



BOARD ORDER

Fiscal Year 2026 Water Quality and Storage Program

PURPOSE

Authorize a FY26 Water Quality and Storage Program.

RECITALS /FINDINGS OF FACT

1. Minn. Stat. 103F.05 provides the statutory authority for the Water Quality and Storage Program. The purpose of the Program is to control water volume and rates to protect infrastructure, improve water quality and related public benefits, and to mitigate climate change impacts. Statute establishes that the priority areas for the program are the Minnesota River basin and the lower Mississippi River basin in Minnesota.
2. Laws of Minnesota 2023, Regular Session, Chapter 60, Article 1, Sec. 4(p), appropriated \$17 million in Fiscal Years 24-25 to a water quality and storage program.
3. The Request for Proposals and frequently asked questions documents have been prepared for the fiscal year 2026 Water Quality and Storage Program application period.
4. The Grants Program and Policy Committee, at their January 13, 2025 meeting, reviewed the proposed Water Quality and Storage Program RFP and associated documents and recommend approval to the board.

ORDER

The Board hereby:

- A. Adopts the attached scoring and ranking criteria.
- B. Authorizes staff to issue the FY26 Request for Proposal, in the amount of \$3 Million, and score and rank the responses for future consideration by the board.

Dated at St. Paul, Minnesota, January 22, 2025.

MINNESOTA BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES

Todd Holman, Chair
Board of Water and Soil Resources

Date: 1/22/2025

BOARD ORDER

Soil Health Practices Program: RCPP Soil Health Practices Grants

PURPOSE

Authorizes staff to issue an RFI for participation by SWCDs in the RCPP Soil Health Practices Grants and to authorize staff to distribute funds as requested by participating Districts.

FINDINGS OF FACT / RECITALS

1. The Board of Water and Soil Resources (Board) received funding and authorization for soil health grants from the following appropriations and agreements:
 - A. The Laws of Minnesota 2021, 1st Special Session, Chapter 1, Article 2, Sec. 6(p): *\$2,000,000 the first year and \$2,000,000 the second year for grants to farmers who own or rent land to enhance adoption of cover crops and other soil health practices in areas where there are direct benefits to public water supplies.*
 - B. The Laws of Minnesota 2021, 1st Special Session, Chapter 1, Article 2, Sec. 6 (c) *\$4,841,000 the first year and \$4,841,000 the second year are for accelerated implementation, local resource protection, enhancement grants, statewide analytical targeting or technology tools that fill an identified gap, program enhancements for technical assistance, citizen and community outreach, compliance, and training and certification.*
 - C. Laws of Minnesota 2023, Regular Session, Chapter 40, Article 2, Section 6, paragraph (o): *\$6,039,000 the first year and \$6,038,000 the second year are for financial and technical assistance to enhance adoption of cover crops and other soil health practices to achieve water quality or drinking water benefits. The board may use grants to local governments and agreements with the United States Department of Agriculture, AgCentric at Minnesota State Center for Excellence, and other practitioners and partners to accomplish this work.*
 - D. *BWSR was awarded \$25,000,000 in NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Program funding on November 1, 2023 and has executed the appropriate agreements under contract # RCPP Project ID: 3053 for implementation of soil health practices in counties with a minimum of 30% agricultural land via grants and agreements with participating SWCDs.*
2. "Soil Health" is defined in MN Statute Section 103C.101, Subd. 10a. "Soil Health" means the continued capacity of soil to function as a vital living system that sustains plants, animals, and humans. Indicators of soil health include water infiltration capacity; organic matter content; water holding capacity; biological capacity to break down plant residue and other substances and to maintain soil aggregation; nutrient sequestration and cycling capacity; carbon sequestration; and soil resistance.
3. MN Statute Section 103F.06 establishes the Soil Health Practices Program to accomplish soil health activities and to achieve water quality, soil productivity, climate change resiliency, or carbon sequestration benefits.
4. The Board has authorities under Minnesota Statutes Chapter 103B to award grants and contracts to accomplish water and related land resources management.
5. Soil Health Staffing and Capacity Grants were awarded by staff, as provided by Board Order #23-60, to 40 SWCDs to increase capacity to expand local capacity for Soil Health.

6. Soil Health Delivery Grants were awarded by staff, as provided by Board Order #23-60, to 89 SWCDs to deliver Soil Health programming and support locally.
7. The Laws of Minnesota 2021 First Special Session, Chapter 1, Article 2, Section 6 (p) appropriated \$4,000,000 for grants to farmers to enhance adoption of cover crops and other soil health practices, of which approximately \$197,052 is currently unallocated; and (t) the board may shift grant, cost-share, or easement funds in this section and may adjust the technical and administrative assistance portion of the funds to leverage federal or other nonstate funds or to address oversight responsibilities or high-priority needs identified in local water management plans.
8. The Grants Program and Policy Committee, at their January 13, 2025, meeting, reviewed the proposed RCPP Implementation Grants and proposed funding shift and recommended approval.

ORDER

The Board hereby:

I. RCPP Soil Health Practice Grants

- A. Authorizes establishment of a RCPP Soil Health Practices Grants consistent with MN Statutes Section 103F.06 and RCPP Agreement #3053 including up to \$25,000,000 of RCPP agreement funding (FOF 1D) and \$5,000,000 from 2023 CWF Soil Health appropriation (FOF 1C).
- B. Authorizes staff to use a Request For Interest (RFI) to determine participation in RCPP Soil Health Practices Grants among the 70 eligible SWCDs.
- C. Authorizes staff to award Initial RCPP Soil Health Practices Grants in the amount of \$180,000 per SWCD based on responses to the RFI.
- D. Authorizes staff to establish a process for the award of subsequent RCPP Soil Health Practices Grants based on SWCD utilization and request until Federal funds under RCPP Agreement #3053 have been allocated.

II. Soil Health Technical Oversight funding shift

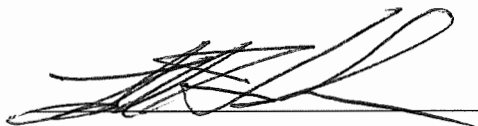
- A. Authorizes staff to shift unobligated funds from 2021 CWF Soil Health to 2021 Accelerated Implementation to address technical oversight responsibilities of RCPP agreement #3053.

III. Program Reporting

- A. Directs staff to report to the Board on the status of Soil Health Staffing and Delivery and RCPP Soil Health Practice Grants awarded.

Dated at St. Paul, Minnesota, this January 22, 2025.

MINNESOTA BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES



Todd Holman, Chair
Board of Water and Soil Resources

Date: 1/22/2025

Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155

In the Matter of the review of the Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan for the Mississippi River - St. Cloud Watershed, pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103B.101, Subdivision 14 and 103B.801.

