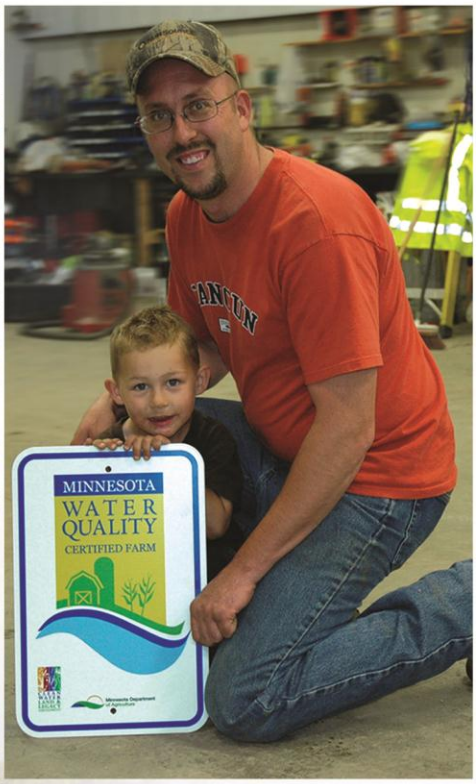
Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program

Certifying that Minnesota's farms and waters can prosper together

January 30, 2015



Photograph of Chisago County by Kent Larson

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

CLEAN WATER LAND & LEGACY AMENDMENT

Minnesota Department of Agriculture

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Producers and landowner participants have been anonymously surveyed about their experience with the program. Quotes taken directly from these surveys are included throughout this report.

Pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 3.197, the cost of preparing this report was approximately $1200.

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Legislation

In 2013 the Minnesota Department of Agriculture received an appropriation from Minnesota's Clean Water Fund of:

> $1,500,000 the first year and $1,500,000 the second year to implement a Minnesota agricultural water quality certification program. This appropriation is available until June 30, 2018.

The 88th legislature additionally passed a bill establishing the Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP) in Minnesota Statutes Chapter 17 (17.9891 – 17.993). The statute designates a biennial reporting requirement per section 17.992 below:

> The commissioner, in consultation with the Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program Advisory Committee, commissioner of natural resources, commissioner of the Pollution Control Agency, and Board of Water and Soil Resources, shall issue a biennial report to the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative committees with jurisdiction over agricultural policy on the status of the program.

Introduction

The Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP) is a voluntary opportunity for farmers and agricultural landowners to take the lead in implementing conservation practices that protect our water. Those who implement and maintain approved farm management practices will be certified and in turn obtain regulatory certainty for a period of ten years.

Lisa and Tom Hoekstra, certified farmers from Plainview, MN

Through this program, certified producers receive regulatory certainty, recognition and priority for technical and financial assistance. Certified producers are deemed to be in compliance with any new water quality rules or laws during the period of certification. Certified producers may use their status to promote their business as protective of water quality. Producers seeking certification can obtain specially designated technical and financial assistance to implement practices that promote water quality.

Through this program the public receives assurance that certified producers are using conservation practices to protect Minnesota's lakes, rivers and streams.

This program uniquely responds to challenges in conservation. Producers develop and maintain comprehensive, effective, and economical conservation for ten years and realize financial and productivity rewards without an ongoing payment for doing so. The certification assessment process assesses every acre of the entire operation, instilling whole-farm conservation planning, and determines only those places where conservation treatments are needed, rather than self-selected single-site, single-treatment adoption. Rented land is treated equally for resource concerns by providing for both producers and landlords to be certified and, further, certification provides for non-farming landowners to obtain professionally-developed conservation plans for every parcel they own that can be directly incorporated into their leases.

"Participating in this program can make me more aware of what I do and the effect I have on my surroundings."

Program Background

The Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program was formally initiated through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed by Governor Dayton, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Vilsack and then Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Jackson. This MOU outlined the need for the establishment of a stakeholder advisory committee to provide recommendations on the development of the program. The advisory committee consisted of representation from Minnesota Corn Research and Promotion Council, County Government, Crop Consultants, Minnesota Farm Bureau, Minnesota Farmers Union, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Minnesota Corn Growers Association, Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy, and Minnesota Soybean Growers Association. It is through this widely representative committee and their expertise and support that the MAWQCP has been implemented and has gained participation from producers.

Governor Mark Dayton, USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack, and former U.S. EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson signed the MOU in 2012.

Members of the Advisory Committee listen to certified farmer Ken Schefers talk about treating open tile intakes.

