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CROW WING COUNTY

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Crow Wing County Receives Clean Water Partnership Grant

Crow Wing County recently received a \$42,744 Clean Water Partnership (CWP) grant from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) for a diagnostic study of the Serpent Lake lakeshed. This is one of many grant applications that the County recently submitted to benefit local water resources as part of its water planning efforts. This grant focuses on protecting Serpent Lake and surrounding water bodies by investigating the nutrients that are causing water quality concerns within the lakeshed. Crow Wing County was one of 17 CWP grant recipients in the state.

This grant was a cooperative effort between Crow Wing County Environmental Services, Crow Wing Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), City of Crosby, City of Deerwood, Deerwood Township, Irondale Township, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR), civic groups, and Serpent Lake Association. When asked about the level of cooperation amongst local units of government with jurisdiction on Serpent Lake, Mitch Brinks, Crow Wing County Water Protection Specialist, explained “this project is a great example of folks coming together to diagnose the source of declining water quality in order to come up with solutions to fix the problem.”

The data available for Serpent Lake has shown a trend of decreasing water clarity, which has led many to speculate about the potential causes. Generally, an increase in nutrient levels from stormwater runoff and other sources is the primary contributor to a decline in water quality. Monitoring the levels and sources of these inputs will allow for a more targeted implementation of stormwater best management practices once the threats are better known.

The project will monitor the main lake basin and its major inflows and outflows as well as Unnamed (Cranberry), Peterson, and Cascade Lakes. It will then determine nutrient loads, specifically phosphorus, associated with the inflows and outflows. Modeling will be used to determine the transport of nutrients, water quality conditions, and responses to nutrient loads. Finally, the project will create a report that identifies and prioritizes areas of concern along with corresponding corrective actions to be implemented within the lakeshed. Crow Wing SWCD and

the Serpent Lake Association will coordinate the bulk of the monitoring effort, much of which is conducted by volunteers, and will assist in the modeling, report preparation, and civic engagement components of the grant.

The grant will run from 2011-2012. For more information about the project, citizens can contact Mitch Brinks with Crow Wing Environmental Services at 218-824-1128 or Melissa Barrick with the Crow Wing SWCD at 218-828-6197.