

Program Update: Clean Water Legacy Partners FY 26

The purpose of the Clean Water Legacy Partners (CWLP) program is to expand partnerships for clean water. The program is administered by the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) and seeks to protect, enhance and restore water quality in Minnesota by providing funding to partners outside the scope of BWSR’s traditional local government clients.

Fiscal year 2026, the third grant cycle of the program, arose to utilize remaining funding from FY 24/25 that was not awarded during the previous Request for Proposals (RFP). This round of funding saw a total of twenty-three applications received from Tribal and Nonprofit entities by the close of the RFP date of August 5, 2025. Tribal entities submitted five applications requesting a total of \$772,877, with enough funds available to allow all five requests to be awarded. NGO/Nonprofits submitted 18 applications totaling \$2,615,691 in requests, exceeding the available funding of \$272,075 and allowing two grants to be awarded.

| Table 1. Clean Water Legacy Partners FY 26 Application Summary | | | | | |
|---|---------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Organizations | Applications | Amount Requested | Amount Available | Difference | Awards |
| Tribal Entities | 5 | \$772,877 | \$793,950 | +\$21,073 | 5 |
| NGO/Nonprofits | 18 | \$2,615,691 | \$272,075 | -\$2,343,616 | 2 |

Table 1 – CWLP FY 26 Applications

| Table 2. Clean Water Legacy Partners FY 26 Summary of Awards | | | |
|---|--|---|--------------------|
| Grant ID | Applicant Name | Application Title | Award |
| C26-0032 | Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe | Steamboat Lake Shoreline Septic System Inventory and Assessment | \$53,727.00 |
| C26-0041 | Lower Phalen Creek | Daylighting Phalen Creek | \$218,148.00 |
| C26-0042 | Upper Red Lake Area Association | KEEP IT CLEAN 2025 - Ice is No Place for Garbage and Waste | \$75,000.00 |
| C26-0050 | Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa | Increasing Water Quality via Street Sweeper Acquisition | \$240,000.00 |
| C26-0055 | Upper Sioux Community | In-Lake Management; Proposed Actions to Reduce Adult Carp for Clean Water, habitat, and wild rice reintroduction. | \$139,150.00 |
| C26-0056 | Red Lake Nation | Clean Water Legacy Partners Infiltration Basin/Raingarden | \$250,000.00 |
| C26-0065 | Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe | Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe: Natural Shorelines | \$90,000.00 |
| Total | | | \$1,066,025 |

Table 2-CWLP FY 26 Summary of Awards

Application Summary

C26-0032 Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe
Steamboat Lake Shoreline Septic System Inventory and Assessment
\$53,727.00

The Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe plans to reduce nutrient and bacteria pollution in Steamboat Lake by conducting a septic system inventory and assessment across the Steamboat River watershed. Partnering with Cass and Hubbard Counties, the project will gather septic records, identify systems over 20 years old, and provide targeted outreach and inspection with a goal of assessing 30% of shoreline systems. This effort will raise community awareness, improve septic maintenance, and reduce pollutants entering the lake, leading to better water quality and fewer algae blooms in a waterbody of cultural importance to the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe.

C26-0041 Lower Phalen Creek
Daylighting Phalen Creek
\$218,148.00

Wakan Tipi Awanyankapi seeks support to restore the first section of Phalen Creek on Saint Paul's East Side, reconnecting the waterway that once linked Lake Phalen to the Mississippi River. This project addresses decades of industrial pollution and neglect, improves water quality, mitigates flooding, and enhances urban ecosystems for over 5,000 nearby residents. It aligns with state and local watershed plans, restores riparian habitat and migratory corridors, and honors the cultural significance of Phalen Creek to Dakota people while providing equitable access to healthy green spaces and nature-based climate solutions.

C26-0042 Upper Red Lake Area Association
Keep it Clean 2025 - Ice is No Place for Garbage and Waste
\$75,000.00

The Upper Red Lake Keep It Clean Partnership seeks to reduce human waste pollution on Upper Red Lake through a cost-share program of waste collection sites as well as education and outreach. The project aims to capture over ten tons of waste during the grant period while educating anglers on proper disposal through signage, media, and targeted advertising. Community involvement includes workshops and an end-of-season shoreline cleanup, protecting this culturally and economically important resource for Beltrami County, Red Lake Nation, and Minnesota.

C26-0050 Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa
Increasing Water Quality via Street Sweeper Acquisition
\$240,000.00

The Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa seeks to acquire a street sweeper to strengthen its program for reducing pollutants—such as sediment, trash, leaves, and nutrients—that enter storm drains and impact local lakes, rivers, and wetlands. The project emphasizes proper equipment operation, frequent sweeping, adequate disposal facilities, and staff training to ensure optimal performance and adoption of technologies that improve pollutant removal.

C26-0055 Upper Sioux Community
In-Lake Management; Proposed Actions to Reduce Adult Carp for Clean Water and Wild Rice Reintroduction
\$139,150.00

The Upper Sioux Community plans to rehabilitate Ruby Lake Pond by removing invasive carp, stabilizing the shoreline with native plantings, and reestablishing wild rice to reduce turbidity and improve water quality. The project will use pollution prevention indicators to track and demonstrate water quality improvements over time.

C26-0056 Red Lake Nation

Clean Water Legacy Partners Infiltration Basin/Raingarden

\$250,000.00

Red Lake Nation is proposing a Clean Water Legacy Grant project to install infiltration basins and raingardens across the Red Lake Reservation to filter stormwater pollutants and protect Upper and Lower Red Lake. Building on the 2025 Lower Red Lake Stormwater BMP Retrofit Study, the project partners with Red Lake DNR, HR Green, Beltrami SWCD, and local communities to promote cultural preservation through Ojibwe language signage, native plantings, and community education. This initiative addresses environmental justice, supports long-term watershed protection, and serves as a model for future water quality efforts.

C26-0065 Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe

Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe: Natural Shorelines

\$90,000.00

The Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe's Division of Resource Management plans to use this funding to restore and establish native vegetation along shorelines within Tribal boundaries. This project aims to improve water quality by reducing nutrient and sediment runoff into area lakes and engaging the community in long-term land stewardship.