



Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment Listening Sessions

Ideas for habitat and water quality improvements

“ Multiple-benefits projects should be given priority, for example, wetland restorations provide fish and wildlife habitat, improve water quality, sequester carbon and prevent flooding. ”

“ Get citizens involved in conservation and clean water via connection to their local governments, local media and local associations. ”

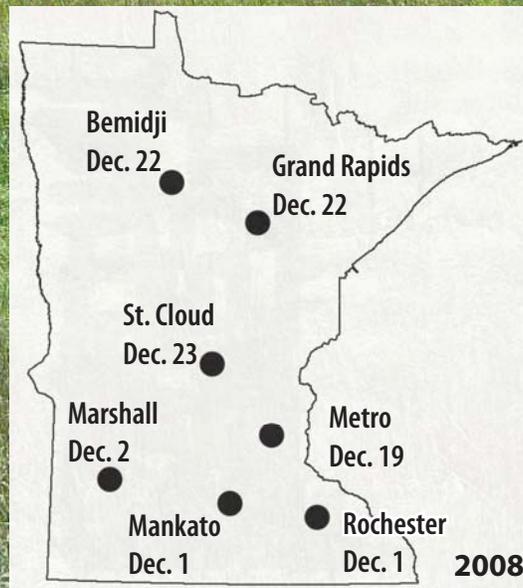
“ Need to accomplish behavior changes and land-use practices in combination with projects. ”

“ Results should be measurable, accountable and accessible to the public. ”

“ It's more cost-effective to protect a threatened area before it becomes degraded. ”

“ Any research funds should be directed, not a competitive process. ”

“ Forest and woodland management has both habitat and water quality benefits. ”



“ Local USDA EQIP work groups are good models for local coordination and maximizing the leveraging of funds. ”

“ Public lands are a minority portion of the state and are generally in good condition. But some money should be available to improve public lands. ”

