

Level II Performance Review

Lake County Environmental Services Department

And

Lake Soil and Water Conservation District

Local Government Unit Review

Final Report

October 10, 2018

Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources

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This report has been prepared for the **Lake County Environmental Services Department and the Lake Soil and Water Conservation District** by the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) in partial fulfillment of the requirements of Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 103B.102, Subd.3.

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PRAP Level II Report Summary

Lake County and Lake SWCD

What is a PRAP

Performance Review?

The Board of Water and Soil Resources supports Minnesota's counties, watershed districts and soil and water conservation districts that deliver water and related land resource management projects and programs. In 2007 the Board set up a program (PRAP) to systematically review the performance of these local units of government to ensure their effective operation. Each year BWSR staff conduct routine reviews of several of these local conservation delivery entities. This document reports the results of one of those reviews.

Key Findings and Conclusions

The Lake County Environmental Services Department (County) and the Lake Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) need to continue to build a strong working relationship to meet the water management and conservation challenges in the county. For the most part, their partners believe both entities are doing good work and are good to work with. New water management challenges have created the necessity to forge new working relationships among partners, but there is a strong base to build upon for future local water management in Lake County. With the upcoming opportunities for implementation of One Watershed, One Plan, there will be an opportunity for Lake County and SWCD to focus projects on specific problems and priorities for the watershed and county's waterbodies. The partners who responded to the PRAP survey provided generally good to strong marks in their judgement of the performance of the County, and good to strong marks in the performance of the SWCD.

Resource Outcomes

The Lake County Local Water Management Plan (the basis for most of the report) does not include targets or objectives for resource outcomes. The Lake Superior North One Watershed One Plan does include targets and measures for resource outcomes. The early stages of plan implementation was evaluated as part of this assessment and there has already been significant progress made.

Commendations:

The Lake Soil and Water Conservation District is commended for meeting 11 of 14 high performance standards for SWCDs and the Lake County Environmental Services Department is commended for meeting 9 of 12 high performance standards for counties.

Recommendations:

Joint Recommendation 1: Continue providing strong participation in the Lake Superior North 1W1P implementation using the watershed scale for prioritizing projects and program implementation and using Prioritized, Targeted and Measurable criteria for measuring progress for goals and objectives.

Joint Recommendation 2: Structure website information to report progress and trends made in achieving resource outcome goals and implementation of the 1W1P.

Lake SWCD Recommendation 1: Implement the strategic assessment of the SWCD to revise and improve existing mission, goals and staff capacity to meet the demands for conservation services in the district.

Lake County Wetland Conservation Act Recommendation 1: The County should pass a new Wetland Conservation Act resolution adopting the Rule.

Lake County Wetland Conservation Act Recommendation 2: The County should continue to work with BWSR and TEP and DNR Water Resources Enforcement Officer to review administration of the WCA in the County.

Action Items: Lake SWCD and Lake County Environmental Services Department have no action items.

Introduction

This is an information document prepared by the staff of the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) for both the Lake County Environmental Services Department (County) and the Lake Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD). It reports the results of a routine performance review of these organizations' water management plan implementation and overall organizational effectiveness in delivery of land and water conservation projects and programs. BWSR has conducted and reported a joint review of both entities because they both use the same local water management plan to guide their respective activities. The findings and recommendations are intended to give both local government units (LGUs) constructive feedback they can use to enhance their joint and individual delivery of conservation services.

For this review, BWSR has analyzed the LGUs' reported accomplishments of their management plan action items, determined each organizations' compliance with BWSR's Level I and II performance standards, and surveyed members of the organizations and their partner organizations.

This review is neither a financial audit nor investigation and it does not replace or supersede other types of governmental review of local government unit operations.

While the performance review reported herein has been conducted under the authority granted to BWSR by Minnesota Statutes Chapter 103B.102, this is a staff report and has not been reviewed or approved by the BWSR board members.

What is PRAP?

PRAP is an acronym for BWSR's Performance Review and Assistance Program. Authorized by the 2007 Minnesota legislature, the PRAP purpose is to support local delivery of land conservation and water management by periodically reviewing and assessing the performance of local units of government that deliver those services. These include soil and water conservation districts, watershed districts, watershed management organizations, and the local water management functions of counties.

BWSR has developed four levels of review, from routine to specialized, depending on the program mandates and the needs of the local governmental unit. A Level I review annually tabulates all local governmental units' compliance with basic planning and reporting requirements. In Level II, conducted by BWSR once every ten years for each local government unit, the focus is on the degree to which the organization is accomplishing its water management plan. A Level II review includes determination of compliance with BWSR's Level I and II statewide performance standards, a tabulation of progress on planned goals and objectives, a survey of board or water plan task force members and staff of the factors affecting plan implementation, a survey of LGU partners about their impressions of working with the LGU, and a BWSR staff report to the organization with findings, conclusions and recommendations. BWSR's actions in Levels III and IV include elements of Levels I and II and then emphasize assistance to address the local governmental unit's specific needs.

Background

This section describes what BWSR learned about the performance of the Lake County Environmental Services Department and the Lake SWCD.

INTRODUCTION

One Watershed, One Plan (*the following information was taken from the Lake Superior North Watershed One Watershed, One Plan*).

“The One Watershed, One Plan (1W1P) legislation passed by the State of Minnesota in 2013 provided authorization and funding to the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) for assistance and grants to local governments to transition local water management plans to a watershed-based approach. Based on this legislation, BWSR sought nominations in early 2014 and selected five watershed areas for piloting the program on June 25, 2014. The Lake Superior North Watershed (LSNW) was one of the five watersheds selected for this pilot program. The LSNW was selected to develop a Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan. This all-inclusive Plan leverages the existing requirements for local government comprehensive water management plans and has the highest standards of the three options for 1W1P pilot plan development. A Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan should address surface water and groundwater resources, water quality and quantity and land use. The implementation actions identified in the Plan will use a broad range of tools including capital improvements, official controls and various programs and initiatives to achieve the goals of the Plan. The LSNW 1W1P identifies the priorities, management goals and implementation activities that Cook and Lake Counties and the Cook and Lake County Soil and Water Conservation Districts intend to address over the next ten years with this watershed. Water management planning and activities in areas of both Lake and Cook Counties outside the LSNW boundary will continue to be directed by the current Local Water Management Plan that is in place for each county. As Lake and Cook counties transition to comprehensive watershed planning processes in all watersheds within the counties, these watershed-scale

plans will replace the Local Water Management plan in those areas.”

Because the Lake Superior North Watershed One Watershed, One Plan implementation is still in its infancy, this PRAP review looked back to the previous County Water Plan to evaluate implementation accomplishments.

The following information was taken from the Lake County Comprehensive Local Water Management Plan.

Executive Summary

“The Lake County Local Water Management Plan was amended in 2010 as agreed to per approval of the Lake County Water Plan Update on October 26, 2005 by the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources. On February 9, 2010, the Lake County Board passed a resolution to begin the amendment process. Local units of governments and state agencies were notified in late February and the Lake County Water Plan Advisory Committee started the amendment process at their February 23, 2010 meeting. Briefly, the entire 2005 Lake County Water Plan Update was reviewed and changes were made in the following areas:

1. Priority Concerns – high priority watersheds were listed and defined.
2. Relevant Plans and Controls – updated and additional plans were added for reference purposes
3. Implementation Program (5 Year Work Plan: 2011-2015) – updated and work plan was expanded.

Following approval by the Water Plan Advisory Committee, the amended plan was sent to local units of government and state agencies for formal review. After taking into consideration review comments, a public hearing was held in Lake County. The Water Plan Advisory Committee met on November 28, 2012. The Advisory Committee members list was updated due to turnover and retirements and decisions were made for the following:

1. Lake Superior will be added as a Priority Waterway.
2. Representatives from all townships and municipalities within Lake County will be invited to participate on the Advisory Committee.

Previously, the Lake County Local Water Management Plan was updated by a ten-member Water Plan Advisory Committee that was led by Wayne Seidel,

Lake County Water Plan Administrator. The update process was started in 2002, suspended in 2003 due to a state budget shortfall, resumed in 2004, and completed in 2005. The purpose of the planning process was to develop a plan of work that would protect and enhance surface water, ground water and related land resources within Lake County. The Advisory Committee developed a planning process designed to incorporate input from the general public, input from local units of government and state agencies, and to develop consistency with local, state and federal plans and controls.

Following meetings with township officials, completion of a water issues survey (230 respondents), and feedback from state agencies, the Advisory Committee identified seven *Priority Concerns*.

1. Increased Development Pressures – Erosion Control on Construction Sites, Road Management, Cumulative Impacts, Shoreline Erosion Control
2. Enforcement of Existing Land Use Laws and Use of Best Management Practices in Development Activities and Forest Management Activities
3. Storm Water Management
4. Wastewater Management - Non-Conforming Sewage Treatment Systems, Surface and Groundwater Contamination, Drinking Water Quality
5. Natural Resources Education on Water/Land Issues
6. Lake and Stream Water Quality, Water Quantity and Biological Integrity
7. Supportive of Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) research project efforts on north shore streams.

After assessing the seven *Priority Concerns* and additional ongoing water plan programs, the Advisory Committee endorsed the overall goal of the original Local Water Management Plan (1993) as still being relevant for Lake County. The overall goal states, “Maintain and improve both surface and groundwater quality and quantity through sound ecosystem management.”

This overall goal encompasses three components that include: Education and Information; Natural Resources Planning and Practices; and Administration. The Advisory Committee combined this overall goal with six specific objectives, within the framework of a ten-year plan of work, to address the needs of the *Priority Concerns* and ongoing water plan programs.

The six objectives identified to achieve the overall goal include:

- Objective 1: Promote and Implement Sound Land Use Practices
- Objective 2: Promote Proper Use and Disposal of Household Hazardous Wastes
- Objective 3: Improve the Management and Maintenance of Individual Sewage Treatment Systems
- Objective 4: Coordinate Local Government Efforts to Address Surface and Ground Water Pollution Problems
- Objective 5: Implement a Natural Resources Education Program that instills a Stewardship Ethic
- Objective 6: Administer the Lake County Local Water Management Plan in an Efficient and Cost-Effective Manner

The ten-year plan of work concentrates on tasks that address priority concerns that are within current budgetary and staff time constraints. Presently, the Lake County Water Plan budget is \$19,307, including \$4,571 of Lake County Levy Match, per year and implementation has been delegated to the Lake County Soil and Water Conservation District. Examples of work plan items include:

- a. Conduct an annual Erosion Control Workshop for Contractors.
- b. Assist the Lake County Planning Commission on land use issues related to erosion control and storm water management.
- c. Conduct a variety of natural resources education programs for students – Natural Resources Field Day, Area III ENVIROTHON Competition, Lake County Demonstration Forest, and Wastewater Treatment.
- d. Provide educational opportunities on the proper maintenance of sewage treatment systems.
- e. Provide a copy of the Lake County Property Owner’s Resource Guide to all new property owners.

Background of Planning Process

The Lake County Comprehensive Water Management Plan, originally approved in 1993, was updated in 1998 by a 17-member Water Planning Task Force. The revised plan was set to expire on July 22, 2003, therefore, the second update process was begun in 2002. The Water Plan Advisory Committee met bi-monthly to assess the previously identified issues and to develop a planning process that would incorporate public input.

In July and August of 2002, a notification letter was sent to townships and cities in Lake County informing them of the water plan update process and requesting their participation. Wayne Seidel, Water Plan Administrator, met with three of the five township boards (Beaver Bay, Crystal Bay, and Silver Creek) and spoke with representatives of the other two townships (Stony River and Fall Lake) to gather input on water-related issues. Based on this input, a written survey tool was developed to gather public opinions on priority water issues in Lake County. The survey was used at the 2002 Lake County Fair and over 220 people participated by rating water-related issues and identifying additional concerns. Township and city officials were also encouraged to complete the written survey. Altogether, 230 surveys were completed and the results were tabulated.

In February 2003, the State of Minnesota budget shortfall led to the unallotment of all local water management funds administered by the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources. In response to this situation, the Lake County SWCD laid off the Water Plan Coordinator in March and suspended all water plan update activities due to the uncertainty of future funding. Following legislative action, a portion of local water planning funding was restored for FY 2004.

The Water Plan Update process was resumed on April 14, 2004 when the Lake County Board of Commissioners approved a resolution to revise and update its current local water management plan. The County Board delegated to the Lake County SWCD the responsibility of coordinating, assembling, writing and implementing the revised local water management plan pursuant to M.S. 103B.301. The County Board

also approved a ten-member Water Plan Advisory Committee (WPAC) to complete the update process.

Priority Concerns Assessment

Based on input from the public, local units of government, and state agencies, the Water Plan Advisory Committee has determined that the following priority water concerns will be addressed in the updated and amended Lake County Local Water Management Plan:

1. Increased Development Pressures – Erosion Control on Construction Sites, Road Management, Cumulative Impacts, Shoreline Erosion Control
2. Enforcement of Existing Land Use Laws and Use of Best Management Practices in Development Activities and Forest Management Activities
3. Storm Water Management
4. Wastewater Management - Non-Conforming Sewage Treatment Systems, Surface and Groundwater Contamination, Drinking Water Quality
5. Natural Resources Education on Water/Land Issues
6. Lake and Stream Water Quality, Water Quantity and Biological Integrity
7. Supportive of Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) research project efforts and will work with landowners to complete objectives and goals identified in the TMDL Implementation Plans (BMP projects/education) on north shore streams.

Item #4 above includes the support of Lake County for waste-water management infrastructure improvements proposed and being considered for funding for the Stewart River area and Silver Creek Township.

Furthermore, Lake County recognizes the importance of dealing with issues and priority concerns on a watershed basis and will continue to work on a watershed basis whenever appropriate. The Water Plan Advisory Committee has identified six “high priority watersheds” on which to focus a major portion of their work efforts to address priority water concerns. In general, these “high priority watersheds” are subject to increased development pressure, have more intensive land use, and/or may have steep gradients through lacustrine heavy red clay deposits. The Beaver River and Knife River have also been designated as impaired water bodies for excess turbidity on the 2010 - 303 (d) Total Maximum Daily Load list. These six “High Priority Watersheds” include:

- a. Beaver River
- b. Kawishiwi River

- c. Knife River
- d. Skunk Creek
- e. Stewart River
- f. Lake Superior

Priority Concerns - Goals and Objectives

Overall Goal: Maintain and improve both surface and groundwater quality and quantity through sound ecosystem management.

Components of the Overall Goal include:

1. Education and Information
2. Natural Resources Planning and Practices
3. Administration

Lake County recognizes the importance of a comprehensive, multi-faceted approach to meeting our overall goal. Education is a key component and will inform users of water in Lake County of the importance of the water resource and promote a stewardship ethic.

Natural resource planning will be based on using sound scientific data and applying the best available techniques. The planning component will facilitate the protection of natural resources while at the same time recognizing broader human needs and interests. The administration component will include the refinement of public policy and local regulations, and enforcement.

Objectives to achieve the overall goal include:

- Objective 1: Promote and Implement Sound Land Use Practices
- Objective 2: Promote Proper Use and Disposal of Household Hazardous Wastes
- Objective 3: Improve the Management and Maintenance of Individual Sewage Treatment Systems
- Objective 4: Coordinate Local Government Efforts to Address Surface and Ground Water Pollution Problems
- Objective 5: Implement a Natural Resources Education Program that instills a Stewardship Ethic
- Objective 6: Administer the Lake County Local Water Management Plan in an Efficient and Cost-Effective Manner”

Findings

Findings Part 1: Planning

The findings in this section describe the local water plan and action items assigned to the County and the SWCD and the accomplishments to date for each organization.

The county and SWCD are jointly responsible for accomplishing the steps necessary to address these concerns.

As part of this review, county and SWCD staff prepared a table (See Appendix A) listing the accomplishments to-date for each of the action items for which they are responsible. The table contains a progress rating applied by BWSR to each item indicating whether it has been completed or its target was met, whether progress has been made and work is continuing, or whether it was dropped or not started yet.

County Water Plan Implementation

According to these ratings, the county and SWCD are both making good progress on their assigned action items. The county and SWCD made progress on all 38 of their action items (100 percent). The County and SWCD have completed 10 of their action items and 28 items are ongoing.

A full description of the goals, objectives, action items, accomplishments and next steps is contained in Appendix A-1, pages 18-33.

Lake Superior North Watershed Plan Implementation

Although implementation of the Lake Superior North Watershed Plan is in the very early stages, significant work is already ongoing. Lake SWCD staff provided a status report of plan implementation thus far as part of this Level II PRAP assessment. (See appendix A-2, pages 34-44. BWSR evaluated progress and according to these ratings, the county and SWCD are making good progress on their assigned action items. The county and SWCD initiated 34 action items, 3 actions have already been completed and 10 items have not been started. This is a very good start to implementation of one of the first One Watershed, One Plans in Minnesota.

A full description of the goals, objectives, action items, accomplishments and next steps is contained in Appendix A-2, pages 34-44.

