

DATE: March 17, 2026  
TO: Board of Water and Soil Resources' Members, Advisors, and Staff  
FROM: John Jaschke, Executive Director   
SUBJECT: BWSR Board Meeting Notice – March 25, 2026

The Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) will meet on Wednesday, March 25, 2026, beginning at 9:00 a.m. The meeting will be held in the lower-level Board Room, at 520 Lafayette Road North, St. Paul and by Microsoft Teams. Individuals interested in attending the meeting through Teams should do so by either 1) logging into Teams through the provided [meeting link](#) or 2) join by audio only conference call by calling telephone number: 651-395-7448 and entering the conference ID: 204 685 425#.

The following information pertains to agenda items:

**COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

***RIM Reserve Committee***

1. **Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) – Shift Clean Water Fund (CWF) Wellhead Funds to Allow Expanded Conservation Practice Acquisition** – ML 2021 First Special Session, Chapter 1, Article 2, Section 6(g) appropriated funds for permanent conservation easements on wellhead protection areas or for grants to local units of government for fee title acquisition to permanently protect groundwater supply sources. Section 6(k) of the same chapter and article appropriated funds to purchase and restore permanent conservation easements under the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). Appropriation law also allows for the shift of easement funds to leverage federal funds and address high-priority needs.

CREP includes four conservation practices: CP2 – Establishment of Permanent Native Grasses (inside and outside Wellhead Protection Areas), CP21 – Filter Strips, CP23 – Wetland Restoration, Floodplain, and CP23A – Wetland Restoration, Non-Floodplain.

Shifting of the funds from wellhead easements to CREP easements will allow for leveraging of federal funds as well as meeting high-priority needs and will still allow the funds to be used for wellhead protection under CREP as well as the other approved practices and is consistent with authority in appropriation law. **DECISION ITEM**

***Central Region Committee***

1. **Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission Watershed Management Plan** – In their updated Watershed Management Plan, the Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission (BCWMC) grouped issues and goals under four main categories: waterbody and watershed quality, flooding and climate resilience, education and engagement, and organizational effectiveness. Within these categories, the Plan contains six high priority issues, as well as medium and low priority issues, and associated goals, to address over the life of the Plan. Located in the northwestern part of Hennepin County in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area, the approximately 40 square mile BCWMC will use this Plan over the next 10 years to protect the water resources of the Bassett Creek watershed. **DECISION ITEM**

### ***Southern Region Committee***

1. **Blue Earth River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan** – Blue Earth River Watershed Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan – The Blue Earth River Watershed was selected by BWSR for the One Watershed, One Plan (1W1P) Planning grant August 24, 2023. The 1W1P Operating Procedures 3.0 and 1W1P Plan Content Requirements 3.0 were followed during development. A kick-off meeting and survey were conducted in May 2024 to obtain public input. The Policy Committee, Advisory Committee, and Steering Team members attended regularly scheduled meetings and review periods in order to develop the Plan. The required public hearing was held on November 17, 2025. The Planning Partnership submitted the Blue Earth River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan to BWSR on December 23, 2025, for review and approval. The Southern Regional Committee (Committee) met on February 19, 2026, to review the content of the Plan, State agency comments on the Plan, and to make a recommendation for approval. The Committee recommends approval by the full Board. ***DECISION ITEM***
2. **Redwood River Watershed Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan** – The Redwood River Watershed was selected by BWSR for the One Watershed, One Plan (1W1P) Planning grant in August 2023. The 1W1P Operating Procedures and Plan Content Requirements 3.0 were followed for the planning process. Three public kick-off meetings were held and surveys were collected June 2024 to obtain public input. The Policy Committee, Advisory Committee, and Steering Team members attended regularly scheduled meetings and review periods to develop the Plan. The required public hearing was held on November 10, 2025. The Planning Partnership submitted the Redwood River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan to BWSR on December 19, 2025, for review and approval. The Southern Regional Committee (Committee) met on February 19, 2026, to review the content of the Plan, State agency comments on the Plan, and to make a recommendation for approval. The Committee recommends approval by the full Board. ***DECISION ITEM***

### **NEW BUSINESS RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. **BWSR Pollinator Conservation and Biodiversity Efforts** – The decline of pollinator populations has led to a movement for action across Minnesota. Local partners, legislators and the public have looked to BWSR to provide guidance and resources to address pollinator declines and executive orders from Governor's Dayton and Walz directed BWSR to incorporate pollinator habitat across programs. Due to the importance of healthy biological systems in supporting water and soil resources, and rapid declines in plant and wildlife populations BWSR's efforts have expanded to a "Living Landscape Initiative." This initiative is focused on pollinator conservation, but also supporting overall biodiversity and building the resiliency of landscapes. Several BWSR programs are used to address needs across a wide range of landscape types in collaboration with local partners. This presentation focuses on five priorities identified in BWSR's updated Pollinator Plan, and discuss next steps for supporting pollinators, biodiversity, and landscape resiliency. ***INFORMATION ITEM***
2. **Climate Action Framework 2.0 Overview** – Minnesota's Climate Action Framework is the state's plan to reduce climate pollution, also known as greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and prepare communities for climate change in ways that benefit all Minnesotans. The framework builds on Minnesota's longstanding leadership in addressing climate change and aligns the state around the path forward. This framework comes out of the contributions of hundreds of Minnesotans. It invites all of us to contribute to creating the climate future in which everyone is healthy and safe in the face of climate change. The urgency of climate action is underscored by Minnesota's 2025 GHG inventory. Minnesota's emissions have decreased 18% from 2005 to 2022, but emissions increased 5.1% between 2020 and 2022, as activity rebounded following the COVID-19 pandemic. While the overall emissions trend is downward, Minnesotans are also feeling the impacts of climate change more acutely, with more unhealthy air quality, more extreme rains, and more costs associated with these events. The Climate Change Subcabinet has released the 2026 Climate Action Framework to reflect new opportunities, the progress Minnesota has made, and the need for accelerated action. The updated framework includes new GHG forecasting, a stronger focus on collaboration with local governments, and health and economic benefits for our communities. ***INFORMATION ITEM***

If you have any questions regarding the agenda, please feel free to contact me at 651-539-2587. We look forward to seeing you on March 25th.

**BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES  
520 LAFAYETTE ROAD NORTH  
ST. PAUL, MN 55155  
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25, 2026**

**PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

**9:00 AM CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

**MINUTES OF JANUARY 28, 2026 BOARD MEETING**

**PUBLIC ACCESS FORUM (10-minute agenda time, two-minute limit/person)**

**REPORTS**

- Chair & Administrative Advisory Committee – Todd Holman
- Executive Director – John Jaschke
- Audit & Oversight Committee – Joe Collins
- Dispute Resolution and Compliance Report – Travis Germundson/Rich Sve
- Grants Program & Policy Committee – Mark Zabel
- RIM Reserve Committee – Jayne Hager Dee
- Water Management & Strategic Planning Committee – Joe Collins
- Wetland Conservation Committee – Jill Crafton
- Buffers, Soils & Drainage Committee – LeRoy Ose
- Drainage Work Group – Neil Peterson/Tom Gile

**AGENCY REPORTS**

- Minnesota Department of Agriculture – Thom Petersen
- Minnesota Department of Health – Steve Robertson
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources – Sarah Strommen
- Minnesota Extension – Joel Larson
- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency – Katrina Kessler

**ADVISORY COMMENTS**

- Association of Minnesota Counties – Brian Martinson
- Minnesota Association of Conservation District Employees – Mike Schultz
- Minnesota Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts – LeAnn Buck
- Minnesota Association of Townships – Eunice Biel
- Minnesota Watersheds – Jan Voit
- Natural Resources Conservation Service – Troy Daniell

**COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

***RIM Reserve Committee***

1. Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) – Shift Clean Water Fund (CWF) Wellhead Funds to Allow Expanded Conservation Practice Acquisition – Sharon Doucette – ***DECISION ITEM***

**Central Region Committee**

1. Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission Watershed Management Plan – Marcey Westrick – **DECISION ITEM**

**Southern Region Committee**

1. Blue Earth River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan – Ted Winter and Jill Sackett Eberhart – **DECISION ITEM**
2. Redwood River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan – John Shea – **DECISION ITEM**

**NEW BUSINESS**

1. BWSR Pollinator Conservation and Biodiversity Efforts – Dan Shaw, Erin Loeffler, Jason Beckler and Megan Reich (Metro Blooms) – **INFORMATION ITEM**
2. Climate Action Framework 2.0 Overview – Suzanne Rhees and MPCA Representative – **INFORMATION ITEM**

**UPCOMING MEETINGS**

- Wetland Conservation Committee meeting is scheduled for April 1<sup>st</sup> at 9:00 a.m. in St. Paul and by MS Teams.
- BWSR Board meeting is scheduled for April 22<sup>nd</sup> at 9:00 a.m. in St. Paul and by MS Teams.
- Dispute Resolution Committee Hearing is scheduled for April 23<sup>rd</sup> at 10:00 a.m. in St. Paul.
- Dispute Resolution Committee Hearing is scheduled for May 8<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. in St. Paul.

**ADJOURN**

**BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES  
520 LAFAYETTE ROAD NORTH  
LOWER-LEVEL BOARD ROOM  
ST. PAUL, MN 55155  
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 28, 2026**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Eunice Biel, Jayne Hager Dee, Jill Crafton, Joe Collins, Kevin Wilson, LeRoy Ose, Lori Cox, Mark Zabel, Mike Runk, Neil Peterson, Rich Sve, Ron Staples, Ted Winter, Todd Holman, Tom Schulz, Jason Garms, DNR; Joel Larson, University of Minnesota Extension; Katrina Kessler, MPCA; Steve Robertson, MDH; Thom Petersen, MDA

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Justin Hanson, Rachel Mueller, Tom Gile, Travis Germundson, Marcey Westrick, Andrea Fish, Maggie Karschnia, Josh Norman, Donna Caughey, Dave Weirens, Jared House, Melissa Sjolund, Ara Gallo, Brad Wozney, Mandy Duong, Karli Swenson, Don Bajumpaa, Denise Lauerman, Renee Sutton, Sharon Doucette, Adam Beilke, Jenny Gieseke, Ed Lenz, Ryan Hughes, Shane Bugeja

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Brian Martinson, AMC; LeAnn Buck, MASWCD; Sheila Vanney, MASWCD; Kevin Paap, Blue Earth County; Colby Schroeder, Renville SWCD; Annie Felix, MDH; Yellow Medicine Watershed, Amanda Bilek, Randy and Carrie Freiborg

Chair Todd Holman called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM

#### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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26-01 **ADOPTION OF AGENDA - Moved by Mark Zabel, seconded by Ron Staples, to adopt the agenda as presented. *Motion passed on a roll call vote.***

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26-02 **MINUTES OF DECEMBER 18, 2025 BOARD MEETING – Moved by Joe Collins, seconded by Mike Runk, to approve the minutes of December 18, 2025, as amended. *Motion passed on a roll call vote.***

Lori Cox joined the meeting at 9:05 a.m.

#### PUBLIC ACCESS FORUM

No members of the public provided comments to the board.

#### INTRODUCTION OF NEW STAFF

Marcey Westrick introduced Maggie Karschnia, Clean Water Coordinator and Josh Norman, Board Conservationist. Andrea Fish introduced Donna Caughey, Contracts Specialist.

Board Members welcomed new staff.

#### 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 he attended the Audit and Oversight Committee and there is an item on the agenda today. He did not attend the EQB meeting last week.

**Executive Director’s Report** – Justin Hanson reported he appreciates the opportunity to attend the board meeting today. Reviewed the Day of Packet that included Snap Shots, the Campaign Finance Board notification, and Government Bonding Recommendations. Justin stated they met with the Local Water Roundtable to hear some of their priorities for the upcoming legislative session.

**Audit and Oversight Committee** – Joe Collins reported they met in January and have an item on the agenda.

**Dispute Resolution and Compliance Report** – Rich Sve reported they have one appeal pending and the Dispute Resolution Committee has not met. They will be having two hearings, 25-9 and 25-10 that are tentatively scheduled to be heard in April.

**Grants Program & Policy Committee** – Mark Zabel reported they met earlier this month and set their schedule for the year, the third Monday of the month. They have four items on the agenda for today.

**RIM Reserve Committee** – Jayne Hager Dee reported they have one item on the agenda for today.

**Water Management & Strategic Planning Committee** – Joe Collins reported they met in January. They had an early discussion to guide Soil and Water Conservation District Comprehensive Plans through the board approval process.

**Wetland Conservation Committee** – Jill Crafton reported they will be meeting February 17<sup>th</sup>.

**Buffers, Soils & Drainage Committee** – LeRoy Ose reported they met earlier in the month and have items on the agenda for today.

**Drainage Work Group (DWG)** – Neil Peterson reported they met in December, the same day as our Board meeting, and had a discussion on future work topics including some discussion on a level of interest for a summary of structure. Tom Gile reported they spent time discussing topics that they'll be preparing for the next drainage workgroup season that will start in June. The January meeting was canceled.

Lori Cox requested in the future that we try not to hold meetings at the same times as other Board meetings.

#### **AGENCY REPORTS**

**Minnesota Department of Agriculture** – Thom Petersen reported the Governor and Mayer Fry received a letter from USDA freezing all their funds and grants, which is 13% of their budget. At the same time, staff were processing claims with the USDA and some are being paid. They are working through this with the congressional delegation on what it means. They released continuous living cover grants last week. Comments for the Ground Water Protection Rule is open until March 12<sup>th</sup>.

Mark Zabel asked if the USDA freeze includes contracts with farmers that have been signed. Commissioner Petersen stated it's not clear but think it's not for farm programs but grants that go to an agency.

Jill Crafton asked about the conservation titles in the farm bill and if they are frozen or if there is money for those items. Commissioner Petersen stated it isn't clear.

Jason Garms stated farmer payments are going through.

Katrina Kessler joined the meeting at 9:37 a.m.

**Minnesota Department of Health** – Steve Robertson reported a couple grant programs will be opening in the coming weeks. The Groundwater Restoration and Protection Strategies (GRAPS) are accelerated implementation grants and opens February 16<sup>th</sup> through March 27<sup>th</sup>, more information available here: <https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/groundwater/accimpgrant.html>. The Source Water Protection Grants are transient grants that open March 2026. The Implementation Grants open April 2026 and the Competitive Grants open May 2026, more information available here: <https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/swp/grants.html>. They have been

working closely with the Minnesota Rural Water Association; they have been leading efforts and developing promotional materials to help support soil health initiatives in the state.

**Minnesota Department of Natural Resources** – Jason Garms reported there was an Agriculture Summit in Fergus Falls last week organized by Representative Jeff Backer. The DNR is proposing a rule change for catching walleye, they are changing the limit from six to four and the comment period is currently open. They are going into the legislative session with light and uncontroversial policy changes.

Lori Cox asked who was invited to the Agriculture Summit. Jason stated agencies and legislature were the majority.

Jill Crafton asked if the front facing sonar is on their radar. Jason stated it is something they watch.

Rich Sve left the meeting at 9:50 a.m.

**Minnesota Extension** – Joel Larson reported they had their annual Soil Management Summit on January 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> in Fargo North Dakota and had a great attendance. They are having their annual Nutrient Management Conference on February 3<sup>rd</sup> in Mankato. February 3<sup>rd</sup> is the Women in Agriculture conference, and the Nitrogen Conference is on February 17<sup>th</sup> in St. Cloud. There is a series of Northern Soil Compaction Webinars that are being held on the four Tuesdays in February. Registrations are available on the University's Extension website.

**Minnesota Pollution Control Agency** – Katrina Kessler reported next week she will be participating in a Hypoxia Task Force for the entire Mississippi River that drains to the Gulf. EPA previewed that nationally they are seeing nitrogen trends meeting the interim goal of the hypoxia task force. Stated they are working on an update to the Feed Lot Rules that are 25 years old. The Climate Action Framework for the state is on the cusp of an update and they are hoping to announce it in the next couple weeks and have an event. She stated the Climate Smart Foods Systems Grants are going out the door.

Jill stated there are partnerships with NGOs and the DNR with people speaking of their concerns of muscle beds and things that are important for the river and cleaning it out. Jill asked if more research is being presented. Katrina stated that the Hypoxia Task Force is focused on phosphorus and nitrogen. There are regional efforts within states around the expanded lists of pollutants and can look into what regional group she could connect Jill with.

Joe Collins stated MPCA did a presentation on Area C in St. Paul and did a good job explaining the issues to citizens on a complicated piece of land.

#### **ADVISORY COMMENTS**

**Association of Minnesota Counties** – Brian Martinson reported the Local Water Round Table met and continues to be a productive group. AMC hosted annual leadership meetings with environmental state agencies and had opportunities to talk about work they are collaborating on and protentional new efforts. Brian highlighted some of the topics they discussed with agencies. The Buffer Law Guidance is on the agenda today and they have been engaged and have had thorough discussions about the changes. The AMC Drainage conference is taking place today and tomorrow.

Neil Peterson stated AMC does a great job and he supports the Buffer Law on the agenda for today.

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

**Minnesota Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts** – LeAnn Buck reported the conversations at the Local Water Round Table has helped meet the needs of technical and financial assistance to landowners and appreciates the work of that group. They are looking forward to working with the Clean Water Council as that provides predictability, especially for financial assistance when they're looking at One Watershed One Plan delivery. She stated it is a bonding year and will be looking at RIM Reserve, the SWCD asset preservation components, and their SWCDA. LeAnn thanked individuals and districts for taking the initiative in making soil health a major program.

**Minnesota Association of Townships** – Eunice Biel reported Township Officers are invited to join the Minnesota Association of Townships for Township Day at the Capitol on Monday, March 2<sup>nd</sup> in St. Paul. They will also hold one day in-person workshops called Spring Short Courses statewide . The annual meeting and elections will be held on March 10<sup>th</sup>. They will have their Township Tuesday Zoom calls for updates on the most recent Township information on the first and third Tuesday of each month at 10:00 a.m.

**Minnesota Watersheds** – No report was provided.

**Natural Resources Conservation Service** – No report was provided.

Chair Holman called a recess at 10:21 a.m. and called the meeting back to order at 10:32 a.m.

Neil Peterson left the meeting at 10:30 a.m.

## **COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Buffers Soils and Drainage Committee**

**Revised Buffer Program Procedures** – Tom Gile presented the Revised Buffer Program Procedures Approval.

The Board of Water and Soil Resources (Board) has the responsibility to oversee the provisions of Minnesota Statute 103F.48.

In 2017 via Board Resolution #17-62 BWSR adopted nine buffer procedures.

Minnesota Statutes Section 103F.48, Subd 1(J) was revised in 2024 to expand the definition of “With Jurisdiction” which means “a board determination that the county or watershed district has adopted and is implementing a rule, ordinance, or official controls providing procedures for the issuance of administrative penalty orders, enforcement, and appeals for purposes of this section and section 103B.101. This determination is revocable by board action if the adoption and implementation of rule, ordinance, or official controls are not in compliance with the requirements of this section or board-adopted procedures.”

Staff have reviewed the existing buffer procedures to ensure they align with current Minnesota Statutes Section 103F.48 and to update as needed to ensure SWCDs, Counties, Watershed Districts, and BWSR staff have sufficient clarity and direction to continue implementing and enforcing the law.

At its October 22, 2025, meeting the Board authorized staff to publish a request for public comment on the revised draft procedures packet in the State Register.

The revised procedures were posted in the State Register and on the BWSR website from October 27, 2025, through December 10, 2025.

The Buffer Soils and Drainage Committee, at their January 7, 2026, meeting reviewed the draft Buffer Program Procedures along with proposed revisions resulting from comments and recommend the attached updates for approval.

Jill Crafton asked if there is any place where we'd want to know the outcomes of what's in the ground. Tom stated there is nothing specific that speaks to the effectiveness from a water quality perspective that he's aware of. Their focus is largely on the enforcement and the effectiveness of whether or not individual parcels are compliant.

LeRoy Ose has observed over the years where the side of a ditch has been broken down and almost part way up the road in places.

Lori Cox asked about procedure 10 where BWSR staff will contact the local government unit in writing and asked if there is a timeframe within this. Tom stated there is not a timeframe and it can be situational.

Ron Staples commented with buffers being at 99% compliant, revoking the jurisdictions of a county or watershed district is not going to be very popular. Lori stated if they follow the process and procedures of the buffer law it shouldn't get there.

Tom Gile thanked those who participated in outreach opportunities for their time and efforts.

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26-03 Moved by Ted Winter, seconded by Kevin Wilson, to approve the amended Revised Buffer Program Procedures. ***Motion passed on a roll call vote.***

**Soil Health Legislative Report** – Jared House presented the Soil Health Legislative Report.

This report provides an account of how the 2023 General Fund appropriation of \$21.114 million was utilized for soil health initiatives. A draft of the report was shared with the Buffers, Soils, and Drainage Committee on December 3, 2025, and was transmitted to the legislature prior to the January 16 deadline, as prescribed by the state.

Joe Collins commented that it's important to programs where we get money back.

Lori Cox asked if there was any determination in the funding that says this needs to be a sustained practice. Jared stated they are seeing some situations where a single year contract works best for some but are also seeing contracts that go up to December of 2028.

Mark Zabel stated there may be more accomplishments than we are taking credit for.

#### **Grants Program and Policy Committee**

**Clean Water Legacy Partners Program FY27 Program Authorization** – Ara Gallo and Melissa Sjolund presented the Clean Water Legacy Partners Program FY27 Program Authorization.

The Clean Water Legacy Partners (CWLP) program was established to address gaps in Minnesota's water management framework by advancing implementation of high-priority water quality projects through Tribal Nations and NGOs. Since FY23 CWLP has demonstrated strong alignment with state, local, and Tribal water management plans and delivered measurable water quality outcomes and expanded partnerships. In FY27 eligibility for CWLP is open to Tribes and NGOs with \$1,155,434 in funding

available. Ranking Criteria has been developed by staff and recommended by the Grants Program and Policy Committee.

Lori Cox asked Commissioner Kessler if they anticipate any expansion of the environmental justice. Commissioner Kessler stated they are not proposing any changes to environmental justice statues.

Jill Crafton asked how this request is being advertised. Ara stated it goes out in grants quarterly, GovDelivery, it's on the BWSR's apply for grants webpage, and Ara and Melissa do outreach with current and former applicants, and NGO and tribal partners.

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26-04 Moved by Thom Petersen, seconded by Mike Runk, to approve the Clean Water Legacy Partners Program FY27 Program Authorization. ***Motion passed on a roll call vote.***

**FY 2027 Clean Water Fund Projects and Practices Grants Program Recommendations** – Brad Wozney presented the FY 2027 Clean Water Fund Projects and Practices Grants Program Recommendations.

The board order authorizes the competitive FY 2027 Clean Water Fund Projects and Practices Grants Program and authorizes staff to finalize and issue a Request for Proposals. The Grants Program and Policy Committee reviewed program materials on December 18, 2025, and January 14, 2026, and recommends approval of the attached order to the board.

