with a copy of a paid receipt to complete the contract requirement. Then after the contract is approved at the monthly SWCD board meeting, the landowner will be issued a check for 50% of the well sealing expense up to $500. If you are looking to seal an unused or abandoned well please contact our office for more information or to get the process started.

See You at the Fair!

July 30th- August 3rd

The Clearwater County Fair will be from July 30th - August 3rd at the Clearwater County fairgrounds. We'll have our no-till drill alongside our booth to check out in the hockey arena. So come give us a visit and learn about all our programs while grabbing pollinator seeds, brochures, trinkets for kids, candy, AIS information and all kinds of fair food!

Native Seeds for Pollinators

A US Fish and Wildlife Service Partnership

Do you have a piece of land that you would like to plant native seeds on? The Clearwater SWCD is offering the opportunity to receive free native pollinator seed through a partnership with the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Parcels in Clearwater County between 1 and 10 acres are eligible for this program, and if a contract is signed, the parcel will need to remain managed as a pollinator planting for 10 years.

This fall we will be planting two parcels using one of our no-till drills. One parcel is 2 acres and transitions from wetland to dry sandy soils. We will be using 2 different seed mixes on that site to accommodate for soil conditions. The second parcel is 4 acres and has a fairly uniform soil throughout, so we will create one diverse seed mix for that site. We have a 10-acre parcel scheduled to be planted next fall, with a couple other interested landowners still undecided.

The goal of this program is to seed at least 50 acres with at least 10 different landowners before the middle of 2028. Site prep is very important in giving us our best chance for a successful planting. Clearwater SWCD will be performing the site prep on most of the sites to keep on schedule and ensure a successful planting. There are funding and time limitations, so contacting us sooner rather than later will help your chances of getting into this program. A summarized version of the contract is available on our website if you are interested in learning more. If this opportunity interests you, give us a call at our office and we can help you make this happen!

No-Till and Soil Health Training

Hosted by Clearwater SWCD!

On July 16th Clearwater SWCD hosted a no-till and soil health training in Shevlin. Participants were able to learn about the no-till drill set up, common maintenance, calibrations, setting seed depth and how to verify plantings. Common tillage equipment was available for attendees to observe as well. Participants were also walked through how to make a seed mixture and how to use tools to make a successful cover crop and hay/pasture plantings. Overall, it was a successful training to teach other SWCD's about no-till drilling! A big thank you to Matt Wilde for allowing us to host the training at his farm!

