

**YELLOW MEDICINE
SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION
DISTRICT**

Clarkfield, Minnesota

ANNUAL REPORT

2008

The following Annual Report for the Yellow Medicine Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) consists of a list of personnel and cooperating agencies, the goals of the district, a description of services provided and a narrative of the accomplishments for 2008.

YELLOW MEDICINE SWCD SUPERVISORS

Dennis Kruger	Chairperson
Norris Peterson	Vice Chairperson
Burton Kuehn	Secretary
Steve Hubbard	Treasurer
Menno Fokken	Reporter

YELLOW MEDICINE SWCD STAFF

Lou Ann Nagel	District Manager
Nancy Dyrdaahl	District Administrative Assistant
Kurt Johnson	District Engineer Technician
Jared Brouwer	Farm Bill Assistant
Jim Muchlinski	Education Coordinator

COOPERATING AGENCIES

Board of Soil and Water Resources

John Jaschke	Director
Dave Sill	Board Conservationist
Kane Radel	Wetland Specialist

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

William Hunt	State Conservationist
Gary Watson	Area Conservationist
Cheryl Heard	District Conservationist
	Soil Conservation Technician

Yellow Medicine County Commissioners

Ronald Antony	Canby
Gary Johnson	Montevideo
Jane Remiger	Wood Lake
Louis Sherlin	Canby
Dick Wambeke	Granite Falls

Other Agencies

Jolene Johnson	Water Plan Coordinator
Carl Wendel	FSA County Director
Randy Jacobson	County Feedlot, Zoning & Ag Admin.
Brad Olson	Department of Natural Resources
Michelle Ascheman	Extension Program Coordinator

The district, in cooperation with the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and other agencies, provide technical and financial assistance to individuals, groups, organizations, and governments in reducing costly waste of soil and water resulting from soil erosion, sedimentation, pollution and improper land use.

In 2008 the district provided the following services:

- Provided tree planning, planting, and matting.
- Provided grass seed to farmers and landowners to seed conservation practices.
- Provided technical assistance for the installation of conservation practices.
- Provided a manager for the district.
- Assisted other agencies in promoting programs concerning conservation.
- Promoted educational activities in the district.
- Promoted and administered the CREP/RIM/PWP Reserve Program.
- Promoted and administered the State Cost Share Program.
- Assisted the county in implementing the Yellow Medicine County Water Plan.
- Administered the Wetland Conservation Act of 1991.
- Administered the Native Grass Drill Program.
- Administered the Rainfall Monitoring Program.
- Administered the Ag Best Management Loan Program.
- Administered the Blind Intake Program.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Yellow Medicine Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is to provide technical, financial, and educational support to the public for the purpose of conserving and protecting soil, water, and other natural resources.

The SWCD prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, family status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or a part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program.

The goals for 2008 are:

- Promote and Educate the Public on the District's Ongoing Programs.
- To Protect and Improve the Soil Resources and Surface Water Quality in the County.
Reduce erosion and sediment problems to sustainable levels by promoting the use of Best Management Practices (BMP's).
- To Enhance and Restore the County's Water Quality.
Reduce priority pollutants to sustainable levels.
- Protect and Improve the Quality and Quantity of Groundwater in the County.
Assist with wellhead protection planning.
Support good land use decisions regarding groundwater resources and wellhead protection areas.
Expand groundwater monitoring.
- Improve Surface Water Management to Decrease Flooding in the County.
Minimize losses associated with the flooding of agricultural lands.
- Implement Sound Surface Water and Drainage Management Strategies in the County.
Apply watershed based principles while properly managing drainage systems.
- Protect Surface Water Quantity in the County.
Preserve existing wetlands and restore legally drained wetlands having potential for flood damage reduction, wildlife, recreational and groundwater recharge benefits, where practical.

GOAL & OBJECTIVES

GOAL: PROVIDE FOR AN EFFICIENT DISTRICT OPERATION – Actions:

1. Held regular board meetings the fourth Thursday of each month.
2. Developed budget, annual plan of work and annual report.
3. Staffed a District Manager, District Technician, District Administrative Assistance, Education Coordinator and Farm Bill Assistant/Technician.
4. Provided or sought training for all personnel in order to carry out the SWCD's programs.
5. Conducted employee evaluations and updated job descriptions.
6. Supervisors reviewed policies and developed priorities.
7. Reviewed various memorandums of understanding.
8. Provided representation to various organizations. Such as but not limited too: RCRC, RC&D, Yellow Medicine County Water Plan, Yellow Medicine Watershed Advisory Board, Yellow Medicine Watershed Clean Water Technical Committee, Lac qui Parle Yellow Bank Watershed Clean Water Technical Committee, Southwest Prairie Joint Powers Board, etc.
9. Utilized e-link web based reporting system to report progress.

