

**BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES
520 LAFAYETTE ROAD NORTH
LOWER-LEVEL SOUTH CONFERENCE ROOM
ST. PAUL, MN 55155
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 25, 2025**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Eunice Biel, Jayne Hager Dee, Jill Crafton, Joe Collins, LeRoy Ose, Lori Cox, Mark Zabel, Mike Runk, Rich Sve, Ron Staples, Ted Winter, Tom Schulz, Sarah Strommen, DNR; Joel Larson, University of Minnesota Extension; Melissa Lewis, MPCA; Steve Robertson, MDH; Thom Petersen, MDA

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Todd Holman, Neil Peterson

STAFF PRESENT:

John Jaschke, Rachel Mueller, Travis Germundson, Michelle Jordan, Sharon Doucette, Denise Lauerman, Shane Bugeja, Sara Reagan, Craig Engwall, Mike Nelson; Dave Weirens, John Shea, Jenny Gieseke, Karli Swenson, Dusty Van Thuyne

OTHERS PRESENT:

Brian Martinson, AMC; LeAnn Buck, MASWCD; Matt Drewitz, MPCA; Dave Wall, MPCA; Smita Rakshit, Washington County; Stephanie Souter, Washington County; Jessica Collin-Pilarski, Washington County; Adriana Atcheson, Washington County; Julie Blackburn, ISG; Graham Berg-Moberg, MN Townships

Acting Chair Rich Sve called the meeting to order at 9:01 AM.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

25-31 **ADOPTION OF AGENDA** - Moved by Jill Crafton, seconded by Ron Staples, to adopt the agenda as presented. ***Motion passed on a roll call vote.***

25-32 **MINUTES OF MAY 28, 2025 BOARD MEETING** – Moved by Mike Runk, seconded by Joe Collins, to approve the minutes of May 28, 2025, as amended. ***Motion passed on a roll call vote.***

PUBLIC ACCESS FORUM

No members of the public provided comments to the board.

REPORTS

Chair & Administrative Advisory Committee – No report was provided.

Executive Director's Report - John Jaschke reported the Governor reappointed board members Mark Zabel, Ron Staples, and Todd Holman to serve another four years on the BWSR board. A special legislative session was called, and bills were finalized. John reviewed the Day of Packet that included Snapshot articles. Met with the White Earth Nation yesterday and will be meeting with the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe on Thursday. MN Watersheds is having their tour today in Roseau.

Lori Cox asked about the Lower Minnesota River West partnership and if the watershed based implementation funding is Clean Water Fund dollars. John stated it's a portion of the Clean Water Fund dollars that go through the watershed based implementation grant program that's tied to their plan.

Lori asked about the cover crop program and if it's a temporary type of outreach or if it provides a solution within their watershed plan. John stated it is really both. The goal is to have the individuals try the program with assistance and then find a way to carry it forward either on the same property or on other properties.

Audit and Oversight Committee – Joe Collins reported the committee has not met.

Dispute Resolution and Compliance Report – Rich Sve reported the committee has not met. Travis Germundson reported there has been one new appeal filed since the last report.

File 25-7 is an appeal of a WCA Restoration Order for a property located in Brown County. The Restoration Order regards the unauthorized placement of fill material in wetland associated with the expansion of a Campground/RV Park. No decision has been made on the appeal. They received an appeal on file 25-4 of a replacement plan decision in St. Louis County that was denied last month. It has been appealed to the Court of Appeals and they are currently working with the Attorney General's Office. A buffer update was given, stated the changing of jurisdiction from McLeod County back to BWSR and to the Watershed District occurred on June 16th.

Mark Zabel asked if the McLeod County responsibility would be split with Buffalo Creek Watershed. Travis stated that within their boundary they are the enforcement entity, and the rest of the county defers back to the state.

Grants Program & Policy Committee – Mark Zabel reported they have not met.

RIM Reserve Committee – Jayne Hager Dee reported they have two items on the agenda for today.

Water Management & Strategic Planning Committee – Joe Collins reported the committee has not met.

Wetland Conservation Committee – Jill Crafton reported they have not met.

Buffers, Soils & Drainage Committee – LeRoy Ose reported they have not met.

Drainage Work Group (DWG) – Ron Staples reported they met in June and provided update on the awarded MDM grants for the last two years. They discussed outcomes from the legislative session and anticipated topics for the upcoming year.

AGENCY REPORTS

Minnesota Department of Agriculture – Thom Petersen reported Jeff Berg will be retiring in July. They are implementing the work that passed through legislature.

Minnesota Department of Health – Steve Robertson reported on the bills that passed during the special session. They are involved in a project with the Minnesota Geological Survey as part of their groundwater restoration projection strategy work. Stated they are continuing their response to the nitrates in southeast Minnesota.

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources – Sarah Strommen reported on the outcomes from the legislative session.

