

Looking back at the December 2008 Listening Sessions

Local government conservation officials and staff from Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs), Watershed Districts, and Watershed Management Organizations contributed their **ideas for making the most of dedicated clean water and habitat funding** during a listening tour conducted by BWSR. Here is a status report on the six common themes that were expressed most often:

Common Themes We Heard 1 Year Ago

Honor and build upon existing foundations. Local boards, councils, commissions, and citizens have devoted time to prioritizing efforts that target their limited funds to the most beneficial uses. Plans have been vetted locally, reviewed by the state, and adopted in a purposeful public process. Continue watershed-based focus. Fund some base needs first, but then open competition for on-the-ground work.

Ramp up the delivery pipeline. Local capacity has been strained in recent years and there is a clear need to hire and train local staff to meet with landowners, design projects, and oversee construction -- basically a conservation sales force, which leads to a more-informed customer base. While building local capacity over two years, the state should fund point-source commitments and tools like LIDAR to deliver precision conservation.

Augment, supplement, and leverage. Significant progress can be made in the next 25 years only if heritage and clean water funds are matched by significant dollars from the USDA, local government, and participating landowners. Minnesota is in a strong position for competitive federal conservation funds.

Focus on on-the-ground improvements. The focus should be on creating real-world improvement via multi-benefit, on-the ground projects. Education, advertising, research, and planning have a role, but should be primarily accomplished with base funds with only a small percentage coming from the new dedicated funds.

Provide Transparency and Accountability (and less packaging material). Instead of receiving small grant amounts for a dozen different programs with different rules and restrictions, many attendees stated a desire to receive multi-year (four to ten year) commitments for money that arrived with less packaging. With flexibility to adjust to local practices and market conditions, the state could then fairly judge them by their results and adjust future grant amounts accordingly.

Increase citizen watershed awareness. The day-to-day actions of citizens make a huge difference in the quality of our habitat and waters. Social norms will drive conservation behavior changes where incentives and disincentives don't directly reach. As the results of the efforts accumulate there should be a way to fully tell the story of what worked, and what did not, in ways citizens can understand and value.

For more information about the Clean Water Fund Listening Sessions and the Minnesota Water Sustainability Framework, please contact:



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2010 Clean Water Fund Listening Sessions

Minnesota voters approved the Clean Water, Wildlife, Cultural Heritage and Natural Areas Legacy Amendment to the constitution in 2008 to:

- Protect drinking water sources;
- Protect, enhance, and restore wetlands, prairies, forests, and fish, game, and wildlife habitat;
- Preserve arts and cultural heritage;
- Support parks and trails; and
- Protect, enhance, and restore lakes, rivers, streams, and groundwater.

The amendment has created a three-eighths of a percent sales tax, and roughly one third of these new dollars will go to the **Minnesota Clean Water Fund**, which will be used for projects and programs to protect and preserve Minnesota's surface and ground water.

The University of Minnesota's Water Resources Center (WRC) and the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) are actively seeking input from citizens and policymakers statewide on how to best use these new Clean Water Fund dollars to protect and preserve Minnesota's lakes, streams, rivers and groundwater for the 21st century and beyond.

In 2009 the Legislature appropriated \$750,000 to the University of Minnesota to develop a comprehensive statewide water resources framework. The framework is intended to serve as a roadmap for decision makers -- with clear recommendations on **How** and **When** to invest and **on what initiatives** that will ensure the purity and abundance of Minnesota's water for generations to come.

The 2010 Clean Water Fund Listening Sessions are facilitated by the University of Minnesota's Water Resource Center and the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources.



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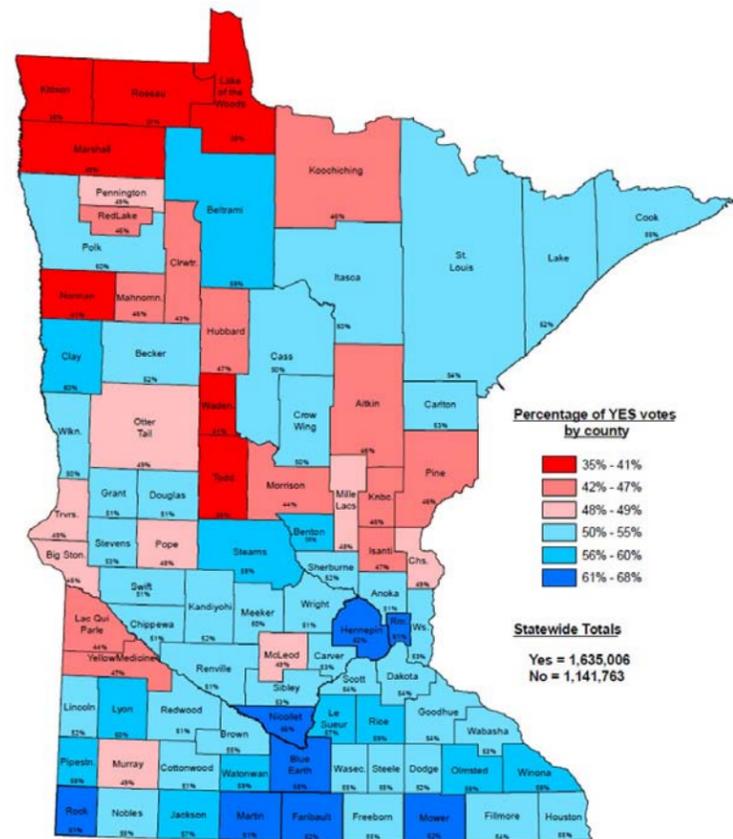
Clean Water, Wildlife, Cultural Heritage and Natural Areas Legacy Amendment Results – Nov. 8, 2008 General Election

