WHERE DO YOU FIT INTO THE PUZZLE?

WHAT CAN FARMERS DO?

The Aux Sable Creek Watershed has been a farming community since its settlement in the 1830s. By implementing conservation farming practices, the natural resources are protected or improved, which benefits the landowner and the watershed.

The Erosion Less Noticed

Gully erosion is easily seen when water cuts a channel; however, sheet erosion is not as obvious. Sheet erosion occurs when raindrops loosen soil particles and surface water carries them away. Typical soil loss with conventional tillage is five tons of soil per acre per year. This represents 150 tons per acre in a 30-year period and equates to one inch of soil lost to sheet erosion. In comparison, it takes approximately 500 years to form one inch of soil.

Continue the Conservation Trend

The recent trend is less tillage and more residue management. Erosion rates have decreased and continue to do so with the acceptance of mulch and no-till systems.

Demonstrate the Benefits

Use highly visible sites to demonstrate conservation practices. These sites serve as real-life situations that show how effective local efforts can be.

Concentrate the Efforts

Farmland with slopes greater than five percent that are adjacent to the creek or a tributary should be treated for soil erosion. These areas have a higher potential for erosion than less sloping ground as well as the potential to erode into the creek. These areas and all land with resource problems should be addressed.

Work with Your Neighbor

Some problems are too big to be solved by one landowner. This is an opportunity for a few landowners or a subwatershed to address the issues together. Once formed, this group can address the quantity and quality of runoff issues collectively rather than leaving it for the downstream landowners to manage.

Utilize Conservation Cost Share Programs

Programs exist that provide private landowners cost share and incentive payments to establish conservation practices such as grassed waterways, filter strips, riparian buffers, windbreaks, wetland restoration, permanent vegetative cover for highly erodible land, and contour grass strips. All these practices protect against erosion.

For more information contact:

- SWCD/NRCS office for conservation practices and technical assistance; Farm Service Agency (FSA) for cost share programs
- Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) for wildlife and woodland management
- Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) for farmland preservation

WHERE IT ALL BEGAN...

The Aux Sable Creek Watershed Planning Committee followed a grassroots planning process to develop this watershed resource plan. By using this method of locally-led resource planning, local individuals got involved, took ownership and formed partnerships. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Kendall County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) assisted this group of local stakeholders and decision makers through the planning steps and facilitated the activities of this process. The process provides a holistic approach to address local concerns. The Planning Committee identified resource concerns (see below) and determined objectives for each concern. A Technical Advisory Committee conducted inventories, analyzed data, and provided recommendations. The recommendations are contained in each catagory "What Can_____Do?" surrounding this center puzzle piece. In order for the plan to be successful, the Planning Committee encourages everyone to get involved.

RESOURCE CONCERNS

- Flooding of bridges, roads, farmland, and residential homes
- Soil erosion from cropland and sedimentation in the creek
- Man-made and natural obstructions of natural creek flow
- Poorly planned development
- Farmland protection
- Future construction in the floodplain
- Inadequate stormwater management
- Lack of wildlife and wildlife habitat with proper management
- Future degradation of surface and ground water quality
- Potential pollution and contamination caused by sewage
- Disappearance of wetlands
- Streambank erosion
- Minimal recreation opportunities
- Lack of government support and interest

WHAT CAN HOMEOWNERS DO?

Homeowners can apply practices in their own backyard to beautify the landscape, provide food and habitat for wildlife, filter excess nutrients, chemicals and sediment, and save water, time, and money! Most homeowners landscape to enhance the "curb appeal" of their property. You may not realize that a little tinkering with the typical landscaping scheme can benefit the Aux Sable Watershed, as well as enhance your property enjoyment . Here are some ideas:

Plant Native Trees, Shrubs, Flowers, and Grasses

Native species enhance biodiversity and are more beneficial to wildlife. Because they're adapted to local soil and climate conditions, native species need minimal care and chemicals, and they live longer. A lawn transformed into a prairie, savanna, or woodland requires less time and money to maintain, allowing you to enjoy these environments and the wildlife they attract. When selecting specific species, consider mature size, color, soil moisture, and the wildlife desired. To optimize wildlife benefits, aim for a variety of flower, fruit and nut bearing vegetation. A few desirable species to plant are listed on the right.

Establish Wetland Plants

A wet area with saturated soil or ponded water might seem like a problem area, however, it is a good location to establish wetland or water tolerant plants. Wetlands can become an extension of your garden. Plants suitable for wetter conditions include: Sedges, Rushes, Switchgrass, Blue Joint Grass, Cardinal Flower, Blue Vervain, Blue Flag Iris, and Black-eyed Susan. More species are available. Consult a local nursery that sells native plants.

