



Community NEWS



Albert Lea • Alden • Clarks Grove • Conger • Emmons • Freeborn • Geneva • Glenville • Hollandale • Hartland • Hayward • Manchester • Maple Island • Myrtle • Oakland • Twin Lakes

Volume 5, Number 5

“City, County, and Watershed News Direct From the Source”

September/October 2011

Blue-green Algae

Ethan Weiss, Freeborn County Intern

When temperatures climb and the summer sun beats down, conditions are ripe for lakes to produce harmful algae blooms, some of which can be harmful to pets and humans. People or animals may develop skin irrita-

tion or upper respiratory problems from exposure to harmful algae blooms and in extreme cases, dogs and other animals have even died after drinking lake water containing these toxins from harmful algae blooms (blue-green algae).

Severe blue-green algal blooms typically occur on lakes with poor water quality (high in nutrients), and look like green paint, pea soup, or a thick green cake. Harmful algae blooms often result in extremely low water clarity (less than 1 foot). There is no visual way to predict the toxicity of an algal bloom.

When these conditions are present, people should avoid contact with the water and they should prevent animals from swimming in or drinking the water. Scientists do not yet know what causes some blooms to produce toxins while others do not, so the safest course of action is to avoid contact with all blue-green blooms.



Blue-green algae on Fountain Lake August 3, 2006.

Blue-green algae can be hard to distinguish from other types of algae. While it's often described as looking like pea soup or spilled green paint, it can take other forms as well.

The last confirmed report of blue-green algae took place in 2006 on both Albert Lea Lake and Fountain Lake. The pictures shown are of the algae blooms on both Albert Lea and Fountain Lake.



Blue-green algae Albert Lea Lake August 3, 2006

Benefits of Wetlands

By Kayla Koenen, Freeborn County Intern

Wetlands are natural areas that are often wet but may not be wet year round. Minnesota contains over 9 million acres of wetlands. This may seem like a large number, but prior to 1800 there were nearly 19 million acres of wetlands in Minnesota. This represents a 50% decrease in wetland area in only 200 years. Wetlands are important ecosystems that benefit both humans and the environment in a variety of ways.

Water Quality

As water enters a wetland it slows down and moves around the plants and vegetation. Sediment settles to the bottom of the wetland and plant roots and microorganisms absorb much of the excess nutrients present in the water. This natural filtration process increases the water quality, making it healthier

for drinking, swimming, and supporting aquatic plants and animals.

Storage and Flood Control

Wetlands can help reduce the frequency and intensity of floods by acting as natural buffers and storage units. A typical wetland can store 1 million gallons of floodwater per acre. After peak flood flows have passed, wetlands slowly release the stored water and recharge the groundwater, reducing damage downstream.

Wildlife Habitat

Wetlands are some of the most biologically diverse ecosystems in the world, comparable to tropical rain forests or coral reefs in the number and variety of species supported. More than one-third of threatened and endangered species live only in wetlands, and 20% of the United States threatened or endangered species use or inhabit wetlands at some point in their life. Migratory waterfowl

rely on wetlands for all aspects of their lives, including resting, eating, and breeding.

Recreation

Wetlands are used for many recreational activities including hiking, fishing, bird watching, photography, and hunting. More than 98 million adults in the United States take part in these activities, spending approximately \$59.5 billion annually.



South Industrial Park Retention Area



South Industrial Park Retention Area

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The Community News is published bi-monthly by the City of Albert Lea, Freeborn County and the Shell Rock River Watershed District. Comments are welcome and should be directed to:	

City of Albert Lea:

tkauffmann@city.albertlea.org

Freeborn County:

randy.tuchtenhagen@co.freeborn.mn.us

Shell Rock River Watershed:

brett.behnke@co.freeborn.mn.us



Recycling Information & Instructions

Place all your **CLEAN** recycling materials **LOOSE** into a labeled recycling container.
PLACE RECYCLING AT CURB OR ALLEY BY 7AM

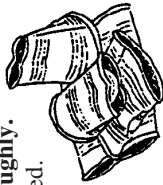
PLASTIC

- Any plastic bottle or food container marked with this symbol and the number 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or 7. Except milk bags.
- Remove caps and covers.**
- Wash thoroughly.**
- Flatten milk jugs and other large plastic containers. (step on)**
- Labels do not have to be removed. Examples - milk, laundry and dish detergent, soft drinks, peanut butter, ketchup, shampoo, cooking oil and other containers with recyclable symbol.
- ANTIFREEZE CONTAINERS** must be rinsed clean and **CAPS REMOVED.**
- MOTOR OIL CONTAINERS ONLY (RE-PLACE CAP TIGHTLY)**
- NON-ACCEPTABLE PLASTIC:** Examples - styrofoam, dishes, meat trays, milk bags, chemical containers, plastic bags, toys, flower pots.
- OVERFLOW HINT:** Thread string through all handles and then tie to the recycling can.



