Blue Earth County

2011
Natural Resources
Block Grant
Report

BLUE EARTH
COUNTY

Board of Water and Soil Resources
NATURAL RESOURCES BLOCK GRANT – 2011
Blue Earth County Report

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. Minnesota Law requires local governments to display reports on their website by June 30 each year showing how State appropriations of Fiscal year 2010 and 2011 NRBG funds were used in the previous calendar years. This report is displayed on the County website to provide information about how State NRBG funds are used in County programs during calendar year 2011.

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 2011 NRBG was $79,269, and the required local match contribution was $79,269. Local match funds are generated locally with permit fees and property taxes. 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.

There are five NRBG program areas that generally align with programs in the Environmental Services Department where nine staff are dedicated to this work. A program summary of the NRBG is displayed in the following table.

2011 Natural Resources Block Grant Summary

Program	2011 NRBG	Required Minimum Local Match	Total NRBG Program
Water Management Planning	$9,855	$15,801	$25,656
Wetland Conservation Act Administration	$17,873	$17,873	$35,746
Shoreland Ordinance Administration	$3,189	$3,189	$6,378
Delegated Feedlot Program	$31,880	$22,316	$54,196
Feedlot Performance Grant	$6,541	None	$6,541
SSTS	$9,931	None	$9,931
Total	**$79,269**	**$59,179**	**$138,448**

The total NRBG has been reduced in recent years, but 2011 was the lowest it has been in several years.

2009 NRBG: $88,975
2010 NRBG: $82,176
2011 NRBG: $79,269

LOCAL WATER MANAGEMENT

2011 NRBG: $9,855
Required Local Match: $15,801

The local water management NRBG contributes little to the actual cost of water management planning in the county. 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. 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). The foundation of the plan is ongoing programs. Reductions in local government aid and other sources of funding limit the ability of the County to expand existing programs or begin new programs.

The 2011 NRBG was the lowest in recent years, and the greatest reduction in the 2011 NRBG was from the Local Water Management program.

> **2009 Water Management NRBG:** $13,197
> **2010 Water Management NRBG:** $13,725
> **2011 Water Management NRBG:** $9,855

In 2011, a significant amount of staff time was devoted to work on plans and projects such as the Blue Earth County Shoreland Buffer Initiative, updating the Blue Earth County Hazard Mitigation Plan, Le Sueur River TMDL, preparing and assisting partners with grant and loan applications, and reporting use of grant funds to BWSR and the MPCA.

<u>Impaired Waters and Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs)</u>
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, mercury and acetochlor (a crop herbicide). The MPCA will prepare TMDL reports and implementation plans for these impairments. Depending on available resources, the County's role with impaired waters and TMDLs will develop along with State TMDL programs.

In 2011 County staff participated in the MPCA Le Sueur River TMDL.

<u>Vegetated Buffers, Minnesota Shoreland Rules and County Shoreland Ordinance</u>
The Blue Earth County Shoreland Ordinance 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."

To improve management of the riparian area and begin working toward enforcing the shoreland rules buffer standards, the County and SWCD worked on a plan 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 needed. The County and SWCD applied

for and were awarded a FY11 Clean Water Fund grant to implement this project in 2011 and 2012. County staff working on the Shoreland Buffer Initiative is funded without State funds, and their time is reported as match for the Shoreland Buffer Initiative.

Hazard Mitigation Plan – Riverine Erosion Hazards

Ravine, stream bank and bluff erosion along waterways in Blue Earth County impact water quality as well as dwellings and infrastructure. Water Management staff assisted the County Emergency Management Department with a grant proposal to the Minnesota Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM). The County was awarded a planning grant for a special risk assessment of ravine and riverine erosion hazards. The SWCD received a FY11 Clean Water Fund grant to assist with technical assistance needs. Most of the County staff time working on Hazard Mitigation Plan update and with the SWCD is not paid with State funds. Their time is reported as match for other projects.

Lake Pepin – Minnesota River Friendship Tour

Blue Earth County Commissioners and County and SWCD staff hosted a friendship tour with County Commissioners and watershed partners from the Minnesota River and Lake Pepin watersheds.

