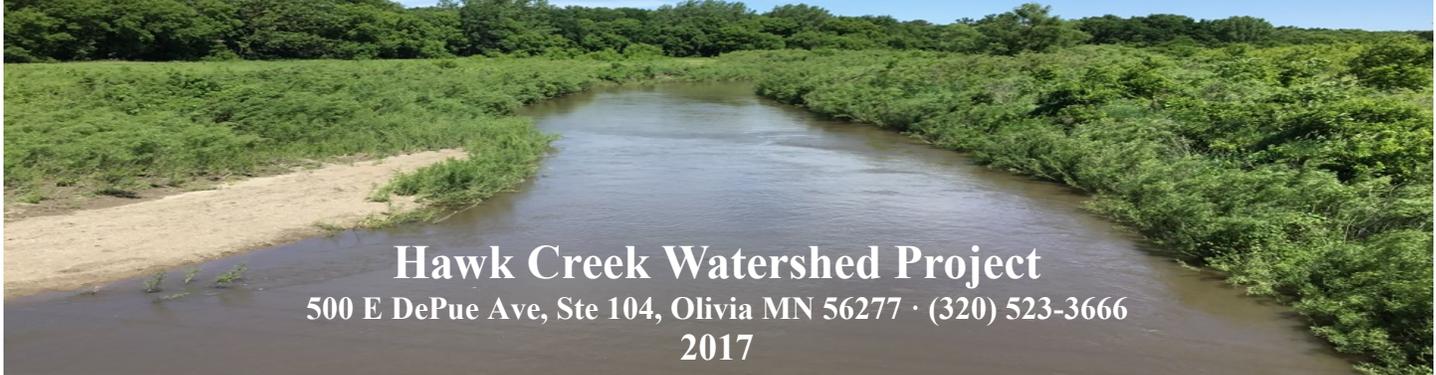


Hawk Creek Headlines



Hawk Creek Watershed Project

500 E DePue Ave, Ste 104, Olivia MN 56277 · (320) 523-3666
2017



Mission Statement

Improving the water quality/quantity issues in the watershed, while also promoting a healthy agricultural, industrial, and recreational based economy for the region.

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Cost-Share Money Available for Best Management Practices

Do you have gullies, washouts, runoff problems, or erosion problems on your property? Are you interested in finding out what you can do to increase conservation practices on your property? The Hawk Creek Watershed Project (HCWP) has funding available for the design and installation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) to fix erosion and water quality issues on your property and to help reduce the amount of pollutants entering our streams and lakes. Cost-share funds are available up to 75% of total BMP project costs, depending on funding availability. Since 1999, HCWP has worked with over 900 landowners on over 1,300 projects aimed to reduce erosion and improve water quality. Let HCWP help find a solution to your erosion and water quality issues.

Some of the practices that may qualify for funding include, but are not limited to:

Ag Waste Upgrades	Cover Crops	Lakeshore Restorations
Alternative Intakes	Farmable Terraces	Rain Gardens
Bank/Grade Stabilizations	Feedlot and Water Diversions	Side/Drop Inlets
Controlled Drainage	Grassed Waterways	Streambank Erosion Control

Call HCWP at 320-523-3666 for assistance with your erosion or runoff problem.

The following offices are also available for information on potential projects:

Chippewa County SWCD/NRCS
320-269-2139 ext. 3

Kandiyohi County SWCD/NRCS
320-235-3906

Renville County SWCD/NRCS
320-523-1553 ext. 3

Chippewa County Ag Inspector
320-269-7447

Kandiyohi County Drainage
320-235-3266

Renville County Ag Inspector
320-523-3712

Interest in Cover Crops is Growing Locally

Over 75 people attended a benefits of cover crops meeting put on by the HCWP, Renville County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), and Renville County Water Management on June 29 in Renville, MN. Local producers from Renville, Redwood, and Yellow Medicine Counties who are using cover crops in their corn, soybean, sugar beet, small grain, and livestock rotations gave presentations and were part of a panel discussion on how they make cover crops work, develop a diverse cover crop seed mix, control weeds, terminate cover crops, adjust fertilizer application rates, convert and adapt equipment for seed application, and use strip-till/reduced tillage/no-till. Local representatives from cover crop seed suppliers, consultants, applicators, and equipment suppliers had displays and were available to answer questions. A large-scale self-contained rain simulator trailer was used to demonstrate how cover crops and soil health affect rain infiltration rates (photo below left of soil cover examples used for rain simulator). A cover crop and no-till/strip-till field day is planned for the fall to showcase what local producers are doing. More information will be sent out soon. If you don't get email and/or mail notices about HCWP events, contact HCWP at (320)523-3666 or jordan@hawkcreekwatershed.org to receive notices about upcoming events like the fall field day.



