



**2023 Strategic Planning**  
**Compilation of Round 1 Results**

**August 2023**

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# Introduction

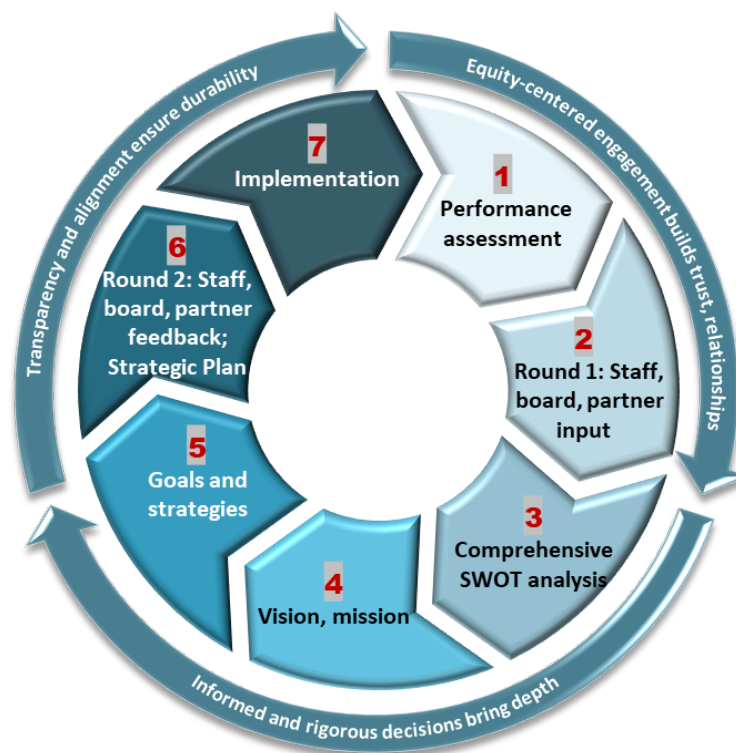
## Strategic Planning Overview

### Purpose and objectives

BWSR's current Strategic Plan was created in 2017 as a five-year plan, so by early 2023 it was time to evaluate progress and ensure that BWSR has identified and updated goals and priorities to guide our work going forward. We are committed to an inclusive, participatory process (see graphic) that involves staff, board, and partners around the state. Learn more at the project [website](#).

### Process and timeline

- **Spring 2023:** Assess performance against the current strategic plan; share results
- **Summer 2023:** Gather input from staff, board, and partners around the state; compile, analyze, and share results
- **Late summer 2023:** Conduct comprehensive SWOT analysis
- **Fall 2023:** Using results from staff, board, and partner input and the SWOT analysis, draft agency core values, vision, mission, long-term goals, and mid-term strategies
- **Winter 2023-24:** Gather staff, board, and partner feedback on draft agency core values, vision, mission, long-term goals, and mid-term strategies; use results to finalize and share strategic plan, and begin implementation



## Round 1 Input

### Questions

Below are the questions asked of board, staff, and partners via virtual, in-person, or online methods. Results are compiled in the following section.

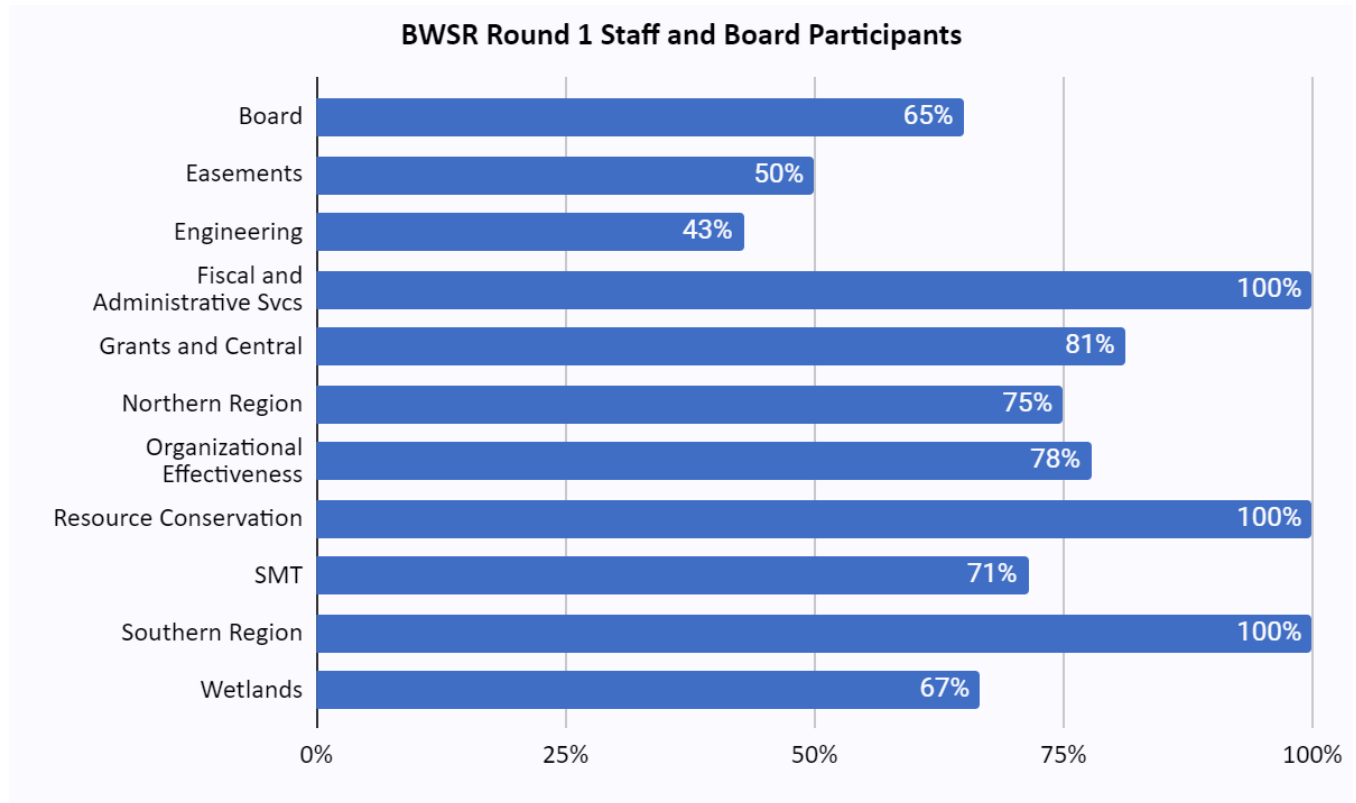
1. BWSR currently works primarily with local governments. As BWSR advances its statewide commitment to equity, who else should BWSR work with to improve and protect natural resources?
2. BWSR focuses on strengthening local capacity. What could BWSR do better or differently to further enhance local capacity and improve outcomes?
3. What are some critical emerging issues that BWSR might be uniquely suited to address?
4. As individuals, groups, and BWSR as a whole, what are more meaningful and relevant ways to measure the results of our collective work to improve and protect natural resources?
5. *Staff and board only:* Thinking about the barriers you face in your work, what improvements to BWSR systems, structures, or processes would help overcome those barriers and yield better results?

6. *Staff and board only:* What criteria should BWSR use to decide which initiatives to pursue, reduce, or eliminate?
7. Other thoughts about BWSR's strategic direction?

## Participants

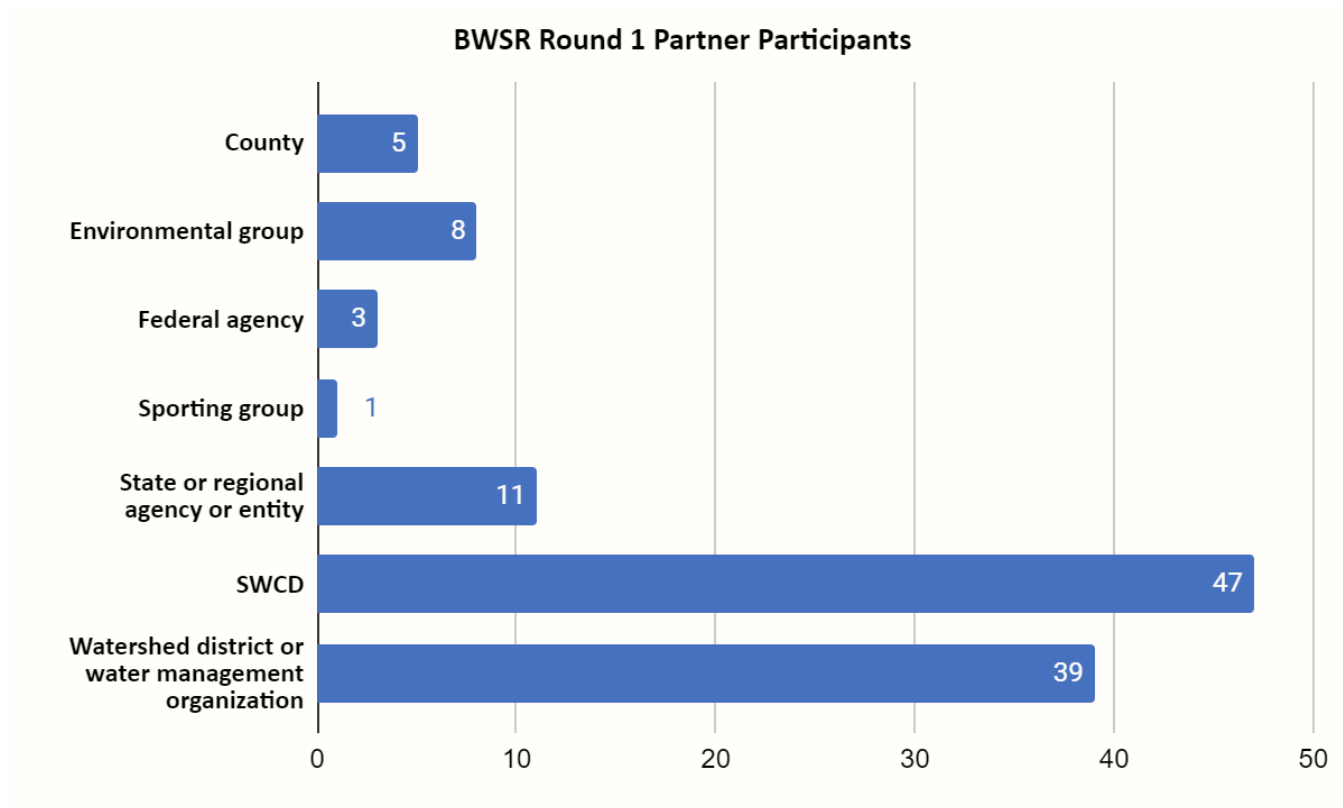
### Board and staff

For Round 1, 100 staff and board members participated, 54 via in-person or virtual sessions and 46 via the online survey. Some may have participated more than once such as to add more ideas to the online survey following a virtual session. The chart below shows the percentage of staff and board members who contributed by their connection to BWSR; one staff member declined to respond to this question.



### Partners

For Round 1, 116 partners participated, 47 via in-person or virtual sessions and 68 via the online survey. The chart below shows their participation by group or organization.



Race was requested only for partners contributing via the survey and was optional. All of the 34 who answered this survey question were white/Caucasian.

## Presentation of results

The responses compiled below are from staff, board, and partners. They are presented by question, separated by staff/board and partners. At the top of each question is a word cloud roughly illustrating all responses to that question.

Responses are generally presented as written, with spelling and minor grammar corrections made to improve readability and understanding.

Round 1 input is analyzed in a separate document, and results will directly shape BWSR's strategic planning work.

# Round 1 Results Compilation

## Introduction

## Responses by Question

**1: BWSR currently works primarily with local governments. As BWSR advances its statewide commitment to equity, who else should BWSR work with to improve and protect natural resources?**



## Question 1, Staff and Board Responses

There were approximately 112 responses to this question.

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● AARP</li> <li>● Ag commodity groups</li> <li>● Agricultural producer associations (corn growers, soybean growers)</li> <li>● Agriculture organizations</li> <li>● Agronomists</li> <li>● Agronomists and farm coops</li> <li>● BWSR is now supporting watershed communities, more than individual LGUs that serve</li> </ul> | <p>Individual landowners. We can continue to be more community focused and lead in this area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● BWSR should continue to expand their working relationship with tribal governments and NGOs</li> <li>● Check with other states about how they are advancing equity</li> <li>● Cities - drinking water</li> <li>● City Forestry Divisions</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Climate advocacy</li> <li>● Climate advocacy groups</li> <li>● Colleges and Universities</li> <li>● Conservation and environmental protection groups</li> <li>● Consulting firms</li> <li>● Contractor trade groups - septic systems installers, excavating, construction</li> </ul> |
|---|--|---|

- Corporate campuses with large tracts of land
- Counties
- Counties (at least do a better job)
- Diverse ethnic groups, such as Hmong farmers association
- Diversity communities; for example: Minnesota Hmong farmers, hispanic farmers, etc.
- Educational institutions - internships, etc.
- Educational institutions, facilities, Higher ed faculty, K-12 teachers, property managers, etc. Student groups.
- Educational institutions, mentorship organizations, and other agencies that help/can help to increase diversity in environmental fields.
- Enhanced focus on drainage authorities?
- Enhancing local capacity of LGUs
- Entities like UMN with relevant research (e.g., cover crops)
- Entities that prioritize diverse and lower income land occupiers
- Environmental justice communities
- Farm organizations, MN Farmers Union, MN Soil Health, MN Cattlemen's Assn., MN Corn and Soybean Assn., MN Farm Bureau
- Fed agencies - NRCS, USFS, US FWS, etc.
- Fed agencies we don't normally work with (e.g., USFWS)
- Foresters, timber companies, timber mills
- Fruit and vegetable growers and associations (MN apple growers, MN Farmers' Market Assn, for examples)
- Higher Education Institutions
- Historically underrepresented communities Ex. minority farmers, Black farmers, Hmong and Latinx farmers
- I don't disagree with the notion that we should focus on local governments but given our LGU capacity concerns, can we really expect them to effectively do this?
- I don't know. It's hard to know where that Intersects with the priority resources of the State. Is there data/maps available that show where we as an agency are falling short?
- I think it is important to continue to foster the local government partnership. I think LGUs are best suited to help us identify new partners and may be best suited to work with those partners.
- Impacted communities ex. low income communities that are located in flood plans. How does our work impact them?
- Lake associations
- Lake associations
- Landowner groups, associations
- Learn from corporations and businesses related to natural resources.
- LGU here is referring to SWCDs, WD's, Counties
- LGUs (cities, counties, WD's, SWCDs, etc.) these partners serve all citizens, increase equity with other aspects such as program setup, requirements, and expectations
- Likely varies by watershed. Maybe worth discussing during local planning efforts.
- Livestock groups
- Major agricultural employers (i.e., meat packers, logging companies, input companies, etc.) they have a stake in equity and in water quality
- Maybe reaching out to MDA to work closer in partnership with the Emerging Farmer Working group established in 2020 Legislative Session.
- MDA for easements; more outreach and coordination
- Minnesota citizens! They are largely our investors, and should be informed and excited about our work.
- More direct work with municipalities, cities and townships. They are currently technically one of our clientele, but workload often limits the ability to engage them as active partners
- Municipalities
- Municipalities
- Municipalities/Cities/towns
- Need to facilitate more forums between SWCDs and Water Mgmt Organizations to network and allow Issues and innovative ideas to bubble up. Not add more parties.
- Neighborhood groups (metro area)
- NGOs
- NGOs - but be aware that they will find government accountability onerous and may resist
- Non-government groups, Pheasants Forever, etc.
- Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) and Tribal, which we are already going that direction.
- Non-profit organizations as they often have connections with a wide range of local communities
- Non-Profits
- Nonprofit organizations
- Nonprofits
- Nonprofits (both local and regional/national). Examples: The Nature Conservancy, Pheasants Forever, Ducks Unlimited, Trout Unlimited, Clean River Partners, others.
- Not an either/or, so: Grow equity into programs delivered through loud gouts. NGOs with existing avenues that can grow or expand. Note: Assume tribal org relationship growth is its own separate effort.



- Not for profit conservation organizations, local, state, and national
- Not for profit conservation partners, local, state, and national
- Other state agencies - DNR, MPCA, MDH, MDA, MFRC, EQB
- Other state agencies MPCA, DNR, break down silos that have formed
- Our focus should remain primarily with local governments as they are the entities that carry out our work locally. We can work with them to expand their clientele as needed
- Out-state cities
- Out-state cities
- Outdoor organizations, hunt fish recreation
- Planning & Development Departments of LGUs and private developers
- Private Companies (expand Public and Private partnerships)
- Private landowners - from residential landowners to private businesses.
- Private Sector. Land O Lakes, Truterra, ect., explore options let others monetize our efforts
- Public
- Public health
- Public health agencies
- Reach out to some of the Emerging Producer organizations, like Women in Ag Network or Hmong American Farmer Associations etc
- Realtors
- Residents. Though this can be challenging, we've made progress with the L2L program. Residents can build support for programs and also accomplish conservation on their...
- Scientific research
- The general public. (eg. State Fair or other public events; MAR; TPT, MN Zoo)
- The Sustainable Farming Association (NGO)
- Timber industry
- Townships
- Trail User groups
- Tribal entities
- Tribal entities
- Tribal governments
- Tribal governments
- Tribal governments
- Tribal governments
- Tribal governments and environmental justice communities
- Tribal governments and tribal community organizations.
- Tribal Nations
- Tribal Nations
- Tribes
- Tribes
- Tribes
- Underserved audiences such as minority farmers
- University and college environmental science programs
- Urban and emerging farmers
- Urban farmers
- Work with co-ops, seed suppliers, others to promote cover crops and regenerative/sustainable practices, e.g., via partnerships with LGUs, conservation agronomists
- Working with Non-profit organizations
- Young Minnesotans (e.g., Gen Z)

## Question 1, Partner Responses

There were approximately 204 responses to this question.

