



1408 21st Ave. NW
Austin, MN 55912
507-434-2603

www.cedarriverwd.org

Cedar River Watershed District 2011 Annual Report

Tapp Streambank Restoration *Restoring Dobbins Creek*

CRWD Board of Managers

7 members appointed for
staggered three-year terms.

Mower County Representatives

Al Layman, Chairman
Mike Merten, Vice Chairman
Harlen Peck, Manager
Jim Gebhardt, Manager

Steele County Representative

Mike Jones, Treasurer

Freeborn County Representative

Steve Kraushaar, Manager

Dodge County Representative

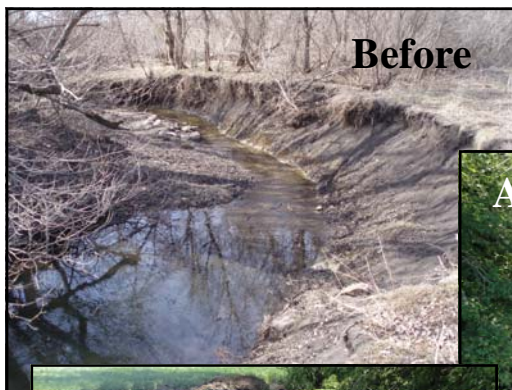
Kevin Kiser, Secretary

Mower SWCD Staff Assisting the Watershed District

Bev Nordby, Administrator
Justin Hanson, Project Coordinator
Matt Taylor, Monitoring
Jeanne Crump, Administrative
Cody Fox, Technical

The Tapp Streambank Revetment targeted severe bank erosion along the North Branch of Dobbins Creek. A recent study identified that the North Branch of Dobbins Creek violated state standards for turbidity every other year. The study identified that a series of stream stabilization projects will make measureable steps toward improving the sediment that clouds up Dobbins Creek.

This project used Red Cedar trees (8'-10' in length) to stabilize the bank. The trees were a nuisance, growing in a township road ditch. After being cut down, they were transported to the site and placed along the toe of the streambank. The trees were slightly overlapped, then bound together with aircraft cable and anchored into the banks with a tool resembling an ice auger. The trees will "heal" the banks and allow sediment to settle out in the branches.



Before



After



Above are the before and after pictures of the Tapp site. Pictured are the members of the MN Conservation Corp (MCC), along with Pete Fryer, Project Engineer.

CRWD Has Changes in Board

New Managers...Welcome to the Board!



Mike Merten - Mower County Representative

Austin area farmer Mike Merten was appointed to the CRWD Board of Managers to fill the vacant position left after Dan Regner retired from the board.

Mike has been an effective leader on numerous local boards and has a unique perspective in that he lives within the city limits, but also farms.

Mike takes his position on the board seriously. His communication skills and problem solving ability will be an asset to the board.



Kevin Kiser - Dodge County Representative

Rural landowner Kevin Kiser was appointed by the Dodge County Board to fill the vacant position left after Richard Fuller retired from the board.

Kevin manages the Freeborn Coop and brings to the board his excellent management skills.

Public awareness and education on the activities of the watershed district are important to him. With the Cedar River's headwaters in Dodge County, he sees opportunity for projects in the area.

CRWD Passes New Rules

After nearly two years of work, the CRWD Board of Managers passed new rules and a permitting program directed at reducing future flooding and improving water quality.

CRWD staff are administering the rules and permitting program, which both went into effect December 1st. CRWD's new rules cover areas related to stormwater, flood plains, water body alterations, erosion control and enforcement.

All watershed districts are required by state law to implement rules to accomplish their purpose. The CRWD's rules are intended to fill gaps in existing federal, state and local regulations – not duplicate existing regulations.

Copies of the rules are available at the Mower Soil & Water Conservation District office at 1408 21st Ave NW in Austin and online at the CRWD's website – www.cedarriverwd.org. Brochures with a summary of the CRWD rules also are available at the SWCD office.



Current Board of Managers

Back Row (L to R):

Steve Kraushaar, Mike Jones,
Mike Merten, Al Layman

Front Row:

Jim Gebhardt, Kevin Kiser, Harlen Peck

It is the Cedar River Watershed District's purpose to reduce flooding and protect and improve water quality in the streams.