METAL

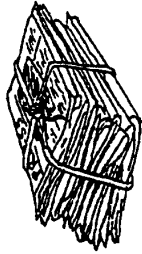
- ALUMINUM:** Pop cans, pie tins, aluminum trays and foil - **wash and rinse thoroughly.**
- TIN CANS** - crimped or flattened. Rinse Clean. Remove labels.
- COPPER:** Pipes and brass fittings.
- Metal pots & pans.
- Empty aerosol cans, cleaned paint cans.
- NON-ACCEPTABLE METALS:** Paint thinner cans, charcoal lighter cans, chemical containers, gas cans, wire, toys.



NEWSPRINT

- Inserts may be left with newsprint.
- Stack neatly, flatten and place in a paper sack or tie securely with string.
- Set on top of or next to container.
- DO NOT DOUBLE FOLD PAPERS.**
- No plastic bags.

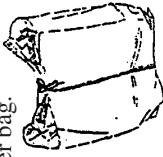
If it's wet it's ruined



If weather is unfavorable, please save your newsprint, magazines & catalogs and cardboard until your next scheduled pick up.

BOXBOARD - JUNK MAIL

- Keep all like items together in paper bag.
- Tie securely.
- All items must be clean.
- Catalogs bundled separately.



Examples

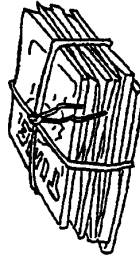
School Papers
 Greeting Cards
 Note Paper
 Envelopes
 (with labels and windows)
 Pamphlets
 Receipts
 Gift Wrap
 Cereal Boxes (remove inserts)
 Laundry Boxes
 Junk Mail
 Tissue Boxes

Advertisements
 Adding Machine Tape
 Manila Folders
 Letters
 Pop Cartons
 Computer Printouts
 Typing Paper
 Phone Books
 Cracker Boxes
 Cookie Boxes
 Shoe Boxes

NON-ACCEPTABLE PAPER PRODUCTS
 Waxy Boxes, Butter Boxes, Frozen Food Boxes, Pizza Boxes, Carbon Paper, Plastic Bags, Bacon Boxes

MAGAZINES & CATALOGS

- Bundle securely with heavy string or place in paper sack.
- Set on top of or next to container.
- No comic books.
- Do not mix with other paper products.
- NON-ACCEPTABLE MAGAZINES:** No plastic bags



CORRUGATED CARDBOARD

- Must be clean and flattened
- Maximum acceptable size 36" by 36" by 6" high. Tape or tie securely.
- NON-ACCEPTABLE CARDBOARD:** Refrigerated Packaging, Waxy Cardboard



GLASS

- CLEAR, GREEN, BROWN OR BLUE** glass that has contained food or beverage items is acceptable.
- Remove caps, covers and o-rings and discard in regular garbage - wash thoroughly - **DO NOT BREAK.**
- Labels do not have to be removed.
- NON-ACCEPTABLE GLASS:** Examples - dishes and drinking glasses, light bulbs, window glass, flower vases, casserole dishes, canning jars, ceramic.

Waste Management Recycling Center

2 MI NO. (Bridge Ave) ALBERT LEA (755 Ave.)

PHONE: 826-3610 or 1-800-222-6214



State Cuts LGA and Market Value Credits

The recent budget deal approved through the Minnesota Legislature's 2011 Special Session resulted in a significant loss of revenue for the City of Albert Lea in the estimated amount of \$958,000. The cuts in State revenue are applicable to 2011 and will need to be offset in spending reductions in the remaining months of the year. The Local Government Aid (LGA) reduction represents about \$598,000 while the Market Value Credit reduction is about \$360,000. The City's General Fund Budget is approximately \$14.1 million. Therefore, the City will experience about 6.79% less in revenues for 2011.

