



2008 Annual Report

2008 Annual Report
of Activities and
Accomplishments for
the Lake of the
Woods Soil & Water
Conservation District



District Organization

Supervisors

Marshall Nelson—Chair	District III since 2004
Roger Krause—Vice-chair	District IV since 1992
Jon Sonstegard—Secretary	District I since 2007
Russell Hansen—Treasurer	District II since 1990
Scott Pieper—Public Relations	District V since 2004

Staff

Josh Stromlund—County LWPO and SWCD Manager
 Mike Hirst—Resource Technician
 Corryn Trask—Resource Technician

NRCS Partners

Kelly Voigt—District Conservationist
 Ryan Haspel—Technician

"The purpose of the District is to provide for the adoption of sound water quality, proper land use, and soil conservation practices on all lands in the District, to assist with the development of a prosperous agricultural economy, and to foster other community development for the general welfare and security of the people of the District."

Shoreline protection project at Morris Point installed in 2008



Councils and Committees

MASWCD Legislative Committee
 Giziibii RC&D
 NC MN JPB Engineering Board
 Envirothon Planning Committee
 Rainy River Basin Committee
 International Joint Commission
 Technical Advisory Committee
 EQIP Local Workgroup
 MASWCD Area VIII Committee

Minnesota Association of County Feedlot
 Officers
 Local Water Plan Committee
 Rainy /Rapid River Board
 Bostic Watershed Project Committee
 LW School Forest Committee
 County Comprehensive Land Use Plan-
 ning Committee
 Wetlands Conservation Act Rule Revision
 Technical Committee

District Responsibilities

Wetlands Conservation Act

The District receives funding to provide technical assistance for the Wetlands Conservation Act. The main focus of the District for 2008 was providing technical assistance for wetland determinations, evaluating construction projects to minimize wetland impacts, and wetland restorations.

- Meet monthly to provide input as part of the County Technical Advisory Committee
- Provide technical assistance to nearly 40 landowners who are considering construction projects which may impact wetlands. Assist the County Land and Water Planning Director on wetland determinations
- Provide technical assistance for wetland enhancement or alteration projects
- Remain up to date on current rules and regulations regarding the Wetlands Conservation Act
- Write and certify wetland restoration orders for wetland violations
- Reviewed over 20 wetland impact/restoration applications and conducted site visits
- Conducted a wetland mitigation inventory and assessment for the BWSR NE MN Wetland Management Strategy. The inventory was part of an effort to address wetland mitigation concerns in counties with greater than 80% of pre-settlement wetlands remaining



County Feedlot Officer

Lake of the Woods County is a delegated county for the MPCA Feedlot Program. Through an agreement with the county, the SWCD provides a staff person to serve as the County Feedlot Officer. Funding for this position comes from the MPCA, with an additional match by the county. Although this is a step away from SWCDs traditionally acting as non-regulatory entities, it also opens the doors to providing financial assistance to help producers meet water quality standards.

- Feedlot Officer attended MPCA Quarterly Feedlot Meetings, MinnFarm Training, MN Association of County Feedlot Officer Annual Conference, and an Agricultural Awareness Workshop
- Direct mailings were sent to all registered feedlot owners to inform them about the SWCD manure nutrient testing program and of the manure spreader calibration service through NRCS
- Submitted press releases in local papers for the Feedlot Water Quality Management Grants, Minnesota Department of Agriculture's Livestock Investment Grant, and information on Bovine Tuberculosis
- Conducted site visits at over 15 feedlots for routine inspections or as part of the cost share grant site inspection
- Completed feedlot work plan and reviewed with county board



Alternative watering system installed through state cost share.

(District responsibilities continued...)

Cost Share Assistance

The District receives state cost share funding for installing conservation practices that improve and protect water quality. In addition to this, the District can apply for Feedlot Water Quality Management Grant funding and other special cost share programs as they come available. Water Plan funds are also a source for cost share assistance. Projects typically take anywhere from 1-4 years from start to finish, depending on complexity and seasonal conditions. In 2008, there were 24 working contracts for cost share assistance, all in varying stages of completion.

