



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Legacy dollars putting conservation on the ground**

*Money now available to improve lakes, rivers and wetlands*

St. Paul, Minn.—Have you been out fishing or hiking this summer and noticed that shorelines around your favorite lake have more plants? Or, as you are biking or driving around town, have you seen new rain gardens being installed?

Environmental improvement projects are underway all across Minnesota, thanks to the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment.

Since the Amendment was passed by Minnesota voters in Nov. 2008, nearly \$45 million has been invested in “on-the-ground” projects, where citizens and local governments are installing conservation practices to improve the quality in our lakes, rivers and wetlands.

In the metro area, some projects include:

- \$37,895 to treat storm water at libraries and schools in Chisago County – Most people don’t know much about storm water best management practices or why they are important. In this project, the Chisago Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is educating citizens and installing storm water treatment. Three highly visible locations are involved – the Wyoming library, the Chisago Lakes Middle School and the Rush City High school, where water-smart practices are being installed to slow, capture or infiltrate storm water runoff. With funds leveraged from partners, the total project cost was nearly \$47,395.
- \$300,000 to re-meander a portion of Minnehaha Creek in St. Louis Park—In the early 1900s, a portion of Minnehaha Creek was straightened to accommodate industrial development. Re-meandering the creek will increase riparian buffers and stabilize the stream bank, re-invigorating vegetation and improving water quality. With funds leveraged from partners, the total project cost was nearly \$1.4 million.

The Executive Director of the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR), John Jaschke, said that citizen involvement has been the key to success in these grant programs.

“We’ve had unbelievable turnout from local communities that want to be involved with putting projects on the ground. In the first two years of Amendment funding, we’ve awarded \$45 million and have been able to leverage \$44 million from partnerships,” Jaschke said. “These investments are

(more)

making a dramatic difference on Minnesota’s landscape and improving our lakes and rivers all across the state.”

Beginning on today, more money will become available for similar projects for every community in Minnesota.

From Aug. 1-Sept. 14, BWSR will accept grant applications, where local units of government can compete for \$22.9 million for projects that will protect and restore Minnesota’s streams, rivers, lakes and groundwater.

Eligible projects include those that control storm water runoff in agricultural or urban areas, or that will improve water quality by replacing problem septic systems, upgrading feedlots, or establishing native vegetation along shorelines in environmentally-sensitive areas.

Minnesota’s cities, counties, soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs), watershed districts and watershed management organizations are eligible for the grants.

For more information, please visit the BWSR website at: [www.bwsr.state.mn.us](http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us).

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