Jill Crafton asked if this is an outgrowth from 2010 when they were making biennial requests to find out what cities or larger districts wanted to do. Brad stated these are based on implementation plans. The more specific they can be with their plan citations, the more competitive they can be.

Joe Collins commented that he's glad to see they're putting money in to deal with nitrates. He believes they need to deal with environmental justice areas. He hasn't seen additional language before describing the outreach efforts to support the project beyond the standard and thinks it's a good idea.

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26-05 Moved by Thom Petersen, seconded by Joe Collins, to approve the FY 2027 Clean Water Fund Projects and Practices Grants Program Recommendations. ***Motion passed on a roll call vote.***

**Red River Basin Commission FY26/27 Grant Approval** – Justin Hanson presented the Red River Basin Commission FY26/27 Grant Approval.

In 2025 the Legislature appropriated funds to the Board for grants to the Red River Basin Commission (RRBC) for waters quality and floodplain management, including administration of programs. The RRBC has submitted an updated report of 2024 activities related to their Natural Resources Framework plan and has developed a work plan and budget for 2026 and 2027. The RRBC has secured matching fund commitments from the State of North Dakota and Province of Manitoba. BWSR staff have reviewed these materials and found that they are consistent with previous materials submitted to secure these funds.

The Grants Program and Policy Committee met January 14, 2026, reviewed the Board Order, and authorized the FY2026/27 grant to the Red River Basin Commission to the full Board. The Committee recommends approval by the full Board.

Jill Crafton stated the cooperation was good.

LeRoy Ose stated North Dakota does a lot with soil health.

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26-06 Moved by Jayne Hager Dee, seconded by Ron Staples, to approve the Red River Basin Commission FY26/27 Grant Approval. ***Motion passed on a roll call vote.***

**Bridging Conservation Grant Program** – Mandy Duong presented the Bridging Conservation Grant Program.

The Laws of Minnesota 2023, Chapter 60, Article 1, Section 3, subd. 6 appropriated \$250,000 for BWSR to create new or expand existing outreach and education programs for non-native English-speaking communities. The Bridging Conservation Grant Program supports education and outreach activities regarding conservation of land and water resources. On January 14, 2026, the Grants Program and Policy Committee reviewed the proposed Bridging Conservation Program draft board order and ranking criteria and recommended approval to the Board.

Jayne Hager Dee asked about the word draft on the board order. Mandy stated it was listed as such in preparation for finalization.

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26-07 Moved by Thom Petersen, seconded by Joe Collins, to approve the Bridging Conservation Grant Program. ***Motion passed on a roll call vote.***

**RIM Reserve Committee**

**Easement Alteration Request – RIM Easement #65-08-02-01** – Karli Swenson presented the Easement Alteration Request – RIM Easement #65-08-02-01.

BWSR acquired easement #65-08-02-01 in Renville County on October 31, 2002. This perpetual easement was acquired as part of the CREP program and consists of 21.9 acres of land extending from Chetomba Creek to the township road.

The current landowners, Mr. and Mrs. Freiborg, own and reside on the family farm located about a half mile south of the existing easement. With the farm being transferred to the Freiborgs' son, Mr. and Mrs. Freiborg are planning to relocate and would like to build a new home nearby. Their preferred site to build the new home is on the existing RIM easement.

The landowner is requesting to release 5.8 acres adjacent to the township road from the existing RIM easement to build the new home. The area proposed for release consists of 3.5 acres of prior cropland that has been planted to native grasses, and 2.3 acres of mature cottonwood trees that were existing when the RIM easement was acquired (non-cropland). The proposed building site would lie approximately 2,000 feet from Chetomba Creek, with the remainder of the RIM easement buffering the land between the creek and the building site.

The landowner is proposing to add 13.8 acres to the easement as replacement. The replacement lands are approximately 0.4 miles south of the existing easement, on a separate parcel adjacent to the Freiborg's family farm. 11.1 acres of the proposed replacement lands are currently in a CRP contract that expires in 2033. The CRP land consists of restored grassland that the landowners have enhanced by planting a variety of native forbs to improve biodiversity at their own cost, to improve the habitat. The remainder of the replacement lands are non-cropland that has been planted to cedar trees to provide additional cover for wildlife. The re-placement land lies approximately 1,500 feet from Chetomba Creek.

The proposal constitutes a 2.4:1 replacement ratio. This exceeds the required replacement ratios in the Easement Alteration Policy. CRP land is considered "land with crop history" according to RIM statute so the CRP acres would meet the 2:1 replacement requirement for cropland acres. This proposal would result in a net gain of 8 easement acres, on land that could otherwise be returned to production when the CRP contract expires in 2033.

When asked why the new home could not be built on other lands owned by the Freiborgs, the landowner noted an airstrip immediately adjacent to the other land in their ownership. The airstrip is operated by a local crop-dusting business. According to the landowner, the planes taking off and landing on the airstrip would make building a home on or near the replacement lands unsuitable. The landowners also see benefit from the mature cottonwood trees on the existing RIM easement providing a windbreak on the proposed new building site. Building a home on lands currently in crop production would not have similar wind protection.

The DNR area wildlife supervisor has submitted a letter in support of this easement alteration request citing that the location and habitat value of the replacement lands would provide better protection for local wildlife. The Renville SWCD board has also submitted a letter in support of this easement alteration request, noting that the replacement lands consist of similar habitat to the existing easement.

Because this request was received by BWSR prior to the effective date of the recently revised Easement Alteration Policy, this request must be considered by the board under the conditions of the previous version of the policy adopted in 2017. This request meets the requirements of the 2017 easement alteration policy.

*Land replacement ratios:*

To release 3.5 acres of land with crop history: required replacement 2:1 = 7 acres of land with crop history.

To release 2.3 acres of land without crop history: required replacement 2:1 = 4.6 acres of land with or without crop history.

Total required replacement land: 11.6 acres.

CRP land offered as replacement 11.1 acres + non-cropland offered as replacement 2.7 acres = 13.8 acres.

Jason Garms commented they had other options of building on crop land.

Lori Cox stated she didn't see something that talks about hardship and agrees there were other options.

LeRoy Ose stated DNR recommended it and its increasing what the goal of RIM is at no cost.

Jayne Hager Dee commented that the DNR supported it vs. recommended it.

Jason stated the DNR approval is to look at it through wildlife habitat and possible water quality too.

Thom Petersen referenced the letter of recommendation from the Water District.

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26-08 Moved by LeRoy Ose, seconded by Thom Petersen, to approve the Easement Alteration Request – RIM Easement #65-08-02-01. **Motion passed on a roll call vote.**

**Audit and Oversight Committee**

**2025 Performance Review and Assistance Program Legislative Report** – Don Bajumpaa presented the 2025 Performance Review and Assistance Program Legislative Report

The Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) is required to provide a report annually to the legislature on Performance Review and Assistance Program activities as prescribed by Minnesota Statutes Chapter 103B.102, Sub-division 3, effective February 1, 2008. BWSR staff have prepared a report that describes the program activities for 2025, including summaries of the activities of BWSRs local government partners, and goals and objectives for future PRAP activities. The report was presented to and has a recommendation from the BWSR Audit and Oversight Committee for BWSR Board approval.

Lori Cox asked about the 10% of no information was provided and if an example could be given. Don stated because of the way plans were structured or organized they didn't have a way to quantify progress, and it wasn't measurable.

Lori Cox asked if we're helping people by using standardized templates. Don stated it depends on the complexity of the plan, each one is unique.

Joe Collins commented that the work of the LGUs is the bases on everything we talked about today. Don has done a lot of work, and this report is solid.

\*\*  
26-09 Moved by Joe Collins, seconded by Mark Zabel, to approve the 2025 Performance Review and Assistance Program Legislative Report. **Motion passed on a roll call vote.**

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Vice Chair Nomination** – Justin Hanson presented the Vice Chair Nomination.

According to bylaws, the Vice Chair will be elected to a two-year term by the members of the Board. Nominations will be made at the meeting. After the vote to close nominations if there is more than one nomination voting ballots will be mailed to board members along with a prepaid envelope to return their ballot by March 1, 2026. The Vice Chair will be announced by the March board meeting if a ballot is required.

Chair Holman thanked Rich Sve for serving as Vice Chair.

Chair Holman nominated Jayne Hager Dee.

There were no additional nominations and Chair Holman closed the nominations.

Moved by LeRoy Ose, seconded by Mike Runk, to close nominations for Vice Chair.

Mark Zabel stated in Roberts Rule, when only one nominee is put up and the bylaws do not require a ballot, the chair can take a voice vote, or can declare that the nominee is elected, thus effecting the election by unanimous consent or acclamation. The motion to close nominations should not be used as a means of moving the election of the candidate in such a case.

LeRoy Ose and Mike Runk rescinded their motion.

Chair Holman declared Jayne Hager Dee Vice Chair.

**UPCOMING MEETINGS**

- Wetland Conservation Committee is scheduled for February 17th at 1:00 p.m.
- BWSR Board meeting is scheduled for March 25th at 9:00 a.m. in St. Paul and by MS Teams.

Chair Holman adjourned the meeting at 12:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Todd Holman  
Chair

## BOARD MEETING AGENDA ITEM

**Agenda Item Title:** Dispute Resolution/Compliance Report

**Meeting Date:** March 25, 2026

**Agenda Category:**

- Committee Recommendation     New Business     Old Business

**Item Type:**

- Decision     Discussion     Information     Non-Public Data

**Keywords for Electronic Searchability:** Wetland Conservation Act Appeals/Buffer Compliance

**Section/Region:** Resource Conservation/Central

**Contact:** Travis Germundson

**Prepared by:** Travis Germundson

**Reviewed by:**

**Presented by:** Rich Sve, DRC Chair

**Time requested:** 5 minutes

**Attachments:**

- Resolution     Order     Map     Other supporting information

**Fiscal/Policy Impact:**

- None     Capital Budget  
 Amended Policy Request     Outdoor Heritage Fund Budget  
 New Policy Request     Clean Water Fund Budget  
 General Fund Budget     Other:

### ACTION REQUESTED

None

### LINKS TO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

See attached report.

### SUMMARY *(Consider: history, reason for consideration now, alternatives evaluated, basis for recommendation)*

The report provides a monthly update on the number of appeals filed with the Board of Water and Soil Resources and summary on buffer compliance/enforcement actions statewide.

## Dispute Resolution and Compliance Report

March 10, 2026

By: Travis Germundson

**Four** new appeals have been filed since the previous report, bringing the total number of pending appeals to **12**.

Format note: ~~New appeals that have been filed since last report to the Board. Appeals that have been decided since last report to the Board.~~

~~File 26-4 (February 6, 2026) This is an appeal of a WCA Replacement Order for a property located in Mille Lacs County. The Replacement Order regards the unauthorized impact of 36,390 sq. ft. of wetland impact. The petition contends that the area is not wetland, and any such activity is exempt. The petition indicates that an application for a no-loss has been submitted to the local unit of government (LGU) concurrently with the appeal. Status: The appeal was placed in abeyance pending LGU's decision on an after-the-fact no-loss application.~~

~~File 26-4 (February 6, 2026) This is an appeal of a WCA Notice of Decision for a property in Otter Tail County. The appeal challenges the county's denial of an after-the-fact no-loss decision. The petition contends that the alleged wetland fill material currently located on the property existed prior to the purchase of the property by the appellant. This involves the same property and wetland area associated with a pending appeal of a Restoration Order (Appeal File 25-12). Status: The appeal was denied.~~

~~File 26-3 (February 6, 2026) This is an appeal of a WCA Notice of Decision for a property in Otter Tail County. The appeal challenges the county's denial of an after-the-fact no-loss decision. The petition contends that the alleged wetland fill material currently located on the property existed prior to the purchase of the property by the appellant. This involves the same property and wetland area associated with a pending appeal of a Restoration Order (Appeal File 25-11). Status: The appeal was denied.~~

~~File 26-2 (February 6, 2026) This is an appeal of a WCA Notice of Decision for a property in Otter Tail County. The appeal challenges the county's partial approval of an after-the-fact no-loss decision. The county granted the approval of a 5-foot-wide path and required the removal of all remaining fill material placed outside that footprint. The petition contends that the alleged wetland fill material currently located on the property existed prior to the purchase of the property by the appellant. This involves the same property and wetland area associated with a pending appeal of a Restoration Order (Appeal File 25-13). Status: The appeal was denied.~~

File 26-1 (January 8, 2026) This is an appeal of a WCA Replacement Order in Otter Tail County. The Replacement Order regards the unauthorized impact of 0.8 acres of wetland impact. The petition contends that the area is not wetland and if any impact occurred in wetland, such activity is exempt. The petition indicates that an application for a no-loss has been submitted to the local unit of government (LGU) concurrently with the appeal. Status: The appeal was placed in abeyance pending submission of a complete after-the-fact application and for the LGU to issue a final decision on the after-the-fact application.

File 25-18 (December 12, 2025) This is an appeal of a WCA No-loss decision in Pine County. The appeal challenges the County's denial of a no-loss decision, asserting that the wetland areas in question are incidental. This involves the same property and wetland area associated with a pending appeal of a WCA Restoration Order (Appeal File 25-8) Status: The appeal was remanded back to the local unit of government to develop an adequate record that considers a written Technical Evaluation Panel report.

File 25-17 (December 11, 2025) This is an appeal of a WCA Restoration Order in Sherburne County. The Restoration Order regards the unauthorized impact of approximately 3.5 acres of wetland. The petition contends that the area is not wetland, and any excavation/drainage in or around the area qualifies for a no-loss. The petition also indicates that an application for a no-loss has been submitted to the local unit of government concurrently with the appeal. *Status: The appeal was placed in abeyance for the local unit of government to issue a final decision on the after-the-fact application.*

File 25-16 (November 21, 2025) This is an appeal of a WCA Replacement Plan decision for a property in Crow Wing County. The appeal challenges the denial of a replacement plan application for the development of a residential lot. According to the county the lot is subject to existing development restrictions. *Status: The appeal was placed in abeyance pending the local unit of government's (LGU) decision on a local building permit appeal. The LGU denied the building permit appeal and now that decision is being challenged in District Court.*

File 25-13 (October 23, 2025) This is an appeal of a WCA Restoration Order for a property located in Otter Tail County. The Restoration Order regards the placement of 2,000 sq. ft. of fill in a wetland adjacent to Long Lake. The petition contends that the current landowners are not responsible for the alleged violation. *Status: The appeal was placed in abeyance pending the local unit of government's (LGU) decision on the after-the-fact exemption and no-loss application submitted concurrently with the appeal. The LGU approved in part the no-loss application and now that decision has been applied (see appeal File 26-2).*

File 25-12 (October 22, 2025) This is an appeal of a WCA Restoration Order for a property located in Otter Tail County. The Restoration Order regards the placement of 3,400 sq. ft. of fill in a wetland associated with two areas adjacent to Long Lake. The petition contends that the current landowners are not responsible for the alleged violation. *Status: The appeal was placed in abeyance pending the local unit of government's (LGU) decision on the after-the-fact exemption and no-loss application submitted concurrently with the appeal. The LGU denied the no-loss application and now that decision has been applied (see appeal File 26-4).*

File 25-11 (September 25, 2025) This is an appeal of a WCA Restoration Order for a property located in Otter Tail County. The Restoration Order regards the placement of 4,000 sq. ft. of fill in wetland adjacent to Long Lake. The petition contends that the current landowners are not responsible for the alleged violation. *Status: The appeal was placed in abeyance pending the local unit of government's (LGU) decision on the after-the-fact exemption and no-loss application submitted concurrently with the appeal. The LGU denied the no-loss application and now that decision has been applied (see appeal File 26-3).*

File 25-10 (August 29, 2025) This is an appeal of a WCA Notice of Decision for a property located in Brown County. The appeal challenges the denial of an after-the-fact exemption and no-loss determination. The appeal contends that the local administrative process is flawed and disputes the conclusion that the property does not qualify for the agricultural activities' exemption. This appeal involves the same property and wetland area associated with a pending appeal of a WCA Restoration Order (File 25-7). *Status: A decision to grant and hear the appeal was made on September 22, 2025. A hearing before the Dispute Resolution Committee is scheduled to take place on May 8, 2026 to hear the appeal.*

File 25-9 (August 25, 2025) This is an appeal of a WCA no-loss decision for a property located in Morrison County. The appeal challenges the approval of a no loss decision that was made under remand (File 24-9) for a township cartway. The petition contends that the incidental wetland determination is being applied in error. *Status: A decision to grant and hear the appeal was made on*

September 17, 2025. A hearing before the Dispute Resolution Committee is scheduled to take place on April 23, 2023 to hear the appeal.

File 25-8 (July 24, 2025) This is an appeal of a WCA Restoration Order for property located in Pine County. The Restoration Order regards the placement of 62,640 sq. ft. of fill in wetland associated with a housing development. *Status: The appeal has been placed in abeyance and the Restoration Order stayed for the submittal of a complete application and final decision by the local unit of government (LGU). An application for an after-the-fact no-loss determination was denied by the LGU on November 18, 2025 and that decision was appealed and remanded back to the LGU (File 25-18).*

File 25-7 (June 6, 2025) This 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 a wetland associated with the expansion of a Campground/RV Park. The petition contends that the applicant still operates a farming operation that qualifies for an agricultural activities' exemption. An application for exemption, and no-loss have been submitted to the local unit of government (LGU) concurrently with the appeal. *Status: The appeal was placed in abeyance pending LGU's final decision on the after-the-fact exemption and no-loss application. The LGU denied the application. That decision was appealed and then granted to be heard by the Dispute Resolution Committee (File 25-10).*

Summary Table for Appeals

Type of Decision	Total for Calendar Year 2025	Total for Calendar Year 2026
Order in favor of appellant	1	
Order not in favor of appellant	4	3
Order Modified	1	
Order Remanded	1	
Order Place Appeal in Abeyance	4	2
Negotiated Settlement		
Withdrawn/Dismissed	1	

Buffer Compliance Status Update: BWSR has received Notifications of Noncompliance (NONs) on 98 parcels from the 13 counties BWSR is responsible for enforcement. Currently there are 10 Corrective Action Notices (CAN), and six Administrative Penalty Orders (APO) issued by BWSR that are still active. Of the actions being tracked over 71 of those have been resolved.

Statewide 43 counties are fully compliant, and 44 counties have enforcement cases in progress. Of those counties (with enforcement cases in progress) there are currently 377 NONs, 287 CANs, and 28 APOs actively in place. Of the actions being tracked over 3,232 of those have been resolved.

*\*Disclaimer: These numbers are generated monthly from BWSR's Access database. The information is obtained through notifications from LGUs on actions taken to bring about compliance and may not reflect the current status of compliance numbers.*

## COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

### *RIM Reserve Committee*

1. Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) – Shift Clean Water Fund (CWF) Wellhead Funds to Allow Expanded Conservation Practice Acquisition – Sharon Doucette – **DECISION ITEM**

## BOARD MEETING AGENDA ITEM

**Agenda Item Title:** Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) – Shift Clean Water Fund (CWF) Wellhead Funds to Allow Expanded Conservation Practice Acquisition

**Meeting Date:** March 25, 2026

**Agenda Category:**

Committee Recommendation     New Business     Old Business

**Item Type:**

Decision     Discussion     Information     Non-Public Data

**Keywords for Electronic Searchability:**

**Section/Region:** Easements

**Contact:** Sharon Doucette

**Prepared by:** Sharon Doucette

**Reviewed by:** RIM Reserve Committee

**Presented by:** Sharon Doucette

**Time requested:** 5 minutes

**Attachments:**

Resolution     Order     Map     Other supporting information

**Fiscal/Policy Impact:**

None     Capital Budget  
 Amended Policy Request     Outdoor Heritage Fund Budget  
 New Policy Request     Clean Water Fund Budget  
 General Fund Budget     Other:

### ACTION REQUESTED

Authorize staff to shift funds from wellhead protection easements to all easement types allowed under CREP consistent with the appropriation language.

### LINKS TO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### SUMMARY *(Consider: history, reason for consideration now, alternatives evaluated, basis for recommendation)*

ML 2021 First Special Session, Chapter 1, Article 2, Section 6(g) appropriated funds for permanent conservation easements on wellhead protection areas or for grants to local units of government for fee title acquisition to permanently protect groundwater supply sources. Section 6(k) of the same chapter and article appropriated funds to purchase and restore permanent conservation easements under the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). Appropriation law also allows for the shift of easement funds to leverage federal funds and address high-priority needs.

CREP includes four conservation practices: CP2 – Establishment of Permanent Native Grasses (inside and outside Wellhead Protection Areas), CP21 – Filter Strips, CP23 – Wetland Restoration, Floodplain, and CP23A – Wetland Restoration, Non-Floodplain.

Shifting of the funds from wellhead easements to CREP easements will allow for leveraging of federal funds as well as meeting high-priority needs and will still allow the funds to be used for wellhead protection under CREP as well as the other approved practices and is consistent with authority in appropriation law.

## BOARD ORDER

### Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) – Shift Clean Water Fund (CWF) Wellhead Funds to Allow Expanded Conservation Practice Acquisition

#### PURPOSE

Authorize shift of funds from wellhead easements to Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) easements.

#### RECITALS/FINDINGS OF FACT

1. The Minnesota State Legislature has appropriated Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve funds to the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) from the Clean Water Fund to acquire and restore RIM conservation easements under Minnesota Statutes, Section 103F.515 to 103F.531.
2. The Laws of Minnesota 2021 First Special Session, Chapter 1, Article 2, Section 6(g) appropriated \$5,000,000 for permanent conservation easements on wellhead protection areas or for grants to local units of government for fee title acquisition to permanently protect groundwater supply sources, of which approximately \$3,300,000 is currently unallocated.
3. Section 6(k) appropriated funds to purchase and restore permanent conservation easements to treat and store water on the land for water quality improvement in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture and with a priority to use the funds for CREP.
4. Paragraph 6(t) specified that 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.
5. Section 2, subdivision 2 of the same law states that if a project receives federal funds, the period of the appropriation is extended to equal the availability of federal funding.
6. CREP is a voluntary, federal-state funded natural resource conservation program with four eligible water quality conservation practices: CP2 – Establishment of Permanent Native Grasses (inside and outside Wellhead Protection Areas), CP21 – Filter Strips, CP23 – Wetland Restoration, Floodplain, and CP23A – Wetland Restoration, Non-Floodplain.
7. CREP provides a significant leverage of federal funds.
8. Shifting of the CWF Wellhead Funds from wellhead protection only easements to all CREP practices, including those that provide drinking water protection for public and private water supply systems as noted in paragraph 5 above, will allow these funds to be used more efficiently to meet landowner interest and ensure the leverage of federal funds.
9. The RIM Committee, at their March 11, 2026, meeting, reviewed the proposed shift and recommended approval to the Board.

**ORDER**

The Board hereby:

- A. Authorizes staff to shift funds from wellhead protection easements to easements allowed under CREP consistent with the appropriation language cited above.

Dated at St. Paul, Minnesota, this March 25, 20226.