- Additional stakeholders like state (DNR, MPCA) and tribal governments and NGOs (TNC) & EQB.
- Advocacy groups; e.g., Fresh Water
- Ag businesses
- Ag organizations that reflect those owners
- Ag Organizations. Irrigators. Corn growers, etc.
- Ag producers
- Agricultural associations
- Agricultural Co-Ops (i.e., Ag Partners/ CHS, Farmers-Win, Albert Lea Seed) - entire operation
- Agricultural groups
- Also work with MN Watersheds (formerly MAWD). Makes sense to work with local gov'ts, and MN Watersheds can help do that in a more coordinated way.
- Always talk with tribal governments.
- American indian tribes (assuming you are including them as local gov't) and joint tribal organizations like Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission
- Analyze where underserved areas are located and why
- Big river farms - incubator farm in Marine on St. Croix
- Blue Thumb/Metro Blooms
- Businesses/industries
- BWSR can better promote opportunities for underrepresented people to become part of these efforts; seek their innovative and creative ideas
- BWSR formerly had a very narrow definition of local partners and recently expanded that to include cities - - this is great as they are key to drinking water protection.
- BWSR should consider using local partners to help reach underserved citizens around the state
- Certified Crop Advisors

- Cities
- Cities or densely populated urban areas
- Cities, Ag Schools, Colleges, all schools K-12 (education materials, especially for younger students)
- Clean River Partners
- CO-OPs
- Colleges
- Colleges
- Commodity Groups like Corn Growers, Soybeans, Wheat, Sugarbeets, etc.
- Communities near polluted soils and waters
- Community councils
- Community development organizations
- Conservation organizations like TNC or Pheasants Forever.
- Continue increasing involvement with Tribal Agencies
- Continue utilizing LGUs for equity engagement.
- Contractors and representatives from the minority population' Land use planners!!!!!!!!!!
- Coordination with State government entities on intersecting priorities
- Corn and soybean growers to advance SWCD/BWSR initiatives.
- Corn growers; soy growers; dairy farmers
- County commissioner
- County commissioners; communicate more directly, attend board meetings 1-2/year to discuss BWSR commitments, direction
- Creel surveys (fishery management)
- Crop advisors
- CSAs
- Cultural centers - cultural differences, particularly for first generation immigrants, can be extreme when it comes to natural resources stewardship. BWSR could work with cultural centers to reach audiences and hone messaging that could then be adopted by LGUs.
- Different cultural/farming organizations such as Latino Economic Development Center, Hmong American Farming Assoc, Somali Farmers Assoc, etc.
- Directly with private landowners. It is the best way to understand those relationships to better adapt programs and understand challenges that occur with implementing those programs.
- Districts. Landowners/Community members. Other businesses/organizations. Places to promote the importance of boots on the ground and enhance/encourage future project impacts.
- DNR
- DNR
- Ducks Unlimited
- Efforts should be made to support conservation efforts and engagement for diverse community groups and non-profit organizations seeking to broaden the reach of conservation and resilience efforts. An emphasis should be put on providing resources and support to communities of environmental justice concern (ie: lower socioeconomic standing, lower green space access, lasting effects of industrial activity/ zoning disparities, etc).
- Emerging Farmer groups
- Emerging Farmers identified groups.
- Encourage local governments to collaborate with the community groups and non-profit organizations in their areas.
- Environmental Groups
- Environmental groups like MCEA, Ikes, "Friends" groups
- Environmental Resto Contractors like MNLA, Landbridge Ecological
- Equity should not be focused on over quality of work and effective outcomes for stated soil & water quality.
- Expanding ways to work with current partners like NGOs.
- Experts in habitat loss, species, public resource protection, and water quality
- Farm Bureau
- Farmers
- Federal agencies
- Federal government
- Federal government (WPAs and other public lands)
- Focus on building capacity with your local SWCD partners
- Focus on soil & water quality work (conservation), not climate change initiatives that lack solid outcomes.
- Focus on working with Local Units of Government. No need to expand the clientele
- For groups like statewide farmer groups or Ducks Unlimited, talk with local staff/entities to learn what they're doing locally
- For renters-- how are they being engaged if BWSR is interacting with the landowner. Work with non-operating landowner groups?
- Foster stronger working relationships between local watersheds and SWCD entities.
- From our perspective, BWSR is in contact with right stakeholders, however, I think more feedback from drainage authorities' side and planning strategically based on that would be an improvement opportunity.
- Groups that represent land owners
- Grower groups
- HAFA
- Help coordinate the protection of our groundwater resource with 1 state agency, not 4.
- Help strengthen relationships between SWCD and tribal entities if possible.
- How about local public health? They have complementary skill sets

- particularly in engagement and communications.
- I think BWSR has it about covered already
- I think the main focus should still be LGUs but individual landowners and nonprofits also play a very important role with strategic planning
- Immigrant communities
- Immigrant Farming Groups
- Indigenous activist groups
- Indigenous groups
- Indigenous groups and native tribes.
- It is appropriate that the work be completed by local governments.
- It seems more a question of how folks work together versus who. While it is likely true that all are participants in improvement and protection of natural resources, simply bringing more folks to the table is not a solution and presents challenges in developing solutions. BWSR's role, in our opinion, is best working as a resource to local governments rather than the link to other entities, especially as it relates to project prioritization and development.
- Keep working with local governments like watershed districts! There are a few workgroups/collectives of WD staff that meet regularly and coordinate on equity issues.
- Key federal agencies: USFWS; ACOE; USGS
- Lake association
- Lake Associations
- Lake Associations
- Lake associations and local environmental groups
- Lake Associations?
- Lake/River Associations
- Lakeshore groups; have BWSR representatives at annual meetings
- Landowner/ conservation groups have local divisions/ entities, and BWSR should be talking with them, too
- Large corporate entities/landowners
- LGUs doing outreach on equity could suggest candidates/community members who could add value to this effort to improve/protect water resources
- Local businesses that use water
- Local food grower co-ops?
- Local government
- Local governments should remain the focus. While community groups, non-profits, and others are important contributors, I would expect them to work in collaboration with local governments to ensure all work is locally coordinated.
- Local hunting/fishing/habitat organizations and nonprofits
- Local nonprofits like Metro Blooms, Friends of the Mississippi River
- Main focus should be implementation through local government/SWCDs. Spreading out further reduces resources and services
- MDA Emerging farmer program
- Midwest farmers of color
- Minnesota Farmers market association
- Minnesota Ground Water Association
- Minnesota Water Well Association
- Minnesota well owners association
- Minnesota Well Owners Organization
- MN Dept of Ag and other agencies, specifically relating to soil health. Team resources/options.
- MN Extension Service
- MN Rural County Organization (commissioners)
- MN Well Owners \*Organization\*
- More emphasis should be put on working with watershed districts and WMOs rather than adding more entities
- More emphasis should be put on working with watershed districts and WMOs rather than adding more entities.
- MPCA
- Municipalities
- Municipalities, County governments, and Tribal governments
- Native American communities
- Native American Tribal governments.
- Native tribes
- Nature Conservancy worked on the ENRTF renewal effort, which, if renewed, includes a community grants program (admin by DNR in collaboration with MPCA and BWSR, I think); hope that BWSR will actively participate in this effort and make connections with these constituencies with which our organizations are less connected
- NGOs
- NGOs
- NGOs - (selective)
- NGOs - identify more areas to work together with PF. Specifically with restoration areas or habitat restoration programs.
- Non-government organizations providing resource to landowners installing conservation without government assistance
- Nonprofit organizations have a different set of skills and members that can be very helpful in moving our work forward.
- Nonprofit organizations with conservation goals (Minnesota Land Trust, Ducks Unlimited, etc.)
- Nonprofits
- Nonprofits
- Nonprofits like SFA, R9DC, Renewing the Countryside, Great River Greening, UMRBA, and others.
- NRCS urban outreach spec.
- Other state agencies

- Other state agencies to ensure consistent equity planning/work/grant program eligibility and equity focus
- Outstate districts - moving to work with urban landowners; they are a big part of WBIF.
- Partner with local community organizations
- Pheasants Forever
- Positions in private industry dedicated to conservation, thinking specifically about conservation agronomists
- Possible introducing organization to landowners
- Potentially urban/local-food informal or more loosely-organized community groups
- Private entities and corporations
- Private sector ag industry, large and small.
- Property Owners
- Public
- Reach out to organizations that may not have water as their primary focus but representative affected communities.
- Regional Development Commissions who can connect what happens on the landscape with what's happening in city and county governments
- Religious organization for input from their communities
- Responsible Ag in Karst Country
- Ruffed Grouse Society
- Sharing Our Roots-- Northfield.
- Should be a commitment to equality (equal chance) in agricultural country, farm groups
- Small business or start-up grants. Award innovation. Support local business.
- Soil Health Coalition
- Sovereign nations that share our geography (tribal nations).
- Specialty Crop Groups
- Sporting Groups
- Sportsmen organizations
- Start building long term relationships with other stakeholders: tribes, ag, industry, and community.
- State agencies i.e., DNR
- Stay within the current mission of "partnership with local organizations and private landowners," but increase effort to work with local governments to better identify underserved populations for existing programs.
- Suggest finding demographics of a county or region and work with the primary and minority demographic. This way you have a thoughtful methodology that is defensible if there is public scrutiny.
- SWCD
- SWCDs and their contacts for lower income farmers and others needing support/grants
- TNC - Nature Conservancy
- Townships
- Townships Association
- Traditional conservation groups that represent land owners
- Tribal communities
- Tribal Departments of Natural Resources
- Tribal entities
- Tribal Government
- Tribal governments
- Tribal governments
- Tribal Governments & Associations
- Tribal governments and organizations
- Tribal Nations
- Tribal Nations
- Tribal Nations and Tribal Resource Managers
- Tribal reluctance/distrust/"we'll go at it alone" mentality is often experienced. I think we all need to be involved, local SWCDs and BWSR.
- Tribes
- Tribes
- Tribes
- Tribes
- Tribes
- Tribes
- Tribes
- Tribes
- TRUSTED Natural Resource contractors/nurseries to provide special rates/discounts to landowners implementing conservation practices
- Turkeys and deer groups
- UMN Extension
- Underrepresented communities in the watersheds work with
- University/other educational institutions.
- Urban Ag
- Urban environmental/sustainability groups
- Use existing lists from local governments for statewide outreach
- USFS and USFWS
- USFWS
- Utilize local partners to engage in local underserved communities
- Voices for Rural Resilience
- Watershed Districts
- Well owners association of MN
- Wildlife conservation groups
- Wildlife Partnership's like DU, PF, TU, TNC, Audubon, NFWF and others.
- Women landowners who rent farmland
- Work with the UofM and universities to understand, measure and predict natural resources, carbon storage above and below ground, work with universities to understand water storage to address drought to flooding cycle with climate change.
- Work with who is closest to the source (ag industry, etc.) not social or political-focused stakeholders primarily.
- Working with new Americans - many are now becoming farmers
- working with Tribal nations
- Yes to local public health!
- Youth organizations

## 2: BWSR focuses on strengthening local capacity. What could BWSR do better or differently to further enhance local capacity and improve outcomes?



## Question 2, Staff and Board Responses

There were approximately 136 responses to this question.

- A great deal of time/effort/\$ is put into their local plans. Keep programs flexible so the delivery/funding can help them implement their plan.
- Administration - Districts do the work on the ground. BWSR helps w/ Admin part
- Advocate for dependable funding
- Advocate for increased funds to support staffing, recruitment pipelines, retention, etc.
- Allow flexibility for nontraditional practices in nontraditional environments, e.g., urban soil health or Tribal Climate Adaptation Menu.
- Assist with more strategic thinking with watershed partnerships for shared positions
- Assist with Recruitment
- BC work areas are still assigned by # of LGUs, when the workload is now driven by # of watersheds. Considering making changes to BC work areas to reflect work.

- Be more active and consistent in seeking input on BWSR programs from LGU partners to see how things will actually work on the ground
- Build skills in messaging, communication and sharing outcomes.
- BWSR could assist with recruitment and work with higher education to ensure coursework matches skills needed.
- Changing LGU staffing needs in light of funding, programs, and space. How can LGUs move beyond the manager, admin, tech framework of the past.
- Clearly define SMART objectives for program applicants
- Coach boards on using remote/telework options for locations with limited office space. Promote hotel options within offices
- Combine (expand) training for local staff
- Complete fair wage survey for all local areas. Coach boards on developing wage structures comparable to the area
- Connect with the local units of government on a timely basis to achieve outcomes for programs
- Continue stable funding for local staff retention and technical certification.
- Continue to promote and provide education to elected officials.
- Continue to promote peer to peer learning efforts
- Continue to staff and support the growth of training programs such as the TTCP and MWPCP.
- Continue work (at Legislature, etc) to secure and sustain, predictable, sufficient (state) funding. Government conservation roles and responsibilities.
- Continue working with the legislature to provide adequate funding for SWCDs
- Create skills for our LGU partners to effectively communicate and work with their Boards to support our work
- Define outcomes and deliverable expectations so everyone has the same understanding.
- DEI training for LGUs
- Develop a database of sharable positions and needs
- Develop electronic permitting system
- Develop focused staff position(s) helping with LGU administration rather than remaining strictly focused on funding delivery and technical skills
- Develop tools to improve knowledge of equitable salaries within regions
- Do whatever we can to keep our promise of providing predictable long term funding
- Educating boards so they pay staff decent wages (and they stay)
- Encourage more Joint Power Entities between LGUs.
- Encourage partnerships with all LGUs
- Encourage SWCD technical Staff to increase JAA
- Encourage the use of temporary/contract workers (consultants, etc) to complete projects/programs (GIS, outreach)
- Encourage/facilitate shared positions by LGUs
- Encourage/promote ways for LGUs to share technical resources
- Encourage/provide mechanisms to enhance shared services
- Enhance local partners capacity for effective outreach including; education and processes that build trust and relationships
- Enhance meeting facilitation skills
- Ensure that our LGUs are aligned with private sector vendors and service providers to deliver conservation projects and practices key core functions. This is ongoing
- Ensure the work and dollars to NGOs is spent in alignment with state and local partnerships, example TWIP implementation
- Establish a more systematic mentoring effort for (esp) technical training and on-the-job learning.
- Expand efforts to bring more people into this line of work
- Expand technical training opportunities (ex, tools)
- Facilitate communication between LGU partners in different hierarchies (county to SWCD, SWCD to WD) so they better understand each other and respect opportunities
- Facilitate more "best practices" discussions
- Facilitate more opportunities for O.J.T. for technical training to get J.A.A
- Facilitate strategic planning efforts for Local Governments
- Fill in gaps. Have a direct conduit to the state level to provide support in areas where our partners lack expertise (or don't have the manpower).
- Functional watershed and local organizations and boards
- Further build partnerships that can bring different skills/strengths
- Help build excitement about conservation as a field
- Help identify metrics; share best practices as a single source.
- Help make shared services more of a reality, such as SWCD or WD technicians to assist with technical service bottlenecks
- Help with surveys and other methods to better assess educational/engagement outcomes beyond # events or # participants.
- Hire a BWSR staff person to be recruiting students (high school and college) into the field of

- conservation. Be present at career fairs, etc.
- Hold our local partners more accountable to make sure they are meeting our technical assurance requirements
  - Improve communication with LGUs and make feedback a priority during policy, practices and funding development.
  - Improve outcomes BCs could use PRAP performance checklists w/LGU boards annually.
  - Improved communication/guidance
  - Increase the diversity of the workforce
  - Inform boards, educate decision makers such as county commissioners; SWCD supervisors, watershed district managers, etc.
  - Institute performance based, not output based, funding and evaluation
  - Just hire more regional staff (through TSAs or something) to help deliver conservation programs - coordinators/cover crop specialists, drinking water expert
  - Keep building leadership skills
  - Keep programs as flexible as allowed by the funding stream, to allow local staff to run the program the way it best works for them and their organization/customers.
  - Listening to external partners without judgment
  - Make sure everyone has the same understanding of outcomes and deliverables
  - Make sure our programs are in alignment with sister state agencies through our core statutory functions
  - Many SWCDs and WD/WMOs have little to no access to HR support of any kind. Is there a way we could help to facilitate access to this?
  - More administrative training for staff - they really struggle with HR stuff - need more statewide support/training for this
  - More staff particularly at SWCDs (and funding to pay those staff)
  - More state funding for these entities for staff to do the work we require/want them to do
  - More training development for SWCD and WD boards.
  - More training for local (fiscally conservative) boards on the number of staff actually needed to implement millions of dollars of conservation programs
  - Need more staff, staff decently paid, more consistent funding for SWCDs at least
  - Need more training for counties, municipalities, etc. on our BWSR programs.
  - Now that we have funding for a tribal liaison, once we have someone hired get that person in contact with the LGUs in tribal areas
  - Offer training opportunities for LGU boards and staff
  - Open JAA training to Higher Education
  - Partner and meet more frequently with local boards
  - Pay attention to the details of Local Government capacity needs. Lack of power or control to act on their own behalf. Fill needs or coach them through needs.
  - Perhaps provide a "required" annual training to all the SWCD board members on their roles and responsibilities and their decision making authorities.
  - Potential language barriers - Ojibwe, Dakota, Hmong, Somali, Spanish, etc.
  - Prepare talking/ selling points for our partners to use.
  - Promote our organizational assistance programs/grant funding
  - Promote the use of consultants as an alternative to hiring staff (many boards seem averse to this - help them be okay with it)
  - Provide a "required" training to all SWCD board members and staff on their roles and responsibilities.
  - Provide a platform for LGUs to present on advancement of knowledge and skills of new technologies and techniques.
  - Provide additional board training
  - Provide additional training and support on LGU financial management including budgeting and accounting.
  - Provide consistency in our program
  - Provide current and accurate data and information in formats that are understandable both to our partners and those they will be working with.
  - Provide funding/grants that are specific to capacity needs. Do not generalize.
  - Provide information to LGU Boards so they can realize paying staff higher amounts would improve retention.
  - Provide organizational and strategic training and planning to our SWCD/WD partners so they can move into the future.
  - Provide/incentivize training that goes beyond JAA and focuses on civic engagement
  - Provide/incentivize training that goes beyond JAA and focuses on civic engagement.
  - Public cooperation with ag co-ops, shared positions.
  - Public private partnerships, such as ag co-ops
  - Put primary focus on our core clients as defined by state law, make sure these are functioning well and aligned with our policies, programs and procedures
  - Recognize their contributions to conservation
  - Recruiting and retaining great staff at BWSR and local governments



- Reduce the amount of paperwork involved in funding and reporting of grants
- Requirements and training so our partners know what expectations are
- Rethink district payment process and amounts for easement work
- Reward local partners who serve as BWSR's "front door" for programming
- Simplify requirements where possible
- Stay focused - make sure our programs and services align with private landowners through our LGU partners
- Streamline programs for ease of implementation at the SWCD level
- Streamline administrative and reporting requirements where possible
- Structure programs around BWSR objectives for water quality, etc.
- Support and encourage hiring and retention of additional staff.
- Support and promote shared services (even though we do this now)
- Support efforts to enhance funding to SWCDs
- Support for regionalized efforts like outreach at a TSA-like scale
- Survey why staff leave SWCDs
- That general fund tax funding for SWCDs will be really important - now we just need to increase that number
- The aging of the board member and manager workforce. Bring in new people into these areas with the appropriate skills.
- The turnover at SWCDs in particular is really challenging
- There were some really good ideas on this topic from the in-person conversation you facilitated last week Jenny!!
- Training external partners
- Training for board managers
- Training w/ local governments regarding organizational effectiveness
- Understand the impact of growth and development on our soil and water systems. Rapidly expanding city limit footprints are having negative effects.
- Understand what the barriers to capacity are and determine what BWSR's role in addressing them are.
- Use technology to enhance data analysis
- Utilize TSA's in an effort to encourage shared services
- We need to have more conversations about our own internal capacity
- Whenever you can step back and lead from behind
- Work strategically with local and federal partners to help resolve space issues in some offices. Some SWCDs would like to add staff but they have run out of space in their office.
- Work to enhance the social science skills so our partners can better engage with their communities focusing on community interests that are aligned with program goals.
- Work with community organizations (e.g., legacy partners program) to carry out initiatives
- Work with higher education to get more graduates to know what a SWCD is or WD or what local government actually does

## Question 2, Partner Responses

There were approximately 218 responses to this question.

