

EWS RELEA

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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 southwestern Minnesota, some projects include:

- \$178,930 for cost-share projects in Nobles County—After \$300,000 from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act was expended in cost-share projects to construct terraces, water ways and sediment control basins, the Nobles County Soil and Water Conservation District still had more requests for funds than what was available. Amendment dollars have supplemented these requests, funding ten additional cost-share projects for installation of conservation practices. With funds leveraged from partners, the total project cost was \$688,184.
- \$184,210 to lower nitrate levels Lincoln County—A source to ten community water suppliers, 34 large rural users and more than 1,000 rural hook-ups, the Verdi Well Field must be protected. Recent water quality monitoring indicated a presence of nitrate nitrogen in the wells. This project decreases runoff and filters sediment, nutrients and pesticides, reducing nitrate levels in the water supply. With funds leveraged from partners, the total project cost was \$231,710.

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 Legacy dollars putting conservation on the ground—page 2

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.

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