

Why does the HLWD seek outside funding?

Our general operating funds are limited and minimal in comparison to what is needed. In order to make the best use of general operating funds, the HLWD has put forth extensive efforts to obtain outside funding.

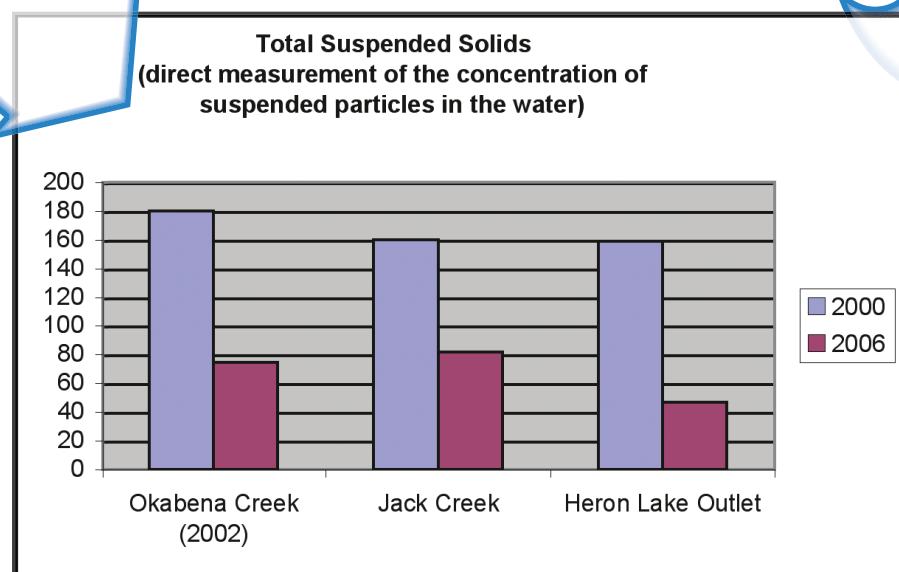
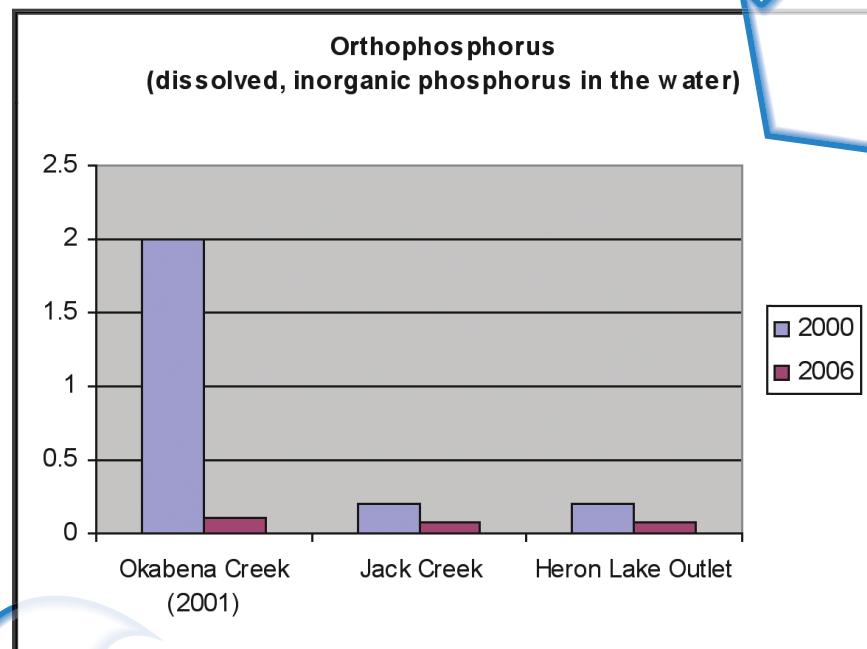
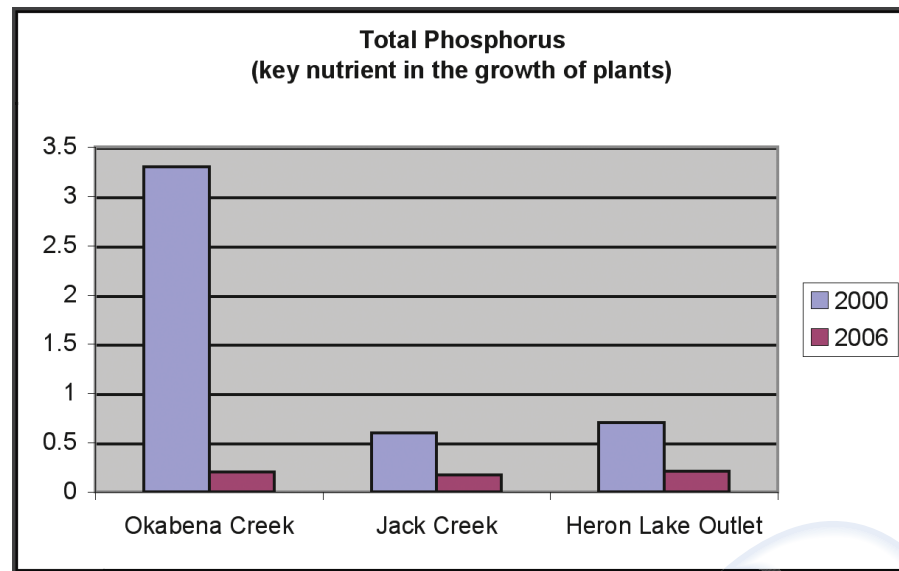
The HLWD first began applying for additional outside funding in 1995. Since that time we have successfully secured 20 grants. These grants were awarded by local, state, and national organizations such as the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, AgStar, Environmental Protection Agency, US Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources Conservation Service, Board of Water and Soil Resources, and the Heron Lake-Okabena Community Foundation.

