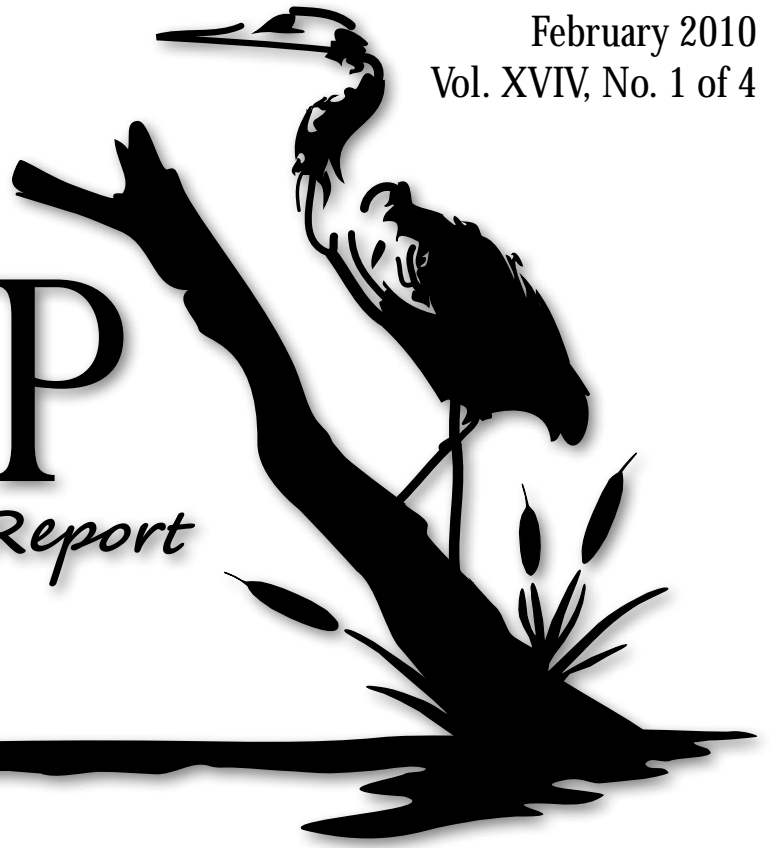


CRWP

2009 Annual Report



From the Executive Director

“Far away there in the sunshine are my highest aspirations. I may not reach them, but I can look up and see their beauty, believe in them, and try to follow where they lead.”

– Louisa May Alcott

Miss Alcott’s words speak to me as I try each day to do what I can to achieve our vision of a healthy watershed that is fishable, swimmable, and drinkable. Water quality improvements are not something that happens overnight but take time, patience, and most importantly persistence.

With the help of the staff, Board of Directors, and Pat Allen from Learning Technologies LLC, we wrote and adopted a strategic plan for CRWP for 2009-2012 to give CRWP a compass to guide our work in achieving this vision. If you’d like to read the entire document please contact us for a copy. I’d like to highlight the three program areas we decided on for the work we will do:

Conservation Partnership – Our focus areas will be projects that work with the agricultural community, rural water quality/waste water, shoreland land use, and urban stormwater.

Water Monitoring – We will continue our work to assess current conditions and look for changes and trends. Citizen volunteers will play a big part in this area as always.

Education/Recreation – Work will get underway this year to flesh out the education piece that is so important to building understanding and commitment from those who live in the watershed. Recreational opportunities are another area we plan to build on as enjoying all the watershed has to offer is a way to grow our love and care for these precious natural resources.

This report gives the highlights of the work we have done in 2009. The upcoming year will be one of challenges as we face uncertainties in funding support. While I do not know what the outcomes of 2010 will be I promise you this – CRWP will work as hard as we can, with your help, to believe in and reach for our “highest aspirations” of fishable, swimmable, drinkable water.

Beth Kallestad

View from The Board Chair

Year 2009 was a tremendously active year for CRWP. In these pages you will read about the terrific accomplishments of our talented staff and volunteers. I'd like to tell you a bit about the Board of Directors' year as well.

