



# 2014 Performance Review and Assistance Program

Report to the Minnesota Legislature

February 2015

---

**Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources**

520 Lafayette Road North

St. Paul, MN 55155

651-296-3767

[www.bwsr.state.mn.us](http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us)

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.

Prepared by Donald Buckhout, PRAP Coordinator (Don.Buckhout@state.mn.us; 651-296-0768)

The estimated cost of preparing this report (as required by Minn. Stat. 3.197) was:

Total staff time: \$3200

Production/duplication: \$300

Total: \$3500

BWSR is reducing printing and mailing costs by using the Internet to distribute reports and information to wider audiences. This report is available at [www.bwsr.state.mn.us/PRAP.index](http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/PRAP.index) and available in alternative formats upon request.

## 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 methodically assessed the performance of the units of government that constitute Minnesota's local delivery system for conservation of water and related land resources. The goal is to assist these local government partners to be the best they can be in their management of these critical resources.

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

- Plan Implementation—how well an LGU's accomplishments meet planned objectives.
- Compliance with performance standards—administrative mandates and best practices.
- 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.

#### **2014 Program Highlights**

- Completed 26 Level II performance reviews exceeding the 2014 target of 24 reviews. By March 2015 BWSR will have conducted 88 Level II performance reviews since 2008.
- Conducted a survey to assess LGU implementation of BWSR performance improvement recommendations. Surveyed LGUs reviewed in 2008-2013 to find out if they have implemented BWSR's recommendations for organizational improvements. LGUs reported fully completing 46% and partially completing 34% of the recommendations in their Level II performance review reports.
- Coordinated PRAP Performance Review methods with surveys developed for the new One Watershed-One Plan pilot watershed groups.
- Used PRAP Assistance Grant funds and assisted BWSR field staff to restore financial stability to the North St. Louis Soil and Water Conservation District.

#### **2014 Results of Annual Tracking of 240 LGUs' Plans and Reports (PRAP Level I)**

Overall compliance with LGU plan revision and reporting requirements improved in 2014. On-time drainage buffer and eLINK grant reporting was significantly better. Low WMO performance was due to overdue plan revisions and some WMOs' premature adoption of a pending rule change regarding audits.

##### **Long-range Plan Status: the number of overdue plans increased to 9 from 6 in 2013.**

- Soil & Water Conservation Districts: all plans or resolutions are current.
- Counties: all local water plans are current with 11 extensions; three metro county groundwater plan revisions are overdue.
- Watershed Districts: three plan revisions are overdue; all are in progress.
- Watershed Management Organizations: three plan revisions are overdue; all are in progress.

##### **LGUs in Full Compliance with Level I Performance Standards: 79%.**

- Soil & Water Conservation Districts: 88% compliance (78/89).
- County Water Management: 87% compliance (76/87).
- Watershed Districts: 65% compliance (30/46).
- Watershed Management Organizations: 28% compliance (5/18).

#### **Selected PRAP Program Objectives for 2015 (see complete list on page 12)**

- Maintain the new target for Level II performance reviews of 24 per year.
- Adapt PRAP performance review methods for assessing the One Watershed-One Plan pilots.
- Maintain the focus on resource outcomes in Level II performance reviews.
- Schedule surveys to track LGU compliance with Level II PRAP recommendations.
- Track 240 LGUs' Level I performance with emphasis on improving WMO and WD reporting.
- Adopt performance measures/targets for each program objective; report progress in 2016 report.

## Table of Contents

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Executive Summary .....  | iii |
| What is the Performance Review and Assistance Program?.....                        | 1   |
| Report on PRAP Performance.....  | 3   |
| 2014 LGU Performance Review Results.....   | 4   |
| Assistance Services to Local Governments.....                                      | 9   |
| Reporting.....   | 10  |
| Program Conclusions and Future Direction.....                                      | 12  |
| Appendix A PRAP Authorizing Legislation.....                                       | 13  |
| Appendix B Level I: 2014 Long Range Plan Status .....                              | 14  |
| Appendix C Level I: 2013 Annual Activity Reports.....                              | 15  |
| Appendix D Level I: 2013 Financial Reports and Audits .....                        | 16  |
| Appendix E Standard Level II: 2014 LGU Performance Review Summaries .....          | 17  |
| Appendix F Watershed-based Level II: 2013-14 LGU Performance Review Summaries..... | 30  |
| Appendix G 2014 LGU Performance Awards and Recognition.....                        | 39  |

# 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 primary focus is on how well they are implementing their long-range plans. Those LGUs reviewed are soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs), watershed districts (WDs), watershed management organizations (WMOs), and the water management function of counties—a total of 240 distinct organizations. PRAP, authorized in 2007 (see Appendix A), is coordinated by one BWSR central office staff member, with assistance from BWSR's 15 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 particular 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 the different types of LGUs. (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

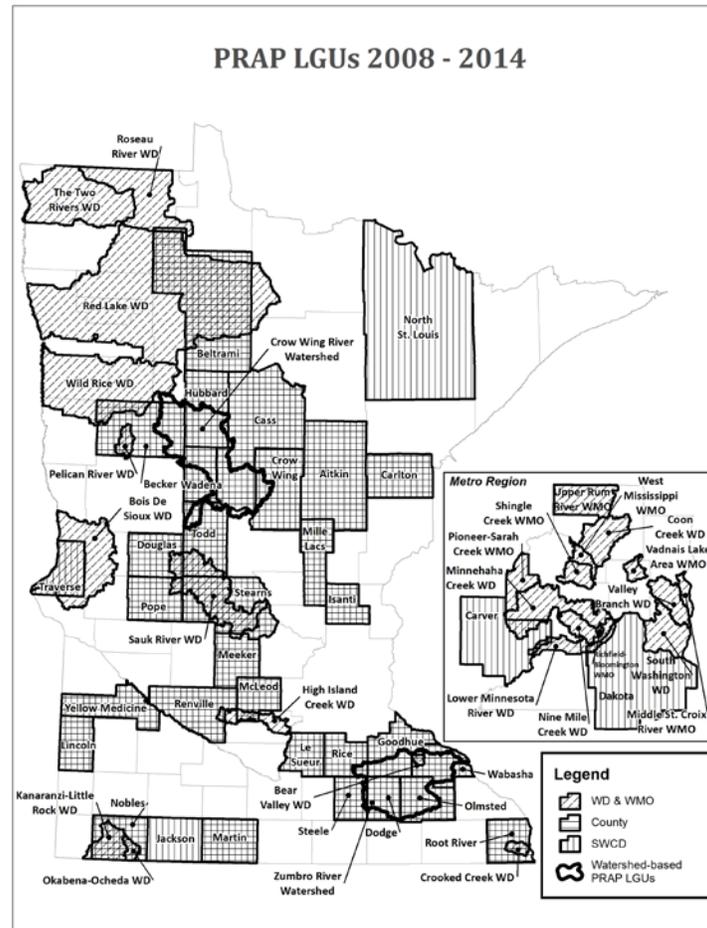
The **performance review** component is applied at four levels (see pages 4-8).

**Level I** is an annual tabulation of required plans and reports for all 240 LGUs with website posting of the results. Level I is conducted entirely by BWSR staff and does not require additional input from LGUs.

**Level II** is a routine, interactive review to cover all LGUs at least once every 10 years to evaluate progress on plan implementation, operational effectiveness, and partner relationships. This review includes assessing compliance with Level II performance standards. The map on page 2 shows which LGUs have received a Level II review.

**Level III** is an in-depth assessment of an LGU's performance problems and issues initiated by BWSR or the LGU and usually involving targeted assistance to address specific performance needs. Since 2008 BWSR has conducted Level III reviews for three LGUs at their request. BWSR regularly monitors all LGUs for additional opportunities.

**Level IV** is for those LGUs that have 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 cases.



**Assistance** (page 9) varies with the needs of the LGU. BWSR provides practical and financial assistance to help LGUs make organizational improvements or address performance issues. Since 2012 BWSR has awarded PRAP Assistance Grants to LGUs for specialized assistance, usually in the form of consultant services, identified by LGUs themselves or recommended by BWSR in a performance review.

**Reporting** (pages 10-11) makes information about LGU performance accessible to the LGUs' stakeholders and constituents. Reporting methods specific to PRAP include links to performance review summaries, the database of Level I compliance, and this annual report to the legislature, which can all be accessed via the PRAP page on BWSR's website ([bwsr.state.mn.us/PRAP/index.html](http://bwsr.state.mn.us/PRAP/index.html)). In

addition the PRAP Coordinator has presented results from Level II performance reviews to county boards when requested to do so by LGU staff.

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

Administration of government programs demands and deserves 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 publically accessible results. In 2014 two PRAP program elements were added to track resource outcomes based on LGU accomplishments and to follow up with LGUs to find out whether they have adopted BWSR's recommendations for organizational improvements (pages 6 and 8).

## 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 2014 program activities with the corresponding objectives from the 2014 PRAP legislative report.

| PERFORMANCE REVIEW OBJECTIVES   |   |
|---|---|
| What We Proposed  | What We Did   |
| Meet amended authorizing legislation target by conducting 24 Level II reviews.  | Conducted Level II reviews of 26 local governments, including 11 in the Zumbro River watershed.   |
| Work with other BWSR program staff to improve the on-time reporting by LGUs.  | Collaboration among BWSR staff resulted in significant improvement in reporting for drainage buffers (from 33% late in 2013 to 6% in 2014).                       |
| Conduct evaluation of LGU implementation of BWSR's PRAP recommendations to evaluate program effectiveness.                                    | A 2014 survey sample of 2008-2013 Level II reviews revealed that LGUs fully implemented 46% of BWSR's recommendations and partially implemented 34%.              |
| Modify watershed-based PRAP performance standards to incorporate accountability measures developed for the One Watershed-One Plan initiative. | Worked with the One Watershed-One Plan program by using PRAP performance review survey questions as a basis for assessing LGU readiness in four pilot watersheds. |
| Monitor and report Level I performance of all 241 LGUs.   | All LGUs were tracked for basic plan and report compliance. Level I compliance was reported in the 2014 PRAP Legislative Report.                                  |

| ASSISTANCE OBJECTIVES   |  |
|---|--|
| What We Proposed  | What We Did  |
| Continue monitoring LGUs experiencing change for assistance opportunities.            | Monitoring by BWSR managers led to assistance for the North St. Louis SWCD supported by \$19,800 in PRAP Assistance funding. |
| Publicize the availability of PRAP Assistance Grants.                                 | The November 2014 BWSR Spotlights publication featured the use of these grants by one LGU.                                   |
| Notify PRAP LGUs of BWSR Academy training classes that address their expressed needs. | In 2014 Level II LGUs did not identify training needs so notifications were not required.                                    |

| REPORTING OBJECTIVES  |  |
|---|--|
| What We Proposed  | What We Did  |
| Highlight resource outcomes in the plan implementation section of Level II reports. | All 2014 Level II reports featured Resource Outcomes information but only 2 plans have resource outcomes targets in their planned goals. Of those 2, only one had follow-up data that addressed those targets. |

