

Renville County Soil & Water Conservation District

2010 Annual Plan



2010 Annual Plan

Renville Soil & Water Conservation District

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Board of Supervisors

The Board meets the second Thursday of each month at 7:00 a.m. at the Ag Services Building, 1008 West Lincoln, Olivia MN.

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Others Assisting the Renville SWCD

Renville County Farm Service Agency (FSA) Committee & Staff

Rick Schmidt

Tom Gruendemann

Barb Melberg

Byron Hogberg, CED

Lynn Zieske

Kay Precht

Stacy Lindahl

Greg Kodet, Field Reporter

Tom Anderson, Farm Loan Manager

Cindy Haubrich

Jiselle Pfaff

Joe Serbus, Field Reporter

Renville County Board of Commissioners

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Renville County Administrator

Sara Folsted

Renville County Public Works

Larry Zupke, Ditch Inspector

Renee Hannah, Admin. Asst.

Renville County Office of Environment & Community Development

Mark Erickson

Scott Refsland

Renville County Household Hazardous Waste & Water Management

Diane Mitchell

Julie Kohout, Admin. Asst.

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Jeff Zajac, Wildlife Manager

Joe Stangel, Private Lands Specialist

Lee Sundmark, Fisheries

Rob Collett, Waters

Prairie Country Resource Conservation & Development Council

Randy Nelson

Hawk Creek Watershed Project

Cory Netland, Project Coordinator

Stephanie Klamm, Water Quality & Outreach Technician

Dean Dambrotten, Planner/Field Tech

Crow River Organization of Waters

Diane Sander, Coordinator

Jenny Gieseke, Watershed Spec.

High Island Watershed Project

Joel Wurscher, Coordinator

Ron Otto, Technician

Purpose of Annual Plan

The purpose of the Renville County Soil & Water Conservation District Annual Plan is to provide guidance for the District's conservation program operations during the one-year period of January 1, 2010 – December 31, 2010.

The plan enables the District to set priorities and to implement conservation programs in an orderly and consistent manner throughout the year. The annual plan gives direction for activities and strategies for the program year. The activities of the District can be divided into five broad categories of Administration, Education/Promotion, Wildlife Habitat, Water Quality & Soil Conservation. The following plan describes goals and objectives under each of those categories. In addition, the Annual Plan summarizes staffing needs to complete the goals and it provides budget information for the District.

Administration

1. Manage personnel & funds in keeping with accepted accounting practices and State & Federal guidelines & laws.
2. Maintain District Website
3. Maintain records including Board minutes, State Cost-Share files, RIM & CREP files, WCA files, Feedlot inspection records and any other records necessary to meet State & Federal guidelines & rules.
4. File all required reports to BWSR and to other local, State & Federal agencies and organizations including the Legislative Citizen's Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR).
5. Apply for supplemental funding through grants as opportunities present themselves.
6. Maintain District files
7. Maintain supplies & equipment
8. Maintain good working relationships with cooperating agencies and offices including but not limited to: *BWSR*NRCS*FSA*DNR*USFWS*Renville County*LCCMR*
9. Staff & Board involved in Local Work Group to set NRCS EQIP priorities & assist in promotion and scoring.
10. Obtain technical & engineering assistance and cost-share assistance through the State Cost-Share Program, the Native Buffer Cost-Share Program, the Feedlot Water Quality Management Program, the USDA EQIP Program, Local Water Management Cost-Share Program, Watershed Project Cost-Share and other funding sources.
11. Administer the Wetland Conservation Act
 - a. Monitor all USDA 1026 requests for possible WCA implications
 - b. Serve as official repository of national Wetland Inventory maps.
12. Work with BWSR to process easements through RIM, the Buffer Easement Program, RIM/WRP, Roadbank mitigation, and the Hard Rock easement program.
 - a. Maintain records in a manner that will expedite processing
13. Work with vendors and contractors to achieve easement management goals and objectives
14. Staff & supervisors regularly involved in the political process at local, state and national levels.
15. Work cooperatively with USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) to process applications for conservation programs such as CRP, CCRP, WRP, WHIP & EQIP.
16. Assist with mid-contract management revisions to existing CRP contracts.
17. Assist in preparation and reporting for the Renville County Natural Resource Block Grant.
 - a. Administer Local Water Management Cost-Share program
 - b. Direct programs to help meet goals of the Comprehensive Water Management Plan.

