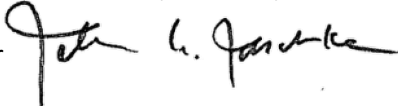


DATE: March 19, 2024

TO: Board of Water and Soil Resources' Members, Advisors, and Staff

FROM: John Jaschke, Executive Director 

SUBJECT: BWSR Board Meeting Notice – March 27, 2024

The Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) will meet on Wednesday, March 27, 2024, beginning at 9:00 a.m. The meeting will be held in the lower-level Board Room, at 520 Lafayette Road North, St. Paul and by Microsoft Teams. Individuals interested in attending the meeting through Teams should do so by either 1) logging into Teams by [clicking here to join the meeting](#) or 2) join by audio only conference call by calling telephone number: 651-395-7448 and entering the conference ID: 575 117 842#.

The following information pertains to agenda items:

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Grants Program and Policy Committee

- Habitat Enhancement Landscape Program (HELP)** – The BWSR Habitat Enhancement Landscape Program (HELP) is focused on restoring and enhancing strategically located, diverse native habitat across Minnesota on conservation lands and natural areas to benefit populations of pollinators, beneficial insects and other wildlife species with declining populations and provide co-benefits of carbon sequestration, soil health, water quality improvements, and increased landscape resiliency. HELP prioritizes landscape/regional scale initiatives and as a result of these efforts the MN Board of Water and Soil Resources hopes to build new partnerships and increase conservation innovation. The Grants Program and Policy Committee was briefed on the program on January 10, 2024 and recommended approval of the RFP criteria to the full board at their February 28, 2024 meeting. **DECISION ITEM**
- Pollinator Pathways Request for Proposals** – The Minnesota Pollinator Pathways program is led by local conservation partners who work with Minnesota Residents to promote and establish pollinator plantings and key corridors for at-risk pollinators such as (but not limited to) the Monarch Butterfly and Rusty Patched Bumble Bee, Minnesota's State Bee. This can be done by establishing/connecting pollinator pathways across communities with an emphasis on residences and/or community spaces. Pathways can range from a local neighborhood scale to across watersheds. Creating these pathways, by establishing deep rooted native vegetation will have climate resiliency benefits, increase biodiversity and provide other important ecosystem services. **DECISION ITEM**
- One Watershed, One Plan Planning Grants – Request for Proposals** – The purpose of this agenda item is for the Board to approve the 2024 Request for Proposals for One Watershed, One Plan Planning Grants. This is the ninth year BWSR is offering planning grants. Relative to the 2023 RPF, there were a few minor wording changes plus language indicating that BWSR anticipates this will be the last time 1W1P Planning Grants will be offered. This grant program operates under the policy updated by the by the Board in Dec 2022 (attached). **DECISION ITEM**

4. **Red River Basin Commission FY24/25 Grant Approval** – In 2023, the Legislature appropriated funds to the Board for grants to the Red River Basin Commission (RRBC) for water quality and floodplain management, including administration of programs. The RRBC has received matching funds from the Province of Manitoba and State of North Dakota. The Northern Regional Committee met January 3, 2024 and reviewed the request. The Grants Program and Policy Committee (Committee) met January 10, 2024 and made a recommendation to the full Board. The Committee recommends approval of the supplemental funding to the Red River Basin Commission by the full Board. **DECISION ITEM**

Water Management and Strategic Planning Committee

1. **BWSR Strategic Plan** – Over the past year, BWSR's has been working to update the Agency's Strategic Plan using an inclusive, participatory planning process involving BWSR staff and board members along with key external stakeholders around the state. The updated plan includes a revised mission, a newly developed vision, as well as key long-term goals and strategies to focus on over the next 10-15 years. Staff, board members and key external partners provided input and feedback to the plan through in-person and virtual meetings and surveys. The Water Management and Strategic Planning Committee has recommended adoption of the updated Strategic Plan. **DECISION ITEM**

Southern Region Committee

1. **Upper Minnesota River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan** – The Upper Minnesota River Watershed was selected by BWSR as one of the eleven planning areas for the One Watershed, One Plan program in 2021. The watershed partnership Policy Committee, Advisory Committee, and Planning Work Group members have attended regularly scheduled meetings and submitted the Upper Minnesota River Watershed Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan to BWSR on December 11, 2023 for review and approval. The Southern Regional Committee (Committee) met on February 27, 2024 to review the content of the Plan, State agency comments on the Plan, and to make a recommendation for approval. The Committee recommends approval by the full Board. **DECISION ITEM**
2. **South Fork Crow River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan** – The South Fork Crow River Watershed was selected by BWSR as one of the eleven planning areas for the One Watershed, One Plan program in 2021. The watershed partnership Policy Committee, Advisory Committee, and Steering Committee Group members have attended regularly scheduled meetings and submitted the Upper Minnesota River Watershed Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan to BWSR on January 11, 2024 for review and approval. The Southern Regional Committee (Committee) met on February 27, 2024 to review the content of the Plan, State agency comments on the Plan, and to make a recommendation for approval. The Committee recommends approval by the full Board. **DECISION ITEM**

If you have any questions regarding the agenda, please feel free to call me at 651-539-2587. We look forward to seeing you on March 27th.

**BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES
520 LAFAYETTE ROAD NORTH
ST. PAUL, MN 55155
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27, 2024**

PRELIMINARY AGENDA

9:00 AM CALL MEETING TO ORDER

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

MINUTES OF JANUARY 24, 2024 BOARD MEETING

PUBLIC ACCESS FORUM (10-minute agenda time, two-minute limit/person)

INTRODUCTION OF NEW STAFF

- Jen Dullum, Board Conservationist

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION

A conflict of interest, whether actual, potential, or perceived, occurs when someone in a position of trust has competing professional or personal interests, and these competing interests make it difficult to fulfill professional duties impartially. At this time, members are requested to declare conflicts of interest they may have regarding today's business. Any member who declares an actual conflict of interest must not vote on that agenda item. All actual, potential, and perceived conflicts of interest will be announced to the board by members or staff before any vote.

REPORTS

- Chair & Administrative Advisory Committee – Todd Holman
- Executive Director – John Jaschke
- Audit & Oversight Committee – Joe Collins
- Dispute Resolution and Compliance Report – Travis Germundson/Rich Sve
- Grants Program & Policy Committee – Mark Zabel
- RIM Reserve Committee – Jayne Hager Dee
- Water Management & Strategic Planning Committee – Joe Collins
- Wetland Conservation Committee – Jill Crafton
- Buffers, Soils & Drainage Committee – LeRoy Ose
- Drainage Work Group – Neil Peterson/Tom Gile

AGENCY REPORTS

- Minnesota Department of Agriculture – Thom Petersen
- Minnesota Department of Health – Steve Robertson
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources – Sarah Strommen
- Minnesota Extension – Joel Larson
- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency – Katrina Kessler

ADVISORY COMMENTS

- Association of Minnesota Counties – Brian Martinson
- Minnesota Association of Conservation District Employees – Mike Schultz
- Minnesota Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts – LeAnn Buck
- Minnesota Association of Townships – Eunice Biel
- Minnesota Watersheds – Jan Voit
- Natural Resources Conservation Service – Troy Daniell

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Grants Program and Policy Committee

1. Habitat Enhancement Landscape Program (HELP) – Dan Shaw – ***DECISION ITEM***
2. Pollinator Pathways Request for Proposal – Erin Loeffler and Dan Shaw – ***DECISION ITEM***
3. One Watershed, One Plan Planning Grants – Request for Proposals – Julie Westerlund – ***DECISION ITEM***
4. Red River Basin Commission FY24/25 Grant Approval – Henry Van Offelen – ***DECISION ITEM***

Water Management and Strategic Planning Committee

1. BWSR Strategic Plan – Jenny Gieseke – ***DECISION ITEM***

Southern Region Committee

1. Upper Minnesota River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan – Ted Winter and Doug Goodrich – ***DECISION ITEM***
2. South Fork Crow River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan – Ted Winter and Jeremy Maul – ***DECISION ITEM***

UPCOMING MEETINGS

- Northern Region Committee is scheduled for April 3rd at 10:00 a.m. in Duluth and by MS Teams.
- RIM Committee is scheduled for April 10th at 10:30 a.m. in St. Paul and by MS Teams.
- Grants Program and Policy Committee is scheduled for April 15th at 8:30 a.m. in St. Paul and by MS Teams.
- BWSR Board meeting is scheduled for April 24th at 9:00 a.m. in St. Paul and by MS Teams.

ADJOURN

**BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES
520 LAFAYETTE ROAD NORTH
LOWER-LEVEL BOARD ROOM
ST. PAUL, MN 55155
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24, 2024**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Joe Collins, Jill Crafton, Jayne Hager Dee, Mike Runk, Neil Peterson, Rich Sve, Lori Cox, Ted Winter, LeRoy Ose, Kelly Kirkpatrick, Eunice Biel, Todd Holman, Ron Staples, Mark Zabel, Glenn Skuta, MPCA; Joel Larson, University of Minnesota Extension; Peder Kjeseth, MDA; Steve Robertson, MDH; Katie Smith, DNR

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Kurt Beckstrom

STAFF PRESENT:

John Jaschke, Rachel Mueller, Tom Gile, Travis Germundson, Jennifer Hahn, Andrea Fish, Amie Wunderlich, Wendy Murphy, Luke Olson, Ed Lenz, Dave Weirens, Brett Arne, Don Bajumpaa, Dave Copeland, Craig Engwall, Jenny Gieseke, Mike Nelson, Sara Reagan, John Shea, Rita Weaver, Ryan Hughes, Rita Weaver, Sara Reagan, Julie Westerlund

OTHERS PRESENT:

Jeff Berg, MDA; Brian Martinson, AMC; Jan Voit, Minnesota Watersheds; Ray Bohn, Minnesota Watersheds; LeAnn Buck, MASWCD; Sheila Vanney, MASWCD; Troy Daniell, NRCS; Skip Langer, Olmsted County; Angela White, Olmsted County; Nicole Bernd, West Polk SWCD; Graham Berg, MAT; Sam Walseth, Sarah Boser

Chair Todd Holman called the meeting to order at 9:02 AM

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

**** 24-01 ADOPTION OF AGENDA** - Moved by Rich Sve, seconded by Ted Winter, to adopt the agenda as presented. *Motion passed on a roll call vote.*

**** 24-02 MINUTES OF DECEMBER 14, 2023 BOARD MEETING** – Moved by Joe Collins, seconded by Rich Sve, to approve the minutes of December 14, 2023, as circulated. *Motion passed on a roll call vote.*

PUBLIC ACCESS FORUM

INTRODUCTION OF NEW STAFF

Andrea Fish introduced Amie Wunderlich, Chief Financial Officer. Amie Wunderlich introduced Wendy Murphy, Senior Financial Analyst. Dave Weirens introduced Jennifer Hahn, Federal Conservation Programs Coordinator. Ed Lenz introduced Luke Olson, Board Conservationist.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION

Chair Holman read the statement:

“A conflict of interest, whether actual, potential, or perceived, occurs when someone in a position of trust has competing professional or personal interests, and these competing interests make it difficult to fulfill professional duties impartially. At this time, members are requested to declare conflicts of interest they may have regarding today’s business. Any member who declares an actual conflict of interest must not vote on that agenda item. All actual, potential, and perceived conflicts of interest will be announced to the board by members or staff before any vote.”

REPORTS

Chair & Administrative Advisory Committee – Chair Todd Holman reported he attended the Grants Program and Policy, and the Audit and Oversight committee meetings. He also attended the Environmental Quality Board meeting where they are continuing to work on their Strategic Plan. Attended a policy committee meeting of the Long Prairie River 1W1P.

Executive Director’s Report - John Jaschke reported they will work on getting committee meeting information to members 4 days prior to meetings. Lori Cox stated she would like information ahead of time to make educated votes.

John reported they are preparing for the legislative session. Reviewed the Day of Packet that included the vice chair nomination form, updated board orders, updated policy documents, an update on the Strategic Plan, Snapshot articles, and Minnesota Campaign Finance reporting documents.

Audit and Oversight Committee – Joe Collins reported the Audit and Oversight met in January with an item on the agenda today.

Dispute Resolution and Compliance Report – Rich Sve reported they have not met. Travis Germundson reported there are presently four appeals pending. There has been one new appeal filed since last report.

File 23-15 is an appeal of a WCA notice of decision in Morrison County. The appeal regards a decision made under remand (Appeal file 23-8) of a wetland boundary/type. The initial decision was remanded back to the local unit of government to develop an adequate record and now that new decision is being

appealed. This appeal has been put in abeyance for the appellant to have more time to put together additional documentation pertaining to an access of an easement area file 23-14.

File 23-14 is an appeal of a WCA Restoration Order for property located in Pope County. The appeal regards the alleged wetland impacts associated with the placement agricultural drain tile. It has been denied and the restoration order affirmed.

Stated they've received eight new appeals and five of those have been decided upon so there's been a fair amount of activity.

File 23-6 is in the process of rescheduling the prehearing conference, this is the third attempt.

Travis stated the Buffer and Compliance numbers are fairly stable and consistent across the state.

Lori Cox asked for clarification on the numbers being reported. Travis stated the data is being pulled from what they receive in the database.

Grants Program & Policy Committee – Mark Zabel reported they met January 10th and have one item on the agenda for today. Stated there were a couple information items that came to the committee.

RIM Reserve Committee – Jayne Hager Dee reported they are planning a committee meeting in February.

Water Management & Strategic Planning Committee – Joe Collins reported they have been updating the Strategic Plan and stated the results are in the Day of Packet. They will do one more 30-day review period starting today to see if there are any comments from the results. The committee will meet in March for one more review and will come to the board in March.

Wetland Conservation Committee – Jill Crafton reported they have not met. John Jaschke stated the inter-agency group working on the assessment of the impact in Minnesota on the Federal Supreme Court case *Sackett vs EPA* has completed that effort.

Buffers, Soils & Drainage Committee – LeRoy Ose reported they met Monday, and the Drainage Work Group Report to the Legislature was approved.

Drainage Work Group (DWG) – Neil Peterson reported the Drainage Work Group Report to the Legislature will be on the agenda today. Tom Gile reported the last workgroup meeting was held in January they typically meet June or July through December or January depending on the legislative session and the topics that they're working through.

AGENCY REPORTS

Minnesota Department of Agriculture – Peder Kjeseth reported on January 12th they submitted a workplan with the MDH and MPCA to the EPA regarding the nitrates in southeast Minnesota.

Lori Cox asked if the workplan they're putting together would differ or complement from what is already a nutrient reduction strategy, plan, or management period. Peder stated he thinks it would complement it and help identify other strategies they might not be implementing.

Minnesota Department of Health – Steve Robertson reported more information on nitrates in southeast Minnesota is available on their website. The Health Risk Assessment group at MDH released new health-based guidance values for a couple of key PFOA and PFOS compounds. Additional

information is available on their website. Stated grants are available for local units of government for private well testing and financial assistance to eligible households for mitigation. Applications are due February 16th.

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources – Katie Smith reported their legislative proposal for the Native Prairie Bank is to increase the easement payment rates to be more competitive. Stated they are in the process of interviewing for a Drainage Engineer position in the southern portion of the state.

Mark Zabel asked if there were any outcomes from this year's DNR Roundtable to be updated on. Katie stated the first two plenaries were about climate. Invasive carp was also a focus. Stated they had good conversations and attendance.

Lori Cox asked if the Roundtable is invitation only. Katie stated there are some invitational only and then they open it up on a first come first serve basis.

Jill Crafton stated the Roundtable was excellent this year.

Minnesota Extension – Joel Larson congratulated Jennifer Hahn in her new role at BWSR. Stated they have hired two new extension educators focusing on water quality and soil health. They are hosting two upcoming conferences. The first is the Nitrogen Conference on February 13th in St. Cloud and there is an in-person or virtual option to register for. The second is the Nutrient Management Conference February 20th in Mankato also with an in-person and virtual option.

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency – Glenn Skuta reported general permits for feedlots are getting towards the end of their term. They will be having a public meeting to talk about the proposed changes next Monday. Stated they will be releasing a wastewater nitrogen strategy soon. A report was submitted to legislature with recommendations on how to prevent fish kills in southeast Minnesota and is available on their website. Glenn stated there are implementation grants for stormwater resilience available with an application deadline of April 11th. Information is available on their website.

ADVISORY COMMENTS

Association of Minnesota Counties – Brian Martinson reported they are getting ready for the start of the legislative session on February 12th. Stated county leaders are meeting with state agencies to talk about AMC's priorities for the upcoming session.

As a member of DWG, Brian would encourage support for the Drainage Work Group Legislative Report that's on the agenda for today. Stated the Outlet Adequacy Technical Report was discussed at the DWG meeting in December and will be going on public notice.

Minnesota Association of Conservation District Employees – No report was provided.

Minnesota Watersheds – Jan Voit reported they have been working on their legislative priorities, their board will meet Friday to adopt those. Ray Bohn will be retiring at the end of 2024 as their lobbyist. Jan stated she would encourage approval of the Drainage Work Group Report on the agenda today.

Jill Crafton thanked Jan and Brian for the work they've done.

Minnesota Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts – LeAnn Buck reported the Water Quality and Storage Grant Program item on the agenda today is supportive of resolutions by their members. Stated there is another item on the agenda with Olmsted County and thanked them for the work they

do. Stated they are working with partners and at how they can leverage for federal dollars for reforestation work. They are also in the process of adopting their legislative platform and their legislative advocacy.

Glenn Skuta thanked LeAnn for their partnership.

Jill Crafton commented there is a need for project maintenance and thought it might be a good fit to partner with SWCDs.

Minnesota Association of Townships – Eunice Biel reported March 5th is the primary election. The 2nd Tuesday is township elections and the annual meetings. There will be short courses in the spring for new and experienced Township Officers. There will be a Township Day at the Capitol in April.

Natural Resources Conservation Service – No report was provided.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Grants Program and Policy Committee

FY 24 Updated Documents - Water Quality and Storage Grant Program – Rita Weaver presented the FY 24 Updated Documents - Water Quality and Storage Grant Program.

The Water Quality and Storage Pilot Program provided grants (approx. \$2M) to our local partners in FY22-23. The program received a \$17M appropriation for FY24-25. Based on experience with the pilot program and feedback from our partners during outreach meetings, changes have been proposed by BWSR staff for the FY24 program. The more significant changes include reducing match to 10% to be consistent with our other programs, allowing projects associated with 103E Improvements, and providing funding for modeling and conceptual design. These changes were incorporated into the FY 24 Policy and the FY 24 RFP document. The scoring criteria has had minor revisions for the final design and construction funds and new scoring criteria has been developed for the modeling and conceptual design funds.

BWSR staff proposes that a total of \$3M be available for the FY24 application period, with up to \$500,000 available for modeling and conceptual design work. BWSR staff would like to further propose that this grant program be open for applications twice a year so that grant recipients of the modeling and conceptual design funds will more quickly be able to access final design and construction funds.

BWSR staff are asking to issue the RFP and score and rank responses. Projects proposed for funding will be brought to the board for approval at the May 2024 meeting.

Glenn Skuta asked if there were particular models they have in mind. Rita stated they laid out a few standard models in their proposed RFP and noted that other types can be approved by BWSR.

Lori Cox asked for clarification in the eligible and ineligible activities. Rita provided more details on eligibility.

Jill Crafton asked what we're trying to accomplish in terms of climate mitigation. Rita stated they aren't focusing as much on it as this has a 25-year requirement. Stated perennial vegetation changes are covered under this program. Jill asked if we would consider lowering the number of years to get more projects. Rita stated its something they could consider.

Board Members discussed the potential connection to soil health practices.

Lori Cox asked what staff would be funded with the \$500,000. Rita stated it would be the SWCD or Watershed Districts if they are taking on the modeling or for the consultants. It would be set aside to do the modeling, prepare conceptual designs, and a feasibility study.

**
24-03 Moved by LeRoy Ose, seconded by Mike Runk, to approve the FY 24 Updated Documents - Water Quality and Storage Grant Program. **Motion passed on a roll call vote.**

Chair Holman called a recess at 10:47 a.m. and called the meeting back to order at 10:56 a.m.

