

LE SUEUR RIVER WATERSHED NETWORK POTLUCK SUPPER

5/15/12

Red Jacket Potluck, Mankato

POTLUCK SUPPER

Agenda

4-5 Canoe trip down river

5-6 Potluck Supper

6-7 Small group discussions about 1) What lives in the river? 2) Recreational hotspots in the watershed 3)

Thank you for everyone who helped with the successful Potluck dinner. For those who couldn't attend, here's a quick summary. About a dozen people went paddling at 4 pm. More people started arriving after 5 pm carrying great potluck additions for a really nice feast. About 40 people attended. There was a diverse cross section of people there: paddlers, farmers, commissioners, ag reps, teachers, retired folks.... Everyone chatted and enjoyed the potluck. We broke out into 6 tables and had fruitful discussion about 1) About the Watershed Project 2) Recreational Opportunities and 3) River Life. People seemed to have a good time. There were many good conversations with engaged and interested citizens (numerous repeats from the Map Party).

For those who attended, could you please send me:

1) Any photos

2) Summary information from your conversations. In particular, were there any questions that commonly arose, people you had particularly fruitful conversations with, ideas for next steps? Anything pertinent you can think of. We collected all of the sheets at the tables, but hoped to capture as much detail as we could to help clarify what citizens are interested in learning more about, any leaders that stood out, and any particularly interesting conversations that you had.

ORAL INTERVIEWS

Linda is moving forward with the Oral Interviews and asked me to attach the questions for your review. Please let her know if you have any suggestions for improvement by May 21st. <linda@ruraladvantage.org> The interviewers are ready to go and will be starting right after that.

NEXT STEPS

From Patrick: We are looking to schedule a farm tour somewhere in the watershed that would take place in August and would be co-sponsored by the Soybean growers. Stay tuned -- we hope to have the date established by the first week of June. We are working with Jessica Dornink JDornink@wideopenthinking.com in scheduling this event. I am also working on having Natalie Siderius of Winona and Shelia Harms of the Whitewater Watershed Farmer led council come up to the Le Sueur River to talk about their work as

a possible model for ours. At this point, I am not planning any more meetings till the August meeting but perhaps we can have a teleconference in June to get and update on what Linda and others are learning.

NOTES FROM DISCUSSIONS WITH RESIDENTS AT POTLUCK

RECREATION

Great Paddles

- Le Sueur County Road 41 to County Road 8 (St. Clair)
- Cobb River
- Maple River – Highway 30 to 18
- Crystal Lake to Loon Lake

Recreational Opportunities

- Ski on rivers in the winter – great wildlife, especially in the morning
- Would be great to have a place in the watershed that has a deck on the river or lake (like Europe) where you can sit out and enjoy
- Mankato Paddling and Outings Club has trips throughout the summer
- How can we popularize the history and lore of area paddling routes?
- Commercial, public club resources: paddling beta equipment rentals, trips, camping land
- “River Ramblers” canoe club in the Twin Cities came down to paddle the Le Sueur in early May. Did 16 miles, 6 hours CR90 Hungry Hollow to Red Jacket Park.
- Amboy Community Club is proposing a canoe route between Amboy and Vernon Center on the Blue Earth River

WATER QUALITY STORIES

With wetland restoration at the headwaters of Cobb River, paddlers noticed improvements in the water quality of the Cobb River.

PARKS

- Bray Park on Madison Lake – Blue Earth County Park

- Wildwood Park - Blue Earth County Park
- Daly Park – has a great island you can hike out to - Blue Earth County Park
- Minnesota Lake – has nice city park along the shores of Minnesota Lake with path and playground
- Arrowhead Point – a great park on Freeborn Lake near Freeborn
- There was (still is?) an interesting cable bridge near Good Thunder

BIRDING

- Swan Lake
- Perch and Severson Lake – has many eagles
- Perch Lake – Many pelicans migrate through there, typically covered with pelicans in mid-May

RESIDENT QUESTIONS

- What is the ecological health of the river?
- What is the status of drainage in the watershed?
- How much tiling is going on?
- Why are there differences in counties in terms of conservation effort?
- Leaders in Conservation are sometimes profiled in agricultural materials. It takes a leader to get thing going, prove themselves, and other follow
- What role is technology playing in reducing nutrients? (Example of GPS and more precise technology reducing amount of spray, hopeful for reducing nitrates.)
- What role do biotech seeds play in reducing chemical use?
- How can we think ahead for future generations? We need to care for the land for the future and work together.

PEOPLE

- Will Purvis– County Commissioner had many questions
- Lu and John Guse – Farm 4,000 acres in BE, Waseca, Steele, Freeborn counties; member of BE County Corn Growers; participate in Trade Team to China; own elevator in Waldorf, live across from Perch Lake and Cobb River.