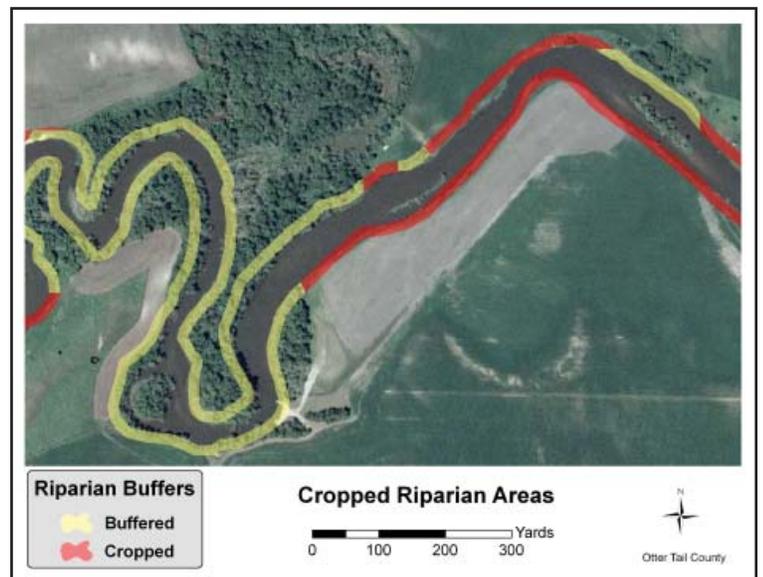
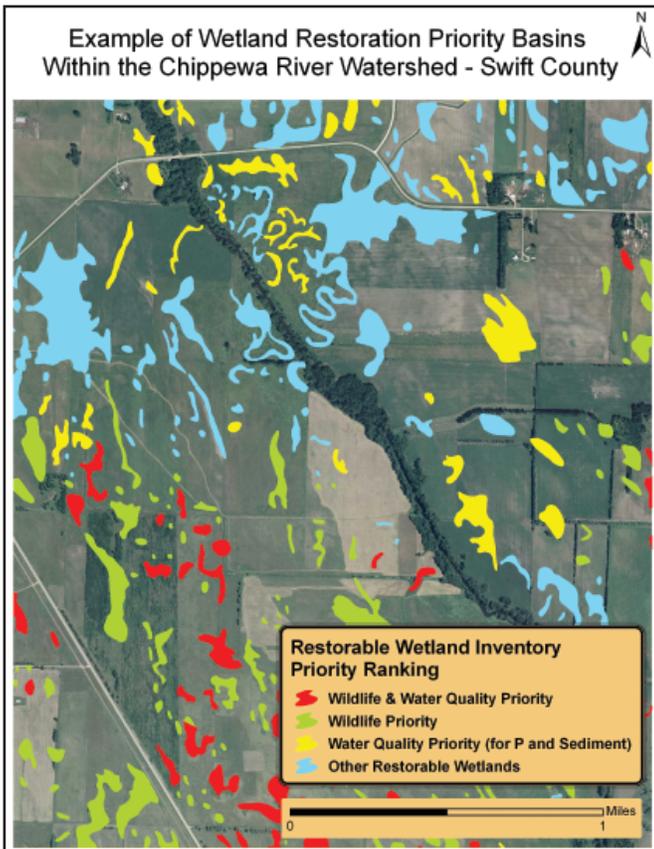
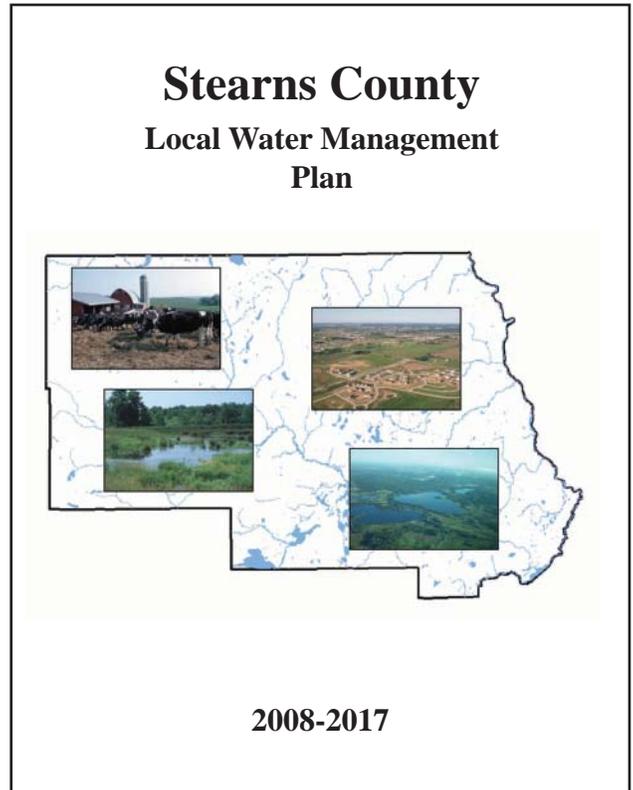
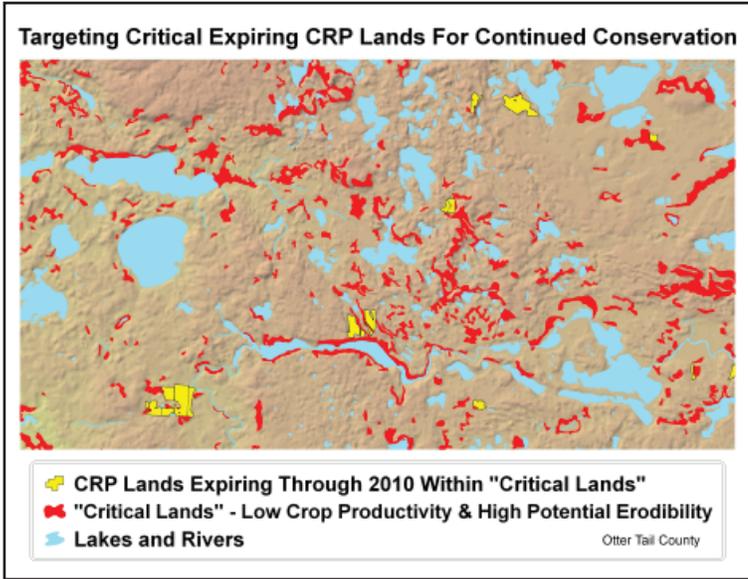
“ Make existing CRP buffers permanent -- it makes no sense to pay for them more than once. Allow for habitat-compatible harvesting or grazing. ”

