

# Pennington SWCD

January 2021

# OUNTY DITCH 96 UTLET PROJECT



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The CD96 Outlet Project emerged after Red Lake County SWCD secured a 2016 Clean Water Fund Grant to implement projects within a defined priority drainage area. County Ditch 96, south of St. Hilaire, is in this priority area. The Red Lake River Comprehensive Water Management Plan focuses project implementation on a water-shed-scale, going beyond county boundaries. Pennington SWCD partnered with Red Lake County SWCD and Pennington County on the project. HDR Engineering was contracted to provide technical services and project management. In addition, the Red Lake Watershed District is also providing a large portion of the funding match. This project is one example of great teamwork and collaboration to implement priority projects.

The outlet of County Ditch 96 is half a mile south of St. Hilaire with the project taking place east of State Highway 32. Large portions of the south ditch bank were sloughing due to groundwater movement and weak soils. A shelf was dug out on the south slope eleven feet up from the toe and a granular/sand filter was put in place. Close to 1,000 lineal feet of rock rip rap was dispersed over the filter layer to stabilize the bank and prevent sloughing. Davidson Construction was contracted and started the work on October 28<sup>th</sup>. Excellent weather conditions this fall allowed the project to be completed in mid-November.



District drone picture of County Ditch 96 Outlet Project facing west from the Red Lake River to Highway 32.



# PENNINGTON SWCD

Serving Pennington County Since 1948

# **Office Hours**

7:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. M-TH 7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. F

### **Mission Statement**

Provide landowners with technical assistance in identifying and improving resource issues.

# **Board of Supervisors**

Brenda Szymanski Ricky Peterson Linda Hanson Greg Hilgeman ADawn Nelson

Board meetings are held the third Thursday of every month at 10:00 a.m.

# District Staff

### **Assisted by NRCS**

Nico Bennett...... District Conservationist

## **Assisted by RRVCSA**

Zach Foley......Engineering Technician

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An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer

# Meet Our Newly Elected Supervisor ADawn Nelson



Hello! My name is ADawn Nelson. My husband, Travis Nelson, and I live west of town with my son, Blake. I work full time as an Agricultural Instructor at Northland Community College in Thief River Falls.

Four years ago I developed a two year animal science program for the college. Students enrolled in the program can go on to UMC to earn a 4 year degree. My husband and I also own T and A Farms and Repairs. We raise cow/calf pairs, goats, sheep, horses, donkeys, usually a few pigs, and about 250 acres of hay.

I am very blessed to be a part of many aspects of the world of agriculture and look forward to this new endeavor serving on the Pennington SWCD Board of Supervisors.

# **Staffing Change at the SWCD**

In December, Peter Nelson accepted his new position as District Manager of the Pennington SWCD. He started working for the District in May of 2012 as the Water Plan Coordinator. He grew up on a dairy and small grain farm and went to school in Goodridge. He received a Bachelor of Science Degree in Environmental Science with an emphasis in policy and planning from Bemidji State University in 2009.

Peter and his wife, Ashley, live in rural Goodridge and have four children: Deanna, Neelow, Sade, and Sareena. Peter enjoys spending time with his family, friends, hunting, fishing, camping, sports, and other outdoor activities. Peter is looking forward to continue working with Pennington County landowners.



Congratulations!

# **2020 Rural Beautification Award** Randy & Jennifer Knott from Sanders Township

Randy and Jennifer purchased 320 acres of untouched wooded land back in 1994, and named this treasured area "Knott's Wildwood." Like talented artists, they bore a vision in their minds of what the natural resources on this tract of land could be transformed into. They have



Elaina, Jennifer, Randy, and Anna Knott **Photo Credit: TRF Times** 

been sculpting and airbrushing the property with pops of color and unique structures ever since.

Some of the structures include their garage and home (which Randy designed), a rounded silo top chicken coop, a greenhouse, a little red tool shed, and a one room family hunting cabin. The cabin, an old granary completely remodeled on the inside, is nestled far out into the woods next to a clearing. It is used extensively by family and friends, not only during hunting season, but throughout the entire year.

Out in the yard you can find groomed trails, a large garden, grapevine terraces, beautiful flower beds, two Adirondack chairs engraved with their daughter's names, and many memories of items that family and friends had given the couple over the years. A few notable memories include the small tree that came from Jennifer's dad's place that now stands 25-30 feet high and greets you as you drive in, grandma Lilly's lilies that border the yard, and communion grapes that reach to the heavens above.

