

## Urban Issues

One of the components of the Upper Catfish Creek Watershed Project is to address future development concerns in the county. The Soil & Water Conservation District does not want to prevent future development in the county. We simply want to make sure development is done in a sustainable way throughout the county, preserving the qualities people love about Dubuque County, while protecting our natural resources. Working together, we can make sure we get the development we want—strengthening our economy, and creating a great place to live, work, and visit.



### What's Next???

- ◆ Friday, February 23rd — Project Implementation Ceremony @ Swiss Valley Nature Center, 11:00 a.m. Please plan on attending.
- ◆ Website Development, which should be online soon.
- ◆ Begin building landowner relationships.
- ◆ Develop educational/informational displays.
- ◆ Organize Septic System Workshop.
- ◆ Evaluate current water quality monitoring and assess future monitoring needs.

District Commissioners	Office Staff
Mel Wilgenbusch, Chair	<i>District Staff</i>
Dave Ruden	Eric Schmechel
Charles McCullough	Earl Hosch
Jerry Ostwinkle	<i>NRCS Staff</i>
Jeff Reiter	Theresa Weiss
Robert O'Connell, Asst.	Julie Hoefler
Clyde Thielen, Asst.	Paul Vondra
Ralph Hunt, Asst.	<i>State Staff</i>
	Colleen Siefken
	Ron McCarthy

**Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer**

**319/WSPF**—This project is supported in part by the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, Division of Soil Conservation, through funds of the Water Protection Fund, and by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources through a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency under the Federal Non-point Source Management Plan (Section 319 of the Clean Water Act). Technical assistance is provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service.”

**WIRB**—This project is supported in part by the Iowa Watershed Improvement Fund administered by the Iowa Watershed Improvement Review Board and with the support from the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, Division of Soil Conservation.



Winter, 2007

EDITOR: *Eric Schmechel, Watershed Coordinator*

CONTACT: *Eric.schmechel@ia.nacdnet.net*

## UPPER CATFISH CREEK WATERSHED PROJECT

Dubuque Soil & Water Conservation District  
210 Bierman Rd  
Epworth, Iowa 52045  
563-876-3418#3

### District Hires Eric Schmechel as Watershed Coordinator

It's hard to put into words how excited I am to be the new watershed coordinator for the Upper Catfish Creek Watershed project. I have always been an “outdoor enthusiast,” interacting in many different outdoor activities, which in turn, I have developed a strong passion for conservation of all sorts.

I am a graduate from the University of Wisconsin—Green Bay, and received a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Planning & Environmental Science. During my last few years of college, and while working for the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, I became actively involved with water quality monitoring and fish management research.



As I settle into my new position, I am grateful for the way everyone around me has made me feel welcome here in Dubuque.

In the upcoming months ahead of me, I will be able to meet many of you as the Upper Catfish Creek Watershed project unfolds. I certainly look forward to working with you, and am also looking forward to hearing from you about your ideas for this project. Please let me know what you're thinking; feel free to call me or send me an email. My door is always open!

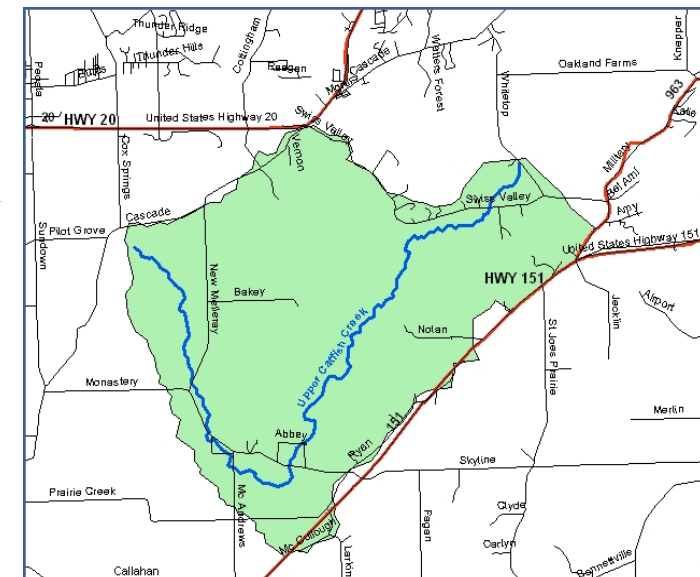
### Where is the Upper Catfish Creek Watershed?

The Upper Catfish Creek Watershed area encompasses 9,300 acres located to the west and south of the city of Dubuque within Table Mound and Vernon Townships.

Upper Catfish Creek is an existing high quality, cold-water stream that has brown trout naturally reproducing within it. (One of only 30 streams in Iowa). The watershed includes Swiss Valley Park and the Swiss Valley Nature Preserve, one of the largest nature preserves in the Midwest.

### Funding Received for the Upper Catfish Watershed Project!

The Dubuque Soil & Water Conservation District Commissioners applied for and received funding for the Upper Catfish Creek Watershed Project this past fall! Currently, the project is slated for a three-year term. Funding was received from the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, Division of Soil Conservation, through funds of the Water Protection Act, and by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. This project was also funded in part by the Iowa Watershed Improvement Fund (WIRB). A huge THANKS goes out to Sandi Helgerson, the district's Grant Writer, whom applied for the grants!!



