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BWSR announces \$5.4 million in Targeted Watershed Demonstration Program grants

St. Paul, Minn. – The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) announced today the second round of grants for its Targeted Watershed Demonstration Program, funded through the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment’s Clean Water Fund. A new approach to addressing water pollution, the program focuses funding on watersheds where actions needed for water quality improvement are known and can be achieved in a four-year window of time.

BWSR received applications from 19 local governments, totaling more than \$30 million in requests for \$5.4 million in available funds. This year’s recipients are Chisago Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) for the Chisago Chain of Lakes watershed, Cook County SWCD for the Poplar River watershed, Nicollet SWCD for the Seven Mile Creek watershed, and Scott County for the Sand Creek watershed. The program’s first projects were funded in March of this year.

John Jaschke, BWSR’s Executive Director, said, “This program enables our local conservation partners to target actions where they know they can make the biggest difference for the benefit of the entire watershed. It’s a holistic approach that will have a positive impact on water quality. That means conservation work that helps make meaningful progress toward goals for these watersheds.”

Project Overviews:

- **Chisago Chain of Lakes watershed, Chisago SWCD, \$707,000 award.**

The Chisago SWCD project centers on the Chisago Chain of Lakes watershed, which includes several regionally significant waterbodies and is a destination for water tourism recreation. Several lakes within the watershed are currently on the state’s Impaired Waters List because of high nutrient levels, and others are at risk of exceeding Minnesota’s standards. The projects will reduce phosphorus runoff, helping them achieve 10-15% of the total goal for reduction.

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- **Poplar River watershed, Cook SWCD, \$829,000 award.**

The Cook SWCD project centers on the Poplar River watershed, a high-profile watershed that is a vital trout fishery, recreation area, natural area, and economic engine for the North Shore. The funds will accelerate work to reduce non-point pollution entering the Poplar River and Lake River, improving water quality and achieving their goal of removing the Poplar River from the state's impaired waters list.

- **Seven Mile Creek watershed, Nicollet SWCD, \$1.7 million award.**

The Nicollet SWCD project centers on the Seven Mile Creek watershed, which is the priority watershed for Nicollet County. The creek is on the state's impaired waters list because of sediment levels, nutrients and other pollutants that affect aquatic life, recreation, and drinking water. The projects estimated to achieve 40-50% of the goal for sediment reduction, 15-25% of the goal for nutrient reduction, and 20-30% of the goal for E. coli reduction.

- **Sand Creek watershed, Scott County Water Management Organization, \$2.2 million award.**

The Scott WMO project centers on the Sand Creek watershed, which drains an area of 271 square miles along the Minnesota River near Jordan, New Prague and Montgomery. Water quality issues in the watershed have impacted aquatic life and recreational use. This project will address sediment and nutrient levels and runoff, allowing McMahan Lake to achieve all its needed pollution reduction goals, Cedar Lake to achieve the necessary reductions from its watershed, and Sand Creek to make 20-30% progress toward its goals.