

# 2008-2009 Biennial Report to the Minnesota Legislature

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Information contained in this report is available in an alternative format upon request.

Pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 3.197, the cost of preparing this report was approximately \$2,000.

**August 2012**

# Letter from the Board Chair

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Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Ideas for improving coordination among local, state and federal organizations with water management duties have been discussed for many years, and in Fiscal Years 2008-2009, the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources was instrumental in turning those ideas into reality. The board has continually worked to find ways to coordinate programs and resources in ways that achieve the best results. This report highlights those accomplishments.

BWSR experienced a tremendous amount of change in Fiscal Years 2008-2009. We successfully implemented changes to grant programs through the Clean Water Legacy Act and other legislatively prescribed programs. We continued to collaborate with other agencies to streamline administration and implementation of the Wetland Conservation Act. We have developed a more systematic and comprehensive local unit of government fiscal management oversight program. Our efforts to implement the \$25 million in Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve were very successful, and through our partnership with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Wetlands Reserve Program, and with local Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs), it is the premier wetland restoration program in the nation. We have done all of this while retaining a small staff.

The practices on the land are what determine the fate of our waters. With a focus on the privately owned working lands of the state, BWSR is ready, willing, and able to make major contributions to protect and improve the water and land resources of Minnesota -- in partnership with local, state, and federal organizations, and private landowners.

I am proud to present the 2008-2009 Biennial Report, which highlights some of our main accomplishments for the biennium.

Brian Napstad, Chairman

Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources

# BWSR Mission and Strategic Plan

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## ***BWSR Mission***

Improve and protect Minnesota's water and soil resources by working in partnership with local organizations and private landowners

## ***Strategic Plan***

In 2007, BWSR staff and board members sought input from stakeholders and completed a new strategic plan. The plan was adopted January 23, 2008, and is available on the BWSR website ([www.bwsr.state.mn.us/publications/Strategic\\_Plan.pdf](http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/publications/Strategic_Plan.pdf)).

The BWSR Strategic Plan includes three strategic issues for 1) creating an effective conservation delivery system, 2) delivering conservation programs in ways that maximize their impact on the land and water resource, and 3) making accomplishments known to those who have influence on BWSR's mission.

## **Beliefs**

- **Real-World Effectiveness.** The mission is focused on water resources and soil conservation. The success of BWSR should be measured by our effectiveness at enhancing both.
- **Local Planning and Implementation.** Working at the local level is the approach best positioned to produce lasting success.
- **Resource Leadership.** Effective resource protection requires a strong vision of the resource future we desire and the willingness to challenge organizations to participate. BWSR can be the leader that does it.
- **Wise Use.** Resource protection can effectively take place within a framework that acknowledges the motivations for resource use by landowners.
- **Partnerships to Deliver Programs.** Minnesota is a diverse state. Resource protection cannot be accomplished by any one organization or group. Partnerships are not just preferred; they are the only way to be effective.
- **Cooperative Approach.** Aligning the voluntary and regulatory elements of federal, state, and local conservation efforts is necessary to assure citizens are well-served by all levels of government.
- **Innovation.** As water and soil resource challenges evolve, so must our ways of doing business.

## Strategic Issues

1. What do we do to create the effective local delivery system and partnerships to accomplish our mission? BWSR's principal delivery system is a statewide set of local government units (LGUs) that are focused on protecting and enhancing the state's water and soil resources. The primary LGUs include Counties, Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs), Watershed Districts (WDs), and Metropolitan Watershed Management Organizations (WMOs). BWSR can only accomplish its mission if it has an effective delivery system. Leverage points:
  - a. Lead LGU staff is critical to the success of an organization, and BWSR can potentially influence that selection. There are in excess of 800 board members directing the actions of our primary partners. It is beyond our ability to reach all so our emphasis is in interfacing with the lead staff that is critical to the success of an organization.
  - b. Partnership between LGUs, and between Counties and other LGUs. Building a positive LGU/County relationship can pay enormous dividends, both in terms of influence as well as money.
  - c. Accountability/performance mechanisms at BWST's disposal. Measurement brings accountability to organizations. BWSR has a responsibility, and an opportunity, to use this tool to improve performance.
  - d. Existing sources of revenue. WDs, Counties, and Cities all have statutory authority to raise revenue by a variety of means. LGUs without sufficient revenue streams should look to partnerships with others who utilize these powers.
  
2. How do we redevelop and deliver our conservation programs so we maximize their impact on the land and water resource? BWSR's principal delivery system is a statewide set of LGUs that are focused on protecting and enhancing the state's water and soil resources. At present, BWSR spends about 75 percent of its General Fund budget on external program activities (LGU grants, technical and administrative support, Cost-share, etc.), with the remaining 25 percent devoted to BWSR program, technical, and administrative activities. Some of this funding is distributed on a need basis using formulas that account for population, land area, tax capacity, and quantity of activity. However, BWSR has flexibility in how it distributes a large and growing portion of the funding. Leverage points:
  - a. The method by which BWSR delivers programs (need-based vs. competitive). BWSR has the power to allocate the resources to projects that make the most impact.
  - b. The method by which BWSR monitors performance. BWSR can do more than measure its and its partner's successes.
  - c. The guidelines that determine eligible and priority activities for each program. Focusing resources on priority issues is one method to effect change.
  - d. BWSR staff work planning. Time invested in setting strategies and priorities will result in increased efficiencies and effectiveness for the agency and its partners.
  
3. How do we make our accomplishments and the state's resource conservation needs well known among those having significant influence over our mission? Competition for state and other resources is increasing, while available funding is not keeping pace with demand. BWSR and the partner LGUs are not just in competition for other resource dollars, but also for general fund resources that are used for a broad range of state needs. At the same time, it is a

challenge to effectively communicate the “BWSR story” to those that have influence over the organization. Leverage points:

- a. Performance and its measurement. Telling a story about effectiveness requires the actual measurement and documentation.
- b. Strong and deep partnerships with LGUs. It is one thing to tell your own story; it is quite another, and even more powerful, to have others tell it. Others will only tell the story if they feel like they are a part of it.
- c. Strong relationships with those that have a resource conservation mission that complements the BWSR mission. External groups have influence in the process and are potential allies.

The BWSR Strategic Plan lists for the following next steps, which began in 2007 and have continued through 2008-2009:

- Determine the outcomes that are desired and the appropriate measures for the success of each. Desired outcomes have to do with effectiveness of LGUs, the change in water quality and soil conservation, and the awareness and support for BWSR. Each can be measured (although some are harder than others). The measures act as a rudder for the entire process. If positive change is evidence, then the strategies are appropriate. If it isn't, BWSR should know about it and that acknowledgement should drive a change in strategy.
- Assign a staff person or team responsible for implementation. If this is everyone's responsibility, it is no one's responsibility. Accountability and responsibility need to have a face attached to it.
- Charge the staff with developing action steps, timelines, and securing resources. Each strategy needs more detail. Specific actions need to be identified, resource needs need to be considered, and timelines need development. Measurement requires measurability - this detail will provide that.
- Charge some person or group with measuring progress and results. Responsibility to oversee the evaluation is critical.
- Assure that citizen perspectives are considered. Program evaluation and alignment shall include assessment of technical, procedural, and administrative components from a citizen perspective.

# Board Membership and Staff

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The structure and makeup of the board is an asset, because it creates a forum where ideas are exchanged among state and local government representatives and citizens from different parts of the state. At least one board member is appointed from each of the state's congressional districts to achieve geographic balance, and each board member represents key stakeholders in the local-state conservation delivery system.