Different soil covers from left to right: 1) conventional tilled corn/soybeans/wheat, 2) 10 year strip-till corn/soybeans with fall cover crops on corn, 3) native grass, 4) multi-species cover crops (radish, rape, annual rye, and crimson clover), and 5) 12 year no-till corn/soybeans.



The audience at the June 29 cover crop meeting in Renville listened to a talk on how cover crops increase organic matter and improve soil structure.

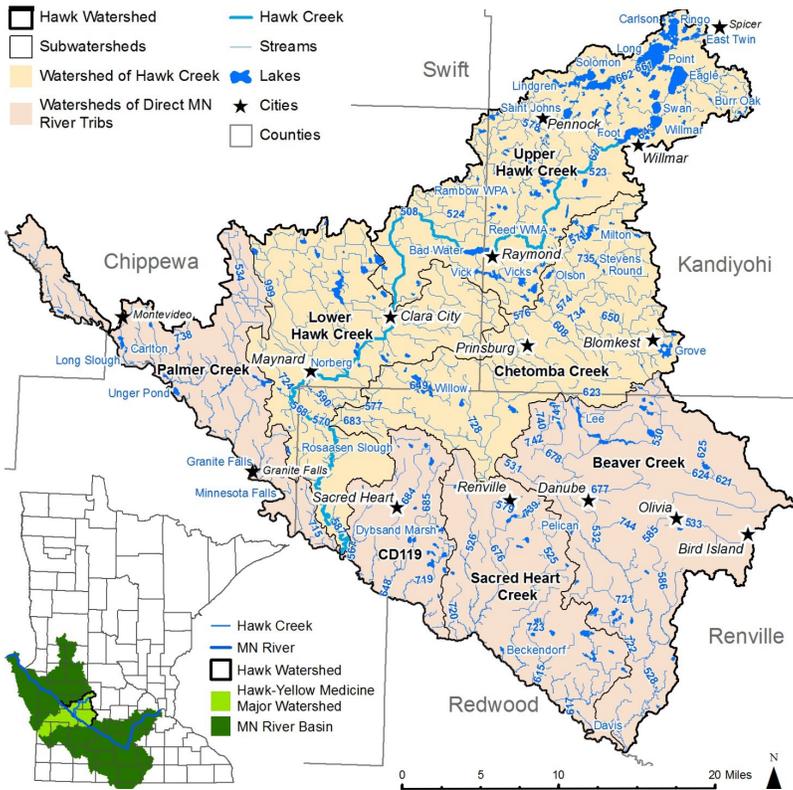
2017 Cover Crop Cost-Share Available

The HCWP, Renville County Water Management, and Renville County SWCD are offering a cost-share program for cover crops planted between April 1 and September 15, 2017.

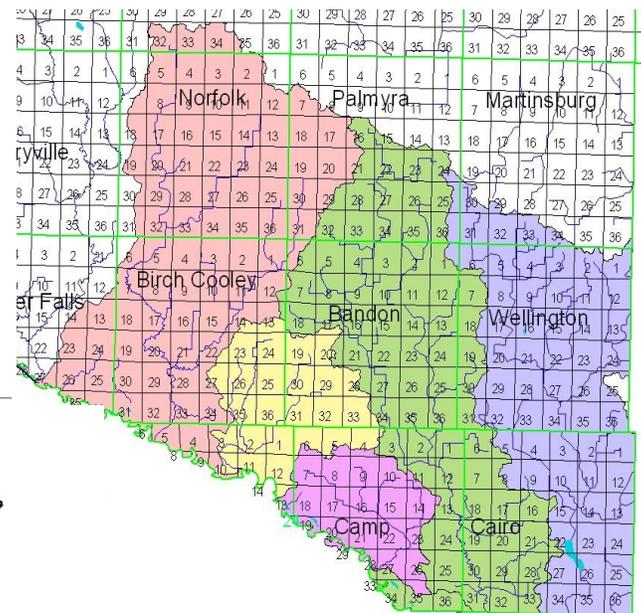
- Cost-share up to 75% of costs to plant cover crops (e.g. seed, labor, equipment use), with maximum payment of \$2,000.00 per farmer per year
- Maximum of three years of cost-share payments through this program
- Cost-share application must be signed and approved before seeding
- Seed mix must be comprised of at least three species pre-approved by SWCD or HCWP
- No fall tillage or excessive grazing (as determined by SWCD or HCWP staff). Pre-approval by SWCD or HCWP staff is required for harvesting of cover crop under special circumstances
- Invoices, seed tags, and field inspection required before payment is made
- Ineligible for this cost-share if you receive cover crop incentive and/or cost-share payment through any other program (e.g. EQIP, CSP)
- Cost-share available to producers in Renville County and the Hawk Creek Watershed (covering portions of Chippewa, Kandiyohi, and Renville Counties - see maps on page 3)

What Areas are Covered by HCWP Cost-Share Funds?