CEDAR RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT BUDGETARY COMPARISON SCHEDULE BUDGET AND ACTUAL GENERAL FUND YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2011			
	Original Budget	Actual	Variance with Final Budget Positive (Neg)
Revenues			
Property Tax			
Administrative Levy	\$225,000	\$203,574	-\$21,426
Current Tax Revenue		\$145	\$145
State Aid		\$22,807	\$22,807
State Revenues			\$0
MPCA Monitoring			\$0
CWF Runoff Reduction Grant	\$163,596	\$3,750	
Interest Income		\$2,089	
Other Revenues			\$0
Hormel (H & H)	\$20,000		-\$20,000
Other Misc. Income		\$1,134	\$1,134
			\$0
Total Revenues	\$408,596	\$233,499	-\$17,340
Expenditures			
Administrative Expenses	\$21,850	\$20,124	-\$1,726
Engineering/Technical Services	\$55,000	\$50,986	-\$4,014
Personnel	\$75,000	\$74,043	-\$957
Public Information & Education	\$12,000	\$4,203	-\$7,797
Training / Travel Expenses	\$9,500	\$2,033	-\$7,467
Water Monitoring	\$16,004	\$15,535	-\$469
Watershed Projects	\$229,242	\$7,420	-\$221,822
Total Expenditures	\$418,596	\$174,344	-\$244,252
Excess of Revenues Over Expenditures	-\$10,000	\$59,155	\$69,155
Fund Balance - January 1, 2011	\$320,229	\$320,229	\$0
Fund Balance - December 31, 2011	\$310,229	\$379,384	\$69,155

Adopt-A-River - Cedar River Cleanup

Adopt-A-River effort starts on Cedar

Thousands of pounds of trash are no longer in the waters of the Cedar River or along its banks following a highly successful first year of a local Adopt-A-River effort.

Initiated and led by the CRWD, the Adopt-A-River effort in Mower County involved nine groups “adopting” stretches of the Cedar River for cleaning at least once a year. Eight of those groups conducted cleanups in 2011, involving about 50 volunteers overall. Tires proved to be a major issue with the Cedar River, with one cleanup group removing 120 tires and another spotting 110 tires in a different short stretch of the river.

The CRWD received help for the Adopt-A-River program from the **Jay C. Hormel Nature Center, City of Austin, Mower County and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.**