NEW BUSINESS

Olmsted County Groundwater Protection and Soil Health Initiative – Skip Langer and Angela White presented the Olmsted County Groundwater Protection and Soil Health Initiative.

The Olmsted Soil and Water Conservation District and the Olmsted County Board of Commissioners, in partnership with local landowners and farmers, are leading innovative solutions to groundwater protection in Olmsted County. Using federal funds from the American Rescue Plan Act, the new Groundwater Protection and Soil Health Program promotes soil health management practices to help reduce nitrogen input on agricultural land and prevent groundwater contamination. The program started with a cover crop cost-share pilot in 2022. It expanded in 2023 to include small grain and alternative crops, haying, and grazing opportunities. So far, 82 producers are participating and adopting more soil health practices across the landscape, and almost 7,000 acres are enrolled in a component of the program.

Joe Collins commended their website, thought it was very informative.

Lori Cox asked if any of these areas that were mapped are Drinking Water Supply Management Areas (DWSMAs). Skip stated those areas would be eligible. Angela stated there were some DWSMAs in the Rochester area.

Kelly Kirkpatrick stated as a resident of Rochester she is proud of everything they do.

Jill Crafton asked if they are getting small farms with less acreage in addition to larger ones. Skip stated it's a nice blend of both.

Vice Chair Nomination – John Jaschke presented the Vice Chair Nomination.

According to bylaws, the Vice Chair will be elected to a two-year term by the members of the Board. Nominations will be made at the meeting. After the vote to close nominations if there is more than one nomination voting ballots will be mailed to board members along with a prepaid envelope to return their ballot by March 1, 2024. The Vice Chair will be announced by the March board meeting if a ballot is required.

Joe Collins nominated Rich Sve for Vice Chair. Neil Peterson seconded the nomination for Rich Sve.

Moved by Ted Winter, seconded by Mike Runk, to close nominations for Vice Chair. **Motion passed on a roll call vote.**

**
24-04 Moved by Joe Collins, seconded by Ron Staples, to elect Rich Sve as the Vice Chair. **Motion passed on a roll call vote.**

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS cont.

Northern Region Committee

Boundary Change for the Bois de Sioux Watershed District and Upper Minnesota River Watershed District – Ron Staples, Ryan Hughes, and Pete Waller presented the Boundary Change for the Bois de Sioux Watershed District and Upper Minnesota River Watershed District.

The Bois de Sioux Watershed District (BdSWD) and the Upper Minnesota River Watershed District (UMRWD) submitted a joint petition for boundary change which was received by the Board on July 31, 2023. The petition was submitted pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 103D.251. Board staff reviewed the petition for conformance with state law and rule and determined the petition is valid. The proposed boundary change would correct the watershed assessment designation of three parcels along the common boundaries of the watershed districts and would result in the transfer of 120 acres of land (in Traverse County) from the UMRWD to the BdSWD. The boundary petition and maps illustrating the proposed boundary changes are attached.

Statute allows the Board to make a decision on the petition at a future meeting without holding a hearing, after proper notice and if no written request for hearing is submitted to the Board within 30 days from the last publication of the notice. The legal notice of filing was published in three newspapers in October 2023:

- the Ortonville Independent on October 3, 2023 and October 10, 2023;
- the Traverse County Gazette News on October 4, 2023 and October 11, 2023; and
- the Northern Star on October 5, 2023 and October 12, 2023.

The Board has the statutory authority to change the boundary of a watershed district. The petition is not controversial. No written requests for public hearing, nor any questions or comments have been received. The Northern Region Committee met on January 3, 2024 to discuss the petition. After discussion, the Committee voted to recommend to the full Board that the boundary change be approved as proposed in the petition per the attached Board Order.

Ted Winter asked what the reason is behind the landowner's request to move. Ryan stated they've had conversations with watershed districts, the hydrology supports this request, and it's supported by landowners.

Jayne Hager Dee asked if we approved a boundary change for Bois de Sioux about a year ago. Ryan stated there was a boundary change in January 2022.

**

24-05

Moved by Neil Petersen, seconded by Ron Staples, to approve the Boundary Change for the Bois de Sioux Watershed District and Upper Minnesota River Watershed District. ***Motion passed on a roll call vote.***

Sand Hill River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan – LeRoy Ose, Brett Arne, and Ryan Hughes presented Sand Hill River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan.

The Sand Hill River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (Plan) planning area is in Northwest Minnesota encompassing portions of Norman, Mahnomen, and Polk counties and shares its boundary with the Sand Hill River Watershed District.

On November 29, 2023, BWSR received the Plan, a record of the public hearing, and copies of all written comments pertaining to the Plan for final State review. The planning partnership has responded to all comments received during the 60-day review period and incorporated appropriate revisions to the final Plan.

BWSR staff completed its review and subsequently found the Plan meets the requirements of Minnesota Statutes and BWSR Policy.

On January 3, 2024, the Northern Regional Committee met to review and discuss the Plan. The Committee's decision was to recommend approval of the Sand Hill River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan as submitted to the full Board per the attached draft Order.

Lori Cox stated on page five and six of the Executive Summary it states to improve habitat of 145 acres of wetland and also calls for an increase in water storage. Lori asked if those are different or if they are linked together. Brett Arne stated those are different priorities.

**
24-06

Moved by LeRoy Ose, seconded by Joe Collins, to approve the **Sand Hill River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan. Motion passed on a roll call vote.**

Buffers, Soils and Drainage Committee

Drainage Work Group Legislative Report – Tom Gile presented the Drainage Work Group Legislative Report.

During the 2023 legislative session the following language was enacted (Laws 2023, Chapter 60, Article 5, section 21):

The Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) and the Drainage Work Group (DWG) established under Minnesota Statutes, section 103B.101, subdivision 13, must evaluate and develop recommendations on the following subjects:

- *the definition and application of outlet adequacy as provided in Minnesota Statutes, section 103E.261; and*
- *public notice requirements for proposed public drainage activities, including a drainage registry portal.*

The Board must submit the report to the chairs and ranking minority members of the house of representatives and senate committees and divisions with jurisdiction over environment and natural resources by February 1, 2024.

The DWG was also directed to complete another task as provided in Laws of Minnesota Chapter 60, Article 1, Section 4d):

The Drainage Work Group must review a drainage authority's power under Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 103E, to consider the abandonment or dismantling of drainage systems; to re-meander, restore, or reconstruct a natural waterway that has been modified by drainage; or to deconstruct dikes, dams, or other water-control structures.

This report addresses each of the specific directives identified above and also addresses the DWG consideration of the sunset language in 103E.729 relating to the sediment and runoff control option for assessing repair costs.

It is important to note that there is not a consensus recommendation for legislative action on 103E related policy at this time for outlet adequacy or public notice requirements including for the drainage registry. There is broad unanimity among the DWG membership that those tasks have the potential to include significant burdens in the administration of 103E and more time is needed to effectively bring forward any detailed policy recommendations.

Neil Peterson stated Tom did an excellent job overall of managing this group.

Katie Smith stated the DNR thinks the report seems to be missing a path forward on the next steps.

Lori Cox asked when referencing “goal” earlier if that is a statutory requirement. Tom stated it’s not required.

**
24-07 Moved by Mark Zabel, seconded by Joe Collins, to approve the Drainage Work Group Legislative Report.
Motion passed on a roll call vote.

Neil Peterson left the meeting at 12:34 p.m.

Audit and Oversight Committee

2023 Performance Review and Assistance Program Legislative Report – Don Bajumpaa presented the 2023 Performance Review and Assistance Program Legislative Report.

BWSR is required to provide a report annually to the legislature on Performance Review and Assistance Program activities as prescribed by Minnesota Statutes Chapter 103B.102, Subdivision 3, effective February 1, 2008. BWSR staff have prepared a report that describes the program activities for 2023, including summaries of the activities of BWSRs local government partners, and goals and objectives for future PRAP activities. The report was presented to and has a recommendation from the BWSR Audit and Oversight Committee for BWSR Board approval.

Lori Cox left the meeting at 12:40 p.m.

**
24-08 Moved by Ted Winter, seconded by Mike Runk, to approve the 2023 Performance Review and Assistance Program Legislative Report. ***Motion passed on a roll call vote.***

UPCOMING MEETINGS

- RIM Committee is scheduled for February 23rd at 9:00 in St. Paul and by MS Teams.
- Next BWSR Meeting is scheduled for 9:00 AM, March 27, 2024 in St. Paul and by MS Teams.

Chair Holman adjourned the meeting at 12:45 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Rich Sve
Chair

BOARD MEETING AGENDA ITEM

AGENDA ITEM TITLE: Dispute Resolution/Compliance Report

Meeting Date: March 27, 2024

Agenda Category: Committee Recommendation New Business Old Business

Item Type: Decision Discussion Information

Keywords for Electronic Searchability: Wetland Conservation Act Appeals/Buffer Compliance

Section/Region: Central

Contact: Travis Germundson

Prepared by: Travis Germundson

Reviewed by: _____ Committee(s)
Rich Sve DRC Chair and Travis Germundson

Presented by: Germundson

Time requested: 5 minutes

Audio/Visual Equipment Needed for Agenda Item Presentation

Attachments: Resolution Order Map Other Supporting Information

Fiscal/Policy Impact

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None	<input type="checkbox"/> General Fund Budget
<input type="checkbox"/> Amended Policy Requested	<input type="checkbox"/> Capital Budget
<input type="checkbox"/> New Policy Requested	<input type="checkbox"/> Outdoor Heritage Fund Budget
<input type="checkbox"/> Other:	<input type="checkbox"/> Clean Water Fund Budget

ACTION REQUESTED

None

LINKS TO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

See attached report.

SUMMARY *(Consider: history, reason for consideration now, alternatives evaluated, basis for recommendation)*

The report provides a monthly update on the number of appeals filed with the Board of Water and Soil Resources and summary on buffer compliance/enforcement actions statewide.

Dispute Resolution and Compliance Report

March 12, 2024

By: Travis Germundson

There are presently six appeals pending. There have been two new appeals filed since last report.

Format note: New appeals that have been filed since last report to the Board.
~~Appeals that have been decided since last report to the Board.~~

File 24-2 (3/6/24) This is an appeal of a WCA Notice of Decision for a property located in Meeker County. The appeal regards the denial of an after-the-fact no-loss application associated with changes to an existing drain tile system. No decision has been made on the appeal.

File 24-1 (2/5/24) This is an appeal of a WCA Restoration Order for a property located in Wright County. The appeal regards the placement of fill in a wetland for the creation of a road and earthen embankment. The appeal claims that wetland is incidental. No decision has been made on the appeal.

File 23-15 (12-18-23) This is an appeal of a WCA notice of decision in Morrison County. The appeal regards a decision made under remand (Appeal file 23-8) of a wetland boundary/type. The initial decision was remanded back to the local unit of government to develop an adequate record and now that new decision is being appealed. *The appeal was placed in abeyance and the decision stayed to allow time for the submittal of additional documentation on access of the easement area.*

File 23-9 (10/23/23) This is an appeal of a WCA Restoration Order for property located in Crow Wing and Aitkin County. The appeal regards the placement of fill material for multiple wetland crossings including a portion of an airstrip. *The appeal has been placed in abeyance and the Restoration Order stayed for the submittal of after-the-fact exemption application.*

File 23-6 (8-8-23) This is an appeal of two separate after-the-fact replacement plan applications in Brown County. The appeal regards the denial of those applications. A previous decision of one of the applications had been appealed (File 22-7). That appeal was remanded back to develop an adequate record and now the decision made under remand is being appealed along with another application for the same impact/project. *A decision was made to grant and hear the appeal. A prehearing conference took place on February 15, 2024 and the briefing schedule has been set. The parties are still actively pursuing settlement.*

File 23-4 (6-16-23) This is an appeal of a WCA notice of decision involving a banking plan in Aitkin County. The appeal regards the approval of a the Mille Lacs Meadows North Wetland Bank consisting of an area of approximately 617.3 acres. The appeal contends that the site is ineligible for replacement wetland credits. A decision was made to grant and hear the appeal. *A DRC hearing occurred on March 7, 2024 and a recommendation will be presented to the Board at the April 24th, Board meeting.*

Summary Table for Appeals

Type of Decision	Total for Calendar Year 2023	Total for Calendar Year 2024
Order in favor of appellant		
Order not in favor of appellant	7	
Order Modified	1	
Order Remanded	2	
Order Place Appeal in Abeyance	1	
Negotiated Settlement		
Withdrawn/Dismissed	3	

Buffer Compliance Status Update: BWSR has received Notifications of Noncompliance (NONs) on 65 parcels from the 12 counties BWSR is responsible for enforcement. Currently there are no active Corrective Action Notices (CANs) and one Administrative Penalty Order (APO) issued by BWSR that is still active. Of the actions being tracked over 57 of those have been resolved.

Statewide 39 counties are fully compliant, and 48 counties have enforcement cases in progress. Of those counties (with enforcement cases in progress) there are currently 248 CANs and 64 APOs actively in place. Of the actions being tracked over 2,757 of those have been resolved.

**Disclaimer: These numbers are generated monthly from BWSR's Access database. The information is obtained through notifications from LGUs on actions taken to bring about compliance and may not reflect the current status of compliance numbers.*

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Grants Program and Policy Committee

1. Habitat Enhancement Landscape Program (HELP) – Dan Shaw – ***DECISION ITEM***
2. Pollinator Pathways RFP – Erin Loeffler and Dan Shaw – ***DECISION ITEM***
3. One Watershed, One Plan Planning Grants – Request For Proposals – Julie Westerlund – ***DECISION ITEM***
4. Red River Basin Commission FY24/25 Grant Approval – Henry Van Offelen – ***DECISION ITEM***

BOARD MEETING AGENDA ITEM

AGENDA ITEM TITLE:	Habitat Enhancement Landscape Program (HELP)		
Meeting Date:	<u>March 27, 2024</u>		
Agenda Category:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Committee Recommendation	<input type="checkbox"/> New Business	<input type="checkbox"/> Old Business
Item Type:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Decision	<input type="checkbox"/> Discussion	<input type="checkbox"/> Information
Keywords for Electronic Searchability:	<u>Habitat, Pollinator, Wildlife,</u>		
Section/Region:	<u>Resource Conservation Section</u>		
Contact:	<u>Jason Beckler</u>		
Prepared by:	<u>Jason Beckler</u>		
Reviewed by:	<u>Grants Program and Policy</u>	<u>Committee(s)</u>	
Presented by:	<u>Dan Shaw</u>		
Time requested:	<u>5 minutes</u>		

Audio/Visual Equipment Needed for Agenda Item Presentation

Attachments: Resolution Order Map Other Supporting Information

Fiscal/Policy Impact

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> None | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> General Fund Budget |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Amended Policy Requested | <input type="checkbox"/> Capital Budget |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Policy Requested | <input type="checkbox"/> Outdoor Heritage Fund Budget |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: | <input type="checkbox"/> Clean Water Fund Budget |

ACTION REQUESTED

Approve the board order which authorizes staff to release the Habitat Enhancement Landscape Program Request for Proposals and enter into agreements.

LINKS TO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

SUMMARY *(Consider: history, reason for consideration now, alternatives evaluated, basis for recommendation)*

The BWSR Habitat Enhancement Landscape Program (HELP) is made possible through an appropriation from general funds (Laws of Minnesota 2023, Chapter 60, Article 1, Section 4 paragraph (J)). HELP is a continuation of a Pilot that started in 2021 with funding from the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources’ Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund. Updates from the Pilot Program include the expansion of eligible applicants, increases to eligible funding request levels, and increases in eligible project sizes. Staff have completed an internal program development and review process with BWSR Teams including the Conservation Contracts Team, Grants Team, and Senior Management Team. The Grants Program and Policy Committee was briefed on the program on January 10, 2024 and recommended approval of the RFP criteria to the full board at their February 28, 2024 meeting.

BOARD ORDER

Fiscal Year 2024 and 2025 Habitat Enhancement Landscape Program (HELP)

PURPOSE

Authorize the Fiscal Year 2024 and 2025 Habitat Enhancement Landscape Program (HELP) Grant Program and delegate awarding mechanisms to staff.

FINDINGS OF FACT / RECITALS

- A. The Laws of Minnesota 2023, Chapter 60, Article 1, Section 4, paragraph (J) appropriated \$2,000,000 in Fiscal Year 2024 and \$2,000,000 in Fiscal Year 2025 to the Board for the Habitat Enhancement Landscape Program.
- B. The Laws of Minnesota 2023, Chapter 60, Article 5, Section 8 provides the statutory authority for the Habitat Enhancement Landscape Program (Minn. Stat. 103B.106), includes the purpose of the program to “support declining populations of bees, butterflies, dragonflies, birds, and other wildlife species that are essential for ecosystems and food production across conservation lands, open spaces, and natural areas; and provide additional benefits for water management, carbon sequestration, and landscape and climate resiliency”, and requires that the Board establish criteria for grants or payments, and allows the Board to enter into agreements with “Federal, State, and local agencies; Tribal Nations; nonprofit organizations; and contractors to implement and promote the program”.
- C. The Board has authorities under Minnesota Statutes §103B.101 to award grants and contracts to accomplish water and related land resources management.
- D. The Grants Program and Policy Committee, at their February 28, 2024 meeting, reviewed the proposed Habitat Enhancement Landscape Program scoring criteria and recommended approval to the Board.

ORDER

The Board hereby directs and authorizes staff to:

1. Issue Request for Proposals for the Habitat Enhancement Landscape Program consistent with the attached scoring and ranking criteria and statutory program and related appropriation provisions.
2. Approve Habitat Enhancement Landscape Program awards based on responses to the RFP and funds available.

3. Enter into agreements to implement the program as provided for in Minn. Stat. 103B.106 and other related statutory provisions.
4. Regularly report to the Board on the status of Habitat Enhancement Landscape Program awards.

Dated at St. Paul, Minnesota, this March 27, 2024.

MINNESOTA BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES

_____ Date: _____
 Rich Sve, Vice Chair
 Board of Water and Soil Resources

Attached: Table 1. Habitat Enhancement Landscape Program Scoring and Ranking Criteria

Table 1: Habitat Enhancement Program Scoring and Ranking Criteria	
Criteria	Maximum Points Possible
Value to populations of beneficial insects, bees, butterflies, dragonflies, birds, other wildlife, and at-risk species	30
Connection to habitat corridors/pathways or areas mapped as important for target species	25
Partnerships and collaboration established or strengthened and social equity considerations	10
Sufficient technical capacity of applicant and partners	15
Long-term protection and maintenance/sustainability of projects, including protection from pesticide exposure	10
Anticipated measurable project outcomes will be obtained	10
Total Points Available	100

BOARD MEETING AGENDA ITEM

AGENDA ITEM TITLE: Pollinator Pathways Request for Proposal

Meeting Date: March 27, 2024

Agenda Category: Committee Recommendation New Business Old Business

Item Type: Decision Discussion Information

Keywords for Electronic Searchability: Pollinator Pathways

Section/Region: Resource Conservation

Contact: Dan Shaw

Prepared by: Erin Loeffler

Reviewed by: GPPC Committee(s)

Presented by: Erin Loeffler/Dan Shaw

Time requested: 10 minutes

Audio/Visual Equipment Needed for Agenda Item Presentation

Attachments: Resolution Order Map Other Supporting Information

Fiscal/Policy Impact

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> None | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> General Fund Budget |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Amended Policy Requested | <input type="checkbox"/> Capital Budget |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New Policy Requested | <input type="checkbox"/> Outdoor Heritage Fund Budget |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: | <input type="checkbox"/> Clean Water Fund Budget |

ACTION REQUESTED

The BWSR Pollinator Pathways program is made possible through an appropriation from the general funds (Laws of Minnesota 2023, Chapter 60, Article 1 Section 4 paragraph (i) and will focus on promoting and establishing pollinator plantings and key corridors for at-risk pollinators such as (but not limited to) the Monarch Butterfly and Rusty Patched Bumble Bee, Minnesota’s State Bee. This program will also provide the co-benefits for climate resiliency and increased biodiversity.

