

Steele County Soil & Water
Conservation District

ANNUAL REPORT



2010

Steele County Soil and Water Conservation District

2010 Annual Report

235 Cedardale Drive SE

Owatonna, MN 55060

Phone: 507-451-6730 Ext. 3 FAX: 507-444-2421

Website: www.steeleswcd.com

Mission Statement

MISSION STATEMENT:

The Prime Responsibility of the District is to coordinate assistance on private lands to control erosion, prevent flooding, enhance wildlife, develop recreation, build the economic base, and to manage our soil and water resources.

Board of Supervisors

The Board meets the second Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the Ag Service Center, 235 Cedardale Drive SE Owatonna, MN.

DISTRICT GOVERNING BOARD

AREA OF REPRESENTATION

Kyle Wolfe, Treasurer

City of Owatonna

James Klecker, Vice Chairman

Berlin, Blooming Prairie
and Summit Townships

Mark Ihlenfeld, Bd. Chrmn.

Clinton Falls, Deerfield,
Medford, and Merton
Townships

David Melby, Reporter

Havana, Meriden and
Owatonna Townships

Dan Hansen, Secretary

Aurora, Lemond and Somerset
Townships

District Staff

Daniel Arndt

District Manager, Technician

Susan Condon

District Administrative Secretary

Eric Gulbransen

District Resource Conservationist

Danielle Waldschmidt

District Farm Bill Technician

NRCS Staff

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE PERSONNEL

Noel Frank	District Conservationist
James Smith	NRCS Soil Conservation Technician

Partners Staff

BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES:

Chris Hughes	Board Conservationist, Mankato
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AREA NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE PERSONNEL:

John Nicholson	Area Conservationist
Aaron Peter	Area Engineer
Willis Goll	Engineer
Mary Weis	Civil Engineer Technician

Others Assisting the Steele SWCD

Steele County Farm Service Agency (FSA) Committee and Staff

FARM SERVICES AGENCY PERSONNEL:

David Charles	County Executive Director
Ken Prestegard	Committee Member
Lonny Klemmenson	Committee Member
Sharon Katzung	Committee Member

Steele County Board of Commissioners

District 1 - Commissioner Bruce Kubicek

District 2 - Commissioner Doug Johnson

District 3 - Commissioner Mark Schultz

District 4 - Commissioner James "Corky" Ebeling

District 5 - Commissioner Tom Shea

Steele County Environmental Services Staff

Scott Golberg	Director
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University of Minnesota Extension Service

Brad Carlson	Extension Educator
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Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

James Wilson	District Forester
Jeanine Vorland	District Wildlife Manager
Emily Hutchins	Private Lands Specialist

2010 Accomplishments

Completed Projects

State Cost-Share

The projects below were completed with funds available through the State Cost Share Program.

3 grade stabilizing structures totaling \$5,805.55

1 stream bank stabilization project totaling \$40,000.00

Cooperative Weed Management Grant

The District was again successful in obtaining a Cooperative Weed Management Grant from the Board of Water and Soil Resources. The purpose of the grant was to demonstrate effective controls of invasive species. This year the District helped seven landowners manage invasive weeds and trees on established RIM Easements totaling 97.2 acres.

EQIP 2010

PRACTICE	AMOUNTS		AMOUNT PAID
Compost Facility	1	Square foot	\$12,545.00
Cover Crop	4	1,317 acre	\$22,446.00
Critical Area Planting	2	12.3 acre	\$1,892.00
Windbreak	2	2.5 acre	\$3,349.00
Grassed Waterway	1	2.3 acre	\$2,500.00
Mulching – matting	2	7,020 feet	\$1,675.00
Nutrient Management	2	2,895 acre	\$11,078.00
Invasive Species Pest mgt.	1	19.3 acre	\$2,190.00
Subsurface Drain	2	6,880 feet	\$9,744.00
Underground Outlet	1	200 feet	\$1,545.00
Water & Sediment Basin	7	2,500 feet/each	\$15,750.00
Seasonal High Tunnel	2	1.89 sq. foot	\$8,234.00
Ag Waste	2	66,800 + 85,256	\$152,056.00
Strip till & No-till	18	2,250 acre	\$54,000.00
Prescribed Grazing	1	165 acre	\$4,125.00
TOTALS			\$303,129.00

Clean Water Buffer Incentive Grant

The District was successful in being approved for a Clean Water Fund buffer incentive grant. Eligible landowners can receive an incentive of \$600/Ac., for installing fifty foot buffer adjacent to streams and ditches on their farm.

