

# Our Water

Keeping it Clean

North Dakota Department of Environmental Quality

## Project Spotlight

### Richland County Soil Conservation District

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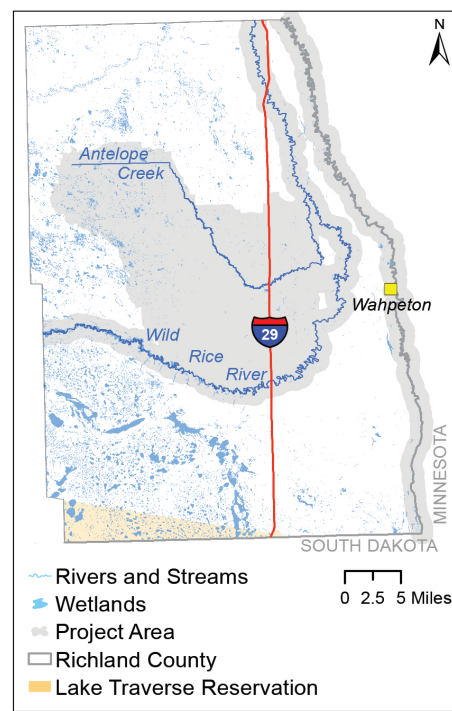
In October 2024, the Richland County Soil Conservation District (SCD) submitted a proposal to continue its nearly 20-year watershed implementation project addressing nonpoint source pollution in the Wild Rice River and tributary watershed Antelope Creek. The Wild Rice River and Antelope Creek are identified as “impaired” (not supporting state water quality standards) due to high levels of bacteria and sediment. Nonpoint source pollution occurs when runoff from rain or snowmelt carries contaminants into nearby streams and lakes. Watershed projects address nonpoint source pollution by providing financial and technical assistance to landowners implementing conservation practices known as “Best Management Practices” (BMPs).

District Manager and Watershed Coordinator Jennifer Klostreich has headed the Wild Rice/Antelope Creek project since its beginning. “We continue to be amazed at how well our project has done,” Klostreich said. The project is working to improve water quality through practices such as riparian vegetation, cropland buffering, and increased public understanding of nonpoint sources and solutions. Project accomplishments are extensive and continue to grow. Cost-share funding from the project has supported BMPs, including:

- 230 septic system renovations
- 79 wells decommissioned
- 32,914 feet of fencing (pasture and ag waste)
- 11,265 acres of cover crop
- 7 partial manure management systems
- 5,716 feet of weed control barrier
- 5,618 feet of established trees/shrubs
- 300 feet of pipeline
- 5 livestock wells
- 4 solar pumps
- 4 water tanks
- 5 acres of critical area planting
- 2.5 acres of riparian herbaceous cover
- 1 waste management system

The Richland County SCD has a history of successful nonpoint source projects and water quality improvements. In 2015, a success story was published by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, highlighting measured water quality improvement in a section of the Wild Rice River. The article described a reduction in bacteria levels thanks to project efforts and local participation.

A 2016 national report on nonpoint source management programs featured Klostreich as one of “The Faces of Success” for her work on upgrading septic systems contaminating the Wild Rice River. Asked about project success and participation, Klostreich said “Positive word of mouth has been a huge benefit for our project. I try to have a step-by-step fact sheet for each producer. This helps them navigate the process by knowing what to expect and when.”



Richland County nonpoint source watershed project area.





Initial stream bank erosion.



Project sloping and reseeding.



One year following restoration.

*Riparian restoration (before-during-after) in the Wild Rice River watershed.*  
Photos courtesy of Richland County SCD.

These efforts have led to continued national, state and local support of the project. In 2025, the SCD hopes to receive additional funding to continue supporting Richland County producers with cost-share opportunities for BMPs addressing nonpoint source pollution in the watershed.

When asked about her job, Klostreich said, “My favorite thing is working with producers and being able to help them in a process that might be unfamiliar. This journey was supposed to be helping with tree planting for a couple of weeks and has lasted over 25 years, and I am thankful for that. I enjoy my job and the people that I get to work with.”

For more information on the Antelope Creek and Wild Rice River Watershed Project, contact the Richland County Soil Conservation District at 701-642-5997 (ext. 3) or email [jen.klostreich@nd.nacdnet.net](mailto:jen.klostreich@nd.nacdnet.net).

For information on watershed projects throughout North Dakota, contact Environmental Quality Nonpoint Source Program Manager Emilee Novak at 701-328-5240 or email [ejnovak@nd.gov](mailto:ejnovak@nd.gov).

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