**ORDER
APPROVING
COMPREHENSIVE
WATERSHED
MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Whereas, the Mississippi River - St. Cloud Partnership submitted a Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (Plan) to the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (Board) on December 16, 2024 pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103B.101, Subdivision 14 and 103B.801 and Board Resolution #21-08, and;

Whereas, the Board has completed its review of the Plan;

Now Therefore, the Board hereby makes the following Findings of Fact, Conclusions, and Order:

FINDINGS OF FACT

- Partnership Establishment.** The Mississippi River - St. Cloud Partnership (Partnership) was established through adoption of a Memorandum of Agreement for the purposes of developing a Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan. The members of the Partnership include Benton County, Benton Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), Meeker County, Meeker SWCD, Mille Lacs SWCD, Stearns County, Stearns SWCD, Sherburne County, Sherburne SWCD, Wright County and Wright SWCD.
- Authority to Plan.** Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103B.101, Subdivision 14 allows the Board to adopt resolutions, policies or orders that allow a comprehensive plan, local water management plan, or watershed management plan, developed or amended, approved and adopted, according to Chapters 103B, 103C, or 103D to serve as substitutes for one another or be replaced with a comprehensive watershed management plan. Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103B.801, established the Comprehensive Watershed Management Planning Program; also known as the One Watershed, One Plan (1W1P) program. Board Decision #21-08 adopted the One Watershed, One Plan Program's *Operating Procedures (Version 2.1)* and Board Decision #19-41 adopted the One Watershed, One Plan Program's *Plan Content Requirements (Version 2.1)* policies.
- Nature of the Watershed.** The Mississippi River - St. Cloud watershed covers 1,080 square miles (691,200 acres), spanning seven counties. Most of the watershed is dominated by agricultural land use (54% by area), but also includes large areas of deciduous forest (13%) and emergent wetlands(11%) The watershed has 374 lakes and 907 stream miles, with 59.5 of those miles being Mississippi River reaches. Within the watershed, there are ample recreational opportunities and valuable habitat.

4. **Plan Development.** The Plan was developed as a single, concise, and coordinated approach to watershed management. The Plan consolidates policies, programs, and implementation strategies from existing data, studies and plans, and incorporates input from multiple planning partners and public input to provide a single plan for management of the watershed. The Plan focuses on prioritized, targeted, and measurable implementation actions to protect and restore the water quality of lakes and streams, address groundwater quality and knowledge gaps, restore and preserve habitat and natural resources, and tackles surface water hydrology issues in the watershed.

5. **Plan Review.** On December 16, 2024, the Board received the Plan, a record of the public hearing, and copies of all written comments and responses for final State review pursuant to Board Resolution #21-08. During the development of the Plan, State agency representatives attended and provided input at advisory committee meetings. The following review agency comments were received during the comment period.
 - A. Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA): “Thank you for the opportunity to review the Mississippi River-St. Cloud One Watershed One Plan (plan). The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) appreciates the opportunity to work with BWSR and local staff on the development and review of this plan. As written, we believe this plan sufficiently addresses the resource concerns present in this watershed. The MDA recommends the approval of this plan.
Thanks again for the opportunity to participate and provide comment.”
 - B. Minnesota Department of Health (MDH): “On behalf of MDH and consistent with the 60-day letter I submitted on August 13, 2024, I am recommending approval of the Mississippi River-St. Cloud Comprehensive Watershed Plan. I feel the Plan is written in a manner that satisfactorily incorporates MDH’s priority concerns pertaining to groundwater and drinking water, while reflecting the priorities of residents of the watershed and the capacities of the local entities that will implement the Plan.”
 - C. Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR): “The Minnesota DNR has received the final Mississippi River – St. Cloud Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (1W1P) and reviewed responses to comments submitted of the draft plan. The DNR is satisfied with the responses to issues raised during our review, has no additional comments, and recommends that BWSR approve the plan.
Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this process. We look forward to working with watershed partners to help implement the plan.”
 - D. Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA): “The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) has reviewed the draft Mississippi River - St. Cloud Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (Plan) dated December 2024. Overall, the Plan is very well written, concise, and thorough. We have no further comments as part of the official 90-day Review and Comment Period and recommend it for approval.
The MPCA greatly appreciates the opportunity to participate and provide input throughout the Plan development process. The MPCA sincerely values the efforts that you and the watershed partners put forth in coordinating and completing this important Plan.”
 - E. Minnesota Environmental Quality Board (EQB): Policy requires that EQB be notified of the final draft document. EQB confirmed receipt of the Plan and did not provide comments on the 90-day final draft Plan.

F. Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR): BWSR finds that the partnership has adequately addressed our comments provided during the 60-day review. During our final review, we find that the plan meets all items found within the One Watershed, One Plan Content Requirements (version 2.1). Therefore, we recommend approval of the plan as submitted.

6. **Plan Summary and Highlights.** The highlights of the Plan include:

- The Partnership sought community engagement during the early stages of the planning process including public input from two public kick-off meetings (in person and virtual), and several Citizen Advisory Committee meetings throughout the planning process. The comments were used during plan development to inform issues, goals, and actions and provided an opportunity for public input on the implementation actions.
- The advisory committee identified 27 original resource concerns, which were narrowed down to seven priority issue statements grouped into seven resource categories. The partnership identified 42 lakes as a priority for restoration or protection.
- Within those seven issue categories, the partners developed 21 measurable goals for the watershed. These goals include reducing sediment loading in the watershed by 2,200 tons/year, reducing phosphorus loading within the watershed by 10,200 pounds/year, delisting 10 waterbodies from the state's impaired waters list, reducing high stream flows by storing 5,200 acre feet of water, conducting feasibility studies and reducing internal phosphorus budgets by 60% on 5 waterbodies, sealing 77 wells, increasing permanently protected land by acquiring 23 new conservation easements, increasing landscape resiliency by implementing 47,700 acres of soil health practices, among other goals.
- The partnership undertook a Multi-Benefit Analysis (MBA) which consisted of the compilation of numerous available data layers related to each priority issue. The layers were overlapped, evaluated, and refined to reflect the areas within the watershed where maximum progress towards watershed goals would be achieved.
- The Plan goals were estimated using models (primarily HSPF and HSPF-SAM) and then further refined based on local staff professional judgement for realistic, yet optimistic, expectations for what could be accomplished over 10 years.

7. **Planning Boundary Adjustment.** The Board maintains a suggested boundary map for the One Watershed, One Plan program. The Mississippi River St. Cloud partnership proposed a boundary adjustment that divided the suggested Planning Area 11 boundary into two HUC 8 Watersheds – Mississippi River – St. Cloud and Mississippi River - Sartell. The partnership provided documentation of local concurrence, rationale, and justification for the adjusted boundary, including support from 18 of the 19 potential partners in the Area 11 suggested planning boundary. The adjusted boundary was approved by Board staff per the One Watershed, One Plan Operating Procedures. The adjusted boundary is included as an attachment to the Board Order. Additionally, a detailed review of the boundary found that a small area of Sherburne County, approximately 175 acres, was not covered by the Mississippi River St. Cloud Watershed Planning boundary. For planning and implementation purposes, the Mississippi River St. Cloud Policy Committee requested that BWSR approve the addition of this area as a part of the Mississippi River St. Cloud Watershed. This request was approved. Maps have not been recreated to accommodate this change. Figure 0.1 on page 10 of the plan shows this area in relation to the rest of the Watershed.

