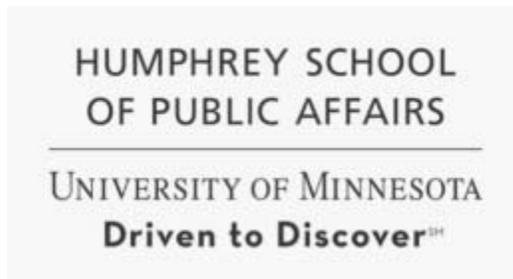




National Policy Challenge
Fels Institute of Government
University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
March 18-20, 2016



Julie Barton, MLS '15, MPA '17
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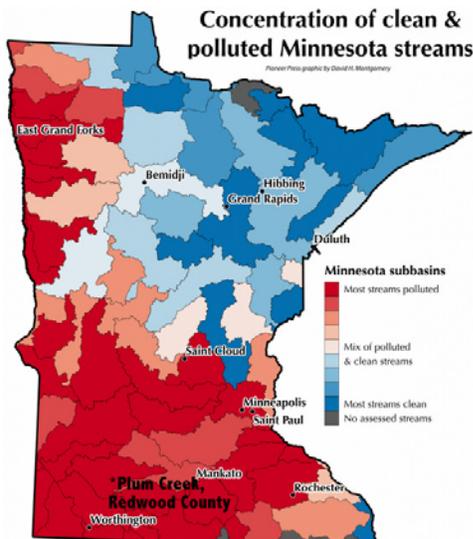
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Too Many Rural Minnesota Waters Suffer High Contaminant Levels...

The waters of rural Minnesota, the Land of 10,000 Lakes, are polluted with excessive phosphates, nitrates, and loose sediments from agricultural practices.¹

- Children and water enthusiasts can no longer swim or fish in most southern Minnesota lakes and rivers; the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency notes that most southern lakes and rivers are “unfishable, unswimmable, and undrinkable.”²
- Although best practices for reducing agricultural pollution sources have been known and suggested for decades, the complexity of agricultural business and tradition of farmer individualism limit protection efforts.³
- Reduced water quality impairs human, animal, and plant health. It forces communities to upgrade water filtration systems at great expense.⁴
- Rural women have been underrepresented as leaders in responsible farming.



5

...But We Can Fix This.

The Plum Creek Initiative (PCI) solution drives learning and changing through grassroots collaboration and neighbor engagement. Designed as a long-term, state-wide, Water improvement strategy, this program invites women leaders from Redwood County to participate in a fellowship offering water education, leadership growth, and networking opportunities. With credible, local educators to facilitate learning, fellows will explore water improvement science, technology, and messaging. The fellows, one from each of the twenty-six townships and one reservation, will design outreach plans to engage their communities with water-friendly farming messages for one year, including ongoing program and fellow evaluation.

“I learned to swim and fish in these waters. Now, I won’t let my kids wade in them. I am ready to help heal the water.” –Minnesota Mom

¹ Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. “Minnesota River: Cottonwood River Watershed.” 2010.

² Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. “Swimmable, fishable, fixable? What we’ve learned so far.” April 2015.

³ Kennedy, Tony. “In farm country, tainted water is ‘just the way it is.’” *Star Tribune*. 4 June 2015.

⁴ *ibid.*

⁵ Montgomery, Daniel. “Minnesota’s polluted and clean waters, mapped.” Pioneer Press. July, 2015.

Why Redwood County? Why Women? Redwood County is home to the beloved Plum Creek of the *Little House on the Prairie* series by Laura Ingalls Wilder. Its watershed, including Plum Creek, exceeds acceptable contaminant levels due to farming practices.⁶ Each year, Redwood County hosts Farmfest, attracting 40,000 farmers, industry experts, and politicians. Currently, Redwood County participates in water improvement programs and is receptive to others.⁷ Women in Redwood County lag substantially behind men in leadership roles and earnings, according to census records.⁸ Rural sisters, mothers, aunts, and grandmothers provide creativity, agricultural knowledge, green values, and positive influence.

How? The PCI fellows will gather for training, and then return to Redwood County to implement their water improvement messaging plans with mentor support.



