



*The Jensen sisters: Norma Schlemmer, Linda Nesburg, and Diane Jensen.*

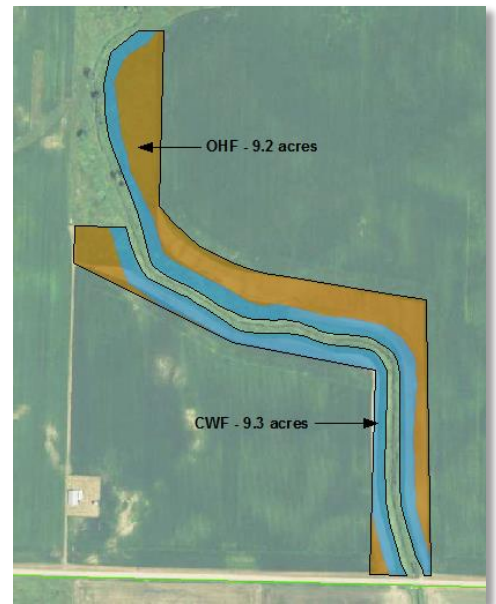
For the Jensen sisters, conservation is part of their family farming tradition. Their parents believed strongly in being good stewards of the land, and that legacy lives on in their daughters. Even though they don't farm the land themselves, the conservation practices they've installed have been beneficial both to the farmer they rent to and to the surrounding land and water. The Jensen farm has used buffers to slow erosion and benefit water quality through the Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve Buffer Program, which provides critical support in advancing the state's goals to protect and improve water quality, protect and enhance wildlife habitat, and reduce flooding.

A small stream on their farm outlets into the Redwood River just a few hundred feet from their property boundary. Efforts by the Redwood Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) to protect the river had already led to multiple easements in the area, establishing a corridor with a highly functional ecosystem.

In 2013 the sisters installed an 18.5 acre easement on their property that has a 100-foot Clean Water Fund buffer (pictured right in blue) that provides water quality benefits to a tributary that outlets into the Redwood. That buffer is matched by 100 feet of Outdoor Heritage Fund buffer (pictured right in tan), providing more acreage for wildlife habitat. The RIM program in the state that uses both Clean Water and Outdoor Heritage fund to maximize benefits for water and wildlife.

"The farm's location meant that their buffer application was a great candidate because it provided both clean water benefits and habitat benefits for wildlife," Kristy Zajac, Redwood SWCD Conservation Specialist explained.

"Five years ago, we proposed expanding the RIM program to include wildlife buffers to the Lessard Sams Outdoor Heritage Council and this is exactly the kind of project we had in mind," Tabor Hoek, BWSR Private Lands Program Coordinator said. "It directly ties the clean water and wildlife components of the Legacy Amendment together."



Landowner Diane Jensen – one of the three sisters - is actively involved in seeding the easement with a diverse group of vegetation. She manages for pollinators, removes buckthorn by hand, and has used other practices to manage her land. It's a success story, and a clear demonstration of how both funds - and the enthusiasm and commitment of local landowners - can be leveraged to maximize benefits for water and wildlife.