**MINNESOTA BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Todd Holman, Chair  
Board of Water and Soil Resources

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

### ***Central Region Committee***

1. Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission Watershed Management Plan – Marcey Westrick – ***DECISION ITEM***

## BOARD MEETING AGENDA ITEM

**Agenda Item Title:** Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission Watershed Management Plan

**Meeting Date:** March 25, 2026

**Agenda Category:**

Committee Recommendation     New Business     Old Business

**Item Type:**

Decision     Discussion     Information     Non-Public Data

**Keywords for Electronic Searchability:** BCWMC Watershed Management Plan

**Section/Region:** Regional Operations/Central

**Contact:** Jen Dillum

**Prepared by:** Jen Dillum

**Reviewed by:** Central Region Committee

**Presented by:** Marcey Westrick

**Time requested:** 10 minutes

**Attachments:**

Resolution     Order     Map     Other supporting information

**Fiscal/Policy Impact:**

None     Capital Budget  
 Amended Policy Request     Outdoor Heritage Fund Budget  
 New Policy Request     Clean Water Fund Budget  
 General Fund Budget     Other:

### ACTION REQUESTED

Approval of the Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission Watershed Management Plan as recommended by the Central Regional Committee.

### LINKS TO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

<https://bassettcreekwmo.org/document/2025-plan-update>

### SUMMARY *(Consider: history, reason for consideration now, alternatives evaluated, basis for recommendation)*

#### *Background*

The Bassett Creek Flood Control Commission was formed in 1968 primarily to study flooding issues in the watershed and adopted a watershed management plan in 1972. In 1984, the Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission (BCWMC) was created after revising the Flood Control Commission's Joint Powers Agreement. The Commission prepared its first-generation watershed management plan that the Board approved in July 1989. The BCWMC is located in Hennepin County in the northwest portion of the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area. It is bound by the Elm Creek and Shingle Creek Watershed Management Commissions to the north, on the south and west by the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District, and on the east by the Mississippi

Watershed Management Organization. The watershed covers approximately 40 square miles and all or part of nine communities: Crystal, Golden Valley, Medicine Lake, Minneapolis, Minnetonka, New Hope, Plymouth, Robbinsdale, and St. Louis Park. There are 10 priority lakes and four priority streams in the Bassett Creek watershed. The watershed drains to Bassett Creek and ultimately enters the Mississippi River through the Bassett Creek tunnel that runs under downtown Minneapolis. The watershed is influenced by urban and suburban land uses, and the population is anticipated to continue increasing.

#### *Plan Process and Highlights*

On April 14, 2022, the BCWMC sent notification of initiation of the planning process for the 2026-2035 Watershed Management Plan (Plan) to the plan review agencies and other parties as required by MR 8410, and solicited each agency's priority issues, summaries of relevant water management goals, and water resource information. An initial planning meeting was hosted by the Board of Commissioners on February 28, 2023. Regular meetings were held with the Plan Steering Committee between May 2024 and November 2025. The BCWMC also conducted Commission workshops and periodically invited additional participants to the plan steering committee meetings, as needed. The BCWMC also created a press kit for stakeholder engagement which included a watershed equity workshop, online survey, and meetings with underrepresented community groups, among other engagement actions.

The BCWMC grouped issues into four categories: waterbody and watershed quality, flooding and climate resilience, education and engagement, and organizational effectiveness. The Plan sets six high priority issues with associated goals to help reach Plan objectives. There are additional medium and low priority issues also with associated goals. The updated Plan will build on previous success through the continuation of many current programs and activities and introduction of new activities such requiring winter maintenance plans, targeting future work through surveys and assessments, and using indigenous land and water care practices where appropriate. Other programs include building connections with diverse communities, trainings for commissioners and local official, and potential public-private partnerships.

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

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**In the Matter** of the review of the Watershed Management Plan for the **Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission**, pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Section 103B.231, Subdivision 9.

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**ORDER  
APPROVING  
A WATERSHED  
MANAGEMENT PLAN**

**Whereas**, the Board of Commissioners of the Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission (BCWMC) submitted a Watershed Management Plan (Plan) on January 12, 2026, to the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (Board) pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Section 103B.231, Subd. 9, 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. Watershed Management Organization Establishment.** The Bassett Creek Flood Control Commission was formed in 1968 primarily to study flooding issues in the watershed and adopted a watershed management plan in 1972. In 1984, the Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission (BCWMC) was created after revising the Flood Control Commission's Joint Powers Agreement. The Commission prepared its first-generation watershed management plan that the Board approved in July 1989.
- 2. Authority of Plan.** The Metropolitan Surface Water Management Act requires the preparation of a watershed management plan for the subject watershed area which meets the requirements of Minnesota Statutes Sections 103B.201 to 103B.251. The current BCWMC watershed management plan was approved by Board Order on August 27, 2015. Subsequently, the BCWMC completed two minor amendments between 2015 and 2025.
- 3. Nature of the Watershed.** The BCWMC is located in Hennepin County in the northwest portion of the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area. It is bound by the Elm Creek and Shingle Creek Watershed Management Commissions to the north, on the south and west by the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District, and on the east by the Mississippi Watershed Management Organization. The watershed covers approximately 40 square miles and all or part of nine communities: Crystal, Golden Valley, Medicine Lake, Minneapolis, Minnetonka, New Hope, Plymouth, Robbinsdale, and St. Louis Park. There are 10 priority lakes and four priority streams in the Bassett Creek watershed. The watershed drains to Bassett Creek and ultimately enters the Mississippi River through the Bassett Creek tunnel that runs under downtown Minneapolis. The watershed is influenced by urban and suburban land uses, and the population is anticipated to continue increasing.
- 4. Plan Development and Review.** On April 14, 2022, the BCWMC sent notification of initiation of the planning process for the 2026-2035 Watershed Management Plan (Plan) to the plan review agencies and other parties as required by MR 8410, and solicited each agency's priority issues, summaries of relevant water management goals, and water resource information. An initial planning meeting was hosted by the Board of Commissioners on February 28, 2023. Regular meetings were held with the Plan Steering Committee between May 2024 and November 2025. The BCWMC also conducted Commission workshops and periodically invited additional

participants to the plan steering committee meetings, as needed. The BCWMC also created a press kit for stakeholder engagement which included a watershed equity workshop, online survey, and meetings with underrepresented community groups, among other engagement actions.

The draft Plan was submitted to the Board, other state agencies, and local governments for the formal 60-day review on August 1, 2025, pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Section 103B.231 Subd. 7. The BCWMC prepared a written response to the 60-day comments, made revisions, and sent responses to reviewers on November 21, 2025. A public hearing was held on December 18, 2025. The BCWMC sent a final draft Plan to State Review Agencies and the Board on January 12, 2026. Comments received during the 90-day review period indicated that most reviewers did not have additional comments, however the Minnesota Department of Health recommended that one incorrect statement be addressed in the future.

5. **Local Review.** The BCWMC distributed copies of the draft Plan to local units of government for their review pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Section 103B.231 Subd. 7. During the 60-day comment period Hennepin County's remarks highlighted aquatic invasive species prevention, chloride reduction, carbon footprint consideration, goals and actions integrating Dakota knowledge, work with underrepresented communities, and support for education and community engagement. They also commented on development of a watershed-wide wetland inventory and assessment and identifying partnership opportunities for a county groundwater plan. The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) also provided comments. Many of the comments were in agreement with the Plan contents or shared suggestions for partnership and projects. Comments also noted improvements for Plan accessibility, organization, and document navigation. The MPRB commended the BCWMC for focus on equity, climate resilience, and Dakota place-naming, and supported investigation into the BCWMCs best-fit for governance structure and regular plan reassessments to ensure goals are met. The City of Minneapolis provided several comments, of those a few highlighted general Plan accessibility and organization. They also voiced support for an organizational assessment to evaluate options for the appropriate governance structure and funding options, wanted to ensure goals are measurable, and hoped to see that water quality improvement projects are highest priority. Lastly, the Friends of the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden also commented on the Plan which included requests for studies and restoration projects.
6. **Metropolitan Council (Council) Review.** During the 60-day review, the Council commended the BCWMC for developing a watershed management plan that includes a comprehensive list of issues, goals, and strategies, ambitious chloride loading goals, and that highlights partnership effort implementation. They welcomed the Plan's focus on water equity and feel the Plan is consistent with the Council's policies. They did office several comments which included adding a discussion on deicer, supporting work with partners, supporting BCWMC collaboration with the Council on studies and research, and encouraging goal measurability. During the 90-day review, the Council again commended the BCWMC for developing an inclusive Plan with comprehensive issues, goals, policies and strategies. They again applauded the ambitious chloride goals and welcomed the focus on water equity. The Council felt their 60-day comments were addressed and that the Plan was consistent with Council policies and the Council's Water Policy Plan.
7. **Department of Agriculture (MDA) Review.** At the 90-day review the MDA thanked the BCWMC for the opportunity to review, and did not provide any comments, but recommended approval.
8. **Department of Health (MDH) Review.** During the 60-day review, MDH commended the BCWMC on its well-organized and visually accessible draft plan, specifically highlighting the effective executive summary and layout of the Plan goals. MDH appreciated the inclusion of groundwater quality and multiple-benefit projects while suggesting improvements to the Plan by clarifying MDH roles, ensuring specific and measurable Plan goals, expanding on chloride loading in groundwater, considering surface water-groundwater interactions near drinking water supply management areas, and considering unused and unsealed wells as a potential contamination source. During the 90-day review, MDH noted that their comments, concerns, and priorities had been addressed. They noted that one comment provided during the 60-day resulted in an inaccurate statement in the final draft Plan. MDH recommends rewording during the next opportunity to edit the Plan.

9. **Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Review.** The DNR did not provide formal comment during the 60-day. During the 90-day review, DNR indicated that the Plan is consistent with DNR goals and priorities. The DNR appreciated the BCWMC’s focus on ecosystem health and identification of climate change impacts on hydrology.
10. **Pollution Control Agency (PCA) Review.** During the 60-day review, the PCA commended the BCWMC on including the Native American stream name into the Plan, demonstrating completed work, and highlighting what is new in the updated Plan. Suggestions provided included listing PCA ID numbers, updating table descriptors for the general reader, correcting mislabeled TMDL dates, and using more current references. These edits were all for specific tables or Plan sections. A more general recommendation was to include numerical targets for goals to help evaluate success where appropriate. During the 90-day review, the PCA had no additional comments and recommended the Plan for approval.
11. **Department of Transportation (DOT) Review.** The DOT did not provide formal comment.
12. **Board Review.** During the 60-day review, Board staff thanked the BCWMC for hosting various Plan development meetings, noted appreciation of the inclusion of priorities related to chloride pollution, climate change, addressing inequities and authentic engagement, and noted that the Plan was well written and utilized plain language. Board staff suggested clarifications to several parts of the Plan for increased reader comprehension. Staff also had comments on goal measurability and other suggestions to help bring the plan into conformance with Minnesota Statutes Sections 103B.201 to 103B.251 and Minnesota Rules 8410. Staff also sent unofficial typographical, grammatical, and formatting comments. Staff felt the Plan was revised as necessary to provide required Plan content.
13. **Plan Summary.** The BCWMC identified issues into four categories: waterbody and watershed quality, flooding and climate resilience, education and engagement, and organizational effectiveness. The Plan sets six high priority issues with associated goals to address them. There are additional medium and low priority issues also with associated goals to help reach Plan objectives. The updated Plan will build on previous success through the continuation of many current programs and activities and introduction of new activities such requiring winter maintenance plans, targeting future work through surveys and assessments, and using indigenous land and water care practices where appropriate. Other programs include building connection with diverse communities, trainings for commissioners and local official, and potential public-private partnerships.
14. **Central Region Committee Meeting.** On March 2, 2026, the Board’s Central Region Committee and staff met in St. Paul and online to review and discuss the final Plan. Those in attendance from the Board’s committee were Joe Collins (in-person), Mike Runk (in-person), Jill Crafton (online), Mark Zabel (online), Lori Cox (online), Steve Robertson (online), and Heather Johnson (online). Board staff in attendance were Marcey Westrick (Central Regional Manager, in-person), Jen Dullum (Board Conservationist, in-person), and Josh Norman (Board Conservationist, online). Others in attendance included Laura Jester (BCWMC Administrator, in-person), Catherine Cesnik (BCWMC Commission Chair, in-person), Shaun Kennedy (BCWMC Alternate Commissioner, in-person), and Stephanie Johnson (BCWMC Engineer – Barr Engineering – in-person) who provided overview of the watershed, highlights of the Plan, and responded to comments. Joan Hauer (BCWMC Commissioner, online) was also present. After a presentation and discussion, the committee recommended approval of the Plan to the full Board.

## CONCLUSIONS

1. All relevant substantive and procedural requirements of law and rule have been fulfilled.
2. The Board has proper jurisdiction in the matter of approving the Watershed Management Plan for the Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission (BCWMC) pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Section 103B.231, Subd. 9.

3. The BCWMC Watershed Management Plan, attached to this Order, defines the water and water-related problems within the BCWMC's boundaries, possible solutions thereto, and an implementation program through 2035.
4. The attached Plan is in conformance with the requirements of Minnesota Statutes Sections 103B.201 to 103B.251.

**ORDER**

The Board hereby approves the attached Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission Watershed Management Plan submitted on January 12, 2026.

Dated at Saint Paul, Minnesota this 25<sup>th</sup> day of March 2026.

MINNESOTA BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES

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Todd Holman, Chair  
Board of Water and Soil Resources



March 25, 2026

Bassett Creek Watershed Management  
Commission c/o Laura Jester, Administrator  
P.O. Box 270825  
Golden Valley, MN 55427

Dear Chair and Commissioners:

I am pleased to inform you that the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (Board) has approved the Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission (BCWMC) Watershed Management Plan (Plan) at its regular meeting held on March 25, 2026. For your records I have enclosed a copy of the signed Board Order that documents approval of the Plan. Please be advised that the BCWMC must adopt and implement the Plan within 120 days of the date of the Order, in accordance with MN Statutes 103B.231, Subd. 10.

The commissioners, plan steering committee members, consultants, and all others involved in the planning process are to be commended for their work on developing the Plan. With continued implementation of your Plan, the protection and management of the water resources within the watershed will be greatly enhanced to the benefit of the residents. The Board looks forward to working with you as you implement this Plan and document its outcomes.

Please contact Board Conservationist, Jen Dullum at 651-308-6956, [jen.dullum@state.mn.us](mailto:jen.dullum@state.mn.us), or at the central office address for further assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

Todd Holman, Chair

Enclosure

cc: Reid Christianson, MDA (via email)  
Abby Shea, MDH (via email)  
Megan Moore, DNR (via email)  
Katie Kowalczyk, DOT (via email)  
Maureen Hoffman, Met Council (via email)  
Melinda Neville, MPCA (via email)  
Marcey Westrick, BWSR (via email)  
Jen Dullum, BWSR (via email)  
File Copy

# Draft Bassett Creek Watershed Management Plan

2026-2035



90-Day Review Draft – January 2026

The Bassett Creek Watershed Management Plan (Plan) guides the management of water resources within the boundaries of the Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission (BCWMC) to achieve the organization’s vision and goals for the next ten years. It was developed with significant input from watershed residents, member cities, partners, and state and local agencies. The Plan provides data and background information; identifies watershed-wide and resource-specific issues; sets measurable goals; and describes applicable tools, policies, and activities aimed at achieving the goals.

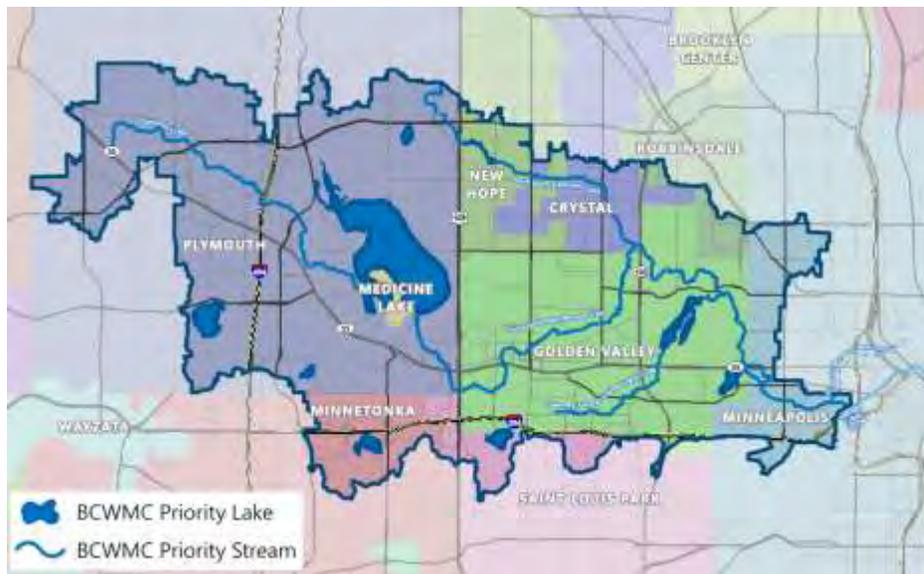
The Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission (BCWMC) established the following vision to provide strategic direction to its work.

***Stewardship of the Ĥaĥá Wakpádaŋ / Bassett Creek Watershed to improve ecosystem health and reduce flood risk.***

### About Us – who we are

The BCWMC is a special purpose unit of local government that manages surface water resources, like lakes and streams, within 40 square miles in the northwestern area of the Twin Cities. It encompasses all the land that ultimately drains to Ĥaĥá Wakpádaŋ / Bassett Creek, including all or part

of nine cities. The largest portion of the watershed lies in the cities of Plymouth and Golden Valley. The watershed also includes parts of New Hope, Crystal, Robbinsdale, Minneapolis, St. Louis Park, and Minnetonka, and the entire small city of Medicine Lake. There are ten priority lakes and four priority streams in the watershed. The final 1.7 miles of the creek flows under downtown Minneapolis in the Bassett Creek tunnel.



The BCWMC acknowledges that the waterways of the Ĥaĥá Wakpádaŋ / Bassett Creek encompass the homeland of the Dakota peoples, who nurtured the land and waters as relatives. The streams, lakes, and wetlands are living waters that are part of a broader ecosystem.

## Executive Summary

The BCWMC was originally formed as a joint powers organization among the nine cities as the Bassett Creek Flood Control Commission in 1968 to address significant flooding along the creek. In 1984, the Flood Commission revised its joint powers agreement and became the BCWMC in accordance with provisions of the 1982 Metropolitan Surface Water Management Act. Much of the significant flooding in the watershed has been corrected, primarily through the extensive Bassett Creek Flood Control Project. And while flooding remains a concern and an area of focus for the BCWMC, much of our work is now centered on protecting and improving the quality of water in priority lakes and streams.

The BCWMC is managed by a nine-member Board of Commissioners – one commissioner and one alternate appointed from each member city. Each city also appoints a staff person to the Commission’s technical advisory committee (TAC). The TAC provides recommendations on technical aspects of studies and projects, and provides input on budgets, policies, etc.

Work of the BCWMC is primarily funded with an operating budget and capital improvement program funds. Operating funds come mostly from assessments to the nine member cities, while capital improvement projects are funded through a tax on all watershed properties levied by Hennepin County on the BCWMC’s behalf. State and local grant funds and development review fees often augment the BCWMC budgets, becoming an important source of current and future funding.

### Priority Issues & Goals – what we’re working on

Many of the lakes and streams in the watershed have degraded water quality and habitats, impacting aquatic life and recreation opportunities. Significant pollutants, coming mainly from stormwater runoff, include chloride (i.e., salt from winter deicers), nutrients, sediment, and bacteria. In addition, water quantity concerns – including flooding and drought conditions – also impact water resources and watershed communities.

To focus work for the next ten years, the BCWMC identified discrete watershed issues early in the planning process through input from state and local agencies and member cities, commissioner workshops, an online public survey, and a public open house. Issues were grouped into four categories: Waterbody and Watershed Quality, Flooding and Climate Resilience, Education and Engagement, and Organizational Effectiveness.

#### **Purpose of Watershed Management Organizations (WMOs)**

Because water does not follow political boundaries, the 1982 Surface Water Management Act required the formation of WMOs across the Twin Cities.

Purposes of WMOs include:

1. Protect, preserve, and use natural surface and groundwater storage and retention systems.
2. Minimize public capital expenditures needed to correct flooding and water quality problems.
3. Identify and plan for means to effectively protect and improve surface and groundwater quality.
4. Establish more uniform local policies and official controls for surface and groundwater management.
5. Prevent erosion of soil into surface water systems.
6. Promote groundwater recharge.
7. Protect and enhance fish and wildlife habitat and water recreational facilities.
8. Secure the other benefits associated with the proper management of surface and groundwater.

## Executive Summary

Each issue was assigned a priority level of high, medium, or low. Some issues span multiple areas of watershed management, including the intent to deliver projects and programs with an emphasis on diversity, equity, inclusion, and access. While specific issues regarding equity are categorized as a “medium” priority, helping to address current or past inequities will be incorporated across all BCWMC work – from representation on the Board of Commissioners, to building relationships with diverse audiences and selecting projects in vulnerable communities.

Once issues were identified and prioritized, goals were developed to describe the change or desired outcome expected by the end of 10 years. A process of adaptive management will be used to track progress and adjust activities depending on new data or changing conditions.

The high priority issues and associated goals include:

Category	High Priority Issue	High Priority Goal(s)
Waterbody and Watershed Quality	Impaired waters (degraded water quality) (see Section 3.1)	Improve water quality in Medicine Lake such that it is removed from impaired waters list for nutrients (WQ1)
		Significantly improve water quality in Lost Lake and Northwood Lake (WQ2)
		Improve/maintain water quality and ecology in all other priority lakes and streams (WQ3 – WQ9)
	Chloride pollution (salt from winter deicers) (see Section 3.2)	Reduce chloride pollution to lakes and streams (CHL1)
		Reduce chloride concentrations in ǪǪǪǪ Wakpádaŋ / Bassett Creek by 10% (CHL2)
Flooding and Climate Resilience	Impact of climate change on hydrology, water levels, and flood risk (see Section 3.11)	Reduce flood risk in vulnerable areas (FLD1 – FLD4)
		Enhance climate resiliency (FLD5)
	Bassett Creek Valley flood risk reduction and stormwater management opportunities (see Section 3.12)	Collaborate on regional improvements in Bassett Creek Valley (BCV1)
Organizational Effectiveness	Organizational capacity and staffing (see Section 3.17)	Assess organizational structure, staffing needs, and funding mechanisms; implement recommendations (ORG1 – ORG2; FUND1 – FUND3)
	BCWMC funding mechanisms (see Section 3.18)	
	Progress assessment (see Section 3.19)	Assess progress toward plan goals (PRG1 – PRG2)

## Executive Summary

Issues that were assigned medium or low priority levels are also addressed in this Plan. However, these issues may receive lower levels of resources and effort, and may be primarily addressed in collaboration with partners, or as opportunities arise. These issues include:

- Aquatic invasive species
- Carbon Footprint
- Ditch Management
- Education
- Erosion
- Equity
- Groundwater
- Recreation
- Riparian Areas and Uplands
- Wetlands

### Primary Tools and Activities – **the work we're doing**

The BCWMC uses various tools to make progress toward its goals including policies and requirements, education and engagement, and construction of capital improvement projects. Other important activities include inspection and maintenance of the Bassett Creek Flood Control Project structures; monitoring water quality and quantity; performing studies; mapping floodplains; and assisting with aquatic invasive species (AIS) management. Much of the work performed by the BCWMC is done in collaboration with partners such as member cities, Hennepin County, Three Rivers Park District, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, state and local agencies, lake groups, and others.