- Potential Partners and Funders**
- Redwood-Cottonwood River Control Area
 - Redwood Area Communities Foundation
 - Minnesota West Community and Technical College
 - Soil Sisters of Minnesota
 - The University of Minnesota
 - The McKnight Foundation
 - The Legacy Amendment
 - Blandin Foundation
 - Ducks Unlimited

And Then What? The PCI fellows will saturate Redwood County with water-friendly farming messaging while fostering professional and leadership skills. The PCI fellows will lead toward improved water quality and environmental stewardship.

- Fellows communicate and encourage water-friendly farming practices.
- Farmers will practice current requirements plus bolder conservation methods, reducing phosphorus, nitrogen, and sediment runoff.
- PCI begins in other Minnesota counties while Redwood County PCI continues.
- Women lead toward stewardship of water resources.
- Water quality in Minnesota and downstream improves.

⁶ Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. "Minnesota River: Cottonwood River Watershed." 2010.

⁷ Redwood-Cottonwood Rivers Control Area. 2015. <http://www.rcrca.com>.

⁸ American Factfinder. United States Census Bureau "Redwood County, MN. Median Earnings by Educational Attainment." 2014.

THE PROBLEM

“If enough people think of a thing and work hard enough at it, I guess it’s pretty nearly bound to happen, wind and weather permitting.”

Laura Ingalls Wilder, author of *On the Banks of Plum Creek* and *Little House on the Prairie* series

We are the land of lakes, winding rivers, trickling creeks, and fishing holes. We are the babies who take first steps on muddy shorelines and the children who take first swim strokes among walleyes. On frozen November mornings, we are the men who hunt ducks from jon boats. In June, we are the mothers who bait leeches onto hooks for young anglers. We are responsible for the glacial gift of water, left by a mile-high mountain of ice ten thousand years ago.

We use the water for recreation, sport, transportation, irrigation, and industry. We farm adjacent to it. Minnesota is the land of some of the richest, blackest soil on the planet, another gift of the glaciers. We till our acreage to provide food and energy for the world. As the global need for food and energy rises, so too does pressure on our soil and our water. Nearly every available acre is being turned over for crop production. The soil, exhausted of natural nutrients, requires more and more fertilizing chemicals. Compounded by the web of subsurface tiling systems that drain rainwater and snowmelt into our lakes and ponds, the application of artificial nutrients has poisoned our water.

In southern Minnesota’s Redwood County, where Laura Ingalls Wilder waded in Plum Creek all those years ago, 90% of the natural wetlands have been drained for agriculture.⁹ The waters of Plum Creek and of rural Minnesota are in crisis.



Too many Minnesota lakes and rivers suffer from water pollution from agricultural sources. Levels of nitrogen, phosphorus, and loose sediments are too high.

- Less than 20% of public waters in Minnesota’s southern, agricultural regions are suitable for recreation or are hospitable for aquatic life due to high phosphorus levels from animal waste, high nitrogen levels from fertilizers, and loose sediments.¹⁰

⁹ Redwood County Soil and Water Conservation District. “Assessing Priority Concerns.” 2014.

¹⁰ Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. “Swimmable, fishable, fixable?” April, 2015.

- Farmers, incentivized by high yields, high prices, and federally subsidized crop insurance drain as much land as possible into tillable acres, which pits maximum yield against water quality.¹¹
- Current agricultural best practices to reduce water pollution are largely voluntary and are difficult to monitor. Market externality of pollution means effects not immediate.
- Water pollution negatively affects the health of animals, plants, and humans, costing rural communities money. Rural communities are spending millions of dollars to remove toxic algae, which kills aquatic life and is harmful to human health,¹² and to filter the excessive nitrates from both public waters and drinking water sources.¹³
- Water pollution rapidly moves downstream. In turn, this pollution downstream affects the fishing, economy, and health of southern states and the Gulf of Mexico.¹⁴

Public policy regarding water contamination over the last two decades has gradually increased focus on agricultural sources. Unfortunately, due to cultural attitudes of the farming community, as well as the mechanism of public programs, farmers have developed a deep distrust of policy that pits environmental protections against maximum production and against government entities. This simultaneously demands bumper crops and pollution reduction. Farmers feel forced to choose between maximum production, for which they are highly incentivized, and best practices for water-friendly farming, which has the perception of economic loss. The complexity of this area of public policy is enormous. Farmers do take their stewardship of the land seriously, but ubiquitous distrust of the government has meant many of them haven't fully accepted the need to reduce nutrient runoff. Legislators, both Republican and Democratic, are hesitant to mandate changes in agricultural policy, choosing to avoid controversial positions.

