

PROJECT DETAILS

Practice:

- CREP/RIM Easement
- Wetland Restoration
- Native Prairie Seeding
- Pollinator Habitat
- Prescribed Burning
- Tree/Shrub Planting

Project Implementation:

- 2020
- 2021
- 2022

Benefits:

- Protect and improve water quality and wildlife habitat
- Assist landowners in building their legacy
- Restores a critically endangered habitat type
- Provides crucial food sources for native pollinators
- Maintain scenic and rural beauty

Partners:

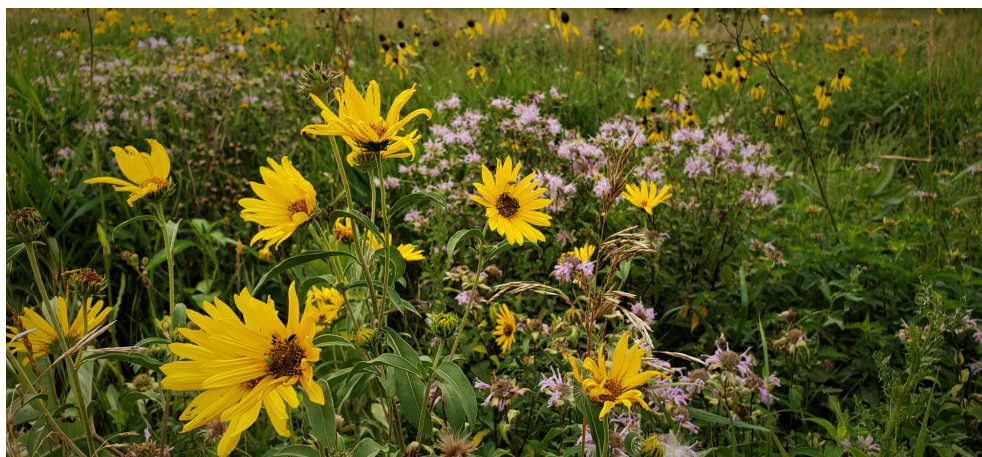
- Landowner
- Stearns County SWCD
- West Central Technical Service Area
- Board of Water and Soil Resources
- USDA - FSA
- USDA - NRCS
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
- Clean Water Fund

Watershed:

- Sauk River Watershed



PROJECT HIGHLIGHT - CONSERVATION RESERVE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM



Scott and Kate Schaefer, Stearns SWCD's 2022 Wildlife Habitat Stewards, have been working with SWCD Wildlife Habitat Specialist Ryan Rothstein since 2020 to enroll their fourth-generation family farm into a Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) easement.

With the conservation easement, the Schaefer's have permanently preserved over 260 acres of high-quality habitat on marginal former ag land. This project protects a crucial habitat oasis on a landscape surrounded by row crop agriculture, while also serving as a sponge for water infiltration, improving water quality within the Sauk River Watershed.

Following is a list of projects that have gone into the Schaefer's CREP easement:

- 260+ acres of high-quality habitat permanently preserved
- 157.84 acres of marginal cropland reconstructed to native prairie
- 111.22 acres of prairie reconstruction interseeded with a 36-species mix of wildflowers
- 5.39 acres of highly diverse pollinator habitat planted
- 46.62 acres of prairie reconstruction planned for wildflower interseeding in 2024
- Six USFWS wetland restorations, comprising 21.80 acres of restored wetland habitat
- One BWSR CREP wetland restoration, comprising an additional 6 acres of restored wetland habitat
- CREP wetland seeded with high-quality, 39-species wet sedge meadow mix
- 14.11 acres of native tree and shrub block plantings
- 8.62 acres of windbreak/snow fence native tree and shrub plantings
- Long-term fire regime in place for sustained habitat management

Thanks to Scott and Kate Schaefer's for their dedication to quality wildlife habitat!



Prescribed fire was used as a tool on the Schaefer's CREP easement to prepare the site for interseeding.



Narrow-leaved coneflower (*Echinacea angustifolia*) growing on a remnant hillside on the Schaefer's CREP easement.



Aerial view of the CREP wetland restoration during construction on the Schaefer's CREP easement.