



# Citizen Connection

Connecting People Through Their River

## CRWP Launches New Website

The Chippewa River Watershed Project is now accessible through the world wide web. Our new site features watershed facts, monitoring information, events calendar, information on water quality implementation projects, contact information, donation opportunities, and a monthly newsletter.

Check us out at [www.chippewariver.com](http://www.chippewariver.com)

## Local Work Group Funding On-the-Ground Projects

The CRWP local work group with representatives from each of the participating counties is meeting regularly to discuss upcoming implementation projects. The local work group has the decision making authority as to which projects will be funded with 319 Implementation Dollars. Currently, money is available for landowners in the East Branch Chippewa River sub-basin. Project applications are being sought for buffer strips, shoreline naturalization, livestock exclusion and other special projects deemed appropriate for funding by the local work group. Nearly **\$90,000** is available for projects.

Beginning in 2004, the local work group will also be taking applications from landowners in the Lower Mainstem sub-basin. Contact the CRWP or your county's work group representative (SWCD, NRCS, environmental services) for information on how you can get money to implement water quality improvement projects on your land.

## Funding Update

The CRWP is operating under a Clean Water Partnership Phase II Implementation Grant until March 2004. Federal 319 Implementation Grant Dollars are available for the East Branch sub-basin and upon approval of a work plan will be available for the Lower Mainstem.

The Chippewa River Watershed Project has been awarded \$280,000 in Phase II Implementation Continuation Funds. This grant will allow the project to remain staffed and operational until December 2005. Applications were submitted for 319 Implementation Dollars in the Upper Chippewa and the Greater Shakopee Creek. A collaborative application between CRWP, CURE and Land Stewardship Project was submitted to the EPA Environmental Justice Fund. Announcements regarding these grants are expected after the first of the year.

The Chippewa River Watershed Project is also establishing an Endowment Fund through the Southwest Minnesota Foundation. The endowment fund will give interested parties an opportunity to make a charitable contribution towards the long-term restoration and preservation of the Chippewa River Watershed. Go to [www.chippewariver.com](http://www.chippewariver.com) for more information or contact Kylene.



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### Quote of the Day

*In the end, our society will be defined not only by what we create but by what we refuse to destroy.*

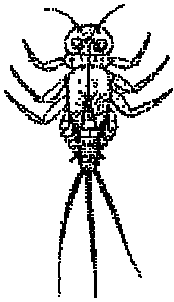
John Sawhill, The Nature Conservancy

## BMI Monitoring Network Growing

The Benthic Macroinvertebrate Monitoring (BMI) Network of the Chippewa River Watershed doubled in size this past fall. Four schools participated in fall sample collection: Benson High School, Brandon-Evansville High School, Hancock High School and Montevideo High School. With the help of CRWP staff, students collected macroinvertebrates from stream locations near their school and took them back to the classroom for identification.



Macroinvertebrates are good indicators of water quality conditions. Most students are surprised by the diversity of bugs found in their samples. Once all the class finishes with identification, reports highlighting the results are generated and given back to them. The BMI Network is a great opportunity for students to collect credible water quality data and become more connected to the watershed they live in. Let's keep the BMI Network growing!



## Another Successful Monitoring Season

The 2003 monitoring season was a flurry of activity for the Chippewa River Watershed Project. The CRWP uses a wide variety of data collection methods to obtain the most comprehensive picture of water quality conditions in the Chippewa River Watershed. Water chemistry samples, flow monitoring, transparency tube transects, buffer strip surveys, benthic macroinvertebrate monitoring, streambank erosion detection, and the Citizen Monitoring Network are key tools used during the monitoring season.

Data analysis for 2003 is in full swing. Look for results to be posted on our new website, in the Annual Report, and in local newspapers after the first of the year.

## Watershed Model on Display

The Shakopee Creek Headwaters Watershed is on display at the Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center near Spicer. New London-Spicer High School art teacher, Bill Gabbert, and his Know Zone students, Nathan Larsen, Brendan Smith, Travis Strom and Suzette Therkilsen, have built an incredible 3-D, table sized model of the watershed. Tremendous amounts of work went into creating this true-to-scale model featuring Norway Lake, Games Lake, Lake Andrew and Lake Florida. The model rests on a base featuring watershed facts and figures that was custom made by Schiller Custom Cabinetry Inc. Special features are numbered and illuminated thanks to Dave Upsahl and Jon Melander. Major funding for this beautiful piece of educational artwork was provided by the MN Dept of Natural Resources Education Grant program with great support from the Shakopee Creek Headwaters Project and its partners.



