



Hawk Creek Watershed Project • 500 East DePue Avenue • Olivia MN • 56277 • (320) 523-3666

Summer 2006

Special Points of Interest

- Hawk Creek Offers Cost-sharing
- Meet the Staff
- Parks Profile
- Septic Loan Funds
- Urban Storm Sewers
- Kids Corner
- 20th Anniversary of CRP
- Water Monitoring Update
- Did You Know

"The scarcest resource is not oil, metals, clean air, capital, labor, or technology. It is our willingness to listen to each other and learn from each other and to seek the truth rather than seek to be right."

-Donella Meadows,
environmental scientist, teacher
and writer

Hawk Creek Watershed Project—"Staying One Step Ahead of Regulation."

Hawk Creek Offers Cost-sharing on Conservation Practices

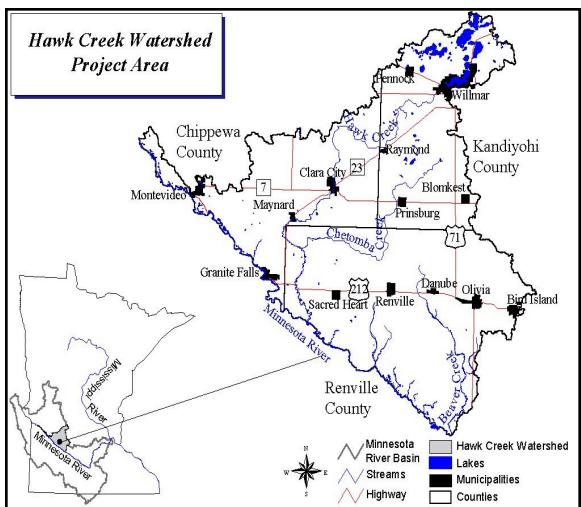
The Hawk Creek Watershed Project has received a number of grants to promote conservation practices in the watershed. According to water quality monitoring results, there are elevated levels of nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment in the watershed. The nutrients come from a variety of sources. They include industrial discharges, municipal wastewater, septic systems, farmland, parking lots and lawns. The cost-share funds are available to land operators who need assistance in correcting and preventing pollution challenges. The Hawk Creek Watershed Project work area also includes the Chetomba and Beaver Creek watersheds.

Some of the most common conservation projects are:

- **Terraces, waterways, and retention basins**, which control sheet and gully erosion.
- **Livestock waste storage facilities** which range from clean-water diversions to animal waste storage facilities.
- **Alternative surface drainage systems** reduce the amount of sediment that is delivered to a ditch system or watercourse. Rock inlets or pattern tile can be used to replace open tile inlets.
- **Livestock exclusions** are anything that addresses over-use of the stream by livestock. Exclusions can include fencing and stream crossings.

- **Buffer strip initiative** is found to be critical. A one-time \$80 per acre bonus payment will be provided to landowners who enroll buffer strips into the Conservation Reserve Program.

For more information call:
(320) 523-3666.



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Meet the Staff

Darrell Schindler joined the Hawk Creek Staff in June as the Project Coordinator.

Darrell's duties are to oversee and assist the project technicians with landowner contacts and educational activities for the watershed project, along with writing project reports and securing additional funding.

The Hawk Creek Watershed Staff also includes Dean Dambroten, Planner/Field Technician and Stephanie Klamm, Water Quality Outreach Technician.

Dean works with landowners to implement Best Management Practices in the watershed.

Stephanie works on water monitoring throughout the watershed, along with assisting 30 citizen monitors and education activities in school and in the public.

Darrell, Dean and Stephanie can be contacted at
(320) 523-3666.



Parks Profile: Skalbekken Park

With summer upon us, two things comes to mind; camping and fishing. Below is a profile of Skalbekken park in the Renville County area which is a great "get-away" for a summer day.

Skalbekken Park is located southwest of Sacred Heart, along the Minnesota River on Renville County Road 10. To get to the park take US Highway 212 to Renville County Road 10, then go south to park.

The Park encompasses a total of 403 acres.



There are six entrances with gates into the Park.

Facilities include:

- two shelters
- three restrooms
- picnic areas with tables
- trails for horseback riding
- trails for hiking and biking
- fishing and camping are allowed

For more information call 320-523-3768!

Septic Loan Program: Funds Available!

It's estimated that nearly 60% of the rural septic systems do not meet current state code. Many of these systems pose a serious health and water quality threat.

