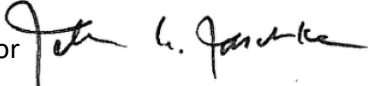




DATE: March 14, 2023
TO: Board of Water and Soil Resources' Members, Advisors, and Staff
FROM: John Jaschke, Executive Director 
SUBJECT: BWSR Board Meeting Notice – March 22, 2023

The Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) will meet on Wednesday, March 22, 2023, 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: 293 933 020#.

The following information pertains to agenda items:

OLD BUSINESS

1. **Historical Context: Tribes** – As part of continuous learning, a summary will be shared of historical events that have shaped and impacted Tribal Nations in Minnesota. Also, an overview of agency responsibilities under Minn. Stat. §10.65 Government-to-Government Relationship with Tribal Governments will be provided. **INFORMATION ITEM**

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Grants Program and Policy Committee

1. **2023 Request for Proposals for One Watershed, One Plan Planning Grants** – The purpose of this agenda item is for the Board to approve the 2023 Request for Proposals for One Watershed, One Plan Planning Grants. This is the seventh year BWSR is offering planning grants. The RFP has evolved over time to encourage more discussion among prospective planning groups during proposal development and to refine BWSR selection criteria. Relative to the 2022 RFP, only the dates changed for the 2023 RFP. This grant program operates under the policy updated by the by the Board in December 2022. **DECISION ITEM**

Northern Region Committee

1. **St. Louis River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan** – The St. Louis River watershed was selected by BWSR as one of the planning areas for the One Watershed, One Plan program in 2020. The watershed partnership Policy Committee and Advisory Committee members have attended regularly scheduled meetings and submitted the St. Louis River Watershed Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan to BWSR on January 12, 2023, for review and approval. The Northern Regional Committee met on March 1, 2023, to review the content of the Plan, State agency comments on the Plan, and to make a recommendation. The Committee recommends approval of the submitted Plan by the full Board. **DECISION ITEM**

Southern Region Committee

1. **Des Moines River Watershed Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan** – The Des Moines River Watershed was selected by BWSR as one of the seven planning areas for the One Watershed, One Plan program in 2020. The watershed partnership Policy Committee, Advisory Committee, and Planning Work Group members have attended regularly scheduled meetings and submitted the Des Moines River Watershed Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan to BWSR on January 6, 2023 for review and approval. The Southern Regional Committee (Committee) met on March 13, 2023 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. **Lac qui Parle – Yellow Bank Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan** – Lac qui Parle – Yellow Bank watershed was selected by BWSR for the One Watershed, One Plan program in 2021. The watershed partnership Policy Committee, Advisory Committee, and Steering Team members have attended regularly scheduled meetings and submitted the Lac qui Parle – Yellow Bank Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan to BWSR on January 6, 2023, for review and approval. The Southern Regional Committee met on March 13, 2023, to review the content of the Plan, State agency comments on the Plan, and to make a recommendation for approval. The Committee recommends approval of the submitted Plan by the full Board. ***DECISION ITEM***

3. **Lower Minnesota River West Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan** – The Lower Minnesota River West was selected by BWSR for a One Watershed, One Plan Planning Grant in August of 2019. The Partnership established a Memorandum of Agreement in the spring of 2020 for the purposes of watershed planning. Planning was initiated on June 6, 2020 via notification to designated Plan review authorities. The Partnership has followed One Watershed, One Plan Operating Procedures and the Policy Committee, Technical Advisory Committee, and Planning Work Group members have attended regularly scheduled meetings and kept open communication throughout Plan development. The Partnership submitted the Lower Minnesota River West Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (Plan) to BWSR on December 28, 2022 for review and approval. The Southern Regional Committee (Committee) met on March 13, 2023 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. ***DECISION ITEM***

4. **Mississippi River – Winona/La Crescent Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan** – The WinLaC Partnership was selected by BWSR for a One Watershed One Plan (1W1P) Planning Grant in August of 2020. The Partnership established a Memorandum of Agreement on February 17, 2021 for the purposes of watershed planning. Planning was initiated on March 9, 2021 via notification to designated plan review authorities. The Partnership has followed 1W1P Operating Procedures and the Policy Committee, Advisory Committee, and Planning Work Group members have attended regularly scheduled meetings and kept open communication throughout Plan development. The Partnership submitted the WinLaC Plan to BWSR on March 3, 2023 for review and approval. The Southern Regional Committee (Committee) met on March 13, 2023 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. ***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 22nd.

**BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES
520 LAFAYETTE ROAD NORTH
ST. PAUL, MN 55155
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22, 2023**

PRELIMINARY AGENDA

9:00 AM CALL MEETING TO ORDER

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

MINUTES OF JANUARY 25, 2023 BOARD MEETING

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

INTRODUCTION OF NEW STAFF

- Renee Sutton, Contracts Accountant
- Lisa Sweep, Accounting Technician
- Brad Leibfried, Easement Acquisition Specialist
- Alan Ritchie, Easement Acquisition Specialist

REPORTS

- Chair & Administrative Advisory Committee – Gerald Van Amburg
- Executive Director – John Jaschke
- Audit & Oversight Committee – Joe Collins
- Dispute Resolution and Compliance Report – Travis Germundson/Rich Sve
- Grants Program & Policy Committee – Todd Holman
- RIM Reserve Committee – Jayne Hager Dee
- Water Management & Strategic Planning Committee – Joe Collins
- Wetland Conservation Committee – Jill Crafton
- Buffers, Soils & Drainage Committee – Mark Zabel
- 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 – John Bilotta
- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency – Katrina Kessler

ADVISORY COMMENTS

- Association of Minnesota Counties – Brian Martinson
- Minnesota Association of Conservation District Employees – Nicole Bernd
- 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

OLD BUSINESS

1. Historical Context: Tribes – Melissa King and Craig Engwall – **INFORMATION ITEM**

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Grants Program and Policy Committee

1. 2023 Request for Proposals for One Watershed, One Plan Planning Grants – Julie Westerlund – **DECISION ITEM**

Northern Region Committee

1. St. Louis River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan – Rich Sve – **DECISION ITEM**

Southern Region Committee

1. Des Moines River Watershed Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan – Ted Winter and Doug Goodrich – **DECISION ITEM**
2. Lac qui Parle – Yellow Bank Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan – Ted Winter and Jason Beckler – **DECISION ITEM**
3. Lower Minnesota River West Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan – Ted Winter, Jeremy Maul, and Ed Lenz – **DECISION ITEM**
4. Mississippi River – Winona/La Crescent Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan – Ted Winter and Adam Beilke – **DECISION ITEM**

UPCOMING MEETINGS

- BWSR meeting is scheduled for 9:00 a.m., April 26, 2023, 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 25, 2023**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Joe Collins, Jill Crafton, Jayne Hager Dee, Kurt Beckstrom, Neil Peterson, Rich Sve, Gerald Van Amburg, Ted Winter, LeRoy Ose, Kelly Kirkpatrick, Eunice Biel, Todd Holman, Ronald Staples, Mark Zabel, Katrina Kessler, MPCA; Marcelle Lewandowski, University of Minnesota Extension; Thom Petersen, MDA; Steve Robertson, MDH; Sarah Strommen, DNR

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Carly Johnson

STAFF PRESENT:

John Jaschke, Rachel Mueller, Tom Gile, Travis Germundson, Jenny Gieseke, Jenny Mocol-Johnson, Rita Weaver, Marcey Westrick, Darren Mayers, Steve Christopher, Ryan Hughes, Pete Waller, Craig Engwall, Melissa King, Suzanne Rhees; Sharon Doucette, Annie Felix-Gerth, Julie Westerlund

OTHERS PRESENT:

Brian Martinson, AMC; LeAnn Buck, MASWCD; Troy Daniell, NRCS, Deanna Pomije, Kanabec SWCD; Jannina Aristy, Toby Spanier, Joe Barten, Sarah Boser, Kim Johnson, Zach Van Orsdel

Chair Gerald VanAmburg called the meeting to order at 9:02 AM

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

23-01 **ADOPTION OF AGENDA** - Moved by Mark Zabel, seconded by Ron Staples, to adopt the agenda as presented. ***Motion passed on a roll call vote.***

23-02 **MINUTES OF DECEMBER 15, 2022 BOARD MEETING** – Moved by Kurt Beckstrom, seconded by LeRoy Ose, to approve the minutes of December 15, 2022, as circulated. ***Motion passed on a roll call vote.***

PUBLIC ACCESS FORUM

No members of the public provided comments to the board.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION

REPORTS

Chair & Administrative Advisory Committee – Chair Gerald Van Amburg reported there was an EQB meeting last week. There was a presentation on the overview of the EQB budget and work plan. There was a presentation on the overview of the budget request for a Minnesota-based emissions assessment tool and guidance to support the implementation of the environmental assessment worksheet process. There was also a process update on the continuous improvement effort they are instituting.

Stated the Administrative Advisory Committee met yesterday morning on the DEI Plan and it's on the agenda for today.

Executive Director's Report - John Jaschke reported the Governor's recommendations are out and will hear more news on bonding along with several bills being heard for consideration. Stated Pheasant Fest is coming up in a couple weeks in Minneapolis.

John reviewed the Day of Packet that included the MN Campaign Finance Board Letter, Snapshot articles, Governor's Budget Recommendations for BWSR, and a Federal IRA Conservation draft document.

Joe Collins asked if the state match is through a separate bonding bill or in the programs mentioned. John stated it could be both.

Jill Crafton stated the working lands is an important part of the Climate Action Plan and asked if capacity dollars have gone out to SWCDs. John stated the Governor has a general fund recommendation on it but doesn't know exactly what the number is yet.

Audit and Oversight Committee – Joe Collins reported they met on January 12th to discuss the PRAP that's on the agenda for today.

Dispute Resolution and Compliance Report – Rich Sve reported they have not met. Travis Germundson reported there are presently seven appeals pending and received two new appeals since the last report. Appeals 22-9 and 22-8 involve an appeal of a restoration order associated with the same landowner and parcel in Otter Tail County. Both involved the placement of fill and request that the appeals be placed in abeyance. Currently no decisions have been made on those appeals.

Actions were taken in the last month on file 22-7 and 22-6. File 22-7, the appeal has been remanded back to the Brown County to develop an adequate record that considers the written technical evaluation panel report and to make a new decision on the application. File 22-6, the appeal has been placed in abeyance and the Restoration Order stayed for the submittal of a complete application to the local unit of government.

Travis gave a Buffer Compliance Status Update. Stated no notable changes have occurred over the past month. Stated over 750 parcels statewide have been brought into compliance over the past year.

Grants Program & Policy Committee – Jill Crafton reported they had good discussion and items will be on the agenda today.

RIM Reserve Committee – Jayne Hager Dee reported they met last week and will be bringing action items to the March meeting.

Water Management & Strategic Planning Committee – Joe Collins reported a committee meeting is being scheduled for February.

Wetland Conservation Committee – Jill Crafton reported the committee has not met.

Buffers, Soils & Drainage Committee – Mark Zabel reported the committee met last night. Does not have any decision items on the agenda for today. Discussed buffer compliance and stated in the past five years they've reached almost full compliance. There was an overview of the Soil Loss Program. They talked about changes in the Multi-Purpose Drainage Program with the potential of additional funding going into the program. They talked about the drainage work group deliberations, two things they focused on were the outlet adequacy discussion and the drainage registry portal.

Drainage Work Group (DWG) – Neil Peterson and Tom Gile reported the workgroup met in January and had a productive conversation on the drainage registry portal concept. Will be having another meeting in February to continue making progress. Stated they spent a fair amount of time talking about outlet adequacy at their meeting. Stated there is a lot of overlap between the concepts of outlet adequacy and the drainage law.

Joe Collins stated in the PRAP report there has been a couple of agency recommendations of the counties for modernization of records. Joe asked how well it's going and if there is anything they can do to help that process. Tom stated there was a LCCMR funded grant program for drainage record modernization that has since closed. Stated there has been a handful of drainage authorities that have inquired if funding was still available. Stated it would be worth talking about to see if they can pursue other dollars to continue that with the recent interest.

Neil agreed there is a need to get funding for modernization.

Jill Crafton stated some of the downstream impacts seemed subjective and asked if there was any discussion on it. Tom stated it is one of the central components of the outlet adequacy discussions. Neil stated there are a lot of good technical people involved and they'll come to something that will be workable.

AGENCY REPORTS

Minnesota Department of Agriculture – Thom Petersen reported the budget was released yesterday. Stated the pilot Soil Equipment Grants opened last week. They have an Ag BMP loan program that has a

large backlog. Stated they have language for a Climate Coordinator position for the agency and that they currently don't have a set person that works on climate issues. They worked with Farmers Union and Farmers Legal Action Group to develop a guide on carbon markets for farmers, available online.

Neil Peterson thanked Commissioner Petersen for his work and for reaching out to them, they are interested in carbon sequestration.

Minnesota Department of Health – Steve Robertson reported they are looking to make rule changes to make better use of the infrastructure investment JOBS Act Funding. They are looking to make some statutory changes that will optimize their ability to make better use of funding that will be available for drinking waters. Stated they will be requesting some appropriations in the Clean Water Fund.

Steve stated they are nearing completion of the PFAS monitoring sampling efforts and hope to be done this quarter. Results are being posted to the dashboard on the MDH website.

Jill Crafton stated the comments for the One Watershed One Plan looks like the Department of Health has been actively working with groups and asked if it's going to help with what their reporting on. Steve stated they have been trying to improve ways they engage with the One Watershed One Plan process and hopefully they'll see good results down the road.

Commissioner Kessler stated they will need more resources for the PFAS that's being reported.

Joe Collins asked if there's a filter for PFAS. Katrina stated they are forever chemicals and are hard to get rid of, working on an evaluation of treatment.

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources – No report was provided.

Jill Crafton stated Minnehaha Creek Watershed District was recognized as a Watershed District of the Year in the PRAP report. Stated they've done some really good work.

Commissioner Strommen had to step away for a while but relayed to John Jaschke that there is a Re-Leaf program in the budget for re-forestation. They also received funding to reestablish capacity at the State Nursery to grow seedlings. Stated additional budget information can be found on the DNR website.

Minnesota Extension – Marcelle Lewandowski reported there is an Irrigation Extension position in the hiring process. Stated the Minnesota Office for Soil Health along with the Board of Water and Soil Resources have been working for almost a year on the development of the State Soil Health Action Plan. They are working on the first interim report and will have a final report in December.

Ted Winter asked what the plan will mean to the public is after the action framework is finalized. Marcelle stated it will be a task for next year and that their immediate audiences are the Clean Water Council and the Board of Water and Soil Resources.

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency – Katrina Kessler reported they are excited about the opportunities presented in the Governor's budget. It includes more than \$700 million to help implement the Climate Action Framework and drive forward climate mitigation and resilience work across the state. It will also include an expansion of the Green Step Cities Program, money for PFAS treatment and grants, and money to refine the way of calculating and communicating greenhouse gas emissions. Commissioner Kessler stated the number one source of Minnesota's emissions is transportation. The number two

source is now the agriculture and forestry sector with the generation sector moving down to number three.

Jill Crafton stated Bloomington is a Green Step City and have recently acquired a no till seed drill for restoration programs in their natural resource areas. Thanked Commissioner Kessler for the support of the Green Step cities program.

Commissioner Kessler stated the third annual Ag Urban Partnership Forum is taking place in person on March 1st.

ADVISORY COMMENTS

Association of Minnesota Counties – Brian Martinson reported on the Governor’s budget and stated their priority funding is for solid waste. They’re also working to increase state resources for Natural Resources Block Grants and County Feed Lot Officers. They are looking for support of County Ag Inspectors, funding for the Local Road Wetland Replacement Program, and continuing work on the 404 Assumption.

Stated DWG has had good conversations over last year and hope others feel they have been productive. AMC has their legislative conference February 22nd and 23rd. Members from around the state are coming to St. Paul with representatives from agencies being invited to speak. There will also be an opportunity for members to meet with their legislatures.

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

Minnesota Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts – No report was provided.

Minnesota Association of Townships – Eunice Biel reported they are having Township Tuesday conference calls on the first and third Tuesday of the month at 10:00 a.m. Township Day at the Capitol is February 1st and 4th in St. Paul where all township officials are invited to join. Township elections are in March, there will be supervisor and treasure positions open for most townships. There will be a spring short course training across the state, location and dates are available on their website. Scholarship applications are being offered for 2023 to 11th graders. Minnesota DNR Parks and Trails Grant Program applications for 2023 are now available.

Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts – No report provided.

Chair Van Amburg stated February 15th and 16th they are having a legislative day.

John Jaschke stated they are changing their name from Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts to Minnesota Watersheds.

Natural Resources Conservation Service – Troy Daniell reported they will be receiving additional IRA funds in the next couple years in addition to the existing appropriation levels under the existing farm bill. Stated in addition to the increase in RCPP funds, it will also include Ag Land Easements.

Stated there is currently a notice of funding out for tribes to assist with food sovereignty issues and concerns they have addressing natural resource concerns.

Stated there was a release on [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) for general entities that included several elements. One is grazing to help provide infrastructure for temporary or targeted grazing for CRP, WRP type landscapes or other easements. It also included seedlings, an element for water management, “field to plate” to assist with sustainable food systems, and there is an Ag retailer to conservation part.

Kelly Kirkpatrick thanked STC Daniell for his work.

Todd Holman stated STC Daniell hosted a recent State Technical Advisory Committee in Saint Cloud where it was a great coming together of networking with the opportunity to hear and learn from programs.

Chair Van Amburg stated the Red River Watershed Management Board and Flood Damage Reduction Work Group joint conference is being held on February 22nd and 23rd in Moorhead at the Marriott.

Chair Van Amburg called a recess at 10:50 a.m. and called the meeting back to order at 11:05 a.m.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Administrative Advisory Committee

BWSR Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan – Jenny Gieseke, Jannina Aristy, and Toby Spanier presented BWSR Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan.

BWSR is committed to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) and is working internally to improve DEI policies and practices across the organization. To effectively infuse DEI values and practices into our work, ongoing efforts must be intentional and strategic. The BWSR DEI Plan identifies five strategic priority areas for BWSR to focus over the next three years. The associated Learning and Development Framework outlines the learning approaches required to build capacity to execute BWSR’s DEI strategy and plan. S&E Consultants facilitated discussions and obtained feedback from BWSR staff, the Administrative Advisory Committee, and BWSR’s partners in developing the plan. The Administrative Advisory Committee has recommended approval of the DEI Plan.

Kelly Kirkpatrick asked if this plan addresses tokenism. Jannina stated the plan does address it.

Joe Collins stated this plan is a way to serve all of Minnesota.

Jayne Hager Dee stated this is a chance to influence traditional audiences to help them be more aware.

Sarah Strommen stated she thinks this is a great plan and noted not to conflate the relationship with indigenous communities and native cultures with the government-to-government relationships that state agencies have with tribes.

Rich Sve noted a correction in the Board Resolution to remove “further” from the last statement.

**
23-03

Moved by Mark Zabel, seconded by Kelly Kirkpatrick, to approve the BWSR Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan. ***Motion passed on a roll call vote.***

Audit and Oversight Committee

2022 Performance Review and Assistance Program Legislative Report – Jenny Gieseke and Jenny Mocol-Johnson presented the 2022 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 2022, 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 recommendation from the BWSR Audit and Oversight Committee for BWSR Board approval.

Rich Sve noted a typo in the Board Order which was corrected.

Rich Sve left the meeting at 12:13 p.m.

**
23-04 Moved by Joe Collins, seconded by Kelly Kirkpatrick, to approve the 2022 Performance Review and Assistance Program Legislative Report. ***Motion passed on a roll call vote.***

Grants Program and Policy Committee

FY23 Water Quality and Storage Pilot Grant Program – Rita Weaver presented FY23 Water Quality and Storage Pilot Grant Program.

In 2021 the MN Legislature passed a law requiring BWSR to develop a Water Quality and Storage Program. In FY22 BWSR released the RFP, received and reviewed the grant applications, scored the applications and entered into three grant agreements with local partners. Upon completion of the first year of the pilot program, staff would like to see minor changes to the Water Quality and Storage Pilot Grant program scoring and process. The more significant changes include review of the selected applicants by the board and modification to the scoring criteria to formalize how projects in or out of the priority areas will rank. The FY program policy and RFP have been reviewed by the SMT and will be presented to the GP&P committee on January 23, 2023.

Ron Staples asked if legislature approves the funding will the amount of money go to \$27 million. John Jaschke stated its going to be \$17 million and would take the pilot label off it. Ron stated he would like 103E to be included. Rita stated projects that are associated with 103E are not eligible for funding right now due to a disagreement of how those projects might be connected.

**
23-05 Moved by Ted Winter, seconded by Joe Collins, to approve the FY23 Water Quality and Storage Pilot Grant Program. ***Motion passed on a roll call vote.***

Amendment to Board Order #22-55: Clean Water Fund Competitive Grants – Marcey Westrick presented Amendment to Board Order #22-55: Clean Water Fund Competitive Grants.

Applications C23-1872 and C23-9488 referenced a plan amendment to a comprehensive watershed management plan that was anticipated to be approved prior to the BWSR Board award of the FY23 CWF Competitive grants. During the process of approving the amendment, an administrative error was discovered, and the plan amendment could not be approved as planned at no fault of the local governments seeking the amendment. The requested extension will allow for the plan amendment to go through an amendment process that can be approved.

**
23-06 Moved by Neil Peterson, seconded by Joe Collins, to approve the Amendment to Board Order #22-55: Clean Water Fund Competitive Grants. ***Motion passed on a roll call vote.***

Central Region Committee

Snake River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan – Darren Mayers presented Snake River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan

The Snake River Watershed is located in east-central Minnesota within the St. Croix River Basin. The watershed has over 87 lakes and 128 streams. The Snake River meanders over 100 miles from its headwaters in southeast Aitkin County through Kanabec County and east through Pine County to its confluence with the St. Croix River.

The Plan actions generally focus on development of studies and data collection to better target implementation actions, on-the-ground implementation of agricultural, forestry, and urban BMPs to address the priority issues, policy improvements where feasible and timely, and active public outreach and engagement by local partners.

The total 10-year estimated cost of Plan implementation is \$19,794,500 of which 51% will be used to improve and protect lakes, streams, and rivers, 17% will focus on groundwater issues, 11% on land use and cover activities with the remaining used for the other priority issue areas.

The Partnership held a 60-day review process that ended on September 5, 2022 and held two public hearings on September 20, 2022 in different watershed locations. The final draft of the Plan, all written public comments and responses, and public hearing comments and responses were submitted on November 30, 2022 to the state review agencies and BWSR for the final 90-day review and approval of the Plan. The Partnership has incorporated the majority of agency and public comments received throughout the Plan review process.

On January 5, 2023, the Central Region Committee met to review and discuss the Plan. The committee's decision was to recommend approval of the Snake River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan as submitted to the full board per the attached draft Order.

Kurt Beckstrom stated he is very proud of staff in the district and those who worked on it.

Jill Crafton noted they included to manage water resources and related ecosystems to sustain their long-term health and integrity and thought that was excellent.

Joe Collins stated their cost sharing incentives really made sense in the plan and noted they want to promote native resilient trees in their forests.

**
23-07 Moved by Joe Collins, seconded by Jill Crafton, to approve the Snake River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan. ***Motion passed on a roll call vote.***

John Jaschke suggested the New Business agenda item on the Historical Context on Tribes be moved to a future meeting to allow for more time. Board members agreed to have it presented at another time.

Lower Mississippi River Watershed Management Organization Watershed Management Plan – Steve Christopher presented Lower Mississippi River Watershed Management Organization Watershed Management Plan.

Background:

The Lower Mississippi River Watershed Management Organization (LMRWMO) was established in 1985. The vision of the LMRWMO is to manage water resources and related ecosystems to sustain their long-

term health and integrity through member city collaboration and partnerships with other with other water management organizations with member city citizen support and participation. The current plan was approved by the Board in September 2011.

The LMRWMO is located in the southeast part of the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area, in northern Dakota County and southern Ramsey County. It encompasses approximately 58 square miles, abutting the south and west sides of the Mississippi River from the confluence of the Mississippi and the Minnesota Rivers to Rosemount. Adjoining watershed management entities include the Lower Minnesota River Watershed District, the Egan-Inver Grove Heights WMO, and the Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization. The LMRWMO is composed of seven cities wholly or partially within the boundary including Inver Grove Heights, Lilydale, Mendota, Mendota Heights, St. Paul, South St. Paul, Sunfish Lake, and West St. Paul.

Plan Process and Highlights:

The LMRWMO initiated the process on updating its Watershed Management Plan (Plan) in mid-2020 soliciting input from its stakeholders, conducting a survey, convening a Technical Advisory Committee, as well as holding a virtual public kickoff meeting. The LMRWMO Board held a workshop to discuss the input submitted and develop a list of priorities and goals for their next ten years of implementation.

Through the process identified above, the LMRWMO identified the following as their highest priority issues:

- Water quality
 - o Stormwater runoff management
 - o In-lake and in-stream water quality
 - o Impaired waters
 - o Chloride management
 - o Mississippi River Outfalls and bluff erosion
- Education and engagement
- Partner collaboration
 - o Grant and cost-share projects
 - o Regulatory framework

The LMRWMO developed three levels for its priority waterbodies with the Mississippi River, Interstate Valley Creek, Ivy Falls Creek, Kaposia Creek, Thompson Lake, Rogers Lake, and Seidls Lake designated within the highest level.

The LMRWMO's implementation will focus on non-degradation goals for priority waterbody water quality and the draft Plan has an increased focus on streams through studies and restoration activities. The LMRWMO will continue its strong education and outreach program which includes workshops for project design of small-scale stormwater best management practices. Overall, this Plan continues to position the LMRWMO well to continue its implementation benefitting the most important surface waters within the watershed through its staff and partners.

Jayne Hager Dee stated she will be abstaining since she is a member of Dakota County SWCD Board. Stated they've done a nice job with this plan.

**
23-08 Moved by Joe Collins, seconded by Jill Crafton, to approve the Lower Mississippi River Watershed Management Organization Watershed Management Plan. ***Motion passed on a roll call vote.***

Northern Region Committee

Otter Tail River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan – Kurt Beckstrom and Pete Waller presented Otter Tail River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan.

The Otter Tail River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (Plan) planning area is in Northwest Minnesota. The Plan was developed as part of the One Watershed, One Plan program by Cormorant Lakes Watershed District, Pelican River Watershed District, Becker Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), East Otter Tail SWCD West Otter Tail SWCD, Becker County, and Otter Tail County.

On December 15, 2022, 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 4, 2023, the Northern Regional Committee met to review and discuss the Plan. The Committee’s decision was to recommend approval of the Otter Tail River Watershed Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan as submitted to the full Board per the attached draft Order.

Jayne Hager Dee stated she was impressed with the response to the survey and people that attended the outreach meetings. Jayne asked how they engage with people who have vacation homes and if there are any tensions with year-round residents and the part timers. Pete stated there were tensions and they will continue with education and communication.

Joe Collins stated the plan did a good job of showing delegation duties.

Jill Crafton thanked them for their work.

Chair Van Amburg noted they recognized the importance of climate change as addressed directly in the plan.

