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## List of Acronyms

**AU**- Animal Unit

**AUAR** – Alternative Urban Area Review

**BEC** – Blue Earth County

**BWSR** – Board of Water and Soil Resources

**BMP** – Best management practice(s)

**CD** – County Ditch

**CWI** – County Well Index

**CWL** – Clean Water Legacy (Act)

**CWP** - Clean Water Partnership, an MPCA-administered water quality grant

**DNR** – (Minnesota) Department of Natural Resources

**EAW** – Environmental Assessment Worksheet

**EIS** – Environmental Impact Statement

**EPA** – Environmental Protection Agency

**EQB** – Environmental Quality Board

**FEMA** – Federal Emergency Management Agency

**FSA** – Farm Service Agency (division of the USDA)

**GBERBA** – Greater Blue Earth River Basin Alliance. GBERBA includes the Blue Earth River watershed and its tributary watersheds, the Le Sueur and Watonwan.

**HEL**- Highly erodible land.

**ISTS**- Individual sewage treatment system (generally means the same as SSTS)

**IPHT** – Imminent public health threat. IPHT is a term used in State rules to describe straight pipe wastewater discharges.

**JD** – Judicial Ditch

**MDA**- Minnesota Department of Agriculture

**MDH**- Minnesota Department of Health

**MES** – University of Minnesota Extension Service

**MGS** – Minnesota Geological Survey

**MNDOT** – Minnesota Department of Transportation

**MPCA**- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

**MRB**- Minnesota River Board

**MSU-Mankato**- Minnesota State University – Mankato

**MSU-Mankato-WRC**- Minnesota State University – Mankato, Water Resources Center

**NCED** – National Center for Earth Surface Dynamics

**NPDES** – National Pollution Discharge and Elimination Standards

**NRBG** – Natural Resources Block Grant. The NRBG is administered by BWSR and is a consolidation of grants from MPCA, DNR and BWSR.

**NRCS** – Natural Resource Conservation Service (Division of the USDA)

**PCB** - Polychlorinated Biphenyls

**PFA** – Public Facilities Authority

**POTW** – Publicly owned treatment works, a government-owned wastewater treatment facilities

**SSTS** – Subsurface Soil Treatment System

**SWCD** - Soil and Water Conservation District

**SWPPP** – Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan

**TEP** – Technical Evaluation Panel (Wetlands Conservation Act)

**TMDL** – Total Maximum Daily Load (Impaired Waters, Clean Water Act)

**USDA**- United States Department of Agriculture

**USFWS** – United States Fish and Wildlife Service

**USGS** – United States Geological Survey

**WCA** – Wetland Conservation Act

**WMA** – Wildlife Management Area

## List Of Terms

**Agricultural Drainage.** Improving the productivity of agricultural land by removing excess water from the soil by such means as ditches or subsurface drainage tiles.

**Approved Practice.** A conservation practice that qualifies for state cost-sharing and that has been approved by the state board.

**Best Management Practice (BMP).** Methods that have been determined to be the most effective, practical means of preventing or reducing pollution from non-point sources. “BMPs” means the same as conservation practices.

**Conservation Practices.** Practices applied to the land for the purpose of controlling or preventing soil erosion, sedimentation, nutrient runoff, or other water pollution to maintain the sustainable use of soil and water and other natural resources.

**Conservation Practice Plans.** Consists of drawings and specifications. The drawings are a graphical description and the associated specifications are a narrative description of the tasks involved to install the practice.

**Cost Sharing.** A publicly financed program shares part of the cost of establishing soil and water conservation practices, cultural practices, or pollution control measures with land owners, operators or other entities.

**Cultural Practices.** Refers to tillage and cultivation activities, or constructed features of terrain such as buildings, canals, boundary lines, i.e., people made structures.

**Encumber.** To designate funds for a specific practice or purpose. This is accomplished via a motion at an official conservation district board meeting and documented in the approved minutes of the meeting and all applicable forms and ledgers.

**Erosion.** The wearing away of land surface by wind or water, intensified by land-clearing practices related to farming, residential or industrial development, road building, or logging.

**Established.** A conservation practice that has been properly installed and has successfully developed to function properly.

**Eutrophication.** The slow aging process during which a lake, estuary, or bay evolves into a bog or marsh and eventually disappears. During the later stages of eutrophication the water body is choked by abundant plant life due to higher levels of nutritive compounds such as nitrogen and phosphorus. Human activities can accelerate the process.

**Fecal Coliform Bacteria.** Bacteria found in the intestinal tracts of mammals. Their presence in water is used as an indicator of pollution and possible contamination by pathogens.

**Ground Water.** The supply of fresh water found beneath the Earth's surface, usually in aquifers, which supply wells and springs.

**Hazardous Chemical.** An EPA designation for any hazardous material requiring an MSDS under OSHA's Hazard Communication Standard. Such substances are capable of producing fires and explosions or adverse health effects like cancer and dermatitis. Hazardous chemicals are distinct from hazardous waste.

