

## BOARD ORDER

### Fiscal Year 2027 Managing Invasives for a Resilient Landscape Grants Program

#### PURPOSE

Authorize the fiscal year 2027 Managing Invasives for a Resilient Landscape Grants Program and adopt request for proposals ranking criteria.

#### FINDINGS OF FACT / RECITALS

- A. The Laws of Minnesota 2025, 1<sup>st</sup> Spec. Session Chapter 1, Article 1, Section 4(b)(2) appropriated \$200,000 for invasive species and weed management programs and to restore native plants at selected invasive species management sites.
- B. The Board has authorities under Minnesota Statute §103B.101 to award grants and contracts to accomplish water and related land resources management.
- C. The Managing Invasives for Resilient Landscapes grants program supports activities for the removal of invasive plants and establishing native plant communities.
- D. The request for proposals (RFP) criteria are needed to provide expectations for applicants and subsequent implementation activities conducted with these funds.
- E. On March 16, 2026, and April 13, 2026, the Grants Program and Policy Committee reviewed the proposed Managing Invasives for a Resilient Landscape Grants Program board order and ranking criteria and recommended approval to the Board.

#### ORDER

The Board hereby:

1. Authorizes local government units and Tribal Entities as eligible applicants for the fiscal year 2027 Managing Invasives for a Resilient Landscape Grants Program.
2. Authorizes the fiscal year 2027 Managing Invasives for a Resilient Landscape Grants Program ranking criteria to be included in the RFP (Table 1).
3. Authorizes staff to finalize program requirements and issue a Request for Proposals based on the amount available (current estimate is \$180,000) and awards that amount from \$15,000 to \$30,000.

#### MINNESOTA BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES

  
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Todd Holman, Chair  
Board of Water and Soil Resources

Date: April 22, 2026

Attachments: Table 1: FY 2027 Managing Invasives for a Resilient Landscape Request for Proposals Ranking Criteria

Table 1: Managing Invasives for a Resilient Landscape Ranking Criteria	Maximum Points Possible
Project Abstract: The project abstract succinctly describes what results the applicant is trying to achieve and how they attend to achieve those results.	5
Plan Alignment: The proposed project is based on priority restoration actions identified in a local, state, and/or federal resource management plan, or comparable Tribal plan or strategy, that target terrestrial invasive species, strengthens partnership and collaborative implementation.	15
Organizational Readiness: The application demonstrates organizational readiness to begin implementation soon after award. Includes information on organizational expertise and previous restoration experience with terrestrial invasive species management.	5
Proposed Outcomes: The proposed project has articulated specific and relevant metrics tied directly to the project's outcomes. Provides a realistic plan for sustaining proposal benefits after the grant funding period ends.	10
Target Species Selection and Native Plant Community Benefits: Proposal targets terrestrial invasive species that are high priority and locally relevant. Proposed methods and practices are appropriate, targeted, and will benefit native plant communities.	30
Environmental Justice: Explains whether the project is located in or benefits an MPCA Environmental Justice Area.	5
Collaboration and Partnerships: Existing collaboration enhances project outcomes or builds capacity.	20
Project Impact: Activities will accelerate implementation of terrestrial invasive plant management practices and restoration of native plant communities. Activities will initiate or build upon efforts that benefit local communities	10
Total	100

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 Vadnais Lake Area Watershed Management Organization, pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Section 103B.231, Subdivision 9.

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**ORDER  
APPROVING  
A WATERSHED  
MANAGEMENT PLAN**

**Whereas**, the Board of Directors of the Vadnais Lake Area Watershed Management Organization (VLAWMO) submitted a Watershed Management Plan (Plan) on February 26, 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 Vadnais Lake Area Watershed Management Organization was established by a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) in 1983 between the Cities of Gem Lake, Lino Lakes, North Oaks, Vadnais Heights, and White Bear Lake and the Township of White Bear. The first-generation Watershed Management Plan was approved by the Board in 1985.
- 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 VLAWMO Watershed Management Plan was approved by Board Order on September 28, 2016. Three minor amendments were completed between 2019 and 2022.
- 3. Nature of the Watershed.** The VLAWMO watershed encompasses 24.2 square miles in Northern Ramsey County and a small portion of Anoka County. The watershed is bordered by the Rice Creek Watershed District on the north and the Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District on the south. VLAWMO is an urban watershed, but contains abundant surface water resources, including fifteen public water lakes, 47 public water wetlands, Lambert Creek, and several minor streams, ditches, and channels. There are also numerous parks and natural spaces, providing ecological and recreational benefits. Importantly, the watershed is home to East Vadnais Lake, which is the drinking water source for over 450,000 people – including the City of St. Paul. Further, nearly the entire watershed overlaps with one or more groundwater Drinking Water Supply Management Areas (DWSMAs), most of which have moderate vulnerability to contamination.
- 4. Plan Development and Review.** On December 14, 2023, VLAWMO sent notification of planning process initiation for the 2027-2035 Watershed Management Plan to the plan review agencies and other parties as required by MR 8410.0045. The notification solicited each agency’s priority issues and opportunities, water management goals, and water resource data, reports, and other relevant information. The Board of Directors hosted an initial planning meeting on April 4, 2024. Three workshops were held with state, regional, and local partners in collaboration with VLAWMO’s Technical Commission between November 2024 and April 2025. Additional input was gathered through several virtual and in-person community meetings as well as via online and in-person surveys.

