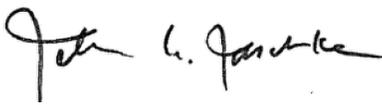


DATE: April 15, 2025

TO: Board of Water and Soil Resources' Members, Advisors, and Staff

FROM: John Jaschke, Executive Director 

SUBJECT: BWSR Board Meeting Notice – April 23, 2025

The Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) will meet on Wednesday, April 23, 2025, beginning at 9:00 a.m. The meeting will be held in the lower-level Board Room, at 520 Lafayette Road North, St. Paul and by Microsoft Teams. Individuals interested in attending the meeting through Teams should do so by either 1) logging into Teams by [clicking here to join the meeting](#) or 2) join by audio only conference call by calling telephone number: 651-395-7448 and entering the conference ID: 494 929 717#. The following information pertains to agenda items:

The following information pertains to agenda items:

## COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

### *RIM Reserve Committee*

1. **RIM Drinking Water Program** – Board approval is needed for updates to the RIM Wellhead program. Updates will include increased easement flexibility in terms of continued use and length, as well as determining appropriate rates. The Wellhead Protection Partners Grant Pilot will also be made into a permanent program. In addition to these programmatic updates, the name of the program will be changed to RIM Drinking Water. The RIM Committee met March 25th and approved the Board Resolution. **DECISION ITEM**
2. **Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Easement Payment Rates** – Easement staff have identified over 20 resolutions that either determine RIM easement payment rates or reference a payment rate structure. With simplification in mind, the attached board order was drafted to become the only active board order to govern RIM rates and authorizes BWSR staff, with Executive Director approval, to establish RIM easement payment rates and requires that rates are reviewed, updated, and published regularly. **DECISION ITEM**

### *Water Management & Strategic Planning Committee*

1. **2025 Nonpoint Priority Funding Plan Approval** – BWSR adopted the original Nonpoint Priority Funding Plan (NPPF) in 2014 and subsequent updates in 2016 and 2018 as required by Minn. Stat. §114D.50. A 2019 statute revision allowed BWSR to develop alternative content and timelines for the NPPF. Board actions in 2020, 2021, and 2023 directed staff to establish a framework for revising the NPPF and to proceed with the revision. In 2024, staff drafted the 2025 NPPF with input from an interagency team and invited public comment on the draft. The 2025 NPPF incorporates changes since the original plan was written in 2014, including significant progress local watershed plan development and implementation. **DECISION ITEM**
2. **Update on BWSR's Strategic Plan** – In 2024 the BWSR Board approved a new strategic plan for the agency. Jenny Gieseke provided an update to the Water Management and Strategic Planning Committee in March on the status of the plan, and will share that information with the full Board, along with plans for monitoring and evaluation moving forward. **INFORMATION ITEM**

## **NEW BUSINESS**

1. **Minnesota Drinking Water Action Plan** – The Minnesota Drinking Water Action Plan (the Plan) is a 10-year action plan to ensure that everyone, everywhere in Minnesota has equitable access to safe and sufficient drinking water.

The Plan outlines goals, strategies, actions, and key measures to address drinking water issues that affect all Minnesotans. The Plan also contains summaries of key policies, opportunities, challenges, and threats that shape our drinking water systems in Minnesota. ***INFORMATION ITEM***

If you have any questions regarding the agenda, please feel free to call me at 651-539-2587. We look forward to seeing you on April 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES  
520 LAFAYETTE ROAD NORTH  
ST. PAUL, MN 55155  
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23, 2025**

**PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

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

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

**MINUTES OF MARCH 26, 2025 BOARD MEETING**

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

**INTRODUCTION OF NEW STAFF**

- Ara Gallo, NGO/Tribal Grants Specialist

**REPORTS**

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

**AGENCY REPORTS**

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

**ADVISORY COMMENTS**

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

## **COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

1. RIM Drinking Water Program – Sara Reagan and Sharon Doucette – ***DECISION ITEM***
2. Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Easement Payment Rates – Sharon Doucette and Kristina Geiger – ***DECISION ITEM***

### ***Water Management & Strategic Planning Committee***

1. 2025 Nonpoint Priority Funding Plan Approval – Julie Westerlund – ***DECISION ITEM***
2. Update on BWSR’s Strategic Plan – Jenny Gieseke – ***INFORMATION ITEM***

## **NEW BUSINESS**

1. MN Drinking Water Action Plan – MN. Dept. of Health – ***INFORMATION ITEM***

## **UPCOMING MEETINGS**

- BWSR Board meeting is scheduled for May 28, 2025 at 9:00 a.m. in St. Paul and by MS Teams.

## **ADJOURN**

**BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES  
520 LAFAYETTE ROAD NORTH  
LOWER-LEVEL BOARD ROOM  
ST. PAUL, MN 55155  
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 26, 2025**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Joe Collins, Jill Crafton, Jayne Hager Dee, Mike Runk, Neil Peterson, Ted Winter, LeRoy Ose, Eunice Biel, Todd Holman, Ron Staples, Mark Zabel, Tom Schulz, Melissa Lewis, MPCA; Joel Larson, University of Minnesota Extension; Jeff Berg, MDA; Steve Robertson, MDH; Jason Garms, DNR

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Lori Cox, Rich Sve

**STAFF PRESENT:**

John Jaschke, Rachel Mueller, Melissa Sjolund, Janna Fitzgerald, Adam Beilke, Julie Hendrickson, Lucy Dahl, Tom Gile, Travis Germundson, Karli Swenson, Suzanne Rhees, David Weirens, Sharon Doucette, Dusty Van Thuyne, Ryan Hughes, Chad Severts, Don Bajumpaa, Denise Lauerman, Jeff Hrubes, Jenny Gieseke, John Shea

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Jan Voit, Minnesota Watersheds; Carl Stenoien, MPCA; Amanda Gorton, MPCA; Erick Schenck MFRC; Pete Aube, MFRC; Jaime Thibodeaux, MFRC ; David Wilson, MFRC; James Aasen, Koochiching SWCD; Pam Tomevi, Koochiching SWCD

**Chair Todd Holman called the meeting to order at 9:01 AM**

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**\*\***  
**25-13** **ADOPTION OF AGENDA** - Moved by Ted Winter, seconded by LeRoy Ose, to adopt the agenda as presented. ***Motion passed on a roll call vote.***

**\*\***  
**25-14** **MINUTES OF JANUARY 22, 2025 BOARD MEETING** – Moved by Joe Collins, seconded by Ron Staples, to approve the minutes of January 22, 2025, as circulated. ***Motion passed on a roll call vote.***

**PUBLIC ACCESS FORUM**

No members of the public provided comments to the board.

**INTRODUCTION OF NEW STAFF**

Adam Beilke introduced Melissa Sjolund NGO/Tribal Grants Specialist and Janna Fitzgerald, eLINK Coordinator. Lucy Dahl introduced Julie Hendrickson, Easement Acquisition Specialist.

**Chair Holman read the statement:**

*“A conflict of interest, whether actual, potential, or perceived, occurs when someone in a position of trust has competing professional or personal interests, and these competing interests make it difficult to fulfill professional duties impartially. At this time, members are requested to declare conflicts of interest they may have regarding today’s business. Any member who declares an actual conflict of interest must not vote on that agenda item. All actual, potential, and perceived conflicts of interest will be announced to the board by members or staff before any vote.”*

**REPORTS**

**Chair & Administrative Advisory Committee** – Chair Todd Holman reported he conducted John Jaschke’s annual review with Rich Sve and will report on it at the next meeting. Attended the Environmental Quality Board’s Environmental Review Implementation Subcommittee meeting on March 19th. Also attended the RIM Committee yesterday and will be attending the Tribal-State Relations Training in May.

**Executive Director’s Report** - John Jaschke reported on the Governor’s budget revisions following the updated forecast. The Clean Water fund had a reduction caused by a long running Dept. of Revenue error. Stated BWSR paused the soil health program funds that were tied to the federal match until they get better clarity. Kelly Kirkpatrick did not win city council reelection so will no longer serve on the board. A thank you note and gift on behalf of the board and staff was sent. Annie Felix, BWSR’s Clean Water Fund Coordinator, started a new role working with groundwater programs at the Department of Health.

John reminded members to note if they had a conflict of interest in any of today’s items.

John reviewed the day-of-packet. There was a minor change to Peatland Restoration Order in item number four. Reviewed the memo regarding mileage reimbursement and Snapshots. Noted BWSR staff will be updating the website.

Joe Collins asked if the Governor could come back later with any future changes from the federal government. John stated there is a possibility, but there is a lot of uncertainty about what’s actually going to happen or when.

**Audit and Oversight Committee** – Joe Collins reported the committee has not met.

**Dispute Resolution and Compliance Report** – Travis Germundson reported there have been two new appeals filed since the last report and there are two appeals pending. The following two appeals have been on acted on.

File 25-3 is an appeal of a WCA notice of decision for a property located in St. Louis County. The appeal regards the denial of a replacement plan application for fill in a wetland for shoreland access. The initial staff decision was affirmed under local appeal proceedings by the St. Louis County Board of Adjustment and that decision was appealed to the Board and has been denied.

File 25-2 is an appeal of a WCA Restoration Order for a property located in Cass County. The appeal regards the placement of fill in a wetland along both sides of Seven Mile Creek (DNR Public Watercourse). A DNR Public Waters Restoration and Replacement Order was also issued for the placement of culverts and fill in Seven Mile Creek. The appeal has been denied and the restoration order affirmed.

**Grants Program & Policy Committee** – Mark Zabel reported they have not met.

**RIM Reserve Committee** – Jayne Hager Dee reported they have three items on the agenda for today and had a productive committee meeting yesterday.

**Water Management & Strategic Planning Committee** – Joe Collins reported they met to review the drafts of the non-point priority funding plan and the BWSR Strategic Plan. The final plans will be presented at a future board meeting.

**Wetland Conservation Committee** – Jill Crafton reported they are looking to set a date for a future meeting.

**Buffers, Soils & Drainage Committee** – LeRoy Ose reported they have not met.

**Drainage Work Group (DWG)** – Neil Peterson reported they have not met since January and will expect an upcoming meeting in June.

## **AGENCY REPORTS**

**Minnesota Department of Agriculture** – Jeff Berg reported they are still dealing with High Pathogenic Avian Influenza. The drought monitors show most of the state is abnormally dry or in drought conditions.

