



BOARD ORDER

Fiscal Year 2024 and 2025 Cooperative Weed Management Area Program Authorization

PURPOSE

Authorize staff to develop the Request for Proposal (RFP) for fiscal year 2024 and 2025 General Fund Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA) Program.

FINDINGS OF FACT / RECITALS

1. The Laws of Minnesota 2023, Chapter 60, Article 1, Section 4c(2), appropriated fiscal year 2024 and 2025 funds for county cooperative weed management cost-share programs.
2. The CWMA program provides financial assistance to develop and sustain Cooperative Weed Management Areas that control emerging weed threats and manage natural areas and conservation lands through an integrated pest management and ecosystem approach.
3. The Board has previously endorsed an inter-agency granting strategy that includes an interagency Project Advisory Team to assist in the development and evaluation of this grant program.
4. The Grants Program and Policy Committee, at their September 18, 2023 and October 16, 2023 meeting, reviewed staff's request and recommended approval to the Board.

ORDER

The Board hereby:

1. Authorizes staff to use the criteria identified in Table 1 to develop a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the FY 2024 and 2025 CWMA Grants Program consistent with the provisions of the appropriation.

Dated at St. Paul, Minnesota, this October 25, 2023.

MINNESOTA BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES

Todd Holman, Chair
Board of Water and Soil Resources

Date: 10/25/2023

Table 1: Cooperative Weed Management Area Program Ranking Criteria	
Ranking Criteria	Maximum Points
<u>Newly Establishing Organizations:</u> The funding will be used to assist the development of a newly establishing or expanding Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA) or Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CISMA).	10
<u>Anticipated Outcomes:</u> The outcomes expected upon completion of the project initiatives are identified, consistent with project goals, and it is clear how these outcomes will be obtained.	25
<u>Relationship to CWMA and Conservation Plans:</u> The proposal and species of focus are based on local collaboration and knowledge, as well as local, state, tribal or federal invasive species plans.	10
<u>Weed Prioritization:</u> Weed threats are prioritized due to the threat they pose to conservation lands and natural areas and are consistent with Minnesota's Noxious Weed Law, as well as local needs.	15
<u>Strength of Partnerships:</u> Partnerships are clearly defined, with each partner's role identified, and leading to effective management, operation, and maintenance.	15
<u>Management Approach:</u> An approach is defined to plan and manage invasive species through partner coordination and with a focus on using local ecological knowledge to restore native vegetation and/or native plant communities where practicable.	15
<u>Information Management:</u> An approach is defined for the management of information about weed locations (using <u>EDDMapS</u> or other methods) if weed mapping will be conducted, as well as documenting management approaches used.	10
Total Points Available	100

BOARD ORDER

FY24-25 Multipurpose Drainage Management Grants Program

PURPOSE

Authorize the FY24-25 Multipurpose Drainage Management (MDM) Grant Program and delegate award decision to staff.

FINDINGS OF FACT / RECITALS

1. 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.
2. The Laws of Minnesota 2023, Regular Session, Chapter 40, Article 2, Section 6(j) appropriated Clean Water funds to the Board of Water and Soil Resources (Board) to facilitate MDM practices to reduce erosion and sedimentation, reduce peak flows and flooding, and improve water quality, while protecting drainage system efficiency and reducing drainage system maintenance for priority Chapter 103E drainage systems.
3. The Board has authorities under Minnesota Statutes §103B.3369 and 103B.101 to award grants and contracts to accomplish water and related land resources management.
4. The Buffer Soils and Drainage Committee discussed the MDM Grants Program delivery methods, including scoring criteria concept on May 23, 2023 and August 22, 2023.
5. The Grants Programs and Policy Committee at their September 18 and October 16, 2023 meeting, reviewed the MDM Grants Program scoring criteria and recommended the Board approve this order.

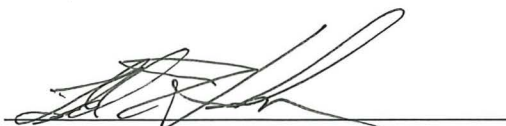
ORDER

The Board hereby:

1. Authorizes staff to use the scoring criteria identified in Table 1 to develop and issue the FY24-25 Request for Proposal (RFP) and other program support documents for the FY24-25 Multipurpose Drainage Management Grants Program.
2. Delegates the authority to staff to approve Multipurpose Drainage Management Grant awards based on responses to the RFP and funds available.
3. Authorizes staff to enter into grant agreements for these purposes.
4. Directs staff to regularly report to the Board on the status of MDM grants awarded.

Dated at St. Paul, Minnesota, this October 25, 2023.