The Advisory Committee's recommendations were passed into statute resulting in support from both the Executive and Legislative branches of Minnesota state government. Clean Water Funds were appropriated for the implementation of the program. Governor Dayton signed an Executive Order establishing the partnership of the four state agencies that address water quality policy: the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, the Board of Water and Soil Resources, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. This assures that these government agencies have a vested interest legally, financially, and programmatically in the success and sustainability of this program. In addition, the number of project partners supporting this effort has grown from private industry and charitable foundation sectors, such as The McKnight Foundation, Sand County Foundation, Agri Drain Corporation, GNP Company, Ecosystem Services Exchange, and Environmental Initiative.

Certification Process

MAWQCP Certification is a three step process that achieves the objective of developing a certification program that functions to accelerate on-farm adoption of recommended water quality management practices. These steps consist of:

1. Application

A producer enters the program and verifies compliance with existing laws and rules applicable to water quality such as: National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permits; Minnesota Wetlands Conservation Act; Subsurface Sewage Treatment System requirements; Federal Insecticide, Rodenticide and Fungicide Act; Minnesota pesticide and fertilizer requirements; or Minnesota shore land ordinances. The producer is notified that all data is private by law and all information including the certification status of the producer cannot be publicly revealed unless an Informed Consent form is signed.

2. Assessment

The MAWQCP Assessment Tool is used to guide analysis of an agricultural operation's risk to water quality on a field by field and crop by crop basis. The Assessment Tool is a unitless index from 0-10 with a threshold score of 8.5 eligible for certification. The assessment process examines each parcel and crop for physical field characteristics, nutrient management factors, tillage management factors, pest management factors,

irrigation management factors, tile drainage management factors, and conservation practices to identify areas that need additional conservation treatments.

3. Verification

Field verification establishes that the practices and commitments of certified producers are accurate and that there are no additional resource concerns to be addressed. If resource concerns are found, participants are referred to their local SWCD/NRCS for technical assistance to remedy the problem. Audits and verification of these commitments will occur randomly throughout the certification period.

Field verification of cover crops taking place on Chuck Uphoff's certified farm in Melrose, MN.

In the first step, producers seeking certification are directed, if needed, to resources for technical or financial assistance in meeting compliance with existing state water quality laws and rules. The activities and practices provided are unique to each individual farm's circumstance, but, for example, may consist of a local partner developing an EQIP contract with a producer for nutrient management in complying with State of Minnesota feedlot rules.

In the second step of MAWQCP Certification, water quality resource concerns are identified on a parcel by parcel basis. The producer works with a local conservation professional to develop and determine appropriate and agreeable conservation practice prescriptions to address the resource concerns identified in the assessment process.

> ***"[I would tell farmers to] just go through the process to see where they score. They maybe would not get a passing score, but they might be able to improve some things to help make our water quality better and safer for all."***

In the third step, an on-site visit with the producer provides the opportunity to verify physical features, review management strategies, and ensure resource concerns are being met.

Over the period of certification, random audits of producers will be conducted to ensure compliance with the program. All data collected under the program that identifies a producer, or a producer's location, are considered nonpublic data. However, the producer may sign an Informed Consent form and MDA and local personnel may legally identify the producer by name or location.

Ultimately, in actual practice, conducting assessments for MAWQCP certification brings agricultural producers into a conversation with a MAWQCP-licensed conservation professional about their resource management, production goals and stewardship strategies for each and every one of their fields, pasture parcels, or whatever type of land they are managing. This

aspect of the process has universally, and predictably, been deeply engaging for producers. These men and woman know the land they farm in greatest detail, have clear goals for managing it, and have an irrepressible curiosity about any advancements or alternatives related to their management of each parcel. And when risks are identified, the assessment process equally engages and empowers them in finding the most appropriate, efficient, economical and effective response for mitigating that risk.

Assessment Tool and Evaluation

Certification of agricultural operations in the MAWQCP is the result of the three-step process that is anchored by the assessment tool that has been developed for assessing the risks posed to water quality by an operation's management.

Two important projects have been undertaken during the pilot phase of the project, including the development of an online version of the assessment tool and the completion of an assessment tool analysis.

Online Assessment Tool

In June of 2014, a Request for Proposals was sent out to private contractors to adapt the assessment tool to a more accessible online format. During the pilot phase, the assessment tool was run as a beta-version Microsoft Access database, which is functional, but data-entry intensive. In August 2014, Houston Engineering was selected after a competitive RFP process, and the online tool is scheduled for release in spring 2015. New functionality will allow interested producers and the general public to explore the tool and increase efficiency for certifiers. Integrated mapping capability and helpful calculators will increase ease of use and enhance water quality education.

