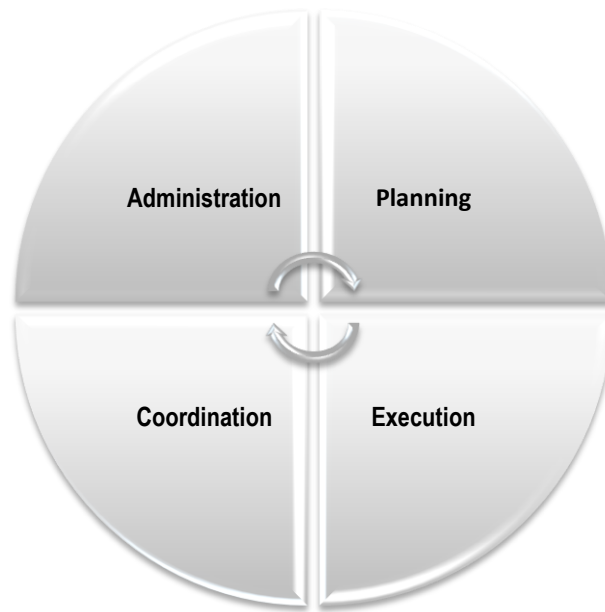


2011 Performance Review and Assistance Program (PRAP)



***Report to the Minnesota Legislature
February 2012***

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www.bwsr.state.mn.us/PRAP/index.html

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MINNESOTA BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES

Performance Review and Assistance Program (PRAP)

Fact Sheet

Since 2007, BWSR's PRAP has been methodically assessing the performance of the local units of government that constitute Minnesota's delivery system for conservation of water and soil resources. The goal of this program is to help these local government partners to be the best they can be in their management of these critical resources.

PRAP focuses on four aspects of Local Governmental Unit performance in the delivery of conservation services:

- Administration--reporting and accountability
- Planning—keeping plans current and relevant
- Execution—implementing planned objectives and tracking progress
- Communication and Coordination—working with partners and stakeholders.

The four Levels (I-IV) of performance review and assistance are described on the back of this page.

2011 Program Accomplishments

- Tracked report and plan compliance (Level I) for 244 counties, soil and water conservation districts, watershed districts and watershed management organizations.
- Conducted in-depth (Level II) performance reviews of seven LGUs. BWSR has conducted 31 Level II performance reviews since 2008.
- Provided assistance to two LGUs.
- Maintained and updated the publically accessible LGU performance database on the BWSR website.

2011 LGU Performance Review

Management Plan Status:

40% reduction in overdue plan revisions since 2009.

- SWCDs: All plans or resolutions are current.
- Counties: 5 updates are overdue.
- Watershed Districts: 7 revisions are overdue.
- Watershed Management Organizations: 2 revisions are overdue.

Statewide LGU Performance: compliance with Level I standards (12/31/11)

- SWCDs: 99% compliance.
- County Water Management: 93% compliance.
- Watershed Districts: 53% compliance.
- Watershed Management Organizations 50% compliance.

2012 PRAP Objectives

- Level II performance reviews of 7-8 LGUs.
- Pilot of a watershed based performance review of overlapping LGUs.
- Expand Level I database and web reporting.
- Monitor LGUs experiencing change for assistance grant opportunities.
- Develop performance standard benchmarks for each LGU type.

**Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources
Performance Review and Assistance Program Overview**

PRAP Program Level	Frequency	Performance Review	Assistance	Reporting	BWSR BC Role	Prog Coordinator Role
Level I Routine Monitoring and Tabulation	Annual	Tabulation of required reports, plans, audits, etc.	Voluntary, may join training or programs set up for others	Report required submittals by LGU (WS and LR) ¹	Review check of tabulated results	Ensure reporting compliance; report results of tabulation
Level II Routine performance review and targeted assistance	Once every 5yrs./LGU 50 LGUs/yr (limited by funding)	Interview using performance standard checklist; review progress toward plan goals/objectives	Set performance goals in an PIA ² , if needed; group training targeted to needs; limited coaching	List LGUs that receive Lvl II review (WS and LR) ¹	Conduct LGU performance reviews; establish performance goals where needed; conduct training or provide coaching	Monitor and schedule performance review; coordinate assistance and training; review, modify, improve assessment & assistance tools; report results
Level III Prescriptive assistance & grants available	As needed	Monitor progress toward PIA ² goals	Various: 360° Feedback; self-assessment; Benchmarking; Mediation; Mentoring	List LGUs that receive Lvl III review (WS and LR) ¹	Regular meetings with LGU; provide assistance as appropriate;	Arrange for/contract and manage assistance; report performance; lead self-assessment team; report results
Level IV Penalties	As needed	Monitor progress toward PIA ² goals	Continue Level III Assistance; Notice of Deficiencies; Restriction of funds	List LGUs that receive NoDs/restriction of funds (WS and LR) ¹	Recommend action to Program Administrator; monitor compliance with perf goals	Present recommended action to BWSR Board; communicate with LGUs; report results

¹WS=BWSR website, LR=annual legislative report

²PIA=Interim Performance Improvement Agreement

About this Report

This report has been prepared for the Minnesota State Legislature by the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) in partial fulfillment of the requirements of Minnesota Statutes Chapter 103B.102, subdivision 3. This statute requires BWSR to provide designated legislative committees with “an analysis of local water management entity performance” each year. This report covers the activities of the Performance Review and Assistance Program (PRAP) during the 2011 calendar year. This is the fifth annual report prepared by BWSR for this program.

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Program Summary 2011

PRAP—Year 4

After four years of implementation, the Board of Water and Soil Resources' (BWSR) Performance Review and Assistance Program (PRAP) is well-established as a tool for monitoring and enhancing the effectiveness of Minnesota's local government system of conservation services delivery

Level I Performance Review

BWSR reviews compliance with plan and report requirements for 244 local governmental units each year.

LGUs Meeting All Level I Performance Standards in 2011

84%

Level II Performance Reviews

BWSR conducted reviews of 7 LGUs' plan implementation performance and operational effectiveness.

