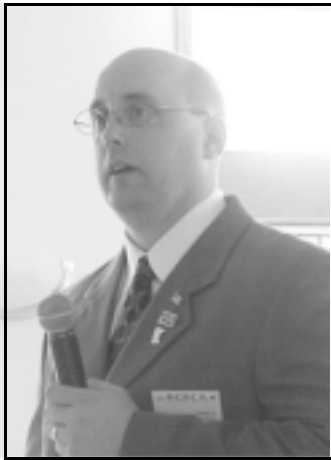


Annual Report 2002

**REDWOOD-COTTONWOOD
RIVERS CONTROL AREA
(RCRCA)**

A Message from the Director . . .



James Doering, Executive Director

This annual report is published to document the organization and partner watershed activities in 2002 and to again refocus on the goals and objectives of RCRCA. Over the last nineteen years, the purpose of the Redwood-Cottonwood Rivers Control Area (RCRCA) has been to develop and implement plans to protect and enhance the Redwood and Cottonwood Rivers. In 2002 we have continued that important task and remain committed to providing watershed residents and our local government members and partners the support to help accelerate conservation adoption in both watersheds.

It is understood that it will take time to accomplish the goals and objectives set by RCRCA in their entirety. We also understand it will take the combined efforts of many of our conservation partners and local watershed citizens. These facts are illustrated in the six-year Redwood River report "Evolution of Watershed Restoration" published by RCRCA in 2002. This unprecedented account of watershed wide management and conservation efforts has received many accolades and serves as a model for other watersheds to follow. Through combined conservation efforts, substantial water quality improvements have been realized on the Redwood River.

Watershed planning will continue to be an important function of RCRCA. Addressing Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) requirements set in the Clean Water Act will be a new role RCRCA will fill in the near future. With the Cottonwood River Restoration Project finishing the third year of a six-year implementation plan and the Redwood River Clean Water Project finishing the eighth year, RCRCA is poised to be instrumental in TMDL planning and implementation. Support by RCRCA, its partners and voluntary adoption of best management practices are the only way Total Maximum Daily Load limits can be set and achieved without regulation. State and Federal agencies recognize that fact and look to our leadership and experience in watershed management to again set the standard.

Looking ahead to 2003, I have clouded optimism. In 2002, headlines have touted recession, war on terrorism and in the last few months deficit and the possibility of going to war a second time in Iraq. What significance does conservation, watershed management and improved water quality have in times like these? The answer is "substantial significance"! Conservation of land and water ensures a better quality of life. A concept that is demanded as one of the freedoms watershed residents (Americans) expect on a daily basis. Threats such as terrorism and the instability of other countries infringe on this freedom. Conservation of land and water insures stable economic growth and development into the future. Land and water are the raw materials that support our food production, industry and community development. Conservation of land and water will bring us out of recession and enable us to conquer seemingly insurmountable state deficits. Will conservation adoption decrease in the short term? Probably, yes. The economy will require watershed residents, local, state, federal organizations and governments to tighten their belts. The quest for more efficient ways to live, offer programs and services will temper the rapid adoption of conservation programs and practices we have enjoyed over the last few years.

Currently we have one of the most conservation weighted Federal Farm Bills I have ever seen. The Federal Farm Bill drives all conservation efforts. With that fact and favorable fund allocations, there has not been a more opportune time to implement conservation in the Cottonwood and Redwood River Watersheds. Conservation adoption will continue despite the headlines. RCRCA will be there in 2003 to accelerate this adoption and support our conservation partners!

James Doering

About RCRCA

The Redwood-Cottonwood Rivers Control Area (RCRCA) represents the interest of local units of government through a joint powers agreement. Organized in 1983 to protect and enhance the Redwood and Cottonwood Rivers, RCRCA works with local, state, and federal agencies, as well as private foundations to finance and administer programs of benefit to the two watersheds. RCRCA is the fiscal manager of both the Redwood River Clean Water Project and the Cottonwood River Restoration Project.