Minnesota Extension – Joel Larson reported he toured the Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center and said it was great facility. Stated they are holding a series of field days in partnership with the Minnesota Grazing Lands Conservation Association on the integration of profit and livestock operations together. The Annual Water Resources Conference is October 14 and 15 and the Midwest Climate Resilience Conference is October 22-25 in Milwaukee.

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency – Melissa Lewis reported the feedlot rule update process is holding public meetings, and the comment period ends July 22nd. Stated they are analyzing federal budget impacts. An information session for Climate Action Framework has been scheduled for June 30th.

Commissioner Petersen stated he attended a couple feedlot meetings, and they were informative.

ADVISORY COMMENTS

Association of Minnesota Counties – Brian Martinson reported on their legislative budget. AMC completed its district meetings throughout the state.

Minnesota Association of Conservation District Employees – No report was provided.

Minnesota Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts – LeAnn Buck reported they are attending area meetings. A legislative update was provided. Thanked partners they've worked with.

Minnesota Association of Townships – Eunice Biel reported they continue to hold Township Tuesdays on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of the month. In August they will hold district meetings throughout the state with local issues and more. Minnesota Paid Leave Law is projected to go into effect in January 2026.

Stated there is a resolution authorizing the county to conduct retail registration and compliance checks for cannabis retailers. MN Townships recommends townships delegate the cannabis retail registration and compliance checks with their county. MN Townships will keep a list of property values up to date for values over \$35,000 and they will be assessed every five years.

Minnesota Watersheds – No report was provided.

Natural Resources Conservation Service – No report was provided.

Acting Chair Sve called a recess at 10:04 a.m. and called the meeting back to order at 10:11 a.m.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Central Region Committee

Washington County Groundwater Plan 2025-2035 – Michelle Jordan presented Washington County Groundwater Plan 2025-2035.

Background

In the seven-county Twin Cities Metropolitan Area, counties have the option to prepare and adopt a Groundwater Plan. The authorities and requirements of these plans are contained entirely within Minnesota Statutes Section 103B.255. At this time, three counties have approved groundwater plans (Carver, Dakota, and Washington). Washington County (County) is located on the eastern edge of the seven-county Twin Cities metropolitan Area, bordered to the east by the St. Croix River. The County is the 5th most populated county in Minnesota and relies entirely on groundwater for its water supply. That supply is known to be impacted by groundwater contamination from polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and volatile organic compounds (VOCs). The County's current Groundwater Plan (Plan) was approved and adopted in 2014. The original expiration date for the Plan was August 28, 2024. The County requested and received a one-year extension to their Plan to accommodate a delay in the Plan update process due to the COVID-19 pandemic and staff transitions and vacancies. The County Board held a workshop in June 2023 to initiate the process to update the Plan.

Plan Process and Highlights

Minnesota statute 103B.255 requires that the County seek the advice of local and state government agencies, and local and regional interests during the development of the Plan. The County formed a groundwater advisory committee, and a technical advisory committee, and these committees met jointly three times over the Plan development process. In addition to these statutory obligations, the County also conducted more general community engagement including administering a survey. An early draft of the Plan was submitted to reviewers and others for unofficial comment prior to the formal review process to gather additional feedback and input. During the formal review process, the County engaged with commenters, including meeting as appropriate to ensure that comments were addressed sufficiently.

The vision statement of this Plan is:

"We envision a future where there is plenty of clean water in Washington County to support human health, community growth, and a thriving natural environment."

The Plan contains an implementation section detailing four broad goals to reach that vision and 21 strategies to address the goals.

- Goal #1. Groundwater Quality: *Groundwater is safe to drink*

- Goal #2. Groundwater Quantity: *Groundwater is plentiful to support human needs and a thriving natural environment*
- Goal #3. Groundwater Education: *People who live and work in Washington County understand the importance of protecting groundwater, how to conserve water and use it efficiently, and prevent contamination*
- Goal #4. Groundwater Governance: *Groundwater management is coordinated, efficient, and effective.*

The strategies are prioritized from high to low, and further defined by specific actions to take, and how the County will participate in those actions (lead, partner, regulate, educate, fund, advocate, monitor, operate). Many of the actions represent continuation of past efforts that have proven successful and/or necessary, however approximately 40 percent are identified as being new. Each action includes how implementation will be measured, and each strategy includes overall measures of success over the 10-year life of the Plan.

Formal Plan Review Process

The draft Plan was submitted for the 60-day review and comment period to the Board and other required reviewers on November 13, 2024, pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Section 103B.255 Subd. 8. The County prepared a written response to comments received and held a public hearing on February 18, 2025. A revised draft of the Plan, comments received, a record of the public hearing, and a summary of changes incorporated as part of the review process was submitted to the Metropolitan Council and state agencies for the 45-day review and comment period on March 12, 2025. Most responses received during that time indicated no additional comments. The Metropolitan Council submitted additional comments which will be incorporated into the final Plan, and those changes are included as replacement pages in the Board packet. With the close of the 45-day review period on April 28, 2025, the Board has 90 days to review and act on the Plan pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Section 103B.255 Subd 10.

