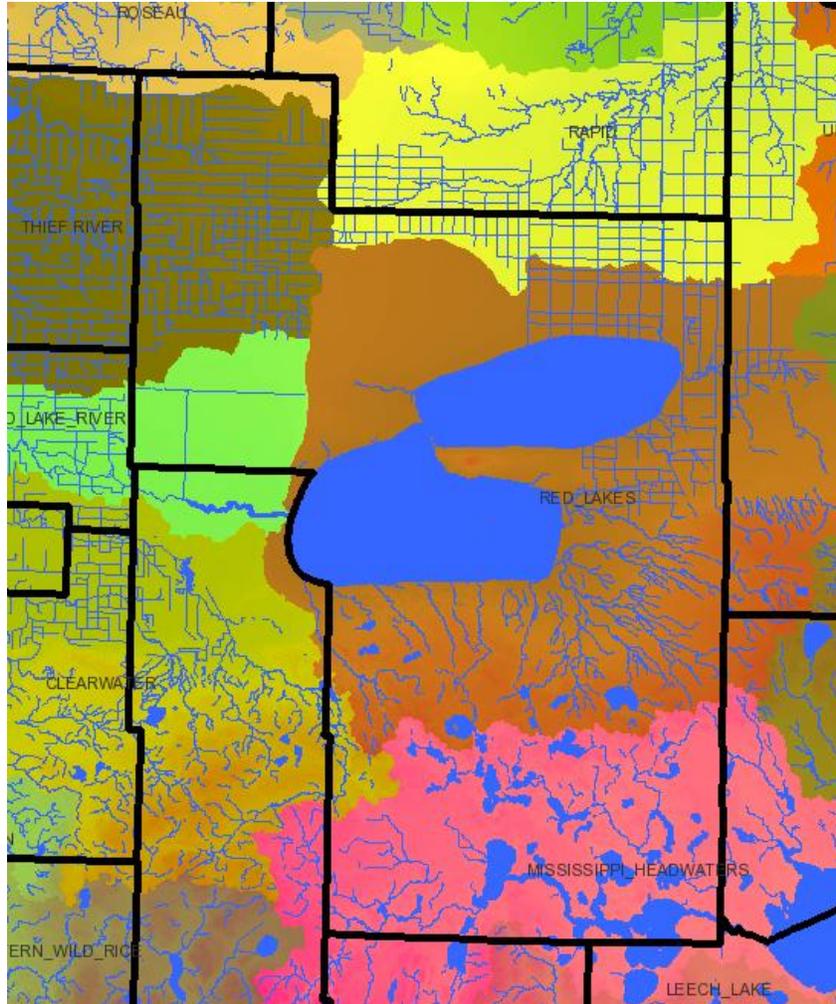


Beltrami County Comprehensive Local Water Management Plan



2008-2013

Document prepared by
Beltrami Soil & Water Conservation District

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A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose of Comprehensive Water Management Plan

This update of the Beltrami County Comprehensive Local Water Management Plan (CLWMP) provides strategic guidance for water management activities in the county over the five year period from 2008 to 2013.

Description of Priority Concerns Addressed

Priority concerns for the county were identified through a process coordinated by the Headwater Regional Development Corporation (HRDC) during the summer and fall of 2007. Identified priority Concerns are summarized in Section B and the final ‘Priority Concerns Scoping Document’ is included as Appendix I.

Summary of Goals and Total Projected Costs

The overall goal of this water plan is to provide strategic guidance for protecting and enhancing surface and groundwater resources of Beltrami County. Section C of this document provides detailed response strategies for addressing issues identified in the priority concerns scoping process. The section is presented in two parts. The first presents county-wide response strategies while the second presents response strategies specific to particular watershed within the county. On-going work and accomplishments are summarized in Section D.

Using estimated funding levels for each specific response strategy yields a total cost estimate of \$1,860,000 spread over the five year duration of the plan. In addition, funding for a number of strategies was not explicitly estimated so the total cost for completing all work outlined would obviously be somewhat higher.

Relationship to other Planning Efforts

The plan presented is consistent with pertinent state, local, and regional plans and its watershed-based approach is well aligned with an emerging statewide emphasis.

Beltrami County’s water planning process is designed to identify priority water resource issues in the County; its intent is to provide policy direction to other monitoring and management efforts undertaken for the County. In order to fulfill this intent, Beltrami SWCD communicates the County’s priorities to other organizations involved in the management of Beltrami County’s water resources, and coordinates implementation activities in this plan with other agencies, groups, and entities across political boundaries.

Wherever possible, this Comprehensive Local Water Plan (CLWP) was designed to complement and support the vision, strategies and policies of a more comprehensive Beltrami County plan. At appropriate points, the CLWP addresses key County-wide issues in more detail than is possible in the Comprehensive Plan. The research and issues

contained in the CLWP also support and substantiate the findings and direction of the Comprehensive Plan, and vice versa. In addition, action plan items were coordinated with relevant work plan issues identified by the County Resource Excellence Team.

This CLWP is also consistent with the plans of other agencies and jurisdictions operating within the same watershed units. Beltrami County is a part of the River Defense Network of the Mississippi Headwaters Board (MHB), authorized by MN Stat. 103.361-377, and has adopted and continues to implement the MHB's Comprehensive Plan. This document is also consistent with all other state statutes.

Recommendations

The water planning process would be more coherent and well-coordinated if implemented by watershed rather than by county. Future environmental legislation should be reviewed for its ability to be implemented effectively across different regions of Minnesota. Perhaps a regional or basin-oriented approach would be an appropriate way to ensure that environmental conservation issues not only address the local needs, but that these efforts will be accepted and implemented by the local landowners.

Streamlining the review process would save a considerable amount of time for actually implementing the strategies contained in the five-year plan. In practice it can take six months or more to approve the final draft of the plan– the initial announcement process when beginning the update is only slightly shorter. Cutting down on the amount of time it takes to complete this process would increase the resources and time available to complete some of the activities within the plan's short timeframe of five years.

Improve the water quality database for easier comprehension and comparison of information. While it is wonderful to have water quality available on the web, comparing data from water plan update to the next is difficult because of the variety of sampling methodologies and the inconsistent timeframe for that sampling. Specific Quality Assurance thresholds would be helpful.

B. PRIORITY CONCERNS

Identification and Assessment of Priority Concerns

The Priority Concerns Scoping Document (see Appendix I) summarizes the process used and responses collected in the public input process. Although diverse individuals and groups responded, some consistent trends emerged.

All parties involved addressed the following three questions:

Question #1: What do you feel are the *priority concerns* for water resources in Beltrami County?

Question #2: For each of the concerns listed above, *why* do you feel this issue is important? (Please address which issue you are writing about)

Question #3: What *part* of Beltrami County do each of your priority concerns pertain to?

The following section summarizes six major categories of identified Priority Concerns (four related to surface water and two related to ground water). The bracketed codes following each item (e.g., [SW:dat]) are used to link Priority Concerns to specific issues identified in the Action Plan.

For each Priority Concern, relevant data as well as existing policies and plans were analyzed by the both the Water Plan Advisory Committee and the Water Plan Technical Committee. In all cases, the perceived public concerns were deemed legitimate and genuine.