2011 Level II Results

Part 1 Plan Implementation

(% of plan action items addressed)

High	Low	Average
100	52	82

Part 2 Performance Standards

(% of standards met)

Basic Standards

High	Low	Average
100	69	89

High Performance Standards

High	Low	Average
73	8	56

Level III & IV Review

- No Level III or IV performance reviews were conducted in 2011.

Assistance Services to LGUs

- Training courses at BWSR Academy addressed LGU requests identified during PRAP reviews in 2010.

2011 PRAP Assistance to LGUs

- Advised Heron Lake WD regarding their management plan update.
- Consulted with MN Assn. of Soil and Water Conservation Districts on new district capacity evaluation and coordination with MCIT on assistance options and resources.
- Offered facilitation services to Le Sueur County LGUs for local water plan collaboration.

Reporting

No. of Website Hits to PRAP Level I Performance Database

(by calendar year)

2010- 1437 (1st year)

2011- 186

www.bwsr.state.mn.us/PRAP/reporting/index.php

BWSR maintains a user-accessible database of LGU compliance with routine planning and reporting requirements.

PRAP Program Accountability

BWSR met its own performance objectives for PRAP in 2011. However, the state shutdown in July precluded the testing of a new approach to PRAP that will assess the joint performance of water management LGUs with jurisdiction in the same major watershed. This initiative will be implemented on a pilot basis in 2012.

PRAP Background

Supporting Local Delivery of Conservation Services

PRAP focuses on the local governmental units (LGUs) that deliver BWSR's water and land conservation programs, and in particular, how well they are implementing their long-range plans. Those LGUs are soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs), watershed districts (WDs), water management organizations (WMOs), and the water management function of counties—a total of 244 distinct organizations. PRAP, authorized by the state legislature in 2007 (see Appendix A), is coordinated by one BWSR central office staff member. He receives assistance from BWSR's 13 Board Conservationists, who routinely work with LGUs across the state.

With limited program funding BWSR was able to track several performance indicators for all LGUs statewide, but could conduct only 7 of the needed 49 in-depth reviews.

Multi-level Process

PRAP has three operational components:

- **performance review**
- **assistance**
- **reporting.**

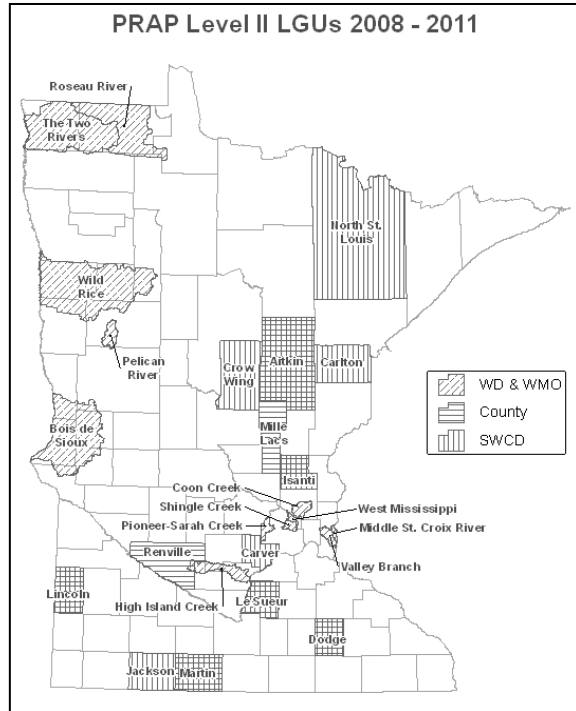
The **performance review** component is applied at four levels.

Level I is a tabulation of required LGU plans and reports with website posting of the results. Level I is accomplished with current program funding and does not require additional effort by LGUs.

Level II is a routine, interactive review originally envisioned to cover up to 49 LGUs per year to evaluate operational effectiveness and plan implementation progress. Program funding so far has

allowed an average of only 8 Level II reviews per year.

BWSR's Level I and II performance



standards for each type of LGU can be viewed at www.bwsr.state.mn.us/PRAP/index.html.

Level III is an in-depth assessment of an LGU's performance problems and issues initiated by BWSR or the LGU and usually involving targeted assistance to address specific performance needs. BWSR has conducted Level III review and assistance for several LGUs and regularly monitors all LGUs for additional opportunities.

Level IV is for those LGUs that have significant performance deficiencies, requiring extensive assessment, monitoring and possible penalties as authorized by statute. So far there have not been any Level IV cases.

Assistance varies with the needs of the LGU. Level I assistance is largely routine

training for LGUs. BWSR presents this type of training primarily through the annual BWSR Academy and board member training sessions. At Levels II-IV assistance is targeted to the specific needs of the LGUs and can be provided by BWSR staff or consultants, depending on availability and the skills needed. A small portion of the PRAP budget is available to LGUs to both incentivize and support specialized assistance recommended by the program.

Reporting makes information about LGU performance accessible to the LGU's stakeholders and constituents. The various venues include the PRAP page on BWSR's website, and the LGUs' own websites and annual activity reports.

Accountability: From Measuring Effort to Tracking Results

Administration of government programs demands and deserves a high degree of

accountability. PRAP was developed, in part, to deliver on that demand by providing systematic local government performance review and then reporting publically accessible results. The challenge in reporting results is to move from measuring effort (e.g., how much money was spent on buffers?) to detecting effects of those efforts on targeted resources (e.g., have buffers improved downstream habitat and water quality?). PRAP addresses LGUs' functions of administration, program execution, communication, and collaboration that all contribute to successful resource outcomes.

At the program's start in 2007 the BWSR board adopted principles (see box) that still guide the implementation of this oversight function. Those principles are reflected in the program's goal of providing both performance analysis and recommendations in a way that encourages LGUs to act in their own best interests.

Guiding Principles

PRAP operates on the following principles adopted by the BWSR Board in 2007:

- **Pre-emptive**
- **Systematic**
- **Constructive**
- **Includes consequences**
- **Transparent**
- **Retains local ownership and autonomy**
- **Maintains proportionate expectations**
- **Preserves the state/local partnership**
- **Results in "more/better" on-the-ground conservation**

Performance Review of PRAP

BWSR's Accountability

BWSR continues to hold itself accountable for the accomplishments of the PRAP program. In consideration of that commitment, this section matches program

objectives from last year's PRAP legislative report with corresponding program activities during 2011.