LINKS TO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

SUMMARY *(Consider: history, reason for consideration now, alternatives evaluated, basis for recommendation)*

The Lawns to Legumes Program started in 2019 and is comprised of three components; Individual Support Grants (\$400 grants and coaching) administered through the Blue Thumb Partnership, a competitive RFP grant program (Pollinator Pathways) to support community based residential projects (formerly known as the Lawns to Legumes Demonstration Neighborhoods), and a public education and outreach campaign. The Lawns to Legumes Demonstration Neighborhood grants were funded through the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund and were successful in achieving LCCMR outcome after 2 funding cycles and is now funded through the general

fund. With the change in appropriation comes a greater opportunity to work more broadly with diverse communities to increase biodiversity and build pollinator habitat throughout the state. Therefore, the Demonstration Neighborhood grant program is being rebranded to Pollinator Pathways. Additional changes will include broadening the eligibility criteria and activities, opening the program to public and non-profit prekindergarten through grad 3 schools as eligible applicants, removal of a funding cap, and decreasing the required match to 10%.

DRAFT BOARD ORDER

Fiscal Year 2024 and 2025 Pollinator Pathways Grant Program

PURPOSE

Authorize the Fiscal Year 2024 and 2025 Pollinator Pathways Grant Program.

FINDINGS OF FACT / RECITALS

1. The Laws of Minnesota 2023, Chapter 60, Article 1, Section 4i, \$2,000,000 the first year and \$2,000,000 the second year for the lawns to legumes program under Minnesota Statutes, section 103B.104 and authorized the board to enter into agreements with local governments, Metro Blooms, and other organizations to support this effort.
2. The Board has authorities to implement the program consistent with 103B.101 and 103B.104.
3. The Pollinator Pathways Grant Program is established to provide financial assistance to promote native plantings and the establishment of key corridors for at-risk pollinators such as, but not limited to, the Monarch Butterfly and Rusty Patched Bumble Bee.
4. The program is being rebranded from Demonstration Neighborhood to the Pollinator Pathways Grant Program to better align with other BWSR Living Landscapes Initiatives.
5. The request for proposal criteria provides expectations for applications by eligible local governments and subsequent implementation activities conducted with these funds.
6. The Grants Program and Policy Committee, at their March 18, 2024 meeting, reviewed the proposed Pollinator Pathways Grant Program scoring criteria and recommended approval to the Board.

ORDER

The Board hereby authorizes staff to:

1. Issue Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Pollinator Pathways Program consistent with the attached scoring and ranking criteria (Table 1) and statutory program and related appropriations provisions.
2. Approve the Pollinator Pathways Program awards based on responses to the RFP and funds available.
3. Enter into agreements to implement the program as provided for in Minn. Stat. 103B.101, Minn. Stat. 103B.104, and other related statutory provisions.
4. Regularly report to the Board on the status of Pollinator Pathways Program awards.

Dated at St. Paul, Minnesota, this March 27, 2024.

Rich Sve, Vice Chair
Board of Water and Soil Resources

Date: _____

Table 1: Pollinator Pathways Grant Program Scoring and Ranking Criteria

Criteria	Maximum Points
Potential benefits for at-risk pollinators such as but not limited to the Rusty Patch Bumble Bee, Monarch Butterfly, in residential, educational and/or community spaces	25
Connection to habitat corridors/pathways or areas mapped as important for pollinator plantings and benefiting at-risk species	15
Collaborations established or strengthened as part of pollinator pathways and equity considerations	10
Sufficient technical capacity of the applicant and their partners	10
Long-term plans for project maintenance and sustainability, and related topics such as nesting and overwintering habitat for pollinators, and protection from pesticide exposure	10
Potential to incorporate several project types (i.e. native pocket plantings, pollinator meadows, flowering trees and shrubs, pollinator lawns, etc.) into residential, community and/or educational spaces.	10
Anticipated Outcomes and Project Value: The outcomes expected upon completion of the project initiatives are identified, consistent with project goals, and it is clear how these outcomes will be obtained.	20
Total Points Available	100

BOARD MEETING AGENDA ITEM

AGENDA ITEM TITLE:	One Watershed, One Plan Planning Grants – Request For Proposals		
Meeting Date:	<u>March 27, 2024</u>		
Agenda Category:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Committee Recommendation	<input type="checkbox"/> New Business	<input type="checkbox"/> Old Business
Item Type:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Decision	<input type="checkbox"/> Discussion	<input type="checkbox"/> Information
Keywords for Electronic Searchability:	<u>1W1P, Planning Grant, One Watershed, One Plan, RFP</u>		
Section/Region:	<u>Central Region – Land and Water Management Section</u>		
Contact:	<u>Julie Westerlund</u>		
Prepared by:	<u>Julie Westerlund</u>		
Reviewed by:	<u>Grants Program and Policy</u>	<u>Committee(s)</u>	
Presented by:	<u>Julie Westerlund</u>		
Time requested:	<u>10 minutes</u>		

Audio/Visual Equipment Needed for Agenda Item Presentation

Attachments: Resolution Order Map Other Supporting Information

Fiscal/Policy Impact

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> None | <input type="checkbox"/> General Fund Budget |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Amended Policy Requested | <input type="checkbox"/> Capital Budget |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New Policy Requested | <input type="checkbox"/> Outdoor Heritage Fund Budget |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Clean Water Fund Budget |

ACTION REQUESTED

Approve the 2024 2023 Request for Proposals for One Watershed, One Plan planning grants and authorize staff to distribute the RFP and manage the proposal review process.

LINKS TO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

SUMMARY *(Consider: history, reason for consideration now, alternatives evaluated, basis for recommendation)*

The purpose of this agenda item is for the Board to approve the 2024 Request for Proposals for One Watershed, One Plan Planning Grants. This is the ninth year BWSR is offering planning grants. Relative to the 2023 RFP, there were a few minor wording changes plus language indicating that BWSR anticipates this will be the last time 1W1P Planning Grants will be offered. This grant program operates under the policy updated by the by the Board in December 2022 (attached).

BOARD ORDER

One Watershed, One Plan Program 2024 Planning Grants: Request for Proposals

PURPOSE

Authorize the 2024 Request for Proposals (RFP).

FINDINGS OF FACT / RECITALS

1. Minnesota Statutes §103B.801 establishes the Comprehensive Watershed Management Planning Program, also known as the One Watershed, One Plan Program.
2. The Board has authority under Minnesota Statutes §103B.3369 to award grants to local units of government with jurisdiction in water and related land resources management.
3. The Laws of Minnesota 2021, 1st Special Session, Chapter 1, Article 2, Section 6 (i) and the Laws of Minnesota 2023, Chapter 40, Article 2, Section 6 (i) appropriated funds to the Board for assistance, oversight, and grants to local governments to transition local water management plans to a watershed approach.
4. The One Watershed, One Plan Planning Grant 2024 RFP was reviewed and approved by the Board’s Senior Management Team on February 13, 2024 to forward to the Board’s Grants Program and Policy Committee for consideration.
5. The Board’s Grants Program and Policy Committee reviewed the 2024 One Watershed, One Plan Planning Grant RFP on February 28, 2024 and recommended approval to the Board.

ORDER

The Board hereby:

1. Authorizes staff to finalize, distribute, and promote a 2024 RFP for the One Watershed, One Plan Planning Grants.

Dated at St. Paul, Minnesota, this March 27, 2024

MINNESOTA BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES

Rich Sve, Chair
Board of Water and Soil Resources

Date: _____

Attachments:

- One Watershed, One Plan Planning Grant Policy
- 2024 Planning Grant Request for Proposals

One Watershed, One Plan Planning Grants

Request for Proposals

March 28, 2024

Request for Proposals (RFP) General Information

The Clean Water Fund was established to implement part of Article XI, Section 15 of the Minnesota Constitution, with the purpose of protecting, enhancing, and restoring water quality in lakes, rivers, and streams in addition to protecting ground water and drinking water sources from degradation. The appropriation language governing the use of these funds is in Laws of Minnesota 2021, 1st Special session, Chapter 1, Article 2, Section 6 (i) and Laws of Minnesota 2023, Chapter 40, Article 2, Section 6 (i). These funds must supplement traditional sources of funding and may not be used as a substitute to fund activities or programs. Final funding decisions will be dependent on the actual funds available. BWSR is currently making approximately \$1,000,000 available. Consistent with the legislative goal of a full transition to watershed planning by 2025, BWSR anticipates this will be the final RFP for One Watershed, One Plan Planning Grants.

Proposal Guidelines

Proposals must be in PDF format and will be submitted electronically via: BWSR.Grants@state.mn.us.

1. Proposals are subject to a five-page limit, minimum font size 11 pt.
2. Proposals must include a one-page map of the watershed (maps are not included in the page limit) in PDF format. The map may be letter, legal, or ledger size and should identify the planning boundary, the boundaries of the planning partners, and any requested changes to the boundary. The One Watershed, One Plan Suggested Planning Boundaries, including a geodatabase, can be found in the Boundary Framework section of <https://bwsr.state.mn.us/one-watershed-one-plan-policies>
3. Proposals may be submitted by one or more of the eligible local governments on behalf of others in the watershed area. Respondents should demonstrate that a sufficient commitment exists to implement the project through a supporting motion or resolution from the board of each identified participant. A formal agreement between participants establishing a partnership to develop a plan will be required prior to execution of the grant agreement. If participants are unable to establish a formal agreement and work plan within six months of successful grant notification, the grant may be rescinded, and funds redistributed.
4. A cost estimate is a requirement for the project proposal. The final grant amount for successful respondents will be determined upon completion of a grant work plan and detailed budget. No cash match will be required of grant recipients.

Grant Execution

Successful respondents will be required to complete a planning agreement and submit a detailed budget and work plan prior to execution of the grant agreement. For template agreements, work plans, and budgets, contact julie.westerlund@state.mn.us.

Policies for participating in the program as well as additional resources for planning, can be found at: <https://bwsr.state.mn.us/one-watershed-one-plan>. Successful respondents will be subject to the versions the *One Watershed, One Plan Operating Procedures* and the *One Watershed, One Plan - Plan Content Requirements* that are in place when planning grants are approved.

Project Period

The project period starts when the grant agreement is executed, meaning all required signatures have been obtained. Work that occurs before this date is not eligible for reimbursement with grant funds. All grants must be completed by June 30, 2027.

Payment Schedule

Grant payments will be distributed in three installments to the designated grantee for the planning region. The first payment of 50% of the grant amount will be paid after work plan approval and execution of the grant agreement, provided the grantee is in compliance with all BWSR website and eLINK reporting requirements for previously awarded BWSR grants. The second payment of 40% of the grant amount will be paid once the grantee has provided BWSR with notification and BWSR has reconciled expenditures of the initial payment. The last 10% will be paid after all final reporting requirements are met, the grantee has provided BWSR with a final financial report, and BWSR has reconciled these expenditures.

Incomplete Proposals

Proposals that do not comply with all requirements, including incomplete or missing proposal components, may not be considered for funding.

Clean Water Fund Project Reporting Requirements

1. All grantees are required to report on the outcomes, activities, and accomplishments of Clean Water Fund grants. All BWSR funded projects will be required to develop a work plan, including detail relating to the outcome(s) of the proposed project. All activities will be reported via the eLINK reporting system. Grant funds may be used for local grant management and reporting that are directly related to and necessary for implementing this activity. For more information go to <https://bwsr.state.mn.us/elink>.
2. BWSR Clean Water Funds will be administered via a standard grant agreement. BWSR will use grant agreements as contracts for assurance of deliverables and compliance with appropriate statutes, rules and established policies. Willful or negligent disregard of relevant statutes, rules and policies may lead to imposition of financial penalties on the grant recipient.
3. When practicable, grantees shall prominently display on their website the legacy logo. Grant recipients must display on their website either a link to their project from the Legislative Coordinating Commission Legacy Site (<http://legacy.leg.mn>) or a clean water project summary that includes a description of the grant activities, including expenditure of grant funds and measurable outcomes (www.bwsr.state.mn.us/cleanwaterfund/stories/)

4. When practicable, grantees must display the legacy logo on printed and other materials funded with money from the Clean Water Fund. The logo and specifications can be found at <http://www.legacy.leg.mn/legacy-logo>
5. Grantees may be required to document local involvement in the plan development process to demonstrate that the grant is supplementing/enhancing water resource restoration and protection activities and not supplanting traditional sources of funding.

Grants and Public Information

Under Minnesota Statute 13.599, responses to an RFP are nonpublic until the proposal deadline is reached. At that time, the name and address of the grantee, and the amount requested becomes public. All other data is nonpublic until the negotiation of the grant agreement with the selected grantee is completed. After the evaluation process is completed, all data (except trade secret data) becomes public. Data created during the evaluation process is nonpublic until the negotiation of the grant agreement with the selected grantee(s) is completed.

Conflict of Interest

State Grant Policy 08-01, (see <https://mn.gov/admin/government/grants/policies-statutes-forms/>) Conflict of Interest for State Grant-Making also applies to BWSR grantees. Grantees' conflicts of interest are generally considered organizational conflicts of interest. Organizational conflicts of interest occur with any of the following scenarios:

1. A grantee is unable or potentially unable to render impartial assistance or advice due to competing duties or loyalties.
2. A grantee's objectivity in carrying out the grant is or might be otherwise impaired due to competing duties or loyalties.
3. A grantee or potential grantee has an unfair competitive advantage through being furnished unauthorized proprietary information or source selection information that is not available to all competitors.

Submittal

All responses must be electronically delivered to: BWSR.Grants@state.mn.us and must be received no later than 4:30 p.m. June 14, 2024. Late responses will not be considered. The burden of proving timely receipt is on the respondent.

Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan Development Proposals

To propose a watershed area, describe the qualifications of interested respondents. Responses should address the items in selection criteria #1 (see below).

1. Provide a general watershed map of the proposed planning boundary (map may be separate from the written information). If the proposed planning boundary deviates from the [1W1P Suggested Planning Boundaries](#), provide a brief narrative of the reasons for the deviation, and whether all partners and affected or potentially affected partners in adjacent planning boundaries concur with the revised planning boundary.
2. Provide the name for your watershed planning boundary. Each planning partnership determines the name for the planning boundary (prior to participation in the program, boundaries are only numbered).

3. In consideration of the local government units (LGUs) within the boundary, provide a table with a list of all counties, soils and water conservation districts, watershed districts, and watershed management organizations, and the percentage of the jurisdictional land area of each local government within the boundary. The table must include:
 - a. Whether each LGU is a required participant (see section II of the *One Watershed, One Plan Operating Procedures*)
 - b. Indication of interest of each LGU (e.g. verbal, letter, resolution, etc.) or why a given LGU is not interested
 - c. Name and contact information for the primary staff contact(s) for each LGU

Proposals may also list potential or confirmed optional participants as described in the *One Watershed, One Plan Operating Procedures*. For a list of required participants and land percentages for planning boundaries shown on the *1W1P Suggested Planning Boundaries*, contact julie.westerlund@state.mn.us.

4. Describe technical information data sources for surface water, groundwater, and land management (plans, TMDLs, models, targeting tools, WRAPS, landscape stewardship plans, etc.) that will help inform the development of the comprehensive watershed management plan.
5. Describe the capability (experience with plan development, project and consultant management, facilitation, etc.) and availability (ability to commit time to the effort) of staff and local officials to participate in plan development.
6. Describe how the planning partnership will leverage each partner's watershed management capacities and strengths (e.g. current water programs, areas of expertise), and how completing the plan will result in better resource outcomes and collaborative implementation approaches, shared services, and acquiring non-local funds for implementation.
7. Describe discussions among the partners within the boundary regarding the plan development process (the minimum requirement is that initial discussions have taken place, not that decisions have been made).
 - a. Potential governance structure for the planning effort (e.g., memorandum of agreement/joint powers collaboration or joint powers entity)
 - b. Roles and responsibilities for the planning effort (e.g. administrative lead, fiscal agent, plan writing and facilitation consultants, etc.)
 - c. Cost estimate (the cost estimate must include a 10% contingency amount)

Selection Criteria

All complete proposals submitted by the deadline will be reviewed by BWSR staff, with assistance from an inter-agency review committee. The successful respondents will be selected by the Board of Water and Soil Resources based on:

1. Responses to questions in this RFP, considered as follows (failure to include information that addresses each of the elements below will be considered an incomplete proposal):
 - a. Inclusion of general watershed map and description of any boundary changes consistent with question 1.
 - Minimum: map (including proposed boundary changes if applicable) included with proposal

- b. Inclusion of a name for the watershed planning boundary consistent with question 2.
- c. Inclusion of a table of local government information consistent with question 3.
 - Minimum: indication of support from required participants
 - Minimum: potential optional participants have been identified and invited
 - Preferred: resolution of support, specific to the proposed planning boundary, signed by required participants
 - Preferred: optional participants have responded to invitation to participate
- d. Pertinence of existing studies, plans, and information consistent with question 4 to the development of the comprehensive watershed management plan.
 - Minimum: the group has discussed and identified existing data, plans, and reports that will be used to develop a prioritized, targeted, and measurable plan
 - Preferred: the group has discussed and identified models and tools that will be used to develop a prioritized, targeted, and measurable plan
- e. Demonstration of the partnership’s readiness and commitment to planning together, based on early discussions of: capability, availability, and commitment to plan together, a shared understanding of one another’s current work and strengths, and a vision for future watershed management that includes better resource outcomes and improved use of existing and future funding, consistent with questions 5 and 6.
 - Minimum: the group (staff) has met to discuss staff capability and availability for planning, information about capacity and strengths present in each partner
 - Preferred: the group (staff and governing bodies) demonstrates that a majority of participants are committed to ongoing collaboration and contributing resources to developing the plan.
 - Highly Preferred: the group (staff and governing bodies) has shared information about one another’s current plan priorities and local programs and has discussed a common vision for the future management of the watershed.
- f. Demonstration of understanding of the scope of work required for development of a comprehensive watershed management plan, consistent with questions 6 and 7.
 - Minimum: group has discussed administrative roles.
 - Preferred: potential policy members have been identified and have met; MOA is drafted.
 - Preferred: group has a clear vision for developing the plan (e.g., relative contributions of partners and/or consultants)
 - Highly preferred: MOA is signed by all participants

2. Recommendation of BWSR staff.

BWSR Grant Administration

BWSR reserves the right to provide funding to any and all proposals based on the number of eligible proposals submitted, anticipated staff time requirements, and the amount of funding available.

Timeline

- March 28, 2024– Proposal period begins
- June 13, 2024 – Proposal deadline at 4:30 PM
- June – August – Proposal review
- August 29, 2024 - BWSR Board approval of planning grant recipients
- March 14, 2025 Work plan submittal deadline
- Plans submitted to BWSR by June 30, 2027

Questions

For more information concerning the request for proposal, contact BWSR's One Watershed, One Plan Coordinator: Julie Westerlund, julie.westerlund@state.mn.us or 651-600-0694.

Grants Policy

One Watershed, One Plan Planning Grants

From the Board of Water and Soil Resources, State of Minnesota

Version: 2.0

Effective Date: 12/15/2022

Approval: Board Decision #22-54

Policy Statement

The purpose of this policy is to provide expectations for One Watershed, One Plan Planning Grants conducted via the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) Clean Water Fund grants to facilitate development and writing of comprehensive watershed management plans consistent with Minnesota Statutes §103B.801 and to facilitate mid-point evaluations and/or amendments of approved plans.

Reason for this Policy

The Clean Water Fund was established to implement part of Article XI, Section 15, of the Minnesota Constitution, with the purpose of protecting, enhancing, and restoring water quality in lakes, rivers, and streams and to protect groundwater and drinking water sources from degradation.

BWSR will use grant agreements for assurance of deliverables and compliance with appropriate statutes, rules and established policies. Willful or negligent disregard of relevant statutes, rules and policies may lead to imposition of financial penalties or future sanctions on the grant recipient.

Requirements

1. Applicant Eligibility Requirements

Eligible applicants include counties, watershed districts, watershed management organizations, and soil and water conservation districts working in partnership within a single One Watershed, One Plan planning boundary, meeting the participation requirements outlined in the *One Watershed, One Plan Operating Procedures*. Application for these funds is considered a joint application between participating local governments and may be submitted by a joint powers organization on behalf of local government members (partners). Formal agreement between the partners, consistent with the *One Watershed, One Plan Operating Procedures* or the *Watershed-Based Implementation Funding Policy* is required prior to execution of a grant agreement.