SURFACE WATER PRIORITY CONCERNS

The overriding pattern emerging in the Priority Concerns Scoping Document is that surface water is near the top of almost every independent list concerns. This is primarily due to the appeal of the area lakes and rivers for recreation purposes. The responses from the various stakeholders differ in their specific concerns about surface water, but the following summary gives a good indication about what is keeping people awake at night as they think about surface water in Beltrami County.

The Priority Concerns Scoping Document was reviewed by the Water Plan Technical Advisory Committee and was formally approved by the voting members of the Water Plan Advisory Committee. It was also approved the North Region BWSR Board at their 13 February 2008 meeting in Brainerd. All priority concerns raised in the process are addressed in the Action Plan (Section c).

***Data* [SW:dat]**

Data collection was the main concern for many of the groups involved. This concern was very broad in nature. Some groups were concerned about a specific water body as well

as surface water in general. Specific water bodies mentioned throughout the process include Lake Bemidji, the Mississippi River chain, the Turtle River chain, and other specific lakes that people live on. Other groups were concerned about entire watersheds, or all the lakes and rivers in Beltrami County. A countywide inventory of lake quality was suggested by some. Others were concerned about scientifically identifying the cause of specific pollutants or contaminants.

Systematic and comprehensive surface water data are indeed quite limited. Citizen volunteer monitoring efforts, especially those initiated by the Beltrami County Lakes and Rivers Association and the Turtle River Watershed Association, have provided some data related to phosphorus, algal productivity, and clarity on a relatively small subset of county lakes; through a Clean Water Legacy grant, Beltrami SWCD is currently collecting productivity data on thirty-six additional lakes. A more comprehensive and searchable database on 100 county lakes is in the early planning stages. Systematic data on county streams and rivers are even more scarce although several studies by the MPCA, the MnDNR, and Beltrami SWCD have begun to address the dissolved oxygen impairment on the Mississippi River above Lake Irving.

Development [SW: dev]

Changing water quality resulting from existing and future development was a concern that came up in several discussions. Much of this concern is a result of development along lakeshore, and the subsequent contributions of runoff that goes into the lake. There was also a concern about stormwater management in urbanizing areas.

The Minnesota State Demographic Center projects a 33% population increase for Beltrami County between 2005 and 2035 (from 43,334 to 57,900). Much of this population increase will be driven by the onset of baby-boomer retirements and will consequently lead to the development and intensive redevelopment of lake and stream riparian zones. Historical patterns of riparian development tend to reduce water clarity and a recent study by Bemidji State University has linked such changes to significant declines in property values (Krysel, C., Boyer, E., Parson, C. & Welle, P. 2003. Lakeshore property values and water quality: evidence from property sales in the Mississippi Headwaters region; http://www.co.cass.mn.us/esd/intralake/bsu_study.pdf)

Septic Systems [SW: sep]

The performance of septic systems was a concern for many of the parties involved in the public engagement effort. This concern is also a byproduct of development. Septic systems have an expected lifetime and the potential to fail, which can have an adverse effect on water quality. This problem is compounded as more and more development increases the need for septic systems. Particular reference was also made to mound systems. There was expressed concern that mound systems have a tendency to freeze up in the winter if not properly protected and maintained.

Many of the septic systems installed in the first wave of riparian development in Beltrami County are approaching their limits of functionality. In addition, redevelopment and more intensive use of riparian properties exacerbates potential problems. Finally, a trend

toward reduced winter snow cover has led to frozen systems and subsequent on-land disposal problems. The resulting flush of phosphorus into surface waters with spring runoff can alter summer phosphorus cycling potentially inducing dramatic shifts toward internal loading and greatly reduced water clarity.

Agriculture [SW:agr]

Agriculture practices came up as a concern in various discussions, but it does not rank high on many lists of priority concerns. There are some concerns that need to be discussed however. Many of the issues relating to agriculture are directed towards surface water, and includes placement of feedlots, tiling, and drainage.

Although agricultural concerns are relatively localized within Beltrami County there are potentially significant issues, particularly in regions of the county with heavier soils and higher drainage densities. Most of the concerns relate to livestock operations but cultivation of wild rice is also a matter of local concern especially in northeastern townships.

GROUNDWATER PRIORITY CONCERNS

The majority of the priority concerns addressed the quality of ground water to some degree. Several concerns addressed certain contaminants of groundwater. The Beltrami County Local Water Management Advisory Committee voted groundwater as their highest concern, citing the amount, quality, and distribution of groundwater.

Data [GW:dat]

The major ground water concern related to availability of objective data. The specific concerns for groundwater were not articulated to a high level of detail but rather reflected the fact that all Beltrami County residents consume ground water. The general consensus was that eliminating or controlling sources of pollution in our ground water supply is good for the future of Beltrami County. The need for a groundwater resources inventory in Beltrami County was vocalized by most groups.

Nineteen observations wells are used to monitor groundwater levels in the southern third of Beltrami County; systematic monitoring of groundwater levels is absent in other areas. Data from Bemidji-Bagley Groundwater Study shows that the saturated thickness of the surficial aquifer in Beltrami County varies from 0 to 80 feet. The most productive part of the aquifer is located in an area immediately west and south of Lake Bemidji with other smaller areas of 40 to 80 foot saturated thickness scattered throughout the southern third of the county. Direction of flow in the Bemidji-Bagley sandplain aquifer is generally east and south in Beltrami County, toward the Mississippi River. A groundwater flow divide is located near the Beltrami-Clearwater County line, close to the continental divide.

Septic Systems [GW:sep]

Group responses indicate that people are generally concerned about the implications of the increasing quantity of new septic systems as Beltrami County continues to grow. Potentially of greater concern in the near future is the performance of aging septic

systems in Beltrami County. Increasing numbers of failing septic systems has negative implications for both groundwater and surface water.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The first part of the Action Plan (in Section C) identifies county-wide priority concerns and appropriate response strategies. Each item includes an issues statement, a specific concern and objective, followed by one or more response strategies with rough cost estimates, potential funding sources, and likely lead agencies for implementing each strategy. Four top priority issues and nine additional high priority issues are identified. Contingent on available funding, top priority items should be implemented within two years with high priority strategies targeted for years three through five of this plan cycle.

The second part of this Action Plan outlines concerns and strategies specific to each of five watersheds having significant catchment areas within Beltrami County. For purposes of the plan this includes the Beltrami County portions the following watersheds: Mississippi Headwaters, Upper and Lower Red Lake, Clearwater River, Thief River, and Red Lake River. Because of geographic proximity and functional similarity specific action items are combined for the Thief and Red Lake River watersheds. This action plan does not individually address specific concerns and strategies for the small and/or relatively remote Beltrami County fragments of the following watersheds: Leech Lake, Rapid River, and Roseau River.

The section concludes with a brief summary of Beltrami County's water planning process including background on responsibilities for administration and maintenance, procedures for amending the plan, and suggestions for streamlining the planning process.

