

# **Blue Earth County**

**2009**

## **Natural Resources Block Grant Report**



**BLUE EARTH COUNTY**

## Natural Resources Block Grant – 2009

The Natural Resources Block Grant (NRBG) is an annual base grant that partially funds programs in the Blue Earth County Environmental Services Department. The State legislature appropriates NRBG funds to two State agencies, the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), for distribution to local governments. The NRBG is divided into five program areas, including water management planning, the delegated feedlot program, subsurface sewage treatment systems (SSTS), shoreland ordinance and the Wetlands Conservation Act (WCA). These five NRBG program areas generally align with staff divisions in the Environmental Services Department where nine staff are devoted all or partially to this and related work.

The State legislature, BWSR and MPCA require local governments to contribute a match to the NRBG and report how grant funds were used each year. The total 2009 NRBG was \$88,975, and the required local match contribution was \$68,647. Local match funds are generated locally with permit fees and property taxes. A program summary of the NRBG is displayed in the following table.

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### ***2009 Natural Resources Block Grant Summary***

<b>Program</b>	<b>2009 NRBG</b>	<b>Required Local Match</b>	<b>Total NRBG Program</b>
Water Management Planning	\$13,197	\$15,281	\$28,219
Wetland Conservation Act Administration	\$20,710	\$20,710	\$41,420
Shoreland Ordinance Administration	\$3,695	\$3,695	\$7,390
Delegated Feedlot Program	\$41,373	\$28,961	\$70,334
SSTS	\$10,000	None required	\$10,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$88,975</b>	<b>\$68,647</b>	<b>\$157,363</b>

The NRBG has remained fairly stable for many years, but reductions during the 2009 and 2010 legislative sessions were significant. According to BWSR estimates, Blue Earth County's 2011 NRBG will be nearly \$10,000 less than the 2010 NRBG.

**2009 NRBG:** \$88,975  
**2010 NRBG:** \$82,176  
**2011 NRBG:** \$72,727 (*proposed*)

Minnesota Law requires local governments to display reports on their website showing how State appropriations of Fiscal year 2010 and 2011 NRBG funds were used. Beginning in 2010, the MPCA also requires Counties with State-delegated feedlot programs to display on the County website the annual County Feedlot Officer and Performance Credit Report and other information related to how the County uses the Feedlot NRBG and the feedlot program costs.

This report is displayed on the County website to provide information about how State NRBG funds are used in County programs during calendar year 2009. The County's actual costs for all five NRBG programs exceed the program costs required for the NRBG and are not shown in this report.

## Local Water Management

**2009 NRBG:** \$13,197

**Match Contribution required:** \$15,281

**Total NRBG Program Required:** \$28,219

The *Blue Earth County Water Management Plan 2008-2013* includes objectives and actions intended to be practical, measurable and achievable in a five-year period. The foundation of the plan is ongoing programs. Although there are many partners, implementation of the plan is mainly the responsibility of the County and the Blue Earth County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD). Reductions in local government aid and other sources of funding limit the ability of the County to expand existing programs or begin new programs in 2009 and the coming years. The greatest proposed reductions in the 2011 NRBG will be from the Water Management program.

**2009 Water Management NRBG:** \$13,197

**2010 Water Management NRBG:** \$13,725

**2011 Water Management NRBG:** \$ 9,885 (*proposed*)

In 2009, a significant amount of staff time was devoted to watershed organizations and projects, TMDL studies, assisting partners with grant and loan applications and developing support for enforcing shoreland rules requiring vegetation.

### Impaired Waters and Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs)

The MPCA is in the process of assessing surface waters in Minnesota and has identified water quality impairments in virtually every watershed in Blue Earth County. The pollutants causing these impairments affect aquatic life and include turbidity, nutrients, fecal bacteria, acetochlor, a corn herbicide, and mercury. MPCA TMDL reports and implementation plans will be required for these impairments. TMDLs are relatively new to local water management, but addressing pollutants causing water quality impairments has been the focus of local water planning for twenty years and much longer for many local programs at the County and SWCD. Depending on available resources, the County's role with impaired waters and TMDLs will develop along with State TMDL programs.

Throughout 2009 County staff participated in the MPCA Greater Blue Earth Turbidity TMDL, Le Sueur TMDL, Acetochlor TMDL, and Crystal Lake TMDL meetings.