Recommendation

On June 2, 2025, the Board's Central Region Committee and staff met with representatives from Washington County in St. Paul and virtually via Teams, to review and discuss the draft Plan. The Committee's decision was to recommend to the Board approval of the Washington County Groundwater Plan per the attached draft Board Order.

Jill Crafton was impressed with the amount of community engagement. Thanked them for their work on this plan.

Mark Zabel commended Washington County on their commitment to manage and protect groundwater within the region.

Mike Runk thanked them for their work on the plan.

Stephanie Souter with Washington County thanked the board and staff for their support along the way.

Moved by Joe Collins, seconded by Jill Crafton, to approve the Washington County Groundwater Plan 2025-2035. ***Motion passed on a roll call vote.***

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25-33

RIM Reserve Committee

Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve Conservation Practices and Reimbursement Payment Rates –

Sharon Doucette presented Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve Conservation Practices and Reimbursement Payment Rates.

Statute requires the Board to determine approved restoration practices and practices eligible for reimbursement, and to establish reimbursement rates for restoration on RIM easements. Current RIM Reserve conservation practice reimbursement rates are inadequate for establishment of certain conservation practices. The per acre cost caps were last approved by the Board in 2010. The intent of the reimbursement process is to cover all conservation plan implementation costs for a landowner for a typical restoration of a RIM easement. If a landowner makes individual choices for their land that creates a significantly higher cost for their restoration, they are required to cover the difference. Inflation, unique and diverse native seed mixes, necessary site preparation and prevailing wage laws are driving costs of the typical restoration beyond the current maximum in Board Order #10-26. Additionally, the RIM program now has restoration practices and needs that are different than the restoration of previous cropland to either prairie or wetland that was the exclusive focus of the program in 2010. The ability to adapt to evolving costs, prevailing wage requirements, and new restoration techniques and needs are better achieved by providing staff, with Executive Director approval, the ability to establish and update the list of approved practices and conservation practice reimbursement rates. Board Resolution #22-16 established additional approved practices and reimbursement rates specific to working lands.

Both resolutions #10-26 and #22-16 will be rescinded upon publication of new approved practices and reimbursement rates pursuant to the new board order.

Lori Cox asked about the timeline of review and asked if it was in the order. Sara Reagan stated its listed in number two of the board order as “annually.”

25-34 Moved by Tom Petersen, seconded by Mike Runk, to approve the Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve Conservation Practices and Reimbursement Payment Rates. ***Motion passed on a roll call vote.***

Technical Amendment to Board Order 25-21 – Sharon Doucette presented Technical Amendment to Board Order 25-21

BWSR Board Order 25-21 was signed April 23, 2025, approving significant changes to the RIM Drinking Water Program. However, the incorrect term was used within the order, specifically in the second BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED.

The second BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT was originally approved as:

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, the Executive Director is delegated to approve Drinking Water Protection Partner Grants consistent with this order.

A technical adjustment is warranted to replace Grants with the word “agreements.”

Per the appropriation language associated with this funding, the RIM Drinking Water Program can utilize “grants or contracts.” Naming a specific grant program specifically can limit the flexibility of program development as future needs may require additional opportunities for drinking water protection.

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25-35

Moved by Jayne Hager Dee, seconded by Tom Petersen, to approve the Technical Amendment to Board Order 25-21. ***Motion passed on a roll call vote.***

NEW BUSINESS

Nutrient Reduction Strategy Update – Matt Drewitz presented Nutrient Reduction Strategy Update.

The Nutrient Reduction Strategy compiles the latest science, research, and data and recommends the most effective strategies to reduce nutrients in our waters from both point and nonpoint sources. The strategy serves as a framework that outlines voluntary and regulatory actions to reduce nutrient pollution to meet long-term goals. Reductions in Minnesota’s nitrogen and phosphorus pollution are needed to reach our in-state water quality goals and the 2040 goals that aim to restore the Gulf of Mexico, Lake Winnipeg, and Lake Superior.

Jill Crafton asked if the size of the hypoxic zone has increased over the last five years. Matt stated it has fluctuations and this year it’s a typical size, there has been a downward trend since 2011. Jill asked for a better understanding of some of the regulations that are in place throughout the state at the different levels of jurisdiction. Matt stated they could have more discussion on this offline.

Lori Cox asked with it being all voluntary how do they implement strategies. Dave Wall with the MPCA stated Minnesota and other states could be models to expand and increase adoption.

Mike Runk thanked them for their work.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

- BWSR Board Tour and Meeting, August 27-28, 2025

Acting Chair Sve adjourned the meeting at 11:15 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Rich Sve', written over a horizontal line.

Rich Sve
Acting Chair