

**BOARD ORDER****Fiscal Year 2024 and 2025 Habitat Enhancement Landscape Program (HELP)****PURPOSE**

Authorize the Fiscal Year 2024 and 2025 Habitat Enhancement Landscape Program (HELP) Grant Program and delegate awarding mechanisms to staff.

**FINDINGS OF FACT / RECITALS**

- A. The Laws of Minnesota 2023, Chapter 60, Article 1, Section 4, paragraph (J) appropriated \$2,000,000 in Fiscal Year 2024 and \$2,000,000 in Fiscal Year 2025 to the Board for the Habitat Enhancement Landscape Program.
- B. The Laws of Minnesota 2023, Chapter 60, Article 5, Section 8 provides the statutory authority for the Habitat Enhancement Landscape Program (Minn. Stat. 103B.106), includes the purpose of the program to “support declining populations of bees, butterflies, dragonflies, birds, and other wildlife species that are essential for ecosystems and food production across conservation lands, open spaces, and natural areas; and provide additional benefits for water management, carbon sequestration, and landscape and climate resiliency”, and requires that the Board establish criteria for grants or payments, and allows the Board to enter into agreements with “Federal, State, and local agencies; Tribal Nations; nonprofit organizations; and contractors to implement and promote the program”.
- C. The Board has authorities under Minnesota Statutes §103B.101 to award grants and contracts to accomplish water and related land resources management.
- D. The Grants Program and Policy Committee, at their February 28, 2024 meeting, reviewed the proposed Habitat Enhancement Landscape Program scoring criteria and recommended approval to the Board.

**ORDER**

The Board hereby directs and authorizes staff to:

1. Issue Request for Proposals for the Habitat Enhancement Landscape Program consistent with the attached scoring and ranking criteria and statutory program and related appropriation provisions.
2. Approve Habitat Enhancement Landscape Program awards based on responses to the RFP and funds available.

3. Enter into agreements to implement the program as provided for in Minn. Stat. 103B.106 and other related statutory provisions.
4. Regularly report to the Board on the status of Habitat Enhancement Landscape Program awards.

Dated at St. Paul, Minnesota, this March 27, 2024.

**MINNESOTA BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES**



Rich Sve, Vice Chair  
Board of Water and Soil Resources

Date: 3-27-24

Attached: Table 1. Habitat Enhancement Landscape Program Scoring and Ranking Criteria

<b>Table 1: Habitat Enhancement Program Scoring and Ranking Criteria</b>	
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Maximum Points Possible</b>
Value to populations of beneficial insects, bees, butterflies, dragonflies, birds, other wildlife, and at-risk species	30
Connection to habitat corridors/pathways or areas mapped as important for target species	25
Partnerships and collaboration established or strengthened and social equity considerations	10
Sufficient technical capacity of applicant and partners	15
Long-term protection and maintenance/sustainability of projects, including protection from pesticide exposure	10
Anticipated measurable project outcomes will be obtained	10
<b>Total Points Available</b>	<b>100</b>

## BOARD ORDER

### Fiscal Year 2024 and 2025 Pollinator Pathways Grant Program

#### PURPOSE

Authorize the Fiscal Year 2024 and 2025 Pollinator Pathways Grant Program.

#### FINDINGS OF FACT / RECITALS

1. The Laws of Minnesota 2023, Chapter 60, Article 1, Section 4i, \$2,000,000 the first year and \$2,000,000 the second year for the lawns to legumes program under Minnesota Statutes, section 103B.104 and authorized the board to enter into agreements with local governments, Metro Blooms, and other organizations to support this effort.
2. The Board has authorities to implement the program consistent with 103B.101 and 103B.104.
3. The Pollinator Pathways Grant Program is established to provide financial assistance to promote native plantings and the establishment of key corridors for at-risk pollinators such as, but not limited to, the Monarch Butterfly and Rusty Patched Bumble Bee.
4. The program is being rebranded from Demonstration Neighborhood to the Pollinator Pathways Grant Program to better align with other BWSR Living Landscapes Initiatives.
5. The request for proposal criteria provides expectations for applications by eligible local governments and subsequent implementation activities conducted with these funds.
6. The Grants Program and Policy Committee, at their March 18, 2024 meeting, reviewed the proposed Pollinator Pathways Grant Program scoring criteria and recommended approval to the Board.

#### ORDER

The Board hereby authorizes staff to:

1. Issue Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Pollinator Pathways Program consistent with the attached scoring and ranking criteria (Table 1) and statutory program and related appropriations provisions.
2. Approve the Pollinator Pathways Program awards based on responses to the RFP and funds available.
3. Enter into agreements to implement the program as provided for in Minn. Stat. 103B.101, Minn. Stat. 103B.104, and other related statutory provisions.
4. Regularly report to the Board on the status of Pollinator Pathways Program awards.

Dated at St. Paul, Minnesota, this March 27, 2024.



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Rich Sve, Vice Chair  
Board of Water and Soil Resources

Date: 3-27-24

<b>Table 1: Pollinator Pathways Grant Program Scoring and Ranking Criteria</b>	
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Maximum Points</b>
Potential benefits for at-risk pollinators such as but not limited to the Rusty Patch Bumble Bee, Monarch Butterfly, in residential, educational and/or community spaces	25
Connection to habitat corridors/pathways or areas mapped as important for pollinator plantings and benefiting at-risk species	15
Collaborations established or strengthened as part of pollinator pathways and equity considerations	10
Sufficient technical capacity of the applicant and their partners	10
Long-term plans for project maintenance and sustainability, and related topics such as nesting and overwintering habitat for pollinators, and protection from pesticide exposure	10
Potential to incorporate several project types (i.e. native pocket plantings, pollinator meadows, flowering trees and shrubs, pollinator lawns, etc.) into residential, community and/or educational spaces.	10
Anticipated Outcomes and Project Value: The outcomes expected upon completion of the project initiatives are identified, consistent with project goals, and it is clear how these outcomes will be obtained.	20
<b>Total Points Available</b>	<b>100</b>

**BOARD ORDER**

**One Watershed, One Plan Program 2024 Planning Grants: Request for Proposals**

**PURPOSE**

Authorize the 2024 Request for Proposals (RFP).

