Clean Water Council Meeting Agenda
Monday, April 20, 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 March minutes
- **(INFORMATION ITEM**) Council updates
    - Chair update
    - Staff update

9:20 Public comment

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

9:35 (ACTION ITEM) Policy Committee Update & Large Volume Water Users Policy Statement

The Policy Committee has revised and finalized its Large Volume Water Users policy statement draft, and is presenting it for adoption by the Clean Water Council at this meeting. Please plan to review the draft in advance of the meeting.

9:55 (DISCUSSION ITEM) Budget and Outcomes Committee Update

The Budget and Outcomes Committee has prepared initial considerations regarding priority and funding direction for proposals presented at the March Clean Water Council meeting. Feedback from Council members is requested.

10:15 (INFORMATION ITEM) Process overview and reminders

10:20 BREAK

10:35 (DISCUSSION ITEMS) Proposal presentations

- Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies (MPCA)
- Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies (DNR)
- Groundwater Restoration and Protection Strategies (MDH)
- Source Water Protection (MDH)
- Chloride Reduction (MPCA)

12:00 LUNCH

12:30 (DISCUSSION ITEMS) Proposals Continued

- Stormwater Research (UMN)
- County Geologic Atlas Part A (UMN)
- County Geologic Atlas Part B (DNR)
- Minnesota Water Research Library (MDA)
- Forever Green Initiative (MDA)
- Beach Portal (MDH)

1:45 BREAK

(DISCUSSION ITEMS) Proposals Continued

- Tillage and Erosion Transects (BWSR)
- Future of Drinking Water (MDH)
- Manure Land Application and Water Quality Specialist (MDA)
- Clean Water Council Administration (MPCA)
- Legislative Coordinating Commission website (LCC)

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

Clean Water Council
March 23, 2026, Meeting Summary

Members present: John Barten (Chair), Steve Besser, Eunie Biel, Rich Biske (Vice Chair), Dick Brainerd, Gail Cederberg, Steve Christenson, Tannie Eshenaur, Warren Formo, Brad Gausman, Justin Hanson, Bonnie Keeler (Joel Larson), Peter Kjeseth (Margaret Wagner), Annie Knight, Chris Meyer, Fran Miron, Jason Moeckel, Ole Olmanson, Peter Schwagerl, Glenn Skuta, April Swenby, and Jessica Wilson.
Members absent: Kelly Gribauval-Hite, Rep. Steve Jacob, Holly Hatlewick, Sen. John Hoffman, Rep. Kristi Pursell, and Sen. Nathan Wesenberg.

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

Regular Clean Water Council Business

- Introductions
  - Welcome to our new Clean Water Council member April Swenby, representing Minnesota Watersheds, from the Sand Hill River Watershed District!
  - Annie Knight is expecting, due August!
- Agenda - comments/additions and approve agenda
- Motion to approve the March 23rd meeting agenda by Dick Brainerd, seconded by Annie Knight. Motion carries unanimously.
- Motion to approve the February 23rd meeting summary by Dick Brainerd, seconded by Warren Formo. Motion carries.
- Council updates
  - Chair update
    - John Barten will be attending the Minnesota Stormwater Pond Research and Practice Symposium, on March 31-April 1.
    - Saint Anthony Falls Hydrologic Lab, from the University of Minnesota (UMN), is putting together a grant proposal to figure out how to transfer research data into action. This has been in response to the wake boat research and has not seen immediate changes following the impacting data revealed from that research. John Barten will serve on the advisory committee if they receive the grant.
  - Staff update
    - Legislative session emails are being sent out. Jen is tracking water-related bills.
    - House Legacy Finance Committee has asked Jen to speak about the current work of the Council. She will present on Wednesday, March 25th. A few state agency members will attend to answer any relevant water questions as well.
    - The Governor's Office, Office of Long-Range Planning with Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB), has selected the long-range research topic of water. It is complementary to the work of the Council.
    - There are over 9,000 subscribers for the Council's main newsletter, with a 29 percent open rate.
    - In April, Jen will speak at a section meeting with the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR).
    - Jen will attend the MASWCD Area Four (11 Soil and Water Conservation Districts) spring meeting.
    - Folks can still register for the Minnesota Stormwater Pond Research and Practice Symposium (connect with Joel Larson if you are unable to).
  - Policy Committee
    - At their last meeting, they reviewed changes suggested by Bonnie Keeler for the Large Water-Volume Water Users policy. The policy statement is stronger. It will be brought forward at a future full Council meeting for review and approval.
  - Budget and Outcomes Committee
    - At their last meeting, they elected new officers. Steve Christenson is the new BOC Chair, and Brad Gausman is the new BOC Vice Chair. Thank you to the prior BOC Chair, Steve Besser, and BOC Vice Chair, Dick Brainerd for all your work.

- Regarding the supplemental budget opportunity, there is a memo included in the meeting packet. MMB is forecasting something less than ten million dollars of a supplemental budget. Consistent with prior conversations, if the budget was less than ten million, the BOC recommended it be carried over to the next biennium. The BOC recommends that John Barten prepare a letter on behalf of the Council back to the Governor's Office and relevant Legacy Committees. Given the economic uncertainties, with the budget forecast in process, as well as the short Legislative session, and shorter time for scoring, the Council recommends carrying over any potential supplemental budget to the next biennium.
    - *Motion by Dick Brainerd for Chair John Barten to send a letter on behalf of the Council, revealing the recommendations of the Council to the Governor's Office and relevant Legislative Committees. Seconded by Steve Besser. Motion carries unanimously.*
- Graphic for Council's process reviewed (found in meeting packet).
- The BOC reviewed the first group of proposals (16 proposals), and there is a workbook document included in the meeting packet on the direction of the BOC. This included a high, medium, low prioritization and an increase, decrease, or hold steady of the funding.
    - There was a lot of discussion on the Olmstead County (Southeast Groundwater Protection and Soil Health Initiative) versus the BWSR program (Enhancing Landowner Adoption of Soil Health Practices for Drinking Water and Groundwater Protection). There was a lot of appreciation for Olmstead County, but the BOC recommended they speak to each other, to include the Olmstead County request with the BWSR program. The BOC will want to hear an update on it.
    - Council members have no major issues with current scoring. Scores will be reviewed in the future.

No Public Comments *(Webex 00:47:30)*

Process Overview and Reminders, by Jen Kader *(Webex 00:48:00)*

- In the last two years, Council members have been taking input from the last budget cycle, strategies of the Council, the field tour, and survey results. Then, there was the development of the scoring rubric revealed the Council's values and priorities. The proposal was updated to reflect the scoring rubric.
- The Council is in the proposal review phase. This is from February to early June.
    - *See flow chart in meeting packet.*
    - Council members review proposals and submit scores and initial questions.
    - Presentation of proposal, including answering initial questions.
    - Council members revise the scores and can submit any follow up questions for applicants.
    - Proposal applicants provide follow up question responses in written form.
    - Council members develop initial suggestions for funding direction (increase, decrease, hold steady) along with prioritization (high, medium, low).
    - Review and amend initial suggestions.
- Next is the preliminary budget development phase. This is from June to when the Council's preliminary recommendations are submitted to the Governor's office.
    - *See flow chart in meeting packet.*
    - At the June full Council meeting, there will be a review of all the initial suggestions, Council member feedback, and hear public input.
    - Amend suggested funding directions.
    - Finalize suggested funding directions.
    - Submit funding requests in response to input.
    - Review the ICT memo, develop first draft of preliminary budget.
    - Review and amend draft, provide feedback to BOC if needed.

Questions/Comments:

- April Swenby: When we receive the final numbers for approval, will the document include information on which programs are new versus renewal? Additionally, can you include previous years, so we know what the previous funding was? *Answer:* Yes. We can decide how many biennia to go back if you would like previous recommendations.

Proposal Presentations

- **One Watershed, One Plan (BWSR)** *(Webex 01:06:00)*
  - High-level purpose/program goal: Align state data and strategies with local priorities in prioritized, targeted, and measurable watershed plans.
  - Program output or outcome highlights: Evaluation and/or amendments of up to twelve plans.
  - Funded since FY2014, with a total funded amount of $23,398,000.

  Questions/Comments:
  - Steve Besser: I didn't realize 2016 was when One Watershed, One Plan (1W1P) was approved. Have we covered all 1W1Ps? *Answer:* We have reorganized the watersheds, so there have been some updates. You might have remembered celebrating the Minesota Pollution Control Agency's (MPCA) monitoring schedule. BWSR celebrated full participation, the last few to join are still writing their plans. It is sixty in total (the twin cities are treated a little differently).
  - Dick Brainerd: You spoke about the state law, state program, but local implementation. How does that come together given the program pieces. If BWSR is responsible for certain things, how are you holding them accountable? How are you reporting this? *Answer:* We are asking them if items are implemented.
  - Rich Biske: When the planning was started, there must have been consistency in terms of guidance. Was PTMapp used? *Answer:* It was included in some, but was not uniform, it was something that could be selected. They needed to find a model or tool that was applicable, and the tools were not always applicable.
  - Rich Biske: Would it not benefit to have one way to consolidate? *Answer*: It would be awesome. The partnerships could come together to organize it the same way. We are talking about going out to have listening sessions this summer, hoping to have them converge a bit. We had to let this play out organically, to have good buy in. It had to be developed at the local level.
- **Watershed Based Implementation Fund (BWSR)** *(Webex 01:50:50)*
  - High-level purpose/program goal: Provide predictable, reliable funding to implement locally developed watershed and groundwater plans.
  - Program output or outcome highlights: Implement priorities in sixty watershed planning areas and twenty-seven watershed allocation areas.
  - Funded since FY 2018, with total funding of $247,380,000.

  Questions/Comments:
  - April Swenby: As a Watershed District Administrator, we utilize this program probably every single day right now. It has been beneficial. There is a healthy level of scrutiny for our reporting. There is a staff person going over our billable rates, to make sure we are right in line with it. There has been a good level of success and resources to implement this program, in the way it was meant to be implemented. Response: Yes, our grants management is robust.
- **Riparian Protection and Soil Loss Assistance – SWCD Buffer Funding (BWSR)** *(Webex 02:09:30)*
  - High-level purpose/program goal: Provide resources to SWCDs and BWSR for Buffer program implementation and oversight and Excessive Soil Loss programming.
  - Program output or outcome highlights: 99+ percent compliance statewide. All SWCD's Monitor respective areas one every three years. There is an initiation of enforcement, when needed. Supports tracking system for monitoring and reporting and program support/training.
  - Funded since FY 2016, with total funds of $26.872 million.

  Questions/Comments:
  - Dick Brainerd: In general, can you define what compliance means for this? *Answer from Tom Gile, BWSR:* Compliance under the law, simply means if the parcel has the buffer or the alternative practices. Success under the law, in my opinion, means there are more buffers than there were ten years ago. For compliance, it can be complex, because it could just be a visible stripe of green, or other practices that bring it into compliance. I am happy to go into more details at a future time.
  - April Swenby: What did it look like when the buffer law put into place. What was the original funding for it? What is the consequence, what does that look like funding this? *Answer:* It is hard to answer that because I am not a Legislator. However, if the SWCD portion is not funded, all of the parcels that end up in enforcement would not happen because the SWCDs assist with that work. The statute includes the Clean Water Funds (CWFs) as the initial string of funding to do this work.

- **Technical Evaluations (BWSR)** *(Webex 02:25:30)*
  - High-level purpose/program goal: To fund the continuation of the restoration evaluations required by state law that help ensure and improve conservation outcomes state-wide.
  - Program output or outcome highlights: Ten restoration projects are evaluated annually relative to the law, current science and state goals, with funding summarized in an annual report to the legislature and governing councils and used to identify recommendations for future restorations.
  - Funded since 2012, with total funded is $1,324,000.

  Questions/Comments:
  - Steve Christenson: You didn't use the words fraud prevention or fraud protection. *Answer*: Not directly. Our process is focused on how practices are being designed and implemented on the ground. So, we are looking at what happened with the projects and review it in a technical side. We are looking to make sure projects are planned and followed through on them.
  - Comment from Rich Biske: As someone who has been through the review, Wade and his team do a really good job of bringing outside experts in to also provide feedback, which is helpful from a program evaluation standpoint. This is a great program and really improves the practice.
- **Nonpoint Source Restoration and Protection Strategies (DNR)** *(Webex 02:37:00)*
  - High-level purpose/program goal: Restore/improve/protect ecological functions and watershed conditions that produce clean water (such as natural shorelines, connected floodplains, stable waterways, water storage and infiltration, biodiversity) through stream and lake projects technical assistance, forest stewardship plans and cost-share, and collaborative outreach and training.
  - Program output or outcome highlights: There are major strides in stream restoration and effectiveness monitoring. There is a paper published on reducing excess nutrients from stream banks. Lake prioritization tools are widely adopted in lake-rich watersheds. Additionally, a "Riprap alternatives "initiative launched to address shoreline loss.
  - Funded since FY10-11, with total funded is $20.85 million.
  - No questions.
- **Technical Assistance (MDA)** *(Webex 02:46:30)*
  - High-level purpose/program goal: Ensures accurate, scientific information is available to address water quality concerns in agricultural areas.
  - Program output or outcome highlights: Maintains more than twenty-five active edge-of-field 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. Authored multiple scientific peer-reviewed articles and technical reports on best management practices (BMP) effectiveness, groundwater age, and practice design. Additionally, engaged more than 23,000 ag producers, crop advisors, and local partners at more than 530 education and outreach events.
  - Funded since 2009, with total funded is $23.9 million.

  Questions/Comments:
  - Dick Brainerd: Regarding overall funding, what goes where? *Answer:* The budget breakdown is for the discovery farms program, it falls under their umbrella of technical assistance (main areas include discovery farms, Root River Field to Stream River Partnerships, Nutrient Management Initiative, and other edge-of-field sites. The majority of this funding is invested in staff and about managing staff.
  - John Barten: The cost-share N inhibitors and stabilizers, are those new products being developed in response to some of the nitrate loss? *Answer:* Many have been around for a long time. In the market new products are being developed. We evaluate those products, to make sure they actually work for the landowners (to make sure environmental protection exists).
- **Native Mussel Restoration (DNR)** *(Webex 03:06:30)*
  - High-level purpose/program goal: Restore mussel populations and their ecological services across Minnesota by rearing and reintroducing them across the state.
  - Program output or outcome highlights: Propagated juvenile Spectaclecase (125 individuals) were released for the first time in the Upper Midwest in Summer of 2025.
  - Funded since FY24-25, with total funded at $1,300,000.

  Questions/Comments:

- Dick Brainerd: Since our last visit, can you speak on the expansion of your space? *Answer:* Yes, we moved to another location, a larger area for our work. It is across from the parking lot from our last building. It is allowing us to reorganize and strategize our propagation efforts in the lab. We were able to increase our electrical capacity, which is important for all the systems we have in place for fish and mussels at the lab. It is set up well and has been working well. We updated our systems, which are custom designed, so it takes time and effort, and resources to get them set up.

- **Great Lakes Restoration Projects (Lake Superior LAMP) (BWSR)** *(Webex 03:17:30)*
  - High-level purpose/program goal: To leverage Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) or other federal Great Lakes funding to implement projects in the Lake Superior Basin.
  - Program output or outcome highlights: $1.7 million leveraged federal funding in the first year of the program.
  - Funded since 2024, with total funding at $2,000,000.

  Questions/Comments:
  - Glenn Skuta, MPCA: Our MPCA commissioner was at a Great Lakes meeting in DC and reported back that the GLRI program is probably the best environmental program which has clear bipartisan support.
- **Conservation Corps of MN and IA (BWSR)** *(Webex 03:26:30)*
  - High-level purpose/program goal: To deliver services (restoration, maintenance, training, and other activities) that provide additional capacity to Minnesota's local governments.
  - Program output or outcome highlights: Anticipate approximately 35-50 projects will be requested for crew placements to help achieve clean water goals.
  - Funded since FY2012 though projects and practices and now funded separately since FY2026. Total funded is $1.5 million.

  Questions/Comments:
  - Gail Cederberg: What kind of follow up have you done with the people who joined?
    - *Answer:* I can follow up on it.
    - John Barten: I can provide some info on it. About half of our workforce comes from CCMI.
    - Response Gail Cederberg: Because of the workforce piece, that would be something the program should include in the tracking.
    - Jen Kader: Full disclosure, I am a Conservation Corps alumnus.
    - Justin Hanson*:* As am I.
    - Brad Jordahl Redlin, Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA): I can't remember how many of our field staff have gone through it, but a few as well who've recently come to join us.
- **Irrigation Water Quality Protection (MDA)** *(Webex 03:38:00)*
  - High-level purpose/program goal: 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.
  - Program output or outcome highlights: The specialist oversaw expansion of the irrigation management assistant tool from serving only five counties to now having statewide coverage. 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, eighty-six percent 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 forty-five 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 UMN podcasts.
  - Total funded is $1.8 million since 2013.

  Questions/Comments:
  - John Barten: Are you looking at the overall impact of reducing irrigation water, then having folks use split applications of nitrogen, nitrogen inhibitors or stabilizers? Looking at the downward movement of nitrates down to the groundwater? Are you doing five-year studies looking at that? *Answer:* A lot of that has been supported through Rosholt Farms. We've either been there or talked about it at different meetings. Yes, the combined effort between the water saving, as well as the nitrate leaching. We can follow up afterwards to talk more about this topic.

- **Nitrate in Groundwater (MDA)** *(Webex 03:49:30)*
  - High-level purpose/program goal: Funding for activities that evaluate sources of nitrate contamination and promote practices to reduce nitrate in groundwater.
  - Program output or outcome highlights: They completed the Township Testing program where they tested 32,217 private wells in vulnerable townships. They test between 650 and 900 private wells annually through the Central Sands Private Well Network and Southeast Volunteer Nitrate Monitoring Network. They convened 23 local advisory teams (LATs) to discuss groundwater protection strategies, develop BMP lists for the area, and support practice implementation. They have published 12 BMP lists for Level 2 DWSMAs (59,226 acres) and five for high-nitrate townships (56,000 acres). Farmers adopted land management changes in Level 2 DWSMAs. Supported research that developed new nitrogen rate guidelines for corn through UMN, titled Fertilizing Corn in Minnesota. They Co-hosted four statewide conferences reaching nearly 800 attendees and impacting more than 7.5 million acres in Minnesota. They also leveraged CWFs to secure additional resources from USDA for irrigation practices.
  - Total funding since 2009 is $39.7 million.
  - *No Questions/Comments.*
- **Water Sustainability Support (Met Council)** *(Webex 04:05:00)*
  - High-level purpose/program goal: To 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.
  - Program output or outcome highlights: Held over thirty subregional meetings to identify priority issues and projects to fund; in process of updating regional ground water model; communities have updated information on water availability in their area; $1 million stormwater reuse grant program beginning in 2026; large volume use guidance for communities to use; and water values project is complete.
  - This program has been funded since FY10-11. Total funded is $16,488,000.

  Questions/Comments:
  - Dick Brainerd: Can you share more about private wells, what you are looking to do more of? *Answer:* With private wells we have not done a lot in past. We are trying to bring them into the conversation, and we hear from our partners that more needs to be done in this area. We want to make sure the quality of that water is good too. One project we are looking to roll out this year is a regional groundwater synoptic effort. It allows us to go find those wells that have historically in the past looked at water levels, and we send out folks within one week to go collect water levels. This helps build our data. We will be going out to talk to our private well owners. We hope to connect with the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), to figure out more collaboration we can do. It is just the beginning. This is a new area for us. We have private well owners in every county in the metro.
- **SSTS Program Support (MPCA)** *(Webex 04:17:00)*
  - High-level purpose/program goal: Critical funding that supports SSTS programs at the state and county levels. Funding is also made available to counties for grants to homeowners with low income to repair or replace noncompliant SSTS.
  - Program output or outcome highlights: there are over 5,375 SSTS replaced in 2024. About 20 million was available to low-income homeowners for SSTS fixes since FY13; replaced about 2,800 SSTS. They provide crucial funding to support county programs.
  - They have been funded since FY13, and total funded has been $49,140,000.

  Questions/Comments:
  - Gail Cederberg: How do you communicate that this program is available? How do you define low income? *Answer:* The SWCDs usually advertise it, often on their websites. For the definition of low income, we let them decide, but often they use the USDA low-income guidelines.

- **National Park Water Quality Protection Program (VNPCWJPB)** *(Webex 04:27:00)*
  - High-level purpose/program goal: To fund wastewater planning and construction that protects water quality in and around Voyageurs National Park by reducing nutrient and pathogen pollution and safeguarding groundwater, consistent with Clean Water Fund priorities.
  - Program output or outcome highlights: Sanitary sewer expansions and upgrades advancing failing septic systems eliminated; permanent water quality improvements in park-adjacent lakes and groundwater.
  - They have been funded since FY14-15, with a total of $10,400,000 in funds.

  Questions/Comments:
  - Gail Cederberg: Could you give more detail about the Ash River project, of the number of hookups and the number of businesses and private entities. I am curious about the scale of it. *Answer:* Ash River is unique; it is the longest one to get formed into a sewer district. The terrain is also harsh. The lots are too small to build a new septic system to meet current standards. So, they are often trapped. Sometimes the resorts have spent money on a system that fails a few years later. There are not a lot of options. It is a large, linear projects, the cost of implementation goes up due to it. There is also a ton of Canadian shield lead rock. Portions are rock, and then poor soils that require stabilization to keep items in place. The geology is not in our favor. There are seven resorts in Ash River, so they are outputting more sewage than a typical home. We can follow up with ERUs for Ash River.
  - Gail Cederberg: Would they have larger user fees? *Answer:* Yes, based on the amount of output from the resort versus a standard house. It is hard to describe the area, until you see it. There is more traffic and accessibility in the area, but it is growing back from the lake. Council members are welcome to come to see this area in person, to imagine what might be impacting the area.
- **Private Well Initiative (MDH)** *(Webex 04:49:00)*
  - High-level purpose/program goal: Make sure drinking water is safe for private well users.
  - Program output or outcome highlights: Twenty-one counties and one tribal nation engaged in Private Well Protection grants. Timely and effective response to the EPA directives in 2023 for Southeast Minnesota.
  - It has been funded since 2014 (no funding in FY22-23), with a total funding amount of $12.39 million.

  Questions/Comments:
  - Steve Besser: I was surprised when I saw the list of contaminants, and lead was found in 37 percent of the wells tested! Where is that lead coming from? *Answer:* Like public water supply systems, they come from pipes and well components. It is not coming from the groundwater.
  - Dick Brainerd: It is voluntary, but is that reality? Can you share more about it? *Answer:* Protecting people who rely on private well is a patchwork of efforts spread across agencies. If they find items in community systems, they search for nearby private wells. It is still voluntary to provide the samples.

- Reminders: Please email any follow-up questions for any presentations provided. Council members, please send any revised scores to Jen Kader by end of day Wednesday.

Adjournment *(Webex 05:04:38)*

MINNESOTA
CLEAN WATER COUNCIL

CLEAN WATER LAND & LEGACY AMENDMENT
YOUR Clean Water Fund AT WORK

March 24, 2026

The Honorable Josh Heintzeman
Co-Chair, House Environment & Natural Resources Finance and Policy Committee

The Honorable Peter Fischer
Co-Chair, House Environment & Natural Resources Finance and Policy Committee

The Honorable Joe McDonald
Co-Chair, House Legacy Finance Committee

The Honorable Samantha Vang
Co-Chair, House Legacy Finance Committee

The Honorable Nick A. Frentz
Chair, Senate Energy, Utilities, Environment, and Climate Committee

The Honorable Andrew Mathews
Ranking Minority Member, Senate Energy, Utilities, Environment, and Climate Committee

The Honorable Foung Hawj
Chair, Senate Environment, Climate, and Legacy Finance Committee

The Honorable Steve Green
Ranking Minority Member, Senate Environment, Climate, and Legacy Finance Committee

RE: Feedback in response to the February budget forecast from MMB

Thank you for the opportunity to share our feedback regarding the February budget forecast shared by MMB on Friday, February 27.

The Clean Water Council was encouraged by the slight uptick in funding forecasted for the Clean Water Fund for both the FY26-27 and FY28-29 biennia. In our statutory role as advisors to the Legislature and the Governor on implementation of the Clean Water Legacy Act and use of Clean Water Funds (Minn. Stat. 114D), the Council recommends carrying over any supplemental amounts for inclusion in the FY28-29 budget. Given current economic uncertainties and continued increases in costs, the Council feels this is the prudent course of action, and one that will allow the Council to recommend stronger financial support for priorities in FY28-29 that protect, enhance, and restore Minnesota's surface waters, groundwater, and drinking water.

We acknowledge that neither the House nor Senate Legacy Finance Committees are seeking to pass a supplemental funding bill, and wanted to commend you for this decision and express our support.

The Council is currently reviewing proposals for the FY28-29 biennium and preparing policy statements regarding priority concerns for Minnesota's residents and waters. We look forward to sharing those with you in the future.

If you have any questions, please contact Administrator Jen Kader at jen.kader@state.mn.us. Thank you for your service and for your consideration.

Sincerely,

John Barten
Chair, Clean Water Council

Steve Christenson
Chair, CWC Budget & Outcomes Cmte

Jen Kader
Administrator, Clean Water Council

Clean Water Council

Revised draft for Policy Committee consideration 3/27/26

Large-volume water users

Summarized Policy Statement

In response to a recent increase in interest from prospective large-volume water users and demonstration of clear need for a coordinated response, the Clean Water Council recommends that the State of Minnesota implement the following actions to protect groundwater across jurisdictional boundaries and for future generations:

- Enhance regional groundwater models.
- Increase intention around siting and design of new facilities with respect to water supply.
- Incorporate large-volume water users as considerations in existing state, regional, and local water plans.

These actions are expanded upon under "Recommendations", beginning on page 3.

Problem Statement

Minnesota is a water rich state. However, water is not an unlimited resource. Large increases in water use can impact individuals, businesses, communities and ecosystems. Of particular concern are potential increases in the presence of large water volume users in Minnesota, or those using more than 100 million gallons of water per year or one million gallons per day. Much attention has been directed towards the siting of new hyperscale data centers that can withdraw up to 1-5 million gallons of water per day - the equivalent of a small city[1]. Quality can also be impacted, as pumping of large volumes of water can change groundwater chemistry through changing flow patterns and mobilizing contaminants such as arsenic, manganese, and others. Private well interference and quality changes can create hardship for users and financial risks for municipalities. Additionally, accessing and transporting large volumes of water to support new facilities and managing the subsequent wastewater streams can create challenges for local infrastructure capacity, leading to additional financial and planning implications for a community. The addition of multiple large-volume water users within a single community (or adjacent communities) can therefore create significant impacts on local and regional groundwater sustainability, local water quality, groundwater-dependent waters, ecosystems, and future availability of groundwater.

Water for domestic consumption is considered by the State of Minnesota as the highest priority use (Minn. Stat. §103G.261). The prioritization of uses is an important safeguard, ensuring that water is available for domestic consumption (public and private), especially in the event of an emergency. Water appropriation requests from proposers of new data centers have caused concern that this

[1] (Include reference to Freshwater data centers fact sheet, McKinsey & Company Report, and MCEA documents)

statute could be circumvented, that or water suppliers could feel pressure to continue to provide supply in the event of an emergency longer than they should.

Municipalities and communities also may not have access to sufficient information to comprehensively evaluate proposals. In order to understand potential risks, reviewers need to be able to be able to know how much water would be needed to supply the proposed large volume water user, what that volume of pumping would mean for local groundwater or surface water quantity and quality, how climate trends or changes could influence availability for all users, what the cumulative impact could be, and more. Unfortunately, this information is often not available or not available at the scale necessary, do not include planned-but-not-built developments, or are not made available in a way to support informed decision making and a prioritization of water in considering proposals. Higher resolution models and more accessible and appropriate risk-assessment tools are needed.

Proposals can also be too early in design to contain sufficient information about water need, and nondisclosure agreements can limit transparency. Even if higher resolution models and tools are available, lacking this information makes it hard for any evaluation to be relevant.

Communities and the State need data that are at a relevant scale, include planned developments, incorporate understanding of water quality conditions and impacts of changes in groundwater flow, considers an uncertain future, and more.

Given the resources listed above and more, we have information and tools available to enhance decision making. While we can build on top of that, much of the work can simply be leveraged. For instance, some groundwater models exist for the metro region and other parts of Minnesota at greater risk of over withdrawal. These models and other tools can inform safe water yield thresholds. However, as a state, we do not yet have a good way to understand the cumulative impact of large-volume water users everywhere or assurances that this information is consistently leveraged between plans and jurisdictions.