Resource Outcomes

The most recent Lake County Local Water Management Plan did not include targets or objectives for resource outcomes. Therefore, resource outcomes are not reported in this review of plan accomplishments. The Lake Superior North One Watershed One Plan does include targets and measures for resource outcomes. The Lake Superior North One Watershed One Plan is in the early stages of implementation. A progress report is included in Appendix A-2.

Findings Part 2: Performance Standards

BWSR has developed a set of performance standards that describe both basic and high performance best management practices related to the overall operation of the organization. These standards are different depending on the type of LGU. Nevertheless, each set of standards addresses four areas of operation: administration, planning, execution, and communication/coordination. The basic standards describe practices that are either legally required or fundamental to county or SWCD operations. The high performance standards describe practices that reflect a level of performance that exceeds the required practices. While all local government water management entities should be meeting the basic standards, only the more ambitious ones will meet many high performance standards. Compliance with performance standards for the Lake County and SWCD are contained in Appendix B, pages 45-46.

Each year for the Level I PRAP review, BWSR tracks all of Minnesota's water management LGUs' compliance with the basic standards.

For this Level II review, the county reports compliance with 9 of 9 basic standards. The county reported achieving 9 of 12 high performance standards.

The SWCD reports compliance with 18 of 18 basic standards, and 11 of 14 high performance standards.

Wetland Conservation Act Compliance: Beginning in 2017, local government unit (LGU) compliance with the Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) was added to the PRAP Level II assessments. In 1991, the Legislature passed the Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) in order to achieve a no-net loss in the quantity, quality, and biological diversity of Minnesota's wetlands. In doing so, they designated certain implementation responsibilities to local government units (LGUs) and soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs) with the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) to provide oversight. One oversight mechanism is an administrative review of how LGUs and SWCDs are carrying out their responsibilities.

BWSR uses the administrative review process to evaluate LGU and SWCD performance related to their responsibilities under the WCA. The review is

intended to determine if an LGU or SWCD is fulfilling their responsibilities under WCA and to provide recommendations for improvement as applicable.

The BWSR Wetland Specialist assigned to assist Lake County conducted an evaluation of LGU performance in carrying out the responsibilities as described in Minnesota Rules 8420.

Data for WCA program review was collected via direct interview(s) with staff, a review of an appropriate number and type of project files, a review of existing documentation on file (i.e. annual reporting/resolutions), and through prior BWSR staff experience/interaction with the LGU or SWCD. In some cases, a project site review may be necessary. Generally, interviews, project file reviews and site visits were done with two BWSR staff on agreed upon dates. A review of implementation of the Wetland Conservation Act found that Lake County and Lake SWCD are generally implementing the program in compliance with Minnesota Rule 8420. There are two recommendations related to implementation of the Wetland Conservation Act (See Recommendations, page 15. A copy of the WCA report is located in Appendix D, pages 56-59.

Findings Part 3: Internal and External Surveys

Parts 3 and 4 of this performance assessment are based on responses to an on-line survey of both LGUs' staff and board or water plan implementation committee members and of their partner organizations. The board and staff answered different survey questions than the partners. The survey questions are designed to elicit information about LGU successes and difficulties in implementing plan goals and objectives and assessing the extent and quality of partnerships with other related organizations. A compilation of all survey results is in Appendix C, pages 47-55.

Internal: LGU Self-Assessment

A total of 10 staff and board members of the Lake County Environmental Services Department were invited to take the online survey, and 6 submitted responses, a 60% response rate. For the SWCD, 12 supervisors and staff were invited to take the survey and 11 responded, a 92% response rate.

Survey participants were asked which programs or projects they consider to be particularly successful in the past few years. The county staff and board members mentioned *Lake Superior North One Watershed One Plan, development of the County AIS program and shoreline stabilization.*

They cited the following as reasons for success with the programs:

- *Collaboration with Cook County SWCD & Land Dept., Cook and Lake County Commissioners & Residents, North Shore Management Board & DNR.*
- *1W1P for the LSN was made successful through partnerships that worked effectively together. Funding made possible through the legislature to allow the hiring of staff to implement AIS program.*
- *State funding.*

For projects and programs that have been difficult to implement, the County mentioned *implementation of the 1W1P due to the funding method.*

When asked to identify reasons for difficulties, one County survey participants stated *our 1W1P received a very small percent of the funding available due to public lands the Northeast region has, which will significantly hinder the ability of our plan to be implemented.*

The county listed good working relationships with *BWSR wetland specialist, Lake Co. SWCD, Highway, and Forestry Departments, Army Corps of Engineers, Town of Silver Creek, MN DNR Hydrologist, Cook County SWCD & Land Department, Cook and Lake County Commissioners & Residents, North Shore Management Board & DNR.*

The survey asked participants to identify organizations with whom they would like to collaborate with more often. The county mentioned *City of Silver Bay, North Shore Management Board (mostly because it is not very active).*

The County and SWCD staff and boards also identified ways to improve the effectiveness of their respective organizations. The county survey participants mentioned

- *Arrange to have better representation in the legislature when it comes to funding for mandated requirements and implementation of goals identified in 1W1P. Counties with a significant amount of Public land need a fair share of the money available for implementation.*
- *Secure additional funding to increase staffing capacity and implement projects identified in the 1W1P priority areas.*

The SWCD supervisors and staff who responded when asked to identify successful programs mentioned:

- *Expansion of water quality monitoring and outreach on AIS prevention.*
- *Cost-share projects*
- *Invasive Species education (Terrestrial and Aquatic), Water Quality outreach and education.*
- *We did a large River restoration project on both the Knife River and the Stewart River. We managed three round of Flood relief Grants. We have had consistent water monitoring on the Lakes in the Cloquet and Rainy headwaters. We have a forestry program that has addressed the increasing problem of Spruce Budworm. AIS program that does inspections as well as education.*
- *River restoration projects on the Knife River and Stewart River. Forestry program is actively engaging many property owners with various forest health improvement projects. AIS work is very visible across the county with boat inspection programs. One Watershed One Plan pilot is now being implemented across Lake Superior North. Terrestrial invasive species control expanding. E-coli source investigation work underway in Two Harbors.*
- *Stewart River and Knife River restoration projects, AIS and rusty crayfish trapping, EQIP forestry plans for landowners, CWF forestry spruce budworm removal projects; general outreach and increasing the District's capacity and image in the County; water monitoring especially collaboration with lake associations and the PCA.*

Reasons for success cited included:

- *Partnerships with other organizations, such as lake associations to recruit volunteers and broaden outreach and education.*
- *Co-operation between the staff and the board when making decisions about helping landowners. Discussing the pros and cons and*

determining if the project fits into the mission of the organization.

- *Outreach efforts to constituents and public involvement.*
- *We have a great staff that has increased recently, including additional summer help to do the AIS inspections. Sadly, the flood of 2012 and the funding that followed helped us to complete a lot of projects and work with many landowners. The local capacity money is what we have used to hire the forester and give us a good base funding to add staff.*
- *Good working relationships with collaborating partners. Financial and public support for the projects we do.*
- *People who took initiative & sufficient funding.*

For projects and programs that have been difficult to implement, the SWCD mentioned

- *Terrestrial invasive species and cost share projects*
- *Shoreland Stabilization projects on Lake Superior and projects in the Cloquet and Rainy Basins that are not related to AIS or Water Monitoring.*
- *Stormwater program in Two Harbors and Silver Bay because of lack of buy in from the municipalities and Lake Superior shoreline erosion*

One participant stated stormwater has recently been a priority of the district and we have received additional funding for projects, but it has been hard to gain traction on and clarify moving forward. Projects have also been geographical, meaning much work in the RRHW has been on hold while work moves forward with the Lake Superior watershed, per the comprehensive watershed planning effort recently having taken place there. Some core mission-driven SWCD work has also been on hold lately in favor of bigger-picture grants with more robust funding (i.e. smaller cost-share projects, well sealing, tree planting).

When asked to identify reasons for difficulties, SWCD survey participants identified the following:

- *There doesn't seem to be enough money or enough workers to accomplish all the projects in the area.*
- *Lack of funding, local technical experience and desire to pursue these projects comprehensively. 2. Staff focusing only on 1W1P priorities which are Lake Superior focused and neglecting Water Plan priorities which are County-wide.*
- *Cities do not have the money to do stormwater plan or do not see the immediate need for one. One city would just like to have problems with drainage fixed without looking at the bigger picture. We have no current funding source to address the Lake Superior shoreline erosion, but our BC is trying to look at this problem.*
- *Staff turnover/people leaving without sufficient grant tracking or organization left behind; insufficient funding from state; collaborative work environment without defined project leaders; lack of communication among staff in the long-term.*
- *Continue current strategic planning to further develop goals and determine action steps and timeline for implementation.*
- *Secure a strong district manager.*
- *Fewer staff at fewer meetings, structured communication procedures to share information.*
- *We are watching for grant opportunities for culvert replacements which are in our 1W1P (1 per year). We are working on an E.coli project to improve the beach quality in Agate and Burlington Bays. We are working through the strategic plan we recently did to set goals and policies.*
- *We are just implementing a strategic planning exercise and expect to take direction from it.*
- *Increase organization; define staff roles more narrowly; all goals back to the mission; plan ahead for grants to prioritize work.*

Full survey responses are in Appendix C, pages 47-55.

The SWCD indicated strong relationships with USFS (3), MPCA (4), WICOLA (2), BWSR (2), NRCS (2), Lake County (2), Cook SWCD (2), DNR, North St Louis SWCD, NRCS, WICOLA, Coastal Program, DNR Fisheries (multiple districts), County, Forest Service, and City of Two Harbors.

The survey asked participants to identify organizations with whom they would like to collaborate with more often. The SWCD listed *Cities of Two Harbors (2) and Silver Bay (2), town Boards and staff, Area III TSA connection, NSLSWCD, The Nature Conservancy, MNTU, and more NRCS programs.*

The SWCD staff and board also identified ways to improve the effectiveness of their respective organizations.

The SWCD staff and board mentioned the following:

Findings Part 4: Partners' Assessment

Lake County Environmental Services Department

Partners Survey: The County provided a list of 19 partners to take the survey, and 10 responded (53%). These partners reported interacting with the County between several times a year (50%), monthly (30%) and almost every week (20%). Twenty percent of the survey participants said they thought that this amount of interaction was not enough, there is potential for us to do more together, and 70% said this amount of interaction was about right while one person said too much, they depend on us for work they should be doing themselves.

Regarding their assessment of the county in five operational areas, the partners gave mostly strong, good or acceptable marks, for communication, quality of work and relationships with customers, and follow-through/meeting deadlines.

| Performance Area | County Partner Ratings (percent) | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|------|------------|------|------------|
| | Strong | Good | Acceptable | Poor | Don't Know |
| Communication | 20% | 50% | 30% | 0% | 0% |
| Quality of Work | 30% | 60% | 10% | 0% | 0% |
| Customer Relations | 20% | 60% | 0% | 10% | 10% |
| Initiative | 40% | 50% | 10% | 0% | 0% |
| Timelines/Follow through | 50% | 40% | 10% | 0% | 0% |

Twenty percent of the participants reported the quality of their organization's working relationship with the county as powerful, 60% as strong, and 20% as good.

Lake County Environmental Service Department partners were asked for suggestions to improve their program and provided the following feedback:

- *They have had staff turnover so I think they will do better communicating a clear message to land owners in the future. Clear communication with the public is needed.*
- *The Environmental Services Department is a good department. Articles 7 and 8 of the Lake County Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Ordinance should be updated to recognize and review current practices and policies.*
- *Only that I think all government agencies need to survey with the general public that they serve.*

Lake SWCD Partners Survey: For the SWCD, 83 partners were invited and 34 (41%) responded. These partners reported a wide range of interaction with the SWCD over the past 3 years: 12% said a few times, 31% reported several times a year, 37% said monthly, and 19% said they interacted with the SWCD almost every week. Twenty percent of these participants indicated that the amount of interaction they had with the SWCD was not enough, and 80% indicated the amount of interaction was about right.

These partners also assessed their interactions with the SWCD in five operational areas. The partners' rating of the district's work in the operational areas was quite high. Most of the partners rated the district's communications either as good or strong (74%). Forty five percent of the partners thought the district's quality of work was strong and about 42% rated it good.

Relationships with customers were judged to be strong by 35%, while 26% rated it good and 35% didn't know. Seventy one percent rated the SWCD strong on initiative and another 16% ranked them good. For timelines and meeting deadlines, the partners thought the district performance was strong (26%) and good (45%) while 12.9% rated it acceptable and 12.9% didn't know.

| Performance Area | SWCD Partner Ratings (percent) | | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|-------|-------------|------|------------|
| | Strong | Good | Accept-able | Poor | Don't Know |
| Communi-cation | 35.5% | 38.7% | 12.9% | 9.7% | 3.2% |
| Quality of Work | 45.2% | 41.9% | 3.2% | 0% | 9.7% |
| Relations with Customers | 35.5% | 25.8% | 3.2% | 0% | 35.5% |
| Initiative | 71.0% | 16.1% | 0% | 0% | 12.9% |
| Timelines/ Follow through | 25.8% | 45.2% | 12.9% | 3.2% | 12.9% |

The partners' overall rating of the quality of their working relationship with the district ranged from powerful (26.7%), strong 50% or good, but could be better. One survey participant said their working relationship was acceptable and another one said it was non-existent.

When partners were asked for additional thoughts about how the Lake SWCD could be more effective, they provided the following comments:

- We have an excellent relationship with all staff that we work with. All of them are very effective. I suppose that they could be more effective if they had more staff and those staff have adequate resources to their jobs.*
- The staff are doing great work within the current structure but would like to see a stronger presence representing the SWCD and the great work they're doing. Having a district manager who understands resource management and leveraging partnerships is going to be crucial in implementing the Lake Superior North One Watershed One Plan and other initiatives. Coastal erosion has become a big problem and SWCD staff could use support from a coastal engineer like the BWSR position that was once held by Gene Clark. BWSR should consider a support role in this area that could also serve to balance out the DNR's bend towards Natural Channel Design projects.*
- Lake (and Cook) County SWCDs are instrumental in helping other agencies (MN DNR, MN PCA, USDA Forest Service, etc.) work towards individual mission areas as well as the collective conservation efforts in the arrowhead region of Minnesota.*
- Continue to work to provide ALL programs and services to all parts of the County.*
- Lake SWCD has struggled recently with leadership in the form of their District Manager. They are in a much better place now. They have a very motivated staff that doesn't require a lot of oversight. I am trying to provide them with NRCS resources in the form of funding through programs and staffing*

funding through agreements, but I often find it impossible to dedicate enough time to it. NRCS could do more to work directly with the Lake SWCD to be more effective.

- *New staff need to be better trained to better understand their direction as a district and as staff. It will provide them with the skills and confidence they need and future planning for the district. They are a talented staff and have great things to offer the district and area.*
- *Communication, Communication, Communication.*
- *Increase the number of outreach specialists.*
- *They need a coastal engineer or someone who can engineer structures for the coast line of Lake Superior, where coastal erosion is a huge problem and many homeowners need this assistance.*

Full survey responses are in Appendix C, pages 47-55.

General Conclusions

The Lake County Environmental Services Department (County) and the Lake Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) need to continue to build a strong working relationship to meet the water management and conservation challenges in the county. For the most part, their partners believe both entities are doing good work and are good to work with. New water management challenges for the County and SWCD has created the necessity to forge new working relationships among partners, but there is a strong base to build upon for future local water management in Lake County.

Although implementation of the Lake Superior North Watershed Plan is in the very early stages, significant work is already ongoing. Lake SWCD staff provided a status report of plan implementation thus far as part of this Level II PRAP assessment. (See appendix A-2, pages 33-43.

The partners who responded to the PRAP survey generally provided good to strong marks in their judgement of the performance of the County, and good to strong marks in the performance of the SWCD.

The Lake SWCD reports compliance with 18 of 18 basic standards, and accomplishing 11 of 14 high performance standards.

For this Level II review, the county reports compliance with 9 of 9 basic standards. The county reported achieving 9 of 12 high performance standards.

Commendations

Commendations are based on achievement of BWSR's high performance standards (see Findings, Part 2 and Appendix B, pages 45-46). These practices reflect above average operational effectiveness and level of effort.

Lake County is commended for:

- Public drainage records meet modernization guidelines
- Water quality trend data used for short and long range plan priorities (in 1W1P area)
- Water quality trends tracked for priority water bodies (in 1W1P area)

- Water quality data collected to track outcomes for each priority concern (in 1W1P area)
- Water quality trends tracked for priority water bodies (in 1W1P area)
- Obtained stakeholder input: within last 5 yrs.
- Partnerships: liaison with SWCDs/WDs and cooperative projects/tasks done
- Annual report to water plan advisory committee on plan progress
- County local water plan on county website
- Water management ordinances on county website

Lake SWCD is commended for:

- Job approval authorities are reviewed and reported annually
- Operational guidelines and policies exist and are current
- Staff training: orientation and continuing education plan and record for each staff member
- Prioritized, Targeted and Measurable criteria are used for goals and objectives in water plan as appropriate (in 1W1P area)
- Annual Plan of Work: based on comp plan, strategic priorities
- Website contains additional content beyond minimum required
- Obtained stakeholder input: within last 5 years
- Annual report communicate progress on plan goals
- Certified wetland delineator on staff
- Partnerships: cooperative projects/tasks with neighboring districts, counties, watershed districts, non-governmental organizations
- Coordination with County Board by supervisors or staff

Action Items

Action items are based on the LGU's compliance with BWSR's basic practice performance standards (see Findings, Part 2 and Appendix B pages 45-46). LGU's are given an Action Item in this section to address lack of compliance with one or more basic standards.