# 2014 LGU Performance Review Results

## Level I Results

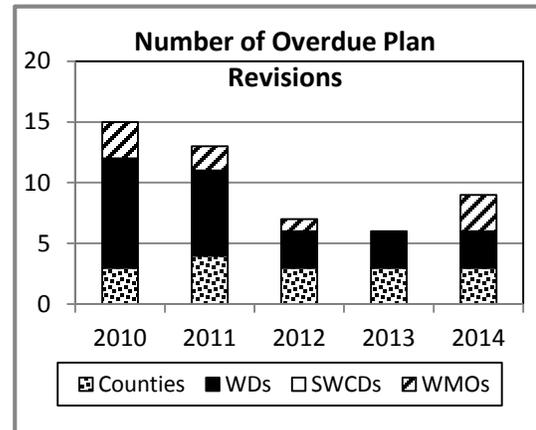
The Level I performance review monitors and tabulates all 240 LGUs' long-range plan updates and their annual reporting of activities, ditch buffer strip, grants, and finances. BWSR tracks these performance measures each year to provide oversight of legal and policy mandates, but also to screen LGUs for indication of potential problems. Chronic lateness in financial or grant reporting, for example, may be a symptom of operational issues that require BWSR assistance.

| LGUs Meeting All Level I Performance Standards |            |            |  |
|--|------------|------------|--|
|  | 2014       | 2013       |  |
| <b>240 LGUs</b>                                | <b>79%</b> | <b>68%</b> |  |
| SWCDs (89)                                     | 88%        | 82%        |  |
| Counties (87)                                  | 87%        | 62%        |  |
| WMOs (18)                                      | 28%        | 61%        |  |
| WDs (46)                                       | 65%        | 57%        |  |
| (number of LGUs)                               |            |            |  |

Overall, LGU compliance with Level I standards improved markedly over 2013. This was largely because of a significant improvement in county reporting that exceeded declines in WMO compliance. Because BWSR has tightened Level I compliance tracking in recent years, this report compares Level I performance with only one previous year rather than back to 2008, PRAP's first year of tracking.

**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. After several years of reduction in the numbers of overdue plans, that trend reversed

in 2014 because three WMOs missed their plan revision due dates. No progress was made in watershed district plan revisions because, even though one plan revision was completed, two revisions remain in progress and another LGU missed the revision due date. Until their plans are revised and approved, the WMOs and WDs are ineligible for Clean Water Fund grants. As in each of the past four years, there are still three metro area county groundwater



plans that need updating. In 2015 BWSR will actively engage with Ramsey County, one of the three, to incorporate groundwater protection and management strategies in a revision of their draft groundwater management plan. Appendix B (page 14) lists the LGUs that are overdue for plan revisions.

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

In 2014 there was a significant improvement in on-time submittal of drainage system buffer strip reports by both county and WD drainage authorities. Of the 96 LGUs that must submit annual buffer

reports, 91% met the February 1, 2014, deadline compared with 67% in 2013. The reason was persistent work by BWSR staff to contact LGUs with missing reports before the due date.

Similarly, SWCDs and counties improved their on-time submittal of grant status reports via BWSR's on-line eLINK system with 93% of LGUs meeting the deadline compared with 86% in 2013. This improvement in reporting was even more noteworthy because BWSR had implemented a new eLINK system and conducted extensive LGU training in the interim. Some of the improvement in on-time reporting was likely due to the system upgrade.

Watershed district and metro area WMO compliance with the annual activity report requirement was similar to the previous year. This reporting compliance rate (79%) is not yet as good as it should be.

Finally, only one SWCD missed the website content requirement by the due date. Appendix C (page 15) contains details about reporting.

**Annual financial reports and audits.** In general, compliance with annual financial report and audit requirements declined slightly in 2014 compared with 2013.

All SWCDs submit annual financial reports to BWSR. In 2013 all these reports came in on-time. However, in 2014 four SWCDs submitted late reports, which accounts for some of the decline.

Most LGUs are required to prepare annual audits of their financial records. Exceptions are SWCDs whose annual expenditures fall below a certain threshold. BWSR does not track county audits because they are accountable to the Office of the State Auditor. Level I tracking showed that 79% of LGUs met the audit performance standard in 2014 compared with 89% in 2013. A few WMOs, anticipating pending changes in the rules that govern metro watershed organization reporting, did not submit audits in 2014. When those rules take effect in 2015 there will likely be improved performance in this area. See Appendix D (page 16) for financial report and audit details.

## Level II Performance Review Results

The Level II performance review process is designed to give both BWSR and each individual LGU an overall assessment of their effectiveness in both 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. It includes surveys of board members and staff and of the LGU's partners to assess internal and external effectiveness and working relationships. BWSR uses two approaches in conducting Level II reviews: standard and watershed-based.

### Standard Level II Performance Reviews

BWSR conducted standard Level II reviews of 15 LGUs in 2014: **Nobles County and SWCD, McLeod County and SWCD, Carlton County, Renville SWCD, Mille Lacs SWCD, Dakota County SWCD, the Okabena-Ocheda and Kanaranzi-Little Rock WDs** in southwest Minnesota, and the **Nine Mile Creek WD, Lower MN River WD, South Washington WD, the Richfield-Bloomington WMO and the Upper Rum River WMO**, all in the metro area. The McLeod County and SWCD reviews were conducted jointly because both entities share the same local water plan. For the four LGUs with jurisdiction in Nobles County (i.e., the Nobles County Environmental Services Department, the Nobles SWCD and the Kanaranzi-Little Rock and Okabena-Ocheda WDs), the four performance reviews reports were sent to each LGU because all four use the same local water management plan as their long-range plan. The remaining LGUs received individual reviews. Appendix E (page 17-29) contains summaries of the performance review reports. Full reports are available from BWSR by request.

While there are no findings or conclusions from these reviews that apply to all LGUs,

there are general observations about LGU performance worth noting. In the case of the four LGUs in Nobles County, their use of a common long-range plan is unique in Minnesota. While most SWCDs now use their county's local water management plan in place of their own district comprehensive plan, in Nobles County two of the three watershed districts with jurisdiction in the county have adopted the county plan as their watershed management

### Reporting Resource Outcomes

All 2014 Level II PRAP reviews included an assessment of resource outcomes resulting from LGU programs and projects (e.g., water quality improvements, aquatic habitat enhancement). Each report featured a text box containing actual resource outcomes expected from LGU planned actions. However, only two plans contained specific resource outcomes as objectives. The Nine Mile Creek WD plan contains specific water quality and habitat objectives for lakes and streams in that district. The WD reports resource changes and trends each year in their annual report. The Lower Minnesota River WD plan contains specific long-term metrics for resource improvements. However, the WD has not started to track those metrics. In order to increase targeting of resource outcomes by LGUs, BWSR challenged a few of those LGUs to include resource outcome measures in their next water management plans.

plan. The performance reviews showed that such a coordinated planning approach has also led to good collaboration in implementation. Only the Kanaranzi-Little Rock WD has lagged in plan implementation. However, as a result of the existing local coordination the WD is now contracting with the SWCD for administrative services, which should improve their performance. This single plan approach in Nobles County prefigured the new One Watershed-One Plan approach to collaborative

local water management. The county has indicated a willingness to consider the One Watershed-One Plan option when their local water plan is due for revision.

In the metropolitan area, the Level II reviews revealed wide differences in performance. While some LGUs, such as the watershed districts and Dakota SWCD are systematically and effectively implementing their planned actions, the Upper Rum River WMO has adopted an approach to do the minimum necessary to maintain the function of a joint-powers WMO. The BWSR review was critical of the organization's low profile approach and encouraged engagement with citizens and neighboring LGUs to determine issues and approaches that are relevant to their mission.

In addition the reviews of the Upper Rum River and Richfield-Bloomington WMOs revealed the potential for an enhanced watershed focus and effectiveness by merging with a neighboring water management entity. BWSR recommended that option to each but they declined to pursue that option. The Lower Minnesota River WD review also highlighted their difficulty in addressing water quality issues because their jurisdiction does not include their upstream watersheds. The issue of jurisdictional boundaries for metro area watershed management LGUs is a factor in their ability to manage resources. (See Program Conclusions, page 12.)

### Watershed-based Level II Performance

**Reviews.** In 2013 BWSR began the second watershed-based performance review focused on the LGUs with jurisdiction in the same watershed. In addition to evaluating plan implementation, the watershed-based review examines the extent to which LGUs share a watershed focus and collaboration. BWSR selected the Zumbro River watershed because the majority of the LGUs in that watershed had not previously received a Level II review and most LGUs were

participating in the Zumbro Watershed Partnership organization. It was hoped that the process would be able to assess the effect of that participation on collaboration. The Zumbro River watershed includes 13 LGUs: the counties and SWCDs in **Steele, Rice, Dodge, Goodhue, Olmsted** and **Wabasha** counties and the **Bear Valley** WD. BWSR completed the process with the delivery of a joint report and individual reports to all LGUs. Appendix F (pages 30-38) contains the summaries from all the reports.

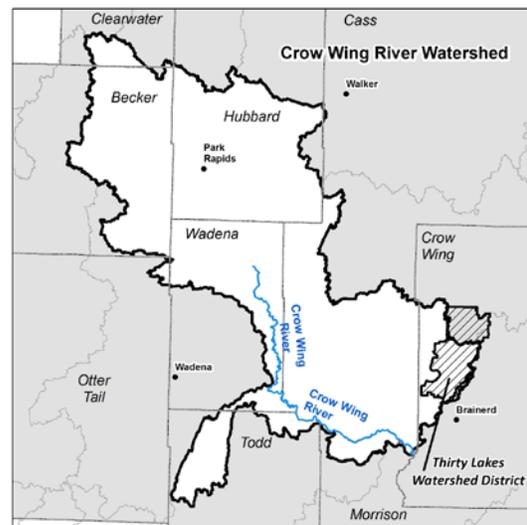


In general, the LGUs operating in the Zumbro watershed are making good progress in implementing their planned projects and programs. The high value resource, identified in the survey of board members and staff as the productive agricultural land base, along with the long history of soil conservation in southeast Minnesota are two factors that contribute to effective conservation delivery.

