

**BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES
39375 COUNTY HIGHWAY 24
GRAND EAGLE 3 CONFERENCE ROOM
MORTON, MN 56270
THURSDAY, AUGUST 28, 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, Todd Holman, Tom Schulz, Sarah Strommen, DNR; Joel Larson, University of Minnesota Extension; Glenn Skuta, MPCA; Steve Robertson, MDH; Brad Jordahl Redlin, MDA

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Neil Peterson

STAFF PRESENT:

John Jaschke, Rachel Mueller, Ed Lenz, Denise Lauerman, Mark Hiles, Julie Westerlund, Marcey Westrick, James Adkinson, Adam Beilke, Craig Engwall, Annie Gunness

OTHERS PRESENT:

Jan Voit, Minnesota Watersheds; LeAnn Buck, MASWCD; Sarah Boser

Chair Todd Holman called the meeting to order at 9:01 AM

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

**
25-36 **ADOPTION OF AGENDA** - Moved by Jill Crafton, seconded by Joe Collins, to adopt the agenda as presented. *Motion passed on a roll call vote.*

**
25-37 **MINUTES OF JUNE 25, 2025 BOARD MEETING** – Moved by Ron Staples, seconded by Eunice Biel, to approve the minutes of June 25, 2025, as circulated. *Motion passed on a roll call vote.*

PUBLIC ACCESS FORUM

No members of the public provided comments to the board.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION

Chair Holman read the statement:

"A conflict of interest, whether actual, potential, or perceived, occurs when someone in a position of trust has competing professional or personal interests, and these competing interests make it difficult to fulfill professional duties impartially. At this time, members are requested to declare conflicts of interest they may have regarding today's business. Any member who declares an actual conflict of interest must not vote on that agenda item. All actual, potential, and perceived conflicts of interest will be announced to the board by members or staff before any vote."

REPORTS

Chair & Administrative Advisory Committee – Chair Todd Holman reported the BWSR Board Tour went well. Stated the Environmental Quality Board passed the Annual Groundwater Report that BWSR staff had a part in. Met with John Jaschke and Jake Rossow and looked at the Control Systems Assessment Worksheets. Thanked staff who were involved in the grant streamlining work. Stated a NRCS supported staff, a Resilience Specialist, worked with Camp Ripley Sentinel Landscape team and conducted a project to develop a climate resilience parcel scoring tool. They will be presenting the tool at the Land Trust Alliance Conference in Ohio next week.

Executive Director's Report - John Jaschke reported the BWSR Board Tour took place yesterday with Renville and Redwood County Soil and Water Conservation Districts and thanked them and BWSR staff for their work. Also appreciated the Lower Sioux Community hosting our event. Stated annual meetings will be taking place with discussions of resolutions and policies. Dave Weirens will be attending the AMC Policy Meeting for BWSR and John will be attending a Government to Government meeting with the Tribal Nations.

Audit and Oversight Committee – Joe Collins reported they have not met.

Dispute Resolution and Compliance Report – Rich Sve reported the committee has not met. Rich stated he will not be seeking another term on the BWSR Board after his term expires.

Todd Holman thanked Rich Sve for his service.

Grants Program & Policy Committee – Mark Zabel reported there are multiple items on the agenda for today.

RIM Reserve Committee – Jayne Hager Dee reported they have not met.

Water Management & Strategic Planning Committee – Joe Collins reported they have not met. Stated he attended the Tribal State Relations Training and found it very informative.

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 received a Wetland Conservation Act rule making update from Les Lemm. They also received an update from the DNR on the Public Waters Inventory. Discussed recent federal changes that impact the wetlands section of the public drainage manual. Discussed housing the Technical Summit Communities Report on outlet adequacy on the BWSR website, separate from the Drainage Manual. No meeting scheduled in September.

Mark Zabel asked if any comments were being accepted on the report of outlet adequacy. Ron stated it is available to the public, but they are not taking comments.

Lori Cox asked if there is any movement on the portal. Ron does not know the status. John Jaschke stated it's on the list but does not have a majority of people wanting to do something with it at this time. John will have Tom Gile prepare a future summary to share with the Board on the portal.

AGENCY REPORTS

Minnesota Department of Agriculture – Brad Jordahl Redlin reported the Soil Health Financial Assistant Program applications close on Friday for their Soil Health Equipment Grants.

