



# Greater Blue Earth River Basin Alliance

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**DATE:** JUNE 12, 2020  
**TO:** GBERBA MEMBERS  
**FROM:** KAY GROSS and DAVID BUCKLIN, GBERBA COORDINATORS  
**SUBJECT:** COORDINATOR REPORT GBERBA EXECUTIVE MEETING

## **MN Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program**

Update on progress made in areas 5 and 6 – See Certification Specialist Reports. Over 580,000 acres and over 850 certified producers state wide!

GBERBA has the Area 5 and 6 MAWQCP administrative contract approved through 2021. The Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program is launching three new endorsements in addition to 10-year certification a farmer or landowner receives in the program. The endorsements are for soil health, integrated pest management, and wildlife.

## **2017 MPCA 319 Grant - Cover Crops and Alternative Tile Intakes**

An Implementation Policy Paper for the grant titled "Greater Blue Earth River Basin TMDL Implementation" has been developed and reviewed at the Technical meeting. This guidance document will be posted on the GBERBA website.

Cover crops: \$50.00 dollars per acre maximum, 50% cost share maximum (\$25.00 ac.), 80-acre size maximum per owner. Prioritization required. Alternative intakes: Rock and pattern tile. \$500.00 maximum and 50% cost share. These are federal dollars and require state or local match. Perforated risers, broom and other water quality intakes: \$200.00 maximum and 50% cost share. These are federal dollars and require state or local match.

The grant amendment has been completed and all remaining cost share for projects including Alternative intakes, Side inlets, and Cover crops will be at 50% cost share. **Grant End Date 8-31-2020**

**For 2020 the cover crop acre limits are removed. At this point the 50% cost share rate will continue.**

**GBERBA staff has requested an extension of this grant due to 2019 weather conditions and the Covid-19 outbreak.**

## **2017 CWF Grant- Multipurpose Drainage Management**

Multipurpose Drainage Management - \$301,200: Projects for this Drainage Grant will need to be located in public ditch sheds. **GBERBA member entire counties are eligible.** Priority parameters are developed to identify the eligible ditches. A guidance policy sheet is online.

A grant Work Plan Revision has been approved by the BWSR to allow for CAP 130 Drainage Water Management plans and for Structures for Water Control.

**Grant Amendment Agreement has been approved to extend the expiration date to 12-31-2020.**

## **One Watershed One Plan Planning Grants**

The Watonwan 1W1P Planning Project is ready to move into the Plan 60 day comment period. The Watonwan Policy Committee voted to further research GBERBA as the fiscal and reporting agent for the 1W1P Watonwan. The GBERBA Policy board has agreed to revise the Joint Powers Agreement to allow inclusion of 1W1P duties.

Le Sueur River and Des Moines River Watersheds planning partners are submitting RFPs for the 2020 One Watershed, One Plan Planning Grant.

## **Minnesota Conservation Corps Position**

**The Minnesota/Iowa Conservation Corps program decided to suspend AmeriCorps member field operations in Minnesota beginning on Friday, March 27. Ashley is still working from home with some office and field hours, with proper COVID-19 protocols.**

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DAVID BUCKLIN: Technical Coordinator  
KARI CLOUSE: Financial Coordinator

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# Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program

South Central MAWQCP Certification Specialist  
Serving the Counties of: Blue Earth, Brown, Faribault, LeSueur, Martin, McLeod, Nicollet, Renville, Sibley, Waseca, Watonwan



Greater Blue Earth River Basin Alliance



Herman Bartsch  
AREA 6 MAWQCP CERTIFICATION SPECIALIST  
May 20th, 2020

### Workload:

- Working with producers and SWCDs to complete assessments and certifications
- Assisting producers with MDA Grant Applications
- Cover Crop Plans
- Practice Plans
- Program Promotion
- Program Reviews
- Endorsements
- Field Verifications

AREA 6	Applications	Assessments	Certifications
Blue Earth SWCD	13	12	7
Brown SWCD	10	6	3
Faribault SWCD	27	21	13
LeSueur SWCD	14	9	4
Martin SWCD	12	6	5
McLeod SWCD	9	7	4
Nicollet SWCD	1	1	1
Renville SWCD	15	9	8
Sibley SWCD	3	3	3
Waseca SWCD	11	11	5
Watonwan SWCD	12	9	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>59</b>

Certified producers will be given "high priority" for Conservation Stewardship Program funding through NRCS.

Producers continue to use the MDA \$5,000 grant to install conservation practices that will address water quality concerns and help them gain certification.

MAWQCP is beginning to offer **three new endorsements** in addition to certification. Endorsements will recognize producers who are going above and beyond in the areas of **soil health, integrated pest management, and wildlife.**

The **Regional Conservation Partnership Program** with NRCS has been renewed for another **five years and nine million dollars.** This program offers a pot of EQIP money that producers can use to install conservation practices to help them become certified. Only certified producers, or those seeking certification have access to these funds.