2. Match Requirements

No match will be required of the grantees. Grantees will be required to document local involvement in the plan development, evaluation, or amendment process.

3. Eligible Activities

Eligible activities must be directly for the purposes of providing services to the plan development, evaluation, or amendment effort and may include activities such as: contracts and/or staff reimbursement for plan development, evaluation, or amendment; technical services; preparation of policy committee, advisory committee, or public meeting agendas and notices; taking meeting minutes; facilitating and preparing/planning for facilitation of policy or advisory committee meetings, or public meetings; grant reporting and administration, including fiscal administration; facility rental for public or committee meetings; materials and supplies for facilitating meetings; reasonable food costs (e.g. coffee and cookies) for public meetings; publishing meeting notices; and other activities which directly support or supplement the goals and outcomes expected with development, evaluation, or amendment of a comprehensive watershed management plan.

4. Ineligible Expenses

Ineligible expenses include staff time to participate in committee meetings specifically representing an individual's local government unit; staff time for an individual, regularly scheduled, county water plan task force meeting where One Watershed, One Plan will be discussed as part of the meeting; and stipends for attendance at meetings.

5. Grantee Administration of Clean Water Fund Grants

The grantee for these funds includes the partners identified in the formal agreement establishing the partnership, consistent with the One Watershed, One Plan Operating Procedures or Watershed-Based Implementation Funding Policy. Grant reporting, fiscal management, and administration requirements are the responsibility of the grantee. All grantees must follow the Grants Administration Manual policy and guidance.

- a. Formal agreement between partners is required prior to execution of a grant agreement and must identify the single local government unit which will act as the fiscal agent for the grant and which will act as a grantee authorized representative. Grant reporting, fiscal management, and administration requirements are the responsibility of the grantee.
- b. All grantees are required to report on the outcomes, activities, and accomplishments of Clean Water Fund grants.
- c. Grantees have the responsibility to approve the expenditure of funds within their partnership. The local government unit fiscal agent administering the grant must approve or deny expenditure of funds and the action taken must be documented in the governing body's meeting minutes prior to beginning the funded activity. This responsibility may be designated to a policy committee if specifically identified in the formal agreement establishing the partnership.
- d. BWSR recommends all contracts be reviewed by the grantee's legal counsel. All contracts must be consistent with Minnesota statute and rule.
- e. Grantees are required to document local involvement in the plan development, evaluation, or amendment process in order to demonstrate that the grant is supplementing/enhancing water resource restoration and protection activities.

6. BWSR Grant Administration Requirements

BWSR staff is authorized to develop grant agreements, including requirements and processes for project outcomes reporting, closeouts, and fiscal reconciliations.

In the event there is a violation of the terms of the grant agreement, BWSR will enforce the grant agreement and evaluate appropriate actions, including repayment of grant funds at a rate up to 150% of the grant agreement.

History

Version	Description	Date
2.00	Incorporated plan evaluation and amendment	2022
1.00	Reformatted to new template and logo	2018
0.00	New policy for One Watershed, One Plan Program	March 23, 2016

BOARD MEETING AGENDA ITEM

AGENDA ITEM TITLE: Red River Basin Commission FY24/25 Grant Approval

Meeting Date: March 27, 2024

Agenda Category: Committee Recommendation New Business Old Business

Item Type: Decision Discussion Information

Keywords for Electronic Searchability: Grant Approval

Section/Region: Regional Operations/Northern

Contact: Ryan Hughes

Prepared by: Henry Van Offelen

Reviewed by: Grant Program and Policy Committee(s)

Presented by: Henry Van Offelen

Time requested: 5 minutes

Audio/Visual Equipment Needed for Agenda Item Presentation

Attachments: Resolution Order Map Other Supporting Information

Fiscal/Policy Impact

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None | <input type="checkbox"/> General Fund Budget |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Amended Policy Requested | <input type="checkbox"/> Capital Budget |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New Policy Requested | <input type="checkbox"/> Outdoor Heritage Fund Budget |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: | <input type="checkbox"/> Clean Water Fund Budget |

ACTION REQUESTED

Board approval of the FY2024-2025 Red River Basin Commission Grant.

LINKS TO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[Home | Red River Basin Comm \(redriverbasincommission.org\)](http://redriverbasincommission.org)

SUMMARY *(Consider: history, reason for consideration now, alternatives evaluated, basis for recommendation)*

In 2023 the Legislature appropriated funds to the Board for grants to the Red River Basin Commission (RRBC) for waters quality and floodplain management, including administration of programs. The RRBC has submitted an updated report of 2023 activities related to their Natural Resources Framework plan and has developed a work plan and budget for 2024 and 2025. The RRBC has secured the required matching funds from the State of North Dakota and Province of Manitoba. BWSR staff have reviewed these materials and found that they are consistent with previous materials submitted to secure these funds.

The Northern Regional Committee (Committee) met January 3, 2024, to review and discuss the RRBC 2023 Annual Report, the RRBC 2024/25 Workplan, the current status of the RRBC, and recommended review by the Grants Program and Policy Committee. The Grants Program and Policy Committee met January 10, 2024, reviewed the Board Order, and authorized the FY2024/225 grant to the Red River Basin Commission to the full Board. The Committee recommends approval by the full Board.

BOARD ORDER

FY2024-2025 Red River Basin Commission Grant

PURPOSE

Provide fiscal year 2024 and 2025 legislatively allocated general funds to the Red River Basin Commission.

RECITALS /FINDINGS OF FACT

- A. The Laws of Minnesota 2023, Regular Session, Chapter 60, Article 1, Section 4(e) appropriated \$100,000 the first year and \$100,000 the second year are for a grant to the Red River Basin Commission for water quality and floodplain management, including program administration. This appropriation must be matched by nonstate funds.
- B. The proposed allocations in this order were developed consistent with this appropriation.
- C. The Grants Program and Policy Committee reviewed the order at the January 10, 2024 meeting and recommended approval to the full board.
- D. The Board Executive Director has authority to approve the proposed allocations in this order.

ORDER

The Board hereby:

- 1. Approves the allocation of \$100,000 for fiscal year 2024 and \$100,000 for fiscal year 2025 to the Red River Basin Commission for water quality and floodplain management, including administration of programs.

Dated at St. Paul, Minnesota, this March 27, 2024.

Rich Sve, Vice Chair
Board of Water and Soil Resources

Date: _____

Memo

Date: December 27, 2023

To: Northern Regional Committee

From: Ryan Hughes and Henry Van Offelen

RE: 2024/2025 Red River Basin Commission Grant

This informational memo is for the FY2024/2025 grant to Red River Basin Commission (RRBC) per the following appropriation:

The Laws of Minnesota 2023, Regular Session, Chapter 60, Article 1, Section 4(e) appropriated \$100,000 the first year and \$100,000 the second year are for a grant to the Red River Basin Commission for water quality and floodplain management, including program administration. This appropriation must be matched by nonstate funds.

These funds are provided to support their annual work related to implementation of the Red River Basin Natural Resources Framework Plan, Long Term Flood Solutions Plan, and recently completed Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan.

The RRBC will submit an updated report of activities related to their Natural Resources Framework plan and will develop a work plan and budget for 2024 and 2025. The RRBC will document the required matching funds and BWSR staff will review these materials to approve distribution of funds through the work plan approval process in eLINK.

BWSR staff will continue to work with the RRBC and their Executive Director to ensure work completed under this grant is directed toward water quality and floodplain management related activities. BWSR staff has recently met and will continue to work with RRBC staff to ensure that grant related reporting are completed in eLINK consistent with current policies.

This item is an informational item for the Northern Regional Committee and will be a decision item for the Grants Program and Policy Committee (GP&PC). This decision was recently made due to the increased number of members abstaining from voting on the Northern Regional Committee and guidance to process all grant related items through the GP&PC. The Northern Regional Committee will be informed of future similar funding to RRBC from BWSR.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Water Management and Strategic Planning Committee

1. BWSR Strategic Plan – Jenny Gieseke – ***DECISION ITEM***

BOARD MEETING AGENDA ITEM

AGENDA ITEM TITLE:	BWSR Strategic Plan		
Meeting Date:	March 27, 2024		
Agenda Category:	<input type="checkbox"/> Committee Recommendation	<input type="checkbox"/> New Business	<input type="checkbox"/> Old Business
Item Type:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Decision	<input type="checkbox"/> Discussion	<input type="checkbox"/> Information <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Public Data
Keywords for Electronic Searchability:	Strategic Plan, Mission, Vision		
Section/Region:	Organizational Effectiveness		
Contact:	Jenny Gieseke		
Prepared by:	Jenny Gieseke		
Reviewed by:	WMSP	Committee(s)	
Presented by:	Jenny Gieseke		
Time requested:	30 minutes		

Audio/Visual Equipment Needed for Agenda Item Presentation

Attachments: Resolution Order Map Other Supporting Information

Fiscal/Policy Impact

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> None | <input type="checkbox"/> General Fund Budget |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Amended Policy Requested | <input type="checkbox"/> Capital Budget |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New Policy Requested | <input type="checkbox"/> Outdoor Heritage Fund Budget |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: | <input type="checkbox"/> Clean Water Fund Budget |

ACTION REQUESTED

Seeking adoption of the updated Strategic Plan

LINKS TO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

SUMMARY *(Consider: history, reason for consideration now, alternatives evaluated, basis for recommendation)*

Over the past year, BWSR’s has been working to update the Agency’s Strategic Plan using an inclusive, participatory planning process involving BWSR staff and board members along with key external stakeholders around the state. The updated plan includes a revised mission, a newly developed vision, as well as key long-term goals and strategies to focus on over the next 10-15 years. Staff, board members and key external partners provided input and feedback to the plan through in-person and virtual meetings and surveys. The Water Management and Strategic Planning Committee has recommended adoption of the updated Strategic Plan.

Board Resolution # 24- _____

BWSR Strategic Plan

WHEREAS, the Board of Water and Soil Resources recognizes the importance of being strategic in our efforts to improve and protect Minnesota’s land and water resources; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Water and Soil Resources issued a solicitation for the development of an updated Strategic Plan on Jan 23, 2023; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Water and Soil Resources entered into a contract with Carroll, Franck & Associates for these services on March 13, 2023; and

WHEREAS, the BWSR Board, BWSR staff members and key partners provided input through surveys and meetings during the period of April 1, 2023 through February 29, 2024; and

WHEREAS, on March 21, 2024 the Water Management and Strategic Planning Committee reviewed a final draft of the BWSR Strategic Plan Framework, and recommended Board adoption.

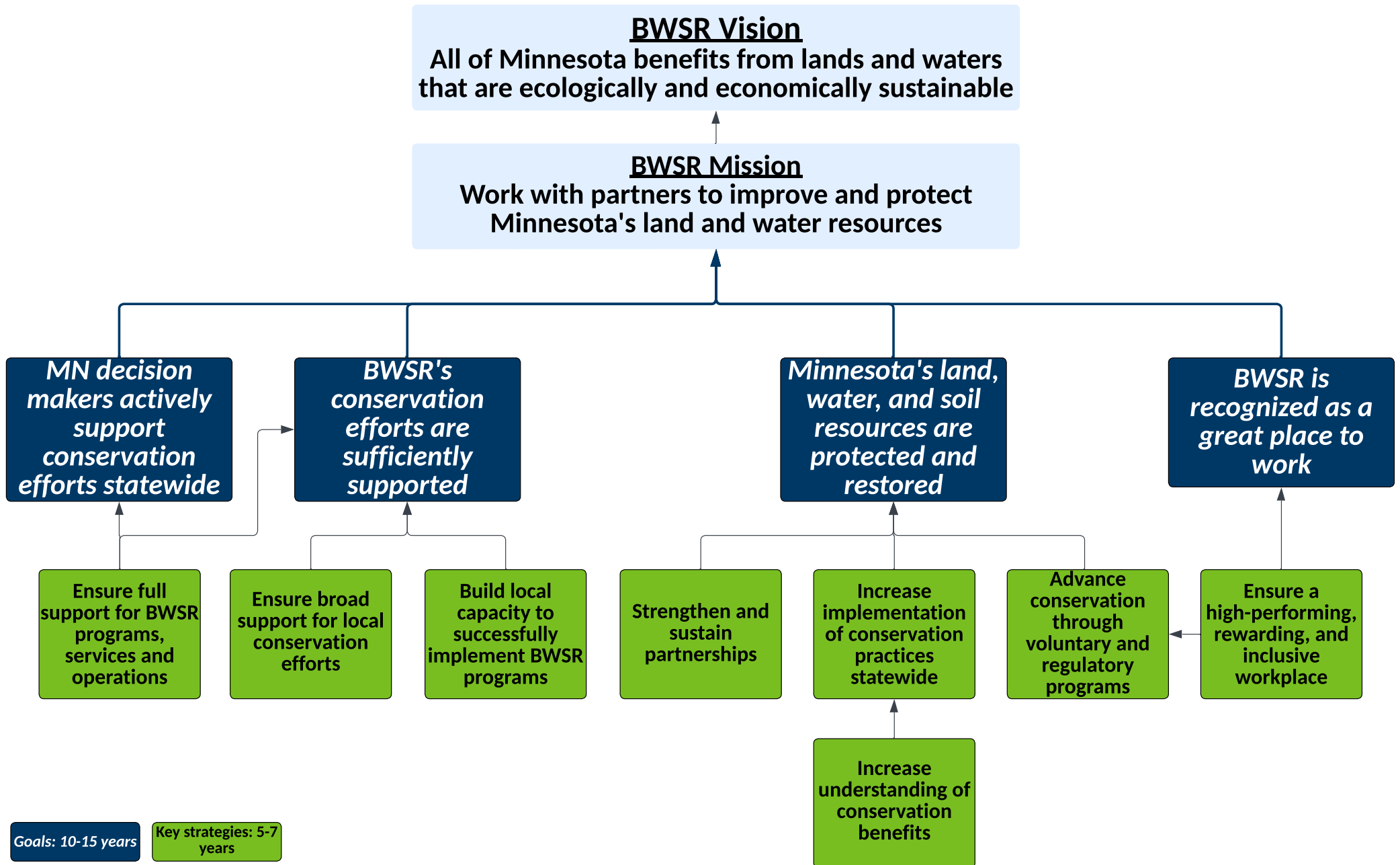
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, the Board of Water and Soil Resources hereby adopts the attached Strategic Plan Framework and directs staff to finalize the Plan and begin implementing the actions included within.

Rich Sve, Vice Chair
Board of Water and Soil Resources

Date: _____

Attachment

BWSR 2024 Strategic Plan Framework



COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Southern Region Committee

1. Upper Minnesota River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan – Ted Winter and Doug Goodrich – ***DECISION ITEM***
2. South Fork Crow River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan – Ted Winter and Jeremy Maul – ***DECISION ITEM***

BOARD MEETING AGENDA ITEM

AGENDA ITEM TITLE: Upper Minnesota River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan

Meeting Date: March 27, 2024

Agenda Category: Committee Recommendation New Business Old Business

Item Type: Decision Discussion Information

Keywords for Electronic Searchability: Upper Minnesota River One Watershed, One Plan

Section/Region: Southern Region

Contact: Ed Lenz

Prepared by: Douglas Goodrich

Reviewed by: Southern Regional Committee(s)
Ted Winter, Committee Chair and Doug Goodrich, Board Conservationist

Presented by: Goodrich, Board Conservationist

Time requested: 15 minutes

Audio/Visual Equipment Needed for Agenda Item Presentation

Attachments: Resolution Order Map Other Supporting Information

Fiscal/Policy Impact

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None | <input type="checkbox"/> General Fund Budget |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Amended Policy Requested | <input type="checkbox"/> Capital Budget |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New Policy Requested | <input type="checkbox"/> Outdoor Heritage Fund Budget |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: | <input type="checkbox"/> Clean Water Fund Budget |

ACTION REQUESTED

Approval of the Upper Minnesota River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan as recommended by the Southern Regional Committee to include the adjusted planning area.

LINKS TO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Plan is on the Upper Minnesota Watershed District website:

https://umrwd.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Upper-MN-CWMP_FINAL-PLAN-FOR-BWSR-review.pdf

SUMMARY *(Consider: history, reason for consideration now, alternatives evaluated, basis for recommendation)*

Upper Minnesota River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (Plan) – On January 28, 2022 the Upper Minnesota River planning partnership received an approved grant agreement from the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) to develop a Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan under the One Watershed, One Plan Program. The Partnership established a Memorandum of Agreement on May 11, 2021, for the purposes of watershed planning. The Partnership has followed One Watershed, One Plan Operating Procedures; and the Policy Committee, Advisory Committee, and Steering Team members have attended regularly scheduled meetings and kept open communication throughout Plan development. The Partnership submitted the draft Upper

Minnesota River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (Plan) to BWSR on July 21, 2023, for 60-day comment period. A public hearing was held October 31, 2023, and the Policy Committee submitted the Plan for approval December 11, 2023. The Southern Regional Committee (Committee) met on February 27, 2024, to review the planning process, the content of the Plan, State agency comments on the Plan, and to make a recommendation for approval. The Committee recommends approval by the full Board.

Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155

In the Matter of the review of the Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan for the Upper Minnesota River, pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103B.101, Subdivision 14 and 103B.801.

**ORDER
APPROVING
COMPREHENSIVE
WATERSHED
MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Whereas, the Policy Committee of the Upper Minnesota River Partnership submitted a Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (Plan) to the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (Board) on December 11, 2023 pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103B.101, Subdivision 14 and 103B.801 and Board Resolution #18-14, and;

Whereas, the Board has completed its review of the Plan;

Now Therefore, the Board hereby makes the following Findings of Fact, Conclusions, and Order:

FINDINGS OF FACT

- Partnership Establishment.** The Partnership was established On May 11, 2021 through adoption of a Memorandum of Agreement for the purposes of developing a Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan. The membership of the Partnership includes: Big Stone County, Swift County, Traverse County, Big Stone Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), Swift SWCD, Traverse SWCD, and Upper Minnesota Watershed District.
- Authority to Plan.** Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103B.101, Subdivision 14 allows the Board to adopt resolutions, policies or orders that allow a comprehensive plan, local water management plan, or watershed management plan, developed or amended, approved and adopted, according to Chapter 103B, 103C, or 103D to serve as substitutes for one another or be replaced with a comprehensive watershed management plan. Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103B.801 established the Comprehensive Watershed Management Planning Program; also known as One Watershed, One Plan. And, Board Resolution #18-14 adopted the One Watershed, One Plan Operating Procedures and Plan Content Requirements policies.
- Nature of the Watershed.** The Greater Upper Minnesota River Watershed covers portions of Minnesota (784 square miles), South Dakota (1,346 square miles), and North Dakota (2.5 square miles) with the headwaters for all of the high priority planning regions originating on the north side of the Minnesota River within Minnesota. The plan makes note that prior to European settlement the Upper Minnesota watershed planning area was populated by the Mdewakanton Dakota, Wahpekute, and Yanktonai Dakota (Sioux, Očhéthi Šakówinj) tribes with a landscape consisting of tallgrass prairie, wetlands, floodplain forests and pothole lakes that were left behind after the ice sheets receded. The last glaciation recession created the current landscape of the area as well as the Glacial Lake Agassiz. The present-day Minnesota River Valley and present-day Minnesota River was formed when the Glacial Lake overtopped the moraine dam on its south end flooding and carving out the valley we see today. Current land use is predominantly agriculture lands, with 68% of the planning area being used as cropland which influenced how the plan partners developed measurable goals and associated action items.