**FINDINGS OF FACT / RECITALS**

1. Minnesota Statutes §103B.801 establishes the Comprehensive Watershed Management Planning Program, also known as the One Watershed, One Plan Program.
2. The Board has authority under Minnesota Statutes §103B.3369 to award grants to local units of government with jurisdiction in water and related land resources management.
3. The Laws of Minnesota 2021, 1st Special Session, Chapter 1, Article 2, Section 6 (i) and the Laws of Minnesota 2023, Chapter 40, Article 2, Section 6 (i) appropriated funds to the Board for assistance, oversight, and grants to local governments to transition local water management plans to a watershed approach.
4. The One Watershed, One Plan Planning Grant 2024 RFP was reviewed and approved by the Board's Senior Management Team on February 13, 2024 to forward to the Board's Grants Program and Policy Committee for consideration.
5. The Board's Grants Program and Policy Committee reviewed the 2024 One Watershed, One Plan Planning Grant RFP on February 28, 2024 and recommended approval to the Board.

**ORDER**

The Board hereby:

1. Authorizes staff to finalize, distribute, and promote a 2024 RFP for the One Watershed, One Plan Planning Grants.

Dated at St. Paul, Minnesota, this March 27, 2024

**MINNESOTA BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES**

  
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Rich Sve, Vice Chair  
Board of Water and Soil Resources

Date: 3-27-24

Attachments:

- One Watershed, One Plan Planning Grant Policy
- 2024 Planning Grant Request for Proposals

## Grants Policy

# One Watershed, One Plan Planning Grants

From the Board of Water and Soil Resources, State of Minnesota

**Version:** 2.0

**Effective Date:** 12/15/2022

**Approval:** Board Decision #22-54

## Policy Statement

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The purpose of this policy is to provide expectations for One Watershed, One Plan Planning Grants conducted via the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) Clean Water Fund grants to facilitate development and writing of comprehensive watershed management plans consistent with Minnesota Statutes §103B.801 and to facilitate mid-point evaluations and/or amendments of approved plans.

## Reason for this Policy

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The Clean Water Fund was established to implement part of Article XI, Section 15, of the Minnesota Constitution, with the purpose of protecting, enhancing, and restoring water quality in lakes, rivers, and streams and to protect groundwater and drinking water sources from degradation.

BWSR will use grant agreements for assurance of deliverables and compliance with appropriate statutes, rules and established policies. Willful or negligent disregard of relevant statutes, rules and policies may lead to imposition of financial penalties or future sanctions on the grant recipient.

## Requirements

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### 1. Applicant Eligibility Requirements

Eligible applicants include counties, watershed districts, watershed management organizations, and soil and water conservation districts working in partnership within a single One Watershed, One Plan planning boundary, meeting the participation requirements outlined in the *One Watershed, One Plan Operating Procedures*. Application for these funds is considered a joint application between participating local governments and may be submitted by a joint powers organization on behalf of local government members (partners). Formal agreement between the partners, consistent with the *One Watershed, One Plan Operating Procedures* or the *Watershed-Based Implementation Funding Policy* is required prior to execution of a grant agreement.

### 2. Match Requirements

No match will be required of the grantees. Grantees will be required to document local involvement in the plan development, evaluation, or amendment process.

### **3. Eligible Activities**

Eligible activities must be directly for the purposes of providing services to the plan development, evaluation, or amendment effort and may include activities such as: contracts and/or staff reimbursement for plan development, evaluation, or amendment; technical services; preparation of policy committee, advisory committee, or public meeting agendas and notices; taking meeting minutes; facilitating and preparing/planning for facilitation of policy or advisory committee meetings, or public meetings; grant reporting and administration, including fiscal administration; facility rental for public or committee meetings; materials and supplies for facilitating meetings; reasonable food costs (e.g. coffee and cookies) for public meetings; publishing meeting notices; and other activities which directly support or supplement the goals and outcomes expected with development, evaluation, or amendment of a comprehensive watershed management plan.

### **4. Ineligible Expenses**

Ineligible expenses include staff time to participate in committee meetings specifically representing an individual's local government unit; staff time for an individual, regularly scheduled, county water plan task force meeting where One Watershed, One Plan will be discussed as part of the meeting; and stipends for attendance at meetings.

### **5. Grantee Administration of Clean Water Fund Grants**

The grantee for these funds includes the partners identified in the formal agreement establishing the partnership, consistent with the One Watershed, One Plan Operating Procedures or Watershed-Based Implementation Funding Policy. Grant reporting, fiscal management, and administration requirements are the responsibility of the grantee. All grantees must follow the Grants Administration Manual policy and guidance.

- a. Formal agreement between partners is required prior to execution of a grant agreement and must identify the single local government unit which will act as the fiscal agent for the grant and which will act as a grantee authorized representative. Grant reporting, fiscal management, and administration requirements are the responsibility of the grantee.
- b. All grantees are required to report on the outcomes, activities, and accomplishments of Clean Water Fund grants.
- c. Grantees have the responsibility to approve the expenditure of funds within their partnership. The local government unit fiscal agent administering the grant must approve or deny expenditure of funds and the action taken must be documented in the governing body's meeting minutes prior to beginning the funded activity. This responsibility may be designated to a policy committee if specifically identified in the formal agreement establishing the partnership.
- d. BWSR recommends all contracts be reviewed by the grantee's legal counsel. All contracts must be consistent with Minnesota statute and rule.
- e. Grantees are required to document local involvement in the plan development, evaluation, or amendment process in order to demonstrate that the grant is supplementing/enhancing water resource restoration and protection activities.

### **6. BWSR Grant Administration Requirements**

BWSR staff is authorized to develop grant agreements, including requirements and processes for project outcomes reporting, closeouts, and fiscal reconciliations.