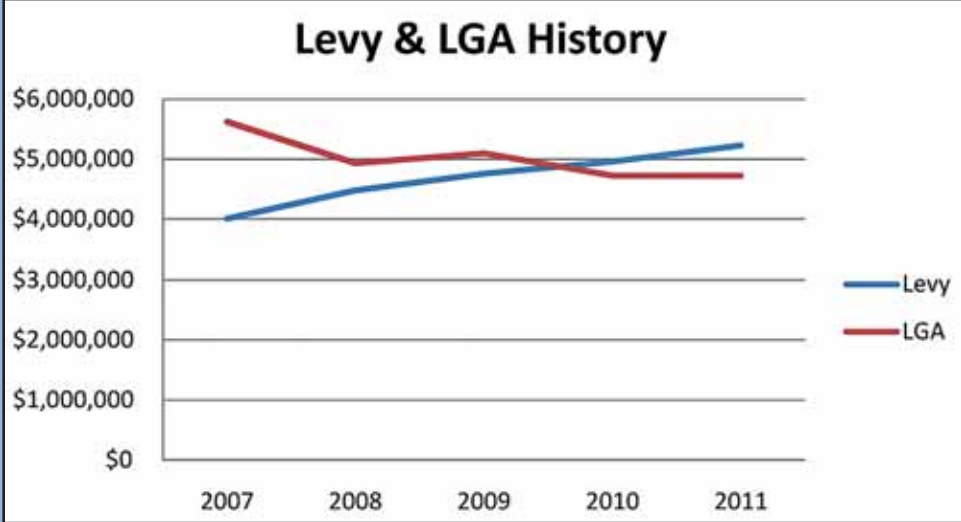
Despite the loss in revenues, the City has been experiencing expenditure savings to date and is projecting additional savings for the rest of the year. These savings are attributed to careful and fiscally responsible spending by City departments in the first half of 2011. The City has been aware that reductions to both LGA and MVC were possible and began contingency planning in February 2011. In light of the budget forecast, there are no plans for employee layoffs, furloughs or service cuts for 2011. The 2011 budget will continue to be monitored closely and will involve a 3rd Quarter budget review and report to the City Council.

The 2012 Budget will be funded with LGA in the same revised amount for 2011, or about \$4.7 million. The MVC amount will be reduced by another \$122,000 in 2012 which effectively results in no reimbursement to the City in 2012 and thereafter. A preliminary 2012 budget is currently under re-

view by the City Council. The Council will need to establish a preliminary tax levy by September 15th. Increasing taxes or fees will be one option to consider for supplementing the LGA and MVC reductions. Other options will include service cuts or elimination, as well as compensation freezes or employee layoffs. In the past 10 years, the City has reduced the number of full-time employees from 154 to 137 as a result of past LGA cuts.

The chart below illustrates the City's revenue from LGA and property taxes in the last five years. LGA was originally established in 1971 and one of the primary purposes of the program was to keep property taxes equalized throughout the state to assure that all citizens have reasonable access to public services and to avoid disparity between greater Minnesota cities and metro cities.

The continued cuts to LGA are presenting difficult challenges to remain competitive economically within the state, but also across the border in Iowa. The community has also taken a number of innovative and collaborative approaches in the past to maintain the quality of life and service levels for residents and businesses. The City will continue to explore and implement such approaches into the future. As deliberations continue on the 2012 budget, the City requests your feedback to elected officials, staff, or during a Council meeting on the services you value and desire to be maintained. Please feel welcome to call City Hall at 377-4330 or check the City's website, www.cityofalbertlea.org for contact information.



This chart illustrates the relationship between decreased LGA and increased property taxes.



Story times Monday, Tuesday and Thursday morning at 10:30 a.m. and evening story time on Thursdays at 6:00 p.m.

We will begin on Monday, September 12th and run through the week of November 21st (closed on Thursday for Thanksgiving)

BINGO-MEA event on Thursday, Oct. 20th at 2:00pm

Book Pals for children in 3rd-5th grade beginning on Tuesday, October 11th and running through Tuesday, November 15th. We meet from 3:45 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. We will be reading The Phantom Tollbooth.

Adult Basic Computer Classes: Interested in picking up some basic computer skills?

This class covers basic internet and email skills.

Stop by the circulation desk to register or to learn more about the class. Class will be held Oct. 5. Space is limited.

