

Clean Water Council Meeting Agenda

Monday, March 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)** Council updates
 - Chair update
 - Staff update
 - Policy Committee
 - Budget and Outcomes Committee

9:55 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.

10:10 Process overview and reminders

10:15 BREAK

10:30 (DISCUSSION ITEMS) Proposal presentations

- One Watershed, One Plan (BWSR)
- Watershed Based Implementation Fund (BWSR)
- Riparian Protection and Soil Loss Assistance (BWSR)
- Technical Evaluations (BWSR)
- Nonpoint Source Restoration and Protection Strategies (DNR)

12:00 LUNCH

12:30 (DISCUSSION ITEMS) Proposals Continued

- Technical Assistance (MDA)
- Native Mussel Restoration (DNR)
- Great Lakes Restoration Projects (Lake Superior LAMP) (BWSR)
- Conservation Corps of MN and IA (BWSR)
- Irrigation Water Quality Protection (MDA)
- Nitrate in Groundwater (MDA)

1:40 BREAK

1:55 (DISCUSSION ITEMS) Proposals Continued

- Water Sustainability Support (Met Council)
- SSTS Program Support (MPCA)
- National Park Water Quality Protection Program (VNPCWJPB)
- Private Well Initiative (MDH)

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

Clean Water Council
February 23, 2026, Meeting Summary

Members present: John Barten (Chair), Steve Besser, Rich Biske (Vice Chair), Dick Brainerd, Gail Cederberg, Steve Christenson, Tannie Eshenaur, Warren Formo, Brad Gausman, Kelly Gribauval-Hite, Justin Hanson, Bonnie Keeler (John Bilotta), Peter Kjeseth (Margaret Wagner), Annie Knight, Chris Meyer, Fran Miron, Jason Moeckel, Ole Olmanson, Rep. Kristi Pursell, Peter Schwagerl, Glenn Skuta (Heather Johnson), and Jessica Wilson.

Members absent: Eunie Biel, Rep. Steve Jacob, Holly Hatlewick, and Sen. John Hoffman.

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

- Introductions
- Motion to approve the February 23rd meeting agenda by Dick Brainerd, seconded by Chris Meyer. Motion carries unanimously.
- Motion to approve the January 26th meeting summary by Steve Christenson, seconded by Dick Brainerd. Motion carries unanimously.
- Committee Updates:
 - The Policy Committee will meet on February 27th. They will continue their work on the large volume water user policy statement. They will work on the revision of the chloride policy at the March meeting.
 - The Budget and Outcomes Committee (BOC) meeting met virtually on February 6th. This was to discuss the supplemental budget, as well as reviewing a letter from the Interagency Coordination Team (ICT). The BOC decided if the supplemental budget is over \$10 million, they would provide a recommendation for the additional funds to the Legislature, but if it is under \$10 million, they would recommend the Council hold it (as a risk management measure). The impact of the last two months will not be factored in to the forecast (economic impacts of January and February from Operation Metro Surge that likely will impact sales tax). They plan to send a letter to the Legislature after the decision at a future meeting.
- Council Staff Updates:
 - This is a different meeting setup for the budget recommendation process. Please share feedback with staff. If preferred, it can be submitted anonymously by placing feedback in a shared folder on Teams. All feedback is welcomed. We can make improvements as we go.
 - The Legislative session has begun. Large water users in the form of data centers have already been mentioned, among other water topics. Jen Kader will be keeping track of agendas and will attend hearings for items that come up for the Council. Updates will be provided via the newsletter.
 - Jen completed three presentations this month, following up on the engagement plan. One was for the ICT's watershed management implementation subteam, on the Council's work focusing on outcomes and results, as well as how the Council is looking at the measurements, communicating the results and measures, etc. There were great conversations on leveraging results for both sides. Another presentation was for the statewide interagency watershed management conference. Also, at the Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) in Wilkin County on the Council's history and moving forward with the Clean Water Funds (CWFs). It helped to show the value of these funds and share the message of it.
 - The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) communications staff are closing out a grant and have some funds and are looking to capture some stories from local public members (not staff who touch CWFs, but people who have benefited from the CWFs). They want to connect with folks who can talk about the benefit of CWFs for them or their community. This would be audio stories. Connect with Jen at the Steering Committee meeting. They are looking to finish up this work by May, so they are moving quickly.

No Public Comments (Webex 00:17:00)

Committee Rosters (Webex 00:18:00)

This is a review of the committee rosters. A motion to finalize the rosters is requested.

- Motion to approve the committee rosters, including Gail Cederberg (non-voting member of Met Council) on the Policy Committee, by Dick Brainerd, seconded by Steve Christenson. Motion carries unanimously.
- There would be one open member for the Policy Committee. If the Watershed Districts open Council member is filled by the Governor's Office, there is a spot on the Policy Committee available if they would like to be on a subcommittee.

First Round of Proposal Review for the FY28-29 Biennium (Webex 00:20:30)

The voting members have their rubrics, to review and adjust scores. Agency staff received the questions from the Council members. The meeting packet includes the list of questions (by program) which Council members requested agency staff present responses to today. If a one-page handout was provided about the program, that is also included in the meeting packet. Every program received questions. In addition to today, there is another opportunity to ask questions before the upcoming BOC meeting as well.

Proposals:

- **Surface and Drinking Water Protection Restoration (BWSR) (Webex 00:30:30)**
 - High-level purpose/program goal: Provide competitive grants to local governments to protect, enhance, and restore water quality in lakes, rivers, and streams and to protect groundwater and drinking water.
 - Program output or outcome highlights: BWSR anticipates that at least sixteen projects would be awarded that will reduce phosphorus, nitrogen, and sediment reaching Minnesota waters. Up to fifty percent of the projects would be focused on improving drinking water in protection areas.
 - Funded since 2010, and funded total at \$167.7 million.

Questions:

- Dick Brainerd: Things don't always work out the way you intend. Do you feel like the funds are being used in the way that you thought they would be? Are there ways the program could be tweaked to produce better results? *Answer:* We do technical reviews of the proposals and provide feedback to make proposals better. We work with the grantee to adjust and still get the outcomes for the water body because of how we ask for the proposals and during the projects if something comes up. If they can't, we can return the funds. The funds are used for the next round.
- John Barten: Do you have a specific outreach to drinking water supply management areas (DWSMAs), to solicit grant applications? If you do projects within DWSMAs, do you have a follow up to ensure practices are still functioning properly?
 - *Answer:* We require O&M plans with an inspection schedule. There is an inspection follow up. The local government staff would know if it wasn't working on it. Regarding advertisements, the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) has a fact sheet for this program that is distributed. It is great work from the MDH, and they are doing targeting that area.
 - *Tannie Eshenaur, MDH:* They have regional planners. They interact and help the community water systems create and protect their plans. They know where the vulnerabilities are. They have surface water intake protection plans. They work closely with BWSR.
 - *Margaret Wagner, MDA:* The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) also advertises these BWSR grants within DWSMAs. They work with the local advisory teams.
- Rich Biske: What are the administrative costs versus a formula base? How does the return on investment compare? *Answer:* We are always looking for ways to make the programs more efficient. There are great examples from each program over the years, on making them more efficient. This is an older program, so it is set up for success, over time. We are generating a lot of shovel ready projects in the state. We have more projects than funding. We are working to move the needle on water quality.
- **Accelerated Implementation (BWSR) (Webex 00:59:00)**
 - Program/goal: To address an existing gap by providing technical support, training, certifications, site inventories, and analytically targeting tools to local government staff to increase their technical skills and capacity to accelerate water quality projects.
 - Program highlights: Over the past ten years, the Technical Training and Certification Program has hosted 533 training events with 32,907 attendees, create interactive training modules, enhanced the PTM App, and provided engineering and technical assistance to roughly 350 projects annually.
 - Funded since 2012, and funded total of \$71.6 million.

Questions:

- Tannie Eshenaur, MDH: Has groundwater been included in PTMapp? *Answer:* They continue to look at including it. At this time, they have not. Groundwater monitoring is hard to do; it is a bigger task.
- John Barten: The PTMapp seems to be something to apply to the land. Are there multiple tools being used? *Answer:* There are several tools that the local government units (LGUs) will use. It is an ongoing tool used throughout the planning process. There are many models that help inform the work, but the PTMapp, is one the locals have ownership of and assist in the decision-making process.

- **Conservation Drainage (Multipurpose Drainage Management) (BWSR) (Webex 01:15:00)**

- Purpose/goal: Systematic implementation of Multipurpose Drainage Water Management activities on, or adjacent to, 103E Drainage Systems.
- Program highlights: There are 46 projects funded with multipurpose drainage management (MDM), with removal of nitrogen (11,900 pounds per year), Phosphorus (3,550 pounds per year), and sediment (5950 tons per year).
- Funded since 2016, and funded total at \$9.4 million.

Questions:

- John Barten: Do you have an idea of how many drainage projects are occurring statewide that are not funded through these conservation drainage practices? *Answer:* Yes, kind of. There is not a systematic reporting system. There is the drainage law that is at the local level. There are on average twenty that go through reviews with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR). There are probably about forty to sixty large scale repairs that happen yearly. There is a lot that happen on private lands as well that we would not know about.
- Brad Gausman: Have dollars from this program ever used to responsibly take a ditch offline, if it is no longer helpful? *Answer:* This program, none to date. We are specific on the eligible practices, because we want to stay up to date on what fits with the multipurpose criteria. I will not be shocked to see legislation this year that comes from northeast Minnesota tied to the ability of systems to proactively approach the idea of abandoning sections of systems. There are provisions in 103E that allow impoundment, or water quality practice to be added into the systems. There may be interest in the future.

- **Legacy Partners (BWSR) (Webex 01:33:30)**

- Purpose/goal: Implement activities that protect or restore high priority water resources and expand partnerships for clean water in Minnesota.
- Program highlights: Since the program's inception, the CWLP has received 65 applications and funded 24 projects with a diverse range of partners including two Watershed Districts, five Tribal Governments, and ten NGOs Projects funded include, but are not limited to, green infrastructure, lake and stream restoration, agriculture conservation, feasibility studies, street sweeping, and carp removal.
- Funded since 2023, and funded total at \$5 million.

Questions:

- Gail Cederberg, Met Council: If you go from an RFP to an RFI, are the projects for the Tribal partners graded? *Answer:* Yes, they submit an application with an RFP process, it would be a request for interest. Some of the Tribal partners, there is a three-month RFP process, they often have to go through several branches of their government just to apply. This would open it for a longer period of time, rather than the time constraints of our typical process. So, they can move when they have things set.
- Dick Brainerd: In the handout, you shared you've worked with 11 NGOs. Do you get a lot of applications from them? *Answer:* Yes. The demand and interest is very high.
- Tannie Eshenaur, MDH: When the original outline came out, the list of eligible activities was closer to the list BWSR traditionally would allow. Has there been some expansion of eligible activities? *Answer:* I was not here at start. I understand, there are now more broad activities incorporated—more grassroots efforts and more innovation. The interpretation is adjusting as we move forward with this program.

- **Measures, Results, and Accountability (BWSR) (Webex 01:50:00)**

- Purpose/goal: To provide the required oversight and accountability for the CWFs that BWSR administers to measure, track, and communicate the results of projects, ensuring effective and high-quality investments of funds with measurable water quality results.
- Program highlights: BWSR provides oversight on approximately 245 CWF grants annually across the state and reports outcomes to the Legacy website.
- Funded since 2010, and funded total at \$18 million.

Questions:

- Dick Brainerd: Is this for all the oversight of the programs? *Answer:* Yes.
- Rich Biske: I appreciate all the tools BWSR uses for this program. When you do the evaluations are you tracking against WRAPS? It would be helpful to know how the goals could be measured in each individual watershed. It would be important to pull for outcomes as we move towards 2034. *Answer:* In the presentation, we have things mapped by larger watershed (not individual). It is available to pull out from eLink. It could be done.

- **Enhancing Landowner Adoption of Soil Health Practices for Drinking Water & Groundwater Protection (BWSR) (Webex 02:05:00)**

- Purpose/goal: To drive landscape scale and cover crop soil health adoption, allow Soil Health Professionals to coordinate and deliver meaningful and lasting conservation that improves water quality.
- Program highlights: 100K+ acres implemented, \$25 million in federal funding leveraged, and 700+ farmers mentored influencing 300K+ acres.
- Funded since 2022 and funded a total of \$25.6 million.

Questions:

- Peter Schwagerl: You rely heavily on those federal funds, how long is that allocated for? *Answer:* Those go out to districts and are available until December 31st, 2020. We hope to re-enroll the program, as we get close to the end rate. It is up in the air right now. We have built a structure of local and state folks working together, which we hope to continue. Our partners hope the same.

- **Southeast Groundwater Protection and Soil Health Initiative (Olmsted County) (Webex 02:19:30)**

- Purpose/goal: This program 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.
- Program highlights: While this program has not received CWFs, 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 percent 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.

Questions:

- Chris Meyer: I am a Winona County Commissioner. I think this is a great program, and I am excited about it. It sounds like you have the other eleven SWCDs in the county region on board, but is there not any allocation by county if you receive funding? Would it be first come, first serve? *Answer:* There would be an equal distribution of the funds.
- Chris Meyer: Is Olmsted County Board the final approval for distribution? Who would be the fiscal agent for the region? *Answer:* The SWCDs have been managing contracts, so approvals would go through the counties. They will track the funding and payments. Ultimately, all of the reporting would come back to Olmsted County on behalf of the region.
- Steve Besser: Thank you for your efforts. However, this seems like work that could be done with the existing SWCD funding in the area. Do we take the \$9 million from the WBIF to the SWCDs to get to you? Why do you think this should be by the county versus the SWCDs? *Answer:* It is a partnership. The work will be done by the SWCDs. It is a high priority with Olmsted County. We are seeing an uptick in participation from the work we are doing. It is a cooperative effort, and not just county led. Olmsted County has a different relationship, because some staff work for both (the county and SWCD). We are okay being a fiscal host, but we are okay giving up that role if there is a better fit elsewhere. However, we bring the proposal forward, the programs are key and are popular, and we are working to help get the farmers participating. That is what we need to keep moving forward.
- Dick Brainerd: How would this be available statewide? *Answer:* It could be rolled out in collaboration with our BWSR and MDA and MDH partners. It could be expanded federally with the Farm Bill.
- Rich Biske: How has the private sector been involved? *Answer:* We are seeing more crop advisors showing up at our meetings (like the oat mafia meetings). They are learning in this collaborative way. The farmers are leading the way. When nitrogen rates and prices get high, refining is happening more. I also would like to mention weed control (due to resistant waterhemp). A few producers are looking to suppress waterhemp with cover crops.

- Steve Christenson: Could BWSR absorb this program? *Answer:* We have had conversations with them, looking at the overlap. We are learning about their delivery model. If there is a desire to have this model work through the fiscal delivery method BWSR uses, we could make it work through the SWCDs. I appreciate the innovative approaches they have taken, trying to work with the producers. That is powerful. That tech piece they have access to is a dilemma rolling out to a broader scale. We can help to do this work expanded to other counties. We are supportive to support them across the board. Either funding directly or running funds through them. We are open to all the options across the board. They have farmer interest, and that is worth making the effort to move forward.
- **Water Demand Reduction/Efficiency Grant Program (Metropolitan Council) (Webex 02:46:30)**
 - Purpose/goal: To provide grants to assist municipalities in the 7-county metro area as they implement water demand reduction measures and water efficiency measures to ensure the reliability and protection of drinking water supplies and support resiliency of water supplies.
 - Program highlights: This is 100 percent pass-through, added equity specific grants in 2025, funds water efficient appliances, irrigation controllers and spray sprinkler bodies, and irrigation system audits, provided grants to 41 communities last round, saving approximately 44 million gallons each year as of December 31, 2025.
 - Funded since 2017 with a total of \$5.4 million.
 - No further questions from the Council. Prior questions submitted were answered in the presentation.
- **Culvert Replacement Incentive Program (DNR) (Webex 03:00:30)**
 - Purpose/goal: To support Minnesota communities in upgrading road-stream crossings. To install modern, natural channel designs that improve water quality, restore aquatic ecosystems, and strengthen infrastructure resilience.
 - Program highlights: There have been 41 sites submitted for grant funding, with 15 completed (or nearly completed), and 14 in the planning stages.
 - Funded since 2024 at \$4.8 million.

Questions:

- Dick Brainerd: How are you working with the entities across the state? You are only asking for \$2.8 million. How far will that go with the projects you have? *Answer:* We connect with MNDOT and work with them. State aid, and they leverage funding as well. We are always connecting with MNDOT on the designs. Most of the folks we work with on the projects are in townships and counties, so that helps as well.
- **Minnesota Agriculture Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP) (Webex 03:12:30)**
 - Purpose/goal: MAWQCP offers a voluntary pathway to protect our state's water resources. By adopting practices that safeguard surface and groundwater, participating farmers and landowners strengthen the resilience of their operations while contributing to long-term environmental stewardship.
 - Program highlights: More than 1,700 producers and 1.2 million acres are certified, with 7,872 new conservation practices implemented. This results in: 59,483 tons of sediment kept out of Minnesota waters each year; 76,184 pounds of phosphorus prevented from entering waterways annually; 166,325 soil loss prevented each year; 3,553,268 pounds of nitrogen prevented from entering waterways naturally; reduced nitrogen use by 20,000,000 pounds/year.
 - Funded since 2014. There is \$32 million through FY25 and \$29 million through FY27.
 - Questions can be emailed to Jen Kader, as they ran out of time to take questions from Council members. Prior questions were answered during the program presentation.
- **Conservation Equipment Assistance (MDA) (Webex 03:31:30)**
 - Purpose/goal: This is to improve water quality and soil health by helping producers access the equipment necessary to implement soil health practices.
 - Program highlights: There are 526,102 acres of soil health practices implemented annually.
 - Funded since 2024 (general fund only in 2023), with \$7 million through FY25 and \$10.5 million through FY27.

Questions:

- Dick Brainerd: You talk about equipment, but what is healthy equipment that you are referencing? *Answer:* Soil health can look different, so we want to keep the equipment open. It is up to the applicant to make the case in the application, for what the equipment would look like and how it would perform in

terms of soil health practices. We focus on the practices the equipment would be used. We have a list of prohibited equipment.

- **AgBMP Load Program (MDA)** (*Webex 03:50:00*)

- Purpose/goal: Provide affordable loans to prevent, reduce, or eliminate water quality concerns.
- Program highlights: Repayments guaranteed, so revolving loan program has no end date; Borrowers leveraged loans for \$56.9+ million in additional funding; Reduces nitrogen loading by more than 845 tons per year; Reduces phosphorus load by 300 tons per year; Reduces sediment loading by 73,000 tons per year per million loaded.
- Funded since 2009, with \$31.5 million.

Questions:

- Brad Gausman: Any opportunity to connect well testing to this type of loan program? *Answer:* It is still a loan at the cost of the landowner. If they wanted to do well testing, we could assist with corrective actions (if they have a concern), but we need to tie it back to the water quality concern so would not be included.
- Brad Gausman: Could you do something like have a requirement for well testing as a requirement for getting the loan? *Answer:* We'd have to look at that a little closer. There are a lot of things this loan could be used for that have nothing to do with wells. So, that would be a little odd. It is already a loan addressing water quality concerns.

- **Critical Shorelands Easements (BWSR)** (*Webex 04:01:00*)

- Purpose/goal: Permanently protect lands adjacent to public waters that have good water quality that are threatened with degradation.
- Program highlights: There are 7,100 acres permanently protected in four watersheds.
- Funded since FY16-17, at \$17.5 million (\$4 million supplemental FY24-25).

Questions:

- Rich Biske: Why are there not as many easements in southern Minnesota? *Answer:* I've heard from local implementers, RIM focused on restoration, in southeast Minnesota, due to the topography and resource issues landowners have provided feedback that they cannot take anything out of production. The land available to farm is too valuable. We are starting to see a shift focusing on bluff land parts of those properties. We will if we can make more success, additionally tree protection too. Grassland protections are also being adjusted, hoping to do more work in this area. We are targeting to get more interest in the southeast in other areas as well.

- **Wetland Restoration Easements (BWSR)** (*Webex 04:30:00*)

- Purpose/goal: Restore and permanently protect previously altered wetlands and adjacent uplands.
- Program highlights: There are 2,200 acres permanently protected with Wetland appropriations.
- Funded since FY22-23, with a total of \$20.66 million.

Questions:

- Chris Meyer: I am not too familiar with environmental justice areas, could you share an explanation?
 - *Answer from Glenn Skuta, MPCA:* There are a few different factors. Often the percentage of people living in an area, often just below the poverty line. Other factors like people of minorities are included. Tribal areas are separate but considered too. There is a map of Minnesota on the MPCA website of these areas.
 - *Answer:* BWSR uses that map for this area.
- John Barten: I understand this is a voluntary program. Are the SWCD staff in the Upper Mississippi River Basin, do they approach and try to solicit these? *Answer:* Yes, we have a core group. They are growing. Every year they are more successful overall.
- John Barten: Do you coordinate with groups that are protecting land?
 - *Answer:* There are a lot of entities doing easement work. We work with some of them, working towards more. We have some high-level meetings with easement stakeholders, to try to get on the same page and talk about that overlap. Everyone has a niche, and scoring is different, geography is different. We are all working on it.
 - *Annie Knight:* We have recently met, with supporting the easement programs. The need is present, but the funding is not. There is always more need in this area.

- **Floodplain Restoration Easements (BWSR)** (*Webex 04:38:30*)

- Purpose/goal: Restore and protect riparian and floodplain lands for water quality and wildlife habitat.
- Program highlights: There are 13,600 acres of land protected in easement.
- A total of \$75.2 million has been funding (modified program since FY22-23 funding).
- No additional questions from Council members for this program.
- **Drinking Water Easements/Partner Program (BWSR) (Webex 04:48:00)**
 - Purpose/goal: Protect drinking water supplies through RIM easements or agreements with LGUs for fee title acquisition.
 - Program highlights: There are 3,000 acres of easement land, and 550 acres through the partner protection program.
 - Funded since FY10-11, with \$35.5 million funded (\$1 million supplemental in FY24-25).

Questions:

- Tannie Eshenaur, MDH: The MDH and Minnesota Rural Water, we have an appreciation for what Sharon and her team have done. These are big changes to the program, and the monitoring data is revealing these changes. It makes a real difference in the drinking water sources.
- Margaret Wagner, MDA: Some of the outreach comes from different agencies. Our staff are responsive to get out and trying to sell these easements too. We are excited too and assist in the implementation (often the connections are direct and include getting together to go over strategies). We are working together well, all assisting each other in this area. Not only prioritizing the geographic location but also working together to try to figure out what it might take to get these landowners to sign up for these easements.
- Sharon Doucette, BWSR: We appreciate the state agencies working with us on these projects too.
- Peter Schwagerl: What is a payment reduction on this versus the working lands? *Answer:* I believe 65 percent.
- Annie Knight: If we increase, do you have the capacity to put the easements on the ground? *Answer:* Yes. In the last few years, we have increased. There is capacity for additional funding. Land is getting more expensive every year. We can manage more, but there would be a breaking point as well.

Any additional questions can be emailed to Jen Kader. Follow-up answers will be provided. The BOC will meet on March 13, 2026 to go over these proposals more. Additionally, these presentations will be in the final meeting packet available in the Council's Teams folder. Please connect with staff if you have any further questions for access.

Adjournment (Webex 05:06:47)

BOC recommendations following MMB's February Budget Forecast

March 17, 2026

At their meeting on Friday, March 13, the Budget and Outcomes Committee recommended to hold over the available supplemental funding for inclusion in the FY28-29 budget. This memo contains information regarding the Budget Forecast released by Minnesota Management and Budget on February 27, 2026 and other considerations that factored into the Committee's recommendation. The tables from MMB are included in the packet.

February Budget Forecast

The February Budget Forecast showed a slight improvement for the Clean Water Fund for both FY26-27 and FY28-29 over what was included in the November Budget Forecast. Specifically, it included the following adjustments:

	FY26-27	FY28-29
February Forecast	9,030,000	331,805,000
November Forecast	7,111,000	329,282,000
Change	+1,919,000	+2,523,000

As a reminder, the FY28-29 numbers reflect an assumption of no spending of the additional funding from FY26-27. Any amount spent of the available funding for FY26-27 would reduce the forecasted amount for FY28-29.

The forecast includes analysis for General Sales Tax. This analysis shows a slightly higher forecast for taxable sales in Minnesota out to 2029. However, the forecast was released with a caveat that some key Federal data usually included in conducting needed analysis was not available, leading to a certain degree of additional uncertainty.

Current economic context

In discussions with MMB following the release, they confirmed that in addition to the missing Federal data, the economic impacts resulting from Operation Metro Surge were not factored in (including lost revenue, lost wages, business closures, and other impacts in the Twin Cities metro and across the state), and the forecast was released the day before the United States launched a new war with Iran. As of the drafting of this memo, gas prices

have already increased nearly \$0.90/gallon (or roughly 32%) since mid-February, and those prices impact individuals at the pump as well as through increased costs for goods.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics also released its latest consumer price index summary for February before the conflict with Iran began. This summary already shows increases in costs for food (up 3.1% from a year ago), energy services (6.3% over a year ago), and all other items (2.5% over a year ago). At the same time, real average hourly earnings for all employees increased only 1.1% over the last year.

This mix of uncertainty, increased costs, and pay increases not keeping pace with cost of living, signaled to the BOC a need to be cautious regarding recommendations for the Clean Water Fund. This aligns with the memo received from the ICT, noting the increases in cost as a concern, and requesting that the Council consider holding onto the funds to meet priorities in the FY28-29 budget.

Recommendation

To that end, the Budget and Outcomes Committee has developed two recommendations.

- 1) Regarding the FY26-27 Budget, the Budget and Outcomes Committee recommends holding onto the funding available for incorporation into the FY28-29 budget.
- 2) Regarding the FY28-29 Budget, the Budget and Outcomes Committee recommends that the Administrator meet with MMB staff in late April/early May to better assess what budget target to use to develop the Council's preliminary budget recommendations, due in September 2026.

Minnesota Management and Budget
2/27/2026
(\$ thousands)

Unobligated Carry Forward from Prior Year
Obligated Carryforward from Prior Year
Sales Tax Receipt Forecast
Investment Income & Other Revenue
Other Revenue
Total Resources
Total Uses
Budgetary Balance
Required 5% Reserve
Amount Available to Appropriate
Biennial Total

Annual/biennial amounts in the table are not cumulative; any amount unspent will be available to appropriate the following year

November 2025 to February 2026 Forecast Changes

February Forecast Biennium Available
November Forecast Biennium Available
Change

Reserve Carryforward
Prior Period Adjustment
Sales Use Taxes
Interest Earnings
All Other Revenue
All Uses
5% Reserve
Total Change Per Fiscal Year
Total Availability Change

Clean Water (2302)



(\$ in thousands)	Actual 2022	Actual 2023	Biennium 2022-23	Actual 2024	Actual 2025	Biennium 2024-25	FEB 26 Fcst 2026	FEB 26 Fcst 2027	Biennium 2026-27	FEB 26 Fcst 2028	FEB 26 Fcst 2029	Biennium 2028-29
ACTUAL & ESTIMATED RESOURCES												
Balance Forward From Prior Year	73,820	84,420	73,820	123,138	132,837	123,138	102,542	14,327	102,542	16,825	181,414	16,825
Prior Period Adjustment	12,739	22,374	35,113	17,975	8,694	26,669	0	0	0	0	0	0
Adjusted Balance Forward	86,560	106,793	108,934	141,113	141,531	149,807	102,542	14,327	102,542	16,825	181,414	16,825
Revenues												
Sales-Use Taxes	129,234	145,295	274,529	146,088	144,074	290,162	150,875	155,933	306,808	158,817	161,734	320,551
Taxes	129,234	145,295	274,529	146,088	144,074	290,162	150,875	155,933	306,808	158,817	161,734	320,551
Statewide Investment Income	600	5,487	6,088	10,405	9,827	20,232	7,716	5,864	13,580	5,770	5,770	11,540
Investment Income	600	5,487	6,088	10,405	9,827	20,232	7,716	5,864	13,580	5,770	5,770	11,540
Internal Reimbursement	16	0	16	8	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Revenue	1	0	1	0	5	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cost Recovery/Reimbursement	1	1	2	2	2	4	2	2	4	2	2	4
All Other Revenue	18	1	19	10	8	18	2	2	4	2	2	4
Total Revenues	129,853	150,783	280,636	156,504	153,909	310,412	158,593	161,799	320,392	164,589	167,506	332,095
Total Resources Available	216,413	257,577	389,570	297,616	295,440	460,220	261,135	176,126	422,934	181,414	348,920	348,920

ACTUAL & ESTIMATED USES

Expenditures by Bill Area and Agency

University Of Minnesota	2,673	1,295	3,968	1,500	2,500	4,000	1,000	1,400	2,400	0	0	0
Higher Education	2,673	1,295	3,968	1,500	2,500	4,000	1,000	1,400	2,400	0	0	0
Health	6,416	7,550	13,966	9,508	11,737	21,245	25,217	15,845	41,062	0	0	0
Health and Human Services	6,416	7,550	13,966	9,508	11,737	21,245	25,217	15,845	41,062	0	0	0
Pollution Control	22,420	22,506	44,926	24,005	29,443	53,448	32,758	24,702	57,460	0	0	0
Natural Resources	9,032	8,903	17,935	11,963	11,927	23,890	18,886	14,650	33,536	0	0	0
Water and Soil Resources, Board of	57,898	70,578	128,476	75,614	96,255	171,869	126,177	75,004	201,181	0	0	0
Metropolitan Council - Environment	1,544	1,544	3,088	1,875	1,875	3,750	2,025	2,125	4,150	0	0	0
Environment and Energy	90,894	103,531	194,425	113,457	139,500	252,957	179,846	116,481	296,327	0	0	0
Agriculture	15,205	16,370	31,575	22,467	25,383	47,850	20,034	15,350	35,384	0	0	0
Public Facilities Authority	15,683	5,646	21,329	12,597	5,639	18,236	18,769	8,300	27,069	0	0	0
Jobs, Commerce, Ag and Housing	30,888	22,016	52,904	35,064	31,022	66,086	38,803	23,650	62,453	0	0	0

Clean Water (2302)



(\$ in thousands)	Actual 2022	Actual 2023	Biennium 2022-23	Actual 2024	Actual 2025	Biennium 2024-25	FEB 26 Fcst 2026	FEB 26 Fcst 2027	Biennium 2026-27	FEB 26 Fcst 2028	FEB 26 Fcst 2029	Biennium 2028-29
Legislature	9	1	10	4	1	5	17	0	17	0	0	0
State Government and Veterans	9	1	10	4	1	5	17	0	17	0	0	0
Total Expenditures	130,881	134,392	265,273	159,533	184,760	344,292	244,883	157,376	402,259	0	0	0
Transfers To Other Funds:												
Transfer Out to Special Revenue	1,113	47	1,159	5,247	8,138	13,385	1,925	1,925	3,850	0	0	0
Total Transfers to Other Funds	1,113	47	1,159	5,247	8,138	13,385	1,925	1,925	3,850	0	0	0
Total Uses	131,993	134,439	266,432	164,780	192,897	357,677	246,808	159,301	406,109	0	0	0
Balance Before Reserves	84,420	123,138	123,138	132,837	102,542	102,542	14,327	16,825	16,825	181,414	348,920	348,920
Budgetary Balance	84,420	123,138	123,138	132,837	102,542	102,542	14,327	16,825	16,825	181,414	348,920	348,920

ID	Program	Proposer	Brief Description	26-27 Amount	Proposed Change	BOC suggestion	Priority level if known	CWC response	Notes
1	Surface and Drinking Water Protection Restoration (Projects and Practices)	BWSR	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.	\$ 6,000,000	Increase	Inc	H		Drinking water impact, question of how high, 1 med
2	Accelerated Implementation	BWSR	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 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.	\$ 8,700,000	Increase	Inc	H		3 Hold steady, 5 increase
3	Conservation Drainage (Multipurpose Drainage Management)	BWSR	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.	\$ 2,000,000	Increase	Inc	H		
4	Legacy Partners	BWSR	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.	\$ 1,000,000	Increase	Inc	H		2 med
5	Measures, Results, and Accountability	BWSR	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.	\$ 2,500,000	Increase	Hold	H		3 inc (1 moderate), 2 med
6	Enhancing Landowner Adoption of Soil Health Practices for DW & GW Protection	BWSR	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 system 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 available to plant cover crops, provide payments to reduce risk, and purchase specialized interseeding equipment in one or two targeted areas within the state. This initiative can leverage existing NRCS financial assistance programs and will be implemented by SWCDs with partnership opportunities for Tribal governments.	\$ 9,486,000	Increase	Inc	H		
7	Southeast Groundwater Protection and Soil Health Initiative	Olmsted County	This program 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 SE MN 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.	-	NEW	Merge			Interest in seeing continued conversations with BWSR. Maintain Olmsted innovations, possibly make competitive.

