



Citizen Connection

Connecting People Through Their River

2000 in Review

Chippewa River Watershed Project

By Kylene Olson
Project Coordinator

Just as the river is a dynamic system, always changing, so is the Chippewa River Watershed Project (CRWP). Jennifer Hoffman Churchill has become the project's Watershed Specialist for priority areas. This means she will be working primarily in the Shakopee Creek sub-basin. We were fortunate to hire Paul Wymar as Jennifer's vibrant replacement. Paul's introduction and biography follow this article. He will be assuming the water quality monitoring and citizen monitoring network responsibilities of the Monitoring and Outreach Technician position.

Last year was the final year of the Diagnostic Study of the Chippewa River. Many hours were spent preparing the Diagnostic Study Final Report and Implementation Plan required by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA). Completion of this report was necessary to be eligible for application for Clean Water Partnership Phase II Grants through the MPCA. The deadline for application and submission of the report was in October and over the next 3 months we anxiously awaited the announcement of the grant awards. This was an extremely competitive year as MPCA received 71 requests totaling \$15 millions dollars with only \$5 million available to be awarded.

The announcement came the first week of January that the Chippewa River Watershed Project had received full funding to continue the project into the Implementation Phase. What great news!

The Implementation Plan was formulated with input from those partner agencies, organizations and landowners throughout the watershed that have been cooperating together since the inception of

(Continued on page 5)

Winter Meetings Successful, More are planned

The Chippewa River Watershed Project (CRWP) has held several successful meetings this winter. Participation has been good and much has been accomplished. Consensus building is always time consuming but in this case it has paid off. Sometimes there were participants who attended the meetings thinking that they were going to hear a fairly one sided story but found that this was not the case. In fact, most participants leave the meetings feeling that their ideas were heard and their views are respected.

As spring begins to make the roads safer and the trees start to leaf out CRWP will begin to hold its monthly meetings throughout the watershed. In addition to the monthly meetings, there are plans to hold meetings in the early morning, evenings and on the weekends. It is the intention to use these meetings to extend the opportunity to participate to people who are unable to attend the monthly meetings. So watch and listen for meetings near you.

Inside this issue:

Monitoring Results	2-3
River Monitor Meetings	4
New Staff	5
Keep mercury out of trash	5
EQIP	6
Shakopee Cr Priority Area	6

Definitions

- **Watershed:** A body of water and all of the land that drains to it.
- **Non-point source pollution:** pollution that originates from a wide area and can not be traced back to a point source.
- **Implementation Project:** education and application of Best Management Practices (BMP's) on the landscape

2000 Monitoring Results by Paul Wymar

During the 2000 monitoring season we saw a large reduction in the **quantity** of pollutants going through the river in comparison to 1999. While we saw a large reduction in quantity, concentrations of pollutants (water **quality**) did not drop nearly as much and in some cases were actually higher than in 1999 (see table below).

These results were expected as 2000 was a below average year for rainfall (between 12 and 19 inches) and individual rain events were generally small. Conversely, 1999 was produced more rain, about 22 inches. Less rain means less run off from the land and therefore less total pollutants. It also means less water running through the river. With less water to dilute them those pollutants entering the system are more concentrated. According to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency during low flow years the majority of the nutrients enter the river from point sources (treatment plants, industry, etc.)