Lake SWCD and Lake County Environmental Services do not have any action items.

Recommendations

This section contains recommendations offered by BWSR to the Lake County Board and staff and to the supervisors and staff of the Lake SWCD. The intention of these recommendations is to enhance both organizations' delivery of effective water and related land resource management and service to the residents of the Lake County. BWSR financial assistance may be available to support the implementation of some of these recommendations. See BWSR website for more information:

http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/PRAP/How_to_apply.pdf

Joint Recommendation 1: Continue providing strong participation in the Lake Superior North 1W1P implementation using the watershed scale for prioritizing projects and program implementation and using Prioritized, Targeted and Measurable criteria for measuring progress for goals and objectives.

As both entities participate in implementation of one watershed, one plans, they should identify priority implementation projects by major or minor watershed. The County and SWCD staff should provide leadership for the implementation of projects that lead to resource outcomes in installing projects for the One Watershed, One Plan. Project implementation should be explicitly geared toward achieving prioritized, targeted and measurable goals.

Joint Recommendation 2: Structure website information to report progress and trends made in achieving resource outcome goals and implementation of the 1W1P.

Efforts should be made to share water resource progress and trend information in easy to understand and easy to access formats on the websites. Significant water quality monitoring efforts and project implementation have taken place in Lake County, and the results should be made accessible to the public. The LGUs should consider developing an independent website for the 1W1P implementation.

Lake SWCD Recommendation 1: Implement the strategic assessment of the SWCD to revise and improve existing mission, goals and staff capacity to

meet the demands for conservation services in the district.

With increasing SWCD responsibilities in a county with many conservation challenges, the Lake SWCD should continue to implement a strategic assessment of the SWCD to determine whether existing mission, goals and staff capacity are sufficient to meet the conservation needs of the county. Even the most competent organizations will lose effectiveness when workload exceeds staffing resources over an extended period of time. BWSR PRAP Assistance Grant funds may be available to partially fund this effort.

Lake County Wetland Conservation Act (WCA)

Recommendation 1: The County should pass a new WCA resolution adopting the Rule which omits the language of rescinding the authority upon a change or revision in Rule as well as additional resolution language that delegates WCA decision-making authority to the Lake County Planning & Zoning Department.

Lake County WCA Recommendation 2: The County should continue to work with BWSR and TEP and DNR Water Resources Enforcement Officer to review administration of the WCA in the County and WCA enforcement procedures outlined in MN Rule 8420.0900 and make use of the Enforcement Procedures Checklist.

LGU Comments and BWSR Responses

Lake County and SWCD were invited to comment on the findings, conclusions and joint recommendations in the draft version of this report.

Lake SWCD Response Letter

Lake SWCD provided a comment letter which can be found in Appendix E, pages 60-62 and is summarized below.

Lake SWCD Comment #1, Lake SWCD

Recommendation 1: *Lake SWCD conducted a strategic plan in spring 2018 and have been meeting monthly to design an action plan. Part of the strategic planning effort includes a hiring plan for the district manager position as staff turnover in the coming year.*

BWSR Response: We look forward to working with the SWCD as you implement the strategic plan and develop an action plan.

Lake SWCD Comment 2, Joint Recommendation 2:

Lake County is currently undergoing a website refresh, and Lake SWCD will concurrently redesign their website within Lake County's website to reflect water plan project updates and goal achievement strategically, including LSN1W1P outcomes.

BWSR Response: BWSR staff recognize Lake County's ongoing efforts to redesign the website and look forward to a strong interface for the public to follow progress in implementation of the Lake Superior North 1W1P.

Lake SWCD Comment 3: *LSN1W1P implementation began primarily after funding was received in spring 2018. The LSN1W1P reporting process was voluntary and included information from the entire watershed, although it is noted this PRAP is for Lake County, not Cook County/Cook SWCD.*

BWSR Response: BWSR recognizes the progress made in implementing both the Lake County Comprehensive Local Water Plan and the Lake Superior North 1W1P.

Lake SWCD Comment 4: *Due to the seasonality of projects and work completed by SWCDs, conducting a PRAP during peak field season in July proved difficult to manage. In the future, conducting the reporting*

process at a slower time of year would help the process be more useful to SWCDs.

BWSR Response: BWSR understands that the timing of the PRAP review was not ideal, with LGU workload typically peaking during the summer months. Unfortunately, due to statutory requirements, BWSR needs to complete 24 Level II PRAP assessments each year and staff are not able to complete all of these reports during winter and fall. We appreciate the SWCD's willingness to assist BWSR during a busy summer season.

Lake County Response Letter

Lake County Environmental Services Director provided a comment letter which can be found in Appendix E, pages 60-62 and is summarized below.

Lake County Comment 1, Joint Recommendation 1:

LCES will continue to be an active partner in the Lake Superior North 1W1P implementation plan. Strong participation in the implementation of the plan will require adequate funding for Lake County regardless of the ratio of private to public lands.

BWSR Response: BWSR recognizes that adequate funding is required to implement the Lake Superior North 1W1P.

Lake County Comment 2, Joint Recommendation 2:

It is acknowledged that the County website should have more water plan content and project updates. The website will be doing a website "refresh" that will allow us to provide future improved content and organization.

BWSR Response: BWSR staff recognize Lake County's ongoing efforts to redesign the website and look forward to a strong interface for the public to follow progress in implementation of the Lake Superior North 1W1P.

Lake County Comment 3, Lake County Wetland

Conservation Act (WCA) Recommendation 1: *LCES will work with its Board to pass a resolution that will adopt updated WCA rules.*

BWSR Response: BWSR staff look forward to assisting Lake County as necessary.

Lake County Comment 4, Lake County WCA

Recommendation 2: *The County will continue to work with its partners to administer WCA in Lake County, following WCA enforcement procedures outlined in MN Rule 8420.0900 and make use of the Enforcement Procedures Checklist.*

BWSR Response: BWSR Wetland staff look forward to assisting Lake County, as needed, to implement the Wetland Conservation Act.

Appendix A-1. County Water Plan Accomplishments

LGU Name: Lake County SWCD

Date of This Assessment: July 31, 2018

Type of Management Plan: Local Water Management Plan

Date of Last Plan Revision: Amended 23 November 2010, last update 14 May 2013 (currently extended until 2022). Priority Concerns Scoping Document (PCSD) for update adopted 09 July 2014. LSN1W1P (see separate attachment) adopted for Lake Superior Watershed adopted 2017.


GOAL No. 1: Maintain and improve both surface and groundwater quality and quantity through sound ecosystem management.


3 Components: 1) Education and Information, 2) Natural Resources Planning and Practices, 3) Administration (Page 9-14 of Mgmt. Plan)



Objective 1: Promote and Implement Sound Land Use Practices

Progress Rating: ☐ =not started/dropped ☐ =on-going progress ☒ =completed/target met


| Planned Actions or Activities | Proposed Timeframe | Actual Timeframe | Accomplishments to Date | Progress Rating | Next Steps |
|--|--------------------|------------------|--|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Partner with the Lake County Planning & Zoning Department to conduct Earth Work Contractors Workshops | Every 2-3 Years | Every 5 years | 2 workshops conducted 2005-2010. Lake County provides information to contractors regularly upon land use permitting application submittal. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Earth Work Contractor workshop organized for January 2019 |
| 2. Participate on the Knife River Forest Stewardship Committee | Annual | quarterly | Regular attendance, 6 presentations to the advocates group in last 3 years. | <input type="radio"/> | Ongoing – continue attendance. |


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| 3. Assist Two Harbors in implementing the Storm Water Management Plan and the Two Harbors Urban Forest Management Plan. | Annual | Annual | Lake SWCD cost-share projects focused on priorities established by the management plan, especially urban storm water management practices from 2009-Present: 2013 Castle Danger Rain Garden & 2017 Castle Danger 155M Storm Water Retention Garden, 2013 Smith Rain Garden & Bioretention Basin, and 2016 Cliff House Commons. Received MN Coastal Program STAR Grant funds to create 3 storm water design BMPs for Skunk Creek (Two Harbors): Rustic Creek, North Shore Horizons, and a Channel Stabilization. Currently, Lake SWCD is administering an Urban Stormwater Assessment Grant and Coastal Grant on Bacteria Source Tracking in Skunk Creek, impaired for <i>E.coli</i> under the Lake Superior Streams TMDL. This has included facilitating placement of dog waste diversion stations and the creation of outreach materials focusing on storm water impacts. Lake SWCD worked with the 2018 Conservation Corps Apprentice to create a database and begin an updated tree inventory for Two Harbors. |  | Conduct urban forest management plan inventory and update for Two Harbors with City partners. Conduct inventory and planning for urban forestry for Silver Bay. Secure funding to implement STAR storm water designs. |
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| 4. Field inspections on construction sites for compliance with erosion control and storm water management controls. | Annual | Annual | Lake County requires land use permits for soil disturbance thresholds, which require erosion control plans in shoreland areas. Lake County further refers people to the SWPP permitting process as appropriate. MPCA and MDH continue to regulate storm water permitting as appropriate. Lake SWCD continues to conduct field inspections and provide technical assistance with regards to erosion and storm water management control. Lake SWCD conducted 4 Technical Assistance Reviews/Assistance to landowners with NPDES permitting reviews as of July 2018, 3 reviews in 2017, and 15 additional coastal (Lake Superior) erosion assistance requests with field visits in 2017. Lake SWCD established a close partnership with NRCS in 2016 and has since secured additional erosion mitigation and responsible land use contracts for forestry through the EQIP program – 31 Forest Stewardship Plans were written in 2017 and 14 implemented, and 19 additional contracts pending with NRCS for 2018. |  | Continue assistance as planned. Train new staff and certify staff with JAA authority to provide additional assistance to landowners. Secure additional funding for coastal erosion technical assistance inquiries. |
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| 5. Assist the Lake County Planning Commission on land use issues related to water quality such as erosion and sediment control, storm water management, and wetlands conservation. | Annual | Annual | Lake County continues to require the opportunity to review all land use permits. Land use permits issued: 132 as of July 2018, 224 in 2017, 197 in 2016, and 198 in 2015. Lake SWCD continues to provide comment and review on relevant land use and water quality variance requests, especially relating to NRBG Shoreland Grant - variance reviews for the Planning Commission: 4 as of July 2018, 10 in 2017. Additional variance reviews have been submitted by staff in previous years per request or submittal from Lake County Environmental Services. Lake SWCD also continues representation on the Technical Evaluation Panel (TEP) for Wetland Conservation Act Applications and monthly reviews (see WCA PRAP). 2 WCA Permits in 2017/18 included additional funding and technical assistance from Lake SWCD for a preserve wetland bank and a fill project. Lake SWCD is currently coordinating the E Beaver River Stabilization Project and recently certified an additional staff member with Wetland Delineator Certification. |  | Continue providing input/review/comments and training new staff to submit comments in the future. |
| 6. Assist the Lake County Planning & Zoning Department and Lake County Attorney on enforcement of the Lake County Land Use Ordinance. | Annual | As-needed basis | Lake County oversees enforcement of the Minnesota Buffer Law. Lake SWCD provides mapping of County-wide compliance with buffer standards and conducts site visits of parcels under review (current and in 2017). There have been no buffer cases requiring enforcement. Lake County continues to enforce as needed, and Lake SWCD assists property owners as needed, but there have been few ordinance violations requiring enforcement in the last few years. One case in 2018 included assistance from Lake SWCD. Lake County currently gathering proposals for Comprehensive Plan 2019 Update. |  | Lake SWCD - aid in an update of hydrology data for use in Lake County ordinance enforcement. Make changes per recommendation of the Lake County Comprehensive Plan 2019 update. |

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| 7. Work with City, Township, and County Departments to ensure they are using sound erosion control measures. | Annual | As needed, grant-funded basis | Lake SWCD conducted a Lake County Culvert Inventory of 795 sites with data made public in February 2017 (for use in future erosion management projects with partners) through a 2014 CWF Grant. This culvert inventory has already initiated many discussions with County Highway Department and outlined priorities to address sound control measures. Lake SWCD continues to work closely with partners on all projects. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Apply for grant funding and replace problem erosion culverts per Culvert Inventory and County, City, Township priorities. |
| 8. Provide financial assistance to clean up old dump sites/illegal dump sites in Lake County. | As-needed basis | As-needed basis | Financing is limited for dump sites cleanups. | <input type="radio"/> | Create a revolving fund for tax-forfeit or dump site cleanups. |
| 9. Monitor private wells near old dump sites where feasible and practical. | As-needed basis | As-needed basis | Closed landfill in Lake County monitored by MPCA. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Continue open communication with MPCA. |
| 10. Review city and county ordinances for adequate soil erosion and storm water management provisions and other water quality provisions. | Annual | As-needed basis | Reviewed county and city ordinances for needed zoning changes related to erosion, water quality and storm water management. Increased storm water tracking and grant funding (Urban Stormwater Assessment Grant and Coastal Bacteria Source Assessment Grant) to work toward storm water management planning for municipalities. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Increase communication between municipal and County governments on storm water and hydrology permitting and concerns. Lake SWCD has explored storm water protection task force interest and will continue to pursue. Encourage cities of Two Harbors and Silver Bay to develop a storm water plan. |
| 11. Encourage private well water quality testing on an annual basis. | Annual | Annual | Well testing kits now available at City of Silver Bay and Lake SWCD Office (same-day courier service pickup). Education on wells and contaminants is an emerging concern and was included in the septic workshop already held in the Spring and will be included in future workshops (September 2019). | <input type="radio"/> | Social media and increased education on outcomes of well-testing and well-sealing cost share opportunities. Certify Lake SWCD staff with JAA for well-sealing. |

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| 12. Encourage the development of a set of guidelines to evaluate cumulative impacts of development on water resources. | Annual | Annual | Continue to monitor and evaluate outcomes of previous cost-share projects or grants to determine efficacy (including follow-up site visits). Currently conducting releve surveys on timber stand improvement projects to evaluate effectiveness. Lake SWCD recently worked with additional funding from the 1W1P Planning Grant to complete a conservation project prioritization tool mapping out priority work areas by parcel based on cumulative land change data. |  | Continue monitoring previous cost-share projects. Implement the ACIST (Arrowhead Conservation Implementation Selection Tool) in the region to prioritize and map cost-share or technical assistance projects. Advocate for a tool to measure erosion reduction or water quality benefits resulting from forest practices. |
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| <p>13. Provide technical and financial assistance to LGUs, agencies, organizations, and landowners to implement erosion control and water quality improvement Best Management Practices with special emphasis for High Priority Watersheds and/or Impaired Waters with TMDL Implementation Plans. (2012 Update)</p> | Annual | Annual + | <p>Lake SWCD continues to focus cost-share and local capacity funding in high priority watersheds. \$15,000 Local Capacity was utilized for cost-share projects in 2016 as well as \$8,114 in cost-share fund dollars. \$7,363 cost-share dollars have been utilized from 2017 as of July 2018. 2016 cost-share projects supplemented a \$114,000 CWF Timber Stand Improvement Grant focused on sediment reduction in the Knife and Skunk Creek Watersheds. Grant funding was allocated primarily toward a Conservation Corps Crew at Lake SWCD during summer 2017. Lake SWCD secured an additional 18 Conservation Corps Crew Days in 2017 and 21 days in 2017 to address water quality improvements in high-priority watersheds. Lake SWCD has also hosted a Conservation Corps Apprentice for the last four years. After the 2012 Flood, Lake SWCD facilitated \$556,328 in flood projects, including initial work on the Stewart and Knife Rivers with riparian buffer plantings and a natural channel design, reducing sediment load by 102 tons/year. Lake SWCD further addressed TSS impairments through projects in high priority watersheds from 2012-2015: The Knife River Sediment Reduction and Stewart River Stream Restoration Project. A \$221,569 Clean Water Fund Grant was received for the Knife River and \$73,650 for the Stewart River Project. These projects were matched by additional funding from the Great Lakes Commission for the Knife River Project at \$210,000. Additional match at \$317,143 Sustain our Great Lakes and \$409,256 of Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council was received for the Stewart River Project. The Knife River Project is expected to reduce sedimentation by 12%, or 430 tons/year, while the Stewart River is expected to see a decrease in sediment loading by 551 tons per year. An additional \$41,569 in CWF funds were utilized to complete smaller projects with property owners on the Knife and Stewart Rivers, also addressing sediment reduction. In 2016, Lake SWCD implemented an LCCMR-funded Dufresne Road White Cedar Restoration Project addressing altered wetland hydrology. Currently assisting on a</p> |  | <p>Increase technical training within Lake SWCD office. Seek additional grants to address sedimentation in the Knife, per continued regional prioritization of the watershed. Utilize the 1W1P to guide cost-share and project priorities. Secure shoreland stabilization grant for work in the Rainy River Basin (CWF).</p> |
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| | | | Native Plant Propagation LCCMR Grant with Martin County focusing on invasive species mitigation in High Priority Watersheds. | | |
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Objective 2: Promote Proper Use and Disposal of Household Hazardous Wastes