Most of the contributing LGUs with jurisdiction in the Zumbro River watershed already show moderate to good degrees of collaboration for certain aspects of their operations. Collaboration is stronger on programs than on services however. Also, collaboration is much stronger among the LGUs in the downstream reaches of the watershed. The most likely reason is that the upstream counties, Rice and Steele, have very small pieces of the Zumbro watershed and spend relatively little time and resources on

project and program implementation in those areas. Another factor is the active participation by the downstream LGUs in the Zumbro Watershed Partnership (ZWP) and the Southeast Minnesota Water Resources Board, two coordinative organizations

An interesting finding of this review was that while the survey showed that a majority of both board members and staff believe more collaboration would be good for both their organizations and for the resource, a not-insignificant 25% of board members believe that there would be no benefit to either themselves or the resource from more collaboration. Another 25% said they didn't know if more collaboration would help or not. This result could reflect a variety of perspectives, which the survey did not explore. Nevertheless, these opinions may have implications for future watershed-based planning in the Zumbro basin.



In October 2014 BWSR began its third watershed-based performance review, focusing on the LGUs (counties and SWCDs) with jurisdiction in the Crow Wing River watershed of north central Minnesota. The 10 LGUs are in **Becker, Hubbard, Wadena, Cass** and **Crow Wing** counties. The **Todd** and **Morrison** SWCDs will participate to a

lesser extent than the five others. That process will be completed in 2015.

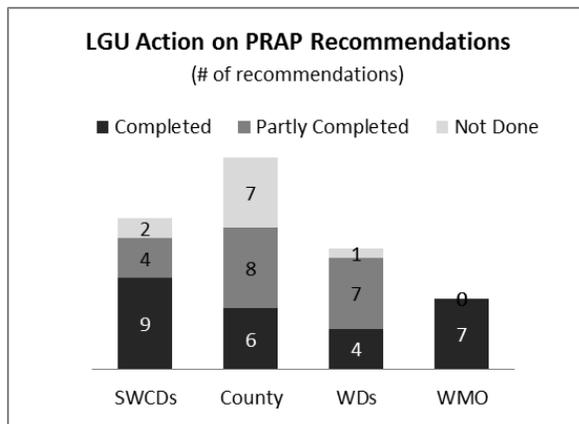
**Coordination with One Watershed-One Plan.**

Elements of the watershed-based performance review process were used in BWSR’s *One Watershed-One Plan* initiative. The University of Minnesota Extension Service used the PRAP watershed survey as the basis for an assessment of readiness for collaboration among the LGUs in the pilot watersheds. In a few years, BWSR will use the PRAP process to assess the implementation of these new watershed plans.

**Survey of LGU Implementation of PRAP Recommendations**

A PRAP program goal for 2014 was to find out to what extent LGUs are following through on the recommendations BWSR offered as part of their performance review.

In October BWSR surveyed a sample of 30 of the 63 LGUs that had a Level II performance review from 2008-2013 using an online Survey Monkey™ tool. Lead staff from these LGUs were directed to a list of the recommendations from their LGU’s PRAP report and asked to indicate the level of completion for each one. The chart shows the number of recommendations completed fully, partially or not done.



Twenty-two of the 30 LGUs (73%) responded. Survey results showed that LGUs self-reported fully completing 46% of the recommendations and partially completing another 34%, meaning that 80% of BWSR’s recommendations were addressed to some degree. One purpose of the

survey was to find out if the LGUs see BWSR’s recommendations as beneficial. The premise is that useful recommendations are more likely to be adopted. The survey results indicate that they are useful but that more follow-up with LGUs is needed.

**Level III Results**

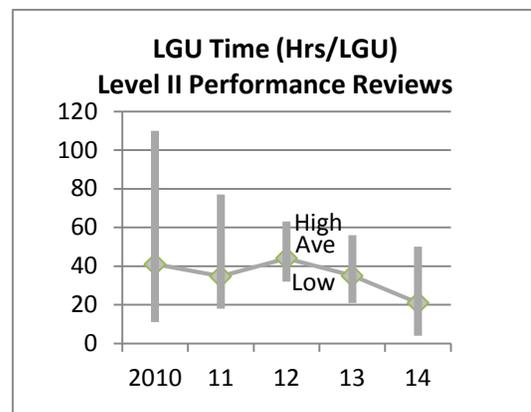
There were no Level III performance reviews conducted in 2014.

**Level IV Results**

No Level IV actions were conducted in 2014.

**PRAP 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 persons who help with data collection, and the ready availability of performance data. In 2014 LGU staff spent an average of 21 hours on their Level II review, a significant reduction from past years and continuation of a recent trend. BWSR seeks to maintain a balance between getting good information while minimizing the LGU time required to provide it.



Not including overall performance review administration and process development, BWSR staff spent an average of 27 hours for each LGU’s performance review, consistent with the past few years.

## Assistance Services to Local Governments

### Types of Assistance

Part of helping LGUs to be the best they can be involves targeted assistance to address organizational development issues. PRAP has systematically expanded BWSR's capability to assist LGUs. In addition to PRAP, BWSR field staff provided LGUs, such as the Wabasha SWCD, with many hours of assistance to support and enhance their operational effectiveness. The PRAP Coordinator provided assistance as described in the box below.

**2014 PRAP Assistance to LGUs**  
**North St. Louis SWCD:** *BWSR contracted for an audit of the district's finances after the district manager announced in late 2013 that the SWCD was out of money. The audit was followed by a PRAP Assistance Grant to the neighboring Koochiching SWCD to provide administrative services and develop a recovery plan for North St. Louis. In addition, program staff and BWSR field staff attended several SWCD supervisor meetings to guide them in the recovery of district operations. The result of this assistance and other efforts by BWSR staff and SWCD board members is a return to fiscal stability, improved collaboration with county government, and a plan for continued program and service delivery.*

### PRAP Assistance Grants

In 2014 BWSR Board reauthorized the delegated authority to the Executive Director to award grants or contracts for the purpose of assisting LGUs in making organizational improvements. Grants, which are 50-50 cost-shared with the LGU, were issued to the Koochiching SWCD, the Heron Lake WD, the Nicollet SWCD, the East Ottertail SWCD, and

the Vadnais Lakes Area WMO. These grants were used for staff realignment, evaluating merger options, and strategic planning. BWSR also used these funds to contract for a financial audit of the North St. Louis SWCD. Of the \$32,000 spent in 2014 (compared with \$8,000 in 2013 and \$6,300 in 2012), 30 percent was used for assistance to that one SWCD. BWSR publicized the grants in a November *BWSR Snapshots* article that described how the Buffalo-Red River WD used their grant to conduct a strategic assessment of the district's organizational issues.

LGUs that undergo a Level II or III performance review are automatically eligible for PRAP Assistance Grants to help with the implementation of organizational improvements recommended by BWSR in their Level II final report. The BWSR Executive Director regularly informs Board members of assistance grant status. Potential applicants can find information on the BWSR website ([bwsr.state.mn.us/PRAP/index.html](http://bwsr.state.mn.us/PRAP/index.html)).

### Assessing and Meeting LGU Needs

While not part of the PRAP program, the BWSR Training Academy provides important skills and knowledge to support and enhance LGU staff performance. The Academy continues to be a popular and useful opportunity for increasing the effectiveness of the local government conservation delivery system. PRAP performance reviews can uncover needs for staff training that can be met at the BWSR Academy and the review process has been used to direct staff to that opportunity. The Level II reviews always include presentations to LGU board members, which frequently include opportunities for BWSR staff to advise board members on specific organizational issues and encourage them to take advantage of training and orientation offered by their LGU associations.

## Reporting

### Purpose of Reporting

The purposes of reporting about LGU performance are:

- to meet the legislative mandate to provide the public with information about the performance of their local water management entities, and
- to 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 gives users access to a searchable database of basic Level I performance information that BWSR has collected for each LGU from 2008-2013. As shown in the sidebar, the number of user visits to that database has dropped significantly since 2010. The most recent drop is partly because of a database shutdown for most of 2013 and part of 2014 because of a computer virus. BWSR plans to convert this database to BWSR's eLink system and add a

#### No. of Hits to PRAP Webpage

(by calendar year)

**2010-** 1437

**2011-** 695

**2012-** 213

**2013-** 784

**2014-** 59

[www.bwsr.state.mn.us/PRAP/reporting/index.php](http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/PRAP/reporting/index.php)

portal to allow public access to the data. However that conversion is still not scheduled.

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 that is the 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 prepares both a final report that is sent to the LGU and a one-page summary that is included in this legislative report (see Appendices E and F) and added to the PRAP webpage. In 2014 BWSR added a resource outcomes feature to all Level II reports, highlighting those changes in resource conditions related to LGU projects and program. Occasionally, LGUs will request that BWSR present performance review results to their local county board. In 2014 the PRAP coordinator presented the Renville SWCD Level II report to that county board and will be presenting the reports from the four Nobles County LGUs to that board in early 2015.

### 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. This document is the eighth such report.

### 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 G.)

For those LGUs that undergo a Level II performance review, their report lists a "commendation" for compliance with each benchmark performance standard, demonstrating practices over and above basic requirements. All 2014 Level II LGUs received such commendations.



**Pam Tomevi**, Koochiching SWCD District Manager, received the BWSR award as the **2014 Outstanding SWCD Employee of the Year** from BWSR Executive Director **John Jaschke** at the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts Annual Meeting and Trade Show.

# Program Conclusions and Future Direction

## Conclusions from 2014 Reviews

- **Focused BWSR staff attention can improve LGUs' on-time reporting, but LGUs need both reminders and incentives.** This was demonstrated by the significant improvement in drainage authority buffer strip reporting because of BWSR staff efforts. However, without financial incentives (e.g., grant ineligibility) lapses in on-time reporting will continue.
- **PRAP Level II reviews can track actual resource outcomes, but LGUs need encouragement to include measureable outcomes in their plans.** PRAP will continue to highlight resource outcomes in Level II reviews and make recommendations that LGUs develop such measures in subsequent plan revisions. The One Watershed Plans will provide examples of how LGUs can do this.
- **The PRAP watershed performance methods can help to assess LGU readiness for watershed-based collaboration.** Application of those standards in surveys of the pilot One Watershed LGUs showed good levels of collaboration. A follow-up survey will indicate whether LGUs are more collaborative after completing their watershed plans.
- **About half of the PRAP Level II recommendations for LGU improvements are seen as useful or necessary, as shown by the rates at which LGUs have adopted them.** However, BWSR must do more to follow-up with LGUs to find out why some recommendations are not being adopted, and to promote PRAP Assistance Grants as a means to implement improvements.
- **The alignments of some metro LGU jurisdictions, WMOs in particular, do not follow watershed boundaries, and require more collaboration with neighboring LGUs to effectively address water management issues.** Future PRAP Level II reviews of metro WDs and WMOs will include an evaluation of jurisdictional boundaries and, where appropriate, make recommendations to LGUs for mergers or collaboration agreements to facilitate effective water management on a watershed basis.