4. **Plan Development.** The Plan was developed as a single, concise, and coordinated approach to watershed management for the purpose of guiding watershed managers as they work with landowners and communities to protect and restore the watershed's resources. The Plan consolidates policies, programs, and implementation strategies from existing data, studies, and plans, and incorporates input from multiple planning partners to provide a single plan for management of the watershed. The Plan focuses on prioritized, targeted, and measurable implementation efforts and lays out specific goals and actions to improve excessive surface erosion and sedimentation in surface waters, soil health, changes to drainage patterns including ditching, culverts, and tile, decline in wetland quality and quantity, streambank erosion and drainage system impacts, decreased groundwater recharge and supply, contamination of private wells, flood damages to private and public lands through loss of storage in the watershed.
5. **Plan Review.** On December 11, 2023, the Board received the Plan, a record of the public hearing, and copies of all written comments pertaining to the Plan for final State review pursuant to Board #18-14. State agency representatives attended and provided input at advisory committee meetings during development of the Plan. The following state review comments were received during the comment period.
- A. Environmental Quality Board indicated Policy indicates that EQB only be notified of the final draft document. EQB did not respond to the submission.
 - B. Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA): During the 60-day comment period MDA requested revisions to the plan and were considered adequately. MDA confirmed receipt of the Plan at the final formal review and stated all MDA comments were considered and addressed in the final draft plan and recommends approval.
 - C. Minnesota Department of Health (MDH): MDH confirmed receipt of the Plan at the final formal review and stated all MDH comments were considered and addressed in the final draft plan and recommends approval.
 - D. Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR): During the 60-day comment period, DNR provided comments to the Upper MN planning partners. DNR is satisfied with the received responses to issues raised during the review and has no additional comments. DNR confirmed receipt of the Plan at the final formal review and recommends approval.
 - E. Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA): During the 60-day comment period MPCA acknowledged that throughout the planning process the partners were responsive to the MPCA's concerns, comments and priorities. MPCA confirmed receipt of the Plan at the final formal review and stated all MPCA comments were considered and the final draft plan is very well written, concise, and thorough. MPCA recommends approval.
 - F. Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) regional staff: During the 60-day review period, BWSR provided comments requesting numerous revisions to the Plan to ensure consistency throughout the Plan and that plan content requirements were met. All comments were adequately addressed in the final Plan.

6. **Plan Summary and Highlights.**

The highlights of the plan include:

- The Plan includes an informative Executive Summary summarizing resource concerns and issues, the method of establishing measurable goals, summarizing pace of progress toward goals attained by the planned activities, and short-term cost of the 10-year implementation schedule.
- The Plan includes a thorough identification of the targeted areas using PTMApp. PTMApp has estimated feasible locations for management practices and structural BMPs, as well as the associated annual costs and anticipated benefits arising from implementation. The result is a list of the best (most cost-effective and most effective toward load reduction goals) practices.
- The Plan identifies four different planning regions which were defined based on land use, hydrology, and geology. The four planning regions are Upper Big Stone Lake, Stony Run, Five-Mile Creek, and the Lower Big Stone Lake watersheds.

- Upper Big Stone Lake and Stony Creek planning regions were designated High Priority planning regions. The High Priority planning regions will be the areas the partners will focus first with the other planning regions are not going to be the focus during the ten-year lifespan of the Plan.
 - The plan development process generated twenty issues, organized in four resource categories (Groundwater, Habitat, Land Stewardship, and Surface Water) using existing reports, plans, studies, data, and stakeholder input. Each issue was assigned as one of four priority levels within each planning region. Three issues were identified as a “high” priority ranking in at least one planning region and will be the focus of initial implementation efforts. Six issues were identified as a “medium-high” priority ranking in at least one planning region and will be the focus of initial implementation efforts, likely with additional funding. Five issues were identified as a “medium” priority ranking in any planning region and will not be assigned prioritization during the Plan but may receive attention if time and funding allows. The remaining six issues were identified as a “low” priority ranking watershed-wide and are not the focus of the Plan.
 - The Plan details seven measurable goals that collectively address the nine high and medium-high priority issues and their associated goal scale. A quick reference guide was developed for each of these priority issues. Each reference guide summarizes the priority issues, multiple benefits for the watershed-wide goals, the planning region and goal scale for each issue, background information about the issue and goal, and the long-term and short-term goals.
 - The Plan recognizes three funding levels for implementation. Level 1 - Current Funding, Level 2 - Current Funding + BWSR’s Watershed Based Implementation Fund (WBIF) grant program, and Level 3 - Partner and Other Funding. Actions pursued under Funding Level 2 are the focus of the Plan and have an estimated annual cost of \$1,009,770.
 - Separate targeted implementation tables were created for each planning region that include actions within the Projects and Practices implementation program. Only priority issues that rank high in the planning region were given planning region specific measurable goals and associated targeted action items. Watershed-wide implementation tables were created for actions related to Capital Improvement Projects, Regulatory, Education and Outreach, and Research and Monitoring.
7. **Planning Boundary Adjustment.** Planning Boundary Adjustment. The Board maintains a suggested planning boundary map for the One Watershed, One Plan program. The Upper Minnesota River watershed partnership proposed a boundary adjustment in the application for funding. The Partnerships provided documentation for local concurrence, rationale, and justification of the adjusted boundary. The adjusted boundary was approved by Board staff per the One Watershed, One Plan Operating Procedures. The adjusted boundary is included as part of the board packet.
8. **Southern Regional Committee.** On February 27, 2024, the **Southern** Regional Committee met to review and discuss the Plan. Those in attendance and remotely participating from the Board’s Committee were Eunice Biel, Jeffrey Berg, Heather Johnson, Steve Robertson, Scott Roemhildt, and Ted Winter. Board staff in attendance were Southern Regional Manager Ed Lenz, Board Conservationist Luke Olson and Doug Goodrich, Clean Water Specialist Mark Hiles, and One Watershed, One Plan Coordinator Julie Westerlund. The representatives from the Partnership were Amber Doschadis and Rachel Olm with Tammy Neubauer and Brett Baldwin of the Big Stone SWCD. Board regional staff provided its recommendation of Plan approval to the Committee. After discussion, the Committee’s decision was to present a recommendation of approval of the Plan to the full Board.
9. This Plan will be in effect for a ten-year period until March 27, 2034.

CONCLUSIONS

1. All relevant substantive and procedural requirements of law have been fulfilled.
2. The Board has proper jurisdiction in the matter of approving a Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan for the Upper Minnesota pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103B.101, Subd. 14 and 103B.801 and Board Resolution #18-14.
3. The Upper Minnesota River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan attached to this Order states water and water-related problems within the planning area; priority resource issues and possible solutions thereto; goals, objectives, and actions of the Partnership; and an implementation program.
4. The attached Plan is in conformance with the requirements of Minnesota Statutes Section 103B.101, Subd. 14 and 103B.801 and Board Resolution #19-41.
5. The One Watershed, One Plan Suggested Boundary Map is adjusted to exclude portions of planning boundary #16 (part of the Lac qui Parle – Yellow Bank Watershed District as adjusted in the Lac qui Parle-Yellow Bank CWMP AND the portion outside of the Upper Minnesota River Watershed District to be ceded to the Chippewa River planning area) as indicated on the Board adopted Suggested Boundary Map approved by the Board March 24, 2021.
6. The attached plan when adopted through local resolution by the members of the Partnership will serve as a replacement for the comprehensive plan, local water management plan, or watershed management plan, developed or amended, approved and adopted, according to Chapter 103B, 103C, or 103D, but only to the geographic area of the Plan and consistent with the One Watershed, One Plan Suggested Boundary Map.

ORDER

The Board hereby approves the attached Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan of the Upper Minnesota River, dated March 27, 2024.

Dated at St. Paul, Minnesota, this 27th day of March, 2024.

MINNESOTA BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES

Rich Sve, Vice Chair
Board of Water and Soil Resources

Date: _____

March 27, 2024

Upper Minnesota River Planning Partnership
c/o Amber Doschadis, Director
211 2nd Street SE
Ortonville, MN 56278

RE: Approval of the Upper Minnesota River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan

Dear Upper Minnesota River Planning Partnership:

The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) is pleased to inform you the Upper Minnesota River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (Plan) was approved at its regular meeting held on March 27, 2024. Attached is the signed Board Order that documents approval of the Plan and indicates the Plan meets all relevant requirements of law, rule, and policy.

This Plan is effective for a ten-year period until March 27, 2034. Please be advised, the partners must adopt and begin implementing the plan within 120 days of the date of the Order in accordance with Minnesota Statutes §103B.101, Subd. 14, and the One Watershed, One Plan Operating Procedures.

The members of the partnership and participants in the plan development process are to be commended for writing a plan that clearly presents water management goals, actions, and priorities of the Partnership, and for participating in the One Watershed, One Plan program. The BWSR looks forward to working with you as you implement this Plan and document its outcomes.

Please contact Board Conservationist Luke Olson of our staff at 507-591-6312 or luke.olson@state.mn.us for further assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

Rich Sve, Vice Chair
Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources

Enclosure: BWSR Board Order

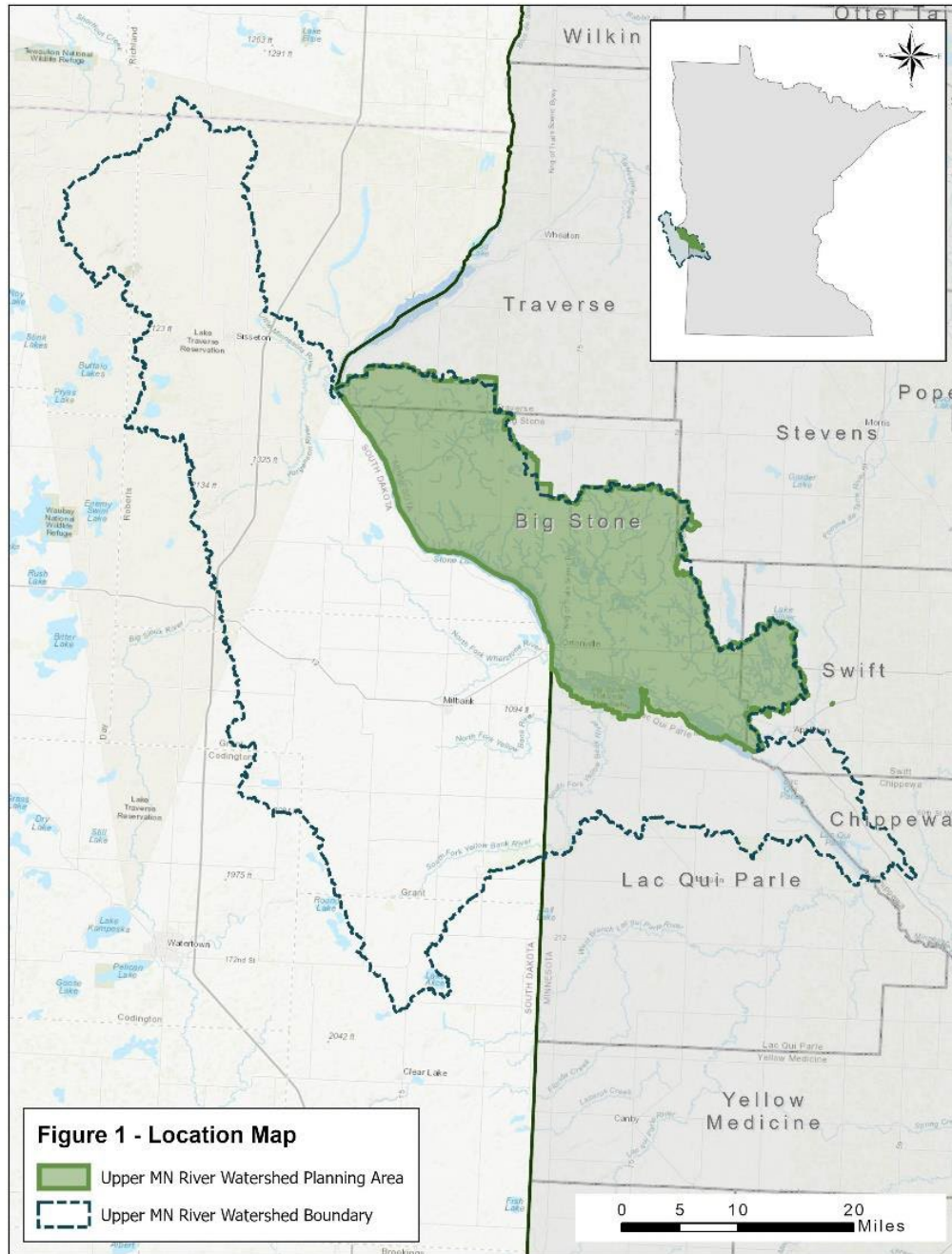
CC: Ryan Lemickson, MDA (via email)
Amanda Strommer, MDH (via email)
Ethan Jenzen, DNR (via email)
Katherine Pekarek-Scott, MPCA (via email)
Ed Lenz, BWSR Regional Manager (via email)
Luke Olson, BWSR Board Conservationist (via email)
Rachel Mueller, BWSR (file copy)

Bemidji 403 Fourth Street NW Suite 200 Bemidji, MN 56601 (218) 755-2600	Brainerd 1601 Minnesota Drive Brainerd, MN 56401 (218) 203-4470	Detroit Lakes 26624 N. Tower Road Detroit Lakes, MN 56501 (218) 846-8400	Duluth 394 S. Lake Avenue Suite 403 Duluth, MN 55802 (218) 723-4752	Mankato 11 Civic Center Plaza Suite 300 Mankato, MN 56001 (507) 344-2826	Marshall 1400 East Lyon Street Marshall, MN 56258 (507) 537-6060	Rochester 3555 9 th Street NW Suite 350 Rochester, MN 55901 (507) 206-2889	St Cloud 110 Second St. South Suite 307 Waite Park, MN 56387
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UPPER MINNESOTA RIVER WATERSHED PLANNING AREA



UPPER MINNESOTA RIVER WATERSHED PLANNING REGIONS





A. Executive Summary



Section A. Executive Summary

The Upper Minnesota River Watershed (UMRW) is in southwest Minnesota within a region of predominately agricultural-based uses, with rich and productive farms. The watershed, originating primarily in South Dakota, forms the headwaters of the Minnesota River and covers approximately 2,132 square miles, with approximately 784 square miles within Minnesota. The Minnesota portion of the UMRW is the focus of this planning effort.

The planning area includes several major tributaries of the headwaters of the Minnesota River, including Fish Creek, Five Mile Creek, Meadowbrook Creek, Salmonson Creek, and Stony Run. The planning area is also fed by the Little Minnesota River, Yellow Bank River, and Whetstone River, which all originate in South Dakota. These waters do not follow traditional political boundaries, creating a need to plan water management at a watershed scale rather than at political scales. The UMRW Comprehensive Water Management Plan (CWMP) planning area was created to accommodate planning at a watershed scale.

The UMRW CWMP planning area contains portions of five counties (Big Stone, Traverse, Stevens, Swift, and Lac qui Parle Counties). The three most populated towns within the planning area are Ortonville, Browns Valley, and Clinton. These counties and communities are in approximately 501,700 acres of the CWMP's planning area .

The UMRW CWMP was developed between 2022-2023 through the One Watershed, One Plan (1W1P) program administered by the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR; Minnesota Statutes §103B.801). The CWMP will guide watershed partners, including local counties, soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs), the Upper Minnesota River Watershed District (WD), and other local stakeholders through the implementation processes to restore, protect, and ensure the Watershed's water management and sustainability moving forward.

Administration and Coordination

CWMP planning began with a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA; Appendix A) between cooperating local governmental agencies and organizations, including:

- Big Stone, Swift, and Traverse Counties
- Big Stone, Swift, and Traverse SWCDs, with a letter of support from Lac qui Parle SWCD
- Upper Minnesota River Watershed District

Throughout the planning process, guiding committees have developed and detailed the CWMP for implementation. These committees include:

- **Policy Committee** that is comprised of board members from counties, SWCDs, Upper Minnesota River WD, and other local groups. The policy committee represented their respective organizations as well as guided general decision-making regarding the CWMP.
- **Advisory and Steering Teams** that are composed of members from SWCDs; Upper Minnesota River WD; counties; landowners; city and township officials; and other stakeholders, including state agencies such as BWSR, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA), Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA).



For plan implementation, these groups continue much of their responsibilities (full responsibilities outlined in Section F). The Policy Committee continues to guide decision making and works closely with BWSR for implementation. The Advisory and Steering Teams will provide reports and develop working plans.

Planning Regions

Due to the varied topography and unique surface water features within the planning area, planning regions were developed to help identify distinct regions for focused prioritization and implementation of activities. The four planning regions developed for this CWMP are shown in Figure A1. These planning regions will be used to guide the implementation of this plan. They are meant to represent distinct areas of the watershed that will aid in focusing efforts on the priority issues of this CWMP.



Figure A1. Planning region map.



Issue Prioritization

Existing reports, state agency feedback, and input for the Steering Team and Advisory Committee were used to establish a list of 20 distinct issues within the planning area. These 20 issues were then initially ranked based on feedback at a public kick-off meeting. How frequently the issue was addressed was decided based on information in existing studies and feedback from state agencies. The Steering Team, with input from the Advisory Committee, then adjusted the initial rankings based on local expertise within the planning area to establish a final prioritization of the 20 issues.

Figure A2 shows the ranking structure for issue prioritization, how many issues were within each rank, and what those ranks mean for implementing this CWMP. Each issue was then further divided into either a watershed-wide issue or a planning region specific issue by the Steering Team and Advisory Committee. The Policy Committee made the final approval of the issue prioritization process. The High (Table A1) and Medium-High (Table A2) issues, along with their watershed-wide or planning region rankings, are shown on the following pages.

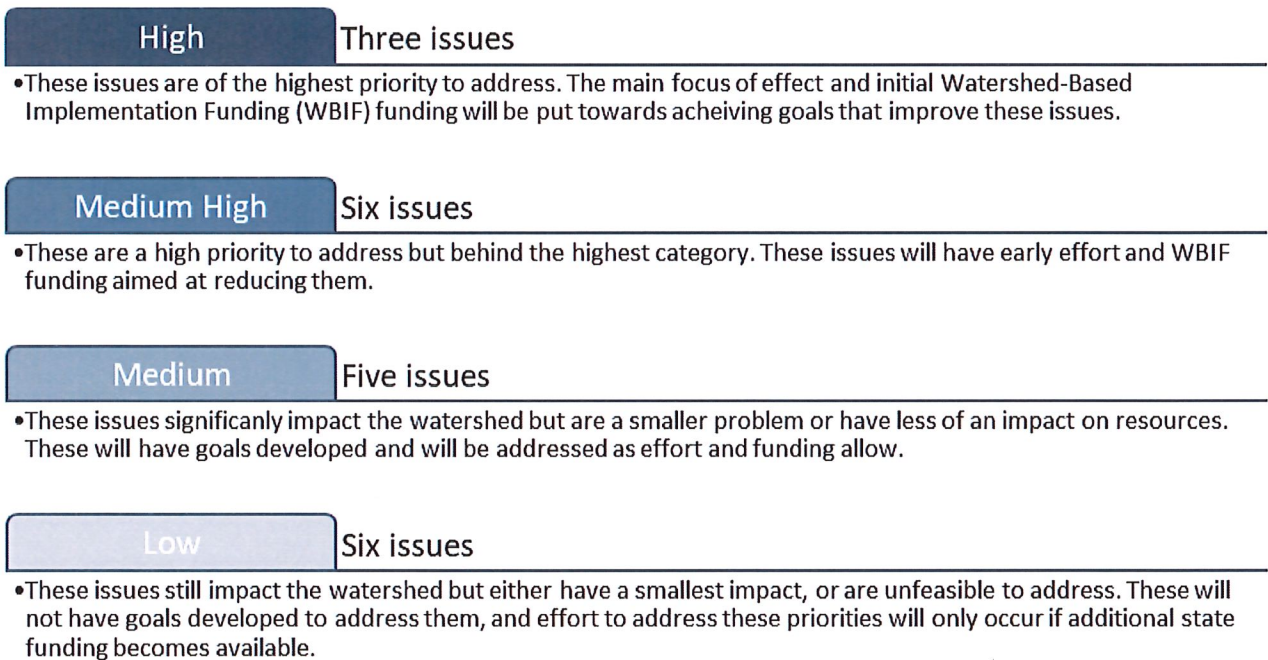


Figure A2. Structure of the issue prioritization process ranks and the number of issues within each rank.









Priority Issues

High Priority Issues

Planning Region Prioritization Key: ● = high priority ● = medium priority ○ = low priority

Table A1. High priority issues within the planning area along with planning region rankings. All high priority (dark blue) indicates a watershed-wide issue.









