

Guiding Principles

Watershed-based Funding Pilot Program

Vision

BWSR's vision is to move towards more systematic Clean Water Funding for local water management (LWM) authorities on a watershed basis. This funding approach will result in greater efficiency and effectiveness for both LWM authorities and the state and is critical for Minnesota to reach its clean water goals. This funding model could also serve as a future framework for broadening funding to include other state funding sources associated with supporting LWM activities.



Purpose

The purpose of this document is to further outline this vision by providing the guiding principles that will direct and influence future policies and procedures for Clean Water Funds appropriated to the Board of Water and Soil Resources for the purposes of implementing comprehensive watershed management plans. Eligible watersheds are defined as those areas that have watershed management plans developed under the One Watershed, One Plan Program or the Metropolitan Surface Water Management Act.

- **Watershed-based funding will be used to implement activities identified in comprehensive watershed management plans developed under the One Watershed, One Plan program, the Metropolitan Surface Water Management Act, or the Metropolitan Groundwater Management Act.** These plans focus on results and an evidence-based decision-making process. Plans contain implementation timelines, milestones, and cost estimates that address the largest pollution threats and provide the greatest environmental benefits to each watershed.
- **Watershed-based funding must be based upon accountability and performance in achieving measurable progress towards elements of the comprehensive watershed management plan.** Requests for funding must include transparent standards of accountability and performance criteria to objectively evaluate and prioritize funding based on outcomes.
- **Watershed-based funding will be consistent with the Nonpoint Priority Funding Plan (NPPF).** Leadership from State agencies tasked with protection and restoration of Minnesota's water resources came together and agreed on a set of high-level State priorities and criteria to ensure Clean Water Funds are used effectively and efficiently. BWSR must allocate funding according to the priorities and criteria identified in the NPPF when Clean Water Funds are the source of funding.
- **Watershed-based funding envisions a holistic and flexible approach that includes both protection and restoration.** Recognizing that the level of government closest to the ground can best understand resource management needs and implement effective strategies, funding should not be strictly prescribed to a limited number of conservation practices but should allow the flexibility needed by local

water management authorities to address watershed-specific priorities identified in comprehensive watershed management plans consistent with the requirements of the available funding source(s).

- **Watershed-based funding envisions funding requests through a single watershed based work plan.** LWM authorities, as provided in their formal implementation agreement, submit a commitment to collaboratively pursue priority projects and, as identified within the implementation schedule of their approved comprehensive watershed management plans.
- **Watershed-based funding will require a non-state contribution.** A non-state match will be required from LWM authorities in order to have access to this state funding.