

Rum River Watershed Partnership



Including SWCD and county partners from Aitkin, Anoka, Benton, Isanti, Kanabec, Mille Lacs, Morrison, Sherburne counties and the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe.

Biannual Agricultural News & Updates

July 2024

Greetings!

Find below in this Biannual e-Newsletter:

- **Upcoming field days and events in the area.**
- **Available financial assistance.**
- **Local farmer testimonials.**

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What is the Rum River Watershed Partnership?

Minnesota is shifting from county-level to watershed-scale water planning, also known as “one watershed, one plan”. Water doesn’t stop at county lines, so this makes plans more complete and consistent. The Rum River Watershed Partnership was formed as part of this effort.

The Rum River Watershed Partnership (RRWP) is a joint powers entity formed by 5 counties, 8 SWCDs, and the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe. The group’s purpose is to implement the state-approved Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan which was formed from local, public, and state input. The RRWP is funded primarily by grants and does not charge dues to its members. Grant funding exceeds \$500K/yr. Work is primarily accomplished by passing funds to members coordinating approved conservation projects that benefit our water resources.



Events

Rum River Watershed Soil Health Field Day

WHERE: Braun's Market (10 1st St, Pease, MN)

WHEN: August 5th, 5:30pm - 7:30pm

REGISTER HERE

Join us for an engaging Soil Health Field Day in Pease, MN, where you'll learn the principles of maintaining and improving soil health. On August 5th, 5:30 - 7:30, discover how to improve soil structure and protect your land. Extension Educator Gabi Bolwerk will cover the basics of soil health, tillage types, and equipment needs for each type. You will also learn about cost-share opportunities and connect with other farmers. Free to attend and dinner will be provided! For any questions please call 763-689-3271 or email Lgodfrey@isantiswcd.org

Minnesota Farm Fest

WHERE: 29366 County Highway 13, Morgan, MN 56266

WHEN: August 6th - 8th

Over three days, see a showcase products, services and technologies from over 500 exhibitors and vendors. Buy tickets [online here](#).

Boots on the Ground: Tips for Transitioning to No-Till

WHERE: 2611 17th St. N, Sartell, MN 56377

WHEN: August 9th 1:00 - 3:30pm

If you're curious about cover crops, transitioning to no-till and other practices that build more resilient soil, don't miss this chance to learn from the Udermann family.

Their farm includes a 1,000-acre row crop operation, which is 100% no-till, along with 80 dairy cows and 300 beef steers. They also grow cereal rye for seed, use cover crops extensively, custom-haul liquid and solid manure and do custom no-till planting and cover crop seeding.

REGISTER HERE

Soil Health Field Day at Jon Stevens Farm

WHERE: Maple Grove Farm- 10815 555th St, Rush City, MN 55069

WHEN: August 23, 9:00am - 3:00pm

This field day will feature keynote speaker Jay Fuhrer. Jon Stevens and Stephanie Mclain with the NRCS will also speak. Free to attend and lunch will be provided.

REGISTER HERE or call 612-600-4872

Soil Health Field Day

Free to attend and dinner will be provided!

Monday, August 5th
5:30pm - 7:30pm

Braun's Market
10 1st St, Pease, MN

Register at: bit.ly/SHFD8523



For questions email lgodfrey@isantiswcd.org or call 763-689-3271

Cost-Share Available for Agricultural Practices

Your county's Soil and Water Conservation District has funding for a variety of projects. Exact funding and rates vary in each area, so please reach out to your local SWCD for more information. Soil and Water Conservation Districts serve to help landowners install voluntary conservation practices through free technical or financial assistance.

There may be funding available for:

- Structural Projects, such as filter strips, water and sediment control basins, or livestock exclusions.
- Non-Structural Projects, such as cover crop, tillage management, or conversion to perennial crops.
- Protecting your land through a conservation easement.
- Reforesting your land.
- Sealing old wells.
- Wetland restorations.



Contact your County Soil and Water Conservation District to get started:

AITKIN SWCD: 218-927-7284

ANOKA CD: 763-434-2030

BENTON SWCD: 320-968-5300

ISANTI SWCD: 763-689-3271

KANABEC SWCD: 320-679-1391

MILLE LACS SWCD: 320-983-2160

MORRISON SWCD: 320-631-3551

SHERBURNE SWCD: 763-220-3434

Equipment Grant through MDA



The Soil Health Financial Assistance Grant provides cost-share for the purchase and retrofit of soil health equipment. Adopting soil health practices often requires expensive and specific pieces of equipment, creating a need for a cost-share opportunity to offset those costs. Another round of funding for the Soil Health Financial Assistance Program will open August 1, 2024.

