



PINE COUNTY LOCAL WATER MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE

by Jill Carlsen, District Manager

As you may recall, in 2008 the county board passed a resolution directing Pine SWCD to begin the process of updating the Water Management Plan. After that, we held public meetings, sent mailings to cities and townships, and had surveys available at our office, as well as our booth at the Pine County Fair. All of this was to obtain citizen input on water concerns in the county. We also solicited agency input from DNR, MPCA, MDH, and MDA, as required by the State. While it didn't seem like we received much input at the time, we compiled quite a list.

At that point, Pine SWCD created a "sub-committee" of the Water Plan Task Force group. Why? Well, the Task Force has grown from approximately 20 members up to 35-40 members in the past few years. And while it's great to see the interest and support each year at our meetings, as the old saying goes "too many cooks spoil the soup". So we created the Water Plan Working Group. We took 10 peo-

ple from the task force from all areas of the county, each representing different interests. Some represent lake associations; there is a city administrator, a township official, and a small farmer, just to name a few. We also have SWCD Supervisor Doug Odgaard and Commissioner Curt Rossow, along with myself and Sam Martin. This group has met for a year now working on different aspects of the new plan.

The Working Group went through all of the citizen input we had obtained and developed 2 main priority concerns for the new plan:

- 1. Water Quality
- a. Improving Impaired Waters
- b. Maintaining Unimpaired Waters
- 2. Natural Resources Conservation, Utilization and Education

Next, the group fit all of the public's concerns into one of those categories. We then went through the current water plan to find out what objectives had been worked on and achieved.

and which ones hadn't. The objectives that had not been dealt with yet were then brought over to the new plan, and also placed into one of the categories listed above. Each list was then ranked from most important to least important. At that point, a Priority Concerns Scoping Document was written. Once the group and the Pine SWCD board approved the Scoping Document, Sam and I presented the document to a BWSR committee that reviews water plans and makes recommendations to the BWSR board. The BWSR board approved our Scoping Document, which brings us to where we are now.

Currently we are working on writing the actual water plan. The plan needs to list specific projects we will be working on to try to achieve our goals for our Priority Concerns. Once we have a draft that we are happy with, we will start the approval process, starting with the Working Group, then the Task Force, then the SWCD board.

Once the SWCD board approves the plan, it will be sent to the county board. According to BWSR requirements for water plan updates, the county must hold a public hearing on the new water plan. After the county board approves the plan, it is sent to BWSR for final approval. Once BWSR approves the plan, it will be presented back to the county for adoption.

If you have any questions about the process or the update itself, please feel free to call me at 320-216-4241, or stop in to see me.

THE SNAKE RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT WILL BEGIN A TOTAL MAXIMUM DAILY LOAD (TMDL) STUDY IN THE SNAKE RIVER WATERSHED

by Sam Martin, Water Management Specialist

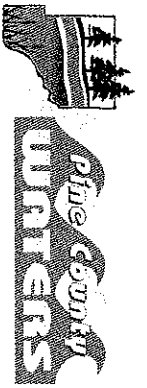
A comprehensive TMDL Study will begin in the Snake River Watershed this spring. Lakes and streams will be sampled for three years. The lakes will be sampled twice a month May through September. Staff from the Pine and Kanabec SWCD's will be collecting the stream samples in their respective counties. The streams will be sampled bi-weekly April through October plus ten rain event samples. Eleven stream sites will be monitored in the watershed.

Three of these locations will be in Pine County. Trained volunteers will be doing the lake sampling. Pokegama and Cross Lake in Pine County and Knife and Quamba in Kanabec County will be sampled. Pokegama Lake will be sampled in two locations and Cross Lake will be monitored in three locations. The DNR Division of Waters will be conducting flow monitoring and Era Labs in Duluth will be analyzing the samples. Pokegama and Cross Lakes

are on the MPCA's Impaired Waters List for Excess Nutrients. Pokegama, Mission, Bear, and an unnamed creek to Cross Lake are also on the Impaired Waters list. After the three year study is completed, the data collected will be used to determine waste load allocations for the sub-watersheds. Public input meetings will be held to gather information from local landowners. An implementation plan will be developed based on the moni-

toring results and public input. The plan will address how it will help achieve the St. Croix River Basin Team's 20% phosphorus load reduction goal by 2020 and the future Lake St. Croix TMDL and Implementation Plan. Applications for grant funding will then be submitted to assist with the cost of installing projects.





