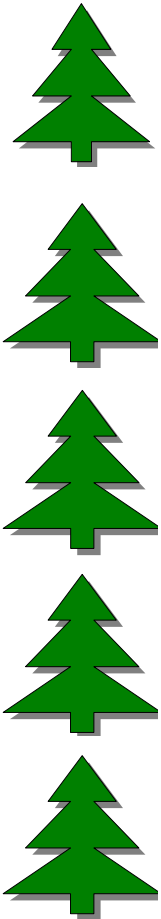




# 2009 Annual Report

1400 West Main Street  
Albert Lea, MN 56007-1816  
Phone: 507-373-5607 Ext. 3  
FAX: 507-373-7654  
[www.freebornswcd.org](http://www.freebornswcd.org)



Tree Planting



Water & Sediment Control Basin



Envirothon Competition



CREP Water Control Structure

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

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# From The Chairman. . .

by Don Kropp



Looking back on 2009, I see several events and happenings that have come before our District Board. Nationally, the down turn in the economy, the state budget cuts related to our programs and state cuts to the county, from which we get most of our operating funds, makes watching our operating budget a top priority.

Through the efforts of SWCD, NRCS and Ducks Unlimited staff persons we're able to administer a large number of conservation programs and offer other related services to our constituents in the county. This is a result of continued cooperation and partnering with agency and private groups.

In addition to our ongoing conservation practice application work, our SWCD Board and Staff are involved with one of our largest projects, a 304 acre wetland restoration project. The project involves five landowners and several other agencies. The primary funding will come from a Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program easement (CREP). The preliminary work began in 2009 and a majority of the work hopefully will be completed in 2010.

On a personal note, I was honored to be chosen as a judge for the state Envirothon. The event involved the winning teams from the seven regional competitions held though out Minnesota. The teams represent some of the brightest high school age young men and women from our State. The event was held at Ironwood Springs Christian Ranch near Stewartville this year. The winners advanced to the National Competition.

On behalf of our SWCD Board of Supervisors, I would like to thank all the local agencies, organizations, other local units of government and individuals that work in cooperation with us to deliver conservation programs and "put conservation on the land" in 2009. 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 ASS., MN DNR, US Fish & Wildlife, Shell Rock River Watershed District, Turtle Creek Watershed District, Cedar River Watershed District and others
- SE Tech Support Joint Powers Board
- Greater Blue Earth River Basin Alliance JPB


We hereby submit the following Annual Report of Soil and Water Conservation Activities for calendar year 2009.


