



2013 Board Tour: Lake County

August 28, 2013



Hosted by Lake
County SWCD



Two Harbors, Minn. -- On Wednesday, Aug. 28, the BWSR Board and staff, Lake County SWCD supervisors and staff, congressional delegation representatives, landowners and other interested parties toured Lake County conservation practices that protect and restore water quality in northeastern Minnesota.

Nearly 60 people attended the tour, learning about dynamic partnerships between private landowners and federal, state and local governments.

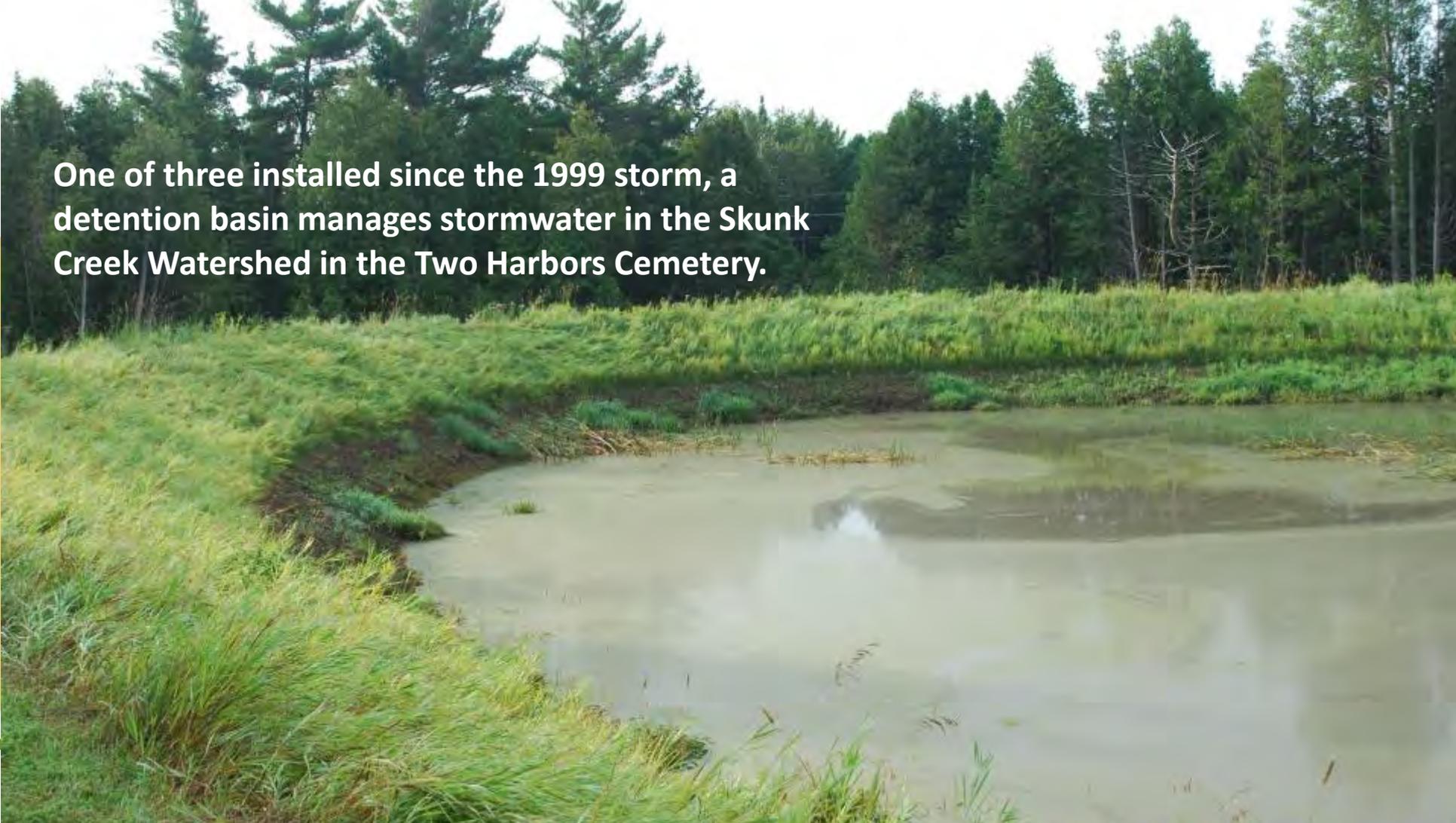


BWSR Chair Brian Napstad welcomes tour participants at Superior Shores before departure.

