

What is a watershed district?

Citations from Minnesota Statute 112.34, Subd. 1 and 2.

"In order to carry out conservation of the natural resources of the state through land utilization, flood control, and other needs upon sound scientific principals for the protection of the public health and welfare and the provident use of the natural resources, the establishment of a public corporation, as an agency of the state for the aforesaid purposes, is provided in this chapter of Minnesota Statute... This chapter shall be known and may be sited as Minnesota Watershed Act."

In other words, a watershed district is a public body created to monitor the quality of water and protect it from the effects of man-made changes to the environment.

Who runs a watershed district?

Members of the *Minnesota Water Resource Board* are appointed by the governor. This board has the power and authority to establish watershed districts, define the boundaries of such districts, and appoint the first board of managers for each district. Subsequent district board members are appointed by the county commissioners.

What does a watershed district do for me?

A watershed district may be established for any or all of the following purposes:

- Control or alleviation of damage by flood waters.
- Improvement of stream channels for drainage, navigation, etc.
- Reclaiming or filling wet and overflowed lands.
- Provide water for irrigation.
- Regulate the flow of streams.
- Divert or change watercourses.
- Provide and conserve water for domestic, commercial, industrial, recreational, agricultural, or other public use.
- Provide for sanitation and public health by controlling the disposition of waste.
- Repair, improve, relocate, consolidate, or abandon drainage systems within a district.
- Impose preventative or remedial measures for the control of land and soil erosion.
- Regulate improvements by riparian landowners of the beds, banks, and shores of lakes, streams, marshes, etc.
- Provide for the generation of hydroelectric power.
- Protect or enhance the quality of water.

Where do watershed tax dollars go?

Answers to Your Questions About Watershed Districts

Tax rates may vary from district to district. The actual levy depends on the number and magnitude of the projects within each district. Some common costs incurred by a district are:

- Per diem salary to district board members.
- Engineering consulting fees.
- Periodic soil and water tests.
- Inspections of improvement projects.
- Auditing and accounting fees.
- Data tabulation and maintenance.

Additional printed information about watershed districts is available by referring to Minnesota Statute Chapter 112.

Assessing personnel are available to help answer your questions Monday through Friday, from 8:00 am. to 4:30 pm. Our phone numbers are listed below.

Revised: August 20, 2004