

conservation CONNECTION 2008

Brought to you by the Faribault County Soil and Water Conservation District
415 South Grove Street • Suite 8 • Blue Earth, MN 56013 • 507-526-2388



2007 SWCD/Planning & Zoning Highlights

By: Michele Stidtman
District Manager

Many times we are asked the question "Who is the SWCD, and why are they co-located with the Planning and Zoning Office?"

Soil and Water Conservation Districts, or SWCD's, are political subdivisions of the State established under Minnesota Statute 103C, and each is governed by a board of 5 elected supervisors. SWCD's fill the crucial niche of providing land and water conservation services to owners of private lands. In Faribault County, the SWCD is also the Water Plan Coordinator, and is responsible for developing and carrying out the goals and objectives set forth through this planning process.

As the Water Plan Coordinator, this provided Faribault County with the umbrella necessary to combine Planning and Zoning regulatory programs with SWCD implementation programs to better serve the residents. The merging of these two departments, through a Joint Powers Agreement, has allowed the county to offer one-stop shopping and to eliminate duplication of efforts at the county level.

The Office has been very busy over this past year, and the following is a partial list of some of our accomplishments:

- Huntley Sewer Service District formed and wastewater project construction completed.
- Faribault County Subsurface Sewage Treatment System Ordinance adopted.
- Held Faribault County Contractor Training for septic contractors.
- Received grant dollars to install demonstration urban BMP's and hire an Urban Outreach Specialist to work with 11 communities, conduct a Community Needs Assessment, and provide stormwater education and outreach.
- Held Urban BMP Workshop for all communities.
- Developed "Stormwater at the Fair" Booth, including constructing a Storm Drain Tunnel.
- Worked with Ecology students in leading a hands-on stormwater activity.
- Hosted tours of the Judicial Ditch 9 and Judicial Ditch 10 wetland restorations.
- Installed 30+ conservation projects with cost share dollars.
- Completed 25% of feedlot site inspections/re-registrations.
- Wrote Manure Management Plans for producers.
- Monitored 25 sites through the Faribault County Rain Gauge Network.
- Monitored 9 sites through the county Citizen Stream Monitoring Network.
- Sponsored Ecology Bus presentations for youth through the Community Ed program.
- Coordinated the Envirothon & Environmental Day Camp.

For a complete list of 2007 accomplishments, please check out the Faribault County SWCD 2007 Annual Report at www.faribaultcountyswcd.com



Row 1: Jim Robertson, Don Ziegler
Row: 2 Bill Anderson, Larry Wigern, Jean Millmann

Faribault SWCD Board of Supervisors

DISTRICT 1 - Don Ziegler, P/R

Townships - Elmore, Jo Daviess, Pilot Grove, Rome, Seely
Term Expires - 2008

DISTRICT 2 - Jean Millman, Vice Chairman

Townships - Blue Earth, Emerald, Prescott
Term Expires - 2010

DISTRICT 3 - Larry Wigern, Chairman

Townships - Brush Creek, Clark, Foster, Kiester, Walnut Lake
Term Expires - 2010

DISTRICT 4 - Jim Robertson, Treasurer

Townships - Delavan, Verona, Winnebago
Term Expires - 2008

DISTRICT 5 - Bill Anderson, Secretary

Townships - Barber, Dunbar, Lura,
Minnesota Lake
Term Expires - 2010



Row 1: Jesi Matthew, Michele Stidtman, Linda Berndt, Brandee Douglas
Row 2: Shane Johnson, Bruce Blakesley, Chad Viland, John Billings

Upcoming 2008 SWCD Events

- Monthly Board Meetings – second Monday of every month at 8:30 a.m. in the SWCD Office
- Tree Delivery – April
- Maple Watershed CWP Landowner Meeting, Delavan – April 11 at 8:00 a.m.
- Municipal BMP Workshop for City Employees/Supervisors, Wells – May 5
- Raingarden Design Workshop for City of Wells residents – May 5
- Envirothon, Lake Hanska Park – May 7
- Fifth Grade Environmental Day Camp, Faribault County Fairgrounds – May 23
- Faribault County Fair, Horticulture Building - July 21 – 26
- Backyard Conservation Presentation, Horticulture Building – July 22
- Prairie Ecology Bus Center, Fairgrounds – July 23 & 24
- Canoe Trip, Blue Earth and Le Sueur Rivers – TBA (Fall 2008)



Before Starting Spring Construction Projects...

