

Clean Water Council Meeting Agenda
Monday, February 23, 2026
9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

IN PERSON at MPCA offices in St. Paul with Webex Available (Hybrid Meeting)

9:00 Regular Clean Water Council Business

- **(INFORMATION ITEM)** Introductions—please declare any perceived or actual conflict of interest
- **(ACTION ITEM)** Agenda - comments/additions and approve agenda
- **(ACTION ITEM)** Meeting Minutes - comments/additions and approve January minutes
- **(INFORMATION ITEM)** Chair, Committee, and Council Staff update

9:30 Public comment

Any member of the public wishing to address the Council regarding something not on the agenda is invited to do so as a part of this agenda item.

9:45 Committees

Committee rosters will be reviewed. A motion to finalize the rosters is requested.

10:00 (DISCUSSION ITEMS) First round of proposal review for the FY28-29 biennium

- Surface and Drinking Water Protection Restoration (BWSR)
- Accelerated Implementation (BWSR)

10:35 BREAK

10:45 (DISCUSSION ITEMS) Proposals continued

- Conservation Drainage (BWSR)
- Legacy Partners (BWSR)
- Measures, Results, and Accountability (BWSR)
- Enhancing Landowner Adoption of Soil Health Practices (BWSR)
- Southeast Groundwater Protection and Soil Health Initiative (Olmsted County)

12:00 LUNCH

12:30 (DISCUSSION ITEMS) Proposals Continued

- Water Efficiency Grant (Met Council)
- Culvert Replacement Incentive Program (DNR)
- MAWQCP (MDA)
- Conservation Equipment Assistance (MDA)
- AgBMP Loan Program (MDA)

1:35 BREAK

1:45 (DISCUSSION ITEMS) Proposals Continued

- Critical Shoreland Easements (BWSR)
- Wetland Restoration Easements (BWSR)
- Working Lands Floodplain Easements (BWSR)
- Drinking Water Protection (BWSR)

3:00 Adjourn (*Steering Committee meets directly after adjournment*)

Clean Water Council

January 26, 2026, Meeting Summary

Members present: John Barten (Chair), Steve Besser, Eunie Biel, Rich Biske (Vice Chair), Dick Brainerd, Gail Cederberg, Steve Christenson, Tannie Eshenaur, Warren Formo, Brad Gausman, Kelly Gribauval-Hite, Justin Hanson, Holly Hatlewick, Bonnie Keeler, Peter Kjeseth, Annie Knight, Chris Meyer, Fran Miron, Jason Moeckel, Ole Olmanson, Glenn Skuta, and Jessica Wilson.

Members absent: Rep. Steve Jacob, Sen. John Hoffman, Rep. Kristi Pursell, Peter Schwagerl, and Sen. Nathan Wesenberg.

To watch the Webex video recording of this meeting, please go to <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/clean-water-council/meetings>, or contact [Brianna Frisch](#).

Regular Clean Water Council Business

- Moment of silence for Alex Pretti today.
- Introductions
- Motion to approve the January 26th meeting agenda and December 15th meeting summary by Dick Brainerd, seconded by Fran Miron. Motion carries unanimously.
- Chair, Committee, and Council Staff update
 - Chair:
 - DNR Roundtable: Brad Gausman and Jason Moeckel were both speakers. John Barten attended.
 - We talked about having a Clean Water Fund license plate option, when they re-do the catalog to add the Clean Water Funds (CWFs) option to it. Should we attempt it? It is something for the Council to consider.
 - Jason Moeckel, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR): The DNR is currently working on a sticker option to put on the license plate, and it would also provide access to the Minnesota state parks, and additional funding would be supplemental. This could be an option the Council investigates instead of a license plate. Other groups are looking into this as well.
 - Trevor Russel (public comment): I would recommend exploring a “Legacy” endorsement versus individual endorsements for individual legacy funds. To help promote the broader Legacy ‘brand’ because that will be important in advance of about 2034 reauthorization. This approach might serve as an important pillar of the work to enhance public awareness in the run-up to 2034.
 - Policy Committee:
 - Large-volume Water Users policy will be brought forward later in this meeting for review and approval.
 - Rich Biske also attended a meeting on sustainable aviation fuel (SAF). Greater MSP was also present to talk about their plans with the SAF. It was inclusive of a section of environmental groups across Minnesota.
 - Budget and Outcomes Committee (BOC):
 - Dick Brainerd (Vice Chair of BOC): January meeting was held January 9th. They worked on the KPI dashboard. There was also a budget discussion on scenarios moving forward. They decided to wait until the budget forecast comes out in February. The frequency of the KPI dashboard updates were discussed as well.
 - Staff:
 - Many of us are not okay right now, and it is hard to leave what is happening in the world around us at the door, because the truth is it follows us inside. I want to acknowledge the intensity of the situation we are in. It is hard to fully separate it. Thank you for the work you are doing, and we will focus on the topics today. We will continue to carry the work forward as we go.
 - Today is the first day of “[Winter Salt Week](#)”!
 - Jen Kader will likely be participating in a “Freshwater and Climate Conference” at Winona State University. She is submitting a presentation abstract for review. Details on date and time to be provided at a future meeting.

- Teams channel folders are continuing to be updated. It includes useful forms. The expense reimbursement for is getting an update with the new year (mileage rates increased) and will be posted once ready.
- The Watershed Districts seat is still waiting to be appointed by the Governor's Office.

No public comment provided.

Council Leadership and Committee Membership (*Webex 00:48:00*)

Every two years, the Council nominates and elects a Chair and Vice Chair. The Committee Rosters are also reviewed annually.

- Election of Council Chair and Vice Chair:
- Nominations for the Council Chair: John Barten has expressed interest in continuing to serve.
 - Nominate John Barten for Chair by Steve Christenson, seconded by Fran Miron. No other nominations for Council Chair.
 - Motion to approve John Barten as the Council Chair. Motion carries unanimously.
- Nominations for the Vice Chair: Rich Biske has expressed interest in continuing to serve.
 - Nominate Rich Biske as Vice Chair by Dick Brainerd, seconded by Steve Christenson. No other nominations for Council Vice Chair.
 - Motion to approve Rich Biske as the Council Vice Chair. Motion carries unanimously.
- The February Council meeting will finalize the subcommittee meeting rosters. These committees need to be finalized before the budget process. It is being pushed to the next meeting, hoping that the Watershed Districts open seat will be appointed.

Proposal Schedule and Approach (*Webex 00:58:00*)

Based on the proposals submitted, a draft schedule for their presentation has been assembled. This time is to review the schedule and walk through how to review proposals and submit scores and questions. As a reminder, the proposal review schedule is in Teams.

- Proposals have been submitted. Note, two proposals will still arrive from PFA, they needed a little more time to submit due to a staffing issue.
- Three proposals came in from outside of the state agencies.
 - The Red River Watershed Management Board for River Watch. The Legislature usually appoints them funding. In the last budget, the Legislature did not include them. The last budget cycle was the first time the Legislature accepted the Council's recommendations completely, without any changes. So, they will be presenting this item to the Council.
 - Clean Water Joint Power Board has submitted for their community sewer projects. They have submitted to the Council before (usually funded through MPCA).
 - Olmstead County submitted for their soil health initiative. This will be their first time going through the Council's process.
 - There are a few programs that are not coming back.
 - Additionally, about half of the programs are seeking an increase in funding from the last budget cycle (numbers will happen over time).
- There are two options for the presentation order (see meeting packet). There was a request to move WBIF to February. Option A includes WBIF separate from the other grants. Option B includes the grants together. What is the preference?

Discussion:

- Glenn Skuta, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA): Can you share what will happen at the BOC meetings? So, we know how that moves forward. *Answer:* The Teams has the calendar of the proposal process with all the dates and deadlines. It is the same schedule. February full Council meeting has a set of proposals, and then the BOC meeting will review the same set of proposals. In trying to address the questions the Council members may have, there are questions submitted before the presentation so the speakers can make sure to provide the answers in their presentations. The scoring rubric for voting members is also submitted before the presentations, and able to be adjusted two days after the full Council meetings presentations. When the time allotted is up for the presentations, folks can still submit questions afterwards.

The BOC can review the question/answers at the BOC meeting. Numbers will not be set yet but looking at what the Council would like to see in programs moving forward regarding funding (increase, decrease, steady, etc.).

- John Barten: Every Council member will need to do their work ahead of time, to be prepared. Folks, please adhere to the timeline.
- Dick Brainerd: This is a new process. Which option will give us the best opportunity to complete the proposals, in a way to see how the pieces are connected? Additionally, from a standpoint of time, which one gives us the best review? We do not know which questions may come forward, so we need to be mindful of it slowing down the process. *Answer from Jen Kader:* Option A would have 19 programs, and option B would be 21. There is some guesswork in the amount of time needed for presentations. I plan to summarize some of the questions coming in, to narrow down and help presenters provide a focused response. This should help with the time. In my opinion, WBIF alone in February would be good. The new process would be one month in, and Council members will know how to use the new rubric. There are things I like about both options.
- Margart Wagner, MDA: The Agricultural Research and Evaluation Program was not submitted for renewal, which provides another ten minutes for the April meeting (on both options).
- Steve Christenson: Should we take the financial assistance programs, to have fewer in the first month, while the Council members figure out how to process it? *Response:* I think we could lighten it by a few programs. We are trying to honor the water management framework.
- Tannie Eshenaur, Minnesota Department of Health (MDH): Thank you for the work you've done. We submit the proposals on paper. Then, we get questions from the Council and include those answers in the presentations. Then, questions after the Council meeting, but before the BOC meeting, we will have potentially more questions to answer before the BOC meeting. In the past we did follow up questions written to the BOC, and those were a huge effort, and we try to provide thorough responses. We take them seriously. *Answer:* We tried to increase the time available for agencies to get that info in advance. We can do a similar process, to summarize the questions again from Jen Kader, to reduce the number of questions down.
- Tannie Eshenaur, MDH: Items on paper endure. The Council submits the rubric scores. Are Council members adjusting their scores? *Answer:* Yes, the rubric scores will not be public until after the adjustment takes place. Council members submit scores in advance of the full Council meeting, then two days to submit adjusted scores. As a reminder, these points are for the Council's notes and mental processing. It is to help move through the process. Council members can review their notes, to clarify points allocated. The BOC will see how these points come forward and help with the level of priority and funding direction. It is a new process, so we will be watching for any red flags.
- Rich Biske: Have the state agencies had time to digest this timeline? Can we prepare ourselves for many questions, with thoughtful responses? We can perhaps defer the more complicated program questions to build some time – if we need more time to answer these questions.
 - *Response from Glenn Skuta, MPCA:* The draft schedule was sent last month. We will do the best we can.
 - *Rich Biske:* I think we should try to be flexible if there is a program that ends up needed more work; more back-and-forth.
- Holly Hatlewick: I like having the WBIF standing alone in March because it is a big topic to digest. I am concerned about the agility for the questions. However, we need to do our homework at the front end and to be concise with our questions.
- Jen Kader: In both options the PFA programs would require they are able to get their proposal this Thursday. It may be good to just move their date further away, so they have more time to submit. That will provide more time for the start of this new process in February.
- Judy Sventek (Met Council staff): Can you remind me of the timeline the agencies will have to receive the questions? When are presentations due? *Answer:* Council members may provide questions after scoring the proposals. These will be summarized by Jen and sent to the agencies before the upcoming full Council meeting. Agencies should make sure these questions are answered in their presentations. Please provide the presentations to Brianna close of business Friday before the meeting (Monday morning at the latest). The list of questions asked of the agencies will also be provided as a list to the Council members to have during the presentations, as a part of the meeting packet. Jen will also be sending out a generic slide for all presenters to include.

- Council selects option A but will move the two PFA programs to a later date. Jen Kader will review the move, to see if any issues come up.

2026 Clean Water Fund Performance Report, Kim Laing (she/her), Manager, Surface Water Monitoring Section, MPCA (*Webex 01:58:00*)

Staff are working on developing the 2026 Clean Water Fund Performance Report. They will share a high-level look at what they are producing and how it has been updated from previous iterations. Council members are invited to consider how the 2024 Performance Report could be useful during review of budget proposals as they wait for the 2026 release later this spring.

- It is the eighth edition of the Clean Water Fund Performance Report. It will be released in April 2026.
- The goal is to clarify the connections between the Clean Water Fund investments, actions taken, and outcomes achieved in Minnesota’s water resources.
- The performance report provides each measure with an action status, outcome status, and trend status. It tracks 28 investments, action, or outcomes measures. They have reformatted it, to make it easier and digestible. Each measure has a measure narrative to state why it is important, what state agencies are doing and what progress has been made.
- The report includes the dollars appropriated by biennium, as well as dollars appropriated by different categories.
- Regarding partnerships and collaboration, the CWFs have been awarded more than 3,736 grants to protect and restore Minnesota’s water resources. They have issued more than 2,797 loans to prevent nonpoint source water pollution or solve existing water quality problems.
- Highlights of success:
 - Clean Water Funds enabled Martin SWCD to install and incentivize practices to keep nutrients out of the subwatersheds that drain to Fairmont’s drinking water source.
 - Protection:
 - Secured more than 984 easements that will permanently protect approximately 35,235 acres along riparian corridors and within wellhead protection areas, of which 27,409 acres were protected using CWFs.
 - There are 830 out of the approximately 970 community water systems plans developed to protect drinking water sources.
 - In 2023, Minnesota completed a major milestone with the completion of the final Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy (WRAPS). The WRAPS resembles a “to-do list” or blueprint for activities that must happen for waters in a major watershed to meet water quality standards.
 - Reducing pollutants and documenting success:
 - Delisted over 100 lakes and streams from Minnesota’s impaired waters list
 - Upgraded 63 municipal wastewater treatment facilities, which reduced phosphorus discharges by over 324,000 pounds per year via municipal wastewater treatment upgrades.
 - Repaired 1,010 imminent health threat subsurface sewage treatment systems.
 - The CWFs supported pilot projects to two groups of rural counties to offer free private well testing, one for nitrate and one for arsenic, and options for alternative water for income-qualified households. These pilots form the basis for the state’s upcoming response to recent federal requirements to support drinking water needs for private well users with high nitrate levels in southeastern Minnesota.
 - The MDH added pesticide water quality monitoring to approximately 140 additional pesticide compounds in vulnerable groundwater and surface water resources statewide.
 - The Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP) has certified 1,177,437 acres of farmland across more than 1,600 farms.

Discussion:

- Steve Christenson: This looks terrific. What are we doing to prevent fraud? What kind of oversight is in place? Is there information included in the report to address this concern? *Answer:* When it comes to grants, there is a risk assessment process. There is a lot of reporting and documentation. We have mechanisms in place. In addition, at the MPCA and other state agencies, everyone involved with grants is going through a specific training program as well. The way we pass through funding to local units of government, they also have

criteria and oversight. In the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR), there is also a reconciliation, grant specialists review. There are also post evaluations. With MDH, there is an internal moderator, and they go through each appropriation looking at internal controls to look at prevention strategies. For those receiving the grants, the process is onerous. Every single penny needs to be accounted for. The reports are complex and detailed.

- Jen Kader: We can include a page in our Teams file regarding steps that are taken for CWFs to prevent fraud.
- Gail Cederberg: Let's start addressing fraud in the report, so we are laying the foundation now.
- Rich Biske: The Legislative Auditor just did a review of the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Fund (LSOHF). It was a thorough review. It was a clean bill of health.
- The current Performance Report is online. Know that the 2026 version will be out this spring (April). It will be before the Council sets any budget numbers, so you can get a higher-level look. We are talking about it now, so we know it is on its way.

Large Volume Water Users Policy Statement (*Webex 02:50:00*)

The Policy Committee spent several months developing a new policy statement focused on Large Volume Water Users. It is not just data centers; it is large volume water users. This continues to be an evolving and pressing area of concern and we expect that this policy will need to be updated in the future. Stakeholders were active in this process as well. Currently, the Council is invited to engage with the draft statement as it currently stands.

Discussion:

- Steve Christenson: This is focused on new facilities, the sites and design decisions. Should there be anything on operation of existing facilities and permits? *Answer from Jason Moeckel, DNR:* All municipalities that are of a certain large size are required to complete and submit a water supply plan every ten years. Often, looking at things like growth and population. They also provide information on their largest customers (varied by community). Also, there is a priority system for allocation of water (domestic supply being number one, and lawn watering is the lowest). So, cities need to be ready to enact ordinances on lawn watering. Data center is priority five (four is energy production, three is agricultural). We do have large volume water users in the state that have been in the state for quite some time. Looking at the groundwater level data we have on our network, we are doing well. We've been in the wettest thirty years, so we should not be complacent (we do not know how impacting that has been in this area). There is a new interest for large volume water users that are interested in coming to Minnesota. We have strong statutory requirements for sustainability and for not having negative impacts on our appropriation of water. However, there is still a lot of unknown impacts, but we are in a strong spot. Minnesota is viewed as a leader (because of our statutes and what is available to us). We still need to make decisions in real time, with unknowns.
- Steve Christenson: Is this policy fine without saying anything about operations and maintenance of existing facilities? *Answer from Jason Moeckel, DNR:* I need to think about it for a bit.
- Jen Kader: This was a hot topic in the last nine months, because things are moving fast. This is something to continue discussion on moving forward.
- Bonnie Keeler: As a new Council member, where do the policy statements live? Who is the intended audience? How does the public interact with these policy statements? Have there been significant impacts of these policies coming from the Council? *Answer:* There are a few different audiences. The Council, to recognize the value in supporting the DNR groundwater monitoring network, recognizing the investments of the CWFs. Also, what the needs might be in the future. However, outside of the scope of this Council. Then, the audience becomes the state agencies and/or the Legislature. These policy statements help provide additional steps that need to be taken. Examples of the Council's past policies include the buffer rule, lead pipes, well testing on title transfer. They are to help carry the mantle forward.
 - *John Barten:* The first policy statement the Council adopted was the buffer law. The Governor picked it up and it became the Buffer Law. The Council also recommended the MDH do an assessment of lead pipes in Minnesota. The MDH came up with a plan for the state on the issue. There is a chloride program in the MPCA, and there was public interaction involved as well. Public involvement varies, and some policies are more engaged than others.
 - *Jen Kader:* At the end of the last budget cycle, there was a stack of public input letters, and the engagement committee (a temporary subcommittee) provided responses. Anything that had a policy

connection was provided to the Policy Committee, for their next priorities list. There are a lot of different elements interacting. The policies currently live in the Biennial Recommendations Reports. Jen plans to move them to the website, as standalone policy statements. There is also going to be a document tracker (previously used), that will be updated to the status, to post online as well.

- *Bonnie Keeler*: What are the next steps for this policy? Jen Kader: The next biennial recommendations report is due January 2027. The Council has a current policy platform, and this policy statement would be added to it.
- *Bonnie Keeler*: Can we move it out sooner? It seems like it would be timely to be sooner. *Answer*: Yes.
- *Bonnie Keeler*: Because you are addressing multiple audiences, it is unclear who is supposed to do what in each of the statements. It can be strengthened. I see opportunities to make some of these statements clear and can work with the committee on it.
- Jessica Wilson: We should use numbers or letters, instead of bullets, to make referencing simpler.
- Finalize a draft for review and approval at the February meeting.

Public Participation Plan: Check in, 2026 Planning (Webex 03:31:00)

The Council's Public Participation Plan stipulates that we will check in on the plan every January. This is an even-numbered year, which is a budget year.

- Part of the Public Participation Plan is to shift discussions with the public sooner, in multiple ways. Also, to align the questions being asked with the decisions being made. Pull the input in at an early stage. It is reflected in the rubric. It would help influence the budget recommendation process. Public input is welcome during this whole process. However, conversations with Council member constituents are important at critical times too. There is public input scheduled for June. Final decisions for preliminary budget recommendations happen in September or October. The November forecast will come out in December, for adjusting. There is a lot of opportunities for engagement. Open conversations about what Council members are doing to involve the public.

Discussion:

- Jessica Wilson: We talk about how the Council is allocating our funding publicly, it is an important part. The work we have done, especially since our last budget cycle, has positioned us well to have a robust public conversation. We can build on it in the future. Since this plan has been implemented, it is important to have staff at events and conferences. An easy, quick win would be for staff and Council members to have funding to support attending these kinds of events. Additionally, we hear from agency and industry folks, we are searching for the Minnesota voice as well, on where we should be making investments. Hearing from the programs (We Are Water, Legacy Grants Program, etc.) and hearing what Minnesotans are searching for, could be beneficial. Hearing and reacting to comments is part of the plan.
- Glenn Skuta, MPCA: I am looking at the different quarters for this year. In quarter one, the Council is to share priorities with the Interagency Coordination Team (ICT), to start the proposal process. Beyond the Strategic Plan, have we received priorities from the Council? *Answer*: Not beyond the rubric, for what questions were being asked.
- Jen Kader: The webpage will have the calendar posted. The Council's newsletter will also have the schedule provided. So, members of the public can know when programs will be presented, and they can contribute their feedback.
- Rich Biske: Constituent groups can get scheduled in May, starting anytime now. *Answer*: Yes, we can start.

Reminder, the Council will shift the meetings to be 9-3 for the budget recommendations process. Steering Committee meetings will also be sent out to add to calendars.

Motion to adjourn by Dick Brainerd, seconded by Rich Biske. Motion carries.

Adjournment (Webex 03:56:17)

FY28-29 CLEAN WATER FUND PROPOSAL

Program Title:	Surface and Drinking Water Protection Restoration (Projects and Practices)
Program Number (if applicable):	26
Agency/Organization Name:	Board of Water and Soil Resources
Program website:	https://bwsr.state.mn.us/grant-profile-projects-and-practices

Program Contact	
Name	Maggie Karschnia
Email	Maggie.karschnia@state.mn.us
Phone	651-539-2528

Person Filling Out Form	
Name	Marcey Westrick
Email	Marcey.westrick@state.mn.us
Phone	651-284-4153

Eligibility Requirements

Proposers must confirm that their proposal meets basic statutory eligibility. Please check each box that applies to certify the following:

Eligible Use of Funds: Requested funds will be used in accordance with Minnesota law and Clean Water Fund requirements, outlined in full in [Minnesota Statutes 114D.50 Subd. 3](#). This includes confirmation that this funding request supplements rather than supplants previous non-legacy state funding.

Accounting and Reporting Capacity: The proposing organization has experience with or ability to meet accounting and reporting requirements in order ensure appropriate use of funds, as stipulated in [Minnesota Statutes 114.50 Subd. 4](#).

Mandate Alignment (if applicable): This proposal supports or fulfills state or federal mandates (i.e. TMDL, Nonpoint Source Pollution, Nutrient Reduction Strategy, Wild Rice protection, etc.).

If yes, please cite applicable statute or rule: _____

Abstract

Provide a summary (up to 100 words) that clearly states the purpose of the program, its intended water quality impact, and who it serves. The content here will largely be used as a brief summary when looking across programs, so some degree of redundancy is anticipated with other content in the form.

This project-specific competitive grant program provides Clean Water Funds to local governments to support the implementation of high priority surface and groundwater projects derived from state approved, locally adopted water management plans.

Water Quality Impact

Which step of the [Water Management Framework](#) does this program most fit under: *Implementation*

Overall, how will this program protect, enhance, and restore water quality in lakes, rivers, and streams, protect groundwater from degradation, or protect drinking water sources. Please limit your response to 200 words.

This program provides Clean Water Funds to local governments for high-priority projects that align with the Minnesota Watershed Framework's comprehensive, watershed-based approach to water resource management. Local governments use these competitive funds to design and install targeted best management practices, capital improvement projects, and conservation practices that address specific water quality impairments identified in watershed and groundwater restoration and protection strategies and water plans.

These practices protect and restore water quality by:

- *Retaining rainfall and runoff on the land, reducing flood volumes and recharging groundwater*
- *Filtering and reducing sediment, phosphorus, and nitrogen transport to lakes, rivers, and streams*
- *Preventing contamination of drinking water sources and aquifers*
- *Restoring natural hydrology and floodplain areas*

Through a combination of eligibility screening, and an inter-agency scoring and ranking process, each project is considered on its benefits to water quality. Criteria include prioritization in a state approved water plan, targeting, measurable outcomes, project readiness and public benefit.

Measurable Outcomes and Progress

Responses for each bullet (e.g. 1a, 1b, etc.) should be limited to 50-100 words.

1. Expected Outcomes for FY28–29 Request:
 - a. Describe measurable and outcome-based goals for the current funding request.
Based on past funding request, BWSR anticipates that at least 16 projects would be awarded reducing phosphorus, nitrogen and sediment reaching Minnesota Waters. It is anticipated that at least 50% of the projects implemented would be focused on improving drinking water in vulnerable drinking water or source water protection areas.

- b. Describe how outcomes will be tracked, evaluated, and reported.
Grantees will track progress and outcomes through BWSR's reporting system (eLINK). eLINK is used to track grant progress from initial grant award through final closeout including estimated environmental outcomes like number of best management practices installed pollution load reductions and/or number of acres treated. Staff review reports annually to evaluate effectiveness and ensure accountability. Upon grant completion, proposed and reported outcomes are considered during the grantee evaluation and outcomes are communicated to the Office of Grants Management and the Legislative Coordinating Commission.

Environmental outcomes are estimated using tools that have been developed to help support Minnesota's Watershed Management Framework.

- c. (If applicable) For past recipients, describe any planned changes to this program from previous funding cycles, if any.

2. Outcomes from Prior Clean Water Fund Appropriations (if applicable):

- a. How would you characterize progress made to date? As much as is possible, include outcomes achieved as they relate to the program purpose.

This program provides Clean Water Funds to local governments to support the implementation of high priority surface and groundwater projects derived from state approved, locally adopted water management plans. To date, more than 10,000 conservation practices have been installed to reduce erosion and stormwater runoff, and to keep water on the land. These awards include public and private projects and involve Minnesotans who voluntarily engage in these activities. These conservation practices are estimated to reduce 334,349 tons of sediment per year and prevent 306,377 pounds of phosphorus per year from entering Minnesota waters.

- b. How close is the program to reaching its long-term goals?

Over the past 15 years, demand for this program has consistently exceeded available funding by 3 to 4 times. Projects are delivering measurable improvements in surface water, groundwater, and drinking water protection. While significant progress has been made toward the long-term goal of achieving cleaner water, substantial funding needs remain for projects throughout the state. Although work remains to fully address water impairments and protection needs, the Project and Practices program has established a strong foundation that aligns with the CWC Strategic Plan, state approved water plans and emphasizes outcome-based goals.

Alignment with Clean Water Council Strategic Plan

For each relevant goal or strategy in the Clean Water Council's Strategic Plan, list the applicable item and briefly explain (50-100 words) how this proposal helps fulfill that objective.

Goal: Protect groundwater from degradation and support effective measures to restore degraded groundwater. Strategy: Develop and carry out strategies that will protect and restore groundwater statewide.

Funding supports investment in land treatment projects and practices that protect or improve drinking water sources such as within Minnesota Department of Health Drinking Water Supply Management Area (DWSMA), a Level 1 or Level 2 area identified by the Groundwater Protection Rule and/or township with high nitrate levels through the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) Township Testing Program, or well sealing located in a low sensitivity/vulnerability area.

Projects are supported by local water plans such as wellhead protection plans, protection plans for surface water intakes, groundwater restoration and protection strategies (GRAPS), or local water management plans.

Goal: Public Water Systems-. Strategy: Support the Ground Water Protection Rule (GPR). Strategy: Support prevention efforts to protect groundwater in DWSMAs. Goal: Private Water Supply Wells

Funding supports investment in land treatment projects and practices that protect or improve drinking water sources within Minnesota Department of Health Drinking Water Supply Management Area (DWSMA), a Level 1 or Level 2 area identified by the Groundwater Protection Rule and/or township with high nitrate levels through the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) Township Testing Program, or well sealing located in a low sensitivity/vulnerability area.

Projects are supported by local water plans such as wellhead protection plans, protection plans for surface water intakes, groundwater restoration and protection strategies (GRAPS), or local water management plans.

Goal: Protect and restore surface waters. Strategy: Support competitive grants for protection and restoration activities.

This program provides Clean Water Funds to local governments for high-priority projects that align with the Minnesota Watershed Framework's comprehensive, watershed-based approach to water resource management. Local governments use these competitive funds to design and install targeted best management practices, capital improvement projects, and conservation practices that address specific water quality impairments identified in watershed and groundwater restoration and protection strategies and water plans.

Additionally, please list any other statewide or federal plan this effort supports.

- *Minnesota Nutrient Reduction Strategy*
- *Minnesota Nonpoint Priority Funding Plan*
- *Minnesota State Water Plan*
- *Minnesota State Drinking Water Action Plan*
- *Minnesota Climate Action Framework*
- *Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies*
- *Groundwater Restoration and Protection Strategies*

Interconnection

Please list other Clean Water Fund-supported programs it informs and/or is informed by. Please briefly describe for each (up to 50 words) how Clean Water Funds add to existing efforts.

Connected CWF-supported programs:

Monitoring, Assessment, and Characterization programs (lake IBI, river and lake monitoring assessment, private well testing, groundwater monitoring and assessment) provides information used in planning, which determines the most important issues and locations for needed projects.

Watershed & Groundwater Restoration/Protection Strategies (GRAPS, WRAPS) provide critical science based information used directly in planning for setting measurable goals and selecting the most effective actions to address priority issues. This information is used in deciding where to spend Projects and Practices Funding.

Research, Evaluation, and Tools support implementation with targeting practice location and estimating outcomes from implemented activities.

Connected non-CWF-supported programs: *319 small watershed program*

Non-CWF Funding

Will this program receive or request other funding from non-CWF sources, or eventually leverage non-CWF sources?

If so, please describe what funds are being leveraged, the anticipated amount, and your degree of certainty that the funding is secure. Feel free to add rows if needed.

Funding Source	Anticipated Amount	Degree of Security (%)
<i>Ex. Private landowner contributions</i>	<i>\$100,000</i>	<i>100%</i>

If additional description or elaboration is needed, please include here. (50 words max)

The project and practices program leverages funds by requiring a 10% match to combine CWF dollars with local and private resources to maximize water quality outcomes. Match may include cash, federal grants, cost-share funds, in-kind services, technical expertise, and landowner contributions.

Long-term funding vision

- If this proposal is funded, should the Clean Water Council expect future (beyond FY28-29) requests to increase, decrease, or stay about the same? (Do not factor inflation into your answer.)
 - Increase
 - Decrease
 - Stay the same
- Do you have an anticipated end date for funding need? If so, when? _____
- Do you intend to continue this program past 2034 in some capacity? Yes No Unsure

Funding Recipients

Please state as a percentage the amount of funding from this request that is anticipated to be pass-through to a non-state agency entity.

90 %

Engagement and Community Value

- How have program beneficiaries been engaged in the development or evolution of this program? Who are the program partners, if any? (150 words)
The program's partners and beneficiaries are local government recipients and the communities and water resources benefiting from funded activities. Feedback from grant recipients and other agency partners is regularly conveyed through BWSR grant managers or directly to program staff for adaptive program management.

Please describe how this program advances environmental justice and promotes equity. (150 words)

BWSR clean water programs employ a holistic and comprehensive watershed planning and implementation approach. BWSR strives to lead in advancing environment justice and promote equity consistent with the agency's strategic plan and the 2025 Nonpoint Priority Funding Plan.

By requiring robust public engagement through planning processes in state approved local water plans, the needs of communities are reflected. Projects funded are prioritized to water resources that have a public benefit and targeted to critical source areas of pollution through the planning process.

- If this has been funded through Clean Water Funds in the past, please share 1-3 recent examples of outreach conducted by this program. Links or attachments are allowable.
 - *BWSR Snapshots 2025: [Todd SWCD](#)*
 - *Conservation Story April 2024: [Nine delistings tied to work backed by Clean Water Funds](#)*
 - *BWSR YouTube Channel: [Bone Lake](#)*

CWF Communication Plan

For both new and returning applicants, please describe (under 100 words) or attach the plan for communicating with the public and pass-through recipients about the Clean Water Fund.

BWSR strategically communicates outcomes from Clean Water Fund (CWF) supported programs and initiatives using news releases, targeted messages, website features, and social media platforms. BWSR uses storytelling to highlight CWF-supported programs and their results. These stories are frequently published by community news outlets, increasing our reach with relevant stories at a targeted, local level. BWSR's CWF grant agreements specify that materials developed by local grantees (e.g., documents, signage) prominently display the CWF logo and credit the fund. This coordinated outreach ensures broad awareness of how CWF investments protect and restore Minnesota's water resources.

PRIOR APPROPRIATIONS	
FY10-11	\$6,000,000
FY12-13	\$29,100,000
FY14-15	\$21,400,000
FY16-17	\$20,400,000
FY18-19	\$19,500,000
FY20-21	\$26,000,000
FY22-23	\$22,300,000
FY24-25	\$17,000,000
FY26-27	\$6,000,000
TOTAL APPROPRIATED TO DATE	\$167,700,000

FY28 Request	FY29 Request	FY28-29 TOTAL REQUEST
Increase	Increase	Increase

[For agency applicants: don't fill out the FY28-29 until you receive agency approval. We will update the form at that time. Until then, please include "New", "Hold steady", "Increase", or "Decrease".]

State Employees

If applicable, indicate the number the full-time state employees supported by the CWF for this program.

FY10-11	3.9
FY12-13	6.5
FY14-15	8.0
FY16-17	7.9
FY18-19	3.7
FY20-21	11.2
FY22-23	9
FY24-25	15
FY26-27	4

Nitrate-reduction work focuses on St. Peter's drinking water supply



YOUR Clean Water Fund AT WORK

Bottom: Thompson, left, and Honetschlager showed one of the farmable water and sediment control basins in Mark and Richard Wettergren's field in St. Peter's Drinking Water Supply Management Area. Part of the Nicollet SWCD's Clean Water Fund-supported nitrate-reduction work with landowners and the city, the basin — one in a series of three in this 112-acre field — will also curb field erosion.

ST. PETER — In a corn field within St. Peter's 4,500-acre Drinking Water Supply Management Area (DWSMA), three water and sediment control basins slow runoff bound for a small pond that feeds the Jordan Aquifer.

The structures are part of the Nicollet Soil & Water Conservation District's (SWCD) nitrate-reduction work with landowners and the city, supported by a Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) competitive Clean Water Fund grant earmarked for drinking water protection.

At 300 feet deep, the Jordan is the shallowest of the three aquifers that supply St. Peter's 12,000-some residents with drinking water. It also contains the highest nitrate levels, exceeding the U.S.



“ I'm not only a businessman trying to make a living, but I'm also concerned about the environment and the water quality for the St. Peter people. ”

— Mark Wettergren,
Nicollet County landowner

Environmental Protection Agency's 10 parts per million (ppm) drinking water standard.

The city blends water from three different aquifers; reverse osmosis reduces nitrate levels to 1 ppm. The [Minnesota Department of Health](#) links

Center: From left: St. Peter Water Foreman Chris Voeltz prepared to lead a tour of the Broadway Water Treatment Facility on May 14 with St. Peter Water Resources Superintendent Curtis Thompson, Nicollet SWCD technician Blake Honetschlager and Nicollet SWCD Manager Kevin Ostermann.

Left and right: Four wells at St. Peter's Broadway Water Treatment Facility site supply groundwater from three aquifers. Pictured are three of the wells, which draw from the Jordan, Tunnel City-Wonewoc and Mount Simon aquifers. Well No. 11, in the foreground, draws from the Jordan Aquifer and is the shallowest at 233 feet. **Photo Credits:** Ann Wessel, BWSR

nitrate to health concerns including blue baby syndrome.

Drawing \$238,480 from the Clean Water Fund grant BWSR awarded to the Nicollet SWCD in 2021, SWCD staff worked with two landowners to install a total of 11 basins that treat about 68 acres. With grant support, those landowners plus four more enrolled 17 fields — just over 890 acres total — into three-year nutrient management plans, which run through 2025.

Sandy, coarse soils within St. Peter's DWSMA mean water infiltrates quickly.

"By trapping the water or slowing the water down farther out ... in the watershed, we're able to increase the travel time for nitrogen to reach our source wells," said Blake Honetschlager, the Nicollet SWCD technician who worked with landowners and city staff. "You have more volume of water so you're not delivering a high concentration of pollutant closest to the well."

The city of St. Peter provided \$63,240 in matching funds.

"Those Clean Water Funds are integral to be able to do these projects. Without them, it's very tough. Especially when we are trying to get money together to do projects outside of city limits, it's hard making that link. Even though work done there directly correlates, it's still outside of our jurisdiction," said Curtis Thompson, St. Peter water resources superintendent.