C. ACTION PLAN & IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

The action plan is central to Beltrami County's Comprehensive Local Water Plan as it outlines specific strategies and activities to be undertaken over the next five years to protect and enhance our water resources. The suggested activities summarized here have been approved by the Beltrami County Water Planning Advisory Committee and County Board. Listed activities are designed to address, in a practical and cost effective manner, the most important water resource priorities in the County. The action plan also recommends complementary actions for other collaborating local entities as well as various federal, state, and tribal agencies.

Two issues which became more prominent since the previous Comprehensive Local Water Plan was developed and implemented provided essential context for this Plan update. First, we recognized that increasing local population density and related demographic changes are intensifying pressures on water resources. Second, most probable regional consequences of climate fluctuations were considered. Strategies recommended here reflect these two concerns.

Strategy Development Guidance

After receiving the public's priority concerns about water resources, the Water Plan Advisory Committee and staff developed a range of response strategies. The following principles were used in developing strategies and should guide activities of annual work plans.

1. Watershed Focus -- Because watersheds function as natural landscape units, they provide the most appropriate context for comprehensive water planning. Each watershed functions as a catchment basin incorporating all inputs of nutrients and other materials and discharging surface waters from a single, easy to monitor outlet. Because watersheds seldom coincide with county lines or other existing political boundaries this poses significant but surmountable challenges for planning and coordinating activities.
2. Public Education – Incorporate public education activities within all strategies, wherever possible. Public education is viewed as the most cost effective means of addressing emerging water resource issues.
3. Coordination – Coordinate activities with other agencies. For example, address the issues related to Minnesota PCA's list of TMDL waterbodies when working on a listed waterbody. The focus on recognizing watersheds as naturally occurring landscape units provides a coherent foundation for coordinated efforts.
4. Future Opportunities – Since one cannot predict the future with precision or reliability, it is important to design strategies sufficiently flexible to deal with unforeseen challenges and/or opportunities. However, because climate change

and population growth are likely to shape and constrain our future they are incorporated into the strategies presented.

5. Measurable Results – For a strategy to be an effective use of public resources, it is important that its results be tangible and clearly measurable. While this document does not specify particular target outcomes, it does underscore the need for measurable results.

Glossary of Acronyms

Acronyms and other labels used in the following section to identify potential funding sources, programs, lead agencies, and supporting agencies are summarized below.

BAJPB: Bemidji Area Joint Powers Board
BCLARA: Beltrami County Lakes and Rivers Association
BIA: Bureau of Indian Affairs
BSU: Bemidji State University
BWSR: Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources
CRP: Conservation Reserve Program
CSP: Conservation Security Program
DNR (div): Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (**fsh** – Fisheries, **eco** – Ecological Services, **for** – Forestry, **wtr** – Waters, **wld** – Wildlife)
ESD: Beltrami County Environmental Services Department
GIS: Beltrami County Geographic Information Systems Department
GRCD: Giziibii Resource Conservation and Development Association
HWY: Beltrami County Highway Department
HRA: Housing Redevelopment Authority
HRDC: Headwaters Regional Development Corporation
HSC: Headwaters Science Center
JDA: Joint Ditch Authority for Marshall and northwest Beltrami counties
LA: Individual lake or watershed associations
LLDRM: Leech Lake Division of Resource Management
LCCMR: Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources
MDA: Minnesota Department of Agriculture
MDH: Minnesota Department of Health
MG: Master Gardeners
MHB: Mississippi Headwaters Board
MnDOT: Minnesota Department of Transportation
Nielson: G.W. Nielson Foundation
NMF: Northwest Minnesota Foundation
NRCS: Natural Resources Conservation Service
NRM: Beltrami County Natural Resources Management
OWD: Ozawindib Watershed District
PCA: Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
RL-DNR: Red Lake Reservation Department of Natural Resources
RLWD: Red Lake Watershed District

SWCD(s): SWCD refers to Beltrami Soil and Water Conservation District, MB-SWCD refers to Marshall-Beltrami Soil and Water Conservation District, SWCDs refers to both
TSA1, TSA2: Technical Service Areas 1 (Northwest) and 2 (North-central).
TMDL: Total Maximum Daily Load
TWPs: Townships
UMEX: University of Minnesota Extension
USACE: United States Army Corp of Engineers
USFS: United States Forest Service
USGS: United States Geological Survey

Part I: County-wide Concerns

TOP PRIORITY ISSUES AND STRATEGIES

Issue I: Need to more formally adopt a watershed perspective [SW: context]

Concern: Because watershed boundaries do not correspond with county lines, county based approaches to planning, monitoring, and managing water resources may be ineffective.

Objective: Move toward more explicitly watershed-based management strategies.

Strategies:

#1: Consider establishment of appropriate watershed districts in conjunction with adjacent counties.

Funding: Unknown **Source(s):** Local in-kind

Responsibility: Lead: Citizen petitioners
Supporting: SWCDs, DNR, PCA

Evaluation: Inclusion of all county lands within watershed districts.

#2: Actively participate in discussions related to the statewide effort to create basin-coordinated watershed management districts.

Funding: Unknown **Source(s):** BWSR

Responsibility: Lead: County
Supporting: SWCDs, DNR, BCLARA, BWSR

Evaluation: Passage of legislation, acceptable to counties, defining basin coordinated watershed management districts.

#3: Undertake enhanced lake monitoring and modeling of the relationships between watershed land use and water quality on high priority lakes.

Funding: ~ \$10,000 per lake **Source(s):** BWSR, MPCA, LCCMR

Responsibility: Lead: SWCD
Supporting: PCA, DNR, NRCS, BSU

Evaluation: Number of complete reports for high priority lakes.

#4: Develop, implement, and support citizen/partner educational programs to respond to emerging water quality issues within watersheds.

Funding: \$5,000 **Source(s):** MDA, PCA, BWSR

Responsibility: Lead: SWCD
Supporting: NRCS, TWPs, ESD, BSU

Evaluation: Implementation of appropriate educational campaigns.

#5: Conduct biennial Shoreland Summit to review accomplishments, receive public input, and recommend improvements to shoreland management efforts.

Funding: \$5,000

Sources: County, PCA

Responsibility:

Lead: ESD, SWCD

Supporting: BWSR, PCA, DNR(wtr), BCLARA, BAJPB, BSU, USFS

Evaluation: Successful completion of Shoreland Summits.

Issue II: Surface waters data are limited in scope and duration [SW: dat]

Concern: Data indicating surface water health is very limited in both quantity and quality. This problem is especially acute for river and stream data.

Objective: Collect additional priority data, and manage it effectively for use in making water resource management decisions.

Strategies:

#1: For 100 county lakes, review all water quality and ecological data sets from diverse sources (e.g., SWCD, BSU, and PCA) for quality and integrate them into a comprehensive web-accessible database.

Funding: \$25,000

Source: PCA, BWSR

Responsibility:

Lead: Beltrami SWCD

Supporting: ESD, DNR

Evaluation: Completion of the task.

#2: For at least the primary river in each watershed collect and compile baseline data sets on flow regimes and water quality and integrate them into a comprehensive web-accessible database.

Funding: \$50,000

Source: PCA, BWSR

Responsibility: Lead: Beltrami SWCD

Supporting: Marshall-Beltrami SWCD, RLWD, RL-DNR

Evaluation: Completion of task

#3: Identify any nutrient-impaired waters in the county and, where appropriate, advocate formal listing with MPCA.