“ SWCD service centers need more capacity to deliver designs for landowners. ”

“ Targeting tools should be utilized to maximize results. ”

“ Projects should be prioritized based on both science and local citizen input. County-scale local water or conservation plans can be the bridge between science and citizens. ”

Tools to target priority sites



eLINK: Tracking local conservation outcomes

Where conservation dollars go

Local organizations that receive state grant dollars through the Board of Water and Soil Resources report conservation project information using eLINK, a database for tracking expenditures and conservation outcomes. BWSR staff currently provide technical support and training to more than 600 users of the eLINK system, and also conduct site visits of select projects to ensure that state conservation dollars are used as effectively as possible.

What conservation dollars buy

Local governments use features in eLINK to submit project data, including location, management practices, funding sources, and estimated pollution reduction. eLINK is spatially enabled, which means users can draw point, line and polygon features of their projects on top of color aerial imagery. Local conservation outcomes are linked to produce a visual display of what conservation dollars are buying statewide.

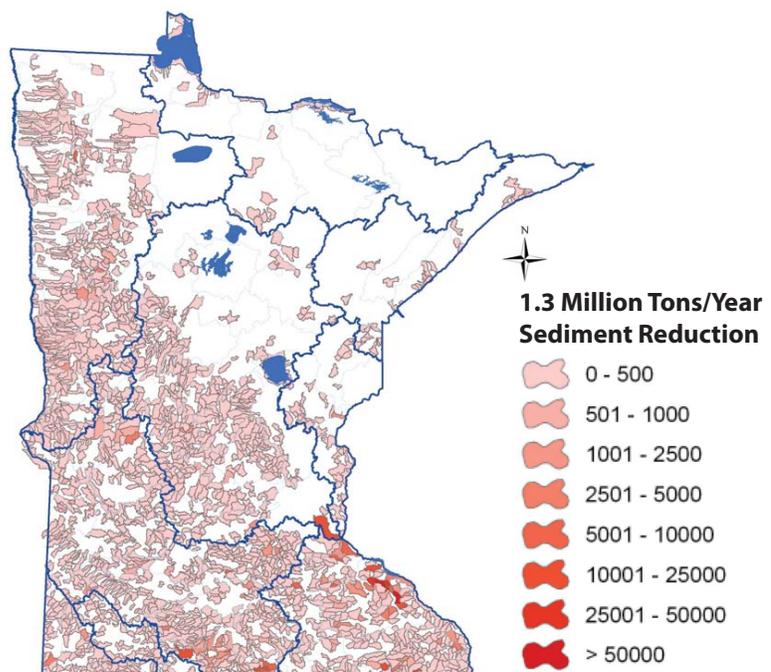
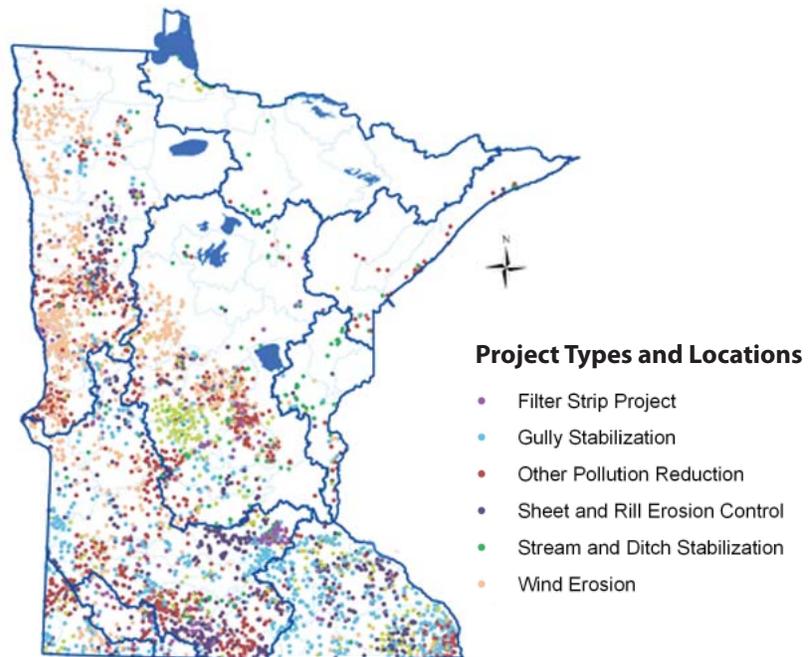
Public access to eLINK data

