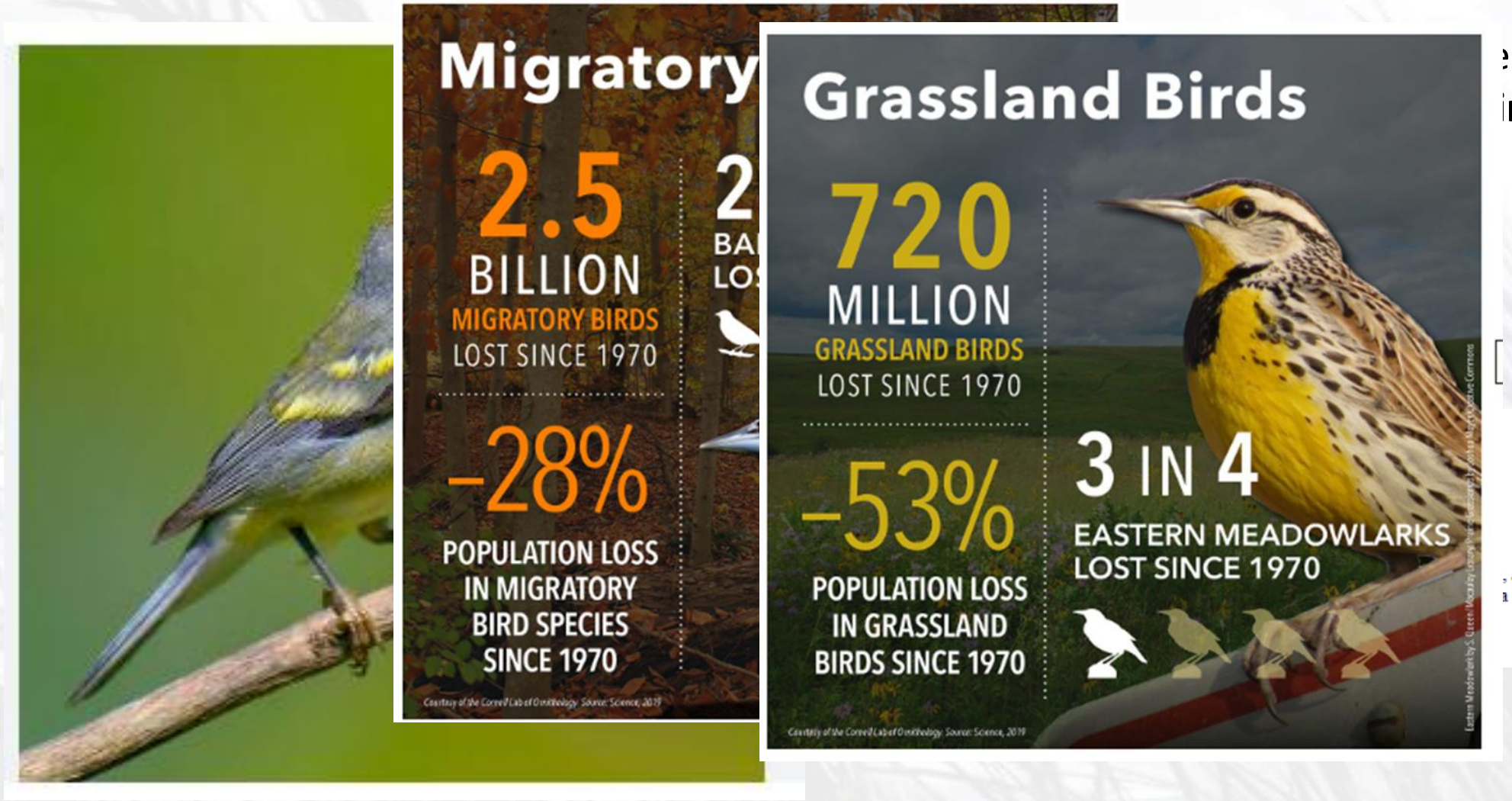


BWSR's Living Landscape Initiative

BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES

Jason Beckler, Ecological Science Conservationist

Birds need Bugs!