**Minnesota Department of Health** – Steve Robertson reported the Safety Water Act and the Clean Water Act revolving loan funds were approved at the 2024 levels. Public Water Systems were required to file their inventories last fall. There were uncertainties with some of the inventories of not knowing the material used. They are looking at having them resolve those uncertainties and are offering grants or technical service assistance. The deadline to apply for assistance is March 28<sup>th</sup>. Activities are taking place in response to the EPA petition in southeast Minnesota, they've had over 1,200 people request testing kits in the eight-county area. Private wells that have nitrate levels testing above 10 are eligible for a Reverse Osmosis Systems.

Jill Crafton asked if the Department of Health is being affected by the federal actions taking place. Steve stated they have some uncertainties.

Joe Collins asked what the percentage rate is of well tests coming back at a high level. Steve stated he does not have those numbers.

Ted Winter asked if the results are reported to the Department of Health and if they know who needs reverse osmosis systems. Steve stated they receive the results.

**Minnesota Department of Natural Resources** – Jason Garms reported they have a lot of legislative items in play. They are working on a program for the helium gas discovered in Minnesota. They will be having some fee increases. They are set up for an active fire season with the drought and limited snow falls.

Ron Staples asked for an update on the Public Water Inventory. Jason stated hydrologists have been hired and the IT tool will be rolling out soon.

**Minnesota Extension** – Joel Larson reported they hosted an annual Soil Management Summit in January in Mankato. In February they hosted the Nitrogen Conference and Nutrient Management Conference in Mankato and St. Cloud with an option to attend in-person or remotely. Extension colleagues hosted a meeting in southeast Minnesota on nitrate and resources and research that's available at the University. Abstract submissions for the Minnesota Water Resources conference are open until April 4<sup>th</sup>. Jeff Peterson the Water Resources Center Director is returning to a faculty position at the University and they are in search of a new director.

**Minnesota Pollution Control Agency** – Melissa Lewis reported on their legislative budget priorities. It includes an operating budget for the agency and permitting reform that will bring additional accountability and efficiency. They are working on an e-waste stewardship program provides resources to raise awareness around and enforce the ban on mercury and skin lightening creams. They have been testifying to keep strong laws banning PFAS, lead, and cadmium. They are continuing to implement the first phase of Amara's Law, which came into effect on January 1<sup>st</sup>. They are participating in conversations about the need to maintain reliable funding for EPA states that carry out the delegated work from the EPA. Stated they are continuing work on the Nutrient Reduction Strategy.

#### **ADVISORY COMMENTS**

**Association of Minnesota Counties** – No report was provided.

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

**Minnesota Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts** – No report was provided.

**Minnesota Association of Townships** – Eunice Biel reported the annual meetings and elections for Township Officers were held on March 11<sup>th</sup>. Staff are traveling for the spring short courses. Eunice attended the short course in Rochester. Reported they have been active at the legislative sessions.

**Minnesota Watersheds** – Jan Voit reported in February they had their legislative briefing and networking event. There was a panel discussion with John Jaschke, Dana Vanderbosch and Sarah Strommen on permitting. Held a special meeting of their membership last Friday where they made

changes to their bylaws. They will be starting their resolutions process April 1<sup>st</sup> and will hold a special meeting in August for legislative issues. Summer tour will be in Roseau River Watershed District June 24<sup>th</sup> through 26<sup>th</sup>.

Jill Crafton asked if there was a way to improve the agency permitting process. John Jaschke stated there are some approaches being evaluated that could be taken between agencies to do better together.

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

Chair Holman called a recess at 10:17 a.m. and called the meeting back to order at 10:25 a.m.

## **COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **RIM Reserve Committee**

**RIM Easement Alteration Request for Benton County Public Road Improvements - Easement #05-01-20-18** – Karli Swenson presented RIM Easement Alteration Request for Benton County Public Road Improvements - Easement #05-01-20-18.

The Benton County Highway Department is requesting release of 1.1 acres from RIM Easement 05-01-20-18 to accommodate upcoming bridge replacement, roadway reconstruction and right-of-way expansion along CSAH #22 and CSAH #7, to improve public safety and to meet current MnDOT design standards. CSAH #22 right-of-way runs along the northern boundary of the RIM easement and CSAH #7 right-of-way runs along the eastern boundary of the easement.

The West Fork Rum River runs through the RIM easement, and there are two bridges along the adjacent highways that have been deemed structurally deficient. Exposed rebar, cracked concrete, and corroded steel reinforcements were noted. Therefore, replacement of both bridges is inevitable to protect the safety of the traveling public. In addition to the structural deficiencies, the road and bridge width is less than minimum standards and needs to be widened to safely accommodate use by large agricultural vehicles and equipment traveling over the bridge, and to allow traffic to flow safely in both directions. Further, the shoulders also need to be widened to accommodate gentler slopes and increase clear zone widths to meet current safety standards. An additional 27 feet of right-of-way is required to accomplish all necessary improvements.

The proposed width increases of the right-of-way to both CSAH #22 and CSAH #7 will result in a 1.1 acre overlap with the existing RIM easement. Because all the existing trees along the new right-of-way will need to be cleared, an easement boundary alteration is necessary.

BWSR's Easement Alteration Policy for public benefitted projects allows for release of land from the easement if the public entity compensates BWSR for the released acres at two times the current RIM payment rate, reimburses the state any funds paid for conservation practices, plus a \$500 administrative fee. Benton County has submitted the \$500 fee and has agreed to pay BWSR \$3,666.00 to release the 1.1 acres as calculated below. Note: 0.1 acres of the release area consists of a public water that was donated to the RIM easement, so no compensation is required. Compensation is calculated for 1.0 easement acre.

Current RIM Rate for this parcel (based on 60% of 2024 tax assessed value) is \$1,833/acre.

Our policy requires compensation at 2x the current rate for the easement alteration. To release 1.0 acre at  $2 \times \$1,833 = \$3,666$ .

The state expended \$0 on conservation practices on this area since it was existing trees when the easement was acquired, so no conservation practice payment is required for the release.

*Recommendation*

The RIM Reserve Committee recommends approval to formally amend easement 05-01-20-18 to release 1.1 acres, as proposed. The Benton SWCD Board is also recommending approval of the easement alteration request and has submitted a letter of recommendation.

Jill Crafton asked if there was a way to add more trees within the easement area to make up for the loss. Karli stated it's something they could consider outside of this request. It would require a conservation plan amendment.

\*\*  
25-15 Moved by Jayne Hager Dee, seconded by Ted Winter, to approve RIM Easement Alteration Request for Benton County Public Road Improvements - Easement #05-01-20-18. ***Motion passed on a roll call vote.***

**Climate Pollution Reduction Grant for Peatland Restoration** – Suzanne Rhees, David Weirens, Sharon Doucette presented Climate Pollution Reduction Grant for Peatland Restoration.

BWSR has been awarded \$8 Million through the MPCA as part of a Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) from the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). BWSR will plan and implement restoration of peatlands on private and other non-state lands, through RIM-Wetland easements and other agreements. BWSR will work with counties, state and federal agencies, Tribal governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other interested parties to identify suitable restoration sites and plan and implement restoration projects. CPRG funds will supplement and leverage the 2024 General Fund appropriation for peatland-focused easements.

Joe Collins asked if the federal money is available. Suzanne stated the funds are available and hope to be utilizing those funds as soon as possible.

LeRoy Ose asked how they are going to spend the money. Suzanne stated most will go to easement acquisition and restoration.

\*\*  
25-16 Moved by LeRoy Ose, seconded by Jill Crafton, to approve the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant for Peatland Restoration. ***Motion passed on a roll call vote.***

**Minnesota Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program Extension and Expansion** – Dusty Van Thuyne presented Minnesota Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program Extension and Expansion.

Board Resolution 17-14 (January 25, 2017) authorized staff to: 1) utilize existing and anticipated appropriated RIM funds (Clean Water Fund, Outdoor Heritage Fund, and Capital Investment) and other (Environmental and Natural Resources Trust Fund) appropriated funds to implement MN CREP.

The purpose of the MN CREP was to permanently protect 60,000 acres of buffers, wetlands and wellhead areas with landowners by partnering the Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve program with the Federal Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) program (administered by USDA- Farm Service Agency - FSA). Landowners participating in MN CREP enroll in the USDA-FSA- administered CRP for 14-15 years, and in the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR)-administered RIM Reserve program — a state-funded perpetual conservation easement program. MN CREP is a voluntary conservation

program that permanently protects environmentally sensitive land in targeted Minnesota counties by leveraging state and federal funds.

The BWSR and the USDA-FSA expanded the MN CREP to provide additional water quality, habitat and economic benefits to Minnesota communities. A recently approved amendment to the original MN CREP agreement authorized in 2017 will expand opportunities to 12 additional counties and increased the enrollment goal to 75,000 acres of buffers, wetlands, grasslands, and wellhead areas for Minnesota agricultural producers. The amendment also extended the agreement through 2039.

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25-17 Moved by Jayne Hager Dee, seconded by Tom Schulz, to approve the Minnesota Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program Extension and Expansion. ***Motion passed on a roll call vote.***

### **Northern Region Committee**

**Rainy River-Rainy Lake Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan** – LeRoy Ose and Ryan Hughes presented Rainy River-Rainy Lake Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan.

The Rainy River-Rainy Lake Watershed planning area was approved for a One Watershed, One Plan program planning grant at the regularly scheduled meeting of the BWSR on August 16, 2022. The planning partners established a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for the purposes of writing a Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan. The organizations signing the MOA included Koochiching County, Koochiching Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), City of Ranier, and City of International Falls.

The partnership held a 60-day plan review process that ended on November 29, 2024, and held the required public hearing on December 17, 2024. The final draft of the Plan, a record of the public hearing, and copies of all written comments were submitted to the state review agencies on January 8, 2025. The partnership has addressed and documented agency and public comments received throughout the Plan review process.

On March 5, 2025, the Northern Regional Committee met to review and discuss the Plan. The Committee's decision was to recommend approval of the Rainy River-Rainy Lake Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan as submitted to the full Board per the attached draft Order.

Joe Collins asked about gray water management. Chad Severts stated it mainly deals with houseboat traffic.