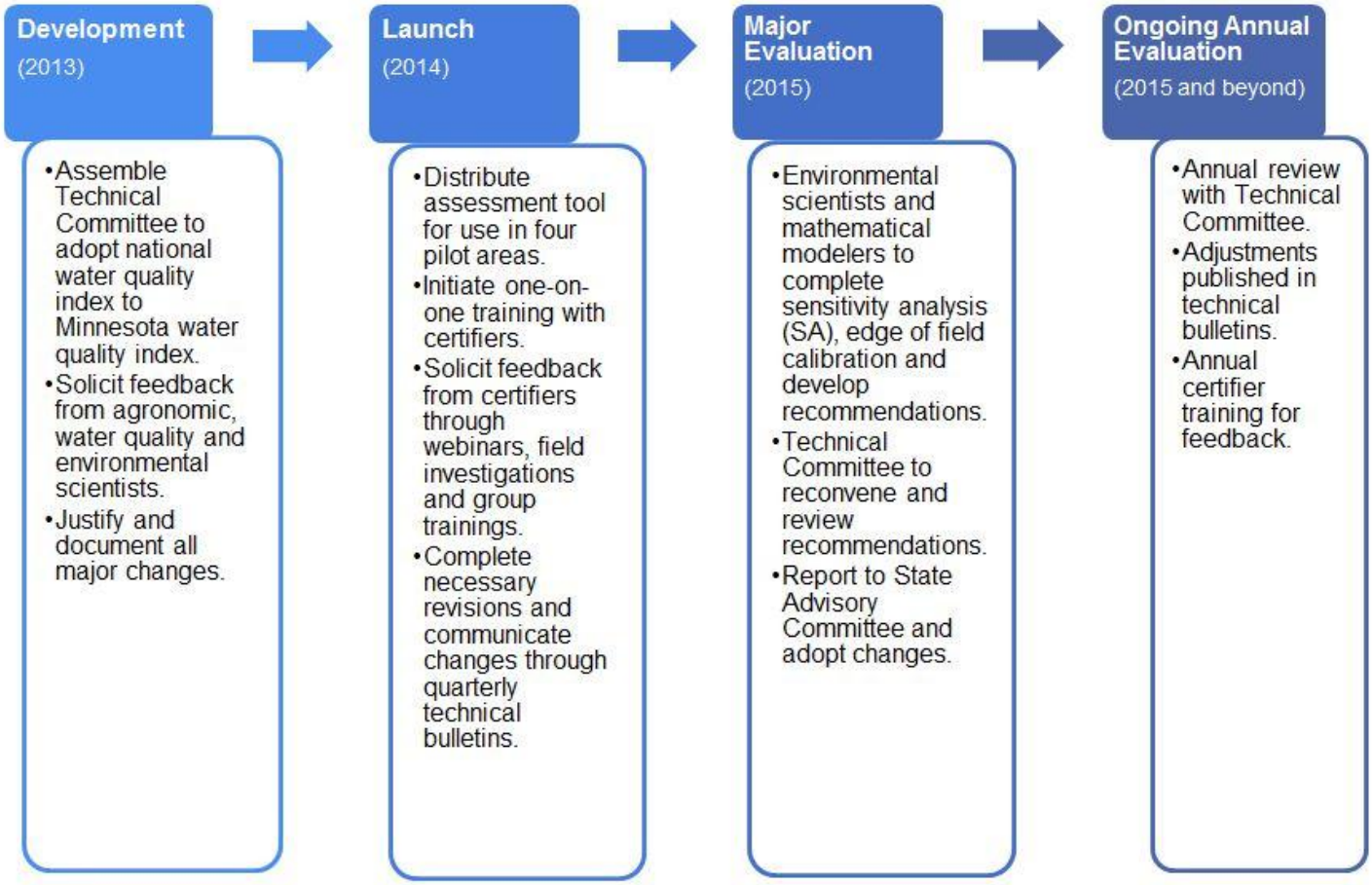
Quick Facts about the Assessment Tool:

- Much like a stock index, the intent of the tool is to aggregate complex information into an easy-to-understand index number. This number allows comparison across different management practices, soil types and agro-ecosystems.
- The higher the number, the better management a producer has implemented to reduce their risk of negatively impacting water quality.
- The tool assesses the risk to both ground and surface water resources.
- The assessment tool was adapted from the Water Quality Index for Agriculture developed by the NRCS West National Technology Support Center. A team of experts from state agencies and the University of Minnesota adapted it to Minnesota conditions.
- The assessment tool is run on every parcel and every crop that may be grown on that parcel.

