

2017 Sand Hill River Watershed District Annual Report

*Rapids at end of
“natural” channel of
Sand Hill River...until it
re-emerges in its natural
channel upstream of
Climax.*

FOR MORE INFORMATION. CONTACT US



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Visit the Sand Hill River Watershed District!

The board of managers meets the first Tuesday of every month at 8 AM at the district office located at 219 North Mill. Minutes are posted on our web-site.



SAND HILL RIVER
WATERSHED DISTRICT

ABOUT THE DISTRICT

The Sand Hill River Watershed District, founded in 1975, encompasses approximately 495 square miles that drain to the Sand Hill River and the Red River. The District encompasses portions of Polk, Norman, and Mahnomen counties in northwestern Minnesota. Municipalities within the District include Fosston, Winger, Fertile, Nielsville, and Climax.

THE TOPOGRAPHY & LAND USE

The Sand Hill River Watershed District is characterized by rolling topography in the eastern and central portions of the District, flattening further to the west. There are many small lakes in the middle of the District between Fertile and Winger. These basins tend to be non-contributing or have poorly developed outlets. The primary land use for the District is agriculture.

Rock Riffles - Sand Hill River

The primary funding source for the project is Minnesota's Clean Water Land and Legacy Amendment. A portion of funds generated from this Amendment are administered through the MN Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) Clean Water Fund grant program. The West Polk Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) was successful in attaining a \$475,000 grant from the BWSR Clean Water Fund for the Sand Hill River Grade Stabilization Project. These funds require a 25% minimum match of awarded grant dollars, which is being provided by the Sand Hill River Watershed District, and a \$100,000 Enbridge Ecofootprint Grant.

Funding

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers funded 75 percent of the project's cost of nearly \$7.6 million, while the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council funded 25 percent of the fish passage component, providing the Minnesota DNR with more than \$1.9 million in two phases for removing the four dams.

Funding for the Outdoor Heritage and Clean Water grants comes from the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment that Minnesota voters approved in 2008. Construction began in August 2016 and wrapped up about two months later. In 2017,



seeding was established and inspected.

The project came in under budget, and remaining funds will be used for additional improvements on the river. According to a July 2017 update from BWSR, about \$1.2 million in Lessard-Sams funding remains for fish passage and fish habitat, while about \$246,000 in Clean Water money will go toward projects such as additional riffles downstream to further improve water quality.



The district will continue its efforts to determine the best way to allocate the remaining funds and obtain permitting. Collaboration between the district, MnDNR and West Polk SWCD will continue.

“The district is excited to be recognized for Clean Water Funds to promote clean water in the Sand Hill River”.

- Administrator Daniel Wilkens

River Recreation and Clean Water

The district was selected as the recipient of this year's Adopt a River Program which is funded through the DNR. The DNR hires the Conservation Corp of Minnesota to do the work of clearing the river. In June, 21 workers operating in two crews completed as much as they could in the time allowed. There was no cost to the district.

The Sand Hill River Watershed District has recognized that river recreation has grown increasingly popular on Sand Hill River. A huge part of river recreation is clean water. The district was awarded clean water funds to clean the Sand Hill River beginning one mile west of Fertile. The Conservation Corp of MN is planning a 2018 river clean up effort to clean up debris and garbage on the Sand Hill River to sustain our water resources.



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Sand Hill River Kayaking

RCPP Program

The Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) is a new, comprehensive and flexible program that uses partnerships to stretch and multiply conservation investments and reach conservation goals on a regional or watershed scale.

Summary

The district signed the agreement in September of 2016 to participate in the RCPP program to explore upper and lower detention areas of the Sand Hill. The Lower Sand Hill River has many issues related to increased runoff rates. Reduced channel stability along the Sand Hill Ditch has led to significant bank sloughing and channel head cutting. Much of this material is then deposited further downstream where channel slopes moderate, resulting in reduced channel capacity and increased risk of flooding.

Partners participating in RCPP can use their local knowledge and networks to undertake conservation projects by joining with agricultural producers to restore or sustain natural resources such as clean and abundant water, healthy productive soils, enhanced wildlife, and pollinator habitat.



The Sand Hill River Watershed District will continue planning to determine ideal locations for retention with the upper portion of the Sand Hill River Watershed District.

