



CRWD board approves busy 2013-14 work plan

Top priorities involve projects focused on flood control, water quality

AUSTIN, Minn. – Monday, Feb. 25, 2013 – Constructing flood-control projects north of Austin as well as enhancing efforts to improve water quality top the Cedar River Watershed District's extensive work plan for 2013-2014.

On Wednesday, the CRWD Board of Managers voted unanimously to approve a 2013-2014 work plan proposed by CRWD staff. The work is based on implementing the CRWD's 10-year watershed management plan.

This is the second-straight year in which the CRWD has been able to conduct "earth-moving" projects since going through state-mandated steps for new watersheds to develop and approve a 10-year watershed management plan as well as establish rules for work within the district.

"We have laid out an aggressive plan to construct projects within the Cedar River Watershed to reduce flooding and improve water quality as well as work even harder to educate and connect the general public to the Cedar River and its tributaries," CRWD Administrator Bev Nordby said.

Under the '13-'14 work plan, the CRWD is planning numerous projects related to flood control, including constructing water and sediment control basins in priority watershed areas to slow stormwater flows north of Austin.

In the Dobbins Creek subwatershed, CRWD staff also plan to construct a retention area as well as work with the Minnesota Department of Transportation to research other areas for water retention. Dobbins Creek, which has south and north branches converging at Austin's nature center before it becomes East Side Lake and later joins the Cedar River, is prone to flash flooding and has been shown to contribute greatly to flooding in Austin.

CRWD staff also will use its new watershed modeling system to apply for state Clean Water funds for various practices to slow water down in the headwaters of priority subwatersheds within the overall district.

For water quality, the CRWD will continue doing extensive water-quality monitoring in local waterways, work with landowners on public and private water courses to plant buffer strips, and promote practices as well as wetland restorations within priority subwatersheds. One major wetland restoration project is being planned just north of Austin. CRWD staff also will start removing trees that are causing streambank erosion along the Cedar River's tributaries.

In other areas of work, the CRWD will continue to promote the Cedar River's new State Water Trail designation while working with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and Austin's Vision 2020 Waterways Committee related opportunities. The CRWD also will work with the DNR to support more public-access facilities on the Cedar River as well as to work with the DNR to develop and implement a management program for fisheries in the Cedar River.

For the third-straight year, the CRWD also will lead a local "Adopt-A-River" effort that places volunteers with "adopted" stretches of the Cedar River and other waterways to remove litter and debris. CRWD staff also plan to enhance their educational effort in several ways, including developing curriculum for teachers from water-quality monitoring data.

The Mower County Soil & Water Conservation District staff is contracted by the CRWD board to provide staffing and administrative services for operating the watershed district. The SWCD has provided these services since the CRWD was established in 2007.

In December 2012, the CRWD was named the state's top watershed program by the Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts for its work to reduce flooding and improve water quality in the Cedar River Watershed.

State and local officials formed the CRWD in response to the Cedar River Watershed's 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.

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