

Little Cottonwood River

LCR Watershed

a Historical Newsletter

LCR Project Timeline

Brown–Nicollet–Cottonwood Groundwater Analysis Projects Begin

1989/
1998

- Groundwater/surface water interconnection is studied
- Little Cottonwood River comprised the “west” study area

Middle/Lower Minnesota River Basin Assessment Project (MLAP)

1996

- Established communications with Watershed (LCR) landowners
- Intensified monitoring
- Conducted by MPCA (Minnesota Pollution Control Agency)

Phase I Spring 1997 Clean Water Partnership LCR Restoration Project begins

1997

Tornado ravages entire length of LCR Watershed; projects and activities suspended

1998

Extension of LCR Restoration Project

1999/
2000

- Kevin Kuehner hired as Water Quality Specialist
- Activities resume

Since 1989 parts of the Little Cottonwood River Watershed have been monitored as part of groundwater studies. These groundwater studies led to funded examinations defining the connections between groundwater and surface water quality in the area. These activities were led by Larry Gunderson, now with PCA and Michael Hanson, now with Cottonwood County Environmental Services.

In 1996 monitoring in the watershed intensified as part of a resource investigation project to identify which surface waters could negatively affect the Minnesota River.

This intense monitoring project led to the initial project application for Clean Water Partnership funding. The application was successful and the Little Cottonwood River Restoration Project began in **Spring 1997**. These activities were led by Kevin Bigalke, now Director of Nine Mile Creek Watershed District.

The success of the implementation project was sidetracked when the **1998 tornado** roared down the complete length of the watershed. As the counties, communities and the Brown–Nicollet–Cottonwood Water Quality Board reeled from their losses, a time extension for completion of activities and extra assistance with monitoring activities were provided by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.

In 1999, Kevin Kuehner, now employed with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture was hired as the Project Administrator/Conservation Liason. In 1999 full monitoring resumed and yet another extension **through 2000**

Phase II Clean Water Partnership LCR Implementation Project Grant awarded

2001/
2004

- Hiring of Scott MacLean as Watershed Technician
- Acceleration of voluntary adoption of BMPs and promotion of federal/state programs

Funding for continuation of LCR Phase II Implementation Grant awarded

2005

- Continue protection and enhancement of LCR Watershed focused on conservation planning and security program
- Increased efforts to install/maintain filter strips, wetlands, and conservation drainage projects throughout watershed

Clean Water Partnership Grant awarded to continue implementation projects and monitor effectiveness of conservation practices in the Middle Minnesota Watershed

2007/
2010

- Hiring of Ed Hohenstein (Watershed Specialist) and Jack Bovee (Water Quality Technician) to complete grant requirements

was granted to complete this Implementation Project. The study concluded that non-point source pollutants impair the water quality in the Little Cottonwood River. Sediments, nutrients (nitrate and total phosphorus) and fecal coliform bacteria are the three main pollutants.

As part of this study, goals related to the Minnesota River and Little Cottonwood River Watershed were defined. These goals could be accomplished by concentrating specific Best Management Practices (BMPs) within certain areas to address water quality concerns.

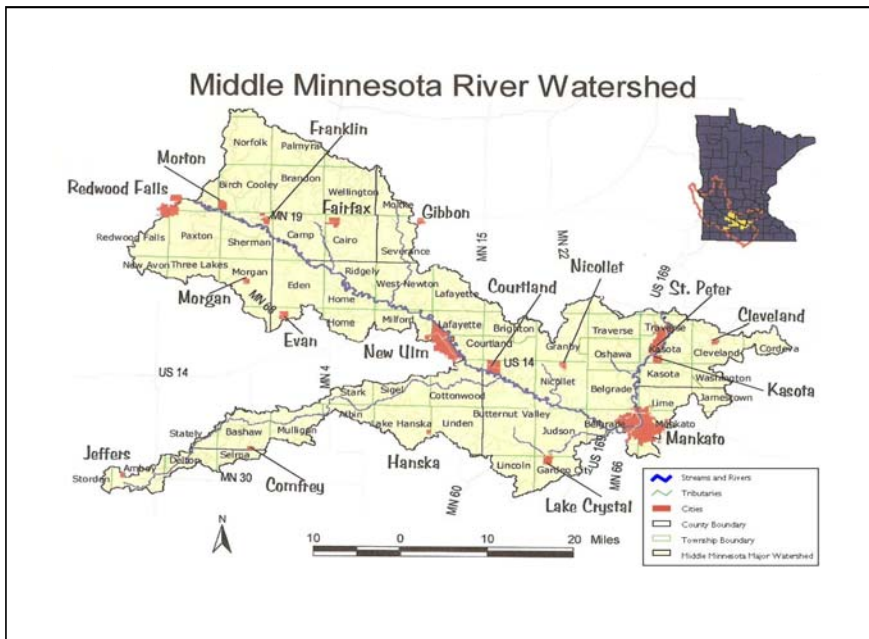
In 2001 a Phase II Clean Water Partnership Implementation Grant was awarded to accelerate the voluntary adoption of these recommended BMPs. A part of this funding was used to hire a full-time Watershed Technician/Technical Service Representative Scott MacLean, now with Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. Two popular programs, the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) and the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), were promoted after watershed assessments were completed identifying critical areas. **2001-2004** saw intensive marketing with additional technical assistance to accelerate enrollment of these critical areas in one of the conservation programs. Over 2,000 acres were enrolled into some type of conservation practice.

