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- WRAPS | *Doing together what we can't do alone*

FAVORITE PLACES:

Inspiration Point



Zachary Hursch, triumphant at the peak and (inset) satisfied with a great day.

My favorite place at Whitewater State Park is Inspiration Point. I like a challenge, and the hike is challenging, but not too hard. On the way to the top there are small peaks with great views, and when you *get to the top* you get a great view of the valley below and nearby cliffs and peaks. I've only seen Inspiration Point during summer, but I'd bet it looks cooler when the trees turn yellow, red, gold, orange, purple, green and brown in fall. The path is steeper going down the other side, with slight drops and rises and multiple stairways. And if you start on this side, the stairs are the way up! Chimney Rock trail is near the trail with stairs. It's easier and flatter, with small cliffs, good views and the highlight—Chimney Rock! Both trails can be reached by crossing the bridge at Whitewater Beach.

— Zachary Hursch, Sixth Grade
St. Charles, Minnesota



Familiar landmarks at Whitewater State Park are part of the climb to Inspiration Point.

Where do you go to rejuvenate and enjoy the beauty of our watershed? Send your photo of a favorite place and description of not more than 150 words to whitewaterwatershed@gmail.com.

LEARN SOMETHING!

"Soils 101" by UM Extension
8 am-5 pm, November 13, 2013
St. Charles City Hall, St. Charles
In a small group of just 15 people learn to manage soil quality, enhance yields, decrease tillage and make better farming decisions. Register @ 612-596-1175.

"Keep it Growing, Keep it Green: Soil Health and Water Protection Are the Answers"
December 5, 2013
3rd Annual Grazing and Soil Quality Videoconference

Join Minnesota Grazing Lands Conservation Association at one of seven sites: Rochester, Crookston, Pine City, St. Paul, Lamberton, Morris or Staples. Learn about healthy soil biology for profitable pastures and crops, plus grazing opportunities on conservation lands. More information @ www.mnglca.org.

2014 Conservation Tillage Conference by UM Extension
February 18th & 19th, 2014
St. Cloud, Minnesota

No-tillers and aspiring no-tillers, mark your calendars for hands-on, how-to information that will help you conserve soil, time and fuel. Register @ <http://z.umn.edu/gmz> or call 800-876-8636.

TAKE ON A PROJECT!

Farm Project Funds Available

Ready to take care of an issue on your land? Financial and technical support is available. Learn more at your county's NRCS / SWCD offices.

Minnesota Department of Agriculture supports farm innovation with grants and loans for rural projects. Learn more at <http://www.mda.state.mn.us/grants>.

IN THE WATERSHED

Thank You, Winona County Rain Gauge Monitors!

Each year, Winona County Soil and Water Conservation District calls upon volunteers to monitor rainfall in the County. Results are sent to Minnesota's state climatologist, who makes summaries available. Results are used day to-day, statewide by government offices, private consultants and researchers for a wide variety of environmental purposes. Volunteers must collect and report information with integrity.

Currently, 16 volunteers in Winona County check rain gauges every day and document all rain fall totals.

Roger Aldinger Lynn Brummer
Daryl Buck Lavern Fritz
John Halling Laverne Johnson
Lois Ladewig Elayne Marg
Ted Olson Duane Papenfuss
Art Redig David Rupprecht
Mary Speltz Dean Tollefson
Larisa Walk Marianne Mastenbrook

Thank you, volunteers, for your time and commitment. Without you, we could not collect this important data.

To learn more about the rain gauge program, climate data, and conservation, contact Brein Maki, Winona County Soil & Water Conservation District: 507-523-2171.

MISSISSIPPI RIVER - WINONA WATERSHED PROJECT

400 Wilson St., P.O. Box 39
Lewiston, MN 55952
507-523-2171, Ext. 110
whitewaterwatershed.org

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If you'd like to receive this new electronically, send your request to whitewaterwatershed@gmail.com.

City of WINONA

WATERSHED NEIGHBORS

BUILDING A BUSINESS?

3 Retention Basin Benefits

- Landscaping attracts positive attention, creates goodwill, and adds beauty to the community.
- Minimize storm water utility fees, to improve cash flow.
- Walk the "green" talk! Do what you believe, and show others how to keep pollutants out of rivers.