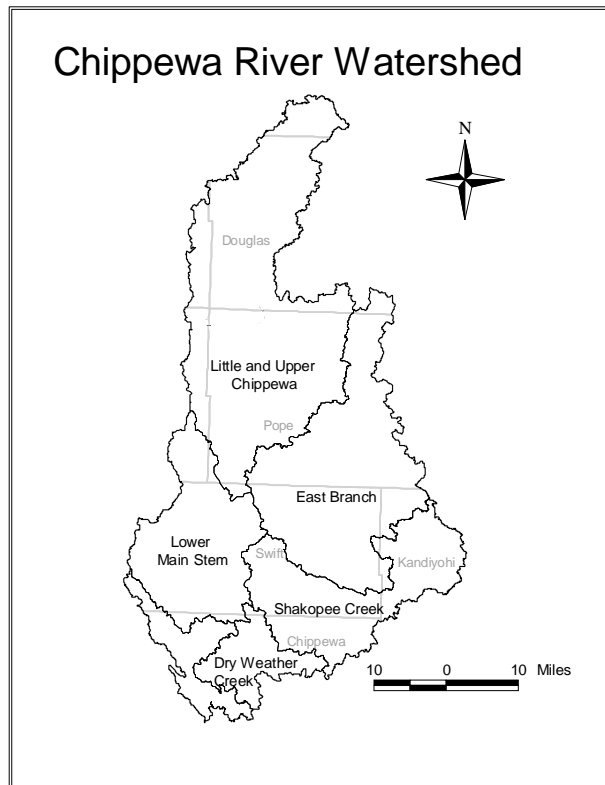
Regardless of the lower levels of pollutants in 2000, total phosphorus

entering the river was estimated at 59,000 pounds. That is enough phosphorus to fertilize 1,690 acres of corn (following U of M recommendations for a Bray

soil test of 11-15 ppm, broadcast applied with 150 bushels/acre yield goal). Furthermore, 14,200 tons of precious topsoil and stream bank soil washed into the Chippewa River. That is equivalent to two twenty-ton dump trucks per day backing up to the river during the monitoring season and dumping the loads into the river!

Fecal coliform levels throughout the watershed were well above the standard of exceeding the fecal coliform standard of 200 organisms per 100 milliliters of water.

These results clearly indicate the need for enacting better management practices in both Urban and Rural areas.