A person is awestruck as you look down over the backyard and woods from the back of the house seeing a firepit, tree swing, and log fence. The story wouldn't be complete without telling you about the bear, deer, birds, and other wildlife that also call this place home.

So much work has gone into this beautiful rural property, but they are not done yet; so much more is yet to come. Randy and Jennifer are truly building a legacy for their family. As Jennifer puts it, they are building:



# CD 96-21-16 PROJECT

In 2016, the Pennington SWCD received a Clean Water Fund Grant to install side water inlets (SWI's) throughout County Ditches 96, 21, and 16. Many locations along these three ditch systems had gullies forming from field ditches, as shown in the before picture below. The purpose of the SWI's is to stabilize the areas with erosion problems. Using a previously completed ditch inventory, these locations were identified and ranked for installation.





Pennington SWCD entered into an agreement with Pennington County to install the SWI's. The county secured maintenance agreements with landowners for access to install and maintain the SWI's. Pennington SWCD covered 75% of the project cost, while Pennington County covered the remaining 25%.



After a successful construction season, the grant was finalized with 43 SWI's installed to date. We would like to thank Pennington County and all the landowners who worked side-by-side with us on this project! If you are interested in installing a SWI or other erosion control project, contact our office at (218) 683-7075.

# Thief River Grade Stabilization and Cover Crop Implementation

This Clean Water Fund Grant, awarded in April 2020, is a great way for those interested in cover crops to get started. With various species of cover crops and payment rates to choose from, there is flexibility in what you can do. These three-year flat rate contracts allow the operator to move cover crops between fields from year to year based on the cash crop and field conditions. To qualify for this grant, the fields must be in priority areas within the Lower Thief River, JD 30, JD 18, or JD 13 Watersheds. Operators interested in cover crops outside these areas are also encouraged to contact us.

### Cover Crop Rates:

\$15 per acre for a single species cover crop

\$25 per acre for a two species cover crop

\$40 per acre for a multi-species cover crop (minimum of one grass and one broad leaf species)

\$50 per acre for a multi-species cover crop with reduced tillage (minimum of one grass and one broad leaf species, following an annual crop with a minimum of 50% residue remaining after seeding of the cover crop)

Landowners can enroll a maximum of 80 acres per year or 240 acres per contract. The 80 acres may be subdivided into different tracts, but these tracts may not be smaller than 5 acres in size.

The grant also contains funding to cost-share 62 side water inlets at 75% of the project cost. For land-owners/operators that implement both cover crops and side water inlets, 90% cost-share will be available on the side water inlets. To date, 11 side water inlets have been installed. Contact the Pennington SWCD at (218) 683-7075 for more information.

# **Pennington Cooperative Weed Management Area**

Pennington SWCD received a grant from the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) to form a Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA). The goal for this program is to create a unified approach to weed management in Pennington County. Agencies, organizations, and individuals interested in the control of invasive weeds are invited to participate in the Pennington CWMA and provide input on the prioritization of target species, infested areas, and best management practices.

A mapped inventory of noxious and invasive weeds within the county was started last summer. Common tansy, European buckthorn, Canada thistle, spotted knapweed, and leafy spurge are among the most frequently observed invasive plants thus far. These invasive and noxious weeds can be harmful to our ecosystem as they outcompete native plants and are difficult to control once established.

It is important to identify invasive weeds and learn about the plant. The MN Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and MN Department of Agriculture (MDA) provide information about invasive plants in Minnesota and



recommended control methods. Knowing the invasive weeds on your property better equips you for effective control. For instance, understanding the optimal time to apply herbicide or when to avoid mowing to reduce seed dispersal is critical for effective weed management. **Remember:** DO NOT mow invasive weeds when seed is present! Also, when invasive weeds are treated, do not remove the plants from the infested area. It is best to leave the disposed plant material on site and destroy it. Moving the plant material could further spread the invasive weeds to areas not infested.

The Pennington CWMA will provide education and outreach to residents to promote awareness of the invasive weeds in the area, aid in identification skills, and share best management practices. If you are interested in being involved with the Pennington CWMA or have issues with invasive plants on your property, check out the Pennington SWCD website for more information or call (218) 683-7075.