Resource Category	Resource	Issue	Issue Description	Planning Region Prioritization
	Agricultural Lands	Soil health	Healthy soils provide increased agricultural productivity and benefits for water quality and water quantity. In addition, healthy soils provide opportunities to increase climate resiliency. Maintaining or improving soil health within the watershed can produce multiple benefits. This includes promoting a healthy soil structure that allows for better infiltration, reducing ponding and surface flow along with reducing nutrient loading into streams.	
	Agricultural Lands	Erosion and sediment	Upland surface erosion (inclusive of ravine, gully, and wind erosion) causing detachment and transport of valuable soils and sediment to surface water, impacting aquatic life and recreation.	
	Streams and Drainage Systems	Agricultural surface flow and drainage	Water moves quickly across agricultural fields causing concentrated flow paths which result in gully formation. In turn, high sediment and nutrient yields may occur, impacting drainageways and stream and lake health. Numerous forms of drainage such as public and private ditches, culverts, and tile drainage have been constructed in the watershed to move water out of agricultural fields. Drainage can cause downstream impacts, such as flooding and decreased water quality.	





Medium-High Priority Issues

Planning Region Prioritization Key: ● = high priority ● = medium priority ○ = low priority

Table A2. Medium-High priority issues within the planning area along with planning region rankings. All high priority (dark blue) indicates a watershed-wide issue.

Resource Category	Resource	Issue	Issue Description	Planning Region Prioritization
	Wetlands	Decline in wetland quality and quantity	In the last century, land use and land management decisions have resulted in a loss of wetlands or decline in the quality of wetlands. These changes have impacts on habitat as well as issues connected to surface water such as decreased storage.	
	Streams and Drainage Systems	Streambank erosion	Eroding banks along streams and ditches have resulted in issues that impact drainage, infrastructure, aquatic life, aquatic recreation, and water quality.	
	Streams and Drainage Systems	Loss of water storage	Lost storage can impact chronic bank-full flooding, increase crop damage, drive cross-watershed flood events, and increase flashiness of ditch systems. Insufficient storage of water in lakes due to increased inflows and lack of structural release of water downstream is increasing water levels in waterbodies. The sizing of infrastructure impacts flow and storage, such as culverts, can also be connected to this issue.	
	Aquifer	Groundwater quantity protection	Water quantity in Well Head Protection Areas (WHPAs) and Drinking Water Supply Management Areas (DWSMAs) can be impacted if recharge is not balanced against withdrawals. These public water supplies may need to be protected against depletion.	



Resource Category	Resource	Issue	Issue Description	Planning Region Prioritization
	Drinking Water	Groundwater quality/protection of private wells and public water supplies	Groundwater is threatened due to unsealed abandoned wells and Subsurface Sewage Treatment Systems (SSTS) that are failing or are an immediate threat to public health. Due to the significant reliance on groundwater for personal consumption, private well owners should be educated about potential contamination from naturally occurring (ex: arsenic and manganese) and human made sources (ex: pesticides and nitrates). Additionally, WHPAs and DWSMAs may need protection to safeguard drinking water quality.	

Measurable Goals

To successfully implement the CWMP and make progress towards improving priority issues, setting and tracking measurable goals are essential. Demonstrating progress towards goals over the plan’s 10-year timeframe will ensure its success. To do this, specific, measurable outcomes were set to track progress. These goals were set either on a watershed-wide basis or a planning region basis consistent with the manner in which an issue was prioritized (Table A1 and Table A2).

The Prioritize, Target, and Measure Application (PTMApp; <https://ptmapp.bwsr.state.mn.us/>) was used in this plan to develop goals and identify the locations of structural and non-structural practices that would be both cost effective and help make progress towards the plan’s goals. The Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) and Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy (WRAPS) were used with PTMApp projections and helped define measurable goals for the CWMP. In addition, existing state studies, along with Steering Team and Advisory Committee input, was used to craft measurable goals that could be accomplished within the plan’s lifespan and make progress towards improving the priority issues. Table A3 provides an outline of the measurable goals that are described in detail in Section D.

Table A3. Measurable goals outline described in Section D. Short-term goals are set for 10 years and long-term goals are the desired future condition.

Measurable Goal	Short-Term Goal(s)	Long-Term Goal(s)
Soil Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement soil health practices on at least 5,000 acres per year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have healthy and productive soils on all working lands within the watershed.
Water Storage (Agricultural Surface Flow and Drainage and Loss of Water Storage)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add 6,210 acre-feet of storage across the watershed (1,580 acre feet in Upper Big Stone Lake and Stony, 3,500 acre-feet watershed-wide). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add 33,848 acre-feet of storage across the watershed (17,380 acre feet in Upper Big Stone Lake and Stony Run).



Measurable Goal	Short-Term Goal(s)	Long-Term Goal(s)
Erosion and Sediment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce sediment by a total of 8,600 tons per year from the two planning regions prioritizing this goal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce sediment by a total of 31,200 tons per year from the two planning regions prioritizing this goal.
Decline in Wetland Quality and Quantity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create, restore, protect, or enhance 800 acres of wetland and 14,000 acres of adjacent uplands cumulatively in the two high priority planning regions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish and maintain healthy and resilient wetlands across the watershed.
Streambank Erosion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement eight projects that aid in stabilizing streambanks in planning regions that are a high priority for this goal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create stable and healthy streams and drainage systems throughout the watershed.
Groundwater Quantity Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add a cumulative total of 3,000 acres per year of groundcover that will support groundwater quantity protection within the two planning regions that are prioritizing this goal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a resilient groundwater supply.
Groundwater Quality/Protection of Private Wells and Public Water Supplies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add a total of 3,000 acres per year of practices protect groundwater quality within the two priority planning regions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet Minnesota nitrogen reduction goal for drinking water and groundwater protection. Goal is based on the Minnesota Groundwater Protection Act of 1989.

Targeted Implementation

To successfully implement the CWMP, a series of action tables were developed that outline actions that can be taken to address specific issues in the watershed at the planning region scale. These action tables outline where and when the actions should be targeted, how they will be measured, and the costs of implementation. These tables can be found in Section E of the CWMP. There are seven implementation programs, as outlined in Figure A3.



Figure A3. Implementation Programs described in Section F.

The resources available (both staff time and funding) over the 10-year implementation period will drive the progress made in implementing the programs of this CWMP. There are three funding levels for this CWMP, shown in Table A4. This plan is expected to be implemented at Funding Level 2 with the intent of pursuing resources to achieve several actions budgeted for Funding Level 3. Table A5 shows the anticipated funding Level 2 allocation for each of the plan programs.

Table A4. Funding levels and descriptions

Funding Level	Funding type	Description
1	Current Funding	This is baseline funding for current programs and projects.
2	Current Funding + WBIF	Level 2 funding assumes current funding will remain available and WBIF funding will add an additional \$250,000/year
3	External Funding	This includes additional sources of funding, including partners such as National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Sustainable Forest Incentive Act (SFIA), Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), and Lessard-Sams.



Table A5. Estimated cost of implementing the CWMP under funding Level 2 (Current + WBIF)

Funding Level 2 (Current + WBIF)		
Implementation Program	Est. Annual Cost	10-year Cost
Project & Practices	\$390,520	\$3,905,200
Research and Monitoring	\$36,000	\$360,000
Education & Outreach	\$45,600	\$456,000
Regulatory	\$24,103	\$241,030
Capital Projects + Maintenance	\$405,296	\$4,052,964
Administration and Technical Assistance	\$108,250	\$1,082,500
Total	\$1,009,770	\$10,097,694

BOARD MEETING AGENDA ITEM

AGENDA ITEM TITLE: South Fork Crow River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan

Meeting Date: March 27, 2024

Agenda Category: Committee Recommendation New Business Old Business

Item Type: Decision Discussion Information

Keywords for Electronic Searchability: South Fork Crow River One Watershed, One Plan

Section/Region: Southern Region

Contact: Ed Lenz

Prepared by: Jeremy Maul

Reviewed by: Southern Regional Committee Committee(s)

Presented by: Ted Winter & Jeremy Maul

Time requested: 15 minutes

Audio/Visual Equipment Needed for Agenda Item Presentation

Attachments: Resolution Order Map Other Supporting Information

Fiscal/Policy Impact

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None | <input type="checkbox"/> General Fund Budget |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Amended Policy Requested | <input type="checkbox"/> Capital Budget |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New Policy Requested | <input type="checkbox"/> Outdoor Heritage Fund Budget |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: | <input type="checkbox"/> Clean Water Fund Budget |

ACTION REQUESTED

Approval of the South Fork Crow River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan as recommended by the Southern Regional Committee.

LINKS TO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Plan is on the Mcleod SWCD website:
https://www.mcleodcountymn.gov/services/one_watershed_one_plan/60_day_review.php

SUMMARY *(Consider: history, reason for consideration now, alternatives evaluated, basis for recommendation)*

South Fork River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (Plan) – On February 23, 2022 the South Fork Crow River planning partnership received an approved grant agreement from the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) to develop a Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan under the One Watershed, One Plan Program. The Partnership established a Memorandum of Agreement on July 21, 2021, for the purposes of watershed planning. The Partnership has followed One Watershed, One Plan Operating Procedures; and the Policy Committee, Advisory Committee, and Steering Team members have attended regularly scheduled meetings and

kept open communication throughout Plan development. The Partnership submitted the draft South Fork Crow River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (Plan) to BWSR on August 14, 2023, for 60-day comment period. A public hearing was held November 27, 2023, and the Policy Committee submitted the Plan for approval January 11, 2024. The Southern Regional Committee (Committee) met on February 27, 2024, to review the planning process, the content of the Plan, State agency comments on the Plan, and to make a recommendation for approval. The Committee recommends approval by the full Board.

Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155

In the Matter of the review of the Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan for the South Fork of the Crow River, pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103B.101, Subdivision 14 and 103B.801.

**APPROVING
COMPREHENSIVE
WATERSHED
MANAGEMENT PLAN**

ORDER

Whereas, the Planning Partners of the South Fork Crow River Partnership submitted a Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (Plan) to the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (Board) on January 11, 2024 pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103B.101, Subdivision 14 and 103B.801 and Board Resolution #18-14, and;

Whereas, the Board has completed its review of the Plan;

Now Therefore, the Board hereby makes the following Findings of Fact, Conclusions, and Order:

FINDINGS OF FACT

- Partnership Establishment.** The Partnership was established On July 21, 2021 through adoption of a Memorandum of Agreement for the purposes of developing a Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan. The membership of the Partnership includes: The Counties of Kandiyohi, McLeod, Meeker, Renville, and Wright; the Soil and Water Conservation Districts of Carver, Kandiyohi, McLeod, Meeker, Renville, and Wright; Winsted City and the Buffalo Creek Watershed District.
- Authority to Plan.** Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103B.101, Subdivision 14 allows the Board to adopt resolutions, policies or orders that allow a comprehensive plan, local water management plan, or watershed management plan, developed or amended, approved and adopted, according to Chapter 103B, 103C, or 103D to serve as substitutes for one another or be replaced with a comprehensive watershed management plan. Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103B.801 established the Comprehensive Watershed Management Planning Program; also known as One Watershed, One Plan. And, Board Resolution #18-14 adopted the One Watershed, One Plan Operating Procedures and Plan Content Requirements policies.
- Nature of the Watershed.** The South Fork Crow River Watershed is a predominately agricultural watershed in central Minnesota. The watershed is 72 miles wide when measured between the cities of Independence and Willmar. The watershed is roughly 1,280 square miles and contains 179 lakes greater than 10 acres and over 1,420 perennial river and stream miles. It also crosses eight different county boundaries (Kandiyohi, Renville, Meeker, McLeod, Sibley, Wright, Carver, and Hennepin). The main river is the South Fork Crow River which flows from west to east and connects with the North Fork Crow River just upstream of Rockford, MN, before continuing to the Mississippi River as the Crow River. The present-day Minnesota River Valley and present-day Minnesota River was formed when the Currently the landscape is dominated by row crop agriculture and pasture. These two land use types make up 81% of the watershed area. Altered Hydrology and drainage are an important feature in the watershed. An estimated 67% of streams within the South Fork Crow River Watershed have been altered, meaning they have been ditched or straightened. 12% of streams are natural streams, 3% have been impounded, and another 17% have no definable channel.

4. **Plan Development.** The Plan was developed as a single, concise, and coordinated approach to watershed management for the purpose of guiding watershed managers as they work with landowners and communities to protect and restore the watershed's resources. The Plan consolidates policies, programs, and implementation strategies from existing data, studies, and plans, and incorporates input from multiple planning partners to provide a single plan for management of the watershed. The Plan focuses on prioritized, targeted, and measurable implementation efforts and lays out specific goals and actions to address Drainage Water Management, Loss of Water Storage and Altered Hydrology, Nutrient Loading to Surface Waters, Wind and Water Erosion, Soil Health, Bacteria Loading, Drainage Partnerships, Urban Stormwater Runoff and Development Pressure.
5. **Plan Review.** On January 11, 2024, the Board received the Plan, a record of the public hearing, and copies of all written comments pertaining to the Plan for final State review pursuant to Board #18-14. State agency representatives attended and provided input at advisory committee meetings during development of the Plan. The following state review comments were received during the comment period.
 - A. Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA): No comments were received during the formal 60 day review. MDA did not respond to the submission.
 - B. Minnesota Department of Health (MDH): During the 60-day comment period, MDH provided comments to the SFC planning partners. MDH did not respond to the final submission
 - C. Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR): During the 60-day comment period, DNR provided comments to the SFC planning partners. DNR confirmed receipt of the Plan at the final formal review and stated that they were satisfied with the responses to issues raised during our review and would have no additional comments. The DNR recommends that BWSR approve this plan and thanked the partnership for the opportunity to participate in this process. *DNR Recommends approval.*
 - D. Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA): During the 60-day comment period, MPCA provided comments to the SFC planning partners. MPCA confirmed receipt of the Plan at the final formal review and stated all MPCA comments were considered and the final draft plan is very well written, concise, and thorough. *MPCA recommends approval.*
 - E. Minnesota Environmental Quality Board (EQB): Policy indicates that EQB only be notified of the final draft document. EQB responded they had no comments on the plan.
 - F. Met Council: The Met Council confirmed receipt of the Plan at the final formal review and stated it had finished its review of the South Fork Crow One Watershed One Plan and had no comments and thanked partners for giving them the time to review.
 - G. Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) regional staff: During the 60-day review period, BWSR provided comments requesting numerous revisions to the Plan to ensure consistency throughout the Plan and that plan content requirements were met. All comments were adequately addressed in the final Plan.

6. **Plan Summary and Highlights.**

The highlights of the plan include:

- The Plan includes an informative Executive Summary summarizing resource concerns and issues, the method of establishing measurable goals, summarizing pace of progress toward goals attained by the planned activities, and short-term cost of the 10-year implementation schedule.
- The Plan includes a thorough identification of the targeted areas using HSPF SAMS. HSPF SAMS has estimated feasible pollution reductions for management practices and structural BMPs in the watershed, as well as the associated annual costs and anticipated benefits arising from implementation.

- The Plan identifies three different planning regions which were defined based on land use, hydrology, and geology. The three planning regions are Upper South Fork, Lower South Fork, , and the Buffalo Creek watersheds.
 - The plan development process generated the resource categories, concerns, and issues by Planning Region, and described the information and process used to develop watershed resource concerns and issues. Particularly important resources included the WRAPS, WHAF, TMDLs, existing water plans, other management plans, studies and reports, and local expertise. Public input was utilized via invitation to comment, a public kick-off meeting on June 22, 2022, an online survey, and development of an Advisory Committee. Tier 1 and Tier 2 priority issues will be the focus in this 10-year Plan (pgs. 29-32). Tier 1 priorities include Drainage Water Management, Loss of Water Storage and Altered Hydrology, Nutrient Loading to Surface Waters, Wind and Water Erosion, and Soil Health. Tier 2 issues include Bacteria Loading, Drainage Partnerships, Urban Stormwater Runoff and Development Pressure, Protection of Wildlife Habitat and Perennial Ground Cover. Maps are included for resource concerns and issues where Geographic Information System (GIS) data was available. Emerging issues cited in the Plan include: contaminants (pharmaceuticals and personal care products, and PFAS), increased water storage, age and Resiliency of Drainage infrastructure, Chlorides, and Environmental Justice.
 - The Plan details eight measurable goals that collectively address the tier 1 and 2 priority issues and their associated goal. A reference guide was developed for each of these measurable goals. Each reference guide summarizes the priority issues, multiple benefits for the watershed-wide goals, the planning region and goal scale for each issue, background information about the issue and goal, and the long-term and short-term goals.
 - The Plan recognizes three funding levels for implementation. Level 1 - Current Funding, Level 2 - Current Funding + BWSR's Watershed Based Implementation Fund (WBIF) grant program, and Level 3 - Partner and Other Funding. Actions pursued under Funding Level 2 are the focus of the Plan and have an estimated annual cost of \$1,356,300.
 - Separate targeted implementation tables were created for each planning region that include actions within the Projects and Practices implementation program. Only Tier 1 and 2 priority issues in the planning region were given planning region specific measurable goals and associated targeted action items. Watershed-wide implementation tables were created for actions related to education and outreach, Assessments and Data Gaps, and local controls implementation programs.
7. **Planning Boundary Adjustment.** Planning Boundary Adjustment. The Board maintains a suggested planning boundary map for the One Watershed, One Plan program. The plan area also includes a small area (approximately 117 acres) in McLeod County which was previously not covered under a 1W1P or metro watershed management plan. This area was identified during the planning process. While this area is not part of the hydrologic boundary of the watershed, it has been included in the SFCRW under the guidance of BWSR staff. Hydrologically speaking, it is part of the Lower Minnesota River Watershed. The adjusted boundary was approved by Board staff per the One Watershed, One Plan Operating Procedures. The adjusted boundary is included as part of the board packet.
8. **Southern Regional Committee.** On February 27, 2024, the **Southern** Regional Committee met to review and discuss the Plan. Those in attendance from the Board's Committee were Eunice Biel, Jeffrey Berg, Heather Johnson, Kelly Rae Kirkpatrick, Scott Roemhildt, Mark Wettlaufer and Ted Winter. Board staff in attendance were Southern Regional Manager Ed Lenz, Board Conservationist Jeremy Maul, and Clean Water Specialist Mark Hiles. The representatives from the Partnership were Kyle Richter, Margaret Johnson, Coleton Draeger and Ryan Freitag. Board regional staff provided its recommendation of Plan approval to the Committee. After discussion, the Committee's decision was to present a recommendation of approval of the Plan to the full Board.
9. This Plan will be in effect for a ten-year period until March 27, 2034.

CONCLUSIONS

1. All relevant substantive and procedural requirements of law have been fulfilled.
2. The Board has proper jurisdiction in the matter of approving a Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan for the Upper Minnesota pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103B.101, Subd. 14 and 103B.801 and Board Resolution #18-14.
3. The South Fork Crow River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan attached to this Order states water and water-related problems within the planning area; priority resource issues and possible solutions thereto; goals, objectives, and actions of the Partnership; and an implementation program.
4. The attached Plan is in conformance with the requirements of Minnesota Statutes Section 103B.101, Subd. 14 and 103B.801 and Board Resolution #19-41.
5. The One Watershed, One Plan Suggested Boundary Map is adjusted to include the 117 acre area in McLeod County that hydrologically is part of the Lower Minnesota River as indicated on the Board adopted Suggested Boundary Map approved by the Board March 24, 2021.
6. The attached plan when adopted through local resolution by the members of the Partnership will serve as a replacement for the comprehensive plan, local water management plan, or watershed management plan, developed or amended, approved and adopted, according to Chapter 103B, 103C, or 103D, but only to the geographic area of the Plan and consistent with the One Watershed, One Plan Suggested Boundary Map.

ORDER

The Board hereby approves the attached Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan of the South Fork of the Crow River, dated March 27, 2024.

Dated at St. Paul, Minnesota, this 27th day of March, 2024.

MINNESOTA BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES

Rich Sve, Vice Chair
Board of Water and Soil Resources

Date: _____

March 27, 2024

South Fork of the Crow River Planning Partnership
c/o Colton Draeger, McLeod SWCD Resource Conservationist
520 Chandler Ave.
Glencoe, MN 55336

RE: Approval of the South Fork Crow River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan

Dear South Fork Crow River Planning Partnership:

The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) is pleased to inform you the South Fork Crow River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (Plan) was approved at its regular meeting held on March 27, 2024. Attached is the signed Board Order that documents approval of the Plan and indicates the Plan meets all relevant requirements of law, rule, and policy.