The draft Plan was submitted to the Board, review agencies, and local governments for 60-day review on June 6, 2025, pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Section 103B.231 Subd. 7. VLAWMO prepared a written response to comments, which was sent to reviewers on December 11, 2025. A public hearing on the 60-day draft plan was held on February 25, 2026; no comments were received. The final draft Plan, including revisions based on 60-day comments, was released for agency review and submitted to the Board for approval on February 26, 2026.

5. **Local Review.** VLAWMO distributed copies of the draft Plan to local units of government for their review pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Section 103B.231 Subd. 7. The City of White Bear Lake expressed appreciation for the opportunity to participate in workshops during Plan development and provided a list of minor clarifications, typos, and errors. Rice Creek Watershed District provided comments on shared priorities and suggestions for photo credits and map clarifications. VLAWMO provided responses to all comments and incorporated changes as they deemed appropriate.
6. **Metropolitan Council (Council) Review.** During the 60-day review, the Council offered suggestions for the narrative with respect to local water plans and comprehensive planning as well as environmental justice. They also requested clarification around stormwater reuse practices and targeting. VLAWMO provided a response to comments and made changes to the narrative as they deemed appropriate. The Council stated they had no further comments during the 90-day review.
7. **Department of Agriculture (MDA) Review.** The MDA did not provide formal comment.
8. **Department of Health (MDH) Review.** During the 60-day review, MDH commended VLAWMO for thorough consideration of drinking water protection throughout the plan. They provided suggestions for the narrative regarding fish consumption guidelines, groundwater withdrawal decreases, AIS chemical management, and chlorides as a contaminant of concern in groundwater. Comments were also provided regarding typos, inactive links, references, and other minor errors. MDH pointed to projects and opportunities for collaboration and/or where they can provide more information regarding resources. VLAWMO replied to all comments and made changes to the narrative where they deemed appropriate. During the 90-day review period, MDH stated that their comments had been adequately addressed and thanked VLAWMO for their consideration of and collaboration on addressing MDH's concerns.
9. **Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Review.** The DNR provided comments regarding Threatened and Endangered species, Rare Natural Communities, and utilizing native plants in shoreline and streambank restorations. They also provided several resources for native plant information and encouraged early coordination on projects. VLAWMO replied to all comments and incorporated all suggested changes to the narrative.
10. **Pollution Control Agency (PCA) Review.** During the 60-day review, the PCA provided positive feedback on the inclusion of the WLA (Waste Load Allocation) and MS4 (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System) responsibilities in the Plan, particularly with respect to tracking outcomes. They also suggested adding language that describes progress to date with respect to pollution reductions. VLAWMO provided a response to comments and made changes to the narrative. During the 90-day review, the PCA noted that they had no further comments.
11. **Department of Transportation (DOT) Review.** The DOT did not provide formal comment.
12. **Board Review.** During the 60-day review, Board staff provided positive feedback on the engagement and issue prioritization process in collaboration with state, regional, and local partners; the inclusion of climate change, resiliency, environmental justice, and chloride pollution; and for creating a well-organized and well-written Plan. Board staff provided comments related to measurable goals and evaluation of progress towards goals, water quality trends, wetland prioritization, flood levels, and a few other items to help bring the plan into conformance with Minnesota Statutes Sections 103B.201 to 103B.251 and Minnesota Rules 8410. Suggestions were also made with respect to water resource prioritization and clarifying incentive program information. Staff sent a list of unofficial typographical, grammatical, and formatting comments. VLAWMO

provided responses for all comments and BWSR staff feel that the changes made to the Plan are sufficient to meet plan content requirements.

