

**YELLOW MEDICINE
SOIL & WATER
CONSERVATION
DISTRICT**

ANNUAL REPORT



2011

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 2011.

YELLOW MEDICINE SWCD SUPERVISORS

Menno Fokken	Chairperson
Jerry Nelson	Vice Chairperson
Norris Peterson	Secretary
Burton Kuehn	Treasurer
Hollis Weber	Reporter

YELLOW MEDICINE SWCD STAFF

Lou Ann Nagel	District Manager
Nancy Dyrdaahl	District Administrative Assistant
Kurt Johnson	District Engineer Technician
Ian Olson	Farm Bill Assistant

COOPERATING AGENCIES

Board of Water & Soil Resources

John Jaschke	Director
Dave Sill	Board Conservationist
Kane Radel	Wetland Specialist

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Don Baloun	State Conservationist
Gary Watson	Area Conservationist
Cory Walker	District Conservationist
Jon Paul Pringle	Soil Conservation Technician

Yellow Medicine County Commissioners

Ronald Antony	Canby
Gary Johnson	Montevideo
Greg Renneke	Echo
Louis Sherlin	Canby
Dick Wambeke	Granite Falls

Other Agencies

Ryan Krosch	County Administrator
Jolene Johnson	Water Plan Coordinator
Vacant	FSA County Director
Randy Jacobson	County Feedlot, Zoning & Ag Officer
Chris Balfany	County Ditch Inspector
Bill Schuna	DNR Wildlife Habitat Specialist
Lucas Youngsma	DNR Area Hydrologist
Vacant	MN Extension Service 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 2011 the district provided the following:

- Tree planning, planting, and matting services.
- Technical assistance for the installation of conservation practices.
- A manager for the district.
- Assistance to other agencies in promoting programs concerning conservation.
- Promotion of educational activities in the district.
- Promotion and administration for the CREP/RIM/PWP Reserve Program.
- Promotion and administration for the State Cost Share Program.
- Assistance to the county in implementing the Yellow Medicine County Water Plan.
- Administration for the Wetland Conservation Act of 1991.
- Promotion and administration for the Native Buffer Cost Share Program.
- Administration of the Rainfall Monitoring Program.
- Promotion and administration for the Ag Best Management Loan Program.
- Promotion and administration for the Blind Intake Program.
- Promotion and administration for the Working Lands Initiative Program.
- Promotion and administration for the Rock Outcrop Program.
- Promotion and administration for the Vegetative Management & Enhancement of Conservation Easements.

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.

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 2011 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.

SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

- Tree Program – Design, Planting, and Mats
- State Cost-Share Program – Cost Share dollars available for installation of best management practices
- Native Buffer Cost Share Program - This program provides cost share up to 75% to establish and manage 25 species of native grasses and forbs on eligible lands
- Vegetative Management & Enhancement of Conservation Easements Cost Share Program - Provides cost share up to 100% with a maximum of \$300/acre to convert cool season grass stands to native grasses, or to enhance and inter-seed additional species into an existing native grass planting on eligible lands enrolled into certain conservation easements
- Blind Intake Program – Cost share available to replace existing intakes with alternative intakes
- Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) and Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) – Permanent conservation easement programs
- Rock Outcrop Easement Program – RIM Program
- Education Programs
- DNR Well Monitoring - Monitor 5-DNR observation wells throughout the County
- Working Lands for Wildlife Initiative
- Water Permits - Process and review the DNR water permits
- eLink Reporting - Reporting of progress of conservation practices through the Board of Water and Soil Resources web page
- Wetland Conservation Act
- Ag BMP Loan Program
- Assist with Yellow Medicine County Local Water Management Plan -See Yellow Medicine County Website: yellowmedicine.govoffice.com
- Engineering
- Walk In Access Program

GOAL & OBJECTIVES

GOAL: PROVIDE FOR AN EFFICIENT DISTRICT OPERATION – Actions:

All of the action items listed below were completed in 2011:

1. Held regular board meetings the fourth Thursday of each month.
2. Developed a budget, annual plan of work and annual report.
3. Staffed a District Manager, District Technician, District Administrative Assistant, and Farm Bill Assistant.
4. Provided and 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 to: RCRCA, 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. Utilized the e-link web based reporting system to report progress.
10. Maintained the SWCD's Website.

