

Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources
Performance Review and Assistance Program

Instructions for Part 2 Performance Standards Checklist

LGU Type: Metro Area Watershed Districts

General Instructions: The Part 2 Performance Standards checklist is intended to be used as part of the Board of Water and Soil Resources' review of local governmental unit performance in the delivery of water management services. The purpose of this part is to provide an overview of your watershed district's operations in four areas: administration, planning, execution and communication/coordination. The performance standards cover basic or required practices (■) and high performance practices (★). We expect each district to meet all of the basic practice standards. The high performance standards describe optional practices that are met less frequently. Districts will receive BWSR commendations for compliance with high performance standards. Any unmet high performance standards can serve as stretch goals for performance improvement. Where the performance standard lists multiple criteria (e.g., "written and reviewed/updated"), all criteria must be met in order to check the "yes" box on the form.

The performance standards are labeled as being either Level I or Level II. BWSR will monitor and report Level I standard compliance annually for all districts. Level II standards are applied to those districts selected for a once-in-five-years PRAP Level II performance review. Those districts will receive special notification and additional instructions for completing the checklist.

Administration

- Activity report: annual, on-time
Annual activity reports are due to BWSR within 120 days of the end of the district's fiscal year. The content is specified in MN Rule 8410.0150 Subp. 3.
- Financial report and audit completed on schedule
The financial and audit reports are required by MN Rule 8410.0150 and must be submitted within 120 days of the end of the district's fiscal year.
- Drainage authority buffer strip report submitted
If the watershed district is the local drainage authority, the annual buffer strip establishment and inspection report required by MS Chap. 103E.067 must be submitted to BWSR by March 1 each year. If the district is not the drainage authority, enter "N/A" for this item.
- Rules: date of last revision or review
The date of the last revision or adoption of district rules (month and year) should be entered in the space on the form. Rules reflect the authority of the district and must be kept relevant to the changing conditions within the district. Based on this item BWSR will determine whether a rule review or revision is needed.
- Personnel policies: written and reviewed/updated within last 5 years
A personnel policy includes such procedures as how staff are compensated, hired and dismissed, and also how benefits are provided and used. A written policy document provides consistency in the board's decisions on staff-related issues.
- Data practices policy: reviewed/updated within last 5 years
A data practices policy describes how the district responds to requests for information submitted under the Minnesota Data Practices Act (MS Chap. 13). Guidance for local governments is available at <http://www.ipad.state.mn.us/>. To

- check “yes” the district must have a local policy and have reviewed it (determined that it is up-to-date) or updated it within the past 5 years.*
- **Manager appointments: current and reported**
This standard reports compliance with MS Chap. 103D.311 Subp. 4. BWSR is one of the entities that must be notified of appointments made to the board of managers.
 - **Consultant RFP: within 2 years for professional services**
MS Chap. 103B.227 subd. 5 requires biennial solicitations for consultant services. Districts that check “yes” will have requested interest proposals within the previous two years.
 - ★ **Administrator on staff**
Record “yes” if the district contracts for or employs a person designated as the district administrator. In general the administrator serves as lead staff to the board of managers and coordinates the overall administrative, project, regulatory, and public involvement operations of the district.
 - ★ **Board training: orientation and cont. ed. plan and record for each board member and Staff training: orientation and cont. ed. plan and record for each staff member**
These two standards have the same content but apply to either board members or staff. Districts who meet these standards will provide for mandatory orientation class(es) for both new staff and board members. There will also be a training plan, which can be individually tailored, for each board member and staff person to enhance skills or technical expertise related to their service to the district. The district will also maintain a record of what elements of the plan each board and staff member has completed. Districts without staff should enter “N/A” for the staff training item.
 - ★ **Operational guidelines exist and current**
Operational guidelines are written procedures and policies that are used to inform and guide the operation of the district. There is no prescribed format or content for these. However, the Minnesota Office of the State Auditor website (osa.state.mn.us) has helpful information regarding standard audit procedures for local government, including guidelines for meeting minutes content, fiscal procedures and conflict of interest. Operating guidelines serve two purposes: they establish standard procedures and policies thereby saving time at board meetings and by using them the district holds itself to a standard of accountability for how it manages public funds and discharges public duties. BWSR has examples of good operating guidelines.
 - ★ **Public drainage records: meet modernization guidelines**
Districts that serve as the public drainage authority will meet this standard if they have upgraded their drainage system records to meet the Drainage Records Modernization Guidelines. These guidelines are explained at www.bwsr.state.mn.us/drainage/index.html). Districts that are not the public drainage authority should enter “N/A” for this item.