## Curleyleaf Pondweed Workshops

The Minnesota Lakes Association, U of M Extension Service, and Initiative Foundation will host a series of workshops on Curleyleaf Pondweed, an "invasive exotic" aquatic plant that can choke out native vegetation and adversely impact fisheries, wildlife habitat, and recreational uses. The workshop cost is \$15.00. For a brochure or more information contact: Eleanor Burkett, Extension, at 888-241-0720, burke044@umn.edu

### Locations and dates are:

January 24; 8:30-12:30 a.m. Salida Event Center, Big Lake  
January 31; 8:30-12:30 a.m. Nisswa Community Center  
February 21, 9:00-12:30 a.m. Richfield Nature Center

**\*\*\*ATTENTION:** Lakeshore residents in the East Branch Chippewa River watershed are eligible to receive a tuition stipend from the Chippewa River Watershed Project.\*\*\*

Contact Jennifer for more details: 320-269-2139 x120, [jennifer.hoffman@mn.usda.gov](mailto:jennifer.hoffman@mn.usda.gov)

# Filters for the Future

The Chippewa River Watershed Project (CRWP) is embarking on a new and innovative marketing strategy for installing riparian buffer strips to improve water quality. Local students working under the “Filters for the Future” program will connect with farmers willing to establish filter strips on their land. The Chippewa River Watershed Project will provide \$100 to the student organization for every filter strip established under a Conservation Reserve Program contract up to five contracts per organization. The farmer will receive payments according to CRP guidelines plus a \$50/acre incentive bonus from the Chippewa River Watershed Project.



This program is being launched in the East Branch Chippewa River, a priority sub-basin of the Chippewa River Watershed. Monies from a 319 Federal Implementation Grant are being used to administer the “Filters for the Future” program. The CRWP will

target students involved in organizations such as Future Farmer of America and 4-H as potential participants. Students will then be introduced to conservation professionals from the local Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Soil and Water Conservation District (SCWD). The Chippewa River Watershed Project will help to connect all the participants and oversee the details of the “Filters for the Future” project.

The “Filters for the Future” program has great potential for promoting conservation education among high school students, providing an opportunity for intergenerational connectivity, offering financial assistance, and ultimately improving water quality in the East Branch Chippewa River Watershed. It is hoped that this program can be replicated throughout the remaining sub-basins of the Chippewa River Watershed. If you have any questions about this program or would like to participate call the Chippewa River Watershed

## Events Calendar



*Remember...We All Live Downstream!*

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- ◆ **January 9**, CRWP Monthly Meeting, 10:15, Benson Fire Hall-1415 Kansas Ave, Benson
- ◆ **January 20**, Local Work Group Meeting, 9:30, Swift USDA Service Center
- ◆ **January 22-23**, MN Drainage Management Conference, Holiday Inn-Willmar. Register by Jan. 15 at <http://wrc.coafes.umn.edu/MDM/> or call 612-625-4756
- ◆ **January 26**, Minnesota River Board Meeting, 9:30, Assembly Room-Chippewa County Courthouse, Montevideo

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## Attention Lakeshore Owners

Are you losing lake front property to erosion? Would you like to attract more songbirds and butterflies to your home? Would you like to reduce your mowing time? Most important, do you want to protect your lake from pollution? If you answered yes to these questions and own property on Lake Amelia, Leven, Villard or Gilchrist then the Chippewa River Watershed Project could help you.

The CRWP is seeking to establish lakescaping demonstration sites on lakes in the East Branch Chippewa River Watershed. Lakescaping restores native plants to the shoreline and establishes a buffer zone between land and water that controls erosion, filters nutrients and provides habitat for fish and wildlife.

Demonstration sites will be chosen based on several factors including severity of erosion and visibility of site. Locations and landowners chosen will receive cost-share dollars for site design and preparation, plants and installation. Interested landowners are encouraged to call 320-269-2139 x120 or email [jennifer.hoffman@mn.usda.gov](mailto:jennifer.hoffman@mn.usda.gov) to schedule a site visit and complete a short application.

## It's Time to Get Involved

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The waters of the Chippewa River Watershed have been listed as impaired by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency for failing to meet water quality standards set for fecal coliform bacteria, ammonia, and turbidity (transparency). The state is taking this seriously and requiring the TMDL (Total Daily Maximum Load) process be carried out.

**MEANING—YOU NEED TO BE INVOLVED!** Pollutant reductions need to be made and nonpoint sources like urban and agricultural runoff are going to be targeted. Be a part of the process and help develop the best local reduction strategy possible. Remember, rules are made by those who show up! Be on the lookout for public meeting announcements or contact the CRWP for more information.

# GET INVOLVED!

Non-Profit Organization  
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Chippewa River Watershed Project  
629 N 11th Street  
Montevideo, MN 56265

Sponsored by CRWP, Cooperating Partners  
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