Establish Filter Strips Along Creeks

Homeowners whose property includes a stretch of the Aux Sable Creek or its tributaries have an opportunity to establish filter strips. These unmowed strips of grass adjacent to a creek can be planted with Switchgrass, Big Bluestem, Indiangrass, and Smooth Bromegrass. These deep-rooted natives stabilize soil and filter out sediment and pollutants from water runoff.

Enhance Existing Riparian Forest Corridors

Riparian corridors, or vegetation adjacent to the Aux Sable Creek and its tributaries, can be maintained to enhance biodiversity, improve wildlife habitat, and protect water quality. Invasive species like Box Elder, Buckthorn, Honeysuckle, Garlic Mustard, and Reed Canary Grass can crowd out valuable native plants if not removed.

Maintain Creeks According to Accepted Guidelines

Accumulation of sticks, leaves, and other fallen debris is a vital part of a healthy stream ecosystem. However, large accumulations may hinder stream flow and exacerbate flooding. Homeowners can achieve proper stream maintenance by consulting guidelines such as Stream Obstruction Removal Guides. Copies can be requested from the Kendall County SWCD office.

NATIVE SPECIES

TREES
Oak, Bur & White
Walnut, Black & Butternut
Hickory, Bitternut & Shagbark

SHRUBS
Dogwood
Serviceberry
Nannyberry
Arrow-wood

FLOWERS
Coneflower, Yellow & Purple
Coreopsis
Joe Pye Weed
Blazing Star
Wild Bergamot
Butterfly Weed

GRASSES
Big Blue Stem
Little Blue Stem
Prairie Dropseed
Indiangrass
Switchgrass

Site Development and the Natural Resources

Consider these resources when purchasing property:

- Soil Survey – soil maps, description of soils, and tables identifying uses and limitations. Some tables include building site and septic tank absorption field suitability for each of the mapped soil types.
- Floodplain map – designates floodplain boundaries. It is helpful to know if you are considering buying or building a home on or even near a floodplain.
- National Wetland Inventory (NWI) and/or NRCS wetland maps – a guide to identify potential wetland sites.

Also, refer to the "What Can Developers Do?" for information on developing a site.

For more information contact:

- Local nurseries that sell native plants
- University of Illinois Cooperative Extension Service for assistance from a master gardener
- SWCD/NRCS office for a list of native plant distributors, maps, and soil survey information

WHAT CAN DEVELOPERS DO?

Few groups will have as much impact on the Aux Sable Creek Watershed as private, commercial, and residential developers. The watershed community needs their help in order to preserve high quality resources and rural character.

Preserve Open Space

Identify and preserve significant natural features such as prairies, wetlands and forests to provide environmental benefits and amenities for citizens. Investigate options that cluster buildings around open spaces. Dedicate land for trails that can be linked to countywide networks.

Maintain Wetlands as Part of a Development

Wetlands are a special ecosystem that need to be preserved because they play a vital role in the management of rainwater. These areas have seasonally saturated soils or ponded water and are not suggested locations for homes or buildings. These areas should be considered in the design process and kept in their natural state.

Use Natural Water Management

Consider natural drainage measures as an alternative to traditional engineered solutions. Explore the use of native vegetative swales and wetlands to slowly convey stormwater, manage flooding, facilitate infiltration, filter runoff, and reduce costs.

Prevent Soil from Leaving a Construction Site

Mass grading exposes soil to water and wind erosion and causes soil particles to be carried off-site. By developing and implementing a soil erosion and sediment control plan, soil will be contained on-site and natural areas protected. (Consult NRCS Urban Manual.)

Protect Subsurface Drainage

Many areas going to development were previously farmed. Most of that farmland has plastic and clay tiles used for subsurface drainage. These tile systems, running through multiple fields, can be destroyed with land use changes or when detention basins are outletted into the subsurface system, causing negative impacts on drainage.

Suggestions for Development

No one plan can be used for every development. Each site will have different needs. These are some suggestions to consider or incorporate into each plan:

- Use native vegetation
- Retain natural features
- Mix housing styles and types
- Decrease impervious surfaces (i.e. parking lots & streets)
- Reduce area disturbed by mass grading
- Shrink lot size and create more open space
- Maintain historical and cultural resources
- Treat water where it falls
- Preserve views
- Establish and link trails

For more information consult these reading suggestions:

- *Design With Nature* by Ian McHarg
- *Best Development Practices* by Reid Ewing
- *Conservation Design for Subdivisions: A Practical Guide to Creating Open Space* by Randall Arendt
- *Rural By Design* by Randall Arendt

WHAT CAN EVERYONE DO?

