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Pine County JOURNAL

STUDENTS FROM PINE COUNTY HELP WITH WATER QUALITY PROJECTS AT UPPER AND LOWER BIG PINE LAKES

by Margy Lauer Big Pine Lakes Association

The Big Pine Lakes Association

Water Quality and Fish Habitat

Committee headed by James Lauer

is making great strides in improv-

ing the water quality of both North

and South Big Pine Lakes through

education, awareness, and a lot of

hard work. The Big Pine Lakes

Association Water Quality

Committee had plenty of work to

do during the summer of 2009.

There were 14 planned intermittent

stream projects with native plant-

ings. They also offered lakeshore

owners a Buffer Zone Program to

have their shorelines planted with

native grasses and flower seeds.

This work was to be done by vol-

unteers within the committee. We

were excited to see thirty shoreland

owners signed up and a bit

worried about how we could get

that many done without extra help!

Then the Association was blessed

by a call from Sam Martin of Pine

SWCD. Sam was contacted by

Lynn Walz, Crew Supervisor for

the Central Minnesota Jobs and

Training Service Youth Summer

Employment Program. Lynn said

Hinkley-Finlayson High School

students were available and ready

to do some work. The kids spent

the week cleaning stream beds and

cleaning up debris in the intermit-

tent streams. They also placed

river rock where it washed out to

prevent sediment from getting into

the lake. Thanks to those of you

that helped keep us on track!! You

are welcome back anytime! The

following week we received a call

from the coordinator of the Central

Minnesota Jobs and Training



Students in the Summer Youth Employment Program and Greg Bennett working at the narrows across the street from the public access.

Service and they had students from East Central High School who were interested in helping the Big Pine Lakes

Association with Native Planting projects. What perfect timing as we were planning and designing another Educational Interpretive site on County Road 23. There were several teens and a great supervisor, Greg Bennett. The kids worked with us in the heat, the cold and the rain. We never knew what the weather was going to do each day. They helped create a picnic area, planted over 1,000 native flowers and grasses, put down float free mulch, put up a fence and made a walking trail of gravel. This site is at the narrows across the street from the interpretive site at the public access. Thanks to all those that helped!! We found it especially rewarding to see the kids show interest and want to learn more about the benefits of buffer zones and native plantings at the shoreline.

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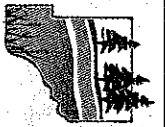
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Pine County WATERS

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Editor's Column

by Jill Carlier, District Manager

Who do you listen to? Have you ever noticed that bad news travels faster than good news? Why is that? When did we, as a society, become so negative, so pessimistic that all we do is focus on the bad side of life? It's almost like we want to hear about other peoples' misfortunes to make ourselves feel better about our own problems. Why?

Remember the old saying, "If you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all"? When did that saying disappear? As parents we try to teach our kids right from wrong, what to say and what not to say, and how to act. Yet as adults, it seems we don't practice what we preach. Why?

I have worked for Pine SWCD for several years now, and I am constantly amazed at how some people treat us and react to us. People are so quick to judge us and what we do. Why? Apparently many people in Pine County have heard bad stories about us. I'm told we have a bad reputation and people will do whatever it takes to avoid dealing with us. Why? Are we really that bad? Are we really that difficult to work with? Does everyone feel that way, or is it just a few that are really good at spreading negative stories? Do people really know what they are talking about, or do they hear tidbits, and fill in the blanks on their own?

Have you ever heard a story about someone you know, and it seems pretty farfetched, but you find yourself believing at least part of it? Do you believe in giving people the benefit of the doubt, or is everything in your world black and white? I used to think everything was black or white, good or bad. But as I get older, I seem to find myself living in the "grey area" more often than not.

As I write this, my mind keeps coming back to the rumors about how bad Pine SWCD is. Why? Did the district do something to make everyone in the county dislike us; or even "hate" us? I am not typically an optimist, but I find it hard to believe that no one in Pine County supports the district, and the work that we do. Recently, a citizen came to our board meeting and stated that the public needs to know what we are doing, and how we are doing it. This person said that the public needs proof that we are doing our job like we are supposed to. This person said that our board needs to "sit up and pay attention to what is going on around here", "the image of the district is very bad around the county, and the board needs to start working on it".

These comments have bothered me ever since that meeting. I keep thinking that if people want to know what we are doing, why don't they call us? Why don't they stop in to see us?

And why is it that every time I hear about how bad the "image" of the district is; it's always the same few people telling me?

Don't get me wrong, I completely understand "justification", but what ever happened to "trust"? Do people go to the hospital and question what the surgeon is doing during an operation; or question how the cook prepares your food at a restaurant; just to make sure these people are doing their jobs? Of course not. There are state and federal regulations both of these professions are required to follow. Did you know that there are also state regulations that Pine SWCD is required to follow? Did you know that if we don't follow the rules sent down from the state, our office as well as activities in the county can be stopped temporarily until the State resolves the issue? That means that the driveway into the land you just purchased could not be built. The wildlife pond you were going to dig would be put on hold until the State says it's OK to do it. It means that the shoreline stabilization project you were planning on to prevent your house from falling into the lake could not be constructed until the State says it's OK. Did you know that? Have any of the local "gossips" heard that before?

Do the people that are so against the district really know what we do? Do they know the statutes and regulations that we are required to follow by the State of Minnesota? My guess is that they don't. My guess is that these few people don't have a clue who we are, what we do, and why we are here. Do they know how many good things we do in Pine County? I doubt it. If they knew - if they really paid attention to what we do, they wouldn't be so judgmental about us. They would stop and think about things before they repeat the rumors they heard at the local coffee shop that morning. If people took the time to find out the answers to some of these questions, we might all find ourselves in a different state of mind! Who do you listen to - the person telling you all kinds of stories; or do you go and find out the truth for yourself?

So, Pine County, here is my challenge to you: Do you know who we are? Do you know what we do? Do you support us and the work that we do? If so, we'd like to hear from you! Send us a quick email, a short note in the mail, or something to let us know that there are people out there who really do believe in us, and want to let us know that the whole world is not against us! Send your comments to: Editor, Pine SWCD 1602 Hwy 23 North, Sandstone, MN 55072. Email your comments to: jimcarlie@co.pine.mn.us