- 1W1P data aggregation across watersheds (eg. at the TSA area level) and comparison/best practices publications
- Actively and more broadly share positive outcomes of BWSRs work
- Additional collaborative training of local professionals to enhance habitat restoration/enhancement practices.
- Additional collaborative training with professionals and farmers to advance practices including perennial cover, multiple species planting, incorporation of livestock grazing, etc. across the state.
- Additional grants to local orgs
- Additional training for locals to have capacity to solve local problems and implement solutions
- Admin support as needed
- Administrative support for SWCDs (in cooperation with MASWCD): Human resources, accounting, legal, etc.
- Advertise the BWSR academy courses and make them available to anyone who wants to take them.
- Allowing NGO's (like PF) to apply for RFP's in some cases. Specifically In restoration areas
- Attend annual township meetings (multiple meet at together); others like DNR and Ag attend...why not BWSR?
- Attend county board meetings 1-2/year to update them on outcomes of plans
- Awareness of programs is not consistent throughout the state-- training on all available programs for staff, especially for wetland restoration, agroforestry.



- Be consistent with other state agencies on consistent reporting of grant fund use (i.e. DNR CPL grant is easier)
- Be sure to involve other state agencies that have different technical expertise
- Better communicate funding opportunities and timing
- Better engagement with E&O. Examples, templates, assistance with outreach.
- Better equipment and newer technology availability for SWCDs
- Better guidance
- Better or more training on writing or applying for grants.
- Build a framework on how to obtain additional capacity (SWCD employees) both as a stand alone agency and in partnership with other agencies-two different frameworks; Some of us don't know where to start.
- BWSR can support and incentivize the formation (and continuation) of partnerships between organizations with local community influence (non-profits, community groups, etc) and those with grant management and technical expertise (SWCDs, NRCS, local governments, etc). These partnerships are incredibly valuable for reaching underserved populations or landowners with priority resources and connecting them to resources and expertise to manage resource concerns more holistically and effectively.
- BWSR has done a lot to build capacity for groundwater protection at the local level. However, much remains to be done.
- BWSR is focused on increasing local capacity. We are going to add another staff to bring us to full capacity. I feel BWSR is pushing districts to add more staff. Yes there are more 1w1p dollars available and temporary capacity funds, but how do districts hire additional staff when we need \$60-100k/employee and that isn't easy to get? More staff means tougher budgets. BWSR should be working more closely with MASWCD and SWCDs to find more funding. When SWCDs are successful, so is BWSR and vice-versa. Project funds are there, but staffing is a major hurdle.
- BWSR should take an active role in advocating the concerns of their local partners with State Agencies, especially those who serve on the BWSR Board.
- Capacity is currently measured by individual JAA. Consider creating a way for folks to demonstrate high level proficiencies with core competencies, e.g., plant materials selection and management; soils biological, physical and chemical properties assessment; water chemistry monitoring, analysis and strategy; hydrologic and hydraulic analysis of surface water and groundwater; etc.
- Change internal procedures so LGUs have more input in training sessions at BWSR Academy than your own staff.
- Change internal procedures so LGUs have more input in training sessions than BWSR staff about BWSR project team and not about internal process
- Combine the state cost share, conservation delivery, and NRBG elements and open them to more flexible uses.
- Consider grants for improving ecosystem services.
- Consider hosting an annual conference / meeting to support statewide networking, sharing ideas, building relationships, learning, etc.
- Consider partnering with private consultants (engineering-potentially others)
- Continue / strengthen communication between BWSR and locals -- be "louder" to ensure BWSR stays on their radar screen
- Continue building resources for local collaboration, such as working with counties, cities, and watersheds for collaborative projects.
- Continue technical training and development of employees.
- Continue technical training programs and incorporate programmatic skill sets and soft skills (contract management, leadership)
- Continue to build training programs and some uniformity to provide to SWCDs/local governments. Prioritize making the boots on the ground knowledgeable and efficient.
- Continue to have excellent coordination between BCs and local entities (shout out to Anne Sawyer!)
- Continue to improve availability of grant funding. Many local governments have significant projects & needs but no funding to do them. Consistent, diverse funding sources for a variety of projects would be most helpful.
- Continue to provide support for TSAs.
- Continue to provide training opportunities
- Continue to provide training resources organized, and perhaps add symbology of the types of jobs the trainings would be most applicable to
- Continue to simplify the reporting process
- Continue to streamline reporting info as much as possible.

- Continued training for accibrathing QAA
- Coordinate workshops with local government entities (like county, SWCD, city, DNR offices, etc)
- Create a BWSR AmeriCorps Program or support MN GreenCorps
- Create a network of farmers and land managers who can teach each other about how to make changes that will build soil health and store carbon
- Decrease paperwork time. To much time gets taken to accept practices and approvals, landowners get frustrated with all time it takes to do all the paperwork for a project
- Develop a more robust pre-screening to ensure all impacted parties are involved in scoping the work before the task is started.
- Develop local learning alliances/cohorts. Have regional workshops for groundwater based on local geology (like for a groundwater province) where the concerns are similar.
- Develop SWCD soil health program and not just a grant program
- Don't duplicate efforts; work closely together with other agencies
- Education
- Eliminate duplicate planning efforts. In particular, consider eliminating 1W1Ps that straddle metro and outstate watersheds. Duplicate plans are confusing and inefficient to create and administer.
- Emphasize on customer service training for local staff. In addition to technical training- consider sales training, social science to understand motivations
- Employees return to work at the office so they have better internet connections and are at their phones
- Empower each LGU to make connections with local ag businesses to support landowners interested in conservation
- Empower local governments to implement without extra regulation beyond existing.
- Encourage BWSR to build in more flexibility for local agencies to coordinate implementation between independent plans versus creating duplicative plans.
- Encourage discussion/collaboration between WDs during rule revisions.
- Encourage/continually fund (not with existing WBIF funding amounts) shared-capacity services within 1-3 WBIF plan areas
- Enforcement
- Engagement of metro hobby farms to increase cover crops, livestock grazing, and perennial vegetation.
- Equitable funding across state
- Estimate or measure carbon storage above and below ground in restorations. New science needs to be incorporated to work toward outcomes
- Facilitate more forums for SWCDs+WD+WMOs to network and provide feedback on the areas for improvement of outcomes.
- Facilitating strategic planning by SWCDs and 1W1P partnerships
- Fewer grant programs
- Find more money to continue to build local capacity - that is where implementation happens
- Find streamlined, consistent, simple ways to communicate outcomes to the public.
- Find streamlined, consistent, simple ways to quantify outcomes. Excessive time is spent reporting outcomes in many different formats.
- Focus on directing investment towards outcomes
- Focus on longer retention of local staff by creating more opportunities for advancement?
- Focus on return on investment
- For regulatory programs like WCA, provide training sessions targeted at local and private applicants (not just LGUs responsible for administering the programs). Example: targeted at county engineers, not just county environmental staff
- Fund more shovel-ready projects
- Fund more TA time with grants/local capacity, etc.
- Funding
- Get into co-ops and meet with people to understand their concerns.
- Grants page can be daunting to navigate... provide more training, info, or navigators of programs; also provide info in multiple languages
- Have the drainage work group meeting out-state more often. Long way from ditches, not always St. Paul
- Help be a "convener" around issues. BWSR often is a more trusted entity than, say, DNR
- Help communities identify funding and prepare applications.
- Help communities move from planning to implementation of 1W1P cross sector. How do those planning teams continue to work together now?
- Help ensure LGUs are educated in aquatic and terrestrial species, natural resources, water quality, water quantity, and groundwater
- Help farmers understand the carbon market, which practices achieve long-term C storage
- Help secure Lake Superior SWCD capacity funding specific to implementing GLRI/LAMP
- Help set clean water funds to watershed districts for actual

- projects. No more administration planning "Time to get it done"
- Help share information across geographies, what's working and what's not
  - Help with recruitment of qualified employees
  - Higher level of follow up with customers - customers are whoever received the assistance.
  - Hire and retain sufficient FTEs so that your staff are not overloaded in their work. Do a workload analysis if you haven't already.
  - Hire more staff that have worked in the field before-especially the ones that are developing policies and providing guidance to SWCDs
  - Host an annual festival/fair to engage and educate attendees
  - I am seeing a trend of young technicians not staying with a SWCD very long but fall into job hopping.
  - I like the training focus of BWSR academy- build on that and add some mentoring for staff or peer groups?
  - I think we need to provide strategies to attract and retain good staff. Thinking outside of the box type.
  - Identify points of potential conflict between adjacent WDs during rule revisions.
  - Identify ways to better support on-site people locally in the field.
  - Identify ways to coordinate with NGO partners to enhance more local capacity.
  - If possible, support business training for district managers to ensure effective use of that funding.
  - If the target audience is landowners, consider how the local government can employ peers to these landowners.
  - Implementation funds (such as for One Watershed); need to continue growing that pot of money and supporting advocacy for those programs
  - Improve and develop 1w1p reporting and tracking tools
  - Include groundwater data in the PTM app.
  - Include weekly or monthly "practical tips" that everyone could do to protect natural resources (possibly on Facebook or e-mails)
  - Increase county trust of state/BWSR. Somehow.
  - Increase funding to SWCDs specifically focused on wetland and habitat restoration, with staff time for administration included.
  - Increase grant funding opportunities for lawns to legumes and other community grant programs
  - Increase grant writing training for LGUs, such as WDs and SWCDs
  - Increase operational training for LGUs, such accounting, board management, etc - possibly creating a central "cooperative" for accounting, record keeping required to be done by LGUs
  - Increase staff to supply more LGU and community facing support
  - Increase the amount of funding to SWCDs that is dedicated to staff/admin time working on specific BWSR programs, i.e., RIM, CREP, HELP Grant, Lawns 2 Legumes, BWSR Solar Initiative, etc.
  - Increased polling through the SWCDs of local landowners. More knowledge of what the public actually needs.
  - Individual LGU trainings from Board Conservationists or other BWSR staff to address specific local issues or weaknesses
  - Investments technology for conservation
  - It is not clear by this question what "local capacity" even means?
  - It is not definitively clear what is meant by "capacity" here. When it is intended as "workforce/staffing," it does not seem to be a role for BWSR. Yet, for other WDs with little/no staff, there may be a value in BWSR being engaged more in shepherding the WD through 103D process and grant applications/administration.
  - It may be nice if BWSR would have a WQ liaison to help districts more easily quantify outcomes and how they may impact WQ and even impairments. Reading through 100 pages of WRAPS and other documents, 100 pages isn't something SWCD's do a lot, because we have to pay the bills and are always chasing. Some assistance in guiding us to delivering better information to the public would benefit all of our work.
  - It's clearly fraught, but an option would be to explore more "block grant" type options for local recipients to have less/little restrictions on how to deploy the funding
  - Less administration - make things as simple as possible
  - Less restrictions and length of programs
  - Leverage federal dollars for local partners and programs.
  - Listen to locals - one size does not fit all. Local people know what is needed in their area.
  - Listen to watersheds
  - Local radio/news broadcasts on state and regional issues
  - Look at programs and see if they can be included under the line item local capacity.
  - Look at regional organizations and their ability to relieve organizational pressure off of SWCDs and Watershed Districts, etc.

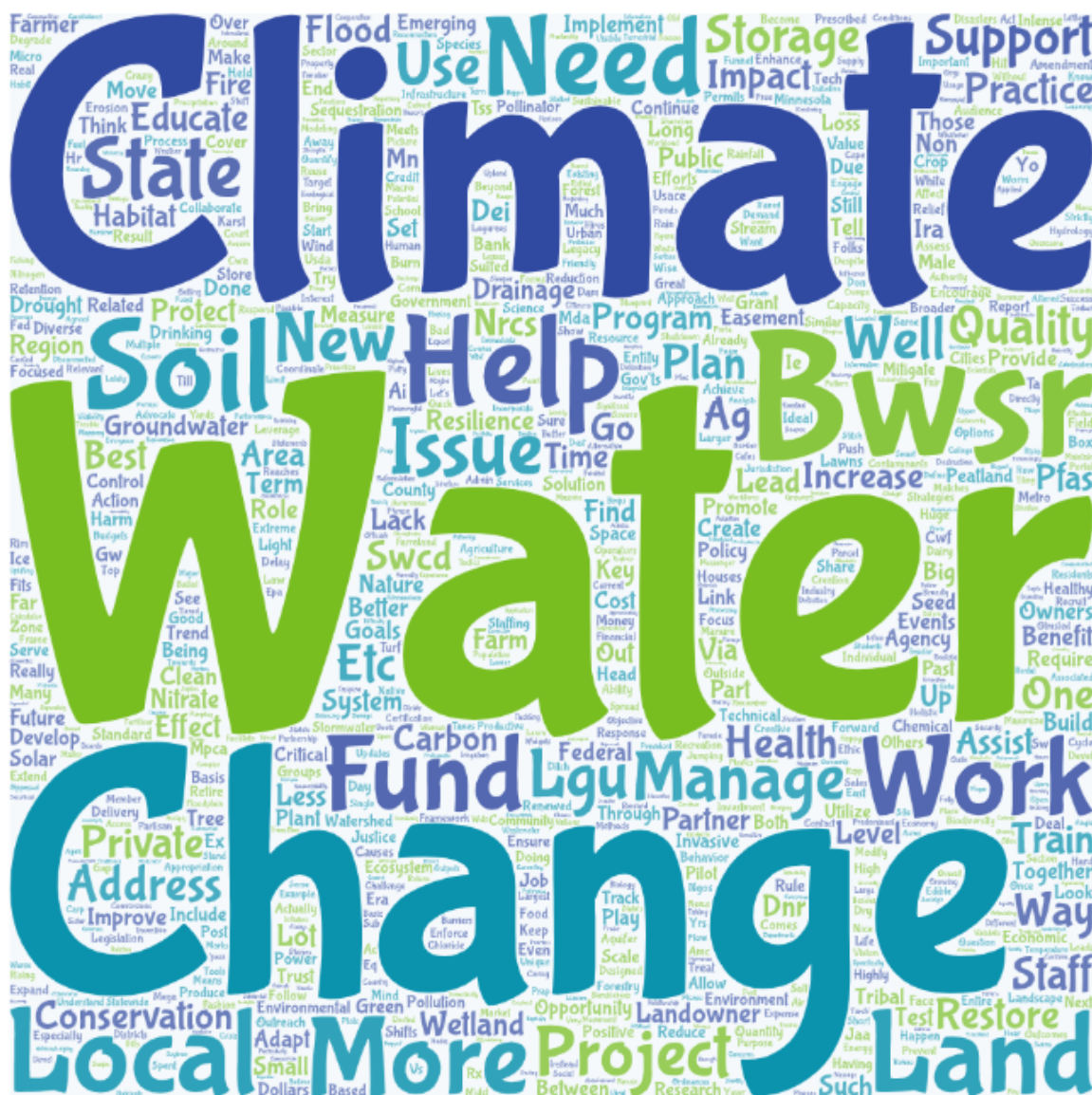
- Maintain and enhance the availability of technical resources, from guidance documents to staff, to assist local governments.
- Maintain or increase staffing presence in rural MN
- Make BWSR academy courses more widely available
- MASWCD has 8 resolutions relating to forestry or woodlands. Our SWCD thinks that forestry is important. When we talk to BWSR staff about moving up the chain there is minimal response.
- Meet with local heavy equipment colleges, well drillers, shoreland, and agricultural contractors (including those who do ditch cleanouts and install tile and septic installers) to share information and hear feedback
- Minimize reporting requirements.
- Money
- Monitor and report on LGU work-who is doing what and who isn't
- Monitor practices to see if they actually achieve desired outcomes
- More appearance on social media and news (Radio and TV channels) with this, I mean, educating local individuals to get on board and work toward the common mission.
- More educational meetings with local authorities
- More flexibility with programs and policies
- More funding to counties
- More funding with less process and strings attached to funding.
- More guidance with CWMP Implementation and working with collaborative partners.
- More leniency in how funds can be spent
- More local/regional in-person training and/or networking opportunities
- More non-competitive grant funding that is locally prioritized
- More of a local focus and less pie in the sky plans that are on a statewide basis (million acre tree planting that is not achievable) ect.
- More resources for less funded SWCDs especially about outreach and education
- More TSP support in local offices so workload is not held up due to overloaded staff.
- Motivations for behavior change. Consider how to meet the landowner where they are and offer options for changes.
- No surprises! Don't change rules during the project or efforts.
- Not sure what this means? BWSR should be a clearing house for funding resources of all kinds not just BWSR controlled funding
- One Watershed has not worked for the Metro area watersheds. Asking the metro watersheds to share monies does not work fairly. Please seek other solutions to disperse funds.
- Outreach to colleges/universities for job fairs and recruitment
- Outreach to local media with LGU assistance.
- Partner on We are Water MN
- Pass-through grants to local organizations/ nonprofits to help expand capacity
- Perhaps, be a central hub in good fiscal practices for SWCDs.
- Position SWCDs as the primary vehicle for the delivery of conservation projects: efficiency, expertise, relationships.
- PR and advertising for the local SWCD (Like a regional marketing person)
- Priority areas - but still allow and encourage other projects to take place not in those areas.
- Promote/teach methods to encourage/promote employee retention
- Provide a way for watersheds to have meaningful input that is followed before adopting policies that affect them.
- Provide capacity funding for Watershed Districts
- Provide local support for technical delivery. Similar to NRCS area offices.
- Provide more funding for implementing subwatershed assessments if PTM is going to basically be a requirement for grants
- Provide more resources to local SWCD and watersheds, such as the current classes that Freeborn SWCD have been putting on for ag, including classes on cover crops.
- Provide more structure (written down) to the use of funding instead of having SWCD staff continually ask what can and cannot be funded.
- Provide resources for specialty staff. Or staffing more specialists. Grazing, Forestry, Agronomists, etc.
- Provide resources or training to assist with education and outreach
- Provide resources that will help locals develop long term strategic planning for organization capacity.
- Provide technical support in areas lacking technical experts
- Provide Trainings on financial topics.
- Push more funding to SWCD
- Reach out to drainage engineers about multi-purpose drainage management for conservation, similar to how MPCA does Smart Salting training for snow removal contractors.
- Reduce funding for obscenely expensive manure management projects and instead allocate those dollars towards habitat restoration and/or enhancement projects.
- Relationship building with partners is key. Working with agencies if