Minnesota Department of Health – Steve Robertson reported uncertainty about federal funding continues. Stated the Department of Health sponsored a meeting of source water protection for managers from the other Region 5 states. Steve shared the link to the [Minnesota Drinking Water Action Plan](#).

Lori Cox asked if they're partnering with agencies through different funding for water protection. Steve stated they are partnering with other agencies.

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources – Sarah Strommen provided an update on the Public Waters Inventory. The application process for the Urban and Forestry Grants is open until October 28th. The Governor announced the 2026 fishing opener will be held in Stillwater on the St. Croix River.

Mike Runk thanked the Commissioner Strommen for her mention of the fishing opener. He is a member of the Convention Visitor Bureau in Stillwater, and they have been working diligently to get the invitation.

Jill Crafton asked if there is any information on the Mississippi River and the federal uncertainties. Commissioner Strommen stated she doesn't have anything specific, they are continuing to work with federal and state partners.

Minnesota Extension – Joel Larson reported he was happy to see the irrigation workshop article in Snapshots that they partnered in. Stated they are having a related workshop for Irrigators and Agriculture Professionals on November 18th and 19th in Sherburn County. The Minnesota Water Resources Conference being held October 14th through 15th in St. Paul. The Midwest Climate Resilience Conference is being held in Milwaukee October 20th through 22nd.

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency – Glenn Skuta thanked everyone involved in the tour. Reported they are generating a draft impaired waters list for next year. The Nutrient Reduction Strategy is on public notice until September 10th. Stated updated State and Federal Feedlot Permits for large agriculture facilities are being issued.

Jill Crafton asked about PFAS monitoring and if there is a report available. Glenn stated he will get back to Jill.

ADVISORY COMMENTS

Association of Minnesota Counties – No report was provided.

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

Minnesota Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts – LeAnn Buck reported they are midway into their resolution process and thanked those that have been part of those conversations. Their MASWCD Leadership Institute in partnership with the University of Minnesota Extension Service had their graduation. Stated they are looking to schedule eight area meetings in the months of September and November. LeAnn provided an update on preliminary legislative items. Stated they are 16 years into the Clean Water Fund and have nine years to go.

Minnesota Association of Townships – Eunice Biel reported there were district meetings in August. Minnesota paid leaves take effect January 2026, there is no exception for elected officials and Townships must create a paid leave account. Townships may now apply for loans and grants for wastewater and stormwater projects. September 4th there will be a Cleark and Treasure Training for small cities and township to learn about paid leave. There is a Legislative and Research Committee meeting in Mankato on September 12th.

Minnesota Watersheds – Jan Voit reported they had their summer tour in Roseau. They had their resolutions meeting on Monday. Their annual conference is December 3rd through the 5th at Grandview Lodge in Nisswa. They will be having a joint tour in August 2026 with BWSR, the Red River Water Management Board, and the Red River Retention Authority.

Natural Resources Conservation Service – No report was provided.

Chair Holman called a recess at 10:15 a.m. and called the meeting back to order at 10:25 a.m.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Grants Program and Policy Committee

FY26-27 Technical Service Area Grants – Adam Beilke presented FY26-27 Technical Service Area Grants. Nonpoint Engineering Assistance (NPEA) - (General Fund). The Non-Point Engineering Assistance (NPEA) Grants are allocated annually to the NPEA (TSA) Joint Powers Boards for the purpose of providing technical assistance to landowners to apply conservation practices.

TSA Enhanced Technical Assistance - (Clean Water Fund). Enhanced Technical Services grants are used to invest in regional capacity across the state to efficiently accelerate projects and practices that improve or protect water resources. These grant funds are available only to Technical Service Areas.

Lori Cox asked if there is a cap per grant. Adam stated the amounts shown are the individual grants that go to each TSA. Lori asked if he could provide an example of the equipment. Adam stated it could be for survey equipment or vehicles for staff to access the sites.

Mark Zabel stated each of the TSAs is a joint organization of the SWCDs, they enhance and provide additional capacity in their technical service.

**
25-38 Moved by Ted Winter, seconded by Tom Schulz, to approve the FY26-27 Technical Service Area Grants. ***Motion passed on a roll call vote.***

Natural Resources Block Grants – Adam Beilke presented Natural Resources Block Grants (NRBG).

