



RCRCA

Redwood-Cottonwood Rivers Control Area
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Annual Report 2001



From the Executive Director . . .

RCRCA continues to be unwavering in its purpose to enhance the Cottonwood and Redwood River Watersheds. This annual report is published to document the organizational and partner watershed activities in 2001 and to refocus on the goals and objectives of RCRCA and it's sponsored projects.

This past year we have seen one of the most significant conservation programs in the history of the Minnesota River Basin take center stage and become the focus of all conservation professionals. The CREP program at the end of 2001 is well on its way to accomplishing it's goal of restoring 100,000 acres of marginal Minnesota River Basin flood plain and integral wetland complexes. There is no doubt in my mind that these acres will be attained by the deadline in 2002. Congratulations to all of the RCRCA Joint Power members and partners that have made this program a success. The real heros of course are the watershed land-owners who have recognized the need to retire sensitive and marginal agricultural land. Incorporating conservation into the agricultural landscape is a large step to sustainability. There isn't a conservation program or watershed goal that would be attained without the landowner's voluntary participation. Thank you!

In the life after CREP, RCRCA will continue to provide technical support in the watersheds to help implement the conservation practices associated with CREP. The acceleration of best management practices in the Cottonwood River Watershed priority areas will be the primary focus. Entering year three of the six-year restoration project on the Cottonwood River promotes a sense of urgency, determination and focus on the goals and objectives we as a joint powers organization have set for the Cottonwood River Watershed.

The six-year projects on both watersheds, are recognized as the beginning or foundation of watershed based management. In 2001 the most significant endeavor was to write the final report for the Redwood River Clean Water Partnership. Outlining the accomplishments, obstacles and lessons learned in the watershed was vital in documenting what has been done and showing us what we need to do. Focusing on the road ahead while glancing in the rearview mirror is a good analogy for the coming years. Six-year projects are only the beginning. Looking ahead five, ten years down the road, the question of what future role RCRCA will play in watershed management will need to be explored. I look forward to exploring the future and the new challenges and opportunities that will present themselves in 2002.



RCRCA Board of Directors

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

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Steve Johnson, Murray Co.
Phil Nelsen, Lyon Co.
Darold Neperman, Redwood Co.
Jane Remiger, Yellow Medicine Co.
Gary Sorenson, Cottonwood Co.
Robert Weets, Pipestone Co.
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Burton Kuehn, Yellow Medicine
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Paul Posthuma, Murray
Greg Roiger, Brown (Oct.-Dec.)
Glen Sorensen, Lincoln
LeRoy Stensgaard, Pipestone
Ray Traen, Lyon
Ernie Vogel, Brown (Jan.-Sept.)

RCRCA Staff

James Doering, Executive Director
Kari Howey, Watershed Technician (Sept. - Dec.)
Roseanne Kaseforth, Watershed Educator
Mark Koster, Watershed Technician (Jan.- May)
Stephanie McLain, Watershed Technician
Jason Neuman, Watershed Technician (Jan.- Aug.)
Jon Opdahl, Engineering Technician
Sharon Voeks, Office Manager



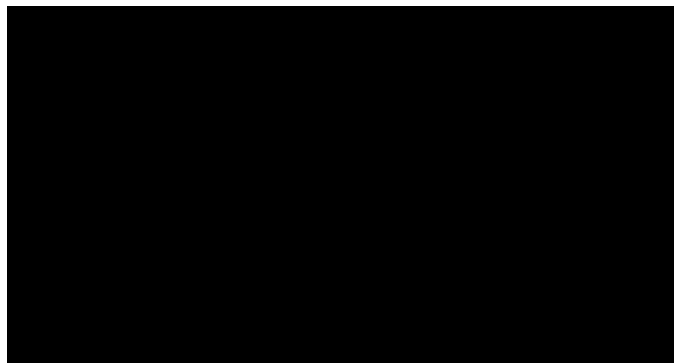
RCRCA Technical Accomplishments

Redwood River Watershed 1994-2001:

Grassed Waterway—Feet	126,968
Sediment Control Basin—#	136
Waste Management—#	6
Riparian Buffer Strips—Acres	132
Wetland Restoration—Acres	449
Conservation Tillage—Acres	3,919
Streambank and Shoreline Protection—Feet	1,340
Diversion—Feet	4,150
Terraces—Feet	3,660
Critical Area Planting—Feet	2,450
Integrated Pest Management—Acres	153.2
Multi Purpose Dam—#	2
Waste Utilization, Nutrient and Pest Management—Acres	15,103
Other Conservation Practices—Acres	974

Cottonwood River Watershed 1999-2001:

Alternative Tile Intakes—#	160
Grade Stabilization Structures—#	1
Waste Management—#	1



Grassed Waterway



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“Solutions Happen Upstream”



February 2002



About RCRCA

The Redwood-Cottonwood Rivers Control Area (RCRCA) represents the interest of local units of government through a joint powers agreement. Organized in 1983 to protect and enhance the Redwood and Cottonwood Rivers, RCRCA works with local, state, and federal agencies, as well as private foundations to finance and administer programs of benefit to the two watersheds. RCRCA is the fiscal manager of both the Redwood River Clean Water Project and the Cottonwood Restoration Project.

Member Counties and Soil and Water Conservation Districts include:

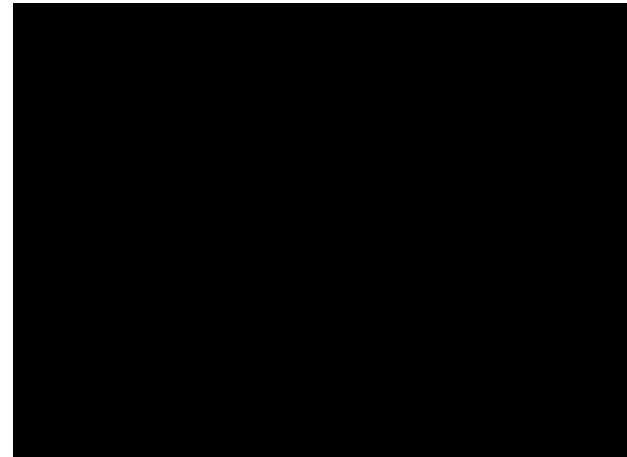
- **Brown**
- **Cottonwood**
- **Lincoln**
- **Lyon**
- **Murray**
- **Redwood**
- **Pipestone**
- **Yellow Medicine**

Financial support for RCRCA is provided, in part, through these counties.

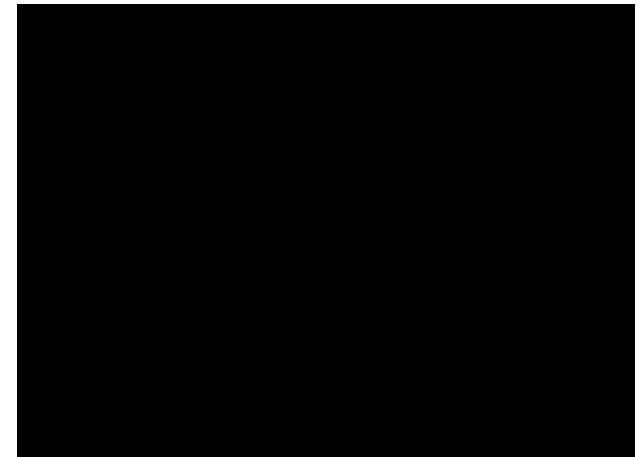
Purpose

RCRCA was organized to develop and implement plans to:

- protect property from the damage of flooding.
- protect property, rivers and lakes from sedimentation and pollution.
- maintain and improve the quality of water in the rivers, lakes and groundwater.
- improve recreational and wildlife opportunities within the two watersheds.



Area students enjoy investigating how nonpoint source pollution can travel using a 3D watershed model at the Children's Water Festival.