By: Bruce Blakesley
Planning & Zoning Administrator

Before starting those Spring construction projects, rural homeowners need to be aware of when a county building permit is needed:

A building permit is required to construct or alter, in respect to height or area, any building. Fees are determined by the project being completed and are collected when a building permit is obtained at the Planning and Zoning Office.

Building Permits Are Needed For:

- New Construction (dwellings, barns, silos, grain bins, machine sheds, garages, and other structures) - \$100.00
- Expansion or addition to existing structure - \$50.00
- Accessory Structure (porch, deck, gazebo, pool, tool shed) - \$30.00
- Construction, alteration, and movement of buildings

Building Permits Are Not Needed For:

- Non-structural (reshingling, residing, window replacement, internal remodeling)

All building permits must meet setback and minimum lot size requirements. In addition, all applications for a building permit must submit either a Certificate of Compliance or valid Inspection Form for their septic system before the application can be approved. This also includes proof that the system has been maintained (pumped) within the last three years. If a building permit is not obtained prior to construction the permit fee is doubled.

Contact Bruce Blakesley, Planning & Zoning Administrator, at (507) 526-2388 for more information or go to faribaultcountyswcd.com Please call to make an appointment for a building permit application if you do not have a Certificate of Compliance AND Pumping Form, or are unsure if you meet current setback and lot size requirements

Faribault SWCD Staff

Michele Stidtman:
District Manager / Water Plan Coordinator
Brandee Douglas:
District Assistant Manager
Shane Johnson
District Technician

Chad Viland:
District Water Quality Technician
Linda Berndt:
District Secretary
John Billings
Watershed Technician
Jesi Matthew
Urban Outreach Specialist

Faribault County Planning & Zoning Staff

Bruce Blakesley:
Zoning Administrator



Conservation
is just a click away...

...the next time you're browsing the internet, check us out at

www.faribaultcountyswcd.com

with information on programs and services, staff and supervisors, links and much more!

Nutrient Management Planning In the Greater Blue Earth River Basin

Nutrient management planning is a tool to help producers manage the location, timing, rate, form, and method of all nutrient applications.

What is included in a Management Plan?

Nutrient and Manure Management Plans are made up of the same basic components:

- Total Farming Acres
- Field Maps
- Soils Tests
- Crop Rotations
- Fertilizer & Manure Applications
- Manure Sources
- Animal Numbers
- Manure Tests
- Manure Spreader Calibrations
- Conservation Practices
- Soil Survey Maps

A completed Nutrient Management Plan will give the producer a detailed overview of the farming operation and nutrient planning for the given crop year. This plan will also maintain and improve soil conditions while protecting natural resources. A completed plan is also a great record keeping system that will help to develop realistic yield goals, observe past cropping and management

decisions, and aide in the development of future management plans.

Who is required to have a Nutrient Management Plan?

- MPCA requires all registered feedlots to manage the manure produced at the facility by completing a Manure Management Plan.
- NRCS requires Nutrient Management Plans for participation in some incentive and cost-share programs.
- Not all farms are required to have a Nutrient Management Plan, but it is recommended to increase farm productivity and management.

If you are interested in utilizing a Nutrient Management Specialist, at no cost to feedlot producers in the Greater Blue Earth River Basin, contact Annalie Plaetz at 507-831-1153 ext. 3 or annalie.plaetz@mn.nacdnet.net

Serving the communities of Blue Earth, Cottonwood, Faribault, Freeborn, Jackson, LeSuer, Martin, Waseca and Watonwan



Faribault County SWCD/Planning & Zoning Website

What's in it for you?

