



Making the Wetland Conservation Act Work

December 2014 Snapshots

Since 1991, the City of Plymouth has had the responsibility of administering the state's Wetland Conservation Act (WCA), using that role to work with its citizens and developers to shape growth. The Wetland Conservation Act was passed by legislation in 1991 to protect Minnesota's wetlands from impacts that affect the number of wetlands, their quality and biological diversity, while allowing for replacement when there aren't other options.



Plymouth has seen firsthand how working with the WCA has positively impacted city development. Today, many neighborhoods are designed around existing wetlands, instead of over them. The result is a landscape that isn't just aesthetically pleasing, but better equipped to handle high water events because of natural drainage opportunities.

"Today, many developers work wetlands right into their designs so there's minimal impact to the resource," Plymouth Water Resources Manager Derek Asche said. "The end result is wetlands that stay intact, benefiting both the city's natural resources and our drainage needs."



The protection of wetlands also has an integral role in the city's stormwater system. Working within both federal and state stormwater standards, the city is able to integrate wetlands into their stormwater infrastructure. "There's a system for how the water is cleaned before discharge into a wetland, where it ultimately goes. This system assists the city and our landowners, reducing the risk of flooding and water in their basements," Asche said.

The City of Plymouth works with BWSR on WCA compliance and permitting, a relationship that has been productive over the years. Asche also credits the City Council and others within city government for helping make the program a success.

"BWSR's been very consistent in how it handles WCA applications and expectations are always clear," Asche noted. "Because the permitting process is the same

whether the application is from the City or a private developer, we're able to help folks on our end understand and navigate the process, which is a definite plus."

Navigating regulations and requirements can be complicated, but the partnership between BWSR and the City of Plymouth demonstrates how multiple agencies can work together in ways that satisfy both natural resource goals and city development needs.