Member Counties and Soil and Water Conservation Districts include:

- **Brown**
- **Cottonwood**
- **Lincoln**
- **Lyon**
- **Murray**
- **Redwood**
- **Pipestone**
- **Yellow Medicine**

Financial support for RCRCA is provided, in part, through these counties.

RCRCA was organized to develop and implement plans to:

- protect property from the damage of flooding.
- protect property, rivers and lakes from sedimentation and pollution.
- maintain and improve the quality of water in the rivers, lakes and groundwater.
- improve recreational and wildlife opportunities within the two watersheds.

Technical Assistance

Through both the Redwood River Clean Water Project and the Cottonwood River Restoration Project, technical assistance is available to watershed residents to assist with design and installation of best management practices (BMPs). Funding, in the form of cost share grants, is available for up to seventy-five percent (75%) of most practices intended to protect water quality. Project staff also help landowners access other state and federal sources of financial assistance.

Education/Information

The RCRCA educational program activities are intended to raise the level of public awareness and provide the most current information to all watershed residents. Through the use of various educational components, farmers and the general public will be able to learn about the watershed project and how they can participate in reducing erosion and non-point source pollution on their land. Information includes newsletters, updating written material, public events, as well as providing educational information developed for specific audiences and programs.

Cottonwood River Restoration Project



Cottonwood River Watershed Sampling

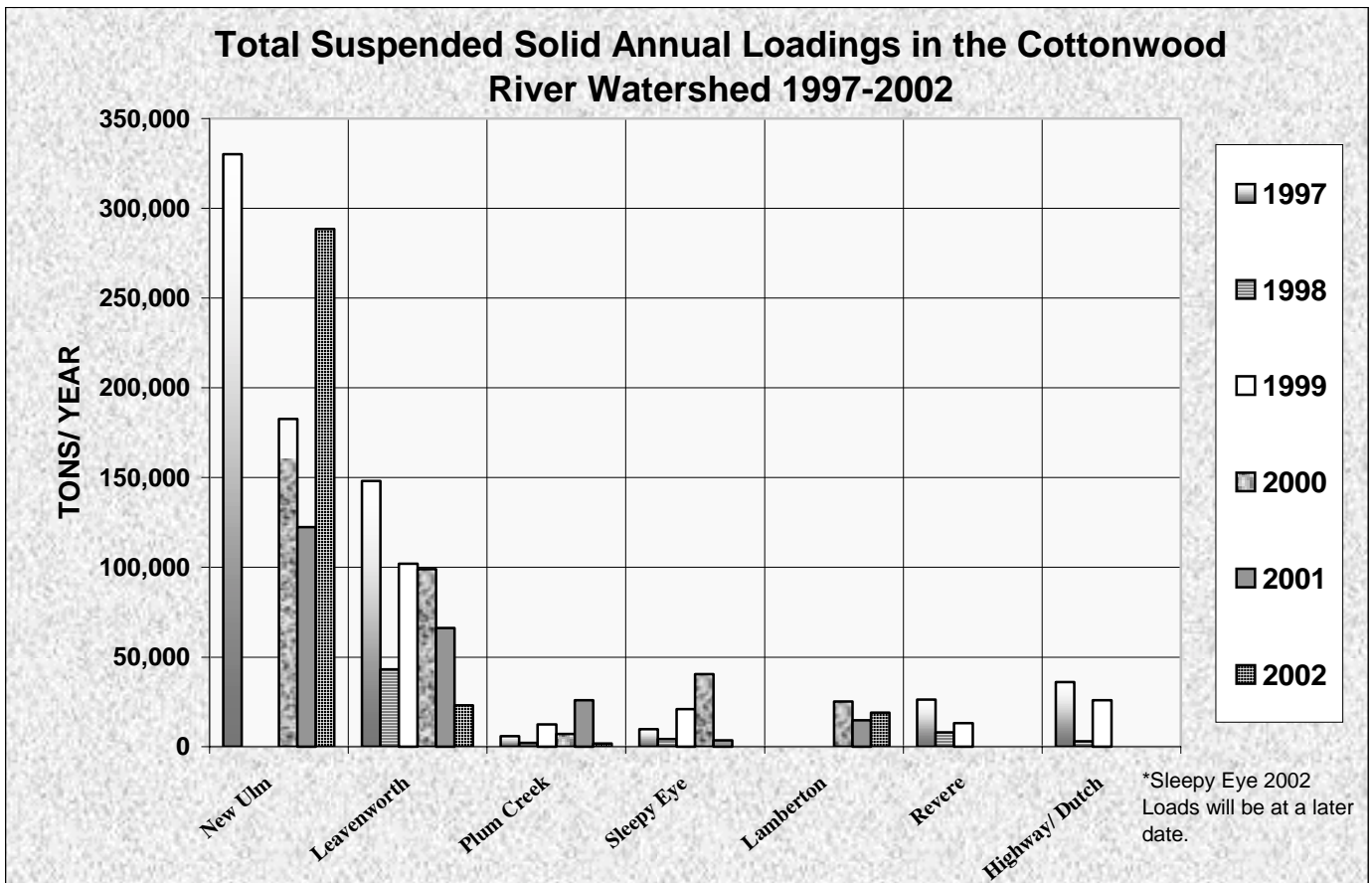
Surface water sampling on the Cottonwood River (three sites) and its tributaries (two sites) continued for a fifth year. Samples were collected monthly (base flow) at each station through the growing season (May–September.) Samples were also collected on a four hour interval during two storm events.