Over the next 10 years, the BCWMC will build on the success of many existing programs and activities with few changes. However, some new or expanded tools and activities will be used to better address priority issues and make accelerated progress toward goals. New activities are shown in red in the graphic below. The implementation schedule of the activities and capital improvement program can be found in Table 4-5 and Table 4-6, respectively, although the timing of some programs and projects may shift with a change in opportunities, partnerships, and available funds. While many of the activities are performed on a regular, routine basis, other discrete projects and studies are one-time activities and are scheduled in order to inform future work. Examples include sub-watershed assessments that are used to target and prioritize capital improvement projects or other programs to improve conditions in a specific waterbody. Similarly, development of a social vulnerability index will help prioritize work in areas where it is most needed and most impactful.

The annual budget (in 2025 dollars) is estimated to be between \$1 million and \$1.3 million for programs and activities (Table 4-5) and an average of \$5 million per year for capital improvement projects (Table 4-6).

The implementation schedule and corresponding budget is ambitious. A shift in organizational structure and/or an expansion of funding mechanisms may be needed to realize full implementation potential and desired outcomes. Options for significant changes to the operations of the BCWMC will be analyzed through comprehensive assessments early in the life of the plan (See Table 4-5, activities EA-4 and EA-5).

# Executive Summary

## Implementation Tools:

### CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

- Up to 36 projects scheduled over 10 years
- Projects start with feasibility study
- Examples: streambank restoration, pond creation or expansion, flood risk reduction, stormwater reuse
- Use Indigenous land/water care practices, where appropriate (new activity)
- Public-private partnerships (potential new activity)

### DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS

- Appropriate stormwater management – infiltration and treatment
- No impacts to 100-year floodplain
- Stream and wetland buffer requirements
- Winter maintenance plans required (new activity)
- Construction erosion control

### EDUCATION & ENGAGEMENT

- Build communication and engagement with diverse communities (new emphasis)
- Partner with West Metro Water Alliance and Hennepin County
- Watershed map, displays, educational materials
- Signage and Indigenous art (new activity)
- Trainings for commissioners and local officials (expanded activity)
- Volunteer opportunities

### MONITORING, MODELING, STUDIES

- Routine, comprehensive monitoring of priority waters
- Hydrologic modeling (water flow and quantity after rainfall and snowmelt)
- Floodplain mapping
- Surveys and assessments to target future work (expanded activity)

### FLOOD CONTROL PROJECT

- Routine inspections of structures
- Minor maintenance by cities
- Major repair by BWCMC, as needed

### OTHER TOOLS

- Administration, operations, technical assistance
- Inter-agency planning and collaboration
- Aquatic invasive species (AIS) management
- Evaluation and reporting

## Member City Responsibilities

As noted earlier, portions of nine cities lie within the Ĥaĥá Wakpádaŋ / Bassett Creek Watershed and the BCWMC exists as a joint powers organization among these “member cities.” Member cities are very involved in the work of the BCWMC, and they have corresponding responsibilities. Each city appoints a BCWMC board commissioner, alternate commissioner, and technical advisory committee member. Each city contributes funds to the BCWMC operating budget through “city assessments” which are based on the area of land in the watershed and the tax valuation of that land. In many cases, the BCWMC enters agreements with cities to construct and maintain BCWMC capital improvement projects. The technical advisory committee, comprised of city staff, often reviews and makes recommendations to the Board of Commissioners on technical studies, projects, budgets, etc.

Actual requirements of member cities are the same or similar to requirements included in the 2015 watershed management plan.

Subject Area	Policy No.	Requirement
Local Plans/ Controls	5	Member cities must update their local water management plans to incorporate consistency with BCWMC goals, policies, and requirements. The BCWMC will review city local water management plans for consistency with BCWMC goals.
Local Plans/ Controls	6	Member cities must inform the BCWMC regarding updates to city ordinances or comprehensive plans that will affect stormwater management.
Development Requirements	9	Member cities must incorporate standards and requirements included in the Requirements document into their official controls (e.g., ordinances). Member cities must inform developers and other project applicants regarding BCWMC requirements.
Development Requirements	12	Member cities shall not issue construction permits or other approvals relevant to controls intended to protect water resources, until the BCWMC has approved the project.
Development Requirements	13	For projects subject to BCWMC review and erosion and sediment control standards, the BCWMC requires that member cities perform regular erosion and sediment control inspections.
Data submission	19	Upon request (typically annually), member cities shall provide the BCWMC with information on development, redevelopment, and BMPs constructed within their city such that the BCWMC can appropriately update the models.
Aquatic Invasive Species	20	The BCWMC requires that member cities annually inspect wetlands classified as Preserve (or equivalent) for terrestrial and emergent aquatic invasive vegetation, such as buckthorn and purple loosestrife, and attempt to control or treat invasive species, where feasible.
Flood Control Project	25	Member cities must formally notify the Commission Engineer regarding their completed maintenance and repair actions on any of the FCP project features.
Flood Control Project	25	Member cities are responsible for routine maintenance and repair of FCP features as outlined in Table 4-4.

**Table 4-5. Program Implementation Table (red activity ID = new; red goals = high priority; orange goals = med priority; green goals = low priority)**

Tool	Activity ID <small>(red = new)</small>	Activity Name <small>(red = new)</small>	Activity Description	Most Relevant Goals	Estimated Costs (presented in 2025 dollars)										
					2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	
Operations: Administration & Technical Services	OP-1	Administrator	Contracted administrator: half time 2026 and 2027; full time starting 2028	All	\$ 85,200	\$ 85,200	\$ 166,400	\$ 166,400	\$ 166,400	\$ 166,400	\$ 166,400	\$ 166,400	\$ 166,400	\$ 166,400	
	OP-2	Administration	Administrative services including administrative assistance, legal, audit, insurance, MW annual dues, etc.	All	\$ 94,000	\$ 94,000	\$ 94,000	\$ 94,000	\$ 94,000	\$ 94,000	\$ 94,000	\$ 94,000	\$ 94,000	\$ 94,000	
	OP-3	General Technical Services	Engineering and other technical services provided, as needed, to support Commission and member city actions. Includes attendance at Commission and TAC meetings	All	\$ 166,000	\$ 166,000	\$ 166,000	\$ 166,000	\$ 166,000	\$ 166,000	\$ 166,000	\$ 166,000	\$ 166,000	\$ 166,000	
<b>Operations Subtotal</b>					<b>\$ 345,200</b>	<b>\$ 345,200</b>	<b>\$ 426,400</b>								
Planning and Collaboration	PL-1	Municipal Plan and Ordinance Review	BCWMC review of local water plans (as updated) for consistency with BCWMC goals, policies, and implementation. BCWMC also reviews updates to ordinances and other official controls.	PRG1	\$ 2,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	
	PL-2	Watershed Mgmt. Plan Update	Savings for development of 2036 Watershed Management Plan	FUND3	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	
	PL-3	Upland and Natural Area Planning	Cooperate, when appropriate and as resources allow, with partners and organizations that identify and work to preserve connected greenway corridors and other natural areas	UP1	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	
	PL-4	Public-Private Partnership Cost Share Program Development	Develop a framework for private-public funding partnerships and/or CIP-funded cost share program. (Look to MWMO and/or SCWMO as examples)	FUND2	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	PL-5	Bassett Creek Valley Collaboration	Assist multi-jurisdictional partners with evaluating, prioritizing, and coordinating multi-benefit project opportunities within the Bassett Creek Valley.	BCV1	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	
	PL-6	Social Vulnerability Index Integration	Develop and/or leverage existing social vulnerability indices to inform the targeting, design, and implementation of BCWMC projects and programs.	DEIA1	\$ 10,000		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	PL-7	Channel Maintenance along Trunk System	Continue contributions to Channel Maintenance Fund for minor repairs of channel or ponds by member cities	WQ5, STRM1, STRM2	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000	
<b>Planning and Collaboration Subtotal</b>					<b>\$ 70,000</b>	<b>\$ 68,000</b>	<b>\$ 73,000</b>	<b>\$ 60,000</b>							
Development and Project Review	Dev-1	Development/ Project Review (offset by fees)	Services to review proposals for development, redevelopment, and other improvements for compliance with BCWMC performance standards .	WQ1-6, CHL1-2, FLD2, GWQT1-2, RIP1, WTL1, GWQL1	\$ 90,000	\$ 90,000	\$ 90,000	\$ 90,000	\$ 90,000	\$ 90,000	\$ 90,000	\$ 90,000	\$ 90,000	\$ 90,000	
	Dev-2	Development/ Project Review (non-fee)	Services to review proposals for development, redevelopment, and other improvements (that are exempted from development review fees) for compliance with BCWMC performance standards.		\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	
	Dev-3	Groundwater Permit Review	Review all MDNR groundwater appropriation permit applications in the BCWMC excluding applications for temporary appropriations permits	GWQT1	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	
<b>Development and Project Review Subtotal</b>					<b>\$ 121,000</b>	<b>\$ 121,000</b>	<b>\$ 121,000</b>	<b>\$ 121,000</b>	<b>\$ 121,000</b>	<b>\$ 121,000</b>	<b>\$ 121,000</b>	<b>\$ 121,000</b>	<b>\$ 121,000</b>	<b>\$ 121,000</b>	
Studies	S-1	Lost Lake Subwatershed Assessment	Evaluate the Lost Lake subwatershed for water quality improvement opportunities.	WQ2	\$ 75,000										
	S-2	Northwood Lake Subwatershed Assessment	Evaluate the Northwood Lake subwatershed for water quality improvement opportunities.	WQ2		\$ 75,000									
	S-3	Bassett Creek Main Stem Subwatershed Assessment	Evaluate the Bassett Creek main stem subwatershed for water quality improvement opportunities.	WQ2				\$ 75,000							

**Table 4-5. Program Implementation Table (red activity ID = new; red goals = high priority; orange goals = med priority; green goals = low priority)**

Tool	Activity ID (red = new)	Activity Name (red = new)	Activity Description	Most Relevant Goals	Estimated Costs (presented in 2025 dollars)											
					2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035		
Studies	S-4	Subwatershed Assessments (TBD)	Perform additional Subwatershed Assessments (TBD) for additional priority waterbodies/watersheds.	WQ3-9							\$ 75,000		\$ 75,000			
	S-5	Flood and Climate Vulnerability Risk Assessment	Ongoing: Encourage/assist cities or partners with development of flood emergency response plans + one large scale watershed wide flood risk assessment and prioritization considering vulnerable populations, critical infrastructure, and priority resources Acknowledge projected future climate trends in flood risk analyses.	FLD1, FLD2, FLD4, FLD5	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 80,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000
	S-6	Climate Resilience Strategy Framework	Develop climate resilience study/plan that evaluates climate adaptation strategies (e.g., tree planting to increase canopy, incorporating native plantings, etc.) and potential impacts to priority waterbodies.	FLD1, FLD4, FLD5				\$ 50,000								
	S-7	Baseline Bacteria Monitoring and Source Assessment	Monitor priority streams to establish baseline bacteria conditions and identify pollution sources.	WQ4										\$ 30,000		
	S-8	Stream MIBI Stressor Mapping	Review watershed data and stressor ID study to identify areas/zones where specific stressors are most significant.	WQ7		\$ 20,000										
	S-9	Chloride Study and Management Plans	Identify waterbodies most at risk of chloride impairment and develop subwatershed analyses/management plans for chloride-impaired waters to identify pollution hotspots and to target implementation.	CHL1, CHL2			\$ 25,000	\$ 10,000		\$ 10,000		\$ 10,000		\$ 10,000		
	S-10	Lake Shoreline Inventory	Inventory shoreline conditions of priority lakes for erosion issues and presence of buffers.	LK1				\$ 20,000								
	S-11	Groundwater-Surface Water Interaction Study	Work with Met Council or other agencies to map groundwatersheds and evaluate groundwater-surface water interactions and groundwater dependency of BCWMC priority waterbodies.	GWSW1					\$ 25,000							
	S-12	Watershed-wide Wetland Inventory	Develop a watershed-wide wetland inventory using consistent methodology and identify priority wetlands or restoration, in cooperation with cities.	WET1								\$ 50,000				
	S-13	Indigenous practices guidebook	Develop guidance manual on Indigenous land and water care	EDIV3			\$ 12,000									
	S-14 (NEW)	Thredore Wirth Hydrology Study	Work with partners to scope and perform a hydrology study of the Eloise Butler Wilfdlower Area in Theodore Work Regional Park to inform restoration actions.	GWSW1, WET1		\$ 70,000										
<b>Studies Subtotal</b>					<b>\$ 77,000</b>	<b>\$ 167,000</b>	<b>\$ 117,000</b>	<b>\$ 157,000</b>	<b>\$ 27,000</b>	<b>\$ 87,000</b>	<b>\$ 52,000</b>	<b>\$ 117,000</b>	<b>\$ 2,000</b>	<b>\$ 2,000</b>		
Monitoring and Modeling	MM-1	Water Quality Monitoring	Perform annual water quality monitoring activities as described and planned in the BCWMC Monitoring Plan (see link - TBD). Monitoring includes: - Lake water quality and biological monitoring, including vegetation surveys - Stream water quality and flow monitoring - Stream biotic index monitoring	PRG1-2, WQ1-9, AIS1, CHL1-2	\$ 160,000	\$ 160,000	\$ 160,000	\$ 160,000	\$ 160,000	\$ 160,000	\$ 160,000	\$ 160,000	\$ 160,000	\$ 160,000	\$ 160,000	
	MM-2	Water Quantity Monitoring	Perform annual water level and quantity monitoring activities as described and planned in the BCWMC Monitoring Plan (see link - TBD).	PRG1-2, FLD1, FLD4	\$ 9,000	\$ 9,000	\$ 9,000	\$ 9,000	\$ 9,000	\$ 9,000	\$ 9,000	\$ 9,000	\$ 9,000	\$ 9,000	\$ 9,000	
	MM-3	Watershed Outlet Monitoring Program	Support the watershed outlet monitoring on Bassett Creek performed in cooperation with the Metropolitan Council.	PRG1-2, WQ1-9, CHL1-2	\$ 34,500	\$ 34,500	\$ 34,500	\$ 34,500	\$ 34,500	\$ 34,500	\$ 34,500	\$ 34,500	\$ 34,500	\$ 34,500	\$ 34,500	
	MM-4	Water Quality Model Updates	Update the P8 water quality model.	PRG1-2, WQ1-9, CHL1-2	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000	
	MM-5	Hydrologic and Hydraulic Model Updates	Update the hydrologic and hydraulic model and map areas of higher risk and identify potential flood risk reduction project locations.	PRG1-2, FLD1, FLD4	\$ 4,000	\$ 150,000	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000	
	MM-7	Streambank Monitoring	Biennially assess the condition of streambanks along BCWMC priority streams, evaluate downstream impacts, and prioritize areas for action.	STRM1, STRM2	\$ -	\$ 5,000	\$ -	\$ 5,000	\$ -	\$ 5,000	\$ -	\$ 5,000	\$ -	\$ 5,000	\$ -	\$ 5,000
<b>Monitoring and Modeling Subtotal</b>					<b>\$ 211,500</b>	<b>\$ 362,500</b>	<b>\$ 211,500</b>	<b>\$ 216,500</b>								

**Table 4-5. Program Implementation Table (red activity ID = new; red goals = high priority; orange goals = med priority; green goals = low priority)**

Tool	Activity ID <small>(red = new)</small>	Activity Name <small>(red = new)</small>	Activity Description	Most Relevant Goals	Estimated Costs (presented in 2025 dollars)											
					2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035		
AIS Management	AIS-1	AIS Management Actions	Perform actions, as needed, consistent with the BCWMC's AIS Rapid Response Plan (see link) and policies described in Section 4.1.6 of this Plan, including CLP management in Medicine Lake.	AIS1, AIS2	\$ 40,000	\$ 40,000	\$ 40,000	\$ 40,000	\$ 40,000	\$ 40,000	\$ 40,000	\$ 40,000	\$ 40,000	\$ 40,000	\$ 40,000	
<b>AIS Management Subtotal</b>					<b>\$ 40,000</b>	<b>\$ 40,000</b>	<b>\$ 40,000</b>	<b>\$ 40,000</b>	<b>\$ 40,000</b>	<b>\$ 40,000</b>	<b>\$ 40,000</b>	<b>\$ 40,000</b>	<b>\$ 40,000</b>	<b>\$ 40,000</b>	<b>\$ 40,000</b>	
Flood Control Project	FCP-1	Flood Control Project Inspections	Inspect the Flood Control Project features consistent with the scope and schedule described in Section 4.1.7 of this Plan.	FLD2	\$ 45,000	\$ 45,000	\$ 45,000	\$ 45,000	\$ 45,000	\$ 45,000	\$ 45,000	\$ 45,000	\$ 45,000	\$ 45,000	\$ 45,000	
	FCP-2	FCP Long Term Maintenance Fund	Annual Allocation to Flood Control Project Long-term Maintenance Fund - See Section 4.1.7 of this Plan.	FLD2	\$ 35,000	\$ 35,000	\$ 35,000	\$ 35,000	\$ 35,000	\$ 35,000	\$ 35,000	\$ 35,000	\$ 35,000	\$ 35,000	\$ 35,000	
<b>Flood Control Project Subtotal</b>					<b>\$ 80,000</b>	<b>\$ 80,000</b>	<b>\$ 80,000</b>	<b>\$ 80,000</b>	<b>\$ 80,000</b>	<b>\$ 80,000</b>	<b>\$ 80,000</b>	<b>\$ 80,000</b>	<b>\$ 80,000</b>	<b>\$ 80,000</b>	<b>\$ 80,000</b>	
Education and Engagement (see Appendix C for details)	EE-1	Commissioner Training	Provide opportunities for BCWMC commissioner training and conference attendance; host watershed tours (App C: 2.0)	PAA1 - 3, EDIV1 - 3, REC1 - 2, GWQT3, AIS1, WQ1 - 9, CHL1-2, LK2	\$ 6,000	\$ 6,000	\$ 6,000	\$ 6,000	\$ 6,000	\$ 6,000	\$ 6,000	\$ 6,000	\$ 6,000	\$ 6,000	\$ 6,000	
	EE-2	Education and Engagement Events	Engage with residents and communities through public meetings, open houses, community conversations, events, presentations, and workshops (App C: 3.0, 7.0)		\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000
	EE-3	Educational Partnership Support	Participate in and/or support partnerships focused on education, engagement, and volunteers, including WMWA, Metro Blooms, Metro Watershed Partners, CAMP, etc. (App C: 8.0)		\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000
	EE-4	Engagement with Diverse Communities	Build and maintain communications and relationships with diverse and underserved communities, including members of Indigenous communities; utilize Dakota placenames (App C: 3.0 - 8.0)		\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000
	EE-5	Educational Communications	Develop and share educational material with watershed residents, property owners, and communities including digital media, printed materials, maps, signs, displays, etc. (App C: 4.0, 5.0, 6.0)		\$ 12,000	\$ 12,000	\$ 12,000	\$ 12,000	\$ 12,000	\$ 12,000	\$ 12,000	\$ 12,000	\$ 12,000	\$ 12,000	\$ 12,000	\$ 12,000
	EE-6	Website Maintenance	Maintain the BCWMC website, make one significant update, maintain ADA compliance (App C: 4.0)		\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000
	EE-7	Cost-Share Programs	Develop/implement cost-share programs for residents and partners focusing on: - Shoreline protection and restoration - Infiltration/rain gardens - Chloride reduction -Habitat improvements	PAA1, EDIV1-3, GWQT3, WQ1 - 9, CHL1-2, LK2, RIP2, UP1			\$ 75,000	\$ 75,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000
<b>Education and Engagement Subtotal</b>					<b>\$ 60,000</b>	<b>\$ 60,000</b>	<b>\$ 135,000</b>	<b>\$ 135,000</b>	<b>\$ 110,000</b>	<b>\$ 110,000</b>	<b>\$ 110,000</b>	<b>\$ 128,000</b>	<b>\$ 110,000</b>	<b>\$ 110,000</b>	<b>\$ 110,000</b>	
Evaluation and Assessment	EA-1	Annual Report	Create and publish annual report on activities	PRG1	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	
	EA-2	Biennial Progress Assessment	Track implementation metrics and outputs and evaluate progress towards goals at least every two years.	PRG1, PRG2		\$ 2,000		\$ 2,000		\$ 2,000		\$ 2,000		\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	
	EA-3	Implementation Compliance	Ensure appropriate member city implementation of BCWMC policies	PRG1	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	
	EA-4	Organizational Structure Assessment	Complete a comprehensive assessment of BCWMC organization structure and staffing options, benefits, and challenges.	ORG1-2	\$ 30,000											
	EA-5	Funding Assessment	Complete a comprehensive assessment of funding mechanisms available to BCWMC.	FUND1-3	\$ 30,000											
<b>Evaluation and Assessment Subtotal</b>					<b>\$ 63,000</b>	<b>\$ 5,000</b>	<b>\$ 3,000</b>	<b>\$ 5,000</b>	<b>\$ 5,000</b>							
<b>TOTAL ANNUAL EXPENSES (2025 dollars)</b>					<b>\$ 1,067,700</b>	<b>\$ 1,248,700</b>	<b>\$ 1,206,900</b>	<b>\$ 1,240,900</b>	<b>\$ 1,078,900</b>	<b>\$ 1,145,900</b>	<b>\$ 1,103,900</b>	<b>\$ 1,193,900</b>	<b>\$ 1,053,900</b>	<b>\$ 1,060,900</b>	<b>\$ 1,060,900</b>	

Table 4-6 BCWMC Capital Improvement Program (2026-2035)

