



State grant going to Cedar River Watershed

Clean Water Legacy funds to help projects for slowing water, controlling erosion

AUSTIN, Minn. – Tuesday, Dec. 27, 2011 – A \$91,000 state grant has been approved to support the construction of water and sediment control basins in high-priority areas of the Cedar River Watershed, upstream from the city of Austin.

For the third-straight year, the Cedar River Watershed District had a grant request approved for Minnesota Clean Water Land & Legacy Amendment funds for projects that help reduce flooding and improve water quality. Subwatersheds of Dobbins, Wolf and Roberts creeks are targeted by the grant.

CRWD's previous Clean Water grants have funded stream reventments and ongoing work on a water retention area.

Overall, the Upper Cedar Watershed Runoff Reduction Project costs about \$122,000, with \$30,000 given by the CRWD. Contract work will begin immediately, with construction anticipated to begin in fall 2012; the CRWD has two years to complete the work. Agricultural producers sign a contract to maintain the practice for 10 years – the life span of the basins.

Water and sediment basins – earthen embankments – will be built in the Upper Cedar River Watershed, which consists of about 50,000 acres, with half of those acres in the Dobbins Creek subwatershed. The project's approach assures that water treatment starts on the top end and progressively works its way downstream while using Best Management Practices.

"The CRWD recognizes that water quality and flood damage reduction goals can't be accomplished without taking the battle to the source," said Bev Nordby, CRWD administrator. "This initiative needs to start with flow reduction and a targeted approach to the upper most reaches of the CRWD's most-critical waterways."

In 2008, the CRWD received funding to study the Dobbins Creek watershed for projects that could improve water quality and slow stream flows. The study identified the north branch of Dobbins as a target area for seeking funds for best-management practices, and revealed that Dobbins Creek consistently exceeds the state's water-quality standards for turbidity or dirty water.

Dobbins Creek – which has south and north branches converging in northeast Austin's Jay C. Hormel Nature Center before it becomes East Side Lake – is prone to flash flooding and has been shown to contribute greatly to flooding in Austin.

CRWD already has begun practices to address certain issue areas of the Dobbins Creek subwatershed. The newly approved project will add to the CRWD's ongoing progress.

"This is another tool in the box," Nordby said, "for reducing flow rates, keeping those soils at their highest point in the landscape and keeping them far away from the sensitive stream bodies."

Who: Cedar River Watershed District.

What: Received \$91,000 grant from the state's Clean Water Fund.

Where: Subwatersheds of Dobbins, Wolf and Roberts creeks – all flow into the Cedar River in or north of Austin.

When: Construction likely in fall 2012.

Why: Water and sediment control basins have been shown to slow the water down and control soil erosion.

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