23-09 Moved by Kurt Beckstrom, seconded by Mark Zabel, to approve the Otter Tail River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan. ***Motion passed on a roll call vote.***

UPCOMING MEETINGS

- Southern Region Committee is scheduled for 10:00 a.m., February 23, 2023, location TBD.
- BWSR meeting is scheduled for 9:00 a.m., March 22, 2023, in St. Paul and by MS Teams.

Chair VanAmburg adjourned the meeting at 12:54 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Gerald Van Amburg
Chair

BOARD MEETING AGENDA ITEM

AGENDA ITEM TITLE: Dispute Resolution/Compliance Report

Meeting Date: March 22, 2023

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)

Presented by: Rich Sve DRC Chair/Travis 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 2, 2023

By: Travis Germundson

There are presently **nine** 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 23-2 (2-28-23) This is an appeal of a Buffer Administrative Penalty Order in Pope County. The APO regards the placement of a 50' buffer or implementation of an approved alternative practice. The petition claims that public watercourse was improperly classified. No decision has been made on the appeal.

File 23-1 (2-27-23) This is an appeal of a WCA Restoration Order in Olmsted County. The appeal regards the impact of approximately 6,000 sq. ft. of wetland associated with a parking lot expansion project. No decision has been made on the appeal.

File 22-9 (12-27-2022) This is an appeal of a WCA Restoration Order in Otter Tail County. The appeal regards the placement of 34,125 sq. ft. of fill in a wetland. This appeal involves the same landowner and wetland as Appeal File 22-8. The petition request that that the appeal be placed in abeyance for a decision on an after-the-fact application for exemption and no-loss. *The appeal has been placed in abeyance and the Restoration Order stayed until the LGU makes a final decision on the after-the-fact application.*

File 22-8 (12-14-2022) This is an appeal of a WCA Restoration Order in Otter Tail County. The appeal regards the placement of 27,770 sq. ft. of fill in a wetland. This appeal involves the same landowner and wetland as Appeal File 22-9. The petition request that that the appeal be placed in abeyance for the submittal/decision of an after-the-fact application for exemption and no-loss. *The appeal has been placed in abeyance and the Restoration Order stayed until the LGU makes a final decision on the after-the-fact application.*

File 22-7 (12-6-2022) This is an appeal of a WCA notice of decision involving a replacement plan in Brown County. The appeal regards the approval of an after-the-fact replacement plan for wetland impacts associated with a road and turnaround areas located in a campground facility. *The appeal has been remanded back to the Brown County to develop an adequate record that considers the written Technical Evaluation Panel Report. The 60-day deadline for remand proceedings has been extended.*

File 22-6 (11-16-2022) This is an appeal of a WCA Restoration Order in Wright County. The appeal regards the alleged drainage impacts to wetlands associated with the installation of new drain tile. The petition request that that the appeal be placed in abeyance to allow further investigation and submittal of an after-the-fact application. *The appeal has been placed in abeyance and the Restoration Order stayed for the submittal of a complete application.*

File 21-9 (12-17-2021) This is an appeal of a WCA notice of decision involving a no-loss determination in Pope County. The appeal regards the approval of a 36' inlet structure/tile to reduce inundation and saturated soil on agricultural fields. At issue is the elevation that was approved (to high). The petition request that the appeal be placed in abeyance until technical data can be gathered. Note, this involves the same notice of decision being appealed under File 21-07. *The appeal has been combined with file 21-7 and placed in abeyance to allow the Technical Evaluation Panel to develop written finding of fact following the submission of additional technical analyses. The appeal has been remanded back to the local*

unit of government for expanded technical review and a new decision because of the submission of additional technical analyses. The 60-day deadline for remand proceedings has been extended.

File 21-8 (12-17-21) This is an appeal of a WCA Restoration Order in Rock County. The appeal regards the alleged placement of tile lines through wetlands and DNR Public Waters. The petition request that the appeal be placed in abeyance for the submittal of an after-the-fact wetland application. *The appeal was placed in abeyance and the Restoration Order stayed for further investigation and submittal of an after-the-fact wetland application. An after-the-fact application for a no-loss was approved, which allows for the installation of non-perforated tile. The restoration/placement of this tile has yet to occur do to do DNR Public Waters permitting/approval. The time period on the stay of the Restoration Order has been extended.*

File 21-7 (12-14-2021) This is an appeal of a WCA notice of decision involving a no-loss determination in Pope County. The appeal regards approval of a 36" inlet structure/tile that allegedly rout water around U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service property and impact wetlands. At issue is the elevation that was approved (to low). *The appeal has been combined with file 21-9 and placed in abeyance to allow the Technical Evaluation Panel to develop written finding of fact following the submission of additional technical analyses. The appeal has been remanded back to the local unit of government for expanded technical review and a new decision because of the submission of additional technical analyses. The 60-day deadline for remand proceedings has been extended.*

Summary Table for Appeals

Type of Decision	Total for Calendar Year 2022	Total for Calendar Year 2023
Order in favor of appellant		
Order not in favor of appellant	3	
Order Modified	1	
Order Remanded	2	
Order Place Appeal in Abeyance	5	
Negotiated Settlement		
<i>Withdrawn/Dismissed</i>	<i>1</i>	

Buffer Compliance Status Update: BWSR has received Notifications of Noncompliance (NONs) on 96 parcels from the 12 counties BWSR is responsible for enforcement. Currently there are seven active Corrective Action Notices (CANs) and 3 Administrative Penalty Orders (APOs) issued by BWSR that are still active. Of the actions being tracked over 93 of those have been resolved.

*Statewide 35 counties are fully compliant, and 48 counties have enforcement cases in progress. Of those counties (with enforcement cases in progress) there are currently 452 CANs and 80 APOs actively in place. Of the actions being tracked over 2,423 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.*

OLD BUSINESS

1. Historical Context: Tribes – Melissa King and Craig Engwall – ***INFORMATION ITEM***

BOARD MEETING AGENDA ITEM

AGENDA ITEM TITLE: Historical Context: Tribes

Meeting Date: March 22, 2023

Agenda Category: Committee Recommendation New Business Old Business

Item Type: Decision Discussion Information Non-Public Data

Keywords for Electronic Searchability: Tribal Nations, Sovereignty, History

Section/Region: Regional Operations, Central

Contact: Melissa King

Prepared by: Melissa King

Reviewed by: None Committee(s)

Presented by: Melissa King, Craig Engwall

Time requested: 30 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

[Minn. Stat. §10.65](#)

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

As part of continuous learning, a summary will be shared of historical events that have shaped and impacted Tribal Nations in Minnesota. Also, an overview of agency responsibilities under Minn. Stat. §10.65 Government-to-Government Relationship with Tribal Governments will be provided.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Grants Program and Policy Committee

1. 2023 Request for Proposals for One Watershed, One Plan Planning Grants – Julie Westerlund –
DECISION ITEM



DRAFT BOARD ORDER

One Watershed, One Plan Program 2023 Planning Grants: Request for Proposals

PURPOSE

Authorize the 2023 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) 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 2023 RFP was reviewed and approved by the Board’s Senior Management Team on February 7, 2023 to forward to the Board’s Grants Program and Policy Committee for consideration.
5. The Board’s Grants Program and Policy Committee reviewed the 2023 One Watershed, One Plan Planning Grant RFP on February 27, 2023 and recommended approval to the Board.

ORDER

The Board hereby:

1. Authorizes staff to finalize, distribute, and promote a 2023 Request for Proposals for the One Watershed, One Plan Planning Grants.

Dated at St. Paul, Minnesota, this March 22, 2023

MINNESOTA BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES

Gerald Van Amburg, Chair
Board of Water and Soil Resources

Date: _____

Attachments:

- One Watershed, One Plan Planning Grant Policy
- 2023 Planning Grant Request for Proposals

One Watershed, One Plan Planning Grants

Request for Proposals

March 24, 2023

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 2019, 1st Special Session, Chapter 2, Article 2, Section 7 (i) and Laws of Minnesota 2021, 1st Special session, Chapter 1, 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 \$1,100,000 available; additional funding may be made available for this purpose at a later date.

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 at: www.bwsr.state.mn.us/planning/1W1P/index.html.
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. Respondents who were previously awarded Clean Water Funds and have expended less than 50% of previous award(s) at the time of this proposal may need to demonstrate organizational capacity to finalize current projects and complete a new project concurrently.
5. 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: www.bwsr.state.mn.us/planning/1W1P/index.html. 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, 2026.

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, will 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 www.bwsr.state.mn.us/outreach/eLINK/index.html.
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 will be required to document local involvement in the plan development process in order 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 10, 2022. 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 LGU'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 LGUs 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: monitoring and assessment report (and stressor identification report, if applicable) approved
 - Preferred: TMDL calculations and WRAPS document sufficiently developed to inform planning; WRAPS report on public notice or approved when proposal is submitted
 - Highly 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 LGU
 - 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. Geographic distribution
- Preference will be given to the proposals with partners that have fewer completed comprehensive watershed management plans

- Preference will be given to the proposals with partners that are participating in fewer active planning efforts
- 3. Amount of available funding
- 4. Recommendation of BWSR staff and recommendation of the inter-agency review committee.

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 24, 2023– Proposal period begins
- June 18, 2023 – Proposal deadline at 4:30 PM
- June – August – Proposal review
- August 24, 2023 - BWSR Board approval of planning grant recipients
- March 15, 2024 Work plan submittal deadline
- April 5, 2024 Work plans due, grants executed
- Plans submitted to BWSR by June 30, 2026

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

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Northern Regional Committee

1. St. Louis River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan – Rich Sve – ***DECISION ITEM***

BOARD MEETING AGENDA ITEM

AGENDA ITEM TITLE:	St. Louis River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan		
Meeting Date:	<u>March 22, 2023</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>St. Louis River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan</u>		
Section/Region:	<u>Regional Operations/Northern</u>		
Contact:	<u>Ryan Hughes</u>		
Prepared by:	<u>Erin Loeffler</u>		
Reviewed by:	<u>Northern Regional</u>	<u>Committee(s)</u>	
Presented by:	<u>Rich Sve</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 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 St. Louis River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan as recommended by the Northern Regional Committee.

LINKS TO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- [St. Louis River Watershed Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan](#)
- [St. Louis River Watershed Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan Appendices](#)
- [St. Louis River Watershed 60-day Formal Review](#)

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

On January 12, 2023, BWSR received the St. Louis River Comprehensive Watershed Management 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 and provided a recommendation of approval to the Northern Region Committee.

On March 1, 2023, the Northern Regional Committee met to review and discuss the Plan. The Committee's decision was to recommend approval of the St. Louis River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan, as submitted, to the full Board per the attached draft Order.

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 St. Louis River Watershed, pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103B.101, Subdivision 14 and 103B.801.

**ORDER
APPROVING
COMPREHENSIVE
WATERSHED
MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Whereas, the Policy Committee of the St. Louis River Watershed submitted a Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (Plan) to the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (Board) on January 12, 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

1. **Partnership Establishment.** The St. Louis River Watershed Partnership (Partnership) was established March 9, 2020, through adoption of a Memorandum of Agreement for the purposes of developing a Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan. The membership of the Partnership includes North and South St. Louis Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), Carlton SWCD, as well as St. Louis County, Carlton County, and the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa.
2. **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 the One Watershed, One Plan (1W1P) program.
3. **Nature of the Watershed.** The St. Louis River is a large, geographically diverse, and culturally rich watershed in northeastern Minnesota. The watershed covers area within Lake, St. Louis, Itasca, and Aitkin counties as well as the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa. The watershed is entirely on ceded tribal land, including the 1854 and 1855 treaty areas. The St. Louis River Watershed planning boundary includes the Cloquet River watershed, along with a portion of the Lake Superior South Watershed. The planning region covers 3,000 square miles and includes 500 lakes and 2,000 miles of streams all flowing to Lake Superior. The watershed provides habitat for many vulnerable resources, including wild rice, trout and sturgeon. While most of the watershed is forest or wetlands, many communities make their home here, including the Mesabi Range communities, Cloquet and the City

of Duluth. Mining, logging, farming and industry are historically and currently part of this watershed and have drastically altered the watershed from its original form.

4. **Plan Development.** The Plan was developed as a single, concise, and coordinated approach to watershed management. 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 actions to manage water quantity, protect and restore water quality, natural habitat, recreational uses and drinking water sources in the watershed.

5. **Plan Review.** On January 12, 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 Resolution #18-14. During the development of the Plan, State agency representatives attended and provided input at advisory committee meetings. The following state review comments were received during the comment period.
 - A. Minnesota Department of Health (MDH): MDH staff thanked the partnership for including MDH priorities and inputs in the plan and had no additional comments to provide. MDH recommends approval of the plan.
 - B. Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR): DNR staff thanked the partnership for including DNR priorities and additional inputs during the plan and review process. DNR staff noted it was a pleasure working with the Advisory Committee. DNR recommends approval of the plan.
 - C. Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA): MPCA staff noted that they appreciated the opportunity to participate and provide input and that the plan is well written, concise, and thorough. MPCA recommends approval of the plan.
 - D. Minnesota Environmental Quality Board (EQB): EQB did not provide comments for the final review.
 - E. Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA): MDA did not provide comments for the final plan review though congratulated the partnership on plan completion.
 - F. Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources regional staff: BWSR staff provided comments throughout the planning process and had no suggested or required changes to the Plan submitted for the final review. We commend the partners for their trust level and commitment to the resources of the Plan area. BWSR staff recommend approval of the Plan and look forward to working with the Partnership during implementation.

6. **Plan Summary and Highlights.** The highlights of the Plan include:
 - The Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa was a full participant in the process and providing valuable contributions to the Steering Team, Advisory Committee, and the Policy Committee.
 - The Plan was led and written by local staff after transitioning from the originally selected consultant team.
 - The Plan recognizes resource management actions and data provided by existing efforts, including the Lake Superior Lakewide Action and Management Plan (LAMP), the St. Louis River Estuary, and the Federally recognized Area of Concern (AOC) where the St. Louis River enters Lake Superior.
 - The Planning area includes both the St. Louis River and Cloquet River major watersheds (HUC-8 scale) as well as a series of cold-water stream watersheds that flow directly into Lake Superior in and around the city of Duluth.

- The planning area contains large, highly urbanized areas on the Iron Range and in Cloquet-Duluth area, as well as many acres of intact forests, wetlands and cold-water and warmwater water resources resulting in generally good water quality with a few exceptions.
 - A Landscape Stewardship Plan was developed to complement the watershed plan and provided information on forest resources and their relationship to priority water resources.
 - High quality resource protection was an issue addressed in this plan with thorough measurable goals established using a RAQ (Riparian, Adjacency, Quality) index identifying high scores for the most valued protection areas.
 - The Department of Natural Resources provided an Evaluation of Hydrologic Change for the planning area showing that, in general, hydrology has been very stable since the 1940's.
 - The Plan includes focused priorities for five (5) planning regions (St. Louis River North, St. Louis River South, Cloquet-Upper Whiteface, Duluth Urban Area and Lake Superior Streams, Fond du Lac Reservation) and targeted sub-watersheds within those regions that targets implementation to the needs of each geographical area.
 - Twelve priority issues were selected for the Plan, although the importance of those issues varies among the planning regions, resulting in short and long-term measurable goals specific to each region. The priority issues were divided into four categories: Surface Water Quality, Drinking Water Protection, Land Use, Altered Hydrology, and Habitat.
 - Specific "lenses" such as Climate Change and Resilience, Equity, Social Capacity and Culturally significant species were used to uncover potential overlooked opportunities throughout the Plan area rather than being identified as a specific issue.
 - A thorough discussion of regulatory and enforcement measures that meet the needs of county and watershed obligations, including shoreland management, public drainage, buffers, and land use planning was conducted.
7. **Northern Regional Committee.** On March 1, 2023 the Northern Regional Committee met to review and discuss the Plan. Those in attendance from the Board's Committee were Rich Sve, LeRoy Ose, Jeff Berg, Neil Peterson, Todd Holman, Gerald Van Amburg, Tom Estabrooks and Ron Staples. Board staff in attendance included Ryan Hughes, Erin Loeffler and Jeff Hrubes. The representatives from the Partnership were Melanie Bomier, Carlton SWCD; R.C. Boheim, South St. Louis SWCD; Anita Provinzino, North St. Louis SWCD; Becca Reis, North St. Louis SWCD; and Chuck Bainter, North St. Louis SWCD. Melanie Bomier presented the Plan on behalf of the partnership. 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.
8. This Plan will be in effect for a ten-year period until March 22, 2033.

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 St. Louis River Watershed pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103B.101, Subd. 14 and 103B.801 and Board Resolution #18-14.

3. The St. Louis River Watershed 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 #18-14.
5. The attached Plan when adopted through local resolution by the members of the Partnership will replace 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 St. Louis River Watershed, submitted January 12, 2023.

Dated at St. Paul, Minnesota, this twenty-second day of March 2023.

MINNESOTA BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES

BY: Gerald Van Amburg, Chair

March 22, 2023

St. Louis River Watershed Policy Committee
c/o Melanie Bomier, Carlton SWCD
808 3rd Street
Carlton, MN 55718

RE: Approval of the St. Louis River Watershed Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan

Dear St. Louis River Watershed Policy Committee:

The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) is pleased to inform you the St. Louis River Watershed Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (Plan) was approved at its regular meeting held on March 22, 2023. 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 22, 2033. 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 103B.801, 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 Erin Loeffler of our staff at 218-850-1141 or Erin.Loeffler@state.mn.us for further assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

Gerald Van Amburg, Chair
Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources

Enclosure: BWSR Board Order

CC: Listed on next page.

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St. Louis River Watershed Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan
2023 - 2032

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St. Louis County
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Section 1. Executive Summary

Introduction

The St. Louis River is a large, geographically diverse, and culturally rich watershed in northeastern Minnesota. Its boundary touches five counties and one tribal reservation. The watershed is entirely on ceded tribal land including the 1854 and 1855 treaty areas. Including the Cloquet River watershed and Duluth Urban Area, this plan covers over 3000 square miles and includes over 500 lakes and 2000 miles of streams all flowing to Lake Superior. The watershed provides habitat for many vulnerable resources including wild rice, trout and sturgeon. While most of the watershed is forest or wetlands, many communities make their home here including the Mesabi Range communities, Cloquet and the city of Duluth. Mining, logging, farming and industry are historically and currently part of this watershed and have drastically altered the watershed from its original form. Even so, this area is rich in cultural and natural resources.

The goal of the St. Louis River One Watershed One Plan is to prioritize projects that will protect the watershed's valuable resources and target projects to help solve water quality problems. The result will be protection and restoration of our area's natural resources for future generations.

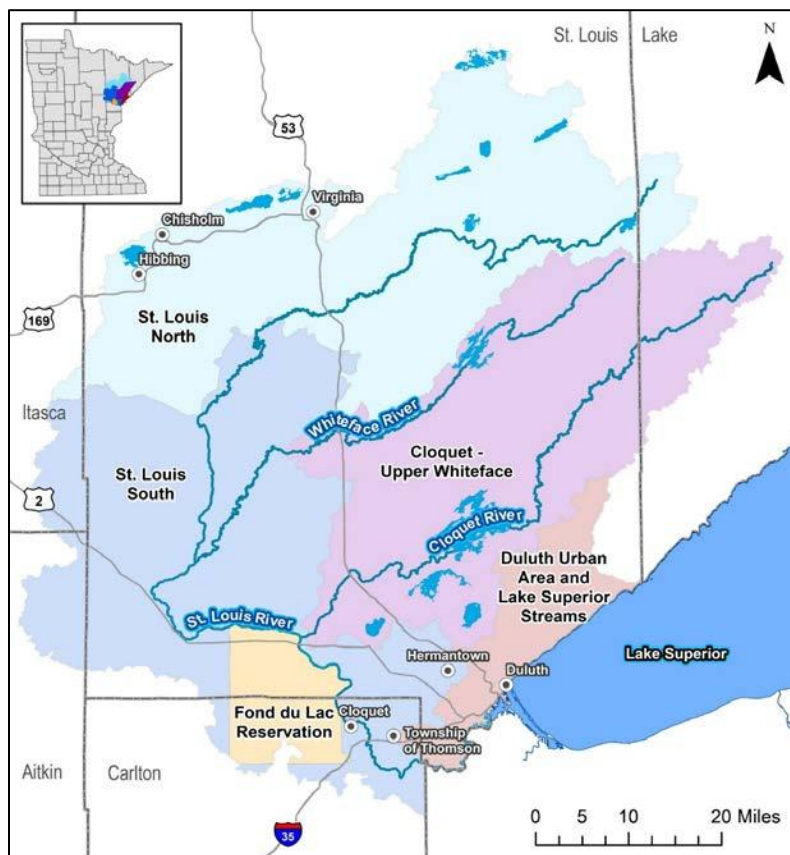


Figure 1-1. The St. Louis River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan planning area, which includes the St. Louis River Watershed, Cloquet River Watershed and Duluth Urban Area and Lake Superior Streams.

What is a Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan?

The purpose of this Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan is to guide decisions on what and where to complete projects that restore and protect natural resources. The actions of this plan are prioritized, targeted and measurable using current science. The plan relies completely on voluntary conservation. This plan does not create any new rules or ordinances or overrule any existing regulations.

Vision & Mission Statements

The vision statement was developed to describe what the planning committees hope to achieve in the future. A question from a public survey was: “What would you like the watershed to look like in 50 years?” From the responses, we were able to craft our common vision for the watershed.

A watershed where the natural and human communities are sustainable and resilient and economic opportunity is in harmony with ecosystem health

The mission of the plan was developed to provide a guide to what the plan will do. The overarching mission statement for this plan is:

To support, protect and restore the peaceful, beautiful, and unique natural resources of the St. Louis River Watershed

Purpose, Roles and Responsibilities

This Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan was developed following the guidelines established by the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR). This voluntary program and planning effort:

- Aligns water planning along watershed boundaries, and enhances existing county water plans
- Uses existing authorities and funding mechanisms
- Is based on the most current information and data available from state agencies
- Charts a course of actions for the next 10 years
- Monitors and tracks progress for achieving measurable goals
- Provides opportunity for bi-annual funding through a non-competitive process regulated by legislature control
- Provides opportunity for biannual funding grant allocations

A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the North and South St. Louis Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD), St. Louis County, Carlton SWCD, Carlton County, and Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa (Appendix A) was established as the first step in the planning process. A representative from each governmental unit was appointed to serve on the Policy Committee, which is the decision-making body for this plan. South St. Louis SWCD was the fiscal agent for this project.

An Advisory Committee was formed to provide valuable input to the planning process. For the St. Louis River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan, a wide range of stakeholders formed the Advisory Committee and drafted all the major plan content. At each milestone in the process, the Policy Committee provided input and approved the plan's progress (Figure 1-2).

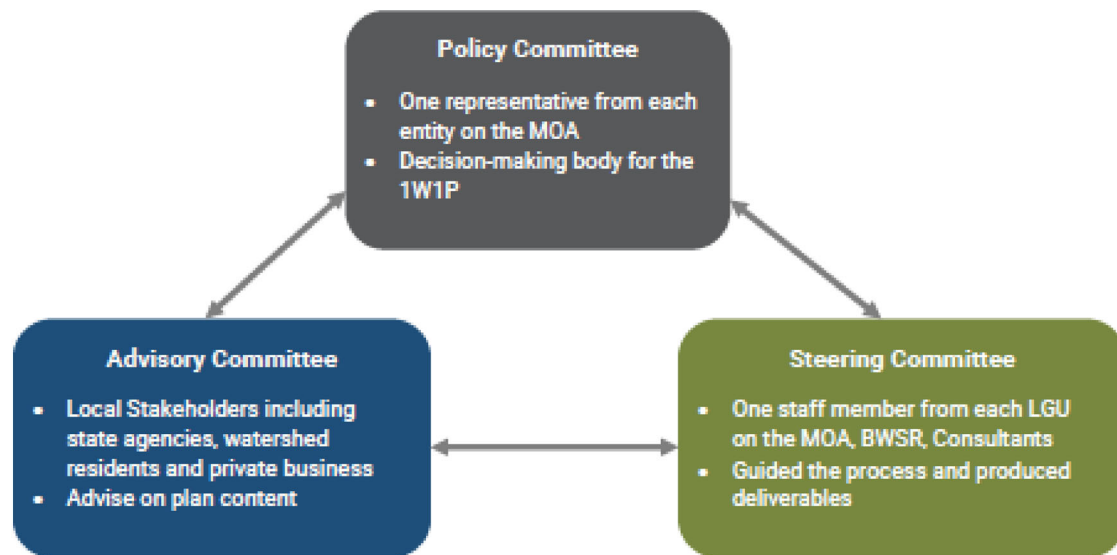


Figure 1-2. Three committees were involved with the planning process, each with unique roles.

Planning Approach

The backbone of this planning effort was over 100 previous studies and reports (see Appendix B for a full list). This data was used in concert with a public survey to help identify issues and opportunities in the watershed. The public kickoff was held virtually due to the Covid 19 pandemic. It included an on-line survey, personal phone calls, press releases, and a project website which included a video and Story Map to orient people to the Planning Area (see appendix C for more information). In addition, a 'notification of planning' was sent to planning partners on April 26, 2020. Partners' input was solicited from state agencies and 74 local governments (counties, cities, townships) regarding issues to be addressed by the Plan. The partners received input from the following entities:

- Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR)
- Minnesota Department of Health (MDH)
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MNDNR)
- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA)
- Duluth Natural Resource Commission
- City of Duluth
- Duluth Urban Watersheds Advisory Committee (DUWAC)

Prioritization was completed using the latest science including the Watershed Health Assessment Framework along with professional knowledge of the Advisory Committee. Additional tools included

the Social Vulnerability Index and the St. Louis, Cloquet and Duluth Urban Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies. The planning process for the St. Louis River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan is outlined in Figure 1-3.

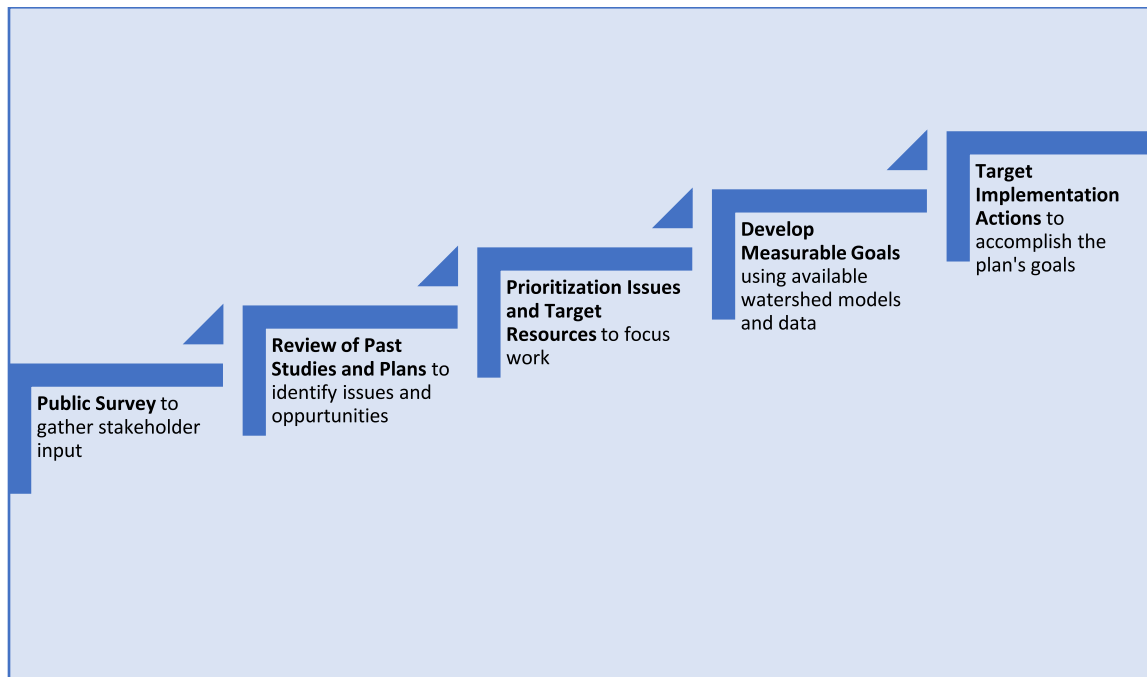


Figure 1-3. Steps in developing the St. Louis River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan.

