



Clean Water Fund Restoration Technical Assistance Grazing Management Initiative for the Root, Whitewater and Adjacent Watersheds

Fillmore Soil and Water Conservation District

**Clean Water Fund Grant
Awarded** \$ 126,316

Grant Period (incl. extensions)
From: March 25, 2011
To: December 31, 2012
Extended to June 30, 2014

Funds Returned to State
Type \$0
Date Fund Returned: N/A

Expenditures by Budget Category

**March 25, 2011 to
June 30, 2014**

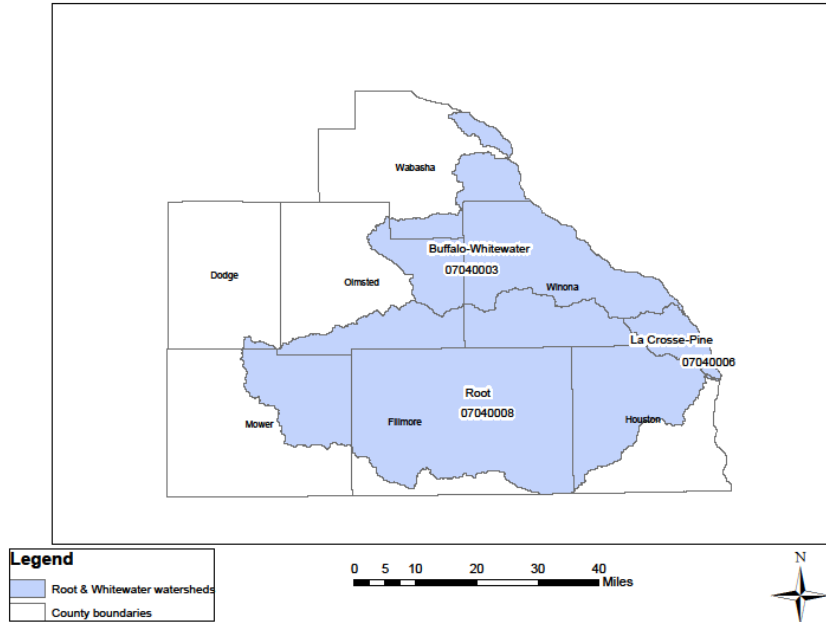
Administration/ Coordination	\$ 6,316.00
Technical and Engineering	\$ 120,000.00
Total Ex- penditures	\$ 126,316.00
Balance 6/30/2014	\$ 0

PROJECT CONTACT

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*Prepared by Fillmore SWCD
for BWSR Website Reporting Requirements*

Root, Whitewater and Adjacent Watersheds



The Regional TMDL Implementation Plan for Fecal Coliform Bacteria identifies the availability of grazing specialists as a key milestone in implementing managed grazing practices on critical areas where cattle have unlimited access to ephemeral or permanent streams or are pastured on steep slopes near streams. The Root River and Whitewater River are identified in the plan as priority watersheds due to high levels of bacteria.

Outputs and Outcomes

Outputs: The Grazing Specialist will provide technical assistance to producers in the Root River watershed, the Whitewater watershed, and those watersheds adjacent to both in Winona County, to develop 5-10 multi-phased grazing management plans per year that meet the NRCS standard 528 (Prescribed Grazing) and help cooperators locate funding to implement them, including MRBI funding. The Grazing Specialist will also follow up on existing plans that can be implemented utilizing funding from the federal EQIP program and MRBI, as well as follow up and troubleshooting on plans that are being implemented. Cover crops on corn silage and soybean acres will be promoted as a way to extend and enhance grazing. Cover crops can be used for grazing or forage. Education and outreach activities, such as writing newspaper and newsletter articles and conducting field days and workshops, will be conducted in cooperation with Extension, MN Dept. of Ag, NRCS, and other agencies.

The Grazing Specialist is currently working with about 40 producers per year with developing managed grazing plans, installing fence and pipeline, and troubleshooting existing grazing systems. Since 2009, a total of 3,258 acres have grazing plans with 240,000 feet of pipeline and 387,000 feet of fence. EQIP contracts on these acres total \$941,498, and state cost share funding totals \$63,107.



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Cattle watering tank installed using EQIP and state funds.

Outputs and Outcomes

Outcomes:

As of December 30, 2011, no funds have been expended from this grant in order to use up existing grant funds for this position. These existing funds were not utilized as quickly as anticipated due to a 3-month staff vacancy and reduced insurance costs over the past two years, which were unknown at the time the grant applications were submitted. Utilization of these funds is expected to begin in 2012. A grant extension may be requested from BWSR to extend the use of these funds beyond the existing grant period.