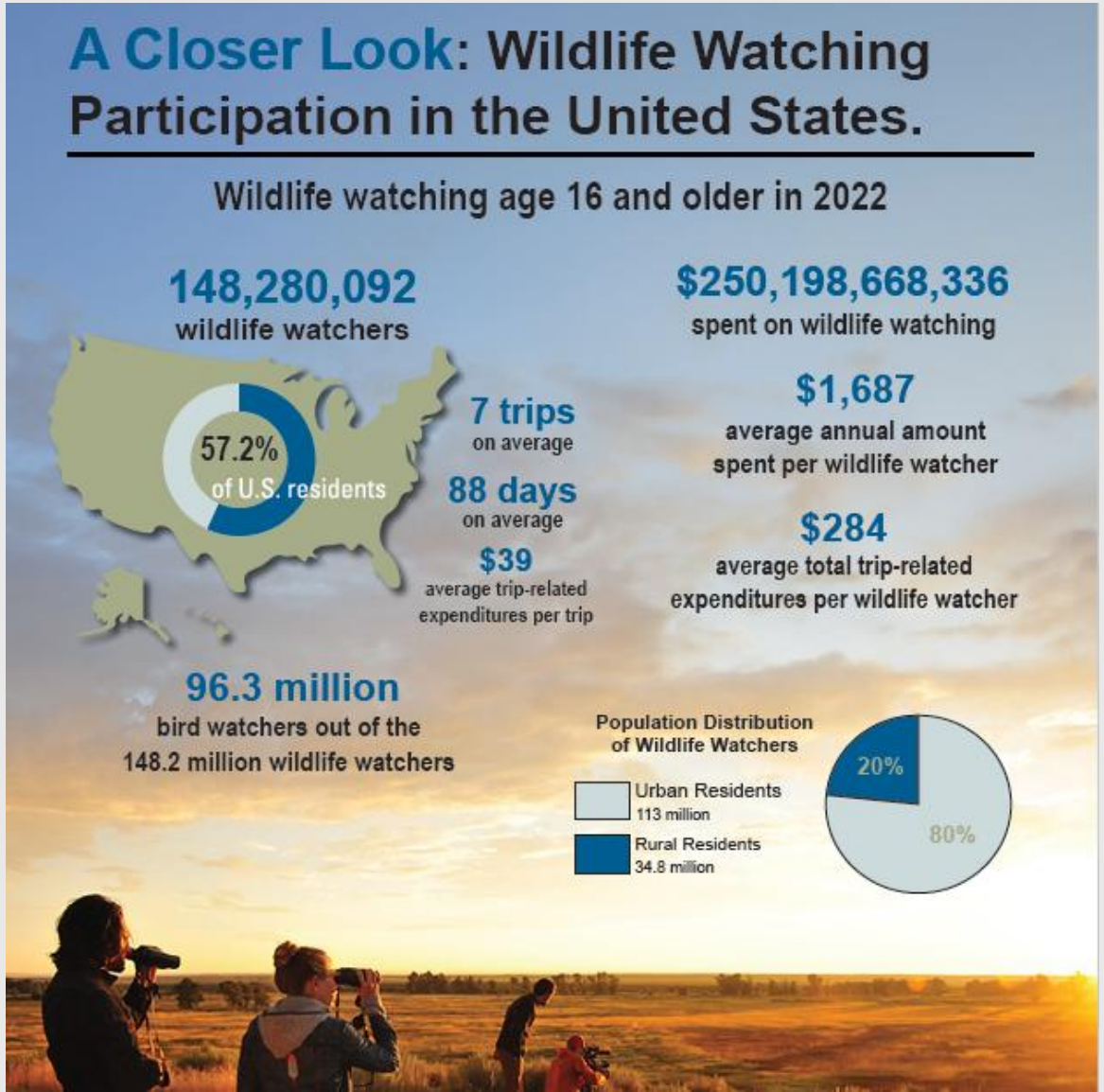


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, John R. Sauer[4],
Helft[1], Michael

People Care about the Outdoors



What is BWSR's Living Landscapes Initiative?

- Integrates habitat into residential, agricultural, and utility landscapes.
- Aligns multiple programs and partners (SWCDs, watershed/utility/tribal/city/county/nonprofit/for-profit/federal and university partners) to create strategic habitat networks across Minnesota, guided by statewide priority-area mapping.
- Goals:
  - Increase awareness about declining wildlife and plant populations
  - Build habitat corridors and structure
  - Engage diverse communities
  - biological health of landscapes to meet soil health and water quality goals
  - Support pollinators that sustain our food production and ecosystems
  - Build landscape resiliency



BWSR's Living Landscapes Initiative

Habitat Enhancement Landscape Program

Maximizing BWSR Programs to Support Biodiversity, Build Corridors & Increase Resiliency

