



Wetland monitoring staff wraps up another successful season

November 2013 Snapshots

As the 2013 wetland monitoring season comes to a close, Karli Tyma, Carol Strojny and Eric Mohring reflect proudly on the nearly 100 wetland sites they spent an abundance of time and energy visiting this summer. Now, they get to analyze and evaluate the information they found during those site visits.

Mohring, Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) hydrologist, said that the end of the monitoring season is an exciting time of the year. "I love to go and collect up the data that have been accumulating throughout the growing season," he said. "It's like opening Christmas presents."

At most sites, water levels are recorded and stored by a data logger every few hours throughout the monitoring season. Mohring said water level data from the logger are then downloaded into a computer program, plotted, analyzed and used to make reports. "You can see the water levels fluctuate in response to climate and other factors such as the plants' drinking habits over time," Mohring said.

Once the information is graphed and reported, the BWSR monitoring team analyzes the information to determine how the wetland responded to restoration efforts. From this information, staff can evaluate if the desired results were produced and if changes are necessary for future management.

"We learn something new every year," Mohring said.

"Sometimes the sites do what we think they are going to do, and sometimes they surprise us."

Although it was a short season due to the late summer, the crew wrapped up final delineations for three sites: two in Renville County and one in Chisago County. "We've been monitoring these sites for 5 to 6 years. In the beginning, there was no wetland, and now we can claim a fully restored, functioning wetland," Mohring said. "Having the opportunity to see the process of these collaborative projects, with so many parts coming out the other end as a success is extremely gratifying."

Looking forward to next summer, there are new projects already in the works. "Just like the Renville locations, there are agricultural areas where there is absolutely no wetland, which will be restored to their former state," Mohring said. "I'm already looking forward to next season."



Pictures: (Top) Shorebirds enjoying a restored wetland in Renville. (Bottom) Mohring checks the logger at one site, which has measured water levels throughout the growing season every few hours.