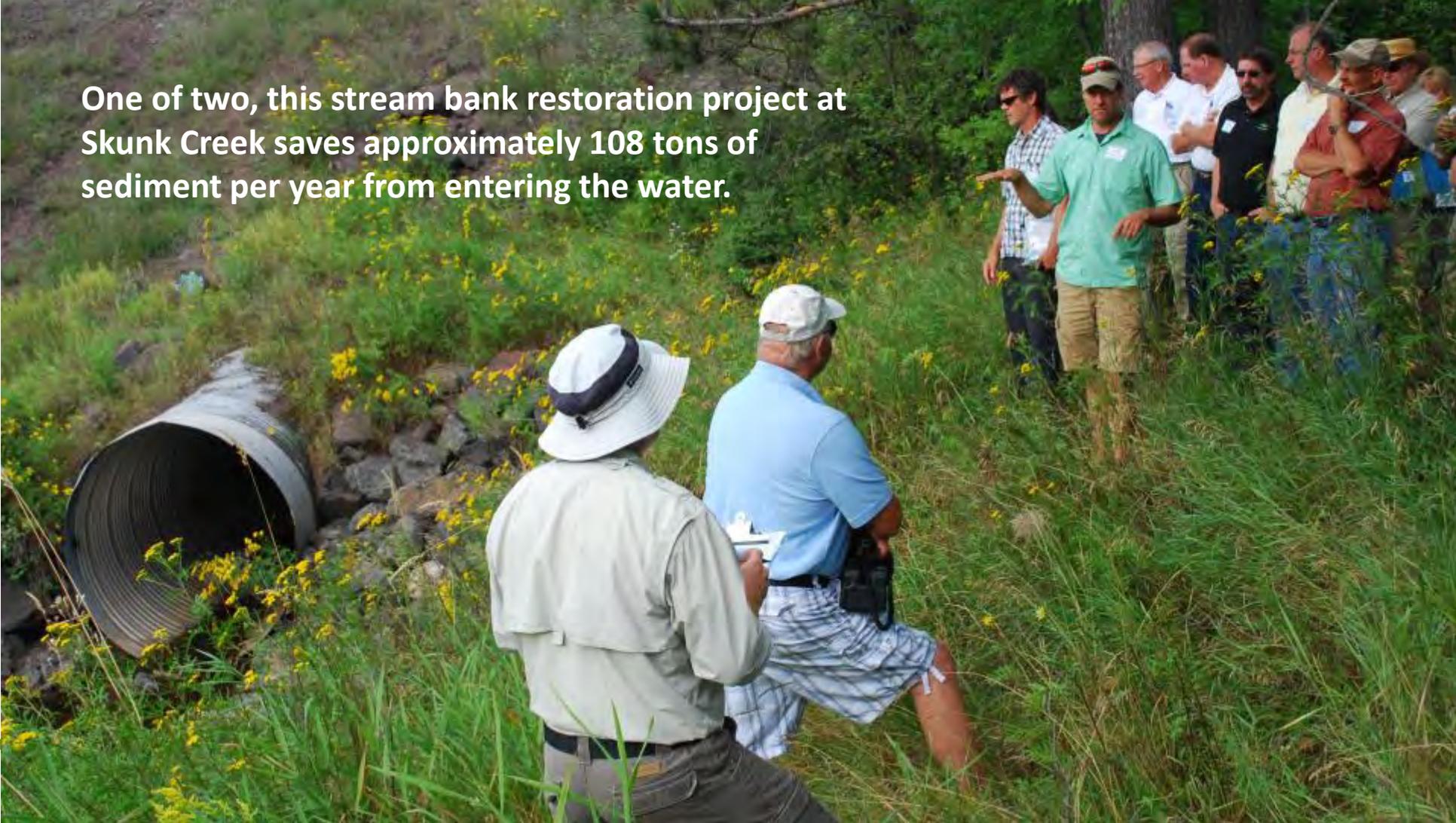


Wayne Seidel, Lake County SWCD (retired) and Tom Gelineau, City of Two Harbors (retired) explained the city's efforts to manage stormwater, following an eye-opening storm on July 4, 1999.

One of three installed since the 1999 storm, a detention basin manages stormwater in the Skunk Creek Watershed in the Two Harbors Cemetery.



One of two, this stream bank restoration project at Skunk Creek saves approximately 108 tons of sediment per year from entering the water.