A recent study by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) identifies targets for nutrient reduction over the next ten years, and these targets reflect the goals identified by a national hypoxia task force.¹⁵ The report notes that current activities will not reduce or even mitigate water contamination due to agricultural practices. A combination of a thorough understanding of the rural psyche, of best practices in agriculture, of the water quality crisis, of the complexity of the agricultural industry, and the positions of all stakeholders, especially those previously left out of the conversation, is needed. The Plum Creek Initiative (PCI) understands these truths.

¹¹ Kotila, Jennifer. "New study shows tiling causes increased flow in MN rivers." April, 2013.

¹² Krohn, Tim. "Lakes get renewed effort in Lake Crystal." May, 2015.

¹³ Conservation Minnesota. "Safe Drinking Water: At What Cost?" November, 2015.

¹⁴ United States Pollution Control Agency. "Mississippi River/Gulf of Mexico Hypoxia Task Force." 2008, updated 2015.

¹⁵ Ibid.

POLICY PROPOSAL

PCI's policy proposal embraces southern Minnesota's secret power player: the rural woman, who, behind the scenes, wields positive and strong influence at home, on the farm, and in the community.

Designed as a long-term, state-wide, water improvement strategy, at its start this initiative invites women leaders from Redwood County to participate in a fellowship offering water education, leadership growth, and networking opportunities. With the guidance of credible, local educators, fellows will explore water improvement science, technology, and messaging. The fellows will design outreach plans to engage their communities with water-friendly farming activities for one year, including ongoing fellow mentorship.



SOLUTION

PCI will select and invite women leaders from each of the 26 townships and one American Indian reservation in Redwood County, Minnesota, to participate in a community water improvement process. The fellows will explore ways to engage their community in discussions about water-friendly farming practices, using non-threatening, supportive approaches. The fellows will partner with key stakeholders in agricultural, policy, and conservation sectors.

Upon selection for the Plum Creek Initiative, the fellows receive a monetary award plus childcare expenses during workshops and training sessions. The fellows will attend a series of workshops at Minnesota State University, Mankato. During the workshops, the fellows will begin development of personal activities designed to spread water-friendly farming messages to be implemented in their homes, farms, and communities. Periodic follow-up sessions, as well as on-the-ground and electronic support, will occur during implementation. Success stories will be highlighted on social media, so the fellows can learn from each other and spread the work of one another. Fellows will prepare and apply their individually prepared water-friendly farming education and marketing activities in Redwood County for one year. The program will be evaluated at the end of that year.



WHO

Women in Redwood County lag substantially behind men in leadership roles and earnings, according to census records. Rural sisters, mothers, aunts, and grandmothers provide creativity, agricultural knowledge, and positive influence.

The Plum Creek Initiative gives support to rural women because they have largely been overlooked in the past, and, as indicated by the \$10,000 to \$15,000 annual gender wage gap in that county,¹⁶ need opportunities to develop leadership and economic possibilities. Through interviews and family connections, the Plum Creek Initiative has received positive feedback from legislators, private consultants, county officials, and most importantly, rural women themselves, who see the uniqueness and value of bolstering women leaders in the journey toward improved water quality. Like all communities, rural communities have an idiosyncratic social script that is important to understand before asking for change. PCI fellows will already know the social and cultural mores because they share or understand those values and norms as members of the community. They can communicate with the farmers in the same verbal and nonverbal language. Built-in trust exists already. Skepticism is diluted.¹⁷

Within the farming world introductions from trusted community members and “who you know” are critical in order to gain credibility. Initially, rural women will be personally recruited to apply for fellow positions.



WHERE

Redwood County is in southwestern Minnesota. More than 90% of its wetlands have been drained for agriculture production.¹⁸ In southern Minnesota, up to 80% of the public water languishes under untenable concentrations of nitrates, phosphates, and loose sediments.¹⁹

Currently, restorative water programs are underway in Redwood County, but they cannot keep up with the relentless addition of contaminants from every planting and harvesting season. The county is open to hosting more water improvement activities from people who understand the conundrum farmers experience, of maximizing production and managing water quality.

Additionally strategy for our implementation is the fact that Redwood County hosts Farmfest, which draws 40,000 farmers and industry experts, plus politicians every year. It is the ideal opportunity and place for the Plum Creek Initiative to launch our program, spread our brand, connect with community and farmer leaders, and attract community and statewide support for our program.

