

**Final Progress Report**  
**Grant# LPT 74422 07/01/2022 – 12/31/2022**  
**Lake St. Croix TMDL Civic Engagement Phase II – St. Croix County**

**Summary of Grant results:**

**Civic Governance:** St. Croix County's Resource Management Division continued to use the "Civic Governance Model" through the remainder of 2022 in efforts to build organizational capacity within our Division and the St. Croix County Water Network. Staff continued to attend both Interstate Civic Organizing Agency and Midwest Active Citizenship Initiative meetings for the purpose of expanding our staffs' Civic Leadership development. Mentoring was conducted by Civic Organizing Inc's designated Lead Organizers. Our focus for organizing continued to work toward building capacity within the St. Croix County Water Network for the purpose of improving water quality within Lake St. Croix and its tributaries. In addition, a continuing focus of the Water Network was establishing and then sustaining "Civic Policy Partnerships". These partnerships adhere to the Water Network's new governing structure whereby they identify first the need for water quality improvement. Second, we've identified those impacted by the problem(s) within Lake St. Croix, and third have proposed a "solution strategy" to address the problem(s) in an accountable and transparent way. Throughout 2022 stakeholders continue to be engaged in decision-making for the common good. Moreover, stakeholders have continued to be held accountable for contributing their time and knowledge in efforts to develop effective water resource policy. In summary, implementation of the "Civic Governance Model" has helped our Division build the infrastructure needed to organize partnerships between community and government with the capacity of addressing complex public policy issues.

The St. Croix County Water Network **Governing Document's Identity and Purpose Statements** are:

**Identity Statement:** St. Croix County Water Network is a civic partnership focused on water quality improvement within Lake St. Croix and its tributaries.

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

**Education and Outreach:** Education and outreach activities for the latter half of 2022 focused on strengthening partnerships with the Dry Run Creek Farmer Led Council, Farmers Union, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USF&WS), USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), St. Croix County Alliance of Sportsman's Clubs (Alliance), Trout Unlimited (TU), Farm City Day's Planning committee, and active Ag Producers within the Willow River Watershed.

The St. Croix County Water Network (SCCWN) along with St. Croix County Resource Management staff continued to meet and work with the Dry Run Creek Farmer Led Council. Coordination between partners occurred with support from Farmer's Union. Farmer's Union support of a Farmer Led Grant Coordinator made it possible for us to contract 500 acres of nutrient management and 450 acres of cover crops in the latter half of 2022. Additionally, this partnership facilitated interest in 2 Wetland Scrapes, a waste storage abandonment, and a 15 Yr., 18.8 acre CREP contract along Dry Run Creek. USF&WS partnered on the wetland scrape designs, in addition to partnering on habitat development and enhancement opportunities for landowners in the Willow River watershed. We look forward to strengthening this partnership through 2023.

A substantial CREP contract was planned and contracted with a Dry Run Creek Ag Producer. Initial discussions and planning for the project occurred with help from the SCCWN and NRCS. USDA and DATCP funds incentivized the placement of a vegetated field border along the banks of Dry Run Creek. In total, 18.8 acres of marginal ag land was retired from production. In its place, a vegetated buffer was installed to provide valuable habitat. Stabilizing this area with a buffer will reduce sheet and rill erosion, presently occurring along the creek. The CREP contract will provide protection for a minimum of 15 years.

The SCCWN continues to work on a civic policy partnership with the St. Croix County Alliance of Sportsman's Clubs. They've communicated with each other at various meetings and events throughout 2022 in hopes of assigning stakeholders to each organization's governing body. To date, the St. Croix County Alliance of Sportsman's Clubs has welcomed a SCCWN member to its governing board. Likewise, 2 Alliance members are now governing members on the SCCWN Stakeholder group. The Alliance looks forward to partnering with both the SCCWN and Lake Mallalieu Lake Association on lakeshore stabilization projects. In early August, Resource Management staff presented at the Association's annual mid-summer meeting. SCCWN stakeholders, Lake Association members, and Resource Management staff discussed lakeshore stabilization

and the importance of maintaining and improving near shore habitat. Six site visits with lakeshore owners were scheduled as a result of the meeting. We are currently assessing the feasibility of project implementation and hope for project installation early summer of 2023.

SCCWN stakeholders, Alliance members, Resource Management staff, and TU members participated in our County's annual "Farm City Day" event. The event, held in mid-August, was attended by approximately 2500 people. The event's focus concentrated on a family farming operation and looks to bring urban residents out to experience life on a dairy farm. The event provides several demonstrations for the public. Moreover, it has several booths set up for the purpose of educating the public on issues related to surface and groundwater protection, manure management, farm economics, soil health, and many other topics as they relate to our current farming systems.

Overall, we believe this grant afforded us the opportunity to strengthen our partnerships with like minded organizations. In our view, developing civic policy partnerships and relationships with Ag Producers is key to water quality improvement within the Lake St. Croix Basin. We look to build upon these successes into and throughout 2023.