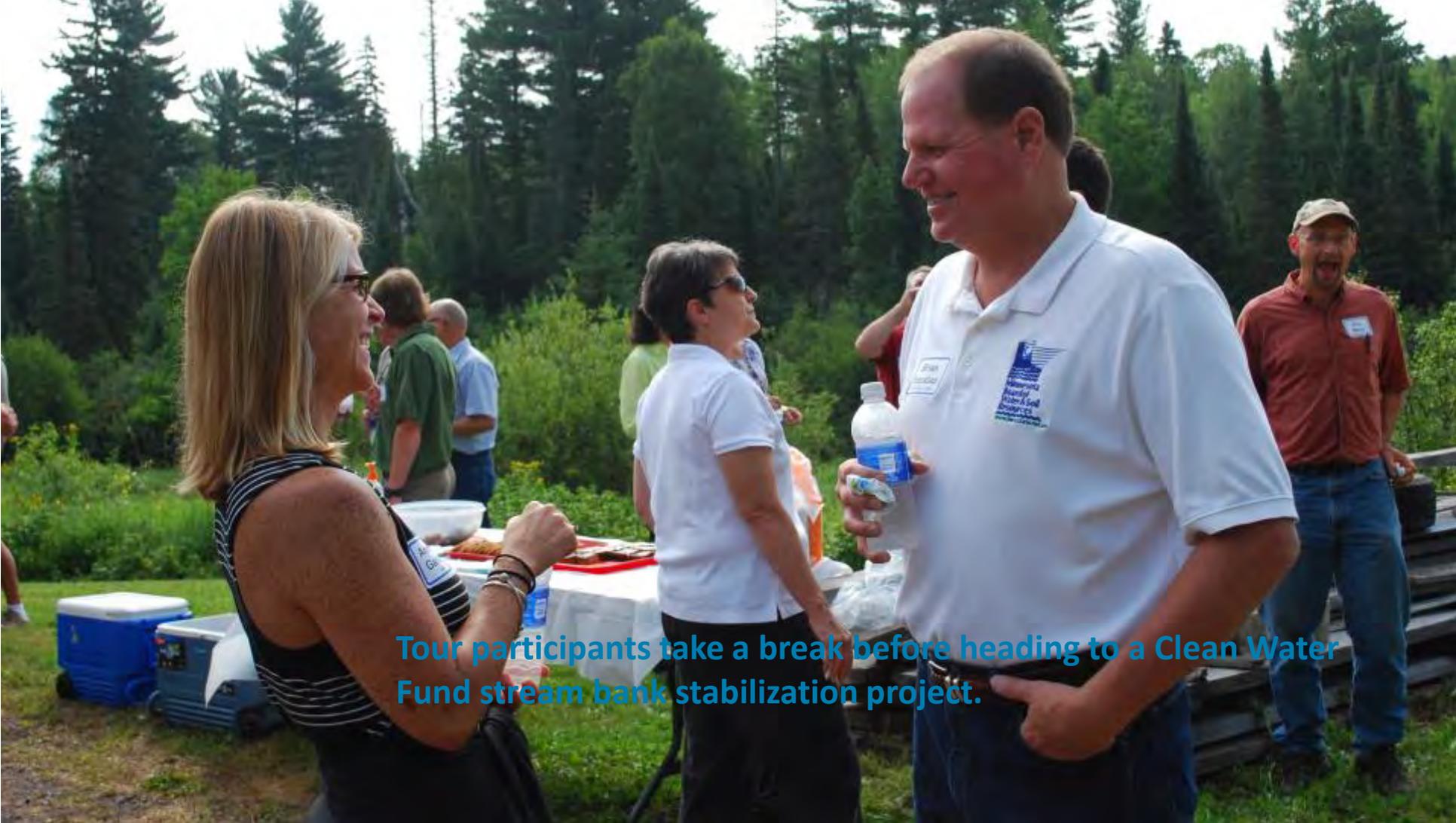




The Two Harbors Courthouse rain garden was constructed to improve water quality by collecting and filtering storm water runoff from the parking lot.

After the water is collected and treated, it moves through the city's storm drain system and empties into Lake Superior.

Before the rain garden and other stormwater practices were installed, runoff was previously untreated and directly emptied into the lake.