**Hazardous Substance.** 1. Any material that poses a threat to human health and/or the environment. Typical hazardous substances are toxic, corrosive, ignitable, explosive, or chemically reactive. 2. Any substance designated by EPA to be reported if a designated quantity of the substance is spilled in the waters of the United States or is otherwise released into the environment.

**Hazardous Waste.** By-products of society that can pose a substantial or potential hazard to human health or the environment when improperly managed. Possesses at least one of four characteristics (ignitability, corrosivity, reactivity, or toxicity), or appears on special EPA lists.

**Herbicide.** A chemical pesticide designed to control or destroy plants, weeds, or grasses.

**High Priority Erosion Problems.** "High priority erosion problems" in the Blue Earth County Water Plan means soils identified as "highly erodible" and "potentially highly erodible" in the USDA Soil Survey. It also means areas where erosion from wind or water is occurring equal to, or in excess of, 2 X T tons per acre per year or is occurring on any area that exhibits active gully erosion or is identified as high priority in the comprehensive local water management plan or the conservation district's comprehensive plan.

**High Priority Water Quality Problems.** “High priority water quality problems” means areas where sediment, nutrients, chemicals, or other pollutants discharge to DNR designated protected waters or to any high priority waters as identified in a comprehensive local water management plan or the conservation district’s comprehensive plan, or discharge to a sinkhole or groundwater. The pollutant delivery rate to the water source is in amounts that will impair the quality or usefulness of the water resource.

**Household Hazardous Waste.** Hazardous products used and disposed of by residential as opposed to industrial consumers. Includes paints, stains, varnishes, solvents, pesticides, and other materials or products containing volatile chemicals that can catch fire, react or explode, or that are corrosive or toxic.

**Hydrology.** The science dealing with the properties, distribution, and circulation of water.

**Hydraulic Conductivity.** The rate at which water can move through a permeable medium. (i.e. the coefficient of permeability.)

**Imminent Threat.** A high probability that exposure is occurring.

**Land Owner.** A person, corporation, or legal entity that holds title to or is in possession of land.

**Land Owner / Operator.** A person, corporation, or legal entity that holds title to or is in possession of land within a conservation district as an owner, lessee, tenant, or otherwise. It is the same as the term “land occupier” used in the State Cost Share Guide.

**Monitoring.** Periodic or continuous surveillance or testing to: 1) determine the level of compliance with statutory requirements and/or pollutant levels in water, plants, and animals, 2) observe a situation for any changes which may occur over time using a measurement of some sort, such as the performance of an established conservation practice, an identified erosion problem or biological conditions of surface water.

**National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES).** A provision of the Clean Water Act which prohibits discharge of pollutants into waters of the United States unless a special permit is issued by the State of Minnesota as delegated by the EPA.

**Nitrate.** A compound containing nitrogen that can exist in the atmosphere or as a dissolved gas in water and which can have harmful effects on humans and animals. Nitrates in water can cause severe illness in infants and domestic animals. A plant nutrient and inorganic fertilizer, nitrate is found in septic systems, animal feed lots, agricultural fertilizers, manure, and industrial waste waters.

**Non-Point Sources.** Diffuse pollution sources (i.e. without a single point of origin or not introduced into a receiving stream from a specific outlet). The pollutants are generally carried off the land by storm water. Common non-point sources are agriculture, forestry, urban, mining, construction, dams, channels, land disposal, and city streets.

**Nutrient.** Any substance assimilated by living things that promotes growth. The term is generally applied to nitrogen and phosphorus in wastewater, but is also applied to other essential and trace elements.

**Nutrient Pollution.** Contamination of water resources by excessive inputs of nutrients. In surface waters, excess algal production is a major concern.

**Pathogens.** Microorganisms (e.g., bacteria, viruses, or parasites) that can cause disease in humans, animals and plants.

**Pesticide.** Substances or mixture thereof intended for preventing, destroying, repelling, or mitigating any pest. Also, any substance or mixture intended for use as a plant regulator, defoliant, or desiccant (herbicide).

**Phosphorus.** An essential chemical food element that can contribute to the eutrophication of lakes and other water bodies. Increased phosphorus levels result from discharge of phosphorus-containing materials into surface waters.

**Planning period.** 2008-2013 period of time intended for implementation of the Blue Earth County Water Management Plan.

**Point Source.** A stationary location or fixed facility from which pollutants are discharged; any single identifiable source of pollution; e.g. a pipe, ditch, ship, or pit.

**Pollutant.** Generally, any substance introduced into the environment that adversely affects the usefulness of a resource or the health of humans, animals, or ecosystems.

**Pollution.** Generally, the presence of a substance in the environment that because of its chemical composition or quantity prevents the functioning of natural processes and produces undesirable environmental and health effects. Under the Clean Water Act, for example, the term has been defined as the man-made or man-induced alteration of the physical, biological, chemical, and radiological integrity of water and other media.

