



YELLOW MEDICINE SWCD NEWSLETTER

Clarkfield, MN 56223

320-669-4442 Ext 3

June 2008

REINVEST IN MINNESOTA/ WETLANDS RESERVE PROGRAM SIGNUP ANNOUNCED

The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) and the Minnesota USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) are announcing Phase I of a Reinvest In Minnesota (RIM) Reserve Program/Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) partnership. This partnership between the premier national and state wetland restoration programs will combine agency processes to offer competitive payment rates to landowners for the purpose of restoring wetlands in high-priority areas.

RIM/WRP applications will be accepted beginning June 26th and ending on July 18th, 2008. Applications received after July 18th may be considered during future scoring periods.

NRCS will be acquiring a 30-year WRP easement. BWSR, through the RIM Reserve program, will be acquiring a perpetual easement. The landowner will receive a combined payment from both programs. The combined easement payment rates will be known to the local offices at the time of sign-up. This will shorten the processing time and allow landowners to quickly know what their easement payments will be. In addition, NRCS will be paying 75% of the actual conservation practice costs. BWSR will pay the remainder of the conservation practice costs, not to exceed RIM's program maximums and/or actual costs.

Landowners can sign up for the partnership at the Yellow Medicine SWCD/NRCS office in Clarkfield. All applications will be reviewed and signed off locally by both the NRCS District Conservationist and a SWCD representative before being submitted for consideration by the BWSR/NRCS RIM/WRP Selection Committee. The scoring system provides a higher score for those applications that restore the most wetlands and uplands in priority migratory species habitat areas of the state and in areas of the state that have had a large amount of their wetlands drained or altered.

For more information call 320-669-4442 Ext 3.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVES PROGRAM (EQIP) SIGN-UP AND SCORING PERIOD

Agricultural producers wanting to solve natural resource problems on their farms should apply for assistance through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) administered by the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The Minnesota NRCS announced that a scoring period to determine priority for funding applications is now in progress.

Completed applications must be received at the Clarkfield NRCS Field Office by June 30th to be considered in the current funding period.

EQIP continues to be the heart of the NRCS' working lands conservation program. EQIP is the primary tool for landowners who want to apply soil and water conservation practices and provides both technical and financial assistance for agricultural producers.

In the earlier 2008 EQIP sign up we approved contracts for Terraces, Grassed Waterways, Water & Sediment Control Basins, Dam Repair, Prescribed Grazing Systems and associated practices, Composting Facility, Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan, Waste Facility Cover, Terrestrial Invasive Plant Species Pest Management, Conservation Tillage, Nutrient Management and Pest Management. Over \$257,000 was obligated to Yellow Medicine County so far in 2008 and over \$420,000 in 2007. EQIP provides practice payments for structural practices which cover a significant portion of the cost of installation. Management practices are supported with incentive payments made each year for three years.

If you have natural resource concerns on your land and are interested in making a commitment to conservation, EQIP could be the answer you have been looking for.

To find out more information about EQIP contact the Clarkfield NRCS field office (320)669-4442 ext. 3 or please visit the MN NRCS website: www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

- July 14th, 2008 at 10:00 a.m.—Presentation on Prairie and Wetland Environmental History at the Hanley Falls Museum. Learn about the history of the region's prairie ecosystem, including early 20th century drainage followed by more recent conservation success stories.
- 2008 Certification of acreage is required by July 15th for all CRP and CREP!! It is also mandatory for the 2008 Farm Program! Please call the FSA Office and schedule an appointment at 320-669-4492 ext. 2.
- September 17th, 2008—Clean Water: Our Future, Your Legacy Women's Day Workshop in Lamberton.

FILE BEFORE JULY 15TH TO RUN FOR SWCD SUPERVISOR

- The Board consists of 5 elected supervisors and are elected by nomination districts on the general ballot.
- SWCD does not participate in the primaries.
- Terms are for four years. In 2008 the following seats will be up for election:
 - Area 1 (Sioux Agency, Wood Lake, Posen, and Echo Townships)
 - Area 2 (Lisbon, Stony Run, and Minnesota Falls Townships)
 - Area 5 Hammer, Norman, Fortier, and Florida Townships).
- Interested individuals must file with the county auditor from July 1st through July 15th, 2008.

NATIVE BUFFER COST-SHARE PROGRAM

The SWCD is administering the new Native Buffer Cost-Share Program. This program provides cost share up to 75% to establish and manage 25 species of native grasses and forbs.

Eligible land includes cropland, pasture, and land already covered by an easement, such as the Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Program. The land must then be managed to maintain the diverse stand for a period of at least 15 years.

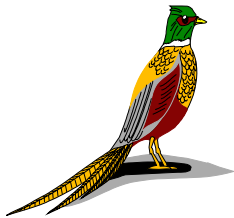
If the enrolled land is not under an existing easement, there is an upfront per acre payment which is based on 75% of the CRP annual rental rate which is then multiplied by 3 years. Also, if not restricted by an easement, the landowner has the right to harvest the hay and/or to harvest and sell the seed.

For more information on this program please contact Jared Brouwer at 320-669-4442 Ext 3.

CERTAIN CRP ACRES ELIGIBLE FOR CRITICAL FEED USE

Certain acreage enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) are available for hay and grazing after the end of the primary nesting season. CRP participants may request to voluntarily modify CRP contracts for critical feed use, such as haying and grazing. Haying modifications require the removal of all hay before November 10th and not during the primary nesting season, limit haying to 1 cutting, cannot hay and graze the same acreage, hay no more than 50% of each field, and re-establish cover if destroyed. Grazing modifications require the removal of livestock by November 10th and cannot graze during the primary nesting season and will require a written grazing plan from the NRCS.

Only certain CRP lands are eligible for this penalty-free forage use. Ineligible CRP land includes all CREP and Continuous CRP practices such as filter strips, grassed waterways, and wetland restorations. For more information contact the Farm Service Agency at 320-669-4492 Ext. 2.



WILDLIFE HABITAT INCENTIVES PROGRAM SIGNUP

We are pleased to announce a Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) signup. Over \$71,000.00 has been allocated to the 14 counties in southwest Minnesota. Funds may be obligated on a first come first serve basis.

WHIP is a voluntary program for landowners who want to develop or improve wildlife habitat on their land. WHIP provides both technical and financial assistance to help establish or improve habitat for fish and wildlife. So far in 2008 Yellow Medicine County has received over \$19,000 for use in tree plantings and farmstead shelterbelts.

WHIP cost share can be used for tree/shrub and grass plantings as well as other wildlife friendly practices. The cost-share agreement normally lasts 5 - 10 years. Under the agreement the landowner agrees to maintain the cost-shared practices and allow the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) access to monitor the progress and the effectiveness of the practice. Lands currently enrolled in CRP, CREP, RIM, WRP, and the Water Bank Program are not eligible for WHIP funds.

For more information contact the SWCD/NRCS Office at (320)-669-4442 Ext. 3.

**Yellow Medicine SWCD
P. O. Box 545
1000 10th Avenue
Clarkfield, MN 56223**

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