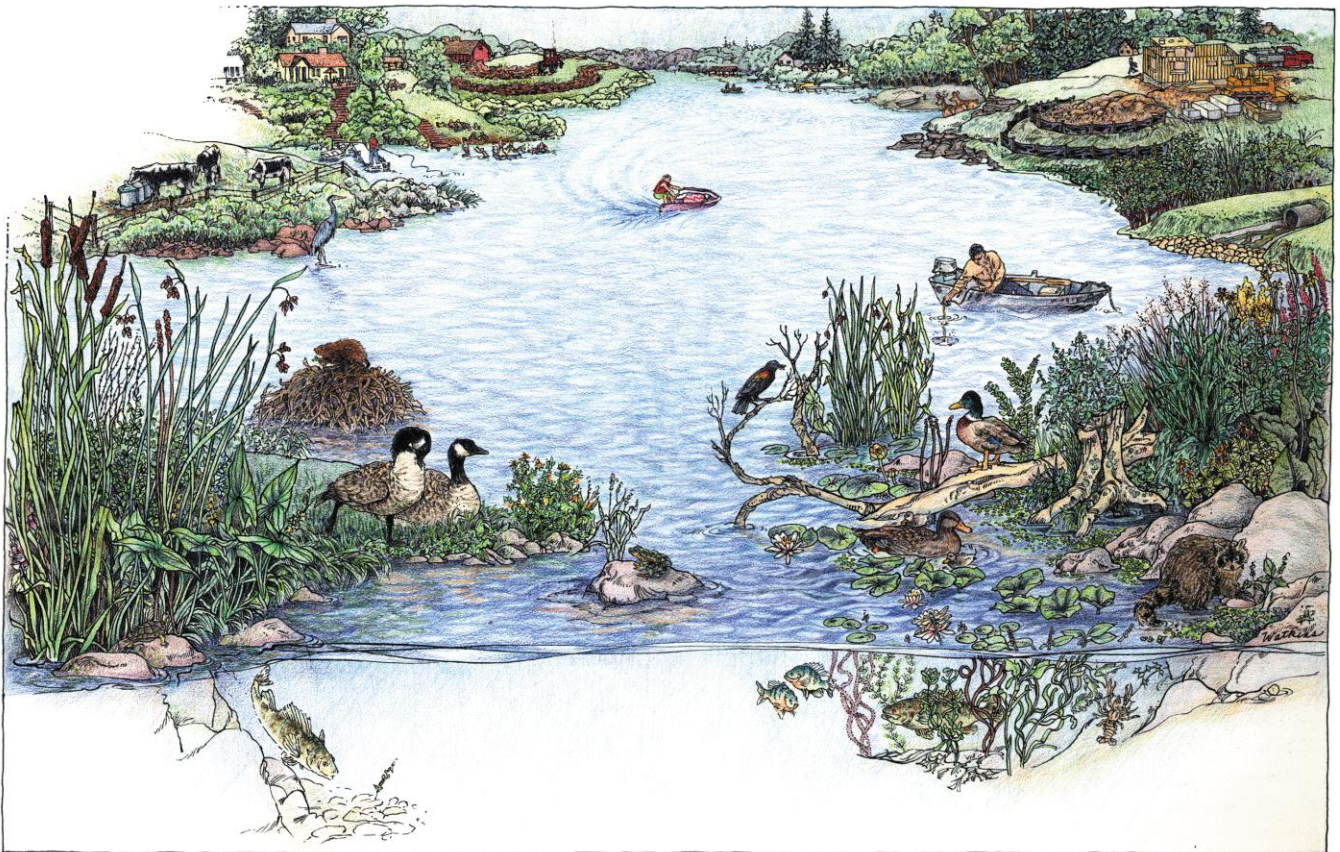


Crow Wing Soil and Water Conservation District

2008 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, 2008 through December 31, 2008. The update of the Crow Wing County Comprehensive Local Water Plan was completed and adopted by the Crow Wing County Board of Commissioners on October 28, 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, partnering with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) on their Phase II Construction Stormwater Program, and assisting Camp Ripley and BWSR with administering the Army Compatible Use Buffer (ACUB) program. 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
Melissa Barrick	Water Planner/Administrative Asst.	Sept. 2008-Present
Beth Hippert	District Technician	Sept. 2006-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	Board of Water & Soil Resources

ACTIVITIES FROM 2008 ANNUAL PLAN

A. Objective: Improve the management and maintenance of the Crow Wing SWCD

The Crow Wing SWCD continually works to maintain our financial resources and strength. There have been discussions on developing a better working relationship with the Crow Wing County Land Services Department. The Water Plan Advisory Board has been revised to include two Crow Wing County Commissioners and two Crow Wing SWCD Supervisors. The goal is to increase communication between the two Boards. There will also be quarterly public input meetings that will be structured in manner to foster public input.