8. **Central Regional Committee.** On January 6, 2025, the Central Regional Committee met to review and discuss the Plan. Those in attendance were Joe Collins, Jill Crafton, Joel Larson, Jayne Hager Dee, Heather Johnson, Grant Wilson, Steve Robertson, Mark Zabel, and Mike Runk. The representatives from the Partnership were Dan Cibulka and Stephanie Hatzenbihler. BWSR staff in attendance were Brad Wozney, Zach Guttormson, and Marcey Westrick. Board regional staff provided its recommendation of Plan approval to the Committee. After discussion, the Committee's decision was to present a recommendation of approval of the Plan to the full Board.
9. This Plan will be in effect for a ten-year period until January 22, 2035.

CONCLUSIONS

1. All relevant substantive and procedural requirements of law have been fulfilled.
2. The Board has proper jurisdiction in the matter of approving a Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan for the Mississippi River - St. Cloud Watershed pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103B.101, Subd. 14 and 103B.801 and Board Resolution #21-08.
3. The Mississippi River - St. Cloud Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan attached to this Order states water and water-related problems within the planning area; priority resource issues and possible solutions thereto; goals, objectives, and actions of the Partnership; and an implementation program.
4. The attached Plan is in conformance with the requirements of Minnesota Statutes Section 103B.101, Subd. 14 and 103B.801 and Board Resolution #21-08.
5. The attached Plan when adopted through local resolution by the members of the Partnership will replace the comprehensive plan, local water management plan, or watershed management plan, developed or amended, approved and adopted, according to Chapters 103B, 103C, or 103D, but only to the geographic area of the Plan.

ORDER

The Board hereby approves the attached Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan of the Mississippi River - St. Cloud Watershed, submitted December 16, 2024.

Dated at St. Paul, Minnesota, this twenty-second day of January 2025.

MINNESOTA BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES



Todd Holman, Chair
Board of Water and Soil Resources

Date: 1/22/2025

BOARD ORDER

Cottonwood-Middle Minnesota River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan

PURPOSE

In the Matter of the review of the Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan for Cottonwood-Middle Minnesota River, pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103B.101, Subdivision 14 and 103B.801.

RECITALS /FINDINGS OF FACT

Whereas, the Policy Committee of the **Cottonwood-Middle Minnesota River** submitted a Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (Plan) to the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (Board) on October 11, 2024 pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103B.101, Subdivision 14 and 103B.801 and Board Decision(s) #21-08 and #19-41

Whereas, the Board has completed its review of the Plan;

Now Therefore, the Board hereby makes the following Findings of Fact, Conclusions, and Order:

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. **Partnership Establishment.** The partnership was established in 2022 through adoption of a Memorandum of Agreement for the purposes of developing a Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan. The membership of the partnership includes: The Counties of Brown, Cottonwood, Lyon, Murray, and Redwood and The Brown, Cottonwood, Lyon, Murray and Redwood Soil and Water Conservation Districts, The Area II Minnesota River Basin Projects and Redwood-Cottonwood Rivers Control Area Joint Powers Organizations, and the City of Springfield.
2. **Authority to Plan.** Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103B.101, Subdivision 14 allows the Board to adopt resolutions, policies or orders that allow a comprehensive plan, local water management plan, or watershed management plan, developed or amended, approved and adopted, according to Chapter 103B, 103C, or 103D to serve as substitutes for one another or be replaced with a comprehensive watershed management plan. Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103B.801 established the Comprehensive Watershed Management Planning Program; also known as One Watershed, One Plan. Board Resolution #16-17 adopted the One Watershed, One Plan Operating Procedures and Plan Content Requirements policies; Board Decisions #18-14, #19-41, #21-08, #23-50 adopted subsequent versions of the program policies.
3. **Nature of the Watershed.** The Cottonwood-Middle Minnesota Watershed (CMMW) spans 1,076,000 acres of land that drains into the Cottonwood and Minnesota Rivers. It consists of two major Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC)-8 watersheds: all the Cottonwood River Watershed plus part of the Minnesota River – Mankato Watershed. The Cottonwood River flows 144 miles east from its headwaters to its confluence with the Minnesota River near New Ulm. The watershed boundary is determined by the area draining into the Cottonwood River and its many tributaries.

4. **Plan Development.** Two public kickoff events were held in 2023 to inform watershed residents about the Comprehensive Watershed Management Planning process and solicit feedback on perception of issues that should be included in the plan. The nearly 40 attendees identified streambank erosion, flooding and high flows, and pollutants such as sediment, nutrients, and bacteria as top issues. Public opinion, state priority letters, existing reports, and committee expertise were utilized to develop a list of high, medium, and low priority issues.
5. **Plan Review.** On October 17, 2024, the Board received the Plan, a record of the public hearing, and copies of all written comments pertaining to the Plan for final State review pursuant to Board decisions #21-08 and #19-41. State agency representatives attended and provided input at advisory committee meetings during development of the Plan. The following state review comments were received during the comment period.
 - A. Minnesota Department of Agriculture: Received the Plan for Final Review October 17, 2024, and recommended approval of the Cottonwood-Middle Minnesota Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan on November 1, 2024.
 - B. Minnesota Department of Health: Received the Plan for Final Review October 17, 2024, and recommended approval of the Cottonwood-Middle Minnesota Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan on October 24, 2024
 - C. Minnesota Department of Natural Resources : Received the Plan for Final Review October 17, 2024, and recommended approval of the Cottonwood-Middle Minnesota Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan on November 4, 2024
 - D. Minnesota Pollution Control Agency: Received the Plan for Final Review October 17, 2024, and recommended approval of the Cottonwood-Middle Minnesota Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan on October 31, 2024
 - E. Minnesota Environmental Quality Board: Received the Plan for Final Review October 17, 2024, and conformation of receipt with no comments October 18, 2024.
 - F. Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources regional staff: Received the Plan for Final Review October 17, 2024, and recommended approval of the Cottonwood-Middle Minnesota Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan on November 15, 2024.
 - G. Local Review:
 - a. No comments from County, SWCD, City, or public.
6. **Plan Summary and Highlights.** The highlights of the plan include:
 - Watershed wide goals
 - i) Sediment and Nutrients reduction
 - Nitrogen: 5%, or 328,800 lbs/yr
 - Total Phosphorus: 5%, or 17,600 lbs/yr
 - Sediment: 12%, or 135,700 tons/yr
 - ii) Storage Flooding and Hydrology
 - Add 7,000 acre-ft of storage
 - iii) Groundwater
 - Improve groundwater recharge and protection on 1,000 acres of vulnerable Drinking Water Supply Management Areas.
 - iv) Soil health
 - Implement soil health practices on 18,150 acres.
7. **Southern Regional Committee.** On December 9, 2024, the Southern Regional Committee met to review and discuss the Plan. Those in attendance from the Board's Committee were Ted Winter, Chair; Jeff Berg, Steve

Robertson, Scott Roemhildt, Heather Johnson, Kelly Kirkpatrick. Board staff in attendance were Ed Lenz, Southern Regional Manager; John Shea, Mark Hiles, Julie Westerlund, Denise Lauerman. The representatives from the Partnership were Kerry Netzke, Redwood-Cottonwood Rivers Control Area (RCRCA); Rachel Olm, Houston Engineering, Inc.; Melanie Krueger, Brown SWCD; Kay Gross, Cottonwood County; Allison Kletscher; Brown County; Nick Brozek; Sarah Soderholm, Murray County. Board regional staff provided its recommendation of Plan approval to the Committee. After discussion, the Committee's decision was to present a recommendation of approval of the Plan to the full Board.

