



**Renville**  
COUNTY  
Service · Stewardship · Shared Responsibility

## Environmental Services



# 2024 Annual Report

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#### ESSD STAFF SUPPORT

## **PLANNING**

### **ZONING ADMINISTRATION**

#### **1. Land Use Ordinance.**

Staff reviews the Land Use Ordinance annually, and recommended changes are brought to the Planning Commission. In 2024, amendments were adopted for Chapter One (Administration) and Chapter Two (Zoning Regulations). Chapter Seventeen (Cannabis Land Use Regulations) was approved.

#### **2. Shoreland Management Regulations.**

The Lake Allie/Preston Lake area continues to be an area in the County of ongoing development. Environmental Services staff spends time performing site visits in this area to ensure compliance of the Shoreland Management Regulations. Activities performed include site plan reviews, subdivision reviews, shoreline alteration reviews, rain garden inspections, ordinary high water and setback determinations, and compliance inspections.

#### **3. Subdivision Regulations.**

In 2001, Environmental Services began implementing Subdivision Regulations. When a land split is brought to the County Recorder's office for recording, the deed and any supporting development information (survey, etc.) are forwarded to Environmental Services for review in light of the Subdivision Regulations and other pertinent sections of the Land Use Ordinance.

During 2024, staff reviewed and approved 67 minor subdivision land splits.

#### **4. Land Use Permits/Complaints.**

Environmental Services is charged with administration of the Land Use Ordinance and areas of the Nuisance Ordinance dealing with the environment/land use. The following tables note the number of permits and investigations undertaken over the past five years:

##### Land Use Permit Breakdown

	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>
New House	9	10	5	11	11
House Addition	7	8	3	8	10
Garage/Garage Addition	8	7	7	5	3
Bin	17	13	7	18	12
Livestock Building	2	5	7	5	12
Building/Building Addition	22	24	40	39	32
Solar Energy Conversion System (Commercial)	2	5	3	2	5
Solar Energy Conversion System (Personal)	0	1	1	6	1
Other	<u>13</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>11</u>
TOTAL	80	89	93	110	97

Nuisance/Zoning Complaint Investigation Breakdown

	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>
Zoning Violations	2	4	1	7	2
Feedlots	4	4	0	2	0
General Environmental	1	1	1	2	0
Other (CUP/IUP Conditions)	8	3	4	3	4

Compliance Inspections

	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>
CUP	22	38	51	42	75
IUP	29	29	21	17	0
Variance	16	32	32	16	7
Land Use Permits	6	5	7	9	9

**BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT AND APPEALS**

The Board of Adjustment and Appeals members include:

Carl E. Rudeen – District 1	12/31/2026 (term expiration)
Jeffrey T. Ruff – District 2	12/31/2026 (term expiration)
Helen A. Ruebel – District 3	12/31/2025 (term expiration)
James Boersma – District 4	12/31/2024 (term expiration)
Paul D. Hamre – District 5	12/31/2025 (term expiration)
ES Director – Secretary	

The Board of Adjustment and Appeals hears and makes decisions regarding Administrative Appeals, Variances, and Official Map appeals. The five-member Board meets on the fourth Thursday of each month (unless there are no public hearings scheduled) at 8:30 a.m. in Suite 313 of the Renville County Government Services Center. One member is appointed by the Renville County Board of Commissioners from each of the five commissioner voting districts. Members serve three-year terms with a term limit of 12 consecutive years. Each Board member is paid a per diem of \$75 per meeting plus compensation for mileage to and from meetings and site visits.