The Hawk Creek Watershed Project Septic System Loan Programs have received more funds for upgrade septic systems for this year. These funds are not available for new home construction. Low interest loan funds are available to rural residents of the Hawk Creek Watershed work area. If approved, you can borrow funds at 3% APR for up to 10 years. Payments are made twice a year and will be a part of your property tax statement. Loans can be transferred to new owners if a property sells.

These funds are limited and are on a first-come first-serve basis.

Call your local County Environmental Services office for more information:

Renville County 320-523-3768
Kandiyohi County 320-231-6229
Chippewa County 320-269-6231



Water Monitoring Update

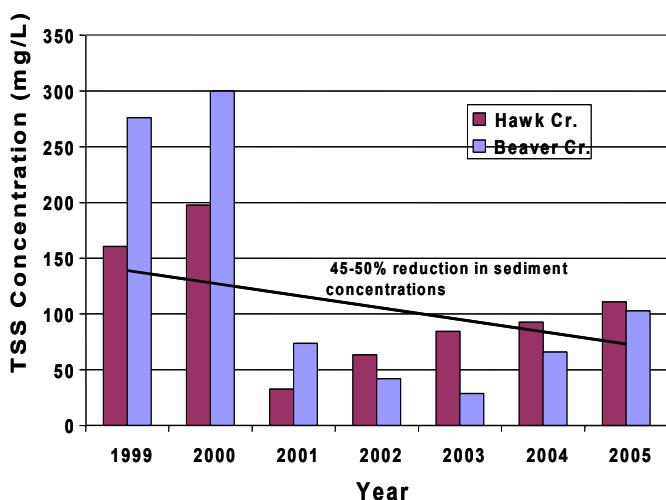
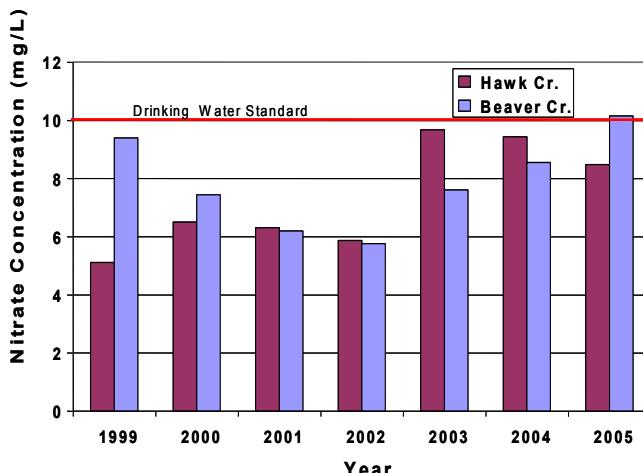
-Information taken from presentation by Pat Baskfield, MPCA Hydrologist

A “**flow weighted mean concentration**” is an estimated pollutant concentration of all the water passing through a monitoring sight over the course of the monitoring period. In other words, if all the water passing a monitoring site over the course of the year were routed to a big pool, stirred well and one sample collected and analyzed for a given pollutant, that sample would represent the yearly flow weighted mean concentration for that site. Most of Hawk and Beaver Creeks sediment load is delivered from a few high intensity storms.

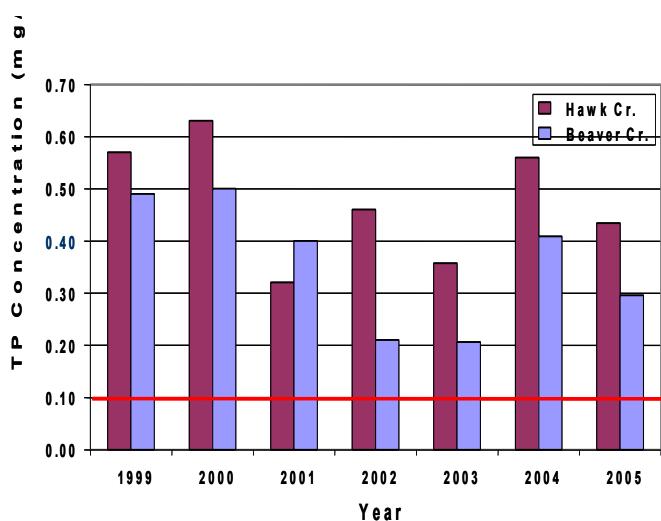
Monitoring data from 1999-2005 show 40-60% reductions in sediment flow weighted means concentrations.