Ted Winter asked about the parameters of the forest health activities. James Aasen, Forest Resource Specialist with Koochiching SWCD stated forest management is a critical component to the hydrology of the watershed. Securing stewardship plans and working on watershed forest land protection will be a major component.

Jill Crafton asked about the tribal nations. Ryan Hughes stated Red Lake Nation has been involved in the process.

LeRoy Ose asked if there were ways to encourage people not to leave ice fishing garbage or waste on lakes. Pam Tomevi, District Administrator of Koochiching SWCD stated they are signed on with the Keep it Clean Initiative and it will continue to be part of their education and outreach in this watershed.

\*\*  
25-18

Moved by LeRoy Ose, seconded by Neil Peterson, to approve the Rainy River-Rainy Lake Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan. ***Motion passed on a roll call vote.***

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

**Greenhouse gas emissions in Minnesota 2005-2022 Legislative Report** – Carl Stenoien and Amanda Gorton, MPCA presented Greenhouse gas emissions in Minnesota 2005-2022 Legislative Report.

This report summarizes what we know about Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions in Minnesota, including the major sources and trends over time. Tracking GHG emissions and identifying their sources are two important ways that state government can help Minnesotans understand how our actions contribute to our changing climate and how we can curb our climate pollution.

Jill Crafton asked if mercury is considered a GHG. Carl stated mercury is not considered a GHG.

LeRoy Ose asked how much GHG is given off after a peatland has been drained. Carl stated they segregate those into their current land uses and that it's several million metric tons per year.

Joel Larson stated with emissions increasing they will continue to have challenges and it's important to be connecting with partners.

LeRoy Ose asked how many pounds of carbon are burned from approximately 6 ½ pounds of gasoline. He also asked if you gain anything when charging your electric car with a coal fired plant. Carl stated these are not in his area of expertise. Provided an example of carbon burned from gasoline. Stated electric engines for cars are more efficient and would have lower emissions when using electricity from coal to power than by powering it by gasoline.

Tom Schulz asked about the residential population growth and energy being used. Carl stated they have more houses and the population has grown. There is a lot more cooling that's happening than in previous decades. They've completed a statewide look per capita emissions since 2005 and they've gone down but haven't done the analysis for the residential sector. Amanda stated we have a trend of larger house and SUVs that create more emissions.

Mark Zabel stated he owns an electric vehicle where he charges it off peak hours and shared the benefits.

**Minnesota Forest Resources Council Report** – Erick Schenck and Pete Aube presented Minnesota Forest Resources Council Report.

This report summarizes what we know about GHG emissions in Minnesota, including the major sources and trends over time. Tracking GHG emissions and identifying their sources are two important ways that state government can help Minnesotans understand how our actions contribute to our changing climate and how we can curb our climate pollution.

Ted Winter asked about options for private landowners. Erick stated there are several different programs to encourage landowners to keep their forest and land forested.

Tom Schulz stated local people are a good source of getting information to the land.

Jayne Hager Dee asked with most of the forest products used for paper and cardboard, has there been an effect on the industry with the regularity of recycling programs in communities. Erick stated they are supportive of it. Recycling works well to make sure the carbon in that forest product can be used as long as possible.

Jaime Thibodeaux stated the Regional Landscape Program does a lot of coordination on forested areas across Minnesota.

Jill Crafton asked if there was built in tree diversity to check on balance. Erick stated there is a lot of diversity and it depends on different factors.

Ted Winter asked if fallen trees could be put into this bioenergy. Erick stated they can use that wood but not a lot of markets value that type of wood.

#### **UPCOMING MEETINGS**

- Water Management and Strategic Planning Committee is scheduled for April 7<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 p.m. in Rogers and by MS Teams.
- Next BWSR Meeting is scheduled for 9:00 AM, April 23, 2025 in St. Paul and by MS Teams.

Chair Holman adjourned the meeting at 12:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Todd Holman  
Chair

## BOARD MEETING AGENDA ITEM

**AGENDA ITEM TITLE:** Dispute Resolution/Compliance Report

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**Meeting Date:** April 23, 2025

**Agenda Category:**     Committee Recommendation     New Business     Old Business

**Item Type:**                 Decision                                 Discussion                 Information

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

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

**Contact:** Travis Germundson

**Prepared by:** Travis Germundson

**Reviewed by:** \_\_\_\_\_ Committee(s)  
Rich Sve DRC Chair and Travis Germundson

**Presented by:** Germundson

**Time requested:** 5 minutes

**Audio/Visual Equipment Needed for Agenda Item Presentation**

**Attachments:**     Resolution     Order     Map     Other Supporting Information

**Fiscal/Policy Impact**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None          | <input type="checkbox"/> General Fund Budget          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Amended Policy Requested | <input type="checkbox"/> Capital Budget               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New Policy Requested     | <input type="checkbox"/> Outdoor Heritage Fund Budget |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other:                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Clean Water Fund Budget      |

**ACTION REQUESTED**

None

**LINKS TO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

See attached report.

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

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

# Dispute Resolution and Compliance Report

April 7, 2025

By: Travis Germundson

There have been **no** new appeals filed since the last report and there are currently **two** appeals pending.

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

~~Appeals that have been decided since last report to the Board.~~

File 24-9 (12-20-24) This is an appeal of a WCA notice of decision in Morrison County. The appeal regards the approval of an exemption and no-loss decision for an access road associated with a township cartway. Morrison SWCD Board of Supervisors affirmed a decision made by staff under a local appeal and now that decision is being appealed. Note this involves the same property and wetland area associated with previous appeals (Files 23-8 and 23-15) of a wetland boundary and type decision. *The appeal was remanded back to the local unit of government to develop an adequate record that considers a written Technical Evaluation Panel report.*

File 24-8 (9-13-24). This is an appeal of a WCA Restoration Order for a property located in Beltrami County. The appeal regards the placement of fill material in wetland to create berms. The petition claims that drainage was in place prior to 1991, and the area is considered an artificial wetland. *The appeal was placed in abeyance and the Restoration Order stayed to allow time for completion of a wetland assessment and plan to comply with EPA's requirements of restoration and conditions of the WCA Restoration Order.*

Summary Table for Appeals

Type of Decision	Total for Calendar Year 2024	Total for Calendar Year 2025
Order in favor of appellant		2
Order not in favor of appellant	5	
Order Modified	1	1
Order Remanded	1	
Order Place Appeal in Abeyance	1	
Negotiated Settlement		
Withdrawn/Dismissed		

Buffer Compliance Status Update: BWSR has received Notifications of Noncompliance (NONs) on 67 parcels from the 12 counties BWSR is responsible for enforcement. Currently there are no Corrective Action Notices (CANs) and eight Administrative Penalty Orders (APO) issued by BWSR that are still active. Of the actions being tracked over 58 of those have been resolved.

Statewide 43 counties are fully compliant, and 44 counties have enforcement cases in progress. Of those counties (with enforcement cases in progress) there are currently 264 NONs, 336 CANs, and 44 APOs actively in place. Of the actions being tracked over 2,963 of those have been resolved.

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

## **COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

1. RIM Drinking Water Program – Sara Reagan and Sharon Doucette – ***DECISION ITEM***
2. Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Easement Payment Rates – Sharon Doucette and Kristina Geiger – ***DECISION ITEM***



Updates are needed for both the RIM Wellhead easement program and the Wellhead Protection Partners Grant Program. The updates are designed to increase landowner participation, allow adequate compensation, recognize the public health benefit of protecting the land that most directly contributes surface water to the drinking water source and provide financial assistance to LGUs for fee title acquisition of these vulnerable drinking water areas. The program is being renamed RIM Drinking Water Program to emphasize the resource protected and purpose of the program.

Board Order # 25- \_\_\_\_\_

**Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve Drinking Water Program**

**WHEREAS**, the Minnesota State Legislature has established the program to acquire RIM conservation easements under Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103F.515 to 103F.531 to restore and protect land and water resources; and,

**WHEREAS** the Board has authority under Minnesota Statutes Section 103B.101 to award grants and contracts to accomplish water and related land resources management; and,

**WHEREAS**, ML 2024 Chapter 106, Article 2, Section 6 (e) designates funds “for conservation easements acquired under Minnesota Statutes, sections 103F.501 to 103F.535, or for grants or contracts to local units of government or Tribal governments, including for fee title acquisition or for long-term protection of groundwater supply sources. Consideration must be given to drinking water supply management areas and alternative management tools in the Department of Agriculture *Minnesota Nitrogen Fertilizer Management Plan*, including using low-nitrogen cropping systems or implementing nitrogen fertilizer best management practices. Priority must be placed on land that is located where the vulnerability of the drinking water supply is designated as high or very high by the commissioner of health, where drinking water protection plans have identified specific activities that will achieve long-term protection, and on lands with expiring conservation contracts”; and,

**WHEREAS**, future funds may become available to acquire Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) conservation easements and enter into agreements under the RIM Drinking Water Program; and,

**WHEREAS**, drinking water protection can only be accomplished on specific and limited parcels of lands within drinking water supply management areas; and,

**WHEREAS**, lands within priority areas for drinking water protection may have high crop production rates and higher than average estimated market value, requiring higher landowner compensation than rates established for other RIM programs that are targeted to less productive agricultural lands; and,

**WHEREAS**, protection and restoration of drinking water at its source is a long-term and effective mechanism to provide clean drinking water; and,

**WHEREAS**, resolutions 13-107, 19-34, 20-13, 21-55 authorized the RIM Wellhead Protection Initiative and Wellhead Protection Partner Grant Pilot program and will be replaced by this order; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Board of Water and Soil Resources RIM Reserve Committee met on March 25, 2025 and recommends the following provisions.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT**, the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources authorizes staff to:

1. Utilize existing and future designated funds for similar purpose to implement the RIM Drinking Water Program.
2. Establish payment rates for perpetual and limited-term easements and for fee title acquisitions via agreements with other organizations.
3. Conduct Request for Proposals and establish agreements for partner efforts, including fee title acquisition.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, resolutions 13-107, 19-34, 20-13, 21-55 are replaced by this order for any unobligated funds that remain; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT**, the Executive Director is delegated to approve Drinking Water Protection Partner Grants consistent with this order.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT**, this order will remain in effect, as funding is available, until material changes in the program warrant an amendment.

Dated at Saint Paul, Minnesota this 23<sup>rd</sup> day of April, 2025.

