

Conservation Implementation Strategy Project

Vermillion River



This Project At-A-Glance

Partners:

Clay County Conservation
District

Vermillion River Water
Development District

Clay Rural Water

Funding for this project is provided by the ACEP Program and partners with financial and in-kind contributions.

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The Conservation Implementation Strategy (CIS) is a new phased-in approach to deliver conservation programs to farmers and ranchers across South Dakota. Funding for CIS comes through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP). Funding and support from other agencies and groups can be leveraged and coordinated to focus on mutual issues of the highest priority.

Background

The Vermillion River, south of Davis, South Dakota (SD), had its original hydrology manipulated by the installation of dikes in the 1940s and 1950s. In recent years, a group of landowners south of Centerville, SD, has become overwhelmed by devastation left behind after several flood events. The worst of these floods occurred throughout the 2019 growing season. The dikes that were installed have repeatedly failed during those flood events forcing the landowners to spend thousands of dollars repairing dikes to help protect their fields and their neighbor's fields. That has brought the group of landowners to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) seeking assistance to reduce the risk associated with farming within this stretch of the Vermillion River floodplain. The project location also includes part of a source water protection area that would directly benefit from the establishment of long-term perennial vegetation through enrollment. Improved treatment efficiency of the Clay Rural Water System will directly benefit the public receiving services from them.

Goals

The goal of this project is to assist the landowners in reducing their risk by eliminating cropping on flood-prone reaches of the Vermillion River. This will be accomplished by permanently removing cropland from agricultural production via ACEP - Wetlands Reserve Easements (ACEP-WRE). The project has targeted 1,200 acres for enrollment with almost 950 of those acres being restored to native vegetation with natural hydrology being restored as well within the project area.

Desired Outcomes

As a result of landowners entering WREs and permanent vegetation establishment in the floodplain, producers will no longer have to fret about flood events damaging dikes and crops. The establishment of natural hydrology and permanent vegetation will prevent soil erosion during flood events, increase wildlife habitat in the locale, and reduce pressure on the dikes downstream.

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Resource Concern(s): Flooding and ponding that occurs within this reach of the Vermillion River floodplain is the highest priority resource concern to be addressed. Flooding and ponding create a whole suite of other resource concerns in the area and downstream including, but not limited to, pesticides in surface and ground water, sheet and rill erosion, and sedimentation. Implementing practices like restoration of rare or declining natural communities and wetland restoration along with long-term protection of land-permanent easement will alleviate and repair concerns within this reach and downstream.

Core Practices	Supporting Practices
Restoration of Rare or Declining Natural Communities (643)	Herbaceous Weed Treatment (315)
Wetland Restoration (657)	Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (645)
Well Decommissioning (351)	Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management (644)
Fence (382)	
Obstruction Removal (500)	
Long-term Protection of Land – Permanent Easement (LTPPE)	