- 13. Plan Summary.** VLAWMO has identified seven priority resource issue categories: surface water quality management; groundwater management; data collection; outreach, education, and community engagement; flooding and water quality; policy and facilitation; and community and ecosystem health and resiliency. Each resource issue category has one to three priority issues, and the Plan sets several measurable goals to address these areas of concern. The Plan will build on previous success through the continuation of current activities, such as the Section 319 Program for small priority watersheds, cost-share programs, education/outreach activities, and the introduction of new activities, such as those that address climate change and resiliency.
- 14. Central Region Committee Meeting.** On April 6, 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), Jill Crafton (in person), Jayne Hager Dee (in person), Mark Zabel (in person), Mike Runk (in person), Lori Cox (online), Steve Robertson (online), Grant Wilson (online) and Heather Peterson (online). Board staff in attendance were Marcey Westrick (Central Regional Manager, in person) and Anne Sawyer (Board Conservationist, in person). Others in attendance included Andrea West (VLAWMO Board Director, in person), Dawn Tanner and Phil Belfiori (VLAWMO staff, in person), and Rachel Olm (consultant, online) who provided highlights of the Plan and planning process. After 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 VLAWMO pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Section 103B.231, Subd. 9.
3. The VLAWMO Watershed Management Plan, attached to this Order, defines the water and water-related problems within the VLAWMO’s boundaries, possible solutions thereto, and an implementation program through 2036.
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 Vadnais Lake Area Watershed Management Plan submitted on February 2, 2026.

Dated at Saint Paul, Minnesota this 22<sup>nd</sup> day of April, 2026.

### MINNESOTA BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES



BY: Todd Holman, Chair

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 **Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization**, 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 Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization (VRWJPO) submitted a Watershed Management Plan (Plan) on February 2, 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 Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization was established by a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) between Scott and Dakota Counties in 2002 following the dissolution of the previous JPA-WMO in 2000. The first-generation Watershed Management Plan was approved by the Board in 2005.
- 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 VRWJPO Watershed Management Plan was approved by Board Order on May 25, 2016. Three minor amendments were completed between 2019 and 2022.
- 3. Nature of the Watershed.** The VRWJPO watershed encompasses approximately 335 square miles in Dakota and Scott Counties, with the majority in central Dakota County. The watershed is bordered by the Mississippi River on the northeast, the Cannon River Watershed on the east, the North Cannon River WMO on the south, the Scott County WMO on the west, and the Black Dog, Egan-Inver Grove, and Lower Mississippi River WMOs on the northwest and north, respectively. The Vermillion River Watershed is unique to a large metropolitan area, boasting more than 50 miles of Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR)-designated trout streams. The watershed also has several urban lakes, the largest of which is Lake Marion, a 530-acre lake in the City of Lakeville, as well as backwater lakes within the Mississippi River Valley. The watershed also has many areas with significant surface-groundwater interactions, including the Hastings Drinking Water Supply Management Area (DWSMA), which covers more than one-quarter of the watershed's area. Approximately 75% of the land within the watershed is agricultural, undeveloped, or preserved. While rapid growth over the next 20 years is projected to expand urban and industrial land use to nearly 40% of the watershed area, the dominant land use is anticipated to remain agricultural in nature.
- 4. Plan Development and Review.** On April 3, 2023, the VRWJPO sent notification of planning process initiation for the 2026-2035 Watershed Management Plan to the plan review agencies and other parties as required by MR 8410.0045. The notification solicited each agency's priority issues and opportunities, water

management goals, and water resource data, reports, and other relevant information. The VRWJPO hosted an initial planning meeting and open house on October 12, 2023. Staff implemented a robust public engagement plan, including meetings with townships and municipalities, surveys, virtual and in-person opportunities, pop-up events, and displays at places like libraries and parks. The VRWJPO convened a Technical Advisory Group which met several times between February 2024 and July 2025. The VRWJPO also engaged in a series of meetings with the Community Advisory Committee and the VRWJPO Board to prioritize issues identified during the public outreach phase, develop goals, and create an implementation strategy for the Plan.

The draft Plan was submitted to the Board, review agencies, and local governments for 60-day review on August 28, 2025, pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Section 103B.231 Subd. 7. The VRWJPO prepared a written response to comments, which was sent to reviewers on December 4, 2025. A public hearing on the 60-day draft plan was held on January 22, 2026; no comments were received. The final draft Plan, including revisions based on 60-day comments, was released for agency review and submitted to the Board for approval on February 2, 2026.

