

# 2010 Annual Report

## Big Stone SWCD

A Soil and Water Conservation District is a legal subdivision of the State governed by a five member Board, elected by the public. They provide the local leadership and direction for applying conservation practices to the land.

The following Annual Report, for the Big Stone SWCD, is presented by the following Board members and office personnel:

### Board of Supervisors

Area I	Scott Gillespie, Chairman	Toqua, Graceville, Moonshine
Area II	Vernon Johnson, Vice Chairman	Browns Valley, Foster, Prior
Area III	Mike Jorgenson, Member	Malta, Almond, Otrej
Area IV	Holly Wellendorf, Member	Ortonville, Big Stone
Area V	Lon Moen, Treasurer	Odessa, Akron, Artichoke

### Employees

Darrin Welle, District Technician                      Tammy Neubauer, District Admin. Asst.  
Travis Issendorf, Pheasants Forever Farm Bill Biologist

### Cooperating Agencies

#### **USDA-NRCS**

Krecia Leddy, District Conservationist                      Anthony Wild, Soil Conservation Technician  
Don Baloun, State Conservationist                      Gary Watson, Asst. State Conservationist

#### **UMRWD**

Dianne Radermacher, Administrator                      Deanna Lundberg, Secretary

#### **BWSR**

John Jaschke, Executive Director                      David Sill, Board Conservationist  
Kane Radel, BWSR WCA Representative

### **BIG STONE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

## **Services Provided by the District:**

- Tree planning, planting, and fabric installation
- Make available tree tubes and Plantskydd for animal control on tree plantings
- Technical and financial assistance through state cost-share for installation of conservation practices
- Promote conservation educational activities through information contests and displays
- Administer State Conservation Programs such as RIM/WRP, Cost-Share, etc.
- Serve on the TEP for the Wetlands Conservation Act of 1991
- Provide a native-grass drill for conservation seedings
- Provide grass seed for conservation seedings
- Administer a county well-sealing program, contingent upon funding from County Water Plan (CLWP) and priority funding through the State Cost-Share program
- Assist walk-ins and customers – provide information or direct to a contact person
- Enter Cost-Share information into eLINK program for resource management for BWSR
- Assist NRCS with filing and sorting mail, bulletins, and correspondence.
- Assist NRCS with Farm Bill implementation of CRP, WHIP, EQIP.
- Administer the CWMA through the District via education, mapping, identifying, eradicating, cost-sharing chemical, and administration.

## **Education Activities**

- Beautiful Farmstead Award – recipients for 2010 are Dave and Dianne Vogt of Moonshine Township. They received an aerial photo of their farmstead.
- Conservationists Award – recipients for 2010 are Steve and Lori Strei of rural Ortonville. The Strei's were given state recognition and the opportunity to attend the MASWCD state convention in Minneapolis.
- 4-H Club Conservation Award – The District sponsors a club traveling trophy and individual conservation trophy
- Conservation Camp Scholarship – no applicants
- Poster, Mural and Video Contest – None of the eligible schools participated this year
- Arbor Day – Each 4<sup>th</sup> grade student in Big Stone County received an ash tree to plant
- Environmental Fair – since Big Stone is no longer in Area V, no schools participated in the Environmental Fair in 2010. Area II offers educational opportunities for the students, that the schools will hopefully take advantage of in 2011.
- Soil Stewardship – Materials were offered free of charge to all churches within the county. Six churches took advantage of the offer.
- Newsletters – one newsletter was printed in partnership with Big Stone County Environmental Office and NRCS, and 1 annual report was distributed to essential partners. Newsletter information page available on the District website @ [www.bigstoneswcd.org](http://www.bigstoneswcd.org).
- Envirothon – Encouraged participation in the event, although no one participated from the local schools.
- Big Stone County Fair, Clinton – Conservation Booth was periodically staffed during the 3 day fair.
- Ortonville Sports & Leisure Show – shared a booth with Pheasants Forever Local Chapter and Big Stone CWMA during the 2 day show.
- District participated in 7 radio programs.
- Maintained District website.
- Submitted 9 Weed-of-the-Week articles to local newspapers in addition to other articles

