



NEWS RELEASE

www.bwsr.state.mn.us ● Toll-free and TTY: 800-627-3529

Bemidji — Brainerd — Duluth — Fergus Falls — Mankato — Marshall — New Ulm — Rochester
Central Office: 520 Lafayette Road North, St. Paul, MN 55155

For release: Aug. 1, 2012

Contact: Jennifer Maleitzke, 651-215-9008 (office); 651-315-5082 (cell)

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 northwestern Minnesota, some projects include:

- \$65,684 to protect drinking water in Fergus Falls—As the Otter Tail River is the main drinking water supply for the city of Fergus Falls, the West Otter Tail Soil and Water Conservation District is working with landowners to conduct wetland restorations and to install buffer strips, rain gardens and sediment basins along the Otter Tail and Pelican Rivers. These projects will decrease the amount of sediment and phosphorus entering the rivers, helping to protect the city’s drinking water supply. With funds leveraged from partners, the total project cost was \$1.855 million.
- \$253,229 to clean up the Wolverton Creek, near Moorhead—Gully erosion along the 25-mile Wolverton Creek is bringing pollution to the Red River of the North. The Buffalo-Red River Watershed District is installing projects to reduce the sediment erosion, cleaning up both Wolverton Creek and the upstream Red River. With funds leveraged from partners, the total project cost was \$341,629.
- \$662,000 to stabilize Grand Marais Creek in Polk County—ditch erosion has created unstable banks in the Grand Marais Creek, which is polluting the creek and the upstream Red River with excess sediment. The Red Lake Watershed District is constructing a project to stabilize the outlet channel, which will help to clean up both water bodies. With funds leveraged from partners, the total project cost was \$893,552.

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.

(more)

“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 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.

###