5. **Local Review.** The VRWJPO distributed copies of the draft Plan to local units of government for their review pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Section 103B.231 Subd. 7. The City of Apple Valley provided clarifications to the narrative and comments regarding continued partnership opportunities for items of interest to the City. The City of Rosemount provided comments regarding localized flooding, intercommunity discharge, collaboration, financial assistance, and local planning. They also submitted a list of typos and clarifications. Dakota County Environmental Services provided comments about soil health priorities/actions, groundwater quality and quantity, the timing of the VRWJPO's Climate Resiliency Plan, and narrative clarifications. Dakota County Transportation Department affirmed Plan alignment with the County's 2040 Transportation Plan. Scott County provided comments regarding prioritization and projects that address bacteria (*E. coli*). Comments were also provided by the Friends of the Mississippi River, focused on the prioritization of upland habitat and soil health practices. The VRWJPO provided responses to all comments and incorporated changes as they deemed appropriate.
6. **Metropolitan Council (Council) Review.** During the 60-day review, the Council commended the VRWJPO for thoughtful overview of the watershed as well as a comprehensive list of issues, goals, and strategies. The Council offered suggestions for the narrative, including groundwater quantity and quality impacts on baseflow and ecosystem function, irrigation water use, and climate adaptation actions. The Council also requested inclusion of criteria to measure implementation success. The VRWJPO responded to all comments and made changes as they deemed appropriate. During the 90-day review, the Council stated that their comments had been addressed and found the Plan to be consistent with Council policies and the Council's *Water Policy Plan*.
7. **Department of Agriculture (MDA) Review.** The MDA did not provide formal comment during the 60-day review. During the 90-day review, they commented that the Plan recognizes the need for continued adoption of agricultural best management practices and that it references groundwater protection work in the Hastings Drinking Water Supply Management Area (DWSMA). MDA also provided several reports and references to assist the VRWJPO with Plan implementation.
8. **Department of Health (MDH) Review.** During the 60-day review, MDH commended the VRWJPO for including chlorides in groundwater and private wells. They recommended stronger references to groundwater nitrate contamination and clarity around targeting and actions the VRWJPO would take to mitigate nitrate contamination, particularly in DWSMAs and with respect to soil health activities. They suggested a subwatershed map be added to the narrative as well as ensuring that goals were measurable and tied to implementation activities. They recommended clarifications to the narrative with respect to risk management from infiltration projects, drinking water sources across the watershed, bedrock aquifers, multiple benefits of implementation activities. MDH also provided several instances where they are willing

to collaborate on projects and/or provide more information regarding resources. The VRWJPO replied to all comments and made several changes to the narrative. During the 90-day review, MDH stated that many, but not all, of their comments were addressed. In particular, the narrative still lacked clarification with respect to the definition and background on DWSMAs, potential drinking water impacts from stormwater management practices and floodplain alterations, and multiple benefits of implementation activities.

9. **Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Review.** The DNR stated that the Plan was consistent with DNR goals and policies. They also emphasized that when projects or educational opportunities allowed, the VRWJPO should consider all aspects of watershed health such as upland vegetation and habitat, in conjunction with water quality and hydrology. The VRWJPO provided a response to comments. At the 90-day review, the DNR stated that they had no additional comments.
10. **Pollution Control Agency (PCA) Review.** During the 60-day review, the PCA commended the VRWJPO for including estimated pollution reductions for work completed over the past ten years and including some numeric reductions in the measurable outcomes table. They also suggested that additional quantifiable outcomes, where feasible, would better link to the activities in the implementation table, and provided suggestions to better connect the implementation actions, measurable outcomes, and priority areas in the Plan. The VRWJPO provided a response to comments. During the 90-day review, the PCA noted that they had no additional comments.
11. **Department of Transportation (DOT) Review.** The DOT did not provide formal comment.
12. **Board Review.** During the 60-day review, Board staff provided positive feedback on the engagement and issue prioritization process, the inclusion of climate change, resiliency and chloride pollution issues, providing some quantifiable pollution reductions in the implementation section, and for creating a well-organized and well-written Plan that utilized plain language. Board staff provided comments related to measurable goals and evaluation, local plan requirements, wetland management, and floodplain management to help bring the plan into conformance with Minnesota Statutes Sections 103B.201 to 103B.251 and Minnesota Rules 8410. Suggestions were made with respect to prioritizing water resources, differentiating between prioritized objectives and “topics of importance”, subwatershed and major water resource maps, and clarifying measurable outcomes in relation to implementation actions. Staff also sent unofficial typographical, grammatical, and formatting comments. The VRWJPO provided responses for all comments and BWSR staff feel that the changes made to the Plan are sufficient to meet plan content requirements.
13. **Plan Summary.** The VRWJPO has identified six priority issue categories, including water quality, stormwater management, groundwater sustainability, climate resilience, natural environments, and community relationships. Each issue category has one or two issue statements, and the Plan sets 12 measurable goals to address these areas of concern along with prioritized objectives and project types (Topics of Importance) to help reach these goals. The Plan will build on previous success through the continuation of several activities and introduction of new activities, particularly those related to climate change and resiliency.
14. **Central Region Committee Meeting.** On April 6, 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), Jill Crafton (in person), Jayne Hager Dee (in person), Mark Zabel (in person), Mike Runk (in person), Lori Cox (online), Steve Robertson (online), Grant Wilson (online) and Heather Peterson (online). Board staff in attendance were Marcey Westrick (Central Regional Manager, in person) and Anne Sawyer (Board Conservationist, in person). Others in attendance included Kelly Perrine and Travis Theil (VRWJPO staff, in-person) who provided highlights of the Plan and process. After 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 VRWJPO pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Section 103B.231, Subd. 9.
3. The VRWJPO Watershed Management Plan, attached to this Order, defines the water and water-related problems within the VRWJPO's boundaries, possible solutions thereto, and an implementation program through 2036.
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 Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization Watershed Management Plan submitted on February 2, 2026.