8. This Plan will be in effect for a ten-year period until February 1, 2035.

CONCLUSIONS

1. All relevant substantive and procedural requirements of law have been fulfilled.
2. The Board has proper jurisdiction in the matter of approving a Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan for the Cottonwood-Middle Minnesota River pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103B.101, Subd. 14 and 103B.801 and Board Decisions #21-08 and #19-41.
3. The Cottonwood-Middle Minnesota Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan attached to this Order states water and water-related problems within the planning area; priority resource issues and possible solutions thereto; goals, objectives, and actions of the Partnership; and an implementation program.
4. The attached Plan is in conformance with the requirements of Minnesota Statutes Section 103B.101, Subd. 14 and 103B.801 and Board Decisions #21-08 and #19-41.
5. The attached plan when adopted through local resolution (contingent on BWSR approval [Minnesota Statutes 103B.801 and Board Resolution #21-08 and #19-41]) by the members of the Partnership will serve as a replacement for each partners' comprehensive plan, local water management plan, or watershed management plan, developed or amended, approved and adopted, according to Chapter 103B, 103C, or 103D, but only to the geographic area of the Plan and consistent with the One Watershed, One Plan Suggested Boundary Map.

ORDER

The Board hereby:

1. The Board hereby approves the attached Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan of the Cottonwood-Middle Minnesota River, dated January 2025.

Dated at St. Paul, Minnesota, this January 22, 2025.

MINNESOTA BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES



Todd Holman, Chair
Board of Water and Soil Resources

Date: 1/22/2025

BOARD ORDER

Performance Review and Assistance Program 2024 Report to the Minnesota Legislature

PURPOSE

Adopt 2024 PRAP Legislative Report

FINDINGS OF FACT / RECITALS

1. The 2007 Legislature directed the Board of Water and Soil Resources (Board) to develop and implement an ongoing program to evaluate and report on the performance of each local water management entity.
2. In 2007 the Board developed a set of guiding principles and directed staff to implement a program for reviewing performance, offering assistance, and reporting results, now called the Performance Review and Assistance Program (PRAP), in consultation with stakeholders and consistent with the guiding principles as published on the BWSR website.
3. According to Minnesota Statutes Chapter 103B.102, Subdivision 3, beginning February 1, 2008, and annually thereafter, the Board shall provide a report of local water management entity performance to the chairs of the House and Senate committees having jurisdiction over environment and natural resources policy.
4. The 2024 PRAP Report to the Minnesota Legislature contains the summaries of the local water management entity performance reviews conducted by BWSR staff in 2024 and a summary of findings describing the performance of local water management entities regarding compliance with plan status and basic reporting requirements.
5. The 2024 PRAP Report to the Minnesota Legislature was reviewed by the Board's Audit and Oversight committee on January 15, 2025 and was recommended for Board adoption by the committee.

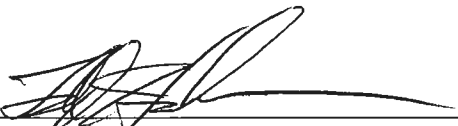
ORDER

The Board hereby:

Adopts the 2024 Performance Review and Assistance Program Report and directs staff to submit the report to the Minnesota Legislature and publish it on the Board's website, with allowance for any minor editing modifications necessary for finalization.

Dated at St. Paul, Minnesota, this January 22, 2025.

MINNESOTA BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES



Todd Holman, Chair
Board of Water and Soil Resources

Date: 1/22/2025

Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155

In the Matter of the review of the Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan for the Crow Wing River Watershed Partnership, pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103B.101, Subdivision 14 and 103B.801.

**ORDER
APPROVING
COMPREHENSIVE
WATERSHED
MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Whereas the Policy Committee of the Crow Wing River Watershed Partnership submitted a Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (Plan) to the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (Board) on December 3, 2024, pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103B.101, Subdivision 14 and 103B.801 and Board Decision #21-08, and;

Whereas the Board has completed its review of the Plan.

Now Therefore the Board hereby makes the following Findings of Fact, Conclusions, and Order:

FINDINGS OF FACT

- **Partnership Establishment.** The Crow Wing River Watershed Partnership was established on January 28, 2023, through adoption of a Memorandum of Agreement for the purposes of developing a Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan. The members of the Partnership include Becker County, Becker Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), Cass County, Cass SWCD, Crow Wing County, Crow Wing SWCD, Hubbard County, Hubbard SWCD, Otter Tail County, East Otter Tail SWCD, Todd County, Todd SWCD, Wadena County and the Wadena SWCD.
- **Authority to Plan.** Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103B.101, Subdivision 14 allows the Board to adopt resolutions, policies or orders that allow a comprehensive plan, local water management plan, or watershed management plan, developed or amended, approved and adopted, according to Chapter 103B, 103C, or 103D to serve as substitutes for one another or be replaced with a comprehensive watershed management plan. Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103B.801 established the Comprehensive Watershed Management Planning Program; also known as One Watershed, One Plan and Board Decision #21-08 adopted the One Watershed, One Plan Operating Procedures Version 2.1 and Board Decision #19-41 adopting the One Watershed, One Plan Plan Content Requirements Version 2.1 policies.
- **Nature of the Watershed.**
The Crow Wing River Watershed (CWRW) is located in north-central Minnesota, where it drains nearly 2,000 square miles with numerous rivers, lakes, and forests. About two-thirds of the watershed is covered in forests or wetlands, which provides water storage, protects surface and groundwater quality, and provides habitat. The other third is productive land used for agriculture. The CWRW has over 400 lakes and 1,600 miles of streams, and many of these support aquatic life

and recreation. The watershed includes Becker, Cass, Clearwater, Crow Wing, Hubbard, Morrison, Otter Tail, Todd, and Wadena Counties along with a portion of the White Earth Nation on the northeast corner. Historically the Chippewa established themselves in north and central Minnesota, including the CWRW. Between 1837 and 1867 a series of treaties were signed by Chippewa bands in Minnesota ceding vast tribal territories to the United States, but reserved the right to hunt, fish, and gather on the ceded lands.

