

# Final Progress Report

*LPT 62719 4-15-19 – 6/30/22*

## Lake St. Croix TMDL Civic Engagement Initiative- St. Croix Co

### Summary of grant results:

**Civic Governance** St Croix County hired a Watershed Technician (position description attached) to build organizational capacity and coordinate watershed management work in St Croix County. Staff were trained in Civic Governance by Civic Organizing, Inc., Lead Organizer and they have been getting mentored by another Lead Organizer. The Water Technician successfully brought together a group of stakeholders for the purpose of improving water quality in Lake St Croix. They have had 25 public meetings using the Civic Governance model. Covid 19 made 1:1 meetings difficult so many of the meetings needed to be online which presented some challenges initially.

**Identity Statement:** St Croix County Water Network is a partnership to improve water quality in Lake St. Croix.

**Purpose Statement:** The St Croix County Water Network develops the civic leadership necessary to increase capacity and sustain purposeful partnerships for the common good of improving water quality in Lake St. Croix.

**Cover Crops:** There have been a total of 1438 acres of cover crops implemented and reimbursed through the project funds. Reductions totaled 1660 lbs of nitrogen, 413 lbs of phosphorus, and 124.1 tons of sediment during the 3 year project. Some of the acres of cover crops were multi species (360 acres).

### Education and Outreach:

Due to the pandemic of 2020/2021 many planned education and outreach activities had to be postponed or were simply canceled. Prior to Covid 19, five farmers were able to attend the 2020 Cover Crop Conference with support of grant funds. This action helped with cost sharing of cover crops the following year.

Farm City days was resumed in 2021 and was attended by the Watershed Technician. A Farm To Lake Tour was organized by the Watershed Technician in 2021 that brought farmers and Lake Association members together to view what each group was doing to protect water quality. The event was popular and may occur again in 2022.

**Project Activities** January 1, 2022 – June 30, 2022:

St. Croix County Water Network (SCCWN) partnership to improve water quality in Lake St. Croix actively worked to use the civic leadership model to increase capacity and sustain purposeful partnerships for the common good of improving water quality in Lake St. Croix. The purpose of the Water Network is to convene a diverse group of stakeholders to organize around Lake St. Croix water quality issues.

The year 2022 started with a strategic planning process in January, where members outlined obtainable goals and how to implement them. A gap identified by the Water Network was outreach activities. The group made a goal to increase our capacity to other necessary stakeholders interacting through meetings, tours, and general outreach events within the Lake St. Croix Watershed.

Through the Water Network, the association has been able to meet and converse with the needed agency staff and conservation groups to expand on the needed improvements to improve water quality in the impoundment before entering the St. Croix. The Lake Mallalieu Association has been able to apply for a surface water grant with assistance of the SCCWN's brainstorming session. This summer, the association will host their annual meeting with a focus point on the shoreline erosion and, the upstream soil health and water quality efforts, all targeted toward to mitigating the amount of nutrients entering the impoundment.

In May, Resource Management Staff had the opportunity to interact with 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders from Glenwood City School District to discuss the importance of water quality, leave no trace camping principles and local wildlife. The positive interaction left the 140 kids with an understanding of the benefits to conservation efforts within the county.

This June, Resource Management staff were able to host eight separate counties in the western Wisconsin area to a county tour, highlighting the recent work done by staff, landowners and additional stakeholders. Topics of discussion included a largescale C.RE.P. project, and the implications involved working with NRCS, FSA, and DATCP to convert marginal crop ground into a cool season grasses mix. Next topic of discussion was the affects karst topography has on groundwater quality, discussing the mapping required to identify sinkholes, issues faced and the counties ground and surface water program to monitor water quality. The Western Wisconsin Farmers Council discussed groundwater testing and building relationships with local partners. The Farmer Led Council was able to speak on the watershed councils in the western Wisconsin area, highlighting their efforts to improve soil health and water quality. The last stop on the tour was the City of Roberts waste water treatment plant, where we discussed the reasoning behind the plant and how the city uses the excess phosphorus to market algae to be sold.

Site visits have included interactions with CAFOS within the counties to individual landowners seeking help on aquatic plant identification to everything in between.

An effort to convert marginal crop ground into pollinator habitat showed a joint effort that included all necessary stakeholders. The St. Croix County Resource Management Department, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and, the Dry Run Farmer Led Council were able to collaborate on a project within the Dry Run Watershed to reduce nitrogen, sedimentation and phosphorus by 75% into the adjacent stream.

# **Civic Governance Policy**

# Agenda

**Identity Statement:** - The St Croix County Water Network develops the civic leadership necessary to increase capacity and sustain purposeful partnerships for the common good of improving water quality in Lake St. Croix

**Civic:** The work of citizens. “Civic” is a qualifier that indicates that our work is framed in the tension between democratic principles and develops the capacity of the *populous* to govern for the good of the whole within that tension.

**Govern:** To rule over by right of authority; to exercise a directing or restraining influence over; to guide; to define problems, contribute to solutions and act as a policy maker.

**Policy:** Principled course of action. Policies provide a compass for governance; they are the result of taking bearing and setting direction. They provide the basis for rewards and sanctions. Policies require continual evaluation and feedback. Individuals and institutions have policies.

**Agenda:** Plan for action. “We believe in this principled course of action (policy) and therefore we will do x, y and z (agenda).”