Download eBooks for Your eReader:

Visit Albert Lea Public Library on the web at www.alplonline.org and click on "Over-Drive" to download eBooks and audiobooks.

Holiday closings: Labor Day—Monday, Sept. 5

Nonfiction Book Club: The nonfiction book club meets on the 3rd Tuesday of the month at 6 p.m. in the library's Computer Lab.

Friends Book Sale: Thursday, Oct. 13th 4 - 7 p.m. Members only Join at the sale for only \$5

Friday, Oct. 14th 12 - 6 p.m.

Saturday, Oct. 15th 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. Bag sale - Saturday only.



Broadway Ridge Grant Fund

The Broadway Ridge Grant Fund was established by the City Council in 2011 to assist downtown property owners in the rehabilitation of their buildings to the original historical appearance and standard. The fund will match an owner's construction cost up to \$50,000 for historically approved work on the building façade that faces a street, alley, or parking lot. The fund does not assist with roofs or interior improvements. Buildings to be assisted must be located within the National Commercial Historic District and must contribute historically to the district. Proposed projects are reviewed by the Heritage Preservation Commission for a determination of historical correctness for the proposed improvements.

The National Commercial Historic District, designated by the National Park Service, includes properties from Washington Avenue to Elizabeth Avenue and from Fountain Street to College Street. The district was formed in two phases with the first phase in 1987 that included mostly Broadway Avenue with 48 buildings. The second phase was completed in 2003 and included 109 additional buildings and five vacant sites. The combined district includes 157 buildings of which 133 contribute historically to the district. This is the largest National Commercial Historic District in the State of Minnesota.

The City recently issued the first grant from the fund to AZ-1 for the Community Cornerstone building, at 244 South Broadway Av-



Community Cornerstone

enue, formerly known as the Bible Book Store and St. Paul Clothing. This building was constructed in 1888. The grant totals \$50,000 and the owners will be contributing \$71,956 to the project. Windows and the store front will be replaced with historically correct designs. In exchange for the grant, the owners provide the City with an easement over the façade so that it can't be changed in the future without City approval.

The matching fund is available to any building owner whose building contributes historically to the National Commercial Historic District. A list is available in the Community Development office. Building owners must be able to match or exceed the grant and may need to make improvements that are not eligible for the grant.

Owners interested in potential use of the fund should contact Bob Graham, Community Development Director, (507) 377-4316 or email bgraham@city.albertlea.org.

Transfer Station Hours:

April 1 - September 30

Monday & Wednesday
3:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday & Friday
11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Saturday
9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

October 1 - November 30

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday
12:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Tuesday & Friday
11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Saturday
9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

**KEEP OUR
STREETS CLEAN!**

GRASS, LEAVES &
TRASH POLLUTE OUR
LAKES & RIVERS!



MARION ROSS



PERFORMING
ARTS
CENTER

ACT's 47th Season:

Doubt - Sept. 22-24, 28-Oct. 1

Christmas Carol - Dec. 1-3, 7-10

How to Talk Minnesotan - Apr. 26-29M,
May 2-5

Oliver - July 12-15M, 18-21

SCOOP THE POOP!

Albert Lea City Ordinance states that it is a petty misdemeanor to fail to clean up after your pet.

Animal feces goes into local waterways, causing pollution and carrying diseases such as roundworm, parvo, etc.

**PLEASE CLEAN UP
AFTER YOUR PETS!**





Albert Lea Parks and Recreation *The City of Albert Lea*

Lil' Monsters

Grades Preschool-1st

Have fun decorating your very own pumpkin, crafts and even monster cookies! You can also watch a spooky movie (nothing scary) with your friends and listen to stories. Spook-tacular snacks provided.

Fee: \$8
When: Fri. October 21st (Fall Break-No School)
Time: 10:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m.
Where: City Arena-Conf. Room #1
Make sure your child dresses to make a mess!

Movies, Pumpkins, and Snacks-Oh My!

Grades 2nd-5th

Come and enjoy an afternoon filled with creepy crafts, pumpkin decorating, ghoulish games and a spooky movie, but not too spooky! And to top it off we will enjoy scary snacks!



Fee: \$8
When: Fri. October 21st (Fall Break-No School)
Time: 1:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m.
Where: City Arena-Conf. Room #1

Great Pumpkin Seed Contest

Guess how many pumpkin seeds are in our jar!!! The closest guess without going over wins two youth trip vouchers for any of our youth trips! Winners need not be present to win. One guess per participant. Please include your name, phone number and guess. Contest begins October 3rd and winner will be announced November 4th.

