

## **Goodhue Co. SWCD Annual Report 2008**

The SWCD promotes the establishment of vegetative buffers along all streams and rivers to filter out and trap pollutants before they enter the surface water. Working with Goodhue County and local townships, SWCD staff have helped many landowners understand the benefits and requirements for these buffers. Various programs offer incentives to establish these buffers, including CRP and a local cost share program to provide free no-till drill and seed to establish these buffers.

Erosion control and stormwater runoff control continue to be priorities, with two full time staff working in cooperation with our federal partner (NRCS) to survey, design, and monitor construction of these practices. SWCD staff assisted on 31 grass waterways, 4 terraces, 41 water & sediment control basins, and 3 pond rehabilitations. Funding from state (\$36,286) and federal (\$163,197) sources were utilized to make these practices affordable to private landowners.

Water Quality is a SWCD priority and is promoted through educational efforts, a nitrate well testing program, and stream quality monitoring on several streams, including the Little Cannon River, Butler Creek and Spring Creek.

A County Feedlot Officer works as part of the SWCD staff to administer all parts of the County Feedlot Program. About 1200 feedlots are registered, with 780 of them having over 50 Animal Units or within a shoreland area. 181 feedlots were inspected, 65 County permits were reviewed related to feedlot issues and 19 Construction Short Form or Interim Permits were issued. The SWCD works closely with county land-use staff on permitting issues when necessary.

Feedlot technical assistance is provided by SWCD technicians in coordination with engineering staff and nutrient management planning staff from the Non-Point Engineering Assistance program. This gives landowners technical assistance on complex feedlot runoff control projects. The Goodhue SWCD also has on staff an engineering technician dedicated to assisting on similar projects and completed 12 Nutrient Management Plans with 3 manure spreader calibrations. We approved financial assistance to 6 feedlot projects in 2008 with a total of \$161,538. 75 feedlot sites in the Little Cannon Watershed had evaluations and technical advice provided, plus 10 other sites elsewhere in the County.

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program was been promoted and administered by SWCD staff in cooperation with the Board of Water and Soil Resources and USDA. This conservation easement program offers financial incentives for long-term set-aside of marginal cropland with the establishment of conserving plants. More than 425 acres have been enrolled in CREP in Goodhue County. Signup has ended, but staff continue to finalize and help implement approved easements practices. In addition, we inspected 18 older RIM easement sites for compliance covering 286 acres.

Through the SWCD's No-Till Drill Rental Program, the SWCD provides a John Deere 1590 no-till drill with an appropriate seed mix for use on newly constructed grass waterways. Seeding is done into the firm untilled soil to reduce erosion potential, and is a time saver to landowners who do not have to purchase small amounts of seed and locate a small drill that fits their new waterway. 52 landowners rented this drill in 2008 to plant 406 acres, many being less than 1 acre per use.

A Truax No-till drill available to rent from the SWCD for planting native grass and forbes. These seeds do not flow well through conventional planting equipment and must be planted very shallow. Because the seed is 'fluffy', each seed mix requires drill calibration to achieve proper planting rates. 18 landowners used this drill last year on 300 acres.

The SWCD also coordinates Low Interest Rate Loan Programs for both Ag Best Management Practices and Small Septic Treatment System repair or replacements. \$1.8 million in new loan funds have been allocated to Goodhue County thru this program since its start in 1995. As these loans can be 'revolved' during their first 10 years, the net result has been \$3.7 million in low interest loans.

Woodland management is promoted with a tree and shrub program along with providing a Forest Stewardship Planner in cooperation with the MN DNR Division of Forestry. 23,175 bare root trees and shrubs were sold last year to 189 individuals, provided with technical assistance when needed; including windbreak design, species recommendation, spacing, and other technical assistance.

### **Cooperating Agencies:**

The Goodhue Co. SWCD works closely with many local, state, and federal agencies to complete its work. The following are some of our main cooperating partners:

- Goodhue County (Administration, Public Works, Public Health, Land Use Management, County Attorney, Recorder Office)
- Cannon River Watershed Partnership
- Well Creek Watershed Partnership
- Zumbro River Watershed Partnership
- SE MN Water Resources Board
- SE SWCD Technical Support Joint Powers Board
- MN Board of Water & Soil Resources
- MN Department of Natural Resources: Forestry and Waters
- MN Pollution Control Agency
- University of MN Extension Service;
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- USDA Farm Service Agency