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

1. **Goal - Publish 3 newsletters:** The SWCD published 3 newsletters one in February, March, and July.
2. **Goal - Select a Conservation Farmer:** The Thielges, Robert and Jeff, were selected Conservation Farmers for 2011. They operate a beef and grain farm raising corn, soybeans, wheat, alfalfa, and beef cattle. Robert began farming in 1974 with his father and Jeff joined the operation in 1980. (photo 2) Over the years, they have installed a grassed waterway, two terrace systems, and are currently planning to install another. The Thielges Brothers have also enrolled marginal lands into CRP in the form of filter strips and wildlife habitat practices. Integrated Pest Management has also been incorporated into the Thielges Brother's operation through the CSP program. Robert & Jeff are happy with their decisions to be stewards of the land and enjoy the benefits provided by their conservation practices.
3. **Goal - Set up displays:** Displays were developed for the fair and the office.
4. **Goal - Distribute educational material and conduct classroom presentations, if requested:**
The SWCD did a presentation at the "Ag in the Classroom" event which was held in Clarkfield on April 5, 2011. This event was organized by Roger Dale. Approximately 183 fourth grade students from Yellow Medicine East, Clarkfield Charter School, Canby School, Dawson School and Holy Redeemer School from Marshall attended this event. Kurt Johnson and Amanda Prochazka played a tree trivia game with the students teaching them tree characteristics, benefits, leaf identification, etc.
5. **Goal - Work with the SWMACDE to co sponsored an Environmental Fair for all 5th & 6th graders in Marshall.** This year marked the 20th Anniversary for the Southwest Minnesota Association of Conservation District Employees (SWMACDE) Environmental Fair. The first Environmental Fair was held in Marshall in September 1992. That one-day event was attended by 1,280 6th grade students from a 14-county area. Over the years, the Fair has grown into a two-day event moved around the area (reducing school travel time), the participating SWCDs have changed, and both 5th and 6th graders are now invited to attend. This year 1,834 students from 36 schools (including several home schools) registered to learn about soil, water, and other resources at the 2011 Environmental Fair which was held in Marshall in September. The Fair remains a positive experience that enables students to be informed decision makers in the future. In the previous 19 years of this event, we reached more than 32,300 children! Nearly 21,000 are now adults helping make decisions with their votes. Considering the population in this part of rural Minnesota, those are impressive numbers, and we hope someday to see the results on the land. Yellow Medicine SWCD, along with Lac qui Parle, Lincoln, Lyon and Redwood SWCDs, served on the Environmental Fair Committee this year.
6. **Goal - Distribute an educational newsletter:** No educational newsletters were sent to the schools in the fall.

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

7. **Goal - Publish weekly news articles:** Unfortunately, the SWCD did not publish a news articles every week. The SWCD paid for an advertisement and submitted articles for the spring Advocate Tribune Spring Edition. Articles were also submitted for the Advocate Tribune's Fall Farm Edition.
8. **Goal - Informational calls to landowners/operators regarding current programs:** Through the efforts of the SWCD staff, approximately 1,500 landowners were contacted one on one promoting the current SWCD and Federal programs. Approximately 2,430 landowners were also contacted through each SWCD newsletter that was sent out. News articles, workshops and the SWCD website have also been used to reach landowners in Yellow Medicine County.
9. **Goal - Work with Extension and Water Plan Coordinator in promoting Environmental Education:** No programs were developed in 2011.
10. **Goal - Assist and promote the SWMACDE Area Envirothon:** Yellow Medicine SWCD, along with Lac qui Parle, and Redwood SWCDs, served on the Area Envirothon Committee. Five teams from Yellow Medicine East High School attended the 2011 Southwest Regional Envirothon on May 5th at Camden State Park near Marshall. The top-finishers from YME were Justice Jensvold, Cody Randt, Edwin Little Creek, Summer Hammilton, and Merideth Rupp. They placed 5th among 11 teams.
11. **Goal - Assist Pezuta Zizi Environmental and Cultural Learning and Resource Center:** Megan Ulrich from the Environmental Learning Center borrowed the SWCD's Enviroscape for a presentation on March 11, 2011.
12. **Goal - Meet with County FAC Committee:** The SWCD met periodically with the Farm Service Agency, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Yellow Medicine County Ditch Inspector, Extension Service and the Yellow Medicine County Zoning Office as needed to discuss building and/or county concerns.
13. **Goal - Promote Clean Water Partnership Projects for the Yellow Medicine Watershed District and the Lac qui Parle – Yellow Bank Watershed District:** The SWCD continues to promote the 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 committee for both of the Clean Water Partnerships.
14. **Goal - Hold SWCD Retreat:** A retreat was held on December 22, 2011 to discuss 2012 annual plan, what each individual brings to the organization, etc.
15. **Goal – Hold a Ladies Workshop:** The Yellow Medicine SWCD, in cooperation with six neighboring SWCDs in our area, chose water quality as our theme for the regional SWCD Women's Day Conference. The event, "Water Quality - Under Our Umbrella" was held at the Prairie Event Center in Marshall. Lee Ann Buck, MASWCD Executive Director explained the connection between surface and groundwater. After a great lunch, the Prairie Ecology Bus conducted presentations on water quality, groundwater and wetlands. The event concluded by informing the participants of how the SWCDs can help them address water quality issues and concerns. Approximately 37 women registered for this event.