Lawns to Legumes

Cost-share Projects



Connecting to DNR, USFWS, USDA & Other Conservation Lands

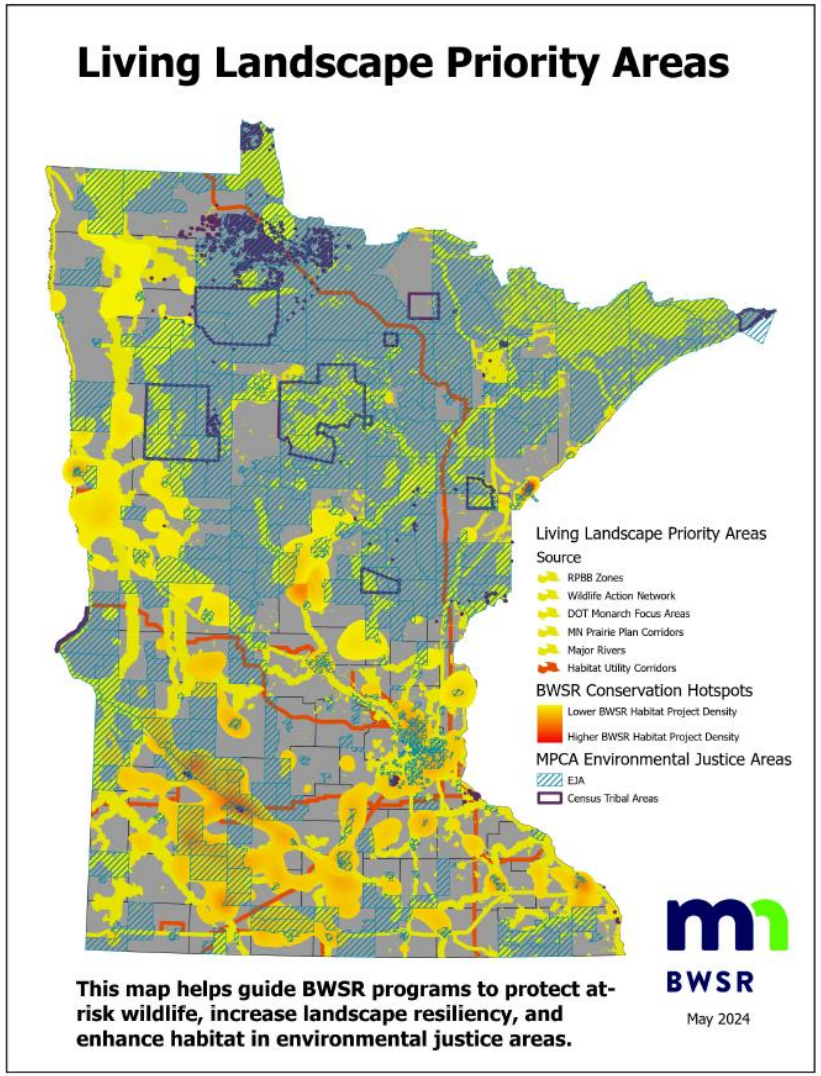
Habitat Friendly Solar

Weed Management Program

Easement & Wetland Programs
Over 300,000 acres

Addressing Rapid Declines in Biodiversity

Priority Areas



- Created to guide BWSR efforts to protect at-risk wildlife, increase landscape resiliency, and expand habitat corridors along waterways, roads and utility corridors.
- Guide decision making for the BWSR Living Landscapes Initiative including project selection for individual conservation programs.
- Updated periodically to add new habitat corridors that are being developed across the state.
  - Giving our partners the opprotunity to recommend edits

Habitat Enhancement Landscape Program (HELP)

Overview

This program is focused on restoring and enhancing strategically located, diverse native habitat across Minnesota natural areas, conservation lands and open spaces to benefit populations of pollinators and beneficial insects as well as overall plant and wildlife.

Received $4M of general funds in 2023







Habitat Enhancement Landscape Program (HELP)

Eligible Applicants:

- Soil and Water Conservation Districts
- Watershed Districts
- Watershed Management Organizations
- Cities
- Towns
- Contractors
- Nongovernmental Organizations
- Tribal Governments
- Counties
- Local Government Joint Power Boards
- Park Districts



CRP State Incentives Program

Overview

The Conservation Reserve Program State Incentives Program grant funds are made available to CWMP Partnerships for the purpose of providing landowner incentive payments to install or adopt Continuous Conservation Reserve Program practices that improve or protect water quality and/or provide pollinator and wildlife benefits.