**MINNESOTA BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES**

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

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

DRAFT

## BOARD MEETING AGENDA ITEM

**AGENDA ITEM TITLE:** Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Easement Payment Rates

**Meeting Date:** April 23, 2025

**Agenda Category:**  Committee Recommendation     New Business     Old Business

**Item Type:**  Decision     Discussion     Information     Non-Public Data

**Keywords for Electronic Searchability:** Easements, RIM, Rates, Payments, Restoration

**Section/Region:** Easements Section

**Contact:** Kristina Geiger

**Prepared by:** Kristina Geiger

**Reviewed by:** RIM Committee(s)

**Presented by:** Sharon Doucette, Kristina Geiger

**Time requested:** 10 minutes

**Audio/Visual Equipment Needed for Agenda Item Presentation**

**Attachments:**     Resolution     Order     Map     Other Supporting Information

**Fiscal/Policy Impact**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> None                     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> General Fund Budget          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Amended Policy Requested | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Capital Budget               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New Policy Requested     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Outdoor Heritage Fund Budget |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other:                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Clean Water Fund Budget      |

**ACTION REQUESTED**

Authorize the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) staff to establish easement payment rates for RIM Reserve Conservation Easement Programs.

**LINKS TO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

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

The Easements Section seeks to simplify available programs, distribute opportunities, maintain competitive payments in changing market conditions, incentivize enrollment of priority land, and provide important public benefits. Consolidating the authority for staff to set RIM conservation easement payment rates will promote clarity and efficiency and further the goals of the Program. This Order would authorize BWSR staff, with Executive Director approval, to establish market-based RIM easement payment rates that consider the unique aspects of individual RIM programs by using data from the MN Dept. of Revenue, local assessors, and other property valuation sources. Easement payment rates are also required to be reviewed, updated, and published regularly.

## BOARD ORDER

### Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Easement Payment Rates

#### PURPOSE

Authorize the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) staff to establish easement payment rates for RIM Reserve Conservation Easement Programs.

#### RECITALS /FINDINGS OF FACT

1. The Minnesota State Legislature has appropriated Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve funds to BWSR to acquire and restore permanent RIM conservation easements under Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103F.515 to 103F.535.
2. Minnesota Statutes, Section 103F.515, Subdivision 6, provides the Board with authority to set payment rates for RIM conservation easements and directs the Board to consider market factors, including the township average equalized estimated market value of property, to establish payment rates.
3. The RIM Reserve Conservation Easement Program is administered by BWSR in cooperation with local Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) and other Local Government Units (LGUs) under Master Joint Powers Agreements.
4. Past Board Resolutions authorized BWSR staff to use two easement payment structures, township average value and tax-assessed value, to serve as the basis in establishing payment rates for RIM easement programs.
5. BWSR has established various easement programs and seeks to simplify available programs, distribute opportunities, maintain competitive payments in changing market conditions, incentivize enrollment of priority land, and provide important public benefits.
6. There are several past Board Resolutions with payment rate implications – some Resolutions have been superseded, some were based on appropriations that have expired, and some are still active. Exhibit A includes previous Board Resolutions relating to RIM payment rates.
7. Consolidating the authority for staff to set RIM conservation easement payment rates will promote clarity and efficiency and further the goals of the Program.

**ORDER**

NOW THEREFORE, the Board hereby authorizes BWSR staff, with Executive Director approval, to:

1. Establish market-based RIM easement payment rates that consider the unique aspects of individual RIM programs by using relevant and available data from the Minnesota Department of Revenue, local government assessors, and other property valuation sources.
2. Review, update, and publish easement payment rates on a regular schedule.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that:

3. Upon publication of a payment rate pursuant to this Order, the previously established rate is superseded by the new published rate.
4. This Order establishes the method for determining easement payment rates prospectively, and any other method previously used for establishing payment rate is superseded by this Order.

Dated at St. Paul, Minnesota, this April 23, 2025.

**MINNESOTA BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES**

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

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

Past Board resolutions that establish easement payment rates:

- a. 13-109: Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve – Standard Easement Payment Rates
- b. 17-035: Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) Present Value and Roundout Payments
- c. 17-103: Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve – Standard Easement Payment Rates: Northern Forest Region
- d. 18-006: Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve – Camp Ripley Compatible Use Buffer (ACUB) Program Rates
- e. 18-037: MN Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (MN CREP) 2018 Adjustments

Additional past Board resolutions with easement payment rates implications include:

- f. 06-055: Approve RIM Reserve Payment Rate Increase for CREP II
- g. 09-085: Establish Rates, Eligibility and Wellhead Protection Area Selection for Clean Water Funded Permanent RIM Reserve Wellhead Protection Easement Program
- h. 09-86: Establish Rates, Eligibility, and Sign-Up Procedures for Clean Water Funded Permanent RIM Reserve Riparian Buffer Conservation Easement Program
- i. 10-027: Establish Rates, Eligibility, and Sign-up Procedures for the 2010 RIM WRP Partnership Program
- j. 11-019: Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve – Wetlands Reserve Program (RIM-WRP) Partnership: Payment Rates & 2011 Sign-Up
- k. 11-079: RIM Reserve and RIM Reserve – Wetland Reserve Program (RIM-WRP) Partnership Payment Rates RECINDS 11-019
- l. 12-060: RIM Reserve Clean Water Fund Wellhead Protection Initiative Payment Rate Revision
- m. 13-036: Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve – Wetlands Reserve Program (RIM-WRP) Partnership Program FY13 Easement Payment Rates
- n. 13-068: Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve – Wetlands Reserve Program (RIM-WRP) Rate Adjustment 2010-2012
- o. 13-107 (portion): Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve – Camp Ripley Army Compatible Use Buffer (ACUB) Program
- p. 13-107 (portion): Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve – Shoreland Protection on Wild Rice Lakes
- q. 13-107 (portion): RIM Reserve- Wellhead Protection Initiative
- r. 15-038: Method for Establishing Native Prairie Bank Easement Payment Rates
- s. 16-037: Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve – Pine River Watershed Protection
- t. 16-042: Method for Establishing Native Prairie Bank Easement Payment Rates
- u. 17-104: Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve – Crow Wing River Watershed Protection
- v. 25-017: Minnesota Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program Extension and Expansion

## **COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

### ***Water Management & Strategic Planning Committee***

1. 2025 Nonpoint Priority Funding Plan Approval – Julie Westerlund – ***DECISION ITEM***
2. Update on BWSR's Strategic Plan – Jenny Gieseke – ***INFORMATION ITEM***

## BOARD MEETING AGENDA ITEM

<b>AGENDA ITEM TITLE:</b>	<b>2025 Nonpoint Priority Funding Plan Approval</b>		
<b>Meeting Date:</b>	<u>April 23, 2025</u>		
<b>Agenda Category:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Committee Recommendation	<input type="checkbox"/> New Business	<input type="checkbox"/> Old Business
<b>Item Type:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Decision	<input type="checkbox"/> Discussion	<input type="checkbox"/> Information
<b>Keywords for Electronic Searchability:</b>	<u>Nonpoint Priority Funding Plan, NPFP, 103C.405 program plan, comprehensive watershed management plans, 1W1P, one watershed, one plan</u>		
<b>Section/Region:</b>	<u>Land and Water</u>		
<b>Contact:</b>	<u>Julie Westerlund</u>		
<b>Prepared by:</b>	<u>Julie Westerlund</u>		
<b>Reviewed by:</b>	<u>Water Management and Strategic Planning</u>		Committee(s)
<b>Presented by:</b>	<u>Julie Westerlund</u>		
<b>Time requested:</b>	<u>15 minutes</u>		

**Audio/Visual Equipment Needed for Agenda Item Presentation**

**Attachments:**     Resolution     Order     Map     Other Supporting Information

**Fiscal/Policy Impact**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None          | <input type="checkbox"/> General Fund Budget          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Amended Policy Requested | <input type="checkbox"/> Capital Budget               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New Policy Requested     | <input type="checkbox"/> Outdoor Heritage Fund Budget |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other:                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Clean Water Fund Budget      |

**ACTION REQUESTED**

Approve the Nonpoint Priority Funding Plan (NPFP); Designates the NPFP and comprehensive watershed management plans developed under the 103B.801 as the program plan required by 103C.405.

**LINKS TO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

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

BWSR adopted the original Nonpoint Priority Funding Plan (NPFP) in 2014 and subsequent updates in 2016 and 2018 as required by Minn. Stat. §114D.50. A 2019 statute revision allowed BWSR to develop alternative content and timelines for the NPFP. Board actions in 2020, 2021, and 2023 directed staff to establish a framework for revising the NPFP and to proceed with the revision. In 2024, staff drafted the 2025 NPFP with input from an interagency team and invited public comment on the draft. The 2025 NPFP incorporates changes since the original plan was written in 2014, including significant progress local watershed plan development and implementation.

## BOARD ORDER

### Revision of the Nonpoint Priority Funding Plan (NPFP)

#### PURPOSE

Approve the 2025 Nonpoint Priority Funding Plan (NPFP)

#### RECITALS /FINDINGS OF FACT

- A. In 2013, the Clean Water Accountability Act was passed in the Minnesota Legislature and resulted in the addition of the nonpoint priority funding plan as defined in Minn. Stat. §114D.50, Subd. 3a., which states:
- (a) Beginning July 1, 2014, and every other year thereafter, the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) shall prepare and post on its website a priority funding plan to prioritize potential nonpoint restoration and protection actions based on available WRAPs, TMDLs, and local water plans. The plan must take into account the following factors: water quality outcomes, cost-effectiveness, landowner financial need, and leverage of nonstate funding sources. The plan shall include an estimated range of costs for the prioritized actions.*
- (b) ...state agencies allocating money from the clean water fund for nonpoint restoration and protection strategies shall target the money according to the priorities identified in the nonpoint priority funding plan.*
- B. The Board adopted the NPFP in 2014.
- C. For the 2014, 2016, and 2018 NPFP reports, BWSR relied on the Biennial Budget Request (BBR) submitted by local governments to estimate costs for needed statewide nonpoint implementation work.
- D. In 2019, the Minnesota Legislature passed a package of statutory policy changes in Minnesota Statutes Chapters 103B and 114D referred to as “coordinated watershed management,” which included the addition of Minn. Stat. §114D.47 Nonpoint Funding Alternative. Tew language states:
- Notwithstanding section 114D.50, subdivision 3a, the Board of Water and Soil Resources may, by board order, establish alternative timelines or content for the priority funding plan for nonpoint sources under section 114D.50, subdivision 3a, and may use information from comprehensive watershed management plans or comprehensive local water management plans to estimate or summarize costs.*
- E. The Board passed Board Order 20-27 in June 2020, which extended the date for revising the NPFP to December 31, 2021, and authorized staff to develop a framework to evaluate the need to establish alternative content.
- F. As authorized, staff developed a framework consisting of a) the “coordinated watershed management” approach and other changes to Minnesota Statutes Chapters 103B and 114D, b) linking to local comprehensive watershed management plans via the One Watershed, One Plan program which are locally driven and state supported, c) the ongoing transition from the traditional Clean Water Fund competitive grants to noncompetitive watershed-based implementation funding approach, and d) the connection to the Clean Water Council’s 2020 Strategic Plan.

