



WaterFront Bulletin



Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

December 2009

Working with Minnesotans to protect, conserve and improve our environment and enhance our quality of life.

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MPCA awards \$1.7 million in Clean Water Partnership grants

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) recently awarded \$1.7 million in grants for Clean Water Partnership projects. MPCA Commissioner Paul Eger approved the recommendations of MPCA staff and the Intergovernmental Project Coordination Team to fund 11 resource investigation projects and nine implementation projects. The grants are funded from both state Clean Water Partnership (CWP) and state Clean Water Fund (CWF) appropriations.

Five of the implementation projects were also awarded \$3.5 million of State Revolving Fund (SRF) loan money to upgrade septic systems and fund agricultural best management practices.

The following tables outline the projects and grant/loan amounts.

Stay tuned for additional funding

The CWP program will be opening another grant and loan funding round in January 2010. Look for further information in upcoming WaterFront issues.

CWP and CWF Resource Investigation Projects		
Project Title	Sponsor Agency	Grant Amount
Deer and Pokegama Lakes: A Diagnostic Study	Itasca County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD)	\$249,986
SE Minnesota Volunteer Nitrate Monitoring Network	Southeast Minnesota Water Resources Board	\$143,600
Pine River Watershed Stream Baseline Water Quality	Cass County Administration (Pine River Watershed Alliance)	\$105,712
Lake Alice Resource Investigation Project	City of Fergus Falls	\$ 98,500
Square Lake Implementation Plan Refinement	Carnelian-Marine-St. Croix Watershed District	\$ 58,000
Crosby Lake Management Plan	Capitol Region Watershed District	\$ 50,000
Pearl Lake Diagnostic Study	Pelican River Watershed District	\$ 47,188
Sand and Long Lake Diagnostic Studies	Carnelian-Marine-St. Croix Watershed District	\$ 39,000
Green Lake Eurasian Watermilfoil/ Stormwater Study	Middle Fork Crow River Watershed District	\$ 33,000
Clear Lake Water Quality Diagnostic Study	Rice Creek Watershed District	\$ 20,100
Lambert Creek Retrofit ID and Design Project	Vadnais Lake Area Watershed Management Organization	\$ 15,000

Clean water grants, continued on next page

Events

Dec. 17: Forum to address challenge of energy conservation

The Minnesota Environmental Initiative will present "Energy conservation in Minnesota: Meeting the Challenge" Thursday, Dec. 17, noon to 4 p.m. at A.G. Hill Ballroom, Kagin Commons, Macalester College, 1600 Grand Ave., St. Paul, Minn.

Forum presenters will address the Conservation Improvement Program (CIP), which mandates an annual 1.5 percent annual energy savings goal. All Minnesota utilities will be expected to meet this goal beginning in 2010.

The cost per person is \$30 for MEI members and \$60 for non-members.

For more information, go to www.mn-ei.org/events/upcoming.html#energy.

The forum will be followed by an optional tour of Macalester College's newly built Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Platinum-Certified Markim Hall. Markim Hall is the first higher-education building in Minnesota to receive the highest level of LEED Certification.

CWP grants, continued from previous page

CWP and CWF Implementation Projects / State Revolving Fund Loans		
Project Title	Sponsor Agency	Grant/Loan Amount
Greater Blue Earth and Des Moines River SSTS Loans	Watsonwan County	0 / \$1,200,000
North Fork Crow Septic System/ Feedlot Upgrades	North Fork Crow River Watershed District	0 / \$ 750,000
Rock River Replacement SSTS Loan Program	Rock County SWCD/Land Management	0 / \$ 650,000
East Branch Blue Earth River Watershed Approach	Faribault County	\$250,000 / \$ 200,000
Enhanced Total P Removal in an Urban Wetland System	Capitol Region Watershed District	0 / \$ 430,000
Bevens/Silver Creek SSTS Project - Sibley County	Sibley SWCD	\$ 9,770 / \$ 273,000
Reducing Sediment in the Crow River Basin	Meeker County/ Crow River Organization of Water	\$250,000 / 0
Blue Earth River Basin Restoration Positions	Greater Blue Earth River Basin Alliance	\$ 227,600 / 0
Lake Johanna/Oasis Pond Water Quality Treatment	Rice Creek Watershed District	\$110,200 / 0

MPCA awards nearly \$300,000 in federal stimulus funding

The MPCA has selected three watershed projects for federal stimulus funding. The Agency recently completed the evaluation and grantee selection for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) Water Quality Management Planning 604(b) pass-through grant awards. Three top-scoring proposals out of eight were selected to receive funding:

- Whitewater River Watershed Project: awarded \$115,850 for the Farmer-led Watershed Council Pilot Project.
- Upper Mississippi River Basin Association: awarded \$100,000 for Upper Mississippi River Clean Water Act Planning and Coordination.
- Heron Lake Watershed District: awarded \$74,122 for the West Fork Des Moines River Watershed Collaboration.

The MPCA thanks all applicants for submitting strong proposals and for their commitment to this important water quality planning work.

Questions can be directed to Kimberly Nuckles at 651-757-2618 or kimberly.nuckles@state.mn.us.

U.S. EPA accepting applications for Environmental Education grants

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is accepting grant applications for a total of \$3.4 million in funding for environmental education projects and programs. EPA expects to award about 100 grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$200,000 and will accept applications until **Dec. 15, 2009**.

The purpose of the Environmental Education Grant Program is to promote environmental stewardship and help develop knowledgeable and responsible students, teachers and citizens. The grants provide financial support for innovative

Survey

U of M: Make sure your voice is heard

From the water we drink and use to grow our food, to the lakes and rivers that provide recreation for us and habitat for wildlife, Minnesota's water supply is vital, precious and worth protecting.