Yellow Medicine SWCD along with Lac qui Parle SWCD, Lincoln SWCD and Lac qui Parle Watershed District sponsored a workshop titled "Blue Thumb Garden Party". This garden party was held on May 19th at the Creekside Park in Canby. Approximately 36 people registered, ten were from Yellow Medicine County. Topics covered included: rain gardens, rain barrels, composting, fertilizer/chemical use on lawns, etc.
16. **Goal - Hold regular staff meetings:** Staff meetings were held regularly throughout the year.
17. **Goal - Develop promotional presentations:** Promotional items were developed and used at workshops and the county fair.
18. **Goal - Continue to maintain the SWCD's website:** The District Manager continues to update the website as needed.

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

- 19. 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, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Farm Service Agency, Yellow Medicine County Zoning Office, Lac qui Parle Watershed District and the Yellow Medicine Watershed District on resource concerns.

- 20. Goal – Hold a workshop for landowners in Wood Lake Creek:** Thirteen landowners attended the Wood Lake Creek Watershed Workshop that was held on March 9th, 2011. One purpose of the meeting was to encourage landowners to tell us what natural resource concerns they see in this watershed and to help us develop a plan to address those concerns. The other purpose was to help us determine if we should apply for Clean Water Funds (sales tax amendment dollars) to address their concerns.

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 1,250 feet of field windbreaks and/or living snowfence:** The SWCD planted 565 feet of field windbreaks and 2,320 feet of living snowfences in 2011.

A drawing was sponsored by the SWCD and local financial institutions to plant trees. Winners were as follows: Matt Hoffman – Canby Coop Credit Union; Maria Maciejack - First Security Bank and Nick Kissner – Granite Falls Bank. Thanks to all of the lenders for their efforts in promoting conservation in the county.

Goal – Plant 15 acres of farmstead windbreaks, and 2 acres of wildlife habitat and riparian buffers: The SWCD planted 34.6 acres of farmstead windbreaks. Due to the wet conditions, the wildlife habitat and riparian buffer was not planted in 2011. This will be planted in 2012.

Goal – Install 40,000 feet of plastic mulch: Due to the extremely wet spring conditions, some of the mat jobs were cancelled per the landowners. This resulted in only 28,916 feet of plastic mulch being installed this year.

Goal - Enroll 3,000 acres of residue management into a program: Residue management was implemented on 29.3 acres.

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

3. **Goal - Reduce the amount of water erosion on severely eroded acres by installing 7,500 feet of terraces and/or water and sediment control basins, 7 acres of grassed waterways and 150 acres cover crop:**
- a. Terraces and/or water & sediment control basins 13 basins
 - b. Grassed Waterways 1 waterway
 - c. Cover Crop 90 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.

4. **Goal - Continue to manage CREP and/or RIM easements, and conduct status reviews:** The SWCD conducted 48 CREP/RIM status reviews in 2011.
5. **Goal - Establish 250 acres of filter strips/buffers:** 385.3 acres of filter strips/buffers have been established through the Conservation Reserve Program and Conservation Stewardship Program.
6. **Goal - Develop plans to enroll or re-enroll 1,000 acres into RIM/CRP:** 730.8 acres were enrolled/re-enrolled into the Conservation Reserve Program. In 2011, another 6 contracts totaling 272.3 acres were processed into the RIM Rock Outcrop Program.

