

Watersheds to Work on Clean Up Together

The Cedar River Watershed District (CRWD) and the Turtle Creek Watershed District (TCWD) will work with Shell Rock Watershed District to write a cleanup plan for the Cedar River. The CRWD Board of Managers and TCWD Board of Managers approved a work plan with the Shell Rock and Turtle Creek Watershed Districts as well as Mower Soil and Water Conservation District and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.

Cleaning up the Cedar River will require cleaning up the tributaries upstream along with the river itself. Federal and state agencies use a tool called the Total Maximum Daily Load, or TMLD to measure pollutants, identify sources and implement activities to reduce those pollutants.

MPCA has offered \$300,000.00 to the three area watershed to conduct the TMDL which is both a measurement of pollutants loads and a process that involves the public in writing a plan to reduce pollutant loads.

There are 4 steps to the process.

- Step one will start this spring to begin a 3 year water monitoring program and inventory work in the field to measure the levels of pollutants entering our streams.
- Step two will use computer modeling to identify sources from the data taken.
- Step three will write a plan to reduce pollutants.
- Step four will start implementing activities to lower levels such as conservation practices on farm fields and erosion controls and urban and rural areas.

The joint TMDL for the Cedar River offers several advantages for the Cedar River Watershed District and Turtle Creek Watershed District.

- Increase funding opportunities
- Starts a comprehensive monitoring program
- Builds cooperation with other government agencies and individual citizens
- Retains local control over the clean up plan
- Increases efficiency by sharing expenses and holding joint meetings.

This first 3 steps of the TMDL will process will be complete in June of 2010. Full implementation will start during this process and afterwards.