### Vegetated Buffers, Minnesota Shoreland Rules

The challenges of managing the riparian corridor and enforcing Minnesota Rules were discussed during work sessions with the County Planning Commission, and meetings with County and SWCD staff. Blue Earth County Code and Minnesota Rule Chapter 6120 require permanent vegetation within 50 feet of the ordinary high water level for agricultural uses in shoreland areas:

### *Agricultural use standards*

Within 50 feet of ordinary high water level: General cultivation farming, grazing, nurseries, horticulture, truck farming, sod farming, and wild crop harvesting are permitted uses if steep slopes and shore and bluff impact zones are maintained in permanent vegetation or operated under an approved conservation plan.

Highly erodible soils are associated with slope and are found along every river, stream and intermittent stream in Blue Earth County. There are more than 550 miles of rivers, streams and unnamed streams in Blue Earth County. Of the total existing cropland in the County, just over one percent is considered “highly erodible” and 3.53 percent “potentially highly erodible” according to the *USDA Soil Survey for Blue Earth County*. A recent BWSR study estimates that 18% of the 50 foot riparian zone in Blue Earth County is cultivated.

To improve management of the riparian area and begin enforcing the shoreland rules buffer standards, the County and SWCD agreed to work together to identify property owners out of compliance for targeted education and cost share assistance. In order to accomplish this goal, additional staff resources will be necessary to assess more than 2,000 parcels within the shoreland areas of Blue Earth County. The County and SWCD applied for, but did not receive, a grant for this project in 2009.

### Grant Applications

County staff worked on several grant and loan applications with various partners. The following table summarizes the grant proposals submitted in 2009. Implementation of those projects funded will begin in 2010.

**Local Projects – Grant & Loan Applications 2009**

<b>Local Agency Applicant</b>	<b>Funding Agency</b>	<b>Amount Requested</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Status</b>
SWCD	BWSR	\$246,750	River Channel Management	Funded
Environmental Services	BWSR	\$26,000	SSTS Database	Funded
SWCD/ Environmental Services	MPCA	\$244,000	Riparian BMPs	Not Funded
Environmental Services	LCCMR	\$132,000	Community-based Natural Resource Planning	Not Funded
Environmental Services and three other Counties	MPCA	\$300,000 in Loans	Upgrade SSTS	Funded

For more information about Blue Earth County’s Water Management Plan, contact Julie Conrad, 507-304-4381.

2009 Water management accomplishments with local funds and partnerships:

Ground Water

Blue Earth County’s Well Program is 100% locally funded. Under a delegation agreement with the Minnesota Department of Health, Blue Earth County issues permit and inspects construction of new domestic wells and sealing of unused and abandoned wells. The County has funded a well sealing cost share program Well sealing cost share program with at least \$9,000 annually.

The Minnesota Geologic Survey is in the process of updating the Geologic Atlas for Blue Earth County. County staff assisted the MGS with field verifying well locations.

Wastewater Treatment - Subsurface Sewage Treatment Systems

The bulk of the County population (77-percent in 2005) lives in one of the eleven municipalities utilizing State-permitted, publicly owned, wastewater treatment systems. Most of the remaining population utilizes onsite, subsurface soil treatment systems (SSTS) regulated by State rules and County ordinance. The City of Mankato’s regional wastewater treatment system continues to expand to high density areas, reducing problems associated with managing SSTS and small municipal systems. The County sponsored a Subordinate Service District including several lakes near the City of Madison Lake that will be partners with the City of Mankato’s regional wastewater system when constructed in future years.

## Wetland Conservation Act

**2009 NRBG:** \$20,170  
**Less Transfer to SWCD:** - \$5,000  
**Required Local Match:** \$20,710  
**NRBG Program Total:** \$41,420

More than fifty percent of the County's pre-settlement wetlands were lost due to drainage for agriculture, community development and transportation. Due to the high percentage of lost wetlands, the County is considered a "high priority region" for preservation, enhancement, restoration, and establishment of wetlands, according to the Wetland Conservation Act (WCA). The purpose of the Wetland Conservation Act, Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 8420.0100, is to:

- A. achieve no net loss in the quantity, quality, and biological diversity of Minnesota's existing wetlands;
- B. increase the quantity, quality, and biological diversity of Minnesota's wetlands by restoring or enhancing diminished or drained wetlands;
- C. avoid direct or indirect impacts from activities that destroy or diminish the quantity, quality, and biological diversity of wetlands; and replace wetland values where avoidance to activity is not feasible or prudent.

