

Clean Water Council Meeting Agenda

Monday, June 15, 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)** Council member 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 May minutes
- **(INFORMATION ITEM)** Council updates
 - Chair update
 - Staff update

9:20 **(DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS) Policy Committee Update**

The Policy Committee has finalized the update to the chloride deicers policy statement. It is included as an FYI for today's discussions but will be discussed and approved in July. There is also a special meeting scheduled for later this month regarding draft language related to stormwater reuse that would potentially prohibit its use. Support for Clean Water Council Administrator to speak on behalf of water reuse as a valuable strategy is requested.

9:30 **(DISCUSSION ITEM) Budget and Outcomes Committee Update**

The Budget and Outcomes Committee has prepared initial considerations regarding priority and funding direction for the proposals presented at the May Clean Water Council meeting. Additionally, the Council explored a possible budget target for the FY28-29 biennium of \$340M based on information from Minnesota Management and Budget. Feedback from Council members is requested to set a working budget target.

9:40 **(INFORMATION ITEM) Framing today's public input discussions**

As Council members prepare to develop the first draft budget for the FY28-29 biennium, they are being asked to keep a considerable amount of information present in their mind: statutory requirements, guiding documents such as the Clean Water Council's strategic plan and the Water Management Framework, input received over the last two years, outcomes from the rubric evaluation process, and the public input received specifically in advance of this meeting. This presentation will aim to provide reminders for each of these items and help ground all workshop participants in the context these discussions are taking place in.

10:30 BREAK

10:40 **(WORKSHOP DISCUSSION #1) Identifying themes and key items**

In small groups, participants will be asked to reflect on the framing presentation and materials shared in advance and identify what they are noticing from the bulk of content.

11:25 **(WORKSHOP DISCUSSION #2) Discerning takeaways and lessons to hold onto**

In small groups, participants will consider what these patterns or themes mean for the Clean Water Council and Clean Water Fund.

12:00 LUNCH

(Agenda continues on the next page)

12:30 (WORKSHOP DISCUSSION #3) Articulating next steps to put lessons into practice

In small groups, participants will review the key takeaways offered before lunch and identify important actions for the Council to take to incorporate those lessons—in this budget cycle and over the coming years.

1:30 (WORKSHOP DISCUSSION #4) Establishing draft considerations, priorities

This final workshop discussion will take place as a large group, building off the previous discussion as an initial draft is developed of key considerations the Council should use in prioritizing how to use Clean Water Funds for the FY28-29 biennium. Participants will be invited to share their thoughts regarding which considerations are most important as well.

2:00 BREAK *(this concludes the public input portion of the meeting)*

2:15 (DISCUSSION ITEM) Review of outcomes from the day, next steps

Outcomes from each of the four discussions will be reviewed for further discussion regarding how to incorporate this input going forward. Next steps regarding the upcoming survey, Budget and Outcomes Committee meeting in July, and other items will also be reviewed.

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

Clean Water Council
May 18, 2026, Meeting Summary

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

Members absent: Gail Cederberg, Rep. Steve Jacob, Sen. John Hoffman, Annie Knight, Rep. Kristi Pursell.

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

Regular Clean Water Council Business

- Introductions
- Motion to approve the May 18th meeting agenda by Dick Brainerd, seconded by Brad Gausman. Motion carries unanimously.
- Motion to approve the April 20th meeting summary by Dick Brainerd, seconded by Fran Miron. Motion carries unanimously.
- Council Updates
 - Chair Update
 - The University of Minnesota (UMN) St. Anthony Falls Lab, who worked on the wakeboard research. They submitted for a grant, and they would find out on June 1st if they received it.
 - Staff Update
 - Jen Kader will be finalizing the public engagement approach for the June 15th meeting. She is compiling public comments, and it is being summarized in a spreadsheet. There will also be a survey for public folks unable to participate in the meeting.
 - We Are Water is at the Capitol Region Watershed District until June 14th.
 - Jen is meeting with Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB), to discuss possible target amount.
 - Policy Committee Update
 - There is a meeting on May 29th looking at the Chloride De-icer policy update. There is a smaller group meeting to update the policy before the meeting. There is some stakeholder engagement involvement process for the June meeting.
 - Jen, Glenn, and Rich participated in the Bdote Tour with We Are Water. Recommend others participate.
 - Locally, the Rice Creek Watershed District completed an alum treatment. They had the Clean Water Funds (CWFs) sign up as they were doing the work. My son was fishing on Centerville Lake because they heard about the alum treatment on social media.

Budget and Outcomes Committee (BOC) Update (Webex 00:16:00)

- The BOC met on May 8th. They spoke on the goals for 2026, the budget process and refinements for it, and the directions and priority of funding. *See meeting packet for updated documents.*
- For the goals, these were finalized. The Public Participating Plan was pulled in, in particularly with the public input. So, the goals were adjusted slightly.
- The BOC came up with definitions for the direction and priorities of the program.

Public Input (Webex 00:37:00)

Trevor Russel (Friends of the Mississippi River): Does the \$330M initial target account for leaving 5% on the bottom line? *Answer:* Yes, per statute.

Proposal Presentations (Webex 00:40:00)

- Point Source Implementation Grant (PSIG) Program (MPFA) (Webex 00:40:00)
 - High-level purpose/program goal: Provide funding assistance for projects needed to address more stringent wastewater effluent limits.

- Program highlights: PSIG cap was increased to \$12 million during the 2025 legislative session. There are 13 projects that are currently in the funding range.
- This has been funded since FY2014. Total funded has been \$310 million (including bonding dollars).

Questions/Comments:

- Steve Besser: Can you share the pros and cons about lime softening? Should we be looking at it for reducing chloride? *Answer:* Chloride is likely to come from the water softeners. So, for the wastewater, it depends on their systems and how much the operators can handle. Pipestone is about the size to do a centralized limestone plant. It also helped to remove radium in drinking water. The benefits of lime softening are that there is no chloride addition in the process. The challenge is in the local jurisdiction, to replace or remove home softeners. For smaller communities they will do reverse osmosis softening. There is no chloride added. They require more water usage (there is water loss with this kind of system). It is also a centralized water treatment process. It is a holistic approach. Having PSIG available to help these communities is valuable.
- Jessica Wilson: Does it always stay around 12 or 13 projects, or is there a backlog that we are continually making progress on? Is the list getting longer over time or shorter? *Answer:* I think in general we are falling behind. It will continue to grow. The ask has been significantly more. It will take years and years of additional funding to assist.
- Rich Biske: Does rural development or other federal funds assist in this area? *Answer:* USDA Rural Development does assist in this area. We have great relationships with our funding partners, but they do not have the money they used to, in order to partner with us.
- Small Community Wastewater Treatment Program (MPFA) (*Webex 00:53:00*)
 - High-level purpose/program goal: Eliminate non-complying and straight pipe wastewater discharges often resulting in fecal coliform, nitrogen, and/or phosphorus discharges into the environment.
 - Program highlights: Program technical assistance (TA) has led to construction of multiple projects eliminating environmental discharges.
 - This has been funded since FY2007, with a total funding of \$9,134,000 (\$152,000 in TA).

Questions/Comments:

- John Barten: Have the Voyageur's National Park folks, or anyone, approached you for technical assistance or construction funding. *Answer:* We have done projects up that way, but I am not sure.
- Bonnie Keeler: Who typically provides technical assistance in this program? Would that be the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), or is it to other consultants or partners? *Answer:* It is often contracted to engineering firms who do the work.
- Steve Christenson: I thought we were making good progress with dealing with straight pipe discharges, and we are down to single digit numbers in the state. However, how many are left? Are we making progress? *Suzanne Bowman, MPCA:* Yes, we are making progress. The number is harder to identify (depends on the scope). There is not enough money for infrastructure in our state, there is always more demand for it. These funds are an important resource for small communities, to support what their system could be.
- Brad Gausman: Are priority projects identified and supported in any 1W1Ps? *Answer:* Not sure.
- Wastewater/Stormwater TMDL Implementation (MPCA) (*Webex 01:08:00*)
 - High-level purpose/program goal: Integrate point source regulatory and watershed strategies, elevating the effectiveness of both.
 - Program highlights: Allows for innovation and creates flexibility for point source dischargers, while simultaneously achieving greater pollution reduction outcomes.
 - This has been funded since FY14-15, with a total fund of \$15.2 million.

Questions/Comments:

- John Barten: When you do the training for the cover crops, what sort of agreement do you have with the landowner? *Answer:* I will follow up and provide you with specifics. Southern Minnesota Beet Sugar has done a ton of work, and they have contracts with their farmers.
- Forestry BMP Evaluation and Lidar Hydrography Tools (DNR) (*Webex 01:31:15*)
 - High-level purpose/program goal: LiDAR Hydrography, the program generates Minnesota's official statewide digital elevation data through the LiDAR technology, enabling precise mapping of the state's landscape features that influence surface water movement and infiltration to groundwater. Forestry BMP

work is to monitor and report on the implementation of the Forest Management Guidelines on public and private forestlands, as required by the Minnesota State Statute.

- Program highlights: LiDAR Hydrography specializing in 3D data collection and terrain analysis, the team develops authoritative digital contours, elevation models, hydrography, and watershed boundaries for CWC funded projects and for Minnesotans. The Forestry BMP work monitors almost 1800 forested sites since 2000. There are new regional reports on 5-year results in 2025, improved data collection software upgrades in 2026, and guiding SFEC trainings twice yearly using results from statewide monitoring.
- This has been funded since 2010, with a total funded at \$10,600,000.

Questions/Comments:

- Rich Biske: Regarding LiDAR, the 70,000 users per year is impressive. Do you know how many are private engineering firms? *Answer:* We have done a survey, to see who the users are, and we found that private engineering firms are the biggest user. Does the private sector pay for this data, no. We provide this data to the public, and it is also collected by the federal government.
- Lake Biological Monitoring and Assessment (LBMA) (formerly Lake IBI) (DNR) (*Webex 01:47:00*)
 - High-level purpose/program goal: The LBMA conduct biological surveys, aquatic life use assessments, and stressor identification for lakes as part of the IWM. Results inform watershed protection and restoration.
 - Program highlights: Developed fish-based IBI models, completed aquatic life assessments on lakes in 47 watersheds, baseline report for biological health of lakes, long-term monitoring framework to inform decision making, completed stressor identification and protection reports for assessed lakes, developed standards and collected data for assessing coldwater lakes, developing models for shield lakes in NE MN, and provide results on Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and MPCA websites, seminars, social media, and regularly engage with local, state, tribal, and national partners.
 - They have been funded since FY2010, with total funded at \$21,828,000.

Questions/Comments:

- John Barten: Are you factoring in climate change, or warmer temperatures, warming lake temperatures in those stressors? *Answer:* Yes.
- Rich Biske: This is important information. Do you have a sense of how it is being consumed and utilized through programs across the state? *Answer:* We are trying to get the information out. We are producing reports and going to meetings. Also, the MPCA project managers are important vectors for taking the scientific information and working with our partners on the implementation. There are more opportunities. *Response from Rich Biske:* If we could get a summary of that, it would be helpful.
- Stream Flow Monitoring (DNR) (*Webex 02:06:30*)
 - High-level purpose/program goal: To maintain our stream gage network to provide water quantity information in support of the State's monitoring efforts.
 - Program highlights: Upgraded gages and improved data checks will give agencies more accurate flow records to calculate pollution levels and understand how water carries nutrients and sediment
 - This has been funded since FY10-11, with a total funding of \$35,810,000.

Questions/Comments:

- John Barten: Your nitrogen concentration tracks the flow closely. You'd think there would be some dilutional impacts on either side. *Answer:* Yes, these are new data sets, and we are starting to see results come through. Our website has all this data, and you can choose a filter (like nitrate).
- Rich Biske: What was the program like pre-CWFs? *Answer:* We have been supported since FY2010. I understand it was a lot of scraping to get by. We have more flexibility now; we have a replacement on the shelf. *Response from Glenn Skuta, MPCA:* It is a more robust network.
- Dick Brainerd: What about the other contaminants? *Answer from Glenn Skuta, MPCA:* So, pollutant load would include phosphorus, nitrogen, sediments, and others. There are regular meetings with the team, and a strong relationship between the state agencies. The quantity and quality come together.
- Steve Besser: Could you add additional sensors? *Answer:* Each addition adds costs, and maintenance and calibration of the equipment. However, it is happening organically where items are added.
- Fish Contamination Assessment (DNR) (*Webex 02:23:00*)
 - High-level purpose/program goal: Collaboratively support the state's need to understand and measure contaminant levels in Minnesota's fish to: ensure thriving fish populations, protect human health, and determine water quality standards assessments.

- Program highlights: For FY2025 they analyzed 346 samples for PFAS, 112 for PCBs, and 616 for mercury. They implemented rigorous statistical modeling approach for mercury consumption guidance thus reducing mercury analytical workload.
- They have been funded since FY2010, with a total funded at \$3,502,000.

Questions/Comments:

- Dick Brainerd: How much of this data is used for people traveling to Minnesota to fish? *Answer:* It is a nice tool from DNR, so folks can see the consumption advisories. We do not track how many people are using it, and making decisions based on it, but it is available to the public.
- Brad Gausman: Does information from this program inform on fish stocking decisions? *Answer:* Sounds like a great thing to do. Not all fishing is for consumption; a lot is catch and release fishing. Folks want to have access to fishing spots, even if they cannot eat the fish. It can be complicated decisions. It is a hard question to answer.
- John Barten: Do any lakes have no consumption advisory? *Answer:* We have had to add a number of water bodies to not eat for sensitive populations. Overall, about 60-70 that have some level of do not eat guidelines (often PFAS related). Some guidelines are lake specific too.
- Pesticide Testing of Private Wells (MDA) (*Webex 02:44:00*)
 - High-level purpose/program goal: Provide homeowners with information on presence of pesticides in their drinking water.
 - Program highlights: From 2016 to the end of 2024, more than 7,700 private drinking water wells were tested for pesticides. Overall, 228 samples (3 percent) were identified with pesticide concentrations above drinking water standards.
 - Total funded has been \$8.52 million since 2009.

Questions/Comments:

- Dick Brainerd: Can you speak more on the reverse osmosis (RO) systems? *Answer:* When cyanazine has been found over the health risk limit, they are offering people the option to receive an RO system. They are incredibly effective at removing pesticides (almost 100 percent). The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) makes the health risk limits.
- Monitoring for Pesticides in Surface Water and Groundwater (MDA) (*Webex 03:00:00*)
 - High-level purpose/program goal: Funding supports expanded monitoring using Clean Water-funded laboratory instruments.
 - Program highlights: Funding increased the number of monitored pesticides, the sensitivity in detection of certain pesticides, and the quantity of samples/locations analyzed on an annual basis. The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) reports 100,000+ additional water quality data points annually since support began.
 - This has been funded since FY10-11, with a total amount funded of \$6,320,000.

Questions/Comments:

- Steve Christenson: Regarding impaired waters for pesticides, and about half have been removed from it. Is it fair to attribute it to CWF activities? *Answer:* It is fair to say it played a role.
- Rich Biske: Has the MDA requested an increase? *Answer:* Yes, but not in the last few years. We can follow up on it with you.
- Drinking Water Contaminants of Emerging Concern (MDH) (*Webex 03:17:00*)
 - High-level purpose/program goal: Develop health-based guidance values, conduct water analysis, accredit laboratories to national standards, review contamination in fish.
 - Program highlights: Developed health-based guidance values for 53 contaminants. Update mercury analyses and fish consumption guidance for about 1500 Minnesota waterbodies. Increased PFAS capacity from 3,558 to 8,760 samples in two years. Also, expanded PFAS accreditation capacity.
 - They have been funded since 2010, at a total funding of \$37,790,000.

Questions/Comments:

- Steve Besser: Regarding the health standards you are setting are strictly for humans? *Answer:* Yes, for humans who drink the water. We do not include costs.
- Aquifer Monitoring for Water Supply Planning (DNR) (*Webex 03:35:00*)

- High-level purpose/program goal: This program provides essential information on groundwater trends, sustainability, and groundwater-surface water interactions to protect drinking water, water supplies, and groundwater dependent ecosystems.
- Program highlights: So far, in FY26, they have installed twenty new observation wells and maintained 97 existing well. They continue collecting and processing long-term aquifer level data from the statewide network of 1,257 observation wells.
- They have been funded since FY10-11, with a total funded at \$28,925,000.
- *No questions or comments.*
- Groundwater Assessment (MPCA) (*Webex 03:45:00*)
 - High-level purpose/program goal: Provide data and information to understand the condition of groundwater and evaluate progress in its protection, to guide investment of CWF implementation actions.
 - Program highlights: Informs priority info on levels and trends for chloride and nitrate, as well as occurrence of PFAS and Contaminants of Emerging Concern.
 - This program has been funded since FY10-11, with a total funded of \$19.83 million.

Questions/Comments:

- Tannie Eshenaur, MDH: Often, we hear folks asking about why we do not have a humongous water agency. What the water programs have shown is incredible collaboration. We have our specific water monitoring networks but work closely with each other. The MPCA and DNR are the front lines for water contaminants, and we work together. When MDA finds pesticides, we alert the public water systems, etc. We are alerted to look into areas where the water may be impacted. So, we are all working together.
- River and Lake Monitoring and Assessment (MPCA) (*Webex 03:58:00*)
 - High-level purpose/program goal: Develop data needed to guide investments of CWF and determine status of surface waters. Work includes monitoring to conduct water quality assessments, and determine trends in water quality, effectiveness of implementation work, and change in water quality over time.
 - Program highlights: Ongoing assessment of the 80 major watersheds. Ongoing load monitoring in 80 watersheds. As well as trend evaluations.
 - This program has been funded since FY10-11, with a total funding of \$146.6 million.
 - *No time for questions/comments. Follow up with Jen Kader if any.*
- River Watch and River of Dreams (Red River Watershed Management Board) (*Webex 04:16:15*)
 - High-level purpose/program goal: Engage K-12 grade students and educators in learning experiences that develop science literacy, environmental awareness, and appreciation for their local water systems.
 - Program highlights: Over 14,000 students reached
 - They have been funded from FY10-11 to FY24-25, with a total funded of \$2,122,000.

Question/Comments:

- Brad Gausman: If this is extracurricular activity? *Answer:* Most have it as an extracurricular. However, there are some schools that integrate it into a science class (Environmental Science).
- River Watch in the Minnesota Valley (Friends of the Minnesota Valley) (*Webex 04:30:00*)
 - High-level purpose/program goal: Hands on water quality education for high school and middle school.
 - Program highlights: Directly serve approximately 950 students each year through classroom-based programming. Directly serve approximately 700 young people each year through Partner Programming. Targeted Diversity Outreach serves approximately 100 students; they are serving Indigenous and Latino students in Minneapolis (Hiawatha Academy Charter School who are over 95 percent student body is Latino, along with the All Nations Program at South High School in Minneapolis). These schools are served through a field day rather than a classroom program. Although, some other schools a part of this program have it as part of the classroom. So, there are a few different approaches, reaching out to the kids in a way that works for their school.

Questions/Comments:

- Steve Christenson: How much are you requesting? *Answer:* We are asking for \$75,000 a year for two years.
- Natural Shorelines (DNR) (*Webex 04:41:00*)
 - High-level purpose/program goal: Protect lakeshore and advance restoration of shorelines to reduce nutrient pollution on targeted lakes.

- Program highlights: Permanently protect 6,000 feet of natural shoreline across several vulnerable lakes, expand MLR's Lake Steward Program
- This is a new program, so there has been no funding yet.

Questions/Comments:

- Tannie Eshenaur, MDH: Kudos for talking about social science and changing norms. I think that is critical to our impact of CWFs. The person who delivers the message is key. Have you looked at Dr. Mae Davenport's work? *Answer:* Yes, we have had her invited to some of the lake association meetings to talk about it. The local SWCD seems to be the best person to communicate. Sometimes the DNR is the best person. Sometimes it is the neighbor. It is sometimes a mix. These are not simple issues to address. What we have said is we need to do something. It is a water quality issue, and it is an opportunity to focus on it.
- Rich Biske comment: Regarding the vanishing shorelines report, there is a gap in what the CWFs are doing for lakeshore management and restoration. You have made a compelling case, it is a conclusion that the Council has been asking for, to have a program that addressing vanishing shorelines, so thank you. It is a new program coming to us, in response to an old request.
- Brad Gausman: I am seeing a parallel to our pollution reduction work. Are you working with all those property maintenance folks to get this message across as well? *Answer:* Some of the folks in the partnerships are. Some of the counties are doing that work, and there are good models out there. Some of the counties are planning to do it this summer. So, yes, we are talking about that.
- Jessica Wilson: How do you define a shoreline? I think of it as a fuzzier transition space. Folks often want to tidy up the aquatic weeds. I would like to see it creep into the transition zone. Thinking about the ecosystem, I would like to see it extended into the water more to protect it. *Response:* Yes, we are looking at it and seeing what we can do in that area. It is a fuzzy area.

Taking Stock: Feedback for the Process to date (*Webex 05:01:00*)

- This will be shifted to the next meeting.
- Council members can provide feedback in the Teams file (Jen Kader will provide the link). So, Council members' feedback is collected.
- Submit final rubric scores to Jen Kader by Wednesday, along with any additional questions before the BOC meeting.

Motion to adjourn by Brad Gausman, seconded by Steve Besser.

Adjournment (*Webex 05:02:03*)

Reducing Chloride Pollution from Winter De-icing Chemicals

Summarized Policy Statement

The Clean Water Council recommends that the State of Minnesota implement the following actions to reduce chloride pollution from winter de-icing chemicals (salts) in Minnesota's surface water and groundwater.

Highest Priority Recommendations

While all recommendations are important and interconnected, the Clean Water Council identifies the following as especially critical near-term actions for the legislature to consider:

(1) Implement a granular salt fee

A granular salt fee would create a direct market incentive to reduce unnecessary salt use, encourage innovation and efficiency, and generate sustainable funding for chloride reduction efforts, research, training, and remediation.

(3) Investigate feasible approaches for restoration and remediation.

Minnesota currently lacks a practical strategy for addressing the growing inventory of waters impaired by chloride pollution. Research is needed to identify feasible remediation technologies and long-term management approaches.

(5) Incorporate low salt design standards into building and site development.

Many sites are unintentionally designed in ways that require excessive salt use. Updating development standards can reduce long-term winter maintenance needs while improving safety and reducing costs.

(6) Require Smart Salting for state contracts and facilities.

The State of Minnesota should lead by example by requiring best practices and certified applicators for publicly funded winter maintenance activities.

(7) Establish an occupational licensure program for winter maintenance professionals.

Similar to Minnesota's pesticide applicator licensing program, winter maintenance professionals should meet standardized training and competency requirements because their work directly affects public safety and environmental health.

Full List of Recommendations

Incentives & Financial Sustainability

(1) Implement a granular salt fee.

(2) Sustain and enhance funding for the MPCA's Chloride Reduction Program including the Smart Salting training and certification program. *Included here for the grant and technical assistance elements of the program.*

Research & Remediation

- (3) Investigate feasible approaches for restoration and remediation.
- (4) Provide research funds to develop new technology, best management practices, and alternatives to chloride-containing de-icing chemicals.

Standards & Requirements

- (5) Incorporate low salt design standards into building and site development.
- (6) Require Smart Salting for state contracts and facilities.
- (7) Establish an occupational licensure program for winter maintenance professionals.
- (8) Develop standardized labeling requirements for de-icing chemicals sold in Minnesota.
- (9) Expand requirements for proper storage of de-icing chemicals.

Data & Accountability

- (10) Expand and strengthen chloride monitoring statewide

Risk & Liability

- (11) Provide liability protection for certified applicators using best practices.

Awareness & Behavior Change

- (12) Establish a statewide community-based social marketing campaign.
- (2) Sustain and enhance funding for the MPCA's Chloride Reduction Program including the Smart Salting training and certification program. *Included again here for the training program contribution to behavior change.*

These actions are further expanded under the "Recommendations" section.

Additional Considerations

Recommendations 7 (occupational licensure) and 11 (liability protection) are especially important because they address major barriers to behavior change in the winter maintenance industry. Many applicators continue to overapply salt due to liability concerns, inconsistent training standards, and lack of professionalization within the industry. Creating clear standards and protections can support safer and more sustainable practices statewide.

From 2016-2025 a limited liability bill was introduced at the Minnesota Legislature, modeled after a limited liability bill that passed in New Hampshire. Despite many attempts, common ground for the liability language has not been found over the ten-year life of the bill. In light of this, local governments have begun to explore the feasibility of local licensing requirements though a state-level program would ensure consistency and lessen the burden on local governments to deliver a program locally.

Recommendations 2 (MPCA Chloride Reduction Program funding) and 4 (research funding) also represent areas where the Clean Water Council can have particularly strong influence in the near term through funding recommendations and program support. Expanding research, technical assistance, and Smart Salting training capacity can deliver immediate and measurable reductions in chloride use while supporting broader long-term implementation of the Council's recommendations.

Problem Statement

Chloride pollution from the application of de-icing salt for winter maintenance of roads, parking lots, and sidewalks disrupts aquatic ecosystems, alters food webs, damages soil, damages infrastructure, and contaminates groundwater and drinking water. Many waterbodies in the state have elevated levels of chloride pollution, with trends continuing upward. Further, a study by the University of Minnesota and referenced in the Statewide Chloride Management Plan found that about 70% to 78% of salt applied in the Twin Cities for winter maintenance is either transported to groundwater or remains in the local lakes and wetlands.

Chloride is considered a “permanent” pollutant because it does not degrade over time through typical environmental processes. Additionally, there is no practical way to remove chloride once it enters a waterbody, so it accumulates over time. As the adage goes, “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure,” making source control the most practical and cost-effective strategy. Addressing chloride pollution will require a broad range of knowledge building, behavior change, implementation activities, and policy measures. At the same time, a remediation pathway must be investigated to address the existing and growing inventory of waters impaired by excess chloride.

Winter de-icing salts are among the primary sources of chloride pollution in Minnesota waters. The Minnesota Statewide Chloride Management Plan addresses pollution caused by de-icing chemicals, fertilizers, and water softeners. The Clean Water Council has an independent policy statement related to reducing chloride pollution from water softening to address the Wastewater Treatment Plan (WWTP) pollutant stream.



Figure 4: Fraction of annual chloride contributions from major point and nonpoint sources for State of Minnesota (Overbo et al. 2019)

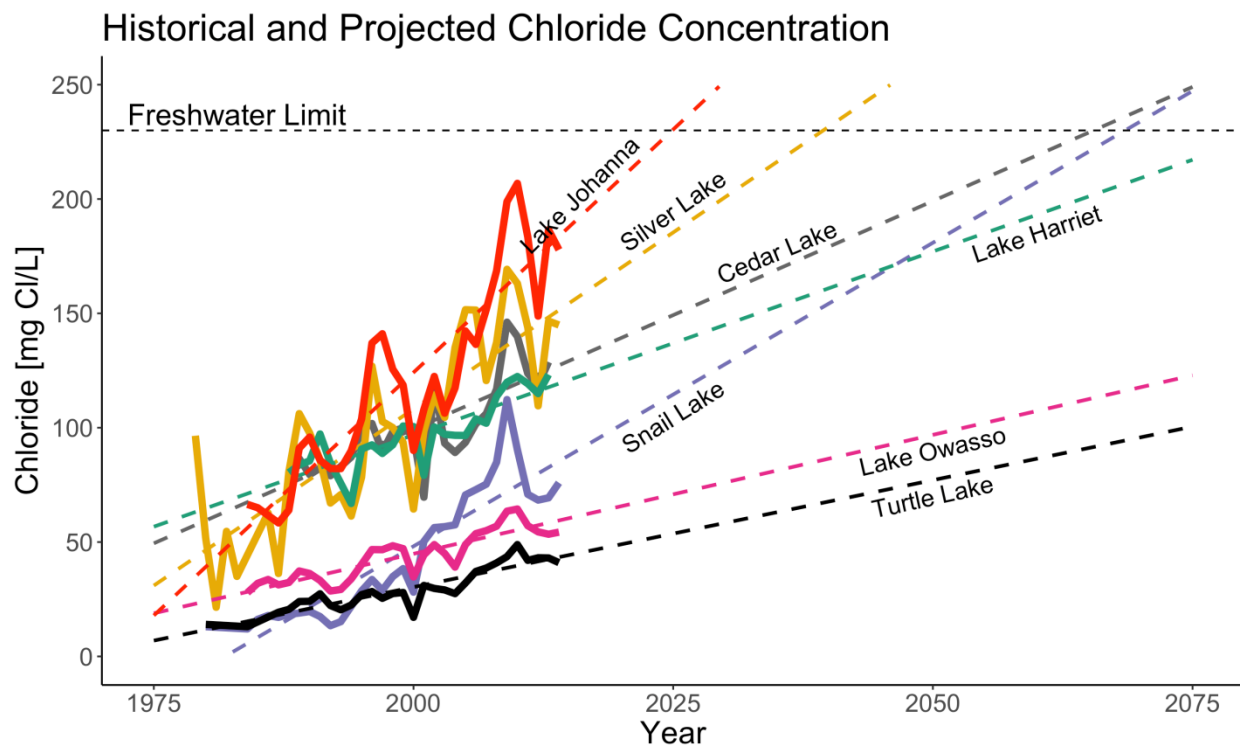
**Please note that Road salt use is actually all de-icing salt applied to roads, parking lots, sidewalks, and trails.*

Statewide, approximately 404,000 tons of de-icer is used annually. It takes just one teaspoon in 5 gallons of water to exceed the water quality standard and become toxic for freshwater fish and other aquatic life under long-term exposure. The de-icing salts applied to hard surfaces eventually wash off and/or infiltrate, contaminating nearby lakes, streams, wetlands, and groundwater.

One ton of salt costs more than its purchase price.

Cost to Buy	Cost to Society	Cost to Water Resources
\$151/ton	\$1,700-\$17,000/ton	796,178 gallons/ton
Bulk road salt purchase price	Estimated infrastructure damage costs	Water permanently polluted
State Salt Purchase Report (2023-2024 avg.)	MPCA Smart Salting for Roads Manual	Based on 1 teaspoon polluting 5 gallons

The Metropolitan Council published a report (Regional Assessment of Chloride in Select Twin Cities Metro Streams (1999 – 2019) which revealed rising chloride levels in nearly all streams. While the metro has been most heavily studied, chloride pollution is not a metro-only problem. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency published its Milestones report (Water Quality Trends for Minnesota Rivers and Streams at Milestone Sites) in 2014 which identified significant, largely statewide increases in chloride concentrations. Chloride from de-icing salts has been attributed in part to the impaired waters designations for chloride impaired waters in St Louis, Rice, Jackson, Meeker, Le Sueur, Douglas, Lyon, and Kittson counties. A study of chloride impacts to groundwater predicts groundwater in multiple Twin Cities aquifers is likely to reach chronic chloride exposure thresholds by mid-century due to de-icing salt (McDaris, John R et al. "Documentation and Prediction of Increasing Groundwater Chloride in the Twin Cities, Minnesota." Ground water vol. 60,6 (2022): 837-850. doi:10.1111/gwat.13227). As of 2026, there are 68 impairments statewide for chloride, and 14 were added in just the last two years.



Graph credit: Freshwater Society

Excess chloride contributes to a phenomenon often referred to as freshwater salinization syndrome, mobilizing heavy metals and creating a chemical cocktail (Kaushal et al., 2022). It leads to direct toxicity and biodiversity loss, macroinvertebrate sensitivity and reduced reproductive success, amphibian mortality, reduced zooplankton populations shifting phytoplankton communities from green algae toward cyanobacteria, density stratification and anoxic conditions which can trigger phosphorus release from sediments.

There is currently no alternative to de-icing salt that doesn't have other tradeoffs in effectiveness, cost, scalability, or other environmental harm. While a variety of products are marketed as safer or more sustainable alternatives, most still contain chloride compounds, perform inconsistently in extreme winter conditions, or introduce their own environmental concerns. Organic additives such as beet juice are commonly blended with salt brine to improve performance at lower temperature and help reduce bounce and scatter, which can lower overall salt use. However, beet juice mixtures can increase biological oxygen demand in nearby waters, contribute nutrients and organic matter to aquatic systems, create odors, and add cost and storage complexity for winter maintenance operators. Other alternatives, such as calcium magnesium acetate or potassium acetate, may reduce chloride impacts but are often significantly more expensive and impractical for widespread use on roads, parking lots, and sidewalks. As a result, the most effective current strategy is not complete replacement of salt, but reducing unnecessary application through smarter winter maintenance practices and targeted use.

In recent years, calls for more enhanced and comprehensive approaches to reducing chloride pollution have gained momentum. The Environmental Quality Board (EQB) identified chloride pollution as an emerging issue in the 2015 Water Policy Report. In September 2025, the EQB published the Groundwater Policy Report and in the chloride section noted gaps and opportunities, specifically, "Implementation of policies that support chloride reduction are needed to move beyond voluntary chloride reduction actions". The Upper Mississippi River Basin Association issued a resolution in 2022 calling for collaboration and progress on chloride pollution. Minnesota Watersheds adopted a resolution in 2024 calling for a regulatory approach to addressing chloride pollution. The Minnesota Cities Stormwater Coalition issued a position statement in 2025 expressing urgency and offering ideas for a comprehensive approach to meet the challenge.

Audience and Purpose

The Clean Water Council has a statutory role to foster coordination and cooperation as part of the Clean Water Legacy Act. These recommendations are intended to inform legislative and regulatory decision-making, guide state and local program development, and support the adoption of best practices across public and private sectors.

This policy statement is intended for the Minnesota Legislature, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, other state agencies, and local governments responsible for water quality protection, transportation systems, and land use regulation. It is also directed toward private sector parties, including winter maintenance professionals, commercial applicators, property managers, developers, and de-icing product manufacturers whose decisions influence use across Minnesota. It applies statewide, with particular relevance to developed areas where impervious surfaces and winter maintenance activities are concentrated. While awareness has been increasing, continued progress depends on deepening that awareness across all groups (general public, decision-makers, practitioners, and industry leaders). At the same time, awareness alone is not sufficient to drive the scale of change needed. Progress will require translating awareness into more comprehensive and coordinated action.

The purpose of this document is to recommend a suite of actions to reduce chloride pollution from de-icing chemicals while maintaining public safety and effective winter maintenance. Further, this updated policy statement reflects an inflection point in chloride pollution management in Minnesota. Early efforts have focused on improving operational efficiency and advancing voluntary best practices, yielding measurable reductions in de-icing chemical use, particularly among public road authorities. However, chloride concentrations continue to rise in many waterbodies, indicating that additional progress will require a strategic shift beyond operational efficiency improvements in the public sector alone. A more comprehensive approach that integrates standards, incentives, research, accountability, and behavior change is necessary to make meaningful progress in source control and restoration of impaired waters.