The board's membership and public processes provide a means for citizens and local governments to take direct ownership of conservation issues, instead of having a one-size-fits-all approach to conservation.

The Legislature expanded the board from 17 to 20 members in 2009 to add city and township elected officials. The makeup of the 20-member board is specified in Minnesota Statutes Chapter 103B.101 and consists of three county commissioners; three soil and water conservation district supervisors; three watershed district or watershed management organization representatives; three citizens (who are not employed by, or the appointed or elected officials of, a governmental office, board, or agency); one township officer; two elected city officials, one of whom must be from a city located in the metropolitan area; and the commission's appointee of the following:

- Minnesota Department of Agriculture;
- Minnesota Department of Health;
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources;
- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency; and
- The Director of the University of Minnesota Extension Services.

Agency staff is located in nine geographically distributed offices throughout Minnesota.

Most of the duties of the board and staff are accomplished by working in partnership with local organizations. BWSR staff provides financial, technical, and administrative assistance to local governments for implementation of the state's soil and water conservation policy, resource protection programs required by the Wetland Conservation Act (WCA), local water management planning, and for implementing conservation projects on privately owned lands.

The main duties of the board and staff include:

- Serving as the state soil conservation agency (M.S. 103B.101)
- Implementing best management practices that reduce nonpoint source pollution, promote native vegetation establishment and control invasive plant species by providing financial, technical, and administrative assistance to local government units, and working with private landowners (M.S. 103B, 103C, 103D)
- Evaluating the performance of and, where necessary, providing assistance to each local water management entity (M.S. 103B.102)
- Providing planning assistance to ensure that local water resource planning is linked with comprehensive land use planning and reviewing all local water management plans (M.S. 103B)

- Resolving water policy disputes (M.S., 103A.211, 103A.305, 103A.315, 103A.311)
- Implementing all comprehensive local water management acts (M.S. 103B.201, 103B.255, 103B.301)
- Providing a public forum for citizens and a broad range of interests to make decisions on complex water and soil conservation policies (M.S. 103B.101)
- Protecting wetlands from being drained or filled implementing the Wetland Conservation Act (M.S. 103G)
- Coordinating local, state, and federal resources to achieve the most effective conservation outcomes for the state's investment

## ***Recommendation***

The board's balanced mix of perspectives and experiences is a critical element of the practical and credible conservation policy and program development that is achieved in Minnesota. No changes to the board membership are recommended.

# Program and Budget Overview

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The mission of the Board of Water and Soil Resources is to work in partnership with local organizations and private landowners to protect and improve water and soil resources. Minnesota Statutes authorize BWSR to implement conservation programs and policies via a unique statewide partnership that leverages state, local, and federal efforts to protect and restore the state's waters, wetlands, working lands, soils, woodlots, prairies, and related natural habitats.

BWSR programs primarily are delivered through local governments, and they have resulted in less sediment and nutrients entering lakes, rivers, and streams; greater fish, wildlife, and native plant habitat; and conservation measures being implemented on public drainage systems. These outcomes are achieved despite more intense agricultural practices, greater demands for forest products, and urbanization in many parts of the state.

BWSR's mission is accomplished through the following strategies:

- Develop and implement targeted grant programs that encourage voluntary adoption of land management practices and projects that protect and improve Minnesota's natural environment
- Assist local government units in the development of comprehensive water and resource planning and implementation programs that target investments in conservation to obtain the greatest ecological benefit
- Administer the state's Wetland Conservation Act to support the goal of no net-loss of wetlands through coordinating the regulatory functions of federal and state agencies
- Provide an essential interface between the executive branch agencies and local government units so that water, soil, and habitat conservation and protection programs are fully integrated

## ***BWSR Programs***

**Land and water conservation projects:** The major focus of BWSR is getting land and water conservation projects on the ground, in the locations that provide the best environmental outcomes. BWSR grants provide funding to local governments to implement programs and to provide cost-share to landowners who install conservation practices on their land to benefit state water and soil resources. Conservation easements are land-use agreements where landowners receive a payment to establish conservation practices such as restored wetlands and prairies in vulnerable resource areas. These BWSR programs address high-priority state and local resources concerns, such as:

- Keeping water on the land
- Maintaining healthy soils
- Reducing pollutants in ground and surface water
- Insuring biological diversity
- Reducing flooding potential
- Maintaining stream integrity

The Clean Water Legacy Act of 2006 provided new one-time funding for projects that accomplish these goals, and additional funding has been appropriated to BWSR through the Clean Water, Land & Legacy Amendment to the constitution, approved by Minnesota voters on November 4, 2008. The Amendment increases the sales and use tax rate by three-eighths of one percent on taxable sales, starting July 1, 2009, continuing through 2034. Those dollars are dedicated to four funds: Outdoor Heritage Fund, Clean Water Fund, Parks and Trails Fund, and Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund. BWSR has received appropriations from the Outdoor Heritage Fund and the Clean Water Fund.

**Resource planning and delivery effectiveness:** BWSR provides for targeted resource planning and evaluates the effectiveness of conservation efforts in two ways: 1) organizational evaluations of local government units that implement conservation programs and 2) evaluations of environmental outcomes. These goals are accomplished by:

- Providing technical, administrative, and financial support to a core network of conservation delivery professionals in more than 240 local governments
- Assisting and providing guidance to local governments in the development of comprehensive resource management plans that address critical state and local needs and priorities
- Increasing the skill base of local governments through a comprehensive training program
- Systematically reviewing the performance of local governments in meeting the goals of their own management plans
- Evaluating the ecological integrity of restoration evaluations while assuring that conservation easements are maintained in the state's best interest

**Resource protection rules and laws:** BWSR is responsible for administering the Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) and providing oversight to drainage authorities operating under drainage law (M.S. 103E). Ensuring compliance with environmental laws, rules, and regulations is accomplished by:

- Providing oversight of local WCA implementation through annual reporting and adjudicating or mediating disputes elevated through an appeals process of local government decisions
- Managing and administering the state wetland bank system
- Coordinating inter-agency funding to local governments for implementation of the DNR Shoreland Management Program, PCA Subsurface Sewage Treatment System Program, PCA Feedlot Permit Program, and BWSR Comprehensive Local Water Management Program
- Facilitating the Drainage Work Group in developing consensus recommendations of updates to drainage law to be adopted by the Legislature without controversy.

**Board administration and agency operations:** Goals related to administrative efficiency and effectiveness are accomplished through board and administrative leadership, internal business systems, and operational support. Board administration and agency operations include financial and accounting services, legislative and public relations, information technology services, communications, and human resources.