The following actions were taken by the Board of Adjustment and Appeals in 2024 as compared to the previous years:

	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>
Meetings	4	3	4	5	2
Variance Hearings	5	5	4	6	1
Administrative Appeals	0	0	0	0	0
Official Map Appeals	0	0	0	0	0
Corrective Action	0	0	1	0	0

2024 Variances

<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Request</b>	<b>Zone</b>	<b>Board of Adjustment and Appeals Action</b>
C & N Livestock Farms LLC	Variance to allow operation of existing feedlot that does not comply with minimum required setback from livestock feedlot to residential dwelling.	A	Approved 12/19/2024

## **PLANNING COMMISSION**

The Planning Commission members include:

Jeffrey A. Kramer – District 1	12/31/2025 (term expiration)
Leif T. U'Ren – District 2	12/31/2026 (term expiration)
Helen A. Ruebel – District 3	12/31/2025 (term expiration)
Austin J. Neubauer – District 4	12/31/2024 (term expiration)
Steve A. Santjer – District 5	12/31/2026 (term expiration)
Neal Johnson – At-Large	12/31/2024 (term expiration)
Joel W. Harmoning – At-Large	12/31/2025 (term expiration)
ES Director – Secretary	

The seven-member Commission meets on the second Monday of each month at 6:00 p.m. in Suite 313 of the Renville County Government Services Center. One member is appointed by the Renville County Board of Commissioners from each of the five commissioner voting districts with two members selected at-large. Members serve three-year terms with a term limit of 12 consecutive years. Each Commission member is paid a per diem of \$75 per meeting plus compensation for mileage to and from meetings and site visits.

The Planning Commission has the following duties and responsibilities:

1. Study, report, and make recommendations on amendments to the official controls including the Ordinance and Official Maps and the Comprehensive Plan prior to adoption of the amendment by the Renville County Board of Commissioners.
2. Conduct public hearings, review all applications, and prepare a report and recommendation to the Renville County Board of Commissioners on the following:
  - A. Conditional Use Permits and Interim Use Permits.
  - B. Major plats for subdivisions of land.
  - C. Planned unit developments.
  - D. Plans for public land acquisition and development.
3. Conduct hearings and make recommendations to the Renville County Board of Commissioners on alleged violations of conditions contained in Conditional Use Permits and Interim Use Permits.
4. Other duties as the Renville County Board of Commissioners may prescribe.

The following actions were taken by the Planning Commission in 2024 as compared to the previous years:

	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>
Meetings	6	9	8	7	8
Conditional Use Permits	7	10	7	7	5
Interim Use Permits	0	3	2	3	5
Ordinance New or Amendments	2	2	1	0	3
Map Amendments	1	1	0	2	1
Plats	0	0	0	0	0
Corrective Action	0	0	1	0	0

2024 Conditional Use Permits

<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Request</b>	<b>Zone</b>	<b>County Board Action</b>
Schwartz Family, LLC (Randal N. Freiborg Trust)	CUP to allow construction of 990-animal unit (3,300-head finishing) swine production feedlot.	A	Approved 02/27/2024
Southern Minnesota Beet Sugar Cooperative (Broderius Family Partnership LP and David M. Broderius)	CUP to allow expansion of existing agricultural commodity storage facility (beet piling site).	A	Approved 02/27/2024
Tillman Infrastructure, LLC (Solem, Joan M. and Stephen J.)	CUP to allow construction of telecommunication tower greater than 200 feet in overall height.	A	Approved 03/26/2024
Beck's Superior Hybrids, Inc.	CUP to allow construction of facility for retail sales and service use, warehousing and distributing use, wholesale business use, and commercial grain and agricultural commodity storage facility.	C/I	Approved 09/24/2024
East River Electric Power Cooperative (Southern Minnesota Beet Sugar Cooperative)	CUP to allow major essential service (electrical substation).	C/I	Approved 12/20/2024

2024 Interim Use Permits

<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Request</b>	<b>Zone</b>	<b>County Board Action</b>
Bergstrom, Chad and Kim (Wulkan, Brad and Wendy Lee)	IUP to allow Home Occupation, Level II (commercial dog kennel).	A	Approved 01/23/2024
L&S Construction Corp. (Kubesh, Jean R.)	IUP to allow mining, extraction, and processing of minerals (gravel).	A	Approved 04/23/2024
Central Specialties, Inc. (Kubesh, Jean R.)	IUP to allow temporary asphalt plant.	A	Approved 05/28/2024
Duininck, Inc. (Haug Family Trust)	IUP to allow temporary asphalt plant.	A	Approved 05/28/2024
Nelson, Jessica Renee and Jonathan Carl	IUP to allow commercial dog kennel.	A	Approved 05/28/2024