8	Water Efficiency Grant	MC	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.	\$ 1,400,000	Hold Steady	Hold	Med		
9	Culvert Replacement Incentive Program	DNR	The 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.	\$ 2,800,000	Hold Steady	Hold	High		Some appetite for more investment if capacity is there.
10	MN Ag Water Quality Certification Program	MDA	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.	\$ 7,000,000	Increase	H/I	High		3 med
11	Critical Shoreland Easements	BWSR	The program goal is to protect lands adjacent to public waters with good water quality but threatened with degradation. Using the RIM program, conservation easements are acquired to protect existing high quality shoreland areas. The highest priority areas are targeted through science-based conservation methods.	\$ 1,000,000	Increase	Inc	High		
12	Wetland Restoration Easements	BWSR	This 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.	\$ 5,000,000	Increase	Inc	High		
13	Working Lands and Floodplain Easements	BWSR	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.	\$ 2,000,000	Increase	Inc	High		
14	Targeted Wellhead/Drinking Water Protection	BWSR	The program goal is to ensure that the land use within a DWSMA 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 RIM easements or agreements with local units of government for fee title acquisitions.	\$ 5,000,000	Hold Steady	Hold	High		
15	Conservation Equipment Assistance	MDA	This program supports MDA'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.	\$ 3,500,000	Hold Steady	Hold	High		
16	AgBMP Loan Program	MDA	This program provides low-interest loans (<3%) to farmers, rural landowners, and agriculture supply businesses to implement BMPs that prevent, reduce, or eliminate a water pollution problem. The 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.	\$ 4,000,000	Increase	Inc	High		

FY28-29 CLEAN WATER FUND PROPOSAL

Program Title:	One Watershed, One Plan
Program Number (if applicable):	16
Agency/Organization Name:	MN Board of Water and Soil Resources
Program website:	https://bwsr.state.mn.us/one-watershed-one-plan

Program Contact	
Name	Julie Westerlund
Email	julie.westerlund@state.mn.us
Phone	651-539-2522

Person Filling Out Form	
Name	Julie Westerlund
Email	julie.westerlund@state.mn.us
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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: TMDLs, Nutrient Reduction Strategy, Nonpoint Priority Funding Plan, Groundwater Protection

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 funds evaluations and amendments of comprehensive watershed management plans developed through the One Watershed, One Plan program. The program supports voluntary, multi-jurisdictional partnerships among local and tribal governments to develop and implement prioritized, targeted and measurable actions that protect and restore quality of surface and groundwater. Plans guide use of state funds to high priority areas based on available data. By FY28-29, all initial 10-year plans will be complete. Maintaining plans through evaluation and amendments ensures plans stay relevant and useful, reflect new data, and engage local partners who were not part of the original planning process.

Water Quality Impact

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

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.

Watershed planning in Minnesota is a strategic, data-driven approach that maximizes the effectiveness of public investments, accelerates restoration of impaired waters, and directs resources to safeguard the state's clean water resources for future generations.

*Each plan uses science and community input to **prioritize** the most pressing water management **issues** and **priority areas** in the watershed based. Prioritization is based on watershed characteristics, high pollution loading areas, and places at greatest risk of degradation. Partners identify the highest-impact **targeted implementation** actions and establish **measurable goals** for the 10-year plan period aligned with implementation capacity (anticipated funding, trained staff, and voluntary participation).*

*The **prioritize – target – measure** approach focuses resources where they will achieve quantifiable reductions in nutrient and sediment loading, protect drinking water sources, and prevent groundwater degradation.*

Mid-point evaluations (years 4-6) assess progress and may refine goals, actions, or priority areas through plan amendments. Ongoing state support for plan maintenance keeps the prioritize-target-measure framework adaptive and effective by incorporating new science and emerging priorities. The mid-point process also helps new partnership members, including representatives from Tribal and municipal governments, understand watershed priorities, contribute their perspectives, and gain ownership of the updated plan—maintaining momentum, accountability, and continuity in local implementation.

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.

Provide One Watershed, One Plan Mid-Point Grants to 10-12 partnerships for the purpose of evaluating and/or amending comprehensive watershed management plans. These grants will result in 6-12 evaluation reports and/or 6-12 plan amendments. (Grants may be used for evaluations, amendments, or evaluations and amendments, depending on partnership needs.)

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

Required grant deliverables include plan evaluation reports and/or a plan amendments. BWSR tracks plan evaluations and amendments funded through One Watershed, One Plan Mid-Point Grants through an internal tracking system. Dates of plan amendments are listed on the BWSR website and BWSR reports results on the Legislative Coordinating Commission website.

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

Because all plans are underway or complete, this will be the first biennium in which BWSR does not award grants to develop new comprehensive watershed management plans; planning grants will be exclusively for the purpose of plan maintenance.

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.

Great progress on planning – we have successfully reached our goal of a full transition from county-based to watershed-based planning through the One Watershed, One Plan program!

Partners that have participated in plan evaluations and amendments to date report that this is an extremely useful exercise, and that state support is critical for keeping plans relevant and useful.

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

We have met our original long-term goal of the full transition to watershed plans. We now need to protect our investment through plan maintenance (evaluations and amendments).

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: Protect groundwater from degradation and support effective measures to restore degraded groundwater. *All plans incorporate data and strategies for groundwater protection and restoration from available Groundwater Restoration and Protection Strategies (GRAPS), which are developed consistent with One Watershed, One Plan planning boundaries. For plans developed before a GRAPS was available, plan amendments will have the opportunity to incorporate GRAPS information now.*

Groundwater: Ensure groundwater use is sustainable and avoid adverse impacts to surface water features due to groundwater use. *Where applicable, plans incorporate actions to protect groundwater quantity, including groundwater-dependent natural resources and irrigation management.*

Drinking Water Source Protection: Public Water Systems – *Plans identify drinking water source protection as a priority. For example, drinking water supply management areas are priority areas for restoration and protection actions in most, if not all plans. Plans contain actions to reduce sources of contamination (e.g., agricultural best management practices to reduce nitrate).*

Drinking Water Source Protection: Private Wells - *Plans identify a range of actions for working with private well owners, from outreach and private well testing clinics to sealing abandoned wells. Plans contain actions to reduce sources of contamination (e.g., agricultural best management practices to reduce nitrate).*

Surface Water: 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 is directly related to this strategic plan goal. Plans incorporate the following elements: WRAPS; water storage; impairment status (“nearly” and “barely” impaired waters); public use and public health. Plans are required for Watershed Based Implementation Funding.*

Water Value: Strategy: Maintain and increase capacity of Minnesotans to improve water quality. *Planning identifies and advances programming designed to engage those who live, work, and play in the watershed in understanding water issues and taking action to address them.*

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*

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 and assessment, private well testing, groundwater monitoring and assessment) provide information that is*

used in identifying priority issues and locations in comprehensive watershed management plans. As new data becomes available, it can be integrated into plans via amendments.

Watershed & Groundwater Restoration/Protection Strategies (geomorphology, WHAF, 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.

Nonpoint Source and Groundwater/Drinking Water Implementation programs provide funding to implement plans developed and maintained through the One Watershed, One Plan program.

Research, Evaluation, and Tools support planning by further developing science, data, and information so it is useful and can be used in a local planning and implementation context.

Connected non-CWF-supported programs:

RIM 1W1P (Integrating Clean Water and Habitat) is an easement program funded by the Outdoor Heritage Fund to target conservation easements in priority areas that contribute to goals in comprehensive watershed management plans developed through the One Watershed, One Plan 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>In-kind contribution from local/state/tribal staff participation in plan evaluations and amendments</i>	<i>\$115,200</i>	<i>100%</i>

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

Mid-point grants cover costs of evaluation reports and plan amendments. This typically involves contributions (e.g., organizing and submitting implementation data) and meeting attendance of staff from participating governments, not paid by the grant. (conservative estimate for 12 grants: 6 meetings@ 2hrs each; 10 people/meeting; \$80/hr./person)

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
 - X Stay the same

- Do you have an anticipated end date for funding need? *No, we anticipate needing ongoing support for some amount of plan maintenance. This could decrease over time but likely won't reach zero.* If so, when? _____
- Do you intend to continue this program past 2034 in some capacity? X 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.

85 %

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 beneficiaries of the One Watershed, One Plan program are local governments - soil and water conservation districts, watershed districts, and counties - and Tribal governments. Local governments helped develop the original program structure and requirements through the local government water roundtable and a program development committee (2012-2016). In 2021, BWSR revised program requirements to clarify expectations for Tribal government participation with feedback from The Minnesota Tribal Environmental Committee.

The program partners include these beneficiaries and others that engaged in watershed planning through advisory committees, including state water agencies. In 2021, BWSR commissioned a formal evaluation of the One Watershed, One Plan Program, using surveys and focus groups of partners resulting in recommendations to support plan maintenance. Research projects by University of Minnesota graduate students have also informed program evolution. BWSR continues to use partner input for continuous improvement.

- 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.
 - *December 2025: Two presentations at Minnesota Watersheds and Minnesota Soil and Water Conservation Districts Conferences showcasing 1W1P Mid-Point Evaluations*
 - *BWSR Snapshots 4/2023: BWSR pilot tracks progress of watershed management plan (Yellow Medicine)*

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	\$900,000
FY16-17	\$4,200,000
FY18-19	\$4,000,000
FY20-21	\$3,999,000
FY22-23	\$5,808,000
FY24-25	\$3,500,000
FY26-27	\$1,000,000
TOTAL APPROPRIATED TO DATE	\$23,398,000

FY28 Request	FY29 Request	FY28-29 TOTAL REQUEST
<i>Hold Steady</i>	<i>Hold Steady</i>	<i>Hold 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	
FY12-13	
FY14-15	1.4
FY16-17	2.1
FY18-19	4.7
FY20-21	6.5
FY22-23	5.7
FY24-25	5.7
FY26-27	7

A__One Watershed, One Plan

Comments:

1W1P is the foundation for everything we do.

Questions:

1. Now that you're in a maintenance phase, how many do you anticipate each year? Are you cycling back through on the same schedule or is it by request or opportunity-based?
2. How are citizens, special interests and others included in the process to ensure public input at the local and regional level?
3. Which plans are up for the mid-point review?
4. Each plan has Quantitative Measurable Goals with a target load reduction by a set year. Please summarize progress toward these goals as a % for acre feet of storage, Phosphorus, Nitrogen and Sediment. How is performance measured and included in the mid-point plan updates?
5. Why isn't every plan available on BWSR's website or any central location?
6. The proposal states 1W1P supports several other state and federal plans (Nutrient Reduction Strategy, State Water Plan, Drinking Water Action Plan, Nonpoint Funding Prioritization Plan, Climate Action Framework). Please describe how contribution is quantified and summarized on a major basin or statewide basis.
7. Plans have a Total Estimated Funding Needs summary. Now that all plans are complete, what is the total funding need for all plans?
8. Will the staff added in FY 26-27 remain in place or be reduced as all 1W1Ps are completed?

FY28-29 CLEAN WATER FUND PROPOSAL

Program Title:	Watershed Based Implementation Funding
Program Number (if applicable):	
Agency/Organization Name:	MN Board of Water and Soil Resources
Program website:	https://bwsr.state.mn.us/watershed-based-implementation-funding-program

Program Contact	
Name	Julie Westerlund and Maggie Karschnia
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Phone	651-539-2522

Person Filling Out Form	
Name	Julie Westerlund
Email	julie.westerlund@state.mn.us
Phone	651-539-2522

Eligibility Requirements

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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.

*Watershed-Based Implementation Funding (WBIF) accelerates progress toward Minnesota's clean water goals by funding actions prioritized through local watershed and groundwater plans. This approach provides a **dependable, equitable funding source** that enables local and Tribal governments to target measurable outcomes and implement high-impact projects efficiently. By integrating local expertise with statewide data, **WBIF increases consistency, reduces administrative burden, and ensures resources are used where they achieve the most benefit**. Funded activities protect and restore surface waters, safeguard groundwater and drinking water sources, and improve water quality outcomes across diverse Minnesota watersheds.*

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.

*Watershed-Based Implementation Funding (WBIF) **accelerates on the ground implementation** through activities that reduce and prevent pollution entering lakes, rivers, streams and groundwater and programs that engage Minnesotans in understanding and taking actions for clean water. Importantly, WBIF is **changing how Minnesota invests in clean water protection and restoration**:*

- *Stable, formula-based funding enables local and Tribal partners to move quickly on shared priorities, building **long-term capacity** for technical staff, program delivery, and joint governance.*
- *Partnerships use watershed-scale data and local knowledge to target actions where they will **most effectively achieve water quality results**.*
- *Concentrating effort in priority areas yields **more measurable progress toward clean water goals** than scattered, project-by-project investments.*

*Beyond biophysical benefits, the program strengthens collaboration among counties, watershed districts, SWCDs, cities, and Tribal governments, creating **durable implementation frameworks** that can **leverage significant federal, state, and local funds**. Streamlined funding and reporting reduce administrative burden, allowing staff to spend more time on outreach, technical assistance, and on-the-ground work that supports landowners and communities. Over time, this approach improves consistency across the state, increases accountability to clean water goals, and **delivers visible, locally supported outcomes** that build public trust in Minnesota's Clean Water Fund investments.*

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.

Anticipated/estimated outcomes for the FY28-29 request are based on outcomes from previously closed grants and estimated using FY26-27 funding amounts:

- 18,000 lbs/year phosphorus
- 58,000 lbs/year nitrogen
- 24,000 tons/year sediment

...prevented from entering lakes, rivers, streams, and groundwater through...

- 900 structural best management practices
- 15,000 acres of nonstructural land management practices (e.g., cover crops)
- 100 wells sealed to prevent groundwater pollution
- 900 acres of forest management / stewardship

*Additional outcomes include **strengthening collaborations, building capacity, and an overall shift in how state funding is distributed as described above.***

- b. (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.

To date, BWSR has awarded 280 WBIF grants. Fifty-four of 60 (non-metro) partnerships and dozens of local governments (metro) have received at least one WBIF grant. Reported outcomes to date from CLOSED GRANTS (many grants remain open; we will provide updated values for all open grants after our February 1 reporting deadline):

- 32,478 lbs/year phosphorus
- 105,373 lbs/year nitrogen
- 44,418 tons/year sediment

...prevented from entering lakes, rivers, streams, and groundwater through...

- 1,700 structural best management practices
- 28,229 acres of nonstructural land management practices (e.g., cover crops)
- 190 wells sealed to prevent groundwater pollution
- 12,008 acres of forest management / stewardship

*Additional outcomes include **strengthening collaborations, building capacity, and an overall shift in how state funding is distributed as described above.***

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

WBIF is designed to provide ongoing funding for local implementation, supporting partnerships as long as funding is available. Minnesota's waters will need continuous investment to address historical water quality issues as well as emerging challenges.

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: Protect groundwater from degradation and support effective measures to restore degraded groundwater. *Funding supports actions that protect groundwater from degradation, including promoting and cost-sharing for agricultural practices that reduce nitrogen leaching into surficial aquifers and sealing unused wells which can be conduits for pollution to enter aquifers.*

Groundwater: Ensure groundwater use is sustainable and avoid adverse impacts to surface water features due to groundwater use. *WBIF may be used to supplement irrigation management activities and other actions to protect groundwater quantity.*

Drinking Water Source Protection: Public Water Systems – *WBIF is used to fund actions in drinking water supply management areas, which are priority areas in most, if not all plans. Actions include reducing sources of contamination (e.g., agricultural best management practices to reduce nitrate) and protecting drinking water supplies.*

Drinking Water Source Protection: Private Wells – *WBIF is used to support outreach to private well owners, including private well testing clinics, and to seal abandoned wells. WBIF also funds actions to reduce sources of contamination (e.g., agricultural best management practices to reduce nitrate).*

Surface Water: Strategy: Prioritize waters for protection and restoration using comprehensive watershed management plans (One Watershed One Plan or other approved plans) updated every ten years. *WBIF provides a significant source of funding to ensure the plans developed through this strategic plan goal can be implemented.*

Water Value: Strategy: Maintain and increase capacity of Minnesotans to improve water quality. *WBIF funds programming designed to engage those who live, work, and play in the watershed in understanding water issues and taking action to address them.*

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*

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.

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 WBIF spending.

Watershed & Groundwater Restoration/Protection Strategies (geomorphology, WHAF, 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 how to spend WBIF and in evaluating progress toward measurable goals.

Comprehensive Local Watershed Management develops the plans that determine how WBIF is spent.

Nonpoint Source and Groundwater/Drinking Water Implementation programs provide additional funding for implementation, which frequently complements WBIF as implementers creatively package funding for complex projects. In addition, WBIF provides an available source of funding for activities that accelerate targeted implementation (e.g., subwatershed assessments, feasibility studies)

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

Connected non-CWF-supported programs:

RIM 1W1P (Integrating Clean Water and Habitat) is an easement program funded by the Outdoor Heritage Fund to target conservation easements in priority areas where WBIF is also contributing to goals in comprehensive watershed management plans. WBIF provides leverage for this funding.

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 (%)
10% grant match (required). Typical sources are private landowner contributions, local and federal funds, and other sources (NGO or private sources)	\$8,350,000	100%
Leverage above and beyond required match, based on previous grants (same sources as above).	Past WBIF grants have leveraged \$1 of non-CWF money for every grant dollar.	
Outdoor Heritage Fund (RIM-1W1P)	\$1.8M	100%

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

The main federal funding programs that could be used as match are: Environmental Quality Incentive Program, Regional Conservation Partnership Program (e.g., 1W1P, Soil Health, Irrigation) Section 319, Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, Conservation Reserve 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*
- 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.

93 %

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 Watershed-Based Implementation Fund (WBIF) recipients and the local communities and water resources benefiting from funded activities. BWSR engaged these partners through the Local Government Water Roundtable (associations for SWCDs, counties, and watershed districts) to ensure strong collaboration and stakeholder input. Since 2016, BWSR has held multiple workshops and meetings to refine program elements — including the funding formula, reporting, distribution of funds in the metro area, assurance measures, and implementation tracking — to promote transparency and effectiveness. Feedback from grant recipients is regularly conveyed through BWSR grant managers to program staff for adaptive program management. The BWSR board, representing local governments, incorporates this input into decision-making, demonstrating accountability and a commitment to continuous improvement as partnerships and program needs evolve.

- 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. Providing and building the capacity to provide technical

assistance helps remove barriers for local government where resources and capabilities vary widely. Finally, 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.
- 1) BWSR Snapshots 8/2025: [With Watershed-Based Implementation Funding, partnerships focus on priorities](#) (Missouri River Basin, Pine River, Yellow Medicine River)
 - 2) BWSR Snapshots 8/2025: [Leech Lake River plan protects waters by cutting the \(road\) salt](#)
 - 3) BWSR Snapshots 7/2025: [Cultivating connections, cover in Lower Minnesota River West](#)
 - 4) BWSR Conservation Story 2/2025: [Feedlot upgrade contributes to groundwater protection effort](#) (Greater Zumbro River)
 - 5) BWSR Snapshots 10/2024: [Full switch: Renville County farm's soil health transformation](#) (Hawk Creek/Middle Minnesota)
 - 6) Conservation Story 4/2024: [Nine delistings tied to work backed by Clean Water Funds](#)

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	\$9,750,000
FY20-21	\$26,966,000
FY22-23	\$43,564,000
FY24-25	\$79,000,000
FY26-27	\$88,100,000
TOTAL APPROPRIATED TO DATE	\$247,380,000

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	4.4
FY20-21	5.4
FY22-23	8
FY24-25	4.2
FY26-27	9

B__Watershed Based Implementation Funding

Comments:

This program = boots on the ground for 1W1P

Questions:

1. The program is completed in 80 watersheds. Is the continuation of funding to be used for maintenance only?
2. WBIF allocation formula
 - a. How does the WBIF allocation formula work across the 60 1W1P comprehensive plans? (i.e., is it as simple as \$88M/60 1W1P plans = \$1.46M per LGU's plan?)
 - b. Explain the WBIF formula and how it includes Clean Water Fund priorities.
3. How many recipients are working on or have completed an assessment of WQ trends in their planning area as plans are implemented?
4. Relationship to other BWSR programs
 - a. Would it be beneficial to recipients to roll some of the competitive grant programs like conservation drainage or accelerated implementation into the WBIF program?
 - b. Are activities also funded by other BWSR programs like Soil Health, Multi-purpose drainage management, buffer law implementation also funded by WBIF?
5. Goals
 - a. The proposal estimates reductions for phosphorus, nitrogen and sediment. How does this contribute to the load reduction goals identified in 1W1Ps as a percentage? Please also include progress on water storage goals, i.e. % of acre feet?
 - b. How close is the program to reaching long-term goals? \$247M spent to-date and we don't know? Is equitable distribution of funds across the state still appropriate if there is uncertainty how this formula-based approach has contributed toward goals?
6. Where can we find information on WBIF spending by watershed and category, such as Administration, Education/Outreach, Project Development, Technical Assistance, Planning, Studies, BMP Implementation?
7. Relationship with SWCDs
 - a. Any idea as to how many SWCD staff are supported statewide by WBIF funds?
 - b. How does SWCD capacity funding complement WBIF\$?
 - c. Great program and very supportive. Do you have an idea of how much time is spent on the admin side? (for both BWSR staff and SWCD staff reporting back)

FY28-29 CLEAN WATER FUND PROPOSAL

Program Title:	Riparian Protection and Soil Loss Assistance
Program Number (if applicable):	24
Agency/Organization Name:	Board of Water and Soil Resources
Program website:	https://bwsr.state.mn.us/minnesota-buffer-law

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: __Minnesota Statue 103F.48

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 supports soil and water conservation districts in providing technical assistance to landowners, conducting ongoing monitoring and compliance tracking, and assisting with local enforcement of the Minnesota buffer law.

This work is the foundation of ongoing compliance with the buffer law and needed to fund the SWCD efforts prior to any handoff for potential enforcement by a county or watershed district (enforcement entities receive Riparian Aid not CWF dollars).

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.

Minnesota's buffer initiative, which was signed into law in 2015, helps protect the state's water resources from erosion and runoff pollution by establishing roughly 110,000 acres of buffer along waterways. This program strengthens and supports these efforts.

The SWCD work funded with these dollars specifically addresses the following areas of the water management framework:

- 1) **Monitoring and Assessment:** SWCDs complete ongoing monitoring and assessment of the required buffers by a combination of aerial photo review, site visits and complaint investigations, without which it would not be possible to maintain an accurate annual understanding of the number of compliant and noncompliant parcels.
- 2) **Problem Investigation:** If a parcel is determined to be out of compliance or in need of efforts to ensure long term compliance, SWCDs will work directly with landowners to develop conservation plans and identify practices that help bring the parcels into compliance or can be used to protect the buffer area from potential impacts and stressors.
- 3) **Implementation:** SWCDs will assist landowners as practices are installed, re-establishment of impacted buffers if needed, and support improvement of buffer areas. This is important with a significant amount of land management changes ongoing in any given year.

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.

SWCDs will use these funds to support the ongoing monitoring and assessment of parcels subject to the buffer law. Approximately 1/3 of the parcels in the state subject to the law are reviewed every year which is ultimately reported through a system BWSR uses to provide compliance updates outwardly.

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

BWSR maintains and hosts a statewide implementation tracking system (BUFFCAT) used by SWCDs to monitor landowner progress toward compliance with the law and to meet their statutory obligation to track progress. This includes annual reporting of parcel compliance.

The staff hours and effort used to complete the monitoring information above are tracked annually in the BWSR eLink reporting system to track funding expenditures for staffing, any practice implementation done using funds and any supporting expenditures.

BWSR reports on outcomes and performance annually to the Legislative Coordinating Commission and biennially to the Legislature.

- 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 90% of parcels adjacent to Minnesota waters are compliant with the state's Buffer Law (<https://bwsr.state.mn.us/where-can-i-find-buffer-maps>)

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

Long term the "stretch goal" would be near 100% compliance with the law statewide.

Practically with ongoing landowner changes, annual management of adjacent lands and program evolutions, it's likely that we will reach 99% compliance statewide. Due to the nature of the buffer implementation being adjacent to annual row crop production areas we expect the % compliance to fluctuate annually as SWCDs rotate their monitoring efforts through the respective Districts and work with landowners to ensure parcels stay compliant.

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 2034ii 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.

Generally, all comprehensive watershed management plans include an area of the plan that speak to regulatory programs that impact the planning areas and ongoing monitoring, inspection and enforcement of the MN Buffer Law is listed in nearly, If not all, adopted One Watershed, One Plan documents.

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:

The SWCD component as well as a very small component of BWSR's oversight work for the buffer law is currently funded through the CWF appropriation requested here. (Monitoring, assessment, landowner assistance, tracking progress for compliance).

The County, Watershed and BWSR enforcement work is funded from a General Fund Riparian Aid payment which comes directly from the MN Department of Revenue. (Enforcement, program oversight legal expenses and some enforcement estaglishment).

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 (%)
<i>Riparian Aid funding for Enforcement</i>	<i>\$8,000,000</i>	<i>90%</i>

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

Riparian Aid is ongoing in the state tax laws so while it is in law it could be changed through legislative means.

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 ☒ Yes
- 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)
Primary program partners are SWCDs. They are regularly engaged in the program status and training associated with it. They are regularly involved directly with the affected landowners and have shared perspectives and information back to the BWSR staff who manage and direct the programing.
- Please describe how this program advances environmental justice and promotes equity. (150 words) *This program is a state regulatory framework and does not have a specific lens beyond working to bring all parcels subject to the law into compliance.*
- 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 June 2024: [Buffer Update](#)

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	\$5,000,000
FY18-19	\$5,000,000
FY20-21	\$5,000,000
FY22-23	\$3,872,000
FY24-25	\$4,000,000
FY26-27	\$4,000,000
TOTAL APPROPRIATED TO DATE	

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	
FY12-13	
FY14-15	
FY16-17	1
FY18-19	1.5
FY20-21	2.0
FY22-23	2.0
FY24-25	2.0
FY26-27	2.0

C__Riparian Protection and Soil Loss Assistance

Comments:

Critically important program - requires education and mind set expansion of average farmer.

Questions:

1. Outcomes
 - a. When do you expect all parcels to be in compliance with the law? It appears 90% are in compliance now.
 - b. Can presenters share estimates of nutrient and erosion reductions due to buffer law?
2. What are the actual expenses for this program?
3. Riparian Aid Funding
 - a. How much of the Riparian Aid Funding for Enforcement has been spent and what has it been spent on? Why can't Buffer Law Enforcement be paid for with the Riparian Aid general fund \$?
 - b. Does the Riparian Protection Aid funding for buffer law enforcement include any \$ for monitoring and assessment? If not, why doesn't the state allocate dedicated monitoring funds, given that regular monitoring is required by statute under the buffer law?
 - c. Resilience without CWFs
 - i. If this program lost CWF funding would the Riparian aid funding be enough to keep compliance from slipping?
 - ii. How would this program be affected if CWF weren't reauthorized? How would it need to change and what would be the consequences?

FY28-29 CLEAN WATER FUND PROPOSAL

Program Title:	Technical Evaluations
Program Number (if applicable):	43
Agency/Organization Name:	Board of Water and Soil Resources
Program website:	https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/legacy/restoration-evaluation.html

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.

State law requires evaluations be conducted on restoration projects completed with funds from the Clean Water Fund (M.S. 114D.50. As provided by law, BWSR is the responsible agency for Clean Water Fund restoration evaluations.)

This proposal is a continuation of the required restoration evaluations that were initiated in 2012. These evaluations assess project performance to ensure and improve conservation outcomes across the state. DNR and BWSR elected to combine administration and reporting for three statutory requirements in a single Legacy Fund Restoration Evaluation program.

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 evaluation program is responsible for:

- *Evaluating restorations relative to the law, current science, and the stated goals and standards in the restoration plans.*
- *Providing findings on the evaluations, determining whether restorations are meeting planned goals, identifying problems with implementation of restorations, and, if necessary, providing recommendations on improving restorations.*

This program evaluates the effectiveness of restorations funded through the Clean Water Fund, thereby helping to measure the performance of projects in meeting goals and providing recommendations to improve the effectiveness of future projects. The findings of the evaluation panel are summarized in an annual report to the legislature and governing councils.

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.
This program evaluates 10 clean water restoration projects every year. Based on review of these projects, a panel of restoration experts identifies common opportunities for improvement and provides recommendations for improving future restorations.
 - b. Describe how outcomes will be tracked, evaluated, and reported.

As statute directs, projects are evaluated relative to the law, current science and stated goals. The findings of this work are summarized in an annual report to the legislature and governing councils.

- 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 117 projects have been evaluated since 2012. Initial findings of these evaluations have found that all projects evaluated were determined to have been implemented in compliance with applicable appropriation laws and reporting requirements, including presenting measurable outcomes and planning to evaluate results. 76% of projects were on track to meet or exceed their state goals. 85% of projects utilized best practices within the range of current science and 70% were implemented without problems.

- b. How close is the program to reaching its long-term goals?
A goal of this program is to facilitate the technical exchange between restoration experts and implementers. This begins in the field with discussion of projects and evaluation of the site. The assessments are shared with a panel of experts to discuss challenges and successes. The technical exchange forms the recommendations presented in the annual report.

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 evaluation and assistance for restorations to local implementers. Maximizing the benefits of clean water funded projects requires evaluating projects to learn what is working, engaging experts to promote current science and communicating the recommendations so they can be implemented.

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: *BWSR Projects and Practices*

Connected non-CWF-supported programs: *Parks and Trails Projects; Lessard Sams Outdoor Heritage Council*

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>Lessard Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC)</i>	<i>\$200,000</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
 - X 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 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.

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)
Every year program staff work with local project managers and visit restorations around the state. Highlights from the projects and lessons learned are communicated back to the restoration community, via multiple channels, to improve the quality of Legacy Fund restorations

in Minnesota. Various communication occurs through podcasts, regional meetings, Minnesota Water Resources Conference, and BWSR Academy.

- 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 governments 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.

2024 Report: <https://files.dnr.state.mn.us/aboutdnr/legacy/legacy-funds/legacy-restoration-evaluation-report.pdf>

Minnesota Legacy Podcast: <https://podcasts.apple.com/ca/podcast/minnesotas-legacy/id1817240581>

2025 MN Water Resources Conference Special Session on Stream Restoration: <https://ccaps.umn.edu/minnesota-water-resources-conference/2025-special-sessions>

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.

Recommendations are communicated to implementers in a variety of ways which incorporate the CWF logo and credit and the Clean Water Fund. One example is through a collaboration with the University of Minnesota Extension on a continuing webinar series focused on improving restoration practices. Since 2021, 16 webinars have been held featuring more than 30 experts engaging more than 6,000 stakeholders on topics related to the programs recommendations.