Water Plan

The District is the lead agency for the implementation of the County's Comprehensive Local Water Management Plan. The 5-year plan was written in 2003, and is currently under revision.

Updating the Local Water Plan

- A two year extension was granted by the Board of Water and Soil Resources. The plan will be finalized by the end of 2009. The draft priority scoping document is currently out for review.

Abandoned Well Cost Share Program

- 7 abandoned wells were sealed in 2008 using Water Plan funds. Each landowner received up to \$300 or 75% of the total project cost, whichever was less.

Well Water Testing

- The SWCD held their annual well testing clinic, where reduced cost testing for e.coli, coliform bacteria, and nitrates was provided. Over 45 wells were sampled during this clinic. Tests that normally cost \$35 individually were provided at a cost of \$10 to the public, with the SWCD picking up another \$10 of the total cost.
- The SWCD now also carries mail-in test kits for year round testing

County-wide Stormwater Planning

- SWCD staff submitted a CWL grant for assistance from the Minnesota Conservation Corps. 1000 hours were rewarded to help conduct a county-wide culvert inventory.
- SWCD staff completed a revision of the county ditch inventory book, including new maps with aerial photography, a reference map, and electronic versions of all the new format.

Bostic Creek Watershed Protection Project

- SWCD staff and JPB Engineer presented a hydraulic study of a two-stage ditch design that will potentially alleviate erosion problems and help to stabilize a large stretch of JD 28 as part of the Bostic Challenge Grant
- County board was in favor of the project, and staff is working with PWD to move towards construction in 2009.



(District responsibilities continued...)

- SWCD encumbered cost share funding to assist with Bostic Creek Protection Project
- Staff gave poster presentation of the Bostic Creek Watershed Protection Project at the Lake of the Woods Water Quality Symposium

Water Quality Monitoring

- District representatives attended the Lake of the Woods Water Quality Symposium
- Attend regular meetings of the Rainy Rapid Board, Rainy River Basin Committee, and International Joint Commission, and Lake of the Woods Control Board
- Work with school coordinators, Jenny Moorman and Becky Mollberg, to continue efforts for the Rainy River Basin River Watch Program
- The District contracted with MPCA to conduct a Dissolved Oxygen Impairment Verification and TMDL Development Project on the Baudette River
- The District has contracted with MPCA to conduct a dissolved oxygen TMDL study on Williams Creek.



Watershed Management

- Formed partnership with NRCS Watershed Staff to work on watershed issues in the county, including Zippel and Bostic Bay

Shoreline Restoration Assistance

- Installed a bio-engineering shoreline stabilization project at the Dinndorf residence. MCC crew labor was provided free of charge through a Clean Water Legacy grant.
- Provided engineering assistance and technical guidance on shoreline protection and restoration techniques at over 10 sites

Other Responsibilities and Activities of the SWCD

The SWCD has many other duties and responsibilities which do not receive direct funding. Grass-roots conservation and local representation of soil and water quality issues, which were the main reason SWCD's were created, continues to be a driving force of the District. Districts also have cooperative working agreements with other agencies at the state and federal level, and provide a local voice for these agencies.

Local and State Policy Making

- Supervisor Nelson represented northern Minnesota on MASWCD Legislative Committee
- Nelson traveled to State Capitol for MASWCD Legislative Days where he met with Representative Anzels and Senator Saxhaug to discuss local concerns
- Submitted Statement of Economic Interest for each elected officer which is available for public review
- Appointed new committee members and vote on operational policies for 2008
- Sent a representative to the 2008 MASWCD State Convention
- Conduct local workgroup meeting for NRCS EQIP programs and priority setting for the county

(District responsibilities continued...)