By: Brandee Douglas
District Assistant Manager

The Faribault County Soil & Water Conservation District / Planning & Zoning has an extensive website full of information at hand for you.

- Ag Erosion Control - cost share, conservation easements
- Education Programs
- GIS Information – links to interactive maps including aerial photos and soils
- Rain Gardens – step by step guide
- Stormwater – lawn care, landscaping tips, Construction Stormwater Permits
- Trees – planting, maintenance, plant selector, sample order forms
- Water – impaired waters, rivers, lakes, wetlands, groundwater
- Monthly Rain Gauge Network reports
- Building Permits – fees, setbacks
- Applications – Building Permit, Conditional Use, Variance
- Commercial applicator tests available
- Septic Systems – licensed installers, pumpers, rules, forms
- Septic System Homeowners Guide
- Zoning Ordinance - includes Tower, Feedlot, Septic Systems, and 911 Rural Signing Ordinances.
- Zoning Maps
- Board and Staff contact information
- State Revolving Fund (SRF) loans
- Local Water Management Plan
- Citizen Stream Monitoring Program – yearly reports, maps
- Links to: “Guide to Rural Living” site for Faribault County –an education tool for rural homeowners on zoning, building permits, septic systems, feedlots, solid waste, wells, erosion control, 911 signs, wetlands, trees, burning permits, and spills.
- Small Community Stormwater Project – public resource and project partner information

The next time you're browsing the internet, check us out at
www.faribaultcountyswcd.com

Citizen Stream Monitoring in Faribault County

By: Brandee Douglas, District Assistant Manager

Minnesota streams are important for recreation, transportation, and as a source of clean water for many plants and animals...including humans! The Citizen Stream Monitoring Program (CSMP) combines the knowledge and commitment of interested citizens with the technical expertise and resources of the MPCA and local agencies, such as the Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), to develop a more comprehensive statewide network for monitoring our state's 92,000 miles of streams.

Goals are to:

- Help determine the condition of streams by expanding our water quality monitoring network.
- Provide the opportunity for anyone interested to participate in a basic stream monitoring program.
- Facilitate awareness and understanding of water quality issues, and promote shared responsibility for protection of our water resources.

CSMP records can be useful in determining where runoff may be contributing

sediment and other pollutants to streams, and identifying changes over time to measure improvements or declines in water quality. Increased monitoring will help identify problems, develop strategies, prioritize activities for improving water quality, and track progress toward improvement.

Any person or group willing to devote a small amount of time and energy to conduct simple stream checks on a regular basis can become a volunteer monitor. About once per week during the spring and summer, volunteers establish a spot on a nearby stream and measure transparency, appearance, recreational suitability, stream stage, and precipitation.

Summaries of CSMP results from 2003 – 2007, including maps and other program information, can be found on the Faribault County SWCD website at www.faribault-countyswcd.com. Click on “Programs & Services”, then “Citizen Stream Monitoring Program.”

If you are interested in becoming a monitor please contact the SWCD at 507-526-2388. We are currently looking for addi-



tional monitors on the Blue Earth River north of Winnebago; Blue Earth River (West or Middle Branches) south of Blue Earth; Brush Creek in the Kiester/Bricelyn area; Foster Creek; Rice Creek near Delavan, Bass Lake, or the county line; County Ditch 3 near Easton and the county line; and the Maple River.