In the event there is a violation of the terms of the grant agreement, BWSR will enforce the grant agreement and evaluate appropriate actions, including repayment of grant funds at a rate up to 150% of the grant agreement.

## History

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Version	Description	Date
2.00	Incorporated plan evaluation and amendment	2022
1.00	Reformatted to new template and logo	2018
0.00	New policy for One Watershed, One Plan Program	March 23, 2016



# One Watershed, One Plan Planning Grants

Request for Proposals

March 28, 2024

## Request for Proposals (RFP) General Information

The Clean Water Fund was established to implement part of Article XI, Section 15 of the Minnesota Constitution, with the purpose of protecting, enhancing, and restoring water quality in lakes, rivers, and streams in addition to protecting ground water and drinking water sources from degradation. The appropriation language governing the use of these funds is in Laws of Minnesota 2021, 1<sup>st</sup> Special session, Chapter 1, Article 2, Section 6 (i) and Laws of Minnesota 2023, Chapter 40, Article 2, Section 6 (i). These funds must supplement traditional sources of funding and may not be used as a substitute to fund activities or programs. Final funding decisions will be dependent on the actual funds available. BWSR is currently making approximately \$1,000,000 available. Consistent with the legislative goal of a full transition to watershed planning by 2025, BWSR anticipates this will be the final RFP for One Watershed, One Plan Planning Grants.

## Proposal Guidelines

Proposals must be in PDF format and will be submitted electronically via: [BWSR.Grants@state.mn.us](mailto:BWSR.Grants@state.mn.us).

1. Proposals are subject to a five-page limit, minimum font size 11 pt.
2. Proposals must include a one-page map of the watershed (maps are not included in the page limit) in PDF format. The map may be letter, legal, or ledger size and should identify the planning boundary, the boundaries of the planning partners, and any requested changes to the boundary. The One Watershed, One Plan Suggested Planning Boundaries, including a geodatabase, can be found in the Boundary Framework section of <https://bwsr.state.mn.us/one-watershed-one-plan-policies>
3. Proposals may be submitted by one or more of the eligible local governments on behalf of others in the watershed area. Respondents should demonstrate that a sufficient commitment exists to implement the project through a supporting motion or resolution from the board of each identified participant. A formal agreement between participants establishing a partnership to develop a plan will be required prior to execution of the grant agreement. If participants are unable to establish a formal agreement and work plan within six months of successful grant notification, the grant may be rescinded, and funds redistributed.
4. A cost estimate is a requirement for the project proposal. The final grant amount for successful respondents will be determined upon completion of a grant work plan and detailed budget. No cash match will be required of grant recipients.

## Grant Execution

Successful respondents will be required to complete a planning agreement and submit a detailed budget and work plan prior to execution of the grant agreement. For template agreements, work plans, and budgets, contact [julie.westerlund@state.mn.us](mailto:julie.westerlund@state.mn.us).

Policies for participating in the program as well as additional resources for planning, can be found at: <https://bwsr.state.mn.us/one-watershed-one-plan>. Successful respondents will be subject to the versions the *One Watershed, One Plan Operating Procedures* and the *One Watershed, One Plan - Plan Content Requirements* that are in place when planning grants are approved.

## Project Period

The project period starts when the grant agreement is executed, meaning all required signatures have been obtained. Work that occurs before this date is not eligible for reimbursement with grant funds. All grants must be completed by June 30, 2027.

## Payment Schedule

Grant payments will be distributed in three installments to the designated grantee for the planning region. The first payment of 50% of the grant amount will be paid after work plan approval and execution of the grant agreement, provided the grantee is in compliance with all BWSR website and eLINK reporting requirements for previously awarded BWSR grants. The second payment of 40% of the grant amount will be paid once the grantee has provided BWSR with notification and BWSR has reconciled expenditures of the initial payment. The last 10% will be paid after all final reporting requirements are met, the grantee has provided BWSR with a final financial report, and BWSR has reconciled these expenditures.

## Incomplete Proposals

Proposals that do not comply with all requirements, including incomplete or missing proposal components, may not be considered for funding.

## Clean Water Fund Project Reporting Requirements

1. All grantees are required to report on the outcomes, activities, and accomplishments of Clean Water Fund grants. All BWSR funded projects will be required to develop a work plan, including detail relating to the outcome(s) of the proposed project. All activities will be reported via the eLINK reporting system. Grant funds may be used for local grant management and reporting that are directly related to and necessary for implementing this activity. For more information go to <https://bwsr.state.mn.us/elink>.
2. BWSR Clean Water Funds will be administered via a standard grant agreement. BWSR will use grant agreements as contracts for assurance of deliverables and compliance with appropriate statutes, rules and established policies. Willful or negligent disregard of relevant statutes, rules and policies may lead to imposition of financial penalties on the grant recipient.
3. When practicable, grantees shall prominently display on their website the legacy logo. Grant recipients must display on their website either a link to their project from the Legislative Coordinating Commission Legacy Site (<http://legacy.leg.mn>) or a clean water project summary that includes a description of the grant activities, including expenditure of grant funds and measurable outcomes ([www.bwsr.state.mn.us/cleanwaterfund/stories/](http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/cleanwaterfund/stories/))

4. When practicable, grantees must display the legacy logo on printed and other materials funded with money from the Clean Water Fund. The logo and specifications can be found at <http://www.legacy.leg.mn/legacy-logo>
5. Grantees may be required to document local involvement in the plan development process to demonstrate that the grant is supplementing/enhancing water resource restoration and protection activities and not supplanting traditional sources of funding.

## Grants and Public Information

Under Minnesota Statute 13.599, responses to an RFP are nonpublic until the proposal deadline is reached. At that time, the name and address of the grantee, and the amount requested becomes public. All other data is nonpublic until the negotiation of the grant agreement with the selected grantee is completed. After the evaluation process is completed, all data (except trade secret data) becomes public. Data created during the evaluation process is nonpublic until the negotiation of the grant agreement with the selected grantee(s) is completed.