**Polychlorinated Biphenyls. (PCBs)** A group of toxic, persistent chemicals used in electrical transformers and capacitors for insulating purposes, and in gas pipeline systems as lubricant. The sale and new use of these chemicals, also known as PCBs, were banned by law in 1979. PCBs are a pollutant stressor causing water quality impairments in Blue Earth County.

**Potable Water.** Water that is safe for drinking and cooking.

**Publicly Owned Treatment Works (POTWs).** A waste-treatment works owned by a unit of government, usually designed to treat domestic wastewaters.

**Recharge Area.** A land area in which water reaches the zone of saturation from surface infiltration, e.g., where rainwater soaks through the earth to reach an aquifer.

**Run-Off.** That part of precipitation, snow melt, or irrigation water that runs off the land into streams or other surface-water. It can carry pollutants from the air and land into receiving waters.

**Sediment.** Topsoil, sand, and minerals washed from the land into water, usually after rain or snow melt.

**Sediment Yield.** The quantity of sediment arriving at a specific location.

**Sedimentation.** Solids settling out of water in reservoirs, rivers and harbors, destroying fish and wildlife habitat, and clouding the water so that sunlight cannot reach aquatic plants.

**Sewer.** A channel or conduit that carries wastewater and storm-water runoff from the source to a treatment plant or receiving stream. "Sanitary" sewers carry household, industrial, and commercial waste. "Storm" sewers carry runoff from rain or snow. "Combined" sewers handle both.

**Soil Erodibility.** An indicator of a soil's susceptibility to raindrop impact, runoff, and other erosive processes.

**Solid Waste.** Non-liquid, non-soluble materials ranging from municipal garbage to industrial wastes that contain complex and sometimes hazardous substances. Solid wastes also include sewage sludge, agricultural refuse, demolition wastes, and mining residues. Technically, solid waste also refers to liquids and gases in containers.

**Source-Water Protection Area.** The area delineated by a state for a Public Water Supply or including numerous such suppliers, whether the source is ground water or surface water or both.

**Soil and Water Conservation Practices.** Control measures consisting of managerial, vegetative, and structural practices to reduce the loss of soil and water.

**Stakeholder.** Any organization, governmental entity, or individual that has a stake in or may be impacted by a given approach to environmental regulation, pollution prevention, TMDLs, etc.

**Storm Sewer.** A system of pipes (separate from sanitary sewers) that carries water runoff from buildings and land surfaces.

**Subwatershed:** Topographic perimeter of the catchment area of a stream tributary.

**Surface Runoff.** Precipitation, snow melt, or irrigation water in excess of what can infiltrate the soil surface and be stored in small surface depressions; a major transporter of non-point source pollutants in rivers, streams, and lakes..

**Suspended Solids.** Small particles of solid pollutants that float on the surface or are suspended in water, sewage or other liquids.

**SWCD Board.** The board of supervisors of a Soil and Water Conservation District as organized under Minnesota Statutes, chapter 103C.

**SWCD Technical Representative.** A district employee assigned by the conservation district board or other designee who has expertise in the design and application of conservation practices.

**Total Suspended Solids (TSS).** A measure of the suspended solids in wastewater, effluent, or water bodies, determined by tests for "total suspended non-filterable solids."

**Soil and Water Conservation Practices.** Control measures consisting of managerial, vegetative, and structural practices to reduce the loss of soil and water.

**Technical Approval Authority.** The authorization granted to a district technical representative to provide comprehensive technical assistance for individual conservation practices, including associated technical signoff as the district technical representative of record.

**Turbidity.** A cloudy condition in water due to suspended silt or organic matter.

**Urban Runoff.** Stormwater from city streets, domestic or commercial properties and other paved impervious surfaces that carries pollutants of various kinds into storm sewer systems and receiving surface waters.

**Vegetative Controls.** Non-point source pollution control practices that involve vegetative cover to reduce erosion and minimize loss of pollutants.

**Water Table.** The level of groundwater.

**Water Well.** An excavation where the intended use is for location, acquisition, development, or artificial recharge of ground water.

**Wastewater.** The spent or used water from a home, community, farm, or industry that contains dissolved or suspended matter.

**Water Pollution.** The presence in water of enough harmful or objectionable material to damage the water's quality.

**Water Quality Criteria.** Levels of water quality expected to render a body of water suitable for its designated use. Criteria are based on specific levels of pollutants that would make the water harmful if used for drinking, swimming, farming, fish production, or industrial processes.

**Water Quality Standards.** State-adopted and EPA-approved ambient standards for water bodies. The standards prescribe the use of the water body and establish the water quality criteria that must be met to protect designated uses.

**Water Quality-Based Limitations.** Effluent limitations applied to dischargers when mere technology-based limitations would cause violations of water quality standards. Usually applied to discharges into small streams.

**Watershed.** The land area that drains into a stream; the watershed for a major river may encompass a number of smaller watersheds that ultimately combine at a common point.

**Watershed Approach.** A coordinated framework for environmental management that focuses efforts on the highest priority problems within hydrologically-defined geographic areas taking into consideration both ground and surface water flow.