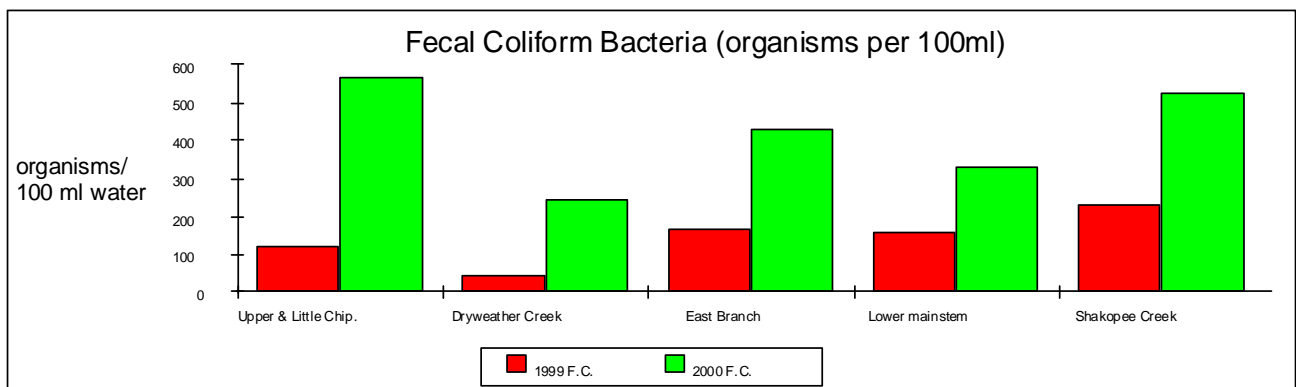
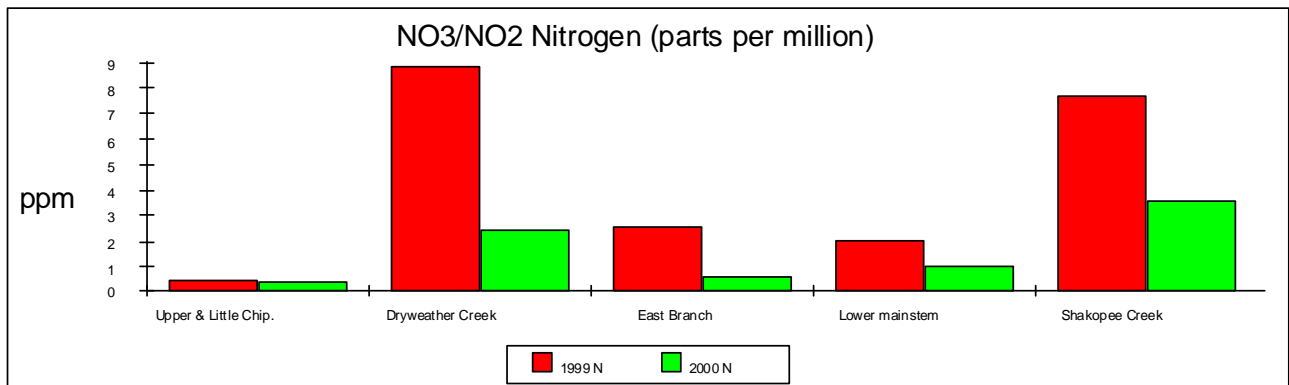
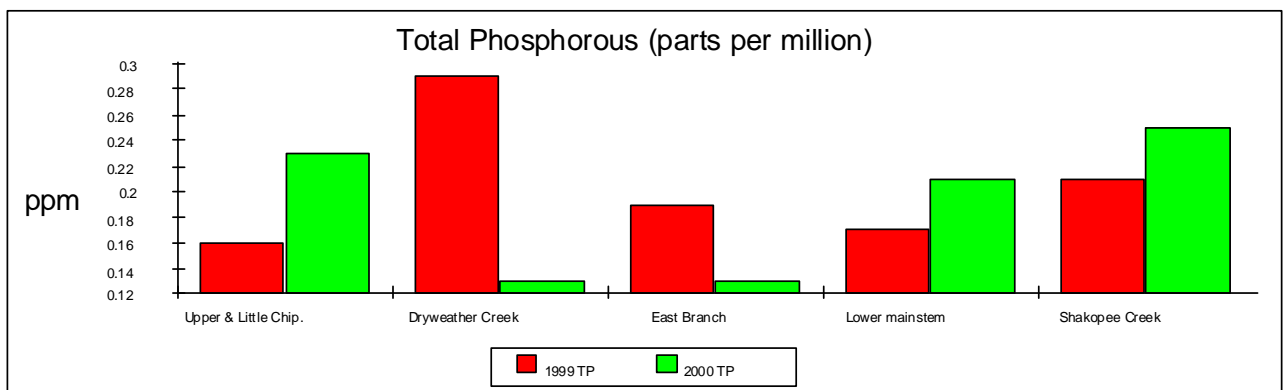
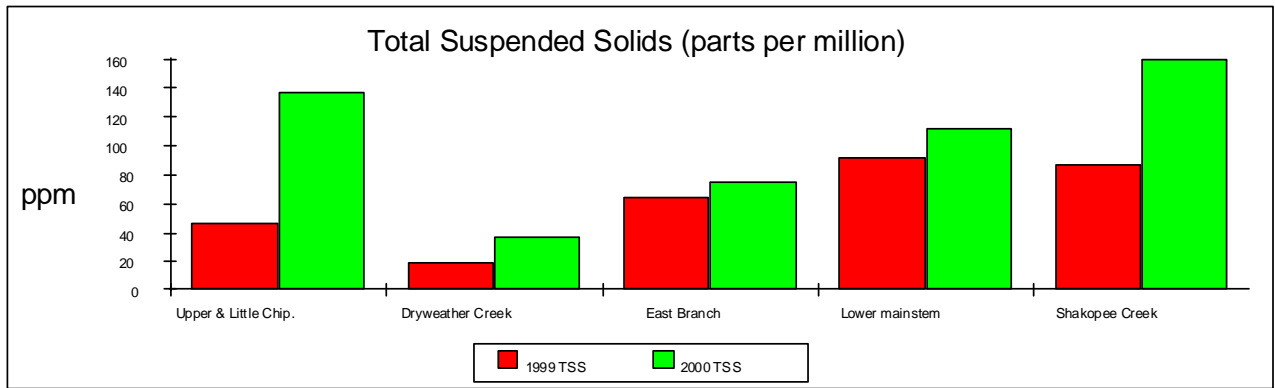
Average Concentrations of Pollutants in parts per million (ppm)

