



An Inside Look at Grants Administration

July 2015 Snapshots

Support from state government is an essential part of making conservation work in Minnesota happen. Grants from the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) provide funding to local units of government to deliver soil and water conservation services to their communities. These grant funds support and increase the ability of local units of governments to implement programs and, provide funds to assist landowners who install conservation practices on their land to benefit state water and soil resources.

The process of applying for, receiving, and using grant dollars requires patience and attention to detail to make sure the project is a success.

First, a local government unit such as a soil and water conservation district, watershed district, county, city, etc., applies for a specific grant, with the project needs and plans in mind. This application then undergoes a review and ranking process by BWSR – and, sometimes, partner agencies - to prioritize projects and use grant money effectively to meet legislative intent. Finally, approved applicants hear the good news.

While the first stage in the grant process is complete, work has really just begun. Grantees are responsible for processing grant agreements, keeping financial records, reporting on the status of the grant project, complying with grant program requirements, implementing the projects, and much more.

Luckily, grantees aren't on their own. BWSR grants staff have created and maintained the BWSR Grants Administrative Manual (found on the BWSR website) to help grantees understand the administrative and programmatic requirements to successfully implement a local grant project or program. BWSR Board Conservationists also work with individual local units of government to help them as they take a project from start to finish.

"The grants process can be difficult to navigate," said BWSR Grants Coordinator Wayne Zellmer. "BWSR is committed to supporting local government units and partners in their conservation projects by working to make the grants process as clear and simple as possible."

The relationship is a win for everyone. While the administrative side of grants doesn't take up the spotlight, it ensures that public dollars are put to use in the most effective and efficient way possible. Our natural resources benefit from the investment, and BWSR makes certain to be a responsible steward of those public funds.

In 2014, BWSR granted over \$41 million to support the work of local governments, who work on projects with private landowners to improve and protect the quality of Minnesota's soil and water. Over 80% of



Attendees of the 2014 BWSR Board Tour learn about a Clean Water Fund grant-supported project at the Oneka Ridge Golf Course in Hugo.

BWSR's total funding annually goes out the door to support local government conservation work. Grants support the work being done throughout the state, enabling local governments and other organizations to roll up their sleeves and get to work on behalf of Minnesota's natural resources. It's a partnership that works.