PRIOR APPROPRIATIONS	
FY10-11	
FY12-13	\$168,000
FY14-15	\$168,000
FY16-17	\$168,000
FY18-19	\$168,000
FY20-21	\$168,000
FY22-23	\$84,000
FY24-25	\$200,000
FY26-27	\$200,000
TOTAL APPROPRIATED TO DATE	\$1,324,000

FY28 Request	FY29 Request	FY28-29 TOTAL REQUEST
Hold Steady	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	0.5
FY14-15	0.5
FY16-17	0.5
FY18-19	0.5
FY20-21	0.5
FY22-23	0.5
FY24-25	0.5
FY26-27	0.5

D__Technical Evaluations

Questions:

1. 117 projects have been found to be in compliance. What is next to be done with the funding requested? LSOHC funding of \$200,000--is that enough?
3. There is often distrust in advice that comes from companies and private parties that have economic self-interest (e.g. sales agronomists that have sales in their title). Based on your evaluations of the restorations, do you believe the advice offered is following best available science? Are there opportunities for improvement you see?
4. With such a relatively low request could this program be internalized or paired with other agency compliance efforts?

FY28-29 CLEAN WATER FUND PROPOSAL

Program Title:	Nonpoint Restoration and Protection
Program Number (if applicable):	34
Agency/Organization Name:	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
Program website:	Nonpoint Source Restoration and Protection (Legacy website)

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

Person Filling Out Form	
Name	Barbara Weisman
Email	barbara.weisman@state.mn.us
Phone	651-259-5147

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 to 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.).

Applicable statute/rule: Nonpoint Priority Funding Plan ([M.S. § 114D.50 Subd 3](#)); Shoreland Management Act ([M.S. § 103F](#)); Shoreland and Floodplain Management ([M.R. 6120](#))

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.

This program supports the protection and restoration of water quality in streams and lakes through direct technical assistance, training, and tools to help local water managers prioritize, target, scope, design, construct or adopt recommended approaches, and quantify the anticipated and actual outcomes – from sediment and nutrient load reductions to multiple co-benefits. In partnership with other agencies and organizations, DNR Nonpoint staff work directly with local governments, local conversation groups, and landowners to help them compare implementation options and better understand approaches that address the root causes of water quality problems and improve watershed health.

3. Water Quality Impact

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

Ongoing Implementation

- 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.*

Field staff and statewide experts help water managers explore potential higher returns on investment through lake and stream projects that meet water quality objectives by protecting and restoring ecological functions that provide multiple co-benefits and build resilience.

DNR regional geomorphology experts use their surveys, analyses (DNR WRAPS funded) and completed restoration project data to recommend and assist projects to address sediment (and sediment-bound phosphorus if applicable) in impaired streams where streambank erosion is a significant source of sediment.

DNR shoreland program staff and hydrologists engage LGUs in developing and adopting strong standards to protect water quality in local shoreland ordinances. This is critical as communities face modern development pressures and climate change impacts not fully anticipated when state shoreland rules were last updated (1989).

In forested subwatersheds, privately owned forest land conversion or degradation is often the main risk to water quality. DNR partners with others to develop watershed-based landscape stewardship plans and to write (and help landowners implement) forest stewardship plans in targeted subwatersheds via cost-sharing and easements.

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.

- Comprehensive watershed management plan renewals are strengthened by DNR multidisciplinary input.
- DNR site-level project recommendations are clearly illustrated and summarized vis-a-vis scalability and high-level cost estimates and pollutant load reductions.
- At least 40 restoration or protection projects are measurably improved by early inclusion of DNR geomorphology or lake experts.
- Systematically organized data on stream restoration outcomes facilitates training and communications, expanding the program's reach.
- Accelerated lake nutrient reductions via enhanced prioritization to manage erosion and runoff.
- More at-risk subwatersheds approach the "75% protected" goal. More LGUs adopt strong standards to protect and restore natural shorelines. Over 90% of woodland stewardship plans lead to cost-sharing or easements.

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

Staff document the projects they recommend or assist, and the anticipated water quality and co-benefits. They will increasingly quantify the outcomes, including return on investment, as we collect and assess more data on completed projects.

Staff also report the type and size of audiences reached by trainings, presentations, and other outreach.

The DNR private forestland management database tracks stewardship plans and cost share projects funded by the Nonpoint program.

Outputs (numeric indicators of progress), qualitative outcomes, and data about the supporting CWF investments, are summarized on the Legacy tracking website (see p. 1). Investments are also reflected in the interagency biennial CWF Performance Report.

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.

- Exceeding expectations for the number of proposed or underway projects recommended or assisted annually. Completed projects that we recommended or significantly assisted are meeting desired objectives. The challenge now is to

systematically evaluate, document, and disseminate information on the resulting sediment and nutrient reductions and other outcomes.

- Around 20,000 acres of woodland stewardship plans funded to date, 19,000 acres in easements, and 400 water quality cost-share project plans.
- The [Innovative Shoreland Standards Showcase](#) developed earlier (80+ examples from over 35 LGUs of dozens of ways to better protect water quality in local ordinances) has greatly facilitated trainings and assistance to interested communities.

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

Just as implementation is ongoing, so is the direct technical assistance we provide. It may take several years to develop and start implementing a systematic approach to documenting and quantifying the outcomes of the projects we assist.

Some subwatersheds have met the “75% protected” goal. We expect to accelerate progress in others by partnering with SWCDs that already have a forester, in watersheds that have a landscape stewardship plan. The program will also accelerate the completion of more landscape plans.

Long-term goals center on widespread, effective engagement of local water managers—enough to ‘move the needle’ via adoption of systemic, science-based solutions to water quality risks and impairments.

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.*

- **Surface water vision, Goal 2**—*Protect and restore surface waters by prioritizing and targeting resources by major watershed:*
 - DNR Nonpoint staff provide technical assistance and expertise that directly supports local efforts to prioritize restorable streams and lakes to help meet 2034 goals for outdoor recreation and healthy fish communities.
 - We annually update and help local water managers apply lake phosphorus sensitivity data, lake protection cost-benefit assessment data, and other lake hydrology data essential for prioritizing high-quality unimpaired waters at risk of becoming impaired.
 - The program’s forest stewardship planning and shoreland ordinance related activities are well suited for high-quality unimpaired waters at risk of becoming impaired.

- **Surface water vision, Goal 3** —*Protect and restore surface waters by prioritizing and targeting resources by through statewide, regional, or issue-specific programs, **Strategy:** Support competitive grants for protection and restoration:*
 - See BWSR Competitive Grants, in Interconnected Programs.
- **Vision for all Minnesotans to help, Goal 1, Action:** *Support local efforts to engage lakeshore property owners and private landowners*
 - The forest stewardship planning activities in this program are directed to private landowners. They contribute to the Upper Mississippi Rivers headwater basin 2034 protection goal in the Council’s strategic plan, by keeping forested lands forested.
- **Vision for all Minnesotans to help, Goal 1, Action:** *Engage water managers statewide.*
 - DNR Nonpoint staff collaborate with water managers in 1W1P advisory committees, provide technical assistance to LGUs at all stages of restoration and protection project planning and implementation. They mentor interested Technical Service Authority (TSA) engineers and train them to install natural-channel-design projects on their own.
 - The program also includes training and technical assistance to help LGUs voluntarily develop and adopt higher standards for water quality in local shoreland ordinances.
 - Finally, the program partners with SWCDs to develop and implement landscape level and individual forest landowner plans.

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

- Minnesota Nonpoint Priority Funding Plan
- Minnesota Nutrient Reduction Strategy
- Minnesota Climate Action Framework
- State Water Plan (Minnesota Environmental Quality Board)
- Minnesota's 2020 State Forest Action Plan
- Fish Habitat Plan (DNR Fisheries)
- State Wildlife Action Plan
- DNR Ecological and Water Resources Division Strategic Plan

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:*

- **DNR Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies:** The same DNR field staff who collect and analyze stream geomorphology, hydrology, and connectivity data in the DNR WRAPS program apply this information and their expertise when providing technical assistance in the Nonpoint program.
- **BWSR One Watershed One Plan:** DNR field staff contribute to comprehensive watershed management plans in every watershed where active planning is underway. Landscape stewardship plans are incorporated into watershed plans and help identify priority subwatersheds in which to concentrate forest stewardship planning and implementation efforts.
- **BWSR Watershed Based Implementation Funding and CWF Competitive Grants (Projects and Practices; Accelerated Implementation):** DNR's Nonpoint program helps applicants identify, scope, target, design, construct, and monitor the effectiveness of water quality and water management projects, including assistance in developing proposals for funding.
- **BWSR Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM):** There are well-established cross-promotional linkages between forest stewardship plans (many funded by DNR's Nonpoint program) and forested RIM easements that keep the land perpetually forested.
- **BWSR Restoration Evaluation Program** recommendations affirm the value of DNR Nonpoint staff technical expertise and the importance of including such experts early in restoration projects, especially those of significant scale, scope, and complexity.
- The 2026 **MN Nutrient Reduction Strategy** includes priority subwatershed maps and lists supplied by DNR Nonpoint staff and appends a *Nutrient Reduction Strategies for Streams and Gullies* paper by DNR Nonpoint staff. Among other things, the paper compares the effectiveness of different practices to reduce nutrients originating from streambank erosion.
- **MPCA River and Lake Monitoring and Assessment:** DNR's Nonpoint program uses MPCA water quality assessment data to annually update the lake phosphorus sensitivity, lake protection cost-benefit assessment data, and other lake hydrology data used by water managers to prioritize lakes for protection and restoration.
- **DNR Watershed Health Assessment Framework (WHAF):** The suite of lake data mentioned above are essential to the DNR WHAF Lakes application.
- **DNR Lake Biological Monitoring and Assessment:** Nonpoint staff promote lake protection strategies recommended in reports from the monitoring program.
- **DNR Culvert Replacement Incentives Program:** The geomorphic approach that guides the culvert program emerged from earlier DNR Nonpoint work. Nonpoint staff promote the program and refer potential projects to culvert program staff.
- **DNR Native Mussel Restoration Program**—Dam removal and culvert replacement projects assisted by DNR Nonpoint regional staff help identify quality mussel restoration sites.
- **DNR Lidar Hydrography Tools:** Nonpoint staff may use Lidar-derived digital-dam breachline data to help local water managers identify and prioritize culvert projects.

- **DNR Forestry BMP Evaluation:** Certain easements with a forest stewardship plan (Nonpoint funded or other) must follow DNR Forestry monitoring BMP guidelines.
- **MDH surface source water protection program:** Many of the earliest forest stewardship plans and cost-shared practices funded by DNR's Nonpoint program are concentrated in the Upper Mississippi River, where they help protect Mississippi River sourced drinking water for St. Cloud and the Twin Cities.
- **MDH Groundwater Restoration and Protection Strategies (GRAPS):** GRAPS reports note risks to groundwater quality and to groundwater-dependent lakes, flora, and fauna if forestland conversion occurs in areas of sensitive geologic conditions and vulnerable aquifers. These may be places where forest stewardship plans could help protect groundwater and ecological resources.

b. Connected non-CWF-supported programs:

- **MPCA's Small Watersheds Focus Program:** A DNR report on sediment reduction strategies for the Wells Creek watershed in Goodhue County (a Small Watersheds program participant) recommends over 20 site-specific implementation projects. DNR Nonpoint staff in all regions of the state are assisting projects in other participating watersheds as well.
- **DNR Fisheries programs:** DNR Fisheries Habitat staff contribute to the Nonpoint program in many watersheds generally and specifically related to forest stewardship and natural shoreline efforts—which in turn support fish habitat plans, Aquatic Management Area goals and more.
- **DNR Shoreland Management Program:** The Nonpoint program supports shoreland management by facilitating tools to help LGUs develop and adopt higher standards for water quality in shoreland ordinances.
- **US Forest Service Forest Stewardship Program:** Supports the DNR Forestry private forestland stewardship planning program supplemented by the Nonpoint program to protect water quality in at-risk watersheds.
- **US Forest Service Landscape Scale Restoration Program:** Offers grants that support the landscape level plans that help target forest stewardship plans to at-risk subwatersheds or those closest to "75% protected" status, so as to show progress sooner.
- **US Forest Service (USFS)/DNR Forest Legacy Program and DNR Forests for the Future:** DNR Nonpoint partners may guide landowners with forest stewardship plans to consider a Forest Legacy or Forests for the Future conservation easement to keep the land perpetually forested.
- **DNR Sustainable Forest Incentives Act (SFIA):** DNR Nonpoint partners help interested landowners with forest stewardship plans enroll in eight-year, 20-year, or 50-year SFIA options for protection from agricultural and other development.
- **DNR Forestry Cost Share** – helps landowners defray the cost of implementing stewardship plan activities that improve water quality, like tree planting, timber stand improvement, and shoreland stabilization.

- The **Northern Waters Land Trust (NWL) Clean Water Critical Habitat Program** and related organizations and partnerships in lake-rich watersheds of Minnesota uses the DNR Nonpoint lake prioritization data mentioned earlier.

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 (%)
General Fund - DNR Ecological & Water Resources Division (EWR)	\$90,000	100%
General Fund (EWR Land Use Unit)	\$150,000	100%
General Fund (EWR Lake Ecology Unit)	\$110,00	100%
Game and Fish Fund	\$1,630,720	85%
Private forest landowner contributions	\$50,000	100%
Landscape Scale Restoration Funds	\$100,000	100%
US Forest Service Inflation Reduction Act grant	\$150,000	100%

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

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
X Stay the same

- b. Do you have an anticipated end date for funding need? **No** If so, when? _____
- c. Do you intend to continue this program past 2034 in some capacity? **X** 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.

All of the requested funding allocated to forest stewardship activities (11.5% of the total requested) will be passed through in contracts to SWCDs and potential other non-state partners.

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)*

Around 10 years ago DNR Nonpoint staff led interested communities in at least 20 watersheds in exercises to help identify watershed priorities and values for WRAPS and One Watershed One Plan (1W1P). We committed to active participation in 1W1P plan development in every watershed statewide. These experiences have helped DNR Nonpoint staff build and strengthen relationships with local government partners, especially counties, soil and water conservation districts, and watershed districts.

Nonpoint staff also have longstanding relationships with colleagues at many other federal, state, local government, private-sector, and nonprofit groups, as well as within DNR (especially Fisheries), often from years of collaboration on implementation-oriented local and regional work groups. Likewise, forest stewardship plans have fostered long-term relationships between field foresters and landowners.

Sustaining and renewing these relationships remains vital to our work. It helps us understand and innovate ways to meet partner's needs and coordinate early on potential projects.

- 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.

The US Forest Service granted \$500,000 to DNR Forestry for a 3-year effort to develop landscape stewardship plans and seek opportunities to reach underserved forest landowners.

- 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.*

- Helped develop [Crissy Lake Dam Modification Project](#) website content
- Partnered with City of Duluth on the [Tischer Creek Roadmap to Resilience](#)
- Forest stewardship planning booklets distributed to 90 lake resort owners

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 in stories, field days, awards, and more. We display the Legacy logo on program materials and strive to ensure beneficiaries know that our staff and contractors are available thanks to the CWF.

A website and communications plan that we are finalizing in FY27 will drive us to develop new ways to raising awareness of the CWF and the work it supports, such as a link in staff email signature blocks to a page highlighting our services and products, accompanied by our [field staff contact list](#).

12. Prior Appropriations

FY10-11	\$500,000
FY12-13	\$2,400,000
FY14-15	\$2,000,000
FY16-17	\$2,000,000
FY18-19	\$1,900,000
FY20-21	\$2,000,000
FY22-23	\$2,500,000
FY24-25	\$3,200,000
FY26-27	\$4,350,000
TOTAL APPROPRIATED TO DATE	\$20,850,000

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 of full-time state employees supported by the CWF for this program.

FY10-11	1.0
FY12-13	7.0
FY14-15	6.5
FY16-17	6.3
FY18-19	7.7
FY20-21	8.5
FY22-23	7.7
FY24-25	8.5
FY26-27	8.5

E__Nonpoint Source Restoration and Protection Activities

Comments:

The Tischer Creek guide is great, though does not acknowledge the contribution of CWFs.

Questions:

1. Talk about the partnership with SWCDs and what is needed to move this program along.
2. Outcomes
 - a. Past funding resulted in 40 projects improved and 20,000 acres of woodland stewardship plans developed. What are your targets for this round of funding?
 - b. Can DNR estimate the miles of stream impacted, sediment reduced, etc.
 - c. Can presenter provide estimates of nutrient and sediment reductions or other measures of water improvement?
3. How have costs been allocated to Watershed Planning vs. project planning?
4. How has Emerald Ash Borer impacted the forest stewardship program?
5. Thinking about MPR's vanishing shorelines coverage a couple years back. Can this program scale to those losses? What would be needed to get to that scale (through this program or otherwise)? If not for this program, how would locals advance these projects? Who would they work with and what would be the challenges/opportunities with that? [I presume they'd have to seek consultant help at a much higher rate?]

FY28-29 CLEAN WATER FUND PROPOSAL

Program Title:	Technical Assistance
Program Number (if applicable):	32
Agency/Organization Name:	Minnesota Department of Agriculture
Program website:	www.mda.state.mn.us/pesticide-fertilizer/edge-field-water-quality-monitoring www.mda.state.mn.us/root-river-field-stream-partnership

Program Contact	
Name	Margaret Wagner
Email	Margaret.wagner@state.mn.us
Phone	651-201-6488

Person Filling Out Form	
Name	Reid Christianson
Email	reid.christianson@state.mn.us
Phone	651-201-6026

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 MDA's Technical Assistance program helps to ensure accurate, scientific information is available to address water quality concerns in agricultural areas. Funding is used to evaluate conservation practices, demonstrate practices that protect water, share information about research and new technologies, and enhance outreach and education to the agricultural community and local partners.

Technical assistance activities fill an important need for field demonstrations and validation of practices to protect water quality. The MDA uses on-farm, edge-of-field monitoring to assess sediment and nutrient loss at the field scale and evaluate the effectiveness of conservation practices. These activities generate high-quality data and practical insights that inform Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies (WRAPS), the One Watershed, One Plan (1W1P) process, as well as statewide models and decision-support tools.

Water Quality Impact

Which step of the [Water Management Framework](#) does this program most fit under: Implementation, Monitoring, Assessment, and Characterization, and Problem Investigation and Applied Research.

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.

Through on-farm demonstrations and edge-of-field monitoring, the Technical Assistance program applies science to evaluate conservation practices and quantify nutrient and sediment losses. These activities generate high-quality data and practical insights that inform the WRAPS and 1W1P processes, as well as statewide models and decision-support tools.

Technical assistance activities are a primary vehicle to work with the agricultural community to promote conservation practices. MDA staff have directly engaged more than 23,000 ag producers, crop advisors and local partners at more than 530 education and outreach events.

Data from more than 25 edge-of-field stations and hundreds of nutrient management plots help target ag practices where they deliver the greatest positive impact on water quality. Practices such as cover crops, controlled drainage, saturated buffers, grassed waterways, prairie stripes, and optimized nutrient management were evaluated and implemented at these sites. Through initiatives such as Discovery Farms Minnesota, Root River Field to Stream Partnership, Nutrient Management Initiative, and drainage water management projects, the program reduces nutrient and sediment losses to surface waters and groundwater, protecting drinking water sources and improving watershed health statewide.

By integrating research, monitoring, and implementation, Technical Assistance ensures that conservation strategies are science-based, measurable, and aligned with statewide priorities for clean 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:

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

- Maintain high-quality edge-of-field monitoring stations and provide real-time water quality and flow data to [mda.onerain](https://mda.onerain.org) for public access. Ensure data is used for WRAPS, GRAPS, 1W1Ps, as well as development of decision support tools and computer modeling efforts.
- Host, sponsor, and participate in outreach events related to water management and water quality; publish technical summaries, fact sheets, and peer-reviewed articles to reach farmers, advisers, researchers, and local partners.
- Enter one to three new partnerships with agricultural retailers for conservation agronomist positions to support farmers adopting BMPs, enhancing manure management, incorporating cover crops, and diversifying crop rotations.
- Support Nutrient Management Initiative plots (~50 annually) and publish an annual report with findings. Make data from advanced plots available to the University of Minnesota for BMP development.

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

Outcomes for all Clean Water Fund activities are tracked internally at the MDA and summarized at the end of each calendar year. This process has been in place since 2013, which has enabled consistent performance measure tracking over time. The MDA contributes performance measures and outcomes to the Clean Water Performance Report. Outcomes also are reported as follows:

- Water quality monitoring data is streamed in real time via [mda.onerain](https://mda.onerain.org) and available as public data on state databases (EQuIS, WISKI).
- Peer-reviewed publications and technical reports are archived on the MDA website and the [Minnesota Water Research Digital Library](https://mnwrl.org) (MnWRL).

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

- Broaden collaboration with ag retailers and co-ops for conservation agronomist positions that support BMP adoption, use of cover crops, and enhanced manure management in areas with vulnerable groundwater.
- Develop new cover crop biomass estimator to quantify nitrate loss reductions from cover crops.
- Demonstrate and qualify impact of precision manure management tools.
- Increase use of digital dashboards for real-time data sharing.
- Expand nitrate leaching modeling to provide regional estimates and inform WRAPS, GRAPS, and 1W1P planning.
- Convene working group on expansion of perennial cover, focusing on removing barriers and developing markets.

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 2025, the MDA has directly engaged more than 23,000 ag producers, crop advisors and local partners at more than 530 education and outreach events. The MDA supports about 50 nutrient management initiative on-farm plots each year engaging 50 farmers and 20 crop advisers. For example, the Technical Assistance program participated in a USDA-funded Conservation Innovation Program related to drainage practices to reduce nitrate losses. Outcomes included field days, BMP development, reports, and peer-reviewed publications.

The MDA maintains more than 25 active edge-of-field water quality monitoring stations around the state. Edge-of-field data have been used for education, outreach and computer simulations, including PTMApp, Adapt-N, SWAT, and the Runoff Risk Advisory Tool. Data are used to support the state's watershed approach and referenced in numerous WRAPS reports, making real-time data publicly available. MDA and project partners have shared edge-of-field monitoring data nearly 50 times to support modeling and research by other research organizations.

- Leveraged ~\$15 million from partners for implementation of practices, enhanced monitoring, and research efforts.
- Implemented conservation practices in critical source areas through the Root River Field to Stream Partnership
- Authored multiple scientific peer-reviewed articles and technical reports on BMP effectiveness, groundwater age, and edge-of-field practice design.

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

- The program is a cornerstone for statewide water quality monitoring and applied research.
- Long-term goal: sustain monitoring, expand computer modeling, and fully integrate data into watershed planning and BMP adoption strategies.

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.

- Technical Assistance reduces nitrate contamination risk by promoting nutrient management BMPs and drainage water management practices. Edge-of-field monitoring and modeling

provide data to target practices where they most effectively protect groundwater and drinking water sources.

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

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

- Technical Assistance supports this vision by promoting BMPs that reduce nitrate contamination, sharing monitoring data, and delivering outreach to help suppliers and landowners protect vulnerable areas. These efforts align with Source Protection Plans and the Ground Water Protection Rule to maintain safe, equitable drinking water statewide.

Surface Water Protection and Restoration Vision: Minnesotans will have fishable and swimmable waters statewide

Goal 2: Protect and restore surface waters to achieve 70% swimmable and 67% fishable waters by 2034.

- On-farm demonstrations and monitoring evaluate BMPs that reduce sediment and nutrient runoff. Data informs WRAPS and 1W1P strategies, ensuring targeted investments for impaired and high-quality waters.

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

- **Strategy 1- Action 1: Support local efforts to engage farmers in water quality efforts.**
 - Technical Assistance provides outreach, peer-to-peer learning, and science-based resources to farmers, crop advisers, and local partners—fostering adoption of conservation practices.

Other statewide or federal plans supported:

- Minnesota Nutrient Reduction Strategy
- Minnesota Water Management Framework (implementation, monitoring, applied research)
- Federal Gulf Hypoxia Task Force goals through nutrient reduction 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 Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP):** Technical Assistance provides monitoring data and BMP evaluations that strengthen certification standards and endorsements.
- **Nitrate in Groundwater Program:** Shares modeling and monitoring data to inform nitrogen BMP adoption in vulnerable areas.

- **Agricultural Research and Evaluation Program:** Technical Assistance offers applied research sites and data that complement statewide BMP effectiveness studies.
- **Irrigation Water Quality Protection Program:** Collaborates and shares information about waterquality protection under irrigation.

Connected non-CWF-supported programs:

- **Statewide Nutrient Reduction Strategy:** Technical Assistance staff played a key role in revising this strategy, ensuring science-based recommendations.
- **Discovery Farms Minnesota:** Technical Assistance supports this farmer-led program with technical staff and equipment; program funding is primarily from commodity groups and external partners.
- **Federal and University Partnerships:** Collaborates with USDA EQIP and RCPP initiatives and University of Minnesota Extension to leverage research and outreach resources.

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 (%)
Foundation for Food and Agricultural Research (FFAR)	\$1.25 million	40%

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

Technical Assistance leverages state agency funding, commodity group support, and small grants to enhance demonstration sites and outreach and federal cost share programs to support practice implementation. These funds complement CWF investments by expanding monitoring capacity, supporting equipment needs, and increasing farmer engagement to adopt practices.

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 planned end date
- **Do you intend to continue this program past 2034 in some capacity?** X 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.

____ 10%

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)**

Technical Assistance has evolved through continuous engagement with farmers, crop advisers, local government units, and conservation professionals. Staff gather feedback at field days, workshops, and advisory meetings to identify emerging needs and adjust BMP demonstrations. Partnerships include SWCDs, University of Minnesota Extension, commodity groups, private industry, and individual farmers. These collaborations help integrate research findings into on-farm practices and inform program priorities. Technical Assistance staff also contribute to interagency workgroups and planning teams, supporting WRAPS and 1W1P processes with monitoring data and applied research.

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

Clean water, and particularly clean drinking water, is a core equity and environmental justice issue. Technical Assistance advances these priorities by reducing sediment and nutrient losses from agriculture fields. 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 technical assistance activities.

- **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.**

- **Southeast Minnesota Groundwater Resources:** [videos, infographic and additional resources](#)
- **Educational Outreach:** Delivered free webinars for statewide initiatives like the [Minnesota Nutrient Reduction Strategy](#) and presented research at major conferences, including the Land Use and Water Quality Conference and the Minnesota Water Resources Conference.
- **Data Transparency:** Streamed real-time edge-of-field water quality data via [MDA OneRain](#).

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 MDA includes the CWF logo in all presentations and state-branded outreach materials. An acknowledgement to the CWF is made in when its logo can't be displayed.

PRIOR APPROPRIATIONS	
FY10-11	\$2,665,000
FY12-13	\$1,550,000
FY14-15	\$3,000,000
FY16-17	\$2,250,000
FY18-19	\$2,250,000
FY20-21	\$3,000,000
FY22-23	\$3,000,000
FY24-25	\$3,000,000
FY26-27	\$3,200,000
TOTAL APPROPRIATED TO DATE	\$23,915,000

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	1.0/3.95
FY12-13	5.2/5.85
FY14-15	8.5/6.85
FY16-17	6.85
FY18-19	7.00
FY20-21	7.00
FY22-23	7.00
FY24-25	7.25
FY26-27	7.50

F__Technical Assistance

Comments:

1. This is important work.
2. Great video about the Root River - really helped to understand the importance of this program. Do need to add the legacy logo to the edge of field water quality monitoring landing page.

Questions:

1. Please talk about monitoring model and integrating data in watershed planning and BMP strategies.
2. Are there any edge of field monitoring stations funded by this program that provide data to measure water quality outcomes from MN Ag Water Quality Certified farmland? Please describe linkages or synergies between this program and MN AWQC program?
3. Could you estimate the cost of a monitoring program to compare N, P and TSS runoff from MAWQCP farms to non-certified farms? It would be very beneficial to determine the water quality effect of using multiple BMP's on cropland relative to the effect of single BMP's, eg is there a synergistic effect of these BMP's so the total is greater than the sum of individual treatments.
4. How much \$ goes to Discovery Farms? How have programs, particularly Discovery Farms data collection, changed farmer behavior, practices or programs?
5. Given the monitoring and modeling of the program, has MDA estimated the extent of BMPs or practice change necessary to reduce nitrates below 5 mg/l in Southeast MN?
6. How do the MDA technical staff differ from the SWCD technical staff. Could a similar outcome be realized through the WBIF funding directed to watersheds?
7. Want to hear more about the future changes to engage ag retailers and other planned changes

FY28-29 CLEAN WATER FUND PROPOSAL

Program Title:	Native Mussel Restoration
Program Number (if applicable):	XX
Agency/Organization Name:	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
Program website:	https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/mussels/index.html ; https://www.legacy.mn.gov/projects/native-mussel-restoration

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

Person Filling Out Form	
Name	Kate Holcomb
Email	Kathryn.holcomb@state.mn.us
Phone	651-314-6307

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.

Native freshwater mussels play a key role in contributing to clean waters in Minnesota. However, many mussel species are no longer present in sufficient numbers to repopulate rivers and streams. The DNR will use its expertise to propagate (grow) mussels and restore populations in Minnesota rivers. We propose to improve techniques and scale up production of mussel species and place them into their natural habitats. Funding will support collection, rearing, distribution, monitoring costs, and identification of new species and locations for restoration. These efforts will benefit Minnesotans by contributing to fishable and swimmable waters across the state.

3. Water Quality Impact

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

Freshwater mussels play a key role in contributing to fishable and swimmable waters in Minnesota. They are nature's water filter, removing bacteria and excess nutrients. They also provide habitat and food resources for sportfish and other aquatic organisms. However, mussels have declined largely because of anthropogenic impacts such as historical overharvest, construction of dams, and pollution from urban and agricultural runoff. Even after efforts to improve the condition and connectivity of Minnesota waters, many mussel species are no longer present in sufficient numbers to repopulate rivers and streams. This restoration program seeks to alleviate this constraint by restoring mussels in sufficient numbers to become self-sustaining populations.

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.*

Expected outcomes for this proposal include restored freshwater mussel populations at 2-3 sites in each of the following: Cannon River watershed, Cedar River watershed, Mississippi River, and Minnesota River.
 - ii. *Describe how outcomes will be tracked, evaluated, and reported.*

Genetic samples are collected from all brood mussels and propagated mussels to assess genetic robustness of propagated mussels and their offspring through time. Survival and growth of propagated mussels are evaluated in the laboratory and grow-out ponds to understand how to optimize growing conditions. Survival, growth and recruitment of mussels are monitored post-release for several years to evaluate success of mussel restoration efforts. Results are documented in technical reports and through outreach, such as our program newsletter.

- 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.*

The Center of Aquatic Mollusk Programs (CAMP) moved into its new propagation facility in Lake City in November 2023. Custom fish-holding and mussel rearing systems were designed by CAMP biologists to successfully rear new mussel species in 2024 and 2025. Since spring 2024, CAMP has successfully reared 6 rare mussel species (Snuffbox, Mucket, Black Sandshell, Spectaclecase, Elktote, and Winged Mapleleaf) and has released over 7,000 mussels across the Cannon, Cedar, and Mississippi watersheds.

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

Work is expected to continue decades beyond 2034. Approximately seven years of mussel rearing is required to complete restoration for each mussel species at each site. The process is resource-intensive, but survival rates of our released mussels are higher and more quantifiable than other less intensive methods. Since mussels are long-lived species and mussel restoration is a new science, monitoring mussel survival and reproduction at restoration sites for three years post-release, and again at 10 years post-release, allows us to evaluate success of our efforts and adapt our restoration process as needed.