Funding: \$40,000

Source(s): SWCDs, BWSR, MPCA

Responsibility:

Lead: SWCDs

Supporting: ESD, MPCA, RL-DNR, BSU

Evaluation: Completion of the task.

#4: Develop and implement a comprehensive five-year pilot program and lakeshed analysis for monitoring 5 priority surface waters (e.g., impaired or

vulnerable waters, rapidly urbanizing areas, hub lakes) and encompassing lakesheds.

Funding: \$15,000 per year **Source(s):** PCA, BWSR, OWD

Responsibility: Lead: SWCDs
Supporting: DNR, PCA, Lake Associations, MHB:
Riverwatch, HSC, Schools, BSU

Evaluation: Develop a plan for lakes, rivers and streams the first year; implement the plan the following four years.

#5: Continue to recruit and support citizen volunteer monitoring efforts with a grant program for volunteers and groups.

Funding: \$15,000 per year **Source(s):** SWCD, PCA, BWSR

Responsibility: Lead: SWCDs
Supporting: PCA, DNR, Lake Associations, MHB:
Riverwatch, HSC, Schools

Evaluation: Develop a plan for lakes, rivers and streams the first year; implement the plan the following four years.

Issue III: Need for strict but fair enforcement of existing regulations. [SW:dev]

Concern: Fair and timely enforcement of ordinances is necessary to protect water resources.

Objective: Enhance capacity to enforce existing ordinances and to monitor compliance with provisions of conditional use permits and variances.

Strategies:

#1: Establish an Outreach Coordinator position to work with and educate citizens and volunteer groups, and assist in the enforcement of policies and regulations.

Funding: \$50,000 per year **Sources:** Beltrami County

Responsibility: Lead: ESD
Supporting: SWCDs, BWSR, PCA, BSU

Evaluation: Establishment of Outreach Coordinator position.

#2: Develop a compliance tracking database to assure follow-up visits on all variances and conditional use permits.

Funding: Unknown (see #1) **Source(s):** County

Responsibility: Lead: ESD
Supporting: SWCDs

Evaluation: Completion of compliance inspections

#3: Develop and promote a web-based violations matrix including description of violation categories, standard operating procedures, severity criteria, and resolution options.

Funding: Unknown (see #1) **Source(s):** County
Responsibility: Lead: ESD
 Supporting: SWCD
Evaluation: Development and publication of list.

#4: Utilize enforcement review team to develop a process for systematic annual review of ordinances.

Funding: Unknown (see #1) **Source(s):** County
Responsibility: Lead: ESD
 Supporting: SWCD
Evaluation: Development and publication of list.

Issue IV: Storm water management [SW: dev]

Concern: Storm water impacts increase as population increases. Beltrami County is expected to experience a substantial increase in population over the next several decades with much of the growth concentrated near surface waters. Climate change is expected to produce more frequent and more intense storm events resulting in an even greater amount of stormwater run-off. Untreated run-off is contributing chemicals, sediments, and peak volumes to water bodies.

Objective: Reduce the flow of stormwater directly entering water bodies and thus minimize adverse impacts of storm water run-off on water quality.

Strategies:

#1: Identify rapidly urbanizing priority lakes in each watershed.

Funding: \$5,000 **Source(s):** County, PCA, BWSR
Responsibility: Lead: SWCD
 Supporting: BCLARA, ESD, BSU (Geography)
Evaluation: Establishment of ranked list of priority lakes by watershed.

#2: Undertake and complete a study to identify the quality and quantity of storm water entering into urbanizing, priority lakes by storm watershed.

Funding: \$15,000 **Source(s):** PCA, EPA, County
Responsibility: Lead: SWCD
 Supporting: BAJPB, Cities, MPCA, BWSR, BSU
Evaluation: Completion of studies.

#3: Develop and implement mitigating measures in those high priority storm watersheds to reduce nutrient and sediment inflow.

Funding: Unknown **Source(s):** PCA, EPA, BWSR, County
Responsibility: Lead: SWCD, NRCS
 Supporting: Cities, PCA, TWPs, ESD, DNR
Evaluation: Development and implement mitigating measures.

#4: Develop and implement new and existing measures to minimize the contribution of storm water from new subdivisions and development to surface waters. For all new developments, implement infiltration requirements based on projected rather than current stormwater levels.

Funding: Unknown **Source(s):** BWSR, County
Responsibility: Lead: ESD
 Supporting: SWCD, HRDC, Townships
Evaluation: Implementation of measures

#5: Improve communication and technical support for developing public demonstration projects (e.g., rain gardens).

Funding: Unknown **Source(s):** County, NMF
Responsibility: Lead: ESD
 Supporting: SWCD, DNR, NRCS, BWSR, MG, BSU, UMEX
Evaluation: Demonstration projects established

#6: Enhance engineering support for stormwater management.

Funding: Determined by demand **Source(s):** County, Fees
Responsibility: Lead: BAJPB, TSA2
 Supporting: SWCD, ESD
Evaluation: Project completed

HIGH PRIORITY ISSUES AND STRATEGIES

Issue V: Real and perceived threats of aquatic invasive species [SW:dev]

Concern: Actual and perceived impacts of aquatic invasive species are poorly understood. There is widespread concern that they may threaten the ecological integrity of economically critical surface waters.

Objective: Minimize probability of introductions, extent of invasions, and intensity of ecological impacts of invasive species.

Strategies:

#1: Continue and intensify public education efforts focused on minimizing the probability of “aquatic hitch-hikers” and other invaders with potential to compromise water quality.

Funding: \$15,000 **Source(s):** DNR
Responsibility: Lead: DNR (eco)
 Supporting: SWCD, BCLARA, LA, ESD, BSU
Evaluation: No new introductions to county waters; minimal impacts.

- #2: Reduce the invasibility of surface waters by enhancing the diversity and integrity of native plant and animal communities.**
Funding: \$10,000 / year **Source(s):** DNR Eco, BWSR
Responsibility: Lead: SWCD
 Supporting: ESD, DNR, BCLARA, LA, MG, BSU
Evaluation: Increased use of native vegetation in shoreline buffers and maintenance of aquatic plant communities.
- #3: Create a regional entity to cooperatively address potential migration and infestation.**
Funding: \$10,000 / year **Source(s):** DNR Eco
Responsibility: Lead: SWCD
 Supporting: DNR, Lake Associations, ESD
Evaluation: Creation of appropriate entity.

Issue VI: Soil erosion degrades water quality [SW:dev & SW:agr]

Concern: Soil erosion from all sources contributes to surface water quality degradation, loss in fish and wildlife habitat, removes productive topsoil and reduces functionality of streams, rivers and ditches.

Objective: Reduce soil erosion to protect water quality.

