



C.R.O.W. JOINT POWERS

306C Brighton Avenue • Buffalo, MN 55313 • Phone (763) 682-1933 ext. 3 • Fax: (763) 682-2903

Press Release

For Immediate Release

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Crow River Watershed Tour

On July 17, 2002 the Crow River Organization of Water (C.R.O.W.) hosted a tour focused on the western portion of the Crow River Watershed, demonstrating typical land use issues in the Crow River Watershed. The tour encompassed 175 miles of the Crow River Watershed with sites featured in Meeker, Stearns and Kandiyohi Counties. The Crow River Watershed makes up 1.8 million acres in portions of ten counties: Carver, Hennepin, Kandiyohi, McLeod, Meeker, Pope, Renville, Sibley, Stearns and Wright. The tour highlighted projects that reduce soil erosion, nutrient loading and improve water quality throughout the Watershed. Along with site stops, the tour also viewed buffer strips, wetland replacements, a living snow fence, and one of the C.R.O.W.'s diagnostic monitoring stations. Tour attendees included: Senator Steve Dille, local Water Planners, Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Representatives, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Environmental Service Staff, County Commissioners, area Watershed District Representatives, local land owners and Lake Association members.

The tour highlighted four projects that the C.R.O.W. has worked together with local landowners, Lake Associations and Natural Resource Agency partners. The first stop was at Leonard and Leann Wagner's farm located in Meeker County. The Wagner's farm showcased an Agricultural Waste System Upgrade. The upgrade included a storage pond that would hold one year's worth of manure and collect feedlot runoff water and manure from Wagner's dairy operation. The pond will properly manage over 9,000 pounds of phosphorus and ensure proper application of manure on fields. Proper management of phosphorus is important to reduce environmental impacts on local water bodies. Phosphorus from manure can move to surface waters through runoff and erosion and potentially damage the area by affecting water quality through nutrient loading.

The second stop featured a tour of Litchfield's Waste Water Treatment Facility. Dave Simons, Facility Manager, gave the tour. The City of Litchfield Wastewater Treatment Facility is currently undergoing an expansion and upgrade. The project is scheduled to be completed in the fall of 2003. The improvements were needed due to an aging facility, combined with new more restrictive effluent limits from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. The upgrade will effectively remove ammonia, nitrogen and phosphorus from the

waste stream. The upgrade will help manage nutrient levels and improve water quality in Jewitts Creek, the facility's receiving water body and in the Crow River.

The third stop was located along the Stearns/Meeker County border, on Doug Larson's and Tom Burr's properties. The project highlighted a joint effort between the landowners, Lake Koronis and Rice Lake Associations, North Fork Crow River Watershed District, the C.R.O.W. and Stearns and Meeker SWCD offices. The project identified a problem with a drainage area initiated on both Larson and Burr properties in Meeker County. Their properties drain into Stearns County before entering Lake Koronis. The project created two water sediment basins and a field block on Larson's property and gully repairs and wetland enhancement along the property line between Larson and Burr's properties. The total soil loss before the project was completed was 881 tons per year. The project will reduce soil loss by 95%.

The fourth stop was at Terry Schafer's property in Roseville Township located in Kandiyohi County. Schafer's project consists of a floodwater dam, an earthen structure with a pipe riser inlet, an emergency spillway and installation of rock rip-rap. Schafer was concerned with erosion and sediment loss from his property located less than a half-mile from the Crow River. The object of the project was to provide a holding area for runoff, reduce flooding and reduce the transport of nutrients and sediment to the North Fork of the Crow River. Schafer was named Kandiyohi County's 2002 Conservation Farmer of the Year.

The tour ended at Kingston Park located in Meeker County. The Department of Natural Resources-Fisheries Division out of Hutchinson gave a demonstration on electrofishing or "fish shocking" on the Crow River. Bobbi Chapman, Brad Koenen and Cam Mitchell explained the application, fish reactions and common forms of electrofishing. Koenen and Mitchell trolled the Crow River and demonstrated how eletrofishing was done using a fishing boat. The boat demonstration yielded 15 fish including: Carp, Pike, Bass, Red Horse and Shiners species. The demonstration was a huge success among onlookers!

This is the second time the Crow River Organization of Water has hosted a Watershed Tour. The tours have illustrated projects within the Crow River Watershed and provided information on partnerships within the Watershed. The tours raise awareness of watershed issues like: storm water, soil erosion, nutrient loading and the need for strong partnerships in the Watershed. If you would like more information on projects or education materials please contact the Crow River Organization of Water at (763) 682-1933 Ext. 3.