

2010 ANNUAL REPORT

RICE SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

JANUARY 1, 2010 - DECEMBER 31, 2010



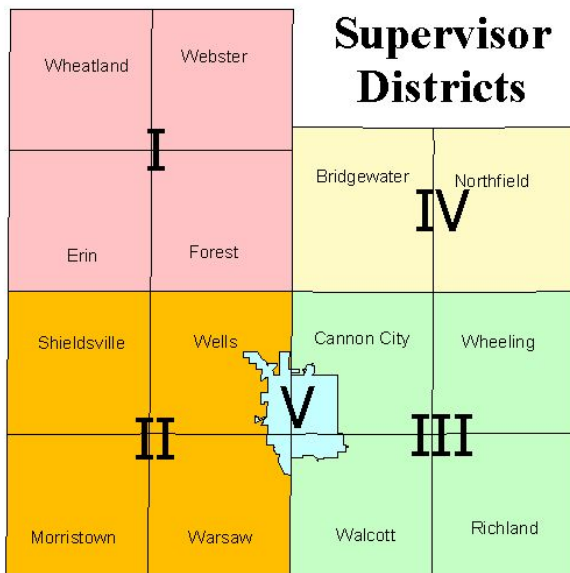
New Construction and Mulching of a Grassed Waterway

PERSONNEL RESOURCES



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Back row: Wallace J. Hildebrandt –Vice Chair; Gary Wagenbach – Treasurer; Richard Huston- PR&I. Front row: Robert Borchert- Chair and Robert Duban- Secretary.



BOARD MEETINGS THIRD WEDNESDAY AT 1:00 pm

- District I: Robert Duban
- District II: Richard Huston
- District III: Wally Hildebrandt
- District IV: Gary Wagenbach
- District V: Robert Borchert

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT STAFF



Steven Pahs
District Manager



Tim Labs
District Program Manager



Deb Skarupa
District Secretary



Adam Arndt
Nutrient Management Specialist
(January to September 3)



Kathrine Richards
Nutrient Management Specialist
(October to present)



Danielle Waldschmidt
Farm Bill Technician

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE



Tom Coffman
District Conservationist



Kelly Oliver
Soil Conservation Technician

COOPERATING AGENCIES

BALMM (Basin Alliance for the Lower Mississippi in Minnesota)
CANNON RIVER WATERSHED PARTNERSHIP
CITY OF DUNDAS
CITY OF FARIBAULT
CITY OF LONSDALE
CITY OF MORRISTOWN
CITY OF NERSTRAND
CITY OF NORTHFIELD
HIAWATHA VALLEY RESOURCE CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT AREA
MN. BOARD OF WATER & SOIL RESOURCES
MN. DNR FORESTER AND WILDLIFE MGR.
MN DNR DIVISION OF WATERS
MN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
MN. ASSOC. OF SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICTS
MN. POLLUTION CONTROL AGENCY
MINNESOTA WATERS
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS
PHEASANTS FOREVER-RICE COUNTY CHAPTER
RICE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
RICE COUNTY PLANNING AND ZONING
RICE COUNTY EXTENSION
RICE COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPT.
RICE COUNTY AUDITOR /TREASURER
RICE COUNTY RECORDER
RICE COUNTY LAKE ASSOCIATIONS
RICE COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS
SE MN JOINT POWERS BOARD
SE MN WATER RESOURCES BOARD
USDA NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
USDA FARM SERVICE AGENCY
US FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

THE RICE SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT BOARD AND STAFF WOULD LIKE TO **THANK** ALL ASSISTING AGENCIES AND THEIR PERSONNEL FOR THEIR ASSISTANCE IN CARRYING OUT THE DISTRICT'S CONSERVATION GOALS AND PROGRAMS FOR ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL YEAR OF SOIL AND WATER ACCOMPLISHMENTS

INTRODUCTION

The Rice Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors submit our Annual Report for the calendar year of January 1, 2010 through December 31, 2010.

