

Minnesota Wildlifers,

Welcome to the December 2021 edition of the Prairie/Farmland Newsletter. Enjoy!

Remember - we'd love for you to share any relevant content with us for inclusion in the next edition. Please send those items to either Jake (jcnelson8487@gmail.com) or Nicole (ndavros@gmail.com). And if you have any issues you'd like to investigate further with the committee, let Jake know.

Grassland/Farmland Wildlife, Habitat, Farming, Soil Health, & Federal Conservation Programs

- [Keeping Cattle on the Move and Carbon in the Soil](#) – Ranchers and conservationists, once unlikely allies, are teaming up to preserve grasslands, which act as a carbon dioxide sink that could support climate goals.
- [With 142 cars, a North Dakota elevator's 8,500-foot-long train is a first for the U.S.](#) - The Honeyford grain elevator, North Dakota's oldest cooperative elevator, is the first south of the U.S.-Canadian border to load an 8,500-foot — 1.6 miles-long — unit train. The train full of corn was bound for Canada.
- [Pheasants Forever partners with ag group on new conservation program](#) - USDA announced on Nov. 8 that the Minnesota-Iowa program was one of 18 new projects receiving part of \$25 million under the Conservation Innovation Grants On-Farm Conservation Innovation Trials program.
- [Conservation practices are on the rise on Minnesota farms and across the U.S. Here's why](#) - "And you hear of older farmers that said, 'That's not something that works. People have done that in the past. They were unsuccessful,'" Daniel said about that first year with the cover crops. "And for us it was the complete opposite. ... It was very successful."
- [Carbon Into Cash: Farmers Get Paid to Fight Climate Change](#) - Planting cover crops could sequester 6.4 million metric tons of carbon dioxide in Minnesota, according to a January report from The Nature Conservancy. Reducing tillage practices and improved management of fertilizers and nutrients could reduce emissions by more than four million metric tons.
- [Prairies are Making Headlines. But What Exactly Are They? Here's an explainer](#) – The headlines this story is referring to is the ongoing effort to save Bell Bowl Prairie from destruction. Bell Bowl Prairie is located in Rockford, Illinois and was scheduled to be destroyed to make room for an airport expansion. Recently, the airport stated that they are delaying the destruction of the prairie until March, 2022. Illinois has less than 2,500 acres of remnant prairie left in the state.
- [New RIM funding to expand easement opportunities](#) - Funding approved this year by the state Legislature will help expand Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve program conservation easement opportunities across Minnesota.
- [Dhore a quick study to the barriers of farmland ownership](#) - After two failed farmland purchase agreements, Naima Dhore recently signed a lease to begin farming land in Alexandria, Minnesota, which she'll transition her small-scale organic operation to in February.

Pollinators and Insects

- [Park Rapids kids plant pollinator prairie](#) - Century School students learned how to take scientific measurements of the garden's growth and started a strip of pollinator prairie with wildlife-friendly fruiting shrubs around the perimeter of the community garden.
- [How to Support Pollinators Through the Winter](#) - After blustery storms displace sprinkles of red, orange, and yellow autumn leaves, one may be tempted to rake the mess out of their yard, but local entomologist Cynthia Brast urges you to think twice before you do! Over-raking or over-pruning in the winter can wreak havoc on the important pollinators seeking shelter that will come out in the spring.

Pesticides and Invasive Species

- [What Happens if we Lose?](#) – “If we focus all our energy on fighting and still lose, that loss will likely be catastrophic. On the other hand, if we take a little time to think about how to facilitate the transformation, maybe we can shape a result that’s better than the worst-case scenario. More importantly, if we start now, maybe we can develop and test some management options for post-transformation landscapes now instead of working from behind after transformations occur.”
- [Ag inspectors nip pests and weeds at the U.S.-Canada border](#) - U.S. Customs and Border Protection ag inspection specialists are on duty 24/7 to look for noxious weed seeds and insect pests coming from Canada to the U.S. by rail. The crossing at Portal, North Dakota, is the fifth busiest railyard in the country, when measured by number of containers. The crossing at International Falls, Minnesota, is the busiest.

Webinars, Podcasts, Videos, Social Media, & Other Events

- The Prairie Reconstruction Initiative will be holding a virtual field day on December 9th: "Prairie Practicalities: Overcoming Restoration Hurdles in a High Stakes Game of Recovery for a Rare Species." For more info or to join the meeting, [see the flyer here](#)
- [Habitat Talk: Fall Smooth Brome Control](#) - [3 minute video] How to treat smooth brome in the fall with glyphosate.
- [Grasses for the Masses botany course](#) - This virtual course is designed for anyone who wants to learn how to identify the most common native and introduced grasses of the tallgrass prairie region, and possibly a few prominent sedges and rushes. This course is for beginners, and the emphasis is on learning how to learn the plants, and becoming more self-sufficient through guided practice.