ID	Resource or Area	Project Title (status, if applicable)	Plan issue/goal addresses	Project description/need	Potential Partners	Planning Level Cost (2026-2035)	Years of Implementation									
							2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035
1	Medicine Lake	<a href="#">Projects resulting from Medicine Lake TMDL Assessment</a>	Impaired Waters: Medicine Lake delisting for nutrients	Projects and BMPs will vary depending on assessment results	Plymouth, Medicine Lake, TRPD	\$ 2,000,000			\$ 1,000,000	\$ 1,000,000						
2	Medicine Lake	Medicine Lake Shoreland Restoration (ML-14) <i>(included in 2015 watershed plan but not implemented)</i>	Lakeshore Erosion: Increase percentage of properties with native buffers on nutrient impaired lakes.	Projects to restore portions of Medicine Lake shoreline	Plymouth, Medicine Lake, TRPD	\$ 150,000							\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	
3	Northwood Lake	Projects resulting from Northwood Lake TMDL and Subwatershed Analysis (SWA)	Impaired Waters: Northwood Lake WQ improvements	Projects and BMPs will vary depending on assessment results	New Hope	\$ 1,000,000				\$ 500,000	\$ 500,000					
4	Lost Lake	Projects resulting from Lost Lake TMDL and Subwatershed Analysis (SWA)	Impaired Waters: Lost Lake WQ improvements	Projects and BMPs will vary depending on assessment results	Plymouth	\$ 750,000			\$ 500,000	\$ 250,000						
5	Crane Lake	<a href="#">Crane Lake Chloride Reduction Demonstration Project</a>	Impaired Waters: Maintain or improve water quality in priority lakes and streams	Monitoring indicates that high chloride levels are likely impacting aquatic life. This project will study and implement practices to reduce chlorides reaching the lake, and could be a demonstration for implementation in other areas.	Minnetonka	\$ 300,000		\$ 300,000								
6	Crane Lake	Retention of impervious area drainage at Ridgedale area (CL-3) <i>(included in 2015 watershed plan but not implemented)</i>	Impaired Waters: Maintain or improve water quality in priority lakes and streams	Crane Lake outlets to Medicine Lake; Examples of projects include bioswales, tree trenches, rain gardens	Minnetonka	\$ 300,000								\$ 300,000		
7	Main Stem Bassett Creek	Projects resulting from Main Stem Haha Wakpadan / Bassett Creek Subwatershed Analysis (SWA)	Impaired Waters: Maintain or improve water quality in priority lakes and streams	Projects and BMPs will vary depending on assessment results	Golden Valley	\$ 1,000,000						\$ 500,000	\$ 500,000			
8	Main Stem Bassett Creek	<a href="#">Bassett Creek Main Stem Restoration - Regent Ave to Golden Valley Rd</a>	Impaired Waters: Achieve stable streambanks along all priority streams; Maintain or improve macroinvertebrate indices of biological integrity (MIBI) in priority streams; Maintain or improve water quality in priority streams	Will reduce phosphorus and sediment loading to downstream resources including Bassett Creek and Mississippi River. May possibly improve riparian and in-stream habitats.	City of Golden Valley	\$ 653,500	\$ 653,500									
9	Main Stem Bassett Creek	Medicine Lake Road and Winnetka Avenue Long Term Flood Mitigation Plan Implementation - DeCola Pond F Flood Storage & Diversion Project	Flooding/Climate Change Impacts: Reduce flood risk to structures and infrastructures	Based on projects identified in the Medicine Lake Rd. and Winnetka Ave. Long Term Flood Mitigation Plan. Two projects already constructed (DeCola Ponds B&C and SEA School & Wildwood Park Projects).	Golden Valley, New Hope, Crystal	\$ 4,000,000		\$ 1,000,000	\$ 1,000,000		\$ 1,000,000	\$ 1,000,000				
10	Main Stem Bassett Creek	Bassett Creek Valley floodplain reduction and stormwater management projects	Bassett Creek Valley: Collaborate on evaluation, sequencing, and implementation of multi-beneficial projects within the Bassett Creek Valley to create regional flood storage, reduce floodplain by at least 8 acres, improve regional stormwater management, and improve creek access.	Projects that result in regional flood storage, reduce floodplain by at least 8 acres, improve regional stormwater management, and improve creek access.	Minneapolis, MPRB, Hennepin County	\$ 5,000,000						\$ 1,000,000	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 1,000,000
11	Main Stem Bassett Creek	Restoration and stabilization of historic Bassett Creek channel north of Hwy 55, Minneapolis <i>(included in 2015 watershed plan but not implemented)</i>	Impaired Waters: Maintain or improve water quality in priority streams	Will reduce phosphorus and sediment loading to downstream resources including Bassett Creek and Mississippi River. Removed from CIP list due to low priority	Minneapolis	\$ 1,200,000								\$ 600,000	\$ 600,000	
12	Main Stem Bassett Creek	Bassett Creek Park water quality improvements or wetland restoration, Minneapolis <i>(included in 2018 version of CIP list but later removed due to low priority)</i>	Wetland Health & Restoration: Restore or enhance priority wetlands as opportunities arise or adjacent CIP projects are planned	Construction of BMPs benefitting Bassett Creek, potentially in conjunction with MPRB park renovations. May be an opportunity for a wetland restoration on the south side of Bassett Creek. Provides a better neighborhood connection to the creek.	Minneapolis, MPRB	\$ 700,000			\$ 350,000	\$ 350,000						
13	Main Stem Bassett Creek	Double Box Culvert Repair (FCP-1) <i>(slated for 2026/2027)</i>	Flooding/Climate Change Impacts: Reduce flood risk to structures and infrastructures	Maintenance of Flood Control Project; project would address needed repairs along the 5,600-foot-long tunnel	Minneapolis	\$ 1,300,000	\$ 950,000	\$ 350,000								
14	Main Stem Bassett Creek	Toledo Ave/Minnaqua Pond Stormwater Improvements & Flood Reduction (BC-13) – <i>(slated for 2028/2029)</i>	Impaired Waters: Maintain or improve water quality in priority lakes and streams; Flooding/Climate Change Impacts: Reduce flood risk to structures and infrastructures	Relocating infrastructure, creating flood storage, and redesigning the pond/stream interface will lower flood risk and damage, improve water quality of Bassett Creek and downstream waters, improve maintenance, and enhance vegetation and wildlife habitat.	Golden Valley	\$ 1,000,000			\$ 500,000	\$ 500,000						

Table 4-6 BCWMC Capital Improvement Program (2026-2035)

ID	Resource or Area	Project Title (status, if applicable)	Plan issue/goal addresses	Project description/need	Potential Partners	Planning Level Cost (2026-2035)	Years of Implementation									
							2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035
15	Main Stem Bassett Creek	Bassett Creek Lagoon Dredging in Theodore Wirth Park (BC-7)	Impaired Waters: Maintain or improve water quality in priority streams; improve habitats for macroinvertebrates and fish	Original project was not completed to specifications. This project will finish the project and/or complete a project with similar outcomes in upstream areas.	Golden Valley, MPRB	\$ 800,000		\$ 400,000	\$ 400,000							
16	Main Stem Bassett Creek	Deep Tunnel Sediment Removal	Flooding/Climate Change Impacts: Reduce flood risk to structures and infrastructures	Maintenance of Flood Control Project; sediment removal near the outfall to the Mississippi River in conjunction with 2030 scheduled deep tunnel inspection.	Minneapolis, USACE	\$ 2,000,000					\$1,000,000	\$ 1,000,000				
17	Main Stem Bassett Creek	Deep Tunnel repairs	Flooding/Climate Change Impacts: Reduce flood risk to structures and infrastructures	Maintenance of Flood Control Project; perform repairs identified in tunnel inspection reports, including void filling, infiltration repairs, concrete debris removal, and shaft modifications, plus any additional repairs identified in the 2030 inspection.	Minneapolis, USACE	\$ 5,000,000										\$ 5,000,000
18	Main Stem Bassett Creek	Haha Wakpadan / Bassett Creek restoration within Brookview Golf Course	Impaired Waters: Achieve stable streambanks along all priority streams; Maintain or improve macroinvertebrate indices of biological integrity (MIBI) in priority streams; Maintain or improve water quality in priority streams	The project will reduce phosphorus and sediment loading to downstream resources including Haha Wakpadan / Bassett Creek and Mississippi River; the project may improve riparian and in-stream habitats.	Golden Valley	\$ 2,500,000					\$ 1,250,000	\$ 1,250,000				
19	Main Stem Bassett Creek	City Hall Campus Redesign Stormwater Improvements & Interpretive Area	Impaired Waters: Maintain or improve water quality in priority streams; potentially address chloride water quality goals and engagement goals	From Golden Valley staff; could be an opportunity to do something like MWMO plus Indigenous installation/ reflection/ vegetation, community gathering space, etc	Golden Valley	\$ 750,000							\$ 750,000			
20	Main Stem Bassett Creek	Stormwater & Habitat Improvements in Hampshire Park (includes flood mitigation)	Impaired Waters: Maintain or improve water quality in priority streams; Flooding/Climate Change Impacts: Reduce flood risk to structures and infrastructures	The project will reduce phosphorus and sediment loading to downstream resources including Haha Wakpadan / Bassett Creek and Mississippi River. The project may improve riparian and in-stream habitats.	Golden Valley	\$ 2,500,000									\$ 1,250,000	\$ 1,250,000
21	Main Stem Bassett Creek	Stormwater & Habitat Improvements in Orkla Park (includes flood mitigation)	Impaired Waters: Maintain or improve water quality in priority streams; Flooding/Climate Change Impacts: Reduce flood risk to structures and infrastructures	The project will reduce phosphorus and sediment loading to downstream resources including Haha Wakpadan / Bassett Creek and Mississippi River. The project may improve riparian and in-stream habitats.	Golden Valley	\$ 2,000,000						\$ 1,000,000	\$ 1,000,000			
22	North Branch Bassett Creek	Bassett Creek Park Pond Dredging and Upstream Channel Improvements, Crystal	Impaired Waters: Maintain or improve water quality in priority streams	This project was originally studied in 2017 in conjunction with a study of Winnetka Pond dredging. The final project resulted only in dredging of Winnetka Pond with an understanding the Bassett Creek Park Pond dredging would be completed in the future.	Crystal	\$ 1,200,000					\$ 600,000	\$ 600,000				
23	Plymouth Creek	<a href="#">Plymouth Creek Restoration Project Dunkirk Lane to Plymouth Ice Center</a>	Impaired Waters: Achieve stable streambanks along all priority streams; Maintain or improve macroinvertebrate indices of biological integrity (MIBI) in priority streams; Maintain or improve water quality in priority streams	The project will reduce phosphorus and sediment loading to downstream resources including Medicine Lake. The project may improve riparian and in-stream habitats.	Plymouth	\$ 900,000	\$ 900,000									
24	Plymouth Creek	Fernbrook Regional Stormwater Improvements	Impaired Waters: Maintain or improve water quality in priority streams; Flooding/Climate Change Impacts: Reduce flood risk to structures and infrastructures	This project in the city of Plymouth will construct a regional stormwater treatment system to reduce flooding and improve water quality in downstream Plymouth Creek and Medicine Lake in the area north of Highway 55 on Fernbrook Lane.	Plymouth	\$ 3,000,000		\$ 500,000	\$ 500,000	\$ 2,000,000						
25	Sweeney Branch Bassett Creek	Culvert Repair/Replacement: Sweeney Lake to Sweeney Branch Bassett Creek, Golden Valley	Flooding/Climate Change Impacts: Reduce flood risk to structures and infrastructures	This project in Golden Valley will repair or replace aging infrastructure that facilitates the flow of the Sweeney Lake Branch of Bassett Creek, helps to protect critical regional watermain infrastructure, and prevents flooding of nearby buildings and property.	Golden Valley	\$ 1,000,000							\$ 500,000	\$ 500,000		

Table 4-6 BCWMC Capital Improvement Program (2026-2035)

ID	Resource or Area	Project Title (status, if applicable)	Plan issue/goal addresses	Project description/need	Potential Partners	Planning Level Cost (2026-2035)	Years of Implementation									
							2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035
26	Watershed-wide	Projects resulting from subwatershed assessments in prioritized areas	Multiple issues and goals in Watershed and Waterbody Quality category and Climate Resiliency and Flooding category	In addition to the planned subwatershed assessments (SWAs) for Nothwood Lake (#3) and Lost Lake (#4), and the Medicine Lake TMDL Assessment (#1), additional SWAs are planned in other areas of the watershed. SWAs will identify, target, and prioritize activities to improve conditions, including CIP projects.	Cities	\$ 300,000					\$ 100,000		\$ 100,000		\$ 100,000	
27	Watershed-wide	Shoreline improvement projects on priority lakes	Lakeshore Erosion: Increase percentage of properties with native buffers on nutrient impaired lakes.	As identified by assessments or as be cost share program	Cities	\$ 450,000		\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000
28	Watershed-wide	Streambank restoration and channel/habitat improvements on priority streams; various segments	Impaired Waters: Achieve stable streambanks along all priority streams; Maintain or improve macroinvertebrate indices of biological integrity (MIBI) in priority streams; Maintain or improve water quality in priority streams	Based on surveys of streambanks and riparian areas; projects to restore streams, introduce in-channel habitat, overhanging vegetation, and woody debris	Cities, MPRB	\$ 2,400,000						\$ 600,000	\$ 600,000		\$ 600,000	\$ 600,000
29	Watershed-wide	Curly-leaf pondweed control for WQ improvement	Impaired Waters: Improve lake water quality AIS: Mitigate the impact of existing AIS infestations	<u>Per AIS management policies.</u>	Cities, Hennepin County, TRPD, MDNR	\$ 180,000		\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000
30	Watershed-wide	Implementation of recommendations from Street Sweeping Prioritization Project	Impaired waters: improve lake and stream water quality; reduce chloride loading to lakes and streams; reduce chloride concentrations in Bassett Creek by 10%	<u>Potentially includes equipment purchase cost share or augmented street sweeping programs.</u>	Cities	\$ 360,000		\$ 40,000	\$ 40,000	\$ 40,000	\$ 40,000	\$ 40,000	\$ 40,000	\$ 40,000	\$ 40,000	\$ 40,000
31	Watershed-wide	Private Developer Cost-share for Project Performance Beyond Minimum Standards (water quality and/or flood control)	Multiple goals including water quality improvements and flood reduction	Requested on multiple occasions by TAC. Fewer and fewer opportunities for projects on public land. Cooperation with private property owners is needed.	Cities	\$ 900,000		\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000
32	Watershed-wide	Chloride Reduction Projects or cost-share program	Impaired Waters: Reduce chloride loading to lakes and streams	Prioritization given to areas tributary to chloride-impaired waters. Cost share program could be developed for city and private entities. Examples include equipment upgrades, brining equipment, porous pavement, heated surfaces, reconfiguring sites for less ice build-up	Cities, MPRB	\$ 450,000		\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000
33	Watershed-wide	Flood risk reduction cost share program (for habitable structures)	Flooding/Climate Change Impacts: Reduce flood risk to structures and infrastructures	Floodproofing or flood risk reduction projects for homes	Cities	\$ 400,000			\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000
34	Watershed-wide	Implementation of water quality improvement projects resulting from the Upper Mississippi River Bacteria TMDL (WS-1) (included in 2015 watershed plan but not implemented)	Impaired Waters: Reduce sources of bacteria to priority streams	Goose management, pet waste management projects, reduction of bacteria loading from ponds and pipes	Cities, MPCA	\$ 100,000					\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000				
35	Watershed-wide	CIP Project Maintenance	Multiple goals across all areas	Maintenance of past CIP projects	Cities	\$ 450,000		\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000
36	Wirth Lake	Wirth Lake Aeration	Impaired Waters: Maintain or improve water quality in priority lakes and streams; and Maintain or improve fish index of biologic integrity for applicable priority lakes	Implement results of Wirth Lake Aeration Study	MPRB	\$ 150,000		\$ 150,000								
						\$ 47,143,500	\$ 2,503,500	\$ 3,010,000	\$ 4,610,000	\$ 4,960,000	\$ 4,860,000	\$ 6,360,000	\$ 4,860,000	\$ 3,810,000	\$ 3,960,000	\$ 8,210,000

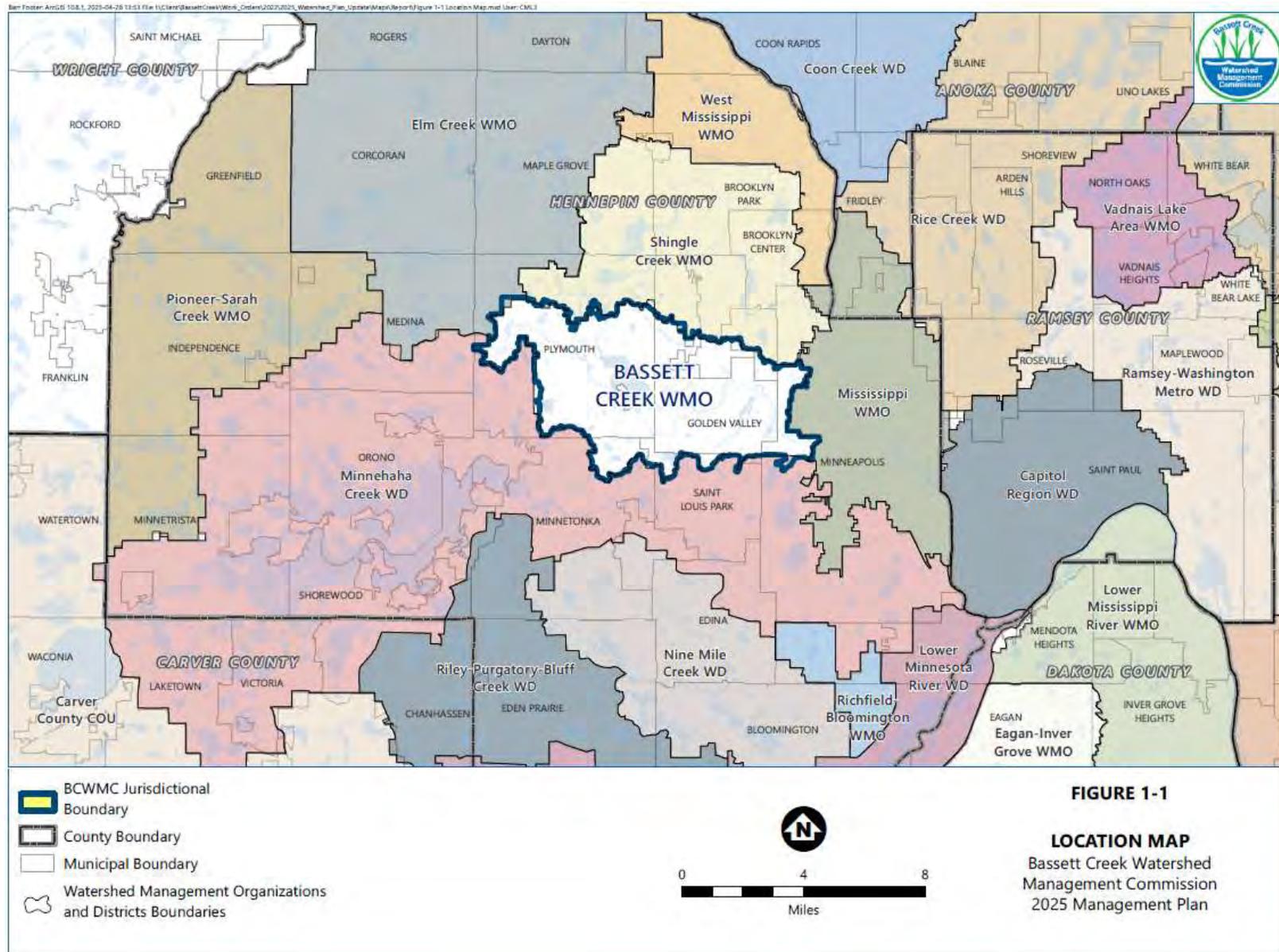


Figure 1-1 Location of the Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission

## **COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

### ***Southern Region Committee***

1. Blue Earth River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan – Ted Winter and Jill Sackett Eberhart – ***DECISION ITEM***
2. Redwood River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan – John Shea – ***DECISION ITEM***

## BOARD MEETING AGENDA ITEM

**Agenda Item Title:** Blue Earth River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan

**Meeting Date:** March 25, 2026

**Agenda Category:**

- Committee Recommendation     New Business     Old Business

**Item Type:**

- Decision     Discussion     Information     Non-Public Data

**Keywords for Electronic Searchability:** Blue Earth, 1W1P, CWMP, Planning, Watershed

**Section/Region:** Regional Operations/Southern

**Contact:** Ed Lenz

**Prepared by:** Jill Sackett Eberhart

**Reviewed by:** Southern Region

**Presented by:** Ted Winter, Southern Regional Chair and Jill Sackett Eberhart, Board Conservationist

**Time requested:** 10 minutes

**Attachments:**

- Resolution     Order     Map     Other supporting information

**Fiscal/Policy Impact:**

- None     Capital Budget  
 Amended Policy Request     Outdoor Heritage Fund Budget  
 New Policy Request     Clean Water Fund Budget  
 General Fund Budget     Other:

### ACTION REQUESTED

Approval of the Blue Earth River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan as recommended by the Southern Regional Committee.

### LINKS TO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[Blue Earth 1W1P](#)

[BWSR One Watershed, One Plan Participating Watersheds \(Plans in Final 90-day Review – Blue Earth\)](#)

### SUMMARY *(Consider: history, reason for consideration now, alternatives evaluated, basis for recommendation)*

The Minnesota portion of the Blue Earth River watershed encompasses a total of 777,243 acres in portions of Blue Earth, Cottonwood, Faribault, Freeborn, Jackson, Martin, and Watonwan counties. The Blue Earth River itself begins in Iowa and flows approximately 146 miles north with both the Watonwan and Le Sueur Rivers flowing into it before it outlets to the Minnesota River in Mankato. The predominant land use is agriculture (~86%). There is a total of 21 municipalities within the watershed; two of which pull drinking water from surface sources (Fairmont and Mankato).

The Blue Earth River Planning Partnership (Partnership) was established on September 26, 2023, through adoption of a Memorandum of Agreement for the purposes of developing a Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan. The membership of the Partnership includes Blue Earth County, Blue Earth County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), Faribault County, Faribault County SWCD, Freeborn County, Freeborn SWCD, Jackson County, Jackson SWCD, Martin County, Martin SWCD, and the City of Fairmont. Per the BWSR Operating Procedures, if less than 10% of the jurisdictional land area of the local government is within the watershed planning boundary, participation by that local government is optional. Cottonwood County, Cottonwood SWCD, Watonwan County, and Watonwan SWCD opted out of the planning process.

On December 23, 2025, 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 #23 50. Letters were received from MDA, MDH, DNR, and MPCA. The State agencies each recommended Plan approval.

BWSR staff completed their review and subsequently found the Plan meets the requirements of Minnesota Statutes and BWSR Policy. BWSR staff recommended Plan approval.

On February 19, 2026, the Southern Regional Committee (Committee) met to review and discuss the Plan. The Committee's decision was to recommend approval of the Blue Earth River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan to the full Board per the attached draft Order.

