

Remsen Municipal Utilities
08 W. 2nd St.
Box 510
Remsen, Iowa 51050

March 3, 2011

Watershed Improvement Review Board
Mr. Jerry Neppel
502 E. 9th St.
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

RE: Project #8025-015 Remsen Source Water Protection Project

Dear Mr. Neppel and the W.I.R.B. members:

Attached please find the FINAL report for the above referenced project.

I wish to thank Mr. Neppel for all his assistance guiding me through this project and to the W.I.R.B. members who saw the benefits of this project for the citizens of Remsen. Without your assistance, we could not have accomplished this task to reduce the nitrate contaminants entering into Remsen's water supply.

If there are any further questions or reviews in the future, I would be glad to provide any data needed.

Sincerely,

Steven J. Pick
Steven J. Pick
Operations Director
Remsen Municipal Utilities

Remsen Source Water Protection Project

AGREEMENT NO. 8025-015

**BETWEEN THE
IOWA WATERSHED IMPROVEMENT REVIEW BOARD
AND THE
CITY OF REMSEN**

FINAL REPORT

March 3, 2011

This final report to the Iowa Watershed Improvement Review Board by the City of Remsen Utilities consists of accomplishments made by the Remsen Utilities as per this agreement.

The City of Remsen Utilities did in fact purchase approximately 27 acres of land lying upstream of the city's water well field. The land was purchased from Mr. Larry Rodesch and Mr. Rich Harpenau for the purpose of removing nitrates from Remsen's water source and establishing native prairie grasses to assist in this removal.

The Remsen Utilities, along with the assistance of the Iowa D.N.R., Pheasants Forever and city crew members have contributed nearly \$36,000.00, to date, in financial aid and labor for the conversion of this crop land to native prairie. There is a deep commitment to continue this project for the ultimate goal of providing safe drinking water for the citizens of Remsen.

Water monitoring will continue beyond the scope of this grant to chart nitrate levels in the raw water coming from all shallow wells providing water to the city's water treatment plant. This monitoring may go from a monthly to quarterly or semi-annual after a few years but will continue in the future. The Utility will be anxious to chart the water quality improvements as years pass to confirm that the proper steps were taken, at the least expense, to continue providing safe drinking water.

At the beginning of this program, 2007, raw water samples from well #8, the well nearest to this site, showed nitrate levels to be as high as 27 ppm. This level has been decreasing and hovering around 18 ppm for 2010. Well #3, next in line from the site, tested 15 ppm in 2007 and is around 8 ppm in 2010. Other wells fluctuate but still show a decrease in overall nitrate levels. This water mixed with the two deep wells, blended and treated has shown a decrease in the distribution system levels which was the primary goal.

A burn plan has been developed and will begin this spring with the assistance of the Plymouth County Conservation Dept., Remsen Fire Dept., Pheasants Forever volunteers and members of the city and utility crews. This plan provides for annual burns for portions of these sites to gain the maximum cover for wildlife and beauty of natural

prairie grassland. We have seen nature welcome this site with abundant sightings of pheasants, geese, ducks and deer. Mowed trails were laid out this past fall and used by numbers of people. The school systems and the Plymouth Co. Naturalist were encouraged to utilize this area for field trips, presentations and studies for various classes.

Citizens of Remsen have welcomed this project and continue to show support. They appreciate the fore site the utilities have taken to assure the safe drinking water for residents long into the future. They have volunteered to help in the area whenever needed.

The following represents a simplified budget synopsis of this project to date:

<u>Budget Item</u>	<u>Bud.Amt.</u>	<u>Expended</u>	<u>Balance</u>
Land Acqu-RodeschWIRB	120,000	120,000	0.00
Land Acqu-Harpenau -WIRB	59,440	59,440	0.00
Native grass maint.-Utility	600	6,648	-6,048
Project Adm. – Utility	2,000	8,343	-6,343
Legal Fees – Utility	1,000	1,157	-157
Supplies/Equip.-Utility	500	4,210	-3,710
Water Sampling/Analy.-DNR	1,260	1,680	-420
Data Analy./Mgt.-DNR	200	500	-300
Native Grass Planting-P.F.	15,000	13,406	1,594

The City has experienced higher than estimated out-of-pocket expenses for the maintenance, administration, equipment and supplies but still feel this was well worth it. We have adjusted other budget items to absorb these expenses and have taken the future maintenance into account with our current and projected budget. The Iowa DNR has also experienced higher than budget items and are committed to staying with us throughout this project.

Some challenges to overcome and resolve were convincing the property owners of the overall benefits of purchasing their farmable land, which was producing a crop at the time when grain prices were at their high, to convert to a native grassland and taken out of production. Convincing them that the positive reflection on them cooperating for the benefit of the community would be looked highly on by everyone.

