

## **PRESS RELEASE: Clearwater SWCD Wins State Legacy Grants FROM CLEARWATER SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT, 694-6845**

Clearwater Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) recently won over \$40,000 in competitive Clean Water Fund grants from the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources. These funds boost local efforts to protect county water quality and reduce harmful erosion.

“While we’re proud of our county’s generally good water quality, there are still sensitive sites that require additional protection from pollution and erosion,” comments District Manager Kathy Rasch. She continues, “Winning these grants allows us to ensure that future generations inherit the clean, clear waters they deserve.”

The largest share of these funds goes to improve water quality in the Lost River and Pine Lake areas.

The first element serves agricultural producers near the Lost River. The grant provides assistance to restore a significant section of compromised riverbank. The grant also funds cost sharing for landowners to install specialized culverts, called side water inlets, on fields adjacent to eligible streams and ditches. These simple structures allow for field drainage while reducing gullies and erosion. Producers and communities save time and money when side water inlets keep excess soil out of ditches and other waterbodies downstream.

Another component of this grant funds protection of Pine Lake water quality. Cost sharing will be available to homeowners to protect their shorelines using naturalized shoreline buffers with native wildflowers, grasses, shrubs and trees. For those sites needing more protection rock rip rap or landscaping logs may be used to shield the shoreline against the destructive force of waves and ice. These practices stabilize vulnerable shoreline, filter out pollutants and reduce the erosion that otherwise harms a lake’s health.

Clearwater SWCD encourages interested Lost River area producers and Pine Lake landowners to call the office to take advantage of these volunteer conservation opportunities.

Monitoring local lake water quality is another important component of conservation. Additional grant monies fund water quality studies on three county lakes. Good data from studies like these informs sound water protection practices and planning.

The final share of these grants supports the revision and distribution of the *Clearwater County Shoreland Homeowner’s Guide to Lake Stewardship*. Clearwater SWCD and Clearwater County Environmental Services staff will collaborate to update this important resource for local lakeshore owners. This guide contains tips to protect fishing, swimming, recreation, shoreline and water quality on area lakes. Call the district if you want to get on the mailing list for the revised Stewardship guide.

Clearwater SWCD encourages local residents to reach office staff at 218-694-6845 with questions about conservation problems and programs. Active community participation ensures that our county benefits fully from the grant dollars awarded. Clean Water Fund grants come from the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment approved by Minnesota voters in 2008.