CARNELIAN-MARINE-ST. CROIX WATERSHED DISTRICT

WATERSHED UPDATE

Protecting Our Vital Wetlands

The Carnelian-Marine-St. Croix Watershed District includes a wealth of wetlands — lowland marsh and forest areas that benefit groundwater, provide wildlife habitat, generate oxygen, aid in flood prevention and capture and filter stormwater.

In the past, wetlands have been seen as problem areas that can’t be easily farmed or developed. Now, scientists understand the ecological importance of protecting wetlands, which also can be great places for recreation and exploring nature.

In 2010, the District completed a Wetland Management Plan that identifies particularly vital wetland areas and lays out steps for protection. Working with a diverse technical advisory committee, the District designated specific “Wetland Preservation Areas” that are ecologically healthy and important to the surrounding community. The District is working to promote protection projects in these areas, which range from the Big Marine Park Reserve and the Silver and Carnelian Creek corridors, to the Kelly Farm area and lands between Bass Lake and County Road 7.

For example, the District works closely with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to manage water levels in the large wetland complex between Big Marine Lake and 155th Street, an area that will eventually be added into Big Marine Park Reserve. The District is collaborating with the county on habitat restoration for the threatened Blanding’s turtle in the same area.

“We’re fortunate to have some unique and high quality wetland systems here,” said District Administrator Jim Shaver. Many of the identified wetland areas are near one another and could create connected "greenway" corridors, which would offer more benefits than fragmented habitat areas. For more information, contact Jim Shaver or download a copy of the Wetland Management Plan on the District website.

New Rules to Protect Water and Natural Resources

Changes to the land affect our water. And because even small projects can have large environmental consequences, the District requires a permit for many activities, from mining operations and new construction to home renovations and shoreline repairs.

In March 2010 the District adopted new rules that include a new permit fee structure — and also reflect efforts to reduce the amount of engineering required for small projects.

See the Permit section of the District website for details, including a small project work sheet and flow chart to help landowners determine if they need a Watershed District permit for stormwater management. For more information, contact Jim Shaver.

Download our 2010 Annual Report

Check the District website for information on our financial and programmatic activities, including water monitoring, permitting and cost share programs.

UPCOMING EVENTS

HORSE WORKSHOP
Tuesday, January 24, 6-9pm
at Hooley Hall, Washington County Fair
Get tips from local veterinarians and learn how to manage your horse pasture to prevent water pollution. Contact: Wendy Griffin at 651-275-1136 ext. 24 or wendy.griffin@mnwcd.org.

CARNELIAN-MARINE-ST. CROIX WATERSHED DISTRICT

Meet Manager Jason Husveth

Jason Husveth, a District manager since 2008, is committed to implementing projects that help protect and improve the water quality of the lakes, streams and groundwater aquifers in the St. Crox River Valley. Principle ecologist and owner of Scandia-based Critical Connections Ecological Services, Husveth brings strong technical skills to the District Board of Managers.

Husveth has worked hard to evaluate and understand the unique natural resources found in northern Washington County, as well as greater Minnesota. He is especially well versed in the area of wetland science. Husveth is also well known for his ability to find and identify plant species that are protected under the State’s Endangered Species Law. Husveth has discovered and documented more than six hundred new populations of plants that are considered to be very rare in Minnesota — including recent finds within our watershed. Often times these plants are no larger than a penny and only persist above ground for a few weeks of the year, so finding them is no easy task!

In his role as District Manager, Husveth advocates for sustainable development practices coupled with the protection of the wealth of natural resources found in Washington County. Thank you, Jason Husveth, for offering your widely recognized expertise for the benefit of our watershed!

Did You Know?

Excavating in a wetland requires a District permit as well as authorization under the Wetlands Conservation Act.

If you have questions or would like information on any of the District’s programs, contact Administrator Jim Shaver at 651.433.2150 or jshaver@csmdwd.org. Visit our website at www.csmdwd.org.
The District works hard to make sure changes to the land don’t degrade local waters. Baseline testing on streams near a proposed gravel mining project is one example.

INSIDE
Learn about lake clean-up plans, wetland protection, our 2012 budget and more!

Are you a past member of the Citizens’ Advisory Committee? Would you like to continue your involvement? Or would you like to join? Contact Jim Shaver at 433-2150 or jshaver@cmcwcd.org.

Cleaning Up Our Lakes

Our clean, fishable and swimmable lakes make our area a great place to live. Unfortunately, ten lakes in our Watershed District were tested and failed to meet state water quality standards. Cleanup planning is now in process for the “impaired” lakes — East Boot, Fish, Goose, Hay, Jellum’s, Long (Scandia), Loon, Louise, South Twin and Mud.

All of the impaired lakes are polluted by phosphorus, which contributes to algae growth and depletes oxygen in water. Most phosphorus pollution occurs when contaminated soils, fertilizers, lawn clippings, leaves and other substances are washed into waters.

Each impaired lake will have its own cleanup plan, also known as a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) plan. In all cases the District will be working to identify significant sources of pollution and conducting specific on-the-ground improvement projects. Work on Goose Lake, described at right, is one example.

“Phosphorus pollution is being caused by many land uses, so many small projects will be needed to improve lake water quality,” said District Administrator Jim Shaver. Landowners with property that drains to an impaired lake are actively participating in planning. Check the District website for stakeholder meetings or contact our office for more information.

Carnelian-Marine St. Croix Proposed 2012 Budget

The charts below detail the Watershed District’s proposed 2012 revenue and expenses. A public hearing on the budget was held in August. For the fourth year in a row, the District will maintain or reduce the tax levy for landowners in the watershed.

REVENUE
Grants $89,000
Contributions $49,100

EXPENSES
Professional Fees $24,100
Plants $14,000
Residential Cost Share $70,600
Administration $138,200
Projects/Programs $167,000*
Laws $240,500

*Includes shared staff salaries, education, permitting, monitoring and other projects/programs.

Scandia Gravel Mine Update

The re-opening of a gravel operation in Scandia has been a focus of District involvement since late 2008. The proposed project is located on a 114-acre site at the intersection of Highways 95 and 97 immediately adjacent to the St. Croix Scenic Riverway.

“The District will be permitting storm water and erosion control issues if this operation proceeds,” said Administrator Jim Shaver, “but from the beginning we have had concerns about ground water and dust impacts on the St. Croix River, small streams and wetlands in the area.”

A preliminary draft Environmental Impact Statement was released for review at a Public Advisory Committee meeting in mid-November. “The public looks to the District to protect its water resources and so we have requested additional data,” said Shaver. “We can’t review the potential effectiveness of mitigation unless we know the potential impacts.” The public comment period will begin on March 6, 2012.

The District is hopeful that the release of the final draft Environmental Impact Statement will include the details needed for the public and the Scandia Council to make a fully informed decision on the project. More information is available on the Scandia website and written comments can be made to the City of Scandia.