

Chippewa River Watershed Project
Committee Meeting Minutes
February 11, 2005
Benson Fire Hall, Benson MN

Present: Jerry Johnson, Douglas Co Commissioner, Jennes Swenson, Grant Co Commissioner; Larry Dalen, So MN Beet Sugar Coop, JoAnn Blomme, Chippewa Co Land & Resource Mgmt; Rick Gronseth, Swift SWCD; Ryan Kessler, DNR/Glenwood Fisheries; Jeff Bredberg, Kandiyohi Co Environmental Services; Dennis Rupp, Kandiyohi Co Ag Inspector; Roger Rasmussen, Kandiyohi SWCD Supervisor; Douglas Rasmussen, Stevens SWCD Supervisor; Keith Naig, Pope Co Commissioner, Randy Nelson, Prairie Country RC&D; Dean Shuck, Kandiyohi Co Commissioner; Jennifer Hoffman, Paul Wymar, Kylene Olson, CRWP.

Introductions: Kylene opened the meeting and passed out the sign-up sheet. During introductions, everyone was to tell the last time they were on the river, responses made it clear that there is a need for a spring canoe trip.

In-Kind Reporting: Kylene reminded partners of the importance for reporting in-kind contributions and made reporting sheets available. Reminder: the in-kind reporting forms are also available online at www.chippewariver.com

Special Congratulations: Pheasants Forever (PF) awarded the Stevens Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) with its Brood Booster award during PF's Minnesota State Convention earlier this year. The award recognizes those who have demonstrated exceptional accomplishments in enrolling private land into conservation programs that boost pheasant and other wildlife populations. During 2004, Stevens County SWCD personnel helped enroll over 1,400 acres in the Conservation Reserve Program and the Wetlands Reserve Program.

2004 Monitoring Report: Paul Wymar, Watershed Scientist, presented last year's monitoring report. In 2004, Paul maintained the six major sub-basin sites in addition to adding two new sites in the Lower Mainstem Sub-basin. The news sites were added on Cottonwood Creek (Site 17) and Judicial Ditch 9. Paul discussed the results of several of the parameters: discharge, total suspended solids (TSS), total phosphorus (TP), orthophosphorus (OP), nitrate/nitrite nitrogen (NO₂-NO₃). Paul gave a very comprehensive report on the year's findings; some of the highlights are described below. Complete monitoring results will be on our website, www.chippewariver.com, soon.

Discharge is the amount of water that flowed past the monitoring site from the basin for the monitoring season. Discharge is related to several hydrologic characteristics, including rainfall and land use but an interesting note is that although the Upper Mainstem and the Shakopee Sub-basins are nearly identical in size, the Shakopee had over 50% more water discharge from its system.

TSS results are given as a flow weighted mean concentration. Dryweather Creek and the East Branch sub-basins have reached their goals regarding TSS. Shakopee had the highest concentration at 117.89 parts per millions (ppm). At Highway 40 monitoring site, 22,000 tons of TSS passed through. Since Hwy 40 is the outlet site for the Chippewa River Watershed, it would stand to reason that the cumulative tons from the other sites would be approximately 22,000 tons. Using this method, it leaves over 6,000 tons of TSS not accounted for; leading towards the fact that streambank erosion is highly significant. Disturbing trend is that the TSS levels in the Upper Mainstem-Cyrus are steeply increasing. Positive trend is that levels at Highway 40 have flattened out, almost appearing to decrease.

TP and OP results are also given in flow weighted mean concentrations. OP is the portion of TP that is readily available for algae uptake. East Branch achieved its goal for TP concentrations. Shakopee had the highest concentration in the watershed for both TP and OP.

NO₂-NO₃ levels were higher in 2004 and no goals were achieved in any of the sub-basins. There is a standard for NO₂-NO₃ as it pertains to ground water and drinking water set at 10.0 ppm. Both Shakopee Creek and Dryweather Creek had high concentrations at 9.05 and 9.72 ppm respectively. In regards to the amount of NO₂-NO₃ added to the system, Shakopee Creek is the greatest contributor and a direct correlation is easily seen at Hwy 40 in regards to Shakopee Creek. Disturbing trend is that NO₂-NO₃ concentrations at Dryweather Creek are increasing and Shakopee Creek has flattened at the higher than desired levels.

In conclusion, each sub-basin has particular issues and although some goals are being met, water quality issues still exist. It is important that ways are found to make the system less leaky in regards to phosphorus and nitrogen, reinforcing the need for good nutrient management.

CSP Update: This past week Kasey Reed and Mike Appel, NRCS Area Conservationists, gave a presentation to help prepare our local partners in getting landowners ready for CSP. Thanks to the watershed NRCS and SWCD staff who attended. The most important message from the meeting was that it is not too early to be talking to landowners and getting them qualified. CRWP will help with press releases, handouts and getting the word out. Jennifer will be issuing these items to each of the field offices soon. There is also a large amount of information on the website www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/CSP, including downloadable power point presentations.

DNR Walleye Stocking Update: Ryan Kessler, DNR-Glenwood Fisheries, gave a brief update on the area walleye stocking done out of their office. Last year the DNR stocked Lake Emily with 2.3 million fry and Lake Minnewaska with 7 million fry. During the month of May, 40-50 million fry are hatched in Glenwood. Some of those fry are immediately stocked others are placed in rearing ponds by the DNR. Fingerlings are then stocked in Sept/Oct. Ryan invited everyone to stop in and visit the Glenwood Hatchery and if anyone wants a complete listing of lakes being stocked out of the Glenwood Hatchery, just contact Ryan.

Big Bend Cemetery Update: The Corps and DNR funds are in place. The local match has raised ~\$60,000. The Five Star Grant is in the process of being resubmitted. It's hopeful that there will be a bid request in July. The bids opened in August and construction to begin in Sept/Oct.

Annual Meeting Discussion: The CRWP staff asked for suggestions and comments on an upcoming annual meeting. In the past, CRWP meetings have been held in the evening, but attendance has decreased the last couple of years and was brought up that days might be better. Days were agreed upon as trying this year, with a preference for mornings. The group suggested keeping the meeting short, to a half-day or less and try offering a free meal rather than charge. Topic ideas were highlighting success stories and projects, progressive farmers, and innovative farming techniques. Jennifer will start the planning process immediately.

Next monthly meeting will be Friday, March 11th at 10:15 a.m. at the Benson Fire Hall, Benson, MN. Please remember to park on the west side of the building.