



GRAND  
LAKE  
TWP

CANOSIA  
TWP

**RICE  
LAKE**

LAKESWOOD  
TWP

DULUTH  
TWP

SOLWAY TWP

**DULUTH**

**HERMANTOWN**

**PROCTOR**

THOMSON  
TWP

**CLOQUET**  
TWP

MIDWAY  
TWP

**SCANLON**  
TWP

**CARLTON**  
TWP

TWIN LAKES  
TWP

**WRENSHALL**

SILVER BROOK TWP

ST LOUIS RIVER

LAKE SUPERIOR



**Resource  
Renew**

The brand of WLSSD

# Boom Town

- 1873
  - 5,000
- 1893
  - 70,000



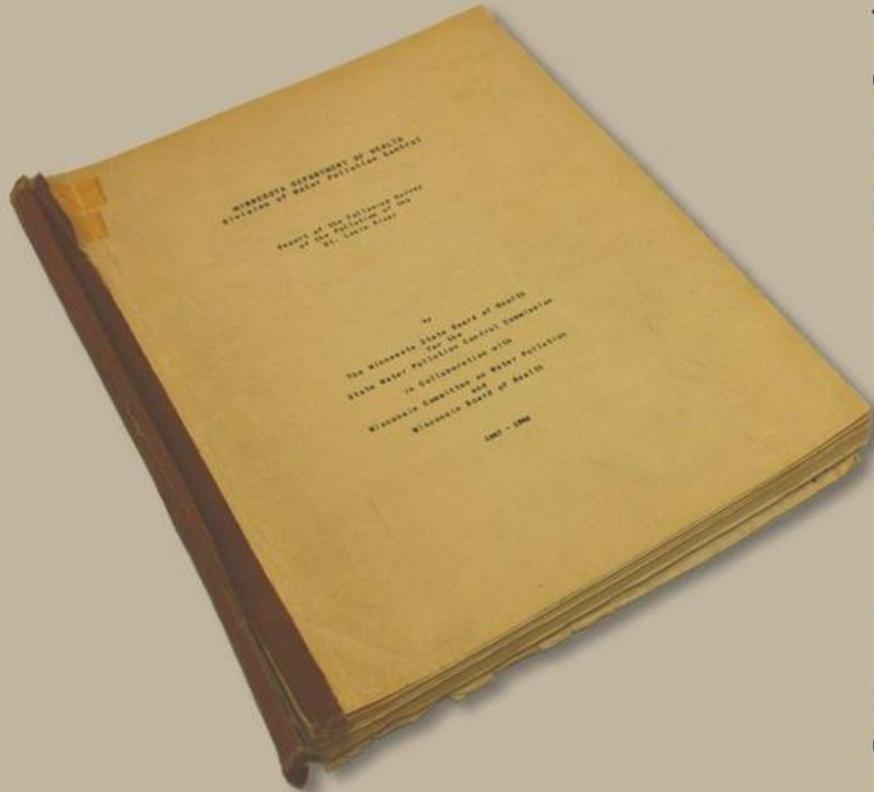
# Typhoid Fever

- Only 10% of Duluth homes had sewer connections in 1891
- Mandatory by 1915

Year	Source Water	Deaths
1888	15 <sup>th</sup> E and 58 <sup>th</sup> E	266
1896	15 <sup>th</sup> E and 58 <sup>th</sup> E	249



# Continued Contamination



“Industries at Cloquet use the river as a source of process water and then finally, along with the municipalities, for the dilution and disposal of wastes and sewages... To remove all pollution from the river would not be economically feasible, but some steps toward reducing the pollution, particularly in regard to sludge-forming wastes from industries, are possible and should effect considerable river improvement.”

-1948 State Board of Health Survey of Pollution of the St. Louis River, a 20-year follow up survey from a 1928-29 report

“Both the 1928-29 and the present survey show that the effect of this pollution extends to the St. Louis Bay and has nearly eliminated fishing and fish life from the lower stretch of the river...no stocking or habitat improvement should be attempted.” 1948 State Board of Health Survey

# Where we started



Lyell Brand of the United Northern Sportsmen examining sludge in the St. Louis River.



