



# 2019 Performance Review and Assistance Program

Report to the Minnesota Legislature

January 22, 2020

**Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources**

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This report has been prepared for the Minnesota State Legislature by the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) in partial fulfillment of Minnesota Statutes Chapter 103B.102, subdivision 3.

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## MINNESOTA BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES Performance Review and Assistance Program (PRAP)

### Executive Summary

Since 2008, BWSR's Performance Review and Assistance Program has assessed the performance of the local units of government constituting Minnesota's local delivery system for conservation of water and related land resources. These local units of government include 88 soil and water conservation districts, 87 counties, 45 watershed districts and 18 watershed management organizations. The program goal is to assist these local government partners to be the best they can be in their management of Minnesota's land and water resources.

#### **PRAP focuses on three aspects of Local Governmental Unit (LGU) performance:**

- 1) Plan Implementation—how well an LGU's accomplishments meet planned objectives.
- 2) Compliance with performance standards—meeting administrative mandates and following best practices.
- 3) Collaboration and communication—the quality of partner and stakeholder relationships.

BWSR's PRAP uses four levels of review to assess performance ranging from statewide oversight in Level I, to a focus on individual LGU performance in Levels II and III, and to remediation in Level IV.

#### **2019 Program Summary**

- Completed 24 Level II performance reviews, meeting the target set for 2019.
- Surveyed 24 LGUs reviewed in 2017 to assess implementation of BWSR's recommendations for organizational improvements and action items. Of the 24 LGU's contacted, all the LGUs completed the survey. The LGUs reported fully completing 53% of their recommendations, and partially completing another 41% of their recommendations in their 2017 Level II performance review reports. This means that these LGUs took some action on 94% of their recommendations. In 2017, LGUs were given a total of 16 action items. All 16 of the 2017 action items were resolved within 18 months.
- Updated Performance Standards and guidance for soil and water conservation districts, counties, watershed districts and watershed management organizations. BWSR staff will begin using these performance standards for 2020 Level II PRAP Reviews.
- Tracked 238 LGUs' Level I performance.
- Provided PRAP Assistance Grants for 4 local government units in 2019 to implement recommendations from past Level II or Level III performance reviews.
- Continued review of Wetland Conservation Act program implementation as part of Level II and Level III assessments to measure local government unit compliance with this program.
- Continued evaluation of potential key performance measures for PRAP Level II reviews within the framework of the watershed-based One Watershed-One Plan approach to LGU water plan implementation.
- Stressed the importance of measuring outcomes in all 24 Level II performance reviews conducted in 2019. Discussed ways of demonstrating resource outcomes resulting from plan implementation, and specific expectations for reporting resource outcomes by LGUs.
- Added sections reporting results of implementation of water plans and incorporation of best management practices by LGUs. For the 24 local government water plans reviewed in 2019, LGUs had completed or started 89% of the combined 806 action items identified in their 10-year plans. Based on LGU reporting, Minnesota realized a reduction of an estimated 5,811 pounds of phosphorous, 6,069 tons of sediment, and 5,505 tons of soil loss. (See also pages 22-23).

## 2019 Results of Annual Tracking of 238 LGUs' Plans and Reports (PRAP Level I)

Overall compliance with LGU plan revision and reporting requirements improved to 96% in 2019. All drainage buffer reports were submitted on time, and WMO compliance improved to 94% from 89% in 2018, 89% in 2017 and 78% in 2016. Staff efforts will continue in 2020 to improve compliance.

- **Long-range Plan Status:** the number of overdue plans is two in 2019 (*up from 1 in 2018. There were 3 overdue plans in 2017*).
  - Counties: No local water management plans are overdue.
  - Watershed Districts: Two watershed management plans are overdue. (*up from no overdue plans in 2018*).
  - Watershed Management Organizations: No watershed management plans are overdue.
- **LGUs in Full Compliance with Level I Performance Standards: 96%.**
  - Soil & Water Conservation Districts: 96% compliance (85/88).
  - County Water Management: 100% compliance (87/87).
  - Watershed Districts: 87% compliance (39/45).
  - Watershed Management Organizations: 94% compliance (17/18).

## Selected PRAP Program Objectives for 2020

- Track 238 LGUs' Level I performance.
- Continue efforts to improve Level I performance review reporting of all LGUs through LGU cooperation and persistent follow-up by BWSR staff, with a goal of reaching 100% compliance.
- Maintain the target of 24 Level II performance reviews per year.
- Complete up to two Level III performance reviews, if needed, in 2020.
- Provide leadership in enunciating the importance of measuring outcomes in Level II performance reviews, ways of demonstrating resource outcomes resulting from plan implementation, and set specific expectations for reporting resource outcomes by LGUs.
- Survey LGUs from 2018 Level II PRAP reviews to track LGU implementation of PRAP recommendations.
- Continue monitoring and reviewing compliance with Action Items identified during a Level II review. This will allow us to determine if we are meeting the goal of 100% compliance within 18 months for required Action Items.
- Continue the promotion and use of PRAP Assistance Grants to enhance LGU organizational effectiveness.
- Continue updating protocols for PRAP Level I and Level II reviews for performance-based funding for implementation of watershed-based One Watershed-One Plans.
- Utilize new Performance Standards Checklists for counties, soil and water conservation districts, watershed districts and watershed management organizations. (*New for 2020*).
- Evaluate and develop metrics for tracking LGU implementation of the Buffer Program (*New for 2020*).
- Work with BWSR Water Planning Team to develop protocol for tracking, assessment, evaluation and reporting for One Watershed, One Plans (*New for 2020*).

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# What is the Performance Review & Assistance Program?

## Supporting Local Delivery of Conservation Services

PRAP is primarily a performance assessment activity conducted by the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR). The subjects of the assessments are the local governmental units (LGUs) that deliver BWSR's water and land conservation programs and the process is designed to evaluate how well LGUs are implementing their long-range plans. The LGUs reviewed include soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs), watershed districts (WDs), watershed management organizations (WMOs), and the water management function of counties—a total of 238 distinct organizations (*Ramsey Conservation District's duties were transferred to Ramsey County in 2018*). PRAP, authorized in 2007 (see Appendix A), is coordinated by one BWSR central office staff member, with assistance from BWSR's 18 Board Conservationists and 3 regional managers, who routinely work with these LGUs.

## Guiding Principles

PRAP is based on and uses the following principles adopted by the BWSR Board.

- Pre-emptive
- Systematic
- Constructive
- Includes consequences
- Provides recognition for high performance
- Transparent
- Retains local ownership and autonomy
- Maintains proportionate expectations
- Preserves the state/local partnership
- Results in effective on-the-ground conservation

The principles set parameters for the program's purpose of helping LGUs to be the best they can be in their operational effectiveness. Of note is the principle of proportionate expectations. This means that LGUs are rated on the accomplishment of their own plan's objectives. Moreover, BWSR rates operational performance using both basic and high-performance standards specific to each type of LGU. (For more detail see [www.bwsr.state.mn.us/PRAP/index.html](http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/PRAP/index.html).)

## Multi-level Process

PRAP has three operational components:

- performance review
- assistance
- reporting

The **performance review** component is applied at four levels (see pages 10-16).

**Level I** review is an annual tabulation of required plans and reports for all 238 LGUs. Level I review is conducted entirely by BWSR staff and does not require additional input from LGUs.

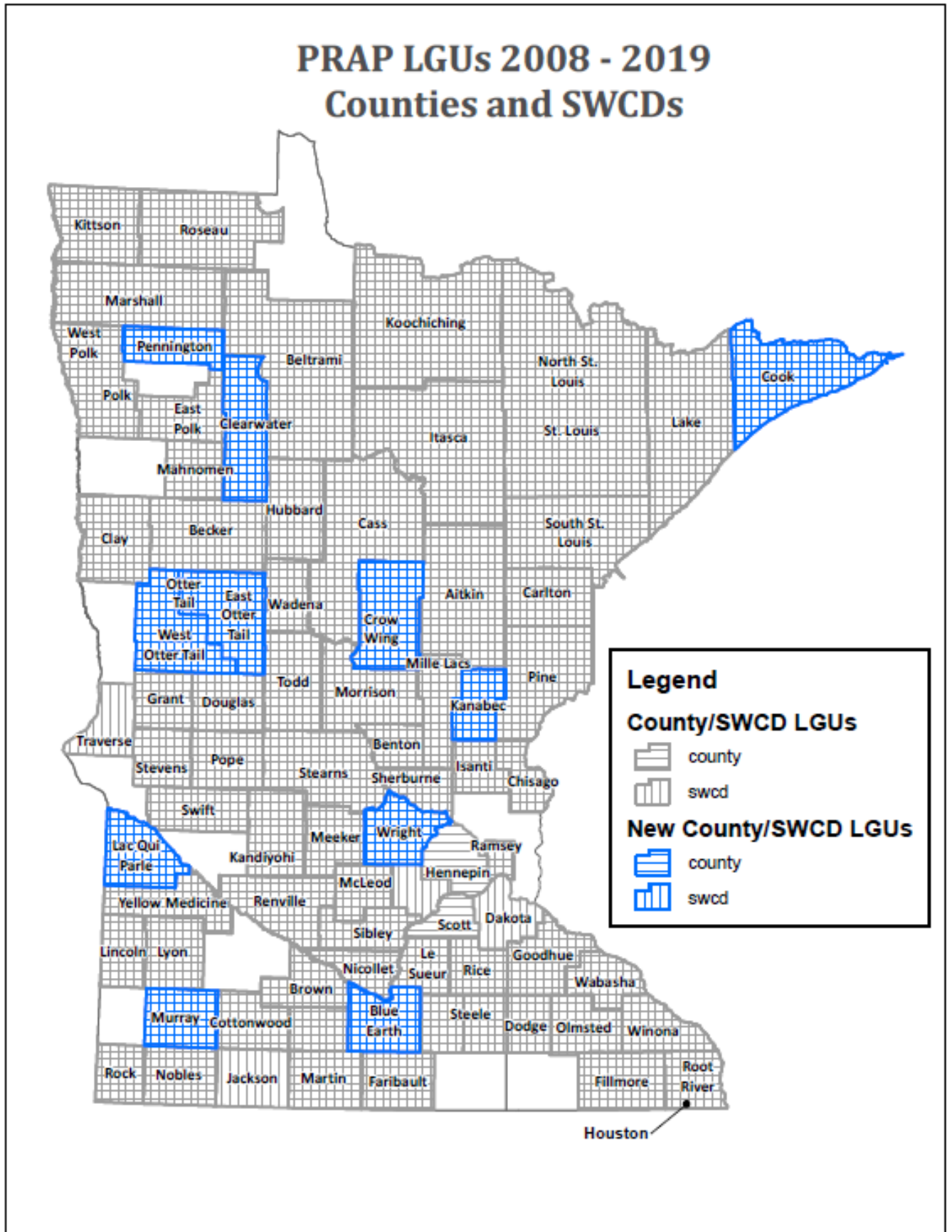
**Level II** is a routine, interactive review intended to cover all LGUs at least once every 10 years. A Level II review evaluates progress on plan implementation, operational effectiveness, and partner relationships. This review includes assessing compliance with Level II performance standards. The maps on pages 3-5 show which LGUs have gone through a Level II review since the program started in 2008.

**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. Since 2008, BWSR has conducted Level III reviews for three LGUs at their request and in 2017 we completed two more. BWSR regularly monitors all LGUs for challenges that would necessitate a Level III review.

**Level IV** is for LGUs with significant performance deficiencies and includes BWSR Board action to assign penalties as authorized by statute. Levels I-III are designed to avoid the need for Level IV. To date there have not been any Level IV reviews.