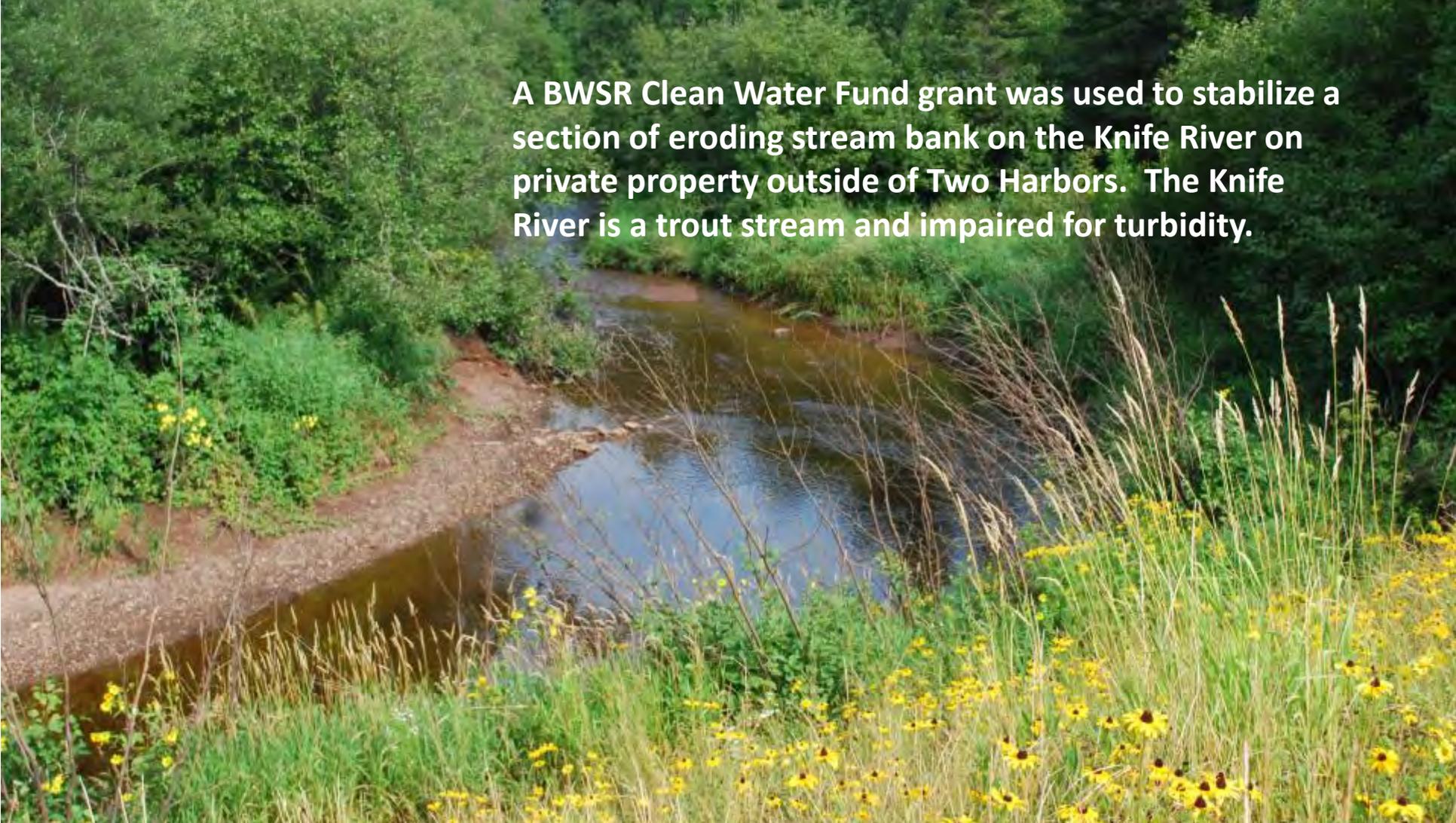


Tour participants take a break before heading to a Clean Water Fund stream bank stabilization project.





A BWSR Clean Water Fund grant was used to stabilize a section of eroding stream bank on the Knife River on private property outside of Two Harbors. The Knife River is a trout stream and impaired for turbidity.



“This has been a problem for more than 50 years ... if you are a property owner and have a project like this, you should cooperate with the SWCD. The project fixed the stream. This is your tax dollars going to a good thing – this is good work.”

-Landowner Curt (and Daryl) Uppgard



Dan and Brenda Ziemet restored a 14-acre wetland on their property from what was once a gravel pit. Site improvement activities included excavation in areas down to native clay soils, installation of riprap channel and shaping of berms to prevent erosion.



3,000-4,000 native plants were seeded and invasive plants were managed through chemical application during wetland establishment.



"I wanted to do something to see and make a difference on this land in my lifetime,"
-Dan (and Brenda) Ziemet