## Conflict of Interest

State Grant Policy 08-01, (see <https://mn.gov/admin/government/grants/policies-statutes-forms/>) Conflict of Interest for State Grant-Making also applies to BWSR grantees. Grantees' conflicts of interest are generally considered organizational conflicts of interest. Organizational conflicts of interest occur with any of the following scenarios:

1. A grantee is unable or potentially unable to render impartial assistance or advice due to competing duties or loyalties.
2. A grantee's objectivity in carrying out the grant is or might be otherwise impaired due to competing duties or loyalties.
3. A grantee or potential grantee has an unfair competitive advantage through being furnished unauthorized proprietary information or source selection information that is not available to all competitors.

## Submittal

All responses must be electronically delivered to: [BWSR.Grants@state.mn.us](mailto:BWSR.Grants@state.mn.us) and must be received no later than 4:30 p.m. June 14, 2024. Late responses will not be considered. The burden of proving timely receipt is on the respondent.

## Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan Development Proposals

To propose a watershed area, describe the qualifications of interested respondents. Responses should address the items in selection criteria #1 (see below).

1. Provide a general watershed map of the proposed planning boundary (map may be separate from the written information). If the proposed planning boundary deviates from the [1W1P Suggested Planning Boundaries](#), provide a brief narrative of the reasons for the deviation, and whether all partners and affected or potentially affected partners in adjacent planning boundaries concur with the revised planning boundary.
2. Provide the name for your watershed planning boundary. Each planning partnership determines the name for the planning boundary (prior to participation in the program, boundaries are only numbered).

3. In consideration of the local government units (LGUs) within the boundary, provide a table with a list of all counties, soils and water conservation districts, watershed districts, and watershed management organizations, and the percentage of the jurisdictional land area of each local government within the boundary. The table must include:
  - a. Whether each LGU is a required participant (see section II of the *One Watershed, One Plan Operating Procedures*)
  - b. Indication of interest of each LGU (e.g. verbal, letter, resolution, etc.) or why a given LGU is not interested
  - c. Name and contact information for the primary staff contact(s) for each LGU

Proposals may also list potential or confirmed optional participants as described in the *One Watershed, One Plan Operating Procedures*. For a list of required participants and land percentages for planning boundaries shown on the *1W1P Suggested Planning Boundaries*, contact [julie.westerlund@state.mn.us](mailto:julie.westerlund@state.mn.us).

4. Describe technical information data sources for surface water, groundwater, and land management (plans, TMDLs, models, targeting tools, WRAPS, landscape stewardship plans, etc.) that will help inform the development of the comprehensive watershed management plan.
5. Describe the capability (experience with plan development, project and consultant management, facilitation, etc.) and availability (ability to commit time to the effort) of staff and local officials to participate in plan development.
6. Describe how the planning partnership will leverage each partner's watershed management capacities and strengths (e.g. current water programs, areas of expertise), and how completing the plan will result in better resource outcomes and collaborative implementation approaches, shared services, and acquiring non-local funds for implementation.
7. Describe discussions among the partners within the boundary regarding the plan development process (the minimum requirement is that initial discussions have taken place, not that decisions have been made).
  - a. Potential governance structure for the planning effort (e.g., memorandum of agreement/joint powers collaboration or joint powers entity)
  - b. Roles and responsibilities for the planning effort (e.g. administrative lead, fiscal agent, plan writing and facilitation consultants, etc.)
  - c. Cost estimate (the cost estimate must include a 10% contingency amount)

## Selection Criteria

All complete proposals submitted by the deadline will be reviewed by BWSR staff, with assistance from an inter-agency review committee. The successful respondents will be selected by the Board of Water and Soil Resources based on:

1. Responses to questions in this RFP, considered as follows (failure to include information that addresses each of the elements below will be considered an incomplete proposal):
  - a. Inclusion of general watershed map and description of any boundary changes consistent with question 1.
    - Minimum: map (including proposed boundary changes if applicable) included with proposal

- b. Inclusion of a name for the watershed planning boundary consistent with question 2.
- c. Inclusion of a table of local government information consistent with question 3.
  - Minimum: indication of support from required participants
  - Minimum: potential optional participants have been identified and invited
  - Preferred: resolution of support, specific to the proposed planning boundary, signed by required participants
  - Preferred: optional participants have responded to invitation to participate
- d. Pertinence of existing studies, plans, and information consistent with question 4 to the development of the comprehensive watershed management plan.
  - Minimum: the group has discussed and identified existing data, plans, and reports that will be used to develop a prioritized, targeted, and measurable plan
  - Preferred: the group has discussed and identified models and tools that will be used to develop a prioritized, targeted, and measurable plan
- e. Demonstration of the partnership’s readiness and commitment to planning together, based on early discussions of: capability, availability, and commitment to plan together, a shared understanding of one another’s current work and strengths, and a vision for future watershed management that includes better resource outcomes and improved use of existing and future funding, consistent with questions 5 and 6.
  - Minimum: the group (staff) has met to discuss staff capability and availability for planning, information about capacity and strengths present in each partner
  - Preferred: the group (staff and governing bodies) demonstrates that a majority of participants are committed to ongoing collaboration and contributing resources to developing the plan.
  - Highly Preferred: the group (staff and governing bodies) has shared information about one another’s current plan priorities and local programs and has discussed a common vision for the future management of the watershed.
- f. Demonstration of understanding of the scope of work required for development of a comprehensive watershed management plan, consistent with questions 6 and 7.
  - Minimum: group has discussed administrative roles.
  - Preferred: potential policy members have been identified and have met; MOA is drafted.
  - Preferred: group has a clear vision for developing the plan (e.g., relative contributions of partners and/or consultants)
  - Highly preferred: MOA is signed by all participants

2. Recommendation of BWSR staff.

### **BWSR Grant Administration**

BWSR reserves the right to provide funding to any and all proposals based on the number of eligible proposals submitted, anticipated staff time requirements, and the amount of funding available.

