

The Minnesota Water Management Framework

A high-level, multi-agency, collaborative perspective on managing Minnesota's water resources

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The passage of the Clean Water, Land, and Legacy Amendment is a **game-changer** for water resource management in Minnesota. Increased funding and public expectations have driven the need for **more and better coordination** among the state's main water management agencies.

The **MN Water Quality Framework** and the companion **MN Groundwater Management Framework** were developed by the agencies to enhance collaboration and clarify roles in a complex water governance structure, so that it's **clear to everyone who is responsible** at each stage in the process, making it **easier and more efficient** for state and local partners to work together.

Goals: cleaner water via comprehensive watershed management; ensure that groundwater is protected and managed sustainably.

Building on a classic "plan - do - check" adaptive management approach, the framework uses 5 "boxes" to outline the steps Minnesota's agencies are taking toward our goals of clean and sustainable water. The agencies aim to streamline water management by systematically and predictably delivering data, research, and analysis and empowering local action.

Ongoing Local Implementation is at the heart of the state's overall strategy for clean water. Actions must be prioritized, targeted, and measurable in order to ensure limited resources are spent where they are needed most. The rest of the cycle supports effective implementation.

Monitoring and Assessment determines the condition of the state's ground and surface waters and informs future implementation actions. The state's "watershed approach" systematically assesses the condition of lakes and streams on a 10-year cycle. Groundwater monitoring and assessment is more varied in space and time.

Water Resource Characterization and Problem Investigation delves into the science to analyze and synthesize data so that key interactions, stressors, and threats are understood. In this step, watershed and groundwater models and maps are developed to help inform strategies.

Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies (WRAPS) and Groundwater Protection and Restoration Strategies includes the development of strategies and high level plans, "packaged" at the 8-digit HUC scale (81 major watersheds in Minnesota). These strategies identify priorities in each major watershed and inform local planning.

The **Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan** is where information comes together in a local commitment for prioritized, targeted, and measurable action. Local priorities and knowledge are used to refine the broad-scale WRAPS and other assessments into locally based strategies for clean and sustainable water.

The red arrow emphasizes the important connection between state water programs and local water management. Local partners are involved - and often lead - in each stage in this framework.