MINNESOTA BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES



Todd Holman, Chair
Board of Water and Soil Resources

Date: 10/25/2023

Table 1. Scoring and Eligibility Criteria

Multipurpose Drainage Management Grant Program		
Scoring and Funding Criteria	Minimum Eligibility Criteria (if any one of these criteria is not met, the application will be considered ineligible)	Maximum Points Possible
<u>Activity Eligibility</u> : The proposed grant-funded activities are eligible under this RFP.	All requested activities are eligible	Yes
<u>Project Map</u> : Map provided by the applicant clearly identifies the drainage system.	Map included that shows the drainage system where activities are proposed	10
<u>Operations and Maintenance(O&M)</u> : Applicants have identified who will be responsible for holding the easement or responsible for operations and maintenance of the proposed grant funded activities.	Landowners identified as the party responsible for O&M	10
<u>Priority System</u> : Applicants have identified the priority 103E system for the proposed activities and the rationale for its selection including the water resource of concern.	A single system is identified in a repair report or engineers preliminary survey report	20
<u>Partnering Efforts</u> : Clear description of efforts to coordinate with partnering organizations including reference to applicable agreements or resolutions supporting the proposal.	Written documentation of coordination from the respective organizations of intent to partner	10
<u>Landowner Coordination</u> : Clear description of efforts to coordinate with participating landowners.	Written documentation of coordination with participating landowners	10
<u>Water Quality Outcomes</u> : Clear demonstration of water quality outcomes proposed by the activity.	Outcomes provided	20
<u>Multipurpose Benefits</u> : Clear demonstration of the multipurpose benefits proposed by the activity.	Description of different benefits provided	20
<u>Cost Benefits</u> : If the activity is associated with a MS 103E.005 defined Drainage Project, a clear description of how the proposed activities are supplemental and not needed to ensure the Cost Benefits considerations.	The proposed activities are NOT associated with a 103E Drainage Project OR The applicant has documented that the 103E Drainage Project stands on its own merits and the proposed grant activities are supplemental.	Yes

<p><u>Outlet Adequacy:</u> If the activity is associated with a MS 103E.005 defined Drainage Project, a clear description of how the proposed activities are not needed to ensure the proposed project outlet is adequate.</p>	<p>The proposed activities are NOT associated with a 103E Drainage Project OR The applicant has documented that the 103E Drainage Project stands on its own merits and the proposed grant activities are supplemental.</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p><u>Environmental or regulatory impacts:</u> The proposed grant funded activities are not being used to offset other environmental or regulatory impacts for this or another project.</p>	<p>Written confirmation provided by the applicant.</p>	<p>Yes</p>
	<p>TOTAL</p>	<p>100</p>

BOARD ORDER**Soil Health Practices Program: Staffing and Delivery Grants****PURPOSE**

Authorizes staff to develop and issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a Soil Health Grant for staffing and authorizes staff to develop and distribute funding allocations for a Soil Health Staffing and Delivery Programs

FINDINGS OF FACT / RECITALS

1. The Board of Water and Soil Resources (Board) received funding and authorization for soil health grants from the following clean water and general fund appropriations:
 - A. Laws of Minnesota 2023, Regular Session, Chapter 40, Article 2, Section 6, paragraph (o): *\$6,039,000 the first year and \$6,038,000 the second year are for financial and technical assistance to enhance adoption of cover crops and other soil health practices to achieve water quality or drinking water benefits. The board may use grants to local governments and agreements with the United States Department of Agriculture, AgCentric at Minnesota State Center for Excellence, and other practitioners and partners to accomplish this work. Up to \$450,000 is for an agreement with the University of Minnesota Office for Soil Health for applied research and education on Minnesota's agroecosystems and soil health management systems; and*
 - B. Laws of Minnesota 2023, Regular Session, Chapter 60, Article 1, section 4, paragraph (k): *\$10,557,000 the first year and \$10,557,000 the second year are for soil health activities to achieve water quality, soil productivity, climate change resiliency, or carbon sequestration benefits consistent with Minnesota Statutes, section 103F.06. This is a onetime appropriation and is available until June 30, 2027. The board may use grants to local governments, including soil and water conservation districts, and agreements with the United States Department of Agriculture; the University of Minnesota, Office for Soil Health; AgCentric, Minnesota State Northern Center of Excellence; and other practitioners and partners to accomplish this work.*
2. "Soil Health" is defined in MN Statute Section 103C.101, Subd. 10a. "Soil Health" means the continued capacity of soil to function as a vital living system that sustains plants, animals, and humans. Indicators of soil health include water infiltration capacity; organic matter content; water holding capacity; biological capacity to break down plant residue and other substances and to maintain soil aggregation; nutrient sequestration and cycling capacity; carbon sequestration; and soil resistance.
3. Laws of Minnesota 2023, Chapter 60, Article 5, Section 15 establishes the Soil Health Practices Program in MN Statute Section 103F.06 to accomplish soil health activities to achieve water quality, soil productivity, climate change resiliency, or carbon sequestration benefits.
4. The Technical Training and Certification Program (TTCP) is a collaborative effort between MASWCD, MACDE, NRCS and BWSR which supports Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) capacity development, including provisions related to soil health.
5. The Board has authorities under Minnesota Statutes Section 103B.101 to award grants and contracts to accomplish water and related land resources management.