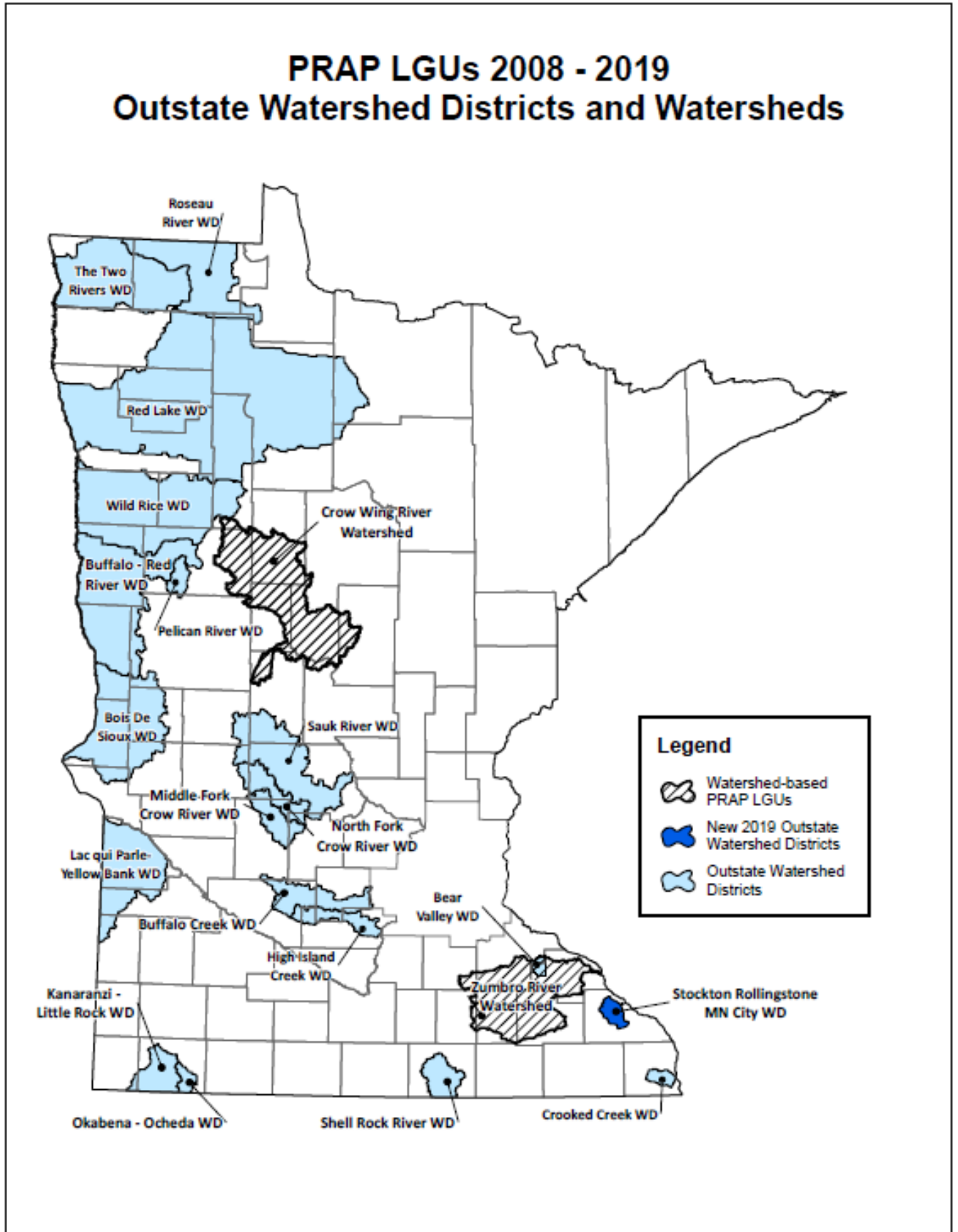




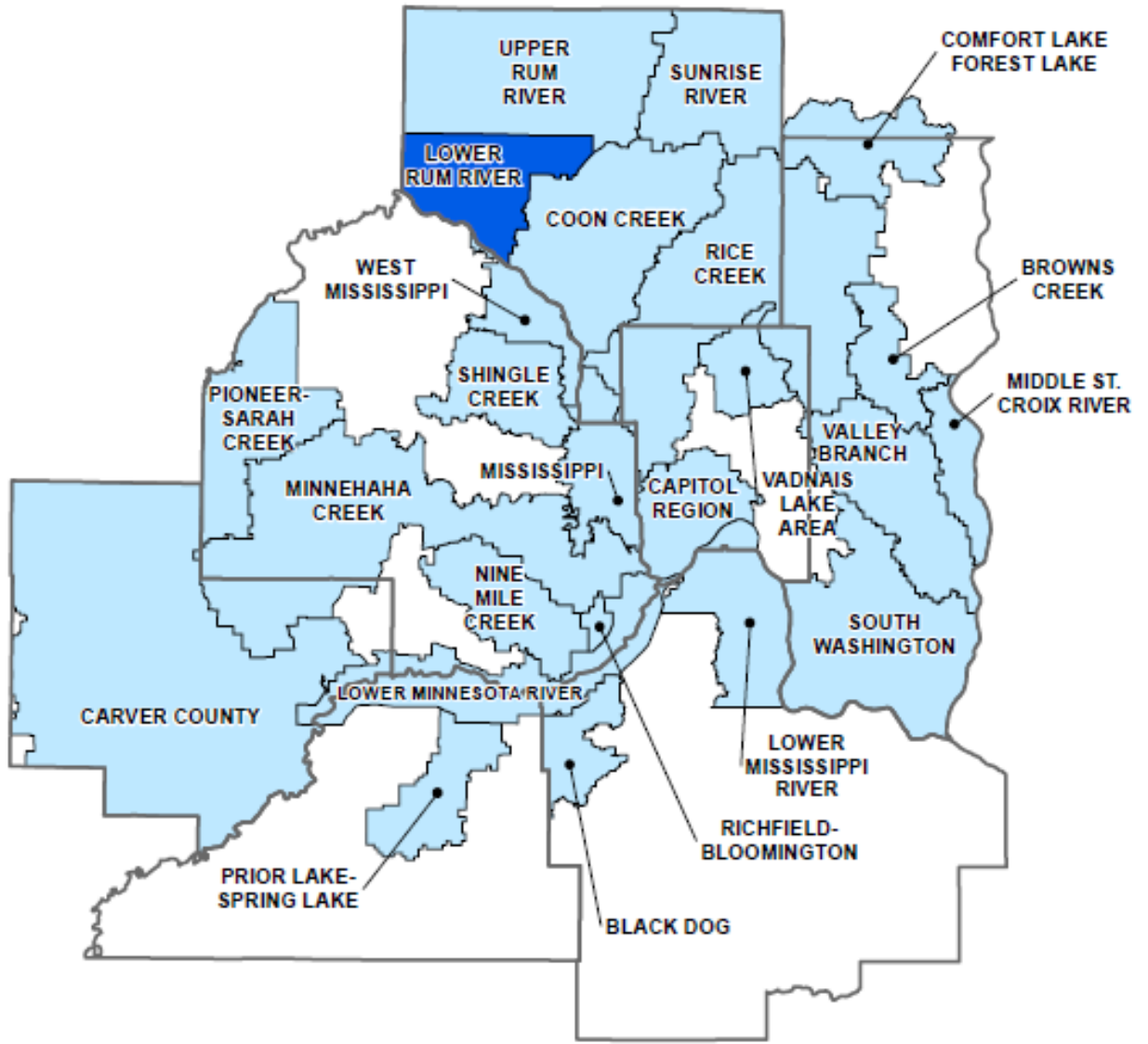


# PRAP LGUs 2008 - 2019



## Outstate Watershed Districts and Watersheds



# PRAP LGUs 2008-2019 Metro Watershed Districts and Management Organizations



**Legend**

-  New 2019 Watershed Districts and Management Orgs
-  Metro Watershed Districts and Management Orgs

**Assistance** (page 17). In 2012, BWSR began awarding PRAP assistance grants to assist LGUs in obtaining practical and financial assistance for organizational improvements or to address performance issues. The grants are typically used for consultant services for activities identified by the LGU or recommended by BWSR in a performance review.

**Reporting** (pages 19-22) makes information about LGU performance accessible to the LGUs' stakeholders and constituents. Reporting methods specific to PRAP include links to performance review summaries and this annual report to the Legislature, which can be accessed via the PRAP page on BWSR's website <http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/PRAP/index.html>. In addition, the PRAP Coordinator presents results from Level II performance reviews to LGU boards at the completion of the review, and to additional boards/committees upon request.

### **Accountability: From Measuring Effort to Tracking Results**

The administration of government programs necessitates a high degree of accountability. PRAP was developed, in part, to deliver on that demand by providing systematic local government performance review and then reporting results. In 2017, BWSR added review of local government unit's implementation of the Wetland Conservation Act program. In 2018, BWSR expanded the scope of PRAP to lay the groundwork for future evaluation of SWCD Technical Service Areas (TSA).

# Report on PRAP Performance

## BWSR's Accountability

BWSR continues to hold itself accountable for the objectives of the PRAP program. In consideration of that commitment, this section lists 2019 program activities with the corresponding objectives from the 2018 PRAP legislative report.

### PERFORMANCE REVIEW OBJECTIVES

<b>What We Proposed</b>	<b>What We Did</b>
Track 238 LGUs' Level I performance.	All LGUs were tracked for basic plan and reporting compliance. Level I Compliance is documented in the PRAP Legislative report. Overall, Level I performance improved in 2019, at 96% overall compliance. Overdue long-range water management plans increased from 1 to 2 in 2019.
Take measures to improve WMO and WD reporting.	Reminders were sent by the PRAP Coordinator to Board Conservationists and LGUs to remind them of deadlines. WD compliance was steady in 2019 at 87% (39 of 45 reporting). Only one of 18 Watershed Management Organizations did not meet reporting or auditing requirements (94% compliance).
Maintain the target of 24 Level II performance reviews per year.	In 2019, 24 Level II performance reviews were completed.
Complete up to 2 Level III performance reviews, if needed, in 2019.	Discussed need for Level III performance reviews with BWSR Regional Managers and Organizational Effectiveness Manager and concluded that no Level III reviews were needed in 2019. Follow up for the 2018 Level III Review of the Pine SWCD and the 2017 Wabasha SWCD were achieved through PRAP Assistance Grants in 2018 and 2019.
Survey LGUs from 2017 Level II PRAP reviews to track LGU implementation of PRAP recommendations.	Surveyed 24 LGUs reviewed in 2017 to assess implementation of BWSR's recommendations for organizational improvements and action items. All 24 LGUs completed the survey and reported fully completing 53% of their recommendations and partially completed another 41% of their recommendations in their Level II performance review reports, meaning that LGUs acted on 94% of the recommendations. A summary of survey results is in the report.

<p>Continue monitoring and reviewing compliance with Action Items identified during a Level II review. This will allow us to determine if we are meeting the goal of 100% compliance within 18 months established for required Action Items.</p>	<p>All Action Items identified during 2019 PRAP Level II reviews were assigned an 18-month timeline for completion. BWSR followed up with the LGUs who participated in 2017 Level II reviews to verify completion of action items within 18 months. The PRAP follow-up survey demonstrated that all the action items included for 2017 LGUs were implemented within 18 months (16 total action items assigned in 2017).</p>
<p>Continue evaluating and updating protocol for PRAP Level I and Level II reviews for performance-based funding for implementation of watershed based One Watershed-One Plans.</p>	<p>Continued evaluation and refinement of key performance measures for PRAP Level II reviews within framework of watershed-based One Watershed-One Plan approach to LGU water plan implementation. Participated in discussions with BWSR Clean Water Team and BWSR Water Planning Team.</p>
<p>Continue development of protocol for evaluating Technical Service Area (TSA) performance and evaluate one TSA if time permits.</p>	<p>Assisted BWSR Water Planning Team with continued development of guidance and expectations for Technical Service Areas. Team decided that it was pre-mature to conduct a TSA review at this time.</p>
<p>Review and update Performance Standards Checklists for counties, soil and water conservation districts, watershed districts and watershed management organizations.</p>	<p>Working with a team of Board Conservationists and Regional Managers, updated performance standards and guidance counties, soil and water conservation districts, watershed districts and watershed management organizations. The new standards incorporate concepts for watershed planning and increased expectations for use of advisory committees. The standards add high performance standards for LGU coordination with state initiatives, using water quality data to track resource outcomes and for LGUs who conduct a self-assessment to improve performance.</p>

**ASSISTANCE OBJECTIVES**

<b>What We Proposed</b>	<b>What We Did</b>
<p>Continue the promotion and use of PRAP Assistance Grants to enhance LGU organizational effectiveness.</p>	<p>Board Conservationists were encouraged to work with LGUs who could benefit from PRAP Assistance grants. LGUs undergoing a Level II PRAP review were also notified of PRAP assistance funding when recommendations were made for activities that would be eligible for PRAP funds. In fiscal year 2019, PRAP Assistance Grants were provided for Crow Wing SWCD, Lake SWCD, Stevens SWCD and Traverse SWCD for a total of \$19,355.</p>

**REPORTING OBJECTIVES**

<b>What We Proposed</b>	<b>What We Did</b>
<p>Increase the focus on developing and reporting resource outcomes by LGUs in Level II reviews.</p>	<p>While all 24 Level II performance reviews included a review of the LGUs water plans for targets or objectives for resource outcomes and if outcomes are being reported, only three LGUs covered by Level II reviews in 2019 have targets. Reported progress on resource outcomes is less frequent. Much work remains and is an objective for 2020.</p>



# 2019 LGU Performance Review Results

## Level I Results

The Level I Performance Review monitors and tabulates all 238 LGUs' long-range plan updates and their annual reporting of activities, ditch buffer reports, grants, and finances. BWSR tracks these performance measures each year to provide oversight of legal and policy mandates, but also to screen LGUs for indications of potential problems. Chronic lateness in financial or grant reporting, for example, may be a symptom of operational issues that require BWSR assistance.

	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
<b>238 LGUs</b>	<b>96%</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>87%</b>	<b>81%</b>
SWCDs (88)	96%	96%	93%	93%	87%
Counties (87)	100%	98%	94%	91%	91%
WMOs (18)	94%	89%	89%	78%	44%
WDs (45)	87%	87%	80%	73%	65%

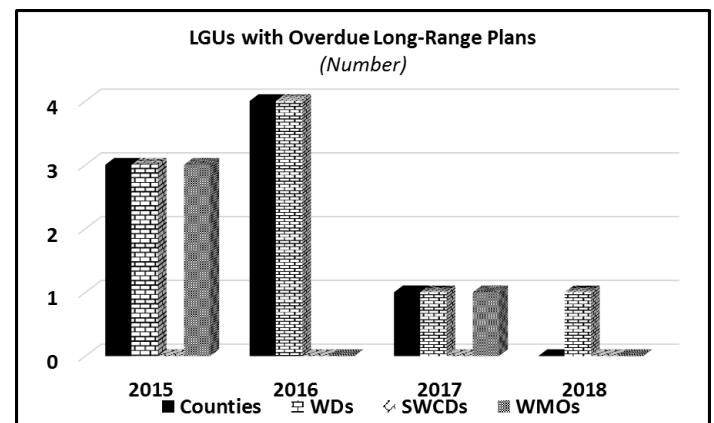
Overall, LGU compliance with Level I standards improved to 96% in 2019. BWSR began tightening Level I compliance tracking in 2013, and as can be seen in the table above, improvement in overall compliance has occurred since that time.

**Long-range plans.** BWSR's legislative mandate for PRAP includes a specific emphasis on evaluating progress in LGU plan implementation. Therefore, helping LGUs keep their plans current is basic to that review. Level I PRAP tracks whether LGUs are meeting their plan revision due dates. For the purposes of Level I reviews, LGUs that have been granted an extension for their plan revision are not considered to have an overdue plan. Many Local Water Management plans were operating under extensions granted by the BWSR as LGUs continue transitioning to development of One Watershed One Plans. The number of overdue plans is 2 in 2019 compared

to 1 in 2018. Two Watershed District water management plans are overdue at the end of 2019. All other counties, soil and water conservation districts, watershed districts and watershed management organizations are operating under an approved or extended plan. Local government units without an approved water management plan are not eligible for Clean Water grant funds awarded by BWSR.

The Carver County Groundwater management plan was approved by the BWSR Board in January 2016. Ramsey County and Scott County metro area county groundwater plans need updating but are not considered overdue because the plans are optional, and these counties are still eligible for Clean Water Fund grants.

Appendix D (page 30) lists the LGUs whose plans are overdue for a plan revision.



**Annual activity and grant reports.** LGU annual reports are an important means of providing citizens and BWSR with information about LGU activities and grants expenditures. The Level I review tracks both missing and late reports.

