

## CLEAN WATER PARTNERSHIP DRAWS TO A CLOSE

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Lake Crystal, MN – After almost three years of working with watershed residents to help clean up their local lakes, the Crystal Loon Mills Clean Water Partnership (CWP) is drawing to a close. The project, which began in May 2007 and focused on improving water quality and reducing nuisance algae blooms on Crystal Lake, will be finished this December.

“Three years isn’t a very long time to try to reverse more than 30 years of pollution,” said project coordinator, Sarah Duda. “But we tried very hard to get the ball rolling. There is always something more that could be done but we’ve made some significant headway with urban and rural landowners. I think that puts Lake Crystal in a good position to pursue funding for water quality improvement in the future.”

The CWP, through funding from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and the Clean Water Legacy Act and in-kind from 13 partner organizations, provided more than \$18,000 for education and outreach activities and \$112,500 in cost-share and technical support for best management practices throughout the watershed. Between July 2007 and October 2009, the CWP & partners were able to enroll more than 40% of the agricultural watershed in soil sampling & variable rate nutrient application, convert 15 open-tile inlets, install 0.9 acres of buffer on CD 56, restore 10.6 acres of wetlands, provide technical assistance for 18 raingardens, and cost-share 82 rain barrels. The project also hosted or participated in 24 community outreach activities, and sent out 15 promotional mailings.

As part of the reporting for the project, watershed residents will receive a survey via post or email. It will provide citizens a chance to weigh in on how effective they think the Clean Water Partnership was. Citizens can also visit the Clean Water Partnership website to fill out the survey online.

Duda said, “It’s so important that we are able to hear from people in the watershed. We want to know what worked for them, what didn’t, and what they would like to get from any future watershed projects. It hardly takes any time to fill out and it not only helps us figure out how well we did this time around, but it also helps us tailor future efforts to fit what people really want.”

The CWP will hold a public meeting in January to share a summary of project outcomes and monitoring data. For more information regarding the Clean Water Partnership please visit the website at <http://mrbdc.mnsu.edu/org/lakecrystal/index.html> or contact Sarah Duda at 507-389-2299 or [sarah.duda@mnsu.edu](mailto:sarah.duda@mnsu.edu).