BWSR's PERFORMANCE REVIEW ACTIVITIES	
What We Proposed	What We Did
Track Level I performance of all LGUs.	BWSR tracked the required plan and report status of 244 LGUs.
Develop performance thresholds for selected Level II performance standards.	BWSR dropped, added, or modified 21 performance standards for 2011, including adding a threshold to funds leveraging standard.
Conduct 7-8 Level II routine performance reviews.	BWSR conducted 7 Level II performance reviews.

BWSR's ASSISTANCE to LGUs	
What We Proposed	What We Did
Continue Level III assistance.	BWSR assisted one WD with their management plan revision and the SWCD state association with district capacity assessment and assistance planning.
Continue monitoring of LGUs experiencing change for assistance opportunities.	BWSR managers periodically monitored LGUs experiencing change in staffing and board membership, finances, organization, etc.
In collaboration with the BWSR Training Team provide LGUs with guidance for basic board and staff skill sets.	The 2011 BWSR Academy included 5 training sessions that addressed training-related assistance requested by LGUs during 2010 Level II reviews.

BWSR's PRAP REPORTING	
What We Proposed	What We Did
Report Level I performance of all LGUs.	BWSR website includes a searchable database of compliance with Level I performance standards for SWCDs, WDs, counties, and WMOs. Appendices C, D and E summarize the Level I results.

PRAP Advisory Team

The purpose of the Advisory Team is to advise BWSR on program implementation and help BWSR maintain a balance between the need for accountability and the need to minimize the program's administrative burden on LGUs. The

Team did not meet in 2011. However, BWSR provided the members with an annual program update. In the future BWSR will consult with the team only in the event of substantial program modifications.

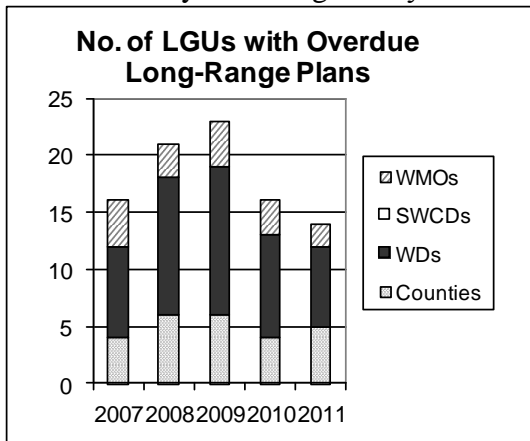
LGU Performance Review Results

2011 Objectives

The 2011 objectives for the PRAP performance review component were to continue the Level I compliance tracking for all LGUs, to conduct the same number of routine Level II reviews as in 2010, and to monitor the activities of LGUs undergoing significant change for opportunities to initiate Level III review or assistance.

Level I Results

Level I performance review consisted of monitoring and tabulating the plan revisions due and the routine annual activity and financial reports that LGUs are required to submit to BWSR. In April, BWSR posted those requirements on the website (www.bwsr.state.mn.us/PRAP/index.html), and then followed up with non-compliant LGUs at mid-year and again at year's end.



LGU-specific results are listed in Appendices C (long-range plans), D (annual activity reports), and E (annual financial reports) and are searchable through the BWSR website.

The improvement in the number of overdue WD and WMO plan revisions is continuing, meaning more plans are up-to-date and addressing current resource issues. With PRAP's emphasis on evaluating plan implementation, having a current plan is essential. The plans overdue graphic now

includes both metro county groundwater plans and statewide local water management plans in the county plan category for all years. In the 2010 PRAP report groundwater plans were only included in the 2010 graph bar. BWSR field staff continue to work with LGUs on plan updates.

LGUs Meeting All Level I Performance Standards in 2011

All LGUs 84%
 SWCDs 99%
 Counties 93%
 WDs 53%
 WMOs 50%

The Level I information indicates which LGUs submitted late reports in addition to listing those whose reports were not submitted at all. LGU reports are an important means of providing citizens with timely information about LGU plans and performance.

On a statewide basis, the 2011 Level I performance review shows the SWCDs and county local water management offices doing a good job of meeting basic program accountability requirements. WDs in greater Minnesota continue to have difficulty complying with the annual activity report requirement. Local drainage authorities improved their compliance with the ditch buffer strip reporting requirement. Only one LGU failed to submit a report in 2011 compared with 9 in 2010.

Level II Results

BWSR conducted seven Level II reviews in 2011: SWCD districts in Le

Sueur, Carlton and Carver counties, the **Pelican River** and **Wild Rice River** watershed districts, **Le Sueur County** local water management, and the **Middle St. Croix WMO**.

The Level II review process examines the LGU's progress in implementing their plan's goals and objectives (Part 1), compliance with BWSR's checklist of Level II performance standards (Part 2), and LGU board members' or water plan task force members' discussion of factors affecting plan implementation (part 3) to present a picture of overall performance. The BWSR PRAP coordinator and a Board Conservationist serve as the primary reviewers for each LGU.

2011 Level II Results			
Part 1 Plan Implementation			
(% of plan action items addressed)			
High	Low	Average	
100	52	82	
Part 2 Performance Standards			
(% of standards met)			
Basic Standards			
High	Low	Average	
100	69	89	
High Performance Standards			
High	Low	Average	
73	8	56	

Appendix F contains summaries of each 2011 Level II performance review.

In 2011 BWSR intended to expand the annual Level II coverage through a program initiative that assesses the performance of all LGUs working in the same watershed. However, the state shutdown in July precluded the testing of this new method. This approach will be implemented on a pilot basis in 2012.

Level III Results

There were no formal Level III performance reviews in 2011. BWSR staff provided

assistance to the Heron Lake Watershed District with their watershed plan revision process, at their request. This assistance did not include an overall performance assessment, however.