Recommendations

- 1. Implement a Granular Salt Fee.** To curb overuse, the costs of infrastructure and environmental damage should be partially shifted to those who overapply salt. A granular salt fee, modeled after the agricultural fertilizer fee, would incentivize more judicious use while generating revenue for and supporting financial sustainability of chloride reduction efforts. Funds could be reinvested in training and certification programs, research and innovation, implementation of best practices, and equipment and facilities upgrades. A fee structure would also enable improved tracking of salt use statewide, supporting benchmarking and accountability.
- 2. Sustain and Enhance the MPCA Chloride Reduction Program including the Smart Salting Training Certification program.** The MPCA Smart Salting training and certification program supports a range of audiences involved in de-icing decisions and operations, from private and public winter maintenance professionals who maintain roads, rural roads, parking lots, and sidewalks, to MnDOT, property managers, and community leaders. The Statewide Chloride Management Plan identifies the Smart Salting training program as the top implementation strategy to reduce salt overuse in the winter. Case studies have shown that participating organizations have been able to reduce salt use by 30% to 70%, without compromising safety. Further, the program provides low-interest loans and grants for equipment and retrofit projects.

The program has been exclusively funded by Clean Water Funds since January 2021. The State should sustain and enhance the MPCA's **Chloride Reduction Program** to support the development and maintenance of tools, resources, policies, trainings and assistance programs to assist communities, private sector applicators, and property managers in their effort to reduce chloride pollution and at least half of the chloride reduction budget should be dedicated to adoption of best practices to reduce chloride from de-icing chemicals.

Lastly, growing the chloride reduction program in Minnesota is critical as adoption of best practices and other policies in this document could accelerate progress and would put more demand on the training and cost share programs.

- 3. Investigate Feasible Approaches for Restoration and Remediation.** While source control is and should remain a top priority, it is prudent to advance a solution to remediate surface water that is or is imminently impaired by chloride. The State should lead a feasibility effort to evaluate remediation options and assess engineering feasibility, cost and scalability, waste management challenges and opportunities, risks, tradeoffs, energy demand, ecosystem impacts, and policy barriers. The goal is to determine if, where, and how chloride remediation can be implemented effectively.

Case Study: Leveraging Watershed Based Implementation Funding, the Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission and City of Plymouth studied options for delisting Parker's Lake. The study analyzed two primary alternatives to reduce chloride in Parkers Lake: 1) pumping lake bottom water directly to the sanitary sewer, and 2) pumping lake bottom water, treating it, and returning treated water to the lake. Two different treatment systems were evaluated for this alternative – a small-scale reverse osmosis system (RO) and an ion exchange system (IX). Ultimately, the decentralized treatment systems were cost prohibitive. More information on the study is available at [Parkers_Lake_Chloride_Dilution_Extraction_Tech_Memo_final.pdf](#)

- 4. Fund Research and Innovation.** The 2016 Twin Cities Metro Area (TCMA) Chloride Management Plan identified a broad range of research needs focused on reducing chloride pollution while maintaining public safety. Key research priorities including improving winter maintenance practices including in technology and equipment; evaluating alternative de-icing materials and additives; understanding and tracking chloride fate and transport; evaluating site design and infrastructure approaches; and understanding behavioral, institutional, and policy drivers that influence de-icer application decisions. Lastly, the plan recognizes a need to explore long-term management and potential mitigation strategies for chloride-impacted waters, given that chloride does not break down and accumulates in the environment.

The University of Minnesota's Stormwater Research Program provides an existing framework and strong institutional partner for advancing applied winter maintenance research to support the development and evaluation of new technologies, decision-support tools, and other best management practices that reduce chloride use while maintaining public safety. Expanded research capacity would also help test emerging de-icing products and operational approaches, accelerating the adoption of practical and scalable solutions.

The Forever Green Initiative could serve as a model framework for developing alternatives to chloride-based de-icing chemicals. Innovation in this sector is essential to develop a cost-effective alternative that can perform and is less harmful to the environment.

- 5. Incorporate Low Salt Design Standards.** Infrastructure should be designed with winter maintenance in mind. Poor designs with inadequate snow storage, inefficient drainage, and snow removal obstacles drive salt overuse. Design improvements can reduce long term maintenance costs, improve safety, and minimize environmental impacts. The state should incorporate established low salt design principles into building and site development standards, state-funded project requirements, and sustainability frameworks such as the Minnesota B3 (Buildings, Benchmarks, and Beyond) Guidelines.
- 6. Require Smart Salting for State Contracts and Facilities.** Require Smart Salting certification, use of best practices, and proper storage of de-icing chemicals for all winter maintenance conducted under state contracts and at state-owned or state-managed facilities. Contract specifications should clearly define performance expectations, documentation requirements, and compliance measures, including calibration of equipment, application rate tracking, and recordkeeping. State agencies should incorporate accountability mechanisms such as incentives, audits, or penalties. By leading through its own operations and procurement standards, the State can set a strong example and accelerate adoption across the private sector.

A model contract for responsible snow and ice management that embraces best practices to minimize environmental impacts from de-icing chemicals while also maintaining safety and addressing liability risk allocation is available on the MPCA's Chloride Resources website.

The February 2025 State Salt Purchase Report to the Minnesota Legislature included reporting from seven agencies that own property (MnDOT and leased properties excluded, with about half of agencies not reporting). The average annual purchase for 2023 and 2024 was 1,330 tons. If all the de-icing salt purchased were applied, it could permanently pollute more than a billion gallons and cause \$2M to \$22M in infrastructure damages annually.

7. **Establish an Occupational Licensure Program.** Establish a statewide occupational licensure program for winter maintenance professionals, or authorize counties to do so, to ensure consistent training and accountability. Licensure should include completion of an approved training program (such as the MPCA's Smart Salting certification program) and periodic continuing education. This approach would professionalize the industry, reduce overuse, and provide assurance to property owners and the public that winter maintenance services are being delivered safely and responsibly.
8. **Develop Standardized Labeling Requirements.** Develop standardized labeling requirements for de-icing chemicals sold in Minnesota to address misleading or incomplete information. De-icers can be labeled as "eco-friendly" or as an alternative to salt, but they may pose other problems for water quality. The MPCA should convene interested parties from a variety of sectors and lead a process to develop recommendations for new labeling requirements on packages of de-icing chemicals sold in Minnesota. Some key areas to establish requirements for include, but would not be limited to:
 - Ingredient disclosure
 - Verified environmental and safety claims
 - Realistic performance information
 - Clear application guidance

Improved labeling would support informed decision-making and reduce unintended environmental harm.

9. **Expand Proper Storage Requirements.** Proper storage of de-icing chemicals is a cost-effective and common-sense measure to reduce pollution.

Proper storage is required in communities regulated under the MPCA's Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) program; the permit requires local controls for proper bulk storage of de-icing chemicals at commercial, institutional, and non-NPDES permitted industrial facilities. The MPCA's Chloride Reduction Model Ordinance Language document provides guidance for creating and implementing an ordinance.
10. **Expand Strategic Chloride Monitoring.** Incorporate strategic chloride monitoring into the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's surface water and groundwater monitoring programs to better track statewide conditions and identify trends. This should include strategic enhancements to the MPCA's ambient groundwater monitoring network and the Watershed Pollutant Load Monitoring Network to sufficiently capture patterns in high-risk areas and across the state. Enhanced strategic monitoring and reporting of conditions and trends will support early detection of problems in vulnerable waterbodies, evaluate the effectiveness of chloride reduction strategies, and provide the data needed to guide policy, prioritize investments, and engage with interested parties on addressing chloride pollution.
11. **Liability Protection.** Provide liability protection to certified private salt applicators against slip and fall lawsuits who follow established best practices and document their work. The primary goal is to reduce overapplication driven by fear of litigation, encourage adoption of Smart Salting practices, and maintain safety while improving environmental outcomes.
12. **Establish a Statewide Community-Based Social Marketing Campaign.** A coordinated, statewide community-based social marketing campaign is needed to increase awareness and drive behavior change. The MPCA should

lead a process to establish a baseline of the public's current knowledge and attitudes, identify gaps, opportunities and roles among interested parties (MPCA's Chloride Reduction Program, Tribal governments, cities, counties, academic institutions, watersheds, non-profits, other state agencies, etc.), support crafting and distributing coordinated messages, and evaluate progress. State leadership can amplify and align existing local efforts. Additionally, the MPCA should further support enhancing chloride pollution awareness into existing programs such as the successful We Are Water program, Eco Experience at the Minnesota State Fair, and supporting the regional Winter Salt Week campaign.

Conclusion

Chloride pollution from de-icing chemicals is a growing threat to Minnesota's water resources. Because chloride accumulates and cannot be feasibly removed, proactive and coordinated action is essential. This policy framework outlines a comprehensive approach that combines incentives, standards, knowledge building, monitoring, research, and accountability. Together, these actions can significantly reduce chloride pollution while maintaining public safety, protecting infrastructure, and preserving Minnesota's freshwater resources for future generations.

ID	Program	Proposer	Brief Description	26-27 Amount	Proposed Change	Range (Mean)	BOC priority	BOC direction
48	Wastewater/ Stormwater TMDL Implementation	MPCA	Funding for these program areas advances point source water pollution reductions by supporting point source implementation work, notably 1) integrating the watershed approach and pollutant restrictions into point source stormwater and wastewater discharge permits; 2) incorporating stormwater and wastewater point source discharges into TMDL projects and watershed restoration and protection strategy (WRAPS) reports; 3) supporting technical assistance for wastewater and stormwater permittees in achieving pollutant reductions; and 4) creating more opportunity for water quality pollutant trades.	\$ 3,200,000	Hold Steady	29-48 (38.9)	High	Hold Steady
49	Point Source Implementation Grant (PSIG) Program*	PFA	Through the Clean Water Council and the Clean Water Fund Interagency Coordination Team (ICT) framework, specific impaired and threatened water bodies are identified where pollutant reductions are needed to meet water quality standards. Watershed restoration and protection strategies are developed to guide implementation activities. The PSIG program provides grants to help municipalities construct wastewater, stormwater, and drinking water treatment projects when the Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) determines that higher levels of treatment are necessary to meet water quality goals. These include projects to meet Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) requirements and water-quality-based effluent limits for phosphorus, chlorides, and other pollutants.	\$ 16,440,000	Hold Steady	31-50 (41)	High	Hold steady
50	Small Community Wastewater Treatment Program*	PFA	Minnesota has many areas with significant numbers of noncomplying septic systems in close proximity that are polluting surface waters and groundwater. Local governments interested in community solutions submit projects to MPCA for ranking on the Project Priority List based on the density and condition of existing systems. The program provides technical assistance grants to help communities evaluate potential alternatives and prepare a community assessment report which is submitted for review to MPCA, and construction financing (loans and grants) for projects when they are ready to proceed.	\$ 200,000	Hold Steady	31-50 (40.7)	High	Hold Steady
51	Aquifer Monitoring for Water Supply Planning	DNR	The Minnesota DNR's groundwater monitoring program collects long-term aquifer level data through a statewide network of 1,257 observation wells. This program provides essential information on groundwater trends, sustainability, and groundwater-surface water interactions to protect drinking water, water supplies, and groundwater dependent ecosystems. By analyzing water level changes alongside climate, land use and water demand, the program supports planning that prevents water shortages and protects lakes, streams, wetlands, trout streams, and calcareous fens. The program serves state and local water managers, communities and resource professionals by supplying reliable data, modeling and shared tools for sustainable groundwater management.	\$ 4,700,000	Hold Steady	33-50 (41.2)	High	Hold Steady
52	Fish Contamination Assessment	DNR	The program analyzes fish tissue to detect mercury and other contaminants. The information collected is then used by the MPCA to determine whether lakes are impaired for these contaminants, and by MDH in establishing fish consumption advisories. Fish consumption advisories are for the Minnesota public to determine how much wild caught fish can be safely eaten from Minnesota waters.	\$ 1,100,000	Hold Steady	29-46 (37.9)	High	Hold Steady

Notes

Encouragement to look at game (ducks, geese, etc.)

53	Lake Biological Monitoring and Assessment (formerly Lake IBI)	DNR	The program supports MPCA and Federal Clean Water Act evaluations by conducting biological surveys and aquatic life assessments for lakes. Fish-based Indices of Biological Integrity were developed and used to evaluate fish communities in 1,056 lakes within 47 watersheds to identify impairments, stressors and exceptionally healthy lakes. Monitoring has expanded to 13 northwestern watersheds. Standards to assess coldwater fish habitat in over 500 lakes have been developed, with assessments beginning once rules are promulgated. The program serves Minnesotans by informing watershed protection and restoration efforts, and by monitoring conditions and trends statewide.	\$ 3,050,000	Hold Steady	35-47 (41.2)	High	Hold Steady
54	Forestry BMP Evaluation and Lidar Hydrography Tools	DNR	The Guideline Monitoring Program monitors the implementation of forest management guidelines (FMGs) and Best Management Practices (BMPs) at logging sites across Minnesota's forested watersheds. We analyze data on FMG/BMP implementation to identify risks to water quality and provide training and advising for forest managers and loggers to implement sustainable forestry practices. The Lidar Hydrography Program generates Minnesota's official statewide elevation data through lidar technology, enabling precise mapping of the state's landscape features that influence surface water movement and infiltration to groundwater. Specializing in 3D data collection and terrain analysis, the team develops authoritative digital contours, elevation models, hydrography, and watershed boundaries.	\$ 1,400,000	Hold Steady	14-47 (35.9)	High	Hold Steady
55	Stream Flow Monitoring	DNR	Stream flow information is essential for understanding the state of Minnesota's waters. Clean Water funding has allowed the DNR to expand the network of stream gages that support planning and implementation for clean water protection and restoration. Specifically, stream flow data are needed to calculate pollution loads for Total Maximum Daily Load studies and pollution reduction plans. Through the Legacy Amendment the DNR will continue to maintain at least one stream gage in each of the 81 major watersheds to provide water quantity information in support of the State's long term water quality trend monitoring efforts.	\$ 5,650,000	Hold Steady	35-46 (40.7)	High	Hold Steady
56	Monitoring for Pesticides in Surface Water and Groundwater	MDA	Funding supports the purchase and maintenance of laboratory instruments that provide greater capacity for pesticide monitoring throughout the state. Clean Water funding allowed the MDA to increase the number of detectable pesticides, increase the sensitivity of detection of certain pesticides, and increase the overall number of samples analyzed on an annual basis. This expansion allowed the MDA to test additional public water supply wells, lakes, rivers, streams, and wetlands, including samples collected on Tribal lands. Data generated support pesticide management decisions to ensure groundwater, surface water, and drinking water resources are protected.	\$ 740,000	Hold Steady	29-47.5 (40.1)	High	Hold Steady
57	Pesticide Testing of Private Wells	MDA	This program provides homeowners and the public with information about pesticide occurrence in private drinking water wells located in geologically vulnerable areas. Earlier phases of the program analyzed up to 133 pesticide compounds in private wells across agricultural areas with vulnerable groundwater. Those results identified the herbicides cyanazine and atrazine--and their degradates--represent the greatest pesticide-related risks to private well users. Building on these findings, upcoming sampling will prioritize these compounds, along with nitrate and select neonicotinoid insecticides and fungicides in vulnerable aquifers, to ensure continued monitoring of contaminants most likely to affect groundwater quality.	\$ 1,000,000	Hold Steady	22-48 (39.7)	High	Hold Steady

3 mediums. Interest in having GF pay. Could have tighter tie to clean water outcomes.

58	Drinking Water Contaminants of Emerging Concern	MDH	MDH advances science-based public health responses to contaminants of emerging concern by strengthening health-based guidance development, water analysis, and laboratory quality assurance. Health Risk Assessment develops drinking water guidance, conducts risk assessments, engages stakeholders, and collaborates with state and federal partners. The Public Health Laboratory develops analytical methods and improves detection at lower concentrations. The Minnesota Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program ensures that accredited laboratories performing analytical water testing are accountable to standards that support defensible and accurate data. Clean Water Funds protect human and ecological health amid evolving contaminant risks.	\$ 11,850,000	Hold Steady	32-50 (41.2)	High	Hold Steady	
59	River and Lake Monitoring and Assessment	MPCA	Minnesota monitors and assesses surface waters to meet Clean Water Act requirements and support water protection and restoration. The state evaluates water quality every two years, identifies impaired waters, and reports results to the U.S. EPA. Monitoring includes intensive watershed studies, trend and pollutant monitoring, and 10-year lake and stream assessments using physical, chemical, and biological data. The program coordinates partners, supports volunteer monitoring, manages and shares data, tracks long-term and climate trends, and produces reports and analyses to inform water quality management and policy. <small>Most Minnesota residents receive drinking water from groundwater. Protecting and restoring groundwater quality requires reliable data on Minnesota's groundwater resources. Groundwater monitoring and assessment helps the MPCA, and its local and state partners, understand groundwater quality and investigate potential sources of contamination.</small>	\$ 18,900,000	Increase	32-48 (42.3)	High	Increase	Concern about degree of increase on such a large program. Support for nitrate sensor network.
60	Groundwater Assessment	MPCA	The groundwater assessment program is responsible for: Monitoring and evaluating the presence and concentrations of non-agricultural pollutants, including contaminants of emerging concern; Modeling the interaction between groundwater and surface water;	\$ 2,000,000	Increase	34-47 (40.5)	High	Increase	Question about whether the lapse of the PFAS Blueprint funding means the increase is a supplant. 3 hold steady.
61	River Watch and River of Dreams	Red River Board	The Red River Basin River Watch (RW) and River of Dreams (ROD) programs provide hands-on watershed education for K-12 students across the Red River of the North Basin. The programs connect youth to local rivers through field-based learning, water quality monitoring, and creative exploration. Their purpose is to build environmental literacy and stewardship by increasing understanding of non-point source pollution, its impacts, and key watershed health concepts. By engaging students, educators, and communities, the programs support improved water quality awareness, long-term protection of MN's waters, and development of the next generation of informed watershed stewards.	NEW (\$350,000)	NEW	17-48 (35.2)	High	Fund	Question if this should be funded directly or if it would be a grant program within the MPCA, who has directed funding to them in the past when the legislature directed it. Or BWSR Com \$\$.
62	River Watch in the Minnesota Valley	Friends of the Minnesota Valley	River Watch is a hands-on learning program operated by Friends of the Minnesota Valley for students in 28 high schools and in some middle schools during the 2025-2026 school year. Beginning with an in-classroom lesson aligned with state Science standards, students make 2 trips per semester to a river or stream to conduct water quality monitoring using a multi-function electronic probe and other tools. Macroinvertebrate surveys are conducted during the stream visits. Data is reported through the MPCA Citizen Science Portal. Most work is in the Minnesota River Basin, two High Schools serving Latino and Indigenous students in Minneapolis participate.	NEW (\$150,000)	NEW	17-48 (34.3)	High	Fund	Likewise would want to see this overseen by a state agency. NEed to explore what this would look like.

63	Natural Shorelines	DNR	<p>We are proposing an integrated system to address the mounting challenges on Minnesota's most heavily used lakes. About half of Minnesota's natural shorelines have been altered or degraded, diminishing ecological function and lake water quality, as lawn-down-to-the-lake shorelines allow 7-9 times more pollutants to enter a lake than naturally vegetated shoreline. These pollutants accumulate in lakes, creating serious water quality problems. This proposal includes a Lake Steward program administered by Minnesota Lakes and Rivers and a lakeshore conservation easement program managed by Minnesota Land Trust for permanent protection of critical shoreland on popular lakes at risk for land use change. Another element of this overall effort will be submitted to the LCCMR to support a program to develop a certification and extension program for protection and restoration of natural shorelines.</p>	NEW	NEW	28-50 (40.2)	High/Med	Fund	50/50 split on the priority level.
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Setting CWF budget target for FY28-29

June 2, 2026

Jen Kader and Dana Vanderbosch met with Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB) staff on Tuesday, June 2, 2026 to discuss the current status of sales tax revenues against the forecast for FY26.

At present, the actual sales tax revenues in every quarter of the year have performed slightly better than the forecast. Actual income on investments is expected to also perform slightly better. This lends support to the possibility that the February forecast should at least be met.

Additionally, the Council made the recommendation to not spend the ~\$9M that was available as a supplemental in order to have additional flexibility to meet priorities in FY28-29. The legislature did not include any spending from the Clean Water Fund in this legislative cycle, so we now know that money is still available. *Note:* in previous communication regarding the supplemental amount, it had been shared that any additional FY26-27 spending would reduce the amount available in the FY28-29. However, in this discussion with MMB, it was clarified that the ~\$9M will be *additional* to the \$331M in the forecast for the biennium.

There is also just over \$2M of unspent funds that are being returned by the Board of Water and Soil Resources, further increasing the available amount expected. This will be included in updated information shared in the November forecast.

With that in mind, the following table is offered to support discussion at the June 5, 2026 BOC meeting:

Source	Amount
February Forecast for Clean Water Funds	\$331,805,000
FY26-27 Supplemental amount	\$9,030,000
Returned amount from BWSR	\$2,077,000
Total	\$342,912,000

#	Program	Proposer	Brief Description	26-27 Amount	Proposed Change	Mean (Range)	BOC priority	BOC direction	Notes
46	CWC Administration	MPCA	This program funds the operation of the Clean Water Council and related expenses, including reimbursements, per diem, communications and engagement expenses, overhead, and staff.	\$922,000	Increase	43.8 (37-50)	High	Increase	Explore: what could be contracted vs. FTE? Support for FTE also.
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	43.6 (26-50)	High	Increase	Need to be realistic about how much is possible as a total.
40	Forever Green Initiative	MDA	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.	\$5,000,000	Increase	43.3 (33-50)	High	Increase	Appreciation for leverage, split of interest in moderate or full increase. NRS connection.
36	Source Water Protection	MDH	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.	\$7,540,000	Increase	43.1 (35-50)	High	Increase	
33	WRAPS	MPCA	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.	\$14,500,000	Hold Steady	43.1 (35-49)	High	Hold Steady	
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	43.1 (29-50)	High	Hold	
4	Legacy Partners	BWSR	The Clean Water Legacy Partners program funds implementation of high-priority projects that protect, enhance, and restore Minnesota's lakes, rivers, streams, groundwater, and drinking water sources. By advancing actions identified in state, local, and Tribal water management plans, the program delivers measurable water quality improvements in impaired and vulnerable waters. The program serves Tribal nations, nonprofits, community-based organizations, and local partners, expanding implementation capacity, strengthening collaboration, and ensuring Clean Water Fund investments reach diverse communities and priority waters statewide.	\$ 1,000,000	Increase	43.1 (27-50)	High	Increase	2 med

1	Surface and Drinking Water Protection Restoration (Projects and Practices)	BWSR	This project-specific competitive grant program provides Clean Water Funds to local governments to support the implementation of high priority surface and groundwater projects derived from state approved, locally adopted water management plans.	\$ 6,000,000	Increase	42.8 (36-49)	High	Increase	Drinking water impact, question of how high, 1 med
7	Southeast Groundwater Protection and Soil Health Initiative	Olmsted County	This program will collaboratively address rising nitrate trends in groundwater on a regional scale by working with farmers to implement soil health practices on private land in SE MN where karst geology is prevalent and groundwater is susceptible to contamination. Protecting groundwater is imperative because it serves as our drinking water supply and sustains local industries and communities. Research confirms that converting traditional row crops to small grains, cover crops, and perennial hay and grazing systems reduces nitrate leaching, retains nitrogen, and limits erosion. The program could also be expanded statewide.	-	NEW	42.8 (34-50)		Merge	Interest in seeing continued conversations with BWSR. Maintain Olmsted innovations, possibly make competitive.
34	WRAPS	DNR	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.	\$4,750,000	Hold Steady	42.7 (33-50)	High	Hold Steady	
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 occurrence in private wells; expands education, outreach, and technical assistance for well users; and strengthens partnerships with partners. The program increases public access to private well water quality data, develops model policies to better protect well users, is establishing a statewide well testing program, and supports targeted efforts to address nitrate contamination in southeast Minnesota.	\$6,000,000	Increase	42.6 (36-50)	High	Increase	
42	Stormwater Research Program	UMN	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.	\$1,600,000	Increase	42.3 (34-50)	High	Increase	1 hold steady. Interest in at least restoring to previous levels
59	River and Lake Monitoring and Assessment	MPCA	Minnesota monitors and assesses surface waters to meet Clean Water Act requirements and support water protection and restoration. The state evaluates water quality every two years, identifies impaired waters, and reports results to the U.S. EPA. Monitoring includes intensive watershed studies, trend and pollutant monitoring, and 10-year lake and stream assessments using physical, chemical, and biological data. The program coordinates partners, supports volunteer monitoring, manages and shares data, tracks long-term and climate trends, and produces reports and analyses to inform water quality management and policy.	\$18,900,000	Increase	42.3 (32-48)	High	Increase	Concern about degree of increase on such a large program. Support for nitrate sensor network.
3	Conservation Drainage (Multipurpose Drainage Management)	BWSR	This program provides financial and technical assistance to Minnesota's Public Drainage Authorities and Soil and Water Conservation Districts to facilitate planning, design, and installation of conservation practices on drainage systems that will result in water quality improvements. These practices promote retention of rainfall and runoff on the land, soil erosion reduction, and water quality improvement in drainage systems and receiving waters while maintaining agricultural production. The program is implemented through partnering with the state's public drainage system authorities, principally counties and watershed districts. The state's investment leverages local investment as the grants require a 10% local match.	\$ 2,000,000	Increase	42.3 (31-49)	High	Increase	

32	Chloride Reduction Program	MPCA	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.	\$1,300,000	Increase	42.1 (37-49)	High	Increase	2 members as hold steady (with one as potential increase), 1 medium. Connection to policy needs/ legislative action. Scale of challenge noted. Other state funding sources?
35	GRAPS	MDH	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 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.	\$3,500,000	Hold Steady	42.1 (36-48)	High	Hold Steady	Explore additional funding sources. One Increase.
6	Enhancing Landowner Adoption of Soil Health Practices for DW & GW Protection	BWSR	This program provides an opportunity for a large acre and participant increase in cover crop and soil health practice adoption. To reduce nitrate from leaching into our groundwater and running off into our surface waters, a shift in the cropping system is required. One component of this shift is the recommended use of cover crops to scavenge excess nitrogen from the soil. Cover crop adoption improves groundwater and surface water quality and benefits drinking water supply areas. Clean Water Funds will be made available to plant cover crops, provide payments to reduce risk, and purchase specialized interseeding equipment in one or two targeted areas within the state. This initiative can leverage existing NRCS financial assistance programs and will be implemented by SWCDs with partnership opportunities for Tribal governments.	\$ 9,486,000	Increase	42.1 (25-50)	High	Increase	
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	41.9 (35-48)	High	Increase	
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	41.7 (36-47)	High	Increase	
23	Native Mussel Restoration	DNR	Native freshwater mussels play a key role in contributing to clean waters in Minnesota. However, many mussel species are no longer present in sufficient numbers to repopulate rivers and streams. The DNR will use its expertise to propagate (grow) mussels and restore populations in Minnesota rivers. We propose to improve techniques and scale up production of mussel species and place them into their natural habitats. Funding will support collection, rearing, distribution, monitoring costs, and identification of new species and locations for restoration. These efforts will benefit Minnesotans by contributing to fishable and swimmable waters across the state.	\$700,000	Hold Steady	41.7 (30-49)	High	Increase	2 medium, 2 hold steady. Question of what capacity for increase there is.

38	County Geologic Atlas Part B	DNR	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.	\$200,000	Hold Steady	41.5 (26-50)	High	Hold Steady	1 med priority. DNR supports consistent funding with current capacity.
10	MN Ag Water Quality Certification Program	MDA	MAWQCP is a first-of-its-kind, voluntary initiative that supports the adoption of conservation practices on a field-by-field and whole-farm basis, whether the land is owned or rented. The program uses a comprehensive risk assessment process that evaluates every parcel and cropping scenario to identify and mitigate potential impacts to water quality. Producers work one-on-one with local agronomic and conservation professionals to assess risks and implement proven practices that protect water quality. This level of individualized, whole-farm evaluation and direct technical support is unmatched by any other program in the nation and provides a uniquely effective approach to protecting Minnesota's water resources.	\$ 7,000,000	Increase	41.5 (24-50)	High	50/50 Hold or Increase	3 med
44	Future of Drinking Water	MDH	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 for the <i>Minnesota Drinking Water Action Plan</i> in 2025, the initiative now focuses on implementing the Plan and providing regular updates on progress and where there are key risks to address.	\$500,000	Hold Steady	41.3 (33-49)	High	Hold Steady	
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	41.2 (35-50)	High	Increase	1 hold steady
53	Lake Biological Monitoring and Assessment (formerly Lake IBI)	DNR	The program supports MPCA and Federal Clean Water Act evaluations by conducting biological surveys and aquatic life assessments for lakes. Fish-based Indices of Biological Integrity were developed and used to evaluate fish communities in 1,056 lakes within 47 watersheds to identify impairments, stressors and exceptionally healthy lakes. Monitoring has expanded to 13 northwestern watersheds. Standards to assess coldwater fish habitat in over 500 lakes have been developed, with assessments beginning once rules are promulgated. The program serves Minnesotans by informing watershed protection and restoration efforts, and by monitoring conditions and trends statewide.	\$3,050,000	Hold Steady	41.2 (35-47)	High	Hold Steady	
51	Aquifer Monitoring for Water Supply Planning	DNR	The Minnesota DNR's groundwater monitoring program collects long-term aquifer level data through a statewide network of 1,257 observation wells. This program provides essential information on groundwater trends, sustainability, and groundwater-surface water interactions to protect drinking water, water supplies, and groundwater dependent ecosystems. By analyzing water level changes alongside climate, land use and water demand, the program supports planning that prevents water shortages and protects lakes, streams, wetlands, trout streams, and calcareous fens. The program serves state and local water managers, communities and resource professionals by supplying reliable data, modeling and shared tools for sustainable groundwater management.	\$4,700,000	Hold Steady	41.2 (33-50)	High	Hold Steady	
58	Drinking Water Contaminants of Emerging Concern	MDH	MDH advances science-based public health responses to contaminants of emerging concern by strengthening health-based guidance development, water analysis, and laboratory quality assurance. Health Risk Assessment develops drinking water guidance, conducts risk assessments, engages stakeholders, and collaborates with state and federal partners. The Public Health Laboratory develops analytical methods and improves detection at lower concentrations. The Minnesota Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program ensures that accredited laboratories performing analytical water testing are accountable to standards that support defensible and accurate data. Clean Water Funds protect human and ecological health amid evolving contaminant risks.	\$11,850,000	Hold Steady	41.2 (32-50)	High	Hold Steady	

49	Point Source Implementation Grant (PSIG) Program*	PFA	Through the Clean Water Council and the Clean Water Fund Interagency Coordination Team (ICT) framework, specific impaired and threatened water bodies are identified where pollutant reductions are needed to meet water quality standards. Watershed restoration and protection strategies are developed to guide implementation activities. The PSIG program provides grants to help municipalities construct wastewater, stormwater, and drinking water treatment projects when the Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) determines that higher levels of treatment are necessary to meet water quality goals. These include projects to meet Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) requirements and water-quality-based effluent limits for phosphorus, chlorides, and other pollutants.	\$16,440,000	Hold Steady	41 (31-50)	High	Hold steady	
13	Working Lands and Floodplain Easements	BWSR	The program goal is to restore and protect riparian and floodplain areas across the state to improve and enhance water quality and wildlife habitat through limited term and perpetual easements with private landowners. The land targeted for this program is existing row crop agriculture within a riparian area or a mapped floodplain. Landowners have options to restore the easement to native vegetation or continue to generate income through uses that do not include row crop agriculture, with payment structure based on the proposed easement length and use.	\$ 2,000,000	Increase	41 (27-50)	High	Increase	
16	AgBMP Loan Program	MDA	This program provides low-interest loans (<3%) to farmers, rural landowners, and agriculture supply businesses to implement BMPs that prevent, reduce, or eliminate a water pollution problem. The program is administered by local governments and has very low transaction costs; revolving loan repayments fund additional projects. Demand for AgBMP loans greatly exceeds available resources and additional funding would allow for expanded projects and practices that help protect and restore water quality.	\$ 4,000,000	Increase	40.7 (35-48)	High	Increase	
55	Stream Flow Monitoring	DNR	Stream flow information is essential for understanding the state of Minnesota's waters. Clean Water funding has allowed the DNR to expand the network of stream gages that support planning and implementation for clean water protection and restoration. Specifically, stream flow data are needed to calculate pollution loads for Total Maximum Daily Load studies and pollution reduction plans. Through the Legacy Amendment the DNR will continue to maintain at least one stream gage in each of the 81 major watersheds to provide water quantity information in support of the State's long term water quality trend monitoring efforts.	\$5,650,000	Hold Steady	40.7 (35-46)	High	Hold Steady	
50	Small Community Wastewater Treatment Program*	PFA	Minnesota has many areas with significant numbers of noncomplying septic systems in close proximity that are polluting surface waters and groundwater. Local governments interested in community solutions submit projects to MPCA for ranking on the Project Priority List based on the density and condition of existing systems. The program provides technical assistance grants to help communities evaluate potential alternatives and prepare a community assessment report which is submitted for review to MPCA, and construction financing (loans and grants) for projects when they are ready to proceed.	\$200,000	Hold Steady	40.7 (31-50)	High	Hold Steady	
60	Groundwater Assessment	MPCA	<p>reliable data on Minnesota's groundwater resources. Groundwater monitoring and assessment helps the MPCA, and its local and state partners, understand groundwater quality and investigate potential sources of contamination.</p> <p>The groundwater assessment program is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monitoring and evaluating the presence and concentrations of non-agricultural pollutants, including contaminants of emerging concern; - Modeling the interaction between groundwater and surface water; 	\$2,000,000	Increase	40.5 (34-47)	High	Increase	question about whether the lapse of the PFAS Blueprint funding means the increase is a supplant. 3 hold steady.