Planning

- **Watershed management plan: up-to-date**
This standard identifies whether the district is operating under a management plan that is not overdue for revision.
- **Percent of city/twp. local water plans not yet approved**
Record the total number of cities or townships that do not yet have district-approved local water plans as a percentage of the total number of such plans required within the district.

- Capital Improvement Program: reviewed every 2 years
A capital improvement program is defined in MS Chap. 103B.205 Subp. 3 and is listed as a required management plan component in MR 8410.0130 Subp. 4. Districts that meet this standard will review their capital improvement program at least once every 2 years.
- ★ Plan goals and objectives guide annual budgeting
Organizations that meet this optional standard will regularly consult their comprehensive management plan when setting annual budgets. Budget priorities will be set based in part on which goals and objectives need attention and the annual budget document may refer to plan elements.

Execution

- Engineer Reports: submitted for DNR & BWSR review
Record a “yes” if during the last five years all required engineer reports for district projects have been submitted for DNR and BWSR review and comment, as required by MS Chap. 103D.711 Subd.5.
- Total expenditures per year (past 10 years)
This is the organization’s total expenditures from all sources of funds with a dollar amount for each of the last 10 years for which data are complete. These data are one indicator of trends in the level of district activity. A table is provided at the bottom of the Part 2 checklist to enter these amounts.
- Project & program \$ expended/total \$ expended (5 year annual average)
This item tracks the district’s expenditures for on-the-ground projects and watershed management/conservation programs as a percentage of total district expenditures. Project expenditures in this instance include land, materials, construction, public education programs, and newsletters. Staff time and overhead allocated to the projects or programs are not included. Report the average of the annual percentages for the last five complete years.
- ★ Water quality trends tracked for priority water bodies
Districts that meet this optional standard will have identified priority water bodies in their district and have an established monitoring program to track the water quality of those water bodies. The water quality data can be used to set priorities for strategic and annual activity planning and projects.
- ★ Watershed hydrologic trends monitored / reported
Districts that meet this optional standard will regularly measure one or more hydrologic parameters for their watershed or sub-watersheds and report the results. Selected parameters should be indicators of the effectiveness of water retention efforts, changes in impervious surface coverage, and hydrologic connectivity and be used to identify trends in peak flows, runoff volumes, baseflow, and other hydrologic characteristics related to the district’s watershed management objectives.

Communication and Coordination

- Website: contains annual report, financial statement, board members, contact info, watershed mgmt plan
These basic elements should be available for review on the district’s website and be updated within a reasonable amount of time after changes to any one element.
- Functioning advisory committee(s): recommendations on projects, reports; maintains 2-way communication with board
Districts have both a citizens’ and a technical advisory committee or can combine them into one. To meet this standard the district’s advisory committee(s) meets

- regularly, submits recommendations and/or comments on district projects and reports, or other products. There is regular communication between the advisory committee(s) and the board.*
- **Communication piece: sent within last 12 months**
A communication piece can be a newsletter, press release for publication in local newspapers, enclosure with regular local government mailings, etc. that highlight the work and program opportunities of the watershed district. Content requirements are described in MN Rule 8410.0100 Subp. 4.
 - ★ **Website contains meeting notices, agendas & minutes, updated after each board mtg., additional content**
Districts that meet this optional standard will include the listed items on their website, update them regularly and include other items such as news updates, project status reports, or links to monitoring data.
 - ★ **Obtain stakeholder input: within last 5 years**
Districts that meet this optional standard will have conducted, either solely or in partnership with other local entities, a general formal or informal survey of stakeholder opinions or interest in water management issues. This effort can take several forms and need not be a scientifically based, random sample survey. BWSR recommends seeking such broad-based public input in conjunction with major plan updates in order to give district stakeholders an opportunity to inform priority setting.
 - ★ **Track progress for I & E objectives in Plan**
Districts that meet this optional standard will have public information and education objectives in their management plan, and will have developed measures and data that they are tracking to determine their progress in meeting those objectives. Types of outcomes could include changed attitudes and behaviors, increased participation in district programs, and increased demand for district assistance with water management projects.
 - ★ **Coordination with County Bd and City/Twp officials by managers or staff**
Districts that meet this optional standard will have regular contact and coordination with their county commissioners, city and township officials. Coordination activities include giving periodic status reports at county or municipal board meetings, inviting local elected officials or staff to attend board of managers meetings, or establishing a liaison person for regular consultation with local government staff.
 - ★ **Partnerships: cooperative projects/tasks done with neighboring districts, counties, soil and water districts, non-governmental organizations**
Districts that meet this optional standard will have conducted or coordinated programs and projects with other local government, or non-governmental entities (e.g., local lake association). Programs will include sharing in education, monitoring, planning, and project implementation efforts.