



2018 Annual Activity Report

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Aquatic Invasive Species Watercraft Inspection Program

Watercraft inspections and decontaminations were conducted on Burntside Lake, Ely Lake, Fall Lake, Gilbert Pit, Pelican Lake, Shagawa Lake, & Lake Vermilion in 2018. This program educates boaters on aquatic invasive species prevention as inspections/decontaminations are conducted.

- 24,311 watercraft inspections
- 546 watercraft decontaminations
- Employed nearly 40 seasonal workers
- 12,213 watercraft inspector hours
- A pilot project with resorts resulted in another 6,556 inspections on private accesses.
- All of this with lake associations and municipalities



Forestry Services



In 2018, 842 acres of land were incorporated into nine Forest Stewardship Plans for private landowners. In addition, we partnered with the Natural Resource Conservation Service to design forest conservation projects for 6 landowners applying for federal funding. A field tour was organized to see forestry projects and practices in the Ely area. Free site visits are offered to all landowners, with a focus on those owning small acreage that often don't qualify for other forestry services.

Annual Tree Sale

Orders take place the beginning of January each year, with pickup dates in May. In 2018, we offered over 20 types of trees and shrubs. Unsold trees were donated to the Laurentian Environmental Learning Center and Camp Esquagama. Orders are underway for the 2019 planting season. Order yours today!





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Civic Engagement & Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies (WRAPS)

Cloquet, Vermilion and Rainy Rivers-Headwaters Watersheds:



- Promoted citizen water quality monitoring at booths at the St. Louis County Fair and Ely Farmers Market. A Secchi disk display showed people how easy it is to take readings and volunteer.
- Presented on watersheds and citizen water monitoring at 2 lake association meetings and an Ely Field Naturalist group meeting.
- Culvert inventory assessments were conducted in the Rainy River Headwaters Watershed
- A Family Forest Workshop and field tour focusing on healthy forests for healthy watersheds was held in Ely, MN in the Rainy River Headwater Watershed.
- Collected surface water quality data at four lakes in the Vermilion River Watershed.
- Over 30 people attended a public meeting was held in Orr, MN to discuss the water monitoring status and plans for Myrtle Lake in the Vermilion River Watershed.
- A public meeting was held in Fredenberg, MN to discuss the water monitoring status of the Cloquet River Watershed.
- Students in the Vermilion Watershed played the “The Watershed Game” in coordination with the Lake Vermilion-Soudan Underground Mine State Park.
- Presented a Shoreline Best Management Practices Workshop in the Vermilion River Watershed.

Surface Water Assessment Grants (SWAG)

Little Fork River Watershed

Collected water quality samples for 5 lake sites and 8 stream sites in the Little Fork River Watershed. Data will be used to assess surface water quality and prioritize future restoration and protection strategies throughout the watershed.



Outreach and Education



A new position was created to help facilitate outreach efforts within the district to school age children and adults. In 2018, District staff provided outreach and learning opportunities including:

- About 300 students competed in a poster contest for grades 4-6 on the theme “Watersheds: Our Water, Our Home.”
- Conducted in-school programs to students in grades 4-12.
- Presented at a school forest workshops for teachers.
- Presented at the 6th grade Boreal Forest Field Day at Bear Head Lake State Park and assisted with Ely Community Resource Eco Club activities.

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DNR Conservation Partners Legacy Grant

Orr Area Trout Streams II

Work commenced on a project that will help improve stream trout habitat on the Lost River, Bulldog-Hanson Creek, and Fawn Creek near Orr. Partnerships with St. Louis County and the MN DNR have already resulted in the replacement of an undersized and perched culvert on the main stem of the Lost River. The new culvert will increase fish passage, increase floodplain connectivity and reduce unnatural erosion that was resulting from the previous crossing. Two additional culvert replacements, riparian tree planting, and brush release will be targeted for completion under this grant.



DNR Conservation Partners Legacy Grant

St. Louis River Conifer Enhancement

In 2018, 1,350 trees were planted across 3 sites along the St. Louis River to provide food and cover for wildlife. The trees were a mix of bur oak and white spruce. Primary wintering habitats are imperative to the survival of whitetail deer in these harsh winter areas of northeastern Minnesota.

