

MN Overview

Through the National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI), the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is offering financial and technical assistance to farmers, ranchers and forest landowners interested in improving water quality and aquatic habitats in priority watersheds with impaired streams. NRCS will help producers implement conservation and management practices through a systems approach to control and trap nutrient and manure runoff. Qualified producers will receive assistance for installing conservation practices such as cover crops, filter strips and terraces. For over 75 years, NRCS has provided agricultural producers with assistance to implement voluntary conservation practices that protect natural resources while maintaining production and profits.

Minnesota Priority Watersheds

Minnesota's three Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC 12) Watersheds for the National Water Quality Initiative include: Chippewa Watershed, Elm Creek Watershed and Sevenmile Creek Watershed. (see Map on page 2). The Chippewa is impaired due to nutrients. All three Watersheds are impaired due to sediment and turbidity. In addition, all three Watersheds have at least one impaired 303 (d) impaired water body and. A HUC 12 Watershed is approximately 20,000 acres in size. Chippewa Watershed is a tributary to the Chippewa River, located in the western portion of Chippewa County. Elm Creek Watershed is a tributary to Blue Earth River in the Minnesota River Basin and is located in the western portion of Faribault County and the northeastern portion of Martin County. Sevenmile Creek Watershed is located in the Middle Minnesota River Basin in Nicolet County. The primary land use in the Chippewa,



Interested in reducing the impact of water on your field; consider signing up for a Residue Management Practice.

photo credit MN NRCS

Elm Creek and Sevenmile Creek is agriculture.

Conservation Funding and Practices

NRCS conservation professionals will provide technical assistance and planning tools to determine which conservation actions will provide the best results to improve water quality on your land. Nutrient management

The National Water Quality Initiative will work in selected watersheds to help farmers, ranchers and forest landowners improve water quality and aquatic habitats in impaired streams.

systems, erosion control, conservation tillage, pest management, and buffers systems are just some of the practices being offered as part of the National Water Quality Initiative. To help install these conservation practices, finan-

cial assistance to share in the cost of these conservation practices is available through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

Partnerships

NRCS identified priority watersheds through the help of local partnerships and state water quality agencies. Partners sometimes offer financial assistance in addition to NRCS programs. NRCS will continue to coordinate with local and state agencies, conservation districts, nongovernmental organizations and others to implement this initiative. This strategic approach will leverage funds and provide streamlined assistance to help individual agricultural producers take needed actions to reduce the flow of sediment, nutrients and other runoff into impaired waterways.

Producer Benefits

Water quality conservation practices benefit agricultural producers by lowering input costs and enhancing the productivity of working lands. Conservation investments are good

for all Americans because well managed farms limit pollution from runoff, produce food and fiber, sustain rural economies, and provide food security to the Nation. All across the country—farmers, ranchers and forest landowners are voluntarily taking action and putting conservation on the ground to improve water quality on millions of acres!

Public Benefits

NRCS is proud to be involved in a nationwide effort with landowners and communities to improve and protect our water resources. The landowners and farmers participating in the initiative will receive conservation payments to work on the land in a sustainable way which provides cleaner water. In addition to the financial assistance, the land will remain productive into the future. Communities benefit by having clean waterways, safer drinking water and healthy habitat for fish and wildlife.

How to Apply

Almost every county in the Nation has a *USDA Service Center*. To get started, make an appointment at your local office. You will need to establish eligibility and farm records for your land. NRCS will help you complete an application while explaining which conservation practices are available in your watershed. Remember to check with your local NRCS office to see if you

are located in a selected watershed. All applications for funding consideration, during fiscal year 2012, must be received by June 15, 2012.

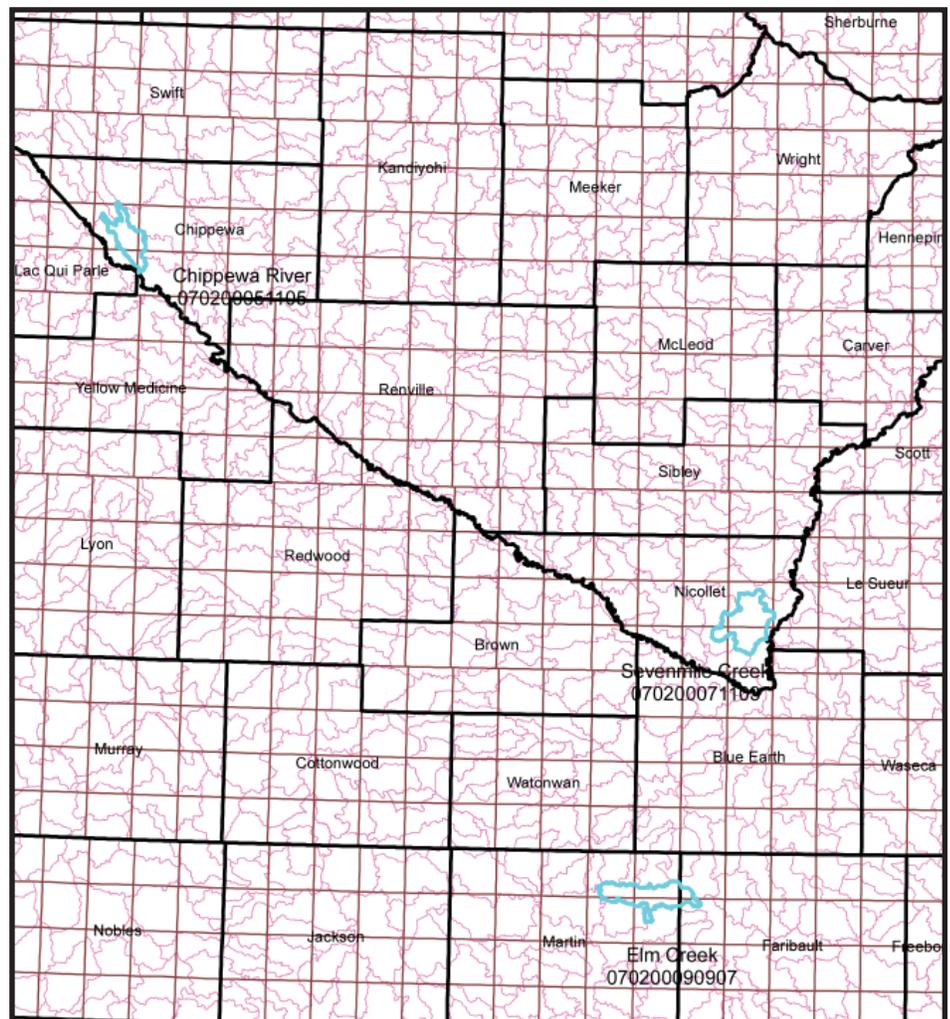
For more Information

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Chippewa Watershed, Elm Creek Watershed and Sevenmile Creek Watershed.

MN GIS Staff



United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

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