



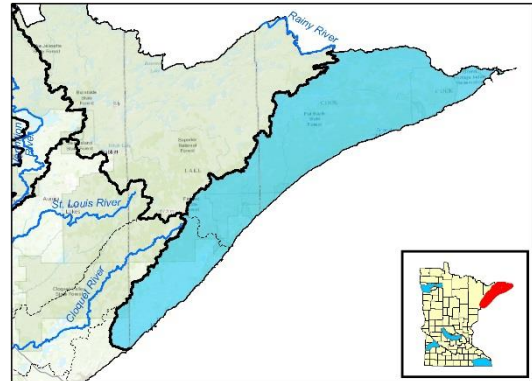
Lake Superior North Watershed: Planning for a new era in water management

October 2015 Snapshots



The Lake Superior North Watershed is on the fast track to attaining a final draft of its watershed plan. Since submitting a nomination to be a part of *One Watershed, One Plan* in early 2014, the Lake Superior North pilot project team has stayed focused on reaching milestones to make progress on its plan.

The key to Lake Superior North’s impressive progress has been good communication. “Our area has been working well together from the start, communicating and collaborating,” said Ilena Berg, Water Plan Coordinator with Cook County SWCD. “Communication has to be the key. Right from the start, our pilot tried hard to communicate well.” David Demmer with Cook County Planning and Zoning echoed Berg, saying “here it really helped that everybody already knew each other prior to *One Watershed, One Plan*, and had a working relationship.”

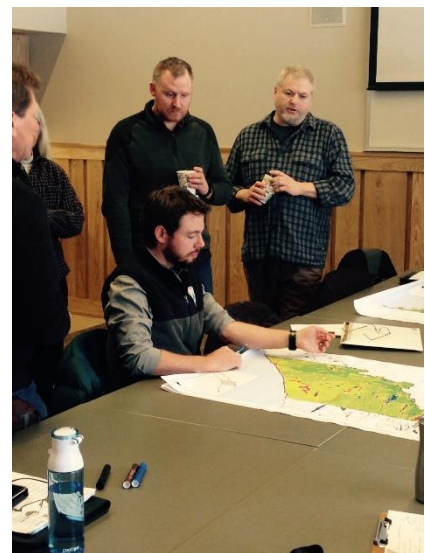


One Watershed, One Plan has foundations in the Local Government Water Roundtable, in which the Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC), the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (MASCWD), and the Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts (MAWD) committed to collaboration. The *One Watershed, One Plan* program, developed in 2013 and funded by the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment, offers grants and assistance to local governments charged with water management responsibility to help them transition to water planning on a watershed scale.

“I’m especially happy to say that it has been a collaborative effort,” said Rich Sve, Lake County Commissioner, of the *One Watershed, One Plan* process in Lake Superior North.

Since June 2014 when the BWSR Board approved the Lake Superior North *One Watershed, One Plan* nomination, the Lake Superior North team has been “going full steam ahead regarding the plan, both administratively and in terms of prioritization,” said Dan Schutte, Lake County SWCD Manager. “We’ve had great participation from our advisory committee and consultant. We’ve been happy with the prioritization tool, helping us to highlight things that we know and things that we don’t.”

One of the most important pieces of advice that Sve offers to other watersheds undertaking the *One Watershed, One Plan* planning process is



to “stay engaged. Keep the conversation going. Talk to facilitators, and make sure that the advisory group is still meeting, and that the policy group is staying on the timeframe.”



After hosting well attended public meetings and receiving positive feedback from the public, the Lake Superior North pilot project team is feeling good about the *One Watershed, One Plan* process. “We’re light years ahead of where we were in understanding how to facilitate this process compared to 18 months ago,” said Schutte. “Everything we’ve heard and thought about during this process has been that this [*One Watershed, One Plan* approach] makes a lot more sense than trying to do things along county lines.”

“I’m just amazed at how well different groups and different agencies get along and cooperate,” said Don Goodell, Cook SWCD Board Chair. “It is amazing how from the beginning groups have been so cooperative, asking ‘what is the best way we can all do this?’ It’s just been a joy to watch that happen.”

Next steps for the Lake Superior North Watershed include getting the draft plan approved. “I’ve been comfortable with the process,” said Cook County Commissioner Garry Gamble. “More importantly, I believe the integrity demonstrated through this process has been maintained by all participants. People have rolled up their sleeves and really contributed.”

Through trailblazing forward progress, the Lake Superior North *One Watershed, One Plan* pilot project is helping lay the groundwork to permanently improve water quality across Minnesota.