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

WETLAND CONSERVATION ACT

2011 NRBG: $17,873
***Less* transfer to SWCD:** - $5,000
Total to County: $12,873
Required Local Match: $17,873

Prior to passage of the Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) of 1991 more than fifty percent of the County's pre-settlement wetlands were lost due to agricultural drainage, community development and transportation. 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 of drained wetlands;
C. Avoid direct or indirect impacts from activities that destroy or diminish the quantity, quality, and biological diversity or 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. A Technical Evaluation Panel (TEP) assists the LGU by providing regulatory and technical opinions to the LGU. The TEP consists of the Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) manager, the Board of Water & Soil Resources (BWSR), and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in Shoreland areas. Ultimately, the LGU is responsible for making all of the regulatory decisions for the program.

Within Blue Earth County, three LGUs administer WCA. The City of Mankato administers the WCA within the city limits, the County Highway Department administers the WCA for County transportation projects, and the County Environmental Services Department administers the WCA in the remainder of the County, including municipalities. The County Environmental Services Department has two staff positions which are certified to review / delineate wetlands. Part of their time is devoted to the administration of the WCA. In 2011 a total of 6.5 staff days were spent fulfilling the training requirements to remain certified to review / delineate wetlands.

Administration of 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 DNR conservation officers issue enforcement orders including cease-and-desist orders (CDO's) & restoration / replacement orders. CDO's and restoration / replacement orders are not criminal charges; however, violation of a CDO or restoration / replacement order is a misdemeanor.

In 2011, the most common type of wetland decisions made by the LGU and TEP involved approval / denial of a wetland boundary and exemptions. Of the seven exemptions approved, 2.13 acres were permanently impacted. The following tables summarize the County's 2011 WCA report to the BWSR.

Blue Earth County Report – 2011
Wetland Conservation Act Administration

Number and Type of Applications

Type of Application	Number Approved	Number Denied	Number Withdrawn
Replacement Plan	2	1	0
Sequencing	0	0	0
Exemption	7	1	0
No-Loss	1	0	0
Boundary or Type	9	0	0
Total	19	2	0

Technical Assistance

Number of landowners for which wetland related technical assistance was provided:	More than 100

Violations

Number of potential violations investigated:	15
Number of enforcement actions taken under local ordinance and/or did not result in DNR cease and desist, restoration or replacement orders:	8

NOTE: This report does not include WCA administration in the City of Mankato or Blue Earth County Highway Department which are reported to BWSR separately.

Blue Earth County Report – 2011
Wetland Conservation Act Administration
Exemptions

Number and Type of Exemptions

Type of Exemption	Number Approved	Number of Acres
Agriculture	4	1.9
Drainage	2	0.2
Federal Activities	0	0
Forestry	0	0
De minimus	1	0.03
Total	7	2.13

NOTE: This report does not include WCA administration in the City of Mankato or Blue Earth County Highway Department which are reported to BWSR separately.

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

2009 Wetland NRBG: $20,710
2010 Wetland NRBG: $20,710
2011 Wetland NRBG: $17,873

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

SHORELAND ORDINANCE

2011 NRBG: $3,189
Required Local Match: $3,189

The Shoreland NRBG contributes little to the actual cost of administering the Shoreland Ordinance. Shoreland is generally defined as the land area within 1,000 feet of lakes and 300 feet from rivers. Counties are required by Minnesota Rule to adopt shoreland ordinances consistent with State Rules. The County is required to submit an annual report on Shoreland Ordinance administration activities outside of city limits in areas. The report submitted to the DNR is on the following page.

The annual Shoreland NRBG was at its lowest in 2011.

2009 Shoreland NRBG: $3,695
2010 Shoreland NRBG: $3,695
2011 Shoreland NRBG: $3,189

For more information about the Blue Earth County Shoreland Ordinance and Shoreland Administration Report, contact George Leary, 507-304-4381.

___2011____ ANNUAL SHORELAND ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITES REPORT & CERTIFICATION

NUMERICAL DATA: Grant (2011): $_3189_____.

List data for activities located within shoreland area (1000 feet lakes/300 feet rivers).

1. **Shoreland permits:** Building permits: _32____;
   Permits for grading & filling: ___0_; vegetative alterations: __0___; other: ___0___.

