



# 2005 Annual Report

## Freeborn County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD)

Freeborn County SWCD is organized under provisions of MN Statute Chapter 103C and is governed by a board of five elected supervisors.



**Freeborn County SWCD – Working to conserve and protect our  
Soil & Water Resources “Above the Lakes”.**

# From The Chairman. . .

by Jerry Demmer

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Again, it's time to reflect back on another year of conservation activity and application within Freeborn County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD). This report will include some of the highlights of our activities, summarize our state cost share and easement applications and present a full financial accounting of our revenues and expenditures.

Through "partnering efforts" with NRCS, FSA, Ducks Unlimited and others, local landowners and/or operators can access a number of conservation programs through our office. These include the State Cost Share Program, Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CCRP), Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP), Emergency Conservation Program (ECP), and a new Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP II). This combines the federal CRP Program with the state Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Program. Sign-up for CREP II started June 6<sup>th</sup>. Although we don't yet have any signed applications, we do have several pending that we expect to complete in 2006.

Looking ahead to 2006, we see the need for even more "partnering". We'll be assisting with an EPA, 319 Grant Implementation Project in the LeSeuer River Watershed. This watershed is located in the northwest corner of our county. It will provide another opportunity for landowners to access money to solve conservation problems they may have. We'll also continue to be involved with ongoing activity in the Shell Rock and Turtle Creek Watersheds. The Turtle Creek Watershed may be expanded or a new watershed could be formed to include all the area of our county and Mower County that's located in the Upper Cedar River Watershed. Another option might be to form a Joint Powers Board (JPB). Regardless of the organizational structure, the purpose will be to mitigate the efforts of flooding, especially in the City of Austin and the Hollandale area.

On behalf of our Board of Supervisors, I would like to express our sincere thanks to all the local agencies, organizations and individuals that help us accomplish our mission. They include the following:

- Landowners & Operators
- Freeborn County Board of Commissioners
- Freeborn County Environmental Services
- Minnesota Board of Water & Soil Resources (BWSR)
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
- USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA)
- Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, MN Waterfowl Assn., MN DNR, US Fish & Wildlife, Shell Rock River Watershed District, Turtle Creek Watershed District and others.

We hereby submit the following Annual Report of Soil & Water Conservation Activities for calendar year 2005.