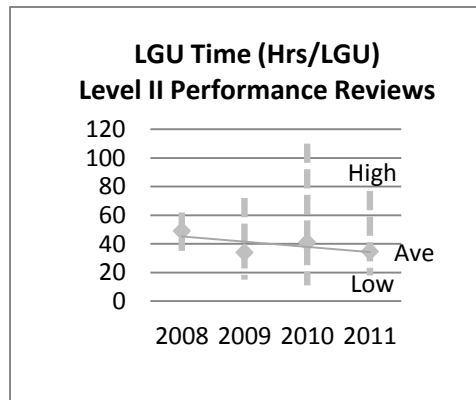
BWSR managers continue to regularly monitor the performance of LGUs experiencing change in order to assess the need for Level III review. LGUs can request these services and PRAP has money for small grants to support LGU organizational development tied to Level III assessments.

Level IV Results

No Level IV actions were needed in 2011.

PRAP Program Costs

BWSR tracks the time spent by LGUs in a Level II review as a substitute for actual program costs. Factors affecting an LGU's time include the number of action items in their long-range plan, the number of staff persons who help with data collection, and the ready availability of performance data.



BWSR staff spent approximately 330 hours conducting Level II reviews with the seven LGUs in 2011, an average of 47 hours per LGU. This compares with averages of 41 hours in 2010 and 46 hours in 2009.

Assistance Services to Local Governments

Focus on Assistance

The term “assistance” is in the PRAP program title in part because it is listed as an activity in the authorizing legislation and also because it is a logical next step after performance review. Prior to PRAP, BWSR field staff regularly provided LGUs with assistance to support and enhance their operational effectiveness. While that essential service continues, PRAP has expanded BWSR’s capability to assist LGUs.

2011 PRAP Assistance to LGUs

- Advised Heron Lake WD during public review of their management plan update.
- Consulted with MN Assn. of Soil and Water Conservation Districts on new district capacity evaluation and coordination with Mn Counties Insurance Trust on assistance options and resources.
- As a result of 2011 Level II reviews offered Le Sueur County and SWCD facilitation services to enhance collaboration on local water plan implementation.

Assessing the Needs

PRAP provides an opportunity for LGUs to identify the types of assistance they think would be most helpful. Each Level II performance review includes an opportunity for LGU board members and staff to list assistance needs in the context of their perceived barriers to program and project implementation. In 2011 the seven LGUs requested assistance with:

- obtaining stability and flexibility in funding,

- increasing traditional funding sources (e.g., cost-share and NRBG),
- writing grant applications for new funding sources (e.g., Clean Water Fund),
- continuing board and staff training,
- enhancing communication among greater MN WDs, and
- revising a long-range watershed management plan.

Each year LGUs request training related to various operational needs, as was the case this year. BWSR held its fourth annual Training Academy for LGU staff in October. BWSR’s Training Program Coordinator ensured that the 2011 Academy offerings covered the training needs identified during the 2010 performance reviews. This kind of program coordination is on-going and will be enhanced in 2012.

Future of Assistance

As funds allow, LGUs are able to apply for small matching grants from PRAP to help with some assistance needs. There were no applications for organizational assistance grants in 2011. BWSR staff assistance to LGUs will be closely coordinated with the needs assessment and programs developed by the BWSR Training Program Coordinator. PRAP will continue to serve as one of the pathways for BWSR’s delivery of targeted training and assistance.

Reporting

Purpose of Reporting

The purposes of reporting about LGU performance are:

- to provide a perspective on the progress in meeting statewide soil and water conservation goals through the efforts of local government-based activities and programs,
- to give stakeholders access to information about the effectiveness of their local water management entities, and
- to provide both information and incentives that will encourage LGUs to learn from one another about methods and programs that produce the most effective results.

Report Types

PRAP either relies on or generates different types of reports to achieve the purposes listed above.

LGU-Generated

These include information posted on the LGU websites and the required or voluntary reports submitted to BWSR, other units of government, and the public about fiscal status, plans, programs and activities. These all serve as a means of communicating what each LGU is achieving and allow stakeholders to make their own evaluations of LGU performance. PRAP tracks submittal of required, self-generated LGU reports in Level I.

BWSR Website

The BWSR website contains a webpage devoted to PRAP information. The site gives users access to a searchable database of basic Level I performance information that BWSR has collected for each LGU.

No. of Website Hits to PRAP Level I Performance Database

(by calendar year)

2010- 1437

2011- 186

www.bwsr.state.mn.us/PRAP/reporting/index.php

The number of user visits to that database has dropped significantly since 2010, the year the database came on-line. The BWSR website also includes regularly updated maps of long-range plan status by LGU type.

Visitors to the PRAP webpage can find general program information, tables of current performance standards by LGU type, summaries of Level II performance review reports, and copies of annual legislative reports.

Level II Performance Review Reports

BWSR prepares a report containing findings, conclusions, and recommendations for each LGU that is the subject of a Level II performance review. The LGU lead staff and board or task force members receive a draft of the report to which they are invited to submit comments or corrections. BWSR then prepares both a final report that is sent to the LGU and a one-page summary that is included in this legislative report (see Appendix F) and on the PRAP webpage.

Annual Legislative Report

As required by statute, BWSR prepares an annual report for the legislature containing the results of the previous year's program activities and a general assessment of the performance of the local delivery system for land and water conservation services

and programs. These reports are reviewed and approved by the BWSR board and then sent to the chairpersons of the senate and house environmental policy committees, as well as LGU statewide associations and the office of the legislative auditor. This document is the fifth such report that BWSR has prepared.

Rewards and Recognition

BWSR seeks to ensure that PRAP pays as much attention to exemplary performance as it does to performance improvement. Each year the PRAP legislative report highlights those LGUs that are recognized by their peers or other organizations for their contribution to Minnesota’s resource management and protection, as well as service to their local clientele. (See Appendix G.)

The BWSR website also features some of these award recipients.

In addition, for those LGUs that receive a routine Level II performance review, their report highlights compliance with each high performance standard with a “commendation” for practices over and above basic requirements. All 2011 Level II LGUs received commendations, which are the starred items listed in the report summaries in Appendix F.

Each year BWSR staff encourages LGUs that receive findings of exemplary performance during a Level II review to use the report results with local media outlets. In 2011 the Middle St. Croix WMO issued a press release about their performance review that was reported in the local newspaper. (See sidebar.)



The Middle St. Croix WMO used the results of their 2011 Level II PRAP review in a press release.