Over the last twelve years, the HLWD has received \$845,669.73 in cash through grants from these organizations. These funds were used to pay for cost-share and incentive programs, water quality monitoring, and education efforts. Grants are not easy to obtain. Competition in the application process is rigorous. The HLWD has been very fortunate that outside funders have deemed our projects to be good investments in accordance with their goals and priorities.

In order to meet the funders' requirements, the HLWD and its partners must provide cash and/or in-kind to "match" the money given by the grant. In-kind is the equivalent of equipment costs or staff time. In general, the match must equal or be more than the amount requested from the grant and can be provided by the grant applicant as well as any partners participating in the project. Since 1995, grant matches from the HLWD and their many partners amounted to \$2,889,868.16.

Loan funds are separate from grant funds. Loan funds have been awarded to the HLWD for septic system replacement, best management practice installation, and conservation tillage equipment. The total in loan funds obtained since 1995 amounts to \$1,070,174.48.

Education and implementation come with a price tag. Our educational efforts in producing newsletters and providing knowledgeable speakers cost money. Implementation with the agricultural and urban community takes time, as balance between conservation and making a living must be maintained. One person or one project in itself will not make much difference, but all of our efforts added together result in noticeable improvements.



Is progress being made?

HLWD staff has made documentation a priority in all education and implementation efforts, whether funded through grants or the general operating levy. This is done through various means including water quality monitoring, tracking website visits, recording meeting attendance, pre- and post-tests at workshops, photographs, and comments from meeting attendees. Some of the results are shown to the left.

A picture is worth a thousand words -

this picture shows the importance of water quality improvement efforts. On the left is Jack Creek, and on the right is water from Jack Creek that has passed through a wildlife management area, which contains wetland restorations that help to enhance water quality and wildlife habitat.

Since July 2005, 6,520 people have visited our website. This month's visitors came from Minnesota, South Dakota, New Jersey, Washington, DC, New York, Nebraska, Michigan, and Iowa. The most popular pages are those regarding our projects and funding resources.

Residents care about the watershed and take the time to attend our public meetings and offer direct feedback regarding watershed projects and programs. This input is used as the basis for planning future education meetings and grant applications.

Meet the staff...

Jan Voit-District Administrator, Chris Bauer-CREP Technician, Ross Behrends-Watershed Technician, Melanie Luinenburg-Education Coordinator.

The HLWD has four staff members, two full-time and two part-time. Twenty percent of the district administrator's time is spent on office administration. Otherwise, the remainder of the administrator's time and all of the watershed technician, education coordinator, and CREP technician's time is appropriated to education and implementation. The majority of staff wages are used to match grants for education and implementation efforts.

Please contact us!

The HLWD does the utmost to pursue every option to educate and inform watershed residents as to how they can help improve the water quality within the watershed and beyond.

In an effort to improve communication and gather information, we would like to hear from watershed residents, project partners, and government officials. Please contact the HLWD at 507-793-2462 or send an email to hlwd@roundlk.net and tell us your thoughts on the efforts undertaken and the funding mechanisms used. You could also fill out the short feedback form found on our website: www.hlwdonline.org.

