

Minnesota Wildlifers,

Welcome to the April 2022 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

- [Wheat prices soar on Ukraine fears, but U.S. growers can't cash in](#) - After Russia's invasion of Ukraine sent global wheat futures soaring, U.S. farmer Vance Ehmke was eager to sell his grain. Instead of reaping a windfall, Ehmke found a commodities market turned upside down. He and his wife Louise told Reuters they couldn't sell a nickel of their upcoming summer wheat harvest for future delivery.
- [Rep. Michelle Fischbach \(MN-07\) and Kelly Armstrong \(ND\) introduce the Landowner Easement Act](#) - A new bill has been introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives that would give landowners the legal right to renegotiate or buy out U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service easements that were created before 1977. The bill would prohibit the Department of the Interior (DOI) from entering into a conservation easement with a term of more than 50 years. It would also give owners of existing easements the option to renegotiate, renew or buy out the easement. **(Please consider contacting your representative to stop this threat on our habitat)**
- [Tracing Regenerative Farming to its Indigenous Roots](#) - In her new book, Liz Carlisle shows that carbon can be stored in the soil if we adopt ancestral land management strategies, many of which are held by communities of color.
- [U.S. farm groups urge sowing on protected land as war cuts off Ukraine supply](#) - In a letter to U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack on Wednesday, seven agriculture lobbying organizations representing U.S. farmers, feed producers, grain exporters, millers, bakers and oilseed processors asked the USDA to provide flexibility to farmers to plant crops on more than 4 million acres of "prime farmland" currently enrolled in the Farm Service Agency's Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) without penalty.
- [Despite uncertainty, Minnesota farmers are hopeful they'll have a good year](#) - Fertilizer prices have been rising since last year, partly due to the supply chain issues affecting so much of the economy, and higher prices for natural gas, a raw material in the manufacturing process. But the Russian invasion of Ukraine is pushing those prices even higher because Russia is a large exporter of fertilizer.
- [Bipartisan proposal could secure stable funding for soil and water conservation districts](#) - Funded through the Board of Water and Soil Resources, the districts receive no statutory appropriation, have no taxing authority (despite being elected at the local level), and can see major fluctuations in their budgets from year to year, making long-range planning around local water issues a tricky proposition.
- [MN Bill Summary: H.F. 2719 CRP State Incentives/Easement Stewardship](#) - Allows BWSR to use money from the water and soil conservation easement stewardship account and the mitigation easement stewardship account for repairing or replacing water control structures. Also Appropriates \$5,000,000 in fiscal year 2023 from the general fund to BWSR for onetime state incentives to enrollees of Continuous CRP.

Pollinators and Insects

- [Beware Drought-Loving Insects](#) - For some insects, another year of hot, dry weather could create the perfect conditions for a lively family reunion. Expect grasshoppers, spider mites and soybean aphids to thrive in droughty areas this spring and summer, crop scientists warned growers in a University of Minnesota webinar on March 2.
- [Make your lawn do double duty](#) - Are you interested in doing more to help our native pollinator insects? You can make your lawn do double duty. A flowering lawn can provide much-needed food resources for bees and other beneficial pollinators in addition to being a place for recreation.
- [Why pollinator protection is critical to the future of produce](#) - As the food industry continues to grapple with supply chain issues, a new report from USAApple shines a light on what has the potential to become the ultimate supply chain challenge — what should happen if the growing community fails to protect pollinators.

Pesticides, Invasive Species, and Disease

- [EPA approves tighter controls on dicamba in Minnesota, Iowa](#) - The changes would set deadlines for herbicide application on soybeans in Iowa and Minnesota and restrict spraying based on weather conditions in Minnesota.
- [Plant disease outbreaks may be curbed by periodic wildfires](#) – periodic wildfires in ecosystems adapted to them can help inhibit plant disease outbreaks, according to research by scientists affiliated with the U.S. National Science Foundation Cedar Creek Ecosystem Long-Term Ecological Research site in Minnesota.
- [Backyard flocks should be on lookout for avian flu](#) - As confirmed cases of bird flu creep closer to Minnesota, small backyard flocks appear to be among those most at risk. "This strain, what's interesting about it is it's affecting more backyard flocks and also broilers than what we saw in 2015," Sawatzke said, referring to the year of the last major outbreak in the poultry industry.
- [Meet the Spongy Moth, Whose Old Name Contained an Offensive Term](#) - The Entomological Society of America unanimously voted last week to adopt the common name “spongy moth” for the species *Lymantria dispar*. The moth had been nameless for about eight months, after the society removed the former common name — “gypsy moth,” based on a term that many Romani people view as derogatory — from its list of common names in July.
- [Adding fungi to soil may introduce invasive species, threatening ecosystems](#) - What about creatures in the soil? Have they been affected by invasive species? Which species have gone extinct? Which ones are proliferating? It is important to think about soil as an invisible ecosystem, because many agricultural practices include the deliberate addition of microbes to the soil, biofertilizers.
- [Avian flu spreads, now confirmed in 5 Minnesota counties](#) - State officials say cases of H5N1 have now been detected in poultry flocks from operations in Kandiyohi, Lac Qui Parle, Meeker, Stearns, and a backyard flock in Mower County.

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

- **MN CREP** will be taking applications April 4th - April 29th - Contact your local [SWCD](#) to find out how to sign up for Minnesota CREP.
 - For more info on CREP: <http://bwsr.state.mn.us/mn-crep-landowners>
- **Save The Date!** The Minnesota Prairie Chicken Society is holding their Annual Meeting Saturday April 23rd at the MSUM Regional Science Center near Glyndon, MN
 - See the full agenda [here](#).
 - [Register Here!](#)
- If you are ever looking for videos on habitat tips, check out Nebraska Pheasants Forever's youtube page. They have a playlist of 28 videos and are a great resource!
 - https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLaB9StBffkEer0_crAx Cz6ipRA61UOEfz