



# Clearwater's Conservation Chronicles



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Photo by: Chester Powell



# 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 Jack Pine or American Plum 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.

## Coffee and Cover Crops A Spring Soil Health Event

Last February Clearwater SWCD had their second annual Coffee, Cover Crops & Soil Health events. These events are typically held in the late winter/early spring and are catered towards producers that want to learn more about soil health or any of the programs the district offers.

A series of 5 separate meetings were held in and around the county and it was a fair success! Keep an eye out during next late winter for announcements of when the Coffee and Cover Crops will be held. We typically post on our Facebook page and website for such events. And don't worry, coffee and snacks are absolutely provided!

A huge thanks to all our venues for allowing us a place for the meetings!





# Rain Barrels

## Helping the Environment One Class at a Time

This spring on April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2024, 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 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.

Clearwater SWCD hopes to hold more community education classes in the future, so keep an eye out on our Facebook page or website for any more classes. We hope to expand into rain garden, pollinator gardens, composting and other urban conservation classes eventually.

A special thank you to the Bagley Public School Community Education for allowing us to put on this rain barrel class and NRCS for helping with the class!

# County Geologic Atlas

Work on the County Geologic Atlas (CGA) began for Clearwater County in January of 2024. The CGA is an effort to map the geology and groundwater of each county. Mapping in more than a third of Minnesota counties has already been completed, with more counties beginning every year. The role of Clearwater SWCD in this process is to accurately map locations of wells using well logs provided by the well drillers. Many well locations can be mapped using descriptions in the well logs and aerial imagery, but the more difficult wells will need to be visited in person to get a more accurate location.

Once all the wells are located by Clearwater SWCD, the mapping information is sent to the University of Minnesota so the Minnesota Geological Survey can complete their portion of the project. The Minnesota Geological Survey is responsible for the geologic maps showing the distribution of sediments and rocks across the county. After the geologic maps are produced, it is the responsibility of the Minnesota DNR to complete the last step in the process. The DNR will map the groundwater hydrology of the county, producing maps that will show water levels, flow direction, and water chemistry.

Clearwater SWCD has already completed the in-office portion of well locating. Next, we will be driving around the county and confirming locations of the wells we could not locate in office. Our vehicles will have our logo on them, and we will attempt to contact landowners when we arrive on site. More information on the CGA can be found on the websites of the University of Minnesota and the Minnesota DNR.



## See You at the Fair!

The Clearwater County Fair will be from July 31<sup>st</sup> through August 4<sup>th</sup> at Clearwater County fairgrounds. We'll have our no-till drill alongside our booth to check out. We'll even have some new merchandise. So come give us a visit and learn about all our programs while grabbing pollinator seeds, brochures, AIS information and all kinds of fair food!

## Soil is Alive on Highway 75

Staff and board members (John and Paul, pictured right) attended a soil demonstration tour this July in Grygla to learn about the value of soil health and the importance of soil organisms. The tour included an emphasis on the biological aspect of the soils ecosystem with lively discussions.





## How's it Growing?

### A Mid-Season Soil Health Update

Clearwater SWCD staff kicked off the soil health planting season way back in February with the start of our Coffee and Cover Crop series of meetings. These mid-winter meetings are a great opportunity for producers both new and seasoned to talk with one another about Soil Health practices and how they can make them work in their operation and the challenges they have faced along the way.

The first no-till planting of the season went in the ground on April 24<sup>th</sup> and from there on staff stayed busy through June running equipment and providing technical assistance to producers throughout the Clearwater and Southern Beltrami counties. Now that spring planting season has wrapped up and we are now in the dog days of summer, we get to visit with producers and get feedback on how no-till plantings are doing and start planning for fall cover crop planting season.

Now is a great time to go for a drive around the county to see how things are growing, when you do, please keep an eye out for our no-till planting signs on field edges. If you see one of these signs around the county, feel free to ask that farmer what they think of no-till. The growth and strength of our Soil Health Program is based on farmers talking with their neighboring farmers about soil health practices to build a network that can be relied on to help make all our crops flourish and help keep our waters clean.

