

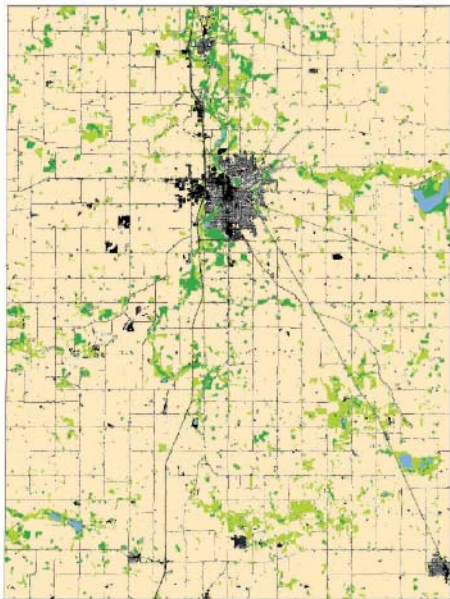
Steele

Soil & Water Conservation District



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SWCD board meetings:
2nd Wednesday of month at 7 p.m.



Steele County Land Cover



Recent Projects / Accomplishments



Pictured: A drainage ditch with buffers in Steele County.

The SWCD's vigorous promotion of the Continuous Conservation Reserve Program has led to Steele having the most CCRP contracts in MASWCD Area VII. The SWCD has focused on establishing buffers adjacent to all surface waters in Steele County.

2005 Expenditures by category

Monitoring / Research	\$428
Education / Outreach	\$642
Wetland Conservation Act	\$9,200
Cost Share / project construction, implementation and maintenance	\$23,180
Planning/ other local water management duties	\$48,010
Conservation easement funding / assistance	\$3,539
Programs and Operations	\$172,441
Total	\$257,441

SWCD Board of Supervisors

Name	Position	Address	Phone	Elected
Mark Ihlenfeld	Chairman	6148 NW 50th Street, Owatonna	507-451-5864	1991
Doug Pirkel	Vice-Chairman	4202 SW 28th Street, Owatonna	507-451-4670	2000
James Klecker	Secretary	10263 SE 24th Ave., Owatonna	507-451-0129	1988
Dan Hansen	Treasurer	7111 SW 75th St., Ellendale	507-451-1191	2000
Kyle Wolfe	Reporter	2980 Northridge Lane NE, Owatonna	507-451-6139	2007



The Straight River Marsh Wetland

Restoration Project has been very successful in restoring 1,600 acres of wetland and associated adjacent uplands. The Steele SWCD has been instrumental in facilitating this project with the assistance of several other agencies and groups including the Board of Water and Soil Resources and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. This project began in 1997, and 27 landowners have enrolled in permanent easements to accomplish this unique project. The SWCD was recently awarded a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for its dedication to this project.

A 319 Total Maximum Daily Load

Grant recently expired in Steele County. The SWCD in cooperation with the Cannon River Watershed Partnership, MPCA, and Steele County completed an effort to reduce fecal coliform levels in the Straight River. The SWCD's responsibility for implementation of this grant was to focus on assisting landowners with the implementation of buffers and filters through the CCRP. From 2004-2006, conservation practices have been installed on more than 1,800 total acres. Accomplishments are as follows:

Year	2004	2005	2006
Landowner Contacts	195	229	123
New Contracts	52	40	52
Farmed Wetland Program acres	873	229.2	211
Acres of Filter Strips	73.3	52.5	57.9
Acres of Grassed Waterways	2.2	10.4	15.3

The Ellendale Wetland Restoration

Project was facilitated by the SWCD in cooperation with Steele County, NRCS, and the Board of Water and Soil Resources. The City of Ellendale had been experiencing flooding and degraded drainage because of a failed County drainage system (Public Tile #11). The solution to the problem included restoring a large wetland and re-routing the public tile resulting in better drainage and less flooding in the City of Ellendale.

A **No-Till Drill Program** is offered by the SWCD to cooperators for native prairie and waterway seedlings. The SWCD Board and staff feel it is important to make these drills available because most landowners do not have drills capable of seeding the fluffy native seed.

Top 5 Natural Resource Concerns

1. Maintain and improve ground water quality through promotion and application of conservation practices which reduce soil erosion by water to tolerable levels on all land in the county.
2. Reduce wind erosion to tolerable levels on all land in the county.
3. Reduce water erosion to tolerable levels on all land in the county.
4. Assist with restoring wetlands in designated areas in the county.
5. Educating general public of the need of protecting and restoring our natural resources in the county.

Future Projects

Easement Maintenance Program: The SWCD is planning to establish an easement maintenance program. SWCD staff have identified the need for maintenance to existing permanent conservation easements. Many of the people that own permanent easements are absentee owners that have no equipment or other means of maintaining their easements on their own. The focus will be to offer the service of spot spraying trees and brush that are encroaching on the easements.