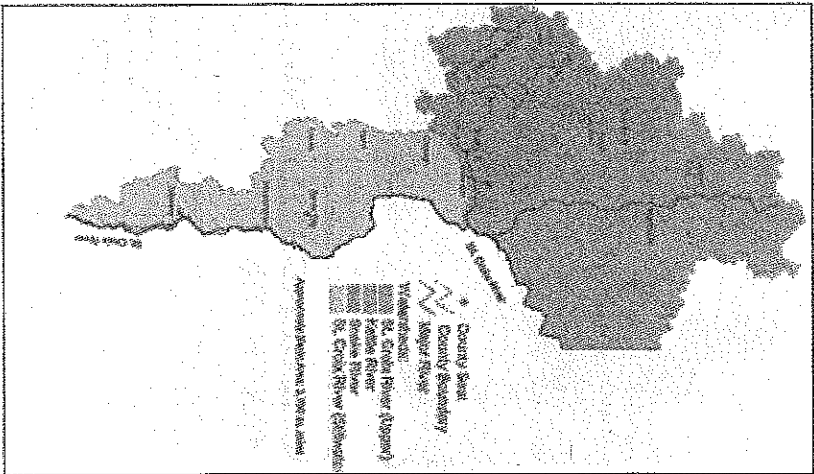
"CONSERVATION ST CROIX"

A group of 9 Soil & Water Conservation Districts have partnered up to work on a TMDL that encompasses the entire St. Croix Watershed Basin. Carlton, Aitkin, Pine, Kanabec, Mille Lacs, Chisago, Isanti, Anoka, and Washington district boards have recently signed a Memo of Agreement to work together on the basin-wide TMDL with MPCA. Other agencies involved are: BWSR, MN DNR, WI DNR, and the St. Croix River Association.

Once the TMDL Implementation Plan is approved, an unprecedented amount of cost-share dollars will be available in the basin for projects to reduce the amount of phosphorus in the Watershed. Projects like lakeshore and streambank stabilization, filter strips, grass waterways, feedlots, and ag waste systems will be implemented through the TMDL. This process has the potential to bring in large amounts of money into each county involved in the process - whether it be to local contractors, nurseries, dealerships, etc. During economic times like this, any type of cash infusion to the local economy is welcome!

Basin Information

The river crosses three major ecoregions and provides protection for a rich riparian zone, originating in a region of northern spruce and pine and flowing south-westerly through hardwood forests and prairie, eventually joining the Mississippi River. The St. Croix river supports 95 fish species, beaver, muskrat and others. Eagles, osprey, and ducks nest along the river. Insects, 41 species of fresh water mussels, and hundreds of other species of plants and animals make the St. Croix their home.



During the 1950s and '60s, a burgeoning population from the Twin Cities continued to push for development and increased recreational usage of the St. Croix River. Worried that continued urban stressors would put the natural resources of the watershed at risk, concerned citizens and politicians pushed for the St. Croix to be included in the original National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. The St. Croix National Scenic Riverway, which includes the Namekagon River in Wisconsin and the upper portion of the St. Croix, was established as part of that original Act in 1968. The Lower St. Croix National Scenic Riverway was added in 1972. This park is one of the most biologically diverse national parks of the Midwest.

The states of Minnesota and Wisconsin both recognize the St. Croix as an exceptional resource, deserving of protection. Minnesota has designated the entire St. Croix and its Kettle River tributary as Outstanding Resource Value Waters. Wisconsin has designated portions of the St. Croix as an Exceptional Resource water and the remainder as an Outstanding Resource Water. Wisconsin has also declared its tributary, the Namekagon River, an Outstanding Resource Water. For more information on the St. Croix Basin, see the following link to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency website:

<http://www.pca.state.mn.us/water/basins/stcroix/index.html>

If you would be interested in getting involved in the TMDL process, please contact Sam Martin or Jill Carlier at (320) 216-4240 for more information, or email them at: smartin@co.pine.mn.us and jmcarter@co.pine.mn.us

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) funds available to Minnesota producers

Hinckley, MN, January 22, 2010- Agricultural producers looking to solve natural resource problems on their farms should apply now for assistance through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) administered by the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

The Minnesota NRCS announced that a scoring period to determine priority for funding applications will occur at the end of February, 2010. Nearly \$22 million is available to assist producers.

According to Julie Lindner, Acting District Conservationist, completed applications must be received at local NRCS Field Offices throughout Minnesota by February 26 in order to be considered for this scoring period.

Through EQIP, landowners interested in conservation practices are provided both technical assistance and financial assistance to install eligible practices.

For 2010 Minnesota producers are eligible for two new practices, drainage water

management and seasonal high tunnels for crops. Drainage water management facilitates the management and control of existing tile drainage systems to improve the water quality leaving the system. Seasonal high tunnels, sometimes referred to as hoop houses, are limited as a pilot practice to determine if such structures can provide environmental benefits with increased production.

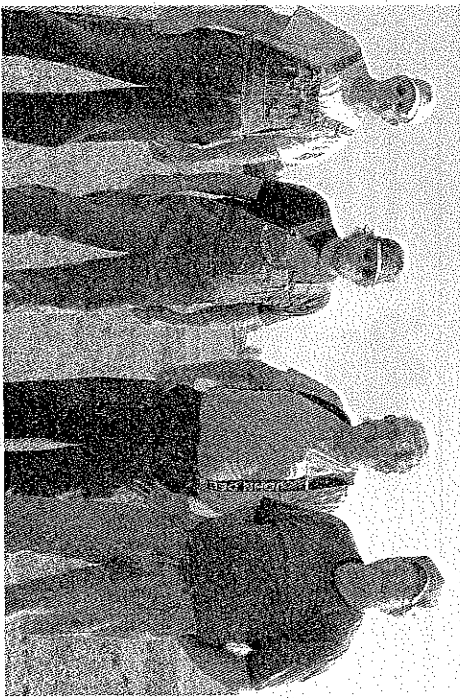
Participation in EQIP is limited to agricultural producers. Organic producers, limited resource farmers, beginning farmers, and underserved farmers were designated in the 2008 Farm Bill as focused outreach groups and may benefit from EQIP. EQIP provides assistance for a wide variety of conservation practices treating cropland, grazing, forestry, feedlots, and wildlife.

