

# RCRCA News

Redwood-Cottonwood Rivers Control Area

## Fall 2003 Soil Sampling Complete

RCRCA technicians, Kelly Oliver and Shawn Wohnoutka, have completed their soil sampling for 2003. They are taking soil samples from locations within the Cottonwood River Watershed that have been approved by the RCRCA Board to receive cost-share dollars to improve water quality. The purpose of this year's sampling is to generate a baseline or current level of phosphorous runoff from farm fields into our waterways. Samples will be taken again in a few years after BMP's have been installed to determine how effective the new management practices have been in reducing phosphorous runoff.

Phosphorous is added to fields when manure and other fertilizers are applied. Immediately following application phosphorous is in a solid state, but can be dissolved in standing water over a period of roughly 24 hours. As long as water is not allowed to pond on the fields, the phosphorous should remain on the field. Tile lines and intakes are installed to drain water from the fields before it ponds up, dissolves the phosphorous and enters our local streams, lakes and rivers. Here is where the phosphorous can cause problems by providing nutrients that promote growth of algae blooms, water milfoil and curlyleaf pondweed. The phosphorous serves as the limiting input to these aquatic plant's growth, that is, they have enough of all the other nutrients they need to grow unabated. They can only reproduce and grow as much as the available phosphorous allows them to. By reducing the amount of phosphorous runoff, we hope to reduce the growth and spread of these nuisance aquatic plants.

The plants themselves do not pose a major problem for the water systems, but what happens in the waterways as these plants die off does. When these plants die, oxygen consuming bacteria decomposes the plant material. The additional phosphorous can allow plant populations to expand beyond sustainable numbers, which then provide large amounts of food for the bacteria. The excessive amount of bacteria activity and oxygen consumption in turn lowers the available oxygen for other forms of aquatic life. The result of all this unseen activity can lead to a very visible result: fish kills in streams, lakes and rivers.

### RCRCA Engineering Technicians Available to Assist You!

Kelly Oliver and William Moldestad, Engineering Technicians for the Cottonwood River watershed are available to assist local landowners, NRCS staff, and SWCD staff. Our current projects are waiting for Army Corps of Engineers approval giving us the ability to help with surveying, design, and construction of conservation practices. If you need help and have a waiting list, contact RCRCA at 507-637-2142, ext 4 for assistance.

December 2003

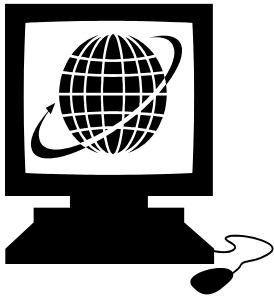
*RCRCA News*



### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Soil Sampling</i>	1
<i>Engineering Technicians</i>	1
<i>Web Site</i>	2
<i>Board Minutes</i>	2
<i>Cost Share Available</i>	2
<i>View of Executive Director</i>	3
<i>Calendar of Events</i>	4
<i>Board &amp; Staff Members</i>	4

## New Look for Web Site!



The web site will be under "construction" over the next couple of months. The information will remain the same, however the layout and overall "look" will be different. Thanks for your patience!

If you have any ideas about what you'd like to see on the web site, call 507-637-2142, Ext. 4.

Suggestions can also be e-mailed to: [shawn.wohnoutka@mn.usda.gov](mailto:shawn.wohnoutka@mn.usda.gov)

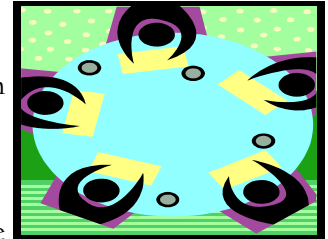
Remember, you will be able view *RCRCA News* through the web site at: [www.rcrca.com](http://www.rcrca.com) and click on "RCRCA News."

## RCRCA Board Minutes

The RCRCA Board of Directors held their monthly meeting on Monday, November 17, 2003 at the Redwood County Courthouse.

The following is the unofficial version of the minutes:

- Board passed resolution to extend Redwood County's first ISTS loan agreement with MPCA.
- Board approved three Cottonwood watershed 319 cost share contracts.
- Board approved one Cottonwood watershed 319 cost share contract for payment.
- Board approved request for one computer that will upgrade the last "old" one in the office. When this action is completed, the replaced computer will be put up for bids.
- Doering informed the Board of the video he participated in for the EPA, to represent Minnesota for successful 319 projects. This video will be used for Region staff and promotion to Congress.
- Doering updated the Board on status of Redwood River TMDL Compliance Project Grant.
- Kerry Netzke reviewed Area II items, noting the Area II Legislative Breakfast and Area II 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on December 13, 2003 in Tracy. The Board also discussed the AMC convention and Minnesota River Basin Conference.
- Next regular RCRCA Board meeting will be December 15, 2003, 1:30 p.m. at Redwood County courthouse in county commissioners meeting room.



## Septic Loan Program

Redwood County, as of October 31, 2003 has \$27,000.00 left in septic system loan program dollars for the Cottonwood Watershed. Contact Redwood County Environmental Office or RCRCA if you are interested and reside in the Cottonwood River Watershed and Redwood County.