Donald Kropp, Chairman


# Freeborn County Soil & Water Conservation District Supervisor Nomination Districts



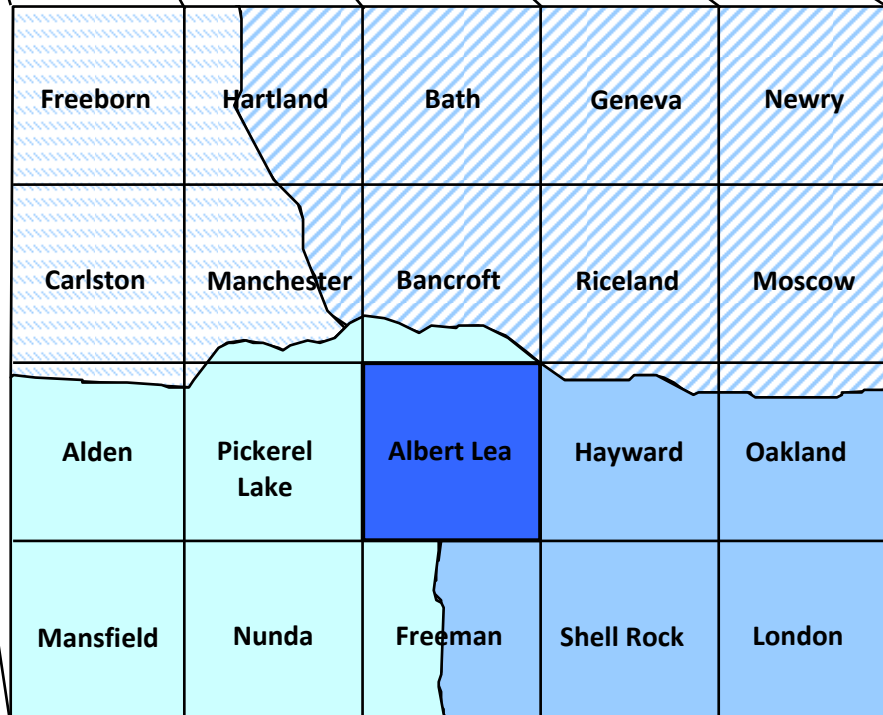
 District 1  
David Ausen  
Treasurer

 District 2  
Chris Dahl  
Board Secretary










 District 3  
Roger M. Nelson  
Supervisor

 District 4  
Cole Pectorious  
Vice-Chairman

 District 5  
Don Kropp  
Chairman



## 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. (Wetland Restoration Construction)
-  Maintenance supervision of the Minnesota River Watershed (CREP I) area of 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 and Technical Evaluation Panel (TEP) Membership.
-  Conservation compliance planning and assistance with other aspects of the current Farm Bill.
-  Consultations for the Rural Finance Authority Young Farmer Program.

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### **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

## Board Members

Don Kropp, Chairman  
Cole Pectorious, Vice-Chairman  
Dave Ausen, Treasurer  
Chris Dahl, Board Secretary  
Roger M. Nelson, Supervisor



## SWCD Staff :

Don Flatness, District Manager/Tech.  
Brenda Lageson, District Admin. Assist.  
Mark Schaetzke, District Technician



## NRCS Staff:

Edward Moffett, District 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  
Peter Hartman, Area Resource Soil Scientist  
Aaron Peter, Area Engineer  
Willis Goll, Agricultural Engineer  
Elizabeth Oolman, Agricultural Engineer  
Amy Dessner, Civil Engineer  
Larry Peterson, Civil Engineering Technician  
Mary Weiss, Civil Engineering Technician  
Chris Nelson, Civil Engineering Technician  
Christiane Roy, GIS Specialist

Judy Lambert, Area Adm. Coordinator  
Mark Kanable, Program Specialist  
Jayne Piepenburg, Accounting Technician  
John Zinn, Grazing Specialist



# District Conservationist Report

By Edward Moffett, USDA-NRCS



## Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA)

The Conservation Technical Assistance Program (CTA) is a voluntary program that provides technical assistance to help people conserve, maintain, and improve their natural resources. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Freeborn County SWCD staff are responsible for the delivery of CTA to local landowners, operators, groups, organizations and units of government. Clients may develop conservation plans, which serve as a basis for them to enter into financial assistance and easement conservation programs provided by Federal, State, and local programs.

There were over 8,900 acres of new CTA plans developed by the Freeborn County conservation staff in 2009. These plans are an important first step to participate in the many conservation programs which offer continued technical assistance and cost share funding.

## Conservation Security Program (CSP)

The Conservation Security Program in the Blue Earth Watershed had 16 landowners with active contracts in 2009. CSP provides “green payments” to participants who continue to implement soil, water, air, and energy conserving practices. There were 140 practices implemented in 2009 on 5400 acres which earned \$108,500 in green payments. These payments stimulate the local economy and provide many businesses with additional income and continued customers for the needed products associated with each farm operation enrolled in CSP.

## Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)

The environmental quality incentive program is a voluntary program which supports needs of agriculture and environmental concerns through financial incentives and cost share payments. An additional benefit of EQIP is that all technical planning and engineering is completed by NRCS and our SWCD partners. This technical assistance provides planning, survey, engineering design, design layout, and engineering oversight. Completed conservation projects improve water quality, land sustainability, create new wildlife habitat and stimulate local business. EQIP is responsible for the implementation of many conservation projects which continue to improve our environment.

There were 13 new funded EQIP contracts with a funding total of \$122,000 in 2009. EQIP provides 75% to 90% cost share for projects. Payments made for completion of over 70 planned contract items totaled \$170,000 in 2009.

## Wetland Reserve Program (WRP)

The wetland reserve program is voluntary program that offers landowners financial and technical assistance to enroll land into a 30 year or permanent easement. The goal is to protect, restore or enhance wetland habitat for the many environmental benefits. The easement options provide a financial settlement based on a land appraisal for the property rights on the planned easement site. The WRP also covers legal, land survey, and land appraisal cost which can be significant. The permanent easement option pays 100% of the planned construction and the 30 year option pays 75%. There were 120 acres of wetland habitat constructed and 115 acres of native grass seeding on projects which accounted for 220 acres of WRP easements. The newly constructed practices accounted for payments to the landowner which totaled \$127,500. There were 113 acres of new WRP easements which “closed,” making them ready for the design and construction phase. The easement payments to the landowners generated over 500,000 dollars for the local economy. Typical practices for the construction phase include low embankments, water control structures, tile breaks, scrapes, weed control and new native grass seeding.