¹⁶ American Fact Finder, the United States Census Bureau. “Earnings in the Past Twelve Months, Redwood County.” 2014.

¹⁷ Enticott, Garth and Frank VanClay. “The Role and Functioning of Cultural Scripts in Farming and Agriculture.” April, 2011.

¹⁸ Redwood County Soil and Water Conservation District. “Assessing Priority Concerns.” 2014.

¹⁹ Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. “Swimmable, fishable, fixable?” April, 2015.

Of course, Redwood County is important because it is the home to Plum Creek, the nationally-known watering hole made famous by the author Laura Ingalls Wilder of the Little House on the Prairie series. Restoring that water, which is presently impaired, is of national interest.



The Plum Creek Initiative will provide opportunities for fellows to learn about water quality science and best practices for agricultural drainage. In addition, they'll have the opportunity to increase their leadership skills with focused training and ongoing support.

Phase One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure PCI funding, potentially through the McKnight Foundation, Blandin Foundation, and other funding sources. • Hire part-time executive director. • Identify measurement tools. • Design workshop with credible educators and partners. • Recruit fellows through network web in Redwood County. • Secure booth at Farmfest to launch PCI.
Phase Two	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fellows receive monetary award. • PCI and partners hold workshops for fellows in education, water activity plan design, and leadership skills. Quality child care provided. • PCI and partners support fellows in creation of personal water improvement activity plans following guidelines in "Fellow Activity Proposals."
Phase Three	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fellows encourage thoughtful and knowledgeable engagement with community on water quality issues. • PCI and partners provide support throughout the year. • Results measured throughout the year. • Program evaluated at end of the year, modified as needed, then expanded to the next county.

<p>Education Partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renewing the Countryside • University of Minnesota Extension Service • Minnesota State University • Local Biology Teachers • Local Crop Consultants • Center for Community Vitality University of Minnesota 	<p>Potential Fellows</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women Farm Owner-Producers, Traditional • Women Farm Owner-CSA Producer • Women Farm Owner-Absentee or Retired • Interested Rural Women • Reservation Representative
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It is true – and valuable to the Plum Creek Initiative – that other programs focused on water quality improvement exist. Rather than compete with these programs, we advocate for them because the proven research and strategies that comes out of many of them are not widely used in rural Minnesota. For instance, the State of Minnesota offers tax incentives for planting perennial buffer zones between farmland and public waters because they reduce nitrates and phosphates in the water. In

addition, vouchers exist for bioreactors that reduce nitrogen in runoff before it hits public waters. PCI fellows will share information about conservation programs. They can help fill out the tax forms, and both get the farmer the credit he or she deserves and get one more farm on its way to water-friendly agriculture. Again, our fellows can help farmers navigate the “messy world” of government programs. In fact, lamenting the “messy world of government programs” might be one way our fellow gets her foot in the door to discuss the merits of cover crops, complex rotations, perennial crops, and other ways of reducing nitrogen and phosphorus runoff.

PCI’s approach is innovative because we understand the hearts and minds and motivations and, most importantly, the power structure of the people in the agricultural community. Our program is innovative because we have a thorough understanding of implementation, and understand that “having a good idea” is only the beginning of the beginning of the work. We are using the strength and connectedness of the rural community to sing to, not shout at, the agricultural community about best practices in water-friendly farming. Our program is innovative because we have studied the failures of other agencies, nonprofits, and regulators. We have been able to use their experiences to both identify strategies that work (subtle emotional appeals along with science-based technology, appeals to profit, appeals to stewardship responsibility) and strategies that do not (obvious partisan language, top-down construction, finger-pointing, shaming, or saying anything about how Iowa does it better). We are putting the work in the hands of the people who live in Redwood County, who live along the banks of Plum Creek, the Cottonwood River, the Redwood River, Willow Lake, and the Sandy Slough. We are supporting rural women who are ready to participate as stakeholders and agents of change who want to bring their children back to the water to swim and who want to be able to drink from their kitchen faucet.



