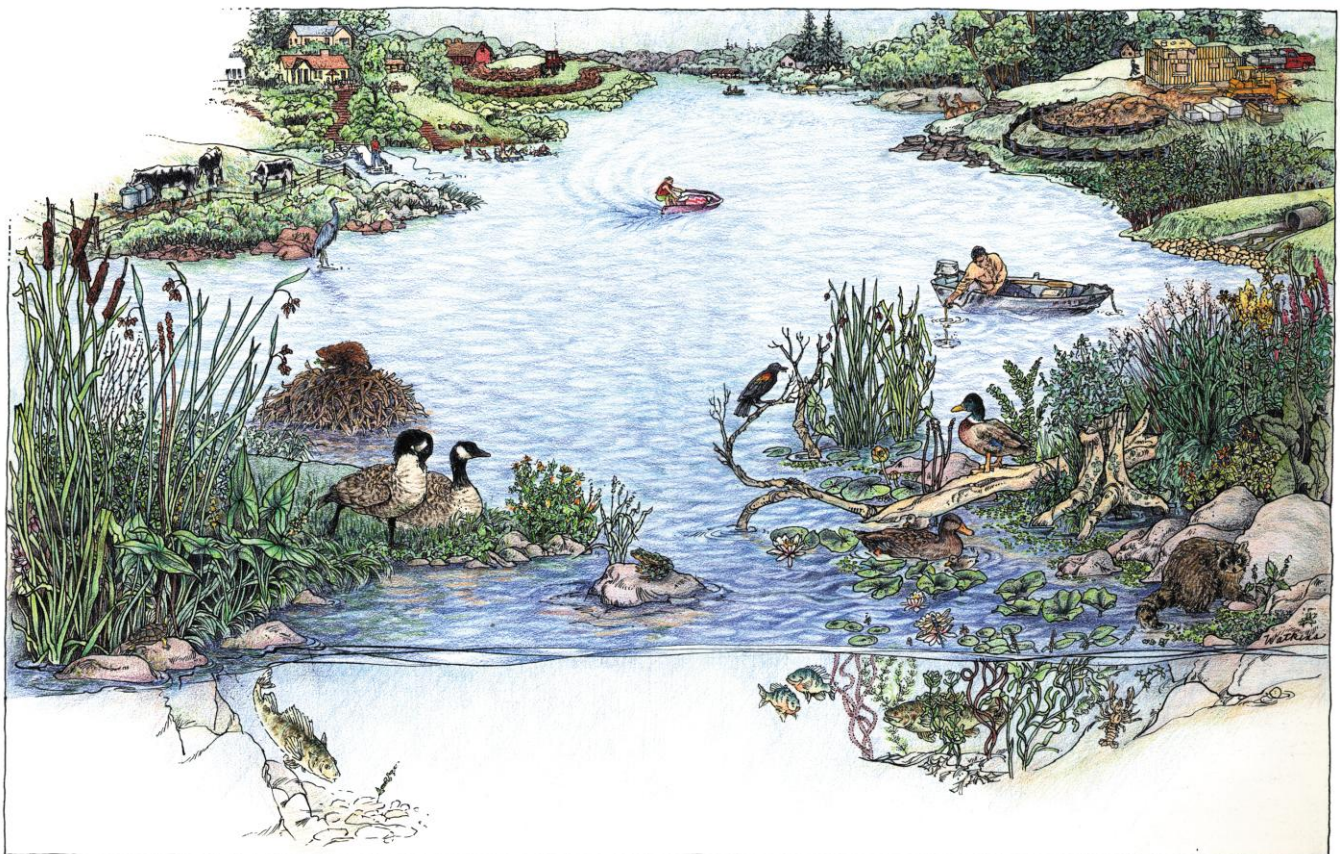


Crow Wing Soil and Water Conservation District

2009 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, 2009 through December 31, 2009. The makeup of the Crow Wing County Water Plan committee was completed and consisted of two Commissioners and two Supervisors. Crow Wing County will be administering the Water Plan as of January 1, 2010 and we unsure what role the Crow Wing SWCD will play in the future. We are also continuing 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 is continuing to map the soils in Crow Wing County. It is anticipated that the first data will be available online in spring 2010. 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-Sept.2009
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
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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 2009 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 continued discussions on developing a better working relationship with the Crow Wing County Land Services Department. The Water Plan Advisory Board was revised to include two Crow Wing County Commissioners and two Crow Wing SWCD Supervisors. As of January 1, 2010, Crow Wing County will begin administration of the Water Plan. Currently, it is unknown what the role of the Crow Wing SWCD will be.

