

Redwood river Journal

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What We're about

James Doering, RCRCA Executive Director

New Faces Replace Staff

RCRCA and its projects on both the Redwood and Cottonwood River have been in a state of transition the better part of the new millennium.

The former Executive Director, Watershed Coordinator and Watershed Planner have applied their talents to other endeavors and we wish them well. To pick up where they left off, new talent from within and outside the watersheds have been hired to keep RCRCA and projects on task. Stop in and meet the new staff: Watershed Educator, Roseanne Kaseforth; Cottonwood River Watershed Technician, Stephanie McClain; Redwood/Cottonwood River Watershed Technician, Jason Neuman and myself James Doering, Executive Director. For your technical engineering questions on BMP's, stop in and talk to Mark Koster and John Opdahl located in the Lyon County SWCD office.

The project rose out of a recognition that to improve the Redwood River you have to improve its watershed. Over the past six years over 160 conservation minded landowners and operators have participated with the project to establish over 350 best management practices through out the watershed and the number is still climbing! This is happening in tandem with the project partners (SWCD's, NRCS, FSA, DNR, USFWS, Area II, counties, and many more). They have been establishing road retentions, RIM, CRP general, CRP continuous, WRP, WMA, WPA and recently CREP acres through out the watershed.

"Is the Redwood River getting better?"

The answer is emphatically, YES!

Landowners and operators are recognizing more and more that conservation minded management can improve their bottom-lines. With the abundance of conservation programs available, landowners and operators can choose which program will best fit their management plan.

The Redwood River Clean Water Partnership

Here we are at year six of a six-year project.

The million dollar questions are:

- * "Is the Redwood River getting better?" The answer is emphatically, YES!
- * "Is it because of this project alone?" No.
- * "Has the project accomplished what it has set out to do?" And again the answer is absolutely, YES!

Are we done? No, not yet. The efforts of the Redwood River Clean Water Project and partners involved have been a catalyst in accelerating conservation practice adoption in the Redwood River Watershed. The challenge will be to carry this momentum into the future and monitor its progress. RCRCA and its partners will continue to focus on the Redwood River, acquire conservation funding and continue to provide conservation alternatives for watershed residents to utilize.



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Cost Share grants available

Jon Opdahl, RCRCA Engineering Technician

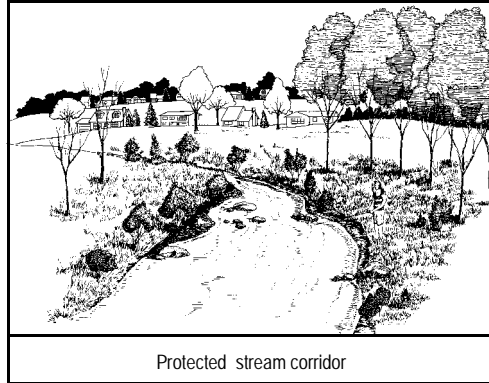
The Redwood River Clean Water Project has cost share grant funding available for conservation practices. Some eligible practices include: terraces, sediment and water control basins, waterway repairs (non-crop qualified), stream bank stabilizations, Ag waste management systems, and multi-purpose dams. These practices may qualify for 75 % cost share grants for cooperators within the Redwood River Watershed. In addition to the grants, a 3% loan (plus applicable fee's) is available in each county. This loan is to help cover cooperator out of pocket expenses for the practice.

There are also programs available for other conservation practices. For example, new waterways that have cropping history (cropped 2 out of the last 5 years) may qualify for the CRP programs. There are many other CRP programs available at this time that offer great incentives to co-operators. If you ever

thought about a buffer of filter strips, now is the time to sign them up. If you have other environmental concerns not mentioned, there may be an assistance programs available. Please check with us regarding your concern.

Environmental concerns will not go away. In the future it may become mandatory to address these concerns, without the availability of cost-share grants. Voluntarily addressing these concerns now, with financial assistance, is a much better alternative. Take advantage of these grants and programs now.

