



7-Mile Creek Watershed Partnership *Fall 2016 Report*

Background & Overview

In September, 65 members of the 7 Mile Creek Watershed community came together to talk about what we want for the future of our watershed. In just a couple hours the contributions of those 65 people led to an ambitious strategic plan that will guide the watershed's work for many years to come.

Since then, we have:

- Formed a Watershed "Core Team" of leaders from different parts of the watershed community. These leaders will help guide work based on the strategic plan, as well as connect and communicate back to the broader community.
- Met once as a Core Team to begin taking action, based on the community's plan (see below for ways to get involved!)

Next Steps:

- The Core Team will meet quarterly to update each other and will send an update to the broader community (like this one!) to increase awareness, alert folks of action opportunities, and increase understanding across parts of our community.
- Promote community actions in key areas. See below for specific opportunities about strip tillage, cover crops, nitrogen SMART trainings, a new photography grant, and a request for input regarding conservation assistance

Key Identified Actions:

The 7-Mile Creek Watershed Partnership Core Team, which consists of farmers, agency representatives, citizens, non-profit leaders, and researchers, has identified 17 actions from the community-created strategic plan that are either already in progress or that are priorities to begin over the course of the next year.

Goal: Improve level of conservation customer service to farmers

Action: Communicate the level of difficulty involved in accessing services to decision makers

Progress: Watershed staff are collecting illustrative stories about difficulty working with conservation programs and will use these stories to support improved customer service and access to services.

Take Action: We need your story to make a difference! [Email us](#) your story, or let us know that you'd like to be interviewed!



Goal: Increase communication between key stakeholders in the 7-Mile Creek Watershed

Action: Quarterly gathering of a "core team" that represents the differing stakeholders in the 7-Mile Creek Watershed

Progress: A core team has been developed with comprehensive representation

Take Action: Look at the list of Core Team members (below) and connect with folks you know, or provide feedback or updates through this

Goal: Apply farming (and other land management) practices that have a positive impact on the environment



1) *Action: Increase the acreage that is strip tilled by at least 25% per year (25% for year 1, and 25% for year 2, etc.)*

Progress: 600 new acres are under contract to be strip tilled beginning in 2017!

Take Action: The Watershed Partnership offers a \$15-30/acre incentive payment, and would like to work with local Co-ops to offer custom application. [Contact us](#) if you'd like to give it a try or would be interested in custom application!

2) *Action:* Offer support for farmers to attend Nitrogen SMART Trainings

Progress: Core Team member Jeremy Geske invited a group of 7MC farmers to a training in New Ulm December 14. Jeremy is working organizers to bring one of these training to 7MC next year.

Take Action:

1) Attend a Nitrogen SMART training is on December 22 in Faribault ([link](#)).

2) If you attend a training, let us know so that we can let other folks know how actively 7MC farmers are working to improve N management

3) Have an idea about improving your N management? The Watershed Partnership offers a \$5-20/acre incentive for practices like split application, rate reduction, tissue testing, or any other practices you hear about at an N SMART training.

[Click Here for the full Strategic Plan](#)

Highlights:

Career Development Grant from Prairie Lakes Regional Art Center.

Photographer Kay Herbst Helms, Mankato, received a Career Development Grant from the Prairie Lakes Regional Art Center to print, mat and frame new photographs with environmental and water-related themes. She has focused much of her photography over the past year on people and projects in the 7 Mile Creek Watershed, including some of the photos in the video highlighted below. She will have an exhibit at a local art center in 2017.

Take action: We need storytellers like Kay to tell the world about the exciting, proactive things that are happening in the 7 Mile Creek Watershed. Kay wants your ideas, suggestions, people, places, etc. for positive stories and photographs related to 7 Mile Creek actions. She wants her work to highlight and publicize the work that the 7 Mile Creek Watershed Partnership is doing, and of course, get some really good photographs! [Click Here](#) to contact submit ideas for stories/photographs.

Cover Crops

This past fall, the **Mogensen farm** planted cover crops to reduce erosion and improve soil fertility— check out this video that we made about aerial seeding.

(Click the link below for the video!)

Take Action: The 7MC Watershed Partnership offers \$30-65/acre incentives for cover crops! [Contact us](#) to give it a try! We can also connect you with the specialized equipment required!



Video

Core Team

The 7-Mile Creek Watershed Partnership Core Team consists of the following members:

1. [David Newell](#) (convener)
2. [Karen Galles](#) – Watershed Coordinator, Great River Greening
3. [Amy Linnerooth](#) – Nicollet County
4. [Doug Wenner](#) - Farmer
5. [Pat Baskefield](#) - MPCA
6. [Chuck Peters](#) – Farmer
7. [Kay Herbst Helms](#) – Community Member
8. [Linda Pell](#) – Community Member
9. [Eric Miller](#) – SWCD
10. [Laura Triplett](#) – Gustavus Faculty (Geology)
11. [Jeremy Geske](#) - Minnesota Agricultural Water Resource Center



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