Fulda Phosphorus Reduction Initiative

Final Report

Jan Voit
August 20, 2015

Project Sponsor:
Heron Lake Watershed District

Contributing Sponsors:
St. Paul Lutheran School Staff and Students
Bondin-Belfast 4-H Club
Master Gardeners
Fulda City Council
Fulda Heritage Society
Fulda Game and Fish
Jim and Rona Brown
Jack and Carol Tomford
Jerry Johnson
Jim and Lori Stainer
Howard and Virginia Anderson
Chuck and Georgia Lursen
Grant Project Summary

Project title: Fulda Phosphorus Reduction Initiative

Organization (Grantee): Heron Lake Watershed District

Project start date: 1/1/2011  Project end date: 8/31/2015  Report submittal date: 8/18/2015

Grantee contact name: Jan Voit  Title: District Administrator

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City: Heron Lake  State: MN  Zip: 56137
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Basin (Red, Minnesota, St. Croix, etc.): Des Moines  County: Nobles, Jackson, Murray, and Cottonwood

Project type (check one):

[ ] Clean Water Partnership (CWP) Diagnostic
[ ] CWP Implementation
[ ] Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Development
[ ] 319 Implementation
[ ] 319 Demonstration, Education, Research
[ ] TMDL Implementation

Grant Funding

Final grant amount: $12,600.00  Final total project costs: $25,170.83

Matching funds: Final cash: $0.00  Final in-kind: $12,570.83  Final Loan: $0.00

Contract number: CFMS: 36250, Project ID: 7838  MPCA project manager: Katherine Pekarek-Scott

Executive Summary of Project (300 words or less)

The City of Fulda is located at the north end of the Heron Lake Watershed District (HLWD) and includes two lakes, First Fulda Lake and Second Fulda Lake. Land use within the Fulda Lakes subwatershed is primarily agricultural. The majority of the City of Fulda contains impervious surfaces such as streets, parking lots, roof tops, and compacted lawns, which contribute to stormwater runoff.

Through this effort, the HLWD conducted a rain garden demonstration project. This was done by providing educational opportunities for students and the community to learn about native vegetation, water quality improvement, pollution reduction, and environmentally-friendly landscaping.

Presentations were given to the Master Gardeners, Bondin-Belfast 4-H Club, St. Paul’s Lutheran School, Fulda City Council, Fulda Heritage Society, and Fulda Game and Fish. Through these
presentations approximately 160 people received information about rain gardens and water quality improvement.

This allowed the opportunity to use the Prairie Ecology Bus in 2013 for a hands-on education event. Children and adults learned about rain gardens and had the opportunity to experience installation of two rain gardens. There were 23 participants.

Water quality data shows that small rain gardens save one pound of phosphorus per one-inch rain event or 50 to 80 percent and 90 to 100 percent of the heavy metals, petroleum, and bacteria found in stormwater. Rain gardens also have been found to reduce stormwater flows by 80 to 90 percent. Through an advertisement, flyer, news release, and newsletter, watershed residents, agency personnel, and legislators were provided information about the importance of rain gardens. In addition, a Rain Garden Open House was held in 2015 that allowed 30 people the chance to visit with HLWD staff and tour the six rain gardens that were installed through the Fulda Phosphorus Reduction Initiative.

**Goals (Include three primary goals for this project.)**

1st Goal: Provide educational materials and information to approximately 50 individuals

2nd Goal: Hire landscapers to install and coordinate the planting of five rain gardens within the City of Fulda

3rd Goal: Increase community awareness through an open house, newsletter, and by other news media

**Results that count (Include the results from your established goals.)**

1st Result: Educational materials and information was provided to approximately 190 individuals through presentations and the open house

2nd Result: Nelson Landscaping, Inc. was hired to install six rain garden sites within the City of Fulda

3rd Result: The open house was promoted through an advertisement, news release, and newsletter. There were 30 people in attendance at the open house.

**Picture (Attach at least one picture, do not imbed into this document.)**

Description/location: Rain garden planting during the Prairie Ecology Bus Center Rain Garden Tour on August 15, 2013 in the city of Fulda.

**Acronyms (Name all project acronyms and their meanings.)**

- HLWD – Heron Lake Watershed District
- TMDL – Total Maximum Daily Load
- MPCA – Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
- PEBC – Prairie Ecology Bus Center
- DNR – Department of Natural Resources
• QAPP – Quality Assurance Project Plan

Partnerships (Name all partners and indicate relationship to project)
• Heron Lake Watershed District: project sponsor, project staff, project administration, and inkind contribution
• St. Paul Lutheran School Staff and Students: received PowerPoint presentation and educational materials, time committed used as inkind match
• Bondin Belfast 4-H Club: received PowerPoint presentation and educational materials, time committed used as inkind match
• Fulda City Council: received PowerPoint presentation and educational materials, time committed used as inkind match
• Fulda Heritage Society: received PowerPoint presentation and educational materials, time committed used as inkind match
• Fulda Game and Fish: received PowerPoint presentation and educational materials, time committed used as inkind match
• Jim and Rona Brown: rain garden installed on property, time committed used as inkind match
• Jack and Carol Tomford: rain garden installed on property
• Jerry Johnson: rain garden installed on property
• Jim and Lori Stainer: rain garden installed on property
• Howard and Virginia Anderson: rain garden installed on property
• Chuck and Georgia Lursen: rain garden installed on property
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Work Plan Review

1. Work Plan Changes

1.1. Work Plan Change #1: March 27, 2012
   HLWD staff met with Katherine Pekarek-Scott, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) on March 1, 2012 to review the grant work plan. $500 will be moved from Objective 3, Task A: Organize and Host Open House to Objective 3, Task D: Signs. This is done so that:
   - A self-guided tour of the rain garden sites will be held instead of a bus tour.
   - A sign identifying the types of plants established at each of the sites will be installed at Seven Mile Park to increase community awareness and will be inkind.
   - Signs identifying project locations and cooperators will be installed at each of the five sites and will be paid through grant funds.
   A change was also requested to have HLWD staff and summer interns assist with establishment and preservation of the rain gardens throughout the grant period in Objective 2, Task B.