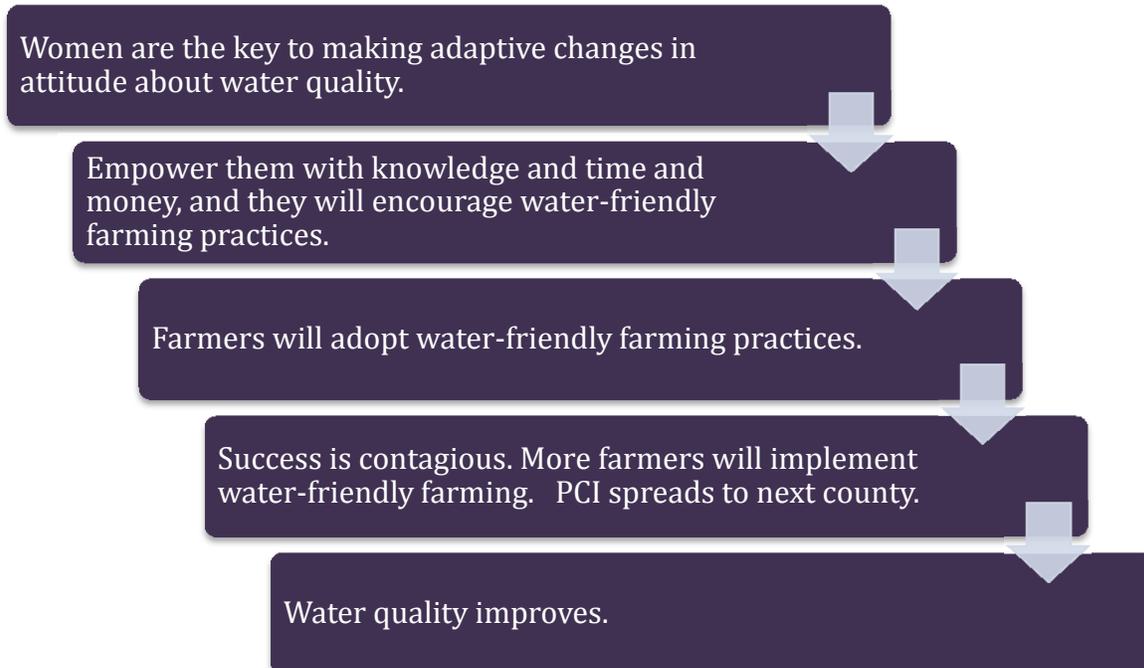
Many, many programs have tried to fix Minnesota’s water quality issue. Most of them had good ideas. Yet the water worsens. Our strength is implementation. We know how to take a good idea, a spark, and whistle on it until the fire is lit.

As well as appreciating the culture of the family farm and rural Minnesota, our research has encompassed environmental law, the Clean Water Act, the Farm Bill, and all of the different stakeholders bearing down on the farm. We have considered other angles, legislative and legal, but have decided that ideas and activities borne of the people

themselves with monetary support, personnel support, and actual tools, will work for the betterment of our water. At the end of the first year, the Plum Creek board will make an evaluation request for proposals and select the evaluator who best fits our needs and budget. Based on the evaluation, we will review our program, make adjustments where necessary, and make plans to move the program into the next county while continuing to support the original pilot fellows.

Water improvement will take time. As noted in the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's water quality report from April 2015, "we're in it for the long haul."²⁰ We no longer have time to trivialize the issue. We must act, knowing that technical solutions alone are not the answer. An adaptive change in thinking and behavior is the key to long-term successful outcomes.

THEORY OF CHANGE



²⁰ Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. "Swimmable, fishable, fixable? What we've learned so far." April 2015.

THE CAMPAIGN

Influence Map



A Minnesota farmer is an independent business person, committed to taking care of family, fighting, on a daily basis, the weather, the seemingly inexplicable movement of commodity prices, and the never-ending body of state and federal regulations. Understanding the way the farmer “sees things” is integral to our success.

His or her land is also his or her income, so regulations or changes in farming practices, which potentially affect autonomy, income, wealth, and work load, are often met with skepticism and resistance. Research data overwhelmingly identify agricultural sources of water pollution, yet conversations about water often result in a blame dance between farmers, regulators, conservationists, and corporations.

Recognizing this challenge, our team has focused on developing a solution that does not assign blame, is not top-down, and recognizes and celebrates the innovative spirit and natural resource stewardship inherent in farmers. Our use of non-traditional participants, rural women from the twenty-six counties and one American Indian reservation, capitalizes on their knowledge and desire to leave a legacy of improved water quality for their children. Our solution uses a practical approach by utilizing existing networks such as schools, churches, 4H clubs, tribal committees, hospitals, and

others to identify thought leaders. We have learned from other women-focused outreach programs in order to increase the effectiveness of our program.