Implementation of Wetland Conservation Act is the responsibility of both State and local government units (LGU). Local governments are required to administer the Wetland Conservation Act in accordance with State Rules. The LGU is responsible for making the initial regulatory determinations for the program. A Technical Evaluation Panel (TEP) assists the LGU with wetland determinations. The manager of Blue Earth County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is a member of the TEP, and the State requires \$5,000 of the NRBG to be transferred to the SWCD to assist the LGU with WCA administration. Within Blue Earth County, the City of Mankato administers WCA and a separate TEP within the city limits, and the County administers WCA in the remainder of the County. In the Environmental Services Department, two staff positions are qualified to delineate wetlands, and their time is partially devoted to administering the WCA.

Administering the WCA requires coordination with numerous local, State, and Federal agencies. The BWSR promulgates administrative rules for the program, participates on the TEP, and assures proper implementation by LGUs. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) conservation officers issue enforcement orders including cease and desist, restoration and replacement orders and participate on the TEP. Cease and desist and restoration or replacement orders are not criminal charges; however, violation of a cease and desist or restoration or replacement order is a misdemeanor. Cease and desist and restoration or replacement orders may also be enforced civilly by action for injunction in district court.

More than fifty percent of the pre-settlement wetlands in Blue Earth County have been lost or drained and there is no official inventory of drained or existing wetlands. The National Wetland Inventory is an inventory of deeper wetlands that existed in 1980 and its use for planning and regulatory purposes is limited. Wetland boundaries must be determined on a site-by-site basis when there could be wetland impacts. Wetland boundary determinations are most often necessitated by a development proposal.

In 2009, the most common type of wetland determinations made by the LGU and TEP involved boundaries, but violations and providing technical assistance tend to require more time from County staff and TEP members. The following table summarizes the County's 2009 WCA report to the BWSR.

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**Blue Earth County Report - 2009  
Wetland Conservation Act Administration**

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**Number and Type of Applications**

<b>Type of Application</b>	<b>Number Approved</b>	<b>Number Denied</b>	<b>Number Withdrawn</b>
Replacement Plan	0	1	0
Sequencing	0	0	0
Exemption	1	2	0
No-Loss	8	0	0
Boundary or Type	17	4	0

**Technical Assistance**

Number of landowners for which wetland related technical assistance was provided:	83
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**Violations**

Number of potential violations investigated:	19
Number of enforcement actions taken under local ordinance and/or did not result in DNR cease and desist, restoration or replacement orders:	3

The WCA NRBG has remained fairly stable for many years, but the proposed 2011 Wetland NRBG is reduced nearly \$3,000 from previous years.

**2009 Wetland NRBG:** \$20,710  
**2010 Wetland NRBG:** \$20,710  
**2011 Wetland NRBG:** \$17,873 (*proposed*)

For more information about Blue Earth County's administration of the Wetland Conservation Act, contact Tim Grant, 507-304-4381.

## Shoreland Ordinance

**NRBG:** \$3,197

**Match required:** \$3,197

**Total NRBG program:** \$7,390

The Shoreland NRBG contributes little to the actual cost of administering the shoreland ordinance. The County is required to submit an annual report on Shoreland Administration Activities in areas within 1,000 feet of lakes and 300 feet from rivers. The following table summarizes the 2009 report to the DNR.

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<b>2009 ANNUAL SHORELAND ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITIES REPORT TO MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES</b>	
<hr/>	
<b>Shoreland permits</b>	
Building permits	18
Permits for grading & filling	1
Vegetative alterations	1
Other	0
<b>Conditional Use Permits</b>	
Issued	6
Denied	0
<b>Variances</b>	
Total Issued	2
Denied	0
<b>Land subdivisions</b>	
Plats	3
Lot splits	0
PUD	0
Resort conversions	0

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The Shoreland NRBG will be reduced in 2011.

**2009 Shoreland NRBG:** \$3,695

**2010 Shoreland NRBG:** \$3,695

**2011 Shoreland NRBG:** \$3,189 (*proposed*)

For more information about Blue Earth County's Shoreland Rules, contact George Leary, 507-304-4381.

## Feedlots

**2009 NRBG:** \$41,373

**2008 Performance Credit Reimbursement:** \$2,936

**Required Local Match:** \$28,961

**Total 2009 NRBG Program:** \$73,270

Livestock feedlot manure can be a source of bacteria, TSS, phosphorus, nitrogen and other pollutants. Most livestock in Blue Earth County is produced in confinement barns with below-barn, concrete manure storage pits. Runoff containing manure used as fertilizer for agricultural crop production is likely the greatest source of pollution from livestock feedlots as most feedlots with direct runoff were improved or eliminated early in the County's feedlot program history.