The Redwood River Clean Water Project has two Technicians ready to assist you. Mark Koster and Jon Opdahl are based out of the Lyon SWCD in Marshall, but work in cooperation with all SWCD's in the watershed. They can be contacted by calling (507) 532-0396, ext. 3 or by inquiring at your local SWCD.



Protected stream corridor

Illustration courtesy of the Environmental Resources Center, University of Wisconsin-Extension

Winter's Coming! But Don't Abandon The Yard and Garden

Article adapted from Dr. J. Robert Nuss, Penn State Cooperative Extension

Penn State Pointers Winter's Coming

A Fall Yard and Garden Check List:

Completed

- Mow your grass until it stops growing.**
 Tall grass gets matted under the snow, encouraging growth of snow mold.
- Clear your gardens of debris and garden litter.**
 Insect eggs, fungi, and plant diseases can overwinter in dead plants and leaves.
- Turn the soil in food and flower gardens.**
 It helps debris decompose quickly so pests and disease cannot survive.
- Remove weeds in late autumn and early winter.**
 A single weed pulled now can prevent hundreds of sprouting weeds in spring.
- Prepare trees and shrubs for winter conditions.**
 Remove dead twigs and branches. Mulch around trees. Fence and wrap as needed.

Visit us at
["http://aginfo.psu.edu/news/psp/index.html"](http://aginfo.psu.edu/news/psp/index.html)

The weather may be getting cold, but don't put away your lawn mower and garden tools just yet. There is still plenty to do outside.

"Take time to clean up your yard and garden before it snows," says Dr. J. Robert Nuss, professor of ornamental horticulture in Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences. "You'll be rewarded with fewer insects, weed and disease problems next spring."

Lawn-weary homeowners often are tempted to retire their mowers as soon as possible after Labor Day. "But it's important to keep your lawn mowed right up until the grass stops growing," says Nuss. "Tall grass gets matted under snow, encouraging the growth of snow mold. This looks like circular white patches on your lawn in the spring. Areas with extensive snow mold damage may need reseeding."

If you have fallen behind in weeding, take heart. Late autumn and early winter is a good time to remove annual and perennial weeds. "Weed control is an important part of fall gardening because it prevents weeds from seeding," Nuss says. "A single weed pulled now can prevent hundreds of weeds from sprouting up next spring. These weeds also can harbor insects and diseases."

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

Stephanie McLain, RCRCA Watershed Technician

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) began in 1998 in the Minnesota River Basin. This program is a “marriage” between the federally funded Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and the state funded Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM). This program offers landowners a unique opportunity to improve the quality of water in the Minnesota River and its tributaries. Over the years, the Minnesota River has been touted as the most polluted river entering the Mississippi River north of St. Louis, Missouri. Most of the problem stems from agricultural runoff, especially from marginal lands.

The goal of CREP is to put conservation easements on 100,000 acres of land in the 37 county Minnesota River basin. Marginal land such as floodplain areas, riparian bottomlands, and drained or farmed wetlands are ideal areas to enter into CREP. In fact, any farmland adjacent to a body of water can be entered into CREP. A 120 ft. buffer strip between a body of water and a field can significantly reduce sediment and nutrient runoff.

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program consists of 15 years of guaranteed CRP payments



CREP

*“Farm
the
Best . . .
Buffer
the
Rest”*

plus a lump sum RIM payment. Both of these payments are calculated based on the value of the land. Total payments range from \$1,700-\$2,700 per acre, depending on county soil rental rates. Cost-share to implement conservation practices is 100%, which means there is no cost to the landowner!!

Landowners of the Redwood River Watershed who are interested in voluntarily enrolling land into the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program should contact their local Soil and Water Conservation District, Farm Service Agency, or District Conservationist. The CREP program expires on September 30, 2002, so enroll in CREP soon!