Planning Areas

Given the size and range of ecosystems and land uses covered by the planning area, the planning partners split it into five sub-planning areas (see Figure 1-1). These planning areas are described below:

- **St. Louis River North** – The northern half of the St. Louis River watershed contains the second largest urban centers in the Planning Area including Hibbing, Virginia and numerous Mesabi Iron Range communities. This portion of the Planning Area presents unique challenges related to mining activities, economic growth and development pressure. Existing conservation efforts are focused on addressing shoreline impacts and forestry management.
- **St. Louis River South** – The southern half of the St. Louis River watershed includes the most agricultural activities in the planning area and associated ditched and drained resources. This area is influenced by all activities in the St. Louis River North, Cloquet-Upper Whiteface, and Fond du Lac sub-planning areas. There is growth and development pressure as cities expand and people move into this area. Existing conservation efforts include stormwater management planning, wetland restoration and protection, buffers, improved stream connectivity, and agricultural conservation practices.
- **Cloquet-Upper Whiteface** – This portion of the Planning Area is more pristine in nature and includes important recreation areas such as the Island Lake and Boulder Lake reservoirs and the Cloquet River, a state water trail. Most of the current work focuses on protecting the high-quality resources from impacts related to forest management and increasing development pressure. Additionally, both the Cloquet River and the Upper Whiteface River watersheds have

managed reservoirs which may require the same restoration and/or management considerations.

- **Duluth Urban Area and Lake Superior Streams** – This portion of the Planning Area contains the largest urban center, the City of Duluth, along with smaller urbanized communities including Rice Lake, Hermantown, and several townships. This area discharges directly to the St. Louis River Estuary and Lake Superior. This area is subject to increasing growth and development pressure. There is a combination of both high-quality resources that need protection (e.g., 16 urban trout streams in addition to Talmadge, French, and Sucker rivers) as well as resources that need restoration (e.g., Keene, Amity, and Miller Creeks). Existing conservation work in the area includes subwatershed plans, stream assessments, stormwater management practices and projects that increase connectivity.
- **Fond Du Lac Reservation** – The Fond du Lac Band is one of six Chippewa Indian Bands that make up the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe. Most of the Reservation is contained within the St. Louis River watershed, and the resources include Otter Creek, Big Lake, and several wild rice lakes. On-going conservation activities include monitoring, improving stream connectivity, implementing sustainable forestry practices, and maintaining ditches to protect wild rice waters. The Fond du Lac Reservation planning area is a Sovereign Nation, and as such has developed water quality standards and planning documents focused on the unique resources and needs of the Band.

The St. Louis River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan is unique in that it includes these five smaller sub-planning areas to better articulate and address the issues unique to each area. As this Plan illustrates, this sub-planning area structure is carried through the planning process – from the identification of priority areas and priority issues to the establishment of measurable goals and the identification of implementation activities. A more complete description of the planning area and the sub-planning areas is provided in the Land and Water Resources Narrative.

Priority Issues

A comprehensive list of priority issues was created during the planning process. These issues were divided into four categories:

- **Surface Water Quality** – the ability to recreate in/on, feed ourselves from, and otherwise enjoy healthy water bodies is an essential part of our culture in this region
- **Drinking Water Protection** – we hold water that we drink as particularly valuable—we need it to survive (people consistently name this as their most important connection to water)
- **Land use** – people’s decisions about what to do with and on the land, for economic, practical, or spiritual reasons, impact water and its value
- **Altered Hydrology** – what we want from water (more of it here, less of it there) causes us to move water, which changes its value for others and impacts other things that we value
- **Habitat** – there are particular species and landscapes that we value, and our choices about what (whose home) to protect impacts water

Table 1-1. The prioritized issue statement by category.

Issue Category	Priority Issue
Surface Water Quality	Pollutants (e.g., nutrients, bacteria, sediment, chloride, mercury, etc.) are a source of degradation leading to the impairment of aquatic life, aquatic consumption, and aquatic recreational uses.
	Failing septic systems can contaminate groundwater, surface waters and localized drinking water, leading to imminent threats to public health.
Drinking Water Protection	Drinking water quality and quantity from surface water and groundwater sources is threatened by land use activities and water appropriations.
Land Use	Urbanization, development, and road expansion can impact watershed health and increase nutrient and other pollutant loadings when stormwater is not effectively managed.
	Water- and land-based recreational activities can impact the quality of lakes and streams, stress wildlife, degrade habitats, and lead to conflict between different uses.
	Aggregate mining has the potential to alter natural hydrology, impacting baseflows for nearby streams and local and regional aquifers.
Altered Hydrology	Channel instability, excess sedimentation, and disruption of natural sediment transport and flow are present throughout the watershed.
	Loss of water storage, altered flows, and changes in watershed boundaries are the result of land development, drainage, and legacy mining that alter natural hydrologic processes.
	Obsolete and nonfunctioning dams alter natural hydrology, impede fish passage and aquatic organism movement, and affect stream temp.
Habitat	Forest fragmentation and loss can affect ecological community processes, community resilience and adaptive capacity, habitat connectivity and quality, species migration capacity, and surface water and groundwater quality.
	Aquatic, riparian, and shoreland habitats are impacted by land use changes, pollution, climate change and altered flows which can lead to degraded resources, incision and floodplain disconnection, impeded fish passage, and fragmentation.
	Aquatic and terrestrial invasive species pose a threat to individual habitats and overall biodiversity.

Goals

The priority issues were then used to develop the plan’s goals. Goals are a guide for what quantifiable changes the plan can accomplish in its 10-year lifespan and are based on calculations linked to water quality improvements and protection from future water quality risks. A series of Stakeholder and Advisory Committee meetings were held in the fall of 2021 to develop the plan’s goals. The approved goals for the plan are listed in table 1-2.

Table 1-2. The goals by issue category.

Issue Category	Goals
Surface Water Quality	Identify and address ground and surface water quality problems stemming from inadequate wastewater treatment by supporting the enforcement of SSTS ordinances and inventory and upgrade 40% of non-compliant systems in priority areas
	Complete farm projects on 50% of properties identified as needing enhancements (e.g., livestock exclusion, manure storage, pasture management) where there are bacteria impairments.
	60% of municipalities with identified bacteria impairments are implementing plans to reduce bacteria in surface waters.
	Manage chlorides reaching surface and ground water from road salts and water softener salts by ensuring 60% of municipalities have Smart Salt Certified Staff, 60% Communities achieved Level 2 Certified & education & outreach to 100% of priority landowners.
Drinking Water Protection	Protect groundwater quality by sealing 45 unused, unsealed wells watershed wide
Land Use	Promote the implementation of low impact development techniques to reduce stormwater runoff, volume and rate control in 50% of communities
	Educate, increase stewardship and mitigate the water quality impacts of recreational land users and landowners to natural resources at 5 high-use & high priority recreational areas.
	Evaluate impacts of aggregate mining at 100 % of high priority sites that have the potential to impact sensitive surface and ground water resources.
Altered Hydrology	Reconnect 55 miles of priority streams and tributaries to benefit aquatic life and improve water quality.
	Restore stream reaches that have been altered by human activity, including impounded, straightened, and incised stream reaches on 19,000 Linear Feet of high priority streams and tributaries.
	Maintain the current acre/feet of watershed storage by restoring wetlands in identified priority areas where they have been lost and/or altered due to ditching or development activities
Habitat	Protect & manage 16,000 acres of private owned forests in areas that protect surface water, drinking/groundwater water quality and riparian habitat.
	15,000 feet of shoreline in prioritized lakes and streams have natural buffers and near shore areas are protected and restored to reduce erosion using bank stabilization, bioengineering, etc. techniques.
	Protect/Restore 30% of high priority wild rice stands/populations (water levels, disturbance, shoreland development).
	Identify and manage 20 high priority sites/resources for invasive species.

Implementation Strategies

Implementation strategies were compiled from each sub-planning area from the WRAPS, previous plans and studies, and the state agencies responses to planning. In addition, actions were brainstormed at a series of Steering, Advisory, and Policy Committee meetings, along with a stakeholder meeting focusing on the estuary and urban areas.

The St. Louis River partners are consistently implementing actions to achieve watershed goals through many different efforts, but to fully implement this plan, additional funding and capacity over current levels will be needed. The implementation table displays funding in three different categories (Table 1-3). Funding categories are calculated by the best available estimates, and limitations in funding levels could limit the goals of this plan.

Table 1-3. Funding categories for the plan

Baseline	Other Funding Sources – Competitive Grants, Partner Funding
WBIF	Watershed Based Implementation Funding
Other	Local Baseline Funding

Plan Administration

The St. Louis River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan planning effort was conducted through a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between St. Louis River and Carlton Counties and SWCDs and Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa (Appendix E). The parties plan to form a new Memorandum of Agreement for administering the plan. The committees formed during the planning process (Figure 1.2) will continue into implementation. The Policy Committee is the decision-making body for implementation. They will be the coordinating body of the plan acting on behalf of the partnership members. The Advisory Committee and Steering Committee will continue to meet, review, and identify collaborative funding and project opportunities, complete the annual work plan, identify and apply for additional funding opportunities, update the Policy Committee on what projects are completed and where funding is spent, and implement the targeted implementation schedule. Fiscal and administrative duties for plan implementation will be assigned to an LGU through a Policy Committee decision as outlined in the formal agreement.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Southern Regional Committee

1. Des Moines River Watershed Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan – Ted Winter and Doug Goodrich – **DECISION ITEM**
2. Lac qui Parle – Yellow Bank Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan – Ted Winter and Jason Beckler – **DECISION ITEM**
3. Lower Minnesota River West Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan – Ted Winter, Jeremy Maul, and Ed Lenz – **DECISION ITEM**
4. Mississippi River – Winona/La Crescent Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan – Ted Winter and Adam Beilke – **DECISION ITEM**

BOARD MEETING AGENDA ITEM

AGENDA ITEM TITLE: Des Moines River Watershed Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan

Meeting Date: March 22, 2023

Agenda Category: Committee Recommendation New Business Old Business

Item Type: Decision Discussion Information Non-Public Data

Keywords for Electronic Searchability: Des Moines, Planning, 1W1P

Section/Region: Regional Operations/Southern

Contact: Ed Lenz

Prepared by: Douglas Goodrich

Reviewed by: Southern Regional Committee(s)
Ted Winter, Southern Regional Chair;

Presented by: Doug Goodrich

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

Approval of the Des Moines River Watershed Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan as recommended by the Southern Regional Committee.

LINKS TO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[Des Moines River Watershed One Watershed, One Plan \(murraycountymn.gov\)](http://murraycountymn.gov)

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

The Des Moines River planning area includes all waters of the state that are tributaries to the Greater Des Moines River Basin and include the Upper West Des Moines River and Upper East Des Moines River major watersheds in Minnesota. The Des Moines River Watershed Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan was the resultant plan associated with the “2020” round of One Watershed, One Plan planning grant applicants. On June 24, 2020, the Des Moines River Watershed Partnership was formed under a memorandum of agreement involving thirteen

LGUs (The Counties of Cottonwood, Jackson, Martin, Murray, Nobles, and Lyon by and through their respective County Board of Commissioners; the Cottonwood, Jackson, Martin, Murray, Nobles, and Lyon Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD), by and through their respective Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors; and the Heron Lake Watershed District, by and through its Board of Managers) 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 Des Moines River planning area.

On January 9, 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. The Planning Partnership has responded to all comments received and incorporated appropriate revisions to the final Plan. The State agencies recommended that BWSR approve the Plan as submitted.

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

On March 13, 2023, the Southern Regional Committee (Committee) met to review and discuss the Plan. The Committee's decision was to recommend approval of the Des Moines River Watershed Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan to the full Board per the attached draft Order.

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 Des Moines River Watershed Partnership, pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103B.101, Subdivision 14 and 103B.801.

**ORDER
APPROVING
COMPREHENSIVE
WATERSHED
MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Whereas, the Policy Committee of the Des Moines River Watershed Partnership submitted a Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (Plan) to the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (Board) on January 6, 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

1. **Partnership Establishment.** The Partnership was established in the spring of 2020 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 Cottonwood, Jackson, Lyon, Murray, Nobles, and Martin by and through their respective County Board of Commissioners; the Cottonwood, Jackson, Lyon, Murray, Nobles, and Martin Soil and Water Conservation Districts, by and through their respective Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors; and the Heron Lake Watershed District, by and through their Board of Managers.
2. **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 Resolution #19-41 the Plan Content Requirements policies.
3. **Nature of the Watershed.** The Des Moines River Watershed Planning Area is a 1,537 square mile area consisting of the tributaries of the Greater Des Moines River Basin within the state of Minnesota; the only portion of the major tributary of the Mississippi River outside of the state of Iowa where the confluence is in Keokuk. The planning area resides in southwest Minnesota on the Couteau du Prairies from just east of Pipestone and 30-50 miles south of Marshall and forms the far border of Buffalo

Ridge as it transitions into Iowa. The planning area encompasses a majority of Murray County and Jackson County, and lesser portions of Cottonwood, Nobles, Martin, Lyon, and Pipestone Counties. The area is largely rural and most of the populous residing in the cities of Windom, Jackson, Fulda, and Slayton. The area land use is predominantly row cropped as is like the rest of southern and western Minnesota. Livestock operations, feedlots, and pasturelands are also a main component of the economy of the area. Groundwater is hard to come by in parts of the area and cooperative water supplies are used to supplement groundwater that is produced. Many of the groundwater sources are susceptible to contamination due to surface water/groundwater connectivity. Lakes are prevalent in the planning area especially in the headwaters of the Des Moines River in Murray County and the Heron Lake Watershed District areas of Murray County and Jackson County. Plan priorities for this planning region reflect the importance of those area resources.

4. **Plan Development.** The Partnership initiated the plan development process for the One Watershed, One Plan on May 2021 by notifying the designated state plan review agencies, local government units, and other identified stakeholders that it was starting the planning process and soliciting each plan review agency's priority issues, summaries of relevant water management goals, and water resource information. The Missouri Watershed Planning Partnership held two events for stakeholder and public involvement. The effort was officially kicked off on July 21, 2021 in Windom and July 22, 2021 in Slayton during a pair of open houses where citizens, stakeholders, elected and appointed officials, and staff were given the opportunity to share information, identify priority concerns, and provide comments for the planning process. This input was used in the development and prioritization of resource concerns, as well as strategies and actions to address these concerns and achieve measurability. The numerical measurable goals of the project were based on a Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies (WRAPS) for the Des Moines River Watershed planning area, groundwater test results as well as TMDLs, local water plans, and local stakeholder input. Rationale for goals were underpinned in total or in part by results from modelling through the Prioritize, Target, and Measure Application (PTMApp) and spatial analysis as well. The PTMApp was used to identify the magnitude and distribution of potential pollution sources across the planning area, along with targeting locations for implementing practices to address issues impacting the resources of concern. Planning partners were then able 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, provided an estimated pace of progress that can be expected through the ten-year planning period. Implementation categories and initiatives were then detailed to identify where funds will be utilized to accomplish the strategies and actions from the targeted implementation schedule. The draft Plan was approved by the Policy Committee and then distributed to individuals, communities, Plan Review Authorities, and other stakeholders a 60-day review process that ended on September 21, 2022. Written comments were received, considered, and responded to by the Partnership and approved by the Policy Committee. The Policy Committee held public hearings in Windom on October 7, 2022. No additional comments were brought forth by the public. The final draft Plan and all required materials were submitted and officially received by the Board on January 9, 2023.
5. **Plan Review.** On January 9, 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. Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA): MDA provided initial response to the planning process. During the 60 day comment period the MDA provided comments requesting revisions to the Plan including inclusion of MDA as partners in selected items of the implementation schedule and notes on goals and methods outlined in the appendices. MDA confirmed receipt of the Plan at the final formal review and responded that they did not have additional comments; recommends approval.
- B. Minnesota Department of Health (MDH): MDH provided input throughout the planning process and participated in Advisory Committee meetings. During the 60-day review and comment period, MDH provided comments requesting revisions to the Plan the addition of the Red Rock Rural Water Drinking Water Supply Management Areas in relative figures of the plan as well as clarification of activities related to MDH in the activity tables. MDH confirmed receipt of the Plan at the final formal review and stated they had no additional comments; recommends approval.
- C. Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR): DNR provided input throughout the planning process and participated in Advisory Committee meetings. While the 60-day review period was underway, DNR provided many comments and most comments resulted in a change to the Plan. DNR confirmed receipt of the Plan at the final formal review. They were satisfied with the responses to issues raised during review stating that actions in the plan shall help 1) improve groundwater quantity and quality, 2) allow more water storage goals to be more focused and feature fully funded efforts, 3) promote stream and river stability through storage efforts, 4) act on better drainage cause and effect awareness among LGU staff and landowners when considering public and private projects, and 5) underpin dam-reconstruction projects in the watershed. No additional comments will be necessary; recommend that MN BWSR approve the plan. No additional comments will be necessary. DNR recommends MN BWSRs approval the plan.
- D. Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA): MPCA provided input throughout the planning process and participated in Advisory Committee meetings. Responses to the 60-day review and comment period by MPCA included comments correcting action item duties as local as opposed to MPCA for septic review. MPCA confirmed receipt of the Plan at the final formal review. No additional comments will be necessary. MPCA recommends MN BWSRs approval the plan.
- E. Minnesota Environmental Quality Board: No comments were received.
- F. Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources regional staff: BWSR staff provided early input to the planning process, participated in the Advisory Committee meetings, and provided assistance to the Planning Work Group during the plan development process. BWSR staff also took advantage of the opportunity to attend the public involvement activities held by the Partnership during the planning process. During the 60-day review, BWSR staff commended the Partnership for collaborating together in such an inclusive planning process and coordination of such a large number of participants. BWSR staff recommends approval of the plan.
- G. Local Review: The partnership sought input from local units of government and local associations dealing with soil and water resources and habitat. No comments were officially received from these entities during the 60 or 90 day period.
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 through the use of 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) structural practices in each of the four planning regions.
 - A priority level include: Drinking Water (public and private), Streams and Rivers, Rural Land Stewardship (soil health), and storage goals. B level priorities include: Functioning Wetlands, Terrestrial and Shoreland Habitat Fragmentation and Loss, Land Stewardship Related to Riparian/Bank Stability, Drainage Systems, and Aquatic Invasive Species.
 - Implementation schedules for structural and management practices are tailored to each of the five planning regions of the plan
 - An estimated \$21,169,000 is needed to fund the prioritized activities of the Plan over its ten-year lifespan, a figure which does not factor Watershed Based Implementation Funds (WBIF) but is assumed in the plan in the state funding source description.
 - Included in the appendices of the plan include some background on spatial analysis methodology in Appendix E (Subwatershed Prioritization) and Appendix H (An altered hydrology analysis). Appendix F displays the different funding scenarios for the plan areas and the progress toward goals estimated using priority activities. Appendix “E” contains a series of maps and prioritization scenarios for HUC-12 watersheds to be used as a tool for prioritization of implementation efforts.
7. **South Regional Committee.** On March 13, 2023, the South Regional Committee met to review and discuss the Plan. Those in attendance from the Board’s Committee were Ted Winter, Eunice Biel, Jeff Berg (MDA), Kelly Kirkpatrick, Scott Roemhildt (DNR), and Mark Wettlaufer (MDH). Board staff in attendance were Southern Regional Manager Ed Lenz; Board Conservationists Adam Bielke and Jeremy Maul; Clean Water Specialists Mark Hiles and Shaina Keseley; Administrative Specialist Carla Swanson-Cullen; and 1W1P Coordinator Julie Westerlund. The representatives from the Partnership and presenting were Sarah Soderholm (Murray County) and Ashley Brenke (Martin SWCD) and others present for discussion were Jean Christoffels (Murray County), Consultant Rachel Olm (Houston Engineering Inc.) and Rick Anderson (Commissioner, Lyon County). 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.
8. This Plan will be in effect for a ten-year period until March 23, 2033.

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 Missouri River Watershed Partnership pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103B.101, Subd. 14 and 103B.801 and Board Resolution #18-14.
3. The Des Moines River Watershed 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 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 Des Moines River Watershed Partnership, received January 9, 2023.

Dated at St. Paul, Minnesota, this 22nd of March, 2023.

MINNESOTA BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES

BY: Gerald Van Amburg, Chair



March 22, 2023

Des Moines River Watershed Planning Partnership
c/o Sarah Soderholm, Murray County
2500 28th Street
P.O. Box 57
Slayton, MN 56172

RE: Approval of the Des Moines River Watershed Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan

Dear Des Moines River Watershed Planning Group:

The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) is pleased to inform you the Missouri River Watershed Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (Plan) developed through the One Watershed, One Plan program was approved at its regular meeting held on March 22, 2023. 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 23, 2033. 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 development of 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 Douglas Goodrich of our staff at 507-920-6031 or douglas.goodrich@state.mn.us for further assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

Gerald Van Amburg, Chair
Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources

Enclosure: BWSR Board Order

CC: Listed on next page.

CC: Margaret Wagner, MDA (via email)
Kevin Hauth, MDA (via email)
Barbara Weisman, DNR (via email)
Korey Woodley, DNR (via email)
Tom Kresko, DNR (via email)
Carrie Raber, MDH (via email)
Amanda Strommer, MDH (via email)
Jeff Risberg, MPCA (via email)
Katherine Pekarek-Smith, MPCA (via email)
Bryan Spindler, MPCA (via email)
Erik Dahl, EQB (via email)
Ed Lenz, BWSR (via email)
Douglas Goodrich, BWSR (via email)
Julie Westerlund, BWSR (via email)

Equal Opportunity Employer



Executive Summary



Executive Summary

The Des Moines River Watershed, located in southwestern Minnesota, is a primarily agricultural watershed rich with unique natural features and diverse water resources. The watershed drains 983,719 acres of land, spanning portions of seven counties, including Cottonwood, Jackson, Martin, Murray, Nobles, Lyon, and Pipestone (Figure ES.1). Two main river systems form the main arteries of this watershed: the West Fork Des Moines River and the East Fork Des Moines River. The West Fork Des Moines River starts in Lake Shetek in the headwaters of the watershed and flows southeast into Iowa, passing through the cities of Windom, Jackson, and others. The East Fork Des Moines River also drains southeast, flowing into the West Fork across the Iowa border.

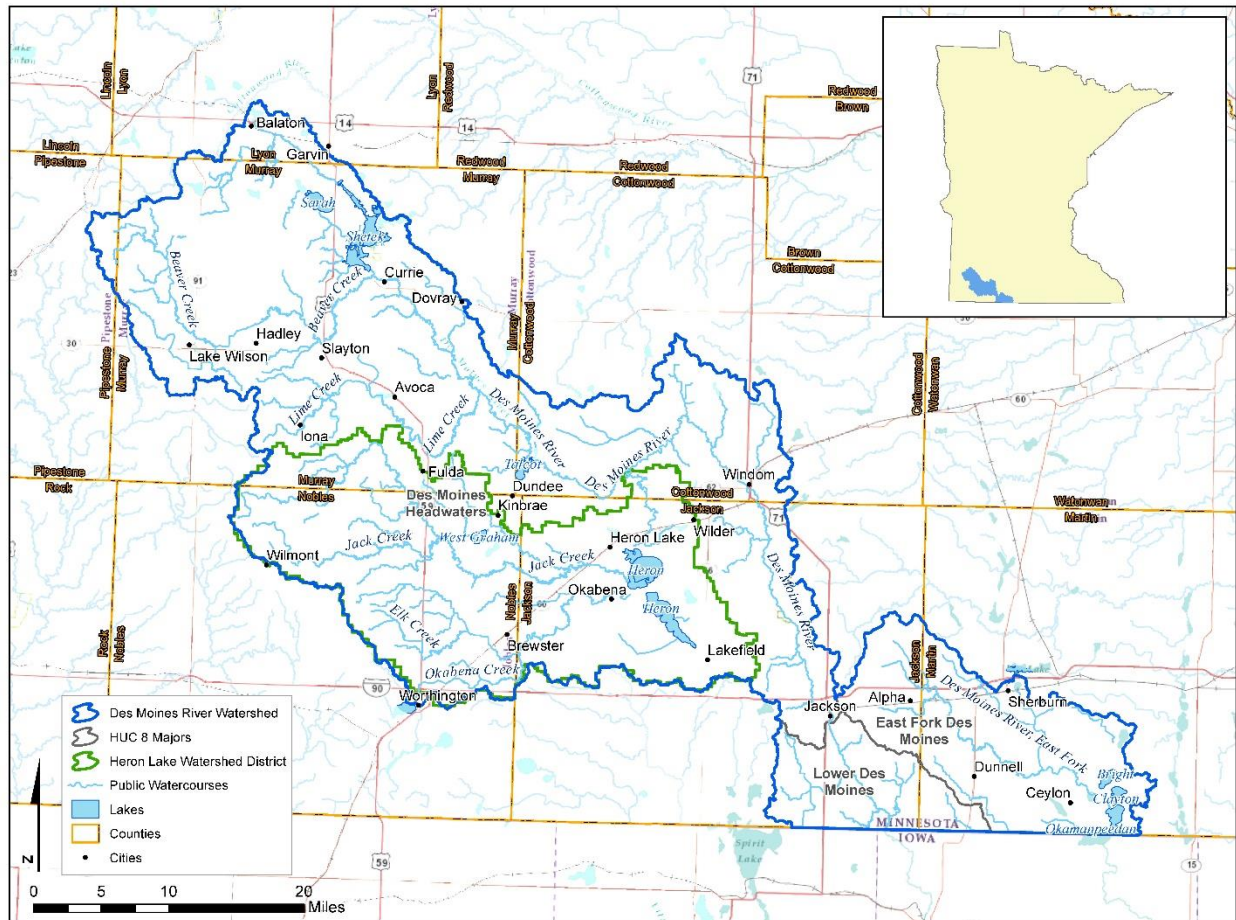


Figure ES.1. The Des Moines River Watershed.

The Des Moines River Watershed includes three major watersheds (USGS Hydrologic Unit Code [HUC]-08 size): the Headwaters of the Des Moines River (HUC 07100001), Lower Des Moines River (HUC 07100002), and the East Fork Des Moines River (HUC 07100003) (Figure ES.1). This Des Moines Comprehensive Water Management Plan (CWMP) was developed in 2021-2022 through the One Watershed, One Plan (1W1P) program administered by the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR), Minnesota Statutes §103B.801.