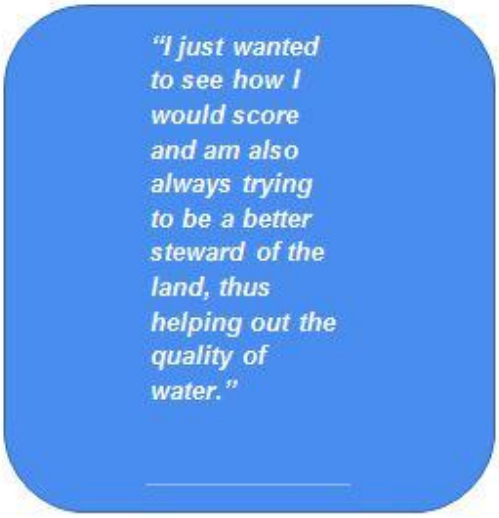
Assessment Tool Evaluation

Established program policy is to constantly monitor and review the assessment process for improvement. The important role filled by the assessment tool is among the major elements in achieving our project outcome goals. For this reason, the following evaluation process and protocols have been developed for the assessment tool as a central component of project evaluation.

The assessment tool development and evaluation process:



To ensure the assessment tool is accurately assessing risk, an examination of the parameters, scoring and weighting has been established. Improved understanding of the tool can be used to build public confidence in the Certification Program. A team of experts, including representatives from engineering, mathematical modeling, and environmental science, has been assembled and data from actual on-the-ground, edge-of-field monitoring networks obtained. The objective is to evaluate and make recommendations to improve the assessment tool through the use of sensitivity analysis, regression of the index against actual water quality parameters, and quantification of water quality stressors as they relate to certified farms through environmental modeling. Stearns County Soil and Water Conservation District, Kieser and Associates, and representatives from the University of Minnesota began this analysis project in August 2014. The project is funded in part by The McKnight Foundation. The MAWQCP

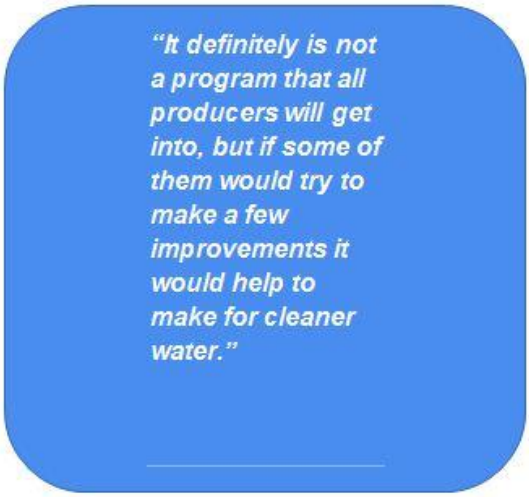


Technical Committee—which includes representatives from Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Board of Water and Soil Resources, University of Minnesota, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Department of Agriculture—is tasked with reviewing outcomes from the analysis. Recommendations to the State Advisory Committee and final report will be available February 4th, 2015.

The evaluation contains the following components:

Local Sensitivity Analysis (LSA)

Team members complete LSA to determine how the variation in parameters affects the assessment tool output. Up to five water quality stressors (quantity, pesticides, nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment) are considered in the sensitivity analysis. The LSA evaluates how the output of the model responds when the value of each input is changed individually. To conduct the LSA, the input parameter values are adjusted using a predetermined percent change based on sample data collected from MAWQCP pilot areas. Each input parameter is then ranked by the relative influence on the index result. The ranked input parameters can be used to direct future improvement to the certification program.



Global Sensitivity Analysis (GSA)

Team members conduct a GSA on multiple parameters and change the values of all factors in the group simultaneously. The GSA improves understanding of the weight attributed to groups of input parameters by assessing the sensitivity of the output to changes applied to the entire group. The GSA groups the following stressors: phosphorus, nitrogen, sediment, quantity and pesticides.

Comparison of select scenarios to edge of field data and model

Team members determine agronomic and physical factors that represent 'typical' scenarios. Team members complete regression analysis of actual edge of field data and assessment tool runs. This analysis identifies the parameters and stressors that are most correlated and inform scoring and weighting of the assessment tool. This improves the understanding of variability associated with different field physical factors and cultural practices.