GOAL: PROMOTE & EDUCATE THE PUBLIC ON THE SWCD'S PROGRAMS – Action:

1. **Goal - Publish 3 newsletters:** Newsletters were published in March and June.
2. **Goal - Select a conservation farmer:** Doug and Marge Frazier from Hammer Township north of Canby was selected as the 2008 SWCD Conservation Farmer of the year. As a farmer with nearly 25 years of ridge till experience, Doug has shared his knowledge with researchers and other farmers. He has served as a host for educational tours designed to offer firsthand opportunities to see ridge till results. As an early adopter of ridge till, he became a source of field-based knowledge that helped to generate advances in the usage of both ridge-till and strip-till cropping methods. He has demonstrated a steady commitment to conservation as a vital part of farming activities which includes tree plantings, waterways, CRP, and nutrient management.
3. **Goal - Participate in the MASWCD poster and video contest:** The theme for 2008 was "Trees – Rooted in Our Future". This is the last year that the State is offering this contest. Canby Mural Winning posters were as follows: 1st place - Morgan Crowser and Leah Jessen; 2nd place - Rachael Stafke and Morgan Krug; 3rd place - Brittany Merritt and Haylee Smith. St. Peter's mural winning posters were as follows: 1st place - Taylor Vandeputte and Kaitlin Varcoe; 2nd place - Michaela Johnson and Ricki Kallhoff; 3rd Place - Danielle Kontz and Shelby Haight.
4. **Goal - Set up displays at the county fair, banks, restaurants, family resource fairs, Hanley Falls Museum, etc.:** A SWCD history display was taken to the Hanley Falls Museum. The County Fair display consisted of information on the Native Buffer Cost Share Program, WRP/RIM Program and a question and answer game.
5. **Goal - Distribute educational material to each grade level (Pre-school through sixth grade) in the county and conduct a presentation in each classroom:** Presentations for the 2007-2008 school year were as follows:

<u>Grade Level</u>	<u>Ed. Material</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Approximate # of students</u>
Pre-K	Art Projects	Tree Cookies/Animal Kingdom	80
K	Treasured Trees	Natural World	35
1 st	Treasured Trees	Trees	95
2 nd	Water and Me	Water and Wetlands	145
3 rd	Adopt a River/Earth	Soil and Erosion	110
4 th	Conservation and You	Rivers/Watersheds	105
5 th	Book Cover	Soil, Water and Landscapes	140
6 th	Book Cover	Resource Management	80

GOAL: PROMOTE & EDUCATE THE PUBLIC ON THE SWCD'S PROGRAMS – Action (continued)

- 6. Goal - Work with the SWMACDE to sponsor an Environmental Fair for all 6th graders at Slayton:** Over 1,300 sixth grade classes from schools throughout southwestern Minnesota experienced a wide range of environmental topics at the 14-county regional Environmental Fair which was held in Slayton on September 23rd and 24th. Learning stations covered water, soil, trees, prairies, wildlife and many other subjects that tie in with their natural surroundings. Schools that participated from Yellow Medicine County included Canby Elementary and St. Peter's Catholic School. Yellow Medicine NRCS District Conservationist, Cheryl Heard, co-presented at one of the Environmental Fair learning stations about trees. Yellow Medicine SWCD staff members; Nancy Dyrdaahl, Jared Brouwer, Kurt Johnson and Jim Muchlinski all assisted with site management during parts of the event.
- 7. Goal - Distribute an educational newsletter once a year to all teachers; scout leaders, 4H leaders, etc.:** The education newsletter was distributed at the start of the year to all classroom teachers and school administrators. Elementary and secondary versions were created in order to provide information that's completely relevant to each specific age group. They described contact information, classroom opportunities, annual education events, and resources the SWCD can provide to local educators. The newsletters are available to other program coordinators and the public upon request.
- 8. Goal - Publish weekly news articles to address conservation issues and concerns:** Weekly articles were submitted to the local papers in the county. Unfortunately not all papers printed all the articles every week.
- 9. Goal - Promote soil stewardship week:** The Yellow Medicine Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) encouraged all local churches in Yellow Medicine County to join the nationwide observance of Soil and Water Stewardship Week. This year's theme "Water is Life" encouraged us to learn about life-sustaining natural resources and to remember that each of us has the power to conserve resources for future generations. This year we had five churches participate in soil stewardship week.
- 10. Goal - Informational calls to landowners/operators regarding current programs:** Jared Brouwer, Farm Bill Assistant, has contacted 230 landowners and/or operators letting them know about various conservation programs and which program would best fit their needs.
- 11. Goal - Hold conservation days for all 5th graders in the county:** These annual events were held on May 7 at Upper Sioux Agency State Park and May 12 at Del Clark Lake. They served approximately 150 students from Bert Raney Elementary in Granite Falls, H.A. Hagg Elementary in Clarkfield, the Clarkfield Area Charter School, Canby Elementary, and St. Peter's Catholic School of Canby. Presenters were furnished by the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Upper Sioux Agency State Park, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Redwood Cottonwood Rivers Control Area, University of Minnesota Southwest Research and Outreach Center, and Yellow Medicine County Planning and Zoning office. MPCA and SWROC were first-time participants.
- 12. Goal - Work with Extension and Water Plan Coordinator in promoting Environmental Education in the classroom through various presentations, videos, materials, etc.:** The SWCD regularly shares program information with county-based Extension and Water Planning staff. When appropriate, information is also provided to regional offices that perform the same types of services. These contacts led to contributions at local youth field days and conservation seminars. Agencies participated at no cost to the SWCD.

