

**BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES  
520 LAFAYETTE ROAD NORTH  
ST. PAUL, MN 55155  
WEDNESDAY, MAY 28, 2025**

**AGENDA**

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

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

**MINUTES OF APRIL 23, 2025 BOARD MEETING**

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

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION**

*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 – 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 – Jason Garms
- Minnesota Extension – Joel Larson
- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency – Melissa Lewis

## **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**

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

1. Grant Noncompliance Policy Revision – Adam Beilke – ***DECISION ITEM***
2. Funding Recommendations for the FY26 Water Quality and Storage Program Grants – Rita Weaver – ***DECISION ITEM***

### ***RIM Reserve Committee***

1. RIM Easement Alteration Request for Blue Earth County Road Improvements - Easement #07-20-99-01 – Karli Swenson – ***DECISION ITEM***
2. RIM Easement Alteration Request-Easement 21-18-01-01-C Douglas County-Nathe – Karli Swenson – ***DECISION ITEM***
3. ACUB Easement Alteration Request – Easement 49-01-12-04 Morrison County - Kroll– Karli Swenson – ***DECISION ITEM***

### ***Water Management and Strategic Planning Committee***

1. Update on BWSR's Strategic Plan – Jenny Gieseke – ***INFORMATION ITEM***

### ***Wetland Conservation Committee***

1. Wetland Conservation Act Rulemaking Update – Les Lemm and Ken Powell – ***INFORMATION ITEM***

## **UPCOMING MEETINGS**

- Central Region Committee is scheduled for June 2<sup>nd</sup> at 2:30 p.m. in St. Paul and by MS Teams.
- RIM Reserve Committee is scheduled for June 9<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. in St. Paul and by MS Teams.
- BWSR Board meeting is scheduled for June 25<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m. in St. Paul and by MS Teams.

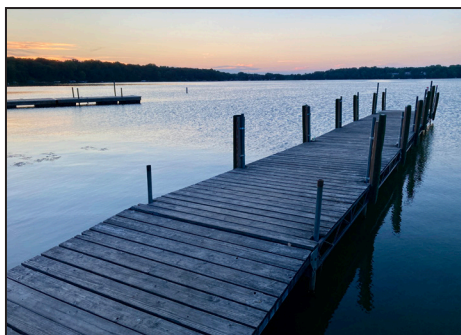
## **ADJOURN**

# University of Minnesota Extension

Agency Report provided by Joel Larson

- The 2025 MN Water Resources Conference will be held on October 14-15 at the RiverCentre in St. Paul. Registration should open in late summer, and we will share that when it is available.
- We are partnering with the MN Grazing Lands Conservation Association to host a series of field days across the state focused on the benefits of crop and livestock integration and how it can improve soil health and provide financial benefits. More information on the events can be found at the MNGLCA events website (<https://www.mnglca.org/events>).
- Extension will be hosting the annual Field School for Ag Professionals on July 29 and 30 on the University's St. Paul campus. It is a hands-on program for farming professionals and will include sessions on soil assessment and cover crop establishment.

# Producers' work with Martin SWCD targets Fairmont city water supply



YOUR Clean Water  
Fund AT WORK

**RELATED WORK:**  
BWSR awarded Martin County an \$882,000 Clean Water Fund grant in 2022 for a [nutrient treatment train](#) to reduce pollutant-loading to Amber Lake, which flows from Hall Lake to Budd Lake. Contractors built an 8-acre nutrient treatment wetland and an 8,000-linear-foot two-stage ditch. Tile installation is set for this season. Estimated annual reductions: 12,827 pounds of nitrate, 463 pounds of total phosphorus, 29 tons of sediment.

**F**AIRMONT — The Martin Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is poised to work with producers on the second phase of Clean Water Fund-backed work affecting Fairmont's drinking water.

The city of about 10,250 draws its municipal water supply from Budd Lake, part of the nutrient-impaired Fairmont Chain of Lakes. In May 2016 nitrate levels exceeded 10 parts per million (ppm), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) standard for safe drinking water. The [Minnesota Department of Health](#) (MDH) links nitrates to health concerns.

Fairmont solved the 2016 issue by drawing from a backup well. But water quality improvement work continues. Clean Water Fund grants the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) awarded to the Martin SWCD in 2019 and 2025 are part of that effort. Those grants focus on two subwatersheds draining to Budd Lake: Dutch Creek and Hall Lake.

With 100% of costs covered by \$92,150 in Clean Water Funds and \$43,060 in EPA grant dollars via the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), producers installed five grassed waterways, three water and sediment control basins and two saturated buffers.

