

Repairs on Prior Lake Outlet Channel continue

By Andrea Slotke, GreenCorps Member, Prior Lake-Spring Lake Watershed District

Lake levels rising, water rushing, people racing to sandbag their property, culverts blown out, roads underwater... all as the rain continued to fall. How could anyone forget the flood of 2014? At 906.17 feet, June 30, 2014 holds the highest lake level recorded for Prior Lake in the last hundred years. Damage was widespread, impacting urban and rural landowners alike. For some, this disaster is over and life is back to normal, but for the Prior Lake-Spring Lake Watershed District, massive repair work is just beginning.

The watershed district experienced over \$900,000 in damages from the 2014 flood to the Prior Lake Outlet Channel alone.

The outlet channel was constructed in 1983 to address high lake level issues on Prior Lake and to act as a trunk stormwater system for the City of Prior Lake, the City of Shakopee, and later, the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community. When Prior Lake reaches a water level of 902.5 feet, it discharges into the outlet channel, which eventually flows into the Minnesota River.

During the 2014 flood, the outlet channel functioned properly while con-



Damaged culverts along the Prior Lake Outlet Channel will be among the repairs made next year using state and federal disaster relief funds.

tinuously receiving water from the elevated Prior Lake. Water rushed through the Channel at a rate and volume never experienced before; thus, this extreme water velocity, coupled with the duration of rainfall events, caused significant damage throughout the Channel. Trees fell, sediment was distributed, and over 20,000 feet of bank erosion occurred. Many of these problems still exist, but

the District is implementing solutions.

Although the outlet channel suffered substantial damage, it prevented even more. Engineers have estimated that without the Channel, water levels on Prior Lake could have reached 910 feet. The Prior Lake-Spring Lake Watershed District has been working with the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) and received

approval for federally-financed repairs. Specific repairs along the outlet channel will include:

- tree and woody debris removal
- removal of sediment
- culvert replacements
- streambank restoration

There are 37 property owners along the Channel. According to Diane Lynch, District Administrator, "The extensive repair work in the Channel that will be undertaken over the next year is a perfect opportunity for us to reach out to the affected property owners and provide information, hear their concerns, and offer ideas that they may want to implement."

The District plans to keep residents informed throughout this process. To achieve this goal, an education and outreach plan has been created for the outlet channel. Landowners will receive technical information and timely updates on repair work, as well as opportunities to share their experience and provide feedback. For more information on outlet channel repair efforts please contact Diane Lynch, District Administrator, at (952) 440-0067 or dlynch@plslwd.org.

Students attend 30th SWCD Outdoor Education Days

Almost 1,200 fifth graders from 14 Scott County schools learned about conservation at outdoor stations set up in a 10-acre woods near New Prague. For the past 30 years, the John Bisek, Sr. family members have shared its property for this fall field trip for schools from New Prague, Elko New Market, Belle Plaine, Savage, and Shakopee.

Collin Schoenecker, Scott Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) staff, asked teams questions about wildlife, invasive species, and the environment during a "Jeopardy"-style game of student teams. This station was one of six learning sessions; at others, students...

... got to touch and feel the textures of different soil types and discuss why soil is more than just "dirt"

... caught mosquitoes in random containers that unintentionally hold water in a typical yard, and also learned

about the life cycle of a mosquito

... drew tree cookies of their lives and found out what trees need to be healthy

... were entertained by CLIMB Theatre actors, whose superhero "Can Man" taught them about hazardous chemicals, along with recycling and reusing trash

... played bingo after learning about the importance of pollinators and the six parts of a plant.

Interestingly, Collin attended the event himself as a fifth grader; his father Doug, a retired SWCD staff member, used to teach at the OED soils station and is now on the Scott SWCD Board of Supervisors. Special thanks to staff from local organizations who presented at the various stations: Scott-Carver Master Gardeners, Metropolitan Mosquito Control District, Scott SWCD, Scott County Environmental Health and Natural Resources, and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.



Collin Schoenecker, a member of the Scott Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) staff, played a "Jeopardy"-style game with students using questions about wildlife, invasive species, and the environment during the 30th Annual Outdoor Education Days.

Funds available for improvements in Credit River watershed

Do you live in the Credit River watershed? If you do, and are interested in making improvements on your land to protect the Credit River, you may apply for technical and financial assistance.

The Scott Watershed Management Organization (WMO), in partnership with the Scott Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), is currently providing cost-share funding through a state grant for landowners who wish to make improvements to their land, while correcting erosion issues or creating habitat for wildlife. The grant ends June 30, so landowners can apply now for spring installation!

Eligible practices include rain gardens, wetland restoration, native prairie plantings, shoreline plantings, stream bank stabilization, and grade control structures. Projects need to be approved for cost share, installed and certified complete before June 30, 2016.



The Credit River watershed includes parts of Savage, and Credit River and New Market townships.

Not sure if your property falls within the Credit River watershed? Check out the map above or contact the Scott SWCD office in Jordan with questions as soon as possible at (952) 492-5425.

New SWCD tree website makes ordering easier

Most of us have become used to using PayPal or similar e-commerce sites. The Scott Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) has launched a new website for its annual young tree and seed mix sale. The website (www.scottswcdtrees.com) has photos of all products for sale from now through April 2016, including brief descriptions of 33 varieties of seedlings, native seed mixes, and plant plug kits; along with tree mats; spades; marking flags; and rain barrels.



Order seedlings now to grow a beautiful windbreak on your property.

The process for ordering is simple. Merely select the item and quantity, and the items will be added to your shopping cart. You can then check out using Visa, Mastercard, Discover, or American Express payments. Orders will not be shipped to your home or business; instead, all orders will be assembled and may be picked up at the Scott County Fairgrounds in Jordan, as in the past. The dates for pickup will be Friday, April 29, and Saturday, April 30.

If you are new to the program, welcome! Please let us know how the process worked for you, and if you have any questions about our products. If you are a returning customer, thank you for ordering with us again.

For feedback or more information, call the Scott SWCD office in Jordan at (952) 492-5425 or send an email to scottswcdtrees@gmail.com.