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Clearwater River Watershed District Fact Sheet

This fact sheet is intended to explain what watershed districts can do and, in particular, what the Clearwater River Watershed District (CRWD) has done.

Watershed districts are authorized by MN Statute 103d. Each district is governed by a Board of Managers who are appointed by county commissioners from the county the manager represents.

The CRWD is situated in parts of Wright, Meeker, and Stearns counties. The size of each district is determined by its hydrological boundary, meaning that the area of the district is determined by the origin of all surface water that flows to a certain point. In the CRWD, water flows from west of Watkins to the Mississippi at the city of Clearwater. The CRWD is 159 square miles in size.

Watershed districts are required to have an advisory committee. In addition to the advisory committee, the CRWD has a wastewater task force that makes recommendations to the Board of Managers regarding what methods of wastewater treatment should be pursued in the District.

Staff needs vary from district to district with the CRWD having an administrator, assistant administrator/bookkeeper, engineer, and attorney. Staff works at the direction of the Board of Managers.



Swartout Lake fish barrier



Lake Louisa rain garden

The Many Roles of the CRWD

The Clearwater River Watershed District (CRWD) gathers water quality data for lakes and streams during the open water season. This data is generated from water samples that are analyzed in a certified lab. That data, along with citizen Secchi disk readings, provides water surface quality trends in the District. A water quality report, along with recommendations, is developed each year and is available on the CRWD's website at www.crw.org.

Sediment in certain lakes has been collected and analyzed in the District. This data supplements the water quality data, especially when considering internal loading in lakes.

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CRWD Roles, Continued

The CRWD has implemented a number of projects to improve surface water quality in the District, such as the 1980 Clean Water Partnership- and local resident-funded establishment of the Lake Augusta Erosion Control Project, the Kingston Wetland Enhancement Project, the Watkins Wetland Isolation Unit, the Watkins Wetland South Enhancement Project, Tri-county Conservation Tillage Project, and rough fish removal.

The CRWD owns and operates four community wastewater treatment systems that serve a total of 134 hook-ups. The CRWD is the ditch authority over Meeker County Ditch #20 North.

Watershed districts can fill a number of roles. Sometimes they are leading an effort; other times they are a partner; and still again, they may facilitate the development of an effort.

Incentive programs have been developed by the District to either supplement existing cost-share programs or provide an incentive where no other

exists. These incentive programs assist with ag buffers, lakeshore buffers, rain gardens, feedlots, lakescaping, and soil erosion control measures.

City stormwater management plans have been developed by the District for the cities of Kimball, Watkins, and Annandale. These plans assisted the cities in growth planning, stormwater management, and recreational area development.

Education and promotion of District Activities are accomplished by development of a biannual brochure, annual Annandale Expo participation, annual bus tour for residents, attendance at lake association meetings, Wright County Fifth Grade Days, attendance at city council meetings, township board meetings, and county-sponsored functions.

Watershed districts have the authority to order water quality improvement projects. The most recent project is called the Cedar, Albion, Swartout, and Henshaw Lakes Water Quality Improvement Project 06-1.



Swartout Lake rough fish harvest

This project will improve water quality in all four lakes by removing and isolating rough fish, buffering of ditches and waterways, and construction of sediment basins to be followed up each year with intensive monitoring to track progress.

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Segner Pond, a wetland treatment basin.

CRWD Identifies 19 Projects to Improve Water Quality

The Clearwater River Watershed District has identified 19 potential projects to help improve water quality in the District.

The projects aim to preserve or improve water quality by reducing nutrient, sediment and bacteria loads; controlling erosion; stabilizing channels; and improving habitat.

1. Potential V-Notch Weir in Tributary Wetland
2. Residue Management and Conservation Tillage
3. Partner with SWCDs for Ag Practice Outreach
4. Convene Farmers Group to Identify Agricultural Best Management Practices
5. Drainage Ditch-Potential for Improvement Project
6. Meierhoffer Wetland Northwest-Potential for V-notch Weir
7. Drainage Ditch-Potential for Improvement Project
8. Meierhofer Wetland South-Proposed V-notch Weir
9. Runoff to Lake from Horse Pasture
10. Evaluate Unsewered Area-Potential for Cluster System
11. Clearwater River-Potential for Stream Channel Restoration
12. Little Mud Lake-Evaluate for Stormwater Management Opportunities
13. Opportunity for Conservation Practices with Land owner
14. Horse Pasture adjacent to Clearwater River-Potential for Pasture Management
15. Crop Rills-Potential for Cropland Buffer
16. Potential to Reduce Sediment Load from Ditch
17. Potential to Reduce Sediment Load from Ditch
18. Rills in Agricultural Fields
19. Kingston Wetland Channel Remeander



Grass Lake lakescaping



Segner Pond fish barrier