FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 7, 2023

Pennington County’s Ditch 96 Receives 2023 County Conservation Award

(St. Paul, MN)— The Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) and the Board of Water & Soil Resources (BWSR) selected Pennington County’s Ditch 96 to receive the 2023 AMC-BWSR County Conservation Award. The award was presented by 2023 AMC President and Ramsey County Commissioner Mary Jo McGuire and BWSR Executive Director John Jaschke.

Partnerships between Pennington County, Pennington SWCD, Red Lake County SWCD, and the Red Lake Watershed District (RLWD) led to the successful implementation of the CD96 outlet project. Ongoing slope stability issues near the outlet contributed to drainage and water quality issues impacting the Red Lake River. Through the One Watershed, One Plan process, the CD96 management area was identified as a priority area for project implementation with sediment reduction the primary focus for improving water quality. Downstream of the ditch outlet, the Red Lake River is impaired for Total Suspended Solids (TSS) and stabilizing 3,500 feet of the ditch bank will result in improved water quality, recreation, and fish habitat. HDR Inc. provided engineering services which included a geotechnical analysis indicating groundwater seepage and weak soil contributing to slope failures. The geotechnical analysis was key to project design and confirmed that flattening the slope alone would not be a sufficient solution due to groundwater interference. The project incorporated a riprap toe filter that involved excavating the toe of the slope and placing riprap with a two stage, sand and gravel filter behind it to address groundwater seepage and weak soil.

AMC is a voluntary statewide organization that assists the state’s 87 counties in providing effective county governance to the people of Minnesota. It is the mission of the Association to assist in the provision of effective county governance for the people of Minnesota. The association works closely with the legislative and administrative branches of government in seeing that legislation and policies favorable to counties are enacted. In addition, the Association provides educational programs, training, research and communications for county officials.

BWSR is the state soil and water conservation agency, and it administers programs that prevent sediment and nutrients from entering our lakes, rivers, and streams; enhance fish and wildlife habitat; and protect wetlands. The 20-member board consists of representatives of local and state government agencies and citizens.

###

Caption: Dakota County representatives accepted the 2023 County Conservation Award from BWSR Executive Director John Jaschke and 2023 AMC President Mary Jo McGuire, Ramsey County Commissioner.