Progress Rating: ☐ =not started/dropped ☐ =on-going progress ☒ =completed/target met

| Planned Actions or Activities | Proposed Timeframe | Actual Timeframe | Accomplishments to Date | Progress Rating | Next Steps |
|--|--------------------|------------------|--|-----------------------|---|
| 1. Promote use of the Lake County Recycling and Household Hazardous Waste Program | Annual | Annual | Seasonal weekly collection for household hazardous waste available and disposal coordinated through a contracted service with the Western Lake Superior Sanitary District. Lake SWCD Letter of Support to County Green Corps Application (focus on recycling). Lake County completed a recycling and hazardous waste survey and outreach in 2018 with a Green Corps Member. Upon completion of the survey, tabling, a presentation, and general outreach presented the results and additional education on proper waste disposal. A Lake County waste and recycling guide was created (2018). Lake County has ordered and will be receiving recycling "trailers" to be utilized for event waste. | <input type="radio"/> | Send Lake County waste and recycling guide, and/or additional education materials (i.e. an info magnet) to all landowners. Utilize Recycling Trailers at events to increase collection. Diversify outreach vectors to increase HHW collection. Increase outreach on plastic wastes and runoff to Lake Superior. |
| 2. Make recommendations for improvement to the Household Hazardous Waste program to the Solid Waste Officer. | Annual | Annual | A Lake County Waste Advisory Committee (LCWA) had its first meeting in August 2018 to make further recommendations and communicate among representatives, waste haulers, township supervisors, and citizens with the intention of increasing collection of, and more responsibility collecting, HHW. | <input type="radio"/> | Continue to provide proper disposal for hazardous waste. Advocate for recycling reimbursement funding to more accurately reflect a seasonal land occupier population. Increase incentives statewide for recycling and accurate SCORE reporting. |

Objective 3: Improve the Management and Maintenance of Subsurface Sewage Treatment Systems



Progress Rating: ☐ =not started/dropped ☐ =on-going progress ☒ =completed/target met


| Planned Actions or Activities | Proposed Timeframe | Actual Timeframe | Accomplishments to Date | Progress Rating | Next Steps |
|---|--------------------|-----------------------------|--|-----------------------|---|
| 1. Hand out "Septic Systems Owner's Guides" with each Subsurface Sewage Treatment System Permit. | Annual | Annual | Septic System Owner's Guides are handed out with each SSTS permit: 13 as of June 2018, 73 in 2017, and 51 permits in 2016. Most SSTS permits are new tanks or systems. | <input type="radio"/> | Continue to hand out owner's guides with permits. Update SSTS guide. |
| 2. Conduct Septic System Maintenance Classes | Every 3 years | 2 in 2018 and every 3 years | 1 workshop with 29 attendees conducted in Spring in partnership with UMN Extension, Lake County, Lake SWCD, and MDH (workshop also covered well contaminants). | <input type="radio"/> | 2 nd workshop scheduled for September 2018. Work closely with local contractors to train additional SSTS inspectors. |
| 3. Provide education on SSTS regulations – newspaper articles; copy of Lake County Property Owner's Resource Guide to all new property owners | Annual | Annual | February 2015 ordinance change: mandated septic inspections and system compliance at point of sale of a property or a land use permit. Lake County presented at the CP Health Fair about SSTS (Fall 2017). | <input type="radio"/> | Continue distributing information on SSTS. Explore an SSTS Loan program for financial assistance in partnership with the AgBMP program. |
| 4. Promote the adoption of sewage treatment system maintenance contracts on shared systems. | Annual | As-needed | The community of Finland is participating in a state program to survey septic systems with the intention of considering a shared system in the area. Lake County would require treatment of imminent threat or failure to treat groundwater findings to come out of the survey. Note: Larsmont SSTS Abatement Grant 2011 increased water quality and coordinated septic improvements for 4 properties. | <input type="radio"/> | Provide resources to community of Finland as needed. Distribute information about shared systems at workshops. |

Objective 4: Coordinate Local Government Efforts to Address Surface and Ground Water Pollution Problems

Progress Rating: ☐ =not started/dropped ☐ =on-going progress ☒ =completed/target met




| Planned Actions or Activities | Proposed Timeframe | Actual Timeframe | Accomplishments to Date | Progress Rating | Next Steps |
|--|--------------------|------------------------------|--|-----------------------|---|
| 1. Meet with Townships annually to review water quality issues. | Annual | Annual | Lake County Environmental Services is available upon request for township meeting presentations or technical assistance. Lake SWCD Board Supervisors attend Township meetings addressing water quality monthly in Fall Lake Township and as-needed in other Townships. Extensive Township presentations and input solicited during the LSN1W1P planning process. | <input type="radio"/> | Continue attendance at Township meetings. Outline a presentation schedule for Townships during LSN1W1P implementation. Solicit Township input during Rainy River Headwaters 1W1P creation and water plan updates. |
| 2. Develop a fund to assist local units of government and/or organizations with water quality projects related to water plan priorities. | Annual | Annual (and grant-dependent) | With a move toward comprehensive watershed planning, the Lake Superior North One Watershed, One Plan has brought in additional funding for water quality and water-related projects for the region. Lake SWCD has also received and continues to actively seek additional CWF, GLRI, SOGL, GLC, Coastal, BWSR and MPCA funding for water quality projects per water plan priorities. Lake SWCD has sent staff to a one-day grant training in 2018. | <input type="radio"/> | Continue actively seeking additional funding for water quality work. Increase staff capacity in grant writing. Submit FY2019 or 2020 CWF Grant and FY2019 Conservation Partners Legacy Grant. |

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| 3. Implement components of the Lake Superior Basin Plan and Rainy River Basin Plan that are approved locally. | As-needed basis | Annual | Lake SWCD conducts outreach and works closely with the MPCA on WRAPS implementation. Targeted outreach (workshops and promoting cost-shares) is also conducted for rain gardens, native plantings, and other filtration runoff management solutions as prioritized in Basin Plans. Lake SWCD expanded efforts through a 2017 Coastal Engagement Grant, including hosting a “Conservation Corner” radio program on KTHW, in addition to 5-7 minute monthly radio spots on WTIP. The program has served as a water quality education platform for the last few years (15 30-minute episodes per year 2016, 2017, 2018). The Lake Superior Basin Plan has been further supported through Sweep the Skunk (a cleanup effort) which hosted 25 volunteers in 2015, 5 in 2016, 35 in 2017, and 70 volunteers in 2018 with 1700lbs of trash collected in 2018. Lake SWCD facilitated a new “a ton of trash” program to mitigate surface pollution into Lake Superior with local youth in 2018 as continuation of the Sweep the Skunk Event. All projects and grant applications cite the LS and RR Basin Plans where appropriate. |  | Secure additional grant funding. Guide grant applications toward Basin Plans. |
| 4. Promote monitoring of the physical and biological health of county lakes and streams. | Annual | Every 2 weeks | Lake SWCD continues to coordinate the citizen lake monitoring program through a Civic Engagement Grant in the Rainy River Headwaters/Cloquet with MPCA (5 sites – Sand, Cedar, Browns, Fall, Fall in RRHW and 3 sites – Thomas, Pequaywan, White in Cloquet) and through a partnership with the White Iron Chain of Lakes Association (8 sites). Coordinating the civic engagement grant includes assisting the MPCA with WRAPS data collection processes in the RRHW (current). Lake SWCD also attends WICOLA board meetings monthly and has prepared lake profiles analyzing monitoring data and assisting in further sense of place development for watersheds. Canoe the Cloquet was organized in 2016 (13 attendees) to promote water quality awareness in the Cloquet Watershed, continued with 18 attendees in 2017 and 18 in 2018. With a 2015 SWAG grant, Lake SWCD coordinated water quality monitoring in 10 lakes of the Cloquet watershed and engaged volunteers. Presented findings in presentations, published articles in Lake County Chronicle, and social media posts. Entered all water sample data in EQIS. |  | Secure RRHW Civic Engagement Grant after current expiration December 2017; participate in/secure additional funding for Lake Superior South Civic Engagement through the MPCA 2019. Continue monitoring, and incorporate more water quality data, with AIS funds. Secure funding for near shore Lake Superior lake monitoring and expand monitoring efforts with Citizen Stream Monitoring Program. |

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| 5. Serve as the Project Sponsor and provide administrative support to the Kawishiwi Watershed Protection Project initiated by the White Iron Chain of Lakes Association. In 2010, the project received \$225,000 in Clean Water Legacy Funds (2005 Update). | Annual (through June 2013) | Annual (through June 2013) | Analyzed and compiled 10/2/2017. KWPP created files identifying Beneficial Use classifications of all lakes in the watershed, found 72/73 impaired waterbodies attributed to mercury contaminants in fish, and higher for the ecoregion Total Phosphorous and lower secchi water clarity. The project also mapped paleolimnological data (with Birch Lake changing the most rapidly), identified a high priority and personal responsibility for AIS management, and mapped 1,173 of 1,909 noncompliant septic systems. |  | Implement suggested actions (Land Use Actions 1-6, SSTS Actions 1-7, AIS Actions 1-5, Shoreland BMPS 1-6, Lake and Well Water Quality Monitoring Actions 1-5, and Education and Outreach Actions 1-3) and incorporate information into future RRHW 1W1P. |
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Objective 5: Implement a Natural Resources Education Program that instills a Stewardship Ethic

Progress Rating: ☐ =not started/dropped  =on-going progress ☒ =completed/target met

| Planned Actions or Activities | Proposed Timeframe | Actual Timeframe | Accomplishments to Date | Progress Rating | Next Steps |
|---|--------------------|------------------|---|---|---|
| 1. Conduct an annual NATURAL RESOURCES FIELD DAYS program for 6 th grade students. | Annual | Annual | Lake SWCD continues to coordinate - 25 th year ongoing with all 6 th grade students in the District, occurs at the end of May located at Split Rock Lighthouse with visits to each classroom prior to the field day. 2018 served 96 students, 95 students in 2017, and 92 students in 2016. |  | Continue coordinating Natural Resources Field Day. Incorporate more technology (app data collection, mapping) into lessons. |
| 2. Assist with hosting the annual Area III ENVIROTHON Competition for high school students. | Annual | Annual | 2018 was the third year with Lake SWCD as the primary organizer for the event. 2016 had 197 students in attendance, 10 teachers, and 30 volunteers. In 2017 5 teams competed, but numbers are less complete as a snow storm affected participation. 2018 saw 195 student participants (with more registrations and no-shows). |  | Continue involvement and promote participation from local youth/schools. NSLSWCD is now coordinating. |
| 3. Develop and staff a Water Plan display booth at the County Fair. | Annual | Annual | Water Plan and Lake SWCD booth continues to be presented at the Lake County Fair. |  | Continue hosting a booth at the County Fair. Incorporate more informative water plan information into booth. |

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| 4. Conduct secondary classroom presentations on Waste Water Treatment. | Annual | Annual | Lake SWCD delivered wastewater education classes successfully in 2009 after creation of unique curriculum addressing physical, chemical and biological methods of cleaning wastewater with a hands-on approach. All 7 th graders in Two Harbors were taught during four class periods April 27 th , 2009, all 7 th and 8 th graders in Two Harbors in four class periods April 30 th , 2009. Resulting in part from this work, the LSSD's river watch program was started and Lake SWCD partnerships with lake associations increased. Lake SWCD also conduct additional in-classroom presentations annually through the Natural Resources Field Day (all 6 th graders in the County), conducted a STEM workshop for youth focused on AIS with 15 girls 5-8 th grade in 2016, and 3 classroom presentations focusing on AIS with youth for 4 th graders (35), 6 th graders (15) and 10 th graders (30 in 2017. UMN 4-H and Lake SWCD started a 6-week summer program focusing on water quality and AIS early detection for youth ages 6-9 th grade in 2017 (7 participants 2017, 6 in 2018). | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Share bacteria source assessment findings. Increase classroom presentations and outreach to teachers. Provide kits for teachers to teach their own lessons. |
| 5. Distribute "Lake County Property Owner's Resource Guide" and revise as needed. | Annual | Annual | Still serves as an important reference for property owners many years later and is still distributed at all booths/outreach events, presentations, and through the office. Lake SWCD secured a new office space in 2017 which is open to the public and has prompted an average increase of 3 people per month as "walk-ins" who can pick up additional information (including the Guide). | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Comprehensive update and revisions planned. Continue distributing. |




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| 6. Assist with the Lake County Demonstration Forest Project (broad-based natural resources emphasis) that includes classroom field visits, adult education tours, equipment management demonstrations, site development, site maintenance, and the development of educational materials. | Annual | Annual | Lake County has assisted in the Lake County Demonstration Forest Project, but has expanded forestry cost-share projects, outreach, and workshops through with the North Shore Forest Collaborative, the Natural Resource Conservation Service, and Clean Water Fund forestry grants. Lake SWCD also hired a District Forester. Forestry work has expanded to additional cooperation with NRCS and invasive species outreach and monitoring, including coordinating a Cooperative Weed Management Area for Lake County. 2 forestry workshops in 2017 and 1 as of July 2018 were hosted by Lake SWCD with local partners (MNDNR, Forest Service, North Shore Collaborative, NRCS, South St. Louis and North St. Louis SWCDs). | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Map Lake County Demonstration Forest Project and integrate on upcoming Lake SWCD website update. |
| 7. Partner with Sea Grant Extensions on Non-Point Pollution Education for Municipal Officials (NEMO) and "View from the Lake" Boat Tours | Annual | Annual | Partnership with Sea Grant and municipal officials have extended into work on storm water outreach and BMPs. Sea Grant partnership has extended to work with AIS as well (Annual booth staffing or hosting at Heritage Days, Bay Days, Harvest Moon Festival, Blueberry Fest, Duluth Boat Show, Duluth Home Show, and teaching at River Quest). Lake SWCD also coordinates an AIS Citizen Science Sentry Program with regular aquatic plant and lake monitoring workshops (45 attendees 2017 and 10 2018). Lake SWCD hosted several additional workshops and presentations related to non-point pollution, storm water, and water quality in the last few years: Rain garden workshop Spring 2018 with 25 attendees; "Lawn to Lake" storm water management workshop with 10 attendees in Fall 2016; September 2016 water quality workshop on White Iron Lake – 13 attendees; Shoreland planting workshop at Delaney Site May 2017 – 10 attendees; July 2018 Pequaywan Lake Association presentation – 22 attendees. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Invasive species workshop planned September 2018. Rain barrel building workshop planned Fall 2018. Sweep the Skunk recently expanded and will continued to grow into broader cleanup effort for the County. Create story map of Sweep the Skunk trash collected and education work around the County to integrate into Lake SWCD website update. |

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| 8. Participate as a member of the Arrowhead Water Quality Team to develop joint water quality education programs. | Annual | n/a | Arrowhead Water Quality Team no longer exists. Lake Superior North 1W1P has brought many partners together and prompted additional cooperation on projects including: a coastal erosion hazard map, storm water education and BMPs, SSTS, and culvert replacements. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Establish and participate in a cold water collaborative. Begin a Baptism River Lake Association. Continue shared services agreement with Wolf Ridge ELC to develop Lake Superior curriculum/programming. |
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Objective 6: Administer the Lake County Local Water Management Plan in an Efficient and Cost-Effective Manner

Progress Rating: ☐ =not started/dropped ☐ =on-going progress ☒ =completed/target met

| Planned Actions or Activities | Proposed Timeframe | Actual Timeframe | Accomplishments to Date | Progress Rating | Next Steps |
|---|--------------------|-------------------|---|-------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Prepare Annual Report of Accomplishments. | Annual – 2005-2015 | Annually mostly | Conducted annually until 2015. Additional updates and information shared with the public through township meeting and City Council presentations, tabling at Ely Blueberry Festival (2013-18) and the Lake County Fair. Updates have since been incorporated into 1W1P updates and reporting. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 2018 Annual Water Plan update already drafted to be available at Planning & Zoning Office starting after completion of PRAP. Short updates presented to the public via social media. |
| 2. Conduct Water Plan Advisory Committee Meetings. | Annual | Annual (and more) | Water Plan advisory committee has met at least annually throughout the length of the plan (11/28/2012, 10/23/2013, 12/12/2017). Public meetings and topic-oriented meetings held for updates, input, and creation of the 2014 PCSD also conducted at least bi-annually, which included water plan advisory committee members (7/15/2013, 11/18/2013, 1/13/2014, 2/12/2014, 4/2/2014, 2/28/2014, 7/9/2014, 9/17/2014, 11/18/2015; LSN1W1P focused advisory committee meetings: 10/14/2014, 12/12/2014, 1/30/2015, 2/13/2015, 3/6/2015, 3/20/2015, 4/17/2015, 5/15/2015, 6/12/2015, 7/10/2015). | <input type="radio"/> | Continue meeting regularly and currently revising members of advisory committee given recent staff/personnel changes and for greater representation in the Rainy River Headwaters |
| 3. Prepare Natural Resources Block Grant Application – Lake County on eLink | Annual | Annual | NRBG grants applied for and received each year. County and SWCD work closely to accomplish grant application. | <input type="radio"/> | Continue applying for NRBG. |

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| 4. Report Accomplishments on eLink. | Annual | Annual | Accomplishments reported annually. |  | Continue reporting accomplishments. |
| 5. Provide Updates to the Lake County Board/Lake County SWCD Board. | Annual | Annual | 2 presentations per year to Lake SWCD Board and 1 per year to Lake County Board of Commissioners. Lake SWCD Board also has a water plan committee (2 representatives) which sit on the water plan advisory committee. Initial 1W1P presentation was made to County board 1/14/2014. Most recent presentation was made to the Lake County Board 2/8/2018 and the Lake SWCD Board 6/12/2018. |  | Continue providing updates to the Lake County and Lake SWCD Boards. |
| 6. Maintain Financial Records / Prepare Annual Budgets. | Annual | Annual | Accomplishments budgeted and reported annually. Recently updated timesheet to reflect language in eLink to more accurately track expenditures. |  | Incorporate 1W1P into annual budgeting and records. Hire District Clerk position to overlap with current financial manager for continued institutional knowledge. |

Appendix A-2. Lake Superior North Watershed Plan Accomplishments






Targeted Implementation Schedule

(Note: To facilitate implementation, the order of the Implementation Activities have been grouped together to highlight connections and have been presented in chronological order. Reported actions include only targeted implementation actions of LSN1W1P, not secondary implementation actions).
(Note: This report is for Lake County and does not incorporate all relevant Cook County 1W1P accomplishments).









