

How the Clean Water Fund Protects Minnesota's Drinking Water Sources



In 2008, Minnesota voters took a bold action to protect our drinking water resources, protect and enhance natural habitats, improve our parks and trails, and preserve our cultural heritage. The vote to confirm the Clean Water, Land, and Legacy Amendment affirms the cultural importance of water in our “Land of 10,000 Lakes” and the desire to provide safe and sufficient drinking water for all Minnesotans.

The Legacy Amendment requires that at least **five percent of the Clean Water Fund** must be spent only to protect drinking water sources.

Our strategy



Identify what's wrong (or healthy) with our water.



Find the source of the problem, make a plan to fix it, and prioritize the most important problems first.



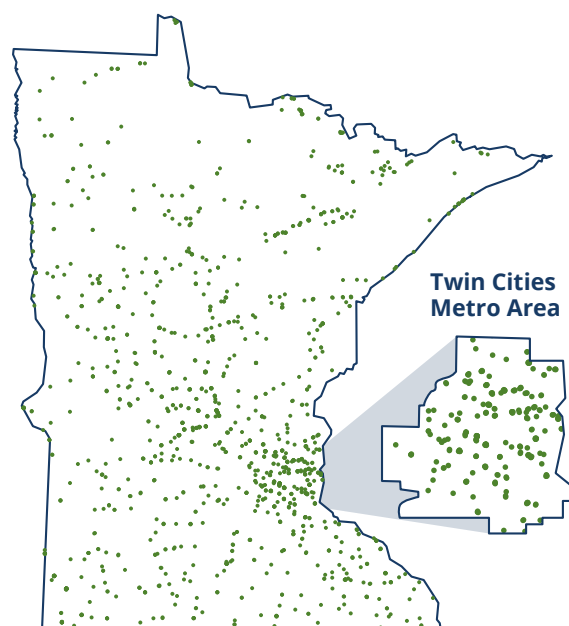
Fund projects and support the people who can fix the problem.



Monitor the project results to see if the fixes worked.

Projects supported by a source water protection grant

2010–2024



How do we help communities?

Healthy people in healthy communities depend on safe and reliable water for drinking and clean water for recreation. As Minnesota's lead public health agency, the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) is using the Clean Water Fund to expand existing drinking water protection successes and enhance water resource protection efforts for the future. They achieve this through a variety of initiatives.

- Gather and share important information about groundwater resources and drinking water wells
- Learn more about the health risks from chemicals, pathogens, and naturally occurring elements in water
- Assist communities to protect their drinking water

How do we measure success?

- MDH completes re-evaluations, full evaluations, and updates water guidance for nominated chemicals in Minnesota waters to see what health risks they pose through the Contaminants of Emerging Concern (CEC) program.
- The state's goal is to keep groundwater nitrate levels below the drinking water standard (10 parts per million) for all people who use it as a drinking water source.
- The Clean Water Fund is being used to provide private well tests for 10% of users every year for ten years, and all private well users are offered education on mitigation options.

A sampling of thousands of projects:



SOURCE WATER PROTECTION PLANNING AND GRANTS

More than 920 community water suppliers use groundwater in Minnesota. The Clean Water Fund supports a source water protection plan for each that identifies risks to drinking water. Twenty-three water suppliers that use surface water like the Mississippi River have source water protection plans in progress.



GROUNDWATER PROTECTION RULE

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture administers a rule to keep nitrate in public drinking water sources below the federal standard. About three dozen communities have nitrate levels that are close to this limit. The Department of Agriculture works with local water suppliers to identify the sources of nitrate, and engages landowners to use best practices such as cover crops, planting perennials, or adjusting nitrogen application rates.



PRIVATE WELL TESTING

There are over 469,000 private wells in Minnesota. The Clean Water Fund is used to offer all private well households a free well test for five contaminants (nitrate, bacteria, lead, arsenic, and manganese). Using other state funding sources, local government partners provide free mitigation for high nitrate in eight southeast Minnesota counties.



CONTAMINANTS OF EMERGING CONCERN (CECS)

The Health Department operates a nation-leading Public Health Lab. The lab monitors for contaminants found in Minnesota's surface and drinking waters. The Health Department evaluates and reviews contaminants, developing or updating water guidance as necessary using new methodologies to reduce health risks to Minnesotans.