This Plan is effective for a ten-year period until March 27, 2034. Please be advised, the partners must adopt and begin implementing the plan within 120 days of the date of the Order in accordance with Minnesota Statutes §103B.101, Subd. 14, and the One Watershed, One Plan Operating Procedures.

The members of the partnership and participants in the plan development process are to be commended for writing a plan that clearly presents water management goals, actions, and priorities of the Partnership, and for participating in the One Watershed, One Plan program. The BWSR looks forward to working with you as you implement this Plan and document its outcomes.

Please contact Board Conservationist Jeremy Maul of our staff at 507-766-9819-6312 or Jeremy.maul@state.mn.us for further assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

Rich Sve, Vice Chair
Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources

Enclosure: BWSR Board Order

CC: Aicam Laacouri, MDA (via email)
Chad R Anderson, MDH (via email)
Al Gleisner, DNR (via email)
Amy Timm, MPCA (via email)
Dan Henly, Met Council
Ed Lenz, BWSR Regional Manager (via email)
Jeremy Maul, BWSR Board Conservationist (via email)
Rachel Mueller, BWSR (file copy)

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Memorandum

Date: February 27, 2024

To: Southern Regional Committee

From: Jeremy Maul, Board Conservationist

Review of the South Fork Crow River Watershed Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan

The following memo outlines the BWSR staff review and recommendations for the South Fork Crow River Watershed Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (plan), developed through the One Watershed, One Plan program.

Background

The South Fork Crow River planning area includes all waters of the state that are tributaries to the South Fork of the Crow River Watershed. The South Fork Crow River Watershed Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan was the resultant plan associated with the “2021” round of One Watershed, One Plan planning grant applicants. On July 21, 2021, the South Fork Crow River Watershed Partnership was formed under a memorandum of agreement between thirteen LGUs (The Counties of Kandiyohi, McLeod, Meeker, Renville, and Wright; the Soil and Water Conservation Districts of Carver, Kandiyohi, McLeod, Meeker, Renville, and Wright; Winsted City and the Buffalo Creek Watershed District) to collectively develop and adopt, as local government units, a coordinated watershed management plan for implementation of actions to address priority resource concerns in the South Fork Crow River planning area.

The plan area also includes a small area (approximately 117 acres) in McLeod County which was previously not covered under a 1W1P or metro watershed management plan. This area was identified during the planning process. While this area is not part of the hydrologic boundary of the watershed, it has been included in the SFCRW under the guidance of BWSR. Hydrologically speaking, it is part of the Lower Minnesota River Watershed.

On February 23, 2022, a grant agreement between BWSR and the group was executed to accomplish the planning process through the Clean Water Fund – One Watershed One Plan Program. The fiscal agent and administrative lead of the planning grant is the McLeod Soil and Water Conservation District.

Area staff members began laying the groundwork for the planning process in early 2020 and applied for a planning grant in summer 2020 but were unsuccessful. Staff members representing LGUs continued getting organized despite not receiving a planning grant in 2020 and were able to hit the ground running once they

were awarded a grant in 2021. They hired Houston Engineering, Inc prior to the getting the final executed grant agreement so as to get the process started as soon as possible. HEI served as the facilitator and technical entity in building the report using an aggregation of planning inventories and attribute information from the watershed as well as knowledge and experience from the local entities.

The Policy Committee consisted of one elected or appointed representative from each member organization; they provided direction, final decision-making on Plan content, and approval of expenses during Plan development. In addition to the Policy Committee, two other committees were enacted to help provide guidance and decision-making throughout the planning process. The Advisory Committee contained members representing local partners, State review agencies, and local stakeholders; they reviewed comments received during public comment periods, including information gathered from a “Kick-Off” meeting held on June 22, 2022 and provided recommendations to the Policy Committee for final inclusion in the One Watershed, One Plan. The Advisory Committee also ensured that the Plan content and planning process followed State requirements. The Steering Committee contained local staff and 2 BWSR field staff; they developed and recommended plan elements and changes to be approved by the Policy Committee.

The content of the South Fork Crow River Watershed Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan closely follows BWSR’s High Level State Priorities and Criteria set forth in the Clean Water Nonpoint Priority Funding Plan and the strategies defined in supplements to the BWSR Plan Content Requirements for Prioritizing, Targeting, and Measuring techniques.

Plan Highlights

Section 1 – The Executive Summary provides an accurate but condensed summary of the plans high and Tier 1 & 2 priority issues (Table 1.1 and 1.2) and measurable goals with short-term and long-term goals (Table 1.3). The executive summary also contains an estimated cost to implement the plan (Table 1.4) of \$13,563,000. The plans executive summary is well-written and will provide beneficial information to future readers, implementors and stakeholders.

Section 2 – The Land and Water Resources Narrative provides a summary of watershed characteristics and issues. Information was included on geology, precipitation, surface water, groundwater, stormwater, drainage, recreation, habitat, land use, and socioeconomics. The South Fork Crow River Watershed is a predominately agricultural watershed in central Minnesota. The watershed is 72 miles wide when measured between the cities of Independence and Willmar. The watershed is roughly 1,280 square miles and contains 179 lakes greater than 10 acres and over 1,420 perennial river and stream miles. It also crosses eight different county boundaries (Kandiyohi, Renville, Meeker, McLeod, Sibley, Wright, Carver, and Hennepin). The main river is the South Fork Crow River which flows from west to east and connects with the North Fork Crow River just upstream of Rockford, MN, before continuing to the Mississippi River as the Crow River.

Currently the landscape is dominated by row crop agriculture and pasture. These two land use types make up 81% of the watershed area. Altered Hydrology and drainage are an important feature in the watershed. An estimated 67% of streams within the South Fork Crow River Watershed have been altered, meaning they have been ditched or straightened. 12% of streams are natural streams, 3% have been impounded, and another 17% have no definable channel.

Section 3 – The Priority Issues and Resources section identifies the resource categories, concerns, and issues by Planning Region, and described the information and process used to develop watershed resource concerns and issues. Particularly important resources included the WRAPS, WHAF, TMDLs, existing water plans, other management plans, studies and reports, and local expertise. Public input was utilized via invitation to comment, a public kick-off meeting on June 22, 2022, an online survey, and development of an Advisory Committee. Tier 1 and Tier 2 priority issues will be the focus in this 10-year Plan (pgs. 29-32). Tier 1 priorities include Drainage Water Management, Loss of Water Storage and Altered Hydrology, Nutrient Loading to Surface Waters, Wind and Water Erosion, and Soil Health. Tier 2 issues include Bacteria Loading, Drainage Partnerships, Urban Stormwater Runoff and Development Pressure, Protection of Wildlife Habitat and Perennial Ground Cover. Maps are included for resource concerns and issues where Geographic Information System (GIS) data was available. Emerging issues cited in the Plan include: contaminants (pharmaceuticals and personal care products, and PFAS), increased water storage, age and Resiliency of Drainage infrastructure, Chlorides, and Environmental Justice.

Section 4 – The Measurable Goals section explains how both short-term and long-term goals were developed for each of the high and medium-high priority issues. This was done primarily through WRAPS data, WHAF information, HSPF SAM results, Advisory Committee and Policy Committee input, and local expertise provided by Steering Team members. Through this process the Advisory Committee and Steering Team underwent an intensive geographic prioritization exercise where each priority issue was reviewed and listed as needing to be a watershed-wide goal or planning region specific goal. Priority resources were identified based on a review of scientific data and expertise of the local planning committees. They include (for example) priority drainage systems and locations most suitable for habitat expansion. Priority resources also include “nearly” and “barely” impaired lakes and streams to align with the Nonpoint Priority Funding Plan for Clean Water Funding Implementation. In addition to priority resources, this plan identifies subwatersheds (HUC-12 scale) that should be the initial focus of implementation efforts specific to each goal. These subwatersheds were identified based on a geospatial analysis that considered information including the prominence of priority resources present in each subwatershed.

Section 5 - The targeted implementation schedules were developed as the implementation road map which establishes the schedule for achieving the measurable goals for each Tier 1 and Tier 2 level resource concerns in Section 3. HSPF SAMS was used through several stages of the planning process. It was used to identify the magnitude and distribution of potential pollution sources across the planning area, along with modeling for implementing practices to address issues impacting the resources of concerns. The Partnership was then able to use HSPF SAMS to select specific practices based on pollutant reduction estimates and cost effectiveness. The reduction estimates from the targeted implementation schedule along with the measurable goals established for the watershed give a sense of the estimated progress that can be made over the next ten years and relate them to each subwatershed goal. Three planning region implementation schedules were developed to show cost-effectiveness focused practice cost, location, and pollution reductions in the three define planning regions. another action table was developed for a large array of watershed-wide goals related to education and outreach, Assessments and Data Gaps, local controls implementation programs. For each of the three resultant planning regions (Upper South Fork, Lower South Fork, and Buffalo Creek), there are graphic pages for 1) an issue table and the associated prioritization within the watershed, 2) map of priority resource locations in the targeted implementation approach, 3) a graphic summary of the goals and milestones of the region for the 10 year plan to meet the progress needed, 4) Benefits Calculator created by summarizing the average size, cost,

and water quality benefits provided by cropland practices. The section ends with a discussion on the financial cost to implement the 10-year Plan. An estimated \$13,563,000 is needed to fully fund the actions identified in the plan.

Section 6 – The Implementation Programs section describes seven implementation programs that will be used to fund and implement the Plan. These programs lay the foundation for how the partnership will provide cost-share funds to landowners, host education and outreach efforts, measure pace of progress of the Plan, and lays out partnership roles and responsibilities. Table 6.3 details a list of Capital Improvement Projects identified by partners including an description, measurable goal being addressed, lead entity, status, and estimated cost. Unique to this plan are two water management districts enacted within the Buffalo Creek WD.

Finally, Section 7 – “Plan Administration and Coordination” concludes with some details into how the partnership will administer, assess, report, fund the Plan, and amend the Plan if warranted. Figure 7.1 provides a breakdown of the roles/functions for the Policy Committee, Steering Committee, and local Fiscal and Administrative Agent during the implementation of the Plan. The partnership has decided to establish a Joint Powers Collaboration for Plan implementation and administration.

Implementation of the South Fork Crow River Watershed Comprehensive Watershed will be done under a signed Joint Powers Agreement (JPA). The JPA will identify roles and responsibilities of each of the Plan members. The JPA board members will provided oversight to the plan with Steering Committee members to review Plan progress, track measurable progress towards ten-year goals, recommend changes to the Plan, and review implementation priorities.

Recommendations

The partnership received initial comment letters with issues of concern from State of Minnesota reviewing agencies following the notice to plan January 6, 2022. The partnership held a 60-day review process that began on August 14, 2023, and the required public hearing was held in Hutchinson on November 27, 2023. The final draft of the updated Plan, a record of the public hearing, and copies of all written comments were submitted to the state review agencies on January 11, 2024 and a deadline of February 2, 2024 was given for extenuating comments and approval. The partnership has incorporated the majority of the agency and public comments received throughout the Plan development process. The following state agency comments were received by BWSR:

- Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA): No comments were received during the formal 60 day review. MDA did not respond to the submission.
- Minnesota Department of Health (MDH): During the 60-day comment period, MDH provided comments to the SFC planning partners. MDH did not respond to the final submission
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR): During the 60-day comment period, DNR provided comments to the SFC planning partners. DNR confirmed receipt of the Plan at the final formal review and stated that they were satisfied with the responses to issues raised during our review and would have no additional comments. The DNR recommends that BWSR approve this plan and thanked the partnership for the opportunity to participate in this process.

- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA): During the 60-day comment period, MPCA provided comments to the SFC planning partners. MPCA confirmed receipt of the Plan at the final formal review and stated all MPCA comments were considered and the final draft plan is very well written, concise, and thorough. MPCA recommends approval.
- Minnesota Environmental Quality Board (EQB): Policy indicates that EQB only be notified of the final draft document. EQB responded they had no comments on the plan.
- Met Council The Met Council confirmed receipt of the Plan at the final formal review and stated it had finished its review of the South Fork Crow One Watershed One Plan and had no comments and thanked partners for giving them the time to review.
- Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) regional staff: During the 60-day review period, BWSR provided comments requesting numerous revisions to the Plan to ensure consistency throughout the Plan and that plan content requirements were met. All comments were adequately addressed in the final Plan.

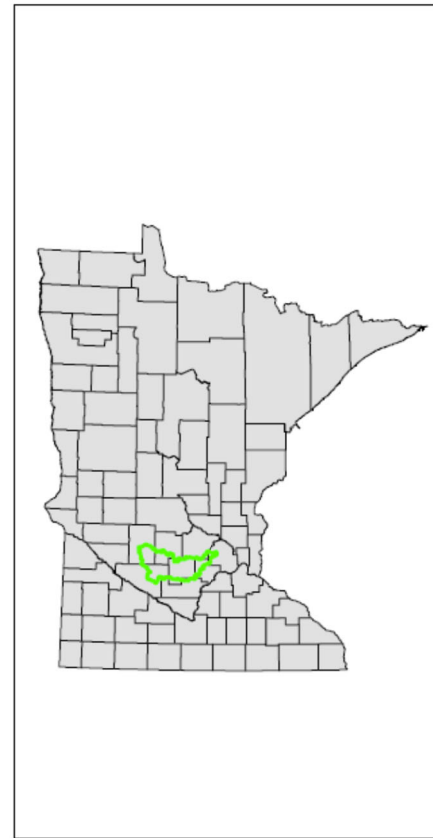
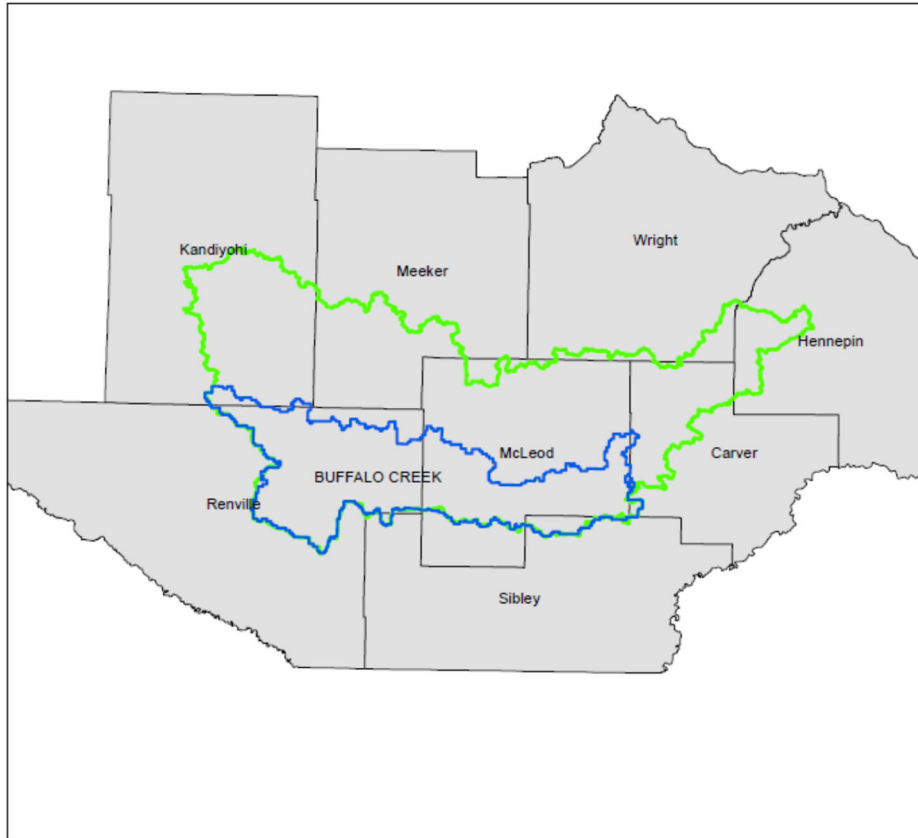
BWSR staff has completed its review and recommends approval of the Plan.

Enclosure




- Draft Board Order for Plan Approval
- Map of the South Fork Crow River 1W1P Planning Area
- Copy of Plan Executive Summary and Link to Full Plan:
https://www.mcleodcountymn.gov/services/one_watershed,_one_plan/60_day_review.php

South Fork Crow River Planning Area 13

Attachment A



Legend

-  Buffalo Creek Watershed
-  South Fork Crow River Planning Boundary
-  South Fork Crow River Counties





Section 1.

Executive Summary



Section 1. Executive Summary

Introduction and Purpose

In 2022-2023, local partners with the South Fork Crow River Watershed developed the South Fork Crow River Watershed Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (SFCRW CWMP) through the One Watershed One Plan (1W1P) program. The 1W1P program is administered by the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) through Minnesota Statutes§103B.801. This resulting plan is not a regulatory document. The plan instead focuses on voluntary conservation and provides a framework to guide watershed managers (local counties, soil and water conservation districts, and the watershed district) as they work to manage the watershed’s natural resources.

Plan Area

The South Fork Crow River Watershed (SFCRW) planning area is a predominately agricultural watershed in central Minnesota. The planning area is defined by Hydrologic Unit Code 8 watershed boundaries. The eastern side of the watershed extends into the seven county metropolitan area. Minnesota Statutes Chapter 103B.231 of the Metropolitan Surface Water Management Act requires metropolitan watershed districts and water management organizations to develop and adopt a watershed management plan. As such, the Pioneer-Sarah Creek and Carver County Watershed Management Organization (CCWMO) have Water Management Plans that overlaps with a portion of the SFCRW.

The watershed is 72 miles wide when measured between the cities of Independence and Willmar. The watershed is roughly 1,280 square miles and contains 179 lakes greater than 10 acres and over 1,420 perennial river and stream miles. It also crosses eight different county boundaries (Kandiyohi, Renville, Meeker, McLeod, Sibley, Wright,



Picture credit: Explore Minnesota (left); McLeod SWCD (right)





Carver, and Hennepin). The main river is the South Fork Crow River which flows from west to east and connects with the North Fork Crow River just upstream of Rockford, MN, before continuing to the Mississippi River as the Crow River (**Figure 1.1**).

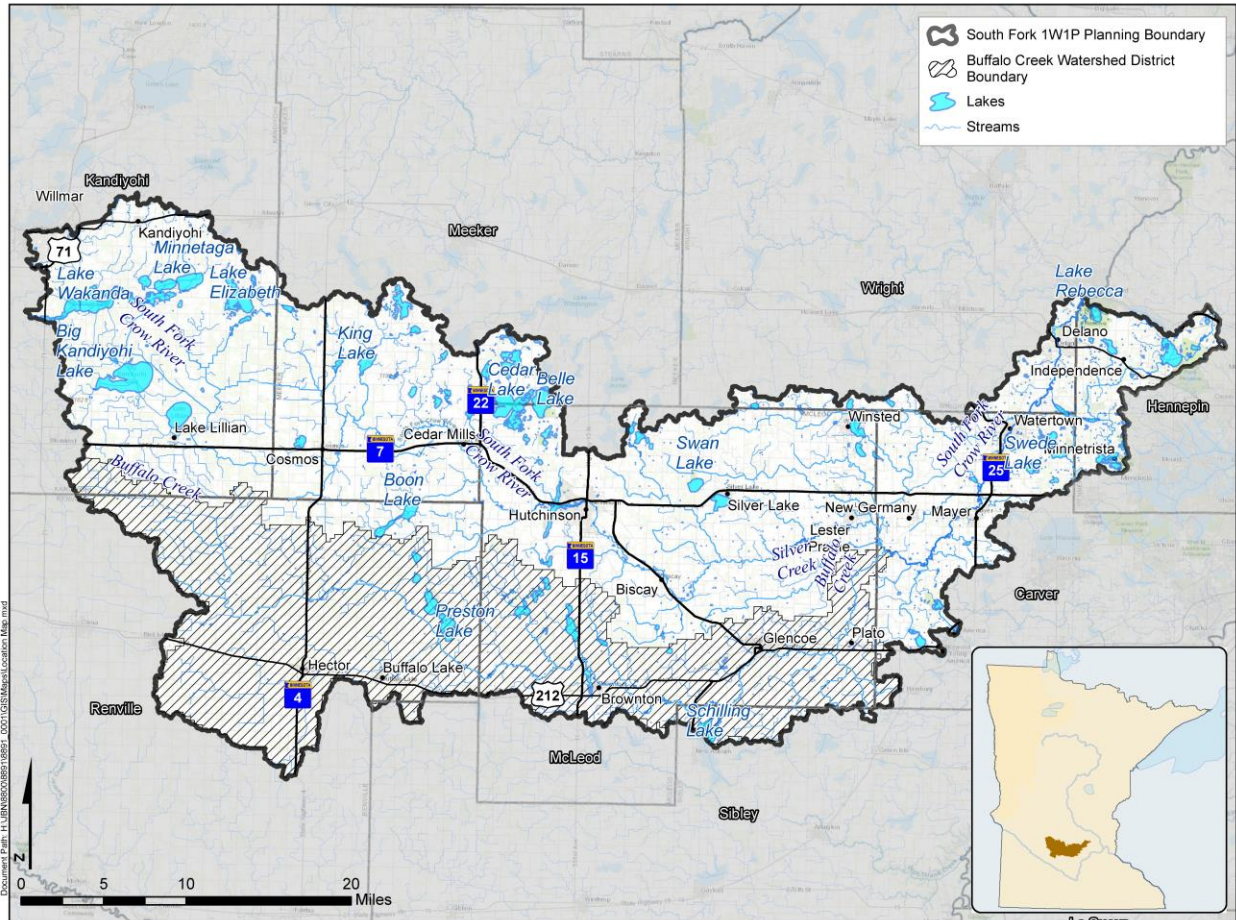


Figure 1.1: South Fork Crow River Watershed planning area

The plan area also includes a small area (approximately 117 acres) in McLeod County which was previously not covered under a 1W1P or metro watershed management plan. While this area is not part of the hydrologic boundary of the watershed, it has been included in the SFCRW under the guidance of BWSR (**Figure 1.2**).