## **Biennial State Budget**

- \$57.127\* million in General Funds for FY2008-2009 biennium
- \$49.129 million (86%) in pass-through grants
- FY2008: 77 FTE of which 45 were supported by General Fund
- FY2009: 80 FTE of which 50 were supported by General Fund

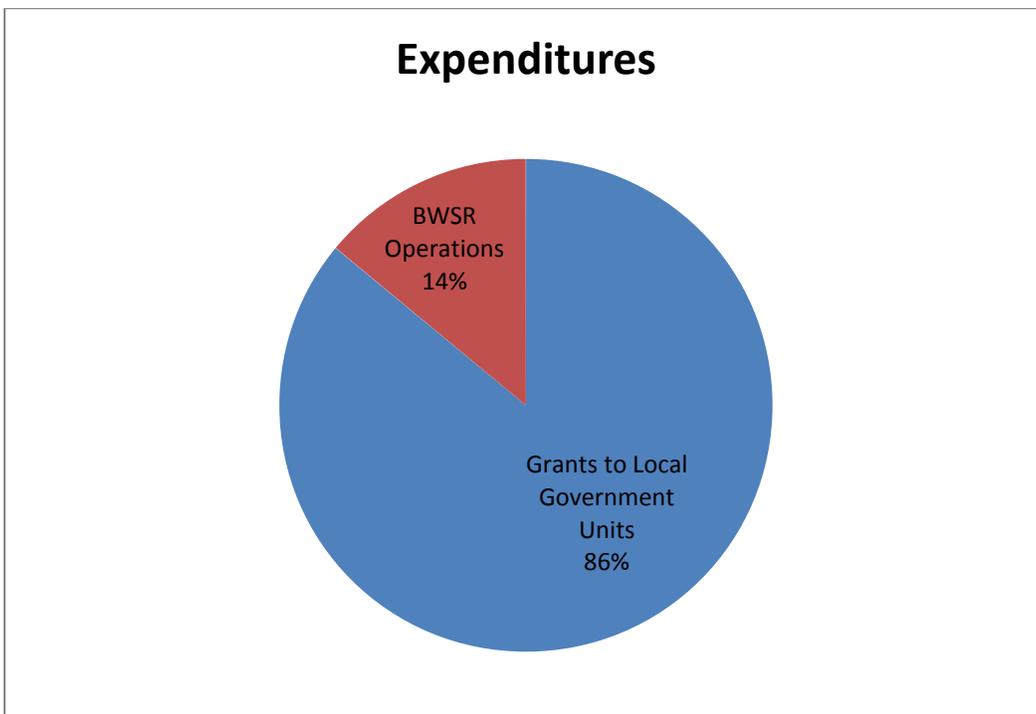
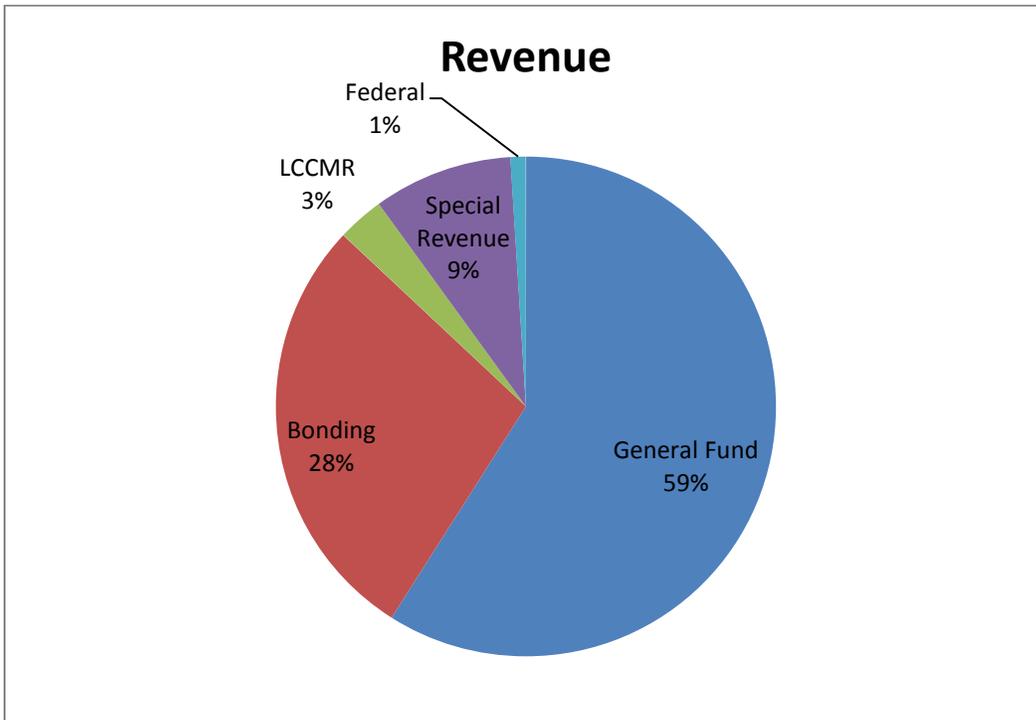
\* General Fund included large one-time Clean Water Legacy appropriation of \$14.166 million and \$4.95 million for flood recovery.

## **Bonding**

BWSR received the following appropriations in 2008:

- \$22.750 million for the Reinvest in Minnesota easement program
- \$4.2 million for Local Government Road Wetland Replacement
- \$0.8 million for Grass Lake conservation easements

**Total FY2008-2009 Revenue and Expenditures \$97.4 Million** (including bonding)



# Conservation Easements

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Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve increases public and private investment in private lands to improve water quality, create wildlife habitat, and increase flood storage capacity. Voluntary conservation easements with private landowners are administered in partnership with soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs) and focus on restoring drained wetlands and enrolling highly erodible, riparian, and sensitive groundwater lands.

BWSR staff provides the necessary administrative, legal, and engineering duties to be able to secure the conservation easements with landowners through the local SWCDs. BWSR duties include:

- Verifying land ownership
- Preparing a legal description and map of the easement area
- Assisting landowners and SWCDs in preparing a conservation plan
- Preparing the necessary legal agreements to secure the state easement
- Encumbering conservation practice funds
- Working to clear objectionable title issues

Easements are inspected annually by SWCD staff for the first five years then every third year thereafter.

## ***RIM Reserve - Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) Partnership***

RIM-WRP is a local-state-federal partnership that combines the state's Reinvest in Minnesota Reserve conservation easement program with the USDA Wetlands Reserve Program, administered by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Minnesota's SWCDs implement the program at the local level. The RIM-WRP partnership has enabled Minnesota to leverage \$1.4 federal dollars for every \$1 in state RIM funds.

According to the NRCS, Minnesota was one of the leading states in the nation in dollars allocated and wetland acres set to be restored through the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) for Federal Fiscal Year 2009. Minnesota ranked:

- #1 with 125 easements funded
- #2 with 19,793 acres - 14% of the nationwide total (North Dakota was #1 with 24,726 acres)
- #2 in dollars obligated at \$30,399,780 - 10% of the nationwide total (Florida was #1 due to its \$75 million Everglades Project)

The RIM-WRP Partnership received the 2009 Partnership of the Year Award at the 2009 Environmental Initiative Awards ceremony, presented by Minnesota Environmental Initiative. The RIM-WRP Partnership was chosen for the award by the nearly 300 attendees at the event after hearing presentations about each of the 15 finalists for the award.