# Where we started



# Our History

1971 – Minnesota State Legislature creates Western Lake Superior Sanitary District

1972 – Clean Water Act

1973 – Oil Embargo

1974 – Solid Waste Authority and ground breaking

1978 – Opened our doors



# Our Mission and Vision



- Ensure responsible reuse and renewal of water, solid waste and energy to advance the health and resiliency of our communities.
- Transform resource renewal, empower communities, and protect the environment

# Water Resource Recovery

- 13 billion gallons of clean water
- 13,000,000 kWh clean energy
- 530 square miles
- 75 miles of pipes
- 16 communities
- 4 major industries
- EVERY business and residence



# Solid Waste Facilities

Transfer Station



Materials Recovery Center



Yard Waste Compost Site



Household Hazardous Waste

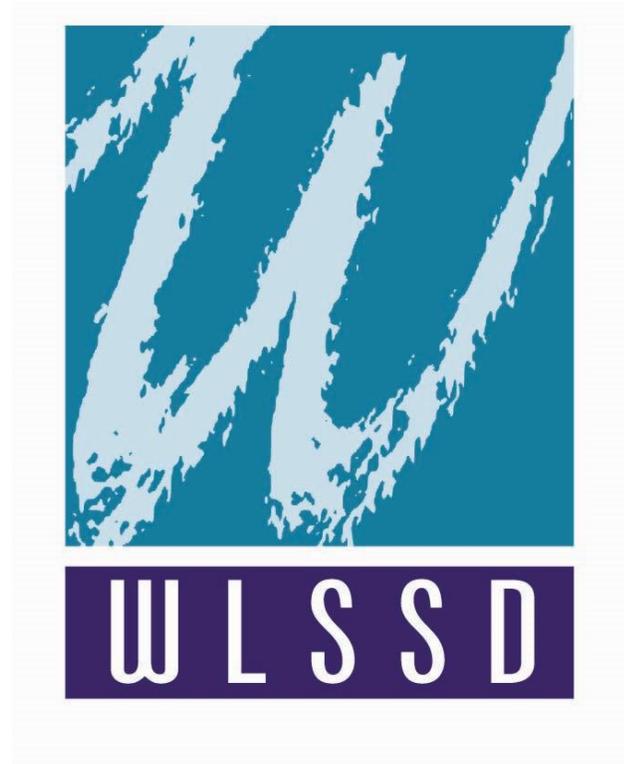


# Branding History

1978



1998



# Branding History

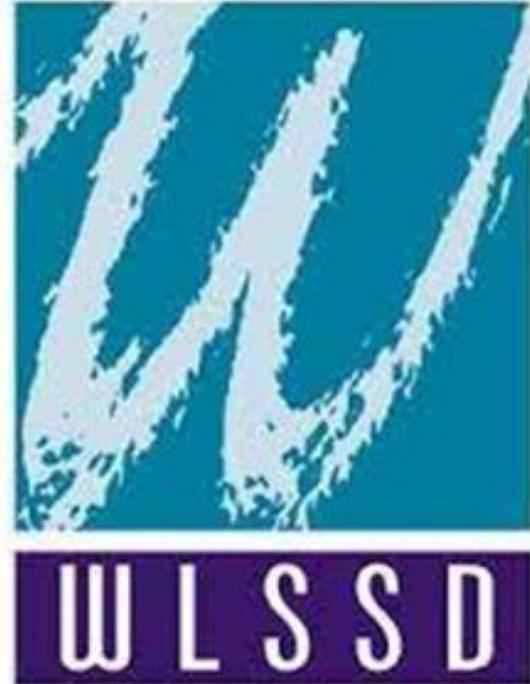


**THINK  
BEFORE YOU  
THROW**



# Identity

- Western Lake Superior Sanitary District
- Clear Answers for Clean Water



# What we do

- 9 member board
  - 4 Duluth, 3 Cloquet, 1 Carlton County, 1 St. Louis County
- Waste Water Treatment
- Green Energy
- Pollution Prevention
- Solid Waste
- Leader in Environmental Preservation



# We are NOT

- Local/City
- Federally Funded
- Waste Management
- Garbage Hauler
- The Dump
- Radio Station
- Poop Plant
- Polluters
- Gross/nuisance



# Industry Trend

- Does your brand tell your story?
  - Lots of confusion, lost history, seen as the problem- not the solution
- What is the community perception?
  - Lots of confusion, lost history, seen as the problem- not the solution
- What is the employee perception?
- What changes have occurred- new process, new products?