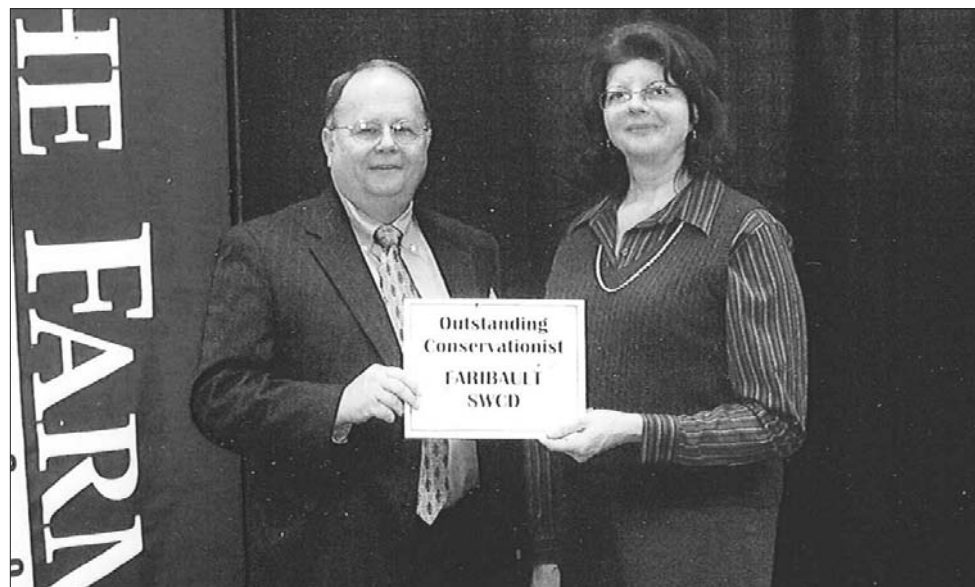
I also want to thank our 2007 CSMP volunteers for their continued commitment and efforts: Orville Goemann, Kay Bogan, Laurie Ristau, Robert Worner, Deanna Pomije, Wilma Bittinger, Deb White, Brian Hedland, and Barbara Baker.

2007 Outstanding Conservationist Named

The community of Huntley has been selected as 2007 “Outstanding Conservationist” for Faribault County. They were recognized at the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts Annual Convention on December 4 in Rochester, represented by Dick Mair and Don Wishman of the Huntley Sewer District Board. Each year, the state's SWCD's recognize individuals and organizations for their outstanding accomplishments with implementing conservation practices and improving Minnesota's natural resources.

Huntley is an unincorporated community located in west-central Faribault County and was without a centralized wastewater collection and treatment system. The community consists of approximately 50 households and 10 businesses. Most residences were equipped with individual septic tanks that discharged directly into a Judicial Ditch system, contributing to the degradation of the water quality in Center Creek, and ultimately the Blue Earth River.

The residents of this community worked together with the County to secure funding



Dick Mair, Huntley Sewer District Board, was presented with a “Certificate of Merit” from the Farmer Magazine and MASWCD at the MASWCD Annual Convention in Rochester.

that would assist them in installing a force main to the nearby community of Winnebago which currently has a mechanical treatment plant. The County commends the residents for their support and

contribution to the project that is currently underway with an expected completion and restoration date in early Spring 2008.

Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act

By: Shane Johnson
District Technician

In 1991, reacting to public concern about Minnesota's disappearing wetlands, the Minnesota Legislature approved the Wetland Conservation Act (WCA),

The Legislature has amended the WCA significantly three times, mostly to accommodate the varying needs of the different geographic areas of Minnesota.

In Faribault County, WCA is implemented by the SWCD and the City of Blue Earth. Each LGU has a Technical Evaluation Panel (TEP), which provides a forum to discuss site-specific interpretations of laws, rules and technical data. The panel also provides an opportunity for gaining consensus on a number of primarily technical issues in order to make a recommendation to the decision maker. The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) administers the program statewide and enforcement is provided through the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

The Wetland Conservation Act recognizes a number of wetland benefits including:

- Water quality, including filtering pollutants out of surface water and groundwater, using nutrients that would otherwise pollute public waters, trapping sediments, protecting shoreline, and recharging groundwater supplies.
- Floodwater and storm water retention,

including reducing the potential for flooding in the watershed.

