



# Hawk Creek Headlines

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## Hawk Creek Watershed Project

*Looking For Solutions*

### What is a Watershed?

A watershed is the area of land where the rainfall and snowmelt drain into a particular stream, river, wetland or lake.

## Project Update

The Hawk Creek Watershed Project recently completed the first phase of a water quality improvement project. This consisted of a two-year long study of the quality of the water in the Hawk Creek Watershed. The results of this study identified 4 different pollutants affecting the watershed.

This spring, the second phase which focuses on implementation of best management practices (BMPs) begins. Runoff, failing septic systems, and erosion have all been

identified as problems that contribute to the pollutants in the watershed.

By increasing the number of BMPs on the land, we hope to reduce runoff and erosion. This should lead to improvements in water quality.

During the implementation phase, landowner participation is critical. The funding and technical assistance available is for landowners who will voluntarily come forward and have these practices implemented on their land.

The monitoring program will continue during the implementation phase. As best management practices are implemented, the project should be able to monitor the improvements in water quality.



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## Funding Available for Watershed Residents

To help reduce the amount of pollutants entering the watershed, the Hawk Creek Watershed Project has money available for implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs).

Cost sharing, low interest loans, and technical assistance are available. Apply early as funding is distributed for qualified practices on a first come, first serve basis.

Some of the practices that qualify for funding include:

- Buffer Strips**
- Ag Waste Systems**
- Stream Bank Erosion Control**
- Septic System Upgrades**
- Grassed Waterways**
- Nutrient Management**
- Field Windbreaks**

To see if your land qualifies, or for more information contact:

- Renville SWCD  
320-523-1559
- Chippewa SWCD  
320-269-2139 ext. 3
- Kandiyohi SWCD  
320-235-3906 ext. 3
- Hawk Creek Watershed Project  
320-523-3666

## Results

Five water quality issues were identified in the watershed. Each one is a problem for either recreational, financial or health reasons.

**Bacteria** - In high amounts, bacteria indicate that dangerous diseases could be present, such as hepatitis A.

**Phosphorus** - In excess, this nutrient causes algae blooms which degrade stream habitat and discolor the water.

**Total Suspended Solids** - This soil or sediment suspended in the water causes discolored water and degraded stream habitat.

**Nitrogen** - In high amounts, this nutrient can cause blue baby syndrome.

**Water Quantity** - In excess, water can lead to flooding,

## Meet The Staff

A new year brings new staff and a new location to the office of the Hawk Creek Watershed Project. The project office is now housed in Olivia at the Renville County Courthouse on the lower level.

Two new employees make up the project staff. Dean Dambrotten is the Watershed Planner/Field Technician. He will be working with landowners to implement Best Management Practices on land in the watershed. Pam Skon is the Water Quality Outreach Technician. She will be focusing on information education, water quality monitoring, and coordinating the volunteer water monitoring program.

Dean grew up on the banks of Hawk Creek northwest of Sacred Heart. He has farmed the land in that area for the last 20 years. Dean has implemented many erosion control practices on his own farm, including CREP. He has served on various co-op boards and the Renville County

Corn Growers Board.

Pam grew up in Northern Minnesota, moving from Bemidji this past December. In May 2000 she graduated from Bemidji State University with a B.S. in biology. She has worked for the past two summers with the DNR at Itasca State Park. Pam is looking forward to the monitoring season and meeting the watershed residents.

If you have any questions about the project, you can reach Dean or Pam at the Olivia office at (320) 523-3666. Dean can also be reached at the Chippewa SWCD (320) 269-2139, Renville SWCD (320) 523-1559, and the Kandiyohi SWCD (320) 231-0008

### 1999 Monitoring Results

#### Mouth of Hawk Creek

**53 tons** of soil passed into the Minnesota River from the Hawk Creek **per day!**

In 6 months, **33 tons** of Phosphorus passed through the Hawk Creek. That's enough to fertilize **1680 acres of corn!**

#### Mouth of Beaver Creek

**61 tons** of soil passed into the Minnesota River from the Hawk Creek **per day!**

In 6 months, **19 tons** of Phosphorus passed through Beaver Creek. That's enough to fertilize **1000 acres of corn!**



Dean Dambrotten



Pam Skon

## EQIP Funding Now Available!!

The Hawk Creek Watershed Project has received \$250,000 dollars in EQIP funding. EQIP, the Environmental Quality Incentive Program, is a voluntary conservation program designed to assist farmers facing environmental problems.

EQIP offers up to 75% cost sharing for qualified conservation practices. Some of the practices include: ag waste management systems, grassed waterways, terraces, livestock pipelines, fencing and other components needed for a planned grazing system. Incentive payments may be available for practicing manure, nutrient, and pest management. For some practices it is possible to receive cost sharing up to 90%

**Funding is available for a limited time only! Act now to take advantage of this opportunity!**

in conjunction with other programs.

Applications must be received by early April for the first round of funding. If any money remains, a second round will be funded in early June. It is very important to apply immediately to increase chances of your project getting funded.

The Hawk Creek Watershed has been identified as a Conservation Priority Area, this means that any landowner in the watershed with a viable project will receive first opportunity for funding.

For more information or to apply for EQIP funding, please contact your local SWCD or NRCS office.

## Get Involved Through Volunteer Monitoring!

With the monitoring season just around the corner, it's time to get the volunteer citizen monitoring network up and running.

Any resident of the watershed can be a volunteer monitor. This is a great opportunity to see what shape



the creek is in by your home.

Volunteers can choose from several different monitoring activities, ranging from checking a rain gauge to measuring the clarity of a stream. Monitoring locations must be in

the watershed, and the volunteers

decide where they would like to monitor.

All that is asked of volunteers is their time. Supplies and training will be provided by the project.

For more information, or to become a volunteer monitor, please contact Pam Skon at 320-523-3673.

## Focus on: Agricultural Waste/Manure Nutrient Management

Anyone owning livestock has a valuable resource on their farm. The nutrients found in agricultural waste can be used as fertilizer in place of some or all commercial fertilizers.

These manure nutrients, can become pollutants if not managed carefully. Runoff can cause these nutrients to end up in the ditches and streams.

There is funding and technical support available to help improve current practices and implement new practices. Landowners/operators are invited to take advantage of this opportunity.

Some of the included practices are:

**Livestock Exclusion/Pasture Management**

**Manure/Nutrient Management Plans**

**Tillage/Residue Management Plans**

**Ag Waste Storage Facilities**

Contact the Hawk Creek Watershed Project or your local SWCD/NRCS for more information.

# Hawk Creek Watershed Project

Hawk Creek Watershed Project  
Renville County Courthouse  
Lower Level  
500 E DePue Ave  
Olivia, MN 56277

Non-Profit Organization  
US Postage Paid  
Permit # 680  
Willmar, MN 56201

**Sponsored by:**  
**Hawk Creek Watershed Project**  
**Cooperating Agencies and**  
**Prairie Country RC&D Council**  
1005 High Ave NE  
Willmar, MN 56201

## How Well Do You Know Your Watershed?

- The Hawk Creek Watershed drains 612,822 acres of land. That's 958 square miles!
- Approximately 98% of the original wetland in the watershed have been drained.
- Watershed contains many different creeks, including Beaver Creek, Sacred Heart Creek, and Middle Creek.
- The Hawk Creek begins in Eagle Lake and flows 65 miles to the Minnesota River.
- The Hawk Creek Watershed is in parts of Chippewa, Renville, and Kandiyohi counties.
- 34 miles of Hawk Creek and 26 miles of Chetomba Creek were channelized in the 1960's.

