



Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources

Senate Environment, Climate, and Legacy Committee

John Jaschke | Executive Director
Andrea Fish | Assistant Director

m MINNESOTA

January 21, 2025

1

Our Vision and Mission

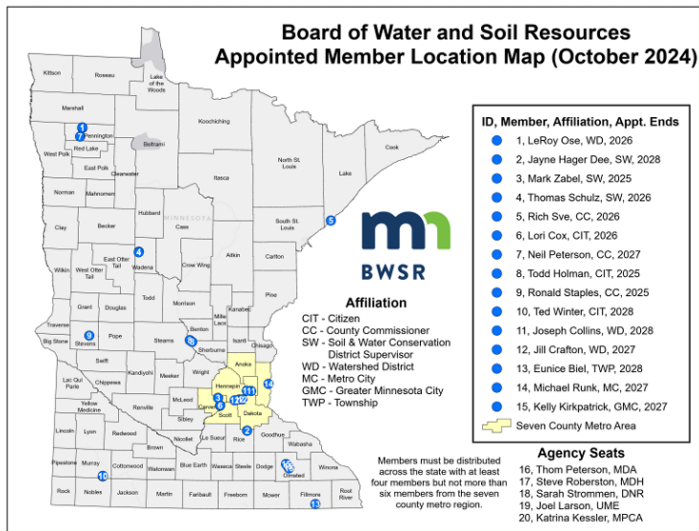


Vision:
All of Minnesota benefits from lands and waters that are ecologically and economically sustainable.

Mission:
Work with partners to improve and protect Minnesota's land and water resources.

2

BWSR Structure



Governor-Appointed 20-member board:

- Local Govts
- Citizens
- State Agencies



3

Who We Work With

- **88** Soil and Water Conservation Districts
- **45** Watershed Districts
- **87** Counties
- Joint Powers Organizations
- State and Federal agencies
- Agricultural and Environmental NGOs
- Tribal Governments

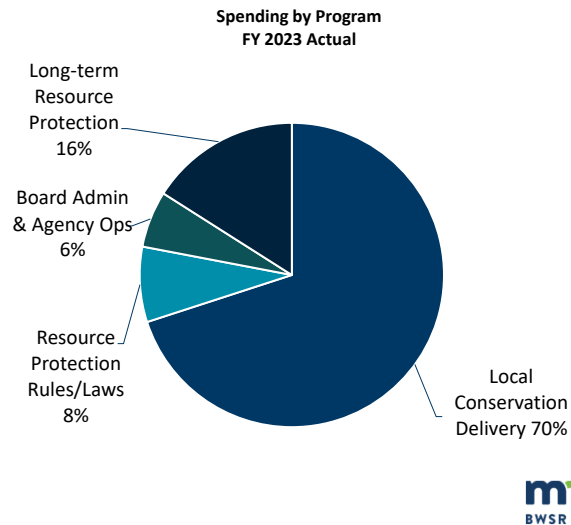
**Focus on Minnesota's private lands –
76% of the state**



4

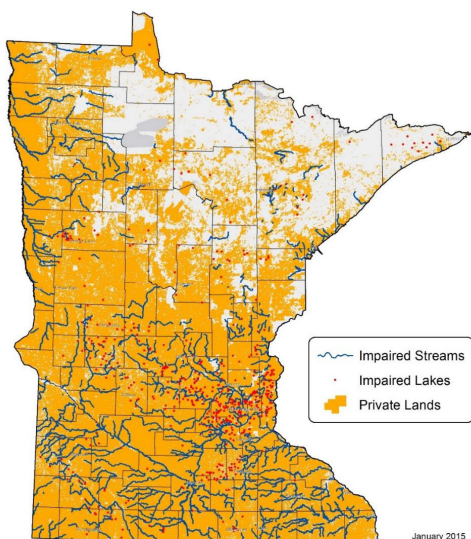
Business Model

- **Local delivery system**
(Counties, Cities, SWCDs, Watershed Districts/WMOs, NGOs, Tribal Govts)
- **On-the-ground conservation results**