Audience and Purpose

The Clean Water Council has a statutory role to foster coordination and cooperation as part of the Clean Water Legacy Act. The Council is interested in protecting groundwater across jurisdictional boundaries and for future generations. The Council encourages improved data sharing, local government capacity building, and broader intergovernmental collaboration. The Clean Water Council is interested in understanding risks associated with overuse or contamination of water from large-volume water users, and in addressing the potential gaps in the statewide, regional and local decision-making processes.

The purpose of this document is to identify policy recommendations and investments that address potential environmental and social problems associated with large-volume water users in Minnesota, including those already permitted and operational. We acknowledge that large volume water users also raise concerns related to energy, air pollution, long-term economic development,

and other issues. However, the Council within its charge is interested predominantly in the implications specific to water.

Fortunately, work in recent years has better equipped Minnesota to respond to the influx of interest from large-volume water users. The following tools or resources have been developed as a result of Clean Water Fund investments, and can be leveraged and expanded upon to meet the challenge:

- Groundwater Restoration and Protection Strategies have built on statewide monitoring information to identify strategies to protect and restore groundwater quality and quantity
- One Watershed, One Plan has elevated groundwater as an issue on regional scales across the state, drawing attention to need for protection and restoration
- The DNR has engaged in aquifer monitoring for water supply planning across the state, with specific attention to areas of concern
- Modeling and planning for Little Rock Creek Area Water Use Conflict
- Planning and technical support for the three Groundwater Management Areas
- Staff in the Twin Cities metropolitan region have been researching and planning around water sustainability and have worked to cultivate intergovernmental relationships:
    - Metro Model 3 (Metro Model 4 in the works)
    - Multi-community Wellhead Protection Plan pilot
    - Subregional water planning collaboratives
    - Metropolitan Council commissioned research paper on large-volume water users, due in early 2026, that will have a checklist guide for cities to use

The Environmental Quality Board also developed a new Groundwater Report in 2025 that provides great detail and content, providing recent updates on current science, challenges, risks, and needs. This document can help provide background and insights as the state works to address the increased interest from large volume water users.

The Council also recognizes the need for legislative and policy action to address the challenge of large-scale water users. As such, the memo includes recommendations for agencies, legislators, and other elected officials who oversee policies, procedures, permitting, and resource allocation as they relate to water resources and potential threats to water quality and quantity.

Water in aquifers, like water on the surface, does not adhere to jurisdictional boundaries. Decisions in one community impact the communities around it, and vice versa. As demonstrated above, large-volume water users impact both groundwater quantity and quality. Whether we look at individual proposals or cumulatively, we do not have the tools to fully understand regional impact. Regional planning support for cities and intergovernmental collaboration is needed to help manage for regional impact.

At the end of the 2025 legislative session, the State Legislature set new expectations for pre-application and early coordination with the Department of Natural Resources for any new data centers. This provides an opportunity to discuss the regulatory framework, but also do an assessment of possible locations under consideration and share resource concerns, trends, other wells, etc. While this can help to address some siting concerns and support private industry and

communities in making early informed decisions regarding data centers, additional action with regard to all large-volume water users is needed to safeguard water availability for today and the future.

Recommendations

In response to a recent increase in interest from prospective large-volume water users and demonstration of clear need for a coordinated response, the Clean Water Council recommends the following actions to protect groundwater across jurisdictional boundaries and for future generations:

1. **Enhance regional models.**
    a. The Department of Natural Resources and Metropolitan Council should continue to develop and enhance regional groundwater models in order to better understand current conditions across the state, the influence of new proposals, and cumulative impacts on water supply, aquifers, and groundwater dependent surface waters and ecosystems. Ensure these regional models factor in forecasted population growth and climate change.
    b. The Department of Natural Resources should modernize the Statewide Drought Plan to incorporate threats from extreme drought fueled by climate change and address triggers for groundwater conservation based on risks to groundwater supply.
    c. The Department of Natural Resources should collaborate with neighboring states, Tribal governments, and Canada to more fully reflect and manage water conditions where activities have the potential to impact surface water and groundwater quantity and quality in Minnesota.

2. **Increase intention around siting and design of new facilities with regard to water supply.**
    a. Local utilities and municipalities should coordinate with the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (and the Met Council, where appropriate) on the siting of new facilities from a groundwater availability and water supply perspective. First Stop is a good example for data centers.
    b. The Department of Natural Resources should continue to coordinate with the Minnesota Department of Health from a chemistry and water quality perspective in reviewing permit applications.
    c. The Legislature should require proposers of a new large-volume water use to publicly disclose anticipated water use as a part of environmental review.
    d. The Metropolitan Council and Department of Natural Resources should develop a framework or tool to aid the public and private sector in better evaluating water risk and/or more strategically site or design large-volume water use industries.
    e. Encourage co-location of large-volume water uses with wastewater treatment facilities or other beneficial industries, and consider opportunities for recharge of treated discharge.

f. Local permitting authorities should require proposers of a new large-volume water use to incorporate water efficiency mechanisms such as closed loop geothermal systems and water reuse.

3. **Incorporate large-volume water users as considerations in existing state, regional, and local plans.**
    a. The state agencies and local government units should include large-volume water users as considerations in Groundwater Restoration and Protection Strategies (GRAPS) and the development or amendment of comprehensive watershed management plans (One Watershed One Plan or other approved plans). Groundwater use and discharges to surface waters from data centers should be of particular interest. Encourage amendments for comprehensive watershed management plans in areas which have recently seen an increased interest from developers.
    b. State, regional, and local governments as well as water suppliers should include large-volume water users as considerations for municipal planning efforts, more closely aligning land use decisions with water supply and protection plans, including local and regional Wellhead Protection Plans, Water Supply Plans (including emergency preparedness plans), Local Water Plans, and Local Comprehensive Plans in the metro area.
    c. Local planners should coordinate with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, and Metropolitan Council Environmental Services when appropriate, on wastewater discharge.
    d. Water suppliers and the Department of Natural Resources should integrate groundwater risk assessment models into coordinated emergency response plans to address the concern of over-allocation of water to particular uses.
    e. When new land use decisions allowing for large-volume water users are proposed, the Department of Natural Resources should review impacts on high-priority current and future water use; Minnesota Department of Health should be engaged for review of Drinking Water Supply Management Areas, water chemistry and private well considerations; and, in the metro area, the Metropolitan Council should review whether impacts to water availability will require a change to population forecasts or service availability. These local planning resources should be informed by statewide risk management plans including the Statewide Drought Plan.
    f. The Metropolitan Council, Department of Natural Resources, and Department of Health should work with the League of Minnesota Cities, and the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities, Minnesota Association of Townships, and other interested entities for proactive outreach and training opportunities regarding planning for and responding to interest from new large-volume water users, as described in other bullet points in this document.

DRAFT CWC BOC Goals - 2026

Theme	Goal	Actions (calendar year quarters)
Budget	Deliver budget recommendation for FY28-29 to meet MMB forecasts and legislative deadlines	• Utilize new program scoring rubric & process to inform budget recommendations favoring clean water outcomes (1Q-2Q) • Review accumulated proposal scores and input, and develop initial recommendation by mid-year (2Q-3Q) • Capture lessons learned from initial season of using scoring rubric for future improvements (4Q) • Adapt to MMB forecasts and develop final recommendation by December (4Q)
Outcomes	Monitor overarching outcomes to track water quality improvements and ensure CWF dollars are being spent effectively and efficiently	• Support the biennial Performance Report measurement of outcomes (2Q) • Receive routine updates on outcomes via KPI dashboard (2Q-3Q) • Review Outcome updates embedded in proposal form for program-based outcome tracking (2Q-3Q)
Communication	Enhance communications about CWC budget processes & CWF outcomes to inform, consult, and involve the public and stakeholders per Minn. Stat. 114D.35	• Support timely issuance of Performance Report for legislative audience (2Q) • Communicate BOC goals for 2026 and develop initial KPI Dashboard for CWC audience (2Q) • Leverage communications capabilities of CWC fund recipients for external stakeholder audiences (continuous-4Q) • Engage stakeholders in line with CWC Public Participation Plan (continuous-4Q)

ID	Program	Proposer	Brief Description	26-27 Amount	Proposed Change	Range (Mean)	BOC priority	BOC direction	Notes
17	One Watershed, One Plan	BWSR	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 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.	$ 1,000,000	Hold Steady	29-50 (43.1)	High	Hold	
18	Watershed Based Implementation Funds	BWSR	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.	$ 88,100,000	Increase	26-50 (43.6)	High	Increase	Need to be realistic about how much is possible as a total.
19	Riparian Protection and Soil Loss Assistance	BWSR	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 entitities receive Riparian Aid not CWF dollars).	$ 4,000,000	Hold Steady	31-49 (38.4)	Medium	Reduce	
20	Technical Evaluations	BWSR	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.	$ 200,000	Hold Steady	35-45 (39.2)	Medium	Hold	2 high priority
21	Nonpoint Restoration and Protection	DNR	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 conservation groups, and landowners to help them compare implementation options and better understand approaches that address the root causes of water quality probelms and improve watershed health.	$ 4,350,000	Hold Steady	33-47 (40.4)	High	Hold	
22	Technical Assistance	MDA	The 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 demonstration 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 WRAPS, 1W1P, as well as statewide models and decision-support tools.	$ 3,200,000	Increase	36-47 (41.7)	High	Increase	
23	Native Mussel Restoration	DNR	Native freshwater mussles 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 propogate (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.	$ 700,000	Hold Steady	30-49 (41.7)	High	Increase	2 medium, 2 hold steady. Question of what capacity for increase there is.

24	Great Lakes Restoration	BWSR	This grant funding provides support to SWCDs 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 GLRI's Action Plan, already identified through WRAPS, and Comprehensive Watershed Management Plans developed through 1W1P.	$ 1,000,000	Hold Steady	28-50 (36.7)	Split H/M	Hold	1 increase
25	Conservation Corps of MN and IA	BWSR	Since 2012, BWSR has contracted with CCMI for delivery of services (restoration, maintenance, training, and other activties) 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 FY26-27, the funding was legislatively directed in appropriation language and previously used Surface and Drinking Water Protection/Restoration Grants or Accelerated Implementation funding sources.	$ 1,500,000	Hold Steady	26-50 (36.1)	Medium	Hold	2 high
26	Irrigation Water Quality Protection	MDA	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 BMPs, and contributes to the development of irrigation scheduling tools for Minnesota irrigators. Farmers, crop advisers, and SWCD staff benefit form expanded education, training, and direct technical support, and the practices help reduce nitrate leaching losses from irrigated crop production to groundwater.	$ 310,000	Hold Steady	24-48 (38.6)	High	Hold	1 medium, like the prevention component. Small but mighty program.
27	Nitrate in Groundwater	MDA	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 fertilizer 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.	$ 6,200,000	Increase	35-48 (41.9)	High	Increase	
28	Water Sustainability Support Program	Met Council	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, conduct investigations into groundwater and surface water interaction, looks at ways to minimize impacts from this on both our drinking water and surface waters, and support the residents of the metropolitan area.	$ 2,750,000	Hold Steady	23-45 (36.7)	Medium	Hold	2 high prioirity
29	Enhanced SSTS Program Support	MPCA	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).	$ 6,881,000	Increase	35-50 (41.2)	High	Increase	1 hold steady
30	Voyageurs National Park Clean Water Project - National Park Water Quality Protection Program	Voyageurs National Park Clean Water JPB	These projects protect and restora 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.	$ 1,500,000	Increase (S7,400,000)	20-45 (36.6)	High	Increase	Caution about increasing to the 7.4M amount. Support of an increase of some amount though.

31	Private Well Initiative	MDH	The Private Well Initiative proposes a comprehensive approach to ensuring safe drinking water for the more than 1.1M Minnesotans who rely on private wells. Building on the work of existing state and local programs, the initiative improves understanding of contaminant occurence 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.	$ 6,000,000	Increase	36-50 (42.6)	High	Increase

Input from previous 2 years

- Last budget cycle
- Strategy year convos
- Field Tour
- Surveys

Proposal & Rubric

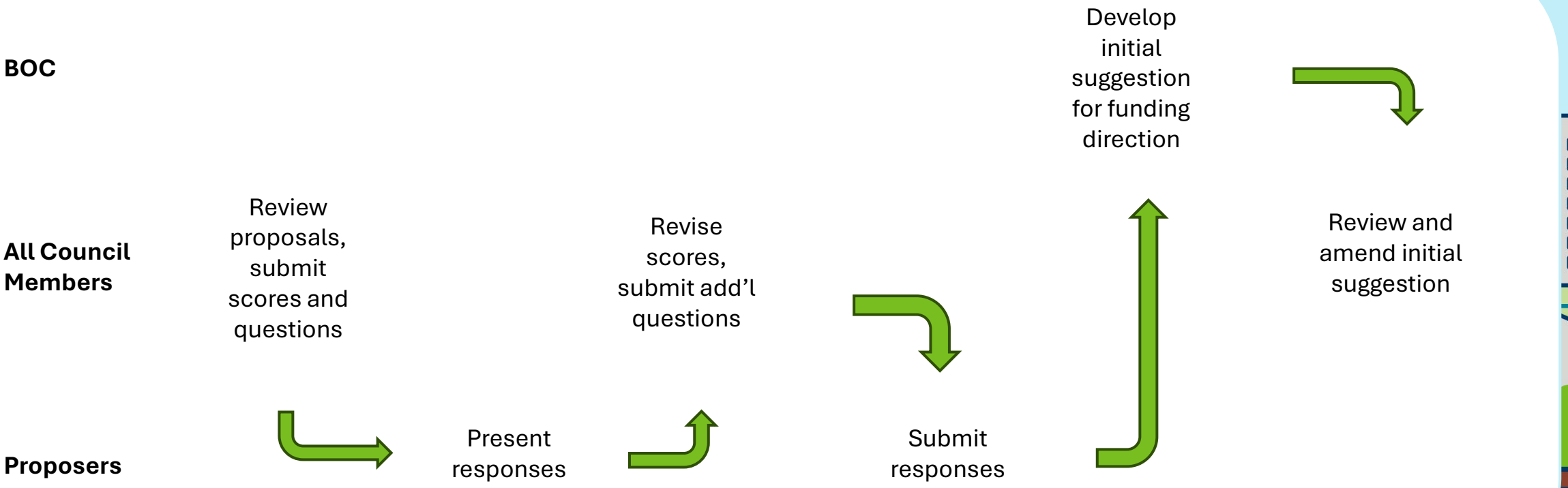
- Values
- Priorities

Proposal review phase (Feb – June)

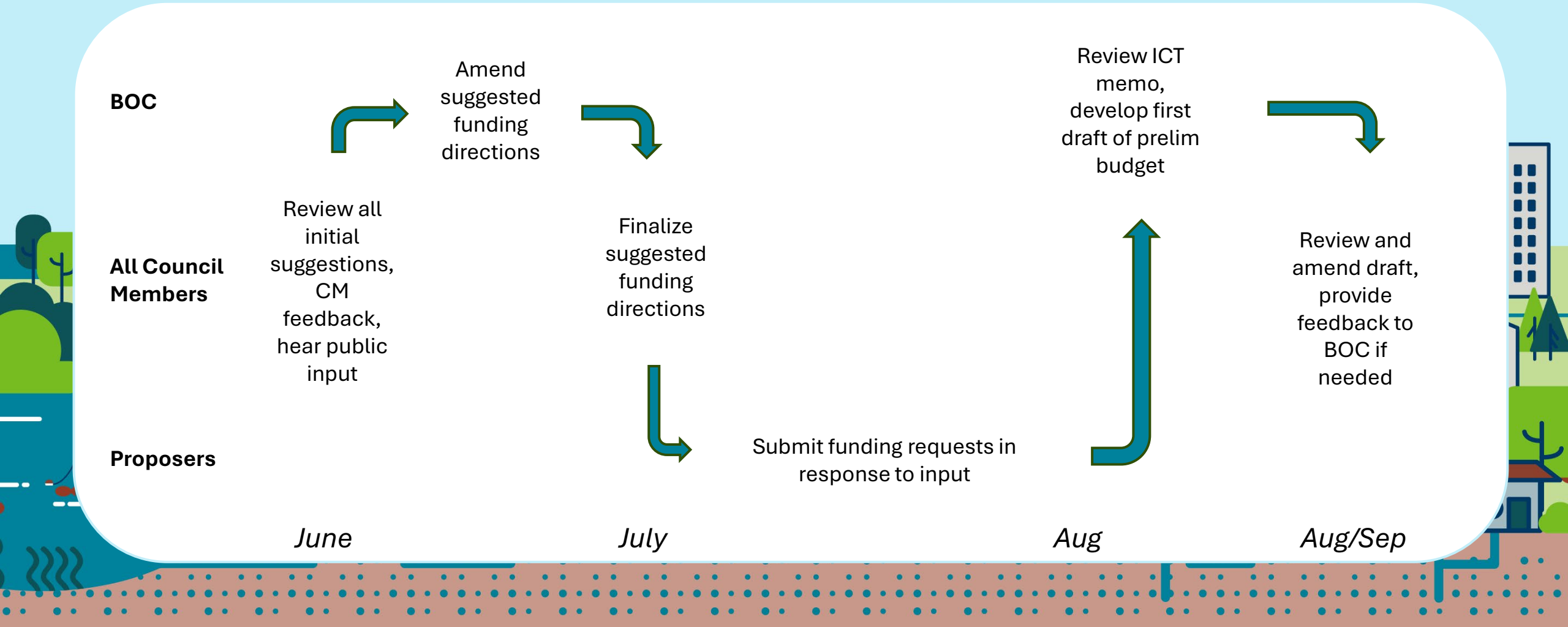
Preliminary Budget Development Phase (June-Sep)

Final budget recs (Jan)

Proposal Review Phase (x4, Feb-June)



Preliminary Budget Development Phase



FY28-29 CLEAN WATER FUND PROPOSAL

Program Title:	Chloride Reduction program
Program Number (if applicable):	38
Agency/Organization Name:	Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
Program website:	Chloride reduction program | Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

Program Contact	
Name	Brian Timerson
Email	Brian.timerson@state.mn.us
Phone	651-757-2785

Person Filling Out Form	
Name	Brian Timerson
Email	Brian.timerson@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: Statewide Chloride Management Plan and supports NPDES chloride permit requirements_____

Abstract

The MPCA Chloride Reduction program provides assistance, grants, training, and education & outreach to communities, permittees, and partner organizations to help reduce chloride at its source and protect water quality. Chloride is a permanent pollutant—it does not break down over time—so preventing it from entering the environment is the most effective and cost-efficient strategy for protecting both surface water and groundwater from chloride contamination.

Water Quality Impact

Which step of the Water Management Framework does this program most fit under: **Implementation, and also supports Monitoring & Assessment, WRAPS development and Problem Investigation.**

The MPCA Chloride Reduction program advances the goals of the Minnesota Water Management Framework by reducing chloride pollution at its source and strengthening statewide efforts to protect and restore water resources. The program directly advances implementation, supporting and empowering communities and permittees to implement targeted chloride reduction actions that prevent chloride from entering surface waters and groundwater. By reducing chloride at the source, the program supports long-term protection for lakes, rivers, streams, and drinking water sources.

The program also contributes to monitoring, assessment, and characterization by helping communities understand chloride sources through the Smart Salting Tool and chloride education, supporting monitoring efforts of chloride sources, lakes, streams, and groundwater. It contributes to Problem Investigation by promoting best practices and offering technical assistance that helps partners identify and fund effective chloride reduction strategies.

Through training, grants, and outreach, the program supports local partners to incorporate chloride source reduction into WRAPS and GRAPS processes. It further supports comprehensive watershed management plans by equipping local governments with the tools and knowledge needed to prioritize chloride reduction within One Watershed, One Plan. The Smart Salting Tool also provides essential support for developing chloride TMDLs.

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.

Accelerate statewide chloride reduction progress through expanded chloride reduction grant program. The current funds allow for a limited number of projects to be funded. Increasing the available funds will allow for more communities to received funds to implement chloride reduction projects. This will accelerate chloride reduction, which is critical given its permanent nature.

Continue to provide statewide Smart Salting training capacity and expanding access to small and low-income communities. The current model relies heavily on hiring contractors for program support, this approach has become increasingly expensive and unsustainable for a program that is expected to lead a statewide training program. It is possible an additional training staff person may be needed.

Strengthen statewide education & outreach through development of new tools/resources, workshops, and direct support to local stakeholders and permittees. To date there has been limited capacity within the program to provide the necessary resources and support. This proposal will allow the program to provide assistance and support for the increased outreach needs.

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

- Training and participation metrics: Number of trainings delivered, participants trained, communities served, and private contractors reached.
- Grant program performance: Documentation of funded projects, implementation progress, and estimated chloride reductions achieved.
- Education and outreach outputs: Number of workshops, demonstrations, and technical assistance engagements delivered by the new outreach FTE.
- Long-term Environmental indicators: Coordination with MPCA monitoring programs to track chloride trends in wastewater discharge, lakes, streams, and groundwater.
- Voluntary Chloride reduction metrics: Chloride reduction results from training participants willing to track and share their data, grant recipients (estimated chloride reduction is required to be tracked by grantees), and available chloride reduction data from permittees.

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

7This FY28/29 proposal includes increased grant funding—that will allow the MPCA to accelerate progress, reduce long-term costs, and strengthen statewide chloride reduction support for communities and permittees.

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 Smart Salting training program has made great progress in providing training to several audiences that are then able to reduce their salt use by 30-70%. The program has expanded the audiences that we offer training opportunities to allowing for strategic salt reduction from various sectors. The two newest trainings created with CWF dollars includes Smart Salting for Water Softening and Smart Salting for Rural Roads. The table below shows the progress that has been made.

Smart Salting Training program	**2021 (CWF)**	**2022 (CWF & ENRTF)**	**2023 (CWF & ENRTF)**	**2024 (CWF)**	**2025 (CWF)**
Number of trainings/workshops/refreshers	40	57	56	54	50
# of certification trainings	40	48	43	43	42
total ind. certified	1267	1410	1246	1384	1484

Note that in 2025 the MPCA began charging a fee for trainings and were not able to offer as many MPCA sponsored (free) trainings which is why there were less trainings offered in 2025. There are no funds available for any free trainings to be offered in 2026.

The chloride reduction grant program has awarded funds to 6 grantees to date to strategically reduce chloride in priority communities. The funds are awarded every 2 years through a competitive process. Grantees are required to track chloride reduction achieved and describe project outcomes in the required final report.

	total amount awarded	**number of grant recipients**	**type of projects funded**
FY27 CWF	$950,000.00	RFP coming summer 2026	chloride reduction for priority communities
FY25 CWF (additional funds received)	$1,754,733.00	4	chloride reduction for priority communities
FY22 ENRTF (one time funding)	$250,000.00	1	water softening rebate for 2 communities
FY20 CWF	$200,000.00	1	water softening rebate for 2 communities

FY20 CWF chloride reduction results: The City of Avon had 37 replacements, five optimizations, and one resin replacement completed. This amounted to an estimated chloride reduction of 22,000 lbs./year. Adding retrofits brings this total to over 25,000 lbs. chloride/year. In the City of Altura 13 replacements and 15 optimizations were completed, resulting in an estimated salt reduction of 31,000 lbs./year and an estimated chloride reduction of 18,800 lbs./year.

FY22 ENRTF chloride reduction results *(included to demonstrate the impact of the grant program)*: 100 water softener replacements, 78 optimizations, and 120 removals were completed in the City of Marshall resulting in an estimated reduction of 127,000 to 194,000 pounds of chloride per year removed from the wastewater stream. The City of Worthington completed 178 replacements and 30 retrofits of individual water softeners, resulting in an estimated reduction of 129,000 pounds of chloride per year removed from the wastewater stream.

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

The chloride reduction program has been very successful in reaching internal program goals, however more aggressive chloride reduction is necessary to achieve long-term water quality goals. This proposed program expansion will align resources with the scale of Minnesota's chloride challenge and ensuring the MPCA can lead effectively, equitably, and efficiently.

Alignment with Clean Water Council Strategic Plan

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

The MPCA Chloride Reduction Program is a direct implementation tool for several of the CWC's Strategic Plan's goals including engaging chloride users and reducing salt pollution. This program is the primary

statewide mechanism for delivering these outcomes through training, technical assistance, grants, and the Smart Salting Tool. Another goal met includes protecting surface and groundwater by providing critical services that allow communities to reduce chloride at the source and meet water quality standards. Building local capacity statewide is a goal that this program fulfills this by offering statewide training, grants, and supporting communities with limited staff or technical expertise. Collaborating with local stakeholders on chloride related issues has long been a priority for MPCA program staff who have built long-lasting partnerships with many organizations. The chloride reduction program also helps to fulfill the goal of supporting monitoring and TMDL development by providing chloride-use estimates and reduction strategies through the Smart Salting Tool. Advancing equity in Clean Water Fund investments will also be achieved through this proposal by allowing the program to prioritizing access to trainings, resources and grants for small, rural, and low-income communities.

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

The MPCA Chloride Reduction program directly aligns with and supports the MPCA Statewide Chloride Management Plan. Chloride continues to be highlighted in many organizations water reports and goals. The services provided by the MCPA Chloride Reduction program is critical to support others goal to reduce chloride pollution. A few examples include:

EQB 2025 Groundwater Policy Report

Clean Water Council Policy

MCSC Chloride Reduction position statement

Upper Mississippi River Basin Association Chloride Resolution

Minnesota Watersheds chloride reduction resolution

Interconnection

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

Connected CWF-supported programs: The MPCA Chloride Reduction program collaborates with many internal water-related programs to support and improve chloride reduction in those programs. Collaboration with the MPCA MS4 program and wastewater programs are two of the programs where a significant amount of coordination occurs. These funds are leverageed in that the programs are aligned and the Chloride Reduction program can offer targeted resources, trainings, and support to permittees. There is also a significant partnership with the MPCA Watershed program work. This partnership allows for resources needed for addressing choride reduction to be streamlined and efficient and avoiding duplicate efforts. This results in effcienct uses of CWF and maximizing results.

Connected non-CWF-supported programs: There are many programs that the MPCA Chlroide Reduction program are connected with, as partnersips and collaboration are a core function of the program. A few exmaples include the Minnesota GreenCorps program, the MPCA Small Business Assistance program, MnDOT, and MnTAP.

Non-CWF Funding

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

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

Funding Source	Anticipated Amount	Degree of Security (%)
General Environmental funds – MPCA Chloride Coordinator FTE	*$350,000*	*100%*
Smart Salting training fee revenue	*$190,000*	*70%*

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

The revenue generated by the training fee is based on an estimated 60 trainings per year, which is dependent on the needs and available funds from local hosts so is an estimate and not a guaranteed amount. It could be more or less than estimated.

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? _____
- 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.

__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)
  The Chloride Reduction Program has been built on partnerships and the collective ideas and chloride needs is constantly driving the continued growth and development of the program. For example the need for MS4 permittees to provide annual training of all their winter maintenance staff was the motivation for creating new refreshers for them to attend in between certification trainings. And now others are benefiting from the development of these new training opportunities. There are too many partners of the program to list here, but they consist of cities,

counties, watershed organizations, MnDOT, private contractors, researchers, and environmental groups.

- Please describe how this program advances environmental justice and promotes equity. (150 words) The program has looked for opportunities to support environmental justice by incorporating EJ areas into the competitive grant process and promoting training opportunities to low-income communities. This proposal aims to improve and promote equity with our Smart Salting training program as the new fee structure has created barriers to participation by small and low income communities. The program has had some program materials translated to ensure non-English communities have access to our resources. This proposal will allow for more resources to further this work.

- 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.

Please see attachments.

CWF Communication Plan

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

The program will continue to communicate Clean Water Fund support through all program materials and events. This includes explicit recognition in all training promotion, registration and training content and materials. All chloride reduction program outreach efforts including public facing web content, training materials, grant announcements, and community presentations will include the CWF logo. Passthrough grant recipients will continue to receive clear guidance on funding requirements, reporting expectations, and acknowledgment language. The MPCA will share updates through email lists, social media, and direct communication with partners to ensure consistent, transparent messaging about Clean Water Fund investments in the program.

PRIOR APPROPRIATIONS	
FY10-11	
FY12-13	
FY14-15	
FY16-17	
FY18-19	
FY20-21	$500,000
FY22-23	$520,000
FY24-25	$2,300,000
FY26-27	$1,300,000
TOTAL APPROPRIATED TO DATE	**$4,620,000**

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	
FY16-17	
FY18-19	
FY20-21	1.0
FY22-23	1.0
FY24-25	1.0
FY26-27	1.0

Capitol Region Watershed District
595 Aldine Street
Saint Paul, MN 55104
(651) 644-8888 • capitolregionwd.org

4/10/2026

Minnesota Clean Water Council
520 Lafayette Road North
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Dear Members of the Clean Water Council,

On behalf of the Capitol Region Watershed District (CRWD), I am writing to share the attached letter we submitted to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) on January 29, 2026. In this letter, we voiced our concern over chloride pollution in our watershed and requested increased financial support for the MPCA's Chloride Reduction Program.