In the coming weeks we will be putting together a self-guided soil health tour consisting of a map showing the field locations of many no-till and/or cover crop plantings throughout Clearwater and Beltrami Counties and a brief description of the plantings. Keep an eye out for it on our Facebook!

# Clearwater County Rain Gauge

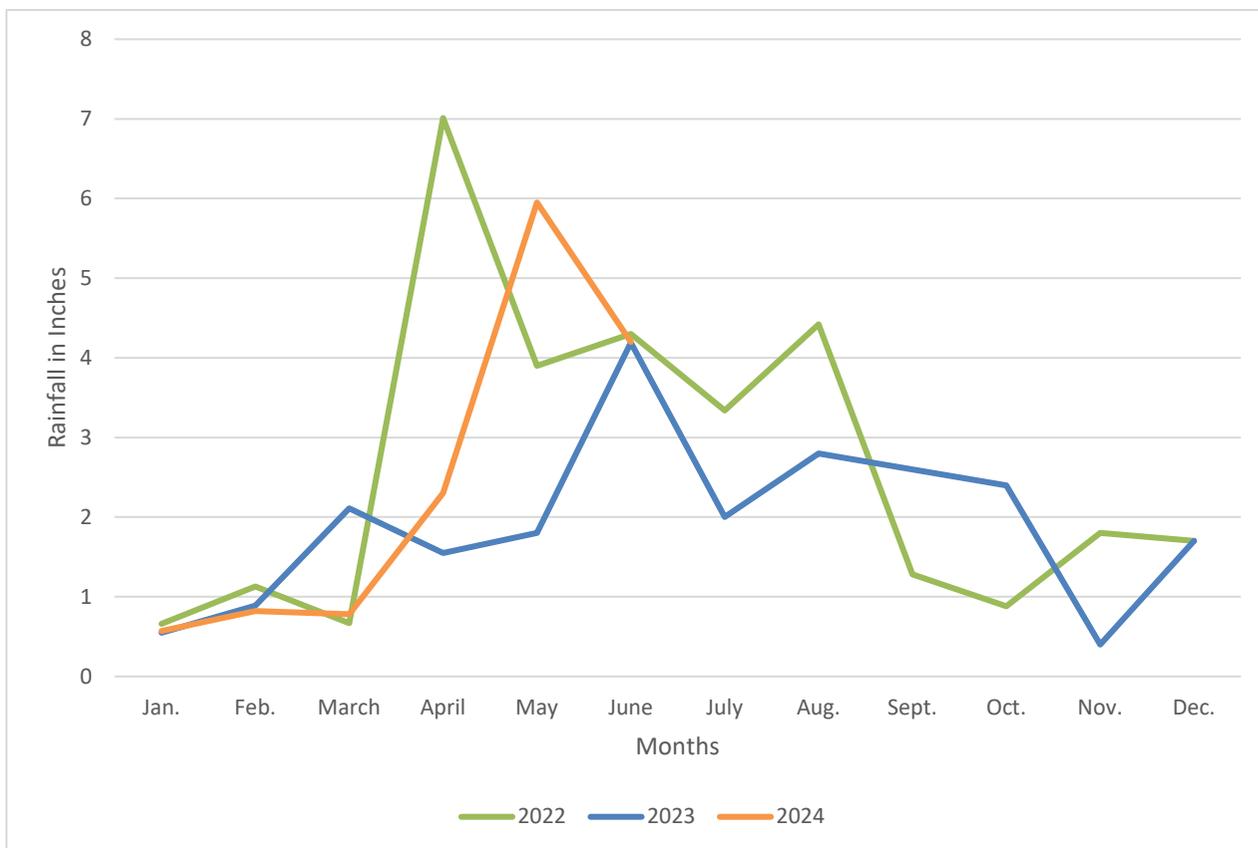
## A Look at Rainfall for 2024 so far

Clearwater County had an averaged total of 22.28 inches of rainfall in 2023. June was our wettest month with roughly 4 inches of precipitation and January being our driest with 0.62 inches of precipitation (converted from snow). The deep snowpack led to flooding in the spring but seemed to dry out by May. Though August had a decent amount of rainfall it did not bring us entirely out of the drought.