Program Conclusions and Future Direction

Conclusions

Based on four years of PRAP implementation, including Level II reviews of 31 LGUs throughout the state, BWSR finds:

- A steadily increasing percentage of long-range management plans are up-to-date.
- SWCDs in particular have a high rate of compliance with basic operational performance standards.
- LGUs with strong lead staff and strong board leadership are the most successful at obtaining funding and implementing projects and programs effectively.
- LGUs are struggling with the shift to more competitive funding sources, particularly in the allocation of staff.
- Most LGUs are aggressively pursuing the objectives in their long-range plans.
- Some LGUs will need assistance with identifying and targeting to address priority resource problems.
- SWCDs and WDs with overlapping jurisdictions underuse opportunities for collaboration with each other.

PRAP in 2012

During 2012 BWSR will add some program elements, modify some, and continue others.

NEW PRAP Elements

- Begin performance reviews of multiple LGUs that share a common watershed or other geographic boundary.

MODIFIED PRAP Elements

- Change “high performance” standards to “benchmarks” based on LGU organizational best management practices.
- Notify Level II LGUs of BWSR Academy training classes that address their expressed needs.
- BWSR Public Relations, Outreach and Strategic Planning Committee will review PRAP Guiding Principles.

CONTINUED PRAP Elements

- Conduct 7-8 Level II routine performance reviews.
- Continue monitoring of LGUs experiencing change for assistance opportunities.
- Monitor and report Level I performance of all 244 LGUs.

Challenges Long-Term

Performance measurement is a young and evolving field for entities delivering local government conservation services.

Improvements will require successfully addressing several issues.

- How to find the best indicators and the appropriate scale for measuring the performance of the local government conservation services delivery system.
- Measure real changes in resource *quality*, not just *effort* in program delivery.
- Use PRAP to incentivize collaboration in locally based resource management.

Appendices

A. PRAP Authorizing Legislation (Minn. Statutes Chapter 103B.102)

B. PRAP Advisory Team Members

C. Level I: 2011 Long-range Plan Status

D. Level I: Status of Annual Reports for 2010

E. Level I: Status of Audits and Financial Reports for 2010

F. Level II: Summaries of 2011 LGU Performance Review Reports

G. 2011 LGU Performance Awards and Recognition

Appendix A

PRAP AUTHORIZING LEGISLATION

103B.102, Minnesota Statutes 2007

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103B.102 LOCAL WATER MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTABILITY AND OVERSIGHT.

Subdivision 1. **Findings; improving accountability and oversight.** The legislature finds that a process is needed to monitor the performance and activities of local water management entities. The process should be preemptive so that problems can be identified early and systematically. Underperforming entities should be provided assistance and direction for improving performance in a reasonable time frame.

Subd. 2. **Definitions.** For the purposes of this section, "local water management entities" means watershed districts, soil and water conservation districts, metropolitan water management organizations, and counties operating separately or jointly in their role as local water management authorities under chapter 103B, 103C, 103D, or 103G and chapter 114D.

Subd. 3. **Evaluation and report.** The Board of Water and Soil Resources shall evaluate performance, financial, and activity information for each local water management entity. The board shall evaluate the entities' progress in accomplishing their adopted plans on a regular basis, but not less than once every five years. The board shall maintain a summary of local water management entity performance on the board's Web site. Beginning February 1, 2008, and annually thereafter, the board shall provide an analysis of local water management entity performance to the chairs of the house and senate committees having jurisdiction over environment and natural resources policy.

Subd. 4. **Corrective actions.** (a) In addition to other authorities, the Board of Water and Soil Resources may, based on its evaluation in subdivision 3, reduce, withhold, or redirect grants and other funding if the local water management entity has not corrected deficiencies as prescribed in a notice from the board within one year from the date of the notice.

(b) The board may defer a decision on a termination petition filed under section [103B.221](#), [103C.225](#), or [103D.271](#) for up to one year to conduct or update the evaluation under subdivision 3 or to communicate the results of the evaluation to petitioners or to local and state government agencies.

History: 2007 c 57 art 1 s 104

Appendix B

PERFORMANCE REVIEW AND ASSISTANCE PROGRAM ADVISORY TEAM MEMBERS

NAME	ORGANIZATION	REPRESENTING
Kevin Bigalke Ray Bohn	Nine-Mile Creek WD MN Assoc. of Watershed Districts	Metro WDs WD statewide association
Brian Dwight Vacant	BWSR	BWSR-No. Region Greater MN WD managers
Annalee Garletz Barbara Haake	Assoc. of Minnesota Counties Rice Creek WD	County government Metro area WD managers
Todd Olson	Assoc. of Metropolitan Municipalities	Watershed Management Organizations
Kathryn Kelly Tim Koehler	Renville SWCD USDA-Natural Resource Conservation Service	SWCD supervisors Federal partner
Kevin Ostermann	MACDE / Nicollet SWCD	MN Assoc. of Conservation District Employees
Sheila Vanney	MN Assoc. of Soil &Water Cons. Districts	SWCD statewide association
Steve Woods	BWSR-St. Paul	BWSR management

Appendix C

Level I: 2011 LGU Long-Range Plan Status

Soil and Water Conservation Districts

(Districts have a choice of option A or B)

A. Current Resolution Adopting County Local Water Management Plan

All resolutions are current.

B. Current District Comprehensive Plan

All comprehensive plans are current.

Counties

Local Water Management Plan Revision Overdue

Polk

Metro County Groundwater Plan Revision Overdue

Carver

Dakota

Ramsey

Scott

(Anoka and Hennepin Counties have chosen not to participate in this optional program.)

Watershed Districts

10-Year Watershed Management Plan Revision Overdue:

No Action

Crooked Creek

Plan Revision in Progress

Bear Valley

Belle Creek

Coon Creek

Cormorant Lakes

Sand Hill River

Stockton-Rollingstone-Minnesota City

Watershed Management Organizations

Management Plan Revision Overdue: Plan Revision in Progress

Grass Lake

Pioneer-Sarah Creek

Appendix D

Level I: Status of Annual Reports for 2010 as of December 31, 2011
--

Soil and Water Conservation Districts

eLINK Reports of Grant Expenditures

All districts comply.

Website Content: Compliance with 10 Content Elements

All districts comply.