Together, those projects will keep an

“Farmers are the first defense in land stewardship. If we don't take care of it, then it doesn't happen.”

— Kate Rosenberg,  
Martin County producer

estimated 1,002 pounds of nitrogen, 52 pounds of phosphorus, 123 tons of sediment and 248 tons of soil out of the chain of lakes annually. One pound of phosphorus can feed up to 500 pounds of algae.

“Having this really targeted area allows you to focus your energy and efforts on specific, critical areas, and having this grant gave us the staff time to do that,” said Martin SWCD Manager Ashley Brenke. “We normally don't do saturated buffers, so that was one practice we were able to install that we probably wouldn't have otherwise.”

The Dutch Creek subwatershed is the largest of the two that drain to Budd Lake. Land-use is primarily agricultural.

“Farmers are the first defense in land stewardship. If we don't take care of it, then it doesn't happen,” said Kate Rosenberg.

**Center:** Martin SWCD outreach coordinator Jesse Walters and Kate Rosenberg took a look at the soybean crop in July 2022 on land she farms in Rolling Green Township. Rosenberg worked with the Martin SWCD to install a series of water and sediment control basins in a field bordering Dutch Creek (**right**). The Clean Water Fund grant-supported project is part of the SWCD's nitrate-reduction work targeting watersheds that feed into Budd Lake, **left**, a source of city drinking water.

**Photo Credits:**  
Ann Wessel, BWSR

Rosenberg, who farms about 1,000 acres with her husband, worked with the SWCD to install a series of three water and sediment control basins in a Rolling Green Township field bordering Dutch Creek, also known as County Ditch 2.

That field contains a draw that stretches back a half mile, draining about 55 acres. Existing grassed waterways couldn't handle the runoff. The water and sediment control basins curb erosion and nutrient-loading by allowing the sediment to settle out.

"There is a clear benefit that the outlet tile at the ditch itself is repaired (and) the dike is higher so that we don't have (more) soil loss at that point," Rosenberg said.

The structure held up to heavy rains in June 2024.

"People driving by, observing projects and seeing that they are functioning properly and have a positive impact — those are all positive interactions that lead to more projects," said Martin SWCD outreach coordinator Jesse Walters.

With a \$260,000 Clean Water Fund grant awarded in 2025, the Martin SWCD will offer incentives for practices including up to 55 acres of new enrollments in the federal Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and 700 acres of split-rate nitrogen application; and cost-share for seven high-



*The city of Fairmont supplies about 3,900 residential users with drinking water.*

**“ I think there’s a lot of people that care a lot about the water quality in the Fairmont Chain of Lakes, and I think it takes all of those people and more to make improvements.**

— Jesse Walters,  
Martin SWCD outreach coordinator



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priority structural practices identified in Fairmont's Surface Water Intake Protection Plan.

That list reflects some of the things landowners were interested in that weren't covered under the 2019 grant.

Before approaching producers, SWCD staff run computer modeling to see what projects might work where. Producers are primarily interested in the cost and how projects would fit with their farming practices and equipment. The 2025 grant and leveraged funding — including continuing EPA funds targeting the



**VIDEO: in [“Fairmont Drinking Water Treatment,”](#) Water and Wastewater Superintendent Brady Powers explains how the city treats its drinking water, which is drawn from the Fairmont Chain of Lakes.**

Dutch Creek and Hall Lake subwatersheds, made available through the EPA's Small Watersheds Focus program — may cover up to 100% of the cost.

Walters meets with

producers in the field. If the computer model doesn't fit their operation, they might discuss other options.

"We've also seen increases in other programs that aren't funded by this grant, like Jesse's done a great job working on some CREP (Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program) projects," Brenke said. "So we've seen an increase in those projects in this small watershed compared to other parts of the county just because we're doing that targeted landowner outreach."

Practices supported by the 2019 Clean Water Fund grant are treating 550 acres within the 26,000-acre Fairmont Drinking Water Supply Management Area.

"I think there's a lot of people that care a lot about the water quality in the Fairmont Chain of Lakes, and I think it takes all of those people and more to make improvements within the Fairmont Chain of Lakes," Walters said. "It can take efforts beyond what we can do to see noticeable improvements."

Project partners include the city of Fairmont, Martin County, the Martin County Drainage Authority, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, the MDH, the MPCA and BWSR.

BWSR staff members write and produce Snapshots, a monthly newsletter highlighting the work of the agency and its partners.