Jerry L. Demmer, Chairman

# Freeborn County Soil & Water Conservation District Supervisor Nomination Districts



District 1  
David Ausen  
Supervisor



District 3  
Obert Haldorson  
Secretary



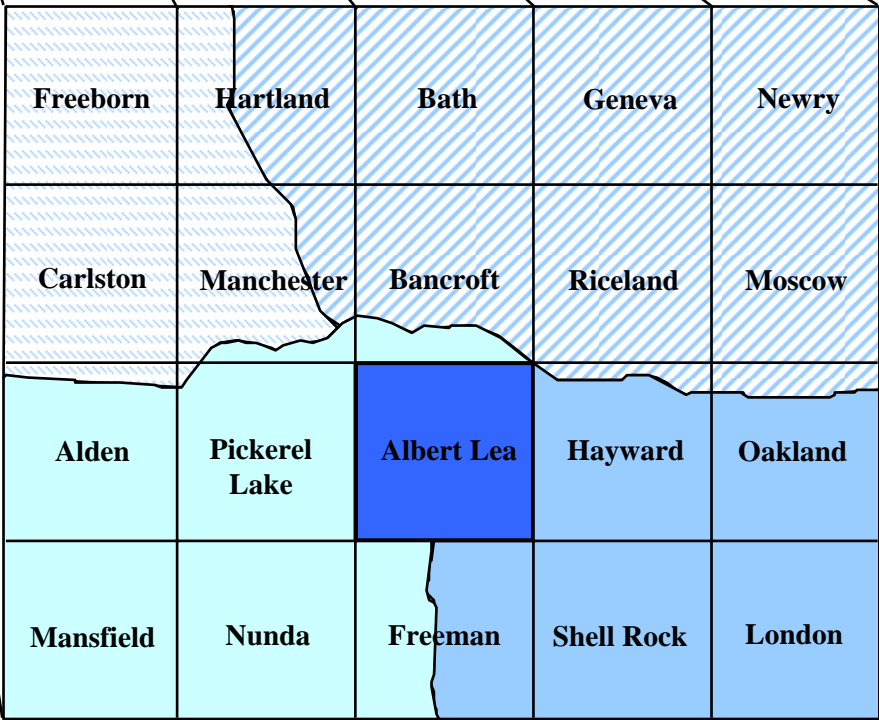
District 2  
Jerry Demmer  
Chairman













District 4  
Cole Pectorious  
Vice-Chairman



District 5  
Don Kropp  
Treasurer



## Services Provided by Freeborn County Soil & Water Conservation District

-  Engineering planning, layout and construction supervision of conservation practices such as waterways, water and sediment control basins, grade stabilizing structures and tile drainage.
-  Administration of the State Cost-Share Program for conservation practices.
-  Administration of the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP II) Easement Program.
-  Maintenance supervision and final practice application in the Minnesota River Watershed (CREP I) area in northwest Freeborn County.
-  Farmstead and field windbreak design, species selection, tree sales, on site layout and planting equipment rental.
-  Assisting with the implementation of the Ag Best Management Practices loan program. These funds are made available through the State Revolving Fund and are administered by the MN Dept. of Ag.
-  Assisting landowners with compliance issues with the Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) which was passed in 1991. This may include reviewing maps, etc. to determine potential applicability of the Act or discussing alternatives in cooperation with the LGU.
-  Conservation compliance planning and assistance with other aspects of the current Farm Bill.
-  Consultations for the Rural Finance Authority Young Farmer Program.
-  Conservation education projects, demonstrations, workshops and contests.

### **Mission Statement:**

*To serve the residents of Freeborn County by creating an awareness of soil and water resource concerns, by offering practical alternatives to manage these concerns, and by providing technical assistance (as local resources allow) to apply and maintain best management practices (BMPs) that impact water quality while sustaining soil productivity and land-user profits.*



Freeborn County Soil & Water Conservation District

# Freeborn County Soil & Water Conservation District



**Board Members (L to R):**

Don Kropp, Treasurer  
Cole Pectorious, Vice-Chairman  
Jerry Demmer, Chairman  
Obert Haldorson, Secretary  
David Ausen, Supervisor

## **SWCD Staff :**

Don Flatness, District Manager/Technician  
Brenda Lageson, District Administrative. Assist.  
Lenny Hulburt, Farm Bill Partnership Technician

## **NRCS Staff:**

Myron Taylor, District Conservationist  
Rick Berscheid, Soil Conservationist  
Brian Jensen, Soil Conservation Technician

## **Ducks Unlimited Staff:**

Tony Reali, Wetland Restoration Specialist

\*Technical Assistance was furnished to the district by NRCS Area Office, Rochester, MN

John T. Nicholson, Assistant State Conservationist  
Lawrence Svien, Area Resource Conservationist  
John Beck, Area Resource Soil Scientist  
Robert Romocki, Area Engineer  
Judy Lambert, Area Adm. Coordinator  
Lori Quinnell, IT Specialist  
Larry Peterson, Civil Engineering Technician  
Chris Nelson, Civil Engineering Technician



## **District Conservationist Report by Myron L. Taylor , USDA-NRCS**

### **Conservation Security Program (CSP)**

In 2005, landowners in the Blue Earth Watershed were once again given the chance to sign-up for the CSP program. During the 2005 sign-up three (3) landowners in Freeborn County were selected for funding. The three applications covered 625 acres in the watershed. Also in 2005 landowners in the Blue Earth Watershed received \$144,716.42 in stewardship and enhancement payments.

Blue Earth Watershed in Freeborn County



### **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)**

The EQIP program continues to provide technical and financial assistance to landowners wanting to install sound conservation practices on their land. EQIP is a voluntary conservation program that supports production agriculture and environmental quality as compatible goals. EQIP may pay up to 75 percent of the costs of eligible conservation practices. Incentive payments may be made to eligible landowners to adopt land management practices, such as nutrient management, manure management, integrated pest management, and wildlife habitat management. In Freeborn County in 2005 there were 24 applications covering 3,775 acres and obligating over \$246,112 in financial assistance for conservation practices and incentive payments. 2005 also proved to be a good year for the application of conservation practices with \$102,011 worth of conservation installed on 5,095 acres.

