

# Renville County SWCD

## 2010 Annual Report

### Introduction

The following is a summary of the programs, personnel and accomplishments of the Renville County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) for 2010.

Renville County SWCD was established in August 1955. It is governed by a five member elected Board of Supervisors. Supervisors are elected from the County Commissioner District where they reside, but are elected countywide during the general election. Supervisors serve four year terms.

The financial health of the SWCD can be evaluated by referring to the Document entitled Financial Statements, which is posted separately on the website. Financial Statements are completed in accordance with the requirements set forth by the Board of Water & Soil Resources (BWSR). The SWCD is audited by an outside CPA as required by State Statute. The most recent audit was completed for the period ending December 31, 2008 and is available under separate cover as well as on the SWCD website. An audit is required for the year ending December 31, 2010 and should be available by late fall. When it is available it will be posted on the SWCD website or a copy can be obtained by calling the office.

The Renville SWCD is housed in the Ag Services building in Olivia and is co-located with the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Farm Service Agency (FSA). SWCD staff work cooperatively with the USDA staff on Federal Farm Bill Conservation Programs including CRP, CCRP, CSP, WRP, WHIP, and EQIP.

The SWCD staff also partner with Renville County to provide feedlot inspections as required by MN Statutes Chapter 7020. This partnership has been instrumental in helping landowners obtain cost-share for feedlot upgrades. Through co-location with USDA, and because of involvement with several watershed projects, the SWCD staff are in a position to acquire funds from a variety of sources which can help landowners fund Ag Waste projects.

The SWCD is designated by Renville County as the Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) LGU. SWCD staff also assist the Renville County Environmental office with technical assistance for mining reclamation plans, rain garden design and installation, and other environmental activities.

The SWCD administers the State Cost-Share program and actively seeks out projects to fund in accordance with program priorities and guidelines (see 2011 Annual Plan for list priorities). In addition to the use of the regular cost-share program, staff regularly apply to the State as additional opportunities are announced. The Native Buffer Cost-Share and Feedlot Water Quality Management funds that were requested in 2009 were received in 2010 and landowners are beginning to get paid as their projects progress. In addition, several landowners were paid market rate adjustment payments for enrolling land into CRP. These funds were from the DNR Working Land Initiative with Renville SWCD serving as fiscal agent.

In the fall of 2009 the Board of Water & Soil Resources introduced a new Buffer Easement Program for land along streams and ditches. The program places a Reinvest in Minnesota perpetual easement on the buffer acres. Twenty-seven applications were approved for funding in early 2010 and an additional four in July. The SWCD received administrative funding for easement processing. Landowner interest remains high. Another application period is expected in 2011. Staff have been contacting landowners and have a list of people interested in applying for the program as soon as it is announced.

July of 2010 saw the beginning of the third round of funding from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund. To date the ENRTF has awarded nearly \$4 million to fund easements in Renville, Redwood, Chippewa, Lac qui Parle and Yellow Medicine Counties. The purpose of this program is to protect rare & unique granite rock outcrop areas that are particularly vulnerable to development. Funding applications are reviewed by the Legislative-Citizen's Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR).

In July 2010 members of the LCCMR, the Clean Water Council and the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council toured Renville County where they viewed conservation practices including hard rock easements and buffer easements. They also spent time canoeing on the Minnesota River and heard presentations on wildlife and fisheries, river history and the on how conservation practices have improved water quality on Beaver Creek.

The SWCD discontinued the sale and planting of trees prior to the 2010 season. Customers were referred to the Redwood SWCD for tree purchases and planting. Renville SWCD staff are still available to assist landowners with tree questions and with designing tree plantings.

SWCD staff regularly present educational programs and are available to work with any school or community groups. In 2010 the staff assisted Supervisor Loyal Fisher with a large educational event called Green Career Day at the Renville County West Schools. Staff & Supervisors are involved in area, state and national conservation organizations and are actively involved in the political process at all levels. In December 2010, Renville SWCD Supervisor Dr. Kathryn K. Kelly was elected President of the Minnesota Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts (MASWCD). In addition, Loyal Fisher was elected South Central MASWCD Director which makes him a member of the MASWCD Board of Directors.

