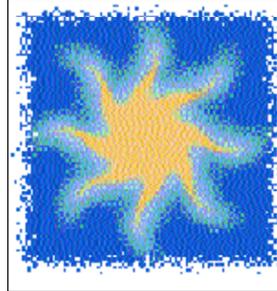


**Sauk River
Watershed District**

524 4th St South
Sauk Centre, MN 56378

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Summer 2007

**Sauk River Watershed
District Newsletter**

Water Festival a Huge Success!

The 4th Annual Middle Sauk Water Festival was a huge success despite howling winds and cool temperatures. 400 fourth graders and chaperones from Melrose, Albany, Meire Grove, Freeport, and Sauk Centre attended the event held at the Sinclair Lewis Park on the shores of Sauk Lake.



Thirty environmental agencies and organization specialists shared their knowledge of our fresh water resources when students in groups of 25 visited the seven stations for 20 minutes each. Students were thrilled with the hands on activities and the array of information given about water.

Middle Sauk Festival. These water festivals are a great way to engage and educate students about water quality issues. The students get a hands on educational experience they might not necessarily get in a classroom.



Each year there are a number of Water Festivals around the area. The SRWD hosts two of these events directly, the Lower Sauk Festival and the

(Continued on pages 4)

New Faces to SRWD



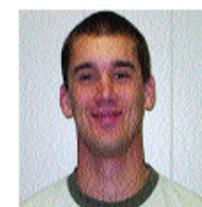
Dan Coughlin has joined the SRWD board of managers. He represents Stearns county area, and is the city administrator for Richmond.



Heather Lehmkuhl has joined the SRWD as the monitoring assistant. She holds a B.S. degree in meteorology/hydrology.



Adam Hjelm has joined the SRWD as the education coordinator. He holds a M.S. degree in biology education, and B.S. degree in aquatic biology.



Noah Czech has joined the SRWD as an inspector and technician. He holds a B.S. degree in environmental studies.

**Thank You
Volunteers**

*for all your time,
effort and energy
given to help
water quality!*

**Board of
Managers**

- **Sharen Kutter,**
Stearns County
- **Chub Hensley,**
Todd County
- **Larry Kuseske,**
Pope County
- **Virgil Rettig,**
Meeker County
- **Kay Cook,**
Stearns County
- **Bob Mostad,**
Douglas County
- **Dan Coughlin,**
Stearns County
- **Jim Kral,**
Todd County
- **Ken Robinson,**
Stearns County

**Sauk River Watershed
District**

524 Fourth St South
Sauk Centre, MN 56378
(320)352-2231

Send Comments and
Questions to:
srwd@srwdmn.org
visit www.srwdmn.org

Did you know...

There are 6,564 rivers and stream in Minnesota, that totals over 69,200 miles of rivers and streams.

The total surface water in Minnesota, including wetlands totals 13,136,357 acres.

Minnesota's total area of wetlands present in 1850 was 18.6 million acres, the area of wetlands in 2003 was down to 9.3 million acres.



Join Our Mailing List!!

Like what you see in the newsletter? Interested in our education series? Curious what is going on at SRWD? All this and then some? Join our mailing list to get our newsletter, education alerts, and so much more. Contact us via phone, email, or mail and let us know you want to be on the mailing list.



Weed Harvesting; A Constant Effort and Reward



Once again this year, weed harvesting has begun to take place on Sauk Lake. The strong winds have prevented harvesting as frequently as desired, but the crew is confident that they will be able to catch up.

Weed harvesting began on Sauk Lake in 1992 in an effort to safely, and effectively control the growth of curly-leaf pondweed from navigation channels. Curly-leaf pondweed is an exotic species, that grows very rapidly. Once it reaches the surface, it forms dense mats that interfere with aquatic recreation.



The weed harvester used on Sauk Lake is capable of cutting a path that is six feet deep and nine feet wide. Under ideal conditions, the harvester can cut and transfer 1000 pounds of weeds onto its transporter within 15 minutes. The transporter when full then transfers the harvested weeds onto a trailer. The weeds are then brought to local farmers who utilize them for agricultural fertilizer.

Sauk Lake Weed Harvesting Data

Year	Loads of Weeds	Pounds of Weeds
2004	152	453,100
2005	131	331,200
2006	77	177,100

Curly-leaf Pondweed Management

There are two more common methods of curly-leaf pondweed removal within the SRWD. Certain areas are being chemically treated, while others are mechanically harvested. Both methods of weed management have their pros and cons to their use.

Aquatic Herbicide Applications

Advantages

Selective control, can choose a chemical that will work on nuisance plants, but not have significant impact on native plants.

Long lasting control potential.

Minimal labor requirements for application.