### MAWQCP Numbers as of 5-18-20

- 875 producers certified
- 600,552 acres certified
- 1,830 new practices installed or planned to be installed
- Sediment delivery to surface waters reduced by 37,606 tons per year
- Soil loss reduced by 105,157 tons per year
- Phosphorus loss reduced by 46,561 lbs. of P per year
- 12 Soil Health Endorsements
- 13 IPM Endorsements
- 9 Wildlife Endorsements

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# Greater Blue Earth River Basin

May 21, 2020



DANIELLE EVERS

AREA 5 MAWQCP CERTIFICATION SPECIALIST

Serving the Counties of: Cottonwood, Jackson, Lac Qui Parle, Lincoln, Lyon, Murray, Nobles, Pipestone, Redwood, Rock, & Yellow Medicine

### Projects and Workload:

- Continuing to “meet” with producers for assessments, mapping, & uploading documents for state verification
- Assisting producers in submitting MAWQCP Cost-Share Grant Applications
- Working on program promotion, and story map participation
- Contacting producers about endorsements
- Working to line up phone assessments and program reviews.
- Doing field reviews

### Events:

- May 14<sup>th</sup> –Pipestone Board Meeting Presentation
- May 20<sup>th</sup> –MN Ag Water Quality ACS Meeting/Conference Call

### Program Updates and Information:

- Endorsements for Integrated Pest Management (IPM), Wildlife Habitat, & Soil Health available for certified producers.
  - Endorsement information now added to my Year to Date Numbers
- **WRE dollars available** for 30 year & permanent easements. Please contact me if you know of an interested producer.
- Grant applications still available for up to **\$5,000 75%** cost-share through the MDA for producers
- MAWQCP has certified over **875 farms**, including over **600,552 acres** with **1,830 new BMP's**
- Estimated benefits include: **37,606 tons** of TSS reduced per year, **105,157 tons** soil reduced per year, **46,561 lbs** Phosphorous reduced per year, **37,734 CO<sub>2-e</sub> tons** per year
- **12** Soil Health Endorsements, **13** Integrated Pest Management Endorsements, **9** Wildlife Endorsements

## YEAR TO DATE NUMBERS

Area 5	Applications	Assessments Completed	Actively Pursuing Cert.	Certifications	Endorsements		
					IPM	Soil Health	Wildlife
Cottonwood	33	31	1	15	0	0	0
Jackson	34	31	2	17	2	2	0
Lac Qui Parle	6	6	0	4	0	0	0
Lincoln	21	19	0	7	1	0	1
Lyon	16	14	1	7	0	0	0
Murray	15	13	0	10	0	0	0
Nobles	14	14	0	10	0	0	0
Pipestone	42	38	2	18	0	0	0
Redwood	35	34	1	22	0	0	0
Rock	20	16	1	11	0	0	0
Yellow Med.	28	28	5	11	0	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>263</b>	<b>244</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>

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## COTTONWOOD SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

**DATE:** May 28, 2020

**NAME:** Josh Votruba  
Watershed Technician

**Topics:** Past Events, Upcoming Events, Working on

### **Past Events:**

- Apr 22 – GBERBA Technical Meeting (WebEx)
- Apr 22 – Watonwan 1W1P Steering Team Meeting (WebEx)
- Apr 29 – Watonwan 1W1P Steering Team Meeting (WebEx)
- May 8 – GBERBA Policy Meeting (WebEx)
- May 13 – Des Moines 1W1P Meeting (Conference Call)
- May 20 – Watonwan 1W1P Policy Committee Meeting (WebEx)
- May 27 – GBERBA Technical Meeting (WebEx)

### **Upcoming Events:**

- June 12 – GBERBA Executive Meeting (webEx)

### **Working on:**

- *Watonwan River One Watershed, One Plan:* Assisted the Watonwan 1W1P Steering Team with consolidating the Steering Team & Stage Agency comments for the draft of the Watonwan River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan. The Steering Team and Stage Agency representatives had the opportunity to review and comment on the first full draft of the plan. On the April 15, April 22, and April 29 Steering Team Meetings the Steering Team discussed changes needed to the draft plan and clarified comments made on the draft plan. Starting May 21 the 60 day review period will start for the Watonwan Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan. The draft plan will be sent out to review authorities such as the State Agencies (BWSR, MPCA, DNR, MDA, MDH), Townships, Cities, Counties, and SWCDs. This 60-day comment period closes July 20<sup>th</sup>.
- *GBERBA Grant 37 Cover Crops:* Continue to work with landowners within Cottonwood County on the GBERBA cover crop cost-share. In addition, recently I have attended various cover crop meetings and have met with Cottonwood County landowners to discuss the possibility of starting a cover crop group in Cottonwood County.
- *MDM Grant 39:* Continue to assist GBERBA with MDM Grant Reporting.
- *Des Moines River One Watershed, One Plan:* Have been working on gathering together reports and studies such as County Water Plans, State Plans such as TMDLs, and Wellhead Protection Plans in preparation for the Des Moines River One Watershed One Plan. I have begun work on putting together a Land & Water Resources Narrative for the Des Moines 1W1P.



## Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program

Agriculture and Water Outreach Corpsmember  
Conservation Corps of MN & IA  
Ashley Broussard



Greater Blue Earth River Basin Alliance



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May 21st 2020

### Workload:

- Assisting Herman and Danielle with mapping assessed fields in the MAWQCP mapping tool and assessment tool
- Attended producer meetings with Herman
- Level 1 MAWQCP certification reviews

### Projects and Events:

- Tree planting in Cottonwood County
- Work with MAWQCP and contacting newly certified producers
- Level 1 certification reviews

### Upcoming Events:

- Continue work with MAWQCP mapping and assessment tool
- Continue working on writing producer stories and contacting producers

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