Progress Rating: ☐ =not started ☐ =on-going progress ☒ =completed/target met





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| Forestry |
| TIS |
| AIS |
| GIS |
| Outreach |
| Engineering |
| Water Plan Coordination |
| Stormwater |
| Wetlands |
| SSTS & Wells |
| Streams |
| Aggregate Materials |




| ID * | Implementation Activities | Proposed Timeline | Actual Timeline | Accomplishments to Date | Activity Outcome Measurability | Progress Rating | Next Steps |
|--------|---|-------------------|-----------------|--|--|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| AM 1.1 | Prior to issuing a permit for the extraction of aggregate materials, evaluate impacts to natural resources and conservation of unique/significant features. Permits issued should identify an extraction operation sunset date, and require that a restoration plan be prepared, implemented to the specifications in the restoration plan, and inspected to attain proper closure status. Permits issued will require the appropriate SPCC, SWPP, WCA and USACE 404, MPCA 401 and MN DNR Protected Waters Permits as applicable to the site. | As needed | As needed & n/a | No permits or applications submitted to date | Develop best management practices documents for areas of extraction of aggregate material. | <input type="checkbox"/> | Apply implementation goal. |

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| CC 1.1 | Integrate climate change scenarios and vulnerability assessments into land use plans and resource management plans, including but not limited to: economic development plans, nutrient management plans, municipal official plans, fisheries management plans, wildlife management plans, forest management plans, and Species at Risk Recovery plans. | 2021, 2022, 2023 | Begun in 2018 | First meeting for Coastal Erosion Hazard Map (CEHM) task force July 2018. Key partners identified. Developing a CEHM as part of implementation round 1 for LSN1W1P (\$45,000 budgeted). CEHM Project will identify data gaps, then create a database and map to guide decision making for infrastructure and development, decrease infrastructure vulnerability, and identify proposed coastal projects. The project will also include reaching out to landowners and realtors. | More resilient infrastructure and regional ecological areas in the face of climate change; decrease of infrastructure vulnerability |  | Creation of CEHM. Ongoing. |
| CC 1.2 | Consider and implement climate change adaptation strategies on all stormwater management projects implemented by or on behalf of Cook County and Lake County, including establishing additional staff and resources to accomplish this work. | Beginning 2019 | Begun in 2018 | Implementing climate change scenarios into Grand Marais Stormwater Plan and engineering BMP designs. Incorporating Lake Superior High Water Level and increased precipitation estimates into grant applications for culvert replacements or other projects. Seeking additional funding for coastal erosion technical assistance for landowners. | SW ordinance changes; adaption to projects to accommodate climate change. |  | Ongoing. Climate Change incorporation into future SW plans for Two Harbors and Silver Bay. |
| DC 1.1 | Partner with agencies and organizations to support and expand the development of standardized invasive species monitoring, assessment, control and outreach activities. | Annual | Annual + | GIS map of infestations in southern LSNW completed with MN Conservation Corps-Lake County Crew Fall 2017. Lake SWCD hired a Terrestrial Invasive Species Coordinator in August of 2017. Data mapping is continually updated. Treatment currently occurring and ongoing 2018. Partnerships established with Northwoods Volunteer Connection for treatment. Infestation locations incorporated into recently completed GIS prioritization model for further conservation planning. | More accurate and accessible invasive species monitoring, assessment, and control; 1 outreach activity annually; increase monitoring or assessment by 25% within the life of the plan. |  | Continue monitoring infestations. Make make of infestations accessible and updated online. |
| DC 2.1 | Secure funding to support water quality monitoring of lakes and streams. | Annual | Annual + | Civic Engagement funding from MPCA for Lake Superior North (Cook SWCD). All data uploaded to EQIS | Data sets of water quality. |  | Secure funding long-term/ongoing. |
| DC 2.2 | Continue to support and secure financial assistance for training SWCD staff and additional citizen groups in volunteer monitoring program and expand program to monitoring for additional, parameters, such as phosphorus and nitrogen. | Annual | Annual + | Lake County AIS incorporating water monitoring of calcium and other parameters into monitoring efforts - initial 2018 and continuing 2019. WICOLA | Data sets of water quality; support of efforts for local citizen groups for water monitoring; increase |  | Increase volunteers. Incorporate more data. Ongoing. |

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| | | | | continues to incorporate broader water quality parameters in their intensive CLMP monitoring efforts (e.g. year 10 of metals testing). Increased by estimate of 4 volunteers 2017/2018. | volunteers by 50 within life of the plan | | |
| DC 4.1 | Complete a culvert inventory in the Lake Superior North Watershed. | 2017, 2018, 2019 | 2017, 2018 | Lake SWCD complete. Currently updating with DNR data and prioritizing collected data for replacement projects. Cook SWCD drafting grant for inventory FY2019. | 100% of county, state, USFS, and federal roads inventoried for culverts; Completed inventory of culverts in LSNW; inventory to be shared with other agencies; provide information for development, stream and ditch connectivity; fulfillment of known data gap | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Secure funding for Cook County culvert inventory and complete inventory. |
| DC 5.1 | Work with landowners and agencies to conduct and compile the assessment data of existing conditions in priority subwatersheds, including land most sensitive to runoff, riparian forest conditions, presence and locations of wetlands in headwaters areas, and locations of contributing sediments and pollutant load. | Annual | Annual + | GIS update of Lake SWCD computers 2018 incorporated more holistic data sets. Completion of parcel-level prioritization GIS model (June 2018) aiding identification of priority areas based on land use change from CCAP data for Arrowhead Region (see LSNW Planning Grant Attachment: ACIST Tool). | Compilation of more holistic data set to better support location and types of BMPS prescribed for an area | <input type="checkbox"/> | Targeted outreach to landowners to better track locations or information. Continued updating of GIS data. |
| DW 1.1 | Develop a GIS database of wellhead protection areas, surface water drinking areas, and groundwater protection areas within the LSNW. | 2022, 2023 | n/a | Not yet begun | Increased knowledge and information accessibility on ground and surface water resources; GIS database completed; 100% of private land drinking water resources identified; fulfillment of known data gap | <input type="checkbox"/> | Apply implementation goal (2022) |
| DW 1.2 | Use this database to assist with considering wellhead protection areas, surface water drinking areas, and groundwater protection during the County permitting process when making land use decisions. | Annual | Ongoing | Well testing kits now available at offices of Silver Bay and Lake SWCD (Two Harbors). Outreach to landowners and cold-call information ongoing throughout the watershed. Groundwater data incorporated into land use decisions where available. Well information incorporated into Septic Workshops in Lake County 2018. | Increased protection for ground and surface water resources; 100% of permits have water resource protection consideration | <input type="checkbox"/> | Begin and complete inventory. Greater information for incorporating ground water information into permitting decisions. |



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| DW 3.1 | Conduct an unused, unsealed well inventory and implement well water monitoring program to supplement efforts that seal abandoned wells. | 2018, 2019 | Begun in 2018 | Lake SWCD staff pursuing well-sealing JAA. | Counties reduce abandoned wells; well monitoring program established; inventory completed; 100% of wells identified, 25% of abandoned wells converted to monitoring wells, 75% abandoned wells sealed; fulfillment of data gap |  | Identify wells and provide resources for well sealing. Seek additional funding for well inventory. |
| DW 3.2 | Develop and maintain a cost share program to financially assist property owners in sealing unused, unsealed wells on their property, including the public water suppliers in the watershed. | 2019 ongoing | n/a | Not yet begun | Enhanced groundwater protection. |  | Apply implementation goal (2019) |
| EO 1.1 | Annually lead one community conversation on stormwater management BMPs. | Annual | Annual + | 3 stormwater public engagement sessions facilitated for input (as well as online maps available for review and a survey) in creation of the Grand Marais Stormwater Management Plan 2017. Rain Garden Workshop in Silver Bay had 25 attendees in May 2018. | 10 conversations/county/year for life of plan; reach 200 watershed constituents |  | Continue engagement with landowners, especially with .kmz file of stormwater drainage in Grand Marais. Work with Lake County Waste Advisory Committee to facilitate education about rain runoff management. |
| EO 1.2 | Work with MPCA to develop a contract for continued civic engagement work in LSS watershed and LSNW for 2016 and beyond. | Annual | Annual/Grant dependent | Currently pursuing LSS grant. | Continuation of successful civic engagement activities and opportunities within the watershed. |  | |
| EO 1.3 | Encourage community members to participate in conservation projects by attending public meetings and events, coordinating community activities around conservation projects including water quality and AIS monitoring, establishing community leadership roles within priority subwatersheds, and establishing communication tools to allow both agencies and citizens to participate in watershed conservation issues. | Annual | Annual/dependent on available meetings and people | LSN1W1P planning grant helped facilitate new connections and watershed leaders. Currently maintaining momentum through facilitation of Stormwater and Forestry meetings for the watershed in Fall 2017 (average 20 attendees at each meeting). | Increased public participation in natural resource-related programs and activities; interact and reach 500 people within the watershed |  | Annual LSNW project presentation/public meeting tentatively scheduled for December. Develop a "Superior Way" outreach campaign to facilitate communication about programs and activities. |
| EO 1.4 | Establish a regular meeting schedule, for the lifespan of the Plan, of a working group comprised of members of the LSNW Policy and Advisory Committees, joined by County and SWCD staff, to track progress on the Plan, make modifications, discuss and identify alternative sources of funding for both staff and project resources, and assess effectiveness towards Plan implementation. | Annual | 2X Annual | Policy Committee met to approve the Implementation Plan in February 2018. Policy Committee members met in July 2018 for initiation of the CEHM Project. | Continuation of the positive communication and working channels established through the 1W1P process; scheduled opportunity for review, revisions, and amendments; one annual meeting a year |  | Develop annual progress report for 2018. Policy Committee continue meeting. |
| EO 1.5 | Review strategies in LSN/LSS WRAPS documents when they are completed, and use local knowledge and expertise to prioritize recommendations & identify specific targeted projects. Identify specific, targeted projects and project implementers. | 2019/2020 | n/a | Participated in most recent MPCA update meeting about LSN WRAPS. Provided input on GLRI Action Plan #3. Provided input on Lake Superior Streams TMDL. | Better targeted actions and BMPs brought forth in the WRAPS process; meeting to ensure the coordination of WRAPS into the plan |  | Apply implementation goal (2019) |
| EO 1.6 | Meeting with the County Boards, County Departments (Administration, Attorneys, Planning and Zoning, etc.), and City Councils to express the importance and potential benefits of Plan implementation and providing an annual update on Plan progress (City of Duluth good case study). | | | Presentations to Grand Marais, Silver Bay, and Two Harbors City Councils Spring 2018 for a LSN1W1P update with a focus on stormwater. Met multiple times with Planning and Zoning and | Education and momentum building activities for positive action in the watershed; one annual meeting with the above mentioned to continue |  | Ongoing. Schedule annual meetings for 2019. |







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| | | | | County Commissioners about plan updates in 2017 and 2018. | building communication and capacity | | |
| EO 1.7 | Assist watershed residents and landowners in development of Watershed Advocacy groups with a focus on developing these groups within Tier One priority watersheds where they are not already established. | Annual | Annual | Initial conversations with area landowners for establishment of a new lake association (Beaver River Watershed) and Baptism River Association/Advocacy Group. | Increase citizen group presence and activity advocating for responsible water management; establish 2 watershed advocacy groups in areas they are not already established |  | Continue conversations and momentum for Baptism and Beaver River Groups. |
| EO 2.1 | Secure funding to and provide educational opportunities on conservation BMPs design and implementation including road maintenance, ditching, development impacts, source and/or groundwater protection, wetlands, etc. to a minimum of one relevant audience per year within LSNW. Relevant audiences may include but are not limited to landowners, LGU staff, Planning and Zoning Boards, real estate, and contractors. | Annual | Annual | Finishing implementation of the Cook SWCD CWF-Community Partners Shoreland Grant. Seeking funding for additional shoreland plantings Lake SWCD. Provided and had phone conversations with 2 realtors about coastal erosion and FEMA flood mapping of Lake Superior. | Increased educational opportunities to a minimum of one relevant audience per year whose activities have potential to impact water quality |  | Ongoing |
| EO 4.1 | Build understanding of the connections between invasive species management and Lake Superior Watershed basin health; work with and engage private landowners to educate, manage invasive species sites, develop local sources of native plants, and restore native vegetation and ecological function (Draft Strategy from Lake Superior Lakewide Action and Management Plan, 2013). | | | Managed 5 Spruce Budworm Sites through a Timber Stand Improvement Grant in the Skunk and Knife River Watersheds in 2017. Managing 4 purple loosestrife sites annually through Lake County AIS. Treating an average of 4 sites per year through volunteer pulling with the Northwoods Volunteer Connection and the tool shed at Sugarloaf Cove. Treated Garlic Mustard and Knotweed infestations in Two Harbors 2017-18. | Better regional understanding of the impacts of invasive species and what citizens can do to help with the effort; manage 3 invasive species sites; local source of native vegetation; distribute 5 outreach products |  | Ongoing |
| EO 4.2 | Using monitoring and assessment data, conduct outreach activities by hosting or coordinating one invasive species workshop per year, per county, in identified target areas (Source: Lake County SWCD 2015 Annual Plan of Work, modified). | | | Terrestrial invasive species workshop schedule for September 2018. 1 presentation given to the Knife River Watershed Advocates January 2018. | 10 workshops/county/life of the LSNW Management Plan; reach 100 constituents about invasive species |  | Ongoing |






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| EO 4.3 | Educate people about best management practices to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species using Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers, Habitattitude and other available materials from partnering organizations and agencies, including DNR, MN Sea Grant, and others. | Annual | Annual + | Lake and Cook County AIS Coordinators facilitate. Lake created and hired a new position in 2017. Coordinated annual outreach (2017-2018) at St. Urho's and Heritage Days Parade; Booths at Heritage Days, Bay Days, Blueberry Festival, Harvest Moon Festival, and Fisherman's Picnic (over 1500 constituents reached at Blueberry Festival alone in 2018); education through 6 in-classroom presentations; 3-6 annual aquatic plant identification workshops; 1 statewide volunteer event "Starry Trek"; staffing at River Quest, Duluth Boat Show, Duluth Home Show, and other regional conferences and events; radio spots on WTIP, KTWB, and WELY; coordination of a summer 4-H club for youth "Water Watchers," and over \$80,000 annually in printed outreach materials and advertisements given away for free to interested parties. | Better regional understanding of the impacts of invasive species and what citizens can do to help with the effort; Complete 1 workshop annually; reach 300 constituents |  | Continue outreach. CBSM marketing initiative - incorporate DNR-derived data into outreach. Further development of curriculum for trail guides. Terrestrial invasive species workshop scheduled for September 2018. |
| IS 1.1 | Provide educational information at harbors and marinas along the near shore Lake Superior area, evaluate options for improving boat launch sites to incorporate BMPs and site upgrades to prevent the spread of AIS. | Annual | Annual + | Pursuing CD3 station install BMP to prevent further infestations at launch sites. Staffing watercraft inspectors at accesses in the Lake Superior Watershed - focus on Agate and Silver Bay, as well as Gunflint Lakes, Lake/Cook border lakes, and Stewart & Greenwood in the Lake Superior Basin. Cook has 5 seasonal watercraft inspection staff and Lake has 4.5. Also conducted monitoring at accesses for early detection of invasive species through volunteer monitors and staffed technicians. Compliance with inspections currently averaging 97%. | Better regional understanding of the impacts of invasive species and what citizens can do to help with the effort; completed 2 informational outreach products annually and distributed; consistence presence at 9 marinas and harbors; reduce number of violations by 50% |  | Continue inspections. Map data. In-depth interviews of constituents to determine effectiveness. |
| IW 1.1 | Continue work with MDH in monitoring beaches along Lake Superior for E. coli, including evaluating sources of contamination. | Annual | Annual + | Ongoing work with MDH. Secured 2018 Coastal Program Grant for Bacteria Source Tracking: E.coli in Skunk Creek (Lake SWCD). Hired additional technician to conduct and report on monitoring. | E. coli and WQ data from beaches on Lake Superior targeted for monitoring incl. likely sources and mitigation of at least 1 source. |  | Ongoing. Summarize E.coli and source tracking findings for Skunk Creek. |