5

Partnership with Private Landowners



- 76% of Minnesota's lands are privately-held
- Many of our programs directly impact privately held land of all sizes – farms, utilities, and residences.
 - **RIM** Reserve Conservation Easement Program has successfully restored and protected more than 300,000 acres of private lands over the past 30 years
 - One of our most popular programs, **Lawns to Legumes**, focuses on residential properties and neighborhoods

m
BWSR

6

Statutory Authorities

- 12A – [Natural Disaster, State Assistance](#)
- 103A – [Water Policy and Information](#)
- 103B – [Water Planning and Project Implementation](#)
- 103C – [Soil and Water Conservation Districts](#)
- 103D – [Watershed Districts](#)
- 103E – [Drainage](#)
- 103F – [Protection of Water Resources](#)
- 103G – [Waters of the State](#)
- 103H – [Groundwater Protection](#)
- 114D – [Clean Water Legacy Act](#)



7

Local Government Roads Wetland Replacement Program MN Statutes 103G.222



- Larger, higher-quality wetland mitigation
- More cost-efficient
- Expedited permitting



8

Soil Health Practices Program

M.S. 103F.06



- Voluntary and locally-led
- Practices on sensitive lands to slow water and address surface and groundwater quality.
- Provides climate resiliency and carbon sequestration.

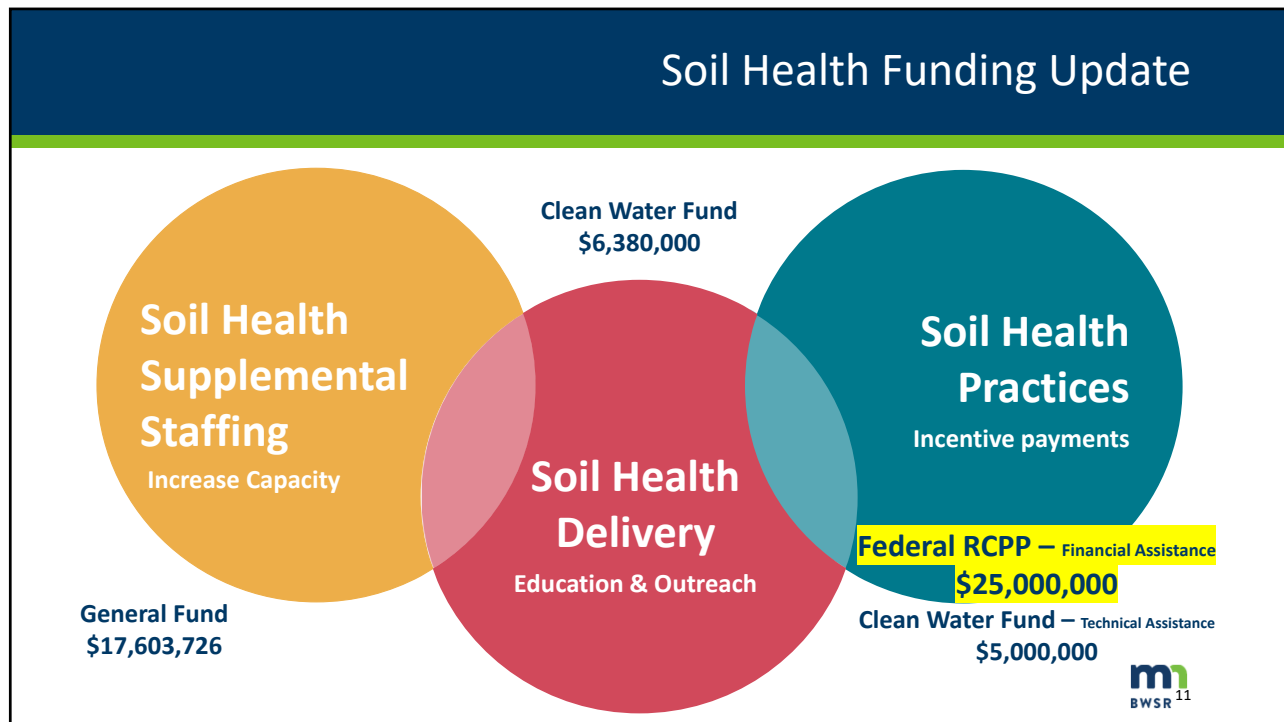


9

Examples - Soil Health Practices



10



11

Water Quality and Storage Program

M.S. 103F.05

Increasing climate resiliency

Goals

- Increase water storage capacity
- Control water rates
- Protect infrastructure

The image shows a large, circular water storage pond (detention basin) in a rural landscape. The pond is surrounded by green fields and trees, with a dirt road leading to it. The BWSR logo is in the bottom right corner.

