



'Adopt-a-River' effort gears up for 3rd year

CRWD again leads volunteer effort to remove litter from Cedar River, local waters

AUSTIN, Minn. – Tuesday, April 23, 2013 – Last summer, Larry Callahan and 11 other volunteers trudged into the Cedar River to remove litter and debris along a stretch of the waterway in southern Mower County.

In its first year of helping the local "Adopt-A-River" effort, Callahan's group – consisting of family and friends – made major strides. They removed about 150 tires – including several large tractor tires – from the Cedar River between the County Road 5 and 6 bridges.

Volunteers in the group also took out stoves, grills, car parts, gas tanks, scrap metal pieces and even parts of a 1953 Buick when they realized the whole vehicle wouldn't be coming out.

In 2012, Callahan's group was one of 10 that did cleanups on the Cedar River in Mower County. About 55 volunteers overall removed thousands of pounds of trash and nearly 200 tires overall as part of the local "Adopt-A-River" initiative started and led by the Cedar River Watershed District. CRWD initiated the local "Adopt-A-River" effort as part of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources statewide program.

Now the CRWD is gearing up for a third year of "Adopt-A-River," with routes already adopted along almost all of the Cedar River in Mower County. A few stretches of the river, however, remain available to adopt: a 3-mile stretch north of Lansing and a short stretch from County Road 6 to the Iowa border. "Adopt-A-River" routes also are available for Dobbins Creek, Turtle Creek and Wolf Creek (Todd Park).

"Volunteers drive this whole cleanup effort and have made it a huge success," said Justin Hanson, CRWD resource specialist. "Since 2011, we all have made major strides in cleaning up the Cedar River to make it an even more beautiful recreational waterway and state water trail."

In 2012, cleanups were conducted by the Wayde Bishop family; Mike Jones; Pheasants Forever; Rotaract Club; Barb Wright family; Cedar River Watershed District; Howie Crawford/Jon Erichson families; Mike Hull group; Harlen Peck family; and Larry Callahan family/friends.

CRWD staff, which annually cleans a one-mile stretch of the Cedar River starting at Marcusen Park, created cleanup routes in 2011 and sought individuals and groups to "adopt" each route to clean up at least once a year for two years. There were no "Adopt-A-River" groups in Mower County at the time through the state DNR program.

CRWD also coordinates and pays for the removal of trash and debris removed by volunteers.

This year, the local "Adopt-A-River" initiative for the first time will have a stretch of waterway adopted for cleanup that isn't on the Cedar River. Vision 2020 Waterways Committee members earlier this year adopted East Side Lake – which is formed by a dam on Dobbins Creek – to clean up.

CRWD also will work this year with Mower County Corrections to get cleanup assistance from the local Sentenced-to-Serve crew in various areas within and outside of Austin.

Callahan, who works in the Mower County Soil & Water Conservation District office, lives about 100 feet west of the Cedar River along the stretch of river his group cleaned last year. He found it surprising to find the types of things people dump in or near the river. He got involved with "Adopt-A-River" for "green reasons mostly."

"It's good for everyone to get involved," Callahan said.

Pheasants Forever also performed its first cleanup last year as part of the "Adopt-A-River" effort, focusing on the stretch of the Cedar River just upstream from the Ramsey Mill Pond, north of Austin. The group of about a dozen volunteers removed more than 1,000 pounds of trash, mostly including docks and old flood debris.

'Adopt-a-River' keeps growing

Who: Cedar River Watershed District.

What: Seeking more volunteers for its "Adopt-A-River" initiative to clean available stretches of the Cedar River or Turtle, Dobbins and Wolf creeks.

Where: For the Cedar River: from the County Road 2 bridge near Lansing going upstream a few miles; and a short route from the County Road 6 bridge to the Iowa border.

When: Make a two-year commitment of doing at least one cleanup per year on your route.

Why: Removing litter and flood debris from the Cedar River and other waterways helps wildlife, recreation and water quality.

Contact: Justin Hanson, CRWD, 507-434-2603.
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Anyone interested in “Adopt-A-River” can contact Hanson at 507-434-2603 or justin.hanson@mowerswcd.org. CRWD officials also encourage people to participate this Saturday, April 27, in Austin’s annual Community Pride Day cleanup event organized by the Austin Parks & Recreation Department. Part of this effort focuses on removing trash and debris from waterway shorelines within the city.

Photos of “Adopt-A-River” cleanups are on the CRWD Facebook page – www.facebook.com/CedarRiverWD – and its website – www.cedarriverwd.org – in the “Pictures” section under the “Library” tab.

In April 2007, state and local officials formed the CRWD in response to the Cedar River Watershed’s top, worst-known floods occurring in 2000 and 2004. The CRWD’s top priorities are aimed at reducing flooding and improving water quality within the Cedar River Watershed.

SOME OF THE ITEMS REMOVED IN 2013 FROM THE CEDAR RIVER:

Swimming pool, mattress, boat docks, flood debris, cable spindles, barrels, tires, tables, propane tank, recliner, wood planks, roof tops, pool filtration system, metal wire, cans, bottles, glasses, garbage bags, metal rods, broken glass, trailers, stoves, grills, car parts, gas tanks, tractor tires, plastic chair, computer parts.

“ADOPT-A-RIVER” ROUTE LINEUP for 2013 (as of April)

Cedar River

- Wayde Bishop family – northern Mower County
- Mike Jones – northern Mower County
- Craig Anderson – Lansing area south of County Road 2
- Pheasants Forever – stretch north of Ramsey Mill Pond
- Izaak Walton League – Ramsey Mill Pond
- Rotaract club – Ramsey Dam to downtown Mill Pond
- Barb Wright family – Fourth Ave. NE dam to Marcusen Park
- Cedar River Watershed District – Marcusen Park to former Skjeveland property
- Howie Crawford/Jon Erichson families – Skjeveland property to DNR access at Solafide Observatory
- Mike Hull group – Solafide Observatory to County Road 4
- Harlen Peck family – County Road 4 to Orchard Creek
- Mullenbach group – Orchard Creek to Riverbend Campground
- Larry Callahan family and friends – County Road 5 to County Road 6

Dobbins Creek – East Side Lake

- Vision 2020 Waterways Committee

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www.cedarriverwd.org

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