Also a 20-25% reduction in phosphorus flow weighted

Nitrogen flow weighted means concentrations have increased 15%-25% since 1999. The standard for drinking water in the state of Minnesota is 10 mg/L of nitrates.



means concentration. The standard for the state of Minnesota for phosphorus is 0.10 mg/L of phosphorus.



Did you Know!!!

- * The Hawk Creek Watershed Project has been around since 1997. With the first grant starting in 1999 for a water quality diagnostic study.
- * Since 2001, the Hawk Creek Watershed Project has helped over **176** cooperators put Best Management Practices (BMP's) on the land with cost-share dollars.
- * There has been over **\$477,525.00** of Project Grant Money spent on BMP's within the Hawk Creek Watershed Project.
- * This is not including the **232** septic systems installed within the 3 county watershed work area.
- * The septic loan program has loaned out over **\$1,051,801.00** since 2005.



Contact Us!

We love to hear from the public! Please contact us at (320) 523-3666 to provide some input or have questions answered or to receive more information on the Hawk Creek Watershed Project.

Our address is: Hawk Creek Watershed Project
Renville County Courthouse
500 East DePue Avenue
Olivia, MN 56277

urban Legend-Urban Storm Sewers

ment facility. NOT TRUE!! Water from storm sewers flows directly into ponds, lakes, wetlands and drainage systems without being treated. That is why it's important that each of us take responsibility for our actions. The following tips will help reduce additional nutrients and chemicals from reaching area surface waters from storm sewers.



LAWN CARE!

One pound of phosphorus can grow 500 pounds of algae!

Use low to no phosphorus fertilizers!!

The middle number on the fertilizer bag indicated the phosphorus.

Fertilize in late summer or fall, rather than spring!!

Keep fertilizers off the paved surfaces!!

Never fertilize before a heavy rain!!

Let your grass grow to 2 to 2.5 inches!!

This will require less watering during hot conditions.

Leave grass clippings on the lawn!!

Grass clippings are free fertilizer for the lawn.

Bag up leaves in the fall!!

Leaves in storm sewers back up runoff and can flood out basements, streets and also release excess nutrients into the watercourses.

One of the most common misconceptions about storm sewers is that water flows to the waste water treatment facility. NOT TRUE!! Water from storm sewers flows directly into ponds, lakes, wetlands and drainage systems without being treated. That is why it's important that each of us take responsibility for our actions.

HANDLE WITH CARE!

Don't Dump!!

Never allow oil, paint, pesticides, or other chemicals enter a storm sewer.

Use pesticides/herbicides sparingly!!

Spot spray rather than broad application reduces runoff and saves you money.



CAR CARE!

Wash on the lawn!!

Washing cars on a lawn allows for the water to filter through the grass rather than into the street.

Prevent Puddles!!

Auto leaks can lead to puddles of oil, anti freeze, and other chemicals that get washed into storm sewers.

KIDS CORNER-Buffer Strips

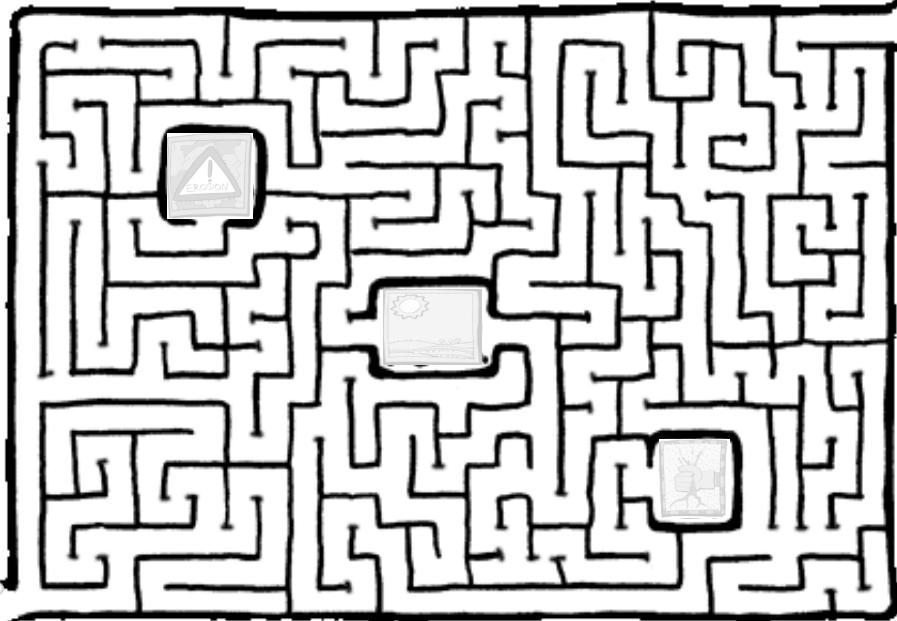


What is a buffer strip?