2000		Upper		Dry Weather		Lower
Data	Units	Chippewa	East Branch	Shakopee	Creek	Mainstem
TSS	ppm	136.71	75.42	159.47	37.39	112.43
NO3-NO2	ppm	0.40	0.59	3.58	2.40	1.01
PO4	ppm	0.02	0.03	0.01	0.03	0.02
TP	ppm	0.23	0.13	0.25	0.13	0.21
Fecal	/100 mL	563	430	523	246	332

1999		Upper		Dry Weather		Lower
Data	Units	Chippewa	East Branch	Shakopee	Creek	Mainstem
TSS	ppm	46.92	63.89	87.34	18.93	92.23
NO3-NO2	ppm	0.43	2.56	7.7	8.79	2.05
PO4-P	ppm	0.09	0.08	0.1	0.06	0.08
TP	ppm	0.16	0.19	0.21	0.29	0.17
Fecal	/100 mL	125	166	236	49	161

TSS = Total Suspended Solids; NO3-NO2 = Nitrate-Nitrite; PO4 = Ortho Phosphorus; TP=Total Phosphorus; Fecal = Fecal Coliform bacteria (organisms per 100 milliliters of water).

Comparison of 1999 and 2000 Monitoring Data



Come to a River Meeting

Come learn more about the river!

Volunteer and discover the secrets of the Chippewa river!

Help play a key role in maintaining a healthy, balanced ecosystem!

Help plan local strategies for volunteer water quality monitoring!



The Chippewa River Watershed Project will be holding several meetings across the basin to discuss this year's monitoring strategies and kick start the season. The meetings do not require a commitment but if you are interested in volunteering, finding out what you can do or learning more about the river please attend.

Meeting Dates and Locations

Montevideo Public Library
Tuesday, March 27, 7-8:30 pm

Gilchrist Township Hall
Pope County Road 8,
Monday, April 2, 7-8:30 pm

Benson Public Library
Thursday, April 5, 7-8:30 pm

Farwell Community Center
Tuesday, April 10, 7-8:30 pm

Starbuck, Nodland's Cafe
511 Main Street
Thursday, April 12, 6:30-8 pm

For more information Contact Paul Wymar at

Why we should volunteer By Paul Wymar

Just the other day a person came into the office with a concern. "You need to do more to get these polluters to stop what they are doing," the person said. I listened to the complaints and asked him to attend one of the meetings that I was planning in March. I explained that at the meetings we might find a way to address the concerns and cause change on the river.

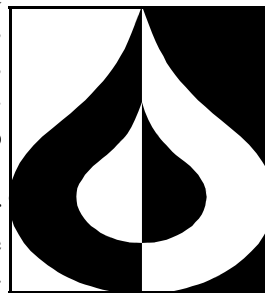
Ironically, late last year another person had stopped in to prove to us that the water running by his place was so clean that he could drink it. He went on to say that we should not be concerned with pollution in the water because there was none. People with this attitude should also attend our meetings.

There are many people who

believe that the river is either clean or dirty. The problem is that what one person perceives as clean the other perceives as dirty. This basic difference in perception leads to many misunderstandings. This is the reality of our watershed. Some people feel things are fine and others see need for major change.

The question is how do we get people with different beliefs to sit down together and agree on what to consider clean and what to consider dirty. Our answer has been to suggest that concerned individuals engage themselves in the process of col-

lecting data.



We need to establish a balance in the watershed and that can only be done through understanding and respect.

and work to create a balance.

So, if you have a strong belief about the river, I urge you to contact us about making a difference.

An important goal of the Citizen Monitoring Project is to engage you the residents of the watershed to go out and see for yourselves through a standard method what the condition of your river is in. This way, observations of the water are deliberate and standardized. Hopefully, through the gained understanding and communication we can begin to respect opposing viewpoints

CRWP Review

(Continued from page 1)

the project. The strength of these partnerships that have been fostered throughout the study phase played a major role in the project receiving this next grant. I would like to thank everyone who has been involved with this project; agency and organizational personnel, landowners, and participants of the citizen monitoring network. Their participation and hard work added to the successful grant award.

“changes need to happen in both urban and rural parts of the watershed.”