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

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

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**ORDER  
APPROVING  
COMPREHENSIVE  
WATERSHED  
MANAGEMENT PLAN**

**Whereas**, the Policy Committee of the Blue Earth River Planning Partnership submitted a Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (Plan) to the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (Board) on December 23, 2025, pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103B.101, Subdivision 14 and 103B.801 and Board Decision #23-50, 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 Blue Earth River Planning Partnership (Partnership) was established on September 26, 2023, through adoption of a Memorandum of Agreement for the purposes of developing a Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan. The membership of the Partnership includes Blue Earth County, Blue Earth County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), Faribault County, Faribault County SWCD, Freeborn County, Freeborn SWCD, Jackson County, Jackson SWCD, Martin County, Martin SWCD, and the City of Fairmont. Per the BWSR Operating Procedures, if less than 10% of the jurisdictional land area of the local government is within the watershed planning boundary, participation by that local government is optional. Cottonwood County, Cottonwood SWCD, Watonwan County, and Watonwan SWCD opted out of the planning process.
- 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 (1W1P). Board Decision #23-50 adopted the revised versions of the *One Watershed, One Plan Operating Procedures version 3.0* and the *One Watershed, One Plan - Plan Content Requirements version 3.0*.
- Nature of the Watershed.** The Blue Earth River Watershed lies on the Minnesota – Iowa border. The Minnesota portion of the watershed encompasses a total of 777,243 acres in portions of Blue Earth,

Cottonwood, Faribault, Freeborn, Jackson, Martin, and Watonwan counties. The Blue Earth River itself begins in Iowa and flows approximately 146 miles north with both the Watonwan and Le Sueur Rivers flowing into it before it outlets to the Minnesota River in Mankato. The miles of river and stream are joined by 69 lakes and approximately 360 miles of public open ditch and 1,400 miles of public subsurface tile drainage. Historically prairie, the current predominant land use is agriculture (86%), and the watershed is also home to 21 municipalities partially or wholly within its boundaries. The majority of drinking water comes from wells but two municipalities pull drinking water from surface sources (Fairmont and Mankato).

4. **Plan Development.** The Blue Earth River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan is primarily a restoration-based Plan. The Plan focuses on restoring impaired waters and habitats, protecting high quality lakes, reducing peak flows through water storage, and protecting drinking water quality through resource management. The Plan focuses on prioritized, targeted, and measurable implementation efforts and lays out specific actions to meet Plan goals. It was developed in coordination with local government units, state and Federal agencies, and interested stakeholders.
5. **Plan Review.** On December 23, 2025, 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 #23-50. 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): Expressed appreciation for the opportunity to review responses to their draft comments. “The MDA has no additional comments and recommends BWSR approval.”
  - B. Minnesota Department of Health (MDH): “The Minnesota Department of Health has received the final draft plan to review and does not have any further comments or suggestions. MDH recommends approval of the Blue Earth River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan.”
  - C. Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR): Thanked the partnership for the opportunity to participate in the process and reviewed the responses to their draft review comments. “The DNR is satisfied with the responses to issues raised during our review, has no additional comments, and recommends that BWSR approve the plan.”
  - D. Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA): Appreciated the opportunity to participate and provide input throughout the 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 but did not provide comments.
  - F. Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR): BWSR staff conducted a review of the final Plan and commended the Partnership for its diligent undertaking of the planning process. Staff find the Plan meets plan content requirements. BWSR staff recommend BWSR Board approval of the Plan.
6. **Plan Summary and Highlights.**
  - The watershed is organized into five planning regions based on Hydrologic Unit Codes (HUC) 10 boundaries. This allows for a watershed-wide focus while allowing actions to be tailored to the planning region they will have the greatest impact on.

- The Plan has a total of 15 high and medium priority issues. High priority issues include: erosion and sedimentation; stream, ravine, and shoreline erosion; nutrient loading; protection of surface drinking water sources; altered hydrology and flood damage reduction; wetlands; maintenance/repair of drainage systems; and soil health. Medium priority issues include: bacteria loading; aquatic invasive species; stormwater runoff; groundwater contamination; groundwater supplies; aquatic connectivity; and wildlife habitat.
  - The Partnership made a point to integrate climate resiliency, environmental justice, recreation, conservation action, and policy development when developing the issues and goals of the Plan.
  - Key goals include:
    - Reducing both total phosphorus and total nitrogen by 4% to improve stream and lake conditions (53,600 lbs/year and 1,975,300 lbs/year, respectively)
    - Implement 30,000 acres of soil health practices to aid in adding water storage while reducing nutrient sediment loss.
    - Water Storage short term goal of adding 1,200 acre-feet of water storage and a future condition goal of 71,895 acre-feet of water storage.
    - Stabilize or enhance 2,000 feet of priority lake shoreline.
    - Implement BMPs to treat 20 acres of urban runoff.
    - A focus on drinking water with the goals of:
      - a) Reduce total phosphorus and total nitrogen contributions to the Fairmont surface water source, Budd Lake, by 20% (2,600 lbs/year and 12,700 lbs/year, respectively);
      - b) Protect Mankato’s surface water source through the previously mentioned 4% total phosphorus and total nitrogen load reductions;
      - c) Sealing 100 unused wells; and
      - d) Improve groundwater recharge by implementing 3,500 acres of recharge conservation practices (perennial land protection, cover crops, etc.).
  - The estimated cost to meet the 10-year Plan’s goals is approximately \$46.7 Million.
  - An existing Joint Powers Entity, the Greater Blue Earth River Basin (GBERBA) will be utilized for implementation. GBERBA membership consists of both counties and SWCDs.
7. **Southern Regional Committee.** On February 19, 2026, the Southern Regional Committee met to review and discuss the Plan. Those in attendance from the Board’s Committee were Chair Ted Winter (citizen), Eunice Biel (townships), Kevin Wilson (non-metro city), Ellen Friedrich (MDA), Amanda Strommer (for Steve Robertson, MDH), Brian Schultz (DNR) and Heather Johnson (MPCA). Board staff in attendance were Southern Region Manager Ed Lenz, Board Conservationist Jill Sackett Eberhart, Board Conservationist John Shea, Board Conservationist Shane Bugeja and Office and Administrative Specialist Denise Lauerman. The representatives from the Partnership that provided the presentation were Faribault County SWCD Co-Program Administrator Nathan Carr and Martin SWCD District Manager Ashley Brenke. Also in attendance from the Planning Partnership were Blue Earth County Commissioner Kevin Paap, Faribault County Commissioner Gertrude Paschke, Blue Earth County SWCD District Manager Jerad Bach, Fairmont Water Resources Coordinator Hannah Neusch, Freeborn County Environmental Health Coordinator Rachel Wehner, Freeborn SWCD District Manager Lindsey Cornell and HEI Senior Project Manager Rachel Olm. Board regional staff provided their 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 March 25, 2036.

## **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 Blue Earth River Planning Partnership pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103B.101, Subd. 14 and 103B.801 and Board Decision #23-50.
3. The Blue Earth River Planning Partnership 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 Decision #23-50.
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 Blue Earth River, submitted December 23, 2025.

Dated at Saint Paul, Minnesota, this 25th day of March 2025.

## **MINNESOTA BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Todd Holman, Chair  
Board of Water and Soil Resources

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

March 25, 2026

Blue Earth River Planning Partnership / Faribault County SWCD  
c/o Mr. Nathan Carr, Co-Program Administrator  
415 South Grove Street, Suite 8  
Blue Earth, MN 56013

**RE: Approval of the Blue Earth River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan**

Dear Blue Earth River Planning Partnership:

The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) is pleased to inform you the Blue Earth River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (Plan) was approved at its meeting held on March 25, 2026. Attached is the signed Board Order that documents approval of the Plan and indicates the Plan meets all relevant requirements of law, rule, and policy.

This Plan is effective for a ten-year period until March 25, 2036. Please be advised that the partners must adopt and begin implementing the Plan within 120 days of the date of the Order in accordance with Minnesota Statutes §103B.101, Subd. 14, and the One Watershed, One Plan Operating Procedures.

The members of the partnership and participants in the Plan development process are to be commended for writing a plan that clearly presents water management goals, actions, and priorities of the Partnership. The BWSR looks forward to working with you as you implement this Plan and document its outcomes.

Please contact BWSR Board Conservationist Jill Sackett Eberhart at 507-317-1680 or [jill.sackett.eberhart@state.mn.us](mailto:jill.sackett.eberhart@state.mn.us) for further assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

Todd Holman, Chair  
Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources

Enclosure: BWSR Board Order

CC: Reid Christianson, MDA (via email)  
Scott Matteson, MDA (via email)  
Carrie Raber, MDH (via email)  
Amanda Strommer, MDH (via email)  
Barbara Weisman, DNR (via email)  
Korey Woodley, DNR (via email)  
Erynn Jenzen, DNR (via email)  
Melinda Neville, MPCA (via email)  
Paul Davis, MPCA (via email)  
Catherine Neuschler, EQB (via email)  
Ed Lenz, BWSR (via email)  
Jeremy Maul, BWSR (via email)  
Jill Sackett Eberhart, BWSR (via email)  
Julie Westerlund, BWSR (via email)



# Blue Earth River

## Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan



# Plan Acknowledgements



## Local Planning Partnership

Blue Earth County and SWCD  
 Faribault County and SWCD  
 Freeborn County and SWCD  
 Jackson County and SWCD  
 Martin County and SWCD  
 City of Fairmont

## Created in Collaboration With

Houston Engineering, Inc.  
 7550 Meridian Circle North, Suite 120  
 Maple Grove, MN 55369

## Funded By

Board of Water and Soil Resources



## Advisory Committee

Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources  
 Minnesota Department of Agriculture  
 Minnesota Department of Health  
 Minnesota Department of Natural Resources  
 Minnesota Pollution Control Agency  
 Cottonwood County and SWCD  
 City of Mankato  
 Fairmont Lakes Foundation  
 Faribault CEDA  
 Faribault County Drainage  
 Farm & Township Board  
 Minnesota State University, Mankato  
 US Fish and Wildlife Service  
 Watonwan County and SWCD



# Table of Contents

- 1. Executive Summary**
- 2. Land and Water Resources Narrative**
- 3. Priority Issues**
- 4. Measurable Goals**
- 5. Targeted Implementation**
- 6. Implementation Programs**
- 7. Plan Administration and Coordination**

## Appendices

- A. Planning Memorandum of Agreement
- B. 60 Day Notification Responses
- C. Public Kickoff Summary
- D. Carbon Benefits
- E. Geospatial Prioritization
- F. Total Maximum Daily Load Summary
- G. Altered Hydrology Analysis
- H. PTMApp Implementation Scenario
- I. Ordinance Comparison
- J. Local Funding Authorities
- K. Formal Review Comments

## Acronyms

TWIP	One Watershed, One Plan
ACEP	Agricultural Conservation Easement Program
AIS	Aquatic Invasive Species
BERW	Blue Earth River Watershed
BMP	Best Management Practice
BWSR	Board of Water and Soil Resources
CAFO	Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation
CIP	Capital Improvement Project
CREP	Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program
CRP	Conservation Reserve Program
CSP	Conservation Stewardship Program
CWMP	Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan
DNR	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
DWSMA	Drinking Water Supply Management Area
EQIP	Environmental Quality Incentive Program
FM	Flood Migration Assistance
FSA	Farm Service Agency
FWP	Farmable Wetlands Program
GAM	Grants Administration Manual
GBERBA	Greater Blue Earth River Basin Alliance
GRP	Grassland Reserve Program
HAB	Harmful Algae Blooms
HMGP	Hazard Mitigation Grant Program
HUC	Hydrologic Unit Codes
IBA	Important Bird Areas
LGU	Local Government Unit
LPSS	Lakes of Phosphorus Sensitivity Significance
MAWQCP	MDA Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program
MDA	Minnesota Department of Agriculture
MDH	Minnesota Department of Health
MnDOT	Minnesota Department of Transportation
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MPCA	Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
MS4	Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
PCBs	Polychlorinated Biphenyls
PDM	Pre Disaster Mitigation
PFAS	Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances
PTMApp	Prioritize, Target, and Measure Application
RCPP	Regional Conservation Partnership Program
RIM	Reinvest in Minnesota
SRF	State Revolving Fund
SSTS	Subsurface Sewage Treatment System
SWAG	Surface Water Assessment Grants
SWCD	Soil and Water Conservation District
SWPPP	Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
TMDL	Total Maximum Daily Load
TN	Total Nitrogen



TP	Total Phosphorus
TSS	Total Suspended Solids
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USGS	United States Geological Survey
WASCOB	Water and Sediment Control Basin
WBIF	Watershed-Based Implementation Funding
WCA	Wetland Conservation Act
WHAF	Watershed Health Assessment Framework
WMA	Wildlife Management Areas
WPLMN	Watershed Pollutant Load Monitoring Network
WRAPS	Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy
WRP	Wetland Reserve Program

# 1. Executive Summary

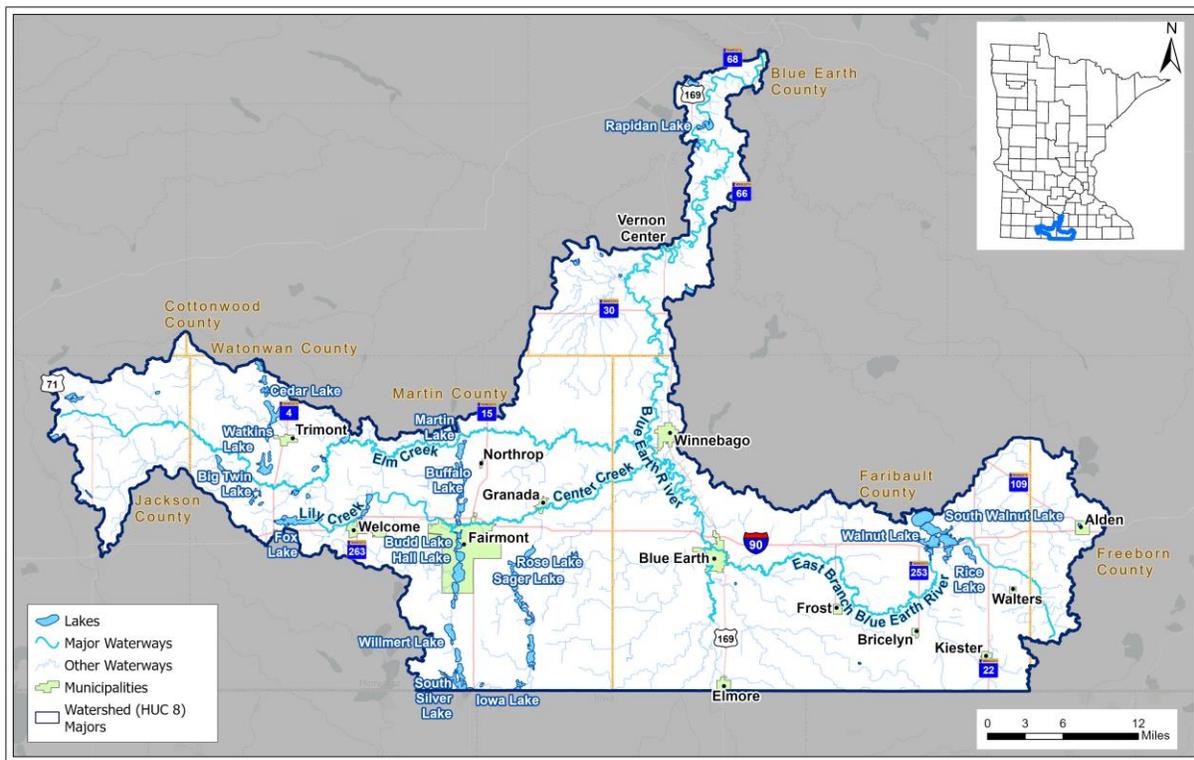


Photo Credit: Blue Earth County

# Section 1. Executive Summary

## Introduction

The Blue Earth River Watershed (BERW), located in southern Minnesota along the Iowa border, covers nearly 800,000 acres around the Blue Earth River and within the Minnesota River Basin (**Figure 1-1**). Although the hydrologic boundary of this watershed extends south into Iowa, this plan only considers the area on the Minnesota side of the border. The watershed is home to many in Blue Earth, Jackson, Martin, Faribault, and Freeborn counties, and with cropland as the dominant land use, the watershed supports many producers and farms. The watershed is home to the cities of Blue Earth and Fairmont as well as the Fairmont Chain of Lakes, a unique recreational asset to the surrounding area.



**Figure 1-1. Blue Earth River Watershed plan area**

This Blue Earth Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (CWMP) was developed as part of the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources' (BWSR's) One Watershed, One Plan (1WIP) program. The 1WIP departs from traditional local water planning along county jurisdictional boundaries to instead encourage local government partnerships to plan resource management along watershed boundaries. The BERW joins watersheds throughout the state in having a CWMP through the 1WIP program, which opens the door to noncompetitive funding to achieve the actions described in this plan. This 10-year CWMP is active from 2026-2035, upon which the plan will be reviewed and updated.

## Planning Partners

Local governmental units (LGUs) convened in 2024 to form a planning Memorandum of Agreement (MOA, see **Appendix A**) to develop this CWMP. MOA members include:

- City of Fairmont
- Blue Earth, Faribault, Freeborn, Jackson, and Martin counties
- Blue Earth, Faribault, Freeborn, Jackson, and Martin Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs)

Throughout the planning process, the following three committees guided plan content and decisions:

- **Steering Committee:** A committee comprised of local government staff who initially drafted and recommended content to the other committees.
- **Advisory Committee:** A committee comprised of state agency staff, local professionals, and community stakeholders who provided expert advice on plan themes, priorities, and content. The Advisory Committee includes Steering Committee members.
- **Policy Committee:** A committee comprised of an elected official from each MOA entity and was responsible for reviewing and approving drafted plan content.

The public was also involved in the creation of this plan. A public kick-off meeting was held in Fairmont on May 2024, where community members were invited to learn about the watershed planning process and provide input on watershed issues. Nearly 300 people filled out a survey to better understand the community's top concerns. Based on survey responses, priority concerns for the community included pollutants like sediment, nutrients, and bacteria impacting aquatic life and recreation; management of aquatic invasive species; and drinking water protection from contamination. **The public's priority concerns were considered in the planning and prioritization process- many of which emerged as a focus in this plan.**

The Blue Earth River CWMP will be implemented through the Greater Blue Earth River Basin Alliance (GBERBA) Joint Powers Entity. GBERBA is a Joint Powers Organization consisting of member local government units encompassing the Blue Earth, Le Sueur, and Watonwan River Watersheds.

## Issues and Goals

Issues impacting resources in the BERW were identified by referencing existing data and reports, soliciting letters from relevant state agencies, and listening to feedback from watershed stakeholders, including the public and planning committees. In total, 20 issues were identified. These issues were then prioritized to focus implementation efforts. Issues were prioritized based on the prominence of the issue in existing sources (the public survey, agency reports, county water plans, and agency letters), with a higher priority assigned for issues that were most prominent. The 15 High and Medium priority issues each have a 10-year measurable goal set to address them (**Table 1-1**). **A goal is a quantifiable change expected in a resource condition in the plan's 10-year timeframe.**

**Table 1-1: Priority issues and their associated 10-year goals**

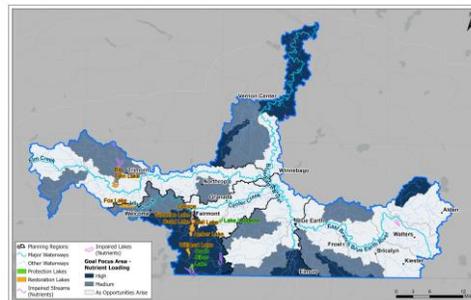
High Priority Issues	Issue/Goal	Issue Statement	10-Year Goal (Abbreviated)
	<b>Erosion and Sedimentation</b>	Upland erosion delivers sediment to surface water, impacting aquatic life and recreation	Reduce upland sediment loading by <b>10%</b>
	<b>Stream, Ravine, and Shoreline Erosion</b>	Incised and unstable streambanks, shorelines, and ravines combined with the naturally steep slopes of the downstream region experience significant erosion	Stabilize or enhance <b>2,000 feet of shoreline</b> and <b>2,000 feet of ravines or streambanks</b>
	<b>Nutrient Loading</b>	Phosphorus and nitrogen are degrading lake and stream water quality, causing algal blooms and impacting aquatic life	Reduce total phosphorus and nitrogen by <b>4%</b>
	<b>Protection of Surface Drinking Water Sources</b>	The Mankato and Fairmont drinking water sources are vulnerable to surface water contamination	Reduce total phosphorus (TP) and total nitrogen (TN) contributions to <b>Budd Lake by 20%</b> . Protect Mankato drinking water through the Nutrient Loading goal.
	<b>Altered Hydrology and Flood Damage Reduction</b>	Shifts in land use and climate, including changes in cropping patterns, increased drainage improvements, new impervious surfaces, and increased rainfall volume and duration, have all contributed to the increase in surface water volume and timing / velocity of flows.	Add <b>1,200 acre-feet</b> of water storage
	<b>Wetlands</b>	Historical drainage of wetlands and subsequent loss of storage, habitat, and water quality benefits.	Restore <b>500 acres</b> of wetlands
	<b>Maintenance/Repair of Drainage Systems</b>	Most of the cropland is drained by ditches and/or tile, some of which are aging and can result in high flow, sediment, bacteria, and nutrients to surface waters.	<b>Reduce peak flows / volume</b> as part of a petitioned repair, improvement proceeding, or voluntary project
	<b>Soil Health</b>	Degraded soil health has led to reduced water retention, agricultural productivity, and increased erosion.	Implement <b>30,000 acres</b> of soil health practices

Medium Priority Issues	Issue / Goal	Issue Statement	10-Year Goal (Abbreviated)
	<b>Bacteria Loading</b>	Many waterbodies have high bacteria levels, impacting aquatic recreation	Develop <b>15 manure management plans or projects</b> , address <b>60 noncompliant septic systems</b> , and implement setbacks
	<b>Aquatic Invasive Species</b>	Aquatic invasive species (AIS) outcompete native species and impact aquatic life and recreation	Conduct <b>five events and annual boat inspections</b>
	<b>Stormwater Runoff</b>	Stormwater runoff from urban areas is a source of sediment and pollutants to surface water	Implement stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs) to treat <b>20 acres</b> of urban runoff
	<b>Groundwater Contamination</b>	Private wells are susceptible to groundwater contamination, specifically from arsenic and nitrate	Seal <b>100 wells</b>
	<b>Groundwater Supplies</b>	Groundwater resources are vulnerable to overuse if withdrawal increases	Implement <b>3,500 acres</b> of recharge conservation practices
	<b>Aquatic Connectivity</b>	Barriers such as dams and culverts are impeding fish passage and aquatic connectivity	Address <b>four connectivity barriers</b>
	<b>Wildlife Habitat</b>	Loss and fragmentation of prairie and the need for protection of unique natural features to support wildlife habitat	Protect <b>685 acres</b> of land



Left: View from former Rapidan Dam. Source: Jill Sackett Eberhart. Right: Wetland Restoration. Source: Blue Foot Productions

With **Section 4—Measurable Goals**, each priority issue and measurable goal has a focus area map that shows where the work towards the goal will be prioritized based on available data. Data that supports focus area maps are described in each goal summary.