January—December 2012: Worked on 11 new grazing plans for EQIP, two of which were funded through MRBI. Conducted site visits on 18-22 farms, some several times to get information for doing plans, GPSing fence or pipeline installations, checking seedings and other practices, and troubleshooting problems. Completed status reviews for EQIP and assisted with 76 status reviews of 76 old EQIP contracts for the NRCS State Office. Worked on NRCS standards for fencing, seeding and pipeline practices for 2013. Began publishing the monthly Grazing Gazette with funding from GLCA grant and local sponsors; mailed to over 700 grazers. Planned and assisted with summer and fall field days with NRCS and U of M Extension and Vet School staff. Completed grant proposals for pasture renovations and rotational grazing research. Participated in 7 teleconferences with GLCA and NRCS Grazing Specialists. Gave 3 presentations to U of M Vet School students about grazing operations. Attended and provided information at Tour de Forage, U of M Cow/Calf Days, Tri-State Conservation Grazing Workshop, SWCD grazing field day, NRCS grazing training sessions (5/13&5/14), Winona/Fillmore Local Work Group Meeting, Grazing Training in Rochester, Soils webinar in Rochester, Rush Pine Grazing and Soils Workshop, Midwest Forage Day, Pland ID Training, Field Day at Dairy Farm, and Ti-State Grazing Workshop in North Dakota. Assisted with helping producers with Emergency CRP Haying and Grazing Program. Assisted with collecting soil wate samples from the lysimeter network established to better understand nitrate transport in karst under various land uses. Also helped collected samples for basal stalk and soil nitrate testing. Promoted cover crops with NRCS and SWCD staff. Assisted with Napa Insurance claims for pastures due to the drought. Attended trainings for Toolkit and Watershed Tool. Attended meetings for the Root River and Watson Creek watersheds. Continued work with CPS on seeding winter rye into standing beans.

January-June 2013: Dean conducted 20-30 site visits to gather information to assist producers with grazing plans. Developed 7grazing plans which 3 funded through EQIP. Conducted construction checks as needed. Assisted with field days with NRCS & U of MN Extension and Vet School staff. Participated in 5 teleconferences with GLCA and NRCS Grazing Specialist. Working with U of MN on pond sampling for cattle watering. Attended 5 grazing work group meetings, attended 4 soil health video, assisted with Farm Safety Day, assisted with harvest/hay plots. Made numerous presentations at NRCS seed tool training, U of MN Vet students, Envirothon. Presented at Soil Health training about cover crops and spoke with numerous producers about cover crops on prevented plant acres. Assisted 28 producers in signing up for cover crops through EQIP (4247.1 acres) and worked with NRCS to get cover crop standards revised.



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Temporary fencing for paddocks..

Outputs and Outcomes

Outcomes cont'd:

July - December 2013: Dean conducted numerous site visits to work with producers on development of grazing plans and oversaw installation of practices for grazing plans. Participated in 2 Field days and 6 teleconferences and also the soil webinar through GLCA. Dean also made numerous site visits to check on cover crops and process paperwork for payments and certification of cover crops. Met with new producers for potential 2014 funding. Participated and spoke at 4 field days for cover crops. Conducted Infiltration testing on the 7 Soil Health cover crop contracts. 7 EQIP soil health cover crop contracts for 999 acres total over 5yrs. also 21 EQIP cover crop contracts for 3248.1 acres total over 1-3yrs. Presented at Soil Health training about cover crops. Worked with NRCS on changing cover crop standards.

January—June 2014:Two Grazing Gazette issues completed and sent to over 1000 by regular mail and email. Cover crop article completed for SWCD newspaper insert. Three new grazing plans started. Participated in 9 NRCS and GLCI teleconferences and meetings. Assisted NRCS with EQIP and CSP producer sign ups for grazing and cover crops and with developing new EQIP standards for these practices. Participated in Ag-PhD meeting, RMA webinar, Tour de Forage, and Extension Cow/Calf Days. Planned and presented information for Farm Tech training for NRCS/SWCD staff in February, Land Stewardship Project meeting in Chatfield in March, cover crop meeting with agronomists in March, grazing meeting in Preston in March, Soil Health meeting in Plainview in March. Completed reporting for National Wildlife Federation Cover Crop Champion grant awarded in 2013 and began activities for 2014 Cover Crop Champion Grant. Completed Toolkit training and CPR/First Aid training.