Blue Earth County was one of the first Counties in the State with a feedlot ordinance. The local program and regulations are consistent with State of Minnesota Rules, but the County feedlot program addresses more than the tasks outlined in the State feedlot delegation agreement. The strength of the County's program is its ability to respond to local concerns. For example, to the extent possible the County has addressed resident's concerns about animal mortality and storage, manure spreading acres, pit abandonment, and other issues. Since inception of the local feedlot program, the County Feedlot Officer developed a relationship with feedlot operators during continuous, systematic review of each individual feedlot with the operator. Today Blue Earth County continues to be one of the few Counties with a feedlot program requiring annual County permits and annual permit fees.

Blue Earth County's feedlot program is a State-delegated program. Under the State delegation agreement, the County is responsible for implementation of feedlot rules and regulations with the exception of large feedlots with 1,000 or more animal units that require federal, Nonpoint Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits. The County has been delegated administration of the following State regulations: registration, permitting, inspections, education and assistance, and complaint follow-up. The County receives State funding to administer the delegation agreement and is required to submit annual reports and work plans for review and approval by the MPCA. Beginning in 2010, the MPCA also requires Counties with State-delegated programs to display on the County website the annual *County Feedlot Officer and Performance Credit Report* and other information related to how the County uses the Feedlot NRBG and the feedlot program costs during the previous year.

The State legislature appropriated money in 2010 and 2011 to the MPCA to be distributed to delegated counties using a three part formula, including:

**Number of feedlots** in the county: 60 percent of the total appropriation must be distributed according to the number of feedlots that are required to be registered in the county. Grants awarded under this paragraph must be matched with a combination of local cash and in-kind contributions.

**Minimum program requirements:** 25 percent of the total appropriation must be distributed based on the county (1) conducting an annual number of inspections at feedlots that is equal to or

greater than seven percent of the total number of registered feedlots that are required to be registered in the county; and (2) meeting non-inspection minimum program requirements as identified in the county feedlot workplan form.

**Performance credits:** 15 percent of the total appropriation must be distributed according to work that has been done by the counties during the fiscal year. The amount must be determined by the number of performance credits a county accumulates during the year based on a performance credit matrix jointly agreed upon by the commissioner in consultation with the Minnesota Association of County Feedlot Officers executive team.

Beginning in 2008, Counties have been eligible for Feedlot Performance Credit Reimbursement. Blue Earth County's performance credits received and earned in 2009 are as follows:

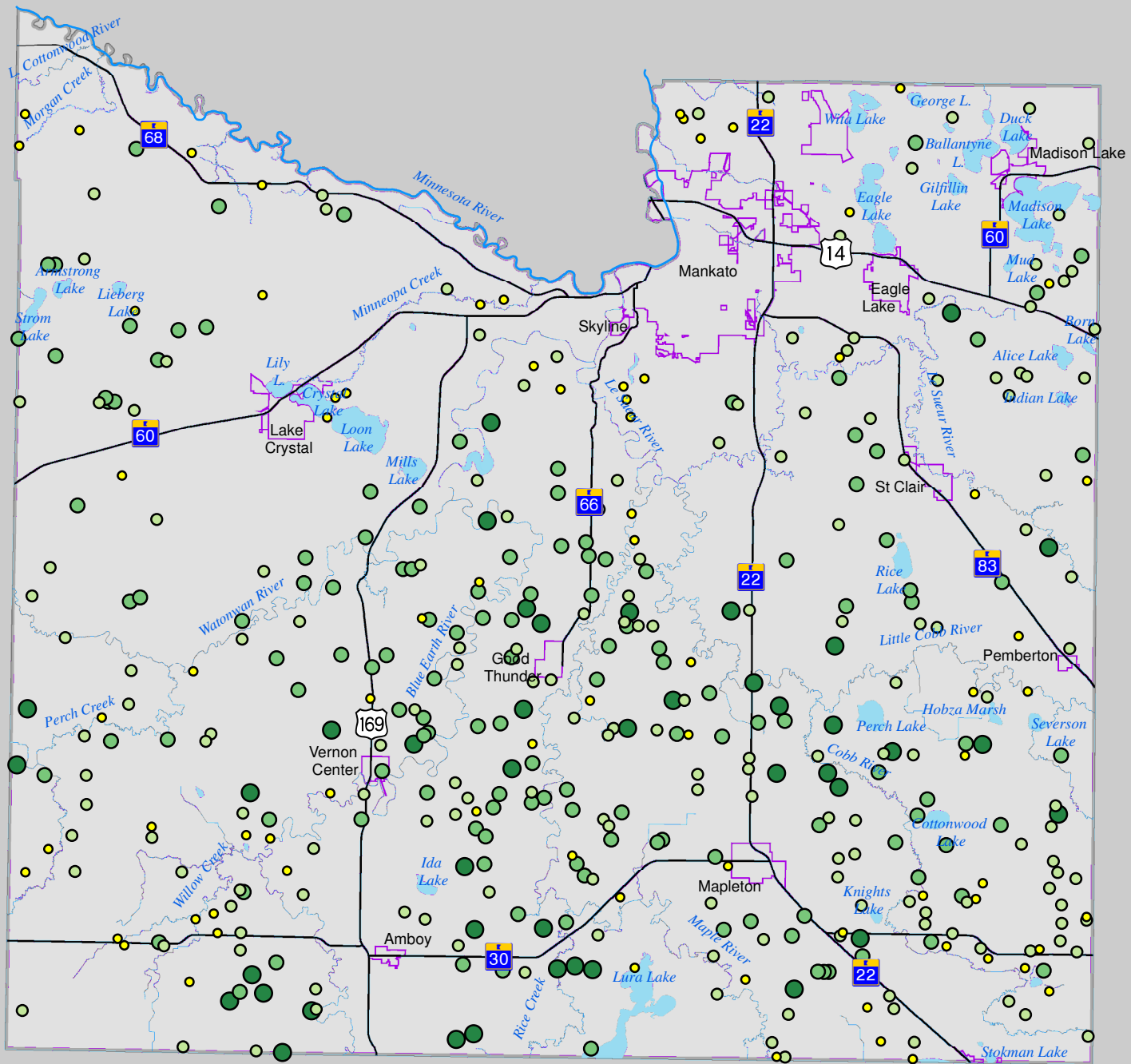
**2008 Feedlot Performance Credit:** \$2,963 reimbursed in 2009  
**2009 Feedlot Performance Credit:** \$6,541 reimbursed in 2010