2. **Conditional Use Permits:** Issued: _5___; Denied: _0___; Tabled: __0___.

3. **Variances:** Issued: _0___; Denied: __1__; Tabled: ___0__.

   How many based on following types: shoreline setback: _1__; building height: __0_;
   impervious cover: _0__; lot size/setback: _0__; other: __0___.

4. **Land subdivisions** (plats): _1_____; Lot splits: __50____;

   PUDs: ___0___; Resort conversions: ____0_____.

5. If contracted or under joint powers agreement with other LGUs to manage their shoreland, list how many cities and/or townships you provide service to: _0____.

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS WORKING WITH ALTERNATIVE SHORELAND STANDARDS:

___In process of adopting alternative or enhanced shoreland standards.
___Some alternative or enhanced shoreland standards already adopted:

1. **Multiple shoreland classes** approved: _0_; Special Protection Lakes/Districts_0__.

2. **Resort permits:** ___0___; Feet of shoreline restored____0_____.

3. **Conservation subdivisions**: __0_____;

4. **Shoreline vegetation restorations** as condition for permit (number): ___0_____.
   Total feet of shoreline restored (other than for resorts listed above): ____0_____.

5. **Enhanced stormwater management.** Number of projects approved using low impact design or Minnesota Stormwater Manual BMPs: __0___.

6. How many innovative uses of ag BMPs (CRP for agricultural buffers, etc.): __0____.
   Number of miles or feet of agricultural shoreline protected by buffers _____0_____.

County: ___Blue Earth County_____.
Contact Person:_Sara Isebrand_____. Title:__Land Use Specialist_____
E-Mail Address:__sara.isebrand@co.blue-earth.co.mn.us_____
Phone Number:___507-304-4381_____

If you received a shoreland grant in 2008, this form must be completed. **Any questions, please contact: Kathleen Metzker, Land Use Hydrologist, 500 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, MN 55155-4032. Tel. 651-259-5694. Please e-mail the completed form to shore.land.update@state.mn.us. Alternatively, you may fax it to 651-296-0445 or mail it to the above address. E-mail is preferred. Reports due: February 1, 2012**

STATE-DELEGATED FEEDLOT PROGRAM

2011 NRBG: $31,880
2010 Performance Credit Reimbursement: $6,541
Required Local Match: $22,316

Blue Earth County's feedlot program is a State-delegated program for feedlots under 1,000 animal units. Large feedlots with 1,000 or more animal units require federal, Nonpoint Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits administered by the MPCA. Under the State delegation agreement, the County is responsible for implementation of feedlot rules and regulations, including 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. The 2011 Annual County Feedlot Officer and Performance Credit Report follows this section.

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

> **Number of feedlots registered in the county.**
>
> **Minimum program requirements.** (1) Inspect at 7% of the total number of registered feedlots; and (2) meet minimum program requirements identified in the county feedlot workplan form.
>
> **Performance credits.** The amount is determined by the number of performance credits a county accumulates during the year.

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

Comparison of Feedlot NRBG, County Match and Total Feedlot Grants

Feedlot Program Grants	2011 NRBG	2010 NRBG	2009 NRBG	2008 NRBG
Feedlot NRBG	$31,880	$34,115	$41,373	$45,113
Performance Grant*	$6,948	$6,651	$2,936	-0-
Total Feedlot Grant	**$38,531**	**$34,115**	**$44,309**	**$45,113**
Required County Match	$22,316	$23,881	$28,961	$34,681

* Performance grants are reimbursements from previous years.

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

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Feedlot Program

2011 Annual County Feedlot Officer and Performance Credit Report

(Data for the Period January 1, 2011 - December 31, 2011)

Name of County:	Blue Earth
Contact Person:	Sara Isebrand
Phone No.:	507-304-4381
E-mail Address:	sara.isebrand@co.blue-earth.mn.us
Signature:	Mark Peyles (Signature of County Board Commissioner) Jan 24, 2012 (Date)