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 problems and improve watershed health.	\$4,350,000	Hold Steady	40.4 (33-47)	High	Hold	
14	Targeted Wellhead/Drinking Water Protection Easements	BWSR	The program goal is to ensure that the land use within a DWSMA is conducive to protecting or improving the drinking water that is impacted by the land use in areas that are vulnerable to contamination and protect the land via RIM easements or agreements with local units of government for fee title acquisitions.	\$ 5,000,000	Hold Steady	40.4 (28-48)	High	Hold Steady	
15	Conservation Equipment Assistance	MDA	This program supports MDA's Soil Health Financial Assistance Program (SHFAP), which provides grants to producers, producer groups, and local governments to purchase or retrofit equipment that promotes soil health practices. By expanding access to equipment for cover cropping, reduced tillage, managed grazing, and similar practices, the program improves soil structure, increases infiltration, and limits disturbance. These improvements directly protect water quality by reducing erosion and curbing sediment and nutrient runoff into Minnesota's waterways.	\$ 3,500,000	Hold Steady	40.3 (32-47)	High	Hold Steady	
12	Wetland Restoration Easements	BWSR	This program restores and permanently protects previously drained wetlands and adjacent uplands via RIM easements on private lands across the state for water quality and habitat benefits. The program utilizes a ranking and selection process and is locally implemented by SWCD staff. Restored wetlands benefit society by storing floodwaters, filtering pollutants, serving as a carbon sink, and providing habitat.	\$ 5,000,000	Increase	40.3 (29-50)	High	Increase	
37	County Geologic Atlas Part A	UMN	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,	\$800,000	Increase	40.3 (25-50)	High	Increase	1 med, 1 Hold Steady
9	Culvert Replacement Incentive Program	DNR	The program helps Minnesota communities modernize the state's more than 65,000 road-stream crossings by providing design expertise and funding natural channel and floodplain designs using the geomorphic approach. The program delivers three primary benefits. It ensures cleaner water by reducing soil erosion and allowing natural areas to filter pollutants. It supports healthier ecosystems by restoring fish passage and habitat. It also strengthens infrastructure, lowering maintenance costs and reducing the risk of washouts during floods. Ultimately, the program encourages local governments to adopt these high-performing designs as the standard for all future road projects.	\$ 2,800,000	Hold Steady	40.2 (30-50)	High	Hold Steady	Some appetite for more investment if capacity is there.
63	Natural Shorelines for Clean Water	DNR	We are proposing an integrated system to address the mounting challenges on Minnesota's most heavily used lakes. About half of Minnesota's natural shorelines have been altered or degraded, diminishing ecological function and lake water quality, as lawn-down-to-the-lake shorelines allow 7-9 times more pollutants to enter a lake than naturally vegetated shoreline. These pollutants accumulate in lakes, creating serious water quality problems. This proposal includes a Lake Steward program administered by Minnesota Lakes and Rivers and a lakeshore conservation easement program managed by Minnesota Land Trust for permanent protection of critical shoreland on popular lakes at risk for land use change. Another element of this overall effort will be submitted to the LCCMR to support a program to develop a certification and extension program for protection and restoration of natural shorelines.	NEW	NEW	40.2 (28-50)	High/Med	Fund	50/50 split on the priority level.
2	Accelerated Implementation	BWSR	This program is used to enhance the capacity of local governments to accelerate implementation of projects and activities that supplement or exceed current state standards for protection, enhancement, and restoration of water quality in lakes, rivers, streams, and groundwater. Activities include 1) increasing technical assistance through regional technical service areas (TSAs), 2) technical training and certification, 3) inventories of potential restoration or protection sites, and 4) developing and using analytical infrastructure of the agency such as the targeting tool Prioritize, Target, and Measure Application (PTMApp) and eLINK as well as funding to local governments to support staff participation in training and increased capacity to deliver priority water quality projects.	\$ 8,700,000	Increase	40.1 (33-47)	High	Increase	3 Hold steady, 5 increase
11	Critical Shoreland Easements	BWSR	The program goal is to protect lands adjacent to public waters with good water quality but threatened with degradation. Using the RIM program, conservation easements are acquired to protect existing high quality shoreland areas. The highest priority areas are targeted through science-based conservation methods.	\$ 1,000,000	Increase	40.1 (31-50)	High	Increase	

56	Monitoring for Pesticides in Surface Water and Groundwater	MDA	Funding supports the purchase and maintenance of laboratory instruments that provide greater capacity for pesticide monitoring throughout the state. Clean Water funding allowed the MDA to increase the number of detectable pesticides, increase the sensitivity of detection of certain pesticides, and increase the overall number of samples analyzed on an annual basis. This expansion allowed the MDA to test additional public water supply wells, lakes, rivers, streams, and wetlands, including samples collected on Tribal lands. Data generated support pesticide management decisions to ensure	\$740,000	Hold Steady	40.1 (29-47.5)	High	Hold Steady	
57	Pesticide Testing of Private Wells	MDA	This program provides homeowners and the public with information about pesticide occurrence in private drinking water wells located in geologically vulnerable areas. Earlier phases of the program analyzed up to 133 pesticide compounds in private wells across agricultural areas with vulnerable groundwater. Those results identified the herbicides cyanazine and atrazine--and their degradates--represent the greatest pesticide-related risks to private well users. Building on these findings, upcoming sampling will prioritize these compounds, along with nitrate and select neonicotinoid insecticides and fungicides in vulnerable aquifers, to ensure continued monitoring of contaminants most likely to affect groundwater quality.	\$1,000,000	Hold Steady	39.7 (22-48)	High	Hold Steady	
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	39.2 (35-45)	Medium	Hold	2 high priority
48	Wastewater/ Stormwater TMDL Implementation	MPCA	Funding for these program areas advances point source water pollution reductions by supporting point source implementation work, notably 1) integrating the watershed approach and pollutant restrictions into point source stormwater and wastewater discharge permits; 2) incorporating stormwater and wastewater point source discharges into TMDL projects and watershed restoration and protection strategy (WRAPS) reports; 3) supporting technical assistance for wastewater and stormwater permittees in achieving pollutant reductions; and 4) creating more opportunity for water quality pollutant trades.	\$3,200,000	Hold Steady	38.9 (29-48)	High	Hold Steady	
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 from 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	38.6 (24-48)	High	Hold	1 medium, like the prevention component. Small but mighty program.
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 entities receive Riparian Aid not CWF dollars).	\$4,000,000	Hold Steady	38.4 (31-49)	Medium	Reduce	
52	Fish Contamination Assessment	DNR	The program analyzes fish tissue to detect mercury and other contaminants. The information collected is then used by the MPCA to determine whether lakes are impaired for these contaminants, and by MDH in establishing fish consumption advisories. Fish consumption advisories are for the Minnesota public to determine how much wild caught fish can be safely eaten from Minnesota waters.	\$1,100,000	Hold Steady	37.9 (29-46)	High	Hold Steady	Encouragement to look at game (ducks, geese, etc.)
45	Manure and Water Quality Specialist	MDA	Funding will support a manure land application and water quality specialist to develop and promote BMPs and update guidance, with a focus on regions at elevated environmental risk, including SE and Central Minnesota. Data from the USDA and 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 UMN'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.	\$-	NEW	37.7 (16-46)	High	Fund	Likely starting around the same as the Irrigation Water Quality Specialist position.

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	36.7 (28-50)	Split H/M	Hold	1 increase
8	Water Efficiency Grant	MC	The program provides grants to assist municipalities in the 7 county Twin Cities metro area as they implement water demand reduction and water efficiency measures to ensure the reliability and protection of drinking water supplies and support resiliency of water suppliers. This program provides funding to residents in the region that currently get their drinking water from a municipality to purchase water efficient appliances which reduces the demand on ground and surface water sources. It also provides funds to communities that supply water to improve the efficiencies of their systems and facilities, also reducing water use and demand on our valued water resources.	\$ 1,400,000	Hold Steady	36.7 (27-43)	Medium	Hold Steady	
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	36.7 (23-45)	Medium	Hold	2 high priority
30	Voyageurs National Park Clean Water Project - National Park Water Quality Protection Program	Voyageurs National Park Clean Water JPB	These projects protect and restore water quality at the primary public access points to Minnesota's only national park and the nation's only water-based national park. FY28-29 funding of \$7,400,000 will support implementation of sanitary sewer system expansions, system upgrades and planning efforts, and related water quality protection infrastructure in remaining high-risk areas adjacent to Voyageurs National Park and downstream waters connected to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. The proposed projects reduce nutrient loading, pathogen contamination, and groundwater degradation while protecting drinking water, recreational waters, and nationally significant aquatic resources.	\$1,500,000	Increase (\$7,400,000)	36.6 (20-45)	High	Increase	Caution about increasing to the 7.4M amount. Support of an increase of some amount though.
47	LCC Website	LCC	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.	7000	Hold Steady	36.2 (15-50)	High	Hold Steady	Required by law.
25	Conservation Corps of MN and IA	BWSR	Since 2012, BWSR has contracted with CCMI for delivery of services (restoration, maintenance, training, and other activities) to provide additional capacity to Minnesota's local governments. This funding request also includes delivery of service to provide additional capacity to Tribal nations. Prior to 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	36.1 (26-50)	Medium	Hold	2 high
54	Forestry BMP Evaluation and Lidar Hydrography Tools	DNR	The Guideline Monitoring Program monitors the implementation of forest management guidelines (FMGs) and Best Management Practices (BMPs) at logging sites across Minnesota's forested watersheds. We analyze data on FMG/BMP implementation to identify risks to water quality and provide training and advising for forest managers and loggers to implement sustainable forestry practices. The Lidar Hydrography Program generates Minnesota's official statewide elevation data through lidar technology, enabling precise mapping of the state's landscape features that influence surface water movement and infiltration to groundwater. Specializing in 3D data collection and terrain analysis, the team develops authoritative digital contours, elevation models, hydrography, and watershed boundaries.	\$1,400,000	Hold Steady	35.9 (14-47)	High	Hold Steady	3 mediums. Interest in having GF pay. Could have tighter tie to clean water outcomes.

43	Tillage and Erosion Transects	BWSR	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 statewide 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.	\$850,000	Hold Steady	35.8 (12-45)	High	Hold Steady	
41	Beach Portal	MDH	Beach monitoring determines if beach water is safe for recreational activities and minimizes the risk of waterborne illnesses. Funding from the 2024-2025 CWFs established 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 Minnesota aware of crucial issues impacting water quality.	\$600,000	Hold Steady	35.7 (15-46)	Medium	Hold Steady	1 low, 1 high
61	River Watch and River of Dreams	Red River Board	The Red River Basin River Watch (RW) and River of Dreams (ROD) programs provide hands-on watershed education for K-12 students across the Red River of the North Basin. The programs connect youth to local rivers through field-based learning, water quality monitoring, and creative exploration. Their purpose is to build environmental literacy and stewardship by increasing understanding of non-point source pollution, its impacts, and key watershed health concepts. By engaging students, educators, and communities, the programs support improved water quality awareness, long-term protection of MN's waters, and development of the next generation of informed watershed stewards.	NEW (\$350,000)	NEW	35.2 (17-48)	High	Fund	Question if this should be funded directly or if it would be a grant program within the MPCA, who has directed funding to them in the past when the legislature directed it. Or BWSR Com \$\$.
39	MnWRL	MDA	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 CWF-supported documents, including MPCA WRAPS, and BWSR 1W1P reports. MnWRL enables water managers, researchers, and residents to easily find and share research information 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 BMPs statewide.	\$100,000	Decrease	34.9 (26-45)	High	Decrease	(Update to application: MDA supports decrease for this program).
62	River Watch in the Minnesota Valley	Friends of the Minnesota Valley	River Watch is a hands-on learning program operated by Friends of the Minnesota Valley for students in 28 high schools and in some middle schools during the 2025-2026 school year. Beginning with an in-classroom lesson aligned with state Science standards, students make 2 trips per semester to a river or stream to conduct water quality monitoring using a multi-function electronic probe and other tools. Macroinvertebrate surveys are conducted during the stream visits. Data is reported through the MPCA Citizen Science Portal. Most work is in the Minnesota River Basin, two High Schools serving Latino and Indigenous students in Minneapolis participate.	NEW (\$150,000)	NEW	34.3 (17-48)	High	Fund	Likewise would want to see this overseen by a state agency. Need to explore what this would look like.
5	Measures, Results, and Accountability	BWSR	This funding provides the required oversight and accountability for the Clean Water Funds that MN Board of Water & Soil Resources administers to measure, track, and communicate the results of projects, ensuring effective and high-quality investments of funds with measurable water quality results. Central to these efforts is eLINK, the agency's grant management system, which features grants tracking from application to reporting, contract management, and tracking of outcomes, including pollution reduction estimates. BWSR also administers a grant reconciliation process, through which staff conduct field visits with grant recipients to ensure compliance with state policies, guidance and fiscal best management practices.	\$ 2,500,000	Increase	33.5 (12-44)	High	Hold Steady	3 inc (1 moderate), 2 med

Agency	Program	Constituency	Commenter	Comment summary notes
BWSR	Conservation Drainage Management and Assistance	Environmental Organizations	The Nature Conservancy	TNC recommends increased investment (\$3.5M) to continue to modify existing drainage infrastructure for improved environmental performance while maintaining agricultural productivity.
BWSR	Legacy Partners Grant Program	Environmental Organizations	The Nature Conservancy	TNC recommends increased investment for the Legacy Grants program, specifically as it relates to grants to Tribal partners.
BWSR	MULTIPLE	Business	Jen Wahls	There are too many easement programs. Must be tied to Landscape Stewardship Plans and 1W1P. These need to be permanent and need consistent rates. Lots of training and overhead. "Working lands" needs strict criteria.
BWSR	MULTIPLE	Environmental Organizations	The Nature Conservancy	TNC recommends increased investment in Critical Shoreline (\$6M), Wetland Restoration (\$6M), and Floodplain (\$4M) easement programs.
BWSR	MULTIPLE	Watershed Districts	Comfort Lake-Forest Lake Watershed District	BWSR Clean Water Fund administration is not aligned with governing watershed statutes as to what is eligible for coverage in grants, loans and other reimbursable costs for WATERSHED PROJECTS, including preliminary scientific work performed by Civil Engineers to identify and evaluate best projects to meet prioritized, targeted, and measurable criteria. We ask the Clean Water Council to provide for reimbursement of all costs to date not covered by BWSR for these activities due to a structured rule denying access – for all Watershed Districts.
BWSR	Soil Health	Environmental Organizations	The Nature Conservancy	Given the leverage of federal funding, TNC recommends that this program be adjusted to include more performance standards for each participating entity.
BWSR	Tillage and Erosion Survey Project	Environmental Organizations	The Nature Conservancy	TNC recommends this program be modified to evaluate efficacy of multiple soil health and technical assistance programs across MN with improved coordination and data sharing.
BWSR	WBIF	Cities	Minnesota Cities Stormwater Coalition	With all 81 watersheds on track to have approved 1W1P management plans, continued support for a robust WBIF program is critical. This allows local governments to implement the highest-priority projects identified in their state-approved plans.
BWSR	WBIF	Counties	Local Government Roundtable	WBIF is the mechanism that will deliver on the investments and long-term vision established by the Clean Water Council, building on years of planning, monitoring, and data collection by turning those investments into on-the-ground action. This program is working as intended, and planning is nearly done across the whole state. Value is already being seen for the planning, and WBIF is the funding stream that makes implementation possible. Legacy amendment recognized role of local leadership in implementation. Sustained funding is requested.
BWSR	WBIF	Environmental Organizations	The Nature Conservancy	TNC recommends that the Council add requirements for standardized reporting for watershed-based implementation funding across Minnesota.
BWSR	WBIF	SWCD	East Otter Tail and Wadena SWCDs	Respectfully urge the CWC to maintain and ideally increase funding for WBIF, one of the most effective and efficient mechanisms MN has for delivering measurable water quality improvements on private lands. Builds on the locally-led watershed-based approach that aligns local governments, state agencies, and stakeholders around shared watershed priorities based on sound science, local knowledge, and concerns. This reduces duplication and improves targeting of resources. WBIF becomes on-the-ground conservation to improve and protect water quality. These funds are heavily leveraged by local partners and often serve as a catalyst. Increasing WBIF funding would allow more high-priority projects to move forward and accelerate measurable progress. WBIF success is also rooted in trust. Stable and reliable funding is necessary to sustain long-term watershed progress. Funding instability slows progress, disrupts partnerships, and reduces effectiveness. WBIF has allowed EOT SWCD to increase in cost share from 15 projects and \$39,000 in 2019 to 72 projects and nearly \$330,000 invested. Wadena SWCD has seen similar increases, demonstrating how WBIF has enabled SWCDs to dedicate staff time to priority efforts. More projects are being implemented, larger benefits are being achieved, and plan priorities are being translated into measurable conservation outcomes.
BWSR	WBIF	SWCD	Local Government Roundtable	WBIF is the mechanism that will deliver on the investments and long-term vision established by the Clean Water Council, building on years of planning, monitoring, and data collection by turning those investments into on-the-ground action. This program is working as intended, and planning is nearly done across the whole state. Value is already being seen for the planning, and WBIF is the funding stream that makes implementation possible. Legacy amendment recognized role of local leadership in implementation. Sustained funding is requested.
BWSR	WBIF	Watershed Districts	Local Government Roundtable	WBIF is the mechanism that will deliver on the investments and long-term vision established by the Clean Water Council, building on years of planning, monitoring, and data collection by turning those investments into on-the-ground action. This program is working as intended, and planning is nearly done across the whole state. Value is already being seen for the planning, and WBIF is the funding stream that makes implementation possible. Legacy amendment recognized role of local leadership in implementation. Sustained funding is requested.
DNR	Native Mussels	Environmental Organizations	The Nature Conservancy	TNC recommends increased investment (\$2M) to support integration with watershed implementation activities and advance MN's long-term goal of restoring and protecting aquatic ecosystems.
DNR	Nonpoint Source Restoration and Protection Activities	Environmental Organizations	The Nature Conservancy	TNC considers this a model implementation program, and recommends increased investment (\$6M).

MDA	AgBMP Loans	Business	First Farmers & Merchants Bank	Helps our farm customers with low interest money to be able to replace structures, purchase equipment and fix-up facilities to help reduce runoff, reduce soil erosion and help maintain a more ecological friendly environment. Well over 100 loans for multiple millions of dollars. Only complaint is there isn't enough money to help everyone who is interested. Backlog currently through 2027.
MDA	AgBMP Loans	SWCD	Fillmore SWCD	Essential financing tool for water quality efforts. SE MN especially vulnerable. Continued investment in education, technical assistance, and financial assistance will protect drinking water, improve soil health, and support farm profitability.
MDA	AgBMP Loans	SWCD	Rock SWCD	Wait list of 22 that have applied for \$2.3M with 2026 repayments at ~\$480,000. Long wait time to be funded with current rate. Demand high thanks to low interest. Additional funds requested.
MDA	Conservation Equipment Assistance	Environmental Organizations	The Nature Conservancy	TNC recommends continued investment given high ROI for cost per acre of soil health practice implemented.
MDA	Conservation Equipment Assistance	Farmers	Minnesota Farmers Union	The Soil Health Financial Assistance Program is an innovative approach to reducing risk in implementing new practices. This is a budget priority for us.
MDA	Forever Green	Business	Community Letter of Support for Forever Green	Nutrient Reduction Strategy notes central role of Continuous Living Cover in meeting long-term water quality goals. CWC support of funding has been longstanding and prescient. The work is reaching a critical inflection point and continued support is needed. FGI is internationally recognized, and CLC crops provide multiple benefits. FGI invests in farmers of today and crops of tomorrow, along with supply chain development. Successfully breeding and commercializing new crops requires dedicated researchers and supply chain specialists, so long term funding is needed.
MDA	Forever Green	Environmental Organizations	Friends of the Mississippi River	FGI is a nationally respected research effort to design new, economically viable "Continuous Living Cover" cropping systems. It aligns with the Nutrient Reduction Strategy (which has CLC as a pillar of success) and drinking water protection goals, as well as the Council's own strategic plan. Leverages additional funding 7:1, and sustained investment is needed to scale up acreage.
MDA	Forever Green	Environmental Organizations	94 individuals through Every Action (see other tab)	Forever Green is an internationally respected research and commercialization effort designed to develop new, perennial crops and winter annual crops (cover crops) that protect our environment while enhancing farm prosperity. Forever Green crops greatly improve water quality, soil health, habitat and climate resilience, while helping farmers and our rural economy thrive. Please designate as high priority and deserving of an increase.
MDA	Forever Green	Environmental Organizations	Community Letter of Support for Forever Green	Nutrient Reduction Strategy notes central role of Continuous Living Cover in meeting long-term water quality goals. CWC support of funding has been longstanding and prescient. The work is reaching a critical inflection point and continued support is needed. FGI is internationally recognized, and CLC crops provide multiple benefits. FGI invests in farmers of today and crops of tomorrow, along with supply chain development. Successfully breeding and commercializing new crops requires dedicated researchers and supply chain specialists, so long term funding is needed.
MDA	Forever Green	Environmental Organizations	Mary Tkach (FMR Every Action)	Please designate as high priority and deserving of an increase. I worked on public health and environment throughout my life. The public has the desire and you have the power to make a very positive impact. Help us move FGI forward.
MDA	Forever Green	Environmental Organizations	The Nature Conservancy	TNC recommends continued investment to enable scalable outcomes.
MDA	Forever Green	Farmers	Carmen Fernholz	As a farmer I was one of the early collaborators with FGI and have watched it evolve over 15 years. Because of the issues and challenges to ag that this research is working at solving, continued support through research dollars is critical. Long-term research is needed, and the results sometimes take a while to become known. Living in western MN I see quite vividly the need for CLC to protect our soil and water. As a farmer I see this as one of the most viable means to introduce a third crop and create a more robust financial safety net. Please increase funding to assure viability for the future.
MDA	Forever Green	Farmers	Ben Penner	I grow CLC crops on my farm and operate a custom farming operation planting CLC for my neighbors. These are a win-win-win: we can increase our level of entrepreneurship while reaching environmental goals and making our farms more productive. CWF support is crucial right now due to rising costs of research and uncertainty of federal funding. Please increase funding support.
MDA	Forever Green	Farmers	Minnesota Farmers Union	New markets for oats and CLC crops, as well as farmer learning and supply chain development, are needed to accelerate adoption. This is a budget priority for us.
MDA	Forever Green	Farmers	Community Letter of Support for Forever Green	Nutrient Reduction Strategy notes central role of Continuous Living Cover in meeting long-term water quality goals. CWC support of funding has been longstanding and prescient. The work is reaching a critical inflection point and continued support is needed. FGI is internationally recognized, and CLC crops provide multiple benefits. FGI invests in farmers of today and crops of tomorrow, along with supply chain development. Successfully breeding and commercializing new crops requires dedicated researchers and supply chain specialists, so long term funding is needed.
MDA	Forever Green	Farmers	Land Stewardship Project	Support increased funding for the FGI. Previous funding has been instrumental, especially for key programs like the Environmental and Economic Clusters of Opportunity (ECCO) program that help de-risk these crops. Need to scale these crops across the state and region.
MDA	Forever Green	SWCD	Community Letter of Support for Forever Green	Nutrient Reduction Strategy notes central role of Continuous Living Cover in meeting long-term water quality goals. CWC support of funding has been longstanding and prescient. The work is reaching a critical inflection point and continued support is needed. FGI is internationally recognized, and CLC crops provide multiple benefits. FGI invests in farmers of today and crops of tomorrow, along with supply chain development. Successfully breeding and commercializing new crops requires dedicated researchers and supply chain specialists, so long term funding is needed.

MDA	Forever Green	UMN	Dr. Anthony Brusa, UMN	As a recipient of the most recent round of Forever Green funding, your support is allowing my team to move forward with development of a genomic resource that will greatly accelerate the development of new agronomic traits for Forever Green crops. By more rapidly identifying novel genetic variants, our tools will enable large scale screenings of important traits without needing a large amount of field space for our work. This work will benefit plant development efforts, bringing us closer to adoption of winter oilseed crops for Minnesota growers. This support comes at an important time as costs rise and federal funding has been sharply cut. Please consider an increase to further enable funding of agronomic research in pursuit of cleaner waters for people in Minnesota.
MDA	Forever Green	UMN	Dr. Hannah Rusch, UMN	As a researcher, it is exciting to see all that has been made possible through state funding of the FGI. This summer I will be starting a new project looking to build and compile knowledge of how three FGI winter annuals crops impact water quality in SE MN when incorporated into corn/soybean rotation. Urge you to continue to advance FGI work to the benefit of the environment, rural livelihoods, and entrepreneurship in our state.
MDA	Forever Green	UMN	Erin Meier, Green Lands Blue Waters, UMN	CLC agriculture is particularly important for addressing water quality concerns, reducing nitrate leaching and soil erosion. MN's 2026 Nutrient Reduction Strategy states its importance to achieving MN's clean water goals. FGI's research infrastructure is at the core of this. Environmental urgency is meeting funding urgency. We are at a critical time as we create productive ag systems that nurture and provide opportunity rather than extract.
MDA	Forever Green	UMN	Jim Anderson, UMN	CWF support has been essential to the progress FGI has made, advancing new CLC species from early development to commercialization. At the same time, research costs continue to increase and federal funding has become increasingly uncertain. Maintaining momentum and expertise requires stable and expanded state investment. Respectfully encourage an increase in funding.
MDA	Forever Green	UMN	Dr. Bekah Schulz, UMN	Desire for the CWC to continue and increase funding for the FGI. Your support has allowed this work to happen, and continued support is needed now more than ever as research costs increase.
MDA	Forever Green	UMN	Dr. Maciej Kazula, UMN	FGI's progress in developing CLC crops would not have been possible without the sustained support of the CWF. Winter oilseeds fill a critical gap in row-crop systems by providing cover when soils are most vulnerable to erosion and nutrient loss. They keep nutrients out of MN waters and support pollinators. They do not compete with food crops. Additional funding is needed as research costs rise and federal funding becomes uncertain.
MDA	Forever Green	UMN	Grace Doyle, UMN	I am a PhD student working with FGI to ease agronomic barriers to the adoption of CLC systems. CWF Support has been instrumental to the accomplishments FGI has made in the sustainable agriculture sector. With the rising cost of research and high uncertainty around federal funding, the past 1.5 years have been challenging for sustainable agriculture research at a time when it is more important than ever. Increasing funding would make an impactful difference to the progress we can make in addressing water quality and soil health challenges connected to agricultural practices.
MDA	Forever Green	UMN	Cesar Medina, UMN	I analyze data for our alfalfa breeding projects. Alfalfa is incredibly valuable for its high forage quality and its direct and positive impact on watershed health. The costs associated with acquiring and translating this data into actionable decisions has risen significantly. An increase in funding would allow us to accelerate solutions across FGI's diverse crops. Thank you for your ongoing support.
MDA	Forever Green	UMN	Amy Teller, UMN	I do social science research on CLC systems, meaning I learn from growers, value chain businesses, and other partners about how CLC crops fit into and forward the visions they have for this work and communities. My work helps FGI continually improve how they advance CWC agriculture and be accountable and responsive to the people supporting and adopting these crops. Federal funding uncertainty makes state funding even more crucial. Encourage an increase in funding so CLC can be advanced more rapidly and responsibly.
MDA	Forever Green	UMN	Professor Jessica Gutknecht, UMN	I have been heavily engaged in FGI for the last 10 years. In that time I've seen how much advancement of novel, environmentally friendly cropping systems, and the university capacity to support them, has been made possible by your support. Thank you! With many funding sources at risk and with recent developments in FGI cropping system advancement, now is a great time to support increased funding for the initiative.
MDA	Forever Green	UMN	Madeleine Luskey, UMN	It's been incredibly encouraging to see compounding interest in building markets for CLC crops. As market interest grows, two things remain crucial: the foundational R&D at the heart of FGI and supporting farmer adoption of these crops. Public support is more important than ever as research funding becomes scarce. Ask that you increase funding for FGI.
MDA	Forever Green	UMN	Dr. George Annor, Food Science Undergrad Program, UMN	My research focuses on development of food products and markets that encourage adoption of crops that reduce nutrient losses and protect MN's waters. Increased funding for FGI is needed as research costs rise and federal funding becomes more uncertain. Additional support would allow us to expand and accelerate the program.
MDA	Forever Green	UMN	Walid Sadok, UMN	My research focuses on improving freezing tolerance in perennial and winter-hardy crops, something necessary for CLC in Minnesota. Research costs have increased substantially and there is growing uncertainty for federal funding. Sustained and increased support is needed at this time and help us shorten the timeline from research and discovery to on-farm adoption.
MDA	Forever Green	UMN	Fernanda Dias, UMN	My research helps create new food and ingredient markets that can improve the economic viability of these environmentally beneficial crops. Continued support is particularly important now as research costs have increased and federal funding is more uncertain. This makes it hard to sustain long-term innovation programs. Additional funding could accelerate the development of value-added products, expand pilot-scale validation, and more. Respectfully encourage an increase in funding.
MDA	Forever Green	UMN	Chase Krug, UMN	My work focuses on helping to move silflower (a perennial oil seed crop) closer to commercial viability while maintaining the environmental benefits associated with perennial agriculture. Research costs have increased and federal funding is uncertain. Increased funding could allow us to accelerate the breeding process, expand field evaluations, and more, helping to advance the goals of CLC ag.

MDA	Forever Green	UMN	Dr. Senyu Chen, UMN	My work focuses on the interaction between soybean cyst nematode (SCN) and pennycress. Pennycress is being developed as a winter oil seed for MN, with strong potential for environmental benefit. However, pennycress is a host for SCN, the most destructive pest for soybean. It is critical to understand how to scale up pennycress without this potential impact. More research is needed, but costs are increasing and the number of projects within the FGI continue to increase. Additional funding for the FGI is requested.
MDA	Forever Green	UMN	Frank Forcella, retired USDA and UMN professor	Past CWC support has been critical to FGI. CLC crops are extremely useful for preventing soil erosion and enhancing water quality. Attraction for pollinating insects is also clear. The novel FGI ag systems contribute positively to the environment while maintaining or enhancing economic outcomes for farmers and food/feed suppliers. Sustainable aviation fuel as well, which is becoming increasingly of interest. MN can lead the nation in developing perennial field crops. FGI's past success more than justifies enhanced funding for this work.
MDA	Forever Green	UMN	Dr. Matthew Ott, UMN	Public funding of research into finding solutions for challenges related to rural economies, clean lakes and streams, fuel prices, and climate change is a bit tight these days, but there is a lot of bang for the buck in terms of the private sector also making investments in parallel to public teams working on this research. Please consider increasing support.
MDA	Forever Green	UMN	Christopher Sherve, UMN	Sustained support from the CWC has been foundational to the progress we have made with CLC agriculture across MN. My work focuses on breeding improved varieties of Winter Camelina and Pennycress as winter cover crops. These crops offer farmers a new revenue stream while reducing runoff, improving soil health, and providing early season habitat alongside primary cash crops. These are also strong candidates for feedstocks and sustainable aviation fuel. We are at a critical juncture. Increased funding would allow us to advance these crops and support adoption of these practices.
MDA	Forever Green	UMN	Professor Robert Stupar, UMN	Thank you for past support of FGI. This program is valuable to the future of the agricultural economy and ecological conservation of our state. I'm a researcher involved for several years in the development of winter annual and perennial crops for MN farmers. Particularly excited about how these crops can reduce erosion and protect waterways. More work is needed, and federal support for this type of research has suffered vast reductions. An increased budget would be a game changer for research and results delivered to the state.
MDA	Forever Green	UMN	Cora Gertjeanssen	Thank you for past support. The cost of research is increasing, and research and development are essential to Forever Green's work. Increased uncertainty around federal funding makes CWF support that much more valuable. With more resources we could fund more projects and accelerate progress. Please consider an increase.
MDA	Forever Green	UMN	Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture	Thank you for the ongoing support the CWC has provided. The funding supports important research and demonstration work, outreach and incentives for farmers. Please continue to provide this important funding!
MDA	Forever Green	UMN	Dr. Yesuf Assen Mohammed	Thanks to CWF support, interest in winter oilseed crops has grown significantly among stakeholders, including industry partners, policymakers and agricultural organizations. This growing attention reflects the tremendous potential of these crops to deliver agronomic, economic and environmental benefits. Despite this progress, we are facing significant challenges in securing federal funding. Continued and increased support from the CWF is critical and would have a substantial impact on outcomes.
MDA	Forever Green	UMN	Jake Jungers, UMN	The research model developed by FGI is the most impactful I've seen. Colleagues around the country are blown away by the Clean Water Council and MN's commitment to innovative agriculture and water conservation. Thank you! Additional funding is needed to account for decreased federal funding. CWF support gives MN researchers a leg-up against the competition, making now an ideal time to increase FGI funding.
MDA	Forever Green	UMN	Ann Kirby, UMN	This work isn't happening in this way anywhere else. Thank you! Circumstances have changed in recent years--federal research landscape is far more constrained and farmers are facing mounting challenges. CWF support is critical to advancing solutions. Additional funds could help expand and deepen research, increase farmer adoption, and provide technical assistance. Request increase.
MDA	Forever Green		Beth Dooley	As a James Beard Award winning food writer and cookbook author, I have engaged with FGI CLC by writing cookbooks with recipes and stories about the impact of these crops on our ecosystem, our health, our rural communities, and in addressing food insecurity and food justice. These foods are delicious and nutritious and their impact on clean water cannot be understated. Given the rising cost of research and uncertainty around federal research funding the support from CWF is extremely important. With more funding, we'll see more of these foods in our stores and in our kitchens.
MDA	Forever Green		Tammy Kimbler	Live in the Minnehaha Creek and Mississippi watersheds. The Councils support for Forever Green is critical to the future of agriculture and the watersheds it relies on and empties into throughout the state. My work at The Land Institute to advance continuous living cover crops would not be possible without our partnership with Forever Green. Encourage you to increase FGI funding so farmers have more viable alternatives that benefit and protect our waters.
MDA	MAWQCP	Environmental Organizations	The Nature Conservancy	TNC recommends the program provide more information on water quality outcomes at the watershed scale and describe improvements link to the program. Increase technical assistance within the private sector of trusted advisors.
MDA	MAWQCP	Farmers	Minnesota Farmers Union	MFU strongly supports voluntary incentives and MDA's MAWQCP. This is a budget priority for us.
MDA	MULTIPLE	Business	Jen Wahls	AgBMP Loans and Conservation equipment assistance should be combined.
MDA	MULTIPLE	Environmental Organizations	The Nature Conservancy	TNC emphasizes importance of capacity investments within agricultural programs, including funding for new MDA positions focused on advancing manure BMPs, nutrient management, and producer support.
MDA	MULTIPLE	Farmers	Minnesota Farmers Union	Over the past year, Minnesota has lost approximately one third of its NRCS staff. Supporting local technical assistance, such as that provided through the MDA's MAWQCP, is essential for both maintaining and increasing agricultural conservation practices across the landscape. This is a budget priority for us.