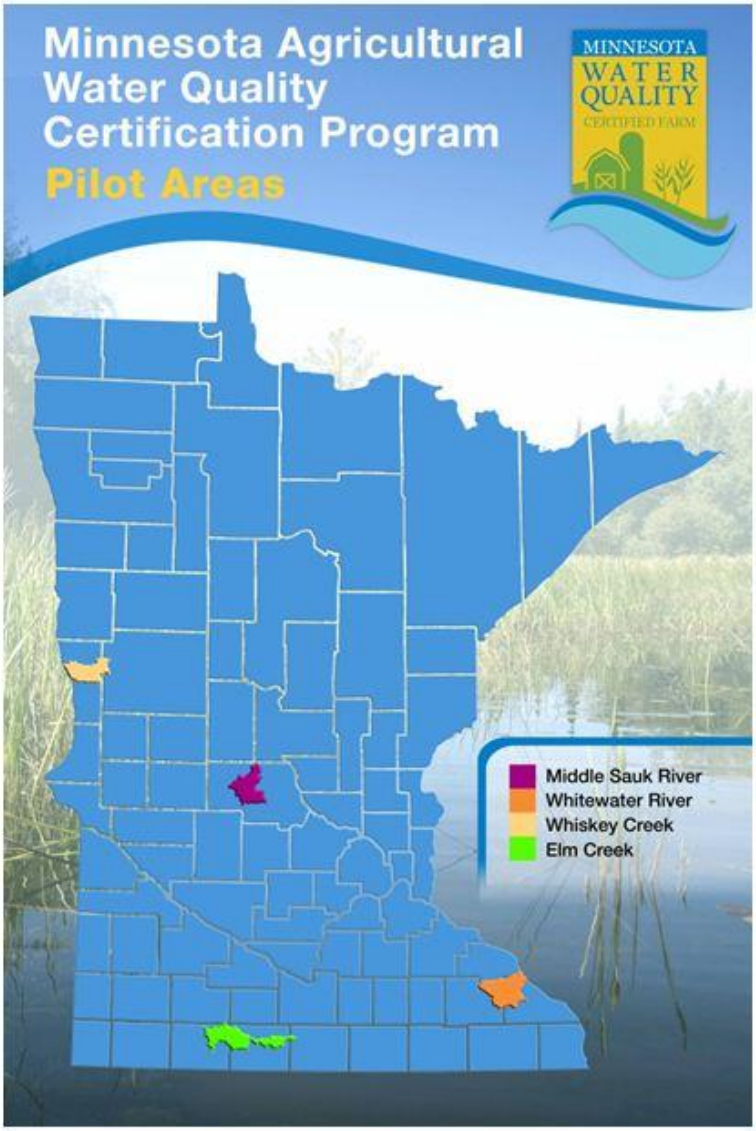
Recommendations

Based on the findings of the LSA, GSA and modeling, recommendations are made for improving the assessment tool. Recommendations include specific and detailed steps with proposed methodologies. A draft final report is provided to the MAWQCP Technical Committee and State Advisory Committee for review, revision and approval.

Pilot Implementation

Pilot Areas

In June of 2013 the MAWQCP selected four small-watershed pilot project areas out of a pool of applicants from local watershed and soil and water conservation districts, joint powers boards and various other collaborations. Each pilot received an annual allocation at $106,250 shared between NRCS and MDA funding, for technical assistance and the associated costs to manage the pilot. The pilots were established to refine details and gather feedback from local producers and conservation professionals. All producers or agricultural landowners that operate within the four pilot areas are eligible for certification. These pilots have further programmatic support from private foundation, non-profit organization, and agribusiness participants. This pilot process is scheduled to sunset no later than June 2016 with a statewide program planned following the end of the pilot period as defined by the Commissioner of Agriculture.



Local advisory committees with membership that includes producers, crop consultants, educators, SWCD and County representatives were established in each watershed to guide the pilot. This has included resource areas of concern and developing ranking criteria for the pilots' allocation of NRCS EQIP funds (up to $750,000 annually in each pilot area). In addition, MDA made $80,000 available for each pilot watershed for producer incentives to address these resource concerns. Eligible expenses are determined by the BWSR CWF guidelines.