18. Administer and implement the State Cost-Share program following program rules and administrative guidelines.
19. Work with County Ditch Inspector to develop conservation plans on public ditch systems.
 - a. Work with County Ditch Inspector and County Board to identify appropriate sites for side inlet structures.
 - b. Provide County with information about state and federal programs that can be utilized to provide benefits to public and private drainage systems.
 - c. Assist with remote camera inspections of county drainage systems.

Education & Promotion

1. Submit articles to local newspapers, Renville County Messenger, & FSA newsletter to promote conservation.
2. Speak to organizations, school groups & individual landowners/operators about topics related to natural resources and the environment. Topics include but not limited to erosion, water quality, wildlife habitat, feedlot runoff, chemical runoff, buffers, wetland restoration benefits, conservation tillage, and careers in natural resources. Inform them about local, state and federal programs that can help them with both technical assistance and cost-share.
3. Work with County Ditch Authority to promote planting of buffer strips along drainage ditches, creeks and wetlands using the CCRP program and the incentives from watershed project grants.
4. As staffing and time permit, staff will contact individual landowners, both in writing and in person, with information on conservation programs.
5. Staff will refer interested landowners to Watershed Projects and Renville County Office of Environment & Community Development (ECD) for cost-share assistance and information on how to upgrade noncompliant ISTS.
6. Staff will promote proper manure application with individual feedlot owners and when working with groups.
7. Cooperate with Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, US Fish & Wildlife Service and other agencies to offer habitat workshops for easement owners.
8. Work with farm managers, professional ag groups and banking professionals to encourage them to consider conservation easements in their management decisions.
9. Cooperate & partner with sportsman groups, state and local agencies and individuals on improving and expanding existing wildlife habitat.
10. Work with Renville County Board & office of ECD on improving County Park system for wildlife.
11. Promote EQIP funding when working with individual landowners on conservation practices and feedlot issues.
12. Promote Envirothon participation.
13. Plan and implement WALK 2010 for Renville County sixth grade students.
14. Cooperate with other SWCD offices in efforts to promote the work of Districts at events such as Farmfest.
15. Educate landowners who have noncompliant feedlots about the availability of technical and engineering assistance and cost-share assistance through local, state & federal programs.
16. Work with individual feedlot operators to reduce application of manure on sensitive areas and reduce winter application of manure.
17. Use all available educational outlets to promote information on MPCA rules and Renville County ordinances regarding ISTS and Ag Waste Systems.
18. Promote conservation tillage as a major factor in reducing fertilizer and chemical run-off.
19. Promote wetland restoration/protection to trap sediment and pollutants upstream of receiving lakes, rivers, streams and drainage systems.
20. Inform landowners in the Minnesota River Valley of the availability of LCCMR Hard Rock easement program as an option for their land.

21. Advise easement owners on the value and importance of proper easement management for wildlife populations and recreational opportunities.
22. Refer landowners to other agencies for assistance with habitat management concerns.
23. Work with landowners, FSA & NRCS to improve, protect and enhance easement habitat using WHIP, EQIP, DNR Private Lands & Working Lands Initiative, Native Buffer Cost-Share Program and any other available funds.
24. Continued involvement in the political process including visiting with elected officials on natural resource issues and taking advantage of every opportunity to conduct tours.
25. Educate landowners about the various laws and rules that could affect wetland protection and drainage decisions.
26. Attend quarterly Water Management Task Force meetings.
27. Contact individual landowners/operators to inform them of rental rates & incentives for enrolling buffers in CCRP program.
28. Encourage County Board and County Ditch Authority to suggest easement programs as a solution to poorly functioning drainage systems.

