

Volume XVII Number 1
March, 2008

CRWP 

 2007

Cannon River Watershed Partnership

Annual Report

To protect and improve the surface and groundwater resources of the Cannon River Watershed.



Year 2007 was a great year for CRWP, and the family grew to seven full-time staff and two independent contractors. As a donor, I always want reassurance that my dollars are going directly towards the mission, and I'm happy to report that a whopping 83% of the budget is used for conservation activities. In this letter, I'd like to give you examples of the value created by CRWP staff in addressing watershed needs.

Let's start with the basics. How's the water these days? Is it getting better or worse? We can ask Watershed Analyst Beth Kallestad, who coordinates the watershed monitoring program, one of the most extensive in the state. Monitoring was one of CRWP's earliest activities, and it remains a critical aspect of our work.

The need for information never relents, and Outreach and Development Coordinator Hilary Ziols fills that need. Hilary organizes our Annual Summit, an event bringing together citizens, scientists, and community decision-makers to learn about a current topic. This year's summit on March 12th was "Putting Low Impact Development to Work in Your Community". Past summits have addressed ethanol production and water quality, causes and effects of mercury in our waters, conservation tillage opportunities for farmers, and more. Hilary also researches and writes informed, science-based evaluations of issues of interest to citizens and local government. Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) are scientific documents mandated by the federal Clean Water Act to assess water quality in watersheds. They will provide the foundation for all future water quality work. Hilary and Beth apply their impressive technical and writing muscle to complete TMDLs in the Cannon River watershed.

One of our urgent water quality concerns is contamination caused by wastewater from unsewered communities and illegal straight pipes. Our two community wastewater facilitators, Sheila Craig and Aaron Wills, help small communities sort through the maze of regulations, grants, loans, financing, and engineering needed to achieve compliance.



Back Left to Right: Dave Legvold, Beth Kallestad, Ross Hoffmann, and Aaron Wills.
Front Left to Right: Sheila Craig, Hilary Ziols, Leslie Kennedy, and Roger Wilkowske.

Agriculture is another source of water pollution. Executive Director Dave Legvold, a farmer himself, works to organize events and programs to help match farmers with good conservation methods that work on their farms. Independent contractor Roger Wilkowske visits farmers, literally door to door, promoting the River-Friendly Farming Program.

Our watershed is experiencing continued development pressure. Our newest staff member Ross Hoffmann and independent contractor Lisa Lukis are busy researching city and county zoning and shoreline ordinances, with an eye to helping local government with enforcement and development of effective ordinances.

The critical task of tracking grant money and donor dollars is in the able hands of Leslie Kennedy, Administrative Assistant. Leslie is a tremendous asset, managing a current budget of over \$400,000.

These are just a few examples, and I hope you are as impressed as I am with the bargain of investing in the Cannon River Watershed Partnership!

The business of working for water quality entails taking aim at a moving target every day. With a creative, competent and flexible staff and board I believe we could hit that target a large percentage of the time. We have been able to gain the equipment, people and knowledge needed to keep our focus on safeguarding and improving our water resources.

In 2007 we have seen evidences of hitting a few "bullseyes" as CRWP had gone about its work. We have been blessed with many new partnerships to strengthen our work as well as being able to lend the expertise that CRWP possesses to other groups. We've joined forces with Oxfam International, the Izaak Walton League, the McKnight Foundation, county governments, farmers, several lakes organizations and COLAs, elevators and agronomy providers, The American Farmland Trust, and many others. Although partnering with other agencies can be an imperfect art at times, the Cannon River Watershed Partnership is regarded as an organization that is in touch with its citizen base and has the talent, energy, hope, and optimism to get things accomplished.

Our citizen base has continued to grow and I believe the staff of CRWP and its Board of Directors give good reason for citizens to believe in the work we endeavor to do. It is pretty apparent that our citizens and major donors do not give to our cause, they invest in the cause of clean water and a healthy environment. CRWP has accomplished much in the past year, and that is great, but there is so much more to be done. Every body of water in our watershed needs help, from the last remaining trout streams to the grand flowage where the Cannon River meets the Mighty Mississippi. Not just waters, but our forests, farmlands, cities—you name it.



Where does this sewer go!?! Sheila Craig assisting residents in Nicolville, MN.

Pick an area that is dear to you and work hard for it. It is not necessary for all of us to be environmentalists. Rather it is most important for ordinary people to see a problem and do something about it in whatever way their personal passions and resources allow.