- Public recreation and education, including hunting and fishing areas, wildlife viewing areas, and nature areas.
- Commercial benefits, including wild rice and cranberry growing areas and aquaculture areas.
- Fish and wildlife benefits.
- Low-flow augmentation during times of drought.

To retain the benefits of wetlands and reach the legislature's goal of no-net-loss of wetlands, the Wetland Conservation Act requires anyone proposing to drain, fill, or excavate a wetland first to try to avoid disturbing the wetland; second, to try to minimize any impacts, and finally, to replace any lost wetland acres, functions, and values. Certain wetland activities are exempt from the act, allowing projects with minimal impact or projects located on land where certain pre-establishment land uses are present to proceed without regulation.

A local government unit decision on a replacement plan, public road project notice, banking plan, exemption, or no-loss or wetland boundary or type may be brought before BWSR through an appeal. However, before BWSR will hear an appeal, all local administrative appeal options must first be exhausted. Generally,

a decision must have been made only after a TEP recommendation was made to the LGU and a hearing was subsequently held by the LGU. It is important to note that this does not mean all exemption and no-loss decisions would require a hearing, it just provides the appellant an opportunity for a hearing at the local level.

In accordance with Minnesota Statutes, section 103G, and Minnesota Rules, chapter 8420 (Wetland Conservation Act Rules), DNR Conservation Officers, Wetland Enforcement Officers, and other peace officers may issue cease and desist orders, restoration orders, and replacement orders in the event of a violation of WCA. The DNR is currently in the process of flying over each county in Minnesota looking for potential wetland violations. In 2006, 526 cease and desist orders were issued for WCA violations from the flights across the state.

If you are considering an activity that may have an impact on an existing wetland, please contact the Faribault County SWCD and the Faribault County FSA/NRCS to make sure that your proposed project is not in violation of any state or federal laws.

When does my septic system need to be in compliance?

By: Bruce Blakesley
Planning & Zoning Administrator

With the exception of the following requirements, septic systems need to be in compliance by 2012 to conform with the Faribault County Zoning Ordinance and MPCA Chapter 7080 and 7081.

• SHORELAND

State statute was passed in 1994 which required the upgrade of all SSTS within shoreland areas.

• BUILDING PERMITS

All applications for a building permit must submit either a Certificate of Compliance or valid Inspection Form at the time an application is made. This also includes proof that the system has been maintained (pumped) within the last 3 years.

• PROPERTY TRANSACTIONS

When selling property, the seller is required to provide information to the buyer regarding the status of the septic system on the property. A SSTS Property Transaction Form must be provided by the seller to the buyer at or before closing. If the existing SSTS is out of compliance, a septic system which meets existing ordinance requirements needs to be installed within 10 months of the date of the transaction.

Frost Depth Gauge

By: Shane Johnson, District Technician

In December of 2006, a Frost Depth Gauge was installed by the National Weather Services near the Faribault County Ag Center in Blue Earth. Gauge readings are taken weekly during winter months by SWCD Staff and submitted to the National Weather Service. The information is used to help calculate surface water runoff rates and potential flooding problems.

2007/2008 Frost Depth Measurements

Date	Frost Depth
12/4/07	6"
12/10/07	7"
12/18/07	8"
12/26/07	8.5"
1/2/08	8.25"
1/7/08	9.75"
1/14/08	9.75"
1/22/08	13.0"
1/28/08	14.75"
2/4/08	15.75"
2/11/08	16.5"
2/19/08	16.5"
2/25/08	18.75"
3/5/08	19.5"
3/10/08	19.75"
3/17/08	19.75"
3/24/08	19.0"

Federal Conservation Programs

Since we are currently waiting on a new Farm Bill, there are still many unknowns on our Federal Conservation Programs. The following is just a brief update on some of our current conservation programs and issues.