As in 2018, there was complete on-time submittal of drainage system buffer strip reports by both County and WD drainage



authorities in 2019. Of the 96 LGUs that must submit annual buffer reports, 100% met the February 1, 2019 deadline, maintaining the 100% compliance achieved from 2015 through 2018. This continued compliance is attributed to persistent efforts by BWSR staff to contact LGUs with missing reports before the due date.

SWCDs and counties maintained a high level of compliance for on-time submittal of grant status reports via BWSR's on-line eLINK system, with 98% of LGUs meeting the deadline compared with 98% in 2018, 97% in 2017, 96% in 2016, and 95% in 2015.

Watershed district compliance with the annual activity report requirement was slightly lower in 2019 at 87% compliance compared with 89% in 2018, but above the 84% in 2017. Continued improvement in reporting will continue to be an objective of BWSR staff in 2020, with a goal of reaching 100% compliance.

Appendix E (page 31) contains more details about reporting.

**Annual financial reports and audits.** All SWCDs submit annual financial reports to BWSR, and most are required to prepare annual audits of their financial records. SWCDs whose annual expenditures fall below a certain threshold do not have to prepare audits. In 2019, SWCD Financial Reports are no longer due for all those SWCD's that elect to do an audit in 2019 (for the year ended 2018.) While the underlying determination of which SWCD's are required to do an audit hasn't changed, it now falls under the umbrella of any SWCDs that waived the submission of the SWCD Financial Report and stated that they would undergo an audit. 98% met the audit performance standard for SWCDs.

Watershed Districts and WMOs are also required to prepare annual audits. In 2019, 89% of WDs met the audit performance standard compared to 91% in 2018 and 80% in 2017. In 2019, 94% (17/18) of WMOs met this standard, maintaining the same level as in 2018 and 2017. In 2016 78% of WMOs were following the audit standard.

See Appendix F (page 33) for financial report and audit details.

BWSR does not track county audits because counties are accountable to the Office of the State Auditor.

## Level II Performance Review Results

The Level II performance review process is designed to give both BWSR and the individual LGUs an overall assessment of the LGU's effectiveness in both the delivery and the effects of their efforts in conservation. The review looks at the LGU's implementation of their plan's action items and their compliance with BWSR's operational performance standards. Level II reviews also include surveys of board members, staff and partners to assess the LGU's effectiveness and existing relationships with other organizations.

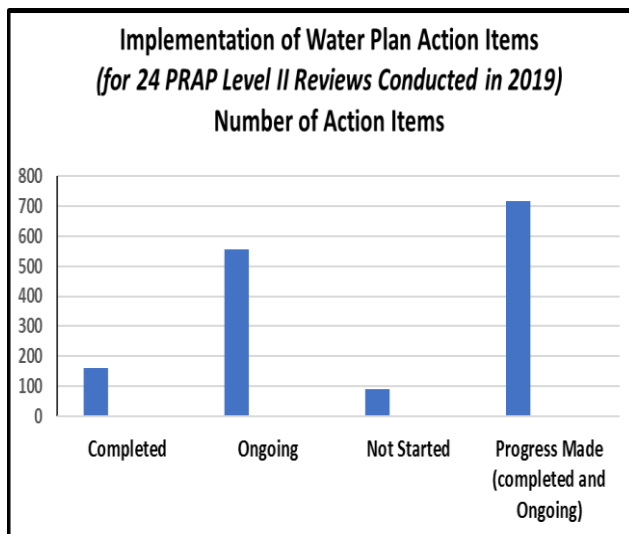
BWSR conducted standard Level II reviews of 24 LGUs in 2019: **Blue Earth County, Blue Earth SWCD, Carver SWCD, Clearwater County, Clearwater SWCD, Cook County, Cook SWCD, Crow Wing County, Crow Wing SWCD, Kanabec County, Kanabec SWCD, Lac qui Parle County, Lac qui Parle SWCD, Lower Rum River WMO, Murray County, Murray SWCD, Otter Tail County, East Otter Tail SWCD, West Otter Tail SWCD, Pennington County, Pennington SWCD, Stockton-Rollingstone-Minnesota City Watershed District, Wright County and Wright SWCD.**

In the instances where the County and the SWCD share the same local water plan (*Blue Earth, Clearwater, Cook, Crow Wing, Kanabec, Lac qui Parle, Murray, Otter Tail Pennington and Wright*) the reviews were conducted jointly. The remaining LGUs received individual reviews. Appendix G (pages 34-48) contains summaries of the performance review reports. Full reports are available from BWSR by request.

### Implementation of Water Plan Action Items

Each year BWSR regional and program staff meet to discuss which LGUs should be selected for PRAP reviews. Some of the factors considered include the expiration date of water plans, whether the LGU has had a review in the past and other factors such as recent LGU staff turnover.

For the 24 local government water plans reviewed in 2019, those plans identified a combined 806 action items. Of those 806 action items in the 24 LGU water plans, 161 actions were completed, 556 were started and are ongoing and 89 action items were not started. Eighty-nine percent of those actions were implemented to some extent (either completed or ongoing). That is a high rate of implementation considering that most of the 10-year plans reviewed still had several years remaining to initiate additional projects.



### Common Recommendations in 2019

While none of the findings or conclusions from these reviews apply to all LGUs, there were general observations and commonly used recommendations to improve LGU performance worth noting.

**1. Resource Outcomes** – Most county water plans developed prior to 2015 did not include targets or objectives for resource outcomes. These County Local Water Management Plans were developed prior to the statewide focus on resource outcomes, so most plans did not include targets or objectives for resource outcomes. Most of the newer One Watershed One Plans and LGU water plans developed in past few years do include targets and objectives for resource outcomes.

**2. Citizen Participation** – Several local governments were advised to improve participation in their Water Plan Advisory Task Force to ensure that agency and citizen representation is adequate and schedule enough meetings to efficiently develop comprehensive local water management plans through the 1W1P Program.

This recommendation recognizes the importance of keeping the water plan advisory task force engaged in both the watershed planning and implementation phases. The LGUs were encouraged to ensure that all local, state and federal agencies and citizens involved in water management can participate in these advisory groups. Some counties call task force meetings quarterly, however, at a minimum, the recommendation was made to have an annual meeting that would allow staff to communicate accomplishments in implementation of the plan for the past year and help prioritize projects for the coming year.

**3. Add Prioritized, Targeted and Measurable (PTM) specifics into water plan.** All the non-watershed-based Level II

PRAP reviews resulted in a recommendation that organizations include, or expand on existing use of Prioritized, Targeted and Measurable as criteria in their next water planning efforts. The PTM criteria are the new standard for One Watershed-One Plan efforts currently underway and beyond those projects, the degree to which these criteria are currently being used varies.

**4. Use the major or minor watershed scale for plan organization.**

BWSR has been recommending for both county water plan updates and new One Watershed-One Plan efforts currently underway that priority concerns be identified by major or minor watershed and action items also be carefully targeted to differing watershed priorities. While some recent water plans had begun to organize plans by watershed, this approach has been a standard recommendation for most PRAP Level II reports.

**5. Encourage strong participation and leadership in development and implementation of One Watershed One Plans (1W1P).**

This recommendation focused on leadership in implementation of 1W1Ps where they have already been developed (Fillmore, Lake and Kittson Counties). For the rest of the SWCDs and counties that were reviewed in 2018, recommendations focused on strong participation and leadership in development of the 1W1P within their counties.

**6. Recommendation to conduct a strategic assessment of the SWCD (or county department) to determine whether existing mission, goals and staff capacity are enough to meet the demands for conservation services in the district.**

This commonly used recommendation focused on the increasing expectations and SWCD responsibilities in recent years. To meet new conservation challenges, the SWCDs were encouraged to consider conducting a strategic assessment of the SWCD to determine whether existing mission, goals and staff capacity are

enough to meet the conservation needs in the county. This recommendation recognizes that even the most competent organizations will lose effectiveness when workload exceeds staffing resources over an extended period.

**7. Evaluate, maintain or improve implementation of the Wetland Conservation Act.**

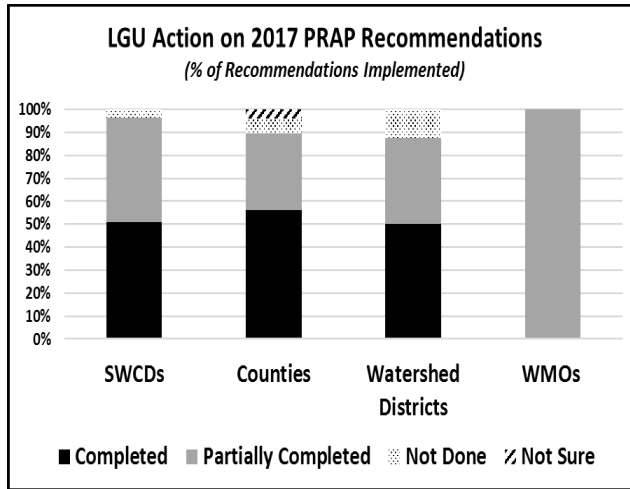
2019 was the third year that Level II reviews included an evaluation of the LGU's performance in implementing the Wetland Conservation Act. In general, most local government units were doing a good job implementing the program. However, the Level II reviews did identify several weaknesses in LGU implementation of the program. Examples of Wetland Conservation Act recommendations provided to LGUs in 2019, included update flawed LGU resolutions adopting the program, to clarify wetland appeal processes and to improve coordination with DNR Enforcement. The addition of the Wetland Conservation Act to PRAP resulted in better coordination among LGU and state agency staff for surface water management.

**8. Website reporting of resource trends could be improved.**

Many of the LGUs included in 2019 Level II reviews participate in or lead water quality monitoring programs, yet the use of websites to report trends and results is limited. Additional efforts to make these results easily accessible to the public would be beneficial.

### Survey of LGU Implementation of PRAP Recommendations

A PRAP program goal for 2019 was to find out to what extent LGUs are following through on the recommendations BWSR offers as part of each performance review.



BWSR surveyed 24 LGUs that had a Level II performance review in 2017. Lead staff were asked to indicate the level of completion for each recommendation included in their PRAP reports. All the 24 LGUs contacted for the survey responded. Survey results showed that LGUs self-reported fully completing 53% of the recommendations and partially completing another 41%, meaning that 94% of BWSR’s recommendations for these LGUs were addressed to some degree.

These survey results indicate that LGUs find most of the recommendations contained in the PRAP reports to be useful for their organizations. Additional follow up is needed to determine why some recommendations are completed while others are not fully implemented.

#### Action Items

During a Level II or Level III review, the LGU’s compliance with performance standards is reviewed. Action items are based on the LGU’s lack of compliance with BWSR’s basic practice performance standards. LGU’s are given an Action Item in the PRAP Report to address lack of compliance with one or more basic standards.

All Action Items identified during 2018 PRAP Level II reviews were assigned an 18-month timeline for completion. BWSR followed up with LGUs to verify completion within 18 months. The PRAP follow-up survey demonstrated that all the action items included for 2017 LGUs were implemented within 18 months (*sixteen total action items*).

#### Level III Implementation Results

In late 2018, program staff discussed the need for Level III performance reviews in 2019 with BWSR Regional Managers and Organizational Effectiveness Manager and concluded that no Level III reviews were needed in 2019. Instead, staff decided to do follow up on LGU recommendations for the 3 most recent Level III reviews that were completed for Wabasha SWCD, Bois de Sioux Watershed District and Pine SWCD. Below is a brief summary of LGU implementation for the Level III assessments.

#### Wabasha SWCD (Level III Review completed April 2017):

The SWCD received a \$7,135 BWSR PRAP Assistance Grant in 2018 to conduct a strategic assessment of the SWCD. A workplan was completed that incorporates goals and actions from the Wabasha County Comprehensive Local Water Management Plan. Work completed towards water plan goals is tracked within the plan throughout the year and implementation progress was presented to the Wabasha County Board. Staff provide written reports monthly for each SWCD board meeting which are included in the board packet. Priority concerns and the mission are reviewed annually at the end of the year to be approved as submitted by staff or as amended at the January board meeting.

One of the major findings of the 2017 Wabasha SWCD Level III review was the recommendation to seek additional state and federal funding for water plan

implementation projects. In 2019 the Wabasha SWCD received and is administering a \$750,000 Lessard Sam's funded natural channel restoration on the North Fork of the Zumbro River at Mazeppa. A 3-year grant through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for \$117,978.64 was also obtained for this project.

**Bois de Sioux Watershed District (Level III Review completed June 2017):**

Bois de Sioux Watershed District (BdSWD) has had significant staff changes since 2017, including the hiring of an office manager, replacement of an administrator, and a retirement and replacement of a district attorney. Their annual work plan has been driven by larger landowner-initiated projects. They initiated one major project in 2017, one project in 2018, and one project in 2019. Each project takes one year of active construction and one year of close-out. All these major projects are being managed with board oversight on a month-to-month basis, with project progress monitored at monthly meetings, and with input and oversight from the board president between monthly meetings.

The BDSWD reestablished an engaged Advisory Committee (*required by M.S. 103D.331*) which is meeting twice a year. Advisory Committee members are providing input on projects, reports and maintaining communication with the BDSWD Board of Managers. Several members attend monthly BDSWD board meetings and all 6 counties and SWCDs are engaged in Mustinka-Bois de Sioux Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (CWMP) planning committees. The level of communication has improved dramatically. Interagency communication is expected to continue to improve as the Mustika-Bois de Sioux CWMP is completed and implemented.

The BDSWD added a new board member in 2019 and provided an orientation program for the new manager who was also able to attend the Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts (MAWD) Summer Tour. BDSWD board managers and staff participated in events as

their schedules allowed, attending MAWD events and Red River Watershed Management Board events and drainage conferences. Several board members also serve on other watershed-related boards and committees, and on community boards.

**Pine SWCD (Level III Review completed July 2018):**

Follow up for the 2018 Level III Review of the Pine SWCD was achieved through a \$8,775 PRAP Assistance Grant. The grant helped fund a strategic assessment initiated in December of 2018 and completed in May of 2019 with the assistance of a private consultant. The SWCD developed a plan that addressed the following:

- Assessed and identified Pine County natural resource threats and management needs for the next 5 years,
- reviewed current programs, delivery of services, assessed and identified organizational structure and financial resources and
- developed an action plan that will inform the Districts Annual plan of work.

One of the outcomes was the board reviews the staff's timesheets and reviews their progress report to ensure work performed aligns with the organizations mission.

