

Vernon County Success from the Field

EQIP Assists in Restoring Stream Function

Background

In 2007 and 2008, Vernon County, Wis., suffered from severe flooding. Dave Jacobson was one of the many landowners impacted by this event. Dave is an agricultural producer along Spring Coulee Creek near Coon Valley, Wis. The '07 and '08 floods exacerbated streambank erosion, threatening adjoining cropland and impairing stream function due to increased sediment loading.

Before the floods, Dave's land was actively cropped, being used for corn, hay, and tobacco. With flood waters inundating all of his cropland and almost reaching his residence, the landscape was drastically changed with rock and sand deposited on his crop fields and eroding his streambanks to 12-foot sheer drops.

Program Successes

Dave learned of the possibilities of EQIP funding to address his rapidly eroding streambanks after he saw other projects being done in the area. Dave had conversations with a DNR construction crew and an NRCS Soil Conservation Technician on site. After discussions, they decided the Streambank Protection practice would address Jacobson's resource concerns.

The streambank work on Dave's farm was partially funded through the Driftless Area Land Conservation Initiative (DALCI). DALCI focuses on restoring cold water stream corridors. This special funding pool helped many landowners address their stream resource concerns in Vernon County.

The work was also supported by the Wis. DNR through a fisheries easement. NRCS initiatives often involve partners at every level of government, from municipalities to states.

"Vernon County is home to one of the premier trout fisheries in the United States," said Sam Skemp, NRCS District Conservationist in Vernon County. "Work like this not only provides conservation benefits, but contributes to a robust local economy. Fishermen come from far and wide to enjoy our crystal clear streams."



Spring Coulee Creek after streambank protection and fish habitat installation. Lunker structures, instream wood placement, and in-stream rock placement provide habitat for trout.

Dave is hopeful the streambank work will prevent future flooding because the removal of trees in the area will prevent backup. He looks forward to addressing other resource concerns on his land through the EQIP program. He plans on converting cropland back to natural cover and is particularly interested in pollinator plantings.

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