We refreshed our sense of purpose. In February, staff and the Board met to update our Strategic Plan. We first revisited our mission statement, and the end result was "To engage people in protecting and improving the water quality and natural systems of the Cannon River watershed." Everyone wants clean water, and CRWP works with others to achieve it. The Strategic Plan outlines strategies, goals, and tactics for the next three years. Staff work is allocated to specific parts of the plan, and any potential new projects are evaluated for their alignment with the plan. The document provides direction from the Board to the staff, and makes sure CRWP stays focused on the most important things.

We learned. In April, Board members attended "Boot Camp", presented by MAP for Non-profits, to strengthen our understanding of our responsibilities to ensure CRWP's resources are used wisely in pursuit of its mission, and in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

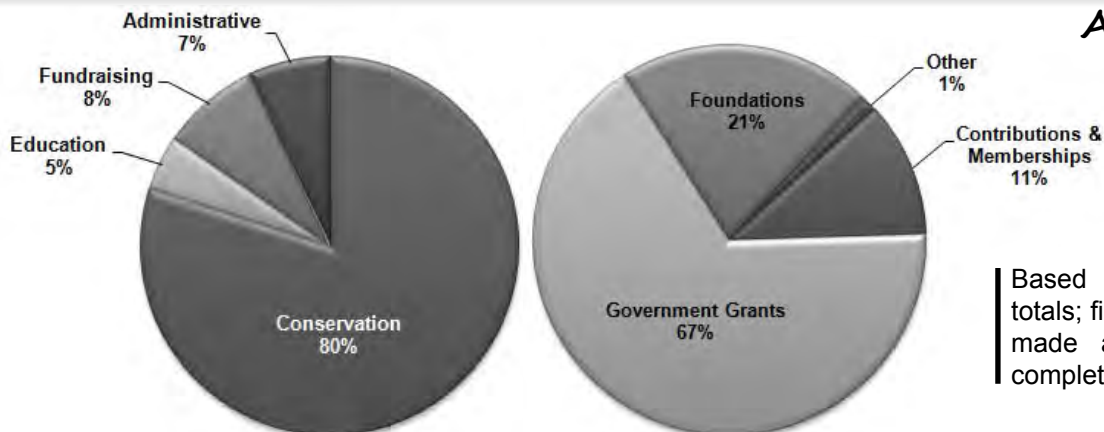


We engaged people. Last, but not least, we advanced the mission, engaging people in the watershed. We attended county fairs, helped with the river cleanup, had a spaghetti dinner and sold raffle tickets. Along the way, we probably had hundreds of conversations about water quality, and motivated a few more people to action.

Between staff, board, and our membership, CRWP is stronger than ever. I wish I had more time to sit in the chair and watch the river go by, but it seems to me the water is beginning to look a little cleaner.

Katy Gillispie

2009 Financial Highlights



Aaron Wills

Based on un-audited totals; final audit will be made available upon completion.

Expenses		Income	
Conservation	\$401,292	Contributions and Memberships	\$54,335
Education	\$23,281	Government Grants	\$323,113
Fundraising	\$42,466	Foundations	\$101,923
Administrative	\$34,998	Other	\$6,745
Total Expenses	\$502,037	Total Income	\$486,116

Conservation Partnership

Assisting Small Communities

Pollution from old, noncompliant, or straight-pipe septic systems is a significant problem in the Cannon River Watershed and throughout Southeast Minnesota. CRWP provides assistance to small communities that have septic systems that are polluting lakes and rivers and are not in compliance with local regulations. CRWP staff assist community members to explore options, find solutions, pursue funding, navigate local and state rules, and provide startup funds to get the projects off the ground.

Overall 2009 was a challenging year for communities to reach construction. After a very successful 2008 which saw two communities construct new wastewater treatment systems (Hope and Meriden in Steele County), communities struggled with many challenges including difficulties acquiring land. Although no community projects reached construction during 2009, several are now positioned to move forward in 2010.

After about 40 years of various attempts, the new cluster treatment system for Nicolville (Mower County) is ready for construction. The community was ready to construct in 2009, but could not acquire land for a new system. Now, funding (grants and loans) is in place, land was acquired via eminent domain, the bid has been accepted, and the township and community are ready to see the project finalized.