1.2. Work Plan Change #2: March 27, 2013
   The Bondin-Belfast and Seward Trail Blazers 4-H Clubs no longer wanted to participate in the grant and the St. Paul Lutheran School was unresponsive to requests. The Fulda City Council, Fulda Heritage Society, and the Fulda Game and Fish agreed to receive education presentations.
   - The HLWD would like to expand their educational capability. It is requested to include other local organizations in the project for education in Objective 1 and rain garden installation in Objective 2 Task B.

1.3. Amendment #1: May 20, 2013
   The Original Grant Contract was amended to rebudget between tasks and decrease the inkind and total project amounts. The total contract amount remains the same.
   - Cash was moved within Objective 2 from rain garden design to site preparation and plants. The total cash amount remained the same.
   - Inkind match was reduced from $14,973.00 to $10,094.00 – a difference of $4,069.00. These changes were made to accurately reflect the inkind contributed by all partners.
2. Activities and Tasks

Objective 1: Classroom teaching

Task A: Develop educational materials and presentations

- Margaret Peeters, HLWD Resource Technician began developing classroom education materials in November of 2011.
- Margaret Peeters and Jan Voit, HLWD Administrator made repeated attempts throughout March and April to schedule meeting dates with the Master Gardeners, Bondin-Belfast and Seward Trailblazers 4-H Clubs, and St. Paul’s Lutheran School students.
- Jan Voit gave a PowerPoint presentation to the Master Gardeners at the county meeting room at the Murray County Courthouse on April 26, 2012. There were seven Master Gardeners and one HLWD staff in attendance.
- Jan Voit gave a pre-test and post-test to 11 Bondin-Belfast 4-H Club members at the City Hall meeting room in Fulda on April 27, 2012. A PowerPoint presentation was given to the 19 club members and one HLWD staff in attendance. The test results are shown in Figure 1.
- Jan Voit gave a pre-test and post-test to 21 students in Grades 4 – 8 at St. Paul’s Lutheran School on May 1, 2012. The PowerPoint presentation was given to 20 students and two teachers. The test results are shown in Figure 2.
- Jan Voit compiled the Bondin-Belfast 4-H Club members test results on May 1, 2012.
- Jan Voit compiled the St. Paul’s Lutheran School students test results on May 2, 2012.
- On April 2, 2013, Chrystal Dunker, Prairie Ecology Bus Center (PEBC), and Jan Voit discussed the education experience that will be held in August. This will be an event for children and will include rain garden education and rain garden planting.
- A presentation regarding pollution prevention and rain gardens was given to the Fulda Game and Fish on May 1, 2013. There were 10 members and two HLWD staff in attendance.
- A presentation regarding pollution prevention and rain gardens was given to the Fulda Heritage Society on May 2, 2013. There were six members and two HLWD staff in attendance.
- A presentation regarding pollution prevention and rain gardens was given to the Fulda City Council on May 6, 2013. There were five council members, one staff, four general public, and two HLWD staff in attendance.
- A presentation regarding pollution prevention and rain gardens was given to the Slayton Kiwanis Club on September 11, 2013. There were 40 club members and one HLWD staff present.
• A presentation regarding pollution prevention and rain gardens was given to Fulda High School students on October 9, 2013. There were 18 students, three PEBC, and one HLWD staff present.

• PowerPoint presentations, the rain garden quiz, brochure, and fact sheet can be found in Appendix 1.
Figure 1. Bondin-Belfast 4-H Club Test Results

Bondin-Belfast 4-H Club Test Results

April 27, 2012

A rain garden is? Circle all that apply.
There was a nine percent increase in the correct answer and a six percent decrease in incorrect answers.

![Bar graph: What is a rain garden?](image)

Plants planted in rain gardens are selected based on? Circle all that apply.
There was a 27 percent increase in the right answer and a nine percent decrease in incorrect answers.

![Bar graph: Plant selection is based on...](image)
Which of these is a native plants (you would find this in Minnesota)? Circle all that apply.
There was a 21 percent increase in correct answers, but not every correct answer was identified. The incorrect answer was not selected before or after the presentation.

Choose the native plant.

What are good way(s) to stop water pollution from entering the lakes, rivers, and streams? Circle all that apply.
The correct answer was identified on both the pre- and post-tests. The number of incorrect answers identified decreased by 12 percent from pre-test to post-test.
True or False (circle T for true and F for false)

Stormwater runoff contains things like chemicals, pesticides, bacteria, and road salts.
- A nine percent increase in correct responses.

Rain gardens gather water to form a pond.
- A 36 percent increase in correct responses.

Rain gardens require a lot of maintenance just like a vegetable garden.
- A nine percent increase in correct responses.

Rain gardens help to reduce pollution to lakes, rivers, and streams.
- A nine percent increase in correct responses.