The Pennington SWCD would like to remind everyone about the importance of complying with the Minnesota Buffer Law (Minn. Stat. 103F.48). The law requires a 16.5-ft buffer on all public drainage systems and a 50-foot buffer around all public wa-

ters. We encourage landowners to speak with the SWCD staff and their renters (if applicable) to discuss available options.

The SWCD is mandated by the law to review all county buffer parcels for compliance. This will be done on a 3-year rotational basis, checking one-third of the parcels each year. Monitoring and random spot checks are currently underway. To learn more about our tracking and monitoring program, check out our website at: <a href="https://www.penningtonswcd.org/buffers">www.penningtonswcd.org/buffers</a>.

A buffer cost-share program is available to help landowners achieve compliance with the law. One time payment cost-share rates are as follows:

- ⇒ \$200 per acre for introduced species
- $\Rightarrow$  \$300 per acre for native species
- ⇒ 75% cost-share on structural alternative practices such as side water inlets

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COMPLIANCE

If you have any questions about the Minnesota Buffer Law or how to apply for buffer cost-share, call us at (218) 683-7075. We would like to thank everyone for working closely with the staff to ensure buffer compliance in Pennington County is being met.

# We'll Miss You, Bryan!!

We are sad to announce that Bryan Malone is leaving the Pennington SWCD. He has accepted a District Manager position with the Becker Soil and Water Conservation District in Detroit Lakes.

Bryan has been a great asset to our District. He started as a Technician in 1998, and later promoted to District Manager in 2005. Bryan developed many conservation partnerships in his 22 years with the District and is well respected by all his co-workers and colleagues. His list of accomplishments is quite vast, but here is a sampling of a few projects that highlight his career with the SWCD:

- ♦ Rondorf/Chapman Group Rock Chute
- ◆Pennington County Wetland Bank
- ♦ Hank Hallstrom Streambank
- ◆Curt Swanson Grassed Waterway
- ◆Pennington County Numerous Side Water Inlets
- ◆County Ditch 96 Outlet Stabilization
- ◆ Jerome Street Group Streambank Stabilization across from Hartz Park
- ♦ City of TRF/Ralph Engelstad Arena Al Gustafson Memorial Raingarden
- ◆St. Hilaire Seed / Van Swanson / Les Cota / Mitch Engelstad Windbreaks
- ◆ Thief River Golf Club Parking Lot & Green #5 Streambank Stabilization

Thank you, Bryan, for your many years of leadership with the SWCD. We wish you and your family the best!

# TREES

A Bundle
Of Benefits

**Trees**, they keep you warm in the winter and cool in the summer. That's just a few of the benefits trees provide. Don't forget the added value to your property, beautiful building sites, protection for livestock, and habitat for wildlife. If you could use trees on your property, contact the SWCD for assistance. We provide a complete package from planning, to planting and maintenance.

Customized Tree Plan: This is your first step. Our staff will design a plan suitable to your soil type, location, and personal preference. The design includes the tree species, spacing, and a cost-estimate. If you are eligible for one of the

cost-share programs, we can help direct you through the process.

**Tree Planting:** If you desire to have our staff plant the trees, we provide the tractor, planter, and the labor. All you need to do is make sure the site is suitable for planting by May.

**Maintenance:** This is a must to get your wind-break well established. The SWCD can apply weed barrier fabric within the rows for weed control and moisture retention. We sell tree protector tubes which act as a mini greenhouse to accelerate growth. They reduce weed competition and provide protection from animals, rodents, and equipment.

**Contact our office** to get your project underway. We'd be happy to visit with you over the phone and send you a packet of information.