Director's Note: *Don't let the recent rule change for posting your land make you miss this opportunity. The truth is, it has always been and always will be your land. Posting it will protect your rights and promote conscientious recreation.*

Citizen-stream monitoring program

Jason Neuman, RCRCA Watershed Technician

Minnesota streams are valued for recreation, aesthetic enjoyment, transportation, and as a source of clean water by many plants and animals...including humans! For these reasons it is important to protect and improve the quality of our state's streams. A citizen-stream monitoring network in the Redwood River Watershed will increase our understanding of how human activities such as land use affects water quality. In turn, we will gain insight on how human activities affect water quality, such as swimming and fishing. Increased stream

monitoring will help identify problems, develop strategies and prioritize activities for improving water quality, and track progress toward improvement.

What do CSMP volunteers do?

About once a week during the summer, volunteers visit an established spot on a nearby stream and measure the transparency, appearance, recreational suitability, stream stage and precipitation.

How do I enroll in the program?

Currently, RCRCA is looking for citizen-stream monitors in priority areas of minor watersheds located throughout the Redwood River Watershed. These priority areas include: Three Mile Creek, Clear Creek and the Redwood River. Volunteers will receive a transparency tube, rain gauge, data sheets, instructions for taking measurements, and a copy of the annual report on stream conditions in their region.

Please call RCRCA at 507-637-2142, ext 4 for more information on becoming a volunteer for the Redwood River Citizen-Stream Monitoring Program.



Programs Available to Lyon County Residents

Lyon SWCD

Low Interest Loans



The Lyon County Soil & Water Conservation District is again offering low interest loans to Lyon County residents to help in the costs of certain projects.

These loans are at a 3% interest rate with a 1/2% one time fee to the financial institution for handling the loan.

Projects include:

- Individual Septic System
- Conservation Tillage Equipment
- Ag Waste Management
- Manure Handling Equipment

For more information and to apply, contact the Lyon County SWCD at 507-537-0396, ext. 3.

Living Snow Fence Program

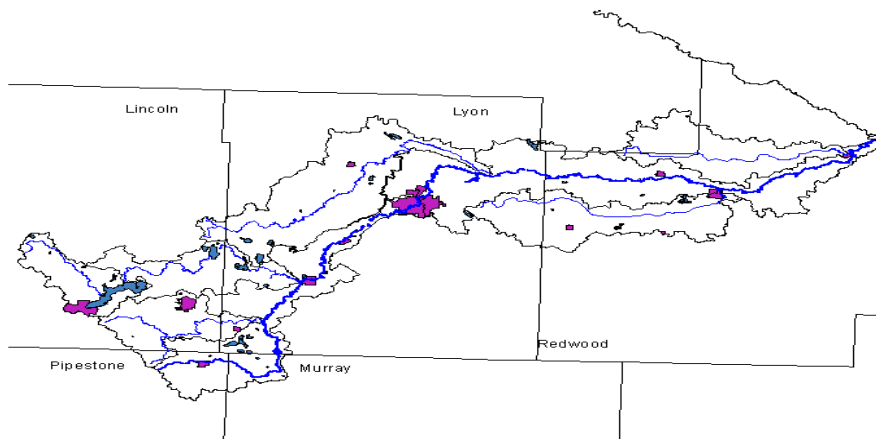
The living snow fence program could mean a large dollar return to you as well as winter benefits to your family and livestock. The benefits of a living snow fence includes helping control blowing and drifting snow, that means less tax dollars paid to remove snow and easier access in winter for you, school buses, and emergency vehicles. Other benefits include, crop production increase, wind protection and wildlife habitat.