Strategies:

- #1: Assist the local governmental units in identifying areas where soil erosion levels contribute to surface water quality degradation.**
Funding: Unknown **Source(s):** County
Responsibility: Lead: SWCDs, NRCS
 Supporting: County, Townships, HRDC, BSU
Evaluation: Identified sites in the county/townships/cities.
- #2: Encourage development of local regulatory erosion control measures.**
Funding: Unknown **Source(s):** County
Responsibility: Lead: BAJPB
 Supporting: County, Townships, SWCDs,
Evaluation: At a minimum, the townships in the Bemidji commuter zone (BAJPB urbanizing area) adopt erosion control measures.
- #3: At the request of local governmental units, develop and provide technical support for regulatory erosion control measures.**
Funding: Unknown **Source(s):** County, NMF
Responsibility: Lead: TSA1, TSA2
 Supporting: County, Townships, SWCDs, JPB

Evaluation: The townships in the Bemidji commuter zone (JPB urbanizing area) successfully implement erosion control measures.

#4: Work with landowners on a voluntary basis to prevent and/or reduce erosion on their property.

Funding: \$10,000/year **Source(s):** BWSR, Local

Responsibility: Lead: SWCDs, NRCS
Supporting: ESD, PCA, USFS, MHB, DNR

Evaluation: Number of landowners utilizing the program.

Issue VII: Reduced function of key wetlands and riparian habitats adversely affects water quality and quantity [SW:dev]

Concern: A loss of wetlands and unique features is impacting water quality in selected areas of the watershed.

Objective: Identify those areas and take additional steps beyond current activities to protect them.

Strategies:

#1: Continue to implement, monitor and update County Ordinance #31 (Wetland Ordinance)

Funding: Unknown **Source(s):** County, Local In-kind

Responsibility: Lead: ESD
Supporting: SWCDs

Evaluation: Net value of wetlands in Beltrami County over time.

#2: Serve as the local contact point for landowners interested in wetland programs, i.e. US Fish and Wildlife Service, RIM, WRP, CRP, CSP, etc.

Funding: \$7,500 **Source(s):** BWSR, Local In-kind

Responsibility: Lead: SWCD
Supporting: BWSR, USFWS, NRCS, USACE, ESD

Evaluation: Utilization of service, number of landowners contacted.

#3: Encourage acquisition and development of conservation easements.

Funding: \$7,500 **Source(s):** BWSR, Local In-kind

Responsibility: Lead: SWCD
Supporting: ESD, BWSR

Evaluation: Number of Conservation Easements initiated.

Issue VIII: Quantity and quality of groundwater resources [GW:dat]

Concern: A lack of basic data on the distribution and status of groundwater within the county poses significant challenges to effective management.

Objective: Develop a comprehensive approach to monitoring and protection of groundwater resources.

Strategies:

#1: Continue to maintain the County Well Index (CWI) in cooperation with Minnesota Department of Health.

Funding: \$10,000 **Source(s):** BWSR, County

Responsibility: Lead: SWCD
Supporting: MDH

Evaluation: Maintenance of county well index.

#2: Continue to encourage well-head protection plans in developing areas.

Funding: Unknown **Source(s):** BWSR

Responsibility: Lead: SWCD
Supporting: MDH

Evaluation: Continue and expand current best practices and WHP areas.

#3: Identify and characterize known/suspected groundwater contamination sites.

Funding: Unknown **Source(s):** PCA

Responsibility: Lead: SWCD
Supporting: PCA, MDH

Evaluation: Establishment of list

#4: Continue to encourage proper procedures for well abandonment and seek cost share funds to help pay sealing costs.

Funding: \$50,000 **Source(s):** BWSR, County

Responsibility: Lead: SWCD
Supporting: MDH

Evaluation: Number of properly sealed un-used wells.

#5: Expand scope and coverage of Observation Well (ObWell) program across areas of the county that are currently unmonitored (e.g., Moose River Sand Ridge).

Funding: \$10,000 **Source(s):** DNR, USGS

Responsibility: Lead: SWCDs
Supporting: MDH

Evaluation: More comprehensive data on county groundwater resources.

Objective: Promote and utilize best management practices (BMPs) for conservation application in areas of the County identified as potential sites of concern.

Strategies:

#1: In at least three high-priority sub-watersheds, conduct a targeted campaign utilizing education, technical and/or financial assistance to increase BMP utilization.

Funding: \$100,000 **Source(s):** USDA, MDA, CSP, BWSR
Responsibility: **Lead:** NRCS
 Supporting: SWCD, UMEX, RLDNR, RLWD, MG
Evaluation: Number of landowners served.

#2: Work with conservation partners to identify and prioritize potential areas of immediate/important concern regarding high nutrient inputs to priority waters.

Funding: Unknown **Source(s):** BWSR, SWCD, RL-DNR
Responsibility: **Lead:** SWCDs
 Supporting: RL-DNR, NRCS
 UMEX, PCA, DNR
Evaluation: High priority areas identified.

#3: Develop conservation plans with landowners in identified priority sub-watersheds.

Funding: Unknown **Source(s):** BWSR, PCA
Responsibility: **Lead:** NRCS
 Supporting: SWCDs, UMEX
Evaluation: Number of plans developed.

#4: Continue to disseminate pertinent water quality BMP information as new data and information becomes available.

Funding: Unknown **Source(s):** Local In-kind
Responsibility: **Lead:** NRCS
 Supporting: SWCDs, ESD, UMEX, RL-DNR
Evaluation: Number of dissemination opportunities utilized.

Issue XI: Need for situation specific response strategies [SW:dev]

Concern: A lack of individualized tailored management plans and implementation processes for watershed and sub-watersheds (i.e., lakesheds) makes it difficult to address the unique circumstances of each situation.

Objective: Promote local groups that are aware of and can manage the impacts to that particular resource.

Strategies:

#1: Target a public education campaign to inform lakeshore owners, particularly new lakeshore owners, of the characteristics and value of their lake, the practices of lake water quality and the management options available to individual homeowners.

Funding: \$20,000 **Source(s):** MPCA, BWSR,
Responsibility: Lead: SWCDs
 Supporting: ESD, RLWD, OWD, BCLARA, LA
Evaluation: Number of persons reached.

#2: Develop and implement a program to promote lakeshed associations.

Funding: \$20,000 **Source(s):** MPCA, BWSR
Responsibility: Lead: SWCDs
 Supporting: BCLARA, ESD, MPCA, Minnesota
 Waters, DNR, BSU
Evaluation: Number of lakeshore associations started.

#3: Address issues related to TMDL for listed water bodies.

Funding: Unknown **Source(s):** PCA, BWSR, Local In-Kind
Responsibility: Lead: SWCDs
 Supporting: PCA, BWSR, DNR
Evaluation: Removal of listed waterbodies from the list.

#4: Implement township-based beaver population management countywide by providing funding for contracted control measures.

Funding: \$20,000 / year **Source(s):** BWSR, In-kind
Responsibility: Lead: Townships, County Hwy Dept., DNR(wld)
 Supporting: SWCD, ESD, NRM, OWD, RLWD
Evaluation: Reduction of beaver-caused damage.

Issue XII: Disposal of septic system wastes (especially winter months) [SW:sep]

Concern: There is a lack of science-based recommendations for locating environmentally suitable septic application sites. In addition, increasingly frequent lack of insulating snow cover and use of mound

septic systems has resulted in high numbers of frozen systems and an increased need to pump and dump waste during winter months.