The grant-backed work aims to reduce nitrates at the source. That, in turn, would



Once the water has been aerated it flows into a 96,000-gallon detention tank. Here, water is filtered through 15-inch layers of anthracite coal, green sand and support gravel to remove iron and manganese. Those minerals were oxidized to form rust particles, which stick to the filtering media.

VIDEO: ["Nicollet SWCD: Focus on Nitrate Reduction"](#)
BLOG: ["Photo Tour: Scenes From St. Peter Broadway Water Treatment Facility"](#)

reduce the city's treatment costs.

"St. Peter is unique because the water that comes down through these ditch systems, it doesn't flow into a river or a lake or another water system. It flows directly in to recharge groundwater," Honetschlager said. "The concentration of nitrogen in that water then goes directly into the Jordan (Aquifer) source well."

The water and sediment control basins slow runoff and allow soil and the nutrients it carries to settle, helping to keep nitrates out of the drinking water supply. The structures benefit farmers by curbing soil erosion.

Nutrient management reduces the potential for nitrates and other pollutants to leach into the groundwater. It also can save farmers money by getting the right amount of nitrogen fertilizer to crops at the right time. Farmers may choose to continue nutrient management on their own.

In late May, the corn was starting to emerge in the 112-acre field on

the northern edge of the DWSMA where Mankato-based Deegan Construction installed the three water and sediment control basins in fall 2023. Mark Wettergren and his brother, Richard, own the land, which they've rented to another Nicollet County producer since Mark retired from his rural mail carrier job and from farming in fall 2023.

"It wasn't a terrible erosion problem. But when (Honetschlager) explained the process and what they were trying to do — and they really weren't going to take any farmland away — that's when Richard and I jumped on board," Wettergren said.

Two of the three earthen berms are farmable. All were designed to temporarily hold back water. Wettergren said precision-farming techniques solved his concerns about maneuvering over and around the berms.

"Any time you can help with that (drinking water protection) I'm all on board for that. If we can help for future generations, that's great," Wettergren said. "It

was nice to see the money available to do that. It just seemed like the right thing to do."

Clean Water Funds plus the city's match covered 100% of landowners' costs to install the structures.

The water and sediment control basins installed on the Wettergrens' land also help to handle the increased volume of water that has accompanied increasingly frequent heavy rains and changes in farming practices.

"We're getting our 100-year floods every 10 years," Thompson said.

The water and sediment control basins installed elsewhere in the DWSMA drain to Nicollet County Ditch 33.

"The runoff coming from the ditch systems is typically higher in concentrations of nitrogen, so the ability to slow that water down prior to getting into that ditch system allows us to get some of that nitrogen to drop out or get into groundwater further away from our source well," Honetschlager said.

Grant-supported work throughout the DWSMA is estimated to reduce sediment by 100 tons a year, nitrogen by 2,500 pounds a year, and phosphorus by 200 pounds a year.

Now, the Nicollet SWCD and nine other partners are writing the Middle Minnesota River-Mankato One Watershed, One Plan, which Honetschlager said will address nitrogen reduction via best management practices.

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

FY28-29 CLEAN WATER FUND PROPOSAL

Program Title:	Accelerated Implementation
Program Number (if applicable):	18
Agency/Organization Name:	Board of Water and Soil Resources
Program website:	https://bwsr.state.mn.us/technical-training-and-certification-program https://bwsr.state.mn.us/elink

Program Contact	
Name	Jenny Gieske, Tom Gile, and Maggie Karschnia
Email	Jenny.gieske@state.mn.us ; Tom.Gile@state.mn.us ; Maggie.Karschnia@state.mn.us
Phone	651-539-2596; 507-696-1974; 651-539-2528

Person Filling Out Form	
Name	Jenny Gieske
Email	Jenny.gieske@state.mn.us
Phone	651-539-2596

Eligibility Requirements

Proposers must confirm that their proposal meets basic statutory eligibility. Please check each box that applies to certify the following:

Eligible Use of Funds: Requested funds will be used in accordance with Minnesota law and Clean Water Fund requirements, outlined in full in [Minnesota Statutes 114D.50 Subd. 3](#). This includes confirmation that this funding request supplements rather than supplants previous non-legacy state funding.

Accounting and Reporting Capacity: The proposing organization has experience with or ability to meet accounting and reporting requirements in order ensure appropriate use of funds, as stipulated in [Minnesota Statutes 114.50 Subd. 4](#).

Mandate Alignment (if applicable): This proposal supports or fulfills state or federal mandates (i.e. TMDL, Nonpoint Source Pollution, Nutrient Reduction Strategy, Wild Rice protection, etc.).

If yes, please cite applicable statute or rule: _____

Abstract

Provide a summary (up to 100 words) that clearly states the purpose of the program, its intended water quality impact, and who it serves. The content here will largely be used as a brief summary when looking across programs, so some degree of redundancy is anticipated with other content in the form.

This program is used to enhance the capacity of local governments to accelerate implementation of projects and activities that supplement or exceed current state standards for protection, enhancement, and restoration of water quality in lakes, rivers, streams, and groundwater. Activities include 1) increasing technical assistance through regional technical service areas (TSAs), 2) technical training and certification, 3) inventories of potential restoration or protection sites, and 4) developing and using analytical targeting tools that fill an identified gap. The proposed appropriation will support critical infrastructure of the agency such as the targeting tool Prioritize, Target, and Measure Application (PTMApp) and eLINK as well as funding to local governments to support staff participation in training and increased capacity to deliver priority water quality projects.

Water Quality Impact

Which step of the [Water Management Framework](#) does this program most fit under: *Implementation*

Overall, how will this program protect, enhance, and restore water quality in lakes, rivers, and streams, protect groundwater from degradation, or protect drinking water sources. Please limit your response to 200 words.

Most of the water management implementation activity is conducted by local governments. It is in the state's interest for local governments to have the technical skill and capacity to develop and implement priority water management projects. This program addresses an existing gap by providing technical assistance and a training delivery program to ensure local government staff have these necessary skills.

Current Clean Water goals are very ambitious. The state will struggle to achieve these goals unless we increase capacity to deliver meaningful and measurable projects implemented by local governments in partnership with private landowners. Ensuring the work of local government has the on-the-ground impact and resulting environmental outputs desired from implementation funds granted to local governments, there is a need for advanced inventories, diagnostic and feasibility studies, and targeting tools to assist in building prioritized, targeted, and measurable strategies into water management or comprehensive plans. This will increase the effectiveness of water quality projects and help make ambitious clean water goals achievable.

Measurable Outcomes and Progress

Responses for each bullet (e.g. 1a, 1b, etc.) should be limited to 50-100 words.

1. Expected Outcomes for FY28–29 Request:
 - a. Describe measurable and outcome-based goals for the current funding request.
 - 1) *Training needs and credentials are documented and tracked*
 - 2) *Opportunities for partners to build skills and obtain credentials are provided*

- b. Describe how outcomes will be tracked, evaluated, and reported.
- *Outcomes will be tracked, evaluated and reported through regular evaluation of the Technical Training and Certification Program. Surveys of partners on the availability, relevance and effectiveness of the trainings will be used to collect data. In addition, certifications and credentials are tracked in databases and will be monitored for increases in credentials for partners.*
 - *TSA outcomes are tracked through the comprehensive water management project strategies. This will be reflected in the Council’s Key Performance Indicator for “Progress made in priority areas” for Watershed based implementation.*
 - *TSA outcomes are collected through eLINK output tracking of projects assisted by the Technical Service Area staff.*
- c. (If applicable) For past recipients, describe any planned changes to this program from previous funding cycles, if any.
2. Outcomes from Prior Clean Water Fund Appropriations (if applicable):
- a. How would you characterize progress made to date? As much as is possible, include outcomes achieved as they relate to the program purpose.
- *Over the past 10 years, the TTCP program has hosted 533 training events. 32,907 people have attended these trainings, with a total of 83,596 hours of training provided.*
 - *The TCP program has also created a series of interactive, on-demand Core Competency training modules made publicly available to anyone, and are being viewed by staff from other agencies, students and conservation professionals in other states. There are three modules dedicated to soil, seven modules on Water Quality, and eight modules on Conservation Planning. To date, 1,302 individuals have set up accounts to access these modules, and there have been 10,726 views.*
 - *PTM App has been enhanced to include a hydrology tool bar to identify and prioritize water storage sites.*
 - *Technical Service Areas provide engineering and technical assistance for 350 projects annually. This includes, streambank restoration, agriculture best management practices, manure management projects to reduce nitrates in groundwater sensitive locations.*
- b. How close is the program to reaching its long-term goals?
- Program activities are implemented through strategic coordination*
- Goal 1 : Training needs and certifications are documented and tracked*
Progress: This is an ongoing effort, we have built and maintain an IDP tool to track training needs and certifications. Continued use and maintenance of this tool is part of the program.
- Goal 2: Provide opportunities for partners to build skills and obtain certifications needed for conservation delivery*

Goal 3: The Technical Service Area Assistance accelerates the planning, design and construction of priority projects identified in the Comprehensive Local Watershed Management Plans. The technical outcomes are not possible without the advanced technical assistance derived from TSA capacity.

Alignment with Clean Water Council Strategic Plan

For each relevant goal or strategy in the Clean Water Council's Strategic Plan, list the applicable item and briefly explain (50-100 words) how this proposal helps fulfill that objective.

Goal: Build capacity of local communities to protect and sustain water resources. Strategy: Maintain and increase capacity of Minnesotans to improve water quality

This program provides technical training and assistance to ensure local governments and other water managers have the skills necessary to carry out programs to meet water quality goals.

Goal: Protect groundwater from degradation and support effective measures to restore degraded groundwater. Strategy: Develop and carry out strategies that will protect and restore groundwater statewide.

The Technical Training and Certification Program offers training for our partners on groundwater protection, ground water recharge, and nutrient management. These trainings ensure local conservation staff understand how to protect and restore groundwater through conservation practices and are able to discuss the benefits with landowners as well as assist landowners in implementing the practices.

Goal: Protect and restore surface waters to achieve 70% swimmable and 67% fishable waters by 2034 by prioritizing and targeting resources by major watershed. Strategy: Prioritize waters for protection and restoration using comprehensive watershed management plans (One Watershed One Plan or other approved plans) updated every ten years.

Local conservation professionals identify key resource needs and priorities using their comprehensive watershed management plan. These resources are considered by partners when they decide what type of training and certification they need to achieve priority goals in their area. This information is used by the Technical Training and Certification Program to determine which trainings are offered, and support is provided to participants to achieve certification for related practices.

Additionally, please list any other statewide or federal plan this effort supports.

Interconnection

Please list other Clean Water Fund-supported programs it informs and/or is informed by. Please briefly describe for each (up to 50 words) how Clean Water Funds add to existing efforts.

Connected CWF-supported programs:

Connected non-CWF-supported programs: *Environmental Quality Incentive Program, Conservation Stewardship Program, Conservation Reserve Program, Regional Conservation Partnership Program*

Non-CWF Funding

Will this program receive or request other funding from non-CWF sources, or eventually leverage non-CWF sources?

If so, please describe what funds are being leveraged, the anticipated amount, and your degree of certainty that the funding is secure. Feel free to add rows if needed.

Funding Source	Anticipated Amount	Degree of Security (%)
<i>NRCS Contribution Agreement</i>	<i>\$2,040,854</i>	<i>100%</i>

If additional description or elaboration is needed, please include here. (50 words max)

Long-term funding vision

- If this proposal is funded, should the Clean Water Council expect future (beyond FY28-29) requests to increase, decrease, or stay about the same? (Do not factor inflation into your answer.)
 - Increase
 - Decrease
 - Stay the same
- Do you have an anticipated end date for funding need? If so, when? _____
- Do you intend to continue this program past 2034 in some capacity? Yes No Unsure

Funding Recipients

Please state as a percentage the amount of funding from this request that is anticipated to be pass-through to a non-state agency.

43 %

Engagement and Community Value

- How have program beneficiaries been engaged in the development or evolution of this program? Who are the program partners, if any? (150 words)
The partners for this program are the Natural Resource Conservation Service, Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and the Minnesota Association of

Conservation District Employees, as well as individual staff at Soil and Water Conservation Districts across the state. These groups have been involved in the creation and growth of the Technical Training and Certification program since 2015. Input from members of these groups is used to identify training needs, measure progress in obtaining certifications, identify barriers to training and certification and improve the efficacy of the program.

- Please describe how this program advances environmental justice and promotes equity. (150 words) *Providing and building the capacity to provide technical assistance helps remove barriers for local government where resources and capabilities vary widely.*
- If this has been funded through Clean Water Funds in the past, please share 1-3 recent examples of outreach conducted by this program. Links or attachments are allowable.
 - <https://bwsr.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/2025-09/snapshots-story-4-october-2025-mnc3.pdf>
 - https://bwsr.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/2025-01/snapshots_story_4_february_2025_ptmapp.pdf
 - https://bwsr.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/2025-08/snapshots_story_1_september_2025_irrigation_mda_nrcs_rcpp.pdf
 - https://bwsr.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/2024-10/snapshots-story-3-november-2024-ttcp_0.pdf

CWF Communication Plan

For both new and returning applicants, please describe (under 100 words) or attach the plan for communicating with the public and pass-through recipients about the Clean Water Fund.

BWSR strategically communicates outcomes from Clean Water Fund (CWF) supported programs and initiatives using news releases, targeted messages, website features, and social media platforms. BWSR uses storytelling to highlight CWF-supported programs and their results. These stories are frequently published by community news outlets, increasing our reach with relevant stories at a targeted, local level. BWSR’s CWF grant agreements specify that materials developed by local grantees (e.g., documents, signage) prominently display the CWF logo and credit the fund. This coordinated outreach ensures broad awareness of how CWF investments protect and restore Minnesota’s water resources.

PRIOR APPROPRIATIONS	
FY10-11	
FY12-13	\$6,600,000
FY14-15	\$8,000,000
FY16-17	\$12,000,000
FY18-19	\$7,600,000
FY20-21	\$8,000,000
FY22-23	\$9,700,000
FY24-25	\$11,000,000
FY26-27	\$8,700,000
TOTAL APPROPRIATED TO DATE	\$71,580,000

FY28 Request	FY29 Request	FY28-29 TOTAL REQUEST
Increase	Increase	Increase

[For agency applicants: don't fill out the FY28-29 until you receive agency approval. We will update the form at that time. Until then, please include "New", "Hold steady", "Increase", or "Decrease".]

State Employees

If applicable, indicate the number the full-time state employees supported by the CWF for this program.

FY10-11	
FY12-13	0.9
FY14-15	2.5
FY16-17	4.6
FY18-19	7.4
FY20-21	7.4
FY22-23	7.4
FY24-25	8.5
FY26-27	9.5

Technical Training and Certification Program

Training Delivery: 2016 - 2025

553

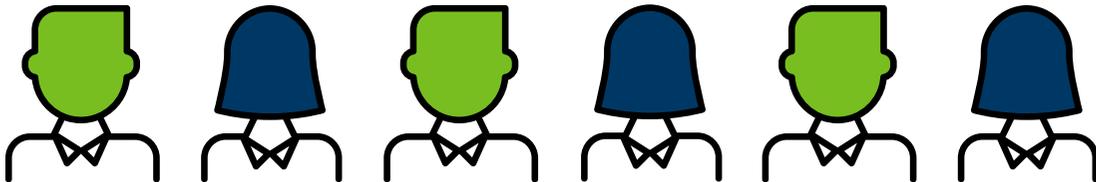
Trainings Provided

83,596

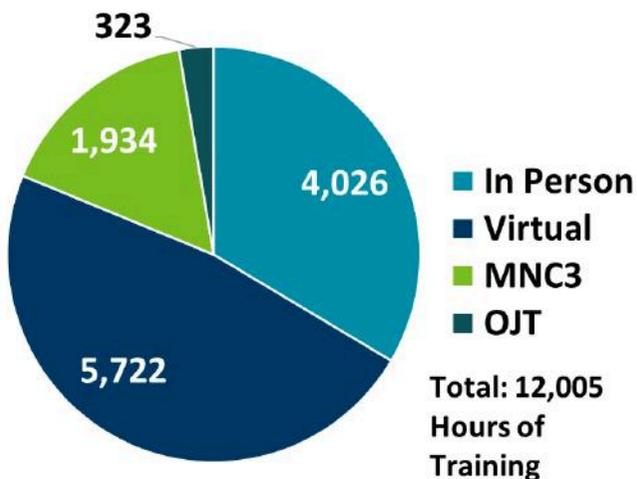
Hours of Training Provided

32,907

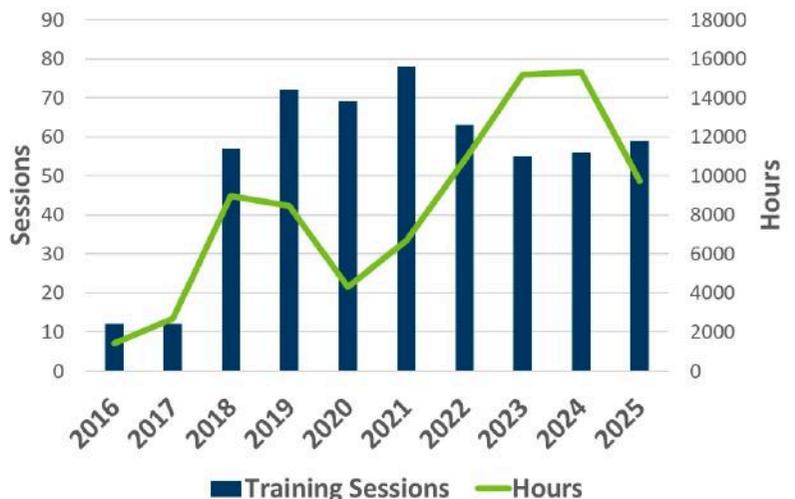
Training Attendees



2025 Training Hours



Training Delivery 2016 - 2025



Increase in TTCP funds supports cohorts, local training delivery

Renewed funding for the Technical Training and Certification Program (TTCP) will help the state-federal partnership deliver conservation training and credentialing to more Minnesota local government staff over the next five years.

In September 2024, the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) and the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) signed a contribution agreement which provides nearly \$9.5 million in funding for the TTCP. Half of this funding comes from the U.S. Farm Bill; half comes from Minnesota's Clean Water Fund.

The TTCP is a partnership among BWSR, NRCS, the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (MASWCD) and the Employees (MACDE). Each year, it offers 55 to 60 formal trainings, which provide between 13,000 and 16,000 total training hours. The TTCP takes information from Individual Development Plans filled out by local government staff to identify and hone area-specific training needs and priorities.

The TTCP also relies on Area Technical Training Teams (ATTTs) to help prioritize and deliver local training. ATTTs are localized partner groups developed to ensure that a wide range of local perspectives and training needs are considered. Team boundaries are based on Minnesota's eight TSA boundaries, and the TTCP provides some funding for priority local trainings.

Another major element of the TTCP includes a series of core competency modules intended for all staff within the partnership to develop a foundation for soil and water conservation and conservation planning in Minnesota. These modules aim to provide consistent baseline training for all Minnesota conservation professionals, and are free to access by anyone with an interest.

The TTCP recently introduced conservation cohorts — groups of experienced trainees who work together on real-world projects to gain confidence in their conservation skills. Cohorts are created based on geographic areas, levels of experience and desired outcomes. BWSR TTCP Coordinator Jon Sellnow said initial feedback on the cohorts has been positive. Participants have shared resources and built connections with others working on similar projects. The new 2024 agreement added two additional trainers to support these cohorts.

“There's a lot of BWSR funding available right now for LGUs (local government units) to do projects and train and hire new staff,” Sellnow said. “It's one thing to throw money at problems, but to make sure that we're using those funds in the best way that we can to correct those problems and find long-term solutions that not only fix the problem, but also work for the landowner.”

Beyond in-person training, the TTCP offers live online learning sessions plus a searchable library of recorded modules, webinars, videos and other resources.



Stephanie McLain, NRCS state soil health specialist, completed a slake test as part of a TTCP-supported conservation planning course in August 2023 at the University of Minnesota's West Central Research & Outreach Center in Morris.



FY28-29 CLEAN WATER FUND PROPOSAL

Program Title:	Conservation Drainage (Multipurpose Drainage Management)
Program Number (if applicable):	19
Agency/Organization Name:	Board of Water and Soil Resources
Program website:	https://bwsr.state.mn.us/node/11046

Program Contact	
Name	Tom Gile
Email	tom.gile@state.mn.us
Phone	507-696-1974

Person Filling Out Form	
Name	Tom Gile
Email	tom.gile@state.mn.us
Phone	507-696-1974

Eligibility Requirements

Proposers must confirm that their proposal meets basic statutory eligibility. Please check each box that applies to certify the following:

Eligible Use of Funds: Requested funds will be used in accordance with Minnesota law and Clean Water Fund requirements, outlined in full in [Minnesota Statutes 114D.50 Subd. 3](#). This includes confirmation that this funding request supplements rather than supplants previous non-legacy state funding.

Accounting and Reporting Capacity: The proposing organization has experience with or ability to meet accounting and reporting requirements in order ensure appropriate use of funds, as stipulated in [Minnesota Statutes 114.50 Subd. 4](#).

Mandate Alignment (if applicable): This proposal supports or fulfills state or federal mandates (i.e. TMDL, Nonpoint Source Pollution, Nutrient Reduction Strategy, Wild Rice protection, etc.).

If yes, please cite applicable statute or rule: _____

Abstract

Provide a summary (up to 100 words) that clearly states the purpose of the program, its intended water quality impact, and who it serves. The content here will largely be used as a brief summary when looking across programs, so some degree of redundancy is anticipated with other content in the form.

This program provides financial and technical assistance to Minnesota's Public Drainage Authorities and Soil and Water Conservation Districts to facilitate planning, design and installation of conservation practices on drainage systems that will result in water quality improvements. These practices promote retention of rainfall and runoff on the land, soil erosion reduction, and water quality improvement in drainage systems and receiving waters while maintaining agricultural production. The program is implemented through partnering with the state's public drainage system authorities, principally counties and watershed districts. The state's investment leverages local investment as the grants require a 10% local match.

Water Quality Impact

Which step of the [Water Management Framework](#) does this program most fit under:

Overall, how will this program protect, enhance, and restore water quality in lakes, rivers, and streams, protect groundwater from degradation, or protect drinking water sources. Please limit your response to 200 words.

Drainage remains very important for agricultural production on much of Minnesota's cropland. However, drainage impacts hydrology, stream stability, water quality and aquatic habitat. Because so much of Minnesota's agricultural land includes drainage systems, multipurpose drainage management is critical for addressing altered hydrology, erosion and sedimentation, water quality, and habitat. Multipurpose Drainage Management is the use of various practices and designs to achieve multiple water management purposes and goals, including drainage. Its use of fields and drainage infrastructure can provide adequate drainage capacity, while reducing downstream peak flows and flooding, reducing erosion and sedimentation, improving water quality and improving aquatic habitat. In many instances the work being done on these systems is large scale maintenance or improvement and could well be a generational opportunity to systematically install valuable multipurpose conservation practices throughout the drainage systems while this other work is happening.

Measurable Outcomes and Progress

Responses for each bullet (e.g. 1a, 1b, etc.) should be limited to 50-100 words.

1. Expected Outcomes for FY28–29 Request:
 - a. Describe measurable and outcome-based goals for the current funding request.

At a high-level, continued utilization of all appropriated funds is a goal for this program. Systematic implementation of multipurpose water management BMPs on 6 targeted drainage systems statewide.

- b. Describe how outcomes will be tracked, evaluated, and reported.

On the ground outcomes are tracked in the BWSR eLink database that includes mapping of practices, total # of practices installed, types of practices, environmental outcomes and inputs for fiscal tracking as well. This information is gathered annually, and the delivery methods also include grants monitoring and reconciliations for certain grants.

- c. (If applicable) For past recipients, describe any planned changes to this program from previous funding cycles, if any.

No changes for existing funded applicants however we are exploring expansion to the list of eligible practices to allow a broader swath of multipurpose activities including additional practices that store water on the landscape.

2. Outcomes from Prior Clean Water Fund Appropriations (if applicable):

- a. How would you characterize progress made to date? As much as is possible, include outcomes achieved as they relate to the program purpose.

To date, 46 multipurpose drainage projects have received funding across the state with Best Management Practices estimated to reduce Nitrogen by 11,900 pounds per year, Phosphorus by 3,550 pounds per year and Sediment by 5950 Tons per year.

- b. How close is the program to reaching its long-term goals?

BWSR continues to increase and promote the number of multipurpose drainage projects implemented across the state, supporting long-term water quality goals.

Alignment with Clean Water Council Strategic Plan

For each relevant goal or strategy in the Clean Water Council's Strategic Plan, list the applicable item and briefly explain (50-100 words) how this proposal helps fulfill that objective.

Goal: Protect and restore surface waters to achieve 70% swimmable and 67% fishable waters by 2034 via by prioritizing and targeting resources by major watershed. Strategy: Prioritize waters for protection and restoration using comprehensive watershed management plans (One Watershed One Plan or other approved plans updated every ten years).

This program provides Clean Water Funds to support projects derived from state approved, locally adopted comprehensive watershed management plans. The current program framing calls for applicants to identify a singular priority drainage system per application. These systems are prioritized based on combinations of factors that include their potential contribution to water quality needs as well as consideration of the generational opportunities for significant infrastructure work that may not occur again for decades or more.

Goal: Protect and restore surface waters to achieve 70% swimmable and 67% fishable waters by 2034 via through statewide, regional, or issue-specific programs that help meet water quality goals but are

not necessarily prioritized and targeted according to geography. Strategy: Support competitive grants for protection and restoration activities.

Proposal for this program are solicited statewide and prioritizes water quality outcomes are aligned with comprehensive watershed management plans. Project locations are selected based on where implementation will make the most impactful efficiently by utilizing efforts like drainage system inspections and bmp need inventories.

Goal: Build capacity of local communities to protect and sustain water resources. Strategy: Maintain and increase capacity of Minnesotans to improve water quality.

Many practices implemented via this program are incorporated into the drainage systems and become a part of the 103E infrastructure. This helps ensure a high-quality level of long-term operations and maintenance to ensure these features have lasting benefits to improve and protect water quality in MN potentially beyond the BMP life expectancy.

Additionally, please list any other statewide or federal plan this effort supports.

- *Minnesota Nutrient Reduction Strategy*
- *Minnesota Nonpoint Priority Funding Plan*
- *Minnesota State Water Plan*
- *Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies*

Interconnection

Please list other Clean Water Fund-supported programs it informs and/or is informed by. Please briefly describe for each (up to 50 words) how Clean Water Funds add to existing efforts.

Connected CWF-supported programs: *Watershed based implementation funding.*

There can be connection between efforts in WBIF where additional practices that support the MDM grant program are implemented along side MDM

Connected non-CWF-supported programs: *Local sources of funding for 103E implementation and BWSR General Funds for funding for larger-scale storage projects. These programs often support multipurpose drainage management implementation and promote larger scale efforts that are often implemented on these drainage systems as well.*

Non-CWF Funding

Will this program receive or request other funding from non-CWF sources, or eventually leverage non-CWF sources?

If so, please describe what funds are being leveraged, the anticipated amount, and your degree of certainty that the funding is secure. Feel free to add rows if needed.

Funding Source	Anticipated Amount	Degree of Security (%)
<i>Local Funding Match</i>	<i>\$200,000</i>	<i>90%</i>

If additional description or elaboration is needed, please include here. (50 words max)

Funding proposals include a minimum required match of 10% or requested funds. Many proposals happen with more than 10% match however they only document what is required under the program RFP at 10%.

Long-term funding vision

- If this proposal is funded, should the Clean Water Council expect future (beyond FY28-29) requests to increase, decrease, or stay about the same? (Do not factor inflation into your answer.)
 - X Increase
 - ___ Decrease
 - ___ Stay the same
- Do you have an anticipated end date for funding need? If so, when? N/A
- Do you intend to continue this program past 2034 in some capacity? Yes

Funding Recipients

Please state as a percentage the amount of funding from this request that is anticipated to be pass-through to a non-state agency entity.

89 %

Engagement and Community Value

- How have program beneficiaries been engaged in the development or evolution of this program? Who are the program partners, if any? (150 words)

Recent changes to the application process have increased the frequency of accessing funding opportunities and were vetted through the Drainage Working Group as well as groups of Drainage staff at the MN Watersheds Annual convention. These changes have led to a noticeable uptick in applications and utilization of the funding. In addition, conversations recently have discussed inclusion of additional practice types which can also provide multipurpose drainage management benefits including, but not limited to, expansion of BMPs that store water on the landscape.
- Please describe how this program advances environmental justice and promotes equity. (150 words). *BWSR clean water programs employ a holistic and comprehensive watershed planning and implementation approach. BWSR strives to lead in advancing environment justice and promote equity consistent with the agency's strategic plan and the 2025 Nonpoint Priority Funding Plan.*

This program is a competitive grant program that considers a number of water quality and multipurpose benefits as the primary drivers in funding. Practices are implemented in/on/adjacent to 103E public drainage systems to maximize the general public benefits as well as water quality outcomes.

- If this has been funded through Clean Water Funds in the past, please share 1-3 recent examples of outreach conducted by this program. Links or attachments are allowable.
 - *BWSR Snapshots October 2025:* https://bwsr.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/2025-09/snapshots-story-3-october-2025-bwsr_board_tour.pdf
 - *BWSR Snapshots April 2025:* https://bwsr.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/2025-03/snapshots_story_1_april_2025_renville_county.pdf
 - *BWSR Snapshots January 2024:* https://bwsr.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/2023-12/snapshots_story_4_january_2024_mcleod_swcd_cwf.pdf

CWF Communication Plan

For both new and returning applicants, please describe (under 100 words) or attach the plan for communicating with the public and pass-through recipients about the Clean Water Fund.

BWSR strategically communicates outcomes from Clean Water Fund (CWF) supported programs and initiatives using news releases, targeted messages, website features, and social media platforms. BWSR uses storytelling to highlight CWF-supported programs and their results. These stories are frequently published by community news outlets, increasing our reach with relevant stories at a targeted, local level. BWSR’s CWF grant agreements specify that materials developed by local grantees (e.g., documents, signage) prominently display the CWF logo and credit the fund. This coordinated outreach ensures broad awareness of how CWF investments protect and restore Minnesota’s water resources.

PRIOR APPROPRIATIONS	
FY10-11	
FY12-13	
FY14-15	
FY16-17	
FY18-19	\$1,500,000
FY20-21	\$1,700,000
FY22-23	\$1,700,000
FY24-25	\$2,000,000
FY26-27	\$2,000,000
TOTAL APPROPRIATED TO DATE	\$8,900,000

FY28 Request	FY29 Request	FY28-29 TOTAL REQUEST
<i>Increase</i>	<i>Increase</i>	<i>Increase</i>

[For agency applicants: don’t fill out the FY28-29 until you receive agency approval. We will update the form at that time. Until then, please include “New”, “Hold steady”, “Increase”, or “Decrease”.]

State Employees

If applicable, indicate the number the full-time state employees supported by the CWF for this program.

FY10-11	
FY12-13	
FY14-15	
FY16-17	
FY18-19	<i>1.2</i>
FY20-21	<i>0.3</i>
FY22-23	<i>0.2</i>
FY24-25	<i>0.3</i>
FY26-27	<i>0.6</i>

FY28-29 CLEAN WATER FUND PROPOSAL

Program Title:	Legacy Partners
Program Number (if applicable):	27
Agency/Organization Name:	Board of Water and Soil Resources
Program website:	https://bwsr.state.mn.us/node/10516

Program Contact	
Name	Ara Gallo; Melissa Sjolund
Email	ara.gallo@state.mn.us / melissa.sjolund@state.mn.us
Phone	651.539.2524

Person Filling Out Form	
Name	Ara Gallo; Melissa Sjolund
Email	ara.gallo@state.mn.us / melissa.sjolund@state.mn.us
Phone	651.539.2524

Eligibility Requirements

Proposers must confirm that their proposal meets basic statutory eligibility. Please check each box that applies to certify the following:

Eligible Use of Funds: Requested funds will be used in accordance with Minnesota law and Clean Water Fund requirements, outlined in full in [Minnesota Statutes 114D.50 Subd. 3](#). This includes confirmation that this funding request supplements rather than supplants previous non-legacy state funding.

Accounting and Reporting Capacity: The proposing organization has experience with or ability to meet accounting and reporting requirements in order ensure appropriate use of funds, as stipulated in [Minnesota Statutes 114.50 Subd. 4](#).

Mandate Alignment (if applicable): This proposal supports or fulfills state or federal mandates (i.e. TMDL, Nonpoint Source Pollution, Nutrient Reduction Strategy, Wild Rice protection, etc.).

If yes, please cite applicable statute or rule: _____

Abstract

Provide a summary (up to 100 words) that clearly states the purpose of the program, its intended water quality impact, and who it serves. The content here will largely be used as a brief summary when looking across programs, so some degree of redundancy is anticipated with other content in the form.

The Clean Water Legacy Partners program funds implementation of high-priority projects that protect, enhance, and restore Minnesota's lakes, rivers, streams, groundwater, and drinking water sources. By advancing actions identified in state, local, and Tribal water management plans, the program delivers measurable water quality improvements in impaired and vulnerable waters. The program serves Tribal Nations, nonprofits, community-based organizations, and local partners, expanding implementation capacity, strengthening collaboration, and ensuring Clean Water Fund investments reach diverse communities and priority waters statewide.

Water Quality Impact

Which step of the Water Management Framework does this program most fit under:

Implementation

Overall, how will this program protect, enhance, and restore water quality in lakes, rivers, and streams, protect groundwater from degradation, or protect drinking water sources? Please limit your response to 200 words.

The Clean Water Legacy Partners program protects, enhances, and restores lakes rivers and streams by supporting projects that make water quality a top priority and make measurable improvements to surface water, ground water, and drinking water. These projects prioritize implementation of proven or innovative practices and include assessment, research, strategy development, and planning to support project implementation.

CWLP programs target identified high-priority water resources and use outcome-based goals and measurable indicators to show improvements to surface water, ground water, and drinking water. Program activities connect landowners and underserved communities with conservation programs and address environmental justice and equity concerns. The program promotes community education and engagement strategies that lead to adoption of practices that impact water quality. These actions deliver long-term water quality benefits and help close the gap between planning and implementation.

The program expands implementation capacity by engaging with Tribal organizations, nonprofits, and community-based organizations to extend Clean Water Funds to partners that are underserved by BWSR programs. Through collaboration, technical assistance, and leveraging local and partner support, the program accelerates projects where water quality is the top priority. These efforts strengthen coordination, advance prioritized watershed goals, and contribute to protection and restoration of Minnesota's high-priority water resources.

Measurable Outcomes and Progress

Responses for each bullet (e.g. 1a, 1b, etc.) should be limited to 50-100 words.

1. Expected Outcomes for FY28–29 Request:
 - a. Describe measurable and outcome-based goals for the current funding request.

The funding request will support implementation of high-priority water quality projects that have clear, outcome-based goals and measurable indicators such as reducing nutrient and sediment loading to impaired waters, restoring or protecting wetlands and riparian areas, improving groundwater recharge, and enhancing drinking water source protection. Success will be measured by qualitative and quantitative metrics such as acres restored or protected, practices installed, modeled pollutant load reductions, number of projects implemented in priority watersheds, leveraged funding secured, and community engagement. The funding provides a feasible path to long term-systems change and may include research or planning to support measurable outcomes.

- b. Describe how outcomes will be tracked, evaluated, and reported.

BWSR requires applicants to estimate outcomes in their proposal using pollution reduction calculators or project outputs. All tracking, progress, and financial reporting is completed through BWSR's eLINK system. Grantees report on outcomes such as practices installed, acres restored or protected, pollutant load reductions, leveraged and partner funds, and outreach and engagement. Staff review results annually to evaluate effectiveness, ensure accountability, and inform funding and program improvements. Upon grant completion, proposed and reported outcomes are considered during the grantee evaluation and outcomes are communicated to Office of Grants Management, BWSR staff, and additional partners and audiences through reports, memos, presentations, and other media.

- c. (If applicable) For past recipients, describe any planned changes to this program from previous funding cycles, if any.

Based on feedback from Tribal nations, who have indicated a preference for non-competitive grants, BWSR is exploring a "Request for Interest" process for programs available to Tribal governments.

2. Outcomes from Prior Clean Water Fund Appropriations (if applicable):

- a. How would you characterize progress made to date? As much as is possible, include outcomes achieved as they relate to the program purpose.