The Crow Wing SWCD has been successful in obtaining Surface Water Assessment Grants (SWAG) from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA). The goal is assess water quality in as many of the lakes as possible.

The Crow Wing SWCD continues to use an outside accountant to insure that financial transactions are completed in an accurate manner. This also allows increased segregation of duties to reduce the chances of fraud occurring. The bank statements and cancelled checks are sent directly to the accountant.

Crow Wing SWCD Supervisors and staff continue to attend MASWCD meetings and Area VIII meetings and tours. A

significant number of Supervisors and staff attended the fall Area VIII meeting and tour that was held in International Falls. Other meetings included MASWCD Legislative Days and spring and summer Area VIII meetings.

B. Objective: Technical review of projects for zoning authorities in Crow Wing County as required by their ordinances

Crow Wing SWCD staff has notified the county of items in the dirtmoving ordinance that must be revised in order to be in compliance with the last changes that were made to the Wetland Conservation Act (WCA). The county will be revising the identified items.

The Crow Wing SWCD continues to review Crow Wing County dirtmoving permit applications when they are required. Staff also assists the municipalities within the county upon request.

There were no requests to review stormwater or gravel pit reclamation plans. Most of the training that was received was for stormwater management.

C. Objective: Administer the Wetland Conservation Act for Crow Wing County

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 need for wetland determinations and delineation reviews is typically large due to the development pressures in Crow Wing County.

In 2008, the following WCA activity was recorded:

Landowner contacts- 1,021
Replacement plans- 0 approved, 1 denied, 1 withdrawn
Exemptions- 6 approved
No-Loss- 3 approved
Boundary or type applications- 7 approved
Exemption types approved- 1 incidental, 1 forestry, 3 De Minimis
Exemption acreage- 1.28 acres
Number of potential violation sites investigated- 27
Staff also attended four training sessions.

D. Objective: Update the Crow Wing County Soil Survey

The update of the Crow Wing County had a full crew beginning in 2007. As of December 31, 2008 the following percentages of the soil survey for the county is completed:

Documentation- 26%
Mapping- 23%
NASIS- 5%
Digitized- 13%
Overall status- 21%

It is anticipated that a portion of the updated soil survey will be made available in 2009.

E. Objective: Work with MPCA on the Construction Stormwater Partnership Education and Assistance Model

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, 2008, there were 364 open permits in Crow Wing County with between 100 and 150 of them being actively inspected by the Crow Wing SWCD. A total of 193 inspections were completed by Crow Wing SWCD staff. A total of four educational events were held for the public.

F. Objective: Encourage more and better use of the small privately owned forestland within the county

The Crow Wing SWCD continues to participate with the MN SWCD Forestry Committee to develop a private forest management program for landowners who own less than 20 acres of forestland. This has not been successful at this time. One forest stewardship plan covering 177 acres was completed.

G. Objective: Administer the Crow Wing County Comprehensive Water Plan

Crow Wing SWCD partnered with Lake Associations, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and Crow Wing County to create a shoreline Landowners Guide for citizens which outlines water quality and the importance of shorelines. We printed a total of 16,000 copies. We reviewed water plan board and adjusted the water plan board to provide better communication between Crow Wing SWCD and the county. Crow Wing SWCD partnered with Minnesota Waters, Lake Association and Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) through the partnership we helped assess 40 lakes for chlorophyll A, Total Phosphorus, chlorophyll-a and Secchi depth. On Tuesday, October 28, 2008 Crow Wing County Adopted the Comprehensive Local Water Management Plan. The enhance water plan will be completed in April 2009.

H. Objective: Assist other governmental agencies, non-profit groups, and private landowners

The Crow Wing SWCD is involved with various groups on a regular basis. A Supervisor attends the monthly WesMin RC&D meetings in Alexandria. The North Central Minnesota Technical Service Area (TSA) engineer assisted with seven projects and the Crow Wing SWCD attended all TSA meetings. There was some activity with non-profit groups including a joint project with the Parker Boy Scouts Camp, Crow Wing County Water Plan, and the Thirty Lakes Watershed District. This is a shoreline restoration project that can be used as a demonstration project. We have also worked with numerous lake association to complete water sampling for the SWAG grants.

