

Pipestone County Conservation & Zoning



2011 Annual Report



*Mission: To Promote Conservation of Natural Resources through
Education, Technical Assistance and Stewardship.*

Staff

Kyle Krier, District Administrator

Angie Raatz, District Conservationist

Stephanie LaBrune, Administrative Assistant

District Supervisors

Ian Cunningham, Chairman

Cal Spronk, Vice-Chairman

Anna Mae Fritz, Secretary/Treasurer

Ed Loll, Programs

Joyce LaBrune, PR&I

Introduction:

The Pipestone Soil and Water Conservation District was formed in 1952 and operates under MN Statue 103C. In 1997 the Conservation District and County Zoning Office were joined and now operate as the Pipestone County Conservation and Zoning Office. The District is co-located and works jointly with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). This Annual Report provides a reflection of 2011's efforts and accomplishments.

The Pipestone SWCD Board meets every second Thursday of each month.

State Cost-Share Program Funds

In 2011 2 Shelterbelts were installed utilizing 2010 State Cost-Share Funds. Tree Project expenditures were \$6783. 1 Rain garden was also installed with 2010 state-cost share funds. The project utilized \$4025.

District Tree Program



Established tree planting

This year there were a total of 5,600 trees sold. Trees were utilized for field windbreaks, farmstead / feedlot windbreaks, and wildlife habitat planting. Tree fabric was also installed on most plantings.

District Monitoring

Monthly reports from 11 Rain Gauge Observers were submitted to the State Climatologist and 10 DNR monitoring wells water depths were recorded monthly and submitted.

Missouri River Watershed Water Monitoring Grant

The Pipestone SWCD was awarded a grant of approximately \$40,000 to take water samples at 8 sites within Pipestone and the surrounding counties. The grant period is for fiscal years 2011-2012, so far the money that was obtained

through the grant was used for monitoring equipment, sampling costs, and to purchase a camera.

USDA Programs

District staff provided secretarial assistance to the NRCS throughout the year and also assisted the USDA in implementation and producer signup as well as the development of plans for programs such as the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), EQIP, and SAFE Programs.

Agricultural Best Management Practices Loan Program

Approximately 12 producers utilized low interest Ag BMP loan dollars to who implemented non-point source reduction projects. Projects included Ag waste, Septic Systems, and no-till equipment purchases.

Educational Events

This year the District sponsored the Conservation Farmer of the Year award program. Brothers Brian & Jerry Houselog, of Holland won the award. The Houselog's operate a grain farm raising Corn and Soybeans, & also have several head of cattle. They have been farming for a number of years and ultimately began doing conservation practices when they took over a neighboring farm that was well known for its conservation practices. Over the years, they have planted several windbreaks, installed grassed waterways, filter strips, terraces, and have also done a good job maintaining a wetland area. Most recently they have installed include several sediment control basins as well as a prescribed grazing system for their cattle. The Houselog's have shown a remarkable will to be first-class stewards of the land by practicing strip till farming and keeping their nutrient management plans up to date.

A contract is maintained with the local Radio station which provides the airing 2 or more 30 second conservation PSA per day.

District staff provided funding and assistance at the annual Environmental Fair. 1000 students from the South West region of Minnesota attended the educational event.

District staff organized an environmental field day where approximately 50 kids from kindergarten to 4th grade attended.

The District was a sponsor of the area Women's Conservation Field Day in Marshall, MN. The field day was organized by the Southwest Area SWCD's. The program was geared to educate several women landowners within the area on water quality. This year 45 women from the surrounding Counties were in attendance.

\$3000 in funding was provided to local schools who utilized the Prairie Ecology Bus.

Land Water Management Funds

Approximately \$5000 in program dollars was utilized to provide 50% cost-share assistance to seal 20 abandoned wells. This was twice as much as what was use in 2010.

The remaining \$12,952 LWM & County Levy Funds were utilized by the district to construct its first rain garden in Pipestone and also on water monitoring and educational events.

Feedlot Delegation

Pipestone County is delegated by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) to oversee and manage feedlots. Accomplishments included 63 onsite compliance inspections, 5 interim and 5 construction short form permits issued. Staff also assisted 6 local producers with manure spreader calibrations.

Geographic information systems (GIS)

GIS services were provided to County departments and City of Pipestone. Services

provided included loading of software and layers, creation of projects, and training of staff. Staff also create and maintain layers along with created maps as requested.

County Planning & Zoning

Within the County Planning and Zoning Department 67 land use permits were issued and 3 wind turbines were permitted. There were also 3 variances and 7 conditional use hearings held throughout the year.

Drill Rental Program



In 2011 the District's Brillion drill was rented out to 15 producers and approximately 225 acres of permanent and rotational grasses/hay was planted with it.

Rock River Watershed



*Rock River TMDL / Commercial Animal Waste
Technician Meeting*

A Clean Water Legacy grant was received by the Rock County SWCD to clean up impaired waters within the Rock River. The Pipestone SWCD held producer incentive meetings in conjunction with the Rock SWCD to help educate and persuade crop and livestock producers that live within the Rock River Watershed to minimize any pollution that may be going on within the watershed. Several Producers received their first incentive payment for implementing a manure management system. And there was a large number

New SWCD Supervisor

In 2011 the Pipestone SWCD had the pleasure to mentor and work with newly elected District 5 supervisor Joyce LaBrune. Besides being an SWCD Supervisor Joyce works at home on the farm. She and her husband Tim are cattle producers, crop farmers and also have a craft business that they run.

MN Department Of Health Grant

This year the district received \$20,000 from the Minnesota Department of Health to help them with their Well Database.

Clean Water Legacy SSTS Grant Program

The district distributed approximately \$38,000 of Low- Income Clean Water grants to 8 residents within the county that updated their septic system in 2011. The low-income grant program is offered to all of the residents within Pipestone County who income qualifies under the USDA Moderate Income guidelines for Pipestone County. The program provides these homeowners a chance to obtain up to 50% of the cost of a septic system so that they can update or

replace their septic systems so that they are in compliance with the state rules.

Clean Water Legacy Feedlot Cost-Share Program



In 2011 the Pipestone SWCD was awarded \$211,589 in Clean Water Legacy Feedlot Water Quality funds. The project funds were utilized on a manure storage basin. The total project costs were \$237,182.46. The producer was awarded \$177,357.00 from the Clean Water Land & Legacy Funds and the remaining \$30,000 was given to the S.W. Prairie T.S.A for their Technical Assistance expertise on the project and \$4,232 was given to the district for administration of the project.

Subsurface Sewage Treatment Systems (SSTS) Program



Subsurface Sewage Treatment System

Site inspections were completed for verification of soil and system installation certification for 27 Septic systems. The office distributed approximately \$67,000 of county low interest loan dollars for 9 system updates, and also distributed approximately \$38,000 of CWL low income grant dollars for 8 system updates.

Recycling and Household Hazardous Waste Program



The Pipestone County Commissioners Touring a Recycling Facility in Redwood Co.

Monthly Electronic, Appliance, Fluorescent light / ballast, Lead Acid Battery, & Empty pesticide container collections were held from which approximately 312,000lbs. of electronics were collected and recycled. This year 2 household hazardous waste (HHW) collections were also held and staffed from which 7200 lbs. hazardous material was collected, 6,750 florescent bulbs, 230 ballasts, and 794 major household appliances were collected and recycled.