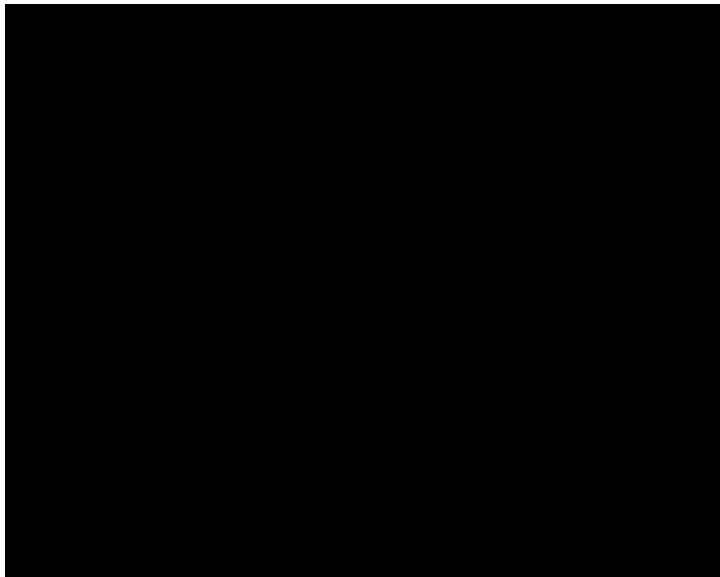
Congressman Mark Kennedy visits informally with watershed residents, after speaking at the Cottonwood River Restoration Project Open House.



RCRCA Education/Information

Outreach efforts throughout the year reached over 3,669 residents in both watersheds, events included:

- Cottonwood River Restoration Project Open House
- Coffee on the Project
- Canoe trips
- Youth group presentations
- Trade shows/community events
- Lunch on the Project
- Radio interviews/news articles

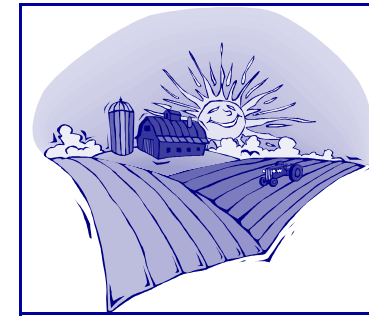


An RCRCA Watershed Technician discusses water quality with a watershed resident using the "Stream Table" at the Cottonwood River Restoration Project Open House.



Technical Assistance

Through both the Redwood River Clean Water Project and the Cottonwood River Restoration Project, technical assistance is available to watershed residents to assist with design and installation of best management practices (BMPs). Funding, in the form of cost share grants, is available for up to seventy-five percent (75%) of most practices intended to protect water quality. Project staff also help landowners access other state and federal sources of financial assistance.



Education/Information

The RCRCA educational program activities are intended to raise the level of public awareness and provide the most current information to all watershed residents. Through the use of various educational components, farmers and the general public will be able to learn about the watershed project and how they can participate in reducing erosion and non-point source pollution on their land. Information includes newsletters, updating written material, public events, as well as providing educational information developed for specific audiences and programs.



Mission

The mission of the Cottonwood River Restoration Project is to promote sustainable conservation land use changes through establishing watershed identity and be cooperatively working to increase watershed awareness that will lead to the restoration of the river's environmental health and increased recreational use.

Ten Year Goals

- To achieve the highest water quality attainable for ecoregion non-impacted streams.
- To have watershed residents take an active role in enhancing and protecting the Cottonwood River.
- To develop the Cottonwood River as a major recreational resource within the Minnesota River Basin.

Overview

The Cottonwood River Restoration Project began in the spring of 1996 with the award of a Clean Water Partnership Grant from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. The project is designed to investigate water quality conditions in the Cottonwood River, then design and implement measures to improve the quality and usefulness of the river.