Summary

Pre- and post-tests were taken by 11 club members ranging in age from six to 18. There was an overall increase in knowledge with correct responses increasing 16 percent from pre-test to post-test. The purpose of a rain garden and the types of native plants seem to cause the most confusion before the presentation. After the presentation, the confusion about the purpose seemed to be removed, however, there still needs to be some education about native plants. No tests were given to adult leaders. In preparing for the event, it was estimated that there would be 12 people in attendance. There were actually 19.
St. Paul’s Lutheran School Test Results

May 1, 2012

A rain garden is? Circle all that apply.
There was a 29 percent increase in correct answers and a 19 percent decrease in incorrect answers.

What is a rain garden?

Plants planted in rain gardens are selected based on? Circle all that apply.
There was a 33 percent increase in correct answers and a decrease of six percent in incorrect answers.

Plant selection is based on...
Which of these is a native plants (you would find this in Minnesota)? Circle all that apply. There was a 44 percent increase of the correct answers chosen and a decrease of five percent for incorrect. This was the one question that every student answered correctly post test.

Choose the native plant.

What are good way(s) to stop water pollution from entering the lakes, rivers, and streams? Circle all that apply. There was a 19 percent increase in correct answers and an 11 percent decrease in incorrect answers selected.
**True or False (circle T for true and F for false)**

Stormwater runoff contains things like chemicals, pesticides, bacteria, and road salts.
- A 33 percent increase in the correct answer.
Rain gardens gather water to form a pond.
- A 24 percent increase in the correct answer.
Rain gardens require a lot of maintenance just like a vegetable garden.
- A 33 percent increase in the correct answer.
Rain gardens help to reduce pollution to lakes, rivers, and streams.
- A five percent decrease in the correct answer. This is the only question with a decrease in correctness.

**Summary**

Pre- and post-tests were taken by 21 students in grades 4 to 8. There was an overall increase in knowledge with a 30 percent increase in the total number of correct answers. Before the presentation, there was some confusion on what a rain garden consisted of and the purpose. After the presentation, the knowledge of the actual rain garden increased. There seems to be more education needed about pollution and ways to minimize it. No tests were given to teachers. In preparing for the event, it was estimated that there would be 20 students.
Obstacles and Lessons Learned

When the grant was written in 2010, Alyson Buschena was the HLWD Resource Technician. A Fulda, Minnesota native, she had personal contacts with the current 4-H Club leaders. By the time the grant work plan was approved and the grant agreement executed, Alyson had taken another position and Margaret Peeters was hired. During the timeframe from grant submission to grant award, new 4-H leaders took over. Despite repeated requests to work with the Seward Trail Blazers 4-H Club, they no longer wanted to participate.

Margaret Peeters accepted a new position in March 2012. After her departure, Jan Voit and Ross Behrends were responsible for her job duties. Not having adequate staff made completing work plan tasks difficult.

Objective 2: Rain Garden Demonstration Sites

Task A: Design and development of five rain gardens

- HLWD staff met on November 9, 2011 to discuss the grant work plan and project promotion.
- Margaret Peeters drafted a letter and brochure regarding rain gardens and the rain garden project to distribute to Fulda residents. She also drafted a landowner agreement form.
- Margaret Peeters and Lauren Michelsen, West Fork Des Moines River Watershed Coordinator distributed brochures to 176 homes within the City of Fulda on December 1, 6, and 8, 2011.
- On December 14, 2011, Ross Behrends, HLWD Technician and Margaret Peeters met with landowners interested in installing rain gardens. Three landowners had committed to participating in the project.
- After meeting with landowners, Margaret Peeters began designing rain gardens using SmartDraw 2012.
- On January 19, 2012, Margaret Peeters conducted a site check for potential rain garden installation in Fulda.
- On February 1, 2012, Margaret Peeters developed a site plan for the Stainer rain garden.
- Ross Behrends and Margaret Peeters visited landowners regarding potential rain garden sites on March 29, 2012.
- Ross Behrends contacted each landowner to give an update on progress on April 18, 2013.
- Summer Intern Nick Bancks worked on a brochure for the rain garden projects on May 23, 2013.
- Summer Intern Amanda Schultz began plant identification for rain gardens on May 28, 2013.
- Ross Behrends, Amanda Schultz, and Nick Bancks met with Fulda homeowners on May 29 and 30, 2013.
• Ross Behrends provided training and information for rain garden design to summer interns on May 29, 2013.
• Amanda Schultz and Nick Bancks worked on rain garden design on June 3, 2013.
• Amanda Schultz and Nick Bancks met with a Fulda homeowner on June 4, 2013.
• Nick Bancks worked on rain garden design on June 4, 2013.
• Amanda Schultz and Nick Bancks met with Fulda homeowners on June 11, 2013.
• Amanda Schultz and Nick Bancks met with a Fulda homeowner on June 12, 2013.
• Nick Bancks worked on rain garden design on June 12, 2013.
• Amanda Schultz worked on rain garden design on June 19 and June 20, 2013.
• Amanda Schultz worked on rain garden design on June 27, 2013.
• Ross Behrends met with Nick Bancks and Amanda Schultz regarding rain garden plans on July 1, 2013.
• Nick Bancks and Amanda Schultz developed design templates for rain gardens, developed a contractor form, and made flower selections on July 2, 2013.
• Jan Voit and Ross Behrends reviewed the contractor form on July 2, 2013.
• Ross Behrends developed project packets for the contractor on July 8, 2013.
• Amanda Schultz made phone calls about signs and plants on July 9, 2013.
• Ross Behrends met with the contractor to go over the project and get the bid on July 9, 2013.
• Amanda Schultz worked on the plant order and plant research on July 11, 2013.
• Amanda Schultz worked on the signs, plant list, and contacted landowners on July 15, 2013.
• Ross Behrends reviewed the plant list and sign on July 15, 2013.
• Amanda Schultz determined plant allocations on July 16, 2013.
• Amanda Schultz worked on the plant order and sign design on July 22, 2013.
• Amanda Schultz submitted the plant order on July 24, 2013.
• Nick Bancks worked on rain garden planting plans on July 24, 2013.
• Six landowners were interested in receiving rain gardens. The sites were chosen before Nick Bancks and Amanda Schultz started their internships in the spring of 2013. The sites are located in front yards in areas with a gentle slope and downhill from a downspout to capture runoff. Nick and Amanda met with the homeowners to determine the shape of the garden and anything they wanted to incorporate in it (rocks, benches, bird feeders, etc.)
• The interns referenced *The Blue Thumb Guide to Raingardens* and the *Rain Gardens: A how to manual for homeowners* to determine how large the rain gardens needed to be. They used Smart Draw and Google Earth to create a blueprint of the gardens. Then, they went to the yards with a tape measure and rope to draw the outline of the gardens and marked the border with spray paint.
• The gardens were excavated to four feet in depth and backfilled with a sand-clay mix. The percentages were approximately 60 percent sand and 40 percent clay. This was done to allow for better infiltration.
• Prairie Moon Nursery and Prairie Nursery catalogs and the Minnesota Wildflowers were used to compile a list of native grasses, sedges, forbs, and shrubs suitable for southwest Minnesota. Interns met with landowners to ascertain the types of plants they wanted in their gardens. Some of the plants that were selected were not available from the supplier and the lists had to be modified to reflect availability.