The Feedlot Performance Credit replaced some of the feedlot NRBG reductions in recent years. The Feedlot NRBG base grant has declined each year since 2008, with the greatest reduction in 2010 and 2011.

**2008 Feedlot NRBG:** \$45,113  
**2009 Feedlot NRBG:** \$41,373  
**2010 Feedlot NRBG:** \$34,115  
**2011 Feedlot NRBG:** \$31,880 (*proposed*)

In 2009 there were 425 active feedlots in Blue Earth County. Minnesota Rules require registration of 345 of those feedlots with the MPCA. Registration with the MPCA is required for all feedlots with 50 or more animal units or with ten or more animal units within shoreland areas. Most of the feedlots in the County are located in the southern two thirds of the County. The following maps display the location of each feedlot in Blue Earth County.

# Blue Earth County - Permitted Feedlots



— State or U.S. Highway

○ Lake

⊕ City

### Feedlot (Animal Units)

- 10 - 49 Animal Units
- 50 - 299 Animal Units
- 300 - 999 Animal Units
- 1000 - 2000 Animal Units

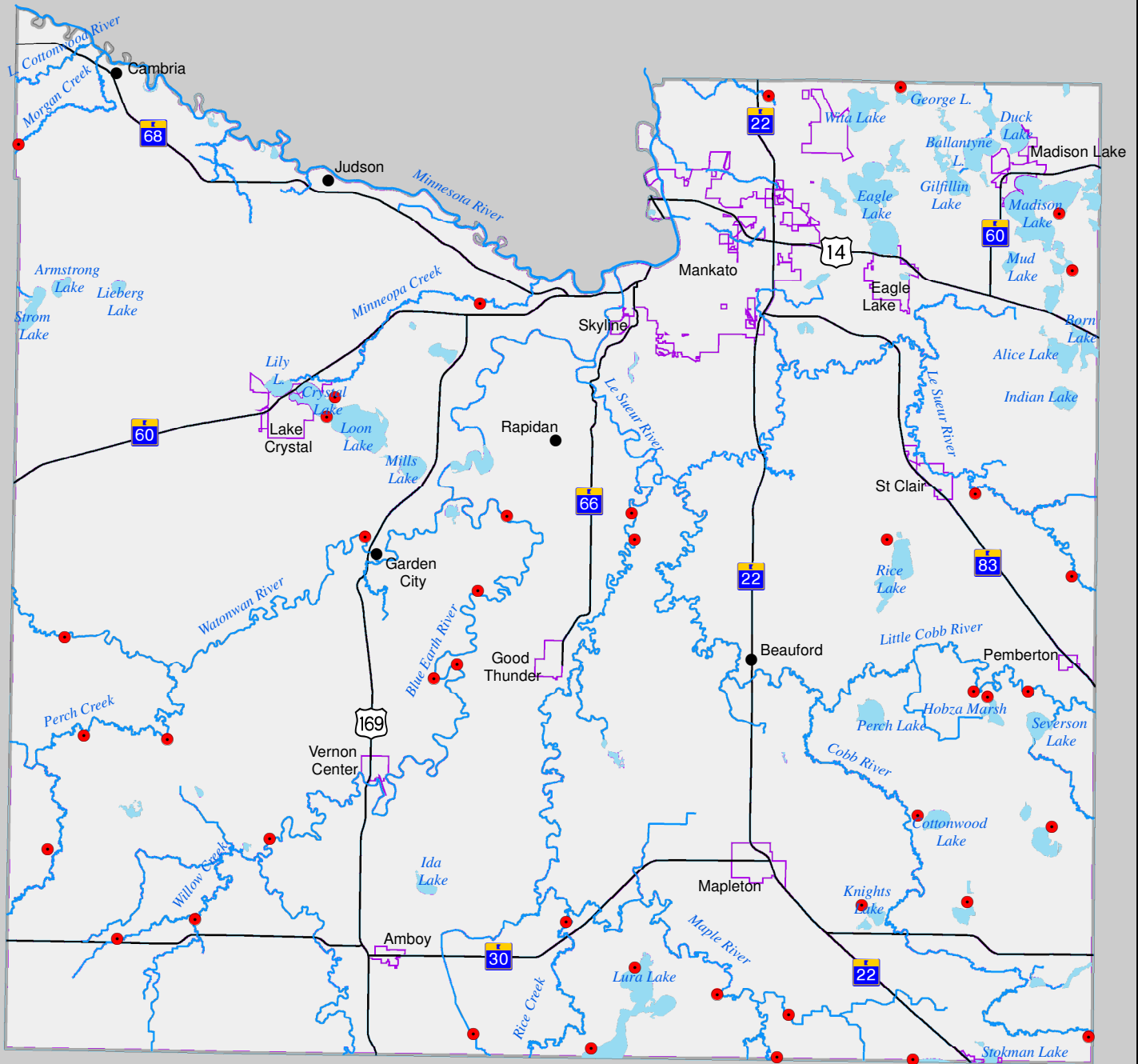
0 ————— 5 Miles



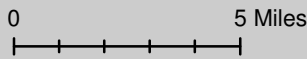
Prepared By: Blue Earth County  
Environmental Services  
June 2010

Source: Blue Earth County  
Feedlot Inventory  
June 2010

# Feedlots within Designated Shoreland Areas



- Feedlot Located in a Shoreland Area
- DNR Protected Basin
- Protected Stream or River
- City
- State or U.S. Highway



Prepared By: Blue Earth County  
Environmental Services  
June 2010

Source: Blue Earth County  
Feedlot Inventory  
June 2010

*Note: Shoreland means land located within the following distances from public waters: 1,000 feet from the ordinary high water level of a lake, pond, or flowage; and 300 feet from a river or stream, or the landward extent of a floodplain designated by ordinance on a river or stream, whichever is greater.*