Funding was allocated to the State to acquire RIM and WRP/RIM easements in areas designated as Flood Disaster counties following the September 2010 storm event. The SWCD submitted 15 applications totaling 966 acres to the State in March of 2011. Of those 15 applications, ten were approved for funding. The SWCD, along with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, has started to process these easements.

7. **Goal – Promote the Riparian Buffer Clean Water Fund RIM Reserve Program:** The Board of Supervisors identified potential catchment areas for the Riparian Buffer Clean Water Fund Reserve Program. Letters were sent to landowners in Ditch #10 asking about interest in this program. Articles were written in the newspapers asking any landowner to contact our office if they were interested in this program. Catchment areas will be finalized in January of 2012.
8. **Goal - Enroll 1,360 acres of pasture land into a prescribed grazing system:** Through the efforts of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) 212.2 acres of pasture land were enrolled into prescribed grazing systems.
9. **Goal - Conduct an annual meeting of stakeholders and/or a Local Work Group Meeting:** Yellow Medicine County citizens were invited to attend a public meeting to discuss the various USDA conservation programs including the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) on Thursday, July 21, 2011 at 10:30 a.m. at the Ag Service Center in Clarkfield. The purpose of the Stakeholder meeting was to review and recommend potential changes in local priorities for spending the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) funds; have input on local conservation efforts; assist the SWCD and the Natural Resources Conservation Service with prioritizing conservation resource concerns and geographic priority areas; and review the ranking process.
10. **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 four newsletters and wrote numerous articles promoting and educating landowners on the need to install conservation practices and enroll acreage into conservation 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 (BMPs). Action: Continued

11. **Goal - Assist the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in implementing the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP):** The SWCD assisted NRCS with advertising the Conservation Stewardship Program and making calls to landowners for scheduling appointments.
12. **Goal - Serve on the Southwest Prairie Joint Powers Board:** Menno Fokken served on the Southwest Prairie Joint Powers Board as Chairperson for 2011. The SWCD contributed \$1,000.00 towards the Joint Power's budget.
13. **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.
14. **Goal - Restore 150 acres of wetlands into a conservation program:** 140.6 acres of wetlands were enrolled/reenrolled in various conservation programs.
15. **Goal – Replace 20 intakes with blind intakes:** In 2011, seven blind intakes were installed using a variety of funding sources such as: SWCD Blind Intake Program, Yellow Medicine Water Task Force, Redwood Watershed Clean Water Funds and the Yellow Medicine Watershed Clean Water Funds. Contractors were very busy this fall and hopefully these blind intakes will be installed in 2012.
16. **Goal – Promote and Administer the Rock Outcrop Program in Yellow Medicine County:** Completed the acquisition process for 6 RIM Rock Outcrop Easements totaling 272.3 acres. Releases still need to be obtained for a number of easements.
17. **Goal – Promote and Administer the Native Buffer Cost Share Program:** The SWCD worked with two landowners to complete their Native Buffer Cost Share Contracts.
18. **Goal – Promote and Enroll acres into Vegetative Management and Enhancement of Conservation Easement Cost Share Program:** Enrolled three landowners into this cost share program. 149.2 acres of vegetative cover will be improved.
19. **Goal – Hold informational meeting for Wood Lake Creek Watershed Landowners:** Thirteen landowners attended the Wood Lake Creek Watershed Workshop that was held on March 9th, 2011. One purpose of the meeting was to encourage landowners to tell us what natural resource concerns they see in this watershed and to help us develop a plan to address those concerns. The other purpose was to help us determine if we should apply for Clean Water Funds (sales tax amendment dollars) to address their concerns. Applied for Clean Water Funds, through an application for minor watersheds in the Yellow Medicine Watershed.
20. **Goal – Apply for Clean Water Fund Dollars for Yellow Medicine Watershed:** The Yellow Medicine SWCD, along with Lincoln and Lyon SWCD, applied for Clean Water Funds for minor watersheds in the Yellow Medicine Watershed.
21. **Goal – Apply for Clean Water Fund Dollars for Lac qui Parle Watershed:** The Yellow Medicine SWCD along with the Lac qui Parle SWCD and the Lincoln SWCD submitted a Clean Water Application for minor watersheds in the Lac qui Parle Watershed. Unfortunately, this application was not funded.
22. **Goal – Promote Flood Disaster RIM Signup:** Funding was allocated to the State to acquire RIM and WRP/RIM easements in areas designated as Flood Disaster counties following the September 2010 storm event. The SWCD submitted 15 applications totaling 966 acres to the State in March of 2011. Nine of the applications were funded and the Farm Bill Assistant continues to process them.
23. **Goal – Administer Working Lands Initiative Program:** No funds were available in 2011 for this program.