New Practice – SAFE

The new State Acres For wildlife Enhancement initiative is designed to increase pheasant habitat. This is a new practice offered under the Continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CCRP). If you have an area that was previously not eligible for CRP, now may be your time to enroll it. SAFE allows you to enroll anywhere from 10-40 acres into grassland habitat. You are allowed to use adjacent land to reach the 10 acre minimum. Since, we are currently waiting on a sign-up for this practice; we are now only compiling applications. However, I still encourage you to stop in and talk with us if you are interested, because there are only 23,100 acres allocated in MN for this practice.

EQIP

Do you have conservation concerns on your land? Do you have a waterway that is causing you problems? Do you want to save money on fertilizer costs by applying only what your crops need? Do you want to try strip-till or no-till for the first time? If you have any of these questions lurking in your mind, please contact us at the NRCS in the AgCenter of Blue Earth. We may be able to assist you. Through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP); our largest conservation program, we may be able to provide you with both technical and financial assistance to help solve some of your conservation concerns. We take applications for this program all year round, and fund applications gener-

ally once per year. The EQIP program offers conservation payments for installing a wide range of conservation practices. Practices such as grassed waterways, erosion control structures, nutrient management, strip-till, organic farming, rotational grazing and manure storage are just a few available.

Buffers

There are many benefits to installing grass buffer strips along drainage ditches. They are not only good at filtering nutrients before it reaches the water, but they may also give you more flexibility in your manure applications. They provide great wildlife habitat and our CRP rental rates went up this last year providing greater financial incentives. If you own land along a county ditch; a buffer may some day be required. Through the CCRP you can sign up for buffers at any time. Generally you may enroll anywhere from 30'-120' wide buffer. Stop by our office at the AgCenter to sign-up.

Tiling

If you are planning on doing tiling this spring NOW is the time to stop in our office to request a wetland determination to ensure you remain in compliance with USDA wetland provisions. The Natural Resources Conservation Service can be reached at 507-526-2400 and our office is located in the AgCenter in Blue Earth at 415 South Grove Street.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service is an Equal Opportunity Employer and Provider.

Written by: Deanna Pomije, NRCS

Cost-Share Program Funding Opportunities

By: Shane Johnson, District Technician

State Cost-Share

The purpose of this program is to help local landowners or land occupiers offset the costs of installing conservation practices that protect and improve water quality by controlling soil erosion and reducing sedimentation. Through the State Cost-Share Program, landowners or occupiers can request financial and technical assistance from their local SWCD to implement state approved conservation practices. The program provides up to 75 percent of the total eligible costs of a practice. The projects are selected by

the SWCD Board of Supervisors and must have high priority erosion and water quality problems and meet Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) specifications.

Approved construction practices include: diversions, farmstead and field windbreaks, grass waterways, grade stabilization structures, ag waste projects, water and sediment control basins, streambank and shoreland protection projects, and unused well sealing.

Clean Water Legacy

Funding is currently available through this grant for the

following practices: grass waterways, grade stabilization structures, water and sediment control basins, and alternative tile intakes. Cost-sharing is available for up to 75 percent of the total eligible costs. The projects are selected by the SWCD Board of Supervisors and must have high priority erosion and water quality problems.

Additional Programs

Cost-share funding is also available for specific landowners through the Blue Earth River and Maple River Clean Water Partnerships.

SRF (State Revolving Fund) Loan Program Overview

By: Chad Viland
District Water Quality Technician

The SRF program started as a pilot program in Faribault County in 1995. The program was initially designed to offer a loan based assistance program to implement Water Plan Goals and Objectives. After working with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, this program was successful in leveraging stable funding, and was expanded statewide by 1997.

What SRF loan money is supposed to do:

1. Provide individuals, organizations, and businesses access to additional funding to address environmental issues. This includes, but is not limited to, conservation equipment, facility improvement, and conservation practice installation.

2. Allow individuals access to loan money for partial fixes or phased fixes for livestock operations. To obtain Cost-Share or Grant Money you must, generally, fix all your problems and even with Cost-Share this can still be a burden.