Objective: Develop a scientifically sound system to identify seasonally suitable areas for disposal of septic system wastes.

Strategies:

#1: Develop a list and map of optimal sites for on-land disposal based on soil types, topography, and groundwater susceptibility.

Funding: \$5,000

Source(s): PCA, EPA

Responsibility: Lead: County GIS

Supporting: BWSR, NRCS, ESD, SWCD, BSU

Evaluation: Development of site list and watershed-based maps

#2: Encourage development of procedures and technologies to accept (on a fee basis) pumped wastes from private systems.

Funding: \$5,000

Source(s): PCA

Responsibility: Lead: ESD

Supporting: BWSR, MDH, SWCD

Evaluation: Feasibility analysis and technical recommendations paper.

#3: Develop criteria and policies related to the use of optimal disposal sites on county lands (e.g., develop procedures for septage application on county timber sites).

Funding: Unknown **Source(s):** County

Responsibility: Lead: County

Supporting: ESD, BWSR

Evaluation: Extent of site use.

#4: Revise and update the comprehensive county septage application ordinance.

Funding: Unknown **Source(s):** County

Responsibility: Lead: ESD

Supporting: SWCD, Townships

Evaluation: Revision of ordinance.

Issue XIII: Poorly planned developments adversely affect groundwater [GW:sep]

Concern: Increasingly intensive development and redevelopment of properties results in greater densities and impacts of individual septic tanks on water quality in sensitive areas.

Objective: Improve developmental planning to protect economically critical groundwater and surface water resources.

Strategies:

Part II: Watershed Specific Concerns

Mississippi Headwaters Watershed

Issue I: Low oxygen and related issues on the Mississippi River [SW:dat]

Concern: The existing dissolved oxygen impairment on the Mississippi River from the Headwaters to its intersection with the Schoolcraft River poses significant water quality problems for downstream waters. In particular, resulting phosphorus inputs to Lakes Irving and Bemidji severely compromise water clarity and aesthetic appeal. In addition, this internationally renowned reach's impairment may adversely affect tourism.

Objective: Characterize and, to the extent possible, remediate existing impairment.

Strategies:

#1: Consider establishing a watershed district to assure stable and sustained funding for water protection and enhancement activities in the watershed.

Funding: \$10,000

Source(s): In-Kind, LCCMR

Responsibility: Lead: Beltrami SWCD

Supporting: Hubbard, Clearwater, & Cass SWCDs,
DNR Waters, BCLARA, MHB

Evaluation: Establishment of watershed district.

#2: Conduct research on the cause and origin of the observed oxygen impairment and its consequences for downstream nutrient enrichment.

Funding: \$30,000

Source(s): NMF, PCA, BWSR, LCCMR

Responsibility: Lead: Beltrami SWCD

Supporting: Clearwater SWCD, PCA, DNR, BSU

Evaluation: Comprehensive analysis of scope and extent of problem.

#3: Develop and implement appropriate remediation steps.

Funding: Unknown

Source(s): PCA, USACE, LCCMR

Responsibility: Lead: Beltrami SWCD

Supporting: PCA, USACE, Bemidji Leads!, BSU

Evaluation: Number of lakes and systems impacted.

#4: Provide public with educational materials and opportunities regarding the nature and origin of the Mississippi River dissolved oxygen impairment.

Funding: \$5000

Source(s): BWSR, Neilson

Responsibility: Lead: Beltrami SWCD

Supporting: Bemidji Leads!, BSU

Evaluation: Quality and extent of educational efforts.

Issue II: Variability of surface and ground water levels cause erosion, loss of shoreland, and damage to structures. [SW:dat & GW:dat]

Concern: Groundwater and surface water flooding damages property throughout the watershed; low water levels compromise recreational activities.

Objective: Identify areas sensitive to fluctuating surface and groundwater levels and develop strategies to minimize damage in those areas.

Strategies:

#1: Continue to develop and implement a comprehensive management plan for all water control structures on the Upper Mississippi River.

Funding: Unknown **Source(s):** BWSR, EPA, USACE, PCA

Responsibility: **Lead:** USACE

Supporting: SWCD, MHB, PCA, DNR(fsh,wtr)

Evaluation: Adoption of U.S. Army Corp of Engineers plan.

Issue III: Intensive riparian development compromises water quality [SW:dev]

Concern: Vegetation modifications along developed/developing shorelines is impacting water quality and increasing run-off into water bodies.

Objective: Increase and enhance the quantity and quality of native vegetation along developed shoreland.

Strategies:

#1: Implement voluntary cost-share program of shoreline vegetative management.

Funding: \$25,000 / year **Source(s):** BWSR, PCA, In-Kind

Responsibility: **Lead:** SWCD

Supporting: NRCS, ESD, UMEX, MG, BCLARA

Evaluation: Number of homeowners served annually.

#2: Actively participate in discussions related to the development of revised state-wide shoreland rules.

Funding: Unknown **Source(s):** Local, BWSR

Responsibility: **Lead:** ESD/SWCD

Supporting: DNR, BAJPB

Evaluation: Appropriate revision of state shoreland rules.

Upper and Lower Red Lake Watershed

Issue I: Land use impacts on water quality of key sub-watersheds [SW:agr]

Concern: Patterns of land use within the Battle, Blackduck, Cormorant, and Tamarac River sub-watersheds result in significant impairments to these ecologically and culturally critical waters.

Objective: Alter patterns of land use to enhance water quality.

Strategies:

#1: Increase public educational outreach.

Funding: \$10,000 **Source(s):** Local

Responsibility: Lead: SWCD, NRCS, ESD
Supporting: RLWD, RL-DNR

Evaluation: Extent of public educational effort and changes in land use.

#2: Systematic collection of data to identify priority areas and issues.

Funding: \$20,000 **Source(s):** Tribal 319 Program, BWSR

Responsibility: Lead: SWCD
Supporting: Red Lake DNR, PCA, NRCS

Evaluation: Collection of sufficient relevant data to understand scope and extent of problems.

#3: Provide technical and financial support to landowners implementing BMPs within high priority areas identified within sub-watersheds.

Funding: Unknown **Source(s):** NRCS, BWSR, ESD

Responsibility: Lead: SWCD, NRCS
Supporting: Red Lake DNR

Evaluation: Extent of participation in relevant programs

#4: Provide technical and financial support for efforts to control release of nutrients and *Escherichia coli* bacteria from rice paddies.

Funding: Unknown **Source(s):** NRCS, BWSR, ESD, RLWD

Responsibility: Lead: SWCD, NRCS
Supporting: Red Lake DNR, RLWD

Evaluation: Extent of participation in relevant programs.

Thief River Watershed | Red Lake River Watershed

Issue I: Sediments from stream and ditch bank erosion degrade water quality [SW: agr]

Concern: Severe erosion is causing significant sedimentation downstream.

Objective: Manage ditch banks and stream banks to reduce erosion losses.

Strategies:

#1: Improve regular maintenance and increase extent of native vegetation in the network of ditch banks throughout the watershed.

Funding: \$250,000 **Sources:** Red Lake WD, DNR, In-Kind

Responsibility: Lead: M-B SWCD.

