



400 Court Ave P.O. Box 1051

Gaylord, MN 55334

Winter 2016

Vol. 13 Issue 1

RIVER WATCHER NEWSLETTER

High Island Creek & Rush River
Watershed 319 TMDL Project

New Project is Here

With the new year, brings a new water quality improvement project for the High Island Creek and Rush River watersheds. This project is titled: High Island Creek and Rush River TMDL Project for Dissolved Oxygen. The goal of this project is to address the low dissolved oxygen impairments of both watersheds and therefore contribute to the Minnesota River's Low dissolved oxygen impairment as well (See page 5 for a background on dissolved oxygen). The majority of pollutants within the waters of High Island Creek and Rush River are believed to be runoff related. This problem can be addressed by implementing best management practices such as cover crops, filter strips, and altering open tile intakes to better accommodate water quality. These specific best management practices aid in sediment reduction, which is the primary cause of phosphorous related pollution in the High Island Creek and Rush River. Cost share and incentive payments have been made available through this project, which offers an additional reason to implement best management practices. Specific qualifications can make you eligible for \$400 per acre one time incentive payments, which are paid to you in addition to CRP payments when implementing a buffer strip. Also, \$30 per acre payments for cover crop implementation, and 75% cost share up to \$600 dollars for the implementation of open intake alternatives. Please contact either the Watershed Coordinator or Watershed Technician to determine if you are eligible for one or all of the listed above incentives. With continuous support and efforts from the residents of both the High Island Creek and Rush River watersheds, water quality improvements can become a reality.

Watershed Coordinator:

Coleton Draeger

Phone: 507-237-4050

E-mail: coletond@co.sibley.mn.us

Watershed Technician:

Ron Otto

Phone: 507-237-5435 ext. 105

E-mail: ron.otto@sibleyswcd.org



Minnesota Duty Officer

In operating a feedlot or farming operation there may be times when accidents or serious incidents can occur that are beyond the control of any one individual to handle, it then becomes necessary to contact the Minnesota Duty Officer. The Duty Officer provides a single answering point of alert to various State agencies that are needed to respond to a particular incident. Incidents may include such things as Natural disasters (tornado, fire, flood etc.), hazardous material incidents, pipeline leaks and breaks, manure spills, lagoon breaks, fires that involve live-stock, substances released into the air, such as anhydrous. If in doubt the Duty Officer should be called.

The Duty Officer is on duty 24 hours a day, seven days a week, if you have an accident or incident it is important to call them so that the incident can be responded to as soon as possible and proper authorities alerted so that the incident may be contained.

When contacting the Duty Officer you will be asked to provide information to the officer such as name of caller, date, time and location of the incident, phone number for call back at the scene or facility, and whether local authorities have been notified. Also, other information may be needed such as material and quantity involved in the incident, phone number of the responsible party, surface waters involved or sewers, what happened and present situation.

Where there is a threat to life and property call 9-1-1 first

The Minnesota Duty Officer may be reached 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at [1-800-422-0798](tel:1-800-422-0798), or [651-649-5451](tel:651-649-5451)

Article written by Greg Devries - Sibley County Feedlot Inspector, on January 4th, 2016.

ATTENTION

New SWCD Funding Opportunity: Flood Relief Phase III

As most recall, the spring /summer of 2014 brought devastating rains and flooding throughout much of Southern Minnesota. In response to the damage, Governor Dayton signed legislation that allocated funding to the Board of Water and Soils Resources (BWSR) to assist local government units (including Sibley SWCD) in the repair of conservation practices damaged by the flood. The Sibley County SWCD was awarded grant funding for Phase I and Phase II to address damage done in Sibley County. In 2015, Sibley SWCD was busy assessing, prioritizing and contracting. Now, we may have an opportunity for additional funding through a Phase III grant. Similar to the past, these grant funds will allow Sibley SWCD to continue cost share assistance towards repair work, including both damaged and new conservation practices. To learn more or see if your land qualifies, please stop by the SWCD field office in Gaylord or call us at 507-237-5435 ext.3.



Assessing a blowout of a structure located in Jessenland Twp.

Attention Watershed Residents...

Did you know that you can dispose of your household hazardous waste items for free!!!

These items include, paint (latex & oil), stains, cleaners, garden chemicals, solvents, used oil & gas, adhesives, etc...

Sibley County residents can dispose of their items at the McLeod County hazardous waste center, which is located at 1065 5th Avenue SE in Hutchinson. They are open every Tuesday to Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. year round.