• Letters to landowners, rain garden designs, and photos can be found in Appendix 2.

• The first draft of the landowner questionnaire was completed on April 22, 2015. The document was finalized on April 27, 2015. The questionnaires were returned to the HLWD office by June 1, 2015.

• The questionnaire results were compiled on June 2, 2015.

• The landowner questionnaire and a cover letter were mailed on May 13, 2015. The questionnaire and cover letter can be found in Appendix 2.

Task B: Install five rain gardens

• Ross Behrends worked with Jim and Rona Brown to develop a shoreline restoration project funded by a Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Shoreland Grant. During the process, discussion was held regarding installing a rain garden. The couple agreed that a rain garden would be a great addition to their water quality improvement efforts.

• Ross Behrends secured Jim Nelson Landscaping to install the shoreline restoration and rain garden projects.

• The shoreline restoration and rain garden project installation began on June 25, 2012 and concluded on June 28, 2012. Ross Behrends and Andrew Busman, HLWD Summer Intern, assisted with rain garden installation. In addition, Jim and Rona Brown and their friends Michelle Malters and Lynn Witzel helped install the rain garden.

• Jan Voit developed a news release and flyer on July 10, 2013 to promote the Rain Garden Field Trip at which rain garden installation will be conducted.

• Jan Voit distributed the flyer and news release on July 17, 2013.

• Jan Voit called Hy-Vee and Subway to get quotes for sack lunches for the Rain Garden Field Trip on July 24, 2013.

• Nick Bancks and Amanda Schultz picked up and delivered the rain garden plants on July 25, 2013.

• Jan Voit discussed the Rain Garden Field Trip with Chrystal Dunker, PEBC on July 25, 2013.

• Nick Bancks and Amanda Schultz conducted rain garden preservation at the Brown’s on July 29, 2013.

• Nick Bancks and Amanda Schultz delineated rain gardens on July 30, 2013.

• Ross Behrends met with the contractor on August 1, 2013.

• Amanda Schultz submitted GopherOne digging tickets on August 3, 2013.

• Amanda Schultz prepared and purchased tools for the Rain Garden Field Trip on August 5, 2013.
• Amanda Schultz and Nick Bancks conducted rain garden preservation on August 6, 2013.
• Nick Bancks and Amanda Schultz prepared for the Rain Garden Field Trip on August 7, 2013.
• Ross Behrends prepared for the Rain Garden Field Trip on August 7, 2013.
• Amanda Schultz prepared for the Rain Garden Field Trip on August 8, 2013.
• Due to inclement weather, the Rain Garden Field Trip was postponed. Jan Voit and Ross Behrends contacted registrants regarding the postponement on August 8, 2013.
• On August 15, 2013, the HLWD hosted a rain garden field trip in partnership with the PEBC. The purpose of the tour was to provide an educational and hands-on rain garden experience for children and adults. Stops were made at two existing rain garden and shoreline restorations during the morning. Following lunch participants assisted HLWD with planting the rain gardens while learning more about the significance of rain gardens and water quality. Two rain gardens were planted. There were 23 people in attendance.
• Jan Voit got lunches at Subway in Windom and delivered them to tour attendees on August 15, 2013.
• Amanda Schultz and Nick Bancks planted two rain gardens on August 19, 2013.
• Amanda Schultz and Nick Bancks planted one rain garden on August 20, 2013.
• Ross Behrends met with the contractor to discuss project issues and checkout on August 20, 2013.
• Jan Voit drafted a Rain Garden Field Trip attendees’ spreadsheet on August 22, 2013.
• Amanda Schultz and Nick Bancks mulched rain gardens on August 26, 2013.
• Amanda Schultz and Nick Bancks mulched rain gardens on August 27, 2013.
• Nick Bancks conducted rain garden preservation on September 4, 2013.
• Ross Behrends conducted rain garden site checks on September 10, 2013.
• Logan Ahlers and Jacob Post, HLWD Summer Interns conducted rain garden preservation on May 21, May 27, and May 29, 2014.
• Logan Ahlers and Jacob Post conducted rain garden preservation on July 14, July 16, and July 31, 2014.
• Michelle Chapel and Cole Sinnamon, HLWD Summer Interns conducted rain garden preservation on June 10, June 11, June 22, and July 1, 2015. They conducted rain garden species identification on June 15 and June 18, 2015.
• Information related to the Rain Garden Field Trip and rain garden installation can be found in Appendix 3.