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.*

- Surface Water Protection and Restoration Vision, Goal 2: Protect and restore surface waters to achieve 70% swimmable and 67% fishable waters by 2034 via by prioritizing and targeting resources by major watershed.
 - This project helps Minnesota reach its goal of having more swimmable and fishable waters by bringing freshwater mussels back to rivers and streams. Mussels naturally clean the water by filtering out bacteria, nutrients, and other pollutants, and they create better habitat for fish. Many places no longer have

enough mussels to recover on their own, so this work focuses on restoring them in the watersheds where they can make the biggest difference. By improving water clarity and supporting healthy fish communities, this effort directly supports statewide water-quality goals.

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

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Recovery Plan for Four Species of Freshwater Mussels: Rayed Bean, Sheepnose, Snuffbox, Spectaclecase.
- Minnesota's Wildlife Action Plan 2015-2025 (and updated 2025-2035 plan).

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:

- DNR Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies— mussel restoration efforts contribute to healthy watersheds and improved water quality. Our mussel data is incorporated into health score calculations in the Watershed Health Assessment Framework. DNR WRAPS program team geomorphology survey data is used to identify quality mussel restoration sites.
- MPCA water quality monitoring data – used to identify quality mussel restoration sites.
- DNR Stream Flow Monitoring – data are used to identify safe field sampling conditions and quality mussel restoration sites.
- DNR Nonpoint Restoration and Protection Strategies – Regional staff expertise related to stream restoration projects is used to identify quality mussel restoration sites

b. Connected non-CWF-supported programs:

- DNR fish survey data – used to identify quality mussel restoration sites (presence of appropriate host fish).
- DNR River Ecology Unit – data and expertise related to dam removals, stream restoration, and stream geomorphology are used to identify quality mussel restoration sites.

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 (%)
LCCMR (FY26-28, grant in progress)	\$991,310	100%
LCCMR (FY29-30)	\$1,090,440	80%

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

Our program is funded through a combination of federal and state grants. Mussel restoration efforts are primarily funded through CWF and LCCMR. Survey and research efforts are primarily funded through federal grants (State Wildlife Grant, Competitive State Wildlife Grant).

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. 0 %

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)*

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Survey, National Park Service, Minnesota Zoo, Wisconsin DNR, Mower County Soil and Water Conservation District, Hormel Nature Center, and University of Minnesota employees collaborate with collection of mussels and host fish for juvenile mussel propagation, developing new techniques for propagating mussels, and identifying mussel restoration sites. The Shedd Aquarium assists by analyzing genetics of brood mussels and propagated mussels. Volunteers, such as Minnesota Master Naturalists, assist with field work to monitor survival of mussels at restoration sites annually.

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

Clean water is essential to all Minnesotans. Restoring mussel populations in the Cannon River watershed, Cedar River watershed, Mississippi River, and Minnesota River will contribute to improved water quality and watershed health, benefiting all Minnesotans in these watersheds. 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. Much of the Mussel Program's outreach effort to educate people about the value of mussels for healthy watersheds is concentrated in the Minneapolis-Saint Paul area, which is home to a diverse population of Minnesotans.

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.*

- Program newsletter – produced quarterly since 2024.
 - December 2025 newsletter: <https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/MNDNR/bulletins/3fee322>
- Booth at the Minnesota State Fair – annually since start of the Mussel Restoration program start in 2024.
- Tours of our mussel propagation lab for the public, including information about the importance of mussels and how they contribute to clean water – monthly since start of program in 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. The Mussel Program's outreach involves a quarterly program newsletter (more than 6,800 recipients), social media posts, educational programs with students across Minnesota, tours of our laboratory in Lake City, and public events like the State Fair. 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.

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	\$600,000
FY26-27	\$700,000
TOTAL APPROPRIATED TO DATE	\$1,300,000

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	1.7
FY26-27	1.7

G__Native Mussel Restoration

Comments:

Critically important program

Questions:

1. Scaling up/expansion
 - a. Fairly new program. Does the DNR have plans to expand this program?
 - b. If additional funds were available from CWF (e.g., \$1.2M instead of \$600K), could this program scale up? Are any of the proposed mussel restoration sites on the Mississippi River on the upper Mississippi? Where? (As context, 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.)
 - c. Anticipating staying steady with the funding request, though the abstract says a goal is to "scale up". Would you prefer an increase in funding to this program?
2. Outcomes
 - a. Any sense of how many gallons of water filtered or how reintroduction improves aquatic health? How many miles of stream have been impacted and what is the expected growth over time?
 - b. Can presenter share data about how much nutrients, sediment, other pollutants are removed by mussels or when such improvements might be seen. What is the long-term prospect for mussels or will we need to keep fostering them?

FY28-29 CLEAN WATER FUND PROPOSAL

Program Title:	Great Lakes Restoration
Program Number (if applicable):	XX
Agency/Organization Name:	Board of Water and Soil Resources
Program website:	https://bwsr.state.mn.us/node/13271

Program Contact	
Name	Melanie Bomier
Email	Melanie.bomier@state.mn.us
Phone	651-249-7519

Person Filling Out Form	
Name	Melanie Bomier
Email	Melanie.bomier@state.mn.us
Phone	651-249-7519

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 grant funding provides support to Soil and Water Conservation District in the Lake Superior Basin to leverage Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) or other federal Great Lakes funding to implement prioritized projects consistent with the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative's Action Plan, already identified through Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies, and Comprehensive Watershed Management Plans developed through the One Watershed, One Plan program.

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 will protect, enhance, and restore water quality in lakes, rivers and streams, protect groundwater and protect drinking water sources by increasing the capacity of Soil and Water Conservation District staff. By increasing the capacity of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, these funds will be used for match to federal dollars, writing grant applications for federal dollars and increasing the technical capabilities resulting in more on the ground conservation work.

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.
Increased staff training, staff capacity, grant applications, and leveraged federal dollars.
 - b. Describe how outcomes will be tracked, evaluated, and reported.
Outcomes will be tracked in the BWSR web-based reporting system called eLINK.
 - c. (If applicable) For past recipients, describe any planned changes to this program from previous funding cycles, if any.
No planned changes.
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 on previous appropriations will be formally documented in the BWSR web-based reporting system and the annual reporting deadline for calendar year 2025 activities is due February 1, 2026. Based on verbal grant monitoring a federal project was leveraged and awarded using the previous appropriations. Appropriations were distributed through grants and the SWCDs have hired and trained staff, pursued federal

funding opportunities, and used the grant funding as match for federal project applications and/or awards. The funding enabled the application for five federal grants.

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

To date, recipients have only received one year of funding. Some projects will be installed with matching funds coming from their first round of funding. Additional information will be reported by February 1, 2026, annual reporting deadline for calendar year 2025 activities.

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

By increasing the capacity of SWCDs, these funds allow additional work with individuals and local partnerships, increase the technical skills of SWCD staff and bring additional federal funding to local and state conservation priorities. These funds will increase progress on goals identified in the Clean Water Funded Comprehensive Watershed Management Plans developed through the BWSR One Watershed, One Plan program and local stormwater plans (Two Harbors, Silver Bay, Knife River, Grand Marais) completed as a result of funding provided through the BWSR Watershed-based Implementation Funding program.

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

This effort supports the federal Great Lakes Restoration Initiative's Action Plan already identified through the state's Nutrient Reduction Strategy, Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies and Comprehensive Watershed Management Plans developed through the One Watershed, One Plan program.

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,*
- *Comprehensive Watershed Management Plans developed through the One Watershed, One Plan program, and*
- *Watershed-based Implementation Fund program.*

Connected non-CWF-supported programs:

- *Minnesota's nonpoint source management plan - 2019 to 2029,*
- *Clean Water Act Section 319 programs,*
- *Great Lakes Restoration Initiative's Action Plan,*

- *MN Coastal Nonpoint Program,*
- *569 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1999 funding from Army Corps of Engineer,*
- *Great Lakes Sediment and Nutrient Reduction Program,*
- *Sustain Our Great Lakes Financial Assistance Program Funds, and*
- *Coastal States Lakes technical and coordination assistance.*

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 (%)
<i>Ex. Private landowner contributions</i>	<i>\$100,000</i>	<i>100%</i>
<i>Federal Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Contributions</i>	<i>South St. Louis SWCD: \$600,000 Others TBD after February First reporting</i>	<i>100%</i>
<i>DNR Coastal Program NOAA Funding</i>	<i>\$113,881 (DNR to BWSR) plus additional funds directly to Carlton, South St. Louis, Lake and Cook SWCDs Cook SWCD: \$21,952 Lake SWCD: \$150,000 – pending and \$44,000 awarded Carlton: \$85,050</i>	<i>100%</i>
<i>Sustain our Great Lakes (SOGL)</i>	<i>NSL SWCD: \$270,000 (Waiting for award notification)</i>	<i>50%</i>
<i>Clean Water Act Section 319</i>	<i>Cook SWCD: \$291,965 Carlton: \$289,645</i>	<i>100%</i>
<i>Great Lakes Sediment and Nutrient Reduction Program</i>	<i>Lake SWCD: \$153,000</i>	<i>100%</i>
<i>Section 569 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1999 funding from Army Corps of Engineers</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.)
 - 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? x 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.

 94 %

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 partners are the following Soil and Water Conservation Districts and their Board of elected Supervisors and staff: Cook, Lake, North St. Louis, South St. Louis and Carlton. The program beneficiaries were involved with developing the idea in partnership with MPCA and BWSR.

- 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.*

According to the MPCA Environmental Justice Areas web-based mapping system funds have the potential to be used; in areas where the reported income is less than the 200% of the federal poverty level; areas identified as Indian Country, which is defined as federally recognized reservations and other Indigenous lands; and in areas where people have limited proficiency in English and/or are people of color.

- 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.

Outreach conducted by this program includes the discussion of the funding at the five SWCD offices during regular board meetings held in compliance with open meeting requirements as well as during conversations between elected officials and staff with partners and landowners. Additional conversations have been held during the watershed partnerships responsible for implementing the comprehensive watershed management plans developed through the One

Watershed, One Plan program as they discuss implementation activities utilizing the Watershed-based Implementation Funds. Additional information will be reported by February 1, 2026, annual reporting deadline for calendar year 2025 activities.

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	
FY18-19	
FY20-21	
FY22-23	
FY24-25	<i>\$1,000,000</i>
FY26-27	<i>\$1,000,000</i>
TOTAL APPROPRIATED TO DATE	

FY28 Request	FY29 Request	FY28-29 TOTAL REQUEST
<i>Hold Steady</i>	<i>Hold Steady</i>	<i>Hold 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	
FY12-13	
FY14-15	
FY16-17	
FY18-19	
FY20-21	
FY22-23	
FY24-25	
FY26-27	1.0

H__Great Lakes Restoration Projects

Comments:

The single most critically important freshwater source on the planet!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Questions:

1. Previous funding and outcomes
 - a. Could you please provide an update on water quality outcomes achieved from past CWF investments in this program? (your initial response indicates this update will be available after February)
 - b. Can presenter share results of previous funding, including quantifiable training and then resulting projects?
 - c. What specific work does this extra capacity enable and why should dollars be directed to this specific watershed instead of spread across the state?
2. Has federal funding for the program been reduced and if so, by how much? What are the activities implemented with state and federal funds?
3. Can WBIF fill the SWCD capacity need here? Can WBIF be used as match to unlock the federal dollars?
4. Can you describe your communications plan for the grant (looks like that question was missed).

FY28-29 CLEAN WATER FUND PROPOSAL

Program Title:	Conservation Corp of Minnesota and Iowa
Program Number (if applicable):	XX
Agency/Organization Name:	Board of Water and Soil Resources
Program website:	https://conservationcorps.org/partner/clean-water-funding/

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.

Since 2012, BWSR has been contracting with Conservation Corps Minnesota & Iowa for delivery of services (restoration, maintenance, training, and other activities) to provide additional capacity to Minnesota's local governments. This funding request also includes delivery of service to provide additional capacity to Tribal nations. Prior to FY2026-2027, the funding was legislatively directed in appropriation language and previously used from Surface and Drinking Water Protection/Restoration Grants or Accelerated Implementation funding sources.

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 local conservation partners with a trained labor force and equips CCMI crews with skills to build their conservation careers. The work centers on installation and maintenance of conservation practices benefitting water quality and provides local conservation partners with increased capacity to accomplish clean water outcomes.

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 projects receiving funding to date, it is anticipated that between 35-50 project will request crew placements to help achieve clean water goals.
 - b. Describe how outcomes will be tracked, evaluated, and reported.
Projects are selected through an RFP process and evaluated based on measurable outputs to achieve water quality objectives. Conservation Corps completes annual reporting to BWSR of accomplishment outcomes, itemization of match, and project location upon project completion.
 - c. (If applicable) For past recipients, describe any planned changes to this program from previous funding cycles, if any. *BWSR is seeking to expand eligibility for this program to include 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, over 500 projects have been supported through this program providing over 150,000 hours of assistance.

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

Providing the ability for college students to build their conservation careers remains and the need to increase capacity of local conservation partners remains high. This program provides a unique opportunity to couple these two needs to meet Minnesota's clean water 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 through statewide, regional, or issue-specific programs that help meet water quality goals but are not necessarily prioritized and targeted according to geography.

The work centers on installation and maintenance of conservation practices benefitting water quality and provides local conservation partners with increased capacity to accomplish clean water outcomes.

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 local and Tribal governments with a trained labor force and equips CCMI crews with skills to build their conservation careers.

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: *These funds provide capacity to maintain water quality conservation practices across a spectrum of non-clean water funding sources .*

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.

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). *CCMI works with local conservation partners to provide needed capacity. Feedback from recipients is conveyed 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. Providing and building the capacity to provide technical assistance helps remove barriers for local and Tribal 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.

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	
FY20-21	
FY22-23	
FY24-25	
FY26-27	<i>\$1,500,000</i>
TOTAL APPROPRIATED TO DATE	<i>\$1,500,000</i>

FY28 Request	FY29 Request	FY28-29 TOTAL REQUEST
<i>Hold Steady</i>	<i>Hold Steady</i>	<i>Hold 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	
FY12-13	
FY14-15	
FY16-17	
FY18-19	
FY20-21	
FY22-23	
FY24-25	
FY26-27	

I__Conservation Corps of Minnesota and Iowa

Questions:

1. What's the difference between Conservation Corps and Green Corps?
2. Why has funding shifted to a direct CWF proposal versus being wrapped into the Surface & Drinking Water Protection/Restoration Grants or Accelerated Implementation funding?
3. Instead of directly funding this program could we suggest that watersheds look toward this labor force to accomplish 1W1P goals utilizing their WBIF funds?
4. Workforce development
 - a. Does the program actively recruit minority populations into the workforce? What % of CCMI members are minorities?
 - b. What is the program doing to increase diversity within the conservation work force?
5. Tribal Governments
 - a. How many hours and projects have supported Tribal efforts?
 - b. Would Tribal governments be eligible for this round of funding or is it a future goal?
6. Outcomes
 - a. Please list several examples of conservation practices implemented and the expected water quality/quantity outcomes?
 - b. Where can we find a copy of the annual report provided to BWSR that includes accomplishment outcomes and locations and why is that not included in proposal?
 - c. Can presenter share results of previous funding, including example projects and estimated nutrient/sediment reductions and/or other pollution reductions? This supplements existing CCC?

FY28-29 CLEAN WATER FUND PROPOSAL

Program Title:	Irrigation Water Quality Protection
Program Number (if applicable):	17
Agency/Organization Name:	MDA
Program website:	https://www.mda.state.mn.us/cwf/irrigation-specialist

Program Contact	
Name	Margaret Wagner
Email	margaret.wagner@state.mn.us
Phone	651-201-6488

Person Filling Out Form	
Name	Jeppe Kjaersgaard
Email	Jeppe.kjaersgaard@state.mn.us
Phone	651-201-6149

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.

Funding supports an irrigation water quality specialist through a contract with the University of Minnesota Extension to address water quantity and water quality issues in Minnesota's irrigated regions. The specialist conducts applied research, develops technical guidance and publications, provides education and outreach on irrigation and nitrogen best management practices (BMPs), and contributes to the development of irrigation scheduling tools for Minnesota irrigators. Farmers, crop advisers, and SWCD staff benefit from expanded education, training, and direct technical support, and the practices help reduce nitrate leaching losses from irrigated crop production to groundwater.

Water Quality Impact

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

Problem Investigation and Applied Research, and Ongoing Implementation through the specialist's outreach and education activities.

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.

A substantial portion of Minnesota's irrigated agriculture occurs on coarse-textured soils that, while highly productive under irrigation, are more prone to nitrate leaching than finer-textured soils. Irrigated crop production requires distinct nitrogen-management approaches compared to rainfed crops. Rapid advances in irrigation and nutrient-management technologies continue to reshape what constitutes effective practices. These factors create a clear need for ongoing development, evaluation, and dissemination of irrigation-specific BMPs that improve water-use efficiency (more crop per drop) and synchronize nitrogen availability with crop demand. Implementing these BMPs reduces nitrate losses, enhances irrigation efficiency, and protects vulnerable groundwater.

This funding supports an irrigation water quality specialist at the University of Minnesota. The specialist develops and updates irrigation and nitrogen BMPs, delivers education and outreach to irrigators, conducts train-the-trainer programs for SWCD staff and other agronomy and conservation professionals, and provides technical guidance to local, state, and federal agencies. Continued funding ensures Minnesota remains at the forefront of science-based irrigation management that protects groundwater quality while supporting a productive and resilient agricultural sector.

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.

Outcomes for the current funding request include:

- Publish a U of M Extension Irrigation Water Management BMP bulletin
- Publish 5 blog posts or podcasts through U of M Extension
- Publish 2 irrigation water management articles in trade journals or commodity newsletters
- Conduct an annual irrigator training workshop
- Submit two or more proposals annually for non-CWF funding for irrigation BMP research and outreach
- Serve in a leadership or coordinator role for at least one irrigation technology implementation project
- Lead or co-lead irrigation annual training workshops for SWCD and NRCS technical staff
- Engage with 500 or more irrigators and irrigation industry professionals at one-on-one conversations, field days, clinics, meetings, conferences or similar
- Impact irrigation water management decisions on at least 50,000 acres
- Train or advise two or more graduate students on sustainable irrigation practices
- Present outcomes from research activities at one or more professional conference annually

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

The University of Minnesota tracks outcomes related to BMP research and development, leveraged non-CWF funding, outreach products (including blog posts, podcasts, news clips and news releases), presentations, farmer contacts, and other performance indicators through its performance-based activity tracking system, which is reported to the MDA quarterly. Outcomes from outreach and education activities led by the irrigation specialist—including participant feedback, documented changes in irrigator behavior, BMP adoption informed by the specialist’s guidance, and additional recommendations—are collected through U of M Extension evaluation forms.

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

No change, although it should be recognized that the irrigation specialist is increasingly taking on a leadership role within Extension and is engaging regional extension staff in irrigation program delivery. This includes building an irrigation curriculum into local educator programs and working with irrigation technical service providers to improve irrigation and nitrogen 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.

The specialist continues to make excellent progress. Examples include:

- The specialist oversaw expansion of the irrigation management assistant tool from serving only five counties to now having statewide coverage: ima.respec.cloud/app/static/docs/IMA%20-%20Quick%20Start%20Guide.pdf
- The specialist leads the annual Minnesota Irrigator Program (MIP), in which participating irrigators and SWCD technical staff are trained in advanced irrigation technology and management. At the most recent MIP Program, held in November 2025, 86% of participants rated the value of the program high or very high. Participants also indicated they directly manage or help manage more than 23,500 irrigated acres.
- During FY24-25, the specialist presented at 45 events, organized three workshops, engaged with more than 1,100 farmers and agronomists, authored eight technical publications and five blog posts about irrigation and nutrient management BMPs, and participated in three U of M podcasts.

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

The program's long-term goal is to continually advance irrigation water and nutrient-management practices across Minnesota through applied research, developing and refining BMPs, and ensuring these practices are broadly adopted through sustained outreach, training, and technical support. Because this goal is ongoing by design, progress is measured through the specialist's ability to maintain active research, update BMP guidance, and expand education and engagement with irrigators and resource professionals. Based on current performance, the program is strongly aligned with its long-term objectives. The specialist consistently exceeds expectations through relevant research, robust outreach efforts, and strong partnerships with academia, industry, and the agricultural community, demonstrating steady and meaningful progress toward the program's enduring mission.

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.

- Strategy 2- Action 3: Reduce nitrate contamination of groundwater

- This project develops and evaluates irrigation water and nutrient-management BMPs, with a focus on practices that improve irrigation efficiency, conserve water and energy, and reduce nitrate leaching to groundwater. Research efforts include assessing irrigation scheduling tools, soil-moisture monitoring technologies, and nitrogen-

application strategies that better align nutrient availability with crop demand. The goal is to identify and promote management approaches that maintain crop productivity while protecting vulnerable groundwater resources.

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 project maintains a comprehensive education and outreach program to promote irrigation BMPs and other science-based conservation practices, with a focus on regions where coarse-textured soils and vulnerable groundwater increase the risk of nitrate contamination.

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:

- **Ag Water Quality Certification Program:** Participants who complete the Minnesota Irrigator Program, which is led by the irrigation specialist, are eligible for the Irrigation Water Management endorsement when their farms are water quality certified.
- **Nitrate in Groundwater:** Support for irrigation water and nutrient-management research at the Rosholt Research Farm in Pope County, which is equipped with advanced infrastructure, including the latest irrigation technology, soil-water sampling systems, and water analysis equipment. Support for the Minnesota Irrigators Program, in which participating irrigators and SWCD technical staff are trained in advanced irrigation technology and management.
- **Minnesota Ag Weather Network Program:** The irrigation specialist actively promotes weather-station-based irrigation scheduling, including the use of the Irrigation Management Assistant, an online tool that applies weather-station data to guide irrigation decisions.
- **Technical Assistance:** Sharing of monitoring information for irrigation practices and irrigation BMPs.

Connected non-CWF-supported programs:

- **Irrigation Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP):** In 2025, the MDA, in partnership with 26 SWCDs, Tribal partners, and the irrigation specialist, secured \$11M of federal funds to support the adoption of irrigation technologies that protect groundwater resources. The irrigation specialist leads the scientific assessment of environmental outcomes associated with these technologies and irrigation-management systems. The RCPP is funded through a USDA grant, with matching contributions provided by the MDA, participating SWCDs and other project partners using Clean Water Funds.

- Additional non-CWF research and outreach funding was provided by the Minnesota Corn Research and Promotion Council, Minnesota Area II Potato Growers Research and Promotion Council, Ag Fertilizer Research and Education Council (AFREC), USDA and EarthScout.

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 (%)
USDA NRCS	\$73,000	100%
USDA NIFA	\$500,000	5%
Ag Fertilizer Research and Promotion Council (AFREC)	\$150,000	25%
Minnesota Corn Research and Promotion Council	\$100,000	15%
Minnesota Area II Potato Growers Research and Promotion Council	\$50,000	20%
MDA AGRI	\$50,000	10%
Industry contributions to the Minnesota Irrigators Program (MIP)	\$10,000	75%

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

Non-CWF funds listed in the table above are for research, outreach, and training activities associated with the development and promotion of irrigation water and nutrient management BMPs, while the Clean Water Fund supports the irrigation water quality specialist position.

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
 - X Stay the same
- **Do you have an anticipated end date for funding need? No end date** If so, when? _____
- **Do you intend to continue this program past 2034 in some capacity? X 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)**

Program beneficiaries continue to play an active role in shaping the program. At its inception, stakeholders participating in the Forum on Minnesota Irrigated Agriculture (<https://www.mda.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/2018-06/irrigationforumrpt.pdf>) identified the hiring of a U of M irrigation specialist as a critical need. Since then, the specialist has conducted three focus groups with irrigators, industry representatives, agency staff, and other stakeholders to gather input on program needs. Ongoing engagement occurs through meetings with the Irrigators Association of Minnesota, agricultural commodity groups, the MDA, and other partners, where stakeholders provide suggestions for program improvement. Additional feedback is collected through written evaluations from participants at field days, workshops, trainings, and other outreach events.

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

The irrigation specialist actively promotes equity by helping historically underserved communities gain access to water-quality information and cost-share programs. For example, the specialist co-leads a cost-share initiative that provides enhanced financial assistance programs to federally designated underserved producers. Through targeted technical assistance, the specialist reduces adoption barriers and supports equitable access to irrigation and nutrient-management resources, strengthening community resilience. The project also prioritizes environmental justice by focusing on communities facing significant water-quality challenges, including areas with elevated nitrate concentrations in groundwater. By advancing irrigation water and nutrient management BMPs in these regions, the project helps mitigate environmental health risks associated with agricultural practices.

- **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.**

- Minnesota Irrigator Program, <https://extension.umn.edu/courses-and-events/minnesota-irrigator-program>
- Irrigation and Nutrient Management Field Day, Becker MN, <https://blog-crop-news.extension.umn.edu/2025/06/register-for-irrigation-and-nutrient.html>
- Train-the-trainer irrigation workshop for SWCD and NRCS technical staff, https://bwsr.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/2025-08/snapshots_story_1_september_2025_irrigation_mda_nracs_rcpp.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.

Both the MDA and the irrigation specialist include the CWF logo in all presentations and state-branded outreach materials. In instances where the logo cannot be displayed, the Clean Water Fund is acknowledged.

PRIOR APPROPRIATIONS	
FY10-11	
FY12-13	
FY14-15	\$220,000
FY16-17	\$220,000
FY18-19	\$220,000
FY20-21	\$300,000
FY22-23	\$270,000
FY24-25	\$300,000
FY26-27	\$310,000
TOTAL APPROPRIATED TO DATE	\$1,840,000

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	0
FY16-17	0
FY18-19	0
FY20-21	0
FY22-23	0
FY24-25	0
FY26-27	0

J__Irrigation Water Quality

Questions:

1. Administration
 - a. Why isn't this application coming from MDA and not the UMN?
 - b. How can this program support an irrigation water quality specialist at the U of M but also be 100% pass through to a non-state agency and support 0 full time state employees?
2. Outcomes
 - a. One note says participants represent 23,500 acres, what % does this represent of all irrigated acres in MN?
 - b. What is the estimated volumetric water conservation benefit from the program or associated programs like \$11M from RCPP, i.e. how many gallons left in the ground?
 - c. How is behavior change from training and research tracked/evaluated?
 - d. Can presenter provide stories or case studies of ag producers adopting recommendations and subsequent nutrient/sediment reductions or reductions in water use?
3. Could presenter share stories about private fund collaboration (ie with Corn Growers and other ag business groups)?
4. I see demonstrated progress and valuable activities planned. What are we striving for? Is there a metric goal or is it a narrative 'do as much optimizing as you can' goal? Is there a discrete recommendation that is being made to irrigators?

FY28-29 CLEAN WATER FUND PROPOSAL

Program Title:	Nitrate in Groundwater
Program Number (if applicable):	15
Agency/Organization Name:	Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA)
Program website:	www.mda.state.mn.us/pesticide-fertilizer/minnesota-nitrogen-fertilizer-management-plan www.mda.state.mn.us/nfr

Program Contact	
Name	Margaret Wagner
Email	Margaret.wagner@state.mn.us
Phone	651-201-6488

Person Filling Out Form	
Name	Margaret Wagner
Email	Margaret.wagner@state.mn.us
Phone	651-201-6488

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 18C and 103H and Rule Chapter 1573](#). MDA is the lead agency for addressing nitrate in groundwater and developing and evaluating best management practices and other agricultural practices to protect water resources.

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 MDA leads nitrate monitoring and reduction activities across Minnesota, with emphasis on areas with vulnerable groundwater. This work is done in partnership with the agricultural community and local governments.

Funding supports activities that identify sources of nitrate contamination and evaluate and implement practices at the local level to reduce nitrate in groundwater. In addition to promoting, demonstrating, and encouraging adoption of nitrogen fertilizer best management practices (BMPs), the program engages in strategic efforts to increase vegetative cover in vulnerable areas; works with farmers and crop advisors in local advisory teams; conducts computer modeling to evaluate practices; monitors groundwater, provides technical support and supports on-farm demonstration 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.

Nitrate is one of the contaminants of greatest concern in Minnesota's groundwater. This proposal will increase resources available to address the issue and allow the MDA to expand work in both drinking water supply management areas and townships with elevated levels. Implementing the MDA's Nitrogen Fertilizer Management Plan and Groundwater Protection Rule will result in prevention and mitigation of nitrogen loss to groundwater. These efforts include:

- **Monitor and assess water quality** to understand the magnitude and severity of nitrate in groundwater and evaluate trends to inform private wells owners of nitrate levels.
- **Conduct applied research and on-farm demonstrations** to evaluate the effectiveness of nitrogen-reduction strategies, quantify impacts, and target relevant agricultural conservation practices to areas with elevated nitrate.
- **Support the development and promotion of nitrogen fertilizer BMPs and strategies to increase vegetative cover** (cover crops, perennials, diversified crop rotations) and other protective practices to significantly reduce groundwater impacts in vulnerable areas.
- **Lead work with local advisory teams and the agricultural community** to adopt practices to minimize groundwater impacts.
- **Provide outreach, education, and technical assistance** through the MDA, University of Minnesota Extension, SWCDs, crop retailers, and other key partners.
- **Leverage and coordinate financial assistance** for practice implementation within priority areas.

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.

Outcomes for the current funding request include:

- Maintain and enhance partnerships with more than 30 local government units for nitrate monitoring and reduction activities, including the Central Sands Private Well Network and Southeast Volunteer Nitrate Monitoring Network.
- Update and publish U of M Extension Nitrogen Fertilizer BMPs, including statewide and regional bulletins for the 2028 growing season.
- Publish lists of required BMPs and implement groundwater protection strategies in all Level 2 DWSMAs and up to 10 new townships. Begin evaluation of BMP adoption in DWSMAs in fall 2026.
- Support 5,000 acres of new oat production in high nitrate townships and DWSMAs in Southeast Minnesota and 5,000 new acres of perennials in vulnerable areas of the Central Sands region.
- Leverage and coordinate financial assistance for practice implementation within all Level 2 townships with BMP lists.
- Expand a performance-based soil-health program for groundwater protection in Southeast Minnesota.

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

All Clean Water Fund activities and outcomes are tracked by the MDA and summarized at the end of each calendar year. This process has been in place since 2013, enabling consistent tracking over time. The MDA contributes performance measures and outcomes to the Clean Water Performance Report.

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

This proposal includes enhanced support for diversified crop rotations and cover crops. New initiatives will focus on agronomic and financial challenges with practice adoption, equipment needs, and risk mitigation, while also strengthening farmer relationships and peer networks in vulnerable groundwater areas. The goal is to accelerate adoption of region-specific diversified crop rotations (small grains, perennials [hay, forages, pasture, grain crops], cover crops and winter annual crops), and provide funding to expand soil health programs for groundwater protection in Southeast Minnesota.

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 Nitrogen Fertilizer Management Plan (NFMP) was updated in 2015; the Groundwater Protection Rule went into effect in June 2019. Implementation is occurring in Drinking Water Supply Management Areas and high nitrate townships. Fall fertilizer restrictions now apply in these areas, as well.

