

**YELLOW MEDICINE
SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION
DISTRICT**

Clarkfield, Minnesota



2015 ANNUAL REPORT

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 2015.

YELLOW MEDICINE SWCD SUPERVISORS

Hollis Weber	Chairperson
Menno Fokken	Vice Chairperson
Jerry Nelson	Secretary
Burton Kuehn	Treasurer
Darwyn Bach	Reporter

YELLOW MEDICINE SWCD STAFF

Lou Ann Nagel	District Manager
Anita Borg	District Administrative Assistant
Kurt Johnson	District Engineer Technician
Tyler Knutson	Farm Bill Assistant

COOPERATING AGENCIES

Board of Water & Soil Resources

John Jaschke	Director
Jason Beckler	Board Conservationist
Kane Radel	Wetland Specialist

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Catherine Pullman	State Conservationist
Gary Watson	Area Conservationist
Vacant	District Conservationist
Jon Paul Pringle	Soil Conservation Technician

Yellow Medicine County Commissioners

Ronald Antony	Canby
Gary Johnson	Montevideo
Greg Renneke	Echo
Louis Sherlin	Canby
John Berends	Granite Falls

Other Agencies

Peggy Heglund	County Administrator
Jolene Johnson	Planning & Zoning Coordinator
Liz Ludwig	FSA County Director
Chris Balfany	County Ditch Inspector
Troy Dale	DNR Wildlife Habitat Specialist
Lucas Youngsma	DNR Area Hydrologist
Alicia Webb	MN Extension 4-H Program Coordinator

The district, in cooperation with the Natural Resources 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 2015 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 and WRP/RIM Reserve Programs.
- Promotion and administration of Rock Outcrop Easement 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 Vegetative Management & Enhancement of Conservation Easements.
- Promotion and administration for the Clean Water Fund Drainage Program.
- Promotion and sign up landowners for the Walk in Access Program.
- Annual and year end reporting in BWSR reporting system – reporting of progress of conservation practices through the BWSR webpage.

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 Management Plan which the Yellow Medicine Soil and Water Conservation District adopted as their comprehensive plan starting in 2004. The goals as defined in the Yellow Medicine County Water Management Plan are as follows:

- Promote and Educate the Public on the District's Ongoing Programs.
- 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
- Vegetative Management & Enhancement of Conservation Easements Cost Share Program - This 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
- Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM), RIM Riparian Buffer Program, WRP/RIM Program, and Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) – Permanent conservation easement programs
- Rock Outcrop Easement Program – RIM Program
- Education Programs
- DNR Well Monitoring - Monitor DNR observation wells throughout the County
- Water Permits - Process and review the DNR water permits
- Annual and Year End Reporting in BWSR Reporting System - Reporting of progress of conservation practices on the SWCD web page
- Wetland Conservation Act
- Ag BMP Loan Program
- Assist with Yellow Medicine County Local Water Plan. To view plan go to the Yellow Medicine County Website: www.co.ym.mn.gov. The link is located on the right side of the page.
- Engineering (survey, design, etc.)
- Walk In Access Program
- Rain Gauge Program
- Clean Water Fund Drainage Program
- Clean Water Fund Projects
- Yellow Medicine Watershed Restoration and Protection Project Strategy (WRAPS)
- Lac qui Parle Watershed Restoration and Projection Project Strategy (WRAPS)
- One Watershed One Plan
- Aquatic Invasive Species Program

GOAL & OBJECTIVES

GOAL: PROVIDE FOR AN EFFICIENT DISTRICT OPERATION – Actions:

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 Technician.
4. Held regular staff meetings
5. Provided and sought training for all personnel in order to carry out the SWCD's programs.
6. Conducted annual employee evaluations and updated job descriptions.
7. Reviewed policies and developed priorities.
8. Reviewed various memorandums of understanding.
9. Provided representation to various organizations, such as but not limited to: Yellow Medicine Watershed Policy Committee, RCRC, Yellow Medicine County Water Task Force, Yellow Medicine River Watershed Advisory Board, Yellow Medicine River Watershed Clean Water Technical Committee, Lac qui Parle Yellow Bank Watershed Clean Water Technical Committee, Southwest Prairie Joint Powers Board, Lac qui Parle Watershed WRAPS committees, One Watershed One Plan for Yellow Medicine Watershed committees, Yellow Medicine Watershed WRAPS committees, etc.
10. Utilized web based reporting system to report progress.
11. Utilized district website to publish annual and other reports.
12. Due to WRAPS for both Yellow Medicine Watershed and Lac qui Parle Watershed and the One Watershed One Plan for the Yellow Medicine SWCD, the SWCD did not apply for Clean Water funds in 2015.
13. Installed cost share practices according to standards and specifications required by the program.
14. Conducted annual status reviews for CREP/RIM, State Cost Share and Clean Water Fund Projects.