To date, 24 awards have been made to five Tribal partners, ten nonprofits, and two watershed districts. These new partnerships extended \$3,400,000 statewide to implement projects with outcome-based goals and indicators.

Two projects are completed to date. Measurable outcomes include a completed feasibility study addressing phosphorus loading, and engineering design and support services related to a streambank restoration project.

Twenty-two projects remain in progress. An example of interim outcomes reported for one project include:

- *11 cover crop installations totaling 340 acres*

- *Estimated pollutant reductions of 2286 pounds/yr nitrogen, 104 pounds/yr phosphorus, and 625 tons/yr sediment to the Cannon River watershed*

b. How close is the program to reaching its long-term goals?

The program is making steady progress toward its long-term goals by consistently advancing implementation of projects that focus on water quality. Projects are delivering measurable improvements in surface water, groundwater, and drinking water protection, while expanding participation among Tribal Nations, nonprofits, and community-based organizations. Although work remains to fully address water impairments and protection needs, CWLP has established a strong foundation that aligns with the CWC Strategic Plan, emphasizes outcome-based goals and measurable indicators, leverages local support, and engages landowners, local communities, and groups that are underserved by BWSR programs.

Alignment with Clean Water Council Strategic Plan

For each relevant goal or strategy in the Clean Water Council’s Strategic Plan, list the applicable item and briefly explain (50-100 words) how this proposal helps fulfill that objective.

CWLP supports the CWC goal to, “(b)uild capacity of local communities to protect and sustain water resources” by:

- ***Supporting local efforts to engage farmers in water quality efforts.*** *Projects build relationships new relationships with farmers that use funds to directly support conservation practices.*
- ***Engaging non-traditional audiences with water planning and implementation.*** *The program extends Clean Water Funds to Tribal and nonprofit partners that increase capacity and community engagement.*
- ***Support local efforts to engage lakeshore property owners and private landowners.*** *CWLP supports organizations managing lake resources and have funded projects that address nutrient inputs, stabilize shorelines, and manage invasive species.*

Additionally, please list any other statewide or federal plan this effort supports.

- *Minnesota Water Management Framework*
- *One Watershed One Plan (1W1P)*
- *Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies (WRAPS)*
- *Groundwater Restoration and Protection Strategies (GRAPS)*

Interconnection

Please list other Clean Water Fund-supported programs it informs and/or is informed by. Please briefly describe for each (up to 50 words) how Clean Water Funds add to existing efforts.

Connected CWF-supported programs:

- *Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies (WRAPS) – informs project targeting and priorities; implementation results support future assessments.*
- *Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) studies – provides pollutant reduction goals that CWLP projects help achieve.*

- *One Watershed, One Plan (1W1P) – CWLP implements priority actions identified in locally led watershed plans.*
- *Drinking Water Supply Management Areas (DWSMAs) – CWLP supports implementation of drinking water source protection strategies.*
- *BWSR Clean Water Fund Competitive Grants – complementary implementation funding; CWLP expands reach to nontraditional partners.*
- *Tribal water quality programs – CWLP supports implementation of Tribal priorities and outcomes.*

Connected non-CWF-supported programs:

- *Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Conservation Easements-CWLP funds implementation activities—such as restoration, and landowner engagement—that complement RIM easements by improving water quality outcomes on protected lands.*
- *RIM Reserve (Federal Farm Bill Partnership Funds)-CWLP supports watershed-based implementation that aligns with RIM Reserve land protection priorities, helping ensure conserved lands deliver measurable water quality benefits.*
- *Local Government Cost-Share Programs-CWLP enhances and leverages local cost-share by expanding eligibility to NGOs and Tribes, increasing adoption of conservation practices and filling funding gaps.*
- *Outdoor Heritage Fund (Legacy Amendment)-CWLP complements habitat-focused investments by targeting water quality improvements that also support habitat protection and restoration goals.*

Non-CWF Funding

Will this program receive or request other funding from non-CWF sources, or eventually leverage non-CWF sources? If so, please describe what funds are being leveraged, the anticipated amount, and your degree of certainty that the funding is secure. Feel free to add rows if needed.

Funding Source	Anticipated Amount	Degree of Security (%)
<i>Matching Funds</i>	<i>10% of Grant Award</i>	<i>100%</i>

If additional description or elaboration is needed, please include here. (50 words max)

CWLP leverages funds by requiring a match to combine CWF dollars with local, Tribal, nonprofit, and private resources to maximize water quality outcomes. Match may include cash, federal grants, cost-share funds, in-kind services, technical expertise, and landowner contributions. Flexible match structures unlock additional funds and expands project scope and implementation.

Long-term funding vision

- If this proposal is funded, should the Clean Water Council expect future (beyond FY28-29) requests to increase, decrease, or stay about the same? (Do not factor inflation into your answer.)
 - X Increase
 - Decrease
 - Stay the same

- Do you have an anticipated end date for funding need? If so, when? **NO**
- Do you intend to continue this program past 2034 in some capacity? **YES**

Funding Recipients

Please state as a percentage the amount of funding from this request that is anticipated to be pass-through to a non-state agency entity.

89%

Engagement and Community Value

- How have program beneficiaries been engaged in the development or evolution of this program? Who are the program partners, if any? (150 words)
The program engages landowners, local communities, and underserved groups in the development and evolution of the Clean Water Legacy Partners program through feedback and collaboration during planning meetings, outreach, and feedback sessions. Input from Tribal organizations, nonprofits, community-based organizations, and local governments has helped to evolve CWLP's goals and objectives and led to updates in the RFP, Scoring Guidance, and review process to make CWLP more accessible and viable for a wider range of applicants. Partners include Tribal governments, nonprofits, local government units and state agencies, whose collaboration strengthens project delivery, expands reach, and helps align Clean Water Legacy Partners with local, state, and Tribal water quality priorities.
- Please describe how this program advances environmental justice and promotes equity. (150 words)
The CWLP program advances environmental justice and promotes equity by engaging landowners, local communities, and underserved groups in conservation initiatives and expanding access to Clean Water Fund resources for Tribal Nations, nonprofits, and community-based organizations. The program prioritizes projects in locations identified by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency as Environmental Justice Areas and relies on direct community support through the grant cycle for project success. CWLP provides flexible funding structures, technical assistance, and partnership opportunities that reduce administrative and financial barriers and enable community engagement and locally driven solutions. By supporting projects that improve water quality, protect drinking water sources, and restore culturally and community-important waters, the program delivers public and environmental benefits while strengthening capacity, stewardship, and community support for programs where water quality is a top priority.
- If this has been funded through Clean Water Funds in the past, please share 1-3 recent examples of outreach conducted by this program. Links or attachments are allowable.
 - *Request for Proposals webinars, informational meetings, and reporting and application assistance*
 - *Direct, face to face outreach and meetings with Tribal and community-based organizations and Local Government Units*
 - *Review committee survey to gather input on the RFP and scoring process*
 - *Feedback and review meetings with unfunded applicants*

CWF Communication Plan

For both new and returning applicants, please describe (under 100 words) or attach the plan for communicating with the public and pass-through recipients about the Clean Water Fund.

BWSR strategically communicates outcomes from Clean Water Fund (CWF) supported programs and initiatives using news releases, targeted messages, website features, and social media platforms. BWSR uses storytelling to highlight CWF-supported programs and their results. Stories are frequently published by community news outlets, increasing our reach with relevant stories at a targeted, local level. BWSR's CWF grant agreements specify that materials developed by local grantees (e.g., documents, signage) prominently display the CWF logo and credit the fund. This coordinated outreach ensures broad awareness of how CWF investments protect and restore Minnesota's water resources.

See attached Communication Plan: FY2027 Request for Proposals

PRIOR APPROPRIATIONS	
FY10-11	
FY12-13	
FY14-15	
FY16-17	
FY18-19	
FY20-21	
FY22-23	\$1,000,000
FY24-25	\$3,000,000
FY26-27	\$1,000,000
TOTAL APPROPRIATED TO DATE	\$5,000,000

FY28 Request	FY29 Request	FY28-29 TOTAL REQUEST
<i>Increase</i>	<i>Increase</i>	<i>Increase</i>

[For agency applicants: don't fill out the FY28-29 until you receive agency approval. We will update the form at that time. Until then, please include "New", "Hold steady", "Increase", or "Decrease".]

State Employees

If applicable, indicate the number the full-time state employees supported by the CWF for this program.

FY10-11	
FY12-13	
FY14-15	
FY16-17	
FY18-19	
FY20-21	
FY22-23	0.3
FY24-25	0.5
FY26-27	1.5



Clean Water Legacy Partners Fact Sheet



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

- Purpose is to implement activities that protect or restore high priority water resources and expand partnerships for clean water in Minnesota
- Tribal organizations and nonprofit organizations are eligible to apply
- Funded since FY 2022/2023



ABOUT THE PROGRAM

In 2021 the Minnesota Legislature established the Clean Water Legacy Partners Grant Program to expand partnerships for clean water. The program is administered by the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) and seeks to protect, enhance and restore water quality in Minnesota by providing funding to partners outside the scope of BWSR's traditional local government clients.

Since inception, CWLP has made 24 awards to 11 Tribal Partners, 11 NGOs, and 2 Watershed Districts totaling \$3,788,256.

To date, CWLP has received 65 applications requesting over \$6,000,000 in funding.

Clean Water Legacy Partners is the only BWSR grant program open to NGOs and one of three BWSR programs that has received a Tribal application.

PROJECTS FUNDED

- Green infrastructure/Stormwater BMPs
- Lake protection
- Stream restoration
- Agriculture conservation
- Nutrient reduction studies
- Prairie Restoration
- Restoration engineering design
- Street sweeping
- Carp removal
- Agroforestry
- Cover crops
- Raingardens
- Pollinator plantings
- Prescribed grazing

GRANTEE RESOURCES

- Dedicated support staff
- Application guide
- Webinars and info sessions
- Site visits and in person meetings



FY28-29 CLEAN WATER FUND PROPOSAL

Program Title:	Measures, Results and Accountability
Program Number (if applicable):	23
Agency/Organization Name:	Board of Water and Soil Resources
Program website:	https://bwsr.state.mn.us/cwf_programs

Program Contact	
Name	Maggie Karschnia
Email	Maggie.karschnia@state.mn.us
Phone	651-539-2528

Person Filling Out Form	
Name	Marcey Westrick
Email	Marcey.westrick@state.mn.us
Phone	651-284-4153

Eligibility Requirements

Proposers must confirm that their proposal meets basic statutory eligibility. Please check each box that applies to certify the following:

Eligible Use of Funds: Requested funds will be used in accordance with Minnesota law and Clean Water Fund requirements, outlined in full in [Minnesota Statutes 114D.50 Subd. 3](#). This includes confirmation that this funding request supplements rather than supplants previous non-legacy state funding.

Accounting and Reporting Capacity: The proposing organization has experience with or ability to meet accounting and reporting requirements in order ensure appropriate use of funds, as stipulated in [Minnesota Statutes 114.50 Subd. 4](#).

Mandate Alignment (if applicable): This proposal supports or fulfills state or federal mandates (i.e. TMDL, Nonpoint Source Pollution, Nutrient Reduction Strategy, Wild Rice protection, etc.).

If yes, please cite applicable statute or rule: _____

Abstract

Provide a summary (up to 100 words) that clearly states the purpose of the program, its intended water quality impact, and who it serves. The content here will largely be used as a brief summary when looking across programs, so some degree of redundancy is anticipated with other content in the form.

This funding provides the required oversight and accountability for the Clean Water Funds that MN Board of Water & Soil Resources administers to measure, track, and communicate the results of projects, ensuring effective and high-quality investments of funds with measurable water quality results. Central to these efforts is eLINK, the agency's grant management system, which features grants tracking from application to reporting, contract management, and tracking of outcomes, including pollution reduction estimates. BWSR also administers a grant reconciliation process, through which staff conduct field visits with grant recipients to ensure compliance with state policies, guidance and fiscal best management practices.

Water Quality Impact

Which step of the [Water Management Framework](#) does this program most fit under: *Implementation*

Overall, how will this program protect, enhance, and restore water quality in lakes, rivers, and streams, protect groundwater from degradation, or protect drinking water sources. Please limit your response to 200 words.

This program tracks and evaluates grant projects funded through the Clean Water Fund and provides training to grantees to build their skills in managing grants and reporting results, thereby helping to measure the performance of projects in meeting water quality goals while ensuring effective and high-quality investments of funds.

Measurable Outcomes and Progress

Responses for each bullet (e.g. 1a, 1b, etc.) should be limited to 50-100 words.

1. Expected Outcomes for FY28–29 Request:
 - a. Describe measurable and outcome-based goals for the current funding request.

On average, BWSR provides oversight on approximately 245 Clean Water Fund grants annually across the state. It is anticipated oversight for grants would be similar in FY28-29.

- b. Describe how outcomes will be tracked, evaluated, and reported.

Grant reporting is conducted through BWSR's web-based reporting system (eLINK). eLINK is used to track grant progress from initial grant award through final closeout, including water quality improvement outcomes, such as number of best management practices installed, estimated pollution load reductions, and/or number of acres. Water quality improvement outcomes are estimated using tools and models that have been developed to help support Minnesota's Watershed Management Framework.

As part of this grant oversight, BWSR reports all proposed and final outcomes along with other reporting requirements to the Legacy Website.

<https://www.legacy.mn.gov/clean-water-fund>) and to the Office of Grants Management.

- c. (If applicable) For past recipients, describe any planned changes to this program from previous funding cycles, if any.
2. Outcomes from Prior Clean Water Fund Appropriations (if applicable):
- a. How would you characterize progress made to date? As much as is possible, include outcomes achieved as they relate to the program purpose.

BWSR provides accountability to the state while supporting and providing assistance to Clean Water Fund grant recipients by:

- 1. Training for staff at grant recipient organizations to strengthen their capacity to manage grants and report outcomes.*
- 2. Supporting grant recipient staff to strengthen program administration and implementation, streamline reporting requirements, and enhance transparency in performance toward program goals.*
- 3. Evaluating the success and value of on-the-ground restoration and protection activities to better target implementation funds.*
- 4. Sharing information about grants and environmental results with the public through websites, reports, and other multimedia means.*

- b. How close is the program to reaching its long-term goals?

BWSR's long-term goal is to continuously strengthen oversight and accountability for all Clean Water Fund grant programs.

Alignment with Clean Water Council Strategic Plan

For each relevant goal or strategy in the Clean Water Council's Strategic Plan, list the applicable item and briefly explain (50-100 words) how this proposal helps fulfill that objective.

The Measures, Results, and Accountability program allows BWSR to ensure that funding from the agency's other programs funded by the Clean Water Fund - which align with various aspects of the Clean Water Council's strategic plan - achieve their intended purpose and results.

Interconnection

Please list other Clean Water Fund-supported programs it informs and/or is informed by. Please briefly describe for each (up to 50 words) how Clean Water Funds add to existing efforts.

Connected CWF-supported programs:

This funding provides oversight and accountability for all of BWSR's CWF-supported programs as funded such as, but not limited to:

- One Watershed, One Plan*
- Watershed Based Implementation Funding*
- Conservation Drainage*
- Surface and Drinking Water Protection Restoration (Projects and Practices)*
- Clean Water Legacy Partners*

- *Enhancing Cover Crops for Adoption*
- *Drinking Water Protection*
- *Great Lakes Restoration*

Connected non-CWF-supported programs:

Non-CWF Funding

Will this program receive or request other funding from non-CWF sources, or eventually leverage non-CWF sources?

If so, please describe what funds are being leveraged, the anticipated amount, and your degree of certainty that the funding is secure. Feel free to add rows if needed.

Funding Source	Anticipated Amount	Degree of Security (%)

If additional description or elaboration is needed, please include here. (50 words max)

Long-term funding vision

- If this proposal is funded, should the Clean Water Council expect future (beyond FY28-29) requests to increase, decrease, or stay about the same? (Do not factor inflation into your answer.)
 - Increase
 - Decrease
 - Stay the same
- Do you have an anticipated end date for funding need? If so, when? _____
- Do you intend to continue this program past 2034 in some capacity? Yes No Unsure

Funding Recipients

Please state as a percentage the amount of funding from this request that is anticipated to be pass-through to a non-state agency entity.

0 %

Engagement and Community Value

- How have program beneficiaries been engaged in the development or evolution of this program? Who are the program partners, if any? (150 words)

Program beneficiaries are engaged through multiple channels during financial reconciliations and communications. BWSR grantees serve as primary beneficiaries and participate actively

through regular grant reporting cycles, technical assistance workshops, and the annual BWSR Academy where they provide feedback.

Please describe how this program advances environmental justice and promotes equity. (150 words)

This program does not disproportionately impact any ethnic, racial, or other minority group in either a negative or positive way, nor would it eliminate or reduce any disparities.

- If this has been funded through Clean Water Funds in the past, please share 1-3 recent examples of outreach conducted by this program. Links or attachments are allowable.

BWSR Snapshots Story: [Planned eLINK updates respond to growth, need](#)

CWF Communication Plan

For both new and returning applicants, please describe (under 100 words) or attach the plan for communicating with the public and pass-through recipients about the Clean Water Fund.

BWSR communicates and provides oversight and training for grantees in several ways through communications and site visits. BWSR also utilizes the BWSR Academy, a three-day, cost effective, annual training event for conservation-based local government staff. The event is centered around 90-minute interactive training sessions with opportunities for hands-on learning by attendees. The goal of the BWSR Academy is to provide high quality trainings that improve the technical skills and administrative expertise needed to successfully implement BWSR-sponsored programs.

PRIOR APPROPRIATIONS	
FY10-11	
FY12-13	
FY14-15	
FY16-17	
FY18-19	<i>\$1,900,000</i>
FY20-21	<i>\$2,000,000</i>
FY22-23	<i>\$2,700,000</i>
FY24-25	<i>\$2,500,000</i>
FY26-27	<i>\$2,500,000</i>
TOTAL APPROPRIATED TO DATE	

FY28 Request	FY29 Request	FY28-29 TOTAL REQUEST
Increase	Increase	Increase

[For agency applicants: don't fill out the FY28-29 until you receive agency approval. We will update the form at that time. Until then, please include "New", "Hold steady", "Increase", or "Decrease".]

State Employees

If applicable, indicate the number the full-time state employees supported by the CWF for this program.

FY10-11	2
FY12-13	4.1
FY14-15	4.1
FY16-17	5.1
FY18-19	9.8
FY20-21	9.8
FY22-23	8.2
FY24-25	5.7
FY26-27	9.5

FY28-29 CLEAN WATER FUND PROPOSAL

Program Title:	Enhancing Cover Crops for Adoption
Program Number (if applicable):	28
Agency/Organization Name:	Board of Water and Soil Resources
Program website:	https://bwsr.state.mn.us/soils/index.html

Program Contact	
Name	Jared House
Email	jared.house@state.mn.us
Phone	320-407-3856

Person Filling Out Form	
Name	Jared House
Email	jared.house@state.mn.us
Phone	320-407-3856

Eligibility Requirements

Proposers must confirm that their proposal meets basic statutory eligibility. Please check each box that applies to certify the following:

Eligible Use of Funds: Requested funds will be used in accordance with Minnesota law and Clean Water Fund requirements, outlined in full in [Minnesota Statutes 114D.50 Subd. 3](#). This includes confirmation that this funding request supplements rather than supplants previous non-legacy state funding.

Accounting and Reporting Capacity: The proposing organization has experience with or ability to meet accounting and reporting requirements in order ensure appropriate use of funds, as stipulated in [Minnesota Statutes 114.50 Subd. 4](#).

Mandate Alignment (if applicable): This proposal supports or fulfills state or federal mandates (i.e. TMDL, Nonpoint Source Pollution, Nutrient Reduction Strategy, Wild Rice protection, etc.).

If yes, please cite applicable statute or rule: _____

Abstract

Provide a summary (up to 100 words) that clearly states the purpose of the program, its intended water quality impact, and who it serves. The content here will largely be used as a brief summary when looking across programs, so some degree of redundancy is anticipated with other content in the form.

This program provides an opportunity for a large acre and participant increase in cover crop and soil health practice adoption. To reduce nitrate from leaching into our groundwater and running off into our surface waters, a shift in the cropping systems is required. One component of this shift is the recommended use of cover crops to scavenge excess nitrogen from the soil. Cover crop adoption improves groundwater and surface water quality and benefits drinking water supply areas. Clean Water Funds will be made to plant cover crops, provide payments to reduce risk, and purchase specialized inter-seeding equipment in one or two targeted areas within the state. This initiative can leverage existing NRCS financial assistance programs and will be implemented by soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs) with partnership opportunities for Tribal governments.

Water Quality Impact

Which step of the [Water Management Framework](#) does this program most fit under: *Implementation*

Overall, how will this program protect, enhance, and restore water quality in lakes, rivers, and streams, protect groundwater from degradation, or protect drinking water sources. Please limit your response to 200 words.

Several Minnesota communities have seen increased water treatment rates due to contamination of ground water from excess nitrate coming from agricultural areas. These incidents are indicative of the widespread vulnerability of many rural communities because much of Minnesota's rural landscape is heavily dominated by intensive row-crop agriculture.

Reports, such as the MPCA Nutrient Reduction Strategy, indicate that despite widespread best management practice (BMP) adoption, nitrate levels in Minnesota are not decreasing. Even perfect timing, rate, and placement of nitrogen fertilizer won't stop all the leaks in the current cropping systems. For a good portion of each spring and fall, large portions of our landscape are bare. Given the significant influence of land uses on water quality, several studies, indicate that to reduce nitrate from leaching into our groundwater and running off into our surface waters, a shift in the cropping systems will be required. One component of this shift is the recommended use of cover crops to scavenge excess nitrogen from the soil. Cover crops are known to be an effective means to reduce nitrogen loss and have been shown to reduce nitrogen loads by 30% compared to 15% for nitrogen fertilizer management alone.

Measurable Outcomes and Progress

Responses for each bullet (e.g. 1a, 1b, etc.) should be limited to 50-100 words.

1. Expected Outcomes for FY28–29 Request:
 - a. **Describe measurable and outcome-based goals for the current funding request.**

By using state funds to leverage federal grants, we anticipate a projected reduction in nutrient and sediment– dependent on soil type, weather, and practice locations:

- i. **Nitrogen:** 540,000 pounds*
- ii. **Phosphorous:** 193,500 pounds*
- iii. **Sediment:** 22,500 tons*

b. Describe how outcomes will be tracked, evaluated, and reported.

Program outcomes will be tracked using eLINK alongside a specialized SharePoint reporting interface developed in partnership with the Minnesota NRCS. This dual-layered approach ensures seamless data integration between state and federal partners.

Evaluation will be conducted by measuring progress against goals outlined in the local comprehensive watershed management plans and the Minnesota Soil Health Action Framework. This ensures that every project funded contributes directly to established local and statewide soil health and water quality benchmarks. Additionally, BWSR is in development of a Soil Health Index that will be used to track soil health adoption across Minnesota.

c. (If applicable) For past recipients, describe any planned changes to this program from previous funding cycles, if any.

BWSR is reviewing two strategic shifts to maximize program impact. First, we are looking at providing an increased funding allocation to counties ineligible for federal program funds, ensuring that conservation gaps are filled across the state. Second, we are exploring ways to increase targeted support for Southeast Minnesota to address critical groundwater protection needs.

2. Outcomes from Prior Clean Water Fund Appropriations (if applicable):

- a. How would you characterize progress made to date? As much as is possible, include outcomes achieved as they relate to the program purpose.**

Past Clean Water Fund Appropriations have been directed towards fostering the development of local SWCD soil health programs. Resulting in on-the-ground projects with landowners and farmers, enhanced SWCD technical capacity, developing and executing educational events, building relationships between public and private sectors, and leveraging \$25,000,000 of federal Regional Conservation Partnership Program funding.

Much of prior clean water fund appropriations are in active programs with local SWCD offices.

b. How close is the program to reaching its long-term goals?

A 2025 Minnesota Office for Soil Health report titled The State of Minnesota’s Soil Health documents an upward trend in the adoption of soil health practices across the state. However, the report further indicated that while these practices are gaining momentum, they still represent a marginal fraction of Minnesota’s 21.5 million acres of cropland, with no-till and cover crop methods being utilized on only 5% and 2.82% of cropland, respectively.

Alignment with Clean Water Council Strategic Plan

For each relevant goal or strategy in the Clean Water Council’s Strategic Plan, list the applicable item and briefly explain (50-100 words) how this proposal helps fulfill that objective.

Goal: Protect groundwater from degradation and support effective measures to restore degraded groundwater. Strategy: Develop and carry out strategies that will protect and restore groundwater statewide.

The current program is being used to implement soil health practices such as cover crops to mitigate nitrate leaching in sensitive groundwater areas.

Goal: Public Water Systems--Ensure that users of public water systems have safe, sufficient, and equitable drinking water. Strategy: Support prevention efforts to protect groundwater in DWSMAs.

In many rural communities DWSMAs are covered in agricultural land. This program allows SWCDs to provide cost-share to producers who farm in these sensitive groundwater areas to protect municipal drinking water supplies.

Goal: Build capacity of local communities to protect and sustain water resources. Strategy: Support innovative efforts that accelerate progress toward clean water goals.

Local SWCDs provide the framework for how they target and implement soil health practices through local soil health financial assistance polices. Programming provides an avenue to build relationships amongst local producers, farmer co-ops, local universities, and various private soil health organizations.

Additionally, please list any other statewide or federal plan this effort supports.

- *Minnesota Nutrient Reduction Strategy*
- *Minnesota Soil Health Action Framework*

Interconnection

Please list other Clean Water Fund-supported programs it informs and/or is informed by. Please briefly describe for each (up to 50 words) how Clean Water Funds add to existing efforts.

Connected CWF-supported programs:

- *MDA Soil Health Financial Assistance Program Grants: Many soil health practices require farmers to purchase specialized equipment.*

Connected non-CWF-supported programs:

- *MDA Agriculture Best Management Practices (BMP) Loan Program: Many soil health practices require farmers to purchase specialized equipment.*
- *Soil Health Practices RCPP: Federal grant program providing \$25 million for on the ground soil health practices.*
- *Soil Health Supplemental Staffing: State grant providing funding to SWCDs to hire technical staff, coordinate farmer mentors, and work directly with private organizations in order to advance the adoption soil health systems.*

Non-CWF Funding

Will this program receive or request other funding from non-CWF sources, or eventually leverage non-CWF sources?

If so, please describe what funds are being leveraged, the anticipated amount, and your degree of certainty that the funding is secure. Feel free to add rows if needed.

Funding Source	Anticipated Amount	Degree of Security (%)
<i>Federal Funding</i>	<i>\$25,000,000</i>	<i>60%</i>
<i>Local Government Unit Match</i>	<i>\$644,000</i>	<i>100%</i>

If additional description or elaboration is needed, please include here. (50 words max)

Beyond a \$25 million federal RCPP grant received by BWSR in 2023, this Clean Water Funding will be used to leverage additional federal funding. This funding will increase Minnesota's competitiveness for future non-CWF sources by providing required match to federal programs.

Long-term funding vision

- If this proposal is funded, should the Clean Water Council expect future (beyond FY28-29) requests to increase, decrease, or stay about the same? (Do not factor inflation into your answer.)
 - X Increase
 - Decrease
 - Stay the same
- Do you have an anticipated end date for funding need? If so, when? NA
- Do you intend to continue this program past 2034 in some capacity? Yes

Funding Recipients

Please state as a percentage the amount of funding from this request that is anticipated to be pass-through to a non-state agency entity.

90 %

Engagement and Community Value

- How have program beneficiaries been engaged in the development or evolution of this program? Who are the program partners, if any? (150 words)

BWSR has partnered with the University of Minnesota's Water Resources Center (WRC) to establish the Minnesota Office for Soil Health, with the mission of building local expertise to promote soil health and soil and water conservation. Research and outreach have expanded the tools and skills of Minnesota's local conservation delivery community and promote understanding of the economic impacts of soil and water management practices. Since establishment in 2018, MOSH has contributed to NRCS Basics of Soil Health training, partnered with University of Minnesota Extension to present the annual Soil Management Summit, and delivered numerous educational talks to local farmers, conservation staff, and farm advisors around Minnesota. MOSH invited stakeholders to 2019 and 2020 Soil Health Forums, and regularly convenes stakeholders from UMN Extension and local government units to coordinate and increase soil health adoption.

- Please describe how this program advances environmental justice and promotes equity. (150 words)

Through the incorporation of federal programs – historically underserved individuals are given prioritization for funding through locally adopted ranking systems. Those identifying as limited resource, beginning, socially disadvantaged, or veteran farmers are given program preference.

- If this has been funded through Clean Water Funds in the past, please share 1-3 recent examples of outreach conducted by this program. Links or attachments are allowable.

BWSR Snapshot, January 2026: [Soil health funding accelerates practice implementation statewide](#)

BWSR Snapshot, December 2025: [Soil health tour demonstrates possibilities, connects farmers](#)

BWSR Snapshot, March 2025: [Soil health incentives strengthen Goodhue nitrate reduction effort](#)

CWF Communication Plan

For both new and returning applicants, please describe (under 100 words) or attach the plan for communicating with the public and pass-through recipients about the Clean Water Fund.

BWSR strategically communicates outcomes from Clean Water Fund (CWF) supported programs and initiatives using news releases, targeted messages, website features, and social media platforms. BWSR uses storytelling to highlight CWF-supported programs and their results. These stories are frequently published by community news outlets, increasing our reach with relevant stories at a targeted, local level. BWSR's CWF grant agreements specify that materials developed by local grantees (e.g., documents, signage) prominently display the CWF logo and credit the fund. This coordinated outreach ensures broad awareness of how CWF investments protect and restore Minnesota's water resources.

PRIOR APPROPRIATIONS	
FY22-23	<i>\$4,000,000</i>
FY24-25	<i>\$12,077,000</i>
FY26-27	<i>\$9,486,000</i>
TOTAL APPROPRIATED TO DATE	<i>\$25,563,000</i>

FY28 Request	FY29 Request	FY28-29 TOTAL REQUEST
<i>Increase</i>	<i>Increase</i>	<i>Increase</i>

[For agency applicants: don't fill out the FY28-29 until you receive agency approval. We will update the form at that time. Until then, please include "New", "Hold steady", "Increase", or "Decrease".]

State Employees

If applicable, indicate the number the full-time state employees supported by the CWF for this program.

FY22-23	<i>0.8</i>
FY24-25	<i>1</i>
FY26-27	<i>1</i>

FY28-29 CLEAN WATER FUND PROPOSAL

Program Title:	Southeast Groundwater Protection and Soil Health Initiative
Program Number (if applicable):	
Agency/Organization Name:	Olmsted County (with support from Dodge, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Houston, Mower, Rice, Steele, Wabasha, and Winona Counties)
Program website:	https://olmsted-soil-health-program-gis-olmsted.hub.arcgis.com/

Program Contact	
Name	Skip Langer
Email	skip.langer@olmstedcounty.gov
Phone	507-328-7140

Person Filling Out Form	
Name	Jennifer Berquam
Email	jennifer.berquam@olmstedcounty.gov
Phone	651-308-8266

Eligibility Requirements
<p>Proposers must confirm that their proposal meets basic statutory eligibility. Please check each box that applies to certify the following:</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Eligible Use of Funds: Requested funds will be used in accordance with Minnesota law and Clean Water Fund requirements, outlined in full in Minnesota Statutes 114D.50 Subd. 3. This includes confirmation that this funding request supplements rather than supplants previous non-legacy state funding.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accounting and Reporting Capacity: The proposing organization has experience with or ability to meet accounting and reporting requirements in order ensure appropriate use of funds, as stipulated in Minnesota Statutes 114.50 Subd. 4.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mandate Alignment (if applicable): This proposal supports or fulfills state or federal mandates (i.e. TMDL, Nonpoint Source Pollution, Nutrient Reduction Strategy, Wild Rice protection, etc.).</p>

If yes, please cite applicable statute or rule: **This proposal supports the goals of the Total Maximum Daily Loading (TMDL) reports (MN 7052.0200), the Comprehensive Watershed Management Planning**

Program (MN 103B.801), the Minnesota Department of Agriculture Groundwater Protection Rule (Minnesota Rules Chapter 1573), and the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act (42 USC Chapter 6A, Subchapter XII). While not required by state law, the Minnesota Nutrient Reduction Strategy (NRS) compiles the latest science, research, and data and recommends the most effective strategies to reduce nutrients in our waters from both point and nonpoint sources. The strategy serves as a framework, outlining how voluntary and regulatory actions can reduce nutrient pollution to meet long-term goals.

Abstract

Provide a summary (up to 100 words) that clearly states the purpose of the program, its intended water quality impact, and who it serves. The content here will largely be used as a brief summary when looking across programs, so some degree of redundancy is anticipated with other content in the form.

The southeast groundwater protection and soil health initiative will collaboratively address rising nitrate trends in groundwater on a regional scale by working with farmers to implement soil health practices on private land in southeastern Minnesota where karst geology is prevalent and groundwater is susceptible to contamination. Protecting groundwater is imperative because it serves as our drinking water supply and sustains local industries and communities. Research confirms that converting traditional row crops to small grains, cover crops, and perennial hay and grazing systems reduces nitrate leaching, retains nitrogen, and limits erosion. The program could also be expanded statewide.

Water Quality Impact

Which step of the [Water Management Framework](#) does this program most fit under: **Implementation**

Overall, how will this program protect, enhance, and restore water quality in lakes, rivers, and streams, protect groundwater from degradation, or protect drinking water sources. Please limit your response to 200 words.

The southeast regional groundwater protection and soil health initiative will promote agricultural management practices designed to reduce nitrate leaching from cropland which will protect groundwater from degradation and improve it over the long-term. Key strategies include:

- **Transitioning from traditional row crops to nitrogen-smart alternatives and small grains.**
- **Implementing cover crops to extend the presence of living roots in the soil.**
- **Expanding haying and grazing acreage and improving pasture conditions in livestock operations.**

The initiative promotes practices and program requirements that are new and different from traditional conservation programs in the following ways:

- **It is results-based where a producer is paid only if requirements of the program are met (i.e. growing cover crop to a specific minimum height).**
- **It offers add-on financial incentives to maximize groundwater and soil health benefits, giving producers flexible options suited to their operations.**
- **A streamlined web-based application and certification process allows easy participation from anywhere.**

- **Education and peer-to-peer learning are prioritized to boost participation and adoption rates.**

These practices not only reduce nitrate leaching but also enhance carbon retention, minimize soil erosion, and safeguard surface water resources. Together, they offer sustainable, long-term solutions for healthy water and soil and overall environmental protection.

Measurable Outcomes and Progress

Responses for each bullet (e.g. 1a, 1b, etc.) should be limited to 50-100 words.

1. Expected Outcomes for FY28–29 Request:
 - a. Describe measurable and outcome-based goals for the current funding request.

Based on average Olmsted program payments, we anticipate this regional request will allow at least 1,640 farmers to participate annually, positively impacting about 230,000 acres directly and indirectly. While annual payment caps per farmer apply, many participants voluntarily double their planted acres—particularly cover crops—when payments cover only half. These actions account for the combined direct and indirect acreage impact. Throughout two years of funding, this is estimated to prevent nearly 9.2 million pounds of nitrogen fertilizer—approximately 368 semi-trailers of urea fertilizer—from leaching into groundwater. The program will emphasize education, with SWCDs hosting eight producer events yearly.

- b. Describe how outcomes will be tracked, evaluated, and reported.

The number of producers and acres will be tracked through a convenient web-based enrollment process. SWCD staff conduct a field visit to certify the practices before payments are issued to producers. Pounds of nitrogen fertilizer prevented from leaching into groundwater is estimated based on ongoing data collection and monitoring of in-field shallow groundwater monitoring wells (lysimeters), natural springs, tile line outlets, shallow wells, and cave drips.

The program will be evaluated by regional staff and results reported to the Clean Water Council by December 31 of each year, or upon request.

- c. (If applicable) For past recipients, describe any planned changes to this program from previous funding cycles, if any. **NA**

2. Outcomes from Prior Clean Water Fund Appropriations (if applicable): **NA**

- a. How would you characterize progress made to date? As much as is possible, include outcomes achieved as they relate to the program purpose.

While the southeast groundwater protection and soil health initiative has not received a prior Clean Water Fund appropriation, the program has demonstrated success and adoption by producers in Olmsted County, where the project was piloted in 2023 and continues to grow. In 2025, 26% of producers in the county certified more than 23,300

acres into the program which is estimated to have prevented nearly 488,000 pounds of nitrogen from entering groundwater.

- b. How close is the program to reaching its long-term goals?