Rural women who use the support of the PCI to learn about water quality, to develop their own plans for water quality improvement in rural Minnesota, to activate those plans in their own communities, and to build leadership and professional skills while doing so will benefit from participating in the Plum Creek Initiative. Rural women will find leadership roles in Redwood County, where nearly 80% of management positions are currently held by men, and where over 70% of service occupations are held by women.²¹ While not proportionally represented, women do hold roles on the school board and on the Redwood County Board of Commissioners. Clearly, a desire for leadership opportunities exists among Redwood County women. PCI gives them a chance to build their resumes and earn income, all the while leading toward an adaptive change in thinking about water quality in rural Minnesota. Rather than resistance, the community will adopt a “we can fix this” attitude because the fellows and the community itself are designing the change.

PCI already has a statewide network of support, along with interested national and local partners. **Currently, our proposal has elicited enthusiastic support from a powerful, woman-led nonprofit group called Renewing the Countryside, which wishes to enter into negotiations about partnering with the Plum Creek Initiative Board.** That means that our program will already have a host and does not need to spend time and money creating our own nonprofit entity. PCI has also tapped allies in politics, including a Republican representative from rural Minnesota who is widely beloved by his rural constituents and who is also a farmer. We have also reached out to the private sector, including a crop consultant for a major seed company, who sees both the value of water improvement and the value of targeting women as agents of change.

Every year, Minnesotans battle extreme temperatures and deadly storms. We are the land of Lambertton, in Redwood County, where in April of 1982 the temperature fluctuated seventy-one degrees in a single day. We are the land of forty-eight tornado touchdowns in less than twenty-four hours in 2010. We are the land where birds fell out of the sky, cows froze solid where they stood, and forty-eight people died in the Armistice Day Blizzard of 1940. We are the land of people who move with weather whims and adapt to environmental challenges. No matter the challenge, we are the people who leave our people better prepared and restore our homes, communities, and waters. We are the land of solutions. We’ve done it before, and we will do it again.

²¹American Factfinder. United States Census Bureau. “Occupation by sex and median earnings in the past 12 months (in 2014 inflation-adjusted dollars) for the civilian employed population 16 years and over.” 2014.

FUNDING AND BUDGET



Funders
and
Strategic
Allies

McKnight Foundation - over 25 years of funding water quality programs, has recently made enormous commitment to rural Minnesota a priority.

Blandin Foundation - focused on rural Minnesota, including community leadership and education

Renewing the Countryside - nonprofit focused on sustainable initiatives that support rural communities; Renewing the Countryside partners with Soil Sisters, a similar program, which targets rural women landowners in southeastern Minnesota. The program educates women who have inherited farm businesses. Many of these women were not included in the business decisions of the farm in the past and now find themselves lost in a sea of responsibility. Soil Sisters have found that most of these women have an attachment to the land, whether they are absentee landowners or still living on the farm, and given the choice will choose water-friendly farming practices to secure a healthy environment for their children and grandchildren. Renewing the Countryside, which hosts the Soil Sisters, is also interested in beginning partnership negotiations with the Plum Creek Initiative.

PCI provides highly organized, very simple, cost-effective, and most importantly, easily scalable solutions.

Timeline

Pilot year

- Grant and supplemental funding sources will be identified
- Create and foster partnership with organizations with similar objectives
- Divide and conquer: decreases cost when cooperating with organizations with same and/or similar objectives
- Increase awareness through advertisement, outreach, and word of mouth
- Raise \$25,000 funding to be used in outreach, training and one part-time staff member's salary

By the end of year three

- We will review measurement data annually and adjust program as needed
- Will have developed a well-structured system in recruiting fellows.
- Expand the number of fellows and will have successfully started implementation to all neighboring counties of Redwood, the original pilot county
- Raise total funding of \$50,000 to support one full-time worker and other part-time workers

By the end of year five

- Raise total funding of over \$200,000 per year to support full time director and staff member, continue the outreach programs, and provide compensation for the fellows
- Hire grant writer that will be in charge of development to donor outreach and marketing

FUNDING STRATEGY

- Grant makers: Plum Creek Initiative will identify foundations and groups that are interested in solving similar issues, particularly the McKnight Foundation the Blandin Foundation, and other funders.
- Fundraising: donations will be solicited from individuals and companies interested in improving water quality in Minnesota.