CRWD views chloride pollution from road salt to be one of the most significant and detrimental issues facing our District water and natural resources as well as stormwater infrastructure. Our recent work to develop a Chloride Pollution Prevention Plan for our District has reinforced our view that prevention through source reduction is the most effective strategy for reducing chloride pollution.

As described in our letter to the MPCA, the continued effort by local organizations like watershed districts will fall short to protect our water resources without stronger regional and state coordination and increased financial support. Therefore, we want to affirm our support for the Clean Water Council (CWC) Policy Statement: Reducing Chloride Pollution from Winter De-icing Chemicals, and express our strong commitment to chloride reduction in CRWD and the state of Minnesota as a whole.

As you consider priorities for the upcoming Clean Water Fund budget, we respectfully ask that you support enhanced funding for chloride reduction initiatives that would help carry out the solutions outlined in the CWC Policy Statement.

Thank you for your continued leadership in this and other important issues affecting Minnesota's water resources. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Bob Fossum

Bob Fossum

Deputy Administrator

Capitol Region Watershed District

Nine Mile Creek Watershed District
12800 Gerard Drive
Eden Prairie, MN 55346
(952) 206-0980
ninemilecreek.org

12/29/2025

Minnesota Clean Water Council
520 Lafayette Road North
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Dear Members of the Clean Water Council,

On behalf of the Nine Mile Creek Watershed District, I am pleased to share the attached letter that was submitted to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) on December 29, 2025. This correspondence outlines the District's ongoing concerns regarding chloride pollution and formally requests increased funding support for the MPCA's Chloride Reduction Program.

Chloride contamination continues to present a significant and growing challenge for water resources within our watershed and across the state. As detailed in the attached letter, despite sustained local efforts, meaningful progress will require stronger statewide coordination, expanded technical support, and increased financial investment.

As you consider priorities for the upcoming Clean Water Fund budget, we respectfully ask that you support enhanced funding for chloride reduction initiatives. Increased investment in this area represents a critical opportunity to accelerate progress toward meeting water quality standards and protecting Minnesota's lakes, rivers, and streams.

Thank you for your continued leadership and commitment to safeguarding Minnesota's water resources. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or would like additional information.

Sincerely,

Erica Sniegowski
Administrator
Nine Mile Creek Watershed District

Nine Mile Creek Watershed District
12800 Gerard Drive
Eden Prairie, MN 55346
(952) 206-0980
ninemilecreek.org

12/29/2025

Katrina Kessler, Commissioner
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
520 Lafayette Road North
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Dear Commissioner Kessler,

On behalf of the Nine Mile Creek Watershed District, I am writing to share our concerns regarding chloride pollution and to request increased support for the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's chloride reduction program.

Chloride pollution remains one of the most difficult pollutants for the Nine Mile Creek Watershed District to address, both in terms of its widespread and persistent impact on water quality and the limited tools available to effectively address it. Despite long-term, sustained efforts by our district—including education, partnerships with other local governments, and implementation of chloride reduction best management practices—chloride concentrations in Nine Mile Creek and other waterbodies in our jurisdiction continue to increase.

Nine Mile Creek is subject to an approved Total Maximum Daily Load for chloride and requires an estimated 62 percent reduction in chloride loading to meet state water quality standards. This level of reduction illustrates the magnitude of the challenge. While watershed districts can and do take meaningful action at the local level, chloride pollution is a regional issue driven by winter maintenance practices and land use patterns that extend beyond individual jurisdictions.

As we enter a new Clean Water Council budget year, and recognize that the MPCA will be submitting funding requests, we strongly encourage the agency to prioritize increased investment in its chloride reduction program. Expanding funding for the established MPCA chloride reduction program represents one of the most immediate and effective opportunities to accelerate progress to protect Minnesota waterbodies from chloride pollution. Additional funding would support expanded training and technical assistance, local implementation efforts, outreach and education, and would support the increased capacity needed to make progress on chloride reduction goals.

We appreciate MPCA's leadership on water quality issues and thank you for considering this request to increase chloride reduction funding to protect Minnesota's water resources from chloride pollution.

Sincerely,

Erica Sniegowski

Erica Sniegowski
Administrator
Nine Mile Creek Watershed District

A__Chloride Reduction

Comments:

- Clear outgoing messages required - average citizen still clueless.
- Excellent ROI, True influence approach with impact at scale.
- Essential program and supportive of continued funding.

Questions:

1. Current and Expected Reach
    a. If funding is increased as requested, how many communities will receive funds to implement reduction programs?
    b. How many applicators will be trained over the two years of the funding?
    c. What is the geographical reach of this program? What parts of the state leverage this program?
    d. Most of the training attendees seem to be public road authorities - what is needed to get more private sector applicators to attend Smart Salting training?
2. Scale
    a. With chloride contamination growing as a cause of impaired waters in MN, is this program thinking big enough?
    b. What would MN need to do to stop & reverse impaired waters listings from chloride contamination?
3. Focus
    a. What fraction of the grants goes toward chloride reductions from water softener/in wastewater streams and what fraction of the grants go toward chloride reduction from road salt. In other words, I'm interested in knowing which source of chloride is most supported by this program. The largest source of chloride is road salt - do your program investments mirror the sources?
    b. It's difficult to tease out in the proposal which chloride source is targeted - could you clarify? For the 6 grantees - what source of chloride was targeted? i.e. water softening, road salt, fertilizer, etc.
4. Are the grants competitive? And if so what makes a high-priority application?
5. Can you speak to how you will include CWF as a funding source in future comms materials? I don't see it listed on the website, on the Smart Salting page, etc.
6. It appears no free training is being offered in 2026. Please explain the Smart Salt training as it relates to the role of the Chloride Coordinator, free training and training where a fee has been charged.
7. Consulting out an established training program seems expensive - is there a plan to transition to staff-led trainings to better leverage available funding?

FY28-29 CLEAN WATER FUND PROPOSAL

Program Title:	Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies
Program Number (if applicable):	
Agency/Organization Name:	Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
Program website:	Watershed information | Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

Program Contact	
Name	Chad Anderson and Heather Johnson
Email	Chad.anderson@state.mn.us and heather.johnson@state.mn.us
Phone	218-316-3910 or 651-206-9270

Person Filling Out Form	
Name	Chad Anderson and Heather Johnson
Email	Chad.anderson@state.mn.us and heather.johnson@state.mn.us
Phone	218-316-3910 or 651-206-9270

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: ____ Minn. Stat. 114D.20, 26 _____

Abstract (both review)

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.

WRAPS Updates provide the scientific basis to LGUs for prioritizing and targeting watershed planning and implementation via 1W1P. WRAPS Updates can include, but are not limited to, stressor identification reports, TMDL reports, in-depth water body characterization, modeling, and enhanced studies, like lake protection reports. WRAPS Updates contain pollutant reduction and waterbody protection goals to guide the creation of a comprehensive watershed management plan and resulting protection and restoration implementation activities. WRAPS scientifically inform water quality permit programs to assist with appropriate level of regulation. Beyond the work the program does, MPCA's Watershed Program carries We Are Water for the CWC/CWF.

Water Quality Impact

Which step of the Water Management Framework does this program most fit under: Restoration and Protection Strategy Development 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.

By using scientific analyses to focus implementation planning and action to improve water quality, WRAPS are an integral part of the Water Management Framework. The WRAPS Update process follows monitoring and assessment, funded through a separate CWF line item at MPCA. Using monitoring data and assessment information, WRAPS Updates can include, but are not limited to, stressor identification reports, model calibrations based on the latest monitoring data, in-depth water body characterization, and additional TMDL studies. Further products such as protection studies (e.g. lake protection studies, Midway River Study) and restoration studies (e.g. Straight River Nutrient Study and TMDLs) provide focused scientific analyses. These types of efforts help guide implementation efforts.

We are quantifying improvements to water quality through our new effectiveness monitoring efforts, analysis of what implementation is working best (e.g. lakes delistings report), and compiling success stories. Healthier Watersheds website highlights both point source and non-point source implementation, their cost, and benefits to water quality.

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.

    Watershed Program goals for FY26/27:
    1. WRAPS Updates will continue to be relevant to partners according to their priorities while still maintaining MPCA's needs.
    2. Timelines are met for key program elements

3. Continuous monitoring data is peer reviewed by 4/1 of each calendar year.
4. Grant and contracting deadlines are met.
5. Program evaluates ways to coarsely connect WQ and BMP data.
6. Continue to develop success stories
7. Staff provide regular substantive engagement and technical support to local partners and general public.
8. Design a plan for Cycle 3 products/processes by end of FY26.

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

The Healthier Watersheds webpage provides valuable updates on progress for BMPs implemented by watershed, spending by watershed and much more. Watershed Program leadership meets twice monthly to track progress on goals and measures, ensuring resources are being effectively used. Minn. Stat. 114D.26 required the MPCA to complete a WRAPS and TMDL report for each of the state's watersheds by 2023 then update them as needed. MPCA completed all first cycle WRAPS on schedule by June 2023 and eleven WRAPS Updates so far.

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

There are no planned changes at this time. Watershed program leadership continuously looks for ways to improve efficiency, streamline the work, and enhance the overall WRAPS Update and TMDL development process.

WRAPS Updates build upon but do not duplicate the original WRAPS that were produced for each watershed. The Updates consider new water quality data, land use changes, and local planning efforts to further refine understanding of each watershed and guide implementation efforts. They could also include new special products as requested/needed by watershed partners.

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.

All initial WRAPS were completed on time. The program is currently working on second-generation reports. Efficiencies have been gained by using existing data and studies to recategorize some new impairments, reducing the number of new TMDLs needed, and by deferring some lower-priority TMDLs. The program has also informed water quality permits. There are 1,167 wastewater NPDES facilities, with 701 of them that have a waste load allocation in a TMDL, as well as MS4 permits.

b. How close is the program to reaching its long-term goals?
WRAPS Updates are being completed while balancing the need to follow the IWM structure and schedule. Significant progress is made each year and is documented on the Healthier Watersheds website.

The Watershed Program completed initial WRAPS for all 80 major watersheds in June 2023 and WRAPS Updates have already been completed for eleven watersheds. Six WRAPS Updates will be completed in 2026, and the program is on track to complete updates for all watersheds before the end of the CWF. WRAPS Updates not only update strategies and science from the initial report but typically include data requested by LGUs and focused studies, such as lake and stream protection studies or pollutant source assessments. WRAPS Update timing has flexibility to align with LGU needs but generally follows the IWM schedule.

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.

Our work is called out several times in the CWC Strategic plan.

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

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

Strategy – Maintain consistent funding for a statewide monitoring system.

Action: Complete Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) reports as needed
Measure: Publication of TMDL reports by the MPCA

MPCA response: This proposal directly funds the work that produces TMDL reports. Prior to 2008, only 147 TMDLs had been completed and approved by EPA. Since then, over 1,750 TMDLs have been completed and approved by the EPA.

Goal 2: Protect and restore surface waters to achieve 70% swimmable and 67% fishable waters by 2034 by prioritizing and targeting resources by major watershed**.**
Strategy – Identify and refine strategies requited to meet water quality standards in each HUC-8 watersheds
Action: Review and revise previously completed WRAPS
Measure: Completion of second generation of WRAPS

MPCA response: With the completion of the first cycle of WRAPS in June of 2023, work has continued on the second generation of WRAPS, called WRAPS Updates. Eleven WRAPS Updates have already been approved, with 13 planned for release in FY26 or FY27. This will continue every year, with the goal of all watersheds getting a WRAPS Update by 2034.

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.

Action: Support local efforts to engage farmers in water quality efforts.

Measure: Targets for nutrients in the state's Nutrient Reduction Strategy.

***MPCA response**:* MPCA has leveraged federal funds with CWF to develop the state's 2025 Nutrient Reduction Strategy, including nutrient reduction goals at basin and individual watershed scales. Implementation of the NRS will commence in 2026.

Action: Engage non-traditional audiences with water planning and implementation.
Measure: Evaluation of We Are Water and its outreach.
Action: Support local efforts to engage lakeshore property owners and private landowners.
Measure: We Are Water annual report.

MPCA response: With this funding, the Minnesota Humanities Center (MHC) uses the MPCA's *We Are Water MN* exhibit and their technical knowledge in relationship building and storytelling to increase community capacity for sustainable watershed management in multiple watersheds. This supports civic engagement activities that are crucial to return impaired waters to meeting water quality standards, by ensuring deep engagement by local organizations who host the exhibit. Each year, five host sites are choses to hold the exhibit.

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

As part of the Watershed Management Framework, data from the MPCA Monitoring and Assessment feeds into our projects. Our work then directly feeds the science to state-approved local comprehensive water plans and fully supporting the 1W1P. We have multiple years of survey data that indicate that LGUs use our work and find our projects helpful. Our work aligns with federal work with EPA on TMDLs, the Nutrient Reduction Strategy, the Lake Superior Lakewide Action and Management Plan (LAMP) and IJC work for Lake Superior, Lake of the Woods, and the Rainy River. Our work is instrumental to MPCA wastewater and stormwater TMDL implementation (for informing effluent limits and permit conditions) and efforts like the City of Duluth Chloride TMDL. We coordinate with DNR WRAPS work.

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:

- MPCA River and Lake Monitoring and Assessment - The Watershed Program uses watershed-based lake and stream monitoring data, which includes biological, fish contaminant, water chemistry, and pollutant load sampling, to develop TMDLs and develop local strategies needed on the ground to protect and restore waters.
- BWSR Watershed Management Transition (1W1P) - WRAPS Updates inform local water planning to target local implementation activities to areas of highest need in order to see improvements in water quality.
- DNR Lake IBI - DNR fish-based Lake IBI is one important component that is considered during the MPCA watershed assessment process. Specifically, it is the primary tool used to assess whether a lake fully supports aquatic life. WRAPS Updates use this information to guide restoration and protection strategies for local water planning.

- DNR WRAPS - Conducts stream geomorphology surveys which help inform MPCA stressor identification work and the management of DNR's Watershed Health Assessment Framework (WHAF) tools. The WHAF helps identify stream protection tools and provide lake health scores to help prioritize restoration and protection in MPCA's WRAPS Update reports.
- DNR Stream flow monitoring - MPCA flow data is displayed on the cooperative network website. MPCA also relies on DNR Hydrologists to assist with publishing flow data. MPCA Hydrologists help publish and peer review DNR flow data.
- MPCA Wastewater Program - The Watershed Program provides pertinent information from TMDLs to inform both the Wastewater and Stormwater programs at the MPCA and their permits.
- MPCA Chloride Reduction - The Watershed Program has developed several chloride TMDLs to quantify the allowable chloride loading to lakes or streams that will result in water quality standards being attained. These TMDL studies have helped inform MPCA's Statewide Chloride Management Plan and local implementation strategies to reduce chloride to our waterways.
- BWSR Great Lakes Restoration LAMP – MPCA WRAPS Update strategies are incorporated into the Lake Superior Lakewide Area Management Plan (LAMP), under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. MPCA staff promote opportunities for implementation of these strategies with partners, while looking to leverage multiple state, federal, and local funding sources.
- We are Water - The Minnesota Humanities Center uses the We Are Water MN exhibit to build community capacity for sustainable watershed management, supporting civic engagement that helps restore and protect waters through strong local participation aligned with each watershed's WRAPS.

Connected non-CWF-supported programs:

- Federal Clean Water Act Section 319 Program - As the Watershed Program continues to roll out effectiveness monitoring at up to seven small watersheds in the state, the MPCA is able to leverage CWF as a match. A wide variety of data is being collected in the small watersheds to gauge effectiveness of CWF and non CWF implementation activities. (Section 319 small watersheds focus | Minnesota Pollution Control Agency)
- Tribal monitoring - The Watershed Program supports several Tribal water quality monitoring programs – some examples being a Lake of the Woods nutrient study and pre-effectiveness monitoring in the Blackduck River Subwatershed.
- Natural Resources Research Institute (NRRI) utilized MPCA's HSPF models to understand how streams might respond under different climate change scenarios within the Camp Ripley Sentinel Landscape (CRSL).

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 per year	Degree of Security (%)

Ex. Private landowner contributions	*$100,000*	*100%*
Environmental Performance Partnership Grant (US EPA)	The MPCA uses an EPA Environmental Performance Partnership Grant (US EPA) in conjunction with Clean Water Funds to supplement and support this work. Amounts vary by grant periods and/or biennial appropriation.	unknown
Federal CWA Section 319	The MPCA will request $2,791,722 in program funds from the EPA for FFY 2025 including $2,791,723 in pass-through funds from the EPA. There will be state and local match of a minimum of $1,861,155.	Less certain as changes at federal level continue to be an unknown.
Federal Hypoxia Funding - NRS	~4.21M	100%
General Fund/Environmental Fund	MPCA uses its appropriations from the Environmental Fund in conjunction with Clean Water Funds to supplement and support this work. Amounts vary by grant periods and/or biennial appropriation.	Unknown
We are Water	MPCA uses appropriations from the Environmental Fund to hire one We are Water Coordinator (.75 FTE), a full time MN Green Corps Member (.50 FTE), and We are Water exhibit staff	Unknown

	(.30 FTE) to support We are Water in conjunction with the Clean Water Funds. Funding varies each biennium depending on staff wages.	

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

CWF supplements WRAPS, leveraging multiple state and federal funding noted above. The program is slightly scalable; some LGU/contractor pass-through funding could be scaled. The program has significantly scaled back its appropriation and staffing from peak workload in FY16-19 and has only recently asked for small increases driven by inflation.

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 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.

____Less than 5_____ %

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)
  Our WRAPS Update work is directed mostly at LGUs, who then use it in water planning and citizen and landowner engagement. In a more tailored approach in this WRAPS Update cycle, we work with each watershed individually to determine what their information needs are and their capacity to help produce products and respond accordingly as we are able. The process begins 2.5 years before IWM when our staff engage with watershed stakeholders to determine local monitoring needs, and this engagement continues through WRAPS Update completion. Watershed staff remain in contact with watershed stakeholders on an ongoing basis, often providing technical assistance on water related questions or concerns. Our field staff

(Hydrologists and Watershed Scientists) also provide technical assistance on monitoring equipment to LGUs when requested. We Are Water engages each annual cohort in program evaluation and evolution.

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

  WRAPS Updates consider Environmental Justice (EJ) in each watershed, and broadly document how these will be addressed in each Watershed Project Charter. Tribal governments are being sent notification letters prior to the initiation of IWM in each major watershed, inviting their participation in the planning process. During the development of the Watershed Project charter, monitoring considerations in relation to EJ areas of concern(s) are required. The Watershed EJ Lateral Team was formed in April 2022 and continues to meet on a regular basis. In FY23, the team developed an Environmental Justice Resource Guide for Watershed Project Managers. In FY24, the EJ Lateral Team began meeting with Watershed Project Managers on an as needed basis to provide collaboration and assistance in EJ planning for watersheds. This continues moving forward.

  The Watershed Program provides financial and staffing support for the We Are Water program, which provides EJ insight by using the Absent Narratives approach to involve and hear from the member 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.
  - Annual WRAPS Update Survey - The Watershed Program conducts an annual survey of key local partners involved in the WRAPS Updates approved during the previous year. The goal is to assess how useful the process and products are for planning and implementation purposes and to identify opportunities for improvement. We continue to see positive feedback on the usefulness of TMDL and Stressor Identification reports. Initial surveys indicated comparatively lower (though not very low) satisfaction with our civic engagement efforts. In coordination with BWSR, MPCA throttled back on that as BWSR and LGUs increased those efforts. In more recent surveys, we see LGUs not finding problem investigation monitoring as relatively useful as other efforts and we are doing less of that, in favor of effectiveness monitoring which LGUs and the CWC are calling for.
  - Communication on the Straight River Nutrient Study - The study was presented to the Legislative Subcommittee for Water Policy and an in-person meeting to discuss the document with Central MN Irrigators in 2025.
  - 2025 Minnesota Water Resources Conference - The MPCA Watershed Division Director was the keynote speaker and panel facilitator on the topic of the 2025 Minnesota Nutrient Reduction Strategy to over 600 attendees at the 2025 Minnesota Water Resources Conference in fall 2025. Also at the conference were presentations on the

Straight River Nutrient Study and a full session on effectiveness monitoring led by Watershed Program staff.

- NRS Webinars - In 2025, there were three MPCA-hosted 2025 NRS webinars that reached 715 attendees. Webinars are available to view here: Minnesota Nutrient Reduction Strategy | Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
- We are Water by nature is an outreach program, hosting exhibits and events over the course of about two months in each of five Minnesota or Tribal communities annually.

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 primary customers of our work are LGUs, who are well-aware of the CWF. We display the Clean Water Fund logo on all of our work products (SID reports, WRAPS Updates, TMDLs, protection studies, etc.) including printed reports, presentations, and fact sheets available on the MPCA website. We share success stories, partially or fully funded by Clean Water Fund through several methods, including the Waterfront Bulletin sent quarterly to over 15,500 subscribers, the MPCA website, and social media. We are Water uses the logo on all of its materials.

PRIOR APPROPRIATIONS	
FY10-11	18
FY12-13	18.8
FY14-15	18.8
FY16-17	20.2
FY18-19	19
FY20-21	15.1
FY22-23	13.45
FY24-25	12.7
FY26-27	14.5
TOTAL APPROPRIATED TO DATE	**150.5**

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

State Employees

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

FY10-11	
FY12-13	31.8
FY14-15	31.5
FY16-17	35.2
FY18-19	35.4
FY20-21	31.2
FY22-23	35

FY24-25	35
FY26-27	33

E__WRAPS (Including TMDLs)

Comments:

- Excellent resources from WRAPS, Healthier Watersheds page, BEET Tracker and NRS and easily accessible.
- Critically important to the CWF's entire existence - regardless of supplement versus supplant analysis, it informs our entire program-based approach.

Questions:

1. How many WRAPS Updates will be completed with this funding?
2. In the last fiscal year a reduction in funding for 2 FTE's occurred yet the overall funding went up 1.8 million. What has occurred programmatically with these changes? Also, 33 FTE's are funded. What is the total cost when compared to the 14.5 million allocated in FY26-27?
3. WRAPS schedule
    a. Is the update schedule - first completed - first updated, or is there an alternative prioritization system?
    b. As federal funds are less available will it be harder to keep up with our 10 year schedule?
4. Use of these resources
    a. How are the WRAPS, NRS and BEET used to inform adjustments to nonpoint pollution reduction approaches, strategies and tactics? Reviewing BEET for selected watersheds where significant activity has taken place, it appears we're a long way from achieving the reductions needed to achieve Nutrient Reduction Strategy goals. Are these plans and tools adequately used to inform action and investment of resources?
    b. Can you speak to how other groups use this data, outside of LGU's? i.e. Environmental nonprofits, federal partners, etc.

FY28-29 CLEAN WATER FUND PROPOSAL

Program Title:	Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies (WRAPS)
Program Number (if applicable):	10
Agency/Organization Name:	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
Program website:	Watershed Health Assessment Framework (DNR website) Watershed Health Assessment Framework (Legacy website) DNR Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies (Legacy) Evaluation of Hydrologic Change Technical Summaries (MN Water Research Digital Library)

Program Contact	
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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: TMDL (M.S.§ 114D.25), Nonpoint Priority Funding Plan (M.S.§ 114D.50 Subd 3)

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 adds geomorphology, hydrology, and connectivity data to the WRAPS process and supports the Watershed Health Assessment Framework (WHAF), supplementing MPCA's biomonitoring and water chemistry data to promote robust watershed health assessments and bridge gaps in watershed science. MPCA and local water managers use DNR data to help identify root causes of water quality problems, compare restoration and protection strategies, and implement resilient, multiple-benefit solutions. The WHAF encourages resource managers, scientists, landowners, and others to explore extensive spatial data at nested watershed scales, without using desktop GIS. Users can save and share custom views, ecological health scores, and more.

3. Water Quality Impact

a. Which step of the *Minnesota Water Management Framework* does this program most fit under:

Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy Development

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.*

Widespread climate and land-use changes in Minnesota have accelerated stream flow increases. Watersheds can endure only so much change to their flow regimes before degradation sets in. Altered hydrology is a frequently identified water quality stressor, but until recently, Minnesota lacked consistently derived data on the nature and degree of change by watershed. DNR staff developed methods to produce such data, identifying the point of greatest change, quantifying changes by flow type, and suggesting levels of concern about potential impacts. This helps inform strategies to protect and restore hydrologic functions critical for water quality, storage capacity, channel stability, and aquatic habitat.

DNR staff identify root causes of biotic and other sediment-related impairments. For example, MPCA might determine that a reach is impaired due to excess sediment. DNR stream geomorphology survey data might indicate streambank erosion as the primary source, and stream instability or as the primary cause. Determining whether the problem is local or systemic is critical to scaling and scoping an effective fix.

WHAF applications (Explorer, Lakes, and Land Cover), data products, and use-cases present information highly relevant to protecting and restoring surface water, groundwater, and drinking water sources.

4. Measurable Outcomes and Progress

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

a. Expected Outcomes for FY28–29 Request

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

- MPCA stressor identification staff and other stream practitioners can readily search, find, and download DNR stream geomorphology surveys to aid stream restoration work.
- Key findings of DNR geomorphology, hydrology, connectivity analyses are consolidated into priorities, targets, and strategies that water managers can readily understand. Assessing their decision support needs help us build their capacity to apply the science.
- The program strengthens Minnesota's capacity to understand hydrologic change, target sediment reduction efforts, and safeguard vital water resources. The resulting work supports more resilient landscapes and better protection of surface water, groundwater, and drinking water sources.

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

Our regional clean water work updates its plan biennially, evaluates progress annually, and will enhance performance measures to better correlate outputs and outcomes. We will continue to track and report annual indicators of progress (e.g., number of surveys, reports, watershed posters, WHAF data updates and new features) and other DNR WRAPS program outcomes (e.g., how data were used and how many users were supported) on the Legacy Amendment website. We also report outcomes to the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) as a condition of leveraging the Fish and Game Fund for some of this work.

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

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

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

We met Cycle 1 objectives and continue to fill gaps in watershed science:

- Surveyed 700+ stream sites and analyzed the data to help diagnose water quality problems, model watersheds, and inform restoration and protection strategies. Developed and started populating a stream geomorphology survey database.
- Developed a hydrologic change evaluation methodology and summarized 20+ indicators for all watersheds having adequate stream flow data.
- Built the WHAF Explorer, Lakes, and Land Cover applications. Added spatial data, health scores, reports, and interpretive resources in collaboration with and in support of other agencies (MPCA, BWSR, MDH).
- Regional curve development and data collection is ongoing. Broad curves have been published on the DNR website, while other are still being refined.

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

Our statewide work plan includes goals that assume continued CWF support through 2034. We are at least five years from reaching mid-range goals, such as completing and publishing reports on certain regional curves and updating hydrologic change analyses as more gage data becomes available.

The WHAF is intended to be responsive to emerging needs to refine restoration and protection strategies. Through strategic review and collaboration with key watershed management groups we look to evolve applications and data products to meet these goals.

5. Alignment with Clean Water Council Strategic Plan

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

- ***Groundwater Vision, Goal 1****—Groundwater quality* and ***Goal 2****—Groundwater sustainable use that avoids adverse impacts:* The WHAF Explorer helps state and local implementers visualize and compare key data statewide, e.g., on township nitrate testing, aquifer-level observation wells, Groundwater Management Areas, vulnerable DWSMAs, and other Groundwater Restoration and Protection Strategy (GRAPS) data related to quality, quantity, and protection of groundwater-dependent surface water features.
- ***Drinking Water Vision, Goal 1****—Public Water Systems* and ***Goal 2****—Private Water Supply Wells.* The WHAF Explorer includes key data related to DWSMAs, the Groundwater Protection Rule, drinking water well density, and more, which public water suppliers and programs for private well owners can use to help plan, implement, and communicate about drinking water protection efforts.
- ***Surface Water Vision, Goal 1****—Monitor, assess, and characterize surface waters*, **Goal *2****—Protect and restore surface waters by prioritizing and targeting resources by major watershed,* and the ***Goal 3 strategy*** *to support competitive grants for protection and restoration*: DNR's geomorphology and hydrology analyses, and WHAF applications help water managers assess watershed health, prioritize target stream and lake restoration and protection efforts, and apply for WBIF and competitive funding. DNR hydrologic change evaluations for 65 streamflow gages in 47 watersheds can be used to help quantify water storage needs (see 1W1P in Interconnected Programs) and opportunities to restore hydrologic function
- ***Vision for all Minnesotans to help, Goal 1****—Local community capacity:* The above-mentioned DNR products can help water managers and landowners understand how surface waters interact with the land that drains to them, understand potential climate and land use impacts on water quality in their watershed, and use that knowledge to help protect and restore valued local waters.