GOAL: PROMOTE & EDUCATE THE PUBLIC ON THE SWCD'S PROGRAMS – Action (continued)

- 13. Goal - Assist and promote the SWMACDE Area Envirothon. SWCD serves on the Committee for 2008:** Five teams from Yellow Medicine East High School competed at the April 30, 2008 regional Envirothon at Camden State Park near Lynd. They took part in aquatics, forestry, wildlife, soil and current issue test stations as well as an oral presentation. The current issue and oral topic for 2008 was natural resources recreation management. Three teams advanced to the state event, including two from Worthington and one from Marshall. Yellow Medicine SWCD served on the Envirothon Committee in 2008 and will also serve in 2009.
- 14. Goal - Work with Pezuta Zizi Environmental and Cultural Learning and Resource Center and continue to serve on the Pezuta ZiZi Board:** The SWCD was actively involved in the Pezuta Zizi Environmental Learning group. Collaborations included a presentation for the Pezuta ZiZi Board about the role of conservation in managing invasive species, a new Earth Day program at Prairie Smoke Nature Area in Granite Falls, and participation in a Minnesota River event for 6th grade classes at Yellow Medicine East.
- 15. Goal - Hold a mini envirothon for Junior High Students:** Students from YME and Echo Charter School took part in mini-envirothon events. These serve as an introduction to envirothon activities and an indication of what participation at the high school level could offer. Teams of students complete tests similar to those done in senior high, but more appropriate for the younger age level. It can be conducted in the classroom or outside, depending on the time of year and the needs of the school. Two different versions are used in alternating years. This enables both 7th and 8th grade classes to participate without repetition.
- 16. Goal - Meet with County FAC Committee at least 2 times a year to discuss building issues:** The SWCD met with the Farm Service Agency, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Yellow Medicine County Ditch Inspector, Extension Service and the Yellow Medicine County Zoning Officer as needed to discuss building and/or county concerns.
- 17. Goal - Promote Clean Water Partnership Project for the Yellow Medicine Watershed and the Lac qui Parle – Yellow Bank Watershed District:** The SWCD continues to work closely with both the Yellow Medicine Watershed District and the Lac qui Parle Yellow Bank Watershed District implementing conservation practices on high priority areas in each watershed. The SWCD serves on both of the watersheds technical committee to address concerns in both watersheds and implement their clean water partnership projects. The Yellow Medicine Watershed District, along with the Lyon & Lincoln SWCD's co-sponsored a tour for the MN River Basin Board on May 19th.
- 18. Goal - Hold SWCD retreat to discuss goals and objectives:** A Retreat was held on July 24th. Board members and staff met at the office in Clarkfield at 1:00 p.m. We then traveled to Granite Falls to see Rock Outcrop Areas and Wetland Habitats. The retreat then wrapped up at 4:00 p.m. with the monthly board meeting.
- 19. Goal - Hold a Ladies Workshop with Lincoln, Lyon, Redwood, Cottonwood, Murray and Pipestone SWCDs:** Area Soil and Water Conservation Districts and more than 40 residents from seven counties explored the meaning of "clean water" Sept. 17 in the day-long regional SWCD Women's Day conference at the Southwest Research and Outreach Center near Lamberton. The event covered: the Clean Water Legacy efforts, Total Maximum Daily Load standard for measuring surface water quality, the Native Buffer Cost Share Program and water quality concerns to the daily activities of individual households. A field tour of the Southwest Research Outreach Center followed with looking at research plots that relate to water quality.
- 20. Goal - Hold regular staff meetings:** Staff meetings were held regularly throughout the year.