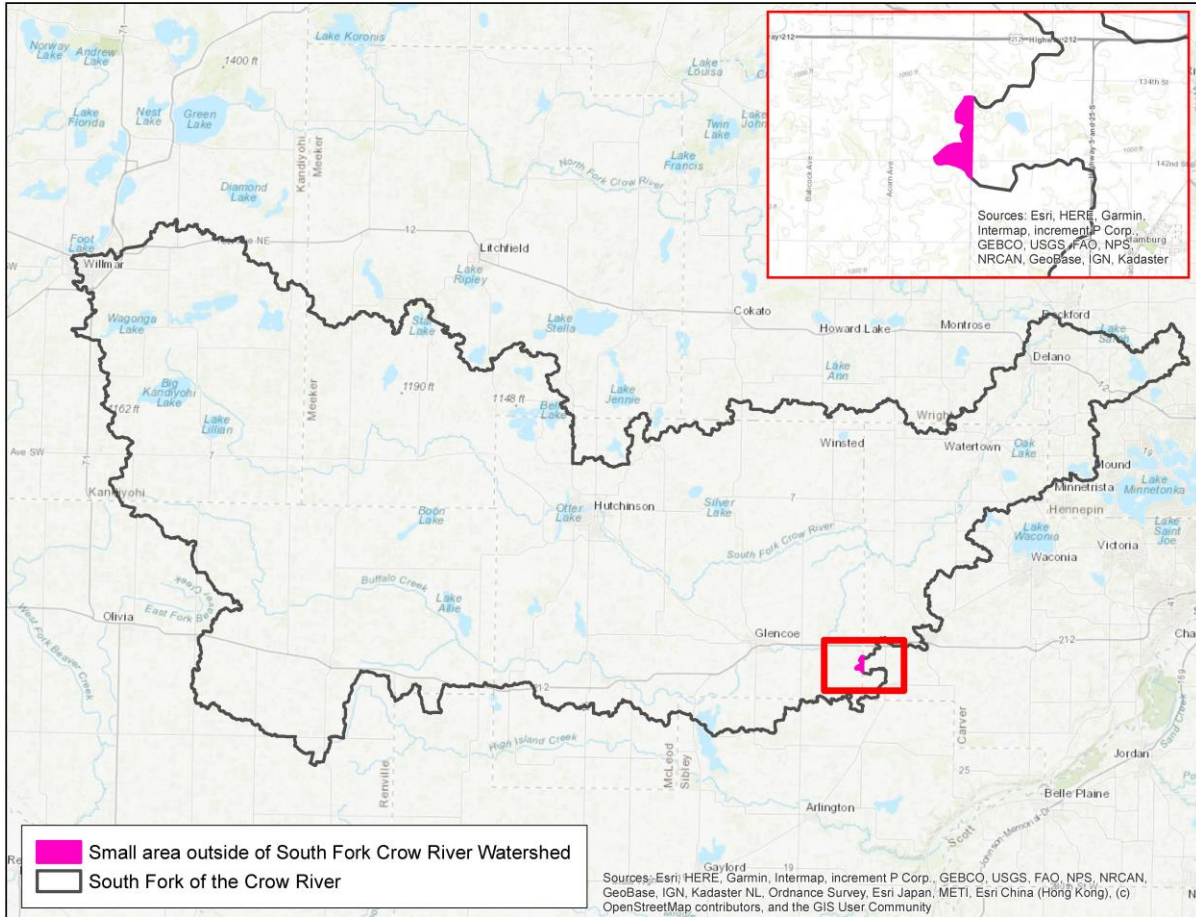


Figure 1.2: Small area in McLeod County included in the South Fork Crow River Watershed CWMP

Planning Partners

The South Fork Crow River 1W1P planning process began within a Memorandum of Agreement (**Appendix A**) between the following local entities:

- The counties of Kandiyohi, McLeod, Meeker, Renville, and Wright,
- The Carver, Kandiyohi, McLeod, Meeker, Renville, and Wright Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs),
- The City of Winsted, and
- Buffalo Creek Watershed District (BCWD).

Three planning committees served the development of this plan: the Steering Committee, the Technical Advisory Committee, and the Policy Committee. The Policy Committee, made up of one representative from each entity in the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), formed the decision-making body for this plan. The Steering Committee consisted of local staff from each of the entities in the MOA and generated



the content in this plan. The Technical Advisory Committee consisted of state agencies and local stakeholders and contributed to plan content in an advisory role.

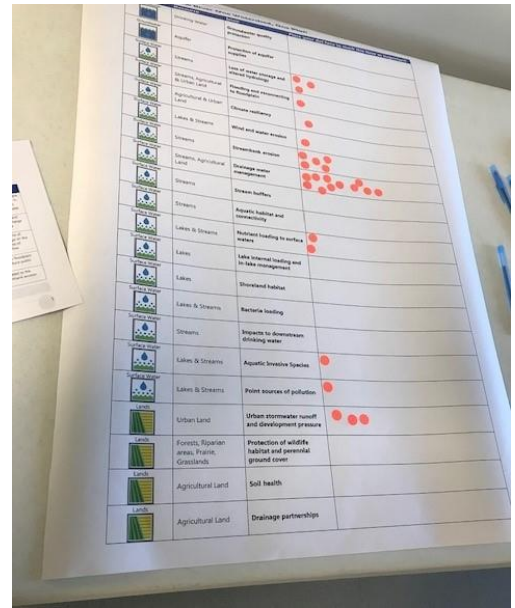
The Steering and Policy Committee are the primary committees implementing the plan, with the Technical Advisory Committee advising on an as-needed basis. Successful implementation will depend on continuing and building partnerships in the watershed with landowners, planning partners, state agencies, and nongovernmental organizations.

Priority Issues

This plan focuses on voluntary conservation efforts.

Therefore, it's critical that the plan reflects the perspectives of the public. Recognizing this, in June of 2022, the Partnership began the planning process with a public kickoff event to receive feedback from the community about issues most important to them, and resources that should be the focus of implementation efforts. A survey was also provided online for members of the public that were not able to attend the kickoff event.

After review and consolidation of public feedback, local water plans and studies, 1W1P notification responses, and committee input, 21 distinct issues were identified within the watershed. The issues were organized into one of three categories:



Feedback from the public kickoff meeting

Surface Water	Groundwater	Lands
<i>e.g. lakes, streams, wetlands, and drainage systems</i>	<i>e.g. aquifers, flow, and drinking water sources</i>	<i>e.g. land management healthy soils, habitat quality</i>




Identified issues were prioritized to focus time, energy, and funding during implementation. Members of the Steering and Policy Committees used input from the public meeting to sort issues into one of three priority tiers:



- Tier 1 issues are the most important issues and will be handled first during implementation.
- Tier 2 issues are important issues that will be addressed by the plan but may require partner involvement.
- Tier 3 issues are not a focus of this plan, as they will be handled by partners or addressed with additional dollars.

The resulting priority (Tier 1 and Tier 2) issues that are the focus of this plan are summarized in the **Table 1.1** and **1.2** below, with the **highest priorities representative of this predominately agricultural watershed: drainage water management, water storage, nutrient loading, wind and water erosion, and soil health.**

Table 1.1: Tier 1 Priority Issues

Resource Group	Resource	Issue	Description
Surface Water 	Streams, Agricultural Land	Drainage Water Management	Many agricultural drainage systems are failing due to age and/or years of neglect. This not only reduces drainage function but results in accelerated sediment delivery to receiving waters. Incorporating conservation projects into drainage maintenance can alleviate field erosion that causes nutrient and sediment delivery, as well as reduce downstream flooding issues in agricultural and urban areas and enhance drainage function.
Surface Water 	Streams	Loss of Water Storage and Altered Hydrology	Altered hydrology refers to a change in the timing and volume of water delivered to receiving waters.. It can occur when water storage or infiltration on the landscape is reduced due to land use changes (including loss of wetlands) or due to climatic (precipitation) changes and can lead to both stream flashiness and low flow conditions.
Surface Water 	Lakes & Streams	Nutrient Loading to Surface Waters	Nitrogen and phosphorus are essential nutrients for plant growth but when in excess in the water, they can cause harmful algae blooms and create other water quality and aquatic life issues. Improper amount or timing of fertilizer application on agricultural land is a source of nutrients in the watershed.









Resource Group	Resource	Issue	Description
Surface Water 	Lakes & Streams	Wind and Water Erosion	Detached sediment from the landscape can be transported to nearby waterbodies by wind or water. Elevated concentrations of sediment in surface waters can be detrimental to aquatic life and aquatic recreation.
Lands 	Agricultural Land	Soil Health	Soil erosion from cropland and pastureland has a major impact on productivity and water quality conditions. Practices such as reduced or no-till and cover cropping can help to retain soil on the land and build soil health.

Table 1.2: Tier 2 Priority Issues

Resource Group	Resource	Issue	Description
Surface Water 	Lakes & Streams	Bacteria Loading	Bacteria in the water can come from animal or human waste, specifically from leaking septic systems, Waste Water Treatment Facilities (WWTFs), feedlots, pasture runoff, and improper manure management, making waters unsafe to swim in and drink from.
Lands 	Agricultural Land	Drainage Partnerships	Increased upstream water volume and flows has caused drainage systems in some locations to be inadequately sized for the increased rainfall events occurring. Increasing partnership between drainage authority and conservation staff will lead to redesigned drainage infrastructure that incorporates better drainage water management that has potential to both increase crop productivity and receiving water environmental benefits.
Lands 	Urban Land	Urban Stormwater Runoff and Development Pressure	Storm sewer systems in urban areas have the potential to deliver sediment, nutrients, and bacteria to surface waters from sediment build-up and runoff on impervious surfaces, pet waste, wildlife, leaves, lawn clippings, fertilizers, automobiles, construction sites, and poorly buffered areas near streams/ditches.
Lands 	Forests, Riparian areas, Prairie, Grasslands	Protection of Wildlife Habitat and Perennial Ground Cover	Protection and expansion of natural features, native species, and landscapes in the watershed to promote species richness, pollinator habitat, and environmental benefits.



Measurable Goals

Measurable goals identify the desired change to address priority issues within the watershed. Goals were developed for each priority issues in this plan at two different time scales:

- ☑
Long-term goals describe the desired future condition (water quality, water availability, habitat quality) planning partners are striving to attain, regardless of time frame. This goal sets the direction for planning and future management.
- ☑
Short-term goals describe the quantifiable change planning partners expect to achieve during implementation of this 10-year plan.

Short- and long-term goals were created using existing local water management plans, state developed watershed restoration and protection strategy reports (WRAPS), total maximum daily load (TMDL) reports, results from water quality models, and local feedback.

Each priority issue is addressed by a goal and summarized in a goal sheet. Each goal sheet contains a summary of:

- Background on the goal and issue it seeks to address,
- Planning region targets,
- Stacked (multiple) benefits of meeting the goal, and
- Priority resources and subwatersheds where work will be focused.

Loss of Water Storage and Altered Hydrology

For purposes of this plan, water storage is defined as the ability for the landscape to hold additional water prior to discharge downstream. Strategies for increasing water storage or slowing the flow of water as it moves downstream include re-connecting streams to floodplains, restoring wetlands, and building infiltration basins and stormwater ponds.

Increasing storage, or slowing the flow of water, can help mitigate flooding during intense rains, which protects public safety and agricultural productivity. Water speed reduction also decreases the erosive potential that water has, resulting in less sediment transport from the landscape into the waterways of the watershed.

The term “altered hydrology” is commonly used in Minnesota to describe changes in the amount and pathways that water moves through the landscape. Altered hydrology is a known stressor to supporting both habitat and aquatic life within the SFCRW (MPCA, 2018). To support this plan, an altered hydrology analysis was completed (**Appendix F**) to define how hydrology has been altered and create an acre-feet storage goal for addressing the impacts of altered hydrology. The short-term goal represents realistic progress that can be made toward the long-term goal, using permanent and temporary storage (**Appendix E**). Permanent storage is aimed at reducing the volume of water delivered downstream (e.g. impoundments and wetland restorations), while temporary storage is aimed at reducing peak flow (e.g. WASCOBs).

Priority Level

Tier 1

Measurable Goals


Long-Term

Mitigate impacts of altered hydrology by adding 43,600 acre-feet of permanent and temporary storage.

Short-Term

Locate and implement efforts that add **1,137-acre feet of permanent and temporary storage**.

Metric: acre-feet of storage



Example of a stormwater pond.

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Example of a measurable goal for a Tier 1 priority issue: Loss of Water Storage and Altered Hydrology



A summary of this plan’s short-term (10-year) measurable goals is provided in **Table 1-3** below. For more details on plan goals, see **Section 4 – Measurable Goals**.

Table 1.3: South Fork Crow River Watershed short-term (10-year) measurable goals

Goal Name	Short-Term (10-Year) Goal
 <p>Drainage Partnerships and Drainage Management</p>	Implement 250 conservation practices that contribute to priority drainage systems, also reducing erosion and sedimentation, nutrient loading, and altered hydrology and flooding.
 <p>Loss of Water Storage and Altered Hydrology</p>	Locate and implement efforts that add 1,137-acre feet of permanent and temporary storage.
 <p>Nutrient Loading to Surface Waters</p>	Reduce total phosphorus (TP) loading watershed-wide by 2,048 lbs/year Reduce total nitrogen (TN) loading watershed-wide by 40,620 lbs/year
 <p>Erosion and Sedimentation</p>	Reduce sediment loading watershed-wide by 286 tons/year
 <p>Soil Health</p>	Implement 15,000 acres of additional soil health practices
 <p>Bacteria Loading</p>	Implement 9 livestock waste management projects to reduce delivery of bacteria to impaired streams
 <p>Urban Stormwater Runoff and Development Pressure</p>	Decrease urban runoff and urban flooding by routing and treating an additional 1,000 acres of developed area through BMPs.
 <p>Wildlife Habitat and Perennial Ground Cover</p>	An additional 825 acres of land is protected permanently (e.g. RIM) within the watershed, with emphasis on adding to existing protected areas and corridors and areas 40 acres or larger.



Implementation Actions

This plan creates a framework for managing natural resources in the watershed, focused on voluntary conservation efforts. This framework culminates into a list of actions that will be pursued during the 10-year plan to make progress towards measurable goals. These actions are organized into action tables with the following information provided in each:

- Action description with “output” that will be implemented in the 10-year plan,
- Goals addressed, either primarily or as a secondary benefit,
- Lead and partnering entities,
- Timeline for implementing the action, and
- Funding level and estimated dollars for implementation.

Similar types of actions are grouped into one of five implementation programs, as shown in **Figure 1.3**, and described more in **Section 6 –Implementation Programs**.

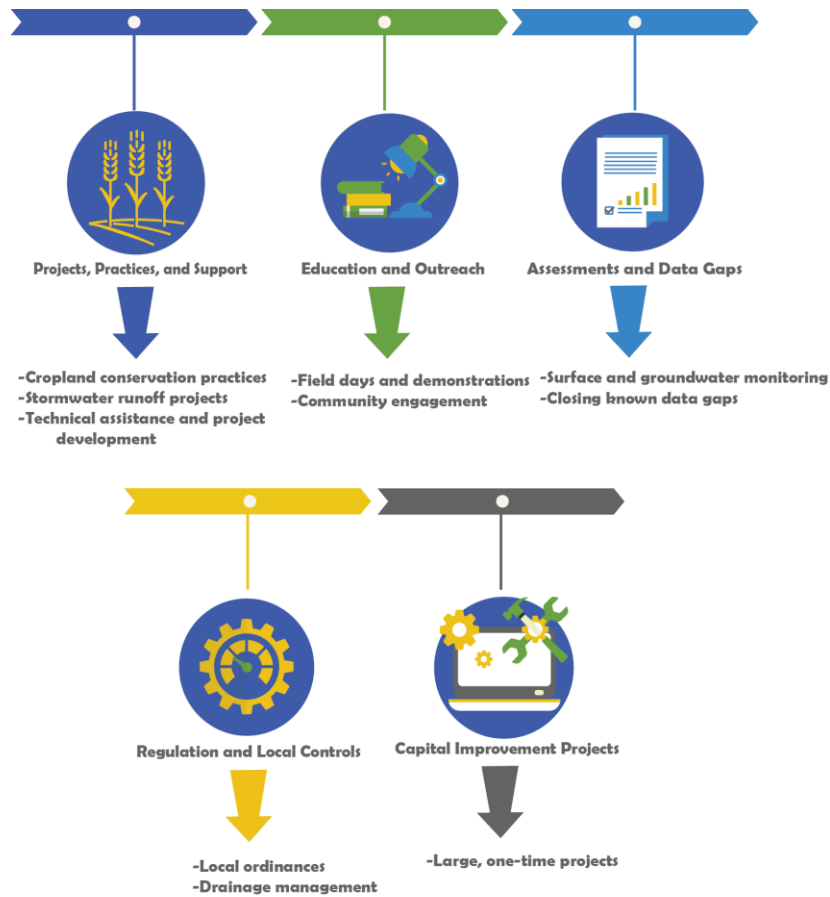


Figure 1.3: Implementation programs with example actions.



Cost of Implementing the Plan

Implementing actions within the plan and making progress toward goals is largely dependent on funding, as more actions can be implemented with more funding. With an approved CWMP, the watershed is eligible to receive non-competitive Watershed-Based Implementation Funding (WBIF) through BWSR. In recognition of this, three funding levels are used to organize actions in this plan:

- Funding Level 1: Current, baseline funding
- Funding Level 2: Current, baseline funding plus WBIF (assumed ~\$600,000 / yr),
- Funding Level 3: Partners, federal dollars, or other competitive funding

Actions pursued under Funding Level 2 (Current Funding + WBIF) are the focus of this plan. The estimated cost of implementing actions within Funding Level 2 is shown in

Table 1.4.

Table 1.4: Estimated cost of implementing the plan (Level 2 funding)

	Est. Annual Cost	Est. 10-Year Cost
Implementation Programs		
Projects, Practices, and Support	\$764,300	\$7,643,000
Education and Outreach	\$30,000	\$300,000
Assessments and Data Gaps	\$68,000	\$680,000
Regulations and Local Controls	\$174,000	\$1,740,000
Capital Improvement Projects	\$60,000	\$600,000
Additional Expenses		
Operations and Maintenance	\$200,000	\$2,000,000
Plan Administration	\$60,000	\$600,000
Total	\$1,356,300	\$13,563,000

