

Crow Wing Soil and Water Conservation District

2007 Annual Report



Contained within this Annual Report, are the activities of the Crow Wing Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) for the period of January 1, 2007 through December 31, 2007. The main new project is working with Camp Ripley and the Board of Water & Soil Resources (BWSR) on the Army Compatible Use Buffer (ACUB) program. The update of the Crow Wing County Comprehensive Local Water Plan is expected to be completed in 2008. We are also working to increase our educational programs through the schools. The major continuing programs the SWCD is involved in are the Wetland Conservation Act and partnering with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) on their Phase II Construction Stormwater Program pilot. The soil survey project also started mapping the soils in Crow Wing County. The major activities of the Crow Wing SWCD are contained in the following Annual Report.

CROW WING SWCD BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Robert Becker	Chair	Pine River
Robert Albrecht	Vice Chair	Crosby
Diane Jacobson	Secretary	Brainerd
Leonard Koering	Treasurer	Fort Ripley
Roger Waytashek	Reporter	Crosby

CROW WING SWCD STAFF

Keith Pohl	District Manager	July 1992-Present
Jim Chamberlin	Forestry Technician	July 1998-Present
Carrie Maurer-Ackerman	Water Planner/Administrative Asst.	April 2006-Present
Beth Hippert	District Technician	Sept. 2006-Present
Sheila Reem	Work Study Student	Oct. 2007-Present

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

Mary Jane Reetz	District Conservationist	Aug. 1980-Present
Todd Braun	Soil Conservation Tech.	Nov. 2007-Present

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE SOIL SURVEY

Mike Rokus	Soil Survey Project Leader	April 2006-Present
Russell Plumb	Soil Scientist	Oct. 2006-Present
Jeremy Ziegler	Soil Scientist	March 2007-Present

The Crow Wing Soil and Water Conservation District works cooperatively with the public, nonprofit organizations, and other governmental entities in protecting our water and land resources through the use of conservation practices; providing local leadership for the prudent use and conservation of water, soil, and associated resources while serving as a local natural resource information center.

COOPERATING ENTITIES

Crow Wing County	MPCA
Crow Wing-Cass FSA	Corps of Engineers
DNR Waters	Thirty Lakes Watershed District
DNR Forestry	DNR Enforcement
BWSR	Crow Wing County Extension
Camp Ripley	Crow Wing County Municipalities
Crow Wing County Lakes & Rivers Alliance	Initiative Foundation
Minnesota Waters	Aitkin County SWCD
Cass County Environmental Services	Morrison SWCD
MNSWCD Forestry Association	MNDOT
WesMin RC&D	Minnesota Forestry Association
Minnesota Erosion Control Association	Brainerd FFA Alumni
Brainerd Lakes Area Environmental Learning	Region 5 Development Commission
North Central Minnesota Joint Powers Board	

CONTINUING ACTIVITIES

Wetland Conservation Act- The Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) is administered on behalf of Crow Wing County outside of shoreland areas and in all of the municipalities except the cities of Brainerd and Pequot Lakes by the Crow Wing SWCD. The SWCD provides wetland technical assistance to the zoning authorities that administer the WCA.

The WCA is a very active program in this county due to its rapid commercial and residential growth and the desire to develop marginal properties on then county's lakes. The county also approves a large number of plats on an annual basis.

With these development pressures, the need for wetland determinations and delineations is large. Many sellers and potential buyers request wetland determinations during the process of purchasing land.

Listed below, is the 2007 WCA activity for the Crow Wing SWCD.

681 Information Requests
369 Site Visits
16 Exemptions
5 Wetland Replacement Plans
16 Violations
1 Wildlife Pond
1,088 Total Landowner Contacts
405 Total Agency Contacts

Construction Stormwater Program Phase II- The Crow Wing SWCD was selected as one of ten pilot local governments in the state to help the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) with inspections and educating the public for the Construction Stormwater Program

(CSP) Phase II. This partnership started in December 2004. The Crow Wing SWCD assists the MPCA by inspecting all of the projects that have received or are required to obtain CSW permit coverage. Various educational events are provided to contractors and developers to help them comply with the permit conditions. The SWCD also assists the MPCA with enforcement activities. As of November 30, 2007, there were 343 open permits in Crow Wing County with between 200 and 250 of them being active. A total of 413 inspections were completed by Crow Wing SWCD staff. A total of seven educational events were held for the public.

Crow Wing County Comprehensive Local Water Plan- The Crow Wing SWCD has administered the Comprehensive Local Water Plan (CLWP) for Crow Wing County since February 8, 2005. The CLWP is in the process of being updated and will be complete in 2008. The water plan helped fund several cost share projects such as the demonstration rain garden at the Crow Wing County Campus and a demonstration rain garden on Serpent Lake. The water plan also helped fund Mission Lakes Association's water quality monitoring for two years to provide data to the DNR in collaboration with Mission Lakes Association's participation in the DNR's pilot program for wholelake treatments of Curly leaf pondweed, an aquatic invasive plant.

