



# Everyone Wins In Lincoln County

## November 2016 Snapshots

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Working with landowners to implement smart drainage technology to improve water quantity and quality is a top priority in Lincoln County. Accomplishing these objectives while also improving agricultural production is the goal, and Lincoln County and the Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) are making steady progress toward its achievement.

Located 4 miles west of Ivanhoe, MN is the Snyder/Gorecki wetland restoration project. The 136.1 acre project, 14 years in the making, will result in a fully restored wetland that treats cropland drainage and runoff. Through the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), the southern half of the wetland was permanently protected in 2001 but only a partial wetland restoration was accomplished. Existing county drain tile and potential flooding impacts on neighboring properties prevented a full wetland restoration at the time. Thanks to continued coordination between the Lincoln County SWCD office, neighboring landowners, and the Lincoln County Drainage Authority, the missing pieces eventually came together.

When existing county drainage tile, identified as CD37-BR4, began to fail, landowners above the project site were impacted by the poor drainage. Rather than replacing the existing tile, which would have cost the ditch system over \$200,000, the SWCD, County, and landowners began discussing other options, focusing on a solution that provided cost savings, improved drainage, and addressed the top water quality/quantity priority for Lincoln County. As a result of effective coordination and communication between all the stakeholders, the Lincoln SWCD was able to enroll the remaining wetland acres – where the tile was failing - into the RIM Wetlands program in 2015. They also secured a six acre flowage easement on a small area just outside of the CREP boundary, which allowed for a full restoration of the wetland.

“Working together is a key component to maximize the benefit of a project of this caliber. It was very beneficial for landowners and agencies to be fully engaged in the discussions throughout the process.” said Randy Kraus, District Technician with the Lincoln Soil and Water Conservation District.



After the necessary acres were secured, BWSR and SWCD staff began investigating conservation practices with landowners and the County Drainage Authority. They discussed the best alternatives to improve drainage for landowners who benefit from the ditch system that would still allow for full restoration of the wetland. It was decided that the failing portion of the tile contained within the CREP and RIM Wetlands boundary (7062 feet) would be abandoned rather than replaced, and in its place a lift station would be installed. Engineering services and Seventy-five percent of the funding for the installation of the station was paid for by the nine-county member Joint Powers Board for Area II Minnesota River Basin Projects. The remaining 25% portion was provided by the CD37-BR4 Ditch System. The lift station will intercept 100% of the watershed that drains into

the tile above the project site and then pump that water via the lift station into the fully restored wetland. This approach provided benefits to the members of the ditch system by improving drainage above and below the restoration, adding stormwater retention, and reducing sedimentation into the open ditch where the tile outlets flow.

“The Snyder/Gorecki project represents an opportunity for landowners, local, regional, state and federal government, along with ditch system members to work together and benefit from it. Each entity will gain from the outcome of this effort,” said Robert Olsen, Lincoln County’s Environmental Office Administrator.

As the case for most projects of this nature, the Snyder/Gorecki project required funding from multiple sources. BWSR, the USDA Farm Service Agency, DNR, Area II Minnesota River Basin Projects, local drainage authority, township, and US Fish and Wildlife

Service all provided funding to make this restoration a success. The local partners in Lincoln County have a long history of working together to maximize funding and outcomes; it is this partnership that made the Snyder/Gorecki wetland restoration a reality.

“This project is proof that private and public entities can work together for the greater good and positive outcomes that restore and protect our natural resources for future generations,” Olsen added.

Final restoration of the site will conclude in the spring of 2017. Once fully restored, the 60 acre wetland will provide a natural filter for the 550 acres of watershed area that drains into the basin, which will remove sediment and nutrients to improve water quality and provide valuable habitat.

