



COVID-19 Impact on Clean Water Fund projects



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Overall COVID-19 picture

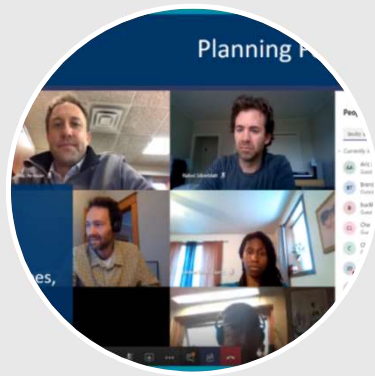
Clean Water Fund programs
adapted and adjusted to accomplish
work safely and shift to virtual
platforms for engagement, trainings,
and meetings.



Overall COVID-19 picture



Monitoring



Planning



Technical assistance



Research

COVID impacts to CWF work – monitoring

Field work paused March - May 2020

Activities eliminated:

- Tasks requiring more than one person
- Hiring students as field workers

Results:

- Data is “estimated” and not reliable
- Missed samples during spring snow melt



COVID impacts to CWF work – monitoring

DNR delays:

- Buildout of groundwater monitoring network and equipment upgrades
- Progress collecting geologic data for county atlases

MDA delays:

- Installation of groundwater monitoring networks in SWSMAs
- Private well testing that required home entry

MPCA delays:

- Less than 50% surface and groundwater monitoring completed – one year delay

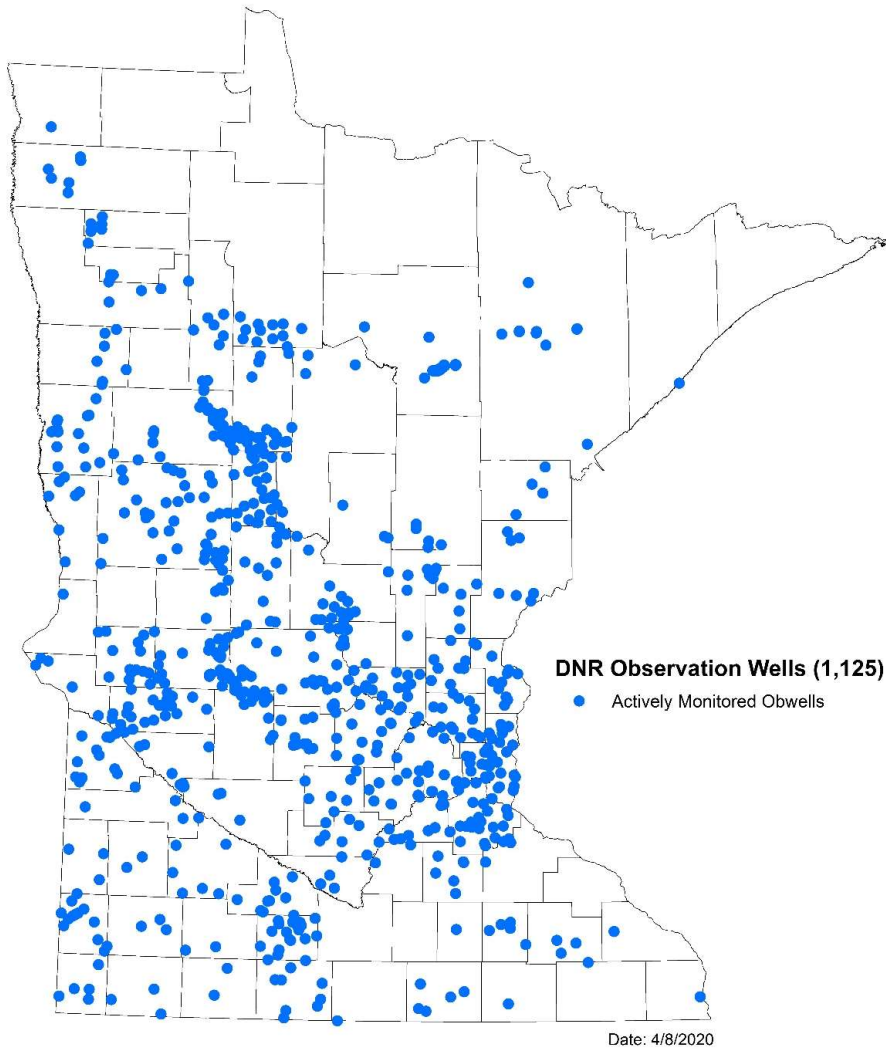
MCES delays:

- Boat monitoring by boat deferred, 60% fewer samples collected spring 2020



Water Level Network

- 1,125 wells
- Many areas still lack wells
- About 700 have continuous monitoring



COVID impacts to CWF work – planning

- New, virtual engagement methods, online meetings used with mixed results
- Used for WRAPs in 24 watersheds, 1W1P
- MN Geologic Survey field work slowed
- Updates to models/trends in 59 watersheds delayed
- MPCA, Tribes, MDH wellhead and surface water protection slowed considerably



COVID impacts to CWF work – implementation

MPCA:

- Efforts to address unsewered communities slowed, projects underway continued, difficulties in momentum for new projects

BWSR:

- Delays in easement processing, transition of most easement processing from paper-based to electronic system — with long term benefits
- Extensions granted to LGUs that experienced delays implementing grant projects

COVID impacts to CWF work – implementation

MDA:

- Implementation of Groundwater Protection Rule in Drinking Water Supply Management Areas (DWSMAs) delayed; formation of local advisory teams prevented

MCES:

- Emerging water supply issues; Communities relying on Clean Water Fund water supply sustainability program due to tight municipal budgets

COVID impacts to CWF work – technical assistance

Social distancing guidelines and virtual platforms **created challenges** to providing technical assistance to landowners/farmers and hosting outreach activities.



COVID impacts to CWF work – technical assistance

BWSR impacts:

- Working with landowners on developing and submitting easement applications

MDA impacts:

- Connecting with farmers DWSMA and other areas vulnerable to nitrate contamination
- Delayed new on-farm cover crops program
- Education and outreach events like field days cancelled or shifted to virtual platforms

U of M in-person stormwater technology training cancelled, adapting to virtual

MDH reliance on virtual meetings slowed source water protection technical assistance, especially in greater MN

COVID impacts to CWF work – research

Project delays:

- Implementation of microplastics work plan developed by MDH and interagency team
- Forever Green analytical research at U of M in spring/summer 2020
- U of M stormwater best management research program
- FY18-19 U of M stormwater projects due July 2020; no cost extensions granted



COVID impacts to CWF work – staff reassignments

- At times and in some programs, all MDH reassigned to COVID response
- Programs prioritized minimizing other risks to public health
- Coordination with stakeholders essential to maintain shared functions
- Outreach, education, public meetings reduced due to reassignments, vacancies, retirements, and safety precautions.



FY20-21 CWF holdback

- Following May 2020 budget forecast, agencies identified \$17 million in potential reductions from the FY20-21 budget, ~6.8% reduction, guiding principles:
 - What work most important to maintain momentum toward CWLA goals
 - Maintain capacity, minimize need to rebuild state and local expertise
 - Preserve ability to leverage other funds
 - Minimize impacts to other priorities like climate and environmental justice efforts
 - COVID meant work that couldn't be done with social distancing would be delayed
- If holdbacks become available as proposed in July 2021, need to consider appropriations that include expiration dates

FY2021 CWF holdback impacts

- Delays or reduced scope: analysis in Nemadji, Lake Superior South, Chippewa, Le Sueur, and Yellow Medicine watersheds
- Less money available: chloride grants, septic system fixes, Voyagers National Park
- Delay in development: guidance for iron-enhanced filter design for stormwater treatment
- Vacant positions held: reduced capacity to support local governments implementing projects
- Held 1W1P Planning grant funds: fewer grants to local watersheds impacts transition to statewide watershed-based plans by 2025
- Held Project & Practices grant funds: reduced number of local implementation activities
- Held MNCREP funds: impacts ability to match federal MNCREP funds, unless replaced
- Reduced Metro Water Efficiency Training, Water Efficiency Grants



Thank you!



Board of Water & Soil Resources
Public Facilities Authority
Minnesota Department of Agriculture
Minnesota Department of Health
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency



Environmental Services