MDA	Forever Green	UMN	Lois Braun, UMN	Our work with hazelnuts would not happen without the support through the FGI. More than a quarter comes from FGI grants. The rest is multi-state, multi-institutional federal funding, which is becoming more competitive. Proposal writing is time intensive—chasing down fewer federal dollars is time not spent doing the research. Additional funding is needed to support staff, research, testing, and equipment.
MDH	Contaminants of Emerging Concern	MDH	Jane de Lambert, Environmental Health Supervisor	The Drinking Water Ambient Monitoring Program and Contaminants of Emerging Concern Program have worked together on pesticide and PFAS analysis at public water systems. This monitoring helps ensure users of public water systems have safe drinking water by understanding both source water and finished water (and the efficacy of treatment systems then to remove emerging contaminants). If the CEC program did not exist there would be a notable gap in our ability to assess threats to drinking water.
MDH	GRAPS	SWCD	Sherburne SWCD	In this most recent round of CWF funding, we have received heartfelt gratitude from township boards and residents who appreciate our continued efforts to promote education and awareness in their communities. This funding lets us reach those we hadn't yet and strengthen relationships, leading to countless conversations about drinking water quality and what's needed to safeguard it. CWF is helping us meet growind demand and support healthy waters and local communities.
MDH	Private Well Initiative	Counties	Dodge County	We have worked with MDH on a variety of groundwater-related initiatives over the years, supporting implementation related to goals in the Dodge County Comprehensive Land Use Plan, Greater Zumbro River Watershed Plan, and the Cedar-Wapsipinicon Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan. Most recently, the PWI has provided valuable funding for private well testing, developing a well inventory, and enhance our understanding of local groundwater quality and drinking water supply. This is helping us effectively target limited resources to areas of greatest need, providing a strong foundation for informed decision making and future protection efforts.
MDH	Private Well Initiative	Counties	Olmsted County	We've worked with the PWI since 2021 to provide water testing services across SE MN. We support providing an avenue to ensure that private well owners have access to local and economical testing options to give peace of mind as they draw from their tap. Through the PWI, we developed TAP-IN Safe Drinking Water Program and maintain a collaborative of SWCDs, local public health, and environmental services staff across 9 SE MN counties. In the two rounds of funding, have offered testing to hundreds of households and offered one-on-one consultation to connect users to resources to address issues. When testing exceeds limits, the program assists with funding for mitigation for those experiencing financial hardship. Additional funding to support the State's workplan to address nitrate contamination of drinking water has allowed the TAP-IN collaborative to provide free water testing to 2,580 households and provide mitigation support to hundreds of users, of which 280 have been referred to MDA's program to receive a free water treatment system. We ask continued support for PWI to expand current programming.
MDH	Private Well Initiative	SWCD	Fillmore SWCD	PWI program helps to ensure drinking water is safe for everyone, everywhere in Minnesota. In SE MN nitrate continues to be a significant conver for private well users. Funding through this initiative helps us connect residents with testing, education, technical assistance, and resources that directly support public health and groundwater protection. Continue to support the PWI and related drinking water protection efforts.
MDH	Private Well Initiative	SWCD	Root River SWCD	The PWI helps the Root River SWCD ensure drinking water is safe for everyone, everywhere in Minnesota. With MDH, we completed Township Nitrate Testing to pinpoint high nitrate areas in the county, partnered with the Tap-IN program to offer free testing and RO systems for affected homeowners. Suggest it has a priority in funding reflective of importance of protecting drinking water.
MDH	Private Well Initiative	SWCD	Wabasha SWCD	The Wabasha SWCD is in process of completing a well inventory for Wabasha County and providing information to update the Minnesota Well Index. Local well owners have been responsive to our efforts, and regional efforts have raised awareness of private well management. Many have discovered that they had contaminants exceeding standards. Without funding from the PWI, we would not be able to complete the work that has been necessary on current regional efforts.
MDH	Private Well Initiative	SWCD	Olmsted County	We've worked with the PWI since 2021 to provide water testing services across SE MN. We support providing an avenue to ensure that private well owners have access to local and economical testing options to give peace of mind as they draw from their tap. Through the PWI, we developed TAP-IN Safe Drinking Water Program and maintain a collaborative of SWCDs, local public health, and environmental services staff across 9 SE MN counties. In the two rounds of funding, have offered testing to hundreds of households and offered one-on-one consultation to connect users to resources to address issues. When testing exceeds limits, the program assists with funding for mitigation for those experiencing financial hardship. Additional funding to support the State's workplan to address nitrate contamination of drinking water has allowed the TAP-IN collaborative to provide free water testing to 2,580 households and provide mitigation support to hundreds of users, of which 280 have been referred to MDA's program to receive a free water treatment system. We ask continued support for PWI to expand current programming.
MDH	Source Water Protection	Business	City of Le Sueur	Our Wellhead Protection Plan and two SWP grants to implement it have allowed us to take concrete steps to protect our drinking water sources. We were able to locate an abandoned well buried 13 feet beneath an electric transformer. We hired a well contractor to raise the casing above grade so it could be sealed in the future. Please have a priority in funding reflective of importance of clean drinking water.
MDH	Source Water Protection	Cities	City of Battle Lake	Battle Lake is a small, lake-centered community in Otter Tail County. Our Public Water System has worked with the Source Water Protection Program since preparing its first Wellhead Protection Plan. The program's technical assistance has helped us understand local drinking water risks, prioritize protection strategies, and take practical steps to safeguard our municipal wells. We have also received multiple grants for implementation. For a small city with limited reousources, this assistance makes a real difference. Continued investment in this program directly benefits communities like ours. It helps local governments protect public health, reduce long-term risk to drinking water supplies, and make responsible use of limited public funds.

MDH	Source Water Protection	Cities	City of St. Cloud	Have worked with the SWP Program for more than 15 years. Our planning activities have helped us take concrete actions, and financial assistance received through the grants have allowed us to purchase necessary equipment for monitoring, implement an early warning system, optimize water treatment, complete outreach about stormwater management, implement Adopt-a-Storm Drain and Storm Drain Art programs, implement a stormwater pond treatment effectiveness project, and coordinate with Minneapolis and St. Paul to prioritize stormwater-influenced potential contaminant sources. Suggest a priority in funding of the program reflective of the importance of clean drinking water.
MDH	Source Water Protection	Cities	City of Avon	Have worked with the SWP program since beginning on our Wellhead Protection Plan in 2011. We have received several Source Water Protection Grants to help us implement our plan, including: outreach and education to thousands of area residents and youth, install equipment to better understand water usage and aquifer impacts, install security at our wellhouse, and pull a pump to televise the well casing and determine its suitability as a long-term well for City. Suggest a priority in funding reflective of the importance of clean drinking water.
MDH	Source Water Protection	Cities	City of Onamia	Have worked with the SWP program since beginning on our Wellhead Protection Plan in 2014. We have received several Source Water Protection Grants to help us implement our plan, including: purchase and installation of a natural gas backup generator for service during power outages, seal the City's old creamery well, conduct exploratory borings to locate a source to construct a new municipal well in order to replace a well with high ammonia levels, connect a low-income homeowner to City water services, and seal a private well that posed a risk to the City's aquifer. Suggest a priority in funding reflective of the importance of clean drinking water.
MDH	Source Water Protection	Cities	City of Richmond	Have worked with the SWP program since beginning on our Wellhead Protection Plan in 2025. Working with the program has allowed us to target and prioritize threats to our drinking water source. It has also created funding opportunities for us to partner with local organizations on projects that benefit our community. Suggest a priority in funding reflective of the importance of clean drinking water.
MDH	Source Water Protection	Cities	Hibbing Public Utilities	Hibbing Public Utilities has worked very closely with MDH staff since 2020. MDH has already assisted us in submitting an implementation grant and continues to support us pursuing other available grants, including from outside sources. In 2025 alone HPU was awarded funding several times by the MDH to help protect our drinking water. One of our main water sources was next to a local mining operation and has since become unusable due to mine dewatering activities. It is now more important than ever to protect what drinking water supply we currently have available. Pursuing funding opportunities helps the utility by keeping rates lower for a community that already has a poverty rate of 16.2% which is 7% higher than the rest of the state.
MDH	Source Water Protection	Cities	City of Mankato	Mankato uses both groundwater and wells under the direct influence of surface water. We have used multiple Source Water Protection Grants to obtain lab accreditation for nitrate analysis, develop a nitrate monitoring program, and perform preventative maintenance of the ion chromatography instrument. We also have received multiple grants to seal numerous wells in our DWSMA, protecting drinking water for Mankato and other neighboring systems. Suggest a funding priority for the Source Water Protection program that reflects the importance of clean drinking water.
MDH	Source Water Protection	Cities	City of Remer	MN Rural Water Association and MDH staff directly assisted our city with the development of our Wellhead Protection Plan Amendment, which outlines the critical, actionable tasks our city can take to protect our drinking water sources. Grant funding we were then eligible for has delivered tangible safety upgrades for our public drinking water wells. We have also received funding that will allow us to team up with the Region Five Development Commission to create a Comprehensive Plan that includes city, climate, and drinking water planning into a single cohesive strategy. This will allow us to have critical conversations about how external factors affect our current infrastructure, proactively identify risks, and take action before problems arise. Encourage continued funding.
MDH	Source Water Protection	Cities	City of Moorhead Public Services	Moorhead Public Services has successfully used grants from the the SWP Program for various projects to improve infrastructure and supply high-quality drinking water for Moorhead and Dilworth. The support received ensures our water supply resiliency and redundancy are maintained through the completion of projects such as Wellhead Protection Plan implementation and updates, installation of monitoring sensors at our surface water intake, security updates for well houses and portable generator docking stations, well televising, and full water supply rehabilitation. Source Water Protection staff also took time at public hearings to speak in support of protecting source water as a series of parcels near our DWSMA were up for rezoning, complementing the grant-funded efforts in safeguarding water resources. SWP Program provides a direct benefit to the communities we serve.
MDH	Source Water Protection	Cities	City of Northfield	Providing safe drinking water to residents and businesses of Northfield is an essential service. Protecting Northfield's water source is an essential component of providing safe drinking water to Northfield and that has been aided through the Source Water Protection Program.
MDH	Source Water Protection	Cities	City of St. Hilaire	The City developed a wellhad protection plan in 2003 and 2013 with help from MDH. The city does not have the technical knowledge or capacity to complete this work without MDH SWP staff. In 2022 they helped navigate federal and state requirements to obtain an extension. The City also counts on the financial resources offered by the program, and it is reassuring to know funds are there to respond to unanticipated events or opportunities to improve water system resilience for growth and future generations.
MDH	Source Water Protection	Cities	City of East Bethel	The City of East Bethel has worked with the MDH Source Water Protection Program since we began preparing our first Wellhead Protection Plan in 2017. It has helped protect our drinking water and provide guidance for planning in the area. The team at Minnesota Rural Water Association has also greatly assisted us with technical knowledge and support throughout the whole process. We benefited from a \$10,000 Implementation Grant to help fund much needed emergency back-up power for two of our municipal wells and submitted grant requests for additional funding. Without this funding support, our city would be greatly hindered financially and lacking in a lot of knowledge involving the protection of our drinking water supply. We hope funding continues.

MDH	Source Water Protection	Cities	City of Edgerton	The SWP program helps us decrease nitrates in our water. CWFs have allowed us to provide cost share to landowners to reduce nitrate loading to our aquifer and most recently is helping us to potentially install solar on a high priority parcel within the wellhead area to further reduce nitrates. We have worked hard over the last 20 years to reduce nitrates from a high of 18-18ppm to our current levels of 5.5-8ppm, under the 10ppm safe drinking water standard. CWFs have been a key factor in helping us achieve this goal. Suggest a priority in funding of the program reflective of the importance of clean drinking water.
MDH	Source Water Protection	Cities	City of Richfield	This program has helped us successfully implement our Wellhead Protection Plan and make significant strides in protecting public health and our drinking water supply, including sealing a contaminated well and moving residents in a mobile home cooperative to a safe source. This was made possible by working with the SWP program.
MDH	Source Water Protection	Cities	City of Fairmont	We have applied for multiple Source Water Protection competitive grants for real-time monitoring of turbidity and nitrate for Dutch Creek, a major contributor to our surface water drinking water source, the Fairmont Chain of Lakes. In 2023, we worked with MDH on adoption of a Surface Water Intake Protection Plan. The Source Water Protection Implementation Grants have helped raise awareness for drinking water protection, and a new project with MDH grant funding will create floating treatment islands to help reduce nitrogen and phosphorous in tile water before entering the Chain of Lakes. Please give a priority level in funding reflective of the importance of protecting drinking water.
MDH	Source Water Protection	Cities	City of Lewiston	We have utilized the program multiple times to ensure our system can provide clean, quality water to our residents. Through this program we have sealed multiple wells in the DWSMA and are preparing to install a generator at our well site to guarantee water will always be available--tasks we would not have been able to accomplish without this funding source. This program makes our jobs easier, and the staff at the State and MRWA are top notch!
MDH	Source Water Protection	Cities	City of Wabasha	We have worked with the SWP Program since 2011. Our first Wellhead Protection Plan has helped us take steps to safeguard our drinking water sources and educate the public. We have received nearly \$50,000 in grants to better understand our DWSMA, seal old wells, collect data on and build a map for storm stewers, and rehabilitate infrastructure. Suggest a priority in funding level that reflects the importance of clean drinking water.
MDH	Source Water Protection	Cities	City of Nielsville	We have worked with the SWP Program since we began preparing our first Wellhead Protection Plan in 2005. These activities have helped us to take concrete actions to safeguard drinking water sources. Received a SWP Grant in 2022 which enabled us to protect our two wells with six foot chain linked fences with doors and replace two doors on our well house. As a city of 78 residents this support is welcomed.
MDH	Source Water Protection	Cities	City of Chatfield	We meet with SWP program staff every year, and the program has helped us get grants to help with our work to keep water clean. Through this program we have partnered with the FGI initiative and have planted Kernza and now Winter Cameline inside our DWSMA. Have also partnered with the SWP Program to have meetings with local ag producers and other government agencies to reduce nitrate in our drinking water. It has been indispensable in our efforts to protect our municipal water supply.
MDH	Source Water Protection	Cities	City of Riverton	We recently amended our Wellhead Protection Plan. Without the assistance of MDH and MN Rural Water Association staff, the process would have been very difficult and we would have needed a consultant to complete the work. Small cities like ours do not have the staffing of financial resources to do so. We are eager to begin implementation. Technical and financial assistance allows communities like ours to continue to protect our source of drinking water.
MDH	Source Water Protection	Environmental Organizations	The Nature Conservancy	TNC recommends approximately \$8M for Source Water Protection, a core priority that requires sustained funding.
MDH	Source Water Protection		Country Estates Mobile Home Park	Country Estates Mobile Home Park has partnered with the Source Water Protection program to develop our Wellhead Protection Plan. Through this effort, identified several vulnerabilities in our system, and now have a plan in place to address them. We are also now eligible for financial assistance, which we hope to secure to make improvements. With continued support, we will be able to enhance the reliability of our system and improve the quality of service for the residents.
MDH	Source Water Protection		Garness Trinity Lutheran Church	Our church applied for a Source Water Protection Transient Grant to reduce nitrogen levels in our drinking water. We wouldn't have been able to do this work without the grant helping us. Suggest a priority in funding level that reflects the importance of clean drinking water.
MPCA	Chloride Reduction Program	Cities	Minnesota Cities Stormwater Coalition	Chloride impairments represent one of the most significant and growing water quality challenges for cities. Support continued funding paired with policy recommendations that provide financial support and flexibility for meeting chloride discharge reductions.
MPCA	Chloride Reduction Program	Environmental Organizations	Sue Nissen and Randy Holst, Stop Over Salting	Minnesotans are repeatedly shocked to learn about our growing chloride pollution challenge. The good news is there is a clear pathway to reduction: this program. But it needs more funding. Reducing salt use is the only answer, and this transformational program makes it easier to do. Please increase support.
MPCA	Chloride Reduction Program	Environmental Organizations	The Nature Conservancy	TNC recommends increase investment (\$2M) to address increasing chloride levels throughout Minnesota.
MPCA	Chloride Reduction Program	Watershed Districts	Capitol Region Watershed District	Chloride pollution from road salt one of the most significant and detrimental issues. Need state coordination and financial support. Enhanced funding support requested.
MPCA	Chloride Reduction Program	Watershed Districts	Nine Mile Watershed District	Chloride pollution from road salt one of the most significant and detrimental issues. Need state coordination and financial support. Enhanced funding support requested.

MPCA	Chloride Reduction Program	Watershed Districts	Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission	Lakes and streams in the BCWMC continue to be threatened by high chlorides, primarily coming from winter deicing activities. Of the 14 priority waterbodies, six are impaired for chloride. Despite sustained local efforts, chloride levels continue to increase. Stronger statewide coordination, expanded technical support, and increased financial investment are needed to accelerate progress toward protecting the health and ecology of Minnesota's lakes, rivers, and streams. Please increase support for the program and advocate for enhanced funding for reduction efforts within Council priorities.
MPCA	CWC Admin	Environmental Organizations	The Nature Conservancy	TNC recommends approximately \$1.5M to strengthen Council staffing capacity in response to the growing complexity and scope of its work.
MPCA	Wastewater/Stormwater TMDL Implementation	Cities	Minnesota Cities Stormwater Coalition	This is among our top priorities as the program provides essential technical assistance to cities, integrates stormwater and wastewater data with WRAPS, and maintains the MN Stormwater Manual--a resource relied upon by thousands. Without this support, cities with limited capacity could fall short of meeting requirements.
MPFA	Point Source Implementation Grants	Cities	Minnesota Cities Stormwater Coalition	The PSIG program is a lifeline for communities that must upgrade stormwater and wastewater treatment infrastructure. These are often mandated improvements that cannot be delayed, yet costs are well beyond what local utilities can cover. This also leverages Clean Water Revolving Fund dollars, stretching state dollars further.
MULTIPLE	MULTIPLE	Business	Jen Wahls	Accomplishments need to be accounted for at a landscape scale. Need to also understand overhead costs and compare those to existing processes. Need consistency from BWSR and SWCDs on developing set rates and in program delivery.
MULTIPLE	MULTIPLE	Business	Jen Wahls	Pesticide Testing of Private Wells and the Private Well Initiative should be combined. Turn testing over to MDH and work with MN Well Owners Organization.
MULTIPLE	MULTIPLE	Business	Jen Wahls	Where local technical teams (e.g. Local Forestry Teams) or workforce (e.g. Consulting foresters) are present, utilize existing service providers and systems that are delivering programs efficiently.
MULTIPLE	MULTIPLE	Business	Minnesota Agriculture Resilience Initiative (MARI)	With less than 10 years of CWFs remaining, MARI encourages prioritization of recommendations that support systems-level changes in technical assistance needed to support farmers in adopting the regenerative ag practices necessary to meet clean water goals. We also support the development of netter indicators and monitoring across programs and agencies to track efficacy of these approaches. Regenerative systems are complex, highly context specific, and require years of experimentation, learning, and adjustment. Technical assistance is vital. To that end, we recommend: 1) support emerging, innovative, and holistic TA programs and practices; and 2) expand and enhance education, training, and resources for TA providers. Several examples and specific programs are included in the letter.
MULTIPLE	MULTIPLE	Cities	Minnesota Cities Stormwater Coalition	For cities, the CWF is often the essential catalyst that makes complex stormwater and water quality projects financially viable. Funds the technical expertise we need, supports compliance, and enables us to participate meaningfully in watershed-scale planning and implementation.
MULTIPLE	MULTIPLE	Environmental Organizations	Minnesota Environmental Partnership	Appreciate the Council's revised process and commend it for being significantly more transparent and openly deliberative. This is an important moment for the CWF, as this round will have completed 20 of the 25 years of funding. Yet, more progress is needed. It is time to reexamine and refocus the allocation of limited CWF resources. Council should prioritize funding for programs that address challenges at scale and over time, not just 1-2 year increments. Need to fund programs or practices that are capable of meeting state water goals. The NRS is refreshingly clear in calling for a shift in how we address nutrients, and we support a substantial increase in funding for developing and implementing a wide range of living cover options. Several CWF programs have previously been funded in part or whole by fees. The Council should examine whether substitution has taken place and act to restore these programs' traditional reliance on fees.

MULTIPLE	MULTIPLE	Environmental Organizations	The Nature Conservancy	<p>As the CWF enters its final quarter of funding, it is imperative that Council agencies receiving CWF investments focus on outcomes, results, and system change. Monitoring and planning completed to-date should inform implementation, and CWF-supported programs should adjust to monitoring results and demonstrating effectiveness.</p> <p>TNC recommends establishing a transparent process that clearly explains how proposals will be ranked and scored using publicly available criteria. The following are suggested: 1) show high potential for early restoration and delisting or prevention of impairment, 2) show high potential for long-term water quality and conservation benefits, 3) statewide significance for recreation, drinking water, economic interest, cultural or community significance, 4) proven outcomes and cost-effectiveness, 5) contribute to system change past 2034, and 6) significantly leverage policy and investments by others to achieve water quality goals.</p> <p>TNC supports strategic capacity-building investments across CWF programs to ensure continued effectiveness, accountability, and long-term impact. Additionally, CWF investments should continue to support emerging, innovative, and holistic approaches to scale for the long term.</p> <p>The Fund has enabled meaningful progress across the state, supporting strong partnerships and advancing measurable outcomes for water quality and public health. At the same time, emerging challenges, evolving priorities, and remaining gaps in implementation underscore that this work is not yet complete. Continued and strategic investment will be essential to sustain momentum, address unmet needs, and ensure that the benefits of clean water are realized for all Minnesotans now and into the future.</p>
MULTIPLE	MULTIPLE	Environmental Organizations	Freshwater	<p>We appreciate the strategic and transparent process being used. The rubric is an excellent tool—we hope water quantity is given ample consideration as a co-benefit. For criteria to use moving forward, we encourage you to prioritize proposals that (examples of programs for each in the letter): 1) fill gaps in clean water needs not addressed by other funding sources, 2) are designed to address future water challenges using a regional and cross-sector approach, 3) provide foundational scientific knowledge, and 4) help landowners reduce agricultural pollution.</p>
MULTIPLE	MULTIPLE	Environmental Organizations	Minnesota Agriculture Resilience Initiative (MARI)	<p>With less than 10 years of CWFs remaining, MARI encourages prioritization of recommendations that support systems-level changes in technical assistance needed to support farmers in adopting the regenerative ag practices necessary to meet clean water goals. We also support the development of netter indicators and monitoring across programs and agencies to track efficacy of these approaches. Regenerative systems are complex, highly context specific, and require years of experimentation, learning, and adjustment. Technical assistance is vital. To that end, we recommend: 1) support emerging, innovative, and holistic TA programs and practices; and 2) expand and enhance education, training, and resources for TA providers. Several examples and specific programs are included in the letter.</p>
MULTIPLE	MULTIPLE	Environmental Organizations	Conservation Community	<p>With the sunset of the Legacy amendment approaching in 2034, these recommendations are consequential to ensure the best possible results from these unique resources. Encourage recommendations emphasize investments in projects and programs that have a track record of being, or can easily be, measurable with demonstrable outcomes. Good results come from the use of CWFs, but the uncertainty of future availability should provide some urgency to support highest and best use.</p>
MULTIPLE	MULTIPLE	Farmers	Minnesota Farmers Union	<p>Over the past year there has been a reduction in federal conservation assistance, and we are currently in a challenging agricultural economy with low crop prices and high input costs. In this context, Minnesota farmers are relying even more on the CWF's working lands programs for the funding and technical assistance needed to improve their operations with changes that promote water quality.</p>
MULTIPLE	MULTIPLE	Farmers	Minnesota Agriculture Resilience Initiative (MARI)	<p>With less than 10 years of CWFs remaining, MARI encourages prioritization of recommendations that support systems-level changes in technical assistance needed to support farmers in adopting the regenerative ag practices necessary to meet clean water goals. We also support the development of netter indicators and monitoring across programs and agencies to track efficacy of these approaches. Regenerative systems are complex, highly context specific, and require years of experimentation, learning, and adjustment. Technical assistance is vital. To that end, we recommend: 1) support emerging, innovative, and holistic TA programs and practices; and 2) expand and enhance education, training, and resources for TA providers. Several examples and specific programs are included in the letter.</p>
MULTIPLE	MULTIPLE	Fishing	Conservation Community	<p>With the sunset of the Legacy amendment approaching in 2034, these recommendations are consequential to ensure the best possible results from these unique resources. Encourage recommendations emphasize investments in projects and programs that have a track record of being, or can easily be, measurable with demonstrable outcomes. Good results come from the use of CWFs, but the uncertainty of future availability should provide some urgency to support highest and best use.</p>
MULTIPLE	MULTIPLE	Hunting	Conservation Community	<p>With the sunset of the Legacy amendment approaching in 2034, these recommendations are consequential to ensure the best possible results from these unique resources. Encourage recommendations emphasize investments in projects and programs that have a track record of being, or can easily be, measurable with demonstrable outcomes. Good results come from the use of CWFs, but the uncertainty of future availability should provide some urgency to support highest and best use.</p>
MULTIPLE	MULTIPLE	Lakes and Streams	Conservation Community	<p>With the sunset of the Legacy amendment approaching in 2034, these recommendations are consequential to ensure the best possible results from these unique resources. Encourage recommendations emphasize investments in projects and programs that have a track record of being, or can easily be, measurable with demonstrable outcomes. Good results come from the use of CWFs, but the uncertainty of future availability should provide some urgency to support highest and best use.</p>
MULTIPLE	MULTIPLE	UMN	Dr. Amy Kireta, UMN Duluth	<p>Suggest increase to scoring for Engagement and Community Value in the rubric. Not only is this best practice to co-create projects that are most needed, but is critical for gaining community support and trust as funding becomes more scarce.</p>

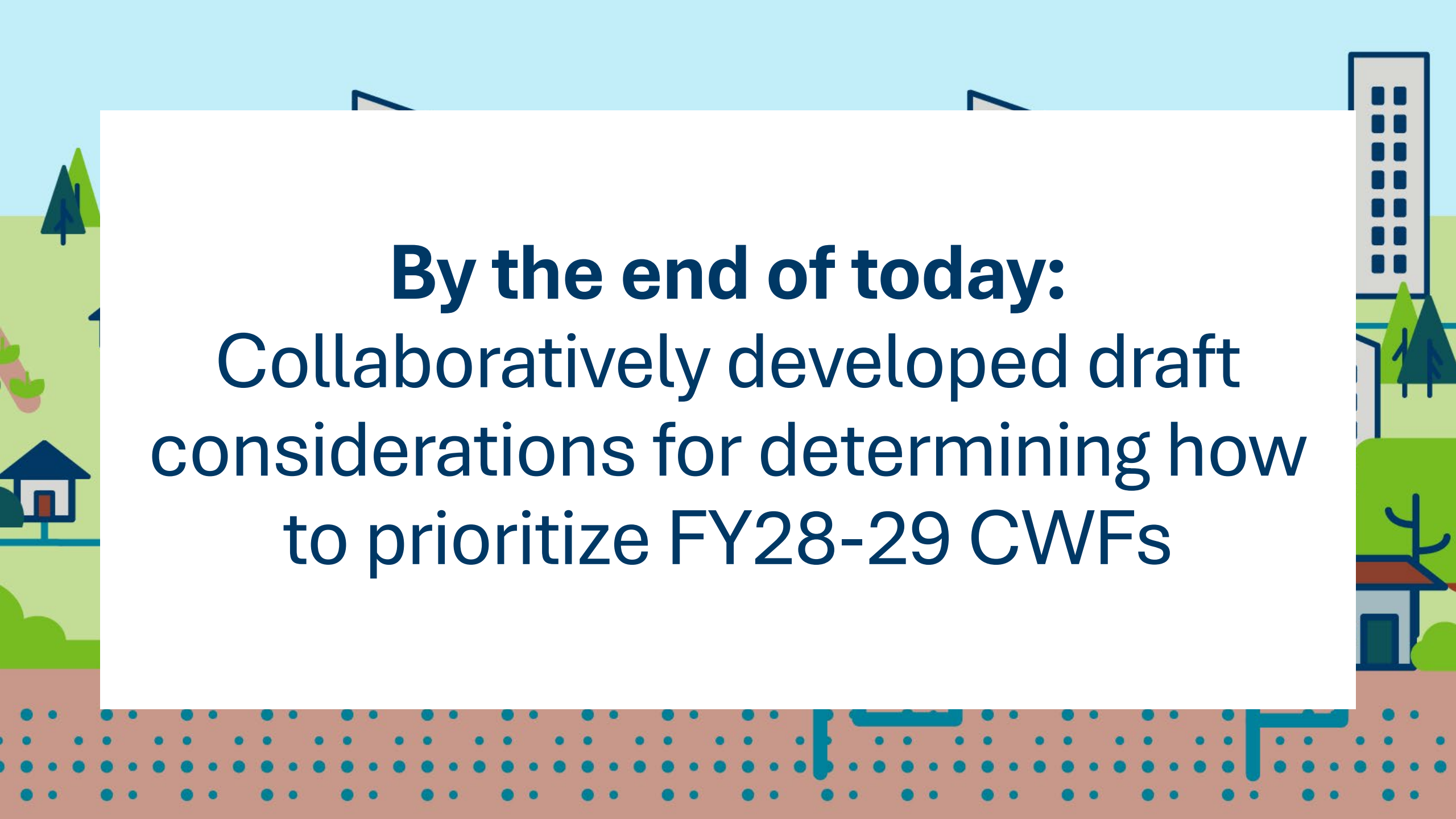
MULTIPLE	MULTIPLE	Watershed Districts	Bois de Sioux Watershed District	CWF programs are maximized to supplement costs of a variety of large scale projects, but opportunities to utilize CWF for the most impactful projects are limited and, in many cases, prohibited by administrative separation of flood control projects vs water quality projects. In the Red River Valley, water quality is dependent upon flood control. Encourage Council members to consider expanded users of CWFs in recognition of areas like the Red River Basin where water quality is directly influenced by flooding.
Olmsted	Groundwater Protection and Soil Health Initiative	Farmers	Land Stewardship Project	Strong support to expand this program to more counties in SE MN. We continually hear from farmers outside of Olmsted that they wish they had access to this innovative program for their own farms.
Olmsted	Groundwater Protection and Soil Health Initiative	SWCD	Olmsted SWCD	Groundwater is especially susceptible to contamination in our karst region in SE MN. EPA declared nitrate contamination in groundwater in SE MN an imminent public health threat in 2023. SWCDs are the "boots on the ground". The efforts underway through this program are making a difference. We support the application and continued strong partnership with BWSR.
Olmsted	SE Groundwater and Soil Health Initiative	Environmental Organizations	The Nature Conservancy	TNC recommends this program and its success be used to set program standards for other soil health programs.
UMN	Stormwater Research Program	Business	WSB Engineering	Essential stormwater research that help consultants support clients. Cutting edge research to design and maintain stormwater BMPs that are effective and efficient. Science-based training and outreach to make sure local work uses best info available.
UMN	Stormwater Research Program	Business	Barr Engineering	Essential stormwater research that help consultants support clients. Cutting edge research to design and maintain stormwater BMPs that are effective and efficient. Science-based training and outreach to make sure local work uses best info available.
UMN	Stormwater Research Program	Cities	Minnesota Cities Stormwater Coalition	Applied research on stormwater BMPs directly informs how cities design and operate stormwater infrastructure. This program has produced actionable results. Continue to support so we have access to cutting-edge, locally relevant guidance.
UMN	Stormwater Research Program	Cities	City of Duluth	Essential stormwater research that help consultants support clients. Cutting edge research to design and maintain stormwater BMPs that are effective and efficient. Science-based training and outreach to make sure local work uses best info available.
UMN	Stormwater Research Program	Environmental Organizations	The Nature Conservancy	TNC recommends increased investment (\$3M) on recognition of the growing intensity of precipitation events, increasing MS4 regulatory requirements, and the role of stormwater sunoff driving impairments in Minnesota's lakes and streams.
UMN	Stormwater Research Program	UMN	John Gulliver	Funding for stormwater research is critically limited, and what MN is able to do is only because of the MSRC. This research is needed to inform the actions of many across the state, who would otherwise be relying on outdated information.
UMN	Stormwater Research Program	Watershed Districts	Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District	Chloride pollution major concern. WD has taken actions but concentrations still increasing. 10 waterbodies already impaired. Need more action and support and this program helps make that happen.
UMN	Stormwater Research Program	Watershed Districts	Mississippi Watershed Management Organization	Essential stormwater research that help consultants support clients. Cutting edge research to design and maintain stormwater BMPs that are effective and efficient. Science-based training and outreach to make sure local work uses best info available.
UMN	Stormwater Research Program	Watershed Districts	South Washington Watershed District	Essential stormwater research that help consultants support clients. Cutting edge research to design and maintain stormwater BMPs that are effective and efficient. Science-based training and outreach to make sure local work uses best info available.
UMN	Stormwater Research Program	Watershed Districts	Prior Lake-Spring Lake Watershed District	Two priorities of the WD (water quality and flood control) aided by the program. "One of the clearest ways the Council can...support implementable clean water for the communities we serve."
UMN	Stormwater Research Program		David Pilipiak, PE	Essential stormwater research that help consultants support clients. Cutting edge research to design and maintain stormwater BMPs that are effective and efficient. Science-based training and outreach to make sure local work uses best info available.
	Voyagers National Park Water Quality Protection Program	Counties	Commissioner Jason Sjoblum, Koochiching County	Please continue funding for the VNP Clean Water Project. Many clean water projects have been accomplished in St. Louis and Koochiching Counties, improving water quality throughout the watershed from east to west. As more people flock to water-based areas, it is crucial to continue funding to benefit clean water goals.

	Voyaguers National Park Water Quality Protection Program	Legislature	Sen. Grant Hauschild	Importance of these waters for tourism, fishing, boating, and northern MN economy. Project is delivering real results. Leverage is valuable.
	Voyaguers National Park Water Quality Protection Program	Legislature	Sen. Jennifer McEwen, Rep. Liish Kozlowski, Rep. Pete Johnson	Importance of these waters for tourism, fishing, boating, and northern MN economy. Project is delivering real results. Leverage is valuable.
	Voyaguers National Park Water Quality Protection Program	Legislature	Sen. Rob Farnsworth, Rep. Cal Warwas	Importance of these waters for tourism, fishing, boating, and northern MN economy. Project is delivering real results. Leverage is valuable.
	Voyaguers National Park Water Quality Protection Program	Legislature	Rep. Skraba	Importance of these waters for tourism, fishing, boating, and northern MN economy. Project is delivering real results. Leverage is valuable.
	Voyaguers National Park Water Quality Protection Program	Townships	Kabetogama Township	The grant dollars the VNPCWJPB has received from the CWF over the years have been greatly appreciated and critical in our efforts to successfully complete sewer infrastructure projects in the Voyageur Park communities of Crane Lake, Ash River, Island View and Kabetogama. Our Township Board of Supervisors supports the funding request of the program.
	Voyaguers National Park Water Quality Protection Program		Rob Scott, Crane Lake Water and Sanitary Board	The success of the Clean Water Project is directly related to the funding approved by the CWC. The ability to improve the sewer systems and infrastructure ensures immediate and long-term water quality will be sustained. It is not fiscally feasible to do this work at the local level--external funding is needed. Thank you for your ongoing support.