Blue Earth Watershed, Minnesota & Iowa



### **Wetlands Reserve Enhancement Program (WREP)**

Minnesota has become the second state in the nation to participate in the USDA's Wetlands Reserve Enhancement Program (WREP). Through Minnesota's WREP plan, the state of Minnesota will provide \$1.2 million and USDA will provide \$2.8 million. The state portion of the funding will come from funds previously appropriated by the legislature to the Board of Soil and Water Resources (BWSR) for the Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve program, which focuses on habitat restoration and protection, water quality enhancement, and water retention and storage.

In Freeborn County four (4) easements were accepted for funding covering 293 acres at a total cost of \$987,800. WREP is administered through a partnership between NRCS and the BWSR. The program provides a voluntary opportunity for landowners to receive both financial and technical assistance to restore wetlands and increase wildlife habitat. Wetlands provide fish and wildlife habitat, act as a water quality filter, reduce flooding, recharge groundwater, and provide educational or recreational opportunities. WRP is a voluntary program that offers landowners the option of permanent easements, 30-year easements and restoration cost-share agreements to protect, restore or enhance wetlands on their property.

## Program Highlights from 2005. . .

### Lowell & Joyce Ross receive “Outstanding Conservation Farmer Award”. . .



Lowell and Joyce pictured here with their RIM/WRP Wetland Restoration Site in the background.

Lowell & Joyce Ross, 1938 Wilby Road, Albert Lea, were chosen as this year's winners of the Outstanding Conservation Farmer Award. Lowell is a retired farmer and High School Ag Instructor. Although retired, he remains very active and interested in soil conservation and water quality improvement.

He has installed a number of conservation practices on his farms. These include grass waterways, water & sediment control basins, filter strips, tree plantings and wetland restorations.

Being a retired educator, it comes natural for him to sell conservation to other land owners. In one instance, he helped us sell a 42 acre RIM/WRP Wetland Restoration that was located primarily on a neighbor's farm and partially on his. This turned out to be a very nice area providing many environmental benefits plus some flood mitigation benefits for landowners downstream.

Lowell and his wife were honored at a special noon luncheon at our Minnesota Association of Soil & Water Conservation District's, State Convention held in early December in Bloomington, Minnesota. We congratulate the Ross Family on their Conservations Accomplishments!

### Greater Blue Earth River Basin Alliance (GBERBA). . .

Our SWCD and County Board of Commissioners continue to be involved with this alliance. It's an 11 county group in the Greater Blue Earth River Watershed. This alliance received a National Watershed Initiative Grant (from EPA) which is being administered by Three Rivers RC&D. Approximately \$432,000 was available for the cost share component of this grant. Freeborn County landowners installed thirteen (13) water and sediment control basins with cost share funds from this source. Total project cost was just over \$22,700.00 with cost share payments totaling over \$17,000.00.

In late 2005 another grant was approved, this is a Clean Water Partnership/Section 319/TMDL Combined Implementation Project. This grant will focus on the Cobb River Watershed. This area is located in



Water & Sediment Basins installed in 2005 with EPA Watershed Initiative Grant Funds.

the extreme northwest corner of Freeborn County. Approximately \$176,000.00 is available for Best Management Practices (BMP) applications as part of this grant. Construction on these projects could start in the second half of 2006.

# Conservation Education

## “Party For The Lakes” . . .



SWCD Display at the event.



Many local citizens attended, shown here listening to Sheryl Corrigan, MPCA.

On August 25<sup>th</sup>, a special event was held at the City Arena entitled a “Party For The Lakes”. It was sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce, Lake Restoration Committee. It was held to raise money for lake restoration and to educate people on what can be done to improve water quality in our lakes. Sheryl Corrigan, Commissioner of MPCA was the featured speaker.

Our SWCD was invited to set up an informational display at this event. The title of the display was “Freeborn County SWCD. . . Assisting Landowners with Lakeshed Land Treatment Options Above the Lakes”. Our display then listed programs and services provided by our SWCD. The event was well attended and well received. The Chamber Committee plans to make it an annual event.

## Conservation on Wheels. . .

The Blue Earth River Basin Initiative (BERBI) put together an educational display in 2005 that they moved around to 11 Minnesota County Fair and 3 Iowa County Fairs. They felt more than 1,000 kids participated in conservation themed games and many adults came through the Conservation on Wheels Tent to view displays and ask questions.

