



Watershed District
Board of Managers



Jim Rothsetin

Virgil Rettig



Bob Mostad

Jim Kral



Jason Scherping

Vernon Vangsness



Dan Coughlin

Larry Kuseske



Todd Foster

Staff



Holly Kovarik, Administrator



Heather Lehmkuhl



Melissa Roelike



Lynn Nelson



Tara Ostendorf



Adam Hjelm



Mike Hayman

Office Location:

524 4th St South, Sauk
Centre, MN 56378

Phone : (320) 352-2231

Visit us online at:

www.srwdmn.org

Sauk River Watershed District Newsletter

December 2010

Greetings,

Happy Holiday's from the Sauk River
Watershed District Board and Staff!

The District was busy in 2010 working
on applications for funding through
various grant opportunities. These
grants will provide funding for
projects and programs that will aid in
the restoration and protection
activities on our water resources here
in this watershed.

This newsletter contains information
about the various grants awarded. I
hope that many of you will be
interested in implementing these
conservation practices on your land.
They will help in the greater effort to
make the water cleaner in our
communities.

The year 2011 marks the 25th
Anniversary of the Sauk River
Watershed District and for the first
time ever...the District has watershed
wide funding for the Incentive
Program. This funding will provide
residents with cost share and loan
dollars to implement practices on their
properties.

We are truly excited about these
funding opportunities available to the
landowners. This is our chance to put
projects on the ground. Some of this
funding comes from the Clean Water
Funds provided by the 3/8ths of a
percent sales tax increase that was
voted as an amendment to the state
constitution just a few short years ago.

So if you ever wondered where this
funding goes...now you know that this
funding is implemented locally to
address our pollution issues.

This is your opportunity to help make
a difference. Call our office to find out
more about how you can implement a
project on your property and aid in
this effort.

Holly Kovarik



SRWD Updates

SRWD Awarded Project of the Year!

The Sauk River Watershed District was awarded
Project of the Year at the MN Association of
Watershed District's (MAWD) annual conference held
on December 3rd at Arrowwood Resort in Alexandria.

The award was presented to the District for the
shoreline restoration of Battle Point Park on Lake
Osakis. Battle Point Park was restored with
cooperation by many partners, both agencies and
private organizations. Approximately 1200 linear feet
of lakeshore was restored back to native vegetation
and the area around the boat landing was
reconstructed after intense erosion had begun to
collapse away the bank.

The area is now home to many perennial wildflower
species, which add aesthetic value to the park, as well
as additional habitat for many insects, songbirds and
other wildlife in the area.

This marks the second award for this project, the
previous awarded by the MN Erosion Control Agency
for Environmental Leadership.



New Funding!

SRWD Awarded Grant Funds for 2011-2013

Every year, the SRWD applies for grant funds available through various agencies such as MN Department of Natural Resources (DNR), MN Board of Water & Soil Resources (BWSR) and MN Pollution Control Agency (MPCA). These grants are awarded to applicants based on their application content, their ability to complete the assigned tasks and their project readiness. The applicants must be able to prove that their projects were completed and be able to show results and water quality benefits of the funded project.

In 2010, the SRWD applied for a total of eight grants to BWSR, MPCA, and MN DNR. As of this publication date, the District has been awarded in full or portions of all 8 applications. The majority of funds will be available beginning in 2011 and ending in 2013.

For the first time ever, the District will have watershed-wide funds available for projects that benefit water quality. The following information details the goals of each of the awarded grants and what types of projects may be eligible for up to 75% cost-share.



The 2008 Clean Water Legacy Amendment has opened up more funding options for the SRWD. These funds are very competitive as more agencies are eligible to apply. Although the 2009 grant season was not very favorable to the SRWD, the 2010 grant season has proven to be quite the opposite! The funding breakdown is shown in the table below. The funds from these projects will focus on three primary elements; education, BMP implementation, and monitoring.

<i>Project Name:</i>	<i>Requested Grant \$</i>	<i>Requested Loan \$</i>	<i>Awarded Grant \$</i>	<i>Awarded Loan \$</i>
Todd County Surface Water Assessment Grant	\$68,475		\$68,475	
SRWD Watershed-Wide Groundwater Protection	\$40,000	\$250,000	\$40,000	\$250,000
Sauk River Water Quality Protection Phase III	\$235,000	\$300,000	\$235,000	\$175,000 (-25%)
Lower Sauk River Water Quality Protection	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$300,000
Osakis Shoreland Enhancement Continuation	\$237,000	\$150,000	\$114,839 (-51.5%)	\$75,000 (-50%)
SRWD Watershed-Wide Stormwater Initiative	\$435,289		\$435,289	
Technical Assistance for Sauk River – MRBI	\$231,579		\$168,421 (-27%)	
DNR Grand Lake Shoreland Habitat Assessment	\$23,050		\$6050 (-73.5%)	
Total Funding Awarded for 2011-2013	\$ 1,570,393.00	\$ 1,000,000.00	\$ 1,368,074.00	\$ 800,000.00

The BMP implementation cost share funds have expanded to incorporate stormwater management projects which include rain gardens, rain barrels and other backyard conservation projects in addition to the list of ag-waste and sediment reduction practices.