Wildlife Habitat

1. Assist landowners in enrolling eligible land into the CRP program. Do site review & evaluation for eligibility on most sites. 2010 goal is to enroll 500 additional acres. Write seed plans and design tree plantings per CRP rules/guidelines.
2. Work with native seed dealers/seeding vendors to help landowners meet the requirements laid out in their conservation plan.
3. Physically spot check perpetual conservation easements as required by BWSR. Attention will be paid to encroachment, condition of cover, need for management, and weed control. Contact landowners by letter or phone with results and assist them in management & enhancement of their easement. Submit report to BWSR. Approximately 120 spot checks to be completed during summer and early fall of 2010.
4. Monitor groundwater and do well observations on Roadbank easements.
5. Work with easement landowners to improve and enhance existing cover or establish native grasses by using cost-share through WHIP and Native Buffer Cost-share Program.
6. Assist landowners in making application to RIM/WRP and Roadbank easement programs for wetland restorations. Assist in easement processing, survey & design and work with landowners, contractors and seed vendors to establish practices to improve wildlife habitat.
7. Work with landowners to enroll land into CRP and into the BWSR Buffer Easement Program along streams and ditches in Renville County. Do the easement processing, and work with landowners and vendors to establish practices to improve wildlife habitat.
8. Design wildlife tree plantings for private landowners.
9. Work with local Pheasant's Forever on cost-sharing wildlife habitat projects.
10. Encourage landowners to convert from row crops to prescribed grazing systems and to follow prescribed grazing systems.
11. Assist in restoration and/or replacement of altered wetlands.
12. Serve as technical committee representatives to Hawk Creek Watershed Project, High Island Watershed Project and Crow Organization of Waters.
13. Serve on the TMDL committee for the Hawk Creek Watershed Project & the High Island Watershed Project.

Water Quality

1. Promote the following practices when working with landowners, County Board and other offices and agencies: Well Sealing, wetland restorations, terraces, sediment basins, grass waterways, rock intakes, side inlet structures, bank stabilization projects, grade stabilization projects, diversions, rain gardens and pest management. Assist landowners in obtaining cost-sharing to complete projects. Assist in survey & design as necessary.
2. Assist NRCS with EQIP program. Staff and Board will be involved in Local Work Group to help set priorities and staff will assist in promotion and in scoring of application and in program implementation.
3. Work with County Ditch Inspector to improve ditch system management by identifying sites, designing and installing side inlet structures and by promoting conservation programs and practices along county ditches. Recommend 3-1 slope on all county ditches and promote buffer strip programs through CCRP on all ditch systems.
4. Enroll environmentally sensitive areas into the CCRP program and conservation easement programs such as the BWSR Buffer Easement Program, RIM, RIM/WRP, Roadbank program and the Hard Rock easement program.
5. Perform 70 feedlot inspections and check for manure management plans per MPCA Rule 7020.
6. Assist landowners who have noncompliant feedlots due to run off issues.
7. Work with landowners seeking to comply with MPCA manure and nutrient management rules.
8. Work with landowners on design & installation of rain gardens in urban areas and on lake lots.
9. Research, design, survey and install wetland restorations for RIM, CREP, CCRP, CRP & WRP.
10. Install conservation practices on land that meets the district priorities as identified in the State Cost-Share Plan.
11. Assist County Board and Ditch Inspector in design and implementation of solutions to ditch maintenance problems.
12. Assist in restoration and/or replacement of altered wetlands.
13. Submit Roadbank applications and oversee restoration of easements under grant with BWSR.
14. Assist landowners in design of critical area seeding practices using EQIP, State Cost-Share and Watershed project funds.
15. Cooperate with NRCS in reviewing and implementing nutrient management plans.
16. Evaluate and approve mining operations and reclamation plans for Renville County.
17. Provide technical assistance to the AgBMP Loan Program in Renville County.
18. Provide information and assistance to landowners regarding ISTS to insure compliance with MPCA Chapter 7080.
19. Promote conservation tillage as a major factor in reducing fertilizer and chemical run-off.
20. Work with industry in the county to educate, identify, prevent and correct potential environmental problems.
21. Make field visits to determine eligibility for CCRP practices.
22. Assist NRCS in survey, design, staking & construction of EQIP practices.
23. Assist NRCS with spot checking EQIP practices.