Lawns to Legumes
Individual Support

The Blue Thumb Partnership is playing a key role for individual support

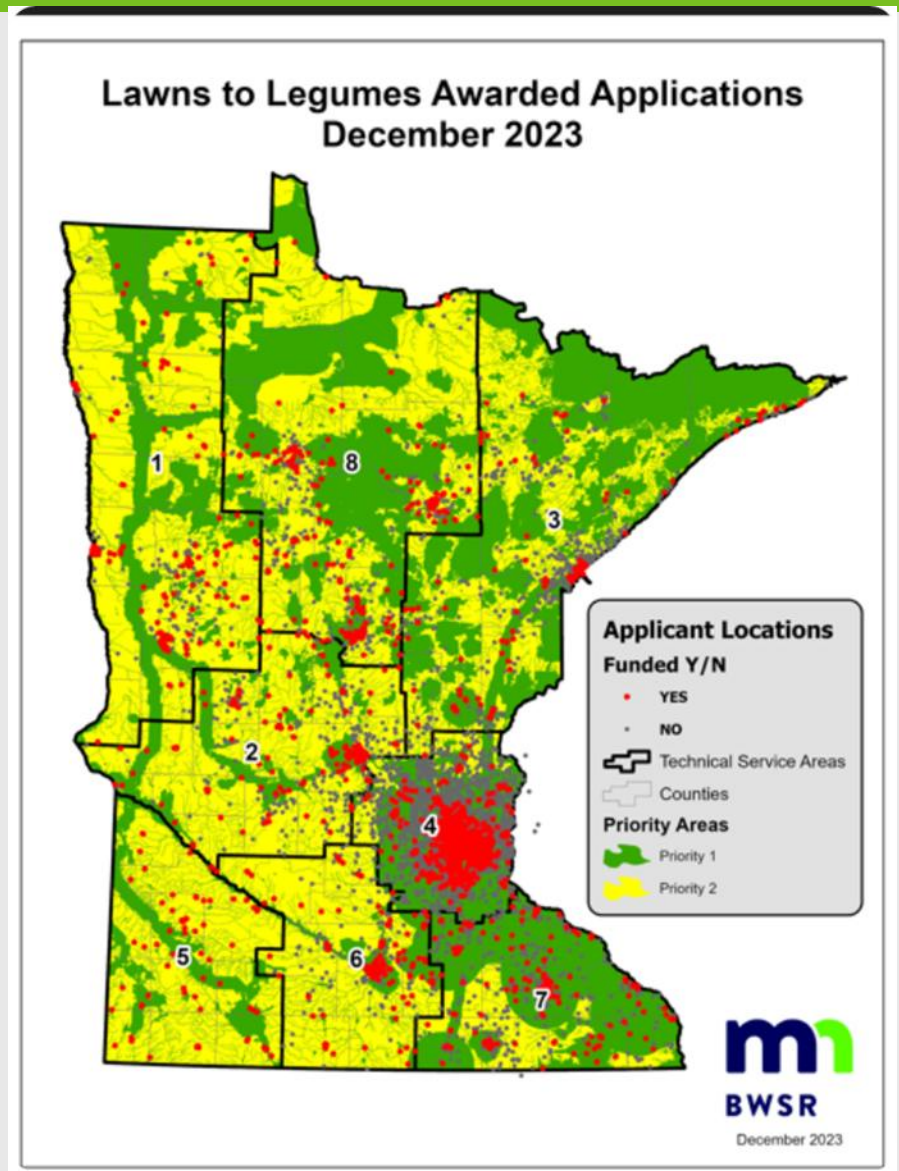
- Working with individual support recipients
- Coordinating Workshops
- Working with MCAD students
- Coordinating coaches



Lawns to Legumes Individual Support

Spring 2024 Plating Grant Awards – 3000

14,000 applicants



Habitat Friendly Utilities Program Goals

1) Promote conservation co-benefits
2) Collaborate with the larger conservation community to help ensure project success
3) Provide a standard and assessments to guide project success





