

YELLOW MEDICINE
SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION
DISTRICT
Clarkfield, Minnesota
ANNUAL REPORT
2009

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 2009.

YELLOW MEDICINE SWCD SUPERVISORS

| | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Norris Peterson | Chairperson |
| Burton Kuehn | Vice Chairperson |
| Steve Hubbard | Secretary |
| Menno Fokken | Treasurer |
| Jerry Nelson | Reporter |

YELLOW MEDICINE SWCD STAFF

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Lou Ann Nagel | District Manager |
| Nancy Dyrdaahl | District Administrative Assistant |
| Kurt Johnson | District Engineer Technician |
| Vacant | 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 |
| Jon Paul Pringle | 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 2009 the district provided the following services:

- Provided tree planning, planting, and matting.
- 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 Buffer Cost Share Program.
- Administered the Rainfall Monitoring Program.
- Administered the Ag Best Management Loan Program.
- Administered the Blind Intake Program.
- Administered the Working Lands Initiative Program.
- Administered the Rock Outcrop Program.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Yellow Medicine Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) was duly organized as a government subdivision of this State, and a public body corporate and politic on the 17th day of April 1950. The soil conservation district was organized in order to provide a local organization for farmers and others to work together and with local, state, and federal organizations in solving their land-use problems and maintenance of soil fertility, erosion control, flooding, and drainage problems.

This annual plan is written to implement the Yellow Medicine Comprehensive Local Water Plan which the Yellow Medicine Soil and Water Conservation District adopted as their comprehensive plan starting in 2004.

The goals for 2009 were:

- 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:

All of the action items listed below were completed in 2009:

1. Hold regular board meetings the fourth Thursday of each month.
2. Develop budget, annual plan of work and annual report.
3. Staff a District Manager, District Technician, District Administrative Assistance, Education Coordinator and Farm Bill Assistant/Technician.
4. Provide or seek training for all personnel in order to carry out the SWCD's programs.
5. Conduct employee evaluations and update job descriptions.
6. Supervisors will review policies and develop priorities.
7. Review various memorandums of understanding.
8. Provide representation to various organizations. Such as but not limited too: RCRCRA, RC&D, Yellow Medicine County Water Task Force, 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. Utilize 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:** The SWCD published newsletters in March, and August.
2. **Goal - Select a conservation farmer:** The SWCD selected Tom & Amy Gorder, from Canby, as this year's Conservation Farmer. They have three children: Zach (17), Bryce (13), and Mya (5). The Gorders have farmed for 17 years, and are farming Amy's family farm. They farm 330 acres of which 150 acres are pasture. The Gorders no-till, and have installed 2 water and sediment control basins. They just started a rotational grazing system. He made one pasture into 10 pastures letting the cows graze 4-7 days on each pasture. Tom said "The grazing helps with herd management and makes it easy to check the cows because they are all in one paddock. No time is spent looking for them. I get a lot more out of it and the cows seem to be tamer."
3. **Goal - Schools in the county participate in the MASWCD 5th and 6th grade poster contest:** The theme for the MASWCD Poster Contest for 2009 was "Soil A Layer of Life". Winners were as follows:
 - Clarkfield Area Charter School: Jordan Glad, Ariel Sakry, and Grace Irvine (went on to area competition).
 - St. Peter's School: Danielle Kontz and Kaitlin Varcoe (went on to area competition)
 - Elizabeth Morris, Justin Cleveland, and Jenna Kockelman
 - Konnor King and Billy Deslauriers
 - Canby Elementary: Jacoby Hunt (went on to area competition)
 - Megan Jelen (went on to area competition)
 - Brock Nothem and Kyle Jelen
 - Canby Elementary – Murals
 - 1st Brandi Merritt and Becca Kamrath (went on to area competition)
 - 2nd Nathan Cooper and Zachary Nuy (went on to area competition)
 - 3rd Kristian Leppke and Brandyn Scheler

Unfortunately the SWCD did not have any area winners.
4. **Goal - Set up displays:** The County Fair display consisted of information on Best Management Practices, Ash Borer, Invasive Plants and the upcoming Women's Day Event "Rain, Rain, Flow This Way". The SWCD displayed three educational resources in the office for all or part of 2009. These include a set of photo cubes about topics that relate in some way to conservation, a set of pictures and captions about Minnesota River area rock outcroppings, and the Enviroscope model with a set of display signs related to erosion control that were created by the SWCD.