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

1. **Goal – Published newsletters:** A SWCD newsletter was published in February covering Soil Health Workshops, Drainage Water Management, Easement Signup and Cover Crops.
2. **Goal - Select a conservation farmer:** Stu Frazier was nominated as the 2015 Yellow Medicine SWCD Conservationist of the year. He owns and operates Stu Frazier Tiling near Canby. Stu has been involved in the promotion, education, and installation of conservation practices for over 20 years. He takes it upon himself to identify and inform landowners about options for improving the sustainability of their farm operations. He is a strong promoter of landowners visiting with the SWCD or NRCS about conservation options. Stu's business is often involved in erosion reduction, SSTS, 638's, waterways, and drainage control structures. Stu has received awards for his progressive work in the drainage industry, including: Minnesota Land Improvement Contractors Association Contractor of the Year and Advanced Drainage Systems' Conservation Stewardship Award. Stu is a leader in his community, church, and especially in conservation efforts in and around Yellow Medicine County. Congratulations Stu!
3. **Goal – Set up displays:** A display on cover crops was developed in March for the Cover Crop Workshop. The Cover Crop display along with a Watershed display was used at the Yellow Medicine County Fair.
4. **Goal – Work with SWMACDE to co-sponsor and serve on committee for Environmental Fair for all 5th & 6th graders in a 14 county area:** Yellow Medicine SWCD, along with Lincoln, Lyon, Lac qui Parle and Redwood SWCDs, served on this year's Environmental Fair Committee. The Environmental Fair for all 5th and 6th graders in a 14 county area was held on September 22 and 23rd at the Lyon County Fairgrounds. We had approximately 960 students attend each day.
5. **Goal – Publish news articles to address conservation issues and concerns:** News articles were written throughout the year addressing conservation issues and concerns. A paid advertisement was put in the Advocate Tribune's Spring Farm Focus Edition.
6. **Goal – Contact landowners/operators regarding current programs:** In 2015, the Yellow Medicine SWCD made direct contact about specific conservation programs with 186 different landowners.
7. **Goal – Assist and promote the SWMACDE Area Envirothon:** Unfortunately, not enough schools signed up to compete at the SWMACDE Area Envirothon so the event was cancelled.

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

- 8. Goal – Work with Pezuta Zizi Environmental and Cultural Learning and Resource Center:** The Pezuta Zizi Environmental and Cultural Learning and Resource Center requested to use our Enviroscape Display. However, due to the weather the event was cancelled.
- 9. Goal – Meet with county FAC Committee during year to discuss resource concerns and building issues:** Periodic FAC meetings were held in 2015 to discuss resource concerns, building concerns, etc.
- 10. Goal – Assist Yellow Medicine River Watershed, Lac qui Parle -Yellow Bank Watershed District and the Redwood Cottonwood River Control Area and Area II in their educational efforts:** The SWCD continued to work closely with the Yellow Medicine River Watershed District to promote the One Watershed One Plan. We also worked with the Lac qui Parle Yellow Bank Watershed District with their educational efforts.
- 11. Goal – Hold SWCD retreat to discuss goals and objectives:** A SWCD retreat was held on August 27th to discuss new funding sources, staffing needs, job descriptions, etc.
- 12. Goal – Develop promotional presentations, tours and/or education activities for local organizations in the county:** A Cover Crop Workshop was held on March 19th, 2015 in Clarkfield. Seventeen landowners participated in this workshop. Discussion was held on cover crops and soil health.
- 13. Goal – Continue to maintain the SWCD’s website:** The District Manager maintained and updated the SWCD’s website monthly.
- 14. Goal – Meet with other agencies and organizations to prioritize resource concerns, setting goals, and objectives:** The SWCD attended the Local Work Group Meeting which was held on July 29, 2015 in Clarkfield to review NRCS’s programs and concerns. The SWCD also is part of the Policy and/or Work Group for the One Watershed One Plan for the Yellow Medicine Watershed and our setting goals and objectives for that plan.
- 15. Goal – Work with SWCDs, Watersheds, and County Officials to develop watershed based planning:** The SWCD served on the Policy Committee, Advisory Committee and Technical Committee for the One Watershed One Plan for the Yellow Medicine Watershed. Due to the fact that we received the Yellow Medicine Watershed WRAPS report late, the One Watershed One Plan planning process has been extended.
- 16. Goal – Present at the Ag in the Classroom event:** The Ag in the Classroom was held on March 10th, 2015 in Granite Falls. This event is organized by Roger Dale. Kurt Johnson, along with help from Anita Borg and Tyler Knutson, played a tree trivia game with the 4th graders in attendance.