Mission

The mission of the Cottonwood River Restoration Project is to promote sustainable conservation land use changes through establishing watershed identity and be cooperatively working to increase watershed awareness that will lead to the restoration of the river's environmental health and increased recreational use.

Sampling Sites:

- Plum Creek
- Cottonwood River near Lamberton
- Cottonwood River near Leavenworth
- Sleepy Eye Creek near Leavenworth
- Cottonwood River at New Ulm



Overview

The Cottonwood River Restoration Project began in the spring of 1996 with the award of a Clean Water Partnership Grant from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. The project is designed to investigate water quality conditions in the Cottonwood River, then design and implement measures to improve the quality and usefulness of the river.

Ten Year Goals

- To achieve the highest water quality attainable for ecoregion non-impacted streams.
- To have watershed residents take an active role in enhancing and protecting the Cottonwood River.
- To develop the Cottonwood River as a major recreational resource within the Minnesota River

High School Monitoring Programs

With the assistance of RCRCA, a number of school groups this past year learned first hand about water quality in the watershed. Kari Howey, RCRCA Watershed Technician showed the students how to conduct environmental sampling and discussed the scientific basis behind sampling to the Natural Resource Team from the Russell-Tyler-Ruthton School District and with an Ecology class from the Red Rock Central High School in Lamberton.

Classroom discussions about environmental issues were also conducted at Red Rock Central, Lamberton; the Ecology class at St. Mary's, Sleepy Eye and the Ecology class at Russell-Tyler-Ruthton. The school groups are very interested in working with RCRCA again next season, especially with doing field trips to the RCRCA sampling sites.



The Red Rock Central Ecology class taking water quality samples.



Kari Howey, Watershed Technician is shown setting up on of the RCRCA sampling sites.