The following shows the state and federal dollars number of permanent wetland restorations in Minnesota through the RIM-WRP partnership in 2008-2009:

<b>RIM Reserve - State \$</b>	<b>WRP-Federal \$</b>	<b>Total \$</b>	<b># of Easements</b>	<b># of Acres^</b>
<b>2008\$14.2M*</b>	<b>\$20.0M</b>	<b>\$34.2M</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>8,900</b>
<b>2009\$16.0M*+</b>	<b>\$25.0M</b>	<b>\$41.0M</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>11,606</b>

\* Bond funds

+ \$9.058M Outdoor Heritage Funds (OHF)

^ Includes wetland and adjacent prairie grassland acres restored. Average wetland:prairie grassland ratio - 1.2

Economic benefits are also generated by RIM-WRP. Easement programs that restore wetlands require a broad range of skilled workers in the public and private sectors throughout Minnesota. According to the USDA NRCS, the RIM-WRP partnership in 2009 generated the following economic benefits:

- \$47.7 million spent in Minnesota
- More than \$61 million in total economic output
- 445 jobs created or maintained

### ***RIM Reserve Flood Recovery Easements***

On October 31, 2007, BWSR announced a special RIM Reserve conservation easement program for disaster-declared counties in southeast Minnesota. The intent of the sign-up was to take perpetual RIM Reserve easements with willing landowners on lands damaged by the flood events that year in August, and on lands that will help to reduce the impacts of future flood events. Funds to this new easement program came from a special session appropriation of \$1 million, and BWSR made available \$1.1 million from its existing bonding appropriation for a total of \$2.1 million. The following shows the acres that were enrolled and associated costs:

<b>SE MN Rim Flood Recovery 2007</b>				
<b>SWCD</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Easement Costs</b>	<b>Practice Costs</b>	<b>Total Costs</b>
Fillmore	151	\$268,942	\$48,240	\$317,182
Root River (Houston Co.)	285	\$578,279	\$55,620	\$633,899
Olmsted	2	\$6,430	\$210	\$6,640
Winona	295	\$751,922	\$148,750	\$900,672
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>733</b>	<b>\$1,605,573</b>	<b>\$252,820</b>	<b>\$1,858,393</b>

BWSR received additional RIM Reserve dollars during the 2008 Legislative Session that funded projects in 2009. The following table summarizes the projects funded through those dollars:

<b>SE MN Rim Flood Recovery 2007</b>				
<b>SWCD</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Easement Costs</b>	<b>Practice Costs</b>	<b>Total Costs</b>
Dodge	13	\$48,901	\$15,290	\$64,191
Fillmore	14	\$41,529	\$7,000	\$48,929
RR-Houston	348	\$874,367	\$55,500	\$929,867
Olmstead	28	\$117,605	\$13,800	\$131,405
Wabasha	130	\$33,452	\$38,330	\$371,782
Winona	71	\$257,354	\$35,750	\$293,104
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>604</b>	<b>\$1,673,209</b>	<b>\$165,670</b>	<b>\$1,838,879</b>

### ***Army Compatible Use Buffer Program (ACUB)***

BWSR’s partnership with the Army National Guard, the Minnesota NDR, and local SWCDs has led to 46 easements being acquired on privately owned lands surrounding the Camp Ripley installation in Little Falls. BWSR is providing the easement acquisition services on a fee-for-service basis to the Army National Guard for their Army Compatible Use Buffer (ACUB) project. Participating landowners voluntarily enroll in an easement and agree to keep the land in a natural state or in agricultural production, but not to subdivide it or convert it to other commercial or residential uses. The project insures that development in nearby Fort Ripley does not encroach on key areas near Camp Ripley. The ACUB easements protect existing fish and wildlife habitat and protect water quality by preventing residential or commercial development. The easements also prevent increased loading of phosphorous, sediment, and other pollutants associated with urbanization by maintaining the landscape in its current condition which, in turn, improves the habitat and water quality values of disturbed lands over time.

Through this partnership, BWSR completed and recorded 50 easements protecting 8,343 acres (50 percent agricultural, 40 percent forest, and 10 percent rural residential/transportation corridor) as of December 2009. The completed land transactions have resulted in an expenditure of \$8,813,547 in federal funding. BWSR has used the federal dollars for ACUB implementation; and a portion has been granted to the SWCDs in the counties where ACUB easements are being acquired.

### ***Recommendation***

BWSR recommends additional funding for RIM Reserve to continue achieving multiple benefits for wildlife habitat, water quality, potential bio-energy production, and economic benefits.

# Wetland Conservation Act

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The Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) was enacted in 1991 to stem the losses of wetlands in Minnesota. Minnesota has more than 10 million acres of wetlands statewide, which is about 50 percent of the wetland acres in the state at the time of European settlement. The law protects wetland resources by requiring individuals to avoid draining or filling wetlands, or to replace wetlands if avoiding a wetland impact is impossible.

Minnesota Statute 103A.201 contains the policy statement for WCA; that it is in the public's interest to:

1. Achieve no net loss in the quantity, quality, and biological diversity of Minnesota's existing wetlands
2. Increase the quantity, quality, and biological diversity of Minnesota's wetlands by restoring or enhancing diminished or drained wetlands
3. Avoid direct or indirect impacts from activities that destroy or diminish the quantity, quality, and biological diversity of wetlands
4. Replace wetland values where avoidance of activity is not feasible and prudent

From 2006 to 2009 BWSR worked with a broad range of stakeholders to revise Minnesota Rules Chapter 8420. The effort is a principal outcome of Governor Tim Pawlenty's letter to the Clean Water Cabinet in 2005, which stated that more should be done to limit the loss of wetlands. As a result of this letter, BWSR undertook a rigorous effort that involved over 35 stakeholder groups and organizations to review and assess the effectiveness of WCA. This program assessment led to legislation amending WCA that was enacted in May 2007. The legislation authorized BWSR to adopt certain WCA rules within 90 days of enactment, which required an exemption to the state's Administrative Procedures Act. That process was completed and an exempt rule was adopted on August 6, 2007.

In Fiscal Years 2008-2009, BWSR focused on the permanent rulemaking process, which began in 2008. Keys to the process were the formation of a Permanent Rule Advisory Committee and a Technical Advisory Committee. These committees included representation from organizations and interests that include: agriculture, business, environment/conservation, local government, state government, federal government, and technical/professional organizations. These advisory committees began meeting in January 2008 to review rule issues and proposed language.

A key purpose of this rulemaking process was to incorporate changes that will further regulatory simplification and state/federal coordination. BWSR and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District (Corps) signed a Wetland Mitigation Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in May 2007 ([www.bwsr.state.mn.us/wetlands/BWSR-COEmemo.pdf](http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/wetlands/BWSR-COEmemo.pdf)). BWSR via this rulemaking, and the Corps through the development of Clean Water Act, Section 404 guidance, have been working to implement this MOU to maximize regulatory consistency. This rulemaking process culminated in the adoption of the current WCA rule on August 10, 2009.

After adoption of the new rule, BWSR conducted numerous training sessions and produced new technical guidance for local governments units that have roles in implementing WCA.

## ***Wetland Enforcement Actions***

Enforcement of WCA is provided for the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Water Resources Enforcement Officers and other licensed peace officers. Local government units and Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) also have important roles in enforcement. When a possible wetland violation is identified, local government staff typically inspect the site and/or review available information to determine whether the activity is a likely violation. For ongoing violations, the DNR enforcement officer will issue a cease and desist order to stop further wetland impacts from occurring.

After a violation is identified, SWCD staff inspect the site to determine the appropriate course of action and develop a wetland restoration plan. The plan is then incorporated into a wetland restoration order and served to the landowner by the enforcement officer. Landowners who are issued a cease and desist order or restoration order have the opportunity to submit an application for approval to the local government unit and/or appeal the order to BWSR.

The DNR Division of Enforcement reported the following information for 2008 and 2009:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Cease and Desist Order</b>	<b>Restoration/ Replacement Orders</b>	<b>Closed Cases</b>	<b>Rescinded Cease and Desist Orders</b>
2008	317	154	189	47
2009	226	103	94	20

## ***Wetland Banking***

Wetland banking provides a source of replacement wetlands - principally from restoring previously drained wetlands - that are used by individuals and road authorities to replace impacted wetlands as required by the Wetland Conservation Act. The federal Clean Water Act and state Wetland Conservation Act require wetland impacts to be replaced in advance.