- reporting at times needs revisions. Focus more on the projects being implemented.
- Remain focused on core, identifiable outcomes related to water and soil quality
  - Requirements and reporting are more like County State Aid funding.
  - Serve as a strong central hub for coordination among local governments. Devote the staff time to gather info from all local govt's throughout the state in order to provide centralized \*optional\* guidance on topics like human resources, equity, project prioritization, etc. It often feels like local governments are continually reinventing the wheel with things like this, and it would be nice if BWSR were able to do more to help set the foundation.
  - Set standards to use with expanded groups then let SWCD succeed or fail, then judge or criticize SWCD
  - Simplify and speed up grant process
  - So many 1W1P list drinking water as a high priority, but then only consider well sealing. Provide education on other implementation activities (may need to expand eligibility).
  - Spend more time with LGUs and ask questions about goals, needs, wishes, and current plans
  - Staff Funding
  - Staff training. If there, help enhance. Training for all capacities: administrative, technical, human resources.
  - State agencies have been doing a good job with e-newsletters and regular updates; helpful to include individual contact info for those so people can follow up
  - Step-by-step flowcharts about how to access funds
  - Stop taking clean water funds
  - Stop tying grants to one watershed-one plan process
  - Streamline reporting and plan tracking. Lots of time being spent tracking and reporting that could be spent implementing conservation, It's also a staff time/cost drain.
  - Succinct and efficient reporting of outcomes and how to do it
  - Support internship programs
  - Support mentoring and development of resources (staff).
  - SWCDs that don't have sound financial practices are limited in capacity.
  - Take a second look at the traditional conservation model. Does that still fit with the Clean Water Fund work? BWSR is the delivery mechanism for about 50% of the CWF \$
  - Technical capacity-hold partners
  - The B.C.s in our area are great. I've heard differing stories from staff in other parts of the state. Maybe some consistency on policy statewide with all.
  - This would likely mean partnering with local agencies or organizations to help in gathering information.
  - Training on selling the benefits of soil health practices and technical knowledge to assist farmers with adoption.
  - Training: Keep programs available and accessible to people statewide
  - Trust more LGUs and enable them to be successful because BWSR is then successful
  - Use the engagement values identified for strategic planning in day-to-day operations.
  - Utilizing larger corporations that want to support (financially) local programs or projects focused on conservation.
  - Watersheds have access to committee meeting information but have no way to provide meaningful input which can affect outcomes.
  - When it comes to groundwater, the list of eligible activities for 1W1P needs to be expanded. Groundwater does not have the extensive monitoring that surface water does.
  - When writing grants be conscious of increasing field worker capacity (similar to Farm Bill Partnership).
  - Where possible, provide flexibility within programs.
  - Wish input from SWCD
  - With new funds becoming available for SWCDs and the stability that's intended to provide, think about what BWSR can do differently to help ensure SWCDs have more reliable, stable funding -- to retain staff, have more predictable project work, etc.
  - With respect to project implementation, BWSR has done a good job of streamlining grant application and management (eLINK is pretty good). BWSR could also consider working to streamline other project management tasks, such as permitting, public notices and meetings, certain agreements (professional services, contracting, access), etc. Many of these tasks share similarities among local project implementers, but can be time consuming. Perhaps there is an opportunity to increase project capacity by improving efficiency here?
  - Work with LGUs with high turnover rates to analyze the cause and possible remedies
  - Work with partners to use the best of each partners' abilities
  - Work with road authorities to address more fish passage barrier issues, related to culverts, bridges, etc.
  - Working with partners on more secure funding
  - Zoom: Norman Co board is all set up for Zoom, so it would be great to

hear from St Paul staff periodically  
to provide update, answer

questions; they understand can't  
always be in person

### 3: What are some critical emerging issues that BWSR might be uniquely suited to address?



### Question 3, Staff and Board Responses

There were approximately 103 responses to this question.

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Accountability in an era of post shutdown</li> <li>● Acknowledging that all residents can play a role in addressing challenges (with our focus on private lands)</li> <li>● Alternative, environmentally friendly lawns and landscaping on private lands</li> <li>● Assist more with new climate related legislation. We need more</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● staff to best utilize the new appropriations coming in.</li> <li>● Assist partners with implementation of hydrology issues</li> <li>● Biodiversity loss</li> <li>● Bumblebees population</li> <li>● Carbon sequestration</li> <li>● Carbon Sequestration education to partners, and tracking of widgets (performance measures) towards state goals.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Changes in federal wetland protection jurisdiction. Reducing federal wetland protection. More BWSR responsibility.</li> <li>● Changing farming conditions related to economics, ownership, land use and how to work with producers to overcome barriers.</li> <li>● Changing LGU staffing needs in light of funding, programs, and space. How can LGUS move beyond the</li> </ul> |
|--|---|--|

- manager, admin, tech framework of the past.
- Climate
  - Climate adaptation as mitigation as our programs already play a key role
  - Climate change
  - Climate change, increased more intense precipitation events
  - Climate rising temperatures, small water cycle, need to support healthy ecosystems, need for systems thinking instead of single-purpose goals.
  - CLIMATE! We COULD modify our requirements so that all state dollars are spent in a way that fits in the Climate Action Framework.
  - Could use more nature based solution options in our programs to adapt natural systems to climate change and increase resilience
  - DEI training for LGUs. The 62-yo white male landowner is still the predominant target audience. We need to think broader.
  - Development in less than ideal, or critical areas despite the need for housing. Updating local wetland ordinances, that really allow for wetland destruction in one area, but allow...
  - Drainage and water storage - push opportunities to restore peatlands
  - Drainage and water storage - require permits for new drainage projects (crazy I know)
  - Drainage water management. Cooperation between farmers and environmental groups.
  - Drinking water
  - Drought impacting water quantity - irrigation and drinking water supply
  - Drought related issues impacting wetlands, groundwater, etc.
  - Ecological diversity- Legumes ex.
  - Ecosystem services
  - Educating LGUs on DEI (once we are trained in)
  - Effective and real collaboration - state local partnership
  - Emerging contaminants. Training, plan requirements, helping get new information to LGUs.
  - Emerging issue is the increasing need to work together collaboratively to address issues. Trust and relationship building is critical to moving forward and creating change.
  - Encourage outside the box solutions.
  - Environmental justice
  - Environmental justice
  - Environmental justice - tribal nations
  - Federal funding getting to the LGU funnel through BWSR
  - Flooding, BWSR could help cities as they work on infrastructure updates. Help with funding. Other LGUs may be able to help with planning.
  - Food security
  - Funding to assist with stormwater planning
  - Grant programs focused on multiple benefits (e.g., water, habitat, etc.)
  - Groundwater Protection
  - Habitat restoration for climate mitigation
  - Help create better statements of outcomes...not just outputs and measures of those
  - Helping landowners address changing climate, particularly as it relates to water storage/retention issues, should droughts become more prevalent.
  - Helping LGU partners frame their delivery on a watershed basis as opposed to a jurisdictional basis.
  - Helping our LGU partners understand the causes of landowner behavior and how to modify local behavior.
  - How to move away from a strictly financial incentive approach to a more holistic approach such as community values and a landowner ethic.
  - How to reward operators who are doing a good job/how to encourage those who aren't to do so
  - Huge federal and state budgets and the capacity, ability of LGUs, private sector, NGOs to implement in coordinated fashion
  - Improving quality of stream and shoreline projects
  - Include wetland restoration, floodplain reconnection and restoration and stream restoration as nature-based solutions
  - Increasing compensation to farmers for utilizing conservation measures
  - Inflation, mega economic trends and shifts
  - Insular and disconnected workforce development for conservation delivery
  - Invasive jumping worm prevention and education via soil health program
  - Lack of agreed vision on what we want to happen in conservation, and how huge Investments will Impact the private sectors-ag, forestry, recreation, land devel
  - Lack of students in conservation field- work with associations on promoting mentorship opportunities
  - Land use changes that could improve drinking water
  - Land use conversions - enhance work with county zoning departments to leverage their authority to prevent the loss of biodiversity in key areas
  - Local capacity/workload analysis
  - localized flooding due to altered hydrology
  - Localized urban flooding
  - Managing flooding and large rain events on a macro level via easements and other water control strategies.



- Many of the critical issues are complex and no one entity can address on their own; issues emerging include climate change/adaptation, biodiversity and natural disasters
- Micro plastics
- More environmentally friendly drainage.
- More focused education/outreach efforts
- Peatland restoration
- Peatland restorations/ditch abandonment
- PFAS and emerging chemicals and how our conservation practices may be more harmful and not helpful
- PFAS ensure stormwater management work does not promote movement of contaminants in the soil (east metro example)
- Pollinators and their habitat.
- Public interest in non-turf lawns, edible yards and pollinator habitat.
- Public support for conservation efforts broadly, Minnesotans caring about the future of our soils and water, and what ways they can help Individually or as part of a community.
- Reforestation on private land.
- Require plans to address climate change (or resiliency, whatever phrase they need to make them happy).
- Show and tell the value of the legacy amendment investments. Especially clean water as we approach 2032 renewed by amendment.
- Soil Carbon storage practice
- Soil health
- Soil health
- Soil Health practices
- Soil health requirements (similar to buffer law)
- Soil health- providing leadership in expanding practice adoption and achieving long-term results
- Soil health.
- Soil health. BWSR has the ability to build/support that meets individual needs.
- Supporting biodiversity as healthy biology leads to healthy soil/water
- Tackling private well drinking water issues
- Telling success stories to extend Clean Water Fund past 2034 (constitutional amendment)
- The application and implementation of relevant science in practical and meaningful ways
- The carbon credit market- BWSR already administers one of the largest wetland bank systems in the Country.
- The potential to access federal funding through the IRA and link up those funds with state and local funds for projects and efforts to help implement CWMPs.
- Upland water storage
- Validate measures of soil carbon storage to quantify practice benefits or even for market or mitigation purposes.
- Water reuse/drought protection.
- Water STORAGE with drainage authorities and without.
- Water storage, how to store water that isn't just restoration but creation.
- Water storage. It needs definition and program support around a highly technical issue. We are best positioned to lead.
- Water storage/management - climate change increasing drought of both and extreme rainfall events
- Watershed planning that is more integrated into all systems (such as drinking water, stormwater, wastewater infrastructure)
- Wetland conservation in light of the new federal court rulings
- Wise land use planning and standards (minimizing future soil and water impacts)
- Women in science - we have an opportunity to work with our existing partners to work with local school and college programs and Inspire future female scientists.
- Work with AMC with Soil Loss and Soil Health policies.

### Question 3, Partner Responses

There were approximately 197 responses to this question.

- Address impacts of climate change/weather trends such as drought
- Advocate for Legacy Amendment renewal & provide tools for others to do the same. While state agencies might not customarily advocate for a ballot initiative, this one will have a massive impact on conservation statewide. And, articulating what has been done so far isn't advocating so much as reporting.
- Agricultural drainage
- Agricultural water-climate nexus
- All of the invasives!
- Aquifer levels, and the increasing demand for water due to climate change and increasing human population
- Are detention/stormwater ponds actually effective at reducing pollution loads? Are they too expensive to maintain and clean out?
- As groundwater is/can be compromised, awareness to the

- public to test wells, uplifting programs for well replacement, etc.
- Assisting everyone (residents, local governments, elected officials, etc) that climate changes will affect the viability of Minnesota economy and way of life.
- Assisting in partnerships with NRCS to find ways to productively utilize the IRA
- Assisting with flood damage control projects that incorporate wetland banking as part of the overall project
- Assisting with regional positions for specialty positions.
- Balancing intensive agriculture with BWSR goals
- Being a trusted messenger for carbon storage/climate benefits that also build soil health, and store water
- Being a trusted messenger on the benefits of continuous land coverage.
- Benefits of soil health practices.
- Better coordination with all State agencies to address climate resiliency
- Between BWSR staff assistance and the PRAP grant program, BWSR can do a lot to help local governments incorporate DEI into their planning.
- Bridging the gap between local environment concerns and local farmers
- Building resilience for climate change
- BWSR could work to link applied research to potential projects. For example, carp management. There's no blueprint, and local folks are working (often individually) with U of M researchers and others to figure it out as they go. Use research and pilot projects to create blueprints for processes.
- BWSR should prioritize climate resiliency work as it relates to ecosystem restoration, water quantity, and drought resilience. Issues of water recharge and responsible usage should be top of mind in the midst of an increasingly dry summer pattern.
- Carbon calculator. Track carbon on projects similar to P & TSS. Report how our work is addressing this (quantify).
- Carbon sequestration can be a key benefit from restoration efforts. Bring it forward more as a key objective of relevant restoration projects.
- Carbon sequestration through permanent easements on forestland w/ easements held by BWSR
- Carbon sequestration: Get familiar with DNR Report on Forests and Carbon: 3 pathways
- Challenge the MDA on their non-actions that are delay tactics not designed to improve water quality but to protect growers at the expense of water quality.
- Chloride reduction
- Chlorides - support technical/financial assistance to landowners and LGUs to implement best practices at all scales
- Clean Water Funds term (25 year) will end - how can BWSR and LGU demonstrate CWF effectiveness so that citizens may continue this program
- Climate change
- Climate Change
- Climate change - need better development and redevelopment controls regarding water and trees and soils to address climate events.
- Climate change and resiliency/Flooding impacts (need for strategies, flood modeling, groundwater sustainability)
- Climate change impacts influence effectiveness of work
- Climate change- carbon sequestration via ag practices
- Climate change- flooding and drought
- Climate change- forestry
- Climate change. From extreme rainfall to severe drought, temperature and precipitation regimes are dramatically shifting, and water resource management must adapt with it. BWSR is well-suited to coordinate local governments in responding to our changing climate.
- Climate change. Solar, wind and other renewable energy movements.
- climate change/carbon sequestration
- Climate change; support for local engagement and planning for private landowners to deal with flooding, increased temperature, etc.
- Climate resiliency
- Climate Resiliency
- Collaborate and work together with land owners and local entities to educate on pollinators, land management practices, etc.
- Communicate to legislators how hard it is to see results in short-term (10 yrs or less)
- communicate to legislators how important LGU funding is
- Concentrate practices in a problematic watershed to achieve visible results
- Conservation "sales" training. Social science.
- Continue with creative programs for well head water quality restoration and protection.
- Continuing to work with private industry to promote collaboration & best practices.
- Converting productive farmland into solar forms
- Cost of land, and property taxes, is high and often encourages quick economic return for practices. Is there a way to help over time as

landowners transition from corn/soybean.

- Cover Crop Management
- Culvert mapping and modeling (water storage)
- Dairy is a part of the ag system that will not likely be going away. In many ways the small dairy operators have good management. The message that they are all bad needs to change. And, the CAFOs are likely to continue, so there have to be new solutions to waste management in those systems. Maybe more for research and development than BWSR, but where possible be open to exploration there. I am not sure it's a BWSR job, but there are intersecting state agencies who manage commercial and manure fertilizer separately. Hoping this starts to change as many producers use both. There has been some attention to this recently
- dam removal
- Define Conservation agronomy
- Develop standards for measuring and assessing Ecosystem Services for land restoration.
- Difficulty financing LGU research on water quality (outside of grant required monitoring)
- Drainage portal. Remember MN is still ag state. The drainage committee has worked well for a long time. Don't let it be ruined.
- Easement land owners - enhance and maximize their land.
- Ecosystem education
- Educate on PFAS uses in conventional ag. The foam that marks the end of the row contains PFAS. Are seeds also coated with PFAS?
- Educate on the benefits of a diverse soil microbiome and how to achieve it.

- Educate on the impacts of tiling. (downstream erosion, export of nutrients)
- Education on the importance of the quality of the land and the benefits that result.
- Effect of ice fishing on water quality. Designate money for dealing with it. Sleeper houses. Porta Potty.
- Emergency Relief for Drought, Floods, and other Natural Disasters. Having state funds to be used for emergency relief
- Expand water storage. Incentify SWCD to expand
- Farmland protection, including farmland and farmers.
- Find ways to help recruit new staff.
- Finding solutions to chemicals in the soil & water that will be found to be harmful, while they are in common use, such as pesticides.
- Flooding with extreme events we are seeing
- Follow Olmsted county SWCDs new program to assess scalability to others in the region
- Follow Olmsted cover crop program and impact it has on region
- Funding for Easement management - ie Rx burning, Timber Stand Improvements, Seeding
- Funding for private land habitat management.
- Green energy (wind, solar) leases impeding conservation easements and acquisitions
- Green infrastructure implementation. There is a significant need for green infrastructure beyond the regulatory minimum to cope with climate change and pollution. BWSR, as a state agency, is well positioned to help local governments implement regional-scale green infrastructure, which is more effective than a

piecemeal, parcel by parcel approach.

