

Riffles & Runs

Rogue River Watershed Project Newsletter

Grand Valley State University Annis Water Resources Institute

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Rogue River Watershed Clean Michigan Initiative Plan Approved

Nichol Stout


A Rogue River Watershed Clean Michigan Initiative Plan was approved by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality in August 2000. Approval of this plan qualifies projects within the Rogue River Watershed for funding from the Clean Michigan Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Grants. The Clean Michigan Initiative provides \$675 million for a variety of environmental, parks, and redevelopment programs.



Rogue River

For the Rogue River Watershed Clean Michigan Initiative Plan to be approved, many elements needed to be included. The plan contained the following items:

- geographic scope of the watershed
- designated and desired uses
- water quality threats and/or impairment
- specific pollutants
- sources of the pollutants
- water quality protection goals
- cost of implementation activities
- timeline for each task
- public participation process
- evaluation process

The Rogue River Watershed Project has already submitted project designs for road stream crossing improvements, vegetative establishment, and stream bank stabilization. These projects are currently under consideration by MDEQ staff. 



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“Clean Cedar Creek” ~ A Clean-Up On A Tributary Of The Rogue

Nichol Stout

The water was murky and calm and seemed to swallow up the very object we were trying to save. The volunteer firefighter buckled a series of ropes and straps together; this rescue was going to require brawn. Someone had to go into the threatening water. We were all relieved when the rescue was made and the object was heaved on shore. Who would have thought, all this trouble for a shopping cart?

That was one of the many pieces of trash that was picked up at the “Clean Cedar Creek” event on June 3, 2000. The Annis Water Resources Institute of Grand Valley State University held the cleanup during National River Cleanup Week, which is a week long river cleanup event around the United States.

During the event, Northland Park and approximately three blocks along Cedar Creek in Cedar Springs were cleaned up. The city provided a garbage truck and use

of the city fire hall for the June third event. The goal of the cleanup event was to inform the community about this valuable resource that flows through Cedar Springs. 💧



Northland Park

Rogue River Watershed Council

Scott Steiner

West Michigan Trout Unlimited (WMTU) is excited about the prospects that this watershed project presents. Within the last couple of years, we have decided to make the Rogue River a top priority in our conservation efforts. Since this coincided with the grant to Grand Valley Metro Council and the work being undertaken by the Annis Water Resources Institute, it seemed natural that we would become a partner in this project.

WMTU has had a good amount of involvement on the Rogue River in terms of installing trout habitat structures, stabilizing banks, and other in-stream improvements. However, in the last few years, there has been a growing realization that these projects alone are not enough. We could install habitat and stream flow structures up and down the river, but unless we do something to address the causes of water quality degradation, they may all fail. For that reason, we realize the need to focus on issues such as stormwater management, sedimentation control,

and thermal consistency.

This realization has led to a very important aspect of this project—the creation of the Rogue River Watershed Council. The primary goal of the Council is to have an institutional, perpetual organization made up of many different agencies, groups, municipalities, and individuals all having one common goal—the long term protection of the Rogue River through education, long term land use planning, and community stewardship. Although we need the involvement and direction of government agencies and municipalities in this effort, the backbone of the effort will have to be citizen-based—that is individuals involved for no other reason than that they enjoy this river and want to put in some time and effort to first really understand it and then to protect it. If you would like to learn more about the Council and help in getting it off the ground, please contact Nichol Stout (895-3092) or myself (233-5206).



Thinking “Sub-regionally”

Andy Bowman

Very few residents in our metro region realize that the combined cumulative affect of literally hundreds of local decisions made weekly and monthly throughout our region is neither routinely analyzed nor collectively managed by any agency, board, commission or person. In Michigan, this is by design and is the way we have chosen to build our communities. It's not that local governments are the only authorizing agency. In fact, significant land use change normally requires many other authorizations from county, state, or federal governments.

The real problem is that there is no forum through which important decisions about significant develop-

ments can take place jointly. As locally elected and appointed officials grapple with large land-altering proposals in between all their usual administrative matters, the widespread regional (or “sub-regional”) effect of those changes are often not well understood and go unexamined in the process. Ignoring these intergovernmental impacts usually results in extra cost to the public.

At Grand Valley Metro Council, we are encouraging such forums as Sub-regional Planning Associations (see Blueprint Planning on the web at www.gvmc.org). After conducting focus groups for two years running in each of six such areas around our

metropolitan region, it is clear that local planning officials see the need for this kind of discussion in their deliberations on significant regional land use change. Though not all sub-regions agree on the form and function of such a group, nearly all expressed interest in this approach to investigating their joint interests. This is good news for the Rogue River Watershed sub-region where as many as 15 municipalities (and maybe more) are joining together in a watershed council to focus on issues of joint concern surrounding the Rogue, including complex land use issues. 💧



Cedar Spring Students Collect Critters

Nichol Stout

Cedar Creek

Before school let out for the summer months, sixty Cedar Spring middle schoolers spent a half-day sampling Cedar Creek. The students were part of a volunteer monitoring program called Stream Search. Stream Search involves volunteers monitoring water quality in Kent County streams. Among these streams is Cedar Creek that runs right through Northland Park where many of the children fish.



A week before the monitoring day, students learned about macroinvertebrates and how aquatic insects can be used as indicators of water quality. Some of the monitoring the students did included sketching the stream, measuring velocity and temperature, and collecting macroinvertebrates. The data collected by the Cedar Springs middle schoolers will be of use to the Rogue River Watershed Project. 💧



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