- G. In December 2021, the Board approved Board Order 21-60, authorizing staff to “revise the NFPF with alternative content based on the framework” set forth in paragraph F.
- H. In December 2023, the Board approved Board Order 23-65 which rescinded items #2 and #3 of Board Order 21-60 and directed staff to revise the NFP consistent with Minn. Stat. §114D.47.
- I. Minn. Stat. §103C.405 directs the board to prepare a program plan to accomplish its duties and review and revise the plan at intervals it deems appropriate.
- J. In 2015, the Board approved a transition plan for watershed-based planning and implementation according to Minn. Stat. §103B.801 and all watershed planning boundaries identified in the plan are now participating in the One Watershed, One Plan program.
- K. The Water Management and Strategic Planning Committee meet on April 7<sup>th</sup> and recommended the 2025 NFPF to the full board for approval.

**ORDER**

The Board hereby:

1. Approves the 2025 NFPF.
2. Replaces the program plan developed under 103C.405 with the 2025 NFPF and Comprehensive Watershed Management Plans developed under 103B.801.

Dated at St. Paul, Minnesota, this April 23, 2025.

**MINNESOTA BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES**

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

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

# 2025 Nonpoint Priority Funding Plan

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{DRAFT, April 23, 2025}

**Developed in collaboration with**  
Minnesota Department of Agriculture  
Minnesota Department of Health  
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources  
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency  
Metropolitan Council

## NPFP One Page Summary

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The 2025 Nonpoint Priority Funding Plan (NPFP) represents a shared vision for Minnesota state agency use of **Clean Water Funds** for nonpoint source implementation, consistent with the **Clean Water Legacy Act** (CWLA; M.S. 114D) and the Soil and Water Conservation District Law (M.S. §103C.405).

### High-Level Priorities

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- Protect **vulnerable drinking water** sources.
- Protect and restore 1) waters closest to the **impairment threshold**; 2) waters with declining water quality **trends**; 3) waters with **highest sensitivity** to nutrient loading; and 4) high-quality waters at **greatest risk** based on watershed and near-shore land use.
- Protect and restore water resources that have **cultural or community significance**.
- Respond to climate change and intensive land uses and **enhance** ecosystem functions as described in state plans and frameworks.

### Strategies to Optimize Outcomes

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- Continue the Commitment
- Increase the Momentum
- Support the Partnerships
- Build and Support Local Capacity
- Leverage Non-State Funding
- Apply the Science
- Use Funds Wisely and Equitably
- Measure Results at the Watershed Scale
- Celebrate Success
- Support Sustainable Land Use for Healthy Watersheds and Aquifers
- Manage Urban Stormwater Carefully
- Integrate Hydrologic Management into Watershed Plans
- Emphasize Adaptive Management

### A Vision for Progress

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- Plan for a Changing Climate
- Implement for Resilience
- Lead in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Engage Multiple Ways of Knowing
- Foster Environmental Justice
- Be Agile and Flexible
- Address Critical Data Gaps
- Improve Data Organization and Delivery
- Clarify Outcomes and Communicate Impacts

## Scope, Purpose, and Use

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The 2025 Nonpoint Priority Funding Plan (NPPF) represents a shared vision for Minnesota state agency use of Clean Water Funds for nonpoint source implementation, consistent with the Clean Water Legacy Act (CWLA; M.S. 114D) and the Soil and Water Conservation District Law (M.S. §103C.405)

**Scope.** The 2025 NPPF\* refers to nonpoint source implementation and the resources (information, assistance, funding) that support implementation. The NPPF guides work supported by Minnesota's Clean Water Fund. The agencies that receive clean water funds and commit to the use of this plan are: The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR), Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA), Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), and Met Council (collectively, "Minnesota water agencies").

**Purpose.** With the NPPF, Minnesota water agencies:

- **Articulate clear priorities** for use of Clean Water Funds.
- **Maintain a commitment** to optimize implementation at the major watershed (hydrologic unit code 8) scale.
- **Signal a vision** for a resilient future, with a continuous improvement mindset.

**Use.** Agencies can use this plan to guide interagency coordination and alignment, develop new programs, and improve existing programs. Implementing partners (local and tribal governments,

NGOs, and others) can use this plan to understand and align with the state's priorities and future vision.

### Agency Use.

Agencies will select from the following options as appropriate to ensure the NPPF guides the use of Clean Water Funds:

- **CWF Expenditures.** Consistent with Minnesota Statutes §114D.5, 3a(b), a, agencies will use the NPPF to target their Clean Water Fund implementation expenditures according to the NPPF priorities.
- **Inform Program Requirements.** Agencies will incorporate the principles of the NPPF into their programs as appropriate.
- **Incorporate in Grant Funding Requests and/or Work Plans.** Where applicable, agencies will include a question in grant requests for proposals that asks the applicant how their proposed project addresses the priorities in the NPPF; and/or require grantees to include information in their work plan describing how their proposed activities address the priorities in the NPPF.
- **Tribal Consultation.** Consistent with M.S. §10.65, agencies consult with Minnesota Tribal Nations on matters of interest to tribes. The NPPF provides a backdrop for consultations on programming related to agencies' Clean Water Funded implementation work.

*\*See appendix A for a summary of previous versions of the NPPF.*

## Background

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Since the 2014 NPPF<sup>†</sup>, Minnesota has made significant progress in carrying out the Clean Water Legacy Act, which provides a framework for working on a watershed basis:

- **More and better data and information.** Agencies collect and analyze data and compile it into information to guide implementation. Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies (WRAPS) are complete for all major watersheds and WRAPS Updates are underway; Groundwater Restoration and Protection Strategies, along with other watershed-based reports, models, and tools (e.g., Watershed Health Assessment Framework, Evaluation of Hydrologic Change, Landscape Stewardship Plans,) support and inform local choices about where to work.
- **Fewer and better local water plans.**<sup>††</sup> The transition from county-based local planning to multi-jurisdictional comprehensive watershed management plans is nearly complete. These plans are local commitments for prioritized, targeted, and measurable implementation, aligned with state priorities and strategies.
- **More and better partnerships at and among all levels of government.** Agencies work together to ensure programs are coordinated and supportive of local, tribal, and other partners. Local governments have formed beneficial partnerships to cooperate at the major watershed scale.
- **More funding.** Noncompetitive funding to implement watershed plans is a game-changer for local implementation. Together with additional general fund investments (e.g., state support for soil and water conservation districts, big investments in soil health) and large influxes of federal funding, the current keys to successful nonpoint source implementation have less to do with finding money and more to do with using available funds effectively and having knowledgeable local staff to lead the work.

<sup>†</sup>See appendix A for a summary of previous versions of the NPPF.

<sup>††</sup>In this document, “local water plan” refers to any plan developed under Minnesota Statutes §103B, §103C, or §103D.

## High-Level State Priorities

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The 2025 NPPF incorporates and builds on the three high level priorities from the 2014 NPPF\*. The revision acknowledges that more data is available to refine and clarify how water resources can be prioritized, and it recognizes other values for our nonpoint implementation work. The state's high-level priorities are:

- Protect **vulnerable drinking water** sources.
- Protect and restore:
  - 1) waters closest to the **impairment threshold**;
  - 2) waters with **declining** water quality;
  - 3) waters with **highest sensitivity** to nutrient loading; and
  - 4) high-quality waters at **greatest risk** based on watershed and near-shore land use.
- Protect and restore water resources that have **cultural or community significance**.
- Respond to climate change and intensive land uses and **enhance** ecosystem functions as described in state plans and frameworks.

See **Table 1** for more information on each of the High-Level State Priorities.

\* The 2014 NPPF High-Level State Priorities:

- Restore those impaired waters that are closest to meeting state water quality standards.
- Protect those high-quality unimpaired waters at greatest risk of becoming impaired.
- Restore and protect water resources for public use and public health, including drinking water.