"We Love Our Trees"
Mitch and Renae Engelstad

## PENNINGTON SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

201 SHERWOOD AVENUE SOUTH THIEF RIVER FALLS, MN 56701 (218) 683-7075

# SPRING 2021 TREE & SHRUB ORDER FORM

PLEASE FILL IN ALL INFORMATION OR ORDER BLANK WILL NOT BE PROCESSED. PLEASE PRINT!											
NAME:		HOME or 0	HOME or CELL PHONE:								
ADDRESS:	WORK PHONE:										
	EMAIL ADDRESS:										
The Pennington SWCD agrees to furnish said nursery stock to purchaser as only a local distributor to landowners. We express or imply no warranty as to productiveness survival of nursery stock we furnish. We accept all orders subject to the same conditions we accept from our suppliers. You will be notified by mail when to pick up your tre If you have any questions, please call our office at 218-683-7075. Remember once our supply of trees is depleted, we cannot obtain any additional trees. ORDER EARLY!  ** ALL TREES ARE TO BE USED FOR CONSERVATION PURPOSES ONLY!! **  ALL TREES & SHRUBS SOLD IN BUNDLES OF 25 (except potted spruce)											
ALL TREES & S		a la filia la filia de la fili		ed spruce)							
Average Tree Size: 18 - 24 Inches											
			CONTRACTOR VARIOUS	PRICE PER							
SPECIES	MATURITY		BUNDLES	BNDL. (25)	\$ TOTAL \$						
Potted Spruce (1 gal. 12-18")	50-80 Feet	EVERGREEN		\$12.00 each							
Cedar, Eastern Red	15-25 Feet	EVERGREEN		\$55.00							
Cedar, White (American Arborvitae)	40-50 Feet	EVERGREEN		\$55.00							
Pine, Red	60-100 Feet			\$55.00							
Pine, Scotch	60-80 Feet	EVERGREEN		\$55.00							
Spruce, Black Hills	60-80 Feet	EVERGREEN		\$55.00							
Spruce, Colorado Blue	60-80 Feet	EVERGREEN		\$55.00							
Ash, Green	40-60 Feet	TALL HARDWOOD		\$45.00							
Cottonwood, Siouxland	80-100 Feet	TALL HARDWOOD		\$45.00							
Hackberry Maple Silver	40-60 Feet 60-90 Feet	TALL HARDWOOD TALL HARDWOOD		\$45.00 \$45.00							
Maple, Silver	1922/00/20 2000/00/2021 00/10/2020	TO THE REAL PROPERTY AND ADDRESS OF THE PARTY OF THE PART		TOTAL COST WING GROWING TO							
Maple, Red	50-70 Feet 70-80 Feet	TALL HARDWOOD  TALL HARDWOOD		\$45.00 \$45.00							
Oak, Bur Poplar, Hybrid	80-100 Feet			\$45.00							
Birch, Paper	20-30 Feet			\$45.00							
Chokecherry, Common	20-30 Feet	MEDIUM HARDWOOD		\$45.00							
Crab, Red Splendor	15-25 Feet	MEDIUM HARDWOOD		\$45.00							
Maple, Amur	15-20 Feet	MEDIUM HARDWOOD		\$45.00							
Plum, American	20-25 Feet	MEDIUM HARDWOOD		\$45.00							
Willow, Flame	20-23 Feet 20-30 Feet	MEDIUM HARDWOOD		\$45.00							
Nannyberry	12-15 Feet	SHRUB		\$45.00							
Elderberry	6-10 Feet	SHRUB		\$45.00							
Cranberry, Highbush	10-15 Feet	SHRUB		\$45.00							
Dogwood, Redosier	12-15 Feet	SHRUB		\$45.00							
Indigo, False	8-15 Feet	SHRUB		\$45.00							
Juneberry	6-15 Feet	SHRUB		\$45.00							
Lilac, Common	8-10 Feet	SHRUB		\$45.00							
Lilac, Villosa (Late)	8-10 Feet	SHRUB		\$45.00							
Sandcherry, Western	6-10 Feet	SHRUB		\$45.00							
		0,1,00		\$ 10.00							
Price does not include tree plantin	g cost			Subtotal							
Also Available:		e tean	0.075								
Plantskydd Deer Repellant (powd	6.875	% Sales lax									
Tree Protector Tubes				TOTAL	e						
Orders under \$100 require paymen	Do	wn Payment									

To minimize the exposure of COVID-19 to you and our staff, we are asking that you mail us a your order form and a check for payment in full by April 1st.

