

Rock River Basin Monthly Educational Series

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The fourth in a series of monthly educational programs about the Rock River Basin will resume on August 10 with a focus on future water quality issues as they relate to water quality trading.

The forums are sponsored by the Department of Natural Resources, University of Wisconsin-Extension and the Rock River Coalition and are open to anyone. They are being organized to help the large group of stakeholders working on the Rock River Recovery Plan become familiar with projects aimed at reducing polluted runoff, says Suzanne Wade, UW-Extension Rock River Basin educator.

August 10 forum topic: Wisconsin's water quality trading framework

In June, 2010, the Natural Resources Board approved a comprehensive rule package aimed at improving the water quality of Wisconsin's lakes, rivers and streams. The rule package addressed point sources and non-point sources, and created numeric water quality criteria for rivers, streams and lakes.

To promote flexibility and provide options to maximize environmental benefits in the most cost-effective manner possible, the DNR Board instructed the Department of Natural Resources to create a framework for water quality trading. The Department was to report back to the Board no later than July 1, 2011. That report was submitted to Natural Board for their approval as required.

Kevin Kirsch, co-team leader for the Water Quality Trading report, will discuss the water quality trading concept and its relationship to implementation of Rock River Basin Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) report.

Members of the public are invited to attend the event at the Lake Mills Community Center, 200 B Water Street, Lake Mills on August 10, 2011 beginning at 9 am.

The Rock River and many of its tributaries have water quality impairments caused by too much soil and excess amounts of phosphorus, a plant nutrient, which washes off of farm fields, city streets and construction sites. The DNR is working with citizens, city stormwater and wastewater utility staff, consultants, farmers and other groups to develop a plan on how to achieve better river health by reducing these two pollutants. The target for reducing the amount of sediment and phosphorus entering the river is derived from a recent report called the Total Maximum Daily Loads for Total Phosphorus and Total Suspended Solids in the Rock River Basin.

For more information about the Rock River Recovery Educational Forums or to view a factsheet on the recovery effort, visit www.rockrivercoalition.org.