Table 1. Supporting Information for the High-Level State Priorities

Protect vulnerable drinking water sources		
Lead	Definition	Supporting Information and Other Factors
MDH	<p><b>Vulnerable sources of drinking water</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ All State approved Wellhead Protection (groundwater) Drinking Water Supply Management Areas (DWSMAs) or portions of DWSMAs designated as high- vulnerable to land use contaminants.</li> <li>■ State approved surface water DWSMAs that encompass an 8-hour Emergency Response Area and a 24-hour Spill Management Area.</li> <li>■ MDH delineated watershed Source Water Assessment areas for the remaining community surface water systems. (This includes existing SWAs or future updated versions by MDH.)</li> <li>■ Vulnerable townships identified by MDA for private well protections.</li> <li>■ MDH does not have regulatory oversight over tribal public water supplies; tribal water supplies may be vulnerable according to the criteria above or other Environmental Protection Agency criteria.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ For public water systems: Source Water Protection Web Map Viewer</li> <li>■ For private wells: Minnesota Well Index (MWI) - MN Dept. of Health</li> <li>■ For groundwater: WHAF GRAPS tools</li> <li>■ Natural susceptibility, sensitivity or vulnerability to nonpoint pollutants is an important factor in prioritizing implementation. For example, some aquifers are more vulnerable than others due to sandy soils, karst topography or aquifer depth. See WHAF GRAPS tools, especially the pollution sensitivity of near-surface materials layer.</li> <li>■ Private wells at higher risk should be prioritized for protection. This includes shallow wells that lack a confining layer and well construction factors such as pre-code wells or wells that are cracked/broken or need repair.</li> </ul>
Protect and restore 1) waters closest to the <b>impairment threshold</b> ; 2) waters with declining water quality and increasing use <b>trends</b> ; 3) waters with <b>highest sensitivity</b> to nutrient loading; and 4) high-quality waters at <b>greatest risk</b> based on watershed and near-shore land use.		
Lead	Definition	Supporting Information and Other Factors
MPCA with DNR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Individual WRAPS reports and WRAPS Update reports contain recommended priorities for protection and restoration.</li> <li>■ <a href="#">MPCA’s Water Quality Assessment Results Data Viewer</a> provides state recommended priorities for lakes (aquatic recreation) and unimpaired streams (aquatic recreation and aquatic life) based on water quality assessment results plus the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Additional information about designated uses and impairments is available in <a href="#">MPCA’s Impaired Waters Assessment Viewer</a></li> <li>■ DNR’s Watershed Health Assessment Framework (WHAF) stream protection layer and WHAF-Lakes Tool (includes cost-benefit analysis)</li> </ul>

	<p>following resource-specific factors relevant to the four sub-items in this priority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Lists of “nearly” and “barely” impaired lakes and streams (#1)</li> <li>● Water clarity trends (#2)</li> <li>● Lakes of phosphorus sensitivity (#3)</li> <li>● Watershed land disturbance (lakes and streams) and risk posed from near shore areas and existing protection (streams) (#4)</li> <li>● Waters that meet the standard but have a higher potential to become impaired, based on confidence intervals, trends, watershed use, individual parameter results, biological indicator scores, and/or a combination of multiple factors. (#1, #2, #3, #4)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Proximity to the impairment threshold (“nearly impaired” or “barely impaired”) is an important consideration for prioritizing implementation efforts to accelerate progress toward reducing the number of impaired waters and to maximize return on investment.</li> <li>■ Risk of future impairment is an important consideration for minimizing costs to restore degraded or impaired waters.</li> <li>■ Local values can act as a “filter” for additional prioritization.</li> </ul>
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**Protect and restore water resources that have community or cultural significance**

<b>Lead</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Supporting Information and Other Factors</b>
	<p>Waters identified in local water plans as priorities.</p>	<p>In the local planning process, priority waters are identified using the best available science (see the above section in this table) together with local importance informed by recreational, economic, or aesthetic values.</p>
	<p>Species and habitats important to Tribal Nations or other communities for economic, cultural, nutritional and ecological benefits*; these may not be reflected in a local water plan.</p> <p>Culturally significant wild rice, aquatic species, and others that support subsistence lifeways.**</p> <p><i>*(Language from Minnesota State Water Plan, EQB)</i>  <i>** (Language from State Climate Action Framework)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Tribal knowledge may be represented in a variety of formats and venues, including consultation and coordination with Tribal natural resource departments and technical staff, oral histories, published papers and reports, white papers, blogs, works of art, historical documents, undergraduate and graduate research reports, and more.*</li> <li>■ Tribal partners are being invited to provide tribal knowledge into WRAPS Update reports and local water planning.</li> </ul>
<p>DNR, MPCA</p>	<p><a href="#">Designated Trout waters</a> <a href="#">Wild rice waters</a></p>	<p><a href="#">National Park Service</a> <a href="#">Wild and Scenic Rivers (MN DNR)</a></p>

	State and Nationally designated parks and waterways <a href="#">Regionally Significant Natural Resource Areas (DNR)</a>	<a href="#">National Water Trails</a>
Respond to climate change and intensive land uses and <b>enhance</b> ecosystem functions as described in state plans and frameworks.		
Lead	Definition	Supporting Information and Other Factors
BWSR, MDA	<p>The resources in this section contain lists of activities which provide multiple benefits that contribute to this priority.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <a href="#">NRCS Conservation Practice Physical Effects</a></li> <li>■ <a href="#">NRCS Climate Smart Mitigation Activities</a></li> <li>■ <a href="#">Groundwater/Drinking Water Protection Practices for Agricultural Lands</a></li> <li>■ <a href="#">Practices that Improve Soil Health (MOSH)</a></li> <li>■ <a href="#">Water Storage: A Planning and Decision Framework</a> {table 3, p 17-19}</li> <li>■ <a href="#">Ag BMP Handbook</a></li> </ul>	<p>The elements of these plans as they relate to nonpoint source pollution describe Minnesota’s approach to this priority.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <a href="#">Minnesota Climate Action Framework</a></li> <li>■ <a href="#">State Soil Health Action Framework (MN)</a></li> <li>■ <a href="#">MN Nutrient Reduction Strategy</a></li> <li>■ <a href="#">State Water Plan (EQB)</a></li> <li>■ <a href="#">Groundwater Protection Rule</a></li> </ul>

### Strategies to Optimize Outcomes

Minnesota has invested heavily in adaptive water management at the major watershed scale by:

- providing data, information, and strategies
- supporting the transition from county-based to watershed-based local water planning
- increasing availability of funding to implement local plans

Protecting this investment is critical to optimizing prioritized, targeted, and measurable implementation that achieves water quality outcomes\*. The following strategies support work on the high-level priorities and should be used as funders and agencies consider program direction and budget development:

- **Continue the Commitment.** The value of the watershed transition will have staying power if the state continues to invest in implementing local plans. Based on the idea that they will continue to receive funding for implementing their plans, partnerships are building effective systems for collaboratively working towards plan goals and measuring their progress.
- **Increase the Momentum.** Noncompetitive funding allows partnerships to act quickly and think bigger. This creates a positive feedback loop that builds confidence to do more. Making funding available quickly and streamlining

administrative requirements (while maintaining accountability) will allow implementers to focus on growing their capacity.

- **Support the Partnerships.** Partnerships that cross jurisdictional boundaries have benefits beyond contributing to shared natural resource goals. Partners support one another, share expertise and ideas, and hold one another accountable for doing prioritized, targeted, and measurable work.
- **Build and Support Local Capacity.** Nonpoint implementation relies on local governments and their partners, including non-governmental organizations, tribal nations, businesses, and state and federal agencies. Success depends on capable local government staff to develop, prioritize, and target projects.

Timely investments in local capacity through training and other support for staff and elected and appointed leaders as well as funding for projects are key.

- **Leverage Non-State Funding.\*** Increasing capacity can position implementers to use Clean Water Fund money to leverage other sources of nonpoint implementation funding, such as federal Farm Bill conservation programs.

BWSR Clean Water Fund grant programs for nonpoint implementation will continue to require grantees to demonstrate leveraged investments (e.g., additional grant funds, local funds, landowner contributions, staff time, etc.; see also “Agency Use” section).

- **Apply the Science.** Minnesota has more and better data, models, and tools than ever before, and the body of water resources knowledge continues to grow. MPCA surveys

consistently find that implementing partnerships value when agencies consolidate data into science-based priorities, goals, and strategies for watershed protection and restoration.

WRAPS and WRAPS Updates, GRAPS, landscape stewardship plans, evaluation of hydrologic change, and other agency efforts to synthesize data into useful information to guide implementation are essential elements in building and maintaining prioritized, targeted, and measurable watershed plans.

- **Use Funds Wisely and Equitably.\*** M.S. §114D.50 subd.4 states: “(a)... A project receiving funding from the clean water fund shall include ... an assessment of whether the funding celebrates cultural diversity or reaches diverse communities in Minnesota, including reaching low- and moderate-income households (b) Money from the clean water fund shall be expended to balance the benefits across all regions and residents of the state.” BWSR’s Watershed Based Implementation Program uses a funding formula to ensure equitable distribution of those funds among watersheds with eligible plans.
  - **Cost effectiveness\*:** Applying the available science to decisions about where and how to focus implementation is critical to selecting the most cost-effective alternatives. For example, a new lake prioritization tool (Watershed Health Assessment – for Lakes) incorporates return on investment.
  - **Landowner Financial Need\*:** Use of environmental justice tools can help agencies and implementers direct programs to ensure funding is distributed equitably, with an emphasis on historically underserved communities.

- **Measure Results at the Watershed Scale.** Because watershed plans, which are designed to produce measurable results, have unique structures and goals, measuring results is best achieved at the watershed scale.
- **Celebrate Success.** Minnesotans value water. Continued support for the Clean Water Fund will only be possible if the public sees the Clean Water Fund at work through stories, videos, field days, awards, and other means. Sharing success stories both with the public and with fellow implementers creates a positive feedback loop that motivates and inspires more action and spreads creativity and innovation.
- **Support Sustainable Land Use for Healthy Watersheds and Aquifers.** Achieving clean water goals can't happen without attention to land use, including:
  - large-scale changes to cropping systems to achieve dramatic increases in adoption of soil health practices and increase strategically placed water storage
  - urban stormwater management that reduces, captures and treats contaminants close to the source without polluting aquifers
  - managing forested land to retain water quality benefits
  - ensuring other land disturbing activities like mining employ best practices for clean water.
- **Integrate Hydrologic Management into Watershed Plans.** Increased runoff volumes and rates due to altered hydrology contribute significantly to water quality problems. Water storage, wetland restoration, practices that increase infiltration, and drainage water management are important strategies restoring a watershed's ecological functions. Minnesota has made significant advances in spatial models and tools to identify and prioritize water storage areas.
- **Emphasize Adaptive Management.** Periodic evaluation of plan progress and adaptation to incorporate new data and new approaches will help implementers refine their priorities, goals, and cost estimates. Leveraging models and tools will improve prioritization and targeting as well as measuring outcomes.
 

Strong partnerships between implementers and state agencies will ensure a feedback loop to help agencies understand data gaps or other barriers to local implementation where the state can help, and to ensure data and tools are useful and used for prioritized, targeted, and measurable implementation.

*\*Required by the NPPF statute: "The plan must take into account the following factors: water quality outcomes, cost-effectiveness, landowner financial need, and leverage of nonstate funding sources." (See Appendix A)*

## A Vision for Progress

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In addition to optimizing implementation within our current system, Minnesota will commit to improving these systems to continue leading the nation in water management. These aspirational principles will guide the work of agencies and partners into the future.