The banking program includes two types of accounts: private and BWSR-held. In a private account, a private entity establishes and maintains the ecological integrity of the replacement site. In a BWSR-held account, the Board establishes and maintains the ecological integrity of the replacement site. BWSR-held accounts are solely used for replacing eligible impacts caused from city, county, and township road projects. As required by M.S. 103G.222, Subd. 1(m), the Local Government Roads Wetland Replacement Program transfers responsibility for replacing wetlands from the local road authority to BWSR. The Board administers the banking program, including the tracking of credits and debits to all accounts and monitoring all replacement sites. The goal of this program is to provide high-quality restored wetlands that will continue to provide replacement credits that meet the standards of state and federal wetland regulations.

BWSR has the technical, financial, and project management expertise to complete high quality, cost-effective wetland restoration projects that generate replacement credit for local road authorities. BWSR has capitalized on this expertise by entering into a partnership with MNDOT that benefits both agencies by streamlining wetland replacement for state and local road projects.

## Summary of 2008-2009 Wetland Banking Activity

Year	Wetland Credits Certified (Deposits)	Wetland Credits Withdrawn
2008	590.35	273.44
2009	495.27	216.76

### Wetland Bank Site Monitoring

BWSR inspects wetlands in the Minnesota Wetland Bank to ensure that the wetlands continue to provide the functions and values stated in their respective bank plan, and to ensure compliance with recorded easement restrictions and covenants. BWSR staff monitor the ecological integrity of privately held banking sites, and provide technical support during the establishment of BWSR-held accounts, including maintenance and monitoring of BWSR-held accounts after establishment. Tasks include the inspection of monitoring reports submitted by the private account holder; performing site inspections of both private and BWSR-held accounts, especially focusing on the quality of vegetative cover; performing or having performed corrective actions such as invasive species control; providing technical support to other Board staff, local government and private sector personnel; preparation of monitoring reports for BWSR-held bank sites; and collaborating with officials from the US Army Corps of Engineers to ensure that banking sites continue to meet their standard of approval.

In 2008-2009, BWSR staff monitored 120 privately held wetland bank sites and on 10 BWSR-held bank sites that are in the process of becoming established.

### Contribution Agreements with USDA NRCS

Annual contribution agreements have continued with the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) to continue support of the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) monitoring effort in Minnesota. In 2008, BWSR contacted 371 landowners representing 41 counties in the WRP program inviting them to attend one of three WRP Land Management Workshops. The workshops were conducted in February and addressed landowner and NRCS rights in the WRP program, modifications and repairs to WRP easements, noxious and invasive weed management, and prescribed burning on private lands. These sessions were attended by 45 landowners and 95 staff. In addition to conducting workshops, BWSR revised the 2006 WRP Monitoring protocol and developed a plant identification guide featuring plants commonly found on restoration sites in Minnesota. Descriptions for 70 species have been developed and made available on the BWSR and NRCS websites as part of the contribution agreements, with anticipation of more species pages to be developed in coming years. In 2009, BWSR training efforts were directed at increasing plant identification skills for field staff that work with WRP or RIM-WRP programs. Five one-day sessions were conducted with the aid of colleagues from the MN Department of Transportation, the US Army Corps of Engineers, NRCS, University of Minnesota-Crookston, and Ducks Unlimited. About 198 participants attended from NRCS offices, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and other partner employees and contractors. In 2009, two student interns working for BWSR monitored and established photo points for 49 easements in 2 counties in western Minnesota.

## ***Recommendation***

Changes to the Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) are underway to continue to protect wetlands and to maximize administrative efficiencies between local operations and federal programs. Local governments play a key role in implementation and have been contributing an ever-increasing portion of the funding. The recently enacted county levy limits have brought the decreasing portion of state funding to the forefront of local concerns. The lack of adequate funding for implementing this regulation is even more pronounced with the increase in the DNR's enforcement capacity and use of fly-over technology to locate violations. BWSR recommends additional funding for local governments to continue implementing WCA effectively.

BWSR-developed wetland credits can also be used to meet Clean Water Act, Section 404 requirements after they are certified by the US Army Corps of Engineers. The Corps currently allows BWSR a two-year grace period to approve wetland replacement credits for local road projects. Federal policy changes are anticipated that will eliminate this grace period and require BWSR to operate on a current basis. Failure to provide all credits prior to an impact will increase regulatory compliance costs for the Local Government Roads Wetland Replacement Program. The process of generating new wetland credit takes several years, from identifying a suitable site, planning and developing the project, and monitoring the project by BWSR and the Corps of Engineers to certify the credits. BWSR recommends additional funding for wetland banking to begin projects that will provide enough replacement credit to meet projected demand.

# Clean Water Legacy and other grant programs

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The agency’s goals are met by providing funds to local government units to complete conservation projects, and the state dollars leverage federal, local, and /or landowner dollars. BWSR staff provides technical and administrative assistance to grant recipients, including planning, project management, and reporting and evaluating outcomes.

## ***Clean Water Legacy***

The Clean Water Legacy Act of 2006 provided new one-time funding for monitoring, protection, and restoration of the state’s waters; expanded local units of government funding for project implementation; and evolved the watershed approach for implementing conservation and improving impaired waters. BWSR provided leadership in inter-agency efforts such as the Clean Water Council and the Stormwater Steering Committee. Using BWSR’s existing and established grant management and local delivery system was the key to launching the Clean Water Legacy in a highly efficient and effective manner.

Clean Water Legacy grants are generally larger than other BWSR grants and they usually involve coordination among several local organizations. Clean Water Legacy grants also differ from other BWSR grants in that they place a greater emphasis on selecting priority projects identified in local water plans that are reviewed and approved by BWSR under M.S. 103B or contained in approved TMDL implementation plans.

Maps showing project locations, and fact sheets summarizing all projects that received Clean Water Legacy funding are available on the BWSR website: [www.bwsr.state.mn.us/CWL](http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/CWL).

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total BWSR Clean Water Legacy Act appropriations</b>	<b>Dollars for competitive grants</b>	<b>Dollars requested by applicants</b>	<b>Dollars Leveraged</b>
2007	\$5.9 Million*	\$5.6 Million	\$44.8 Million (8:1)	\$4.25 Million
2008	\$9.3 Million	\$4.2 Million	\$27 Million (6:1)	\$3.9 Million
2009	\$4.9 Million	\$1.2 Million	\$1	

\* Dollars appropriated in 2007 funded projects completed in 2008-09

## **Accomplishments**

- 11 stream bank, gully, and bluff stabilizations
- 32 lakeshore stabilization and restorations
- 19 sediment basins/ponds
- 37 raingardens and similar projects that allow surface water to soak into the ground
- 17 manure management practices

- 4,000 acres of native buffers and filter strips
- 95 alternative drainage tile intakes
- 10 nutrient management plans

## Featured Projects

### Medicine Lake



A \$425,000 stormwater management project was completed in 2007-2008 near Medicine Lake to improve water quality and to protect a regional park trail and road crossing. Of the \$425,000 total cost, \$198,000 was from a Clean Water Legacy grant through BWSR, \$100,000 was from the Three Rivers Park District, and about \$125,000 was from the City of Plymouth. Inadequate stormwater capacity was causing water to back up, which led to excessive erosion along a 1,200-foot drainage way. The erosion was continuously contributing sediment and phosphorus to Medicine Lake, and it was compromising the integrity of a road crossing and regional park trail. The project repaired the drainage way and is designed to prevent future erosion and to prevent water from backing up into the pedestrian trail corridor under County Road 9.