- Completed the Township Testing program-tested 32,217 private wells in vulnerable townships.
 - Results are used to prioritize implementation in high nitrate townships.
- Test between 650 and 900 private wells annually through the Central Sands Private Well Network and Southeast Volunteer Nitrate Monitoring Network.
 - Results are used to determine if nitrate is increasing, decreasing, or staying the same.
- Convened 23 local advisory teams (LATs) to discuss groundwater protection strategies, develop BMP lists for the area, and support practice implementation. This includes 19 LATs in Level 2 Drinking Water Supply Management Areas and four in high nitrate townships.
- Published 12 BMP lists for Level 2 DWSMAs (59,226 acres) and five for high nitrate townships (56,000 acres). Publishing a BMP list is a milestone for LATs and becomes the focal point for implementation activities and funding.
- Farmers adopted land management changes in Level 2 DWSMAs, including additional acres of lower-nitrogen-input crops (alfalfa, hay pasture, Hamlin potatoes, etc.), lower nitrogen rates, use of nitrogen stabilizers, enrollment in conservation easement programs, and applications for Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) Source Water Protection Program funding and Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) Drinking Water grants. Additional applications for funding are in progress.
- Supported research that developed new nitrogen rate guidelines for corn through the U of M, titled Fertilizing Corn in Minnesota.
- Co-hosted four statewide conferences, including the Nitrogen & Nutrient Management Conference, reaching nearly 800 attendees, both in-person and virtual, and impacting more than 7.5 million acres in Minnesota.
- Partnered with and provided funding to more than 15 SWCDs to organize local advisory team meetings, help develop BMP lists, and implement practices. Leveraging existing relationships between SWCDs and farmers accelerates progress.
- Leveraged CWF funds to secure additional resources from USDA for practice implementation on irrigated land, with priority given to cropland with vulnerable groundwater.

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

The MDA has a strategy to expand adoption of protective practices in high risk areas and is making good progress implementing the Nitrogen Fertilizer Management Plan and the Groundwater Protection Rule. Adoption takes time given the need to overcome technical and economic challenges. Work is ongoing in these core areas:

- Water monitoring and assessment
- Applied research and on-farm demonstrations
- Development and promotion of nitrogen fertilizer BMP and strategies to increase vegetative cover
- Collecting information about local agricultural practices and providing detailed scenario analysis for practice implementation
- Adoption of practices in local areas through work with LATs and area farmers

- Outreach, education, and technical assistance
- Leveraging and coordination of financial assistance

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.

Nitrate in Groundwater funding is used for activities that help identify potential sources of nitrate-nitrogen contamination and evaluate and implement practices at the local level to reduce nitrate in groundwater. 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 1- Action 3: Characterize nitrate and pesticide contamination in vulnerable aquifers.**
 - MDA evaluates nitrate and pesticide contamination through water monitoring programs including the Township Testing Program, (related Private Well Pesticide Sampling), Central Sands Private Well Network, Southeast Minnesota Volunteer Nitrate Monitoring Network, monitoring networks utilizing edge of field locations, streams, springs and monitoring wells in Southeast Minnesota.
- **Strategy 2- Action 3: Develop and carry out strategies that will protect and restore groundwater statewide.**
 - The NFMP and GPR are being implemented in key areas to address nitrate from fertilizer in groundwater.

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

- **Strategy 1: Support ongoing monitoring of groundwater quantity.**
 - MDA evaluates nitrate and pesticide contamination through water monitoring programs including the Township Testing Program, (related Private Well Pesticide Sampling), Central Sands Private Well Network, Southeast Minnesota Volunteer Nitrate Monitoring Network, monitoring networks utilizing edge-of-field locations, streams, springs and monitoring wells in Southeast Minnesota.
- **Strategy 3: Develop and carry out strategies the promote sustainability of groundwater use.**
 - This program works directly with the Irrigation Specialist and supports the Minnesota Irrigators Program, as well as nitrogen and water management research projects and on-farm demonstrations.

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 DWMSAs that are Level 1 and Level 2 under the GPR.**
 - This program works directly with farmers, crop advisers, and landowners in DWMSAs and core activities include working with local advisory teams on adoption of groundwater protective practices and coordination of financial assistance for implementation.
- **Strategy 3- Action 1: Fund protective actions that assist public water suppliers in meeting safe drinking water levels.**
 - This program coordinate funding from state agencies and local partners and also provides grants directly to farmers and landowners.

Goal 2: Private Water Supply Wells- Ensure that private well users have safe, sufficient, and equitable access to drinking water.

- **Strategy 1: Identify risks to and fund testing of private well water.**
 - MDA evaluates nitrate and pesticide contamination through water monitoring programs including the Township Testing Program, (related Private Well Pesticide Sampling), Central Sands Private Well Network, Southeast Minnesota Volunteer Nitrate Monitoring Network, monitoring networks utilizing edge-of-field locations, streams, springs and monitoring wells in Southeast Minnesota.

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.**
 - MDA works with over 30 SWCD partners and participates in 1W1P process to move forward local priorities related to nitrate in groundwater. MDA also works with local advisory teams and individual farmers to implement BMPs and conservation practices.
- **Strategy 1- Action 7: Support innovative efforts that accelerate progress towards clean water goals.**
 - This program supports innovative efforts such as the adoption of Forever Green crops in areas with vulnerable groundwater and new partnerships with crop retailers to support conservation agronomy positions and deliver conservation through the private sector.

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:

- **1W1P and WBIF cost-share funding of conservation practices (BWSR):** Addressing nitrate in groundwater is a local priority identified in many 1W1Ps. MDA staff participate in 1W1P meetings and work with BWSR and local SWCD staff to address this priority concern. BWSR is a main source of cost-share to implement groundwater protective practices.
- **MDH Source Water Protection Grants (MDH):** This funding is used to support municipalities to implement practices that reduce nitrate leaching to groundwater in high nitrate DWMSAs. For

example, in the Ellsworth DWSMA this grant supported planting 26 acres of perennial hay and sealing three unused wells.

- **Minnesota Ag Water Quality Certification Program (MDA):** MDA programs work together to promote BMPs and other protective practices. The Nitrate in Groundwater and MAWQCP programs have joint contracts with private ag retailers to focus conservation practice adoption in vulnerable groundwater areas.
- **Irrigation Specialist (MDA/UMN):** Nitrate losses from irrigation is a potential source of groundwater contamination, especially in areas with sandy soils. The nitrate in groundwater program works directly with the Irrigation Specialist and supports the Minnesota Irrigators Program, as well as irrigation research projects and on-farm demonstrations that inform the specialist's and education and extension programs.
- **Forever Green (MDA/UMN):** Supporting diversified crop rotations and increasing vegetative cover are key components in the state's water quality strategy and outlined in the Nitrogen Fertilizer Management Plan and Clean Water Council Strategic Plan. There is a strong partnership with Forever Green, with implementation funding directed to areas with elevated nitrate in groundwater.
- **Technical Assistance (MDA):** The program helps ensure accurate scientific information is available and used to address water quality concerns in agricultural areas. Outcomes from edge-of-field monitoring and partnerships with ag retailers directly inform MDA's work in high nitrate townships and DWSMAs.
- **Agricultural Research and Evaluation for Manure Management Practices (MDA):** The goals of this research are to evaluate, develop, and demonstrate regional and animal-specific recommendations for manure crediting and to develop or revise manure BMPs. The outcome will directly inform MDA's work in high nitrate townships and DWSMAs.

Connected non-CWF-supported programs:

- **USDA Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP):** The RCPP provides financial and technical assistance for practice implementation on irrigated cropland, with priority in areas with vulnerable groundwater. Clean Water funds are used as in-kind partner contribution to match federal funds. The RCPP also provides train-the-trainer workshops for SWCD and NRCS technical staff to provide technical assistance to irrigators.

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 (%)
Agriculture Fund (Fertilizer Fees)	TBD	100%

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

The Agriculture Fund is a fee-based account, funded by fees collected from the sale of agricultural fertilizers. Contributions from this account will vary depending on the available funds. These funds complement CWF investments by expanding capacity and increasing overall efficiency.

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.

Approximately 50 %

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 MDA works in areas with vulnerable groundwater in partnership with farmers, crop consultants, SWCDs, local advisory teams, local government units, state agencies, and other community members. The MDA works with 19 Local Advisory Teams (consisting of 150 landowners and operators, and 50 agronomists and crop consultants) in Level 2 DWSMAs. Additionally, the MDA has formal agreements with 42 local partners (mainly SWCDs, and city and county government units) with the goal of problem-solving at the local level to address concerns about unsafe levels of nitrate in groundwater.
- **Please describe how this program advances environmental justice and promotes equity. (150 words)** Contaminated groundwater and surface water can have a significant impact on human health and also restrict economic and recreational activities for many communities. This proposal will help reduce nitrate levels in groundwater and will help economically disadvantaged communities that may be unable to test private wells or treat drinking water. The proposal will help to protect and improve water quality to the benefit of all community

members. The MDA does not believe this proposal will adversely impact any disadvantaged communities.

- **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.**
 - More than 50 LAT meetings have been held in DWSMAs and townships with elevated nitrogen levels measured in groundwater.
 - Groundwater protection strategies were published and sent to cropland owners, operators and agronomist in 12 DWSMAs and five townships and are now being promoted.
 - See examples by clicking on Forms + Resources: [Adrian DWSMA](#), [Verdale DWSMA](#), [Agram, Belle Prairie, and Ripley Townships in Morrison County](#)
 - 2026 Nitrogen Management Conference: Promotional flyer: <https://mawrc.org/events/>

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.

MDA includes the CWF logo in all presentations and state-branded outreach materials. In instances where the logo cannot be displayed, the Clean Water Fund is acknowledged.

PRIOR APPROPRIATIONS	
FY10-11	\$1,125,000
FY12-13	\$1,700,000
FY14-15	\$5,000,000
FY16-17	\$5,171,000
FY18-19	\$4,171,000
FY20-21	\$5,170,000
FY22-23	\$5,170,000
FY24-25	\$6,000,000
FY26-27	\$6,200,000
TOTAL APPROPRIATED TO DATE	\$39,707,000

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	0.2/3.2
FY12-13	4

FY14-15	8.2
FY16-17	13.45*
FY18-19	10.4
FY20-21	11.0
FY22-23	11.9
FY24-25	11.6
FY26-27	12

K__Nitrate in Groundwater

Questions:

1. 12 FTEs assigned to this program. What is the total funding for these employees out of the \$6M allocated?
2. Goals/targets
 - a. Based on monitoring and monitoring supported by the program what BMPs and land use changes will be necessary to reduce nitrate in Southeast MN below 5 mg/l and by when?
 - b. What is the ultimate water quality goal of the program?
3. Outcomes
 - a. How many acres of land use and lbs of N loss have resulted from the 23 local advisory teams and BMPs published?
 - b. Can presenter share any estimates of nitrate reductions as a result of efforts?
4. How will MDA regularly communicate progress on nitrate reduction in drinking water and groundwater to the public?
5. Could presenter share info about attendance and effectiveness of LATs?
6. Other funding options
 - a. Fertilizer fees are listed as a source of program income but is listed as TBD. Can you provide information on funds received from fertilizer fees in previous years?
 - b. I see fertilizer fees are TBD. What have the amounts been in the past, generally? If it's variable, provide a range. What scale of funding does that provide and how does it compare to the CWF request?
 - c. Why doesn't AFREC pay for or do the activities listed?
 - d. How much money have fertilizer fees contributed to these activities?

FY28-29 CLEAN WATER FUND PROPOSAL

Program Title:	Water Sustainability Support Program
Program Number (if applicable):	42
Agency/Organization Name:	Metropolitan Council
Program website:	https://metro council.org/Wastewater-Water/Planning/Water-Supply-Planning/Grants/Water-Supply-Sustainability-Program.aspx

Program Contact	
Name	Judy Sventek
Email	Judy.sventek@metc.state.mn.us
Phone	651-602-1156

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 Twin Cities metro region's steady population growth, increased groundwater pumping, changing land use, and variable climate is challenging our ability to meet demands for current and future water supply. This program supports efforts and programs to:

- ensure supplies of potable water are adequate for the region's current and future population;
- protect and enhance surface water quality;
- ensure uninterrupted economic growth and prosperity;
- avoid conflict over water sustainability;
- foster collaboration to address regional water challenges and limitations;
- conducts investigations into groundwater and surface water interaction;
- looks at ways to minimize impacts from this on both our drinking water and surface waters; and
- supports the residents of the metropolitan area.

Water Quality Impact

Which step of the [Water Management Framework](#) does this program most fit under: [problem investigation](#) and [implied research and 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 current program will implement projects that address emerging drinking water supply threats, provide cost-effective regional solutions, leverage inter-jurisdictional coordination, support local implementation of water supply reliability and resiliency projects, and prevent degradation of groundwater resources. In addition, this program supports and implements integrated water planning projects that address water sustainability across the entire water cycle with a focus on preventing degradation of both surface and groundwater resources while supporting sustainable water resources for the Twin Cities Metro Region.

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 funded programs will recommend measures to improve use of groundwater, enhance groundwater quality and surface water features, highlight groundwater-surface water interaction risk factors for communities and provide recommendations to prevent and address these risks and achieve water security through integrated water management, conservation, and reuse. Success indicators are increased number of communities receiving technical support and number of projects implemented through the facilitated sub-regional workgroups; achievement of intended long-term outcomes to sustainably use groundwater in a reliable approach, reduction of groundwater use and impacts to surface waters in the region.

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

Outcomes will be tracked by number of meetings held, number of projects completed, and improvements in the goal of sustainable water resources over time through measures such as less impaired waters, less conflicts of interest when it comes to water supply sources, more available groundwater for use, number of projects put in place to reuse water, thus reducing the impact on our groundwater sources.

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

Not applicable.

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.

From 2005 to 2025, numerous communities received technical support from the Council. In 2023/2024/2025 we held over 30 meetings in the subregions to get their input on water supply/drinking water related problems, issues and needed support for solutions for those subregions. These meetings have provided us with a list of projects and concerns to work on to implement solutions to address drinking water and sustainable water resource issues. All communities in the Metro now have detailed information on current water source availability and future appropriation requirements to support long range planning. Finally, communities have adopted advanced billing practices, automated usage monitoring, irrigation controls to reduce peak requirements, and municipal softening which reduces both water use and chloride pollution.

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

This program needs continued funding to address the emerging and changing issues related to water sustainability in the region. Through our work with the Metro Area Water Supply Advisory Committee, the MAWSAC Technical Advisory Committee and the subregional work we continue to work on projects and studies needed to support sustainable water resources. This is a long-term continued effort that is widely supported by community municipal water suppliers and state agency water regulators.

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.

This program supports the Clean Water Council's Strategic Plan's Groundwater Vision: Groundwater is clean and available to all in Minnesota and the following goals and strategies for that vision.

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

- Strategy: Develop baseline data on Minnesota's groundwater quality, including areas of high pollution sensitivity.
- Strategy: Develop and carry out strategies that will protect and restore groundwater statewide.

This program develops technical products that show groundwater susceptibility areas and produces guidance on how to reduce and minimize groundwater degradation.

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

- Strategy: Develop a cumulative impact assessment and support planning efforts to achieve a sustainability standard for groundwater.
- Strategy: Develop and carry out strategies that promote sustainability of groundwater use.
- Strategy: Identify options that will accelerate progress to achieving a sustainable groundwater standard in line with circular water economy principles

This program develops technical products that show groundwater susceptibility areas and produces guidance on how to reduce and minimize groundwater degradation.

Clean Water Council's Strategic Plan's Drinking Water Source Protection Vision: Drinking water is safe for everyone, everywhere in Minnesota.

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

- Strategy: Identify and reduce risks to drinking water sources by investing in technical training, planning, coordination, and source water protection grants.
- Strategy: Support prevention efforts to protect DWSMAs.
- Strategy: Support prevention and management of newly identified contaminant risks.

This program completes technical studies aimed at protecting drinking water sources, ensuring 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.

- Strategy: Identify risks to and fund testing of private well water.

This program provides technical information on safe, sufficient, and equitable access to drinking water.

Clean Water Council's Strategic Plan's Surface Water Protection and Restoration Vision: Minnesotans have fishable and swimmable waters throughout the state.

Goal 1: Monitor, assess, and characterize Minnesota's surface waters.

The Council receives CWF from the MPCA to help monitor, assess and characterize area streams.

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 sustainability projects and studies funded by this program help to protect surface waters from nonpoint sources of pollution. The reuse projects also funded by this program, aim to protect our surface waters by providing for more recharge of those waters and treating that stormwater before it is discharged to those waters.

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

The sustainability projects and studies funded by this program help to protect surface waters from nonpoint sources of pollution. The reuse projects also funded by this program, aim to protect our surface waters by providing for more recharge of those waters and treating that stormwater before it is discharged to those waters.

Clean Water Council's Strategic Plan's 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: Maintain and increase capacity of Minnesotans to improve water quality.

Depending on which projects are funded by this program, technical work provides guidance documents that can be used by local communities to protect and sustain water resources.

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

N/A

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:

Water Efficiency Grant Program. Both programs are funded by Clean Water Funds. The Water Efficiency Grant funds projects also aimed at water sustainability in the Twin Cities Metro Area.

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? **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? If so, when? ☐ No _____
- Do you intend to continue this program past 2034 in some capacity? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ Unsure

We plan to continue to fund water supply sustainability work but also expand the program to cover other water sustainability work. We will be using input from the issues, solutions and needed projects identified by the work groups for the 7 subregions in addition to input from MAWSAC, and MAWSAC TAC as we make decisions about projects to fund. Expanding the program to a water sustainability program will allow us to fund a wider array of projects and solutions that are tied to overall water sustainability. An example of new work that could be funded with this minor change could be a program to fund projects aimed at helping to implement water reuse.

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.

_____ 75 %

Up to 75% of the funds will be used to fund projects scoped by LGUs and partners through input from our subregional planning process as well as for projects scoped by MAWSAC, MAWSAC TAC, and our Water Policy Plan Advisory Group. 100% of the funds for the water

efficiency/demand reduction grant program which is part of this sustainability work is passed through to LGUs.

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 partners have been engaged in the development of this program. We have received input from over 100s of people through our subregional engagement work. Our MAWSAC and MAWSAC TAC members also provide input on our programs and projects that we fund within the program. Finally, as part of the Water Policy Plan update, the region was given an opportunity to comment on the direction of our work.
- Please describe how this program advances environmental justice and promotes equity. (150 words)
The Council has policies in place to promote environmental justice and equity. These policies direct the work we do and the projects we select to fund.
- 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 engage over 100 people a year through our subregional engagement work.

We held public meetings on the update to the Metro Area Water Supply Plan where these programs are described and detailed.

The program direction and benefits are informed by the Metropolitan Area Water Supply Advisory Committee, with members from local municipal water suppliers, water management and state agency regulators.

We share the projects we have funded on our website and include the Clean Water Fund logo on all publications.

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 plan to discuss new projects to fund with our advisory committees, MAWSAC and MAWSAC TAC as well we with the 7 subregional groups we have set up that cover all the work we do in the region. The Council's regular regional water supply report to the legislature documents progress, challenges and makes recommendations. We will fund studies and projects that these groups have prioritized as well as project we have designed. We will have grants available for stormwater reuse that will be passed through to partners in the region.

PRIOR APPROPRIATIONS	
FY10-11	\$800,000
FY12-13	\$1,000,000
FY14-15	\$2,000,000
FY16-17	\$1,950,000
FY18-19	\$1,900,000
FY20-21	\$2,000,000
FY22-23	\$1,838,000
FY24-25	\$2,250,000
FY26-27	\$2,750,000
TOTAL APPROPRIATED TO DATE	\$16,488,000

FY28 Request	FY29 Request	FY28-29 TOTAL REQUEST
TBD	TBD	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 regional employees supported by the CWF for this program.

FY10-11	1.5
FY12-13	2.0
FY14-15	3.0
FY16-17	3.0
FY18-19	3.0
FY20-21	3.0
FY22-23	3.5
FY24-25	4.5
FY26-27	4.5

L__Water Sustainability Support

Questions:

1. Outcomes
 - a. Any estimate of volumetric water benefits or gallons conserved as a result of the program?
 - b. Can presenter share quantifiable results on reduced groundwater use, quality improvements, or estimates based on specific projects? What tools if any are used to measure these benefits?
 - c. Do you have examples of groundwater use reductions based on stormwater reuse?
 - d. Can you describe the water quality outcomes from the LGU-led projects?
 - e. Please describe past projects benefits and outcomes.
2. Can presenter share about advance billing and its benefits?
3. Leverage
 - a. What are some of the in-kind or financial contributions of participants?
 - b. What has historic leverage looked like for this program?

FY28-29 CLEAN WATER FUND PROPOSAL

Program Title:	Enhanced SSTS Program Support
Program Number (if applicable):	43
Agency/Organization Name:	MPCA
Program website:	Septic systems Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

Program Contact	
Name	Felicia Merkson
Email	Felicia.merkson@state.mn.us
Phone	763-620-8242

Person Filling Out Form	
Name	Felicia Merkson
Email	Felicia.merkson@state.mn.us
Phone	763-620-8242

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

State and county SSTS program support: This is critical funding that supports SSTS programs at the state and county levels. State staff provide technical assistance to counties and support compliance for some of the most difficult enforcement cases that counties ask the MPCA to take over. Base funding is provided to support County implementation of their local SSTS program requirements (M.S. 115.55) including issuing permits, conducting inspections, identifying, and resolving non-compliant SSTS, and revising and maintaining SSTS ordinances. Additional funding is made available to counties for grants to homeowners to repair or replace noncompliant SSTS (septic systems).

Water Quality Impact

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

Ongoing 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.

Approximately 33% of Minnesotans rely on SSTS to treat their wastewater. Properly functioning SSTS help to ensure that our ground and surface waters are protected from pollutants such as bacteria, pathogens, and phosphorus. While the state provides the overarching rules and guidance for the SSTS program, our county partners are required to implement the SSTS program by MN Stat. 115.55. Without base funding, an extensive amount of county-level SSTS permitting and compliance work, that is critical to protect groundwater, would go undone (based on 2023 data): ~86 FTEs on the county level would be unfunded; 33% of wastewater, treated by septic systems in the state would be largely unmanaged; over 10,000 permits, soil verifications, and construction inspections for new and replacement systems would not be issued; and reviews of ~12,000 compliance inspections would not be completed.

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.

Since FY13, when MPCA began receiving CWF for the SSTS program, it has distributed \$1,470,600 annually to counties for enhancing their SSTS programs, and we anticipate this continuing into the FY28/29 biennium. In addition to providing base funding, counties can apply for grant funds for low-income homeowners who have failing SSTS that need to be upgraded or replaced. The total amount of low-income funding distributed since FY13 is ~\$19,942,000.

The demand from counties for funding the SSTS Low-Income Grant program continues, on an annual basis, to exceed the amount of funding available. Without continued

funding, some homeowners would have to wait for future funds to become available before they can upgrade their septic systems, and this is a potential risk to groundwater and drinking water wells.

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

County program work will continue to be monitored through the SSTS Annual Report. The funds are delivered through the BWSR Natural Resource Block Grant, which is reported in e-link.

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

No planned changes. The plan is to continue to offer base grant funding to counties to help run an SSTS program and to continue to offer funds to counties for low-income homeowners to repair failing septic systems.

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 made to date is excellent. Since 2012 the SSTS program has effective local programs and has met the goal of maintaining an 80% compliance rate every year except for two. In addition, the program has provided just under 20 million in funds to be used for low-income upgrades; This equates to about 14 failing systems replaced per \$100,000 for a total of approximately 2800 failing systems replaced.

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

SSTS compliance is an ongoing goal of the program that will need to be maintained. Septic systems have a shelf life, so each year there will be new septic systems that fail and will need to be replaced. The goal is to have strong and effective local programs to increase compliance and to have low-income grant funds available to replace non-compliant systems.

Alignment with Clean Water Council Strategic Plan

- Goal 1, strategy 2, action 2: Reduce risk of bacteria in groundwater. Action: Complete plans and fund activities for protection and restoration of groundwater statewide using a major watershed scale
- Goal 3, strategy 1, action 1: Enhance compliance for regulatory programs to accelerate progress. Action: Maintain compliance rates for subsurface sewage treatment systems (SSTS) at 80 percent with a stretch goal of 90 percent.

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

None at this time.

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: None

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 (%)
State Environmental Fund	\$350,000 per fiscal year	50%?

CWF supplements other state environmental funds. Base grants per county equal \$21,200. Of this amount, \$17,130 is CWF and \$4,070 is Environmental fund.

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
 - X 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? X 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)

County SSTS programs have helped develop and direct the SSTS grants program since inception through the SSTS Advisory Committee and the SSTS Implementation and Enforcement Task Force. They helped set up the base grant for program administration and the perimeters for the low-income grants. Each county must have an up-to-date SSTS ordinance and must submit the SSTS annual report each year to receive base grant funds. The low-income grant funds are administered through a grant application and each SSTS fix must be low income, single family or duplex, and the current SSTS must be failing to protect groundwater or an imminent public health threat. Program partners are county SSTS programs. 86 of the 87 counties receive pass through funding. Ramsey county does not have a program and does not receive funding.

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

The low-income grant funds directly promote and advance the SSTS upgrades to protect water quality and human health in low-income environmental justice areas and promote equity. Many counties use the low-income guidelines from the United States Department of Agriculture to determine eligibility. Using low and very low income which is greater than 115% below the area's median income.

- 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.

Frequently the SSTS program helps counties review and update their SSTS ordinance which governs the SSTS program in each county. There are required minimum standards for each ordinance that we provide outreach too those individual counties. Another instance of outreach is to counties that administer the low-income grant. We are often consulted on whether a homeowner meets the low-income guidelines required of the grant. Lastly, we frequently get inquiries from homeowners looking for available funds to replace a failed SSTS. We can easily determine which county they live in and get them to the right office for application to the funds.

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.

Each year we communicate with county government about available funds for base and low-income grants. A grant application is developed and provided to our county contacts to use to apply for these funds. Counties that receive money advertise locally about the available low-income grant funds to their citizens. Most of them make the grant information available on their website.

PRIOR APPROPRIATIONS	
FY10-11	
FY12-13	\$1,570,000
FY14-15	\$6,900,000
FY16-17	\$7,245,000
FY18-19	\$6,870,000
FY20-21	\$6,750,000
FY22-23	\$5,824,000
FY24-25	\$7,100,000
FY26-27	\$6,881,000
TOTAL APPROPRIATED TO DATE	\$49,140,000

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	1.4
FY14-15	2.1
FY16-17	3.0
FY18-19	3.0
FY20-21	1.8
FY22-23	1.4
FY24-25	1.4
FY26-27	1.4

M__SSTS Program Support

Comments:

Critically important for low-income families

Questions:

1. Scale of the challenge
 - a. Is it unrealistic to think we will ever get over 80% compliance with SSTS systems?
 - b. Can presenter share information about number of failed SSTS in rural mn and the need for fixes/upgrades?
2. Talk about the environment fund and what funding you expect in the next few years.
3. Outcomes
 - a. Any estimate of water quality results like reductions in bacteria or nutrients, or wells protected, etc.?
 - b. Can presenter provide estimates of nutrient reductions needed as a result of SSTS and what reduction program has contributed?
4. For non-low income grants what % is contributed by the resident?

FY28-29 CLEAN WATER FUND PROPOSAL

Program Title:	Voyageurs National Park Clean Water Project – National Park Water Quality Protection Program
Program Number (if applicable):	N/A
Agency/Organization Name:	Voyageurs National Park Clean Water Joint Powers Board (VNPCWJPB)
Program website:	https://www.sehinc.com/online/namakan

Program Contact	
Name	Paul McDonald – President, VNPCWJPB
Email	mcdonaldp@stlouiscountymn.gov
Phone	(218) 365-8200

Person Filling Out Form	
Name	Jason Chopp, PE (Project Manager)
Email	jchopp@sehinc.com
Phone	(218) 305-4733

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:

Minnesota Statutes, Section 115.426**Title:** *Incentive for Voluntary Municipal or Industrial Investment in Nutrient Treatment Technology*

This statute defines and promotes the installation of **biological nutrient removal systems** for nitrogen and phosphorus in wastewater treatment. It provides regulatory certainty for municipalities or industrial permit holders that voluntarily implement nutrient removal technology under NPDES/SDS permits.

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 Voyageurs National Park Clean Water projects protect and restore water quality at the primary public access points to Minnesota's only national park and the nation's only water-based national park. FY28–29 funding of \$7,400,000 will support implementation of sanitary sewer system expansions, system upgrades and planning efforts, and related water quality protection infrastructure in remaining high-risk areas adjacent to Voyageurs National Park and downstream waters connected to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. The proposed projects reduce nutrient loading, pathogen contamination, and groundwater degradation while protecting drinking water, recreational waters, and nationally significant aquatic 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.

This program will directly protect surface water, groundwater, and drinking water by eliminating failing individual septic systems and preventing untreated wastewater discharges in environmentally sensitive areas immediately adjacent to and in Voyageurs National Park. The park's interconnected lake system makes it particularly vulnerable to nutrient loading, pathogens, and groundwater contamination that can rapidly degrade water quality across large areas.

FY28–29 funding will be used to advance engineered sanitary sewer solutions identified in the recently updated Comprehensive Plan, focusing on remaining high-priority areas at park access points where aging or non-compliant systems pose ongoing risks. These investments will produce permanent, measurable reductions in phosphorus, nitrogen, bacteria, and household contaminants entering Rainy Lake, Kabetogama Lake and the Ash River, Crane Lake, and connected waters flowing in Voyageurs National Park and toward the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness.

By implementing proven wastewater treatment infrastructure in unsewered or partially sewerred areas, this program delivers long-term water quality protection, safeguards drinking water sources, preserves aquatic habitat, and supports sustainable recreation and tourism in a nationally significant landscape.

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.

FY28–29 funding will enable further planning and construction for the expansion of sanitary sewer infrastructure in the remaining high-priority areas identified in the updated Comprehensive Plan. Measurable goals include eliminating failing and high-risk individual sewage treatment systems, increasing connections to compliant wastewater facilities, and achieving permanent reductions in phosphorus, nitrogen, and pathogen loading to surface and groundwater. These improvements will protect drinking water sources, safeguard aquatic habitat, and reduce contamination risks in Voyageurs National Park and connected downstream waters. By completing targeted infrastructure projects, the program delivers long-term water quality benefits and measurable progress toward comprehensive wastewater protection.

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

Outcomes will be tracked through project-level reporting, including number of connections completed, systems replaced, linear feet of sewer installed, and treatment capacity added. Water quality benefits will be documented through system compliance records, MPCA oversight, and alignment with approved engineering plans. Progress reports will be provided to funding partners, including the Clean Water Council, consistent with statutory reporting requirements.

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

The FY28–29 request reflects a transition from large-scale district establishment to targeted system expansions and upgrades identified through updated planning. This refined focus ensures remaining investments address the highest-risk areas while maximizing water quality return per dollar invested.

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.

With Clean Water Fund support, the VNPCWJPB has successfully completed and/or advanced over \$30 million in clean water infrastructure projects across four sewer districts (Ash River, Crane Lake, Kabetogama, and Koochiching County) adjacent to Voyageurs National Park. Three of the four primary park access areas now have modern sanitary sewer systems in place, significantly reducing wastewater-related pollution risks in park waters and connected lakes.

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

The program is approaching completion of its long-term objective: comprehensive wastewater protection at all major public access points to Voyageurs National Park. FY28–29 funding will address a significant portion of remaining gaps and ensure long-term system integrity.

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.

Strategic Goal: Protect and Restore Surface Water and Groundwater

This proposal directly advances the Council’s highest priority by implementing infrastructure that permanently reduces pollutant loading to surface water and groundwater in a nationally significant watershed.

Strategic Goal: Implement Proven Solutions with Measurable Outcomes

The project emphasizes construction and implementation of engineered wastewater systems with clear, measurable outcomes rather than planning alone.

Other Plans Supported:

- Minnesota Nutrient Reduction Strategy
- MPCA wastewater and groundwater protection priorities
- Federal National Park Service water resource protection objectives

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 complements Clean Water Fund investments in wastewater infrastructure, nutrient reduction, and groundwater protection across northern Minnesota by addressing a uniquely sensitive national resource.

Connected non-CWF-supported programs:

USDA Rural Development, MPCA Point Source Implementation Grants, Public Facilities Authority financing, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers technical support.

Non-CWF Funding

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

The project leverages significant non-Clean Water Fund investment, including federal, state, and local sources. Historically, Clean Water Fund dollars have unlocked millions in matching and complementary funding from federal, state, and local sources. In 2025, St. Louis County dedicated \$3 million in local funds to leverage federal, state bonding, and CWC funding.