This “grassroots” agricultural movement is still in its infancy. Farmers will need continued regular educational and financial support until the program’s success and results prove the need for federal Farm Bill programming. With a comprehensive goal of reaching 30% continuous living cover across the region, the current progress toward reaching this goal varies with Olmsted reaching 10-15% cover crop, alternative crops, and haying and grazing practice implementation, and other counties currently achieving 3-6% of the same practices.

Alignment with Clean Water Council Strategic Plan

For each relevant goal or strategy in the Clean Water Council’s Strategic Plan, list the applicable item and briefly explain (50-100 words) how this proposal helps fulfill that objective.

Additionally, please list any other statewide or federal plan this effort supports.

- **Groundwater Vision: Groundwater is clean and available to all in Minnesota.**
 - **Goal 1: Protect groundwater from degradation and support effective measures to restore degraded groundwater.**
The southeast regional groundwater protection and soil health initiative will promote agricultural management practices designed to reduce nitrate leaching from cropland which will protect groundwater from degradation and improve it over the long-term. The program directly relates to the strategic plan action step to reduce nitrate contamination of groundwater.

- **Drinking Water Source Protection Vision: Drinking water is safe for everyone, everywhere in Minnesota.**
 - **Goal 1: Public Water Systems – Ensure that users of public water systems have safe, sufficient, and equitable drinking water.**
 - **Goal 2: Private Water Supply Wells – Ensure that private well users have safe, sufficient, and equitable access to drinking water.**
Karst geology is prevalent in southeastern Minnesota, making groundwater susceptible to contamination. There are several areas in the region where both public water systems and private water supply wells are vulnerable to high levels of nitrate. As mentioned earlier, this regional initiative will promote agricultural management practices to reduce nitrate leaching from cropland which will protect groundwater from degradation. This will help ensure safe public and private drinking water sources over the long-term.

- **Vision: All Minnesotans value water and take actions to sustain and protect it.**
 - **Goal 1: Build capacity of local communities to protect and sustain water resources.**

The southeast groundwater protection and soil health initiative will help build local capacity by working directly with farmers/producers to implement soil health practices on their private lands, thus protecting water quality and also improving soil health. This relates directly to the action step of supporting local efforts to engage farmers in water quality efforts.

Interconnection

Please list other Clean Water Fund-supported programs it informs and/or is informed by. Please briefly describe for each (up to 50 words) how Clean Water Funds add to existing efforts.

Connected CWF-supported programs:

- **Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA), and Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) reponse to a 2023 community petition to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regarding high nitrate levels in private wells in southeastern Minnesota counties.**
 - **Phase I: Immediate response for alternative water**
 - **Phase II: Public health intervention**
 - ***Phase I and Phase II work has been funded through Clean Water Fund programs such as the MDA Private Well Protection Program and non-Clean Water Fund programs (legislative appropriations).***
 - **Phase III: Long-term nitrate reduction strategies**
 - ***This proposal directly supports phase III to accelerate long-term strategies to address nitrogen reduction on the landscape.***

Connected non-CWF-supported programs:

- **Southeast Minnesota Nitrate Strategies Collaborative Working Group (aligning with Phase III multi-agency effort to address nitrate contamination in southeast Minnesota groundwater)**
 - ***The proposal directly applies to recommendation one of the working group report to “promote and incentivize policy and programs with the goal of increasing living cover for longer periods” including actions to “replicate programs like the Olmsted Groundwater Protection and Soil Health model to other counties throughout the region”.***

Non-CWF Funding

Will this program receive or request other funding from non-CWF sources, or eventually leverage non-CWF sources?

If so, please describe what funds are being leveraged, the anticipated amount, and your degree of certainty that the funding is secure. Feel free to add rows if needed.

Funding Source	Anticipated Amount	Degree of Security (%)
LCCMR	\$2,817,000	90%

If additional description or elaboration is needed, please include here. (50 words max)

The 2025 Legislature allocated \$75,000 to evaluate the practice performance and economic performance of the Olmsted groundwater protection and soil health initiative. The allocation does not allow for the implementation of practices but demonstrates legislative interest in the program with potential to bolster a future statewide nitrate reduction program.

Long-term funding vision

- If this proposal is funded, should the Clean Water Council expect future (beyond FY28-29) requests to increase, decrease, or stay about the same? (Do not factor inflation into your answer.)
 - Increase
 - Decrease
 - Stay the same
- Do you have an anticipated end date for funding need? If so, when? Unsure _____
- Do you intend to continue this program past 2034 in some capacity? Yes No Unsure

We do not anticipate the incentive payments to continue indefinitely, but for a duration of time that will sustain the adoption of agricultural best management practices. The program could also be expanded to other parts of the state.

Funding Recipients

Please state as a percentage the amount of funding from this request that is anticipated to be pass-through to a non-state agency entity.

100 %

Engagement and Community Value

- How have program beneficiaries been engaged in the development or evolution of this program? Who are the program partners, if any? (150 words)

When developing the pilot program, the Olmsted SWCD staff and Olmsted County Commissioners convened meetings with program beneficiaries such as farmers in the county to determine what practices would have the greatest impact on water quality and soil health, program requirements, and incentivize producer participation. Ten additional SWCDs in the region will be partners going forward. In addition, the program aligns with the mission of many partner organizations and they have promoted and supported the expansion of the program (partners such as Minnesota Farmers Union, Minnesota Farm Bureau, Land Stewardship Project, Green Acres Milling, Minnesota Grazing Lands Conservation Association, University of Minnesota Extension, Minnesota Office of Soil Health, Minnesota Soil Health Coalition, and Cover Crop Seed Dealers).

- Please describe how this program advances environmental justice and promotes equity. (150 words)

The proposed program includes a cap on acreage and payment which allows for more farmers to participate in contrast to other cost-share programs, promoting equity among farmers regardless of size of the operation. Additionally, protecting groundwater from contamination

benefits all people but especially those who are most vulnerable to drinking contaminated water (low-income, elderly, very young etc.). Olmsted County has been implementing the regional TAP-IN program to address the immediate public health response needs in the region. Through this work we have learned that 46% of the families requesting mitigation assistance have a demonstrated need – either a higher health risk from exposure to nitrate or a financial need (less than 300% of the Federal Poverty Level).

- If this has been funded through Clean Water Funds in the past, please share 1-3 recent examples of outreach conducted by this program. Links or attachments are allowable. **NA**

CWF Communication Plan

For both new and returning applicants, please describe (under 100 words) or attach the plan for communicating with the public and pass-through recipients about the Clean Water Fund.

Upon approval of the Clean Water Fund appropriation, counties and SWCDs in the region will issue press releases and share updates on social media highlighting the Clean Water Fund and Clean Water Land and Legacy Amendment’s role in expanding the project regionally. The program website will feature the Amendment’s logo, a link to the organization, and details on how funding made the project possible. Farmers will receive a bulk mailing about participation opportunities and the funding source. Additional outreach strategies may include recommendations from the Clean Water Council.

PRIOR APPROPRIATIONS	
FY10-11	
FY12-13	
FY14-15	
FY16-17	
FY18-19	
FY20-21	
FY22-23	
FY24-25	
FY26-27	
TOTAL APPROPRIATED TO DATE	

FY28 Request	FY29 Request	FY28-29 TOTAL REQUEST
\$9,000,000	\$9,000,000	\$18,000,000

[For agency applicants: don’t fill out the FY28-29 until you receive agency approval. We will update the form at that time. Until then, please include “New”, “Hold steady”, “Increase”, or “Decrease”.]

State Employees

If applicable, indicate the number the full-time state employees supported by the CWF for this program.

FY10-11	
FY12-13	
FY14-15	

FY16-17	
FY18-19	
FY20-21	
FY22-23	
FY24-25	
FY26-27	

FY28-29 CLEAN WATER FUND PROPOSAL

Program Title:	Water Demand Reduction/Efficiency Grant Program
Program Number (if applicable):	35
Agency/Organization Name:	Metropolitan Council
Program website:	Water Efficiency Grant Program - Metropolitan Council

Program Contact	
Name	Henry McCarthy
Email	Henry.McCarthy@metc.state.mn.us
Phone	651-602-1946

Person Filling Out Form	
Name	Judy Sventek
Email	Judy.Sventek@metc.state.mn.us
Phone	651-602-1156

Eligibility Requirements

Proposers must confirm that their proposal meets basic statutory eligibility. Please check each box that applies to certify the following:

Eligible Use of Funds: Requested funds will be used in accordance with Minnesota law and Clean Water Fund requirements, outlined in full in [Minnesota Statutes 114D.50 Subd. 3](#). This includes confirmation that this funding request supplements rather than supplants previous non-legacy state funding.

Accounting and Reporting Capacity: The proposing organization has experience with or ability to meet accounting and reporting requirements in order ensure appropriate use of funds, as stipulated in [Minnesota Statutes 114.50 Subd. 4](#).

Mandate Alignment (if applicable): This proposal supports or fulfills state or federal mandates (i.e. TMDL, Nonpoint Source Pollution, Nutrient Reduction Strategy, Wild Rice protection, etc.).

If yes, please cite applicable statute or rule: _____

Abstract

Provide a summary (up to 100 words) that clearly states the purpose of the program, its intended water quality impact, and who it serves. The content here will largely be used as a brief summary when looking across programs, so some degree of redundancy is anticipated with other content in the form.

The program provides grants to assist municipalities in the 7 county Twin Cities metro area as they implement water demand reduction and water efficiency measures to ensure the reliability and protection of drinking water supplies and support resiliency of water suppliers. This program provides funding to residents in the region that currently get their drinking water from a municipality to purchase water efficient appliances which reduces the demand on ground and surface water sources. It also provides funds to communities that supply water to improve the efficiencies of their systems and facilities, also reducing water use and demand on our valued water resources.

Water Quality Impact

Which step of the [Water Management Framework](#) does this program most fit under:

Overall, how will this program protect, enhance, and restore water quality in lakes, rivers, and streams, protect groundwater from degradation, or protect drinking water sources. Please limit your response to 200 words.

This program is a critical step for implementing actions aimed at protecting groundwater from degradation and protecting drinking water sources. State regulators require water suppliers to reduce water use and increase water conservation and efficiency. This requirement preserves limited groundwater, allows adjacent users to better share aquifer resources, and maximizes the value of existing infrastructure investments. By providing financial assistance to incentivize communities to implement water demand reduction measures in municipalities, the program reduces reliance on groundwater which will help in preventing groundwater degradation in locations around the region, will ensure the reliability and protection of drinking water supplies, and will support resiliency of water suppliers. More recently this program has been expanded to provide a portion of the grant funds to help low-income people living install energy efficient toilets thus reducing their water bills while reducing water demand on their sources of drinking water.

Measurable Outcomes and Progress

Responses for each bullet (e.g. 1a, 1b, etc.) should be limited to 50-100 words.

1. Expected Outcomes for FY28–29 Request:
 - Describe measurable and outcome-based goals for the current funding request.

There are 41 communities participating in the 2024-2026 program. The Water Efficiency Grant Program provides grants to cities, who in turn offer rebates to residents. The rebates are an incentive to replace older, less-efficient clothes washing machines, toilets, dishwashers, showerheads, irrigation controllers, and spray sprinkler bodies with Energy Star and U.S. EPA Water Sense-labeled devices. The program also funds irrigation system audits. Thus far, the 2024-2026 program has funded the replacement of 3,865 devices and nine audits that will save an estimated 36.5 million gallons of water per year. More than \$500,000 in rebates were funded in 2024 and the first three quarters of 2025. We expect

similar numbers for the new FY28/29 program.

- a. Describe how outcomes will be tracked, evaluated, and reported.

Outcomes are generally tracked through water efficient devices purchased and based on specs for those devices. Municipalities submit estimated annual water savings for each device that receives funding through the program. For devices used at municipal facilities, we will be asking for pre and post water usage data to track the reductions. The increase in requests for funding and number of communities participating suggest that the program continues to increase awareness about water efficiency and support water efficiency goals set by communities.

- b. (If applicable) For past recipients, describe any planned changes to this program from previous funding cycles, if any.

We have added in equity criteria to the grant program. The program still funds the purchase of water efficient appliances and audits of water systems but in the case of rebates for people who qualify as low income, there is no match required for their purchase. We also plan to offer grant money to municipalities to conduct device replacements and landscape transition on municipal properties. This possible addition to the program received positive feedback from municipalities when surveyed.

2. Outcomes from Prior Clean Water Fund Appropriations (if applicable):

- a. How would you characterize progress made to date? As much as is possible, include outcomes achieved as they relate to the program purpose.

In FY16-17, the Metropolitan Council awarded grants to nineteen communities in the metro area. Estimated water saved from the first cycle of the program is 52 million gallons annually. In FY20-21, the number of communities participating in the program doubled. It was estimated that 96 million gallons were saved. FY22-23 included the end of the second program cycle and the beginning of the third program cycle. Water savings from grant activities that occurred during FY22-23 were estimated to be more than 72 million gallons annually. FY24-25 included the end of the third program cycle and the beginning of the fourth program cycle. Water savings from grant activities that occurred during FY24-25 were estimated to be more than 62 million gallons annually. Over the lifespan of this program, participant numbers have grown from 19 municipalities to 41.

- b. How close is the program to reaching its long-term goals?

While we continue to get increased requests for funding and increases in community participation, we feel we can adequately meet the needs with minimal to no increase in funding requests. The continued strong interest in this program suggests the need for the continuation of this program.

Alignment with Clean Water Council Strategic Plan

For each relevant goal or strategy in the Clean Water Council's Strategic Plan, list the applicable item and briefly explain (50-100 words) how this proposal helps fulfill that objective.

Additionally, please list any other statewide or federal plan this effort supports.

- This program is most applicable to helping to implement the Clean Water Council Groundwater Vision that groundwater is clean and available to all in Minnesota. It supports the Clean Water Council's Groundwater Goal #1 under that vision *"to protect groundwater from degradation and support effective measures to restore degraded groundwater"* and the strategy under that goal *"to develop and carry out strategies that will protect and restore groundwater statewide"*.

The water efficiency grant program reduces water use and demand on the groundwater aquifers, thus helping to support sustainable and available water for drinking water purposes in the Twin Cities Metro Area.

- It also supports the Clean Water Council's Goal #2 under that vision *"to ensure groundwater use is sustainable and avoids adverse impacts to surface water features due to groundwater use"* and the strategy under that goal *"to develop and carry out strategies that promote sustainability of groundwater use"*.

The water efficiency grant program reduces water use and demand on the groundwater aquifers, thus helping to support sustainable and available water for drinking water purposes in the Twin Cities Metro Area as well as is more readily available to support our valued water resources where groundwater is a clear contributor to flow for those resources. Reduced use of groundwater reduces the demand on that aquifer for sources of water supplies and makes that water more available for groundwater and surface water interactions. For example, our groundwater resources feed our valued trout streams in the metro area.

- It supports the Clean Water Council's Vision that *"all Minnesotans value water and take actions to sustain and protect it"* as well as Goal #1 under that vision *"Build capacity of local communities to protect and sustain water resources"*.

This grant program is also a tool to communicate with Minnesotans of the value of our water and actions they can take to sustain and protect them by reducing their use of water which in turn makes more water available for our aquifers, lakes, rivers and streams.

Interconnection

Please list other Clean Water Fund-supported programs it informs and/or is informed by. Please briefly describe for each (up to 50 words) how Clean Water Funds add to existing efforts.

Connected CWF-supported programs: This program is strongly connected to the Metropolitan Council’s Clean Water funded Water Sustainability Program. This program adds to the work of our sustainability program where our goal is putting together projects that collectively contribute to having sustainable water resources in the region and thus Minnesota.

Connected non-CWF-supported programs: N/A

Non-CWF Funding

Will this program receive or request other funding from non-CWF sources, or eventually leverage non-CWF sources?

This grant program uses matching funds from local water suppliers to incentivize wise use of our precious water resources.

Funding for this requirement has not been provided through other means. By providing financial assistance to incentivize communities to implement water demand reduction measures in municipalities, the program reduces reliance on groundwater which will help in preventing groundwater degradation in locations around the region, will ensure the reliability and protection of drinking water supplies, and will support resiliency of water suppliers.

If so, please describe what funds are being leveraged, the anticipated amount, and your degree of certainty that the funding is secure. Feel free to add rows if needed.

Funding Source	Anticipated Amount	Degree of Security (%)
<i>Ex. Private landowner contributions</i>	<i>\$100,000</i>	<i>100%</i>

If additional description or elaboration is needed, please include here. (50 words max)

Long-term funding vision

- If this proposal is funded, should the Clean Water Council expect future (beyond FY28-29) requests to increase, decrease, or stay about the same? (Do not factor inflation into your answer.)
 - Increase
 - Decrease
 - Stay the same
- Do you have an anticipated end date for funding need? If so, when? No X
- Do you intend to continue this program past 2034 in some capacity? Yes No X
Unsure

Funding Recipients

Please state as a percentage the amount of funding from this request that is anticipated to be pass-through to a non-state agency entity.

100 % pass through.

Engagement and Community Value

- How have program beneficiaries been engaged in the development or evolution of this program? Who are the program partners, if any? (150 words)

The following communities have been involved with the development and evolution of this program over the years. Beneficiaries of this program have helped shape changes over the years to the program requirements and focus. We periodically send out surveys to communities in the program to see how we can improve it.

Community	Funds Expended for 2016-2017	Funds Expended for 2020-2022	Funds Expended for 2022-2024	Funds Expended for 2024-2026 (as of 9/30/2025)
Apple Valley	-	\$25,625.29	\$39,721.82	\$27,737.95
Arden Hills	-	-	-	\$5,414.64
Bayport	-	-	\$8,000.00	\$2,210.69
Bloomington	-	\$21,000.00	\$21,120.00	\$7,440.00
Brooklyn Center	-	\$1,108.94	-	-
Brooklyn Park	\$5,681.25	\$10,272.07	\$13,000.00	\$4,163.48
Centerville	-	-	-	\$1,533.18
Chanhassen	\$13,965.10	\$19,300.00	\$10,320.00	\$4,080.00
Chaska	-	\$14,000.00	-	-
Circle Pines	\$4,605.75	-	\$8,537.56	-
Coon Rapids	-	-	\$25,910.34	\$9,703.29
Cottage Grove	\$5,677.46	\$27,300.00	\$50,470.24	\$40,359.25
Dayton	-	\$ 289.50	-	-
Eagan	\$40,174.84	\$13,927.50	\$37,504.00	\$11,976.00
Eden Prairie	\$37,499.99	\$39,065.37	\$25,891.88	\$8,390.54
Farmington	-	\$10,393.40	\$15,324.70	\$6,676.94
Forest Lake	\$7,762.50	\$2,550.00	\$12,200.00	\$4,200.00
Fridley	\$6,912.70	\$23,898.06	\$11,612.42	\$12,221.18
Hopkins	-	\$19,000.00	-	\$9,149.47
Hugo	\$71,509.86	\$29,565.00	\$36,000.00	-

Lake Elmo	-	\$15,394.77	\$13,585.39	\$4,994.35
Lakeville	-	\$29,456.15	\$23,886.80	\$25,433.47
Lino Lakes	-	-	\$12,024.00	\$6,669.42
Little Canada	-	-	-	\$1,600.00
Mahtomedi	\$3,225.00	\$2,437.50	-	-
Maple Grove	-	-	\$19,981.18	\$9,650.59
Minnetonka	-	\$13,052.05	\$19,499.47	\$23,225.89
Mounds View	-	-	-	\$23,200.00
New Brighton	\$49,999.97	\$14,625.00	\$24,160.00	\$28,160.16
Newport	\$525.00	-	-	-
North St Paul	-	\$20,229.22	\$26,956.95	\$18,959.62
Oakdale	-	\$1,315.63	-	-
Plymouth	\$25,250.00	\$33,300.00	\$47,000.00	\$24,049.56
Prior Lake	-	\$4,037.17	\$14,893.42	\$1,356.87
Ramsey	-	\$26,124.19	\$19,800.00	\$9,335.94
Robbinsdale	-	\$5,900.80	\$7,414.20	\$5,480.35
Rosemount	\$12,541.25	\$11,300.00	\$25,784.36	\$9,253.22
Roseville	-	\$2,819.88	\$20,000.00	\$19,723.44
Saint Paul Regional Water Services	-	-	\$250,000.00	\$24,528.00
Savage	-	\$11,000.00	\$22,351.62	-
Shakopee Public Utilities	\$12,903.86	\$19,915.35	\$33,606.19	\$15,525.15
Shoreview	-	\$9,360.33	\$7,758.42	\$7,551.04
Shorewood	-	\$9,372.07	\$5,623.20	\$1,920.00
St Louis Park	-	\$23,000.00	\$34,823.27	\$33,845.39
Stillwater	-	-	\$31,648.76	\$16,269.52
Vadnais Heights	-	-	-	\$3,314.15
Victoria	\$9,000.00	\$11,578.85	\$5,062.66	\$3,471.22
White Bear Lake	\$63,731.03	\$33,791.43	\$8,764.15	\$13,201.48
White Bear Township	\$41,500.00	\$43,785.66	\$50,000.00	\$18,539.73
Woodbury	\$49,777.92	\$50,300.00	\$55,072.80	\$14,549.82

- Please describe how this program advances environmental justice and promotes equity. (150 words)

The edition of equity criteria to this program helps advance our equity goals. Additional points are awarded for equity components when scoring applications. We also launched an equity pilot program for low-income and other qualifying residents where municipalities developed their own equity criteria, relying on datasets such as the MPCA's Environmental Justice Areas, Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Qualified Census Tracts, Opportunity Zones, and Economically

Distressed Areas. For this pilot program, 100% pass through awards have been awarded to low income residents in the equity dataset areas. We are still in the early stages of this pilot but hope to share success results in the future.

- If this has been funded through Clean Water Funds in the past, please share 1-3 recent examples of outreach conducted by this program. Links or attachments are allowable.

We post announcements for each new funding cycle.

We have had articles in our newsletters about the program.

This program is also promoted by the U of MN Turf Grass team.

CWF Communication Plan

For both new and returning applicants, please describe (under 100 words) or attach the plan for communicating with the public and pass-through recipients about the Clean Water Fund.

PRIOR APPROPRIATIONS	
FY10-11	
FY12-13	
FY14-15	
FY16-17	\$500,000
FY18-19	\$0
FY20-21	\$750,000
FY22-23	\$1,250,000
FY24-25	\$1,500,000
FY27-27	\$1,400,000
TOTAL APPROPRIATED TO DATE	\$5,400,000

FY28 Request	FY29 Request	FY28-29 TOTAL REQUEST
Hold Steady	Hold Steady	TBD

[For agency applicants: don't fill out the FY28-29 until you receive agency approval. We will update the form at that time. Until then, please include "New", "Hold steady", "Increase", or "Decrease".]

State Employees

If applicable, indicate the number the full-time state employees supported by the CWF for this program.

FY10-11	0
FY12-13	0
FY14-15	0
FY16-17	0
FY18-19	0
FY20-21	0
FY22-23	0

FY24-25	0
FY26-27	0

FY28-29 CLEAN WATER FUND PROPOSAL

Program Title:	Culvert Replacement Incentive Program
Program Number (if applicable):	XX
Agency/Organization Name:	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
Program website:	https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/eco/streamhab/geomorphology/index.html ; https://www.legacy.mn.gov/projects/modern-culverts

Program Contact	
Name	Jamison Wendel
Email	jamison.wendel@state.mn.us
Phone	651-259-5661

Person Filling Out Form	
Name	Daniel O’Shea
Email	Daniel.oshea@state.mn.us
Phone	651-259-5127

1. Eligibility Requirements

Proposers must confirm that their proposal meets basic statutory eligibility. Please check each box that applies to certify the following:

Eligible Use of Funds: Requested funds will be used in accordance with Minnesota law and Clean Water Fund requirements, outlined in full in [Minnesota Statutes 114D.50 Subd. 3](#). This includes confirmation that this funding request supplements rather than supplants previous non-legacy state funding.

Accounting and Reporting Capacity: The proposing organization has experience with or ability to meet accounting and reporting requirements in order ensure appropriate use of funds, as stipulated in [Minnesota Statutes 114.50 Subd. 4](#).

Mandate Alignment (if applicable): This proposal supports or fulfills state or federal mandates (i.e. TMDL, Nonpoint Source Pollution, Nutrient Reduction Strategy, Wild Rice protection, etc.).

If yes, please cite applicable statute or rule: _____

2. Abstract

Provide a summary (up to 100 words) that clearly states the purpose of the program, its intended water quality impact, and who it serves. The content here will largely be used as a brief summary when looking across programs, so some degree of redundancy is anticipated with other content in the form.

The Culvert Replacement Incentive Program helps Minnesota communities modernize the state's more than 65,000 road-stream crossings by providing design expertise and funding natural channel and floodplain designs using the geomorphic approach. The program delivers three primary benefits. It ensures cleaner water by reducing soil erosion and allowing natural areas to filter pollutants. It supports healthier ecosystems by restoring fish passage and habitat. It also strengthens infrastructure, lowering maintenance costs and reducing the risk of washouts during floods. Ultimately, the program encourages local governments to adopt these high-performing designs as the standard for all future road projects.

3. Water Quality Impact

- a. Which step of the [Minnesota Water Management Framework](#) does this program most fit under: Implementation; and Problem Investigation and Applied Research
- b. *Overall, how will this program protect, enhance, and restore water quality in lakes, rivers, and streams, protect groundwater from degradation, or protect drinking water sources. Please limit your response to 200 words.*

Minnesota's road-stream intersections frequently act as hydraulic constrictions whether undersized at design or because of sediment deposition. These undersized structures, combined with intensified precipitation, disrupt floodplain connectivity and trigger excessive sediment and nutrient loading in downstream catchments. The Culvert Replacement Program uses field-derived geomorphic data and advanced hydraulic modeling to implement designs that restore natural stream function and water quality.

The program achieves restoration through three primary mechanisms. First, by sizing culverts to accommodate bankfull discharge, the design ensures effective sediment transport and prevents upstream aggradation and downstream scour. Second, by restoring lateral and longitudinal connectivity, the design mitigates high-velocity "firehose" effects and shear stress during peak flows. Third, integrated floodplain culverts facilitate overbank flow, using the floodplain as a natural sink for nutrient processing.

These enhancements provide measurable water quality benefits: reconnected floodplains capture phosphorus-bound sediments and increase nitrogen removal through denitrification in riparian soils. Furthermore, restored connectivity promotes streambank infiltration and groundwater recharge, stabilizing baseflows and enhancing thermal regimes for aquatic biota. By adopting these standards, local governments transition from reactive maintenance to a proactive model of watershed-scale resilience, protecting both infrastructure and regional water chemistry from degradation.

4. Measurable Outcomes and Progress

Limit responses to 50-100 words for each question below.

a. *Expected Outcomes for FY28–29 Request*

i. *Describe measurable and outcome-based goals for the current funding request.*

We anticipate 10-12 culvert projects being completed and providing data collection and design consultation on an additional 10-20 main channel and floodplain culvert projects. These projects will improve fish passage, reduce flooding risks, and strengthen stream resilience by replacing undersized or failing culverts with structures that better match natural stream conditions. The work will also help communities make informed decisions about future projects by generating site-specific data and guidance that lead to safer, more durable crossings and healthier aquatic ecosystems.

ii. *Describe how outcomes will be tracked, evaluated, and reported.*

We document each completed project with a report including pictures. All projects will be georeferenced in the Watershed Health Assessment Framework (WHAF). Projects will be evaluated to refine future implementation.

iii. *(If applicable) For past recipients, describe any planned changes to this program from previous funding cycles, if any.*

N/A

b. *Outcomes from Prior Clean Water Fund Appropriations (if applicable):*

i. *How would you characterize progress made to date? As much as is possible, include outcomes achieved as they relate to the program purpose.*

We have completed or nearly completed eight projects across eight counties. In addition to these eight projects, we have engaged with local communities in nine other counties regarding potential projects. Water quality has been improved by reduced erosion and restored floodplain connectivity, biology has been improved by restored fish passage and habitat conditions, and flood risks have been reduced at each of the eight projects. Participating communities are adopting the geomorphic approach into their road designs on public water courses.

Project	County	Status	Project Cost	Grant Cost Share
Cascade	Olmsted	Completed	\$770,568	\$185,635
Tributary to Crow River	Wright	Completed	\$280,716	\$70,179
Dry Run	Dakota	Completed	\$262,710	\$65,677
Yellow Medicine River	Lincoln	Completed	\$489,018	\$122,254
Mud Lake	Blue Earth	In-Progress	\$79,865	\$19,966
Florida Creek	Yellow Medicine	In-Progress	\$741,121	\$185,280
Mill Creek	Stearns	In-Progress	\$724,915	\$181,228
Rabbit Creek	Aitkin	In-Progress	\$148,620	\$37,155

ii. *How close is the program to reaching its long-term goals?*

Due of the large number of stream-road crossings, the culvert replacement schedule, and the mandate to address water quality and ecological condition, it is expected that the program will continue past 2034.

5. Alignment with Clean Water Council Strategic Plan

- a. For each relevant goal or strategy in the [Clean Water Council's Strategic Plan](#), list the applicable item and briefly explain (50-100 words) how this proposal helps fulfill that objective.
- Groundwater: Goals 1: Protecting groundwater from degradation and support effective measures to restore groundwater.
 - Reconnecting the channel with its floodplain through using the geomorphic approach improves flood storage, slows flows, and increases residence time, enabling gradual infiltration that, cumulatively recharges and protects groundwater resources.
 - Drinking Water Source Protection through Goal 1 (Public Water Systems) and Goal 2 (Private Water Supply Wells).
 - As a nature-based design, the geomorphic approach protects drinking water by slowing flows, reducing erosion, and allowing water to be naturally filtered as it moves into the ground. These processes help protect groundwater used by public water systems and private wells, while also reducing nutrient and sediment pollution in lakes and rivers that supply drinking water.
 - Surface Water Protection and Restoration: Goal 3: Protect and restore surface water to achieve 70% swimmable and 67% fishable waters by 2034 through statewide, regional, or issue-specific programs that help meet water quality goals but are not necessarily prioritized and targeted according to geography.
 - Using a geomorphic approach to culvert replacement stabilizes stream channels by reducing erosion, shear stress, and unnatural flow velocities. This improves fish passage and limits sediment delivery to downstream waters. When applied at headwaters and other areas of a watershed, these improvements translate into enhanced water quality in downstream lakes and rivers, supporting broader water quality and recreational goals across state and regional programs.
 - All Minnesotans value water and take actions to sustain and protect it. Goal 1: Building capacity of local communities to protect and sustain water resources.
 - Minnesota's culvert replacement program protects water by aligning infrastructure with nature. Rather than just moving water quickly, this geomorphic approach uses nature-based designs to support healthy streams, fish and lakes.
 - By partnering with local communities through grants and conversation, the program allows for firsthand experience with these sustainable methods. These

real-world projects build the knowledge and confidence necessary for future nature-based designs, fostering long-term stewardship of Minnesota's vital water resources.

b. Please list any other statewide or federal plan this effort supports.

- FEMA and State Floodplain Requirements:
 - Geomorphic culvert designs reconnect streams to their floodplains, reducing flood risk by lowering water surface elevations and decreasing the likelihood of road overtopping. This approach supports FEMA and state floodplain requirements by improving floodplain function and reducing impacts during high-flow events. In support of the Geomorphic Approach as a nature-based design, FEMA approved waiving the fees for LOMR and CLOMR submittals that utilize this approach.

6. Interconnection

Please list other Clean Water Fund-supported programs it informs and/or is informed by. Please briefly describe for each (up to 50 words) how Clean Water Funds add to existing efforts.

a. Connected CWF-supported programs:

- Consulted on Outdoor Heritage Fund stream restoration and dam removal project sites that involve culvert design.
- Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies (WRAPS): The geomorphic data from the WRAPS Program informs culvert and channel design for the Culvert Replacement Incentive Program. The program's data are also shared with the WRAPS program and entered into the Stream Geomorphology Survey Database for use in additional channel work.
- Watershed Health Assessment Framework (WHAF): Culvert replacement projects sites will be georeferenced and displayed in the WHAF map application as a data layer.
- Stream Flow Monitoring: Accurate culvert and channel design relies on Regional Curves relating channel dimensions and stream flow. Increasing both the number of geomorphic sites and stream flow monitoring sites ensures design precision.

b. Connected non-CWF-supported programs:

- Get Out More projects: Working closely with GOM team to implement projects within their work in Le Sueur County (Gorman Creek and Todd Creek).
- Various local and township funding sources available across Minnesota

7. Non-CWF Funding

- a. Will this program receive or request other funding from non-CWF sources, or eventually leverage non-CWF sources?

Yes.

- b. If so, please describe what funds are being leveraged, the anticipated amount, and your degree of certainty that the funding is secure. Feel free to add rows if needed.

Funding Source	Anticipated Amount	Degree of Security (%)
Local Communities	75% of project cost	75%

- c. If additional description or elaboration is needed, please include here. (50 words max)

To improve equity for smaller communities, we've replaced the 75% match requirement with four funding tiers, dependent on total project cost:

- Under \$25,000: 100% project cost covered
- \$25,000 – \$100,000: \$25,000 grant
- \$100,000 – \$800,000: 25% of project costs covered
- Over \$800,000: Grant is capped at \$200,000

This new structure ensures fairer support across all project sizes.

8. Long-term funding vision

- a. If this proposal is funded, should the Clean Water Council expect future (beyond FY28-29) requests to increase, decrease, or stay about the same? (Do not factor in inflation.)

Increase

Decrease

Stay the same

- b. Do you have an anticipated end date for funding need? If so, when? _____

No

- c. Do you intend to continue this program past 2034 in some capacity? Yes No Unsure

9. Funding Recipients

Please state as a percentage the amount of funding from this request that is anticipated to be pass-through to a non-state agency entity. 60 %

10. Engagement and Community Value

- a. *How have program beneficiaries been engaged in the development or evolution of this program? Who are the program partners, if any? (150 words)*

The Culvert Replacement Incentive program is a collaborative partnership between local governments (townships, cities, and counties), consulting firms, MnDOT, and the DNR. Engagement begins at the conceptual stage and continues through an iterative design process. Initial discussions focus on aligning program goals such as reducing channel instability, reconnecting floodplains and fish passage with specific community needs for the crossing. Partners conduct joint site visits and data collection to ensure local conditions are fully understood. Regular meetings allow partners to refine projects. The tiered funding approach for less expensive projects described in 7c is based on feedback from townships where recently constructed channel crossings are experiencing overtopping and erosion. These issues stem from a lack of floodplain connectivity in the original designs and the townships lack of additional funds to install floodplain culverts.

- b. *Please describe how this program advances environmental justice and promotes equity. (150 words)*

Clean water is essential to all Minnesotans. The DNR joins other agencies in striving to foster environmental justice, engage multiple ways of knowing, and striving to lead in diversity, equity, and inclusion, per the state's 2025 Nonpoint Priority Funding Plan. DEI is also a DNR strategic plan priority via increasing staff's cultural competence, creating a workforce that reflects Minnesota, and continuing to strengthen tribal consultation and build partnerships with diverse communities.

Equity is directly embedded in our project evaluations. Projects receive additional scoring points if they benefit underserved populations or address documented environmental justice concerns. To ensure investments reach communities with the greatest need, we use demographic data from the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) and historical insights from the EPA's EJScreen.

- c. *If this has been funded through Clean Water Funds in the past, please share 1-3 recent examples of outreach conducted by this program. Links or attachments are allowable.*

- Legacy Amendment logo signage is placed at all construction sites.
- Site specific outreach on the geomorphic approach – for example Wright County Road designers, 2025 and Hay Creek Township Board Goodhue County, 2025
- Promote the geomorphic approach and river science nationally - FEMA's Cooperating Technical Partners Seminar, Emergency Management Institute (2024).

11. CWF Communication Plan

For both new and returning applicants, please describe (under 100 words) or attach the plan for communicating with the public and pass-through recipients about the Clean Water Fund.

We recognize that continued CWF support will only be possible if the public sees the fund at work through stories, videos, field days, awards, and other means. We prominently display the Legacy Amendment logo on program materials and strive to ensure that beneficiaries understand that our staff are available thanks to the CWF. The program displays the Legacy Amendment logo during presentations, at the culvert replacement location, and on the program website.