Soil Erosion

1. Assist NRCS with EQIP program promotion, priority setting, practice implementation.
2. Work with County Ditch inspector to improve ditch system management by identifying sites, designing and installing side inlet structures and by promoting conservation program and practices along county ditches. Recommend a 3-1 slope on all county ditches. Promote buffer strips on ditches using CCRP, the BWSR Buffer Easement Program and the Native Buffer Cost-share program.
3. Research, design, survey and install wetland restorations for RIM, CCRP, CRP, WRP, Roadbank program and any other available local, state or federal programs.
4. Administer and implement the State Cost-Share Program following program rules and administrative guidelines.
5. Work with landowners on designing farmstead shelterbelts, field windbreaks, and living snow fences and assist them with cost share through CCRP, EQIP, WHP, State Cost-Share and DOT agreements.
6. Promote conservation tillage by referring landowners to the EQIP program and by administration of the Ag BMP loan program.
7. Promote and administer conservation easement programs and available CCRP practices on land most prone to wind erosion. Inform landowners of any and all incentives available to them through watershed projects, DNR Working Lands Initiative or private groups.
8. Make field visits to determine eligibility for practices and programs.
9. Work with Redwood SWCD to plant farmstead shelterbelts, field windbreaks and living snow fences as requested.
10. Do site inspections as required by State Cost-Share program.

State Cost Share Program

Cost Share monies provided by the state will be used to control erosion, sedimentation and animal waste in areas which have high priority problems. To help determine which areas and/or landowners receive cost share assistance the following definitions have been developed:

A. High Priority Erosion Problems:

"High Priority Erosion Problems" are areas where erosion from wind or water is occurring equal to, or in excess of 2 x T tons per acre per year or is occurring on any area that exhibits active gully erosion or is identified as high priority in the comprehensive local water management plan or the conservation district's comprehensive plan.

B. High Priority Water Quality Problems:

"High Priority Water Quality Problems" are areas where sediment, nutrients, chemicals, or other pollutants discharge to waters of the State as identified in a comprehensive local water management plan or the conservation district's comprehensive plan, or discharge to a sinkhole or groundwater. The pollutant delivery rate to the water source is in amounts that will impair the quality or usefulness of the water resource.

High Priority Conservation Problems

1. High Priority Erosion Problems

Renville County has 575,177 acres of land presently designated as row crop farming. Corn, and especially beans and sugar beets, leave these acres susceptible to wind erosion. In recent winters without adequate snow cover, visible wind erosion has reduced the environmental quality of the air, created hazardous driving conditions and generally lowered the quality of rural living to all residents of the county.

Wind erosion is a high priority erosion problem in Renville County for several reasons. The general topography of the county is relatively flat and treeless with a large amount of wet calcareous soils which are highly susceptible to wind erosion. Present farming methods leave much of our soils unprotected during winter and spring months. When you combine topography, soils and highly intensive, fence row to fence row farming of such crops as corn, soybeans and sugar beets, wind erosion becomes a real problem.

The funding needed to install practices to control high priority wind erosion problems would be far in excess of current funding.

2. High Priority Water Quality Problems

a. Sediment

Due to the topography of the land adjacent to the Minnesota River and its tributaries in the county we are experiencing severe water erosion in cultivated fields. We are presently experiencing sheet, rill and gully erosion on approximately 300 farms along these water courses. Practices needed to control this erosion are CRP contracts and conservation easements and/or extensive network of terraces, waterways, gully control structures and critical area stabilization. Renville County has approximately 158,000 crop acres susceptible to water erosion.

The funds needed to install practices and secure conservation easements to control high priority water erosion problems would be in excess of current funding.

b. Feedlots

Currently Renville County has 350 registered feedlots. We experience ag waste pollution into our agricultural drainage systems, thus reducing water quality in our county and downstream throughout the state.

Excess nutrients via runoff are an issue in Renville County. We see this problem as an on-going situation unless conservation practices are undertaken to reduce the ag chemical pollution run-off. Due to the extensive drainage system in Renville County, feedlot pollution becomes increasingly serious. There are numerous feedlot operations draining into county and private tile which outlets into the legal ditch systems and adversely affects the overall water quality. The funds needed to install practices to control high priority feedlots would be \$250,000 per year.