Obstacles and Lessons Learned
The loss of the Resource Technician proved to be a big set-back for the project. Implementation that was planned for 2012 did not happen due to reduced staff.
Even though several rain gardens had been installed throughout the HLWD, finding a landscaper willing to complete the projects proved difficult.

When we were ready to get started with construction, Ross Behrends had the interns call in a Gopher 1 request. He was expecting them to do the locate for the entire property, but they only did a locate where the rain garden was to be established. As a result, a natural gas line was broken when the tile line was installed from the downspout to the rain garden.

**Objective 3: Increase community awareness**

**Task A: Organize and host open house**
- On April 20, 2015, time was spent drafting the newsletter, press release, rain garden informational handout, flyer, and letter to landowners. The information was submitted to Katherine Pekarek-Scott, MPCA and was approved the same day.
- Landscaper contact information was compiled on April 21, 2015.
- The flyer promoting the open house was distributed via email on July 1, 2015.
- The newsletter promoting the Rain Garden Open House was drafted on April 20, 2015. It was mailed on July 6, 2015.
- An advertisement for the open house was drafted on May 12, 2015. It was published in the *Fulda Free Press* on July 8, 2015.
- The Rain Garden Open House was held on July 16, 2015. Supplies were purchased that morning. The event began with a picnic meal. Grilling was done by Duane Voit and Nathan Voit. Attendees then took a self-guided tour of the six rain gardens funded by the Fulda Phosphorus Reduction Initiative. Information packets were provided which included a map, description of each site, Plant ID Challenge!, and Rain Gardens 101. There were 30 people in attendance.
- All information related to the open house, newsletter, and promotion can be found in [Appendix 4](#).

**Task B: Newsletter**
- A newsletter was drafted on April 20, 2015. It was mailed to approximately 3,400 residents and legislators on July 6, 2015. It was emailed to 278 agency personnel, legislators, and advisory committee members on July 13, 2015.

**Task C: Promotion**
- An update was given at the HLWD meeting on July 17, 2012. Updates were given at the Nobles County Commissioner meeting on July 3, 2012, Cottonwood County Commissioner meeting on July 10, 2012, and the Murray County Commissioner meeting on July 17, 2012.
- A PowerPoint presentation was created to aid the annual update process. The presentation included an overview of 2012 activities and a short summary of proposed 2013 activities. Updates were given to the Jackson County Commissioners on March 26, 2013, Cottonwood County Commissioners on April 9, 2013, Murray County Commissioners on April 16, 2013, and Nobles County Commissioners on April 23, 2013.
• Jan Voit contacted Julie Buntjer, staff writer for the *Worthington Daily Globe* on June 11, 2013. The purpose for contacting her was to inquire about the possibility of writing a story about the Brown rain garden project. Julie met with Jim and Rona Brown in June 12, 2013. The article was published on June 13, 2013.
• Jan Voit proofread the newspaper article on August 20, 2013.
• The newspaper article was published in the *Tri County News* and *Fulda Free Press* on August 28, 2013.
• Time was spent creating a PowerPoint presentation to aid the annual update process. The presentation includes an overview of 2013 activities. Packets were also developed that included the HLWD Annual Report, HLWD Annual Work Plan and Budget, and HLWD 2013 Accomplishments. The presentation was given to the Jackson County Commissioners on April 22, 2014, Nobles County Commissioners on May 6, 2014, Cottonwood County Commissioners on May 13, 2014, and the Murray County Commissioners on May 20, 2014.
• Time was spent creating a PowerPoint presentation to aid the annual update process. The presentation includes an overview of 2014 activities. Packets were also developed that included the HLWD Annual Report, HLWD Annual Work Plan and Budget, and HLWD 2014 Accomplishments. The presentation was given to the Nobles County Commissioners on April 7, 2015, the Cottonwood County Commissioners on April 21, 2015, the Murray County Commissioners on April 28, 2015, and the Jackson County Commissioners on May 5, 2015.

**Task D: Signs**

• Jan Voit provided the summer interns with information needed to develop the signs for the rain gardens.
• Nick Bancks and Amanda Schultz worked on the rain garden sign design on July 23, 2013.
• Nick Bancks and Amanda Schultz prepared the site for sign installation on August 7, 2013.
• Nick Bancks and Amanda Schultz installed the sign at Seven Mile Park on August 14, 2013. The sign can be found in *Appendix 5*.
• Signs identifying project locations and cooperators were installed in August of 2013. Signs can be found in *Appendix 5*.
• Chrystal Dunker, PEBC contacted Jan Voit on September 5, 2013 to request payment for laminating the poster that was put in the Seven Mile Park sign.

**Task E: Website**

• Margaret Peeters began construction of a web page on the HLWD website for the rain garden grant in 2011.
• Jan Voit added the 2011 Annual Report and Budget to the web page.
• No photos were taken at 4-H Club or classroom presentations.
• Jan Voit added the semi-annual report to the website on July 25, 2012.
• Jan Voit updated the webpage on July 17, 2013.
• Jan Voit updated the webpage on August 27, 2013.
• Jan Voit updated the webpage on May 13, 2015.
• Jan Voit updated the webpage on July 20, 2015.