Now it is time to roll up our sleeves and get to work. The benefits and aesthetic qualities of the river are impaired. Conditions are unlikely to improve unless changes are made in land use and water management practices. These changes need to happen in both urban and rural parts of the watershed. These changes can be accomplished through enacting a Plan that recognizes the real problems occurring on the landscape, clearly identifies solutions to those problems, and develops and organizes sufficient resources to attain meaningful and effective solutions. When EVERYONE becomes active and takes personal responsibility as a part of the watershed community, solutions will be within our reach and pollution levels will be reduced. We welcome your participation and input.

The future of this project is exciting. The stage has been set for “Connecting People through Their River”. We will work

to enhance the Chippewa River by engaging watershed residents in the CRWP. In the future the health of the watershed will improve through an increased awareness of the hydrological connection we share. If you are in the Chippewa County Courthouse please come in and see how you can become involved in this Dynamic project.



Meet our new Staff

Paul Wymar was hired in November as the Watershed Monitoring and Outreach Technician. He will be working on expanding the Chippewa River Citizen Monitoring Network. Paul will also be responsible for the project’s ongoing



ing monitoring program and working on outreach and education efforts. Paul is originally from Vermillion, South Dakota but has decided to settle in Western Minnesota. His experiences are diverse he has worked as a forester, a community organizer and most recently an Agroforestry Extension Volunteer with the Peace Corps in Paraguay. In August he received his Masters in Forestry from the University of Minnesota. Anyone interested in contacting Paul can reach him at 320-269-2139 ext 119 or <pw2@mmmontevid.fsc.usda.gov>.

Keep Mercury out of the Trash!!

Mercury in our lakes, streams and ground water is a serious health concern,

- Fluorescent lights contain mercury, when they are broken the mercury immediately becomes airborne.
- 94% of the lakes surveyed have mercury contamination which has prompted warnings against fish consumption.
- It is illegal and dangerous to dispose of fluorescent lights in the trash.
- Contamination from landfills and waste incinerators is a growing concern.
- **Contact your local county courthouse for a list of disposal sites in your area. Or the nearest Ace Hardware store.**

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) By Jim Ridler USDA/NRCS

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program was established to provide land treatment opportunities for rural land owners. This program resulted from a merging of several land treatment programs nation wide a few years ago. As a result there is more continuity in funding between states.

Practices which may be included within an EQIP contract include agricultural waste management systems, planned grazing systems, livestock pipelines, tanks, ponds, fencing and other components needed for planned grazing system application. Erosion control practices such as terraces and grassed waterways also may be conservations for an operator.

There also could be an incentive payment for prescribed grazing and/or nutrient management when completed as part of a planned conservation system.



The Natural Resources Conservation Service will accept the application from the operator. NRCS will then assist the operator in prioritizing the application and submit the application for funding.

The Chippewa River Watershed is in a

conservation Priority Area. This means that the area has an allotment set up for EQIP funding. Operators with valuable projects within the watershed receive first opportunity for funding.

If you would like additional information on EQIP contact your local USDA/Natural Resources Conservation Service office for assistance. Operators should contact their respective offices in a timely manner to allow for administrative processing. Applications are due to the

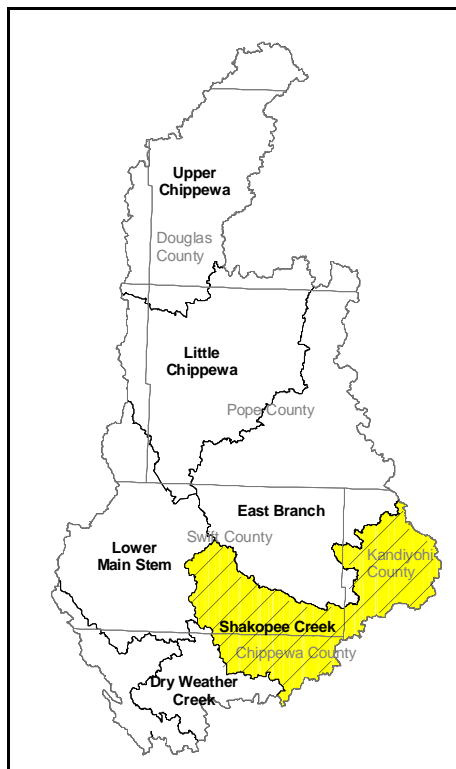
Designated Conservationist on April 13, 2001. A priority rating must be assigned to each application prior to submission to the Designated Conservationist.