# In La Crescent, HELP grant sparks community, habitat connections



*This Veterans Park site is one of 16 in La Crescent supported by a HELP grant.*

**Photo Credits:**  
Jason Ludwigson,  
city of La Crescent



**HELP PILOT, PROGRAM:** An Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund appropriation supported the cost-share Habitat Enhancement Landscape Pilot grant program, meant to restore and enhance strategically located, diverse native habitats to benefit pollinators, beneficial insects, and overall plant and animal diversity. No longer a pilot, HELP is now the [Habitat Enhancement Landscape Program](#). The Minnesota Legislature in 2023 allocated \$4 million to BWSR for the program. BWSR received \$7.9 million in requests from 38 organizations and local governments; it awarded \$3.6 million to 13 organizations and local governments. The pilot required a 25% match; the program requires a 10% match.

**L**A CRESCENT — The city of La Crescent has cut mowing costs, eliminated maintenance hazards and beautified stretches of rights-of-way, steep slopes and bits of city parks by replacing turf grass with native plants.

“(Now) they won’t have to mow it all the time — maybe once every couple of years. So. Save money. Save time. And we’ve got more habitat, and in most people’s opinions, we have better aesthetics out there, too.”

— Dan Wermager,  
Root River SWCD technician



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of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) tripled the 11-plus acres of existing native plantings on city-owned land — establishing 12.2 acres of prairie plantings, increasing plant diversity on 7.9 acres, and clearing invasive brush on 2.2 acres of dry bluff prairies.

The La Crescent projects accounted for \$7,890 of the \$40,000 HELP grant BWSR awarded to the Root River Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) in 2022 to enhance pollinator habitat in Houston County. The city’s \$6,545 contribution — well over the 25% match required by the grant — included site preparation, seeding, brush removal and planting costs.

“We as a city saw the benefit of trying to work with the HELP grant and native prairie restoration,” said La Crescent Sustainability Coordinator Jason Ludwigson, whose job involves implementing the voluntary [Minnesota](#)

Projects completed from spring 2023 through fall 2024 with Habitat Enhancement Landscape Pilot (HELP) grant funds from the Minnesota Board



[GreenStep Cities](#) program.

“One (benefit) is to reduce city maintenance costs. There’s quite a few open spaces within the city that city staff actively maintain — and particularly that involve mowing. A lot of those spaces are pretty steep, difficult to mow, particularly in wet conditions,” Ludwigson said. And mowing is typically a job for the less experienced, seasonal workers. “So there’s a safety consideration there.”

Ludwigson said pockets of deep-rooted native plants — five of them bordering stormwater ponds in the Pine Creek watershed — also could help to improve water quality by filtering runoff bound for the Mississippi River. That, in turn, would help to mitigate flooding and manage stormwater.



Ludwigson



O'Donnell-Ebner

Public works staff suggested locations for some of the 16 sites — focusing on mowed, unused open areas. The city council supported the endeavor.

“Particularly in a small town, we have a limited budget. So any time we can partner and get that extra (grant) funding ... it gives us a chance to add more to the community than we otherwise would be able to budget on our own,” said at-large La Crescent City Council Member Teresa O'Donnell-Ebner.



*The city worked with the Root River SWCD to select site-specific seed mixes. This planting surrounding a stormwater pond, seen from Veterans Park, included sedges, rushes, grasses and wildflowers. Five of the 16 HELP grant-supported sites in the city border stormwater ponds in the Pine Creek watershed.*

## Related SWCD work, MPCA program

**ROOT RIVER SWCD HELP GRANT-FUNDED WORK:** With the \$40,000 HELP grant, the Root River SWCD provided \$25,000 in direct financial assistance. The balance covered the SWCD's technical and administrative time. Besides the La Crescent sites, the grant supported work to improve native cover — which can shelter pheasants and deer — and pollinator habitat on existing Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve easements in Houston County. During spot checks of RIM easements, SWCD staff noticed that non-native plants, cool-season grasses and weeds were overtaking some sites. “That wasn't the intent of the easements. We wanted to preserve more native habitat. If we could find a way to convert them back to natives without being a huge burden on the

landowner, it seemed like a good opportunity,” said Dan Wermager, Root River SWCD technician.

Those four RIM sites involved: 16.5 acres of new seeding; 2.6 acres of new seeding plus 1.2 acres of tree and shrub planting; 3.68 acres of new seeding; 0.78 acre of tree and shrub plantings.

**MINNESOTA GREENSTEP CITIES:** La Crescent joined the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's voluntary challenge, assistance and recognition program in 2015. The goal of the free, continuous [improvement program](#) based on 29 best practices is to help cities achieve sustainability and quality-of-life goals. The actions focus on reducing energy use and encouraging civic innovation.