Feedlots are inspected regularly. The MPCA has defined three levels of feedlot inspections. In 2009, the County Feedlot Officer conducted 117 Level I feedlot site inspections which include a land application review, five Level II Land Application inspections which require review of nitrogen and phosphorus management, and five Level III Land application inspections which require the County Feedlot Officer witness manure application to ensure proper setbacks are maintained.

Blue Earth County tracks Air Quality Notifications. As some livestock operators have grown larger and people choose to live near livestock farms, odor (particularly hydrogen sulfide) has become an issue. Hydrogen sulfide and ammonia can be toxic at high levels and are regulated. Owners of feedlots are exempt from State ambient air quality standards during the removal of manure from barns or manure storage facilities. For a livestock facility greater than 300 animal units, the maximum cumulative exemption in a calendar year is 21 days. To be exempt from the State ambient air quality standards during removal of manure, Minnesota Session Law 2000, Chapter 435, requires feedlot operators notify the MPCA or County Feedlot Officer before the anticipated start date of manure removal and the anticipated number of days manure will be removed from barns or storage facilities. In 2009 the County Feedlot Officer received 30 Air Quality Notifications from producers.

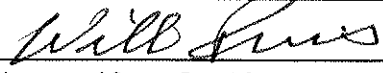
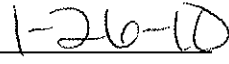
The County Feedlot Officer officially warns feedlot owners and operators of violations with a letter. Letters of warning are sent when a violation has occurred that can be fixed easily. Such violations include improper animal disposal or collection methods, manure spreading violations or manure spills on roadways. In 2009 there were five letters of warning and no letters of violation.

