



# CWF Technical Assistance for the Root River MRBI Project

## Fillmore Soil and Water Conservation District

**Clean Water Fund Grant Awarded** \$ 25,000

**Grant Period (incl. extensions)**  
 From: October 20, 2010  
 To: June 30, 2012  
 Extended to: June 30, 2013

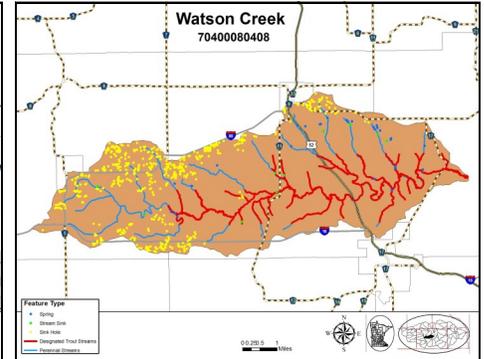
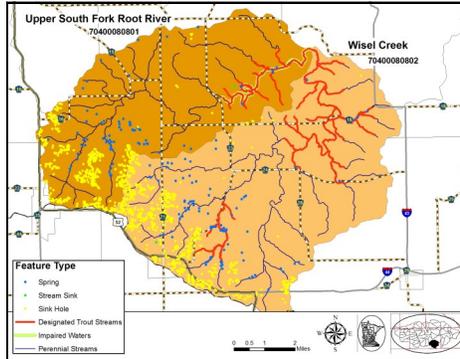
**Funds Returned to State**  
 Type \$0  
 Date Fund Returned: N/A

### Budget by Category

Administration/Coordination	
Project Development	
Technical and Engineering	\$ 25,000.00
Construction	
<b>Total CWF Budget</b>	<b>\$ 25,000.00</b>
<b>Expenditures</b> January 1, 2011 to June 30, 2013	
Technical and Engineering	\$ 25,000.00
<b>Balance as of 6/30/2013</b>	<b>\$ 0</b>

### PROJECT CONTACT

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The Mississippi River Basin Initiative (MRBI) was developed by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service to solve water quality issues related to nutrient and sediment runoff contributing to local water quality issues and to hypoxia in the Gulf of Mexico. The Fillmore SWCD submitted MRBI applications for two subwatersheds in the Root River watershed: Watson Creek and the Upper South Fork Root River/Wisel Creek. Priority practices in these watersheds are ag waste storage for dairy and beef producers, nutrient management for operations utilizing manure, and grazing management. These priorities take advantage of the existing technical staff in the SWCD office and benefit livestock production, which is crucial to maintaining hay and pasture acres on the steep terrain of the Root River watershed. Other practices being promoted include cover crops, no till/strip till, streambank protection, buffers, grassed waterways, contour buffer strips, grade stabilization structures, water and sediment control basins and forest management practices.

### Outputs and Outcomes

**Outputs:** Two SWCD technicians, each with 25 years experience working with SWCD and NRCS programs and practices, will be supported for 1-2 days work per month in both watersheds to conduct outreach and promotion of MRBI-EQIP and WHIP practices and to provide technical assistance to landowners implementing practices. They will primarily work on soil erosion control practices, such as grassed waterways, terraces, and grade stabilization structures. Practices will need to meet the FOTG standards. The existing technical staff working in these watersheds will be the Engineering Technician, the Root River Grazing Specialist, and the Nutrient Management Specialist. The Engineering Technician has 8 years of experience designing feedlot fixes with the JPB Engineer, managing state cost share projects and grants, regional 319 grant projects and those funded using MPCA base grant funds. She completed 18 feedlot projects in 2010. The Grazing Specialist has been with the SWCD since April of 2009. He also is a farmer who practices rotational grazing on his farm. He has been working closely with NRCS Grazing Specialist to implement EQIP prescribed grazing contracts with about 35 producers on about 4,000 acres, as well as writing new grazing plans. The Nutrient Management Specialist has been doing nutrient management plans with the SWCD since March 2007. She previously worked for a local cooperative. She is a certified planner with NRCS developing new and updated comprehensive nutrient plans for over 120 producers on over 50,000 acres.