Counties

Drainage Authority Buffer Strip Report: Not Submitted

St. Louis

eLINK Reports of Grant Expenditures

All reports submitted.

Watershed Districts

Drainage Authority Buffer Strip Report Not Submitted

All reports submitted.

Annual Activity Reports Not Submitted

Belle Creek

Buffalo-Red River

Joe River

Sand Hill River

Upper Minnesota River

Warroad

Annual Activity Reports Submitted Late

Bear Valley

Clearwater River

Comfort Lake-Forest Lake

Crooked Creek

Kanarazi-Little Rock

Lac Qui Parle-Yellow Bank

Sauk River

Yellow Medicine River

Metro Watershed Management Organizations

Annual Activity Reports Not Submitted

Carver

Mississippi River

Annual Activity Reports Submitted Late

Black Dog

Appendix E

Level I: Status of Audits and Financial Reports for 2010 as of December 31, 2011
--

Soil and Water Conservation Districts

Annual Financial Reports (all 90 Districts): Submitted Late

Dodge

Annual Audits (50 required)

All required audits submitted on-time.

Watershed Districts

Annual Audits Not Completed:

Belle Creek

Warroad

Joe River

Wild Rice River

Stockton-Rollingstone-MN City

Annual Audits Submitted Late:

Brown's Creek

Minnehaha Creek

Carnelian-Marine

Metro Watershed Management Organizations

Annual Audits Not Submitted:

Carver

Sunrise River

Grass Lake

Upper Rum River

Lower Rum River

Annual Audits Submitted Late:

Black Dog

Mississippi River

Middle St. Croix

Scott

Appendix F

LEVEL II FINAL REPORT SUMMARY

PRAP

**Performance Review and Assistance Program
2011 Level II Review:
Carlton SWCD (*Carlton County*)**

Why BWSR did this review
BWSR conducts Level II performance reviews to help local government water management entities to be the best they can be in plan implementation and overall operational effectiveness. In 2011 BWSR is conducting Level II performance reviews of seven different local water management entities.

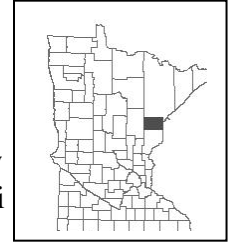
BWSR has conducted a routine Level II performance review of the Carlton SWCD because they are near the midpoint in implementing their 5-year comprehensive plan.

This document includes findings and recommendations to enhance the overall operation and effectiveness of the district. The board of supervisors is responsible for taking any actions they deem necessary in response to the findings and recommendations in this report.

Carlton Soil and Water Conservation District Summary of Performance Review Results

What BWSR Found

Carlton SWCD is on the verge of becoming among the highest functioning SWCDs in northeastern Minnesota. The district has set ambitious goals and, so far, has been particularly successful in accomplishing them in the Nemadji River watershed. Expansion of this kind of success into other areas of the district is what will move the organization to the next level. They have taken a step in that direction with the submittal of a collaborative grant application for the Kettle River watershed. That project could provide the experience that will set the district up for even more effective land and water conservation.



The district is a willing partner with many other conservation organizations and could increasingly find itself in a leadership position, if present trends continue.

Currently, the district is well served by strong, positive and engaged leadership from the Board of Supervisors. The supervisors value their staff as a factor that has contributed to their effectiveness. From BWSR's perspective the district would benefit from a thorough evaluation of staff capacity, which includes workload analysis, reviewing position descriptions, and defining skills training needs.

Action Item

- Operating fund reserve increase

Commendations (show exemplary performance)

- ★ Operational guidelines exist and current
- ★ Board and staff training: orientation & cont. ed.
- ★ State \$ leverage at least 1.5 times in non-state \$
- ★ Outcome trends monitored and reported for key resources

- ★ Website contains additional content beyond minimum required
- ★ Obtain stakeholder input: within last 5 yrs
- ★ Partnerships:
- ★ Coordination with County Board by supervisors or staff

Recommendations are to address the action item and conduct a staff capacity review.

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LEVEL II FINAL REPORT SUMMARY

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Performance Review and Assistance Program 2011 Level II Review: Carver SWCD (*Carver County*)

Why BWSR did this review

BWSR conducts Level II performance reviews to help local government water management entities to be the best they can be in plan implementation and overall operational effectiveness. In 2011 BWSR is conducting Level II performance reviews of seven different local water management entities.

BWSR has conducted a routine Level II performance review of the Carver Soil and Water Conservation District because they are near the midpoint in implementing their comprehensive plan.

This document includes findings and recommendations to enhance the overall operation and effectiveness of the district. The board of supervisors is responsible for taking any actions they deem necessary in response to the findings and recommendations in this report.

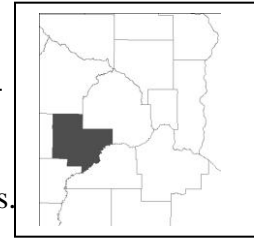
Carver Soil and Water Conservation District Summary of Performance Review Results

What BWSR Found

The Carver SWCD is a well-managed, well-supervised local conservation organization that is aggressively and effectively implementing a variety of traditional and innovative resource conservation measures.

successfully transitioned from an exclusively rural agricultural focus to establish expertise in addressing the complex water management issues of expanding urbanization. Moreover, their close working relationship with county officials has served to benefit both agencies as well as the people of their district. They have proven adept at competing for project and program dollars above and beyond traditional funding sources.

Administratively, the district shows consistent and competent results from its attention to detail in program management and routine reporting.



Action Items (need immediate attention)

There are no action items for the district to address.

Commendations (show exemplary performance)

- ★ Operational guidelines exist and current
- ★ Staff training: orientation and cont. ed. plan and record for each staff member
- ★ Comp and Annual Plans arrange objectives by major watersheds
- ★ State \$ leverage at least 1.5 times in non-state \$
- ★ Website contains additional content beyond minimum required
- ★ Obtain stakeholder input: within last 5 yrs
- ★ Partnerships: cooperative projects/tasks done with neighboring districts, counties, watershed districts, non-governmental organizations
- ★ Coordination with County Board by supervisors or staff

BWSR's recommendations are really options for the district to enhance their already high level of performance in service delivery. These include marketing their expertise to cities and watershed districts, including other local governments in their annual strategic planning, conduct a staff workload analysis, and revisit their 2003 "360 review."

