



CRWD resource specialist honored with state award

Hanson recognized by Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts for 2010



AUSTIN, Minn. – Friday, Dec. 10 – An area conservationist received a significant honor this month from a statewide organization for his work in Mower and Freeborn counties to reduce flooding, improve water quality and create more wildlife habitat.

Justin Hanson, the Cedar River Watershed District’s resource specialist who also serves as the administrator for the Turtle Creek Watershed District (part of the Cedar River Basin), was honored Dec. 2 as the 2010 Outstanding Watershed District Employee by the Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts.

Hanson received the award during the MAWD’s annual conference in Alexandria, Minn. MAWD is a St. Paul-based nonprofit that provides educational opportunities, information and training for watershed district managers and staff.

Hanson described the recognition as a “great reflection of all the good work going on in the Cedar and Turtle Creek watersheds.” The award, he said, never would have happened without great leadership in the SWCD office, the board members and support of state partners and elected officials.

“I’m lucky to work with so many people who are passionate about what they do and driven to get things done,” Hanson said. “I’m a cog in a big wheel of people working on finding solutions to our resource challenges.”

Hanson has numerous responsibilities, including being the land-acquisition contact for the local Pheasants Forever Chapter, grant writing, Wetland Restoration Enhancement Program. Among many things, he has coordinated construction on Wetland Restoration Program/Reinvest in Minnesota projects, the Dobbins Creek Watershed Restoration.

Chris Hughes, board conservationist for Minnesota’s Board of Water and Soil Resources, nominated Hanson for the award, saying he has “great passion for conservation and skills to transform that passion into action.”

“Justin represents the very best in upcoming conservationists,” Hughes wrote in the nomination letter. “He makes me a better conservationist, with challenging questions and honest feedback.”

Bev Nordby, the CRWD administrator who is Hanson’s supervisor, said Hanson is “always a team player who works incredibly hard on whatever it takes to get the work done.”

Hanson started working with soil and water conservation districts in 2002, starting in Jackson County.

In 2004, Hanson came to the Mower County Soil and Water Conservation District because it had a reputation of being one of the more progressive districts in Minnesota. Three years later, the CRWD partnered with the Mower SWCD to provide administrative services for the newly formed CRWD.

He began working in 2009 as the Turtle Creek watershed’s administrator. “Both watersheds have similar goals but are quite different because of their history, landscape and partners,” Hanson said.

Further information is available online at www.cedarriverwd.org and www.mnwatershed.org.

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Who: Justin Hanson, administrator for the Turtle Creek Watershed District and resource specialist for the Cedar River Watershed District.

What: Received the 2010 Outstanding Watershed District Employee award from the Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts.

Where/when: Alexandria, Minn., on Dec. 2.

Why: For his work in various roles with numerous conservation projects.