PRIORITY CONCERN: EROSION AND SEDIMENT CONTROL

GOAL: TO PROTECT & IMPROVE THE SOIL RESOURCES AND SURFACE WATER QUALITY IN THE COUNTY.

OBJECTIVE: Reduce erosion and sediment problems to sustainable levels by promoting the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs).

ACTIONS:

1. **Goal - Promote Best Management Practices in the County.** Best management practices were promoted through efforts of the NRCS and the SWCD.

2. **Goal – Reduce the amount of wind erosion on the most severely erodible acres by designing and planting field windbreaks, living snowfence, wildlife plantings, and farmstead windbreaks in 2015:** The SWCD planted 11,940 feet of field windbreaks and 8.44 acres of farmstead windbreaks. The SWCD also installed/and or sold 32,751 feet of plastic mulch.

3. **Goal – Reduce the amount of water erosion on severely eroded acres by installing best management practices:** Through the efforts of the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Southwest Technical Service Area and the SWCD, best management practices have been installed to reduce the amount of water erosion on severely eroded areas as follows:
 - 1790' water & sediment control basins
 - 600' terrace systems
 - 15.38 acres of grassed waterwaysFunding for these practices was obtained through various agencies and/or programs, such as the Conservation Reserve Program and the Environmental Quality Incentive Program.

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 – Conduct status reviews on CREP and/or RIM Easements:** The SWCD staff conducted site inspections on 90 Easements.

5. **Goal – Work with local technical team to implement the MN Prairie Conservation Plan:** Through the MN Prairie Conservation Plan Local Technical Teams, the SWCD facilitated a 25 prescribed burn on a RIM Rock Outcrop and adjacent unprotected land, as well as administered a grant for MN DNR to remove about 35 acres of solid invasive trees on another RIM Rock Outcrop.

6. **Goal – Establish filter strips/buffers along ditches and stream to capture sediment as it leaves the fields:** Through CRP, 489.7 acres of CRP CP-21 filter strips were established on 73 Yellow Medicine County and surrounding tracts administered by the Clarkfield FSA Field Office. Most of these were the result of SWCD promotion and conservation planning.

7. **Goal – Promote the Riparian Buffer Clean Water Fund Rim Reserve Program:** One RIM Riparian Clean Water Fund buffer was back-funded through the FY2014 signup. This easement will eternally protect about 20 acres around a stub ditch.

PRIORITY CONCERN: EROSION AND SEDIMENT CONTROL

GOAL: TO PROTECT & IMPROVE THE SOIL RESOURCES AND SURFACE WATER QUALITY IN THE COUNTY.

OBJECTIVE: Reduce erosion and sediment problems to sustainable levels by promoting the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs).

ACTIONS Continued:

8. **Goal - Educate landowners/operators about erosion and sediment control and 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:** Education efforts were accomplished by writing news articles for local papers, Water Plan newsletters and SWCD newsletters. Workshops were also held.
9. **Goal - Serve on the Southwest Prairie Technical Service Joint Powers Board.** SWCD contributed \$1,000.00 towards the Southwest Prairie Joint Power's overall budget and another \$1,136.00 towards the cash match for the Southwest Technical Service Area's Terrain Analysis Grant. Menno Fokken serves as the Chair for the Southwest Prairie Technical Service Joint Powers Board. He attended meetings throughout the year.
10. **Goal - Work with RCRCRA on improving water quality in Redwood River Watershed.** Supervisor Burton Kuehn continues to serve on the RCRCRA committee making decision for the Redwood River Watershed.
11. **Goal - Restore wetlands into various conservation programs.** 143.5 acres of hydric soils were restored to wetland vegetation through CRP and also enrolled 572.2 acres of contiguous buffer around those hydric soils. One RIM wetland application was not funded by MN BWSR due to a low ranking score.
12. **Goal - Replace open intakes with alternative intakes, such as dense pattern tile and risers, thus reducing phosphorus and sediment throughout the county.** Utilizing Drainage Water Management Clean Water funds, three open tile intakes were replaced with dense pattern tile reducing phosphorus by 4.5 lbs. /year and sediment by 3 tons/year. Another six open intakes were scheduled to be replaced but landowners cancelled their contracts.
13. **Goal - Promote and enroll acres into the Vegetative Management and Enhancement of Conservation Easement Cost Share Program.** Worked with landowners to improve existing cover on RIM/CREP acres.
14. **Goal - Process WRP/RIM Easements.** As of 2015, all 976 acres of WRP/RIM easements have been acquired and paid. Two of those easement requiring seeding and restoration have been completed and paid or are in process of being paid.
15. **Goal - Apply for Conservation Corp Apprentice:** The SWCD applied for a Conservation Corp Apprentice in the fall of 2014. Ryan Hundesmarck from Florida served as the Conservation Corp Apprentice in 2015. Ryan had the opportunity to work with farmers to conserve and protect our natural resources. Some of the knowledge Ryan obtained through this experience included: tree varieties, methods of planting trees and tree care and maintenance; the State of Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act; native plants; aquatic invasive species in Minnesota; how to conduct a transect survey; taking GPS coordinates and learning how to use Geographic Information System (GIS).