2024 Ordinance Amendments

<b>Amendments</b>	<b>County Board Action</b>
Chapter One (Administration)	Approved 03/26/2024
Chapter Two (Zoning Regulations)	Approved 03/26/2024
Chapter Seventeen (Cannabis Land Use Regulations) - NEW	Approved 05/20/2024

2024 Map Amendments

<b>Amendments</b>	<b>County Board Action</b>
Beck's Superior Hybrids, Inc. - Rezone from UE to C/I part of SE4 of NW4 of NE4 of 11-115-35	Approved 09/24/2024

2024 Plats

<b>Plat</b>	<b>County Board Action</b>
NONE	

**ENVIRONMENT**

**ADMINISTRATION**

**1. Subsurface Sewage Treatment System (SSTS).**

Environmental Services reviewed the designs and inspected the installation of 45 septic systems in 2024. The number of system design types installed over the past five years is:

<u>Type I Systems</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>
Rock-Filled Trench	1	0	0	1	0
Gravelless Pipe Trench	0	0	0	0	0
Chamber Trench	3	0	1	0	0
Seepage Bed	9	14	6	4	1
Mound	41	44	34	38	35
At-Grade	10	5	6	3	4
Tank Only	0	4	0	1	2
 <u>Type II Systems</u>					
Holding Tank/Privies	4	6	12	10	3

There has been a total of 1,843 systems installed since 1999. Below notes the total number of systems installed over the past five years:

<u>Year</u>	<u>SSTS Permits</u>	<u>Installations</u>
2020		68
2021		73
2022		59
2023		57
2024		<u>45</u>
TOTAL		302

It is estimated that over 631 septic systems (25.5%) have not been inspected and have a high potential of being noncompliant. There are a total of 2,474 homes (per Renville County Assessor’s office) that reside out of city limits and are required to have a septic system.

**2. Mining.**

Staff normally conducts inspections of permitted mines yearly to determine if they were in compliance with Chapter Seven (Mining Regulations) of the Land Use Ordinance and the conditions of their Interim Use Permits (IUPs). Due to staff shortage, there were no mining inspections conducted in 2024.

**3. Feedlot Program.**

Renville County is a state-delegated feedlot county through the MPCA. The feedlot program offers information and education to feedlot producers along with permitting of feedlots with capacities of less than 1,000 animal units (based on state calculations). Environmental Services staff work to ensure that all areas of the feedlot program are adequately developed to meet the goals of assisting all feedlot owners to achieve compliance with all federal, state,



and County rules and regulations. Renville County currently has 345 feedlots of which 277 are required to be registered. We currently conduct inspections on 219 of the 277 feedlots once every four years. The remaining 58 feedlots are state permitted and fall under the responsibility of the MPCA. There are currently 68 feedlots that are not required to be registered because they are under 10 animal units located in the Shoreland District or under 50 animal units in the non-Shoreland District. These sites are surveyed once every four years to keep track of livestock numbers. The following achievements were accomplished in 2024:

- Attended feedlot conferences, trainings, and meetings.
- Conducted 21 compliance inspections.
- Closed one feedlot.
- Assisted state feedlot producers with applications.
- MPCA annual review for 2023 found Renville County met all applicable program requirements.