What SRF loan money cannot do:

1. Provide free money to individuals, organizations, or businesses. This is a loan, not a grant, and must be paid back with interest. Interest is set at a maximum of 3%.

2. Work with livestock operations above 1000 animal units. This is a maximum set by State Statute.

3. Provide low interest loan money to individuals or entities that are not credit worthy. They must meet lender's credit guidelines.

4. Refinance a previous purchase.

5. Expand operations.

Faribault County does not fund Septic Upgrades, as the county has their own loan program for these projects.

The maximum SRF loan amount is now set at \$50,000.00. Since 1997, Faribault County has issued 2.5 million dollars in SRF loans on nearly 4 million dollars of projects. We have done this with less than \$900,000.00 of funding, as the remainder has come from repayments.

Program funding is generally limited year to year and the SWCD Office usually maintains a waiting list.



Maple River Clean Water Partnership Landowner Meeting

Date: Friday, April 11

Time: 8:00-9:30

Place: Delavan Community Room

Come and hear about CWP grant funding for COST SHARE & INCENTIVES on implementation of conservation practices in the Maple River Watershed!

Please RSVP to Roxanne Franke, Blue Earth County SWCD, at 507.345.4744 ext. 125 or the Faribault County SWCD at 507.526.2388 by Tuesday, April 8

The Maple River Watershed includes portions of Barber, Clark, Delavan, Dunbar, Lura, Minnesota Lake, Prescott, Verona, Walnut Lake and Winnebago Townships

Getting to Know Stormwater

By: Jesi Matthew, Urban Outreach Specialist

The term "stormwater" includes all of the rain and snowmelt that does not infiltrate into the ground or evaporate but flows over the surface of the land. In developed areas, it is also the source of much contention among neighbors, one of the top sources of water pollution in our country, and often a huge headache for municipalities. Why would something as seemingly harmless as flowing water cause such troubles?

Precipitation in natural, undeveloped areas will seep into the ground very close to the place where it originally falls, but precipitation reacts differently when it hits shingles, asphalt, cement, compacted lawns and gravel lots. These types of hard materials are known as "impervious surfaces" because they don't allow water to infiltrate through them. As stormwater flows over impervious surfaces it collects pollutants

such as grass clippings, car oil, antifreeze, sand, dirt, and pet waste. Stormwater flows into storm drains which lead directly to streams, lakes, rivers, and wetlands without treatment.

What can be done about stormwater and the pollution it carries? First of all, we all need to be mindful of the pollutants that are on our streets, driveways, and sidewalks and where those pollutants come from. Then we need to try and prevent this pollution from happening. Pollution prevention is everybody's job and every effort makes a difference.

Another way to relieve the damage done by stormwater is to provide it with places where it can soak into the ground - rain gardens are an effective and attractive way of doing this. Rain gardens are shallow depressions in the landscape that are plant-



ed with deep-rooted vegetation. As water seeps into the ground under a rain garden, the soil particles filter out pollutants and the plants use the excess nutrients to grow. To learn more about stormwater and rain gardens, please visit our website at www.faribaultcountyswcd.com!

Clean Water Partnership Update

By: John Billings Watershed Technician



The Blue Earth Clean Water Partnership (CWP) has been working for 5 years and will continue until mid 2009. But what exactly is the CWP? The Blue Earth River CWP is actually the new name for the area covered by the original Lily and Center Creek Clean Water Partnership. The Blue Earth River CWP was created out of the need to evaluate and limit pollution impact of the Lily and Center Creeks on the Blue Earth River. In June of 2004 the area covered by the partnership was extended to include a larger portion of the Blue