Bixby (Steele County) and Roberds Lake (Rice County) made significant steps forward in 2009. Bixby has identified preliminary sites for a new sewer system and is now undertaking a feasibility study to determine approximate costs for a new system and to seek funding. Roberds Lake organized around the idea of bringing Faribault city sewer services to the lake properties. They circulated a petition of interest which was signed by well over fifty percent of the property owners and in 2010 will be working with Faribault, Wells Township, and Rice County to put together a project.

Lyle (Mower County) has agreed to extend city sewer to five homes still on individual septic systems and imminent public health threats. Oronoco (Olmsted County) will complete a municipal water project leading the way for wastewater improvements in their historic downtown area.

Other communities CRWP is assisting include Minnesota City (Winona County), Jefferson-German Chain of Lakes (Le Sueur County), Dakota and Dresbach (Winona County), and the Lake Zumbro (Olmsted and Wabasha Counties) and Cedar River Inventories (Mower County).

Aaron Wills and Sheila Craig



Map shows the City of Dakota (Winona County) and locations for a new sewer treatment site; site constraints include the Mississippi River, Amtrak rail line, Interstate 90 with on and off ramps, and the scenic bluffs.



Aerial photo of Lake German

Upper Cannon Lakes TMDL

The Jefferson-German Lake Chain and Lake Volney are in the process of having a TMDL completed for their impairments of Excess Nutrients. Minnesota State University Mankato Water Resources Center is leading this study. CRWP has been involved in organizing public meetings to update residents and gather feedback on the implementation work that will need to follow this study.

Beth Kallestad

Agricultural Shoreland Management Project Concludes

The Agriculture Shoreland Management Project (ASMP) provided education and publicized the need for shoreland protection through buffers in agricultural areas across Southeast Minnesota. Beginning in 2008, the project visited 14 counties across the region, speaking with county staff, SWCDs, and county commissioners about their shoreland concerns. County and SWCD staff were consulted on what the current status of shoreland in their county was and how the ASMP could assist. Presentations on the problems, solutions, science, and laws pertaining to shoreland buffers were provided to county commissioners. In addition, presentations to citizen groups like lake associations were also provided.

Concluding in 2009, some interpretation of regional awareness of shoreland protection can be made. County staff are aware of the shoreland rules, however many relate that funding is still insufficient for enforcement. SWCDs in the region are using the rule to increase enrollment and promote conservation programs. County commissioners were genuinely concerned while a few remained skeptical of the need for shoreland buffers. The public is largely unaware of the need for shoreland protection, but once educated, can be quick to take action. The agricultural community understood the need for protection, but would prefer profitable uses for shoreland while protecting water quality.

Ultimately, vegetated shoreland buffers are the first step in realizing that good agriculture across southeast Minnesota need not come at the expense of good water quality.

Shoreland Management Project Update

The Shoreland Mapping Project (SMP), started in late 2008, has been digitally tracing and coding landuses in shoreland areas of major waterways across ten counties in Southeast Minnesota. The end result will provide counties with information on where exactly shoreland protection is needed. As of January 2010, over 2,500 miles of 3,800 total miles have been mapped. Counties finished include: Rice, Mower, Winona, Goodhue, Wabasha, and Olmsted. Counties yet to be mapped include: Fillmore, Houston, Dodge, and Steele. The project has mapped approximately 66% of the region's waterways, and is on track to finish the region in June of 2010.

More information including the ASMP's final report and SMP shoreland data can be found on Cannon River Watershed Partnership's website, <http://www.crwp.net>, under "Projects". Or, feel free to contact me at (507) 786-3916.

Ross Hoffmann

River Friendly Farmer Project Concludes

With funding from the Bush Foundation, CRWP completed our first River Friendly Farmer project in May 2009. We worked with farmers in the Spring Brook, Chub Creek and Prairie Creek watersheds to learn more about their practices, offer some suggestions for improvements, and provide some financial resources for trying some new practices. A full report is on our website at <http://www.crwp.net/rff.html>.

One Water Project Begins

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency is moving toward the approach of using major watersheds (such as the Cannon) as the scale for monitoring, assessment and management. The Cannon River is part of a pilot project to look at how this can be done. The outcome will be a watershed management plan and approach that better integrates the work done across the counties and cities in the watershed. In 2009 we began work on this project with the Lower Cannon River Turbidity Implementation Plan that was completed in October of the same year.