GOAL & OBJECTIVES

GOAL: PROMOTE & EDUCATE THE PUBLIC ON THE SWCD'S PROGRAMS – Action (continued)

- 21. Goal - Develop promotional presentation for local organizations:** Educational community group programs were provided to Granite Falls Kiwanis, Canby Rotary, Clarkfield Lion's Club, Lady Slipper Garden Club of Granite Falls, the Granite Falls City Design and Beautification Committee, Local Lenders in the County, Stakeholders and the Canby Area Ministerial Association. Additional PowerPoint presentations and informational materials were developed for these programs. They could be used again for similar requests, or will at least provide added starting points.
- 22. Goal - Continue to develop, publish and maintain a WEB site:** The Yellow Medicine SWCD published their website in February. We continually update the site as needed.
- 23. Goal - Meet with other agencies and organizations to prioritize resource concerns and set goals and objectives:** A stakeholder and a local work group meeting was held on November 18th, 2008 to prioritize resource concerns that will help set the SWCD's goals and objectives for the 2009 planning process.
- 24. Goal - Hold a CRP Management Workshop:** A Habitat Management Workshop was held on February 28th, 2008. Thirty-six (36) individuals were in attendance. Jared Brouwer, SWCD Farm Bill Assistant reviewed the guidelines and options for maintaining and improving Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) and Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) acreages. Carl Wendel from the Farm Service Agency talked about mid-contract management on Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acreages. He also introduced a new CRP practice: State Areas for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE). Joe Stangel from DNR discussed the importance of prescribed burning. Dennis Pederson from Pheasants Habitat Forever gave a presentation on the effective control of noxious weeds and volunteer trees on conservation lands.
- 25. Goal - Develop a campaign to encourage citizen involvement in the SWCD election process: candidacy, voting, etc.:** Articles were written and published in the local papers, SWCD newsletter and on the SWCD's Website promoting citizens to run for SWCD supervisor. After the primaries, an article was written introducing citizens to candidates and their views.
- 26. Goal - Participate in an Earth Day Event:** The SWCD provided an Earth Day presentation at Prairie Smoke Nature Area for Pezuta ZiZi Environmental Learning Center members and the public. It covered the goals of conservation and their relationships to the Earth Day observance. The program was attended by 10 people.
- 27. Goal - Develop radio ad program:** The free radio spots conducted in 2007 as part of the city of Clarkfield's monthly radio segment were discontinued after the city employee who coordinated the program left to take another job.
- 28. Goal - Hold a workshop for all lenders in the county to discuss various programs available to the citizens:** A banker's workshop was held on March 25th. We had three bankers in attendance. Lou Ann Nagel covered SWCD programs and Cheryl Isder went over the Federal Programs.
- 29. Goal -Co-sponsor a Renewal Energy Workshop with the Technical Colleges in the County:** The SWCD collaborated with Minnesota West and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to provide public roundtable events at the Canby and Granite Falls campuses. Total public attendance was about 35 people. This was followed later in the year by a presentation about the relationship between soil erosion and water quality for staff, students and the public at the Canby campus during its Harvest Festival week. This lunch hour event was attended by 50 people. The program was also used in some MN West academic programs as a class assignment or extra credit. Both campuses have expressed interest in further collaborations that would be mutually beneficial.

GOAL & OBJECTIVES

GOAL: PROMOTE & EDUCATE THE PUBLIC ON THE SWCD'S PROGRAMS – Action (continued)

30. **Goal - Assist with 4H Camps:** The 4-H program's summer day camps had a full schedule of activities and a theme that did not directly relate to conservation, so the SWCD did not participate in 2008. A presentation was made in 2008 to the 4-H Leaders Council, and a Web of Life activity was included as part of Kid's Day at the Yellow Medicine County Fair. These two events served a total of 45 people. The 4-H program has expressed interest in additional educational collaborations.

TO PROTECT AND IMPROVE THE SOIL RESOURCES AND SURFACE WATER QUALITY IN THE COUNTY

REDUCE EROSION AND SEDIMENT PROBLEMS TO SUSTAINABLE LEVELS BY PROMOTING THE USE OF BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES (BMPs)

Action:

1. **Goal - Promote Best Management Practices in the County.** Best Management Practices were promoted through various news articles, workshops, presentations and newsletters.
2. **Goal - Reduce the amount of wind erosion on the most severely erodible acres by designing and planting 2800 feet of field windbreaks and/or living snowfence.** 7,060 feet of windbreaks were installed in 2008.