## Annual Report Highlights –

### Paul & Vickie Heers Honored as “Outstanding Conservation Farmers” . . .

Paul Heers Jr. and his wife Vickie from rural Oakland, MN were honored during the MN Association of Soil and Water Conservation District’s (MASWCD) Annual Convention held in December at the Duluth Entertainment and Convention Center. They were

selected by our Board of Supervisors in July and invited to attend the convention in December as guests of our district.



The Heers accepting their award from Paula Mohr, Farmer Magazine Editor

The Heers family was selected to call attention to their efforts to establish a prescribed grazing system for their 100 cow beef herd. This system included new fences, new pasture & hay land plantings, a new watering system and grazing plan. It required installation of a new solar powered well, over 7,000 feet of pipeline and 11 watering stations. This new system helped them control soil erosion, improved runoff water quality and nearly doubled the production off their pastured acres. The Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) provided financial assistance to help them fund the new system.

They received a “Certificate of Merit” at a special noon luncheon from Paula Mohr, editor of “The Farmer” magazine while Lynn Ketelsen, well known farm broadcaster read a summary state about their farming operation. While all this was in progress, several digital pictures taken at their farm were being projected on a large screen in the background.

### Supervisors Attend “Legislative Day at the Capitol” to Meet and communicate With Local Legislators. . .



Dave (L) and Chris (R)

David Ausen and Chris Dahl, both Freeborn SWCD Supervisors traveled to St. Paul in February to attend the MASWCD Legislative Briefing and “Day at the Capitol”. During the MASWCD briefing, they were provided a forum to



State Capitol Building

communicate SWCD Roles to policy makers on private lands conservation. During the capitol visit, they met individually with local legislators representing our area of the state to make them aware of our programs and services. They also informed them of our financial needs and asked them to support legislation providing these needs.

## The Greater Blue Earth River Basin Alliance (GBERBA) continues to provide Technical Information and Financial Incentives to its Member Counties. . .

Our Soil and Water Conservation District and Freeborn County have been members of this alliance since its formation in 2003. Our district is represented on the GBERBA Policy Board by Supervisor Don Kropp and on the Technical Committee by SWCD Manager, Don Flatness. The county is represented on the Policy Board by Commissioner Glen Mathiason and on the Technical Committee by Dick Hoffman from Freeborn County Environmental Services.



Watersheds included in GBERBA area

Two grant awards totaling \$102,845.00 were available starting January 1<sup>st</sup> of 2009. These were for AgBMP and Urban BMP Projects. They were from the Clean Water Legacy Act Program. Another grant in the amount of \$87,000.00 was made available for use starting July 1<sup>st</sup>. This was from MPCA's "319 Funding Program". It was targeted to address riparian gullies and ravine erosion projects. These funds are allocated equally to each county initially. As the grant period nears end, the committee pools the remaining funds so any county with projects waiting can use the money. This insures complete expenditure of grant funds.

## SWCD Tree Program. . .

Our tree sales program provides local urban and rural landowners an opportunity to obtain good quality trees at affordable prices. Our SWCD offers a wide selection of trees suited towards conservation practices such as shelterbelts and wildlife plantings. We also provide planning assistance, including recommendations of trees or shrub varieties suited to the site, proper spacing, maintenance advice, and tree planter rentals. Tree mats and fertilizer are also available to increase planting success. We offered tree tubes and stakes for the first time this year.



Planting trees in a CREP II project



Trees planted with tubes and stakes to protect from wildlife while getting established

In 2009 we distributed over 18,700 trees and shrubs that were planted on around 160 sites. The number of trees sold in 2009 was about 50% higher than recent years. This was due to several Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program II easement owners doing large plantings. Potted evergreens seem to be increasingly popular. Our district sold 935 potted evergreens this year. Each of these trees will provide financial, aesthetic, wildlife, soil, water, and air quality benefits.



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

### State Cost Share Program. . .

Landowners were paid a total of \$42,019 in state cost share dollars in calendar year 2009. Practices installed included water & sediment basins, grass waterways, side inlet pipes and shelterbelts. Based on the dollar amount mentioned above, landowners installed over \$52,524 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 \$292,212.