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 (%)
Congressional Directed Spending	\$4,000,000	50%
MN Bonding Bill	\$8,000,000	50%
Point Source Implementation Grant (PSIG)	\$4,500,000	75%
Water Infrastructure Fund (WIF)	\$10,000,000	75%
Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation (IRRR)	\$2,000,000	90%
St. Louis County	\$3,000,000	100%
Public Facilities Authority CWRP Loan	TBD	100%

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

The anticipated funding sources listed apply specifically to the Ash River project, which is closest to construction and actively seeking funds. The VNPCWJPB will continue pursuing additional federal, state, and local funding opportunities to advance this and future projects as resources become available.

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?** Early 2030s
- **Do you intend to continue this program past 2034 in some capacity?** ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure
Yes – for operations, maintenance, and targeted upgrades.

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 %

The VNPCWJPB is the governing authority and applicant for this funding request, which is comprised of four sewer districts: Ash River, Crane Lake, Kabetogama, and Koochiching County. While the VNPCWJPB will receive the funds, 100% of the funding will be passed through to each district for project implementation. Neither the VNPCWJPB nor the four sewer districts are state agencies.

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 VNPCWJPB is a locally governed partnership of counties, townships, and unorganized areas formed specifically to protect Voyageurs National Park waters. Community members, seasonal residents, tribal interests, and park visitors benefit directly from improved water quality and reduced public health risks. The Board works closely with state agencies, engineers, and funding partners to ensure transparent decision-making and locally supported solutions.

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

This program advances environmental justice by addressing critical water quality risks in rural and remote communities with limited tax capacity that border Voyageurs National Park, which is a nationally significant resource. These areas face unique challenges due to seasonal populations, aging infrastructure, and geographic isolation, which make compliance with modern environmental standards cost-prohibitive without external support. By leveraging state and federal funding, the program ensures these communities are not disproportionately burdened while achieving permanent reductions in nutrient loading and pathogen contamination. Clean water protection safeguards public health, sustains subsistence activities, and preserves equitable access to safe recreational waters for residents and visitors alike. Investments in engineered wastewater systems deliver long-term environmental benefits, promote fairness in resource allocation, and uphold the principle that all communities regardless of size or income deserve access to clean water and healthy ecosystems.

- **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 VNPCWJPB has received Clean Water Funding support for several wastewater treatment projects aimed at protecting water quality in Minnesota's only water-based national park. Outreach has been a key component of these efforts, especially for community engagement and education around sanitary sewer projects. Examples include:

Ash River Project Outreach

A major outreach campaign tied to the Ash River project, which is in final design stages and scheduled for construction beginning in 2027, pending funding availability.

Activities included:

- Project Update Newsletters: A series of newsletters have been developed and distributed to inform Ash River area residents and stakeholders throughout the preliminary planning and design phases. These newsletters provide regular updates on project goals, progress milestones, and anticipated benefits for water quality. By delivering timely information and reinforcing transparency, the outreach effort has helped maintain community engagement and support for the project.

Reference: *(An example newsletter is attached to this application.)*

- Public Meetings & Updates: Regular updates have been provided during VNPCWJPB meetings and advisory sessions, where SEH engineers and board members present on project status and answer questions. These meetings are open to the public, offering opportunities for comments and questions to ensure community involvement. In addition, meeting minutes and project information are publicly available through the SEH project webpage, allowing stakeholders to stay informed and engaged throughout the process.

Reference: [Voyageurs National Park Clean Water Projects](#)

- Bonding Bill Tour and Funding Support Informational Flyer: An informational flyer was created to explain project goals, funding sources (including the Clean Water Council), and water quality benefits. These materials were distributed during a meeting where the VNPCWJPB presented to members of the Minnesota House of Representatives as part of the bonding bill tour. The flyer helped communicate the importance of the project and its alignment with Clean Water Fund priorities to secure additional funding.

Reference: [Ash River Flyer \(PDF\) – house.mn.gov](#)

Kabetogama Project Outreach

Outreach during the Pucks Point project and subsequent planning phases for Lake Kabetogama.

Activities included:

- Steering Committee Meetings: A series of public sessions were held to engage property owners and local stakeholders in the planning process for wastewater collection and treatment solutions. These meetings provided a forum for discussion of project goals, design alternatives, and implementation strategies, ensuring transparency and community input at every stage. Committee members included representatives from the VNPCWJPB, township officials, and engineering consultants – fostering collaboration across jurisdictions.

Reference: [Clean Water Documents - Kabetogama Township](#)

- Public Hearing: A formal public hearing was held on February 22, 2024, to present the Facility Plan for the next Kabetogama Collection & Treatment System project and gather public input on proposed alternatives and costs. During this hearing, SEH engineers explained project goals, long-term planning, and anticipated costs, while addressing questions from property owners about treatment options and funding strategies. Meeting minutes and related documents are publicly available, and the Facility Plan was subsequently submitted to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency on March 1, 2024.

Reference: *(A copy of the presentation is attached to this application.)*

Crane Lake Project Outreach

Outreach during the planning and implementation phases of sanitary sewer and wastewater treatment system improvements for the Crane Lake area.

Activities included:

- Community and Project Updates via District Webpage: The Crane Lake Water and Sanitary District maintains its own website and holds regular public meetings where residents can attend, ask questions, and stay informed about project progress. Meeting minutes and updates on sanitary and wastewater treatment system projects are consistently posted online to ensure transparency and community engagement.

Reference: CLWSD website [clwsd.org]

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 Clean Water Fund will be acknowledged through signage at project construction sites, public meetings, and Board communications. Updates will be shared via newsletters, district websites, and partner outreach to highlight the Fund's role in protecting Voyageurs National Park and Minnesota's waters. Outreach materials will include informational flyers, meeting presentations, and online resources to ensure transparency and public awareness of outcomes achieved through Legacy funding. Districts will receive guidance on proper acknowledgment and reporting requirements, reinforcing the importance of Clean Water Fund support in advancing long-term water quality protection.

PRIOR APPROPRIATIONS	
FY10-11	
FY12-13	
FY14-15	\$2,000,000
FY16-17	
FY18-19	\$1,950,000
FY20-21	\$1,550,000
FY22-23	\$1,400,000
FY24-25	\$2,000,000
FY26-27	\$1,500,000
TOTAL APPROPRIATED TO DATE	\$10,400,000

FY28 Request	FY29 Request	FY28-29 TOTAL REQUEST
\$3,500,000	\$3,900,000	\$7,400,000

[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".]

Breakdown of Funds Requested by District:

The total FY28–29 funding request of \$7,400,000, as outlined above, can be further broken down into individual allocations for each participating District (partner). These requests represent specific project priorities within the overall program and are being submitted collectively by the governing authority – the VNPCWJPB.

Ash River

Total: \$6,000,000

FY28: \$3,000,000

FY29: \$3,000,000

Purpose: To advance construction of the centralized wastewater collection and treatment system that addresses failing septic systems, protects water quality in Voyageurs National Park, and meets long-term compliance standards. This funding will support the major infrastructure improvements that are critical for improving environmental and public health.

Crane Lake

Total: \$600,000

FY28: \$350,000 (Facility planning and ISTS upgrades)

FY29: \$250,000 (Continued ISTS work and preliminary engineering for collection system expansion)

Purpose: To complete facility planning and engineering for future wastewater treatment facility upgrades and expanded collection systems to underserved areas. Funding will also support ongoing Individual Sewage Treatment System (ISTS) improvements to reduce nutrient loading and protect sensitive aquatic ecosystems.

Kabetogama

Total: \$500,000

FY28: \$0

FY29: \$500,000

Purpose: To support future planning and design work for wastewater system enhancements following completion of current priorities. This allocation ensures readiness for upcoming construction phases that will improve water quality and maintain compliance with state standards.

Koochiching County

Total: \$300,000

FY28: \$150,000

FY29: \$150,000

Purpose: To fund facility planning and preliminary engineering for collection system expansion to Whispering Pines, County Road 96, and multiple islands on Rainy Lake identified in the County's sanitary sewer Comprehensive Plan. These improvements will extend service to remote areas, reduce reliance on aging septic systems, and protect water resources in a high-use recreational region.

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	N/A
FY26-27	N/A

Reference 1: Resolution of Support

*Resolution
of the
Voyageurs National Park Clean Water Joint Powers Board
Adopted on January 14, 2026: Resolution No. 26-01*

Offered by Commissioner: McDonald

Authorizing its representatives to apply for and accept FY28/FY29 Clean Water Council Funding

WHEREAS, THE VNPCWJPB HAS DEVELOPED AND IMPLEMENTED A PLAN TO CLEAN THE WATERS OF VOYAGEURS NATIONAL PARK, MINNESOTA'S ONLY NATIONAL PARK AND OUR NATION'S ONLY WATER BASED NATIONAL PARK, AND:

AND WHEREAS, THIS FUNDING AND PROJECT HAVE HAD A POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE WATERS OF VOYAGEURS NATIONAL PARK AND THE BOUNDARY WATERS CANOE AREA WILDERNESS, AND;

AND WHEREAS, THE BOARD HAS HAD GREAT SUCCESS, ESTABLISHING SANITARY SEWER DISTRICTS AND PROJECTS IN THREE OF THE FOUR MAIN ENTRANCES TO THE PARK, WORKING WITH THE MINNESOTA POLLUTION CONTROL AGENCY, PUBLIC FACILITIES AUTHORITY, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, U.S. ARMY CORP OF ENGINEERS, THE MINNESOTA CLEAN WATER COUNCIL, AND MANY OTHERS TO BRING FUNDING TO THIS EFFORT, AND;

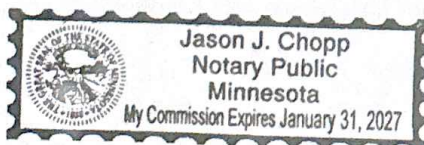
THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, THAT THE VNPCWJB AUTHORIZES ITS REPRESENTATIVES AND STAFF TO APPLY FOR AND ACCEPT UP TO \$7,400,000 FOR FY28/FY29 CLEAN WATER COUNCIL (CWC) FUNDING.

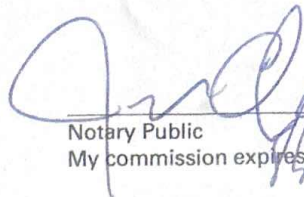
Commissioner Hell moved the adoption of the Resolution, and it was declared adopted upon the following vote:
Yeas – Commissioners McDonald, Sjoblom and Jugovich – 3
Nays – None
Absent - Hell

STATE OF MINNESOTA
County of St. Louis

I certify that this is a true and correct copy of the original resolution in the possession of the Voyageurs National Park Clean Water Joint Powers Board.

Dated: JANUARY 14, 2026




Notary Public
My commission expires 1/31/27

Reference 2: Ash River Project Newsletter

Ash River Sanitary Sewer Collection and Treatment St. Louis County, Minnesota



STLES 146794

Project Status

SEH Project Engineer

Colin Marcusen

Project Manager

320.229.4359

cmarcusen@sehinc.com

March 2023 | Project Status No. 7

Hello and welcome to the *Ash River Sanitary Sewer Collection and Treatment Project Status Update*. In this and later issues, we will be updating you periodically on the status of this project.

Current Activities

The detailed design phase of the Ash River Sanitary District centralized collection and treatment system is underway. This work consists of three main components: (1) the layout of grinder pump stations and discharge piping on individual properties, (2) design of the collection force main that will extend along Ash River Trail, Ash River Trail South, Ash River Drive, and River Park Drive, and (3) the design of the treatment and wastewater subsurface dispersal system. Each of these components is described in greater detail below.

Description of Collection and Treatment Components

Grinder Pump Stations

A small pump station with a submersible grinder pump will be installed on each property with an existing sewer connection. The pump stations will consist of a buried fiberglass manhole housing the pump and valves and a small electrical control panel. Ideally, the grinder pump stations will be installed near the existing septic or holding tanks to minimize the cost associated with modifying the sewer service and to reduce the effort required to convert from the onsite system to the centralized system. It will be necessary to extend a 20-amp, 240-volt electrical service from the existing property electrical service panel to the grinder pump station. The details of the electrical connection have yet to be determined. The resorts may have more than one grinder station.

A future mailing will be sent to each property owner showing the proposed location for the service, grinder station, discharge piping and electrical service for your property. This will provide an opportunity for you to help identify any constraints or problems with the proposed locations. Your assistance with this will be appreciated.

Collection Force Main

The discharge pipe from each grinder station will connect to the collection force main that will be installed along Ash River Trail. Properties on Ash River Trail South, Ash River Drive, and River Park Drive may be connected to a branch extending along those roadways that will connect to the Ash River Trail main line. The collection force main will range in size from two-to-six-inch diameter high density polyethylene pipe (HDPE) and will be installed using a process called horizontal directional drilling. This eliminates the need to excavate an open trench along the entire main and service lines. It will, however, be necessary to excavate and physically connect each service to the collection force main. We anticipate that Ash River Trail will be able to remain open through the project duration, though there may be temporary construction related restrictions in the road right-of-way and potential minor delays. The collection force mains will discharge into a submersible lift station located in the Kab-Ash hiking trail parking lot.

Treatment and Disposal Facilities

A wastewater treatment and subsurface dispersal facility will be constructed on the hill above the Kab-Ash hiking trail parking lot. The treatment system will consist of nine underground tanks that will house equipment that will treat the wastewater to a level that can be safely discharged to an underground absorption bed. This includes the removal of nitrogen, which is not effectively treated in conventional septic systems, but is required for these larger systems. The treatment plant will be designed in modular units which will enable the treatment capacity to be decreased during the winter. A small building will house the electrical control and chemical feed storage tanks and pumps. The treated wastewater will be pumped to an engineered soil adsorption system similar to a conventional wastewater mound. The wastewater treatment system will require a permit from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and will be operated by a licensed wastewater operator.

Project Schedule

The plans and specifications need to be submitted to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency for review by Spring 2024, but SEH will be completing the design by the end of this spring so the design documents will be available to use in applications for funding assistance. If funding is procured in the next fiscal cycle, construction could begin as soon as 2024 or more in 2025. A 2-year construction period is anticipated. The construction will be sequenced so that the collection force main and treatment components are operational before individual grinder stations are placed in operation.

Funding for Construction and Operational Costs

SEH is actively working with the Voyageurs National Park Clean Water Joint Powers Board to identify and procure funding to assist with the construction costs. It is likely that funding consisting of grants and loans will come from a variety of both state and federal programs. Construction will not begin until the funding is in place. Operational costs, equipment replacement, and debt service will be obtained from customer billing or annual property tax assessments. Final details related to billing have yet to be determined.

Frequently Asked Questions

SEH had staff on site periodically over the past several months to identify wetland boundaries, select preliminary piping route, and observe and assist the drilling crew with collecting soil borings. These borings are intended to help define the underground soil conditions so the design can account for areas of high bed rock or soft soils that are unsuitable. Borings were also taken to provide the background information needed to design the wastewater disposal absorption site. Our staff also spoke with many property owners while on site to collect information about the individual properties and the project area. Some of the questions that residents asked are summarized below.

Q. *Will everyone be required to connect to the new system?*

A. It is the stance of the Ash River Sanitary District Board that all members of the District will be required to connect. It would be beneficial to the District to have everyone connect when the project is being constructed, however, some sources of funding prohibit mandatory connections.

Q. *What will happen to my existing septic or holding tank and drainfield/mound?*

A. Existing septic or holding tanks will either be removed or abandoned. If abandoned, the bottom will be modified so they cannot hold water. This work will be completed as part of the project. Existing drainfields or mounds will be abandoned in-place.

Q. *What will my annual costs be?*

A. This will not be known until the construction costs have been finalized and the necessary amount of funding is secured. Construction will not proceed until adequate funding is obtained and the annual costs for the residents is at a level deemed affordable, which will be a decision made by the Ash River Sanitary District Board.

Q. *What if I am only a seasonal resident. Do I have to pay for year-round service?*

A. These details have yet to be determined. It is likely that the fixed portion of the costs will be assessed to seasonal residents but that there may be a reduced usage charge.

Q. *What will I have to do to operate the grinder station?*

A. The District will hire a licensed wastewater operator who will be responsible for the operation of the treatment and collection systems, including individual grinder stations.

Q. *What is happening in surrounding areas?*

A. Similar projects in other areas around Voyageurs National Park are proceeding based on funding and maximum benefit determination.

Q. *How will the piping and grinder stations be installed in areas with high ledge rock?*

A. The soil borings will help with identifying areas with bed rock in the construction area. These areas will be avoided if possible or may require a small amount of confined blasting or rock drilling.

Q. *How can I get more information about the project?*

A. Please watch for the additional mailing with information on the proposed location of piping and grinder stations on each property. You are also encouraged to contact SEH or the Ash River Sanitary District Board Members at any time. Contact information for SEH is provided on the first page.

Reference 3: Kabetogama Public Hearing Presentation

Facility Plan Public Hearing

Kabetogama Township

February 22, 2024



Source: <https://kabetogama.com>

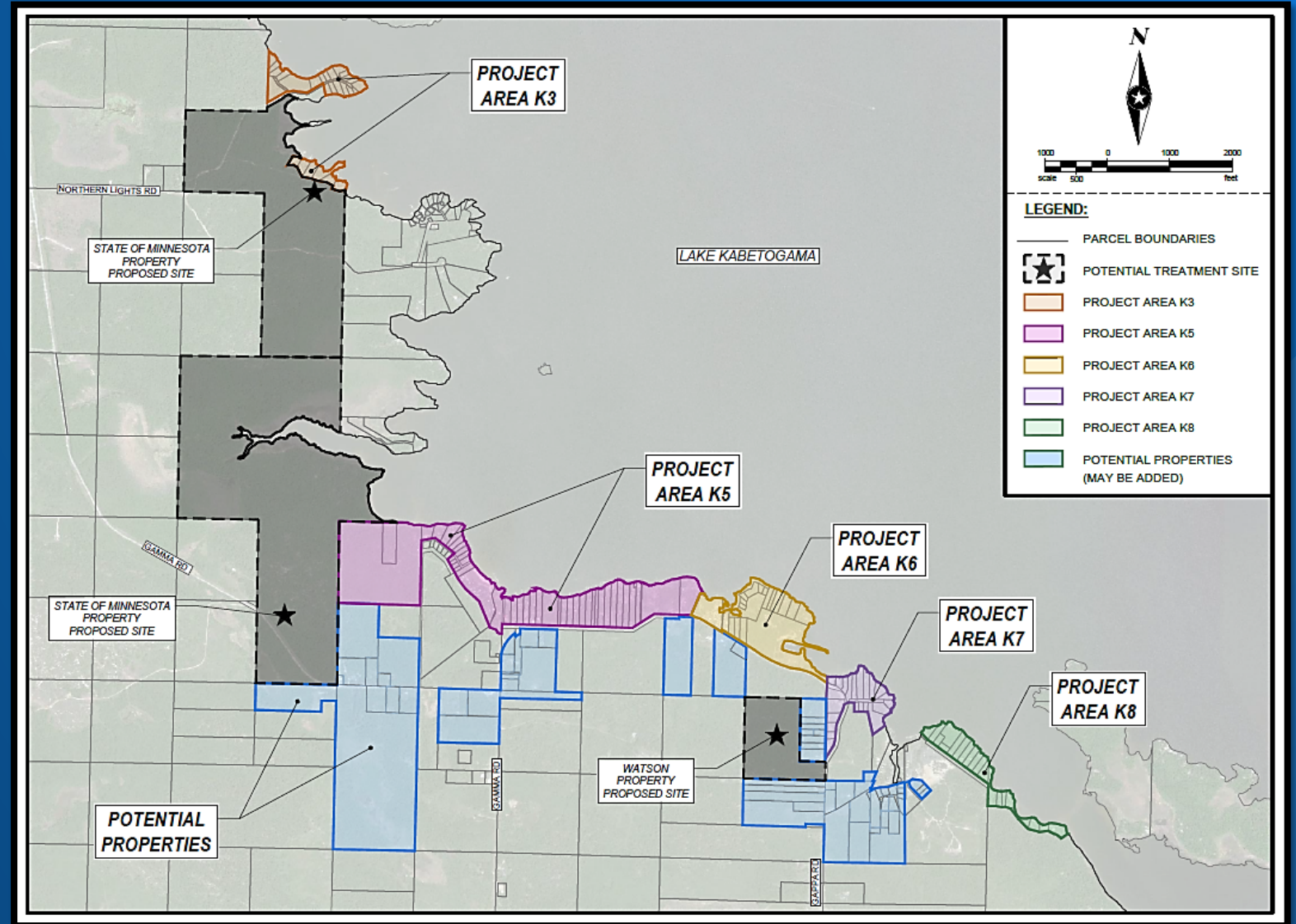
What is a Facility Plan

- Evaluates needs for a 20-year planning period
- Evaluates alternatives for improvements
- Provides a life cycle cost analysis for alternatives
- Includes Environmental, Historical, and Archaeological Reviews in Alternative Analysis
- Arrives at a Recommended Alternative and Total Project Cost
- Required for most funding sources (similar reports called PERs or CARs depending on funding source)



Service Areas

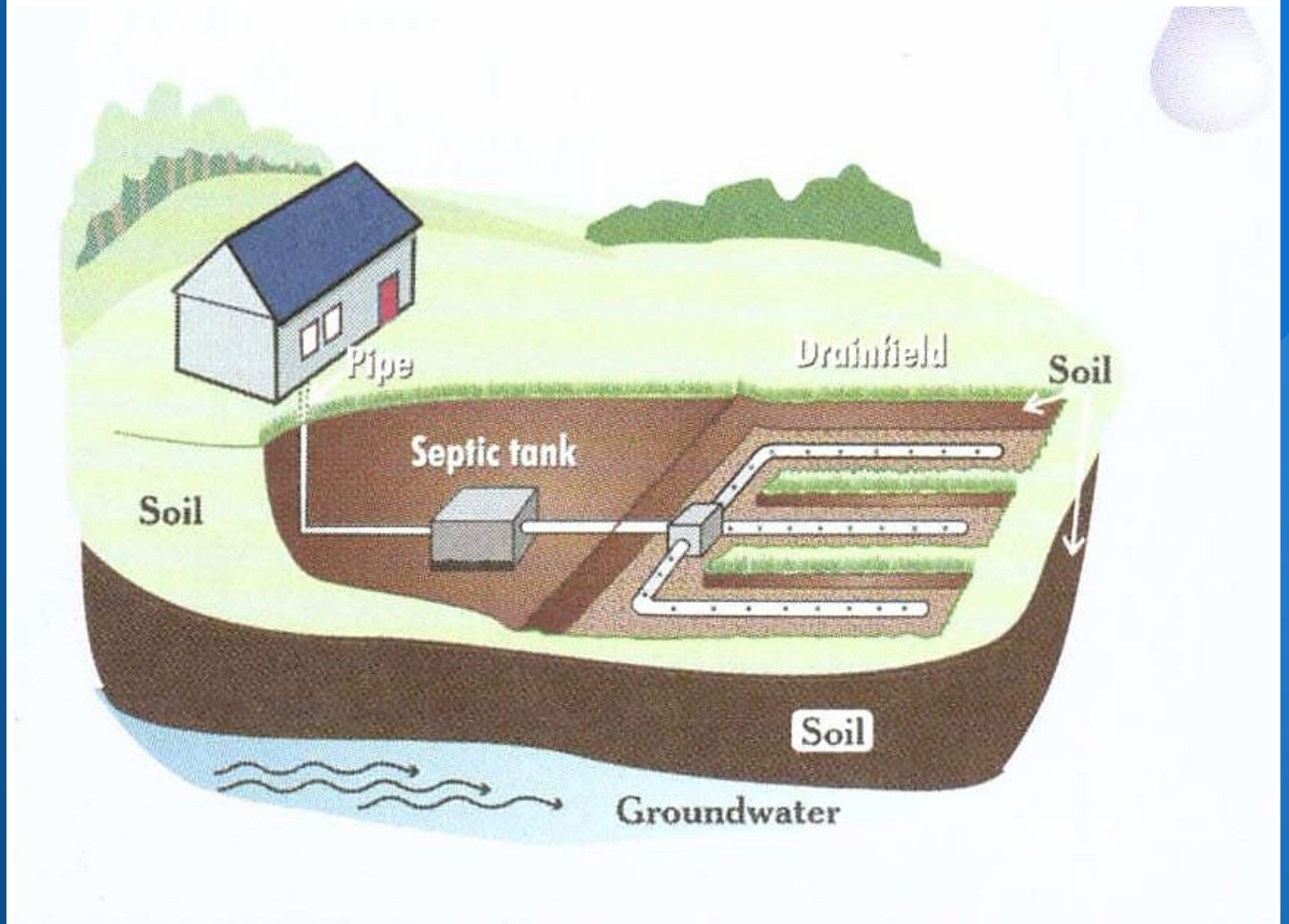
- 199 properties
- Mix of residential and commercial (resorts)
- Roughly 4 miles long between all areas combined



Alternatives

- Do Nothing
- (Keep/Re-install) Individual Sewage Treatment Systems
 - Regulatory requirements and construction challenges
- Community Collection and Treatment System

Typical (Existing) SSTS Layout



Regulatory Requirements

- **Individual Treatment Systems (Septic Systems)**

- Room for existing flow plus expansion
- Rules state second area needed for drain field
- Bedrock and water table issues

- **Community Treatment System**

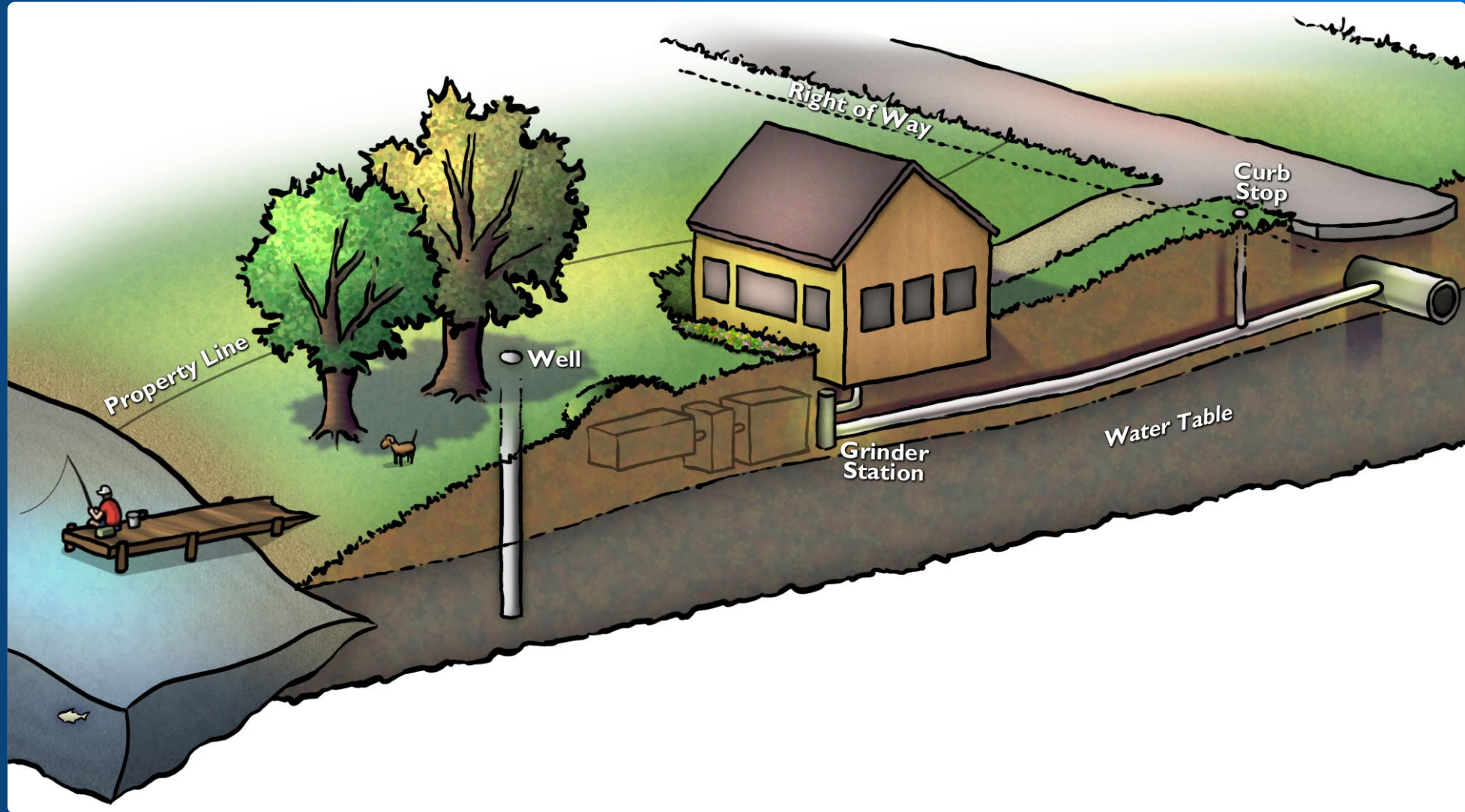
- Lake Kabetogama and Ash River (ORVWs)
- Only subsurface discharge allowed
- Mechanical treatment required to meet 10 mg/L Total Nitrogen



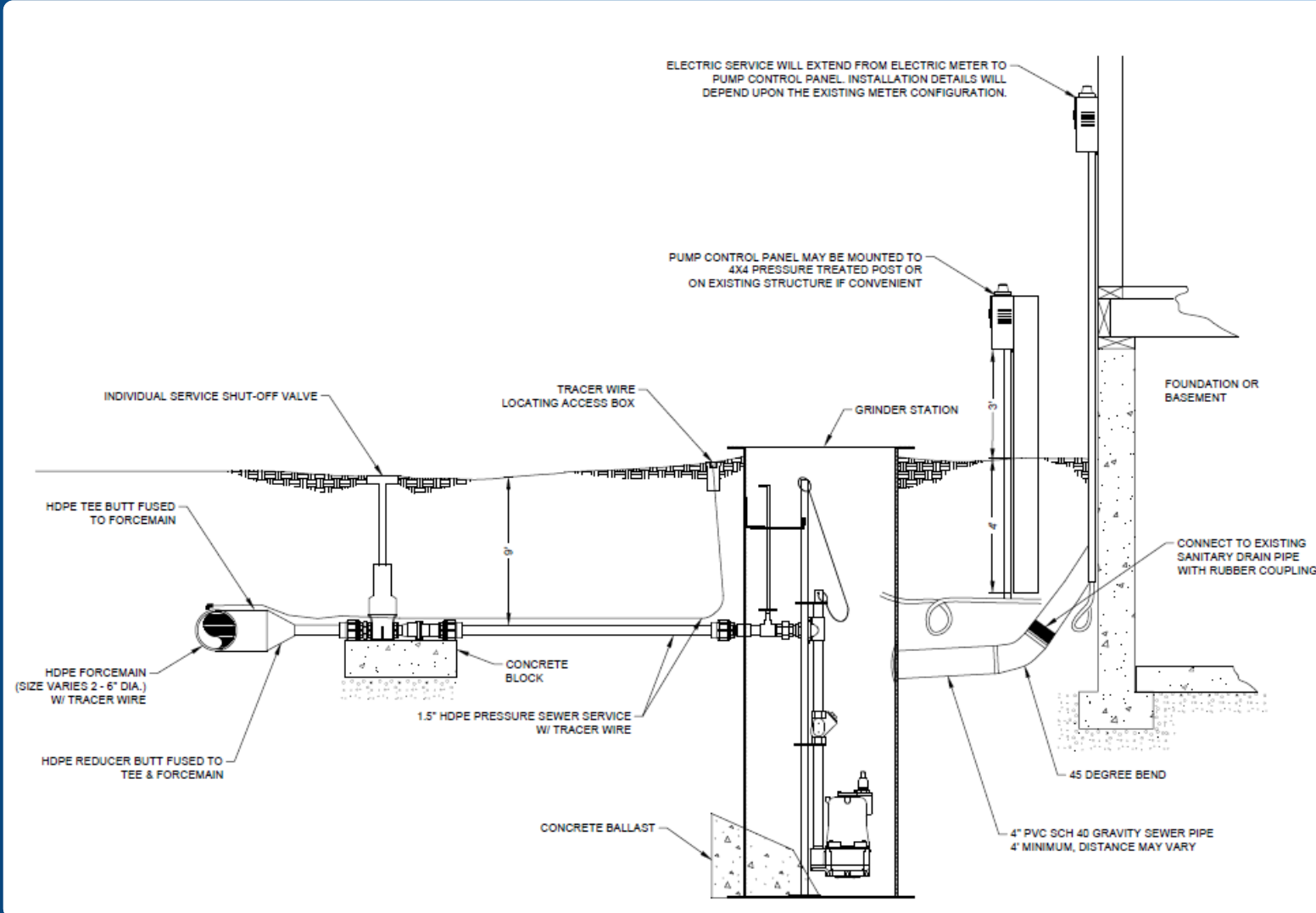
Collection System Alternatives

- **Low-Pressure Sewer with Grinder Stations**
 - Pump station on each property
 - Solid & liquid sewage is mixed/condensed & pumped through forcemain
 - Sewage is fully treated at site
- **Low-Pressure Sewer with STEP (Septic Tank Effluent Pumped)**
 - STEP system on each property
 - Solids settle in septic tank, liquid sewage (effluent) is pumped through forcemain
 - Sewage is partially treated in septic tank, treatment is completed at site

