

Renville

Soil and Water Conservation District

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SWCD Board Meeting: Second Thursday of Month at 7 am at the Ag Services Building in Olivia MN



Top 5 Natural Resource Concerns

1. Protect rare and unique species and landscapes within the Minnesota River corridor.
2. Reduce and slow nutrient runoff into ditches, streams and rivers by installing buffer strips.
3. Reduce ag waste runoff by inspecting and correcting all animal feedlot runoff in Renville County.
4. Reduce wind erosion through conservation tillage methods.
5. Improve water quality through wetland restorations and critical area seeding and by enrolling poor and marginal ag land into perpetual conservation easements. This will also help to address water quantity issues including flooding and groundwater recharge.

2008 Revenue

\$358,812

Recent Projects

Granite Rock Outcrop Easements

In 2007 Renville and Redwood SWCD offices partnered on a \$563,000 project funded by the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) which protected 212 acres of Granite Rock Outcrops in the Minnesota River Valley. The Granite Rock Outcrops are a rare and unique landscape and are home to many threatened species of plants and animals. These areas are susceptible to mining and other development. In 2009 the original partners were joined by Chippewa, Lac qui Parle and Yellow Medicine SWCDs. The ENRTF provided \$1.5 million to protect an additional 540 acres. Recently the Legislative Citizens Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR) recommended an additional \$1.8 million for the project. This money will be available in July 2010 and will protect approximately 700 additional acres. The program gives landowners an opportunity to protect their property while deriving some financial benefits. Applications have far exceeded the amount of funds available.



Pictured: Granite Rock Outcrop easements.

Partnerships

Renville SWCD successfully partners with Renville County in several areas. The SWCD and the Renville County Environment and Community Development office work together on the Feedlot Program. SWCD staff provide the feedlot inspections required by MPCA Chapter 7020 (2003). Through the USDA/SWCD partnership as well as partnerships with Watershed Projects, the SWCD staff have been able to help landowners correct problems with noncompliant feedlots by assisting them in obtaining cost-share from the various sources. The result is controlled runoff, which improves water quality in Renville County.



An ag waste project funded with a state Feedlot Water Quality Management Grant and federal EQIP dollars.

SWCD Staff also assist Renville County residents who are required by County zoning laws to install rain gardens on their property. Staff assist with location and design and then approve the project per zoning requirements. SWCD staff also work with mining companies on reviewing and approving the reclamation plans that are required as part of the permitting process.

Close working relationships with USDA NRCS and with MN DNR Private Lands Specialist have created opportunities for landowners to improve existing conservation easements with management funds available through the USDA/NRCS WHIP program and through DNR.

Farm Bill Biologist. Through a partnership with Pheasants Forever, Renville SWCD has a full-time Farm Bill Biologist promoting the conservation programs of the USDA Farm Bill. Because of his promotion efforts, Renville County continues to enroll acres in the Continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CCRP) and other local, state and federal conservation programs.

An outdoor event called WALK

(Water*Air*Land*Knowledge) is coordinated each year by the Renville SWCD staff. WALK is an event for sixth graders that teaches them about wise land use and how human decisions affect wildlife populations. Students hike through cropland areas and both private and public conservation easement areas. In 2009 four schools attended with nearly 200 students participating. SWCD staff are assisted by employees from Renville County, the Hawk Creek Watershed Project, NRCS and the MN DNR.

Future projects

Staff will continue to work with landowners who have noncompliant feedlots to help them find the cost-share necessary to fix their ag waste problems. With limited cost-share funds from all sources, this requires not only coordination and cooperation with several agencies and offices but also requires a keen knowledge of the grant opportunities available through a variety of sources.

Staff are dedicated to promoting perpetual easements for buffers on drainage ditches, streams and rivers. They will continue to use the programs available to enroll as many acres as possible and will partner with other offices/agencies as additional funding opportunities present themselves. The passage of the Constitutional Amendment in 2008 has created new and exciting opportunities in the areas of water quality and wildlife habitat. Renville SWCD looks to supplement existing programs and funds by taking advantage of competitive grant opportunities. Board and staff will not hesitate to propose new programs to meet the natural resource needs of Renville County and will actively pursue funding for those programs.

Board Members

Marc Iverson	Chair	(320) 523-3640	420 Pine Ave, Bird Island, MN 55310
Loyal Fisher	Vice Chair	(320) 329-3925	PO Box 222, Renville, MN 56284
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