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

		No.	*PC	PC Total
Registration	1 - Feedlots registered in shoreland with 10 - 299 AU:	37		
	2 - Feedlots registered outside shoreland with 50-299 AU:	161		
	3 - Non-NPDES sites ≥300 AU:	99		
	4 - Feedlots registered with NPDES permits:	69		
	5 - Total:	**366**		
	6 - Feedlots with 10 AU or more in shoreland:	46		
	7 - Feedlots with 10 AU or more that are both in shoreland and in a Drinking Water Supply Management Area (DWSMA):	0		
	8 - Feedlots with 50 AU or more that are in a DWSMA and are not in shoreland:	0		
No. of Sites Inspected	9 - Feedlots inspected with 10 - 99 AU required to be registered:	32	0.75	24
	10 - Feedlots inspected with 100 - 299 AU:	27	1.25	33.75
	11 - Non-NPDES sites ≥300 AU inspected:	33	1.5	49.5
	12 - NPDES sites inspected:	28	1	28
	13 - Total feedlots inspected required to be registered:	**120**		
	14 - Feedlots inspected required to be registered that were not in compliance with water quality discharge standards:	0		
	15 - Feedlots that were inspected that were not required to be registered but were the result of a complaint or referral:	1	1	1
	16 - Feedlots inspected required to be registered that were the result of a complaint:	0		
Land Application Inspections	17 - Non-NPDES sites ≥300 AU (or >100 AU located in a DWSMA) where a land application review was attempted, but no written records were available:	0		
	18 - Non-NPDES sites ≥300 AU (or > 100 AU located in a DWSMA) with land application records where a Level II review was conducted and the determination was compliance:	11	2	22
	19 - Non-NPDES sites ≥300 AU (or > 100 AU located in a DWSMA) with land application records where a Level II review was conducted and the determination was non-compliance:	0	2	0
	20 - Feedlots where a Level III land application inspection was conducted and the determination was compliance:	23	1	23
	21 - Feedlots where a Level III land application inspection was conducted and the determination was non-compliance:	0	1	0
Specialty Inspections	22 - Feedlots constructing (new or modifications) where 2 or more on-site producer contacts and/or inspections were done:	4	1	4
	23 - Feedlots with OLAs where 2 or more on-site producer contacts and/or inspections were done:	0	1	0
	24 - Feedlots with an interim permit where 2 or more on-site producer contacts and/or inspections were done:	0	1	0
	25 - Feedlots inspected with 10 AU or more in shoreland:	9	0.25	2.25
	26 - Feedlots inspected with 10 AU or more that are both in shoreland and in a DWSMA:	0	0.25	0
	27- Feedlots inspected with 50 AU or more that are in a DWSMA and are not in shoreland:	0	0.25	0
*PC = performance credits				

