On May 2nd the District was awarded a significant grant to purchase ArcGIS for the office. We heard about the ArcGIS Conservation Grant Program through MAWD, as Yellow Medicine River WD had received a grant through this program themselves. Staff applied for the grant on May 1st through a quick and simple application form. After some correspondence with Esri staff, the grant was awarded the very next day.

The District received two one-year licenses for ArcGIS Advanced with all extensions (Geostatistical Analyst, Data Interoperability, Workflow Manager, Network Analyst, Publisher, ArcGIS Data Reviewer, ArcGIS Schematics, Spatial Analyst, ArcGIS 3D Analyst, and Tracking Analyst) for a total cost of $1,200. This is a major savings for the District. Initial quotes from the company were coming in at $4,500 per individual standard licenses, typical pricing for the advanced licenses (the same level that we received through the grant) is $6,000 per license or $12,000 for two. Staff feels that the value of what we received is actually much higher than $12,000 as that number does not include the additional fees associated with online access, annual maintenance, or upgrade requirements.

With this software, District staff will be capable of performing many new activities as well as improvement on current endeavors such as reviewing potential permit sites, assessing potential capital improvement projects, assessing and prioritizing agricultural areas, and creating maps and story maps for public education and outreach. Staff is excited at the prospect of these activities and countless others that are now possible. With the current changes to staff, existing staff are in the process of updating the 2018 Work Plan and associated tasks so as to help refine the position description of the current Program Assistant held by Mike Sorensen. Seasonal Technicians will help now during the summer season but access to GIS software will now also be considered given its value to support the District’s mission.