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

- Nonpoint Priority Funding Plan
- Minnesota Nutrient Reduction Strategy

- State Water Plan (Environmental Quality Board)
- Minnesota Climate Action Framework
- State Wildlife Action Plan
- Several DNR strategic plans and resource management plans related to fisheries, wildlife habitat, outdoor recreation, natural heritage, and ecological resources.

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.

Given the foundational role of hydrology, geomorphology, and connectivity in water quality, and the breadth and depth of watershed health factors reflected in the WHAF, this program has many connections to diverse programs

a. Connected CWF-supported programs:

- **MPCA River and Lake Monitoring and Assessment:** MPCA assessment data influences DNR stream survey site selections, and DNR survey findings enhance MPCA water chemistry sampling and biological monitoring assessments. The WHAF incorporates substantial MPCA lake and stream water quality assessment data, including data needed for the WHAF stream protection priorities layer.
- **MPCA WRAPS** and **BWSR One Watershed One Plan**: DNR geomorphology, hydrologic change, and WHAF data help watershed partners update strategy tables in WRAPS reports and targeted implementation schedules in comprehensive watershed management plans. Water balance tables in DNR hydrologic evaluation reports can help inform water storage goals required in plans.
- **DNR's Nonpoint Restoration and Protection Activities** program helps local implementers apply information from DNR streambank erosion, channel stability, and sediment source surveys, culvert inventories, and hydrologic change analyses to site-scale project planning, funding applications, design, and implementation.
- **BWSR Watershed Based Implementation Funding** and **CWF Competitive Grants (Projects and Practices; Accelerated Implementation)**: LGUs use WHAF and DNR stream geomorphology and hydrology data and analyses in applications for BWSR grants or work plans submitted to BWSR.
- Given the complexity, cost, and associated risks of many stream restoration projects, **BWSR's Restoration Evaluation Program** recommends that project managers use geomorphology data and expertise like that available from DNR to help inform decisions throughout the entire project, including proper design and implementation to meet desired outcomes.
- **MDH Groundwater Restoration and Protection (GRAPS)**: DNR staff collaborated with MDH staff to incorporate 16 GRAPS data layers in the WHAF Explorer, including MDH source water protection and MDA groundwater protection program data. This is a

companion to watershed-scale GRAPS reports, allowing users to visualize statewide data that is updated dynamically as new data are collected.

- The **2026 MN Nutrient Reduction Strategy** incorporates information on streambank erosion as a source of excess nutrients from a 2025 *Nutrient Reduction Strategies for Streams and Gullies* publication by DNR stream geomorphology experts.
- **DNR Culvert Replacement Incentives Program** staff use DNR stream sediment source and channel stability survey data, where available, to help design geomorphic stream crossings.
- Mussel data from the **DNR Native Mussel Restoration** initiative (and the non-CWF-supported **Center for Aquatic Mollusks** it supplements) is incorporated in WHAF ecological health score calculations.
- The **DNR Aquifer Monitoring** and **DNR Groundwater Management Area (GWMA)** programs are enhanced by the WHAF app's inclusion of data about DNR's observation well network, GWMAs, and "Aquifer Recharge through Wetland Restoration."
- Data from the **DNR Lake Biological Monitoring and Assessment** and **DNR Nonpoint Restoration and Protection** programs, including Fish IBI, Lakes of Phosphorus Sensitivity Significance, Lakes of Biological Significance, and more, contribute to lake health analysis in the WHAF Lakes app.
- **DNR Stream Flow Monitoring** program data supports the development and display of water use index calculations in the WHAF app.
- **DNR Lidar Hydrography Tools:** The boundaries of the 80 Minnesota watershed used to aggregate data generated by the DNR WRAPS program (and most other Minnesota clean water programs) data are based on thousands of smaller catchments delineated by the lidar program. Lidar-derived digital-dam breachline data may be used to aid and accelerate culvert inventories by DNR WRAPS staff.
- The **MN Water Research Digital Library** features numerous DNR reports from this program, including Evaluation of Hydrologic Change technical summaries and WHAF watershed characterization, health score, and climate summary reports for every watershed. We will soon add 30+ stream geomorphology reports.

b. Connected non-CWF-supported programs:

- As gages in the **DNR/MPCA Cooperative Stream Gaging** network reach 30 years of record, the data will enable scaling DNR's hydrologic change evaluation approach to smaller watersheds. This could help water managers refine water storage strategies and other strategies to address water quality problems related to altered hydrology.
- **DNR Water Appropriation Permitting:** The WHAF Land Cover app leverages DNR water appropriations permitting data by incorporating it into a water use index (percent of runoff consumed by reported water appropriations).
- **DNR Fish Habitat** and **Stream Habitat** programs maintain and populate the DNR Culvert Inventory Database. The database may receive or contribute stream crossing inventories included in certain DNR stream geomorphology studies.

- **MPCA's Small Watersheds Focus** program: DNR sediment reduction strategy recommendations based on a stream stability and sediment source study are helping guide 16 years of implementation efforts in the Wells Creek watershed by Goodhue SWCD, a participant in this EPA-funded MPCA program.
- **BWSR and US Army Corps of Engineers regulatory programs**: DNR staff contributed to the development of the MN Stream Quantification Tool, which these regulatory programs use to assess stream functions for stream and wetland permitting and mitigation decisions. Several WHAF health scores are used in the Catchment Assessment decision-support tool.
- **USDA agricultural conservation cost-share programs**, especially the National Water Quality and Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds initiatives: DNR sediment source studies can help identify catchments where ag BMPs will improve sediment-related water quality problems more so than (or together with) stream restorations, versus catchments where the reverse is true.
- **USGS Streamflow Information Program**: The WHAF Land Cover app and DNR hydrologic change evaluations leverage data from USGS streamflow gages in Minnesota to provide information that supports effective watershed management decisions.
- **USGS National Land Cover Database** and **USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service**: The WHAF Land Cover app brings federal land cover, crop cover, and crop history data to light, in context with other watershed health considerations.
- **Other**: The WHAF Explorer illuminates a trove of data from other state and federal programs too numerous to mention, related to watershed biology, connectivity, geomorphology, hydrology, and water quality.

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%
Game and Fish Fund	$1,505,280	85%

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

Field staff activities leverage the Game and Fish Fund; FY28-29 funding depends on the continuation of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service grant. The General Fund supports substantial contributions by DNR field staff supervisors who help guide the program and by DNR Fisheries staff and others not accounted for here.

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. _**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)*

DNR and MPCA supervisors convened early on to determine what data MPCA needed from DNR. This evolved into a five-agency team that sponsors workshops for 150+ field staff and promotes ongoing multi-agency watershed-scale coordination.

DNR solicited extensive input from MPCA and BWSR field staff about standard deliverables. WHAF staff have led workshops to learn how LGUs use the tool. DNR geomorphologists regularly consult and collaborate with a statewide Stream Practitioners "community of practice."

Participation in WRAPS and 1W1P teams sparks diverse local connections that help us engage staff from tribal governments, technical service areas (TSAs), counties, soil and water conservation districts, watershed districts, and nonprofits in DNR-led training on geomorphology survey and culvert inventory methods and applications.

Directly assisting LGUs with projects and collecting effectiveness data (in our Nonpoint Protection and Restoration program) helps this program evolve to better support local implementation needs.

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

Clean water is essential to all Minnesotans. This program plays a key role in helping communities restore and protect waters that they highly value.

The WHAF Explorer democratizes access to a wealth of data, facilitating efforts to engage underserved groups and enabling anyone with internet access to find their watershed and learn how its health affects the quality of the water they drink, fish, or otherwise use. The Explorer

includes tribal government boundaries and symbology to help quickly identify impaired waters and other features partially or wholly in tribal reservations.

Per the 2025 Nonpoint Priority Funding Plan, we strive to foster environmental justice, engage multiple ways of knowing, and lead in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). DEI is also a DNR priority; we aim to increase staff's cultural competence, create a workforce that reflects Minnesota, strengthen tribal consultation, and continue partnering with diverse communities.

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.*

- WHAF Summer 2025 newsletter and Fall 2025 WHAF Explorer user survey
- Participation in an expert panel on *Lessons Learned in Stream Restoration Practice and Research* at the Fall 2025 MN Water Resources Conference (Day 2 concurrent session)
- Presentations on *Nutrient Reduction Strategies for Stream and Gully Systems* (DNR 2025), an appendix to the 2026 MN Nutrient Reduction Strategy, and responses to feedback on this topic received during MPCA's public comment period.

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 display the Legacy logo on reports and websites and help beneficiaries credit the CWF for our work. We have portable banners to help communicate the value of the CWF at events. A forthcoming website will feature searchable DNR watershed data products, share examples of DNR field staff assisting water managers in applying this information, and celebrate outcomes achieved. Our communications plans also include strategies to help stakeholders see the CWF at work in DNR stories, videos, field days, and awards.

12. Prior Appropriations

FY10-11	$2,100,000
FY12-13	$3,500,000
FY14-15	$3,700,000
FY16-17	$3,880,000
FY18-19	$3,772,000
FY20-21	$3,800,000
FY22-23	$3,800,000
FY24-25	$4,300,000
FY26-27	$4,750,000
TOTAL APPROPRIATED TO DATE	$33,602,000

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	6
FY12-13	11
FY14-15	17
FY16-17	19
FY18-19	16
FY20-21	15
FY22-23	13
FY24-25	13
FY26-27	13

F__WRAPS (DNR)

Comments:

- Critically important to the CWF's entire existence - regardless of supplement versus supplant analysis, it informs our entire program-based approach.

Questions:

1. Please explain what being 5 years from mid-range goals means.
2. Proposal indicates that 700 stream sites have been surveyed and analyzed with previous appropriations. How many are anticipated with this allocation? How many regional curves will be developed?
3. Please describe an enhanced performance measure and how it correlates outputs and outcomes. How have the studies, surveys and tools been used to inform action and resource allocation of non-DNR agencies?
4. Why is this program described as DNR WRAPS and not as DNR WHAF?
5. What is the cost for the 13 FTE?
6. What account within the Game and Fish Fund is utilized to realize funds for this program?

FY28-29 CLEAN WATER FUND PROPOSAL

Program Title:	Groundwater Restoration and Protection Strategies
Program Number (if applicable):	74
Agency/Organization Name:	Minnesota Department of Health
Program website:	Groundwater Restoration and Protection Strategies (GRAPS) Clean Water Fund - MN Dept. of Health

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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: _____

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 Groundwater Restoration and Protection Strategies (GRAPS) serve an important purpose in the Water Management Framework aggregating existing state information and data to characterize groundwater and drinking water at a watershed scale. The information sharing begins with the generation of a GRAPS report providing the foundation of what is known regarding potential risks, monitoring data, along with the identification of strategies for Local Government Units (LGUs) to adopt to protect and restore groundwater and drinking water resources. Prior to the GRAPS initiative it was difficult for LGUs to obtain state agency data resulting in limited protection across the state.

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 GRAPS initiative falls within the "**Restoration and Protection Strategy Development**" step of the Water Management Framework. This step of the Framework develops GRAPS reports which include targeted strategies that are packaged at the One Watershed One Plan (1W1P) watershed scale. These strategies identify implementation actions in each watershed and inform local planning. Before strategies can be identified, the GRAPS team relies on state agency "**monitoring data and assessments**" to evaluate risks from groundwater degradation and overuse. "**Water Resource Characterization and Problem Investigation**" synthesize data to produce key products referenced in the GRAPS reports, which include Township Testing Program maps, Source Water Protection Drinking Water Supply Management Areas (DWSMAs), Groundwater Management Areas, County Geologic Atlases, among other supporting information to characterize risk and inform strategies. The data and information obtained through the first two steps of the Water Management Framework is aggregated to provide actionable information that local partners can use to implement activities that protect groundwater resources.

Measurable Outcomes and Progress

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

1. *Expected Outcomes for FY28–29 Request:*
    a. *Describe measurable and outcome-based goals for the current funding request.*
    During fiscal year 2028 we anticipate having completed a GRAPS report for every 1W1P watershed (of which there are 60 in total). Furthermore, there will be a greater emphasis on synthesizing data to make it easier for our partners to implement and achieve restoration and protection priorities. Sharing data has been the cornerstone of GRAPS since its development. Therefore, expanding access to groundwater information and tools in the Watershed Health Assessment Framework (WHAF) is a priority, along with continued investments in the modernization of County Well Index (CWI). Capacity-building grants to LGUs are a foundation to engage in this work.

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

Measuring outcomes in groundwater can take decades to achieve, therefore outputs of this work are used as primary indicators. Outputs that will be tracked are:

- Number of reports generated
- New tools developed and/or access to additional data
- Number of grants awarded

Existing information will be further distilled and synthesized to guide targeted implementation that will lead to groundwater restoration and protection.

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

The GRAPS initiative is continuing to build on and support the program that has developed over the past decade. The FY 26-27 appropriation significantly increased funding to build capacity within the GRAPS program by adding full-time employees (FTE). The addition of key staff has accelerated the timeline for report generation allowing the team to shift focus to implementation.

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 GRAPS initiative has focused on addressing concerns identified by LGUs in a groundwater survey in 2015. LGUs noted the following concerns in engaging in groundwater protection:

   Limited access to information: GRAPS addressed through reports and investment in information sharing in WHAF (Watershed Health Assessment Framework). WHAF is an online digital platform accessible to anyone with access to internet.

   Financial resources targeting groundwater/drinking water: GRAPS developed a capacity-building grant to support staff and project development.

   Knowledge development: GRAPS has focused on supporting LGUs through targeted trainings and developing skills through online education.

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

   The GRAPS work is ongoing. We envision it evolving over time as the needs of our partners continue to grow and mature with the program. Once the GRAPS reports are completed in 2028 there will be a significant shift from data delivery and information to targeted implementation.

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**: Develop and carry out strategies that will protect and restore groundwater statewide.*

- ***Action**: Complete plans and fund activities for protection and restoration of groundwater statewide using a major watershed scale*
    - ***Measure:** Groundwater Restoration and Protection Strategies (GRAPS) completed for all 60 One Watershed One Plan boundaries*

The GRAPS initiative's primary focus is generating reports to inform the 1W1P process. During fiscal year 2028 it is anticipated all first generation GRAPS report will be complete—fulfilling the measure in its entirety.

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

***Strategy**: Support ongoing monitoring of groundwater quantity.*

- ***Action**: Identify groundwater-dependent lakes; streams; calcareous fens, and wetland complexes.*
    - ***Measure**: Data provided to water planners for development of WRAPS, GRAPS, and comprehensive watershed management plans.*

In addition to representing groundwater quantity information in the GRAPS report, significant effort has been made to share groundwater quantity data on the DNR's WHAF tool under the "GRAPS" bundled package of information. Sharing the data in an easy to access online platform make it accessible to water resource professionals for incorporation into comprehensive watershed management plans and support implementation.

Interconnection

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

Connected CWF-supported programs: The GRAPS reports feed directly into the 1W1P process being a required data element to inform the comprehensive watershed plans. Since GRAPS is an interagency collaboration, CWFs support the monitoring data and assessment, as well as water resource characterization and problem investigation that populate the GRAPS report and supporting work.

Connected non-CWF-supported programs: Not applicable.

Non-CWF Funding

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

The GRAPS program relies entirely on Clean Water Fund appropriations to execute the program initiatives.

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 (%)
Ex. Private landowner contributions	*$100,000*	*100%*

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

Long-term funding vision

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

20%

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)*

  GRAPS is a grassroots initiative that was spurred by resolutions adopted by the Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) in 2013. The resolutions focused on being partners in groundwater protection since it is a local resource. Furthermore, they asked state agencies to train them and dedicate resources to be successful in this work. Following the resolutions, a needs assessment survey was conducted by the DNR and Freshwater targeting SWCDs to better define these needs. The findings of these surveys served as the basis for the GRAPS work. We have been focused on delivering on the identified needs and adapting as new opportunities are recognized.

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

  Health equity is a priority at Minnesota Department of Health. The Accelerated Implementation Grant under the GRAPS initiative upholds this priority to ensure drinking water sources are protected and safe for all Minnesotans. This is achieved by making the grant available to all LGUs, including encouraging tribal partners to apply for and access these funds. Additionally, the GRAPS initiative prides itself on making our information accessible statewide through the WHAF tool and GRAPS reports.

- *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 GRAPS initiative outreach is conducted through program webpages, a grant factsheet, and word of mouth.

  - GRAPS webpage: Groundwater Restoration and Protection Strategies (GRAPS) Clean Water Fund - MN Dept. of Health
  - Accelerated Implementation Grant: Accelerated Implementation Grant Groundwater Protection Initiative - MN Dept. of Health
  - Accelerated Implementation Grant Factsheet (attached)

CWF Communication Plan

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

The GRAPS initiative has a limited audience targeting LGUs. As a result, our communication efforts focus on reaching our partners where they are. This includes our project webpage (Groundwater Restoration and Protection Strategies (GRAPS) Clean Water Fund - MN Dept. of Health) where partners can access reports and other resources, presenting at conferences like the BWSR Academy, sharing information at 1W1P planning meetings, and hosting a booth at the MN Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts. All GRAPS-related activities and materials proudly showcase the CWF logo.

PRIOR APPROPRIATIONS	
FY10-11	
FY12-13	
FY14-15	$300
FY16-17	$350
FY18-19	$400
FY20-21	$1,100
FY22-23	$1,126
FY24-25	$1,500
FY26-27	$3,500
TOTAL APPROPRIATED TO DATE	**$8,276**

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	

FY14-15	1 FTE
FY16-17	1 FTE
FY18-19	1 FTE
FY20-21	1.5 FTE
FY22-23	1.5 FTE
FY24-25	3 FTE
FY26-27	6.75 FTE

Groundwater Protection Initiative

ACCELERATED IMPLEMENTATION GRANT

MINNESOTA

CLEAN WATER LAND & LEGACY AMENDMENT

Overview

- Groundwater quality & quantity focus
- $250,000 available annually
- Apply by March 14, 2025
- Open call for Questions 2/25/25 at 10:00am

About the Grant

The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) received funding from the Clean Water Fund to advance Groundwater Restoration and Protection Strategies (GRAPS). A portion of this funding is being offered as grants to build capacity to accelerate implementation of groundwater projects across the state. Each applicant will have the opportunity to apply for up to $50,000 to conduct pre-project identification, planning, and design work that is required before on-the ground projects can be implemented. Through activities like conducting inventories of potential pollutant sites, utilizing existing targeting tools and datasets, providing technical assistance, or increasing citizen interactions, these grants equip local governments with the capacity to increase the installation and/or management of projects and practices that protect groundwater. This grant cannot be used for project implementation or mitigation purposes.

To learn more about the grant, visit: https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/groundwater/accimpgrant.html

Funding Priorities

Collaboration

This grant prioritizes collaborative efforts that result in relationship building. When effectively implemented partners have a shared understanding of resource protection needs, conservation delivery opportunities and regulatory oversight can be achieved.

Regional or Multijurisdictional Scale

This grant prioritizes proposals that target work at a regional or multijurisdictional scale.

Capacity Building

This grant prioritizes efforts that build groundwater expertise to achieve an economy of scale of resource protection.

Example Projects

- Well inventories
- Private well screenings
- Data collection to better understand regional groundwater concerns
- Targeted education campaigns
- Staff capacity building

Who Can Apply

Applicants must be a local or regional unit of government working to implement a state approved plan, such as a wellhead protection plan, metro county groundwater management plan, or comprehensive watershed management plan.

Visit our Website:

MINNESOTA

CLEAN WATER LAND & LEGACY AMENDMENT

For more information, contact: health.drinkingwater@state.mn.us or 651-201-4700

G__GRAPS

Comments:

Critically important to the CWF's entire existence - regardless of supplement versus supplant analysis, it informs our entire program-based approach.

Questions:

1. Could you explain: what has the addition of the funding for 3.5 FTE's meant to the program and its goals?
2. Use of GRAPS
    a. How have GRAPS informed implementation activities? What are some examples? When there are multiple groundwater initiatives underway, like in Southeast MN or Central Sands, what is the role of GRAPS?
    b. In the application, you share "Once the GRAPS reports are completed in 2028 there will be a significant shift from data delivery and information to targeted implementation." I would think that implementation is already occurring due to WBIF. Can you describe what your goal is regarding future implementation that's different from what's being accomplished right now?

FY28-29 CLEAN WATER FUND PROPOSAL

Program Title:	Source Water Protection
Program Number (if applicable):	XX
Agency/Organization Name:	Minnesota Department of Health
Program website:	https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/swp/index.htm

Program Contact	
Name	Steve Robertson
Email	Steve.robertson@state.mn.us
Phone	651-201-4648

Person Filling Out Form	
Name	Steve Robertson
Email	Steve.robertson@state.mn.us
Phone	651-201-4648

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.

Source water protection planning and implementation supports the efforts of local public water systems to identify issues that threaten their source of drinking water as well as opportunities and activities that help to protect it. Implementation of priority activities are supported with financial and technical assistance. Emerging water quality threats are identified through ambient monitoring of drinking water sources and finished water.

Water Quality Impact

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

Source water protection planning and implementation activities span multiple categories in the Water Management Framework. The Drinking Water Ambient Monitoring work is clearly Monitoring, Assessment, and Characterization. Source Water Protection Grants advance Implementation activities. The bulk of CWF support for this program is used for Source Water Protection Plan development, which fits in the Restoration and Protection Strategy step of the framework.

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 Source Water Protection Program at Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) takes a collaborative, science-based approach to protect sources of drinking water from degradation. Further, proactive planning and associated implementation steps are known to be cost effective at protecting the health of public water system customers. The Source Water Protection Program delineates protection areas around drinking water sources, called Drinking Water Supply Management Areas (DWSMAs), and supports local planning to prevent drinking water contamination. This planning process is tied to financial assistance programs (from MDH and other partners) to facilitate local implementation within the DWSMA.

Source Water Protection planning and implementation occurs for public water systems that rely on groundwater as a source of supply (wellhead protection), as well as for systems that rely on surface water. Planning fosters implementation using priorities adopted by local partners and targets actions towards areas where they are needed most. Outcomes of the program work to inform actions by local public water systems and other implementors such as soil and water conservation districts and water management organizations.

The Source Water Protection Program conducts an ambient monitoring program to monitor drinking water sources for emerging contaminants.

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.*
MDH will coordinate the new plan development or plan amendment process for 80 public water systems per year.

b. *Describe how outcomes will be tracked, evaluated, and reported.*
Performance measures will be compiled and reported quarterly in CWF @ MDH updates, as well as summarized in biennial CWF Performance Reports.

c. *(If applicable) For past recipients, describe any planned changes to this program from previous funding cycles, if any.*
During FY28-29 we expect the Wellhead Protection Rule to be revised, slightly changing some procedures and workflow. Also, we expect more attention to plan development and implementation for small systems. We seek to add capacity to sustain program workflow commensurate with expectations of local and state practitioners relative to protecting drinking water.

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.*
   Source Water Protection outcomes have historically focused on source water protection plan development for different kinds of public water systems (i.e., community, noncommunity, vulnerable, nonvulnerable). While traditional public health delivery models prioritize high population systems with vulnerable drinking water sources, concerns in recent years about smaller, resource-limited systems have led to development of new approaches suitable for their needs. Tools such as plan evaluations and audits, as well as financial assistance, have empowered public water systems to implement their plans.
   b. *How close is the program to reaching its long-term goals?*
   Long term goals are safeguarding all sources of drinking water for Minnesota citizens. This means having sufficient resources to serve the ever-evolving needs that public water systems have for protecting their sources of supply. Issues and threats are constantly evolving (e.g., issues like climate change and contaminants of emerging concern were minor at time of program inception 30 years ago). Accordingly, planning efforts must remain dynamic.

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.

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

Goal 1: Public water systems

- *Strategy: Identify and reduce risks to drinking water sources by investing in technical training, planning, coordination, and source water protection grants.*
- *Action: Assist public water suppliers in completing Drinking Water Source Protection Plans (DWSPPs) and support implementation projects listed in the plans.*

The source water protection program helps to fulfill this goal by supplying staff and other departmental resources to lead public water systems through an objective, science-based planning process to identify their drinking water sources, assess the threats to those sources, and set forth a list of measures the system can implement to safeguard the sources against those threats. Additionally, partners use many of the program work products to direct their resources and programmatic activities in a manner that positively affects drinking water sources. Many of these partner efforts are represented by other strategies in the plan.

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

The source water protection program supports the state's federally approved wellhead protection program plan.

Interconnection

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

While public water systems use the source water protection process to identify priority issues and target areas for implementation, these plans are used by many partners that direct their resources in a manner that helps drinking water protection along with their own goals.

Connected CWF-supported programs: MDA Groundwater Protection Rule implementation. BSWR Wellhead RIM easements and Partner Protection Grants, BSWR Comprehensive Watershed Management Plans and associated implementation funding (e.g., Watershed-based Implementation Funding, Projects and Practices grants).

Connected non-CWF-supported programs: MPCA Stormwater management, NRCS Farm Bill Conservation title implementation, FSA Conservation Reserve Program Wellhead priority signup.

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 (%)
Cost share on SWP Grants	Approx $800K per year	variable
Safe Drinking Water Fee	Approximately $400K per year	100%
Federal State Revolving Loan Fund set-aside	Up to $1.2M per year	Uncertain in current federal budgeting climate
Federal Clean Water Act Section 106	$56,000 per year	Uncertain in current federal budgeting climate

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?* No. *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.

14 to 19%

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)*

  Most direct program partners are public water systems statewide. Other partners include any entity involved in water or land use management in the state. Public water systems participate directly in source water protection plan development and have been involved in the engagement process for program evolution as the Wellhead Protection Rule revision process unfolds. Wellhead Protection Rule requirements require public water systems to provide public notice twice during local plan development and to engage the public through informational meetings and public hearings. A common component of source water protection plans are activities related to public education, outreach, and engagement.

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

  The requirements of the federal Safe Drinking Water Act typically place the same water quality standards on large and small community public water systems. The costs of complying with these standards can place a disproportionate per capita cost on small system customers relative to those of large systems. Small public water systems in the state are often rural and are comprised of populations that are socioeconomically disadvantaged. Source Water Protection planning and implementation helps these systems meet the requirements of the Safe Drinking Water act by safeguarding their resources proactively. Such approaches allow these systems to rely on natural systems to deliver safe drinking water without expensive engineered treatment or sophisticated operations and maintenance, thus keeping water delivery costs low and affordable. Source Water Protection grants are prioritized to serve the needs of 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.*

- Source Water Protection Collaborative targeted outreach via local engagement using community-based initiatives.
- A key strategy in the collaborative efforts of the Source Water Protection Program is to engage with local partners through local comprehensive watershed planning (1W1P). The principal goal of these efforts is to interject drinking water concerns and priorities into the watershed planning process. The program has developed a set of standard deliverables (e.g., priority concerns letters) that are tailored to the specific watershed and are coordinated with GRAPS staff to 1W1P local planning entities. Program staff follow up to provide context and technical assistance by attending meetings of the technical advisory team.
- Public information meetings and hearings as required by the Wellhead Protection Rule (MR 4720.5500- 5590). These number about 100 per year).

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.

CWF support for the state's source water protection work propels planning and targeted implementation. The level and pace of these activities make Minnesota a leader in this work. Accordingly, MDH acknowledges CWF support by affixing the Legacy logo to documents, reports, and presentations, as appropriate, that benefit from its appropriations. Pass-through recipients of grant funds and contracts are alerted to the source of the funding and are requested to acknowledge the CWF as the source of funding.

MDH also uses its website and social media to promote source water protection and drinking water issues. CWF support is acknowledged in these posts.