- Groundwater contamination with PFAS
- Groundwater in the metro area.
- Groundwater is a big one and the situation is quickly deteriorating
- groundwater pollution and pumping
- groundwater quantity and quality
- Help spread resources made in well funded counties to less funded counties
- Help support meaningful statewide policy on climate resilience and adaptation.
- Help to convince the powers to be that more realistic long education in our schools is needed to explain how our society's interaction with the environment and demand for resources causes harm and changes around us. Besides enforced policies education is the most basic and effective way to help improve our environment
- Help to project the future needs materials (i.e., native seed) or contractors
- Helping landowners and agencies to work together--through planning and project development to stitch together a landscape that functions in a more healthy way
- Honestly, and entirely uncritically, can't actually think of any emerging issues BWSR is uniquely suited to address in the sense that unique means no one else can. But always an opportunity to leverage and multiply shared strengths with other orgs/entities.
- How AI could be utilized by LGUs to make their lives easier. #chatGPT
- I am really excited for BWSR to have a DEI plan and am looking forward to the outreach BWSR is going to do with that plan. Let's work together on this stuff!

- Implement pollinator habitat standards across all BWSR projects, no matter how big or small.
- Increase focus in next phases of 1W1P on groundwater, perhaps shallow or superficial aquifers that have a direct & often immediate impact to the quantity & quality of groundwater
- Increase funding for conservation easements on existing habitat, while continuing to acquire easements to retire sensitive cropland.
- Increase funding to SWCDs
- Increasing options for private landowners to create positive money flow from properties while keeping a natural environment on the landscape.
- Invasive species. This is already a major issue for all our state's ecosystems, aquatic and terrestrial, and it will only get worse. There is a critical need to understand the impact of introduced/invasive species on ecosystems and develop sustainable, cost-effective methods of control where needed.
- Is there a way for BWSR to engage industry to reduce the production of pollutants like PFAS, microplastics, etc.?
- It is not emerging but just the number of conservation BMPs statewide that are needed to hit water quality benchmarks is astounding. Focusing more on the big picture and working with partners to ensure reporting is done accurately.
- It would be nice if all agencies could work together on projects at one time.
- It's great that BWSR has a tribal liaison. I think BWSR is suited to serve as a connector between local tribal gov'ts and local watershed gov'ts. Help WDs connect with tribal gov'ts so we can learn from them and ensure we're serving tribal community members with our work
- Karst region drinking water nitrate levels. EPA emergency powers to enforce CWA. This would be better addressed at state level than Federal. State lead Fed assist/support.
- Lack of funding for forestry and forest management outside of tree planting projects
- Lately, high levels of staffing turnover, retirements, new hires, inability to rehire... how to keep well-trained staff on, how to better 'pass the torch' when a retirement is on the horizon
- lead or partner in educational programs linked to climate change
- Look for opportunities to partner together. RCPP storage/climate. Future: soil health Eq with MDA and NRCS?
- Lower/ limit the power of DNR on drainage projects. It can be taking over some of their scope or working on the statute change (so the DNR will not be soooo free on every angle) which I believe will improve reasonableness and speed of the process.
- Making peatlands healthy again!
- Matching local issues to new technologies/ research and pilots.
- Measure what changes behavior? Money, mentors, community meetings/convos
- Measuring ac- of storage.
- Miniscule RIM processing reimbursements to SWCDs
- MN Ag Water Quality Certification will not improve water quality
- New requirements need to address climate change
- Nitrate
- Nitrate in groundwater and surface water. Working locally, across public and private groups to find best practices.
- Nitrate pollution--- incentivizing grazing, perennials, cover cropping and have a tiered system of impact relative to reduction of nitrates
- Nitrogen best management practices will not improve water quality
- Nitrogen pollution
- No-Till Strategies
- None local government is addressing them
- Not sure what BWSR can really do with climate change as an international issue, but can help at the local level
- Out of state landowners that manage rental acres (sometimes as part of investment). Could BWSR interface with them and share opportunities for conservation?
- Partner with University of Minnesota to conduct an evaluation of the 1W1P program
- Peatlands restoration
- Peatlands restoration and protection
- Please continue the trend of transforming program delivery from just landowner-need response to conservation-focused delivery that happens to help landowners.
- Pollinator habit promotion
- Promotion of pollinator habitat.
- Provide enhancement activities to the local land owners to maximize their land.
- Provide funding for storage in 103E drainage systems.
- Provide training to management staff and SWCD boards to create working environments that are conducive to goals of #5
- providing \$ or resources to media outreach campaigns on tillage, GW, SW and soil health. go viral.
- Providing boots on the ground to help implement.
- Providing TA as farmers engage with opportunities from the

Climate-Smart Commodities USDA grants

- Public and private wells that are located in floodplains might benefit from water storage on land interventions. (climate change)
- Regional and sub-regional groundwater strategies and management framework creation and subsequent funding.
- Regional stormwater treatment opportunities
- Remain non-partisan. Focus on stated objectives not constant administration changes.
- Remember the importance of drainage to the Minnesota economy.
- Retaining water on the land
- Salt and dust control chemicals on roadways; lack of capacity at the SWCD level, County supports., and creative spacing for new employees.
- Section 404 assumption of Clean Water Act
- Seems like SWCD funding is feast or famine; we hear that SWCDs are having trouble using all the available funds. How can BWSR address this?
- Serve as a moderator between SWCDs and other State Agencies to accomplish conservation goals, especially on State owned or managed land.
- Set a standard for wetland health classifications that all can follow
- Set up new easements for long term success.
- Shoreland and river erosion issues (Upper Reaches + One Watershed plans)
- small plots of land ineligible for USDA programs, but larger than lawns2legumes
- Soil Health
- Solar farms, lots of partners, different economic interests that

have stalled our progress. Could BWSR help identify public lands?

- Source water protection at a watershed scale
- Space. Districts need more space for growing districts.
- Spreading awareness & helping train folks on new water/wetland policies being rolled out in MN by BWSR's sister agencies, such as stream mitigation and Section 401 water quality certification. (MPCA, USACE).
- Staffing issues! Retention, recruitment, training, fair/livable wages, HR, woman staff in male careers, budgets.
- State, and local, dollars can be more flexible than federal dollars and associated with less wait times for the landowner to get cost share. Be strategic, encourage staff to leverage.
- Storage in 103E drainage projects
- Support for local governments developing comprehensive land use plans with soil health and water quality outcomes in mind
- Support incorporating climate actions into 1W1P during amendments
- Support the LGUs that BWSR represents, rather than being partisan and supporting environmental groups.
- Supporting local governments with enforcement of environmental issues
- Sustainability, Climate, clean air - leverage into multiple benefits and look at the larger picture vs too focused in one area.
- Targeting money/action to highly vulnerable DWSMAs and GW Protection Rule areas designated as impacted - to address drinking water issues
- Technical standards for small-scale and other projects not covered by

NRCS FOTG, or for beneficial but not quite "to specification" projects

- Terrestrial Invasives are by far the largest impact that is happening on the landscape. These invaders are affecting habitat for many species of plants and animals. This in turn is having a cascading effect upon the entire environment. That is directly impacting the waters and forests of Minnesota. More funding is needed before the LGUs are overwhelmed.
- The effect of chemicals on aquifers--not just nitrates/phosphates but PFAS, etc.
- The ever widening divide between farmer/operators and those without a farming background, whom may be land owners
- the influx of new programs & significant appropriations to deliver and enable LGUs
- The JAA conundrum. It's time NRCS started working with BWSR to have BWSR help facilitate JAA in a more readily and streamlined fashion. The system is old and we could get so much more done.
- The lack of project fundings. Encourage better and bigger funding amounts.
- The legacy fund (....CWF) is not new anymore. Start working to build support for the next iteration.
- The need for reduced chemical use and increased natural pest reduction methods.
- the potential increased role of sustainable micro-farming to produce local food, income and farm stability.
- The use of prescribed fire in our region is rapidly growing. Issues being addressed include: wildland fire fuel reduction, supporting the health of fire-dependent communities, planting site prep, invasive species management, and increasing forage production. NRCS is also trying to support the use of

prescribed fire. SWCDs are a great contact for landowners to get technical advice and burn plans, but there is little training or experience from staff. BWSR could support a staff member, or a lead SWCD individual to head up training, and support gaining the necessary experience to be the point of contact on prescribed fire and review plans for it.

- Time. Not enough hours in the day. How can BWSR help us find efficient ways to do our work?
- Too much state, and especially federal, money for staff to handle successfully
- Treated seeds and new PFAS/PFOS regulation, how will BWSR help move this forward.
- Urban Agriculture
- Urban and land use planning and education
- Water contamination in karst region - new rounds of testing and educational forums for public
- Water management and erosion issues at the local level, to help mitigate issues around climate change
- Water quality improvement project permitting obstacles with MPCA, DNR and USACE. We are currently jumping through hoops with MPCA to prove that our water quality improvement projects won't degrade water quality. This comes at a substantial cost in terms of staff time and prolonged water quality degradation. Delays and inefficiencies in their

non-degradation certification system are ironically directly leading to extended degradation.

- Water quality, habitat, and recreation are 3 themes that work well together. I humbly suggest that BWSR develop programs to improve or promote human recreation through water quality or habitat projects. This way there is a broader audience reached than the current traditional audience and it promotes equality of opportunity.
- Water retention
- Water sovereignty
- Water storage
- Water storage in agricultural settings
- Watercourse restoration
- WBIF Funding
- We are facing a crisis with nitrate in public and private wells because the conservation/long term approach does not address the immediate health risks.
- We assume that private well owners choose to be on a private well, but lack of affordable housing means renters are often powerless to test and treat their well water.
- well-head protection
- Wetland banking- training for local professionals needed to create credits needed locally
- Wetland is becoming very important ever need guidance
- What is actually in manure these days? Address pharmaceuticals, hormones, etc
- What role does BWSR play in addressing the inequities that

private well owners and users face? If private septic systems are included, why not private wells?

- With new appropriation for soil health, how to use those funds for highest and best opportunities, to have the biggest impact over time; there's a lot of enthusiasm for this topic, so BWSR can help lead the conversations across diverse constituencies and approaches try different things that respond to various priorities and needs
- Work to breakdown silos between State agencies to facilitate the implementation of local solutions that are not undermined by competing State agency policy/preferences.
- Work with cities and counties - land/ zone/ wastewater management. Plant/tree diversity. promote native species. Pollinators.
- Work with SWCDs and MASWCD and specifically NRCS to find more SWCD funding. We are doing gobs of NRCS work, but because we are on their system, we "donate" a lot of work and do not get any technical funding from NRCS to assist with manpower to get this done. We bring more matches and get more done, but if it doesn't pay the bills how does it keep going?
- Working with watersheds to make conservation practices more economical or even profitable for landowners & business owners.

**4: As individuals, groups, and BWSR as a whole, what are more meaningful and relevant ways to measure the results of our collective work to improve and protect natural resources?**



## Question 4, Staff and Board Responses

There were approximately 96 responses to this question.

- Acres of forested land “protected”
- Adapt common measurement tools
- Align the measurements with quality of life values
- Are we meeting the goals of this strategic plan
- Behavior change is the gold standard. Hardest to measure, though.
- Better connect means/measures to ends outcomes, that makes life better for Minnesotans
- Bring more consistency to eLink reporting and I second reporting treated acres instead of tons and pounds when it comes to non-structural practices
- Can we invest resources in funding research to answer this question? Partner with the universities?
- Can you drink the water in your community?
- Center for Changing Landscapes at the U; MSU Mankato has also done/is doing work in this area (behavior/attitudes, BMP adoption rates, etc)



- Citizen opinion or thoughts on how healthy they feel the natural resources in their area are. Remaining constant should still be a success.
- Collaborate on studies of the health of watersheds (what we are accomplishing)
- Commission - likely with lots of others also sponsoring - surveys of citizens or perceptions of progress or problems.
- Communicating/Translate highly technical, science outcomes into simple narratives. "Clean water: healthy communities"
- Connect integrate landscape stewardship plans (forestry) with 1WIPs and WBIF
- Connecting measures back to local plan goals
- Consistent measuring tools across conservation agencies.
- Continued increase in use of soil health practices
- Coordinate forestry projects and accomp DNR Forestry and their PFM database. Coordinate with Elink
- Cover crop acres increase.
- Data. Year over year, or last 5 years, etc.
- Develop and measure metrics based on public interest information.
- Develop integrated user friendly budgeting tools and resources for LGUs that directly support accomp reporting
- Do other agency staff, local governments, tribal entities, citizens even know who BWSR is and what we do?
- Do the social science work to understand what people care about (and are willing to invest in) and how to measure it
- Drinking water is protected long term in Drinking Water Supply Management Areas via easements and long term contracts for growing perennial vegetation
- Educated and engaged consumers who are willing to buy alternative crop food products
- Education and Outreach participation numbers
- Employee retention- When people enjoy their work they keep doing it. That means they stick around and continue to do good work.
- Enhance the ability of BWSR and our partners to understand how to conduct evaluation/measurements of outcomes
- Focus on pollution reduction estimates; acres planted, etc.
- For clean water, look to interagency efforts on Clean Water Fund Report outcomes, but I think the individual waterbody story has more traction with citizens
- For local governments, reduced costs of water treatment
- Grants to conduct effective water quality monitoring
- Has the Buffer Law improved water quality?
- How many people feel they benefit from public investments in natural resources?
- Identify behavioral metrics that can also be used to infer water quality and soil health impacts. For example, commercial fertilizer sales or tractor implements, how do changing sales correlate
- Identify ways that landowners are managing land on their own to protect resources rather than assessing how funding is being used as our dynamic.
- If BWSR already has metrics, I don't know of them. Making those public and informing our work would be a good first step.
- Increase awareness of forestland cover - historic and current levels by 1W1P watershed levels as well as county levels. Great baseline data and knowledge for all
- Increase/transition to alternative crops being developed by Forever Green Initiative at U of M. Less conventional corn being grown
- Instead of incentivizing practices, we should consider incentivizing outcomes. This would encourage more targeting.
- Institute performance based, not output based, funding and evaluation..
- Integration with LGU data
- Is the water getting better or worse?
- Is this lake clean enough to swim in?
- Just put us all reporting the same info in a common system
- Just that we are doing better than Wisconsin
- Landowner interactions with our local partners and behavior changes that resulted from those interactions..
- Landowner testimonial of benefits outcomes.
- Maps of BWSR projects/easements by type, showing statewide use and expansion over time.
- Marketing with Private Industry.
- Measure in land use changes versus nutrient reductions for general public
- Measure number of dead bugs on windshields as indicator of improvements in natural resources.
- Measuring social change how to capture shifts in landowner behaviors/views on conservation practices - to determine where there is traction/isn't for better outreach
- More focus on social impact instead of water quality/other environmental outcomes. We will never buy our way out of environmental issues.



- Move away from pounds and tons, learn what metrics matter to people and measure that instead
- Move away from tons and pounds of sediment and nutrients and start to track treated acres. I think this gives a better perspective on the scale of our program involvement.
- Need baseline data in order to measure outcomes.
- Need social science tools to assess how conservation is adopted outside of our grant/easement programs
- Need to do "satisfaction" surveys with our partners/clients to see if we are doing a good job
- Need to show measurable progress on water quality (particularly cleaning up impaired waters and trends for drinking water nitrates)
- Need well defined goals to be able to measure progress
- Not just work to measure WQ improvement, but could we fund social science surveys to test whether our work is changing public knowledge/opinion?
- Performance based measures with clear criteria towards that strong performance
- Plans are making incremental progress towards a desired future condition, which is likely what connects with people. How do we explain short-term progress towards DFC?
- Pre-post check with locals -- are they seeing change over time?
- Prioritize target measure!
- Promote and support LFTs (local forestry technical teams) to assist in implementing TWIPs
- PTM!!!
- Public perceptions of environmental health (e.g., would you swim in that lake?)
- Public trust of local and state government to be wise stewards of taxpayer money
- Put some definition around "how much water resource work is good enough for what we control"
- Reduction of crop insurance payments (due to drought)
- Resource (lake, river, stream, soil erosion) improvements related to use. Not just pollution listing.
- Results of work through projects implemented
- Satisfaction/follow-up interviews with landowners who enrolled in an easement or conservation project.
- See the logic model in the One Watershed, One Plan [Guidebook](#)
- Show the results of our work. Use results as an educational tool in high schools and colleges. It's amazing how many folks don't know about the work we do, and how broad it is.
- Survey of "users" or those that have implemented practices
- Surveys to track increased general public awareness and understanding of programs and natural resource issues/goals.
- Technology cloud-based system with user interface (input/output)
- The number of MN residents engaged in conservation
- This is the million dollar question. How do we measure outcomes, and not just outputs? We reduced XX pounds of phosphorus, but did it actually make anything better?
- Tracking and display of our work - volume of our efforts (ARCMAP stories/00)
- Use dashboard or running counts of improvements on website for CWFun
- Use performance based outcomes instead of just putting in BMPs with no assessment of their effectiveness.
- Use pre and post data/Information to show differences/outcomes.
- Use the PFM (private forest mgmt) toolbox and its 8 categories of implementation as a common platform to measure success in forest conservation work
- Use the state soil and water conservation policy as a benchmark and see if we are living up to that.
- Volume of nutrient reduction (N & P), tons of sediment reduced and volume of water retained (water storage)
- Water quality modeling calibrated to monitoring results
- We need to more effectively communicate as a whole (state agencies) what effect our programs are having on Minnesota's environment.
- What trends are you seeing in local wildlife? (e.g., waterfowl, frogs and birds on shorelines)
- Work to identify a landowner management ethic and assess if individuals and communities are working toward achieving that objective.
- Work with community members to identify these goals rather than solely with our state agency partners. What is locally Important and are we meeting that need?
- Work with partner agencies on measuring shared topics; e.g., Water quality; pollinator populations, etc.
- WRAPS (surface water) and GRAPS (ground water) - integrate PTM relevant metrics into implementation and accomp reporting

## Question 4, Partner Responses

There were approximately 185 responses to this question.

