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Mower SWCD promotes upland water storage

State group passes local-led resolution to develop statewide program

AUSTIN, Minn. – Thursday, Dec. 8, 2016 – Upland storage of stormwater will get more attention statewide as a water-quality practice thanks to recent efforts by Mower Soil & Water Conservation District.

On Tuesday, Mower SWCD board chair Jim Gebhardt presented a resolution Tuesday for detaining stormwater the upper areas of watersheds – a practice used extensively by Mower SWCD and the Cedar River Watershed District in the Austin area – at the Minnesota Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts' (MASWCD) annual convention in Bloomington.

The resolution called for MASWCD to work with the Minnesota Board of Water & Soil Resources (BWSR), a state agency, to implement a statewide program for funding and supporting upland storage detention in watersheds to improve water quality and reduce flooding.

Gebhardt presented the resolution on behalf of Mower SWCD's board of supervisors and staff.

New data continues to show that upland storage detention reduces the amount of sediment entering waterways and reduces flood-related damage, including streambank erosion, said Justin Hanson, Mower SWCD's district manager.

Mower SWCD, which is contracted annually to perform the CRWD's duties, has been involved extensively in upland-storage projects. In particular, CRWD's \$8.4 million Capital Improvement Project (CIP) initiative that started this past year aims to build 25 water-quality projects in the Cedar River Watershed, mostly involving water-detention structures in the upland areas of the Dobbins Creek watershed.

Also at this year's MASWCD convention, Tom Cotter and his father Michael Cotter – the Mower SWCD's 2016 Conservationist of the Year – were honored during an awards ceremony with other conservationists from throughout Minnesota. Each year, the state's SWCDs recognize individuals and organizations for outstanding accomplishments in implementing conservation practices and improving Minnesota's natural resources.

Mower SWCD staff attended the MASWCD convention along with four members of the Mower SWCD Board of Supervisors. During the convention's workshop portion, Mower SWCD's water plan and outreach coordinator Tim Ruzek teamed with BWSR's communications coordinator Celi Haga to give a presentation Tuesday to SWCD employees on ways to effectively and creatively provide conservation outreach and education.

Mower Soil & Water Conservation District

Since 1953, Mower SWCD has provided land and conservation services to Mower County landowners to help manage lands in a way that promotes a sound economy as well as sustains and enhances natural resources that are key to the state's environmental health. Mower SWCD is one of Minnesota's 91 SWCDs each are governed by an elected board.