Dated at Saint Paul, Minnesota this 22<sup>nd</sup> day of April, 2026.

## MINNESOTA BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES



BY: Todd Holman, Chair

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 **Eagan-Inver Grove Heights Watershed Management Organization**, pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Section 103B.231, Subdivision 9.

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**ORDER  
APPROVING  
A WATERSHED  
MANAGEMENT PLAN**

**Whereas**, the Board of Directors of the Eagan-Inver Grove Heights Watershed Management Organization (E-IGHWMO) submitted a Watershed Management Plan (Plan) on February 24, 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 Eagan-Inver Grove Watershed Management Organization was established by a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) in 2014 between the Cities of Eagan and Inver Grove Heights following the dissolution of the Gun Club WMO in 2013. The first-generation E-IGHWMO Watershed Management Plan was approved by the Board in 2016.
- 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 E-IGHWMO Watershed Management Plan was approved by Board Order on May 25, 2016. One minor amendment was completed in 2020.
- 3. Nature of the Watershed.** The E-IGHWMO encompasses approximately 30 square miles in northwest Dakota County. The watershed is bordered by the Lower Mississippi River WMO to the north and east, the Lower Minnesota River Watershed District to the west, the Black Dog WMO on the southwest, and the Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization to the south. E-IGHWMO is a suburban watershed, mostly within the City of Eagan and a small amount (approximately 4%) within the City of Inver Grove Heights. The watershed is characterized by rolling glacial topography with 32 lakes and numerous wetlands. While there are no perennial streams within the watershed, many of the lakes and wetlands are connected to stormwater conveyance systems. The watershed features abundant parks and natural areas, including the nearly 2000-acre Lebanon Hills Regional Park, which is managed by Dakota County. The dominant land use in the watershed is single-family residential (43%), with most future development anticipated to be in existing developed corridors. Groundwater resources supply all drinking water in the watershed, and about half of the watershed falls into the Eagan Drinking Water Supply Management Area (DWSMA).
- 4. Plan Development and Review.** On June 18, 2024, E-IGHWMO sent notification of planning process initiation for the 2026-2035 Watershed Management Plan to the plan review agencies and other parties as required by MR 8410.0045. The notification solicited each agency's priority issues and opportunities, water management goals, and water resource data, reports, and other relevant information. The Board of

Directors hosted an initial planning meeting on February 18, 2025. Several Board workshops were held in collaboration with state and local partners in 2025. Additional input was gathered through city advisory commissions and a community survey.

The draft Plan was submitted to the Board, review agencies, and local governments for 60-day review on November 18, 2025, pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Section 103B.231 Subd. 7. E-IGHWMO prepared a written response to comments, which was sent to reviewers on January 19, 2026. A public hearing on the 60-day draft plan was held on February 17, 2026; no comments were received. The final draft Plan, including revisions based on 60-day comments, was released for agency review and submitted to the Board for approval on February 24, 2026.