The pilot areas are located in four distinct regions of the state; these areas represent a diversity of Minnesota's agricultural landscapes, cropping systems and water resource concerns. They are further meant to leverage the strength of existing local partnerships and each of the pilot areas is unique in governance/implementation structure. The pilot areas consist of Elm Creek, the Middle Sauk River, Whiskey Creek and the Whitewater River.

USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack announced the pilot areas in June of 2013.

Elm Creek

The Elm Creek pilot area in Cottonwood, Faribault, Jackson, Martin and Watonwan counties is coordinated by Rural Advantage, a local non-profit with technical assistance provided by Rural Advantage staff and partner counties' SWCDs. The Elm Creek watershed lies in south central Minnesota and travels through the eastern part of Jackson County, across Martin County and joins the Blue Earth River just into Faribault County near Winnebago. The watershed comprises 173,000 acres in those five counties. The primary land use in Elm Creek is agricultural with corn, soybeans and swine the main commodities produced.

Middle Sauk River

The Middle Sauk River pilot area in Stearns County is coordinated by the Stearns County SWCD which also provides technical assistance. The Middle Sauk River watershed covers more than 50 percent of Stearns County, the top dairy-producing county in the state of Minnesota. The agriculture industry in general is a key driver in the local economy. This watershed is largely cultivated crops and pasture/hay, with nearly 36 percent corn and soybean row crops and 30 percent pasture/hay. There is a large bovine presence in the watershed with, on average, approximately 14.25 bovine per square mile. The Middle Sauk River watershed covers 175,640 acres, with approximately 124,258 acres of cropland.

Whiskey Creek

The Whiskey Creek pilot area covers 137,130 acres in Otter Tail and Wilkin counties and is coordinated by the Buffalo-Red River Watershed District with technical assistance provided by the West Otter Tail and Wilkin County SWCDs. The Whiskey Creek drainage area is representative of typical agricultural land use and practices found in northwestern Minnesota. The Whiskey Creek drainage area begins in the Glacial Moraine area (prairie pothole), flows through the Beach Ridge area, and then enters the former Lake Agassiz Lake Bed where it empties into the Red River of the North. Agriculture is the major land use throughout the pilot area and is also the major economic driver. The primary crops include corn, soybeans, sugar beets and wheat. Crops in the watershed have shifted from predominantly small grains to more corn and soybeans over the past 40 years.

Whitewater River

The Whitewater River pilot area in Olmsted, Wabasha and Winona counties is coordinated by the Whitewater Joint Powers Board with technical assistance provided by partner county SWCDs. The Whitewater River Watershed consists of 205,000 acres of primarily agricultural lands in the Driftless region of Southeast Minnesota. Upper reaches of the three main branches lie in the Rochester Plateau, dominated by row crops. Lower portions of the Whitewater Watershed are dissected by steep valleys with wooded slopes. Here, crop fields are smaller with more pasture and hay present. Dairy and beef are the major livestock types in the watershed. Overall, the watershed is 45 percent cropland, 20percent forest, 27percent grassland and 5percent developed. Although most of the Whitewater River Watershed consists of agricultural lands, the area is also one of the most economically important outdoor recreation and tourism destinations in Minnesota. The watershed boasts over 100 miles of trout streams and has two popular state parks.

"We all need to be land stewards while enhancing conservation practices which in turn will improve water quality and reduce environmental destruction."

Technical Staff Training and Development

In its pilot phase, the program is relying on conservation professionals to deliver certification services at the field level. These MAWQCP certifying agents, authorized by the commissioner are current Soil and Water Conservation District employees. These agents conduct initial assessments using the assessment tool, obtain technical and financial assistance and work with state staff for producer certification.

For the sake of efficiency, current structures for training and development are being utilized to ensure these agents have the expertise and accreditation in conservation and agronomy needed to be able to conduct assessments of producers' operations and to provide sound recommendations for improvements. This training is provided by NRCS and BWSR and results in certifications in conservation planning and nutrient management for our agents in the field. MAWQCP staff further develop and deliver program-specific training for performing assessments and knowledge of program policy in group and one-on-one trainings for agents and others involved in program delivery. Webinars are also conducted to inform and update field staff on items of timely interest. To record and institutionalize the policy and protocol developments made, official technical bulletins are published, distributed and made part of the formal program record. The bulletins are reinforced by accompanying webinars for field staff.

Technical program staff reviews certification records.

Going forward, as others outside of the SWCD/NRCS structure join the ranks of those delivering certification services, NRCS's training and certification program for Technical Service Providers (TSPs) will be available for the needed background in conservation planning.