Several landowners have taken advantage of this opportunity. The buffers will be installed in 2011.

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP & CCRP)

Practice	Number of Farms	Acres
Warm Season Grasses	2	27.3
Wildlife Tree Planting	3	2.1
Grassed Waterways	2	1.5
Shelterbelt	1	2.5
Filter Strips	12	100.0
<u>Wetland Restoration</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>15.8</u>
Total Contracts	23	

Education and Promotion

Soil and Water Conservation promotion and education is a high priority of the District. The primary effort in this arena each year is publishing the Conservation Calendar. In 2010 thirty five hundred copies were distributed to rural landowners, cooperating agencies, and businesses.

The 4-H Champion Conservation Award was again sponsored by the District. Lauren Larson of the Deerfield Get There club won the award with her "Exploring The Environment Project".

A conservation bus tour was sponsored by the District in July. Tour participants viewed conservation practices throughout the County.

The Southeast Minnesota Envirothon was May 5, 2010. It was held at Chester Woods Park. Medford High School participated and was awarded third place. They then traveled to the State Competition that was held at Deerwood, Minnesota near Brainerd on May 17, 2010. There they competed against 30 other teams from greater Minnesota.

The District in cooperation with Lincoln Elementary School sponsored a tree planting day in April. Eighty eight fifth grade students planted a Burr Oak seedling on the school grounds.

Soil Stewardship Week was again observed by the District with bookmarks being distributed to all fifth grade students in the County.

The 2010 Outstanding Conservationists were recognized. Outstanding farmers were Brent and Margaret Reese, Outstanding Windbreak was Clark and Patty Velzke, and Outstanding Wildlife Conservationists were John and Judy Sherrel.

Easement Programs

RIM/WRP/CREP

It is a high priority of the District to enroll marginal agricultural lands into permanent conservation easements. This effort has been very successful in recent years with several thousand acres enrolled. The primary focus of the easements is wetland restoration and with the floods of 2010 the importance of wetland restoration and water storage is very evident.

RIM/CREP Maintenance Program

Since 2008 and again in 2010 the District has offered an easement maintenance program. The focus of this program is spraying and treating trees and brush on permanent conservation easements. The program has been very well received by County landowners with three landowners requesting assistance on 232 acres this past year.

District Tree Program

The District had another successful tree and shrub sale in 2010. We distributed 14,375 plants to over 200 area landowners. The plants will be used for snow control, energy conservation (windbreaks), and wildlife habitat/cover plantings.

Tree Day

The District held a "Tree Day" open house in February. Interested people can come in any day to discuss tree plantings but, we set aside one day annually and advertize it to attract as many inquiries as we can. Last year we had about 55 people stop in that day.

Wetland Conservation Act

Steele County, in cooperation with the District, administers WCA in the County including all of the cities in the County. The 2010 WCA report reflects that over 100 landowners were assisted with wetland related issues. Seven applications were received including four no-loss, one exemption, and two replacement plans. We are pleased to report due to an active wetland restoration program Steele County had a net gain of wetland acres in 2010.

Precipitation Monitoring

The SWCD, in conjunction with the State Climatology Office, monitors site specific precipitation throughout Steele County. The data collected provides citizens and the State of Minnesota with important precipitation information and weather history. We currently have 11 volunteer precipitation monitors throughout the county that read the rain gauge daily, year around, and send the District the monthly reports.