PRIORITY CONCERN: REDUCING PRIORITY POLLUTANTS

GOAL: ENHANCE AND RESTORE THE COUNTY'S WATER QUALITY

OBJECTIVE: Reduce priority pollutants to sustainable levels.

ACTIONS:

1. **Goal - Work with MPCA to get impaired waters off the Clean Water Act's Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) 303d list of impaired waters.** The SWCD continues to promote the implementation of best management practices to help improve waters in the county that are listed on the MPCA's Impaired Waters of the State. The SWCD also has representation on the Yellow Medicine WRAPS Committee, and the Lac qui Parle WRAPS Committee that works with getting impaired waters off this list.
2. **Goal - Support the upgrading of Subsurface Sewage Treatment Systems (SSTS) by administering the Ag BMP Loan Program.** The SWCD administered the Ag BMP Loan Program for the county. Loans offered through the program replaced eight non-conforming Subsurface Sewage Treatment Systems (SSTS), installed a new SSTS and replaced a well in 2015. Another \$100,000 was used to relocate a chemical and liquid fertilizer dike, loading pad and storage shed. 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.

PRIORITY CONCERN: REDUCING PRIORITY POLLUTANTS

GOAL: ENHANCE AND RESTORE THE COUNTY'S WATER QUALITY

OBJECTIVE: Reduce priority pollutants to sustainable levels.

ACTIONS: Continued

3. **Goal - Assist in planning and installing Ag Waste Systems in 2015.** The SWCD did not assist with installation of any ag waste systems in 2015.
4. **Goal - Work with SWCDs and Counties in Lincoln, Lyon, Lac qui Parle and Yellow Medicine, along with the Yellow Medicine Watershed District and Area II, to develop the one watershed one plan for the Yellow Medicine River Watershed.** The SWCD had a representative on the Policy Committee, Advisory Committee, Technical Committee and the Local Work Plan Committee. The SWCD has put in numerous hours working on developing of this plan.
5. **Goal - Work with Lac qui Parle Watershed District to provide information for the Lac qui Parle River Watershed Restoration and Protection Project Strategy (WRAPS).** Both Lou Ann Nagel and Tyler Knutson attended the Lac qui Parle River Watershed WRAPS meetings. The SWCD assisted the Lac qui Parle Watershed District with kickoff meetings explaining WRAPS.
6. **Goal - Assist the Yellow Medicine Watershed District in carrying out implementation strategy for the Yellow Medicine Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy Plan (WRAPS).** The SWCD attended meetings and assisted the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency in writing and finalizing the WRAPS for the Yellow Medicine River Watershed. Unfortunately, we did not get the final WRAPS document as early as anticipated.

PRIORITY CONCERN: GROUNDWATER PROTECTION

GOAL: PROTECT AND IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF GROUNDWATER IN THE COUNTY

OBJECTIVE: Expand Groundwater Monitoring.

ACTIONS:

1. **Goal - Monitor three (3) groundwater observation wells designated by DNR:** The SWCD monitored three groundwater observation wells throughout the year.
2. **Goal - Comment on DNR water permits:** Comments were made on DNR water permits when requested.
3. **Goal - Encourage testing of wells in order to identify the extent of groundwater pollution problems:** Testing of wells are encouraged.
4. **Goal - Encourage sealing of abandoned wells:** The SWCD continues to promote the County's well sealing program.
5. **Goal - Participate in the state rainfall-monitoring program with 13 rainfall monitors to record daily precipitation:** The SWCD participated in the state's rainfall monitoring program. Yellow Medicine County currently has ten (10) rainfall monitors that record precipitation daily. These reports were sent monthly to the State Climatologist.
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 staff attended a groundwater workshop in Marshall in 2015.

