

FY22-23 Clean Water Fund Initiatives

PROTECTING AND RESTORING MINNESOTA'S WATERS



Supplemental resources provided by the Clean Water Fund (CWF) support Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) efforts to protect, maintain and improve the health of all Minnesotans by making sure drinking water is safe for everyone, everywhere in Minnesota. Drinking water protection efforts include a series of strategic safeguards that begin with sources in rivers, lakes or groundwater and extend to taps in homes, businesses and other places throughout the state.

Contaminants of Emerging Concern (CEC) Initiative

About

The CEC Initiative provides health-based guidance that protects all Minnesotans. Following our promulgated methodology, we consider those most sensitive to contaminant exposures, including pregnant women, fetuses, infants, and children. The CEC Initiative is the only program in the U.S. that specifically addresses the implications of contaminant exposure for infants due to their small size and high fluid intake rate, whether they are breastfeeding or bottle-fed.

Highlights from FY20-21

Over the last biennium, the CEC Initiative:

- Reevaluated PFOS based on a new cancer report;
- Reviewed biphenyl;
- Made progress on a review of PFHxA; and
- Prepared a list of chemicals for rulemaking.

The program has accomplished these activities in spite of most staff being reassigned to the MDH COVID response. Staff have continued providing full technical support to our stakeholders through the forms of emails, phone calls, and presentations. The program will hold its annual CEC nomination meeting in July.

Plans for FY22-23

The CEC Initiative has been collaborating with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on new methods to identify potential CECs and to screen CECs. In the upcoming year, staff will test and fine-tune the new methods. MDH anticipates that more innovative work will stem from this collaboration. The CEC Initiative will also work towards its goal of 10 chemical reviews per biennium.

Private Well Protection Initiative

About

Approximately 21% of Minnesotans drink water from private wells and have to ensure the safety of their drinking water through water testing and treatment. The goal of the Private Well Protection Initiative is to provide safe drinking water to private well users. The Initiative accomplishes this goal through education, outreach activities, strategic partnerships, and research into drinking water contaminants and treatment options.

Highlights from FY20-21

Outcomes from the last biennium include:

- Updating educational materials and website messaging;
- Researching naturally occurring radium in private well water;
- Providing lab toolkits to water testing laboratories; and
- Creating a map of certified labs for private well users to know where to get their well water tested.

Plans for FY22-23

In the next biennium, the Private Well Protection Initiative will:

- Complete the radium study and develop guidance based on the results. Findings and recommendations will be disseminated through outreach and education.
- Pilot two grants through Safe Drinking Water for Private Well Users, focusing on areas with elevated nitrate and arsenic. Grant funds will support well water testing, private well user education, and installation of water treatment systems.
- Continue to develop partnerships with Soil and Water Conservation Districts, local public health, and local organizations to assist private well users.

Source Water Protection (SWP)

About

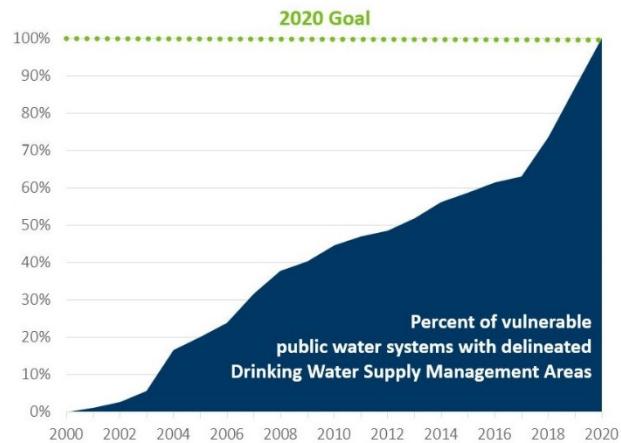
The SWP Program at MDH provides technical and financial assistance to help public water systems protect the sources of their drinking water. MDH works with public water systems to identify potential threats to drinking water quality and public health. Through SWP Planning and SWP Grants, MDH supports public water systems and communities as they develop and implement strategies to manage and eliminate threats to drinking water.

Highlights from FY20-21

CWF dollars helped the SWP Program achieve its 2020 strategic goal of delineating Drinking Water Supply Management Areas for all community water systems in the state with vulnerable wells. Meeting this goal was a complex undertaking that necessitated significant changes to the SWP program and involved staff across the Drinking Water Protection program.

Plans for FY22-23

In FY 22-23, the SWP Program plans to use CWF appropriations to conduct strategic surveillance of source water quality for priority emerging contaminants. The program will also make progress on targets included in the Clean Water Council Strategic Plan, including accelerating source water protection planning for surface water and groundwater systems, meeting increasing demand for SWP Grants, and protecting vulnerable drinking water sources.



Groundwater Protection and Restoration Strategies (GRAPS)

About

GRAPS is an MDH-led, multiple-agency effort to distill state data, information, and expertise on groundwater. GRAPS outputs help local implementers set management priorities and target resources to areas where they are most needed. GRAPS reports provide critical information on groundwater and drinking water that inform local comprehensive watershed plans, referred to as One Watershed One Plan (1W1P).

Highlights from FY20-21

In FY 20-21, ten GRAPS reports were completed. Eight additional reports will be completed for the next round of the 1W1P planning grants. Considerable effort was taken to add datasets included in GRAPS reports to the DNR's Watershed Health Assessment Framework. This enables statewide access to the data, regardless of the availability of a local GRAPS report.

Plans for FY22-23

The GRAPS program is developing a pilot accelerated implementation grant to support local government units. These grants will support capacity building to work with public water systems, outreach to landowners, and development of eligible projects for other CWF grants.

Future of Drinking Water

About

The focus of this effort is to identify current and anticipated threats to Minnesota's drinking water supply, develop strategic actions, and implement those through state agencies, local partners, and stakeholders. The Clean Water Council originated this initiative as a policy and budget recommendation.

Highlights from FY20-21

The first phase of this project resulted in two reports, *Eliminating Lead in Drinking Water* and *the Future of Drinking Water*, developed by University of Minnesota. The reports involved extensive stakeholder engagement and research and informed subsequent actions by MDH.

Plans for FY22-23

The next phase is to create a statewide strategic plan that addresses both public and private drinking water and fully integrates drinking water protection into the watershed management framework used by the Executive Branch water agencies. Based on the report recommendations created through this initiative, MDH will: continue development of public health policies; implement the action plan that addresses individual emerging threats; and ensure long-term safe drinking water in Minnesota by engaging local and national experts.

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