The number and type of feedlot inspections over the past five years are as follows:

	<u>Feedlot Inspections</u>				
	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>
Compliance	71	49	60	65	21
New Feedlot Construction Site	0	0	0	0	0
Complaints	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
TOTAL	75	53	60	65	21

#### **4. Water Planning Projects and Programs.**

In 1989, the Renville County Board of Commissioners adopted a resolution to develop the County's first Comprehensive Local Water Management Plan. The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) approved the Plan in 1991. Renville County has revised the Water Plan four times since 1991. The current Water Plan was approved by BWSR and adopted for implementation by the Renville County Board of Commissioners on August 13, 2013. The Water Plan was effective for a 10-year period until June 26, 2023, with the five-year Implementation Plan having expired in June 2018.

In December 2022, BWSR approved Renville County's request to extend our Water Plan until December 31, 2026, in order to transition to One Watershed, One Plan (1W1P) watershed planning. 1W1P is a process established by BWSR to assist in developing a Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (CWMP). According to BWSR, the new Plan intends to increase efficiencies in both planning and resources by establishing one plan based on watershed boundaries, rather than several smaller plans based on county boundaries, such as our current Comprehensive Local Water Management Plan. The goal of 1W1P is to establish priorities to protect and improve both surface water and ground water resources on a watershed basis. BWSR is encouraging all Local Water Plans to transition to watershed plans by 2025.

**Hawk Creek – Middle Minnesota Watersheds**  
**(BWSR Planning Area #53, Central Minnesota River Watershed Partnership)**  
**(see attached map)**

In 2019, planning partners from Chippewa, Kandiyohi, and Renville Counties and Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) began the planning process of developing a CWMP for the Hawk Creek watershed and portions of the Middle Minnesota watershed. This area encompasses approximately 71% of the watershed area in Renville County. This area also includes a small portion of Nicollet and Sibley Counties, who chose to “opt out” of the planning process.

The project was awarded a \$251,000 planning grant from BWSR. The plan was created and submitted to BWSR for approval in 2021. BWSR approved the plan on January 26, 2022, and the Renville County Board of Commissioners adopted the plan on February 22, 2022. This Plan is now in the implementation phase and is effective for a 10-year period until January 26, 2032.

**High Island Watershed**  
**(BWSR Planning Area #55, Lower Minnesota River West)**  
**(see attached map)**

In August 2019, the Lower Minnesota River West watershed (the area often referred to as the High Island Watershed) received notification that the planning area was awarded a \$237,000 planning grant from BWSR. The planning area includes Carver, McLeod, Nicollet, Renville, and Sibley Counties. Renville County and Renville County SWCD “opted out” as a “Required Partner” for Plan development due to the small percentage of watershed area located in the County; however, Renville County will be able to utilize the Plan to replace the Comprehensive Local Water Management Plan and have access to future implementation funds. Renville County adopted a resolution in February 2023 for the adoption and implementation of the Plan contingent on the BWSR Board’s approval. BWSR then approved the Plan in March 2023, and the Lower Minnesota River West Policy Advisory Committee adopted the plan in April 2023. This Plan is now in the implementation phase and is effective for a 10-year period until March 2033.

**South Fork of the Crow River Watershed**  
**(BWSR Planning Area #13, South Fork of the Crow River)**  
**(see attached map)**

In September 2019, discussions began regarding a 1W1P process for the South Fork of the Crow River Watershed. This area covers the northeast portion of Renville County as well as portions of Carver, Kandiyohi, Meeker, McLeod, Sibley, Wright, and Hennepin Counties. Renville County is a Required Partner in the planning process with approximately 26% of the planning area being in Renville County. The area also includes the Buffalo Creek Watershed District.

The Renville County Board of Commissioners approved a Resolution in May 2020 expressing intent to participate in the 1W1P process and support a planning grant application to BWSR. In August 2021, BWSR selected the South Fork of the Crow River Watershed planning area for a planning grant. The Plan was created and submitted to BWSR for approval in 2023-2024. BWSR approved the Plan on March 26, 2024. The Plan is now in the implementation phase and is effective for a 10-year period until March 2034.