The 1W1P program was designed to align water planning along watershed boundaries, not county or other jurisdictional boundaries as was done in the past. Prior to this single plan, each of the seven counties within this



watershed, as well as the Heron Lake Watershed District, had water-related plans that covered portions of this watershed. Water is connected and ignores county boundaries, so to truly manage the resource holistically, a watershed scale is most efficient and effective. The purpose of this plan is to target management and projects to protect and restore the watershed’s most valuable resources.

The Des Moines River Watershed is diverse, with locations of natural resources and issues changing from north to south based on topography, land use, geology, and natural features (e.g., lakes, prairies, etc.). For purposes of this plan, the larger Des Moines River Watershed was divided into five “planning regions” shown in Figure ES.2 and described in Section 1. Introduction. These planning regions are referenced throughout the plan to better prioritize, target, and measure management efforts in the watershed over the next ten years.

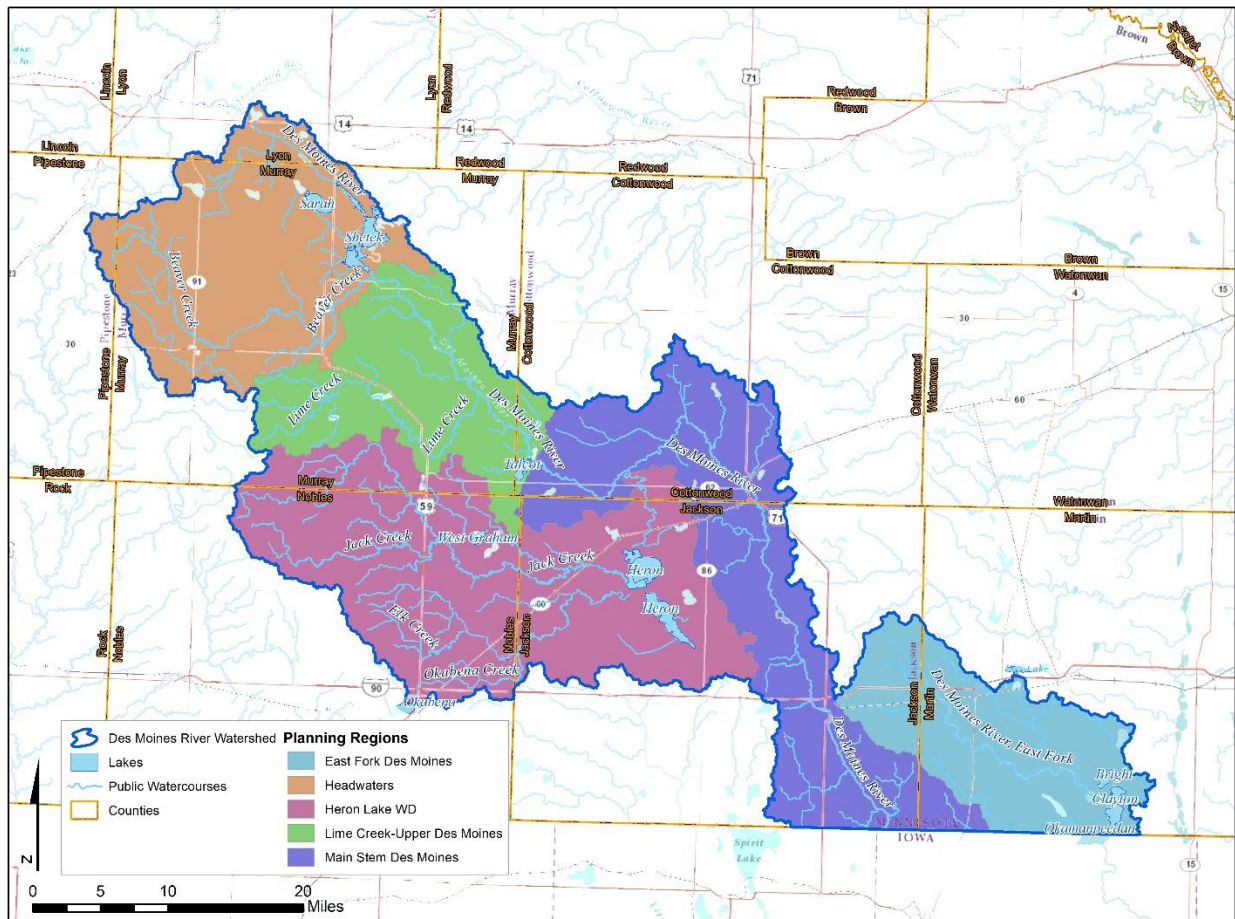


Figure ES.2. Planning regions in the Des Moines River Watershed.

Plan Partners

The Des Moines River Watershed 1W1P began with a memorandum of agreement (MOA) between all local planning entities in the watershed involved in the planning process. This included:

- The counties of Cottonwood, Jackson, Martin, Murray, Nobles, and Lyon,
- The Cottonwood, Jackson, Martin, Murray, Nobles, and Lyon Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs), and
- The Heron Lake Watershed District.



As the jurisdictional area of Pipestone County and SWCD within the watershed planning area is so small, Pipestone elected to serve the planning process from an advisory capacity.

The planning effort was guided by three committees: the Steering Committee, Advisory Committee, and Policy Committee (Figure ES.3). The Policy Committee, made up of one representative from each entity in the 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 state agencies and generated the content in this plan. The Advisory Committee consisted of additional agencies and local stakeholders and contributed to plan content in an advisory role.

The entities implementing this CWMP are collectively known as the Des Moines River Watershed Partnership (Partnership). The Steering and Advisory Committees of the planning process were consolidated for purposes of plan implementation. The Policy Committee continues to function as the decision-making body of plan implementation, with roles summarized in Figure ES.3 and expanded on in Section 7. Plan Administration and Coordination.

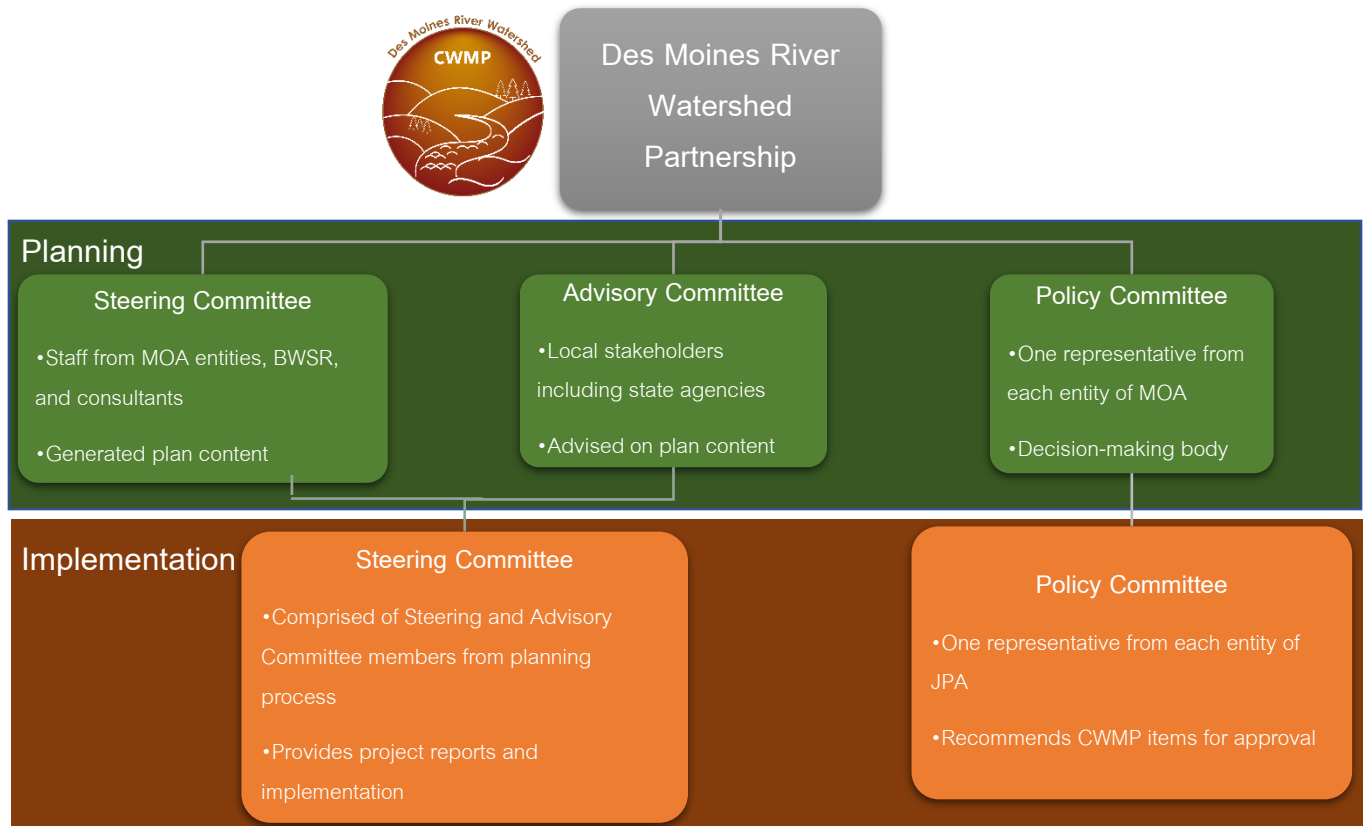


Figure ES.3. Local committee roles for planning and implementing the Des Moines River Watershed CWMP

Priority Issues

This plan identifies and prioritizes issues that planning partners will focus on for the next ten years. To begin the planning effort, natural resource issues present in existing plans, studies, and data were aggregated. These issues were then expanded to include natural resource issues identified in comment letters and responses from the public. In total, a list of 32 issues was generated, organized by resource category below (Figure ES.4):



Figure ES.4. Resource categories used to organize issues in the Des Moines River Watershed CWMP

Due to realistic staff time and funding limitations, this plan prioritizes issues to focus on during a 10-year effort. Issues were prioritized as Priority A, Priority B, or Priority C based on input from two public meetings and feedback from planning committees. The three priority levels are summarized below (Table ES.1).

Table ES.1: Definitions for Priority A, B, and C issues.



Priority A	We intend to address these issues first within the lifespan of this plan. These are the most important!
Priority B	We intend to address some of these issues throughout the lifespan of this plan. Still important, but less of a priority.
Priority C	We may address some of these issues through collecting additional data or funding throughout the lifespan of the plan. This issue may also be addressed through partner groups. Once again, still important, but the lowest local priority issues.

Priority A and B issues are the focus of this plan. They have goals set for them in Section 4. Measurable Goals, and actions assigned to address them in Section 5. Targeted Implementation. They are summarized below.




Priority A Issues

Category	Resource	Issue Statement
	Aquifer	Protection of existing groundwater recharge areas and promotion of additional recharge and infiltration to augment limited groundwater supplies.
	Drinking Water	Protection of drinking water quality from contaminants, including nitrates and pesticides, especially in areas with groundwater and surface water interaction.
	Drinking Water	Protection of drinking water quality from contamination from unused wells and noncompliant septic systems.
	Streams, Ditches	Peak flow from altered hydrology (tile and drainage ditches) and its impact on channel stability, infiltration rates, and water quality degradation.
	Streams	Excess nitrates and ammonia in streams impacting aquatic life.
	Lakes & Streams	Excess delivery of sediment from upland wind and water erosion to lakes and streams impacting aquatic life and recreation.



Category	Resource	Issue Statement
	Lakes & Streams	Excess phosphorus loading from runoff and resuspension in lakes causing nuisance algal blooms, impacting aquatic life and recreation.
	Rural and Urban Communities	Insufficient storage on the landscape, especially in upland areas, and its impact on flooding.
	Agriculture	Low crop diversity and lack of conservation tillage or residue management on fields, leaving soil exposed and impacting soil health.

Priority B Issues

Category	Resource	Issue Statement
	Streams	Need for continued enhancement of buffers along ditches, stream systems, and non-protected waters, impacting water quality and habitat.
	Streams	Streambank and in-channel erosion contributing sediment to water, impacting water quality, and habitat.
	Streams	Livestock access to streams causing degradation in water quality and instability to streambanks.
	Lakes & Streams	Urban/impervious runoff, stormwater runoff, and other urban point sources impacting downstream water quality conditions.
	Lakes	Inadequate lake shoreline habitat to provide habitat and protect against shoreline erosion.
	Drainage Ditches	Uncoordinated and inadequate drainage management to meet drainage network needs and promote water quality.
	Rural and Urban Communities	Increasing extremes from a changing climate (drought and increasing precipitation patterns), and the need to plan for resiliency.
	Wetlands	Loss and degradation of wetlands and its impact on wildlife habitat and water storage.
	Upland Habitat	Degradation and fragmentation of wildlife habitat, including native prairie, woodlands, grasslands, and other areas





Measurable Goals

Good resource management – and the ability to demonstrate progress – relies on setting measurable goals for locally important issues and resources. As such, measurable goals are set for every Priority A and Priority B issue in the Des Moines River Watershed. Goals were established for two different time scales:

- Desired future condition goals describe the resource condition (water quality, water availability, habitat quality) planning partners are striving to attain, regardless of timeframe.
- Ten-year goals describe the quantifiable change in resource condition that planning partners expect to achieve during implementation of this plan.

This plan includes 14 measurable goals that collectively address priority issues. The measurable goals are presented as a series of 2-page summaries for each goal, each detailing:

- The priority issue(s) the goal addresses;
- Background information about the issue and goal;
- The desired future condition and ten-year goals; and
- A map of specific resources and/or subwatersheds that are the geographic focus of initial implementation efforts for that goal.

An example goal is presented in **Figure ES-5**. Goals are set at a watershed-wide scale. However, the prominence of priority issues changes by planning region (and even by subwatershed). To reflect this, planning region milestones were established for each goal so each planning region has a target to make progress toward the watershed-wide goal (**Figure ES.6**). Issues that are more important in one planning region will have a larger milestone goal.

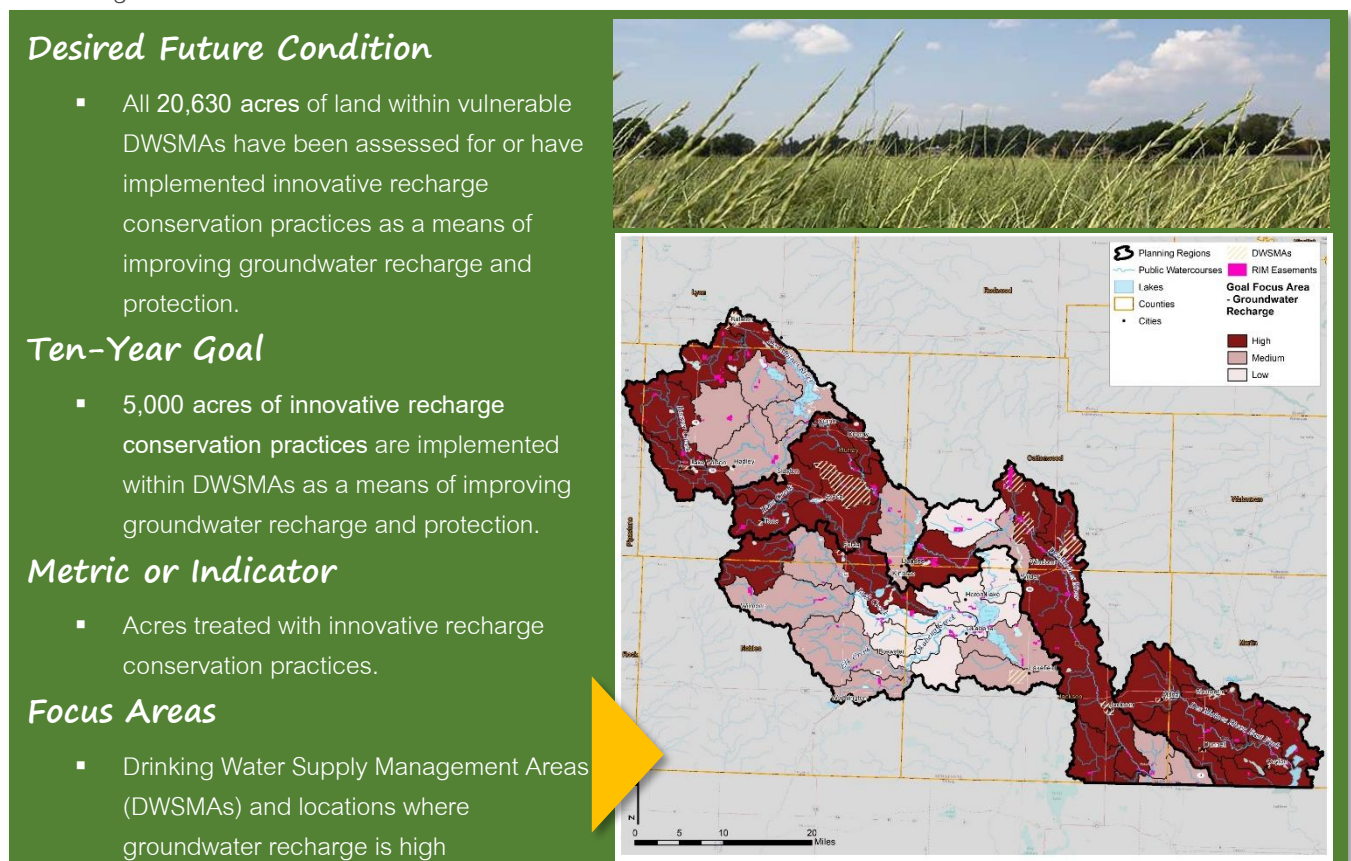
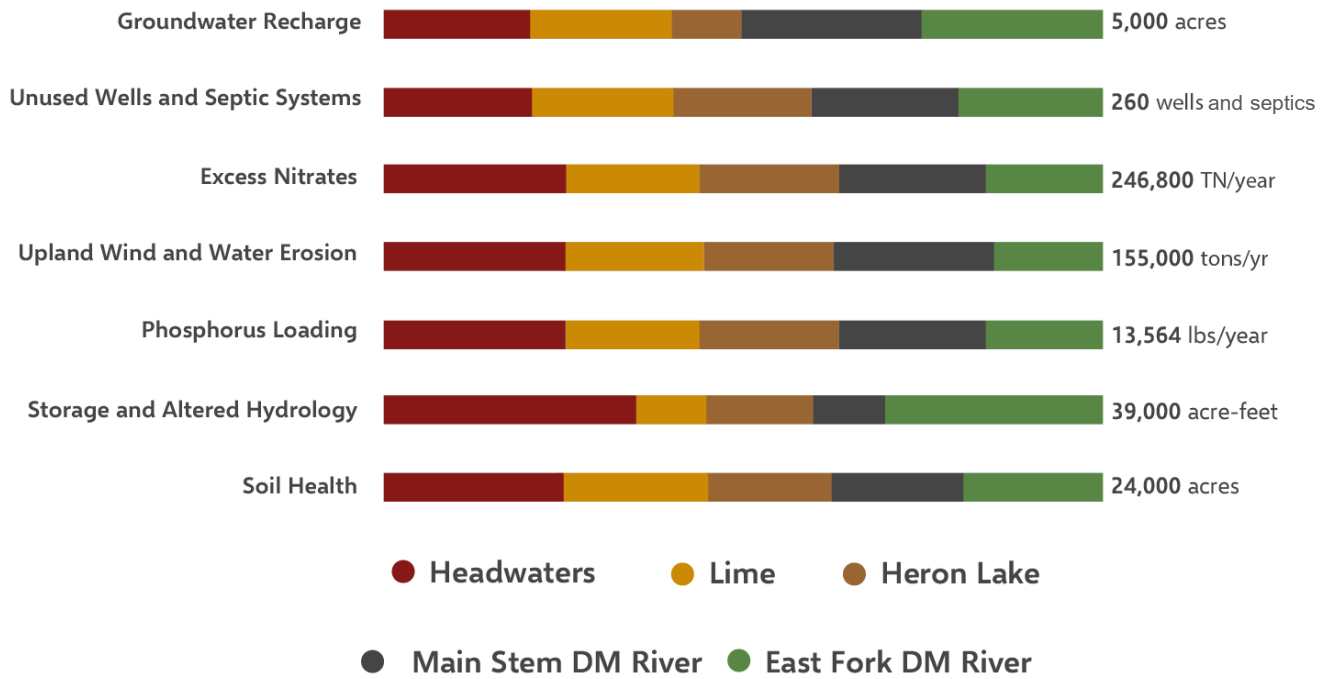


Figure ES.5. Example goal summary for the Des Moines River Watershed





Priority A Goals Overview



Priority B Goals Overview

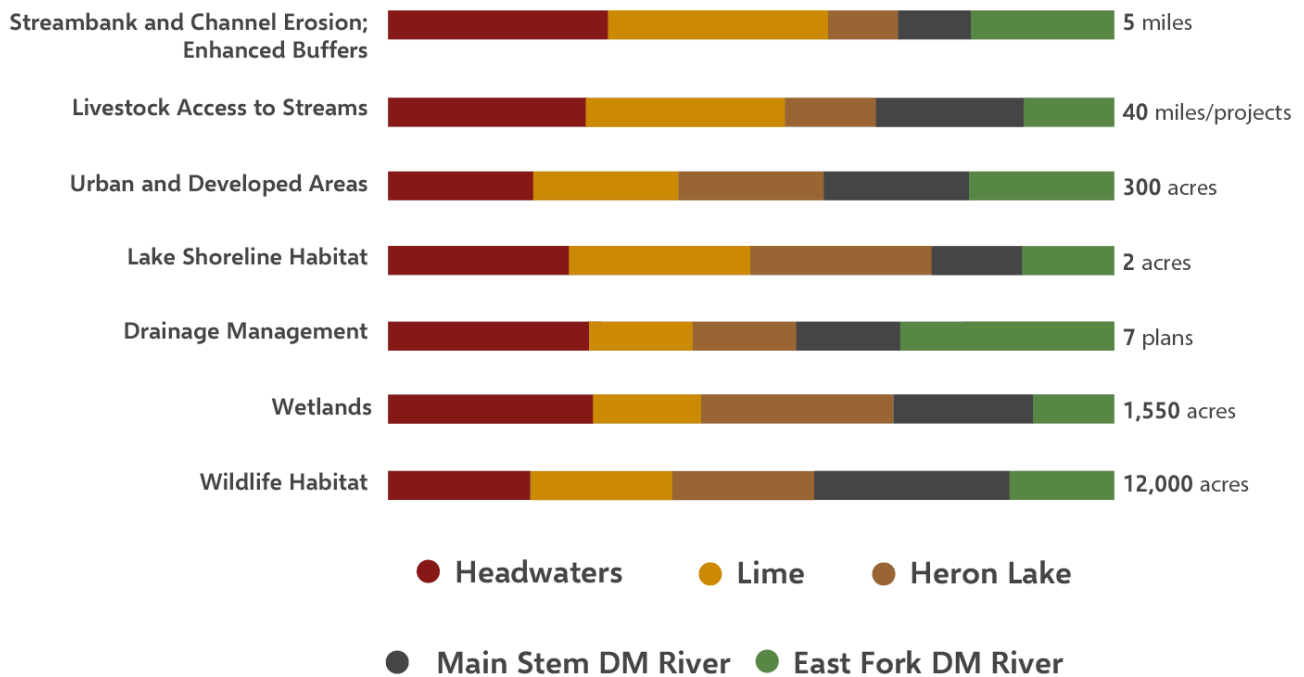


Figure ES.6. Watershed Priority A and B measurable 10-year goals with planning region milestones



Targeted Implementation

This plan includes a series of Action Tables that detail the actions that will be taken to make progress toward planning region milestones and measurable goals. These tables also include information about where and when actions will be targeted, how those actions will be measured, and how much it will cost, and what actions need to be tracked for reporting progress back toward goals. Action Tables can be found in **Section 5. Targeted Implementation**. Similar types of actions are grouped into one of five implementation programs, as shown in **Figure ES.7**, and described in **Section 6. Implementation Programs**.



Figure ES.7: Implementation programs in the Des Moines River Watershed with example actions that are summarized in Action Tables



Table ES.2 shows the estimated costs for implementing actions in the plan. Costs are also included for the operations and maintenance of waterways and waterway infrastructure at or near their current levels, for regulatory actions, and for plan administration and administrative costs related to implementation. This plan assumes local, state, and/or federal fiscal support remains unchanged.

Table ES.2. Estimated cost of implementing the Des Moines River CWMP (assumes Current Funding + Watershed Based Implementation Funding [WBIF])

	Assumes Current Funding + WBIF	
	Est. Annual Cost	Est. 10-Year Cost
Implementation Programs		
Projects and Practices	\$1,217,700	\$12,176,000
Capital Improvement Projects	\$35,900	\$359,000
Education and Outreach	\$260,900	\$2,609,000
Research and Assessments	\$103,100	\$1,031,000
Regulatory Administration	\$242,800	\$2,428,000
Additional Expenses		
Operations and Maintenance	\$186,600	\$1,866,000
Administration	\$70,000	\$700,000
Total	\$2,117,000	\$21,169,000

Lastly, Figure ES.8 summarizes the estimated benefits from implementing the Des Moines River Watershed CWMP. All benefits summarized are related to attaining the ten-year measurable goals.

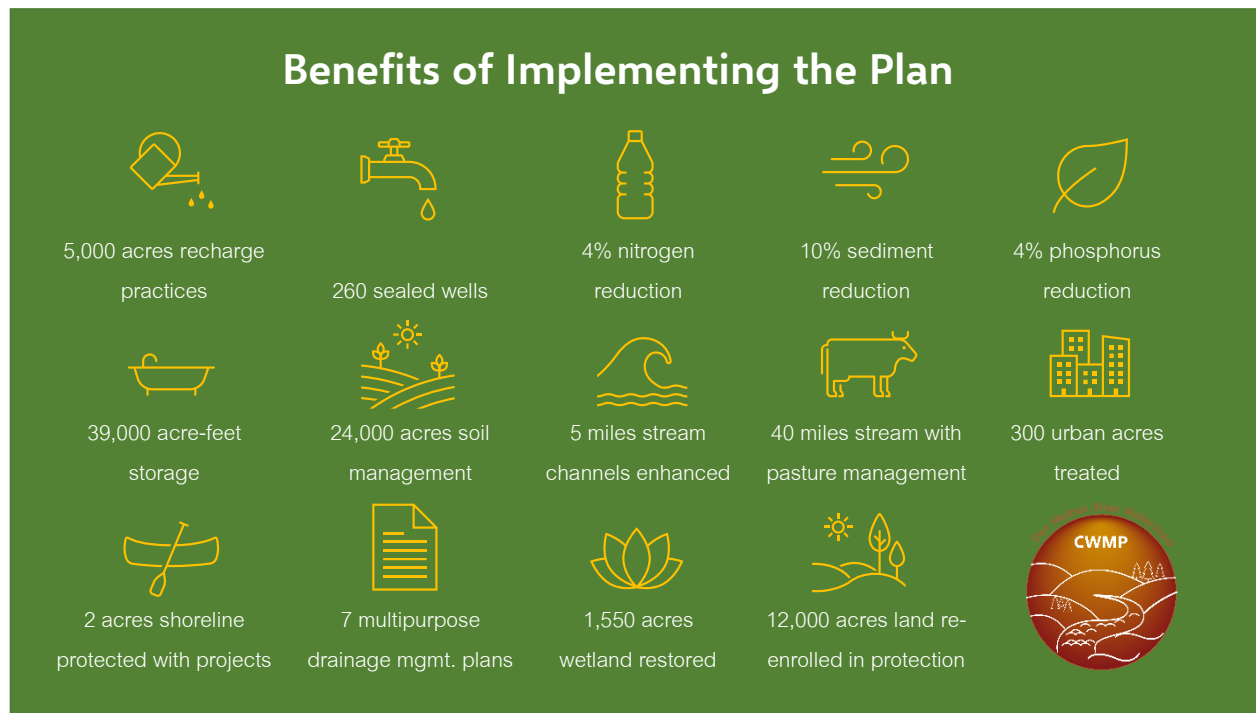


Figure ES.8. Estimated benefits from implementing the Des Moines River Watershed CWMP

BOARD MEETING AGENDA ITEM

AGENDA ITEM TITLE: Lac qui Parle – Yellow Bank Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan

Meeting Date: March 22, 2023

Agenda Category: Committee Recommendation New Business Old Business

Item Type: Decision Discussion Information

Keywords for Electronic Searchability: Lac qui Parle – Yellow Bank One Watershed, One Plan

Section/Region: Southern Region

Contact: Ed Lenz

Prepared by: Jason Beckler

Reviewed by: Southern Regional Committee Committee(s)

Presented by: Ted Winter & Jason Beckler

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 Lac qui Parle – Yellow Bank Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan as recommended by the Southern Regional Committee.