We will also accept the training and certifications attained by Crop Advisors and see to it they have the needed conservation training along with training in our assessment process and program policies. When professional certification in either conservation or agronomy is attained, comprehensive training in the second discipline completed and competency with the MAWQCP assessment process demonstrated, licensure as a Certifying Agent will then be granted.

Knowledge Attitudes and Practice Surveys

To best inform the implementation process, the program engaged the pilot areas in a KAP (knowledge, attitudes and practices) Survey process. The purpose of this study was to; 1) provide MAWQCP with baseline information about the knowledge, attitudes and practices of audiences participating in the pilots; 2) assess the capacity of the producers, communities and local organizations and understand motivational and incentive actions for each; and 3) enable MAWQCP to better scope communications and outreach efforts.

The major focus of this study is agricultural producers and the pilot watershed communities and partners. The KAP study is focusing on the social/civic engagement aspects of the MAWQCP, and explores both how and why individuals in the four pilot sites adopt, or do not adopt, best management practices. The KAP study is also examining residents' constraints in maintaining recommended practices.

The pilot areas' local advisory committees completed a process for identifying the critical issues around water quality and agriculture in their communities. Mail and email surveys were conducted to identify baseline knowledge and practices surrounding these locally-identified issues. After a period of project participation, the same survey is administered to see how knowledge, attitudes and practices have changed.

Landscape features, cropping patterns, and water quality issues vary widely across Minnesota. The KAP study questionnaires were customized to reflect crops, local conditions and water quality concerns in the three pilot watersheds. However, some questions were asked of all respondents and will be directly compared across the three pilot watersheds

In 2014, three first-round KAP studies were conducted in the Middle Sauk, Whiskey Creek and Whitewater pilot areas. Data from the surveys are currently in the process of being analyzed. A total of 1453 surveys were mailed with 474 returned for a 33percent response rate.

Results of the first-round baseline KAP studies will be used to develop educational and outreach messages and information to producers. The studies will be repeated in the future, yielding a second data set that will be used to evaluate program results and impacts.

Pilot Findings

The Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program learned much from the pilot areas about program delivery systems, agency partnerships, community readiness and the certification process.

Certification and the accompanying provision of regulatory certainty are a government function and must be officially delivered through a state or local unit of government – preferably a local unit of government. A non-profit can be a partner in this effort, but not the lead.

Local, experienced conservation professionals connected with a SWCD best deliver certification services in sharing of information and working within an existing conservation delivery infrastructure.

The technical assistance (TA) needs of each operation are different and dependent upon the size of the operation, the physical features of the land, complexity of rotations and the producers' experience in water quality management. The TA investment per producer during the pilot phase ranges from four to 40 hours.

Examples of financial assistance provided to participants include anything from installing a stacking slab for manure storage, planting cover crops following silage harvest, installing a water and sediment control basin, to installing side inlet structures to stabilize stream bank erosion. EQIP contracts ranged anywhere from of $4,141 for a 51 acre cover crop contract to $148,890 for an animal waste facility addressing manure use on 146 acres.

MDA Assistant Commissioner Matthew Wohlman presents certified farmer Henry Evers with his sign.

Incorporating private-public partnerships and supply-chain mechanisms in program operations is another goal of the pilot. One example that is being undertaken is MAWQCP coordination with GNP Company and its efforts to recognize producers who manage their operations for environmental benefits—for instance, energy conservation, water quality, etc. GNP Company's regimen has already incorporated MAWQCP certification as the eligibility standard for a water quality offset credit. Currently, they have committed to making per acre payments to MAWQCP certified producers.

With pilot systems and documents in place, pilot areas began formal MAWQCP certification of agricultural operations in mid-June 2014. As of January 30, 2015, a total of 31 farms representing 12,861 acres have been certified with 84 new conservation practices added as a result of this program. There are over 200 producers at some stage in the certification process, from expressing interest to completing certification.

Certifications by Pilot Area

Pilot Area	Certified Farms	Certified Acres
Elm Creek	1	231
Middle Sauk River	9	2153
Whiskey Creek	5	3151
Whitewater River	16	7326

Outreach Activities

The Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program is a voluntary program. In order to be effective, outreach to producers and landowners is critical to encourage participation and to inform them about opportunities available for their operation. Surveys of program participants show that the ways producers and land owners find out about the program include: local SWCD or NRCS staff, radio, mailings, local newspapers, meetings with landowners, agricultural membership organization meetings, and word of mouth.