---

## PRAP Program Objectives for 2015

- Maintain the new target for Level II performance reviews of 24 per year.
- Adapt PRAP performance review methods for assessing the One Watershed-One Plan pilots.
- Maintain the focus on resource outcomes in Level II performance reviews.
- Schedule surveys to track LGU compliance with Level II PRAP recommendations.
- Evaluate WMO and metro WD jurisdictional alignments in Level II performance reviews for the potential water management benefits of LGU realignments.
- Track 240 LGUs' Level I performance with emphasis on improving WMO and WD reporting.
- Promote the use of PRAP Assistance Grants to enhance LGU organizational effectiveness.
- Adopt performance measures/targets for each of these program objectives and report progress on meeting targets in the 2016 PRAP report.

## Appendix A

### PRAP AUTHORIZING LEGISLATION

#### ***103B.102, Minnesota Statutes 2013***

Copyright © 2013 by the Office of Revisor of Statutes, State of Minnesota.

#### **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

|  |
|--|
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Level I: 2014 LGU Long-Range Plan Status</b><br/>as of December 31, 2014</p> |
|--|

### **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 Revisions**

All local water management plans are current, with 11 extensions.

#### **Metro County Groundwater Plan Revision Overdue**

Carver

Ramsey

Scott

(Anoka and Hennepin Counties have chosen not to participate in this optional program.)

### **Watershed Districts**

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

Crooked Creek

High Island Creek

Thirty Lakes

### **Watershed Management Organizations**

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

Bassett Creek

Elm Creek

Pioneer-Sarah Creek

## Appendix C

### Level I: Status of Annual Reports for 2013 as of December 31, 2014

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

##### **eLINK Status Reports of Grant Expenditures**

All reports submitted; 7 districts submitted late reports.

##### **Website Content: Not in compliance on due date**

Beltrami

#### **Counties**

##### **Drainage Authority Buffer Strip Reports**

All reports submitted; 6 counties submitted late

##### **eLINK Status Reports of Grant Expenditures**

All reports submitted; 4 counties submitted late reports.

#### **Watershed Districts**

##### **Drainage Authority Buffer Strip Reports**

All reports submitted; 3 submitted late

##### **Annual Activity Reports Not Submitted**

Bois de Sioux

Pelican River

Joe River

Ramsey-Washington Metro

Lower Minnesota River

##### **Annual Activity Reports Submitted Late**

4 submitted late reports.

#### **Metro Joint Powers Watershed Management Organizations**

##### **Annual Activity Reports Not Submitted**

All reports submitted.

##### **Annual Activity Reports Submitted Late**

3 submitted late.

---

**Appendix D**

|  |
|--|
| <b>Level I: Status of Financial Reports and Audits for 2013</b><br>as of December 31, 2014 |
|--|

**Soil and Water Conservation Districts****Annual Financial Reports (all 90 Districts)**

All reports submitted. 5 submitted late.

**Annual Audits (57 required)****Audits Not Received**

All audits submitted; four pending review by the State Auditor.

**Watershed Districts****Annual Audits Not Completed:**

High Island Creek

Stockton-Rollingstone-MN City

Joe River

**Annual Audits Submitted Late:**

4 watershed districts submitted late audit reports.

**Metro Joint Powers Watershed Management Organizations****Annual Audits Not Submitted:**

Lower Rum River

Upper Rum River

Sunrise River

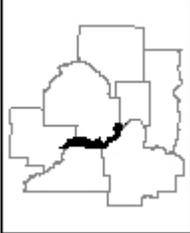
**Annual Audits Submitted Late:**

8 JPA-WMOs submitted late audit reports.

| <p>PRAP Level II<br/>Report Summary</p>  | <p>Carlton County Local Water Management</p>  |
|--|---|
| <p><b>What is a PRAP Performance Review?</b></p> <p>The Board of Water and Soil Resources supports Minnesota’s counties, watershed districts and soil and water conservation districts that deliver water and related land resource management projects and programs. In 2007 the Board set up a program (PRAP) to systematically review the performance of these local units of government to ensure their effective operation. Each year BWSR staff conduct routine reviews of several of these local conservation delivery entities. This document reports the results of one of those reviews.</p> | <p><b>Key Findings and Conclusions</b></p> <p>The Carlton County Zoning and Environmental Services Department has made good progress on several water quality and resource management programs for which it has taken a lead role or partnered with others. Through those partners the county has sought and received over \$1 million of both state and federal funds to implement many of these programs.</p>  <p>The analysis of plan accomplishments shows the county is making good progress on over two-thirds of the action items in their local water management plan, including several notable accomplishments. There is still much work to be done to address the plan action items in the next five years. Two-thirds of the Priority Concern 3 public education action items for which progress is reported have an updated website as the primary action contributing to that progress. While this website upgrade provides an important tool for making citizen access to county programs more efficient, the actions called for in this priority area include more.</p> <p>The survey responses obtained through this performance review mention dedicated county staff that are, nevertheless, hampered somewhat by the lack of capacity to meet all the needs within the county. At the halfway point in the implementation of the now updated local water management plan, the county needs to continue its efforts to ensure that the plan action items are addressed. (See Recommendations 1, 2 and 3, page 6.)`</p> <p>The vast majority of partners indicate a strong working relationship between themselves and the county staff. The partners gave good marks for the county’s performance in four important operational areas, with a particularly strong performance in meeting deadlines and follow-through on projects. The conclusions about the county’s relationship with partners are based on a good response rate to BWSR’s survey. The department also shows strong compliance with BWSR’s operational performance standards.</p> <p><b>Resource Outcomes</b></p> <p>The Carlton 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.</p> <p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider delegating local water management planning and associated funding to the Carlton SWCD.</li> <li>• Have more frequent meetings of the water plan task force.</li> <li>• Write an annual work plan based on staff capacity and watershed-based priorities with clear assignment of the lead agency for local water plan actions.</li> <li>• Develop targets or objectives for resource outcomes in the next plan revision.</li> </ul> <p><b>Commendations</b></p> <p>Carlton County received 9 commendations for meeting BWSR’s benchmark performance standards. (See page 5.)</p> |

| PRAP Level II Report Summary   | Dakota Soil and Water Conservation District  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>What is a PRAP Performance Review?</b></p> <p>The Board of Water and Soil Resources supports Minnesota’s counties, watershed districts and soil and water conservation districts that deliver water and related land resource management projects and programs. In 2007 the Board set up a program (PRAP) to systematically review the performance of these local units of government to ensure their effective operation. Each year BWSR staff conduct routine reviews of several of these local conservation delivery entities. This document reports the results of one of those reviews.</p> | <p><b>Key Findings and Conclusions</b></p> <p>By every measure examined for this performance review, the Dakota County SWCD is shown to be a strong performer in delivery of soil and water conservation services. The board’s adoption of a Strategic Plan to guide the activities of the district is a particularly noteworthy example of good management oversight and adaptation to the uncertain funding environment in which most SWCDs find themselves. Furthermore, the general objectives and strategies described in the Comprehensive Plan lead to simple, actionable goals in the Strategic Plan. What is missing from the mix of goals, objectives, strategies and policies are some resource targets or outcomes that can serve as a means for measuring progress toward goals. These can and should go beyond measuring level of effort or number of practices installed, for which the district has already demonstrated impressive accomplishments.</p> <p>The analysis of compliance with BWSR performance standards shows the district to be exemplary in every area of its operations.</p> <p>Finally, the Dakota County SWCD provides an impressive example of how an SWCD can adopt a strategy of collaboration for implementation and then follow-through with results that not only deliver the services and projects but make the district stronger and a key player in the region’s conservation management.</p>  <p><b>Resource Outcomes</b></p> <p>The Dakota County SWCD plan does not identify resource goals or targets for the purpose of tracking outcomes.</p> <p><b>Action Items</b></p> <p>None</p> <p><b>Commendations</b></p> <p>The district receives commendations for meeting all 15 Benchmark Standards.</p> <p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <p>Consider adding measureable natural resource outcomes to the next version of the district Comprehensive Plan.</p> |

| <p><b>PRAP Level II<br/>Report Summary</b></p>   | <p><b>Kanaranzi-Little Rock Watershed District</b></p>   |
|--|--|
| <p><b>What is a PRAP Performance Review?</b></p> <p>The Board of Water and Soil Resources supports Minnesota’s counties, watershed districts and soil and water conservation districts that deliver water and related land resource management projects and programs. In 2007 the Board set up a program (PRAP) to systematically review the performance of these local units of government to ensure their effective operation. Each year BWSR staff conduct routine reviews of several of these local conservation delivery entities. This document reports the results of one of those reviews.</p> | <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div data-bbox="472 359 1222 1709"> <p><b>Key Findings and Conclusions</b></p> <p>A general conclusion of this performance review is that the KLRWD is not currently living up to its potential for putting good conservation in priority areas. Their successful implementation of federal ARRA and PL566 projects through a coordinated effort with other Nobles local governments is a prime example of the KLRWD’s capabilities. Plan implementation has been somewhat diminished and the lack of adherence to basic administrative and communication practices indicates a lack of enthusiasm for their mission. Hopefully, this is a temporary state because in the recent past the district has demonstrated their ability to accomplish projects and work successfully with partners.</p> <p>The KLRWD has the benefit of working among strong local government partners. Landowners have actively participated in these programs in the past and apparently there is still a lot of interest. A locally successful district program would be easy to build on in the future, by leveraging state and local resources with the district’s substantial operating fund surplus. This review reveals that the district has a number of willing partners among local organizations and agencies. While it is somewhat understandable that with the pending change in district administrative support the managers’ attention would be turned away from project implementation right now, the need for district services has not diminished.</p> <p><b>Resource Outcomes</b></p> <p>The KLRWD watershed plan (i.e., Nobles County Local Water Management Plan) does not include targets or measureable outcome objectives assigned to the district. Consequently, there is no report of resource outcome accomplishments in this performance review.</p> <p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <p>Obtain administrative services that will support an expanded district project and program effort.</p> <p>Address Action Items</p> <p><b>Action Items</b></p> <p>There are five action items for the district to address.</p> <p><b>Commendations</b></p> <p>The KLRWD is commended for meeting two of BWSR’s benchmark performance standards.</p> </div> <div data-bbox="1256 359 1446 590"> </div> </div> |