PRIOR APPROPRIATIONS	
FY10-11	$2,400,000
FY12-13	$2,830,000
FY14-15	$3,230,000
FY16-17	$3,800,000
FY18-19	$5,470,000
FY20-21	$5,494,000
FY22-23	$7,884,000
FY24-25	$7,500,000
FY26-27	$7,540,000
TOTAL APPROPRIATED TO DATE	**$46,148,000**

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	7.0
FY12-13	10.0
FY14-15	11.0
FY16-17	11.0
FY18-19	13.0
FY20-21	14.0
FY22-23	14.0
FY24-25	16.0
FY26-27	16.0

H__Source Water Protection

Questions:

1. It says "stay the same" but looks like requesting an increase for FY 28-29. Explain.
2. 16 FTE's: does this meet your needs for 80 public water systems plans?
3. Stated generally, where does the money go? More specifically, what are the major categories of spending for the ~$7.5M appropriated in the past few biennium cycles (e.g., MDH staff, grants to public water supply systems, lab testing costs, etc.)?
4. It appears that most grant categories are capped at $15K -- is this a large enough amount for public water supply system applicants to bother?
5. Is the ambient monitoring program showing increased or steady CEC's in drinking water sources?

FY26-27 CLEAN WATER FUND PROPOSAL

Program Title:	County Geologic Atlas (Part A)
Program Number (if applicable):	
Agency/Organization Name:	University of Minnesota/MN Geological Survey
Program website:	https://cse.umn.edu/mgs/county-geologic-atlas

Program Contact	
Name	Barbara Lusardi
Email	lusar001@umn.edu
Phone	612-626-5119

Person Filling Out Form	
Name	Barbara Lusardi
Email	lusar001@umn.edu
Phone	612-626-5119

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.).

County Geologic Atlases are specifically identified as essential data in the Statewide Conservation Plan, and in the efforts of the Environmental Quality Board's 2025 Groundwater Policy Report (*Minn. Stat. 103A.204*; *Minn. Stat. 103A.43*), and the Minnesota Department of Health's Minnesota Drinking Water Action Plan (*Minnesota Laws of 2023, chapter 40, article 2, section 7e*)

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 summary when looking across programs, so some degree of redundancy is anticipated with other content in the form.

The distribution of geologic materials defines the location of natural resources including aquifer boundaries and the connection of aquifers to the land surface and to surface water. Geologic atlases provide maps and databases that are essential for improved ground and surface water management.

This foundational data supports drinking water management, domestic and industrial supply, irrigation, and aquatic habitats. Atlases enhance education, provide technical assistance for management and regulation, and facilitate wise use of natural resources. They support permitting, land-use planning, wellhead protection, remediation, nutrient management, monitoring, modeling, and well construction. Atlas information is used by citizens and government agencies.

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.

A complete atlas consists of Part A constructed by the Minnesota Geological Survey — focused on geology and County Well Index (CWI) updates, and Part B constructed by the DNR (funded separately) focused on groundwater. Geologic atlases provide maps and databases essential for improved groundwater and surface water management. By defining aquifer boundaries, Part A maps and CWI provide an aquifer-specific framework for interpreting public and private well water quality data, along with water quantity data for domestic and industrial supply, irrigation, and aquatic habitats. Combined, Atlas Parts A and B enable comprehensive water management implementation efforts by showing aquifer connections to land surface and surface water resources.

Atlases begin with compilation of subsurface information. MGS collaborates with county and tribal stakeholders to establish accurate digital water well locations. Concurrently, geologists visit the project area to describe and sample rock and sediment. Additional data gathering includes shallow and deep drilling programs and geophysical, geochemical, and geochronologic surveys. MGS applied research seeks new and innovative methods to collect, analyze, and portray complex geologic information. Once analysis is completed, maps and associated databases are formalized and prepared for use in geographic information systems and distribution via print and digital means.

Measurable Outcomes

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

This proposal will complete current atlases and start new ones to equal about 2 complete counties. Atlases provide foundational data that can be used to plan, protect, and preserve Minnesota's natural resources.

Specific outcomes include:

- **Update and append the database of well construction records (CWI) to support the mapping, to document water use in specific aquifers, and to help resolve issues with well construction, water supply, and potential contamination.**
- **Complete unfinished County Geologic Atlas projects in progress**
- **Make progress on maps of bedrock geology, surficial geology, subsurface Quaternary geology, bedrock topography, and thickness of glacial deposits**

1. Expected Outcomes for FY28–29 Request:
    a. Describe measurable and outcome-based goals for the current funding request.
    This proposal will complete current atlases and start new ones to equal about 2 complete counties.

    Specific outcomes include:

    1. Update and append the database of well construction records (CWI) to support the mapping, to document water use in specific aquifers, and to help resolve issues with well construction, water supply, and potential contamination.

    2. Complete unfinished County Geologic Atlas projects in progress (e.g., from 2025/26 appropriation)

    3. Make progress on maps of bedrock geology, surficial geology, subsurface Quaternary geology, bedrock topography, and thickness of glacial deposits

    b. Describe how outcomes will be tracked, evaluated, and reported.
    The number of counties completed is determined either by completed CGA products for a county, or a combination of work on existing counties (equivalent to a CGA). MGS geologists report progress quarterly. Updates are provided to the Clean Water Council bi-annually.

    c. (If applicable) For past recipients, describe any planned changes to this program from previous funding cycles, if any.
    Previous print runs were 100-400 copies. MGS now prints only enough to supply the county and authors with paper copies. We have contracted with a print on demand service that allows users to order individual copies as needed.

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 CGA program started in 1980. Early funding was predominantly through the DNR and ENRTF. Support from CWF started in 2010. To date, 23 of Minnesota's 87 counties have been funded all or in part by Clean Water funding. Fifteen counties are complete (including 5 revisions), and 8 are currently in progress. We anticipate 6 of those counties will be completed within the next 12 months.

    b. How close is the program to reaching its long-term goals?
    To date, there are only 8 counties for which we have not started an atlas. 27 counties are currently in progress, with some further along than others. Each county takes approximately 5 years to complete.

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 Minnesota.

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.
    - *Action: Complete groundwater atlases for all Minnesota counties.*
        Measure: All Part B atlases completed by 2038.

Part A of the CGA provides the geologic framework. This information infrastructure is vital to any subsequent research, modelling, or resource management. Part A must be completed prior to Part B.

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

- Strategy: Develop and carry out strategies that will protect and restore groundwater statewide.
    - *Action: Complete plans and fund activities for protection and restoration of groundwater statewide using a major watershed scale*
        Measure: Groundwater Restoration and Protection Strategies (GRAPS) completed for all 60 One Watershed One Plan boundaries.

CGA Part A and B are used by state agencies to contribute to MDH-coordinated GRAPS reports, providing the report's fundamental hydrogeologic framework. In addition, MGS works with MDH to compile CGA data, maps, and subsurface information for watershed regions. This effort requires bringing together different generations of mapping into a seamless, three-dimensional product at major watershed scale

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

- Strategy: Support ongoing monitoring of groundwater quantity.
  - *Action: Maintain network of long-term groundwater monitoring wells and add wells as needed.*
    - Measure: 50 monitoring wells installed annually.

As part of the MGS CGA program, we collect 12-15 rotary sonic drill cores each year. This aspect of our program is funded, in part, by the DNR with Clean Water Funding. Our geologists work closely with DNR staff to utilize some of those drill locations as monitoring well sites.

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: Identify and reduce risks to drinking water sources by investing in technical training, planning, coordination, and source water protection grants.

MGS CGA data is a primary resource for technical training and land-use planning. The County Well Index (CWI) database and associated Minnesota Well Index (MWI) browser application is continuously updated by the MGS. This network of water well data is the most comprehensive database of its kind in the state, and perhaps the country.

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

Strategy: Support selected mitigation activities for private well users.

- *Action: Assist all well users with information on how to achieve safe drinking water.*
  - Measure: All private well users offered education on mitigation options as needed.

By defining aquifer boundaries, MGS Part A maps and associated CWI data provide an aquifer-specific framework for interpreting private well water quality data. By including geologic interpretation through Part A mapping, Geologic interpretations in CWI link water quality information to aquifer-specific well construction information for private well owners, addressing the aquifer extent of natural (geogenic) contaminants such as arsenic and manganese, and anthropogenic contaminants such as nitrate, PFAS, pesticides and other contaminants of emerging concern.

Additional State Programs:

Current MGS priorities were specified by documents commissioned by the Minnesota Legislature—the 2008 Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan, and the 2011 Minnesota Water Sustainability Framework, which concluded that to achieve needed protection of water resources and thus public health, every County should have a layered County Geologic Atlas (CGA), produced by the MGS and DNR Water, with contributions from the counties.

County Geologic Atlases are specifically identified as essential data in the Statewide Conservation Plan, and most recently in the efforts of the Environmental Quality Board (2025 Groundwater Policy Report), and the Minnesota Department of Health (2024 Drinking Water Action Plan).

2025 Groundwater Policy Report (EQB)

2024 MN Drinking water action plan (MDH)

2020 State Water plan: Water and Climate (Environmental Quality Board EQB)

2011 MN Water Management Framework (BWSR)

Federal Programs:

MGS can match Federal funding with State funds

USGS National Cooperative Geologic Mapping Program: STATEMAP: Developing a national framework of geologic information using state mapping efforts (surface and bedrock mapping)

Great Lakes Geologic Mapping Coalition: Focused on the 3-dimensional distribution of glacial sediments in the Great Lakes Region (drilling and subsurface stratigraphy)

Earth Mapping Resources Initiative: Focused on locating and identifying critical mineral resources (bedrock mapping and geophysics)

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:

As discussed, CGA Part A (geology) forms the basis for CGA Part B, prepared by the DNR. In addition CGA parts A and B are used by: the Groundwater Resource and Protection Strategies (GRAPS) Program, for inclusion in Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) One-watershed/One-plan;

BWSR Project and Practices – Drinking Water Subgrant;

and the MDH Source Water Protection Drinking Water Ambient Monitoring Program (DWAMP) .

Connected non-CWF-supported programs:

CGA parts A and B and CWI are being used for: 3M remediation and ongoing PFAs investigations in both metro and greater Minnesota and nitrate occurrence in southeastern and central Minnesota; local Designated Well Programs; CWI data and atlases are used as part Minnesota Well Owners Organization (MNWOO) well testing clinics. Atlases are also being used to by an LGU and stakeholder work group with input from state agencies to understand nitrate occurrence in southeastern Minnesota:

Southeast Minnesota Nitrate Strategies Collaborative Work Group – Report of Recommendations.

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? **2034**

- Do you intend to continue this program past 2034 in some capacity? __ Yes __ No X **Unsure**

We start about 3 new counties per year. If that pace continues, we will begin the final county in 2029. Anticipating a 5-year completion rate, we would be finished in 2034. Actual schedule depends on available staffing, sufficient funding, and county interest. Project is scalable as necessary.

Non-CWF Funding

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

MGS receives funding from State and Federal programs to support CGA mapping. Our largest contributor is the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) as administered by the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources. In addition, we receive funding from the Department of Natural Resources, a portion of which comes from the CWF to enhance our drilling program. Federal funding is provided through various USGS mapping programs.

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 (%)
County effort (est. $25k/county) non-cash	$100,000	100%
DNR (2027/28) potential	$500,000	75%
ENRTF (2024 and 2025) will be spent	2.4 million	100%
ENRTF (2026) pending	1.2 million	75%
ENRTF (2027) potential	1.5 million	50%
USGS mapping programs (est combined)	$200,000	75%

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

Current ENRTF awards will likely be spent by the end of 2027. We have a proposal pending in the 2026 legislature. We anticipate submitting an additional proposal for 2027 consideration. In addition, we leverage state with federal funding as part of various USGS mapping programs.

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. **NONE**

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 DNR is the largest beneficiary as well as a partner in the CGA program. MGS produces Part A, which is focused on the geologic framework. This is information infrastructure that is required for decision making, planning, permitting, and regulating. The DNR produces Part B, which is focused on groundwater. They use data, maps, and cross sections from Part A to determine where to sample and how to define aquifer properties and connectivity.

  Over the years, there have been many changes to the CGA process. New technologies allow us to better portray the geologic framework; differing environmental issues have changed the information we provide for users; and improved social, cultural, and environmental awareness has helped us to better understand the needs and concerns of the citizens of the state.

- Please describe how this program advances environmental justice and promotes equity. (150 words)
  The program objective is to ensure every Minnesota county will have an atlas as soon as reasonably possible so every Minnesota resident can enjoy similar drinking water protection standards as well as ongoing maintenance of this information infrastructure. The program also supports private well initiatives by MDH Water Policy Center and the Water Resources Center at the University of Minnesota through well inventory projects and geologic interpretations added to CWI. These updates provide the means to link water quality information to aquifer-specific well construction information for private well owners, addressing the aquifer extent of natural (geogenic) contaminants such as arsenic and manganese, and anthropogenic contaminants such as nitrate, PFAS, pesticides and other contaminants of emerging concern.

- 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.

  MGS has communicated with all the tribal nations within the state—explaining who we are and what we do as part of our mapping programs. Currently, 4 of the 12 tribal nations, including Lake Superior Band of Chippewa (Grand Portage), Upper Sioux, Mille Lacs, and Bois Forte, do not wish to participate in the CGA program. The tribal land of these nations will remain unmapped in our atlas products.

  Upon completion of an atlas, MGS provides a workshop in which we present our findings and instruct users how to find and use the data available. This information is shared with local, county, state, tribal and federal government agencies, schools, libraries. We have even presented to hazmat responders.
  Hennepin County: https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/MNHENNE/bulletins/2399fa5

  Eden Prairie News: https://swnewsmedia.com/eden_prairie_news/news/local/hennepin-county-s-new-geologic-atlas-shows-what-s-underneath/article_1f40f1d9-eaf7-5128-95e0-ffe5a8d7bc09.html

  Hubbard County: **CGA parts A and B presented as part of a Minnesota Subcommittee on Water Policy Tour, August 19, 2024:**
  https://www.lcc.mn.gov/smwp/Meetings/2024/20240819/Agenda-Hubbard-County-Water-Tour

  Statewide training for conservation-based local government staff: CGA parts A and B presented to statewide SWCD staff in workshop format as part of the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) Academy, October 13, 14, 2025: https://bwsr.state.mn.us/node/13636

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.

Atlases are produced as PDF and GIS files, and in printed form. Digital files are available on our website. Printed copies are shared and distributed to libraries, schools, townships, and other agencies. Staff participate in field trips, meetings, and strategic planning sessions highlighting aspects of the CGA program and discussing geology and groundwater issues. Funding support is acknowledged through use of the agency logo and/or attribution language on project print and electronic media, publications, signage, and other communications.

PRIOR APPROPRIATIONS	
FY10-11	$150,000
FY12-13	$275,500
FY14-15	$738,000
FY16-17	$500,000
FY18-19	$250,000
FY20-21	$500,000
FY22-23	$900,000
FY24-25	$1,000,000
FY26-27	$800,000
TOTAL APPROPRIATED TO DATE	**$5,113,500**

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".]

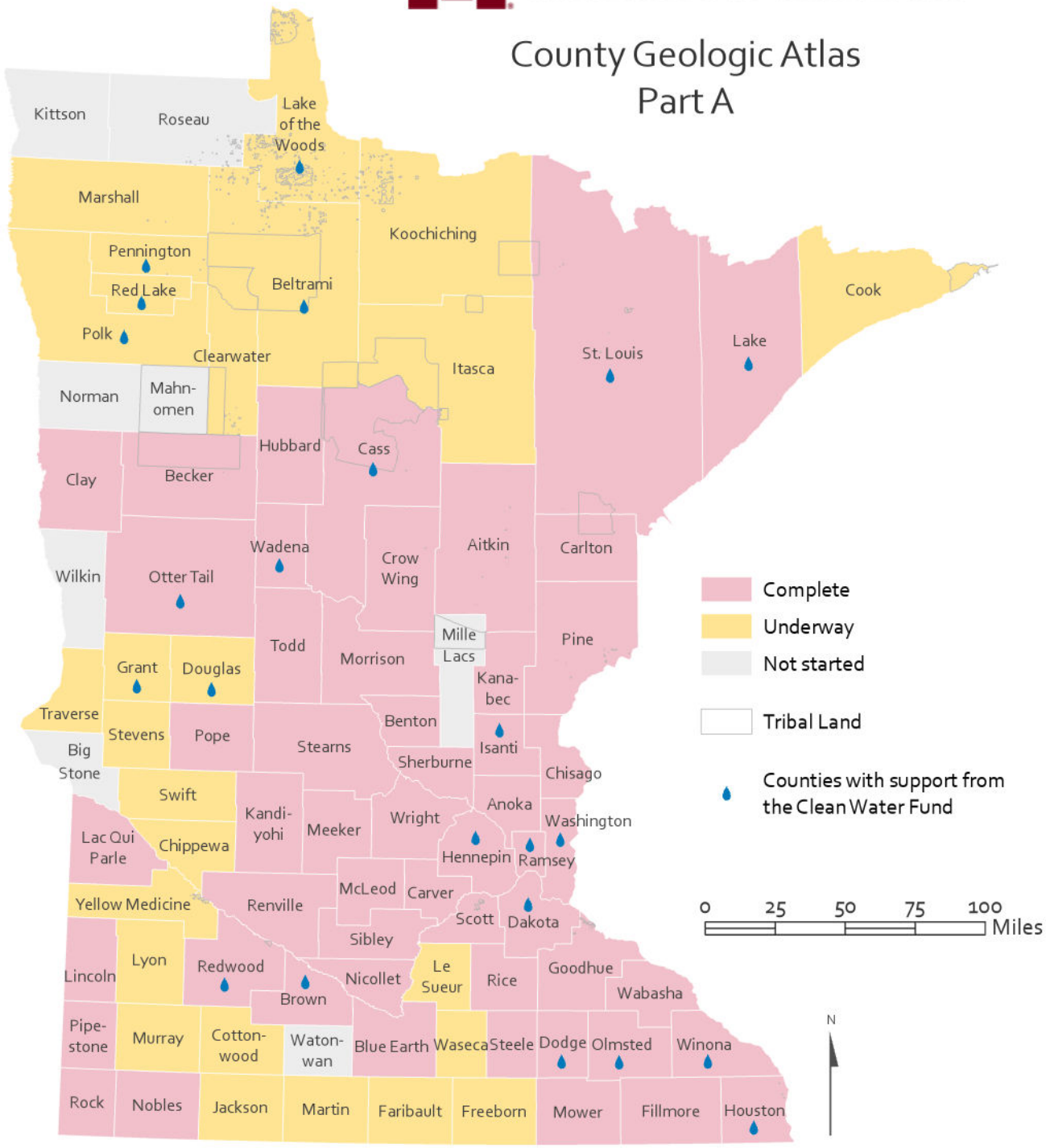
State Employees

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

FY10-11	1.5
FY12-13	2.75
FY14-15	7.25
FY16-17	5
FY18-19	2.5
FY20-21	5
FY22-23	9
FY24-25	10
FY26-27	8

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

County Geologic Atlas
Part A



ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND

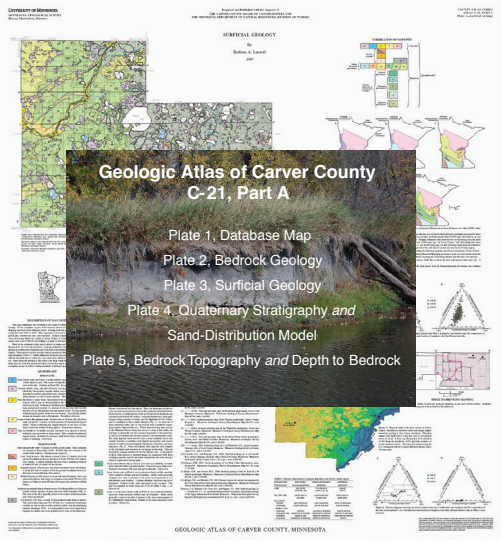
CLEAN WATER LAND & LEGACY AMENDMENT

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

USGS science for a changing world

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
MINNESOTA GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

COUNTY GEOLOGIC ATLAS MAPPING PROGRAM



WHAT IS A COUNTY GEOLOGIC ATLAS (CGA)?

Part A—Geology
Prepared by the Minnesota Geological Survey. Includes the water-well database and 1:100,000-scale geologic maps showing properties and distribution of sediments and rocks.

Part B—Groundwater
Prepared by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. Includes maps of water levels in aquifers, direction of groundwater flow, water chemistry, and sensitivity to pollution.

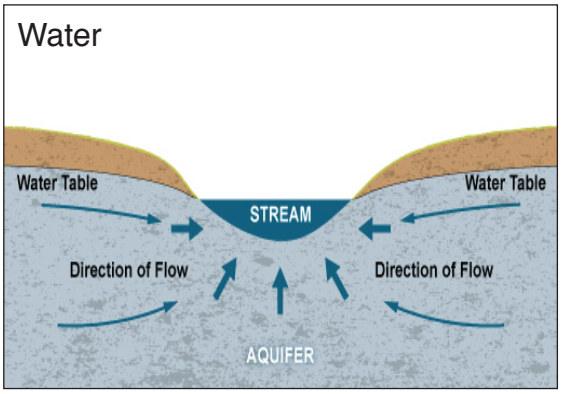
WHY DO COUNTIES NEED A CGA?

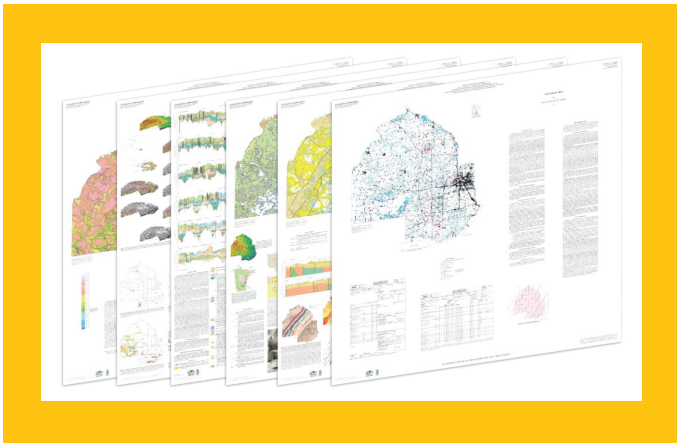
Information is essential to sustainable management of mineral, aggregate, and water resources

Needed for resource allocation, permitting, remediation, and well construction.

CGA = INFORMATION INFRASTRUCTURE

GEOLOGY IS THE CONTAINER THAT HOLDS ALL OF OUR NATURAL RESOURCES.

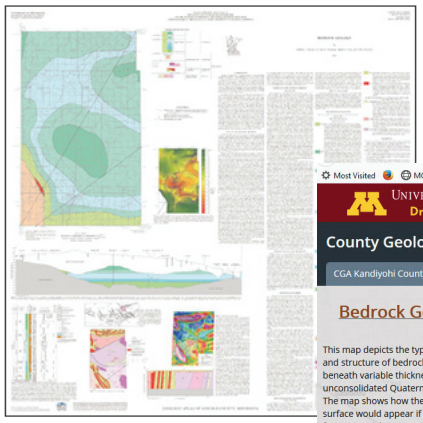




Atlas Products

- Plate 1: **Database**
  (Locations of data used for the project)
- Plate 2: **Bedrock Geology**
  (Solid rock types that extend deep underground)
- Plate 3: **Surficial Geology**
  (Types of loose sediment just below the soil)
- Plate 4: **Quaternary Stratigraphy**
  (Layers of loose sediments between soil and bedrock)
- Plate 5: **Sand-Distribution Model**
  (Model showing likely underground sand bodies, which often hold water)
- Plate 6: **Bedrock Topography**
  (Elevation and shape of the bedrock)

Geologic maps show the distribution of rocks and sediment.

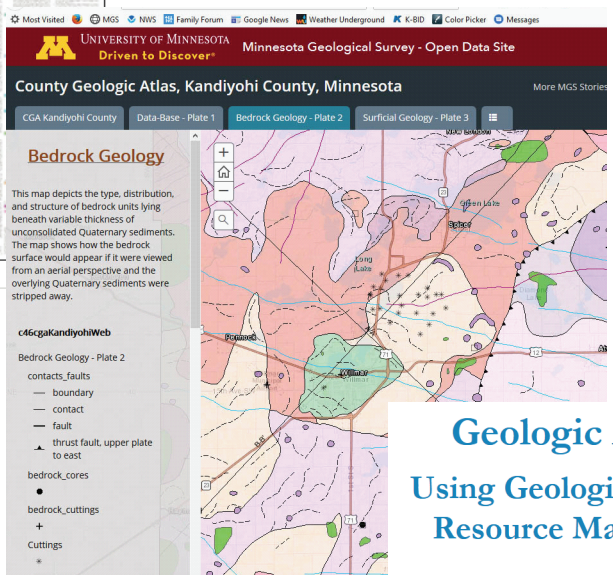


View/Download File

plate_2.pdf (5.74 MB)
plate_1.pdf (2.34 MB)
plate_3.pdf (17 MB)
plate_4.pdf (2.88 MB)
plate_5.pdf (2.38 MB)
plate_6.pdf (8.7 MB)
c58_GIS.zip (354.49 MB)

https://cse.umn.edu/mgs/county-geologic-atlas

Online access to all CGA map plates (PDF), GIS files, and data.



Interactive online access via Story Maps (no special software required)

CGA User's Guide with detailed information about each plate, what they show, and how they can be used

Geologic Atlas User's Guide:
Using Geologic Maps and Databases for Resource Management and Planning

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For additional information, visit us at:

Minnesota Geological Survey (Part A)
2609 Territorial Road, St. Paul, MN 55114
612-626-2969
https://cse.umn.edu/mgs

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (Part B)
https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/waters/groundwater_section/mapping/county-geo-atlas.html

County Geologic Atlases (Part A—Geology) are produced at the request of the County and with the support from the county and these funding sources:

Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
Clean Water Land & Legacy Amendment
Department of Natural Resources
USGS

I__County Geologic Atlas Part A

Comments:

Geology dictates water presence, movement, storage . . .need I say more?

Questions:

1. Regarding progress, when could this be done for all counties? 23 out of 87 counties funded all or in part by CWF--15 complete & 8 in progress- since funding from CWF started in 2010.
2. In past biennial CWF budgeting cycles, the Legislature has appropriated $800K-$1M for the CGA Part A (geology) and ~$200K for the CGA Part B (hydrogeology). Is this the right balance to accelerate completion of the CGAs? Is this the right balance considering that the CWF is intended to protect water resources?

FY28-29 CLEAN WATER FUND PROPOSAL

Program Title:	County Geologic Atlas Part B (Groundwater)
Program Number (if applicable):	59
Agency/Organization Name:	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
Program website:	https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/waters/groundwater_section/mapping/index.html; https://www.legacy.mn.gov/projects/county-geologic-atlases-part-b-groundwater-0

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

Person Filling Out Form	
Name	Vanessa Baratta-Person
Email	vanessa.baratta@state.mn.us
Phone	651-259-5685

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.

County Geologic Atlases provide information about the region's geology and groundwater: location and depth of aquifers, direction of water flow, pollution sensitivity, connections to surface waters, and other characteristics like natural quality and age of groundwater. This information is essential for local planning and environmental protection efforts. Water supply planning, source water protection and well sealing programs are examples of local programs that need geologic and groundwater information. Other typical uses include providing information for permit applications, resource management, monitoring needs, and emergency response to contaminant releases.

3. Water Quality Impact

a. Which step of the *Minnesota Water Management Framework* does this program most fit under:

Problem Investigation and Applied Research.

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

The DNR works with the Minnesota Geological Survey (MGS) to develop County Geologic Atlases that convey geology and groundwater information and interpretations to government units at all levels, but particularly to local governments. The MGS focuses on geology (Part A reports) and DNR focuses on groundwater (Part B reports). Atlases are developed in response to requests by counties, who contribute money and data to the development of Part A reports.

County Geologic Atlases provide information about the region's geology and groundwater: location and depth of aquifers, direction of water flow, pollution sensitivity, connections to surface waters, and other characteristics like natural quality and age of groundwater. This information is essential for local planning and environmental protection efforts. Water supply planning, source water protection and well sealing programs are examples of local programs that need geologic and groundwater information. Other typical uses include providing information for permit applications, resource management, monitoring needs, and emergency response to contaminant releases.

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.*

   Clean Water funding is used to improve the quality of County Geologic Atlases by collecting additional subsurface geologic samples, characterizing flow and nutrients in karst landscapes, expanding the number of sites sampled for water chemistry, increasing sampling opportunities in observation wells, and purchasing and repairing equipment.

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

   Outcomes will be tracked by monitoring and reporting on atlases that are completed, water quality samples collected with CWF support, subsurface geologic samples, and any additional work supporting groundwater characterization and the improvement of county geologic atlases.

   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.*

   DNR County Groundwater Atlases are complete or underway for 51 counties, with plans to complete two atlases and start work on at least two new counties each year. The Clean Water Fund supports expanded data collection for atlases, such as the use of sophisticated geological coring by the MGS. The completion of special high-quality drilling and coring to obtain detailed geologic information has been completed for approximately 8 counties.