Funded by an Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) appropriation, HELP pilot grants aimed to restore and enhance strategically located, diverse native habitats to benefit pollinators and beneficial insects, and overall plant and animal diversity.

In La Crescent, forb-heavy seed mixes tailored to site conditions will attract a variety of pollinators, beneficial insects and birds. The sites also will provide

habitat for salamanders, lizards and turtles.

“We're mimicking nature. ... Restoring nature, in this case,” said Root River SWCD technician Dan Wermager, who applied for the grant. He worked with city staff to finalize seed mixes and locations, cross-referencing maps to prioritize sites where public land and suitable pollinator habitat aligned.

The seed mix for one stormwater basin site

contained nine grass, six sedge, three rush and 18 wildflower species. A drier site mix contained seven grass, two sedge and 27 wildflower species. Wildflower mixes are chosen to ensure that something is blooming spring through fall.

Wildflowers seeded in 2023 bloomed later that year. Signs explain what's happening at high-profile sites where plants are becoming established. O'Donnell-Ebner said the sites can show residents what might grow in their own yards.

Ludwigson fielded calls from about 10 residents seeking advice about completing similar projects on their own. Five residents installed projects, which ranged from a rain garden to an entire backyard that used the same seed mix as an adjacent HELP grant-funded park planting.

As he has traveled throughout the state, Ludwigson said he has seen thousands of idle, mowed acres that would be ideal candidates for the [Habitat Enhancement Landscape Program](#). When he delivers presentations about La Crescent's prairie plantings, Ludwigson encourages other communities to consider doing something similar.

“I think the biggest deterrent is a cultural deterrent,” Ludwigson said, referring to the idea that only manicured lawns and gardens are acceptable. “(Establishing a project) gives people the societal permission. ... Oh, it's OK. The city's doing it; I can, too. That's where it can be most impactful.”

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# New wetland function assessment tool in the works for two-state area

**W**etland regulators in Minnesota and Wisconsin will soon have a new tool available to more efficiently assess wetland functions related to water quality, hydrology and ecology. This updated tool will replace existing wetland assessment methods in both states.

Wetland functions can include storing water, transforming nutrients, growing living matter and supporting diverse wetland plants. Wetland functions can benefit the wetland itself, the surrounding ecosystems and the communities in which they are located.

Under Minnesota's Wetland Conservation Act (WCA), certain functions must be considered when regulating wetlands.

To more efficiently and accurately assess these wetland functions, natural resources agencies in Minnesota and Wisconsin collaborated to develop the Rapid Assessment Method (RAM) tool. A steering committee oversaw the project; participating agencies included the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR), the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, the U.S. Department of Environmental Protection (EPA) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' St. Paul District. A professional consultant assisted with the effort.

Members of the steering committee field-tested the RAM tool in spring 2024, resulting in refinements and improvements. The tool is expected to be available to wetland regulators later this year, along with a user guide and supporting resources.

RAM tool functions were selected based on regulatory requirements for wetlands in Minnesota and Wisconsin. The tool assesses 17 specific hydrologic,



*Members of a steering committee representing state agencies from Minnesota and Wisconsin plus two federal agencies field-tested the RAM tool in May 2024 at a Washington County wetland. Developers anticipate the tool will be available later this year. Photo Credit: BWSR*

water quality, ecological, climate and anthropogenic wetland functions. Like the current rapid response tool it's replacing, MN RAM, the new RAM tool will allow practitioners to assess wetland functional aspects in less than a day. The updated version modernizes and improves the methodology of the MN RAM tool, which was developed in the 1990s.

The RAM tool will help regulators evaluate wetland functions to inform regulatory and conservation decisions. For example, the tool can help determine which wetland functions a particular restoration project will enhance and improve. It can inform decisions about the amount and type of wetland mitigation needed. The tool can also help determine the amount and type of compensatory wetland mitigation banking credits generated by a wetland restoration, creation or other mitigation project. Overall monitoring, assessment and documentation about specific wetlands can also be stored and assessed using the tool.

"The RAM utilizes our best understanding

of modern wetland science and will provide an important perspective of wetland functions and values to inform decisions local government units make when managing wetland resources," said BWSR Wetland Specialist David Demmer, who was involved in the project.

Project planning began in 2020. The EPA supported the efforts with a \$393,312 Wetland Program Development Grant in late 2021. BWSR provided a \$65,552 state match from the agency's WCA general fund.

The RAM tool will primarily be used by professionals — such as local government staff, state agency employees, Tribal Government staff and private consultants who are involved in wetland restoration and mitigation efforts. The tool includes a desktop component and a field component: Users answer questions on a spreadsheet using a computer, tablet, or cellphone. The spreadsheet calculates function rankings based on user input.