# Then v. Now

1978

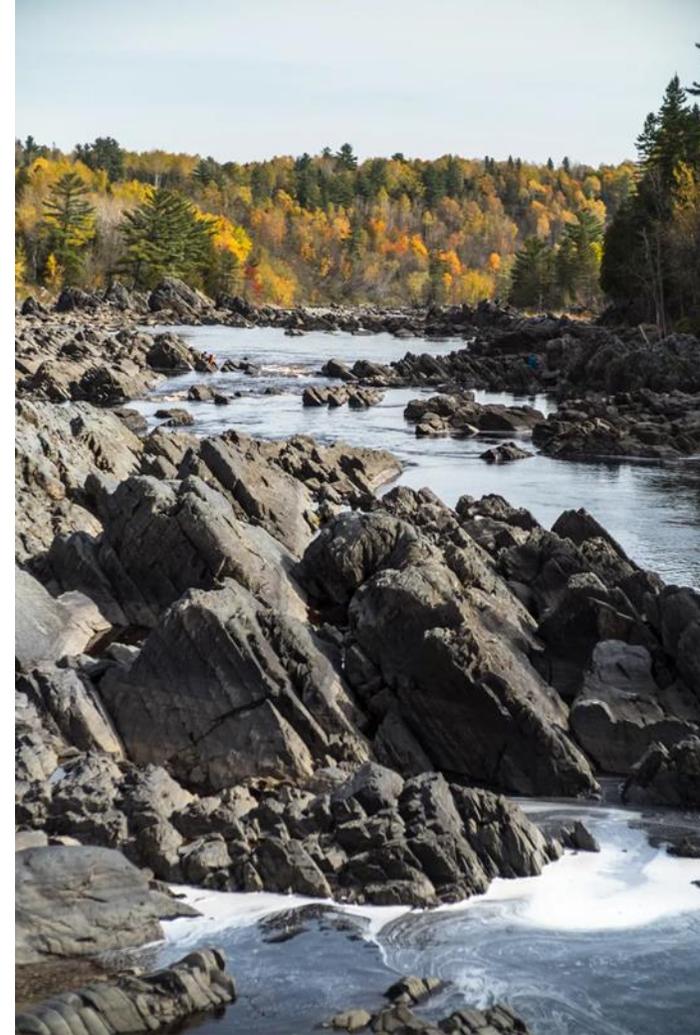
- Obvious Mission
- Remediation
- Pollution Prevention
- Federal Funding



# Then v. Now

## 2025

- Mission/History Unknown
- Success is expected/assumed
- Water Resource Recovery Facility
- Wastewater is a Renewable Energy Resource
- Innovation
- Energy Independence
- Environmental Justice
- Customer/Grant/Loan Funded



# Research Phase

- Brand review
- Market scan
- Stakeholder interviews
- Listening sessions



# Results

“A rebrand could do wonders.....

They’re doing nothing short of heroic work in this area, but they’re viewed as ‘the dump’.”

# Results

## Very positive perception

- Trusted, committed partner
- Outstanding programming
- Proactive approach
- Consistently “above and beyond” environmental approach
- More than a sanitary district

## Limited Understanding

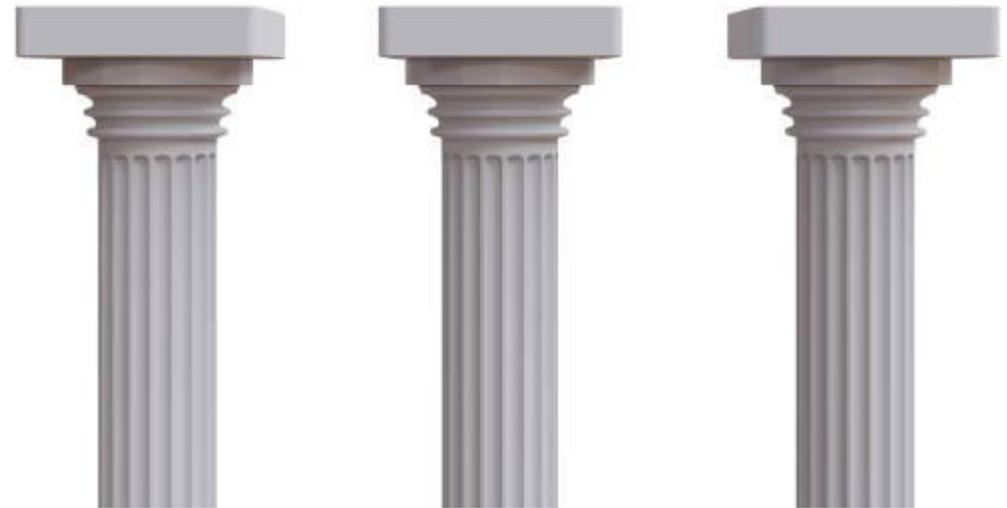
- What does WLSSD do?
- Public naming conventions
- Drinking water/storm water?
- Branding

“Society has forgotten what the Clean Water Act meant. We take clean water for granted.”