The staff and board are now setting up an annual work retreat to discuss and set priorities for the coming year.

In FY19 Pine SWCD staff had applied for funding through the Clean Water Fund program to address 3 different water quality projects in the county.

The Pine SWCD is currently collaborating in three One Watershed One Plan planning efforts (Nemadji, Lower St. Croix and the Snake).

The Pine SWCD District Manager also worked with staff to develop Individual Development Plans to assist them with gaining Job Approval Authority and the District Manager presented to the Pine County Board of Commissioner on progress the district has made.

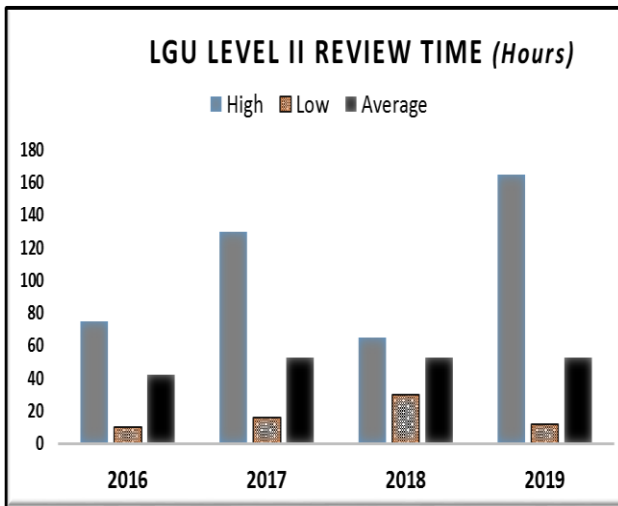
realistic and useful recommendations for improving performance.

**Level IV Results**

No Level IV actions were conducted in 2019.

**Performance Review Time**

BWSR tracks the time spent by LGUs in a performance review as a substitute for accounting their financial costs. Factors affecting an LGU’s time include the number of action items in their long-range plan, the number of staff who help with data collection, and the ready availability of performance data. In 2019 LGU staff spent an average of 41.5 hours on their Level II review, about the same as the previous year.



Not including overall performance review administration and process development, BWSR staff spent an average of 83.5 hours for each Level II performance review, about 6 hours higher than in 2018.

BWSR seeks to maintain a balance between getting good information and minimizing the LGU time required to provide it. Our goal is to gather as much pertinent information as needed to assess the performance of the LGU and offer

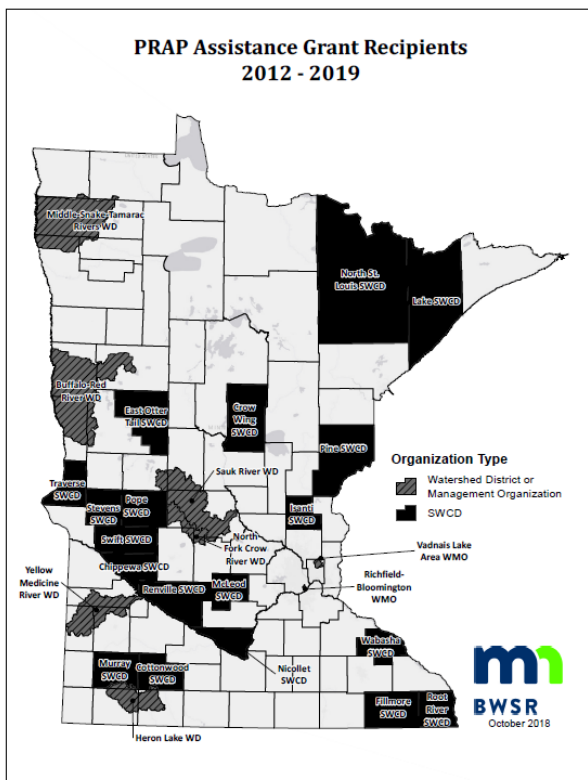
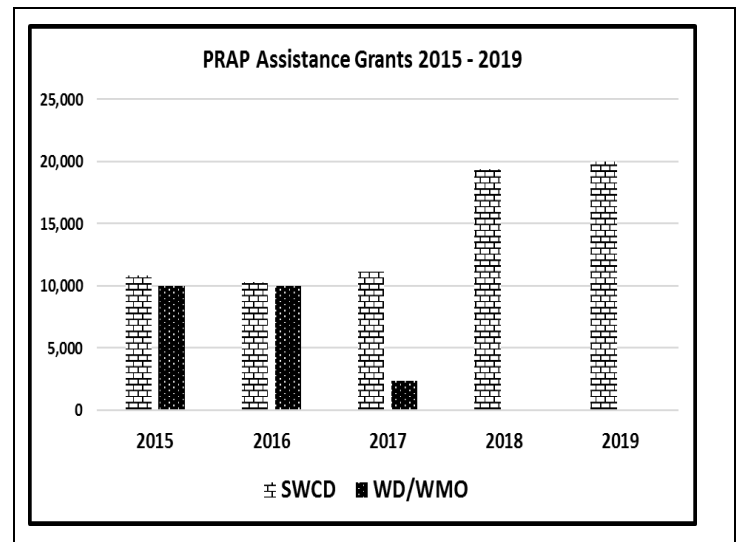


# Assistance Services to Local Governments

## PRAP Assistance Program

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 \$140,000 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 if funds are available.

In 2015, the BWSR Board delegated authority to the Executive Director to award grants or contracts for the purpose of assisting LGUs in making organizational improvements (see resolution in Appendix B). The Executive Director regularly informs Board members of assistance grant status.



In fiscal year 2019, PRAP Assistance Grants were provided for Crow Wing SWCD and Crow Wing County, Lake SWCD, Stevens SWCD and Traverse SWCD for a total of \$19,995. Board Conservationists were encouraged to work with LGUs who could benefit from PRAP Assistance grants. LGUs undergoing a Level II PRAP review were also notified of PRAP assistance funding when recommendations were made for activities that would be eligible for PRAP funds.

The awarded funds will be used for the development of operating policies, organizational assessments, strategic planning and goal setting.

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 guidance and application

information maintain the streamlined process used previously but 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. The application information can be found in Appendix C.

Potential applicants can find information on the BWSR website

<http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/PRAP/index.html>.



# Reporting

## Purpose of Reporting

BWSR reports on LGU performance to:

- meet the legislative mandate to provide the public with information about the performance of their local water management entities, and
- provide information that will encourage LGUs to learn from one another about methods and programs that produce the most effective results.

## Report Types

PRAP either relies on or generates different types of reports to achieve the purposes listed above.

### LGU-Generated

These include information posted on the LGU websites and the required or voluntary reports submitted to BWSR, other units of government, and the public about fiscal status, plans, programs and activities. These all serve as a means of communicating what each LGU is achieving and allow stakeholders to make their own evaluations of LGU performance. PRAP tracks submittal of required, self-generated LGU reports in the Level I review process.

### BWSR Website

The BWSR website contains a webpage devoted to PRAP information. The site provides background information on the program including:

- Guiding principles for the program
- a description of the 4 Levels of PRAP
- Application information for PRAP grants
- Background on the PRAP Legislative Report
- Description of Level I Reporting

For more information see:

<https://bwsr.state.mn.us/prap>

The BWSR website also includes regularly updated maps of long-range plan status by LGU type. Visitors to the PRAP webpage can find general program information, tables of current performance standards by LGU type, summaries of Level II performance review reports, and copies of annual legislative reports.

### Performance Review Reports

BWSR prepares a report containing findings, conclusions, and recommendations for each LGU subject of a Level II or Level III performance review. The LGU lead staff and board or water plan task force members receive a draft of the report to which they are invited to submit comments. BWSR then sends a final report to the LGU. A one-page summary from each review is included in the annual legislative report (see Appendices G and H). In 2014 BWSR added a resource outcome feature to all Level II reports, highlighting those changes in resource conditions related to LGU projects and program. This feature was continued in 2019.

### Annual Legislative Report

As required by statute, BWSR prepares an annual report for the legislature containing the results of the previous year's program activities and a general assessment of the performance of the LGUs providing land and water conservation services and programs. These reports are reviewed and approved by the BWSR board and then sent to the chairpersons of the senate and house environmental policy committees, to statewide LGU associations and to the office of the legislative auditor.

## **Recognition for Exemplary Performance**

The PRAP Guiding Principles include a provision for recognizing exemplary LGU performance. Each year this legislative report highlights those LGUs that are recognized by their peers or other organizations for their contribution to Minnesota’s resource management and protection, as well as service to their local clientele. (See Appendix I, page 53).

For those LGUs that undergo a Level II performance review, their report lists “commendations” for compliance with each high-performance standard, demonstrating practices over and above basic requirements. All 2019 standard Level II LGUs received such commendations.

## eLINK Reports and Reported Best Management Practice Implementation

Soil and Water Conservation Districts are the lead agency in Minnesota charged with working with landowners for the construction and installation of best management practices (BMPs) to control water and wind erosion and improve water quality. In addition, some watershed districts and watershed management organizations provide technical and financial assistance to landowners for installation of BMPs in Minnesota.

Each year local units of government are asked to report progress in installing BMPs to BWSR through eLINK. In 2018, the most recent year of complete reporting data, LGUs reported installation of 647 projects. These totals do not include projects funded by USDA with SWCD assistance.

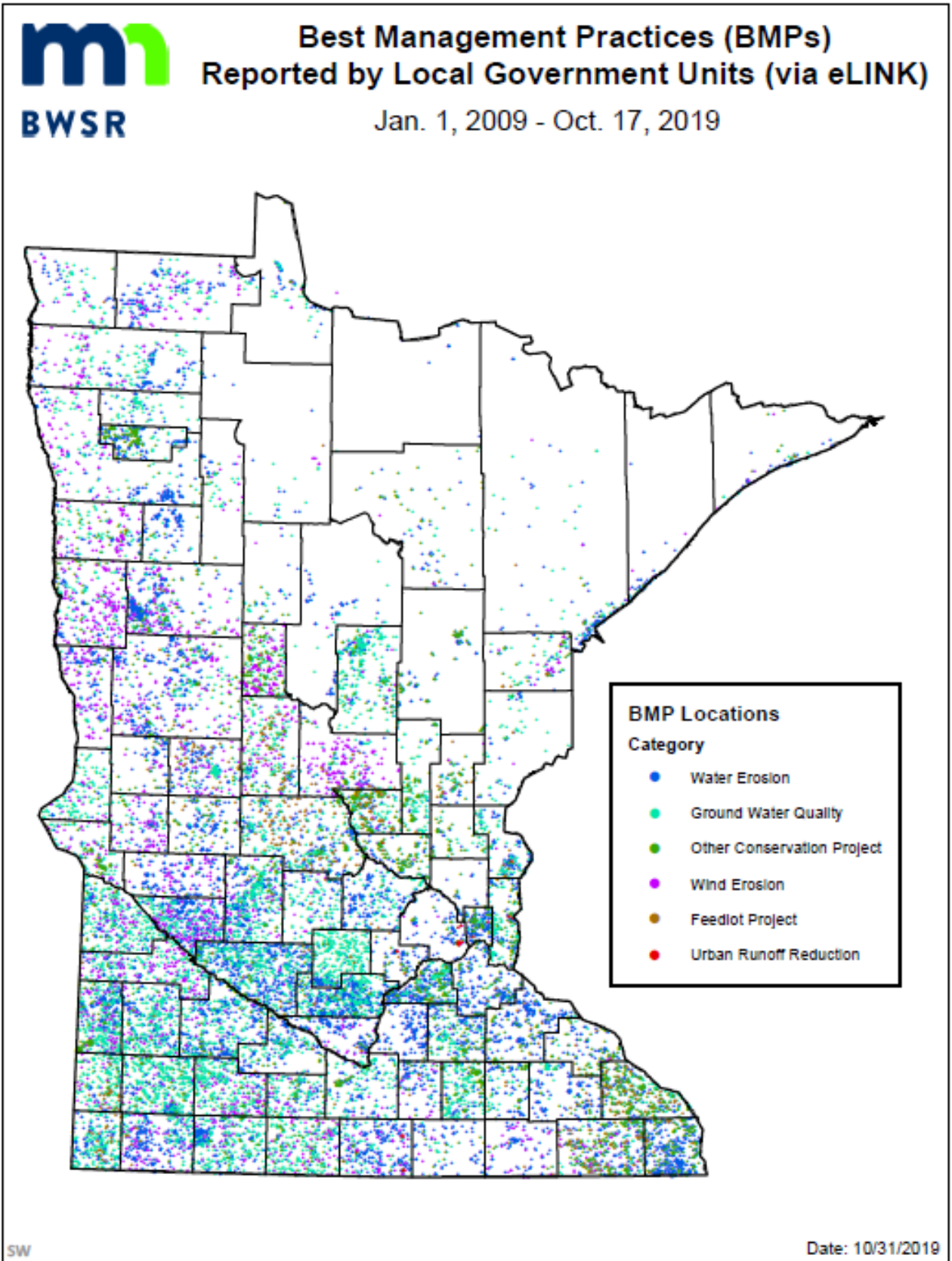
Local government units in Minnesota have been effective in implementing BMPs as part of their water plans by assisting landowners with BMP installation in recent years. (See table below). In 2018 the soil and water conservation districts, watershed districts and water management organizations reported assisting landowners with installation of 74 grade stabilization structures which resulted in an estimated reduction of 2,944 pounds of

phosphorus and 3,193 tons of sediment. The LGUs assisted landowners with installation of 41 streambank and shoreline protection projects covering 8,109 lineal feet resulting in an estimated reduction of 674 pounds of phosphorus and 726 tons of sediment. Another significant BMP accomplishment was completion of 153 grassed or lined waterways resulting in an estimated reduction of 356 pounds of phosphorus and 331 tons of sediment.

Local governments reported completion of 336 other conservation practices in 2018 resulting in an estimated reduction of 1,837 pounds of phosphorus and 1,819 tons of sediment and 728 tons of soil loss reduction. Other conservation practices installed included windbreaks, shelterbelts, well sealing, upland wildlife habitat, bio-retention basins, wetland restorations, watering facilities for livestock and other conservation practices.

The map on the following page shows geographic distribution of completed BMPs that were reported by LGUs over the past 10 years.