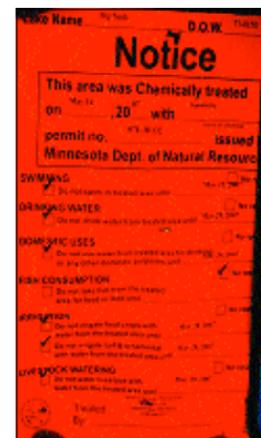
Systemic chemicals affect the root structure, and eliminate the plants ability to reproduce.

Applications can be made to areas that are not accessible by other methods.

Disadvantages

Water use restrictions such as; swimming, drinking, fishing, irrigation.

Some chemicals can take several weeks to affect weeds.



Potential for unknown long-term ecological impacts.

Rapid defoliation in the water column can reduce oxygen levels affecting fish and other aquatic organisms.

Treatment costs, and chemical costs can be highly expensive.

Plants are not removed, so phosphorous and other nutrients stay in ecosystem.

(Continued on page 3)

The Dirt on Ditches

The SRWD recently gained possession of nine ditches within the watershed area. The maps and records on some of these ditches have not been updated for almost a century. The ditches may have changed physically, and parcels of land adjacent and benefiting from the ditches may have also changed. In order to ensure that the maps are accurate, and rightful landowners are benefiting from the ditches requires GIS mapping and digital photos. The SRWD has applied for grants to help pay for the costs of up-dating the ditches.



Curly-leaf management (Continued from page 2)

Mechanical Harvesting

Advantages

Immediate reduction of aquatic weeds creating open water space.

Plant biomass is removed from the ecosystem, and can be properly disposed.

Can be done on large-scale areas.

Lower portions of the plant will stay intact, creating habitat

Will result in removal of nutrients, like phosphorous, from removal of plant tissues.

Disadvantages

Non-selective, removes all plants within the area that is cut impacting native and exotic species.

Limited mobility, can not maneuver into shallow areas, or tight up to docks and other structures.

Initial costs are high, maintenance cost may be high.

Plants continue to grow due to roots being left intact.

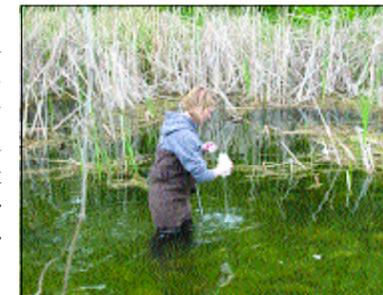
May result in loss of habitat, and loss of some invertebrates and smaller fish.

The board of managers is highly concerned with the unknown long-term effects of chemical use to the areas treated with aquatic herbicides, as well as the watershed areas and ecosystems involved as a whole. The SRWD will continue to investigate, evaluate, and be aware of comments and concerns regarding aquatic herbicide use.

The Monitoring Program Progress

The monitoring program is off and running once again this year. In the past years, SRWD has made changes to its monitoring plan that have included: equipment upgrades, more consistent sample techniques, more rigorous sampling amounts and higher sampling frequencies. We have again expanded our monitoring this year to include six new sites. That brings the total number of stream sites to 32, and the total number of lake sites to 26. We have two teams of SRWD employees that monitor and sample as well as the volunteer monitoring program. Volunteer monitors play a significant role in a successful monitoring program.

We appreciate and recognize the time and effort spent by our volunteers and continue to support their efforts for improving water quality.



Water fest (Continued from page 1)

The Water Festivals are funded by donations and grants from various organizations and business throughout the SRWD. The festivals would not be possible if it were not for the donations of time and money from all the great sponsors involved. A big thanks also goes out to all the presenters and volunteers that helped make this year another huge success.



The next festival, the Lower Sauk Water Festival, is scheduled for September 19th, 2007 and so far we have 285 students signed up!

The value of Clean Water to You?

The legislature of the Clean Water Legacy Act has found that there is a close link between protecting, restoring, and preserving the quality of Minnesota's surface water and the ability to develop the state's economy, enhance its quality of life, and protect its human and natural resources. Minnesota has more surface water than any of the 48 contiguous states. Minnesota has a ten billion dollar a year tourism industry based on water resources. We also have farmers, resort owners, fishing guides, and many others that derive their income from water resources.

Public opinion shows that Minnesota residents state protecting water quality is their top environmental priority. A study done by Bemidji state University in 2003 shows that for every three foot increase in water clarity, a foot of lakeshore property frontage

would increase in value by \$423. Also, for every three foot decrease in water clarity, results in a \$594 decrease per foot of lakeshore property frontage.

Based on the legislature, we also have to be aware of restrictions that may put a hamper on the economies of urban developments. Some cities and towns may not be able to grow and expand until their wastewater treatment plants are examined for environmental impacts. Currently, there are 100 new or existing wastewater treatment plants that are affected by the new legislation.

The hard truth is that in Minnesota and across the nation, the numbers of impaired lakes, stream, and water in general is growing and the problem is not going away. Decisions and actions need to be taken to restore and protect our greatest resource.

<http://www.pca.state.mn.us/publications/wq-iw3-10.pdf>