

RCRCA News

Redwood-Cottonwood Rivers Control Area

RCRCA Changes

The Redwood-Cottonwood Rivers Control Area organization has been undergoing some changes over the last year. As many of you already know, we have promoted Doug Goodrich from watershed technician to executive director as our former director, Jim Doering, took a position with the city of Redwood Falls as their project coordinator. Shawn Wohnoutka has taken on the duties of watershed technician in addition to his current duties of GIS & educational outreach technician. Kari Clouse, office assistant for Redwood County SWCD, has taken over (part time) as the RCRCA office assistant. That summarizes the staffing changes.

The RCRCA Board has also had some changes in the last couple months as elections have changed the composition of county and SWCD boards. These shakeups have led to 4 new RCRCA board members, though one has served on our board previously. The RCRCA organization would like to extend a welcome to Don Evers and Marge DeRuyter, the new commissioner representatives from Lincoln and Pipestone counties, as well as Don Steffen and Shannon Cohrs as representatives from the Soil & Water Conservations Districts of Redwood and Murray counties.

There have been other changes here at RCRCA, most notably, changes to our e-mail addresses. The federal government made changes in how non-federal government cooperators, such as RCRCA, compensate the government for use of federal software and technical assistance. These changes could have led to increased costs ranging from \$15,000 to \$20,000 per year to stay on the current computer system. RCRCA decided to partner with the SWCD office in our building to share the costs of transitioning off the federal system. Because of this transition, all staff at RCRCA have new e-mail address. The website address has not changed, nor has the company e-mail (rcrca2day@yahoo.com). Our new e-mail addresses are updated on the website under the "staff" link at the bottom of most RCRCA webpages.

New staff e-mails are as follows:

Doug Goodrich - douglas.goodrich@racgroup.net
Shawn Wohnoutka - shawn.wohnoutka@racgroup.net
Bill Moldestad - william.moldestad@racgroup.net
Kari Clouse - kari.clouse@racgroup.net

RCRCA Engineering Technician Available to Assist You!

William Moldestad, Engineering Technician for the Cottonwood & Redwood River watersheds is available to assist local landowners, NRCS staff, and SWCD staff. Our technician has sign-off authority for BMP designs, so we have the ability to help with surveying, design, and construction of conservation practices. If you need help or would like to sign up, contact RCRCA at 507-637-2142, ext 4 for assistance, or e-mail Bill at william.moldestad@racgroup.net

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Web Site updates!



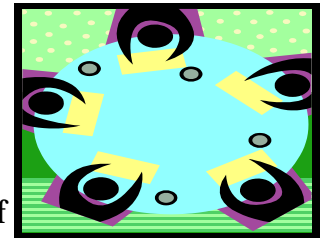
If you have any ideas about what you'd like to see on the web site, call 507-637-2142, Ext. 4. Suggestions can also be e-mailed to: shawn.wohnoutka@racgroup.net

New informational page on BMPs — link on RCRCA homepage

Remember, you can also view the current *RCRCA News* on the web at: www.rcrca.com and click on "Latest Newsletter" under Events/Activities:

RCRCA Board Minutes

The RCRCA Board of Directors held their monthly meeting on **Monday December 15, 2008** at the Redwood County Courthouse.



The following is the unofficial version of the minutes:

- Board reviewed & approved minutes from November Board of Directors Meeting.
- Board reviewed November income & expense reports.
- Board reviewed and approved October payments.
- Board approved three buffer incentive CWP-319 contracts for cost share and payment, totaling \$6,000 in the Redwood Watershed.
- Board approved payment on two CWP-319 contracts, one for stream bank protection and another for sediment control basins and diversions in the Redwood Watershed totaling \$27,732.48
- Board approved payment on four CWP-319 contracts, one for a sediment control basin, another for a grassed waterway and two for rock tile inlets in the Cottonwood Watershed totaling \$10,490.88.
- Board approved payment on a CWP-319 contract for sediment control basins in the Cottonwood Watershed for \$4,524.87, but decided to table an amendment related to this contract.
- Executive Board met with Goodrich for his six month review. Board approved his review.
- Board approved Goodrich to make decision regarding reinvestment of CD funds.
- Board reviewed & approved 2008 expenses and amended 2009 budget. Board approved a COLA increase of 1.5% for 2009.
- Goodrich informed the board that RCRCA received a dividend of \$2,162 from the Minnesota Counties Insurance Trust.
- Board moved to allow the executive committee to make decisions regarding additional funding to complete the 2007 accounting books, if needed.
- Board discussed Legislative Breakfast held on December 13, 2008 at Jackpot Junction in partnership with Area II. Board felt the meeting was informative and approved of the format.
- Board moved January meeting to January 26, 2009 since January 19, 2009 is a Holiday.



Septic systems and ground water

Cooking, cleaning, laundry and bathing in the average Minnesota household generates an average of 220 gallons of wastewater per day, or about 80,000 gallons per year.

Untreated sewage is more than 99 percent water, but contains enough harmful material to endanger human health and seriously degrade ground and surface water. Sewage usually contains bacteria, viruses, metals and organic pollutants.

