

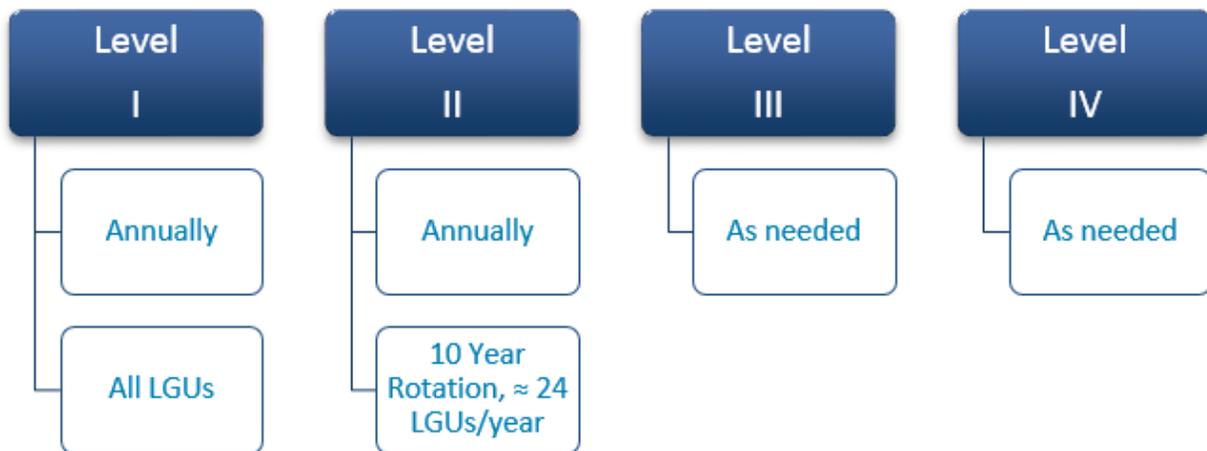


Tracking Performance with PRAP

August 2016 Snapshots

Since 2008, BWSR's Performance Review and Assistance Program (PRAP) has monitored and assessed the performance of Minnesota's local water management entities. While the program was created as by statute, with the intention of assessing performance, BWSR has expanded the program goal to focus on **assisting these local government partners to be the best they can be in their management of Minnesota's land and water resources.**

The review portion of the program consists of four levels to assess performance ranging from statewide oversight in Level I, to a focus on individual local government unit (LGU) performance in Levels II and III, and to remediation in Level IV.



Level I is an annual tabulation of required plans and reports for all LGUs.

Level II is a routine, interactive review intended to cover all LGUs at least once every 10 years. A Level II review evaluates progress on plan implementation, operational effectiveness, and partner relationships. This review includes assessing compliance with Level II performance standards.

Level III is an in-depth assessment of an LGU's performance problems and issues. A Level III review is initiated by BWSR or the LGU and usually involves targeted assistance to address specific performance needs.

Level IV is for those LGUs that have significant performance deficiencies, and includes BWSR Board action to assign penalties as authorized by statute. Levels I through III are designed to avoid the need for Level IV. To date, there has not been a need for BWSR to conduct a Level IV review.

PRAP Assistance

In 2012, BWSR developed the PRAP Assistance program to provide financial assistance to LGUs for improving operating performance and executing planned goals and objectives. Since the program started, more than \$73,000 has been awarded to LGUs around Minnesota. Priority is given to applicants submitting projects related to eligible PRAP Level II, III, or IV recommendations, but other organizations are also eligible. The grants are made on a cost-share, reimbursement basis with a cap of \$10,000 per LGU. The application process

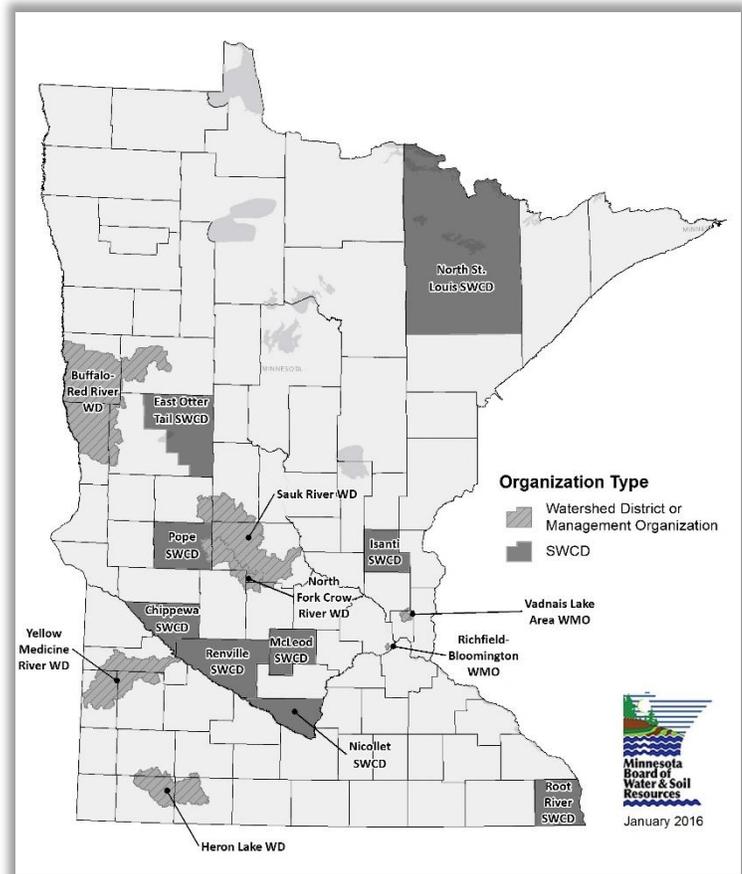
requires basic information about the need, the proposed use of funds, a timeline, and the source of match dollars. BWSR staff assess the LGU need as part of the application review process, and grants are awarded on a first-come, first-serve basis as long as funds are available.

The grant provided to Renville Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is a good example of how these funds can be used to improve performance. In 2015, Renville SWCD requested assistance in planning for anticipated staff changes. The SWCD knew two of its long time staff would be retiring soon, and were concerned that their departure would create a void in their delivery of conservation services to residents.

BWSR approved a PRAP grant request for the Renville SWCD Board to hire a consultant to identify and evaluate opportunities to better deliver resource protection in Renville County.

The PRAP assistance grant led to the identification of additional staffing needs, and ultimately in the hiring of a new technician who is working directly with landowners focusing on the new buffer program and CRP. According to SWCD Manager Holly Hatlewick, “The new technician has allowed the SWCD to focus on targeted resource protection and better outreach to landowners, while allowing our existing technician to focus on other SWCD programs.”

In 2015, BWSR changed some of the application requirements for PRAP assistance funds, and provided more clarity about what types of activities and expenses are eligible for the grants. The new guidance and application information maintains the streamlined process used in the past, but now asks applicants to describe how their Board will be involved in the project, to outline a scope of work, and to provide more detailed budget information as part of the application. Potential applicants can find information on the BWSR website <http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/PRAP/index.html>



PRAP Assistance Grants, 2012-2015