12. Prior Appropriations

FY10-11	N/A
FY12-13	N/A
FY14-15	N/A
FY16-17	N/A
FY18-19	N/A
FY20-21	N/A
FY22-23	N/A
FY24-25	\$2,000,000
FY26-27	\$2,800,000
TOTAL APPROPRIATED TO DATE	\$4,800,000

13. FY28-29 Funding Request

FY28 Request	FY29 Request	FY28-29 TOTAL REQUEST
Hold steady	Hold steady	Hold steady

14. State Employees

If applicable, indicate the number the full-time state employees supported by the CWF for this program.

FY10-11	N/A
FY12-13	N/A
FY14-15	N/A
FY16-17	N/A
FY18-19	N/A
FY20-21	N/A
FY22-23	N/A
FY24-25	2.6
FY26-27	2.6

FY28-29 CLEAN WATER FUND PROPOSAL

Program Title:	Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP)
Program Number (if applicable):	33
Agency/Organization Name:	Minnesota Department of Agriculture
Program website:	www.MyLandMyLegacy.com

Program Contact	
Name	Brad Jordahl Redlin
Email	brad.jordahlredlin@state.mn.us
Phone	651-200-5307

Person Filling Out Form	
Name	Brad Jordahl Redlin
Email	brad.jordahlredlin@state.mn.us
Phone	651-200-5307

Eligibility Requirements

Proposers must confirm that their proposal meets basic statutory eligibility. Please check each box that applies to certify the following:

Eligible Use of Funds: Requested funds will be used in accordance with Minnesota law and Clean Water Fund requirements, outlined in full in [Minnesota Statutes 114D.50 Subd. 3](#). This includes confirmation that this funding request supplements rather than supplants previous non-legacy state funding.

Accounting and Reporting Capacity: The proposing organization has experience with or ability to meet accounting and reporting requirements in order ensure appropriate use of funds, as stipulated in [Minnesota Statutes 114.50 Subd. 4](#).

Mandate Alignment (if applicable): This proposal supports or fulfills state or federal mandates (i.e. TMDL, Nonpoint Source Pollution, Nutrient Reduction Strategy, Wild Rice protection, etc.).

If yes, please cite applicable statute or rule: MS 17.9891-17.993

Abstract

Provide a summary (up to 100 words) that clearly states the purpose of the program, its intended water quality impact, and who it serves. The content here will largely be used as a brief summary when looking across programs, so some degree of redundancy is anticipated with other content in the form.

The Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP) is a first-of-its-kind, voluntary initiative that supports the adoption of conservation practices on a field-by-field and whole-farm basis, whether the land is owned or rented. The program uses a comprehensive risk assessment process that evaluates every parcel and cropping scenario to identify and mitigate potential impacts to water quality. Producers work one-on-one with local agronomic and conservation professionals to assess risks and implement proven practices that protect water quality. This level of individualized, whole-farm evaluation and direct technical support is unmatched by any other program in the nation and provides a uniquely effective approach to protecting Minnesota's water resources.

Water Quality Impact

Which step of the [Water Management Framework](#) does this program most fit under: Implementation

Overall, how will this program protect, enhance, and restore water quality in lakes, rivers, and streams, protect groundwater from degradation, or protect drinking water sources. Please limit your response to 200 words.

The MAWQCP is a first-of-its-kind partnership among federal and state agencies and private industry, designed to protect water quality on a field-by-field, whole-farm basis. The program uses a comprehensive risk-assessment process that evaluates all resource concerns across an entire farm operation. Every acre, rented or owned, is assessed for each crop grown or land use through on-site inspection and review of management records, including soil characteristics, fertilizer and pesticide applications, tillage, irrigation and drainage practices, manure use, existing conservation measures, ground cover, and long-term precipitation trends. This evaluation identifies existing or potential risks to surface and groundwater. All identified risks must be fully mitigated through management changes and conservation practices to achieve certification, which is maintained through a 10-year contract. The BMPs and conservation practices implemented through the MAWQCP are established, scientifically supported, and consistent with standards used in other conservation programs including the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) administered by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources' (BWSR) One Watershed One Plan program, and local Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) programs.

Measurable Outcomes and Progress

Responses for each bullet (e.g. 1a, 1b, etc.) should be limited to 50-100 words.

1. Expected Outcomes for FY28–29 Request:

a. Describe measurable and outcome-based goals for the current funding request.

The current funding request will support continued progress toward the Clean Water Council's goal of 5,100 farms and 6.5 million acres enrolled by 2030. With 1,739 farms and 1,234,189 acres certified as of December 2025, this funding will enable additional outreach, technical assistance, and verification activities needed to accelerate progress toward those 2030 targets. Funding also will advance the program's ability to report certification outcomes. To date, producers have implemented 7,872 conservation

practices and management changes, resulting in reductions of soil erosion, sediment loss, phosphorous loss, and nitrogen leaching. Continued funding will generate additional reductions in pollutant loading in waters across Minnesota.

b. Describe how outcomes will be tracked, evaluated, and reported.

Outcomes are tracked and evaluated using state-approved tools, including:

- Sediment, soil, phosphorus reductions: BWSR Pollution Reduction Estimator, MPCA BEET, PTMapp, MinnFarm.
- Nitrogen effectiveness: USDA-NRCS Conservation Effects Assessment.
- Nitrogen application reductions: [Minnesota Nutrient Reduction Strategy – July 2025](#).

The MAWQCP reports practice adoption and associated pollutant-load reductions on a continuous basis. To date, 7,872 new practices have kept 59,483 tons of sediment, 166,325 tons of soil, and 76,184 pounds of phosphorous out of Minnesota waters each year, with up to 45% reductions in nitrogen loss. Certified farms also must follow the University of Minnesota rate guidelines, reducing nitrogen use by 20,000,000 pounds annually.

c. (If applicable) For past recipients, describe any planned changes to this program from previous funding cycles, if any.

The 2025 program year introduced a technical update that will continue in future funding cycles, in which the MAWQCP transitioned to the Risk Assessment and Planning Tool (RAPT) platform. RAPT records mitigations by specific resource concern, with major improvements for groundwater protection. It strengthens the focus on management changes needed to address water-quality risks and raises certification thresholds. The platform also improves pollution-reduction accounting and integrates calculators aligned with MPCA’s Nutrient Reduction Strategy and BEET Planner. RAPT further streamlines certification through integrated mapping and field assessment, and comprehensive data management.

2. Outcomes from Prior Clean Water Fund Appropriations (if applicable):

a. How would you characterize progress made to date? As much as is possible, include outcomes achieved as they relate to the program purpose.

As of December 2025, MAWQCP-certified farms demonstrated substantial environmental and economic outcomes. Certification has kept more than 1 million tons of soil and 500,000 pounds of phosphorous out of Minnesota waters. Through mandatory implementation of University of Minnesota nitrogen BMPs, certified farms have eliminated more than 100 million pounds of excess nitrogen from agricultural systems. In addition to these environmental benefits, Minnesota State Colleges researchers have documented six consecutive years in which MAWQCP-certified farms achieved higher average net income than non-certified farms—every year studied to date.

b. How close is the program to reaching its long-term goals?

The MAWQCP is making steady progress toward long-term goals outlined by the Clean Water Council. With 1.2 million certified acres, the program has reached one-fifth of the 6-million-acre goal, and with 1,739 certified farms, it has achieved one-third of the 5,100-farm goal, with five years remaining to hit those targets. By the end of FY28-29 biennium, the program is expected to prevent an additional 200,000 tons of sediment, 225,000 pounds of phosphorous, 500,000 tons of soil from entering Minnesota waters, and to add 70 million pounds to the total excess nitrogen removed by certified farms.

Alignment with Clean Water Council Strategic Plan

For each relevant goal or strategy in the Clean Water Council's Strategic Plan, list the applicable item and briefly explain (50-100 words) how this proposal helps fulfill that objective.

Groundwater Vision: Groundwater is clean and available to all in Minnesota.

Goal 1: Protect groundwater from degradation and support effective measures to restore degraded groundwater.

- **Strategy 2- Action 1: Complete plans and fund activities for protection and restoration of groundwater statewide using a major watershed scale**
 - The MAWQCP fulfills this objective by conducting whole-farm risk assessments on every acre of every participating operation, identifying all groundwater-related threats. The program requires mitigation of every identified risk and funds conservation practices that directly address groundwater resource concerns. In vulnerable groundwater areas, the MAWQCP mandates specific conservation treatment on all acres, ensuring reduced nitrate leaching and long-term protection of drinking water supplies.

- **Strategy 2- Action 3: Reduce nitrate contamination of groundwater**
 - The MAWQCP reduces nitrate contamination by auditing all fertilizer use on participating farms and requiring adherence to U of M guidelines for nitrogen rate, timing, source, and placement. These requirements ensure that nitrogen is applied at agronomically appropriate levels and in ways that minimize leaching risk. Following Minnesota's Nutrient Reduction Strategy, certified farms collectively reduce nitrogen application by more than 20 million pounds per year, significantly lowering the potential for nitrate leaching into vulnerable groundwater.

- **Strategy 2- Action 4: Reduce risk of pesticide contamination in groundwater.**
 - The MAWQCP audits all pesticide use by all participating farms and requires adoption of integrated pest management strategies and pesticide BMPs.

Goal 2: Ensure groundwater use is sustainable and avoid adverse impacts to surface water features due to groundwater use.

- **Strategy 3- Action 1: Implement water efficiency BMPs, water use reduction, and irrigation water management in areas of high-water use intensity by agricultural irrigators, highly sensitive areas, Groundwater Management Areas (GWMA), and highly vulnerable Drinking Water Source Management Areas (DWSMAs).**

- The MAWQCP audits all irrigation use by participating farms and requires adoption of water efficiency BMPs. The program also offers an Irrigation Water Management endorsement in partnership with the University of Minnesota's Irrigator Program, ensuing producers receive training and develop irrigation water-management plans that improve scheduling, application efficiency, and monitoring. These requirements directly reduce unnecessary water use and protect groundwater resources in high-use and vulnerable areas.

Drinking Water Source Protection Vision: Drinking water is safe for everyone, everywhere in Minnesota.

Goal 1: Public Water Systems--Ensure that users of public water systems have safe, sufficient, and equitable drinking water.

Strategy 2- Action 1: Support implementation funding and technical assistance to reduce nitrate in DWSMAs that are Level 1 and Level 2 under the GPR

- The MAWQCP reduces nitrate contamination by auditing all fertilizer use by all participating farms and requiring adherence to University of Minnesota guidelines for nitrogen rate, timing, source, and placement. These requirements ensure nitrogen is applied at agronomically appropriate levels, resulting in more than 20 million pounds less nitrogen applied each year, as outlined in Minnesota's Nutrient Reduction Strategy. In addition, the Groundwater Protection Rule recognizes MAWQCP-certification as a compliance pathway, reinforcing the program's role in preventing nitrate leaching and protecting vulnerable groundwater supplies.

- **Strategy 3- Action 1: Fund protective actions that assist public water suppliers in meeting safe drinking water levels.**

- The project funds implementation of water-efficiency BMPs, water-use reduction strategies, and irrigation water-management practices that reduce the potential for nitrate contamination of groundwater. These actions are especially critical in areas of high irrigation intensity, highly sensitive groundwater zones, Groundwater Management Areas, and vulnerable DWSMAs, where improper irrigation and nutrient movement pose elevated risk. These same practices also improve water-quality protection on farms outside these high-risk areas, ensuring consistent, science-based management that reduces nitrate movement into groundwater across the state.

Surface Water Protection and Restoration Vision: Minnesotans will have fishable and swimmable waters throughout the state.

Goal 2: Protect and restore surface waters to achieve 70% swimmable and 67% fishable waters by 2034 by prioritizing and targeting resources by major watershed.

- The MAWQCP--unique among local, state, and federal agricultural conservation programs--conducts whole-farm risk assessments of every acre of every participating farm identifying sources of threats to water quality, requires mitigation of all threats, and funds activities to treat those threats.

Goal 3: Protect and restore surface waters to achieve 70% swimmable and 67% fishable waters by 2034 through statewide, regional, or issue-specific programs that help meet water quality goals but are not necessarily prioritized and targeted according to geography.

- The MAWQCP--unique among local, state, and federal agricultural conservation programs--conducts whole-farm risk assessments of every acre of every participating farm identifying sources of threats to water quality, requires mitigation of all threats, and funds activities to treat those threats.

Vision: All Minnesotans value water and take actions to sustain and protect it.

Goal 1: Build capacity of local communities to protect and sustain water resources.

- **Strategy 1- Action 1: Support local efforts to engage farmers in water quality efforts.**
 - The MAWQCP strengthens local efforts to engage farmers in water-quality protection by providing consistent, statewide outreach and multiple points of connection that help local partners reach area producers effectively. This support includes:
 - Working through SWCDs statewide to provide local staff, technical assistance, and one-on-one engagement.
 - Sponsoring, exhibiting, and presenting at more than 30 conferences, events, trade shows, field days, webinars, or similar meetings each year.
 - Producing a weekly radio report that goes out on 53 radio stations statewide.
 - Publishing participant features in every issue of the Soybean Growers, Wheat Growers and Farm Bureau member magazines, plus garnering 110-plus earned media stories annually.
 - Maintaining formal outreach partnerships with agricultural service providers such as Centra Sota Cooperative and Anez Consulting.
- **Strategy 1- Action 2: Engage private well users to test their wells for five major contaminants.**
 - The MAWQCP maintains a list of well-testing providers and other services on the MDA's website and makes available the list to every MAWQCP-certified farm. In addition, the program publishes the list in every edition of the MAWQCP Insider newsletter.
- **Strategy 1- Action 7: Support innovative efforts that accelerate progress toward clean water goals.**
 - The MAWQCP advances clean-water progress by supporting innovating partnerships and emerging conservation strategies. Two examples:
 - Private-sector delivery partnerships: The program collaborates with agricultural suppliers and service providers to reach farmers through their existing business relationships. These partners receive training and coordinate outreach and promotion, expanding local capacity to engage producers in water-quality certification.
 - Forever Green Initiative (FGI) collaboration: The MAWQCP promotes adoption of FGI crops and services by participating in field days, campus events, ad market-development activities. The program also supports FGI's Environmental and Economic Clusters of Opportunity (EECO) Implementation Program, which supports the commercial success of early-adopter growers and the environmental benefits of new high-efficiency, continuous-living-cover crops and cropping systems in Minnesota.

Interconnection

Please list other Clean Water Fund-supported programs it informs and/or is informed by. Please briefly describe for each (up to 50 words) how Clean Water Funds add to existing efforts.

Connected CWF-supported programs:

One Watershed, One Plan (1W1P): Increasing participation in MAWQCP is a local priority identified in many 1W1Ps. MDA staff participate in 1W1P meetings and work with BWSR and local SWCD staff to promote the program and increase participation levels.

Conservation Equipment Assistance (Soil Health Financial Assistance Program)

State statute directs the Minnesota Department of Agriculture to prioritize MAWQCP-certified applicants for Soil Health Financial Assistance Program grants. This prioritization encourages producers to become certified and implement water-quality practices and management changes on the greatest number of acres while ensuring that soil-health investments directly support measurable water-quality outcomes.

We Are Water

The MAWQCP has been an active participant and supporter of We Are Water since its inception, contributing MAWQCP-certified farmer features to every traveling exhibit. Local certified growers are highlighted and celebrated in each installation, demonstrating the conservation leadership they bring to agricultural land management. In addition, the program's whole-farm water-quality assessment and mitigation framework directly supports a range of programs and projects supported by the Clean Water Fund. Depending on farm location, mitigation needs, and research priorities, MAWQCP contributes to efforts ranging from One Watershed One Plan implementation to Root River Field to Stream monitoring and other targeted initiatives.

Connected non-CWF-supported programs:

The MAWQCP is also cited as a specific strategy and policy to achieve goals of the Minnesota State Water Plan (<https://www.leg.mn.gov/docs/2020/mandated/200899.pdf>), the Minnesota Nutrient Reduction Strategy (<https://www.pca.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/wq-s1-80.pdf>), and the Minnesota's Climate Action Framework (<https://climate.state.mn.us/sites/climate-action/files/Climate%20Action%20Framework.pdf>).

Non-CWF Funding

Will this program receive or request other funding from non-CWF sources, or eventually leverage non-CWF sources?

If so, please describe what funds are being leveraged, the anticipated amount, and your degree of certainty that the funding is secure. Feel free to add rows if needed.

Funding Source	Anticipated Amount	Degree of Security (%)
Producer-paid portion - MAWQCP FA-grants	\$2,000,000+/year	100%
U.S.EPA-CPRG (Climate Smart Food Systems)	\$2,400,000+/year	100%
USDA-RCPP	\$1,000,000/year	25%

If additional description or elaboration is needed, please include here. (50 words max)

The MAWQP has received \$32 million in total CWF appropriations from FY14 to FY25 and has leveraged more than \$30.2 million in additional funds from USDA programs, producer cost-share contributions, and support from a private foundation. Beginning in FY26 through FY29, the program is receiving \$10 million in U.S. EPA funding contingent upon maintaining minimum \$3.5 million annual baseline appropriation. This combined public-private investment strengthens the program's capacity to deliver water-quality outcomes statewide.

Long-term funding vision

- **If this proposal is funded, should the Clean Water Council expect future (beyond FY28-29) requests to increase, decrease, or stay about the same? (Do not factor inflation into your answer.)**
 - Increase
 - Decrease
 - Stay the same
- **Do you have an anticipated end date for funding need? If so, when?** _____
- **Do you intend to continue this program past 2034 in some capacity?** Yes No Unsure

Funding Recipients

Please state as a percentage the amount of funding from this request that is anticipated to be pass-through to a non-state agency entity.

_____ 54%

Engagement and Community Value

- **How have program beneficiaries been engaged in the development or evolution of this program? Who are the program partners, if any? (150 words)**

The MAWQCP maintains a host of formal and informal partnerships that have contributed to the program's development and ongoing refinement. The following is a representative sample, not a complete listing:

- The statutorily required MAWQCP Advisory Committee of stakeholders.
- The statutorily and Executive Order mandated participation of MPCA, DNR and BWSR.
- The USDA and the U.S. EPA via MOU (attached).
- Seven Fiscal Agents (each a Soil and Water Conservation District) managing MAWQCP operations across eight regions encompassing the state.
- An array of technical service contracts including with University of Minnesota GEMS Informatics and Houston Engineering Inc.

Additionally, the MAWQCP maintains:

- A survey regimen for all certified farms at 500 farm intervals (to date at 500, 1000, and 1,500 certified) to inform program staff (attached).
- A 100% audit protocol of each farm for its management and practice commitments, with solicitation for feedback on any aspect of the program.

- **Please describe how this program advances environmental justice and promotes equity. (150 words)**

The MAWQCP advances environmental justice by ensuring Clean Water Funds are spent to advance the goals as outlined: by protecting, enhancing, and restoring water quality in ways that directly safeguard public health across all communities in Minnesota. By engaging farms statewide in implementing management changes required for certification, the program reduces contaminants that traditionally have disproportionately affected underrepresented families and communities. The MAWQCP is explicitly incorporated into the Minnesota State Water Plan, Nutrient Reduction Strategy, Climate Action Framework, and other statewide goals, reinforcing its central role in equitable water-quality protection. As the program expands protections for drinking water supplies and other water-quality issues, the MAWQCP increasingly supports the fundamental needs of underserved, under-resourced, and disproportionately impact communities. The statewide frameworks that reference MAWQCP also embed equity and inclusion principles, which the program upholds and advances through its implementation.

- **If this has been funded through Clean Water Funds in the past, please share 1-3 recent examples of outreach conducted by this program. Links or attachments are allowable.**

1. Sample Farming for the Future radio segments **attached**:
 - 7-1-25 Centra Sota
 - 10-21-25 MAWRC
 - 11-18-25 Outcomes-Update
2. Sample MAWQCP Insider links:
 - Electronic newsletter: [6-2-25 edition](#)
 - Electronic newsletter: [12-9-25 edition](#)
3. Sample Video links:
 - [MPCAfeature](#)
 - [Minnesota Climate Adaptation Partnership](#)
 - [Pioneer PBS](#)

CWF Communication Plan

For both new and returning applicants, please describe (under 100 words) or attach the plan for communicating with the public and pass-through recipients about the Clean Water Fund.

Communications efforts include:

- Weekly reports on 53 Minnesota radio stations of the Linder Farm Network and Red River Farm Network
- Promotional magazine articles in each issue of Soybean Business (Minnesota Soybean Growers); Prairie Grains (Minnesota Wheat Growers), and Land and Life (Minnesota Farm Bureau).
- Quarterly MAWQCP newsletter publications to more than 5,000 subscribers.
- Exhibits, tables, presentations, field days and other public outreach consistently throughout the year to engage one-on-one with producers, industry professionals, and the public.
- Certified farmer features at We Are Water exhibits.

- The MAWQCP [StoryMap](#), showcasing certified farmers’ operations, experiences with certification, and benefits they have received from MAWQCP.

PRIOR APPROPRIATIONS	
FY10-11	
FY12-13	
FY14-15	\$3,000,000
FY16-17	\$5,000,000
FY18-19	\$5,000,000
FY20-21	\$6,000,000
FY22-23	\$6,000,000
FY24-25	\$7,000,000
FY26-27	\$7,000,000
TOTAL APPROPRIATED TO DATE	\$39,000,000

FY28 Request	FY29 Request	FY28-29 TOTAL REQUEST
Increase	increase	increase

[For agency applicants: don’t fill out the FY28-29 until you receive agency approval. We will update the form at that time. Until then, please include “New”, “Hold steady”, “Increase”, or “Decrease”.]

State Employees

If applicable, indicate the number the full-time state employees supported by the CWF for this program.

FY10-11	
FY12-13	0.85
FY14-15	3.75
FY16-17	5.8
FY18-19	5.4
FY20-21	5.7
FY22-23	5.8
FY24-25	6.4
FY26-27	8.7*

*note that 2 FTE MAWQCP field staff previously employed by SWCDs now MDA employees