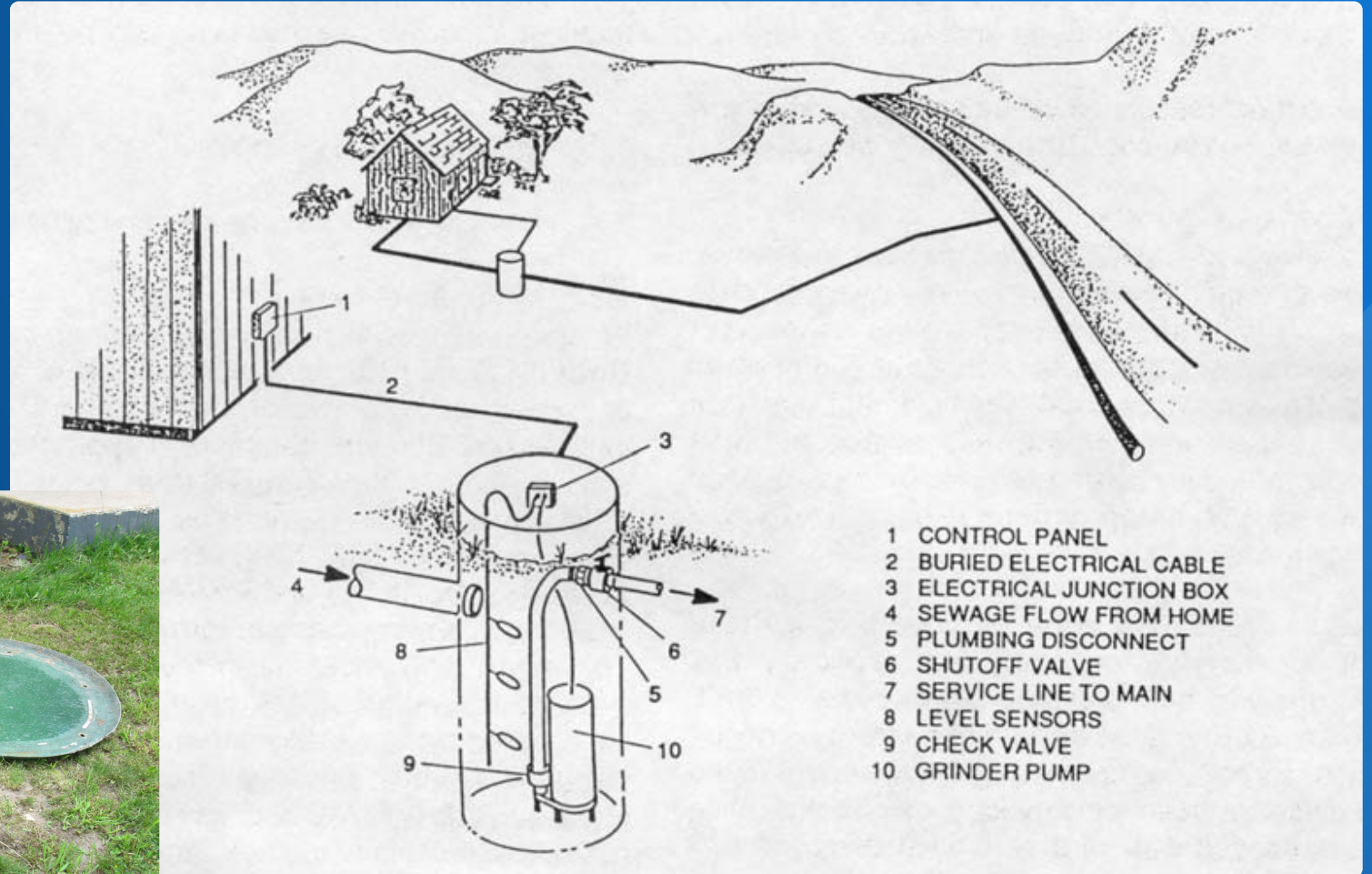
Typical Grinder Station System



Typical Grinder Station

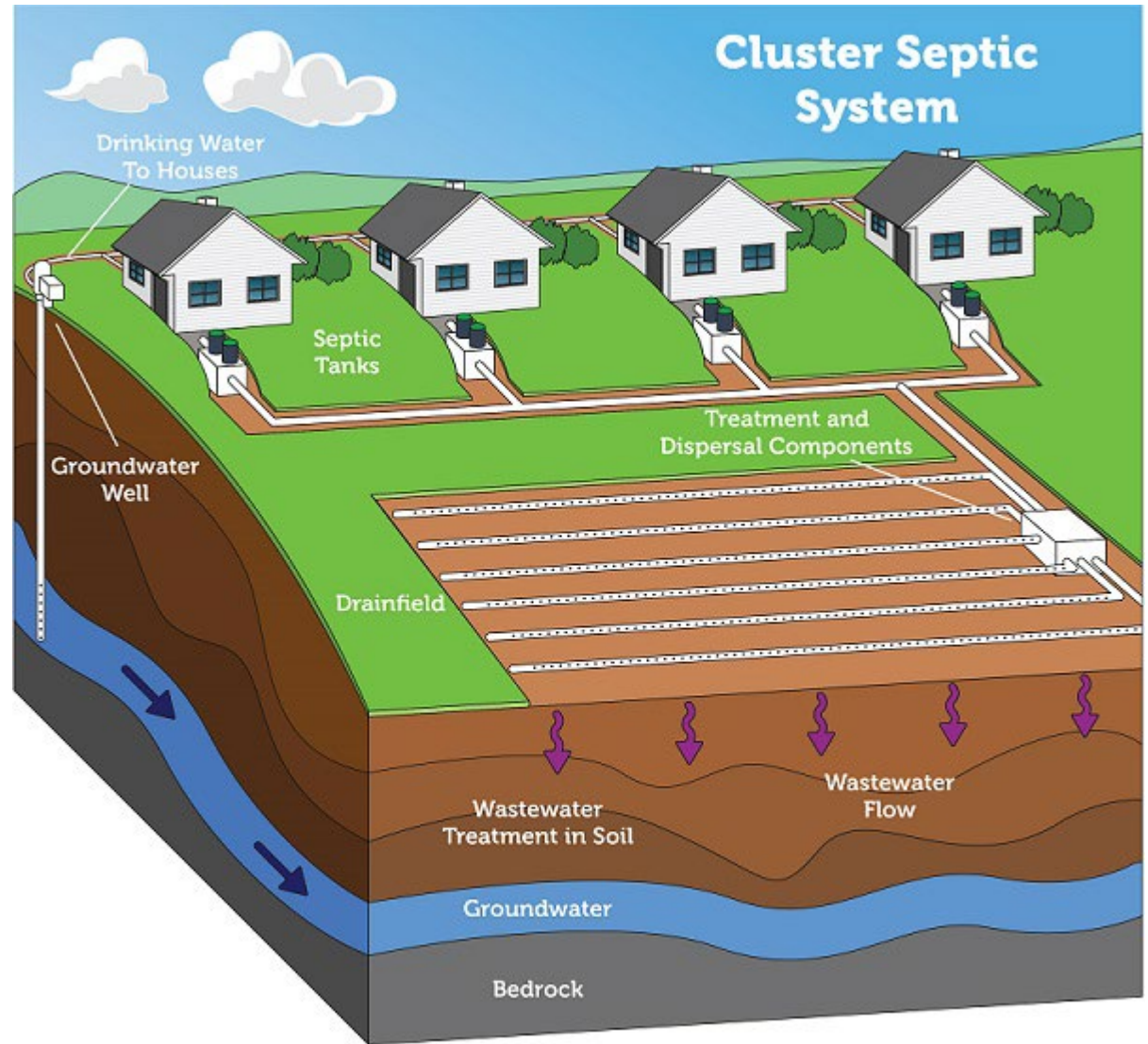


Low Pressure Sanitary Sewer Collection System



- 1 CONTROL PANEL
- 2 BURIED ELECTRICAL CABLE
- 3 ELECTRICAL JUNCTION BOX
- 4 SEWAGE FLOW FROM HOME
- 5 PLUMBING DISCONNECT
- 6 SHUTOFF VALVE
- 7 SERVICE LINE TO MAIN
- 8 LEVEL SENSORS
- 9 CHECK VALVE
- 10 GRINDER PUMP

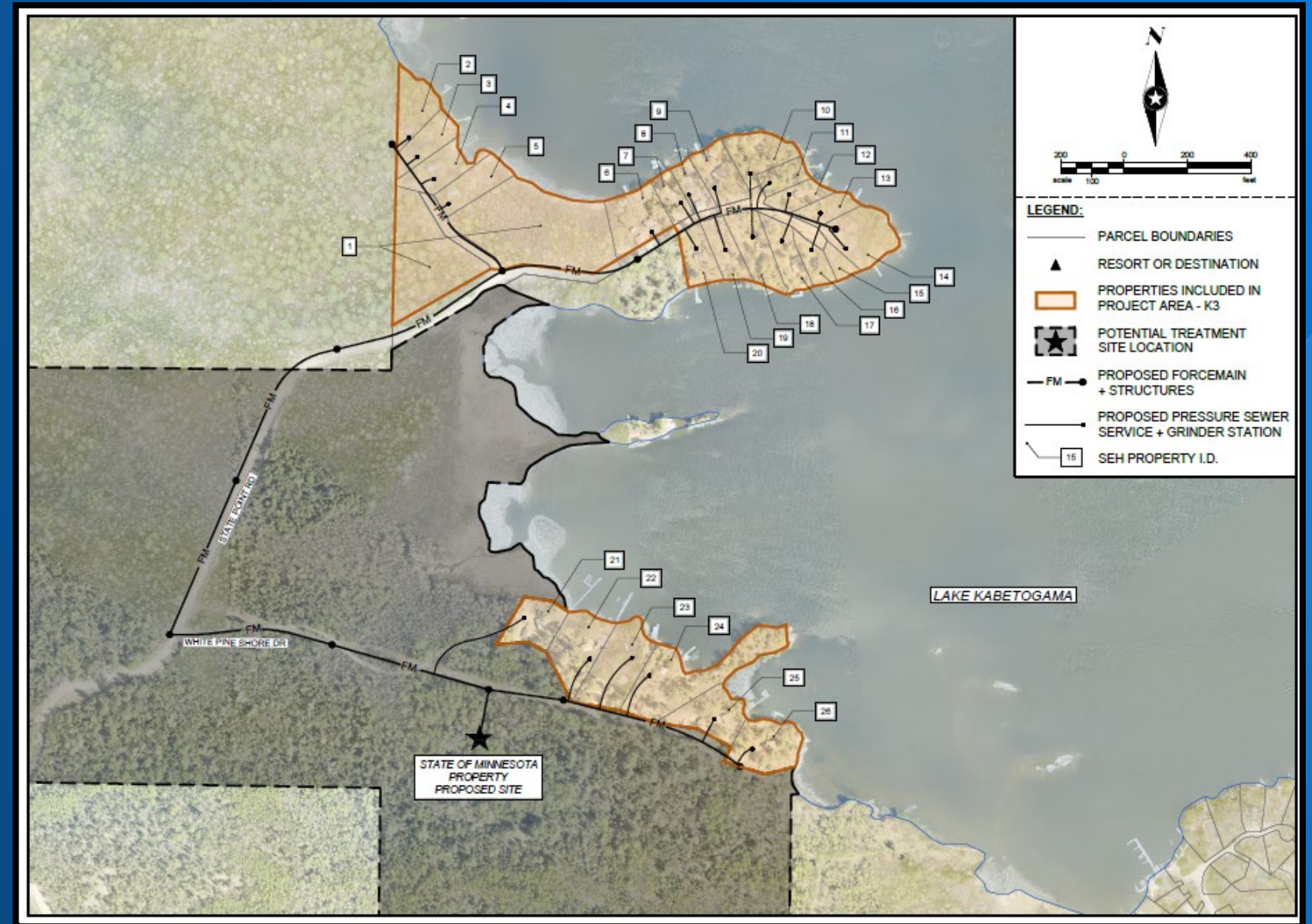
Typical STEP (Septic Tank Effluent Pumped) System



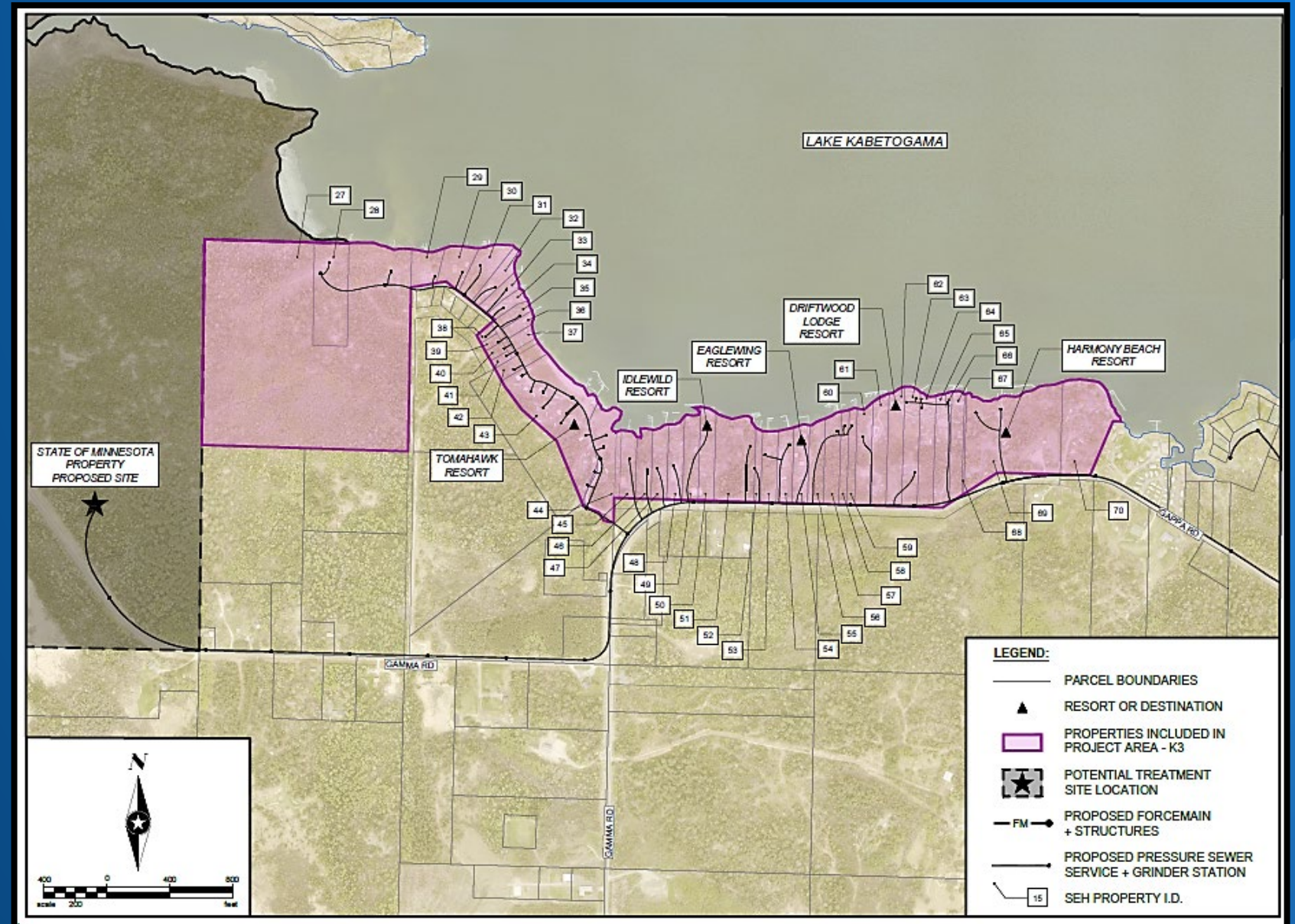
Please note: Septic systems vary. Diagram is not to scale.

