



# NEWS RELEASE

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Central Office: 520 Lafayette Road North, St. Paul, MN 55155

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**Contact:** Celi Haga, 651-215-9008 (office); 651-315-5082 (cell)

## **BWSR Board tours southeast Minnesota on annual tour**

**St. Paul, Minn.**— Partnership was the word of the day on August 26, as private landowners and local, state, and federal staff came together to highlight successes in local conservation in southeast Minnesota as part of the 2015 Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) Board Tour. The annual tour highlights our state's local conservation delivery system in action. This year's tour focused on projects in the Cannon River watershed, located in the southeast part of the state, zeroing in on work done by the Goodhue and Rice Soil and Water Conservation Districts and their local partners.

"Our local government partners do a wonderful job working with landowners to make these projects happen," BWSR Executive Director John Jaschke said. "Getting out and touring these projects gives us a chance to see the direct, positive impact they're having on Minnesota's soil and water."

Over the course of the day, the Board toured both large and small-scale projects, all of which relied on a network of support and shared commitment that extended from private landowners to state and sometimes federal agencies. Streambank stabilizations, water retention basins, feedlot projects: every stop on the tour cumulatively adds up to thousands of pounds of phosphorus and tons of sediment kept out of Minnesota's waters. Along the way, landowners joined tour attendees to talk about the importance of the conservation practices implemented on their land.

"The tour was a great chance to give the BWSR Board – who makes a lot of high-level funding decisions that impact the work we do at the district – the opportunity to see those dollars in action, making a difference at the local level," Goodhue Soil and Water Conservation District Manager Glen Roberson said. "It is also a nice opportunity to discuss emerging issues such as implementation of the new buffer law that will come before the BWSR Board."

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Steve Pahs, District Manager for the Rice Soil and Water District, added, “Resource challenges differ across the state, so this was a wonderful opportunity to provide context for state-level decision makers and translate what they see on paper to what we’re doing on the ground here in southeast Minnesota to make the best use of those grant dollars.”

Following the tour, an issues forum was held in Lake City discussing conservation challenges in southeast Minnesota and water quality issues facing Lake Pepin. Panelists included Norm Senjem, retired Mississippi Basin Coordinator for the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, and Rylee Main, Executive Director of the Lake Pepin Legacy Alliance.

The 20-member BWSR Board includes representatives of state agencies, local governments and citizens. The projects featured during their annual tour illustrate how successful partnerships between federal, state, and local governments and private landowners are making a difference for Minnesota’s soil and water.

Pictures from the Board Tour can be found on the BWSR Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/MNBWSR/>. For high-resolution photos, please contact Celi Haga.

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