Best Management Practices Reported by LGUs for 2018						
Best Management Practice Type	Conservation Practices (number)	Estimated Phosphorus Reduction (lbs.)	Est. Sediment Reduction (tons)	Est. Soil Loss Reduction (tons)	Total Acres	Length of Practice (feet)
Sediment Control Basins & Structures	74	2,944 lbs.	3,193 tons	3,838 tons	-	-
Streambank/Shoreline Protection	41	674 lbs.	726 tons	590 tons	-	8,109 ft.
Grassed and Lined Waterways	153	356 lbs.	331 tons	349 tons	-	-
Wetland Restorations	28	-	-	-	98	-
Windbreaks & Shelterbelts	15	-	-	-	-	25,287 ft.
Other Conservation Practices	336	1,837 lbs.	1,819 tons	728 tons	2,726 ac.	2,822 ft.
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>647</b>	<b>5,811 lbs.</b>	<b>6,069 tons</b>	<b>5,505 tons</b>	<b>2,824 ac.</b>	<b>36,218 ft</b>



# Program Conclusions and Future Direction

## Conclusions from 2019 Reviews

- **A 2019 LGU survey showed that 94% of 2017 PRAP Level II recommendations for LGU improvements were judged to be useful or necessary, as shown by the rates at which LGUs have adopted them** (*from a follow-up survey of 24 LGUs who participated in PRAP Level II in 2017*). This compares to 92% from the follow-up survey conducted in 2018 and 90% from the follow-up survey conducted in 2017. This data shows a trend of more LGUs implementing recommendations in recent years. However, BWSR must do more to follow-up with LGUs to find out why some recommendations are not being adopted and promote PRAP Assistance Grants to implement improvements.
- **All Action Items identified during 2019 PRAP Level II reviews were assigned an 18-month timeline for completion.** BWSR followed up with the LGUs who participated in 2017 Level II reviews to verify completion of action items within 18 months. The PRAP follow-up survey demonstrated that all the action items included for 2017 LGUs were implemented within 18 months (16 total action items assigned in 2017).
- **Website reporting of resource trends could be improved.** In completing Level II reviews in 2019 stressed the importance of improving dissemination of this information to the public. Many LGUs participate in or lead water quality monitoring programs, yet the use of websites to report trends and results is limited. Additional efforts to make these results easily accessible to the public would be beneficial. BWSR made this a recommendation to most LGUs in 2019.
- **Evaluate, maintain or improve implementation of the Wetland Conservation Act.**  
2019 was the third year that Level II reviews included an evaluation of the LGU's performance in implementing the Wetland Conservation Act. In general, most local government units were doing a good job implementing the program. However, the Level II reviews did identify several weaknesses in LGU implementation of the program. Examples of Wetland Conservation Act recommendations provided to LGUs in 2019, included

  - To pass a new clarifying resolution for delegation of responsibilities for the Wetland Conservation Act,
  - To conduct a strategic assessment of organizational capacity of County and SWCD to determine the appropriate division of responsibility and funding for programs such as Local Water Planning and Wetland Conservation Act.
  - To develop policies for documenting "informal" exemption determinations that include noticing technical evaluation panel members.
  - To review and ensure that County policies and ordinances are consistent with WCA by updating ordinances and office procedures.
- **The watershed based PRAP level II process is most useful if there is an existing watershed-based plan in place.** BWSR PRAP staff continued working on an internal staff team evaluating key performance measures that may be used in the future to measure LGU progress in implementing One Watershed, One Plans. Implementation of several of these

plans has begun and progress is being made in the Lake Superior North and several other recently approved plans, but several additional years will be needed to evaluate implementation progress for most plans.

- **Reminders and incentives contribute significantly to on-time reporting by LGUs.**

Overall reporting performance and plan status improved slightly in 2019. Buffer strip reporting was maintained at full LGU compliance after reaching 100% compliance in 2015 through 2018 which can be attributed to close attention from BWSR staff. In the last year WMO overall compliance improved to 94% compared to 89% in 2018 and 2017 and 78% in 2016.

WD overall compliance fell slightly to 87% in 2019, compared to 89% compliance in 2018. However, it is still above the 80% in 2017 and 73% in 2016.

- **A common recommendation for several local government units in 2019 was to conduct a strategic assessment** of the LGU to determine whether existing mission, goals and staff capacity are sufficient to meet the demands and need for conservation services in the district. This recommendation was used where there appeared to be underperformance of the LGU due to shortage of staff or lack of focus on targeted land treatment and resource improvement.

### Selected PRAP Program Objectives for 2020

- Track 238 LGUs' Level I performance.
- Continue efforts to improve Level I performance review reporting of all LGUs through LGU cooperation and persistent follow-up by BWSR staff, with a goal of reaching 100% compliance.
- Maintain the target of 24 Level II performance reviews per year.
- Complete up to two Level III performance reviews, if needed, in 2020.
- Provide leadership in enunciating the importance of measuring outcomes in Level II performance reviews, ways of demonstrating resource outcomes resulting from plan implementation, and set specific expectations for reporting resource outcomes by LGUs.
- Survey LGUs from 2018 Level II PRAP reviews to track LGU implementation of PRAP recommendations.
- Continue monitoring and reviewing compliance with Action Items identified during a Level II review. This will allow us to determine if we are meeting the goal of 100% compliance within 18 months for required Action Items.
- Continue the promotion and use of PRAP Assistance Grants to enhance LGU organizational effectiveness.
- Continue updating protocols for PRAP Level I and Level II reviews for performance-based funding for implementation of watershed-based One Watershed-One Plans.
- Utilize new Performance Standards Checklists for counties, soil and water conservation districts, watershed districts and watershed management organizations. *(New for 2020).*
- Evaluate and develop metrics for tracking LGU implementation of the Buffer Program *(New for 2020).*
- Work with BWSR Water Planning Team to develop protocol for tracking, assessment, evaluation and reporting for One Watershed, One Plans *(New for 2020).*



# Appendix A

## PRAP Authorizing Legislation 103B.102, Minnesota Statutes 2013

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### 103B.102 LOCAL WATER MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTABILITY AND OVERSIGHT.

#### Subdivision 1. Findings; improving accountability and oversight.

The legislature finds that a process is needed to monitor the performance and activities of local water management entities. The process should be preemptive so that problems can be identified early and systematically. Underperforming entities should be provided assistance and direction for improving performance in a reasonable time frame.

#### Subd. 2. Definitions.

For the purposes of this section, "local water management entities" means watershed districts, soil and water conservation districts, metropolitan water management organizations, and counties operating separately or jointly in their role as local water management authorities under chapter 103B, 103C, 103D, or 103G and chapter 114D.

#### Subd. 3. Evaluation and report.

The Board of Water and Soil Resources shall evaluate performance, financial, and activity information for each local water management entity. The board shall evaluate the entities' progress in accomplishing their adopted plans on a regular basis as determined by the board based on budget and operations of the local water management entity, but not less than once every ten years. The board shall maintain a summary of local water management entity performance on the board's Web site. Beginning February 1, 2008, and annually thereafter, the board shall provide an analysis of local water management entity performance to the chairs of the house of representatives and senate committees having jurisdiction over environment and natural resources policy.

#### Subd. 4. Corrective actions.

(a) In addition to other authorities, the Board of Water and Soil Resources may, based on its evaluation in subdivision 3, reduce, withhold, or redirect grants and other funding if the local water management entity has not corrected deficiencies as prescribed in a notice from the board within one year from the date of the notice.

(b) The board may defer a decision on a termination petition filed under section [103B.221](#), [103C.225](#), or [103D.271](#) for up to one year to conduct or update the evaluation under subdivision 3 or to communicate the results of the evaluation to petitioners or to local and state government agencies.

#### History:

*[2007 c 57 art 1 s 104](#); [2013 c 143 art 4 s 1](#)*

# Appendix B

## Board Authorization of Delegation for PRAP Assistance Grants

BOARD DECISION # 18-71



### BOARD ORDER

#### Performance Review and Assistance Program (PRAP) Assistance Service

#### PURPOSE

Authorize PRAP Assistance services and delegate approval of payment to the Executive Director.

#### FINDINGS OF FACT / RECITALS

1. The Board of Water and Soil Resources (Board) regularly monitors and evaluates the performance and activities of local water management entities and provides assistance in improving performance under the authorities and requirements of Minnesota Statutes §103B.102.
2. In June 2018, the Board through Resolution #18-41 which "reconfirmed the delegation of authority to the Executive Director to approve individual PRAP Assistance grants up to \$10,000, and requires that program awards are reported to the Board at least once per year."
3. The Board continues to receive requests for PRAP assistance services to address operational or service delivery needs identified through a PRAP assessment or specialized assistance request.
4. The Board has authorities under Minnesota Statutes §103B.3369 and 103B.101 to award grants and contracts to accomplish water and related land resources management.
5. The Grants Program and Policy Committee, at their November 26, 2018 meeting, reviewed this request and recommended the Board approve this order.

#### ORDER

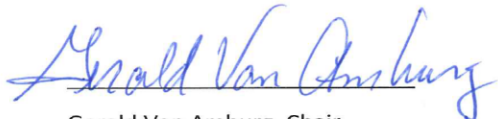
The Board hereby:

1. Approves the allocation of designated or available funds, consistent with the appropriation of the designated or available funds, to eligible local government water management entities for fulfilling the provisions of Minnesota Statutes §103B.102.
2. Reconfirms the delegation of authority to the Executive Director to approve PRAP Assistance grants or contracts up to \$10,000 per contract with a maximum of \$50,000 per year and requires that program awards are reported to the Board at least once per year.
3. Establishes that all PRAP Assistance awards be cost shared by the grantee at a percentage determined by the Executive Director.
4. Authorizes staff to enter into grant agreements or contracts for these purposes.
5. Establishes that this order replaces previous Board resolution #18-41.



Dated at St. Paul, Minnesota, this December 19, 2018.

**MINNESOTA BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES**



Gerald Van Amburg, Chair  
Board of Water and Soil Resources

Date: 12-19-2018

# Appendix C

## PRAP Assistance Grant Application Information

The PRAP Assistance program provides financial assistance to LGUs to improve operating performance and execution of planned goals and objectives. Funding priority is given to activities recommended as part of a Level II, III or IV PRAP review.

**Examples of eligible activities:** facilitation, mediation or consulting services related to organizational improvement such as reorganizations/mergers, strategic planning, organizational development, assessments for shared services, benchmarking, non-routine audits, and staff and board capacity assessments.

**Activities that are not eligible for grant funds, or to be used as LGU match:** Technology upgrades (computer equipment, software, smartphones, etc.), infrastructure improvements (vehicles, office remodel, furniture), staff performance incentives (bonuses, rewards program), basic staff training (BWSR Academy fees and expenses; Wetland Delineator Certification, subjects offered at BWSR Academy, training for promotion, basic computer training), water planning, conservation practices design or installation, publication or publicity materials, food & refreshments, (other than costs associated with meetings and conferences where the primary purpose is an approved, eligible grant activity) lodging, staff salaries, and regular board member per diems.

**Note:** Board member per diems and associated expenses outside of regular meetings, and associated with an approved, eligible activity are eligible for grant funds or can be used as match.

**Grant Limit:** \$10,000. In most cases a 50 percent cash match will be required.

**Who May Apply:** County water management/environmental services; SWCDs; watershed districts; watershed management organizations. In some cases, LGU joint powers associations or boards, or other types of LGU water management partnerships will be eligible for grants. Priority is given to applicants submitting projects related to eligible PRAP Level II, III, or IV recommendations.

**Terms:** BWSR pays its share of the LGU's eligible expenditures as reimbursement for expenses incurred by the LGU after the execution date of the grant agreement. Reporting and reimbursement requirements are also described in the agreement. Grant agreements are processed through BWSR's eLINK system.

**How to Apply:** Submit an email request to Dale Krystosek, PRAP Coordinator ([dale.krystosek@state.mn.us](mailto:dale.krystosek@state.mn.us)) with the following information:

- 1) Description, purpose and scope of work for the proposed activity (If the activity or services will be contracted, do you have a contracting procedure in by-laws or operating guidelines?)
- 2) Expected products or deliverables
- 3) Desired outcome or result
- 4) Does this activity address any recommendations associated with a recent Level II, III or IV PRAP Assessment? If so, describe how.
- 5) How has your Board indicated support for this project? How will they be kept involved?
- 6) Duration of activity: proposed start and end dates
- 7) Itemized Project Budget including

- a. Amount of request
  - b. Source of funds to be used for match (cannot be state money nor in-kind)
  - c. Total project budget
- 8) Have you submitted other funding requests for this activity? If yes, to whom and when?
- 9) Provide name and contact information for the person who will be managing the grant agreement and providing evidence of expenditures for reimbursement.

## Appendix D

### Level I: 2019 LGU Long-Range Plan Status as of December 31, 2019

#### **Soil and Water Conservation Districts**

(Districts have a choice of option A or B)

##### **A. Current Resolution Adopting County Local Water Management Plan**

All resolutions are current.

##### **B. Current District Comprehensive Plan**

All comprehensive plans are current.

#### **Counties**

##### **Local Water Management Plan Revision Overdue: Plan Revision in Progress**

- All Plans are current

##### **Metro County Groundwater Plan Revision Not Updated (*These Plans are Optional*)**

- Ramsey
- Scott

The Carver County Groundwater Plan update was approved by BWSR in 2016. Dakota County is currently in process of development of a plan and should be submitting for BWSR Board approval in 2020. Ramsey County is currently in discussion regarding updating their plan. Anoka and Hennepin Counties have chosen not to participate in this optional program authorized under 103B.255. Scott County has decided to not update their groundwater plan. Development of these groundwater plans is optional and so they are not considered overdue.

#### **Watershed Districts**

##### **10-Year Watershed Management Plan Revision Overdue: Plan Revision in Progress**

- Pelican River Watershed District is overdue
- High Island Creek Watershed District is overdue

#### **Watershed Management Organizations**

- All Plans are current

# Appendix E

## Level I: Status of Annual Reports for 2018 as of December 31, 2019

### Soil and Water Conservation Districts

#### eLINK Status Reports of Grant Expenditures

##### Late Reports:

- Clearwater SWCD

### Counties

#### Drainage Authority Buffer Strip Reports

All reports submitted on time.

#### eLINK Status Reports of Grant Expenditures

One county submitted a late report.

##### Late Reports:

- None

### Watershed Districts

#### Drainage Authority Buffer Strip Reports

All reports submitted on time.