**Minnesota River – Mankato Watershed**  
**(BWSR Planning Area #22, Minnesota River - Mankato)**  
*(see attached map)*

In June 2023, the Minnesota River – Mankato Watershed made application for a planning grant from BWSR. The planning area includes Blue Earth, Brown, Le Sueur, Nicollet, Renville, Sibley, and Watonwan Counties. Renville County and Renville County SWCD “opted out” as a “Required Partner” for Plan development due to the small percentage (.1% of the land area in the watershed boundary) of watershed area located in the County; however, Renville County will be able to utilize the Plan to replace the Comprehensive Local Water Management Plan and have access to future implementation funds. The Plan is still in the planning stage.

**BWSR Local Water Management Natural Resource Block Grant (NRBG)**

Renville County was awarded Local Water Management NRBG funds in the amount of \$19,177 to assist with implementing programs designed to protect and improve water resources.

In 2024, the following water planning projects and programs were completed:

- Provided cost-share to seal one abandoned well.
- Continued water quality sampling of Lake Allie, Preston Lake, and connecting streams.
- Provided funding for a cover crop cost-share program.
- Provided funding to the Hawk Creek Watershed Project to assist with staff activities relating to water quality improvement projects.
- Provided funding to the Renville County SWCD for technical assistance services (i.e., cost-share programs for well sealing and cover crops, eLINK reporting, and other best management practices).

**5. Minnesota Department of Ag – AgBMP Loan Program.**

Since 1995, Renville County has successfully utilized AgBMP funding to assist rural residents with upgrading failing septic systems, purchasing minimum tillage equipment, financing manure handling equipment, and helping landowners with feedlot improvements. In 2012, Renville County established themselves as a Local Lender to provide a financing resource for rural landowners in need of assistance to update deteriorating or contaminated drinking water wells. Historically, Environmental Services has completed approximately 320 loans encompassing over \$6 million.

In 2024, Renville County acted as the lender for the construction/repair of nine wells with AgBMP funding. We helped to coordinate, with outside lenders, the purchase of a field cultivator, ripper, planter, chopping head, vertical tillage machine, sprayer with automatic shut offs, and a manure management improvement project.

AgBMP Loans

	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>
Well Construction or Repair	\$168,473	\$243,003	\$75,980	\$219,989	\$202,534
Number of Loans	10	11	4	10	9
Ag Waste /					
Manure Application Equipment	0	0	\$549,707	\$393,113	\$604,675
Number of Loans	0	0	3	4	8

**6. Minnesota Pollution Control Agency – Low-Interest Loan Program.**

Septic Loan Program:

Since 2001, Renville County has utilized the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) Clean Water Partnership Watershed Loan Program to assist rural residents with upgrading failing septic systems. Environmental Services has completed approximately 501 septic loans encompassing over \$4.9 million. In 2019, the MPCA Clean Water Partnership Watershed Loan Program expired in each of the watersheds. In 2020, Renville County received \$900,000 in loan funds to create a new countywide septic loan program. In 2022, Renville County was awarded an additional \$400,000 to continue the loan program. In 2023, Renville County was awarded an additional \$220,000 to continue the loan program until May 8, 2024. In the spring of 2024, Renville County applied for a new loan from the MPCA to continue the septic loan program. The application was approved, and Renville County was awarded \$750,000 in loan funds to be used by May 2027.

<b>Year</b>	<b># Loans</b>	<b>MPCA</b>
2020	28	\$362,132
2021	19	\$246,833
2022	18	\$260,688
2023	17	\$320,980
2024	19	\$331,272

Lake Allie ESSD Wastewater Collection System Project Loan Program:

In 2020, an application was submitted to the MPCA Clean Water Partnership Loan Program to establish a new program where loan funds could be utilized to upgrade the centralized wastewater collection system for properties located near Lake Allie. Renville County was awarded \$700,000 in loan funds to be used by property owners for the necessary wastewater system improvements. Due to substantial changes to the proposed design by the MPCA, the cost of the proposed project will be approximately \$900,000. In 2022, the MPCA awarded an additional \$300,000 to the Lake Allie ESSD loan program after reducing the amount that was awarded to our Drainage System Loan Program by \$300,000. In 2023, the MPCA awarded an additional \$708,000 through Amendment 2 (\$508,000 of which was remaining funds from the drainage system loan closed in 2023, and \$200,000 awarded to fully fund the project). With the addition of these funds, the new loan total was \$1,708,000. All funding requests were submitted to the MPCA by November 2024. The final loan total is \$1,648,818. The loan expired on November 20, 2024, and a Final Progress Report was submitted to the MPCA in December 2024. The Report was approved.

<b>Year</b>	<b># of Disbursements</b>	<b>MPCA Funds Spent</b>
2023	3	\$1,226,782
2024	4	\$422,036

**7. Minnesota Pollution Control Agency/BWSR – Income-Based SSTS Grant Program.**

In 2021, an application was submitted to the MPCA to establish a new income-based SSTS grant program. Renville County was awarded funds in 2021-2024. An application was developed and income guidelines were set based on the agency’s guidance. The grant pays 50% or 75% of the cost to update a failing system dependent on income.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Awarded from MPCA</b>	<b>Awarded from BWSR</b>	<b>Funds Expire</b>
2022	\$35,447	\$25,450	12/31/2023
2023	\$5,066		12/31/2024
2024	\$32,969		12/31/2025

<b>Year</b>	<b># Grants</b>	<b>MPCA</b>	<b>BWSR</b>
2022	5	\$24,943	\$25,000
2023	1	\$11,000	\$450
2024	2	\$28,826	

## **ESSD ADVISORY COUNCIL**

The ESSD Advisory Council members include:

Richard DeRock	12/31/2024 (term expiration)
Ronald W. Cleland	12/31/2025 (term expiration)
Dean Bloemke	12/31/2026 (term expiration)
Michael J. Knodel	Unlimited
Randy Pederson	12/31/2024 (term expiration)
Randy Kramer – Commissioner	Ex Officio
Doug Erickson – Commissioner	Ex Officio (Alternate)
Jerome Schueller – System Operator	Ex Officio
ES Director – System Administrator	Ex Officio

