**Project Manager Qualifications**

**Proposed Project:** ***Tracking the Climate Benefits of Natural and Working Lands***

**Project Manager:** Suzanne Rhees

**Organization:** Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR)

**Title:** Conservation Projects Coordinator

**BWSR Mission Statement and Charge:**  Improve and protect Minnesota's water and soil resources by working in partnership with local organizations and private landowners. BWSR is the state soil and water conservation agency, and it administers programs that prevent sediment and nutrients from entering our lakes, rivers, and streams; enhance fish and wildlife habitat; and protect wetlands. The 20-member board consists of representatives of local and state government agencies and citizens.

**Project Manager Experience – Suzanne Rhees:**

Suzanne Rhees, AICP, is Conservation Projects Coordinator for the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR). Along with Dan Shaw, she coordinates BWSR’s work on energy and climate. These include:

* Updates to BWSR’s Climate Resiliency Toolbox, a web-based guide, and related on-line resources
* Updates to BWSR’s Climate Trends and Action Plan (ongoing in 2019)
* Participation on interagency Energy and Climate Team
* Updating of eLINK database of conservation projects and carbon sequestration estimates for consistency with MPCA methods

Her related projects include:

* Feasibility study and program plan for a Working Lands Watershed Restoration Program (<http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/planning/WLWRP/wlwrp.html>) to incentivize adoption of perennial and cover crops by farmers to improve water quality.
* Interagency initiatives to promote land use changes (i.e., perennial and cover crop adoption, crop rotations, and other BMPs) to protect groundwater/drinking water in vulnerable areas.
* [Advancing Safe and Sustainable Water Reuse in Minnesota: 2018 Interagency Report on Water Reuse (PDF)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/water/dwp_cwl/reuse/2018report.pdf): Lead technical writer for MDH-managed Clean Water Fund project.

Before coming to BWSR, Ms. Rhees’ experience included practice as a planning consultant and project manager in the areas of land use and resource protection, with an emphasis on green infrastructure and farmland preservation. At the DNR, she managed projects examining the effects of groundwater use on streams, lakes, and wetlands, led agency participation in the EQB *Water Policy Plan, Beyond the Status Quo,* and participated in rulemaking for the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area, among other projects. Ms. Rhees coordinated the MPCA’s *Water Governance Evaluation* (2013), a report to the Legislature evaluating the history and status of water management in Minnesota and recommending strategies to streamline the system.

***Education***

* BA Southeast Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley
* MA Regional Planning, University of Pennsylvania