Framing our discussions

June 15 Clean Water Council
Public Input Meeting





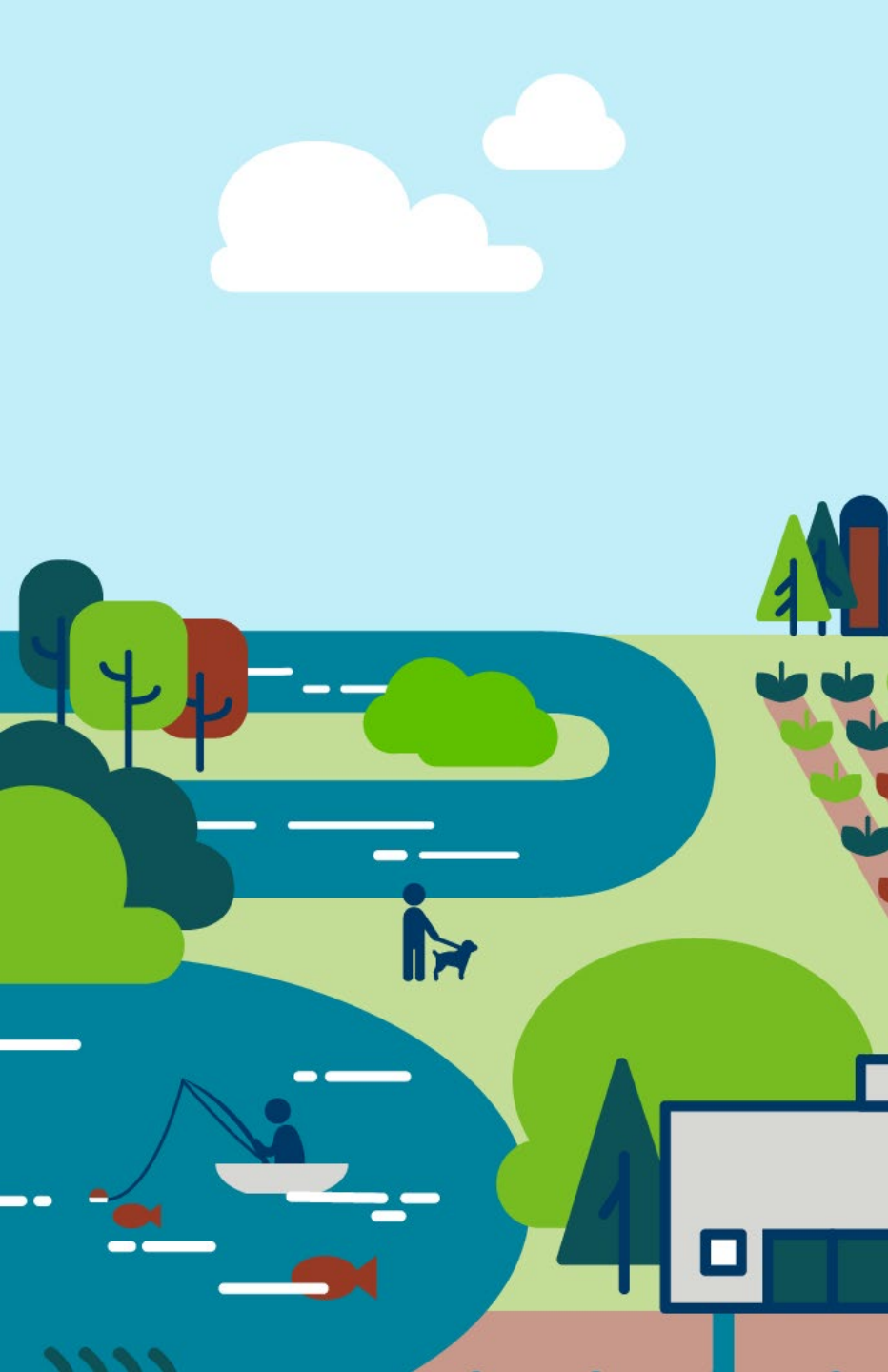
By the end of today:
Collaboratively developed draft
considerations for determining how
to prioritize FY28-29 CWFs

What we'll cover before the break

- Clean Water Council and Fund context
 - Where it all began
 - Statute
 - Strategic Plan visions
 - Water Management Framework
- FY28-29
 - Proposals received
 - Budget forecast
- Public input
 - How input has shaped this work already
 - Overview of submissions for today
- Overview of today's workshop

Critical pivot point in our process:
moving from
proposal review to
budget development





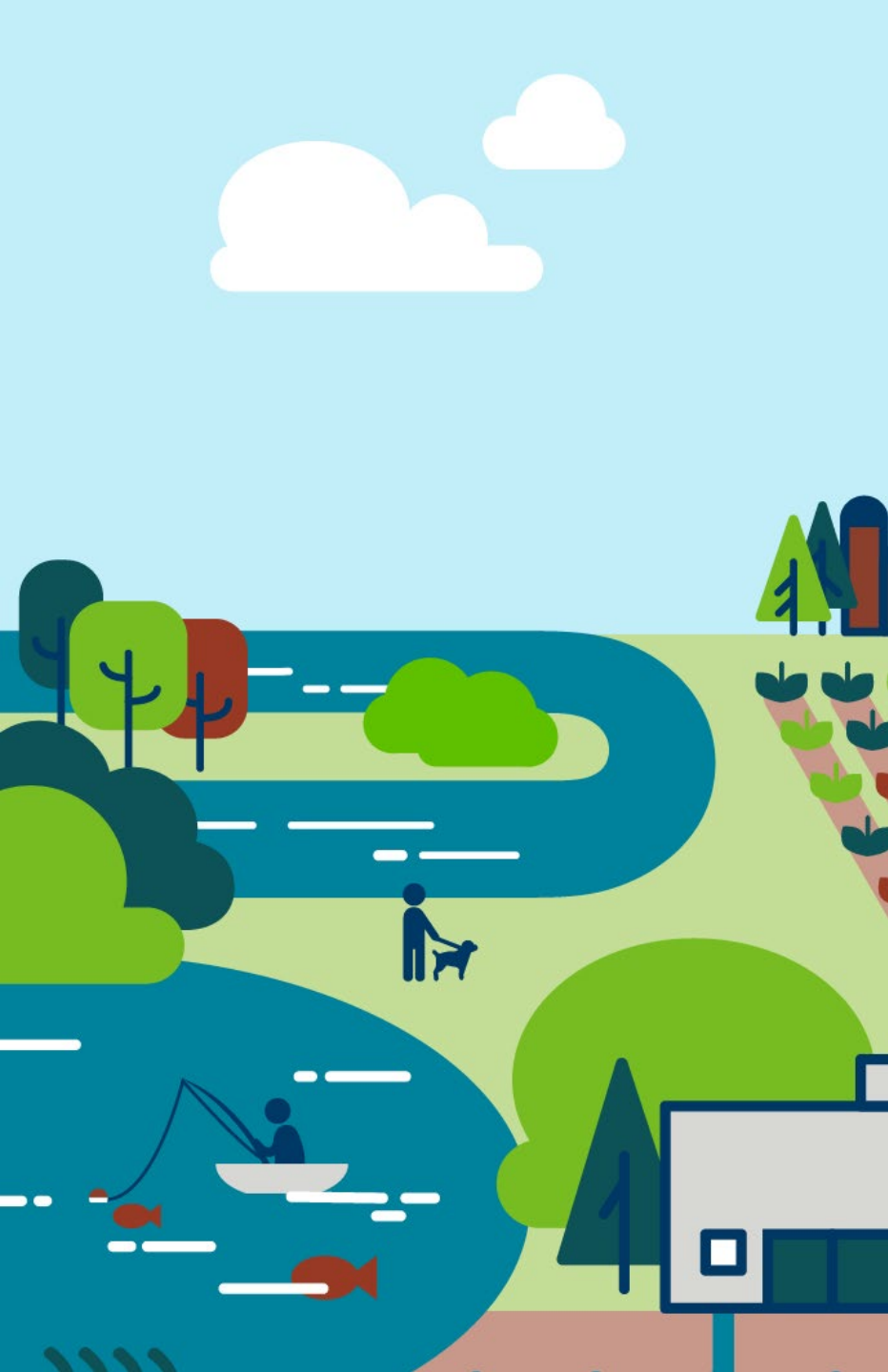
Approaching this work

- Bring your insights and expertise
- Listen to and learn from others
- This work and these funds matter
- Working together enhances the outcomes

THANK YOU!

An illustration of a city with a water utility network. The scene is divided into three horizontal layers. The top layer shows a cityscape with various buildings, including houses and skyscrapers, connected by a network of blue pipes. The middle layer shows a park-like area with trees, a person walking a dog, and a person riding a bicycle. The bottom layer shows a cross-section of the ground with a grid of blue dots representing the water table. Blue pipes are shown extending from the ground up to the buildings and down to the water table, illustrating the water supply system.

Clean Water Council and Fund Context



Before the Clean Water Funds

- Work – good work – was happening, but it paled in comparison to the scale of the challenge
- Responsive and opportunity-based
- We didn't know...a lot
- In 2002
 - MPCA fully assessed only:
 - 5% of the state's stream miles
 - 12% of the state's lakes
 - Falling behind in meeting federal deadlines for TMDL studies → 2015 deadline, likely by 2038
 - Legislative Auditor recognized significant underfunding of ability MPCA ability to meet Clean Water Act requirements



Minnesota's Impaired Waters

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

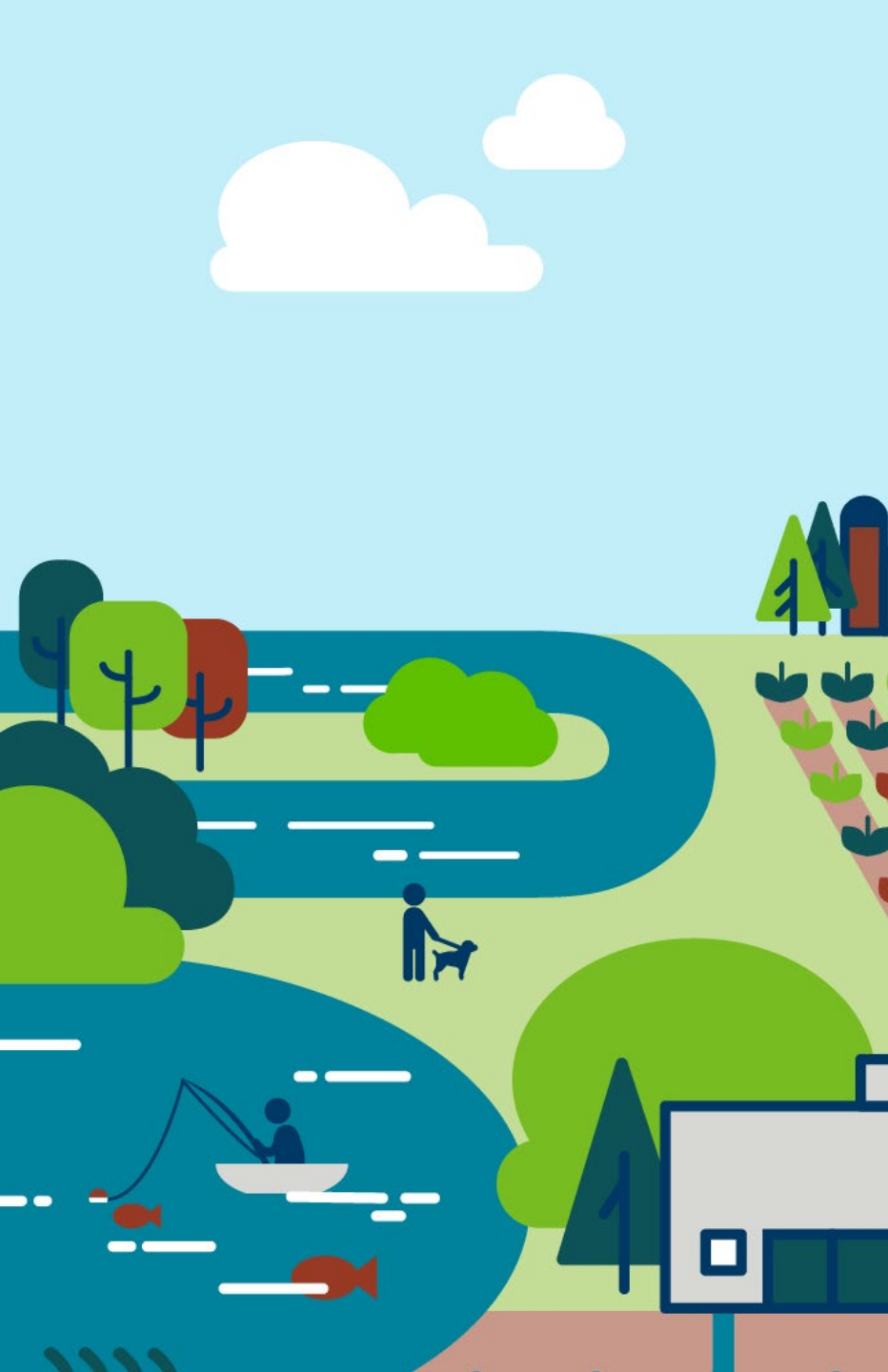


Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

March 2003

2003 Impaired Waters report

- Funding gaps at the state level
 - \$7.1M/year for assessment
 - \$5.8M/year for TMDL study completion within federal deadlines
 - Excluding wastewater treatment facility upgrades, estimates for restoring just *assessed* waters was \$600M-3B, with a gap of up to \$230M/year
- Local government would need to play lead role in restoration, would need additional funding for capacity building



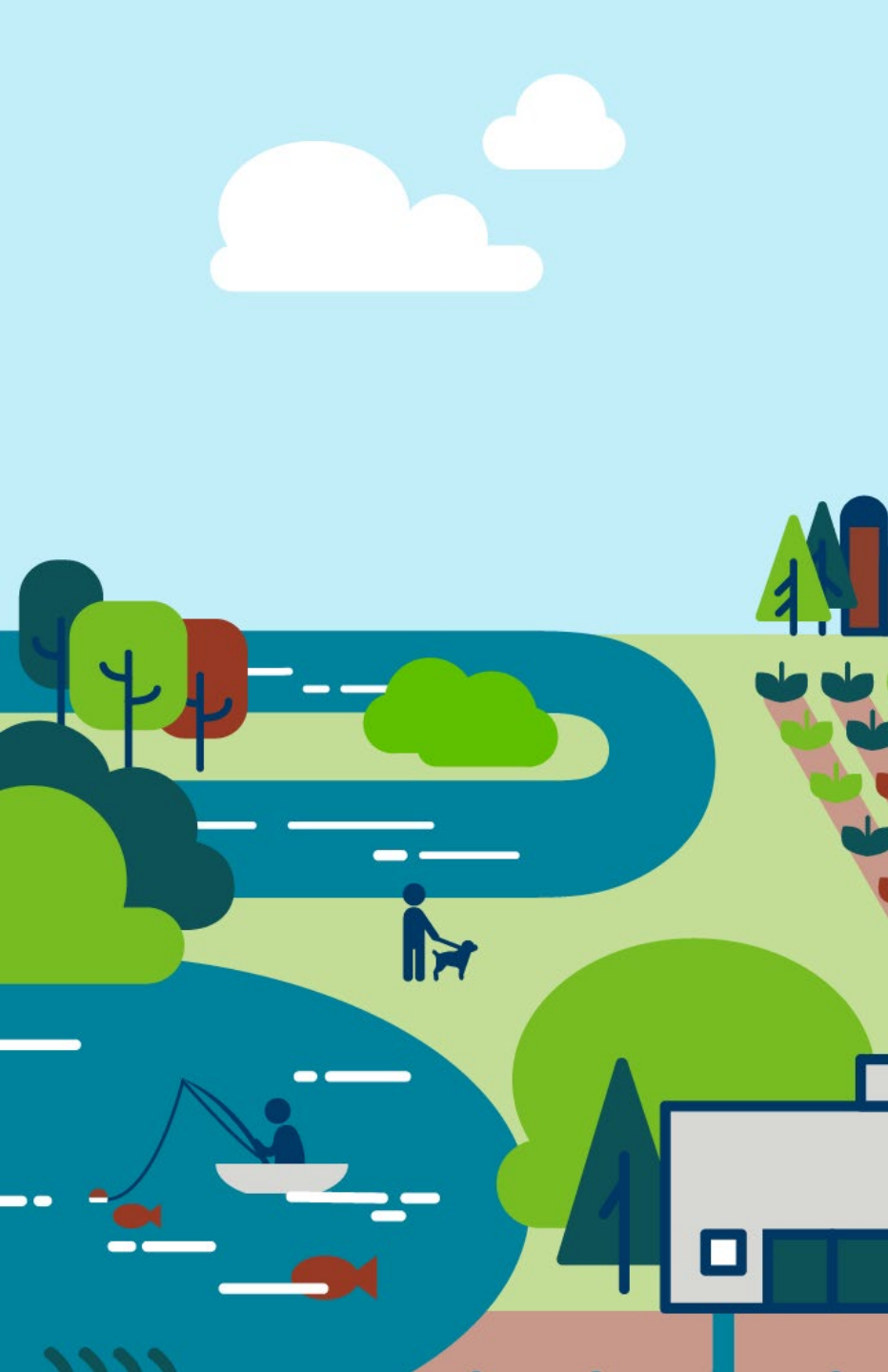
It was clear change was needed

- Lots of opportunity to improve the approach
 - Increase assessment
 - Meet deadlines
 - Coordinate across agencies, programs
 - Build local capacity
 - Increase strategic implementation



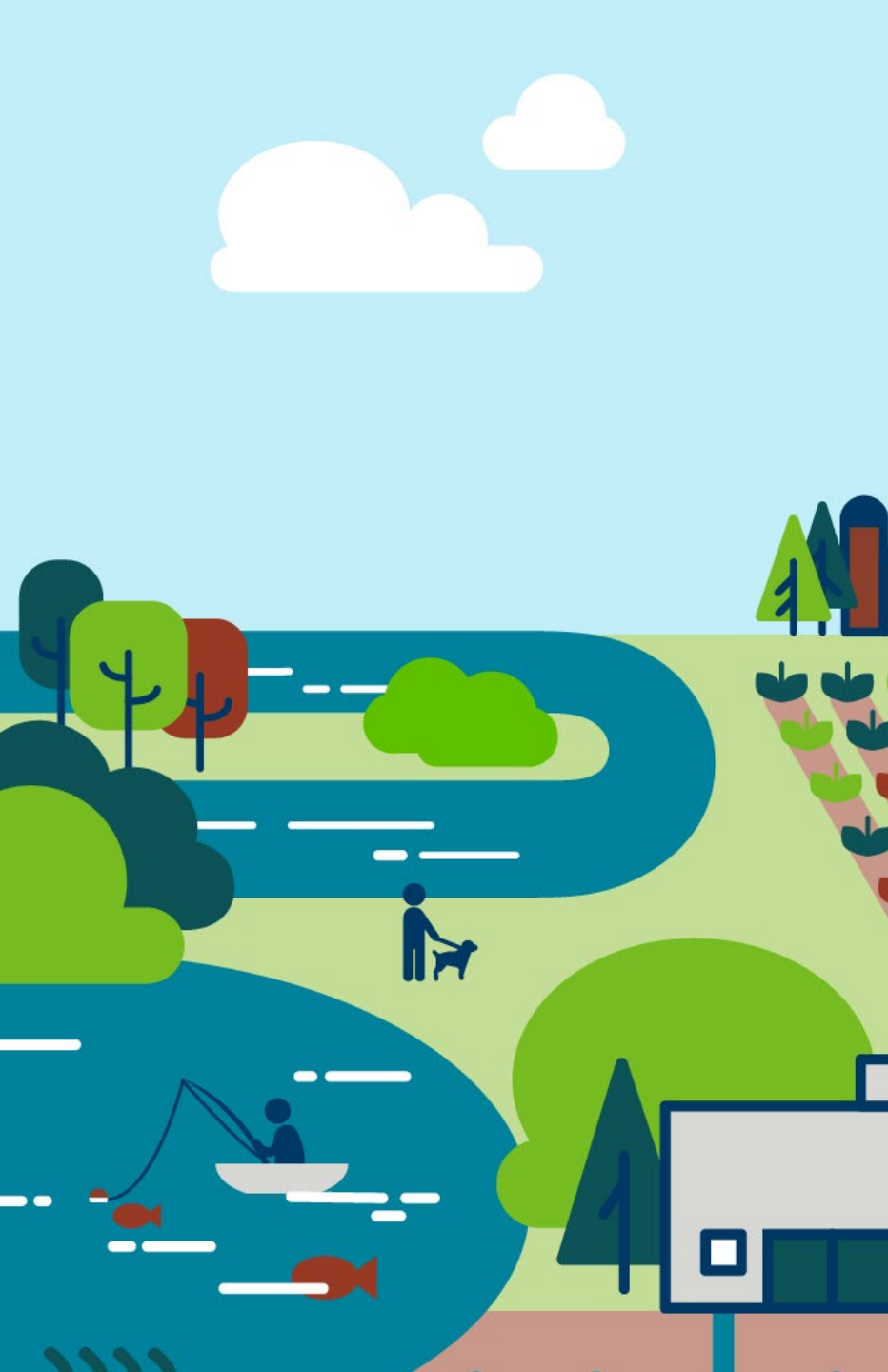
Clean Water Legacy Act

- Predates Legacy amendment
- Established through Minnesota's Clean Water Legacy Act ([Minn. Statute 114D](#))
 - Act Purpose: Protect, enhance, and restore water quality in lakes, river, and streams, and protect groundwater
 - Act Findings:
 - Water quality is **integral** to Minnesota's future
 - Achieving water quality goals requires **long-term commitment and cooperation** by all state and local agencies, public and private organizations, and individuals
 - **We all have a role to play**
- Created the Clean Water Council



Clean Water **Council** focus

- Coordination and cooperation
- Goals for implementation
 - TMDLs and federal compliance
 - Systematic approach to evaluation, technical and financial assistance, implementation for surface waters
 - Protect and restore groundwater
- Policies
 - Regional, multi-pollutant, or watershed TMDLs or WRAPS
 - Maximize use of existing resources, use existing regulatory authorities, promote effective non-regulatory measures
 - Protect, restore, innovate



Restoring impaired waters

- (1) **coordinate with and utilize existing local authorities** and infrastructure for implementation;
- (2) can be implemented in whole or in part by **providing support for existing or ongoing restoration efforts**;
- (3) most effectively **leverage other sources of restoration funding**, including federal, state, local, and private sources of funds;
- (4) show a **high potential for early restoration and delisting** based upon scientific data developed through public agency or citizen monitoring or other means; and
- (5) show a **high potential for long-term water quality and related conservation benefits**.

Clean Water Fund



- Established through the Clean Water, Land, and Legacy Amendment in 2008
- Created the sustainable drinking water account
- Nonpoint priority funding plan
 - Protect vulnerable drinking water sources
 - Guidance for prioritizing which waters to protect and restore
 - Respond to climate change and intensive land uses, enhance ecosystem function

Funding the policy framework in the Act



Subd. 3. **Purpose.** (a) The clean water fund may be spent only to protect, enhance, and restore water quality in lakes, rivers, and streams, to protect groundwater from degradation, and to protect drinking water sources by:

(1) providing grants, loans, and technical assistance to public agencies and others testing waters, identifying impaired waters, developing total maximum daily loads, implementing restoration plans for impaired waters, and evaluating the effectiveness of restoration;

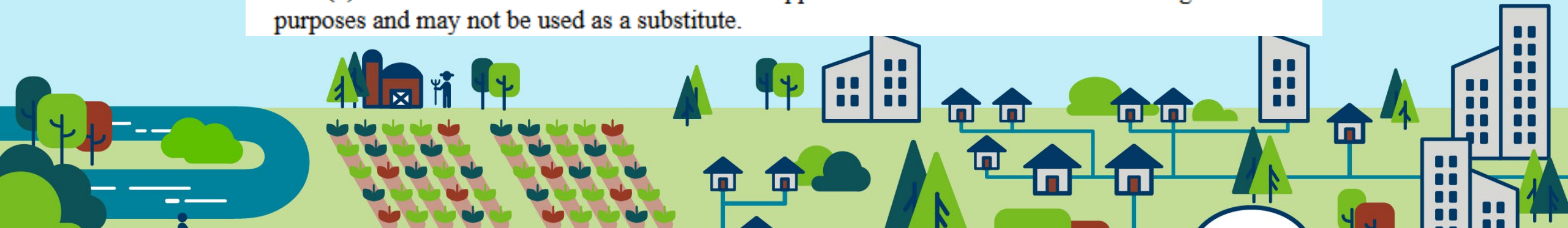
(2) supporting measures to prevent surface waters from becoming impaired and to improve the quality of waters that are listed as impaired, but do not have an approved total maximum daily load addressing the impairment;

(3) providing grants and loans for wastewater and stormwater treatment projects through the Public Facilities Authority;

(4) supporting measures to prevent the degradation of groundwater in accordance with the groundwater degradation prevention goal under section [103H.001](#); and

(5) providing funds to state agencies to carry out their responsibilities, including enhanced compliance and enforcement.

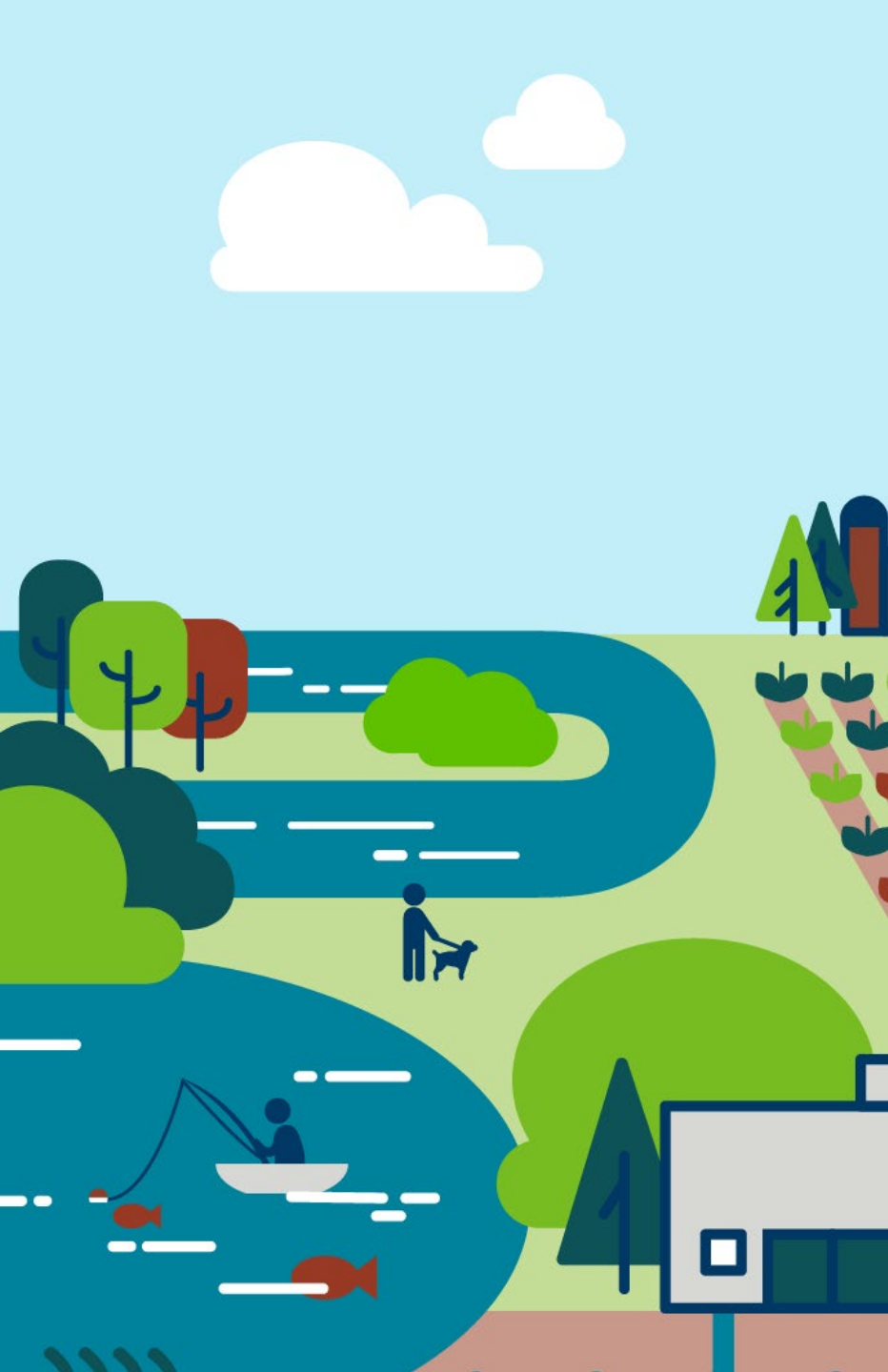
(b) Funds from the clean water fund must supplement traditional sources of funding for these purposes and may not be used as a substitute.





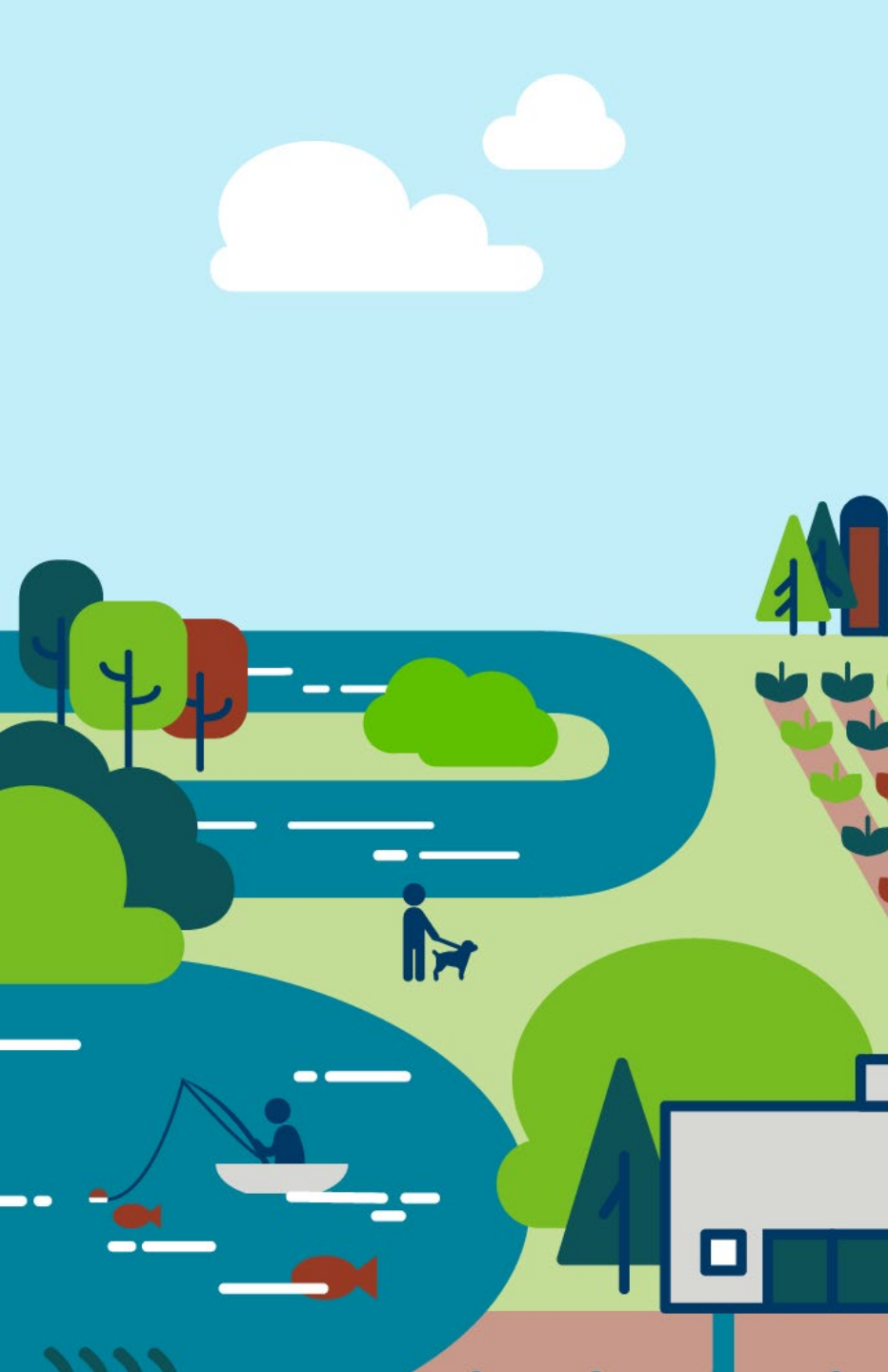
Recommended appropriations

- Recommendations must:
 - be to **protect, enhance, and restore water quality** in lakes, rivers, and streams and to protect groundwater from degradation and ensure that at least five percent of the clean water fund is spent only to **protect drinking water sources**;
 - be **consistent** with the purposes, policies, goals, and priorities in this chapter; and
 - **allocate adequate support and resources** to:
 - identify degraded groundwater and impaired waters, develop TMDLs,
 - implement restoration of groundwater and impaired waters, and
 - provide assistance and incentives
- Include methods to **specify the outcomes** to be achieved as a result of funding



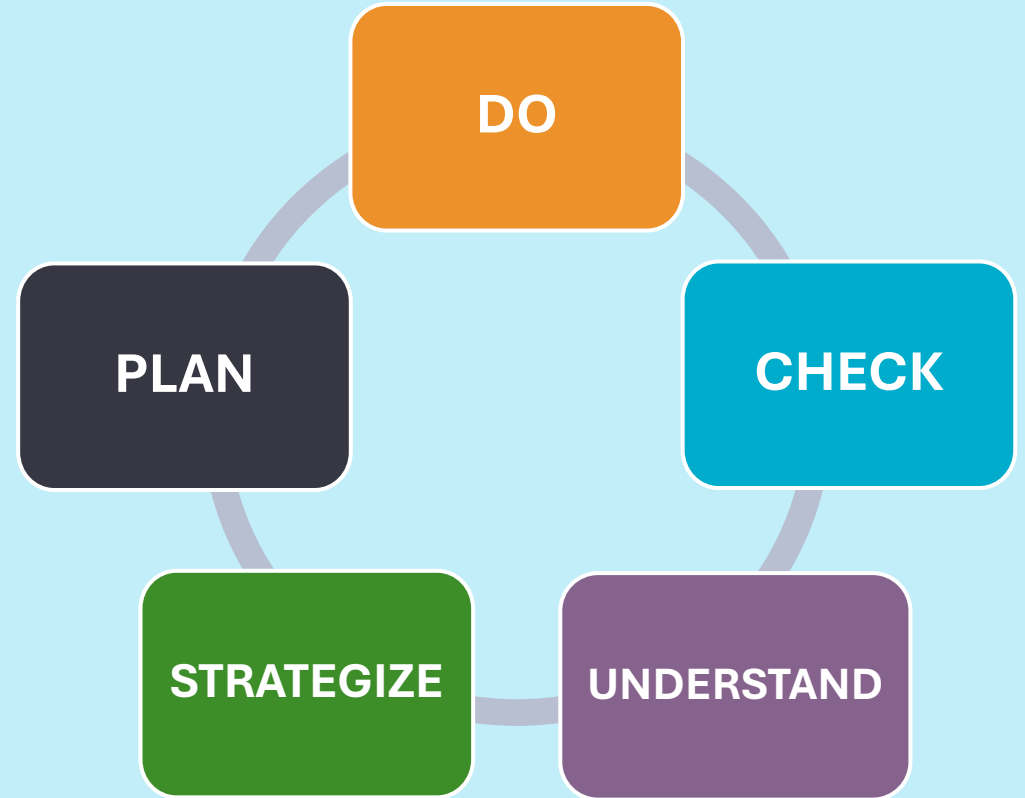
2024-2028 Strategic Plan

- Groundwater is clean and available to all in Minnesota
- Drinking water sources are safe for everyone, everywhere in Minnesota
- Minnesotans will have fishable and swimmable waters throughout the state
- All Minnesotans value water and take actions to sustain and protect it



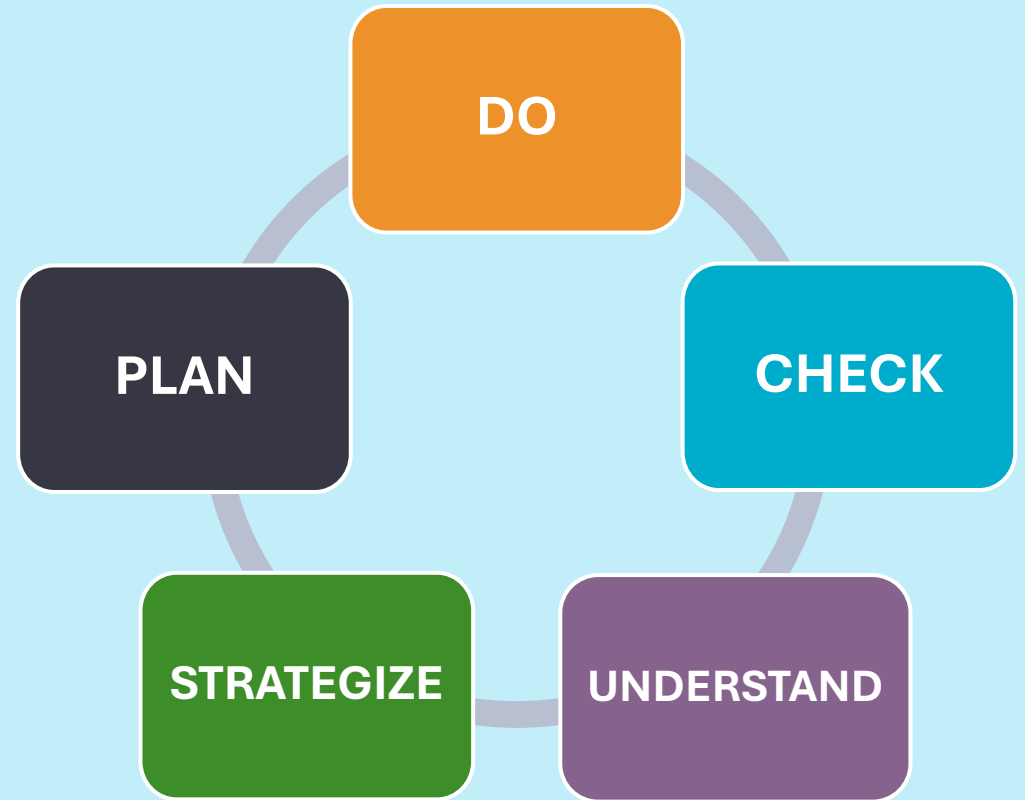
KEY MESSAGES

1. Lasting clean water results rely on a proven **water management framework** that creates a continuous cycle of learning, planning, and action.
2. **All five components work together** to turn science into measurable improvements on the ground.
3. **Sustained commitment** to the full process is essential to achieving lasting results for Minnesota's waters.