To promote watershed stewardship:

Get Involved

Don't wait for others – get involved NOW in shaping your watershed's future! Become active in your watershed. Support or join the efforts of the Aux Sable Creek Watershed Planning Committee. Use and encourage others to use this watershed resource plan and the recommendations it contains. For a successful and healthy watershed, it takes everyone's efforts.

Get Others Involved

Make sure everyone in your community has a voice in shaping its future, even youth. Actively promote efforts to improve your community.

Educate

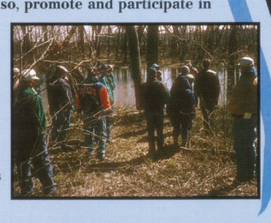
Learn about your watershed. This plan contains valuable information for a variety of groups, however, more information exists than this plan can cover. Seek out these other sources to learn how you can make changes that benefit you and the watershed. Also, promote and participate in events to encourage watershed awareness.

Encourage Regional Cooperation

Help your elected officials see issues in a broader regional context, such as transportation, economic development, land use planning, environment, parks and recreation.

Maintain Practices and Systems

Practices need continual maintenance to properly function and be effective. This may include managing natural areas and vegetation to control weeds and invasive species; removing large debris obstructions in the creek; or enhancing vegetation diversity.



WHAT CAN CITY & COUNTY OFFICIALS DO?

Officials have decision-making power that guides changes in the Aux Sable Creek Watershed. Choices made can have regional effects.

Plans and Ordinances

Establish a County Stormwater Management Commission to develop countywide stormwater management plans and ordinances consistent with best management practices.

Design for Conservation

Use innovative development standards which encourage the use of deep-rooted native plants in buffers, swales, parks, commercial sites, and industrial areas; require detailed site surveys to identify and protect natural features; encourage compact development around existing sewer and water utilities; and cluster housing near transportation, jobs, and existing infrastructure.

Open Space

The possibilities for open space are endless before land is developed. A community-wide network of open space protects large tracts of land rather than isolated pockets for each development. Acquisition of open space by the County Forest Preserve Districts would support goals to preserve natural areas. In addition, countywide greenways and trails provide recreational opportunities and corridors for wildlife movement. A multifunctional greenway plan with permanent riparian buffers and easements is encouraged.

Preservation and Growth

Promote the voluntary preservation of farmland with landowner-approved "agricultural districts;" promote conservation and state programs for voluntary purchase of agricultural easements from landowners; consider growth management laws that may be appropriate for Kendall and Grundy Counties; and use the Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) in the review planning process.

Officials' Actions

Complete an advanced identification (ADID) study for Grundy and Kendall Counties. ADID identifies high quality and important wetlands, allowing long-term preservation and protection with setbacks and buffers.

OVERVIEW

Introduction

This plan documents some of the findings of the Aux Sable Creek Watershed Planning Committee. This side provides information about the Planning Committee as well as various facts and history about the watershed. The reverse side presents the Planning Committee's concerns and supporting recommendations for the watershed. Everyone is encouraged to use this plan and learn more about his or her watershed.

What is a watershed?

A watershed is the area of land that drains into a stream or lake. Watersheds are defined by high points on the Earth's surface, such as hills and ridges. When rain falls in the watershed, it flows across the ground towards a stream or lake. Rainwater carries any pollutants it comes in contact with such as oils, pesticides, and soil.

Why are we involved?

The flood of 1996 prompted concern from residents and farmers to the possibilities of future occurances. Along with governmental representatives, we formed the Aux Sable Creek Watershed Planning Committee. The committee's initial concern was flooding, but as we began identifying the resource concerns in the watershed we soon realized that there was more to address than flooding. Additional concerns include soil erosion, loss of wetlands, development, degraded water quality, and loss of wildlife habitat, to name a few. When the natural resource inventory reports were presented to the Watershed Planning Committee, we discovered how rich and pristine the resources are. For this reason, we should preserve this beautiful watershed.

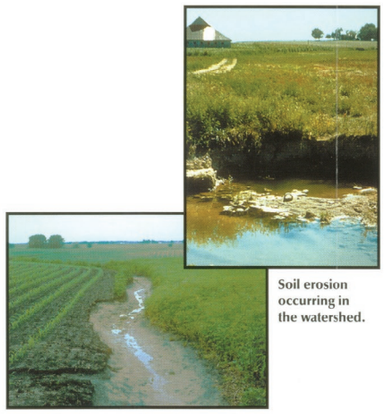
Why get involved?