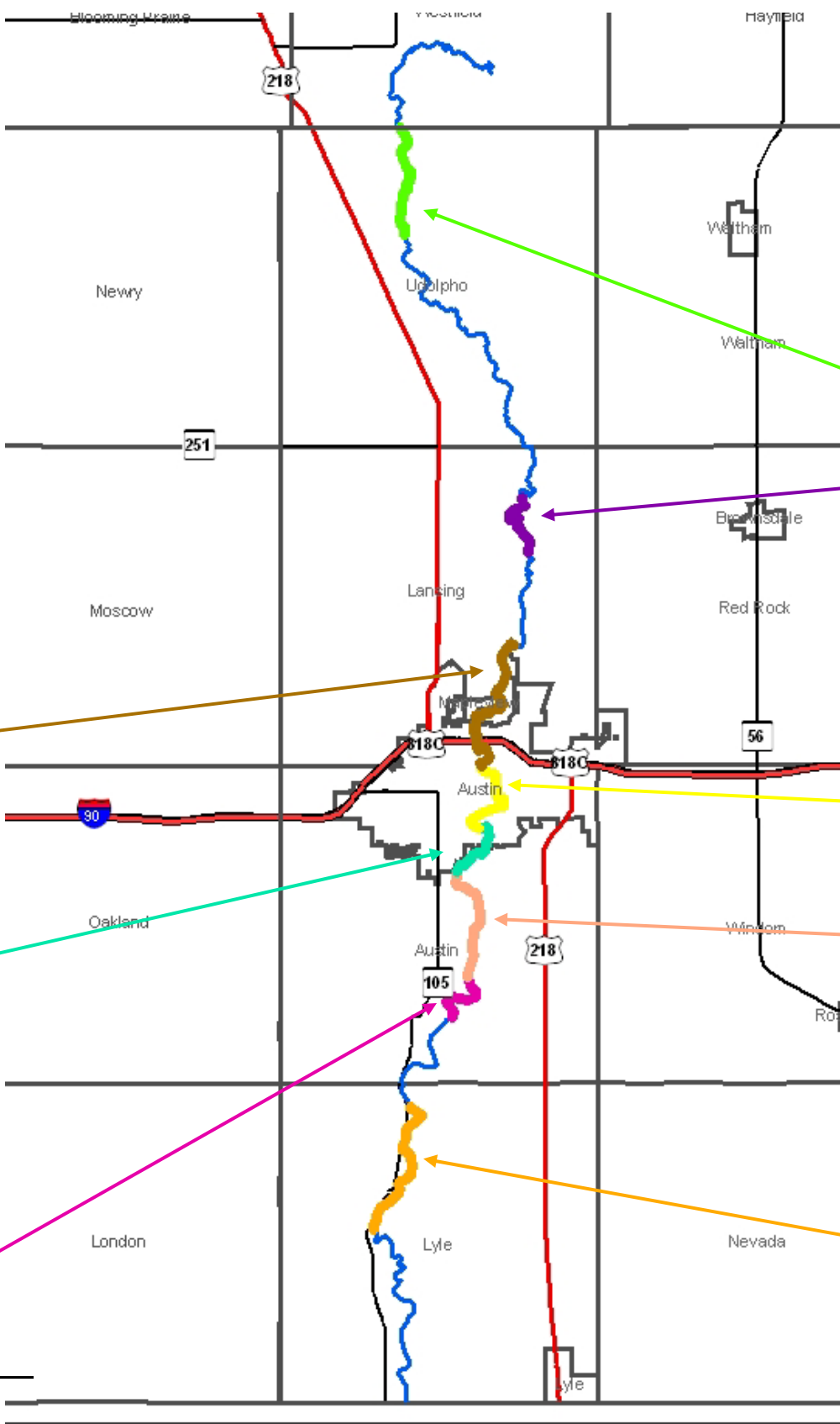


Rotaract Group



MN Conservation Corp members hired by the CRWD.

Mike Hull Group



Adopt-A-River volunteer groups that did cleanups included:

- Wayde Bishop family (Mower County’s north border to County Road 1);
- Craig Anderson (County Road 2 to the south edge of Lansing);
- Rotaract (Ramsey Dam to Mill Pond in downtown Austin);
- Barb Wright group (Fourth Ave. N.E. dam to Marcusen Park);
- CRWD/Minnesota Conservation Corps (Marcusen Park to Skjeveland Property);
- Howie Crawford family (Skjeveland Property to Solafide Observatory);
- Mike Hull group (Solafide Observatory to County Road 4); and
- Mullenbach group (Orchard Creek to Riverbend Campground).

Wayde Bishop Family

Craig Anderson



Barb Wright Group



Howie Crawford Group



Mullenbach Group

CRWD staff is seeking more groups to adopt [available cleanup routes](#) on the Cedar River for 2012 as well as the watershed district’s other tributaries. If interested, please contact the CRWD at 507-434-2603 or stop by the Mower Soil & Water Conservation District office at 1408 21st Ave NW in Austin.

Corn Stalk Nitrate Testing

In 2011, our staff sampled 10 fields in the Cedar River Watershed for the Corn Stalk Nitrate Testing Program. The ag producers found that the areas which were tested had the highest nitrate numbers in the Midwest. This is likely due to the prolonged drought. In its first real year of results, the testing opened the producers' eyes to the concern and some will likely make adjustments. Overall, this program helps the watershed and the producer.



Rain Barrel Sales

CRWD staff along with other local agencies distributed 300 rain barrels in June of 2011 in Austin as part of a new effort to promote water conservation as well as improve water quality.

Sold at discounted rates, the rain barrels are an efficient, convenient way to trap runoff from a roof and storing it in a 55-gallon barrel for later use around your yard. Each barrel has a spigot at the bottom.

CRWD officials and their partners hope to offer a similar rain barrel program again.

Sponsors of the event included: Mower Soil & Water Conservation District; Austin Utilities; Izaak Walton League; and the Austin A.C.E.S. group.



Streamwater Monitoring

In 2011, staff collected 14 samples at 10 different sites in the Cedar River Watershed.

Dissolved oxygen provides fish and other aquatic critters with air to breathe. The goal is to have dissolved oxygen levels stay above 5mg/L. The averages in general were higher this year and only dropped below the threshold of 5 mg/L about 1% of the time.