Implementing practices which would eliminate high priority conservation problems in Renville County would require at least \$500,000 annually. Currently the Renville Soil & Water Conservation District receives just over \$10,000 in State Cost-share funds. Additional funds may be available through other state and federal programs by submitting grant applications for specific projects.

In 2007, 2008 & 2009, the SWCD partnered with the Redwood, Chippewa, Lac qui Parle & Yellow Medicine SWCD offices and received a total of \$3,863,000 from the Environmental & Natural Resources Trust Fund for conservation easements to protect granite rock outcrops in the Minnesota River Valley. Four easements protecting a total of 212 acres of rock outcrop in Renville & Redwood Counties were recorded through this grant program using the initial 2007 grant. In the fall of 2008 the five counties partnered to apply for an additional \$2.8 million to protect an additional 1,000 acres of granite rock outcrops. They were awarded \$1.5 million which funded 14 easements totaling 540 acres. The group is currently awaiting legislative approval of an additional \$1.8 million. If approved, that funding will be available on July 1, 2010 and will fund twelve easements protecting 702 acres. Renville SWCD acts as the grant manager for the five county group. Renville SWCD staff are responsible for grant writing, reporting and some of the fiscal responsibilities.

EQIP funds are expected to be available to address local resource concerns with sign-up expected in February 2010. Practice priorities are set by the Local Work Group organized by the SWCD. In 2008 \$439,090 in EQIP funds were spent in Renville County and in 2009 the amount increased to \$499,169.85.

The Hawk Creek Watershed Project (HCWP) currently has 9 active grants, totaling \$1,193,262.63, to implement best management practices, conduct water quality monitoring activities, and educate the general public regarding water quality issues. Funds are secure through Aug. 31, 2014. The Hawk Creek Project Coordinator will continue to seek out additional grant funds.

The Hawk Creek Watershed Project staff is housed in the Renville County Courthouse. Staff cooperates and partners with landowners and agency personnel in Renville, Chippewa, and Kandiyohi Counties. Renville SWCD staff partner with HCWP staff to promote, design, and implement appropriate practices. There is also a cooperative effort involving the dissemination and presentation of educational information.

Currently approved practices are SSTS loans, buffer strip (incentives), alternative tile intakes, water and sediment control basins (638s), terraces, side inlets, stream bank stabilizations, grade stabilizations, nutrient management practices, ag waste upgrades, livestock exclusions, grassed waterways, rain gardens and wetland restoration (incentives). (SSTS and rain gardens are not found in the NRCS EQIP Docket.)

The High Island Creek Watershed Implementation Project is in its final year of the current 3 year grant to implement water quality improvement projects. The project coordinator will continue to seek out additional project funds through grant applications. The coordinator is housed in the Sibley County Service Center and works with landowners throughout the High Island Creek Watershed. Renville SWCD and NRCS staff work with the coordinator to assist in promotion, design and implementation of appropriate practices. To improve water quality within the Watershed, a diverse selection of cost share incentives along with a number of workshops are available. Practices include: open intake alternatives (slotted risers, rock tile inlets, dense pattern tiling), structural practices (water and sediment control basins, terraces, diversions, grade control structures), cover crop incentive following green pea or sugar beet harvest, vegetative practices (wetland restorations, grassed waterways, filter strips), nutrient management, and low interest loans for septic system upgrades.

Most Renville County landowners have access to loan programs to fund upgrading non-compliant septic systems. The Hawk Creek Septic Loan program has \$26,958.97, High Island Septic program has \$36,926.78. The Middle Minnesota Septic Loan program has \$77,675.53 available. The main watershed of the Crow has \$45,000.00 and the Buffalo Creek sub-watershed of the Crow has \$200,000.00. In addition there is \$206,671.54 available for AgBMP loans. This is a revolving loan program so more funds vary as repayment occurs.