So far in 2024, January was fairly dry and snowless as winters go but it seems like the summer months are making up for the low snow winter. May has been our wettest month with 5.95 inches and the rain just seems to keep falling!

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.

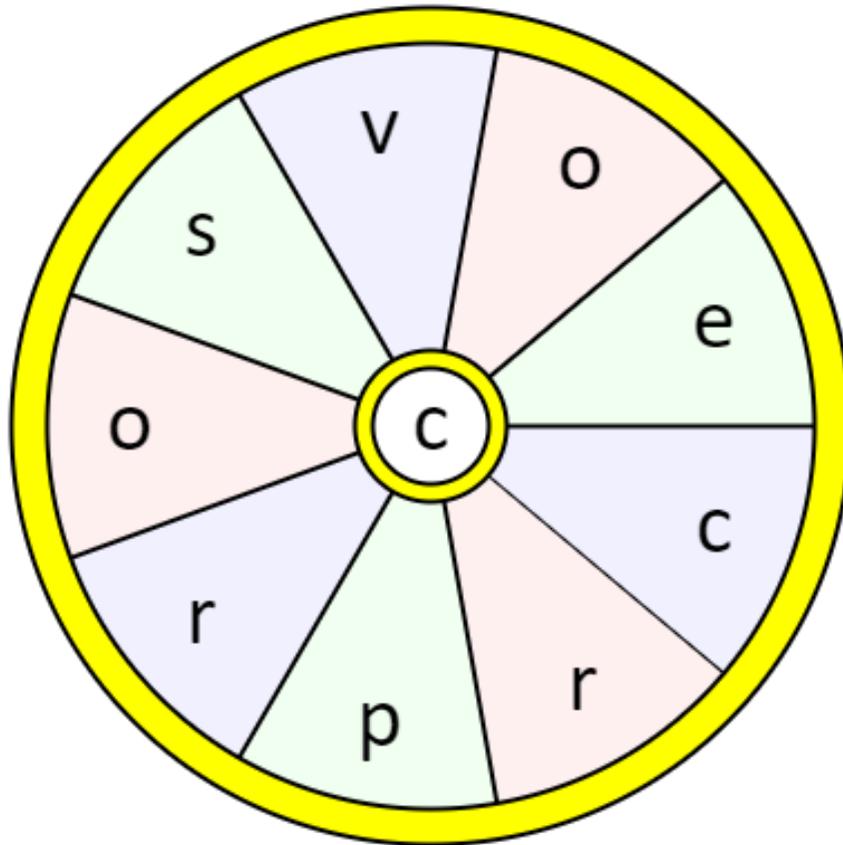
## Clearwater County Average Annual Rainfall 2022, 2023 & 2024



# ✱ Clearwater's Puzzle Page! ✱

This newsletter's event: **Word Wheel**

**How To:** Create as many words as possible with the letters in the word wheel. You can only use each letter once and every word must contain the letter in the center of the wheel.



**Bonus!** What 2 words were used to make this word wheel?

<b>Answers:</b>	corves	corse	core	cep
	corer	cosec	cose	coo
	cores	cover	cove	cop
	corps	covers	crop	cos
	covers	creps	orcs	eco
	scorer	crops	recs	orc
	scoop	scoop	rocs	rec
	soccer	scope	spec	roc
	coopers	score	ceroc	sec
	scoopier	voces	cocos	soc
	scorper	coers	coer	seps
	overcrop	coopar	coops	coco
	overcropps	copers	copar	coop
		corers	copas	soos
		corse	copse	cope

POSTAGE



# CLEARWATER

Soil & Water Conservation District

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Visit Our Website



## Mission:

Our mission is simple - to promote the wise use and improvement of our county resources, in order that future generations will inherit an economically viable county that has made wise choices in resource management.

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