- **Plan Development.** The Plan was developed as a single, concise, coordinated approach to watershed management. The Plan consolidates policies, programs, and implementation strategies from existing data, studies, and plans, and incorporates input from multiple planning partners and stakeholders to provide a single plan for management of the watershed. The Plan focuses on prioritized, targeted, and measurable implementation efforts and lays out specific actions to improve surface water quality and soil health of agricultural lands, improve groundwater quality and soil health of drinking water protection areas, protect water quality and habitat thru land protection programs, manage healthy forest that protect water quality and are resilient to climate variability and invasive species, improve water quality and shoreland habitat and to improve and protect water quality thru nutrient reduction.
- **Plan Review.** On December 3, 2024, the Board received the Plan, a record of the public hearing, and copies of all written comments and responses pertaining to the Plan for final State review pursuant to Board Decision #21-08. State agency representatives attended and provided input at advisory committee meetings during development of the Plan. The following state review comments were received during the comment period.
 - A. Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA): MDA appreciates the opportunity to work with BWSR and local staff on the development and review of this plan. As written, we believe this plan sufficiently addresses the resource concerns present in this watershed. The MDA recommends the approval of this plan.
 - B. Minnesota Department of Health (MDH): Recommend approval of the Crow Wing River Watershed Plan. I feel the Plan is written in a manner that satisfactorily incorporates MDH's priority concerns pertaining to groundwater and drinking water, while reflecting the priorities of residents of the watershed and the capacities of the local entities that will implement the Plan.
 - C. Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR): The DNR is satisfied with the responses, has no additional comments, and recommends that BWSR approve the plan. Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this process. We look forward to working with watershed partners to help implement the plan.
 - D. Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA): The MPCA appreciates the opportunity to participate and provide input throughout your Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (Plan) development process. Overall, the Plan is very well written, concise, and thorough. We have no comments as part of the official 90-day Review and Comment Period and recommend it for approval.
 - E. Minnesota Environmental Quality Board (EQB): Policy requires that EQB be notified of the final draft document. EQB confirmed receipt of the Plan and did not provide comments on the 90-day final draft Plan.

- F. Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR): BWSR staff provided comments throughout the planning process and had no suggested or required changes to the Plan submitted for the 60-day review. The partnership worked well considering the size and vastness of the watershed. They were also inclusive of the tribal nations during the planning process. We commend the partners for listing the stacked benefits in each of the measurable goals section. The entire report is very well-written, easy to understand and is visually appealing.
- **Plan Summary and Highlights.** The highlights of the Plan include:
 - The Policy and Advisory Committees sought extensive community engagement during the early stages of the planning process including public input from two public kick-off meetings and met three times with a Citizen Advisory Committee that was comprised of local stakeholders from a variety of different resource concerns including agriculture, lakes, and habitat. The comments were used during plan development to inform issues, goals and actions and provided an opportunity for public input on the implementation actions.
 - The Advisory Committee identified 10 priority issues; that were then broken down into 4 different focus areas (Groundwater, Surface Water, Habitat/Forestry and Overall Focus Areas: combination of the first three priority resources to determine overall watershed priorities.)
 - The partnership identified 8 measurable goals with a quantifiable desired change. Each goal is described with a short-term goal, what has already been accomplished, the desired future condition, and the big picture story. Each goal also included the following supporting information.
 - A description of the goal and why it matters in the watershed.
 - A map showing priority areas in the watershed.
 - Additional tacked benefits of working towards the goal.
 - For ease of future action of the issues, separate targeted implementation tables and maps were organized by four planning regions. The tables detail an action, the specific focus area for the action, the measurable outcome, who will lead and support the action, timing and estimated costs.
 - **Northern Regional Committee.** On January 6, 2025, the Northern Regional Committee met to review and discuss the Plan. Those in attendance were Committee Chair Rich Sve, Neil Peterson, Ron Staples, LeRoy Ose, Tom Schulz, Jeff Berg, Ben Bergey, and Chad Anderson. BWSR staff in attendance were Ryan Hughes, Northern Region Manager; Darren Mayers, Board Conservationist; Jeff Hrubes, Clean Water Specialist; and Carrie Moline-Rust, Office & Administrative Specialist. The representatives from the Partnership were Dana Gutzmann, Cass SWCD; Darren Newville, East Otter Tail/Wadena SWCD; JoAnn Weaver, Crow Wing SWCD Supervisor; Heide Anderson-Thomas, Hubbard SWCD Supervisor; Moriya Rufer, Houston Engineering; and Jake Shaughnessy, Hubbard SWCD, presented the Plan on behalf of the partnership. Board regional staff provided its recommendation of Plan approval to the Committee. After discussion, the Committee's decision was to present a recommendation of approval of the Plan to the full Board.
 - This Plan will be in effect for a ten-year period until January 22, 2035.

CONCLUSIONS

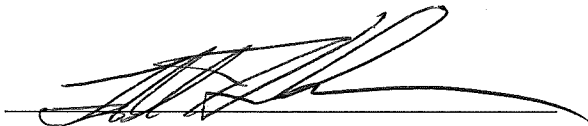
1. All relevant substantive and procedural requirements of law have been fulfilled.
2. The Board has proper jurisdiction in the matter of approving a Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan for the Crow Wing River Watershed pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103B.101, Subd. 14 and 103B.801 and Board Decision #21-08.
3. The Crow Wing River Watershed Partnership Plan attached to this Order states priority water and natural resource issues within the planning area and possible solutions thereto; goals, objectives, and actions of the Partnership; and an implementation program.
4. The attached Plan is in conformance with the requirements of Minnesota Statutes Section 103B.101, Subd. 14 and 103B.801 and Board Decision #21-08.
5. The attached plan when adopted through local resolution by the members of the Partnership will serve as a replacement for the comprehensive plan, local water management plan, or watershed management plan, developed or amended, approved and adopted, according to Chapter 103B, 103C, or 103D, but only to the geographic area of the Plan.

ORDER

The Board hereby approves the attached Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan of the Crow Wing River Watershed Partnership, submitted December 3, 2024.

Dated in Saint Paul, Minnesota, this twenty-second of January 2025.

MINNESOTA BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES



Todd Holman, Chair
Board of Water and Soil Resources

Date: 1/22/2025

Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155

In the Matter of the review of the Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan for the Upper Mississippi - Grand Rapids Watershed, pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103B.101, Subdivision 14 and 103B.801.

**ORDER
APPROVING
COMPREHENSIVE
WATERSHED
MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Whereas the Policy Committee of the Upper Mississippi - Grand Rapids Watershed Partnership submitted a Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (Plan) to the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (Board) on December 2, 2024, pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103B.101, Subdivision 14 and 103B.801 and Board Decision #21-08, and;

Whereas the Board has completed its review of the Plan.

Now Therefore the Board hereby makes the following Findings of Fact, Conclusions, and Order:

FINDINGS OF FACT

- **Partnership Establishment.** The Upper Mississippi - Grand Rapids Watershed Partnership was established on June 28 of 2023 through adoption of a Memorandum of Agreement for the purposes of developing a Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan. The membership of the Partnership includes Aitkin County, Aitkin Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), Carlton County, Carlton SWCD, Cass SWCD, Itasca County, Itasca SWCD, Salo Township and the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe.
- **Authority to Plan.** Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103B.101, Subdivision 14 allows the Board to adopt resolutions, policies or orders that allow a comprehensive plan, local water management plan, or watershed management plan, developed or amended, approved and adopted, according to Chapter 103B, 103C, or 103D to serve as substitutes for one another or be replaced with a comprehensive watershed management plan. Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103B.801 established the Comprehensive Watershed Management Planning Program; also known as One Watershed, One Plan and Board Decision #21-08 adopted the One Watershed, One Plan Operating Procedures Version 2.1 and Board Decision #19-41 adopting the One Watershed, One Plan Content Requirements Version 2.1 policies.
- **Nature of the Watershed.** The Upper Mississippi-Grand Rapids Watershed (UM-GR) is in north-central Minnesota, where it covers 1.3 million acres with numerous rivers, lakes, and forests. It has almost 2,000 miles of rivers and streams, vast amounts of peatlands and wetlands, 625 lakes larger than 10 acres, 79 designated wild rice lakes, and 48 cold water fishery lakes that support fish, like trout and cisco - truly the land of sky-blue waters. It spans five counties: Aitkin, Carlton, Cass, Itasca, and St. Louis. The watershed also includes portions of the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Reservation, and a number of communities including Grand Rapids, Colerain, Cromwell, Hill City, McGregor, and Remer.