### **Timeline**

- March 28, 2024– Proposal period begins
- June 13, 2024 – Proposal deadline at 4:30 PM
- June – August – Proposal review
- August 29, 2024 - BWSR Board approval of planning grant recipients
- March 14, 2025 Work plan submittal deadline
- Plans submitted to BWSR by June 30, 2027

## Questions

For more information concerning the request for proposal, contact BWSR's One Watershed, One Plan Coordinator: Julie Westerlund, [julie.westerlund@state.mn.us](mailto:julie.westerlund@state.mn.us) or 651-600-0694.



## BOARD ORDER

### FY2024-2025 Red River Basin Commission Grant

#### PURPOSE

Provide fiscal year 2024 and 2025 legislatively allocated general funds to the Red River Basin Commission.

#### RECITALS /FINDINGS OF FACT

- A. The Laws of Minnesota 2023, Regular Session, Chapter 60, Article 1, Section 4(e) appropriated \$100,000 the first year and \$100,000 the second year are for a grant to the Red River Basin Commission for water quality and floodplain management, including program administration. This appropriation must be matched by nonstate funds.
- B. The proposed allocations in this order were developed consistent with this appropriation.
- C. The Grants Program and Policy Committee reviewed the order at the January 10, 2024 meeting and recommended approval to the full board.
- D. The Board Executive Director has authority to approve the proposed allocations in this order.

#### ORDER

The Board hereby:

- 1. Approves the allocation of \$100,000 for fiscal year 2024 and \$100,000 for fiscal year 2025 to the Red River Basin Commission for water quality and floodplain management, including administration of programs.

Dated at St. Paul, Minnesota, this March 27, 2024.

Rich Sve, Vice Chair  
Board of Water and Soil Resources

Date: 3-27-24

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

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

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ORDER  
APPROVING  
COMPREHENSIVE  
WATERSHED  
MANAGEMENT PLAN

**Whereas**, the Policy Committee of the Upper Minnesota River Partnership submitted a Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (Plan) to the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (Board) on December 11, 2023 pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103B.101, Subdivision 14 and 103B.801 and Board Resolution #18-14, and;

**Whereas**, the Board has completed its review of the Plan;

**Now Therefore**, the Board hereby makes the following Findings of Fact, Conclusions, and Order:

**FINDINGS OF FACT**

- 1. Partnership Establishment.** The Partnership was established On May 11, 2021 through adoption of a Memorandum of Agreement for the purposes of developing a Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan. The membership of the Partnership includes: Big Stone County, Swift County, Traverse County, Big Stone Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), Swift SWCD, Traverse SWCD, and Upper Minnesota Watershed District.
- 2. Authority to Plan.** Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103B.101, Subdivision 14 allows the Board to adopt resolutions, policies or orders that allow a comprehensive plan, local water management plan, or watershed management plan, developed or amended, approved and adopted, according to Chapter 103B, 103C, or 103D to serve as substitutes for one another or be replaced with a comprehensive watershed management plan. Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103B.801 established the Comprehensive Watershed Management Planning Program; also known as One Watershed, One Plan. And, Board Resolution #18-14 adopted the One Watershed, One Plan Operating Procedures and Plan Content Requirements policies.
- 3. Nature of the Watershed.** The Greater Upper Minnesota River Watershed covers portions of Minnesota (784 square miles), South Dakota (1,346 square miles), and North Dakota (2.5 square miles) with the headwaters for all of the high priority planning regions originating on the north side of the Minnesota River within Minnesota. The plan makes note that prior to European settlement the Upper Minnesota watershed planning area was populated by the Mdewakanton Dakota, Wahpekute, and Yanktonai Dakota (Sioux, Očhéthi Šakówinj) tribes with a landscape consisting of tallgrass prairie, wetlands, floodplain forests and pothole lakes that were left behind after the ice sheets receded. The last glaciation recession created the current landscape of the area as well as the Glacial Lake Agassiz. The present-day Minnesota River Valley and present-day Minnesota River was formed when the Glacial Lake overtopped the moraine dam on its south end flooding and carving out the valley we see today. Current land use is predominantly agriculture lands, with 68% of the planning area being used as cropland which influenced how the plan partners developed measurable goals and associated action items.



4. **Plan Development.** The Plan was developed as a single, concise, and coordinated approach to watershed management for the purpose of guiding watershed managers as they work with landowners and communities to protect and restore the watershed's resources. The Plan consolidates policies, programs, and implementation strategies from existing data, studies, and plans, and incorporates input from multiple planning partners to provide a single plan for management of the watershed. The Plan focuses on prioritized, targeted, and measurable implementation efforts and lays out specific goals and actions to improve excessive surface erosion and sedimentation in surface waters, soil health, changes to drainage patterns including ditching, culverts, and tile, decline in wetland quality and quantity, streambank erosion and drainage system impacts, decreased groundwater recharge and supply, contamination of private wells, flood damages to private and public lands through loss of storage in the watershed.
5. **Plan Review.** On December 11, 2023, the Board received the Plan, a record of the public hearing, and copies of all written comments pertaining to the Plan for final State review pursuant to Board #18-14. State agency representatives attended and provided input at advisory committee meetings during development of the Plan. The following state review comments were received during the comment period.
  - A. Environmental Quality Board indicated Policy indicates that EQB only be notified of the final draft document. EQB did not respond to the submission.
  - B. Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA): During the 60-day comment period MDA requested revisions to the plan and were considered adequately. MDA confirmed receipt of the Plan at the final formal review and stated all MDA comments were considered and addressed in the final draft plan and *recommends approval*.
  - C. Minnesota Department of Health (MDH): MDH confirmed receipt of the Plan at the final formal review and stated all MDH comments were considered and addressed in the final draft plan and *recommends approval*.
  - D. Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR): During the 60-day comment period, DNR provided comments to the Upper MN planning partners. DNR is satisfied with the received responses to issues raised during the review and has no additional comments. DNR confirmed receipt of the Plan at the final formal review and *recommends approval*.
  - E. Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA): During the 60-day comment period MPCA acknowledged that throughout the planning process the partners were responsive to the MPCA's concerns, comments and priorities. MPCA confirmed receipt of the Plan at the final formal review and stated all MPCA comments were considered and the final draft plan is very well written, concise, and thorough. *MPCA recommends approval*.
  - F. Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) regional staff: During the 60-day review period, BWSR provided comments requesting numerous revisions to the Plan to ensure consistency throughout the Plan and that plan content requirements were met. All comments were adequately addressed in the final Plan.