BWSR State Cost-Share Program

Land occupiers wishing to implement projects that reduce erosion are eligible for cost-share funding. The District will evaluate a project idea and seek engineering assistance for project design, if needed. The landowner hires a contractor to complete the work. Once installed, landowners are eligible for up to a 75% match. Below are before and after photos of a 2018 shoreline stabilization project on the Ash River. It is estimated to reduce nearly 6 tons of sediment and 5 pounds of phosphorous going into the river, annually!

Severe erosion on shoreline before project

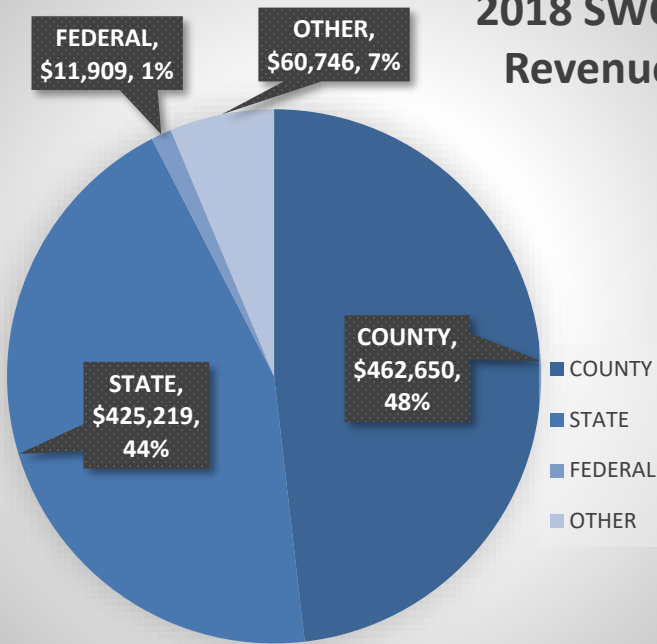


Stabilized shoreline after project

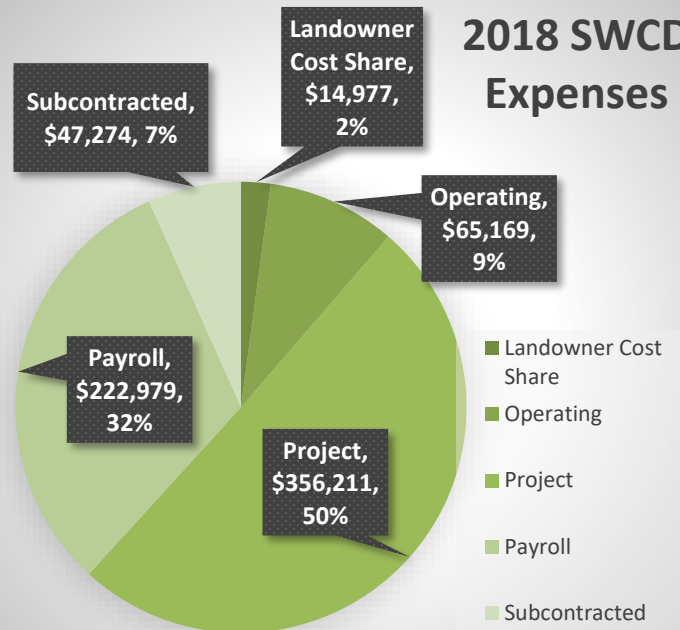


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2018 SWCD Revenue



2018 SWCD Expenses



Income

Revenue Source	Amount	Percentage
COUNTY	\$462,650	48%
STATE	\$425,219	44%
FEDERAL	\$11,909	1%
OTHER	\$60,746	6%
Total	\$960,524	100%

Expenses

Expense type	Cost	Percentage
Landowner Cost Share	\$14,977	2%
Operating	\$65,169	9%
Project	\$356,211	50%
Payroll	\$222,979	32%
Subcontracted	\$47,274	7%
Total	\$706,610	100%



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