- A huge opportunity for BWSR is to partner with the U of MN, getting classes to monitor certain projects. Pick example projects for each type (stream resto, biofiltration, IESF, in-lake, etc) and set up long-term monitoring programs with classes. There are few U of MN classes that offer training with hands-on field monitoring. This would be the most popular class at the U!
- A peatlands health index (along with a cute, relatable peatlands mascot to tell people why they should care about peatlands)
- A requirement that all watershed organizations have to track loss of permeability on a yearly basis, especially in the metro area.
- A soil health index for Minnesota's different landscapes
- Accountability of public dollars - outcomes toward water quality, Soil Health, or other.
- Acres in regenerative practices
- Acres of land reforested (appropriate for forest- need to be careful here- Agriculture and prairies matter too)
- Actually measure the impact of practices that are implemented. (Peak flow reduction; tile water quality; TSS)
- Actually measure the results of BMPs including those recommended by MDA for the Groundwater Protection Rule
- Actually measure the results of BMPs, especially those in the Groundwater Protection Rule of the MDA
- Additionally, and just as important is to meaningfully measure community engagement and education efforts, consideration must be made for the level of community engagement and awareness generated. BWSR should evaluate the effectiveness of education programs, outreach initiatives, and stakeholder involvement. Surveys, interviews, and social science research methods can be employed to gauge the attitudes, knowledge, and behavior changes within communities. This is especially important as it relates, for example, to lake restoration in southern Minnesota, where perceptions on "weeds" and "water quality" collide.
- Address benefits realized for dollars spent
- Anything that can be a physical measurement vs "modeled" find a way to go the physical route (incentivize the measured)
- Are local SWCDs & WDs increasing homeowner awareness of their individual roles regarding run-off, chemical use, clean water, etc.?
- Are we actually making progress when we talk about development in riparian areas? or is development out-
- Ask questions like, "are people being enabled so they can stay on the farm and thrive."
- Assist with monitoring to gauge project effectiveness.
- Average age of wetlands in Minnesota (noting that the older the better, especially for carbon/climate protection)
- Being able to track the amount of land in a given county (and therefore state) that has been assisted by local SWCD
- Besides measuring reductions in pollutants, Knowledge, Attitude and Practice changes from our efforts (although difficult to measure) would be helpful.
- Better promote the Snapshots, explicitly send them to the local areas being featured (press, elected officials, etc.)
- Better public awareness of issues facing our water resources, and increased desire to address them.
- Building partnerships between LGUs
- BWSR can be a partner with us on the ground to help explain how all these issues and projects are connected and making a difference
- BWSR focused on a targeted approach for implementation. Outcomes should reflect how practice addresses a critical area or priority concern.
- BWSR has a lot of data stored up in ELink, but people don't see the cumulative impact. Showing a dashboard for each watershed to show what tasks are being checked off in the One Watershed One Plan (including finishing the plan itself) would be ideal.
- BWSR has all the 1w1p objectives and outcomes from our plans; reporting progress towards a goal should be made easier than what each 1w1p is doing now.
- Can we collect statewide district reports and use them to tell statewide stories?
- Can we drink our well water? Number of contaminated wells, money saved from water treatment
- Carbon stored by various practices
- Changes in human behavior in attitude changes
- Changes in personal actions
- Collect feedback from partners and the public. This survey is a great example of the kind of questions BWSR should regularly pose to local governments it works with.
- Common sense work with LGUs

- Communications about the measures/measurements is essential; too often, the stories are lost; take the existing measurements and communicate them in ways that are meaningful to the public, public officials, NGOs
- Community surveys of ecosystem health and awareness
- Conduct plant/animal surveys of projects to determine longer-term benefits to certain wildlife species.
- Consistent reporting. Easy (as much as possible).
- consistent water quality data
- Continually check in to ensure shared understanding of outputs (e.g., # of BMPs installed, # of outreach events held) vs outcomes (e.g., TMDL load reductions achieved for the target waterbody). Outputs help tell the story, but we don't do projects just to do projects, and we don't spend money just to spend money; we do projects in order to achieve the outcomes.
- Convene inter-agency team to align state-preferred/recommended modeling tools
- Convene inter-agency team to align state-preferred/recommended pollutant reduction estimation tools
- Coordinate with DNR and MPCA for monitoring in key watersheds
- Coordinate with others to show cumulative work.
- Cost per pound of Phosphorus or Nitrogen reduced or CO<sub>2</sub>e sequestered
- Create a metric to talk about carbon footprint.
- Create data in a way that makes it meaningful to a large and diverse audience.
- Create more of a story narrative to help encourage and attract people that have an interest in green spaces and turn them into new partners/advocates
- Creating realistic goals and meeting those goals.
- Creel surveys (fishery management)
- Define on who benefits and why we need to measure metrics.
- Develop a cumulative measurement to show practices implemented and have some metrics behind them. Coordinate with other agencies and efforts to show all efforts.
- Develop consistent goals and tracking tools.
- Diversification of landscapes, variety of crops being grown, number of acres in soil health practices
- diversity measurements before and after an project delivered as, "the diversity in this stream went up 12% when x, y, and z practices were initiated"
- Diversity of crops and farmers in the agricultural landscape.
- Diversity of folks working with BWSR (age, race, cultural background). Who is BWSR serving?
- Easily understandable and to collect measurement metrics that correlate to natural resource improvements
- Easily understandable and to collect measurement metrics that correlate to natural resource improvements r
- Education on ecosystems for sustainable, long-term effectiveness of restoration projects & return on investment of CWLLA funds
- Engaged landowners in a project
- Ensure that new programs include both qualitative and quantitative measures with equal weight; using soil health as an example, as new practices are employed, keep the technical results and cost-benefit analysis along with the local stories, who's participating, what they're doing, what's happening; both dimensions are important to increase attention, participation, and success
- Ensuring funds are not disproportionality going toward staffing vs implementation - compare LGUs
- Evaluate major watersheds separately. The Red is different from the Minnesota, the St. Croix and Lower Mississippi
- Evaluate measurable goals as stated in water management plans
- Farming economics accounts for "externalities" - they see the real cost of cleaning up the surface water, groundwater (and air--N is also a gas) as part of the equation
- Fishable, swimmable, improved water in agricultural areas
- Focus efforts in a watershed in order to see if they work and if improvements are being made
- Focus more on cost effective practices v. money needing to be spend for LGUs to be seen as successful
- focus on impacted acres and not reductions - some conservation is better than no conservation.
- Focus on water quality outcomes, NOT DEI, social justice and other "social" outcomes.
- Focus on water quality outcomes, NOT DEI, social justice, and other "social" outcomes.
- Go back to return on investments. Limited funds. Bang for the buck.
- Happy loon populations ;)
- Has our customer base grown - urban, small, specialty, etc.
- Have consistent goals and measurement tools
- Healthy ecosystems as measured by species diversity and lack of invasives

- How many new contacts make each year to reach out to underrepresented partners and other new partners
- How many Olympic swimming pools of water were held on lands under protection or restoration practices
- How well the public understands importance of NR Management
- I am really not sure
- I really like Paul Radomsky's (Spelling?) research on lakeshore development, and would appreciate this think-tank being applied across rural achievements as well.. Are we actually getting anywhere with the practice instills that we do? Is development
- I think delisting impaired waters is the ultimate metric
- I would be interested in seeing regular published info on wetland acreage that has been impacted vs. restored
- If necessary, evaluate measurable goals after 2 or 5 years to recalibrate, if necessary, especially based upon financial and staff capacities
- improve water quality
- Increasingly, projects we do as an SWCD seek multiple benefits for habitat, water quality, soil health, and more. We consistently find that we do not have the staff time to monitor, evaluate, and maintain previously installed practices. Shifting greater emphasis on year 2 and 3 establishment and maintenance will be crucial for making lasting progress on projects. Investing in reflection and evaluation of project benefits will help inform better work.
- Indices of biological integrity in lakes and streams - change over time
- It is really hard to connect the dots on impact between the MPCA's database on impairments and the eLink database that maps projects. The public would benefit from bridging the two systems.
- It may be nice if BWSR would have a WQ liaison to help districts more easily quantify outcomes and how they may impact WQ and even impairments. Reading through WRAPS and other 100-page documents isn't something SWCDs do a lot, because we have to pay the bills and are always chasing. Some assistance in guiding us to delivering better information to the public would benefit all of our work.
- Keeping track of the number of successful partnerships (public-private, cross sector, etc.) and what makes them work well.
- Landowner engagements. Not all site visits/requests turn into a funded project. Providing good TA is the goal so that they can implement a practice on their own without funding = long-term, sustainable conservation.
- Lawns and legumes project was successful and unitizing some of the same strategies
- Less reliance on model and private firm input. Models are only as good as the data being input and many models are being way oversold by contractors. Individual projects can not be predicted to that degree by a model. Too many unknown factors outside general model data.
- LGU-level water quality monitoring data (versus grant-specific monitoring data)
- Local LGU office staff retention rates - brings stability to local conservation plans
- Long and short term in-stream/lake water quality trends
- Long term forecast reports with perspective. "It will take XXX years for this native prairie we restored to establish X feet of topsoil."
- Look at impacts as well as measurable results. Calculating phosphorus reduction is important in a report, but calculating economic potential through implemented projects shows impact that elected officials like to read about.
- Make e-link more user-friendly
- Make reporting processes simple.
- MDA's Township Testing currently will not track nitrate trends in private wells. Develop some representative monitoring to see if nitrate levels are trending down.
- Measurable reductions in flooding, property damage, erosion, etc.
- Measure biodiversity such as in species.
- Measure changes in private landowner knowledge, attitudes, and practices to see if BMPS will continue after the economic incentive expires.
- Measure nitrate reduction using BMPs, what works better re sequestration and erosion, etc.
- Measure the amount of permanent cover and habitat being put on the ground along with estimated benefits to wildlife species and biodiversity.
- measuring and tracking water quality problems/improvements
- Measuring results of projects implement/funded
- Measuring small water cycle functions and system approach to healthy outcomes.
- Money and time are good measures usually! We adopted PTMAApp recently which gives us some idea of how well we are spending our time and money. I assume BWSR should have something similar that would standardize its performance measurement.

- Money granted by geographic location and equity priorities.
- Money saved from input costs for farmers incorporating soil health practices (fuel savings, fertilizer savings)
- Monitoring (surface water, groundwater, soil health)
- Monitoring!! - objectively measure long term success of conservation goals. Long Term Monitoring: Establish long-term monitoring programs to track the outcomes of projects and collective efforts over extended periods.
- More infographics, data visualization, and mapping tools to share information.
- More research into the environmental benefit tools to gauge how accurate it really is.
- More transparency about where money goes, and what it pays for
- NASA type of measuring
- Native and/or restored prairie acreage
- Need to better educate locals about what the numbers mean and why they matter
- Need to identify ways to get the attention of diverse audiences
- Not original, but further effort on recording economic effects---particularly at and on a community scale---can continue to demonstrate the benefits in fiscal, employment, etc. terms
- Number community water systems with reductions in nitrate in their source water.
- Number of acres in fall covers
- number of EJ zones reached/number of projects in EJ zones
- Number of fish kills
- Number of practices implemented in critical source areas, [percentage of critical source areas in a watershed that are addressed.
- Number of waterbodies delisted by DNR each year and number of water bodies that are added to the impaired waterbodies list.
- One pager reports to the public
- Open data portals
- Outstanding Conservationist Award: break this up into landowner categories. A farmer wins it every year, and there are other folks doing great things outside of agriculture.
- Percentage of budget & revenues that go directly to soil & water quality outcomes, vs. overhead.
- Pictures - before and after. People - stories - how to tell. Farmers tell their story. Recruit and have a link on BWSR.
- Plan the work - but show that as a whole working the Plan and not random acts of conservation
- Population served by community water systems that are experiencing reductions in nitrate trends.
- Programs on the ground that help private landowners with environmental concerns.
- Progress toward TMDLs (need more support for staff to do this well)
- projects on the ground
- Promoting projects and enhancing new technology.
- Quality of drinking water supplies, public and private
- Quantify pollution mitigated. There are many ways to do this depending on the type of project. Pounds of phosphorus removed, tons of soil protected from erosion, cubic feet of runoff infiltrated, etc. This is both an important way to measure results and a great way to promote successful projects to the public.
- Realistic Goals for water planning
- Recognize that the most important economic good that farms and forests can produce is clean water.
- Reduced export of nitrogen and phosphorus in tile water
- Reduced occurrence of antibiotic-resistant bacteria in agricultural ditches and soils
- reduction in pollutants, total dissolved solids; abstraction amounts
- Reductions in pollutant loads and peak flows in sub watersheds
- Reductions in sediment loading; tracking at a watershed level
- Reductions in treatment costs for community water systems and private wells due to reductions in nitrate.
- Regional water quality monitoring, compile and review local data for a regional/statewide trend analysis
- Saw presentation of drone flyover for Wild Rice Upper Reaches project to identify problems, with plan to do another in a few years to show progress
- Scientifically measured outcomes, such as water quality that can be monitored.
- Seeing the economic impact of BWSR. Map regions that are utilizing resources or getting funding. Shade gradient of resources available money for covers, equipment, how well-resourced it is.
- Set up measurements after you establish your goals and do this with project partners.
- Share BWSR projects with others
- Share personal stories of SWCDs and County projects with others
- Shorten approval processes, the shorter the time, the more apt the landowner will want to participate.
- showcase the history, what the land was, what it became, and what the work BWSR has done to bridge the divide
- Simplify the process and language!

- Snapshots about local projects that result in X or Y are appealing to locals
- Social measures that include building individual, relational, and organizational capacity to improve water quality. Social measures monitoring system.
- Societal change. Did efforts result in long term adoption?
- species taken off of the endangered species (such as Rusty Patch)
- stop asking for paper reports that no one reads
- Stop reinventing the wheel . If one has it done, share with others (documents, handouts, programs).
- Success Stories
- Surveying with values-based questions: do you feel you have the same access to safe, healthy drinking water that your parents did? healthy spaces for recreation & wildlife?
- Surveys, focus groups of resident attitudes and perceptions
- Tell the story not the practice.
- The results from the watershed planning efforts should be informative.
- This is a difficult task when focusing on measuring" results, as Soil loss, P, and N calculators have way too many uncontrollable variables in them and are always going to be wildly inaccurate. More focus should be on tracking the number of project types in watersheds, number of acres enrolled into CCs and conservation easements, wetland storage acre ft, and focusing on actual data from long term monitoring. For example, who really cares if it's collectively measured that 100 projects saved a million tons of soil from washing away if the 10-year water monitoring trend for a contributing waterbody does not improve. Basically don't put so much focus on measuring success when we already know that NRCS BMPS are effective towards our goals.
- Tons of carbon sequestered
- Tons of carbon stored above the ground and in the soil column by restoration and preservation actions.
- Try to standardize cost-benefits for different types of projects. Examples: Money per pound of TP removed. Monet per amount of carbon sequestered.
- Try to tell/highlight landowner stories better.
- Uncertain. Currently measuring pollutant reduction, but that doesn't communicate to the general public well
- unsure
- Use a realistic nutrient reduction calculator. The BWSR Calculator is not accurate at all.
- Use maps rather than text to report results
- Use social science to study and measure behavior change
- utilizing funds as per appropriation(s)
- Water quantity trends in streams and lakes--amplitude of fluctuations within a growing season
- Ways to improve messaging our accomplishments.
- We need support from all partners to collectively be able to improve and protect our natural resources.
- We need to measure our work to demonstrate to others its value. The most effective work we can do is to avoid the harm to begin with. This takes public outreach and engagement, the outcomes of which can never be measured accurately. Loosen the mandate for measurability for cases of avoidance and allow the calculation of benefits to consider imminent long-term degradation likely to occur but for the project.
- weighing the benefit of practice installs?
- With more monitoring - run models consistently
- Yes! to SMMS. We cannot buy our way out of our water resource challenges.