Nitrogen is a basic plant nutrient that in excess is responsible for the hypoxia zone in the Gulf of Mexico and blue baby syndrome in drinking water. In the previous three years, Nitrate-Nitrite levels exceeded 10 mg/L in about 20 percent of the samples, this year was 45 percent. In five of the eight sites where monitoring was done in the past four years, the 2011 average was the highest for N-N.

Phosphorous is a basic plant nutrient that in excess can cause excessive plant growth. Phosphorous averages showed a reduction from previous years. Rose Creek was the exception, with a large increase this year. This might correlate with the increase in total suspended solids that was seen at this site. When compared to the past monitoring averages, two of the eight sites showed the highest average and one of the eight sites had its lowest sample year. About 27 percent of the samples were above the .200 mg/L standard, up from 23 percent last year.

Total Suspended Solids (TSS) is a measurement of the sediment being transported in the stream. Overall 10 percent of TSS samples exceeded 60 mg/L. Compared to past monitoring efforts, four of the eight sites had the highest average. We had a wetter spring and that showed with high TSS this spring. Rose Creek had the highest average and in the past, it was typically one of the lowest.



Water sampling in the Cedar River Watershed

Wetland Restorations in the Watershed

Ordella Rolfson-

The Rolfson wetland restoration was the kick-off for the CRWD initiative to reduce flows in Dobbins Creek Watershed. The project was enrolled through the RIM Program and developed to tackle the high-velocity flow challenges of the Dobbins landscape. Located on the top of the watershed, the Rolfson project is the first stop in the water treatment process down to the Cedar. The project reduces flow rates by over 40% on 100 year rain events.



Roger Peterson-

The Roger Peterson Restoration project utilized several different state and federal conservation programs. The project started as a cooperative restoration between neighbors. Eventually, Mr. Peterson purchased the property. The restoration is small and located on the bottom of a small, 20 acre watershed. The reduction numbers are not significant. However, the location is positive for holding water, which previously drained directly into a private drainage ditch, one mile from the Cedar River.



Steve Torgerson-

Torgerson was an efficient stormwater treatment project. The easement involved the minimal amount of acres to get the maximum amount of basin storage. The project was funded through state and federal restoration program funds. This project was very unique in topography. There were a series of three basins that filter the water before out-letting into Mower County Ditch #26. CD #26 enters the Cedar River in the city of Mapleview. The landowner participated because of the wildlife that will be attracted by the shallow wetlands. In addition, the project basins and design will provide perpetual storm water treatment and flow reduction.



City Incorporates BMP's for Snow Piles



City of Austin leaders worked with the CRWD to install "best management practices," also known as BMPs, around the city's large snow pile site next to the Cedar River.



Focused on improving water quality, the practices implemented will help keep pollutants from entering the Cedar River as the snow pile melts. CRWD and City of Austin officials worked together to find a solution for the city's snow storage before the CRWD's new rules went into effect in early December 2011.

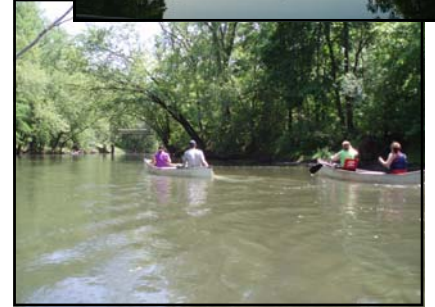
Cedar River Becomes Newest State Water Trail

A stretch of the Cedar River in Mower County received the designation of a state water trail thanks to the Minnesota Legislature's approval of a CRWD initiative in 2011.

The Cedar River became the 33rd state water trail in Minnesota under a program by the Department of Natural Resources that includes mapped routes of all water trails for canoeists and kayakers. Work has started on providing maps and other information for the Cedar River, whose official water trail route runs from the village of Lansing (north of Austin) to the Minnesota-Iowa border.

Sen. Dan Sparks and Rep. Jeanne Poppe, both of Austin, introduced the legislation designating the Cedar River as a state water trail. Rep. Rich Murray, of Albert Lea, also supported the legislation.

DNR staff members are working to provide information, including mapping the Cedar River; developing the Cedar River webpage; and interpreting the existing river gauges to provide river level reports. Officials with the DNR also plan to float the Cedar River several times a year to check for navigation hazards and mark or remove navigation hazards (dams, rapids, etc.), among other services.



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