



# Sauk River Watershed District



*Thank You 2003 Volunteers for all your time, effort and energy given to help water quality!*

### Did You Know?

- The SRWD covers **5 counties**: Douglas, Pope, Todd, Stearns and Meeker
- The SRWD has 9 board members representing the different counties of the watershed.
- Meetings are held the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of the month at 7:30pm at the district office.
- The District **monitors 20 streams** and 11 lakes throughout the 1,007 square mile watershed.
- **Services are provided** to residents wishing to volunteer.
- The SRWD has an active education program for **schools**.
- Assistance is available for land use **improvements** that positively affect water quality.

## What Does An Impaired Lake Look Like?

Do you ever wonder what is the quality of your lake water? It does fine one year than the next it's as green as pea soup, or vegetation becomes thick in early June. Before you say your lake is impaired, you may need to evaluate and record the events for at least 5 years.

Symptoms of impaired water quality can include increases in winter kills, summer kills, extreme algae, invasive aquatic plants, high nutrients and fecal coliform bacteria.

**Evaluation Strategies**  
Strategies to evaluate freshwater lakes include:

chemical, visual, biological, habitat, sediment, and complete sub-watershed assessment. This is a long, intense process that takes a motivated group to perform and commit to.

**The Best Defense**  
A fully natural (not mowed grass) edge!

tated shoreline provides cover for young and adult fish, removal of nutrients before they reach the lake, reduced erosion, food for invertebrates, and food and habitat for other wildlife. A grass way between the water and mowed areas pro-

vides the best line of defense for filtering polluted runoff.

**The First Step**  
Shoreline owners can directly help to maintain or improve water quality and fish habitat by following lakeshore development best management practices, such as maintaining or upgrading septic systems, minimizing nutrient inputs from fertilizer use, and leaving aquatic vegetation and terrestrial vegetation within at least 50 feet of the shoreline intact or restoring such vegetation to its native state.

## Volunteering For The Cause!

Volunteer monitors play a significant role in a successful monitoring program. Whether it be by reading rain gauges, staff gauges, transparency tubes, secchi disks, or by driving boat for lake testing, all are essential components.

In March of this year, the Watershed District, along with the Rivers Council of Minnesota, Stearns SWCD, and Stearns

Environmental Services, hosted its first annual Volunteer Monitoring Workshop. The workshop was a success with nearly 70 interested citizens in attendance and many new volunteering their time and efforts.

Volunteers provide important data used in assessing future monitoring efforts. They may monitor where time and money have limited previ-

ous work. They also are a liaison between agencies and local citizens, helping to build an awareness of the health or the threats to our water resources.

We would like to thank all of the volunteers for taking the time to help, for providing quality data, and for working to educate fellow citizens on the importance of good water quality.



Boy Scout Troop #68 helped install the 250+ curb markers in the

*The Watershed District continues to team up with local and state agencies and organizations to share our excitement and knowledge about this endangered resource to citizens of all ages. If you have any ideas or suggestions and are willing to help us implement them or if you would like to learn ways to get involved in our education and outreach program for youth or adults, contact our office.*

## Sauk River Watershed District

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Send Comments and Questions to:  
[atrisko@saukriver-watersheddistrict.org](mailto:atrisko@saukriver-watersheddistrict.org)

## STORM DRAIN 'CURB MARKERS' A BIG SUCCESS!

Many people think that storm drains lead into a filtering system of some kind, when in fact they flow directly to the river or lake. Unfortunately, this belief leads to storm drains receiving a lot of unnatural liquids and solids from all areas of the watershed.

This year the City of Melrose decided to alert others to the fate of runoff

water and the pollution carried with it from lawns and streets.

The City teamed up with the SRWD and an area boy scout troop placing curb markers on all storm drains in their city. In one night, 250+ markers were installed by participants.

Storm drain 'curb markers' are relatively quick and easy

to install. The surface needs to be dry, flat and clean; adhesive needs to be applied on the entire marker especially around the edges, then firmly placed on the curb. The marker completely seals in 24 hours.

For more information, contact our office or log onto 'das Curb Markers' at [www.curbmarker.com/storm/index](http://www.curbmarker.com/storm/index).

## How is the Watershed District Funded?

The Sauk River Watershed District is funded by a \$250,000 Administrative Levy which is certified yearly to Douglas, Meeker, Pope, Stearns and Todd Counties. The amount of the \$250,000 that each property is assessed is based on the taxable market value of the property. Currently, a parcel valued at \$130,000 is assessed

approximately \$8.75 per year. The amount is calculated on an annual basis using current property values and is added to tax statements for every parcel in the watershed.

The Watershed District supplements the Administrative levy through grants, interest dollars and a survey and data acquisition fund. Since 1994, the watershed district

has received over \$2 million dollars in grants and over \$4 million dollars in low-interest loans that are funneled to citizens for land improvement projects such as shoreline restoration and manure management system upgrades. This means that each levy dollar that citizen's pay has been matched by nearly \$4 of non-levy funds.

## WHAT'S UP WITH YOUR LAKE??

For centuries people have been drawn to water for necessity reasons such as a source of food and transportation. Within the last 100 years water resources have become more of a luxury. People are drawn to water for relaxation and recreation, such as: fishing, swimming, boating or watching the wonders of nature.

The people of Minnesota are very fortunate to have an abundance of lakes and streams to enjoy. However, despite the abundance and the importance of water resources in our lives, we have taken them for granted.

Some lakes and streams of our great state have been negatively impacted by human activities and now what attracted us to the water resources initially (such as fishing and swimming) has a negative appeal. Numerous lakes and streams in Minnesota have lost their sport fisheries and recreational use due to poor water quality.

Water quality has an economic, social, and environmental value in all its competing uses. It has an impact on everyone and everything, for water is a vital element which we all need, directly or indirectly.

It is needed every day to stay healthy, for growing food, transportation, irrigation, industry, recreation and tourism.

Protecting our water resources is every citizen's obligation. We should always remember that water is not a commercial product but rather an inheritance for the next generation to enjoy.

To find out more on your lake, go to:  
[www.dnr.state.mn.us/lakefind](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/lakefind)