### Lac qui Parle River



A riverbank stabilization project on the Lac qui Parle River was completed in 2007 through a Clean Water Legacy grant that leveraged other state and local funds. The velocity of the river was causing severe bank erosion near a bridge along Lac qui Parle County Highway 31. With collaboration and direction from DNR Fisheries staff, the project has stabilized 1,500 feet of riverbank, which has resulted in erosion control, habitat, and water quality benefits. The innovative design and ability to leverage state, federal, and local dollars contributed to the successful grant application. Components of this project include a vegetated bankfull shelf, which reduced the amount of rip rap needed for the project and reduce the project cost. The bankfull shelf reduces velocities by providing a wider floodplain for the entrenched channel, and the vegetation provides roughness, which also reduces velocities.

## Conservation Cost-Share Program

BWSR provides cost-share grants to SWCDs to help landowners offset the costs of installing conservation practices that protect water quality and control erosion. Landowners are required to match a percentage of the total project cost, using their own funds in combination with other state, federal, or local sources. Local SWCD boards set local priorities for projects in conjunction with the state's overall priorities set through BWSR.

These dollars leverage non-state dollars, including local and federal dollars. About \$16 Million each year from the combined local-state-federal funding sources pays for land and water treatment practices, such as soil erosion control, feedlot, and septic system upgrades.

Overviews of selected projects funded through BWSR grants are available on the BWSR website: [www.bwsr.state.mn.us/projects](http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/projects).

## ***Native Vegetation Establishment and Invasive Species Control***

Two new BWSR grant programs were developed in response to 2007 legislation: the Cooperative Weed Management Area program and the Native Buffer Cost-Share program. Program policies and procedures were developed in FY2008 and approved by the BWSR board to implement these new programs.

### **Featured Project**

In 2008, BWSR awarded a grant for a Cooperative Weed Management Area in Red Lake County. The Red Lake County SWCD is leading this effort, which has brought together local, state, and federal agencies, landowners, and private industry to jointly plan a coordinated effort to control the noxious weeds. Funding paid for a broad range of tools and techniques for preventing and controlling weeds, including mapping, early detection, chemical control, re-vegetation, monitoring, and public education. Keys to the success have included information sharing, targeting of treatment, and providing financial assistance for the costs of treatment.

## ***Natural Resources Block Grants***

The Natural Resources Block Grant (NRBG) is a composite of base grants available to counties to help them implement programs designed to protect and improve water resources. Individual programs under this grant include:

- Comprehensive Local Water Management
- Wetland Conservation Act (counties provide \$5,000 or 15 percent, whichever is lower, of this grant to their Soil and Water Conservation District to assist with implementation of WCA).
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Shoreland Management Program
- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Feedlot Permit Program
- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Individual Sewage Treatment Systems Program

Counties are the only eligible applicants for these grants. A county is eligible to receive any or all of these grant components. In addition, a county is responsible for providing the required match. To be eligible for the NRBG, a county must have a locally adopted and BWSR approved comprehensive local water management plan, complete a written application, provide a resolution authorizing the signatures on the application and required match, and must have submitted an annual report.

## ***SWCD General Service Grants***

This program provides each district with a portion of the funds needed for general administration and operation. The grants are intended to provide districts a certain degree of funding stability. The state

contribution assists in providing resources for staff and operating expenses associated with delivery of all state conservation programs.

## ***RIM Services Grants***

BWSR is authorized to grant funds for Reinvest in Minnesota Reserve administration to SWCDs under Minnesota Statutes 103.401, subd. 4. The RIM Services Grant is considered as support to assist SWCDs with the implementation costs associated with the easement program. Administration and other related expenses include:

- Attend training sessions
- Promoting the RIM program
- Conducting screening committee meetings
- Encouraging enrollment
- Application and easement processing
- Conducting on-site investigations and spot-checks
- Submitting summaries and reports

## ***Nonpoint Engineering Assistance***

Cost-share and other financial assistance programs help offset landowners' costs of installing conservation practices, but the technical assistance is the key to accomplishing the environmental benefits of installing those practices. "Technical assistance" refers to the scientific and practical knowledge and guidance on how to properly design, engineer, install, and maintain conservation practices.

BWSR administers the Nonpoint Engineering Assistance Program (NPEA), which enables 11 joint powers groups of SWCDs to share staff with technical expertise, including licensed engineers and engineering technicians. Some conservation practices require greater technical expertise than others, so the joint powers agreements allow each SWCD to have permanent staff who have the expertise necessary for the majority of their projects, and access to an engineer on more complex projects on an as-needed basis. NPEA staff support many state and federal financial assistance programs including the State Conservation Cost-Share Program, State Feedlot Water Quality Management Cost-Share, Ag BMP Loan Program, USDA Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), and the EPA Section 319 Grant Program. BWSR engineering staff provide technical and administrative support for this program.

## ***Recommendations***

Minnesota voters approved the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment in 2008, which has established a new funding source for BWSR grants. BWSR is continually working to design efficient and effective grant systems. Additional flexibility in allocating grants will enable BWSR to more effectively target these new dollars for the highest-priority projects. BWSR recommends using the existing local conservation delivery system to implement projects that protect and restore water quality statewide. Additional funding is recommended for the NPEA program to build local capacity to design and construct high-priority conservation projects.

# Flood Recovery

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Following a severe flood event in SE Minnesota in August 2007, Gov. Tim Pawlenty called the Legislature into Special Session and authorized nearly \$148 million for flood recovery, including \$4 million for BWSR programs. BWSR worked with local and federal conservation partners to respond immediately by providing state funds and technical assistance to support the recovery effort. Staff in local SWCDs and the USDA NRCS conducted preliminary damage assessments and began work to complete key projects in the fall 2007. Having ready, willing, and able local partners was a critical component to the rapid response.

The \$4 million included \$3 million for projects to restore, repair, and install conservation practices on privately owned lands, including projects that control feedlot runoff, repair septic systems, or reduce soil erosion from cropland or riparian areas. \$1 million was for conservation easements on flood-damaged lands next to water bodies. Some of these dollars were used to hire engineering staff on a temporary basis. In response to the tremendous need for conservation project repairs, the Legislature and Gov. Pawlenty in 2008 approved a transfer of \$1.89 million from the Department of Employment and Economic Development to BWSR to help address these needs. Part of this area again flooded in June 2008. That and other challenges led to the Legislature and governor extending deadlines for encumbering flood-relief funds.

All major projects that received funding through BWSR have been completed.

## ***Recommendations***

Additional funding for state and/or local staffing with the technical expertise to design and supervise construction of conservation projects will enable Minnesota to make the most efficient use of local, state, and federal dollars; and will enable Minnesota to recover quickly from flooding events in the future.

## Featured Project

### **Pickwick Dam**

A local state-federal partnership of conservation agencies repaired an emergency spillway at the



Pickwick Dam in 2009. The dam is located on Big Trout Creek southeast of Winona, and it was one of hundreds of sites that were damaged by extreme rainfall and flooding in southeast Minnesota in August 2007. The project was completed by the USDA NRCS, BWSR, Winona SWCD, and Homer Township, in coordination with the Minnesota DNR Safety Unit and Pickwick Mill, Inc. Engineering assistance was provided by Yaggy Colby Association on a contract basis and by BWSR. Providing assistance to hire private engineering and construction companies to work on this project was the key to getting the project done on schedule and meeting the technical assistance requirements of state and federal funding sources. The large number of flood recovery projects created tremendous workload for engineering and technical staff for the local, state, and federal conservation agencies.

# Metro Area Watershed Management

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All local; units of government in the seven-county metropolitan area have been involved in the preparation and implementation of surface water management plans since passage of the Metropolitan Surface Water Management Act in 1982. These plans are reviewed and approved by BWSR.