EXAMPLES

1. **Protection:** improved connectivity for north shore streams (Lake Superior North)
2. **Drinking water:** Sherburne SWCD acts on GRAPS recommendations to protect drinking water (Mississippi River St. Cloud)
3. **Restoration:** Upper Prior Lake delisted after years of study and projects (PLSLWD)



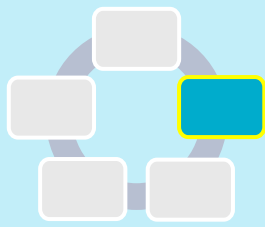
Trout Stream Protection: Lake Superior North



New culverts provide climate resiliency to fish and people on Lake Superior's North Shore

September 5, 2024



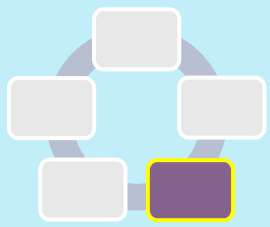


CHECK

*“**Exceptional biological communities** (fish and aquatic macroinvertebrates) were documented in many streams; most streams supported brook trout and other cold-adapted fishes, and highly sensitive aquatic macroinvertebrates were widespread and abundant. These high-quality streams are **excellent candidates for protection efforts**”*

Lake Superior – North Watershed Monitoring and Assessment Report





UNDERSTAND

Localized Restoration and Protection Studies

Stream (Sub-Watershed)	Stressor
Fredenberg Creek (Two Island River)	Loss of connectivity
Wanless Creek (Cross River)	Loss of connectivity
Caribou River	Loss of connectivity
Lindstrom Creek (Baptism R. Trib.)	Loss of connectivity
Hockamin Creek (W. Br. Baptism R. Trib.)	Loss of connectivity
Numerous Streams along old LTV rail line	Loss of connectivity

March 2018

Stressor Identification

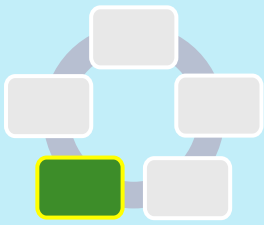
Lake Superior North Stressor Identification Report

A study of local stressors limiting the biotic communities in the Lake Superior North Watershed



m MINNESOTA POLLUTION CONTROL AGENCY





STRATEGIZE

Increase stream connectivity

Upgrade three crossings along Fredenberg Creek (Railroad, Fly Ash Road, and County Road 1).

Limit future road and trail crossings.

Maintain ecological connectivity throughout area's road-stream interactions.

Replace undersized culverts at Forest Road 1855 on Wanless Creek with properly sized and installed structure.

Field-based assessment of the entire Cliffs Erie Railroad/ LTV Grade to determine impacts to fish passage and stream connectivity.

Lake Superior—North Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy Report

August 2018

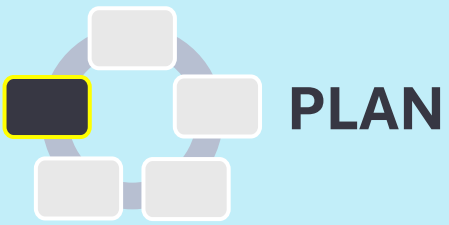


mi MINNESOTA POLLUTION CONTROL AGENCY

Tt TETRA TECH

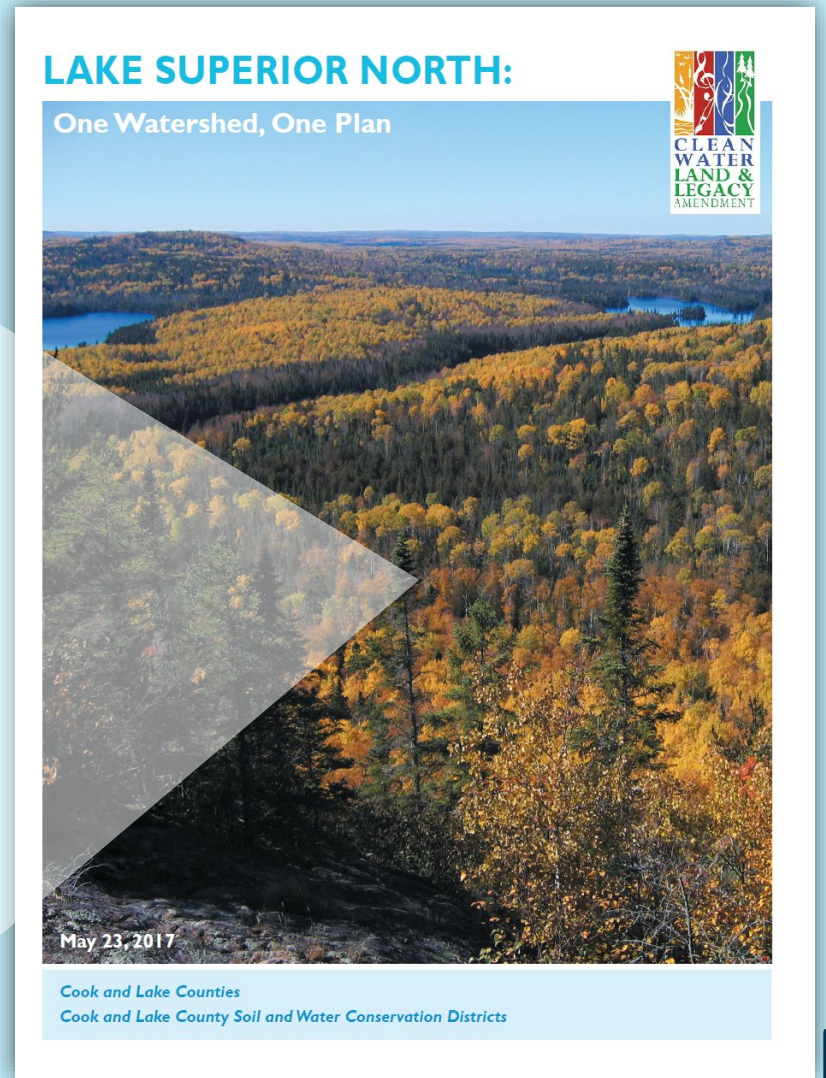
wq-ws4-51a

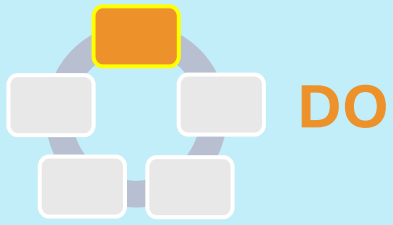




Issue: Stream Connectivity

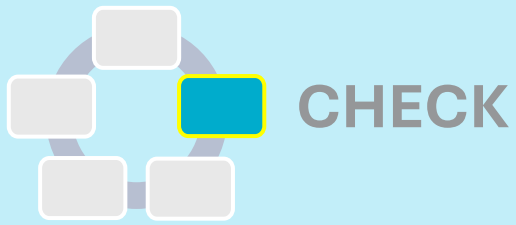
Goal SC 1.2: Based on the stream network inventory results, initiate implementation of projects that **remove anthropogenic barriers**, with the goal of removing ten barriers within ten years.





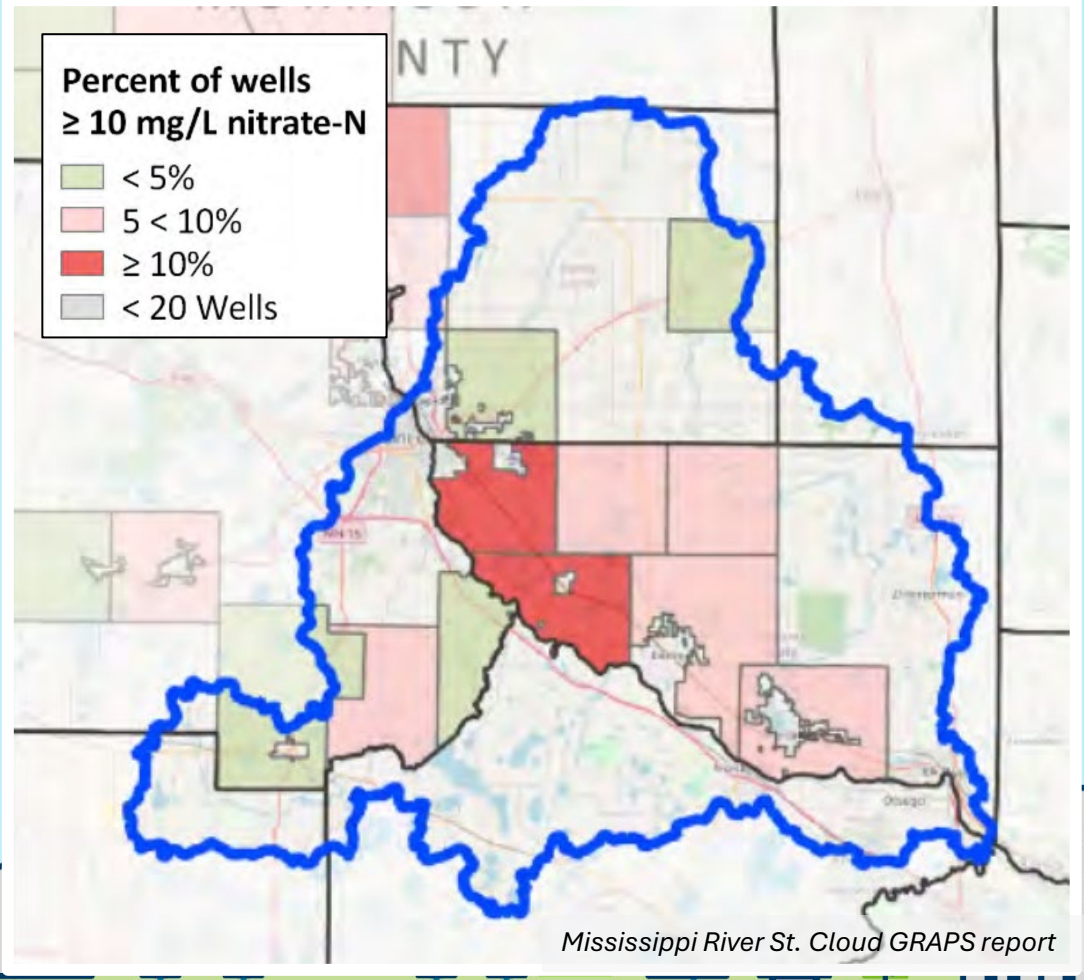
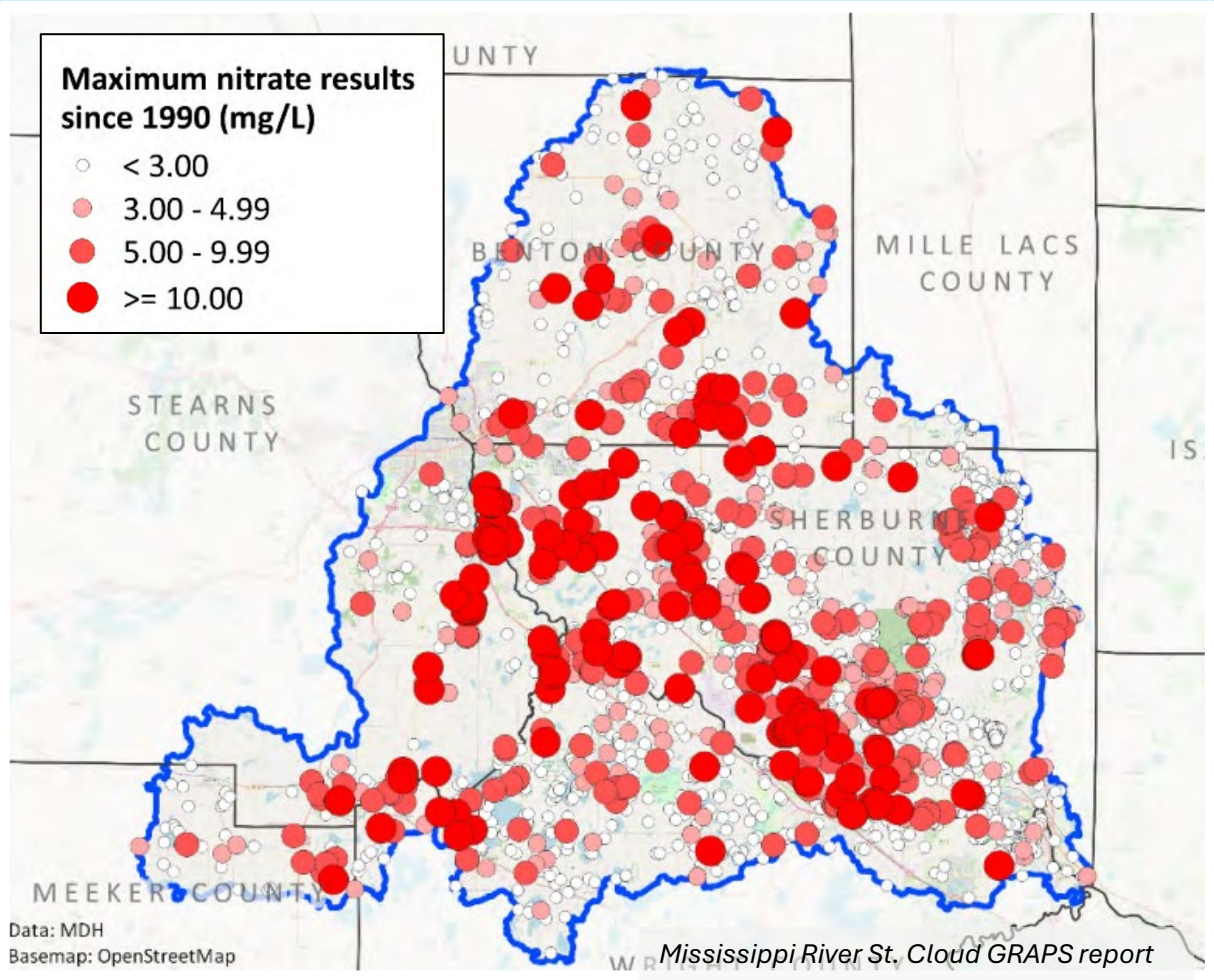
**Drinking Water:
Mississippi River
St. Cloud**

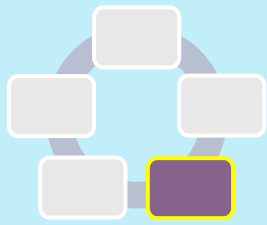




MDH well testing

MDA township testing (final results)

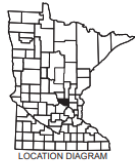




UNDERSTAND

Geologic Atlas of Sherburne County, Minnesota

County Atlas Series C-32
Part B, Hydrogeology



Report

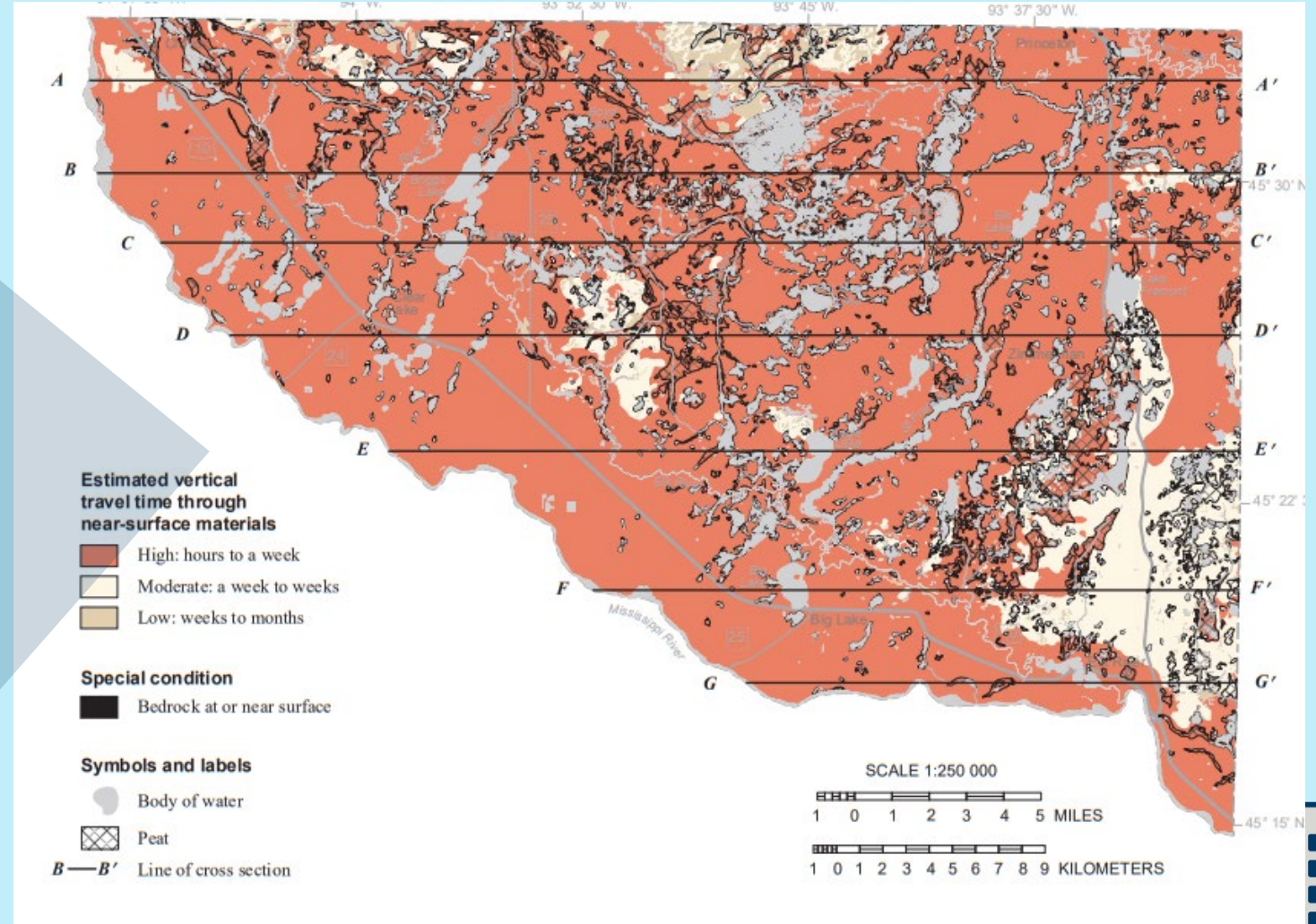
To accompany these atlas components:
[Plate 6, Water Chemistry](#)
[Plate 7, Hydrogeologic Cross Sections](#)

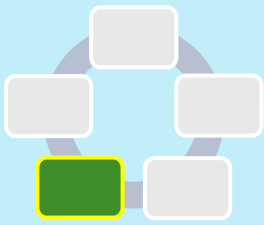
mn DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES

St. Paul
2017

mndnr.gov/groundwatermapping

Pollution sensitivity of near-surface materials





STRATEGIZE

Mississippi River – St. Cloud Watershed (MRSCW)

Groundwater Restoration and Protection Strategies Report



September 2023
GRAPS Report 24



Mississippi River – St. Cloud Watershed Strategies and Actions to Restore and Protect Groundwater

Recommended Groundwater Actions

Promote implementation of nutrient management practices to improve farm profitability and reduce nitrogen loss. Practices include:

- Improve nitrogen efficiency by practicing the 4 R's of nitrogen stewardship (right source, right rate, right timing, and right place)
- Adopt and use of the UMN 'Best Management Practices for Nitrogen use in Minnesota
- Properly credit nitrogen sources (soil/manure tests, past crops, & mineralization)
- - Implement comprehensive nutrient management plans to improve nitrogen crediting, equipment calibration, and record keeping
- Spoon feed nitrogen to sync with plant growth through side dressing and split fertilizer application

Tip(s) for Targeting & Helpful Maps

Focus on areas with high pollution sensitivity and highly vulnerable DWSMAs.

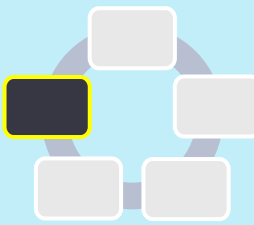
Pollution Sensitivity Map (Figure 5)

Pollution Sensitivity Wells (Figure 7)

Primary Aquifers by Section (Figure 4)

DWSMA Map (Figure 10)








PLAN



Groundwater Issue 2: Groundwater Quality	
Issue Statement	Groundwater quality is impacted by naturally occurring processes and land use practices that degrade drinking water and surface water connections.
Desired Future Condition	Land use practices are managed sustainably to minimize adverse impacts to groundwater quality and allow safe drinking water for all people in the Watershed.

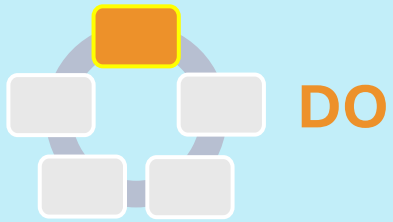
TARGETING CRITERIA
The following map layers were used to target specific areas in the Watershed to address groundwater quality concerns.

-  Pollution sensitivity
-  DWSMA_s
-  Township Nitrate Results > 5mg/L

CWR-18	Establish and implement ongoing program to monitor groundwater quality in private wells	Clearwater River, Townships with >5% wells exceeding drinking water standards, DWSMA _s

Soil Health Practices (AC)															
CWR-01	Act.	Total Soil Health Practice (AC) Efforts conservation tillage, cover crops, nutrient management practices, and pasture management													
	Loc.	Priority Implementation Areas	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							
	Out.	14,700 Acres Reduction: Sediment 400 Tons per Year, Total Phosphorus 1,400 Pounds per Year													
									Stearns SWCD, Wright SWCD Ag Retailers, Corn Growers, NRCS, MDH, U of M Extension, CRWD, MDA, TSP, Meeker SWCD	!!	!!	!!!	!!!!	!!	\$632,950

Local Implementation: Relationships, Awareness, Action



- **Local Advisory Teams**
(groundwater protection rule)
- **Outreach**
(‘lunch-and-learns’, podcasts, farm visits)
- **Nitrate reduction activities**
(ag practices, irrigation management)
- **Private well testing**
(update and expand 2014 twp testing)



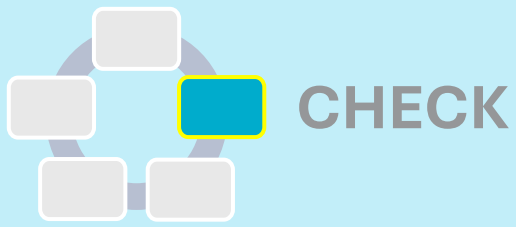
Sherburne SWCD



Lake Restoration: Upper Prior Lake



Maggie Karschnia



Monitoring & Assessment (Listed in 2002)

2002 Impaired Waters List – New Listings

1	Reach ¹⁴	Yr ¹²	New ⁹	Unit ID ¹⁰	Seg ¹³	Lake #	Affected use	Pollutant or stressor ³	Target date for completion ⁷
212	McMahon	02	New			70-0050-00	Swimming	Excess nutrients	2008//2012
213	Spring	02	New			70-0054-00	Swimming	Excess nutrients	2004//2008
214	Fish	02	New			70-0069-00	Swimming	Excess nutrients	2007//2011
215	Upper Prior	02	New			70-0072-00	Swimming	Excess nutrients	2004//2008
216	Pike	02	New			70-0076-00	Swimming	Excess nutrients	2007//2011



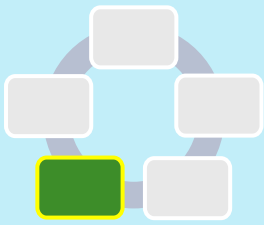
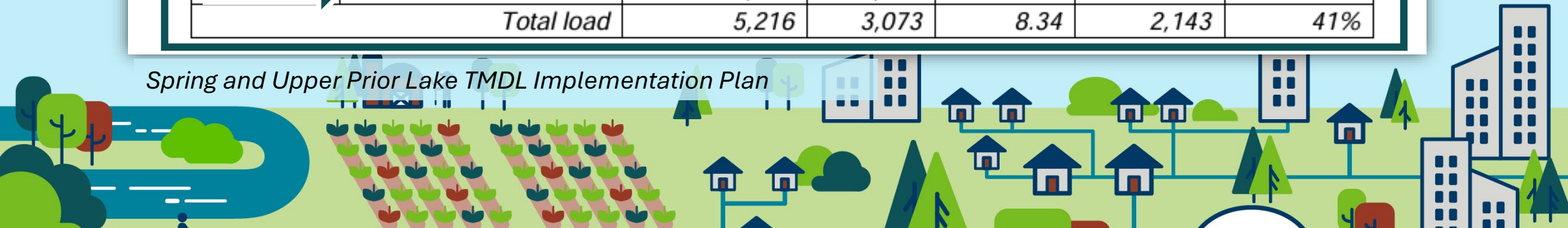
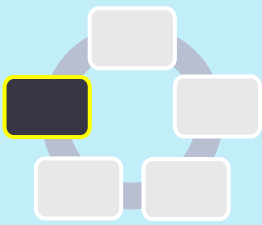


Table 6. Upper Prior Lake TMDL Allocations and Reductions Needed

Allocation type	Phosphorus source	Existing load (lb/yr)	Allocation		Reduction (lb/yr)	Reduction (%)
			(lb/yr)	(lb/day)		
WLA	MnDOT	36.4	36.4	0.1	0	0%
	City of Prior Lake	382.6	382.6	1.0	0	0%
	Scott County					
	Construction stormwater					
Industrial stormwater						
LA	Upstream lake	2,179	611	1.7	1,568	72%
	Septic	4	0	0	4	100%
	Atmospheric	16	16	0.04	0	0%
	Internal	2,598	2,027	5.5	571	22%
<i>Total load</i>		<i>5,216</i>	<i>3,073</i>	<i>8.34</i>	<i>2,143</i>	<i>41%</i>

Spring and Upper Prior Lake TMDL Implementation Plan





PLAN

1. Lakes

Lakes will follow the following prioritization criteria (Figure 6):

Tier 1 Lakes: Those lakes within the District that receive the most public use and have historically received the greatest amount of prior investment.

- Lower Prior Lake
- Upper Prior Lake
- Spring Lake
- Fish Lake

Tier 2 Lakes: Those lakes within the District that have a TMDL and/or that have received significant recent or planned investment into the resource.

- Pike Lake
- Arctic Lake
- Sutton Lake
- Buck Lake

Tier 3 Lakes: Those lakes that have no known water quality impairment and/or need more information to make management decisions.

- Haas Lake
- Crystal Lake
- Rice Lake
- Cates Lake
- Jeffers Pond
- Swamp Lake

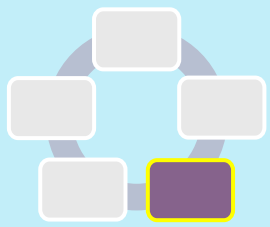


Water Resources Management Plan



 **PRIOR LAKE-SPRING LAKE
WATERSHED DISTRICT**






UNDERSTAND

Problem Investigation: Feasibility Studies

Upper Prior Lake

Alum Treatment Feasibility Study



Prepared for the Prior Lake Spring Lake Watershed District
by Emmons & Olivier Resources, Inc.
Oakdale, MN

EOR water ecology community

September, 6th, 2019

09.06.2019 **EOR** water ecology community

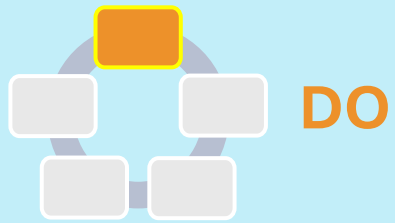


2023 Integrated Pest Management Plan (IPM Plan) FOR COMMON CARP

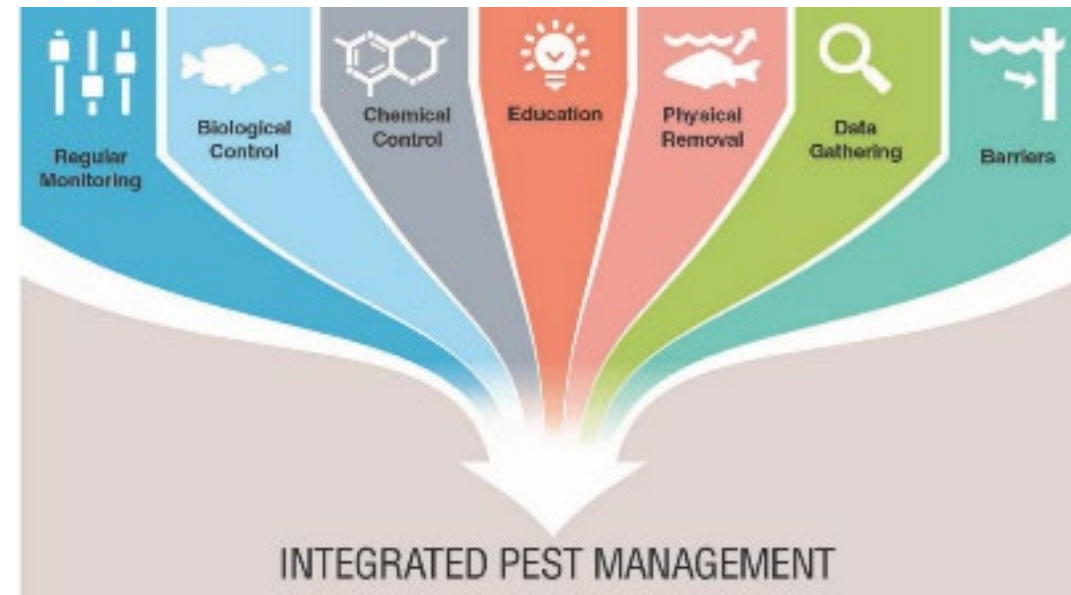
Prepared By:
Tony Havranek, Director of Fisheries, WSB
Mary Newman, Sr Environmental Scientist, WSB
Jeff Anderson, Water Resources Coordinator, PLSLWD
Shauna Capron, Water Resources Technician, PLSLWD
Elizabeth Fröden, Water Resources Specialist, PLSLWD

wsb

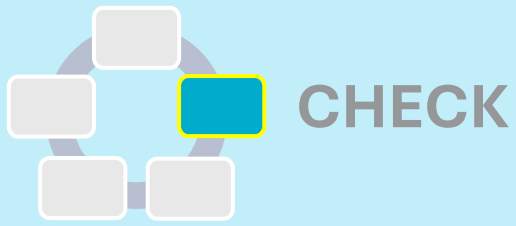




Implementation: Iron-enhanced sand filter, stormwater management, alum treatment, carp removal



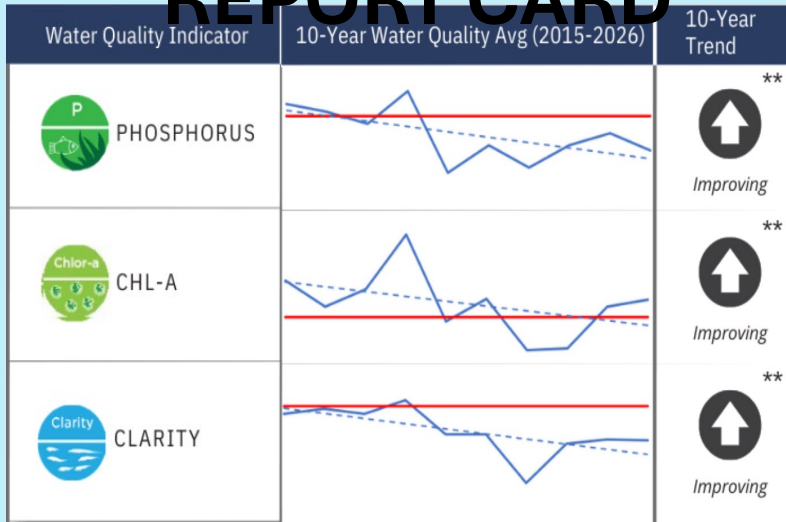
Photos: Prior Lake-Spring Lake Watershed District



Monitoring – Delisting! (2026)

UPPER PRIOR LAKE 2025 WATER QUALITY REPORT CARD

	A	B	I	K	M	N	O
1	Delist year	Water body name	County	Watershed name	Affected designated use	Pollutant or stressor	Reason for delisting
240	2022	Creeky	St. Louis	St. Louis River	Aquatic Life	Fish assessments	Delisting: Applicable WQS attained, due to restoration activities
247	2022	Unnamed ditch	Chisago	Lower St. Croix River	Aquatic Life	Ammonia, un-ionized	Delisting: Applicable WQS attained, due to restoration activities
248	2018	Unnamed ditch (Branch A Judicial Ditch 21)	Marshall	Thief River	Aquatic Recreation	Escherichia coli (E. coli)	State determines water quality standard is being met
249	2026	Upper Prior	Scott	Lower Minnesota River	Aquatic Recreation	Nutrients	Delisting: Applicable WQS attained, due to restoration activities
250	2026	Warroad River, East Branch	Roseau	Lake of the Woods	Aquatic Life	macroinvertebrates	Delisting: Applicable WQS attained; due to unknown reasons
251	2022	Water Hen Creek	St. Louis	St. Louis River	Aquatic Life	macroinvertebrates	Delisting: Applicable WQS attained; due to unknown reasons