- **Plan for a Changing Climate.** Ensuring state programs and local plans keep climate change front of mind is critical as extreme weather and seasonal shifts become increasingly important drivers of watershed and ecosystem health.
- **Implement for Resilience.** Selecting implementation practices that will endure a changing climate and that contribute to the overall resilience of the watershed and its ecosystem (e.g., soil health, water storage).
- **Lead in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.** Emphasize importance of expanding program delivery beyond traditional conservation audiences to all communities served by conservation organizations.
- **Engage Multiple Ways of Knowing.** Engage with people from multiple cultures to incorporate ecological knowledge into planning and implementation processes.
- **Foster Environmental Justice.** Understand the impacts of government decisions on populations that have historically not had a voice and suffered disproportionate impacts of prior decisions, and ensure funding is available for conservation work in these communities.
- **Be Agile and Flexible.** Be prepared to anticipate and pivot to water issues that have not had a major focus (e.g., PFAS, microplastics), new opportunities (e.g., large influx of \$ for soil health or climate smart ag) or known issues that get elevated in public discourse (e.g., nitrates in groundwater).
- **Address Critical Data Gaps.** Understand where enhanced data collection efforts will yield the most benefits.
- **Improve Data Organization and Delivery.** Leverage technology to improve how agencies package and deliver data, including leveraging communication expertise to deliver information and recommended strategies so implementers can easily understand and apply the science.
- **Clarify Outcomes and Communicate Impacts.** Leverage technology to develop state-of-the art tracking systems that easily relate implementation actions to local priorities and goals as well as statewide needs. Ensure the most appropriate tools are used to estimate outcomes from implementation, and that the public can easily understand the positive impacts of the Clean Water Fund.

## Appendix A –NPPF Legislation and Plan Version Summary

In 2013, the legislature passed the Clean Water Accountability Act which modified the Clean Water Legacy Act, including a requirement for the Board of Water and Soil Resources to prepare a nonpoint Priority Funding Plan ([M.L. 2013, Chapter 137, Article 2, Section 14](#)):

### **M.S. §114D.50, Subd. 3a. Nonpoint priority funding plan.**

*(a) Beginning July 1, 2014, and every other year thereafter, the Board of Water and Soil Resources shall prepare and post on its website a priority funding plan to prioritize potential nonpoint restoration and protection actions based on available WRAPs, TMDLs, and local water plans. The plan must take into account the following factors: water quality outcomes, cost-effectiveness, landowner financial need, and leverage of nonstate funding sources. The plan shall include an estimated range of costs for the prioritized actions.*

*(b) Consistent with the priorities listed in section 114D.20, state agencies allocating money from the clean water fund for nonpoint restoration and protection strategies shall target the money according to the priorities identified on the nonpoint priority funding plan. The allocation of money from the clean water fund to projects eligible for financial assistance under section 116.182 is not governed by the nonpoint priority funding plan.*

In 2019, a bill known as “Coordinated Watershed Management” allowed BWSR to establish alternative content and timelines for the NPPF ([M.L. 2019, Sp1, Chapter 4, Article 5, Section 20](#)):

### **M.S. §114D.47, Subd. 3a. Nonpoint priority funding plan.**

*Notwithstanding section 114D.50, subdivision 3a, the Board of Water and Soil Resources may, by board order, establish alternative timelines or content for the priority funding plan for nonpoint sources under section 114D.50, subdivision 3a, and may use information from comprehensive watershed management plans or comprehensive local water management plans to estimate or summarize costs.*

Version	Description	Main Elements	Comments	
2014	Original NPPF; a criteria-based approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ High level priorities (3)</li> <li>■ Keys to implementation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Criteria for use of CWF</li> <li>■ Cost estimates</li> </ul>	Included extensive background and context
2016	NPPF required updates	Case studies demonstrating how agencies applied the main elements of the 2014 plan in their programs; Cost estimates updated	Except cost estimates, main elements did not change	
2018				
2025	NPPF Revision; a shared vision for future success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ High level priorities (4; revised)</li> <li>■ Strategies to Optimize Implementation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Guiding Principles: A Vision for Progress</li> </ul>	Cost estimates not included (found in individual CWMPs)

## BOARD MEETING AGENDA ITEM

**AGENDA ITEM TITLE:** Update on BWSR’s Strategic Plan

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**Meeting Date:** April 23, 2025

**Agenda Category:**     Committee Recommendation     New Business     Old Business

**Item Type:**                 Decision                                     Discussion             Information

**Keywords for Electronic Searchability:** Strategic Plan

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**Section/Region:** Organizational Effectiveness

**Contact:** Jenny Gieseke

**Prepared by:** Jenny Gieseke

**Reviewed by:** \_\_\_\_\_ Committee(s) WMSP

**Presented by:** Jenny Gieseke

**Time requested:** 20 minutes

**Audio/Visual Equipment Needed for Agenda Item Presentation**

**Attachments:**     Resolution     Order     Map     Other Supporting Information

**Fiscal/Policy Impact**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None          | <input type="checkbox"/> General Fund Budget          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Amended Policy Requested | <input type="checkbox"/> Capital Budget               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New Policy Requested     | <input type="checkbox"/> Outdoor Heritage Fund Budget |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other:                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Clean Water Fund Budget      |

**ACTION REQUESTED**

Information only

**LINKS TO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

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

In 2024 the BWSR Board approved a new strategic plan for the agency. Jenny Gieseke provided an update to the Water Management and Strategic Planning Committee in March on the status of the plan, and will share that information with the full Board, along with plans for monitoring and evaluation moving forward.

## BWSR Strategic Plan

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### **Goal 1: BWSR's conservation efforts are sufficiently supported**

Strategy 1.1: Ensure broad financial support for locally led conservation efforts

Strategy 1.2: Build local capacity to successfully implement BWSR programs

### **Goal 2: MN decision makers actively support conservation efforts statewide**

Strategy 2.1/1.3: Ensure full support for BWSR programs, services and operations

### **Goal 3: Minnesota's land, water and soil resources are protected and restored**

Strategy 3.1: Increase understanding of conservation benefits

Strategy 3.2: Increase implementation of conservation practices statewide

Strategy 3.3: Strengthen and sustain partnerships

Strategy 3.4: Advance conservation through voluntary and regulatory programs

### **Goal 4: BWSR is recognized as a great place to work**

Strategy 4.1/3.5: Provide a high-performing, rewarding, and inclusive workplace

# 2025-2026 Work Plan

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The following work plan identifies **new** initiatives that will begin between 2025-2026. These projects, along with the many existing initiatives already happening within the agency are part of BWSR's strategic plan for achieving our mission to work with partners to improve and protect Minnesota's land and water resources.

## New Initiatives

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### Goal 1: BWSR's conservation efforts are sufficiently supported

#### Strategy 1.1: Ensure broad financial support for locally led conservation efforts

##### **Action Item: Advocate for funding to cover legislative mandates**

*Project: Seek adequate and consistent funding for the Local Government Road Wetland Replacement Program*

**Intended Outcome:** Adequate funding appropriated in the 2025 legislative session, split between base and the capital budget

**Accountable SMT Member:** Dave Weirens

**Lead staff:** Dave Weirens, Les Lemm, and Dennis Rodacker, John Jaschke, Andrea Fish, Mike Nelson

**Activities:** Work with stakeholder organizations and MnDOT to evaluate status and needs for LGRWRP, develop communications materials and develop legislative strategy

**Timeline:** Work is underway (as of Feb 6, 2025). Coordination of stakeholders is planned for during and after this legislative session.

##### **Action Item: Increase broad financial support for locally led Conservation efforts**

*Project: Develop budget reports for managers and program coordinators*

**Intended Outcome:** Managers and program coordinators will have up to date information and understanding of the budgets for their sections and programs

**Accountable SMT Member:** Amie Wunderlich

**Lead Staff:** Fiscal Staff, Managers, Program Coordinators

**Activities:**

1) Fiscal Staff will draft budget report format and seek feedback from managers

**Timeline:** February 2025-August 2026

##### **Action Item: Seek Federal Funding for Key priorities**

*Project: Develop and implement a procedure for staff pursuing federal funding*

**Intended Outcome:** All federal applications for grants and contribution agreements will have verification that state matching funds are available and designated for use with the project

**Accountable SMT Member:** Amie Wunderlich

**Lead Staff:** Managers, Federal program staff, fiscal staff

**Activities:**

- 1) Develop a draft procedure (fiscal staff)
- 2) Review/provide feedback on draft procedure (Managers, federal program staff)

**Timeline:** February 2025-August 2026

## **Strategy 1.2: Build local Capacity to successfully implement BWSR Programs**

### **Action Item: Provide board training for partners such as SWCDs, WDs etc.**

*Project: Training and certification for Local Board members*

**Intended Outcome:** By 2026 BWSR will pilot a training and certification program for WDs, SWCDs, County Commissioners participating in watershed partnership committees.

**Accountable SMT Member:** Justin Hanson

**Lead Staff:** Don Bajumpaa, Pete Waller, Brett Arne, Matt Fischer, Julie Westerlund, Annie Felix, (Other BC's? Jason Weirnerman), Local Water Round Table

**Activities:**

- 1) Compile existing training information
- 2) Assess curriculum requirements
- 3) Utilize the onboarding and training content that BC's and Julie Westerlund have been developing.
- 4) Develop criteria and content for introducing board members to their powers, authorities and purpose.
- 5) Develop a threshold for verifying completion of # number of courses.
- 6) Make the training consistent and recurring.
- 7) Formally recognize board member development

**Timeline:** Pilot year 2025, Rollout 2026

## **Goal 3: Minnesota's land, water, and soil resources are protected and restored**

### **Strategy 3.1: Increase understanding of conservation benefits**

#### **Action Item: Evaluate performance against strategies and goals**

*Project: Develop program evaluation schedule, templates, and resources for program coordinators*

**Intended outcome:** By the end of 2026, all program coordinators have the resources needed to conduct program evaluations, and are using the evaluation information to ensure program effectiveness

**Lead Staff:** Mandy Duong, small group of program coordinators

**Accountable SMT Member:** Jenny Gieseke

**Activities:** gather examples of program evaluations, get input from program coordinators, develop recommendations/guidance for how and when to conduct program evaluations, develop tools and templates.