5. **Local Review.** E-IGHWMO distributed copies of the draft Plan to local units of government for their review pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Section 103B.231 Subd. 7. Dakota County submitted corrections, clarifications, and additional resources, largely with respect to groundwater. They also commented on discrepancies between the activity tables in Section 4 and the Implementation Table in Section 5. E-IGHWMO provided responses to all comments and incorporated changes.
6. **Metropolitan Council (Council) Review.** During the 60-day review, the Council stated that the Plan is consistent with Met Council policies and the Met Council's *Water Policy Plan*. They offered comments on typographical errors and suggested several minor clarifications to the narrative. During the 90-day review, Met Council stated they had no further comments.
7. **Department of Agriculture (MDA) Review.** The MDA did not provide formal comment.
8. **Department of Health (MDH) Review.** During the 60-day review, MDH thanked E-IGHWMO for including them in the Plan process and providing informal drafts for review. They provided several examples of typos and errors in the narrative, including the distinct lack of clarity when "priorities" and "goals" are not consistent throughout the Plan. They commented on the misalignment between the goals and actions in Section 4 and the Implementation Table in Section 5. They gave suggestions for clarification regarding karst, fish consumption guidelines, and stormwater reuse. E-IGHWMO replied to all comments and incorporated all suggested changes. During the 90-day review period, MDH stated their comments had been adequately addressed, although there are places where the Plan would further benefit from minor clarification and refinement, including consistency in goals and priorities as well as fixing any remaining discrepancies between tables in Section 4 and Section 5.
9. **Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Review.** The DNR stated that the priority concerns they put forward during early input had been adequately addressed in the Plan. They also thanked E-IGHWMO for prioritizing native shoreline restorations and chloride reduction. The DNR stated they had no additional comments during the 90-day review.
10. **Pollution Control Agency (PCA) Review.** During the 60-day review, the PCA provided clarifications and corrections including, Native American history in the watershed background, climate data and trends, chlorides, lake prioritization, and AIS information. E-IGHWMO provided a response to comments and incorporated all suggested changes. During the 90-day review, the PCA stated that they had no further comments.
11. **Department of Transportation (DOT) Review.** The DOT did not provide formal comment.
12. **Board Review.** During the 60-day review, Board staff provided positive feedback regarding continuity in the outreach and education program and the additional focus on chloride reduction. Board staff provided many comments for narrative clarification, particularly with respect to the roles of member cities and the WMO; resource management in Lebanon Hills Regional Park; repeating and conflicting priority issues, focus areas and goals; resource prioritization; and monitoring. Staff also commented on the misalignment of priority

issues and action items between the table in Section 4 and the Implementation Table, measurability of goals, plan evaluation, and other aspects to bring the plan into conformance with Minnesota Statutes Sections 103B.201 to 103B.251 and Minnesota Rules 8410. Comments also included factual errors in the comments, such as incorrect references, out-of-date text, and irrelevant text copied from the previous plan. BWSR staff also sent a list of unofficial typographical, grammatical, and formatting comments. E-IGHWMO provided responses for all formal comments and made substantial changes to address deficiencies in plan content requirements. BWSR staff feel that the changes made to the Plan are sufficient to meet plan content requirements.

13. **Plan Summary.** The E-IGHWMO Board has identified three priority issue categories: nutrient pollution in surface water resources; chloride contamination to both surface and groundwater resources; and groundwater use and sustainability. Each resource issue category has at least one primary measurable goal and several supporting goals. The Plan will build on previous success through the continuation of a robust education and outreach program and collaborative project implementation with member cities and local partners.
14. **Central Region Committee Meeting.** On April 6, 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), Jill Crafton (in person), Jayne Hager Dee (in person), Mark Zabel (in person), Mike Runk (in person), Lori Cox (online), Grant Wilson (online) and Heather Peterson (online). Board staff in attendance were Marcey Westrick (Central Regional Manager, in person) and Anne Sawyer (Board Conservationist, in person). Others in attendance included Victoria Ranua (E-IGHWMO administrator and Dakota SWCD staff, in person) and Joe Barten (Dakota SWCD staff, in person) who provided highlights of the Plan and process. After 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 E-IGHWMO pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Section 103B.231, Subd. 9.
3. The E-IGHWMO Watershed Management Plan, attached to this Order, defines the water and water-related problems within the E-IGHWMO's boundaries, possible solutions thereto, and an implementation program through 2036.
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 Eagan-Inver Grove Heights Watershed Management Plan submitted on February 2, 2026.

Dated at Saint Paul, Minnesota this 22<sup>nd</sup> day of April, 2026.