**5: Thinking about the barriers you face in your work, what improvements to BWSR systems, structures, or processes would help overcome those barriers and yield better results? (staff/board only)**



## Question 5, Staff and Board Responses

**This question was posed only to staff, not partners.** There were approximately 114 responses to this question.

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A training program that repeats that covers grants management for new staff to attend virtually or as recordings.</li> <li>● Add staff to the organization structure to support more time with individual LGUs.</li> <li>● Additional BWSR Staff</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Aligning our daily work to strategic plan goals - embedding objectives/outcomes in our teams, projects - ongoing reporting of outcomes year round to SP</li> <li>● Allow our LGU partners to identify outcomes and meet those outcomes rather than develop work</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>plans that are so tightly focused on outputs and processes.</li> <li>● Appear to be less bureaucratic to the public</li> <li>● As a busy elected official, I wish I had time to dive into research so I can suggest policy changes. Is there</li> </ul> |
|--|---|--|



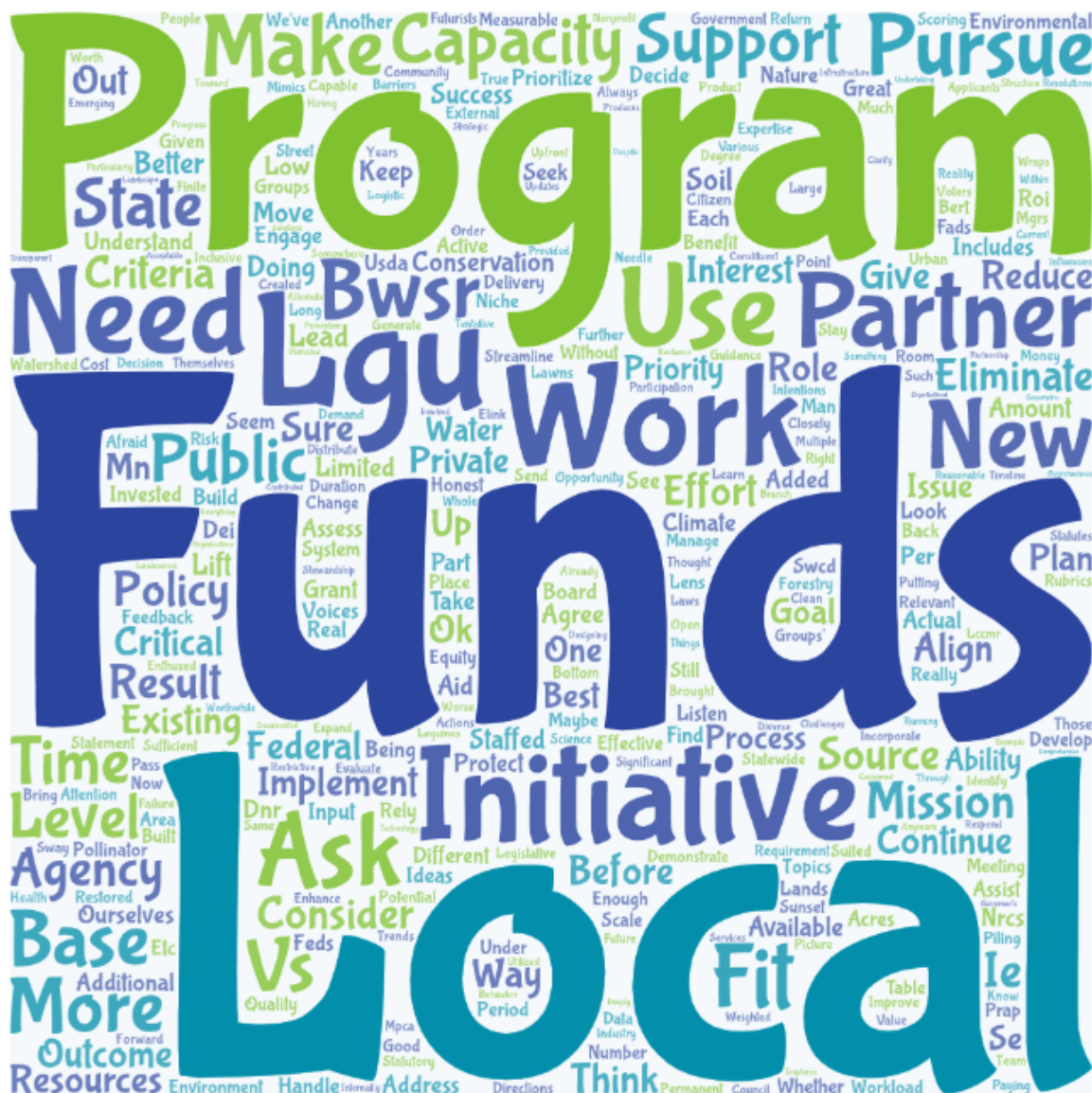
- a liaison or staff that I could meet with to discuss ideas?
- Be more flexible not with the rules but with the processes
- Better collaboration between sections
- Better communicating the rationale and reasoning for decisions
- Better engagement with municipalities, counties, tribes, etc. but need more staff or more staff time for this.
- Better understand the other areas of BSWR and look to more collaboration between geographical areas
- Better/ easier/ documented fiscal processes.
- Board time to discuss the issues and funding sources to be informed to give direction and make the proper board decisions.
- Clarify the roles of clean water specialists. They had a big role in 1WIP development but it's less clear now that plans are being completed.
- Communication/coordination internal and external. Can never be too much.
- Consider NCO roles in partnership to accomplish common goals
- Consistency and structure in onboarding, e.g., mentoring, cohorts, structured learning over time. Checklists of tasks/policies/programs to learn about.
- Continue to be lean and mean. Flexibility to react to situations is very important.
- Continue to gather staff for in-person meetings (even if not All-staff, at least some broader gatherings across staffs).
- Contracting - process is slow and inconsistent in length of time to get contracts finalized. Make sure there is adequate staff capacity to get work done
- Create more program coordinator positions within BWSR
- Easy-to-access data, such web portals that describe some of what we've posted about, like metrics
- Employees working out of class- there are staff who have been working out of class for years. Staffing and job classifications should be addressed at the section level - not individual jobs.
- Empowering staff to make decisions.
- Ensure programs are approached as a collaboration across the agency/as a larger team
- Expenses - barriers
- Explore increasing the use of contracts (not grants) with LGUS where for programs that are only used for staff time where they are performing work on behalf of the State.
- Far too detailed, time consuming. Trust managers and staff, simplify
- Feedback loop
- Fewer hybrid cars. Save staff time by not constantly maintaining fleet needs.
- Fewer meetings! (This is the drum that I beat.)
- Field level staff have shifted toward program and funding management rather than LGU assistance. There is a need for LGU org development work as well.
- Find the a balance (or flexibility) between regulatory enforcement and common sense implementation
- Focus on our mission
- Give coordinators more access to budget information for the programs they are charged with managing
- Grants mgmt -internal roles - Simplify
- Greater calibration across the agency.
- Guidance on personal requirements and responsibilities of LGU staff for state funding to provide to Local Boards
- Have a dedicated staff member for each program as internal support but maintain a main LGU contact such as BC that covers a specified regional area for all things BWSR.
- Have a way to direct bill/invoice "clients"
- Have an overarching grants section instead of housing it in one division when grants are managed agency-wide - 1 highly support this (2nd)
- Hire additional BWSR BCs
- Hire additional BWSR CWS
- Hiring processes- barriers - too lengthy and cumbersome. Solutions - Trust your managers and staff to make good decisions
- HR Processes
- HR turnaround to answering questions
- HR turnaround to hiring staff-it takes forever
- I think it is important, but there is constant change with new funding and programs so more process around how to deal with those
- Improve the onboarding and staff training process
- Improve the way we file/store Board decisions so it is clear what needs to be included in policy. Make it clear what is policy and what are recommendations
- Improved plans for employee development and retention.
- Include more public input.
- Increased flexibility with our programs that allow local governments to be creative in their local conservation delivery system.
- Institute a culture of improvement to allow the value of lessons learned and other innovative ideas of merit to bubble up; boots on the ground vs top down as a barrier.



- Just providing guidance on an internal process doesn't seem to do it. i.e. clarifying who is responsible to update Items in eLINK and realizing that staff is still not updating.
- Less administration - too many layers of documentation: Board order, policy, RFP, Grants Administration Manual, grant agreement. Any/all of these required/needed?
- LISTEN to your public audiences
- Local Boards that don't want to spend funding on staffing
- Location of BWSR staff- better co-location with more LGUs across the state
- Make sure the BWSR field staff have flexibility to make decisions.
- More grants staff is a must. Each legislative session sees BWSR appropriated more money, yet we don't have any more grants staff to help administer it
- More HR Staff. Being able to add/fill a position in <3 months
- More info about "who does what". Org chart is great, but what do they do? Who do I ask about XYZ?
- More meetings/videos to share info about all of our programs to targeted stakeholders
- More of a legislative issue but throwing more money at problems may not be the right solution
- More prompt and faster internal response time to emails
- More transparency in how teams are established, including opportunities for people to choose which teams they want to work in.
- Move away from grants to local partners that are reimbursement only -- too much paperwork!
- MUCH more thoughtfulness about adding tasks to already full plates. New programs = more work.
- Must have more grants staff- redundancy critical
- Need to utilize facilities around the state to host meetings, training, etc. without a mountain of "agreements" paperwork (State issue, not just BWSR?)
- Not enough BWSR staff time to really attend/support local boards to be functional (or a better statewide organization with more staff to help them that isn't us)
- Not enough local staff to implement all the conservation programs.
- Not overlook the role of Boards with our LGU partners and nurturing relationships and communication with Boards so they understand the "ask" to LGUs and why
- Overly bureaucratic admin procedures - HR, contracting, invoicing, expenses. These tie the hands of state agency managers stop effectiveness of agencies doing their job
- Programs within the Resource Conservation Section and are being partially supported by Regional Operations Section staff. Confusion and frustration happening
- Provide more training to our LGUs more consistently on all topics related to conservation...beyond the BWSR academy. Do it in person as well.
- Quicker agency response to additional staffing needs.
- Recruitment at colleges
- Reduce administrative, non program requirements that cumulatively increase workload and reduce capacity for priority items.
- Refresher on BERT and updates when changes are made such as new information
- Required turnaround time to responding to local government questions (i.e. we should be embarrassed by some BCs response time to local government partners)
- Respect the input from constituent groups they are out there listening to those who can make a difference in water quality
- Restructure the BC and CWS positions to more clearly identify roles and responsibilities with our programs and LGUS.
- Rethink the roles BWSR staff have. Not all have to be external facing. We need more staff to manage internal systems to improve external relationships
- Review roles and expectations for board members and staff. What is the board responsible for vs staff?
- Reviewing (possibly change) roles of the board members. What are they responsible for? What is staff responsible for? Reframe expectations and roles for board and staff.
- Seek ideas for programs/initiatives from across the agency
- Silos with Coordinators. Lack of communication
- Simplify and streamline grant policies.
- Simply having more employees may help. Our programs and scope continue to expand, but our staffing does not so it often feels like we are just surviving rather than thriving.
- Since the legislative audit there has been a push to formalize procedures and controls that in my experience tend to result in a paper exercise with little effect on operations
- Smaller workload to provide better individual service.
- Staffing
- Statewide coordinators in relevant regional discussions
- Streamline grants policy. Too many policies and changes to programs to efficiently track.
- Streamline HR
- Technology + technology support

- Technology. There's various programs that exist but we lack the staffing and/or MNIT capacity and money to acquire those tools.
- There are significant gaps because we view ourselves as a technical agency. Social measures and outcomes are ignored meaning that funding is our only solution.
- There is a gap between the coordinator level and the field staff level in which program development and implementation can be disconnected.
- There is a lack of openness around the staffing process. Staff have been told they will be informed when new positions are hired rather than being given an overall vision.
- There is a significant failure in the watershed process and BC allocations. BCs and LGU are confused over who to work with in terms of LGU or watershed partnership.
- Time - I don't think BCs have enough capacity so do we need to hire a few more?
- Too many silos. Better coordination/collaboration between sections.
- Too much time spent running things through committees and boards. More trust should be given to BWSR's professional staff
- Too much work to do, not enough people to do the work. Provide adequate staffing & retention.
- Try to combine BWSR programs and reduce the number of program policies.
- Trying to be consistent statewide in administering programs and yet remaining flexible for partners
- Uniform guidance procedure where possible.
- Using fewer, simpler, most meaningful requirement for oversight of grants, plans, org effectiveness while retaining and growing to help aspects
- Well-documented metrics as both goals and results aim for and measure our success; use it to further plan!
- Work hard to reduce administrative policy that creates barriers to implement
- Workload-we keep adding programs and responsibilities yet don't hire more staff.

## 6: What criteria should BWSR use to decide which initiatives to pursue, reduce, or eliminate? (staff/board only)



## Question 5, Staff and Board Responses

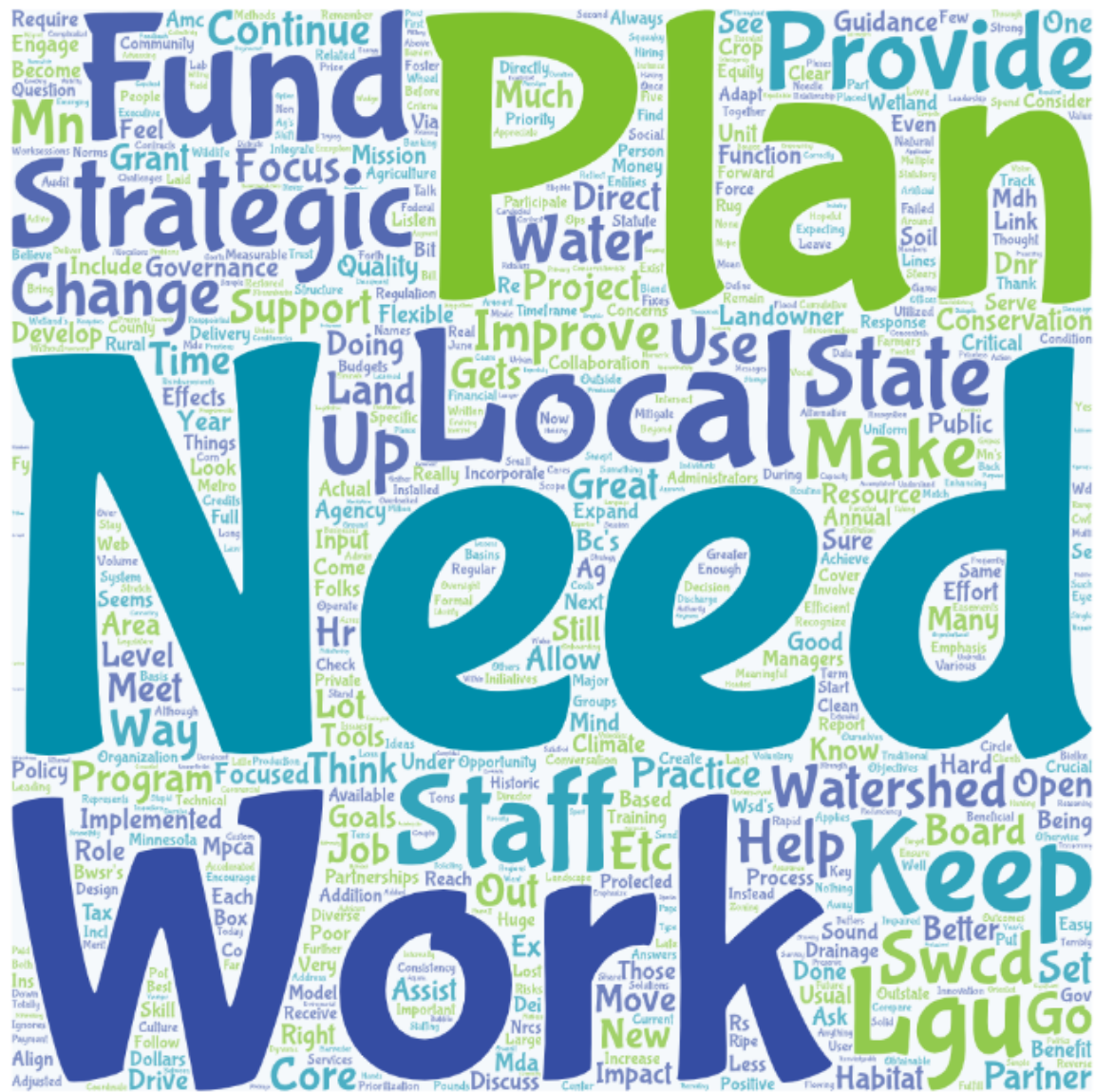
**This question was posed only to staff, not partners.** There were approximately 109 responses to this question.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ability to assist all levels of equity.</li> <li>● Acres restored and protected</li> <li>● Agree we should ask LGU partners, but we need to make sure we understand WHY...</li> <li>● Are pollinator programs really the best fit for BWSR?</li> <li>● Be honest with ourselves about ability in time and staff capacity</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● before agreeing to pursue new work</li> <li>● Bottom-up. Use existing staff ideas and expertise to develop new work or streamline existing.</li> <li>● BWSR relevant state statutory requirements and directions</li> <li>● Can we be successful with the initiative? This includes sufficient</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● staff, resources and understanding of the issue</li> <li>● Capacity of ourselves and local partners</li> <li>● Consider other external groups' capacity when deciding any actually (not doing work LGUs are capable of doing for themselves, giving a lift where needed)</li> </ul> |
|--|--|--|

- Consider our niche with the conservation of private lands and where other agencies are not meeting needs
- Consider the available, potential funding source(s) - amounts, duration.
- Continue to rely and build on the local conservation delivery system with partners.
- Continue to work closely with USDA NRCS.
- Criteria: Do we have the staff time to implement?
- Critical nature of the work
- Critical to consider what role BWSR is working in the given initiative. Lead, support, partnering. Different criteria for each are needed.
- Degree of local support
- Demand from the public (ie. Lawns to Legumes)
- Develop a weighted rubrics scale for scoring to aid in the decision making process.
- Do LGUs have capacity?
- Do our local partners have enough staff to seek out our funds if we pursue this opportunity
- Do you have the funding in place to staff and implement without asking existing program staff to do more?
- Does BWSR have enough staff to pursue an opportunity
- Does it fit our mission?
- Does the initiative align with existing programs and policies, if so move forward. If not additional thought should be giving to outcomes vs. funding amount vs. workload requirement
- Don't be afraid to sunset programs. They can always be brought back.
- Eliminate the PRAP assessment because of limited real use to LGU partners. It is a legislative program that does not generate locally useful results.
- Engagement with the BWSR Board.
- Evaluate workload and don't keep piling it on to staff.
- Expand private forestry efforts with the DNR, partner on the stewardship program and urban forestry efforts to enhance SWCD efforts.
- Federal funding. Are the feds putting money into it?
- Feedback from staff. Not a "criteria" per se, but a process, or at least something to be included.
- For initiatives, we need to make sure local partners are invested and enthused about the initiative. We need to listen and respond.
- Funding sources- prioritize those that are more permanent vs one time funding
- Funding. Effectiveness, engagement, outcomes (results).
- Further assess the emerging challenges that need and can be addressed
- I'm active in the environmental community and watershed management; environment is more policy based; not implementation based.
- Identify and eliminate barriers we've created for ourselves.
- If Private industry mimics our programs or policies.
- If there is already another state agency that works in the area, then we may be better being a support but not the lead. It's OK to send funds to another agency to manage/distribute.
- In pursuing more voices at the table, consider whether the voices are based in reality and science, not just good intentions. Environment community input often not logistic base
- Incorporate feedback from partners/LGUs/public.
- Is BWSR the ONLY agency suited for the initiative. Ask "who else could do it"
- Is funding available
- Is it making natural resources better?
- Is there citizen interest in the initiative? Demonstrated need for the product/outcome? Align with our mission?
- Is this a reasonable ask for our delivery system? Can the LGUs handle the additional work?
- Is this an initiative that LGUs need to support their mission? Can they demonstrate that they can do it and find a way to support it?
- Is this program/process Still needed? Ask why are we doing this
- It is inclusive of more groups (DEI lens)
- It move the needle on conservation work (particularly water quality) in a significant way
- It should be transparent-if BWSR wants to pursue funding for X, Y, Z, all tentative initiatives should be somewhere (like BERT) so staff/mgrs/board can see the whole picture
- It would have multiple benefits
- It would make a difference for conservation
- It would support climate change work
- Keep paying attention to trends -- not fads -- but futurists can bring a new way of thinking to the room
- Laws, statutes, guidance.
- Level of effort and return on investment
- Level of interest in grant applications
- LGU participation and interest
- LGU priorities. LGU resolutions. LGU input.
- Listen to your constituent groups. They are out there; they are your "man on the street." They know what people are thinking.
- Local to support for designing efforts at behavior change, through

