

HERON LAKE WATERSHED DISTRICT

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June 2007

CONSERVATION DRAINAGE FIELD DAY

WHEN:

Wednesday, June 20, 2007

TIME:

9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

STARTING LOCATION:

Bullerman Farm, three miles east of Wilmont, Minnesota on Nobles County Road 16 (160th St.)

COST:

Free. Lunch will be provided. (pre-registration would be greatly appreciated for planning purposes)

AGENDA:

An overview of the project and of conservation drainage will be given by Minnesota Department of Agriculture and University of Minnesota staff, participating landowners, and the contractor. You will also have an opportunity to see a conservation drainage structure in operation.

SPONSORED BY:

Minnesota Department of Agriculture, University of Minnesota Extension Service, Ag Drainage Management Coalition, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Heron Lake Watershed District, Son-D-Farms, Inc., and Loosbrock Farm Drainage. For more information or to register, contact: Jan Voit at 507-793-2462 hlwd@roundlk.net

What is agricultural drainage?

Agricultural drainage provides for the removal of excess water from fields through the use of ditches and subsurface pipes called drainage tile. Subsurface drainage is needed in order to do field work, allow for soil conditions that support crop growth, and protect roads and property.

What challenges and opportunities confront agricultural drainage?

Many drainage systems are old, overloaded, and in need of maintenance and improvement. There are also concerns about the impact that drainage has on water quality and water flow from watersheds.

In order to address these concerns, drainage systems must be redesigned or replaced over the next 10 to 20 years in order to support the needed infrastructure for agricultural production. When these systems are upgraded, this will be a great opportunity to incorporate designs that benefit both agriculture and the environment.

Are techniques available that benefit agriculture and the environment?

There are structural techniques that have been described as conservation drainage practices. One of these practices is controlled drainage. This process uses drainage system design and management to maximize the benefits of drainage and minimize negative impacts on the environment. The practice uses a water control structure in a drainage tile that can hold water at varying depths. The outlet depth is:

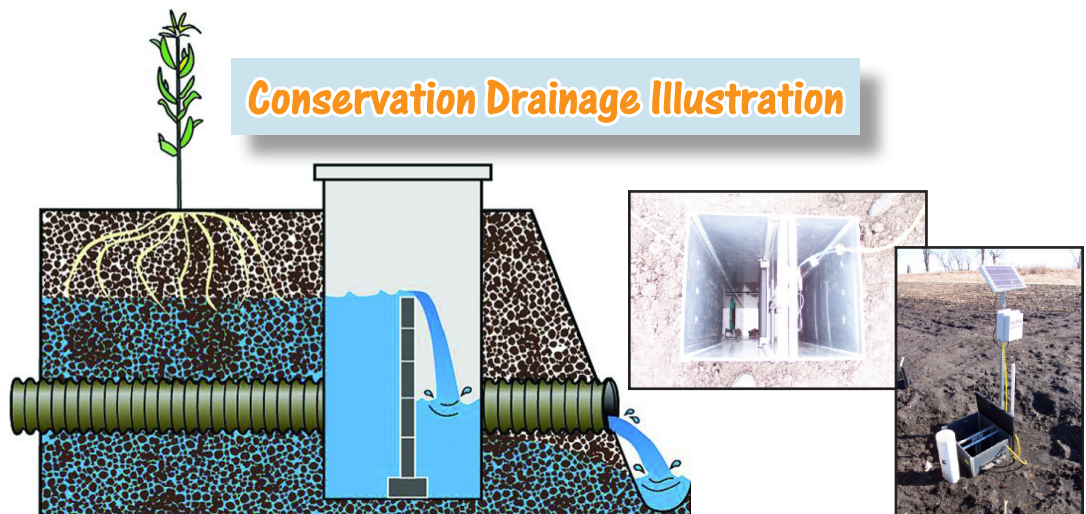
- Raised after harvest to limit drainage outflow and reduce the delivery of nitrate to ditches and streams.
- Lowered in early spring and again in the fall so the drain can flow freely before planting or harvest.
- Raised again after planting and spring field work to create a potential to store water for the crop to use in midsummer dry periods.

Conservation drainage has been shown to reduce drainage water volume and nitrate losses by 25 to 40%.

More information is available at www.mda.state.mn.us/protecting/conservation/drainage.htm.

How can I learn more about conservation drainage?

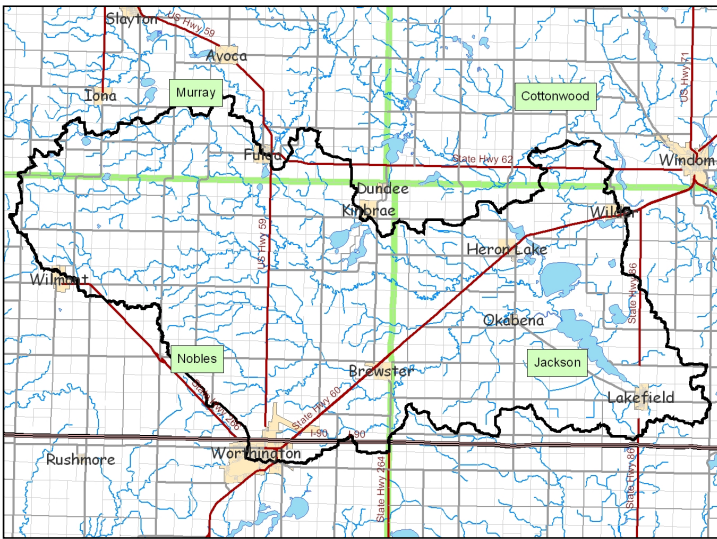
The Minnesota Department of Agriculture received funding through a Conservation Innovation Grant from the USDA/NRCS to conduct a conservation drainage research project. This project will be conducted in five states (Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio). As part of this effort, the Heron Lake Watershed District is partnering with Son-D-Farms, Inc. and Loosbrock Farm Drainage on a demonstration site in the watershed to provide first-hand information about conservation drainage and its affects on water quality and crop production. Please join us for a Conservation Drainage Field Day to learn more about this project.



Heron Lake Watershed District
PO Box 345
Heron Lake, MN 56137

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Map of the Heron Lake Watershed District



**We want to hear from you!
What would you like to know
more about? How can we be
most helpful to you? Please
take our short survey - you
can find it on our website at
www.hlwdonline.org.**

Please contact us with your questions or concerns! Telephone 507-793-2462; Email: hlwd@roundlk.net



**WATERSHED
ASSISTANCE
THROUGH
EDUCATION &
RESOURCES**

What's happening?

- June 20, 2007 - Conservation Drainage Field Day
- July 17, 2007 - Heron Lake Watershed District Board meeting - 7:00 p.m. at the HLWD office

Please note that meetings dates and times are tentative. Please contact the HLWD office for exact meeting date and time.

H  **HERON LAKE WATERSHED DISTRICT**

Funding for this newsletter is provided by the USDA/NRCS through a Conservation Innovation Grant.