More small communities are becoming involved in finding solutions to stop the pollution of our waterways with the complex problem of raw sewage. By eliminating raw sewage discharge from just a handful of small communities each year we can reduce sewage pollution by an amount each year that is equivalent to a string of milk tanker semis that would stretch across the Metro Area from east to west.

Land owners are beginning to help make progress toward better conservation and 2008 will see greater involvement with our River Friendly Farmers. Through many hours of conversation around the kitchen table we are discovering more and more about good people putting good conservation practices on the land voluntarily.

Monitoring our waters through citizen involvement and grant-supported work will continue in 2008 in an effort to provide a solid scientific basis for starting the clean-up. Good science, performed by well-trained people like Hilary, Beth and Ross will help guide decision making and the application of policy and practices. Monitoring helps us pick our battles and remain focused, there are so many problems that it is easy to become distracted.

We all need to set high goals, but remember that the bigger the goal, the more persistence, dedication, focus and sacrifice it will take to achieve it. Big goals are accomplished by taking small steps, and it starts with a single small action. We cannot expect the government to accomplish big goals for us...remember, we are the government. In the work to clean up and protect our waters it is true that who you know is important, yes, but it is also important who you do not know- JUST YET.

Education, Outreach, and Advocacy 2007 Highlights



Jaunty Cannon Falls contingent cleaned up Bylesby shoreline.

Cannon River Summit *The Ethanol Industry: Effects on Water Resources* - Industry, academic, and government spokespeople met interested citizens to pinpoint issues related to water use. The timely topic attracted 60 participants.

River Cleanup - CRWP worked with Lake Bylesby Improvement Association, Maltby Nature Preserve, area colleges and churches to collect garbage from riparian areas as part of an Earth Week celebration.

Advocacy - In 2007, advocacy included comments on proposed development in Stanton Township (Goodhue County) and the Northfield Surface Water Management Plan. Dave Legvold and Aaron Wills travelled to Washington, DC with Oxfam America to provide input on the national Farm Bill. CRWP



Aaron Wills and Dave Legvold in Washington, DC.

continues to rely on good communication with watershed legislators to advance Minnesota's Clean Water Legacy Act.

The Cannon River Watershed Watcher - Our newsletter was sent to over 1,200 people quarterly in 2007. Issues such as monitoring, biofuel production, and the state of wastewater management in small communities were addressed. Our website, www.crowp.net is updated regularly and provides a calendar of events and a record of past and present projects.

Additional Education and Outreach - CRWP staff met with college students planning environmental projects, and mentored two interns. We wrote articles for local newspapers. We supported the work of the Rice Co. Coalition of Lake Associations (COLA), Tri-County COLA, and gave presentations about the health of the watershed to interested groups.

Citizen Monitoring Program - CRWP continues to serve as a local coordinator for the State's Citizen Lake (CLMP) and Stream (CSMP) Monitoring programs. Citizen monitors use transparency tubes, Secchi disks, rain gauges and other basic equipment to collect valuable water quality information. Identifying and solving pollution problems begins, and continues, with monitoring.

Conservation Projects 2007 Highlights



Lower Cannon TMDL meeting in Cannon Falls, MN.

Lower Cannon River TMDL for Turbidity 2003-2006: MPCA Office of Environmental Assistance - The final draft of the TMDL report, written by CRWP and MPCA staff, was approved by the MPCA Citizens' Board on March 27, 2007, and by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on July 13, 2007. CRWP has used this TMDL (the state's first TMDL for turbidity) to advocate for low impact development and environmental review of development near Cannon Falls.

Byllesby Reservoir Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) 2004-2007: MPCA Office of Environmental Assistance - CRWP completed a preliminary draft of the TMDL in September, 2007. MPCA staff is slated to complete this study in 2008, creating caps for phosphorus inputs to the reservoir.

Low Impact Development Techniques in Local Ordinances in the Cannon River Watershed: MPCA Office

of Environmental Assistance - This project enables CRWP to work with the cities of Owatonna, Waseca, Faribault, and Northfield to build support for restoring natural hydrologic cycles in built environments. Ordinance research and CRWP's annual Summit conference were completed in early 2008, laying the foundation for roundtable workgroups to improve the quality and quantity of cities' stormwater runoff.

Building Capacity for Community Solutions to Wastewater Problems: MPCA Office of Environmental Assistance- The project assists small communities in our watershed and throughout Southeast Minnesota to upgrade their sewer systems. After a number of years of investing time and resources, the upgrading of community sewer systems is beginning to happen, not at breakneck speed, but with a steady, deliberate pace. Two communities, Marysvale and Taopi, upgraded their sewer systems in 2007, ending decades of direct discharge of sewage to the Mississippi and Cedar Rivers. The communities of Hope and Meriden along the Straight River received permits from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to construct their new sewer systems in 2008. And another seven communities are continuing to plug away with solid progress towards upgrades.