5. Goal 1 - Distribute educational material and conduct a classroom presentations:

| <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 | 50 |
| 1 st | Treasured Trees | Trees | 50 |
| 2 nd | Water and Me | Water and Wetlands | 120 |
| 3 rd | Adopt a River/Earth | Soil and Erosion | 125 |
| 4 th | Conservation and You | Rivers/Watersheds | 40 |
| 5 th | Book Cover | Soil, Water and Landscapes | 130 |
| 6 th | Book Cover | Resource Management | 135 |

6. **Goal - Work with the SWMACDE to sponsor an Environmental Fair for all 6th graders in Marshall:** Yellow Medicine SWCD, along with other SWCDs in southwest Minnesota, held the Southwest Minnesota Association of Conservation Districts (SWMACD) Environmental Fair on September 22 and 23 at the Lyon County Fairgrounds. In the future the fair will be held either in Lyon County or Murray County. In the past this fair was open to sixth grade students only. However, because of the rotation in locations for the fair, the committee decided that the fair will be opened for both fifth and sixth graders. The Environmental Fair is a learning event in the “outdoor classroom” setting for students in a 14 county area. The goal is to let students study natural resources in a setting that will give them the opportunity to see, touch and sometimes taste what they are learning about. We hope the students went away understanding the importance of our natural resources and realizing that what people do affects all aspects of our environment. Students from Clarkfield Charter, Canby Elementary and St. Peters were among the 1,717 students that attended this year’s fair.
7. **Goal - Distribute an educational newsletter:** The SWCD did not distribute a full-color two-page newsletter in the fall of 2009; instead the schools were sent a letter informing them that the education coordinator position would only be funded through 2009. They were informed that if they wanted classroom presentations they needed to schedule them this fall. They were also updated about contact information, classroom opportunities, annual education events, and resources the SWCD can provide to local educators.
8. **Goal - Publish weekly news articles:** The SWCD tried to write and submit weekly articles to the local papers in the county. Unfortunately, not all papers printed the articles every week. The SWCD paid for an advertisement to be put in the Farm Edition of the Advocate Tribune promoting the SWCD’s tree program, filter strips and cost share program.
9. **Goal - Promote Soil Stewardship Week:** The SWCD encouraged all local churches in Yellow Medicine County to join the nationwide observance of Soil and Water Stewardship Week. This year’s theme “Dig It! The Secrets of Soil”, teach us that soil is one of the basic building blocks of life. This year we had nine churches participate in Soil Stewardship Week.
10. **Goal - Informational calls to landowners/operators regarding current programs:** Through the efforts of the SWCD staff, 275 landowners were contacted one on one promoting the current SWCD and federal programs. Landowners were also contacted through SWCD newsletters, news articles, workshops and the SWCD website.
11. **Goal - Hold conservation days for all 5th graders:** The SWCD hosted two 2009 Conservation Days in May for all fifth graders in county. Approximately 150 students attended these conservation days. The first session on May 11 at Del Clark Lake, included students from Canby Elementary School and St. Peter’s Catholic School. A second Conservation Day on May 13 at Upper Sioux Agency State Park was attended by students from Bert Raney Elementary School in Granite Falls and Clarkfield Area Charter School. Each event featured learning stations that highlighted different topics in environmental education. Presenters were: Jim Muchlinski – prairie/wetlands station; Terri Dinesen - prairie ecology; Bill Dinesen - forest environments; Joe Kristoff – Soils; Jolene Johnson – water cycle; Shawn Wohnoutka – watersheds; Shane Delaney – trees and Mary Homan – wetlands.

- 12. Goal - Work with Extension and Water Plan Coordinator in promoting Environmental Education:** The SWCD regularly shares program information with county-based Extension and Water Planning staff.