LINKS TO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Plan is on the Yellow Medicine Soil and Water Conservation District website:

- Plan Weblink: https://c77eb742-d51b-45c5-a663-ed5d7988357e.filesusr.com/ugd/8da049_dff84617fef8450d89fbc289a1e55391.pdf

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

Lac qui Parle – Yellow Bank Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (Plan) – On March 31, 2021 the Lac qui Parle – Yellow Bank (LqP – YB) 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 January 26, 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 Lac qui Parle – Yellow Bank Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (Plan) to BWSR on September 22, 2022, for 60-day comment period. A public hearing was held December 15, 2022, and the Policy Committee submitted the Plan for approval January 6, 2023. The Southern Regional Committee (Committee) met on March 13, 2023, 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 Lac qui Parle – Yellow Bank, pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103B.101, Subdivision 14 and 103B.801.

**ORDER
APPROVING
COMPREHENSIVE
WATERSHED
MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Whereas, the Policy Committee of the Lac qui Parle – Yellow Bank (LqP -YB) Partnership submitted a Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (Plan) to the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (Board) on January 6, 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

1. **Partnership Establishment.** The Partnership was established in 2021 through adoption of a Memorandum of Agreement for the purposes of developing a Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan. The membership of the Partnership includes: Lac qui Parle County, Lincoln County, Yellow Medicine County, Lac qui Parle Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), Lincoln SWCD, Yellow Medicine SWCD, Lac qui Parle – Yellow Bank Watershed District and Area II Minnesota River Basin Projects.
2. **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.
3. **Nature of the Watershed.** The LqP-YB Watershed planning area encompasses the Minnesota portions of one major (HUC 08) watershed, the Lac qui Parle, and four HUC 10 subwatersheds, the North and South Fork Yellow Bank subwatersheds, the Marsh Lake subwatershed, and the Lac qui Parle Reservoir subwatershed. Minnesota contains roughly 760 square miles (486,400 acres) of the total area for the Lac qui Parle River Watershed (approximately 1,100 square miles or 704,000 acres), while South Dakota's portion is approximately 340 square miles (217,600 acres). The planning region contains

steep slopes with 1,070 foot drop in elevation in the first 60 miles of drainage while the rest of the planning region is relatively flat. The plan makes note that prior to European settlement the LqP – YB watershed was populated by the Yankton and Yanktonia Dakota (Sioux, Očhéthi Šakówiŋ) tribes with a landscape consisting of tallgrass prairie, wetlands, floodplain forests and pothole lakes that were left behind after the ice sheets receded. Current land use is predominantly agriculture lands, with 78% of the planning area being used as cropland which influenced how the planning partners developed measurable goals and associated action items. The watershed contains 203 watercourses, 157 public water basins and 5 Drinking Water Management Supply Areas.

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 surface water quality and quantity, groundwater quality and quantity including public and private water supplies, improve soil health, and mitigate negative impacts that may result from current land use in the watershed.
5. **Plan Review.** On January 6, 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 that included being added as partner for monitoring of groundwater and requested additional information for irrigation groundwater education events. MDA commended the partners for their targeted actions focused on drinking water protection for public water suppliers and private wells. 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): During the 60-day comment period MDH requested revision to the Plans goal scale and additional information for the decreased groundwater recharge and supply priority issue. MDH also requested that the priority issue statements be reviewed to ensure consistent language throughout the plan. MDH commended the partners for including drinking water as a priority concern. 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 LqP – YB partners that will be beneficial during implementation. DNR commented that partners should work with drainage authorities to help mitigate impacts that may result from projects that could alter hydrology. 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 asked that the partners focus their

education and outreach activities to the high priority planning regions. 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. Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR): 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 ten different planning regions which were defined based on land use, hydrology, and geology. The ten planning regions are Yellow Bank River, Minnesota River, Lac qui Parle River, Tenmile Creek, West Branch Lac qui Parle River, Lac qui Parle River South, Cobb Creek, Lazarus Creek, Canby Creek, and Headwaters Lac qui Parle River.
- West Branch Lac qui Parle River, Cobb Creek, and Headwaters Lac qui Parle River planning regions were designated High Priority planning regions. The High Priority planning regions will be the areas the partners will focus first with the Medium Priority planning regions being “on-deck” and the Low Priority planning regions are not going to be the focus during the ten-year lifespan of the Plan.
- The plan development process generated twenty-five issues, organized in six resource categories (Drinking Water, Agricultural Lands, Rural/Urban Areas, Streams/Drainage Systems, Aquifer, Aquatic Habitat) using existing reports, plans, studies, data, and stakeholder input. Each issue was assigned as one of four priority levels within each planning region. Eight issues were identified as a “high” priority ranking in at least one planning region and will be the focus of initial implementation efforts. Five 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. Six 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 six measurable goals that collectively address the thirteen 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.
- Included in the Appendix are a series of maps showing possible locations to implement priority Best Management Practices (BMPs) for each planning region. These maps are to be used as a tool for prioritization of outreach and target implementation efforts in the planning regions.
- 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 \$945,801. When all funding levels are combined, an estimated \$23,616,229 is needed to fully fund the Plan over its ten-year lifespan.

- 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.** The Board adopted the One Watershed, One Plan Suggested Boundary Map on April 23, 2014. The map established suggested planning boundaries for plans developed through the One Watershed, One Plan program. The Partnership requested a boundary adjustment to portions of Lac qui Parle watershed and Upper Minnesota River Watershed, which includes the planning boundary #18 (Lac qui Parle Watershed) and planning boundary #16 (part of the Lac qui Parle – Yellow Bank Watershed District) as indicated on the Board adopted Suggested Boundary Map. The Partnership 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 March 13, 2023, 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 Adam Beilke and Jeremy Maul, and Clean Water Specialists Mark Hiles. The representatives from the Partnership were Amy Bacigalupo, Dave Craigmile, David Johnson, Dale Sterzinger, Rhyan Schicker, Drew Kessler Mitch Enderson, Kerry Netzke, and Trudy Hastad. 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 24, 2032.

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 Lac qui Parle – Yellow Bank pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103B.101, Subd. 14 and 103B.801 and Board Resolution #18-14.
3. The Lac qui Parle – Yellow Bank 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 portions of Lac qui Parle watershed and Upper Minnesota River Watershed, which includes the planning boundary #18 (Lac qui Parle Watershed) and planning boundary #16 (part of the Lac qui Parle – Yellow Bank Watershed

District) 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 Lac qui Parle – Yellow Bank, dated March 22, 2023.

Dated at St. Paul, Minnesota, this 22 of March, 2023.

MINNESOTA BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES

BY: Gerald Van Amburg, Chair

Monday, March 13, 2023

Lac qui Parle – Yellow Bank Partnership
c/o Tyler Knutson, Director
1000 10th Avenue, Suite 3 PO Box 545
Clarkfield, MN 56223

RE: Approval of the Lac qui Parle – Yellow Bank Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan

Dear Lac qui Parle – Yellow Bank Partnership:

The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) is pleased to inform you the Lac qui Parle – Yellow Bank Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (Plan) was approved at its regular meeting held on March 22, 2023. 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 24, 2032. 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 Jason Beckler of our staff at 507-829-8204 or Jason.Beckler@state.mn.us for further assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

Gerald Van Amburg , Chair
Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources

Enclosure: BWSR Board Order

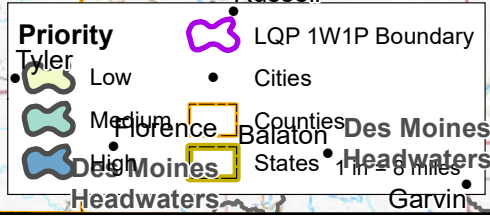
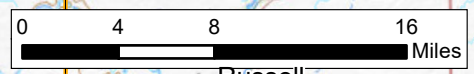
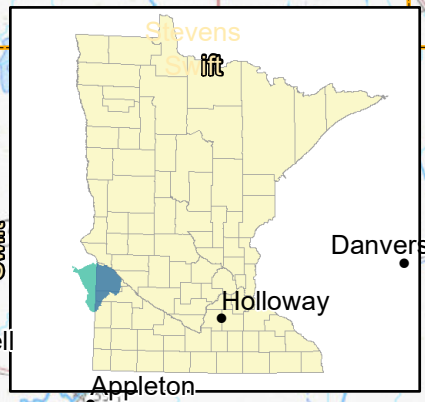
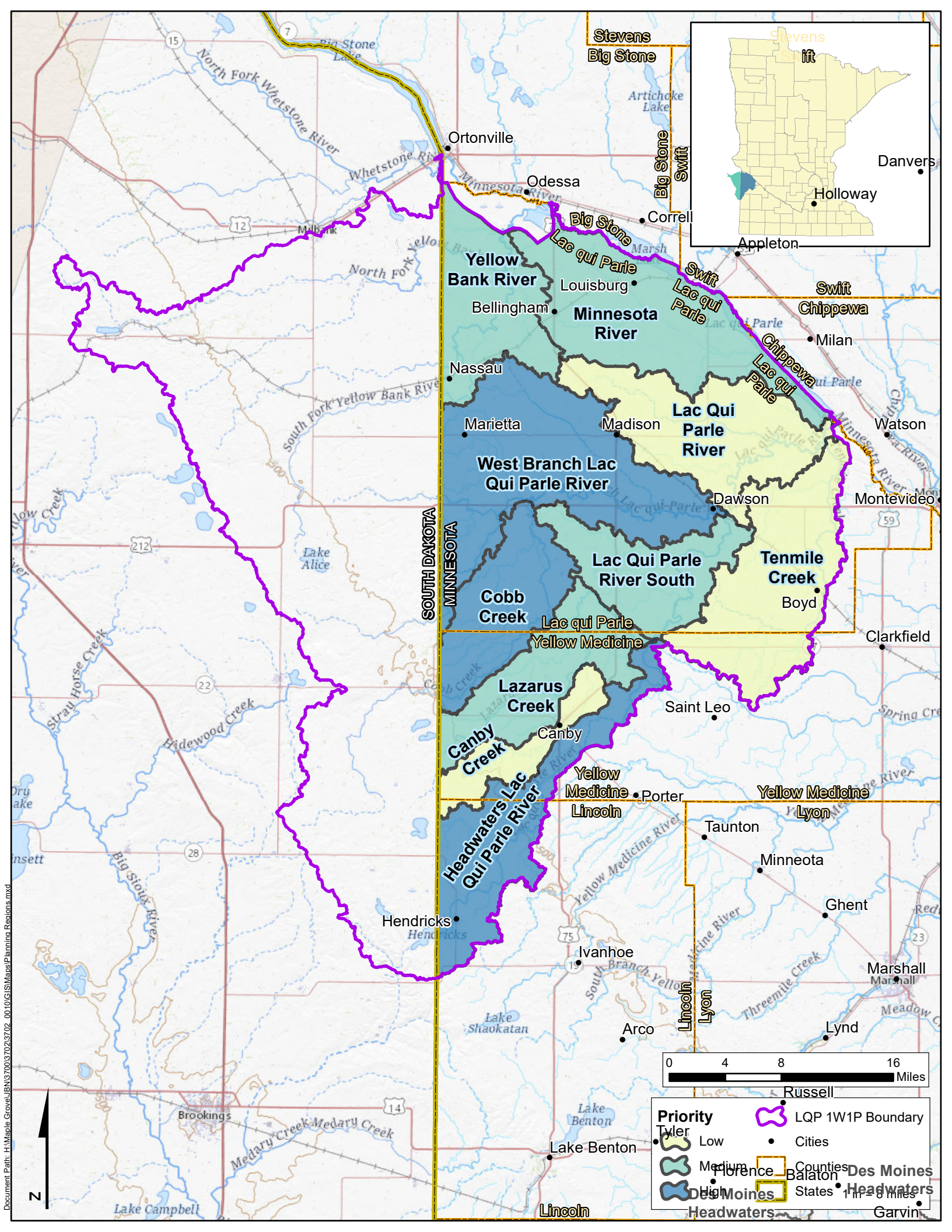
CC: Ryan Lemickson, MDA (via email)
Amanda Strommer, MDH (via email)
Ryan Bjerke, DNR (via email)
Katherine Pekarek-Scott, MPCA (via email)
Ed Lenz, BWSR Regional Manager (via email)
Jason Beckler, BWSR Board Conservationist (via email)
Rachel Mueller, BWSR (file copy)

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A. Executive Summary



A. Executive Summary

The Lac qui Parle – Yellow Bank (LqP-YB) Watershed in southwest Minnesota is an agriculturally rich watershed with fertile soils, gently rolling topography, and surface waters enjoyed for recreation. With approximately 10,000 residents, the LqP-YB Watershed overlaps three counties: Lac qui Parle County, Yellow Medicine County, and Lincoln County. Approximately 30.9% of the LqP-YB Watershed is in South Dakota, and many of the surface waters originate in South Dakota. The LqP-YB Watershed encompasses the Lac qui Parle Watershed (HUC 08) and four smaller watersheds, the North and South Fork Yellow Bank Watersheds, the Marsh Lake Watershed, and the Lac qui Parle Reservoir Watershed (HUC 10s).

Water flowing on the landscape does not follow traditional political boundaries. Because of this, resource management at a watershed scale rather than at political ones has become necessary to manage water resources. The LqP-YB Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (CWMP) planning area was created based on hydrological flow patterns, watershed districts, boundaries with South Dakota, as well as preexisting neighboring watershed boundaries (**Figure A.1**).

The resulting CWMP contains 970 square miles or 622,700 acres. The towns located within the Watershed include Bellingham, Boyd, Burr, Canby, Dawson, Hendricks, Lac qui Parle Village, Louisburg, Madison, Marietta, Nassau, and Rosen.

The LqP-YB CWMP was developed between 2021-2023 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, the LqP-YB 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:

- Lac qui Parle, Lincoln, and Yellow Medicine Counties
- Lac qui Parle, Lincoln, and Yellow Medicine SWCDs
- The Lac qui Parle-Yellow Bank Watershed District (LqP-YB WD)
- The Area II Minnesota River Basin Projects

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

- **Policy Committee** which is comprised of board members from counties, SWCDs, LqP-YB 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 Team** which are composed of members from SWCDs, LqP-YB WD, counties, landowners, city and township officials, and other stakeholders including state agencies

such as BWSR, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), 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 Team will provide reports and develop working plans.

Planning Regions

Due to the varied topography and surface water features throughout the LqP-YB Watershed, planning regions were developed to best implement priorities in an effective manner. The 10 planning regions in the CWMP can be seen in **Figure A.1** and were generated based on land use, hydrology, geology, and vegetation. Implementation of this plan will occur based on these defined planning regions derived from issue prioritization which has occurred in each region.

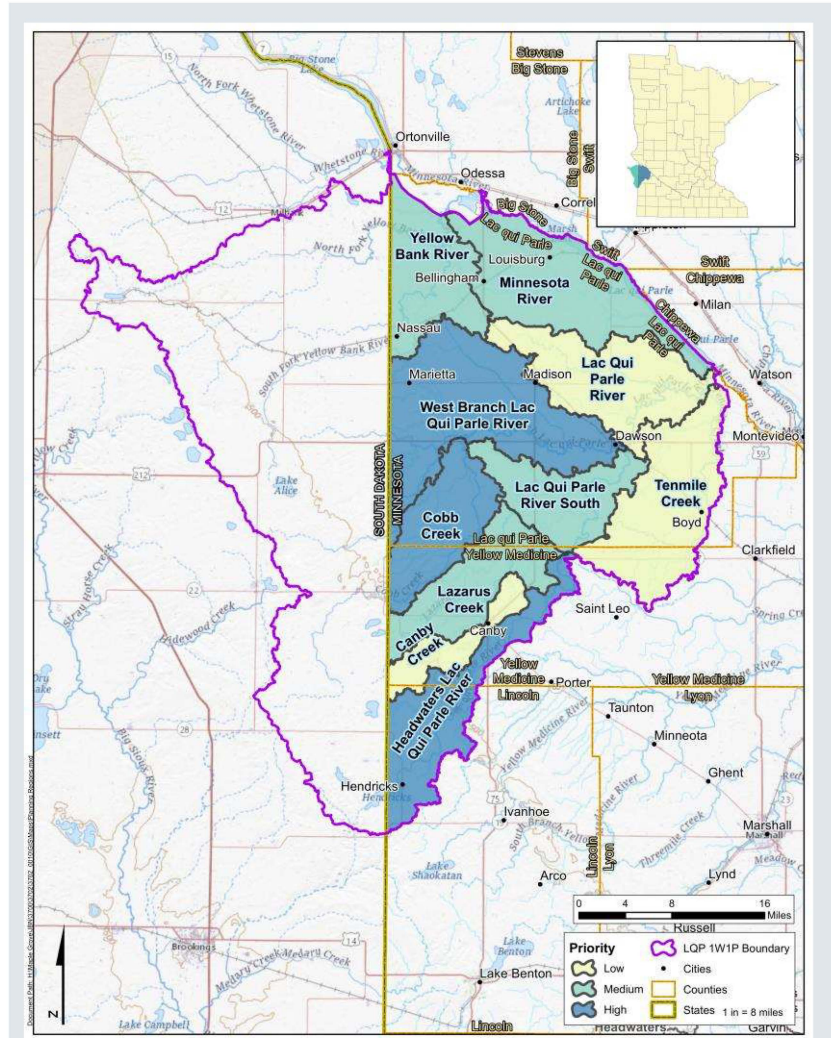


Figure A.1. LqP-YB Planning Regions with issue prioritization (see **Section D**).

Issue Prioritization

To identify and prioritize issues both on a watershed and planning region scale, a planning process occurred with public input. Public participation consisted of an online survey and a kick-off meeting where members of the community could provide feedback about resource concerns in the watershed to begin identifying issues. Public participation identified four areas of resource concern: groundwater (including drinking water), surface water (including lakes and streams, erosion), land stewardship (including soil health and planning for future climate), and habitat (including wildlife and wetlands) (**Figure A.2**).


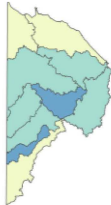




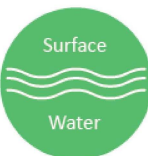

Watershed-wide issues were then selected by the

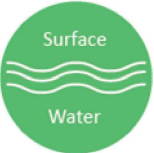

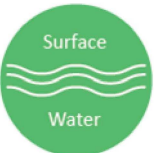

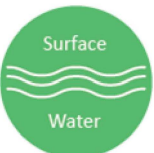

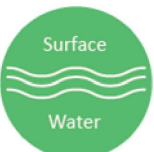

committees based on public feedback, existing studies, and current local knowledge of concerns and divided into four priority levels: high (**Table A.1**), medium-high (**Table A.2**), medium, and low. High priority items are the initial focus for plan implementation, medium-high issues will be addressed with additional funding, medium priority items will receive attention if time and funding allow, and low priority issues will likely not be addressed in the 10-year timeframe of the plan but may be moved up in priority in plan updates based on current needs. The high and medium-high watershed-wide issues were then geographically prioritized as high, medium, and low priority for each planning region based on the needs of each planning region (**Table A.1**, **Table A.2**). This geographic prioritization was completed to address the variation in the prevalence of issues across the planning area.



High Priority Issues







Table A.1. Planning Region Prioritization Key: ● = high priority ● = medium priority ● = low priority

Resource Category	Resource	Issue	Planning Region Prioritization	Description
	Drinking Water	Groundwater contamination of public water supplies		Groundwater contamination, specifically of public water supplies including arsenic, nitrates, and pesticides
	Agricultural Lands	Soil health		Reduction in soil organic matter resulting in less water-holding capacity, lack of rainfall infiltration, higher erosion and nutrient loss, as well as lower agricultural productivity
	Rural and Urban Areas	Changes to land use, land cover, and land management that affect habitat, drainage, flooding, and erosion		Increases in land use changes such as removing vegetation, creating impervious surfaces, and removing surface and subsurface storage areas that have impacts to resources in the planning area. Through the stakeholder engagement process for this plan, the planning partners identified this issue as a need to maintain and improve current conditions. There is not a perception that large amounts of conversion are currently occurring.
	Streams and Drainage Systems	Excess runoff that transports contaminants to surface waters		Excess runoff from increased precipitation or rapid snowmelt causing impacts to downstream waters (e.g., <i>E. coli</i> , sedimentation, nutrients, pesticides) that may drive water quality impairments.

	<p>Streams and Drainage Systems</p>	<p>Surface water quality impairments (DO, AqL, AqR, pH, <i>E. coli</i>, mercury, biological)</p>		<p>Aquatic life and recreation impairments caused by TSS, DO, P, N, pH, <i>E. coli</i>, mercury, temperature, and other contaminants.</p>
	<p>Streams and Drainage Systems</p>	<p>Connectivity and hydrologic changes that degrade streams and drainage systems</p>		<p>Hydrologic changes such as altered hydrology, dams, bridges, and culverts causing flow conditions (e.g., low base flow, increased peak, and base flows) that degrade the quality streams, and longitudinal (upstream and downstream) connectivity issues for aquatic fish and macroinvertebrates.</p>
	<p>Streams and Drainage Systems</p>	<p>In-channel erosion contributing to impacts on water quality and habitat</p>		<p>Includes streambank erosion, channel stability, and channelization that have a negative impact on water quality, infrastructure and aquatic habitat associated with lateral (floodplain) connectivity.</p>
	<p>Streams and Drainage Systems</p>	<p>Accelerated erosion leading to sedimentation and other water quality issues</p>		<p>Accelerated soil, wind, and stormwater erosion leading to turbidity, sedimentation, and other water quality issues. Notwithstanding, many in the watershed have a long history of adopting conservation measures.</p>

Medium-High Priority Issues

Table A.2. Planning Region Prioritization Key: ● = high priority ● = medium priority ● = low priority

Resource Category	Resource	Issue	Planning Region Prioritization	Description
	Aquifer	Decreased groundwater recharge and supply		Any decrease in groundwater or aquifer availability that may result in an impact to water supplies (quantity).
	Drinking Water	Contamination of private wells		Pollutants entering into a private well that may impact the use of the water supply.
	Rural and Urban Areas	Flood damages to private and public lands		Flood damage to crops, ag land, urban areas, infrastructure, and Lac qui Parle State Park resulting from channel debris, land use changes, improperly sized culverts and bridges, and other causes.



Rural and Urban Areas

Subsurface sewage treatment systems and small communities with wastewater needs



Small communities with wastewater needs and failing septic systems contributing *E. coli* to surface water.



Aquatic Habitat

Loss of aquatic habitat



A decrease in the quantity or quality of available aquatic habitat. May be driven by landscape changes that result in changes to aquatic systems such as dams, and undersized or perched culvert crossings. May result in impacts to aquatic species and result in biological impairments.

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 10-year timeframe of this plan will ensure its success. To do this, specific, measurable outcomes were set to track progress (Table A.3). Like issue prioritization, measurable goals were set on both on the watershed scale and for each planning region.

Prioritize, Target, and Measure Application (PTMApp), a geographic information system (GIS) tool, was used in this plan to develop goals and identify the locations of practices that would both be effective in cost and outcome over the 10-year course of this plan. PTMApp projections allow for setting of specific goals related to surface waters, sediment, nutrient loading, and altered hydrology. Locations identified as priority areas by the Committees were a focus of these goals. The Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) and Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy (WRAPS) were utilized in PTMApp projections and helped define measurable goals for the CWMP. Below is an example of a watershed-wide goal. More specific goals for each planning region were also developed using PTMApp, with resource specific targets identified.

Example Goal

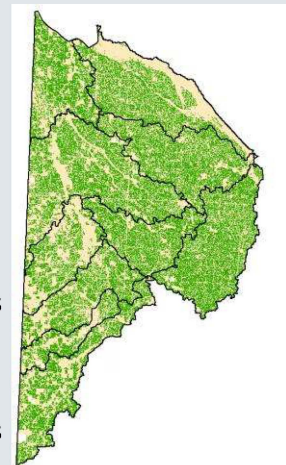
Soil Health (Watershed-Wide Goal)

Short-Term:

- Treat 40,000 acres of working lands, including acres with existing conservation practices
- Implement soil health practices and increase soil organic matter on 20% of acres

Long-Term:

- Treat all acres in watershed, including acres with existing conservation practices
- Implement soil health practices and increase soil organic matter on 70% of acres



Example Table. Multiple benefits addressed through progress towards the watershed-wide soil health goal

Priority Issue	Assessing Progress
Groundwater contamination of public water supplies	Reduced nitrate and other contaminants concentrations
Excess runoff that transports contaminants to surface waters	acre-feet of storage
Water quality impairments (DO, AqL, AqR, pH, E. coli, mercury, biological)	tons/year of sediment lbs/year of total phosphorus lbs/year of total nitrogen
Accelerated erosion leading to sedimentation and other water quality issues	tons/year of sediment
Flood damages to private and public lands	acre/feet of storage

Table A.3. Measurable goals outlined in **Section D.**

Measurable Goal	Short-Term Goal(s)	Long-Term Goal(s)
Soil Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Treat 40,000 acres of working lands, including acres with existing conservation practices ○ Implement soil health practices and increase soil organic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Treat all acres in watershed, including acres with existing conservation practices ○ Implement soil health practices and increase soil organic matter on 70% of acres
Testing and Sealing of Private Wells	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Conduct one outreach event per year about well testing and sealing for private well owners ○ Host one well testing clinic per year ○ Seal 10 wells per year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provide resources and host well testing clinics for private well users to have their wells tested for Coliform Bacteria (yearly), Nitrate (biennially), Arsenic, Lead and Manganese (all once) ○ Seal all unused wells
Subsurface Sewage Treatment Systems and Small Communities with Wastewater Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Replace 10 failing or imminent public health threat SSTS per year ○ Metric: Number of replaced SSTS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Replace all failing or imminent public health threat SSTS
Decreased groundwater recharge and supply	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Host two education and outreach events per year focused on ways to conserve groundwater 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Monitor and maintain aquifer levels over time
Groundwater contamination of public water supplies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 20 Outreach events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continued outreach ○ Testing of drinking water supplies to ensure no degradation
Changes to land use, land cover, and land management that affect habitat, drainage, flooding, and erosion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increase continuous cover by 5%, while maintaining existing cover 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increase continuous cover by 10%, while maintaining existing cover
Excess runoff that transports contaminants to surface waters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increase storage by 0.05 inch (2,934 acre-feet)* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increase storage by 0.39 inch (22,880 acre-feet)*

Measurable Goal	Short-Term Goal(s)	Long-Term Goal(s)
Surface water quality impairments (DO, AqL, AqR, pH, <i>E. coli</i> , mercury, biological)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Phosphorus – 10% reduction in annual loading (6,384 lbs/year) ○ Bacteria – 10% reduction in bacteria concentration ○ Total Nitrogen – 10% reduction in annual loading (140,764 lbs/year) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Phosphorus – 35% reduction in annual loading (22,343 lbs/year) ○ Bacteria – 52% reduction in bacteria concentration ○ Total Nitrogen – 45% reduction in annual loading (633,436 lbs/year)
Connectivity and hydrologic changes that degrade streams and drainage systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Modify 10% of dams, culverts, and bridges that inhibit aquatic life ○ 9 miles of channel restored 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ All dams, culverts, and bridges allow for fish passage ○ Restore all degraded channel beds
In-channel erosion contributing to impacts on water quality and habitat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 9 miles of channel restoration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Restore all degraded channel beds
Accelerated erosion leading to sedimentation and other water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reduce sediment by 10% or about 5,134 tons/year to reduce stressors on biological impairments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reduce sediment by 25% or about 12,834 tons/year to reduce stressors on biological impairments
Flood damages to private and public lands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increase storage by 0.05 inch (2,934 acre-feet) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increase storage by 0.39 inch (22,880 acre-feet)
Loss of Aquatic Habitat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 5 miles of channel restoration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Compare and reassess aquatic habitat based on MPCA’s updated WRAPS

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, to 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 A.3**.