**STATE OF MINNESOTA
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY**

**ENGAGING IN A STATE AND FEDERAL PARTNERSHIP IN SUPPORT OF THE
MINNESOTA AGRICULTURAL WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION PROGRAM**

~~~~~

**We, Mark Dayton, Governor of the State of Minnesota; Thomas J. Vilsack, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture; and Lisa Jackson, Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, by virtue of the powers vested in us, do hereby issue this Memorandum of Understanding:**

**WHEREAS, the State of Minnesota and the Federal government value the health of our agricultural economy and the protection of our natural resources; and**

**WHEREAS, Minnesota farmers and ranchers are providing food, feed, and fiber for the Nation and the world; and**

**WHEREAS, agriculture is a cornerstone of the State's economy and a major employer; and**

**WHEREAS, Minnesotans value the health of our rivers, lakes, streams, wetlands, and ground water; and**

**WHEREAS, our natural resources contribute to our shared quality of life and future economic progress; and**

**WHEREAS, we must protect the environment while supporting economic development in this State; and**

**WHEREAS, Minnesota is a headwaters state, and**

**WHEREAS, we affirm that it is the role of the state through its delegated and other authorities to develop and implement water quality standards; and**

**WHEREAS, we seek to accelerate voluntary adoption of on-farm recommended management practices to protect and improve water quality across the State; and**

**WHEREAS, we seek to remove barriers and expand opportunities for investment in water quality practices; and**

**WHEREAS, we seek to synchronize and harmonize State and Federal water quality recommended practices; and**

**WHEREAS**, we seek to recognize the environmental stewardship of farmers and ranchers who implement and maintain recommended practices; and

**WHEREAS**, we desire to collaboratively work together to enhance our agricultural sector and protect our natural resources.

**NOW THEREFORE**, we do hereby agree to:

- 1.) Support a Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program to accelerate on-farm adoption of recommended management practices on agricultural lands in Minnesota, and
- 2.) Establish a Technical Advisory Committee to work to develop and implement, in consultation with stakeholders, a certification program that will support state water quality standards and goals, and
- 3.) Work to initiate development of a program designed to provide certainty to producers that their attainment and maintenance of certification meets water quality goals and standards of the State and where applicable maintains consistency with Federal water quality goals, and
- 4.) Coordinate and prioritize state and federal resources and funding, to the extent state and federal appropriations are available, to support the development and implementation of the certification program, including technical assistance and cost share to program participants for on-farm recommended management practices.

**IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF**, we set our hands to this document on this 17<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2012.

*Signed copy on file*

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**Mark Dayton**  
Governor  
State of Minnesota

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**Thomas J. Vilsack**  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Agriculture

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**Lisa Jackson**  
Administrator  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

**Legal Disclaimers:** We recognize that this MOU does not, in and of itself, obligate the State of Minnesota, U.S. Department of Agriculture or the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to expend funds, enter into any contract or assistance agreement, or incur any other financial obligation. All financial transactions in furtherance of this MOU shall be undertaken in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, and procedures, and shall be subject to separate agreements and be contingent upon the availability of appropriated funds. Such activities must be independently authorized by appropriate statutory authority. This MOU does not provide such authority. Negotiation, execution, and administration of each such agreement must comply with all applicable statutes and regulations.

This MOU is not intended to and does not create any right, benefit or trust responsibility, substantive or procedural, enforceable by law or equity, by a party against the State or the United States, its agencies, its officers or employees, or any other person. The U.S. Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the State of Minnesota and their respective agencies and offices will handle their own activities and utilize their own resources, including the expenditure of their own funds, in pursuing these objectives. Each party will carry out its separate activities in a coordinated and mutually beneficial manner.

This MOU takes effect upon the signature of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the State of Minnesota and shall remain in effect for ten years from the date of execution. The U.S. Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency or the State of Minnesota may terminate this MOU with a 60-day written notice to the others.

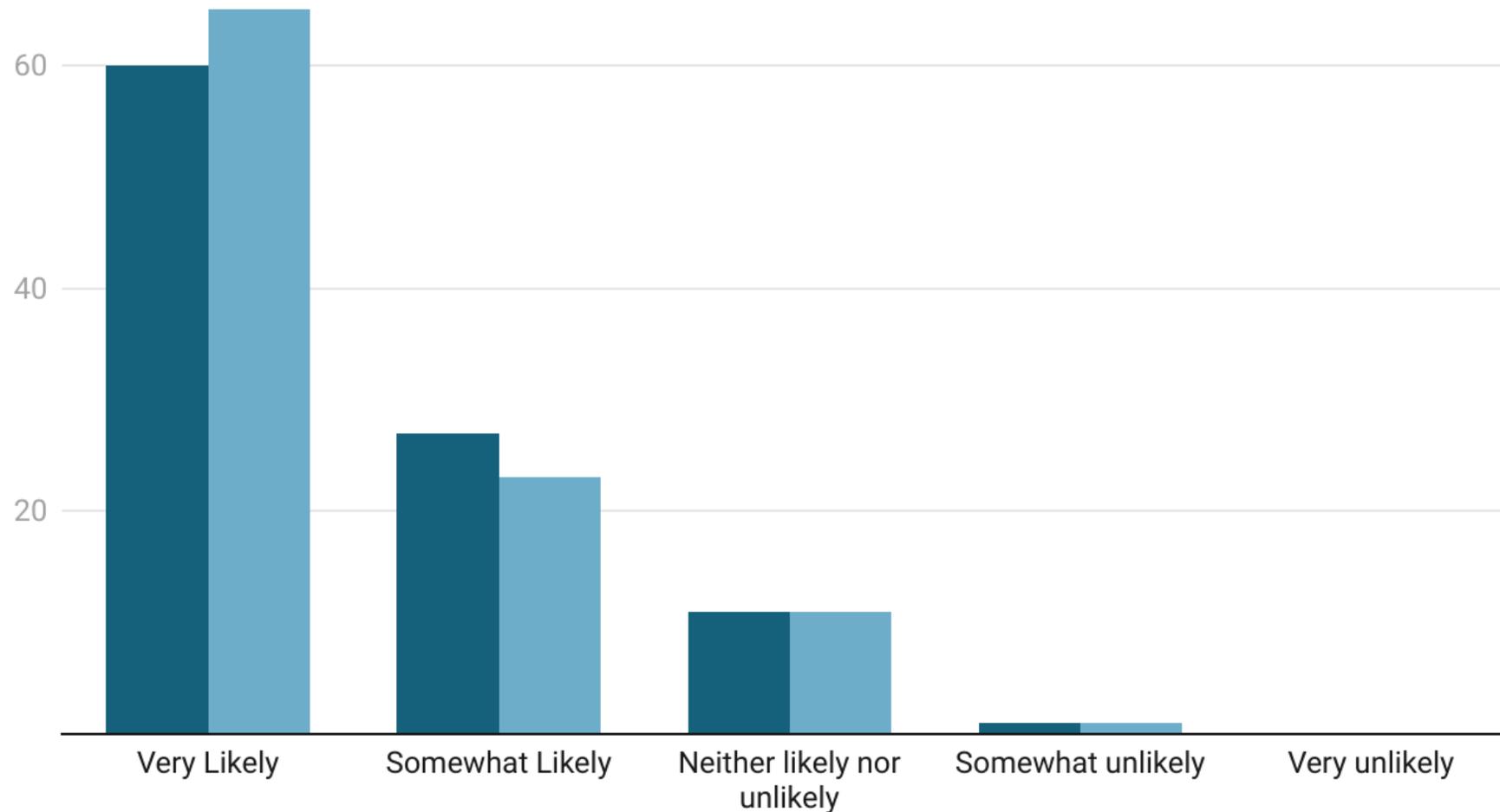
# Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification – Producer Survey

# MAWQC 1500 Producer Survey

- Survey period June 27 – August 15, 2024
- 457 (most recent) producers surveyed
- 22% response rate
- 16 Questions
- 3rd MDA conducted survey
- Producers surveyed at every 500-producer milestone

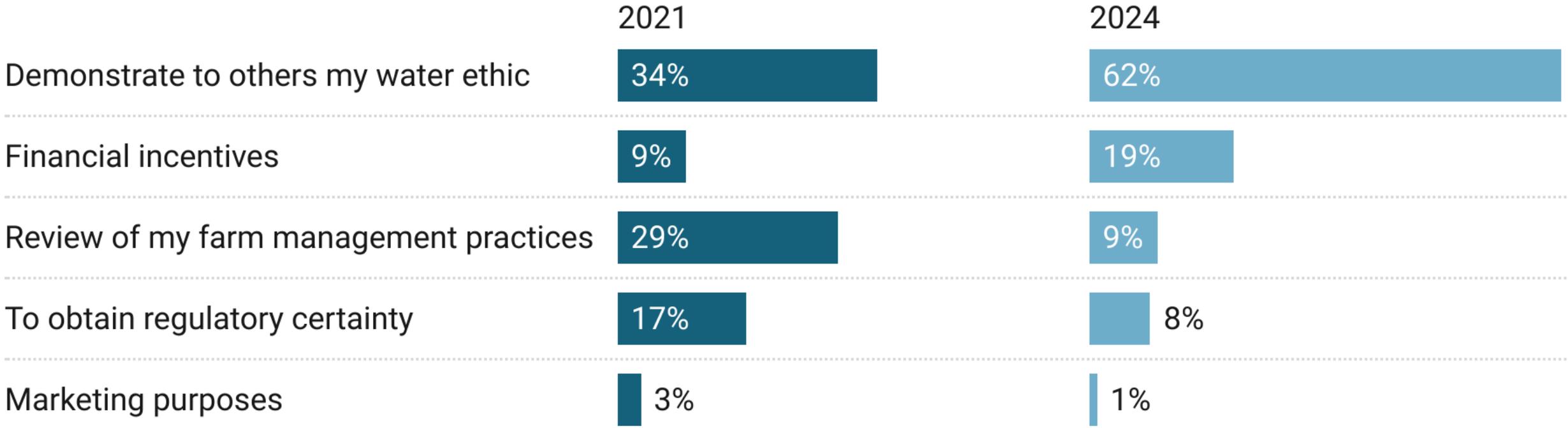
# How likely are you to recommend Water Quality Certification to other Ag producers?

2021 2024



# What was your primary reason to participate in MAWQCP?

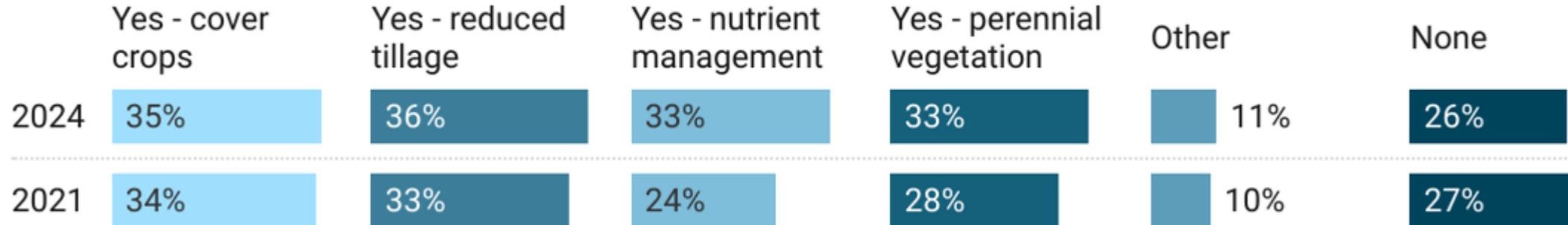
2021 2024



Source: MDA-MAWQC • Created with Datawrapper

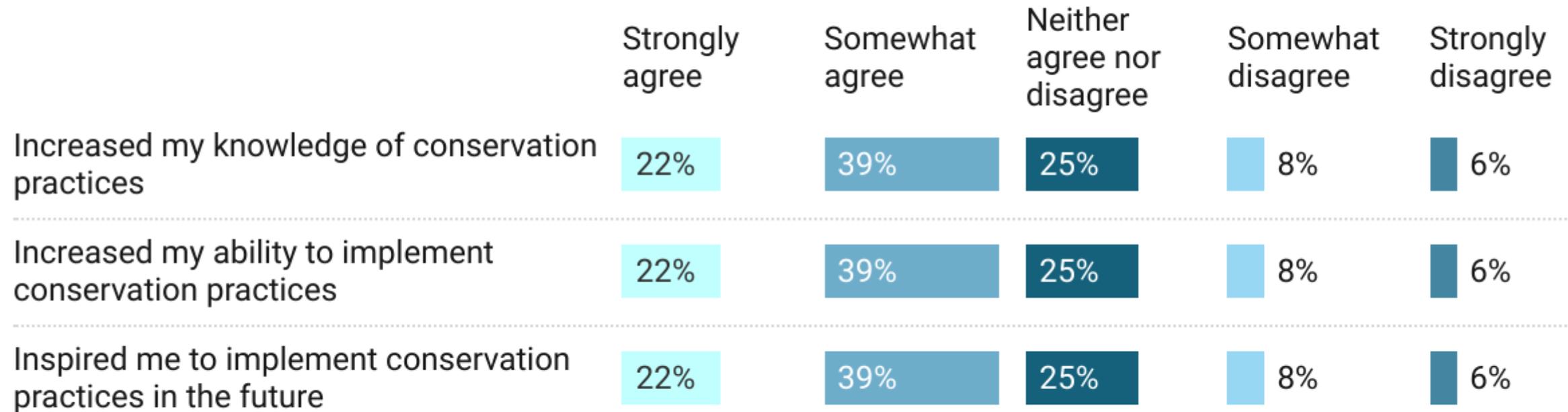
74% of certified producers surveyed in 2024 implemented additional conservation practices after becoming certified, beyond what was required for certification.

## Have you implemented additional conservation practices since becoming certified?



Source: 2024 MAWQCP Producer Survey • Created with Datawrapper

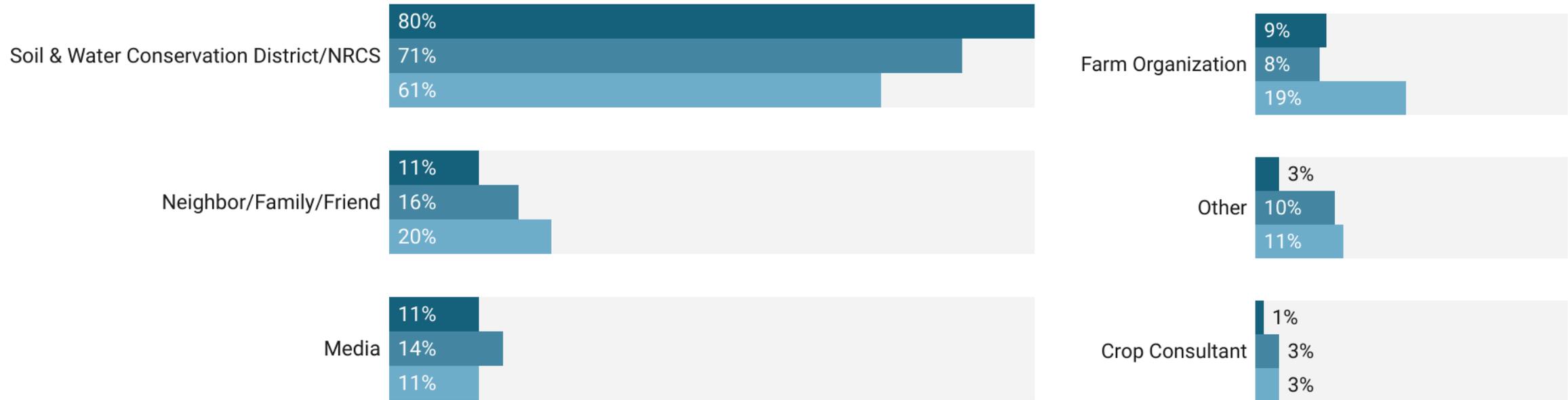
# Water Quality Certification...



Source: MDA - MAWQC • Created with Datawrapper

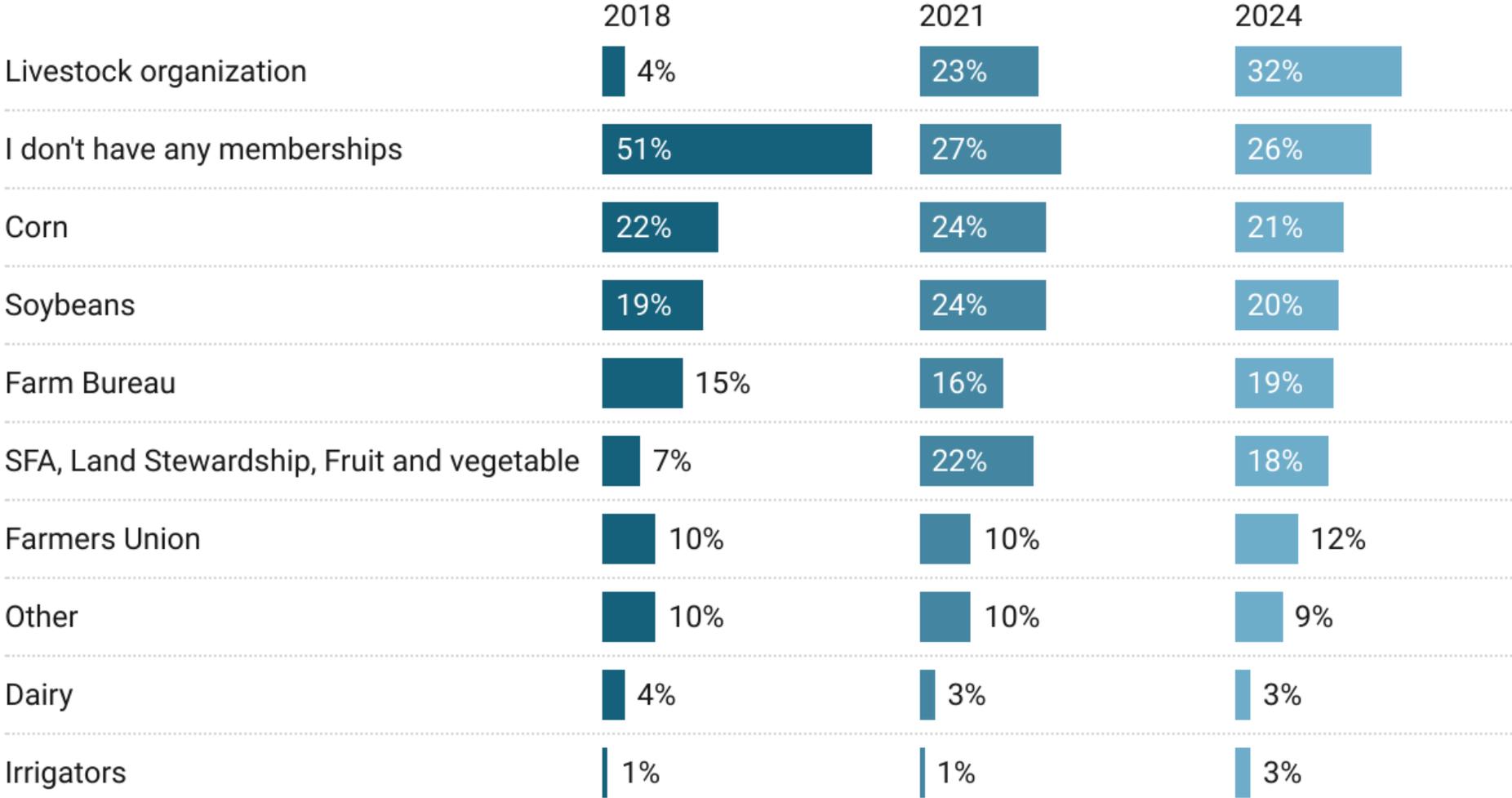
# How did you become aware of the MN Ag Water Quality Certification Program?

2018 2021 2024



# Farming Group or Commodity Group Memberships

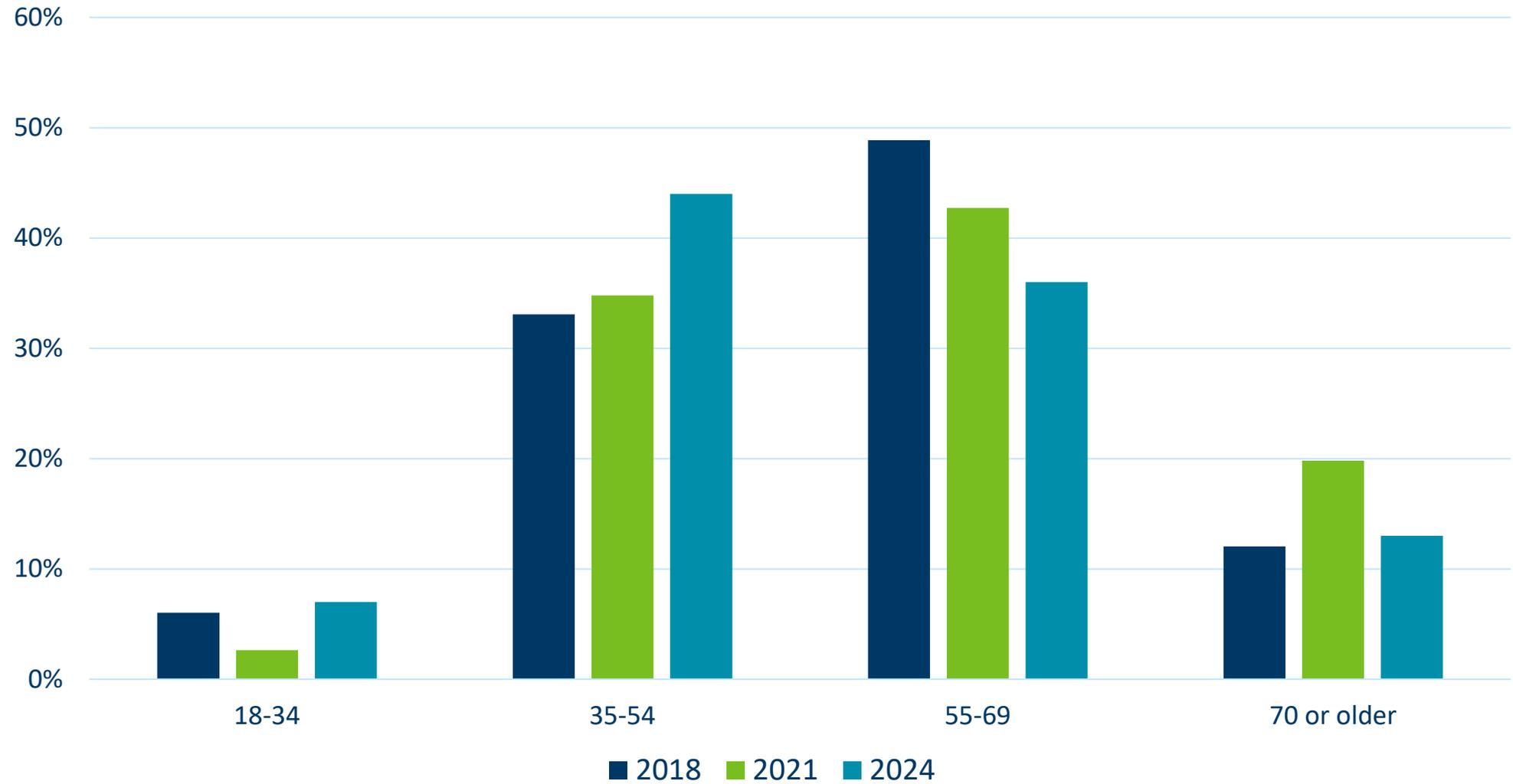
MAWQC Farmers



Source: MDA - MAWQCP • Created with Datawrapper

# Demographics

# Age



## **Socially Disadvantaged, Beginning, or Limited Resource Farmer/Rancher**

|             | <b>Yes</b> | <b>No</b> | <b>Not Sure</b> |
|-------------|------------|-----------|-----------------|
| <b>2024</b> | 27%        | 67%       | 6%              |

# Non-farming Landowner

|             | 2021 | 2024 |
|-------------|------|------|
| Yes         | 11%  | 13%  |
| No          | 87%  | 87%  |
| No response | 2%   |      |

Source: MDA - MAWQC • Created with Datawrapper

Thank You!

# FY28-29 CLEAN WATER FUND PROPOSAL

|                                 |                                                                                                                 |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Program Title:                  | Critical Shorelands Easements                                                                                   |
| Program Number (if applicable): | 21                                                                                                              |
| Agency/Organization Name:       | Board of Water and Soil Resources                                                                               |
| Program website:                | <a href="https://bwsr.state.mn.us/rim-critical-shorelands">https://bwsr.state.mn.us/rim-critical-shorelands</a> |

| Program Contact |                             |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| Name            | Sharon Doucette             |
| Email           | sharon.doucette@state.mn.us |
| Phone           | 651-539-2567                |

| Person Filling Out Form |                             |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Name                    | Sharon Doucette             |
| Email                   | Sharon.doucette@state.mn.us |
| Phone                   | 651-539-2567                |

**Eligibility Requirements**

Proposers must confirm that their proposal meets basic statutory eligibility. Please check each box that applies to certify the following:

**Eligible Use of Funds:** Requested funds will be used in accordance with Minnesota law and Clean Water Fund requirements, outlined in full in [Minnesota Statutes 114D.50 Subd. 3](#). This includes confirmation that this funding request supplements rather than supplants previous non-legacy state funding.

**Accounting and Reporting Capacity:** The proposing organization has experience with or ability to meet accounting and reporting requirements in order ensure appropriate use of funds, as stipulated in [Minnesota Statutes 114.50 Subd. 4](#).

**Mandate Alignment (if applicable):** This proposal supports or fulfills state or federal mandates (i.e. TMDL, Nonpoint Source Pollution, Nutrient Reduction Strategy, Wild Rice protection, etc.).

If yes, please cite applicable statute or rule: \_\_\_\_\_

## Abstract

Provide a summary (up to 100 words) that clearly states the purpose of the program, its intended water quality impact, and who it serves. The content here will largely be used as a brief summary when looking across programs, so some degree of redundancy is anticipated with other content in the form.

*The program goal is to protect lands adjacent to public waters with good water quality but threatened with degradation. Using the Reinvent in Minnesota (RIM) program, conservation easements are acquired to protect existing high quality shoreland areas. The highest priority areas are targeted through science-based conservation methods.*

## Water Quality Impact

Which step of the [Water Management Framework](#) does this program most fit under:

### *Implementation*

*Overall, how will this program protect, enhance, and restore water quality in lakes, rivers, and streams, protect groundwater from degradation, or protect drinking water sources. Please limit your response to 200 words.*

*Lakes and rivers in the forested region of the state are susceptible to the impacts of shoreline development. The alteration of shoreline vegetation and construction of impervious surfaces can result in a reduction in emergent and floating plant abundance, increased nutrient loading and shoreline erosion. The impact of development is cumulative, and over time, such changes can severely reduce water quality of water bodies. This program funds permanent conservation easements that protect existing natural shorelines. Parcels are selected by local technical committees composed of SWCD, BWSR and other agency/partner staff. The technical committees use a scoring system that includes specific criteria – for example, the number of feet of shoreline, parcel size, percent forested, and RAQ score (RAQ stands for Riparian, Adjacency, Quality - a model run for the major watershed), among other criteria.*

## Measurable Outcomes and Progress

Responses for each bullet (e.g. 1a, 1b, etc.) should be limited to 50-100 words.

1. Expected Outcomes for FY28–29 Request:
  - a. Describe measurable and outcome-based goals for the current funding request.

*The number of easements and acres enrolled in this program will depend on the size and cost of the easements. Through a combination of targeted outreach, eligibility screening, and a scoring and ranking process, each site is considered on its benefits to water quality, surrounding landscape, and site-specific features which highlight the benefits of easement enrollment. Criteria include RAQ scores, type of water resource being buffered, feet of shoreline, overall size, proximity to other protected land, and habitat quality according to WAN.*

- b. Describe how outcomes will be tracked, evaluated, and reported.  
*The number of easements and acres enrolled will be tracked in BWSR's easement database. Outcomes are reported via the Biennial Clean Water Fund Report. Site inspections are completed by Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) to evaluate restorations on easements and monitor compliance. SWCDs report to BWSR on each site inspection conducted and findings.*
  - c. (If applicable) For past recipients, describe any planned changes to this program from previous funding cycles, if any.  
*Previously, there was an emphasis on the Mississippi River and major tributaries in the scoring matrix to emphasize protection of the surface water sources of drinking water for the Twin Cities metropolitan area. The scoresheet will be redesigned to allow for priority waterbodies identified locally in CWMPs to score higher to allow for local prioritization consistent with the appropriation language: To purchase permanent conservation easements to protect lands adjacent to public waters with good water quality but threatened with degradation. Review of eligible areas will also be completed; potentially adding to the four eligible HUC 8 watersheds that are currently identified.*
2. Outcomes from Prior Clean Water Fund Appropriations (if applicable):
- a. How would you characterize progress made to date? As much as is possible, include outcomes achieved as they relate to the program purpose.  
*Since FY16-17, 80 easements protecting a total of 7,100 easement acres have been secured through this program.*
  - b. How close is the program to reaching its long-term goals?  
*The program will continue as long as there are landowners interested in protecting shoreland via conservation easements.*

### Alignment with Clean Water Council Strategic Plan

For each relevant goal or strategy in the Clean Water Council's Strategic Plan, list the applicable item and briefly explain (50-100 words) how this proposal helps fulfill that objective.

*Goal: Protect and restore surface waters to achieve 70% swimmable and 67% fishable waters by 2034 by prioritizing and targeting resources by major watershed. Strategy: Prioritize waters for protection and restoration using comprehensive watershed management plans (One Watershed One Plan or other approved plans) updated every ten years.*

Additionally, please list any other statewide or federal plan this effort supports.

*Comprehensive Watershed Management Plans (CWMPs)*

*MN Climate Action Framework (Contributes to at least four Priority Actions under Goal 2 - Climate-smart natural and working lands. The Priority Actions include 1) accelerate forest, grassland and wetland restoration; 2) store more carbon; 3) restore and expand habitat complexes and corridors; and 4) increase water storage and infiltration and manage drainage)*

*Minnesota Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan*

### Interconnection

Please list other Clean Water Fund-supported programs it informs and/or is informed by. Please briefly describe for each (up to 50 words) how Clean Water Funds add to existing efforts.

Connected CWF-supported programs:

*None*

Connected non-CWF-supported programs:

*There are several easement programs with a goal of protection that are funded by Outdoor Heritage Funds as recommended by the Lessard Sams Outdoor Heritage Council that share some overlapping geography and similar goals to the Critical Shorelands program. Many of these programs are designed and led by local partners that desire to use RIM as the mechanism to advance local goals including priorities established in CWMPs. These programs include the Mississippi Headwaters Corridor Habitat Protection, Pine and Leech Watershed Protection, Wild Rice Shoreland Protection and state funded ACUB easements.*

### Non-CWF Funding

Will this program receive or request other funding from non-CWF sources, or eventually leverage non-CWF sources? *No*

If so, please describe what funds are being leveraged, the anticipated amount, and your degree of certainty that the funding is secure. Feel free to add rows if needed.

| Funding Source                             | Anticipated Amount | Degree of Security (%) |
|--------------------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| <i>Ex. Private landowner contributions</i> | <i>\$100,000</i>   | <i>100%</i>            |
|                                            |                    |                        |
|                                            |                    |                        |
|                                            |                    |                        |

If additional description or elaboration is needed, please include here. (50 words max)

### Long-term funding vision

- If this proposal is funded, should the Clean Water Council expect future (beyond FY28-29) requests to increase, decrease, or stay about the same? (Do not factor inflation into your answer.)
  - Increase
  - Decrease
  - Stay the same
- Do you have an anticipated end date for funding need? *No* If so, when? \_\_\_\_\_
- Do you intend to continue this program past 2034 in some capacity?  *Yes*  No  Unsure

## Funding Recipients

Please state as a percentage the amount of funding from this request that is anticipated to be pass-through to a non-state agency entity.

*Approximately 90 % of funds are used for landowner payments, SWCD payments and reimbursement costs.*

## Engagement and Community Value

- How have program beneficiaries been engaged in the development or evolution of this program? Who are the program partners, if any? (150 words)  
*The RIM easement program is entirely voluntary. SWCDs are a critical local partner.*
- Please describe how this program advances environmental justice and promotes equity. (150 words)  
*This easement program has been available in the past in the Rum River, Crow Wing River, Mississippi Headwaters Brainerd and Pine River watersheds. These watersheds cover portions of several reservation boundaries as well as many large EJ areas as mapped by the MPCA including a very large portion of the Crow Wing River watershed.*
- If this has been funded through Clean Water Funds in the past, please share 1-3 recent examples of outreach conducted by this program. Links or attachments are allowable.  
[\*Pine River 1W1P builds on past success \(PDF\)\*](#)  
[\*New RIM funding to expand easement opportunities \(PDF\)\*](#)  
[\*Rum River gains RIM easement option \(PDF\)\*](#)

## CWF Communication Plan

For both new and returning applicants, please describe (under 100 words) or attach the plan for communicating with the public and pass-through recipients about the Clean Water Fund.

*The Critical Shorelands program is a partnership delivered locally by SWCDs and at the state level by BWSR. Local staff promote RIM easements, assist with easement processing, and provide key essential technical assistance and project management services. All easements funded with CWF display a sign containing the Legacy Fund logo posted along the boundary.*

| PRIOR APPROPRIATIONS |             |
|----------------------|-------------|
| FY10-11              |             |
| FY12-13              |             |
| FY14-15              |             |
| FY16-17              | \$2,000,000 |
| FY18-19              | \$2,000,000 |
| FY20-21              | \$3,000,000 |
| FY22-23              | \$2,468,000 |
| FY24-25              | \$7,000,000 |
| FY26-27              | \$1,000,000 |

|                                   |                            |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>TOTAL APPROPRIATED TO DATE</b> | <b><i>\$17,468,000</i></b> |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|

|                 |                 |                       |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| FY28 Request    | FY29 Request    | FY28-29 TOTAL REQUEST |
| <i>Increase</i> | <i>Increase</i> | <i>Increase</i>       |

[For agency applicants: don't fill out the FY28-29 until you receive agency approval. We will update the form at that time. Until then, please include "New", "Hold steady", "Increase", or "Decrease".]

### State Employees

If applicable, indicate the number the full-time state employees supported by the CWF for this program.

|         |            |
|---------|------------|
| FY10-11 |            |
| FY12-13 |            |
| FY14-15 |            |
| FY16-17 | <i>0.6</i> |
| FY18-19 | <i>0.6</i> |
| FY20-21 | <i>0.6</i> |
| FY22-23 | <i>0.6</i> |
| FY24-25 | <i>1.4</i> |
| FY26-27 | <i>0.3</i> |

# FY28-29 CLEAN WATER FUND PROPOSAL

|                                 |                                                                                           |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Program Title:                  | Wetland Restoration Easements                                                             |
| Program Number (if applicable): | XX                                                                                        |
| Agency/Organization Name:       | Board of Water and Soil Resources                                                         |
| Program website:                | <a href="https://bwsr.state.mn.us/rim-wetlands">https://bwsr.state.mn.us/rim-wetlands</a> |

| Program Contact |                                                                              |
|-----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Name            | Sharon Doucette                                                              |
| Email           | <a href="mailto:sharon.doucette@state.mn.us">sharon.doucette@state.mn.us</a> |
| Phone           | 651-539-2567                                                                 |

| Person Filling Out Form |                                                                |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Name                    | John Voz                                                       |
| Email                   | <a href="mailto:John.voz@state.mn.us">John.voz@state.mn.us</a> |
| Phone                   | 218-850-4283                                                   |

**Eligibility Requirements**

Proposers must confirm that their proposal meets basic statutory eligibility. Please check each box that applies to certify the following:

**Eligible Use of Funds:** Requested funds will be used in accordance with Minnesota law and Clean Water Fund requirements, outlined in full in [Minnesota Statutes 114D.50 Subd. 3](#). This includes confirmation that this funding request supplements rather than supplants previous non-legacy state funding.

**Accounting and Reporting Capacity:** The proposing organization has experience with or ability to meet accounting and reporting requirements in order ensure appropriate use of funds, as stipulated in [Minnesota Statutes 114.50 Subd. 4](#).

**Mandate Alignment (if applicable):** This proposal supports or fulfills state or federal mandates (i.e. TMDL, Nonpoint Source Pollution, Nutrient Reduction Strategy, Wild Rice protection, etc.).

If yes, please cite applicable statute or rule: \_\_\_\_\_

## Abstract

Provide a summary (up to 100 words) that clearly states the purpose of the program, its intended water quality impact, and who it serves. The content here will largely be used as a brief summary when looking across programs, so some degree of redundancy is anticipated with other content in the form.

*The Wetlands Restoration program restores and permanently protects previously drained wetlands and adjacent uplands via RIM easements on private lands across the state for water quality and habitat benefits. The program utilizes a ranking and selection process and is locally implemented by SWCD staff. Restored wetlands benefit society by storing floodwaters, filtering pollutants, serving as a carbon sink, and providing habitat.*

## Water Quality Impact

Which step of the [Water Management Framework](#) does this program most fit under:

### *Implementation*

Overall, how will this program protect, enhance, and restore water quality in lakes, rivers, and streams, protect groundwater from degradation, or protect drinking water sources. Please limit your response to 200 words.

*This program is part of a comprehensive clean water strategy to prevent sediment and nutrients from entering Minnesota's lakes, rivers, and streams; enhance fish and wildlife habitat; and protect wetlands. Through the Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Easement Program, and in partnership with soil and water conservation districts and private landowners, permanent conservation easements are acquired, and wetlands are restored to improve water quality and provide habitat.*

## Measurable Outcomes and Progress

Responses for each bullet (e.g. 1a, 1b, etc.) should be limited to 50-100 words.

### 1. Expected Outcomes for FY28–29 Request:

#### a. Describe measurable and outcome-based goals for the current funding request.

*The number of easements and acres enrolled in this program will depend on the size and cost of the easements. Through a combination of targeted outreach, eligibility screening, and a scoring and ranking process, each site is considered on its benefits to water quality, surrounding landscape, and site-specific features which highlight the benefits of easement enrollment. Criteria include prioritization in Comprehensive Watershed Management Plans or other approved plans, acres of wetland restoration, overall easement size, soil data and proximity to other protected land.*

#### b. Describe how outcomes will be tracked, evaluated, and reported.

*The number of easements and acres enrolled will be tracked in BWSR's easement database. Outcomes are reported via the Biennial Clean Water Fund Report. Site inspections are completed by Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) to evaluate*

*restorations on easements and monitor compliance. SWCDs report to BWSR on each site inspection conducted and findings.*

- c. (If applicable) For past recipients, describe any planned changes to this program from previous funding cycles, if any. *None.*

2. Outcomes from Prior Clean Water Fund Appropriations (if applicable):

- a. How would you characterize progress made to date? As much as is possible, include outcomes achieved as they relate to the program purpose.

*CWF has contributed to 325 wetland restoration easements protecting a total of 19,600 easement acres. Many of these easements were secured via CREP funding, not the Wetlands Restoration appropriations.*

- b. How close is the program to reaching its long-term goals?

*The program will continue as long as there are interested landowners looking to restore wetlands and frequently flooded lands and retire less productive land from row crop production.*

### Alignment with Clean Water Council Strategic Plan

For each relevant goal or strategy in the Clean Water Council's Strategic Plan, list the applicable item and briefly explain (50-100 words) how this proposal helps fulfill that objective.

*Goal: Protect and restore surface waters to achieve 70% swimmable and 67% fishable waters by 2034 by prioritizing and targeting resources by major watershed. Strategy: Prioritize waters for protection and restoration using comprehensive watershed management plans (One Watershed One Plan or other approved plans) updated every ten years.*

*This program prioritizes applications where land is located within a priority area as identified by Comprehensive Watershed Management Plans (CWMP).*

Additionally, please list any other statewide or federal plan this effort supports.

*One Watershed, One Plan Program: Comprehensive Watershed Management Plans (CWMPs)*

*MN Climate Action Framework (Contributes to at least four Priority Actions under Goal 2 - Climate-smart natural and working lands. The Priority Actions include 1) accelerate forest, grassland and wetland restoration; 2) store more carbon; 3) restore and expand habitat complexes and corridors; and 4) increase water storage and infiltration and manage drainage)*

*Minnesota Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan*

*Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan*

*Minnesota's Wildlife Action Plan*

## Interconnection

Please list other Clean Water Fund-supported programs it informs and/or is informed by. Please briefly describe for each (up to 50 words) how Clean Water Funds add to existing efforts.

Connected CWF-supported programs:

*MN CREP – Clean Water Funds are part of the \$150M state commitment to MN CREP in partnership with the United States Department of Agriculture.*

*One Watershed, One Plan (1W1P) program – the Wetland Restoration program awards additional points for applications when land is located within a high priority or priority area as identified by CWMPs.*

Connected non-CWF-supported programs:

*RIM Wetlands (Outdoor Heritage Fund)- The RIM Wetlands program restores and permanently protects previously drained wetlands and adjacent uplands via RIM easements on private lands across the state for habitat benefits and water quality. The program utilizes a ranking and selection process and is locally implemented by SWCD staff.*

*RIM Integrating Clean Water and Habitat (Outdoor Heritage Fund) – This program targets easements in priority areas that contribute toward goals in Board approved and locally adopted CWMPs developed through the 1W1P program. In the Twin Cities Metro Area, lands identified in a locally adopted watershed management plan, a county groundwater plan, or a SWCD comprehensive plan are also eligible.*

## Non-CWF Funding

Will this program receive or request other funding from non-CWF sources, or eventually leverage non-CWF sources? *The Board of Water and Soil Resources has a proposal recommended for funding from the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC) through the Outdoor Heritage Fund. At the December 2025 meeting, the LSOHC approved appropriation bill language to be forwarded to the Legislature for consideration during the ML26 legislative session. LSOHC has a history of funding this program dating back to FY10.*

If so, please describe what funds are being leveraged, the anticipated amount, and your degree of certainty that the funding is secure. Feel free to add rows if needed.

| Funding Source                             | Anticipated Amount | Degree of Security (%) |
|--------------------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| <i>Ex. Private landowner contributions</i> | <i>\$100,000</i>   | <i>100%</i>            |
| <i>Outdoor Heritage Fund</i>               | <i>\$3,455,000</i> | <i>95%</i>             |
|                                            |                    |                        |
|                                            |                    |                        |

If additional description or elaboration is needed, please include here. (50 words max)

*The anticipated amount listed above may be adjusted depending on the February 2026 Forecast.*

### Long-term funding vision

- If this proposal is funded, should the Clean Water Council expect future (beyond FY28-29) requests to increase, decrease, or stay about the same? (Do not factor inflation into your answer.)
  - Increase
  - Decrease
  - Stay the same
- Do you have an anticipated end date for funding need? No If so, when? \_\_\_\_\_
- Do you intend to continue this program past 2034 in some capacity?  Yes  No  Unsure

### Funding Recipients

Please state as a percentage the amount of funding from this request that is anticipated to be pass-through to a non-state agency entity.

*Approximately 87 % of funds are used for landowner payments, SWCD payments and reimbursement costs.*

### Engagement and Community Value

- How have program beneficiaries been engaged in the development or evolution of this program? Who are the program partners, if any? (150 words) *The RIM easement program is entirely voluntary. SWCDs are a critical local partner.*
- Please describe how this program advances environmental justice and promotes equity. (150 words) *This easement program is available statewide including within reservation boundaries. Many wetland restoration easements are secured in SW Minnesota, including Renville County, where the MPCA has mapped a large EJ area.*
- If this has been funded through Clean Water Funds in the past, please share 1-3 recent examples of outreach conducted by this program. Links or attachments are allowable.  
BWSR Snapshots 2025 [Restored Jackson County wetland benefits wildlife, water quality \(PDF\)](#)  
BWSR Snapshots 2024 [Peatlands restoration potential sparks research, conservation \(PDF\)](#)  
BWSR Snapshots 2024 [Water storage among benefits of Murray County wetland restoration \(PDF\)](#)

### CWF Communication Plan

For both new and returning applicants, please describe (under 100 words) or attach the plan for communicating with the public and pass-through recipients about the Clean Water Fund.

*The RIM Wetland Restoration program is a partnership delivered locally by SWCDs and at the state level by BWSR. Local staff promote RIM easements, assist with easement processing, and provide key essential technical assistance and project management services. All easements funded with CWF display a sign containing the Legacy Fund logo posted along the boundary.*

| PRIOR APPROPRIATIONS              |                            |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| FY22-23                           | <i>\$5,660,000</i>         |
| FY24-25                           | <i>\$10,000,000</i>        |
| FY26-27                           | <i>\$5,000,000</i>         |
| <b>TOTAL APPROPRIATED TO DATE</b> | <b><i>\$20,660,000</i></b> |

| FY28 Request    | FY29 Request    | FY28-29 TOTAL REQUEST |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| <i>Increase</i> | <i>Increase</i> | <i>Increase</i>       |

[For agency applicants: don't fill out the FY28-29 until you receive agency approval. We will update the form at that time. Until then, please include "New", "Hold steady", "Increase", or "Decrease".]

### State Employees

If applicable, indicate the number the full-time state employees supported by the CWF for this program.

|         |            |
|---------|------------|
| FY10-11 |            |
| FY12-13 |            |
| FY14-15 |            |
| FY16-17 |            |
| FY18-19 |            |
| FY20-21 |            |
| FY22-23 | <i>0.7</i> |
| FY24-25 | <i>1.0</i> |
| FY26-27 | <i>0.7</i> |

# FY28-29 CLEAN WATER FUND PROPOSAL

|                                 |                                                                                                                                                 |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Program Title:                  | Working Lands Floodplain Easements                                                                                                              |
| Program Number (if applicable): | 25                                                                                                                                              |
| Agency/Organization Name:       | Board of Water and Soil Resources                                                                                                               |
| Program website:                | <a href="https://bwsr.state.mn.us/rim-riparian-and-floodplain-restoration">https://bwsr.state.mn.us/rim-riparian-and-floodplain-restoration</a> |

| Program Contact |                                                                              |
|-----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Name            | Sharon Doucette                                                              |
| Email           | <a href="mailto:Sharon.doucette@state.mn.us">Sharon.doucette@state.mn.us</a> |
| Phone           | 651-539-2567                                                                 |

| Person Filling Out Form |                                                                              |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Name                    | Dusty Van Thuyne                                                             |
| Email                   | <a href="mailto:Dusty.vanthuyne@state.mn.us">Dusty.vanthuyne@state.mn.us</a> |
| Phone                   | 651-539-2573                                                                 |

## Eligibility Requirements

Proposers must confirm that their proposal meets basic statutory eligibility. Please check each box that applies to certify the following:

**Eligible Use of Funds:** Requested funds will be used in accordance with Minnesota law and Clean Water Fund requirements, outlined in full in [Minnesota Statutes 114D.50 Subd. 3](#). This includes confirmation that this funding request supplements rather than supplants previous non-legacy state funding.

**Accounting and Reporting Capacity:** The proposing organization has experience with or ability to meet accounting and reporting requirements in order ensure appropriate use of funds, as stipulated in [Minnesota Statutes 114.50 Subd. 4](#).

**Mandate Alignment (if applicable):** This proposal supports or fulfills state or federal mandates (i.e. TMDL, Nonpoint Source Pollution, Nutrient Reduction Strategy, Wild Rice protection, etc.).

If yes, please cite applicable statute or rule: \_\_\_\_\_

## Abstract

Provide a summary (up to 100 words) that clearly states the purpose of the program, its intended water quality impact, and who it serves. The content here will largely be used as a brief summary when looking across programs, so some degree of redundancy is anticipated with other content in the form.

*The program goal is to restore and protect riparian and floodplain areas across the state to improve and enhance water quality and wildlife habitat through limited term and perpetual easements with private landowners. The land targeted for this program is existing row crop agriculture within a riparian area or a mapped floodplain. Landowners have options to restore the easement to native vegetation or continue to generate income through uses that do not include row crop agriculture, with payment structure based on the proposed easement length and use.*

## Water Quality Impact

Which step of the [Water Management Framework](#) does this program most fit under:

### Implementation

*Overall, how will this program protect, enhance, and restore water quality in lakes, rivers, and streams, protect groundwater from degradation, or protect drinking water sources. Please limit your response to 200 words.*

*This program is part of a comprehensive clean water strategy to prevent sediment and nutrients from entering Minnesota's lakes, rivers, and streams; reduce aquatic impairments; and protect wetlands. Studies show that perennial vegetation in riparian areas reduces sediment and nutrients entering waterways, stabilizes streambanks, and provides food and habitat for many species of wildlife. Through the Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Easement Program and in partnership with soil and water conservation districts and private landowners, conservation easements are acquired and vegetated riparian corridors are established replacing row crop agriculture with perennial, managed vegetation (trees, shrubs, native grasses).*

## Measurable Outcomes and Progress

Responses for each bullet (e.g. 1a, 1b, etc.) should be limited to 50-100 words.

### 1. Expected Outcomes for FY28–29 Request:

#### a. Describe measurable and outcome-based goals for the current funding request.

*The number of easements and acres enrolled in this program will depend on the size and cost of the easements. Through a combination of targeted outreach, eligibility screening, and a scoring and ranking process, each site is considered on its benefits to water quality, surrounding landscape, and site-specific features which highlight the benefits of easement enrollment. Criteria include prioritization in Comprehensive Watershed Management Plans or other approved plans, type of water resource being buffered, overall size, proximity to other protected land, and frequency of inundation or crop loss.*

- b. Describe how outcomes will be tracked, evaluated, and reported.  
*The number of easements and acres enrolled will be tracked in BWSR's easement database. Outcomes are reported via the Biennial Clean Water Fund Report. Site inspections are completed by Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) to evaluate restorations on easements and monitor compliance. SWCDs report to BWSR on each site inspection conducted and findings.*
- c. (If applicable) For past recipients, describe any planned changes to this program from previous funding cycles, if any. *None.*

2. Outcomes from Prior Clean Water Fund Appropriations (if applicable):

- a. How would you characterize progress made to date? As much as is possible, include outcomes achieved as they relate to the program purpose.  
*Since FY10-11, CWF has contributed to 780 easements protecting a total of 21,700 easement acres (some easements are funded by more than one source).*
- b. How close is the program to reaching its long-term goals?  
*The program will continue as long as there are interested landowners looking to retire riparian and frequently flooded lands from row crop production.*

### Alignment with Clean Water Council Strategic Plan

For each relevant goal or strategy in the Clean Water Council's Strategic Plan, list the applicable item and briefly explain (50-100 words) how this proposal helps fulfill that objective.

*Goal: Protect and restore surface waters to achieve 70% swimmable and 67% fishable waters by 2034 via by prioritizing and targeting resources by major watershed. Strategy: Prioritize waters for protection and restoration using comprehensive watershed management plans (One Watershed One Plan or other approved plans) updated every ten years.*

Additionally, please list any other statewide or federal plan this effort supports.

*Comprehensive Watershed Management Plans (CWMPs)*

*MN Climate Action Framework (Contributes to at least four Priority Actions under Goal 2 - Climate-smart natural and working lands. The Priority Actions include 1) accelerate forest, grassland and wetland restoration; 2) store more carbon; 3) restore and expand habitat complexes and corridors; and 4) increase water storage and infiltration and manage drainage)*

*Minnesota Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan*

*Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan*

*Minnesota's Wildlife Action Plan*

### Interconnection

Please list other Clean Water Fund-supported programs it informs and/or is informed by. Please briefly describe for each (up to 50 words) how Clean Water Funds add to existing efforts.

Connected CWF-supported programs:

*MN CREP – Clean Water Funds are part of the \$150M state commitment to the MN CREP in partnership with United States Department of Agriculture.*

*One Watershed, One Plan (1W1P) program – the RIM Riparian and Floodplain Restoration program awards additional points for applications when land is located within a high priority or priority area as identified by CWMPs.*

Connected non-CWF-supported programs:

*RIM Buffers for Wildlife and Water (Outdoor Heritage Fund) – This program secures easements along riparian areas that provide both improved wildlife habitat and water quality benefits. Additional points are awarded to applications when land is located within a high priority or priority area as identified by a CWMP.*

*RIM Integrating Clean Water and Habitat (Outdoor Heritage Fund) – This program targets easements in priority areas that contribute toward goals in Board approved and locally adopted CWMPs developed through the 1W1P program. In the Twin Cities Metro Area, lands identified in a locally adopted watershed management plan, a county groundwater plan, or a SWCD comprehensive plan are also eligible.*

### Non-CWF Funding

Will this program receive or request other funding from non-CWF sources, or eventually leverage non-CWF sources? *The Board of Water and Soil Resources has a proposal recommended for funding from the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC) through the Outdoor Heritage Fund. At the December 2025 meeting, the LSOHC approved appropriation bill language to be forwarded to the Legislature for consideration during the ML2026 legislative session. LSOHC has a history of funding this program dating back to FY12.*

If so, please describe what funds are being leveraged, the anticipated amount, and your degree of certainty that the funding is secure. Feel free to add rows if needed.