I would suggest that whenever land needs to be purchased for the benefit of water quality, property owners be approached in a non-aggressive manner to openly discuss the overall benefits. Voluntary cooperation is looked highly upon by the public both by the property owner and the State. The State must also realize that anytime they want to “take” property for their use, even though it is for the betterment of the area, it puts a bad taste in peoples mouths. They need to see cooperation and assistance, like a partner, in a project. I believe this will result in far better relations between the public and the State.

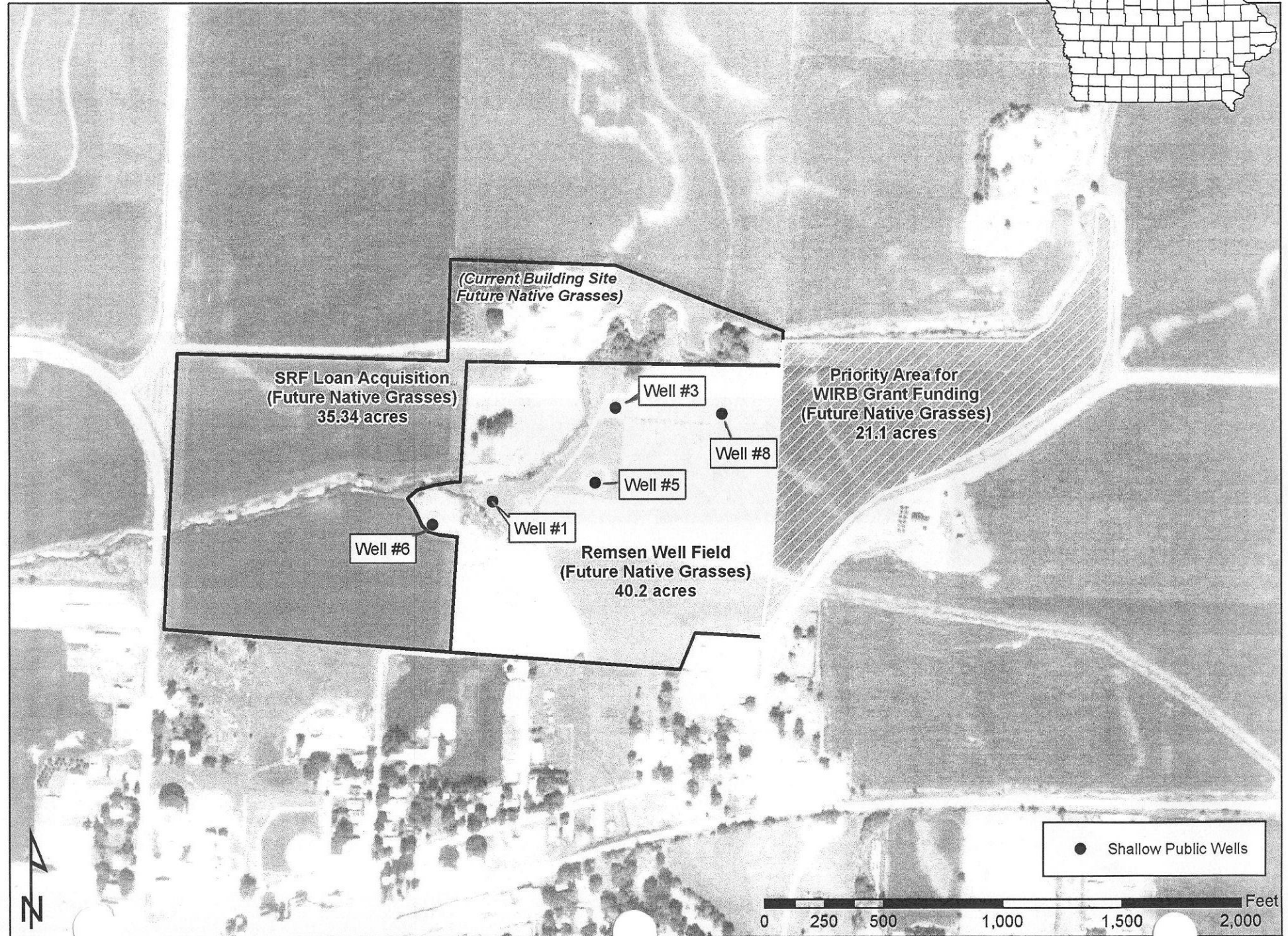
Saying this, I have experienced the utmost cooperation from State agencies such as various departments of the Iowa D.N.R., the Iowa R.C.&D., representative of the W.I.R.B. staff, the Plymouth County U.S.D.A., Plymouth County Conservation Dept., Pheasants Forever and many others whom I may have missed. This has truly been a cooperative and helpful project with people going beyond to see this project through for the benefits of quality water.

With sincere appreciation and gratitude.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven J. Pick
Operations Director
Remsen Municipal Utilities

Remsen Sourcewater Protection Project



Remsen, IA

Well #8 (Shallow)1030361

