Water Quality Improvements for the Big Sandy Lake Watershed

Clean Water Funds: 2010

Clean Water Grant	$33,900
Leveraged Funds*	$29,690
Total Project Budget	$63,590

*** Leveraged Funds include required 25% local match**

Targeted Water:
County/Watershed Wide

Project Sponsor:
Aitkin County SWCD

Partners:
Big Sandy Area Lakes Watershed Management Project, City of Cromwell, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Shamrock Township, Tamarack Sno-Flyers, Workman Township

Grant Period:
January 2010 - December 2011

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Project Narrative

The Big Sandy Area Lakes Watershed Management Project has developed innovative projects to protect and improve water quality, wildlife, and the fishery resources in the Big Sandy Lake Watershed since 1991. Projects have focused on the main ecological problems and sources of nutrient loading to Big Sandy and other watershed lakes. A Clean Water Fund Grant provided funding for nine demonstration projects that continue this work. Projects planned for this area focus on controlling shoreline erosion and overland runoff that carries soil and nutrients to the lakes.

Work has begun on three Rain Garden Projects – one at a public swimming beach in Cromwell, another in the city of Tamarack, and the third on Lake Minnewawa. This variety of locations will provide a good variety of examples that are readily viewed by the public as demonstration projects. Design and shaping has been completed at each site, with planting of native vegetation planned for the spring of 2011. Runoff will also be managed through the stabilization of a snowmobile access on Big Sandy Lake, stabilization of a drainageway into Lake Minnewawa, and the installation of "test management practices" on agricultural lands in the Sandy River watershed.

Critical stretches of shoreline on watershed lakes that have been listed as “impaired” will also be stabilized with native vegetation. Willow wattles will be used to stabilize the water/land interface. Shrubs, flowers, and ferns will be placed in and above the willow wattles to create a buffer that will withstand wave action and filter runoff from the property.

Landowner discussions have occurred over a span of years with the majority of these projects designed and begun in 2010.

Runoff at the public swimming beach in Cromwell will be captured before it crosses the sand beach, and directed to a Rain Garden

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