HCWP has BMP cost-share funds available for the entire Hawk Creek Watershed, which covers the eastern portion of Chippewa County, the western portion of Kandiyohi County, and the western portion of Renville County (see map below left). Towns located within the Hawk Creek Watershed boundaries include part of Montevideo, part of Granite Falls, Maynard, Clara City, Raymond, part of Willmar, Prinsburg, Blomkest, Pennock, Sacred Heart, Renville, Danube, Olivia, and Bird Island. In addition, HCWP BMP cost-share funds are available for the Renville County portion of the Middle Minnesota Watershed, which encompasses Morton, Franklin, and Fairfax (see map below right). If you live or own property in these watershed areas, contact HCWP for more information and possible cost-share assistance!

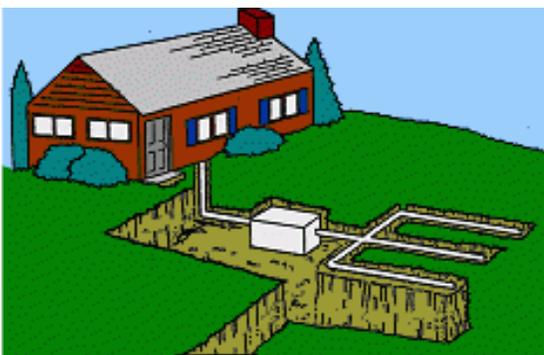


Hawk Creek Watershed



Renville County portion of Middle MN Watershed

Septic System Upgrade Loan Funds Available



Low interest (3%) loan funds to upgrade non-compliant subsurface sewage treatment systems are available to residents within the Hawk Creek Watershed. These funds are not available for new home construction or upgrades that are required due to home additions. There is no collateral required as loan payments are collected through a special assessment on your property tax statement for a term length of 10 years. Loans can be transferred to new owners if a property is sold or transferred. These funds are limited and are distributed on a first come, first serve basis. Applications are made with your county environmental services office:

Chippewa County Land and Resources Management • 629 N 11th St, Montevideo • 320-269-6231
 Kandiyohi County Environmental Services • 400 Benson Ave SW, Willmar • 320-231-6229
 Renville County Environmental Services • 105 5th St, Olivia • 320-523-3760

From Dean's Desk

Dean Dambrotten has been the Planner/Field Technician for the HCWP for 16 years and has been farming in western Renville County for 38 years.

Cover crops, strip-till, vertical tillage, reduced tillage, and no-till all have the potential to do a lot for water quality and quantity issues and are more realistic and economical solutions than taking land out of production and restoring wetlands, which isn't very well accepted.

Four or five years ago when cover crops started getting attention in the farm magazines and NRCS started with their incentive programs, everyone, including myself, was skeptical. All I heard was "it can't work here," "we are too far north," and "our season is too short." Since that time, I have witnessed several producers right here within our watershed boundaries that have been experimenting and developing strategies to make it work here! Yes, there have been challenges and things to learn. And yes, there have been curveballs thrown by Mother Nature that can make attempts fail, but the failures are temporary setbacks and the rewards outweigh the failures. Local producers are being successful and seeing the benefits of better soil structure and increases in organic matter. Last fall when their neighbors struggled and left ruts in their fields, we had producers that testified they had rolled over every acre and left no ruts! For every 1% of soil organic matter increase, the soil will hold an extra 16,500 gallons of water per acre and at the same time increase the infiltration rate of the excess water. Some of these producers have increased their organic matter by 2 to 3%, making their fields less susceptible to drown outs and at the same time protecting against drought! Along with increasing organic matter, the biology starts to build in the soil and your nutrients become more available and efficient. If you attended our cover crop/strip-till meeting in Renville on June 29, you heard from these producers that it can work! They all said their neighbors think they are crazy. They said you need to fight off the peer pressure and allow yourself to get a whole new mind set; "you need to get used to seeing green without the black." The panelists claimed cover crop fields warm up faster than high residue fields with no cover crop and hold the temperature up better when we have later spring cool downs like we had last April and May.

Some believe cover crops are a fad that will pass in time like zone till and ridge till that many tried and very few stuck with. One producer I talked to said he thinks cover crops were the missing link that would have helped those passing fads be successful. Today he is using cover crops in combination with strip-till and says he has never been so excited about the potential this has for his farm. In my opinion, every producer should try a little of this on one field to start the learning process, especially if you have cattle. When you add the options of grazing and forage crops to the system, the benefits are greater and faster and the risks are always less when you have more options.

