

PRAP**Performance Review and Assistance Program****2010 Level II Review:
Isanti SWCD (*Isanti 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 2010 BWSR is conducting Level II performance reviews of eight different local water management entities.

BWSR has conducted a routine Level II performance review of the **Isanti SWCD** in concert with the review of the Isanti County local water management program. Both entities use the same long-range plan.

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

**Isanti Soil and Water Conservation District
Summary of Performance Review Results****What BWSR Found**

The Isanti Soil and Water Conservation District appears to run its organization on a 15 year-old model that does not reflect the changing reality of the local environment. With the district's strong focus on agricultural practices, the opportunities that can be found in the rapidly urbanizing areas are being missed. These urban residents are not a natural clientele for an SWCD and poor outreach to this new population may place the district in an increasingly marginalized position.

The district staff and board members are beginning to make greater efforts to tie into the county government and the water plan task force. These efforts should be continued and the bonds between the organizations strengthened.

Overall, the staff and board have valuable experience in the conservation of the county's natural resources. However, the district appears to lack a clear focus overall. Strengthening the district's operational administration should be a priority and will put the district in a stronger position to tackle the challenges likely to face the county over the next few years.

The district has action items to work on in two areas: developing policies for data practices requests and for managing personnel matters.

The district is commended for:

- ★ Partnerships: cooperative projects/tasks done with neighboring districts, counties, watershed districts, non-governmental organizations
- ★ Coordination with County Board by supervisors or staff

BWSR recommends that the district address its two action items within the next six months, maintain and strengthen its involvement in the Isanti County local water plan task force, designate/hire a staff person with lead district management responsibilities, and expand the scope of district responsibilities in the upcoming county local water plan update.