Challenge Grants- The Crow Wing SWCD received a three county (Aitkin, Cass, and Crow Wing) BWSR Challenge Grant to assist private landowners with assistance in paying the closing costs and incentives for conservation easements. A total of \$100,000 was received (\$25,000 from an unused Cass County Challenge Grant and \$75,000 directly from BWSR).

Healthy Lakes and Rivers Partnership- In 2007, 6 County lake associations completed lake management plans and graduated from the Initiative Foundation's Healthy Lakes and Rivers Partnership Program.

Army Compatible Use Buffer Program- The viability of military training facilities is compromised by increased development around their borders. This is certainly true for Camp Ripley. Camp Ripley is partnering with BWSR, DNR, The Nature Conservancy, Trust for Public Land, Morrison SWCD, Cass County SWCD, and the Crow Wing SWCD to obtain the development rights from willing landowners within three miles of Camp Ripley's borders. The landowners may sell their property to the DNR, The Nature Conservancy, or the Trust for Public. If they wish to retain their property, they may sell the development rights under an easement to the above listed entities or to BWSR. The respective SWCDs work with the landowners within their counties on behalf of BWSR. The Crow Wing SWCD has signed two landowners in Crow Wing County to Army Compatible Use Buffer (ACUB) applications. A total of 450 acres would be enrolled if these applications are finalized. The Cass County SWCD also asked the Crow Wing SWCD to work with two landowners in Cass County. These landowners have submitted applications that would restrict development on 542.9 acres. It is hoped that these applications will be completed in 2008.

Soil Survey Update- 2007 was the first year that a complete soil survey party completed work in Crow Wing County. Approximately 10% of the documentation was completed,

73,000 acres was mapped, 37,500 acres were digitized, and 5% of the NASIS was completed. This meets the goal that NRCS established.

Cost-Share- One cost-share project was approved in 2007. This was for the repair of a Slurry Store manure holding tank that was installed many years ago. The other cost-share activity was the completion of livestock watering projects that were approved under the Drought Disaster Assistance Program.

DNR Protected Waters and Appropriations Permits- A total of eight permit applications were reviewed and commented on.

County Fair- The Crow Wing SWCD had a booth at the Crow Wing County Fair for the 22nd consecutive year. Trees were given away and educational information was provided to the public.

Stewardship Week- Over 9,500 program inserts were distributed to 43 churches. The 2007 theme was “Today is the day to be part of conservation’s power.” This has been a successful program in promoting the conservation of water and soil resources in the faith community.

Gopher Poisoning Machine- This machine is rented to landowners to use in their field and tree plantations.

FFA Alumni- The Crow Wing SWCD is working with the Brainerd FFA Alumni to promote agricultural education in the Brainerd Public School system. Part of this endeavor is the continued use of the Community Ag Center (formerly Brainerd High School Farm). This effort began in 2006 because of school budget cuts.

Tree Sales- A total of 46,280 conservation trees were sold to 210 landowners in 2007.

Rain Gauge- In 2007 drought was a major concern in Crow Wing County. The county was between 5 and 6 inches below average from June 5 to August 13, 2007. An average of 16.25 inches fell in Crow Wing County during the growing season (May-September). An average of 23.83 inches fell from April through October. This is the 30th year of rain gauge monitoring by 15 rain gauge reporters that are scattered throughout the county.

Envirothon-The Crow Wing SWCD co-sponsored and participated in organizing the 2007 Area VIII Envirothon. An Envirothon is an outdoor, hands-on learning experience for high school students. Local students demonstrate their knowledge of Minnesota's natural resources. The Envirothon consists of six learning stations that include questions from topics such as aquatics, soils, wildlife, forestry, current event and oral presentation. The top three teams from the Area VIII Envirothon will advance to the state Competition in Fergus Falls, Minnesota. The State Envirothon winner participates in the Canon Envirothon and is eligible to compete for recognition, scholarships, and prizes. In 2007 two teams from the Crosby-Ironton school district participated.

NEW ACTIVITIES

Water Sampling-In 2007 the Crow Wing SWCD partnered with Minnesota Waters to implement a surface water assessment program. Minnesota Waters received a Clean Water Legacy grant from the MPCA to fund the water sampling program. 12 lakes in Crow Wing County participated in the program and will continue to monitor in 2008. The volunteers of the selected lakes collected samples and Secchi disk readings to be analyzed for the amounts of Chlorophyll a, total Phosphorous, and water clarity.

Fall MASWCD Area VIII Tour-The Crow Wing SWCD hosted the Area VIII Fall Tour in 2007. Each year a district within Area VIII hosts a fall tour to showcase projects and accomplishments in their county. Employees and Supervisors from other SWCD's along with staff from other agencies attended the tour. 38 people attended the 2 day tour. On day one various stormwater construction sites were toured, along with the Crow Wing County Campus Rain Garden, the Brainerd High School Farm, the pervious pavement at Fairview Conservancy, and the Paul Bunyan Savanna at the Northland Arboretum. Day two consisted of the Area VIII business meeting.

Challenge Grants- The Crow Wing SWCD partnered with Aitkin and Cass County Water Plans on a \$56,000 BWSR Challenge Grant to determine priority parcels on ten Crow Wing County lakes for conservation easements. At least three Crow Wing County conservation easements are expected within the next two years as a result of this analysis.