



## **CRWD named state's watershed program of year** *Minnesota Dept. of Natural Resources nominates Austin-based staff for work*

**AUSTIN, Minn. – Tuesday, December 4, 2012** – Cedar River Watershed District has been named Minnesota's top watershed program for its work to reduce flooding and improve water quality in the Austin area.

CRWD staff received the Watershed Program of the Year Award last weekend during the Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts' annual meeting in Alexandria. It is one of two major awards given at the event.

"All of us with the CRWD – staff and board members – are greatly honored by this recognition," said Bev Nordby, CRWD Administrator. "Our motto is 'Reviving Our River,' and we will continue to work very aggressively to improve the Cedar River and other local waterways through a variety of approaches and partnerships."

Administering and staffing of the CRWD's work has been contracted annually to the Mower County Soil & Water Conservation District staff since the CRWD's inception in 2007.

Steve Hirsch, Director of the Minnesota DNR's Division of Ecological Resources Management Team, nominated the CRWD for the award, noting, among numerous efforts, the CRWD staff's work on alternative agricultural drainage demonstration projects with the University of Minnesota and other groups, including a two-stage ditch near Adams and a surge basin near Grand Meadow.

The CRWD also is involved in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Mississippi River Basin Initiative focused on water quality and has coordinated two TMDL-related contracts for the Cedar Basin, with a third contract coming soon for implementing a strategy for the Cedar River Watershed, Hirsch said.

"From the perspective of illustrating how the land conservation work of the (Soil & Water Conservation Districts) can be coordinated with the water management work of the (watershed districts) – this group in Austin is showing us all how it can be done," Hirsch said Dec. 1 at the MAWD event.

Hirsch called the CRWD a "very good partner over years," and, given this partnership, the DNR recently extended a general permit to the CRWD for numerous types of projects proposed in public waters, helping the DNR with its work load. These types of projects include streambank stabilization, excavation and filling, bridges, culverts, intakes, outfalls and low water crossings.

"They have also been trying to come up with many different ways to lessen flooding in Austin, and we continue to work with them on this major historic issue," Hirsch said.

Two years ago, the CRWD also received statewide recognition when its resource specialist Justin Hanson was honored as the 2010 Outstanding Watershed District Employee at the MAWD event.

In 2007, 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.

### **Contact**

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