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

- 24. **Goal – Conservation Corps Minnesota Conservation Apprenticeship:** Mitchell Ness served as the Conservation Corp Apprentice in Yellow Medicine County for the SWCD from May 31st through August 19th. Mitchell assisted the SWCD by: conducting status reviews for both the State Cost Share Program as well as for RIM/CREP Easements; assisting with tree plantings and tree matting projects; developed inventories, etc.
- 25. **Goal – Pursue Investigating Offering a Native Prairie Seed Program:** The SWCD looked into developing a Native Prairie Seed Program but decided not to offer 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 list of impaired waters.
- 2. **Goal - Assist in promoting nutrient and/or pesticide management plans, targeting 15,000 acres of nutrient management and 30,000 acres of pest management countywide:** Through the efforts of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), landowners implemented 13,930.7 acres of nutrient management plans and 14,684.3 acres of pesticide management plans.
- 3. **Goal - Continue to support the upgrading of Individual Sewage Treatment Systems (ISTS):** The SWCD administered the Ag BMP Loan Program for the county, offering loans to fix 12 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 continues to promote conservation practices in the Del Clark Lake area.
- 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 two Ag Waste Systems:** No Ag waste systems were installed in 2011. However, two Comprehensive Nutrient Management Assessments were completed. Systems will be installed in 2012.

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:** We were not asked to participate in a wellhead protection team in 2011.
- 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.

PROTECT AND IMPROVE THE QUALITY & QUANTITY OF GROUNDWATER IN THE COUNTY
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):** The Local Work Group for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) gave a high priority ranking to 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 have only been established for Canby. Only a fraction of cropland is in the wellhead protection area.
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 2011.

EXPAND GROUNDWATER MONITORING.

Action:

1. **Goal - Monitor five (5) groundwater observation wells designated by DNR:** The SWCD monitored five groundwater observation wells designated 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 16 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 Yellow Medicine Water Task Force did not request our assistance.

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 100 acres of wetlands through various conservation programs:** 140.6 acres of wetlands were enrolled/reenrolled into various conservation programs.
2. **Goal - Take flood prone land along rivers, streams and/or waterways out of crop production:** The SWCD Farm Bill Assistant met with landowners and informed them of programs that will take flood prone land out of crop production. Funding was allocated to the State to acquire RIM and WRP/RIM easements in areas designated as Flood Disaster counties following the September 2010 storm event. The SWCD submitted 15 applications totaling 966 acres to the State in March of 2011. Of those 15 applications, ten were approved for funding. The SWCD, along with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, has started to process these easements.
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 Yellow Bank 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 to minimize flooding.

IMPROVE SURFACE WATER MANAGEMENT TO DECREASE FLOODING IN THE COUNTY

MINIMIZE LOSSES ASSOCIATED WITH THE FLOODING OF AGRICULTURAL LANDS. Action: continued

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 Areas 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 dams were repaired utilizing SWCD or Natural Resources Conservation Service funds in 2011.
2. **Goal - Promote the use of alternative intakes, such as blind intakes:** This year through funds from the Lac qui Parle Watershed, Redwood Watershed and the Yellow Medicine SWCD 7 open intakes were replaced with alternative intakes.
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 the 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.
6. **Goal – Encourage enrollment of 30 acres into a Drainage Water Management Practice:** Through efforts of the Natural Resources Conservation Service Staff 93.0 acres were enrolled into the Drainage Water Management Practice.

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. In 2011, the SWCD staff spent over 687 hours administering WCA. The SWCD made over 950 landowner contacts: 603 drainage requests; 181 building and zoning requests; 88 on-site investigations; 4 local road authorities; and 62 wetland related contacts. The SWCD received 11 basic applications, made 9 decisions; no replacement plans were approved, and 6 potential violations were investigated.
2. **Goal – Enter into an agreement with NRCS for assisting with the Wetland Conservation Provisions of the Federal Farm Bill:** The SWCD entered into a Prairie Pothole Wetland Contribution Agreement with Natural Resources Conservation Service to assist them with administration of the Swampbuster Provision of the Federal Farm Bill.