To find out more about EQIP in Minnesota, contact your local NRCS field office in Hinckley at (320) 384-7432 or visit the MN NRCS website: www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov

NORDRUM DAIRY IS PINE COUNTY'S 2009 OUTSTANDING CONSERVATIONIST

Nordrum Dairy of Pine City was chosen as Pine County's Outstanding Conservationist for 2009. Nordrum Dairy is a partnership between 4 brothers who took over the family farm about 10 years ago. Their parents bought the farm in 1925. Nordrum's farm approximately 560 acres. They milk 150 cows 3 times a day, and take care of 150 young stock.

The Nordrum's have done a considerable amount of expansion over the years. They converted their old dairy barn into a milking parlor and constructed a free-stall barn. They have also installed a comprehensive manure management system including two concrete tanks, diversions, sediment basins and filter strip. The Nordrum's develop an annual manure management plan as



well as a pest management plan. The Nordrum's have the foresight to consider environmental concerns into their expansion plans especially in an area with high development. Nordrum Dairy was honored in December at the Minnesota Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts (MASWCD) Annual Convention in Duluth along with representatives from all over the state.

Past recipients of this award are: Terry & Chris Stepan, Willow River; Scott & Lisa Lucht, Roylston; Raymond & Cecilia Rath, Bruno; Roger & Judy Nelson, Hinckley; James & Leigh Branstedt, Hinckley; and Audubon Center of the Northwoods in Sandstone just to name a few.

"LET'S GET GROWING" - THEME OF EIGHTH ANNUAL PINE COUNTY HORTICULTURE DAY SAT. MARCH 27th

"Let's Get Growing" is the theme of the Eighth Annual Pine County Master Gardener Horticulture Day on Saturday, March 27th from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Pine City High School located south of Pine City on MN Highway #61. Registration, exhibits and coffee begin at 8 a.m.



"The Importance of Biodiversity in Organic Gardening" will be the keynote presentation at 9:00 a.m. by Bud Markhart, University of Minnesota professor, organic gardener and contributing writer to the Northern Gardener magazine. Bud will cover why organic gardening works, nature's system, biodiversity in soils, crop rotations and using insects.

Two rounds of concurrent sessions will be presented twice on the following topics by these speakers:

• "Propagating and Increasing Plants for Spring Planting" will be covered by Bill Peters, University of Minnesota Dept. of Horticulture Teaching Specialist. Bill will demonstrate techniques to plant, divide and increase your plant numbers for spring planting.

• "Trees and Shrubs for Zone 3 beyond the Ash" will be presented by Kathy Zuzak, University of Minnesota Extension Educator with expertise in trees and shrubs. Kathy will give an update on Emerald Ash Borer forecast for Minnesota and then recommend hardy trees and shrubs for zone 3 that we can plant now to get ahead of the inevitable loss of our ash trees. Kathy has a forest pathology background and 19 years as a plant breeder when she developed the Northern Accents roses, "Lights" series of azaleas, Garden Glow dogwood, Firefall Freeman Maple and other shrub and tree cultivars.

• "Growing 12 Wonderful Culinary Herbs" will be the first session and "Easy and Healthy Cooking with Herbs" the second session presented by Myrl Moran of Melon Patch Herbs, Princeton.

In the first concurrent session Bud Markhart will cover "How to Grow Organically: The Benefits of Organic Matter and Composting".

In the second concurrent session, "Shade Gardening with Perennials - Beyond Hostas" will be covered by Debee Lonnee, Bailey Nurseries Perennial, woody and bedding plant coordinator. She will present ideas on what can be planted besides hostas in shaded locations in your yard and/or garden.

Morning refreshments and a light lunch will be served, door prizes given and there will be time to visit with exhibitors during breaks between sessions. Bring your gardening questions to the "Ask a Master Gardener Booth (table)" and visit with experienced Pine County Master Gardeners.

Deadline date for Early Bird Registration for Horticulture Day is Friday, March 19th. The fee \$16 will save you money and enter you into a Special Grand Prize Drawing! The registration fee after March 19th and at the door will be \$19.

You can print a registration form from the Pine County Extension office home page at www.extension.umn.edu and clicking "Extension offices" and then "Pine County". Or, request a registration form by calling or stopping by the Extension office at 800-657-5813 Ext. #4 or #3 or 320-591-1651. The office is located at the Pine County Courthouse at 635 Northridge Dr. NW. Ste. #280 in Pine City. Registration forms are also available at Sprouts Home Town Market, Pine City; Beaver Meadow Garden Center, Hinckley; Organic Carrot, Sandstone and Village Floral, Grantsburg, Wisconsin.