Obstacles and Lessons Learned

No difficulties were encountered during all the processes undertaken for project promotion.

Objective 4: Administration

Task A: Complete reporting requirements

• The annual report was submitted on December 30, 2011.
• The annual report was approved by MPCA on January 17, 2012.
• Katherine Pekarek-Scott, MPCA; Ross Behrends, Margaret Peeters, and Jan Voit met on March 1, 2012 to discuss the rain garden grant work plan.
• Work began on the semi-annual report in late-June 2012.
• The semi-annual report was approved by MPCA on July 24, 2012.
• Katherine Pekarek-Scott, MPCA; Ross Behrends, and Jan Voit met on September 25, 2012 to discuss work plan requirements.
• Work began on the annual report in early December 2012.
• The Bondin-Belfast and Seward Trail Blazers 4-H Clubs no longer want to participate in the grant and the St. Paul Lutheran School has been unresponsive to requests. Jan Voit made a request to MPCA for a change order to include other organizations in the education and implementation effort. The Fulda City Council, Fulda Heritage Society, and the Fulda Game and Fish agreed to receive education presentations. Their assistance in planting the rain gardens was requested. She also sought the assistance of the PEBC for an education event for children and obtaining their help with planting.
• Jan Voit reviewed the Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) and submitted the document to MPCA on March 5, 2013. The QAPP was approved by MPCA on April 8, 2013.
• The change order to include additional organizations was approved by MPCA on March 26, 2013.
• In order to move funds from one objective to another, a contract amendment was done. The amendment requested the ability to move funds originally allocated for rain garden design to rain garden installation. The inkind budget was also adjusted to accurately reflect the time spent on the project. Katherine Pekarek-Scott, MPCA, submitted the amendment request to the contracting division in St. Paul on April 9, 2013. The amendment was also submitted to the Environmental Protection Agency for review and approval.
• The annual report was approved by MPCA on January 8, 2013.
• Jan Voit submitted the semi-annual report on July 10, 2013.
• Objective 4. Task A. Jan Voit met with Katherine Pekarek-Scott, MPCA about the grant work plan on July 22, 2013
• Jan Voit submitted the semi-annual report on July 1, 2014. The report was approved on July 30, 2014.
• Jan Voit submitted the annual report on December 1, 2014. The report was approved on December 9, 2014.
• Katherine Pekarek-Scott, MPCA; Amanda Schultz and Jan Voit, HLWD reviewed the grant work plan on March 31, 2015.

Obstacles and Lessons Learned
There were no problems with reporting procedures during the grant period. The change order and amendment processes went well.
Grant Results

7. Measurements

Successful implementation of a grant program requires an extensive effort in recordkeeping. Section 2 summarized the activities completed during the grant period. The methods of measured results and success are varied and dependent upon the tasks. The measurements are described below by objective and task as presented in the work plan.

Objective 1: Classroom teaching

- Classroom presentations were given to the Master Gardeners, Bondin-Belfast 4-H Club, and St. Paul’s Lutheran School students and teachers with pre and post-tests given to students.
- Presentations regarding pollution prevention and rain gardens were given to the Fulda Game and Fish, Fulda Heritage Society, Fulda City Council, Slayton Kiwanis Club, and Fulda High School students.
- These presentations reached project reached 160 people.
- When tests were given, there was an average 23% increase in rain garden knowledge.
- Information regarding Objective 1 can be found in Appendix 1.

Objective 2: Rain garden demonstration sites

- Brochures were distributed to 176 Fulda residents over the course of December 1, 6, and 8, 2011.
- Six landowners were interested in receiving rain gardens.
- Nick Bancks and Amanda Schultz were interns in the summer of 2013. Included in their job duties were design, development, and installation of rain gardens. Neither of them had any experience with rain gardens. They referenced The Blue Thumb Guide to Raingardens and the Rain Gardens: A how to manual for homeowners to determine rain garden sizes. They used Smart Draw and Google Earth to create a blueprint of the gardens. These resources were beneficial for their successful installation of five rain gardens.
- Prairie Moon Nursery and Prairie Nursery catalogs and the Minnesota Wildflowers were used to compile a list of native grasses, sedges, forbs, and shrubs suitable for southwest Minnesota.
- The Brown rain garden was installed on June 28, 2012.
- The Tomford and Johnson rain gardens were installed on August 15, 2013.
- The Stainer and Anderson rain gardens were installed on August 19, 2015.
- The Johnson rain garden was completed on August 20, 2013.
- The questionnaire was mailed to landowners on May 13, 2015. The responses were compiled on June 2, 2015. The results show that the landowners understand the purpose of a rain garden. Their knowledge about rain gardens increased during this project. Participants were satisfied with the project installation process and their
rain gardens. The design could be improved to increase aesthetics. From the survey, the HLWD learned that providing follow-up information as promised is important. Because weeding and mulching is a lot of work, it is good to know that having our interns return each year is necessary. The results can be found in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Rain Garden Questionnaire Results

**A rain garden is?**

1. a garden that needs a lot of water to grow the native plants in it
2. a garden that grows water instead of plants
3. a planted depression that allows the filtration of rainwater runoff

**Plants in rain gardens are selected based on?**

1. the same type of plants the neighbors have growing in their yard
2. plants that were here before the area was settled
3. anything that looks good
What are good way(s) to stop water pollution from entering lakes, rivers, and streams?

- help get the runoff to the water bodies quicker
- build a wall around all water bodies, that way, no more water can get it
- maintain a rain garden to stop runoff after rain storms

How much did you know about rain gardens before this project?

- very little
- little
- some
- much
- very much
How much do you know about rain gardens after this project?