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# Pine SWCD targets Snake River water quality via forestry work



YOUR Clean Water  
Fund AT WORK

Clean Water Funds from the Clean Water Land & Legacy Amendment are the sole source of the non-competitive Watershed-Based Implementation Funding grants. Thirty-three percent of sales tax revenue from the Legacy Amendment, which Minnesota voters passed in 2008, is allocated to the [Clean Water Fund](#).

**P**INE CITY — With a new forester and a new funding source, the Pine County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) is poised to work with landowners within the Snake River watershed on forestry protection plans with water quality benefits.

The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) awarded the Snake River Watershed Plan Partnership a non-competitive \$1,024,500 Watershed-Based Implementation Funding (WBIF) grant in 2024. Pine County is the fiscal agent for the partnership. Together, the Pine SWCD and Pine County administer the grant. The 1,010-square-mile watershed encompasses most of Kanabec, parts of Pine, Aitkin and Mille Lacs, and bits of Isanti and Chisago counties.

The work SWCD staff members are doing now will set up landowners for potential WBIF funding. The Snake River watershed partnership makes cost-share available for forestry related practices.

“Healthy, vigorous forest cover helps provide protection from soil loss and erosion, increases soil health, protects water quality (of) lakes, rivers and streams as well as water (storage) capacity,” said Pine SWCD Manager Paul Swanson. “This protection of



Swanson

forestland is really critical in protecting our water resources in the county.”

Swanson referred to Minnesota Department of Natural Resources [research](#) linking water quality

to watershed disturbance. The goal: permanently protect at least 75% of a watershed.

Seventy-five percent protection in priority areas is a long-term goal stated in the [Snake River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan](#) (CWMP), too. Among the CWMP’s 10-year goals: implement forestry best-management practices on at least 800 acres, complete forest stewardship plans on 5,000 acres within priority areas, and increase protected acres by 5% to 10%.

“Since Pine County is really in the southern part of the forested region of the state, we are focused on looking at land conversion and ... sprawl that’s coming up from the metro area,” Swanson said.

“One of our primary focuses is protecting forest cover in areas where we’re seeing (areas at risk) of development, to try and protect forest cover to help maintain the higher water

**Center:** Cheryl Smetana McHugh shared a laugh with Pine SWCD forester Eddie Johnson, left, and Nick Foss, a forester who works in Pine and Kanabec counties, during a Nov. 8, 2024, walk through a 3-acre site on the Snake River. **Left:** A road divides a buckthorn-infested woods from the site McHugh is clearing of buckthorn, with the SWCD’s technical assistance and financial contribution that offsets the cost. **Right:** McHugh’s property borders the Snake River. **Photo Credits:** Ann Wessel, BWSR

**VIDEO:** [“Forestry in the Snake River Watershed”](#)

quality that Pine County has — while still being cognitive that development is important,” Swanson said.

The Kanabec and Pine SWCDs used WBIF funds to hire Nick Foss, a Foley native with a forestry degree from the University of Minnesota, to work within the Snake River watershed. He started in August 2024. Pine SWCD staff and Foss are focused on informing landowners about forestry protection options.

Cheryl Smetana McHugh’s ongoing buckthorn removal is the first forestry project within the Pine County portion of the watershed since the CWMP was approved. It’s also the SWCD’s first experience with biological control — goats, in this case.

The SWCD used its own funds to support the work, a continuation of a project McHugh started on her own in 2023. That year she hired Pine Towne Services to bring in its goat herd. A three-person team then cleared and burned 40 piles of buckthorn and chemically treated the stumps. She read about the Pine SWCD grant opportunity in the SWCD newsletter.

Her application was approved after Pine County SWCD forester Eddie Johnson inspected the 3-acre site in Pine City and determined the proposed brush removal project was viable. The property is situated on a point that juts into the Snake River.

“Buckthorn, if you let it grow it won’t let anything else grow,” Johnson said. That in turn results in bare ground. “So any time it rains, that soil can run into the river. Since this site is right on the river it’s very important that we



## Watershed Details:

### WATERSHED PARTNERSHIP:

Includes Kanabec, Pine, Mille Lacs and Aitkin counties and SWCDs. Kanabec SWCD-based Snake River Watershed Coordinator Mary Poelman started in August. Isanti and Chisago counties chose not to participate in the partnership because the watershed only includes bits of those counties.

### PINE COUNTY WATERSHEDS:

Three other watersheds include parts of Pine County: the Kettle/Upper St. Croix, Lower St. Croix and Nemadji river watersheds.