   Clean Water support has also been used to improve the atlas products in the karst region of southeast Minnesota by conducting specialty groundwater dye tracing and nitrate monitoring.

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

   The program is roughly halfway toward completing its long-term goal of producing groundwater atlases for every county in Minnesota. With about 50 percent of counties finished, the effort has built a strong foundation of geological and groundwater information. Continued progress will steadily expand statewide coverage, bringing the program closer to fully supporting long-term groundwater planning and protection.

5. Alignment with Clean Water Council Strategic Plan

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

- Groundwater 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.
    - This strategy has an associated action of 'Complete groundwater atlases for all Minnesota counties. This proposal will help fulfill this strategy by supporting the development of additional county groundwater atlases.

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

County Geologic Atlases are specifically identified as essential data for the design of sustainable water management process by:

- Minnesota's Statewide Conservation
- Minnesota Environmental Quality Board
- DNR's Ecological and Water Resources Division
- The Water Resources Center at the University of Minnesota

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:

- The DNR works with the MGS to develop County Geologic Atlases that convey geology and groundwater information and interpretations to government units at all levels, but particularly to local governments. The MGS focuses on geology (Part A reports) and DNR focuses on groundwater (Part B reports).
- MDH Groundwater Restoration and Protection Strategies (GRAPS): Pollution Sensitivity of Near Surface Materials data from the County Geologic Atlas program is a key dataset represented in maps and discussed in GRAPS watershed reports.
- MDA Groundwater Protection Rule implementation activities involve MDH DWSMA vulnerability assessments, for which County Geologic Atlases and related regional hydrogeologic assessments are a key data source.
- DNR Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies: The Watershed Health Assessment Framework (WHAF) Explorer online map illuminates several related datasets related to the above such as Pollution Sensitivity of Near Surface Materials and MDA Groundwater Protection Rule mitigation levels for Drinking Water Supply Management Areas (DWSMAs).

b. *Connected non-CWF-supported programs:*

- N/A

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	$3,200,000	100%
DNR General Fund	$1,200,000	75%

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

The first LCCMR appropriation was awarded in 2024 and will extend into FY28, the second LCCMR award is anticipated to be submitted for consideration in the upcoming funding cycle.

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? If so, when?* _____

No

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. __75__ % to Minnesota Geological Survey

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)*

County Geologic Atlases are very collaborative and request engagement and feedback multiple times during the report development process.

During the early stages of planning for a groundwater atlas, information and input on the sampling plan and report development are gathered from SWCDs, county government and other partners within the county.

During the report development process, our products undergo an external review to integrate feedback from multiple other state agencies, local units of government, and interested parties.

Once a report is completed, a workshop is hosted to introduce the atlas to local resource managers and professionals, county staff, and other interested parties. At the end of this workshop feedback is requested on the completed report and workshop to improve our methods of sharing and demonstrating the functionality of the information in a report.

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.

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.*

To introduce local resource managers and professionals, county staff and others to the atlas when complete, DNR provides hands-on workshops and potentially field trips in cooperation with county staff. Workshops include introduction to the atlas, summary of findings and several real-world exercises demonstrating some of the critical and creative ways to use the atlas to manage resources. Recently workshops were completed in:

- Hubbard County
- Dodge County
- Isanti County
- Planning is underway for a workshop in Houston County in early 2026.

11. CWF Communication Plan

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

We recognize that continued CWF support will only be possible if the public sees the fund at work through stories, videos, field days, awards, and other means. We prominently display the Legacy Amendment logo on program materials and strive to ensure that beneficiaries understand that our staff are available thanks to the CWF. We also ensure to include the Legacy Amendment logo and acknowledgment when we do any presentations, workshops, articles, or news releases related to our work.

12. Prior Appropriations

FY10-11	$1,000,000
FY12-13	$0
FY14-15	$1,230,000
FY16-17	$500,000
FY18-19	$250,000
FY20-21	$300,000
FY22-23	$0
FY24-25	$200,000
FY26-27	$200,000
TOTAL APPROPRIATED TO DATE	$3,680,000

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	0
FY12-13	.5
FY14-15	3.9
FY16-17	3.3
FY18-19	0
FY20-21	0
FY22-23	0
FY24-25	0
FY26-27	0

I__County Geologic Atlas Part A

Comments:

Geology dictates water presence, movement, storage . . .need I say more?

Questions:

1. Regarding progress, when could this be done for all counties? 23 out of 87 counties funded all or in part by CWF--15 complete & 8 in progress- since funding from CWF started in 2010.
2. In past biennial CWF budgeting cycles, the Legislature has appropriated $800K-$1M for the CGA Part A (geology) and ~$200K for the CGA Part B (hydrogeology). Is this the right balance to accelerate completion of the CGAs? Is this the right balance considering that the CWF is intended to protect water resources?

FY28-29 CLEAN WATER FUND PROPOSAL

Program Title:	Minnesota Water Research Digital Library (MnWRL)
Program Number (if applicable):	56
Agency/Organization Name:	MDA
Program website:	https://wrl.mnpals.net/ and www.mda.state.mn.us/protecting/cleanwaterfund/toolstechnology/mnwrl

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 Minnesota Water Research Digital Library (MnWRL) is a user-friendly, searchable inventory of water research relevant to Minnesota. It provides access to peer-reviewed articles, technical reports, and Clean Water Fund-supported documents, including Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy (WRAPS) and Minnesota Board of Soil and Water Resources (BWSR) One Watershed, One Plan (1W1P) reports. MnWRL enables water managers, researchers, and residents to easily find and share research that informs science-based decisions to protect, conserve, and restore Minnesota's water resources. By centralizing thousands of publications, MnWRL improves transparency, reduces duplication, and accelerates adoption of best management practices (BMPs) statewide.

Water Quality Impact

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

Problem Investigation and Applied Research and 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.

MnWRL advances Minnesota's Water Management Framework by centralizing access to research and technical information that supports science-based water planning and implementation. MnWRL provides access to thousands of publications, including Clean Water Fund-supported reports such as WRAPS, 1W1P documents, and applied research studies. By making these resources easily searchable and publicly available, MnWRL enables local governments, watershed planners, researchers, and residents to identify effective strategies for protecting and restoring water quality.

This program strengthens problem investigation and applied research by organizing and sharing studies on BMP effectiveness, hydrologic change, nutrient reduction, and groundwater protection. It also supports Comprehensive Watershed Management Plans by providing data and reports that inform development of WRAPS and the Minnesota Department of Health Groundwater Restoration and Protection Strategy(GRAPS), ensuring that local plans are grounded in the best available science.

MnWRL's role is indirect but critical: It does not implement BMPs itself but accelerates adoption by improving access to research that demonstrates measurable water quality benefits. By reducing duplication, promoting transparency, and supporting collaboration, MnWRL helps Minnesota achieve its long-term goal of clean, sustainable water statewide.

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 MnWRL as Minnesota's central repository for water research and Clean Water Fund-supported reports.
        - Add new publications and improve metadata quality to enhance searchability and usability for local planners and researchers.
        - Strengthen collaboration with interagency partners to ensure timely inclusion of priority resources.
        - Implement process improvements to streamline resource ingestion and reduce administrative costs, supporting a smaller funding request.
    b. **Describe how outcomes will be tracked, evaluated, and reported.**
        - Monitor growth in the library's content and improvements in metadata quality.
        - Track engagement indicators (search sessions, downloads) as secondary measures of accessibility.
        - Report progress through Clean Water Fund Performance Reports and MnWRL's public dashboard, where possible.

    c. **(If applicable) For past recipients, describe any planned changes to this program from previous funding cycles, if any.**
        - Increased interagency coordination to identify and prioritize resources.
        - Process improvements to reduce costs and improve efficiency in adding new content.

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.**
        - MnWRL currently hosts over 3,900 publications, including WRAPS, 1W1P plans, and applied research studies.
        - In 2025 alone, more than 13,000 visitors with nearly 20,000 unique page views demonstrate continued demand for centralized access to water research.
        - MnWRL serves as the central repository for Clean Water Fund-supported reports, improving transparency and reducing duplication.
    b. **How close is the program to reaching its long-term goals?**
        - MnWRL is on track to serve as Minnesota's comprehensive water research hub. Continued funding will sustain improvements and ensure science-based decision-making for water quality protection and restoration.

Alignment with Clean Water Council Strategic Plan

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

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

- Support adoption of best management practices and groundwater protection measures by making research and planning documents easily accessible to local partners and decision-makers.

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

- Provide data and resources that support Source Water Protection and groundwater management planning. MnWRL hosts reports and research that inform GRAPS and local drinking water protection strategies.

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

- Provide access to WRAPS reports, TMDL studies, and BMP research that guide restoration and protection strategies for lakes, rivers, and streams.

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

- Promote transparency and public engagement by making Clean Water Fund-supported research and planning documents publicly available through a user-friendly platform.

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

- Minnesota Nutrient Reduction Strategy
- Minnesota Water Management Framework (Problem Investigation and Applied Research; Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan)
- Gulf Hypoxia Task Force goals through nutrient reduction research

Interconnection

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

Connected CWF-supported programs:

- **Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies (WRAPS):** MnWRL hosts WRAPS reports, making them easily accessible for local planning and implementation.
- **One Watershed, One Plan (1W1P)**: Provides centralized access to planning documents that inform comprehensive watershed management.
- **Technical Assistance and MAWQCP**: MnWRL shares research and evaluation reports that complement outreach and certification efforts.

Connected non-CWF-supported programs:

- Minnesota Nutrient Reduction Strategy: MnWRL includes research and planning documents that inform nutrient reduction goals.

- University and Federal Partnerships: Hosts studies funded by USDA, LCCMR, and other sources, ensuring broad access to water-related research.
- Local and Regional Water Planning: Provides a single platform for reports used by SWCDs, watershed districts, and local governments.

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 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 (%)

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
  - _X_ Decrease
  - __ Stay the same
- **Do you have an anticipated end date for funding need? If so, when?** __No plan for an 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.

_____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)**
  MnWRL evolved through collaboration with state agencies, universities, and local partners to identify priority resources and improve usability. Feedback from watershed planners and

researchers informed enhancements to search functionality and metadata. Interagency partners help ensure timely inclusion of reports that support WRAPS, GRAPS, and 1W1P planning.

- **Please describe how this program advances environmental justice and promotes equity. (150 words)**
  MnWRL provides free, public access to water research and planning documents, reducing barriers for smaller organizations and communities with limited technical capacity. By centralizing Clean Water Fund-supported resources, MnWRL ensures that all stakeholders—regardless of size or location—can access the information needed to protect water quality.
- **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.**
  - Promoted MnWRL at interagency meetings.
  - Shared updates through Clean Water Fund Performance Reports and agency websites.
  - Maintains an open-access platform for all users: https://wrl.mnpals.net.

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.

MnWRL will continue to acknowledge Clean Water Fund support in all public-facing materials and maintain transparency through its online platform. The program will display the Clean Water Fund logo on the MnWRL website and in presentations where practicable. A formal communication plan will be developed under the new PFMD division to ensure consistent branding and outreach. This plan will include strategies for highlighting Clean Water Fund contributions in reports, online resources, and interagency communications.

PRIOR APPROPRIATIONS	
FY10-11	
FY12-13	$350,000
FY14-15	$250,000
FY16-17	$100,000
FY18-19	$100,000
FY20-21	$100,000
FY22-23	$80,000
FY24-25	$80,000
FY26-27	$100,000
TOTAL APPROPRIATED TO DATE	**$1,160,000**

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	0
FY12-13	0.3
FY14-15	1.0
FY16-17	0.3
FY18-19	0.6
FY20-21	0.4
FY22-23	0.4
FY24-25	0.4
FY26-27	0.3

K__MnWRL

Comments

- Rubric scoring on this program is nonsensical. This is a necessary cost, as without a central clearing house for water information, CWF programs would prove worthless.
- Good resource, should be advertised more outside of state government.

Questions:

1. Is MDA suggesting that a decrease in funding after FY28-29 is being recommended?
2. Based on the 13,000+ user views in 2025, this library gets utilized. Do you have any examples or anecdotes suggesting that this library usage delivers water quality benefits?
3. What are some of the most accessed resources?

FY28-29 CLEAN WATER FUND PROPOSAL

Program Title:	Forever Green Initiative
Program Number (if applicable):	81
Agency/Organization Name:	Minnesota Department of Agriculture
Program website:	forevergreen.umn.edu and www.mda.state.mn.us/protecting/cleanwaterfund/forevergreen

Program Contact	
Name	Mitch Hunter
Email	mhunter@umn.edu
Phone	651-675-7380

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: Nutrient Reduction Strategy_____

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 Forever Green Initiative (FGI) develops Minnesota-specific winter annual and perennial crops that provide continuous living cover to protect and restore surface and groundwater quality. Through integrated research, farmer adoption support, and market-building efforts, the program accelerates adoption of cropping systems that reduce nutrient loss, enhance soil health, and support farm profitability. Clean Water Fund support advances research, implementation, and partnerships that expand these crops across Minnesota's agricultural landscape. The program serves farmers, rural communities, and the public by promoting agricultural systems that deliver durable environmental and economic benefits.

Water Quality Impact

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

FGI aligns most directly with the ongoing implementation step of the Water Management Framework, given its primary objective is to expand the use of winter annual and perennial crops that reduce non-point source pollution and protect water quality. To support successful long-term implementation, the program conducts applied research to develop Minnesota-adapted continuous living cover (CLC) crops and best management practices. This combination of research and implementation ensures that new cropping systems deliver benefits across the state.

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

FGI protects and enhances Minnesota's water resources by expanding the use of CLC crops that maintain year-round vegetative cover on agricultural land. These winter annual and perennial crops reduce nutrient loss, erosion, and runoff during the months when most leaching occurs—September through May—safeguarding lakes, rivers, streams, groundwater, and drinking water sources. Nitrogen water quality goals cannot be fully achieved in some areas without changes in cropping system rotations and more months of living cover throughout the year. Expanding living cover is a core element of the state's water-quality strategy and is reflected in the Nitrogen Fertilizer Management Plan, Nutrient Reduction Strategy, and Clean Water Council Strategic Plan.

CLC crops provide economic value and have strong potential for widespread, long-term adoption. Clean Water funding advances this transition through three integrated strategies: 1) research to develop new CLC crops, cropping systems, best management practices, and end uses; 2) the Economic and Environmental Clusters of Opportunity (EECO) Program, which offers technical assistance and risk-sharing to farmers implementing these crops; and 3) cross-sector organizing to develop a network of supportive businesses, NGOs, and other entities (the Forever Green Partnership). Together these efforts enable large-scale adoption of CLC agriculture to deliver durable improvements to Minnesota's water resources.

Measurable Outcomes and Progress

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

- **Expected Outcomes for FY28–29 Request:**
  - **Describe measurable and outcome-based goals for the current funding request.**
    - Support an additional 20-25 research projects that address the most immediate barriers to the commercial viability of each crop. Accelerate the pace of developing high-performing new crop varieties.
    - Acres in production across the portfolio of crops continue to increase. Since expanding from Kernza® to include winter camelina, hybrid winter rye, and winter barley in 2024, EECO has supported 7,059 acre-years of production. (An acre-year represents one acre grown for one year.) In 2025, EECO supported 4,275 acres of CLC production.
    - Number of farmers growing CLC crops will increase through the EECO program. Since 2024, EECO has supported 115 fields and 78 unique growers. In 2025, the EECO program supported 53 unique growers.
    - Number of partners will increase (businesses, organizations, and individuals).
    - Invested stakeholders will be better informed about the progress, challenges and opportunities through communications and outreach activities.
    - Expanded network of partners will advance policy innovations that support the expansion of CLC agriculture to deliver environmental and economic benefits.

  - **Describe how outcomes will be tracked, evaluated, and reported.**
    - Research grants will be tracked by the FGI Research and Development (R&D) team at the University of Minnesota.
    - Crop development progress will be tracked through a tool FGI is developing, currently referred to as the Crop Tracker. This tool will formally guide crops through defined stages of development toward commercial readiness, including integrating activities across R&D, farmer adoption, market development, and public support. When the Crop Tracker is complete (target date early 2027), FGI will provide concise and up-to-date reports on each crop's development stage.
    - Growers and acres served through EECO are tracked in FGI's contract management system.
    - The Forever Green Partnership is exploring options to implement a remote-sensing system to track CLC acres in Minnesota.
    - The effectiveness of EECO will be formally evaluated starting in a newly funded project that will include an analysis of program data and farmer interviews.
    - Communications and outreach engagement analytics will be tracked through relevant platforms and presented on a dashboard.
    - Achievements will be aggregated and presented in an annual report shared online and with state agency partners and key stakeholders.
    - All outcomes will be reported biannually to MDA.

- **(If applicable) For past recipients, describe any planned changes to this program from previous funding cycles, if any.**
    - FGI continually innovates to ensure Clean Water Fund resources are used as effectively as possible. Examples include:
        - The FGI Grant Program evolved its process to ensure that research addresses each crop's most pressing needs across multiple disciplines.
        - The EECO program adds crops as they become commercially viable, and tailors its support models to the needs of each crop (e.g., long-lived woody perennials need different support than row crops).
        - The FG Partnership has developed new models of engaging partners and informing stakeholders.
    - FGI anticipates continued program innovation and expects to implement additional modifications when this funding becomes available.

- **Outcomes from Prior Clean Water Fund Appropriations (if applicable):**
    - **How would you characterize progress made to date? As much as is possible, include outcomes achieved as they relate to the program purpose.**
        - R&D
            - Developed 15+ crop-development teams across genomics, breeding, agronomy, natural resources, food science, sociology, economics, and commercialization, enabled by consistent Clean Water Fund support. Backed 98 research projects through the FGI Grant Program, including 22 in FY26–27.
            - Leveraged Clean Water funding to secure multiple large federal grants, including Kernza CAP ($10 million), IPREFER pennycress ($10 million), IPREP pennycress ($12 million), hazelnut SCRI ($3 million), and Department of Energy OILSEED for camelina and pennycress ($12.5 million, currently on hold).
            - Released eight crop varieties: two Kernza, one winter barley, one hairy vetch, and four hybrid hazelnut.
            - Documented that Kernza consistently reduces nitrate leaching by 90+% compared to corn-soybean systems and also sequesters 525 to 700 pounds of CO2-equivalent per acre per year.
            - Domesticated pennycress from a weed into a crop in under 10 years; developed the only public breeding programs for pennycress and winter camelina.
            - Produced research-based grower guides documenting best management practices for Kernza and winter camelina (see www.forevergreen.umn.edu).
        - EECO Program
            - Supported 2,731 acre-years of Kernza, 3,018 acre-years of winter camelina, and 3,193 acre-years of hybrid winter rye.
            - Kernza plantings have targeted areas with vulnerable groundwater, including clusters in Southeast, Southwest, and Central Minnesota.
            - Supported implementation of two hybrid hazelnut Go First Farms (GFFs) in Cannon Falls and Houston.

        - In 2025, secured $75,000 from the SHOT Fund to hire additional technical assistance support.
    - Partnership/Steering Council
        - Organized a broad coalition of public, private and nonprofit leaders to build and mobilize support for scaling CLC agriculture. This Steering Council met monthly from mid-2020 until late 2022 and supported extensive learning among representatives of environmental advocacy groups, MDA, the University of Minnesota, the private sector, farmers, agricultural advocacy groups, and rural economic development.
        - Since 2022, the Forever Green Partnership has led FGI's cross-sector engagement. The Partnership has advanced public policy for CLC agriculture, including efforts to build coordination capacity, develop novel derisking programs, support new CLC-related enterprises, and enable the use of CLC crops as feedstocks for sustainable aviation fuel and other sustainable biofuels.
    - Overarching
        - In 2024, secured a major partnership with Cargill to advance winter camelina and pennycress—spanning breeding, agronomic research, farmer adoption, early commercial piloting (camelina only), fundraising, and policy. The partnership includes a five-year, $2.5 million philanthropic grant and an in-kind research collaboration, with UMN retaining all crop intellectual property.

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

Since Clean Water Fund support began in 2016, Forever Green has matured into a coordinated innovation platform with professional management, more than 15 multidisciplinary crop-development teams, an in-house commercialization team engaging farmers and market partners, expanding communications capacity, and strong partnerships across industry, government, and nonprofits. Recent outcomes demonstrate the model's potential to drive widespread adoption of CLC agriculture in Minnesota. While this remains a long-term endeavor, FGI is on a clear path toward significantly advancing the state's water quality goals.

Alignment with Clean Water Council Strategic Plan

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

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

Forever Green activities are critical to increasing vegetative cover in Minnesota and address many of the strategies outlined in the Clean Water Council's Strategic Plan, Nutrient Reduction Strategy, Minnesota Climate Action Framework, and the State Water Plan.

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: Develop and carry out strategies that will protect and restore groundwater statewide

- Action: reduce nitrate contamination of groundwater
  - Measure: Alternative land management activities supported that protect groundwater such as easements, perennials, and market-based continuous living cover.

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. Interconnection

- Strategy: Support prevention efforts to protect groundwater in DWSMAs.
  - Action: Fund protective actions that assist public water suppliers in meeting safe drinking water levels.
    - Measure: About 400,000 acres of vulnerable land surrounding drinking water wellhead areas statewide are protected by 2034.
    - Measure: Landowner adoption of practices that protect drinking water through technical assistance, conservation equipment support, financial assistance, easements, drinking water protection/restoration grants, targeted wellhead protection grants, market-based living cover, soil health grants, etc.

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.
  - Action: Support local efforts to engage farmers in water quality efforts.
    - Measure: Number of acres with continuous living cover, with a target of five million acres by 2034.
  - Action: Support innovative efforts that accelerate progress toward clean water goals.
    - Measure: Acres of income-generating continuous living cover planted.

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) - FGI field agronomist Matt Leavitt is educating MAWQCP field staff about new CLC crop opportunities in their regions through a series of tailored calls leading up to crop- and region-specific field days.

Nitrate in Groundwater - FGI partnered with the MDA and City of Hastings to support an 80-acre CLC planting (a Kernza-alfalfa mix) on city-owned land directly adjacent to its water treatment facility, replacing a corn-soy rotation in a wellhead area. There is a strong partnership with the MDA, with EECO funding directed to areas with elevated nitrate in groundwater.

Connected non-CWF-supported programs:

AGREETT - The Minnesota Legislature provides $802,000 per year through AGREETT to pay the salaries of FGI Co-Director Mitch Hunter; Director of Commercialization, Adoption and Scaling

Colin Cureton; and the lead breeders for Kernza, perennial cereal rye, camelina, pennycress, hybrid hazelnuts, and winter and spring pea.

Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG; administered by MPCA) - This grant includes significant funding for adoption of CLC systems through MAWQCP, which helped spur the collaboration noted above.

MDA Developing Markets for CLC Crops - FGI played a key role in conceptualizing this program and continues to promote it widely, especially to small- and mid-sized rural businesses. Several businesses that commercialize camelina, Kernza, elderberry, and hazelnut have benefited.

MDA Beginning Farmer Equipment and Infrastructure Grant - Farmers growing FGI crops have applied for this grant to acquire equipment that eases adoption of CLC systems.

Olmsted County Groundwater Protection and Soil Health Program - This program provides cost-share for multiple CLC crops under development by FGI.

Non-CWF Funding

Will this program receive or request other funding from non-CWF sources, or eventually leverage non-CWF sources? FGI leverages significant funding beyond the Clean Water Fund. On average, every $1 in Clean Water Fund investment generates $7 from other sources.

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

Funding Source	Anticipated Amount	Degree of Security (%)
General Funds (AGREETT)	$802,000	100%
LCCMR	$2,500,000	50%
Federal (USDA, Dept. of Energy, etc.)	$10,000,000	50%
Cargill Inc. (philanthropic gift)	$1,000,000	100%
Additional industry funding	$100,000	50%
Builders Initiative (foundation)	$1,500,000	80%
Additional foundation funding	$500,000	50%
University of Minnesota Funding	$250,000	75%

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

FY24-25: $6 million in Clean Water Fund support was leveraged with $5,340,378 from state, university, foundation, company, and federal sources. *A $12.5 million Department of Energy grant awarded in late 2024 was paused in early 2025, and FGI awaits news on its restart.*

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**? Not at this time. Developing novel crops and the systems needed to scale them is a long-term effort. However, FGI expects both the focus of this work and the funding mix to shift over time. As more FGI crops mature and gain public- and private-sector support, FGI's direct investment needs will shift. New crop development typically begins with public-sector leadership and transitions to private-sector investment—a pattern already emerging with winter camelina. FGI also aims for the federal crop insurance program to eventually assume the EECO Program's risk-management role. Over the long term, royalty revenue from commercial varieties is expected to contribute to FGI's budget.
- **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% of funding was passed to the University of Minnesota Forever Green Initiative

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 three areas of work engage different but overlapping partner networks. Crop research engages roughly 40 UMN faculty and their teams of students and technicians, who also help to shape the Grant Program through the FGI Executive Committee. The EECO program, designed with growers, has engaged about 80 producers through direct financial contracts and supported many more through technical assistance and education led by the EECO-funded field agronomist. The Forever Green Partnership connects a broad network of nonprofit organizations, farm groups, industry partners, funders, and policy makers—including Friends of the Mississippi River, Minnesota Environmental Partnership, Minnesota Farmers Union, Land Stewardship Project, Greater MSP Partnership (MBOLD and SAF Hub), Cargill, General Mills, and numerous small- and mid-sized businesses. FGI communicates weekly with roughly 1,000 active constituents.

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

New CLC crops will deliver significant environmental benefits for soil, water, wildlife, and climate—helping to reduce the disproportionate environmental burdens faced by underserved

communities, particularly in rural areas. They also create new economic opportunities for farmers and for rural and urban communities. FGI is developing a Career Pathways program to recruit and train students and postdocs from all backgrounds and expand outreach to underserved communities. The Forever Equitable working group is guiding FGI's efforts to create opportunities for young farmers, small-scale farmers, and members of historically underserved groups to adopt CLC agriculture. FGI has engaged with MDA's Emerging Farmers Office to explore shared priorities.

- **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 inaugural Forever Green Forum was held in May 2025, featuring a two-day program with a public field day attended by 250 people and a full day of presentations and discussions for 165 multi-sector participants. The event honored the legacy of co-founder Dr. Don Wyse, showcased FGI's thought leadership, and positioned the initiative for broader multi-sector and philanthropic support. Public leaders in attendance included: U.S. Rep. Betty McCollum; state legislators Sen. Aric Putnam, Rep. Nathan Nelson, Rep. Ginny Klevorn; Commissioner of Agriculture Thom Petersen; and staff from the Department of Agriculture and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. Clean Water Fund support was acknowledged throughout via slides, talking points, and signage.
    - The attached EECO postcard and information sheet, which acknowledge Clean Water Fund support, are both used regularly when we table at events, conduct field days, or meet with farmers, etc.
    - The attached PDF titled "UMN Forever Green State Support Acknowledgement" includes two examples of how FGI acknowledges Clean Water Fund support: a banner from the Forever Green Forum and a screenshot from our weekly e-newsletter.

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.

A structured campaign will highlight the CWF's research investments through ongoing email, social media, website content, and outreach such as field days and presentations. The new FGI website will feature stories of EECO growers and why this support is so crucial to advancing CLC agriculture. Partnership investments also include collaborative projects and outreach strategies to deepen engagement across partner groups. CWF support is acknowledged across all tactics, and funding recipients are reminded to do the same.

PRIOR APPROPRIATIONS	
FY10-11	
FY12-13	
FY14-15	

FY16-17	$1,000,000
FY18-19	$1,500,000
FY20-21	$4,300,000
FY22-23	$4,000,000
FY24-25	$6,000,000
FY26-27	$5,000,000
TOTAL APPROPRIATED TO DATE	**$21,800,000**

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
FY12-13	0
FY14-15	0
FY16-17	0
FY18-19	0
FY20-21	0
FY22-23	0
FY24-25	0
FY26-27	0

New crops can be risky for farmers. EECO helps.