Farmers can also dispose of unused Ag chemicals by contacting Al Christensen at 507-381-9196.

Cost-Share and Incentives Offered

- **Buffer Strip Incentive Payment**

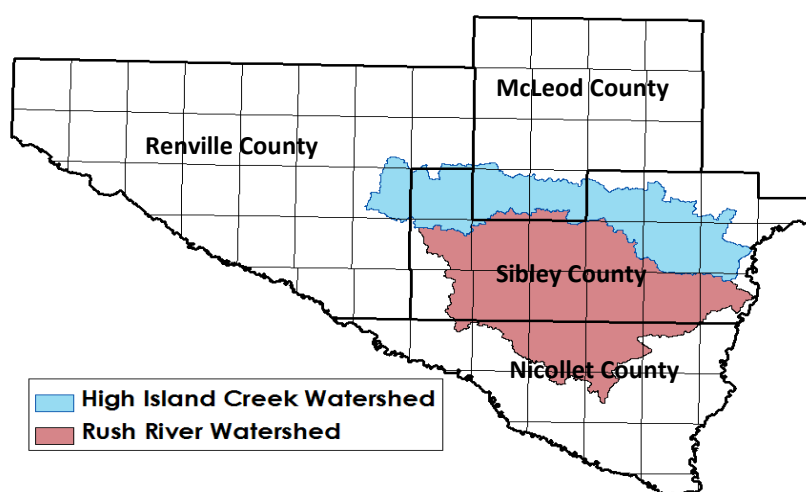
This option pays the landowner a one time payment of \$400 per acre of CRP buffer strip implemented, the CRP must be in a 15 year contract. This payment is in addition to the CRP payments received. After “Buffer Law” deadlines are in place, incentive payments will only be made to those who implement a buffer beyond the minimum requirements.

- **Cover Crop Incentive Payment**

This option pays landowners who have can crops (peas, sweet corn, etc.) \$30 per acre to implement cover crops.

- **Open Intake Alternative Cost-Share**

This option offers 75% cost-share up to \$600 per intake to landowners who implement open intake alternatives. Alternatives include: Rock Inlets, Open Intake Removals, Slotted Risers, or an additional practice determined acceptable by project staff.



Benefits of Best Management Practices:

Are you skeptical about implementing best management practices on your property that can greatly improve the waters of the High Island Creek and Rush River Watersheds? Have you ever wondered how much these practices actually benefit the waterways? Check out the table below to see what two simple best management practices can do to improve water quality. These practices reduce nutrient and sediment as seen below. Variations in sediment and nutrient reductions occur due to the topography and soil type of the given area. These practices are two ways watershed staff feel land owners can contribute to water quality improvements and are fairly reasonable in terms of cost and implementation. Call your local SWCD office today with any questions regarding these practices.

Type of BMP	Amount Installed	Type of Pollutant	Amount Estimated Reduction
Rock Tile Intake	2 Intake Alternatives	Sediment (TSS)	10.8 Tons/Year
		Phosphorous	15 LBS/Year
Rock Tile intake	2 Intake Alternatives	Sediment (TSS)	26.8 Tons /Year
		Phosphorous	17.63 LBS/Year
Buffer Strip	2.55 Acres	Sediment (TSS)	58.65 Tons/Year
		Phosphorous	99.74 LBS/Year
Buffer Strip	3.3 Acres	Sediment (TSS)	21.85 Tons/Year
		Phosphorous	36.32 LBS/Year



Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

Manure Application

Minimum setbacks near waters ✓
(Counties can be more restrictive than state Rule 7020)

	Surface application	Incorporation within 24 hrs.
Lake, stream	300 feet*	25 feet**
Wetlands (10+ ac.)	300 feet*	25 feet**
Ditches (no berms)	300 feet*	25 feet**
Open tile intakes	300 feet	0 feet
Well, quarry	50 feet	50 feet
Sinkhole (no berms)		
Downslope	50 feet	50 feet
Upslope	300 feet	50 feet

* 100-foot vegetated buffer can be used instead of 300-foot setback for non-winter applications (50-foot buffer for wetlands, ditches)
** No long-term phosphorus buildup within 300 feet

State Duty Officer: 1-800-422-0798
MPCA-St. Paul: 1-800-657-3864

✓ See "Applying manure in sensitive areas"
At <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/gp0r69c>

NRCS photo



United States Department of Agriculture Conservation Financial Assistance Programs:

CSP (Conservation Stewardship Program)
Continuous Sign-up

EQIP (Environmental Quality Incentive Program)
Continuous Sign-up
Accepting Applications for 2016 Funding

WRE (Wetland Reserve Easements)
Continuous Sign-up

CRP (Conservation Reserve Program)
Continuous CRP Signup

For more information contact the
NRCS Office at (507) 237-5435 x3

Natural Resources Conservation Service
111 6th Street, PO Box 161, Gaylord, Minnesota 55334
An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer



Low Interest Loans available for upgrading of Noncompliant Septic Systems

Owners of a Subsurface Sewage Treatment System (SSTS) are eligible for low-interest loans to upgrade their non-conforming septic system. Furthermore, those in the High Island Creek Watershed are eligible for an additional \$500 incentive from the High Island Creek Watershed District. Check with your county contact for further details.

To Be Eligible:

- Applicant must be a property owner of a non-conforming septic system:
 - Discharge to the surface
 - Tiled to drainage or road ditch
 - Discharge to cesspool, seep-age pits or dry wells
 - Less than a 2-foot separation to seasonally saturated soil
 - Lack of a system
 - Does not meet setbacks to existing well

Not Eligible:

- Refinancing a previously installed system
- Septic for new homes
- Non-residential property
- Project started before design and loan approval
- Under court order to repair system

Contact Information:

Sibley County: Ron Otto
Sibley SWCD office
111 6th Street, P.O. Box 161
Gaylord, MN 55334
507-237-5435 ext. 105

Nicollet County: Mandy Landkamer
Environmental Services Office
501 South Minnesota Avenue
St. Peter, MN 56082
507-934-0250

McLeod County: Roger Berggren
Environmental Services Office
830 11th Street East, Suite 110
Glencoe, MN 55336
320-864-1214

Renville County: Diane Mitchell
Renville County Government
Services Center
105 S. 5th Street, Suite 318
Olivia, MN 56277
320-523-3760

Background on Dissolved Oxygen

Dissolved oxygen is one of the most critical aspects of life for aquatic organisms, because like humans, without adequate oxygen levels these organisms cannot survive. In order to preserve fish, amphibians, and other aquatic organisms within the waters of High Island Creek, Rush River, and the remaining waterways within Sibley and its neighboring counties we must be conscious about what we are doing to the landscape and how it effects our water. The leading factor in dissolved oxygen depletion is the abundance of phosphorous in a given body of water. If high levels of phosphorous are present, a significant increase of algae is likely present as well. As the excessive algae dies off, a Biochemical Oxygen Demand (B.O.D.) occurs. This B.O.D. occurrence is caused by bacteria that become present in the water column due to the decay of algae. During times of B.O.D. large amounts of dissolved oxygen can be consumed by the bacteria present from an algae die off, therefore leaving little oxygen for other aquatic organisms such as fish. The most common way phosphorous enters the waterways of the High Island Creek and Rush River is through soil erosion. Phosphorous binds itself to the soil particles and then is transferred into our waterways as the soil erodes. Some common ways to prevent phosphorous from entering our waterways, and therefore protect our valuable water resources include: removal of open intakes or open intake alternatives, buffer strips, the use of cover crops, no till or similar tillage practices, and also alternative tiling options. Land owners within the High Island Creek and Rush River Watersheds should contact: Watershed Coordinator – Coleton Draeger or Watershed Technician – Ron Otto, in the near future for information regarding incentive payments and cost share opportunities that will help improve dissolved oxygen levels within both the High Island Creek and Rush River Watersheds.

High Island Creek & Rush River

Watershed Implementation Projects

400 Court Ave, P.O. Box 1051

Gaylord, MN 55334

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Environmental Services of
Sibley, Renville, McLeod &
Nicollet Counties,
University of Minnesota
Extension Service,
High Island Creek Water-
shed District,
Natural Resource Conser-
vation Service

Attention High Island Creek Watershed Residents:

Landowners and renters within the High Island Creek Watershed District must obtain watershed district permits or file notification forms before tiling, ditching, dredging, filling or otherwise altering the natural drainage of an area. Wetlands and stream courses may be protected under the USDA Farm Program, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Army Corp of Engineers or Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act programs.

Protect your legal status and farm program benefits. Before beginning drainage work, contact Al Kerber—Watershed Ditch Inspector @ 320-510-1783. Failure to obtain a permit may result in a fine of \$500 or more.

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Both Projects are equal opportunity organizations and employers. Questions and comments can be directed to: Coleton Draeger

Watershed Grants Coordinator / Phone: (507) 237-4050