Supporting: County, DNR, BWSR, JDA, Twps.

Evaluation: Improved maintenance standards on all local ditches.

#2: Encourage landowners to utilize present and future cost-share and grant programs to provide buffers between areas of cropland and streams and ditches.

Funding: \$50,000 **Source(s):** BWSR, Red Lake WD

Responsibility: Lead: Marshall-Beltrami SWCD

Supporting: NRCS, DNR, BWSR, JDA, Twps.

Evaluation: Extent of implemented buffers.

Issue II: Impacts of feedlots and tiling on groundwater quality [GW:agr]

Concern: There are limited data on effects of tiling and feedlots on groundwater nitrates. Within the watershed, feedlots are present and the use of tiling is increasing.

Objective: Continue to monitor impacts of feedlots and tiling on groundwater nitrate levels.

Strategies:

#1: Collect systematic baseline data on groundwater nitrates

Funding: \$5,000 **Source(s):** PCA, MDA

Responsibility: Lead: Marshall-Beltrami SWCD

Supporting: PCA

Evaluation: Establishment of on-going groundwater nitrate monitoring program.

CLWP ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Administration / Coordination:

Since Beltrami County's CLWP was initially approved in 1991, and particularly within the past 5 years, Beltrami SWCD staff have worked with the Comprehensive Local Water Planning Advisory Committee to implement the strategies identified in each Annual Work Plan. An average of four meetings were held each year seeking input on local resource decisions, and providing the Committee members with updates on accomplishments. Coordination with the Beltrami County Board was accomplished through numerous appearances at regular Board meetings, and through Commissioner-appointed Advisory Committee representatives from their District. In addition, the Beltrami County CLWP was highlighted at several state resource management meetings.

Monitoring / Data Collection:

Lake Monitoring

A successful 2007 MPCA Clean Water Legacy Surface Water Assessment Program grant initiated a priority project that is sampling up to 36 individual lakes over a 2-year period. Samples are gathered by citizen volunteers and shipped to a certified laboratory for water quality analysis of standard parameters. Reports explaining the results are compiled at the end of the sampling season.

Surface water sampling was conducted each year of the water plan, with over 100 Beltrami County lakes being sampled for a multitude of water quality parameters since 1991. This information is utilized to establish water quality trends, or to begin a baseline of information. Lakes were selected by the Citizen's Advisory Committee, approved by the Beltrami SWCD Board, and were sampled once each month for five months (May - September). Samples were shipped to a certified laboratory for water quality analysis of standard parameters, and the results were entered into STORET.

Stream Monitoring

Provided technical assistance to the Turtle River Watershed Association in the form of sampling training, coordinating sampling efforts, serving as a central receiving location for the water samples, shipping the samples to a certified laboratory, compiling water quality test data, ensuring the data is submitted to the State-authorized repository, and in presenting and explaining the water quality data to the TRWA.

Volunteer Monitoring Assistance

SWCD served as a sample collection and shipment clearinghouse for citizen volunteer water monitoring efforts. Volunteers needing training were trained to sample and further assistance was provided upon request, most often with data interpretation. Samples were brought to the SWCD for shipping to a certified water testing laboratory, and follow-up assistance was provided.

Water Resources Impairments

Compiled an updated water resources impairments listing that was used to develop water impairment priorities. This resulted in a successful application for a MPCA Surface Water Assessment Grant.

Water Sampling Coordination

SWCD contacted several entities and agencies who conducted water sampling in Beltrami County to ensure that priority waters were being investigated and documented as efficiently as possible without duplication of efforts. Also discussed LWM Update recommendations.

Nitrate Testing

Four drinking water testing clinics were held in Beltrami County, where over 200 landowners' drinking water was tested for nitrate contamination. Of these water tests, less than 10 percent indicated nitrate levels that exceeded Department of Health drinking water standards. These landowners were provided with information on the associated health risks and options to reduce their nitrate levels. Outside of the clinic dates, approximately 125 landowners were provided with the sampling information and sample bottles with directions for getting the sample tested at a local laboratory. In addition, the SWCD referred over 150 landowners to a local, certified water testing lab where they had their water tested for nitrates and coliform bacteria.

Groundwater (Observation Well) Monitoring

19 groundwater wells were monitored in Beltrami County to continue the established groundwater database. Data was reported to the U of M Climatology Office and is located on the Beltrami SWCD web site.

County Well Index Records

Copies of the MN Department of Health well sealing and drilling records were filed in the SWCD office by township and whether sealed or drilled. They were available to the public, and were used as a technical resource for development planning and resource protection.

Regulations / Ordinances:

Shoreland Summits

Beltrami County initiated 2 Shoreland Summits – in 2003 and 2005 - where community leaders, elected officials, lakeshore association members, realtors, resort owners, and natural resources professionals were brought together to discuss their concerns about riparian impacts, and to develop a prioritized list of actions that the County could take to address these concerns. Each of these Summits resulted in specific targeted strategies that Beltrami County worked to initiate or include in the County's Shoreland Ordinance. Several of these identified strategies have been included in revisions to the County's Shoreland Ordinance and Sub-divisions Ordinance.

Beltrami County intends to continue the Shoreland Summits in the future due to the successful discussion of emerging issues, and the ability for partnership efforts to address these issues.

NE Lakes Study

Due to increasing lakeshore development on smaller, Natural Environment lakes, and prompted by concerned citizens, Beltrami County recognized the need to evaluate these lakes' sensitivity to development, and passed a one-year moratorium on plat approvals. They also undertook an aggressive project to evaluate these 168 lakes for 9 specific environmental criteria in partnership with the SWCD and MN-DNR. This information was weighted and placed into a matrix, and recommendations for shoreland management change were presented to the County Board. The final outcome was that the Natural Environment lakes were re-classified into 3 distinct classifications, and associated development regulations (lot size, frontage, setback, etc.) were updated based on the lake's sensitivity and included in passage of the County's Shoreland Ordinance revision.

Wetland Conservation Ordinance

Since 1991, the Beltrami SWCD provided technical assistance to the City of Bemidji and Beltrami County landowners for projects involving wetlands. Assistance included reviewing applications, conducting site visits, issuing permits, and coordinating with other federal, state, and local agencies.

Land & Water Treatment:

Healthy Lakes & Rivers Partnership

Provided technical and fiscal assistance to 8 lake associations to write and implement a lake management plan for their lake. Work was completed in partnership with the NMF, and the eight participating lake associations. Three lake management plans were completed and adopted in 2006, with another 3 lake management plans being completed and approved in 2007. This project was completed in June 2007, but interest in the program continues and another effort may be launched in the future.

Permitting Review

Permit applications for water appropriation and DNR Waters jurisdiction work were reviewed by SWCD staff and commented on by the SWCD Board as appropriate. Additionally, permit applications for Shoreland Ordinance work in Beltrami County were reviewed as they were received.

Wood Ash Utilization

Landowners whose agricultural fields' soils testing indicated a low pH, were provided with technical assistance so that wood ash, a by-product of the local wood and board companies, was effectively applied to increase the soil pH and the field's productivity for legumes. Over 100 landowners were assisted in the past 5 years to improve their grazing lands, with a total value to Beltrami County in excess of \$2.5 million.