Quick facts

- Covers purchase of new equipment, used equipment, and parts to retrofit existing equipment
- Awards range from \$500-\$45,000 (up to 50% cost share)
- Individual producers, producer groups, and local government units are eligible to apply
- Eligible equipment purchases must advance soil health in Minnesota
- These grants are competitive. Awarded contracts will last for 12 months
- This is a reimbursement grant. No purchases can be made before a grant contract is fully executed (after funding notifications are made)

To learn more and apply on the [Minnesota Department of Agriculture website](#).

A Farm Built for Conservation and Community

Tim Braun, a lifelong farmer with roots near Pease, Minnesota, is dedicated to learning new techniques to improve soil health. Growing up on a farm near Princeton, he helped his parents on their operation before earning a degree in agronomy. As an agronomist, he traveled around the state and learned from other farmers implementing practices to benefit their soil and crops. Now, Tim focuses his expertise on his own farm, aiming to leave the land better than he found it for his young sons, who are increasingly eager to follow in his footsteps.

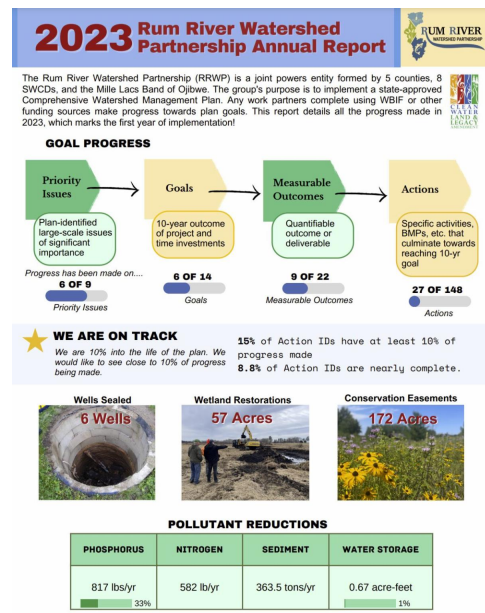
In 2017, Tim and his wife launched their farm operation, which has steadily grown, culminating in the establishment of Braun's Market two years ago. At the market, you can find various local products, including beef, chicken, bread mixes, honey, snacks, and a variety of gifts. The fresh meat they sell is sourced directly from their farm, where they raise cattle and chickens and grow corn, soybeans, and small grains. The market also serves a goal close to his wife, Renae's, heart as she grew up in a more urban environment: "She wanted to be able to connect her people with



stuff we're doing on the farm," Tim shares. This goal of connection shines through their work as they provide local goods to their community, both through their market and farm, while actively learning and sharing ways to produce sustainably.

Striving for conservation, Tim is willing to experiment with new practices on his land. Over the past two years, he has implemented strip-tilling to “reduce tearing up the soil completely and find ways to preserve a little bit of organic matter, carbon, and nutrients.” He is also incorporating cover crops to improve soil health and prevent erosion. Tim’s dedication to these practices demonstrates his commitment to sustainable farming and his vision of a thriving farm for future generations. Tim’s interest in innovative farming practices is fueled by the experiences shared by other farmers through his past work, field day events, and social media. He is now eager to share his knowledge with other farmers. The Rum River Watershed has partnered with an enthusiastic Tim Braun to host a soil health field day at his market, a direct result of his commitment to connect with others. Additionally, Tim now serves on the Mille Lacs Soil and Water Conservation District board, where he can provide a voice for local farmers and help guide the SWCD in finding ways to serve them best. At the field day, he hopes to share his advice with other farmers interested in conservation: “You got to jump in and try it.” Starting these new practices can be challenging but having those willing to share their experiences as a resource can help, as Tim advises, “develop networks of people that have done this and learn from people that have made mistakes before you make the mistakes.”

For Tim, conservation is about leaving the land better than he found it and ensuring future generations can continue farming sustainably. “Conservation means leaving something for my boys to find. I want them to have the same opportunities to do the same stuff I’ve been doing,” he reflects. By adopting and advocating for sustainable practices, Tim Braun sets an example, proving that the future of farming is filled with with knowledge, passion, and community support.



Watershed Annual Report

2023 was the first year of implementation for the Rum River Watershed Partnership! The Rum River Watershed, which includes most of Isanti County, put together a report detailing all of the progress it has made so far.

Highlights from the first year include:

- Preventing 817 pounds of phosphorus from entering waterbodies annually.
- Making progress on six out of nine large-scale priority issues.
- Hiring a Watershed Community Organizer to increase community engagement.

[Read the Annual Report](#)

Contact Details

If you have questions about this newsletter, please contact the Isanti SWCD.

Call Us

763-689-3271

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