A field windbreak drawing was sponsored by the SWCD and the following lending institutions in the county. Winners for the ¼ mile Field Windbreaks were as follows:

- Canby Credit Union – Angie Briggs
- F & M State Bank and Granite Falls Bank – Howard Willander
- Citizens State Bank of Granite Falls – Richard Anderson
- First Security Bank in Canby – Darwyn Bach

Goal – Plant 15 acres of Farmstead Windbreaks, 3 acres of Wildlife Habitat, and 29.3 acres of Riparian Buffers. 16.9 acres of farmstead windbreaks, 3 acres of wildlife habitat and 29.3 acres of riparian buffers were planted in 2008.

Goal – Install 50,000 feet of Plastic Mulch: Promoted the SWCD's tree mat program by installing 45,197 feet of plastic mulch for better weed control and/or soil moisture.

3. **Goal - Conduct a Conservation Tillage Transect Survey for the county.** Due to spring conditions, no survey was completed this year.
4. **Goal - Reduce the amount of water erosion on severely eroded acres by the installation of the following conservation practices by installing 5,000 feet of terraces and/or sediment control basins and 15 acres of grassed waterways:**

- a. Terraces and/or water & sediment control basins 4,805 feet
- b. Grassed Waterways 13.1 acres

Funding was obtained through various agencies and/or programs. The district utilized dollars through the following funding sources: Federal EQIP; Federal WHIP; Clean Water Legacy Funds for the Redwood Watershed, the Yellow Medicine Watershed, and the Lac qui Parle Watershed; State Cost Share Program; the Ag BMP Loan Program; the Yellow Medicine Watershed Clean Water Partnership Grant; and the Lac qui Parle Yellowbank Watershed Clean Water Partnership Grant. The district distributed funds for the State Cost Share Program according to state guidelines and policies.

The SWCD, through the efforts of the SWCD Farm Bill Assistant, assisted the Farm Service Agency in promoting the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) by promoting the new CRP practice called the State Areas For Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE), installing grassed waterways, and/or installing other conservation practices.

TO PROTECT AND IMPROVE THE SOIL RESOURCES AND SURFACE WATER QUALITY IN THE COUNTY

REDUCE EROSION AND SEDIMENT PROBLEMS TO SUSTAINABLE LEVELS BY PROMOTING THE USE OF BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES (BMPs)

Action: Continued

The SWCD assisted NRCS in promoting the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP), Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP), and other aspects of the current Farm Bill. During the EQIP signup in FY2008 Yellow Medicine County received funding for 35 contracts bringing another \$493,832 into the county. Seven contracts were funded in FY2008 through WHIP bringing another \$36,028 into the county.

5. **Goal - Continue to manage CREP and/or RIM easements, and conduct status reviews. Continue to stake CREP easements. GPS CREP and/or RIM sites and enter coordinates into Arc View:** The SWCD Technicians conducted forty-eight CREP and/or RIM status reviews.
6. **Goal - Establish 50 acres of filter strips/buffers along ditches and streams:** Wrote 23 conservation plans enrolling and/or reenrolling 113.8 acres of filter strips.
7. **Goal - Enroll or re-enroll 200 acres of cropland subject to severe erosion into existing programs (i.e., CRP, RIM, etc.):** The district was able to receive another grant through BWSR/DNR/Pheasants Forever to extend the Farm Bill Assistant position in the county. The Farm Bill Assistant wrote 47 CRP plans totaling 707.3 acres.
8. **Goal - Enroll 600 acres of pasture land into a prescribed grazing system:** 245 acres of pasture land was enrolled into a prescribed grazing system.
9. **Goal – Plant 150 acres of grasses utilizing the SWCD’s drill:** Approximately 68 acres were planted utilizing the SWCD’s native grass drill.
10. **Goal - Conduct an annual meeting of stakeholders and/or Local Work Group to discuss resource concerns and set priority areas and practices for the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP):** A stakeholder meeting was held on November 18, 2008, followed by a Local Work Group Meeting. Discussion followed on priority areas and the ranking process.
11. **Goal - Educate landowners/operators about erosion and sediment control, the importance of installing conservation practices and encourage enrollment into conservation programs by providing information and options about BMP’s through newsletters, news releases and individual contacts.** The SWCD educated the public on the importance of installing best management practices and enrolling into various programs through news articles, newsletters, workshops, presentations and the SWCD’s website.
12. **Goal - Assist the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in implementing the Conservation Security Program (CSP).** No sign-up was held in 2008.
13. **Goal Serve on the Southwest Prairie Joint Powers Board and support the technical staff by setting goals, objectives, and policies:** Menno Fokken served on the Southwest Prairie Joint Powers Board. The SWCD contributed \$1,000 towards the Joint Powers Budget.
14. **Goal - Continue to work with RCRC on the Redwood River Clean Water Project.** The SWCD, along with other SWCDs in the area, continue to work on improving the Redwood River. Clean Water Legacy Dollars - SWCDs within the Redwood Cottonwood Rivers Control Area were awarded \$315,000. Projects funded include: nutrient management planning; no-till or strip till contracts; slotted/riser rock inlet alternative intakes; and installation of water and sediment control basins, terraces and/or grassed waterways. Yellow Medicine County landowners received \$5,625 to install blind intakes in the Redwood River Watershed.

