

Press Release - Minnesota Rural Water Association

March 18, 2019

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Minnesota Rural Water Association and Minnesota Department of Health present the Source Water Protection Award to Stearns County SWCD.



The MRWA/MDH Source Water Protection Award is given annually at the MRWA Technical Conference to recognize the importance and value of source water protection efforts in Minnesota, and to recognize individuals, public water systems and organizations that have shown long term commitment, initiative, leadership, sharing of successes, and initiation or participation in activities which resulted in the protection or improvement of their source water.

The recipient of the 2019 MRWA/MDH Source Water Protection Award is Stearns County SWCD.

For many years the Stearns County SWCD has assisted Public Water Suppliers in Stearns County with the development and implementation of their Wellhead Protection plans. The SWCD has made it a priority to have a dedicated Source Water Protection Specialist on staff to assist the Public Water Suppliers.

Staff have assisted them with many activities, including, but not limited to: Water testing clinics, Field demonstrations for agricultural producers, Education and outreach, Lawn care/turf management events for homeowners, Well sealing demonstrations, Development of educational materials, Participating on Wellhead Protection teams and testifying at the House Policy Committee hearing for Working Lands proposal and the benefits of cover crops in Wellhead Protection. Additional staff resources have included, GIS staff at Stearns County SWCD work cooperatively with the public water suppliers, agencies and LGUs in providing quality information on maps and spreadsheets of the potential contaminant source inventories. Conservationist have also provided expertise and training on numerous projects related to groundwater protection. In addition to the implementation of their Wellhead Protection plans staff have assisted public water suppliers with the completing the Source Water Protection grant applications, with their assistance, public water supplies have been successful in obtaining grants so that implementation activities can be accomplished. The Stearns County SWCD partners with, public water supplies, LGUs, state agencies, agricultural producers, landowners, residents and businesses to protect drinking water sources. All of these activities and partnerships have contributed to a greater protection of the drinking water sources in Stearns County.

Photo above from left to right: MRWA Source Water Protection Specialist Robyn Hoerr and Stearns County SWCD staff.