Historically the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe established themselves in north and central Minnesota, including the UM-GR. Between 1837 and 1867 a series of treaties were signed by Ojibwe Bands in Minnesota ceding vast tribal territories to the United States, but reserved the right to hunt, fish, and gather on the ceded lands.

- **Plan Development.** The Plan was developed as a single, concise, coordinated approach to watershed management. The Plan consolidates policies, programs, and implementation strategies from existing data, studies, and plans, and incorporates input from multiple planning partners and stakeholders to provide a single plan for management of the watershed. The Plan focuses on prioritized, targeted, and measurable implementation efforts and lays out specific actions to manage water quantity, protect and restore water quality, natural habitat, recreational uses and drinking water sources in the watershed.
- **Plan Review.** On December 3, 2024, the Board received the Plan, a record of the public hearing, and copies of all written comments and responses pertaining to the Plan for final State review pursuant to Board Decision #21-08. State agency representatives attended and provided input at advisory committee meetings during development of the Plan. The following state review comments were received during the comment period.
 - A. Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA): MDA recommends approval of the Upper Mississippi – Grand Rapids Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan. Thank you for the opportunity to review.
 - B. Minnesota Department of Health (MDH): The entire WS planning process has been very transparent with ample opportunity to provide comment at many places in the timeline. The concerns I expressed, and data I provided, for addressing source (drinking) water protection were well received and thoughtfully incorporated. Staff have been very accessible throughout the process and have been prompt in their replies to any questions or suggestions I posed. The MDH has appreciated the opportunity to participate and looks forward to continuing in this partnership by assisting with implementation of the approved plan.
 - C. Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR): DNR has received the final Mississippi River Grand Rapids Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan and reviewed responses to comments submitted under the 60-day review of the draft plan. The DNR appreciates the inclusion of our comments to topics raised during our review, has no additional comments, and recommends that BWSR approve the plan. Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this process. We look forward to working with watershed partners to help implement the plan.
 - D. Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA): MPCA appreciates the opportunity to participate and provide input throughout the Mississippi River - Grand Rapids Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (Plan) development process. Overall, the Plan is very well written, concise, and thorough. We have no comments as part of the official 90-day Review and Comment Period and recommend it for approval.

- E. Minnesota Environmental Quality Board (EQB): Policy requires that EQB be notified of the final draft document. EQB confirmed receipt of the Plan and did not provide comments on the 90-day final draft Plan.
- F. Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR): BWSR staff provided comments throughout the planning process and had no suggested or required changes to the Plan submitted for the 60-day review. The entire report is very well-written, easy to understand and is visually appealing. The partnership responded well to stakeholder input at the topic meetings by creating issue statements for each section of the plan. They also were inclusive of tribal nations during the planning process. We commend the partners for their trust level and commitment to the resources of the Plan area.
- **Plan Summary and Highlights.** The highlights of the plan include:
 - The Policy and Advisory Committees sought extensive community engagement during the early stages of the planning process including public input from two public kick-off meetings and six topic meetings of expert and local stakeholders on the topics of Lakes, forests, wetlands/ditching, rivers/streams, stormwater and farms/groundwater. The comments were used during plan development to inform issues, goals and actions and provided an opportunity for public input on the implementation actions.
 - The Advisory Committee identified 7 priority Issues (Lakes, Rivers/Streams, Forests, Farms, Groundwater/Drinking Water, Stormwater, Wetlands); each priority issue has measurable goals and an action option of either Fix it, Manage it, Keep it or Know it.
 - The partnership identified ten measurable goals for the seven topics. Each topic has a short-term goal, a long-term goal and a desired condition. The short-term (10 year) measurable goals are what this plan will focus on.
 - For ease of future action of the issues, separate targeted implementation tables and maps were organized by four planning regions. The tables detail an action, the specific focus area for the action, the measurable outcome, who will lead and support the action, timing and estimated costs.
- **Northern Regional Committee.** On January 6, 2025, the Northern Regional Committee met to review and discuss the Plan. Those in attendance were Committee Chair Rich Sve, Ron Staples, LeRoy Ose, Tom Schulz, Jeff Berg, Ben Bergey, and Chad Anderson. BWSR staff in attendance were Ryan Hughes, Northern Region Manager; Darren Mayers, Board Conservationist; Jeff Hrubes, Clean Water Specialist; Melanie Bomier, Board Conservationist; and Carrie Moline-Rust, Office & Administrative Specialist. The representatives from the Partnership were Dana Gutzmann, Cass SWCD; Cal Saari, Itasca SWCD Supervisor; Mitch Brinks, TSA 8; Janet Smude, Aitkin SWCD; Moriya Rufer, Houston Engineering; and Matt Gutzmann, Itasca SWCD, presented the Plan on behalf of the partnership. Board regional staff provided its recommendation of Plan approval to the Committee. After discussion, the Committee's decision was to present a recommendation of approval of the Plan to the full Board.
- This Plan will be in effect for a ten-year period until January 22, 2035.

CONCLUSIONS

1. All relevant substantive and procedural requirements of law have been fulfilled.
2. The Board has proper jurisdiction in the matter of approving a Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan for the Upper Mississippi-Grand Rapids Watershed pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103B.101, Subd. 14 and 103B.801 and Board Decision #21-08.
3. The Upper Mississippi-Grand Rapids Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan attached to this Order states priority water and natural resource issues within the planning area and possible solutions thereto; goals, objectives, and actions of the Partnership; and an implementation program.
4. The attached Plan is in conformance with the requirements of Minnesota Statutes Section 103B.101, Subd. 14 and 103B.801 and Board Decision #21-08.
5. The attached plan when adopted through local resolution by the members of the Partnership will serve as a replacement for the comprehensive plan, local water management plan, or watershed management plan, developed or amended, approved and adopted, according to Chapter 103B, 103C, or 103D, but only to the geographic area of the Plan.

ORDER

The Board hereby approves the attached Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan of the Upper Mississippi-Grand Rapids Watershed Partnership, submitted December 3, 2024.

Dated in Saint Paul, Minnesota, this twenty-second of January 2025.

MINNESOTA BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES



Todd Holman, Chair
Board of Water and Soil Resources

Date: 1/22/2025

Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155

In the Matter of the review of the Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan for the Upper/Lower Red Lake Watershed, pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103B.101, Subdivision 14 and 103B.801.