Staff also cooperate with other agencies and other SWCD offices as need arises and as program opportunities present themselves. An extensive list of cooperating agencies and offices is listed at the end of this report. Also listed are specific accomplishments for the year.

# 2010 Annual Report

## Renville County Soil & Water Conservation District

1008 West Lincoln Avenue

Olivia MN 56277

Phone: 320-523-1559 Fax: 320-523-2389

Website: [www.renvillewcd.com](http://www.renvillewcd.com)

### 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.

Marc Iverson, Chair  
PO Box 545  
Bird Island MN 55310  
District 3

Kathryn K. Kelly  
302 South 4th  
Olivia MN 56277  
District 4

Loyal Fisher, Vice Chair  
321 NW Bryant  
Renville MN 56284  
District 5

James Schafer  
51777 780<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Hector MN 55342  
District 1

Dave Guggisberg, Sec/Treas.  
50427 640<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Fairfax MN 55332  
District 2

### District Staff:

Karen Flom, Office Manager  
[kmflom@yahoo.com](mailto:kmflom@yahoo.com)

Thomas Kalahar, District Technician  
[kalahar@yahoo.com](mailto:kalahar@yahoo.com)

Taralee Latozke, District Technician  
[tara.latozke@mn.nacdnet.net](mailto:tara.latozke@mn.nacdnet.net)

Jason Beckler, Pheasant's Forever  
Farm Bill Biologist  
[jbeckler@pheasantsforever.org](mailto:jbeckler@pheasantsforever.org)

### NRCS Staff:

Jeff Kjorness, District Conservationist  
[jeff.kjorness@mn.usda.gov](mailto:jeff.kjorness@mn.usda.gov)

Mike Anderson, Technician  
[Michael.anderson@mn.usda.gov](mailto:Michael.anderson@mn.usda.gov)

## Others Assisting the Renville County SWCD

### Renville County Farm Service Agency (FSA) Committee & Staff

Orlynn Hegna  
Barb Melberg

Tom Gruendemann

Byron Hogberg, CED  
Kay Precht  
Lynn Zieske  
Melissa Summerlet  
Greg Kodet, Field Reporter

Tom Anderson, Farm Loan Manager  
Stacy Lindahl  
Jiselle Pfaff

Joe Serbus, Field Reporter

### Renville County Board of Commissioners

Ralph Novotny, District 1  
Paul Setzepfandt, District 3  
Lamont Jacobson, District 5

Bob Fox, District 2  
John Stahl, District 4

### 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  
Rob Collett, Waters

Lee Sundmark, Fisheries

### 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

## Renville County Soil & Water

# Conservation District

## 2010 Accomplishments

### Completed Projects

- State Cost-Share
  - 1 new contract approved in 2010
  - FY11 allocation was reduced to \$10,129 due to State budget cuts
- Native Buffer Cost-Share
  - 7 contracts were completed in 2010
  - \$49,762.17 were paid to Renville County landowners in 2010
  - 8 new contracts were approved in 2010
- Feedlot Water Quality Management/Clean Water Grants
  - Renville SWCD has \$109,423 available for projects. That money is earmarked for 3 ag waste projects. To date, landowners have been reimbursed for engineering costs.

### Education/Promotion

- WALK—2 Renville County Schools participated. WALK was held in two County Parks with 60 students participating one day and about 45 the second day. All SWCD staff were involved in planning & in the presentations. Topics included wise land use, watersheds & water quality, wildlife & wildlife habitat. Presentations were specific to the location & resources at that setting.
- Classroom Education –All the staff presented numerous times at RCW High School on various topics including the economics of conservation, career exploration, buffers, wildlife habitat & water quality issues.
- Staff assisted with planning & presentation at the RCW Green Career Day. This event offered students in both the elementary & secondary schools an opportunity to hear numerous speakers
- Two staff manned an information booth at Farmfest.
- Staff and Supervisors attended MASWCD Legislative Day at the Capitol & maintained frequent contact with elected officials at local, state & federal levels.
- Staff and Supervisors attended MASWCD Convention. Dr. Kathryn Kelly was elected MASWCD President. Loyal Fisher was elected South Central Area MASWCD Director.
- State Conservation Plan meetings, TMDL meetings, Working Lands Initiative Meetings, DNR Shoreland meetings.