To what degree were you satisfied with the information you received regarding this project?
What could have been done to make this experience more beneficial?
installation process of the depression could have been more effective adding aesthetic appeal
Don't know much about it
More information about the plant choices. I asked for a simple hand drawn map of the rain garden so I knew what to look for in the spring when the plants came back - never received it.
A planting diagram - tall in back - shorter in front, rather than "3 here - 3 there"
Please provide any other comments, questions, or concerns.

I bought the house (Lersen). It was there. If it is beneficial, I'm OK with it.

We were very happy with the building of the garden. The persons helping measure for the garden, helping to plant, and followed up on progress of the garden. We are happy with the progress of the plants, and the blooms until frost. They are coming up thicker this year!

I was not impressed with Nelson Landscaping. They hit our gas line when digging, offered edging for the rain garden after I had already bought edge bricks. The staff from HLWD were pleasant and helpful!

Looks beautiful, but, it is a lot of work keeping weeds out, mulching, etc.

Objective 3: Increase community awareness

- The sign identifying the types of plants established at each of the sites was installed at Seven Mile Park on August 14, 2013.
- Signs identifying project locations and cooperators were installed in August of 2013.
- Updates were given to the commissioners in Nobles, Jackson, Murray, and Cottonwood Counties in 2012, 2013, 2014, and 2015.
- The flyer promoting the open house was distributed via email on July 1, 2015.
- The newsletter was distributed on July 6, 2015. The newsletter was distributed to approximately 3,678 watershed residents, agency personnel, and legislators.
- The newspaper article and advertisement were published in the *Fulda Free Press* on July 8, 2015.
- The open house was held on July 16, 2015. There were 30 people in attendance.
- The HLWD website contains a webpage dedicated to the Fulda Phosphorus Reduction Initiative. The page contains the project goals and links to articles and information regarding the project.

Objective 4: Administration

- Semi-annual and annual reports were submitted and approved as described in Section 4 above. The reports were uploaded to the web page.

8. Products

There have been several products produced through this grant. Below is a list of the products created and the appendices in which the products are located.

8.1. Appendix 1 – Classroom Teaching

- 01 Rain Gardens brochure
- 02 Rain Gardens 101 fact sheet
- 03 Master Gardeners Presentation – 2012
- 04 4-H Club Presentation – 2012
- 05 St. Paul’s Lutheran School Presentation – 2012
- 06 Rain Garden Quiz
• 07 Bondin-Belfast 4-H Club Test Results
• 08 St. Paul’s Lutheran School Test Results
• 09 Fulda Game and Fish, Heritage Society, and City Council Presentation – 2013
• 10 PEBC Fulda HS RG Tour

8.2. Appendix 2 – Rain Garden Design and Development
• 01 Letter to willing landowners
• 02 Landowner agreement
• 03 Project Design-Dale and Liz
• 04 Project Design-Jack and Carol
• 05 Project Design-Rona
• 06 Forbes Plant Info
• 07 Full Sun Forbes
• 08 Full Sun List of Shrubs-Grasses-Ferns-Rushes-Sedges
• 09 Part Shade Forbes
• 10 Partial Sun List of Shrubs-Grasses-Ferns-Rushes-Sedges
• 11 Plant Inventory
• 12 Homeowner Plant Selection
• 13 Rain Garden Options
• 14 Rain Garden Inventory and ID
• 15 Anderson Design
• 16 Lursen Design
• 17 Lursen300
• 18 Lursen373
• 19 Lursen Comparison
• 20 Stainer Design
• 21 Tomford Design
• 22 Anderson Before
• 23 Anderson Before
• 24 Infiltration Test
• 25 Infiltration
• 26 Johnson before
• 27 Johnson before
• 28 Lursen before
• 29 Stainer before
• 30 Tomford before
• 31 Tomford before
• 32 Rain Garden Questionnaire
• 33 Letter to landowners – questionnaire and rain garden open house reminder

8.3. Appendix 3 – Rain Garden Field Trip
• 01 Field Trip Flyer
• 02 Info for planting
• 03 Anderson before
• 04 Anderson after
• 05 Johnson before
• 06 Johnson after
• 07 Lursen before
• 08 Lursen during
• 09 Lursen after
• 10 Stainer before
• 11 Stainer during
• 12 Stainer after
• 13 Tomford before
• 14 Tomford after
• 15 Planting rain garden
• 16 Planting rain garden 2
• 17 Rain Garden Field Trip Stop 1
• 18 Rain Garden Field Trip Stop 2
• 19 Rain Garden Field Trip Attendees
• 20 HLWD rain gardens – *Tri County News*
• 21 More rain gardens planted in Fulda – *Fulda Free Press*
• 22 Rain Garden Planting

8.4. Appendix 4 – Rain Garden Open House
• 01 Letter to landowners – rain garden open house
• 02 July 2015 newsletter
• 03 Flyer
• 04 Advertisement – Rain Garden Open House
• 05 Fulda Phosphorus Reduction Initiative Newspaper Article 2015
• 06 Rain Gardens 101 Info – 2015
• 07 Landscapers
• 08 Plant ID Challenge!
• 09 Tour map
• 10 Self-Guided Tour Details
• 11 Rain Garden Open House Summary

8.5. Appendix 5 – Signs
• 01 Seven Mile Park Sign
• 02 Poster
• 03 Lende Signs Design
• 04 Anderson Sign
• 05 Johnson Sign
• 06 Lursen Sign
9. Public Outreach and Education

HLWD staff provided information to landowners, agency personnel, and contractors through the use of one-on-one conversations, newsletter, newspaper articles, the HLWD website, and presentations at meetings. The following section summarizes the education efforts undertaken.