**ORDER
APPROVING
COMPREHENSIVE
WATERSHED
MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Whereas, the Policy Committee of the Upper/Lower Red Lake Watershed submitted a Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (Plan) to the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (Board) on November 26, 2024, pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103B.101, Subdivision 14 and 103B.801 and Board Resolution #21-08, and;

Whereas, the Board has completed its review of the Plan;

Now Therefore, the Board hereby makes the following Findings of Fact, Conclusions, and Order:

FINDINGS OF FACT

- 1. Partnership Establishment.** The Upper/Lower Red Lake Watershed Partnership (Partnership) was established through adoption of a Memorandum of Agreement for the purposes of developing a Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan. The membership of the Partnership includes Beltrami County, Beltrami Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), Red Lake Nation, and Red Lake Watershed District.
- 2. Authority to Plan.** Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103B.101, Subdivision 14 allows the Board to adopt resolutions, policies or orders that allow a comprehensive plan, local water management plan, or watershed management plan, developed or amended, approved and adopted, according to Chapter 103B, 103C, or 103D to serve as substitutes for one another or be replaced with a comprehensive watershed management plan. Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103B.801, established the Comprehensive Watershed Management Planning Program; also known as the One Watershed, One Plan (1W1P) program and Board Decision #21-08 adopted the One Watershed, One Plan Operating Procedures Version 2.1 and Board Decision #19-41 adopted the One Watershed, One Plan Plan Content Requirements Version 2.1 policies.
- 3. Nature of the Watershed.** The Upper/Lower Red Lake Watershed (ULRLW) is, by both flow volume and surface area, the largest drainage basin of the Red River. The ULRLW covers 1,940 square miles (1,241,690 acres) primarily in Beltrami County but also small portions within Koochiching, Clearwater, and Itasca counties. Lower Red Lake and 60% of Upper Red Lake, over one third (483,246 acres) of the watershed, falls within the boundaries of the Red Lake Reservation. The Red Lake Peatland is partially contained in the watershed and it is the largest, most diverse patterned peatland in the conterminous United States. The watershed is 55% wetlands and 24% open water and contains approximately 214

lakes. Upper and Lower Red Lake combined is the largest body of water (288,800 acres) in Minnesota with its boundaries completely within the borders of Minnesota. They are significant lakes for walleye fishing for both the Minnesota tourism economy and the Red Lake Nation economy and traditions. All the drainage from within the smaller sub-watersheds ends up in the Red Lakes and eventually outlets into the Red Lake River at the Red Lake Dam.

4. **Plan Development.** The Plan was developed as a single, concise, and coordinated approach to watershed management. The Plan consolidates policies, programs, and implementation strategies from existing data, studies and plans, and incorporates input from multiple planning partners to provide a single plan for management of the watershed. The Plan focuses on prioritized, targeted, and measurable implementation efforts and lays out specific actions to manage water quantity, protect and restore water quality, natural habitat, recreational uses and drinking water sources in the watershed.
5. **Plan Review.** On November 26, 2024, the Board received the Plan, a record of the public hearing, and copies of all written comments pertaining to the Plan for final State review pursuant to Board Resolution #21-08. During the development of the Plan, State agency representatives attended and provided input at advisory committee meetings. The following state review comments were received during the comment period.
 - A. Minnesota Department of Health (MDH): MDH staff thanked the partnership for addressing MDH's comments and noted that the plan was well written and thoughtful. MDH recommends approval of the plan.
 - B. Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR): DNR staff is satisfied with the responses to issues raised during the 60-day review of the draft plan. DNR recommends approval of the plan.
 - C. Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA): MPCA staff noted that they appreciated the opportunity to participate and provide input and that the plan is well written, concise, and thorough. MPCA recommends approval of the plan.
 - D. Minnesota Environmental Quality Board (EQB): EQB acknowledged receipt of the plan.
 - E. Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA): MDA did not provide comments for the final plan.
 - F. Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources regional staff: BWSR staff provided comments throughout the planning process and had no suggested or required changes to the Plan submitted for the final review. We commend the partners for their trust level and commitment to the resources of the Plan area. BWSR staff recommend approval of the Plan and look forward to working with the Partnership during implementation.
6. **Plan Summary and Highlights.** The highlights of the Plan include:
 - Tribally owned or managed lands account for 38% of the area of the watershed, followed closely by State owned lands with 37%. About 23% of the land is privately owned with the remaining 2% being federal and county lands.
 - The watershed is within the larger 1863 Ceded Territory, and the Red Lake Reservation is within the watershed.
 - The Policy and Advisory Committees sought community engagement during the early stages of the planning process including public input from a public kick-off meetings and five topic meetings of expert and local stakeholders on the topics of lakes and streams, forests and habitat, land stewardship, groundwater, and hydrology. The comments were used during plan development to

inform issues, goals and actions and provided an opportunity for public input on the implementation actions.

- The Advisory Committee identified 11 issues covering those resource categories and created seven measurable goals. Each goal includes issues addressed, outcomes, priority map, short-term goals and a desired future condition.
7. **Northern Regional Committee.** On January 6, 2025, the Northern Regional Committee met to review and discuss the Plan. Those in attendance were Committee Chair Rich Sve, Ron Staples, LeRoy Ose, Tom Schulz, Jeff Berg, Ben Bergey, and Chad Anderson. BWSR staff in attendance were Ryan Hughes, Northern Region Manager; Chad Severts, Board Conservationist; Henry Van Offelen, Clean Water Specialist; and Carrie Moline-Rust, Office & Administrative Specialist. The representatives from the Partnership were Brian Dwight, Red Lake Watershed District Manager; Shane Bowe, Red Lake Department of Natural Resources; Kayla Bowe, Red Lake Department of Natural Resources; Robyn Dwight, URLAA, Keep-it-Clean; Tammy Audette, Red Lake Watershed District; Tom Anderson, Red Lake Watershed District; Brent Rud, Beltrami County Environmental Services; Corey Hanson, Red Lake Watershed District; Moriya Rufer, Houston Engineering; and Katelyn Bergstrom, Beltrami SWCD, presented the Plan on behalf of the partnership. Board regional staff provided its recommendation of Plan approval to the Committee. After discussion, the Committee's decision was to present a recommendation of approval of the Plan to the full Board.
8. This Plan will be in effect for a ten-year period until January 22, 2035.

CONCLUSIONS

1. All relevant substantive and procedural requirements of law have been fulfilled.
2. The Board has proper jurisdiction in the matter of approving a Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan for the Upper/Lower Red Lake Watershed pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103B.101, Subd. 14 and 103B.801 and Board Resolution #21-08.
3. The Upper/Lower Red Lake Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan attached to this Order states water and water-related problems within the planning area; priority resource issues and possible solutions thereto; goals, objectives, and actions of the Partnership; and an implementation program.
4. The attached Plan is in conformance with the requirements of Minnesota Statutes Section 103B.101, Subd. 14 and 103B.801 and Board Resolution #21-08.
5. The attached Plan when adopted through local resolution by the members of the Partnership will replace the comprehensive plan, local water management plan, or watershed management plan, developed or amended, approved and adopted, according to Chapter 103B, 103C, or 103D, but only to the geographic area of the Plan.

ORDER

The Board hereby approves the attached Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan of the Upper/Lower Red Lake Watershed, submitted November 26, 2024.