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Performance Review and Assistance Program

2011 Level II Review: Le Sueur County Local Water Management (*Le Sueur County*)

Why BWSR did this review

BWSR conducts Level II performance reviews to help local government water management entities to be the best they can be in plan implementation and overall operational effectiveness. In 2011 BWSR is conducting Level II performance reviews of seven different local water management entities.

BWSR has conducted a routine Level II performance review of the Le Sueur County Local Water Management program because they are at the midpoint in implementing their plan and have recently completed a plan update.

This document includes findings and recommendations to enhance the overall operation and effectiveness of the county's local water management. The county commissioners and staff are responsible for taking any actions they deem necessary in response to the findings and recommendations in this report.

Le Sueur County Local Water Management Summary of Performance Review Results

What BWSR Found

The Le Sueur County local water management program is both ambitious in the planned objectives and successful in a wide range of accomplishments related to that plan. The county has many of the pieces in place to become a trend setter in this challenging arena. The county local water plan tackles a wide range of water management issues in a county that has a diverse mix of lake, stream and groundwater management demands. This review confirmed that, while more could be done with more resources in staff and funding, the county is making progress in implementing broad-spectrum, local water management.

The county program meets all of BWSR's basic performance standards and a majority of the high performance standards, which reflect statewide organizational best management practices. This reflects a well-balanced application of local water management administration and project implementation.

The county is well-served by a diverse membership on its water plan task force and a competent, water plan administrator.

Action Items (need immediate attention)

There are no action items.

Commendations (show exemplary performance)

The Le Sueur County local water management program is commended for meeting these high performance standards.

- ★ LWM implementation plan completed within 5 yrs of plan adoption
- ★ Annual plan priorities based on water quality trend data for key water resources
- ★ Data collected to track outcomes for each priority concern
- ★ Water quality trends tracked for priority water bodies
- ★ Obtain stakeholder input: within last 5 yrs
- ★ Partnerships: liaison with SWCDs/WDs and cooperative projects/tasks done
- ★ County local water plan on county website
- ★ Water management ordinances on county website.

There are four recommendations for the county's consideration.

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LEVEL II FINAL REPORT SUMMARY

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Performance Review and Assistance Program

2011 Level II Review: Le Sueur Soil and Water Conservation District (Le Sueur County)

Why BWSR did this review

BWSR conducts Level II performance reviews to help local government water management entities to be the best they can be in plan implementation and overall operational effectiveness. In 2011 BWSR is conducting Level II performance reviews of seven different local water management entities.

BWSR has conducted a routine Level II performance review of the Le Sueur SWCD in the context of their transition from their own comprehensive plan to adopting the county water management plan.

This document includes findings and recommendations to enhance the overall operation and effectiveness of the district. The supervisors are responsible for taking any actions they deem necessary in response to the findings and recommendations in this report.

Le Sueur Soil and Water Conservation District Summary of Performance Review Results

What BWSR Found

The Le Sueur SWCD does an adequate job at what they choose to work at, but their overall approach to conservation needs some updating and diversification. Some recent actions indicate that the board is moving in that direction: selection of an experienced district technician; recent Clean Water Fund grant application; and adoption of the Le Sueur County local water plan as the district comprehensive plan. But the pace of change could be accelerated.



While the district has some cooperative work with the county environmental services office through Natural Resources Block Grant (NRBG) programs, more could be done. County staff would like the district to expand their role with NRBG programs and provide more technical support. The Cannon River Watershed Project has expressed a similar desire to BWSR regarding the need for greater cooperation by the district.

The SWCD owns the building in which they and the USDA entities are located. BWSR is concerned that the issues related to building management are a significant distraction from the district's conservation work.

Overall, the SWCD still has room for improvement, and because of its geographic location in the critical Minnesota River sediment source area, is in a relatively favorable position to fund those improvements.

Action Item (needs immediate attention)

■ Data practices policy: consistent with MN Data Practices Act.

Commendation (shows exemplary performance)

★ Website contains additional content beyond the minimum required.

In addition to the need to address the one Action Item, BWSR recommends that the Le Sueur SWCD conduct a staff workload analysis, reassess its mission and responsibilities based on their new long-range plan, expand cooperative partnerships, seek competitive funding, and assess building management alternatives.

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LEVEL II FINAL REPORT SUMMARY

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Performance Review and Assistance Program

2011 Level II Review: Middle St. Croix WMO (Washington County)

Why BWSR did this review

BWSR conducts Level II performance reviews to help local government water management entities to be the best they can be in plan implementation and overall operational effectiveness. In 2011 BWSR is conducting Level II performance reviews of seven different local water management entities.

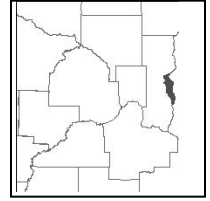
BWSR has conducted a routine Level II performance review of the Middle St. Croix Watershed Management Organization because they are near the midpoint in implementing their 10-year watershed management plan.

This document includes findings and recommendations to enhance the overall operation and effectiveness of the organization. The board members are responsible for taking any actions they deem necessary in response to those findings and recommendations.

Middle St. Croix Watershed Management Org. Summary of Performance Review Results

What BWSR Found

The MSCWMO has demonstrated good progress in implementing the action items from their watershed management plan. They have gone beyond items in their plan to tackle and benefit from additional programs, such as an expanded education program and regional resource assessments under the metro-wide Landscape Restoration Project. The WMO meets many of BWSR's high performance standards, further indication of the organization's potential. In fact, this over-and-above functioning indicates that their current plan may no longer be ambitious enough to challenge the full capabilities of the organization.



The WMO has clearly benefitted from local partnerships with neighboring resource management entities, such as the Washington Conservation District. With strong staff support for the ten very active and knowledgeable board members, they are an effective local water management entity in this area.

