

## **FY20-21 Interim Process: Metro Soil and Water Conservation District Annual Work Plan for Watershed-Based Implementation Funding**

The purpose of this FY20-21 Interim Process is to provide a means for Metro Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) to develop an additional and optional mechanism to meet the Eligible Activities section of the FY20-21 Watershed-Based Implementation Funding (WBIF) Policy by developing a prioritized, targeted and measurable annual work plan. As per the Watershed-based Implementation Funding (WBIF) Policy for FY20-21, eligible activities of a Metro SWCD must be identified in the implementation section of an annual work plan authorized under §103C.331. A Metro SWCD, with concurrence from a watershed management entity, may also receive funding for activities identified in the implementation section of a state approved, locally adopted comprehensive watershed management plan developed under Minnesota statutes §103B.101, Subd. 14 or §103B.801, watershed management plan required under §103B.231, or county groundwater plan authorized under §103B.255.

### **Annual Work Plan Content**

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A Metro SWCD annual work plan must be derived from the conservation district's comprehensive plan (§103C.331) and will outline focused watershed-based activities the conservation district will pursue in the upcoming year to address the clean water goals and objectives. The annual work plan should be succinct and will describe in detail a list of prioritized watershed-based issues and resources, a set of planned actions, and the expected progress towards defined clean water quality goals.

#### **Purpose Statement (short narrative)**

The work plan must contain a short narrative describing the purpose of the work identified in the annual work plan.

#### **Prioritization of issues and resources (narrative, could include maps)**

The work plan must include a narrative and potentially maps identifying the priority issues and resources that will be the focus of the District's clean water work.

The process of developing the annual work plan should:

- Be science based (e.g., TMDL, WRAPS, diagnostic studies, etc.);
- Be thoughtful, inclusive, defensible, and documented;
- Build on priorities established through other local and state planning efforts;

- Create prioritized issue statements and identify geographic priorities (a map); and
- Result in priority issues, resources, or areas that have real, measurable, and actionable solutions.

Recognizing the SWCD will not be able to address all issues or resources in one year, the process should identify only what can be reasonably accomplished within the timeframe.

A list of issue areas and topics that could be considered during the work plan process is as follows:

- Surface water and ground water quality protection, restoration, and improvement, including prevention of erosion and soil transport into surface water systems;
- Restoration, protection, and preservation of drinking water sources and natural surface water and groundwater storage and retention systems;
- Promotion of groundwater recharge;
- Minimization of public capital expenditures needed to correct flooding and water quality problems;
- Wetland enhancement, restoration, and establishment;
- Identification of priority areas for riparian zone management and buffers; and
- Protection and enhancement of fish and wildlife habitat and water recreational facilities.

## Definitions

*Prioritize* – determining the relative importance and precedence of the resources and issues you have identified in your plan. This includes not only agreeing upon which items will be tackled first, but also those that will not be included in your plan.

*Resources* – natural features on the landscape that can be grouped into categories for management activities (e.g., unimpaired lakes, shallow groundwater aquifers, stream riparian corridors, productive soils).

*Issues* – problems, risks, or opportunities for your watershed’s priority resources (e.g. flood damage, groundwater contamination, protect unimpaired waters, social capacity, etc.) that will be addressed in your plan.

## Targeting Approach (narrative, could include maps)

The work plan must describe the method of how proposed implementation actions in the work plan have been or will be targeted. There are many facets to targeting that should be considered:

### **Activity type**

To address the identified priority resources and issues, put careful thought into matching the problem to the proper solution. What primary and secondary BMPs will be most effective for addressing an identified pollutant? Can the practices you select achieve multiple benefits (e.g. pollution reduction and habitat improvement)? Are the outcomes of these activities measurable? What is needed? General education and outreach? Site-specific technical assistance? Also consider the availability of funds and labor for long-term BMP maintenance.

**Location**

The location of practices and projects is another way to target. Availability of completed subwatershed assessments, technical assistance/engineering, nutrient loading hotspots, watershed position, and interactions with other practices are factors that may influence your location decisions. Include maps that show the geographic location of the targeted resources, subwatersheds, management zones or focus areas within those zones. Ultimately, the purpose of targeting is to ensure the right practices are installed in the right locations at the right time.

**Landowner participation**

In most cases, landowners are the most important factor for successful voluntary implementation. It is important to evaluate current and past attempts to generate landowner participation, and where such efforts have been successful (or not). That information could be useful to determine which areas you target work, and the technical support required to get projects done.

**Root cause(s) of problem**

Management activities should address the root cause(s) and drivers of degradation, not just the symptoms, resulting in long term solutions instead of temporary fixes.

**Scale**

Successful targeting must consider a range of scales that will be dependent on measurable goals that are trying to be achieved.

**Definition**

*Target* – identifying when and where actions will be implemented within the watershed to achieve the desired goals.

**Measurable Goals (narrative or bullet points)**

The work plan must articulate what the SWCD is trying to achieve through the actions identified within the time frame of the annual work plan.

**Definitions**

*Measurable Goal* - For the annual work plan, the measurable goal should relate to the progress made toward a desired future condition (DFC).

*Outcome* - What specifically will happen as a result of the project you install or the service you provide? Collectively, the outcomes of your activities should get you to your measurable goal - Outcomes may also express changes in knowledge or behavior which lead to actions that contribute to measurable goals.

## Implementation Actions

The work plan must include a focused list or table of implementation actions within a WBIF watershed allocation boundary(ies) and may also include activities for the full SWCD area. The purpose is to focus efforts on those actions that will address the largest threats or risks and provide the greatest water quality benefit unique to each resource.

The following information must be included for each action:

- Water Resource of Concern
- Implementation action – a brief description of the activity itself and how it relates to goals (project or program)
- Location where the action will occur
- Estimated cost/Funding Source
- Identification of roles and key partners (local government, non-governmental, and other state or federal agency partners as applicable)
- Measurable outcomes or outputs - estimated pollution reductions, countable projects, activities, services, or products you use to track progress
- Parameter(s)

## Partner involvement process (narrative, as needed)

The annual work plan must include a description of the partner involvement process used to develop the plan. At a minimum, the partner involvement process must include:

- Sending all watershed management entities within the SWCD Boundary a copy of the annual work plan for review and comment prior to submittal to BWSR.

## PROCESS (per §103C.401, subdivision 1, (4) )

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- The BWSR Board Conservationist (BC) and identified partners must be informed and invited to public meetings regarding the development and approval of the annual work plan.
- Before submittal to BWSR, the annual work plan must be approved for submittal by SWCD Board at a regular or special meeting.
- The annual workplan must be submitted to the BC.
- The BC will review and make a recommendation to the BWSR Central Region Manager.
- The BWSR Central Region Manager will either approve or deny the annual work plan within 3 weeks of submittal.
  - If approved, the approval will be communicated in writing to the SWCD.

- If denied, the denial and the reason for the denial will be communicated in writing to the SWCD. The SWCD will have up to 30 days to make improvements and resubmit or may appeal the decision to the BWSR Executive Director. If resolution cannot be found within an additional 30 days, the SWCD may appeal to the Central Region Committee of the Board.
- Once BWSR approves, the annual work plan must be adopted by the SWCD Board.