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| | | | | Distributed dog waste diversion stations in Skunk Creek Watershed and created unique stormwater outreach materials for Lake Superior Watershed. | | | |
| SC 1.1 | Conduct one stream network inventory every two years within the subwatersheds included in Tiers 1, 2, and 3 of LSNW Management Plan to identify and prioritize contributing sediment sources and map barriers to stream connectivity. | Every 2 years | Every 2 years | Stream network inventories mostly completed for the Flute Reed, Poplar, Knife, and Stewart Rivers by MPCA. | 5 stream network inventories; identification of barriers, sediment sources, and nutrient loading assisting in identification of future projects; fulfillment of known data gap | ○ | Ongoing. Conduct additional inventories 2020. Seek funding to address barriers. |
| SC 1.2 | Based on the stream network inventory results, initiate implementation of projects that remove anthropogenic barriers, with the goal of removing ten barriers within ten years. | Biannual (each County every other year) | Lake County 2018 - on time | Currently seeking funding and partners for a cold water collaborative and NOAA aquatic organism passage grant to replace key culverts in the watershed (Lake/Cook SWCDs partnership). | Restore fish and benthic macro invertebrate habitat; complete 10 barrier removal projects within LSNW including dam and culvert improvements | ○ | Secure funding for projects |
| SC 1.3 | Collaborate with stakeholders to define riparian management zones (RMZ) and enforce regulations on soil disturbance and tree harvesting that are specific to the RMZ. | 2020, 2021 | n/a | Not yet begun | Increased riparian area protection; standardized definition of RMZ across the watershed | □ | Apply implementation goal (2020) |
| SM 1.1 | Develop one stormwater management plan in urban nodes of each county, one per county every five years. Stormwater management plan development activities will include completing steps of stormwater infrastructure inventory, hydrologic analysis, BMP-recommendation development, and development of stormwater and erosion and sediment control standards for municipal ordinance and policy inclusion, using MN Stormwater Manual as a guide as part of this assessment. | Variable - Lake 2017, Lake and Cook '18 and '19, Cook 2020. | Cook 2017 and 2018 | Grand Marais stormwater plan completed June 2018, not yet adopted, with recommendations, BMPs, and mapping of stormwater management problems. | Development and adoption of 2 stormwater management plans; collaboration between municipalities, counties, LGU's; identification of existing and future stormwater issues, non-point and point source pollutant loads, recommendations for the adoption of stormwater management, erosion and sediment control and lake, stream and wetland buffer standards designed to address resource-specific needs and the identification of and prioritization of BMPs needed to meet the goals of the SWMP. | ○ | Secure bids and additional funding for Silver Bay and Two Harbors Stormwater Management Plans. |
| SM 1.2 | Review local ordinances, permitted and conditional uses, subdivisions, storm water issues, and shoreland issues and provide best management recommendations for the protection of surface water and groundwater resources, including utilizing the most recent precipitation projections for engineered project design, to integrate within municipal and local government policy | Cook 2017, Lake and Cook 2018, Lake 2019 | Cook 2017 and 2018 | Will be further outlined with stormwater management plans. Scheduling meeting for Council members and public works staff for 2019 on MIDS/LIDS standards | Change in local ordinances to be better coordinated to address consistency across the watershed to reduce nutrient and sediment loading from point and non- | ○ | Ongoing. Review local ordinances. |

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| | and ordinance documents. Promote MIDS and LIDS standards within these ordinances. | | | per surveying interest and request. | point sources, stormwater bmps, and land use practices. | | |
| SM 2.1 | Address existing erosion problems by conducting targeted erosion control projects using current natural resource engineering methodologies in order to reduce sedimentation and nutrient loading into surface waters and wetlands. | Every other year | Annual | In Cook County, targeted erosion control are finishing on the Poplar River. Lake SWCD completed 3 stormwater reduction BMP designs for the Skunk Creek Watershed in 2018. | 5 bank stabilization projects completed; reduction in sediment and nutrient loading within identified sub watersheds; Poplar River sediment reduction of 165 tons/year with work on critical stream repairs, ravines/flow paths/streambank stabilization; Knife River work on major areas is estimated to reduce sedimentation by approx. 900 tons/year | ○ | Monitor effectiveness of sediment reduction projects. Seek additional funding for bank stabilization projects. |
| SM 2.2 | Complete the most effective stormwater water quality improvement projects that will be identified and prioritized in each of the stormwater management plans created by municipalities. | starting 2019, then every 2-3 years | | Implementation of stormwater management practices was identified as a priority in the first biennium of funding for the LSN1W1P (\$307,059), guided by the Grand Marais Stormwater Management Plan. Some practices will be in conjunction with Highway 61 corridor reconstruction and in collaboration with Minnesota Department of Transportation. The practices may involve but are not limited to fixing inlet bypasses, engineering of new stormwater systems, changing water pathways through stormwater pipes, and installing bio retention practices. Reduction of water in downtown City of Grand Marais will result in improved water quality and output reduction to Lake Superior. Floodwater reduction (water quantity) will total 0.5in for each 2-year, 24-hour rainfall event and reduce standing water in flood events, potentially decreasing total suspended solids in the system by 6%. An | 5 completed projects to reduce nutrient loading by stormwater; collaboration to complete BMPs to treat pollutants from transportation infrastructure, maintenance areas, refueling areas, storage yards, sand and salt storage areas, and waste transfer stations. | ○ | Ongoing |

| | | | | | | | |
|--------|---|-------------------------------------|-----------------|---|---|---|--|
| | | | | assessment of Nature Boy Creek/Village Ditch will be completed for the purpose of reconnecting the channel to the floodplain, stabilizing banks, and reducing sediment loading into Lake Superior. At minimum this project will result in an estimated 13,750 lbs. total suspended solids reduction per year to Lake Superior (approximately 6.7 tons) via sedimentation in the expanded floodplain. It is estimated that the project will reduce phosphorus loads by 82 lbs. per year from the drainage area to the improved reach along the Creek/Ditch. In addition, there would be a TSS/TP load reduction as a result of peak flow reduction in the lower portion of the system which could be substantial (potentially an order of magnitude higher than what we are reporting for the project itself.) | | | |
| SM 2.3 | Inventory, maintain, and re-vegetate ditches with native species with the goal of transitioning 10% of inventoried ditches in each county to native vegetation by 2025. | Annual starting in 2018 | Started in 2018 | Secured materials and seeds for native plant propagation per LCCMR (partnered) grant. 2 meetings with County Highway Department in 2018 about native species in ditches and invasive species management; mowing schedule. | Increase in native species diversity, decrease in ditch maintenance costs, increased resiliency to erosion in ditch systems; 10% of inventoried ditches revegetated to native plant species; fulfillment of known data gap |  | Propagate plants. Educate County Highway Department on seed mixes. |
| SM 3.1 | Update County and SWCD culvert standards (MESBOAC) to those that accommodate fish passage and increased frequency and magnitude of storm events. | 19, '20 Lake, Cook in 2021 and 2022 | 2018 | Lake and Cook County Highway Departments incorporate MESBOAC Standards and ATLAS 14 rainfall measurements in designs. | Counties/Highway Depts. update culvert standards to accommodate ATLAS 14 rainfall measurements and insure infrastructure standards can accommodate them; upgrade and replace existing infrastructure identified as compromised or causing water quality issues to handle more frequent and intense precipitation events; using information, prior to culvert design, perform stream and |  | Ongoing. Track and continue to incorporate MESBOAC standards in designs. Update hydrology records for municipality and county use. |

| | | | | | | | |
|----------|---|-------------------------------|---------------|---|--|---|---|
| | | | | | site data collection in addition to hydrologic and hydraulic calculations to ensure water; sediment, and aquatic organism passage | | |
| SM 4.1 | Utilize culvert inventory results to update one problematic culvert per year in priority subwatersheds in terms of stream connectivity, aquatic organism passage, and erosion. | 2020, 2021 | Begun in 2018 | 2 projects (Encampment, Highway 3) begun by Lake County Highway Department in 2018. | Increase stream connectivity; reduce stream erosion; better road crossings that require less maintenance |  | Ongoing. Secure additional funding. |
| SSTS 1.1 | Coordinate with Cook and Lake County to develop a GIS based-SSTS database. | 2020 | Begun in 2018 | Mostly complete for Cook County. Project outline completed for Lake County in preparation for biannual funding request. Initial SSTS locations mapped for some watersheds Lake SWCD office. | Completed SSTS inventory of existing systems; 100% of parcels of SSTS identified; database used to track system locations both compliant and non-compliant systems; fulfillment of known data gap |  | Secure additional funding. Hire intern to complete digitization of files. |
| SSTS 1.2 | Based on the database information, prioritize developed lakes and riparian areas in order to identify imminent public health threats and failing systems, with efforts targeted to areas of highest septic densities. | 2021 | n/a | Not yet begun - needs database. Project outline did include a prioritization of key watersheds requiring SSTS inventories. | County has prioritized areas for SSTS focused work in areas reflecting the most need. |  | Apply implementation goal (2021) |
| SSTS 1.3 | Complete SSTS inspections in shoreland areas that demonstrate increased development and/or declining water quality trends to identify non-compliant systems by 2025. | 2021, '22, '23 | n/a | Not yet begun - continue SSTS permits and inventories per request and ordinance | County complete SSTS inspections identified in priority areas; identify 100% of non-compliant systems in prioritized areas; reduction in nutrient loading in water bodies; reduction of pathogens in surface water used for drinking water consumption; additional staff will need to be hired due to workload during and following inspections. |  | Apply implementation goal (2021) |
| SSTS 2.1 | Implement a financial assistance program for SSTS upgrades across the watershed, with the goal of upgrading 10 SSTS systems a year. | Cook '17 and '18, then annual | Annual | Cook County already implements SSTS loan program. Lake has had initial conversations about financial assistance options for landowners with Environmental Services and SWCD staff. | Counties implementing financial assistance program; 100 SSTS systems updated across LSNW over 10 years; bring 10% of systems into compliance watershed-wide each year; reduce nutrient loading |  | Ongoing |
| SSTS 2.2 | Procure funding to provide additional staffing for increased workloads to implement SSTS ordinance and system inspections. | 2022, '23, '24 | n/a | Not yet begun | Counties provided with additional staffing to assist with additional workload during and following up inspections. |  | Apply implementation goal (2022) |

| | | | | | | | |
|--------|--|----------------------------|----------------------|--|--|---|----------------------------------|
| TH 1.1 | Apply technical, educational and financial assistance to install forestry best management practices that limit or correct nonpoint source pollution or improve forested land within the LSNW, promoting the development of forest management plans for private and public landowners, whose stock is not publicly traded, who own forest lands between 1 and 1,000 acres. | Annual | Annual | 31 Forest Management Plans completed in 2017 and 14 implemented. Work with NRCS and forest management planning continues. Lake and Cook SWCD training additional staff on forestry plan writing. | Decreased pollution and increased implementation of forestry BMPs; transition 2% of private open land into forested land within priority sub watersheds |  | Ongoing |
| TH 1.2 | Assist NRCS staff with identifying, planning, and executing small-scale forestry management activities in the LSNW, and securing resources to make this possible, including hiring staff. | starting 2018, then annual | Started 2017, Annual | 19 EQIP Contracts pending 2018. Ongoing | Increased forestry management and BMP activities within the watershed. Better leveraging of federal forestry BMP implementation resources; 5 plans reviewed and landowners assisted. |  | Ongoing |
| TH 2.1 | Restore or protect 2 miles riparian and/or shoreline forest conditions in the next 10 years within priority subwatersheds on private lands and assist with facilitation of these activities on public land, utilizing pertinent existing data (thermal cover, flow accumulation, areas more susceptible to erosion) to target implementation areas to reduce riparian and shoreline erosion and surface runoff entering these systems. | starting 2021, then annual | n/a | Not yet begun - work is prioritized along riparian areas but not specifically tracked or prioritized. CWF 2017 Grant (\$114,000) focused Timber Stand Improvement in riparian areas. | Increased riparian stability and ecological connectivity in priority watersheds; using work previously completed protect or restore 2 miles of shoreline. |  | Apply implementation goal (2021) |
| TH 2.2 | Facilitate the planting of 20 acres of conifers and other species in decline within priority subwatershed within the LSNW in areas of declining birch to create a diverse mix of age, species and densities. | starting 2021, then annual | | 1 of conifers planted 2018 in the Knife River (Lake SWCD). Cleveland Cliffs Grant Fall 2018 application drafted for additional 2+ acres of conifer planting. Securing additional relationships with Castle Danger White Pine Project and Hedstroms. Ongoing. | 20 acres of trees planted within the priority areas; increase in diversity of trees within watershed |  | Ongoing |
| TH 3.1 | Hold two annual private forestry workshops (one in each County) for landowners, with targeted outreach in priority spatial areas. | Annual | | 2 workshops in 2017 and 1 in 2018 for local partners (NRCS, Forest Service, DNR, North Shore Forest Collaborative and Sugarloaf Cove, South St Louis, North St. Louis, 2 area contractors) | 20 workshops over the lifespan of the plan; increase resources provided to landowners; connecting to 100 private landowners |  | Ongoing |
| WM 1.1 | Support and pursue financial assistance for a watershed-wide wetland inventory of private land. Coordinate with the NWI update. | starting 2021, then annual | n/a | Not yet begun | complete accurate wetland inventory of private lands; better information available to inform WAC decisions |  | Apply implementation goal (2021) |
| WM 1.2 | Initiate collaborative efforts among regional jurisdictions of local communities to promote a watershed-wide Resource Management Plan to ensure wetland functions are not lost in the LSNW. | starting 2019, then annual | n/a | Not yet begun | Within 10 years have a wetland management resource plan to coordinate wetland jurisdiction within the watershed. |  | Apply implementation goal (2019) |

Appendix B. Performance Standards

| COUNTY LOCAL WATER MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE STANDARDS | | | | |
|---|---|---|-------------------|----|
| LGU Name: <u>Lake County Environmental Services Dept.</u> | | | | |
| Performance Area | Performance Standard | Level of Review | Rating | |
| | ■ Basic practice or statutory requirement ★ High Performance standard (see instructions for explanation of standards) | I Annual Compliance II BWSR Staff Review & Assessment (1/10 yrs) | Yes, No, or Value | |
| | | | YES | NO |
| Admin | ■ eLINK Grant Report(s): submitted on time | I | X | |
| | ■ County has resolution assuming WCA responsibilities and delegation resolutions (if needed). | II | X | |
| | ■ County has knowledgeable and trained staff to manage WCA program or secured a qualified delegate. | II | X | |
| | ■ Drainage authority buffer strip report submitted on time | I | X | |
| | ★ Public drainage records: meet modernization guidelines | II | X | |
| Planning | ■ Local water mgmt plan: current | I | X | |
| | ★ Metro counties: groundwater plan up-to-date | I | N/A | |
| | ■ Biennial Budget Request submitted on-time | I | X | |
| | ★ Prioritized, Targeted & Measureable criteria are used for Goals & Objectives in local water management plan as appropriate. | II | 1W1P | X |
| | ★ Water quality trend data used for short- and long-range plan priorities | II | 1W1P | X |
| Execution | ■ WCA decisions and determinations are made in conformance with WCA requirements. | II | X | |
| | ■ WCA TEP reviews and recommendations are appropriately coordinated. | II | X | |
| | ★ Certified wetland delineator on staff or retainer | II | | X |
| | ★ Water quality data collected to track outcomes for each priority concern | II | 1W1P | X |
| | ★ Water quality trends tracked for priority water bodies | II | 1W1P | X |
| Communication & Coordination | ■ BWSR grant report(s) posted on website | I | X | |
| | ★ Communication piece sent within last 12 months: indicate target audience below | II | | X |
| | Communication Target Audience: Urban residents, rural residents | | | |
| | ★ Obtain stakeholder input: within last 5 yrs | II | X | |
| | ★ Partnerships: liaison with SWCDs/WDs and cooperative projects/tasks done | II | X | |
| | ★ Annual report to water plan advisory committee on plan progress | II | X | |
| | ★ Track progress for I & E objectives in Plan | II | | X |
| | ★ County local water plan on county website | II | X | |
| | ★ Water management ordinances on county website | II | X | |