- federal funding or LCCMR or other sources.
- Look at our staff levels/capacity before pursuing
  - Look at what the state of MN and LGUs needs, not federal level programs and initiatives
  - Maybe think about X number of federal and state and nonprofit grants is what BWSR can handle without adding new staff (including grants staff)
  - New programs can take a large upfront investment in order to get running, that is OK as long as the program is built in a way that additional funding from various sources may be available
  - Only pursue federal funding that aligns with our programs/goals
  - Our mission statement
  - Outcomes and priority
  - Prioritize actions that result in a measurable outcome within limited time periods <10 years
  - Prioritize issues/resources of statewide significance
  - Programs open to more, diverse applicants seems worthwhile
  - Programs that have low funding amounts don't seem worth it anymore
  - Public and/or legislative support for initiatives
  - Public perception of value ("public" being voters and influencers who might sway whether we continue to get funding)
  - Pursue the ones that will get BWSR toward their mission statement
  - Pursue: Does it address a documented goal in the Clean Water Council strategic plan?
  - Pursue: how will the initiative be staffed internally? Do existing staff have capacity? If not - timeline for hiring new staff?
  - Reduce or eliminate activities that have not resulted in measurable progress or have not contributed to meeting statewide goals
  - Reduce or eliminate if addressed to the best of our ability and resources.
  - Reduce soil health. There is so much emphasis on it at this point that it overshadows other great topics
  - Reduce/eliminate: programs that are under-utilized (low participation). Not cost effective to staff under used programs
  - Resources consumed vs. benefit services provided.
  - ROI
  - Staffing capacity
  - staffing capacity numbers
  - Stay true to our mission.....improve and protect MN water and soil resources in partnership with local organizations and private landowners. Based on local comprehensive plans.
  - Success of implementation
  - Success or failure in other states.
  - There is local capacity (or funding for local capacity) available to do the work
  - There is risk that things will get worse if we don't do the work now
  - Think critically about time, staff capacity, and infrastructure before undertaking new programs.
  - To be added in the future from the same or a different funding source with limited updates. If initiatives are too restrictive then maybe pass.
  - Use data from ELink and the local partners to structure criteria for our agency.
  - Use Policy to continue great work with all partners, not make new Policy for new funding
  - Watershed based planning... give this to the MPCA to incorporate into their WRAPS process.
  - We are in a critical period. Technology won't alleviate consumptive use despite finite capacity. The most critical issues should get attention and funding.
  - We are the right agency to do the work
  - We may have to learn to say no that does not fit our priority criteria, or we don't have the staff to implement. Cannot continue to take on everything.
  - We need to make sure that our priorities are aligned with the governor's priorities.
  - We should ask our local government partners
  - We should engage with the public to decide initiatives to pursue, reduce, or eliminate.
  - What fits with our current staffing. (before adding)
  - What is the role of the organizational effectiveness team? Clarify this part of BWSR so staff better understands the role of this branch
  - What is working locally and of local interest? For example, climate change might not be locally acceptable but there may be topics such as resilience that might be.
  - What produces the most results on the landscape? (actual environmental improvements)
  - Where the public is motivated to be part of solutions (pollinators, climate, water quality, etc.)
  - Work with local government staff. They are the ones deeply involved in implementation

## 7: Other thoughts about BWSR's strategic direction?



## Question 7, Staff and Board Responses

There were approximately 39 responses to this question.

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Assist with developing sound county and state regulations to move initiatives forward.</li> <li>● Be mindful that nothing will get done without effective collaboration and partnering and that is often a skill set conservationists do not receive formal training on</li> <li>● Be open to other delivery methods when working with LGUs, contracts, grants, reimbursements, tax credits,</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● direct payment to the landowner from the state.</li> <li>● Be sure it is not the squeaky wheel that drives our strategic direction</li> <li>● Check with other states about how they are advancing equity.</li> <li>● Continue and improve partnerships with partners (NRCS, MN DNR, MDA, MPCA, MDH, etc.).</li> <li>● Does our Board need input from staff and managers (and other entities) about how our Executive</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Director is doing before being reappointed?</li> <li>● Encouraged with the changes to Statute to allow for more flexibility to grants allocations</li> <li>● Focus on our core roles and statutory responsibilities. Huge federal and state budgets are making things more complicated, easy to get off track.</li> <li>● Have we thought about if we even have the right folks on our Board?</li> </ul> |
|--|---|---|



- Should other folks be represented? Do we still need other state agencies on this board?
- How can we integrate more across programs? watershed planning, easements, wetlands, etc.
  - I am hopeful. With BWSR, I am making a positive impact, and that's more than I can say for much of the other work I do.
  - Is our Board getting enough training and what do they need to be more functional?
  - It is based on sound reasoning.
  - It is written in a way to allow for flexibility to adapt if needed.
  - It's hard to know how our work/mission intersect with the DEI plan. It would be great to have the conversation of how it applies to our actual work.
  - Keep in mind it is BWSR's strategic plan.
  - Local partnerships are the critical link to implementing conservation. Anything we can do to foster and expand those partnerships and their web would be beneficial.
  - Make protecting wetlands a priority; banking ignores the lost functions of a specific wetland's ecosystem services that are crucial to integrity and reverse climate impacts;
  - Need a better structure of onboarding
  - Need a way for our strategic plan/Board to look at staffing levels on a regular basis
  - Need at least HR full-time staff at the same level
  - Need more grants staff
  - Need staff to better understand how the work we do lines up with our strategic plan
  - Need to move beyond pounds and tons to incorporate the importance of changing social norms around conservation via LGUS.
  - Our goals should be measurable and should be stretch (but achievable)
  - Our managers need more training
  - Our strategic plan needs to be internally focused too so we can have the best organization to support the work we do
  - Private landowners are a critical link in voluntary conservation. We need to communicate/coordinate/listen to their needs and ideas through local partners
  - Strong need for system thinking with recognition of the many interconnections.
  - Today was a good start for input from the Board. I feel we should spend more time together in person to discuss the strategic plan.
  - Totally new models of conservation may be needed to address emerging challenges need to continue adapting
  - We need more HR staff and Grants staff
  - We need more redundancy for a few of our critical BWSR positions so we can operate more smoothly when people leave
  - We need to ask ourselves who do we serve and are we meeting the expectations of those individuals, groups, organizations.
  - We need to look at our Strategic Plan 1x/year to make sure we are following it and see if it needs to be adjusted. We have a lot of new staff so likely they don't even know about it
  - We need to make hiring a lot more efficient
  - We need to think about as a state how to really move the needle on conservation-we might need more regulation in addition to just funding.
  - We should consider the conditions of landscape in 10-20 years and what we should be doing now (may see rapid change)
  - What was accomplished in the previous strategic plan?

## Question 7, Partner Responses

There were approximately 97 responses to this question.

- Actually support watersheds and provide specific funding, rather than focusing on funding and support for SWCDs.
- Although real to me, BWSR must continue to develop meaningful messages about climate change and its effects on Minnesota -- protecting our resources by mitigating the climatic risks.
- Always important, and something that can be overlooked, is to re-center and focus on core mission and services---for any public, commercial, etc. institution it is every bit and always as ripe for innovation and improvement as expanding scope is usually considered to be.
- AMC and others to more frequently bring BWSR into worksessions to discuss projects (incl strategic plan)
- As funding allows, a continued effort to provide meaningful habitat enhancement resources is

- important for maintaining critical protected lands.
- As you have it laid out in your circle of strategic planning and improvement, the strategic plan is a dynamic document and can change. Although I don't know all the ins and outs of the current strategic direction, but as a local gov. unit admin, I believe you are moving in the right direction.
  - Audit projects that were installed by SWCDs, or do it more often. Ensure the funding and follow up inspections are being used and conducted correctly. Our area has way too many issues with failed projects that get swept under the rug or funded a second time and it is a terribly poor use of state funding.
  - Be more of a partner instead of a dictator. Find new ways to work with SWCDs.
  - Be open to change.
  - BWSR focuses way too much on agriculture, and landowners in forested regions of the state are not receiving the same amount of opportunity or support.
  - BWSR has been doing a great job keeping an open mind, soliciting input, and evolving programs and policies. Thank you, and keep it up!
  - BWSR needs to make sure they do not become a burden to LGUs that are being asked to do more
  - BWSR needs to provide guidance and tools to LGUs that are effective and efficient. We don't need each LGU developing these tools
  - BWSR needs to stay focused on helping LGUs do their jobs, not doing their jobs.
  - BWSR to come to MN County Planning & Zoning Administrators board / annual meetings to talk about strategic plans -- include June 2024!
  - BWSR to participate in regular AMC worksessions to collectively think about projects are they are being developed -- rather than just reporting out annually
  - BWSR's historic core function has been to support local governments in their administration of conservation programs and practices. Various legislative initiatives have expanded BWSR's role into administrative and oversight roles that at times steers the organizational focus away from the historic core function. Emphasis needs to be placed in reestablishing this core function to the culture and operation of BWSR's organization, including routine engagement with the local governments they serve to identify needs that BWSR can provide support for.
  - Clear timeframe - keep goals and objectives obtainable in that timeframe.
  - Clear timeframe - keep goals and objectives obtainable in that timeframe.
  - concentrate more on providing financial assistance to WSD's and SWCDs
  - Connecting with the local land user
  - Consider how to engage additional partners during implementation of 1W1P. Local governments are key but how about a liaison to farmers and co-ops so they know dollars are available.
  - Continue including those that you serve in the decision making process.
  - Continue to focus on partnerships and collaboration outside of usual agencies and local governments.
  - Continuing to focus on enhancing local capacity provides huge benefits
  - Could crop retailers or advisers be eligible to help with implementations of 4Rs or cover crops? Stand up small businesses (think cover crop applicator or custom harvester).
  - Design plan is failing or is in poor condition after five years. This includes streambarbs, some feedlot fixes, and buffers.
  - Develop trust and long term relationships. Open communication. More on the ground training opportunities.
  - Docusign incorporation.
  - Emphasis on reporting numeric outcomes has become too dominant. It's needed, but feels uncoordinated.
  - Emphasize partnerships and collaborative practices
  - Flexibility in funding or create one pot of dollars that are very flexible and can be used to match other implementation dollars.
  - Getting consistency with SWCDs and how they deliver conservation. Uniform Practice delivery and uniform practice costs.
  - Getting staff back to work in offices
  - Going into the next session, how can BWSR work with other agencies to put forth equity-oriented recommendations that reflect the new, more equitable strategic priorities and benefit new constituencies; blend new strategic priorities into Clean Water Fund conversations
  - Having knowledgeable BC's in our area has been priceless. It allows local staff to focus on resource concerns rather than hunting down answers to a programmatic question.
  - Helping SWCDs Help People, Help the Land
  - How are you working with tribes?
  - How does it compare to, align with, and augment other state agency's strategic plans?



- I am concerned that there is not enough participation by the younger generations; something should be done to increase their participation as it's their future.
- I appreciate the emphasis on empowering local governance in BWSR's strategic plan. I think this helps create a collaborative relationship at the state and local level, which is essential for the work we do to preserve our natural resources.
- I think BWSR is doing a great job honestly. The answers above aren't gripes, they are thoughtful ways our goals and missions align and how we can help each other. Keep working to make more opportunities and keep discussions (BC's) flowing to districts. I'm really satisfied with our BC's (Copeland and Bielke). They have worked very hard and well with SWCD in the SE. BWSR has good leadership and we are headed in the right direction. If we all keep working together, we will make large improvements.
- I think we should keep our eye on the prize: working with traditional LGU clients is our core strength, its where most of the funding will go; LGUs are MN's primary land use authority
- Improve consistency.
- Improving production ag's land use practices, improving land that isn't in production ag in rural settings, and minimizing urban runoff
- In addition to leading the game-changing paradigm of 1W1P, BWSR has made many adjustments in response to interagency discussions; we appreciate this!!!
- It's going the right way. There are many pluses that have come about in the last couple years.
- Keep focused on the large outstate rural needs where much of the soil & water needs exist.
- Keep It Simple Stupid
- Keep local LGUs involved, otherwise will drive a wedge
- Keep up the good work you have done and continue to provide great programs!
- Keep up the great work!
- learned and other innovations of merit to bubble up.
- Less process
- LGU independence does not require a hands-off approach from BWSR. Provide more/better tools and support for LGUs to fulfill their missions.
- Love that you are doing this survey. Keep reaching out directly to local gov'ts like this.
- Make the link between corn ethanol and impaired water
- More emphasis on recruiting, supporting and retaining quality local staff.
- More flexibility with programs and policy to better assist with historically underserved populations
- More support to watersheds. Please remember watersheds are under your umbrella.
- More transparency and assistance on funding and available help. (ex. more communications tools and navigators)
- My board doesn't believe BWSR cares about, will listen to, or incorporate any of their suggestions.
- My question of late has been, are our practices actually holding up? It seems like every engineered
- Need more consistency throughout the organization
- Need to continue grant programs/get the money to where it is needed in metro and outstate
- Need to involve locals in helping to define the problems in need to solutions
- none
- Nope
- Once D gets feedback from groups.
- programs that improve visibility of BWSR in the community
- Provide better guidance, sample language (especially related to resource concerns, etc.), and more for the 1W1P process
- Provide oversight for technical delivery of conservation. Quality Assurance of practice designs.
- Public outreach and engagement at a local level to achieve greater change on the landscape is crucial. Consider tools for engagement to local government as part of the strategy.
- ramp up effort to provide more technical expertise to WSD's and SWCDs
- Recognize that MN is becoming more diverse - which is a good - but BWSR plans/programs must be responsive to recognize MN diversity
- Recognize that outstate areas require voluntary participation from landowners in contrast, metro areas need working partnerships with local governments and public land use.
- Remain focused on solid soil & water quality outcomes, not politics & woke practices, that the next administration will eliminate.
- Remember that BWSR represents watershed and make a concerted effort to provide support - both technical and financial
- Seems like BWSR is engaging more directly with SWCD staff - great job; keep it up.
- send more clean water funds to local government
- State statute change for SWCD funds. Required funds.
- Strategic direction needs to be based on a culture of improvement to allow the value of lessons
- Sustainability & Climate Change

- Taking opportunities to work across agencies, with MDH, MDE to expand impact and reach in addition to MDA
- Target professional membership organizations' annual meetings for presenting BWSR data. Reach out directly to share annual report numbers, etc.
- Thank you for the opportunity to comment!
- The 1W1P plan development process for all 81 major watersheds in Minnesota has been completed under LGU guidance. However, most LGUs need more resources and staff with diverse backgrounds in watershed management. They often delegate leadership and prioritization for watershed implementation to the most active or vocal LGU members. The DNR and MPCA have provided guidance, prioritization, and direction to these efforts. Still, their guidance for habitat loss, species, public resource protection, and water quality must be more effectively incorporated into the planning process. Implementation objectives usually require field-level decisions that necessitate current practices and management changes. Agricultural drainage remains a significant non-point source impact on water quality and aquatic habitat in Minnesota watersheds with agricultural land use. Drainage improvement projects are implemented on tens of thousands of acres annually, increasing discharged water volume, extended flood duration, and increased discharge velocities. These projects cause cumulative impacts in major watersheds, leading to further water quality and habitat impairments. It would be helpful if BWSR could provide more structured guidance to incorporate DNR and MPCA guidance better. For instance, landowners could be incentivized to repair drainage rather than supporting artificial water storage basins after a drainage improvement project. These artificial basins are inadequate to mitigate the cumulatively added water volumes produced by drainage improvement projects and provide little to no ecological benefits compared to restored natural wetlands.
- There are a lot of BWSR programs and some of them have names that sound like they were invented in a military lab. It is hard for the public to know what things mean, like "multi-purpose drainage management" and "watershed-based implementation funding." A one page graphic showing the type of projects supported by BWSR and their program names would be really helpful.
- There should always be an in person option for meetings. Ex: strategic planning
- This exercise seems to be a way for BWSR to check the box, rather than gather meaningful information.
- Use less acronyms.
- We do need to have an agency working with policy makers to make a shift in various policies related to agriculture and climate change. BWSR staff would be great at that!
- We would still encourage BWSR to continue to think outside the traditional conservation model box. Otherwise, some challenges will force us to develop alternative solutions
- What's up with the Accelerated Implementation Grants that are no longer available? These were extremely beneficial to our WD and resulted in many great projects getting installed over time. They are not available anymore yet \$11 Million for the FY 24-25 CWF Programs have been budgeted for Accelerated Implementation during this year's legacy Bill appropriates.
- When should the vision/mission come about?? First or should partner input drive those?
- Wildlife habitat, wetland restoration, and biodiversity must be more of a focus moving forward. Too much time, energy, and money is spent on trying to convince farmers to do things they don't want to do and likely never will do unless they are paid exorbitantly for it or are forced by law. This money could be going to SWCDs or other local units to be used on habitat projects with willing landowners that would have far greater overall environmental benefits than most ag practices and would also go much further towards meeting goals within the State Prairie Plan and Wildlife Action Plan.
- Work with more diligent focus on other stakeholders that work with BWSR, such as MN Watersheds.
- Work with the legislature on combining funding into a single package w/one set of criteria on how the funding is to be utilized, instead of multiple funding mechanism with multiple criteria on how the funding is utilized
- Yes, BWSR should be open to alternatives to the conversation delivery system to meet landowners where they are and "compete" with private industry. May need to adapt.
- You've got a lot of money. The legislature is expecting measurable changes to water quality