| <p>PRAP Level II<br/>Report Summary</p>  | <p>Lower Minnesota River Watershed District</p>   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>What is a PRAP Performance Review?</b></p> <p>The Board of Water and Soil Resources supports Minnesota’s counties, watershed districts and soil and water conservation districts that deliver water and related land resource management projects and programs. In 2007 the Board set up a program (PRAP) to systematically review the performance of these local units of government to ensure their effective operation. Each year BWSR staff conduct routine reviews of several of these local conservation delivery entities. This document reports the results of one of those reviews.</p> | <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div data-bbox="472 359 831 390"> <p><b>Key Findings and Conclusions</b></p> </div> <div data-bbox="1268 359 1458 592">  </div> </div> <p>This performance review reveals a watershed district that is making the effort to emerge from its historical single purpose as a dredged material management agency. Based on their report of accomplishments the LMRWD is seeking to broaden its scope as a local resource management entity with the publication of the 2014 Strategic Resources Evaluation. This document is an excellent first step in providing some strategic direction for district activities and sets the district up well for expanding partnerships with other neighboring or conterminous local, state and federal resource management entities.</p> <p>The district shows reasonable progress in the implementation of planned goals and strategies. One noteworthy feature of the watershed management plan is the list of metrics the district has adopted to track both short- and long-term progress toward plan goals. While the district has not given much attention to reporting results for these metrics, they have indicated that that action item will receive increased attention as a result of this performance review.</p> <p>The performance standards assessment shows that the district has struggled with their compliance with some basic reporting requirements.</p> <p>Finally, the district has evidently turned a corner with regard to both board member dynamics and administrative services. What remains to be addressed in this regard is for the district to fill out the vacancies in the board to achieve a full complement of five managers and to increase staff capacity.</p> <p><b>Resource Outcomes</b></p> <p>As noted above, the LMRWD plan contains a list of “metrics” which include long-term measures of resource outcomes. These include, for example, trends in water quality parameters and number and acreage of wetlands protected, restored, and enhanced. However, the district has not yet begun to report on these metrics but plans to do so in conjunction with a biannual review.</p> <p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Take the lead in pursuing projects and priorities identified in the 2014 SRE and the district watershed management plan.</b></li> <li>• <b>Address Action Items</b></li> <li>• <b>Fill board vacancies.</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Action Items</b></p> <p>The LMRWD needs to address two action items: submit annual activity and audit reports on-time.</p> <p><b>Commendations</b></p> <p>The LMRWD is commended for meeting 8 of 15 benchmark performance standards.</p> |

| <p>PRAP Level II<br/>Report Summary</p>  | <p>McLeod County Environmental Services<br/>McLeod Soil and Water Conservation District</p>   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>What is a PRAP Performance Review?</b></p> <p>The Board of Water and Soil Resources supports Minnesota’s counties, watershed districts and soil and water conservation districts that deliver water and related land resource management projects and programs. In 2007 the Board set up a program (PRAP) to systematically review the performance of these local units of government to ensure their effective operation. Each year BWSR staff conduct routine reviews of several of these local conservation delivery entities. This document reports the results of two of those reviews.</p> | <p><b>Key Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations</b></p> <p>A general theme that emerges from this assessment of local water management in McLeod County is that there is more that could be done for the resource if the capabilities of the Environmental Services (ESD) and SWCD were enhanced. However, the solutions for performance enhancement are different for each organization.</p> <p>For the county ESD, improved performance would depend on a recommitment to basic operations such as improved communication with partners and stronger follow-through on projects and programs. There are certainly some strong aspects to the work the county staff does, but the negative opinions of partners and the lack of identified successes by internal respondents are too prominent to ignore. With half the partners characterizing their working relationship with county staff as difficult, the issues causing that response should be identified and corrected.</p> <p>On the other hand, the limiting factor for the SWCD appears to be lack of staff capacity to engage with willing partners. Partners have a high opinion of the work that the SWCD does already. The fact that most partners would like to do more work with the SWCD is a strong call for adding staff capacity. However, this should be based on a careful assessment of the needs and skills required.</p> <p>The report of plan accomplishments shows most Action Steps partially completed or on-going. While this is to be expected with a relatively new comprehensive local water plan, there seems to be a pattern where the items assigned to the ESD show less progress than those carried by the SWCD. This could be a factor of detail in reporting for the Part 1 section of this performance review, or it may reflect the actual differences between these two agencies.</p> <p>Both agencies show good compliance with performance standards, with particularly strong benchmark standards compliance for the county.</p> <p><b>Resource Outcomes</b></p> <p>The McLeod Local Water Management Plan contains two Action Steps (#16 and #68) that have as goals the reduction of certain water pollutants. However, neither the ESD nor the SWCD are the responsible agencies for these Action Steps. Therefore, they have not reported outcomes for this review.</p> <p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>County and SWCD: Reference plan measures in annual reporting.</li> <li>County #1: Seek partnership opportunities for conservation and water management programs and projects.</li> <li>County #2: Ensure compliance with grant administration requirements.</li> <li>SWCD #1: Conduct a staff capacity assessment.</li> <li>SWCD #2: Address two <b>Action Items</b>.</li> </ul> <p><b>Commendations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>County (10)</li> <li>SWCD (5)</li> </ul> |



| <p>PRAP Level II<br/>Report Summary</p>  | <p>Mille Lacs Soil and Water Conservation District</p>   |   |
|--|--|---|
| <p><b>What is a PRAP Performance Review?</b></p> <p>The Board of Water and Soil Resources supports Minnesota’s counties, watershed districts and soil and water conservation districts that deliver water and related land resource management projects and programs. In 2007 the Board set up a program (PRAP) to systematically review the performance of these local units of government to ensure their effective operation. Each year BWSR staff conduct routine reviews of several of these local conservation delivery entities. This document reports the results of one of those reviews.</p> | <p><b>Key Findings and Conclusions</b></p> <p>The Mille Lacs SWCD is a well-run, efficient organization that does good work and gets good conservation projects on the ground. The SWCD has demonstrated good internal management within the past several years as indicated by two specific actions taken. They have revised their mission statement within the past five years and conducted a semi-formal strategic planning session. The district’s supervisors are engaged with the district’s operation and planning. The district staff are very respectful of the board’s direction and guidance and seek to keep the board fully informed of opportunities and limitations.</p> <p>In addition, the SWCD initiates and cultivates effective partnerships with neighboring LGUs, which serves to further accomplish the district’s mission. This is demonstrated by the high response rate to the partner survey and the uniformly high ratings given to the SWCD by those partners.</p> <p>The primary challenge to the SWCD is the lack of funding, particularly general funds, to meet all of the local needs. This is a challenge for many of the neighboring SWCDs, in part because of local economic limitations. One potential remedy is to explore shared services among districts that would free up district funds used for staffing to undertake additional or cooperative projects. The other avenue to pursue in this regard is more partnerships that could benefit the organization.</p> <p>In going forward, the challenge will be to ensure that the district’s limited resources are targeted to the most critical needs or priority areas for conservation projects.</p> <p><b>Resource Outcomes</b></p> <p>The district’s comprehensive water management plan does not have measureable resource outcomes as goals for the action items. Consequently, there are no resource outcomes reported among the plan accomplishments.</p> <p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate with neighboring districts to explore partnerships and shared services.</li> <li>• Address staff capacity.</li> <li>• Conduct annual prioritizing/targeting for projects and programs that promotes concentration of limited resources and the ability to measure progress.</li> <li>• Address Action Items.</li> </ul> <p><b>Commendations and Action Items</b></p> <p><i>Action Items:</i> 1) meet eLink reporting deadlines; 2) develop a data practices policy.</p> <p><i>Commendations:</i> The Mille Lacs SWCD is commended for meeting 8 of 15 Benchmark performance standards that indicate exemplary performance.</p> |  |

| PRAP Level II Report Summary   | Nine Mile Creek Watershed District   |
|--|--|
| <p><b>What is a PRAP Performance Review?</b></p> <p>The Board of Water and Soil Resources supports Minnesota’s counties, watershed districts and soil and water conservation districts that deliver water and related land resource management projects and programs. In 2007 the Board set up a program (PRAP) to systematically review the performance of these local units of government to ensure their effective operation. Each year BWSR staff conduct routine reviews of several of these local conservation delivery entities. This document reports the results of one of those reviews.</p> | <p><b>Key Findings and Conclusions</b></p> <p>The NMCWD has demonstrated for many years how effective, systematic watershed management and project implementation can be achieved in a complex, developed urban setting. The shift from flood control to water quality management over the life history of the district has followed the demands for service based on both resource needs and priorities of local communities.</p>  <p>The district has a solid record of accomplishment in all areas of their water management plan. The assignment of specific, measureable water quality and habitat objectives on a lake-by-lake basis is commendable. The district follows up these objectives with systematic monitoring, project implementation and reporting of results. If anything could be improved in this area it would be the summarizing of resource outcomes in an easy-to-understand format on the district website.</p> <p>The district’s compliance with BWSR performance standards puts them among the top performers statewide in meeting the routine, but essential, administrative, planning and communication practices that lead to an effective, efficient organization. The need to maintain consistency in reporting is a component of the public accountability and communication goals in the management plan.</p> <p>Finally, the partners who work with the NMCWD reinforce the value of the district’s contribution to urban resource management with high marks for their communication, quality of work, relations with customers and follow-through.</p> <p><b>Resource Outcomes</b></p> <p>The NMCWD watershed management plan contains specific, measureable resource outcomes as objectives for the lakes and streams. The WD annual reports contain detailed information about the water quality results achieved by various lake and stream improvement projects. In general, the resource outcomes show a mix of improving, degrading and non-trending results. The district is applying a comprehensive, systematic approach to addressing these outcome goals, which is defined in the plan and applied in the district’s annual work plans and projects.</p> <p><b>Action Items</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activity reports: annual, on-time</li> </ul> <p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <p>Add water resource trend data to the website in an easy-to-understand format.</p> <p>Consider using Prioritized, Targeted and Measureable as criteria for Goals and Objectives in the next water management plan</p> <p>Address Action Item to meet on-time reporting requirements.</p> <p><b>Commendations</b></p> <p>The NMCWD is commended for meeting 10 of 14 benchmark standards.</p> |