### Feedlot Inspections

- Renville SWCD Staff continue to fill the role of Renville County Feedlot Inspector. 71 feedlots were inspected in 2010.
- Worked with landowners & engineers to determine best solutions for noncompliant feedlots. Assisted those landowners with obtaining cost-share from all available sources. In 2010, \$182,133 in cost-share payments to landowners from the various sources.
- As noted above, SWCD staff wrote a Feedlot Water Quality Management Grant which was funded for \$109,423 to assist 3 landowners correct existing pollution problems.

### Conservation Reserve Program (CRP & CCRP)

- 49 new contracts totaling 869.6 acres were enrolled into CRP. In addition there were 31 RIM Buffer Easements totaling 253.6 acres that also had a CRP component. The SWCD acts as the fiscal agent for the DNR Working Lands Initiative. In 2010 landowners received \$369,369 in incentive payments from this program. In addition landowners were assisted with 78 management practices on 1,140.6 acres.

## Easement Programs

- Staff continued well monitoring on three roadbank easements from prior years. Staff continued to work with landowners & BWSR on maintenance of these easements
- LCCMR Granite Rock Outcrops —\$1.8 million from the Environmental & Natural Resource Trust Fund was approved by the 2010 Minnesota State Legislature and available July 1, 2010. The money will fund 16 easements totaling 711.7 acres in four counties. This grant is in addition to the \$563,000 funded in 2007 which enrolled 212 acres into 4 easements and the 2009 grant for \$1.5 million which funded 16 easements covering 592.2 acres. Renville SWCD staff act as program manager for the ENRTF grants. The eligible area includes portions of Redwood, Renville, Chippewa, Lac qui Parle & Yellow Medicine Counties. There are currently unfunded applications on file and it is the consensus of the 5 SWCD offices that additional funds are needed.
- 27 RIM Buffer Easement applications were accepted in the first round of funding and 4 in the second round. These easements enrolled 253.6 acres into perpetual buffers along creeks & drainage ditches. Workload for this program was significant in 2010. In addition to processing the 31 easements, staff worked to promote additional applications for an anticipated 2011 program.
- RIM/WRP – 3 applications were submitted. None of these applications were funded.
- RIM/CREP Site Inspections – about 100 site inspections completed in 2010
- RIM/CREP maintenance – used NRCS WHIP & the State Native Buffer Cost-share & DNR programs to assist landowners with maintenance & enhancement of existing easements.
- With 393 conservation easements in the county, workload remains high

## Wetland Conservation Act (WCA)

- 440 tiling requests were reviewed for compliance with WCA rules.
- A total of 3 WCA applications were approved including 1 replacement plan and 2 boundary or typing applications.

## Working Lands Initiative (WLI)

- In 2008 Renville SWCD partnered with Chippewa SWCD & MN DNR Section of Wildlife on a WLI project covering 11,004 acres. In 2009 a new area covering 10 square miles in Renville County was also approved. The project protected/enhanced 362.5 acres in 2010 with landowners receiving a total of \$369,369 in incentive payments from the project.

## Local Water Management

- 7 contracts were completed and landowners were paid \$4,400 in cost-share for those projects. An additional \$15,000 was obtained for future projects.

## Mining Permits Reviewed

- 5 mining reclamation plans were reviewed and approved.

## Rain Garden Plan Review

- Continue to work with interested landowners on design and installation of rain gardens.

## Partnerships

BWSR \* DNR \* NRCS \* FSA \* MASWCD \* Renville County \* MnDOT \* Hawk Creek Watershed Project \* Crow River Organization of Waters \* High Island Watershed Project \*Pheasants Forever \* Chippewa SWCD \* Redwood SWCD \* Yellow Medicine SWCD \* Lac qui Parle SWCD \*Upper Sioux Agency \* Lower Sioux Agency \* US Fish & Wildlife

These charts illustrate SWCD funding sources as well as SWCD expenses. Note that on the Expense chart, Incentive Payments and Project Expense State are direct payments to landowners. More than half of the 2010 expenses were payments to landowners. On the Income chart, all the DNR Incentive “income” is pass-thru money to landowners as is a significant portion of the BWSR program funds.