Clearwater County Rain Gage

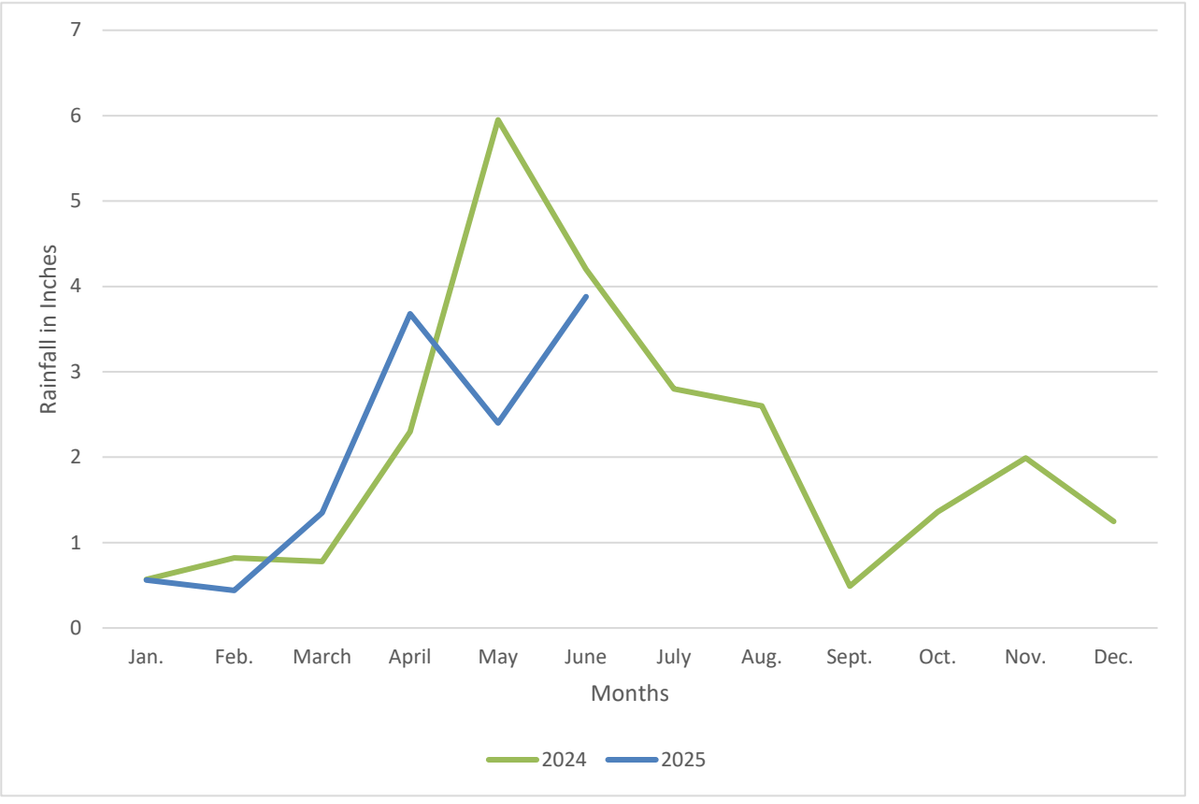
A Look at Rainfall for 2025 so Far

So far in 2025, January was fairly dry, but it seems like the summer months are making up for it. Looking at the daily rain gages our volunteers keep, it seems like half the days of each month are getting at least some sort of moisture. June has been our wettest month, so far, with an averaged 3.88 inches. Besides a few outliners, this year seems to have a *slow and steady* theme of rainfall and the entire state is currently drought free!

The derecho storm of the morning of June 21st was recorded by our volunteers featuring an average of 2.3 inches on June 20th/21st. Our volunteers have the option to give remarks on the weather on their logs and had described the storm as “severe t. storms,” “high winds” and “tornado”. One volunteer mentioned their power was out for 5 days on the log.

Clearwater SWCD, along with local volunteers, have been working with the Minnesota Climatology Network to gather rainfall data since 1978. We currently have volunteers collecting rainfall data in Falk, Greenwood, Minerva, Moose Creek, Popple, Itasca, Eddy and Rice townships. If you are in a township that does not have a volunteer and would like to become a part of our rain monitoring volunteers, give the office a call for more information. You can also check the rain gage data online, along with other weather information, at the MN State Climatology website: https://climateapps.dnr.state.mn.us/ .

Clearwater County Average Annual Rainfall 2024 & 2025

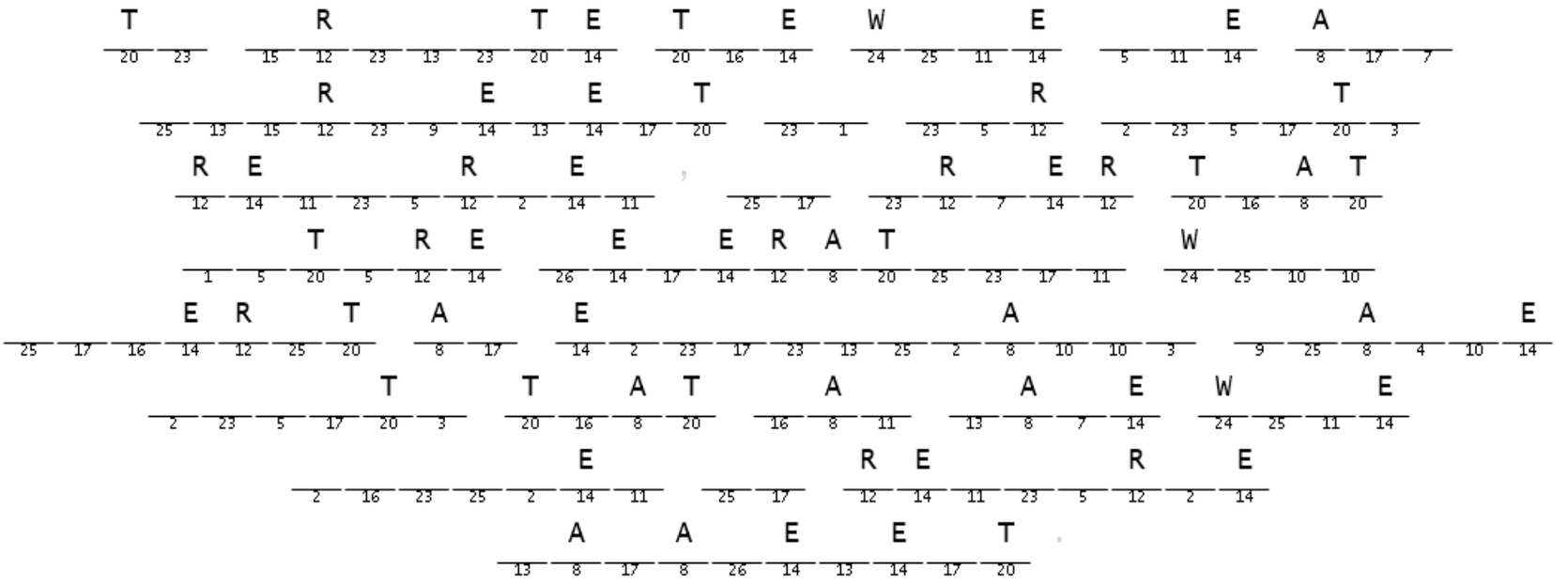


✲ Clearwater's Puzzle Page! ✲

This newsletter's event: Cryptogram

How To: Try to decode the message! Each letter in this particular phrase has been replaced with a number. We've given a few away to get you started.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
8				14													12		20			24			



Hint: The cryptogram contains an important phrase to the SWCD.

Hint 2: The cryptogram statement can be found in this newsletter and our website if you look wisely.