Outreach Materials

Informational materials including brochures, postcards, quarterly newsletters and monthly updates have been developed, both electronically and in print, to inform eligible producers and landowners, as well as stakeholders, about the program. A website is maintained highlighting the program background, advisory committee activities and pilot area updates. An email subscription listserv is available for those that want to receive updates about the program. A promotional video was produced in early Spring of 2014.

Presentations and Conferences

Program staff has been invited to present information about the program at a variety of conferences and meetings at the local, state and national level. Over the biennium, MDA program staff have presented at over 20 meetings and events, including national webinars and conferences to over 1000 people. The program has also had a presence at 26 conventions and tradeshows across the state.

Pilot Outreach

Informing the producers and landowners in each pilot watershed about this program has been critical to its success. The outreach activities in the pilot areas have been directed and informed by the local advisory committees. These local advisory committees identified the communications and outreach priorities in their watersheds. These priorities include:

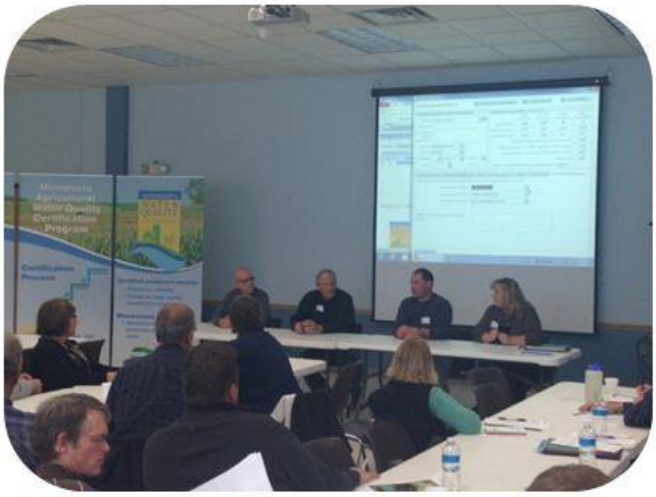
- Local radio advertising and interviews
- Local print media and farm publications
- Promoting through local agricultural organizations
- Group meetings, field days, local events
- Direct mailings
- Websites of local partners
- Video series about the program
- Posters at local coops or ag businesses
- Connect with local FFA/4H groups

Local Media

Radio advertisements featuring certified farmers have been running on radio stations in each pilot area during agricultural shows or the markets. Certified farmers have been interviewed by local radio stations and highlighted in local and agricultural media publications.

Open Houses

Open houses were held in each pilot area in the spring of 2014. The intent for these events was to introduce the producers and landowners in the area to the program, and to solicit interest from attendees. There was an overwhelming response to these events as 232 farmers, landowners and community members attended the six open houses held in the pilot areas. Many attendees requested additional information from pilot staff and have been some of the initial farms certified.



Members of the Whitewater pilot local advisory committee speak on a panel during an open house in St. Charles MN.

Direct Mailings

Direct mailings have been sent to producers and landowners within each of the pilot areas. These mailings include initial informational postcards, contact information, letters announcing events, as well as quarterly newsletters. These mailings are a way to keep producers in the area engaged, and have also been a source for recruitment for the program.

Farm Certifications

The first farms certified in each pilot area held events on their farms during which they were recognized for their conservation efforts by local staff, local advisory committee members and the media. For every certified farm, an MDA commissioner has visited the farm and signed the certification contract with the farmer.

Funding

The biennial Clean Water Fund appropriation to the Minnesota Department of Agriculture to implement the MAWQCP totaled $3,000,000 and is available through FY2018. This appropriation allowed the program to leverage $800,000 in additional funding; $100,000 from The McKnight Foundation, $600,000 from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, and an investment of $100,000 in MAWQCP staff from the Pesticide and Fertilizer Management Division of MDA. Implementation of the MAWQCP will expend $2.9 million in the FY2014 – FY2015 biennium. In consideration of the annual spending requirements that accompanied each of the additional funding sources leveraged, the $800,000 was prioritized for immediate

spending while the Clean Water Funds are available through FY2018. $1,600,000 of total funds have gone directly to local agencies and producers to develop and support on the ground projects

More recently, The Minnesota Department of Agriculture has received a Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) award from NRCS to further develop and expand the MAWQCP beyond the pilot areas and to serve as model for nationwide adoption. The award totals $9 million of match-dependent investment entirely in Greater Minnesota.

Hidden Stream Farms, a certified farm near Elgin, MN

www.mda.state.mn.us/awqcp

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