### MINNESOTA BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES

  
BY: Todd Holman, Chair

**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 Minnesota River – Mankato Watershed, 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 Minnesota River - Mankato Watershed Partnership (Partnership) submitted a Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (Plan) to the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (Board) on January 27, 2026 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**

1. **Partnership Establishment.** The Partnership was established on March 26, 2024, through adoption of a Memorandum of Agreement for the purpose of developing a Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan. The membership of the Partnership includes: the Counties of Blue Earth, Le Sueur, Nicollet; the Soil and Water Conservation Districts of Blue Earth, Le Sueur, and Nicollet; and the Cities of North Mankato, Mankato, Lake Crystal, and Saint Peter.
2. **Authority to Plan.** Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103B.101, Subdivision 14 allows the Board to adopt resolutions, policies or orders that allow a comprehensive plan, local water management plan, or watershed management plan, developed or amended, approved and adopted, according to Chapter 103B, 103C, or 103D to serve as substitutes for one another or be replaced with a comprehensive watershed management plan. Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103B.801 established the Comprehensive Watershed Management Planning Program; also known as One Watershed, One Plan. Board Resolution #16-17 adopted the One Watershed, One Plan Operating Procedures and Plan Content Requirements policies; Board Decisions #18-14, #19-41, #21-08, #23-50 adopted subsequent versions of the program policies.
3. **Nature of the Watershed.** At 370,960 acres (approximately 580 square miles), the Minnesota River - Mankato is a small watershed in southern Minnesota, eventually draining into the Mississippi. Dominated by productive, tile drained row crops (68% of acres), the region nevertheless contains sizeable, developed areas (9% of acres) such as the city of Mankato. This area also hosts rare natural aspects such as calcareous fens and the endangered rusty patch bumblebee. Swan Lake is also present in the watershed, which is the largest prairie pothole lake in North America and a major waystation for waterfowl and other wildlife. Highlighting the need for pollution reduction, this watershed has significant zones of vulnerable drinking water sources, particularly near the city of Saint Peter.

4. **Plan Development.** The Plan was developed with the primary goals to improve water and soil outcomes across the watershed. To achieve this, a prioritized, targeted, and measurable strategy was devised by the Partnership. Public input identified 16 core issues of concern, which were then classified into six high, five medium, and five low priorities. High and medium priorities were then assigned measurable 10-year goals. Each 10-year goal was further divided across four unique implementation regions. Each region was responsible for certain portions of said goals, which were shaped from local partner feedback, watershed modeling, and state agency reports.
5. **Plan Review.** On January 27, 2026, the Board received the Plan, a record of the public hearing, all partner resolutions, and comment responses. Pertaining to the Plan for final State review pursuant to Board decision #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 final State review period:
  - A. Minnesota Department of Agriculture: “MDA has no additional comments on this version, and we appreciated the inclusion of the Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP) and the AgBMP Loan Program in your program lists.”
  - B. Minnesota Department of Health: “MDH appreciates the plan partners for including groundwater and drinking water into the plan and recognizing the comments submitted by MDH on November 14, 2025, as part of the public comment requirement. Thank you for including MDH priorities within your plan. We look forward to working with you on the implementation of your plan. The Minnesota Department of Health recommends approval of this plan.”
  - C. Minnesota Department of Natural Resources: “The Minnesota DNR has received the final Minnesota River – Mankato Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (1W1P) and have reviewed the responses to comments submitted under the 60-day review of the draft plan. The DNR is satisfied with the responses to issues raised during our review and would have no additional comments. The DNR recommends that BWSR approve this plan.”
  - D. Minnesota Pollution Control Agency: “The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) appreciates the opportunity to participate and provide input throughout the Minnesota River-Mankato Watershed (MRMW) Final Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (MRMWMP) development process for the MRMW Planning Area. Overall, the MRMWMP is very well written, concise, and thorough. After further review of the comments to the final MRMWMP, MPCA has no further comments as part of the official Final Review and Comment Period and recommends that Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) approve the MRMWMP.”
  - E. Minnesota Environmental Quality Board (EQB): Policy requires that EQB be notified of the final draft document. EQB confirmed receipt of the Plan and did not provide comments on the 90-day final draft Plan.
  - F. Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources regional staff: “BWSR regional staff have no further comments or required changes to the final draft of the Plan. We recommend the Plan be approved. The Partnership is to be commended, as the watershed is a complex mixture of urban and rural stakeholders. Every city, county, and soil & water conservation district was highly engaged throughout the 1W1P planning process and contributed valuable insight and perspective.”
6. **Plan Summary and Highlights.**
  - Watershed-wide, 10-year goals include reducing 3,150 pounds of phosphorus, 60,748 pounds of nitrogen, and 314 tons of sediment each year. These reductions will come from not only

agricultural lands, but urban stormwater practices as well. As mentioned earlier, Minnesota – River Mankato holds a diverse array of both urban and rural landscapes.