At least two staff members attend monthly Brainerd Lakes Environmental Learning Network meetings. The Crow Wing County Administrator and Land Services Director receive the monthly agendas as an invitation to attend SWCD meetings. The Crow Wing SWCD assists with the Environmental Quality Incentive and Conservation Security Programs when requested. A staff member regularly attends Education Agriculture Technology (FFA Alumni) meetings and assists this group in promoting agricultural education in the Brainerd School District.

I. Objective: Reduce organic and inorganic pollution to improve the water quality of the surface and ground water within the District

In 2008, there was no activity in reducing impacts from livestock to rivers, lakes, and streams. There is one feedlot project that has been approved for cost-share, but has not been started. The Ag. BMP loan program is continuing through a partnership with the Region 5 Development Commission.

There was no activity in transitioning producers to organic production standards or developing Natural Landscaping Protection Plans. The promotion of rain gardens and pervious pavement for stormwater management occur whenever landowner contact is made in a place where it is beneficial.

J. Objective: Expose and educate more non-agricultural landowners, general public and groups to the benefit of the surrounding soil and water conservation measures

The Crow Wing SWCD continues to cosponsor a booth at the Crow Wing County fair with NRCS and FSA. In a typical year, it is estimated that 10,000 people attend the fair. A drawing is held to give away 25 native plants and trees during the fair. Numerous news releases were distributed to promote various educational opportunities.

Over 9,500 program inserts were distributed to 43 churches to promote NACD's Soil Stewardship Week. The 2008 theme was "Water is Life". The Crow Wing SWCD cosponsored and participated in organizing the 2008 Area VIII Envirothon. The only school from Crow Wing County participated in the Envirothon was Crosby-Ironton High School.

The Crow Wing SWCD has developed and maintained a website. The website is updated on a regular basis.

K. Objective: Reduce the soil erosion T-value throughout the District by aiding and encouraging accepted conservation practices

The Crow Wing SWCD worked with 13 landowners to develop shoreline restoration plans that would act to stabilize shoreline. In 2008, the Crow Wing SWCD received 210 orders for a total of 42,000 trees for conservation purposes. This is a typical amount for an average year.

L. Objective: Improve Water Quality by preventing runoff and sedimentation of rivers and lakes

Most of the education that is provided to landowners is conducted when they are met out in the field. This includes education for lawn fertilization, riparian buffer strips, shoreline stabilization, and stormwater management. The Crow Wing SWCD conducts over 400 onsite each year. A total of 15,000 copies of the “Crow Wing County Landowners Guide to Lake Stewardship” were printed. So far they have been distributed by the Whitefish Property Owners Association, Crow Wing County Lakes and Rivers Alliance, Crow Wing County Planning and Zoning, Crow Wing County Extension, and the Crow Wing SWCD. There is a large quantity of these publications available and they will continue to be distributed in the future.

M. Objective: Provide other services beneficial to Crow Wing County landowners

The Crow Wing SWCD has a GA 500 Gopher Getter that is rented to landowners to control gophers. Four landowners used the equipment in 2008.

N. Objective: Apply for Special Project grants

There was no opportunity to apply for special project funding in 2008.

O. Objective: Administer the Army Compatible Use Buffer and Reinvest in Minnesota and Permanent Wetland Preserves Programs

The Reinvest in Minnesota and Permanent Wetland Preserves do not work well in Crow Wing County. There has never been an approved application for these programs.

The Army Compatible Use Buffer (ACUB) program is a joint effort of Camp Ripley, Board of Water & Soil Resources (BWSR), Morrison SWCD, Cass County SWCD, and Crow Wing SWCD. This program was developed in order to protect the viability of camp Ripley as a military training base. The program works by purchasing development rights of properties within three miles of the boundaries of Camp Ripley through the use of conservation easements. The easements are held by BWSR and are in effect as long as Camp Ripley exists. The Crow Wing SWCD works directly with the landowners. In 2008 there were two easements completed in Crow Wing County that cover a total of 255 acres.

The Crow Wing SWCD also worked with two landowners in Cass County. It is estimated that they will be completed in early 2009 and cover a total of 525 acres.

P. Objective: Implement EEO and Civil Rights responsibilities resulting in strong working relationships with agencies, units of government, and organizations

The Crow Wing SWCD reviews these responsibilities on annual basis with the Natural Resources Conservation Service.