12

Water Quality and Storage Program

M.S. 103F.05

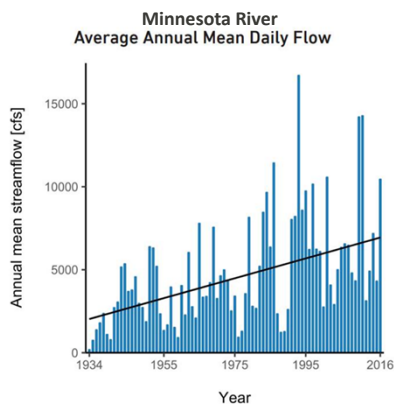
New Federal funding:
\$21 million in NRCS RCPP
funds awarded in
October 2024

16 grants awarded so far
totaling \$5.5 million



13

Accelerated Water Storage Program



- Adapt to changing climate
- Acquire, design, and construct projects to control water volume and rate
- Voluntary and locally-led



14

BWSR Living Landscapes Initiatives



- Encourage individual actions that increase carbon storage and establish landscapes to conserve and enhance biodiversity.

Lawns to Legumes Habitat Friendly Utilities Program Habitat Enhancement Landscape Program

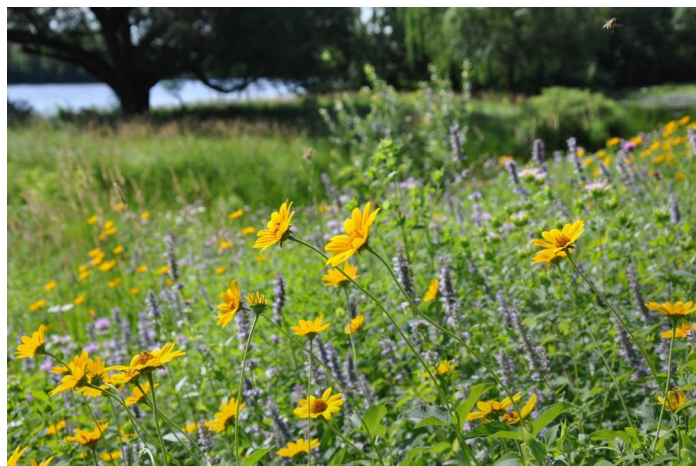


15

Habitat Enhancement Landscape Program (HELP) M.S. 103B.106

Provides financial and technical assistance to establish and enhance habitat on existing conservation lands, such as easements

\$3.4 million awarded to 12 organizations and governments last year



16

BWSR Pollinator Habitat Funding: Habitat Friendly Utilities

M.S. 103B.105

Provides financial and technical assistance to establish habitat within solar, wind, pipeline and electrical transmission corridors



17

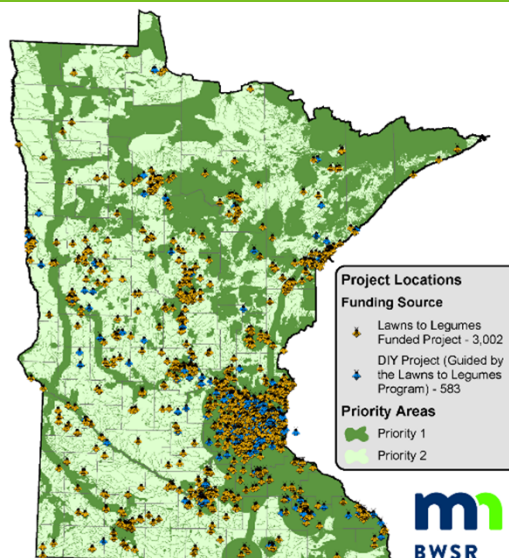
Lawns to Legumes

M.S. 103B.104

Reimburses residents \$400 for creating new pollinator habitat in their yards

More than 5,000 projects installed since 2019

Projects in all 87 Minnesota counties



18

Lawns to Legumes

270 volunteer coaches assist participants

More than 80 local businesses supported

More than 14 million square feet of pollinator habitat created

13,000 trees and shrubs planted



19

Lawns to Legumes Pollinator Pathways Grants

Grants for SWCDs, NGOs, Tribes, schools to create pollinator habitat programs for individual neighborhoods and communities

