



**Renville**  
COUNTY

Service · Stewardship · Shared Responsibility

## Environmental Services



# 2022 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 2022, Ordinance amendments were adopted for Chapter Eleven (Official Map Regulations).

#### **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 2022, staff reviewed and approved 90 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>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>
New House	9	8	9	10	5
House Addition	3	7	7	8	3
Garage/Garage Addition	7	10	8	7	7
Bin	18	17	17	13	7
Livestock Building	7	1	2	5	7
Building/Building Addition	28	25	22	24	40
Solar Energy Conversion System (Commercial)	1	1	2	5	3
Solar Energy Conversion System (Personal)	1	2	0	1	1
Other	<u>10</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>20</u>
TOTAL	84	94	80	89	93

Nuisance/Zoning Complaint Investigation Breakdown

	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>
Zoning Violations	1	3	2	4	1
Feedlots	2	2	4	4	0
General Environmental	2	1	1	1	1
Other (CUP/IUP Conditions)	2	3	8	3	4

2022 Investigations

<b>Complaint</b>	<b>Investigations</b>	<b>Investigation Determined Violation - Violation Resolved</b>	<b>Investigation Determined Violation - Enforcement Ongoing</b>
Zoning	1	0	0
Feedlots	0	0	0
General Environmental	1	1	0
CUP/IUP Conditions	4	0	1

Investigations Turned Over to County Attorney for Legal Action

	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>
Investigations	0	0	0	0	0
Legal Action	0	0	0	0	0

Compliance Inspections

	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>
CUP	49	31	22	38	51
IUP	34	34	29	29	21
Variance	39	32	16	32	32
Land Use Permits	9	12	6	5	7

## BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT AND APPEALS

The Board of Adjustment and Appeals members include:

Carl E. Rudeen – District 1	12/31/2023 (term expiration)
Jeffrey T. Ruff – District 2	12/31/2023 (term expiration)
Helen A. Ruebel – District 3	12/31/2022 (term expiration)
James Boersma – District 4	12/31/2024 (term expiration)
Ryan D. Alderks – District 5	12/31/2022 (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 2022 as compared to the previous years:

	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>
Meetings	2	4	4	3	4
Variance Hearings	3	4	5	5	4
Administrative Appeals	0	0	0	0	0
Official Map Appeals	0	0	0	0	0
Corrective Action *	0	0	0	0	1

### 2022 Variances

<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Request</b>	<b>Zone</b>	<b>Board of Adjustment and Appeals Action</b>
Braun, Phil	Variance to allow construction of 16' x 30' house addition that does not comply with minimum road right-of-way setback from centerline of 810 <sup>th</sup> Avenue.	A	Approved 01/27/2022
Wulf Living Trust, Jeral L. and Linda L.	Variance to allow construction of 36' x 56' accessory structure (shed) on parcel of land that does not have primary use (single-family dwelling) on property.	A	Approved 03/24/2022
Einerson, Tom (Einerson, John P. and Catherine A.)	Variance to allow construction of 8' x 25' new grain dryer that does not comply with minimum road right-of-way setback.	A	Approved 05/26/2022
Ebenezer Presbyterian Church	Variance to allow existing conforming lot or parcel to be split and reduced in size making it two nonconformities in lot area.	A	Approved 10/27/2022

Bryan, Clay and Lisa *	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Variance to allow feedlot expansion which did not comply with minimum separation requirement of one-half mile from existing residence.</li> <li>2) Variance to allow feedlot expansion which exceeds 2,000 animal units, for requested total allowance of 4,000 animal units.</li> </ol>	A	Approved 03/26/1998
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## PLANNING COMMISSION

The Planning Commission members include:

Jeffery A. Kramer – District 1	12/31/2022 (term expiration)
David Rieke – District 2	12/31/2023 (term expiration)
Helen A. Ruebel – District 3	12/31/2022 (term expiration)
Rick R. Marks – District 4	12/31/2024 (term expiration)
Steve A. Santjer – District 5	12/31/2023 (term expiration)
Neal Johnson – At-Large	12/31/2024 (term expiration)
John A. Robinson – At-Large	12/31/2022 (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 2022 as compared to the previous years:

	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>
Meetings	9	8	6	9	8
Conditional Use Permits	7	8	7	10	7
Interim Use Permits	0	1	0	3	2
Ordinance New or Amendments	1	2	2	2	1
Map Amendments	1	1	1	1	0
Plats	0	0	0	0	0
Corrective Action *	0	0	0	0	1

2022 Conditional Use Permits

<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Request</b>	<b>Zone</b>	<b>County Board Action</b>
Weikle Farms LLC	CUP to allow construction of 945 animal unit (3,150 head finishing) swine production feedlot.	A	Approved 01/25/2022
USS Cosmo Solar LLC (Zaske Living Trust, Wanda J.)	CUP to allow construction of one megawatt community solar garden (solar energy conversion system).	A	Approved 03/22/2022
Farmward Cooperative (Leske, Emily)	CUP to allow construction of commercial anhydrous ammonia facility.	A	Approved 04/26/2022
Franklin CSG 1, LLC (Gaasch, Edward)	CUP to allow construction of one megawatt community solar garden (solar energy conversion system).	A	Approved 05/24/2022
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 06/28/2022
B & R Farms LLC (B & R Holding Company, LLC)	CUP to allow expansion of existing swine production feedlot from 600 animal units (2,000 head finishing swine) to 960 animal units (3,200 head finishing swine).	A	Approved 07/26/2022
Development Services, Inc. DSI Don Solar LLC (Schroeder et al, Mary Ann)	CUP to allow construction of one megawatt community solar garden (solar energy conversion system).	A	Approved 10/25/2022
Bryan, Clay and Lisa *	CUP to allow expansion of existing feedlot.	A	Approved 02/02/1999

2022 Interim Use Permits

<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Request</b>	<b>Zone</b>	<b>County Board Action</b>
Holland, Katy	IUP to allow Home Occupation, Level II (commercial dog kennel).	A	Approved 04/26/2022
Duininck, Inc. (Haug Family Trust)	IUP to allow mining, extraction, and processing of minerals.	A	Approved 08/23/2022

2022 Ordinance Amendments

<b>Amendments</b>	<b>County Board Action</b>
Chapter Eleven (Official Map Regulations)	Approved 04/26/2022

2022 Map Amendments

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

2022 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 59 septic systems in 2022. The number of system design types installed over the past five years is:

<u>Type I Systems</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>
Rock-Filled Trench	2	1	1	0	0
Gravelless Pipe Trench	0	0	0	0	0
Chamber Trench	0	0	3	0	1
Seepage Bed	11	2	9	14	6
Mound	25	39	41	44	34
At-Grade	2	3	10	5	6
Tank Only				4	0
<u>Type II Systems</u>					
Holding Tank/Privies	1	2	4	6	12

The total number of systems installed since 1998 is as follows:

<u>Year</u>	<u>SSTS Permits</u>	<u>Installations</u>
1999		79
2000		93
2001		90
2002		107
2003		93
2004		100
2005		84
2006		105
2007		81
2008		91
2009		60
2010		66
2011		62
2012		72
2013		64
2014		61
2015		43
2016		45
2017		57
2018		41
2019		47
2020		68
2021		73
<u>2022</u>		<u>59</u>
TOTAL		1,741

It is estimated that over 733 septic systems (30%) 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.

Investigations Turned Over to County Attorney for Legal Action

	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>
Investigations	0	0	0	0	0
Legal Action	0	0	0	0	0

**2. Mining.**

Staff completed 12 site inspections of permitted mines 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).

**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 340 feedlots of which 273 are required to be registered. Inspections are conducted on all 273 feedlots once every four years. The remaining 67 feedlots that are not required to register are surveyed once every four years to keep track of livestock numbers. The following achievements were accomplished in 2022:

- Attended feedlot conferences, trainings, and meetings.
- Inspected 60 feedlots.
- Hosted a producer meeting.
- MPCA annual review for 2021 found Renville County met all applicable program requirements.

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

Feedlot Inspections

	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>
Compliance	85	88	71	49	60
New Feedlot Construction Site	0	0	0	0	0
Complaints	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>0</u>
TOTAL	87	90	75	53	60

Investigations Turned Over to County Attorney for Legal Action

	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>
Investigations	0	0	0	0	0
Legal Action	0	0	0	0	0

#### **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)

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 BWSR Southern Regional Committee made a recommendation on December 20, 2021, for the Plan to be sent to the full BWSR Board for final approval. 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)

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. The Plan was submitted to BWSR for its 90-day review on December 28, 2022. Projected Plan completion is anticipated to be spring/summer of 2023.