The NRBG is a composite of base grants available to local government units that help them implement programs designed to protect and improve water resources. The purpose of this agenda item is to authorize the Fiscal Years 2026 and 2027 NRBG programs. Appropriation language allows BWSR to authorize both years of the biennium.

**
25-39 Moved by Joe Collins, seconded by Jill Crafton, to approve the Natural Resources Block Grants. ***Motion passed on a roll call vote.***

FY26-27 Soil and Water Conservation District Conservation Delivery and Conservation Contracts Grants – Adam Beilke presented FY26-27 Soil and Water Conservation District Conservation Delivery and Conservation Contracts Grants.

Conservation Delivery Grants - Conservation Delivery Grants provide each Soil and Water Conservation District with funds for the general administration and operation of the district. These administrative and operational costs include paying for the costs of employing staff, office space, transportation, postage and utilities, and supervisors' compensation and expenses.

Conservation Contracts Grant Program - The purpose of this program is to provide grants to SWCDs so they can help local landowners or land occupiers offset the costs of installing conservation practices that protect and improve water quality by controlling soil erosion and reducing sedimentation.

Ted Winter asked if the funding source comes from the general fund. Adam stated they are general funds.

**
25-40 Moved by Eunice Biel, seconded by Jayne Hager Dee, to approve the FY26-27 Soil and Water Conservation District Conservation Delivery and Conservation Contracts Grants. ***Motion passed on a roll call vote.***

Area II Floodplain Management Grants – Adam Beilke presented Area II Floodplain Management Grants.

Area II, formed in 1978 as a non-profit joint powers entity, works to alleviate the recurrent flood problems in southwestern Minnesota. Member counties include:

- Brown
- Cottonwood
- Lac qui Parle
- Lincoln
- Lyon
- Murray
- Pipestone
- Redwood
- Yellow Medicine

BWSR oversees the administrative services funding related to the efforts of Area II and requires BWSR approval before funds can be appropriated. The funding provided to the Area II Board in FY26 and FY27 via specific legislation is in the amount of \$140,000 each year.

**
25-41 Moved by Ted Winter, seconded by Mark Zabel, to approve the Area II Floodplain Management Grants. ***Motion passed on a roll call vote.***

FY26-27 Watershed Based Implementation Funding – Julie Westerlund presented FY26-27 Watershed Based Implementation Funding.

The legislature appropriated \$88.1M for FY26-27 Watershed Based Implementation Funding. Staff have prepared program requirements and calculated allocation amounts according to the previously established funding formula. The BWSR Grants Program and Policy Committee reviewed the program requirements and draft board order on August 18, 2025 and made a recommendation that the full board approve the attached board order.

Glenn Skuta asked if Julie could speak on how past allocations were spent. Julie provided an overview of past allocations.

Ted Winter asked what the funding is. Julie stated its Clean Water Funding.

John stated there is a Board-adopted formula that determines the grant amount available to each 1W1P area.

**

25-42

Moved by LeRoy Ose, seconded by Jill Crafton, to approve the FY26-27 Watershed Based Implementation Funding. ***Motion passed on a roll call vote.***

BWSR Grants Streamlining – James Adkinson presented BWSR Grants Streamlining.

BWSR grant staff have worked to streamline grant programs in efforts to improve efficiency and clarity for grantees. This 18-month initiative was completed in June 2025 and aims to reduce discrepancies in program requirements, define requirements more clearly, and improve the overall communication of grant program information. An overview was provided to the board.

Mark Zabel appreciated clearly showing the line of what's required and what's guidance.

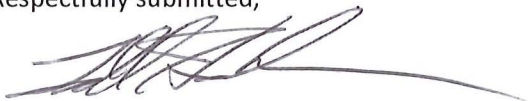
John Jaschke stated we're trying to be as consistent as we can and thanked the team for the work they put into it.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

- RIM Reserve Committee is scheduled for September 5, 2025 at 2:00 p.m. in St. Paul and by MS Teams.
- Next BWSR Meeting is scheduled for 9:00 AM, September 24, 2025, in St. Paul and by MS Teams.

Chair Holman adjourned the meeting at 11:12 AM.

Respectfully submitted,



Todd Holman
Chair