Figure A.3. Implementation Programs for implementing the targeted actions described in this plan section. These programs are full described in Section F. Plan Implementation Programs.



The plan will be implemented to the degree that funding is acquired over the course of the 10-year implementation period. The pace and process of implementation will be decided by local groups. There are three funding levels for the CWMP, described in **Table A.4**. The Partnership expects to implement at a Funding Level 2 and costs were developed in **Table A.5** with this as the assumed level of funding.

Table A.4. Funding Levels for the Lac qui Parle-Yellow Bank Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan

Funding Level	Name	Description
1	Current Funding	This level is based largely upon existing local funding sources. It assumes that this funding will continue during plan implementation.
2	Current Funding + WBIF	This level assumes current funding continues with the addition of an additional \$625,000 per biennium (or \$312,500/year) from WBIF.
3	Added Resources	This plan includes targeted actions that exceed the resources identified in funding levels 1 and 2. Funding level 3 acknowledges that resources beyond current funding and WBIF will be needed to achieve the targeted progress towards measurable goals.

Table A.5. Estimated cost of implementing the Lac qui Parle-Yellow Bank CWMP under Funding Level 2 (Current Funding + WBIF)

Funding Level 2 Current + WBIF		
Implementation Programs	Est. Annual Cost	
Projects and Practices	\$465,600	\$4,656,000
Capital Improvement Projects	NA	NA
Data Collection and Monitoring	\$6,080	\$60,800
Outreach	\$28,174	\$281,739
Regulatory	\$84,234	\$842,335
Operations and Maintenance	\$15,840	\$158,400
Administration and Technical	\$359,374	\$3,593,738
Total	\$954,801	\$9,548,012

BOARD MEETING AGENDA ITEM

AGENDA ITEM TITLE: Lower Minnesota River West Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan

Meeting Date: March 22, 2023

Agenda Category: Committee Recommendation New Business Old Business

Item Type: Decision Discussion Information

Keywords for Electronic Searchability: 1W1P, Sibley, Nicollet, Mcleod, Water Plan

Section/Region: Southern Region

Contact: Ed Lenz

Prepared by: Jeremy Maul

Reviewed by: Southern Regional Committee(s)

Presented by: Ted Winter, Jeremy Maul, Ed Lenz

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 Lower Minnesota River West Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan as recommended by the Southern Regional Committee.

LINKS TO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

<https://www.sibleyswcd.org/documents>

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

The Lower Minnesota River West was selected by BWSR for a One Watershed, One Plan Planning Grant in August of 2019. The Partnership established a Memorandum of Agreement in the spring of 2020 for the purposes of watershed planning. Planning was initiated on June 6, 2020 via notification to designated Plan review authorities. The Partnership has followed One Watershed, One Plan Operating Procedures and the Policy Committee, Technical Advisory Committee, and Planning Work Group members have attended regularly scheduled meetings and kept open communication throughout Plan development. The Partnership submitted the Lower Minnesota

River West Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (Plan) to BWSR on December 28, 2022 for review and approval. The Southern Regional Committee (Committee) met on March 13, 2023 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 Lower Minnesota River West (LMRW) Planning Partnership, pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103B.101, Subdivision 14 and 103B.801.

**ORDER
APPROVING
COMPREHENSIVE
WATERSHED
MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Whereas, the Policy Committee of the Lower Minnesota River West (LMRW) Planning Partnership submitted a Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (Plan) to the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (Board) on December 28, 2022 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 in the spring of 2020 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 Sibley, Nicollet, and McLeod by and through their respective County Board of Commissioners; the Sibley, Nicollet and McLeod Soil and Water Conservation Districts, by and through their respective Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors; and the High Island Watershed District, by and through its Board of Managers.
- 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 (1W1P). And, Board Resolution #18-14 adopted the One Watershed, One Plan Operating Procedures and Resolution #19-41 the Plan Content Requirements policies.
- Nature of the Watershed.** The Lower Minnesota River West planning area includes the portion of the Lower Minnesota River 8-digit HUC watershed (07020012) west of the Minnesota River. Initial One Watershed, One Plan conversations included the entire Lower Minnesota River 8-digit HUC watershed as a single planning area. Ultimately, the planning area was split into an east and west portion divided

by the Minnesota River and along the Sibley County-Carver County line in the northeast portion of the planning area. The Lower Minnesota River West planning area covers 498,000 acres (778 square miles) and includes portions of four counties. A small portion of Renville County is included in the planning area although Renville County and SWCD are not members of the Partnership. The planning area includes primarily agricultural land use as well as areas of pastureland, and forested areas near the Minnesota River. While development of the planning area has altered the natural landscape, it has also made possible the significant agricultural productivity that supports the local and regional economy. Urban development within the watershed is very limited, with smaller towns located throughout the planning area (see Table ES-1). The terrain of the Lower Minnesota River West watershed includes gently rolling terrain in the western and central portions of the watershed transitioning to hills, bluffs, and ravines in the far eastern portion of the watershed adjacent to the Minnesota River. The Minnesota River flows from south to north along the eastern boundary of the planning area. Major hydrologic features include High Island Creek and Rush River (including its North Branch, Middle Branch, and South Branch), which generally flow from west to east across the planning area before discharging to the Minnesota River. In the northeast, Silver Creek and Bevens Creek flow north out of the planning area into Carver County.

4. **Plan Development.** The Partnership initiated the Plan development process for the One Watershed, One Plan on July 6, 2020, by notifying the designated state Plan review agencies, local government units, and other identified stakeholders that it was starting the planning process and soliciting each Plan review agency's priority issues, summaries of relevant water management goals, and water resource information. The Lower Minnesota River West (LMRW) Planning Partnership was unable to conduct a public kick off meeting due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Instead, they developed a detailed survey to gather input from residents in the planning area. Approximately 2,500 surveys were sent out to residents with a total of 273 being returned. This input was The Steering Team grouped specific issues identified through data aggregation and stakeholder input into eight broad issue categories and drafted brief issue statements to characterize each category. The draft issue statements were later revised by the Steering Team based on input from the Advisory Group and Policy Committee. The planning group used a combination of subwatershed scale and field scale targeting to identify priority areas in which to address the identified issues. In developing measurable goals, the Partners considered a range of available information, including existing management plans, studies, reports, data and information, Lower Minnesota River Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy (WRAPS) report and associated scenario modeling, Lower Minnesota River Total Maximum Daily Load (Part I), Lower Minnesota River Groundwater Restoration and Protection Strategy (GRAPS) report, and input received from stakeholder engagement. Generally, goals were first developed at a qualitative level and refined to include quantifiable elements where supported by available data and tools. In situations where existing data is not sufficient to develop a quantitative goal, the goals focus on collecting and interpreting information to support developing more quantitative future goals. Measurable outputs for each goal were selected appropriate to the level of quantification. Emphasis was given to goals that address Level 1 priority issues, although goals were developed to address all eight priority issue areas. Pollutant reduction goals associated with the "degraded surface water quality" issue are subdivided by pollutant of concern and according to major planning watershed. The reduction estimates from the targeted implementation schedule, along with the measurable goals established for the watershed, provided an estimated pace of progress that can be expected through the ten-year planning period. Implementation categories and initiatives were then detailed to identify where funds will be utilized to accomplish the strategies and actions from the targeted implementation schedule. The draft Plan was approved by the Policy Committee and then distributed to individuals, communities, Plan Review Authorities, and other stakeholders a 60-day review process

that ended on September 28, 2022. Written comments were received, considered, and responded to by the Partnership and approved by the Policy Committee. The Policy Committee held public hearings in Gaylord on November 10, 2022. No additional comments were brought forth by the public. The final draft Plan and all required materials were submitted and officially received by the Board on December 28, 2022.

5. **Plan Review.** On December 28, 2022, 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.
 - B. Minnesota Department of Health (MDH): MDH provided input throughout the planning process and participated in Advisory Committee meetings. During the 60-day review period, MDH provided comment requesting the GRAPS report be added in the list of available documents. MDH confirmed receipt of the Plan at the final formal review and stated they had no additional comments; recommends approval.
 - C. Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR): DNR provided input throughout the planning process and participated in Advisory Committee meetings. While the 60-day review period was underway, DNR provided many comments and most comments resulted in a change to the Plan. DNR confirmed receipt of the Plan at the final formal review. They were satisfied with the responses to issues raised during review and recommended that MN BWSR approve the plan. DNR recommends MN BWSR's approval of the Plan.
 - D. Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA): MPCA provided input throughout the planning process and participated in Advisory Committee meetings. MPCA confirmed receipt of the Plan at the final formal review. MPCA stated they have no comments as part of the official 90-day Review and Comment Period and recommend it for approval. MPCA recommends MN BWSR's approval of the Plan.
 - E. Minnesota Environmental Quality Board: No comments were received.
 - F. Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources regional staff: BWSR staff provided early input to the planning process, participated in the Advisory Committee meetings, and provided assistance to the Planning Work Group during the Plan development process. During the 60-day review, BWSR staff provided comments on the implementation schedule and measurable goals. Specifically, that there was language in many of the goals that was ambiguous as it established the goals to be "up to" a given. These comments were adopted in the final draft of the plan. BWSR staff recommends approval of the 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 through the use of HSPF, has estimated feasible areas and reductions 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) structural practices in the priority areas of the plan.

- Level 1 priorities include Degraded Surface Water Quality, Excessive Erosion and Sedimentation, Altered Hydrology and Excessive Flooding. Level 2 Priorities include Protecting Groundwater and Drinking Water and Degraded Soil Health. Level 3 Priorities include Threatened Groundwater Supply and Treats to Fish and Wildlife Habitat.
 - Due to the pandemic, this planning group could not hold a traditional kick off meeting to gather local input, so they were forced to try to send out surveys to approximately 2,500 residents in the watershed. They had an excellent response rate as 273 surveys were returned. They should be commended for out-of-the-box thinking and the outreach conducted to get this amount of local input. The most frequent concerns identified in the survey were water quality degradation, too much agricultural tiling, excessive erosion, and flooding.
 - Implementation schedules for structural and management practices are developed for each of the priority issues, targeting priority planning areas in the Plan.
 - An estimated \$17,422,000 is needed to fully fund the Plan over its ten-year lifespan, a figure which does not factor Watershed-Based Implementation Funds (WBIF) but is assumed in the Plan in the state funding source description.
7. **South Regional Committee.** On March 13, 2023, 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 Kirkpatrick, Mark Wettlaufer on behalf of Steve Robertson, Scott Roemhildt, and Ted Winter. Board staff in attendance were Southern Regional Manager Ed Lenz, and Board Conservationist Jeremy Maul. The representatives from the Partnership were Greg Williams, Barr Engineering; Jack Bushman and Joel Wurscher, Sibley SWCD; Coleton Draeger, McLeod SWCD; Marie Dranttel, Nicollet County Board of Commissioners. 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.
8. This Plan will be in effect for a ten-year period until March 24, 2033.

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 Lower Minnesota River West Watershed Partnership pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103B.101, Subd. 14 and 103B.801 and Board Resolution #18-14.
3. The Lower Minnesota River West Watershed 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 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 Lower Minnesota River West (LMRW) Planning Partnership, dated ver 2. February 2023.

Dated at St. Paul, Minnesota, this 22nd of March, 2023.

MINNESOTA BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES

BY: Gerald Van Amburg, Chair

DRAFT

March 22, 2023

Lower Minnesota River-West 1W1P Planning Partnership
c/o Jack Bushman
112 5th St., Box 161,
Gaylord MN 55334

RE: Approval of the LMW Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan

Dear LMW Partnership:

The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) is pleased to inform you the Lower Minnesota River-West Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (Plan) was approved at its regular meeting held on March 22, 2023. 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 22, 2033. 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. The BWSR looks forward to working with you as you implement this Plan and document its outcomes.

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

Sincerely,

Gerald Van Amburg, Chair
Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources

Enclosure: BWSR Board Order

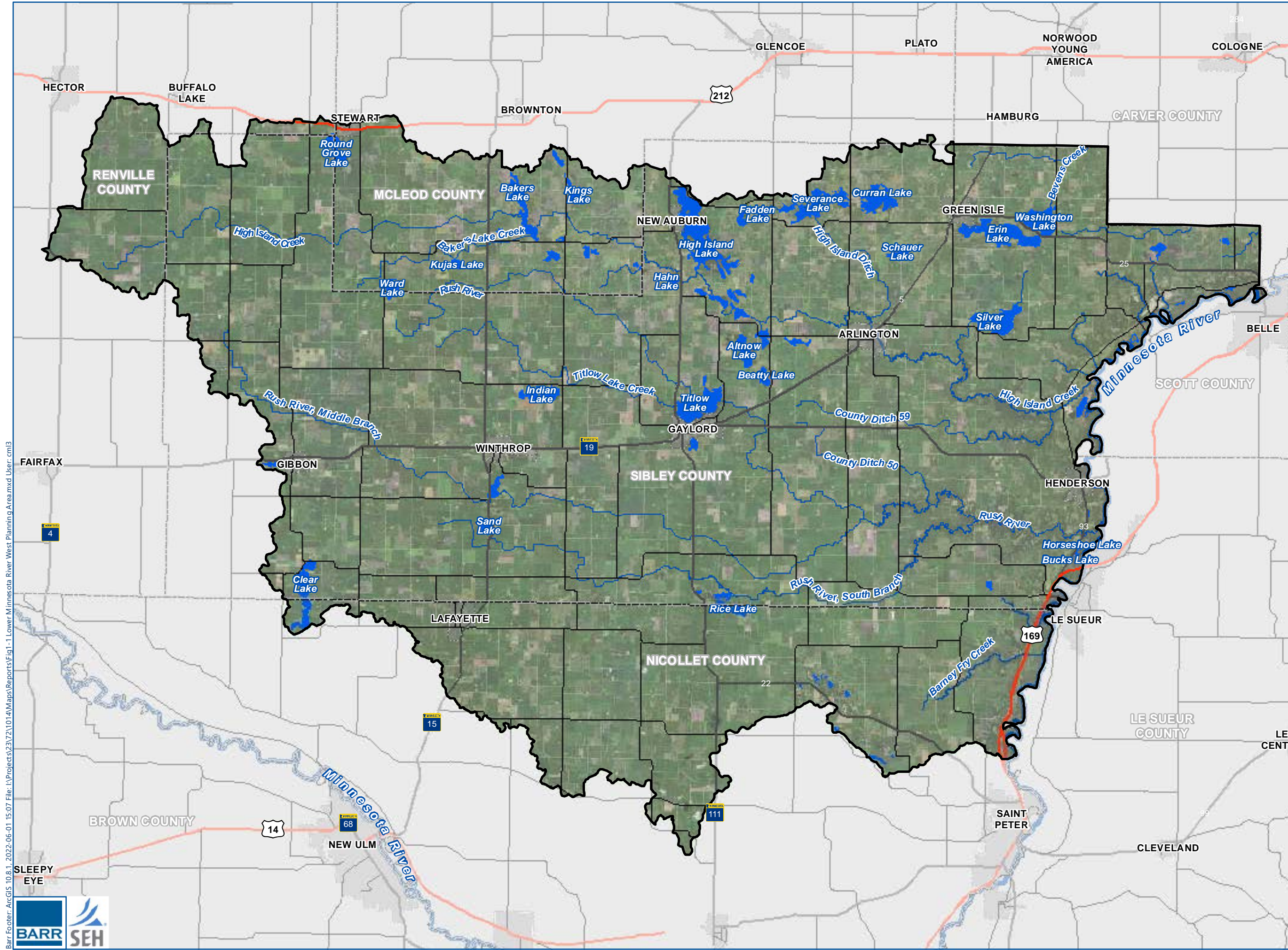
CC: Dawn Bernau, MDA (via email) Margaret Wagner, MDA (via email)
Scott Hanson, MDH (via email) Carrie Raber, MDH (via email)
Dan Lais, DNR (via email) Jeff Weiss, DNR (via email)
Barbara Weisman, DNR (via email) Courtney Ahlers, EQB (via email)
Ed Lenz, BWSR (via email) Adam Beilke, BWSR (via email)
Shaina Keseley, BWSR (via email) Julie Westerlund, BWSR (via email)
Rachel Mueller, BWSR (file copy)






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-  Planning Area
-  County Boundary
-  Municipal Boundary
-  Public Waters Basin
-  Public Watercourse

Source: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Public Waters (PW) Basin and Watercourse Delineation

Barr Footer: ArcGIS 10.8.1, 2022-06-01 15:07 File: I:\Projects\23\21014\Maps\Reports\Fig1-1 Lower Minnesota River West Planning Area.mxd User: cml3

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LOWER MINNESOTA RIVER WEST PLANNING AREA
Lower Minnesota River West Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan

FIGURE 1-1



Executive Summary

The Lower Minnesota River West Partnership (Partnership) is a group of the Counties and Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) of McLeod, Nicollet, and Sibley, and High Island Creek Watershed District. The Partnership covers an area north and west of the Minnesota River herein referred to as the “Lower Minnesota River West watershed” or “planning area.” The Partnership was formed to develop a Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (Plan) through the One Watershed, One Plan (1W1P) program detailed in Minnesota Statutes 103B.801. Through the 1W1P program, the local governments (Partners) prepared this document to guide cooperative water and natural resource management actions over the next 10 years.

Introduction

This Plan outlines a cooperative and coordinated strategy by which the Partners will work together to protect, maintain, and restore the water and natural resources within the planning area. Through prioritized and targeted actions, the Partners will make progress towards measurable, common goals. This Plan provides a framework for the Partners to operate as a local, coordinated partnership while effectively leveraging the resources of local governments (i.e., the Partners) and supporting organizations (e.g., State and Federal agencies). The Plan is a local plan emphasizing the interests of local water managers, policy makers, and affected stakeholders consulted during Plan development (see Section 1.5). The Plan was developed through the efforts of:

- Steering Team – comprised of technical staff of the Partner organizations
- Advisory Group – including staff from state and local cooperators and invited stakeholders
- Policy Committee – comprised of elected officials representing the Partner organizations

This Plan will be executed through a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) between the Partners (see Appendix D). The JPA recognizes the importance of partnerships to implement watershed protection and restoration efforts for the planning area on a cooperative and collaborative basis pursuant to the authority contained in Minnesota Statutes Section 471.59.

Planning Boundary and Subwatersheds

The Lower Minnesota River West planning area includes the portion of the Lower Minnesota River 8-digit HUC watershed (07020012) west of the Minnesota River. Initial 1W1P conversations included the entire Lower Minnesota River 8-digit HUC watershed as a single planning area. Ultimately, the planning area was split into an east and west portion divided by the Minnesota River and along the Sibley County-Carver County line in the northeast portion of the planning area.

The Lower Minnesota River West planning area covers 498,000 acres (778 square miles) and includes portions of four counties (see inset figure). A small portion of Renville County is included in the planning area although Renville County and SCWD are not members of the Partnership. The planning area was subdivided into six major subwatersheds at approximately the 10-digit HUC level for planning purposes (see Section A.1 and Figure A-1). The Lower Minnesota River West planning area is shown in Figure 1-1.

The planning area includes primarily agricultural land use as well as areas of pastureland, and forested areas near the Minnesota River. While development of the planning area has altered the natural landscape, it has also made possible the significant agricultural productivity that supports the local and regional economy. Urban development within the watershed is very limited, with smaller towns located throughout the planning area (see Table ES-1). The terrain of the Lower Minnesota River West watershed includes gently rolling terrain in the western and central portions of the watershed transitioning to hills, bluffs, and ravines in the far eastern portion of the watershed adjacent to the Minnesota River.

The Minnesota River flows from south to north along the eastern boundary of the planning area. Major hydrologic features include High Island Creek and Rush River (including its North Branch, Middle Branch, and South Branch), which generally flow from west to east across the planning area before discharging to the Minnesota River. In the northeast, Silver Creek and Bevens Creek flow north out of the planning area into Carver County.

Additional information about the physical and environmental characteristics of the planning area are presented in Appendix A.

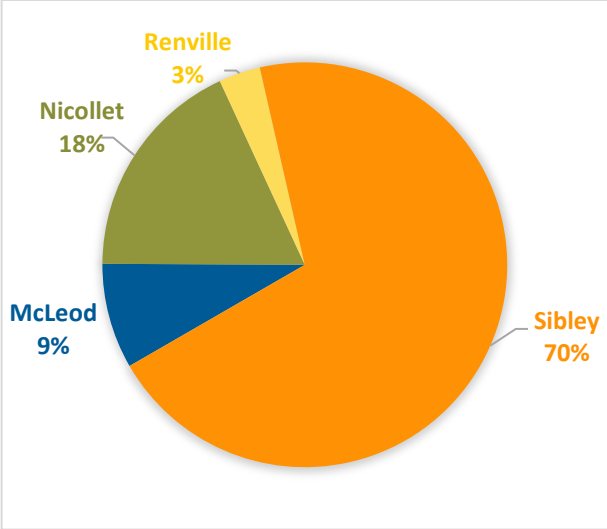


Figure ES-1 Planning Area by County

Table ES-1 Summary of Land Use/Land Cover within the Planning Area

Land Cover	Square Miles	% of Total Area
Barren Land	0.74	0.09%
Cultivated Crops	657.30	84.40%
Deciduous Forest	33.72	4.33%
Developed, High Intensity	0.54	0.07%
Developed, Low Intensity	8.29	1.06%
Developed, Medium Intensity	2.32	0.30%
Developed, Open Space	21.30	2.74%
Emergent Herbaceous Wetlands	22.57	2.90%
Evergreen Forest	0.04	0.01%
Hay/Pasture	11.43	1.47%
Herbaceous (grassland)	0.73	0.09%
Mixed Forest	0.79	0.10%
Open Water	12.49	1.60%
Shrub/Scrub	0.42	0.05%
Woody Wetlands	6.06	0.78%
Total	778.75	100%

Source: Minnesota Land Cover Classification Dataset (MLCCD)

Issue and Resource Prioritization

Section 2 of the Plan summarizes the issue identification and prioritization process used by the Partners and documents the resulting issue priorities. The Partnership implemented an iterative process to identify and prioritize watershed issues with consideration of existing data and input from the Advisory Group, Steering Team, Policy Committee, and public (via stakeholder engagement efforts).

The Partners ultimately established a three-tiered issue prioritization, with four major issues categorized as Level 1 (top priority), two major issues categorized as Level 2 (medium priority), and two major issues categorized as Level 3 (lower priority) (see inset figure). The partners placed emphasis for implementation on Level 1 issues, although many of these activities have direct or indirect benefits for Level 2 and Level 3 issues. Measurable goals (see Section 3) were established for all levels of priority issues.

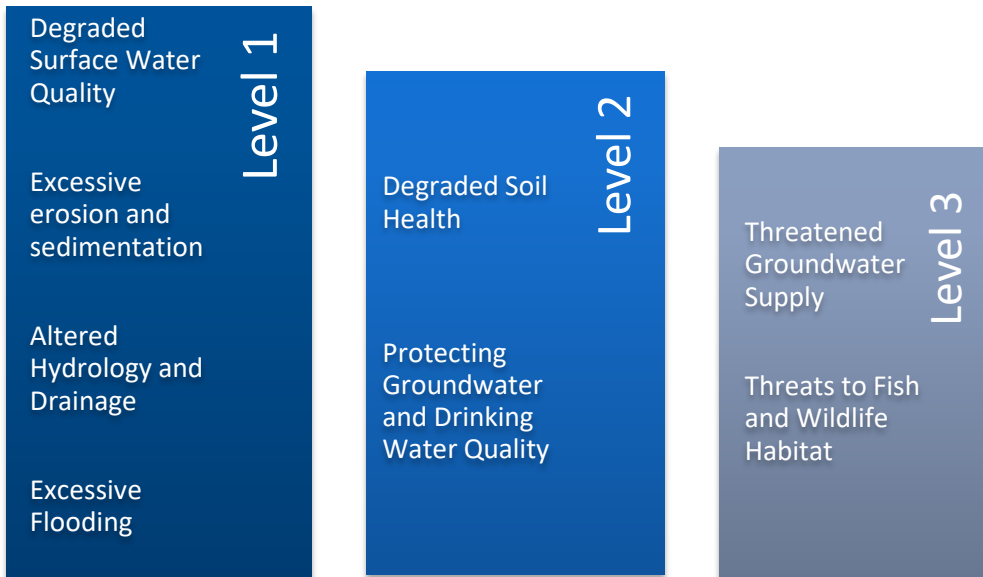


Figure ES- 2 Issue Priority Levels

Section 2 also details the delineation of priority areas for focusing implementation activities related to priority issues of degraded surface water and altered hydrology and drainage. This process used existing geospatial data, modeling results, and watershed assessments. Priority implementation areas for addressing degraded surface water quality and altered hydrology and drainage are presented in Figure 2-8 and Figure 2-9.