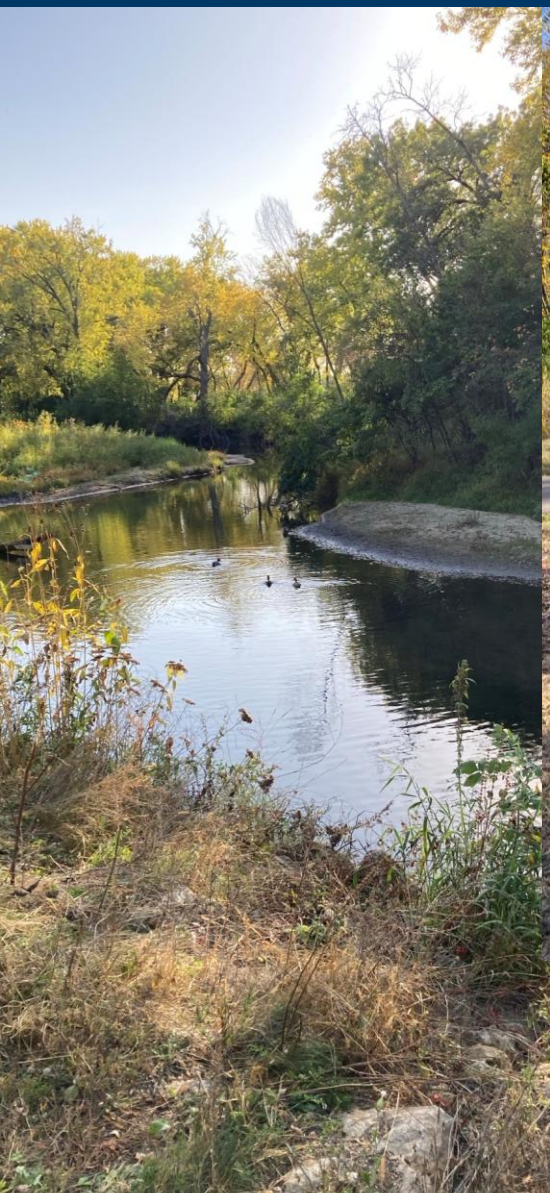
Rochester Public Utilities





- RPU Pilot Site Ranking Criteria
  - Year-round access
  - Recent woody vegetation removal – clean site
  - Riperian – water quality improvements
  - Public access
  - Land outside of the ROW owned by the City of Rochester

Rochester Public Utilities







Habitat Friendly Solar Program



This?

OR

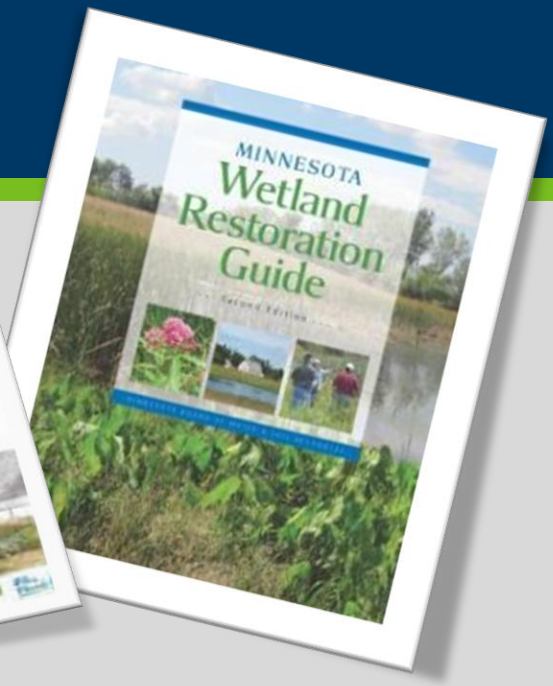


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Related Resources

- State Seed Mixes (70+ mixes and fact sheets)
- Native Vegetation Guidelines
- BWSR Climate Action Steps recently posted to website
- Other Key Resources











Buffer Establishment and Management Toolbox

BWSR Climate Resiliency Toolbox

Looking Ahead / Lessons for Other Agencies

- **Continue to expand program authority and appropriation flexibility.**
- **Build shared funding pools and outcome reporting frameworks.**
- **Pilot innovative, cross-sector demonstration projects.**
- **Further interagency coordination**
- **Need for statewide habitat outcomes/widgets**
- **Continue momentum for programs**
- **Build new programs (Oak Savanna)**
- **Continue refining restoration methods**

Questions?

For more information contact Jason Beckler at jason.beckler@state.mn.us or at 507-829-8204



Wilson's warbler, Mike Goodnature





Paul Raymaker