Tweite's Pumpkin Patch Trip

Families welcome! Children 6 and under must be accompanied by an adult.

Challenge Your Skills at Tweite's Corn Maze, visit the Enchanted Forest, Dino Dig, Dodge City, Pumpkinville, Harvest Town, Back Forty and Storybook Land. We will also take a wagon ride to the giant U-Pick Pumpkin Patch for those that would like to bring one home!

Fee: \$12 (bring extra money for concessions and pumpkins!)
When: Thurs. October 20th (Fall Break-No School)
Time: Bus leaves City Arena @ 9:00 a.m. and returns approx. 2:00 p.m.
Where: Tweite's Pumpkin Patch-Byron, MN

Frightmares at Buck Hill Trip


Grades 6th & 7th

If you thought Buck Hill was just a place to hit the slopes, you're dead wrong! Come check out Orchard Manor Dead & Breakfast, The Fright Factory, Belharm-Lovejoy Asylum and the Haunted Hallow. When you and your friends need a break from all the gore stop by Tucker's Bar & Grill and hang out by the campfire.

When: Saturday, October 22nd
Time: Bus leaves City Arena at 5:30 p.m. and returns approximately 11:30 p.m.
Where: Buck Hill-Burnsville, MN
Fee: \$23 in town \$28 out of town
*Bring extra money for food
Kids will be allowed on their own with a buddy. If parents would prefer children to stay with an adult please notify Parks & Rec
www.frightmares.com

Register by October 17th

You can now register ONLINE!
Check us out @
www.cityofalbertlea.org



Tony DeBlois


(Musical Genius)

will be performing at the
Albert Lea Senior Center
Sept. 16 at 7:00 pm

Tony was born blind, autistic and with Savant Syndrome, he has been playing piano since age 2 and has entertained thousands over the years.

This event is open to the public.

Free will donation.



Albert Lea Senior Citizen Center

Membership Dues: Annual membership fee is \$30.00 per year, our year runs from January 1 thru December 31.

Hours: Monday- 8:00 a.m. to 12 noon, Tuesday - Friday 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. For more info call **373-0704**.

As a member of the Albert Lea Senior Center you will receive a monthly newsletter to keep you up to date on Center events.

Participate in: Aerobics, Yoga, Walking Club, Red Hat Society, Crafts and Card Recycling, Monthly Birthday Party, Play Ph-effer, 500 or Bridge, Blood Pressure Checks, Innovision Eye Care, Coping with Grief, Stress Management Class, Class on Macular Degeneration, AARP Driver Safety Class, Ping Pong and Special Events.

There's a Pool Room with 5 pool tables and the Lounge is open to use the computers, watch TV or put in a movie, work on puzzles or visit with friends.

Take a day trip to exciting destinations around Minnesota, Iowa and Wisconsin.



Firefighters Receive FEMA Grant

The Albert Lea Fire Department was recently awarded an Assistance to Fire Fighters grant from FEMA. The grant, in the amount of \$54,000, was used to upgrade equipment and tools.

About \$13,000 of the grant was used to upgrade the department's extrication equipment. Extrication equipment is commonly known as the "jaws of life." The grant allowed the department to add smaller cutters capable of clipping off small items such as brake pedals and steering wheels and can get into smaller areas than the large cutters and spreaders can. The equipment upgrade also included a quick connect hose system to be able to change tools under pressure and a ram that can both push and pull which will be helpful in pulling dashes apart.

Other equipment the department received under the grant includes a training mannequin that speaks, foam and the nozzles and tubes needed to use it for chemical fires such as anhydrous ammonia, a boom, hazmat pads and socks, a hazmat pool capable of catching up to 200 gallons of liquid during a spill, three large first aid kits, an automated external defibrillator (AED) capable of being used on infants through adults and the Rad 57 system which monitors pulse and the level of carbon monoxide in a person's system. The Fire Department is the only agency in the county that has this mobile equipment.

Fire fighters will also be able to attend two training sessions on anhydrous ammonia and ethanol.



