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News release: BWSR awarded \$25M in NRCS RCPP funds to prioritize soil health

1 message

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News Release

BWSR awarded \$25M in NRCS RCPP funds to prioritize soil health

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November 6, 2023

St. Paul, Minn. — The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) will receive \$25 million in [Regional Conservation Partnership Program \(RCPP\)](#) funding from the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service to support soil health initiatives across Minnesota. The Advancing Soil Health in Minnesota Agriculture project will offer financial incentives to producers for implementing soil health best management practices and systems such as no-till, strip-till, rotational grazing and cover crops.

“This funding is a valuable addition to a large-scale effort BWSR is undertaking to make soil health a top priority in Minnesota,” BWSR Executive Director John Jaschke said. “By improving soil health, we can reduce erosion from tilled fields, which is a significant source of sediment entering major waterways such as the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers. These best management practices also offer benefits to producers by contributing to the long-term health of their soils.”

BWSR is one of 81 organizations selected by NRCS to receive an unprecedented \$1.1 billion investment via RCPP, which takes a voluntary approach to expand the reach of conservation efforts and climate-smart agriculture through public-private partnerships.

“The NRCS, BWSR, and SWCDs work hand in hand to serve the producers of Minnesota,” said NRCS State Conservationist Troy Daniell. “Our partnership puts Minnesota at the forefront of climate smart agriculture. Continuous effort by Minnesota’s farmers and ranchers to improve and maintain soil health keeps our farms productive and resilient.”

Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) will help implement practices supported by the RCPP funding by working in partnership with local landowners.

“Managing soil health means something different on every farm,” said Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts Executive Director LeAnn Buck. “This investment will provide additional expertise and services to help producers with adopting practices that contribute to healthier soils and increase productivity while also meeting their local resource needs and conditions.”

BWSR also received \$21 million from the state’s general fund and \$13 million from

the state's Clean Water Fund this year to support soil health programming throughout Minnesota. Soil health is one priority identified in the Minnesota's [Climate Action Framework](#).

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BWSR is the state soil and water conservation agency, and it administers programs that prevent sediment and nutrients from entering our lakes, rivers, and streams; enhance fish and wildlife habitat; and protect wetlands. The 20-member board consists of representatives of local and state government agencies and citizens. BWSR's mission is to improve and protect Minnesota's water and soil resources by working in partnership with local organizations and private landowners.

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