TO PROTECT AND IMPROVE THE SOIL RESOURCES AND SURFACE WATER QUALITY IN THE COUNTY

REDUCE EROSION AND SEDIMENT PROBLEMS TO SUSTAINABLE LEVELS BY PROMOTING THE USE OF BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES (BMPs) .

Action: Continued

15. **Goal - Restore 2 acres of wetlands into a conservation program.** Farm Bill Assistant wrote one conservation plan enrolling 10 acres into the Farmable Wetland Program.
16. **Goal - Promote the use of alternative intakes, such as blind intakes, that promote efficient trapping of sediments and nutrients that enter drainage systems:** 32 blind intakes were installed in Yellow Medicine county utilizing cost share dollars through the Yellow Medicine SWCD Blind Intake Program, the Redwood Clean water Legacy Funds, and/or the Lac qui Parle Watershed Clean Water Partnership Grant.
17. **Goal - Investigate participating in a Rock Outcrop Program with Renville, Redwood, and Chippewa SWCDs.** A grant application was submitted to the Legislative Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR) for the protection of Granite Rock Outcrop in the Minnesota River Valley. The application was funded. In January of 2009, the SWCD along with Renville, Redwood, and Chippewa SWCDs will develop guidelines for a Rock Outcrop Program.
18. **Goal - Investigate participating in the new opportunities offered through BWSR in the New Native Buffer Cost-Share Program, the Comprehensive Weed Management Area Program and/or RIM Clean Energy Program:**

Comprehensive Weed Management Area Program – The SWCD discussed this program with the County Weed Inspector. It was decided not to participate in this program.

Native Buffer Cost Share Program – The SWCD held a meeting for seed vendors on March 19th explaining the Native Buffer Cost Share Program to them. Yellow Medicine SWCD received a grant for \$25,000. Currently we have one individual who has signed up for the program. His land is located in a USFWS Easement. Therefore, he will not be given an incentive but he will get up to 75% cost share to reseed the area from brome cover to native grass and forbs. Our Farm Bill Assistant is currently working with another three landowners that have shown an interest in enrolling into the program. These landowners would be enrolling non-cropland so they would be eligible for incentive payments as well as cost share.

RIM Clean Energy Program – The State did not offer this program in 2008.

ENHANCE AND RESTORE THE COUNTY'S WATER QUALITY

REDUCE PRIORITY POLLUTANTS TO SUSTAINABLE LEVELS.

Action:

1. **Goal - Work with the MPCA to get waters off the Clean Water Act's Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) 303d list of impaired waters.** The SWCDs within the Redwood Cottonwood Rivers Control Area were awarded \$315,000 through the Clean Water Legacy process. Projects funded include: nutrient management planning; no-till or strip till contracts; slotted/riser rock inlet alternative intakes; and installation of water and sediment control basins, terraces and/or grassed waterways. Yellow Medicine County landowners received \$5,625 to install blind intakes in the Redwood River Watershed.

Clean Water Legacy Dollars - Lincoln, Lyon and Yellow Medicine SWCDs, along with the Yellow Medicine River Watershed District, received a grant for \$211,150. The funds were used as follows:

- \$115,000 for Ag Best Management Loans - \$65,000 went to landowners in Yellow Medicine County.
- \$65,000 for a streambank stabilization project in Lyon County.
- \$31,150 for Best Management Practices - \$6,392 went to landowners in Yellow Medicine Co. to install a 2.5 grassed waterway & 2,700 feet of terraces.