We thank the local fair board for allowing this display on the grounds and hope the event will be repeated next year. Our district provided some of our employees to help occupy the display, facilitate the games and answer questions.



Freeborn County Area kids enjoyed the games and information provided by the conservation on wheels display.



## County Fair Booth. . .

Our 2005 Fair Booth Display promoted the CREP II Program. The display explained program eligibility requirements, provided picture illustrations of eligible land types and included a sample easement area scenario with estimated payments the landowner would receive. Our booth is located in the Conservation Building and has heavy people traffic during the fair.

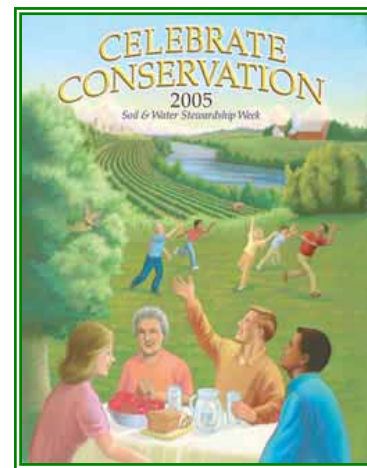


Every year staff and supervisors create a display highlighting programs & services of our SWCD. It's located in the Conservation Building at the Fairgrounds.

## Soil and Water Stewardship. . .

Each year our district provides soil and water stewardship materials to area churches. These materials include a Program leader guide and Litany. The 2005 theme was "Celebrate Conservation".

Stewardship week is celebrated usually the last week of April, however these materials are not dated and can be used anytime.



## Tree Program 2005. . .

Our SWCD again had another successful tree program in 2005. More than 16,000 trees and shrubs were sold to customers. These customers planted them for a variety of reasons. Some are used for windbreaks,

others for wildlife habitat, esthetics or other environmental benefits.

We buy quality trees & shrubs in large quantities from wholesale nurseries and

then re-package them in small lot for sale to our customers. In addition to sales, we also offer help with planting plans, planting equipment rental and tree care or maintenance products. These tree care products

include fabric matting or mulch materials, staples to hold the fabric in place and fertilizer for optimum tree growth.



Trees being prepared for distribution to customers.



CRP Tree Planting Site.

## Cost Share & Permanent Easement Program Activity. . .

### State Cost Share Program. . .

Landowners were paid a total of \$29,800.00 in state cost share dollars in calendar year 2005. Practices installed included water & sediment basins, grass waterways and side inlet pipes. Based on the dollar amount mentioned above, landowners installed nearly \$40,000.00 worth of practices as a result of this cost share program.

### Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). . .

Practices funded with federal EQIP Program cost share included no-till, nutrient management, water & sediment basins, grazing systems and animal waste management. Total amount expended by the program was \$300,000.

### Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP). . .

Practices funded with federal WHIP Program cost share dollars included forest stand improvements and upland wildlife habitat management. Freeborn County currently has three (3) contracts for 2005 for a total of 25.5 acres and \$10,000.00.

**A summary of RIM, RIM/WRP, WRP, EWP and WREP Easements to Date (12/31/05) is as follows:**

Twenty year easements –	
Two (2) Marginal Ag Land Easements	10.5 acres
Perpetual Easements --	
Four (4) RIM Riparian Easements	276.6 acres
Six (6) RIM Marginal Ag Land Easements	87.1 acres
Eleven (11) Permanent Wetland Preserve (PWP) Easements	221.8 acres
Six (6) RIM Wetland Restoration Easements	105.9 acres
Nineteen (19) CREP Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program	598.7 acres
Twenty-eight (28) RIM/WRP Wetland Restoration Easements	1,918.4 acres
Forty (40) WRP Wetland Restoration Easements	2,399.7 acres
Four (4) WREP Wetland Reserve Enhancement Program Easements	293.0 acres
Five (5) EWP Emergency Watershed Protection	250.2 acres
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,161.90 acres</b>

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
FREEBORN COUNTY, MINNESOTA

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES AND  
GOVERNMENTAL REVENUES, EXPENDITURES AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCE  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2005