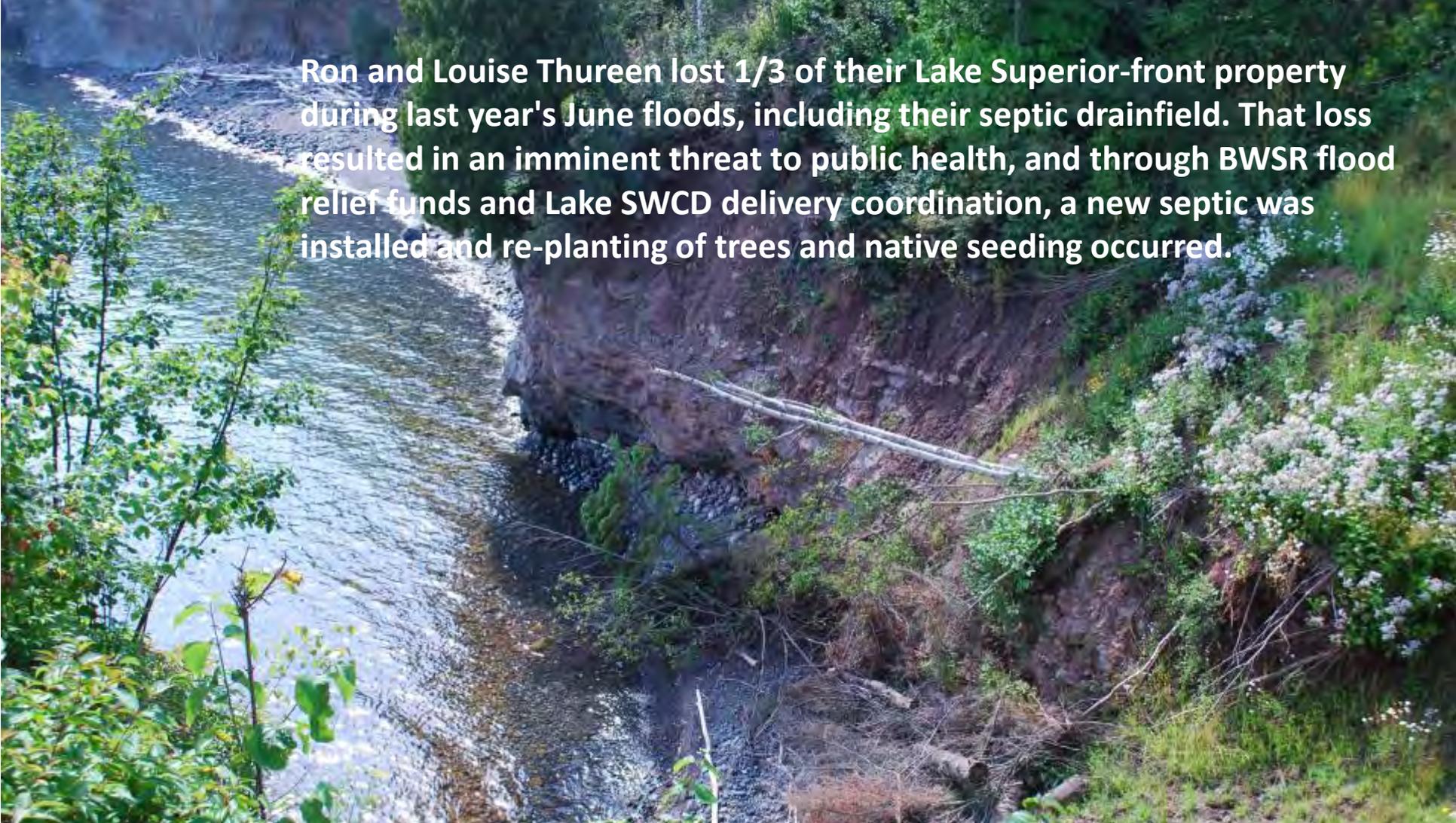
During the June 2012 floods, Jamie and Penny Juenemann's bridge over the Little Stewart River suffered disrepair and was virtually impassable. Through BWSR flood relief funds, the Lake SWCD worked with the Juenemann's to install a new bridge, restore native trees and plants that were washed away in the floods and protect water quality.





“We are very appreciate of this project – this is my home, my life, my passion.”