PRIORITY CONCERN: IMPROVE SURFACE WATER MANAGEMENT TO DECREASE FLOODING IN THE COUNTY

GOAL: IMPLEMENT SOUND FLOOD MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES.

OBJECTIVE: *Minimize losses associated with the flooding of agricultural lands*

ACTIONS:

- 1. Goal - Address the smaller flood events, such as 2 year and 5 year events, by restoring wetlands through various conservation programs. Target sites within the watersheds to achieve strategic flood storage in conjunction with water quality and wildlife benefits.** 143.5 acres of hydric soils were restored to wetland vegetation through CRP and also enrolled 572.2 acres of contiguous buffer around those hydric soils.
- 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.** About 40% of CRP filter strips, wetland and WRP/RIM acres will have a positive effect on stabilizing and buffering the 100 year floodplain.
- 3. Goal - Work with Area II, RCRCA, Watersheds, and surrounding counties to assess, prioritize and pursue funding through various agencies for water storage opportunities.** The SWCD worked with all of our partners to minimize flooding. The SWCD accompanied Area II in conducting the annual inspection on the Fales-VanHyfte Dam (Lake John).
- 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 worked 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 sought in 2015 for streambank stabilization projects.

PRIORITY CONCERN: SURFACE WATER AND DRAINAGE MANAGEMENT

GOAL: IMPLEMENT SOUND SURFACE WATER AND DRAINAGE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

OBJECTIVE: *Apply watershed-based principles in 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.** No small dams were repaired in 2015.
- 2. Goal - Administer the CWF Conservation Drainage Grant for the Lower Yellow Medicine River Sub-Watershed:** This grant was finalized in December of 2015. Unfortunately only \$15,724.38 of the \$30,595.00 grant was spent. The SWCD could not get the landowners in these minor watersheds interested in drainage water management practices.
- 3. Goal - Administer the 2013 CWF Target Drainage Water Management Grant on behalf of Lac qui Parle and Yellow Medicine SWCDs.** This grant was finalized in December of 2015. Unfortunately only \$48,101.36 of the \$60,000.00 were spent. Another \$6,900.00 was encumbered but the landowners did not complete the projects in the allotted time frame. The remaining grant dollars of \$11,898.64 was retained by the MN Board of Water & Soil Resources.
- 4. 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 water courses 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 the drainage policy. Also encouraged landowners to enroll their riparian buffer areas into a conservation program establishing filter strips on these areas.

PRIORITY CONCERN: SURFACE WATER QUALITY

GOAL: IMPLEMENT YELLOW MEDICINE COUNTY AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES PLAN

OBJECTIVE: Prevent the introduction and spread of Aquatic Invasive Species within Yellow Medicine County

ACTIONS:

- 1. Goal - Assess pathways and vulnerabilities to Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) in Yellow Medicine County:** The SWCD completed an inventory of location and types of Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) in the State of Minnesota. No AIS was identified in Yellow Medicine County. The SWCD also completed research on what resource information is out there and it was put in a usable form. Conducted an inventory of all public and private accesses in the County and took an inventory of signs needed at these sites.
- 2. Goal - Increase public awareness of AIS:** Tyler Knutson attended a two day training session in St. Cloud in January on Aquatic Invasive Species. Tyler Knutson and Kurt Johnson attended a training session in St. Paul in September. New articles were written and published in the Yellow Medicine Water Plan newsletter regarding AIS.
- 3. Goal - Participate in AIS preventions, early detection and rapid response.** The SWCD purchased traffic counters for public access sites. These counters will be installed in 2016 and will be rotated on a two year cycle.

PRIORITY CONCERN: SURFACE QUANTITY IN THE COUNTY

GOAL: PROTECT SURFACE WATER QUANTITY IN THE COUNTY

OBJECTIVE: 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 - Educate and 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. In 2015 the SWCD spent a total of \$6,190.18 and matched it with another \$6,190.18 to complete the following:

88	1026's approved
23	1026's approved with restrictions
2	1026's denied
25	Drainage maintenance requests
6	COE/DNR maintenance requests
119	Building permits approved
3	Building permits approved with restrictions
16	On site investigations conducted
44	Contacts without decisions
1	Basic application received
3	Potential Violations

In 2015, 334.75 hours were spent administering this program. Of those hours 35.5 hours were training hours for Kurt Johnson.