#### 6. Plan Summary and Highlights.

The highlights of the plan include:

- The Plan includes an informative Executive Summary summarizing resource concerns and issues, the method of establishing measurable goals, summarizing pace of progress toward goals attained by the planned activities, and short-term cost of the 10-year implementation schedule.
- The Plan includes a thorough identification of the targeted areas using PTMApp. PTMApp has estimated feasible locations for management practices and structural BMPs, as well as the associated annual costs and anticipated benefits arising from implementation. The result is a list of the best (most cost-effective and most effective toward load reduction goals) practices.
- The Plan identifies four different planning regions which were defined based on land use, hydrology, and geology. The four planning regions are Upper Big Stone Lake, Stony Run, Five-Mile Creek, and the Lower Big Stone Lake watersheds.

- Upper Big Stone Lake and Stony Creek planning regions were designated High Priority planning regions. The High Priority planning regions will be the areas the partners will focus first with the other planning regions are not going to be the focus during the ten-year lifespan of the Plan.
  - The plan development process generated twenty issues, organized in four resource categories (Groundwater, Habitat, Land Stewardship, and Surface Water) using existing reports, plans, studies, data, and stakeholder input. Each issue was assigned as one of four priority levels within each planning region. Three issues were identified as a “high” priority ranking in at least one planning region and will be the focus of initial implementation efforts. Six issues were identified as a “medium-high” priority ranking in at least one planning region and will be the focus of initial implementation efforts, likely with additional funding. Five issues were identified as a “medium” priority ranking in any planning region and will not be assigned prioritization during the Plan but may receive attention if time and funding allows. The remaining six issues were identified as a “low” priority ranking watershed-wide and are not the focus of the Plan.
  - The Plan details seven measurable goals that collectively address the nine high and medium-high priority issues and their associated goal scale. A quick reference guide was developed for each of these priority issues. Each reference guide summarizes the priority issues, multiple benefits for the watershed-wide goals, the planning region and goal scale for each issue, background information about the issue and goal, and the long-term and short-term goals.
  - The Plan recognizes three funding levels for implementation. Level 1 - Current Funding, Level 2 - Current Funding + BWSR’s Watershed Based Implementation Fund (WBIF) grant program, and Level 3 - Partner and Other Funding. Actions pursued under Funding Level 2 are the focus of the Plan and have an estimated annual cost of \$1,009,770.
  - Separate targeted implementation tables were created for each planning region that include actions within the Projects and Practices implementation program. Only priority issues that rank high in the planning region were given planning region specific measurable goals and associated targeted action items. Watershed-wide implementation tables were created for actions related to Capital Improvement Projects, Regulatory, Education and Outreach, and Research and Monitoring.
7. **Planning Boundary Adjustment.** Planning Boundary Adjustment. The Board maintains a suggested planning boundary map for the One Watershed, One Plan program. The Upper Minnesota River watershed partnership proposed a boundary adjustment in the application for funding. The Partnerships provided documentation for local concurrence, rationale, and justification of the adjusted boundary. The adjusted boundary was approved by Board staff per the One Watershed, One Plan Operating Procedures. The adjusted boundary is included as part of the board packet.
8. **Southern Regional Committee.** On February 27, 2024, the **Southern** Regional Committee met to review and discuss the Plan. Those in attendance and remotely participating from the Board’s Committee were Eunice Biel, Jeffrey Berg, Heather Johnson, Steve Robertson, Scott Roemhildt, and Ted Winter. Board staff in attendance were Southern Regional Manager Ed Lenz, Board Conservationist Luke Olson and Doug Goodrich, Clean Water Specialist Mark Hiles, and One Watershed, One Plan Coordinator Julie Westerlund. The representatives from the Partnership were Amber Doschadis and Rachel Olm with Tammy Neubauer and Brett Baldwin of the Big Stone SWCD. Board regional staff provided its recommendation of Plan approval to the Committee. After discussion, the Committee’s decision was to present a recommendation of approval of the Plan to the full Board.
9. This Plan will be in effect for a ten-year period until March 27, 2034.

## CONCLUSIONS

1. All relevant substantive and procedural requirements of law have been fulfilled.
2. The Board has proper jurisdiction in the matter of approving a Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan for the Upper Minnesota pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103B.101, Subd. 14 and 103B.801 and Board Resolution #18-14.
3. The Upper Minnesota River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan attached to this Order states water and water-related problems within the planning area; priority resource issues and possible solutions thereto; goals, objectives, and actions of the Partnership; and an implementation program.
4. The attached Plan is in conformance with the requirements of Minnesota Statutes Section 103B.101, Subd. 14 and 103B.801 and Board Resolution #19-41.
5. The One Watershed, One Plan Suggested Boundary Map is adjusted to exclude portions of planning boundary #16 (part of the Lac qui Parle – Yellow Bank Watershed District as adjusted in the Lac qui Parle-Yellow Bank CWMP AND the portion outside of the Upper Minnesota River Watershed District to be ceded to the Chippewa River planning area) as indicated on the Board adopted Suggested Boundary Map approved by the Board March 24, 2021.
6. The attached plan when adopted through local resolution by the members of the Partnership will serve as a replacement for the comprehensive plan, local water management plan, or watershed management plan, developed or amended, approved and adopted, according to Chapter 103B, 103C, or 103D, but only to the geographic area of the Plan and consistent with the One Watershed, One Plan Suggested Boundary Map.

## ORDER

The Board hereby approves the attached Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan of the Upper Minnesota River, dated March 27, 2024.

