

Benton Soil And Water Conservation District And Natural Resources Conservation Service

Conservation
Corner

Summer 2010

Elk River Watershed TMDL Public Meetings Held

On July 21st and 22nd three public meetings were held to present information on four Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) projects located in the Elk River Watershed. TMDLs are water management plans that identify impairments to streams and lakes, identify sources of pollutants (what causes impairments), and set limits of thresholds for those pollutants in the stream or lake. Coupled with implementation plans, TMDLs are basically water quality improvement plans. The public meetings were primarily held to discuss the results of the studies and to gather input from stakeholders in an effort to develop the required implementation plans. Attendees were asked to complete a survey form for their specific area, which outlined the specific actions recommended to bring water levels in those areas into compliance with state requirements.

Water bodies included in this study:

- Mayhew Lake- impaired for Excess Nutrients
- Big Elk Lake- impaired for Excess Nutrients
- Elk River (from Big Elk Lake to St. Francis River)- impaired for bacteria and turbidity

A total of 60 area residents turned up at the Annunciation Church in Sauk Rapids and Palmer Town Hall. The meetings included presentations by the Sherburne SWCD Watershed Coordinator Tiffany Determan and the Project Manager Phil Votruba of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA).

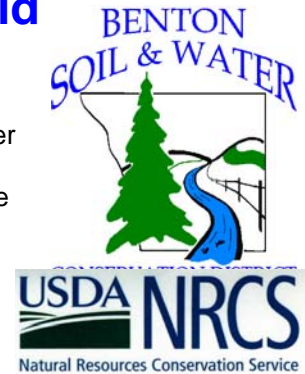
Summary of TMDL Results:

The impairment in Mayhew Lake was determined to be due to an excessive amount of phosphorus, a reduction of 78 percent will be required to bring the water into compliance with the standard going forward. The focus in this watershed will be on reducing runoff of nutrients in the spring. Reduction strategies identified include Best Management Practices (BMPs) such as manure stockpiling or storage, late season cover crop planting, creation of vegetative buffers zones, alternative watering sources for animals, manure and nutrient management programs and septic system compliance. Reducing the amount of nutrients from within the lake, called internal loading, may also be necessary. Internal loading can be reduced by managing levels of invasive plants, rough fish, and alum treatments.

The impairment in the Elk River, from Big Elk Lake to the St. Francis River, and Big Elk Lake was also determined to be due to an excessive amount of phosphorus. The study indicated that a reduction in total phosphorus of 57 percent is required to bring the lake and river into compliance. The focus of these impairments will be to reduce runoff of nutrients during low flow periods such as the summer and fall. Reduction strategies identified include BMP's such as shoreline restoration projects, development of rain gardens, vegetative buffers along ditches, streams and lakes, livestock exclusion and alternative watering sources, manure and nutrient management and septic system compliance efforts. Native aquatic plant establishment and rough fish management were also identified to be beneficial in reducing the overall phosphorus load.

Finally, the bacteria impairment in the Elk River, from Big Elk Lake to the St. Francis River indicates a 72 percent load reduction in E. Coli bacteria is needed in order to meet the state standard that is in effect from April 1 through October 31 each year. The BMPs identified here will focus on the riparian areas of the watershed below Big Elk Lake. BMPs may include: Pet waste/stormwater management, vegetative buffers along ditches, streams and lakes, livestock exclusion from riparian areas, alternative watering sources for livestock, manure and nutrient management and septic system compliance.

Copies of the handouts and surveys from the meetings are available on the Sherburne and Benton SWCD websites at www.sherburneswcd.org and www.soilandwater.org respectively



Benton County Fair
August 3-9, 2010

Come visit the Benton
SWCD/NRCS booth
located in the Sauk
Rapids Sportsmen's
Building

Thanks to the Sauk
Rapids Sportsmen's
Club for showing their
dedication in Natural
Resources by allowing
us to use this space for
educating Benton
County Residents
during the fair.

What's New In Benton County!



Pictured above is Katie Winkelman the new District Water Plan Technician

Benton Soil and Water Conservation District Would Like to Welcome The New Water Plan Technician!

Hello, my name is Katie Winkelman and I am the new District Water Plan Technician for Benton Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD). I will be coordinating the Little Rock Creek and Little Rock Lake TMDL Projects. I will also be providing Wetland Conservation Act technical assistance by sitting on the Technical Evaluation Panel and tracking or constructing restoration orders and completing the construction/maintenance/implementation of Benton's Comprehensive Water Plan.

I have a Bachelor of Science in Ecology with an emphasis in Natural Resources from Saint Cloud State University. I grew up on an elk and horse ranch in Stearns County and now my husband, Mike and I, farm with his father (Richard) in the Gilman area. We have approximately 110 milking cows. We also crop farm approximately 700 acres combined. I am a past member of the Stearns County Mounted Reserve Unit and in 2006 -2008 my husband and I served on the AgStar's Young and New Beginning Farmers Committee.

I am very fortunate and delighted to have this opportunity to work with the public to meet their and the county's conservational needs. I am honored to work with such a wonderful District staff and look forward to working many of years for Benton SWCD. If you have any questions about conservation practices or the TMDL projects, feel free to give me or our office a call at 320-968-5300 Ext. 3.

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) General Sign-up Announced

- The sign up will begin August 2nd, 2010 through August 27, 2010
- During the sign-up period, farmers and ranchers may offer eligible land for CRP's competitive general sign-up at their county Farm Service Agency (FSA) office.



Pictured above is Nathan Sanoski the new District Technician

Benton Soil and Water Conservation District Would Like to Welcome a New District Technician!

My name is Nathan Sanoski and I am the new District Technician for Benton Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD). I have been currently working with Mike McMillin learning about different cost share programs offered for conservation practices, and getting out in the field doing crop residue checks and chlorophyll testing on test plots.

I am a recent graduate from St. Cloud State University with a Bachelors of Science Degree in Environmental Studies and a minor in Geographic Information Systems (GIS). I grew up living on the Mississippi River in Little Falls, Minnesota, where I spent most of my time hunting, fishing, and enjoying the outdoors. If I was not on the river I would be spending my time on my parent's land where I have been maintaining the land by cutting and planting trees, creating food plots, and maintaining wood duck boxes.

While in college I volunteered my time as much as I could to give back to community and educated the youth about conservation practices. Some of the volunteer activities I participated in were water fests, river clean-ups, and habitat day. Working with the district staff has been an awesome experience, and I look forward to a successful year getting some hands on experience working with the people of Benton County!