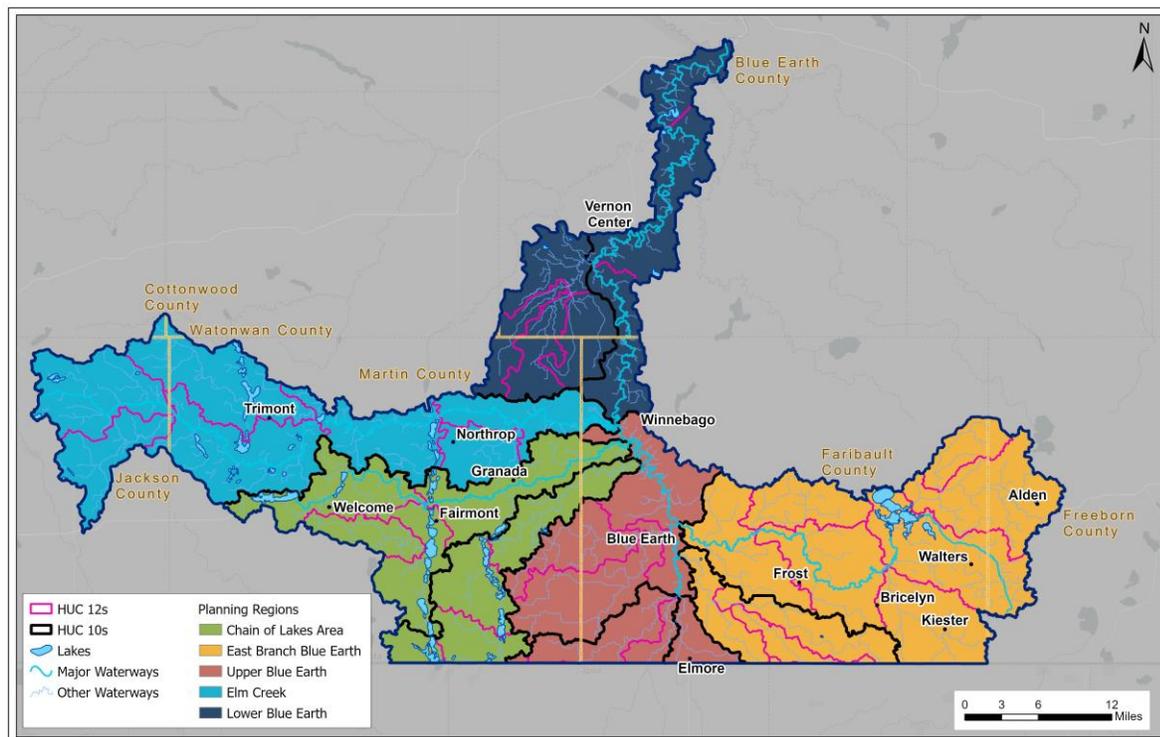


In addition to each goal having a focus map, 10 lakes were identified as priority lakes.

- **Protection Lakes:** South Silver and Imogene
- **Restoration Lakes:** Fox, George, Sisseton, Budd, Hall, Amber, Big Twin, and Wilmert

### Planning Regions

This plan focused on the entirety of the BERW in Minnesota. However, given the vast size of the watershed, the significance and impact of resource-related issues can vary from the western to eastern, and southern to northern watershed extents. In recognition of this, local planning partners organized the watershed into five planning regions based on Hydrologic Unit Codes (HUC-10) boundaries (**Figure 1-2**). The creation of planning regions keeps the focus on watershed-wide management while allowing actions to be tailored to the watershed area they will have the greatest impact on.



**Figure 1-2. BERW Planning Regions**

## Implementation

### Section 5—Targeted Implementation

contains a list of actions that are planned for implementation during the 10-year lifespan of this plan. Actions were developed based on existing information, modeling outputs, committee input, and data gaps discovered as part of the planning process. These actions were developed to make each measurable goal achievable. Actions are carried out through one of five implementation programs:



#### Projects and Practices



#### Public Participation and Engagement



#### Research and Data Gaps



#### Capital Improvements



#### Local Controls

#### Each action table contains:

- Action description
- Focus Area
- Trackable output
- Goals directly or indirectly affected by the action
- Entities responsible for implementation
- Timeline
- Estimated local and partner costs



Actions are summarized into action tables organized by implementation program. In order to streamline implementation, actions within the Projects and Practices implementation program are broken down further for specific planning regions based on the prominence of issues and goals unique to each area.

This plan includes 11 actions under Projects and Practices, 12 actions focused on Participation and Public Engagement, and 9 actions addressing Research and Data Gaps. Examples of these actions include:



**Projects and Practices:** Implement 30,000 acres of soil health practices, stabilize 2,000 feet of lake shoreline, and seal 100 unused wells.



**Public Participation and Engagement:** Hold five workshops on invasive species, hold 25 outreach and education events related to agriculture and soil, and hold four well testing clinics.



**Research and Data Gaps:** Complete a feasibility study for water storage projects and conduct a microbial source assessment for bacteria sources.

## Implementation Cost

The cost of each action is listed in the action tables. A summary of the total plan cost, categorized by implementation program, is shown in **Table 1-2**. The cost for implementing all the actions in the plan is shown both by local costs as well as partner and federal costs.

**Table 1-2. Funding Summary by Program**

Program	Local 10-Year Plan Cost	Partner/Federal 10-Year Plan Cost
<b>Projects and Practices</b>	\$10,060,800	\$23,512,500
<i>Project Development</i>	\$1,360,000	N/A
<i>Technical Assistance</i>	\$873,000	N/A
<b>Public Participation and Engagement</b>	\$1,480,000	N/A
<b>Research and Data Gaps</b>	\$510,000	N/A
<b>Local Controls</b>	\$7,701,000	N/A
<b>Capital Improvements</b>	\$250,000	N/A
Operations and Maintenance	\$449,000	N/A
Plan Administration	\$500,000	N/A
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$23,183,800</b>	<b>\$23,512,500</b>

The Blue Earth River Partnership anticipates a local budget of \$1,966,000 annually—or \$19,660,000—over the 10-year plan (for more details, see **Section 7—Plan Administration and Coordination**. **This means that to meet plan goals, the Blue Earth River Watershed Partnership estimates needing an additional \$352,380 per year, or \$3,523,800 over the 10-year plan.**

## During Implementation

This plan is active from 2026-2035. A work plan will be reviewed by the Blue Earth Subcommittee and approved by GBERBA as needed. As this is a 10-year plan, there will be a midpoint assessment to evaluate progress and determine if changes to the plan are needed. If a significant change is proposed, BWSR has a formal amendment process. At the end of the plan's lifespan, the plan will be updated and revised to adjust to new data, resource conditions, and available funding.



**Osmundson Prairie Scientific and Natural Area. Source: DNR.**

## Implementation Programs

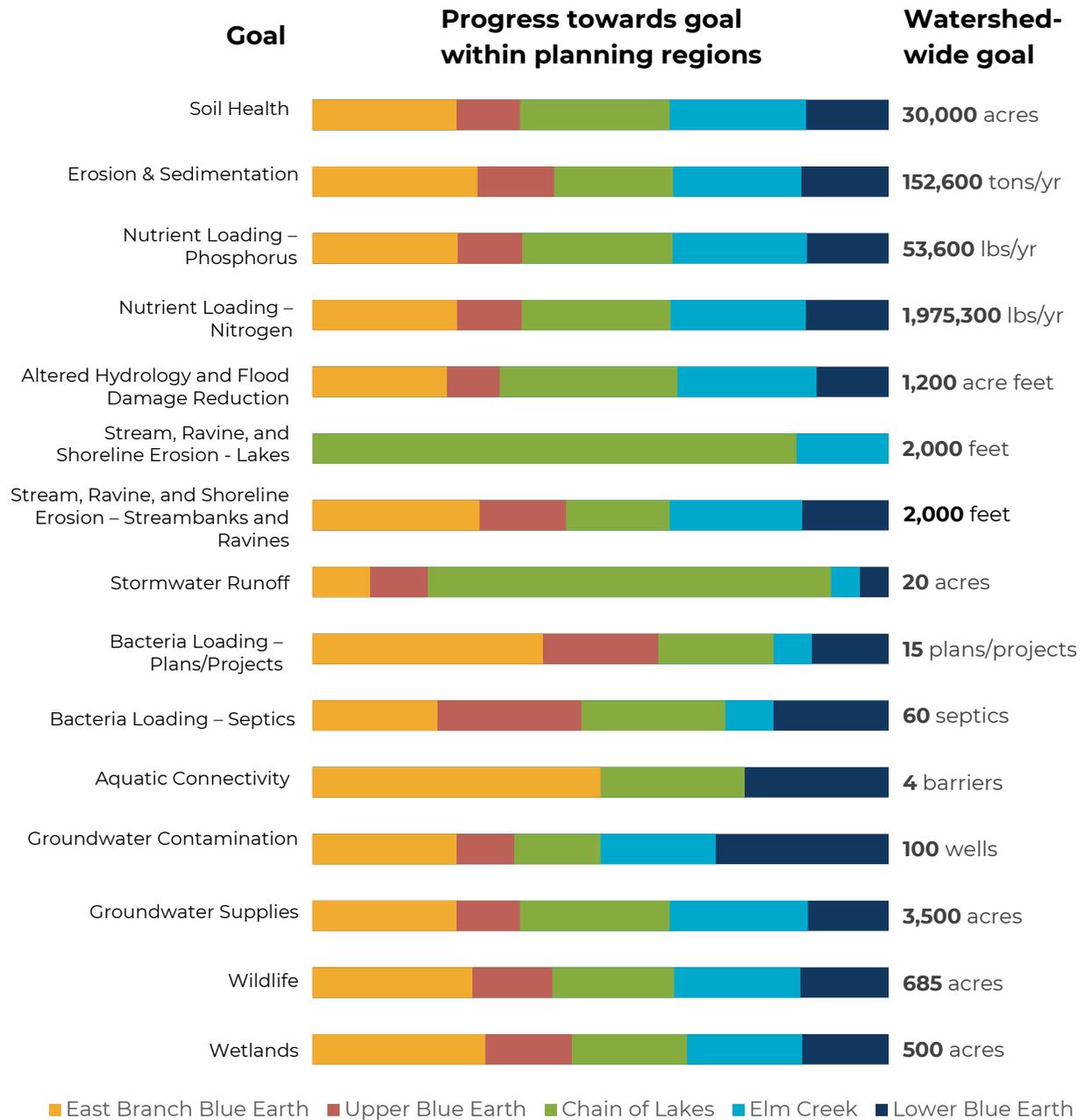
Each action belongs to one of five programs: Projects and Practices, Public Participation and Engagement, Capital Improvements, Research and Data Gaps, and Local Controls (**Figure 5-1**). Public Participation and Engagement, Capital Improvements, and Research and Data Gaps actions have separate watershed-wide tables. Each planning region has a Projects and Practices action table and these are also summarized at the watershed scale.



**Figure 5-1: Implementation Programs in the BERW**

## Targeting Work

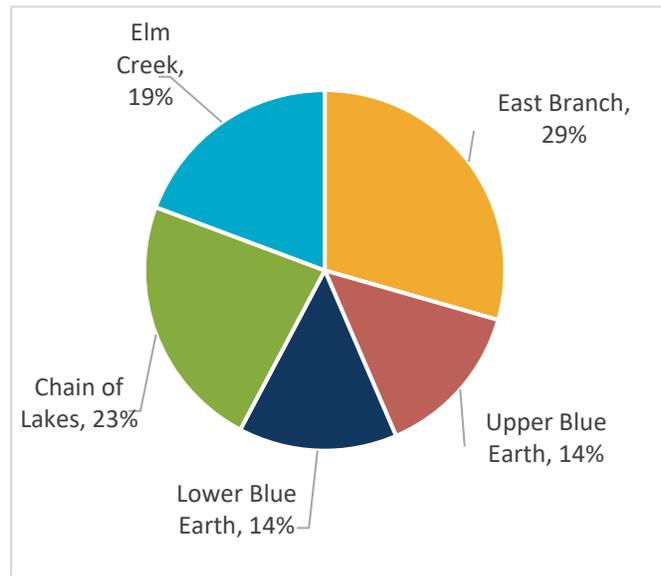
At over 750,000 acres, it is important to target work to priority areas in the watershed. The focus areas in **Section 4—Measurable Goals** summarize the subwatersheds to target for each goal. **Figure 5-2** visually summarizes how work towards each goal is split amongst planning regions. This milestone chart shows the watershed-wide goal on the right, with each bar demonstrating the extent to which progress will be made in a given planning region. The exceptions are the AIS, Protection of Surface Water Drinking Sources, and Drainage System goals, which are not relevant to watershed metrics.



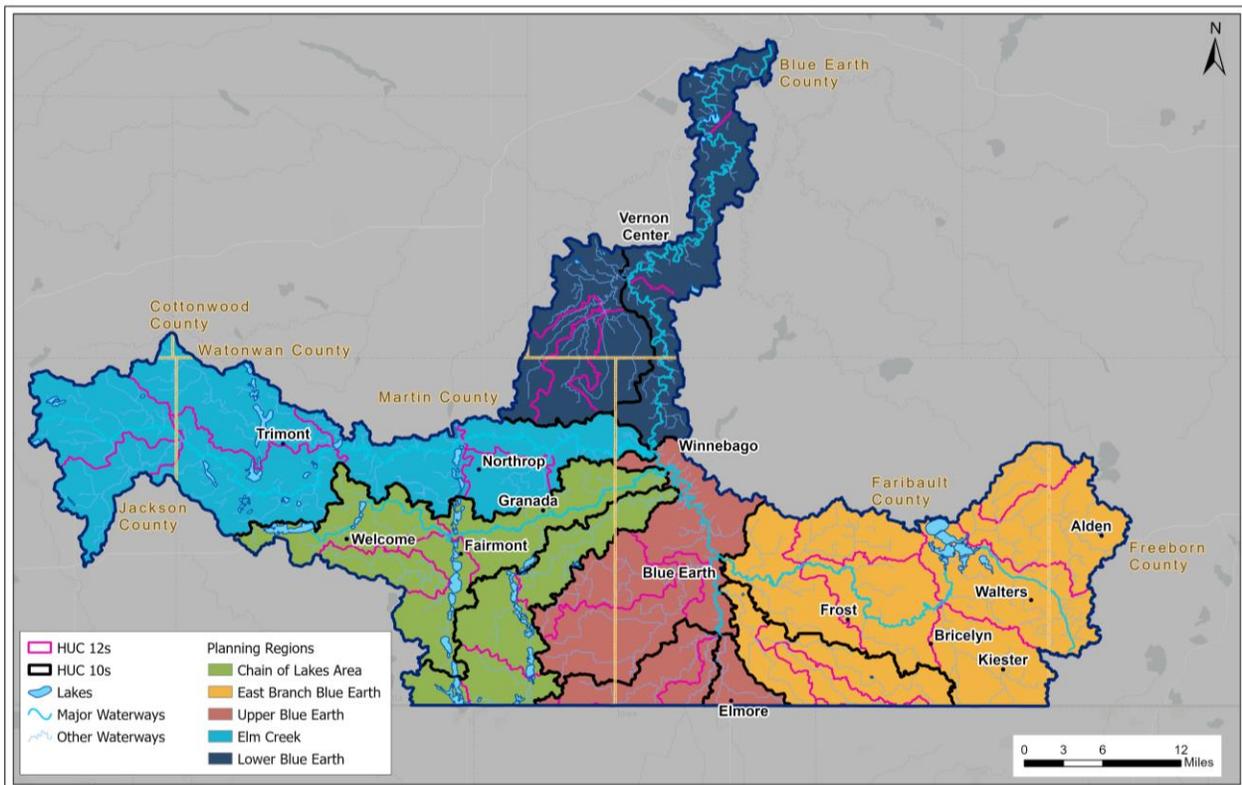
**Figure 5-2. Summary of progress towards goals by planning region.**

## Targeting Resources

As shown in the **Section 4—Measurable Goals** focus area maps, progress towards measurable goals is divided amongst planning regions. This results in an implementation plan that directs the most funding to areas that most benefit priority issues. **Figure 5-2** shows how actions will be distributed between planning regions, and **Figure 5-3** shows the total cost of implementing these actions in each planning region. The most money is expected to be spent in the East Branch Blue Earth River Planning Region, followed by the Chain of Lakes and Elm Creek Planning Regions. The remaining 28% of the Projects and Practices budget is planned to be split between the Upper Blue Earth and Lower Blue Earth Planning Regions.



**Figure 5-3. Estimated Projects & Practices budget in each planning region (sum of local and partner planning region action table costs)**



**Figure 5-4. Blue Earth River Watershed Planning Regions.**

## Projects and Practices: Watershed-Wide

This table aggregates each of the actions in the planning region tables included later in this plan section.

Action Description	Focus Areas	10-Year Output	Progress Toward Goals*				Responsible Entity (Bold = Lead)	Timeline					Local 10-Year Costs	Partner / Federal 10-Year Costs
			Surface Water	Surface/ Groundwater	Water Quantity /Hydrology	Land Use and Habitat		2026-2027	2028-2029	2030-2031	2032-2033	2034-2035		
<b>WW-1: Multi-Benefit Agricultural Best Management Practices</b> e.g., grassed waterways, WASCOb, riparian buffers, filter strips, alternative side inlets, drainage water management, two-stage ditches	Erosion and Soil Health; Nutrient Loading; Altered Hydrology and FDR	14,000 acres 1,200 ac-ft storage 538,900 lbs/yr TN 15,300 lbs/yr TP 32,200 tons/yr sediment	<b>Nutrient Loading, Erosion and Sedimentation</b>	Surface Drinking Water Sources	<b>Altered Hydrology and Flood Damage Reduction</b>		<b>SWCD, NRCS, BWSR, MDA, DNR</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>\$3,195,400</b>	N/A
<b>WW-2: Soil Health and Recharge Conservation Practices</b> e.g., cover crops, nutrient and manure management, strip-till, no-till	Erosion and Soil Health; Groundwater Supplies Focus Areas	30,000 acres 1,436,400 lbs/yr TN 38,300 lbs/yr TP 120,400 tons/yr sediment	<b>Nutrient Loading, Erosion and Sedimentation</b>	<b>Groundwater Supplies, Surface Drinking Water Sources</b>	Altered Hydrology and Flood Damage Reduction	<b>Soil Health</b>	<b>SWCD, NRCS, BWSR, MDA</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>\$4,505,900</b>	N/A
<b>WW-3: Ravine or Streambank Stabilization</b> Small-scale vegetation enhancement and/or engineered management efforts to reduce erosion, with a preference for natural vegetative management where possible	Watershed-Wide	2,000 feet	<b>Stream, Ravine, and Shoreline Erosion, Nutrient Loading</b>	Surface Drinking Water Sources			<b>SWCD, DNR, NRCS, BWSR, MDA</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>\$200,000</b>	N/A
<b>WW-4: Shoreline Stabilization</b> Stabilization, enhancement, and / or engineering management efforts to stabilize priority lake shoreline	Priority Lakes	2,000 feet	<b>Stream, Ravine, and Shoreline Erosion, Nutrient Loading</b>	Surface Drinking Water Sources			<b>SWCD, DNR, NRCS, BWSR, MDA</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>\$200,000</b>	N/A
<b>WW-5: Urban Stormwater Best Management Practices</b> e.g., stormwater detention ponds, sediment basins, raingardens, retrofits	Municipalities	20 acres treated	<b>Stormwater Runoff, Nutrient Loading</b>	Surface Drinking Water Sources			<b>SWCD, Cities, NRCS, BWSR, MPCA, Counties, Townships</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>\$192,000</b>	N/A
<b>WW-6: Bacteria Management</b> Manure management plans and projects such as limited grazing near riparian zones, feedlot BMPs, and alternative intakes	Bacteria Loading Focus Areas	15 plans / projects	<b>Bacteria Loading, Nutrient Loading</b>	Groundwater Contamination, Surface Drinking Water Sources			<b>SWCD, MPCA, Counties, NRCS, BWSR, MDA</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>\$112,500</b>	N/A
<b>WW-7: Address Non-Compliant Septic Systems</b> Cost share or incentivize replacing non-compliant systems	Watershed-Wide	60 systems cost share / incentivized; 100 addressed otherwise	<b>Nutrient Loading, Bacteria Loading</b>	Surface Drinking Water Sources, Groundwater Contamination			<b>Counties, MPCA</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>\$600,000</b>	<i>\$1,000,000</i>
<b>WW-8: Address Aquatic Connectivity Barriers</b> Convey floodwaters, minimize flooding impacts, maintain flows, and allow for wildlife and sediment passage.	Aquatic Connectivity Focus Area	4 barriers			<b>Aquatic Connectivity</b>		<b>DNR, MPCA, SWCD, County Highway Departments</b>		✓	✓	✓		<b>\$120,000</b>	<i>\$800,000</i>
<b>WW-9: Seal Unused or Abandoned Wells</b> Cost share to well owners	Watershed-Wide; DWSMAs	100 wells		<b>Groundwater Contamination</b>			<b>Counties, SWCD, Cities, MDH, BWSR</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>\$150,000</b>	N/A
<b>WW-10: Land Protection</b> Provide incentives or cost-share to enroll land in temporary or permanent easements such as RIM, CRP, CREP, etc. as setbacks or for wildlife benefits	Bacteria Loading; Wildlife and Wetlands Focus Area	685 acres cost share / incentivized	<b>Erosion and Sedimentation</b>	Groundwater Supplies, Surface Drinking Water Sources		<b>Wildlife Habitat</b>	<b>SWCD, NRCS, BWSR, DNR</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>\$685,000</b>	<i>\$1,712,500</i>
<b>WW-11: Wetland Restoration</b> Provide incentives or cost-share for wetland or oxbow restoration or restoring floodplain connectivity	Wildlife and Wetlands Focus Area	500 acres cost share/ incentivized		Groundwater Supplies, Surface Drinking Water Sources	<b>Wetlands, Altered Hydrology and Flood Damage Reduction</b>	Wildlife Habitat	<b>DNR, Counties, SWCD, Conservation Clubs</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>\$100,000</b>	<i>\$20,000,000</i>
<b>Total</b>												<b>\$10,060,800</b>	<b>\$23,512,500</b>	

\*bold = direct progress made toward goal, unbolded = indirect progress made toward goal. Pink = addresses high priority issue, green = addresses medium priority issue

