

PRAP**Performance Review and Assistance Program****2010 Level II Review:****High Island Creek Watershed District** (*Renville, McLeod, Sibley Counties*)**Why BWSR did this review**

BWSR conducts Level II performance reviews to help local government water management entities to be the best they can be in plan implementation and overall operational effectiveness. In 2010 BWSR is conducting Level II performance reviews of eight different local water management entities.

BWSR has conducted a routine Level II performance review of the **High Island Creek Watershed District** because they are near the midpoint in implementing their 10-year watershed management plan.

This document includes findings, conclusions and recommendations to enhance the overall operation and effectiveness of the watershed district. The board of managers is responsible for taking any actions they decide are necessary in response to the recommendations in this report.

**High Island Creek Watershed District
Summary of Performance Review Results****What BWSR Found**

In their 2004 management plan, the managers made a conscious decision to shift the focus of the district from almost exclusively land drainage to begin addressing broader water resource conservation issues. The managers acknowledged that such a shift in emphasis was substantial. Although keeping the drainage system working effectively remains their top priority, over the past ten years the managers have taken steps towards addressing water conservation and water quality concerns.

The start of the High Island Creek Watershed Clean Water Partnership (CWP) Project provided timely support for the watershed district's shift in focus. Clearly, the watershed district managers have benefitted from and appreciate their working relationship with the CWP Project coordinator, and this fact is evidence of the value that a full-time district administrator would provide to the overall operation of the watershed. An administrator would also be able to develop improved working relationships between the district and state and federal regulatory agencies.

Other observations about the basic functioning of the organization are that board meetings would benefit from increased structure and that the district does not submit timely activity reports nor take advantage of other reporting mechanisms, such as websites, to most effectively inform and engage the residents of the watershed.

The district has two action items that need immediate attention: submittal of the 2009 annual report and establishment of a watershed district advisory committee.

The High Island Creek Watershed District is commended for compliance with the following high performance standards:

- ★ Water quality trends tracked for priority water bodies
- ★ Coordination with Cty Board and City/Twp officials
- ★ Partnerships: cooperative projects/tasks done

BWSR recommends that the district managers enter into a Performance Improvement Agreement to address statutory requirements, employ an administrator, tighten up meeting procedures, develop a district website, provide additional administrative training, and seek cooperative funding sources.