

Grant ID	Grantee	Grant Title	Award Amt	Score
C25-0212	Martin SWCD	Fairmont Drinking Water and Watershed Restoration Phase 2	\$ 260,000	90.77

Abstract: This project will improve the drinking water quality for Fairmont, a city with a population of over 10,000 people. The city of Fairmont obtains its public water supply from Budd Lake, which is part of the Fairmont Chain of Lakes. In May 2016 the city's drinking water exceeded the drinking water standard for nitrate (10 mg/L). Approximately half of the Martin County residents reside in Fairmont. This surface water drinking source is also a recreational hub of south-central Minnesota. Phase two of this multi-phase water quality restoration project will leverage federal funding and focuses on providing targeted incentives and installing agricultural best management practices to reduce nitrogen, as well as phosphorus and sediment. All five lakes in city limits are impaired for nutrients. This application will provide incentives for nonstructural practices, including 55 acres of new CRP and 700 acres of split rate N application. Funds will also provide cost share for 7 high priority structural practices identified in Fairmont's Surface Water Intake Protection Plan (SWIPP), such as saturated buffers and wetland restorations. All of these projects will be installed in the two subwatersheds that drain into Budd Lake.

C25-0186	Lincoln SWCD	Verdi Drinking Water Supply Management Area Soil Health Grant 2025	\$ 282,835	90.14
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Abstract: The goal of this project is to reduce and protect the area from nitrate-nitrogen loading to groundwater of the Lincoln/Pipestone Verdi Drinking Water Supply Management Area (DWSMA) from non-point source agricultural land. The DWSMA which is located in Lincoln County, is 9,220 acres in size which includes the 6,407 acres in the 10-year time of travel area (the time it takes for groundwater to reach the wells). Groundwater within this area is highly vulnerable to nitrate-nitrogen contamination (Missouri River Watershed Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan section 4-20). Section 4-20 of the Missouri River Watershed Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan shows the Verdi wells to exceed the 10 mg/L from an MDH past study. This has been a major concern for the Lincoln/Pipestone Rural Water organization. In order to reduce the nitrate-nitrogen levels on non-point source tilled/farmed agricultural land, practices such as cover crops, no-till/strip till and perennial cover needed to be addressed. Some of the land around the well locations have been enrolled into CRP in order to establish vegetative cover. The remainder of the DWSMA is tilled row crop. The Lincoln SWCD provided a letter of interest to all the landowner/operators within the DWSMA. Six landowner/operators showed a strong interest in doing cover crops and/or no-till practices on their property. 1,111 acres or 12% of the DWSMA will be enrolled into no-till and of the 1,111 acres, 751 acres will have cover crops for a three-year period if the grant is awarded. All contracts will be for a three-year time frame. Reduction numbers for these practices on 1,111 acres are calculated to reduce nitrogen by 21,764.89 lbs/year. As secondary benefits, sediment will be reduced by 2,076.29 tons/year and phosphorus by 443.64 lbs/year. The Lincoln SWCD has partnered with Lincoln County and Lincoln/Pipestone Rural Water to supply the required 10% match needed for the grant. The Lincoln SWCD has also partnered with Olsen Custom Farms Agronomy Center for the farmer mentor program. Two agronomists will be available at all times for the six landowners that would be enrolled into the program. They have expertise in all aspects of cover crops, no-till and soil sampling. Their services can be utilized anytime for the three-year contract time frame. The agronomists along with the Lincoln SWCD will present results for this project at the Highway 14 Tour that is held in Lake Benton, MN each winter. It is expected to show positive results of good crop production and nitrogen reductions which would lead to new farmers implementing the practices in the area. Optimistically thinking, the hope is that the six existing landowner/operators will continue the practices beyond the three-year contract time frame.

Grant ID	Grantee	Grant Title	Award Amt	Score
C25-0175	Dakota County	2025 Dakota County Well Seal Program	\$ 200,000	86.64

Abstract: This project proposes to support the Dakota County well seal grant cost-share program to protect the county's primary source of drinking water (groundwater). The project will provide up-to 50 percent cost-share funding to reimburse landowners for the sealing of unused wells. The goal is to permanently seal approximately 100 unused/abandoned wells throughout the county. Unsealed water supply wells that are not in use pose a threat to health, safety, and the environment by providing a potential conduit for contamination to go from the surface down to drinking water aquifers. In addition, Minnesota Statute 103I requires well owners to seal unused wells. Staff will conduct well inventories to identify suspected unused wells and send communication letters to landowners outlining State regulations and encouraging the proper sealing of wells. To reduce risk to municipal drinking water supplies, the project will prioritize sealing of unused wells within Drinking Water Supply Management Areas (DWSMAs).

C25-0178	Le Sueur County	City of Le Sueur Minnesota Valley Canning Company Well #1 Sealing Project	181,363	86.64
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Abstract: This project would educate residents and provide assistance to the City of Le Sueur in sealing an unused/abandoned Minnesota Valley Canning Company Well #1. This well has been identified as high risk due to impacting the groundwater and drinking water supply to the City of Le Sueur. The target area is located less than 500 feet from the City of Le Sueur DWSMA (mostly moderate-high vulnerability), a well in the same aquifer as one of more nearby (within one mile) of public water supply wells, within the 100 year floodplain, 70 feet from the Minnesota River, a well that is located in an area that is considered high aquifer vulnerability, and a well located in a fall nitrogen restriction area. The main goal for The City of Le Sueur and Le Sueur County is to protect groundwater and drinking water resources.