*Prepared by Fillmore SWCD  
 for BWSR Website Reporting Requirements*

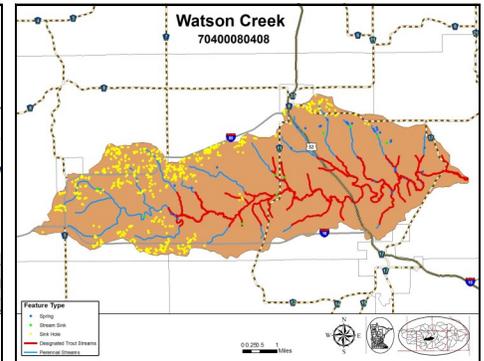
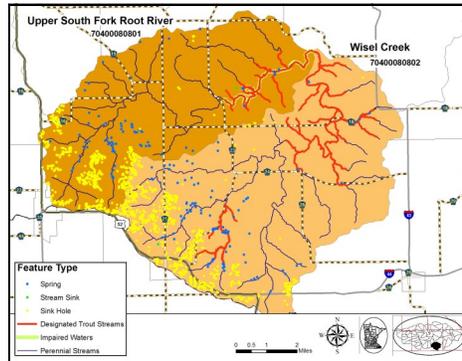


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## Outputs and Outcomes cont'd

### Outcomes:

October - December 2010: SWCD staff assisted with developing a vision statement for the Root River for use by the Midwest Natural Resources Group along with recommendations for support from the federal agencies to enhance efforts in the MRBI watersheds. SWCD staff attended a meeting for all the MRBI partners in the Root and Cedar watersheds on November 18 in Preston to discuss progress to date, plan for the next sign up, and get input on monitoring.

January - March 2011: The technical staff met in January to develop a list of about 30 landowners in each watershed to begin contacting. There was extensive discussion with the NRCS state office staff regarding some EQIP changes for such things as cover crops and streambank projects to be incorporated into the MRBI payment docket. A mass mailing went out in March to both watersheds plus the Fillmore County portion of Rush-Pine watershed (623 pieces total). About 50 landowners in all have contacted the SWCD office or have been contacted by SWCD staff about MRBI who have interest in implementing practices.

April—June 2011: Work continued with contacting landowners and implementing practices signed up under new EQIP and WHIP contracts. Meetings were held to determine how to use NRCS TA funds designated for MRBI.

July—December 2011: Technical staff worked on a large terrace project in Rush-Pine watershed. Dry soil conditions in the fall prevented construction. Staff assisted with review of the application materials, interviewing and selecting the Conservation Planning Specialist hired in October with funding from NRCS and matching funds from The Nature Conservancy. Both technicians provided training to the new employee, who accompanied them into the field to learn about surveying, staking and designing practices. Several meetings were held with two landowners about streambank/riparian projects to repair erosion areas and to plant native grasses and trees. One of the landowners has decided not to proceed due to the cost; the other is postponing his project in order to enroll cropland in CRP. The technicians have assisted the new Planning Specialist with contacting landowners and reviewing conservation needs after the landowners' conservation plans are updated, primarily in the MRBI watersheds.

January—December 2012: Practices implemented in 2012 using MRBI funding (including some projects in Rush-Pine watershed): 10 waterways, 2 prescribed grazing plans, 1 habitat restoration, and 1 terrace. The waterways treat over 1806 acres of drainage area. The grazing plans cover 57.6 acres. The habitat restoration is on 1.7 acres. The terrace treats 6.5 acres.

January—June 2013: Spring soil nitrate test samples were collected by SWCD staff in the same locations as the fall nitrogen samples to gain a better understanding of soil nitrogen changes from fall to spring. Results were shared with the producers. These same fields were sampled in the fall for the basal stalk nitrate tests. Some of the SWCD staff are involved with the Farmer Led Council in Rush-Pine watershed and are providing information about technical and financial assistance for practices. Funding from The Nature Conservancy was transferred through the SWCD to three ag co-ops in the watershed to buy rye cover crop seed for distribution to producers in the watershed. Almost 400 acres were seeded. Conservation practice designs completed include 1 waterway design and 5 different practices for a grazing system. With the wet spring weather, it was difficult to get practices installed and checked out. One project was installed and checked out by June 30, and some portions of the grazing system were installed and checked out. Four more projects were installed and checked out by the end of 2013.

*Prepared by Fillmore SWCD for BWSR  
Website Reporting Requirements*