The Yellow Medicine Extension Service requested the SWCD's assistance in holding a school vacation day program at Clarkfield Area Charter School. This was held on February 9, 2009 and was attended by 10 students. SWCD activities featured the topics of trees, prairies, wind, and seed dispersal. Another vacation day program was held later in the year, but because of the low attendance from the previous program, the SWCD chose not to do a presentation.

The SWCD helped with the "Ag in the Classroom" event organized by Roger Dale in Clarkfield on April 2, 2009. 4th or 5th students from Yellow Medicine East, Clarkfield Charter School, Canby School, and Home schools were invited to attend. Presentations were conducted by the Corn & Soybean Association, Farm Bureau, Pork Association, Beef Association, Turkey Association, Dairy Association and the Yellow Medicine SWCD. Jim Muchlinski gave a presentation on trees in reference to agriculture. The benefits of planting trees, and explained about the SWCD's tree planting and matting programs. The SWCD's tree planter and tree mat machine were taken to the site for students to see. Two hundred and ten students attended this event.

- 13. Goal - Assist and promote the SWMACDE Area Envirothon:** Five teams from Yellow Medicine East High School competed at the May 6, 2009 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 2009 was biodiversity considerations associated with a flood control proposal. Three teams advanced to the state event, including two from Marshall and one from Worthington. Yellow Medicine SWCD served on the regional Envirothon Committee in 2009. This included delivering the welcome presentation at the event to 100 students and their coaches. Prior to the Envirothon, a presentation about the event and a classroom activity designed to provide a starting point for student research was presented to the Yellow Medicine East HS participants.
- 14. Goal - Assist Pezuta Zizi Environmental and Cultural Learning and Resource Center:** The SWCD assisted the Pezuta Zizi Environmental Learning Center in teaching the 5th grade Soil, Water and Landscapes class as one part of a six-week series at Bert Raney Elementary organized by Upper Sioux State Park and the Learning Center.
- 15. Goal - Hold a mini envirothon for Junior High Students:** Students from YME and Echo Charter School took part in mini envirothon events in 2009. 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:** 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 Projects for the Yellow Medicine Watershed and the Lac qui Parle – Yellow Bank Watershed District:** The SWCD continues to promote installation of conservation practices as well as promoting the filter strip incentives for both the Clean Water Partnerships with the Yellow Medicine Watershed and the Lac qui Parle-Yellow Bank Watershed. The SWCD also serves on the technical committees for both of the Clean Water Partnerships.
- 18. Goal - Hold SWCD Retreat:** A retreat was held on January 22, 2009. This year the SWCD supervisors and staff had a brainstorming session with NRCS staff, Cheryl Heard and Jon Paul Pringle. With the potential for additional funding for the SWCD through the sales tax amendment, the SWCD discussed what would we do if we received some of these dollars, who would be our partners, what would the projects look like; what would our future staffing look like; how would our current programs help accomplish these goals and how can we get the public involved and energized.