Source: US EPA

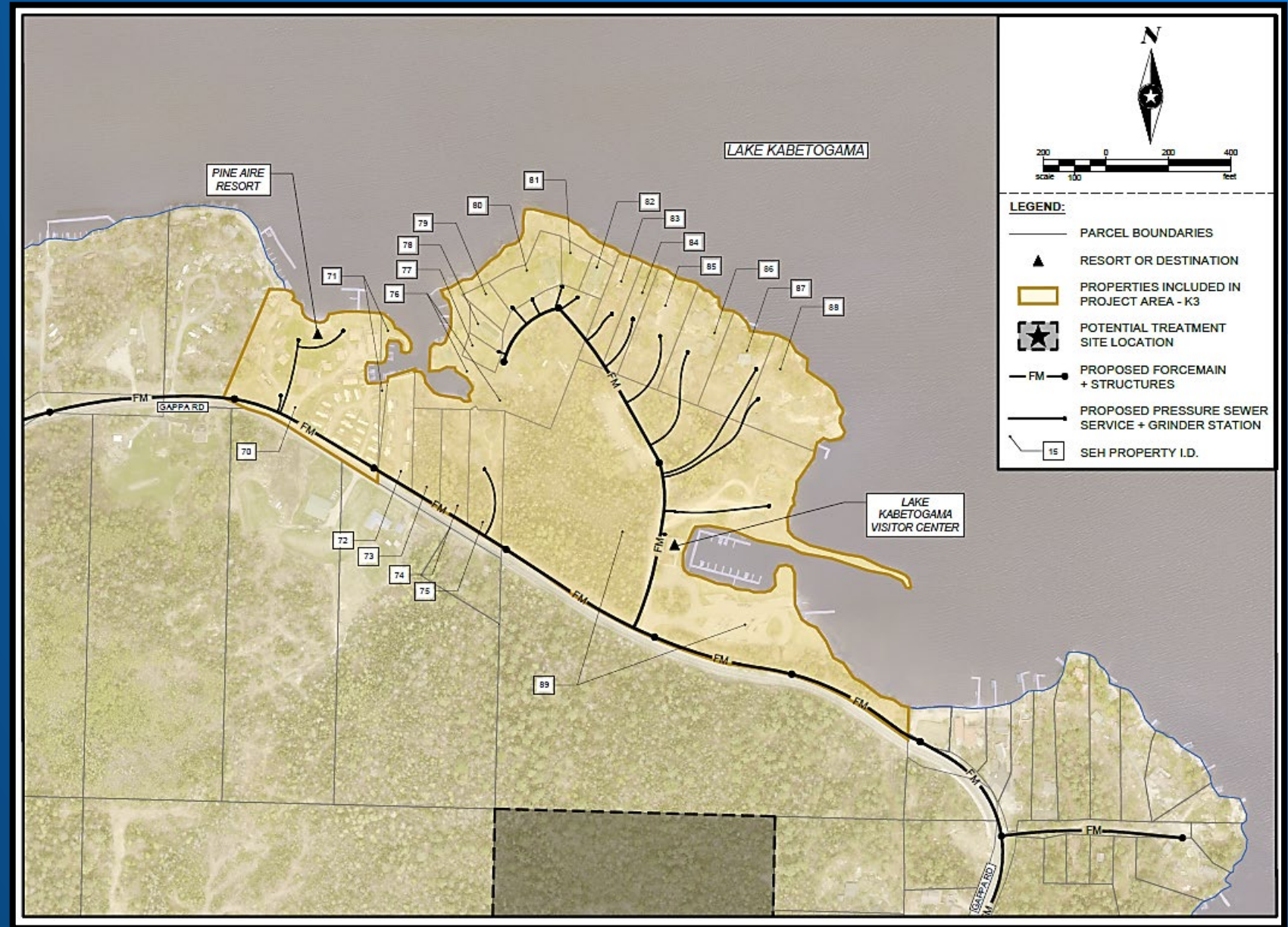
Collection System Layout – Area K3



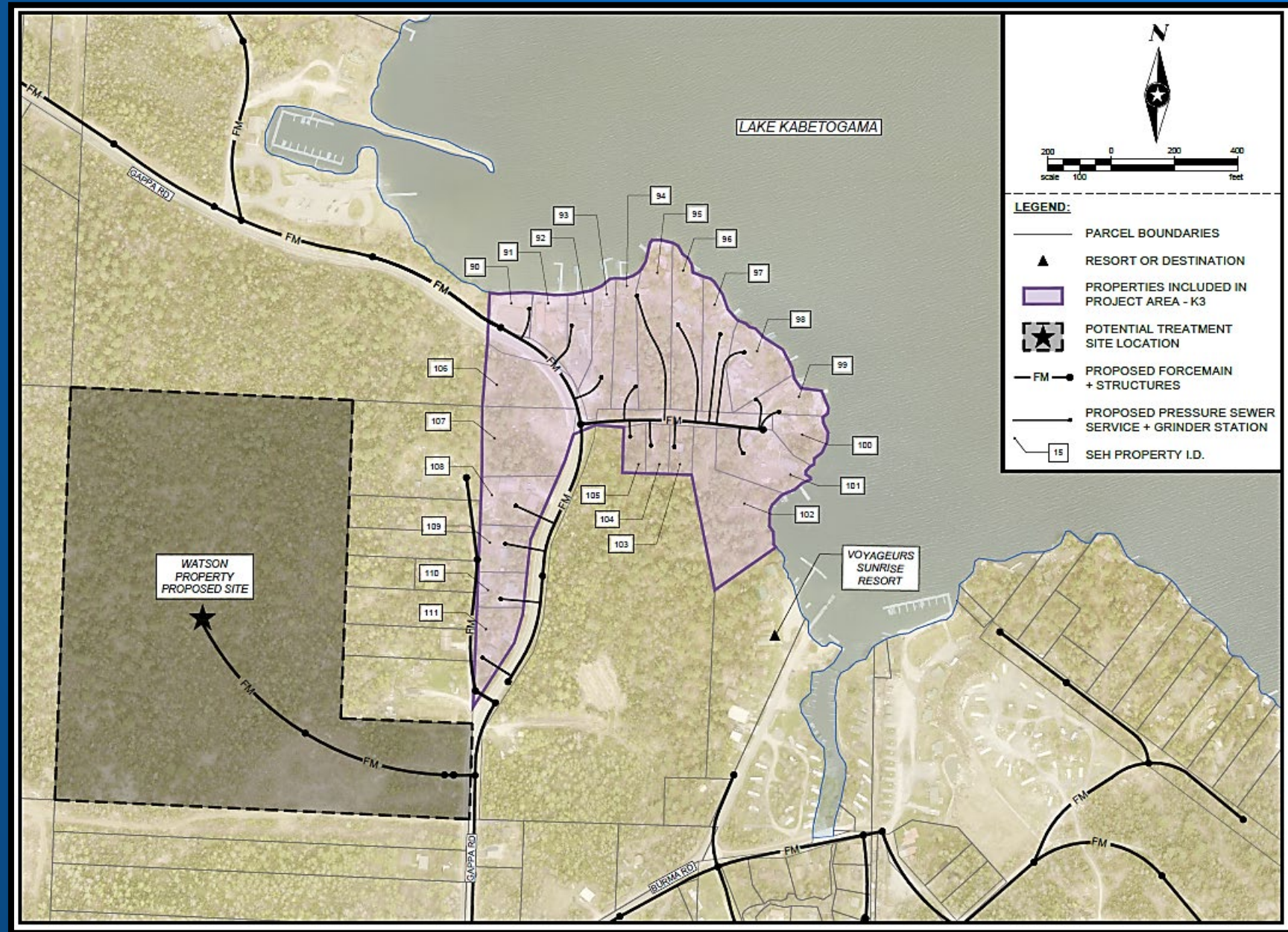
Collection System Layout – Area K5



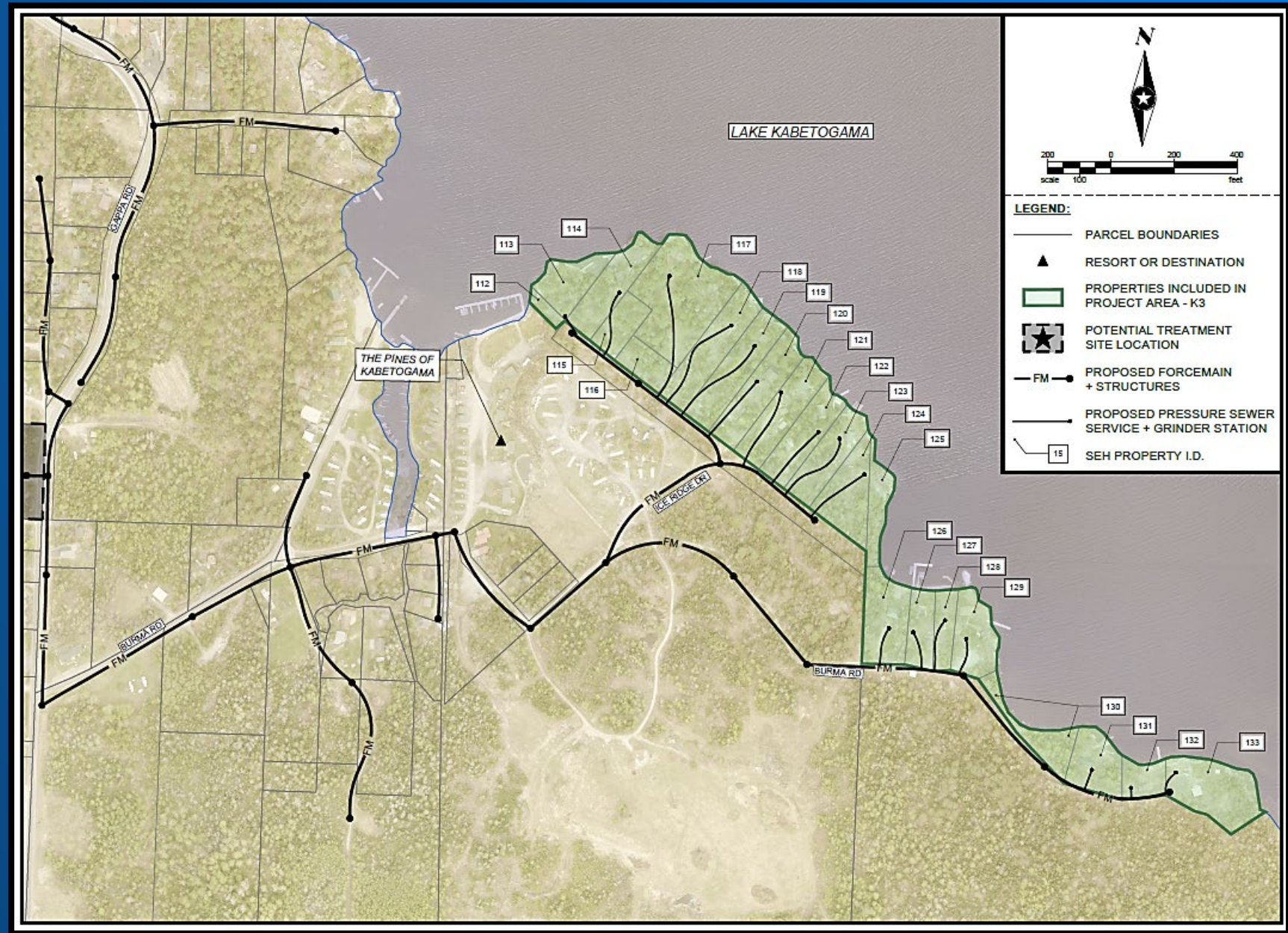
Collection System Layout – Area K6



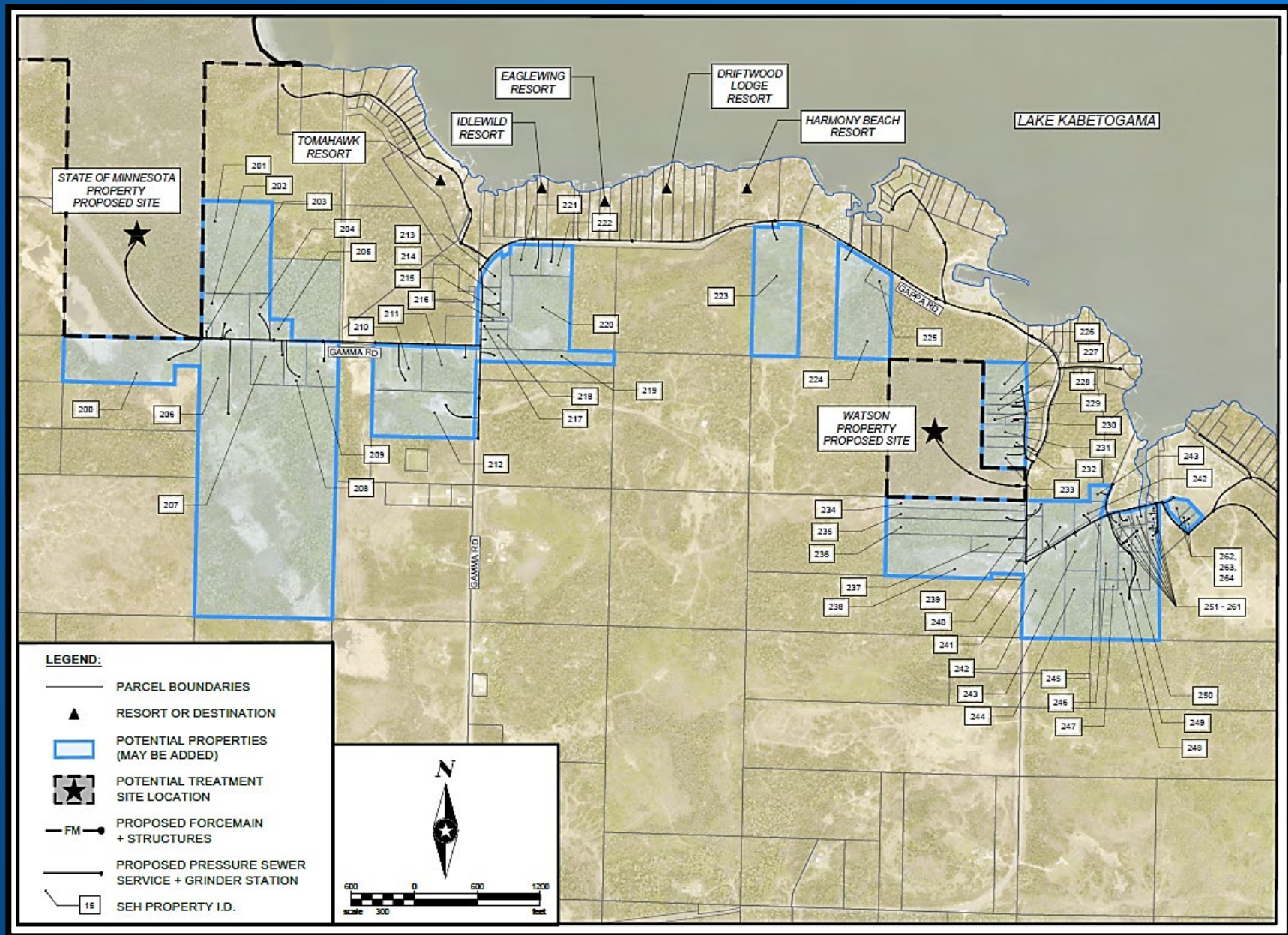
Collection System Layout – Area K7



Collection System Layout – Area K8



Collection System Layout – Potential Properties



Soil Exploration & Dispersal Testing

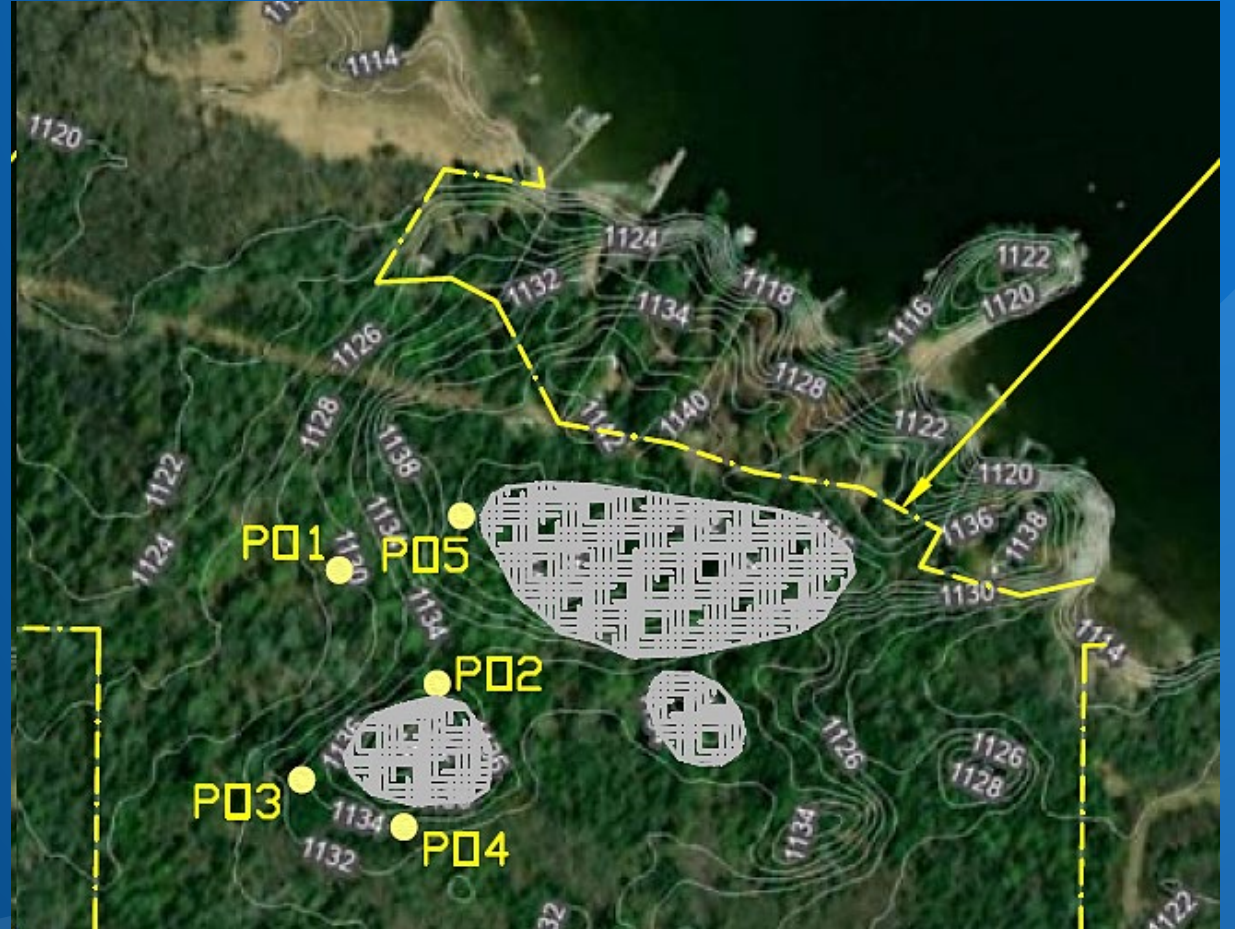
- Five individual sites were evaluated
- Three sites were suitable for use as dispersal areas for subsurface mound systems



Soil Exploration & Dispersal Testing

- Area K3

- 5 test pits
- Subsurface dispersal feasible
- 7,000 gpd required for Area K3
- 14,000 gpd capacity in soil



Source: Matrix Soils & Systems

Soil Exploration & Dispersal Testing (cont'd)

- Areas K5, K6, K7, K8
 - 8 test pits
 - Subsurface dispersal feasible
 - 51,000 gpd required for Area K5, K6, K7 and K8
 - 41,000 gpd required for Area K5, K6 and K7
 - 25,000 gpd capacity in soil



Source: Matrix Soils & Systems

Soil Exploration & Dispersal Testing (cont'd)

- Potential Area K8

- 7 test pits
- Subsurface dispersal feasible
- 10,000 gpd required for Area K8
- 10,000 gpd capacity in soil

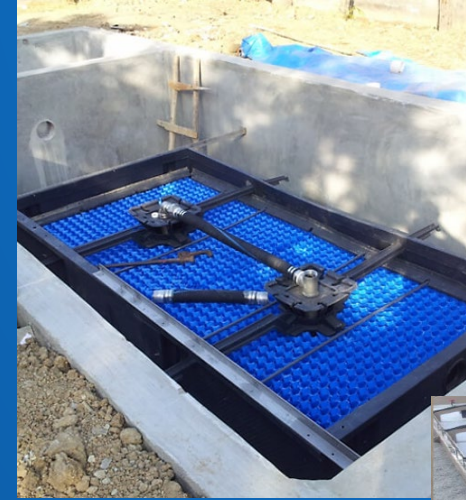


Source: Matrix Soils & Systems

Treatment System Alternatives

Pretreatment - Mechanical

- Option 1
 - FAST (Fixed Activated Sludge Treatment) System – Biomicrobics
- Option 2
 - Advantex AX-MAX Recirculating Media Filter – Orenco
- Option 3
 - Packaged Membrane Bio-reactor (MBR) – Kubota



Source: Orenco Systems

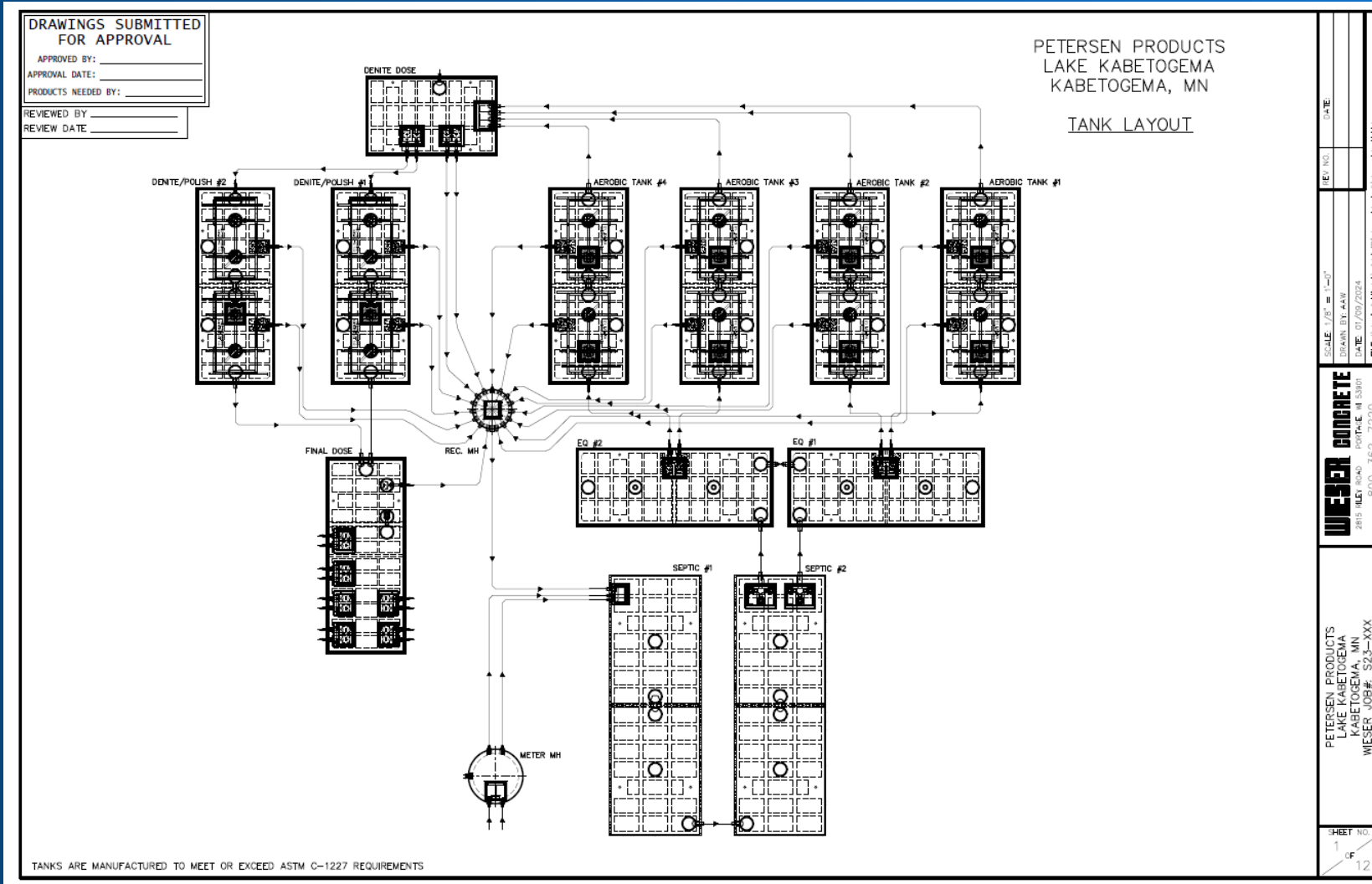
Source: Biomicrobics



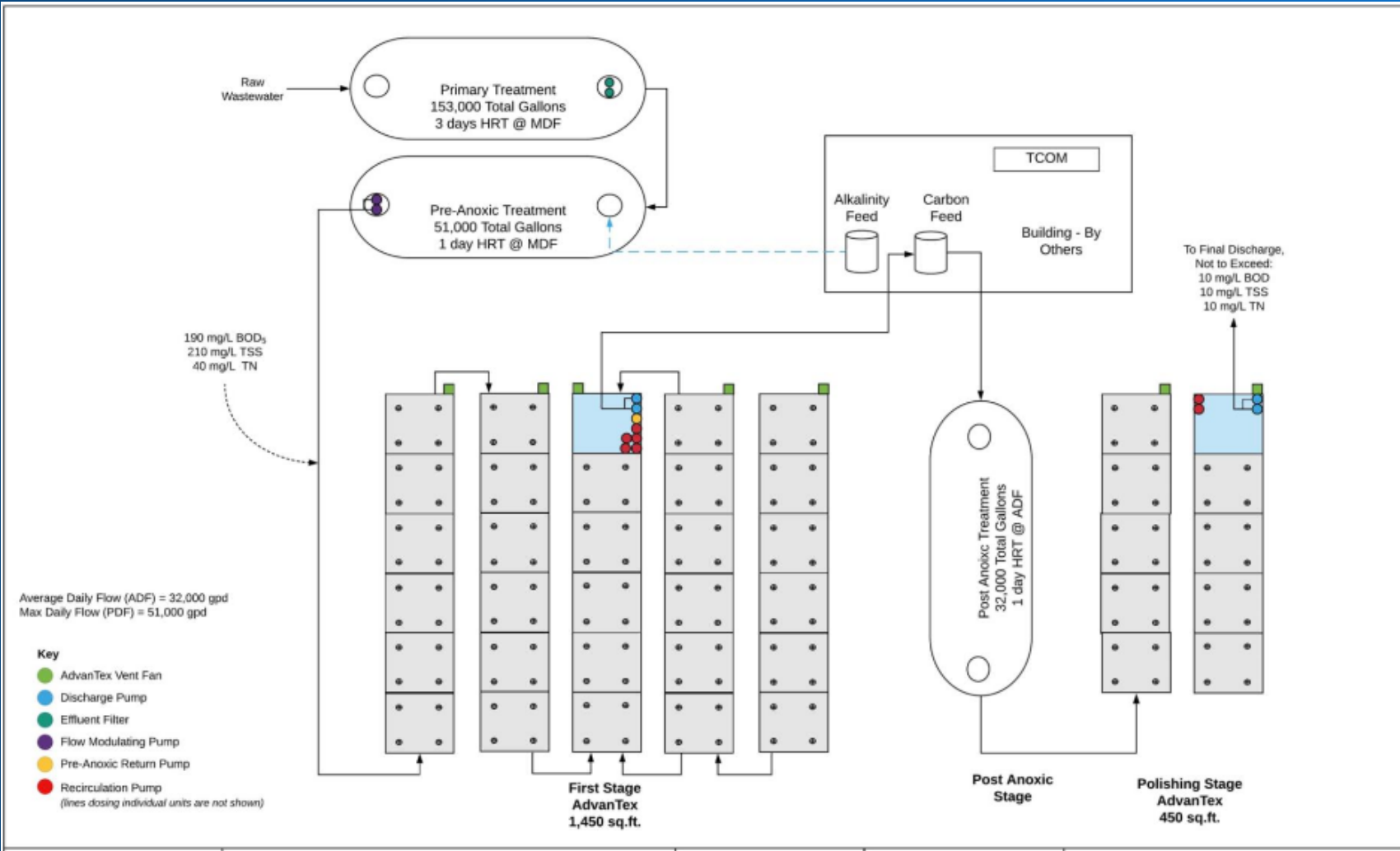
Source: Kubota



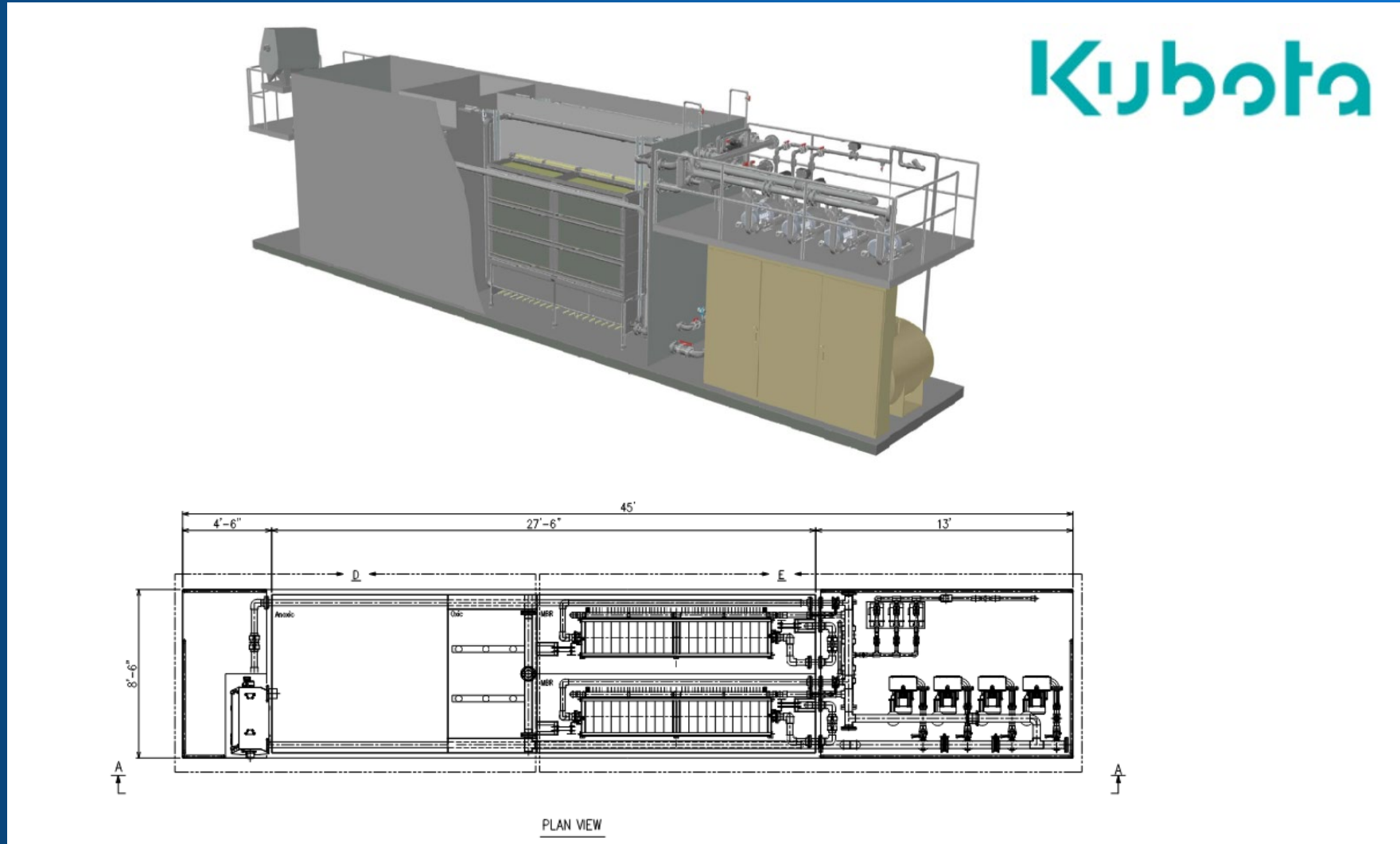
Option 1: Treatment System Layout – BioMicrobics FAST System



Option 2: Treatment System Layout – Orenco System



Option 3: Treatment System Layout – Kubota MBR System



Alternative Analysis – Area K3

Centralized Collection and Treatment System

Collection System Alternatives	2024 Estimated Capital Cost
Low-Pressure Sewer w. Grinder Stations or STEP Systems	\$4,660,000

Treatment System Alternatives	2024 Estimated Capital Cost
Subsurface Dispersal System	\$2,598,000

Alternative Analysis – Area K5, K6, K7, K8 & Potential Properties

Centralized Collection and Treatment System

Collection System Alternatives	2024 Estimated Capital Cost
Low-Pressure Sewer w. Grinder Stations or STEP Systems	\$29,440,000

Treatment System Alternatives	2024 Estimated Capital Cost
Option 1 – BioMicrobics FAST System	\$14,128,000
Option 2 – Orenco System	\$14,705,000
Option 3 – Kubota MBR System	\$14,593,000

Treatment System Alternatives	2024 Estimated Life Cycle Costs (20-year life cycle)
Option 1 – BioMicrobics FAST System	\$15,965,000
Option 2 – Orenco System	\$16,149,000
Option 3 – Kubota MBR System	\$17,477,000

Alternative Analysis – Area K8 & Potential Properties

Split Collection and Treatment Systems

Collection System Alternatives	2024 Estimated Capital Cost
Low-Pressure Sewer w. Grinder Stations or STEP Systems	\$10,510,000

Treatment System Alternatives	2024 Estimated Capital Cost
Subsurface Dispersal System	\$3,045,000

Alternative Analysis – Area K5, K6, K7 and Additional Properties

Split Collection and Treatment Systems

Collection System Alternatives	2024 Estimated Capital Cost
Low-Pressure Sewer with Grinder Stations	\$19,068,000

Treatment System Alternatives	2024 Estimated Capital Cost
Option 1 – BioMicrobics FAST System	\$12,331,000
Option 2 – Orenco System	\$13,141,000
Option 3 – Kubota MBR System	\$13,096,000

Treatment System Alternatives	2024 Estimated Life Cycle Costs (20-year life cycle)
Option 1 – BioMicrobics FAST System	\$13,939,000
Option 2 – Orenco System	\$14,476,000
Option 3 – Kubota MBR System	\$15,536,000

Chosen Alternative - Total Project Cost

- The chosen alternative is the BioMicrobics FAST System with a split subsurface dispersal system to collect flow from K8 and the surrounding additional properties. The subsurface dispersal system for K3 is included as well.

Alternative	2024 Estimated Capital Cost
Low Pressure Collection System	\$34,100,000
Area K3 Subsurface Dispersal System	\$2,598,000
BioMicrobics FAST System with Subsurface Dispersal	\$12,331,000
Area K8 Subsurface Dispersal System	\$3,045,000
Total Project Costs	\$52,074,000

Operation & Maintenance - Annual

O&M Items	Annual Cost
Electrical Cost	\$27,780
Equipment Replacement Cost	\$21,115
Contract Operator	\$60,810
Other Expenses (chemical, permit fees, mowing, snow removal, etc)	\$29,300
Total O&M Cost	\$111,825

User Rates

User Rate Parameters	Cost
Total Project Cost	\$52,074,000
Annual cost paid semi-annually (Includes O&M costs)	\$2,074,400
User rate paid per month	\$674.75

Non-Monetary Factors

- **Historical**

- Kabetogama Visitor Center (Ranger Station) – on National Register of Historic Places
- (7) cabins at Deerhorn Resort – identified as Minnesota historic properties

- **Archaeological**

- Will need further archeological study

- **MN DNR/US Fish & Wildlife**

- DNR ranks area “High” for Biodiversity Significance

- **Cultural**

- No impacts anticipated

- **Floodplain**

- No impacts anticipated



Source: www.Wikipedia.com

N__National Park Water Quality Protection Program

Questions:

1. Why such an increase in FY28&FY29?
2. Why should this particular sewer project be targeted for funds vs other statewide sewer funds (competitive or noncompetitive)?
3. What % of funds are used to address existing problems vs used to expand to accommodate new structures?
4. Please explain the plan for targeted expansion from large scale district.
5. Leverage of other existing and potential funding sources
 - a. This program receives funding from multiple sources--what is expected from those sources in the next fiscal year?
 - b. Why doesn't the federal government pay for the costs of maintaining a National Park?
 - c. Will the proposed fees generate sufficient funds to upgrade to proposed systems when the 20-year life cycle is reached?
 - d. Of the leveraged funds listed, which is local/benefiting household or business assessment?
 - e. Private contribution/responsibility
 - i. What % of funds have been from property owners?
 - ii. What is the financial responsibility of private landowners who are being hooked up to the sanitary system?
 - iii. How much of CWF pays for private business's portion of sanitary sewer?
 - iv. What has been the total amount of local assessments? How are low-income residents factored in?
 - f. How much are you requesting in State Bonding?
 - g. Has VNPCWJPB pursued special taxing authority?
6. Outcomes
 - a. What has been the nutrient or bacteria reduction as a result of the sanitary sewer? What is the projected reduction?
 - b. Can presenter share number of SSTs replaced by each project and a cost per system of CW funds?
 - c. Can presenter quantify the reduction of nutrients from the sewer extensions or elimination of private septic?
7. Can the Clean Water Council expect to receive a funding proposal to fund this project past 2029? The application indicates the project would be completed in 2030.
8. What's your funding source for ongoing operation and maintenance and eventual reinvestment/renewal down the road after initial build-out/upgrade?
9. Please provide examples of how Clean Water Fund support is recognized in public meetings and publications.

FY28-29 CLEAN WATER FUND PROPOSAL

Program Title:	Private Well Initiative
Program Number (if applicable):	XX
Agency/Organization Name:	Minnesota Department of Health
Program website:	Private Well Protection Clean Water Fund - MN Dept. of Health (state.mn.us) (www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/cwf/wells.html)

Program Contact	
Name	Tannie Eshenaur
Email	Tannie.eshenaur@state.mn.us
Phone	651-201-4074

Person Filling Out Form	
Name	Anne Nelson
Email	Anne.nelson@state.mn.us
Phone	651-201-4366

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 Private Well Initiative proposes a comprehensive approach to ensuring safe drinking water for the more than 1.1 million Minnesotans who rely on private wells. Building on the work of existing state and local programs, the initiative improves understanding of contaminant occurrence in private wells; expands education, outreach, and technical assistance for well users; and strengthens partnerships with partners. The program increases public access to private well water quality data, develops model policies to better protect well users, is establishing a statewide well testing program, and supports targeted efforts to address nitrate contamination in southeast Minnesota.

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.

The Private Well Initiative most directly aligns with the Ongoing Implementation step of the Water Management Framework. The Initiative supports local, voluntary implementation actions for private well owners and users to test their well water and take action to safeguard their household's drinking water. These efforts improve understanding of risks to groundwater and drinking water sources.

By providing well users with clear and timely test results, the program enables informed decisions about drinking water safety. Test results can also indicate structural problems, such as bacterial contamination associated with cracked or a damaged well. Identifying these issues allows the initiative to connect well owners with resources to repair or seal wells, reducing pathways for contamination and thus protecting groundwater.

Education and outreach activities complement implementation efforts by helping well owners understand how to inspect, maintain, and protect their wells. This guidance reduces potential entry points for contamination and supports long-term groundwater and drinking water 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.

Outcome goals for the Private Well initiative include **improved understanding of private well contaminant occurrence and distribution** in Minnesota through gathering existing data and making it accessible through public dashboards and visualizations; **increased awareness of private well testing recommendations** through education, outreach, and providing grants to offer free drinking water testing opportunities to an additional 20% of private well users each biennium; **increased local protections for private well users** through example policy recommendations and text; and

strengthened relationships with local partners, non-profits, and academic institutions by providing support for local and specific private well work.

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

Outcomes will be tracked, evaluated, and reported using a combination of project-specific work plans and performance measures. Progress will be monitored through communications plans, webpage analytics, educational material distribution numbers, and results from an annual partnership survey. To assess changes in knowledge and awareness, surveys of private well users will be conducted statewide every two to three years. Because privately funded well water test results are confidential and not available for tracking, program success will also be evaluated using alternative indicators, such as engagement metrics, participation trends, and reported behavior changes.

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

In FY 28-29 we will have several changes to our program including:

1. Nearly 70% of our funding request will pass through to support private well testing in the form of grants and contracts.
2. Local capacity will be better supported in the Private Well Protection grants.
3. The Private Well Protection grants will be fully transitioned from pilots to an established approach to provide financial support for local governments and tribal nations to encourage well testing.

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 program is increasing private well testing, awareness, and protection. 2026 survey data indicate that statewide about 18% of Minnesotans test their wells at the frequency MDH recommends, compared to 31% in southeast Minnesota where targeted outreach has occurred. By the end of FY27, the program will be offering free well testing in jurisdictions where 40% of private well users reside. The initiative also shared a policy recommendation for well testing at property transfer, with three counties considering incorporation into ordinances. Nearly 800 private wells in southeast Minnesota have been identified and will be incorporated into the County Well Index.

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

Our program is charged with offering every private well household in Minnesota a free well water quality test for the main five contaminants in well water by 2034. We currently offer free testing for coliform bacteria, nitrate, arsenic, lead, and manganese in jurisdictions where about 20% of private well users are and are on track to reach 100% by 2034 depending on funding. We will continue to offer education and outreach as long as funding allows.

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.

Drinking water is safe for everyone, everywhere in Minnesota.

Goal 2: Private water supply wells

- *Strategy: Identify risks to and fund testing of private well water.*
- *Strategy: Support selected mitigation activities for private well users.*
- *Strategy: Identify policy options that will accelerate the reduction in the number of unsafe private wells.*

This initiative works with other programs to identify if there are additional common contaminants in Minnesota private well water that present a health risk and to better understand the distribution of common contaminants and how to best mitigate contaminants that present a health risk.

The initiative works with partners across the state to implement locally led and easy-to-access free private well testing.

The initiative also researches and provides recommendations for local and state policies that could reduce the number of private wells with unsafe drinking water.

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: While PWI is the only CWF program with a singular focus on private wells, we do rely on and collaborate with the Drinking Water Ambient Monitoring Program, GRAPS initiative, Source Water Protection, Watershed-based Implementation Funding, the Future of Drinking Water, and Pesticide Monitoring Initiatives to help support private well users.

Connected non-CWF-supported programs: This program supplements the MDH Well Management Section by leading the education and outreach component of private wells in Minnesota, and the Section provides this initiative with data about newly constructed wells. (Well Management is the program that assures the proper construction and sealing of wells and borings.)

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

We are always scanning for non-CWF opportunities for funding. MDH has competed for and received Center for Disease Control funding in the past at \$100,000 per year for six years, but future funding is uncertain at this time.

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
- *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.

70 %

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 have been actively engaged in the development and evolution of the Private Well Initiative through ongoing collaboration with local and academic partners. The program works closely with Olmsted County, the University of Minnesota, and Private Well Protection grantees to pilot new approaches, refine program activities, and improve funding and reporting processes. Regular meetings with these partners provide continuous feedback that informs program adjustments and ensures activities are responsive to local needs.

The initiative currently collaborates with eight grantees (20 counties and one tribal nation) implementing private well testing and outreach efforts across the state. We host quarterly meetings to identify challenges, share solutions, and co-develop tools and services that support effective program implementation. A notable outcome of this engagement is the strengthened collaboration between local soil and water conservation districts and local public health offices, enhancing coordinated service delivery to private well users.

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

This program helps address inequities private well users face. Private well users lack the regulatory protections and routine monitoring provided to community water system customers. Low-income households, renters, and rural residents are disproportionately affected by the high

cost of water testing and treatment, which can delay action and increase exposure to contaminated drinking water. By providing free private well water test kits, technical assistance, and educational materials, the program removes financial and informational barriers that prevent families from understanding and protecting their drinking water. The program also raises awareness that private well safety is the homeowner's or occupant's responsibility, empowering residents with knowledge to make informed decisions. In addition, efforts to promote policies that protect underserved groups—such as renters whose landlords are not required to test or treat well water—help close regulatory gaps and promote more equitable access to safe, clean drinking water for all Minnesotans.

- *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.*
 - Over 60 **presentations or tabling events** in FY 24 – 25 including a Booth at the Partners in Public Health Conference: [Minnesota Partners in Public Health Conference - MN Dept. of Health](#)
 - Availability of **educational brochures** and creation of new magnets for partners and private well users: [Order Well Management Program Educational Materials](#). Over 14,000 brochures and magnets have been ordered by over 100 partners.
 - **Community meetings** in Southeast Minnesota related to nitrate in drinking water: [Minnesota Department of Health starts nitrates discussions in Stewartville - Post Bulletin](#).

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 cite the Clean Water Fund in our presentations and reports and include the logo on educational materials, videos, and on webpages.

PRIOR APPROPRIATIONS	
FY10-11	
FY12-13	
FY14-15	\$650,000
FY16-17	\$650,000
FY18-19	\$800,000
FY20-21	\$1,500,000
FY22-23	\$0
FY24-25	\$3,000,000 + \$2,790,000 supplemental for southeast MN efforts
FY26-27	\$6,000,000
TOTAL APPROPRIATED TO DATE	\$12,390,000

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	
FY14-15	1.0
FY16-17	2.5
FY18-19	2.5
FY20-21	2.75
FY22-23	
FY24-25	2.3
FY26-27	3.8

O__Private Well Initiative

Comments and Questions:

1. What is the goal for the number of wells you hope to test with this round of funding, and what area of the state will be targeted?
2. Better communication and outreach to every ordinary well owner required.