#### Annual Activity Reports Not Submitted:

- Ramsey Washington Metro WD
- Joe River WD
- Stockton-Rollingstone-MN City WD
- Cormorant Lakes WD

### Metro Joint Powers Watershed Management Organizations

#### Annual Activity Reports not submitted

- None

# Appendix F

## Level I: Status of Financial Reports and Audits for 2018 as of December 31, 2019

### Soil and Water Conservation Districts

#### Annual Audits

##### Annual Audits Not Submitted (or submitted late)

- Cottonwood SWCD
- Steele SWCD

### Watershed Districts

##### Annual Audits Not Completed (or submitted late):

- Cormorant Lakes WD
- Stockton-Rollingstone-MN City WD
- Joe River WD
- Lower Minnesota River WD
- Sand Hill River WD
- Riley-Purgatory-Bluff Creek WD

### Metro Joint Powers Watershed Management Organizations

##### Annual Audits Not Submitted:

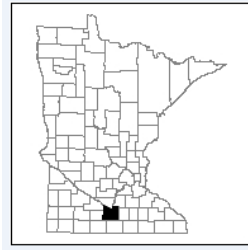
- Richfield Bloomington WMO

# Appendix G

## Standard Level II Performance Review

### Final Report Summaries

#### Blue Earth County and Blue Earth Soil and Water Conservation District



#### Key Findings and Conclusions

The Blue Earth County Environmental Services Department (County) and the Blue Earth Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) need to continue to build a strong working relationship to meet the water management and conservation challenges in the county. For the most part, their partners believe both entities are doing good work and are good to work with. Ongoing water management challenges in southern Minnesota have created the necessity to forge new working relationships among partners to improve local water management in Blue Earth County. Strong participation in the development of One Watershed, One Plans provide an opportunity for Blue Earth County and SWCD to reorient its water planning efforts to focus on specific problems and priorities for the county's waterbodies. The partners who responded to the PRAP survey generally provided acceptable to strong marks in their judgement of the performance of the County, and good to strong marks in the performance of the SWCD.

#### Resource Outcomes

The current Blue Earth Local Water Management Plan does not include targets or objectives for resource outcomes.

#### Commendations:

The Blue Earth Soil and Water Conservation District is commended for meeting 7 of 14 high performance standards for SWCDs and the Blue Earth County Environmental Service Department is commended for meeting 9 of 13 high performance standards.

#### Recommendations:

**Joint Recommendation 1:** The County and SWCD should continue to refine identification of priority watersheds as part of future participation in One Watershed One Plan development.

**Joint Recommendation 2:** Continue to develop Prioritized, Targeted and Measurable criteria for Goals and Objectives in future One Watershed One Plans.

**Joint Recommendation 3:** Structure website information to report progress and trends made in achieving resource outcome goals and implementation of County Water Plan.

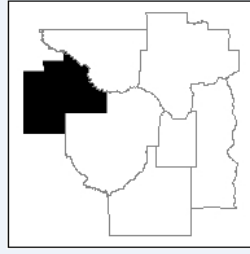
**Blue Earth SWCD Recommendation 1:** Develop a plan for staff training including orientation and continuing education plan and record for each staff member.

#### Action Items:

Blue Earth County has no action items.

Blue Earth SWCD has no action items.

## Carver Soil and Water Conservation District



### Key Findings and Conclusions

The Carver Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) has demonstrated effectiveness in implementation of core programs and its partners believe the SWCD is doing good work and has been good to work with. The SWCD should continue to build strong working relationships with partners to meet the water management and conservation challenges in the district. Ongoing water management challenges in the region have created the necessity to forge new working relationships among partners to improve local water management in Carver County. The opportunity for participation in the development of One Watershed, One Plans may provide collaboration opportunities for Carver SWCD and partners to reorient water planning efforts to focus on specific problems and priorities for the waterbodies within the district. The partners who responded to the PRAP survey provided good to strong marks in their judgement of the performance of the SWCD.

### Resource Outcomes

The current Carver SWCD Comprehensive Management Plan does not include targets or objectives for resource outcomes.

### Commendations:

The Carver Soil and Water Conservation District is commended for meeting 10 of 14 high performance standards for SWCDs.

### Recommendations:

**Recommendation 1:** Develop Prioritized, Targeted and Measurable criteria for Goals and Objectives in the next SWCD Comprehensive Plan.

**Recommendation 2:** Structure website information to report progress and trends made in achieving resource outcome goals and implementation of the SWCD Comprehensive Plan.

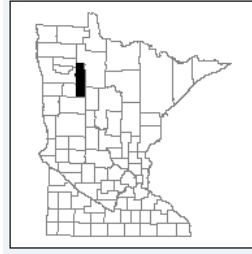
**Recommendation 3:** Conduct a strategic assessment of the SWCD to determine whether existing mission, goals and staff capacity are sufficient to meet the demands for conservation services in the district.

### Action Items:

Carver Soil and Water Conservation District has no action items.



## Clearwater County and Clearwater Soil and Water Conservation District



### Key Findings and Conclusions

The Clearwater County (County) and the Clearwater Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) need to continue to build a strong working relationship to meet the water management and conservation challenges in the county.

For the most part, their partners believe both entities are doing good work and are good to work with. Ongoing water management challenges in northern Minnesota have created the necessity to forge new working relationships among partners to improve local water management in Clearwater County. Strong participation in the development of One Watershed, One Plans provide an opportunity for Clearwater County and the SWCD to reorient the water planning efforts to focus on specific problems and priorities for the county's waterbodies. The partners who responded to the PRAP survey generally provided strong to acceptable ratings in their judgement of the performance of the County, and for the performance of the SWCD.

### Resource Outcomes

The current Clearwater Local Water Management Plan does not include targets or objectives for resource outcomes.

### Commendations:

The Clearwater Soil and Water Conservation District is commended for meeting 8 of 14 high performance standards for SWCDs and the Clearwater County is commended for meeting 4 of 13 high performance standards.

### Recommendations:

**Joint Recommendation 1:** Meet annually and expand role of Water Resource Advisory Committee to review annual accomplishments and set priorities for the next year.

**Joint Recommendation 2:** The County and SWCD should continue to identify priority watersheds as part of participation in 1W1P development.

**Joint Recommendation 3:** Continue identification of Prioritized, Targeted and Measurable criteria for Goals and Objectives in One Watershed One Plan development.

**Joint Recommendation 4:** Structure website information to report progress and trends made in achieving resource outcome goals and implementation of County Water Plan.

**Clearwater SWCD Recommendation 1:** Conduct a strategic assessment of the SWCD to determine whether existing mission, goals and staff capacity are enough to meet the demands for conservation services in the district.

### Action Items:

Clearwater County and Clearwater SWCD have no action items.

## Cook County and Cook Soil and Water Conservation District



### Key Findings and Conclusions

The Cook County Land Services Department (County) and the Cook Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) need to continue to build a strong working relationship to meet the water management and conservation challenges in the county. For the most part, their partners believe both entities are doing good work and are good to work with. Ongoing water management challenges in northern Minnesota have created the necessity to forge new working relationships among partners to improve local water management in Cook County. Strong participation in the development of One Watershed, One Plans has provided an opportunity for Cook County and SWCD to reorient its water planning efforts to focus on specific problems and priorities for the county's waterbodies. The partners who responded to the PRAP survey provided acceptable to strong marks in their judgement of the performance of the County, and acceptable to strong marks in the performance of the SWCD.

### Resource Outcomes

The current Cook Local Water Management Plan does not include targets or objectives for resource outcomes, however the Lake Superior North One Watershed One Plan does include targets and objectives for resource outcomes.

### Commendations:

The Cook Soil and Water Conservation District is commended for meeting 10 of 14 high performance standards for SWCDs and the Cook County is commended for meeting 6 of 12 high performance standards.

### Recommendations:

**Joint Recommendation 1:** Use the major or minor watershed scale for plan organization.

**Joint Recommendation 2:** Develop Prioritized, Targeted and Measurable criteria for Goals and Objectives in the next water management plan.

**Joint Recommendation 3:** Structure website information to report progress and trends made in achieving resource outcome goals and implementation of County Water Plan.

**Joint Recommendation 4:** Consider passing a new resolution for delegation of responsibilities for the Wetland Conservation Act.

### Action Items:

Cook County has no action items.

Cook SWCD has no action items.

## Crow Wing County and Crow Wing Soil and Water Conservation District



### Key Findings and Conclusions

The Crow Wing County Land Services Department (County) and the Crow Wing Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) need to continue to build a strong working relationship to meet the water management and conservation challenges in the county. For the most part, their partners believe both entities are doing good work and are good to work with. New water management challenges have created the necessity to forge new working relationships among partners, but there is a strong base to build upon for future local water management in Crow Wing County. With the upcoming opportunities for development of One Watershed, One Plan, there will be an opportunity for Crow Wing County and SWCD to reorient its local water plan to specific problems and priorities for the county's waterbodies. The partners who responded to the PRAP survey provided good to strong marks in their judgement of the performance of the County, and good to strong marks in the performance of the SWCD. The county and SWCD are both making very good progress on implementing their assigned action items in the local water plan.

### Resource Outcomes

The Crow Wing Local Water Management Plan does not include targets or objectives for resource outcomes.

### Commendations:

The Crow Wing Soil and Water Conservation District is commended for meeting 10 of 14 high performance standards for SWCDs and the Crow Wing County Land Services Department is commended for meeting 7 of 13 high performance standards for counties.

### Recommendations:

**Joint Recommendation 1:** Focus implementation of water plan projects by using Prioritized, Targeted and Measurable criteria for measuring progress for goals and objectives.

**Joint Recommendation 2:** Structure website information to report progress and trends made in achieving resource outcome goals and implementation of County Water Plan.

**Joint Recommendation 3:** Conduct a strategic assessment of organizational capacity of the Land Services Department and SWCD to determine the appropriate division of responsibility and funding for programs such as Local Water Planning and Wetland Conservation Act.

**SWCD Recommendation 1:** Crow Wing SWCD should resolve the action item to establish adequate operating funds in reserve.

### Action Items:

Crow Wing SWCD has one action item which should be addressed in the next 18 months.

- Crow Wing SWCD should establish an adequate operating reserve fund.

Crow Wing County has one action item which should be addressed in the next 18 months.

- Crow Wing County has not posted all BWSR grant reports on their website.

## Kanabec County and Kanabec Soil and Water Conservation District



### Key Findings and Conclusions

The Kanabec County (County) and the Kanabec Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) need to continue to build a strong working relationship to meet the water management and conservation challenges in the county. Ongoing water management challenges in central Minnesota have created the necessity to forge new working relationships among partners to improve local water management in Kanabec County. Future participation in the development of One Watershed, One Plans provides an opportunity for Kanabec County and SWCD to reorient its water planning efforts to focus on specific problems and priorities for the county's waterbodies. The partners who responded to the PRAP survey provided wide ranging feedback with good to poor marks in their judgement of the performance of the County, and strong to poor marks in the performance of the SWCD.

### Resource Outcomes

The current Kanabec Local Water Management Plan does not include targets or objectives for resource outcomes.

### Commendations:

The Kanabec Soil and Water Conservation District is commended for meeting 6 of 14 high performance standards for SWCDs and the Kanabec County is commended for meeting 6 of 13 high performance standards.

### Recommendations:

**Joint Recommendation 1:** The County and SWCD should identify priority watersheds as part of future participation in One Watershed One Plan development.

**Joint Recommendation 2:** Develop Prioritized, Targeted and Measurable criteria for Goals and Objectives in future One Watershed One Plans.

**Joint Recommendation 3:** Structure website information to report progress and trends made in achieving resource outcome goals and implementation of County Water Plan.

**Kanabec SWCD Recommendation 1:** Address action item within 18 months.

The Kanabec SWCD should address the action item by developing a data practices policy.

**Kanabec SWCD Recommendation 2:** Conduct a strategic assessment of the SWCD to determine whether existing mission, goals and staff are enough to meet demands for conservation services in the district.

**Kanabec County Recommendation 1:** Conduct a strategic assessment of the Planning and Zoning Department to determine whether existing mission, goals and staff capacity are sufficient to address the conservation challenges in Kanabec County.

**Wetland Conservation Act Recommendation 1:** Consider passing a resolution to delegate WCA decision-making authority to Kanabec County Environmental Services Department and assist cities with implementation of the program.

**Wetland Conservation Act Recommendation 2:** Consider policies for documenting "informal" exemption determinations that include noticing TEP members.

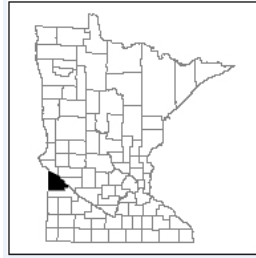
### Action Items:

Kanabec County has no action items.

Kanabec SWCD has 1 action item which should be addressed in the next 18 months:

- The SWCD should develop a data practices policy.

## Lac qui Parle County and Lac qui Parle Soil and Water Conservation District



### Key Findings and Conclusions

The Lac qui Parle County (County) and the Lac qui Parle Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) need to continue to build a strong working relationship to meet the water management and conservation challenges in the county. For the most part, their partners believe both entities are doing good work and are good to work with. Ongoing water management challenges in south western Minnesota have created the necessity to forge new working relationships among partners to improve local water management in Lac qui Parle County. Strong participation in the development of One Watershed, One Plans provides an opportunity for Lac qui Parle County and SWCD to reorient its water planning efforts to focus on specific problems and priorities for the county's waterbodies. The partners who responded to the PRAP survey provided mostly acceptable to strong marks in their judgement of the performance of the County, and mostly acceptable to strong marks in the performance of the SWCD.

### Resource Outcomes

The current Lac qui Parle Local Water Management Plan does not include targets or objectives for resource outcomes.

### Commendations:

The Lac qui Parle Soil and Water Conservation District is commended for meeting 7 of 14 high performance standards for SWCDs and the Lac qui Parle County is commended for meeting 5 of 14 high performance standards.

### Recommendations:

**Joint Recommendation 1:** Use the major or minor watershed scale for plan organization.

**Joint Recommendation 2:** Develop Prioritized, Targeted and Measurable criteria for Goals and Objectives in One Watershed One Plan or updates in the next water management plan.

**Joint Recommendation 3:** Structure website information to report progress and trends made in achieving resource outcome goals and implementation of County Water Plan.