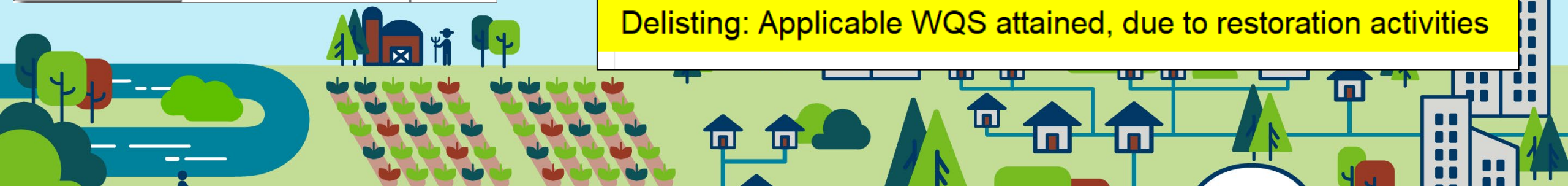


Water body name
Judicial Ditch 21)

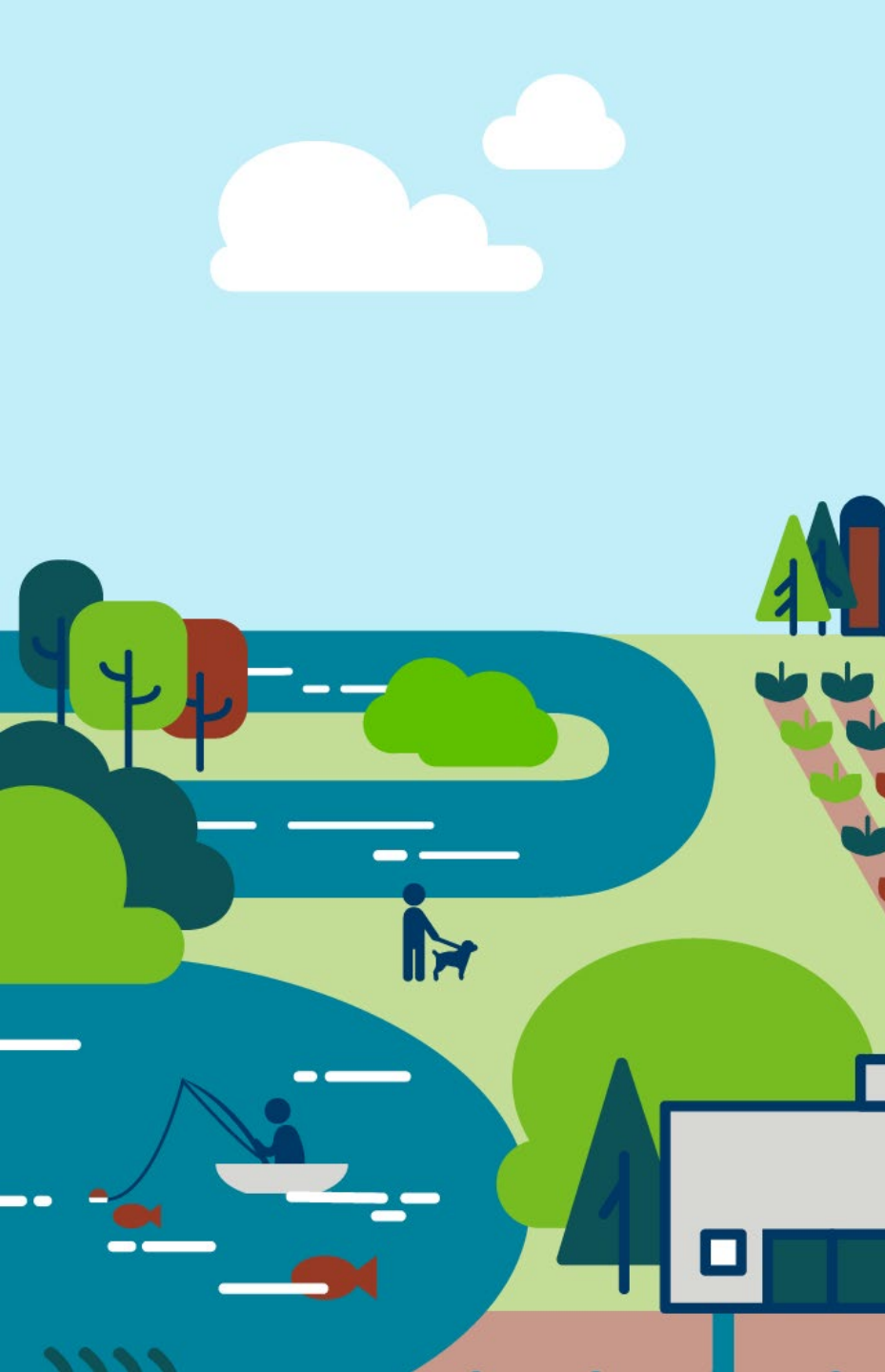
Upper Prior

Reason for delisting
State determines water quality standard is being met

Delisting: Applicable WQS attained, due to restoration activities

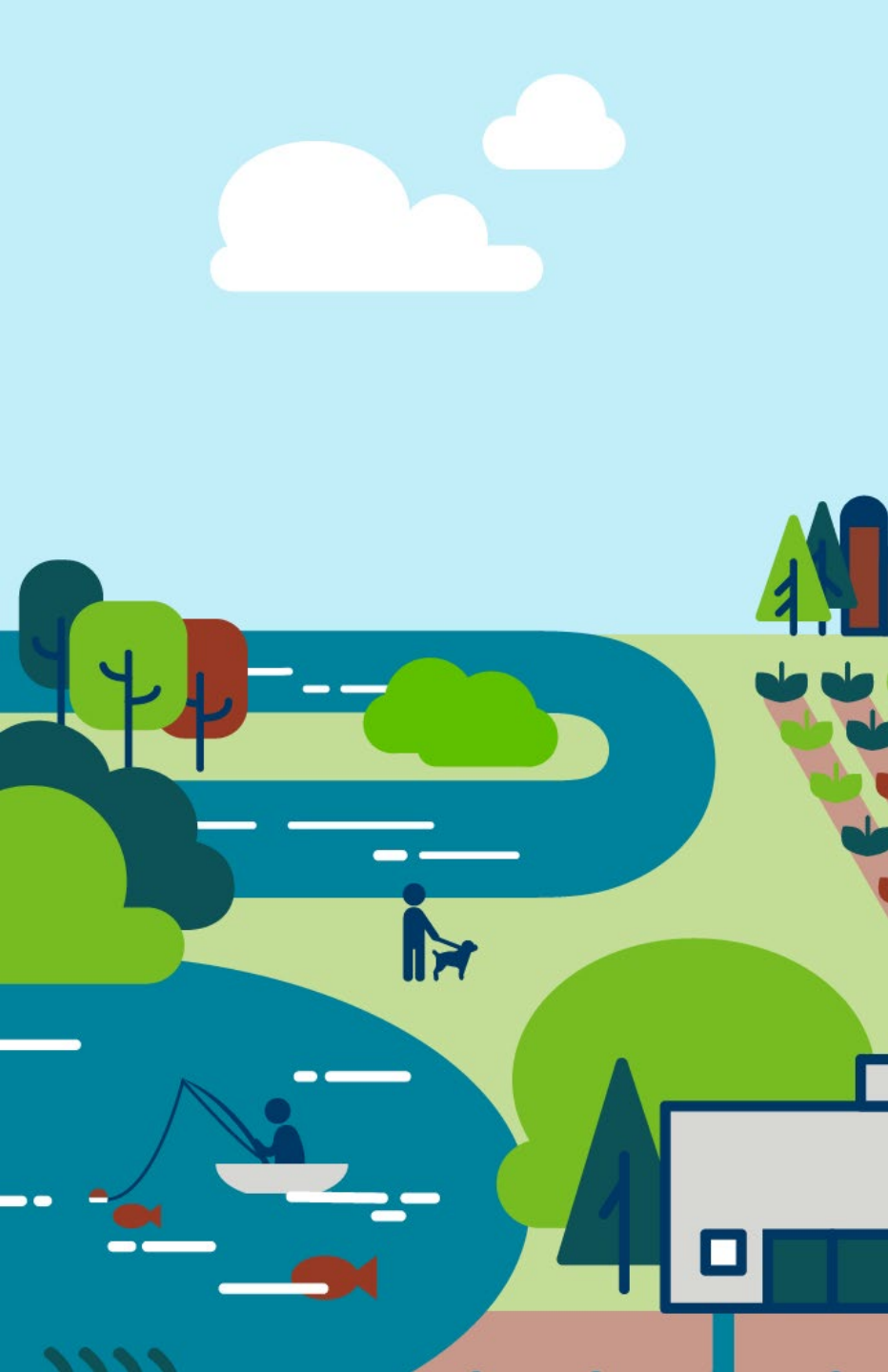


ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT





FY28-29 Budget



Proposals

- 63 proposals across agencies and external proposers, Water Management Framework steps
- Each evaluated using new rubric
 - Water quality impact
 - Measurable outcomes, progress & feasibility
 - Alignment with Strategic Plan
 - Financial leverage and sustainability
 - Engagement and community value
 - Communications
- BOC has proposed initial indications for:
 - Program priority level
 - Funding direction



Proposals (continued)

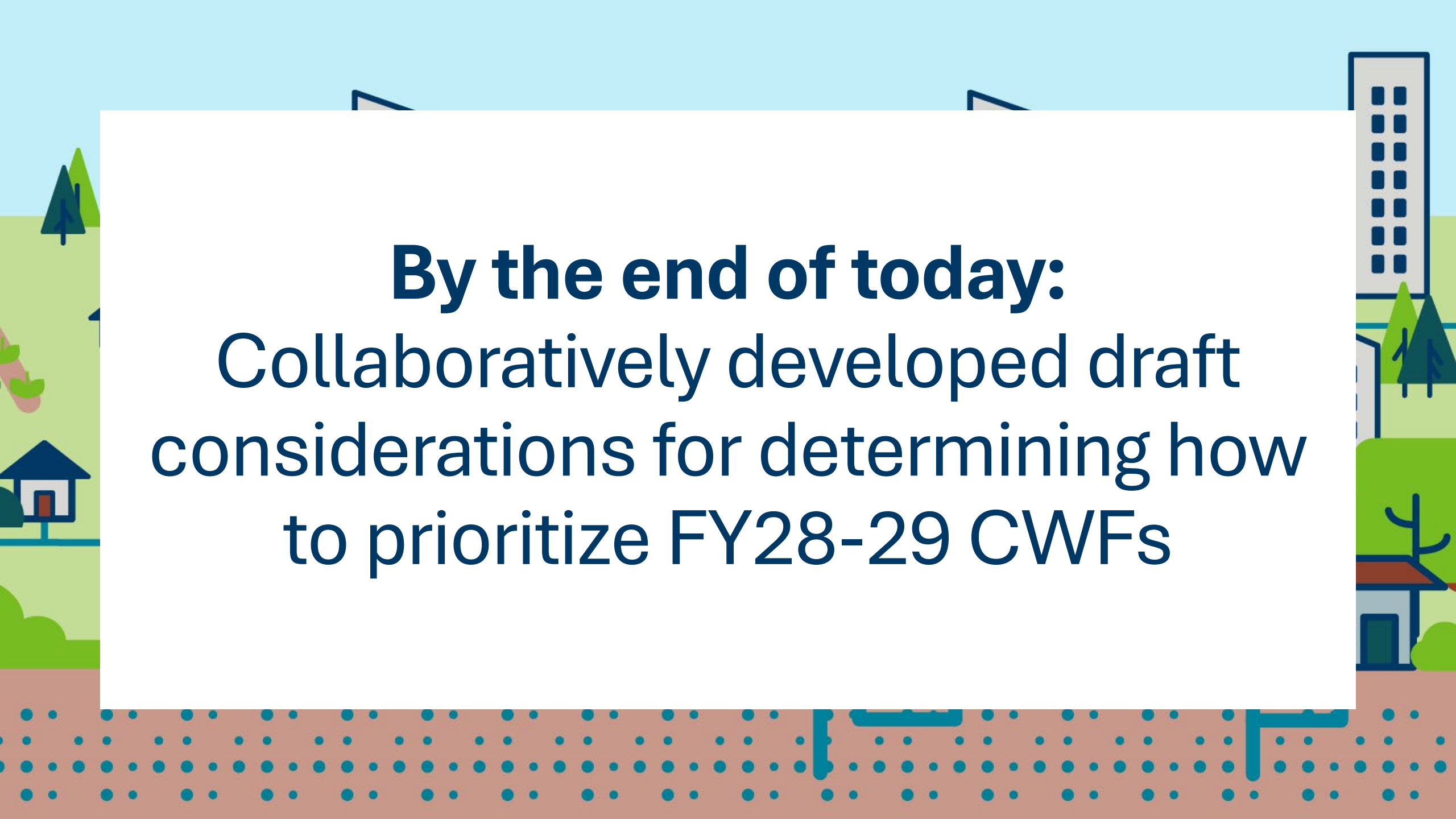
- Full list of programs with BOC indications in the packet, ordered by mean average
 - Nearly all High priority, no Lows
 - Funding direction
 - Add/incorporate new programs: 5
 - Increase: 23
 - Split increase vs Hold: 2
 - Hold steady: 31
 - Decrease: 2
- “Hold steady” could still include increases for inflation, expenses

FY28-29 Forecast

- \$342M based on data from MMB
- ~\$39M more than FY26-27
- Inflation of 5-10% to hold steady existing programs could equal ~\$15-30M alone
 - 23 programs seeking increases
 - New programs seeking funding

More demand than available funding

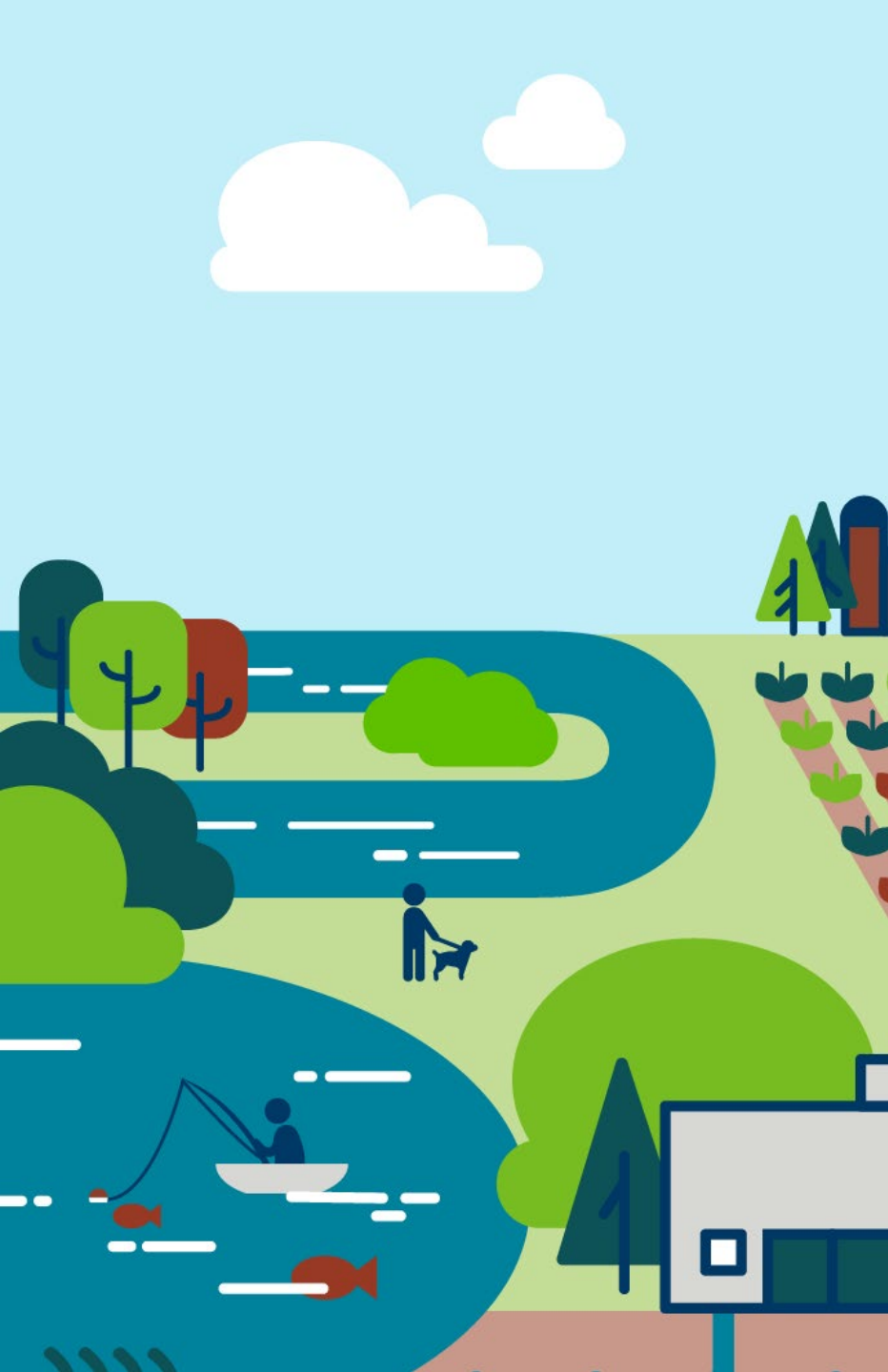




By the end of today:
Collaboratively developed draft
considerations for determining how
to prioritize FY28-29 CWFs

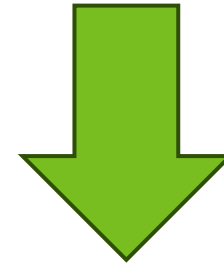


Public input



Public input didn't start today

- FY26-27 input
- Public survey in the fall
- Upper Mississippi River Basin field tour

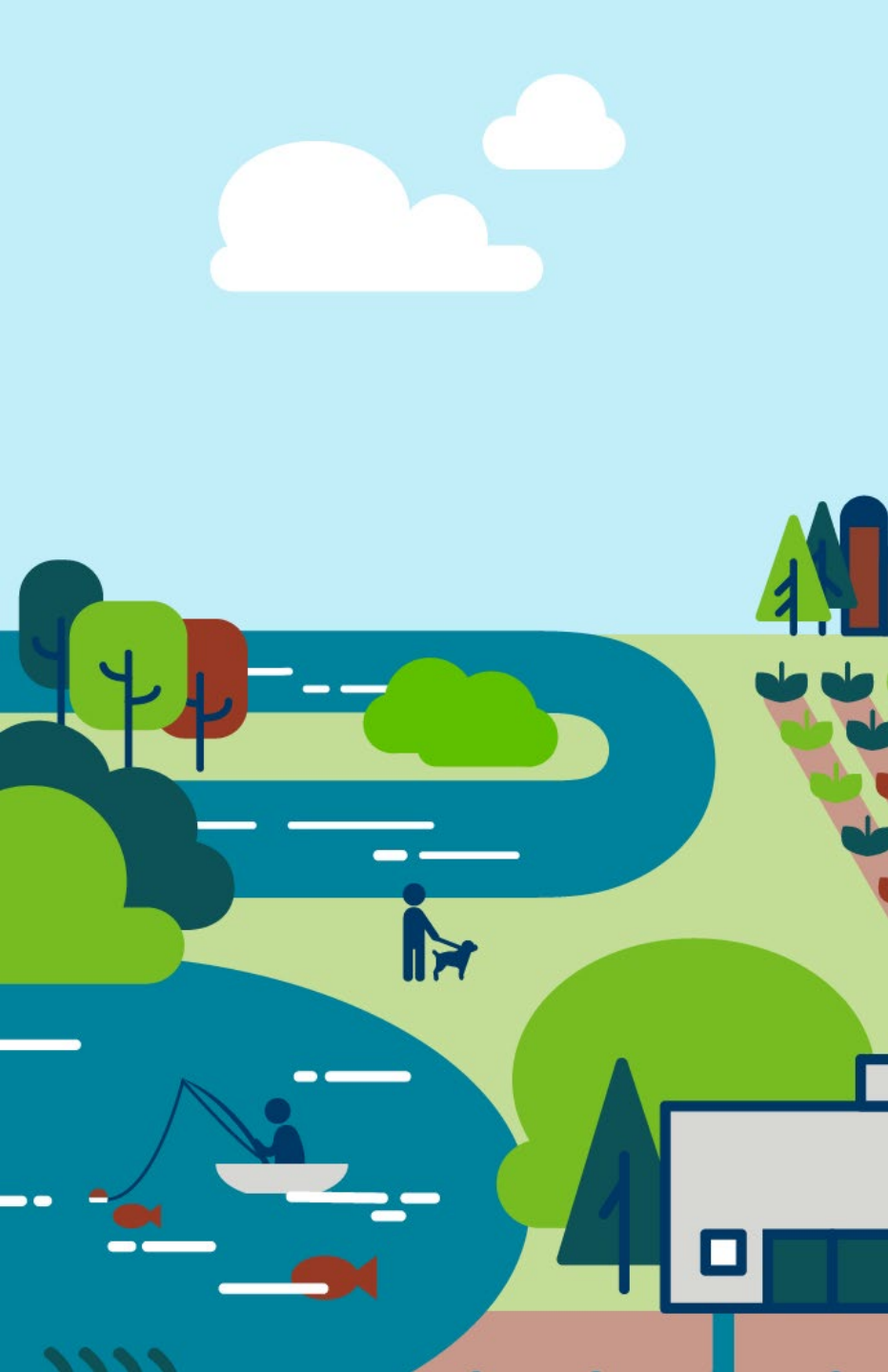


- Public Participation Plan
- Rubric, updated proposal form, and revised process (moving input earlier)
- Questions asked by members



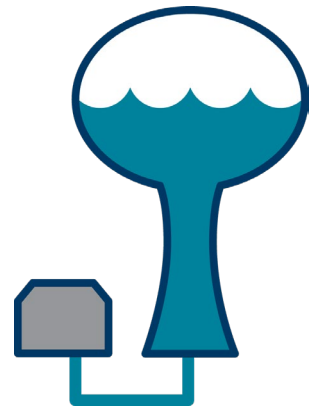
Themes from survey in the fall

- There is a strong affinity and love for Minnesota's waters, and people place a high value on clean water.
- We've made a lot of progress as a result of the Clean Water Fund.
- People are very proud of what we've done so far.
- There are some things that could be given more attention.
- We still have a ways to go.
- SE and SW MN feel we've made less progress.



What they told us

- Folks largely agree:
 - We better understand current conditions
 - We better understand challenges
 - We are seeing improvements to lakes and streams
 - People are more aware of challenges and needs
- Improvement of drinking water and groundwater was identified as needing more attention



What would they point to as a success?



What would they point to as a success?

- Collaboration
- Education and engagement
- Funding
- Staff capacity
- Science-based approach
- Water quality improvements

Systematic approach, AND...

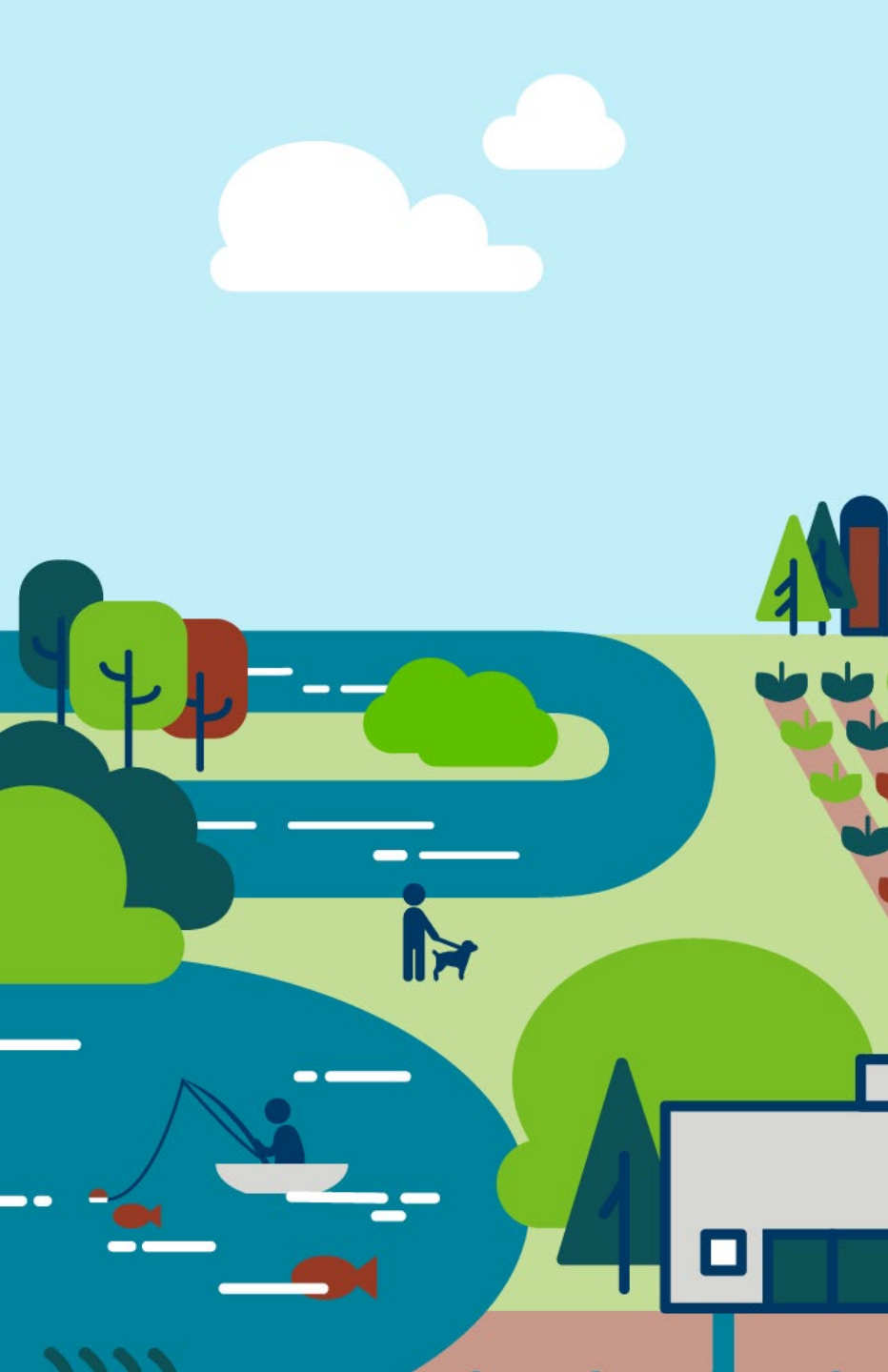


What are we celebrating in 2034?

- Continued commitment, amendment renewal
- Water quality outcomes
- Resilience and responsiveness
- Changes on the landscape
- Shifted norms
- Collaboration and partnership
- Responsible use of water
- Durability of investments
- Holistic approaches
- Accountability
- Local leadership

“I hope we...”

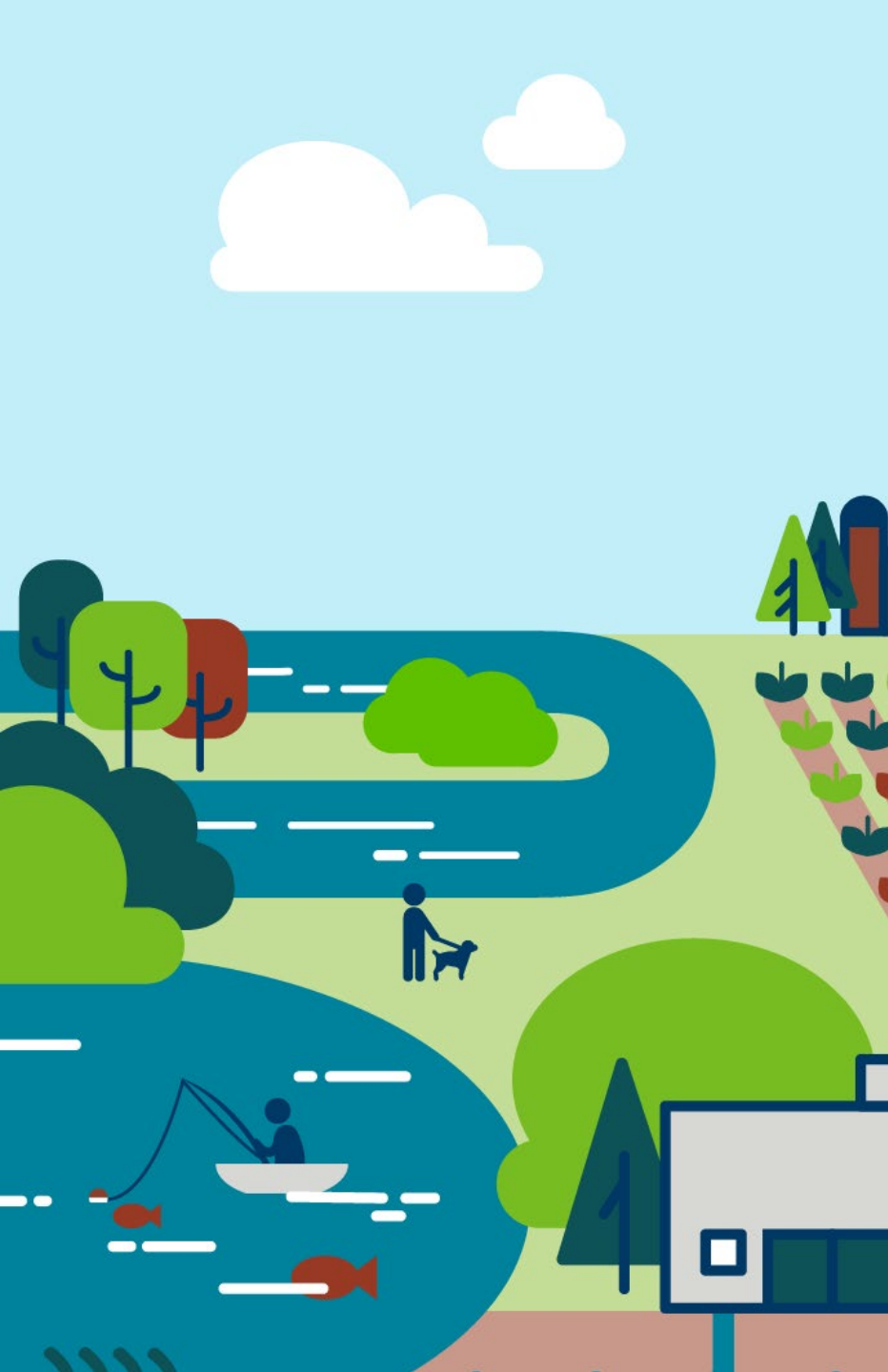




Public input for today

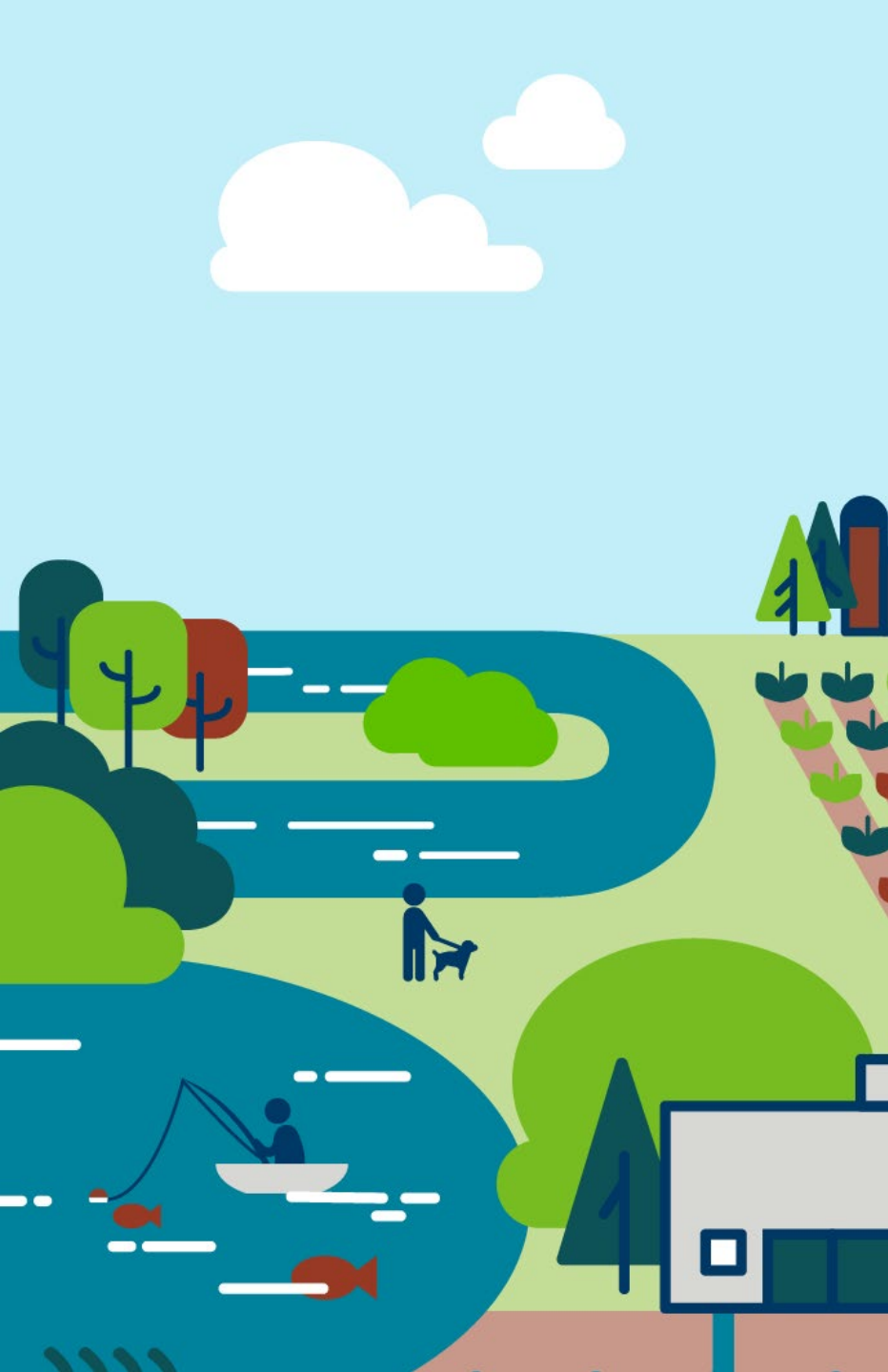
- 202 individual comments – a record for our budget process!
- A good number provided overarching comments and considerations for priorities
- Many individual programs mentioned, including:

- AgBMP Loans
- Aquifer Monitoring
- Chloride Reduction
- CECs
- Conservation Equipment Assistance
- County Geologic Atlas
- Easements
- Forever Green
- Future of Drinking Water
- GRAPS
- MAWQCP
- Monitoring for Pesticides
- Nitrate in Groundwater
- Pesticide Testing in Private Wells
- Private Well Initiative
- Soil Health
- SE MN Groundwater and Soil Health
- Source Water Protection
- Stormwater Research
- Tillage and Erosion
- Voyageurs National Park
- WBIF
- Water Efficiency Grants*
- Water Sustainability Support*