Shoreline Stewardship

Over 175 landowners were provided technical assistance for their lakeshore and riparian conservation issues.

Stormwater Management Assistance

Provided technical assistance to the City of Bemidji for stormwater remediation strategies, particularly the Highway 197 re-alignment project on the southern end of Lake Bemidji. Assistance was also provided to Bemidji State University, and the City of Bemidji.

Beaver Population Control

Funding was pursued to provide financial assistance to townships and the county so that damage from beaver populations could be controlled through trapping, or placing Clemson Levelers in strategic locations as requested at the local level. Efforts did not result in funding of the grant application.

Conservation Technical Engineering Assistance

In 1995, the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) provided funding to the SWCDs in Minnesota to improve their technical capabilities by hiring registered engineers and technicians to assist landowners with the design and construction of conservation practices. Eleven geographic areas were designated in Minnesota and the SWCDs in these areas were asked to form Joint Powers Boards (JPB) to implement the technical assistance program. The North Central Minnesota SWCDs Technical Services Area (TSA) consists of the SWCDs in the counties Beltrami, Cass, Clearwater, Crow Wing, Hubbard, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake of the Woods, and Wadena. The TSA selected the Beltrami SWCD to serve as its Host District, where the technical staff would be headquartered, and where the program administration would be based.

The TSA's current technical staff is Mr. Jon Hodgson, P.E., who meets as much of the technical conservation needs of the area's landowners as is possible. Funding for the TSA has been reduced in the past 5 years, resulting in the loss of the Engineering Technician position in 2007. The JPB has committed to refill the position as soon as stable funding is achieved. In the past 5 years, over 60 landowners have received technical engineering assistance through this program that has addressed priority water resource concerns.

Education / Information:

Education has always been a priority in the CLWP, and efforts are made to integrate an educational component in projects as often as possible. Over 55 water quality related articles and news releases were published in local newspapers and newsletters.

Complete 2003 CLWP Update

Contracts were implemented to complete the Beltrami County Third Generation CLWP. The update process also included presentations to the County Board and the public, in addition to an aggressive educational effort.

2008 CLWP Update

The Beltrami County CLWP update to a Fourth Generation Plan was initiated in 2007 with a strong public participation process. Contracts for process facilitation were engaged and completed, and a Priority Concerns Scoping Document was prepared and submitted to BWSR. The update process required attendance to and presentations to the County Board and the public, and an aggressive educational effort was completed in order to determine the priority concerns.

Lakeshore Association Assistance

Lakeshore associations in Beltrami County greatly increased in number in the past five years. SWCD staff were instrumental in the successful development of the Beltrami County Lakes and Rivers Association (BCLARA), and in the formation of six new lake associations, and the re-vitalization of 3 existing associations.

Shoreland Buffer Restoration Guidebook

The Beltrami SWCD, in partnership with the BCLARA and the Beltrami County Environmental Services Department developed and published a lakeshore-owner targeted booklet providing lakeshore management technical assistance for vegetative buffer restoration. One thousand copies of the “Shoreland Buffer Restoration” handbook were initially printed and distributed to lakeshore owners in 2006, the first year of publication. The handbook was revised and 1,000 copies were again printed in 2007. Landowners appreciated the information, and many subsequent requests for lakeshore technical assistance were received.

CLWP ONGOING ACTIVITIES

CLWP Administration and Maintenance

The Water Planning Advisory Committee (WPAC) is a working group of the Beltrami SWCD, which serves as the designated implementing agency for the Beltrami County

CLWP. This Committee is responsible for overseeing the water planning process and providing guidance on water planning policy decisions. The WPAC meets a minimum of four times during the year.

The WPAC is comprised of a cross-section of citizens and local agency personnel, with 12 voting members and 20 *ex officio*, non-voting members with a variety of technical expertise. This membership list is an extension of the Task Force membership which the Beltrami County Board first appointed in January 1989.

The designated representative of the County Board serves as WPAC Chair and a Vice-Chair and Secretary are elected from its voting membership at the first meeting of each year. The WPAC is responsible for recommending any mileage or per diem compensations to the Beltrami SWCD Board for their approval.

The Beltrami SWCD is the chief implementing agency for Beltrami County's CLWP. The WPAC annually approves of goals and strategies to be completed that year. The Beltrami SWCD Board and staff coordinates the implementation of these strategies with the Marshall-Beltrami SWCD and other local units of government. The Beltrami SWCD also serves as the fiscal agent for the CLWP funds, and is responsible for completing any required audits.

The Beltrami SWCD Board names a Water Planning Coordinator from the Beltrami SWCD staff, who is charged with implementing those strategies outlined above. This person is also responsible for submitting annual work plans and reports, assisting with the annual BWSR Natural Resources Block Grant request, and applying for any additional funding opportunities which will enhance and expedite the water planning goals of Beltrami County.

Water Plan Amendment Process

Proposals and recommendations to alter, enhance, or otherwise change the CLWP will first be presented to the WPAC at one of their regularly scheduled meetings. The WPAC may request the Local Water Planning Coordinator to gather additional information before making a decision.

If the WPAC feels the issue warrants an official amendment to the CLWP, they will record such in the official minutes, and their recommendation for an amendment will be forwarded to the Beltrami SWCD Board at their next monthly Board meeting. The SWCD Board will:

- 1) Examine the associated fiscal or policy effects of the proposal.
- 2) Examine and describe any potential conflicts with existing controls.
- 3) Request official review of the proposed amendment as is deemed appropriate.

The Beltrami SWCD will prepare a report for the WPAC and present it at their next meeting. If the WPAC, after reviewing the Beltrami SWCD report, feels the issue warrants an official amendment to the CLWP, the minutes will record such, and the following process will be followed:

- 1) All local agencies will have a sixty day period in which to review the proposed, amended CLWP, and submit any written comments to the Water Planning Coordinator.
- 2) Any comments received during the local review period will be reviewed by the Water Planning Coordinator, who will respond to the comments received. This person will communicate the comments to the WPAC and the Beltrami SWCD Board, who may recommend incorporating the comments into the amended CLWP if they are deemed pertinent to the goals of the CLWP.
- 3) A public hearing will be conducted pursuant to M.S. section 375.51, where the general public will be given the opportunity to officially comment on the proposed amendments.
- 4) The WPAC may make recommendations based on the public hearing to the Beltrami SWCD Board, who may direct the Water Planning Coordinator to incorporate the comments into the CLWP if they are deemed pertinent to the goals of the CLWP.
- 5) All State agencies will have ninety days to review the proposed amendments and provide written comments to the Water Planning Coordinator. Seven copies of the amended CLWP will be mailed to the BWSR, who will be responsible for distributing them to the appropriate reviewing agency.
- 6) After the State review is completed, the Water Planning Coordinator will present any necessary recommendations for change to the Beltrami SWCD Board and will incorporate them into the CLWP upon SWCD Board approval. After final revision, the amended CLWP will be presented to the Beltrami County Board of Commissioners who will consider adopting the amended CLWP by formal County Resolution.