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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Targeted Fertilizer Project Successful- Water Quality Protected, Farmers' Yield Optimized**

Four years ago, the Clearwater River Watershed District (CRWD) instituted a program focused on protecting and improving water quality by assisting area farmers with implementing a newer best management practice on a watershed scale. At the end of this period, the CRWD is pleased to announce the program, known as the Targeted Fertilizer Application Reduction Project, has successfully concluded.

This award-winning program focused on accelerating the adoption of two conjoined practices, systematic soil testing and fertilizer application, to replace the once-common uniform application of fertilizer of agricultural fields. The result is improved yield optimization for the farmer while reducing the potential for nutrient pollution from fields to area waters.

The project resulted in the enrollment of 17,728 unique acres of predominately corn and soybeans in the targeted area (representing a 61% uptake of the practices mentioned above), as well as additional uptake outside the target area. Estimates from water quality monitoring and extrapolation of available data from the target area indicate the program may provide 10-30% of the required nutrient load reduction from the watershed needed for Lake Betsy to meet state standards. Thanks to the program, these nutrients are staying in the fields where they are needed instead of in our waters where they can degrade water quality.

The program relied on a unique partnership with local farmer cooperatives and their existing relationships with area farmers to implement the program. The partner cooperatives, listed below, continue to offer these practices as a service to area farmers, as well as other value-adding services.

- Centra Sota Cooperative- Watkins, MN
- Cold Spring Cooperative- Cold Spring, MN
- Consumers Cooperative Association- Litchfield, MN



**A section of the Clearwater River protected by the project**

Post-project surveys of participants indicate farmers see the value of the two practices and plan to implement them as part of their operations going forward. Doing so will provide both continual water quality benefits and yield optimization going forward.

To learn more about the program, including review of the final project report, visit:  
[http://crwd.org/tmdl\\_targetedfertilizer.html](http://crwd.org/tmdl_targetedfertilizer.html).

## **CLEARWATER RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT**

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