Dated at St. Paul, Minnesota, this 27<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2024.

## MINNESOTA BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES



Rich Sve, Vice Chair  
Board of Water and Soil Resources

Date: 3-27-24

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

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

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APPROVING  
COMPREHENSIVE  
WATERSHED  
MANAGEMENT PLAN

**ORDER**

**Whereas**, the Planning Partners of the South Fork Crow River Partnership submitted a Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (Plan) to the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (Board) on January 11, 2024 pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103B.101, Subdivision 14 and 103B.801 and Board Resolution #18-14, and;

**Whereas**, the Board has completed its review of the Plan;

**Now Therefore**, the Board hereby makes the following Findings of Fact, Conclusions, and Order:

**FINDINGS OF FACT**

- Partnership Establishment.** The Partnership was established On July 21, 2021 through adoption of a Memorandum of Agreement for the purposes of developing a Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan. The membership of the Partnership includes: The Counties of Kandiyohi, McLeod, Meeker, Renville, and Wright; the Soil and Water Conservation Districts of Carver, Kandiyohi, McLeod, Meeker, Renville, and Wright; Winsted City and the Buffalo Creek Watershed District.
- Authority to Plan.** Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103B.101, Subdivision 14 allows the Board to adopt resolutions, policies or orders that allow a comprehensive plan, local water management plan, or watershed management plan, developed or amended, approved and adopted, according to Chapter 103B, 103C, or 103D to serve as substitutes for one another or be replaced with a comprehensive watershed management plan. Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103B.801 established the Comprehensive Watershed Management Planning Program; also known as One Watershed, One Plan. And, Board Resolution #18-14 adopted the One Watershed, One Plan Operating Procedures and Plan Content Requirements policies.
- Nature of the Watershed.** The South Fork Crow River Watershed is a predominately agricultural watershed in central Minnesota. The watershed is 72 miles wide when measured between the cities of Independence and Willmar. The watershed is roughly 1,280 square miles and contains 179 lakes greater than 10 acres and over 1,420 perennial river and stream miles. It also crosses eight different county boundaries (Kandiyohi, Renville, Meeker, McLeod, Sibley, Wright, Carver, and Hennepin). The main river is the South Fork Crow River which flows from west to east and connects with the North Fork Crow River just upstream of Rockford, MN, before continuing to the Mississippi River as the Crow River. The present-day Minnesota River Valley and present-day Minnesota River was formed when the Currently the landscape is dominated by row crop agriculture and pasture. These two land use types make up 81% of the watershed area. Altered Hydrology and drainage are an important feature in the watershed. An estimated 67% of streams within the South Fork Crow River Watershed have been altered, meaning they have been ditched or straightened. 12% of streams are natural streams, 3% have been impounded, and another 17% have no definable channel.

4. **Plan Development.** The Plan was developed as a single, concise, and coordinated approach to watershed management for the purpose of guiding watershed managers as they work with landowners and communities to protect and restore the watershed's resources. The Plan consolidates policies, programs, and implementation strategies from existing data, studies, and plans, and incorporates input from multiple planning partners to provide a single plan for management of the watershed. The Plan focuses on prioritized, targeted, and measurable implementation efforts and lays out specific goals and actions to address Drainage Water Management, Loss of Water Storage and Altered Hydrology, Nutrient Loading to Surface Waters, Wind and Water Erosion, Soil Health, Bacteria Loading, Drainage Partnerships, Urban Stormwater Runoff and Development Pressure.
  
5. **Plan Review.** On January 11, 2024, the Board received the Plan, a record of the public hearing, and copies of all written comments pertaining to the Plan for final State review pursuant to Board #18-14. State agency representatives attended and provided input at advisory committee meetings during development of the Plan. The following state review comments were received during the comment period.
  - A. Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA): No comments were received during the formal 60 day review. MDA did not respond to the submission.
  - B. Minnesota Department of Health (MDH): During the 60-day comment period, MDH provided comments to the SFC planning partners. MDH did not respond to the final submission
  - C. Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR): During the 60-day comment period, DNR provided comments to the SFC planning partners. DNR confirmed receipt of the Plan at the final formal review and stated that they were satisfied with the responses to issues raised during our review and would have no additional comments. The DNR recommends that BWSR approve this plan and thanked the partnership for the opportunity to participate in this process. *DNR Recommends approval.*
  - D. Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA): During the 60-day comment period, MPCA provided comments to the SFC planning partners. MPCA confirmed receipt of the Plan at the final formal review and stated all MPCA comments were considered and the final draft plan is very well written, concise, and thorough. *MPCA recommends approval.*
  - E. Minnesota Environmental Quality Board (EQB): Policy indicates that EQB only be notified of the final draft document. EQB responded they had no comments on the plan.
  - F. Met Council: The Met Council confirmed receipt of the Plan at the final formal review and stated it had finished its review of the South Fork Crow One Watershed One Plan and had no comments and thanked partners for giving them the time to review.
  - G. Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) regional staff: During the 60-day review period, BWSR provided comments requesting numerous revisions to the Plan to ensure consistency throughout the Plan and that plan content requirements were met. All comments were adequately addressed in the final Plan.

6. **Plan Summary and Highlights.**

The highlights of the plan include:

- The Plan includes an informative Executive Summary summarizing resource concerns and issues, the method of establishing measurable goals, summarizing pace of progress toward goals attained by the planned activities, and short-term cost of the 10-year implementation schedule.
- The Plan includes a thorough identification of the targeted areas using HSPF SAMS. HSPF SAMS has estimated feasible pollution reductions for management practices and structural BMPs in the watershed, as well as the associated annual costs and anticipated benefits arising from implementation.

