



Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



Ecological Science Updates STAC Meeting Spring 2025

FARM PRODUCTION AND CONSERVATION
FSA | NRCS | RMA | Business Center

Team ECS

- Conservation Planning and Certification
- ESJAA
- NEPA
- Technical Guidance
- Practice Standards
- Training Staff
- Field Office Technical Guide
 - 70 + Practice Standards
- CART/CD
- GIS
- **ECS Payment Schedules** and Supplements
- Agreements
- CIG Grants
- **Partnerships**
- STAC
- CRP Technical Assistance
- TSPs

State Agronomist

- Agronomic Conservation Practices
 - Nutrient Management
 - Pest Management
 - Cover Crops
 - Many more
- Soil Loss Models and WINPST
- Agronomic Technical Notes
- Agronomy Trainings
- Soil Health Coordination



Ryan Buetow

State Water Quality Specialist/TSP

- TSPs
 - Certifications/Renewals/Trainings/Communications/QAR Challenges
- Conservation Practices (Salinity, High Tunnel, Irrigation Water Management, Drainage Water Management, Filter Strip, Riparian Forest Buffer).
- Watershed Program Coordination
- Source Water Protection Coordination
- Chair of the Watershed Subcommittee (STAC)
- Trainings



Courtney Cheever

State Rangeland Management Specialist

- Pasture and Range Practices
- Pasture and Range Assessments
- Pasture and Range NRI
- Ecological Sites
- Technical Notes and IR sheets
- Trainings
- CRP Assistance (Haying and Grazing)



State Cultural Resources Specialists

- Cultural Resources Reviews
 - 700 MN-CPA-048s
 - Field surveys
 - Assist in avoidance/mitigation/curation
 - Documentation of new sites
- Services the States PPA
- Consultations with MN SHPO and THPOs



State Economist

- Payment Schedules and Components
- Economic Analysis (IMPLAN)
- Case Studies
- FOTG Content
- Economics SharePoint
- Training

State GIS Specialist/Business Tools

- Conservation Desktop
- CART
- ARC Map/GIS Software
- Geodata Management (87 Servers)
- GIS Based Tools
- LIDAR Acquisition Data Analysis/Maps/Spatial
- Mobile Apps
- Training
- GPS Systems



Urban Agricultural Specialist

- Urban and Small-Scale Specialist
- Resources
- References
- Partnerships
- More

Aces Agronomist (Part Time)

- Coordination
- Special Projects
- FOTG Items
- Research(ish)



Admin Staff 1/2

- Purchases
- FOTG Content Formatting
- Scheduling Meetings
- Registrations
- Timekeeping
- STAC Support
- Others Also Assist





State Forester (St. Paul)

- Forestry and Agroforestry Practice
- Forestry Assessments
- Forestry Technical Notes
- Trainings
- Chairs the STAC Forest Subcommittee

State Wildlife Biologist

- Biology and Wildlife Practices
- NEPA Coordination
- Technical Notes
- WHEGS, WHIS
- ESDs
- CRP (Main Lead)
- Trainings

State Resource Conservationist

- STC Priorities
 - Leadership Direction
 - ECS Staff Leadership
 - Manage Partner Relations
 - Manage Agreements
 - Provide Customer Service
 - All Things ECS
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- **Why I have a great job:** I get to work with You, Area Offices, Soils, Engineering, Programs, Management and Strategy, Public Affair, Compliance, Team MN and Team NRCS and Partners dedicated to Conservation!



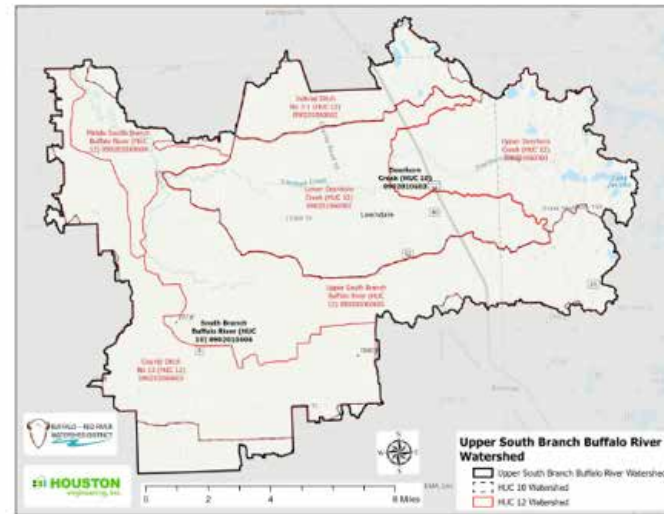
NWQI: Doran Creek

- Currently in implementation phase
- No changes to original FY2026 request ($\approx \$1,000,000$)
- Goal of project: reduce sediment loading and restore 19 miles of the Doran Creek corridor