Measurable Goals

Section 3 describes the development of measurable goals. The Partners considered a range of available information, including:

- Existing management plans, studies, reports, data and information, including:
 - County Water Management Plans
 - Lower Minnesota River Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy (WRAPS) report and associated scenario modeling
 - Lower Minnesota River Total Maximum Daily Load (Part I)
 - Lower Minnesota River Groundwater Restoration and Protection Strategy (GRAPS) report
- Input received from stakeholder engagement (see Section 2.1 and Appendix C)
- Input from the Steering Team
- Input from Advisory Group members
- Input from Policy Committee members

Generally, goals were developed first at a qualitative level (“what types of things would we like to achieve?”) and refined to include quantifiable elements (“how much can we achieve?”) where supported by available data and tools. In situations where existing data is not sufficient to develop a quantitative goal, the goals focus on collecting and interpreting information to support developing more quantitative

future goals. Measurable outputs for each goal were selected appropriate to the level of quantification. Emphasis was given to goals that address Level 1 priority issues, although goals were developed to address all eight priority issue areas.

The Plan goals are divided into long-term (i.e., desired future condition) and short-term (i.e., 10-year, or Plan goals) goals. Long-term goals may not be achievable within the 10-year life of the Plan. 10-year goals are presented as reasonable progression towards the desired future condition. Specific 10-year pollutant reduction goals were estimated using HSPF-SAM.

A complete list of measurable goals developed by the Partners are presented in Table 3-2 and Table 3-3.

Targeting of Projects and Practices

The Partners used digital terrain analysis to identify potential locations to implement best management practices (BMPs) to address excessive erosion and sedimentation and surface water quality degradation issues. Potential BMPs include grade stabilization, increased runoff/flood storage, cover crops, and others. Potential project locations were identified throughout the planning area, regardless of subwatershed priority level. Sites identified via terrain analysis were supplemented with existing databases of drainage and/or erosion issues (see Figure 4-1). The Partners used existing HSPF-SAM models to estimate pollutant reductions anticipated from implementing projects at these locations in addition to other implementation activities (see Section 4.2).

Priority areas for addressing degraded surface water quality and altered hydrology and drainage issues (presented in Figure 2-8 and Figure 2-9), will be used to target projects, studies, and education efforts to achieve applicable goals and evaluate multi-benefit practices. Some activities are targeted to more specific geographies applicable to the specific need or outcome (e.g., groundwater-related activities targeting drinking water supply management areas, or DWSMAs).

Implementation

The Plan includes a targeted and measurable implementation schedule that outlines the projects, programs, and other activities the Partners will implement over the next 10 years (see Section 5 and Table 5-4). The Partners established the implementation schedule with input from the Advisory Group (which represents many of the entities identified as cooperators in Table 5-4).

The implementation schedule provides sufficient direction and measurable outcomes while maintaining flexibility to adapt to developing opportunities. The targeted implementation schedule includes a range of strategies and tools, including cost-share projects, education programs, and new and expanded programs necessary to achieve the goals of the Plan.

The Plan implementation schedule is presented in Table 5-4. The activities included in the implementation program are intended to leverage the existing roles, capacities, and expertise of the Partners while providing a framework for the Partners to perform expanded roles. The activities and projects described in

this Plan will be implemented through existing, new, and expanded programs of the Partners. Programs and activities may be adjusted based on the associated funding source.

Activities included in Table 5-4 are assigned to the following categories:

- Administration of the Partnership
- Projects and project support
- Monitoring and studies
- Education and public involvement
- Regulatory oversight

The proposed timeframe, estimated cost (local and non-local contributions), measurable outputs, and lead and cooperating entities are identified for each implementation activity. Estimates of costs, measurable outputs, and timeframes were developed based on a combination of HSPF-SAM model runs and documentation, Partner estimates of local capacity, and consideration of future BWSR Watershed Based Implementation Funding (WBIF). The current implementation schedule (Table 5-4) was derived from iteration with the Partners. The Partners may revise the implementation schedule, if needed, following the amendment procedure described in Section 5.5.

Implementation Costs

The implementation schedule includes planning level cost estimates for individual activities. Planning level costs are split between local funding sources and external funding sources. Local funding sources include funding borne by the Partners, while external funding sources include all other funding sources (e.g., cost-share with non-Partner entities, State grants). Costs are subtotaled by category and funding source as presented in Table ES-2 and Figure ES- 3.

This Plan includes an ambitious implementation schedule. Total estimated annual costs (approximately \$1.7M) exceed current local funding allocated to existing and similar programs within the planning area. Thus, additional funding provided from WBIF, other State funds, Federal funding, and/or private funding sources will be necessary to accomplish Plan goals.

Table ES-2 Summary of Estimated Plan Funding

Type of Activity	Partner Local Funds	Estimated Landowner Contribution	Watershed Based Implementation Funds (WBIF)	Other state/ federal funding sources	Total
Partnership Administration	\$350,000	--	\$300,000	--	\$650,000
Project and Project Support	\$6,122,000	\$650,000	\$2,590,000	\$5,883,000	\$15,245,000
Studies and Monitoring	\$775,000	--	--	\$150,000	\$925,000
Education and Outreach	\$355,000	--	\$110,000	\$107,000	\$572,000
Regulatory Review/ Oversight	\$30,000	--	--	--	\$30,000
Total	\$7,632,000	\$650,000	\$3,000,000	\$6,140,000	\$17,422,000

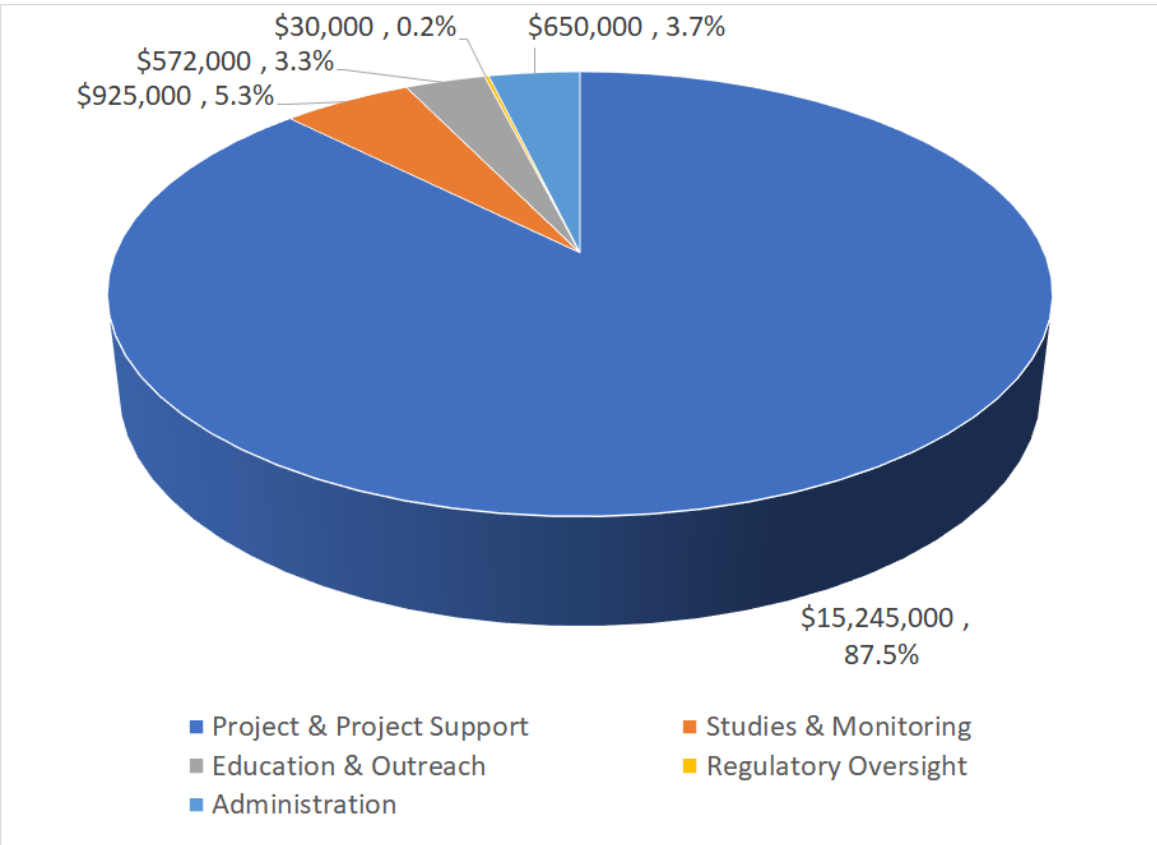


Figure ES- 3 Estimated Plan Implementation Costs

Additional non-governmental funding sources may be used to fund Plan implementation. The Partners will coordinate with non-governmental organizations to explore potential cost-share opportunities

surrounding shared goals. The Partners will seek additional partnerships with private sector businesses as such opportunities arise. Future opportunities may include working with agri-business on incentives that provide opportunity for water resources improvements. Incentives may not be implemented through the Partnership but are instigated through Partnership actions.

Additional information about Plan costs and funding sources is included in Section 5.3.

Implementation Roles and Responsibilities

The Partners will implement this Plan according to the governance structure established in the implementation Joint Powers Agreement (JPA, see Appendix D). The JPA does not create a new entity. Instead, the JPA is a formal and outward commitment to work together as a partnership and specifies mutually accepted expectations and guidelines between partners. Per the JPA, the Partners will establish committees to carry out the coordinated implementation of this Plan. During implementation, the Plan will be executed through the coordinated effort of the following committees:

- Policy Advisory Committee
- Technical Advisory Committee
- Local Implementation Work Group

These groups are described in greater detail in Section 5.4. The Local Implementation Work Group will perform the annual work planning, which will be based on prioritized implementation activities, the availability of funds, and the roles and responsibilities for implementation. Coordination and communication are critical for a partnership operating under a JPA. The Partners will continue to coordinate with BWSR, MDA, MDH, MDNR, and MPCA as required through State-legislated programs and to accomplish the many Plan activities that identify State agencies as cooperating entities. The Partners will also coordinate with Federal partners where appropriate, including NRCS, FSA, USACE, EPA, and USFWS. Similarly, continued coordination and communication with local governmental units, such as cities, township boards, joint powers boards, drainage authorities, and other water management authorities is necessary to facilitate watershed wide activities. The Partners will also collaborate with non-governmental organizations where mutual benefit may be achieved.

BOARD MEETING AGENDA ITEM

AGENDA ITEM TITLE: Mississippi River – Winona/La Crescent Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan

Meeting Date: March 22, 2023

Agenda Category: Committee Recommendation New Business Old Business

Item Type: Decision Discussion Information

Keywords for Electronic Searchability: WinLac; Winona; La Crescent; Whitewater; Karst

Section/Region: Southern Region

Contact: Ed Lenz

Prepared by: Adam Beilke

Reviewed by: Southern Regional Committee(s)

Presented by: Ted Winter, Adam Beilke

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 Mississippi River – Winona/La Crescent (WinLaC) Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan as recommended by the Southern Regional Committee.

LINKS TO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Plan is on the WinLaC website:

- **Plan Weblink:** <https://www.co.winona.mn.us/DocumentCenter/View/3321/Final-WinLaC-Comprehensive-Watershed-Management-Plan-2023-2033>
- **Plan Appendices Weblink:** <https://www.co.winona.mn.us/DocumentCenter/View/3322/Final-WinLaC-Comprehensive-Watershed-Management-Plan-Appendices-2023-2033>

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

The WinLaC Partnership was selected by BWSR for a One Watershed One Plan (1W1P) Planning Grant in August of 2020. The Partnership established a Memorandum of Agreement on February 17, 2021 for the purposes of watershed planning. Planning was initiated on March 9, 2021 via notification to designated plan review authorities. The Partnership has followed 1W1P Operating Procedures and the Policy Committee, Advisory Committee, and Planning Work Group members have attended regularly scheduled meetings and kept open communication throughout Plan development. The Partnership submitted the WinLaC Plan to BWSR on March 3, 2023 for review and approval. The Southern Regional Committee (Committee) met on March 13, 2023 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 Mississippi River – Winona/La Crescent, pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103B.101, Subdivision 14 and 103B.801.

**ORDER
APPROVING
COMPREHENSIVE
WATERSHED
MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Whereas, the Policy Committee of the Mississippi River – Winona/La Crescent (WinLaC) Partnership submitted a Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (Plan) to the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (Board) on March 3, 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

1. **Partnership Establishment.** The Partnership was established in 2021 through adoption of a Memorandum of Agreement for the purposes of developing a Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan. The membership of the Partnership includes: Houston County, Root River Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), Olmsted County, Olmsted SWCD, Wabasha County, Wabasha SWCD, Winona County, Winona SWCD, Stockton-Rollingstone-Minnesota City Watershed District and the city of Winona.
2. **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.
3. **Nature of the Watershed.** The WinLaC watershed planning area includes the Minnesota portions of two major (HUC-08) watersheds, the Mississippi River – Winona and the Mississippi River – La Crescent. The majority of these HUC-08s are in Wisconsin, with Minnesota containing the roughly 750 square miles that make up the WinLaC watershed planning area. Four counties are located within the planning area: Houston, Olmsted, Wabasha, and Winona. Located in the southeastern corner of the state and bordered on the east by the Mississippi River, the WinLaC watershed planning area is a

unique landscape characterized by wooded hills, rich agriculture, karst topography, sheer river bluffs, and craggy limestone. The WinLaC watershed is in the driftless ecoregion and the Lower Mississippi River Basin. The watershed is home to an abundance of rare natural resources, including many of the state's best coldwater streams for trout fishing. Current land use is predominantly agriculture lands, with 33% of the planning area being used for row crop production and another 15% in pasture. Remaining land uses include forests (32%), wetlands/open water (9%), urban areas (7%), and shrublands (3%). The WinLaC watershed is transected by multiple rivers, each generally flowing west to east until they empty into the Mississippi River. The Whitewater River is the largest river, draining a sizable portion of the northern part of the watershed.

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 surface water quality and quantity, groundwater quality and quantity including public and private water supplies, improve soil health, and mitigate negative impacts that may result from current land use in the watershed.
5. **Plan Review.** On March 3, 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 stated that the plan sufficiently addressed the priority concerns for groundwater that were indicated in their initial comment letter for the plan. MDA commended the partners for their targeted actions focused on drinking water protection for public water suppliers and private wells. MDA confirmed receipt of the Plan at the final formal review and stated all MDA comments were effectively addressed in the final draft plan and priority concerns for groundwater were addressed.
 - C. Minnesota Department of Health (MDH): During the 60-day comment period, MDH requested additional language regarding drinking water standards and human health impacts from nitrate and groundwater contamination. MDH also commented on the limitations in the application of PTMApp to layered aquifer systems as well as framing expectations for reaching desired future conditions due to the residence times of shallow and deep aquifers in the watershed along with historic land use. MDH commended the partners for including drinking water as a priority concern. MDH confirmed receipt of the Plan at the final formal review and stated they were pleased to see the changes made based on their recommendations. They provided no further comments or suggestions and recommended approval.
 - D. Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR): During the 60-day comment period, DNR provided comments to the WinLaC partners on opportunities to work with DNR staff on sediment sourcing studies and stream channel projects within the implementation

table. Additional comments included the adoption of minimal impact design standards for water storage, the establishment of a nitrate leaching loss goal, and the promotion of the MDA Runoff Risk Advisory Forecast tool. DNR commended the planning committees and consultants for their vision and dedication to developing the plan. 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 requested language be added to acknowledge the use of PTMApp as a surrogate in the development of a vertical leaching N reduction goal. MPCA also recommended the plan acknowledge the historic fish kills in the watershed and how the plan will work to reduce future risk if goals are achieved. Additional comments included revision to the Stream priority map, defining the water storage goal for capital improvement projects, and verifying the groundwater and surface water reduction goal values. MPCA commended the partners for addressing their priority concerns submitted at the beginning of the planning process. MPCA confirmed receipt of the Plan at the final formal review and stated that nearly all MPCA comments were adequately addressed. MPCA asked for further verification on one comment and provided new suggestions on another comment.
- F. Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR): During the 60-day review period, BWSR provided comments requesting several 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 categories and issues, the establishment of measurable goals, and the development of the 10-year targeted implementation schedule.
- The Plan includes a thorough identification of the targeted areas using available data and tools such as PTMApp. PTMApp was utilized to estimate feasible locations for management practices and structural BMPs, as well as the associated annual costs and anticipated benefits arising from implementation.
- The Plan identifies four different planning regions which are based on subwatershed (HUC-10) boundaries to better deal with the varying land use and topography present across the watershed. The ten planning regions are Whitewater, Garvin Brook, Mississippi River-La Crescent (HUC-8), and Small Tributaries.
- Public involvement in the development of this plan started with a Public Open House Kickoff in the city of Winona in September of 2021. A survey was also created to engage with residents who were not able to attend the kickoff. The partnership also hosted five facilitated “Waterside Chats” in Stockton, La Crescent, Winona, Saint Charles, and Wabasha during March and April of 2022. Finally, public engagement was also provided during a We Are Water exhibit held in the city of Winona from March through April of 2022.
- The plan development process generated 34 issues, organized in 4 resource categories (Groundwater, Surface Water, Land Use, and Habitat and Recreation) using existing reports, plans, studies, data, and stakeholder input. Each issue was assigned as one of three priority categories. Ten issues were identified as a “Priority A” issue and will be the focus of initial implementation efforts. Thirteen issues were identified as a “Priority B” issue and will be partially addressed through the lifespan of the plan. Eleven issues were identified as a “Priority C” issue and will be addressed by partner groups or as a secondary benefit from the higher priority issues.
- The Plan details 16 measurable goals that collectively address the 23 Priority A and Priority B issues. A factsheet was developed for each of these priority issues. Each fact sheet summarizes the priority

issues addressed with the goal, background on the priority issue(s) the goal seeks to address, the short-term goal and desired future conditions (long-term goal), secondary outcomes from meeting the goal, what work will be done, and heat maps showing priority resources and subwatersheds where work will be focused.

- Included in the Appendix are a series of maps showing possible locations to implement priority Best Management Practices (BMPs) for each planning region. These maps are to be used as a tool for prioritization of outreach and target implementation efforts in the planning regions.
 - 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 \$1,345,200 or \$13,452,000 over its ten-year lifespan.
 - Separate targeted implementation tables were created for each planning region that include actions within the Projects and Support implementation program. Watershed-wide implementation tables were created for actions related to the Capital Improvement Projects, Regulation and Local Controls, Education and Public Input, and Monitoring and Studies implementation programs.
7. **Southern Regional Committee.** On March 13, 2023, the Southern Regional Committee met to review and discuss the Plan. Those in attendance from the Board's Committee were Eunice Biel, Jeff Berg, Heather Johnson, Kelly Kirkpatrick, Scott Roemhildt, Ted Winter, and Mark Wettlaufer. Board staff in attendance were Southern Regional Manager Ed Lenz and Board Conservationist Adam Beilke. The representatives from the Partnership were Sheila Harmes, Terri Peters, Rachel Olm, Sadie Neuman, Caitlin Meyer, Skip Langer, and Lynn Zabel. 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.
8. This Plan will be in effect for a ten-year period until March 22, 2033.

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 Mississippi River – Winona/La Crescent pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103B.101, Subd. 14 and 103B.801 and Board Resolution #18-14.
3. The WinLaC 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 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 WinLaC, dated March 22, 2023.

Dated at St. Paul, Minnesota, this 22nd of March 2023.

MINNESOTA BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES

BY: Gerald Van Amburg, Chair

DRAFT

March 22, 2023

Mississippi River – Winona/La Crescent Partnership
c/o Sheila Harmes, Winona County Water Planner
202 West Third Street
Winona, MN 55987

RE: Approval of the WinLaC Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan

Dear WinLaC Partnership:

The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) is pleased to inform you the WinLaC Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (Plan) was approved at its regular meeting held on March 22, 2023. 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 22, 2033. 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. The BWSR looks forward to working with you as you implement this Plan and document its outcomes.

Please contact Board Conservationist Adam Beilke of our staff at 507-766-9820 or adam.beilke@state.mn.us for further assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

Gerald Van Amburg, Chair
Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources

Enclosure: BWSR Board Order

CC: Dawn Bernau, MDA (via email) Margaret Wagner, MDA (via email)
Scott Hanson, MDH (via email) Carrie Raber, MDH (via email)
Dan Lais, DNR (via email) Jeff Weiss, DNR (via email)
Barbara Weisman, DNR (via email) Courtney Ahlers, EQB (via email)
Ed Lenz, BWSR (via email) Adam Beilke, BWSR (via email)
Shaina Keseley, BWSR (via email) Julie Westerlund, BWSR (via email)
Rachel Mueller, BWSR (file copy)

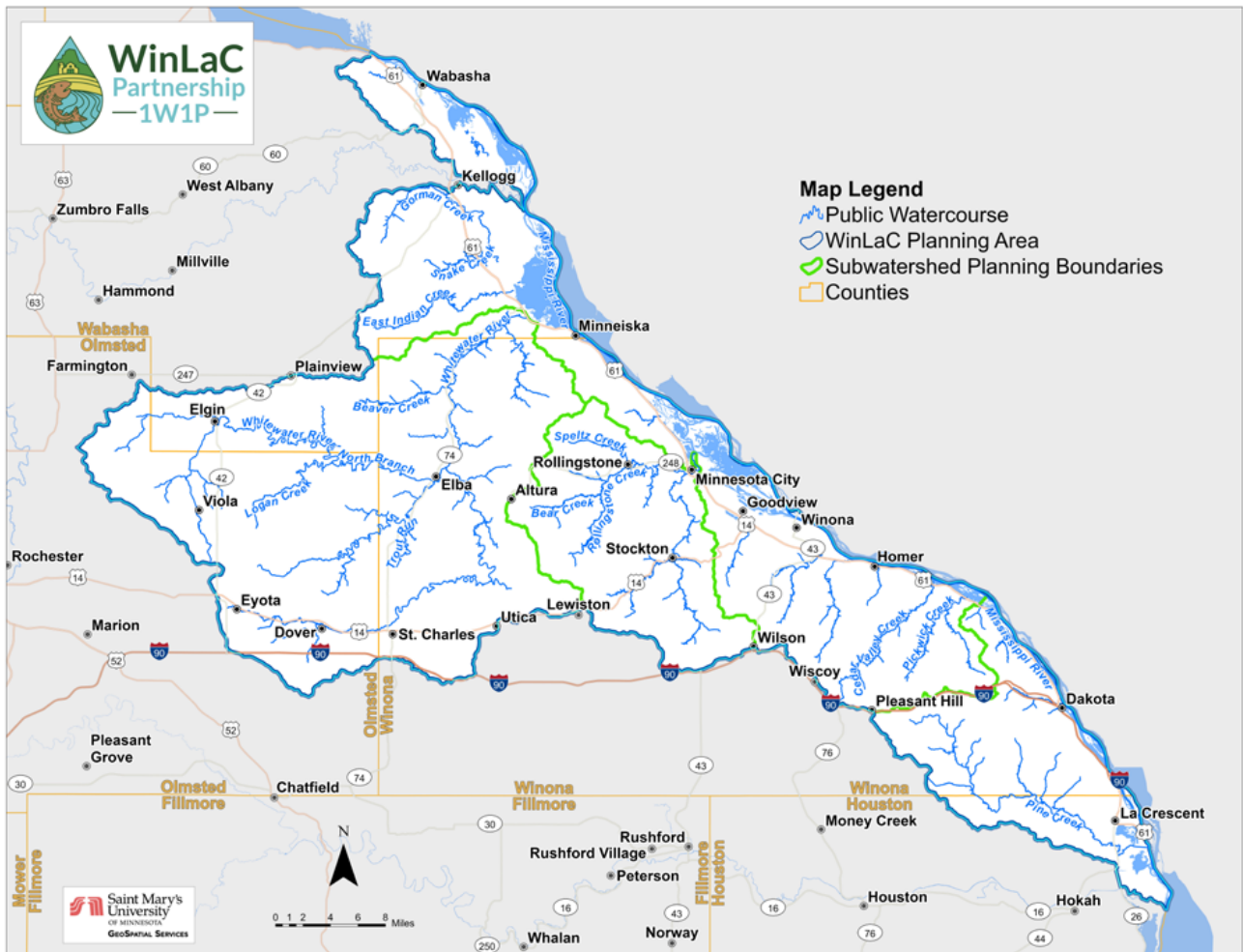


Figure ES-1: WinLaC watershed planning boundary



Executive Summary

Executive Summary

The Mississippi River Winona/La Crescent watershed (WinLaC) is in southeastern Minnesota where it drains about 750 square miles within four counties (Houston, Olmsted, Wabasha, and Winona). The watershed is home to around 60,000 people, many of whom reside in the cities of Winona, La Crescent, Lewiston, Saint Charles, Eyota, and Wabasha.

The WinLaC watershed is in the driftless ecoregion and the Lower Mississippi River Basin. The watershed consists of cropland, forest, and grassland and supports trout streams. For planning purposes, the watershed plan boundaries cover two USGS HUC-08 watersheds: portions of the Mississippi River-Winona watershed and the Mississippi River-La Crescent watershed located in Minnesota. The majority of the HUC-08s are in Wisconsin, but One Watershed One Plans do not cross state boundaries.

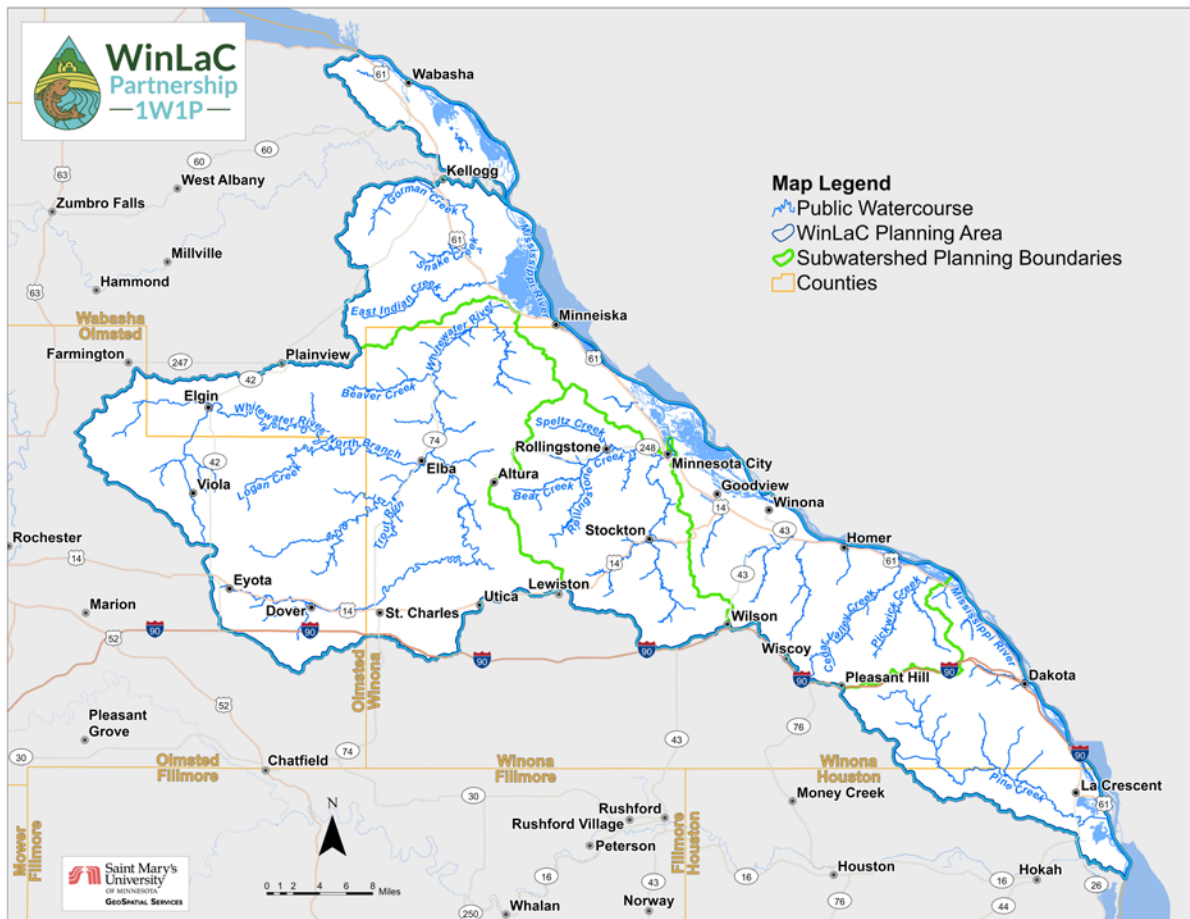


Figure ES-1: WinLaC watershed planning boundary

Purpose, Roles, and Responsibilities

The purpose of One Watershed, One Plan is to align water planning along watershed boundaries, not jurisdictional boundaries such as counties as was done in the past. Prior to this single plan, each of the four counties as well as the watershed district had water-related plans that covered portions of this watershed. Water is connected and ignores county boundaries, so to truly manage the resources overall, a watershed scale is most efficient and effective.