In FY2008-2009, a Metro Water Planning Rules Advisory Committee was formed and met four times from February to June 2009 to discuss possible changes to the Metropolitan Area Watershed Management Rule, Minnesota Rules Chapter 8410. The committee's goal is to build on BWSR's experience implementing the Metropolitan Water Management program by moving away from an overly prescriptive, one-size-fits-all approach to a more result-oriented framework. In essence, future watershed plans would consist of periodically updated inventories and goals, and frequently updated implementation and capital improvement plan sections.

Committee members are Karen Chandler, Barr Engineering; Eric Evenson, Minnehaha Creek Watershed District; Jim Haertel, BWSR, Dale Homuth, MN Department of Natural Resources; Anna Kerr, MN Pollution Control Agency; Denise Leezer, MN Pollution Control Agency; Charles LeFevere, Kennedy & Graven; Matt Moore, South Washington Watershed District; Paul Nelson, Scott County; Randy Neprash, League of Minnesota Cities Stormwater Coalition; Art Persons, MN Department of Health; Judy Sventek, Metropolitan Council; and Brian Watson, Dakota Soil and Water Conservation District.

The committee has recommended changes in four categories: 1) Plan Content, 2) Plan Development Process, 3) Intergovernmental Coordination, and 4) Organization Capacity. Some of the recommended changes will require changes to Minnesota Statutes 103B.201-103B.255.

## ***Recommendations***

The following is a brief summary, by category, of the Committee's recommended changes, and those that would require changes in statutes are noted. BWSR will work with the Legislature to develop specific proposals that would result in a more efficient and effective planning process:

1. Plan Content - "Building Efficiency Toward Implementation"
  - Rule Change Recommendations
    - ✓ "Revolving" plans around priority issues, provides rationale for funding
    - ✓ More dynamic administrative and capital implementation programs
    - ✓ Periodically updated inventories and goals (ten year plans)
    - ✓ Frequently updated implementation and capital improvement plan sections
  - Remaining Issues:
    - ✓ Specific format for incorporating TMDL/303d

2. Plan Development Process - "Upfront Involvement to Prioritize"
  - Rule Change Recommendations
    - ✓ Eliminate obstacles for pursuing local preferences
    - ✓ Early announcement of "priority issues" through intensive citizen and agency involvement
    - ✓ Better annual reporting to evaluate if implementation achieves local goals
    - ✓ More Attractive amendment and review procedures
  - ✓ Remaining Issues:
    - ✓ Streamlining and shortening the plan review process (statute change completed 2009 session)
3. Intergovernmental Coordination - "Connection with local Land Use and State Regulations"
  - Rule Change Recommendations
    - ✓ Better link between local comprehensive land use plans and metro water management plans
    - ✓ Procedures if local preferences conflict with state standards
  - Remaining Issues:
    - ✓ Improving groundwater/surface water interactions (statute change)
4. Organization Capacity - "Accountability for a Consistent Level of Implementation Metro-Wide"
  - Rule Change Recommendations:
    - ✓ Increase self-evaluation through development of report card
    - ✓ Develop guidelines for determination of non-implementation
    - ✓ Allow for alternative reporting methods such as "eLINK"
  - Remaining Issues:
    - ✓ No issues identified

# Resource Planning and Local Conservation Delivery

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Meeting state environmental goals requires working with a broad network of local government units that possess tools to address issues in land and water management. Almost 800 local units of government are empowered to deliver services on behalf of BWSR to achieve local and state soil and water conservation goals.

## ***Comprehensive Local Water Management***

BWSR reviews and approved Comprehensive Local Water Management Plans for counties in Greater Minnesota. These local plans focus on priority concerns, defined goals and objectives, and measurable outcomes. Minnesota's counties, with their planning and land-use authorities, are uniquely positioned to link many land-use decisions with local goals for surface and groundwater protection and management.

BWSR field staff oversee the development and implementation of these plans to assure that local water plans are prepared and coordinated with existing local and state efforts and that plans are implemented effectively. Competitive grants that are awarded by BWSR and other agencies usually require a locally adopted, state-approved plan to assure that the dollars are spent on high-priority projects and that those priorities were developed through an open process. BWSR staff duties include mentoring local government staff toward improving their ability to engage stakeholders, to incorporate measurable outcomes in their plans, to implement high-priority projects, and to measure and evaluate their effectiveness in accomplishing those outcomes that are stated in their plans.

To assist counties in carrying out priority projects and programs in their plans, BWSR provides financial assistance to them through the Natural Resources Block Grant.

## ***Training***

BWSR staff provide one-on-one assistance to local government staff and conduct training sessions throughout the state. In recognition of the value of continuous learning to increased performance, the BWSR training program was formalized in 2009 as a comprehensive strategy for supporting and building the effectiveness of organizations implementing conservation programs. The training program strategy is based on a thorough assessment of skills, knowledge, and needs prioritized by those responsible for results. The training program encompasses the business, technical, and technology skills necessary to develop organization and program success.

BWSR staff provide training to local government units that implement conservation programs and provide training on all aspects of operating an organization. Topics of BWSR trainings include wetland plant identification, annual financial statement preparation, and human resource management.

Technical training is also provided by BWSR in partnership with the University of Minnesota through the Certified Wetland Delineator Program (WDCP). The WDCP adds reputability to wetland professions by formally recognizing the training and expertise that goes into wetland delineation. The WDCP has certified more than 200 wetland delineators working the seven states, and trained hundreds of others.

## ***Performance Review and Assistance Program***

The Performance Review and Assistance Program (PRAP) is a new initiative based on a legislative mandate for closer oversight of BWSR's local government delivery system. PRAP focuses on the long range water management plans of Minnesota's watershed districts, soil and water conservation districts, counties and metro-area watershed management organizations to systematically measure progress and accomplishments. In addition, BWSR has developed, in cooperation with an advisory committee of the monitored entities, a set of performance standards designed to objectively survey the LGU's operational effectiveness. These methods are used at different levels of review by BWSR staff--a program coordinator and existing field staff--to meet the legislative mandates for both an overall assessment of LGU performance and in-depth evaluations of plan implementation (see sidebar).

PRAP also includes an assistance component that targets training, services, and consultants to address specific performance-related needs that are revealed through all levels of review.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Levels of PRAP Review</b></p> <p><b>Level I:</b> Annual tabulation of required reports and plan updates for all 244 PRAP LGUs statewide</p> <p><b>Level II:</b> Routine, interactive performance review with 6-8 selected LGUs per year measuring performance standards compliance and plan implementation.</p> <p><b>Levels III and IV:</b> As needed or requested in-depth review and assistance for LGUs facing challenges in program delivery, operational performance, or plan implementation. One such review was conducted during the biennium.</p>
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Finally, PRAP reports address both the performance review results and highlight the positive accomplishments of the LGUs, including awards and recognition by statewide associations and government. As required by statute, BWSR has submitted two program reports to the legislature describing program accomplishments and outlining future direction. The BWSR website provides access to reports and additional program information:

<http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/PRAP/reporting/index.php>

## **Support for Drainage Authorities**

BWSR's role in public drainage system management includes three major components:

- Direct assistance to the state's public drainage authorities
- Review of water district projects
- Special studies

These activities are implemented with the goal of protecting or improving surface water quality and reducing flooding while maintaining the state's agricultural production capacity.

The 2005 Legislature directed BWSR to study the use, maintenance, and benefits of required grass strips along public drainage ditches. The convened stakeholders decided to continue their work in 2006 and have continued to offer recommendations on buffer compliance, records preservation, and determining where the strip is needed. That study group of stakeholders agreed to continue to meet as the Drainage Work Group (DWG), with facilitation provided by BWSR. The Drainage Work Group serves as a forum to review and analyze drainage policy and provide communities with the tools necessary for developing and implementing conservation-based comprehensive plans.