All data must be entered in accordance with the Annual CFO Report Guidance Document.				
Permitting	28 - No. of 30-day construction/expansion notifications received:	0		
	013-	0	2	0
	30 - No. of interim permits issued for Non-NPDES sites ≥300 AU:	0	2	0
	31 - No. of short-form permits issued for Non-NPDES sites ≥300 AU:	0	1	0
	32 - No. of short form (≥300 AU) or interim permit revisions conducted:	0	1	0
	33 - No. of public meetings held for construction/expansion to >500 AU:	0	2	0
Emergency Response	34 - No. of pollution events where an emergency response was conducted:	0	2	0
Production Site Scheduled Compliance	35 - Feedlots <300 AU in shoreland where a partial environmental upgrade was achieved in the current year:	0	2	0
	36 - Feedlots <300 AU in shoreland where a complete environmental upgrade was achieved in the current year:	0	2	0
	37 - Feedlots <300 AU not in shoreland where a partial environmental upgrade was achieved in the current year:	0	2	0
	38 - Feedlots <300 AU not in shoreland where a complete environmental upgrade was achieved in the current year:	0	2	0
	39 - Non-NPDES feedlots ≥300 AU where a complete environmental upgrade was achieved in the current year:	0	2	0
Land Application Scheduled Compliance	40 - Non-NPDES sites ≥100 AU where Level 1 land application non-compliance was found and was returned to compliance:	0	1	0
	41 - Non-NPDES sites ≥300 AU (or > 100 AU located in a DWSMA) where Level II land application non-compliance was found and was returned to compliance:	0	2	0
	42 - Feedlots ≥100 AU where Level III land application non-compliance was found and was returned to compliance:	0	2	0
Owner Assistance Goals	43 - No. of workshops or trainings hosted and/or co-sponsored by the CFO (Maximum PC credits = 10; please describe on Supplemental Form):	0	2	0
	44 - No. of feedlot owners attending feedlot producer workshops, training events or information meetings:	0		
	45 - No. of mailings to feedlot owners: (Please describe newsletters/mailings on provided on Supplemental Form.)	1		
	46 - No. of feedlot articles placed in local newspapers: (Please list article title(s) on the Supplemental Form.)	0		
Staffing Level and Training	47 - No. of FTEs (Full Time Equivalents) supplied by the CFO:	1		
	48 - No. 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.	49 - No. of FTEs supplied through contract to other LGUs:	0		
	50 - Total No. of FTEs positions that supported county program:	**1**		
	51 - No.of CFO-training hours: (Please see guidance for determining eligible training hours and provide training specifics on Supplemental Form)	13	0.25	3.25
	52 - No. of new CFO in-office-mentoring units provided (List location & dates on Supplemental Form):	0	3	0
	53 - No. of new CFO inspection-mentoring events provided (List location & dates on Supplemental Form):	0	2	0
EAW	54 - No. of EAW (environmental assessment worksheets) petitions received:	0		0
	55 - No. of EAWs prepared by the county:	0	4	0
Air Quality Notifications	56 - No. of notifications received from feedlot owners claiming air quality exemptions:	41		
Enforcement Actions Taken	57 - No. of letters of warning issued:	0		
	58 - No. of notices of violation issued:	9		
	59 - No. of court actions commenced:	1		
Other Program Activities	60 - Feedlots where a FLEval/MinnFARM was conducted:	1	1	1
	61 - Meetings with other local government and producer groups: (Please provide meeting details on Supplemental Form.)	2		
	62 - Feedlot Ordinance Revisions: (Please describe ordinance revision and/or adoption proceedings on Supplemental Form.)	0		
Total Credits				191.75

SUBSURFACE SEWAGE TREATMENT SYSTEMS (SSTS)

2011 NRBG: $9,931
Required Local Match: None required

The SSTS NRBG contributes little to the actual cost of administering the local program. The SSTS NRBG is the only NRBG program that was not reduced in 2011 and 2012. The 2012 SSTS NRBG will be nearly twice the amount as recent years.

2009 SSTS NRBG: $10,000
2010 SSTS NRBG: $ 9,931
2011 SSTS NRBG: $ 9,931

In the Environmental Services Department, three staff positions are certified SSTS inspectors whose time is partially devoted to administering the SSTS program.

Counties are required to submit to the MPCA a construction report showing the number and type of systems installed and tank report of number of septic tanks each contractor installs. The Minnesota Legislature passed a law in 2003 requiring SSTS installers to submit a fee of $25 to the MPCA for each septic tank. In order to verify that each installer submits the correct fees to the MPCA, the MPCA also requires counties keep records of all the tanks installed by each SSTS installer and report to the MPCA.

The following table summarizes SSTS construction between 2008 and 2011 as reported to the MPCA.

2008-2011 Summary
Subsurface Sewage Treatment System
Report to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

Year	Replacement Residential	New Residential	Other	Total
2008	94	45	4	143
2009	71	35	6	112
2010	83	28	5	116
2011	97	18	14	129

Sewage Ordinance Section of the County Code
Beginning in 1996 the *Sewage Ordinance Section of the County Code* contained new SSTS compliance "triggers" intended to increase compliance. Since 1996 these compliance triggers have increased rates of compliance in the County. The compliance triggers included:

1) Required a compliance inspection at property transfer.
2) Affirmed the State-prescribed time frame for upgrades of 10 months for "Imminent Threats to Public Health."
3) Determined the required time for upgrades to failing systems not considered ""Imminent Threats to Public Health" to be five years.

The *Sewage Ordinance Section of the County Code* was revised in 2010 with additional compliance triggers for septic compliance inspections. Compliance triggers in Blue Earth County now include:

1) Requires a compliance inspection at property transfer.
2) Requires an inspection or certificate of compliance for all County construction permits, conditional use permits and variances.
3) Affirms the State-prescribed time frame for upgrades to 10 months for systems that are "imminent threats to public health."
4) Determines the required time for upgrades to systems "failing to protect groundwater" to be two years.