- 19. Goal - Hold a Ladies Workshop with Lincoln, Lyon, Redwood, Cottonwood, Murray and Pipestone SWCDs:** The Yellow Medicine Soil and Water Conservation District, in cooperation with six neighboring SWCDs in area counties, chose rain gardens and water quality as the topic for the 2009 regional SWCD Women's Day conference. The event, titled "Rain, Rain, Flow This Way" was held on September 9th, 2009 at the YMCA in Marshall. Speakers covered a variety of topics associated with water quality: Civic Engagement and the Clean Water Legacy Initiative, Backyard Conservation to Improve Water Quality, How to Select a Site and Plants for a Rain Garden, Benefits of a Rain Garden. These sessions were followed by a bus tour of water quality sites which include a rain garden at the Lyon County Fairgrounds and a wetland/runoff site at the Southwest Minnesota State University. Approximately 65 women attended this workshop.
- 20. Goal - Hold regular staff meetings:** Staff meetings were held regularly throughout the year.
- 21. Goal - Develop promotional presentations:** In 2009 the education coordinator conducted a presentation for pre-school teachers from the child development program at the Granite Falls Campus. This program included information about SWCD program topics and discussion of particular learning tools that were brought to the class.
- 22. Goal - Continue to maintain the SWCD's website:** The District Manager updates the website as needed.
- 23. Goal - Meet with other agencies and organizations to prioritize resource concerns, setting goals and objectives:** The SWCD continues to meet with the Yellow Medicine Water Task Force, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Farm Service Agency, the Lac qui Parle Watershed District and the Yellow Medicine Watershed District on resource concerns.
- 24. Goal - Participate in an Earth Day Event:** The SWCD did not participate in an event specifically centered on Earth Day in 2009. The SWCD did not receive any Earth Day related requests from other organizations.
- 25. Goal - Develop radio ad program:** No radio ads were ran in 2009.
- 26. Goal - Hold a workshop for all lenders in the county:** The SWCD, along with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), held a banker's workshop on February 10, 2009 at the Ag Service Center in Clarkfield. Twenty-five lenders from the surrounding area were invited to this workshop. Unfortunately only two lenders came. We discussed the following programs: Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP); Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP); Wetland Reserve Program (WRP); Conservation Reserve Program (CRP); Grassland Reserve Program (GRP); State Cost Share Program; Native Buffer Cost Share Program; Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Program and the Ag Best Management Practice (BMP) Loan Program. Even though the attendance was low, the meeting was a success.
- 27. Goal - Hold coffee sessions in supervisors' homes:** Due to the late harvest season, the supervisors decided to not hold coffee sessions this fall.
- 28. Goal - Conduct a survey, asking the public how they feel the funding from the new sales tax initiative should be spent:** In the SWCD's March Newsletter we asked approximately 2,200 landowners/operators to indicate how they felt the funds for the habitat and clean water portion of the sales tax amendment should be spent. We had 14 responses. We also had these surveys available at the Yellow Medicine County Fair for citizens to voice their concerns. Only one individual filled out a survey during the fair. We also used this same survey for participates of the Women's Workshop that was held in September.
- 29. Goal - Conduct classroom presentations for 7-12 grade students:** The SWCD sent in an application for our school's 8th grade earth science students to receive a free groundwater education program to be presented by the Science Museum of Minnesota, in cooperation with the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation. Both the Canby and the Yellow Medicine East Schools were lucky to be chosen to receive these groundwater class presentations.
- 30. Goal - Hold an Arbor Day Event in the County:** No event was scheduled on Arbor Day.

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:** The SWCD promotes best management practices in the county by writing news articles, newsletters, conducting presentations, and holding workshops in the county.
- 2. Goal- Reduce the amount of wind erosion on the most severely erodible acres by designing and planting 2,400 feet of field windbreaks and/or living snowfence:** The SWCD planted 2,160 feet of field windbreak in 2009.

A field windbreak drawing was sponsored by the SWCD and the following local financial institutions. Winners were as follows: Mike Prokop – Canby Credit Union; Richard Anderson – Citizens State Bank of Clara City, Granite Falls Branch; Nick Kissner – Granite Falls Bank and the F & M State Bank in Clarkfield; Paul Tol – First Security Bank in Canby. Thanks to all of the lenders for their efforts in promoting conservation in the county.

Goal – Plant 20 acres of farmstead windbreaks, 2.4 acres of wildlife habitat and 25.6 acres of riparian buffers: The SWCD planted 25.2 acres of farmstead windbreaks, 2.4 acres of wildlife habitat and 25.6 acres of riparian buffers.

Goal – Install 40,000 feet of plastic mulch: The SWCD installed 70,163 feet of plastic mulch.

- 3. Goal - Conduct the Conservation Tillage Transect Survey and enroll 2,000 acres of residue management into a program:** The SWCD did not conduct a conservation tillage transect survey in 2009 due to the late wet spring. Residue management was implemented on 4,776 acres in 2009.
- 4. Goal Reduce the amount of water erosion on severely eroded acres by installing 6,000 feet of terraces and/or water and sediment control basins and 15 acres of grassed waterways:**
 - Terraces and/or water & sediment control basins 3,250 feet
 - Grassed Waterways 7.5 acres

Funding for these practices will be obtained through various agencies and/or programs, such as Federal Funds, Clean Water Legacy Funds, Clean Water Funds, etc.