NWQI: Upper South Branch Buffalo River

- Currently in implementation phase
- No changes to original FY2026 request ($\approx \$1,550,000$)
- Goal of project: meet TMDL goals, improve aquatic habitat



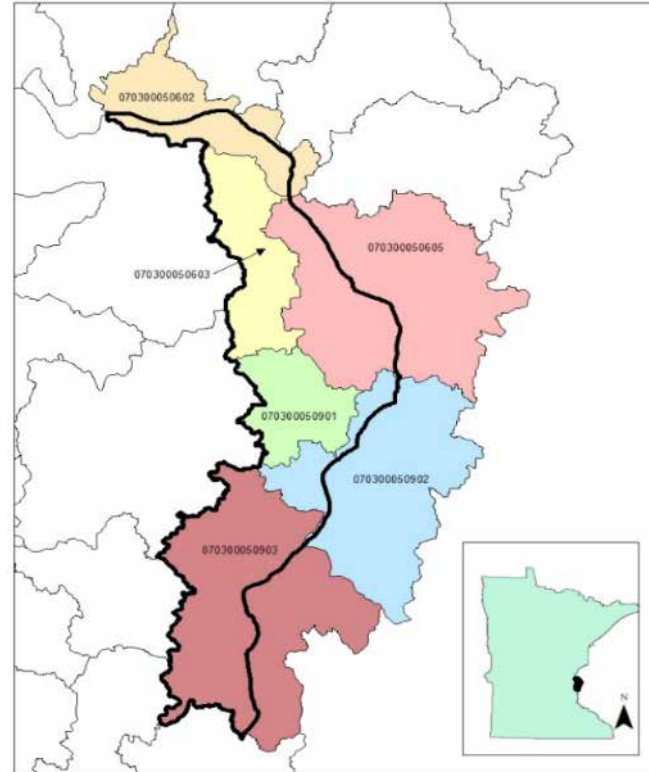
MRBI: Backes Lake

- Currently in implementation phase
- Increase original FY2026 request to ≈\$2,000,000 to fund additional contracts
- Goal of project: reduce nutrients in water, reduce the number of feedlots in noncompliance status



MRBI: Lower St. Croix

- Currently in implementation phase
- No changes to original FY2026 request (≈\$150,000)
- Goal of project: meet water quality standards for Lake St. Croix and not be listed as impaired



NWQI and MRBI Quick Facts

- Funding is typically available for planning and implementation phases of a natural resource project.
- Projects must have an approved watershed assessment before the implementation phase can be approved. Funding to develop the assessment is available through the planning phase.
- These projects are primarily **partner-led**. NRCS is available to review watershed assessments and submit budget requests.
- Questions regarding either initiative may be directed to Courtney (Courtney.Cheever@usda.gov) or Keith Kloubec, ASTC for Programs (Keith.Kloubec@usda.gov)

Technical Service Providers (TSPs)

