

2026 Legislative Session Update

May 27, 2026

The 2026 Legislature adjourned on May 18th, concluding its work for the year. This biennium was unique with a tied membership in the House and a one-vote majority in the Senate. As a result, only bills sharing a common interest between both political parties were passed.

For the second year of the biennium, focus is typically on policy and funding sources like Legacy Fund, Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund, and bonding.

BWSR related items – Passed in regular session:

Legacy and Lands Bill - Outdoor Heritage Fund ([Chapter 126](#))

Through the approved Legacy Bill, BWSR will receive funding for 8 projects as recommended by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council.

Total project appropriations for BWSR: \$19,242,000

Project Name	Description/Purpose	Partners	BWSR portion
Oak Savanna Restoration for Living Landscapes	Restore and enhance oak savanna and associated ecosystems on local public and Tribal lands.	Xerces Society	\$1,702,000
RIM Grasslands Reserve, Phase 7	Acquire permanent conservation easements and restore and enhance wildlife habitat.	Ducks Unlimited	\$2,143,000
RIM Buffers for Wildlife and Water, Phase 12	Acquire permanent conservation easements to protect, restore, and enhance habitat by expanding the riparian buffer program under the clean water fund for additional wildlife benefits from buffers on private land.		\$3,744,000

Project Name	Description/Purpose	Partners	BWSR portion
RIM Wetlands – Restoring Most Productive Habitat in Minnesota, Phase 15	Acquire permanent conservation easements and restore wetlands and native grassland habitat.		\$3,502,000
Integrating Habitat and Clean Water, Phase 4	Acquire permanent conservation easements and restore and enhance wildlife habitat identified under the One Watershed, One Plan program for stacked benefit to wildlife and clean water.		\$1,827,000
Mississippi Headwaters Habitat Corridor Project, Phase 10 (partner led project)	Acquire lands in fee and permanent conservation easements and to restore wildlife habitat in the Mississippi headwaters.	Mississippi Headwaters Board, Trust for Public Lands	\$1,383,000
Red River Basin Riparian Habitat Program, Phase 2 (partner led project)	Acquire permanent conservation easements to protect, restore, and enhance stream and riparian habitat throughout the Red River watershed.	Red River Watershed Management Board	\$3,804,000
Riparian Habitat Protection in Kettle and Snake River Watersheds, Phase 3 (partner led project)	Acquire permanent conservation easements and restore high-quality forests, wetlands, and shoreline in the Kettle and Snake River watersheds.	Pine County Soil and Water Conservation District	\$1,137,000

Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund ([Chapter 104](#))

Through the approved ENRTF Bill, BWSR will receive funding for three projects and an extension of a third as recommended by the Legislative Citizen Commission of Minnesota Resources.

Total project appropriations for BWSR: \$2,706,000

Project Name	Description/Purpose	Partners	BWSR portion
Oak Savanna Restoration for Living Landscapes	Pilot a grant program, agreements, conservation plans, seed mixes, and other technical resources to restore and enhance oak savannas and support tallgrass prairies and woodlands on public and protected conservation lands in Minnesota's Eastern Broadleaf Forest Province.	Xerces Society	\$1,944,000
Resilient and Biodiverse Community Spaces	Develop a planning guide, implement case studies, and provide technical assistance that helps local communities plan and create climate-resilient and biodiverse community spaces.	Great River Greening, Audubon Upper Mississippi River, Metro Blooms	\$612,000
Partnership for Resilient Landscapes (partner led project)	Pheasants Forever project to accelerate adoption of voluntary conservation practices on working lands in Minnesota by increasing technical assistance to farmers and landowners while also attracting federal matching funds.	Pheasants Forever, Natural Resources Conservation Service, US Fish and Wildlife Services, DNR	\$150,000
Extension until June 30, 2027	BWSR's 2022 Conservation Reserve Program State Incentives		

Capital Investment (Bonding) ([Chapter 130](#))

BWSR projects funded in the final capital investment bill include:

- Local Government Roads Wetland Replacement Program (\$4,500,000)
- Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve Program/Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) (\$2,000,000)

Total general obligation bond appropriations for BWSR: \$6,500,000

Grant Management and Oversight Bills for All State Agencies:

Office of Inspector General ([Chapter 92](#))

- An Office of Inspector General (OIG) is established in new MN Statutes, Chapter 15E.
- Powers and responsibilities include conducting inspections, evaluations, and investigations of agencies and programs to: identify fraud and misuse; make recommendations for changes; and protect the integrity of public funds, data, and systems.
- By January 1, 2027, agencies websites must prominently highlight the fraud reporting tools administered by the OIG and Office of Legislative Auditor.
- By January 1, 2027, grant agreements with nonprofit organizations must require the nonprofit to prominently highlight the fraud reporting tools on their website. Agencies are required to regularly confirm and document compliance with this requirement.

State Government Omnibus Bill ([Chapter 119](#))

- Grants management provisions:
 - The Department of Administration shall provide a standard template summary page for request for proposals (RFPs) that includes funding availability and award structure, grant administration requirements, and the application process.
 - By February 1, 2028, the Department of Administration must establish grant management policies and procedures that include a grantee fraud risk rating system.

Various Grant Management Provisions ([Chapter 122](#))

- Withholding of Payments - modifications were made to MN Statute 15.013 regarding program payment withholdings. These include allowing agencies to withhold payments in cases where the program participant is the subject of credible allegations of fraud under investigation in any program. Payments may also be withheld if credible allegations are found by other agencies.
- Approved exceptions to Department of Administration's general grants management policies and procedures must be reported to legislative committees with jurisdiction over Department of Administration.
- MN Statute 16B.991 was amended to further define who is considered a recipient of grant funding in reference to criminal convictions.

BWSR items – Not Passed in regular session:

BWSR Policy Provisions – ([HF4149/SF4446](#))

Efforts were made to modernize MN Statute Chapter 103C provisions containing the term “land occupier” by replacing with alternative terms where needed. The bill was heard and passed through both the House and Senate environment committees. The Senate version was amended to update MN Statute 103G.2241, regarding the agriculture wetland exemption and record keeping options for public drainage authorities. Neither bill was heard on their respective floor.

For More Information

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