| Funding Source                             | Anticipated Amount | Degree of Security (%) |
|--------------------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| <i>Ex. Private landowner contributions</i> | <i>\$100,000</i>   | <i>100%</i>            |
| <i>Outdoor Heritage Fund</i>               | <i>\$3,694,000</i> | <i>95%</i>             |
|                                            |                    |                        |
|                                            |                    |                        |

If additional description or elaboration is needed, please include here. (50 words max)

*The anticipated amount (\$3,694,000) listed above may be adjusted depending on the February 2026 Forecast.*

### Long-term funding vision

- If this proposal is funded, should the Clean Water Council expect future (beyond FY28-29) requests to increase, decrease, or stay about the same? (Do not factor inflation into your answer.)
  - Increase
  - Decrease

- Stay the same
- Do you have an anticipated end date for funding need? No. If so, when? \_\_\_\_\_
- Do you intend to continue this program past 2034 in some capacity?  Yes  No  Unsure

### Funding Recipients

Please state as a percentage the amount of funding from this request that is anticipated to be pass-through to a non-state agency entity.

*Approximately 90 % of funds are used for landowner payments, SWCD payments and reimbursement costs.*

### Engagement and Community Value

- How have program beneficiaries been engaged in the development or evolution of this program? Who are the program partners, if any? (150 words) *Landowners have the option of enrolling into a perpetual or limited term easement on their land. They also decide if they will retain some of the working lands rights on their land or if they will choose a more restrictive easement. SWCDs are a critical local partner.*
- Please describe how this program advances environmental justice and promotes equity. (150 words) *This easement program is available statewide including within reservation boundaries. Many easements are secured in SW Minnesota, including Renville County, where the MPCA has mapped a large EJ area.*
- If this has been funded through Clean Water Funds in the past, please share 1-3 recent examples of outreach conducted by this program. Links or attachments are allowable.  
*October 2023 Snapshots article: [https://bwsr.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/2023-09/snapshots-story-1-october-2023-rim\\_riparian\\_floodplain\\_program.pdf](https://bwsr.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/2023-09/snapshots-story-1-october-2023-rim_riparian_floodplain_program.pdf)  
Cottonwood SWCD Brochure: attached*

### CWF Communication Plan

For both new and returning applicants, please describe (under 100 words) or attach the plan for communicating with the public and pass-through recipients about the Clean Water Fund.

*The Riparian and Floodplain Restoration program is a partnership delivered locally by SWCDs and at the state level by BWSR. Local staff promote RIM easements, assist with easement processing, and provide key essential technical assistance and project management services. All easements funded with CWF display a sign containing the Legacy Fund logo posted along the boundary.*

| PRIOR APPROPRIATIONS              |                     |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|
| FY10-11                           | \$6,900,000         |
| FY12-13                           | \$12,000,000        |
| FY14-15                           | \$13,000,000        |
| FY16-17                           | \$9,750,000         |
| FY18-19                           | \$9,750,000         |
| FY20-21                           | \$9,500,000         |
| FY22-23                           | \$3,872,000         |
| FY24-25                           | \$8,434,000         |
| FY26-27                           | \$2,000,000         |
| <b>TOTAL APPROPRIATED TO DATE</b> | <b>\$75,206,000</b> |

| FY28 Request    | FY29 Request    | FY28-29 TOTAL REQUEST |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| <i>Increase</i> | <i>Increase</i> | <i>Increase</i>       |

[For agency applicants: don't fill out the FY28-29 until you receive agency approval. We will update the form at that time. Until then, please include "New", "Hold steady", "Increase", or "Decrease".]

State Employees

If applicable, indicate the number the full-time state employees supported by the CWF for this program.

|         |     |
|---------|-----|
| FY10-11 | 1.5 |
| FY12-13 | 2.6 |
| FY14-15 | 2.8 |
| FY16-17 | 2.0 |
| FY18-19 | 2.0 |
| FY20-21 | 2.0 |
| FY22-23 | 1.0 |
| FY24-25 | 1.8 |
| FY26-27 | 0.8 |

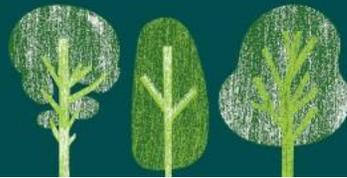


## LIMITED FUNDS!

Funds are limited, so stop in today about eligibility. Ranking periods are October, January, and July or until funds are gone.



## RIM RIPARIAN AND FLOODPLAIN PROGRAM



## CONTACT

**Cottonwood SWCD**

210 10th St

Windom, MN 56101

**Phone:**

507-832-8287

**EMAIL ADDRESS:**

[becky.buchholz@co.cottonwood.mn.us](mailto:becky.buchholz@co.cottonwood.mn.us)

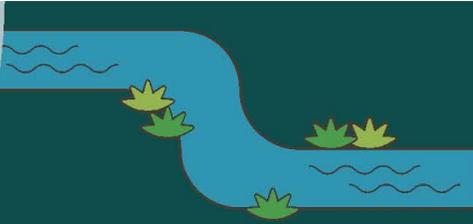
**WEBSITE:**

[www.cottonwoodswcd.org](http://www.cottonwoodswcd.org)



## ABOUT:

RIM Riparian and Floodplain is a new program focused on protecting & restoring riparian and floodplain areas to improve and enhance water quality and wildlife habitat. There are options for perpetual and limited term easements (30 year), in addition to working lands options (haying/grazing).



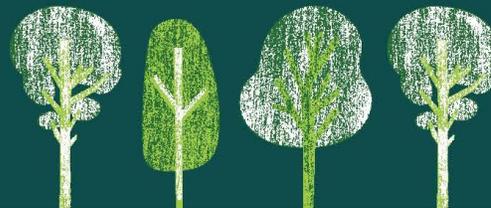
## PROGRAM

Minimum width requirements:

- 1,000 ft from lake
- 300 ft from stream/river, or floodplain, whichever is greater

Minimum size: 8 acres

Buffer areas under 103F.48 must be donated (public waters) or excluded (public ditches)



## PAYMENT RATES:

Rates vary based on the township location, perpetual/limited term, and working lands or non-working lands options.

### **PERPETUAL (NON-WORKING)**

100% OF RIM RATES

### **PERPETUAL (WORKING LANDS)**

65% OF RIM RATES

### **LIMITED TERM (NON-WORKING)**

65% OF RIM RATES

### **LIMITED TERM (WORKING LANDS)**

32.5% OF RIM RATES



# FY28-29 CLEAN WATER FUND PROPOSAL

|                                 |                                                                                                                                                             |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Program Title:                  | Drinking Water Protection                                                                                                                                   |
| Program Number (if applicable): | 37                                                                                                                                                          |
| Agency/Organization Name:       | Board of Water and Soil Resources                                                                                                                           |
| Program website:                | <a href="https://bwsr.state.mn.us/rim-groundwater-wellhead-protection-easements">https://bwsr.state.mn.us/rim-groundwater-wellhead-protection-easements</a> |

| Program Contact |                                                                              |
|-----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Name            | Sharon Doucette                                                              |
| Email           | <a href="mailto:sharon.doucette@state.mn.us">sharon.doucette@state.mn.us</a> |
| Phone           | 651-539-2567                                                                 |

| Person Filling Out Form |                                                                      |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Name                    | Sara Reagan                                                          |
| Email                   | <a href="mailto:Sara.reagan@state.mn.us">Sara.reagan@state.mn.us</a> |
| Phone                   | 651-539-2533                                                         |

## Eligibility Requirements

Proposers must confirm that their proposal meets basic statutory eligibility. Please check each box that applies to certify the following:

**Eligible Use of Funds:** Requested funds will be used in accordance with Minnesota law and Clean Water Fund requirements, outlined in full in [Minnesota Statutes 114D.50 Subd. 3](#). This includes confirmation that this funding request supplements rather than supplants previous non-legacy state funding.

**Accounting and Reporting Capacity:** The proposing organization has experience with or ability to meet accounting and reporting requirements in order ensure appropriate use of funds, as stipulated in [Minnesota Statutes 114.50 Subd. 4](#).

**Mandate Alignment (if applicable):** This proposal supports or fulfills state or federal mandates (i.e. TMDL, Nonpoint Source Pollution, Nutrient Reduction Strategy, Wild Rice protection, etc.).

If yes, please cite applicable statute or rule: \_\_\_\_\_

## Abstract

Provide a summary (up to 100 words) that clearly states the purpose of the program, its intended water quality impact, and who it serves. The content here will largely be used as a brief summary when looking across programs, so some degree of redundancy is anticipated with other content in the form.

*The program goal is to ensure that the land use within a drinking water supply management area is conducive to protecting or improving the drinking water that is impacted by the land use in areas that are vulnerable to contamination and protect the land via Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) easements or agreements with local units of governments for fee title acquisitions.*

## Water Quality Impact

Which step of the [Water Management Framework](#) does this program most fit under:

### *Implementation*

Overall, how will this program protect, enhance, and restore water quality in lakes, rivers, and streams, protect groundwater from degradation, or protect drinking water sources. Please limit your response to 200 words.

*This program seeks to protect and restore the quality of groundwater and drinking water sources in Minnesota through Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve easements by working with soil and water conservation districts and private landowners, as well as permanent protection through agreements for fee title acquisition by local units of government.*

*Priority is placed on land located where the vulnerability of the drinking water supply is designated as high or very high by the Commissioner of Health; where the drinking water supply is identified as Mitigation Level 1 or 2 by the Minnesota Groundwater Rule; where drinking water protection plans developed by Tribal governments have identified high vulnerability; or where drinking water protection plans have identified specific activities that will achieve long-term protection.*

*BWSR will continue to work with Minnesota Department of Health, Minnesota Department of Agriculture, and the Minnesota Rural Water Association to prioritize projects within targeted areas. BWSR also works with SWCDs, LGUs, and/or other community partners in those areas to secure long-term protection on lands and reduce nitrates entering drinking water supplies. This is accomplished through easements that limit row-crop agricultural uses or agreements that allow for fee title acquisition and appropriate land uses by LGUs.*

## Measurable Outcomes and Progress

Responses for each bullet (e.g. 1a, 1b, etc.) should be limited to 50-100 words.

1. Expected Outcomes for FY28–29 Request:
  - a. Describe measurable and outcome-based goals for the current funding request.  
*The number of easements and acres enrolled in this program will depend on the size and cost of the easements. Through a combination of targeted outreach, eligibility screening, and a scoring and ranking process, each site is considered on its benefits to drinking water, the surrounding landscape, and site-specific features which highlight the benefits of easement enrollment. Criteria include prioritization of conversion to perennial cover,*

*high priority areas in Comprehensive Water Management Plans, proximity to karst topography, easement size, and easement terms and length.*

- b. Describe how outcomes will be tracked, evaluated, and reported.  
*The number of easements and acres enrolled will be tracked in BWSR's easement database. Outcomes are reported via the Biennial Clean Water Fund Report. Site inspections are completed by Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) to evaluate restorations on easements and monitor compliance. SWCDs report to BWSR on each site inspection conducted and findings.*
- c. (If applicable) For past recipients, describe any planned changes to this program from previous funding cycles, if any. *Addition of surface water drinking water supply management areas to the area of eligibility.*

2. Outcomes from Prior Clean Water Fund Appropriations (if applicable):

- a. How would you characterize progress made to date? As much as is possible, include outcomes achieved as they relate to the program purpose.  
*A total of 40 easements have been recorded, totaling almost 3,000 acres of protection since 2010. There have also been several partner agreements executed.*
- b. How close is the program to reaching its long-term goals?  
*The program will continue as long as there are interested landowners and local units of government looking to convert land to perennial cover within vulnerable drinking water supply management areas.*

### Alignment with Clean Water Council Strategic Plan

For each relevant goal or strategy in the Clean Water Council's Strategic Plan, list the applicable item and briefly explain (50-100 words) how this proposal helps fulfill that objective.

*Goal: Public Water Systems--Ensure that users of public water systems have safe, sufficient, and equitable drinking water. Strategy: Support prevention efforts to protect groundwater in DWSMAs.*

*BWSR will continue to work with Minnesota Department of Health, Minnesota Department of Agriculture, and the Minnesota Rural Water Association to prioritize projects within targeted areas in efforts to reduce nitrates entering drinking water supplies.*

*Goal: Protect and restore surface waters to achieve 70% swimmable and 67% fishable waters by 2034 via by prioritizing and targeting resources by major watershed. Strategy: Prioritize waters for protection and restoration using comprehensive watershed management plans (One Watershed One Plan or other approved plans) updated every ten years.*

*This program awards additional points for applications when land is located within a high priority or priority area as identified by Comprehensive Watershed Management Plans (CWMP).*

Additionally, please list any other statewide or federal plan this effort supports.

- *Groundwater Protection Rule*
- *Comprehensive Watershed Management Plans*

- *MN Climate Action Framework (Contributes to at least five Priority Actions under Goal 2 - Climate-smart natural and working lands. The five Priority Actions are: 1) accelerate forest, grassland and wetland restoration; 2) store more carbon; 3) restore and expand habitat complexes and corridors; 4) increase water storage and infiltration and manage drainage; and 5) prioritize groundwater and drinking water)*
- *Minnesota Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan*
- *Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan*

**Interconnection**

Please list other Clean Water Fund-supported programs it informs and/or is informed by. Please briefly describe for each (up to 50 words) how Clean Water Funds add to existing efforts.

Connected CWF-supported programs:

*MN CREP – Clean Water Funds are part of the \$150M state commitment to the MN CREP in partnership with USDA.*

*One Watershed, One Plan (1W1P) program – the RIM Drinking Water program awards additional points for applications when land is located within a high priority or priority area as identified by Comprehensive Watershed Management Plans (CWMP).*

Connected non-CWF-supported programs:

*None.*

**Non-CWF Funding**

Will this program receive or request other funding from non-CWF sources, or eventually leverage non-CWF sources? *No*

If so, please describe what funds are being leveraged, the anticipated amount, and your degree of certainty that the funding is secure. Feel free to add rows if needed.

| Funding Source                             | Anticipated Amount | Degree of Security (%) |
|--------------------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| <i>Ex. Private landowner contributions</i> | <i>\$100,000</i>   | <i>100%</i>            |
|                                            |                    |                        |
|                                            |                    |                        |
|                                            |                    |                        |

If additional description or elaboration is needed, please include here. (50 words max)

## Long-term funding vision

- If this proposal is funded, should the Clean Water Council expect future (beyond FY28-29) requests to increase, decrease, or stay about the same? (Do not factor inflation into your answer.)
  - Increase
  - Decrease
  - Stay the same
- Do you have an anticipated end date for funding need? *No*. If so, when? \_\_\_\_\_
- Do you intend to continue this program past 2034 in some capacity?  Yes  No  Unsure

## Funding Recipients

Please state as a percentage the amount of funding from this request that is anticipated to be pass-through to a non-state agency entity.

*Approximately 90 % of funds are used for landowner payments, agreements, SWCD payments and reimbursement costs.*

## Engagement and Community Value

- How have program beneficiaries been engaged in the development or evolution of this program? Who are the program partners, if any? (150 words)  
*Landowners have the option of enrolling into a perpetual or limited term easement on their land. Local government units can utilize funds for agreements for fee title acquisitions. SWCDs are a critical local partner.*
- Please describe how this program advances environmental justice and promotes equity. (150 words) *This easement program is available statewide including within reservation boundaries within DWSMAs and other sensitive drinking water areas as defined in statute. There are many EJ areas as mapped by MPCA that are also mapped by MDH as high vulnerability DSMWAs (the area around the City of Faribault is just one example).*
- If this has been funded through Clean Water Funds in the past, please share 1-3 recent examples of outreach conducted by this program. Links or attachments are allowable.
  - *RIM Drinking Water online training (July 16, 2025)*
  - *MN BWSR Snapshots article (August 2025) [“Revised RIM boosts payment, land-use options, term length”](#)*
  - *Targeted individual outreach to all Level One and Level Two DWSMAs under the Groundwater Protection Rule (Fall 2025)*

## CWF Communication Plan

For both new and returning applicants, please describe (under 100 words) or attach the plan for communicating with the public and pass-through recipients about the Clean Water Fund.

*The Drinking Water Protection program is a partnership delivered locally by SWCDs and at the state level by BWSR. Local staff communicate with LGUS and landowners to promote agreements and RIM*

*easements, assist with easement processing, and provide key essential technical assistance and project management services. All easements funded with CWF display a sign containing the Legacy Fund logo posted along the boundary.*

| PRIOR APPROPRIATIONS              |                     |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|
| FY10-11                           | \$2,300,000         |
| FY12-13                           | \$3,600,000         |
| FY14-15                           | \$2,600,000         |
| FY16-17                           | \$3,500,000         |
| FY18-19                           | \$3,500,000         |
| FY20-21                           | \$4,000,000         |
| FY22-23                           | \$5,000,000         |
| FY24-25                           | \$6,000,000         |
| FY26-27                           | \$5,000,000         |
| <b>TOTAL APPROPRIATED TO DATE</b> | <b>\$35,500,000</b> |

| FY28 Request  | FY29 Request  | FY28-29 TOTAL REQUEST |
|---------------|---------------|-----------------------|
| <i>Steady</i> | <i>Steady</i> | <i>Steady</i>         |

[For agency applicants: don't fill out the FY28-29 until you receive agency approval. We will update the form at that time. Until then, please include "New", "Hold steady", "Increase", or "Decrease".]

### State Employees

If applicable, indicate the number the full-time state employees supported by the CWF for this program.

|         |     |
|---------|-----|
| FY10-11 | 0.5 |
| FY12-13 | 0.8 |
| FY14-15 | 0.6 |
| FY16-17 | 0.6 |
| FY18-19 | 0.7 |
| FY20-21 | 0.7 |
| FY22-23 | 0.8 |
| FY24-25 | 0.8 |
| FY26-27 | 0.8 |

# FY28-29 CLEAN WATER FUND PROPOSAL

|                                 |                                                                                                           |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Program Title:                  | Conservation Equipment Assistance                                                                         |
| Program Number (if applicable): |                                                                                                           |
| Agency/Organization Name:       | Minnesota Department of Agriculture                                                                       |
| Program website:                | <a href="https://www.mda.state.mn.us/soil-health-grant">https://www.mda.state.mn.us/soil-health-grant</a> |

| Program Contact |                                                                                    |
|-----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Name            | Brad Jordahl-Redlin                                                                |
| Email           | <a href="mailto:brad.jordahlredlin@state.mn.us">brad.jordahlredlin@state.mn.us</a> |
| Phone           | 651-200-5307                                                                       |

| Person Filling Out Form |                                                                        |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Name                    | Megan Moland                                                           |
| Email                   | <a href="mailto:Megan.moland@state.mn.us">Megan.moland@state.mn.us</a> |
| Phone                   | 651-418-2271                                                           |

**Eligibility Requirements**

Proposers must confirm that their proposal meets basic statutory eligibility. Please check each box that applies to certify the following:

**Eligible Use of Funds:** Requested funds will be used in accordance with Minnesota law and Clean Water Fund requirements, outlined in full in [Minnesota Statutes 114D.50 Subd. 3](#). This includes confirmation that this funding request supplements rather than supplants previous non-legacy state funding.

**Accounting and Reporting Capacity:** The proposing organization has experience with or ability to meet accounting and reporting requirements in order ensure appropriate use of funds, as stipulated in [Minnesota Statutes 114.50 Subd. 4](#).

**Mandate Alignment (if applicable):** This proposal supports or fulfills state or federal mandates (i.e. TMDL, Nonpoint Source Pollution, Nutrient Reduction Strategy, Wild Rice protection, etc.).

If yes, please cite applicable statute or rule: \_\_\_\_\_

## Abstract

**Provide a summary (up to 100 words) that clearly states the purpose of the program, its intended water quality impact, and who it serves. The content here will largely be used as a brief summary when looking across programs, so some degree of redundancy is anticipated with other content in the form.**

Conservation Equipment Assistance supports the Minnesota Department of Agriculture’s Soil Health Financial Assistance Program (SHFAP), which provides grants to producers, producer groups, and local governments to purchase or retrofit equipment that promotes soil-health practices. By expanding access to equipment for cover cropping, reduced tillage, managed grazing, and similar practices, the program improves soil structure, increases infiltration, and limits disturbance. These improvements directly protect water quality by reducing erosion and curbing sediment and nutrient runoff into Minnesota’s waterways.

## Water Quality Impact

**Which step of the [Water Management Framework](#) does this program most fit under: Implementation.**

**Overall, how will this program protect, enhance, and restore water quality in lakes, rivers, and streams, protect groundwater from degradation, or protect drinking water sources. Please limit your response to 200 words.**

Implementation is the clearest fit for this program, given it directly enables producers to adopt on-the-ground practices that deliver measurable water-quality benefits. By expanding access to specialized soil health equipment, this program accelerates the transition to systems that increase infiltration, reduce erosion, and keep nutrients cycling within fields rather than moving into lakes, rivers, streams, and groundwater. Healthy soils hold more water, lose less sediment, and require fewer nutrient inputs, all of which reduce the risk of contaminants entering drinking-water sources and degrading aquatic ecosystems. Because the upfront cost of equipment is a major barrier, SHFAP’s 50% cost-share (up to \$45,000) makes these practices attainable for more producers and limits the risk of management changes, and in doing so, delivers durable improvements in soil function and long-term protection of Minnesota’s water resources. SHFAP is the first and only program nationally to reimburse for soil-health equipment, and in all program years demand has greatly exceeded available resources.

## Measurable Outcomes and Progress

**Responses for each bullet (e.g. 1a, 1b, etc.) should be limited to 50-100 words.**

### **1. Expected Outcomes for FY28–29 Request:**

#### **a. Describe measurable and outcome-based goals for the current funding request.**

MDA will continue to track performance measures, including the number of grants requested and awarded, the types of equipment requested and funded, and the number of acres in which soil-health practices are implemented through these equipment purchases.

#### **b. Describe how outcomes will be tracked, evaluated, and reported.**

Outcomes are documented at multiple points to ensure clear, consistent evaluation. Applicants provide projected soil health practices and acreage in their initial application,

establishing a baseline for expected outcomes. As projects move forward, reimbursement requests verify that approved equipment has been purchased and is in use. To receive the final 10% of their award, grantees must complete a reporting form that details soil health practices implemented with the equipment, total acres affected, and the number of acres where these practices are newly adopted. Together, these steps create a reliable system for tracking progress and reporting program impact.

- c. **(If applicable) For past recipients, describe any planned changes to this program from previous funding cycles, if any.**

There are no anticipated changes to this program.

**2. Outcomes from Prior Clean Water Fund Appropriations (if applicable):**

- a. **How would you characterize progress made to date? As much as is possible, include outcomes achieved as they relate to the program purpose.**

Progress to date is strong and clearly aligns with the program’s purpose of expanding soil health implementation to protect Minnesota’s waters. Since launching in 2023, SHFAP has enabled more than 300 producers, producer groups, and local governments to acquire soil health equipment, which are now being used on 526,102 acres statewide. Because these tools support practices that are repeated annually, benefits compound over time - improving soil structure, reducing erosion, and limiting nutrient loss year over year. Statutory requirements further ensure long-term continuous adoption by requiring funded equipment to be maintained for 10 years. As a result, SHFAP is driving sustained soil health management and delivering water-quality protection well beyond initial investments.

| Year         | Applications | Awards     | Amount Awarded         | Amount Requests       | Affected Acres (annually) |
|--------------|--------------|------------|------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| FY23         | 238          | 16         | \$478,192.68           | \$6.5 million         | 34,998                    |
| FY24         | 284          | 81         | \$2,358,861.51         | \$8.4 million         | 141,741                   |
| FY25         | 309          | 90         | \$2,796,447.69         | \$9.6 million         | 132,332                   |
| FY26         | 282          | 164        | \$4,808,033.68         | \$8.6 million         | 217,031                   |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>1,113</b> | <b>351</b> | <b>\$10,441,535.56</b> | <b>\$33.1 million</b> | <b>526,102</b>            |



**sensitive areas, Groundwater Management Areas (GWMAs), and highly vulnerable Drinking Water Source Management Areas (DWSMAs).**

- SHFAP applicants who farm in a DWSMA receive priority points. If awarded, they then implement conservation practices that enhance soil health and mitigate water quality concerns.

Drinking Water Source Protection Vision: Drinking water is safe, for everyone, everywhere in Minnesota

Goal 1: Public Water Systems--Ensure that users of public water systems have safe, sufficient, and equitable drinking water.

- **Strategy 2; Action 1 – Support implementation funding and technical assistance to reduce nitrate in DWSMAs that are Level 1 and Level 2 under the Groundwater Protection Rule.**
  - This grant gives priority points to applicants whose operation exists within a DWSMA. This helps provide additional support and priority to producers in these areas so they can implement soil health practices that, in most cases, improve water quality.
- **Strategy 3; Action 1 – Fund protective actions that assist public water suppliers in meeting safe drinking water levels.**
  - This grant provides funding for conservation equipment related to soil health. This equipment enables the adoption of practices that help protect and improve water quality.

Surface Water Protection and Restoration Vision: Minnesotans will have fishable and swimmable waters throughout the state.

Goal 2: Protect and restore surface waters to achieve 70% swimmable and 67% fishable waters by 2034ii via by prioritizing and targeting resources by major watershed.

- **Strategy 2- Action 1: Support local efforts to support those impaired waters that are closest to meeting state water quality standards**
  - SWCDs are eligible to apply for this grant and share the equipment with producers in their area. Given this, if an SWCD in a county with impaired waters is awarded this grant, it is then able to use the equipment and practices on lands near the impaired waters and mitigate water-quality risks through soil health practices.
- **Strategy 2; Action 4 - Restore and protect water resources for public use and public health, including drinking water.**
  - Applicants with a project or projects located within a DWSMA receive priority points in the grant ranking process to target resources where they are needed most.

Vision: All Minnesotans value water and take actions to sustain and protect it.

- **Strategy 1; Action 7 - Support innovative efforts that accelerate progress toward clean water goals.**
  - The SHFAP grant directly advances this action by delivering a truly innovative, first-of-its kind approach to accelerating clean-water progress. As the only program in Minnesota, and the nation, to provide dedicated cost-share resources for soil-health equipment, the

program removes one of the most significant barriers to adopting conservation practices. Since launch, the program has enabled soil-health implementation on 523,102 acres statewide. These acres now benefit from practices that reduce erosion and limit nutrient loss, resulting in measurable improvements to both soil health and water quality.

**Interconnection**

**Please list other Clean Water Fund-supported programs it informs and/or is informed by. Please briefly describe for each (up to 50 words) how Clean Water Funds add to existing efforts.**

Connected CWF-supported programs:

- The Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program- Farms participating in the MDA’s Minnesota Ag Water Quality Certification Program are prioritized in the ranking system.
- CWF Soil Health grant (BWSR) operates in tandem where BWSR grants support the adoption and implementation of practices, and SHFAP grants address a key barrier to adoption — the cost of necessary equipment that makes those practices feasible on farms.

Connected non-CWF-supported programs:

- N/A

**Non-CWF Funding**

**Will this program receive or request other funding from non-CWF sources, or eventually leverage non-CWF sources?**

**If so, please describe what funds are being leveraged, the anticipated mount, and your degree of certainty that the funding is secure. Feel free to add rows if needed.**

| Funding Source                   | Anticipated Amount         | Degree of Security (%) |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|
| General Fund                     | \$639,000/year             | 100%                   |
| Climate Smart Food Systems Grant | \$1,750,000/year till FY28 | 100%                   |
|                                  |                            |                        |
|                                  |                            |                        |

**If additional description or elaboration is needed, please include here. (50 words max)**

**Long-term funding vision**

- **If this proposal is funded, should the Clean Water Council expect future (beyond FY28-29) requests to increase, decrease, or stay about the same? (Do not factor inflation into your answer.)**

- Increase
- Decrease
- Stay the same
- **Do you have an anticipated end date for funding need? If so, when?** \_\_\_\_\_
- **Do you intend to continue this program past 2034 in some capacity?**  Yes  No  Unsure

### Funding Recipients

Please state as a percentage the amount of funding from this request that is anticipated to be pass-through to a non-state agency entity.

    100     %

### Engagement and Community Value

- How have program beneficiaries been engaged in the development or evolution of this program? Who are the program partners, if any? (150 words)  
 SHFAP works with stakeholders across the agriculture industry to remain informed on how to best support producers in all areas of ag. The program works with:
  - Minnesota Farmers Union
  - Minnesota Farm Bureau
  - Minnesota Milk
  - Minnesota Pork
  - Minnesota State Cattlemen’s Association
  - The Nature Conservancy
  - Minnesota Soybean Growers
  - Minnesota Corn Growers Association
  - Minnesota Soil Health Coalition
  - Natural Resources Conservation Service

SHFAP meets annually with these stakeholders to update them on program changes, ask for feedback, and share insights from across the Minnesota agriculture sector.

Further, local government units (usually SWCDs) that receive SHFAP grants make their equipment available for local producers to rent at a low cost, further increasing accessibility of equipment and, therefore, impact of the program.

- Please describe how this program advances environmental justice and promotes equity. (150 words)  
 SHFAP advances environmental justice and promotes equity by intentionally directing support toward producers who face greater structural and financial barriers to adopting soil health practices. The scoring system prioritizes new farmers—those with fewer than 10 years of experience—who often lack capital and access to equipment. It also prioritizes applicants

farming in DWSMAs and those who are Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certified, ensuring that resources reach communities where water quality risks and protection are needed greatest. Further, the program allows local government units to purchase equipment to provide to local producers as a low-cost rental, expanding access to producers who cannot afford to buy. This shared-equipment model broadens participation, strengthens local capacity, and ensures that benefits are more equitably distributed across Minnesota’s agricultural landscape.

- If this has been funded through Clean Water Funds in the past, please share 1-3 recent examples of outreach conducted by this program. Links or attachments are allowable.
  - [Soil Health Financial Assistance /Press Release](#)
  - Soil Health Financial Assistance Grant Announcement: <https://www.mda.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/docs/2025-08/SHFAP%20Grant%20Announcement%202025.pdf>
  - SHFAP Radio Spot – 7/22/2025 (attachment)
  - [Minnesota Farmers Union Webinar – 8/8/2025](#)

#### CWF Communication Plan

For both new and returning applicants, please describe (under 100 words) or attach the plan for communicating with the public and pass-through recipients about the Clean Water Fund.

The program is promoted statewide through in-person outreach, including tabling, presentations, exhibits, and producer testimony at events. Webinars are offered ahead of the annual August RFP to prepare applicants. Periodic news releases and regular radio segments on *Farming for Our Future* help reach broad agricultural audiences. Information is also shared through producer-focused magazines such as *Prairie Grains* and *Soybean Business*. In addition, updates are distributed through the Minnesota Ag Water Quality Certification Program newsletter, which reaches more than 5,000 subscribers.

| PRIOR APPROPRIATIONS              |                   |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| FY10-11                           |                   |
| FY12-13                           |                   |
| FY14-15                           |                   |
| FY16-17                           |                   |
| FY18-19                           |                   |
| FY20-21                           |                   |
| FY22-23                           | \$3,500,000       |
| FY24-25                           | \$3,500,000       |
| FY26-27                           | \$3,500,000       |
| <b>TOTAL APPROPRIATED TO DATE</b> | <b>10,500,000</b> |

| FY28 Request | FY29 Request | FY28-29 TOTAL REQUEST |
|--------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| Hold steady  | Hold steady  |                       |

[For agency applicants: don't fill out the FY28-29 until you receive agency approval. We will update the form at that time. Until then, please include "New", "Hold steady", "Increase", or "Decrease".]

### State Employees

If applicable, indicate the number the full-time state employees supported by the CWF for this program.

|         |   |
|---------|---|
| FY10-11 |   |
| FY12-13 |   |
| FY14-15 |   |
| FY16-17 |   |
| FY18-19 |   |
| FY20-21 |   |
| FY22-23 | 0 |
| FY24-25 | 0 |
| FY26-27 | 0 |

# FY28-29 CLEAN WATER FUND PROPOSAL

|                                 |                                                                                                                |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Program Title:                  | AgBMP Loan Program                                                                                             |
| Program Number (if applicable): | 34                                                                                                             |
| Agency/Organization Name:       | MDA                                                                                                            |
| Program website:                | <a href="#">Agriculture Best Management Practices (BMP) Loan Program   Minnesota Department of Agriculture</a> |

| Program Contact |                                                                              |
|-----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Name            | Richard Gruenes                                                              |
| Email           | <a href="mailto:Richard.gruenes@state.mn.us">Richard.gruenes@state.mn.us</a> |
| Phone           | 651-201-6609                                                                 |

| Person Filling Out Form |                                                                              |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Name                    | Richard Gruenes                                                              |
| Email                   | <a href="mailto:Richard.gruenes@state.mn.us">Richard.gruenes@state.mn.us</a> |
| Phone                   | 651-201-6609                                                                 |

## Eligibility Requirements

Proposers must confirm that their proposal meets basic statutory eligibility. Please check each box that applies to certify the following:

**Eligible Use of Funds:** Requested funds will be used in accordance with Minnesota law and Clean Water Fund requirements, outlined in full in [Minnesota Statutes 114D.50 Subd. 3](#). This includes confirmation that this funding request supplements rather than supplants previous non-legacy state funding.

**Accounting and Reporting Capacity:** The proposing organization has experience with or ability to meet accounting and reporting requirements in order ensure appropriate use of funds, as stipulated in [Minnesota Statutes 114.50 Subd. 4](#).

**Mandate Alignment (if applicable):** This proposal supports or fulfills state or federal mandates (i.e. TMDL, Nonpoint Source Pollution, Nutrient Reduction Strategy, Wild Rice protection, etc.).

If yes, please cite applicable statute or rule: [The AgBMP Loan Program aligns with all state and federal mandated programs that address water quality.](#)

## Abstract

**Provide a summary (up to 100 words) that clearly states the purpose of the program, its intended water quality impact, and who it serves. The content here will largely be used as a brief summary when looking across programs, so some degree of redundancy is anticipated with other content in the form.**

The AgBMP Loan Program provides low-interest loans ( $\leq 3\%$ ) to farmers, rural landowners, and agriculture supply businesses to implement best management practices (BMPs) that prevent, reduce, or eliminate a water pollution problem. The AgBMP Loan Program is administered by local governments and has very low transaction costs; revolving loan repayments fund additional projects. Demand for AgBMP loans greatly exceeds available resources and additional funding would allow for expanded projects and practices that help protect and restore water quality.

## Water Quality Impact

**Which step of the [Water Management Framework](#) does this program most fit under:** Implementation

**Overall, how will this program protect, enhance, and restore water quality in lakes, rivers, and streams, protect groundwater from degradation, or protect drinking water sources. Please limit your response to 200 words.**

AgBMP loans are used to implement practices that protect, enhance, and restore water quality in lakes, rivers, and streams, protect groundwater from degradation, and protect drinking water sources. This program encourages BMPs that prevent or reduce runoff from feedlots, farm fields, and other pollution problems identified in local water plans or watershed management plans issued by counties. Projects typically include manure management, feedlot improvements, septic system upgrades, purchase of conservation tillage equipment, erosion control structures, and the repair or relocation of some wells. These low interest loans are critical matching dollars for grants and other type of cost share available in Minnesota. Collectively, these projects and practices reduce nitrogen loading by more than 845 tons per year, phosphorus loading by 300 tons per year, and sediment loading by about 73,000 tons per year per \$1 million loaned.