6. BWSR initiated the Pilot Cover Crop Program by Board Order #19-35 awarded funds to five SWCDs specifically to implement Soil Health Practices.
7. The Board is a sub-awardee of a USDA Climate Smart Commodities grant awarded to Virginia Tech (The Virginia Tech Alliance Project) in September of 2022, which will support soil health work in Minnesota and requires state-funded match.
8. On April 26, 2023, the Board adopted order #23-22 authorizing staff to implement the USDA Climate Smart Commodities Virginia Tech Alliance Project grant program.
9. On August 18, 2023, the Board of Water and Soil Resources submitted a \$25 million Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) application to the USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service.
10. The Grants Program and Policy Committee, at their October 16, 2023 meeting, reviewed the proposed Soil Health Practices Program: Staffing and Delivery Grants process and recommended and recommended the Board approve this order.

ORDER

The Board hereby:

I. Soil Health Staffing

- A. Authorizes establishment of a Soil Health Staffing Grant Program consistent with MN Statutes Section 103F.06.
- B. Authorizes staff to use the scoring criteria identified in Table 1 to develop and issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Soil Health Staffing Grant Program.
- C. Authorizes staff to assess and score the Soil Health Staffing Grants RFP responses.
- D. Authorizes staff to award Soil Health Staffing Grants consistent with the RFP responses and available funds and enter into agreements for program implementation.

II. Soil Health Delivery

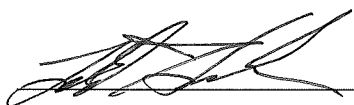
- A. Authorizes the fiscal year 24-25 Soil Health Delivery Grant Program consistent with Chapter 103F.06.
- B. Authorizes staff to develop and distribute funding allocations for Soil Health Delivery Grants to support implementation activities consistent with the definition of soil health in Statute 103C.101, Subd.10a based on available funds.
- C. Authorizes staff to award Soil Health Delivery Grants and enter into agreements for program implementation.

III. Staff Direction

- A. Directs staff to regularly report to the Board on the status of Soil Health Staffing and Delivery Grants awarded.

Dated at St. Paul, Minnesota, this October 25, 2023.

MINNESOTA BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES



Todd Holman, Chair
Board of Water and Soil Resources

Date: 10/25/2023

Table 1. Soil Health Staffing Request for Proposals – Scoring Criteria

DRAFT Soil Health Staffing Program	
Scoring Criteria	Maximum Points Possible
<u>Creating Supplemental Capacity:</u> The applicant clearly and concisely identified how the proposed staffing creates supplemental capacity to assist landowners in implementing soil health systems and to deliver soil health related programing.	30
<u>Partnerships:</u> The applicant intends to create new, or expand or enhance existing partnerships with a common vision of increasing utilization of soil health systems on production lands.	25
<u>Education and Outreach:</u> The applicant proposes specific efforts to enhance local understanding and knowledge around the soil health practices proposed. The applicant proposes specific efforts to increase direct landowner communications and engagement.	20
<u>Additional Expertise:</u> The applicant has ensured that the position will have credentialed technical expertise (e.g., Job Approval Authority, Technical Service Providers) or related experience to assist landowners in implementing soil health practices.	5
<u>Local Priority:</u> The applicant has participated or is participating in the implementation of a state approved, locally adopted plan that includes goals or actions for soil health related activities.	10
<u>Soil Health Focus:</u> The applicant has described the steps that will be taken to assure that the supplemental capacity will be used to deliver soil health related outcomes that make progress towards identified goals for soil health related activities.	10
Total Points Available	100

Board Resolution # 23-61

Board of Water and Soil Resources

Proposed 2024 meeting dates.

January 24

February – no meeting

March 27

April 24

May 22

June 26

July – no meeting

August 28-29 (Wed-Thurs) – Tour and meeting

September 25

October 23

November – no meeting

December 19 (third Thursday)



Todd Holman, Chair
Board of Water and Soil Resources

Date: _____

10/25/2023