Dated at St. Paul, Minnesota, this twenty-second day of January 2025.

MINNESOTA BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES



Todd Holman, Chair
Board of Water and Soil Resources

Date: 1/22/2025



BOARD ORDER

Drainage Work Group Recommended adoption of Minnesota Public Drainage Manual and maintenance plan.

PURPOSE

Adopt the Minnesota Public Drainage Manual (MPDM) in its current form and adopt associated maintenance plan as recommended by the Drainage Work Group.

FINDINGS OF FACT / RECITALS

1. The Board has authorities under Minnesota Statutes Chapter 103B that include working with drainage stakeholders to foster mutual understanding and provide recommendations for drainage system management and related water management, including recommendations for updating the drainage law in chapter 103E and other related provisions.
2. The board convenes drainage stakeholders or work teams to develop information, education, and recommendations for these purposes known as the "Drainage Work Group" (DWG).
3. In 2024 the legislature amended Minnesota Statute Chapter 103B.101 Subd 13 to identify the MPDM as a publication that is prepared by and adopted by the board and that includes explanations, procedures, and guidance consistent with and supplementing the provisions of chapter 103E.
4. The DWG utilizes a Process Summary (adopted by the DWG on 10/11/2018) as a framework for developing and providing recommendations to the legislature and the BWSR Board on proposed amendments to Minnesota Statutes Chapter 103E.
5. A key purpose for the MPDM continues to be to promote consistent implementation of Minn. Stat. Chapter 103E Drainage.
6. The MPDM was first published in September 1991 as a hard copy document in a 3-ring binder.
7. A 2016 legislative appropriation directed BWSR to update the MPDM which was done in coordination with a large stakeholder project advisory committee. In October 2016, the updated MPDM was published on the BWSR website in a Wiki format to better enable access, use, and periodic revision. The MPDM has been hosted on the BWSR website since 2022.
8. The MPDM as recommended for adoption in this order is the version currently posted on the BWSR website and previously vetted by the DWG.
9. The DWG recommended the attached MPDM maintenance plan as the framework for ongoing maintenance and potential revisions to the MPDM at its January 9, 2025 meeting.
10. This recommendation represents consensus of the participating DWG members consistent with the process summary adopted by the DWG.
11. The Buffers Soils and Drainage Committee at their January 17, 2025, meeting reviewed the DWG recommendation and recommend the Board approve this order.

ORDER

The Board hereby:

- A. Adopts the MPDM as currently posted on the BWSR website.
- B. Adopts the attached MPDM Maintenance Plan.

Dated at St. Paul, Minnesota, this January 22, 2025.

MINNESOTA BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES



Todd Holman, Chair
Board of Water and Soil Resources

Date: 1/22/2025

REVISIONS TO MPDM MAINTENANCE PLAN 1/9/25

Summary of Pertinent Background Information

1. The Minnesota Public Drainage Manual (MPDM) was first published in September 1991 as a hard copy document in a 3-ring binder.
2. A key purpose for the MPDM continues to be to promote consistent implementation of Minn. Stat. Chapter 103E Drainage. The MPDM is a guidance document, not law or rule.
3. The Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) received a legislative appropriation in 2014 to update the MPDM. The project team included Houston Engineering, Inc. and Rinke Noonan Attorneys at Law. A stakeholder Project Advisory Committee (PAC) assisted the MPDM update.
4. In October 2016, the updated MPDM was published on the BWSR website in a Wiki format to better enable access, use, and periodic revision. The Wiki format is no longer supported by Minnesota IT Services (MNIT) and the MPDM was moved to the BWSR website in 2022.
5. Several members of the stakeholder Drainage Work Group (DWG) served on the PAC for the MPDM update.
6. During the 2024 legislative session M.S. Chapter 103B.101, Subd. 13 was amended directing BWSR to work with drainage stakeholders to adopt and provide recommendations for updating the MPDM.

Guiding Principles

- 1) Maintain the MPDM to keep it current.
- 2) Provide for timely revisions.
- 3) Utilize an efficient stakeholder advisory input process.

The following recommendations are provided by the DWG to the BWSR Board to achieve the guiding principles;

- The DWG will serve as a standing stakeholder advisory group for revisions of the MPDM.
- Consideration of potential changes to the MPDM at least annually via the DWG consensus process.
- Revisions proposed to the DWG will be provided with track change or some other similar method to allow review of proposed changes related to the prior language.
- The DWG may use committees, workgroups, or teams to review specific topics based on interest or areas of expertise.
- BWSR Staff will oversee resolution of any major revision content issues not resolved through DWG advisory review and discussion and make recommendations to the BWSR Board.

Roles and Coordination Category of Revision		
Involved Entity and Role	Minor Revisions including links, grammar, spelling, text clarity, or notes where future change may be prudent? etc.	Major Revisions based on: changes in Chapter 103E, other statute, rule, case law, or policy; new information; major comments received in the MPDM Wiki; etc.
BWSR Drainage Staff: Lead revisions and coordination	✓	✓
Drainage Work Group: Stakeholder advisory review and discussion	Informed	✓
BWSR Staff: Oversee resolution of any content issues not resolved by advisory review and discussion and make recommendations to the BWSR Board.		✓
BWSR Board	Informed	Approve

BWSR staff may add a footnote within the Drainage Manual to note enacted changes to statute, rule or published case law that may impact drainage practice. The Drainage Work Group will review the change and make a timely recommendation to BWSR concerning the ultimate revision, if any, in the Manual.

BOARD ORDER

**Drainage Work Group (DWG) Policy Recommendation to repeal of §103E.067
(Annual Ditch Buffer Strip Reporting)**

PURPOSE

Authorize BWSR Staff to work with DWG participants and the legislature to pursue a policy recommendation for the repeal of §103E.067. (Annual Ditch Buffer Strip Reporting)

FINDINGS OF FACT / RECITALS

1. The Board has authorities under Minnesota Statutes Chapter 103B that include working with drainage stakeholders to foster mutual understanding and provide recommendations for drainage system management and related water management, including recommendations for updating the drainage law in chapter 103E and other related provisions.
2. The board convenes drainage stakeholders or work teams to develop information, education, and recommendations for these purposes known as the "Drainage Work Group" (DWG).
3. The DWG utilizes a Process Summary (adopted by the DWG on 10/11/2018) as a framework for developing and providing recommendations to the legislature and the BWSR Board on proposed amendments to Minnesota Statutes Chapter 103E.
4. Current §103E.067 includes language related to annual reporting requirements for 103E ditch buffer strip reporting.
5. At its January 9, 2025, meeting the DWG recommended the repeal of §103E.067.
6. This recommendation represents consensus of the participating DWG members consistent with the process summary adopted by the DWG.
7. The Buffers Soils and Drainage Committee at their January 17, 2025, meeting reviewed the DWG recommendations and the attached report and recommended the Board approve this order.

ORDER

The Board hereby:

- A. Authorizes staff to work with DWG participants and the Legislature to seek a repeal of §103E.067.

Dated at St. Paul, Minnesota, this January 22, 2025.

MINNESOTA BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES



Todd Holman, Chair
Board of Water and Soil Resources

Date: 1/22/2025