



# NEWS RELEASE

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Central Office: 520 Lafayette Road North, St. Paul, MN 55155

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**Contact:** Celi Haga, 651-315-5082

## **Board of Water and Soil Resources awards \$14 million in Clean Water Fund grants**

St. Paul, Minn.— Water. It's so essential to Minnesota's identity that our state's very name comes from a Dakota word for the same and caring for it has become a statewide priority. The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) awarded more than \$14 million in grants today to its local government partners that will help protect and restore Minnesota's streams, rivers, lakes and groundwater.

BWSR's Executive Director, John Jaschke, said the fund is making a difference in lakes and rivers all across the state. "By pursuing these investments in clean water, local governments are demonstrating a commitment to improving and protecting Minnesota's landscape." Jaschke said. "From cleaning up shorelines, to installing rain gardens and providing technical assistance for conservation practices, the projects receiving funding are as diverse as the communities they will benefit."

Some examples of funded projects:

- In Northwest Minnesota, Polk County is continuing work in the Sand Hill River Watershed to install erosion control and sediment reduction practices in the upper reaches of the watershed. Working with private landowners, Phase III of the project will install 80 water and sediment basins on agricultural cropland that estimates predict will reduce by 1262 tons per year of sediment and 1397 pounds per year of phosphorus from entering the Sand Hill River.
- In the center of the state, Crow Wing County's Serpent Lake is one example of how Clean Water funds are being put to good use. A highly used and valuable public resource, Serpent Lake is a tourism hub for the area, with parks, beaches, and fishing piers. The FY2014 project builds on previous research and analysis to target and implement high priority stormwater projects, mitigating runoff and, according to estimates, reducing phosphorus in the lake by 27 pounds per year and sediment by almost 5 tons per year. This, in turn, will reduce algal blooms and increase water clarity.
- In the Twin Cities Metro, the City of Savage's Savage Fen Ravine Stabilization project is one example of how Clean Water funds are being put to good use. The Savage Fen Wetland Complex is an important and protected ecosystem, one of Minnesota's largest known calcareous fens. Two large ravines discharge into the complex, and carry with them a significant amount of stormwater and sediment. By stabilizing the ravines the city will be able to protect this rare habitat from excessive sediment and provide long-term protection of the fen, improve the habitat for other native species, and increase overall water quality within the Fen and, ultimately, the Minnesota River.

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- From the southern half of the state, the Southeast Minnesota Wastewater Initiative, submitted by the Southeast Minnesota Water Resources Board. Lack of sewage treatment in many small communities in the region is causing surface water and groundwater pollution, and the grant funds will be used to target ten communities with technical assistance that will help them upgrade their sewage treatment systems. These new sewage treatment systems will eliminate approximately 152,550 gallons of untreated sewage per day – 55 million gallons per year - from entering the Lower Mississippi River and Cedar River Basins.

The Clean Water Legacy funds are targeting polluted and at-risk waters throughout the state. Some funded projects will create catchment areas to slow down water, allowing pollutants to filter out before reaching a lake or stream. Others will filter water entering drainage systems, protect drinking water wells, and reduce soil erosion.

The need still outweighs the funding. In this grant round BWSR received 244 applications totaling \$51 million in requests for the \$14 million in available funds. “There are many exceptional projects to choose from for the limited resources that are available,” Jaschke said. “BWSR and its agency partners use a decision-making process based on good science, sound planning and local commitment to do our best to identify those projects that will be the most effective.”

See how the legacy funds are affecting the land and waters important to you. For detailed project information and maps visit [www.bwsr.state.mn.us](http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us).

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