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 that was held in Bemidji and a tour that was held in Clearwater County. 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

As of January 1, 2010, Crow Wing County will be administering the Wetland Conservation Act in the nonshoreland areas that are under county jurisdiction. The Crow Wing SWCD administered WCA in almost all of the municipalities and non shoreland county jurisdictional areas in 2009.

The Crow Wing SWCD continued to review Crow Wing County dirtmoving permit applications in 2009. The county will assume this duty on January 1, 2010. 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, but due to economic reasons, this activity has slowed significantly.

In 2009, the following WCA activity was recorded:

Landowner contacts- 610
Replacement plans- 0 approved, 1 denied, 0 withdrawn
Exemptions- 5 approved
No-Loss- 3 approved
Boundary or type applications- 0 approved

Exemption types approved- 1 drainage, 4 De Minimis
Exemption acreage- 0.405 acres
Number of potential violation sites investigated- 23
Staff also attended five 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, 2009, it is estimated that 30% of the field office work has been completed. It is anticipated that a portion of the updated soil survey will be made available in spring 2010.

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 and ended on June 30, 2009 due to new MPCA priorities. 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 June 30, 2009, there were between 100 and 150 permits that were being actively inspected by the Crow Wing SWCD. Over 50 inspections were completed by Crow Wing SWCD staff. A total of two 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. No Forest Stewardship Plans were completed in 2009. The Crow Wing SWCD Forestry Technician resigned in September 2009. The Crow Wing SWCD submitted a resolution to MASWCD to create a Forestry RIM program to be administered through SWCDs. This resolution was approved by an overwhelming majority at the 2009 MASWCD Annual Convention.

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

Crow Wing SWCD partnered with WAPOA and Crow Wing County to provide funding to send 4,000 Shoreline Landowners Guide for citizens within the Whitefish chain. The guides were printed in 2008 and outline water quality and the importance of shorelines. The Friends of Rogers Lake, Crow Wing County, and Crow Wing SWCD partnered on creating a “Whole Lake” Water Quality Action Plan. This project also worked with 3-5 property owners to create water quality enhancement projects. The Water Plan also partnered with the Rollie Johnson Natural and Recreation Area to restore 150 feet of shoreline on the east side of publicly owned Big Island. This project will stabilize and protect the aquatic and transition zone. This will improve fisheries/emergent vegetation habitat and habitat and environmental aesthetics. The Water Plan Advisory Committee was revised to consist of two Commissioners and two SWCD Supervisors to provide better communication between Crow Wing SWCD and the county. The WPAC did not meet after September 22nd because Crow Wing County had decided that they would administer the Water Plan through Planning and Zoning. Crow Wing SWCD partnered with lake associations and Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) on a Surface Water Assessment Grant (SWAG). Through the partnership we helped assess 25 lakes and the Gull River for chlorophyll A, Total Phosphorus, chlorophyll-a and Secchi depth.

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 shoreline projects with the Rollie Johnson Recreational Area, Elks Camp, Whitefish Area Property Owners Association, Serpent Lake, and the Thirty Lakes Watershed District. The SWCD also worked with the Lakes Area Clean Water Council on projects such as an Earth Day Presentation. We have also worked with numerous lake associations to complete water sampling for the SWAG grants.

At least two staff members attend monthly Brainerd Lakes Area 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 2009, there was no activity in reducing impacts from livestock to rivers, lakes, and streams. No feedlots received cost-share in 2009. 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 2009 theme was "Dig It! The Secrets of Soils". The Crow Wing SWCD cosponsored and participated in organizing the 2009 Area VIII Envirothon. The only school from Crow Wing County participated in the Envirothon was Pequot Lakes 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 more than 14 landowners to develop shoreline restoration plans that would act to stabilize shoreline. In 2009, the Crow Wing SWCD received 214 orders for a total of 38,225 trees for conservation purposes. The number of trees ordered is slightly less than normal for an average year, but the number of orders is consistent from other years.

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. The booklet “Crow Wing County Landowners Guide to Lake Stewardship” was distributed by various lake associations. The number of booklets remaining is low.

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 2009.

N. 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 2009 there were two easements that are in progress in Crow Wing County that cover a total of 265.8 acres. It is estimated that they will be completed in early 2010.

O. 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 an annual basis with the Natural Resources Conservation Service.