Shakopee Creek Priority Management Area

Each year the Chippewa River Watershed Project will be submitting a new proposal to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency requesting funds to begin improving water quality in a sub-basin of the Chippewa River. The first proposal has been submitted and approved for the Shakopee Creek and its Headwaters.

To get maximum results in terms of water quality it is necessary to devote our attention to areas where the need is most critical. Since resources are limited it is useful to work in priority areas one at a time. The Shakopee Creek and its Headwaters have been selected as the first sub-basin priority area in the Chippewa River.

The Project will promote incentives to implement Best Management Practices in the most critical areas.



Shakopee Creek Priority Management Area

Best Management Practices (BMP's) are defined as those practices, techniques, or measures for preventing or reducing pollution to a level compatible with water quality goals. Examples of BMP's include; Nutrient Management, Residue Management, Wetland Restoration, alternative tile inlets, Shoreline restoration, limiting fertilizer on urban lawns, septic system upgrades and more.

Efforts will begin in the Shakopee this spring with increased monitoring to identify where critical areas are. The monitoring data will then be used to help direct outreach and promotion of the voluntary practices. As practices change the monitoring will help us understand which BMP's are more effective. This will help as the project moves on to the other Priority Management Areas.

Upcoming Events

- **March 27**, Volunteer Monitor Meeting at 7:30 pm at the Montevideo Public Library
- **March 30**, Hawk Creek Watershed Project Monthly meeting, 9:30 a.m. at the Clara City Community Center
- **April 2**, CRWP monthly meeting, 10 a.m., Glenwood City Hall
- **April 2**, Volunteer Monitor Meeting at 7 pm at the Gilchrist Town Hall with the Gilchrist Lake Association
- **April 5**, Volunteer Monitor Meeting at 7:30 pm at the Benson Public Library
- **April 10**, Volunteer Monitor Meeting at 7:30 pm at the Farwell Community Center

- **April 12**, Volunteer Monitor Meeting at 6:30 pm in Starbuck at the Nodland's Cafe
- **April 27**, Hawk Creek Watershed Project Monthly meeting, 9:30 a.m. at the Clara City Community Center
- **May 7**, CRWP monthly meeting, Location to be announced

- **May 8**, Kid's Ground Water Festival at the Alexandria Fairgrounds
- **May 19 and 20**, C.U.R.E. Spring Observation Trip, call CURE at 320-269-2984 for more information

Funding for this publication was provided by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Clean Water Partnership Grant program, Local County Water Plans, and EQIP.



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, handicap, or sexual orientation.



We would love to hear from you!

Are you involved in a local organization, club, city council? If you are interested in having an informational presentation on the Chippewa River Watershed at a future meeting of yours, give us a call at 320-269-2139, ext 116 to arrange a date. If you are interested in becoming involved or have any information, return this form to:

Chippewa River Watershed Project
 Kylene Olson
 629 North 11th Street
 Montevideo MN 56265

What do you see as the most important issues? _____

What are your biggest concerns? _____

Name _____

Address _____

Phone (optional) _____

We need your help Monitoring!

You can be a Citizen Monitor

Join Today!

We are planning projects all over the watershed and need your help to monitor the results. No matter where you are on the watershed you can take a variety of actions that aid us monitor our rivers.

Choose from activities including:

- * Rain Gauge
- * Staff Gauge
- * Soil Moisture
- * Transparency
- * Biological surveys
- * Physical surveys
- * Chemical analysis
- * And much more!

All sorts of people are already helping out.

Contact us today for more information on becoming an active citizen!

Paul Wymar Citizen Monitoring Coordinator
Telephone: 320-269-2139 ext 119,
Email: pw2@mnmontevid.fsc.usda.gov

Chippewa River Watershed Project

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