AMOUNT DUE \_\_\_\_\_

Orders over \$100 require a minimum of 50% down payment

Make Checks Payable to: PENNINGTON SWCD

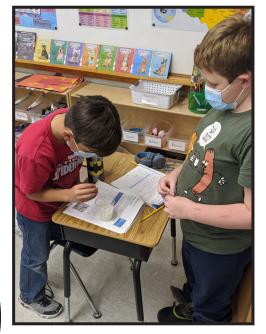
# CONSERVATION EDUCATION

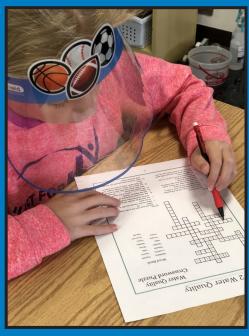
















A big thank you to the northwest Minnesota Soil & Water Conservation Districts, Red Lake Watershed District, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge, and the International Water Institute for working together to develop a virtual NW MN Water Festival. There were 589 fourth grade students from twenty-three schools and four home schools that participated.



# 2020 POSTER CONTEST WINNERS



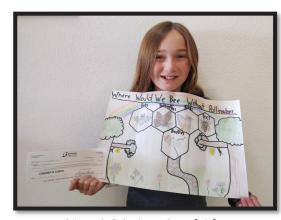


McKenna Carr-St. Bernard's

Mylee Sinlestad-Goodridge



Lilly Swenson-St. Bernard's



Norah Phelps-Goodridge



Congratulations to Peter Nelson who was the recipient of the 2020 Outstanding District Employee Award given by the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR). John Jaschke, BWSR Executive Director, recently made the announcement at the December Pennington Soil and Water Conservation District Board Meeting.

Peter was selected from nominations throughout the state for his outstanding accomplishments in soil and water conservation. Some of Peter's main accomplishments were his key role in completing the Thief River Comprehensive Water Management Plan in 2020 and the Red Lake River Comprehensive Water Management Plan in 2017. He also administers the Water Plan, Shoreland, SSTS, and Floodplain Programs for Pennington County.

Peter joined the SWCD staff in 2012 as the Water Plan Coordinator, and recently was promoted to District Manager. Peter "wears many hats" and wears them well. The Pennington SWCD is extremely proud to have Peter as part of our team.



The Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) provides technical and financial assistance to landowners to address natural resource concerns that deliver environmental benefits such as: improved water quality, reduced soil erosion, improved plant health, and improved wildlife habitat.

Applications for EQIP are accepted throughout the year. If your application is accepted for funding, you will enter into a contract with NRCS to receive financial assistance to implement chosen practices. Payment rates are reviewed annually.

C S P The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) offers an opportunity for landowners to enhance their operation while adopting conservation enhancement activities. CSP can help plan and implement conservation practices and enhancements that address natural resource concerns within your operation. CSP builds on your existing conservation efforts to strengthen your operation for sustainability. CSP has a contract length of 5 years to help achieve your operational goals.

If you have any questions or would like to fill out an application for either of these programs, please contact your local NRCS office at (218) 681-1612.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) pays landowners to temporarily retire cropland. Land is enrolled in 10-15-year contracts and planted into grasses or trees to create wildlife habitat and reduce sedimentation. Landowners receive a yearly payment for maintaining cover. The program can be a great choice for land that may be difficult to farm or land for hunting.

In 2021, there will be both a general and continuous signup with many options for landowners to enroll in. Some of the choices include: food plots, pollinator habitats, prairie strips, tree plantings, and shelterbelts. There are also whole field practices such as: wetland

restoration, native grasses, and introduced grasses. Signing incentives for certain practices and financial assistance to establish the cover may also be available. The general CRP signup starts January 4<sup>th</sup> and ends February 12<sup>th</sup>. The continuous signup is ongoing.

This year, a CRP Grasslands signup will also take place from March 14 - April 23. The program provides landowners a yearly payment for land that can be grazed or hayed. The land must currently be planted with grass cover to be eligible.

If you want to learn more about CRP options for your land, please contact Jill Fejszes at 218-681-1612 x129.







# Flood Insurance Rate Map Update

The Flood Insurance Study (FIS) and Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) are being updated for Pennington County. The FIS and the FIRMs provide base flood information (also known as the one percent annual chance event), designate areas that are subject to significant flood hazards within the county, and offer information used for permit development in the floodplain. The preliminary maps are a significant improvement to the current maps effective since 1990.

The preliminary maps were available for review starting in March of 2020. SWCD, Red Lake Watershed District, and other local Government Unit (LGU) staff have worked with DNR and FEMA representatives during the map update process. A virtual open house was held on December 2, 2020, allowing the public to provide comments or appeals to the preliminary maps. Once the maps become effective, they will be used as the basis for flood insurance as well as local flood protection regulations adopted under the **National** Flood Insurance Program.