Redwood River Clean Water Project



Redwood River Watershed Sampling

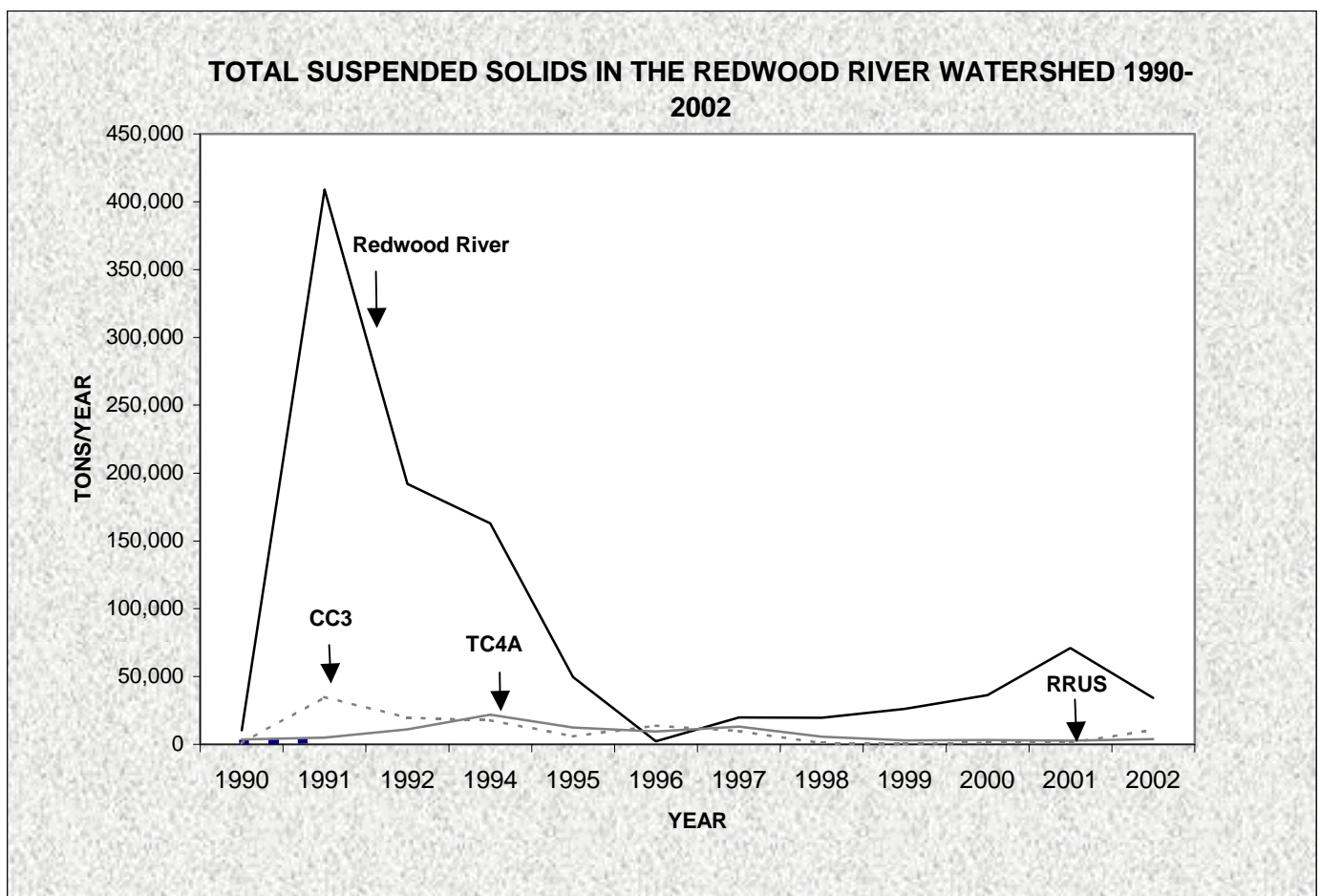
Surface water sampling on the Redwood River and its tributaries continued for a twelfth year. Samples were collected monthly (base flow) at each station throughout the growing season (May–September.) Samples were also collected on a four hour interval during two storm events.

Mission

The mission of the Redwood River Clean Water Project is to create awareness and appreciation for the value of a clean Redwood River, promote watershed identity, and cooperatively achieve land use changes necessary to restore the river's health.