Question approved by voters:

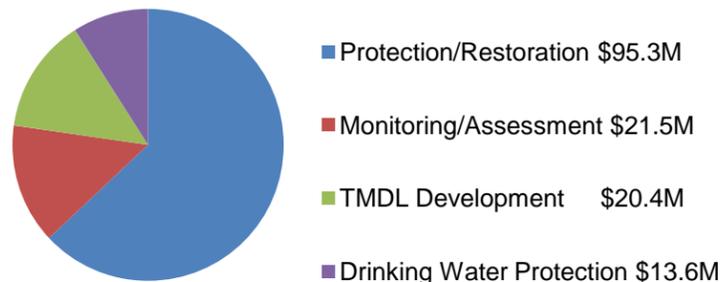
“Shall the Minnesota Constitution be amended to dedicate funding to protect our drinking water sources; to protect, enhance, and restore our wetlands, prairies, forests, and fish, game, and wildlife habitat; to preserve our arts and cultural heritage; to support our parks and trails; and to protect, enhance, and restore our lakes, rivers, streams, and groundwater by increasing the sales and use tax rate beginning July 1, 2009, by three-eighths of one percent on taxable sales until the year 2034?”

Breakdown of dedicated funding:

- 33 percent will be spent to restore, protect, and enhance wetlands, prairies, forests, and habitat for fish, game, and wildlife
- 33 percent will be deposited in the clean water fund to protect, enhance, and restore water quality in lakes, rivers, and streams and to protect groundwater from degradation, and at least 5 percent of the clean water fund must be spent only to protect drinking water sources
- 14.25 percent will be spent to support parks and trails of regional or statewide significance
- 19.75 percent will be deposited in the arts and cultural heritage fund and may be spent only for arts, arts education, and arts access and to preserve Minnesota’s history and cultural heritage



\$150.8 Million is projected to be available for the Clean Water Fund in Fiscal Years 2010-2011



Summaries of estimated Fiscal Year 2010-11 Clean Water Fund budget

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency: \$51.16M

- Water quality monitoring and assessment: \$16.74M,
- Water quality study development (TMDLs): \$18.5M,
- Protection and restoration: \$8.67M, and
- Groundwater assessment and drinking water protection: \$7.25M.

Contact: Assistant Commissioner Rebecca Flood, (651) 757-2022 or rebecca.flood@state.mn.us.

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources: \$14.53M

- Water quality monitoring and assessment: \$3.70M,
- Water quality study development (TMDLs): \$2.1M,
- Nonpoint restoration, protection and preservation: \$6.6M,
- Drinking water protection: \$1.125M, and
- To develop a county geologic atlas: \$1M.

Contact: Larry Kramka, Assistant Commissioner, (651) 259-5033 or larry.kramka@dnr.state.mn.us.

Minnesota Department of Agriculture: \$8.96M

- AgBMP loans to LGUs: \$4.5M,
- Research, pilot projects, demonstration farms, and staff technical assistance: \$1.965M,
- Root River watershed monitoring and analysis: \$695,000,
- Livestock Environmental Quality Assurance Program for voluntary environmental assessments: \$300,000,
- Drinking water protection efforts, primarily elevated nitrate levels: \$1.125M, and
- Increased pesticide monitoring and assessment: \$675,000.

Contact: Assistant Commissioner Joe Martin, (651) 201-6551 or joe.martin@state.mn.us.

Minnesota Department of Health: \$3.76M

- Assist at least 90 communities with developing or implementing source water protection plans in the first biennium with the goal of having wellhead protection plans in place for all communities by 2019,
- Award at least 30 source water implementation grants to communities during the first biennium, and
- Establish new guidelines for ten contaminants of emerging concern in drinking water. Studies of environmental occurrence and risk assessment methods will be conducted. For more information, visit: www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/risk/guidance/dwec.

Contact: Assistant Commissioner John Linc Stine, (651) 201-5063 or john.stine@state.mn.us.

Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources: \$38.22M

BWSR implements the state’s non-point restoration and protection efforts by working in partnership with more than 240 local units of government. Funding is provided based on TMDL, restoration or protection plans that diagnose water quality issues and prescribe projects and practices that will address specific local water quality issues.

Contact: Assistant Director Julie Blackburn (651) 297-5617 or julie.blackburn@state.mn.us.

Minnesota Public Facilities Authority: \$32.7M

- Small community wastewater treatment program: \$2.5M,
- TMDL grants program to assist municipalities to meet added wastewater or stormwater requirements needed to meet TMDL implementation plan requirements: \$21.65M, and
- Phosphorus reduction grants program: \$8.55M.

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