



Rice Soil and Water Conservation District

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Drainage Ditch Inspector's Report for 2015

The following is a report on the activities of the public ditch systems in Rice County. Since May of 2008, Rice SWCD has contracted with Rice County to perform the duties of ditch inspection.

With support from the drainage authority, we have been very active at bringing all systems into good repair. We have made great progress, and are getting close to this goal.

Due to the foresight of the drainage authority, several systems have now gone through the Redetermination of Benefits process. Last year, the state of Minnesota added a requirement for all public ditches to go through the process. We feel confident that with the systems already done, we will be able to achieve this goal on time.

Brush control: Trees and brush pose significant problems for ditch systems. Trees are an obstacle to cleanouts, provide habitat for beavers to construct dams in the ditch, and shade the ground beneath them, often leading to bare soils and increased potential for erosion and sediment accumulation. In addition, tree roots near subsurface drainage lines often find their way into the lines, plugging them and causing drainage problems. To combat this problem, routine mowing or spraying is necessary to prevent the trees and brush from growing along the ditch. Rice County Ditch Program owns a Polaris Ranger with a sprayer, and I have been actively spraying the ditch systems annually. With the new requirement of establishing buffer strips, this job will become easier, as access along the ditch opens up.

Below are specific activities that took place on drainage systems. In addition to the work listed, most systems also require regular communication with landowners on various concerns they have about their ditch.

Work done to specific systems

CD 4: Spraying, inspected system for repair needs.

CD 6: No activity

JD 6: Issued one buffer violation letter-case resolved, cleaned 10530 feet of the ditch by Petricka Excavating, sprayed for brush.

CD 7: Inspected and sprayed for brush control. Hired Ferdie Wilkerson to clear vegetation to facilitate surveying for repair assessment.

CD 9: Cleaned the upper end of Branch B, and sprayed for brush control. Rud Construction was contractor.

CD 11A: Cleaned the ditch from State Hwy. 21 to the south.

CD 12: Cleaned the lower end from Jenkins Ave. to the east end of the ditch by Petricka Excavating. Spot sprayed. Sought bids for repair of lower end of system from Jenkins to Hwy 23.

CD 13A: Sprayed for brush control.

CD 14: Repaired Spur 1 and cleaned it. Installed a tile main to intercept the low flows and stabilize the last 600 feet of Spur 1. Tree removal was completed in this area as well. Contractor was Barnett Brothers.

CD 15A: Spot sprayed. Cleaned out part of open ditch and cleared tile outlet on county tile line. Dahle Enterprises.

CD 16: Inspected and spot sprayed.

CD 17: Used Underground Technologies to camera inspect lower end of tile system. Assisted with the redetermination of benefits.

CD 19: No activity.

CD 20: Sprayed for brush control. Marked areas requiring buffer strips.

CD 22: Sprayed for brush control. Sought bids on petition for repair. Work to be completed in 2016.

CD 23: Sprayed for brush control.

CD25: Sprayed for brush control. Responded to concerns of blockages in ditch.

CD 26: Sprayed for brush control.

CD 29: No activity.

CD 30: Sprayed for brush control. Hired Rud Construction to remove trees and clean lower end of ditch.

CD 31: Spot sprayed for brush control. Looked into culvert replacements.

CD 32: Cleaned a stretch of ditch near Falls Trail. Spot sprayed.

CD 33: Sprayed for brush control. Replaced 40 feet of tile main clogged with roots. Seeded some buffer strip areas.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven R. Pahs
District Manager, Rice SWCD