Upper Cannon Assessment Project: MPCA Office of Environmental Assistance - The Upper Cannon Assessment Project, affectionately known as UCAP is a diagnostic project in the headwaters/Upper Cannon portion of our watershed. LeSueur County Environmental Services received a Clean Water Partnership grant to fund the study. CRWP is assisting with sample collection, outreach, education, and project coordination. Five stream sites, were sampled May - October for total phosphorus, orthophosphorus, total kjeldahl nitrogen, nitrate-nitrogen, E. coli, biological oxygen demand, total suspended solids, turbidity, water temperature, water level and flow. A total of 112 samples were collected during 22 sampling events. Macroinvertebrate samples were collected at 3 sites in May and September.

Seven lakes were sampled twice per month May - September for TP, Chl-a, and Secchi depth. The project will continue through 2009. Special thanks to Tom Miller for help with site selection, the MPCA Mankato Office staff for all their help with stream monitoring and to Dr. Jim Waddell for assistance with macroinvertebrate sampling.

Surface Water Assessment: Clean Water Legacy Grant- In 2007 CRWP began a two year project to assess the status of some of the lakes and streams in our watershed that had not been monitored before or were lacking enough data to properly assess their status. Lakes samples were collected for total phosphorus, chlorophyll-a, and secchi depth. Stream sites were monitored primarily for E. coli and transparency. Volunteers played a huge role in this project. Our 30 volunteers collected almost 600 samples and 90 secchi disk readings. We monitored 17 lakes and 13 stream sites. We will continue sampling these sites and others in 2008.

Straight River 319 Grant: MPCA- In 2007 the work to reduce fecal bacteria, nutrients and soil contamination of the Straight River came to a close. This grant work can best be summarized by stating that much was accomplished but much remains to be done. Over the life of the grant several cost-share projects that supported runoff reduction through tillage changes, and nutrient and manure



Beth Kallestad programming a UCAP stream monitoring station in Waterville, MN.

Manure Utilization Strategies: MPCA Office of Environmental Assistance - This grant supports research to determine if manure can be managed in an innovative way to allow application at lower rates per acre without sacrificing yield in row-crop corn. In 2007 test plots were established in which areas received 7000 gallons of manure per acre that was broadcast while other areas received 1500 gallons of manure per acre that was row-applied using strip-till and row applied manure. Yield results indicated that the low rate area averaged 179 bushels per acre while the high rate area averaged 165 bushels per acre. An area that received equivalent fertilizer from commercial sources yielded 151 bushels per acre. It was anticipated that manure application would demonstrate positive agronomic outcomes. However, it was not anticipated that the lower rate of manure application would actually provide the highest yields. CRWP is looking forward to the 2008 crop season when the trials will be replicated.

Monitoring Fecal Discharge from Areas Utilizing Reduced Manure Applications Grant: MPCA Office of Environmental Assistance - The relationship between manure application, subsurface tile drainage, and E-coli presence is complex and somewhat of a mystery. CRWP worked to monitor tile water for E-coli presence in three manure application regimes, 7000 gallons per acre, 1500 gallons per acre, and no manure application. Manure was spring applied. Samples did not reveal E-coli until well into the summer growing season. 2007 was notable for a lack of rainfall which may have affected the transmission of bacteria through the soil profile. Yields were also assessed on this test area. The yield results revealed that low rates of manure produced the highest yields with no manure producing the lowest yields. It is anticipated that a season of normal rainfall will provide a different data profile. This project also served as a foundation for a St. Olaf College student to do a field biology research project.



River Friendly Farmer Project: Archibald Bush Foundation - The second season of this work, which intends to introduce the River Friendly Farmer Program in small watersheds, has provided new insights into what is required to get farmers to adopt conservation practices. CRWP has secured the contract services of Roger Wilkowske, retired county agent, to meet with farmers and gather information about each farming operation. Incentive money has been distributed to farmers and land owners to support adoption of tillage changes, soil sampling to bring about better nutrient management, engaging farmers in agronomic workshops to learn new farming techniques, and cost-sharing equipment development and purchase to promote erosion control. The 2007 focus on Spring Brook Watershed has resulted in contacts to nearly all farmers in area. A tile water management structure was installed on a farm that is in a critical area of the Spring Brook Watershed. With this structure in place, nutrient-laden water is retained and routed through a bio-reactor (trench full of wood chips) to reduce nitrogen levels five-fold. In addition this farm site served as a workshop venue for tile contractors, farmers, scientists and interested public. Cannon River Watershed Partnership's work on the River Friendly Farmer program has resulted in CRWP staff being invited to present at eleven workshops and agricultural meetings in 2007.

