

## **Educational Programs**

### **Land-use Model and Groundwater Flow Model**

An excellent opportunity to enhance our Educational Program came in late summer of 1993. Mr. Harry Buck, a long time environmental educator and former Quarry Hill Nature Center Director, developed a three-dimensional model landscape, which illustrates land use practices and conservation principles.

The model is a miniature landscape divided into nine separate “neighborhood” cubes, each with a protective cover, mounted on a wooden base. The land surface and underlying geology are clearly shown. The model comes with teacher resources and supporting materials, including directions for its use, landscape data, quizzes and answers, guides for discussion and follow-up activities, as well as additional curriculum resources. The landuse model travels in a set of protective wooden carrying cases.

The District also acquired a Groundwater Flow Model created by the Iowa State University Soil and Water Conservation Club. The model demonstrates the movement of water and contaminants through earth’s soils and natural and artificial drainage systems. This model is ideal for use by schools and groups interested in water quality issues.

A brochure is available to provide local educators with an overview of the educational possibilities for the landuse model. The District has made this educational resource available throughout the county.

### **Joint Agency Newsletter**

A Joint Agency Newsletter is another part of the District’s Education Program. Cooperating agencies participating with Olmsted Soil and Water Conservation District are Farm Service Agency, and Natural Resource Conservation Service. The newsletter includes articles of interest from all agencies as well as a calendar of upcoming events. The newsletter currently goes out to approximately 3000 residents and to neighboring county agencies. Olmsted SWCD posts the newsletter on their website.

<http://www.co.olmsted.mn.us/pw/oswcd/Pages/RegionalAgNews.aspx>

### **Envirothon**

On May 5, 2011 the SE Minnesota Area 7 SWCD’s sponsored its seventeenth Annual Envirothon at Chesterwoods Park in Eyota, Minnesota. The Envirothon is an outdoor, hands-on learning experience for high school students, grades 9-12. It is centered on six different environmental learning stations, one of which is an oral presentation regarding a current environmental issue. Since the event takes place outdoors, questions involve actual contact with the natural resource rather than just providing a paper and pencil approach.

Schools in the eleven southeast Minnesota districts were invited to participate in this event. Eight teams participated in this Envirothon in 2011. Medford High School team took first place, Goodhue High School took second place, and Zumbrota – Mazeppa High School took third place. All SE MN Area 7 participants received a free t-shirt and lunch on-site prior to the awards ceremony at the park. The 3 winning area teams were provided with financial assistance to attend and compete at the state competition held May 16, 2011 at Spirit Mountain Recreation Area in Duluth, MN.

### **Education**

The District provides environmental education to school aged children and special interest groups around the county. The Ag in the Classroom program brings the farm to the classroom and Olmsted SWCD presented materials on soils, landuse, soil erosion, recycling, wetlands, water quality issues and stormwater to hundreds of elementary aged children throughout the county last year. The district also visits local schools to provide classroom presentations, slideshows, and demonstrations for all ages.