The Rice SWCD was granted its Charter in 1942 and organized under Chapter 103C, State of Minnesota District Law. The District is a local governmental subdivision established under State law to carry out conservation programs in the development of soil and water resources.

The District is governed by a Board of five (5) supervisors elected by the voters from their respective districts within the county. The duties of this Board are setting goals and priorities for carrying out conservation programs within the guidelines of the District Comprehensive Plan and the Annual Plan of Operations with the cooperation of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Funds to carry out these conservation program goals are generated from the Environmental Protection Agency, US Fish and Wildlife Service, State of Minnesota, Rice County, NRCS, and District Tree Sales.

MISSION STATEMENT

“To assist land users in the management and conservation of our soil and water resources by means of educational, financial and technical assistance.”

VISION STATEMENT

“To have clean water, pure air, and productive soil.”

SERVICES AND PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

EROSION CONTROL

*Financial assistance, planning, layout and construction supervision of conservation practices including waterways, terraces, and water and sediment control basins.

* Implementing the 2008 Farm Bill including: Conservation Compliance Planning, Sodbuster, Swampbuster, Wetland Reserve Program, E.Q.I.P. and the Conservation Reserve Program.

*Administration of the State Cost-Share Program.



HABITAT CREATION

*Administration of the Re-invest in Minnesota (RIM) Program – Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), RIM/WRP Partnership - Permanent Wetlands Preserve Program (PWP) - Wetland Restoration assistance to county landowners and the Local Government Unit (LGU) for implementing the Wetland Conservation Act in Rice County (except Lonsdale).

*A no-till native grass drill is available for rent through the SWCD for seeding prairie grasses such as Switchgrass, Big Bluestem, and Indian grass.

*District Tree Program includes selling trees to District cooperators and providing design assistance for farmstead windbreaks and wildlife plantings.



PARTNERSHIPS

* Providing technical assistance to various county departments including: Comprehensive Water Plan Implementation, Feedlot Compliance Review, and review of Tax Forfeited Land for wetlands and marginal land, Plat Review Committee, and wetland reviews on new building sites.

* Assist other outside agencies and committees; such as the Cannon River Watershed Partnership, Integrated Roadside Management Committee, Zumbro Watershed Partnership, Minnesota Waters and the Hiawatha Valley RC&D.

FEEDLOTS AND NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT

- *Administer the State Water Quality Management Feedlot Grant.
- *Assist landowners in assessing the pollution potential of their feedlot. Provide technical assistance on feedlot improvement.
- * Applicant to the Minnesota Department of Agriculture for State Revolving Fund Best Management Practice Loan Program.
- *Assisting landowners with manure and nutrient management. This includes writing comprehensive plans and assisting with manure application equipment calibration.

DISTRICT PROGRAMS, ACTIVITIES, AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

STATE COST SHARE PROGRAM

In 2010, Rice SWCD received \$14,419.00 from the Board of Water and Soil Resources for cost-sharing erosion control practices with county landowners. Funds from previous years were implemented as well and the following was accomplished:

- 5 Water and sediment control basins
- 1 Ag. Waste Management System
- 1 Grassed waterway

STATE FEEDLOT WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT GRANT

This grant from the Board of Water and Soil Resources provides funding for waste management systems to correct pollution hazards on feedlots. The following was accomplished in 2010:

The Scott Marik feedlot runoff control project was completed and final payments were made.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVES PROGRAM (EQIP)

A component of the 2008 Farm Bill, the EQIP program continues to provide cost-share funding for a wide variety of conservation practices. Twenty-six contracts were awarded in Rice County, encumbering \$406,315 in cost-share dollars. The following work was planned in 2010:

Erosion control sites	10
No-till/Strip-till	4 farms
Rotational Grazing Plan Activities	1 farm
Nutrient Management Plans	1
Seasonal High Tunnels	4
Nutrient Management Initiative	1
Animal Mortality Facility	4
Organic Farming Conversion	1
Wastewater Treatment System	1
Well Sealing	1