	General Fund	Adjustments See Notes	Statement of Net Assets
<b>Revenues</b>			
Intergovernmental	\$219,669.13	\$0.00	\$219,669.13
Charges for services	\$27,195.77	\$0.00	\$27,195.77
Investment earnings	\$2,498.48	\$0.00	\$2,498.48
Miscellaneous	\$0.00		\$0.00
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<u><b>\$249,363.38</b></u>	<u><b>\$0.00</b></u>	<u><b>\$249,363.38</b></u>
Expenditures			
Conservation			
Current	\$231,344.00	\$8,762.03	\$240,106.03
Capital outlay	\$3,525.16	(\$3,525.16)	\$0.00
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<u><b>\$234,869.16</b></u>	<u><b>\$5,236.87</b></u>	<u><b>\$240,106.03</b></u>
<b>Excess of Revenues Over (Under)</b>			
<b>Expenditures</b>	<b>\$14,494.22</b>	<b>(\$5,236.87)</b>	<b>\$9,257.35</b>
<b>Fund Balance/Net Assets January 1</b>	<u>\$145,376.32</u>		<u>\$145,376.32</u>
<b>Fund Balance/Net Assets December 31</b>	<u><b>\$159,870.54</b></u>	<u><b>(\$5,236.87)</b></u>	<u><b>\$154,633.67</b></u>

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
FREEBORN COUNTY, MINNESOTA

STATEMENT OF NET ASSETS AND  
GOVERNMENTAL FUND BALANCE SHEET  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2005

	General Fund	Adjustments See Notes	Statement of Net Assets
<b><u>Assets</u></b>			
Cash and investments	\$233,736.81		\$233,736.81
Accounts receivable	\$0.00		\$0.00
Due from other governments	\$0.00		\$0.00
Compensated Absences	\$0.00		\$0.00
Capital Assets:	\$0.00		\$0.00
Equipment (net of accumulated depreciation)	\$16,494.44	\$16,494.44	\$16,494.44
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$233,736.81</b>	<b>\$16,494.44</b>	<b>\$250,231.25</b>
<b><u>Liabilities</u></b>			
Current liabilities:	\$0.00		\$0.00
Accounts payable	\$0.00		\$0.00
Salaries payable	\$1,888.80		\$1,888.80
Deferred revenue	\$81,446.94		\$81,446.94
Due to other governments	\$248.95		\$248.95
Long-term liabilities:	\$0.00		\$0.00
Due within one year		\$0.00	\$0.00
Due after one year	\$12,012.89	\$12,012.89	\$12,012.89
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$83,584.69</b>	<b>\$12,012.89</b>	<b>\$95,597.58</b>
<b><u>Fund Balance/Net Assets</u></b>			
Fund Balance/Net Assets			
Reserved for prepaid items	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Unreserved			
Designated for future projects	\$15,000.00	(\$15,000.00)	\$0.00
Undesignated	\$135,152.12	(\$135,152.12)	\$0.00
<b>Total Fund Balance</b>	<b>\$150,152.12</b>	<b>(\$150,152.12)</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
Net Assets			
Invested in capital assets		\$16,494.44	\$16,494.44
Unrestricted		\$138,139.23	\$138,139.23
<b>Total Net Assets</b>		<b>\$154,633.67</b>	<b>\$154,633.67</b>

## Average level of conservation assistance provided by staff in FY2005\*

Item	Number	Units
Clients Assisted	15,046	Persons
Air Resource Management	1150	ac.
Conservation Crop Rotation	817	ac.
Energy Management	4256	ac.
Filter Strips	121	ac.
Grade Stabilization Structures	1	ea.
Grassed Waterway	18	ac.
Habitat Management	1492	ac.
Nutrient Management	420	ac.
Nutrient Management	8791	ac.
Pest Management	3679	ac.
Residue Management, Mulch Till	633	ac.
Residue Management, No-Till	3,342	ac.
Residue Management, Seasonal	285	ac.
Soil Management	6100	ac.
Tree/Shrub Establishment	18	ac.
Upland Wildlife Habitat	8.5	ac.
Waste Utilization	170	ac.
Water & Sediment Control Basins	8	ea.
Wetland Restoration	400	ac.
Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment	1.1	ac.

All Figures taken from Field Office FY2005 accomplishment as reported to the USDA, except as noted. Field Office estimate not measured by the USDA system.