In October 2005 a grant for funding a continuation of the Phase II Implementation activities was awarded to the BNC Water Quality Board.

This project is in the final stages as we write this newsletter. The activities of this grant were selected to continue the protection and enhancement of the Little Cottonwood River Watershed focused on the Conservation Planning and Security Program education and preparation, nutrient management and record keeping, and a very focused effort on installation and maintenance of filter strips, wetland restorations, and conservation drainage structures throughout the watershed. More information about Little Cottonwood River Project results for the Phase I, Phase II, and the Phase II Continuation (when complete) is available on the Water Quality Board website:

What is in the future for the Brown–Nicollet–Cottonwood Water Quality Board?

As mentioned, we are pleased and proud to announce that in **October 2007** the Brown–Nicollet–Cottonwood Water Quality Board and its newly appointed staff Ed Hohenstein and Jack Bovee were awarded funding to continue to implement and monitor the effectiveness of conservation practices in the Middle Minnesota Watershed focusing on the LCR Watershed and the Seven Mile Creek Watershed.



Middle Minnesota at a glance

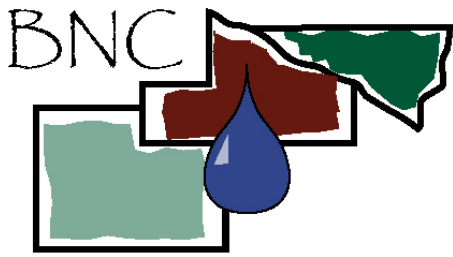
Minnesota's Oddest Watershed...

- It is the only watershed basin in Minnesota without an identifiable and major tributary
- It has the most first- and second-order streams

The Middle Minnesota Watershed Project will build upon the foundation of success of past projects. It is our hope that coordination of efforts will positively influence water quality and continue to address TMDLs (Total Maximum Daily Loads) impairments listed in the watershed.

"We are made wise not by the recollection of the past, but by the responsibility of our future."

George Bernard Shaw



Water Quality Board

Board Members

Brown County

Charles Guggisberg

Dennis Potter

Andrew Lochner

Nicollet County

Judy Hanson

Dave Haack

James Stenson

Cottonwood County

Norman Holman, Chairman

John Oeltjenbruns

Gary Sorenson

Staff Members

Karen Swenson, Director

Marcy Pengilly

Ed Hohenstein

Jack Bovee

Please help us continue to be *responsible*....

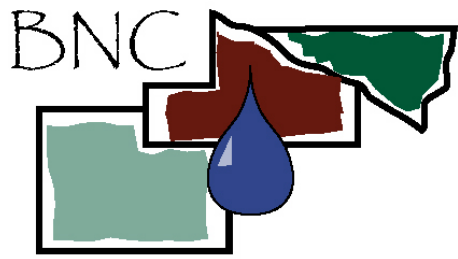
You are invited to participate in a Strategic Planning Day on July 24, 2008. Working with a facilitator from the University of Minnesota, we will celebrate the 16 years of the Brown–Nicollet–Cottonwood Water Quality Board. Working together we will take a day to examine our goals for the future by examining our services and activities as they relate to new opportunities, such as the State's emphasis on TMDLs, the Clean Water Legacy Act, and a new Federal Farm Bill. If you are interested in participating please contact Marcy Pengilly by email at marcy@bnchs.org or call toll-free at 800-931-4140. (Lunch will be served to all participants so you must pre-register.)

*Reflecting on our success,
analyzing our past &
planning for the future.*

Finally...

Thank you to everyone who has been involved in the Little Cottonwood River Projects; all of our friends, staff past and present, colleagues, technical advisors, landowners, and especially all of those who have made a commitment to protecting one of our most valuable resources... **WATER.**

Your contribution has been genuinely appreciated.



Water Quality Board

322 S. Minnesota Ave

St. Peter, MN 56082

507-934-4140

bnccwp@hickorytech.net