## Program Activities

- **Abandoned Well Sealing** – Big Stone County Water Plan provided \$0 for cost-share funding of abandoned wells. Well sealing was considered non-priority for 2010, subject to change in 2011.
- **DNR Observation Wells** – The SWCD monitors 5 wells monthly for 10 months. Readings are entered on the Internet and compensation of \$15.00 per reading is received annually.
- **Rainfall Monitoring** – Four sites in Big Stone County are used to monitor precipitation. The SWCD monitors one rain gauge in Ortonville. We are always looking for more monitor volunteers.
- **Tree Plantings** – 1658 trees were planted in 12 shelterbelts covering 7.8 acres. No field windbreaks were planted. All 12 plantings had weed barrier fabric applied. The total amount of fabric applied was 8,550 feet or 1.6 miles. 4 X 4 fabric squares were used on four plantings. Several tree tubes were sold for these practices for animal control.
- **Grass Drill Seedings** – 37.2 acres of conservation seedings in 7 areas throughout the County were done using the District's grass drill.
- **State Cost-Share Practices** – 8 farmstead shelterbelts were completed using state cost-share on 1.25 acres.
- **Site Inspections for Cost-Share Practices** – 9 farmstead shelterbelts were inspected per requirements of the cost-share contracts.
- **Contribution Agreement** – no dollars were available for Contribution Agreements with NRCS in 2010.
- **RIM/WRP** – District assisted with 8 RIM/WRP applications/surveying/planning – 4 applications were approved and processed on 271.9 acres.
- The District site checked 14 RIM & CREP easement parcels.
- **WCA** – Although most WCA contacts do not initiate official project applications, mitigation plans, cease & desist orders or other official forms, activity involving the Minnesota Wetlands Conservation Act (WCA) remains steady in Big Stone County. (The SWCD elected not to pursue Ag-land issues in 2010). WCA administration was transferred to the Big Stone County Environmental Office. The District Technician remains serving on the TEP. The District Technician is also a Certified In-Training Wetland Delineator by the WDCP of MN.
- **CWMA** – see agency coordination below.
- **WLI** – see agency coordination below.
- **Farm Bill Assistance Grant** – Farm Bill Biologist assists with implementation of CRP, CCRP. Programs were applied on the following:

<u>Programs</u>	<u>Contracts</u>	<u>Practice</u>	<u>Acres</u>
CCRP	2	Filter Strips	4.1 acres
CCRP	4	Wetland Restoration	100.5 acres
CCRP	20	Management Activities	385.5 acres
CCRP	5	Grassed Waterway/Shelterbelt	7.6 acres
CCRP	16	SAFE, State Acres for Wildlife	264.7 acres
General CRP	6	CP2, 4D, 11, 12, 25	178.9 acres

## **Agency Coordination**

The District office is involved with several multi-agency groups that meet on a regular basis. These include:

- (currently inactive) Moonshine Lake Project Team – coordinated by Bois de Sioux Watershed District
- Pomme de Terre River Association – Portions of the watershed and Mustinka watershed are being sampled for water quality by the MPCA. Sediment and Fecal Implementation Plans are being developed for both watersheds.
- The District is involved with monthly (TAC) meetings with the Pomme de Terre Watershed.
- Prairie Country RC & D – District attends regular meetings as a member.
- Minnesota River Joint Powers Board – the JPB is now dissolved.
- Working Lands Initiative (WLI) – NRCS & SWCD were active partners in planning meetings for WLI. In addition to the Otre and Barry areas selected in 2007, the Correll area was selected as a target area for Big Stone County in 2008. Staff provided input to develop Big Stone County WLI Funding Proposal. Two landowners signed WLI agreements in 2010 for payments of \$96,054.28, impacting 405.41 acres.
- County Local Water Management Plan – the District is involved with the CLWM committee.
- EQIP/NRCS – District is involved with the Public Input meeting and Local Workgroup meeting.
- Big Stone SWCD and NRCS partnered with BWSR, Pheasants Forever and DNR to maintain funding for a Pheasants Forever FarmBill Biologist for Big Stone County.
- CWMA (Cooperative Weed Management Area) – Big Stone SWCD agreed to participate with other agencies to receive a grant of \$15,000 for education and weed eradication. The District administers buying and disbursing chemical, cost-sharing weed control areas, treating areas, education and identification of invasive weeds, conducting informational meetings, purchasing and maintaining equipment, and recording treatment areas and results. Progress, results and expenditures of this program are recorded by the District in E-link.
- The District is a part of the Area II TSA.

## **Additional Funding Opportunities**

An additional funding source for the District is the Big Stone County Water Plan. These funds have been allocated for administrative needs, such as local newsletters, well sealing, etc.

The major additional funding for engineered Best Management Practices is the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP). Big Stone County was allocated \$287,000 in 2010.

Big Stone County received \$14,000 in 2010 for the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP).

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and Continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CCRP) can provide additional funding for BMP applications such as grass waterways, buffers, and tree establishments.