- The Plan identifies three different planning regions which were defined based on land use, hydrology, and geology. The three planning regions are Upper South Fork, Lower South Fork, , and the Buffalo Creek watersheds.
  - The plan development process generated the resource categories, concerns, and issues by Planning Region, and described the information and process used to develop watershed resource concerns and issues. Particularly important resources included the WRAPS, WHAF, TMDLs, existing water plans, other management plans, studies and reports, and local expertise. Public input was utilized via invitation to comment, a public kick-off meeting on June 22, 2022, an online survey, and development of an Advisory Committee. Tier 1 and Tier 2 priority issues will be the focus in this 10-year Plan (pgs. 29-32). Tier 1 priorities include Drainage Water Management, Loss of Water Storage and Altered Hydrology, Nutrient Loading to Surface Waters, Wind and Water Erosion, and Soil Health. Tier 2 issues include Bacteria Loading, Drainage Partnerships, Urban Stormwater Runoff and Development Pressure, Protection of Wildlife Habitat and Perennial Ground Cover. Maps are included for resource concerns and issues where Geographic Information System (GIS) data was available. Emerging issues cited in the Plan include: contaminants (pharmaceuticals and personal care products, and PFAS), increased water storage, age and Resiliency of Drainage infrastructure, Chlorides, and Environmental Justice.
  - The Plan details eight measurable goals that collectively address the tier 1 and 2 priority issues and their associated goal. A reference guide was developed for each of these measurable goals. Each reference guide summarizes the priority issues, multiple benefits for the watershed-wide goals, the planning region and goal scale for each issue, background information about the issue and goal, and the long-term and short-term goals.
  - The Plan recognizes three funding levels for implementation. Level 1 - Current Funding, Level 2 - Current Funding + BWSR's Watershed Based Implementation Fund (WBIF) grant program, and Level 3 - Partner and Other Funding. Actions pursued under Funding Level 2 are the focus of the Plan and have an estimated annual cost of \$1,356,300.
  - Separate targeted implementation tables were created for each planning region that include actions within the Projects and Practices implementation program. Only Tier 1 and 2 priority issues in the planning region were given planning region specific measurable goals and associated targeted action items. Watershed-wide implementation tables were created for actions related to education and outreach, Assessments and Data Gaps, and local controls implementation programs.
7. **Planning Boundary Adjustment.** Planning Boundary Adjustment. The Board maintains a suggested planning boundary map for the One Watershed, One Plan program. The plan area also includes a small area (approximately 117 acres) in McLeod County which was previously not covered under a 1W1P or metro watershed management plan. This area was identified during the planning process. While this area is not part of the hydrologic boundary of the watershed, it has been included in the SFCRW under the guidance of BWSR staff. Hydrologically speaking, it is part of the Lower Minnesota River Watershed. The adjusted boundary was approved by Board staff per the One Watershed, One Plan Operating Procedures. The adjusted boundary is included as part of the board packet.
8. **Southern Regional Committee.** On February 27, 2024, the **Southern** Regional Committee met to review and discuss the Plan. Those in attendance from the Board's Committee were Eunice Biel, Jeffrey Berg, Heather Johnson, Kelly Rae Kirkpatrick, Scott Roemhildt, Mark Wettlaufer and Ted Winter. Board staff in attendance were Southern Regional Manager Ed Lenz, Board Conservationist Jeremy Maul, and Clean Water Specialist Mark Hiles. The representatives from the Partnership were Kyle Richter, Margaret Johnson, Coleton Draeger and Ryan Freitag. Board regional staff provided its recommendation of Plan approval to the Committee. After discussion, the Committee's decision was to present a recommendation of approval of the Plan to the full Board.
9. This Plan will be in effect for a ten-year period until March 27, 2034.

## CONCLUSIONS

1. All relevant substantive and procedural requirements of law have been fulfilled.
2. The Board has proper jurisdiction in the matter of approving a Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan for the Upper Minnesota pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103B.101, Subd. 14 and 103B.801 and Board Resolution #18-14.
3. The South Fork Crow River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan attached to this Order states water and water-related problems within the planning area; priority resource issues and possible solutions thereto; goals, objectives, and actions of the Partnership; and an implementation program.
4. The attached Plan is in conformance with the requirements of Minnesota Statutes Section 103B.101, Subd. 14 and 103B.801 and Board Resolution #19-41.
5. The One Watershed, One Plan Suggested Boundary Map is adjusted to include the 117 acre area in Mcleod County that hydrologically is part of the Lower Minnesota River as indicated on the Board adopted Suggested Boundary Map approved by the Board March 24, 2021.
6. The attached plan when adopted through local resolution by the members of the Partnership will serve as a replacement for the comprehensive plan, local water management plan, or watershed management plan, developed or amended, approved and adopted, according to Chapter 103B, 103C, or 103D, but only to the geographic area of the Plan and consistent with the One Watershed, One Plan Suggested Boundary Map.

## ORDER

The Board hereby approves the attached Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan of the South Fork of the Crow River, dated March 27, 2024.

Dated at St. Paul, Minnesota, this 27<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2024.

## MINNESOTA BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES



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Rich Sve, Vice Chair  
Board of Water and Soil Resources

Date: 3-27-24

Board Resolution # 24-15

**BWSR Strategic Plan**

**WHEREAS**, the Board of Water and Soil Resources recognizes the importance of being strategic in our efforts to improve and protect Minnesota's land and water resources; and


**WHEREAS**, the Board of Water and Soil Resources issued a solicitation for the development of an updated Strategic Plan on Jan 23, 2023; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board of Water and Soil Resources entered into a contract with Carroll, Franck & Associates for these services on March 13, 2023; and

**WHEREAS**, the BWSR Board, BWSR staff members and key partners provided input through surveys and meetings during the period of April 1, 2023 through February 29, 2024; and

**WHEREAS**, on March 21, 2024 the Water Management and Strategic Planning Committee reviewed a final draft of the BWSR Strategic Plan Framework, and recommended Board adoption.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT**, the Board of Water and Soil Resources hereby adopts the attached Strategic Plan Framework and directs staff to finalize the Plan and begin implementing the actions included within.



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Rich Sve, Vice Chair  
Board of Water and Soil Resources

Date: 3-27-24

Attachment



# BWSR 2024 Strategic Plan Framework

