The CONSERVATION SECURITY PROGRAM (CSP) IN THE

BLUE EARTH RIVER WATERSHED

Minnesota

SEPTEMBER 2004

Natural Resources Conservation Service

"All successful applicants have achieved high technical standards for protecting soil and water quality," said William Hunt, State Conservationist for Minnesota NRCS. "These are model conservationists who can be pointed to as our first line of defense for managing the Blue Earth River Watershed for both productivty and stewardship as twin goals."

William Hunt, State Conservationist for Minnesota NRCS

For more information:
http://www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov

WATERSHED STATISTICS:

Watershed Surface Area (in acres)
1,013,200

Number of Farms: 2,121

Crops and Land Use:
Cropland: 858,300 acres of cropland, primarily in a corn-soybean rotation. There are also 24,000 acres of pasture and 31, 300 acres of forestland. This landuse makes the Blue Earth River Watershed one of the state's most intensively cropped watershed.

Watershed Description:

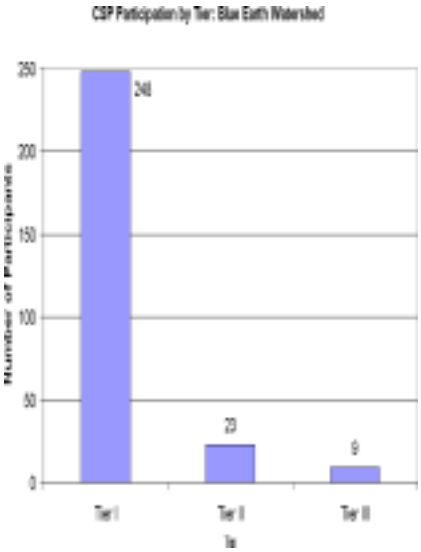
This watershed located in south central Minnesota and northern Iowa is mainly agricultural, with cash crops and hog operations being the primary types of farming operations. The Blue Earth River Watershed is part of the mimnsota River Basin. The 2 rivers join at Mankato, Minnesota. The topography is nearly level to gently rolling, formed primarily from loamy glacial till. This is part of the prairie pothole region, but most wet soils have been drained for crop production.

Natural Resource concerns are water erosion, nutrient management, water quality and loss of wildlife habitat. Mulch tillage is becoming an accepted practice for controlling water and wind erosion.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer

The CSP Blue Earth River Watershed received approximately $1,400,000

A total of 280 contracts were approved within the Watershed which includes both South Central Minnesota and Northern Iowa.



THE FACE OF THE

BLUE EARTH RIVER WATERSHED

Minnesota's 1st Conservation Security Program Signing

Pahl farm, Blue Earth River Watershed

Jim and Peggy Pahl and Jim's parents Lyle and Thelma Pahl farm in Blue Earth County in South Central Minnesota. The fields that Jim submitted for the Conservation program are located in Vernon Center Township section 32 and totals 137.7 acres. This land is not only located within the Blue Earth River Watershed but is actually located adjacent to the Blue Earth River.

The Pahl's raise corn and soybeans on their farm, and the parcels that have been signed up for the Conservation Security Program were planted to soybeans in 2004. The Pahl's work with crop residue management, in combination with flatter silty clay loam soils on the fields in the application, led to an overall positive Soil Conditioning Index.

Jim will be switching from a fall commercial nitrogen application program to a spring commercial nitrogen application. All phosphorus applications will be spring applied and incorporated within 24 hours. In addition, Jim and Lyle collect and use yield data as part of their crop management. The Pahl's soil test regularly and minimize the use of pesticides by using pest resistant plant varieties as recommended by a crop consultant.

ENHANCEMENTS COMMON IN THE BLUE EARTH RIVER WATERSHED

Energey enhancements
Nutrient management
Wildlife enhancements