PLUM CREEK INITIATIVE BUDGET PROPOSAL

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
<u>Revenues</u>					
Grants	\$25,000	\$60,000	\$120,000	\$190,000	\$220,000
<u>Total annual revenue</u>	\$25,000	\$60,000	\$120,000	\$190,000	\$220,000
<u>Expenses</u>					
Labor cost	\$10,000	\$25,000	\$50,000	\$80,000	\$85,000
Administrative cost	\$1,000	\$2,500	\$3,000	\$3,500	\$4,000
Community Engagement/Outreach	\$8,000	\$20,000	\$40,000	\$65,000	\$75,000
Workshop expenses	\$4,000	\$10,000	\$25,000	\$39,000	\$50,000
Program Evaluation cost	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$4,000
<u>Total annual expenses</u>	\$25,000	\$59,500	\$120,000	\$189,500	\$218,000
<u>Net revenue</u>	\$-	\$500	\$-	\$500	\$2,000

1. Plum Creek Initiative is seeking grants from the McKnight Foundation and other funders.
2. Donations may be solicited from companies and fundraisers may be held.
3. Grant writer/donor outreach position will become a full-time position by year five.
4. Administrative expenses include office supplies, printing and other related costs.
5. Workshop expenses include direct workshop costs, fellow support materials, food, and childcare-related expenses.

APPENDIX

“The wilderness needs your whole attention.”

Laura Ingalls Wilder, author of *Little House in the Big Woods* and *Little House on the Prairie* series

LETTER OF SUPPORT FROM RENEWING THE COUNTRYSIDE

March 9, 2016



Julie Barton
Plum Creek Initiative
3526 Highland Avenue
White Bear Lake, Minnesota 55110

Dear Julie,

Renewing the Countryside, a 501c3 nonprofit which works to cultivate vibrant and sustainable rural communities, is pleased to enter partnership negotiations with the Plum Creek Initiative board, whose aim it is to bring water-friendly farming messaging to southern Minnesota.

For 14 years, Renewing the Countryside has been fostering and developing initiatives that have positive impacts on rural communities. Some examples include the creation of a sustainable tourism initiative, the development of a local foods trade show, training for rural entrepreneurs, and facilitating farm to school efforts across the state.

Protecting our natural resources is integral to our work and is a primary focus of some of our initiatives. For example, for the past three years we have partnered with the Women, Food and Agriculture Network to host a dozen Women Caring for the Land workshops and in February 2016 we launched a Soil Sisters Conservation Leadership program.

We have a long and positive history of partnering with other groups on projects and initiatives where we share a common vision. The Plum Creek Initiative, with its strategy to engage and empower local women with the goal of changing practices on agricultural landscapes and improving water quality, is well aligned with our mission. The plan is innovative, well thought out, and can potentially be a game changer for water quality in Redwood County.

We look forward to discussing what a partnership could look like and how we can work together to make Minnesota's environmental and cultural future a shining star for our children.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jan Joannides". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jan Joannides
Executive Director

Plum Creek Initiative Partners, Allies, and Stakeholders



Horse Creek Holsteins Farm

2080 20th Avenue
Star Prairie WI 54026

Lohre Family Farm

Redwood County, MN

Minnesota Agricultural Water Resource Center

Quality Certification Program
3080 Eagandale Place
Eagan MN 55121-2118
TOOL: <https://mnwatercertify.mda.state.mn.us/wqcpapp/>

Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts

255 Kellogg Blvd. East, Suite #101
St. Paul MN 55101

Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA)

Pesticide and Fertilizer Management Division
625 Robert Street N
St. Paul MN 55155

Minnesota House Representative, District 23B

369 State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul Minnesota 55155

Minnesota Land Trust

2356 University Ave. W
St. Paul MN 55114

Nicollet County

Minnesota Environmental Services

501 S. Minnesota Ave.
St. Peter, MN 56082

Redwood County Board of Commissioners, District 5

400 Teakwood Dr.
Redwood Falls MN 56283

Redwood Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD)
1241 E Bridge St.
Redwood Falls MN

Renewing the Countryside
2637 27th Avenue South
Suite 17
Minneapolis MN 55406
www.rtcinfo.org

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155

**U.S. Department of Agriculture
Rural Development**
375 Jackson St.
Suite 410
St. Paul MN 55101

**University of Minnesota
Humphrey School of Public Affairs**
301 19th Ave S
Minneapolis MN 55455

**University of Minnesota
Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships**
411 Borlaug Hall
1991 Upper Buford Circle
St. Paul MN 55108

**University of Minnesota
Southwest Research and Outreach Center**
23669 130th Street
Lamberton MN 56152

Fellow Activity Proposals



Please submit a 1-3-page proposal.

