



*Conservation Partners: Brian Smetana - Walworth County Land Use & Resource Management Department, (L) Greg Igl - NRCS District Conservationist and Maggie Zoellner - Program Manager KMLT.*

## Watershed Improvement Network (WIN)

The Kettle Moraine Land Trust (KMLT) has a long record of forming valuable partnerships to protect and improve natural resources in Walworth County, Wisconsin. One of these partnerships is the newly formed Watershed Improvement Network (WIN) Partners such as KMLT have a crucial role in encouraging and supporting producer participation.

Addressing resource concerns are considered a priority for the Initiative which include water quality, soil health and fish and wildlife habitat.

## Family Farm helps to improve water quality in the Delavan Lake Watershed

The Kettle Moraine Land Trust (KMLT) recognized the importance of working with both the urban and farming community to tackle water quality challenges affecting Delavan Lake in Walworth County. To improve the quality of water leaving agricultural lands in the Delavan Lake watershed, KMLT asked the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to become a partner of the Delavan Lake WIN (Watershed Initiative Network). NRCS agreed and through the Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative (MRBI) KMLT was able to request and receive funds to help local farmers implement conservation practices that improve the quality of water draining to the Mississippi River and the Gulf of Mexico.



*Charles Pearce of C&C Farms, LLC, Delavan Lake  
 Photo: Jeehye Lee, NRCS*

## Conservation Stewards

Many farmers realize the advantage of protecting water quality and Charles Pearce of C & C Farms LLC is one of them. Charles has lived and worked on his family farm south of Delavan Lake for decades. He and his son Charlie now farm together and look for ways to improve the health of the lands they own. The Pearces place fields that are prone to erosion in hay to keep soils from washing down hill. Because of additional funding available in the Delavan Lake Watershed through MRBI and the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Pearce planted a cover crop on several of his fields to help reduce soil erosion. "If we get a hard rain in the spring the soil stays where it is," says Pearce. After the cover crop is removed, corn or soybeans are planted directly in the ground without tilling the soil. The roots of the cover crop continue to hold on to the soil, and residue left behind from harvesting helps hold soil in its place as well.

*"I remember when everyone used to plow everything. Now you don't have dirty water like you used to, you don't have all the dust in the air."*

*Charles Pearce, Delavan Lake Watershed*

# Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative (MRBI)

The goal of MRBI is to improve the health of the Mississippi River Basin. This is accomplished by helping producers implement voluntarily conservation practices that avoid, control and trap nutrient runoff, restore or enhance wildlife habit and maintain agricultural productivity.

Conservation Practices include:

- Streamside Filter Strips
- Grassed Waterways
- Residue Management - No Till
- Nutrient Management Plans
- Cover Crops
- Composting Facility
- Waste Storage Facility
- Solid/Liquid Waste Separation Facility
- Waste Treatment
- Other additional practices

## Conservation System Approach

This approach implements multiple practices and management techniques that work together to address water quality nutrient issues at the edge of farm fields.