42 grants awarded since 2019



20

Private Lands Conservation Easements M.S. 103F.515



Climate Action via the Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve Program

- Grassland/Working Land Restorations
- Peatland Restorations
- Mitigation and Resiliency for Existing State Easements

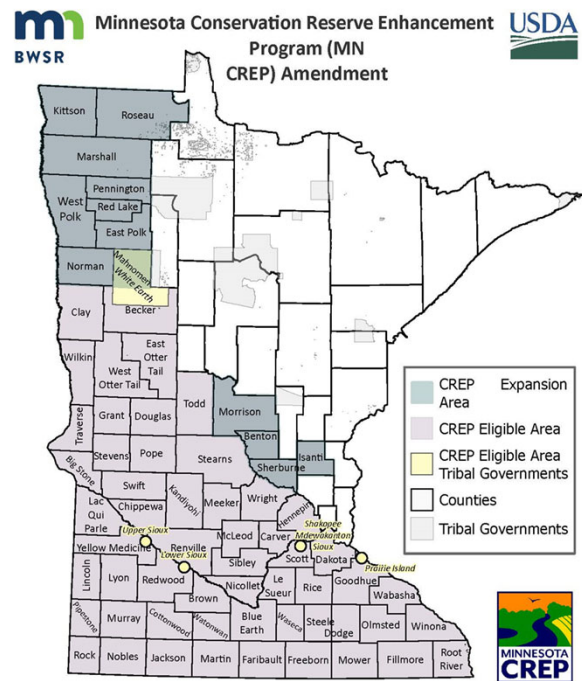


21

MN CREP

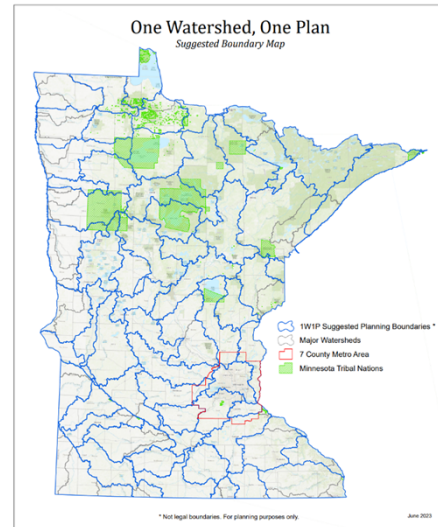
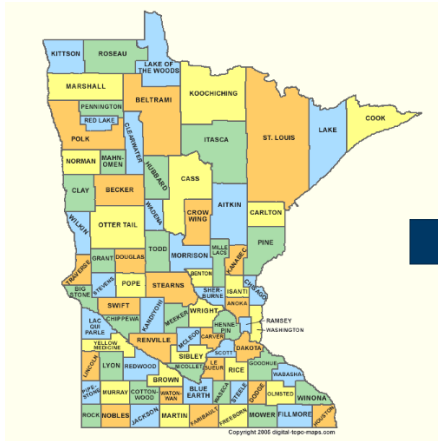
Agreement amended/extended
January 2025

- adds 12 new counties
- increases acreage cap from 60,000 to 75,000
- Adds private well protection practices
- Fed:State funding leverage 70:30