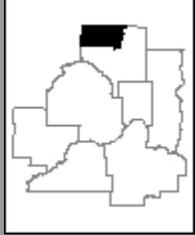
| <p><b>PRAP Level II<br/>Report Summary</b></p>   | <p><b>Nobles County Environmental Services Department<br/>and<br/>Nobles Soil and Water Conservation District</b></p>   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>What is a PRAP Performance Review?</b></p> <p>The Board of Water and Soil Resources supports Minnesota’s counties, watershed districts and soil and water conservation districts that deliver water and related land resource management projects and programs. In 2007 the Board set up a program (PRAP) to systematically review the performance of these local units of government to ensure their effective operation. Each year BWSR staff conduct routine reviews of several of these local conservation delivery entities. This document reports the results of one of those reviews.</p> | <p><b>Key Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations</b></p> <p>This performance review reveals solid performance by two local water management entities that provide complementary services to the people and for the resources of Nobles County. Their progress in the implementation of a comprehensive local water management plan has been consistent, with many planned targets met or exceeded. The plan itself reflected the intent of all the local water management entities in the county, including the watershed districts, to collaborate in the complex tasks of watershed based planning and management.</p> <p>In particular, the joint powers arrangement between the SWCD and the Kanaranzi-Little Rock watershed district exemplifies that collaboration.</p> <p>The ESD and SWCD show good compliance with BWSR’s basic and benchmark performance standards, another indicator of well-managed organizations.</p> <p>The partners who responded to the PRAP survey provided consistently high marks in their judgment of the performance of both LGUs.</p> <p><b>Resource Outcomes</b></p> <p>The Nobles Local Water Management Plan contains many action items with specific quantitative goals, but none of these are for specific improvements in natural resource characteristics, such as surface water quality parameters or habitat quality.</p> <p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <p><b>Joint Recommendation 1: Explore the option of the One Watershed-One Plan concept in the next plan revision.</b></p> <p><b>County Recommendation 1: Ensure that the next version of the local water management plan provides targeting of action items by watershed. (Action Item.)</b></p> <p><b>SWCD Recommendation 1: Continue and expand operational and technical support for the watershed districts in Nobles County.</b></p> <p><b>SWCD Recommendation 2: Develop and adopt a district data practices policy (Action Item).</b></p> <p><b>Commendations</b></p> <p>Nobles County received commendations for meeting 11 of BWSR’s benchmark performance standards.</p> <p>Nobles SWCD received commendations for meeting 7 of BWSR’s benchmark performance standards for SWCDs.</p>  |

| PRAP Level II Report Summary   | Okabena-Ocheda Watershed District  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>What is a PRAP Performance Review?</b></p> <p>The Board of Water and Soil Resources supports Minnesota’s counties, watershed districts and soil and water conservation districts that deliver water and related land resource management projects and programs. In 2007 the Board set up a program (PRAP) to systematically review the performance of these local units of government to ensure their effective operation. Each year BWSR staff conduct routine reviews of several of these local conservation delivery entities. This document reports the results of one of those reviews.</p> | <p><b>Key Findings and Conclusions</b></p> <p>The Okabena-Ocheda Watershed District has been a consistent performer in delivering projects and programs commensurate with planned objectives and available resources. The leaders have a high degree of consensus on what has been accomplished, what still needs to be done, and where the challenges lie. This indicates an organization with a shared sense of mission, good communication among its members, and a common understanding of the issues and needs within their area of jurisdiction.</p>  <p>The managers and staff identified partnerships and collaboration with other local government partners as the keys to their success. Based on that awareness they should be able to take advantage of existing partnerships and build new ones. It is a clear formula for continued effectiveness. This level of effective coordination would not be possible without the services of a full-time administrator. BWSR commends the managers for making this financial commitment.</p> <p>The OOWD’s partners have confirmed the value of the role the district plays in local water management. Their survey responses calling for additional opportunities to work with the district are one indication of that value.</p> <p>In looking ahead, the OOWD managers and staff suggested that improving public outreach and education efforts would boost the district’s program effectiveness. Nearly half the partners surveyed confirmed that there is room for improvement in the district’s relationship with clients and landowners.</p> <p><b>Resource Outcomes</b></p> <p>The OOWD watershed plan does not include targets or measureable outcome objectives assigned to the district. Consequently, there is no report of resource outcome accomplishments in this performance review.</p> <p><b>Action Items and Commendations</b></p> <p>The OOWD has two action items to address to meet BWSR’s basic performance standards.</p> <p>The OOWD is commended for meeting 8 of 14 benchmark standards that indicate high performance practices.</p> <p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Maintain and expand upon the strong partnerships that managers and partners have identified as district strengths. Consider watershed-based planning for the next plan update.</li> <li>● Address Action Items.</li> <li>● Consider strategies for enhancing public outreach, information and education to address priority issues.</li> </ul> |

| PRAP Level II Report Summary   | Renville Soil and Water Conservation District  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>What is a PRAP Performance Review?</b></p> <p>The Board of Water and Soil Resources supports Minnesota’s counties, watershed districts and soil and water conservation districts that deliver water and related land resource management projects and programs. In 2007 the Board set up a program (PRAP) to systematically review the performance of these local units of government to ensure their effective operation. Each year BWSR staff conduct routine reviews of several of these local conservation delivery entities. This document reports the results of one of those reviews.</p> | <p><b>Key Findings and Conclusions</b></p> <p>The Renville SWCD is a strong performer in all aspects of land and water conservation work, as well as having an efficient, well-run organization. Their effectiveness in the various conservation easement programs is exemplary. Those results are a combination of excellent landowner relations, persistent program marketing by staff and a sense of mission that motivates the district to take advantage of all the conservation tools at their disposal.</p> <p>With everything working so well, the main concern is how to ensure that the district continues to function at this high level for a long time. Given the potential for staff turnover in the not-too-distant future the board of supervisors needs a strong plan for succession and knowledge transfer.</p> <p>Partners gave high marks for the SWCD’s performance and several commented on what a pleasure it is to work with district staff. There are opportunities for even more partner collaboration, according to the survey, as one partner commented: “always looking for more projects to work together on.” The survey of supervisors and staff identified a few organizations with which an improved working relationship would benefit the district.</p> <p>Compliance with BWSR performance standards is good, but there may be room for additional attention to administrative best management standards.</p> <p><b>Resource Outcomes</b></p> <p>The Renville County local water management plan does not include measureable goals for resource outcomes. Consequently, the report of accomplishments in this report does not identify changes to Renville County resources resulting from the activities of this SWCD and their partners.</p> <p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan deliberately for district staff transitions.</li> <li>• Seek opportunities for even more partner collaboration.</li> <li>• Address Action Item and consider adding Benchmark Standards.</li> </ul> <p><b>Commendations</b></p> <p>The Renville SWCD is commended for meeting 5 of 12 benchmark performance standards.</p>  |

| PRAP Level II Report Summary   | Richfield-Bloomington Watershed Management Organization  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <p><b>What is a PRAP Performance Review?</b></p> <p>The Board of Water and Soil Resources supports Minnesota’s counties, watershed districts and soil and water conservation districts that deliver water and related land resource management projects and programs. In 2007 the Board set up a program (PRAP) to systematically review the performance of these local units of government to ensure their effective operation. Each year BWSR staff conduct routine reviews of several of these local conservation delivery entities. This document reports the results of one of those reviews.</p> | <p><b>Key Findings and Conclusions</b></p> <p>The Richfield Bloomington WMO has been quite effective at completing stormwater projects, maintaining urban water quality best management practices, and obtaining good cooperation and support from city staff and budgets. The result of collaboration between the two cities by means of the WMO has been effective and efficient stormwater management.</p> <p>The survey responses both internal and external reveal opportunities for a stronger role for the WMO in both increased public awareness and projects with partners.</p> <p>The challenge for this WMO is to ensure that this local collaboration extends beyond the city boundaries to consider a watershed perspective. The governance structure and the decision to contain the organization within the cities’ finances instead of as a separate organization with staff and budget could be limiting such a perspective.</p> <p><b>Resource Outcomes</b></p> <p>The RBWMO management plan does not contain goals for specific resource outcomes. Therefore, there is no information about resource changes resulting from projects undertaken by the WMO.</p> <p><b>Recommendation</b></p> <p><b>Conduct a strategic assessment of the WMO mission and purpose with a view towards adopting more of a watershed perspective. Consider expanding the watershed focus of the current WMO, or joining the Nine Mile Creek Watershed District.</b></p> <p><b>Commendations</b></p> <p>The RBWMO is commended for meeting 7 of BWSR’s benchmark performance standards.</p> |  |

| <p>PRAP Level II<br/>Report Summary</p>  | <p>South Washington Watershed District</p>  |
|--|---|
| <p><b>What is a PRAP Performance Review?</b></p> <p>The Board of Water and Soil Resources supports Minnesota’s counties, watershed districts and soil and water conservation districts that deliver water and related land resource management projects and programs. In 2007 the Board set up a program (PRAP) to systematically review the performance of these local units of government to ensure their effective operation. Each year BWSR staff conduct routine reviews of several of these local conservation delivery entities. This document reports the results of one of those reviews.</p> | <p><b>Key Findings and Conclusions</b></p> <p>The South Washington Watershed District (SWWD) is an effective agent for positive water resource management in a complex metropolitan environment. The district’s systematic, deliberate approach to project development, as set out in their management plan and management processes, is impressive. The confidence that the cities within the district have in the organization’s capabilities is evidenced by the gradual expansion of the district’s jurisdiction as neighboring watershed management organizations have dissolved. The SWWD has been aggressive at applying the various tools and authorities available to a metro area watershed district in its pursuit of effective local water and resource management. In general, the partner organizations find the SWWD good to work with and recognize the quality of its efforts. If there are any areas for improvement in the district’s working relationship with its partners they would be in the area of improved communication about changing timelines or follow-through on projects or programs.</p> <p>The district meets an impressive 93 percent of BWSR’s benchmark performance standards. This rate of compliance shows organizational sophistication, attention to detail in overall district management, and a commitment to service for the people who live in the district and to the resources they depend upon.</p> <p><b>Resource Outcomes</b></p> <p>The SWWD has adopted load reduction goals for water quality on a subwatershed basis. Progress toward those goals is not routinely reported in district documents, however.</p> <p><b>Action Items</b></p> <p>The district has two action items to address in the coming months:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submit annual audit reports on time</li> <li>• Establish an advisory committee.</li> </ul> <p><b>Commendations</b></p> <p>The SWWD is commended for meeting 12 of BWSR’s 13 benchmark performance standards.</p> <p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <p>Address action items<br/>Establish some measureable goals for the next management plan.</p>  |