Sampling Sites:

- Three Mile Creek near Marshall
- Redwood River at Russell
- Clear Creek near Seaforth
- Redwood River near Redwood



Overview

The Redwood River Clean Water Project, set out in 1994 to accelerate best management practice adoption and reduce sediment and nutrient loadings in the Redwood River and Lake Redwood have shown a significant decrease, as illustrated in the graph on page 4. Along with the cooperative work of partner agencies, an increased sense of stewardship and resident participation is behind the adoption of land use practices.

The Redwood River Clean Water Project will continue efforts to reduce nonpoint and point source pollution by seeking sustainable sources of funding.

Redwood River Final Report “Evolution of Watershed Restoration”

Upon the completion of the implementation grant for the Redwood River Clean Water Project, a final report was written “Evolution of Watershed Restoration.” This report was written not only to satisfy grant requirements, but also to serve as a guidebook for beginning a watershed organization.

The report highlights the accomplishments and trends of the clean water partnership, educational efforts, and monitoring data and procedures. The report also takes a look at the lessons learned and the obstacles throughout the project, as well as the future direction and need of maintaining the project for years to come.

Gabion project on the Redwood River in Marshall

A large streambank stabilization project along the Redwood River in Marshall was completed with Gabion walls. The project was necessary to stabilize residential property that was eroding away into the river. The project not only helped reduce the amount of erosion into the river, but also helped stabilize the property and increase the property value.



Redwood River eroding bank before the gabion project.

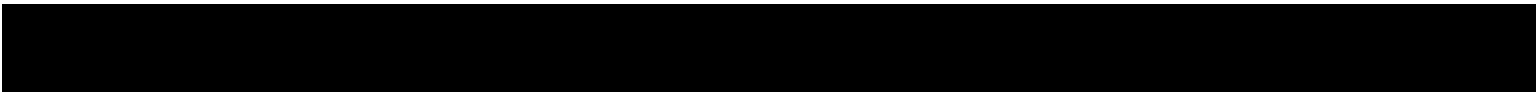


Completed gabion wall on the Redwood River.

Map of the Redwood and Cottonwood River Watersheds

Map was not available for on-line viewing.

See the RCRCAs home page for access to watershed maps.



Education and Outreach

A Pictorial Review of 2002 . . .



Students from the Red Rock Central School are showing the maps they created after learning about GIS.



Women landowners from throughout both watersheds enjoyed conservation information given at the workshop *From Buffers to Butterflies*. The event was a joint effort between RCRCA and the SWCDs.



Watershed residents enjoying an afternoon of golf and learning more about water quality at the RCRCA first annual *Tee-up for the Cottonwood River*.



A watershed resident on a kayak ride during the RCRCA annual canoe trips.



Fifth grade students were fascinated by the groundwater model at Lake Hanska Days in Brown County.



Roseanne Kaseforth, Watershed Educator explaining the dynamics of a river and erosion using the model stream table during Elementary Field Days at the University of Minnesota, Southwest Research and Outreach Center in Lamberton.



A group of Girl Scouts are having fun making an "edible watershed" for a snack after learning about the water cycle.



Landowners and staff sharing river concerns at the annual *Coffee on the Project* in Springfield, MN.



Students were captivated during a demonstration using the model stream table at the Children's Water Festival in Mankato, MN. Children from both Brown and Cottonwood Counties attended the day long water festival.

Watershed Improvements

Cottonwood River Watershed 1999-2002:

Underground outlet (No.)	186
Grade Stabilization Structure (No.)	1
Grassed Waterway (Ac.)	2.6
Pond (No.)	1
Water and Sediment Control Basins (No.)	1
Waste Management System (No.)	2
Terraces (Ft.)	2
Subsurface Drain (Ft.)	185



Redwood River Watershed 1994-2002:

Conservation Cover (Ac.)	464.0
Conservation Crop Rotation (Ac.)	4,063.1
Conservation Tillage (Ac.)	5,876
Pasture and Hay Planting (Ac.)	392.5
Prescribed Grazing (Ac.)	288.0
Pond (No.)	1
Grassed Waterway (Ac.)	100.15
Streambank, Shoreland and Roadside (Ft.)	1,222
*with an additional 434.7 (Ac.) treated	
Water and Sediment Control Basins (No.)	126
Terraces (Ft.)	3,660
Diversions (Ft.)	3,450
Waste Management System (Ac.)	4
Critical Area Stabilization (Ac.)	1.1
Sediment Basin (No.)	2
Pest Management (Ac.)	4,216.3
Nutrient Management (Ac.)	4,063.1
Waste Utilization (Ac.)	6,963
Upland Wildlife Habitat management (Ac.)	20
Miscellaneous Acres Treated	5,638.8

Financial Highlights

Revenues and Expenditures

For the Fiscal Year Ended December 31, 2002

Funding Sources	General Fund	Redwood River Clean Water Project*	Cottonwood River Clean Water Project*
Beginning Fund Balance	\$316,100	-\$8,017	\$99,432
<u>2002 REVENUE</u>			
<i>RCRCA Member Counties: appropriations/match funds</i>			
• Brown County	\$10,665		
• Cottonwood County	7,440		
• Lincoln County	4,140		
• Lyon County	15,840		
• Murray County	3,240		
• Pipestone County	780		
• Redwood County	25,694		
• Yellow Medicine County	660		
MN Pollution 319 Grant			\$45,000
MN Pollution CWP Grant		\$45,136	120,636
Interest/Miscellaneous	12,462		
Total Revenues	\$80,921	\$45,136	\$165,636
<u>2002 EXPENDITURES</u>			
Personnel Services/Benefits	\$85,372	\$34,258	\$130,551
Operation/Supplies	9,479	13	14,220
Capital Outlay	6,360	1,209	2,392
Information/Education			12,193
Monitoring/Evaluation		1,842	4,043
Travel/Expense	3,054		5,192
Other Services/Charges	2,937	23	5,636
Total Expenditures	\$93,672	\$37,345	\$173,954
Ending Fund Balance	\$303,349	-\$226	\$90,688

*Does not reflect in-kind contributions and cost-share funds received/encumbered.

Board of Directors

Clark Lingbeek, *Chairman*
Donald Wellner, *Vice Chairman*
Ray Traen, *Secretary*
Darold Neperman, *Treasurer*
Glen Sorenson, *Public Relations & Information*
Steve Johnson, *Member at Large*

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Gary Sorenson, Cottonwood Co.
Curt Blumeyer, Lincoln Co.
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Steve Johnson, Murray Co.
Robert Weets, Pipestone Co.
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Jane Remiger, Yellow Medicine Co.

SWCD Supervisors

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Clark Lingbeek, Cottonwood
Glen Sorensen, Lincoln
Ray Traen, Lyon
Paul Posthuma, Murray
LeRoy Stensgaard, Pipestone
Tom Daub, Redwood
Burton Kuehn, Yellow Medicine

Staff

James Doering, Executive Director
Joel Connot, Watershed Technician (July-Dec.)
Kari Howey, Watershed Technician
Roseanne Kaseforth, Watershed Educator
Bill Moldestad, Engineering Technician (Feb.-Dec.)
Kelly Oliver, Engineering Technician (May-Dec.)
Stephanie McLain, Watershed Technician (Jan.-June)
Sharon Voeks, Office Manager

Acknowledgements

Landowners/Operators who established BMPs
•
Watershed Residents
•
Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD)
•
County Environmental Offices
•
County Water Planners
•
Area II, Minnesota River Basin Projects, Inc.
•
Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
•
Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
•
Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR)
•
Minnesota River Basin Joint Powers Board (MNRBJPB)
•
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA)
•
Farm Service Agency (FSA)
•
University of Minnesota Extension Service
•
United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
•
University of Minnesota
Southwest Research and Outreach Center (SWROC)



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