A few of the new extrication tools received thanks to a grant from FEMA

Go To:
FirePreventionWeek.org

Protect Your Family From Fire

October 9-15, 2011 • It's Fire Prevention Week




Fire Department Open House
1-3 p.m.
Saturday October 15th

Ordinance Change

Because of a change in State Statute that changes the variance test from a "demonstrated hardship" to a "practical difficulty" An amendment is being added to the Zoning Ordinance (Chapter 74 - City Code). The amendment also allows the Board of Appeals to grant variances without City Council action. If the Board denies a variance, the applicant may appeal to the City council and also to the courts.

The Board shall make findings that a "practical difficulty" exists in the use of the property before a variance may be granted.

An application form is available from the Inspection Department. There is a \$500.00 fee for reviewing and processing variances. The fee is not refundable.

"Practical difficulty" is a legal standard set forth in law that cities must apply when considering applications for variances. It is a three-factor test and applies to all variance requests.

1. The property owner proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner not permitted by the zoning ordinance.
2. The plight of the landowner is due to circumstances unique to the property not created by the landowner.
3. The variance, if granted, will not alter the essential character of the locality.

The Board of appeals shall consider the following factors when making its determination:

- Is the variance in harmony with the purposes and intent of the ordinance?
- Is the variance consistent with the comprehensive plan?
- Does the proposal put property use in a reasonable manner?
- Are there unique circumstances to the property not created by the landowner?
- Will the variance, if granted, alter the essential character of the locality?

Economic considerations alone cannot create practical difficulties. Rather, practical difficulties exists only when the three statutory factors are met.

The Board of Appeals will either approve or deny the request. If the request is denied it may be appealed.

If the variance is approved, a building permit will be issued. Any changes from the variance, as granted by the Board of Appeals, will be subject to removal and be subject to fine.

377-5785

Shell Rock River Watershed

Cedar Basin/Shell Rock River Watershed TMDL Update

Bill Thompson, MPCA

A project called a Total Maximum Daily Load ("TMDL" for short) began in the Cedar and Shell Rock Rivers watersheds in 2008. The general objective of the project is to improve surface water quality of our lakes, streams and rivers. Including the watershed districts, the project has involved the Soil and Water Conservation Districts, MPCA, and MDNR. The project involved water sampling, watershed mapping and assessment, analysis and reporting. The TMDL project will help provide water quality improvements by reducing nutrient and sediment pollution.

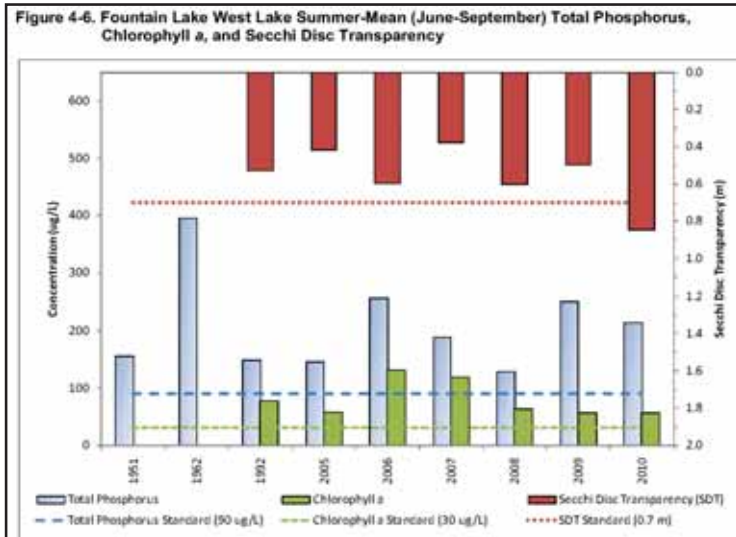
Currently the project is in the reporting phase, reviewing technical reports and getting ready to provide project results to local and regional groups, stakeholders, and local government. A number of meetings, presentations, and other

methods will be employed in the coming months, to provide results to interested citizens. An implementation plan will follow the TMDL project, where specific efforts can be defined and completed.