**Timeline:** Begin work by August 2025, guidance, tools, templated complete by June 2026

*Project: Design and implement an evaluation of the Buffer program (Draft)*

**Intended outcome:** By the end of 2025, BWSR has a better understanding of how well the Buffer program is meeting the intentions of the Riparian Protection and Water Quality Practices statute 103F.48 and how BWSR can improve its support for, and implementation of statute.

**Lead Staff:** Tom Gile, Travis Germundson

**Accountable SMT Member:** David Weirens

**Activities:** Identify key questions, gather data/feedback, analyze data, develop recommendations, make changes to the program as needed.

**Timeline:** Begin work in May of 2025, complete evaluation by the end of December 2025.

**Action Items: Use data to clearly connect implementation and outcomes, present information in local contexts, use plain language to describe work and results, share metrics publicly, communicate results effectively. Note: this project also supports Strategies 1.1 and 3.4.**

*Project: Telling our conservation story*

**Intended outcome: BWSR program coordinators and staff have access to, and regularly use data, infographics, images and plain language to convey how conservation is improving the land and water resources in Minnesota.**

**Lead staff:** Communications staff, Measures and Outcomes Coordinator, Data Analyst, program coordinators/managers

**Accountable SMT Members:** Tom Gile, Marcey Westrick, Mike Nelson

#### **Activities**

- 1) Create a form that every program needs to fill out that identifies key audiences (who) and the what, why, when and how of outcomes from the work.
- 2) Do an analysis of all data BWSR currently has or has access to (coordination with other agencies) and identify any gaps.
- 3) Look at what already exists through other agencies and organizations.
- 4) Collect and obtain missing data
- 5) What tools are available to utilize data with emphasis on visualization.
- 6) Message in simple ways (have science in the back pocket only when needed. Should not necessarily be first mode of communication to general audiences)

**Timeline:** 6-12 months (June 2025-June 2026)

### **Strategy 3.3: Strengthen and sustain partnerships**

#### **Action Items: Establish Relationships with Tribal Entities (also support 1.1 and 3.4)**

*Project: Review and identify the appropriate process(es) for Tribal Government engagement at the start of development of new and modified agency initiatives and programs.*

**Intended outcomes:** All staff will understand their roles in relation to BWSR's relationships to Tribal Governments and entities. Staff continually consider if agency matters have effects on Tribal interests, identify the appropriate level of Tribal engagement needed, and communicate this in a timely manner.

**Lead Staff:** Program/Project Coordinator, Staff Workgroup/Team, Manager/Supervisor, Tribal Liaison (as needed)

**Accountable SMT Members: Melissa King & Craig Engwall**

**Activities:** Part 1: Review and identify the appropriate process(es) for Tribal Government engagement at the start of development of new and modified agency initiatives and programs.

1. Coordinate a guiding core staff group to refine processes to identify and review agency programs/initiatives, clarify agency staff roles, and develop timeline and communication to agency staff.
2. Conduct program staff, agency workgroup & team, Tribal engagement training.
3. All coordinating staff/workgroups/teams develop a list of initiatives and programs & their current status.
4. Review each to determine if initiative/program may be of interest or would have substantial direct effects on one or more Tribal Governments.
5. Complete the Tribal Engagement topic/issue identification form. Identify the effected Tribal Nation(s) and the level of Tribal engagement needed and appropriate: information only, Tribal coordination (staff-to-staff), Tribal consultation (leadership-to-leadership). Describe the subject work, action(s) or issue(s) identified for Tribal engagement and the impact/potential impact to the Tribal Nation(s) or citizens of the Tribal Nation(s). Identify any deadlines/proposed timelines.

**Timeline:** May - December 2025

### **Strategy 3.4 Advance conservation through voluntary and regulatory programs**

#### **Action Items: Ensure programs are flexible & adaptable, deliver programs that evolve to meet changing needs**

*Project: Improve internal easement processes*

**Intended Outcome:** Easement programs evolve to meet changing needs

**Lead Staff:** Program Coordinators, Lucy, Karli, Sharon, Pat, Kristina, Craig, Mike, Exec Team

**Accountable SMT Member:** Sharon Doucette

Activities: Review RIM easement program goals and operations to ensure that the program is meeting the needs of landowners and partners and is appropriately positioned to operate effectively and efficiently and provide flexibility for changes in the future.

Timeline: Work began in the fall of 2024 and is expected to be completed and implemented by the end of 2026. Evaluation of impact will happen along the way to determine if changes are needed.

**Action Item: Continue to relate our programs to the Climate Action Framework**

*Project: Develop internal guidance for program coordinators*

**Intended Outcome:** Guidance materials and templates providing program coordinators with tools to evaluate potential connections between BWSR programs and the Climate action framework

**Lead Staff:** Suzanne Rhees, Dan Shaw, Jennifer Hahn and other staff TBD

**Accountable SMT Member:** Dave Weirens

**Actions:** Develop Project plan, organize small work group to develop guidance followed by internal training

**Timeline:** Begin in FY26

**Goal 4: BWSR is recognized as a great place to work**

**Strategy 4.1/3.5: Provide a high-performing, rewarding and inclusive workplace**

**Action Item: Develop and maintain stable operational procedures**

*Project: Create a procedures documentation template*

**Intended Outcome:** By 7/1/2026, all agency programs and projects will have clear procedures that anyone can reference, and plans for annually reviewing and updating procedures.

**Lead Staff:** Andrea Fish

**Accountable SMT Member:** Andrea Fish

**Activities:**

- 1) By 4/1/2025: A first draft of a procedures documentation template will be shared with SMT for April meeting
- 2) May 2025: Necessary review and edits to procedures template
- 3) By 6/1/2025: Final procedures documentation template will be released
- 4) By 6/30/2025: 1. Gather a calendar of programs/projects that annually occur; 2. Gather list of standard (year-round) operations
- 5) 7/1/2025: Assign procedures to designated subject matter expert due by either program/project deadline, or by 6/30/2026

**Timeline:** Completed by July 1, 2026

## **Action Item: Minimize silos**

*Project: Set aside a clear budget for intentional gatherings*

**Intended outcome:** By FY 2027, our agency will show improved employee satisfaction related to intra-agency and team connections, and reduced silos.

**Lead Staff:** Andrea Fish, Jenny Gieseke, fiscal staff, and possibly the Connect Team

**Accountable SMT members:** Andrea Fish & Jenny Gieseke

### **Activities:**

- 1) Develop survey on agency connections and silos in February and March 2025.
- 2) April 2025: Release survey to all staff; survey to determine what is going well in terms of intra-agency connections, how connected people feel to other work areas and sections, where they would like to connect more
- 3) May 2025: Share results with SMT.
- 4) June 2025: results and feedback analysis
- 5) July 2025: Andrea and Jenny to develop next phase of plan (will be new SMART goal developed)

**Timeline:** Feb 2025-June 30, 2026

**Action Items: continuous process to proactively identify and find solution to address agency workload/staffing capacity issues; avoid staff burnout; clarify roles and expectations to meet program needs; find ways for staff to feel like they are appreciated and best utilized in their roles; make time to more proactively think forward and anticipate issues; carve out time to focus on future planning.**

*Project: Improve access to support staff*

### **Intended outcomes:**

- 1) BWSR staff know which OAS staff to work with and can hand off tasks as needed
- 2) BWSR has adequate capacity within support staff positions to assist staff

**Lead Staff:** Justin Hanson, Ed Lenz, Tom Gile, Jenny Gieseke, John Jaschke

**Accountable SMT members: Rita and John**

### **Activities:**

- 1) Continue work to identify how to best distribute existing support staff services and identify where additional support services are needed. Standing item on SMT agenda until this is resolved and acted on.
- 2) Fill open OAS positions and hire additional OAS staff as needed
- 3) Continue evaluate support capacity after changes are made
- 4) Managers will share relevant information from roles and expectations conversations at SMT meetings to help identify capacity issues and find solutions

### **Timeline:**

- 1) Finalize plan for support staff capacity by June 2025
- 2) Continue conversations with staff during regular performance reviews to determine if they are requesting assistance from support staff for pertinent tasks and projects

*Project: Clarification of roles and expectations*

**Intended outcome:** All BWSR Staff, Managers and Supervisors are discussing roles, expectations and workload capacity during annual reviews

**Lead Staff:** Managers and supervisors

**Accountable SMT members:** Rita and John

**Activities:**

- 1) Managers will include conversations with staff about their roles and expectations as part of their regular annual reviews. Include consideration of what tasks could be carried out by support staff.
- 2) Managers will share relevant information at SMT meetings to help identify capacity issues and find solutions

**Timeline:**

- 1) Beginning March 2025, managers and supervisors are including roles and expectations conversations with staff during regular performance reviews

DRAFT

**NEW BUSINESS**

1. Minnesota Drinking Water Action Plan – MN Dept. of Health – ***INFORMATION ITEM***

## BOARD MEETING AGENDA ITEM

**AGENDA ITEM TITLE:** Minnesota Drinking Water Action Plan

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**Meeting Date:** April 23, 2025

**Agenda Category:**     Committee Recommendation     New Business     Old Business

**Item Type:**             Decision                                     Discussion             Information

**Keywords for Electronic Searchability:** Drinking Water Action Plan, Minnesota Department of Health

**Section/Region:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Prepared by:** John Jaschke

**Reviewed by:** John Jaschke                                    Committee(s)

**Presented by:** MN Dept. of Health

**Time requested:** 30 minutes

**Audio/Visual Equipment Needed for Agenda Item Presentation**

**Attachments:**     Resolution     Order     Map     Other Supporting Information

**Fiscal/Policy Impact**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None          | <input type="checkbox"/> General Fund Budget          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Amended Policy Requested | <input type="checkbox"/> Capital Budget               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New Policy Requested     | <input type="checkbox"/> Outdoor Heritage Fund Budget |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other:                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Clean Water Fund Budget      |

**ACTION REQUESTED**

**LINKS TO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

[Minnesota Drinking Water Plan Information](#)

[Future of Drinking Water - MN Dept. of Health](#)

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

The Minnesota Drinking Water Action Plan (the Plan) is a 10-year action plan to ensure that everyone, everywhere in Minnesota has equitable access to safe and sufficient drinking water.

The Plan outlines goals, strategies, actions, and key measures to address drinking water issues that affect all Minnesotans. The Plan also contains summaries of key policies, opportunities, challenges, and threats that shape our drinking water systems in Minnesota.