### RCRCA APPLIES FOR \$290,000 GRANT

#### FOR CONSERVATION PRACTICES

RCRCA has applied for a \$290,000 grant to implement conservation practices within the Cottonwood River Watershed. \$200,000 would be for cost-share and the remaining \$90,000 would be for technical assistance. Grant awards are expected to be announced in January 2004. The funding would be available in Spring 2004 and the engineering technicians are looking for practices to install. If you or someone you know is looking to install grassed waterways, water and sediment control basins, terraces, or other conservation practices, give RCRCA a call for assistance.

## View of Executive Director

*James Doering, RCRCA Executive Director*

### RCRCA To Represent Minnesota As An Example Of Successful 319 Projects In The Nation

On November 3<sup>rd</sup>, RCRCA participated in an EPA video highlighting successful 319 projects in the United States. Other participants were: Larry Gunderson from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, who gave the agencies perspective on using Clean Water Act Section 319 funds to offset non-point source pollution; Robert Finley of the Water Resources Center of Minnesota State University, Mankato highlighted their use of Section 319 funds and a historical review of conservation efforts in the Minnesota River Basin and Kevin Lines of the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources added CREP efforts that have taken place in the Minnesota River Basin. RCRCA Executive Director James Doering, brought the Basin theme down to sub-watershed level and highlighted the monitored and proven successes in the Redwood and Cottonwood River Watersheds.

### RCRCA Is Developing A Phosphorus Reduction Calculator For Surface Tile Inlet Replacements Using Rock Inlets

Cottonwood River Watershed staff are engaged in developing a phosphorus-crediting calculator for tile inlet replacements. The current method is to approximate one ton of soil loss reduction and one pound of phosphorus reduction per intake. The calculator will use current research developed by U of M Extension, the MN, IA, and WI phosphorus indexes and nutrient composition of actual soil tests. The calculator should be up for peer review in May 2004. For further info, refer to this newsletter's lead article on soil sampling.

### Redwood River Low Interest Septic Loan-On Track For Spring 2004 Availability

The Redwood River was awarded cost share and loan dollars to offset watershed phosphorus loading contributions to the Minnesota River and help achieve the Dissolved Oxygen TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Limit) that has been set for the Lower Minnesota River. Dissolved oxygen levels fall below critical levels during low flow periods as a result of high phosphorus loading. Phosphorus is the limiting nutrient, like nitrogen availability influences corn yield, phosphorus influences algae and plant production in the river. When algae and plants die, the bacteria breakdown of the plant material depletes oxygen stores in the water column.

The Redwood River Watershed Phosphorus TMDL Compliance Project received \$600,000 to be offered as low interest loans to landowners with failed or failing septic systems. The loan dollars will be available in spring 2004 for the Redwood River Watershed in the following counties:

Lincoln	\$130,000
Lyon	\$180,000
Murray	\$30,000
Pipestone	\$70,000
Redwood	\$130,000
Yellow Med.	\$60,000

There are also septic system loan dollars available for the Cottonwood River Watershed. Contact RCRCA or your local Environmental/Planning and Zoning Office for additional details.



1241 East Bridge Street  
Redwood Falls, MN 56283

Phone: 507-637-2142, 4  
Fax: 507-637-2134  
Email: rcrca@rconnect.com



**We're on the web!**  
[www.rcrca.com](http://www.rcrca.com)



*“Christmas is a bridge. We need bridges as the river of time flows past. Today's Christmas should mean creating happy hours for tomorrow and reliving those of yesterday.*

—GLADYS TABER

December 2003

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

**December**

- Nov. 30th - Dec. 3rd MASWCD Convention
- 13th Area II Annual Legislative Breakfast & 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary
- 15th RCRCA Board Meeting—Redwood Falls courthouse
- 24th Half-Day, Christmas Eve
- 25th Christmas Day
- 31st Half-Day, New Year's Eve
- Jan. 1st New Year's Day

**RCRCA Executive Board of Directors**

- Clark Lingbeek, Chairman
- Donald Wellner, Vice Chairman
- Ray Traen, Secretary
- Steve Johnson, Treasurer
- Glen Sorenson, Public Relations & Information
- Phil Nelsen, Member at Large

**RCRCA Full Board of Directors**

**County Commissioners**

- Donald Wellner, Brown Co .
- Norman Holmen, Cottonwood Co .
- David Norgaard, Lincoln Co .
- Phil Nelson, Lyon Co .
- Steve Johnson, Murray Co.
- Jamie Dubbelde, Pipestone Co.
- John Schueller, Redwood Co.
- Jane Remiger, Yellow Medicine Co

**SWCD Board Members**

- Jack Vogel, Brown
- Clark Lingbeek, Cottonwood
- Glen Sorensen, Lincoln
- Ray Traen, Lyon
- Paul Posthuma, Murray
- LeRoy Stensgaard, Pipestone
- Tom Daub, Redwood
- Burton Kuehn, Yellow Medicine

**RCRCA Staff**

- James Doering, Executive Director
- Kelly Oliver, Engineering Technician
- William Moldestad, Engineering Technician
- Shawn Wahnoutka, GIS/Outreach Technician
- Douglas A. Goodrich, Water Quality Technician
- Sharon Voeks, Administrative Officer