### WATERSHED-BASED

**IMPLEMENTATION FUNDING:** The current grant funds are available through Dec. 31, 2026.

not let that happen.”

Removing the buckthorn will allow soil-stabilizing native species to grow, creating a buffer that will help to prevent soil and the pollutants it carries from eroding into the river. That benefits both water quality and soil health — goals of the SWCD and the watershed. And, Johnson added, it will serve as an example of what’s possible.

The SWCD grant is a three-year contract with a 10-year maintenance commitment. Grant-backed work in 2024 removed seven dumpsters full of buckthorn — a three-person team used a skid-steer loader and chainsaws, and then chemically treated the stumps to prevent regrowth. The goat herd returned for about 10 weeks. Ethan Leibel of Pine Towne Services said about 15 goats grazed a quarter-acre at a time, spending about a week per area.

The work to date has cost about \$20,000.

“This has been a major investment that I hadn’t really planned for, so the cost-share

has made it possible for us to do this project. And it’s been really nice to have the expertise of foresters and the department who really have resources to provide advice, consult, walk around, be here to have a hands-on look at the property and the possibilities,” McHugh said.

The SWCD calculated assistance equivalent to the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service’s (NRCS) current flat rates for brush management. For McHugh, that worked out to \$5,250.

The progress was clear on an early November afternoon, when McHugh strolled through the site with SWCD and Pine Towne Services staff. A previously obscured river channel and the road were visible through the trees.

“Before, it was extremely dense. You could not see through it. You couldn’t see the river and you couldn’t see the road. Now after the goats have gone through and the mechanical work has been done, you can see in every direction. You can see the tree species, looking up; you can see what’s growing on the ground,” Johnson said.

McHugh said after another round of goat grazing this season, work would focus on stump removal.

When brush management is complete, McHugh said she planned to work with SWCD staff on restoration, bringing variety to the ash monoculture. This spring, she was starting to envision how the restoration might take shape.

“We’re going to rejuvenate this forest. We’re going to take down undesirable trees to the best of our ability while still making it a natural-forest-looking space. We’re going to remove some stumps. We’re going to plant some desirable plant material on the forest floor, and then I plan to come out with my grandchildren and hike,” McHugh said in November.

Swanson said native habitat restoration like the post-brush-removal project McHugh has planned could potentially qualify for WBIF if it demonstrated water-quality benefits. The Snake River watershed has prioritized WBIF funding for projects that lie within high-priority forestry areas, and for those with a woodland stewardship plan (available to landowners with at least 20 forested acres).

“I was a Girl Scout, and we’re always taught to leave things in a better way than you found them. And I’m a Master Gardener and so I think I could have wildflowers out here or ferns or Solomon’s seal or other understory shrubbery with berries that would attract birds,” McHugh said. “I’m just really hoping to make this a lovely place.”

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BWSR staff members write and produce Snapshots, a monthly newsletter highlighting the work of the agency and its partners.

# BWSR Board Member Conflict of Interest in Grant Review – Disclosure Form

**Meeting:**

**Date:**

I certify that I have read and understand the descriptions of conflict of interest provided, reviewed my participation for conflict of interest, and disclosed any perceived, potential, or actual conflicts. As a BWSR Board member, appointed according to Minnesota Statute Section 103B.101, I am responsible for evaluating my participation or abstention from the review process as indicated below. If I have indicated an actual conflict, I will abstain from the discussion and decision for that agenda item.

*Please complete the form below for all agenda items. If you indicate that you do not have a conflict for an agenda item, you do not need to fill out additional information regarding that agenda item.*

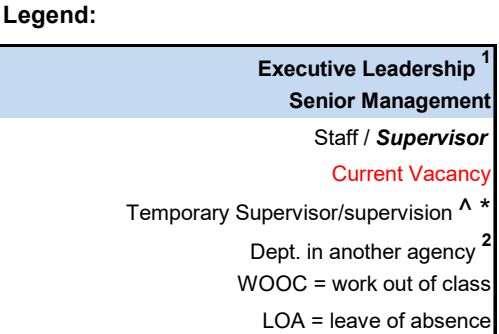
Agenda Item	No conflict (mark here and stop for this row)	Grant applicant(s) associated with conflict (required if conflict identified)	Conflict Type (required if conflict identified)	Will you participate? (required if conflict identified)	Description of conflict (optional)
				Yes / No	
				Yes / No	
				Yes / No	
				Yes / No	

Printed name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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