Currently, only BWSR staff can generate visual displays and reports using eLINK data. The data can be filtered to show outcomes for a specific organization, type of organization, type of project, or environmental outcome. BWSR is developing features that give eLINK users (local government units) the ability to generate reports and maps detailing project accomplishments. Integration of grant reports, along with other enhancements will ultimately provide decision-makers and the public with an informative and user-friendly tool for understanding conservation project expenditures and outcomes.

Local conservation projects

2003-2008

Reported in eLINK



Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) easements

200,000 acres have been enrolled

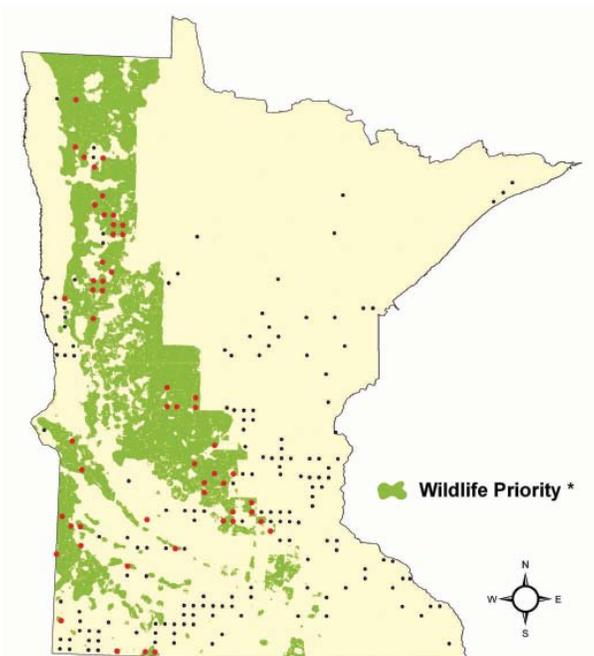
Benefits include:

- Wildlife habitat
- Improved water quality
- Carbon sequestration
- Flood damage reduction
- Economic (including earthwork contractors, title work, seed vendors and landowners)
- \$250 million in federal funds have been leveraged since 1998



Pictured (above): A wetland restoration in Freeborn County that is enrolled in a permanent RIM easement. (Above right) The Dalen Coulee project located in Clay and Norman counties is an example of a multi-purpose project. Many funding sources and organizations worked with landowners to reduce agricultural flood damages while restoring the ecological integrity of the waterway and creating 82 acres of wetland with wildlife enhancements and flood storage.

Projects ready to go in 2009



BWSR conducted a survey in December 2008 asking local governments for a partial **list of conservation projects that are ready to go, if funded in 2009**. They were instructed to include only those projects where **willing landowners** have expressed interest, and the project has not yet begun due to lack of available funds.

The map shows project locations that were identified by the survey respondents (45% response rate as of Jan. 5, 2009). Total estimated costs of funding these projects is \$19.8 million.

*Wildlife Priority Areas derived from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Habitat and Population Evaluation Team's Priority Areas dataset.