**Lac qui Parle SWCD Recommendation 1:** SWCD should review and track training progress for existing staff and their Individual development plans.

**Lac qui Parle SWCD Recommendation 2:** Conduct a strategic assessment of the SWCD to determine whether existing mission, goals and staff capacity are sufficient to meet the demands for conservation services in the district.

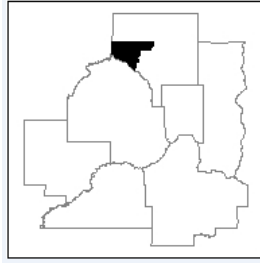
**Lac qui Parle County Recommendation 1:** Conduct a strategic assessment of the County Environmental Office to determine whether existing mission, goals and staff capacity are sufficient to address the conservation challenges in Lac qui Parle County.

**Wetland Conservation Act Recommendation 1-** Ensure that County policies and ordinances are consistent with WCA by updating ordinances and office procedures.

### Action Items:

Lac qui Parle County and Lac qui Parle SWCD have no action items.

## Lower Rum River Watershed Management Organization



### Key Findings and Conclusions

The Lower Rum River WMO has a good record of accomplishment in implementation of their current water management plan which covers the years 2011-2020.

The WMO's compliance with BWSR performance standards is good in meeting the essential, administrative, planning and communication practices that lead to an effective, efficient organization.

The WMO's partners reinforce these conclusions in their generally good marks for communication, quality of work, relations with customers and follow-through.

### Resource Outcomes

The Lower Rum River WMO watershed management plan contains specific, measurable resource outcomes goals for water quality. The WMO annual water quality report contains information about the water quality results achieved in area surface waters. The Lower Rum River WMO has completed 7 action items in the current plan with another 16 activities ongoing.

### Commendations

The Lower Rum River WMO is commended for meeting 5 out of 9 High Performance Standards (applicable to WMOs).

### Recommendations

**Recommendation 1:** Develop and implement training plan for each board member.

**Recommendation 2:** Make water quality data and trends easily accessible to the public.

**Recommendation 3:** Expand the use of Prioritized, Targeted and Measurable as criteria for Goals and Objectives in the next water management plan.

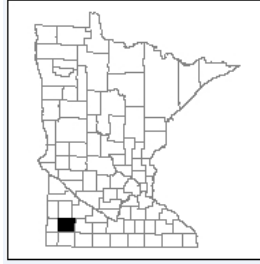
**Recommendation 4:** Be more pro-active, in the next water management plan, in identifying water resource issues and then addressing those issues with specific implementation activities that the WMO will be responsible for.

### Action Items:

Lower Rum River WMO has 2 action items:

- The Lower Rum River WMO should develop a data practices policy and update it every 5 years.
- The WMO should maintain a functioning advisory committee.

## Murray County and Murray Soil and Water Conservation District



### Key Findings and Conclusions

The Murray County Environmental Services Department (County) and the Murray Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) need to continue to build a strong working relationship to meet the water management and conservation challenges in the county. For the most part, their partners believe both entities are doing good work and are good to work with. New water management challenges have created the necessity to forge new working relationships among partners, but there is a strong base to build upon for future local water management in Murray County. With the upcoming opportunities for development of One Watershed, One Plans, there will be an opportunity for Murray County and SWCD to reorient its local water plan to specific problems and priorities for the county's waterbodies. The partners who responded to the PRAP survey provided generally good marks in their judgement of the performance of the County and SWCD. The county and SWCD are both making good progress on implementing their assigned action items in the local water plan. The county and SWCD have made progress on implementing 46 of their 54 action items (85 percent). The County and SWCD have completed 3 of their action items, 43 items are ongoing, and eight action items have not been started.

### Resource Outcomes

The Murray Local Water Management Plan does not include targets or objectives for resource outcomes, however the County and SWCD have been involved in development of several Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies (WRAPS).

### Commendations:

The Murray SWCD is commended for meeting 9 of 14 high performance standards for SWCDs and the Murray County Environmental Services Department is commended for meeting 7 of 13 high performance standards for counties.

### Recommendations:

**Joint Recommendation 1:** Be proactive in the development of the Des Moines River, Redwood River and Cottonwood River WRAPS processes, Missouri One Watershed, One Plan (1W1P), and future 1W1Ps involving Murray County.

**Joint Recommendation 2:** Focus implementation of water plan projects by using Prioritized, Targeted and Measurable criteria for measuring progress for goals and objectives.

**Joint Recommendation 3:** Structure website information to report progress and trends made in achieving resource outcome goals and implementation of County Water Plan.

**Joint Recommendation 4:** Evaluate staffing needs to meet district and county priorities over the next several years.

### Action Items:

Murray County does not have any action items.

Murray SWCD has no action items.

## Otter Tail County Land and Resource Management Department



### Key Findings and Conclusions

The Otter Tail County Land and Resource Management Department, the West Otter Tail Soil and Water Conservation District and the East Otter Tail SWCD have fostered a good working relationship that serves the three agencies well. For the most part, their partners believe all three local government agencies are doing good work and are good to work with.

We commend Otter Tail County and the West Otter Tail SWCD and East Otter Tail SWCD for their participation in three One Watershed, One Plans (1W1P) and leadership in development of another 1W1P, and the reorientation of its local water plan to specific problems and priorities for the county's waterbodies.

The partners who responded to the PRAP survey provided good marks in their judgement of the performance of the Otter Tail County Land and Resource Department, as well as of the two SWCDs.

### Resource Outcomes

The Otter Tail Local Water Management Plan does not currently include targets or objectives for resource outcomes. We anticipate targets and objectives will be developed as part of Comprehensive Watershed Management Plans through the 1W1P program.

### Commendations:

- Otter Tail County Land and Resource Department is commended for meeting 8 of 13 high performance standards for counties.

### Recommendations:

**Joint Recommendation 1:** Continue using the major or minor watershed scale for plan organization for development of Comprehensive Watershed Management Plans (CWMP) through the 1W1P Program.

**Joint Recommendation 2:** Continue using Prioritized, Targeted and Measurable criteria for Goals and Objectives in the new CWMPs.

**Joint Recommendation 3:** Structure website information to report progress and trends made in achieving resource outcome goals.

**Joint Recommendation 4:** Revisit membership of the Water Plan Technical Advisory Task Force to ensure that agency and citizen representation is adequate and schedule sufficient meetings to efficiently develop CWMPs through the 1W1P Program.

**Joint Recommendation 5:** Address action items and consider adding high performance standards to improve organizational performance.

### Action Items:

Otter Tail County Land and Resource Department has one action items which should be addressed in the next 18 months.

- Otter Tail County Land and Resource Department should post BWSR Grant Reports on its website.



## East Otter Tail Soil and Water Conservation District



### Key Findings and Conclusions

The Otter Tail County Land and Resource Management Department, the West Otter Tail Soil and Water Conservation District and the East Otter Tail SWCD have fostered a good working relationship that serves the three agencies well. For the most part, their partners believe all three local government agencies are doing good work and are good to work with.

We commend Otter Tail County and the West Otter Tail SWCD and East Otter Tail SWCD for their participation in three One Watershed, One Plans (1W1P) and leadership in development of another 1W1P, and the reorientation of its local water plan to specific problems and priorities for the county's waterbodies.

The partners who responded to the PRAP survey provided good marks in their judgement of the performance of the Otter Tail County Land and Resource Department, as well as of the two SWCDs.

### Resource Outcomes

The Otter Tail Local Water Management Plan does not currently include targets or objectives for resource outcomes. We anticipate targets and objectives will be developed as part of Comprehensive Watershed Management Plans through the 1W1P program.

### Commendations:

- The East Otter Tail Soil and Water Conservation District is commended for meeting 6 of 14 high performance standards for SWCDs.

### Recommendations:

**Joint Recommendation 1:** Continue using the major or minor watershed scale for plan organization for development of Comprehensive Watershed Management Plans (CWMP) through the 1W1P Program.

**Joint Recommendation 2:** Continue using Prioritized, Targeted and Measurable criteria for Goals and Objectives in the new CWMPs.

**Joint Recommendation 3:** Structure website information to report progress and trends made in achieving resource outcome goals.

**Joint Recommendation 4:** Revisit membership of the Water Plan Technical Advisory Task Force to ensure that agency and citizen representation is adequate and schedule sufficient meetings to efficiently develop CWMPs through the 1W1P Program.

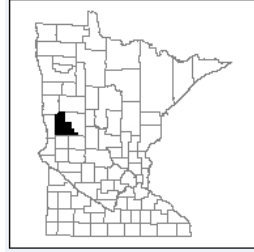
**Joint Recommendation 5:** Address action items and consider adding high performance standards to improve organizational performance.

### Action Items:

East Otter Tail SWCD has one action items which should be addressed in the next 18 months.

- The East Otter Tail SWCD should develop a data practices policy and update it every 5 years.

## West Otter Tail Soil and Water Conservation District



### Key Findings and Conclusions

The Otter Tail County Land and Resource Management Department, the West Otter Tail Soil and Water Conservation District and the East Otter Tail SWCD have fostered a good working relationship that serves the three agencies well. For the most part, their partners believe all three local government agencies are doing good work and are good to work with.

We commend Otter Tail County and the West Otter Tail SWCD and East Otter Tail SWCD for their participation in three One Watershed, One Plans (1W1P) and leadership in development of another 1W1P, and the reorientation of its local water plan to specific problems and priorities for the county's waterbodies.

The partners who responded to the PRAP survey provided good marks in their judgement of the performance of the Otter Tail County Land and Resource Department, as well as of the two SWCDs.

### Resource Outcomes

The Otter Tail Local Water Management Plan does not currently include targets or objectives for resource outcomes. We anticipate targets and objectives will be developed as part of Comprehensive Watershed Management Plans through the 1W1P program.

### Commendations:

- The West Otter Tail Soil and Water Conservation District is commended for meeting 6 of 14 high performance standards for SWCDs.

### Recommendations:

**Joint Recommendation 1:** Continue using the major or minor watershed scale for plan organization for development of Comprehensive Watershed Management Plans (CWMP) through the 1W1P Program.

**Joint Recommendation 2:** Continue using Prioritized, Targeted and Measurable criteria for Goals and Objectives in the new CWMPs.

**Joint Recommendation 3:** Structure website information to report progress and trends made in achieving resource outcome goals.

**Joint Recommendation 4:** Revisit membership of the Water Plan Technical Advisory Task Force to ensure that agency and citizen representation is adequate and schedule sufficient meetings to efficiently develop CWMPs through the 1W1P Program.

**Joint Recommendation 5:** Address action items and consider adding high performance standards to improve organizational performance.

### Action Items:

West Otter Tail SWCD has one action items which should be addressed in the next 18 months.

- The West Otter Tail SWCD should develop a data practices policy and update it every 5 years.

## Pennington County and Pennington Soil & Water Conservation District



### Key Findings and Conclusions

The Pennington County (County) and the Pennington Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) need to continue to build a strong working relationship to meet the water management and conservation challenges in the county. For the most part, their partners believe both entities are doing good work and are good to work with. Ongoing water management challenges in northwestern Minnesota have created the necessity to forge new working relationships among partners to improve local water management in Pennington County. Strong participation in the development of One Watershed, One Plans has provided an opportunity for Pennington County and SWCD to reorient its water planning efforts to focus on specific problems and priorities for the county's waterbodies. The partners who responded to the PRAP survey provided good to strong marks in their judgement of the performance of the County, and good to strong marks in the performance of the SWCD.

### Resource Outcomes

The Pennington Local Water Management Plan does not include targets or objectives for resource outcomes. Therefore, resource outcomes are not reported in this review of plan accomplishments. The recently approved Red Lake River One Watershed One Plan does include targets and objectives for resource outcomes for the areas within this watershed. As part of Water Plan implementation, since 2003, Pennington SWCD assisted landowners with installation of 594 best management practice (BMP) projects, resulting in an estimated reduction of 52,839 pounds of phosphorus, 60,555 tons of sediment and an estimated soil loss reduction of 56,602 tons. The locations of these BMP projects were mapped by minor watershed and estimates of phosphorus and sediment loading reductions were tracked by minor watershed. These totals do not include conservation projects funded by USDA with SWCD assistance.

### Commendations:

The Pennington Soil and Water Conservation District is commended for meeting 7 of 14 high performance standards for SWCDs and the Pennington County is commended for meeting 5 of 14 high performance standards.

### Recommendations:

**Joint Recommendation 1:** Continue using the major or minor watershed scale for plan organization.

**Joint Recommendation 2:** Continue using Prioritized, Targeted and Measurable criteria for Goals and Objectives in the next water management plan.

**Joint Recommendation 3:** Structure website information to report progress and trends made in achieving resource outcome goals.

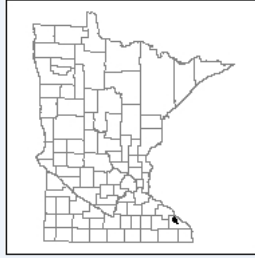
**Pennington SWCD Recommendation 1:** Address action item within 18 months.

### Action Items:

Pennington County has no action items. Pennington SWCD has 1 action item which should be addressed in the next 18 months:

- The SWCD should develop a data practices policy.

## Stockton-Rollingstone-Minnesota City Watershed District



### Key Findings and Conclusions

Stockton-Rollingstone-Minnesota City Watershed District has developed a role in administering local water management programs and projects. The organization is getting work done despite a limited budget and no staff, mostly due to staff assistance from Winona County.

With the upcoming opportunity to participate in One Watershed, One Plan development, there is an opportunity for the Stockton-Rollingstone-Minnesota City Watershed District to focus its local water plan to problems and priorities specific to the watershed's streams, and to provide resource specific outcomes.

The Stockton-Rollingstone-Minnesota City Watershed District shows limited compliance with BWSR's basic and high-performance standards.

### Resource Outcomes

The Stockton-Rollingstone-Minnesota City Watershed District Plan does not contain resource outcome goals and objectives.

### Commendations

The Stockton-Rollingstone-Minnesota City Watershed District is commended for meeting 4 out of 13 High Performance Standards

**Action Items** – The Stockton-Rollingstone-Minnesota City Watershed District has three action items which should be addressed within the next 18 months:

- The Watershed District should complete a financial audit.
- The Watershed District should develop a data practices policy.
- The Watershed District should develop a functioning advisory committee.