Plum Creek Initiative Outcomes

The Plum Creek Initiative program will support and assist Plum Creek fellows as they develop, implement, and evaluate water quality activities in Redwood County, Minnesota. Activities will be supported and assisted by the Plum Creek Initiative Board. These activities will be supported if they meet the following guidelines:

- Some part of the activity must occur in Redwood County.
- Some part of the activity must include a public engagement component.
- Activity must be related to water quality education, promotion and/or implementation in Redwood County.
- Activity must include measurable outcome detailed in activity plan.

Fellow Activity Outcomes

Plum Creek fellow activity proposals must include and detail the following:

- Fellows build personal knowledge about water quality.
- Fellows develop leadership and professional skills.
- Fellows engage with Redwood County public on the topic of water quality and agricultural practices.

Support Amount for Activities. No matching funds are required.

- Minimum support amount-\$0
- Maximum support amount-\$1000

Activity Period

- One year. TBD.
- Fellows may propose activities that extend one year with board approval.

Eligibility

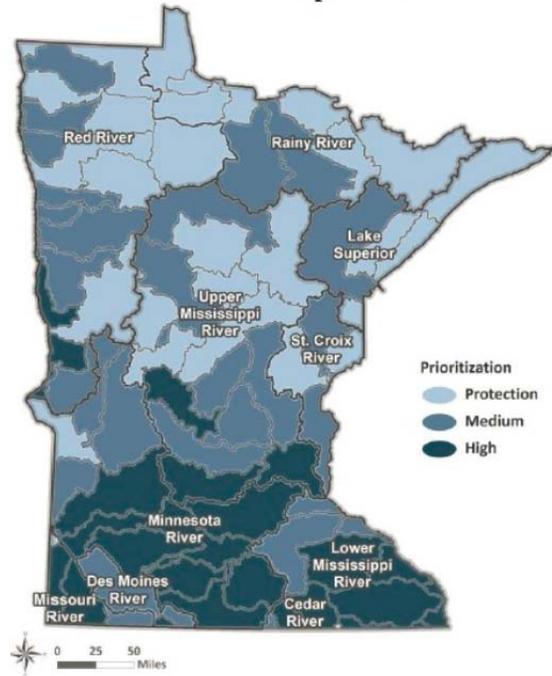
- Woman or identifying woman.
- At least 18 years of age.
- Permanent resident of Redwood County within the past five years.

Activity Review Criteria

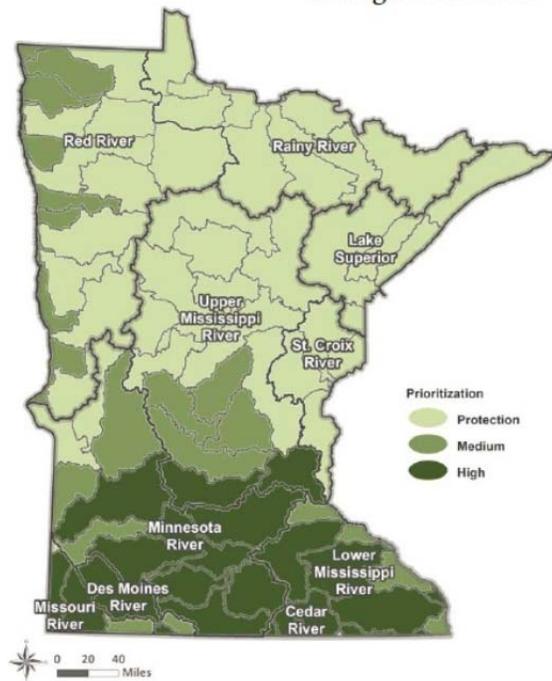
- Merit and feasibility of activity (25 points)
- Impact on water quality in Redwood County (25 points)
- Benefit to Fellows' professional, and leadership growth (25 points)
- Benefit to Fellows' home, community, county, and state (25 points)

Graphs of Critical Clean-Up Targets for Phosphorus and Nitrogen

Phosphorus Priorities



Nitrogen Priorities



Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, *The Minnesota Nutrient Reduction Strategy*, September 2014, Form wq-s1-80, p 4-3