CRP BUFFER TECHNICIAN:

The Farm Bill Assistance Grant offered by BWSR, MN DNR, and Rice SWCD was secured in November 2009 for a 1/3 FTE position shared with Waseca and Steele SWCD’s. In July of 2010, Waseca SWCD terminated their agreement, and the position is now split at a ratio of 60% Rice, 40% Steele SWCD. Funding continues to be available through June of 2011. Work includes promoting the use of the Continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CCRP), Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP), and some Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) practices. In addition, new grants through the MN Clean Water Fund and Scott Water Management Organization for grass buffer strips are being promoted. In 2010, 8.7 acres were enrolled in the Vegetative Buffer program.

RE-INVEST IN MN / WETLAND RESERVE PROGRAM PARTNERSHIP:

WRP, a component of the 2008 Farm Bill, in combination with the state Re-Invest in Minnesota (RIM) Program have partnered to restore drained wetland areas and associated uplands into permanent easements. In 2010, two additional easement totaling 124.9 acres were completed. Easement payments for these two new easements were \$435,666.34 in Federal funds and \$372,847.48 in State funds. Cost share for practice establishment on these easements to date were \$18,178.13 in Federal funds and \$9,646.94 in State funds. To-date, 395.5 acres with eight landowners are enrolled in this partnership.

CONSERVATION RESERVE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM (CREP):

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program is a land retirement program consisting of a 15-year Federal Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contract and either a 45-year or perpetual state Re-Invest in Minnesota (RIM) easement. To-date, 233.5 acres are enrolled in the program in the following categories:

Filter Strip Buffers	65.3 acres
Wetland Restorations	168.2 acres

WHIP – WILDLIFE HABITAT INCENTIVE PROGRAM:

A component of the 2008 Farm Bill, WHIP provides cost share funding for a variety of wildlife habitat improvement projects. Presently, there are five active contracts. The following was completed:

Invasive Species Control	0 acres
Controlled Burning	30.8 acres

PERMANENT WETLAND PRESERVES PWP

Permanent Wetland Preserves is a state funded program to provide permanent protection for existing natural wetlands of Types 1, 2, 3 and at landowner’s option, adjacent lands. The wetland preserves were created as part of the Financial Incentives in the Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) of 1991. To date, the Rice Soil and Water Conservation District has six easements totaling 489 acres.

WETLAND RESTORATION

The Rice Soil and Water Conservation District signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the US Fish and Wildlife Service on April 4, 1990, to assist them with wetland restoration work in Rice County. In the past fifteen years, approximately 285 wetlands have been restored on 160 farms, restoring 875 acres. The SWCD receives a grant for technical assistance. In 2010, no new projects were completed.

WETLAND CONSERVATION ACT

The Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act of 1991 regulates draining, filling, and excavation of wetlands and delegates this authority to local units of government. The Rice SWCD has been the local governmental unit with this authority since 1991, with the exception of the City of Lonsdale, who has chosen to be its own LGU. In 2010, the Rice SWCD processed approximately 250 wetland activity requests, issued two Certificate of Exemptions, and four formal No Loss Determinations. The SWCD had two Restoration Orders on wetland filling violations that were processed as a result of eight Cease and Desist Orders. Two replacement plans were approved and the Technical Evaluation Panel met seven times in 2010. Two wetland banking plans were reviewed, six sequencing road replacement plans reviewed and 11 Wetland Delineation Reports were also field checked and approved. Staff attended four days of wetland training during the year.

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES LOAN PROGRAM

The Rice SWCD received \$99,000.00 from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture in 2010 for this program. Loans for three percent interest and one-half percent loan origination fee were available to county residents for projects that mitigate or prevent non-point source pollution. Eligible items include animal waste control systems, conservation practices including terraces, waterways, and sediment basins, individual sewage treatment systems and tillage equipment. Approved loan requests included four conservation equipment loans totaling \$86,000.00 and \$13,018.30 for one Ag waste management system.

NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM:

The District provides technical assistance to the farmers of Rice County in completing manure and nutrient management plans. In 2010, the District worked with 11 farmers in completing manure and nutrient plans required for their feedlot applications as well as farmers interested in cutting fertilizer costs. Plans written covered over 7184 acres. We also assisted four farmers in calibrating their manure application equipment as well as manure samples. Nutrient management workshops were held in 2010 and will continue to be offered to encourage more landowners to participate.



REINVEST IN MINNESOTA (RIM) RESERVE

RIM Reserve is a state funded program to permanently retire certain marginal agricultural land from production, restore drained wetlands, and/or protect certain lands adjacent to protected and other waters, through the acquisition of easements. Lands under easements are seeded to native grasses, trees, and restored wetlands. Some RIM easements are partnered with the federal Wetland Reserve Program. To date, the Rice SWCD has the following easements under this program:

20 Year Marginal Ag. Land:	36.9 acres
Permanent Marginal Ag. Land:	166.8 acres
Permanent Wetland Restoration:	789.5 acres
Permanent Riparian Cropland:	<u>65.1 acres</u>
	1058.3 acres total

2009 TREE PROGRAM



The District sold approximately 26,000 trees and shrubs to Rice County landowners. The District ordered 34 species of trees and shrubs which were distributed to approximately 260 purchasers. These trees are to be used primarily for farmstead windbreaks, wildlife plantings, and reforestation. Technical assistance for windbreak design, planting layout, species site suitability and general information about growing trees is provided to local landowners. Other tree related products that were sold included 3' by 3' tree mats, 300' mat rolls, 3' tube tree shelters, and fertilizer packets.

2010 RAINGARDEN AND RAIN BARREL SALES

This past year the district provided landowners with raingarden and butterfly garden plant kits. Twenty kits were sold, helping to bring conservation into town. In addition, we sold 23 rain barrels, another way we are promoting conservation on a small scale.

GREAT PLAINS NATIVE GRASS DRILL

2010 was slower than normal for native grass and conservation plantings in Rice County. Staff delivered the Great Plains no-till drill to landowners, calibrated its settings based on land use and seed per acre planted, picked up the drill when done and maintained it. The drill planted about 214 acres of grass cover for Rice County landowners for such practices as wetland restorations, waterways, filterstrips, and critical area plantings. Rental rate was \$50 for delivery, setup, and return plus \$10.00 per acre.



CANNON RIVER WATERSHED PARTNERSHIP

The Rice SWCD supports and is active in the Cannon River Watershed Partnership, which consists of a six county steering committee. Gary Wagenbach, SWCD supervisor, is on this committee. The mission and goals of the partnership are to coordinate public interest and develop a watershed management plan of action to improve the water quality of the Cannon River Watershed. In 2010, the SWCD partnered on many projects that helped get conservation practices on the ground.

OBSERVATION WELLS

The Rice Soil and Water Conservation District monitors water levels on four observation wells monthly, (from March – December), in cooperation with the Department of Natural Resources Division of Waters. Well locations are St. Lawrence Cemetery in Faribault, Southside Service in Northfield, the old Trondhjem Church in Wheatland Township, and Rainbow Island Wildlife Management Area.

RAIN GAUGE MONITORS

The District has been involved in the Volunteer Rain Gauge Program since its beginning in 1979. The district has had very dedicated and interested observers from all parts of Rice County. We appreciate their time and effort. Rainfall recordings are totaled in the office and sent to the State Climatology Office in St. Paul. Our observers, townships, and total rainfall (April-Oct) for 2008, 2009, and 2010 were:

NAME	LOCATION	2008	2009	2010
Peggy Radtke	Richland Township	18.07	23.09	34.66
Wayne Winjum	Walcott Township	20.53	23.6	32.81
Joy Meschke	Morristown Township	18.03	20.79	28.48
Bill Malecha	Forest Township	19.53	19.53	29.92
Leonard Duffney	Wheatland Township	16.68	20.42	32.01
Rene Koester	Northfield Township	18.62	24.00	34.39
David Doneux	City of Northfield	17.81	24.09	31.88
Mark Bauer	Cannon City Township	18.96	26.24	35.21
Virgil Luehrs	Shieldsville Township	16.75	21.53	29.3
Rice SWCD	Wells Township	18.27	21.87	32.36
Elgin Trcka	Erin Township	15.22	24.21	30.45
	Average	18.04	23.01	31.71

EDUCATION AND PROMOTION PROGRAMS

The Rice Soil and Water Conservation District is involved in educating and promoting soil and water conservation to the youth and adults in Rice County through the following programs:

- ✿ Envirothon Contest
- ✿ Soil Stewardship Week
- ✿ Conservation Poster Contest
- ✿ Legislative Bus Tour
- ✿ Rice County Fair Booth
- ✿ Regional & State Envirothon
- ✿ 4-H Program Awards
- ✿ Newsletter & Newspaper Articles
- ✿ Rice SWCD web page
- ✿ Rice County Extension Programs
- ✿ Conservation Tours
- ✿ Rain Gauge Programs
- ✿ Radio Interviews & Announcements
- ✿ Second & Fifth Grade Classroom Education



RICE COUNTY DITCH INSPECTIONS:



In May of 2008, the Rice SWCD entered into an agreement with Rice County to perform the duties of the ditch inspector. The role requires us to respond to questions and concerns related to any of the publicly held drainage ditch systems. In addition, we are charged with the responsibility of identifying maintenance needs, coordinating projects such as cleanouts and improvements, and reporting our findings to the drainage authority. The Rice County Commissioners are the drainage authority and they make all major decisions about the drainage ditches. In 2010, we did several activities including spraying for weed and brush control, culvert replacement, tile outlet repair, side inlet repair, ditch bottom cleanouts, and tree removal.

DISTRICT WEB PAGE

The Rice SWCD maintains a website to provide users detailed and timely information about programs and activities at the district. The site is updated regularly and contains many documents including board meeting agendas and minutes, annual plans and reports, and various grant reports. The address is www.riceswcd.org. Average use has increased to about 160 visits per month.

RETIREMENT OF TWO SWCD SUPERVISORS

2010 was the end of two very distinguished SWCD Supervisory careers. After 51 consecutive years, Wally Hildebrandt decided to retire from the board. He was a leader not only locally, but throughout his service he held regional and state posts including State President of the Minnesota Association of SWCD's. He received the Supervisor of the Year Award in 2003.

Our second retiree is Robert Borchert. While Robert served just eight years, he made them all count. He served on many committees, was Area 7 Director and was very active in promoting the work of SWCD's. Robert received the 2010 Supervisor of the Year Award to recognize his many achievements.



Both Wally and Robert will be missed, but the impact of their work will remain for years to come.

FORESTRY STEWARDSHIP AWARD

Rice SWCD recognized Don and Curtis Piper for their outstanding work in forestry. The two brothers have been managing and improving their forest stand for many years. Of note are buckthorn removal, several tree plantings, direct seeding, timber sales for forest stand improvement, and maple syrup production. Congratulations to the Pipers!



2010 OUTSTANDING CONSERVATIONISTS

The Farmer magazine and the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (MASWCD) honored Fred and Karen Becker of Nerstrand, MN as the **2010 Outstanding Conservationists** from the Rice Soil and Water Conservation District at the annual convention in December, 2010. The Becker's were selected because they have implemented many conservation practices over the years including Water and Sediment Control Basins, No-Till, and Windbreaks to control soil erosion.



2010 WILDLIFE ENHANCEMENT AWARD

Since 2006, Rice SWCD has recognized individuals in Rice County who have done extraordinary work in enhancing and protecting wildlife. This year the award was given to John and Matt Carlander for their many efforts to increase wildlife habitat on their land. They have established native grasses and hardwood trees on most of the land they own, and regularly plant food plots. Thank you to the Carlander's for your conservation efforts.