Natural Benefits

In a High Traffic Area Near Lake Winona, Sugar Loaf Senior Living Brings Nature To Residents Using Storm Water Basins



ABOVE: Winona resident Chuck Kernler and students from Hope Lutheran High School stop for a snapshot after working in the rain garden prairie at Sugar Loaf Senior Living. BELOW LEFT: Native plants are beginning to thrive near the storm water basin's overflow drain.

When Sugar Loaf Senior Living was built in 2012, owners followed local building and storm water permitting processes, including development of a storm water plan. The plan showed how land would be shaped to keep rain and melting snow from roofs, sidewalks and parking lots on the site, so it could sink into the soil rather than run off, untreated, to the Mississippi River.

Two basins capture water on the east and west ends of the property now. They're gardens of native Minnesota plants that thrive in a wet/dry cycle. These low places filter pollutants and contribute something important to people, too.

Allison Briggs, executive director, says the bright, hardy plants are beginning to create an oasis in their high-traffic area on Mankato Avenue across from Lake Winona. "Because of our location, it isn't easy for residents to walk outside and experience nature, so these gardens help. One couple walks the grounds every day now, and residents who can't get outside have something nice to look at."

Sugar Loaf also provides raised garden beds and a safe, inviting outdoor area for people with memory loss. Briggs says these natural settings heal, create connection, and have attracted people to learn and help.

Chuck Kernler is one. When visiting his wife in respite care last summer, he saw work to be done in the basin gardens. With kids from Hope Lutheran High School he's since removed loads of vegetation threatening the young prairie plants. "None of the students had experience with this," he says, "but they dug in!" Chuck also included residents in learning about rain gardens and native plants.

If you have a business, take a look at your site. Are there places where basins or parking lot plantings can keep silt, oil, chemicals and debris from washing to the river? How can you attract people with plantings?

Productive Routine

Commitment To Solid Profitability, Soil Quality and Minimal Runoff Drive Dan Brandt's Farm Plan



ABOVE: Dan Brandt, Eyota area farmer, points to 300 acres of oats that will hold and enrich topsoil through winter. TOP RIGHT: Grass waterway and a swath of fresh-cut corn; stubble will be incorporated into soil in spring. BOTTOM RIGHT: Second-growth oats.

Dan Brandt always wanted to be a farmer. Even on this brisk day, after hours of dealing with a malfunctioning corn dryer during peak harvest, his energy is big and positive. Clearly, he loves this quiet place not far from Eyota where he and his wife, Donna Brandt, have lived since 1994.

The farm is on high ground, near the headwaters of the Whitewater River. Six hundred acres stretch away from the Brandt's neat home, rich and largely level. Dan knows each acre, and does his best to minimize erosion and manage for optimal soil health.

"It goes against a farmer's grain to lose soil," he says. "We need it for good crops. Protecting it is part of a sound, ongoing management plan."

For the Brandts, protecting soil has meant maintaining grass waterways in cultivated fields, leaving as much crop residue as possible on the soil, making cover crops part of the rotation, and installing terraces where gullies formed in fields several years ago. Dan also pays attention to nitrates, testing late-season corn stalks to understand how much nitrogen was used, and applying only enough fertilizer to get a good yield. This, he says, is not just a conservation strategy, but a cost-control strategy.

Dan believes Minnesota farmers need to speak up about water and lead by doing. He's now a member of the Whitewater River Farmer-Led Council and a Minnesota Soybean Growers Association director. "My wife and I have achieved the goals we set for ourselves," he says. "so this is a chance to learn from neighbors and give back."

Good soil protection makes a difference. To connect with Dan and others in our Farmer-Led Council call 507-523-2171, ext. 110, or ask Soil & Water Conservation District /NRCS staff to help you make a plan.



ON BRANDT'S FARM:

3 Essential Practices

- Build and maintain grass waterways in field drainage ravines.
- Incorporate crop residue into soil and make cover crops part of the farm rotation.
- Use structures (like terraces, catchments or biofilters) to prevent gully formation and soil erosion.

ONE THING YOU CAN DO

Careful With Salt!

When cold weather comes, keep people safe *and* polluted runoff out of streams by preventing ice.