Dubuque Soil & Water  
Conservation District  
210 Bierman  
Epworth, IA 52045

NONPROFIT ORG  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
EPWORTH IA  
PERMIT 6

## Media Day—Project Implementation Ceremony

Mark your calendars! On Friday, February 23rd, the Dubuque Soil and Water Conservation District will be kicking off the Upper Catfish Watershed Project by hosting a Project Implementation Ceremony at the Swiss Valley Nature Center, at 11:00 a.m.

The Media has been notified, State Legislators, District Commissioners, and local leaders will all be in atten-

dance, and we are hoping you will attend as well!

We would love to see watershed landowners attend this event and show their support for the project. It will be the perfect time to meet the Watershed Committee members and visit with staff regarding the project. We look forward to meeting you!

## Cost-Share Incentive Programs Best Management Practices

Financial Incentives are available to watershed landowners interested in installing conservation practices and protecting the Upper Catfish Creek. Funding rates vary depending upon funding source, but can be as much as 75%. Eligible practices are: Terraces, Streambank Stabilization, Livestock Exclusion, Timber Stand Improvement, Contour Stripcropping, Sinkhole Diversion, Rain Gardens, Permeable Paving, Infiltration Trench, Contour Buffer Strips, Riparian Forest Buffers\*, Grass Filter Strips\*, and Grassed Waterways\*.

\*These practices may be eligible to be offered into the Continuous Signup of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and are eligible for 90% cost share, an additional Signing Incentive Payments of \$100 per acre, and an annual rental rate for 10 years.



*Terraces, Conservation Tillage, and Conservation Buffers Save Soil and Improve Water Quality.*

## Watershed Project's Main Goal

To develop local partnerships with governmental agencies and private landowners to protect an existing high quality stream from future water quality problems. These partnerships will help us educate each other on water quality, storm water runoff and soil erosion issues as they affect the watershed and impact Catfish Creek. We do not want to prevent future development; we simply recognize the need to become better informed of the impacts our activities have upon the environment.

## What exactly are Best Management Practices?

Best Management Practices (BMPs) are methods, measures, or practices used to protect, maintain, and preserve water quality, wildlife habitat, and soil erosion. One of the biggest threats to the Upper Catfish Creek Watershed is the non-point source pollution (NPS Pollution). NPS pollution occurs when runoff from rainwater and snowmelt picks up and carries pollutants into Catfish Creek.

A few examples of urban BMPs might include:

- Rain Gardens (shown below)
- Native Landscaping
- Bioretention Cells
- Bioswales



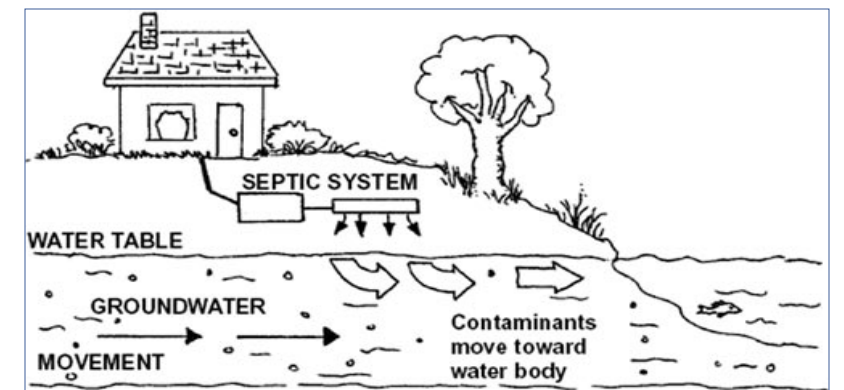
Rain Gardens are an attractive landscaping feature. They are bowl-shaped, designed to absorb storm water runoff from impervious pavements such as parking lots or roofs.

## Septic System Workshop

We are in the process of setting up a Septic System Workshop for Dubuque County residents. We will be partnering up with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR). Faulty septic systems can transport biological, chemical, and nutrient contamination into groundwater and surface water supplies, impacting water quality! Date and Time are yet to be determined, however we are aiming for late summer. The workshop will be approximately 2-3 hours long.

One of our goals in this project is to create awareness and education on septic systems within the watershed. Watershed landowners attending the upcoming planned Septic System Workshop will be eligible to put their name in a raffle for one of seven \$100 dollar vouchers good towards having your septic system cleaned and/or 50% reimbursement, not to exceed \$3,500 towards the replacement of one septic system in the watershed.

**Please email Eric Schmechel, [eric.schmechel@ia.nacdnet.net](mailto:eric.schmechel@ia.nacdnet.net) or call 563-876-3418 #3 to register for the Septic System Workshop**  
*Cost is Free!*



Note: Drawing taken from Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control/Division of Water Resources

## The Upper Catfish Creek Watershed Committee

Support for and interest in the Upper Catfish Creek Watershed Project has been outstanding. Members of the Watershed Committee include officials from Dubuque County - Supervisors, Health, Zoning, Engineering, & Conservation Board; East Central Intergovernmental Assn., City of Dubuque - Planning, Catfish Creek Coalition, Sierra Club, Dubuque Soil & Water Conservation District Commissioners, and three watershed landowners. These landowners represent over 40% of the land owned within the watershed.

The District thanks this group for their willingness to share their concerns and ideas and help us prioritize these as we drafted our project application. The Committee's efforts made this watershed project application successful. This groups continued cooperation will ensure the future implementation of the Upper Catfish Creek Watershed, enabling us to carry out our overall goals for this project.