ENHANCE AND RESTORE THE COUNTY'S WATER QUALITY

REDUCE PRIORITY POLLUTANTS TO SUSTAINABLE LEVELS.

Action: (Continued)

2. **Goal - Develop nutrient and/or pesticide management plans, targeting 5,000 acres countywide.** The SWD, along with NRCS, promoted the timing, rate and placement of synthetic and/or organic fertilizers and pesticides using incentives, such as EQIP. Educated landowners on the need to follow University of Minnesota's nutrient management recommendations.
3. **Goal - Continue to support the upgrading of Individual Sewage Treatment Systems (ISTS).** The SWCD administered the Ag BMP Loan Program for the county. Ten landowners applied for loan dollars totaling \$311,629: Ag Waste Roofing projects/Equipment = \$27,129; Tillage Equipment = \$57,500; and ISTS \$27,000. The SWCD also promoted the ISTS loan programs funded by the Clean Water Partnerships through the Lac qui Parle Yellow Bank Watershed, the Yellow Medicine River Watershed and the Redwood Watershed.
4. **Goal - Protect Del Clark Lake by encouraging landowners to install Best Management Practices, seal abandoned wells and bring non-conforming sewer systems and feedlots into compliance in the Canby Creek Watershed.** The SWCD continues to encourage landowners to install best management practices in the Canby Creek Watershed, protecting Del Clark Lake. The Canby Creek Watershed is listed as one of the high priority areas in the County.
5. **Goal - Assist feedlot operators with completing MPCA permits, developing Manure Management Plans, and/or seeking financial assistance.** The SWCD worked with the Yellow Medicine County Feedlot Officer and NRCS in promoting the manure management workshops that were held on April 2nd in Canby and April 3rd in Echo.
6. **Goal - Assist in planning and installing two Ag Waste Systems.** Two roofing projects were started in 2008. These projects were both funded through EQIP and the Ag Best Management Loan Program. Neither project was complete in 2008.

PROTECT AND IMPROVE THE QUALITY & QUANTITY OF GROUNDWATER IN THE COUNTY

ASSIST WITH WELLHEAD PROTECTION PLANNING.

Action:

1. **Goal - Participate in wellhead/source water protection teams, when invited by the local public water suppliers.** No municipality requested the SWCD's assistance in developing their wellhead protection plan.
2. **Goal - Contact cities and the rural water system with available assistance. Advise and assist public water suppliers with technical land use information and planning assistance, when Wellhead Protection Plans are developed.** To the best of our knowledge we are unaware of any municipality currently developing their wellhead protection plan.

SUPPORT GOOD LAND USE DECISIONS REGARDING GROUNDWATER RESOURCES AND WELLHEAD PROTECTION AREAS.

Action:

1. **Goal - Continue to have Wellhead Protection Areas as priority areas for cost share and other land use incentive programs (i.e., upgrading septic systems, feedlot management, cropland nutrient management, and CRP/RIM).** Through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), we gave a high priority ranking for vulnerable well areas near Canby, Echo and Wood Lake.
2. **Goal - Contact property owners in a Wellhead Protection Area to encourage enrollment in easement programs, such as CRP & RIM, and establish buffer strips.** Wellhead protection areas for public water suppliers has not been established yet.

SUPPORT GOOD LAND USE DECISIONS REGARDING GROUNDWATER RESOURCES AND WELLHEAD PROTECTION AREAS.

Action:

3. **Goal - Continue to cooperate with Lincoln-Pipestone Rural Water on the expansion of the rural water system and advise them about county programs that will help manage potential contamination sources.** Lincoln Pipestone Rural Water did not ask for any assistance this year.

EXPAND GROUNDWATER MONITORING.

Action:

1. **Goal - Monitor five (5) groundwater observation wells designated by DNR.** The SWCD continues to monitor the five groundwater observation wells designed by the DNR.
2. **Goal - Comment on DNR water permits.** The SWCD commented on DNR water permits upon receipt.
3. **Goal - Encourage testing of wells in order to identify the extent of groundwater pollution problems.** The SWCD continues to encourage testing of wells.
4. **Goal - Encourage sealing of abandoned wells.** The SWCD wrote an article in their March 2008 newsletter informing landowners of cost share for sealing their abandoned wells. An article was also put on the Yellow Medicine SWCD's website.
5. **Goal - Participate in the state rainfall-monitoring program with 17 rainfall monitors to record daily precipitation.** The SWCD participated in the state's rainfall monitoring program. Yellow Medicine County currently has 15 rainfall monitors that record precipitation daily.
6. **Goal - Work with Yellow Medicine Water Task Force to educate the public on sensitive groundwater areas and promote proper use of management to protect these areas.** The SWCD continues to work closely with the Yellow Medicine County Task Force by serving on the committee and educating the public and promoting best management practices.

