



BWSR response to June 2012 flood

August 2012

http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/flood_recovery/index.html

June storm events and follow-up federal and state action

During the time period of June 14-21, 2012, severe storms and flooding caused damage to infrastructure, private/public property and natural environments in several Minnesota counties. A Presidential Major Disaster was declared (FEMA, DR-4069) on July 6, 2012.

Counties and tribal lands included in the declaration are: Aitkin, Carlton, Cass, Cook, Crow Wing, Dakota, Goodhue, Itasca, Kandiyohi, Lake, Meeker, Pine, Rice, Sibley, St. Louis, and the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, and the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe.

Anticipating the passage of the disaster relief bill, the BWSR Board approved two flood-related resolutions and a 2012 Flood Policy at its meeting on August 23, 2012:

- 1) [BWSR Flood Relief Resolution](#)
- 2) [BWSR 2012 Flood Relief Cost Share Disaster Recovery Program Policy](#)
- 3) [WCA Alternative Emergency Standards](#)

On Friday, August 24, 2012, Governor Mark Dayton signed a \$167 million disaster relief bill passed earlier in the day by a Special Session of the Minnesota State Legislature. Related to the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR), the bill included:

1. Disaster Relief Funding
2. Authority to establish Wetland Conservation Act alternative standards developed

Disaster Relief Funding

BWSR was appropriated a total of \$12.5 million, in the following components.

Erosion, and Sediment Control, Water Quality and Watershed Protection Projects – \$11 million

In accordance with Minnesota Statutes, Section 12A.05, Subd. 2, these funds are for a disaster recovery program to install, repair, or rehabilitate erosion and sediment control, water quality and watershed protection projects in the disaster area. The appropriation language indicates that priority use of these funds shall be to supplement or match federal funds whenever possible and practical. Note that primary federal and state funding sources for public infrastructure disaster response include FEMA Public Assistance funds, associated state matching funds through the Department of Public Safety, Department of Transportation funds and Department of Natural Resources funds. The federal Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program administered by NRCS may also be a funding source for either public or private infrastructure protection. Flood related erosion control practices needed on agricultural land may be eligible for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) administered by NRCS. BWSR funding should not be used in place of other eligible funding sources.

Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Conservation Easements – \$1.5 million

In accordance with Minnesota Statutes, Section 12A.05, Subd. 1, these funds are to acquire easements from landowners on marginal or damaged lands in the disaster area to provide flood attenuation, restore and protect soil and water resources, and to support related fish and wildlife habitat, as provided in Section 103F.515. These easements are required to be perpetual.

There will be two steps in disaster relief funding:

1. Initial allocations to Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) for erosion, sediment and water quality control projects

In order to immediately address highest priority flood response needs in the affected counties, BWSR will initially allocate approximately \$1 million in funding for erosion, sediment and water quality control projects based on preliminary damage assessments and requests from the SWCD.

Grant questions can be directed to Wayne Zellmer, 651-297-7361 or wayne.zellmer@state.mn.us.

2. Grant process for remaining cost-share for erosion, sediment and water quality control projects and RIM funding

Local government units and others will apply through the Minnesota Recovers Task Force (MRTF) process for remaining funds and RIM funds. The Minnesota Recovers Task Force will ensure applicants meet the eligibility criteria to receive state assistance funds and coordinate eligible funding sources. To apply, download the [Request for Assistance Application Form](#) (application begins on page 4). **Applications must be submitted by October 24, 2012.**

Application questions can be directed to John Moore, Chair, MRTF: 651-201-7453 or john.moore@state.mn.us.

BWSR has also provided additional [guidance for prioritizing streambank and hillside stabilization for erosion, sediment and water quality control projects](#).

Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) Alternative Emergency Procedures

The disaster relief bills (House File 1 and 2) granted BWSR the authority to establish alternative WCA procedures when needed to accomplish timely response to the counties affected by the June 2012 flood events. The WCA Emergency Alternative Standards are effective immediately for Aitkin, Carlton, Lake, Pine, and St. Louis Counties through August 31, 2013.

[Wetland Conservation Action Alternative Emergency Standards](#)

Questions can be directed to Les Lemm, 651-296-6057 or les.lemm@state.mn.us.