Restored RIM/WRP Wetland Site

**A summary of RIM, RIM/WRP, WRP, and EWP Easements Closed to Date (12/31/09) is as follows:**

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-nine (29) RIM/WRP Wetland Restoration Easements	2,471.0 acres
Forty-five (45) WRP Wetland Restoration Easements	2,947.3 acres
Five (5) EWP Emergency Watershed Protection	250.2 acres
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,969.10 acres</b>

## Average level of conservation assistance provided by staff in FY2009\*

Item	Number	Units
Clients Assisted	8,900	Persons
Conservation Plans Written	12,500	ac.
Conservation Crop Rotation	6,520	ac.
Fencing (constructed)	1,200	ft.
Filter Strips	360	ac.
Grade Stabilization Structures	3	ea.
Grassed Waterway	15	ac.
Native grasses	450	ac.
Pest Management	475	ac.
Prescribed Grazing	150	ac.
Residue Management, Mulch Till	200	ac.
Residue Management, No-Till	1,150	ac.
Restoration & Management of Rare & Declining Habitats	250	ac.
Riparian Forest Buffer	2	ac.
Subsurface Drainage	6,000	ft.
Tree/Shrub Establishment	42	ac.
Pipeline	6,800	ft.
Upland Wildlife Habitat	3,200	ac.
Water & Sediment Control Basins	10	ea.
Wetland Restoration	450	ac.
Wildlife Food Plots	0	ac.
Nutrient Management	1,700	ac.

Field Office estimate not measured by the USDA system. Includes Federal and State programs.

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES AND  
GOVERNMENTAL FUND REVENUES, EXPENDITURES AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCE  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2009

	General Fund	Adjustments See Notes	Statement of Activities
<b>Revenues</b>			
Intergovernmental	\$237,295	\$0	\$237,295
Charges for services	\$42,078	\$0	\$42,078
Investment earnings	\$2,367	\$0	\$2,367
Miscellaneous	\$224	\$0	\$224
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$281,964</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$281,964</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>			
Conservation			
Current	\$260,460	\$2,587	\$263,047
Capital outlay	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$260,460</b>	<b>\$2,587</b>	<b>\$263,047</b>
<b>Excess of Revenues Over (Under)</b>			
<b>Expenditures</b>	<b>\$21,504</b>	<b>(\$2,587)</b>	<b>\$18,917</b>
<b>Fund Balance/Net Assets January 1</b>	<b>\$245,525</b>	<b>(\$11,139)</b>	<b>\$234,386</b>
<b>Fund Balance/Net Assets December 31</b>	<b>\$267,029</b>	<b>(\$13,726)</b>	<b>\$253,303</b>

STATEMENT OF NET ASSETS AND  
GOVERNMENTAL FUND BALANCE SHEET  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2009

	General Fund	Adjustments See Notes	Statement of Net Assets
<b><u>Assets</u></b>			
Cash and investments	\$319,060		\$319,060
Accounts receivable	\$0		\$0
Due from other governments	\$0		\$0
Prepaid items	\$0		\$0
Capital Assets:			
Equipment (net of accumulated depreciation)		\$1,651	\$1,651
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$319,060</b>	<b>\$1,651</b>	<b>\$320,711</b>
<b><u>Liabilities</u></b>			
Current liabilities:			
Due to other governments	\$0		\$0
Salaries payable	\$0		\$0
Deferred revenue	\$52,031		\$52,031
Long-term liabilities:			
Due within one year		\$0	\$0
Due after one year		\$15,377	\$15,377
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$52,031</b>	<b>\$15,377</b>	<b>\$67,408</b>
<b><u>Fund Balance/Net Assets</u></b>			
Fund Balance/Net Assets			
Reserved for prepaid items	\$0	\$0	\$0
Unreserved			
Designated for future projects	\$35,000	(\$35,000)	\$0
Undesignated	\$232,029	(\$232,029)	\$0
<b>Total Fund Balance</b>	<b>\$267,029</b>	<b>(\$267,029)</b>	<b>\$0</b>
Net Assets			
Invested in capital assets		\$1,651	\$1,651
Unrestricted		\$251,652	\$251,652
<b>Total Net Assets</b>		<b>\$253,303</b>	<b>\$253,303</b>