IMPROVE SURFACE WATER MANAGEMENT TO DECREASE FLOODING IN THE COUNTY MINIMIZE LOSSES ASSOCIATED WITH THE FLOODING OF AGRICULTURAL LANDS.

Action:

1. **Goal - Address the smaller flood events, such as 2 year and 5 year events, by restoring 2 acres of wetlands through various conservation programs.** Work with the watershed districts to achieve strategic flood storage in conjunction with water quality and wildlife benefits.
2. **Goal - Take flood prone land along rivers, streams and/or waterways out of crop production by encouraging enrollment into land retirement programs, such as CRP, RIM, WRP, etc., and applying best management practices to those areas.** The SWCD continues to fund the Farm Bill Assistant position, along with the State, to promote retirement programs in the County.
3. **Goal - Work with Area II, RCRCA, Watersheds, and surrounding counties to assess, prioritize and pursue funding through various agencies for water storage opportunities. Continue working with the Lac qui Parle Yellowbank Watershed District on Lazarus Creek Flood Control Project by promoting and installing best management practices in the area.** The SWCD continues to work with all partners to minimize flooding.
4. **Goal - Cooperate with Lac qui Parle Yellow Bank Watershed District, the Yellow Medicine Watershed District, the Redwood-Cottonwood Rivers Control Area, and the 639 Study Area concerning flooding in the county. Assist with flood damage recordings.** The SWCD assists as requested.
5. **Goal - Work with Area II, RCRCA, Watersheds, landowners and the county to seek funding for streambank stabilization projects where needed and feasible.** No stabilization projects were completed this year.

IMPLEMENT SOUND SURFACE WATER AND DRAINAGE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES IN THE COUNTY

APPLY WATERSHED BASED PRINCIPLES WHILE PROPERLY MANAGING DRAINAGE SYSTEMS.

Actions:

1. **Goal - Seek funds to repair small dams in the county that were previously constructed by landowners (Area II, SWCD, and/or NRCS).** Two small dams were repaired utilizing a BWSR Grant and funds through Area II and the local Watershed Districts.
2. **Goal - Promote the use of alternative intakes, such as blind intakes, that promote efficient trapping of sediments and nutrients that enter drainage systems.** 32 blind intakes were installed in Yellow Medicine county utilizing cost share dollars through the Yellow Medicine SWCD Blind Intake Program, the Redwood Clean water Legacy Funds, and/or the Lac qui Parle Watershed Clean Water Partnership Grant.
3. **Goal - Educate landowners/operators on the importance of keeping buffers in place to protect the drainage ditch systems and concerns about farming right next to the ditch systems in the county. Maintain the minimum one-rod grassed areas as it applies to drainage policy.** Educated the public on the need to maintain the minimum one-rod grassed areas as it applies to drainage policy.
4. **Goal - Protect the Lazarus Creek Project by promoting upland treatment by encouraging landowners to install best management practices, seal abandoned wells and bring non-conforming sewer systems and feedlots into compliance in the Lazarus Creek Watershed.** The SWCD continues to protect the upland to the Lazarus Creek Project by encouraging landowners to install best management practices.
5. **Goal - Utilize the USFWS Drained Wetland Basin Inventory to address current and future water quality and surface water management goals and issues.** – No inventory has been received.

PROTECT SURFACE WATER QUANTITY IN THE COUNTY

PRESERVE EXISTING WETLANDS AND RESTORE LEGALLY DRAINED WETLANDS HAVING POTENTIAL FOR FLOOD DAMAGE REDUCTION, WILDLIFE, RECREATIONAL, AND GROUNDWATER RECHARGE BENEFITS, WHERE PRACTICAL.

Actions:

1. **Goal - Administer the 1991 Wetland Conservation Act (WCA).** Yellow Medicine County appointed the SWCD as the local government unit to administer the WCA and the rules of the Board of Water and Soil Resources adopted under the act. The SWCD will serve as chair of the WCA Technical Panel. Training will be sought for the SWCD staff as needed. For the first time ever, BWSR conducted an audit on the Natural Resource Block Grant (NRBG). Yellow Medicine County was one of seven counties that was selected to be audited this year. Dave Sill and Jeff Nielson met with Jolene Johnson to review the books for the NRBG and myself to review our books for the Wetland Conservation Act portion of the NRBG. The books were correct as reported.