Minnesota's Environmental and Economic Clusters of Opportunity (EECO) program provides eligible Minnesota growers with financial and technical assistance when they add one of these harvestable cover crops to their rotations:

WINTER CAMELINA

WINTER BARLEY

HYBRID WINTER RYE

- Ecosystem service payments of $20-50/acre/year
- Risk management payments covering half the production cost if there is crop or market failure
- Payment premium for acres in Drinking Water Supply Management Areas

KERNZA®

ELDERBERRY

HAZELNUT

- Targeted funding for SE MN grower led collaboration
- $1000/acre for commercial scale elderberry plantings
- Support for select Hazelnut plantings of at least 5 acres

For more info

z.umn.edu/EECO

University of Minnesota

Forever Green

Department of Agriculture

Clean Water Land & Legacy Amendment

Forever Green Forum 2025 | Acknowledgement of State Support
University of Minnesota | Borlaug Hall, St. Paul Campus | May 29, 2025 | 8 am - 5 pm
165 Multi-Sector Partners in Attendance

Forever Green E-Newsletter | Acknowledgement of State Support
Weekly to ~1000 recipients, added January 2026

Forever Green's work is generously supported through investments from:

Economic and Environmental Clusters of Opportunity (EECO) Program

UMN Forever Green, 2025–2026

The Economic and Environmental Clusters of Opportunity (EECO) program offered by the University of Minnesota Forever Green Initiative provides financial and technical support to farmers to adopt new perennial and winter annual crops in Minnesota. These crops can protect water quality and improve soil health by keeping living roots in the soil year-round, while offering profitable opportunities for growers to diversify rotations. Financial support is available for the following crops:

<table>
<tr><th>Crops included</th><th>Environmental benefit payment</th><th>Economic risk payment*</th><th>Drinking Water Protection Premium</th><th>Additional resources</th></tr>
<tr><td>Winter camelina, with additional support for relay cropping soybean</td><td rowspan="3">$20-40/ac, if winter cover is established</td><td>$70 per acre max</td><td rowspan="4">For growers within Drinking Water Supply Mgmt Area or Wellhead Protection Area, a 25% premium will be added to the ecosystem service payment</td><td>$80 per acre for relay cropping soybean with winter camelina</td></tr>
<tr><td>Winter barley</td><td>$115 per acre max</td><td rowspan="3">N/A</td></tr>
<tr><td>Hybrid winter rye</td><td>$255 per acre max</td></tr>
<tr><td>Kernza™ perennial grain</td><td>$25-50/ac, if winter cover is established</td><td>$175 per acre max</td></tr>
<tr><td>Hybrid hazelnut</td><td colspan="4">Up to $16,500 (50% of establishment costs) for select Go-First Farm partnerships of at least five acres which will serve as regional hubs of hazelnut research and commercialization in the Upper Midwest. For more information visit z.umn.edu/HazelnutGFF</td></tr>
<tr><td>Elderberry</td><td colspan="4">$1,000 per acre provided to select plantings that strategically advance supply chain and market development for elderberry. One acre minimum commercial plantings.</td></tr>
</table>

*Maximum payout levels in the event of production or market failure

To sign up, use this QR code or link (z.umn.edu/EnrollEECO) to fill out the EECO Grower Enrollment Form before planting an EECO eligible crop.

For more information about enrollment:

Sienna Nesser
CLC Adoption Specialist
UMN Forever Green
612-644-5032
nesse059@umn.edu

For agronomy and technical assistance:

Matt Leavitt
Perennial Grains and Winter Annuals Agronomy Specialist
UMN Forever Green
612-381-6199
leav0046@umn.edu

For more information about hybrid hazelnuts and elderberry:

Andrew Leach
Sustainable Commercialization Associate
UMN Forever Green
818-606-5310
leach167@umn.edu

University of Minnesota | CFANS College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences

Resources for:

- **Kernza growers:** kernza.org/growers
- **Winter camelina grower guide:** z.umn.edu/WinCamGrowerGuide
- **Hybrid winter rye:** z.umn.edu/KWS-HybRye
- **Winter barley:** z.umn.edu/UMNWinterBarley

Seed and grain quality testing is covered for all EECO growers.

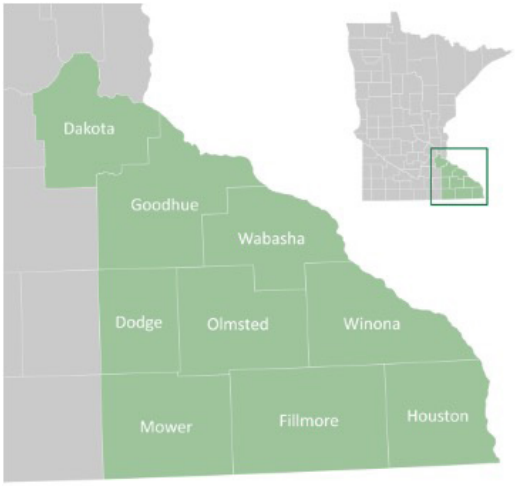
Drinking Water Supply Management Areas

Top priority will be given to commercial row crop acres located in Drinking Water Supply Management Areas (DWSMAs) or Wellhead Protection Areas (WHPAs).

To see whether you farm in a DWSMA or WHPA, enter your address in the following map: z.umn.edu/MN-DWSMA-map

Do you have an idea to increase Continuous Living Cover in Southeast Minnesota?

Funding is available for grower-led collaborative projects that support adoption of “continuous living cover” crops in the SE MN counties of Dakota, Dodge, Fillmore, Goodhue, Houston, Mower, Olmsted, Wabasha, and Winona. If you have an idea for a project, please contact Matt Leavitt at leav0046@umn.edu.



Department of Agriculture | Clean Water Land & Legacy Amendment

839_0425

L__Forever Green Initiative

Comments:

It is important to note that for every $1 of CWF generates approx. $7 from other sources

Questions:

1. Besides Cargill's philanthropic gift, how much private investment has been made in the development and market support for novel crops?
2. Does FGI coordinate or collaborate with other small grains and crops that contribute to Continuous Living Cover? If so, how?
3. Where on the curve are we for accelerating adoption? Are we in initial stages, mid-curve, or further along?
4. This is an essential program and I fully support increasing funding. Only note is that I'm not seeing mention of the Clean Water Fund on the UMN Forever Green home page.

FY28-29 CLEAN WATER FUND PROPOSAL

Program Title:	Beach Portal
Program Number (if applicable):	XX
Agency/Organization Name:	Health
Program website:	Launching May 2026

Program Contact	
Name	Trisha Robinson
Email	Trisha.robinson@state.mn.us
Phone	651-201-5639

Person Filling Out Form	
Name	Trisha Robinson
Email	Trisha.robinson@state.mn.us
Phone	651-201-5639

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.

Beach monitoring determines if beach water is safe for recreational activities and minimizes the risk of waterborne illnesses. Funding from the 2024-2025 Clean Water Funds established the Minnesota Beach Portal (launching summer 2026), the first centralized source for statewide beach monitoring results and trends.

This proposal will optimize the portal through evaluating and expanding its functionality, ensuring Minnesotans can access beach alerts for anywhere in the state.

This proposal aligns with the vision of the Clean Water Council that Minnesota will have fishable and swimmable waters throughout the state. Furthermore, it makes Minnesotans aware of crucial issues impacting water quality.

Water Quality Impact

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

Monitoring, Assessment, and Characterization

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 Minnesota Beach Portal enables the protection, enhancement, and restoration of water quality in Minnesota's lakes through data-driven monitoring, assessment, and characterization of beach water quality trends in a central location. Comprehensive evaluation of monitoring trends allows not only for evaluation of past interventions (e.g., stormwater improvements, shoreline restoration) but also for the ability to prioritize restoration plans or protection strategies under broader water quality programs.

Providing public access to a centralized location for beach monitoring results via the Minnesota Beach Portal raises awareness of water quality issues in lakes and beaches, encourages community involvement in stewardship, and helps Minnesotans understand how land use, runoff, and human activities impact their water resources.

Measurable Outcomes and Progress

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

1. *Expected Outcomes for FY28–29 Request:*
    a. *Describe measurable and outcome-based goals for the current funding request.*
        i. Ninety percent of local jurisdictions conducting beach monitoring will report results on the Minnesota Beach Portal
        ii. Three new education and outreach materials developed

b. *Describe how outcomes will be tracked, evaluated, and reported.*
Outcomes and evaluation data will be tracked and reviewed by program staff at least quarterly to inform program improvement and identify any gaps. Outcomes will be reported in annual reports, as well as upon request.

c. *(If applicable) For past recipients, describe any planned changes to this program from previous funding cycles, if any.*
This request is for the optimization of the Minnesota Beach Portal. This ongoing funding will allow not only for the beach portal to continue operating, but for the refinement and expanded functionality of the portal and evaluation of monitoring data.

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 the Minnesota Beach Portal has been steady and as expected. The Minnesota Beach Portal is launching on schedule in summer 2026.

   b. *How close is the program to reaching its long-term goals?*
   While the Minnesota Beach Portal is launching in Summer 2026, the long-term goal of maintaining and optimizing the portal remains.

Alignment with Clean Water Council Strategic Plan

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

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

This proposal not only supports the Clean Water Council's Surface Water Protection and Restoration Vision: Minnesotans will have fishable and swimmable waters throughout the state, but also Goal 1: monitor, assess, and characterize Minnesota's surface waters. The centralized portal for beach monitoring results allows Minnesotans and visitors a single location to access results or alerts in place for the swimmable waters they depend on. Additionally, being able to conduct comprehensive assessment and evaluation of these results and trends over time will allow for data-driven recommendations for monitoring programs.

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: N/A

Connected non-CWF-supported programs: This program both informs and is informed by over 25 local beach monitoring programs by providing a single outlet for beach monitoring results and alerts. The portal also complements and draws from the work of the national BEACH Act, including the Lake Superior Monitoring Program run by the Minnesota Department of Health.

Non-CWF Funding

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

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 (%)
BEACH Act Funds	$13,400	Unknown

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

Minnesota has received federal BEACH Act funds for over 20 years; however, funding is based on annual congressional budget decisions.

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 *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. 20%

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)*

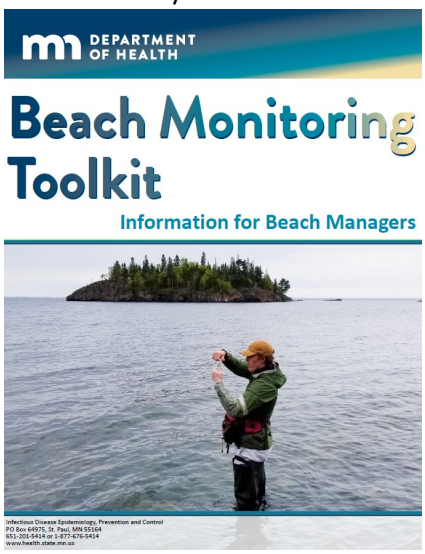
  Minnesota Beach Portal staff have conducted multiple presentations on the Minnesota Beach Portal, including to local public health partners and local beach monitoring programs. With the upcoming rollout of the portal in the coming months, multiple additional opportunities for stakeholder engagement will be taking place. The Minnesota Department of Health has partnered with the University of Minnesota Natural Resources Research Institute for the Minnesota Beach Portal development and hosting.

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

  The Minnesota Beach Portal provides low barrier access to potential health alerts at any beach, providing Minnesotans who depend on swimmable waters a single location to access critical

information. Additionally, maintaining access to swimmable waters is important for healthy children and families in all our 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.*
    - Consultation and presentation to the Eden Prairie Department of Parks and Recreation on beach monitoring, July 2025.
    - Development of a beach monitoring toolkit for local monitoring programs, intended to help with considerations when starting a monitoring program, testing options, and beach advisory and communication considerations.



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 Minnesota Beach Portal website, print materials, and public presentations on the portal proudly display the Clean Water Fund logo. Additionally, any communication about the Minnesota Beach Portal includes wording that it is supported through the generous support of the Clean Water Fund.

PRIOR APPROPRIATIONS	
FY10-11	
FY12-13	
FY14-15	
FY16-17	
FY18-19	
FY20-21	
FY22-23	
FY24-25	$600,000
FY26-27	$600,000
TOTAL APPROPRIATED TO DATE	**$1,200,000**

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	
FY14-15	
FY16-17	
FY18-19	
FY20-21	
FY22-23	
FY24-25	1.5 FTE
FY26-27	1.5 FTE

M__Beach Portal

Comments and Questions:

1. Valuable information from a public health standpoint
2. Submitting data
    a. Any idea as to how many of Minnesota's beach managers are submitting data to the system and how many are not?
    b. There should be 87 Sheriff's Departments participating in this program with responsibility sampling and reporting re water patrols, etc.
3. Getting the word out
    a. A fee should also be mandatory to support what is (or should be) a statewide alert system.
    b. How will Minnesotans know to reference this tool?
4. Does the program currently have a website? Why was Lake Superior's beach website launched first?

FY28-29 CLEAN WATER FUND PROPOSAL

Program Title:	Stormwater BMP Performance Evaluation and Technology Transfer
Program Number (if applicable):	82B
Agency/Organization Name:	UofMN Water Resources Center
Program website:	wrc.umn.edu/stormwater

Program Contact	
Name	Bonnie Keeler
Email	keel0041@umn.edu
Phone	612-624-9282

Person Filling Out Form	
Name	John Bilotta
Email	jbilotta@umn.edu
Phone	612-624-7708

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: This proposal and work support the MS4 Program, Minnesota Statute Chapter 7090, Stormwater Regulatory Program and the TMDL program, established by the Federal Clean Water Act and administered locally by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. It also supports the Minnesota Nutrient Reduction Strategy and, in some circumstances, also supports work under the Minnesota Groundwater Protection Act, 1989, Chapter 103H.

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 will lead to the development of new and revised stormwater practices and management techniques that are used on both public and private properties to prevent, minimize and mitigate the impacts of runoff to Minnesota's water resources. The program accomplishes this by investing the majority of the funds (~70%) into research through competitive or direct pass-through processes. Research is and will be conducted by a variety of Minnesota's academic institutions, public agencies, and private industry and by collaborations of all three. The program also provides technology transfer; training, outreach, and Extension education to Minnesota professionals, practitioners, and policy leaders.

Water Quality Impact

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

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.

The program will lead to the development of new and revised urban stormwater practices and management techniques that are used on both public and private properties to prevent, minimize and mitigate the impacts of runoff to Minnesota's water resources. Research will result in increased effectiveness and improved efficiency of management techniques to reduce the risk and quantity of pollutants reaching receiving waters. Innovations in pollution removal and reduction of runoff volume and rates will help protect, enhance and restore water quality in both surface and groundwater resources. The program will inform new policy and technical guidance, for example, by providing enhancements and innovations in practices for the Minnesota Stormwater Manual. Technology transfer (Extension Education) efforts will increase the knowledge and skills of stormwater professionals, practitioners and policy leaders, equip them with resources to choose, design, implement, monitor and maintain practices, and engage with them to identify future program priorities. The research results and technology transfer efforts of the program will accelerate progress towards clean and sustainable water resource goals and help ensure the 'best' is achieved in the best management practice (BMP) paradigm.

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.

        Ultimately the outcomes of the work are new and revised urban stormwater management practices, strategies, management approaches and policies that protect and improve the health of Minnesota waters or mitigate and minimize the impacts to Minnesota waters from urban runoff. The various outcomes and outputs of completed

research are paired with the transfer of new knowledge to practitioners, professionals, and policymakers. An additional outcome is the incorporation of this work and discoveries into stormwater management guidance policies and manuals such as the Minnesota Stormwater Manual.

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

An annual report of the program summarizes and communicates outcomes and regular newsletters provide communication of outputs as they occur. Pass-through program fund recipients (i.e. research PIs and teams) are required to submit annual reports on their progress. Tracking and reporting are completed using online reporting mechanisms. Outputs (measurements) for completed research include final reports, data, tools, models, formulas, revised design, installation, and operation and management guidelines, graphic diagrams, photos and videos. As these are completed and published, they are made available publicly and used in technology transfer efforts. Outputs from technology transfer include training guides, tools, the number of professionals, policy leaders, and practitioners engaged and trained, and the impact on their knowledge, skills, and adoption of use.

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

At a high level, the program does not anticipate any major changes from previous cycles. It will continue to invest a majority of the funds through competitive and non-competitive through pass-through research grants and projects. At a finer scale, the program will continue to refine research priorities and investment strategies to ensure the most effective and efficient use of funds. It will customize, adopt and innovate technology transfer (Extension education) efforts to meet the needs of target audiences.

2. Outcomes from Prior Clean Water Fund Appropriations (if applicable):
   a. How would you characterize progress made to date? As much as is possible, include outcomes achieved as they relate to the program purpose.

Since the inception of the program, 46 individual research projects have been supported and of those, 33 have concluded and produced knowledge, science, information and specifications that are being used in management and best practices selection, design, installation, maintenance and management efforts at the city, county, and state levels by both private and public stormwater professionals and practitioners. Specific projects are searchable in the online Urban Stormwater Research Project Library. The science and knowledge generated has led to changes and improvements of common stormwater practices and informed new and innovative practices.

Examples include:

- Research conducted on iron enhanced sand filters (IESF) resulted in revised construction methods and maintenance protocols to increase their effective lifespan. Those are currently being considered for inclusion in the Minnesota Stormwater Manual.
- A CWF project focusing on stormwater ponds produced the Pond Assessment Tool that can help pond managers and owners quickly assess ponds at risk for high phosphorus concentrations that can be exported downstream to receiving water bodies having negative impacts.
- Multiple investments in street sweeping science and technology has resulted in a comprehensive Clean Sweep for Water Quality program that includes tools for designing an effective street sweeping program and calculating water quality credits.

The program continues to make significant progress by informing and equipping professionals, communities and agencies with research-based BMPs that help with preventing, minimizing and mitigating negative impacts from urban stormwater runoff. These include reducing pollutants, attenuating runoff rates, and reducing overall runoff volume. In the last decade, the program has contributed to significant positive changes and advanced the adoption of practices.

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

The program has significant work to achieve in the year ahead. Managing urban stormwater and preventing, minimizing and mitigating negative impacts from it, is and will continue to be a long-term effort. It requires continual work to evolve and innovate practices, management approaches and policies and guidance. New professionals entering the field of practice require new science, guidance, acknowledgement and training achieved by the program's technology transfer efforts. Research and technology transfer efforts need to be on-going.

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

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

- **Strategy**: Develop and carry out strategies that will protect and restore groundwater statewide.
  Action: Reduce risk of stormwater contaminants entering groundwater.
  The program addresses this by developing new and revised urban stormwater practices and management techniques that are used on both public and private properties to prevent, minimize and mitigate the impacts of runoff to Minnesota's water resources, including shallow groundwater resources.

SURFACE WATER

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.

- **Strategy**: Enhance compliance for regulatory programs to accelerate progress
  - *Action: Reduce risk of stormwater contaminants entering surface water.*
- **Strategy**: Support competitive grants for protection and restoration activities.
  - *Action: Provide opportunities for competitive grants that meet statewide priorities.*

  The program addresses this by developing new and revised urban stormwater practices and management techniques that are used on both public and private properties to prevent, minimize and mitigate the impacts of runoff to Minnesota's water resources. These are used by many local units of government in their implementation of actions to address TMDLs.

VISION

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

- **Strategy**: Maintain and increase capacity of Minnesotans to improve water quality
  - *Action: Engage non-traditional audiences with water planning and implementation.*
  - *Action: Engage chloride users.*
  - *Action: Engage water managers statewide.*
  - *Action: Support innovative efforts that accelerate progress toward clean water goals.*

  The program addresses this through its multiple Extension Education events, focus groups and research strategy sessions where stormwater practitioners, professionals and policy leaders are engaged in providing input and increasing their knowledge through education and training sessions.

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

Minnesota Nutrient Reduction Strategy The program supports goals in the Minnesota Nutrient Reduction Strategy (Draft 2025 with adoption expected in 2026.) The strategy called for and continues to support a unified research program for the state (pp138-139 & 145-146.)

Cold Climate Stormwater Center of Excellence (center) The program will also leverage resources, expertise, and capacity through the recently established Cold Climate Stormwater Center of Excellence. The center is a joint effort between Minnesota and New Hampshire and is funded by the Federal EPA providing $1M through March 2028. Future funding has already been proposed and is likely to continue. The center's mission and work include completing urban stormwater research, providing technical assistance (education and training) to communities and professionals and establishing coordination of similar stormwater research efforts across the cold climate region. The existence of the Minnesota Stormwater BMP Performance Evaluation and Technology Transfer funded by the Clean Water Fund was

likely a key contributing factor for the selection of the MN-NH as one of only four centers to be established nationally through a highly competitive process. The connection of the Minnesota program to the national center will benefit the state by allowing us to address additional stormwater research and information needs.

Interconnection

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

Connected CWF-supported programs:

The stormwater research program indirectly connects to many other CWF-supported programs, those mainly being urban stormwater implementation projects led by cities, watersheds, and SWCDs. Some of those are funded directly by the CWF and others by competitive processes led by other CWF recipients, for example BWSR Implementation Grants. Many urban stormwater implementation and demonstration projects are informed and guided by the science generated through the stormwater research program. More specifically, research often informs the guidance provided in the Minnesota Stormwater Manual. That manual then provides technical guidance for many of the practices implemented using various CWF source funds.

Connected non-CWF-supported programs: *None articulated.*

Non-CWF Funding

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

Yes. The program routinely and successfully acquires funding from non-CWF sources to augment activities and leverage the CWF resources.

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 (%)
Ex. Private landowner contributions	*$100,000*	*100%*
1.Minnesota Stormwater Research Council through direct funding from watershed districts and organizations, cities, and private industry partners.	$500,000 ($250K/year)	95%
2. Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund - LCCMR *(Clean Sweep and street sweeping program; Through Aug 2028)*	$386,000	100%
3. UofMN Water Resources Center via funds from the National Institutes for Water Resources funded by the USGS	$10,000	100%
4. Minnesota Sea Grant Program	$50,000	90%

5. Cold Climate Stormwater Center of Excellence funded by the EPA	$1,000,000	90%

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

1. Watersheds, cities, and private industry provide funding approaching $250K/yr.
2. A LCCMR grant supports additional research and Extension in street sweeping.
3. USGS funding supports research administration, communication, and technology transfer.
4. MNSG supports 60% of 1FTE for technology transfer.
5. The CCSCoE funded by the EPA allows for additional research and technology transfer efforts through March 2028 and is expected to continue.

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 _ 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)

  The primary beneficiaries of this program are stormwater professionals, practitioners, and policy leaders serving in public and private industry capacities, at the city, watershed, county, state and regional levels. They are continually engaged through monthly in-person and virtual seminars and recurring events and training. Continual input is sought to inform the program priorities and investment strategies. For example, for each competitive research cycle, the program solicits input to refine needs and priorities. In addition, regular project updates, newsletters, and website updates inform a broader statewide network. The program has a twenty member advisory board consisting of city, watershed, private industry and state agency representatives who provide input, guidance and serve as voices for the primary beneficiaries.

  Program partners include

  - University research faculty serving across multiple related disciplines and departments.

- Engineers, planners, and professionals serving in city, watershed, SWCD, and county levels of government
- State agencies including MPCA, MNDOT, and BWSR.

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

  The pass-through research investments of the program are structured in a process that includes being sensitive to equities of the final selection of projects and diversity of research teams awarded funds. While Minnesota stormwater research priorities, methods, and outcomes are the primary filters and selection criteria, the program's advisory board takes into consideration equity in making its recommendations. Furthermore, in recent years, the program has strived and successfully achieved greater diversity of the members of the advisory board.

- 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 Minnesota Stormwater Seminar Series provides a monthly opportunity to both learn and engage with the program beneficiaries. Seminars and diverse panel discussions provide an opportunity to learn about the research results and build towards application at the local level. Participation is available both in-person and virtually. The series draws on average 150 professional participants per month.

  The Program's Annual Program Meeting, Tour, and the Annual Report provide opportunities to share research results and resources with the primary intended audiences.

  Clean Sweep Education & Training Program - The program has invested significant funding and resources into street sweeping research over many years. The results have cumulated into a training program to assist mainly cities to develop and implement street sweeping programs to help achieve water quality goals. In-person and virtual opportunities have had broad participation and provide opportunities to engage, conduct outreach, and train for BMP adoption.

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 CWF is acknowledged in every presentation, publication, and in all electronic program news and updates. This includes acknowledgement at the beginning of each Minnesota Stormwater Seminar Series, Extension events such as Clean Sweep Program training, and during the annual program meeting and tour. The CWF is also acknowledged in print materials including the annual report. Every research project funded by the program is provided with a dedicated acknowledgement page that must be included in the publication of results. A standard acknowledgement presentation slide is provided to the research team to include in every presentation given about the project funded by CWF. Regular and routine program communications such as the SWRP E-news, Minnegram, Confluence, Minnesota Water Resources Conference are additional examples of how components and elements of the program are communicated.

PRIOR APPROPRIATIONS	
FY10-11	
FY12-13	
FY14-15	
FY16-17	$550,000
FY18-19	$1,500,000
FY20-21	$1,500,000
FY22-23	$1,500,000
FY24-25	($2M+$1M supplemental award) $3,000,000
FY26-27	$1,600,000
TOTAL APPROPRIATED TO DATE	

FY28 Request	FY29 Request	FY28-29 TOTAL REQUEST

[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	

N__Stormwater Research

Comments:

Impressive portfolio of work and huge following by practitioners. This program has the trust of practitioners.

Questions:

1. Please explain how the program distinguishes between pass-through competitive and non-competitive research grants and projects, and how it is decided which ones are funded?
2. What is your target for the number of research projects that could be funded with this proposal?
3. Where do the remaining funds (30% that doesn't pass through) end up?
4. Can you talk about the demand for the competitive grant funds? With WBIF, are you seeing less demand from these grant funds?
5. With chloride contamination emerging as a growing cause of impaired waters in MN, what projects are planned on stormwater chloride and its impact on surface water?
6. Can presenter quantify savings from new or improved practices that have been adopted?

FY28-29 CLEAN WATER FUND PROPOSAL

Program Title:	Tillage and Erosion Transects
Program Number (if applicable):	80
Agency/Organization Name:	Board of Water and Soil Resources
Program website:	https://bwsr.state.mn.us/tillage-and-erosion-survey-project

Program Contact	
Name	Udai Singh
Email	udai.singh@state.mn.us
Phone	507-766-5020

Person Filling Out Form	
Name	Udai Singh
Email	udai.singh@state.mn.us
Phone	507-766-5020

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 Tillage and Erosion Transects survey is a comprehensive, long-term program to systematically collect data on high residue cropping systems and cover crop adoption to produce county, watershed, and state-wide estimates of soil erosion caused by water and wind. This valuable information can then be used by local and Tribal government staff to help them reach their water quality goals by using the information to both identify critical areas, and to select and prioritize potential projects based on a more accurate estimate of projected impacts.

Water Quality Impact

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

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.

Tillage, cover crop, and soil erosion data is being collected in the 67 Minnesota counties that have greater than 30% of land dedicated to agricultural row crop production.

The program will provide statistically valid, county-level estimates for soil loss from both wind and water erosion, as well as the annual adoption rate of high residue tillage management systems and cover crops. Providing county-level data that is statistically accurate requires long-term annual data collection.

Tillage and residue data enhances existing watershed water quality models. The improved models are better able to identify critical areas for implementation of conservation best management practice (BMP) and to better estimate pollutant load reductions for both planned and applied conservation practices. Up-to-date tillage and erosion data can aid local and Tribal government staff in reaching WRAPS, TMDL or other water quality goals by comparing current conditions with potential management scenarios designed to reach pollutant reduction goals.

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.
    Program goals include: 1) continuing to use satellite data to collect annual information on high residue tillage management systems and cover crops in 67 counties in Minnesota that have greater than 30% of land dedicated to agricultural row crop production, and 2) delivery of the data to Minnesota stakeholders through the Daily Erosion Project (www.dailyerosion.org), Single-event Wind Erosion Evaluation Program (SWEEP), and Minnesota Geospatial Common.

b. Describe how outcomes will be tracked, evaluated, and reported.
Technical staff meet quarterly to review, evaluate and track project progress. Data is reported and available on the Minnesota Geospatial Common which is a collaborative space for users and publishers of Minnesota's geospatial resources. The Commons is used by researchers, cartographers, web and application developers, journalists, planners, and other citizens who need GIS data for a project.

c. (If applicable) For past recipients, describe any planned changes to this program from previous funding cycles, if any.
There is no change to this program from previous funding cycles.

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.

Excellent progress has been made with the funding of the project to date. Funding appropriations to date has resulted in estimation of crop residue cover and cover crop emergence in 67 agricultural counties of Minnesota utilizing satellite imagery from Landsat 8 and 9 and Sentinel 2 satellites.

Crop residue cover estimation have been produced at 30-meter pixel level for each spring from year 2017 to 2024. This has been produced at minor watershed, country level and Agro-ecoregion scales. Larger area of state continues to adopt higher level of crop residue cover practice in the agricultural region of the state.

Estimates of cover crop emergence have produced at 30-meter pixel level from year 2019 to 2024. This has also been produced at minor watershed, country, and one watershed one plan scales.