Watershed projects traditionally seek additional funding as it becomes available. The amounts listed in this report are monies available in March 2010. Amounts can vary significantly depending on demand and also on additional grant opportunities. If you would like information on any of the septic or AgBMP monies, please contact the Renville County Water & Household Hazardous Waste Management office at 320-523-3706.

Information was not available from the Crow River Organization of Waters.

Staffing Needs

Renville SWCD Workload Analysis Worksheet FY 2010

Goal/Objective/Priority	Staff Time Needed (in FTE)
Administration	2.25
District Operations	
WCA	
Feedlot	
State Cost-Share	
Easement Programs (RIM, RIM/WRP, Roadbank, LCCMR Hard Rock)	
CRP Paperwork	
Education/Promotion	.25
Wetlands	
Feedlot run-off	
Nutrient management	
Classroom Presentations	
WALK	
Envirothon	
CRP promotion	
Wildlife Habitat	.75
CRP establishment/enrollment	
Easement programs	
Wetland restorations	
Native grass seeding	
Water Quality	.75
Wetland restorations	
Buffers (CRP, Easements)	
ISTS	
Tillage	
Feedlot runoff	
Chemical runoff	
Soil Erosion	.25
Buffers	
Tillage	
Total Staff Years	4.00

These staff years include three full-time SWCD staff members and a full time Farm Bill Biologist the SWCD contracts with Pheasants Forever to promote USDA Farm Bill Conservation programs in Renville County.

Approved by Renville County Soil & Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors on February 11, 2010.

Signed: _____, Chair
(Marc Iverson)

**Renville Soil & Water Conservation District
2010 Budget**

Program/Category	Revenues	Expenses
Intergovernmental Revenue - Local	\$ 500.00	
Intergovernmental Revenue - County General Fund	\$ 91,640.00	
Intergovernmental Revenue - County WCA/LWM	\$ 15,000.00	
Intergovernmental Revenue - County Feedlot	\$ 28,000.00	
Intergovernmental Revenue - State General Services	\$ 23,800.00	
Intergovernmental Revenue - State Easement Programs	\$ 28,000.00	
Intergovernmental Revenue - State Farm Bill Technician	\$ 36,000.00	
Intergovernmental Revenue - State Cost Share Program	\$ 17,500.00	
Intergovernmental Revenue - LCCMR Grant Admin	\$ 6,000.00	
Intergovernmental Revenue - Federal	\$ 10,000.00	
Charges for Services	\$ 30,000.00	
Miscellaneous Revenue - Interest	\$ 10,000.00	
Miscellaneous Revenue - Other (Includes WLI admin)	\$ 2,910.00	
Total Revenue	\$ 299,350.00	
District Operations - Personnel Services		
Supervisor's Compensation		\$ 12,000.00
Employee Salary		\$ 132,500.00
Employer Contributions - FICA		\$ 11,000.00
Employer Contributions - PERA		\$ 9,300.00
Employer Contributions - HCSP		\$ 3,000.00
Other (includes Flexible Spending Account)		\$ 500.00
Employee Insurance		\$ 20,100.00
Contract Employee--Pheasant's Forever Farm Bill Biologist		\$ 42,750.00
Total-Personnel Services		\$ 231,150.00
District Operations - Other Services		
Supervisor's Expenses	\$ 6,000.00	
Employee Expenses	\$ 3,000.00	
Office Maintenance	\$ 4,500.00	
Professional Services	\$ -	
Fees & Dues	\$ 4,000.00	
Vehicle Maintenance	\$ 2,000.00	
Education & Promotion	\$ 1,000.00	
Insurance	\$ 4,500.00	
Rent	\$ 5,200.00	
Computer Services	\$ 4,000.00	
RIM Reimbursable Expenses	\$ -	
Total - Other Services	\$ 34,200.00	
Misc - Other Services & Charges	\$ -	
District Operations - Office Supplies	\$ 1,000.00	
District Operations - Capitol Outlay	\$ -	
Project Expenses - District (Trees)	\$ 15,000.00	
Project Expenses - State Cost Share Program	\$ 17,500.00	
Technical Services Area Match	\$ 500.00	
Total Expenses		\$ 299,350.00