Forestry and Tree Sales

- Sold 7,800 trees during the annual tree sale
- Held a Forest Management for Wildlife workshop, over 20 people in attendance

Engineering Assistance

- Through a 9-County Joint Powers Board, low cost engineering assistance is available for projects that protect and improve water quality

Reporting Responsibilities

- Provide Annual Plan and Budget to BWSR and the County
- Required CPA audits every third year
- ELink reporting to account for all project dollars received through the state
- Cost share reviews of FY04 and FY06 Feedlot Water Quality Management Grants
- Year end Financial Reporting for BWSR
- Post financial reports, budgets, annual plan and board minutes on website

AgBMP Program, low interest loans for water quality

- Limited funding was available to the Area VIII SWCDs in 2008
- Funds were requested in 2007 for projects starting in 2008
- \$50,000 was received towards the purchase of no-till equipment
- A large cluster type septic upgrade on Lake of the Woods has received funding for 2009 through the loan program
- One other individual ISTS system will receive funding in 2009 from the money remaining

Community Involvement and Education

- Lake of the Woods High School students competed at Area VIII Envirothon held at Lake Bemidji State Park and their 3rd place ranking advanced them on to the State Envirothon
- Donated time, materials and the Enviroscape to the Lake of the Woods School's Living Green Event
- SWCD staff provided coaching assistance to the Envirothon team and helped coordinate presenters
- Distribution of biannual newsletter "Bridging the Gap"
- District Resource Technician served as co-coordinator for the Area VIII Envirothon. Around 150 students attended the 2008 competition
- Represented the community by serving on the Giziibii Resource Conservation and Development Council
- Booth at the County Fair focused on conservation programs and the upcoming elections



Financial Report

Cost Share Funds Received by the State in 2008

\$17,000 Total State Cost Share Funds for received from State for Conservation Projects

Cost Share Payments for Conservation Projects

\$26,500 Payments to landowners for shoreline stabilization and protection projects

\$5,200 Payments to landowners for feedlot projects which reduce manure runoff and protect water quality

\$2,200 Payments for well sealing assistance to protect groundwater

\$5,000 Payments to landowners for drought disaster assistance as part of emergency funding received from state

\$38,900

Other Funding Assistance Provided by the District

\$100 Donation for Area VIII Envirothon

\$500 Donated to the Rainy River Basin River Watch Program

\$50,000 AgBMP low-interest loan funding spent on no-till equipment to support conservation farming practices

\$109,000 2008 AgBMP funds set aside for ISTS projects in 2009

\$5,000 Additional cost share funds set aside from Water Plan FY09 funding

\$164,600

Total Additional Cash or In-kind Funding Received Through Partnerships

\$22,000 In-kind labor from the Minnesota Conservation Corp received through a Clean Water Legacy grant to conduct a county-wide culvert inventory

\$29,600 Funding for work completed on the MPCA Baudette Estuary Study

\$7,100 Funding received from MPCA for water sampling as part of the Zippel and Williams Creek TMDL

\$58,700

*figures are rounded to nearest \$100

On the Ground Accomplishments

- 2250 Culverts inventoried by MCC Crew via Clean Water Legacy grant funding
 - 47 Wells tested for e.coli, coliform bacteria and nitrate contamination
- 5.75 Miles of stream and ditch buffers installed in Zippel watershed
- 2.75 Miles of stream and ditch buffers installed in Bostic watershed
- 900 Feet of shoreline stabilized through cost share assistance
 - 5 LOTW Envirothon students who made it to the state competition
 - 10 People who volunteer for the Rain Gauge Program
- 4,500 Bringing the Gap Newsletters mailed out
 - 38 Landowners who received technical assistance for Wetland issues
- 265.5 Additional part-time staff hours received through the CEP job placement program.
 - 750 1940's and 60's LW County aerial photos electronically scanned and preserved
 - 10 Newspaper articles and notices published in both local papers
 - 8 Potential banking sites evaluated for the NE Wetland Mitigation Strategy
- 7800 Trees sold for conservation plantings
- 115 Linear feet of shoreline buffer installed on the Rainy River—part 2 of a 2 part project to stabilize the shoreline
 - 2 Workshops hosted by the SWCD. One for Forest Management and one for a tour of on-the-ground conservation projects.
- 16 Total water sampling sites on streams within LOTW County (Baudette, Williams Creek, Zippel, Bostic)
 - 6 River Watch Program water sampling sites on streams within LOTW County (Baudette, Winter Road River)
- 45 Days spent in the field taking water samples at these sites
 - 2 Producers currently working on feedlot grants to improve their operations