22

MN's Watershed Management Transformation



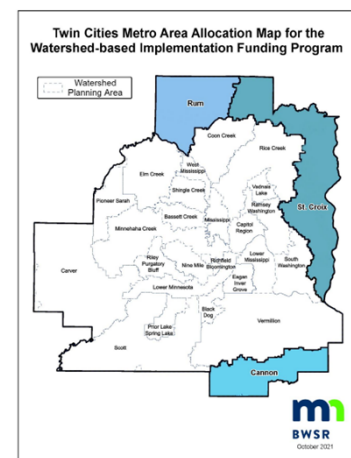
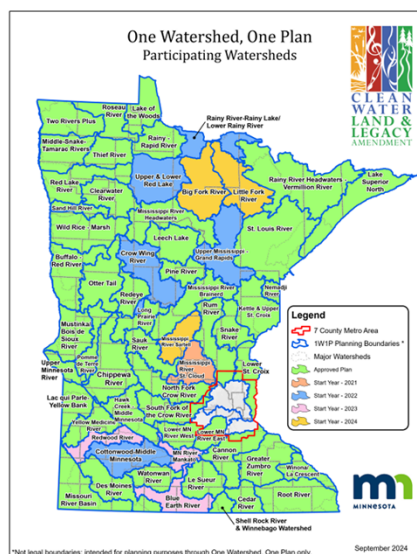
23

Watershed-Based Approach to Resource Management

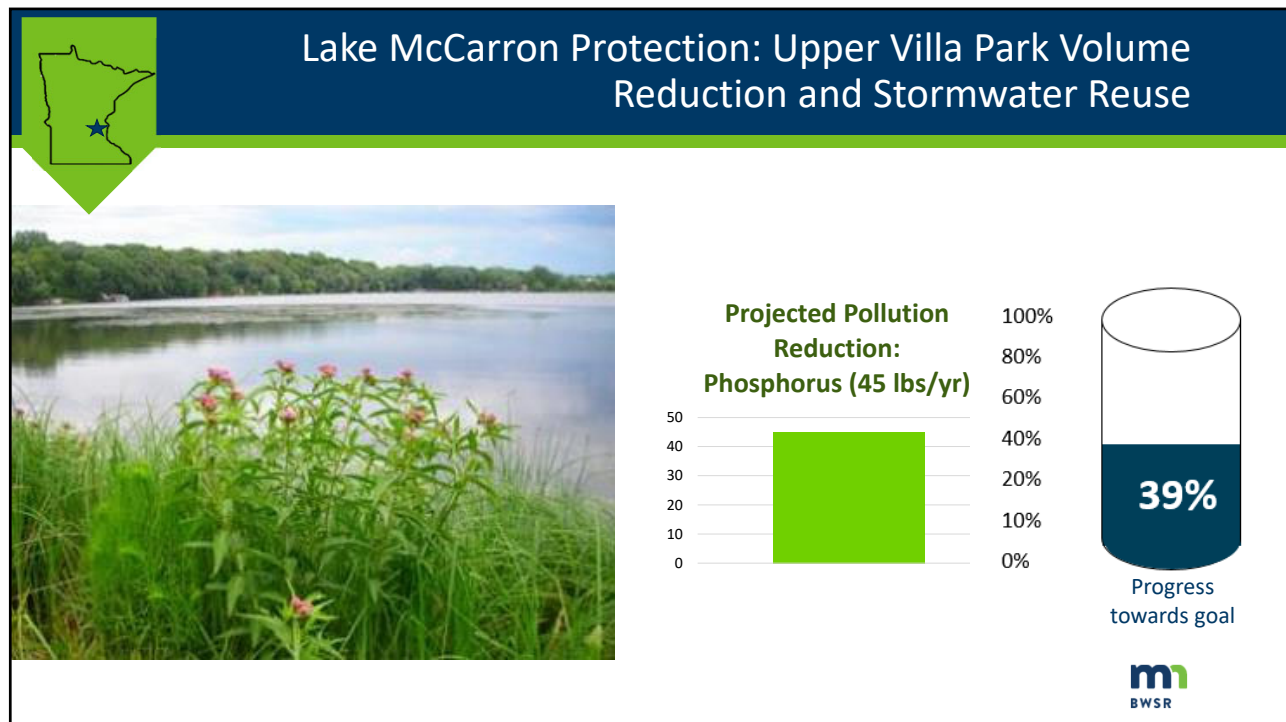


All 60 planning areas now participating in One Watershed, One Plan

- 48 plans approved
- 6 plans in review
- 6 plans in development



24



25



26

BWSR Contacts

John Jaschke
Executive Director
john.jaschke@state.mn.us
612-202-3815

Andrea Fish
Assistant Director
andrea.fish@state.mn.us
612-616-5112

Michael Nelson
Legislative Coordinator
michael.nelson@state.mn.us
651-539-2598



27



Thank you



28