## Measurable Outcomes and Progress

**Responses for each bullet (e.g. 1a, 1b, etc.) should be limited to 50-100 words.**

### **1. Expected Outcomes for FY28–29 Request:**

#### **a. Describe measurable and outcome-based goals for the current funding request.**

An appropriation for FY28–FY29 would increase the program's capacity to offer additional loans, further achieving annual reductions in nutrient and sediment loads. A 2024 program review found that more than \$70 million in water quality projects involving farmers and rural landowners may be delayed or will go uncompleted due to insufficient funding in the upcoming biennium.

#### **b. Describe how outcomes will be tracked, evaluated, and reported.**

Outcomes are tracked through the AgBMP Loan Program database, which records location, project or practice type, loan amount, and total project cost. This data is used to calculate reductions in phosphorus, nitrogen, and sediment loads. Reporting is done

though the AgBMP Loan Program’s legislative biennial report and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture’s clean water reporting, including the Clean Water Performance Report.

- c. **(If applicable) For past recipients, describe any planned changes to this program from previous funding cycles, if any.**

Local governments, including county soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs) and environmental offices, prioritize projects and practices based on local concerns (including those identified in One Watershed One Plans), allowing them to address the most critical needs without delay.

**2. Outcomes from Prior Clean Water Fund Appropriations (if applicable):**

- a. **How would you characterize progress made to date? As much as is possible, include outcomes achieved as they relate to the program purpose.**

The AgBMP Loan Program has made substantial progress in protecting Minnesota’s water resources. Total loan appropriations of \$28.8 million have supported 2,884 loans, representing more than \$85.7 million in total project costs and leveraging over \$56.9 million in collaborative funding. Collectively, these projects and practices reduced nitrogen loadings by more than 845 tons per year, phosphorus loadings by 300 tons per year, and sediment loadings by approximately 73,000 tons per year per \$1 million loaned.

- b. **How close is the program to reaching its long-term goals?**

The AgBMP Loan Program continues to make progress toward its long-term goals by providing low-interest financing to address water quality goals and priorities identified in state and local watershed plans. With additional funding and ongoing collaboration with local partners, the program will further support projects that prevent, reduce, or eliminate water quality impairments, drinking water concerns, and environmental pollution across Minnesota.

Approved lenders can provide loans in all 87 counties in Minnesota.

### Alignment with Clean Water Council Strategic Plan

**For each relevant goal or strategy in the Clean Water Council’s Strategic Plan, list the applicable item and briefly explain (50-100 words) how this proposal helps fulfill that objective.**

AgBMP loans support implementation of practices that protect, enhance, and restore water quality in lakes, rivers, and streams, protect groundwater from degradation, or protect drinking water sources. These low interest loans are critical matching dollars for grants and other type of cost share available in Minnesota. This program area aligns with the Clean Water Council’s Strategic Plan in multiple areas:

Groundwater Vision: Groundwater is clean and available to all in Minnesota.

Goal 1: Protect groundwater from degradation and support effective measures to restore degraded groundwater.

- **Strategy 2- Action 2: Reduce risk of bacteria in groundwater.**

- **Strategy 2- Action 3: Reduce nitrate contamination of groundwater.**
- **Strategy 2- Action 4: Reduce risk of pesticide contamination in groundwater.**
- **Strategy 2- Action 5: Reduce risk of stormwater contaminants entering groundwater.**

Goal 2: Ensure groundwater use is sustainable and avoid adverse impacts to surface water features due to groundwater use.

- **Strategy 3- Action 1: Implement water efficiency BMPs, water use reduction, and irrigation water management in areas of high-water use intensity by agricultural irrigators, highly sensitive areas, Groundwater Management Areas (GWMAs), and highly vulnerable Drinking Water Source Management Areas (DWSMAs).**

Drinking Water Source Protection Vision: Drinking water is safe for everyone, everywhere in Minnesota.

Goal 1: Public Water Systems--Ensure that users of public water systems have safe, sufficient, and equitable drinking water.

- **Strategy 2-Action 1: Support implementation funding and technical assistance to reduce nitrate in DWSMAs that are Level 1 and Level 2 under the GPR.**

Goal 2: Private Water Supply Wells—Ensure that private well users have safe, sufficient, and equitable access to drinking water.

- **Strategy 2- Action 2: Assist qualifying low-income households and households with vulnerable populations to mitigate contaminants, such as well replacement, water treatment systems, etc.**

Surface Water Protection and Restoration Vision: Minnesotans will have fishable and swimmable waters throughout the state.

Goal 2: Protect and restore surface waters to achieve 70% swimmable and 67% fishable waters by 2034 by prioritizing and targeting resources by major watershed.

- **Strategy 2- Action 1: Support local efforts to support those impaired waters that are closest to meeting state water quality standards.**
- **Strategy 2- Action3: Support efforts to protect those high-quality unimpaired waters at greatest risk of becoming impaired.**
- **Strategy 2- Action4: Restore and protect water resources for public use and public health, including drinking water.**

Goal 3: Protect and restore surface waters to achieve 70% swimmable and 67% fishable waters by 2034 via through statewide, regional, or issue-specific programs that help meet water quality goals but are not necessarily prioritized and targeted according to geography.

- **Strategy 1- Action1: Maintain compliance rates for subsurface sewage treatment systems (SSTS) at 80 percent with a stretch goal of 90 percent.**
- **Strategy 1- Action2: Reduce risk of stormwater contaminants entering surface water.**
- **Strategy 1- Action 3: Support small unsewered or under-sewered communities for long-term wastewater solutions.**

Vision: All Minnesotans value water and take actions to sustain and protect it.

Goal 1: Build capacity of local communities to protect and sustain water resources.

- **Strategy 1- Action 1: Support local efforts to engage farmers in water quality efforts.**
- **Strategy 1- Action 4: Support local efforts to engage lakeshore property owners and private landowners.**
- **Strategy 1- Action 6: Engage water managers statewide.**
- **Strategy 1- Action 7: Support innovative efforts that accelerate progress toward clean water goals.**
- **Strategy 1- Action 8: Plan for funding resilience after expiration of Legacy Amendment in 2034.**

**Additionally, please list any other statewide or federal plan this effort supports.**

The AgBMP Loan Program collaborates with local partners to address water quality goals and priorities identified in federal, state, and local watershed plans, including but not limited to:

- Comprehensive Watershed Management Plans (i.e., One Watershed, One Plan) – MN BWSR
- Minnesota Water Management Framework – MN multi-agency
- Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Reports – MPCA/U.S. EPA
- Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies (WRAPS) Reports – MPCA
- Groundwater Restoration and Protection Strategies (GRAPS) Reports – MDH
- Wellhead Protection Plans (MDH)
- Clean Water State Revolving Fund - MN Public Facilities Authority (MPFA)
- The Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program (BTNEP), Louisiana

## Interconnection

**Please list other Clean Water Fund-supported programs it informs and/or is informed by. Please briefly describe for each (up to 50 words) how Clean Water Funds add to existing efforts.**

This Program supports and collaborates with BWSR, MPCA, MDH, and other MDA programs for projects and practices that are eligible for funding. Funds help finance priority agricultural practices, expand cost-share efforts, reduce nutrient and sediment pollution, protect drinking water, and address water quality impairments statewide through state and local partnerships.

These low-interest loans are critical matching dollars for grants and other type of cost share available in Minnesota.

## Non-CWF Funding

**Will this program receive or request other funding from non-CWF sources, or eventually leverage non-CWF sources?**

The AgBMP Loan Program receives additional funding from State General Funds in the amount of \$1.425 million annually, as shown below. Private landowner contributions constitute a considerable amount of leveraged funding; however, the amount is based on the loans awarded and projects implemented.

If so, please describe what funds are being leveraged, the anticipated amount, and your degree of certainty that the funding is secure. Feel free to add rows if needed.

| Funding Source                  | Anticipated Amount | Degree of Security (%) |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| State General Fund              | \$1,425,000        | 100%                   |
| Private Landowner Contributions | TBD                | TBD                    |
|                                 |                    |                        |

If additional description or elaboration is needed, please include here. (50 words max)

These funds complement any other grant, loan or other cost share opportunity and are critical matching dollars for implementation of conservation practices in Minnesota. Projects and practices may be fully or partially funded through the AgBMP Loan Program.

### Long-term funding vision

- **If this proposal is funded, should the Clean Water Council expect future (beyond FY28-29) requests to increase, decrease, or stay about the same? (Do not factor inflation into your answer.)**
  - Increase
  - Decrease
  - Stay the same
- **Do you have an anticipated end date for funding need? If so, when?**  
No end date planned with financing still needed to address water quality goals and priorities identified in state and local watershed plans
- **Do you intend to continue this program past 2034 in some capacity?**  Yes  No  Unsure

### Funding Recipients

Please state as a percentage the amount of funding from this request that is anticipated to be pass-through to a non-state agency entity.

More than 97% of Clean Water Funds go toward AgBMP loans and are passed through for projects. The remaining, 2.5% has been used to offset administrative costs and to support an employee (0.5FTE) attached to the program.

### Engagement and Community Value

- **How have program beneficiaries been engaged in the development or evolution of this program? Who are the program partners, if any? (150 words)**  
The AgBMP Loan Program actively engages program beneficiaries and partners through regular coordination with county soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs), county environmental offices, and eligible borrowers. Program staff routinely consult with these partners to review eligible projects and practices and to discuss current and emerging water quality concerns.

These ongoing discussions—often occurring weekly—allow local partners to identify, prioritize, and advance projects that address the most pressing county-specific water quality needs in a timely manner. This collaborative approach ensures flexibility and responsiveness while avoiding delays. Key program partners include farmers, rural landowners, water quality cooperatives, agriculture-oriented businesses, SWCDs, and county environmental offices, all of whom contribute local knowledge and feedback that help guide program priorities and implementation.

- **Please describe how this program advances environmental justice and promotes equity. (150 words)**

Clean water, and particularly reliable access to safe drinking water, is a core equity and environmental justice issue. AgBMP grants advance these priorities by financing practices that address water quality impacts, including low- to zero-percent interest loans that can meaningfully support economically disadvantaged communities. By reducing pollution sources and improving local water conditions, the program delivers benefits across communities and aligns with the protection of Tribal cultural resources, rights, and self-determination, for which clean water is foundational. Based on current analyses, the MDA does not anticipate any adverse impacts on disadvantaged communities resulting from AgBMP projects.

- **If this has been funded through Clean Water Funds in the past, please share 1-3 recent examples of outreach conducted by this program. Links or attachments are allowable.**

The AgBMP Loan Program has conducted outreach through county and statewide platforms. Each Minnesota county administering the program, through its SWCD or county environmental office, actively promotes the program with websites, newsletters, and local events to inform residents and encourage participation.

Examples include:

- MDA AgBMP Loan Webpage. [Agriculture Best Management Practices \(BMP\) Loan Program | Minnesota Department of Agriculture](#)
- Rock County has the following information posted regarding the AgBMP Loan Program. [Rock County Soil and Water Conservation District and Rock County Land Management - 309 S Freeman Ave, PO Box 1018, Luverne, MN 56156](#)
- Goodhue County SWCD AgBMP Website. [AgBMP Loan | Goodhue SWCD](#)

## CWF Communication Plan

**For both new and returning applicants, please describe (under 100 words) or attach the plan for communicating with the public and pass-through recipients about the Clean Water Fund.**

The AgBMP Loan Program partners with SWCDs and county environmental offices across Minnesota to promote use and benefits of the Clean Water Fund through handouts, newsletters, media outreach, social media posts, public meetings, and in-person visits. The program also is promoted via the Minnesota Department of Agriculture’s website, agency newsletters, and public meetings, ensuring broad outreach to the public and recipients.

| PRIOR APPROPRIATIONS              |                     |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|
| FY10-11                           | \$4,500,000         |
| FY12-13                           | \$9,000,000         |
| FY14-15                           | \$400,000           |
| FY16-17                           | \$150,000           |
| FY18-19                           | \$150,000           |
| FY20-21                           | \$150,000           |
| FY22-23                           | \$150,000           |
| FY24-25                           | \$13,000,000        |
| FY26-27                           | \$4,000,000         |
| <b>TOTAL APPROPRIATED TO DATE</b> | <b>\$31,500,000</b> |

| FY28 Request | FY29 Request | FY28-29 TOTAL REQUEST |
|--------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| Increase     | Increase     |                       |

[For agency applicants: don't fill out the FY28-29 until you receive agency approval. We will update the form at that time. Until then, please include "New", "Hold steady", "Increase", or "Decrease".]

### State Employees

**If applicable, indicate the number the full-time state employees supported by the CWF for this program.**

|         |     |
|---------|-----|
| FY10-11 | .75 |
| FY12-13 | .5  |
| FY14-15 | .5  |
| FY16-17 | .5  |
| FY18-19 | .5  |
| FY20-21 | .5  |
| FY22-23 | .5  |
| FY24-25 | .5  |
| FY26-27 | .5  |

**From:** [Mary Thompson](#)  
**To:** [Kader, Jen \(She/Her/Hers\) \(MPCA\)](#); [Wagner, Margaret \(MDA\)](#)  
**Subject:** Ag BMP  
**Date:** Thursday, February 19, 2026 6:34:39 PM

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You don't often get email from mary.thompson@rockmn.gov. [Learn why this is important](#)

**This message may be from an external email source.**

Do not select links or open attachments unless verified. Report all suspicious emails to Minnesota IT Services Security Operations Center.

Hello Jen and Margaret –

I wanted to touch base with both of you regarding the Ag BMP program. First of all, thank you for all your hard work with and for the Clean Water Funds and for the additional money allocated to the program in 2025, we appreciate all of it so much!! I work with the Rock Soil and Water Conservation District in Luverne, MN. I and my job share partner, Shayla Rock, administer the Ag BMP program here at the local level. We work closely with our area lenders and they with us to promote water quality practices through this program.

We were been able to fund 14 loans in 2025 with 11 of them being for Ag Waste, 2 Conservation Tillage and 1 Septic System totaling \$995,737.00 and have completed one loan for \$200,000 thus far in 2026.

We currently have funds allocated and producers working on two more projects totaling \$170,000.00 and have a wait list of 22 that have applied for funding totaling \$2,317,800.00 with projected repayments for 2026 of \$482,500.27. Two projects totaling \$50,000 having already been ear marked for part of these funds. As you can see, with the average repayments of around \$500,000 producers are having to wait quite some time to be funded. Needless to say, the high interest rates the past several years have driven the demand for funding in this program to an all-time high and our current number of requests to an all-time high as well.

This program is important to our office and our producers in their efforts to improve water quality by making upgrades to feedlots, manure management, septic systems and conservation tillage more affordable with the 3% interest rate. Rock County landowners have also shown a great interest in conservation tillage and cover crops. We currently have approximately \$800,000 in soil health contracts which has also led to a higher number of requests for conservation equipment. Each and every Ag BMP project improves water quality and we could do so much more if funding were available. I am asking you to please consider this program for additional funds so we can continue to help more producers secure loans for practices that help improve our water quality.

Thanks again for all your work and if there is anything we can do on our side to further promote this program and how it is used here in Rock County, please let us know.

Mary Thompson  
Rock SWCD

# A\_\_Surface and Drinking Water Protection Restoration

BWSR

## Comments:

- Excellent program that allows for an adaptive approach to meet needs across MN.
- 90% pass-through and local community engagement with CWF is impressive.

## Questions:

1. Full time employees
  - a. Number of FTE's in FY26-27 is being reduced. If the demand is greater how will you handle the workload?
  - b. Please explain the wide variability in FTEs.
2. Project/application selection
  - a. How do you determine where to fund projects? Is it based on population impacted? Matching funds?
  - b. Who is deciding which grant applications are chosen to receive funding? Is there an internal decision-making body at BWSR?
3. Results
  - a. Is there a single comprehensive list of measurable progress made through the use of these funds?
  - b. How many acres of sensitive DWSMA lands have been protected, last biennium and cumulatively.
  - c. What's the return on investment for lbs of N & P, sediment etc., i.e. \$/N reduced. Does the program have a defined goal, i.e x water bodies de-listed by 2030 or x water bodies protected from degradation, etc.
  - d. What has been done to monitor the 10,000 past projects and conservation practices to demonstrate sustainability of the work/practices?
4. Relationship to other programs
  - a. Are there BMPs or projects funded through this program that are not eligible through WBIF? It would help to provide some examples of funded practices.
  - b. Please explain how this program compares to WBIF in support of the Nonpoint Funding Prioritization Plan, \$ spent on nearly/barely?
  - c. Can they emphasize the difference between this program and the Watershed Management Framework they use vs other BWSR implementation funds and 1W1P guidance
5. There was a significant decrease in FY24-25 funding and FY 26-27 funding. If the demand is increasing, why was significantly less funding requested/received? How much of an

increase will you need to keep this program going?

## B\_\_Accelerated Implementation

BWSR

### Comments:

- Good count of attendance.
- Very important work.

### Questions:

1. Makeup of trainees
  - a. What is the percentage of urban vs rural staff that were trained?
  - b. How many trainings for soil health and resulting # of trained professionals? Are private sector service providers included in trainings, like private agronomists? How can we have more private agronomists and foresters delivering sound technical assistance with a program like this?
2. Credentials
  - a. What specific credentials obtained, documented and tracked?
  - b. How many participants have received Job Approval Authority and for what disciplines?
3. Funding split
  - a. How is funding split between supporting TSA, PTM App and trainings?
  - b. Is only 43% of this funding is getting to LGUs? Would expect this to be higher given the nature of the grant.
4. Stage of program
  - a. Is this program/resources still in the building phase or is it relatively established and more in the execution phase? Please explain the increasing FTEs over time - is that expected to continue or level off at some point or decrease?
  - b. It would seem that as current SWCD and WD employees are trained, the need for additional training would decrease and be limited to new staff. Why is that not the case?
5. Based on past project modeling from the BWSR website for Accelerated Implementation has the program focus changed to modeling via PTMApp? Specifically what changes to PTMApp and or eLink are needed and funded by this proposal? How do they prioritize the work funded by this program - ie system upgrades, what training, whom to include as

regards state and CWC priorities? Can they identify project that used PTMApp and what measurables they delivered (as described in the linked BWSR newsletters)

6. Can WBIF be used for building local capacity if it's in their plan?

## C\_\_Conservation Drainage (Multipurpose Drainage Management)

BWSR

### Questions:

1. Connection to 1W1P and WBIF
  - a. Of the 46 conservation drainage projects referenced in the proposal, what % were funded through this program vs. the WBIF program?
2. Results
  - a. Any idea of how many drainage projects occur annually that so not implement conservation drainage practices? Could you estimate the number of projects this funding would implement and how many feet of channels would be constructed? Between --- and --- projects.
  - b. N, P and sediment reductions are listed, what are the water storage benefits to date and estimated for this proposal? In acre feet. How is the private sector involved like private engineers and land improvement contractors? How are these practices included in 1W1P prioritization & WBIF requests?
  - c. Please describe anticipated outcomes & water quality impacts more clearly.
3. 103E timeline and lifespan
  - a. Could they expand on Goal 3 about building capacity. How does becoming part of the 103E Infrastructure extend beyond the life of the BMP? Maybe an example?
  - b. What is the typical timeline for a 103E drainage project and how many are in the queue for the 28-29 funding cycle?
4. Who is responsible for deciding which applications receive funding?
5. Newly eligible practices
  - a. Are additional practice types going to be included such as expansion of BMPs that store water on the landscape, or others? Why would these be included or why not? Would like to have a more definitive statement than just “conversations have discussed the inclusion...”.
  - b. What are some examples of possible new eligible practices?
  - c. Related to the expansion of eligible BMPs, please describe what these are and how they stack up against the current list of eligible practices in terms of cost/benefit or pollutant removal capacity? Are we funding the highest value BMPs? By expanding

the list of eligible BMPs, are we accepting lower value BMPs? Where did the input for expanding come from? From locals that are desiring this or are we beginning to target the second tier of needs?

## D\_\_Legacy Partners

BWSR

### **Questions and comments:**

1. Excellent program. Competitive process. Leverages community assets and involvement. Should have significantly more funding.
2. Please expand on the potential change to the program – noncompetitive grants for Tribal nations.
3. How are grantees calculating local pollutant load reductions?
4. How much funding would be needed to be able to provide a minimum of \$200,000 to each eligible Tribal government proposal?

## E\_\_Measures, Results, and Accountability

BWSR

### Questions and comments:

1. Other BWSR Programs
  - a. Why is this a standalone program?
    - i. What are the synergies between this CWF-funded accountability system and BWSR's other accountability systems? Is there a fair balance of funding between CWF-funded accountability systems and BWSR's other accountability systems? Is it a good investment to spend \$2.5M on accountability systems to provide oversight of \$150M in BWSR funds from the CWF (i.e., 1.6% ratio of oversight costs)? Why does BWSR request oversight management funding from CWF, when the other agencies appear to fund oversight management funding differently (presumably within their regular budgets)?
    - ii. This seems like a critical component of the array of quality BWSR grants and programs but as a standalone program it is difficult to rank. Why aren't the cost of oversight built into each program?
    - iii. This is an extremely important service, but I question whether CWF funds should be used versus General agency funding direct from the State.
    - iv. Is this the only grant that administrative grant-oversight work comes out of? Or is this a shared cost with the interconnected programs?
    - v. If this is "required oversight" why isn't it automatically funded?
  - b. Other BWSR connections
    - i. What are the water quality and quantity results across BWSR administered programs? How is progress toward objectives and goals in 1W1P and WRAPS tracked? Has there been a return on investment analysis completed for funds spent in a watershed and the net resulting change in water quality improvements? Is there an analysis of \$/lb of nutrient reduction or similar cost per unit for each program and by watershed? How are funds spent relative to the NonPoint Funding Prioritization plan for nearly/barely as it relates to restoration and protection? How does this vary across BWSR Programs?
    - ii. The BWSR capacity building grant also includes funding for eLINK. What is the difference here? How much of this grant funds the BWSR academy?
2. Full time employees
  - a. Where are the 9 FTEs located (who are funded by this program)? What do the 9 FTEs do? (i.e., accounting work, IT work, communications work?)
  - b. Please explain the fluctuation in FTEs, it seems to jump up and down and up again.
3. How big of a challenge would it be to link the BMP locations on the elink map to a file showing acres of cover crops or filter strip length, etc., and show estimated TN, TP and TSS reductions?
4. Can they provide a brief statement about how they enact fraud prevention?
5. One outcome is to evaluate the success and value of on-the-ground restoration and protection activities to better target implementation funds. What have you learned from these evaluations as you move forward? What is working? What is not working? What have you modified/changed?

6. Doesn't this fund leverage local funds through possible in-kind and match? this is often used to pay staff time to report results.

## F\_\_ Enhancing Landowner Adoption of Soil Health Practices for DW & GW Protection

BWSR

### Questions and comments:

1. Could you estimate the # of acres of cover crops that will be needed to achieve the nutrient and sediment reductions referenced in the proposal?
2. For past CWF's, estimate the number of acres of cover crops planted.
3. How much of previous funding and proposed funding has been spent on SWCD personnel? How are private sector service providers like agronomists and Certified Crop Advisors involved in technical assistance and program implementation?
4. How is program effectiveness measured to reduce future dependence on incentive payments? How are local programs evaluated for efficacy? What is the cost per acre of cover crop or soil health practice, by incentive and inclusive of administrative costs?
5. If federal equity consideration is dropped would this program consider adding it back to their criteria?
6. (1c) What is the likelihood that these two strategic shifts to maximize program impact will be implemented? Why or why not?
7. Can we get to a point where this is done voluntarily without the need for funding? How?
8. How durable do you think this program is? If funding were not available, how likely are farmers to continue these practices?
9. Talk more about the development of a "soil health index"
10. Relationship with new program proposal from Olmsted County
  - a. Could you please compare and contrast this program with the program proposed by Olmsted County for Southeast MN Groundwater Protection (proposal G)? How could CWF avoid duplication if both programs were funded by CWF?
  - b. How does this compare and contrast to proposal G - SE groundwater protection?

# G\_\_ Southeast Groundwater Protection and Soil Health Initiative

Olmsted County

## Comments:

- Like this program for what it brings to SE Minnesota
- Innovative and cost-effective. Good inclusion of private sector to leverage public resources.

## Questions:

1. Olmsted County role
  - a. Would Olmsted County be responsible for oversight across all Counties in the program to assure financial integrity of the investments?
  - b. Would CWC funds supplant funding currently being provided by Olmsted County?
2. What is the per acre incentive payment for cover crops, hay, small grain, etc.?
3. How many acres does the 30% represent for continuous living cover crop?
4. What data tracking tool will be used? What technical standard will the BMPs be tied to? USDA FOTG, GAM ?
5. How durable do you think this program is? If funding were not available, how likely are farmers to continue these practices? How would this work leverage federal funding?
6. Relationship with BWSR soil health program
  - a. How does this compare and contrast to proposal F - Soil Health?
  - b. Could you please compare and contrast this program with the program proposed by BWSR for Enhancing Cover Crops for Adoption (proposal F)? How could CWF avoid duplication if both programs were funded by CWF?
  - c. How will this be different from 1w1p funding/program opportunities? Or the RCPP/BWSR soil health programming?

# H\_\_Water Efficiency Grants

Metropolitan Council

## Comments:

- GRANTS to metro cities has been a good program and well received by cities

## Questions:

### 1. Results

- a. Is there a water use reduction goal? How does this program contribute to that goal?
- b. How are reductions being estimated? Is it based on a calculator or measured results from a participating community? How are you ensuring that an inefficient toilet (or other appliance) is what is being replaced? Are we assuming they are all pre-1995 toilets, for example?
- c. Can the reduction in ground/surface water use be confirmed by those operating drinking water utilities?
- d. Have you compared residential use per capita for participating communities to that of non-participating communities to validate that the reductions are attributed to this program? Many municipalities are seeing declining indoor water use based on passive modern technology adoption since energy efficiency standards of the mid to late 1990s.

### 2. Communication with recipients of grants, appliances

- a. Are recipients of new appliances informed that the Clean Water Fund is providing the financial resources for the program?
- b. Besides grant program promotion, are communities also providing educational information to residents/users on water use reduction?
- c. Why were no specifics on a communication plan included in the request?
- d. Can you talk about your communications plan? Looks like this question was missed in the application.

### 3. Program cost and funding

- a. Does the Met Council partner with retailers, manufacturers, and installation professionals to save program costs?
- b. The proposal notes that there isn't an intention to continue the program beyond 2034 - is there a plan in place to wind down this program over the coming years?
- c. Why doesn't Met Council levy for the program?

### 4. Do you know what the percentage of low-income households have participated per community or overall?

# I\_Culvert Replacement Incentive Program

DNR

## Comments:

- Great program to support floodplain issues

## Questions:

1. Do culverts have an "end of life" and if so could we install more effective culverts as they are replaced over time?
2. Could the requester provide geomorphic approach for dummies?
3. Is the program and geomorphic approach shared with non-grantee road authorities to improve culvert replacement procedures?
4. Is it possible to have measurable outcomes? Are you able to determine that since X culvert project was completed, Y data was provided?
5. Is this work eligible for funding under other state programs, like the Flood Hazard Mitigation Assistance program?

## J\_MAWQCP

MDA

### **Comments:**

- Good engagement and leverage with private sector service providers.

### **Questions and comments:**

1. Would it be possible to have eLink show BMP's from AWQCP separately on the same map? Use triangles rather than circles?
2. Could well testing be added as a requirement for certification? This requirement would provide data regarding success of BMP's on GW nitrate levels over time, as well as protect the health of the landowners.
3. What has been the water quality impact at watershed level? How many gallons have been conserved with the irrigation endorsement? What is the average and mean change in nutrient & sediment loss before and after certification?
4. With 34% of the farmer goal and 18% of the acreage goal achieved, how attainable are the 2030 goals? To what extent do you think "early adopters" have already enrolled, potentially making future farmer recruitment more difficult?
5. What is the average size for enrollees (in acres or other metric) and how does this compare to a typical operation across the state? Are enrolled farms on the smaller, medium, or larger side?
6. What do you think is the biggest barrier to joining the program?

## O\_\_Conservation Equipment Assistance

MDA

### Comments:

- Excellent private sector leverage and investment that does not require ongoing state funding.

### Questions:

1. Results
  - a. Can you provide any estimations of reductions in sediment tonnage erosion, P discharges, or N discharges attributable to conservation practices enabled by Conservation Equipment Assistance? Is there a factual basis to believe that the 526,102 acres farmed in part with equipment 50% cost-share funded by the CWF is yielding water quality benefits?
  - b. Have estimated water quality benefits been calculated based on acres implemented, i.e. water holding capacity or nutrient removal/capture?
  - c. Can estimates of nutrient/sediment reductions be made?
2. Could there be a "cash for clunkers" element to the program that would require farms that receive new equipment to sell back their old equipment with proceeds going to support this program?
3. What percentage of the funds go the LGU's that purchase equipment vs individual landowners?
4. If this program was a low or no interest loan instead of an assistance program would the program be less effective?
5. Do priorities for grants consider water quality in the region?
6. Could presenters share some of the feedback given by the ag stakeholders noted in the proposal?
7. How is SHFAP funded? There is no mention of Clean Water Funding in the communications links provided.

## P\_\_AgBMP Loans

MDA

### Questions and comments:

1. Why has the funding for this program varied so widely over the years, from ~\$9M in an early year, to \$150K during 2016-2023, back up to \$13M in FY24-25?
2. What is the timing cycle of loan repayment? Is there a point where council funding decreases because repayments fund the program?
3. What is annual payback amount for these loans?
4. What is the total loan program value - in other words, if the loans were all repaid, including appropriations from other programs including from the legislature, what is the total loan program value? What is the ideal loan program value? And how long would it take to get there at present investment rate?
5. Why are private septic systems an eligible expense for loan funds?
6. SWCD announcements do not mention Clean Water Funding

## K\_\_Critical Shoreland Easements

BWSR

### Questions and comments:

1. Results
  - a. If they are measuring nutrient and/or sediment reductions it would be good to know.
  - b. How are improvements to water quality as a result of easements actually measured?
  - c. How many feet of shoreline have been protected to date?
  - d. Can you estimate the number of acres to be protected with the requested funding, e.g. between \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_ acres?
2. Focus area
  - a. Previously, this program emphasized upper Mississippi River tributaries to protect the Twin Cities drinking water supply. Why is there a proposal to change this emphasis? What are the benefits of shifting away from upper Mississippi River tributaries? (Note, CWF Strat Plan includes the following goal: In addition to 290,151 acres protected during 2008-2018, with partners, protect and restore 200,000 acres in the Upper Mississippi River headwaters basin during 2019-2034.)
  - b. Can these funds be used to enhance Mississippi Headwaters Corridor Habitat Protection or the Pine and Leech Watershed Protection programs?
3. There was a major drop between FY24-25 and FY26-27. What has been/will be the impact? Please be specific - is this delays to those in the queue? Or missed opportunities? Or smaller areas that can be accommodated?
4. What is the biggest barrier to enrolling more permanent acres?
5. How are easement values established?

# L\_\_Wetland Restoration Easements

BWSR

## Comments:

- This is a really good program with lasting, tangible results, but it those need to be better articulated.

## Questions:

1. Results
  - a. Does the wetland restoration easement program yield benefits in the Upper Mississippi River watersheds? (Note, the CWF Strat Plan includes the following goal: In addition to 290,151 acres protected during 2008-2018, with partners, protect and restore 200,000 acres in the Upper Mississippi River headwaters basin during 2019-2034.)
  - b. Can you estimate the number of easements or acres to be protected with these funds, e.g. between \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ acres.
  - c. What are the water quality and quantity results from projects implemented? Is there a wetland restoration goal by watershed? How has the program contributed to water storage goals within 1W1Ps?
  - d. In characterizing the progress made to date, can you be more specific (not just how many easement acres) about the estimates of sediment and nutrients prevented from entering lake, rivers and streams, or acres of wetlands protected?
  - e. How are improvements to water quality as a result of easements actually measured?
2. How do SWCD's inform landowners about the availability of these funds?
3. Does this request include stewardship funding for BWSR/SWCD staff to monitor the easements year after year?
4. There was a major drop between FY24-25 and FY26-27. What has been/will be the impact? Please be specific - is this: delays to those in the queue? Or missed opportunities? Or smaller areas that can be accommodated?
5. What is the biggest barrier to enrolling more permanent acres?

# M\_\_Working Lands Floodplain Easements

BWSR

## Questions and comments:

### 1. Results

- a. Does the working land floodplain easement program yield benefits in the Upper Mississippi River watersheds? (Note, the CWF Strat Plan includes the following goal: In addition to 290,151 acres protected during 2008-2018, with partners, protect and restore 200,000 acres in the Upper Mississippi River headwaters basin during 2019-2034.)
- b. Does the working land floodplain easement program deliver greater benefits than the critical shorelands or wetlands easements or drinking water easement programs? Could you comment generally on which of the 4 easement programs delivers the greatest water quality benefit outcomes? As context, CWF has invested \$75M in the working land floodplain easement program over the years vs. ~\$20M in the wetland easement program vs. ~\$17M in the critical shoreland easement program vs. ~\$35M in Drinking Water protection easements.
- c. Estimate the # of easements or acres to be protected with these funds.
- d. What are the estimated water quality outcomes?
- e. Has the program contributed to any floodplain restorations? How many floodplain projects in Southeast Minnesota have been completed?
- f. How has the program contributed toward protection goals in 1W1Ps, % contribution to goal?
- g. How are improvements to water quality as a result of easements actually measured?
- h. Can you elaborate on what a "limited term easement" involves - what are the restrictions, how long do they last, why not permanent? Understanding that there are several funding sources contributing to the acreage count, how many acres has CWF \$ specifically funded?

### 2. Project selection

- a. Do applicants get priority if land is in a DWSMA?
- b. How are projects prioritized?

### 3. Limited term easements vs. Permanent

- a. Of the ~21,700 acres under easement protections, what amount is non-perpetual (i.e., limited term)? As context, the Legacy Amendment implies a preference for permanent or durable water quality protections for future generations rather than short-term protections.
- b. Have any lands enrolled in the program since its origination been put back into production? If lands are put back into production do we still realize a clean water benefit? If so, should we prioritize opportunities for those enrolled in the perpetual non-working lands category?
- c. How long are the limited term easements referenced in the proposal?
- d. For past projects what is the percentage of projects where landowners have restored the easement to native vegetation or continued to generate income through uses that do not include row crop agriculture? What option has been most "successful" and/or sustainable?
- e. What is the biggest barrier to enrolling more permanent acres?

### 4. Income generation

- a. Does converting row crops to hay qualify under this program?

### 5. BWSR newsletter story has nutrient reduction estimates but main body of proposal does not say all projects have this, do they?

6. Would these easements be outside of land protected by the State Buffer Law?

## N\_\_Drinking Water Protection

BWSR

### Questions:

1. Limited term easements vs. permanent/durability of outcomes
  - a. Please explain the mix of permanent vs. 25-year duration easements and rationale for non-perpetual easements. As context, the Legacy Amendment implies a preference for permanent or durable water quality protections for future generations rather than short-term protections.
  - b. Are clean water benefits still realized if acres enrolled in the program exit the program at the end of a lease term?
  - c. How long are the limited term easements referenced in the proposal? Historically, what has been the breakdown between permanent and limited term easements?
  - d. Outcomes from Prior years: Since 2010 have these easements been “sustained?” Has this been evaluated? Why or why not?
  - e. What is the biggest barrier to enrolling more permanent acres?
2. Please explain generally why the cost per acre for drinking water protection easements is much higher than the other easement programs? As context, past CWF investments of \$35.5M/3,000 acres protected = \$11,833/acre for drinking water protection easements.
3. Do water utilities ever contribute funding for DWSMA protection? How has the program reduced N leaching, i.e. lbs N avoided to source water?
4. Communication seems limited to LGUs and landowners, are community water users and rate payers informed of the program, the need for it?
5. Could you clarify how this program directly supports fee title acquisition, and if so, what “agreements for fee title acquisition” means in practice? The outcomes reference easements and partner agreements, but do not include acres acquired in fee?