The MPCA requires the County Feedlot Officer submit an annual report. The 2009 report is included on the following two pages.

For more information about Blue Earth County's Feedlot program, contact Sara Isebrand, 507-304-4381.

**Minnesota Pollution Control Agency  
Feedlot Program**

**2009 Annual County Feedlot Officer and Performance Credit Report  
(Data for the Period January 1, 2009 - December 31, 2009)**

<b>Name of County:</b>	Blue Earth County
<b>Contact Person:</b>	Sara Isebrand
<b>Phone Number:</b>	507-304-4339
<b>E-mail Address:</b>	sara.isebrand@co.blue-earth.mn.us
<b>Signature:</b>	 _____ 
	(Signature of County Board Commissioner) (Date)

**All data must be entered in accordance with the Annual CFO Report Guidance Document.**

		Number	*PC	PC Total
<b>Registration</b>	Number of feedlots registered in shoreland with 10 - 299 AU:	32		
	Number of feedlots registered outside shoreland with 50-299 AU:	154		
	Number of Non-NPDES sites ≥300 AU:	95		
	Number of feedlots registered with NPDES permits:	64		
	Total:	345		
	Number of sites with 10 AU or more in shoreland:	40		
	Number of sites with 10 AU or more that are both in shoreland and in a Drinking Water Supply Management Area (DWSMA):	0		
	Number of sites with 50 AU or more that are in a DSWMA and are not in shoreland:	0		
<b>Number of Sites Inspected</b>	Number of sites inspected with 10 - 99 AU that are required to be registered:	44	0.75	33
	Number of sites inspected with 100 - 299 AU:	35	1.25	43.75
	Number of Non-NPDES sites ≥300 AU inspected:	29	1.5	43.5
	Number of NPDES sites inspected:	9	1	9
	Total number of sites inspected at feedlots that are required to be registered:	117		
	Number of sites that were inspected that were not required to be registered but were the result of a complaint or referral:	0	1	0
	Number of sites inspected at feedlots required to be registered that were the result of a complaint:	0		

**All data must be entered in accordance with the Annual CFO Report Guidance Document.**

<b>Specialty Inspections</b>	Number of sites >100 AU located in a DWSMA where a Level II land application inspection was conducted:	0	2	0
	Number of Non-NPDES sites ≥300 AU where a Level II land application review was conducted:	5	1	5
	Number of sites where a Level III land application review was conducted:	5	1	5
	Number of sites constructing (new or modifications) where 2 or more on-site producer contacts and/or inspections were done:	1	1	1
	Number of sites with OLAs where 2 or more on-site producer contacts and/or inspections were done:	0	1	0
	Number of sites with an interim permit where 2 or more on-site producer contacts and/or inspections were done:		1	0
	Number of sites inspected with 10 AU or more in shoreland:	40	0.25	10
	Number of sites inspected with 10 AU or more that are both in shoreland and in a DWSMA:	0	0.25	0
	Number of sites inspected with 50 AU or more that are in a DSWMA and are not in shoreland:	0	0.25	0

\*PC means performance credits. Counties are awarded an incentive payment according to the number of performance credits they earn. The numbers in the PC column refer to the performance unit value for the associated line item.