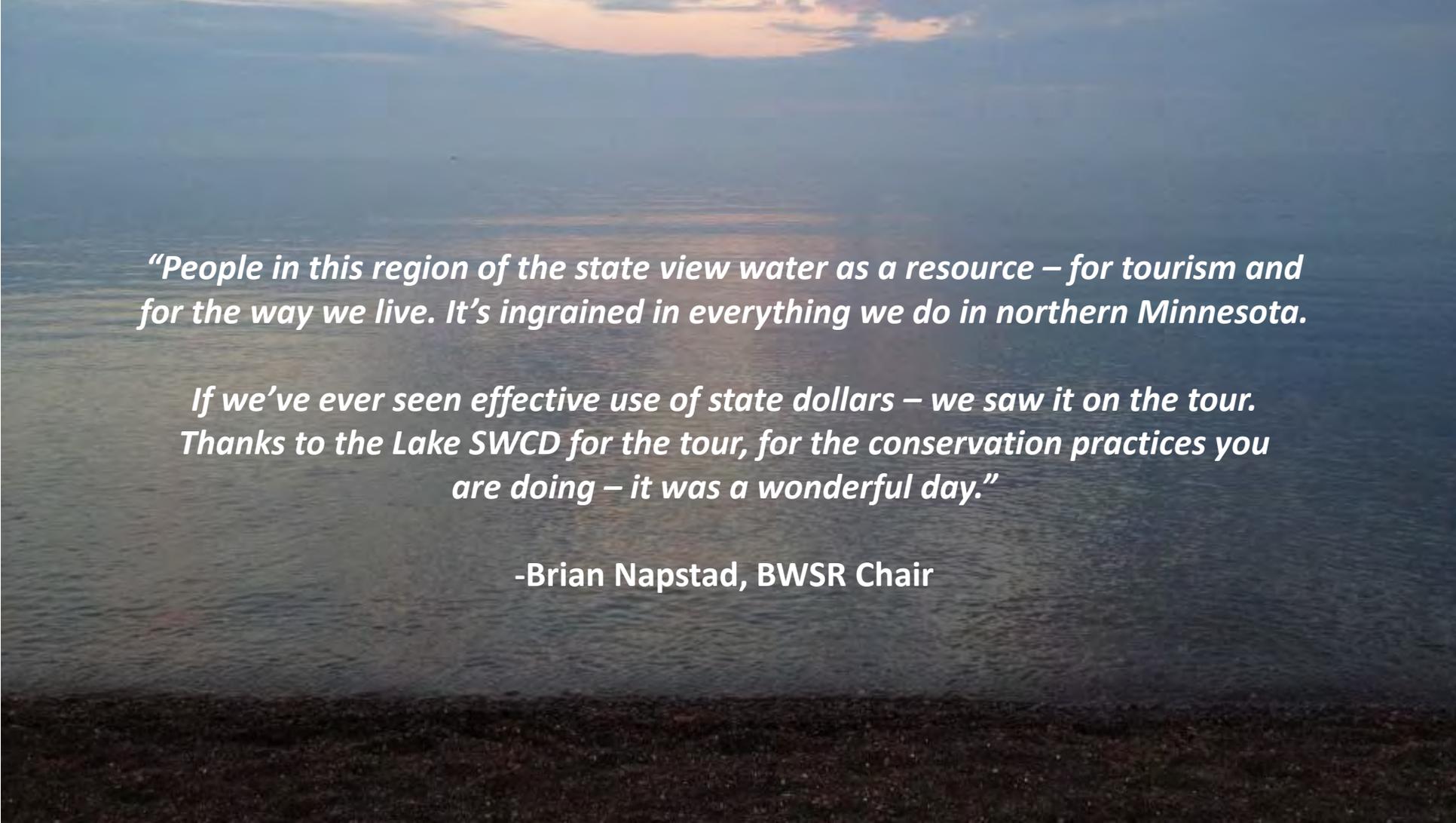
-Jamie Juenemann



Ron and Louise Thureen lost 1/3 of their Lake Superior-front property during last year's June floods, including their septic drainfield. That loss resulted in an imminent threat to public health, and through BWSR flood relief funds and Lake SWCD delivery coordination, a new septic was installed and re-planting of trees and native seeding occurred.

Wrapping up the day, an issues forum on natural resource challenges in northeast Minnesota was held. Panelists included Rich Sve (Lake County Commissioner), Jo Kovach (White Iron Chain of Lakes Association), Tom Gelineau (Retired Lake SWCD Supervisor), and Leo Babeu (Advocates for the Knife River Watershed).





“People in this region of the state view water as a resource – for tourism and for the way we live. It’s ingrained in everything we do in northern Minnesota.

If we’ve ever seen effective use of state dollars – we saw it on the tour. Thanks to the Lake SWCD for the tour, for the conservation practices you are doing – it was a wonderful day.”

-Brian Napstad, BWSR Chair