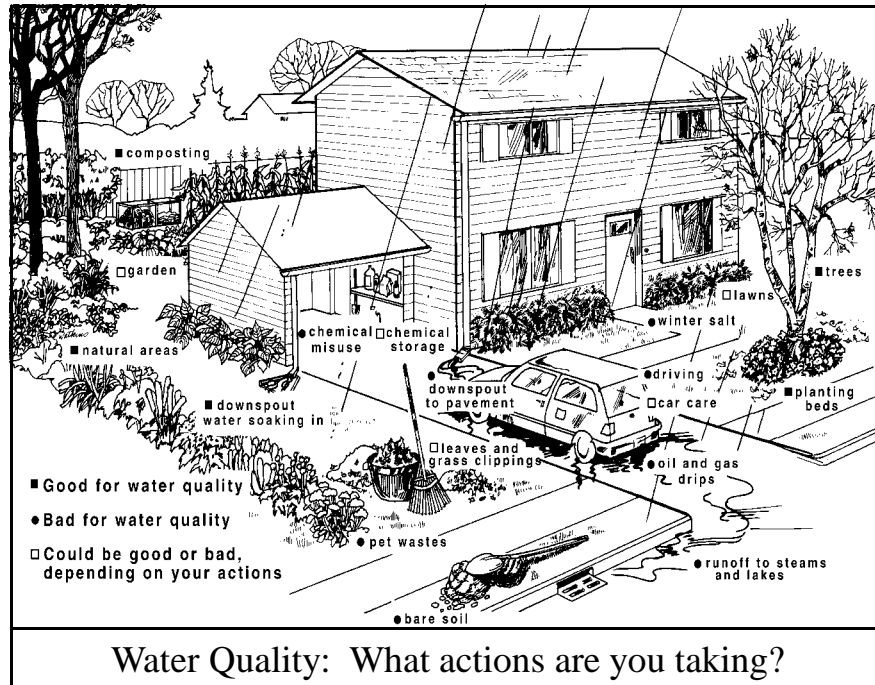
Make sure you are part of this program. You may receive CRP payments for the land for 10-15 years! **These funds will only be available for this year and the spring of 2001.** Do not delay in contacting the Lyon County SWCD at 507-537-0396, ext. 3.



Quick Facts About the Watershed

- * The Redwood River Watershed includes parts of Lincoln, Lyon, Pipestone, Murray, Yellow Medicine and Redwood Counties.
- * The source of the Redwood River is in Pipestone County, south-west of Ruthton, and flows 124 miles to its mouth at the Minnesota River near North Redwood.
- * The main tributaries are Three Mile Creek, Norweigan Creek, Clear Creek, Tyler Creek and Coon Creek.
- * The Redwood River transports 105,000 tons of sediment per year on the average.
- * The highest sediment loads come from between Marshall and Lake Redwood.
- * Approximately 16,200 acres in the watershed, mostly farmland, lie within the 100 year floodplain.
- * The watershed drains approximately 408,940 acres.





Water Quality: What actions are you taking?

Illustration courtesy of the Environmental Resources Center, University of Wisconsin-Extension.

Water Quality

Roseanne Kaseforth, RCRCA Watershed Educator

Protecting water quality is the responsibility of everyone. Less than 1% of the earth's water is usable fresh water, so we all need to take part in keeping our water sources as clean as possible. Ways to protect water quality include learning more about your watershed and attending local planning and zoning meetings to make sure that decisions include water quality protection. Citizens can also take an active role in their school system; see if environmental and conservation issues are part of your child's curriculum. And if you have a private well as a water source, be sure to have it tested regularly to insure the health of you and your family.

Residents can also cut back on the amount of chemicals we use when cleaning the home, here are a few ideas to try.

"Less than 1% of the earth's water is usable fresh water."

Window Cleaner—2 Tbsp. vinegar in one quart of water, use newspapers rather than paper towels;

Furniture Polish—1 Tbsp. lemon oil in one pint mineral oil;

Drain Cleaner—pour boiling water down the drain and/or use a plunger or metal snake;

Air Freshener—boil 2 cups of lemon juice with whole cloves in it, OR boil 2 cups of water with 1 Tbsp. ground cinnamon in it.

Don't leave water quality up to others, take steps in insuring that our water is clean and around for future generations to enjoy.

To learn more about how you can conserve and protect our water or to have RCRCA speak at your local group, school or function; contact Roseanne Kaseforth, Watershed Educator at 507-637-2142, ext. 4.





**REDWOOD-COTTONWOOD RIVERS
CONTROL AREA**

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(RCRCA)

The *Redwood River Journal* is designed to provide information to citizens, agencies and organizations involved with RCRCA and the Redwood River Clean Water Project.

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