In addition to these grant projects, the SRWD assisted the Douglas County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) and the Stearns, Todd and Pope County SWCDs to complete the Mississippi River Basin Initiative grant application for the Sauk River. The Douglas County SWCD received 8 million dollars for the Wetland Reserve Enhancement Program and the three-county effort was awarded 4 million dollars for the areas located from the Osakis Lake outlet to the Cold Spring Dam on the Sauk River Chain of Lakes.

Todd County Surface Water Assessment Grant



The Todd County SWAG is focused on conducting surface water monitoring on lakes that have no monitoring data available. This data set will establish baseline conditions and determine impairment status. If any of these water bodies are impaired for excess nutrients they will be listed on the 2012 MPCA 303d list. Any bodies of water determined to be impaired will move into the next phase of the TMDL process. This project will set up the framework for attaining implementation dollars to address the causes of the impairments. This project began during the monitoring season of 2010.

SRWD Watershed-Wide Groundwater Protection Project



The goal of this project is to address the identified abandon wells and noncompliant septic systems within the Sauk River watershed to protect area groundwater from potential contamination as well as preventing septic leachate from reaching nearby surface waters. Loan dollars are available to assist landowners with upgrading non-compliant septic systems. Grant funds are available to financially assist landowners in properly sealing unused wells or cisterns to protect groundwater.

Sauk River Water Quality Protection Phase III



The goal of this project is to protect the Sauk River from becoming impaired for additional criteria by addressing stormwater runoff and erosion issues along the Sauk River. This project proposes to address municipal and rural **stormwater runoff concerns by taking a closer look at small cities' stormwater management efforts, as well as the land use practices** identified along the Sauk River during the 2008-2009 river assessments.

Eligible Projects: Grant and loan funds are available to financially assist landowners to install rural and urban conservation practices that minimize stormwater runoff to protect the Sauk River. Funds are also available for landowners to fix erosion issues along the Sauk River. Eligible Projects include but are not limited to rain gardens, shoreline restoration, stormwater management projects, feedlot abatement, wetland restoration, buffer strips, rain barrels, and habitat enhancement projects. Other objectives for this grant include providing public outreach and education on stormwater BMPs and riparian restoration. Grant funds will be used for monitoring and modeling and to assist one small municipality in a rain garden initiative to determine the effectiveness in capturing stormwater.

Lower Sauk River Water Quality Protection



The goal of this project is to protect the Sauk River from degrading to the point where it meets the criteria to become re-listed as impaired for turbidity or newly listed for excessive nutrients. The focus area for this project includes the watershed starting from the city of Cold Spring down to the confluence of the Mississippi River in St. Cloud.

Eligible Projects: Grant and loan funds are available to financially assist landowners in installing rural and urban conservation practices that address stormwater runoff to protect the Sauk River. Eligible Projects include but are not limited to rain gardens, shoreline restoration, stormwater management projects, feedlot abatement, wetland restoration, buffer strips, rain barrels, and habitat enhancement projects.

Osakis Shoreland Enhancement Continuation



The goal of the Osakis Lake Enhancement Continuation Project is to restore Osakis Lake to meet state water quality standards and to protect the water quality of the Sauk River by addressing stormwater runoff from urban and rural areas.

Eligible Projects: Grant and loan funds are available to financially assist landowners to install rural and urban conservation practices that address stormwater runoff to protect Osakis Lake and the Sauk River. Grant funds are available for landowners to properly close any unused manure storage basin or other feedlot abatement projects.

Other SRWD Objectives: Other objectives for this grant include providing public outreach and education on stormwater BMPs and shoreland habitat enhancement. Grant funds will be used for monitoring and modeling and to assist the Douglas County SWCD in restoring portions of the Crooked Lake basin into aquatic habitat.

SRWD Watershed-Wide Stormwater Initiative



The goal of the watershed-wide stormwater initiative is to reduce the volume of stormwater runoff that reaches the Sauk River and in doing so, reduce the amount of pollutants entering the river. The SRWD will work with local schools and cities to begin "Rain garden Initiatives", which aim to install rain gardens and treatment trains on school and public property. These initiatives will serve to reduce runoff to storm sewers and ultimately the river, and to serve as education tools to promote rain gardens in residential neighborhoods.

Funds can also be used to implement larger stormwater management practices such as infiltration and retention basins. Shoreline and riparian restoration utilizing native vegetation are also eligible expenses.

Technical Assistance for Sauk River MRBI



This Technical Assistance Project will aid in the facilitation of the Sauk River Watershed-Mississippi River Basin Initiative (MRBI) which began in 2010. Funding will be used for promotion and education efforts and initiate BMP implementation by assisting landowners in project development and design.