Everyone lives in a watershed. Their actions can impact natural resources and people living downstream. Residents can minimize this impact by being aware of their environment and implications of their activities, implementing practices recommended in this plan, and educating others about their watershed.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Aux Sable Creek Watershed Planning Committee is to promote awareness of the exceptional natural resources in the Aux Sable Creek Watershed and to encourage activities that will protect and improve the watershed. The Planning Committee is working to:

- Identify challenges to the quality of the Aux Sable Creek Watershed;
- Develop alternative strategies to address these challenges;
- Promote conservation education that will enhance the Aux Sable Creek Watershed.



Soil erosion occurring in the watershed.

The fish survey showed a high quality creek with a variety of fish and mussel species.

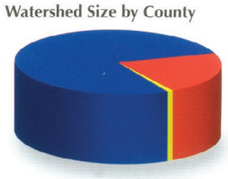
Urban development is beginning to occur in the watershed.

The floodplain should remain as open space to prevent or minimize flood damages.

Aux Sable Creek Watershed

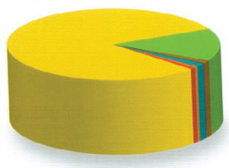
118,758 acres (185.6 square miles)

Watershed Size by County



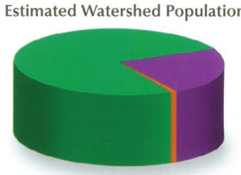
77.62%	Kendall County	92,181 acres
21.88%	Grundy County	25,980 acres
.50%	Will County	597 acres

Land Cover



81.47%	Cropland	96,751 acres	1.51%	Woodland 1,792 acres
14.66%	Grassland	17,408 acres	.62%	Urban or Built-up 736 acres
1.60%	Wetland	1,903 acres	.10%	Barren Land 120 acres
			.04%	Open Water 48 acres

Estimated Watershed Population: 5616 (1990 Census)



66%	Kendall County	3714
33.5%	Grundy County	1881
.50%	Will County	21

The watershed is home to a variety of wildlife.

The I & M Canal provides recreation and history near the Illinois River.

THE HERITAGE OF THE AUX SABLE CREEK WATERSHED

Origins of "Aux Sable"

Aux and sable are French words. The proper French pronunciation is aux [o] sable [sabl]. The translation of "aux" generally means "at the" or "to the" and "sable" means "sand." It was due to the sandy creek bed that the creek was named and was referred to as the sand creek or the sandy creek.

Settlement

In July 1833, the Chicago-Ottawa Trail opened and people began leaving Chicago. This provided a route for stagecoaches across the watershed. The trail was located through Kendall County at the current location of Chicago Road. The trail brought many settlers to this area. Some engaged in farming and others became innkeepers or merchants, thus opening new lands and opportunities to many. One overnight stop on the Chicago-Ottawa Trail was Aux Sable Springs or "The Springs" (now Plattville). This site was settled by Daniel Platt in 1833 and became the first white settlement in Kendall County. Then in 1835, Plattville was named after its founder.

Chester House and his family settled House's Grove in 1833 near a sulfur spring along the Aux Sable Creek. Settlers were attracted to the flat and rolling terrain of the fertile prairies. The prairie grasses grew four to six feet tall and covered the landscape.

The first settlers to the Aux Sable Township in Grundy County lived in Lutzow's Grove. Later, the grove became a popular picnic and gathering area. By 1836, many settlers were attracted to the township as the building of the Illinois & Michigan Canal was in progress. With its completion in 1848, the canal connected the Illinois River and Lake Michigan. The canal encouraged the growth of agriculture and provided a means to get crops to market. Around 1933, the canal's use changed to recreation due to the use of other waterways and different forms of transportation. The Aux Sable Township area between Morris and Channahon is rich in I&M Canal history with Lock #8, the locktender's house, and the rebuilt Aux Sable aqueduct.

Natural Resources

The natural resources brought the settlers, and this remains an attraction. The area was known for the fertile land, abundant fish, and ample game for hunting and trapping. Water was plentiful appearing as creeks, wetlands, marshes, and ponds. In pre-settlement times, the rich prairie filled the watershed aside from the few woodland groves. The prairie has been plowed and replaced by farming and the groves have reduced in size.

The Aux Sable Springs were known for their medicinal value as they had magnetic properties and were often visited by people suffering from rheumatism. Sulfur springs were located along the Aux Sable Creek in Seward Township. In addition to wild game and fish, settlers enjoyed wild honey, sugar distilled from maple syrup, walnuts, hickory, hazel, and butter nuts along with wild crabapples-grapes and elderberries.

Sources
Hick's History of Kendall County
Historical Encyclopedia of Illinois 1914
A Brief History of Minooka, Michiele Roberts Houchens

Kendall County Soil & Water Conservation District
7775A Rt. 47
Yorkville, Illinois 60560
Phone: 630-553-5821 Ext.3

Aux Sable Creek Watershed

Aux Sable Creek Watershed

RESOURCE PLAN