South Fork of the Crow River Watershed  
(BWSR Planning Area #13)

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. We are currently establishing measurable goals and developing an implementation schedule. The Steering Committee meets monthly, and the Technical Advisory Committee met once in 2022. The Policy Committee also meets monthly when there are items to be discussed and decisions to be made. Projected plan completion is July 2024.

Water Management Task Force

The Renville County Water Management Task Force was dissolved in 2021.

BWSR Local Water Management Natural Resource Block Grant (NRBG)

Renville County was awarded Local Water Management NRBG funds in the amount of \$14,047 to assist with implementing programs designed to protect and improve water resources.

In 2022, the following water planning projects and programs were completed:

- Provided cost-share to seal six abandoned wells.
- Continued water quality sampling of Lake Allie and Preston Lake.
- 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 297 loans encompassing over \$4 million.

In 2018, a new loan program was created through the AgBMP program in which the Renville County Drainage Authority could utilize loan funding to purchase easements and establish perennial vegetative buffers on redetermined drainage systems. In 2022, we were able to fund a strip till machine and four well construction loans.

#### AgBMP Loans

	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>
Well Construction or Repair	\$141,024	\$158,811	\$168,473	\$243,003	\$75,980
Number of Loans	9	9	10	11	4
Ag Waste /					
Manure Application Equipment	\$332,000	\$146,249	0	0	\$549,707
Number of Loans	2	3	0	0	3
Septic	0	\$128,681	0	0	0
Number of Loans	0	11	0	0	0
Drainage System	\$793,919	\$1,477,122	0	0	0
Number of Systems	7	8	0	0	0

#### **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 465 septic loans encompassing over \$3.9 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.

<b>Year</b>	<b># Loans</b>	<b>Hawk Creek</b>	<b># Loans</b>	<b>Middle MN</b>	<b># Loans</b>	<b>Crow</b>
2017	12	\$132,638	4	\$44,019	5	\$60,560
2018	11	\$130,477	2	\$21,706	5	\$43,853
2019	5	\$60,463	0	\$0	1	\$18,550

<b>Year</b>	<b># Loans</b>	<b>MPCA</b>
2020	28	\$362,132
2021	19	\$246,833
2022	18	\$260,688

Drainage System Loan Program:

In 2020, after exhausting the availability of MDA – AgBMP loan funds, an application was submitted to the MPCA Clean Water Partnership Loan Program to establish a new program where loan funds could be utilized to purchase easements and establish perennial vegetative buffers on redetermined drainage systems. Renville County was awarded \$3,000,000 in loan funds to be used over the next three years. In 2022, \$300,000 was reduced so the funds could be utilized by the Lake Allie ESSD Wastewater System Project Loan Program.

Year	# Drainage Systems	MPCA Loans
2020	9	\$1,240,820
2021	0	0
2022	28	\$951,085

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. With the addition of these funds, the loan total is now at \$1,000,000. No loan money was spent in 2022.

**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 \$35,447 from the MPCA to be distributed between January 1, 2022, and December 31, 2023. Renville County was also awarded \$25,450 from BWSR (Board of Water and Soil Resources). Renville County developed an application and income guidelines based on the agency's guidance and pays 50% or 75% of the cost to update a failing system. In 2022, we applied for 2023 funds and were awarded an additional \$5,066 to be spent by December 31, 2024.

Year	# Grants	MPCA	BWSR
2022	5	\$24,943	\$25,000

## **ESSD ADVISORY COUNCIL**

The ESSD Advisory Council members include:

Randy Kruse	12/31/2023 (term expiration)
Brian Fischer	12/31/2022 (term expiration)
Mike Knodel	Unlimited
Richard DeRock	12/31/2024 (term expiration)
Alan Koll	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 Lake Allie Waste Treatment Project was completed in 2001 with initial startup in September 2001. The community sewer system serves 63 homes and one commercial business along the north side of Lake Allie with capacity to serve more sites in the future. 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 2022.
- 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.
- The SDS Permit was issued by the MPCA on October 18, 2022.
- Bids for the sewer project will go out in January 2023. The new sewer system will be installed during 2023.