The project match for this grant will consist of staff time as well as financial support (cash). Le Sueur County and the City of Le Sueur staff will need to coordinate efforts for the entire lifespan of the project. Additionally, Le Sueur County staff we will need to administer the grant and complete grant reporting requirements. Lastly, there will be an education and outreach component of this project to inform residents and watershed groups which can be done through newsletters, social media, websites, etc. The financial support will come from local partners. The financial support may come from levy dollars from Le Sueur County and/or the City of Le Sueur or from dues from the Lower Minnesota River East Partnership.

C25-0191	Spring Lake Park, City of	Enhanced Street Sweeping in SLP for Drinking Water Protection	290,000	83.91
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Abstract: The City of Spring Lake Park is located wholly within the Priority A Surface Water Drinking Water Supply Management Areas for the Mississippi River intakes that supply drinking water to the Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, serving over 800,000 residents. These areas were delineated to represent the drainage areas within 8 hours travel time of the municipal intakes. Urban stormwater runoff from streets and other impervious surfaces within Spring Lake Park drains to the Mississippi River via three stormwater conveyances with outfalls located in the northern half of Fridley, immediately upstream of the intakes. Roughly half of the city is also within one of five wellhead protection areas for municipal drinking water wells serving Spring Lake Park, Blaine, and Fridley. Given that Spring Lake Park was fully developed by the 1970s, prior to stormwater management regulations, it contains very few structural stormwater best management practices and very little space for new construction. Pollution prevention and source reduction strategies such as street sweeping are therefore important to reduce pollutant loading to surface waters and protect drinking water sources in this area.

The City of Spring Lake Park currently does not own a street sweeper and instead contracts citywide sweeping twice per year, once in the spring and fall. It is difficult to ensure optimal timing of contracted sweeping between snowmelt and spring wash off and after leaf drop given lead times for coordination and contractor capacity constraints. Spring Lake Park is requesting grant funding to purchase a street sweeper to build an in-house street sweeping program. City staff have the capacity and are committed to using this sweeper to implement the recommendations of the Coon Creek Watershed District enhanced sweeping study. This study divided the City into sweeping zones based on tree canopy cover, density of existing structural BMPs, and connectivity to impaired receiving waters. It was recommended that the City sweep all zones a minimum of 4 times per year (twice in spring and fall) and sweep high priority zones up to 10 times per year based on cost effectiveness of TP and TSS reduction. Purchase of a sweeper will allow the City to more than triple its current sweeping effort from 107 lane miles per year to 323 lane miles per year, targeting priority areas. TP and TSS loading to the Mississippi River will be reduced by at least an additional 43 lbs and 1.3 tons per year, respectively.

Grant ID	Grantee	Grant Title	Award Amt	Score
C25-0192	Ramsey County	2025 Ramsey County Well Sealing Program	65,000	83.59

Abstract: To protect drinking water and groundwater sources, the Ramsey County Soil & Water Conservation Division (SWCD) is proposing to continue the implementation of its successful well sealing cost-share program with this grant application. Land use practices in an urban area like Ramsey County can have damaging effects on both surface water and groundwater. Concerns arise when contaminants can leach into abandoned or unused wells, damaging the quality of water within drinking water supply wells or groundwater recharge zones. To reduce the risk of groundwater and drinking water supply contamination, this project will aim to provide cost share to seal up to 60 wells, giving priority to wells within zones most vulnerable to contamination in Drinking Water Supply Management Areas (DWSMA).

C25-0236	Anoka CD	Phase II: Protecting groundwater quality in Anoka County through targeted well sealing	70,000	83.45
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Abstract: In Anoka County, 330,000 residents (94%) depend on groundwater for drinking water, using about 12 billion gallons annually. Wells (residential, commercial, agricultural, and industrial) that are unused and unsealed pose a significant health and safety hazard by creating a direct, unmaintained conduit to introduce contaminants (e.g. pesticides, nutrients, pathogens) into groundwater supplies.

Historically, Anoka County was one of the few counties in Minnesota without a cost-share program to assist landowners with sealing unused wells. In response to this gap, the Anoka Conservation District (ACD) received a Clean Water Fund (CWF) grant in FY20 to establish a well sealing cost-share program. This initiative, the first of its kind in the county, was developed from scratch. As awareness grew, demand for the program increased, highlighting the need and desire for such financial assistance.

Over the past four years, the well sealing program has made significant progress. ACD has worked with hundreds of landowners promote and educate on well sealing, resulting in the sealing of 63 unused wells since 2020. Despite this, the issue of abandoned wells remains pressing. The current CWF grant is set to expire on December 31, 2024 Without additional funding, the momentum gained is in jeopardy, and future efforts to address this issue may be severely hampered. To build on the success of the initial grant and address the continued risk presented by abandoned wells, we are requesting another round of grant funding to continue and expand the well sealing cost-share program. The proposed grant will enable ACD to seal up to an additional 30 unused wells, targeting those within DWSMAs and deep wells intersecting multiple aquifers.

To maximize the benefits of this program, we'll promote cost-share funds to targeted landowners primarily through mailings and door knockings.