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 installation of grassed waterways and/or installing other conservation practices.

The SWCD assisted the 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.

- 5. Goal - Continue to manage CREP and/or RIM easements, and conduct status reviews:** The SWCD conducted 69 CREP/RIM status reviews in 2009.
- 6. Goal - Establish 40 acres of filter strips/buffers:** 231.2 acres of filter strips were established in 2009.
- 7. Goal - Develop plans to enroll or re-enroll 800 acres into RIM/CRP:** Plans were written and 1,064.4 acres were enrolled in the following categories: 231.2 acres into CRP filter strip program; 137.0 acres into wetland program; 143.3 into general CRP program; and 552.9 acres into the WRP/RIM Program. Mid management maintenance plans for CRP/CREP contracts were written for 548.4 acres.
- 8. Goal - Enroll 100 acres of pasture land into a prescribed grazing system:** Through the efforts on the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) 548.4 acres of pasture land were enrolled into prescribed grazing systems.
- 9. Goal - Selling the native grass drill.** The SWCD sold the native grass drill and discontinued this program.
- 10. Goal - Conduct an annual meeting of stakeholders and/or Local Work Group Meeting:** Due to the timeframe of the EQIP sign up no local work group meeting was held in 2009. One will be held on January 12th of 2010.

**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

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 published two SWCD newsletters; wrote numerous articles for the local newspapers and the SWCD's website; submitted news articles for the Yellow Medicine County Water Newsletter; held workshops; and met one-on-one with landowners and/or operators educating them on the SWCD's current conservation programs and efforts.
12. **Goal - Assist the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in implementing the Conservation Security Program (CSP):** The SWCD assisted NRCS with advertising the Conservation Security Program and making calls to landowners for scheduling appointments.
13. **Goal - Serve on the Southwest Prairie Joint Powers Board:** Menno Fokken served on the Southwest Prairie Joint Powers Board as Chairperson for 2009. The SWCD contributed \$1,000.00 towards the Joint Power's budget.
14. **Goal - Continue to work with RCRCRA on the Redwood River Clean Water Project:** The SWCD continues to work with RCRCRA and the SWCDs in the Redwood Watershed to promote conservation. Landowners who have land in Yellow Medicine County that is located in the Redwood Watershed were able to apply for dollars to install blind intakes. Through this opportunity, four landowners received cost share to replace their open intakes with blind intakes.
15. **Goal - Restore 20 acres of wetlands into a conservation program:** In 2009, 137 acres of wetlands were enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program with an additional 52.5 acres enrolled into the Wetland Reserve Program/Reinvest in Minnesota Program.
16. **Goal – Replace 48 intakes with blind intakes:** Through funds from the Lac qui Parle Watershed, Redwood Watershed and the Yellow Medicine SWCD 22 intakes were installed in Yellow Medicine County in 2009. Due to the wet fall conditions, 49 blind intakes that were scheduled to be installed will be completed in 2010.
17. **Goal -Enroll 200 acres into the Rock Outcrop Program in Yellow Medicine County:** Yellow Medicine SWCD, along with Chippewa, Lac qui Parle, Renville and Redwood SWCDs, applied for and received a grant from the Legislative Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR) for a Rock Outcrop Permanent Easement Program. Landowners interested in protecting rock outcrops in the Upper Minnesota River Valley had a unique opportunity to sign up for the Rock Outcrop Program to protect their rock outcrops from being mined and enrolling them in a permanent RIM-like easement. This program has won attention for protecting a unique resource. The rock outcrops are appreciated both for their rugged beauty as well as the rare and hardy plants that inhabit them. The goal of this program is to provide landowners with compensation for doing the right thing and assisting them with removing invasive species, such as red cedar and sumac to restore the outcrops. If we do not take steps to protect the outcrops, they could disappear from our landscape. Of the 35 applications received, ten were from Yellow Medicine County. Unfortunately, only 14 applications totaling \$1,290,848 were funded enrolling 540.8 acres. Four of those applications are in Yellow Medicine County and will bring approximately \$290,856 into the County enrolling 128 acres into the Rock Outcrop Program. The above SWCDs requested dollars again from LCCMR for 2010 to enroll acres into our Rock Outcrop Program. If funded the SWCDs would fund some of the applications that were submitted in 2009.
18. **Goal – Administer the Native Buffer Cost Share Program:** The SWCD continues to operate the Native Buffer Cost Share Program encumbering another \$10,115 enrolling another 43.5 acres into this program. The Native Buffer Program. This cost share program offers incentive funds for the installation of high quality native buffers in environmentally strategic locations for a period of at least 15 years. The Native Buffer Program could provide cost share funds of up to 75% to establish and manage the enrolled area. Eligible land that could be enrolled includes: cropland, pasture, and land already in an easement such as the Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Program. The land must then be managed for a period of at least 15 years. Practices that can be supported through the cost share include site preparation, seed collection, seed, seeding, vegetation management, invasive species control, disking, haying, landscaping, and management of original remnant prairies.

