

Citizen Connection

Connecting People Through Their River

Keep the CRWP in Mind When Considering Your Conservation Options

Are you thinking about adding conservation practices to your operation? Sitting on the fence about putting in a buffer strip? Want to change the look of your lakeshore property to help keep your lake healthy? **Have a project in mind that doesn't quite fit the existing conservation programs available? *Let the Chippewa River Watershed help.***

Cost-share dollars are available for best management practices. If you are restoring a wetland, installing a sediment basin or terrace, fencing cattle away from a water body, or are interested in trying some alternative practices for open tile intakes, you could be eligible for additional cost-share through the Chippewa River Watershed Project. CRWP cost-share dollars can be used in

conjunction with state and federal cost-share, guidelines and limits do apply, but it's definitely worth finding out about if you have a project in mind.

If you have land along a river, stream or ditch that's not buffered, now is the time to do it. Enroll your land into the Conservation Reserve Program and you could be eligible for a signing bonus incentive of \$50/acre. It makes economic and environmental sense to have our streams and ditches buffered.

If you are losing lakeshore property to erosion, looking to reduce the long term maintenance on your property, hoping to attract birds and wildlife and want to keep your lake clean, then lakescaping could be your answer. Landowners could receive up to 75%

cost-share, not to exceed \$2000, to be used toward a lakescaping project. Start planning now for a spring time planting.

The CRWP Local Work Group, technical representatives from each of the watershed counties, is meeting monthly to discuss projects and award cost-share. Contact Jennifer with the Chippewa River Watershed Project (jennifer@chippewariver.com or 320-269-2139 x120) or your local county NRCS, SWCD, or environmental services personnel for more information on cost-share dollars that may be available for you.

These dollars are available for a limited time. Don't delay, make your conservation goals a reality!

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Swift SWCD Water Festival A Success

The first ever Swift SWCD Water Festival was held on Friday, September 23, 2005, at the Ambush Park Outdoor Learning Center in Benson, MN. Approximately 250 fifth and sixth graders from Benson, Kerkhoven-Murdock-Sunburg, and Hancock attended the festival. The day-long event allowed students to visit several hands-on learning stations that related to the day's theme "A Watershed is Like a Funnel." Students were given a funnel to take home with them at the end of the day as a reminder of how watersheds work.

The Chippewa River Watershed Project was a part of the planning committee for this event and all three staff, Kylene, Paul and Jennifer, were presenters for the day.

Hats off to the Swift SWCD staff and supervisors for all their hard work and dedication in hosting their first ever Water Festival. Students and teachers thoroughly enjoyed the day and hopefully it can become an annual event to help foster local conservation education.



Paul teaches a group of students about water quality and how to use a transparency tube along the banks of the Chippewa River.

Are You Ready for CSP?

The Conservation Security Program (CSP) was created in the 2002 Farm Bill and offers payments to conservation farmers and ranchers. This program rewards producers who are already doing an outstanding job of protecting land resources.

At this time, the Chippewa River Watershed is not approved for application and funding, but it is a good idea to familiarize yourself with the recommended guidelines so that when funding does become available you will be ready. This is a competitive program and all applications may not be funded. The more conservation practices you have in place and qualification guidelines you can document, the higher your ranking will be.

Qualification Guidelines to Consider

- Records from the last two years on each field to be included on application
- Application of fertilizer according to U of MN recommendations
- Current soil tests
- Records on fertilizer (including manure) and pesticide application
- Use of mulch till or reduced tillage practices
- Use of a conservation crop rotation
- Control of soil erosion especially in drainage ways

For More Information and the Self-Assessment Handbook, go to <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp/>

Self-Assessment Handbooks for the Conservation Security Program are available online or at your local NRCS office. The self-assessment handbook will give you the most current information on CSP program guidelines and help you determine how you would rank and what options are available to improve your ranking. Conservation counts, do your part!

Calendar of Events



Check out the upcoming events, mark them on your calendar, and hope to see you there!

Updates and additions at www.chippewariver.com

November

- 8- CRWP Local Work Group Meeting, 10:00 am, USDA Service Center, Benson
- 11- Office Closed, Veteran's Day
- 18- CRWP Monthly Meeting, 10:15 am, Benson Fire Hall
- 24- Office Closed, Thanksgiving Holiday

December

- 8- Shakopee Creek Headwaters Project Monthly Meeting, 10:00 am, Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center
- 16- CRWP Monthly Meeting, 10:15 am, Benson Fire Hall
- 26- Office Closed, Christmas Holiday

Biomonitoring



Students collecting benthic macroinvertebrates

The Chippewa River Watershed Project Benthic Macroinvertebrate Biomonitoring Network was in full swing again this fall. Paul and Jennifer went out with high school students from the Montevideo and Benson schools.

Students collected the macroinvertebrates, “river bugs” and then identified them in class. Macroinvertebrates are an important part of the river ecosystem and can provide valuable insight to water quality conditions as well as habitat conditions.