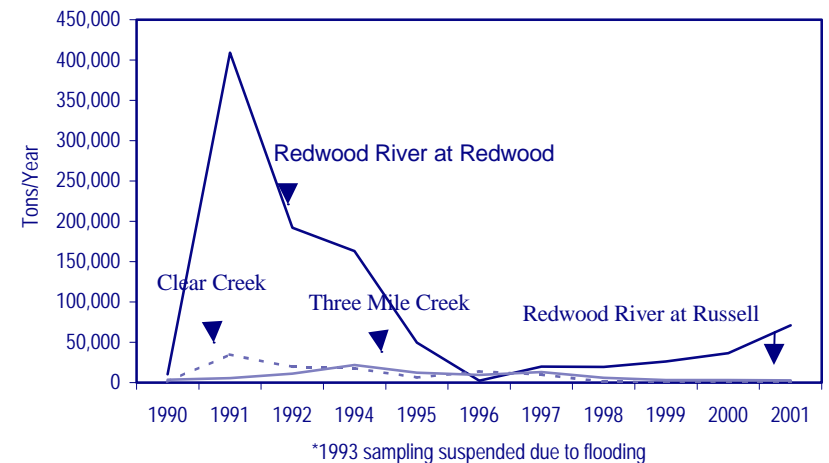
Redwood River Watershed Sampling

Surface water sampling on the Redwood River and its tributaries continued for an eleventh year. Samples were collected monthly (base flow) at each station through out the growing season (May–September.) Samples were also collected on a four hour interval during two storm events. A fourth station was added in 2001 at the Redwood River at Russell.

Sampling Sites:

- Three Mile Creek near Marshall
- Redwood River at Russell
- Clear Creek near Seaforth
- Redwood River near Redwood Falls

Total Suspended Solids in the Redwood River Watershed 1990-2001





Mission

The mission of the Redwood River Clean Water Project is to create awareness and appreciation for the value of a clean Redwood River, promote watershed identity, and cooperatively achieve land use changes necessary to restore the river's health.

Overview

The Redwood River Clean Water Project, set out in 1994 to accelerate best management practice adoption and reduce sediment and nutrient loadings in the Redwood River and Lake Redwood concluded in 2000 with testing results showing a 36% reduction in sediment delivery to the lake. Along with the cooperative work of partner agencies, an increased sense of stewardship and resident participation is behind the adoption of land use practices.

The Redwood River Clean Water Project will continue efforts to reduce nonpoint and point source pollution by seeking sustainable sources of funding.

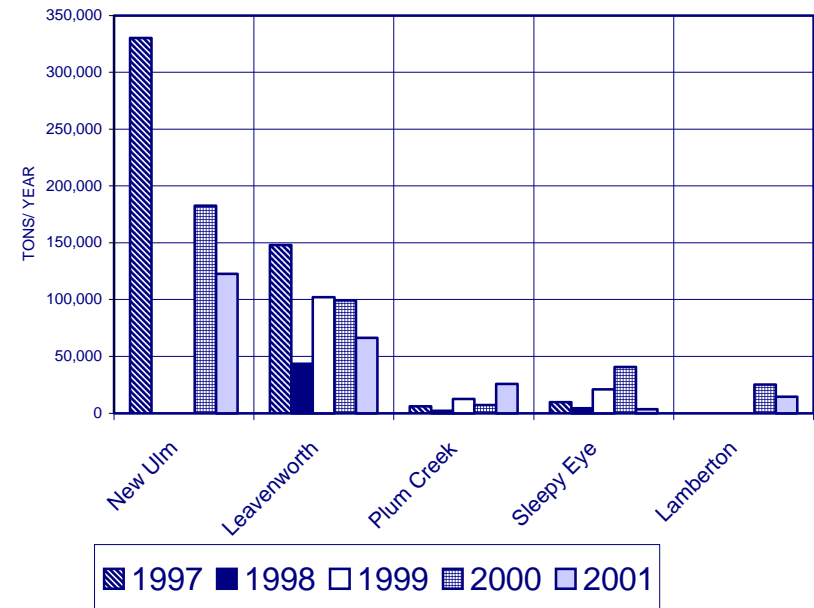
Cottonwood River Watershed Sampling

Surface water sampling on the Cottonwood River (three sites) and its tributaries (two sites) continued for a fourth year. Samples were collected monthly (base flow) at each station through the growing season (May–September.) Samples were also collected on a four hour interval during two storm events.

Sampling Sites:

- Plum Creek
- Cottonwood River near Lamberton
- Cottonwood River near Leavenworth
- Sleepy Eye Creek near Leavenworth
- Cottonwood River at New Ulm

Suspended Solids Annual Loadings in the Cottonwood River Watershed





Map of the Cottonwood and Redwood River Watersheds

