



Grants Quarterly

April 2017

Minnesota Board of Water & Soil Resources • www.bwsr.state.mn.us

Grant agreement processing

BWSR issues more than one thousand grants each year, and we strive to process grant agreements and associated payments as quickly as possible. However, sending your grant agreement to the incorrect contact at BWSR causes unnecessary delays in executing the agreement.

To ensure timely execution of your grant agreements, your signed grant agreement should be returned to:

BWSR
Attn: Kari Keating
520 Lafayette Rd N
St. Paul, MN 55155

Or: BWSR.grants@state.mn.us

Do not send your grant agreement to a Board Conservationist, the State's Authorized Representative, or any other contact as BWSR. As BWSR's Grants Specialist, Kari ensures that any required workplans have been approved by the Board Conservationist, and that the grantee organization is in compliance (eligible to receive grant funds) before routing the grant agreement for execution.

The Authorized Representative is a required field on the grant agreement, and should indicate the title—not the name—of the individual most familiar with the grant project(s). Using the title helps to ensure that if there is a change of staff within your organization, BWSR still knows who to contact. If the title of the authorized representative changes, let your Board Conservationist know.

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Returning unspent funds?

As a reminder, unspent funds must be returned to BWSR within 30 days of when the grant agreement has expired.

Generate, save, and print the returned funds form created in eLINK when you create your final progress report, and return this form with your returned funds check to ensure accurate and timely processing. BWSR does not need a copy of the Final Financial form returned with the check; this should be added as an attachment in eLINK.

One Watershed, One Plan RFP closes soon

The FY17 RFP for One Watershed, One Plan planning grants is currently open, and applications will be accepted until 4:30 pm on **April 19th**. More information can be found on this opportunity on the [Apply for Grants](#) page of BWSR's website.

Updated Grants Monitoring and Financial Reconciliation Policy

BWSR recently began transitioning away from its system of grant “verifications” to a new Grants Monitoring and Financial Reconciliation Policy. What won’t change under the Policy are the annual reporting and monitoring of grants and the paying of competitive grants on a 50/40/10 schedule.

What will change under the new Policy is the timing and number of grants that will be financially reconciled. Under the new Policy, BWSR will reconcile payments on individual grants \$50,000 and over, either when a request for a payment is made and/or before the grant is closed out. Reconciliations can occur either on-site in your office or through a desk review of documents you submit via eLINK.

Monitoring and financial reconciliation are meant to provide guidance to the grantee, increase transparency within the grants process and ensure expenditures claimed are in compliance with the grant agreement. As a grantee, you can help yourself (and BWSR) by updating eLINK when you have spent a substantial portion (at least 70%) of the grant funds, rather than by waiting for the reporting deadline. This allows us to initiate the financial reconciliation process sooner, work with you on addressing any potential issues before the grant is closed out while there is still time to make changes, and may speed the delivery of your final grant payment or closeout.

You can find more information about this revised policy in the [Grants Monitoring and Financial Reconciliation Policy fact sheet](#).

Easements transitioning from grants to contracts

Beginning in late 2017, payments to SWCDs for RIM easement delivery and implementation will no longer be done via the grants process. Instead, BWSR will enter into Master Joint Powers Agreements (MJPAs) as the vehicle to pay SWCDs for RIM easement delivery and implementation. The MJPA process began this spring, and BWSR has fully executed MJPAs with 38 SWCDs to date. Executed MJPAs will be valid for 5 years and will not require reporting in eLINK.

Work under the MJPA will be authorized by issuing Work Order Contracts to individual SWCDs. We anticipate to begin sending out Work Order Contracts for easement delivery as early as July 2017. For easement implementation (acquisition), Work Order Contracts will be issued after easement funding decisions have been made. Requests for payment for easement implementation will be done via an invoicing process. SWCDs may send invoices quarterly in the months of February, May, August and November for any easements that have closed within the quarterly period.

If your SWCD has not sent in their signed MJPA yet, please make sure envelopes containing the signed MJPA are **postmarked by June 9, 2017**.

Additional information on the MJPA process, including a Questions and Answers document, can be found on [BWSR’s MJPA website](#).

Future SWCD base grants will include Cost Share and Conservation Delivery. Please continue to complete annual & final reporting on FY17 & prior Easement Delivery grants in eLINK through grant closeout.

Important upcoming dates

Apr 19: One Watershed, One Plan RFP deadline

Jun 30: Many grants expire

Nov 1-3: BWSR Academy, Cragun’s Conference Center in Brainerd