

# A Record Flood Demonstrates the Power of Partnership

## March 2014 Snapshots

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**A bridge pier at the "Old Highway 61" in Kellogg. Located just downstream of the stabilization project this picture was taken very close to the river crest.**

With more than 10 governmental organizations, 10 land owners and a handful of small businesses were involved; basic communication and coordination spearheaded by the SWCD staff was no small task. Working on projects directly related to natural disasters are not common, and there isn't always a Disaster Recovery and Assistance Program or staff with experience in natural disasters to rely on. While there were certainly difficulties and challenges, the SWCD pressed on and was able to partner with multiple organizations and leverage funds to begin stabilizing the river bank.

WHKS engineering was brought in to develop a feasibility study and plans to help stabilize the bank starting at the downstream side of the Hwy 61



**Construction of Phase 2 which worked upstream and connected to the downstream end of Phase 1.**

On September 24 and 25, 2010 the Zumbro River was making history. At the Zumbro Falls USGU gauge station, the river hit a crest of almost 36 feet – five feet above the historical record and nearly ten feet above Major Flood Stage. The flood's effect on the river impacted more than just the record books.

As the river raged, more than 1500 feet of stream bank began to fail just downstream from the Highway 61 Bridge in Kellogg, Minn. Much of that bank was in excess of 50 feet high and at risk were not just homes but a major Minnesota highway and a railroad bridge. The Wabasha County SWCD jumped into action in the days and weeks following the flood event.



**This image shows part of the failing stream bank. Mature trees gave way and you can see homes just behind the tree line above the bank.**

Bridge. Initial funding was only allocated to complete between 800 and 900 feet of stabilization. Funding was eventually secured to extend the project beyond the homes that were immediately at risk to the majority of the river bend. This second component was vital, ensuring that the project was built correctly and would be a long-lasting and functional effort.

The second phase of this project was finally finished in November of 2013. A project of this magnitude rarely goes off without a hitch. Insufficient funds to complete all project phases, a steep learning curve, government shutdown and no clear "cause of the problem" were just a few of the hurdles the SWCD eventually overcame.

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This project is a shining example of communication, cooperation and perseverance on every level. Federal, state, county, city and private entities all pulled together over three plus years of the project work. It wasn't always easy and it wasn't always pretty, but it ended a **SUCCESS!**

The next time you find yourself taking a Sunday drive along beautiful Highway 61 in Kellogg, take a look at the landscape near the Zumbro River bridge. That's not just a pile of rocks you'll see; it represents more than just a stream bank stabilization. That's an example of Partnership and Collaboration calmly doing their job

with little headlines, little publicity and little acknowledgement. That "pile of rocks" is a shining example of the hard work and dedication the hallmark of so many such projects throughout the state that can only be accomplished with our conservation partners leading the way.



**All phases of construction were completed in November of 2013, just before the first snowfall of the year.**