If your property is located in or near the floodplain area, please review the preliminary Comparison of Flood Hazard Effective & Preliminary Flood Hazards Preliminary Effective emineto: Effective Preliminary

Comparison of current effective and preliminary Flood Insurance Rate Maps using the interactive web viewer.

maps for any increase or decrease in the floodplain boundary. Links to the Preliminary Flood Insurance Study and maps are available on our website at: www.penningtonswcd.org.

# 



Clean Water Funding provided financial assistance for two failing septic systems in 2020. The grant provides up to 100% cost-share to candidates that meet low income guidelines and have a failing system. This includes sewage discharge to the ground surface, sewage backup into a dwelling or establishment, sewage discharge to surface waters, or systems that fail to protect groundwater. currently have funding available and are seeking qualified

candidates for 2021.

If you have a failing septic system and are interested in the grant program, contact Peter Nelson. In addition to the grant program, low-interest loans are available for septic systems through the Agriculture Best Management Practices (AgBMP) Loan Program. Septic systems must be installed according to local and state rules which includes a permit from the Pennington SWCD. AgBMP loans have interest rates up to three percent.





# PENNINGTON SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

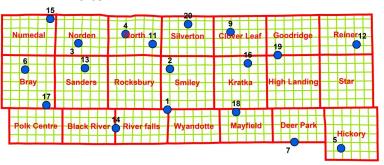
201 Sherwood Ave S, Suite 3 Thief River Falls, MN 56701-3400 PRSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT NO. 4
Thief River Falls, MN 56701

2021 Tree Order Form Enclosed

#	APR.	МАҮ	JUNE	JULY	AUG.	SEPT.	ост.	TOTAL
1	1.47	0.87	5.65	4.64	4.34	0.77	1.01	18.75
2	0.10	0.63	5.86	4.36	4.40	0.90	1.02	17.27
3	1.15	0.95	6.7	5.45	3.03	0.57	0.55	18.40
4	0.00	0.45	8.53	1.90	2.71	0.48	0.27	14.34
5	0.90	1.20	5.77	4.55	3.41	0.78	0.62	17.23
6	1.47	0.87	4.92	6.38	3.22	0.67	0.41	17.94
7	0.00	1.22	5.71	4.77	5.37	0.81	0.82	18.70
8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00
9	0.41	0.86	5.62	4.72	4.58	0.37	0.60	17.16
10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00
11	2.66	0.94	6.48	4.31	2.78	0.81	0.82	18.80
12	0.21	0.87	6.5	5.3	5.18	0.63	0.33	19.02
13	0.41	1.06	6.69	5.27	3.09	0.76	0.28	17.56
14	1.82	0.49	4.82	4.66	3.53	0.35	0.38	16.05
15	0.93	0.81	6.27	6.34	3.25	0	0	17.60
16	1.65	0.89	6.33	5.62	4.82	0.81	0.75	20.87
17	1.53	0.95	5.26	3.78	2.89	0.53	0.52	15.46
18	0.16	0.82	6.41	4.59	4.97	0.53	0.36	17.84
19	0.44	1.30	5.92	5.15	7.42	0.56	0.51	21.30
20	0	0.94	6.21	4.89	4.63	0.58	0.95	18.20
AVE	1.02	0.90	6.09	4.82	4.09	0.64	0.60	18.16

# 2020 Rainfall Monitoring

Pennington County rainfall amounts in 2020 were quite a bit lower than 2019 even though we had a very wet June, July, and August. Our growing season (April thru October) averaged 18.16 inches. This compares to 22.95" in 2019; 15.6" in 2018; 13.5" in 2017; 22.3" in 2016; 18.4" in 2015; and 19.4" in 2014. Since our program started in 1986, the growing season average rainfall amount is 18.83.



**WANTED:** We are currently looking for volunteers to collect rainfall data in the Townships of: Star, Goodridge, Polk Centre, Numedal, Rocksbury, and Highlanding. A rainfall kit will be supplied for your use. If you would like to volunteer, please call Donna Christianson at 218-683-7075 or email her at <a href="mailto:donna.christianson@pennington.mnswcd.org">donna.christianson@pennington.mnswcd.org</a>. Thank You!