



# BWSR Update

May 17, 2011

## Conference Committee Report on Omnibus Finance Bill

The conferees on the Omnibus Finance bill met the evening of May 13 to present their agreed to numbers based on the established spending targets. The committee report calls for a 26% overall reduction for BWSR as outlined in the chart below and in the [H.F. 1010 CC Report](#). The General Fund reductions will have serious consequences to the activities of the agency and local government partners. These reductions jeopardize the ability of the state to secure and implement federal USDA funding which brings in over \$100 million in conservation funding to Minnesota per year, reducing the readiness of the delivery system to respond to disasters, slowing progress to the goals of the Legacy Amendment, and compromising the effectiveness of our current state program efforts.

- 14% reduction (\$870,000) in *Conservation Delivery Program, also known as SWCD General Services*
  - Estimated reduction of \$4,000/SWCD. This reduction is on top of a reduction of more than 30% since 2004
  - Elimination of one engineer and two technicians that provide engineering design, survey, and project oversight services to approximately 15 SWCDs
- 15% reduction (\$1,060,000) in *Natural Resource Block Grant Funding*; average reduction of \$6,075 to a level of less than \$35K/yr in base grants for counties to implement state required statutes and rules such as Shoreland Management and the Wetland Conservation Act. These reductions will result in at least 20% and in some cases as much as 40-50% less in program support beginning in 2012 as compared to 2002.
- 23% reduction (\$2,052,000) in total for agency programs and administrative support operations may result in a reduction 10 FTEs. BWSR currently has only 41 FTEs covered by the General Fund.
  - Wetland Conservation Act implementation reduction of \$136,000. BWSR is responsible for administration and oversight of WCA, which is implemented locally by Counties, Cities, and other local governments. BWSR is also statutorily required to provide technical assistance to local governments and landowners who propose to impact wetlands. A reduction in BWSR WCA staff of would transfer workload to local governments and reduce the assistance provided to landowners
  - Elimination of Wetland Bank Monitoring and Enforcement (reduction of \$120,000). State and Federal regulations require wetland bank sites to be protected by a conservation easement. This ensures that the functions and public value that were lost to impacted wetlands are adequately replaced and maintained long-term. BWSR, as the holder of the easement, is required to periodically inspect those banked replacement wetlands to ensure that the wetlands, and the State's interest in the property, are maintained. If the ability to identify easement violations through monitoring is reduced or eliminated, associated protection of wetland bank functions and value will be diminished, jeopardizing compliance with State and federal wetland conservation laws.
  - Drainage Assistance Program reduction of \$58,000. BWSR is responsible for reviewing engineer reports on drainage projects, coordinating the Drainage Work Group, and providing expertise and guidance to the nearly 100 Drainage Authorities responsible for implementing the requirements of Statutes 103D and 103E on 21,000 miles of public ditches in the state. Our ability to provide assistance and support for these activities will be compromised with this reduction.
  - 23% reduction to Administration and Operations (reduction of \$1,738,000); a reduction at this level equates to approximately 9 FTEs being eliminated resulting in only about 32 FTEs agency-wide supported by the General Fund. These positions are for critical in providing support to all other staff and programs as well as supporting the Board's functions and activities.

The drastic proposed cuts and related workforce reductions will severely degrade and limit the agency's ability to achieve our shared goals of protecting, restoring and enhancing our land and water resources. The majority of our FY2012-13 projected project and program activity is tied to Legacy funding. The agency and local government partners will be challenged to achieve the goals of the Legacy Amendment without the professional staffing required to deliver the conservation expertise necessary to achieve program and project results.

## Conference Committee Report on HF 1010

BWSR Base Budget	2012-13	Conf Committee 5/13/11			Governor's Budget Recommendations	
		Conf Cmte Reduction	2012-13	% reduction	2012-13	% change from base
Total Approp	27,960	7352	20578	-26%	25,684	-8%
Cost Share	4,556	2682	1,874	-59%	3,436	-25%
Conserv Delivery	6,370	870	5,500	-14%	6,370	0%
RRBC	168	84	84	-50%	200	19%
Area II	240	120	120	-50%	0	-100%
MN River JBP	168	84	84	-50%	0	-100%
NRBG	7,052	1060	5,992	-15%	7,052	0%
WCA Operations	908	136	772	-15%	908	0%
WCA Monitoring	120	120	0	-100%	120	0%
WCA DNR Pass through	200	200	0	-100%	0	-100%
WCA 11 Cty Metro	200	200	0	-100%	0	-100%
Drainage Assist Operations	390	58	332	-15%	390	0%
Admin	7,558	1738	5,820	-23%	7,208	-5%

House conferees are: McNamara, Hackbarth, Torkelson, Hoppe and Dill. Senate conferees are: Ingebrigtsen, Rosen, Pederson, Gerlach, and Dahms.

## Legacy Fund bills going to Conference Committee

The House (H.F. 1061) and Senate (S.F. 1363) bills are very similar for the BWSR provisions. However, there are a number of differences in other portions of the bill especially regarding parks funding and the structure of the Clean Water Council. Below are highlights for BWSR appropriations contained in the bills.

### CLEAN WATER FUNDS:

- **\$27M for Surface and Drinking Water Protection/Restoration Projects.** These grants are targeted toward priorities identified in local water plans, and local capacity for on-the-ground implementation will be increased through technical and engineering assistance. These funds will be used for keeping water on the land, protecting and restoring streams, groundwater, surface water, and upgrading feedlots and SSTS Imminent Health Threat systems.
- **\$6M for Targeted Local Resource Protection and Enhancement Grants.** These grants will enhance local efforts to develop and implement, on a local or regional basis, water resource protection and management measures or initiatives that go beyond state minimum standards for water quality. GIS and related tools and models will be used to optimize project effectiveness based on multiple benefits analysis with a minimum of \$3.0M for county SSTS program implementation.
- **\$1.9M for Measures, Results and Accountability.** Quality assurance for CWF projects by providing oversight, assessment, assistance and reporting of outcomes using standardized, scientific evaluation of resource indicators (such as soil erosion and pollutant migration studies). A mentoring, training and certification program will be developed and implemented to build capacity for future conservation program results.
- **\$2.0M for Conservation Drainage Management and Assistance.** Projects to retrofit existing drainage management systems with water quality improvement and retention practices.
- **\$13.6M for Long-Term Water Quality Protection.** RIM Easements -- \$11.6 M for riparian buffers, \$2.0 M for wellhead protection.
- **\$3M for Citizen and Community Participation Program.** Increasing citizen participation in implementing water quality projects and practices via a new sub-granting program. This effort will be delivered through local governments in partnership with engaged community groups.
- **\$84K for Restoration Evaluations** on projects as required by MS1140.50

### OUTDOOR HERITAGE FUNDS:

- **\$2.25M for the Riparian Buffer** program that will compliment the Clean Water Fund riparian buffers.
- **\$13.0M for Wetland Restoration** that will be implemented through the RIM/WRP partnership.
- **\$1.89M for Wild Rice Shoreland Protection;** This is a Ducks Unlimited/BWSR/DNR/SWCD partnership project.