Action Items (need immediate attention)

- Functioning advisory committee: recommendations on projects, reports; 2-way communication with Board
- Consultant RFP: within 2 yrs for professional services

Commendations (show exemplary performance)

- ★ Operating guidelines exist and current
- ★ Plan goals and objectives guide annual budgeting
- ★ Water quality trends tracked for priority water bodies
- ★ Website contains meeting notices, agendas, minutes and is updated
- ★ Track progress for I&E objectives in Plan
- ★ Partnerships and cooperative projects with neighboring districts and organizations, counties, cities, non-governmental organizations, and
- ★ Coordination with county/city/township by board members or staff.

BWSR recommends that the board accelerate their plan revision schedule and address their two action items.

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Performance Review and Assistance Program

2011 Level II Review: Pelican River Watershed District (*Becker and Otter Tail Counties*)

Why BWSR did this review

BWSR conducts Level II performance reviews to help local government water management entities to be the best they can be in plan implementation and overall operational effectiveness. In 2011 BWSR conducted Level II performance reviews of seven different local water management entities.

BWSR has conducted a routine Level II performance review of the Pelican River Watershed District because they have just passed the midpoint of their current 10-year watershed management plan implementation cycle.

This document includes findings and recommendations to enhance the overall operation and effectiveness of the watershed district. The board of managers is responsible for taking any actions they deem necessary in response to the recommendations in this report.

Pelican River Watershed District Summary of Performance Review Results

What BWSR Found

The PRWD combines all the major elements of good watershed management in one organization: a set of bold, measurable goals for the district's lakes, aggressive implementation, consistent monitoring and readjusting of process, and effective synergy between a committed board of managers and skilled staff members.



A good example of their commitment to action in promoting lake water quality is the district's substantial investment of resources on the Rice Lake restoration. This project has required complex land rights/use arrangements. They have persisted and are well on the way to construction next year.

The PRWD has led several high-quality, high caliber research components for controlling flowering rush, an invasive species in the Detroit Lakes area. Traditional methods might have led them to continued control and management, but they have sought better answers. They are innovative and not timid about taking on the big issues in the district.

There is a continuing strong relationship with the Becker SWCD and they have recently improved their working relationship with the City of Detroit Lakes. Recently, they have experienced some difficulty working with the DNR on aquatic nuisance control.

Action Items (need immediate attention)

- Maintain a functioning advisory committee.

Commendations (show exemplary performance)

- ★ Administrator on staff
- ★ Operational guidelines exist and current
- ★ Public drainage records: meet modernization guidelines
- ★ Implementation and/or strategic review every 2-3 yrs
- ★ Local water plans reviewed
- ★ Plan goals and objectives guide annual budgeting
- ★ Water quality trends tracked for priority water bodies
- ★ Watershed hydrologic trends monitored / reported
- ★ Website: contains additional information
- ★ Coordination with County Board and City/Twp officials
- ★ Partnerships: cooperative projects/tasks done with neighboring districts, counties, soil and water districts, non-governmental organizations.

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Performance Review and Assistance Program

2011 Level II Review:

Wild Rice WD (*Mahnomen, Clay, Norman, Becker Clearwater, Polk Counties*)

Why BWSR did this review

BWSR conducts Level II performance reviews to help local government water management entities to be the best they can be in plan implementation and overall operational effectiveness. In 2011 BWSR is conducting Level II performance reviews of seven different local water management entities.

BWSR has conducted a routine Level II performance review of the Wild Rice WD because they are approaching the time to update their 10-year watershed management plan.

This document includes findings and recommendations to enhance the overall operation and effectiveness of the district. The board of managers is responsible for taking any actions they deem necessary in response to the findings and recommendations in this report.

Wild Rice Watershed District Summary of Performance Review Results

What BWSR Found

The WRWD finds itself in the position of having managers and an administrator who were all appointed to their positions after the current watershed management plan was developed.

Consequently, the managers are not unanimous in their support of the plan goals and objectives.

This lack of consensus on the priorities of the watershed district is a factor that may be affecting the board's expressed difficulty in implementing flood damage reduction projects.

It is not uncommon for other watershed districts to face such issues in their project development/implementation, but in the Wild Rice it seems this lack of a common agenda about how best to manage the district's resources is a particular liability. Most of the successes in project implementation that the staff identified are the result of efforts by former managers.

The managers do a good job of pursuing options, investigating alternatives on projects, and taking advantage of their experienced district engineer. Also, the district provides good financial support for and works well with the soil and water conservation districts in their watershed, particularly the Norman SWCD.

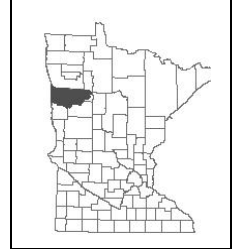
Action Items (need short-term attention)

- Annual report: submitted by mid-year
- Rules: date of last revision or review
- Website: content compliant
- Communication piece: sent within last 12 months

Commendations (show exemplary performance)

- ★ Administrator on staff
- ★ Staff training: orientation & cont. ed. plan
- ★ Public drainage records: meet modernization guidelines
- ★ Implementation and/or strategic review every 2-3 yrs
- ★ Website: contains additional content
- ★ Obtain stakeholder input: within last 5 yrs
- ★ Coordination with County Board and City/Twp officials
- ★ Partnerships: cooperative projects/tasks done with neighboring LGUs.

Four recommendations offered.



Appendix G

2011 Local Government Performance Awards and Recognition

(Awarding agency listed in parentheses.)

County Conservation Award

(Association of Minnesota Counties and Board of Water and Soil Resources)

Crow Wing County

Outstanding SWCD Employee

(Board of Water and Soil Resources)

Pete Fryer, Southeast Technical Service Area 7 Engineer

Outstanding Supervisor Award

(Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts)

Steve Flohrs, Martin SWCD

Living Snow Fence Achievement Award

(MN Assoc. of Soil and Water Conservation Districts and Dept. of Transportation)

West Otter Tail SWCD

Appreciation Award

(Department of Natural Resources)

Todd SWCD

Outstanding WD Employee

(Board of Water and Soil Resources)

James Wisker, Minnehaha Creek WD

Watershed District of the Year

(Department of Natural Resources)

Middle Fork Crow River WD

Program of the Year

(Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts)

Fighting Salt Pollution with Education, **Nine Mile Creek WD**

Project of the Year

(Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts)

Riceland Restoration Project, **Turtle Creek WD**