Roberds Lake Watershed Phosphorus Source Assessment: DNR/MN Environmental & Natural Resources Trust Fund - Through the help of the Rice County Planning and Zoning Office, Rice County Soil and Water Conservation District, the Roberds Lake Club, and watershed residents two goals were accomplished:

- Assess the sources of phosphorus to Roberds Lake and suggest possible strategies to reduce these sources.
 - Create a systematic approach to conduct phosphorus source assessments on the remaining lakes in the Cannon River watershed.
- A full report can be viewed on our website or by contacting Beth Kallestad.

Spring Brook Water Quality Assessment Project: DNR/MN Environmental & Natural Resources Trust Fund-Work is underway to assess the water chemistry, flow conditions, temperature, and aquatic life in the Spring Brook watershed in Rice County. In 2007 we gathered data on total phosphorus, total suspended solids, E. coli, water level, flow, temperature, macroinvertebrates and even a fish survey. As 2007 was such a low flow year, we plan to continue sampling in 2008. Special thanks go out to Michael Pender, our summer intern for sampling and data collection, Dr. Pat Ceas for fish sampling, and Dr. Kathy Shea and her St. Olaf Field Ecology class for assistance with macroinvertebrate sampling.



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Development Coordinator

Annual Report

Ross Hoffmann - Layout

*We apologize if your name has been
omitted. Please let Hilary know by
calling (507) 786-3912 and we will
correct the omission. Thank you!*



Phone: 507-646-8400
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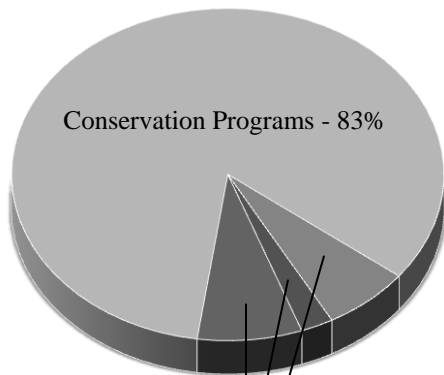


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2007 Financial Highlights

Expenses

| | |
|---------------------------|------------------|
| | |
| Admin/Mgmt 8% | \$29,526 |
| Conservation Programs 83% | \$313,878 |
| Educational Programs 7% | \$24,667 |
| Fundraising 3% | \$9,185 |
| TOTAL | \$377,256 |



Administrative/Management - 8%

Fundraising - 3%

Educational Programs - 7%

Revenue

| | Amount | % of Total |
|--|------------------|-------------|
| Members/Donors | \$33,788 | 9% |
| Richard J. and Lorraine H. Carlander Family | \$10,000 | 2% |
| Program Fees | \$1,705 | <1% |
| Misc Income (Testing fees/Interest/Fiscal Agent Fee) | \$4,720 | 1% |
| Subtotal | \$50,213 | 13% |
| Grants | | |
| AFT Trial Reimbursement | \$1,387 | <1% |
| Bush Foundation Stormwater Project (released) | \$34,470 | 9% |
| Byllesby TMDL | \$10,079 | 3% |
| Fecal Implementation Plan | \$4,791 | 1% |
| Low Impact Development Project | \$6,650 | 2% |
| Manure Utilization Strategies | \$3,779 | 1% |
| Minnesota Environmental Partnership | \$16,255 | 4% |
| Roberds Lake Project | \$9,820 | 3% |
| Spring Brook Assessment Project | \$3,851 | 1% |
| Straight River 319 (released) | \$65,186 | 17% |
| Surface Water Assessment Project | \$12,549 | 3% |
| Tile Monitoring Project | \$3,492 | 1% |
| The McKnight Foundation | \$25,000 | 6% |
| Upper Cannon Assessment Project | \$21,359 | 6% |
| Wastewater Community Solutions Project | \$102,780 | 28% |
| Misc Grants/Projects | \$1,145 | <1% |
| Grants Subtotal | \$322,593 | 87% |
| TOTAL | \$372,806 | 100% |

Based on un-audited totals; final audit will be made available upon completion.