| <p>PRAP Level II<br/>Report Summary</p>  | <p>Upper Rum River Watershed Management Organization</p>  |
|--|---|
| <p><b>What is a PRAP Performance Review?</b></p> <p>The Board of Water and Soil Resources supports Minnesota’s counties, watershed districts and soil and water conservation districts that deliver water and related land resource management projects and programs. In 2007 the Board set up a program (PRAP) to systematically review the performance of these local units of government to ensure their effective operation. Each year BWSR staff conduct routine reviews of several of these local conservation delivery entities. This document reports the results of one of those reviews.</p> | <p><b>Key Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations</b></p> <p>The URRWMO has a limited vision for what they can accomplish with the water resources of northwestern Anoka County. While the water quality monitoring program is well supported and on-going, it does not lead to correcting problems or enhancing the economic value of the region’s water resources. The current plan is relatively modest in scope, but even then some key elements are not being addressed. The annual reports recommend actions to address identified resource problems, but these actions do not make it into WMO work plans.</p>  <p>Based on the information collected for this assessment, it appears that there is a strong sentiment among some of the member cities to minimize the reach and influence of the WMO. This is reflected in recent board-adopted work plans that cut even modestly funded cost-share programs to zero.</p> <p>With the exception of the contract with the Anoka Conservation District, the WMO has not taken advantage of partnership opportunities and engagement with neighboring counties and watershed organizations. These alliances can make the organization’s limited funds more effective by using materials and expertise that others are able to share with them.</p> <p><b>Resource Outcomes</b></p> <p>The Upper Rum River WMO plan does not identify resource goals or targets for the purpose of tracking outcomes.</p> <p><b>Action Items</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare and submit annual audit and financial report on time.</li> <li>• Develop data practices policy.</li> <li>• Convene advisory committee.</li> </ul> <p><b>Commendations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water quality trends tracked for priority water bodies.</li> <li>• Watershed hydrologic trends monitored / reported.</li> <li>• Website: contains meeting notices, agendas &amp; minutes; updated after each board mtg; additional content.</li> <li>• Coordination with County/City/Twp by WMO Board members or staff.</li> </ul> <p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider merger or start coordination now with neighboring organizations to learn from their successes.</li> <li>• Conduct a survey of watershed residents and local officials regarding water resource problems in the watershed.</li> <li>• Member cities must adopt ordinances required by the plan.</li> <li>• Address Action Items.</li> </ul> |

| <p><b>Watershed-based PRAP (Level II) Report Summary</b></p>   | <p><b>Zumbro River Watershed PRAP Summary of Performance Review</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>All LGUs</b></p>  |
|--|---|
| <p><b>What is a PRAP Performance Review?</b></p> <p>The Board of Water and Soil Resources supports Minnesota’s counties, watershed districts and soil and water conservation districts that deliver water and related land resource management projects and programs. In 2007 the Board set up the Performance Review and Assistance Program (PRAP) to systematically review the performance of these local units of government to ensure their effective operation. Each year BWSR staff conduct routine reviews of several of these local conservation delivery entities.</p> <p>From 2013-14 BWSR conducted a review of all 13 local water management entities operating in the Zumbro River watershed. This document reports the results of that review.</p> | <p><b>Key Conclusions and Recommendations</b></p> <p>In general, the LGUs operating in the Zumbro watershed are making good progress in implementing the projects and programs as identified in their long-range plans.</p> <p>Most of the contributing LGUs with jurisdiction in the Zumbro River watershed already show moderate to good degrees of collaboration for certain aspects of their operations. Collaboration is stronger on programs than on services. Also, collaboration is much stronger among the LGUs in the downstream reaches of the watershed.</p> <p>This assessment revealed that a slight majority (54%) of LGU board members either don’t know or don’t think the resources in the Zumbro watershed would be better off with more collaboration among the LGUs. 25 percent of the staff share this opinion. This viewpoint could be a significant barrier to moving forward with watershed-based planning.</p> <p>While this assessment revealed some shortcomings with the effectiveness of the ZWP as a coordinating body, nevertheless it has the potential to be a forum for sharing information among LGUs and others who participate. A more effective ZWP could provide a foundation for increased collaboration, if LGU members choose to promote such a purpose and then take advantage of it.</p> <p><b>Resource Outcomes</b></p> <p>None of the LGU plans include action items with resource outcome targets. There were no resource outcomes to report.</p> <p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <p><b>Joint Recommendation 1: Take Advantage of Existing Coordinative Entities, such as the ZWP and Southeast Water Resources Board.</b></p> <p><b>Joint Recommendation 2: Explore Additional Opportunities for Shared Services</b></p>  |

| <p><b>Watershed-based PRAP (Level II) Report Summary</b></p>  | <p><b>Zumbro River Watershed PRAP Summary of Performance Review</b><br/><b>Bear Valley Watershed District</b></p>   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>What is a PRAP Performance Review?</b></p> <p>The Board of Water and Soil Resources supports Minnesota’s counties, watershed districts and soil and water conservation districts that deliver water and related land resource management projects and programs. In 2007 the Board set up the Performance Review and Assistance Program (PRAP) to systematically review the performance of these local units of government to ensure their effective operation. Each year BWSR staff conduct routine reviews of several of these local conservation delivery entities.</p> <p>From 2013-14 BWSR conducted a review of all 13 local water management entities operating in the Zumbro River watershed. This document reports the results of the performance of one of those entities in the context of the broader watershed-wide review.</p> | <p><b>Key Conclusions and Recommendations</b></p> <p>The BVWD managers have faithfully carried out the responsibilities for which the district was formed back in 1961—the maintenance of the water control structures built to control flooding and runoff in the Cold Creek drainage area. Their reliance on local SWCD and county resource managers to apply land conservation and other types of runoff and wastewater management programs has also contributed to the managers’ structure maintenance objectives.</p> <p>The recently rewritten watershed management plan describes additional objectives which have not yet been addressed. While it is still early in the current planning cycle, the managers should indicate a schedule for when or how they will work on these items.</p> <p>Regarding collaboration with other LGUs, as noted above, they have a collaborative working relationship with the Wabasha SWCD, in particular. With their watershed management plan providing the framework and with careful application of their regulatory authority, the managers have the potential to expand their influence by contributing to funding and building projects that address objectives developed through watershed-wide planning efforts.</p> <p>With no paid staff, the managers have found it difficult to meet some of their basic reporting responsibilities. Nevertheless, they must find some way to meet these requirements.</p> <p><b>Resource Outcomes</b></p> <p>The Bear Valley Watershed Management Plan action items do not include resource outcome targets. Consequently there are no resource outcomes to report as part of this review.</p> <p><b>Action Items:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete an annual financial audit.</li> <li>• Expand webpage information.</li> </ul> <p><b>BVWD Recommendation 1: Participate with the other Zumbro watershed LGUs to contribute the BVWD’s resources to address strategic issues and problems, as well as objectives in the BVWD plan.</b></p> <p><b>BVWD Recommendation 2: Address action items.</b></p> |

| <p><b>Watershed-based PRAP (Level II) Report Summary</b></p>  | <p><b>Zumbro River Watershed PRAP Summary of Performance Review</b><br/><b>Dodge County Environmental Services</b><br/><b>Dodge Soil and Water Conservation District</b></p>   |
|---|--|
| <p><b>What is a PRAP Performance Review?</b></p> <p>The Board of Water and Soil Resources supports Minnesota’s counties, watershed districts and soil and water conservation districts that deliver water and related land resource management projects and programs. In 2007 the Board set up the Performance Review and Assistance Program (PRAP) to systematically review the performance of these local units of government to ensure their effective operation. Each year BWSR staff conduct routine reviews of several of these local conservation delivery entities.</p> <p>From 2013-14 BWSR conducted a review of all 13 local water management entities operating in the Zumbro River watershed. This document reports the results of the performance of two of those entities in the context of the broader watershed-wide review.</p> | <p><b>Key Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations</b></p> <p>The Dodge County ESD and Dodge SWCD provide effective local water management and conservation services to the land users in the county. They have demonstrated good prioritization of project and program delivery based on available resources. The SWCD is poised to enter a new phase of service delivery with the hiring of a district manager to fill the recently vacated technician position.</p> <p>With 85 percent of the county in the Zumbro River watershed’s middle and upper reaches, the Dodge LGUs play a critical role in affecting the river and associated resources. Consequently, there is a continuing need for effective coordination and collaboration with other contributing LGUs in the Zumbro watershed. This need may largely be met through their continued participation in the Zumbro Watershed Partnership.</p> <p><b>Resource Outcomes</b></p> <p>The Dodge Local Water Management Plan action items do not include resource outcome targets. Consequently there are no resource outcomes to report as part of this review.</p> <p><b>Dodge Recommendations</b></p> <p>SWCD Recommendation: <b>Continue to pursue district staffing plan.</b></p> <p>County Recommendation: <b>Prepare the next revision of the county Comprehensive Water Management Plan with consideration for county watershed units.</b></p> |

| <p><b>Watershed-based PRAP (Level II) Report Summary</b></p>  | <p><b>Zumbro River Watershed PRAP Summary of Performance Review</b><br/><b>Goodhue County and Goodhue Soil and Water Conservation District</b></p>  |
|---|---|
| <p><b>What is a PRAP Performance Review?</b></p> <p>The Board of Water and Soil Resources supports Minnesota’s counties, watershed districts and soil and water conservation districts that deliver water and related land resource management projects and programs. In 2007 the Board set up the Performance Review and Assistance Program (PRAP) to systematically review the performance of these local units of government to ensure their effective operation. Each year BWSR staff conduct routine reviews of several of these local conservation delivery entities.</p> <p>From 2013-14 BWSR conducted a review of all 13 local water management entities operating in the Zumbro River watershed. This document reports the results of the performance of two of those entities in the context of the broader watershed-wide review.</p> | <p><b>Key Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations</b></p> <p>Goodhue SWCD and county have developed the type of coordinated working relationship that results in effective and efficient delivery of conservation services and projects to local land users, as well as beneficial resource results.</p> <p>They operate under a detailed, targeted comprehensive plan that they are jointly implementing to good effect. Their continued participation on the Zumbro Watershed Partnership board will serve as a helpful influence to making that organization more effective as a basin-wide coordinating and strategic planning vehicle for all watershed LGUs.</p> <p><b>Resource Outcomes</b></p> <p>The Goodhue Local Water Management Plan action items do not include resource outcome targets. Consequently there are no resource outcomes to report as part of this review.</p> <p><b>Action Item</b></p> <p>Ensure drainage system buffer reports are submitted to BWSR on-time.</p> <p><b>Goodhue Recommendations</b></p> <p>Address one action item.</p> <p>Maintain excellence in coordination and communication.</p> |