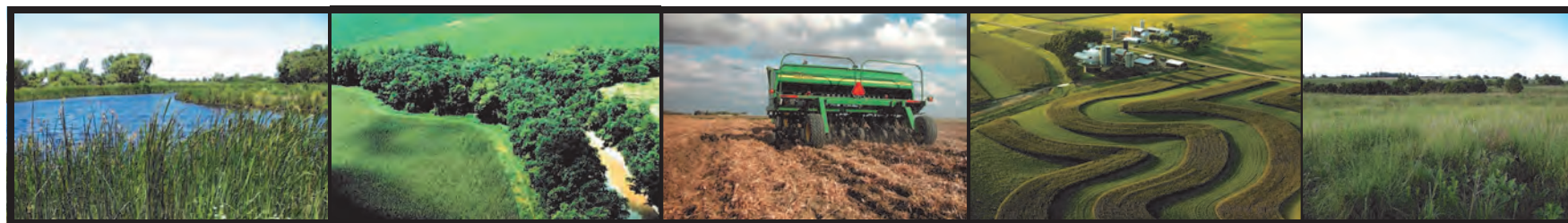
The Sauk River watershed was one of three watersheds selected in Minnesota to receive funding through the Mississippi River Basin Initiative program administered through the United States Department of Agriculture. This project will have a direct impact on water quality of the Sauk River and the Mississippi River. The following page contains more information on these two Mississippi River Basin Grants.

Mississippi River Basin Initiatives Updates

The Sauk River watershed area, including portions of Douglas, Pope, Stearns and Todd Counties, has been approved to receive more than \$12 million from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to carry out projects that will help landowners implement conservation practices that prevent, control and trap nutrient runoff from agricultural land. Two applications were approved for funding: Accelerated Protection of Targeted Watersheds in the Sauk River Watershed, led by the Stearns SWCD and the Wetland Reserve Enhancement Program led by the Douglas SWCD. The SRWD partnered with both agencies and was instrumental in providing information for both applications, due to the District's extensive monitoring efforts, as well as previous diagnostic studies.

What does this mean for residents in the SRWD?

Funding for these two projects will be over a five year time frame beginning in 2010, and will be conducted through the local NRCS/USDA/SWCD offices in Stearns and Douglas Counties. Below is a summary of the goals and objectives for each project, and how residents may benefit from this new funding source.



Accelerated Protection of Targeted Watersheds

The SRWD has an extensive history of monitoring data on water bodies within the District and has defined areas of the watershed on a smaller sub-basin level. This grant will target conservation practices in five of the ten "management districts" which are located at the headwaters of the entire watershed, where water quality improvements have the best chance of showing a change in the monitoring data over time. The Sauk River Area and its NRCS/USDA project partners will benefit from approximately \$4 million dollars in funding over a five-year time frame.

The management districts that will be targeted are the Osakis Lake, Sauk Lake, Central Sauk River, Getchell-Unnamed-Stoney Creeks, and Adley Creek subwatersheds (for additional information on these areas, please contact the SRWD office). Priority concerns in these areas include erosion control, woodland management, surface water protection, ground water protection and wetland management.

The main objectives of this project are to reduce nutrient and sediment loading by working directly with landowners, monitoring water quality changes along the river, as well as at edge-of-field, launching an On-Farm Network for Nutrient Management, and promotion of MRBI through outreach and education.

Eligible projects must fall under the approved NRCS Field Office Technical Guide for Conservation Practices. Funding for conservation practices in this area that address any of the priority concerns is available through the local NRCS/USDA/SWCD offices, located in Long Prairie, Waite Park, Alexandria and Glenwood.

Wetland Reserve Enhancement Program

The Douglas County Soil and Water Conservation District and its partners have secured funding from MRBI to secure permanent easements and to restore 2,204 acres of wetlands within portions within the Sauk River Watershed District to improve the water quality in Lake Osakis and the Sauk River, eliminate flood damage and provide feeding and nesting habitat for waterfowl and other birds and wildlife. The Wetland Reserve Enhancement program will help landowners restore drained wetlands on marginal land that have been previously drained by private and or public ditch systems.

The Douglas SWCD and its partners propose to use approximately \$8 million over five years to help secure permanent easements and restore drained wetlands. The intent is to reduce nutrient and sediment loading into lake Osakis by providing 2,000 or more acres of wetlands that will filter nutrients and stabilize sediments. Further, the restorations will provide critical habitat resources for wildlife, as well as eliminate landowner frustrations with assessed land which is often flooded and unsuitable for agriculture.

For qualifying project information, contact the Douglas County NRCS/USDA office in Alexandria MN.

Minnesota
 DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
Minnesota
 Pollution Control Agency
Minnesota
 Board of Water & Soil Resources
 U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE
 Minnesota Soybean Research & Promotion Council
USGS
 science for a changing world
 MIDWEST ORGANIC & Sustainable Education Service
MOSES
 The Nature Conservancy
 Protecting nature. Preserving life.
 Minnesota Milk
MINNESOTA CORN GROWERS ASSOCIATION
STEARNS COUNTY SOIL & WATER SWCD CONSERVATION DISTRICT
POPE SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
Sauk River Watershed District
MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
United States Department of Agriculture NRCS Natural Resources Conservation Service
Douglas SWCD
Meeker County SWCD
WesMin RC&D
MN Agricultural Water Resources Coalition