# Staff Survey

- 72% response
- Tested
  - Brand pillars
  - Current brand
  - Name options
    - Resource Renew
    - WLSSD

1. Watershed Guardians
2. Next-generation resource management
3. Renewing prosperity



# The visual journey

## The new branding must:

- Demonstrate logical relationship structure between legal and marketing brands.
- Support the essence of the positioning
- Be contemporary, meaningful, and regionally recognizable
- Be easy to work with

## Critical elements

- Clean Water
- Green Energy
- Solid Waste
- Past, present, future
- Innovation

The word "EVERYTHING" is displayed in large, bold, 3D block letters. Each letter is a different color: E (green), V (pink), E (blue), R (orange), Y (light blue), T (purple), H (red), I (green), N (pink), G (blue). The letters have a slight shadow, giving them a three-dimensional appearance.

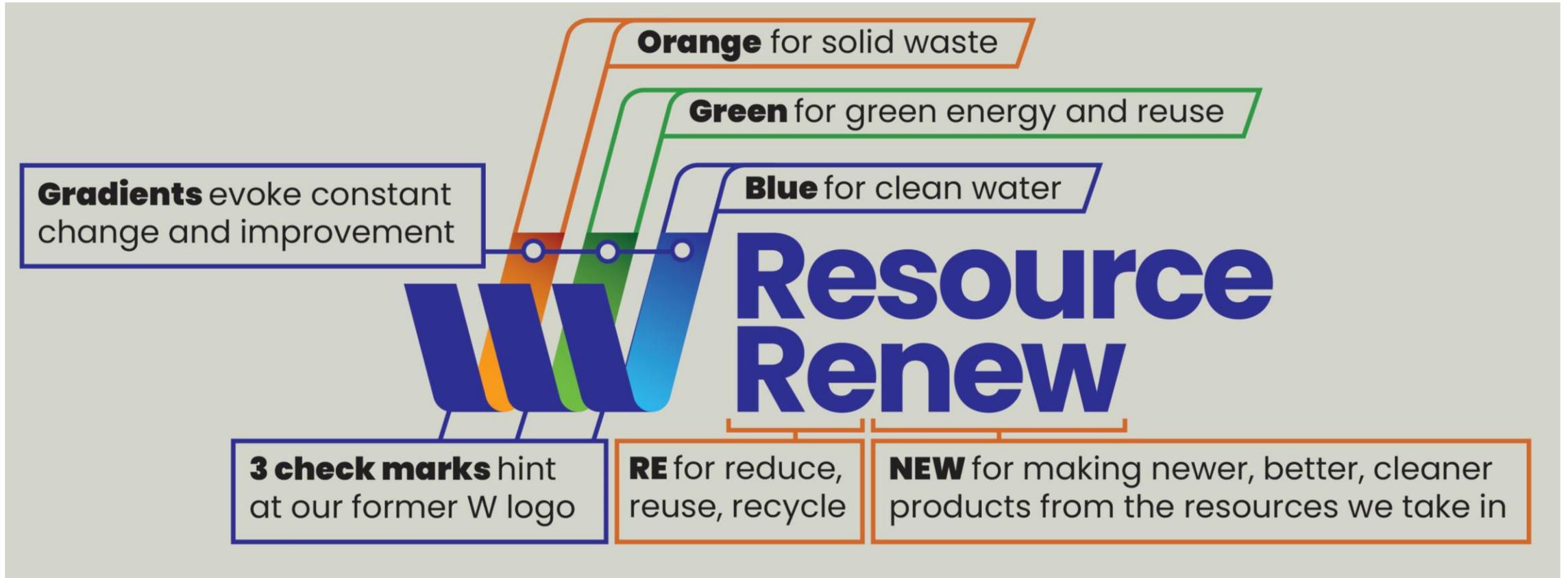


WLS SD



**Resource  
Renew**

# What's in a name?



# Outcomes

- District wide brand recognition
- Public support and funding
- Employee support
- Environmental leader



# Roll-out

## Internal

- Store items
- Badges
- Lanyards
- Water bottles
- Hats
- Pens
- Stickers
- Tours
- Headshots



# Roll-out

## External

- Trifecta
- Timing was KEY
- All the publications
  - Internal and external
  - No paid advertising
- Press Conference
- Facility Grand Re-Openings
- Digital



# What's next

- Phased roll-out
  - Internal displays
  - Low-cost fixes
  - Most public vehicles
- 2026
  - Website
  - Additional signage
  - Additional vehicles
- Beyond
  - Legal name



# Thank You!