| <p><b>Watershed-based PRAP (Level II) Report Summary</b></p>  | <p><b>Zumbro River Watershed PRAP Summary of Performance Review<br/>Olmsted County Environmental Resources Department</b></p>  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>What is a PRAP Performance Review?</b></p> <p>The Board of Water and Soil Resources supports Minnesota’s counties, watershed districts and soil and water conservation districts that deliver water and related land resource management projects and programs. In 2007 the Board set up the Performance Review and Assistance Program (PRAP) to systematically review the performance of these local units of government to ensure their effective operation. Each year BWSR staff conduct routine reviews of several of these local conservation delivery entities.</p> <p>From 2013-14 BWSR conducted a review of all 13 local water management entities operating in the Zumbro River watershed. This document reports the results of the performance of one of those entities in the context of the broader watershed-wide review.</p> | <p><b>Key Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations</b></p> <p>The Olmsted County Environmental Resources Department (ERD) is a high functioning local water management entity that has effectively implemented water management projects and programs for many years. In one sense they have pioneered collaboration beyond the county’s borders, emphasizing regional water management in southeastern Minnesota long before watershed-based management planning came into focus. They have advocated and supported a stronger coordination role for the Zumbro Watershed Partnership organization, on which they actively participate. In addition, they are off to a good start in implementing the strategies in their new local water management plan.</p> <p><b>Resource Outcomes</b></p> <p>The Olmsted County Water Management Plan does not include strategies with resource outcome targets. Consequently there are no resource outcomes to report as part of this review.</p> <p><b>Action Items</b></p> <p>There are no action items for the Olmsted ERD to address.</p> <p><b>Recommendation</b></p> <p>Provide guidance for the ZWP as they seek to develop a strategic watershed focus and coordination framework.</p> |

| <p><b>Watershed-based PRAP (Level II) Report Summary</b></p>  | <p><b>Zumbro River Watershed PRAP Summary of Performance Review<br/>Olmsted County Soil and Water Conservation District</b></p>  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>What is a PRAP Performance Review?</b></p> <p>The Board of Water and Soil Resources supports Minnesota’s counties, watershed districts and soil and water conservation districts that deliver water and related land resource management projects and programs. In 2007 the Board set up the Performance Review and Assistance Program (PRAP) to systematically review the performance of these local units of government to ensure their effective operation. Each year BWSR staff conduct routine reviews of several of these local conservation delivery entities.</p> <p>From 2013-14 BWSR conducted a review of all 13 local water management entities operating in the Zumbro River watershed. This document reports the results of the performance of one of those entities in the context of the broader watershed-wide review.</p> | <p><b>Key Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations</b></p> <p>The Olmsted SWCD has delivered a broad range of traditional soil and water conservation projects and programs for many years. In recent years they have taken advantage of the coordination opportunities provided by the Zumbro Watershed Partnership by participating actively in that organization. The supplemental projects included with the county local water plan adoption resolution demonstrate a willingness to partner on watershed-based projects. As such they are familiar with the issues and challenges of working on a watershed scale.</p> <p>Their progress in implementing their assigned strategies in the new county local water management plan has been reasonable, given that the plan was adopted only a year ago. In the future the Olmsted SWCD needs to develop a closer working relationship with the county Environmental Resources Department.</p> <p><b>Resource Outcomes</b></p> <p>The Olmsted County Water Management Plan does not strategies with resource outcome targets. Consequently there are no resource outcomes to report as part of this review.</p> <p><b>Action Items</b></p> <p>There are no action items for the Olmsted SWCD to address.</p> <p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <p>Make sure annual work plan includes strategies from the county water management plan for which the district is responsible.</p> <p>Improve coordination with the county Environmental Resources Department and a regular progress report presentation to the county Environmental Commission.</p> |

| <p><b>Watershed-based PRAP (Level II) Report Summary</b></p>  | <p><b>Zumbro River Watershed PRAP Summary of Performance Review<br/>Rice County and Rice Soil and Water Conservation District</b></p>   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>What is a PRAP Performance Review?</b></p> <p>The Board of Water and Soil Resources supports Minnesota’s counties, watershed districts and soil and water conservation districts that deliver water and related land resource management projects and programs. In 2007 the Board set up the Performance Review and Assistance Program (PRAP) to systematically review the performance of these local units of government to ensure their effective operation. Each year BWSR staff conduct routine reviews of several of these local conservation delivery entities.</p> <p>From 2013-14 BWSR conducted a review of all 13 local water management entities operating in the Zumbro River watershed. This document reports the results of the performance of two of those entities in the context of the broader watershed-wide review.</p> | <p><b>Key Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations</b></p> <p>The Rice County WRMD and Rice SWCD have an excellent working relationship that shows up in the significant progress they are both making in implementing effective local water and land resource management projects and programs. While their interest and involvement in Zumbro River watershed matters are understandably low because of their relatively small piece of the watershed, they have a sound mechanism in place to address any resource issues that would benefit downstream land users.</p> <p>If the Zumbro Watershed Partnership is able to redefine itself as more of a strategic planning and coordinative body to address watershed-wide issues, there may be a place for the Rice LGUs to participate more actively in that body.</p> <p>With a major revision of the Rice County Local Water Management Plan currently in progress, there is an opportunity to align plan priorities and goals on a watershed basis. As local water planning will increasingly be done on a watershed basis, by anticipating that trend in the next iteration of the plan will position the county and SWCD for participating in that type of collaboration on plans and implementation.</p> <p><b>Resource Outcomes</b></p> <p>The Rice Local Water Management Plan does not contain action items that set resource outcome targets. Consequently there are no resource outcomes to report as part of this review.</p> <p><b>Rice Recommendation 1: Participate in Zumbro Watershed Strategic Planning Sessions</b></p> <p><b>Rice Recommendation 2: Intentional County/SWCD Coordination</b></p> |

| <p><b>Watershed-based PRAP (Level II) Report Summary</b></p>  | <p><b>Zumbro River Watershed PRAP Summary of Performance Review</b><br/><b>Steele County Environmental Services Department</b><br/><b>Steele Soil and Water Conservation District</b></p>   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>What is a PRAP Performance Review?</b></p> <p>The Board of Water and Soil Resources supports Minnesota’s counties, watershed districts and soil and water conservation districts that deliver water and related land resource management projects and programs. In 2007 the Board set up the Performance Review and Assistance Program (PRAP) to systematically review the performance of these local units of government to ensure their effective operation. Each year BWSR staff conduct routine reviews of several of these local conservation delivery entities.</p> <p>From 2013-14 BWSR conducted a review of all 13 local water management entities operating in the Zumbro River watershed. This document reports the results of the performance of two of those entities in the context of the broader watershed-wide review.</p> | <p><b>Key Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations</b></p> <p>The Steele County ESD and SWCD provide high quality environmental management and resource conservation services within their respective areas of responsibility. The two LGUs also collaborate and work well with each other. However, with regard to the Zumbro watershed, the results of this performance review show very little collaboration with other downstream LGUs. This is somewhat understandable given the small percentage of Steele County that contributes runoff to the Zumbro River. While their current low level of involvement in Zumbro River watershed issues may be appropriate, the LGUs, in particular the lead staff, should participate in future watershed-based strategic or comprehensive planning activities. These would provide an opportunity for the Steele County LGUs, as well as other contributing LGUs, to target their efforts to address the most critical problems on a watershed basis.</p> <p>The local water plan committee is not meeting regularly. In order to prepare for the next local water management plan revision in 2016 the county should increase the use of the local water plan committee. This group of citizens and agency representatives can serve many functions to contribute to the effective implementation of local water plan objectives. They can also serve as a communication mechanism for getting messages out to county residents and providing feedback to LGU officials regarding their programs and projects. They should be meeting more frequently.</p> <p><b>Action Items</b></p> <p>There are no action items for Steele LGUs to address.</p> <p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <p><b>Steele Recommendation 1: Participate in Zumbro Watershed Strategic Planning Sessions</b></p> <p><b>Steele Recommendation 2: Re-convene the Local Water Plan Committee</b></p> |

| <p><b>Watershed-based PRAP (Level II) Report Summary</b></p>  | <p><b>Zumbro River Watershed PRAP Summary of Performance Review</b><br/><b>Wabasha County Environmental Services Department</b><br/><b>Wabasha Soil and Water Conservation District</b></p>   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>What is a PRAP Performance Review?</b></p> <p>The Board of Water and Soil Resources supports Minnesota’s counties, watershed districts and soil and water conservation districts that deliver water and related land resource management projects and programs. In 2007 the Board set up the Performance Review and Assistance Program (PRAP) to systematically review the performance of these local units of government to ensure their effective operation. Each year BWSR staff conduct routine reviews of several of these local conservation delivery entities.</p> <p>From 2013-14 BWSR conducted a review of all 13 local water management entities operating in the Zumbro River watershed. This document reports the results of the performance of two of those entities in the context of the broader watershed-wide review.</p> | <p><b>Key Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations</b></p> <p>Both Wabasha County and SWCD have had to deal with complications from staff turnover in recent years. These issues understandably distract from getting conservation work done. Nevertheless, both LGUs have made reasonable progress in addressing the action items in the local water management plan.</p> <p>In addition, their active involvement on the Zumbro Watershed Partnership board has provided opportunities for collaboration with other LGUs, which shows up in the level of compliance with watershed-based performance standards.</p> <p>However, the current financial uncertainties faced by the SWCD in particular represent a challenge to the on-going viability of the district. It is imperative that these issues be addressed effectively and quickly. In view of this matter BWSR is recommending that the district supervisors and staff focus on internal matters.</p> <p><b>Resource Outcomes</b></p> <p>The Wabasha County Local Water Management Plan does not contain resource outcome targets. Consequently there are no changes in resource conditions to report relative to implementation of plan action items.</p> <p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <p><b>Address SWCD and County internal issues as a first priority.</b></p> |

## Appendix G

### 2014 Local Government Performance Awards and Recognition

(Awarding agency listed in parentheses.)

Outstanding SWCD Employee

(Board of Water and Soil Resources)

**Pam Tomevi, Koochiching SWCD**

Outstanding SWCD Supervisor Award

(Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts)

**Bill Lonergan, Jr., Mower SWCD**

SWCD of the Year

(Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts)

**Cottonwood SWCD**

SWCD Appreciation Award

(Department of Natural Resources)

**Washington Conservation District**

Outstanding Watershed District Employee

(Board of Water and Soil Resources)

**Bruce Albright, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District**

Watershed District of the Year

(Department of Natural Resources)

**Roseau River Watershed District**

WD Program of the Year

(Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts)

**Clearwater River WD, Targeted Fertilizer Application Reduction Program**

WD Project of the Year

(Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts)

**Capitol Region WD, Green Line Green Infrastructure Project**

County Conservation Award

(Association of Minnesota Counties and Board of Water and Soil Resources)

**Otter Tail County, Buffer Initiative Program**