19. **Goal – Promote landowner participation in the RIM Clean Energy Program:** This was not offered in the State in 2009.

20. **Goal - Apply for dollars through the Clean Water Fund:** The SWCD, along with Lac qui Parle and Lincoln SWCDs, submitted a grant application for \$144,250 for the Lac qui Parle Yellow Bank Watershed. Dollars were requested for cost share for best management practices and alternative intakes; and incentive dollars for filter strips/riparian buffers and farmable wetlands buffers.

The SWCD, along with Lyon and Lincoln SWCDs, submitted a grant application for the Yellow Medicine Watershed requesting \$174,125 dollars for cost share for BMPs, small dam repairs, rain gardens and alternative intakes; and incentive dollars for filter strips/riparian buffers and farmable wetland buffers.

The SWCD, along with surrounding SWCDs also submitted a grant application for the Redwood Watershed requesting 4476,625 for cost share for BMPs, alternative intakes, repair of small dams, and rain gardens; and incentive dollars for grid sampling, and filterstrip/riparian buffers.

The SWCD submitted a grant application for Ag BMP Loan dollars to be utilized for fixing nonconforming individual sewage treatment systems.

Applications were due on December 1, 2009. We will know sometime in the beginning of 2010 if they funded any of the SWCD's grant proposals.

21. **Goal - Administer the Working Lands Initiative Program:** The SWCD, along with Lincoln and Lyon SWCDs, administer the Working Lands Initiative Program. The goal of this program is to support agriculture and wildlife-based economics by fostering healthy communities in Minnesota's prairie pothole region through cooperative, integrated approaches that enhance coordination, target investments and inspire new thinking. This program targets a small portion in the southwest part of Fortier Township and aims to add more grassland and restore more wetlands to benefit wildlife and still keep local farmers and ranchers thriving. The Working Lands Initiative Program would pay the difference between what the CRP payment would be and \$175.00/acre for 15 years. Due to the limited amount of funds in 2009, no projects were funded in Yellow Medicine County. However, in the later part of December DNR requested the SWCD start promoting this program again. Landowners with land in the targeted area will be contacted again in January or February to see if they are interested in this program.

ENHANCE AND RESTORE THE COUNTY'S WATER QUALITY

REDUCE PRIORITY POLLUTANTS TO SUSTAINABLE LEVELS.