The WinLaC planning process began with a Memorandum of Agreement between local agencies and organizations which includes:

- Houston, Olmsted, Wabasha, and Winona counties,
- Olmsted, Root River, Wabasha, and Winona Soil and Water Conservation Districts,
- The City of Winona, and
- Stockton-Rollingstone-Minnesota City Watershed District.

These entities are collectively known as the WinLaC Partnership, with the vision and mission statement below:



Vision: Through our partnership, we are collaborating to unify local priorities into one active, relevant watershed management plan which streamlines efforts and shares current and future resources.

Mission: Provide citizens with clean water, balanced ecosystems, sustainable farmland, and diverse healthy communities.

A Plan to Reflect the Watershed

The WinLaC CWMP needed to be drafted in a way that appropriately reflects the community it is intended to serve. To accomplish this, the planning process was designed to actively engage two main groups: local planning committees and the public.

Local Planning Committees

The One Watershed, One Plan process uses existing authorities; therefore, a representative from each governmental unit in the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was appointed by each board to serve on the **Policy Committee**, which is the decision-making body for this plan. The **Planning Work Group** consisted of 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.

Community Engagement

A simplified summary of the process used to create the WinLaC CWMP is shown in **Figure ES-2**. To ensure the plan reflected community input, events were held at each milestone to receive feedback.

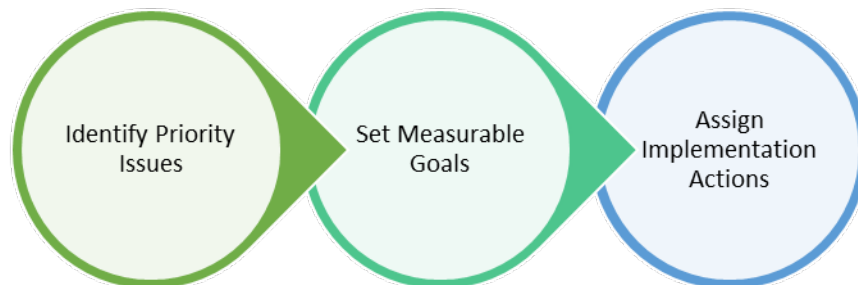


Figure ES-2: Milestones for the WinLaC CWMP planning process.

Planning Regions

Sub-watersheds within the WinLaC Planning Area have varying land use and topology which makes prioritizing issues uniformly across the planning area difficult. “Planning Regions” were identified to allow the WinLaC Partnership the ability to focus on unique issues present within each sub-watershed. The WinLaC Watershed has been divided into four planning regions around subwatershed (HUC-10) boundaries: Whitewater, Garvin Brook, Mississippi River-La Crescent, and Small Tributaries (**Figure ES-4**). Each planning region focuses on different issues and uses a unique approach to meet goals.

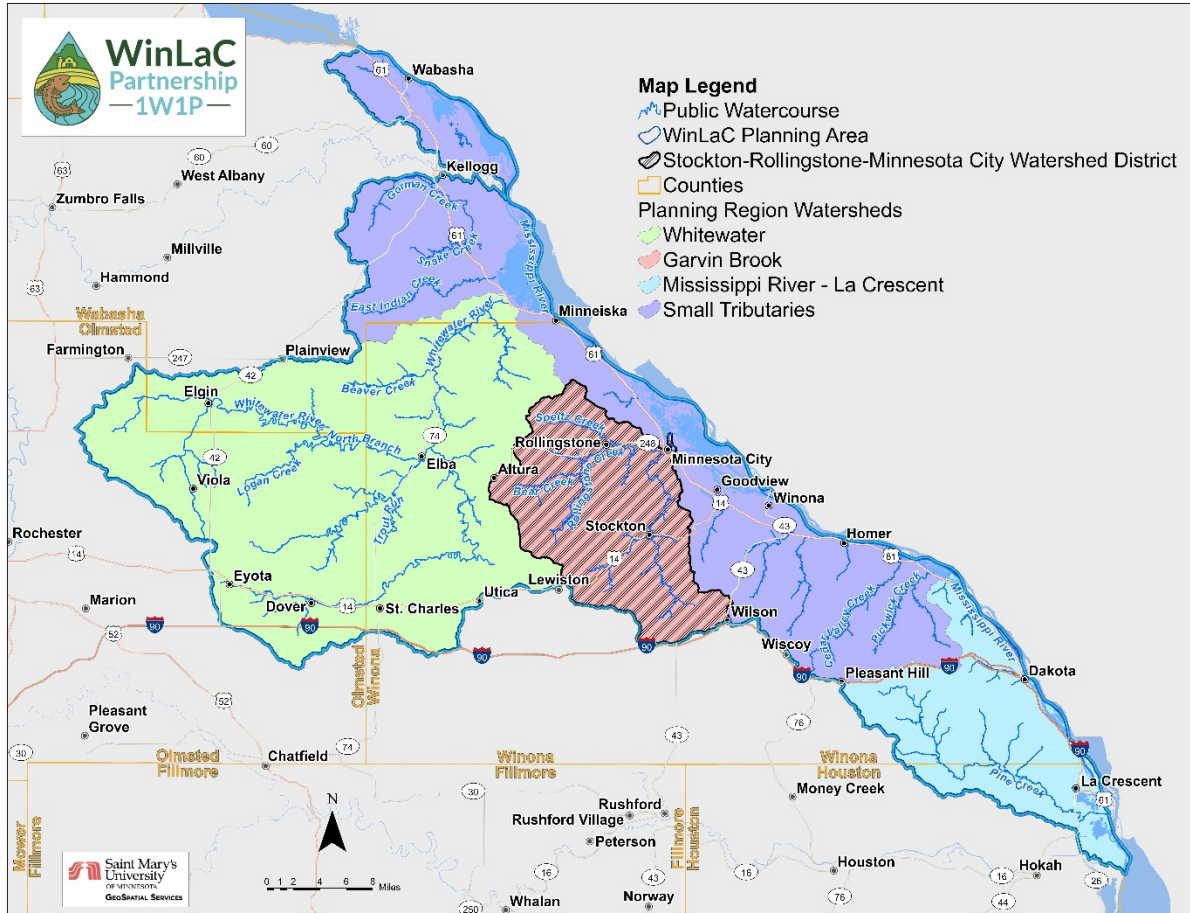






Figure ES-4: WinLaC Planning Regions.

Identify Priority Issues

The first step in prioritizing issues is to identify a comprehensive list of issues that are impacting natural resources in the watershed. The WinLaC Partnership used the available data for the watershed to create a list of all issues and opportunities that are impacting resources of concern. Plans and data reviewed included state, county, and local plans, and agency responses from the 60-Day Notice of Plan Initiation.

A total of 34 issues were identified for consideration in this plan. To better organize information, issues were categorized into one of four groups: groundwater, surface water, land use, and habitat and recreation. These categories are outlined below in **Table ES-1**.

Table ES-1: Breakdown of resource categories and explanation of what is in each category.

 <p>Groundwater</p>	<p>Groundwater includes protecting wellheads, dealing with drinking water contamination, and the continued increased demand for groundwater in the region.</p>
 <p>Surface Water</p>	<p>Surface water issues consider surface water contamination, urban stormwater, flooding, the connection of tile lines to surface water systems, and the impacts of surface water issues to aquatic habitats.</p>
 <p>Land Use</p>	<p>Land use issues include changes to the landscape from development, agriculture, management, and shifting weather patterns that impact how the landscape may change with aging infrastructure, increased precipitation trends and rainfall intensities, and soil health.</p>
 <p>Habitat and Recreation</p>	<p>Habitat and recreation issues include providing better access to waterways, habitat protection, and stream connectivity for aquatic species.</p>

The WinLaC watershed plan is a 10-year plan, but not all issues can be addressed within that timeframe. In recognition of this, the WinLaC Partnership prioritized the most pressing issues within the watershed that are within control of a local water plan. Feasibility and cost were also taken into consideration when prioritizing issues. Issues were placed into one of three categories: Priority A, Priority B, and Priority C, with definitions of each provided below (**Figure ES-5**). In total, this plan summarizes ten Priority A issues, 13 Priority B issues, and 11 Priority C issues.

Figure ES-5: Resource categories for the WinLaC CWMP.

Priority A: We expect these issues to be addressed first within the lifespan of this plan. These are the most important.

Priority B: We expect some of these issues to be addressed throughout the lifespan of this plan. These are important, but less of a priority.











Priority C: We may address some of these issues through collecting additional data or funding throughout the lifespan of the plan. These issues may also be addressed through partner groups or may be addressed as a secondary benefit from higher priority issues. These issues are still important, but are the lowest local priority items.



Priority A Issues

These issues were ranked highest among the WinLaC Partnership and are the issues to be addressed first. They have goals and action items assigned to them in sections 4 and 5.

Table ES-2: Priority A Issue Statements.

Category	Issue Statement
	Need for increased field management practices to reduce excessive nutrient and sediment delivery to streams and enhance nutrient cycling
	Elevated levels of nitrates in drinking water from agricultural and wastewater sources
	Excess nutrient loading (nitrogen and phosphorus) to watershed streams, and impact on aquatic life
	Excess sediment loading as a primary stressor to aquatic life, habitat, and recreation
	Failing or noncompliant septic systems and their potential for groundwater and surface water contamination
	Increased annual precipitation and more intense rainfall events and their impact on hydrology, water quality, and infrastructure, and the need to plan for resiliency
	Increased protection of wellhead/source water areas to reduce groundwater contamination
	Need for improving soil health for carbon sequestration and agricultural productivity
	Urban stormwater runoff , which can contribute to poor water clarity/quality, alter natural flow and infiltration of water, and harm aquatic life
	Excessive upland and overland sediment loading due to various land use practices

Priority B Issues

These issues were given a Priority B ranking and will be addressed throughout the lifetime of the plan. They have goals and action items assigned to them in sections 4 and 5.

Table ES-3: Priority B Issue Statements.














Category	Issue Statement
	Enhancement and long-term protection of forest, native prairie, and pollinator habitats and corridors
	Unsealed or poorly constructed wells as a conduit for groundwater contamination from the land surface

Table continued on next page

Table ES-3 continued

Category	Issue Statement
	Nutrient runoff and legacy loading in Lake Winona and its impact on water clarity, aquatic life, and habitat
	Loss of natural wetlands , in particular riparian and backwater floodplain wetlands (Mississippi River Floodplain), and its impact on water quality, flood damage reduction, and wildlife habitat
	Surface and groundwater interconnectivity due to karst geology
	Excess sediment from near-channel and in-channel sources (floodplains, terraces, and streambanks)
	Pasture runoff and need for managed grazing within riparian corridors
	Flooding and its associated impact to homes, infrastructure, and natural resources
	Continued high levels of E. coli and its impact on aquatic recreation opportunities despite numerous reduction efforts
	Increased drainage (tile networks and drainage ditches) increasing downstream speed and velocity of water and associated sediment/nutrient delivery to channels and ditches
	Increased presence of terrestrial invasive species and its impact on native plant species
	Enhancement and protection of trout fisheries and habitat from adverse conditions
	Presence of aquatic invasive species threatening aquatic vegetation and aquatic life

Priority C Issues

These issues are important but will not be the focus of this plan. These issues may be outside of local governmental control or may be addressed by completing a different priority. They will not have goals or action items assigned to address them.

Table ES-4: Priority C Issues












Category	Issue Statement
	Protection of rare habitats and plant communities (calcareous fens, algific talus slopes, bottomland hardwood forests) to support native wildlife, insects, and birds
	Barriers to stream connectivity (i.e., culverts and road crossings) adversely impacting aquatic life, particularly coldwater fish
	Monitoring and protection of groundwater levels to ensure that water availability meets increasing demand

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Category	Issue Statement
	Protection of riparian game and non-game habitat
	Protection and management of blufflands from development and erosion
	Risk of chloride contamination for surface waters in the watershed
	Increase in development pressure in both rural and urban areas of watershed
	Low dissolved oxygen levels in streams and its impact on aquatic life
	Inadequate public water access sites to designated trout streams
	Inadequate accessibility and presence of debris in the Whitewater River State Water Trail, impacting navigability of the resource
	Need for improved management of aggregate resources and consumption/transport of resources

Set Measurable Goals

To determine if a plan has been successful, measurable goals are needed to monitor progress and to show quantifiable change in resource conditions.

Section 4. Watershed Resources and Measurable Goals of this plan outlines all measurable goals in actionable short- and long-term situations. Accompanying the priority issue and the short-term and long-term goals is background information on why each measurable goal is needed. A watershed map, broken out by HUC-12 drainage areas, is provided for each measurable goal and highlights what areas of the watershed should be prioritized. An example goal within the measurable goal section is provided in **Figure ES-6**.

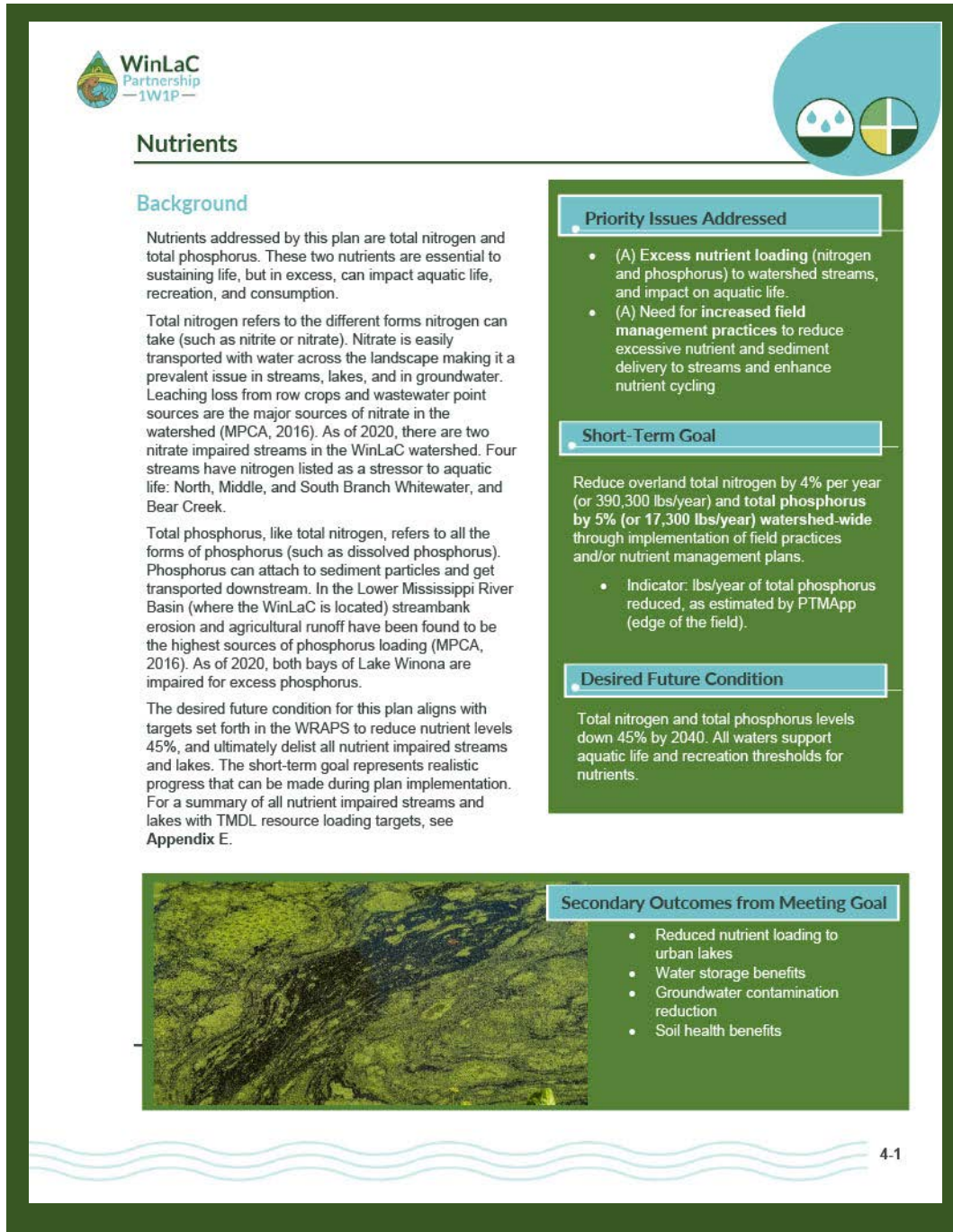


Figure ES-6: Example of a WinLaC CWMP measurable goal.

Assign Implementation Action

Each goal has a corresponding list of actions designed to make progress toward that goal. Actions were collaboratively brainstormed and vetted for this WinLaC plan from community input, input from local planning committees, and existing reports and plans.

Within **Section 5. Targeted Implementation**, actions are organized and summarized into “action tables” that include the following information:

- **Resource:** Identifies if the action is primarily addressing groundwater, surface water, or land use/habitat concerns
- **Primary Goal:** Identifies the goal the action is primarily addressing
- **Output:** How much of the action will be implemented in the 10-year plan
- **Implementation Program:** The program that will fund the action
- **Focus Area:** Priority subwatersheds and resources for implementation
- **Lead:** Lead entities that will oversee implementation, with partners that may assist with funding and efforts
- **Timeline:** Describes when implementation will occur during the 10-year plan
- **Output for Goal Tracking:** Identifies if the output will be used to report progress back on measurable goals
- **Cost:** Estimates the cost of implementing the action

Each action falls into one of five implementation programs, described below with each program’s associated icon (**Figure ES-7**). These are example actions, specific actions within these programs are described more in **Section 5. Targeted Implementation** and **Section 6. Watershed Implementation Programs**.



Actions brainstormed at the city of Winona Waterside Chat.

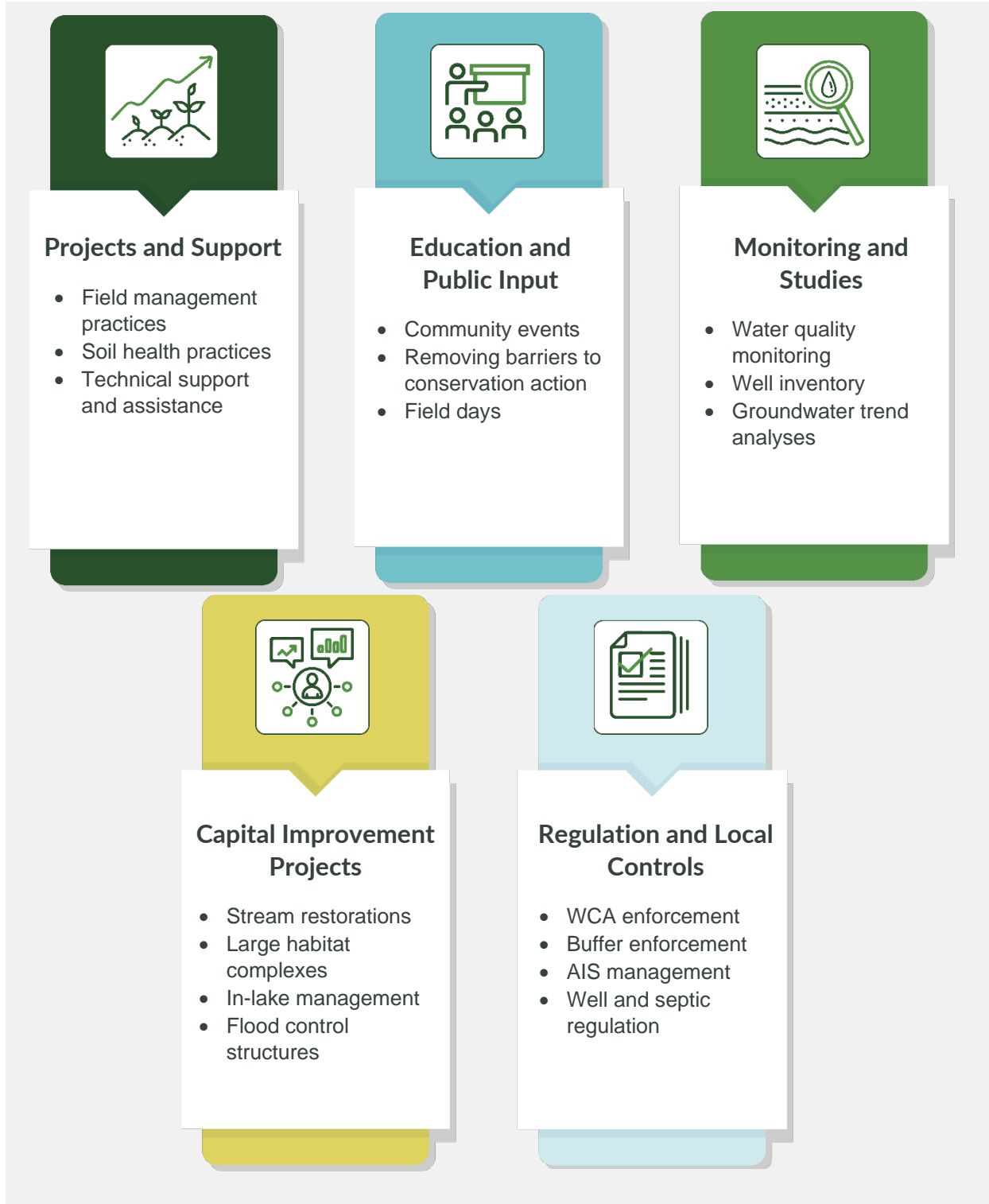
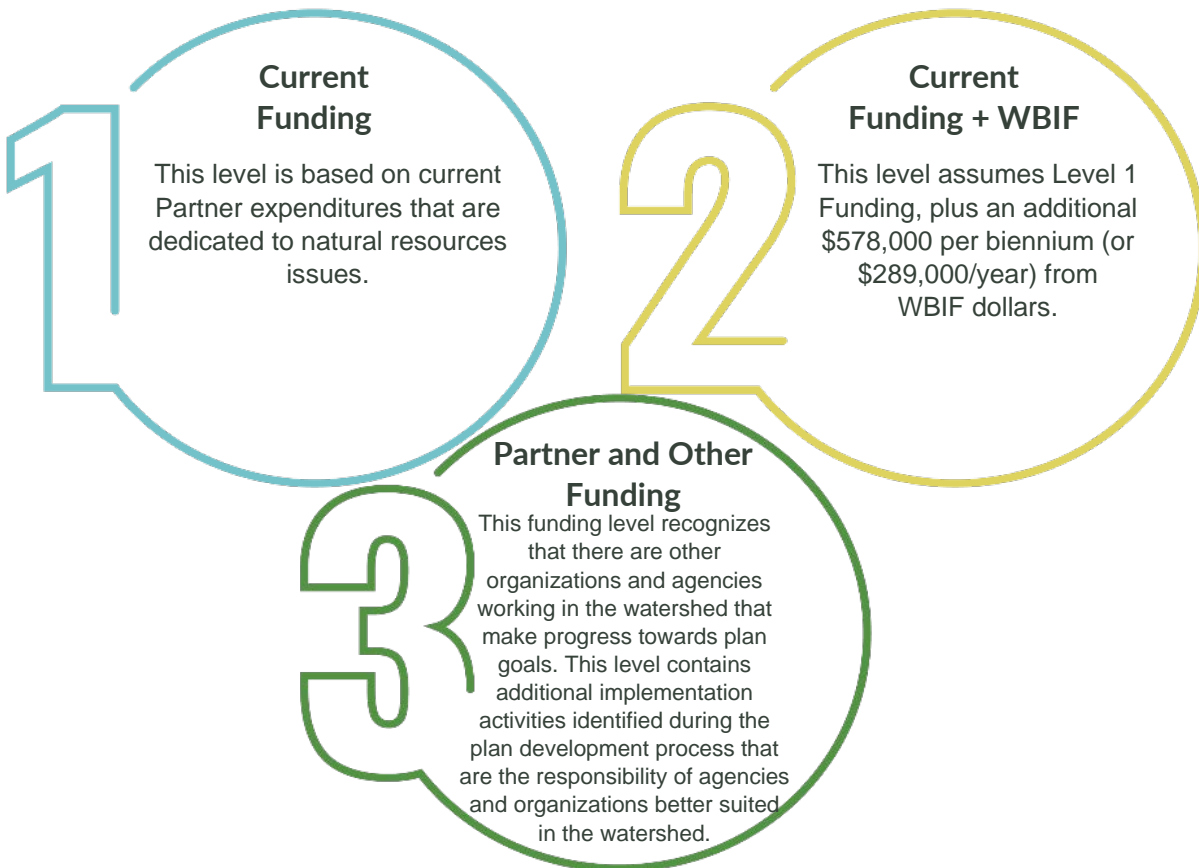


Figure ES-7: Implementation programs for the WinLaC CWMP.

Funding

This plan has defined two funding levels. Funding Level 1 is the estimated total of current funding that the watershed has access to use towards implementing opportunities in this plan. Upon approval of this CWMP, a second pool of funding becomes accessible. This funding is called the Watershed-Based Implementation Fund (WBIF) that is provided by the Board of Soil and Water Resources. Funding Level 2 includes Funding Level 1, the Watershed-Based Implementation Funds, and other funding sources and is the focus of this plan. Level 3 funding includes all other funding- from organizations, agencies, grants, etc. that can be used to implement water quality actions through partnerships.



Plan Administration and Coordination

Implementation of the WinLaC CWMP will require increased capacity of plan partners, including increased staffing, funding, and coordination from current levels. Successful implementation will depend on continuing and building on partnerships in the watershed with landowners, planning partners, state agencies, and organizations. The details of the Administration of this plan are described in **Section 7. Plan Administration and Coordination.**

The WinLaC Partnership local partners involved in implementing this plan are listed below:

- Houston, Olmsted, Wabasha, and Winona counties,
- Root River, Olmsted, Wabasha and Winona Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs),
- City of Winona, and
- Stockton-Rollingstone-Minnesota City Watershed District.