

Benton

Soil and Water Conservation District



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www.soilandwater.org

SWCD Board Meetings: Third Wednesday of Month at 8:30 a.m.

Top 5 Natural Resource Concerns

1. Feedlot and Nutrient Management
2. Development
3. Groundwater Quality and Quantity
4. Water Quality in the Little Rock Watershed
5. Water Quality and Quantity in the Elk River Watershed

2008 Revenue

Charges for Services	\$53,661
Operating Grants & Contributions	\$267,693
Capital Grants & Contributions	\$1,203
County Allocation	\$142,500
State Aid	\$25,212
Investment Earnings	\$15,310
Miscellaneous	\$3,425
Total	\$509,004

Recent Projects



(Pictured left to right: Annie Felix – SWCD, Jeff Jaspersen – MPCA Biologist, and Steve Marod – MN DNR Fisheries are shown conducting geomorphological sampling – Rosgen Survey) 2008 was the third year of the Little Rock Creek TMDL study. The Benton SWCD completed the Little Rock Creek Biological Stressor Identification Report, September 2009, based on available data and Technical Committee and stakeholder input. This report describes impairments, identifies candidate causes of impairment, evaluates relationships of these with the biological community, and identifies the most likely stressors using elimination and strength of evidence analysis. Based on the stressor identification analysis, TMDLs will be developed for the identified pollutants. The SWCD distributed a watershed newsletter in September 2009 to report stressor identification findings to approximately 1,500 watershed residents. Completed documents and publications were posted on the project webpage: www.soilandwater.org/LRC_TMDL.html

New partnerships have been established as a result of this project, including staff involvement from all associated State Agencies (MN Dept. of Agriculture, MN Dept. of Health, MN DNR, BWSR, MPCA), Federal Agencies (NRCS, US Fish and Wildlife Service), and private companies (Natural Resource Research Institute). Continued support and contributions of the agency staff will be essential for the project's long-term success in Phase III and beyond.



(Tiffany Determan, SWCD, stream flow gauging on Lilly Creek)

In 2008 the Elk River Watershed Association

started work on several TMDLs in order to address impaired surface waters in the Elk River Watershed. The SWCD received funds from MPCA that will provide the means to complete TMDLs on three waters on the Clean Water Act 303(d) impaired waters list.

TMDL waters include Big Elk Lake (excess nutrients), Mayhew Lake (excess nutrients), and the Elk River from Big Elk Lake to the St. Francis River (turbidity and fecal coliform).

Shortly after the first stakeholder meeting in March 2009 the streams began to flow kicking off Phase II of the TMDL process. Between March and October twenty stream sites were monitored for a gamut of chemical parameters, such as total phosphorus, chlorophyll-a, and E.coli bacteria as well as stream flow. In addition to the collection of water samples, a bank erosion survey was completed on the Elk River for the portions listed as impaired for turbidity.

Data collected in the summer of 2009 has been sent to Wenck Associates, Inc. which is the project consultant for this TMDL. Over the winter of 2009/2010 Wenck Associates, Inc. will review, analyze and interpret the flow and water quality data.

Once the data analysis is complete there will be another opportunity for stakeholders to hear about and comment on the results of data analysis as well as to discuss the development of the TMDL Implementation Plan.

Future Projects

The SWCD is currently implementing a Native Buffer Program to help address water quality issues within the Little Rock Lake watershed. A native buffer demonstration area was developed in 2009 in conjunction with the Little Rock Lake Association and Benton County.

Funding for the Native Buffer Program is provided by the MN Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR). The Little Rock Lake Association is also contributing by paying for landowner's out-of-pocket expenses for projects installed on Little Rock Lake by utilizing an Initiative Foundation Grant.



(Pictured left to right: Project consultant Bill Walker, MPCA Hydrologist Mark Evenson, and Wisconsin DNR Research Scientist project consultant Paul Garrison analyze a paleolimnological sediment core sample that was taken from the deepest part of Little Rock Lake)

The Little Rock Lake TMDL officially began June 16, 2008 and is scheduled to be completed by May 2010. The purpose of this project is to identify the source of excessive phosphorus in Little Rock Lake. This project combines the data collected from the ongoing Little Rock Creek Biological TMDL Phase II Stressor Identification Study.

To date, the Benton SWCD has completed the Internal Phosphorus Loading Report, the Sediment Core Investigations Report, and has distributed a watershed newsletter. The SWCD is currently developing and organizing a Little Rock Watershed Stakeholder Committee.

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