2017 Ditch Levies

Norman County:

A Drainage System	B County	C Year Benefits Determined	D County Portion of Benefits	E Percent of Benefits %	F Levy Amount (\$) (D x E = F)
#5 - 17-2 (.68764%)	Norman	1981	\$23,346.75	14.73	\$3,438.00
Total					\$3,438.00

Polk County:

A Drainage System	B County	C Year Benefits Determined	D County Portion of Benefits	E Percent of Benefits %	F Levy Amount (\$) (D x E = F)
SH Ditch	Polk	1956	\$272,174.05	5.5112	\$15,000.00
#5 - 17-2 (.3123599%)	Polk	1981	\$23,346.75	6.69	\$1,562.00
#12 - 98 & 148	Polk	1995	\$991,867.00	.7561	\$7,500.00
#20 - 46	Polk	2007	\$2,834,536.75	.002646	\$7,500.00
# 24	Polk	2011	\$5,728,017	.0017458	\$10,000.00
# 27 - LID Pump	Polk	2000			\$15,000.00
# 80	Polk	1909	\$9,561.50	52.293	\$5,000.00
#11 Beltrami Diversion	Polk	1996	\$477,149.30	0.8383	\$5,000.00
#13 Reis - Scandia	Polk	1996	\$382,480.50	0.9151	\$5,000.00
County Ditch # 9	Polk	1982	\$274,235.40	9.116256	\$25,000.00
#17 PC # 41	Polk	2005	\$6,348,626.00	236272	\$15,000.00
Ditch #119	Polk	1982	\$348,872.65	1.44	\$5,000.00
Total					\$116,562.00

Admin
Budget
Income



REIMBURSEMENTS \$1,800.00
HACA \$,500.00
INTEREST \$9,000.00
TAX LEVY \$250,000.00
Total Income \$268,300.00

Admin
Budget
Expenses



WEB-SITE \$600.00
MEETING EXPENSE \$1,100.00
DUES-MEMBERSHIP \$1,700.00
EDUCATION \$2,500.00
STREAM DATA \$3,000.00
TRAVEL EXPENSES \$4,000.00
COMPUTER EXPENSE \$5,000.00
BUILDING MAINTNENCE \$8,000.00
PAYROLL TAXES \$10,000.00
OFFICE OPERATIONS \$15,000.00
MANAGER EXPENSE \$16,000.00
PROF SERVICES \$24,600.00
IMPROVEMENTS \$56,800.00
PAYROLL EXPENSES \$120,000.00
Total Expense \$268,300.00

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Climax Flood Control

The project includes installation of permanent flood protection for the community of Climax. Flood protection measures include flood control levees, internal storm sewer pumping stations, equipment, and other items required to provide 100-year flood protection for the community of Climax.

The City of Climax flood control levee was substantially completed in the fall of 2016. Recording of all easements were completed in 2017, along with final re-

stricted use easements. This project will provide long term growth and sustainability for the City.



Administrator 2017 reflections

“The district staff and board have worked very hard this year and have accomplished a lot. We look forward to the coming year’s success!”

- Twenty-six permits were brought before the board in 2017.
- Many information meetings were held for landowners, MnDOT and BWSR to discuss the drainage options in the Vesledahl Wetland Mitigation area near Winger, MN
- Plans were revised for improving Ditch #80 and a revised petition was received reflecting the revisions.
- The Managers adopted a resolution for the election of jurisdiction of the Minnesota Buffer Law.
- Viewers began work on the redetermination of benefits for Project # 5.
- Landowners along Ditch 9 and 119 asked the district to wait on redetermination of benefits until enough money was levied to pay for the buffer strips.
- Using the Targeted Watershed Demonstration Program (BWSR Funding) a workplan for the \$790,240 that was awarded through BWSR was been completed.
- The district began to digitize all financial records and scans all finances into the accounting system.

Managers & Staff

Stuart Christian - Chair

Scott Balstad - Vice Chair

Bill Brekke - Secretary

Phillip Swenson - Treasurer

Roger Hanson - Manager

Daniel Wilkens - Administrator

April Swenby - Admin. Asst.

The district thanks Phillip Swenson and Scott Balstad on their years of service. On December 6, 2016, Swenson and Balstad attended their last Sand Hill River Watershed Board meeting as board managers.