- The Plan identified surface waters which were nearly or barely impaired as well as ones which were locally prominent. These were then classified into Tier 1 and Tier 2, with Tier 1 being the highest priority for project funding. Tier 1 waters included Crystal Lake, Lake Ballantyne, and Minneopa Creek in Blue Earth County; Lake Emily and Lake Washington in Le Sueur County; and Swan Lake in Nicollet County.
  - The Plan also includes goals to cover key research gaps over 10 years. These include five feasibility studies for water storage projects, a watershed-wide septic system and unsealed well inventory, and two sub-watershed assessments to protect priority surface waters.
  - During the planning process in 2024, record-breaking flooding occurred in the Minnesota River – Mankato and neighboring watersheds. As a result, flooding was moved to a higher priority by the Partnership. To support this change, seven capital improvement projects will store 619 acre-feet of water and improve water quality.
  - Education and outreach were a key part of implementation, aiming to go above and beyond current efforts made by partners. This includes hosting 10 well testing clinics which will examine nitrate, lead, manganese, arsenic, and coliform bacteria; five public programs devoted to stormwater best management practices; and five aquatic invasive species programs.
7. **Southern Regional Committee.** On April 1, 2026, the Southern Regional Committee met to review and discuss the Plan. Those in attendance from the Board’s Committee were Ted Winter, Kevin Wilson, Eunice Biel, Scott Hanson (an alternate for member Steve Robertson), and Heather Johnson. Board staff in attendance included Southern Regional Manager Ed Lenz, Board Conservationists Shane Bugeja and Luke Olson, Office and Administrative Specialist Denise Lauerman, and Clean Water Specialists Jeremy Maul and Mark Hiles. The representatives from the Partnership were Mackenzie Bratsch and Blake Honetschlager, both district technicians of the Nicollet Soil and Water Conservation District. Other participants included Houston Engineering Incorporated employees Rachel Olm and Katie Cassidy, as well as Michelle Overholser and William Briggs, representatives from the Yellow Medicine Watershed. Board regional staff provided a recommendation for Plan approval to the Committee. After discussion, the Committee’s decision was to present a recommendation for approval of the Plan to the full Board.
8. This Plan will be in effect for a ten-year period until April 22, 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 Minnesota River – Mankato pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103B.101, Subd. 14 and 103B.801 and Board Decision #23-50.
3. The Minnesota River Mankato Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan attached to this Order states water and water-related problems within the planning area; priority resource issues and possible solutions thereto; goals, objectives, and actions of the Partnership; and an implementation program.

4. The attached Plan is in conformance with the requirements of Minnesota Statutes Section 103B.101, Subd. 14 and 103B.801 and Board Decisions #23-50.
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 Minnesota River – Mankato, submitted January 27, 2026.

Dated at Saint Paul, Minnesota, this 22<sup>nd</sup> of April 2026.

**MINNESOTA BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES**

  
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Todd Holman, Chair  
Board of Water and Soil Resources

Date: April 22, 2026

**BOARD ORDER**

**EXTENSION OF COMPREHENSIVE WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN**

**PURPOSE**

Authorize extending the revision date of the Yellow Medicine River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan

**RECITALS /FINDINGS OF FACT**

1. On December 14, 2016, the Board approved through Board Order #16-95 the Yellow Medicine River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan. The order states the plan will remain in effect until December 31, 2026.
2. Following the original Board approval, local governments that participated in developing the Yellow Medicine River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan adopted the plan and entered into a memorandum of agreement to implement the plan. Participating members include Lac qui Parle County, Lac qui Parle SWCD, County, Lincoln County, Lincoln SWCD, Lyon County, Lyon SWCD, Yellow Medicine County, Yellow Medicine SWCD, the Yellow Medicine River Watershed District, and Area II Minnesota River Basin Projects.
3. On March 19, 2026, the board conservationist received a request from the partnership, including resolutions from each member of the partnership, to extend the plan expiration date to December 31, 2028. The rationale for the extension request is to incorporate new data and information from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's watershed restoration and protection strategies (WRAPS) report update, which is not currently available.
4. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency informed the partnership that a draft of the Yellow Medicine River Watershed Protection and Restoration Strategy Update will be available by June 2026.
5. The Board has authority under Minn. Stat. §103B.3367 to grant extensions to the revision date of a comprehensive watershed management plan.
6. On April 1, 2026, the partnership presented their extension request to the Southern Regional Committee ("Committee"). Following the presentation, the Committee recommended approval to the Board.

**ORDER**

The Board hereby:

1. Approves extending the revision date of the Yellow Medicine River One Watershed One Plan Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan to December 31, 2028.

**MINNESOTA BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES**



Todd Holman, Chair  
Board of Water and Soil Resources

Date: April 22, 2026