The Minnesota State Legislature has charged the University of Minnesota's Water Resources Center with designing a framework on how and when to make investments that will ensure the purity and abundance of Minnesota's water for generations to come. Because the state's water resources belong to the people of Minnesota, the framework team has created a Citizen/Stakeholder Advisory Group tasked with gathering public opinion via surveys and listening sessions on a range of water issues—from boating to agricultural practices.

Here's your chance to be heard on issues of water quality, water usage and priorities. Please take this survey. Go to the Water Resources Center's web site at wrc.umn.edu/ and click on the link to "Minnesotans and Their Water Survey."

projects that design, demonstrate, or disseminate environmental education practices, methods, or techniques. Projects should involve environmental education activities that go beyond disseminating information.

The Environmental Education Grant Program provides funding to local education agencies, state education or environmental agencies, colleges or universities, not-for-profit organizations, or noncommercial educational broadcasting entities. Tribal education agencies, which are controlled by an Indian tribe, band, or nation, may also apply, including a school or community college.

More information is available at: www.epa.gov/enviroed/grants.html.

Project Updates

Public comment period open for Six Lakes TMDL for excessive nutrients

The public comment period will close Dec. 23, 2009 on a water quality report for six lakes in Washington and Chisago counties. Known as a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) study, the report addresses water pollution caused by excessive nutrients, mainly phosphorus that fuels algal blooms.

All six lakes are located in the Comfort Lake-Forest Lake Watershed District near the cities of Wyoming and Forest Lake. The lakes include Comfort, Birch, Bone, Moody, School, Shields, and Little Comfort. Water quality monitoring of the six lakes has shown that their nutrient levels frequently exceed state standards.

The Six Lakes TMDL report is available on the Web at www.pca.state.mn.us/water/tmdl/project-clflwd.html or at the MPCA St. Paul office, 520 Lafayette Road. For more information and to submit comments, contact Christopher Klucas, MPCA Project Manager, at 651-757-2498 or christopher.klucas@state.mn.us.

MPCA approves implementation plan for Lower Cannon River TMDL

The MPCA approved the implementation plan for the Lower Cannon River TMDL on Oct. 14, 2009. The Lower Cannon River, in the Lower Mississippi River Basin, includes two reaches that are listed for turbidity. The Cannon River Watershed Partnership (www.crowp.net) assisted in drafting the TMDL report. The final TMDL and implementation plan can be found at www.pca.state.mn.us/water/tmdl/project-lowercannon-turbidity.html.

MPCA approves implementation plan for Lower Wild Rice River TMDL

The MPCA approved the implementation plan for the Lower Wild Rice River TMDL on Oct. 12, 2009. The Lower Wild Rice River is listed as impaired for turbidity from its confluence with the South Branch to the Red River of the North. The primary contributing sources of the turbidity impairment appear to be upland soil erosion and stream-bank erosion. Land use is dominated by agricultural cropping and is extensively drained for that purpose. The final TMDL and implementation plan can be found at www.pca.state.mn.us/water/tmdl/project-lowerwildrice-turbidity.html.



School Lake is one of six in Washington and Chisago counties listed as impaired by excessive nutrients.

Submissions

WaterFront is a web-based bulletin featuring updates on impaired waters, watershed project funding and water restoration and protection activities underway throughout the state. *WaterFront* is published to share information with internal MPCA staff and external watershed partners.

Email *WaterFront* submissions to Cat Rofshus at caherine.rofshus@state.mn.us.

Worth Noting

Minnesota River Trends Report: A mixed story of water quality

The first-ever Minnesota River Trends Report provides a snapshot of the basin, summarizing some of the major demographic, land use, water quality, biological and recreational trends in the basin over the past 10 to 100 years. The Water Resources Center at Minnesota State University – Mankato recently released the report, which is available at mrbc.mnsu.edu/mnbasin/trends/index.html.

The report tells a mixed story, with some water quality indicators improving, some not, and some showing little or no change:

- Improving – the number of fish. Surveys show that the diversity and abundance of fish species has been increasing since the 1950s. For example, the number of fish species found in 2005 was 60 with an overall catch of 22,500 fish. Compare that to 1980-82, when the number of fish species found was 54 with an overall catch of 9,980.
- Improving – total suspended solids concentration. This key water quality indicator, which represents in lay terms how “muddy” the water is, showed decreasing levels at seven monitoring stations, no trend or mixed results at three stations, and increasing levels at only one station.
- Mixed – nitrate concentration. This important water quality indicator, a form of nitrogen, showed mixed results or no trend at five monitoring stations, increasing levels at one station, and decreasing levels at three stations.
- Declining – the amount of prairie. This diverse ecosystem is literally losing ground to cropland and urban development. The Department of Natural Resources estimates that 77.6 percent of the Minnesota River Prairie was actually prairie with 13 percent non-forest wetland in the 1890s. A century later, the same area was 0 percent prairieland, only 1.9 percent non-forest wetland, 9 percent grassland and 83 percent cropland.
- Static – the number of mussel species. The historic record for mussel species in the Minnesota River Basin is 41, compared to 21 species in 1991 and 23 species today.

“As you will see, many actions and projects have been put in place to try to understand and improve the water quality across the basin. Cleaning up the rivers and lakes in the basin is a complex and challenging endeavor that will take time. Some progress has been made and much still needs to be accomplished. Many diverse groups across the basin are working together to improve ecosystem the health for future generations,” reads the foreword to the trends report.



Mike Davis of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources examines a live mussel with two citizens during a mussel survey of the Chippewa River on Sept. 18, 2009, in the Minnesota River Basin. The overall number of mussel species in the basin remains static. Mussels are one indicator summarized in the Minnesota River Trends Report. (Photo courtesy of Scott Kudelka, Water Resources Center, Minnesota State University-Mankato)