

2014 Freeborn County Outstanding Conservationists honored. . .

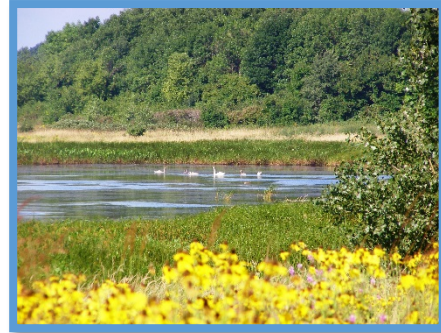
Jim and Linda Butler were chosen as our outstanding conservationists for 2014. They were honored at the MN Association of Conservation Districts annual convention in Bloomington on December 9, 2014. They currently live in Cass Lake since retiring in 2004. Prior to that they ran a corn and hog operation in Newry Township by Maple Island. Some of the farm has been in the family since Jim's grandfather farmed in the early 1900's. They currently have 120 acres of RIM/WRP Wetland Restoration, 22 acres of RIM Buffer, 35 acres of CRP prairie restoration, 9 acres of CRP tree planting, a grassed waterway, and two grade stabilization structures. The Butlers



Jim and Linda Butler on their ReInvest in Minnesota (RIM) easement

realized that some of their land was more suited for habitat and that buffers are valuable to protect our surface waters.

A pair of trumpeter swans has been returning to Butler's wetland restoration for years to raise their chicks, called cygnets. Their recent native planting turned out great and was in full bloom at the time of our visit in August. Their involvement in conservation inspired a daughter to pursue a career in wildlife biology. Jim and Linda hope that conservation programs remain available to land owners so that it is economically viable to place land into conservation easements.



Trumpeter Swans have found Butler's restored wetland to be a good place to raise their young