The Drainage Management Team is a BWSR-led group of individuals from different agencies and universities that meet to pool information regarding drainage issues and to provide information and education to drainage authorities throughout Minnesota.

Expertise and assistance provided by the Drainage Management Team:

- Information and Education: Drainage Management Team members are available to make informative presentations on legal and technical questions related to drainage management.
- Technical Assistance: Objective analysis that covers alternatives and opportunities for drainage-related projects.
- Funding and Financing: With representatives from many different organizations, the Drainage Management Team can provide advice on potential grant opportunities and other funding sources.

# Outcomes

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Local organizations that receive state grant dollars through BWSR report conservation project information using eLINK, a database for tracking expenditures and conservation outcomes.

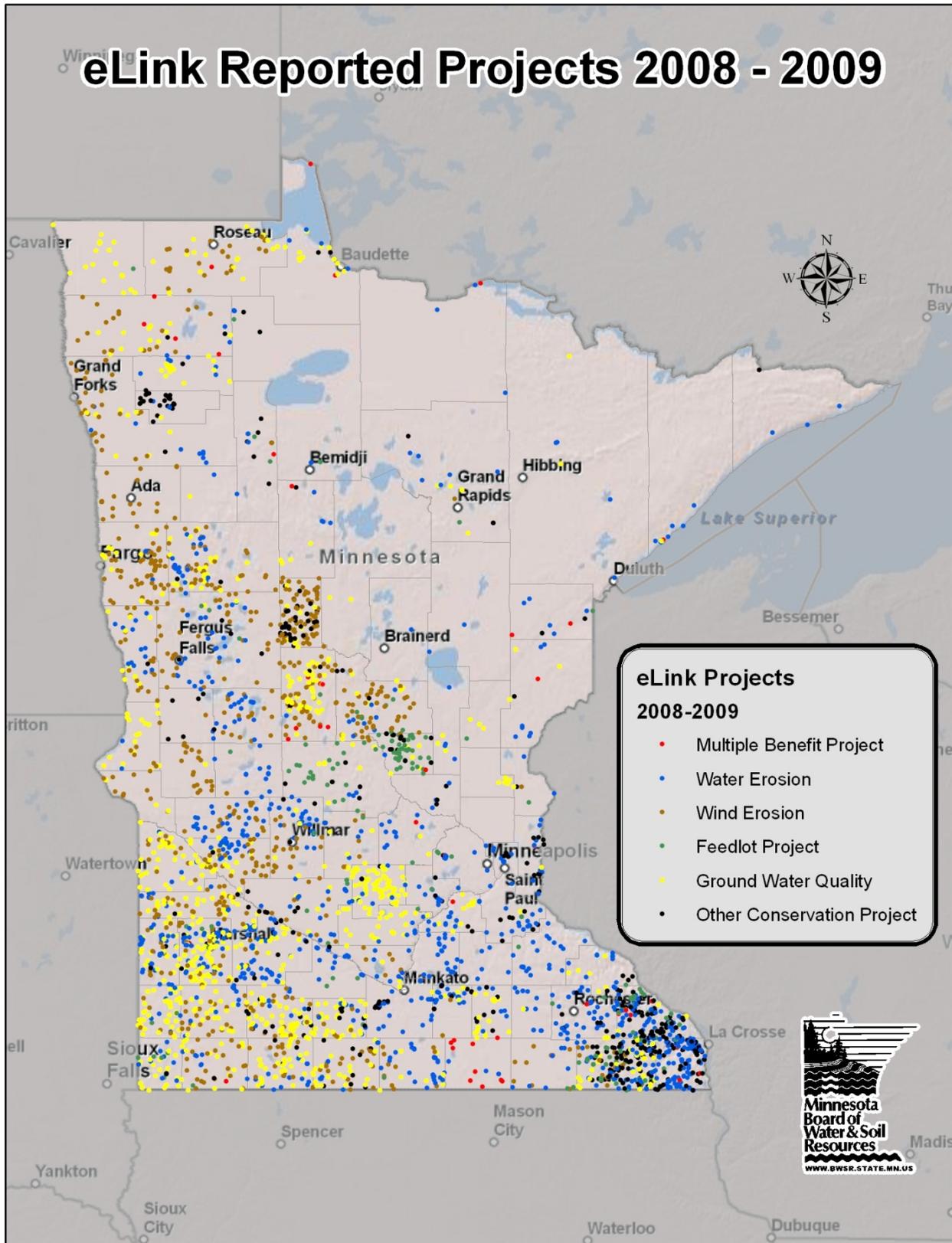
BWSR staff currently provide technical support and training to more than 600 users of the eLINK system, and also conduct site visits of select projects to ensure that state conservation dollars are used as effectively as possible. Local governments use features in eLINK to submit project data, including location, management practices, funding sources, and estimated pollution reduction. That locally generated data is lined to a GIS application that produces a visual display of what conservation dollars are buying statewide.

The following outcomes were reported by eLINK users for state funds administered by BWSR in reporting years 2004 through 2009.

## Land and Water Treatment Projects:

- Projects statewide: 10,417
- Total costs: \$64.8M
- State grants: \$29.2M
- Landowner costs: \$16.7M
- Federal funds spent: \$12.8M
- Local government unit cost: \$4.6M
- # tons per year estimated soil loss reduction = 322,763 tons/year
- # tons per year estimated sediment reduction = 1,451,444 tons/year
- # tons per year estimated phosphorus reduction = 1,225,745 tons/year

# eLink Reported Projects 2008 - 2009



# Outside Funding

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## Grants

The following information was provided by recipients of grants that are administered by BWSR.

Land and Water Treatment Practices, Fiscal Years 2008-2009:

- Projects statewide: 3,655
- Total costs: \$22.2M
- State grants: \$11.1M
- Landowner costs: \$4.8M
- Federal funds spent: \$4.8M
- Local government unit cost: \$1.1M
- # tons per year estimated soil loss reduction = 188,416 tons/year
- # tons per year estimated sediment reduction = 192,185 tons/year
- # tons per year estimated phosphorus reduction = 262,031 tons/year

Source: eLINK

## BWSR-MnDOT Cooperative Agreement

BWSR received \$2 million from the Minnesota Department of Transportation as part of a five-year cooperative agreement to coordinate and streamline wetland replacement activities associated with road projects. BWSR and MnDOT share resources to plan, implement, and manage wetland bank sites. Bank sites generate wetland replacement credits that are used to replace wetland impacts resulting from the repair, rehabilitation, reconstruction, or replacement of currently serviceable existing state, city, county, or town roads necessary to meet state or federal design or safety standards to requirements.

The cooperative agreement, signed in 2005, highlights an effective working relationship between two state agencies with a common goal of replacing unavoidable wetland impacts with high-quality replacements. During 2008-2009, BWSR received 256 applications to replace 182 acres of wetland impacts from local road authorities, and 27 acres of wetland impacts from 22 of 40 MnDOT road projects at an estimated cost of \$5 million.

## Other Outside Funding in 2008-2009

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources provided \$625,000 for the Farm Bill Assistance Partnership, which provides staff that work in some SWCDs to promote conservation programs directly to landowners. BWSR, DNR, Pheasants Forever, and SWCDs have continued this partnership that began in 2002. In FY2008-2009, this partnership provided funds for 20.33 FTEs in 31 SWCDs.