An example of the data used in this project is shown in Figure 4-6, which shows lake water quality data for Fountain Lake West. This bar graph shows three important factors in lake water quality: total phosphorus, chlorophyll (algae levels), and secchi disk transparency (water clarity). The timeframe shows the years 1951, 1962, 1992, and 2005-2010. First, this shows the importance of having continuous data, which means that changes over time can be tracked. Second, the bars for phosphorus (important nutrient in lakes) and chlorophyll are higher than the acceptable threshold (dotted lines) – in simple terms, the TMDL projects seeks

to move the bars below the thresholds. The trend in how clear the water has been is shown by the bars going down from the top – these are the secchi disk readings (think of a white plate being lowered into the lake from a boat). An improvement in water clarity (i.e. the plate can go further down in the water) is shown in 2010. This is the type of positive improvement that we want to continue.

For further information on this project, please contact the SRRWD office.



Rain Barrels Available

The Shell Rock River Watershed District held a Truckload Rain Barrel Distribution Day on June 18, 2011. We were able to purchase a quantity of rain barrels to keep on hand at that time, so we are able to provide interested residents a rain barrel for a great price of \$64.43.

We have several of these barrels around Albert Lea for you to be able to check them out. Locations include: Freeborn County Fairgrounds (Conservation Building), Albert Lea/Freeborn County Chamber Office in the Northbridge Mall, Albert Lea Seed House, Plaza Landscaping as well as our office in the Historic Courthouse at 411 S. Broadway Ave.

If you are interested in purchasing one please contact us at: 507.377.5785 or connie.kaupa@co.freeborn.mn.us

Rain Barrel Winners

The Shell Rock River Watershed provided rain barrels to be given away during the Freeborn County Fair again this year. Congratulations to this year's winners:

- Bob Johnson
- Lynn Koziolk
- Ray Isaacson
- Harlan Thompson
- LaVern Bergerson
- Lenore Fries



Being Water Smart

l i t w y l e y r s
 l e r r a b n i a r
 l v a u a t o v l e
 a r c k n m e m o h
 e e e o t o s r a s
 r s v w o h f e i t
 g n i d o o l f y d
 p o n d n h e k a e
 f c s w h o s e k e
 l e r s g r s i e s

- Conserve
- Flooding
- Home
- Hose
- Leak
- Less
- Pond
- Rainbarrel
- Runoff
- Save
- Shower
- Sky
- Smart
- Water

Community News

c/o The City of Albert Lea
221 E. Clark St.
Albert Lea, MN 56007

Plastic Bags. Use 'em and lose 'em elsewhere!

Our curbside and rural drop box recycling program has been in place for more than 20 years. During that time we have used many methods of communication to educate people about what can and cannot be recycled. We use the Shopper, the Albert Lea Tribune newspaper, radio ads, put the Instruction Sheets in post offices, banks and stores throughout the county, hand out information at the County Fair and the annual Home and Recreation Show. When people call our office for information we can mail the Instruction Sheets to them and at programs put on by our staff to schools, scout troops, church groups and other organizations they are made available.

With this effort to promote our recycling program one would think that people using it would be familiar with what can and cannot be recycled and how to get started. The majority of people do recycle and that's admirable. The majority of people do a good job of recycling, getting their containers out in time, rinsing the cans so they don't draw flies or smell, and people using the program benefit from savings on reduced garbage service.



Each year we try to focus on a problem or a change. Last year it was the change from twice a month curbside service to the every-other-week collection schedule. We were surprised at the number of people who didn't know there was a difference. Twice a month is not the same as every-other-week.

This year we are focusing on plastic bags. We do not want them in the recycling. No plastic bags, no exception. During a visit to the Recycle America recycling center in the cities this spring we observed why. The conveyor belts move about as fast as a person running on a treadmill. It is not possible to sort materials unless the bag is opened and there is no time to do that considering most items are sorted mechanically, not by humans. Our recycling program has never taken plastic bags and the Recycling Instructions repeat that phrase many times as you read the page.

Locally Wal-Mart and the two grocery stores, HyVee and Nelson's have containers at their stores for people to return plastic bags for recycling. Re-using bags for waste can liners or lunch bags are good ways to get rid of them, but please, please, **do not put any plastic bags in the recycling.**



**Randy
Tuchtenhagen**

**Freeborn
County
Solid Waste
Officer**

ATTN: Individuals and Businesses

ELECTRONIC COLLECTION

Take advantage of this opportunity to dispose of electronics at a special price

Friday, September 30, 2011

10:00 am to 2:00 pm only!

Freeborn County Fairgrounds

NOTE: We **DO NOT** accept appliances (white goods) such as stoves, microwaves, dehumidifiers or cooling units. Electronics are not accepted at any other household hazardous waste collection.