<input type="checkbox"/> IN-STATE <input type="checkbox"/> OUT-OF-STATE		<input type="checkbox"/> SHORT TERM ADVANCE <input type="checkbox"/> RECURRING ADVANCE		SEMA4 EMPLOYEE EXPENSE REPORT						<input type="checkbox"/> Check if advance was issued for these expenses <input type="checkbox"/> FINAL EXPENSE(S) FOR THIS TRIP?					
Employee Name		Home Address (Include City and State)			Permanent Work Station (Include City and State)			Agency		1-Way Commute Miles		Job Title			
Employee ID		Rcd #	Trip Start Date		Trip End Date		Reason for Travel/Advance (30 Char. Max) [example: XYZ Conference, Dallas, TX]					Barg. Unit		Expense Group ID (Agency Use)	

Chart String(s)	Accounting Date	Fund	Fin DeptID	AppropID	SW Cost	Sub Acct	Agncy Cost 1	Agncy Cost 2	PC BU	Project	Activity	Srce Type	Category	Sub-Cat	Distrib %	
	A															
	B															

A. Description:

Date	Daily Description	Itinerary		Trip Miles	Total Trip & Local Miles	Mileage Rate	Figure mileage reimbursement below	Meals ✓			Total Meals (overnight stay)	Total Meals (no overnight stay) taxable	Lodging	Personal Telephone	Parking	Total
		Time	Location					B	L	D						
			Depart					<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>						0.00
			Arrive					<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>						0.00
			Depart					<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>						0.00
			Arrive					<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>						0.00
			Depart					<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>						0.00
			Arrive					<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>						0.00
			Depart					<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>						0.00
			Arrive					<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>						0.00
			Depart				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>						0.00	
			Arrive				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>						0.00	
			Depart				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>						0.00	
			Arrive				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>						0.00	
VEHICLE CONTROL #					Total Miles 0					Total MWI/MWO 0.00	Total MEI/MEO 0.00	Total LGI/LGO 0.00	Total PHI/PHO 0.00	Total PKI/PKO 0.00	Subtotal (A) 0.00	

B. Description:

MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT CALCULATION				OTHER EXPENSES – See reverse for list of Earn Codes.			
Enter the rates, miles, and total amounts for the mileage listed above. Get the IRS rate from your agency business expense contact.	Rate	Total Miles	Total Mileage Amt.	Date	Earn Code	Comments	Total
1. Enter rate, miles, and amount being claimed at <b>equal to the IRS rate</b> .			0.00				
2. Enter rate, miles, and amount being claimed at <b>less than the IRS rate</b> .			0.00				
3. Enter rate, miles, and amount being claimed at <b>greater than the IRS rate</b> .			0.00				
4. Add the total mileage amounts from lines 1 through 3.			0.00				
5. Enter IRS mileage rate in place at the time of travel.							
6. Subtract line 5 from line 3.	0.000						
7. Enter total miles from line 3.		0				Subtotal Other Expenses: (B)	0.00
8. Multiply line 6 by line 7. This is <b>taxable</b> mileage.			0.00 <small>(Copy to Box C)</small>			Total taxable mileage greater than IRS rate to be reimbursed: (C)	0.00 <small>MIT or MOT</small>
9. Subtract line 8 from line 4. If line 8 is zero, enter mileage amount from line 4. This is <b>non-taxable</b> mileage.			0.00 <small>(Copy to Box D)</small>			Total nontaxable mileage less than or equal to IRS rate to be reimbursed: (D)	0.00 <small>MLI or MLO</small>
Grand Total (A + B + C + D)							0.00
If using private vehicle for out-of-state travel: What is the lowest airfare to the destination? _____ Total Expenses for this trip must not exceed this amount.						Less Advance issued for this trip:	
I declare, under penalty of perjury, that this claim is just, correct and that no part of it has been paid or reimbursed by the state of Minnesota or by another party except with respect to any advance amount paid for this trip. I AUTHORIZE PAYROLL DEDUCTION OF ANY SUCH ADVANCE. I have not accepted personal travel benefits.						Total amount to be reimbursed to the employee:	
						0.00	
Employee Signature _____ Date _____ Work Phone: _____						Amount of Advance to be returned by the employee by deduction from paycheck:	
						0.00	

Approved: Based on knowledge of necessity for travel and expense and on compliance with all provisions of applicable travel regulations.

Supervisor Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Appointing Authority Designee (Needed for Recurring Advance and Special Expenses)

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## EMPLOYEE EXPENSE REPORT (Instructions)

### DO NOT PAY RELOCATION EXPENSES ON THIS FORM.

See form FI-00568 Relocation Expense Report. Relocation expenses must be sent to Minnesota Management & Budget, Statewide Payroll Services, for payment.