-A buffer strip (also known as a filter strip) is a vegetated (grass strip along a watercourse (lake, wetland, pond, ditch, etc.).

A buffer/filter strip could be either native grasses or grasses that have been planted on the land that was farmed. The purpose of a buffer is to protect streams from pollution (chemicals, soil, excess nutrients), prevent soil erosion, and create food sources and nesting areas for wildlife.

Buffers can include: filter strips, grassed waterways, terraces, living snow fences, contour grass strips, shallow water areas for wildlife, and field borders.



shel-

Help the farmer earn money by going through the "buffer maze." He can earn money by planting buffers on his farm. Beware of erosion and bare land which are caused when buffers are not in place.

Hint: To reach success go through the sunny farm field.

20TH ANNIVERSARY OF CRP



The U.S. Department of Agriculture is celebrating the 20th Anniversary of CRP, but its history goes further back in time. CRP has its roots in the Soil Bank Act of 1956, which was shaped by memories of the 1930's Dust Bowl in the Great Plains. CRP, as we know it today, came about as an out-growth of an agricultural boom that took place in the early 1970's. U.S. producers responded to high prices by planting on marginal cropland and by breaking out and planting crops on range and pasture lands. By the early 1980's, there was significant public concern about environmental damage from farming "fence row to fence row". Erosion was so bad that soil drifted in fence rows like snow, and water runoff carried sediment, nutrients, and chemicals into streams, lakes and other drinking water sources. CRP was established by the Food Security Act of 1985 to address these issues. At first, the emphasis was on reducing soil erosion. Over time, the emphasis expanded to include improving and protecting water resources, enhancing wildlife habitat and improving air quality.

Each year, through CRP and CREP, a significant sum of Federal funds goes to help farmers achieve conservation practices on their farms. In fiscal year 2005 the figure was \$1.7 billion in annual rental payments. But what are we getting in return – a great deal! We know that each year soil productivity benefits amount to \$162 million. Hunting migratory waterfowl is valued at \$222 million. Reducing runoff from fields is valued at \$392 million. And viewing wildlife is valued at \$629 million. And what is the value of good-tasting, clean drinking water? Or of increased pheasant and wild turkey populations that allow a young child time to spend hunting with his parents? Of viewing springtime wildflowers and native grasses on the prairie? These benefits are priceless!

Along with protecting our land and streams, many CRP practices and wildlife areas are used to teach our youth the value of conserving our natural resources. For example, in Renville County the Soil and Water Conservation Service sponsors W.A.L.K (Water, Air, Land and Knowledge) with area schools. The youth take a field trip out to the Beaver Falls Wildlife area, along with some private CRP fields, to view wetland restorations, field windbreaks and native grass plantings. They learn about soil and wind erosion and what animals make their homes in these habitats.



If you are interested in learning more about the 20th Anniversary of CRP, you can go to www.fsa.gov and click on "America's Conservation Program Turns 20". The website features stories and pictures from each state, along with other informational publications. If you are interested in participating or learning more about the conservation practices that are available, please contact your local FSA, NRCS or SWCD office.



HAWK CREEK WATERSHED PROJECT

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You may wonder **what is a watershed and do I really live in one?** A watershed is an area of land where rainfall and snowmelt drain into a particular stream, river, ditch, wetland or lake. Many people don't think they live in the Hawk Creek Watershed. After all, they don't live on Hawk Creek or even close to it. The Watershed is unique in that it doesn't have just one lake or river draining the entire watershed. Instead, the Hawk Creek Watershed Project Area has 2 major creeks—Beaver and Hawk. It also has approximately twenty different streams that drain right into the Minnesota River. The watershed also has about a dozen lakes in the northern reaches. To find your location in the watershed....

Open up the newsletter to Page 1 to see a map of the Hawk Creek Watershed Project Area!
Grant funded by:



If you are a **Resident** in the watershed, then there is information on low-interest loans for septic systems.

If you **Farm** in the watershed, then there is information on *financial incentives* for conservation programs.

Information for Every Individual!