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

LGU Name: Lake Soil and Water Conservation District

| Performance Area | Performance Standard | Level of Review | Rating | |
|------------------------------|---|--|-------------------|----|
| | | | Yes, No, or Value | |
| | | | YES | NO |
| Administration | ■ Basic practice or Statutory requirement | I Annual Compliance | X | |
| | ★ High Performance standard (see instructions for explanation of standards) | II BWSR Staff Review & Assessment (1/10 yrs) | | |
| | ■ Financial statement: annual, on-time and complete | I | X | |
| | ■ Financial audit: completed as required by statute (see guidance) or as per BWSR correspondence | I | X | |
| | ■ eLINK Grant Report(s) submitted on-time | I | X | |
| | ■ Data practices policy: exists and reviewed/updated within last 5 yrs | II | X | |
| | ■ Personnel policy: exists and reviewed/updated within last 5 yrs | II | X | |
| | ■ Technical professional appointed and serving on WCA TEP | II | X | |
| | ■ SWCD has an adopting resolution assuming WCA responsibilities and appropriate decision delegation resolutions as warranted (If WCA LGU) | II | X | |
| | ★ Job approval authorities: reviewed and reported annually | II | X | |
| | ★ Operational guidelines and policies exist and are current | II | X | |
| | ★ Board training: orientation & cont. ed. plan and record for each board member | II | | X |
| Planning | ★ Staff training: orientation and cont. ed. plan/record for each staff member | II | X | |
| | ■ Comprehensive Plan: updated within 5 yrs or current resolution adopting unexpired county LWM plan | I | X | |
| | ■ Biennial Budget Request submitted on time | I | X | |
| | ★ Prioritized, Targeted and Measureable criteria are used for Goals and Objectives in the local water management plan as appropriate. | II | 1W1P | X |
| Execution | ★ Annual Plan of Work: based on comp plan, strategic priorities | II | X | |
| | ■ Are state grant funds spent in high priority problem areas | II | X | |
| | ■ Total expenditures per year (over past 10 yrs) | II | see below | |
| | ■ Months of operating funds in reserve | II | X | |
| | ■ Replacement and restoration orders are prepared in conformance with WCA rules and requirements. | II | X | |
| | ■ WCA TEP member is knowledgeable/trained in WCA technical aspects | II | X | |
| | ■ WCA TEP member contributes to TEP reviews, findings & recommendations | II | X | |
| | ■ WCA decisions and determinations are made in conformance with all WCA requirements (If WCA LGU) | II | X | |
| | ■ WCA TEP reviews/recommendations appropriately coordinated(if LGU) | II | X | |
| | ★ Certified wetland delineator: on staff or retainer | II | X | |
| Communication & Coordination | ★ Outcome trends monitored and reported for key resources | II | | X |
| | ■ Website contains all required content elements | I | X | |
| | ★ Website contains additional content beyond minimum required | II | X | |
| | ★ Track progress on I & E objectives in Plan | II | | X |
| | ★ Obtain stakeholder input: within last 5 yrs | II | X | |
| | ★ Annual report communicates progress on plan goals | II | X | |
| | ★ Partnerships: cooperative projects/tasks with neighboring districts, counties, watershed districts, non-governmental organizations | II | X | |
| | ★ Coordination with County Board by supervisors or staff | II | X | |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------------|-----------|
| 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 |
| \$137,314 | \$189,970 | \$149,638 | \$184,576 | \$185,956 | \$403,515 | \$204,625 | \$220,269 | \$1,692,097 | \$689,333 |

TOTAL = \$4,057,293

Appendix C. Summary of Survey Results

Survey Overview:

The survey was developed by BWSR staff for the purpose of identifying information about the local government units' performance from both board members and staff and from the units' partner organizations. The Lake SWCD and County staff identified, at BWSR's request, their current board members, staff and the partner organizations with whom they have an on-going working relationship. BWSR staff invited those people to take the on-line survey and their responses were received and analyzed by BWSR staff. Board members and staff answered a different set of survey questions than the partners. The identity of the survey respondents is unknown to both BWSR and the LGUs.

In this case, 10 board members and staff, and 19 partner organization representatives, were invited to take the survey for Lake County Environmental Services Department. Six board members/staff responded, a 60% response rate and 10 partners responded (53%).

For the 12 Soil and Water Conservation District supervisors and staff that were invited to take the survey, 11 responded, a 92% response rate. Eighty three SWCD partners were invited and 34 (41%) responded.

Both sets of responses are summarized below. Some responses were edited for clarity or brevity.

Lake SWCD Supervisor and Staff Questions and Responses

| How often does your organization use your current management plan to guide decisions about what you do? (response percent) | |
|--|--------|
| Always | 0.0% |
| Usually | 100.0% |
| Seldom | 0.0% |
| Never | 0.0% |

Additional Comments:

- *I am new to the board and am still learning a lot about how the organization works.*
- *The 1W1P for part of our County is a great guiding document that we use all the time and it is very helpful. I'm looking forward to having the RRHW go through the process.*
- *LSN1W1P guides decision making, but less so the local water plan.*

| List your organization's most successful programs and projects during the past 3-5 years. |
|---|
| <i>Expansion of water quality monitoring and outreach on AIS prevention.</i> |
| <i>The Fish project and Knife River Chepak landscaping</i> |
| <i>Invasive Species education (Terrestrial and Aquatic), Water Quality outreach and education.</i> |
| <i>We did a large River restoration project on both the Knife River and the Stewart River. We managed three round of Flood relief Grants. We have had consistent water monitoring on the Lakes in the Cloquet and Rainy headwaters. We have a forestry program that has addressed the increasing problem of Spruce Budworm. AIS program that does inspections as well as education.</i> |
| <i>River restoration projects on the Knife River and Stewart River. Forestry program is actively engaging many property owners with various forest health improvement projects. AIS work is very visible across the county with boat inspection programs. One Watershed One Plan pilot is now being implemented across Lake Superior North. Terrestrial invasive species control expanding. E-coli source investigation work underway in Two Harbors.</i> |

Stewart River and Knife River restoration projects, AIS and rusty crayfish trapping, EQIP forestry plans for landowners, CWF forestry spruce budworm removal projects; general outreach and increasing the District's capacity and image in the County; water monitoring especially collaboration with lake associations and the PCA.

What helped make these projects and programs successful?

Partnerships with other organizations, such as lake associations to recruit volunteers and broaden outreach and education.

Co-operation between the staff and the board when making decisions about helping landowners. Discussing the pros and cons and determining if the project fits into the mission of the organization.

Outreach efforts to constituents and public involvement.

We have a great staff that has increased to 9 as well as a summer intern and summer help to do the AIS inspections. Sadly the flood of 2012 and the funding that followed helped us to complete a lot of projects and work with many landowners. The local capacity money is what we have used to hire the forester and give us a good base funding to add staff.

Good working relationships with collaborating partners. Financial and public support for the projects we do.

People who took initiative & sufficient funding

During the past 3-5 years, which of your organization's programs or projects have shown little progress or been on hold?

Terrestrial invasive species and cost share projects

1. Shoreland Stabilization projects on Lake Superior. 2. Projects in the Cloquet and Rainy Basins that are not related to AIS or Water Monitoring.

We have had some trouble with our Stormwater program in Two Harbors and Silver Bay because of lack of buy in from the municipalities. Lake Superior shoreline erosion is one request that we have had several land owners approach us on that we do not have funds to help them with. (14 contacts)

None that stand out.

Stormwater has recently been a priority of the district and we have received additional funding for projects, but it has been hard to gain traction on and clarify moving forward. Projects have also been geographical, meaning much work in the RRHW has been on hold while work moves forward with the Lake Superior watershed, per the comprehensive watershed planning effort recently having taken place there. Some core mission-driven SWCD work has also been on hold lately in favor of bigger-picture grants with more robust funding (i.e. smaller cost-share projects, well sealing, tree planting).

List the reasons why the organization has had difficulty with these projects and programs.

There doesn't seem to be enough money or enough workers to accomplish all the projects in the area.

1. Lack of funding, local technical experience and desire to pursue these projects comprehensively. 2. Staff focusing only on 1W1P priorities which are Lake Superior focused and neglecting Water Plan priorities which are County-wide.

Cities do not have the money to do stormwater plan or do not see the immediate need for one. One city would just like to have problems with drainage fixed without looking at the bigger picture. We have no current funding source to address the Lake Superior shoreline erosion, but our BC is trying to look at this problem.

n/a

Staff turnover/people leaving without sufficient grant tracking or organization left behind; insufficient funding from state; collaborative work environment without defined project leaders; lack of communication among staff in the long-term.

| |
|--|
| Regarding the various organizations and agencies with which you could cooperate on projects or programs... |
| List the ones with which you work well already |
| USFS, MPCA, WICOLA |
| BWSR, NRCS, Lake County |
| MPCA, BWSR |
| MPCA, Cook SWCD, Lake County, USFS, DNR, North St Louis SWCD, NRCS |
| Staff turnover/people leaving without sufficient grant tracking or organization left behind; insufficient funding from state; collaborative work environment without defined project leaders; lack of communication among staff in the long-term |
| MPCA, WICOLA, Coastal Program, DNR Fisheries (multiple districts), County, Forest Service, Cook SWCD, NRCS, City of Two Harbors |
| List the ones with which better collaboration would benefit your organization |
| Cities of Two Harbors and Silver Bay. Town Boards and staff. |
| We are working at improving our Area III TSA connection. |
| City of Two Harbors |
| NSLSWCD, The Nature Conservancy, MNTU, increased collaboration with City of Silver Bay and more NRCS programs |
| If you don't know much about your organization's working relationships with partners, enter "I don't know" |
| I don't really know. |

| |
|--|
| What steps could your organization take to increase your effectiveness in accomplishing your plan goals and objectives? |
| Continue current strategic planning to further develop goals and determine action steps and timeline for implementation. |
| Secure a strong district manager. |
| Fewer staff at fewer meetings, structured communication procedures to share information. |
| We are watching for grant opportunities for culvert replacements which are in our 1W1P (1 per year) We are working on an E.coli project to improve the beach quality in Agate and Burlington Bays We are working through the strategic plan we recently did to set goals and policies. |
| We are just implementing a strategic planning exercise and expect to take direction from it. |
| Increase organization; define staff roles more narrowly; all goals back to the mission; plan ahead for grants to prioritize work. |

| How long have you been with the organization? | (response percent) |
|---|--------------------|
| Less than 5 years | 50.0% |
| 5 to 15 years | 50.0% |
| More than 15 years | 0.0% |

Lake SWCD Partner Organization Questions and Responses

| Question: How often have you interacted with this organization during the past two to three years? Select the response closest to your experience. | (response percent) |
|--|--------------------|
| Not at all | 0% |
| A few times | 12.5% |
| Several times a year | 31.3% |
| Monthly | 37.5% |
| Almost every week | 18.7% |

| | |
|-------|------|
| Daily | 0.0% |
|-------|------|

Comments:

- *Usually twice per month on average.*

| Is the amount of work you do in partnership with this organization... | (percent) |
|--|-----------|
| Not enough, there is potential for us to do more together | 20.0% |
| About right | 80.0% |
| Too much, they depend on us for work they should be doing for themselves | 0.0% |
| Too much, we depend on them for work we should be doing ourselves or with others | 0.0% |

Comments:

- *I wish I had more time to spend with them on training and focusing NRCS resources on their priorities.*
- *Not sure.*
- *They are an excellent partner, very responsive, willing to help and open to opportunities to partner.*
- *There is more we can do together, but the fact we aren't doing more together is my organization's fault, not Lake SWCDs.*

| Based on your experience working with them, please rate the organization in the following areas: | | | | | |
|--|-------------------------------|-------|------------|------|--------------|
| Performance Characteristic | Rating (percent of responses) | | | | |
| | Strong | Good | Acceptable | Poor | I don't know |
| Communication (they keep us informed; we know their activities; they seek our input) | 35.5% | 38.7% | 12.9% | 9.7% | 3.2% |
| Quality of work (they have good projects and programs; good service delivery) | 45.2% | 41.9% | 3.2% | 0% | 9.7% |
| Relationships with Customers (they work well with landowners and clients) | 35.5% | 25.8% | 3.2% | 0% | 35.5% |
| Initiative (they are willing to take on new projects, try new ideas) | 71.0% | 16.1% | 0% | 0% | 12.9% |
| Timelines/Follow-through (they are reliable and meet deadlines) | 25.8% | 45.2% | 12.9% | 3.2% | 12.9% |

| How is your working relationship with this organization? (percent) | |
|--|-------|
| Powerful, we are more effective working together | 26.7% |
| Strong, we work well together most of the time | 50.0% |
| Good, but it could be better | 16.7% |
| Acceptable, but a struggle at times | 3.3% |
| Poor, there are almost always difficulties | 0% |
| Non-existent, we don't work with this organization | 3.3% |

Comments from Partners about their working relationship with the Lake SWCD.

- *Lake SWCD is an amazing partner, and there is so much more that we could be doing together. They have initiative in taking on new projects and activities.*
- *We have worked well together over the years even through staff changes from all of us.*
- *Working with this organization has at times been real good and at other times very poor. The biggest issues is they don't communicate with us at all even when we are trying to partner with them on project. The person who was the biggest obstacle seems to have left the organization but communication is still very poor.*

- *Lake County SWCD is one of the best partners we work with.*
- *Due to budget and staff cuts in our agency, we increasingly rely on SWCD staff for important environmental review and restoration work.*
- *Again, we could work together more, but my program is rigid and unable to be a better partner.*
- *We are in regular contact with Lake SWCD but they have not given us many opportunities to work together.*
- *The working relationship exists only when the resource of concern that our agency is responsible for is being addressed.*

Do you have additional thought about how the “subject” organization could be more effective?

We have an excellent relationship with all staff that we work with. All of them are very effective. I suppose that they could be more effective if they had more staff and those staff have adequate resources to their jobs.

I'm a little concerned about the District Manager position. The staff are doing great work within the current structure but would like to see a stronger presence representing the SWCD and the great work they're doing. Having a district manager who understands resource management and leveraging partnerships is going to be crucial in implementing the Lake Superior North One Watershed One Plan and other initiatives. Coastal erosion has become a big problem and SWCD staff could use support from a coastal engineer like the BWSR position that was once held by Gene Clark. BWSR should consider a support role in this area that could also serve to balance out the DNR's bend towards Natural Channel Design projects.

Lake (and Cook) County SWCDs are instrumental in helping other agencies (MN DNR, MN PCA, USDA Forest Service, etc.) work towards individual mission areas as well as the collective conservation efforts in the arrowhead region of Minnesota.

Continue to work to provide ALL programs and services to all parts of the County.

Lake SWCD has struggled recently with leadership in the form of their District Manager. They are in a much better place now. They have a very motivated staff that doesn't require a lot of oversight. I am trying to provide them with NRCS resources in the form of funding through programs and staffing funding through agreements, but I often find it impossible to dedicate enough time to it. NRCS could do more to work directly with the Lake SWCD to be more effective.

New staff need to be better trained to better understand their direction as a district and as staff. It will provide them with the skills and confidence they need and future planning for the district. They are a talented staff and have great things to offer the district and area.

Communication, Communication, Communication.

Nope.

No additional comments.

Increase the number of outreach specialist.

No.

They need a real district manager to provide direction and organization, rather than a stand-in. They need a coastal engineer or someone who can engineer structures for the coast line of Lake Superior, where coastal erosion is a huge problem and many homeowners need this assistance.

| How long have you been with your current organization? | (response percent) |
|---|---------------------------|
| Less than 5 years | 31.25% |
| 5 to 15 years | 37.5% |
| More than 15 years | 31.25% |

Lake County Environmental Services Board and Staff Questions and Responses

| How often does your organization use your current management plan to guide decisions about what you do? (response percent) | |
|---|-------|
| Always | 50.0% |
| Usually | 50.0% |
| Seldom | 0.0% |
| Never | 0.0% |

List your organization's most successful programs and projects during the past 3-5 years.

Lake Superior North One Watershed One Plan.

1 Watershed 1 Plan for Lake Superior North. Development of the County AIS program

I am a new employee, less than 6 months.

Shoreline stabilization.

What helped make these projects and programs successful?

Collaboration with Cook County SWCD & Land Dept., Cook and Lake County Commissioners & Residents, North Shore Management Board & DNR.

1W1P for the LSN was made successful through partnerships that worked effectively together. Funding made possible through the legislature to allow the hiring of staff to implement AIS program.

State funding.