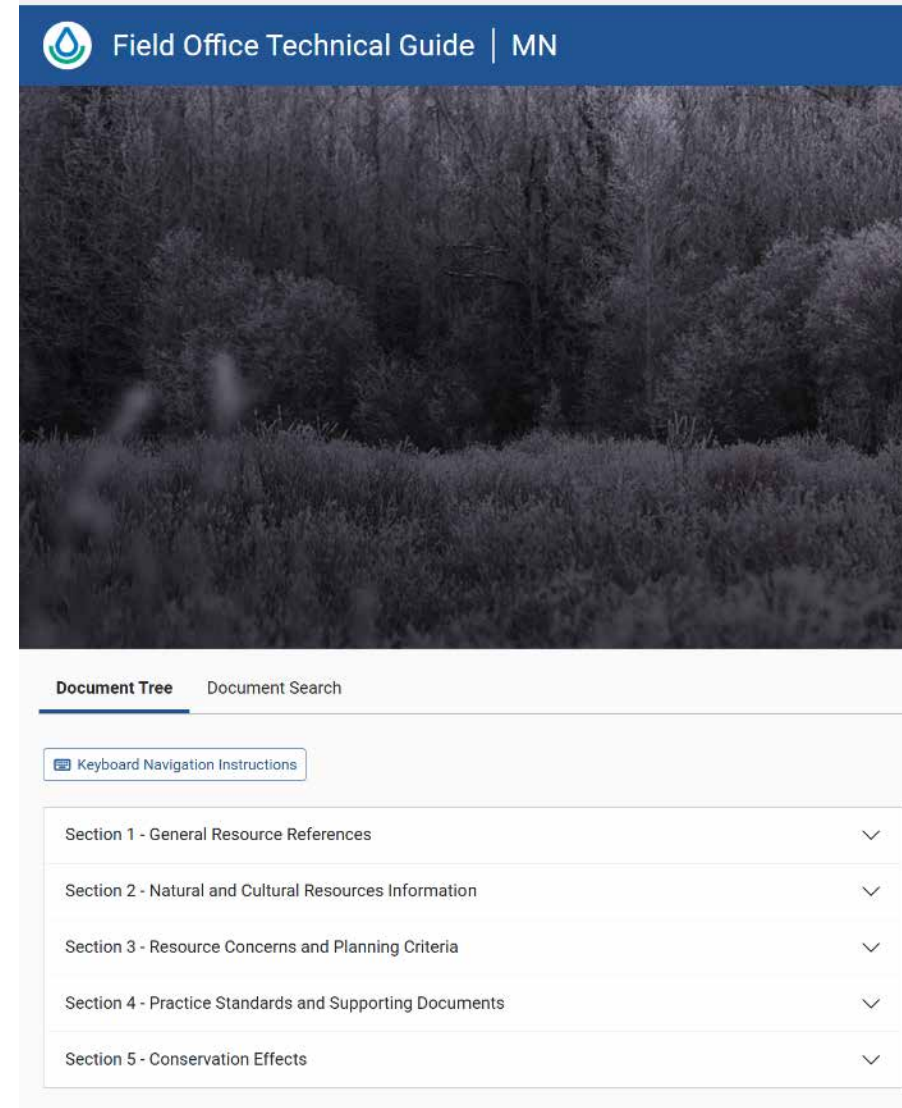
- Provide assistance to landowners participating in NRCS programs (e.g. EQIP, CSP)
- Approximately 100 TSPs certified in Minnesota covering all practices
 - Common practices include nutrient management, pest management, CNMPs, and forest management plans
- Assist with plan development and practice certification
- TSP certification process is free, certification lasts three years
- Contact Courtney with any TSP-related questions, issues, or suggestions
 - Courtney.Cheever@usda.gov
 - (507) 509-3028

MN FOTG

Between January 31, 2024 - March 30, 2025, we had **118,464** downloads.

Top Documents

- § Agronomy Tech Note 31
- § Agronomy Tech Note 33
- § State Payment Rates
- § MN ENG 013
- § Conservation Planning Practice Costs
- § MN Agronomy Tech Note 32
- § Biology Tech Note 7
- § Biology Job Sheet 16





STAC OUTCOMES SUBCOMMITTEE

ABOUT

The outcomes subcommittee will bring together partners to focus on **quantifying and understanding the impact of NRCS and partners' programs.**

This subcommittee will harness **existing approaches at USDA** to measure programmatic, economic, and environmental outcomes, as well as invite guests to offer insights into measuring outcomes.





STAC OUTCOMESSUBCOMITTEE

IN OUR FIRST MEETINGS:

- Present on NRCS outcomes projects underway
- Refine objectives, gather input
- Identify priorities for future presentations and collaborations
- Quarterly meetings, first meeting TBD

TO JOIN:

Email Samuel.Porter@usda.gov





Conservation Practice Updates

Cover Crop (340)
Woody Residue Treatment (384)
Watering Facility (614)
Hedgerow Planting (422)
Wetland Restoration (657)
Seasonal Water Management for Wildlife (646)

Residue and Tillage Management – Reduced Till (345)
Hedgerow Planting (422)
Wetland Restoration (657)
Seasonal Water Management for Wildlife (646)
Surface Roughening (609)
Strip-cropping (585)
Grazing Management (528)
Mulching (484)
Filter Strip (393)
Field Border (386)
Contour Buffer Strips (332)
Contour Orchard and Other Perennial Crops (331)
Residue and Tillage Management – No Till (329)
Conservation Crop Rotation (328)
Critical Area Planting (342)
Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (645)
Pest Management Conservation System (595)
Cross Wind Ridges (588)
Access Control (472)