



# Synergy in Milaca: City, SWCD and BWSR partner to restore Rum River

November 2013 Snapshots

*Synergy* is defined as an interaction that produces a greater total effect than the sum of the individual actions.

A recent project in Milaca's Recreation Park (Rec Park) captured the concept of synergy in that the efforts of the City of Milaca, the Mille Lacs Soil and Water Conservation District, and the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) came together to enhance the environment, resulting in more change than any one organization could have done through their own efforts.



*Prairie Restorations' staff plant native vegetation along the Rum River.*

Rec Park is a community resource through which the Rum River flows. The park provides many uses for the local residents including fishing, canoeing, mountain bike trails, ball fields, and walking paths where locals can meet and enjoy the natural environment. There was an old walking bridge that connected two sides of Rec Park and, unfortunately, the age of this walking bridge resulted in some safety concerns. The opportunity to replace the bridge led to further discussions about restoring the banks of the Rum River at the same time.

The City of Milaca approached Rep. Gail Kulick about the project and she, in turn, worked with members of the Minnesota Legislature to have the cost of the bridge replacement included in the state's bonding bill. The Mille Lacs Soil and Water Conservation District worked with the City to dedicate a portion of the District's annual State Cost Share funding to help offset the cost of the restoration of the native vegetation along the banks of the river.

Kurt Beckstrom, chair of the Mille Lacs SWCD board, said, "The district board was very supportive of this project. We were glad to see that our staff was providing assistance on the restoration of this very visible segment of the Rum River. Our district prides itself on local partnerships and we were happy to work with another local government on a resource that is used by so many of our county residents."

Following the installation of the new bridge across the Rum River, the Mille Lacs SWCD worked with Prairie Restorations to replant 900 feet of bank adjacent to the river with native grasses and plants. Lynn Gallice, District Technician, said, "The city did a great job of preparing the planting site beforehand. We also had a little help from the weather, getting just the right amount of rain to give the new plants the perfect conditions to get a great start."

This native planting is the third project where the City of Milaca has worked with the Mille Lacs Conservation District to install native plants within the community. While both the city and the conservation district do great work to protect water quality within Milaca, the synergy that occurs when the two government units work together ensures that the residents are getting more than if the organizations were to work independently of each other.