During the past 3-5 years, which of your organization's programs or projects have shown little progress or been on hold?

Implementation of the 1W1P due to the funding method.

List the reasons why the organization has had difficulty with these projects and programs.

Our 1W1P received a very small percent of the funding available due to public lands the Northeast region has, which will significantly hinder the ability of our plan to be implemented.

Regarding the various organizations and agencies with which you could cooperate on projects or programs...

List the ones with which you work well already

BWSR wetland specialist, Lake Co. SWCD, Highway, and Forestry Departments, Army Corps of Engineers, Town of Silver Creek, MN DNR Hydrologist

All listed above in #5 (Cook County SWCD & Land Dept., Cook and Lake County Commissioners & Residents, North Shore Management Board & DNR).

List the ones with which better collaboration would benefit your organization*City of Silver Bay, North Shore Management Board (mostly because it is not very active)***If you don't know much about your organization's working relationships with partners, enter "I don't know"***I don't know.***What steps could your organization take to increase your effectiveness in accomplishing your plan goals and objectives?***Arrange to have better representation in the legislature when it comes to funding for mandated requirements and implementation of goals identified in 1W1P. Counties with a significant amount of Public land need a fair share of the money available for implementation.**Secure additional funding to increase staffing capacity and implement projects identified in the 1W1P priority areas.***How long have you been with the organization?****(response percent)****Less than 5 years**

100.0%

5 to 10 years

0.0%

More than 15 years

0.0%

Lake County Environmental Services Partner Organization Questions and Responses**Question: How often have you interacted with this organization during the past two to three years? Select the response closest to your experience.****(response percent)****Not at all**

0.0%

A few times

0.0%

Several times a year

50.0%

Monthly

30.0%

Almost every week

20.0%

Daily

0.0%

If you chose not all, when was the last time you interacted with the organization? *No comments***Is the amount of work you do in partnership with this organization...****(percent)****Not enough**, there is potential for us to do more together

20.0%

About right

70.0%

Too much, they depend on us for work they should be doing themselves

10.0%

Too much, we depend on them for work we should be doing ourselves or with others

0.0%

Other (Please explain):

- *We would like to work with them more on recycling and composting.*
- *The Environmental Services Department is required by ordinance to consult with the many partners to manage stormwater and other construction activities. This "Hydrologic Technical Committee" as written in ordinance has not been convened in my tenure with the SWCD.*

| Based on your experience, please rate the efforts of the subject organization in the following areas: | | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|------|------------|------|--------------|
| Performance Characteristic | Rating (percent of responses) | | | | |
| | Strong | Good | Acceptable | Poor | I don't know |
| Communication <i>(they keep us informed; we know their activities; they seek our input)</i> | 20% | 50% | 30% | 0% | 0% |
| Quality of work <i>(they have good projects and programs; good service delivery)</i> | 30% | 60% | 10% | 0% | 0% |
| Relationships with Customers <i>(they work well with landowners and clients)</i> | 20% | 60% | 0% | 10% | 10% |
| Initiative <i>(they are willing to take on new projects, try new ideas)</i> | 40% | 50% | 10% | 0% | 0% |
| Timelines/Follow-through <i>(they are reliable and meet deadlines)</i> | 50% | 40% | 10% | 0% | 0% |

| How is your working relationship with this organization? (percent) | |
|--|-----|
| Powerful , we are more effective working together | 20% |
| Strong , we work well together most of the time | 60% |
| Good , but it could be better | 20% |
| Acceptable , but a struggle at times | 0% |
| Poor , there are almost always difficulties | 0% |
| Non-existent , we don't work with this organization | 0% |

Comments from Partners about their working relationship with the Lake County Environmental Services:

- *Lake County LGU is great to work with; she keeps me informed of new applications and upcoming projects and discusses them thoroughly with all associated stakeholders.*
- *They are wonderful to work with - knowledgeable and available with answers and help when needed.*

| Do you have additional thought about how the "subject" organization could be more effective? |
|--|
| <i>Only that I think all government agencies need to survey with the general public that they serve.</i> |
| <i>They have had staff turnover so I think they will do better communicating a clear message to land owners in the future. Clear communication with the public is needed. We have had people come into our office who did not think they were treated respectfully.</i> |
| <i>The Environmental Services Department is a good department. Unfortunately, the County Ordinances that manage stormwater and construction activities were written before the Department existed. Articles 7 and 8 of the Lake County Comprehensive Plan And Land Use Ordinance should be updated to recognize and review current practices and policies.</i> |

| How long have you been with the organization? | (response percent) |
|---|--------------------|
| Less than 5 years | 50.0% |
| 5 to 10 years | 50.0% |
| More than 15 years | 0.0% |



Appendix D. Wetland Conservation Act

Wetland Conservation Act Administrative Review Report

Report Prepared for: Lake County

Report Date: 6/29/2018

Prepared by: David Demmer, Wetland Specialist, MN Board of Water & Soil Resources

Matt Johnson, Wetland Specialist, MN Board of Water & Soil Resources

Introduction

In 1991, the Legislature passed the Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) in order to achieve a no-net loss in the quantity, quality, and biological diversity of Minnesota's wetlands. In doing so, they designated certain implementation responsibilities to local government units (LGUs) and soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs) with the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) to provide oversight. One oversight mechanism is an administrative review of how LGUs and SWCDs are carrying out their responsibilities.

BWSR uses the administrative review process to evaluate LGU and SWCD performance related to their responsibilities under the WCA. The review is intended to determine if an LGU or SWCD is fulfilling their responsibilities under WCA and to provide recommendations for improvement as applicable.

This review has been conducted in conjunction with the PRAP process, a summary of which is provided in the overall PRAP report.

Methods

Data for this report was collected via direct interview(s) with staff, a review of an appropriate number and type of project files, a review of existing documentation on file (i.e. annual reporting/resolutions), and through prior BWSR staff experience/interaction with the LGU or SWCD. In some cases, a project site review may be necessary. Generally, interviews, project file reviews and site visits were done with two BWSR staff on agreed upon dates.

BWSR Staff interviewed Neva Maxwell, Lake County Planning & Zoning, on June 18, 2018 in the Soil & Water District Offices in Two Harbors, MN. Also participating in the conversation was Derrick Passe, Lake SWCD TEP member. WCA-related Performance Standards for SWCDs are included in the report summary and recommendations found below. In addition to the data forms collected (see Attachment A), six project files were reviewed (an enforcement, boundary/type, no-loss application, replacement plan and two exemptions). WCA-related County and municipal resolutions were reviewed and copies retained. No project site visits were conducted for this report. BWSR staff conducting the review were Wetland Specialists David Demmer & Matt Johnson.

The review focused on six performance standards in both the administration and execution of the local WCA program. Please note that the sixth performance standard (*Replacement and restoration orders are prepared in conformance with WCA*) was included in the review at the discretion of the reviewers.

Compliance with Performance Standards are ranked from "Does not meet minimum requirements", "Meets minimum requirements but needs improvement", to "Effectively implementing the program". If necessary, recommendations to further improve implementation are listed.

A copy of the questions and forms used during the data collection phase are located in Attachment A.

WCA Report Summary and Recommendations

A. Administration

The Lake County Planning & Zoning Environmental Services Specialist acts as the WCA LGU for the County. The Lake County SWCD Project Coordinator is an active, valuable member of TEP. In general, the LGU follows WCA procedure; effectively utilizes the Technical Evaluation Panel (TEP); and takes a reasonable and prudent approach to administering the Rule.

WCA Performance Standard 1- District has resolution assuming WCA responsibilities and appropriate delegation

The most recent County resolution was passed in 1996. The content and language of the resolution, however, is limited and ambiguous. The resolution concludes with the statement “if there are any changes, Lake County will rescind immediately” (see Attachment E). There have been several Rule changes since 1996.

The review was unable to locate a resolution that delegates WCA decision-making authority. Resolutions delegating WCA administration to the County from two municipalities (Two Harbors and Silver Bay) were reviewed. The City of Two Harbors has delegated WCA decision-authority to the County. The resolution also forms a joint powers appeal board with two city planning commissioners and two city planning commissioners for local WCA appeals. Two other municipalities (Beaver Bay and Castle Danger) were identified during the review as not having resolutions to clarify the WCA administrative authority.

Local Ordinance 8.02E defines the local appeal process whereas WCA appeals go to the Planning & Zoning Board of Adjustment.

This meets minimum requirements but needs improvements.

Recommendations:

- 1) Consider passing a new WCA resolution that omits the language of rescinding the authority upon a change or revision in Rule (Attachment B- template resolution adopting WCA);
- 2) Consider passing resolution to delegation WCA decision-making authority to Lake County Planning & Zoning Department (Attachment C- template resolution delegation WCA decision-making authority);
- 3) Work with the Cities of Beaver Bay and Castle Danger to consider the most effective administration of the WCA within their jurisdiction;

WCA Performance Standard 2- County has a knowledgeable and trained staff member that manages WCA program and/or has secured a qualified delegate.

The County benefits from capable and technically-trained staff. The LGU has a college degree in natural resources, soils training, and attends the BWSR Academy WCA sessions.

The County is effectively implementing the program.

Recommendations:

- 1) The County should consider formal wetland delineation training for the LGU.

B. Execution and Coordination

In general, the Lake County WCA program is executed in a relatively effective manner. This appears to largely be a product of the actual staffing capability of the LGU.

WCA Performance Standard 3- **WCA decisions and determinations are made in conformance with WCA Requirements**

The WCA project file review found that the LGU generally adheres to MN Rule 8420. There was one file that had been misfiled. This suggested that the County would benefit from reviewing their data management policies with respect to handling WCA applications. The LGU does utilize an application tracking spreadsheet but does not include dates to adhere to agency action deadlines as per MN Statute 15.99. The review found relatively few of the applications were date stamped upon receipt. All recent application were appropriately noticed when required. When needed, the LGU also provides prompt, clear and concise notices of incomplete applications.

This meets minimum requirements but needs improvements.

Recommendations:

- 1) Consider current date management practices and digitizing WCA project files to be used to research relevant WCA history for future wetland projects;
- 2) Consider augmenting current project tracking tables to include agency action deadlines;
- 3) Consider reviewing internal processes in handling applications upon submittal such as using date stamps to document the date received;
- 4) Notice of Decision should consistently and correctly identify the local appeal process and fee;
- 5) Consider policies for documenting “informal” exemption and no-loss determinations;
- 6) Consider the use of placing conditions of approval when appropriate to ensure clear communication with applicant;
- 7) Consider using more clear, concise, and direct language on the notice of decision.

Performance Standard 4- **WCA TEP reviews and recommendations are appropriately coordinated.**

TEP meetings are scheduled on a reoccurring date and meet as projects require. The LGU coordinates and effectively facilitates TEP meetings with all required members in regular attendance. The meeting agendas and supporting material are distributed with ample time to prepare.

The County is effectively implementing the standard.

WCA Performance Standard 5- **Certified wetland delineator on staff or retainer**

This is a “high performance standard”. The County staff has formal education in natural resources and has been formally trained in soils but has not received formal wetland delineation training.

- 1) The LGU should consider attending a Wetland Delineation Certification Program basic delineation training course.

The County is effectively implementing the program.

WCA Performance Standard 6- Replacement and restoration orders are prepared in conformance with WCA

Only one enforcement file was found by the LGU although they knew of an older case that was/has been litigated by the County Attorney. There was no clear outline of enforcement procedures evident in review of the one enforcement file. There was a two year lapse between the initial site visit and correspondence and no restoration/replacement orders were issued. The project file concludes with the approval of an after-the-fact replacement plan in which impacts were mitigated at a penalized ratio seven years after the violation was first detected.

Does not meet minimum requirements.**Recommendations:**

- 1) The County should continue to work with BWSR and TEP to review WCA enforcement procedures outline in MN Rule 8420.0900 and make use of the Enforcement Procedures Checklist (See Attachment D);
- 2) The LGU should consider a meeting with the local DNR Water Resources Enforcement Officer and Conservation Officers to discuss the administration of the WCA in the County.

Other BWSR Comments:

- 1) Beyond the miss-file of a large, public infrastructure project file, there were a number of instances in the review where it was evident that the County should consider their data management. WCA procedures and State Statute require LGUs to adhere to relatively strict timelines when reviewing and approving applications. The County should consider updating its WCA project file data management practices.
- 2) Potentially more crucial to the overall compliance with WCA than a more effective enforcement program is a strategic, collaborative public outreach effort to increase a general awareness of the value of wetlands as a natural resource. Also, providing basic information of the wetland regulatory framework to area wetland delineators, realtors, contractors and others would enhance the overall program for the County.

Appendix E. Comment Letters

**LAKE COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

408 FIRST AVENUE, TWO HARBORS, MN 55616

P: (218) 834-8370

WWW.CO.LAKE.MN.US/SWCD

August 28, 2018

Dale Krystosek

MN Board of Water and Soil Resources

520 Lafayette Road North

St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Dale:

Lake SWCD accepts and thanks you for completing the BWSR Level II Performance Review and Assessment Program (PRAP) Report for the Lake County Water Plan and WCA Program.

Following are our comments on the report:

Lake SWCD Comment 1, Lake SWCD Recommendation 1: Lake SWCD conducted a strategic plan in Spring 2018 and have been meeting monthly to design an action plan. Part of the strategic planning effort includes a hiring plan for the district manager position as staff turnover in the coming year.

Lake SWCD Comment 2, Joint Recommendation 2: Lake County is currently undergoing a website refresh, and Lake SWCD will concurrently redesign their website within Lake County's website to reflect water plan project updates and goal achievement strategically, including LSN1W1P outcomes.

Lake SWCD Comment 3: LSN1W1P implementation began primarily after funding was received in Spring 2018. The LSN1W1P reporting process was voluntary and included information from the entire watershed, although it is noted this PRAP is for Lake County, not Cook County/Cook SWCD.

Lake SWCD Comment 4: Due to the seasonality of projects and work completed by SWCDs, conducting a PRAP during peak field season in July proved difficult to manage. In the future, conducting the reporting process at a slower time of year would help the process be more useful to SWCDs.

Thank you for your help throughout this process – we hope the findings will serve to improve the SWCD's operations and programs in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Sonja Smerud".

Sonja Smerud

Water Plan Coordinator, Lake County SWCD

**ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT****Christine M. McCarthy, Environmental Service Director****Planning & Zoning and Solid Waste****Planning Commission and Board of Adjustment**

Lake County Courthouse

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Two Harbors, MN 55616

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September 5, 2018

Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: 2018 Level II Performance Review

Dear Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources,

The staff at Lake County Environmental Services Department (LCES) accepts the BWSR Level II Performance Review as summarized in your report. We feel this report highlights the strong working relationship Lake County has with its environmental partners.

The Environmental Services Department offers the following comments on the recommendations within the review:

Joint Recommendation 1: Continue to provide strong participation in the Lake Superior North 1W1P implementation using the watershed scale for prioritizing projects and program implementation and using Prioritized, Targeted and Measurable criteria for measuring progress for goals and objectives. LCES will continue to be an active partner in the Lake Superior North 1W1P implementation plan. Strong participation in the implementation of the plan will require adequate funding for Lake County regardless of the ratio of private to public lands.

Joint Recommendation 2: Structure website information to report progress and trends made in achieving resource outcome goals and implementation of the 1W1P. It is acknowledged that the County website should have more water plan content and project updates. The website will be doing a website "refresh" that will allow us to provide future improved content and organization.


Lake County Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) Recommendation 1: The County should pass a new WCA resolution adopting the Rule. LCES will work with its Board to pass a resolution that will adopt updated WCA rules.

Lake County WCA Recommendation 2: The County should continue to work with BWSR and TEP and DNR Water Resources Enforcement Officer to review administration of the WCA in the County. The County will continue to work with its partners to administer WCA in Lake County, following WCA enforcement procedures outlined in MN Rule 8420.0900 and make use of the Enforcement Procedures Checklist.

Environmental Services staff spent 18 hours on the BWSR PRAP process.

If you have questions or comments regarding this letter or review, please contact me at (218) 834-8325.

Yours truly,



Christine M. McCarthy
Environmental Services Director

Appendix F. Program Data

Time required to complete this review

Lake SWCD Staff: 31 Hours (*10 hours for progress report on Lake Superior North 1W1P*)

Lake County Staff: 18 Hours

BWSR Staff: 75 Hours

Schedule of Level II Review

BWSR PRAP Performance Review Key Dates

- June 14, 2018: Initial meeting with Lake SWCD Board
- June 14, 2018: Initial meeting with Lake SWCD staff and Lake County staff
- June 20, 2018: Survey of SWCD Supervisors, staff and partners
- June 20, 2018: Survey of County staff, board and partners
- September 13, 2018: Presentation of Draft Report to SWCD Board and staff
- September 25, 2018: Presentation of Report to Lake County Board
- October 10, 2018: Date Transmittal of Final Report to LGU

NOTE: BWSR uses review time as a surrogate for tracking total program costs. Time required for PRAP performance reviews is aggregated and included in BWSR's annual PRAP report to the Minnesota Legislature.