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| Picture_10 | Southeast Minnesota Wastewater Initiative | cleanwater.png |

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**Project Final Report Summary December 2016**

The lack of sewage treatment in many small communities in Southeast Minnesota is causing surface water and groundwater pollution. Since 2002, the Southeast Minnesota Wastewater Initiative has provided facilitation services to small communities seeking solutions to their wastewater problems. The current grant led to the completion of seven community projects, eliminating an estimated 53,100 gallons of untreated sewage per day (19 million gallons per year) from lakes streams and rivers of SE Minnesota.

Completed Projects during this grant:

* Cedar Beach, Oronoco Township, Olmsted County. 23 residential properties connected to a collection system taking sewage to a cluster mound drainfield. Oronoco Township will own the system.
* Lake Francis Woodduck Ln, Le Sueur County. 29 homes organized a private cluster system with a mound drainfield.
* Pratt, Steele County. CAR concluded that all 12 properties have onsite options. Community has decided to utilize private ISTS for fixes. 2 properties have been fixed so far with the rest to be fixed as properties transfer.
* Greenleafton, Fillmore County. 34 residential properties connected to a collection system taking sewage to a cluster in-ground drainfield. County owned system.
* Turtle Creek 1, Mower County, 28 homes. Sewage collection system completed with connection to the City of Austin where they had been annexed. Approximately ½ of the homes have made the connection with municipal water also been included in the project.
* Nicolville Corrective Action project, Red Rock Township, Mower County is completed with all the basements fixed to have clean water routed out of the collection system and all the connections from the home to the sewer main in the street being redone. 14 homes.
* Whalan Block 12; 11 homes plus townhall and gazebo. City needed to provide water and septic for a remodeled Town Hall. 1 homeowner needed to replace a failing septic system. City owned a well that was underutilized and upgraded to serve 12 homeowners plus Whalan Town Hall. All came together for a great solution. Self-funded

Since its inception in 2002, SEMWI has worked with local task forces leading to twenty five small communities finding solutions to their wastewater needs, eliminating 355,090 gallons of untreated sewage per day (130 million gallons per year) from lakes, streams, and rivers of Southeast Minnesota. A spreadsheet and map showing progress of the SE MN Wastewater Initiative shows details of the projects completed (see attachments).

To accomplish this task, the SE MN Water Resources Board contracted with Cannon River Watershed Partnership (CRWP) to host two facilitator positions. The facilitators provide a wide range of technical assistance to help these small communities follow the many steps needed to upgrade their sewage treatment systems. These steps include forming community task forces, studying the large number of sewage treatment system options, applying for and pursuing funding, forming sewer districts, preparing ordinances, and developing operation and management plans. Each facilitator worked 0.75FTE, or 1560 hours per year, for two years at a billable rate of $35/hour. At the close of this grant the facilitators continue to work through our new CWF grant with ten communities that have begun the process, providing continuity of service to these communities.The SE MN Wastewater Initiative steering committee meets bi-monthly to provide support and direction to the facilitators.

Articles about our projects appeared in many publications, information about our projects is available on multiple websites, the facilitators have given presentations about this project and are developing video resources to help others develop similar models. A video was produced about our project by the Bush Foundation and can be seen on the CRWP website. A full listing of these activities can be found in the annual narrative reports attached in eLINK.

Two awards have been received, recognizing the work of the SE MN Wastewater Initiative: The CRWP is the recipient of the Bush Foundation Prize for community innovation, in recognition of the Wastewater Initiative’s work facilitating community sewage treatment solutions. Oronoco Township received a Local Government Initiative award for the Kings Park community sewage treatment system, of which Sheila Craig served as facilitator. The CRWP granted $15,000 to the SEMWRB to be used as a revolving loan fund for unsewered communities to access for specific activities that need completion prior to their grant funds kicking in.