### USE OF FORM: Use the form for the following purposes:

1. To reimburse employees for authorized travel expenses.
2. To request and pay all travel advances.
3. To request reimbursement for small cash purchases paid for by employees.

**COMPLETION OF THE FORM: Employee:** Complete, in ink, all parts of this form. If claiming reimbursement, enter actual amounts you paid, not to exceed the limits set in your bargaining agreement or compensation plan. If you do not know these limits, contact your agency's business expense contact. Employees must submit an expense report within 60 days of incurring any expense(s) or the reimbursement comes taxable.

All of the data you provide on this form is public information, except for your home address. You are not legally required to provide your home address, but the state of Minnesota cannot process certain mileage payments without it.

**Supervisor:** Approve the correctness and necessity of this request in compliance with existing bargaining agreements or compensation plans and all other applicable rules and policies. Forward to the agency business expense contact person, who will then process the payments. Note: The expense report form must include original signatures.

**Final Expense For This Trip?:** Check this box if there will be no further expenses submitted for this trip. By doing this, any outstanding advance balance associated with this trip will be deducted from the next paycheck that is issued.

**1-Way Commute Miles:** Enter the number of miles from your home to your permanent workstation.

**Expense Group ID:** Entered by accounting or payroll office at the time of entering expenses. The Expense Group ID is a unique number that is system-assigned. It will be used to reference any advance payment or expense reimbursement associated with this trip.

**Earn Code:** Select an Earn Code from the list that describes the expenses for which you are requesting reimbursement. Be sure to select the code that correctly reflects whether the trip is in state or out-of-state. **Note:** Some expense reimbursements may be taxable.

**Travel Advances, Short-Term and Recurring:** An employee can only have one outstanding advance at a time. An advance must be settled before another advance can be issued.

**Travel Advance Settlement:** When the total expenses submitted are less than the advance amount or if the trip is cancelled, the employee will owe money to the state. Except for rare situations, personal checks will not be accepted for settlement of advances; a deduction will be taken from the employee's paycheck.

**FMS ChartStrings:** Funding source(s) for advance or expense(s)

**Mileage:** Use the **Mileage Reimbursement Calculation** table to figure your mileage reimbursement. Mileage may be authorized for reimbursement to the employee at one of three rates (referred to as the equal to, less than, or greater than rate). The rates are specified in the applicable bargaining agreement/compensation plan. Note: If the mileage rate you are using is above the IRS rate at the time of travel (this is not common), part of the mileage reimbursement will be taxed.

**Vehicle Control #:** If your agency assigns vehicle control numbers follow your agency's internal policy and procedure. Contact your agency's business expense contact for more information on the vehicle control number procedure.

**Personal Travel Benefits:** State employees and other officials cannot accept personal benefits resulting from travel on state business as their own. These benefits include frequent flyer miles/points and other benefits (i.e. discounts issued by lodging facilities.) Employees must certify that they have not accepted personal travel benefits when they apply for travel reimbursement.

**Receipts:** Attach itemized receipts for all expenses except meals, taxi services, baggage handling, and parking meters, to this reimbursement claim. The Agency Designee may, at its option, require attachment of meal receipts as well. Credit card receipts, bank drafts, or cancelled checks are not allowable receipts.

**Copies and Distribution:** Submit the original document for payment and retain a copy for your employee records.

	Earn Code			Earn Code	
Description	In State	Out of State	Description	In State	Out of State
Advance	ADI	ADO	Membership	MEM	
Airfare	ARI	ARO	Mileage > IRS Rate	MIT*	MOT*
Baggage Handling	BGI	BGO	Mileage < or = IRS Rate	MLI	MLO
Car Rental	CRI	CRO	Network Services	NWK	
Clothing Allowance	CLA		Other Expenses	OEI	OEO
Clothing-Non Contract	CLN		Parking	PKI	PKO
Communications - Other	COM		Photocopies	CPI	CPO
Conference/Registration Fee	CFI	CFO	Postal, Mail & Shipping Svcs.(outbound)	PMS	
Department Head Expense	DHE		Storage of State Property	STO	
Fax	FXI	FXO	Supplies/Materials/Parts	SMP	
Freight & Delivery (inbound)	FDS		Telephone, Business Use	BPI	BPO
Hosting	HST		Telephone, Personal Use	PHI	PHO
Laundry	LDI	LDO	Training/Tuition Fee	TRG	
Lodging	LGI	LGO	Taxi/Airport Shuttle	TXI	TXO
Meals With Lodging	MWI	MWO	Vest Reimbursement	VST	
Meals Without Lodging	MEI*	MEO*	Note: * = taxable, taxed at supplemental rates		