These additional triggers are increasing the rate of compliance throughout the County as the previous compliance triggers only addressed property that changed ownership. The results can be seen in the reports and the number of replacement residential systems and other permits is increasing compared to construction of new systems for new construction.

Compliance Inspections

A Certificate of Compliance is issued to the owner when:

- A newly-constructed SSTS is determined to have been built correctly in accordance with modern, applicable rules and the design plan.

  OR

- An existing system is inspected and determined to meet minimum compliance criteria that ensure the SSTS will not cause human health or environmental problems. A Certificate of Compliance for a new system is valid for five years. A Certificate of Compliance for an existing system is valid for three years.

A Notice of Noncompliance is issued for a non-compliant existing SSTS.
The Notice of Noncompliance documents the compliance criteria the system fails to meet. Noncompliance falls into two categories:

- ***Imminent threat to public health*** (ITPH) – the system has a sewage discharge to surface water; sewage discharge to ground surface; sewage backup; or any other situation with the potential to immediately and adversely affect or threaten public health or safety.

- ***Failing to protect groundwater*** – the bottom of the system does not have the required separation to groundwater or bedrock.

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

OTHER STATE GRANTS and LOANS

Blue Earth County has received other grant and loan funds related to water management.

Clean Water Partnership Low Interest Loans For SSTS

Through watershed-based MPCA Clean Water Partnership projects, Blue Earth County is currently working with two low interest loan projects for SSTS.

- **Greater Blue Earth River Watershed SSTS Loans**
    - Total of Loans Available in Blue Earth County $575,000
    - Project Period: 2010-2014 *or until all funds are used whichever is first*
    - Total Loan Amount Disbursed in 2010-2011: $264,384.57

- **Middle Minnesota River Watershed Loans**
    - Total of Loans Available in Blue Earth County: $420,000
    - Project Period: 2011-2014 *or until all funds are used whichever is first*
    - Total Loan Amount Distributed in 2011: $65,381.00

Other loans for SSTS are also available through the Blue Earth County SWCD and the Minnesota Valley Action Council.

For more information about SSTS loans available in Blue Earth County, contact the Peter Otterness, Stacey Feser or Tim Grant, 507-304-4381.

FY11 Clean Water Fund Shoreland Buffer Initiative

2011 Clean Water Fund Grant: $136,842
Local Match: $40,000

Blue Earth County is working in partnership with the Blue Earth County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) on a new local initiative to ensure there are 50-foot, vegetated buffers along all rivers, streams and lakes in agricultural areas. This 50-foot buffer is required by County Ordinance and State Rules.

The County Environmental Services Department is inventorying all shoreland areas to determine compliance with the buffer standard and is in the process of notifying owners of cropland that appear to lack a 50-foot buffer. Notification letters are being sent out in small batches every two to three weeks. Those who receive letters are asked contact staff at the SWCD dedicated to working with landowners for this project. A 2011 Minnesota Clean Water Fund grant provided funds for the SWCD to provide these services.

The SWCD is a partner for this project because of their experience working with landowners to establish buffers and other best management practices and their knowledge of financial incentive programs available.

FY10 Clean Water Fund SSTS Program Enhancement Grant

2010 Clean Water Fund Grant: $26,000
Local Cash: $115,800
Total Project Cost: $141,800

Blue Earth County was awarded a $26,000 Clean Water Fund SSTS Program Enhancement grant in 2010 and the project was completed in 2011. This grant was used to partially fund the Environmental Department's electronic permitting system. It is part of a greater effort to improve customer service, efficiency, transparency, accuracy, accountability and communication.

The electronic permitting system will provide the basis for accurate and effective enforcement of SSTS rules which will in turn increase SSTS compliance. It will also provide the foundation for tracking SSTS maintenance activities and for improving education relateed to SSTS maintenance. SSTS inspection scheduling, inspection tracking, managing code enforcement activities and complaints, mass mailing creation, workflow management, time tracking (permit expiration, compliance expiration), fee tracking and reporting are all important components of the electronic permitting system.

***For more information about the County's electronic permitting system, contact Scott Salsbury, 507-304-4381*.**