All data must be entered in accordance with the Annual CFO Report Guidance Document.				
<b>Permitting</b>	Number of 30-day construction/expansion notifications received:	1		
	Number of interim permits issued for feedlots with < 300 AU:	2	1	2
	Number of interim permits issued for feedlots with ≥300 AU:	0	1	0
	Number of short-form permits issued by the county:	1		
<b>Emergency Response</b>	Number of pollution events where an emergency response was conducted:	0	2	0
<b>Scheduled Compliance Goals</b>	Number of sites <300 AU in shoreland where a partial corrective action was achieved in the current program year:	0	2	0
	Number of sites <300 AU in shoreland where a complete corrective action was achieved in the current program year:	1	2	2
	Number of sites <300 AU not in shoreland where a partial corrective action was achieved in the current program year:	0	2	0
	Number of sites <300 AU not in shoreland where a complete corrective action was achieved in the current program year:	11	2	22
	Number of Non-NPDES sites ≥300 AU where corrective actions were completed in the current program year:	0	2	0
<b>Owner Assistance Goals</b>	Number of workshops or trainings events hosted and/or co-sponsored by the CFO (Maximum PC credits = 10; please describe event on Supplemental Form):	0	2	0
	Number of feedlot owners attending feedlot producer workshops, training events or information meetings:	0		
	Number of mailings to feedlot owners: (Please describe newsletters/mailings on provided on Supplemental Form):	0		
	Number of feedlot articles placed in local newspapers: (Please list article title(s) on the Supplemental Form.)	0		
<b>Staffing Level and Training</b>	Number of FTEs (Full Time Equivalents) supplied by the CFO:	1		
	Number of FTEs of other county staff, including administrative and support, assigned by the county to the feedlot program:	0		
Please use whole numbers and decimals (such as 1 or .25 or 1.25) to record FTE values.	Number of FTEs supplied through contract to other LGUs:	0		
	The total number of FTEs positions that supported the county program:	1		
	Number of CFO-training hours: (Please see guidance for determining maximum eligible training hours; please provide training location & dates on Supplemental Form):	21	0.25	5.25
	Number of new CFO in-office-mentoring units provided (Please provide location & dates on Supplemental Form):	0	3	0
	Number of new CFO inspection-mentoring events provided (Please provide location & dates on Supplemental Form):	0	2	0
<b>EAW</b>	Total number of EAW (environmental assessment worksheets) petitions received:	0		
	Total number of EAWs prepared:	0		
<b>Air Quality Notifications</b>	Number of notifications received from feedlot owners claiming air quality exemptions:	30		
<b>Enforcement Actions Taken</b>	Number of letters of warning issued:	5		
	Number of notices of violation issued:	0		
	Number of court actions commenced:	0		
	Other: (Please provide details on Supplemental Form.)			
<b>Other Program Activities</b>	Number of sites where a FLEval/MinnFARM was conducted:	5	1	5
	Meetings with other local government services and producer groups: (Please provide meeting details on Supplemental Form.)	0		
	Feedlot Ordinance Revisions: (Please describe ordinance revision and/or adoption proceedings on Supplemental Form.)	0		
	Other county feedlot program activities conducted during this reporting period not already identified in this form: (Please provide details on the Supplemental Form.)	0		
<b>Total Credits</b>				186.5

## Subsurface Sewage Treatment Systems

**2009 NRBG:** \$10,000

**Match required:** none required

**Total NRBG program:** \$10,000

Wastewater contains bacteria, pathogens, chemicals, nutrients, and solids. Untreated wastewater is a potential threat to public health and can pollute surface and ground water. Reducing public health threats and increasing compliance with State rules with installation of onsite wastewater treatment are priorities of the *Water Management Plan 2008-2013*. In the Environmental Services Department, three staff positions are certified SSTS inspectors whose time is partially devoted to administering the SSTS program. In 2009, staff was involved with training, system inspections, reporting and revising the County Code to be consistent with Minnesota Rules in 2010.

Since 1996, the *Sewage Ordinance Section of the County Code* triggered SSTS upgrades by requiring a compliance inspection at property transfer and requiring upgrades to failing, non-Imminent Public Health Threat systems in five years. During 2009, County staff spent a significant amount of time working on revising the *Sewage Ordinance Section of the County Code*. Proposed changes, finalized in 2010, are more restrictive and will further accelerate upgrades of SSTS in the County.

Counties are required to submit to the MPCA a construction report showing the number and type of systems installed. To facilitate the MPCA's collection of fees from SSTS contractors and a tank report showing the number of tanks each contractor installs. The following table summarizes SSTS construction in 2009 as reported to the MPCA.

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***2009 Subsurface Sewage Treatment System Summary  
Report to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency***

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Year	Replacement Residential Systems Installed	New Residential Systems Installed	Systems Installed for Other Establishments	Total Systems Installed
2008	94	45	4	143
2009	71	35	6	114

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The County has required permits for septic systems for more than 40 years. Permit records have been maintained since 1972. Since 1972 the County has issued more 5,000 permits for septic systems and holding tanks. Since 2007, there has been a decline in the total number of permits issued. This is mainly due to the decline in number of new dwellings constructed in the unincorporated areas of the County as County land use regulations have limited new subdivisions outside of municipalities. The number of replacement systems constructed with existing dwellings stayed fairly consistent until 2009 when it is assumed economic concerns reduced construction nationwide.

There is little reduction in the 2011 SSTS NRBG.

**2009 SSTS NRBG:** \$10,000

**2010 SSTS NRBG:** \$ 9,931

**2011 SSTS NRBG:** \$ 9,931 (*proposed*)

For more information about Blue Earth County's SSTS program, contact Peter Otterness, 507-304-4381.