Action:

1. **Goal - Work with MPCA to get waters off the Clean Water Act's Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) 303d list of impaired waters:** The SWCD continues to work with their partners to get the Minnesota River Basin, Redwood Watershed, Lac qui Parle Watershed and the Yellow Medicine Watershed off the Clean Water Act's TMDL listing of impaired waters.
2. **Goal - Assist in promoting nutrient and/or pesticide management plans, targeting 2500 acres countywide:** Through the efforts of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the SWCD landowners implemented their nutrient and/or pesticide management plans on 32,123 acres.
3. **Goal - Continue to support the upgrading of Individual Sewage Treatment Systems (ISTS):** The SWCD administered the Ag BMP Loan Program for the county, fixing 3 non-conforming Individual Sewage Treatment Systems. The SWCD sought technical assistance from the Yellow Medicine County Zoning Office staff to determine if projects were eligible and submitted applications to local lenders.
4. **Goal - Protect Del Clark Lake:** The SWCD planted 3.9 acres of farmstead windbreaks and a 885 foot field windbreak in the Canby Creek Watershed, protecting Del Clark Lake.
5. **Goal - Assist feedlot operators with completing MPCA permits, developing Manure Management Plans, and/or seeking financial assistance:** Worked with the Yellow Medicine County Feedlot Officer to encourage landowners to take soil samples and develop manure management plans.

6. **Goal - Assist in planning and installing three Ag Waste Systems in 2009:** Three ag waste systems received funds through the Federal Environmental Quality Incentive Program and received a low interest loan through the Ag BMP Loan Program to get their systems into compliance.

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:** 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 these property owners in the 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.
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 request our assistance in 2009.

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 as requested.
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, along with the Yellow Medicine County Water Planner, continue to encourage sealing of abandoned wells in the county. Funds can be obtained through the Water Plan for assistance in sealing abandoned wells.
5. **Goal - Participate in the state rainfall-monitoring program with 15 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.** In 2009 the Yellow Medicine SWCD received dollars from the Water Task Force to offer cost share to landowners to implement best management practices on the land. The SWCD also supplied news articles for the Water Task Force Newsletter that was published in 2009.

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 20 acres of wetlands through various conservation programs.** In 2009, 137.0 acres of wetlands were enrolled 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:** The SWCD continues to apply for a grant and partially fund the Farm Bill Assistant position 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 of our partners in 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.** The SWCD works closely with the above organizations to address flooding issues in the county.
5. **Goal - Work with Area II, RCRCA, Watersheds, landowners and the county to seek funding for streambank stabilization projects where needed and feasible:** No funds were used for streambank stabilization projects.

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:** No small dams were repaired in 2009 utilizing a BWSR grant or funds associated with the office.
2. **Goal - Promote the use of alternative intakes, such as blind intakes:** Through funds from the Lac qui Parle Watershed, Redwood Watershed and the Yellow Medicine SWCD 22 intakes were installed in Yellow Medicine County in 2009. Due to the wet fall conditions, 49 blind intakes that were scheduled to be installed will be completed in 2010.
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.** Educated the public on the need to maintain the minimum one-rod grassed areas as it applies to drainage policy. Also encouraged landowners to enroll their riparian buffer areas into a conservation program establishing filter strips on these areas.
4. **Goal - Protect the Lazarus Creek Project:** The SWCD continues to protect the upland above the Lazarus Creek Project by encouraging landowners to install best management practices where needed.
5. **Goal - Utilize the USFWS Drained Wetland Basin Inventory:** The SWCD does not have a copy of this inventory.

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 Wetland Conservation Act and the rules of the Board of Water and Soil Resources adopted under the act. The SWCD served as chair of the WCA Technical Panel. Training was sought for the SWCD staff as needed. The SWCD reviewed tiling request, building permits, and WCA applications and decisions were made.

PRAIRIE COUNTRY RC&D REPORT:

This past year, Prairie Country RC&D continued to provide technical support to the Lac qui Parle – Yellow Bank River Watershed Project, and assisted with implementing the Yellow Medicine County Grazing Workshop and Tour which was attended by 40 individuals. Norris Peterson represents Yellow Medicine SWCD on the Prairie Country RC&D Council, with Menno Fokken serving as an alternate.

Over the past 18 years, the Prairie Country RC&D Council has assisted local people in planning and implementing several natural resource and economic development related projects. These include watershed water quality enhancement projects, the Glacial Ridge Trail, value-added product promotion, economic development, natural resource and recreational development, environmental learning centers, dry hydrants, renewable/alternative energy and various demonstration projects including woody riparian buffers and direct seeding of hardwoods.