Thanks to all the students and teachers that participated. They are helping to collect valuable, long-term biological data from our watershed and the information has the potential to be used in future impairment determinations. It is great to be able to get the students out in the field and introduce them to another aspect of their local stream environment.



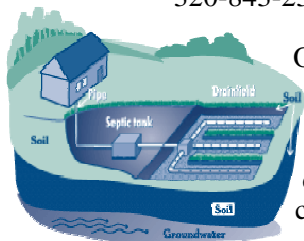
If you have a class, youth group, or individual student that is interested in this type of data collection and research, let us know, we can help get you started.

Fixes for Failing Septic Systems

Failing Individual Septic Treatment Systems (ISTS) are a leading contributor of bacteria and nutrients to the lakes and streams of the Chippewa River Watershed. If you have a system that isn't doing the job, there's a program available for you. Low-interest loan dollars can help fix the problem.

Highlights of the program

- ◆ 3% interest rate to landowners
- ◆ ISTS Upgrades only
- ◆ Landowner completes one page application through county
- ◆ Special assessment on property taxes through County Auditor's office
- ◆ 5 or 10 year payback option on assessments
- ◆ Interest begins accruing after 30 days
- ◆ ISTS must be in the Chippewa River Watershed
- ◆ Landowner must be current on taxes
- ◆ Loan amount cannot exceed value of property



Graphic courtesy of University of Minnesota

Over \$100,000 remains available to landowners in **Douglas County**, contact the Land and Resources Management office at 320-762-2942 to enroll.

Over \$50,000 remains in **Pope County**, contact Environmental Services at 320-634-5715 to enroll.

Only 14,000 remains in **Grant County**, contact the Office of Land Management at 218-685-4967 to enroll

By the end of the year, **\$135,000** should be available in **Swift County**, contact Environmental Services at 320-843-2356 to enroll.

Other counties may have expended their allotment and are awaiting more, contact your local county office for more details.

CRWP Teams Up for Chippewa County Fair Display

In August, the Chippewa River Watershed Project teamed up with the Chippewa SWCD, the Chippewa County Land and Resources Management office, and the Hawk Creek Watershed Project to make a visual statement of “Conservation Choices in Chippewa County.” The twenty-four foot table top display features a river and lake and highlights urban and rural watershed activities. Both healthy and poor conservation choices are shown. Nearly 14,000 people attended the Chippewa County fair and many of those people viewed the display. It was a great opportunity for people to see how different choices can affect water quality and degrade a watershed. The display also did a great job of showing positive alternatives are possible. This display is available for use, contact us for more information.



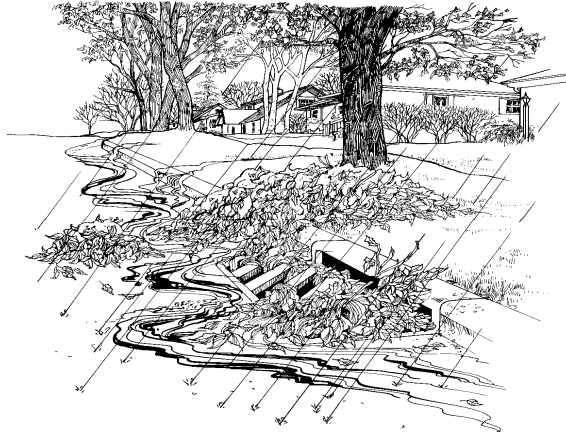
Twenty-four foot table display showing good and bad watershed conservation choices in 3-D.

RAKE TO SAVE A RIVER—OR A LAKE

Tree Leaves Contain Phosphorus—the Nutrient That Turns Rivers and Lakes Green

Water resources professionals have long noticed increases in phosphorus runoff from city neighborhoods during the fall—the suspected source being tree leaves falling into the street.

Streets connect to rivers, lakes and wetlands through storm sewer systems. Unlike our household wastewater, stormwater does not go to a treatment plant first, it goes directly to our precious water resources. As phosphorus is lost from leaves, rainwater and snowmelt carries it into our waters where it leads to excessive algae growth.



Graphics and article content courtesy of Minnesota Water: Let's Keep it Clean. www.cleanwatermn.org

This fall, keep our waters clear!

- * Rake or sweep leaves from your street and storm drains.
- * Compost leaves and grass clippings on location or at a community yard waste collection site
- * Never dispose of leaves in wetlands or water.
- * Keep the street clean of other materials that contain phosphorus, such as grass clippings, commercial fertilizers, and eroded soil.

Clean streets mean clean water!!



CHIPPEWA RIVER WATERSHED PROJECT

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All programs and services of the Chippewa River Watershed Project, Prairie Country RC&D Council, and cooperating agencies are offered on a non-discriminatory basis without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status,

Check it out! We're on the Web!
www.chippewariver.com