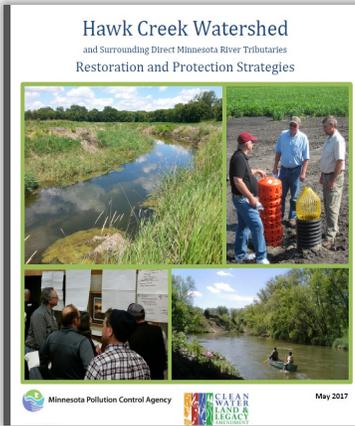
I have witnessed and learned a lot from local producers over the last couple of years and I am ready to get my feet wet. I had 40 acres of corn on my own farm interseeded with a cover crop mix and hope to no-till beans into it in 2018. Although my brother and I did strip-till for a couple of years 15 or so years ago, I am looking forward to trying it again. We have arranged to have our soybean ground going to corn in 2018 strip-tilled this fall.

HCWP and the Renville County Soil and Water Conservation District plan on co-hosting a field day in early to mid-September. Watch for it and try to attend; you will see a rain simulator demonstrate water infiltration differences between conventional tilled soil, reduced tillage soil, and soil that's had a perennial vegetation cover for more than 15 years. You will hear valuable information and interact with local producers that are doing different practices and combinations of tillage types and cover crops.

We have some producers that have expressed an interest in having some informal shop talk meetings where they can learn from each other and discuss issues about cover crops. If you are interested, give the HCWP or the Renville County SWCD office a call and get on the text or email list.

I believe that it will take time to evolve, but I believe that strip-till and no-till and the use of cover crops are going to be widely used practices in the future. When and if that time comes, it is going to have a big positive impact on water quality and quantity issues, and that will be positive for agriculture's public relations.

WRAPS and TMDL Reports Nearing Approval



The Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies (WRAPS) report and the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) report for the Hawk Creek Watershed are very close to being finalized and approved by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA). A public comment period for both draft reports was from May 22 through June 21. After addressing any comments received, MPCA will then finalize and approve the reports.

The WRAPS report includes input from many federal, state, and local agencies, industry, agricultural groups, landowners, watershed residents, lake associations, and many other groups and people. Thank you to everyone who participated in WRAPS meetings, provided input, and shared their knowledge and experiences during the WRAPS report development process.

Renewed Efforts to Improve Water Quality of Willmar's Chain of Lakes

Renewed efforts are underway to improve the water quality of the Willmar chain of lakes, including Foot, Willmar, Swan, and Skataas. With the new regional park destination and recently installed playground at Robbins Island Park, the water quality of the nearby lakes are once again a focus. MPCA has been leading a collaborative effort with the HCWP, City of Willmar, Willmar Area Lakes Association, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Kandiyohi County, and Kandiyohi County Soil and Water Conservation District to revive water quality efforts.

The lakes have been mistreated for a long time, including placing the city dump on a narrow strip of land on Foot Lake (what is now Rau Park), chemicals and pollutants leaching from rail yard, city, and field runoff, horse manure from nearby barns dumped on the ice on Foot Lake and “disappearing” in the spring, and raw waste from sewers and outhouses. Many of the “point” sources of pollution entering the lakes (mainly municipal and industrial wastewater) have been eliminated or reduced because of rules and laws regulating them. “Non-point” sources of pollution entering the lakes (mainly stormwater, city, and field runoff) are still a threat to the lakes and are the focus of efforts to improve the water quality of the lakes.



In 2008 and 2009, HCWP collected water quality samples and data on Willmar, Swan, and Foot lakes. Willmar and Swan lakes failed to meet acceptable water quality standards for shallow prairie lakes and Foot Lake barely met the standards. Some of the data is currently being reassessed and may lead to Willmar Lake being added to MPCA's impaired waters list, which Swan Lake is already on.

About 60 people gathered for a meeting at the Willmar Community Center on April 19 to discuss the history of the lakes, water quality and monitoring data, recreational opportunities and the regional park destination, stormwater management, and potential improvement projects. Current water quality efforts for the Willmar chain of lakes focus on reducing erosion, cleaning up shorelines, and improving stormwater management.



Renville County
Hawk Creek Watershed Project
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Project Partners

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City of Clara City
City of Olivia
City of Willmar
Ducks Unlimited
Eagle Lake Association
Kandiyohi County
Kandiyohi County SWCD/NRCS
Long Lake Association
MN Department of Natural Resources
MN Pollution Control Agency
Pheasants Forever
Renville County
Renville County SWCD/NRCS
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Watershed Citizens and Landowners

**Want to get notices
about upcoming HCWP
meetings and events?**

Join our mailing list by calling
(320)523-3666 or emailing
jordan@hawkcreekwatershed.org.

Check us out on the web!

www.hawkcreekwatershed.org