**Public Participation and Engagement: Watershed-wide**

ID	Action Description	Focus Areas	10-Year Output	Progress Towards Goals*				Responsible Entity ( <b>Bold = Lead</b> )	Timeline					Local 10-Year Costs
				Surface Water	Surface/Ground-water	Water Quantity /Hydrology	Land Use and Habitat		2026-2027	2028-2029	2030-2031	2032-2033	2034-2035	
PPE-1	Continue and expand watershed education and outreach through existing efforts and new programming (e.g., canoe events) in each jurisdictional area	Watershed-Wide	Annual meeting if needed	All	All	All	All	<b>SWCD, Counties,</b> NRCS, BWSR, MDA, MPCA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>\$1,095,000</b>
PPE-2	In addition to baseline outreach services, conduct education and outreach (e.g., field days, demonstration sites) geared to landowners about agricultural BMPs, manure management, and soil health practices	Erosion and Soil Health Focus Areas	25 events	Erosion and Sedimentation, Nutrient Loading	Groundwater Contamination, Surface Drinking Water Sources		Soil Health	<b>SWCD, Counties,</b> NRCS, BWSR, MDA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>\$200,000</b>
PPE-3	Partner with drainage inspectors to gain a deeper understanding of drainage system condition and operations and identify opportunities for multi-benefit solutions as part of repair or improvement proceedings	Watershed-Wide	10 meetings			Drainage Systems, Altered Hydrology and Flood Damage Reduction		<b>Counties, SWCD,</b> DNR	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>\$5,000</b>
PPE-4	Develop an outreach campaign directed at shoreline and urban property owners to stabilize / enhance shorelines, provide education on impacts of wake boats, and provide education on stormwater runoff	Priority Lakes, Stormwater Focus Areas	1 media campaign or event	Nutrient Loading, Stream, Ravine, and Shoreline Erosion, Bacteria Loading, Stormwater Runoff	Surface Drinking Water Sources			<b>SWCD, Counties,</b> Cities, DNR		✓				<b>\$15,000</b>
PPE-5	Connect with landscape companies for education and implementation opportunities of best practices	Watershed-Wide	1 meeting	Stream, Ravine, and Shoreline Erosion, Nutrient Loading	Groundwater Contamination, Surface Drinking Water Sources			<b>Cities, Counties,</b> SWCD	✓					<b>\$5,000</b>
PPE-6	Educate landowners on septic systems and maintenance	Bacteria Focus Areas	1 mailing distributed to landowners	Nutrient Loading, Bacteria Loading	Groundwater Contamination, Surface Drinking Water Sources			<b>Counties, SWCD,</b> MPCA			✓			<b>\$10,000</b>
PPE-7	Hold AIS detector workshops and continue annual boat inspections as part of County local services	Aquatic Invasive Species Focus Areas	5 workshops	<b>Aquatic Invasive Species</b>				<b>County, DNR,</b> SWCD	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>\$20,000</b>
PPE-8	Inform private well owners of local drinking water quality and educate them on well testing. Host a well testing clinic or outreach event for: • Arsenic, lead and manganese • Nitrate • Coliform Bacteria	Watershed-wide	4 events, clinics, or media/educational campaigns		Groundwater Contamination			<b>Counties, MDH,</b> SWCD, MPCA		✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>\$10,000</b>
PPE-9	Inform residents of water conservation practices for homes or businesses.	Watershed-wide	1 mailing distributed to landowners		Groundwater Supplies			<b>SWCD, County,</b> MDH, DNR, Cities		✓				<b>\$10,000</b>
PPE-10	Hold school events or field days for youth education on surface water quality, groundwater conservation, and wetland restoration	Watershed-Wide	10 events		Groundwater Supplies, Surface Drinking Water Sources	Wetlands, Altered Hydrology and Flood Damage Reduction		<b>SWCD, MDH,</b> MPCA, Cities	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>\$50,000</b>
PPE-11	Hold stormwater education days that could include tours of facilities and flows, what a separate storm system is, BMP benefits, and education on salt usage	Stormwater Focus Areas	5 education days	Stormwater Runoff	Groundwater Contamination, Surface Drinking Water Sources			<b>Cities, SWCD,</b> DNR, MPCA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>\$50,000</b>
PPE-12	Build or expand existing partnerships and promote enrollment in land protection programs (CREP, RIM)	Wildlife Habitat and Wetlands Focus Areas	1 mailing distributed to landowners		Groundwater Contamination, Surface Drinking Water Sources		Wildlife Habitat	<b>SWCD, Counties,</b> BWSR, DNR	✓					<b>\$10,000</b>
<b>Total Local 10-Year Cost</b>													<b>\$1,480,000</b>	

\*bold = direct progress made toward goal, unbolded = indirect progress made toward goal. Pink = addresses high priority issue, green = addresses medium priority issue

## Research and Data Gaps: Watershed-wide

ID	Action	Focus Area	10-Year Output	Progress Toward Goals*				Responsible Entity (Bold = Lead)	Timeline					Local 10-Year Cost
				Surface Water	Surface/Ground-water	Water Quantity /Hydrology	Land Use and Habitat		2026-2027	2028-2029	2030-2031	2032-2033	2034-2035	
RDG-1	Continue and expand surface water monitoring efforts to understand water quality, trends, emerging contaminants (e.g., PFAS), and impacts of conservation action	Watershed-wide	Annual Coordination meeting if needed	Nutrient Loading, Bacteria Loading, Aquatic Invasive Species	Surface Drinking Water Sources			Counties, MPCA, SWCD, DNR, MDH	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	\$270,000
RDG-2	Complete feasibility analyses for potential storage projects	Altered Hydrology Focus Areas	1 feasibility study completed			Altered Hydrology		Counties, SWCD, DNR				✓		\$50,000
RDG-3	Conduct multi-purpose drainage management planning	Altered Hydrology Focus Areas	Plans completed for 5 ditches			Drainage Systems		Counties, SWCD, DNR	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	\$60,000
RDG-4	Complete microbial source assessment to better understand source of bacteria impairments	Bacteria Focus Areas	1 source assessment completed	Bacteria Loading				MPCA, Counties			✓			\$20,000
RDG-5	Complete geologic atlas for counties without the data to better inform land use and management decisions	Counties	Geologic Atlas completed		Groundwater Contamination			DNR, University of Minnesota, Counties, SWCD, MDH	✓					Partner funded
RDG-6	Conduct an inventory of unsealed wells, considering factors such as vacant lots and contamination susceptibility	Watershed-wide	Inventory completed		Groundwater Contamination			Counties, SWCD, MDH		✓				\$40,000
RDG-7	Review options for conservation easements and identify gaps that existing programs and partners are not offering landowners	Watershed-wide	Gaps identified				Wildlife Habitat	SWCD, NRCS, BWSR, DNR				✓		\$10,000
RDG-8	Identify available funding and willing landowners for prioritizing wetland restorations	Wetland Focus Areas	1 funding source and 10 landowners identified			Wetlands, Altered Hydrology		DNR, Counties, SWCD				✓		\$10,000
RDG-9	Complete feasibility analyses for enhanced street sweeping	Cities	1 feasibility study completed	Nutrient Loading, Stormwater	Surface Drinking Water Sources			Cities, MPCA			✓			\$50,000
<b>Total Local 10-Year Cost</b>													<b>\$510,000</b>	

\*Pink = addresses high priority issue, green = addresses medium priority issue

## Capital Improvement Projects: Watershed-Wide

The Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) Action Table summarizes the actions pertaining to the construction, repair, retrofit, or increased utility or function of physical facilities, infrastructure, or environmental features. CIPs require external funding. They will be implemented through the CIP Implementation Program, described further in **Section 6—Implementation Programs**. Where eligible, the planning partners intend to use approximately \$25,000/year to support implementation of these projects, likely sourcing from WBIF.

As referenced in the previously in this plan, with the anticipated removal of the Rapidan Dam, the Lower Blue Earth Planning Region will have a key resource impacted: Rapidan Lake. The long-term impact of the June 2024 weather event downstream of the dam is not fully known at the time of plan writing. Potential capital improvements in the river corridor, which align with the goals of this plan, may be pursued outside of WBIF funding by the appropriate lead jurisdiction once projects are identified. Entities will partner with MnDOT where applicable.

Project Title	Focus Area	Description	Lead Entity	Information Source	2026-2027	2028-2029	2030-2031	2032-2033	2034-2035	Status	Cost
<b>Cedar Creek Streambank Restoration</b>	Chain of Lakes Planning Region	Streambank restoration within a City Park	City of Fairmont	Committee Feedback				✓	✓	Preliminary	\$800,000
<b>Streambank Stabilization</b>	Lower Blue Earth River Planning Region	Streambank stabilization efforts to reduce sediment contributions to the Blue Earth River	All	Committee Feedback				✓	✓	Preliminary	\$1,000,000
<b>Urban Stormwater Filtration in Fairmont</b>	Chain of Lakes Planning Region	Manage stormwater runoff (e.g., iron filters, retrofits) to minimize adverse impacts to the Fairmont lakes	City of Fairmont	Fairmont CIP, Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP)	✓	✓				Preliminary	\$1,000,000
<b>Fairmont Street Sweeper</b>	Chain of Lakes Planning Region	Implement stormwater best management practices on city owned property, such as purchasing a street sweeper	City of Fairmont	Fairmont CIP, SWPPP	✓					Preliminary	\$300,000
<b>George Lake Dam Conversion Project</b>	Chain of Lakes Planning Region	Converting the George Lake Dam to a series of rock arches/rapids	City of Fairmont	City of Fairmont				✓	✓	Preliminary	\$1,000,000
<b>Wetland Rehabilitation</b>	Altered Hydrology and Flood Damage Reduction Focus Areas	Removal of excess sediment in wetlands and restoration of wetland functionality	Martin SWCD	Committee Feedback		✓	✓			Preliminary	\$250,000
<b>Large Scale Water Storage</b>	Altered Hydrology and Flood Damage Reduction Focus Areas	Installation of large water storage/ treatment projects, primarily as part of drainage systems	All	Committee Feedback	✓					Preliminary	\$1,000,000
<b>JD 4 Wetland Restoration</b>	Upper Blue Earth River Planning Region	Wetland restoration on DNR property within the JD4 watershed	Faribault Co. SWCD	Faribault Co Drainage	✓					Planning	\$300,000
<b>Dutch Creek Channel Restoration</b>	Chain of Lakes Planning Region	Redesign the lower stream channel so that it is narrow, meandering, and more connected to the floodplain, resulting in increased in-channel water velocity to promote effective sediment transport while also re-establishment of riffles and pools for instream fish and wildlife habitat	City of Fairmont	DNR Permitting Letter				✓	✓	Preliminary	\$1,000,000
<b>Faribault CD46 Water Storage</b>	East Branch Blue Earth River Planning Region	Create water storage as part of a repair to the CD46 system	Faribault SWCD / Faribault County Drainage	Faribault County Drainage	✓	✓	✓			Preliminary	\$400,000
<b>Faribault CD72</b>	East Branch Blue Earth River Planning Region	An in-channel grade control structure exists in the centerline of the CD72 Main Trunk open ditch that is a barrier to fish passage. There is an opportunity to replace this in-ditch grade control structure with an alternative design that allows for fish passage.	Faribault SWCD / Faribault County Drainage	Faribault County Drainage	✓	✓				Preliminary	\$250,000

## BOARD MEETING AGENDA ITEM

**Agenda Item Title:** Redwood River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan

**Meeting Date:** March 25, 2026

**Agenda Category:**

Committee Recommendation     New Business     Old Business

**Item Type:**

Decision     Discussion     Information     Non-Public Data

**Keywords for Electronic Searchability:** Redwood, 1W1P, CWMP, Planning, Watershed

**Section/Region:** Regional Operations / Southern

**Contact:** Ed Lenz

**Prepared by:** John Shea

**Reviewed by:** Southern Regional Committee

**Presented by:** John Shea, Board Conservationist

**Time requested:** 10 minutes

**Attachments:**

Resolution     Order     Map     Other supporting information

**Fiscal/Policy Impact:**

None     Capital Budget  
 Amended Policy Request     Outdoor Heritage Fund Budget  
 New Policy Request     Clean Water Fund Budget  
 General Fund Budget     Other:

### ACTION REQUESTED

Approval of the Redwood River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan as recommended by the Southern Regional Committee.

### LINKS TO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Link to the Plan: [Redwood River CWMP BWSR Approval Draft Nov2025.pdf](#)

Link to the Plan Appendices: [Redwood River CWMP Appendix BWSR Approval Draf.pdf](#)

### SUMMARY *(Consider: history, reason for consideration now, alternatives evaluated, basis for recommendation)*

The Redwood River Watershed (RRW) begins near the town of Ruthton across six counties in southwestern Minnesota and covers 563,471 acres of land that drains into the Minnesota River. For planning purposes, the RRW planning area in this CWMP includes additional areas on the eastern side that have not yet been covered in other watershed planning efforts. This includes all or part of small subwatersheds from the Yellow Medicine Watershed (Echo Creek—Minnesota River, Rice Creek, Middle Creek—Minnesota River, and Smith Creek—Minnesota River) and from the Minnesota-River—Mankato Watershed (Crow Creek, Wabasha Creek, County

Ditch Number 64, County Ditch Number 109, and City of Morton—Minnesota River) that drain directly into the Minnesota River.

The partnership was established in 2024 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 Lincoln, Lyon, Murray, Pipestone and Redwood and The Lincoln, Lyon, Murray, Pipestone 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 Ghent, Marshall, and Redwood Falls.

On December 18, 2025, 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. Letters were received from MDH, DNR, and MPCA. The State agencies recommended plan approval.

On February 19, 2026, the Southern Regional Committee (Committee) met to review and discuss the Plan. The Committee's decision was to recommend approval of the Redwood River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan to the full Board.

## BOARD ORDER

### Redwood River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan

#### PURPOSE

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

#### RECITALS /FINDINGS OF FACT

**Whereas**, the Policy Committee of the Redwood River submitted a Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (Plan) to the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (Board) on December 19, 2025 pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103B.101, Subdivision 14 and 103B.801 and Board Decision(s) #23-50 (OPv3.0 and PCR v3.0).

**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 partnership was established in 2024 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 Lincoln, Lyon, Murray, Pipestone and Redwood and The Lincoln, Lyon, Murray, Pipestone and Redwood Soil and Water Conservation Districts, The Area II Minnesota River Basin Projects and Redwood-Cottonwood Rivers Control Area Join Powers Organizations, and the City of Ghent, Marshall, and Redwood Falls.
- 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.
- Nature of the Watershed.** The Redwood River Watershed (RRW) begins near the town of Ruthton across six counties in southwestern Minnesota and covers 563,471 acres of land that drains into the Minnesota River. For planning purposes, the RRW planning area in this CWMP includes additional areas on the eastern side that have not yet been covered in other watershed planning efforts. This includes all or part of small subwatersheds from the Yellow Medicine Watershed (Echo Creek—Minnesota River, Rice Creek, Middle Creek—Minnesota River, and Smith Creek—Minnesota River) and from the Minnesota-River—Mankato Watershed (Crow Creek, Wabasha Creek, County Ditch Number 64, County Ditch Number 109, and City of Morton—Minnesota River) that drain directly into the Minnesota River.
- Plan Development.** Three public kickoff events were held in 2024 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 60 attendees identified pollutants like sediment, nutrients, and bacteria, drinking water protection, bank erosion, and flood damage. 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 December 18, 2025, 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 December 19, 2025, and No comment .
  - B. Minnesota Department of Health: Received the Plan for Final Review December 19, 2025, and recommended approval of the Redwood River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan on January 15, 2026.
  - C. Minnesota Department of Natural Resources: Received the Plan for Final Review December 19, 2025, and recommended approval of the Redwood River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan on January 9, 2026.
  - D. Minnesota Pollution Control Agency: Received the Plan for Final Review December 19, 2025, and recommended approval of the Redwood River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan on January 20, 2026.
  - E. Minnesota Environmental Quality Board: Received the Plan for Final Review December 19, 2025, and conformation of receipt with no comments.
  - F. Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources regional staff: Received the Plan for Final Review December 19, 2025, and recommended approval of the Redwood River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan on February 6, 2026.
  - 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
    - High priorities**
      - i) Soil Health and working Lands
        - Implement 22,500 acres of soil health practices.
      - ii) Nutrients and Bacteria
        - Total Phosphorus: 7%, or 13,800 lbs/yr
        - Nitrogen Loading: 7% of 251,700 lbs/yr
      - iii) Protection and Restoration
        - Implement 18,000 acres of land in temporary or permanent easements
      - iv) Contamination
        - Protect drinking water by sealing 150 wells
      - v) Water storage/ flooding
        - Add 4,000 acre-ft of storage.
    - Medium Priorities**
      - vi) Bank erosion
        - Stabilize 2000 ft of streambank and ravines

- vii) Riparian and shoreline management
    - Improve vegetation on 3,000 ft of riparian streambanks or shoreline
  - viii) Barriers to Fish Passage
    - Address 4 barriers
  - ix) Stormwater
    - Implement stormwater BMP's to treat 25 acres of rural or urban developed land.
7. **Southern Regional Committee.** On February 19, 2026, the Southern Regional Committee met to review and discuss the Plan. Those in attendance from the Board's Committee were Ted Winter, Chair; Eunice Biel, Amanda Strommer, Brian Schultz, Heather Johnson, Ellen Friedrich, Kevin Wilson. Board staff in attendance were Ed Lenz, Southern Regional Manager; John Shea, Jill Sackett Eberhart, Mark Hiles, Jeremy Maul, Shane Bugeja, Denise Lauerman . The representatives from the Partnership were Kerry Netzke, Area II Minnesota River Basin Projects; Rachel Olm, Houston Engineering, Inc . 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 April 1, 2036.

**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 Redwood River pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103B.101, Subd. 14 and 103B.801 and Board Decisions #23-50 (OPv3.0 and PCR v3.0).
3. The Redwood River 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, Sections 103B.101, Subd. 14 and 103B.801 and Board Decisions #23-50 (OPv3.0 and PCR v3.0).
5. The attached plan when adopted through local resolution 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 approves the attached Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan of the Redwood River, dated December 19, 2025.

Dated at Saint Paul, Minnesota, this 25<sup>th</sup> of March, 2026.

**MINNESOTA BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES**

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Todd Holman, Chair  
 Board of Water and Soil Resources

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

March 25, 2026

Redwood River Planning Work Group  
c/o Kerry Netzke, Executive Director  
RCRCA  
1424 East College Drive  
Marshall, MN 56258

**RE: Approval of the Redwood River Watershed Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan**

Dear Redwood River Planning Work Group:

The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) is pleased to inform you the Redwood River Watershed (Plan) was approved at its regular meeting held on January 22, 2025. Attached is the signed Board Order that documents approval of the Plan and indicates the Plan meets all relevant requirements of law, rule, and policy.

This Plan is effective for a ten-year period until March 25, 2026. Please be advised, the partners must adopt and begin implementing the plan within 120 days of the date of the Order in accordance with Minnesota Statutes §103B.101, Subd. 14, and the One Watershed, One Plan Operating Procedures.

The members of the partnership and participants in the plan development process are to be commended for writing a plan that clearly presents water management goals, actions, and priorities of the Partnership, and for participating as a pilot in the development of the One Watershed, One Plan program. The BWSR looks forward to working with you as you implement this Plan and document its outcomes.

Please contact Board Conservationist John Shea of our staff at 507-838-9423 or [john.shea@state.mn.us](mailto:john.shea@state.mn.us) for further assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

Todd Holman , Chair  
Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources

Enclosure: BWSR Board Order

CC: Listed on next page.

Bemidji	Brainerd	Detroit Lakes	Duluth	Mankato	Marshall	Rochester	St Cloud
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CC: Reid Christianson, MDA (via email)  
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BWSR Executive Assistant (currently Rachel Mueller), BWSR (file copy)

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## **NEW BUSINESS**

1. BWSR Pollinator Conservation and Biodiversity Efforts – Dan Shaw, Erin Loeffler, Jason Beckler and Megan Reich (Metro Blooms) – ***INFORMATION ITEM***
2. Climate Action Framework 2.0 Overview – Suzanne Rhees and MPCA Representative – ***INFORMATION ITEM***

## BOARD MEETING AGENDA ITEM

**Agenda Item Title:** BWSR Pollinator and Biodiversity Support

**Meeting Date:** March 25, 2026

**Agenda Category:**

Committee Recommendation     New Business     Old Business

**Item Type:**

Decision     Discussion     Information     Non-Public Data

**Keywords for Electronic Searchability:** Pollinators, Biodiversity, Native Vegetation, Wildlife, Resiliency

**Section/Region:** Resource Conservation

**Contact:** Dan Shaw

**Prepared by:** Dan Shaw

**Reviewed by:** Dan Shaw

**Presented by:** Dan Shaw, Erin Loeffler, Jason Beckler, and Megan Reich Metro Blooms

**Time requested:** 45 minutes

**Attachments:**

Resolution     Order     Map     Other supporting information

**Fiscal/Policy Impact:**

None     Capital Budget  
 Amended Policy Request     Outdoor Heritage Fund Budget  
 New Policy Request     Clean Water Fund Budget  
 General Fund Budget     Other:

### ACTION REQUESTED

None, presentation is for awareness and discussion about pollinator, biodiversity and resiliency efforts.

### LINKS TO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[Living Landscapes Initiative](#)

[Pollinator and Biodiversity Toolbox](#)

[2026 Revised Pollinator Plan Final](#)

### SUMMARY *(Consider: history, reason for consideration now, alternatives evaluated, basis for recommendation)*

The decline of pollinator populations has led to a movement for action across Minnesota. Local partners, legislators and the public have looked to BWSR to provide guidance and resources to address pollinators declines and executive orders from Governor's Dayton and Walz directed BWSR to incorporate pollinator habitat across programs. Due to the importance of healthy biological systems in supporting water and soil resources, and rapid declines in plant and wildlife populations BWSR's efforts have expanded to a "Living Landscape Initiative." This initiative is focused on pollinator conservation, but also supporting overall biodiversity and

building the resiliency of landscapes. Several BWSR programs are used to address needs across a wide range of landscape types in collaboration with local partners. This presentation focuses on five priorities identified in BWSR's updated Pollinator Plan, and discuss next steps for supporting pollinators, biodiversity, and landscape resiliency.

## BOARD MEETING AGENDA ITEM

**Agenda Item Title:** Climate Action Framework 2.0 Overview

**Meeting Date:** March 25, 2026

**Agenda Category:**

- Committee Recommendation     New Business     Old Business

**Item Type:**

- Decision     Discussion     Information     Non-Public Data

**Keywords for Electronic Searchability:** Climate Action Framework 2.0

**Section/Region:**

**Contact:** Suzanne Rhees, MPCA Representative

**Prepared by:** Suzanne Rhees, MPCA Representative

**Reviewed by:** John Jaschke

**Presented by:** Suzanne Rhees, MPCA Representative

**Time requested:** 30 minutes

**Attachments:**

- Resolution     Order     Map     Other supporting information

**Fiscal/Policy Impact:**

- None     Capital Budget  
 Amended Policy Request     Outdoor Heritage Fund Budget  
 New Policy Request     Clean Water Fund Budget  
 General Fund Budget     Other:

### ACTION REQUESTED

### LINKS TO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[Climate Action Framework 2026](#)

### SUMMARY *(Consider: history, reason for consideration now, alternatives evaluated, basis for recommendation)*

Minnesota's Climate Action Framework is the state's plan to reduce climate pollution, also known as greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and prepare communities for climate change in ways that benefit all Minnesotans. The framework builds on Minnesota's longstanding leadership in addressing climate change and aligns the state around the path forward. This framework comes out of the contributions of hundreds of Minnesotans. It invites all of us to contribute to creating the climate future in which everyone is healthy and safe in the face of climate change. The urgency of climate action is underscored by Minnesota's 2025 GHG inventory. Minnesota's emissions have decreased 18% from 2005 to 2022, but emissions increased 5.1% between 2020 and 2022, as activity rebounded following the COVID-19 pandemic. While the overall emissions trend is downward, Minnesotans are also feeling the impacts of climate change more acutely, with more unhealthy air quality, more

extreme rains, and more costs associated with these events. The Climate Change Subcabinet has released the 2026 Climate Action Framework to reflect new opportunities, the progress Minnesota has made, and the need for accelerated action. The updated framework includes new GHG forecasting, a stronger focus on collaboration with local governments, and health and economic benefits for our communities.