### Recommendations:

**Recommendation 1:** Attend training sessions and connect with Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts (MAWD).

**Recommendation 2:** Conduct a strategic assessment of the Watershed District to determine whether existing mission, goals are enough to meet the demands for conservation services in the district.

**Recommendation 3:** Expand the use of Prioritized, Targeted and Measurable as criteria for Goals and Objectives in the next water management plan update.

**Recommendation 4:** Participate in the development of the Mississippi River-Winona One Watershed One plan using the major or minor watershed scale for plan organization.

**Recommendation 5:** Complete the action items within 18 months.

## Wright County and Wright Soil and Water Conservation District



### Key Findings and Conclusions

The Wright County (County) and the Wright Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) have demonstrated effectiveness in implementation of core programs and its partners believe the SWCD is doing good work and has been good to work with. The SWCD should continue to build a strong working relationship to meet the water management and conservation challenges in the county. Ongoing water management challenges in Minnesota have created the necessity to forge new working relationships among partners to improve local water management in Wright County. Strong participation in the development of One Watershed, One Plans provide an opportunity for Wright County and SWCD to reorient its water planning efforts to focus on specific problems and priorities for the county's waterbodies. The partners who responded to the PRAP survey generally provided good to poor marks in their judgement of the performance of the County, and acceptable to strong marks in the performance of the SWCD.

### Resource Outcomes

The current Wright Local Water Management Plan does not include targets or objectives for resource outcomes.

### Commendations:

The Wright Soil and Water Conservation District is commended for meeting 8 of 14 high performance standards for SWCDs and the Wright County is commended for meeting 8 of 13 high performance standards.

### Recommendations:

**Joint Recommendation 1:** Use the major or minor watershed scale for plan organization.

**Joint Recommendation 2:** Develop Prioritized, Targeted and Measurable criteria for Goals and Objectives in the next water management plan.

**Joint Recommendation 3:** Structure website information to report progress and trends made in achieving resource outcome goals and implementation of County Water Plan.

**Wright SWCD Recommendation 1:** Conduct a strategic assessment of the SWCD to determine whether existing mission, goals and staff capacity are enough to meet the demands for conservation services in the district.

**Wright County Recommendation 1:** Conduct a strategic assessment of the Planning and Zoning Department to determine whether existing mission, goals and staff capacity are enough to address the conservation challenges in Wright County.

### Action Items:

Wright County and Wright SWCD have no action items.

# Appendix H

## Performance Standards Checklists used in Level II Reviews

### COUNTY LOCAL WATER MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

LGU Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Performance Area	Performance Standard	Level of Review	Rating		
	■ Basic practice or statutory requirement ★ High Performance standard (see instructions for explanation of standards)	I Annual Compliance II BWSR Staff Review & Assessment (1/10 yrs)	Yes, No, or Value	YES	NO
Admin	■ eLINK Grant Report(s): submitted on time	I			
	■ <b>County has resolution assuming WCA responsibilities and delegation resolutions (if needed).</b>	II			
	■ <b>County has knowledgeable and trained staff to manage WCA program or secured a qualified delegate.</b>	II			
	■ Drainage authority buffer strip report submitted on time	I			
	★ Public drainage records: meet modernization guidelines	II			
Planning	■ Local water mgmt plan: current	I			
	★ Metro counties: groundwater plan up-to-date	I			
	■ Biennial Budget Request submitted on-time	I			
	★ Prioritized, Targeted & Measureable criteria are used for Goals & Objectives in local water management plan as appropriate.	II			
	★ Water quality trend data used for short- and long-range plan priorities	II			
Execution	■ <b>WCA decisions and determinations are made in conformance with WCA requirements.</b>	II			
	■ <b>WCA TEP reviews and recommendations are appropriately coordinated.</b>	II			
	★ <b>Certified wetland delineator on staff or retainer</b>	II			
	★ Water quality data collected to track outcomes for each priority concern	II			
	★ Water quality trends tracked for priority water bodies	II			
Communication & Coordination	■ BWSR grant report(s) posted on website	I			
	★ Communication piece sent within last 12 months: indicate target audience below	II			
	Communication Target Audience:				
	★ Obtain stakeholder input: within last 5 yrs	II			
	★ Partnerships: liaison with SWCDs/WDs and cooperative projects/tasks done	II			
	★ Annual report to water plan advisory committee on plan progress	II			
	★ Track progress for I & E objectives in Plan	II			
	★ County local water plan on county website	II			
★ Water management ordinances on county website	II				

**SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT PERFORMANCE STANDARDS**

LGU Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Performance Area	Performance Standard	Level of Review	Rating	
			YES	NO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Basic practice or Statutory requirement</li> <li>★ High Performance standard (see instructions for explanation of standards)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I Annual Compliance</li> <li>II BWSR Staff Review &amp; Assessment (1/10 yrs)</li> </ul>	Yes, No, or Value	
Administration	■ Financial statement: annual, on-time and complete	I		
	■ Financial audit: completed as required by statute (see guidance) or as per BWSR correspondence	I		
	■ eLINK Grant Report(s) submitted on-time	I		
	■ Data practices policy: exists and reviewed/updated within last 5 yrs	II		
	■ Personnel policy: exists and reviewed/updated within last 5 yrs	II		
	■ Technical professional appointed and serving on WCA TEP	II		
	■ SWCD has an adopting resolution assuming WCA responsibilities and appropriate decision delegation resolutions as warranted (If WCA LGU)	II		
	★ Job approval authorities: reviewed and reported annually	II		
	★ Operational guidelines and policies exist and are current	II		
	★ Board training: orientation & cont. ed. plan and record for each board member	II		
★ Staff training: orientation and cont. ed. plan/record for each staff member	II			
Planning	■ Comprehensive Plan: updated within 5 yrs or current resolution adopting unexpired county LWM plan	I		
	■ Biennial Budget Request submitted on time	I		
	★ Prioritized, Targeted and Measureable criteria are used for Goals and Objectives in the local water management plan as appropriate.	II		
	★ Annual Plan of Work: based on comp plan, strategic priorities	II		
Execution	■ Are state grant funds spent in high priority problem areas	II		
	■ Total expenditures per year (over past 10 yrs)	II	see below	
	■ Months of operating funds in reserve	II		
	■ Replacement and restoration orders are prepared in conformance with WCA rules and requirements.	II		
	■ WCA TEP member is knowledgeable/trained in WCA technical aspects	II		
	■ WCA TEP member contributes to TEP reviews, findings & recommendations	II		
	■ WCA decisions and determinations are made in conformance with all WCA requirements (If WCA LGU)	II		
	■ WCA TEP reviews/recommendations appropriately coordinated(if LGU)	II		
	★ Certified wetland delineator: on staff or retainer	II		
★ Outcome trends monitored and reported for key resources	II			
Communication & Coordination	■ Website contains all required content elements	I		
	★ Website contains additional content beyond minimum required	II		
	★ Track progress on I & E objectives in Plan	II		
	★ Obtain stakeholder input: within last 5 yrs	II		
	★ Annual report communicates progress on plan goals	II		
	★ Partnerships: cooperative projects/tasks with neighboring districts, counties, watershed districts, non-governmental organizations	II		
	★ Coordination with County Board by supervisors or staff	II		

**METRO WATERSHED DISTRICT and WMO PERFORMANCE STANDARDS**

LGU Name:

Performance Area	Performance Standard	Level of Review	Rating	
			YES	NO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ High Performance standard</li> <li>■ Basic practice or statutory requirement (see instructions for explanation of standards)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I Annual Compliance</li> <li>II BWSR Staff Review &amp; Assessment (1/5 yrs)</li> </ul>	Yes, No, or Value	
Administration	■ Activity report: annual, on-time	I		
	■ Financial report & audit completed on time	I		
	■ Drainage authority buffer strip report submitted on time	I		
	■ eLink Grant Report(s): submitted on time	I		
	■ Rules: date of last revision or review	II	mo/yr	
	■ Personnel policy: exists and reviewed/updated within last 5 yrs	II		
	■ Data practices policy: exists & reviewed/updated within last 5 yrs	II		
	■ Manager appointments: current and reported	II		
	■ Consultant RFP: within 2 yrs for professional services	II		
	■ <b>WD/WMO has resolution assuming WCA responsibilities and appropriate delegation resolutions as warranted(N/A if not LGU)</b>	II		
	■ <b>WD/WMO has knowledgeable &amp; trained staff that manages WCA program or has secured a qualified delegate. (N/A if not WCA LGU)</b>	II		
	★ Administrator on staff	II		
	★ Board training: orient.& cont. ed. Plan, record for each board member	II		
	★ Staff training: orient. & cont. ed. plan and record for each staff person	II		
★ Operational guidelines for fiscal procedures and conflicts of interest exist and current	II			
★ Public drainage records: meet modernization guidelines	II			
Planning	■ Watershed management plan: up-to-date	I		
	■ City/twp. local water plans not yet approved	II		
	■ Capital Improvement Program: reviewed every 2 yrs	II		
	★ Biennial Budget Request submitted on time	II		
	★ Strategic plan identifies short-term priorities	II		
Execution	■ Engineer Reports: submitted for DNR & BWSR review	II		
	■ <b>WCA decisions and determinations are made in conformance with all WCA requirements. (if delegated WCA LGU)</b>	II		
	■ <b>WCA TEP reviews &amp; recommendations appropriately coordinated. (if delegated WCA LGU)</b>	II		
	■ Total expenditures per year (past 10 yrs)	II	see below	
	★ Water quality trends tracked for key water bodies	II		
	★ Watershed hydrologic trends monitored / reported	II		
Communication & Coordination	■ Website: contains information as required by MR 8410.0150 Subp. 3a, i.e. as board meeting, contact information, water plan, etc.	II		
	■ Functioning advisory committee(s): recommendations on projects, reports, 2-way communication with Board	II		
	■ Communication piece: sent within last 12 months	II		
	Communication Target Audience:			
	★ Track progress for I & E objectives in Plan	II		
	★ Coordination with County Board, SWCD Board, City/Twp officials	II		
Partnerships: cooperative projects/tasks with neighboring organizations, such as counties, soil and water districts, watershed districts and non-governmental organizations	II			



**GREATER MN WATERSHED DISTRICT PERFORMANCE STANDARDS**

LGU Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Performance Area	Performance Standard	Level of Review	Rating	
			YES	NO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ High Performance standard</li> <li>■ Basic practice or Statutory requirement (see instructions for explanation of standards)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I Annual Compliance</li> <li>II BWSR Staff Review &amp; Assessment (1/10 yrs)</li> </ul>	Yes, No, or Value	
Administration	■ Annual report: submitted by mid-year	I		
	■ Financial audit: completed within last 12 months	I		
	■ Drainage authority buffer strip report submitted on time	I		
	■ eLink Grant Report(s): submitted on time	I		
	■ Rules: date of last revision or review	II	mo/yr	
	■ Personnel policy: exists and reviewed/updated within last 5 yrs	II		
	■ Data practices policy: exists and reviewed/updated within last 5 yrs	II		
	■ Manager appointments: current and reported	II		
	■ <b>WD has resolution assuming WCA responsibilities &amp; appropriate delegation resolutions as warranted. (N/A if not LGU)</b>	II		
	■ <b>WD has knowledgeable &amp; trained staff that manages WCA program or has secured a qualified delegate. (N/A if not WCA LGU)</b>	II		
	★ Administrator on staff	II		
	★ Board training: orientation & cont. ed. Plan/record for each board member	II		
	★ Staff training: orientation & cont. ed. Plan/record for each staff	II		
	★ Operational guidelines exist and current	II		
★ Public drainage records: meet modernization guidelines	II			
Planning	■ Watershed management plan: up-to-date	I		
	★ Biennial Budget Request submitted on time	II		
	★ Strategic plan identifies short-term activities & budgets based on state and local watershed priorities	II		
	★ Member of County Water Plan Advisory Committee(s)	II		
Execution	■ Engineer Reports: submitted for DNR & BWSR review	II		
	■ <b>WCA decisions and determinations made in conformance with all WCA requirements. (N/A if not LGU)</b>	II		
	■ <b>WCA TEP reviews/recommendations coordinated (N/A if not LGU)</b>	II		
	■ Total expenditures per year for past 10 years	II	attach	
	★ Water quality trends tracked for key water bodies	II		
★ Watershed hydrologic trends monitored / reported	II			
Communication & Coordination	■ Functioning advisory committee: recommendations on projects, reports, maintains 2-way communication with Board	II		
	■ Communication piece sent within last 12 months	II		
	★ Website: contains annual report, financial statement, board members, contact info, grant report(s), watershed management plan, meeting notices, agendas & minutes, updated after each board	II		
	★ Obtain stakeholder input: within last 5 yrs	II		
	★ Track progress for I & E objectives in Plan	II		
	★ Coordination with County Board, SWCD Board, City/Twp officials	II		
	★ Partnerships: cooperative projects/tasks with neighboring districts, counties, soil and water districts, non-governmental organizations	II		

# Appendix I

## 2019 Local Government Performance Awards and Recognition

(Awarding agency listed in parentheses.)

### **Outstanding Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Employee**

(Board of Water and Soil Resources)

Nicole Bernd, West Polk SWCD Manager

### **Outstanding SWCD Supervisor Award**

(Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts)

James Ballenthin, Cass Soil and Water Conservation District

### **SWCD of the Year**

(Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts)

Wilkin Soil and Water Conservation District

### **SWCD Appreciation Award**

(Department of Natural Resources)

Benton Soil and Water Conservation District

### **Community Conservationist Award**

(Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts/Minnesota Pollution Control Agency)

Kyle Crocker (Nominated by Beltrami Soil and Water Conservation District)

### **Outstanding Forest Steward Award**

(Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts/Department of Natural Resources)

Gary Roerick (Nominated by Hubbard Soil and Water Conservation District)

### **Outstanding Watershed District Employee**

(Board of Water and Soil Resources)

Matt Kocian, Rice Creek Watershed District

### **Watershed District of the Year**

(Department of Natural Resources)

Middle Fork Crow River Watershed District

### **Program of the Year Award**

(Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts)

Coon Creek Watershed District, Reaching out about Contaminants of Emerging Concern

### **WD Project of the Year**

(Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts)

Buffalo-Red River Watershed District, Project No. 49 Oakport Flood Mitigation