In an effort to inform landowners about the Fulda Phosphorus Reduction Initiative, a letter was drafted and a rain garden brochure was created in late 2011. HLWD staff went door-to-door and delivered the information. Five sites were secured.

Ross Behrends worked with Jim and Rona Brown to develop a shoreline restoration project funded by a DNR Shoreland Grant. During the process, discussion was held regarding installing a rain garden. The couple agreed that a rain garden would be a great addition to their water quality improvement efforts. The rain garden was installed in June of 2012.

Contact was made with teachers at St. Paul’s Lutheran School and leaders of the Bondin-Belfast and Seward Trailblazers 4-H Clubs. Contact was also made with the Master Gardeners in Murray County. With the loss of Alyson Buschena, the Seward Trailblazers did not want to participate. Presentations were given to the Master Gardeners, St. Paul’s Lutheran School students, and Bondin-Belfast 4-H Club members in 2012.

Pre- and post-tests were given to the students and club members. The results showed an overall increase in knowledge after the presentations.

The Bondin-Belfast 4-H Club and St. Paul’s Lutheran School no longer wanted to participate in 2013. A request was made to MPCA to add additional audiences for the education effort. Presentations about water pollution and rain gardens were given to Fulda Game and Fish, Fulda Heritage Society, and Fulda City Council in 2013.

In April of 2013, plans were formulated for an education experience in partnership with the PEBC. The plans included rain garden education and rain garden planting. A news release and flyer were created and distributed.

The Rain Garden Field Trip was held on August 15, 2013. The field trip provided an educational and hands-on rain garden experience for children and adults. Stops were made at two existing rain gardens and shoreline restorations during the morning. Following lunch participants assisted HLWD with planting two rain gardens while learning more about the significance of rain gardens and water quality. There were 23 people in attendance.

To increase public awareness, a sign identifying the types of plants established at each of the sites was installed at Seven Mile Park. Signs identifying the project locations and cooperators were installed at each of the six rain gardens.

The Tri County News and Fulda Free Press each ran articles regarding the Rain Garden Field Trip. The main coverage for the Tri County News is Jackson County and Nobles County. Subscriptions
total 575, with about 150 store copies available for purchase at various locations in the immediate area. The main coverage area for the *Fulda Free Press* is Murray County and Nobles County. Subscriptions total 800, with about 200 store copies available for purchase at various locations in the immediate area.

Another means of education were the designs and plant lists created and shared with the landowners that committed to having rain gardens installed. These documents were used to teach residents about the correct plants to use in their particular garden.

The July 2015 newsletter highlighted the grant and open house. The newsletter was sent to 3,400 watershed residents, agency personnel, and legislators. It was distributed via email to another 278 individuals.

Landowners that received rain gardens were asked to complete a questionnaire. The results are included in Section 7 of this report.

Advertising was employed to reach watershed residents. An advertisement for the Rain Garden Open House was published in the *Fulda Free Press*. The Rain Garden Open House was held on July 16, 2015. There were 30 people in attendance.

A webpage devoted to the grant was developed for the HLWD website.

Presentations that included information regarding the Fulda Phosphorus Reduction Initiative were given at HLWD and county board meetings throughout the grant period.

Distribution of the brochures to determine interest in rain garden installation was labor intensive. This worked well at the time. However, staffing cuts would no longer allow for this type of individual communication.

Presentations to students, Master Gardeners, club members, and community representatives, as well as the Rain Garden Field Trip, provided great platforms for education. Good questions were asked and the discussion that occurred seemed beneficial for attendees.

The Rain Garden Field Trip provided a wonderful opportunity for children and adults to receive hands-on training about rain gardens and the installation process. Many positive comments were received about the event. Partnering with the PEBC and use of the ecology bus was also beneficial for making this a positive experience for all participants.

No first-hand information was gathered regarding the sign installed at Seven Mile Park or at each rain garden site. Because of this, it is not possible to determine if they were cost-effective education means.

The rain garden questionnaire proved to be a valuable tool. The questionnaire provided the landowners with the opportunity to answer specific questions and voice their opinions regarding the entire process. Overall, the rain garden process was enjoyed by all.

10. **Long-term Results**

While new partnerships were not established with non-profit groups or agency personnel, the working relationship with those entities continued. New partnerships were formed with the
landowners receiving rain gardens. Survey results show that overall the landowners were satisfied with the project and its outcomes.

The final report for the Fulda Phosphorus Reduction Initiative will be submitted to agency personnel, advisory committee members, and legislators. It will also be posted on the HLWD website. The intent is to provide information that shows that education conducted through this grant resulted in presentations reaching 160 people, a rain garden open house that hosted 30 attendees, and the successful installation of six rain gardens.

The HLWD’s general operating funds are limited and minimal in comparison to what is needed for education and implementation projects. In order to make the best use of general operating funds, the HLWD will continue to put forth extensive efforts to obtain outside funding. Grants and general operating levy funds help to provide opportunities for education and implementation as described in the HLWD WMP. As far as the HLWD is aware, no additional rain gardens were installed within the City of Fulda as a result of this education effort. While no grant funds are being sought, HLWD general levy funds can be expended to install rain gardens on a case-by-case basis.

11. Final Expenditures

Table 1 contains a summary of the cash and inkind expenditures that were made to assist in these efforts during the Heron Lake Sediment Reduction Demonstration Project grant period.
Table 1. Final Expenditures

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<td>-$924.09</td>
<td>-$924.09</td>
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