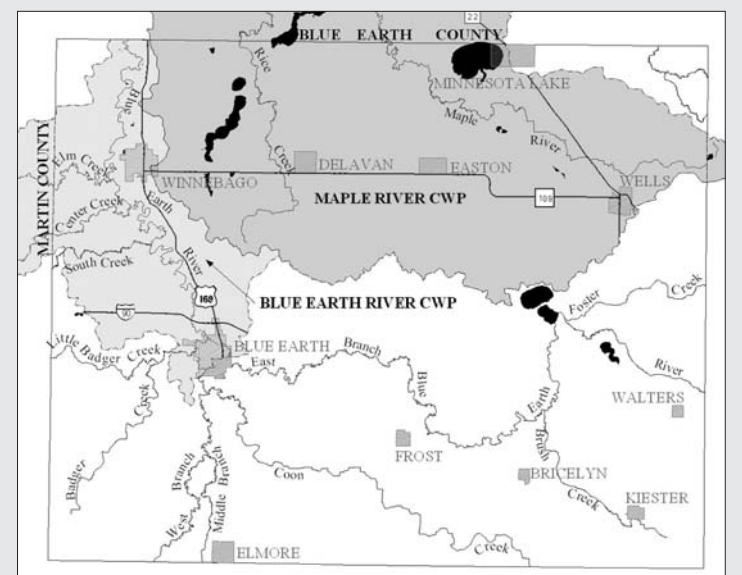
Earth River watershed. The Blue Earth CWP works closely with Martin and Faribault County Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD). This close relationship allows for alternative and extra funding initiatives on current conservation programs that the SWCD and Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) offices provide.

One goal of the CWP is to help improve the water quality for streams, lakes, and ditches in the Center and Elm Creek watersheds that feed the Blue Earth River. We attempt to accomplish this goal through education of youth and adults of the Blue Earth River watershed about the importance of clean water. The CWP offers educational grants to the local schools. We also offer various community educational opportunities to encourage environmental projects such as rain gardens and rain barrel installation. We also support local land owners to employ agricultural Best Management Practices (BMP's) such as grassed waterways, stream

bank stabilization, water and sediment control basins, stream and intake buffers, and wetland restorations. The CWP will cost-share up to 75% on these types of conservation projects.

Additionally, the Blue Earth CWP currently monitors local streams that empty into the Blue Earth River. The sampling involves waters from Elm Creek, Center Creek and Dutch Creek. These water

samples are analyzed for a variety of parameters including sediment, pollutants, and bacteria. The results are then used to compare seasonal loads that can help us realize seasonal trends or potential issues. The results are also submitted to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA). The MPCA evaluates the waters regionally with the conditions of the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers



We need to keep our focus on the revitalization of our water resources. Everyone can play a role in the future of Minnesota's waters. If you would like to know more about the Blue Earth CWP programs, contact John Billings at: 507-526-2388 or j.billings@faribaultcountyswcd.com

Maple River Watershed Report

By: Roxanne Franke, Blue Earth County SWCD

The Maple River Watershed is located in Blue Earth and the northern portion of Faribault county in south central Minnesota. The Maple River is an important tributary to the LeSueur River.

Water quality goals of the CWP are to reduce sediment, nutrient, and bacterial pollution in the Maple River. The past year the Maple River project concentrated on these goals by: Providing education programs including the

Ecology Bus, construction of wood duck boxes, and a river quest program. Water monitoring data was collected from late March until early October and is currently under analysis. Best Management Practice (BMP) implementation was successful with the installation of a grassed waterway, three terraces, and two rain gardens.

The Maple River project has \$313,598.24 implementation and incentive funds available for conservation projects that

can be successfully completed before June 1, 2009.

Eligible conservation implementation practices and incentives include:

- waterways
- terraces
- water & sediment control basins
- harvestable buffer strips
- conservation tillage
- nutrient management
- alternative tile intake
- incentives for current programs

The Maple River Watershed will improve and provide environmental benefits for generations to come with your support.

For more information contact Roxanne Franke at (507) 345-4744 ext. 125 or Shane Johnson, Faribault County SWCD, at (507) 526-2388. Additional information can also be found at <http://www.blueearthswcd.org/watershed/index.php>