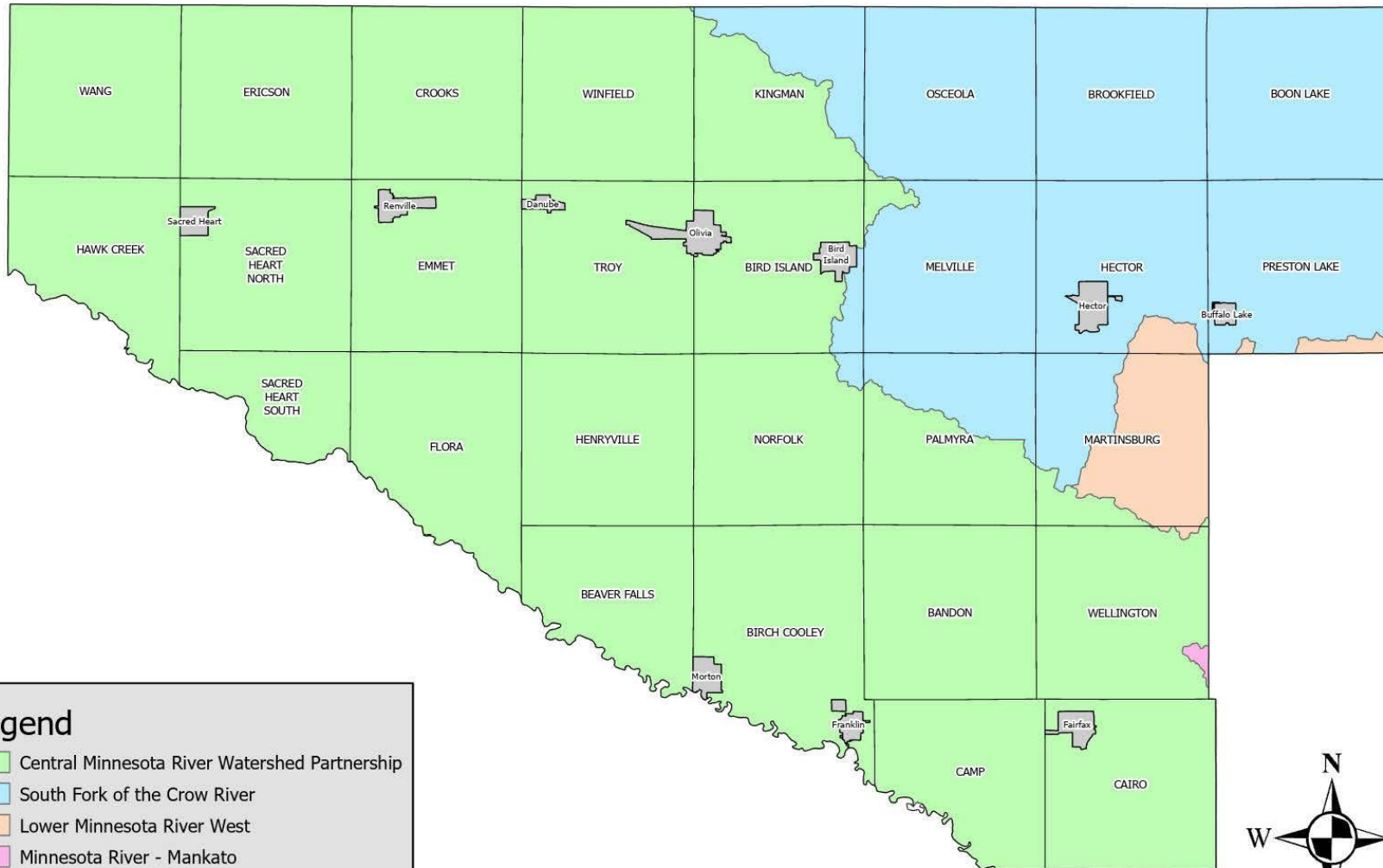
The eight-member Advisory Council meets quarterly. The five voting members represent ESSD property owners and the Oakdale Golf Club. Voting members serve three-year terms with a term limit of nine consecutive years with the exception of the Oakdale Golf Club representative whose term is unlimited.

## **ESSD STAFF SUPPORT**

The original Lake Allie Waste Treatment Project was completed in 2001 with initial startup in September 2001. Construction of the new wastewater treatment facility was completed in February 2024. The new system has the capacity to serve 80 dwellings including the Oakdale Golf Club. The community sewer system currently serves 64 users including the Oakdale Golf Club. Environmental Services staff spent considerable time working on the following ESSD issues:

- Provided staff support to the ESSD Advisory Council on Ordinance interpretation and recommendation for monthly service fee and consulting services.
- Worked with System Operator and ESSD Advisory Council on budget, recordkeeping, and operator agreement for 2024.
- Administered overall system operations and fiscal management.
- Continued to assist with the development of the wastewater treatment facility capital improvement plan.
- Worked closely with Stantec Consulting Services Inc. on new wastewater treatment facility plans.
- Worked with Septic Check on the construction of the new wastewater treatment facility.
- Sent assessment letters to property owners noting the assessment that will be placed on their property starting in 2025.

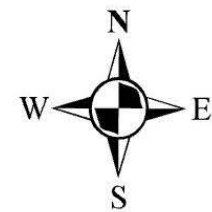
## Renville County One Watershed, One Plan Boundaries



### Legend

- Central Minnesota River Watershed Partnership
- South Fork of the Crow River
- Lower Minnesota River West
- Minnesota River - Mankato
- Townships
- Municipal Boundaries

0    2    4    8    12    16 Miles



Author: JM Created: 1/28/25