AT HOME:

- Fix rain gutter leaks and direct downspouts away from sidewalks and driveways.
- Shovel sidewalks as soon as you can after it snows.
- Put snow where it won't create problems when it melts and refreezes.
- Remove slush and soft snow on warm days.

If you still need a deicer, buy calcium magnesium acetate (CMA), not salt. Use just enough to break ice away from pavement, then shovel away slush.

AT WORK:

- Before winter arrives, develop a cold weather maintenance plan. Identify priority access areas and environmental concerns, plan for sweeping to reduce the need for deicer, and calibrate machines so they don't overuse deicer.
- Communicate your plan up front.
- Store materials carefully.
- Follow weather conditions.
- Use only calcium magnesium acetate, a safe deicer.
- Use just enough.



Care For What We Share: The Watershed Approach

Some tasks can't be done alone. Minnesota's Watershed Restoration & Protection Strategies are helping Minnesotans work smarter and better for water quality.

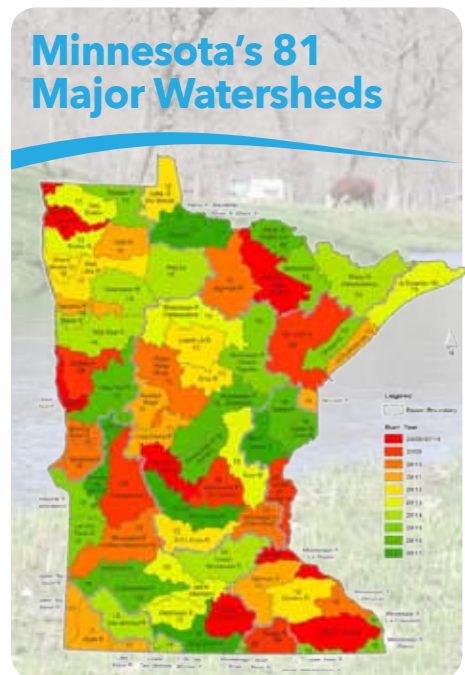
The condition of streams, lakes and rivers depends primarily on the actions of people on the land draining to them.

In other words, what you do affects me and what I do affects you. It's the most basic kind of community.

To help Minnesotans work together to protect water in their own neighborhoods, a new approach was adopted by the Pollution Control Agency in 2008. It's called Watershed Restoration & Protection Strategies, or WRAPS, for short.

The state's 81 watersheds are now managed in a cycle, with four things done every 10 years in every watershed:

- 1) **MONITORING** For two years, watershed conditions are intensively monitored by the Pollution Control Agency. Data collected by state, federal and local organizations is compiled. Land use, topography, soils and pollution sources are evaluated.
- 2) **DATA ASSESSMENT** Specialists evaluate data, see if water quality



standards are met, identify stressors and point planners to places needing work.

- 3) **STRATEGY** Based on the assessment, GIS work, models, local knowledge and plans, geology and technical reports, a strategy and implementation plan are developed by teams of local people and agency specialists.

In Minnesota we use a "watershed approach" to assessing, restoring and protecting water quality. This means the condition of all land draining to one place is considered as a whole. It's a community approach, recognizing that everything's connected.

Our state's 81 major watersheds are shown at left. A strategy is developed for each every 10 years, in rotation.

A watershed is an area of land where all water drains to the same river, stream, lake or ocean.

WHAT IS A WATERSHED?

What's happening here?

Our work cycle began in 2010. Historic data was collected, assessed, and a report released in 2012. New monitoring took place and stressors are now being identified. Work on a strategy begins soon, to outline actions, time lines, assessment milestones and a monitoring plan. When finished, the Whitewater River Joint Powers Board and Olmsted, Wabasha and Winona Counties will adopt the plan as-is or apply it to county water plans to meet local needs.

The goal: Best use of skill, time and money to improve water quality and conditions in our streams.

MISSISSIPPI RIVER-WINONA WATERSHED

It's home to all of us.

EVERYTHING WE DO IN THIS WATERSHED IMPACTS OUR IMMEDIATE NEIGHBORS AND ALL LIVING THINGS DOWNSTREAM.

- Reduce Nitrogen
- Reduce Bacteria
- Keep Soil In Place

Mississippi River | Winona Watershed's OURWATERSHED.INFO

Connect with local folks working for clean water.

STORIES • FACTS • DATA • WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