Of Minnesota's approximately two million housing units, about 25 percent - or half a million - are not connected to a central sewage treatment system. Most of these use septic systems.

A septic system is a small-scale sewage treatment system used in areas with no connection to central sewers. The term "septic" refers to the anaerobic bacterial environment that decomposes the waste. The system treats sewage through a combination of biological, physical and chemical processes in an arrangement that generally consists of a septic tank and some sort of soil treatment system. A properly designed and operating septic system is odor-free and, aside from periodic inspection and pumping of the septic tank, should last for decades with little to no maintenance.

A quick and dirty history

Early settlers did not have running water, and outhouses were the norm. With the advent of indoor plumbing, water use and the need to treat wastewater, increased dramatically. Early communities discharged wastewater to unlined cesspools, which contaminated ground water, or used outlet pipes to ditches and creeks.

In the 1930s, the Works Progress Administration (WPA) built rudimentary wastewater collection and treatment systems in many Minnesota towns. But most rural homes were excluded and therefore continued to discharge untreated wastewater to ground water, lakes and streams. In agricultural areas, where the land was drained for crops, tile lines (perforated drain pipe) buried in the 1940s and 1950s were commonly misused to convey sewage away from homes and businesses. This resulted in the "community" straight pipes that occur in Minnesota and other states. These pipes convey raw sewage from multiple homes and businesses into a common collection system of drainage pipes.

Septic system rules

In 1974, the MPCA developed voluntary standards for septic systems in order to keep failing systems from polluting the water. For the following two decades, licenses and regulations for septic systems varied by county.

In 1994, the first statewide law was passed to address the serious problems associated with failing septic systems. The Law set minimum standards for septic systems and required licensing of septic systems contractors.

Three years later, new legislation required counties to develop a septic system ordinance, with permits, standards, enforcement and training. Revisions and additions have been made to the rules every year since then.

On February 4, 2008, after four years of public debate and comment, Chapter 7080 of the rules was split into four chapters, 7080-7083, and new performance-based requirements were added to systems that process over 5,000 gallons or more per day.

Based on the new requirements, septic systems in Minnesota must be upgraded or replaced if they either pose an imminent threat to public health or fail to protect ground water.

The MPCA estimates that 39 percent of Minnesota's septic systems do not adequately treat sewage. An estimated 12 percent are considered imminent threats to public health. These problems are being addressed through state and local septic system programs, but it is a huge task. The Metropolitan Council estimates that there are about 75,000 septic systems in the seven-county metro area alone.

To better understand specific wastewater treatment needs, the MPCA asked Minnesota counties to identify areas where sewage treatment is inadequate and needs more attention. The draft 2008 Small Community Wastewater Needs Report provides further information about sewage treatment accomplishments, needs and strategies.

See www.pca.state.mn.us/publications/wq-wwtp1-06.pdf

-Daniel McLean - "Reprinted with permission of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency."



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We're on the web!
www.rcrca.com



Straight pipe discharging to drainage ditch

When homeowners learn the environmental damages caused by failing and inadequate septic systems they shake their heads and say, "Gee that's a shame." However when they learn **they** may be drinking today what they had for dinner last night **and** how failing septic systems can drive down their property values, the problem just got personalized. **Their** health and pocketbook can be affected. This will motivate them to get their systems fixed.

~ Jim vonMeier of www.septicprotector.com



Recycled paper

February 2009

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

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

February 2009

- 1st Super Bowl Sunday
- 2nd Groundhog Day
- 14th Valentine's Day
- 16th President's Day
- 23rd RCRCA Board Meeting 7:30 pm

March 2009

- 8th Daylight Savings Time Starts
- 16th RCRCA Board Meeting 7:30 pm
- 17th St. Patricks Day
- 20th 1st Day of Spring!

RCRCA Executive Board of Directors

- Clark Lingbeek, Chairman
- Norman Holmen, Vice Chairman
- Jack Vogel, Secretary
- John Schueller, Treasurer
- Glen Sorensen, Public Relations & Information
- Phil Nelson, Member at Large

RCRCA Full Board of Directors

County Commissioners

- Dennis Potter, Brown Co .
- Norman Holmen, Cottonwood Co .
- Don Evers, Lincoln Co .
- Phil Nelson, Lyon Co .
- Kevin Vickerman, Murray Co.
- Marge DeRuyter, Pipestone Co.
- John Schueller, Redwood Co.
- Jane Remiger, Yellow Medicine Co

SWCD Board Members

- Jack Vogel, Brown
- Clark Lingbeek, Cottonwood
- Glen Sorensen, Lincoln
- Mark Muelebroeck, Lyon
- Shannon Cohrs, Murray
- LeRoy Stensgaard, Pipestone
- Don Steffen, Redwood
- Burton Kuehn, Yellow Medicine

RCRCA Staff

- Kari Clouse, Office Assistant
- Douglas A. Goodrich, Executive Director
- William Moldestad, Engineering Technician
- Shawn Wahnoutka, Watershed & GIS/Outreach Technician