Beth Kallestad

Water Monitoring

Surface Water Assessment Grant II

The goal of this project is to continue assessment of lakes and stream reaches in the Cannon River Watershed that need be assessed for impairments. This project collects water quality samples from 33 stream reaches and three lakes utilizing citizen stream volunteers and CRWP staff. A total of 430 water samples were collected with 2,430 corresponding water quality measurements recorded. Data collected from this project will be used by the MPCA as they develop the Impaired Waters 303(d) list. We anticipate a majority of the lakes and streams tested will be added to the list for excess nutrient and bacteria concentrations. In early January 2010, CRWP was notified that we will receive a third surface water assessment grant for 2010-2011 to continue surface water assessments in our watershed. I would like to thank all of our volunteers for their participation, we could not do this without you.



UCAP site install in Waterville, Spring 2009.

Upper Cannon Assessment Project

The goal of this project was to understand water quality and pollutant sources within the watershed so priority areas can be identified and improvements to water quality can take place. Five monitoring locations were established throughout the watershed for three years where water quality data was collected. Results from the study indicated that the Waterville-Whitewater creek sub-watershed was an area of concern and where implementation projects should be focused. The initial phase of this project will be completed at the end of January, 2010. A PDF version of the final report will be posted on our website in the near future.

Straight River TMDL Project

This project will use the established TMDL process to lay the foundation for addressing direct and indirect sources of turbidity so the Straight River and its tributaries are healthy, unimpaired water resources fully supporting their designated uses. The two goals of this project are: 1) complete TMDL computations for each turbidity listings in the Straight River Watershed. 2) develop management strategies to address pollutant sources, according to the load allocations and waste allocations. These strategies will be summarized and are the basis for an implementation plan to address specific problems on the major watershed scale, but will also provide recommendations specific to each listing.

Lucas Bistodeau

Education and Recreation

First Annual River Clean-Up

This year we established our annual watershed wide river clean-up. Thanks to the hard work of 215 volunteers at ten sites throughout the watershed, over 25,000 pounds of garbage, debris and tires were pulled out of the Straight and Cannon Rivers and Shields Lake. As a kick off for the event Chad Pregrake, the founder of Living Lands and Waters and the “king” of river cleanups, gave a presentation to about 50 attendees at St. Olaf College. Thereafter citizens ranging in age from 4 – 75 took to the river banks, river beds and lake shore to help improve the water quality and the aesthetic appeal of the water bodies in the Cannon River Watershed. A special thanks to all the clean-up sponsors listed on page seven.

Lisa Carey

Thank You Members and Volunteers

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*...and the many River Clean-Up
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*We apologize if your name has
been omitted. Please let Lisa
Carey know by calling (507) 786-
3911 and we will correct the omis-
sion. Thank you!*



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 Sheila Craig - Community Sewage Treatment Facilitator
 Ross Hoffmann - Water Quality Project Coordinator
 Leslie Kennedy - Office Manager/Volunteer Coordinator
 Aaron Wills - Community Sewage Treatment Facilitator

Annual Report Editing by Leslie Kennedy
 Annual Report and Layout by Ross Hoffmann

Phone: (507) 786-8400
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Our mission is to engage people
 in protecting and improving the
 water quality and natural systems
 of the Cannon River watershed.



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Cannon River Watershed Partnership Annual Meeting Notice

Monday March 1, 2010

6:00 - 8:30 PM

First United Church of Christ
300 Union St., Northfield, MN

Program

6:00 Arrival and socializing (light refreshments provided)

7:00 Welcome - Katy Gillispie, CRWP Board Chair
Business Meeting - Approval of 2009 Annual Meeting Minutes,
Recognition of retiring Board of Directors,
Election of new Directors,
Adjourn Board of Directors Meeting

7:15 Stories of the Watershed - 20 Years and Counting
CRWP is celebrating our 20th Anniversary of incorporation on
May 4th.
Take a walk down memory lane with us as some members,
former staff, and directors share their stories of our past.

8:15 20th Anniversary Campaign Kick-Off

8:30 Conclusion - Beth Kallestad

**RSVP IS REQUESTED BY FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 26TH TO 507-786-
8400 OR EMAIL leslie@crwp.net**