

July 2019 Presentation by  
Itasca County Soil and Water Conservation District

Speaker Andy Arens, District Manager & Water Plan Coordinator, Itasca Soil and Water Conservation District spoke.

- They are a political subdivision of the state created by state statute for there to be a soil and water organization in every county. Not state or county employees, they receive some state funding, some county funding some grant funding mostly public sector grants but some private grant.
- His team is made up of 7 full time staff. Their information on the team and their contact information can be found at: <https://www.itascaswcd.org/contact>.
  - Andy
  - Tim Frits – Forestry and Shoreland Specialist
  - Kathy Cone – Receptionist/Bookkeeper
  - Kim Yankowiak – Water Resource Specialist
  - Chris Evans – AIS Specialist
  - Wayland Glienke – Wetland Specialist
  - Bill Grantges – AIS Program Coordinator
- Handouts are at: <https://swanlakeassoc-mn.wixsite.com/55775/shoreland-management-practices>

They work with people who have a natural resource related project, not just permit related, but even to help with erosion control ideas.

*Buffer Law*

He discussed the Dayton Buffer Law (<https://bwsr.state.mn.us/minnesota-buffer-law>). Andy's team is responsible for administration as delegated to them by the county. It is really an agricultural law controlling pastureland and cropping. The goal is to reduce phosphorous in the water.

The law requires perennial vegetative buffers of up to 50 feet along lakes, rivers, and streams and buffers of 16.5 feet along ditches on public lands. There are actually no public ditches in Itasca County. Mowed lawns qualify as compliant. The law did not target lakeshore owners. Andy's team did a county wide inventory year one and there were 12 landowners who had to make some changes and they have all now become compliant. Tim Frits in the Itasca County Soil and Water contact for the Buffer Law. A reasonable amount of sand beach and riprap is allowed. An example of a shoreland property owner violation on a lake like Swan is removing all your grass and replacing it with decorative rock.

*Fertilizer Law*

There is a state fertilizer law that has been around for ten years and it requires the use of zero phosphorous fertilizer on the lake. Most fertilizers are zero phosphorous these days.

<https://www.mda.state.mn.us/phosphorus-lawn-fertilizer-law>

### *Water Quality*

Andy brought the 2015 Swan Lake - Lake Quality Report. They received a grant in 2015-2016 to do an assessment of how many lakes in Itasca county had enough good data that they could make assessments and plans from that data. Only 74 lakes met the threshold of 10 years of continuous good data and Swan is one of those lakes. This report can be found on the RMB Labs website. <https://www.rmbel.info/data/>. He noted that there has been a decline in transparency since 2014. The question as to why a simple answer is not. Kim Yankowiak is the best contact regarding water quality.

There was a discussion about low water levels and Andy indicated that Kim Yankowiak is someone we can work with on this.

### *Shoreline Management Practices*

Andy brought four handouts on this topic which can be found at <https://swanlakeassoc-mn.wixsite.com/55775/shoreland-management-practices>. They address Lakeshore Project Permit Information, a Property Owners guide to Shoreland Erosion Control, Examples of Projects that might be eligible for funding and a Contractor Vendor List for organizations who are familiar with shoreland management practices.

Things that can impact the lake are septic and soil. There is sometimes money available for soil and water projects. You want to minimize erosion to keep the soil out of the water. Swan lake is a big watershed with 6 official streams draining into it, every 2 years all the water in swan is exchanged which is a short renewal cycle.

The Soil and Water team can work with us on bank erosion, riparian buffer, storm water management. They are cost sharing on living buffer and bank/shore stabilization.

Storm water is a new focus for this team. Things homeowners can do:

- rain gardens and other water retention strategies are encouraged
- run downspouts parallel to the lake not straight downhill
- Keep a decent lawn between the house and lake to prevent soil run off
- On roads, water bars or open top box water culverts that keep water from running down the road and washing gravel in the lake.

Some projects require permits and one of the handouts address that. Tim can help with what you need permits for and what you don't.

The Soil and conservation district has an annual native tree and plant sale where they sell native trees shrubs, bushes grasses, etc. Wayland is the best contact for this.

You can get planning assistance from the Soil and Water Conservation Team.

New phone number is 326-5573 and the address is 1895 West Hwy 2, a white log building.