



Flood Recovery Continues in Northeast Minnesota

April 2014 Snapshots

Flood waters can devastate in a matter of moments, as Duluth resident Ryan Blazevic knows all too well. Blazevic, who lives near Mission Creek, was awoken in the early hours of June 20, 2012 to several feet of water rushing through his backyard. In the months since the flood waters receded, he has worked hard to repair his property and help his neighborhood and his city recover.

He told his story at a February 27 press conference in Duluth City Hall, part of a \$4.6 million dollar BWSR disaster relief grant announcement. BWSR Executive Director John Jaschke announced the next wave of funding at the media event, joined at City Hall by Duluth Mayor Don Ness. Within two weeks of the 2012 disaster relief appropriation, BWSR executed grant agreements and allocated more than \$1 million to eleven soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs) to address emergency flood situations for erosion, sediment and water quality control projects based on preliminary damage assessments and requests from SWCDs. After the initial emergency allocation, BWSR allocated additional funding to continue flood recovery work.



BWSR Executive Director John Jaschke, right, is joined by Duluth Mayor Don Ness at the February 27 grant announcement.

BWSR's disaster relief work following the 2012 floods was a strategic, phased approach to recovery that prioritized projects that repaired, rehabilitated or replaced existing conservation practices, installed new practices that addressed erosion and water quality problems that were imminent threats to public or private infrastructure or addressed other erosion and water quality issues that were created by damage from the flood. \$13.3 million in disaster aid grants and an additional \$1.5 million in Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) funding has been allocated to date.

Jaschke praised the work of the Minnesota Recovers Task Force and BWSR's local government partners. "The City of Duluth and SWCDs have done a tremendous job getting these projects underway, helping landowners recover and restoring and protecting the region's water and soil resources."

Blazevic spoke highly of the combined efforts of federal, state and local authorities to provide ongoing support and relief in the months since the flood. "The conditions that led to the flooding took a hundred years to develop, so it's not reasonable to expect recovery to happen overnight," he said. "The work being done now is so important because it's not just about repairing what was damaged, but restoring the area to a place where it hopefully won't be as vulnerable to future heavy rain events."

The City of Duluth was awarded \$3.6 million in this latest phase, the largest single grant in BWSR history. An additional \$1 million in funding in this cycle went to the Carlton, Cook, Lake and South St. Louis SWCDs.