Fall 2019 - 2023 Estimated cover crop emergence summarized by minor watershed and One Watershed boundaries.

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

The program is continuing to make steady progress towards reaching its long-term goals of estimation of Crop Residue Cover and Crop Cover emergence using the current and improved method utilizing satellite imagery.

Alignment with Clean Water Council Strategic Plan

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

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

Public water systems are under the continuous threats due to increase runoff with increased nitrite and Nitrate pollutants. Adoption of crop residue cover and living crop cover best management practices help

support the pollution prevention to protect surface water and groundwater in the Droning Water Source Management Areas (DWSMAs) of the state.

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

Results from the project are used to develop updated maps of land surface covered with crop residues and live crop coverage maps that helps local communities realize the potential of adapting conservation measure to protect and sustain water resources and increase the capacity to Minnesota citizens to improve the water quality. The data is utilized to enhance the existing watershed scale water quality models. Outcomes from Daily Erosion Project (DEP) that is part of this project provide an easy-to-understand visualization tool for the local communities to understand the impact adoption of crop residue cover and living cover crop best management practices.

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

- *Minnesota Nutrient Reduction Strategy*
- *Minnesota Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan*
- *Minnesota Sediment Reduction Strategy for the Minnesota River and South Metro Mississippi River Soil Health RCPP*

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 provides critical information that supports the success of the following programs by improving the identification of priority areas for conservation BMPs and by targeting and prioritizing projects for implementation:

- *One Watershed, One Plan*
- *Watershed Based Implementation Funding*
- *Surface and Drinking Water Protection Restoration (Projects & Practices)*
- *Working Lands Floodplain Easements*
- *Enhancing Cover Crops for Adoption*
- *Drinking Water Protection*
- *Wetland Restoration Easements*

Connected non-CWF-supported programs:

Project efforts also support the Minnesota Nutrient Reduction Strategy (NRS), Minnesota Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan (MSCPP) and Minnesota Sediment Reduction Strategy (MSRS) for the Minnesota River and South Metro Mississippi River Soil Health RCPP by providing the crop residue cover and living crop cover maps for tracking the progress of the NRS, MSCPP and MSRS.

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 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 (%)

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?
  This project will continue to need funding in the future but at a smaller amount.
- 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.

__*73*___ %

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)
  There has been a technical advisory committee that participated in the development of guidelines and projects outcomes that will benefit the stakeholders. Federal Environmental Protections Agency and state agencies including Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Minnesota Department of Agriculture, Minnesota Department of Health and Metropolitan Council along with Minnesota Soil health program, local government units are the main program partners.

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

  (1) April 11, 2025 | Virtual training – LGU Soil Health Interest Group

  Training on using the Tableau-based interface to view Minnesota Daily Erosion Project (DEP) data as well as from satellite-based tillage and cover crop developed through this program.

  (2) November 17, 2025 | MOSH Webinar

  - *MOSH webinar: Exploring Watershed Erosion and Precipitation Trends - Zoom*
  - *MN DEP Dashboards Training Webinar handout - Google Docs*

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	*$1,000,000*
FY18-19	*$845,000*
FY20-21	*$845,000*
FY22-23	*$724,000*
FY24-25	*$850,000*
FY26-27	*$850,000*
TOTAL APPROPRIATED TO DATE	***$5,114,000***

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	
FY14-15	
FY16-17	*0.5*
FY18-19	*0.5*
FY20-21	*0.5*
FY22-23	*0.5*
FY24-25	*0.5*
FY26-27	*1*

O__Tillage and Erosion Transects

Questions:

1. Could you give a more clear idea about reaching your long-term goals?
2. Can the presenter quantify progress toward estimates of loss and/or current cover crop adoption?
3. Use of information gathered by this program
    a. Why isn't cover crop emergence included in the web tool? Where can we find the information?
    b. Is this information not cataloged in any other projects (1W1P, WRAPs etc)?
    c. How is this used to inform action, resource allocation and adjust program development and delivery? How have results from this program changed programming or evaluated program efficacy across local, state, federal and private programs?
    d. How is the private sector included to evaluate results from tillage and cover crop data and improve outcomes?
    e. Are there examples of land use change based on information gathered from this program?

FY28-29 CLEAN WATER FUND PROPOSAL

Program Title:	Future of Drinking Water
Program Number (if applicable):	40
Agency/Organization Name:	Minnesota Department of Health
Program website:	https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/cwf/fdw.html

Program Contact	
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Person Filling Out Form	
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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: This initiative supports fulfillment of the federal Safe Drinking Water Act, Minnesota Well Code, and the Groundwater Protection Act.

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 initiative arose from a 2016 Clean Water Council policy recommendation and companion appropriation. While the federal Safe Drinking Water Act provides a basic level of protection for customers of public water systems, this activity engaged local and national experts to develop an action plan that goes beyond current regulatory requirements to address emerging threats and ensure long-term safe public and private drinking water in Minnesota. With the release of the *Minnesota Drinking Water Action Plan* in 2025, the initiative now focuses on implementing the Plan and providing regular updates on progress and where there are key risks to address.

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.

While the *Minnesota Drinking Water Action Plan* (the Plan) touches every step of the Water Management Framework, the Plan and this initiative best fit **under problem investigation and applied research**. We work with state agencies, Clean Water Fund programs, research institutions, and other partners to address current, emerging, and anticipated risks from source to tap so that everyone, everywhere in Minnesota has safe drinking water.

This initiative considers both groundwater and surface water as sources of drinking water, as well as what many Minnesotans identify as their drinking water source - their kitchen tap. Thus, the initiative underscores the importance of identifying and managing potential threats around drinking water sources for public water systems and private wells and also researches and implements approaches so that both private well users and public water system customers are confident in the drinking water that comes from their tap. The initiative's focus in FY28-29 is to implement a regular biennial update on the Plan, act on the recommendations resulting a from a 2026 assessment of whether Minnesota should pursue state-level drinking water standards, and increase access to accredited laboratories that accept samples from private well households.

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.*
        i. **Increased collaboration** across state agencies and partners to ensure safe and sufficient drinking water, including the establishment of a **lateral private well team** across the Executive Branch.

ii. Implement the process to **update the *Minnesota Drinking Water Action Plan*** every two years, including a communications plan, report, and dashboard that displays progress and measurable outcomes.
iii. **Increase access to accredited water testing laboratories** that accept samples from private well households.
iv. Develop and start implementing a **process to establish Minnesota-based regulatory values for drinking water** if the 2026-2027 assessment determines that is the approach Minnesota should pursue.

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

i. The Plan will have a **summary biennial update document** to note key changes, improvements, new challenges as they relate to the 10-year framework for safe and sufficient drinking water. The update will be posted online and shared through listservs, newsletters, and presentations.
ii. There will be an **online dashboard** for the Plan.
iii. MDH maintains and posts a **list online of laboratories** that accept samples from private well users. As of 2024, there are 25 on that list. MDH also tracks the areas served by these labs.

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

i. The key change from previous funding cycles is that this initiative now uses the *Minnesota Drinking Water Action Plan* as its guide for projects and focus areas. Previous biennia did not have the Plan as a roadmap.

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

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

This initiative has made significant progress in identifying key risks to safe drinking water and ways to address them, including:

i. Cost and benefit analysis of removing lead service lines (*Lead in Minnesota Water* [PDF]), which contributed to the Minnesota Legislature's goal to remove lead service lines and appropriating $243 million to do so.
ii. University of Minnesota report (*Future of Drinking Water* [PDF]) with recommended actions to protect Minnesota's drinking water.
iii. First-ever *Minnesota Drinking Water Action Plan* (PDF)—a multi-agency framework for ensuring safe drinking water.
iv. Cost-benefit analyses for private well testing and mitigation (underway).

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

This program has made significant progress toward establishing strong interagency collaboration to identify key challenges to assuring safe drinking water, but the challenges will continue to evolve over time. As such, there will always be additional challenges to address. The work is never done.

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: Public Water Systems**—Ensure that users of public water systems have safe, sufficient, and equitable drinking water.
- **Goal 2: Private Water Supply Wells**—Ensure that private well users have safe, sufficient, and equitable access to drinking water.

This initiative serves both the 80% of Minnesotans who rely on a public water system for their drinking water and the 20% who rely on a private well. For both public water system users and private well users, we work from source to tap to identify challenges that need to be addressed and propose strategies and actions to address them. Each of the strategies named in the *Clean Water Council Strategic Plan* under the Drinking Water Source Protection Vision are included in the *Minnesota Drinking Water Action Plan*, which serves as the framework for the Future of Drinking Water Initiative.

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

This initiative is the lead for the *Minnesota Drinking Water Action Plan*. That Plan emphasizes the interconnections and importance of the Metropolitan Council Water Policy Plan, Minnesota Climate Action Framework, Minnesota Nitrogen Fertilizer Management Plan, and the State Water Plan in protecting 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: This initiative is informed by many other Clean Water Fund-supported programs, including:

- **Groundwater Restoration and Protection Strategies**: The reports in this program identify local groundwater concerns and outlines strategies and programs to address them. This helps identify key areas of focus or strength across Minnesota when it comes to drinking water.
- **Contaminants of Emerging Concern Program** helps identify emerging contaminants that may present a risk in drinking water.
- **Source Water Protection** helps identify key challenges to protecting sources of drinking water and works to address those challenges.
- **Private Well Initiative** focuses on how to better support private well users in Minnesota and develops strategies to do so.
- **Minnestoa Department of Agriculture** nitrate and pesticide programs identify, understand, and address concerns about nitrate and pesticides in drinking water.

Connected non-CWF-supported programs: This initiative works with various programs at the Metropolitan Council, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Minnesota Department of Agriculture, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Board of Water and Soil Resources, and Minnesota Public Facilities Authority to find ways to work together to ensure safe drinking water into the future.

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 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 (%)

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?* 2034
- *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.

25%

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)*

As noted above, this initiative has evolved from taking on disparate drinking-water-related projects to establishing a 10-year framework for ensuring safe and sufficient drinking water. That framework will drive the focus for this initiative going forward. The *Minnesota Drinking Water Action Plan* had a robust engagement process to incorporate diverse expertise and feedback. Through partnership with University of Minnesota Water Resources Center, Humphrey School of Public Affairs, Freshwater Society, and Clean River Partners, the Plan incorporates expertise and feedback from water professionals, state and local governments, researchers, and Minnesotans who drink water. We gathered feedback through community meetings, surveys, and discussions. We aim to continue robust engagement into the future.

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

  Through the development of the *Minnesota Drinking Water Action Plan,* this initiative compiled core inequities to safe drinking water in Minnesota and worked with partners to identify and propose strategies to lessen the inequities over the next decade. This initiative draws attention to the unfair challenges private well users (20% of Minnesotans) and small public water systems (nearly 50% of Minnesota public water systems serve cities below 500 people) face and outlines how we can better support private well users and small systems. One of the key areas of focus for fiscal year 28-29 is to increase access to laboratories that accept water samples from private well users.

- *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.*
  - Media release (Officials launch state's first Drinking Water Action Plan) and media event for the release of the *Minnesota Drinking Water Action Plan.* The media release and media event resulted in over 107 mentions on television, radio, and online news with an estimated audience of 5.4 million. The event and release also led to multiple radio and television interviews.
  - Over 20 presentations about the *Minnesota Drinking Water Action Plan*, including at the Water Resources Conference, Minnesota Water Well Association Conference, National Private Well Class Conference, Department of Human Services Health Equity Forum, Subcommittee on Minnesota Water Policy meeting, and Advisory Council on Wells and Borings meeting.

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 of the projects funded under this initiative includes a robust communication plan that identifies primary and secondary audiences, key messages, message maps, message platforms, tactics, and measures. Whenever we have any written communication about the initiative, we include the Clean Water Fund logo or wording explaining that the Clean Water Fund funds the work. Additionally, our webpage, all presentations, and all reports proudly display the Clean Water Fund logo.

PRIOR APPROPRIATIONS	
FY10-11	
FY12-13	
FY14-15	
FY16-17	
$500,000	$500,000
$500,000	$500,000
$500,000	$500,000
$500,000	$500,000
FY26-27	$500,000

TOTAL APPROPRIATED TO DATE	**$2,500,000**

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	
FY14-15	
FY16-17	
FY18-19	
FY20-21	0.25
FY22-23	0.7
FY24-25	0.7
FY26-27	0.9

P__Future of Drinking Water

There were no questions submitted for this program.

FY28-29 CLEAN WATER FUND PROPOSAL

Program Title:	Manure Land Application and Water Quality Specialist
Program Number (if applicable):	New
Agency/Organization Name:	MDA
Program website:	New program

Program Contact	
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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: _____

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 will support a manure land application and water quality specialist to develop and promote best management practices (BMPs) and update guidance, with a focus on regions at elevated environmental risk, including Southeast and Central Minnesota. Data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the MDA indicate that nutrients from manure are frequently under credited when farmers calculate the total amount of nitrogen applied to the crop, resulting in overapplication of commercial fertilizer. Improving manure crediting accuracy—and ensuring manure is applied at the right time, in the right place, in the right amount, and from the right source—will reduce nitrate leaching from manured fields to groundwater and decrease manure related runoff to surface water. The University of Minnesota's current manure program would benefit from additional staff capacity dedicated to land application technologies, producer support, and technical assistance. The position will strengthen statewide efforts to improve nutrient management, protect vulnerable water resources, and support farmers in implementing practical, science-based BMPs.

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.

Manure is an excellent source of nutrients, supports soil health, and improves resiliency to extreme weather events. When applied appropriately, Minnesota's soils are highly productive and produce crops of exceptional quality. However, manure use carries a higher risk of nutrient and bacteria runoff to surface water and of nitrate leaching to groundwater compared to inorganic fertilizer, particularly when overapplied on crop fields.

Funding will support a manure land application and water quality specialist at University of Minnesota Extension to expand and strengthen Extension's manure-management programs. University of Minnesota currently has a St Paul based manure faculty member with a split research/extension appointment and an extension educator focused on crops and manure management in Morris. Engagement with farmers, technical service providers, nonprofit organizations and other partners has shown a strong need for a dedicated specialist to promote manure BMPs in regions with elevated environmental risk, including Southeast and Central Minnesota. The specialist will promote BMPs, develop region-specific educational materials, deliver advanced manure-management training for livestock producers, coordinate information about cost-share opportunities, conduct train-the-trainer workshops for SWCD staff and other agronomy and conservation professionals, and collaborate with

local, state, and federal agencies to provide technical guidance. This position will enhance statewide capacity to support producers, improve nutrient management, and protect vulnerable water resources.

Measurable Outcomes and Progress

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

1. **Expected Outcomes for FY28–29 Request:**
    a. **Describe measurable and outcome-based goals for the current funding request.**
    Expected outcomes include leading or co-leading the development of U of M Extension manure and water quality BMPs; organizing an annual regional manure-focused field day or meeting; developing an advanced manure-management training program for livestock producers; submitting one or more proposals each year for non-CWF funding to support manure BMP promotion; leading or co-leading manure management training workshops for SWCD technical staff; and presenting research or program outcomes at least once annually at a professional regional conference.

    b. **Describe how outcomes will be tracked, evaluated, and reported.**
    Outcomes related to research and development of BMPs, non-CWF funding, blog posts, podcasts, news clips and news releases, number of presentations, and number of farmer contacts are tracked through the U of M Extension performance-based activity tracking system and reported quarterly to the MDA. Outcomes from outreach and education events conducted by the manure and water-quality specialist—including participant feedback, change in manure management practices and BMP adoption, acres impacted, and other information—also will be tracked using participant evaluation forms from University of Minnesota Extension.

    A key goal for the specialist is to develop advanced manure management programming and training for livestock producers on advanced manure management. This approach parallels the University of Minnesota Extension's Irrigator Program, in which irrigators complete an advanced training workshop and, upon completion, become eligible for an Irrigation Water Management endorsement through the Minnesota Ag Water Qulaity Certification Program. The manure-management training would follow a similar model, providing producers with in-depth education and practical tools to support improved nutrient-management and water-quality protection.

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

2. **Outcomes from Prior Clean Water Fund Appropriations (if applicable):**
    a. **How would you characterize progress made to date? As much as is possible, include outcomes achieved as they relate to the program purpose.**
    This is a new program.

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

Alignment with Clean Water Council Strategic Plan

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

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

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 refines regional BMPs for manure and water quality, manure conservation practices, and use of technology to conserve crop nutrients and water. The focus of the research and demonstration is developing and evaluating practices and technologies that conserve crop nutrients, reduce nitrate leaching losses to the groundwater and decrease nutrient and manure losses to surface water.

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

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**: The specialist will support BMPs for manure and water quality in line with the Ag Water Quality Certification Program and work to develop a manure endorsement for the program.
- **Nitrate in Groundwater**: The specialist will promote practices that reduce nitrate leaching losses to groundwater—in direct support of the Nitrate in Groundwater program—focusing on regions with groundwater vulnerable to nitrate contamination, including Southeast and Central Minnesota.
- **One Watershed, One Plan**: The specialist will promote practices that reduce loss of manure and nutrients to surface water. This includes providing technical asssitance to support local water-quality implementation plans and guiding farmers on the availability of financial assistance programs.
- **Minnesota Ag Weather Network Program**: The specialist will promote weather-based manure management practices, including the runoff risk advisory system.

Connected non-CWF-supported programs:

The manure land applcation and water quality specialist will integrate with existing programs and collaborate closely with the University of Minnesota Nutrient Management and Soil Health teams.

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 (%)
Ag Fertilizer Research and Education Council (AFREC)	$50,000	20%

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

The non-CWF funds listed above support demonstration and outreach activities related to the development and promotion of manure and water-quality BMPs. Applications for these funds will be submitted in collaboration with University of Minnesota faculty members.

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 and partners have been involved in the development and evolution of the program, including farmers, manure applicators, conservation professionals, government agencies, and other stakeholders.

- Focused shared learning sessions involving the University of Minnesota, interest organizations, and state agencies led to expanded demonstration and promotion activities related to manure BMPs and water quality starting in 2023.
- The MDA's Nitrogen Fertilizer Education and Promotion Team, comprised of leaders from commodity groups, ag industry, nonprofit organizations, government agencies, and soil-fertility experts from the University of Minnesota, identified proper manure-management as a key component of meeting environmental outcomes while noting that more education is needed to achieve desire results.

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

  The manure land application and water quality specialist will actively promote equity by helping historically underserved communities gain access to information and cost-share programs. That person also will provide technical assistance to lower adoption barriers for historically underserved producers, ensuring equitable access to resources and promoting community resilience. This project places a strong emphasis on addressing environmental justice by targeting communities facing significant water quality challenges, such as high nitrate concentrations in groundwater. By implementing manure BMPs, the project mitigates 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.**
  This is a new program.

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 and the manure land application and water quality specialist will use the CWF logo on all presentations and state-branded outreach materials. An acknowledgement to the CWF will be made where its logo can't be displayed.

PRIOR APPROPRIATIONS	
FY10-11	
FY12-13	
FY14-15	
FY16-17	
FY18-19	

FY20-21	
FY22-23	
FY24-25	
FY26-27	
TOTAL APPROPRIATED TO DATE	

FY28 Request	FY29 Request	FY28-29 TOTAL REQUEST
New	New	

[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	

Q__Manure Land Application and Water Quality Specialist

Comments:

Another program that merits funding regardless of rubric scoring.

Questions:

1. Funding ballpark
    a. This is a new program. I'm not sure about what CWF $ are being requested? Looks like $50,000 anticipated from Ag Research and Education Council with a low degree of security of funding. Needs explanation.
    b. Can you provide any estimate of the amount of funds that will be requested?
2. Is there a specific goal for manure management or manure as a component of the SEMN groundwater nitrate reduction? Or specific bacteria reduction goal that this would contribute to? What is the anticipated reduction or impact on surface and groundwater?

FY28-29 CLEAN WATER FUND PROPOSAL

Program Title:	Clean Water Council Administration
Program Number (if applicable):	62
Agency/Organization Name:	MPCA
Program website:	Clean Water Council | Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

Program Contact	
Name	Jen Kader
Email	Jen.kader@state.mn.us
Phone	651-757-2621

Person Filling Out Form	
Name	Jen Kader
Email	Jen.kader@state.mn.us
Phone	651-757-2621

Eligibility Requirements

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

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

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

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

If yes, please cite applicable statute or rule: _____

Abstract

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

This program funds the operation of the Clean Water Council and related expenses, including reimbursements, per diem, communications and engagement expenses, overhead, and staff.

Water Quality Impact

Which step of the Water Management Framework does this program most fit under: Not applicable

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.

By supporting the function of the Clean Water Council—including the preparation of meetings, materials, and experiences to support Council Members in their decision-making, as well as external partnership development and engagement—this program ensures that Council activities fulfill the statutory requirements for the Council and Clean Water Fund.

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 Council will produce its biennial report, including budget recommendations and policy recommendations.
    - The Council will continue to develop and maintain relationships with constituents across the state.
    - The Council will increase awareness of the value of the Clean Water Fund.

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

    Outcomes will reviewed as a part of Council meetings and may incorporate use of survey and other engagement tools.

    - Report: On time submission of the report.
    - Relationships: Participation in events, engagement in public input opportunities, engagement in Council meetings, letters and input submitted.
    - Awareness: Presentations and participation in various events, feedback from Council members.

c. **(If applicable) For past recipients, describe any planned changes to this program from previous funding cycles, if any.**
In addition to the Communications Plan and Strategic Plan, the Council now also has a Public Participation Plan, which seeks to enhance the ability of the Council to engage with and incorporate feedback from constituents across the state. While engagement has happened historically, it is anticipated that this new plan will drive additional efforts and focus them at key moments.

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 focus of the Clean Water Council has evolved as the work supported by the Clean Water Fund has also evolved. Early years focused on building and establishing the scaffolding to support each element of the Water Management Framework and achieve goals surfaced through the Impaired Waters Task Force. Collaboration and understanding between agencies and with the Council have been enhanced through open and regular communication. External communication has improved trust and visibility. The development of the Public Participation Plan and scoring rubric process intends to further improve transparency and accountability, while enhancing buy-in and engagement.

   b. **How close is the program to reaching its long-term goals?**
   (NA)

Alignment with Clean Water Council Strategic Plan

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

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

This budget supports the ability of the Council to carry out its strategic plan and fulfil statutory obligations. Other guiding documents for the administration of the Council include the Communications Plan and the Public Participation Plan, as well as Council bylaws. Plans such as the Nonpoint Priority Funding Plan, the Clean Water Fund Road Map, the Climate Action Framework, the State Drinking Water Action Plan, Metropolitan Council Water Policy Plan, and others also inform the work of the Council.

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: NA

Connected non-CWF-supported programs: NA

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 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 (%)
Ex. Private landowner contributions	*$100,000*	*100%*

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

NA

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.

____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)**
  The structure of the Council incorporates input from a variety of constituencies via designated representation, and feedback in the form of participation in meetings and comment letters have long been used to inform Council activities and decisions. In 2017-2019, a formal stakeholder

process led by Freshwater provided significant, direct feedback regarding the operation and focus of the Clean Water Council. That encouraged the creation of a full-time administrator role in 2018 and led to the development of regular newsletters to inform interested parties of activities and outcomes. Feedback received during the FY26-27 budget development process was responded to and incorporated into Council discussions over the last year. Feedback from one-on-one meetings and events have also been incorporated, and a survey identifying successes and unmet needs will also be factored in to budget decisions.

- **Please describe how this program advances environmental justice and promotes equity. (150 words)**
  The Public Participation Plan, formed using the International Association for Public Participation guidelines and values, is intended to increase engagement with constituencies that have not always been engaged, enhance the ability to incorporate the input as a part of decision making, and ensure follow-up with interested parties. The Council also encouraged the creation of the Clean Water Legacy Partners Grant through BWSR, which provides funding for nonprofits and Tribal governments. Additionally, the rubric and proposal form now request this information so that the Council can consider environmental justice and equity as a part of their deliberations. Finally, multiple policy efforts include addressing environmental harms and prioritizing outcomes that improve quality of life for low-income individuals, renters, and others traditionally overburdened.
- **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.**
  - MASWCD December Newsletter
  - CWC October Newsletter
  - PDF of WRC poster

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.

Communication efforts are guided by the Interagency Clean Water Fund Communications Plan and the Clean Water Council Public Participation Plan. Council members and staff are encouraged to communicate about the Council and the Fund, and a StoryMap and fact sheets are available on our website. Additionally, the Council distributes a general newsletter (>8,000 subscribers, >25% unique opens) and legislative session-focused newsletter (>1,500 subscribers, >33% unique opens).

PRIOR APPROPRIATIONS	
FY10-11	
FY12-13	
FY14-15	$73,000
FY16-17	$100,000
FY18-19	$100,000
FY20-21	$220,000
FY22-23	$600,000
FY24-25	$675,000

FY26-27	$922,000
TOTAL APPROPRIATED TO DATE	**$2,692,000**

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

[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
FY12-13	1.0
FY14-15	1.0
FY16-17	1.5
FY18-19	1.5
FY20-21	2.0
FY22-23	2.0
FY24-25	2.0
FY26-27	2.0

X__Clean Water Council Administration

Questions:

1. Will this proposal provide adequate funding for the CWC Administrator to attend all key conferences (e.g., MN Water Resources Conf)?
2. Could you please provide a comparison of CWF administrative costs with the OHF administrative budget ($ and FTE)?
3. Would an additional FTE provide benefits toward community engagement and communications about CWF outcomes per Minn. Stat. 114D.30, subd. 5, 6, & 7?
4. How much would it cost to increase stakeholder engagement?

FY28-29 CLEAN WATER FUND PROPOSAL

Program Title:	Legislative Coordinating Commission Website
Program Number (if applicable):	63
Agency/Organization Name:	Legislative Coordinating Commission
Program website:	www.legacy.leg.mn

Program Contact	
Name	Michelle Yurich/Sally Olson
Email	michelle.yurich@lcc.mn.gov /sally.olson@lcc.mn.gov
Phone	(651) 296-2963 (MY)/(651) 296-9002 (SO)

Person Filling Out Form	
Name	Jen Kader
Email	Jen.kader@state.mn.us
Phone	651-757-2621

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: __Minn. Stat. 144D.50, Subd. 4(f)_

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 LCC has been tasked with developing and maintaining a website that shows how revenues generated by the Legacy Amendment and the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund are utilized. It is required by law.

Water Quality Impact

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

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 allows for communication about the work and impact of the Clean Water Fund. This can support others in adopting behavior or practice change, and show the value of this dedicated fund to Minnesota taxpayers.

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:** - NA
    a. **Describe measurable and outcome-based goals for the current funding request. Describe how outcomes will be tracked, evaluated, and reported.**
    b. **(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):** - NA
    a. **How would you characterize progress made to date? As much as is possible, include outcomes achieved as they relate to the program purpose.**
    b. **How close is the program to reaching its long-term 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.

The website is intended to show how all revenue is used, relating then to each part of actions taken in line with Clean Water Fund statute and the strategic plan.

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

This program is required by law under Minn. Stat. 144D.50, Subd. 4(f).

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: All of them

Connected non-CWF-supported programs: ENRTF and the other Legacy Funds

Non-CWF Funding

Will this program receive or request other funding from non-CWF sources, or eventually leverage non-CWF sources? Other funding sources reflected in the LCC website contribute to its operation as well, proportionally by amount of funding received.

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 (%)
Ex. Private landowner contributions	*$100,000*	*100%*

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

Long-term funding vision

- If this proposal is funded, should the Clean Water Council expect future (beyond FY28-29) requests to increase, decrease, or stay about the same? (Do not factor inflation into your answer.)
    - __ Increase
    - __ Decrease
    - _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? __ 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)** NA
- **Please describe how this program advances environmental justice and promotes equity. (150 words)** NA
- **If this has been funded through Clean Water Funds in the past, please share 1-3 recent examples of outreach conducted by this program. Links or attachments are allowable.** NA

CWF Communication Plan

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

The LCC Website is home to the Legacy website, which allows users to find projects by funding source and location, including House and Senate districts. It is a go-to website for demonstrating how the Clean Water Funds have been invested, and the link to it is often included in the promotional materials of others.

PRIOR APPROPRIATIONS	
FY10-11	$25,000
FY12-13	$13,000
FY14-15	$30,000
FY16-17	$0
FY18-19	$15,000
FY20-21	$9,000
FY22-23	$8,000
FY24-25	$6,000
FY26-27	$7,000
TOTAL APPROPRIATED TO DATE	**$113,000**

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.

LCC staffing costs are absorbed within their existing General Fund Appropriation.

XX_LCC Website

There were no questions submitted.