High-level takeaways (1/2)

- Progress is being made, the framework is working
- Scale of the challenge is huge, more work is needed
- Water and water work is connected to everything, need to be comprehensive
- How to focus investments?
- 2034 looming large
- Focus on measurable results
- Sustain and increase investments
 - In what's working
 - Where there is leverage
 - Where outcomes are proven, durable, or at the system level
 - Where multiple benefits can be achieved



High-level takeaways (2/2)

- Fill gaps in the system – continue to, or do now
 - Science
 - Capacity
 - Funding
- Support local leadership and innovation
- Technical and financial assistance are valuable
- Things cost more, more demand than available funds
- Federal funding uncertainty and economic hardship making CWFs more important than ever
- Opportunities exist to increase efficiencies

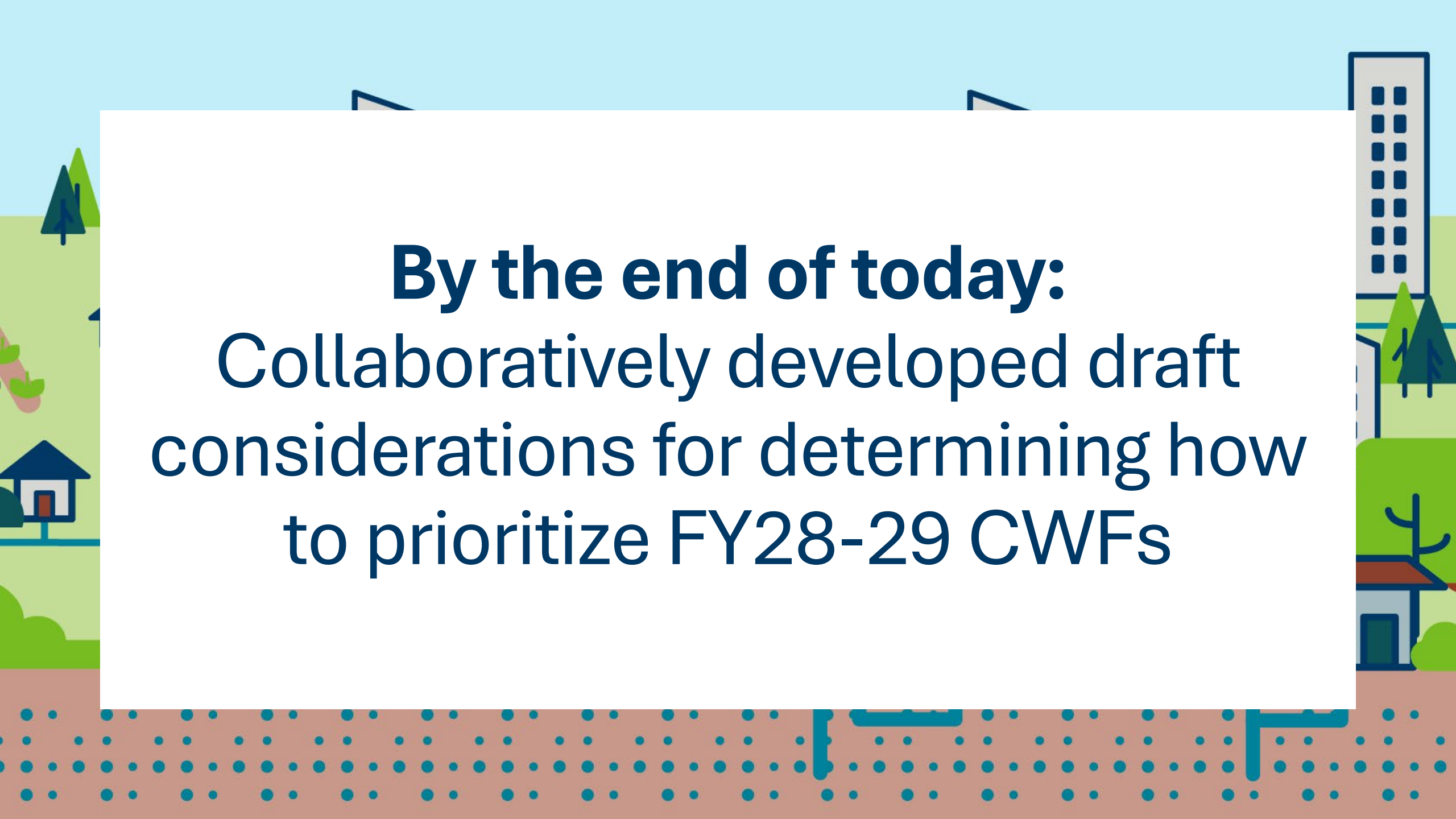


Making sense of it all

Structure for the rest of the day

- First...a break!
- Then, discussions
 - Round 1: Introductions
 - Round 2: What?
 - Round 3: So what?
 - Round 4: Now what?
- Recap at the end with next steps





By the end of today:
Collaboratively developed draft
considerations for determining how
to prioritize FY28-29 CWFs



The Nature Conservancy in Minnesota,
North Dakota, South Dakota
1101 West River Parkway, Suite 200
Minneapolis, MN 55415-1291

tel (612) 331.0700
fax (612) 331.0770
nature.org

June 4, 2026

John Barten
Chair, Clean Water Council
520 Lafayette Road N
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Jen Kader
Administrator, Clean Water Council
520 Lafayette Road N
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Re: Clean Water Council Recommendations

Chair Barten, Administrator Kader, and council members:

Minnesotans voted for the Clean Water Land and Legacy Amendment with the expectation that our lakes, rivers, and drinking water would be protected and restored at the end of 25 years - fishable, swimmable, drinkable for all Minnesotans. As the Clean Water Fund (CWF) enters its final quarter of funding with only four more biennia of funding left before expiration and less for renewal, it's imperative the Clean Water Council (Council) and agencies receiving CWF investments focus on outcomes, results and system change that endures long past the legacy funds.

CWF investments have enabled Minnesota to establish a nation leading watershed, groundwater and drinking water monitoring and planning infrastructure. The monitoring and planning completed to-date should inform and guide implementation programs. CWF supported programs should adjust to monitoring results and demonstrate effectiveness to protect and restore water.

To elevate awareness of and attention to CWF grant program impact, **TNC recommends that the Council add requirements for standardized reporting for watershed-based implementation funding across Minnesota.** Doing so would improve accountability, legislative reporting, strengthen funding justification, enable cross-watershed comparisons, and document best management practices. Currently, reporting is conducted at an individual watershed level with limited consistency, making it difficult to evaluate and communicate statewide impacts.

As the Council considers recommendations for the coming biennium, **TNC recommends establishing a transparent process that clearly explains how proposals will be ranked and scored using publicly available criteria.** Future CWF proposals should be designed to align with these criteria to be competitive for Council funding. **TNC further recommends that the Council adopt and prioritize the following evaluation criteria:**

- Show a high potential for early restoration and delisting or prevention of impaired listing of waters based upon scientific data. (source: CWF statutory requirement)

- Show a high potential for long-term water quality and conservation benefits. (source: CWF statutory requirement)
- Programs that protect and restore waters of statewide significance for recreation, drinking water, economic interest, cultural or community significance. (source: Non-Point Funding Prioritization Program)
- Proven outcomes and cost-effective at achieving outcomes. (source: Non-Point Funding Prioritization Program)
- Contribute to system change sustainable past 2034.
- Significantly leverage policy and investments by others to achieve water quality goals.

TNC supports **strategic capacity-building investments across CWF programs** to ensure continued effectiveness, accountability, and long-term impact. Specially, **TNC recommends approximately \$1.5 million to strengthen Council staffing capacity** in response to the growing complexity and scope of its work, including enhanced evaluation, performance measurement, public engagement, and cross-agency coordination. Adequate staffing is essential to maintain transparency, efficiency, and the Council's ability to clearly communicate the benefits of CWF investments to policymakers, partners, and the public.

At the same time, **TNC emphasizes the importance of complementary capacity investments within agricultural programs**, including funding for new Minnesota Department of Agriculture positions focused on advancing manure BMPs, nutrient management, and producer support. To maximize impact, these roles should demonstrate the ability to efficiently scale technical assistance, leverage group-based and digital delivery approaches, coordinate across partners, and implement cost-effective strategies that reduce cost per acre and per pound of nutrient reduced. Positions should also prioritize lasting practice changes, alignment with federal and private-sector resources, and the development of self-sustaining adoption pathways that extend beyond the life of grant funding. Together, these investments will strengthen system-wide capacity, improve outcomes, and sustain the long-term success of CWF initiatives.

In addition to these more generalized comments, TNC is pleased to provide proposal input as the Council develops a final set of CWF investment recommendations to the Minnesota Legislature. We submit the following recommendations, which are aligned with clean water priorities for Minnesota and listed in our preferred funding order, for your consideration:

1. **Increased Investment (~\$8M) in Source Water Protection Programs:** TNC recommends increased investment in planning, implementation, and monitoring to protect public drinking water sources. Protecting drinking water sources remains a core priority for public health and requires sustained funding for monitoring, source protection, and local implementation.

2. **Increased Investment in CWF Easement Programs:** TNC recommends increased investment in both the **Critical Shoreline (~\$6M)**, **Wetland Restoration (\$6M)**, and **Floodplain (~\$4M) Easements** throughout Minnesota.
3. **Increased Investment (~\$6M) in DNR Non-point Source Restoration and Implementation:** TNC considers this a model implementation program that prioritizes projects across the state, not just within local watersheds. Leveraging technical expertise to implement high impact projects that deliver durable multiple benefits including water quality, hydrology, and aquatic habitat.
4. **Increased Investment (~\$2M) in Native Mussel Programs:** Native freshwater mussels are critical indicators of water quality and overall ecosystem health, yet many species are in decline due to cumulative impacts on habitat, hydrology, and water quality. TNC recommends increased investment in these programs within the CWF to strengthen monitoring, habitat restoration, and propagation and reintroduction efforts. Expanding support would improve integration with watershed implementation activities and help ensure that CWF investments translate into measurable biological outcomes, advancing Minnesota's long-term goal of restoring and protecting its aquatic ecosystems.
5. **Increase Investment (~\$2M) in Chloride Reduction Program:** TNC recommends increased investment in assistance, grants, training, and outreach to reduce chloride pollution at the source and protect surface and groundwater from further impairment due to increasing chloride levels throughout Minnesota.
6. **Increased Investment (~\$5M) in Legacy Partners Grant Programs:** TNC recommends increased investment in Legacy Grants for Tribal partners within the CWF to strengthen indigenous partnership-based approaches to water quality protection and restoration. Tribal governments contribute critical expertise, long-term stewardship perspectives, and implementation capacity across priority watersheds. Expanding these programs would enhance coordination among state, Tribal, and local partners and help ensure that CWF investments deliver measurable, lasting improvements in water quality statewide.
7. **Increased Investment (~\$3M) in Stormwater Research Programs:** Given the growing intensity of precipitation events, increasing MS4 regulatory requirements, and the central role of stormwater runoff in driving [impairments in Minnesota's lakes and streams](#), TNC recommends increased investment in stormwater research programs within the CWF. While recent funding cycles have appropriately expanded support for drinking water and emerging contaminants, stormwater remains a comparatively small share of CWF appropriations despite being a major contributor to nutrient and sediment loading. Results of stormwater research programs are demonstrated and thus offer proven solutions to mounting impairment (i.e., poor health/high risk watershed contamination from nutrients, bacteria, metals, and hydrocarbons) challenges. Strengthening CWF investments for stormwater research will enhance development and transfer of proven stormwater practices and management techniques throughout Minnesota.

8. Increase Investment (~\$3.5M) in Conservation Drainage Management and Assistance:

Surface and subsurface drainage deliver most of the water from field to streams in Minnesota. The engineered system is a conduit of excess nutrients; however, with increasingly cost-effective modifications, nutrients and peak flow can be reduced when properly designed. TNC recommends the continued modification of the existing drainage infrastructure for improved environmental performance while maintaining agricultural productivity.

Minnesota will not reach its water quality goals without increasing and sustaining regenerative agriculture practices at scale, and it will not increase regenerative agriculture practices without sufficient technical assistance. TNC joins other groups in recommending that CWF investments continue to support emerging, innovative, and holistic technical assistance programs and practices as well as innovative approaches to scale for the long-term. Innovative and sustainable practices with farmers and private sector actors can be expanded with modest changes to the following programs receiving CWF investment:

- ***Forever Green Initiative:*** TNC encourages deployment of continuous living cover crops to improve water quality, soil health, and farm profitability. TNC recommends continued investment to enable scalable outcomes aimed at expanding diversified crop markets and enhancing water quality across Minnesota.
- ***Tillage and Erosion Survey Project*** – TNC recommends that this program be modified to evaluate the efficacy of multiple soil health and technical assistance programs across Minnesota with improved coordination and data sharing.
- ***Enhancing Landowner Adoption of Soil Health Practices for Drinking and Groundwater Protection*** – Given the leverage of federal funding for this program, TNC recommends that this program be adjusted to include more performance standards for each participating entity.
- ***Southeast Groundwater Protection and Soil Health Initiative*** – TNC encourages programs that enable groundwater protection and enhanced soil health initiatives. As such, TNC recommends that this program and its success be used to set program standards for other soil health programs.
- ***MN Ag Water Quality Certification Program*** – TNC recommends that the program provide more information on water quality outcomes at the watershed scale and clearly describe the improvements linked to the program. Partnerships with private conservation agronomists should be expanded to increase technical assistance within the private sector of trusted advisors.
- ***Conservation Equipment Assistance*** – TNC recommends continued investment in this program as it delivers high return on investment for cost per acre of soil health practice implemented.

Thank you for your continued leadership and stewardship of the CWC and CWF and the lasting investments it has made in protecting and restoring Minnesota's waters. The Fund has enabled meaningful progress across the state, supporting strong partnerships and advancing measurable outcomes for water quality and public health. At the same time, emerging challenges, evolving priorities, and remaining gaps in implementation underscore that this work is not yet complete. Continued and strategic investment will be



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essential to sustain momentum, address unmet needs, and ensure that the benefits of clean water are realized for all Minnesotans now and into the future.

Thank you again for considering our input. Please let us know if you would like more information on why TNC feels strongly that these criteria warrant priority and listed programs require increased and/or continued funding for the advancement of clean water priorities for Minnesota. We look forward to continuing to collaborate with the Council on your recommendation development process and beyond.

Sincerely,

/s/ Heather Stirratt

Heather Stirratt, Director of Water and Agriculture

The Nature Conservancy, MN-ND-SD

FRESHWATER

June 8, 2026

Jen Kader, Council Administrator
John Barten, Council Chair
Rich Biske, Council Vice Chair
Clean Water Council
520 Lafayette Road North
Saint Paul, MN 55115

Re: Clean Water Council FY28-29 funding proposal evaluations

Dear Council Administrator Kader, Chair Barten, Vice Chair Biske, and Clean Water Council members,

We have been following the Clean Water Council's review of funding proposals for the next biennium, and we appreciate the strategic and transparent process used to consider these important decisions.

The Council's [scoring rubric](#) is an excellent tool for evaluating proposals, and we hope that water quantity is given ample consideration as a co-benefit to water quality impacts. As you move toward FY28-29 funding recommendations, we have included several additional criteria below to help determine which proposals might be prioritized for increased funding.

- 1) Prioritize proposals that **fill gaps in clean water needs** that are not adequately addressed by other funding sources.
Examples: *MDH Private Well Initiative, MDH Future of Drinking Water, MPCA Chloride Reduction Program*
- 2) Prioritize proposals designed to **address future water challenges** using a regional and cross-sector approach.
Example: *Met Council Water Sustainability Support Program*
- 3) Prioritize proposals that **provide foundational scientific knowledge** that can guide implementation work or support sound water policy and permitting.
Examples: *DNR Aquifer Monitoring for Water Supply Planning, UMN/DNR County Geologic Atlas*
- 4) Prioritize proposals that help landowners **reduce agricultural pollution** on private lands.
Examples: *BWSR Working Lands and Floodplain Easements, MDA Forever Green Initiative, MDA Ag BMP Loan Program*

We look forward to the upcoming June 15 Council meeting, and to reviewing the preliminary budget recommendations later this summer.

Thank you for considering these comments, and for your work to protect and improve Minnesota waters.



Michelle Stockness, PE
Executive Director, Freshwater

2550 University Ave Suite 212N | St. Paul, MN 55114 | 651.313.5800 | freshwater.org

Freshwater is a nonprofit organization working to inspire and empower people to value and preserve water.

John Barten
Chair, Clean Water Council
520 Lafayette Road N
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Jen Kader
Administrator, Clean Water Council
520 Lafayette Road N
Saint Paul, MN 55155

RE: Clean Water Council's Funding Recommendations

June 5, 2026

Chair Barten, Administrator Kader, and council members:

We write to you as representatives of the conservation community in Minnesota united in our care for ensuring use of Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment funds, including Clean Water Funds, provides demonstrable results that Minnesotans can be proud of.

With the sunset of the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment approaching in 2034, the remaining opportunities the Council has to make recommendations to the legislature are consequential to ensure the best possible results in the few remaining budget-setting cycles before 2034 from these unique resources.

We encourage the Council to consider a recommendation package for 2028-2029 that emphasizes investments in projects and programs that have a track record of being, or can easily be, measurable with demonstrable outcomes.

While good results have come from the use of Clean Water Funds, the uncertainty of future availability of these funds should provide some urgency to ensure remaining years of funding are being used to the highest and best ability to provide and protect clean water in the state.

Thank you for your service on the Council and your efforts to support more clean water in Minnesota.

Sincerely,

American Woodcock Society

Conservation Minnesota

Fergus Falls Fish and Game Club

Fox Lake

Great River Greening

Lake Superior Steelhead Association

Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy

Minnesota Deer Hunters Association

Minnesota Land Trust

Minnesota Wildlife Federation

Northern Waters Land Trust

Pheasants Forever

Ruffed Grouse Society

The Nature Conservancy

From: John Paulson <John.Paulson@apexenggroup.com>
Sent on: Friday, June 5, 2026 1:14:52 PM
To: Kader, Jen (She/Her/Hers) (MPCA) <Jen.Kader@state.mn.us>
CC: Stout, Liz (she/her/hers) <elizabeth.stout@minneapolismn.gov>; Andrew Hogg <andrew.hogg@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; Jessica Vanderwerff Wilson <jwilson@EdinaMN.gov>; Brandy Goetz <Brandy.Goetz@apexenggroup.com>; randy.neprash <randy.neprash@outlook.com>
Subject: June 15 CWC Letter of Support and Meeting Request
Attachments: MCSC Letter of Support to CWC 060526.pdf (244.39 KB)

Follow up: Follow up
Follow up status: Completed
Completed on: Wednesday, June 10, 2026 4:11:00 AM

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Good morning, Jen,

The Minnesota Cities Stormwater Coalition (MCSC) appreciates the opportunity to provide input as the Clean Water Council begins its development and consideration of funding and policy priorities for the next biennium. The attached letter of support highlights some of the programs that are important to MCSC and the 130 members it represents. We support the important work of the CWC and the funding levels being recommended by the agencies responsible for the programs identified in the attached letter.

The MCSC also would like to participate in the upcoming meeting on June 15th. Both myself and Randy Neprash plan to attend the meeting and participate in the roundtable discussions to share our support for the CWC's efforts.

Do let me know if you have any questions. We look forward to participating in the CWC's process of shaping the future of clean water funding and policy.

Thanks,

John Paulson

Minnesota Cities Stormwater Coalition Staff

[MCSC | Minnesota Cities Stormwater Coalition](#)

Mobile: (320)583-0345

MCSC_Admin@apexenggroup.com

 **Minnesota Cities Stormwater Coalition**
Municipal stormwater professionals
working together for clean water

Email: John.Paulson@ApexEngGroup.com

June 5, 2026

Steering Committee:

Elizabeth Stout (Chair)

City of Minneapolis

Andrew Hogg (Urban Co-Chair)

City of Saint Paul

Andy Bradshaw

City of Moorhead

Bob Bean

Bolton & Menk

Bryan Gruidl

City of Bloomington

Eric Eckman

City of Minnetonka

Erick Francis

City of Saint Louis Park

Jane Byron

City of Rosemount

Kristin Seaman

City of Woodbury

Lori Haak

City of Eden Prairie

Rick Baird

City of Mankato

Ryan Johnson

City of Roseville

Staff:

John Paulson

Apex Engineering Group

12900 Whitewater Drive

Suite 325

Minnetonka, Minnesota

(320) 583-0345

John.paulson@apexenggroup.com

Clean Water Council

Attn: John Barten, Chair

520 Lafayette Road N

St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: FY28-29 Clean Water Fund Biennial Priorities Letter of Support

Dear Members of the Clean Water Council,

On behalf of the Minnesota Cities Stormwater Coalition, I write in support of the FY2028–2029 Clean Water Fund (CWF) priorities being considered by the Clean Water Council (CWC) for inclusion in the FY28-28 Biennial Report to the Legislature. We urge the Legislature to fully fund these recommendations, with particular emphasis on the programs that directly benefit municipal stormwater management and the communities we serve.

Cities across Minnesota are on the front lines of stormwater management. We operate Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4s) under state and federal permit requirements, and we invest significant local resources in stormwater infrastructure, planning, and compliance. The Clean Water Fund is a critical partner in this work—one that multiplies the impact of local investment and makes ambitious water quality goals achievable.

Programs of Highest Priority to Cities

1. MPCA Wastewater/Stormwater TMDL Implementation

The CWC's recommendation for the MPCA's stormwater point-source implementation program is among our top priorities. This program provides essential technical assistance to cities working to comply with the state's general MS4 permit, integrates stormwater and wastewater data with Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies (WRAPS), and maintains the Minnesota Stormwater Manual—a resource relied upon by thousands of public and private stormwater professionals statewide. Without this support, cities that lack the staff capacity to navigate complex stormwater regulations and develop effective compliance strategies will likely fall short of meeting requirements.

2. Chloride Reduction Programs

Chloride impairments from road de-icing and residential water softeners represent one of the most significant and growing water quality challenges for Minnesota cities. MCSC supports the CWC's continued funding for the MPCA's Chloride Reduction Program, paired with any policy recommendations that provides municipalities the tools and resources to meet TMDL requirements without placing undue burden on local budgets or ratepayers. We also support policy recommendations to provide financial support and flexibility for municipalities to achieve chloride discharge reductions in ways that fit local conditions.

3. Public Facilities Authority Point Source Implementation Grants (PSIG)

The PSIG program is a lifeline for communities that must upgrade stormwater and wastewater treatment infrastructure to comply with TMDL-based permit requirements. These are often mandated improvements that cities cannot delay, yet the capital costs are well beyond what local utility rates alone can support. CWF investment through the PFA also leverages federal Clean Water Revolving Fund dollars, stretching every state dollar further. Full funding of the CWC's recommendations to the Legislature for FY28–29 is essential to keeping pace with permit compliance timelines across Greater Minnesota and the metro area.

4. Watershed-Based Implementation Funding (WBIF)

With all 81 of Minnesota's major watersheds on track to have approved One Watershed One Plan (1W1P) management plans, continued support for a robust WBIF program is critical. Cities are active partners in these watershed planning units, and the non-competitive grants distributed through WBIF allow local governments to implement the highest-priority projects identified in locally developed, state-approved plans. This science and community driven approach ensures that stormwater best management practices are targeted where they will achieve the greatest water quality improvements that are in-line with local priorities.

5. University of Minnesota Stormwater Research and Technology Transfer Program

Applied research on stormwater best management practices directly informs how cities design and operate stormwater infrastructure. The Stormwater Research Council's competitive grant program has produced actionable results, such as evidence-based improvements to street sweeping practices, that cities can implement at relatively low cost with significant water quality benefit. Continued CWF investment in this program ensures that Minnesota cities have access to cutting-edge, locally relevant guidance.

The Value of the Clean Water Fund to Cities

Past CWC reports note that every dollar spent from the Clean Water Fund leverages an additional \$1.06 from other funding sources—totaling \$630 million in matched investment between 2010 and 2023. For cities, the Clean Water Fund is often the essential catalyst that makes complex stormwater and water quality projects financially viable. It funds the technical expertise we need, supports compliance with

state and federal requirements, and enables us to participate meaningfully in watershed-scale planning and implementation.

Furthermore, the CWC's past policy recommendations on chloride reduction for both de-icing and water softening reflect priorities that cities have long identified as critical. We appreciate the Council's recognition that municipalities need both financial support and policy flexibility to achieve chloride reduction in ways that are science based and reasonable.

We respectfully urge the CWC to carefully consider the needs of cities, and to advance the accompanying policy recommendations that expand tools and flexibility for municipal stormwater programs. These investments protect Minnesota's waters, support economic growth, and help cities meet their commitments to residents for clean, safe water.

Thank you for your continued commitment to Minnesota's water resources.

Respectfully,

Elizabeth Stout

Elizabeth Stout (City of Minneapolis)
MCSC Steering Committee Chair
(612) 673-5284
elizabeth.stout@minneapolismn.gov

From: Amy Kireta <akireta@d.umn.edu>
Sent on: Monday, June 1, 2026 5:07:17 PM
To: Kader, Jen (She/Her/Hers) (MPCA) <Jen.Kader@state.mn.us>
CC: Keeler, Bonnie (UMN) <keel0041@umn.edu>
Subject: Re: [UMN Water Network] Opportunity to provide feedback on CWC priorities - June 5th

Follow up: Follow up

Start date: Monday, June 1, 2026 12:00:00 AM

Due date: Monday, June 1, 2026 12:00:00 AM

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Hello Jen,

I'd like to suggest increased scoring on Engagement & Community value in the rubric. Not only is this best practice to co-create projects that are most needed, but is critical for gaining community support and trust as funding becomes more scarce.

Thank you for your work,
amy

[Amy R. Kireta, PhD](#)
Outreach Coordinator - Swenson College of Science and Engineering
University of Minnesota Duluth - 136 Engineering Building
office: 218.726.7409; cell: 218.235.3205 ([pronouns](#): she/her/hers)

Sent from ancestral land cared for and called home by Ojibwe, Dakota, Northern Cheyenne, and other Native peoples. - [UMD Land Acknowledgment](#)

Spring is nature's way of saying, "Let's Party!"
-Robin Williams

On Mon, Jun 1, 2026 at 11:50 AM 'Bonnie Keeler' via UMN Water Network <waterscholars@d.umn.edu> wrote:

Dear Water Network,

I represent the University of Minnesota on the [Clean Water Council](#) (CWC) - the decision making body that makes recommendations to the legislature for how to spend dollars allocated from the [Clean Water Land and Legacy Amendment](#) to the [Clean Water Fund](#). At the June 15th Council meeting, members will discuss where to increase or add new investments, where to consider reducing investments, and otherwise prioritize funding among a suite of valuable projects and programs supported by the Fund.

The CWC criteria for allocating funding are [described in this scoring rubric](#) used to evaluate all proposals. All submitted proposals for Clean Water Funding are summarized in meeting packets available on the [Council website](#). Unfortunately there is not an easy one-stop-shop to view all of the proposed programs without wading through monthly meeting packets (see [Feb.](#), [March](#), and [April](#) meeting packets for program details).

The University has two programs directly funded by the Clean Water Fund - the MN Stormwater Research Program and the County Geologic Atlas (Part A). In addition, the University receives clean water funding through a variety of agency pass-through funds that support programs like Forever Green, the Minnesota Office of Soil Health, and extension work related to water quality and public health.

If you get the Clean Water Council's newsletter, you may have already seen the invitations below, but I wanted to be sure to send along my own note of encouragement to share your feedback on the scoring criteria or to indicate your support for specific programs. Members of the public are encouraged to send a letter or email to the Council Administrator - Jen Kader (jen.kader@state.mn.us) or participate by attending an upcoming meeting. If you send a letter or email, please cc me so I can represent your priorities at the June meeting. Written comments received by noon on June 5 will be included in the meeting packet for the June 15th council meeting.

Please let me know if you have any questions. Thank you for your support of clean water research and education in MN.

Bonnie

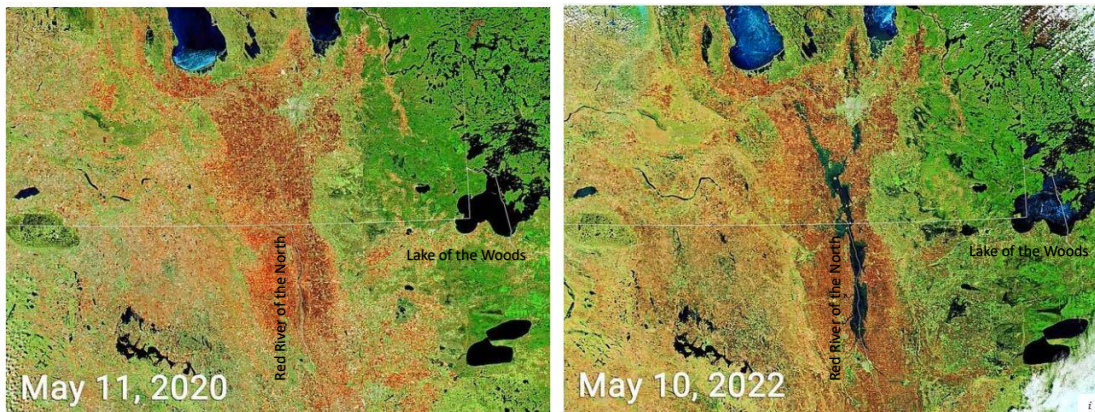
June 1, 2026

Clean Water Council
520 Lafayette Rd N
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: Feedback for Budget Development

Dear Chair Barten and fellow Committee Members,

The Bois de Sioux Watershed District is located at the headwaters of the Red River Basin, where our low-grade topography; young, narrow and shallow river channels; and rapid spring melts frequently contribute to areas of overland flooding. The NASA satellite photos below demonstrate how dramatic of a change is temporarily experienced by the Red River.



Bois de Sioux Watershed District staff maximize Clean Water Fund Programs to supplement the costs of a variety of large-scale initiatives to encourage sediment to remain on the landscape, instead of being delivered to our public waterways – but opportunities to utilize Clean Water Funds for the most impactful projects are limited, and in many cases, prohibited by administrative separation of flood control projects vs. water quality projects.

In the Red River Valley, we understand that water quality is dependent upon flood control.

District staff on-average identify \$300,000 per year in Clean Water Fund-eligible items. In contrast, District landowners provide \$1.6 - \$2.2 million per year for District and Red River Basin projects.

Flood impoundments, water storage, and culverts are featured as tools in MPCA's Climate Adaptation and Resilience Study. What is underrecognized for areas prone to regular flooding, is how frequently these types of infrastructure are utilized to control waterflow and block overland flooding. In 2025, the District filled the North Ottawa Impoundment three times.

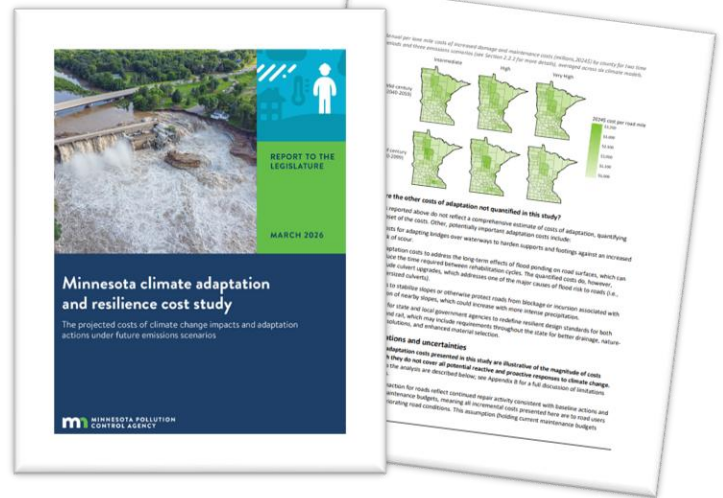
On behalf of the Bois de Sioux Watershed District, we encourage Clean Water Council members to consider expanded uses of Clean Water Funds, in recognition of areas like the Red River Basin where water quality is directly influenced by flooding. Our multipurpose projects support the successful achievement of water quality objectives and fulfill MPCA's Climate Adaptation and Resilience recommendations, and these large-scale projects are what is needed to demonstrate measurable improvements for both.

Sincerely,



Jamie Beyer
Administrator

CC: Bois de Sioux Watershed District





**LAND
STEWARDSHIP
PROJECT**

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MONTEVIDEO OFFICE
117 South 1st St
Montevideo, MN 56265
320-269-2105

June 5th, 2026

Dear Jen Kader and Council Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to weigh in as the Clean Water Council considers which proposals to fund for this next fiscal year. Since 1982 the Land Stewardship Project's mission is rooted in supporting sustainable agriculture and healthy rural communities through both programmatic work such as our Farm Beginnings Training program and Soil Builders Network and policy work at the state and federal level. The funding provided by the Council is a key tool in realizing that vision, and we thank you for your work as you review proposals.

We are writing specifically in support of increased funding for the Forever Green Initiative to bolster its work to research, develop, and market continuous living cover crops and crops that have clear water quality and soil health benefits. The previous funding the Council has allocated to the Forever Green Initiative has been instrumental in expanding its work and especially key programs like the Environmental and Economic Clusters of Opportunity Implementation (ECCO) program which provides a tool to de-risk these crops for farmers, investing in technical and financial assistance for growers. LSP has long seen through our Soil Builder Network and our farmer-to-farmer soil health hubs, that programs that work directly with farmers who are early-adopters of soil health practices and particularly CLC crops and are able to share in the risk of trying something new on the landscape is a powerful investment to change behavior and create landscape scale change. We hope the Council will increase funding for the Forever Green Initiative to help scale these crops to have the water quality and climate benefits needed across our state and region.

We also excited to share our strong support for the Olmsted County Southeast Groundwater Protection and Soil Health Initiative to expand this program to more counties within Southeast MN where nitrate pollution is particularly high in the state given it's vulnerable, karst geography. The unique combination of incentivizing regenerative haying and grazing, cover crops, and/or a third crop rotation of small grains and basing payments on results has delivered measurable progress for nitrate reduction in groundwater in Olmsted County for the farms that are enrolled in this program. This is a program that we hear continually from our farmer members outside of Olmsted county that they wish they had access to this innovative program for their own farm. To further illustrate this, during the 2025 legislative session LSP gathered signatures in support of soil health proposals like expanding the Olmsted County Soil Health program and support for increased funding for the Department of Agriculture's Soil Health Financial Assistance Program and collected more than 400 signatures. The demand is clear from farmers that this type of investment is needed and would be a smart investment by the Council.

Thank you again for the opportunity to share our support for these proposals, and we are happy to answer any follow-up questions you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Laura Schreiber".

Laura Schreiber
Government Relations Director
Land Stewardship Project



To: John Barten
Chair, Clean Water Council
520 Lafayette Road N
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Jen Kader
Administrator, Clean Water Council
520 Lafayette Road N
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Re: Clean Water Council Recommendations

Dear Chair Barten and Administrator Kader:

We appreciate the opportunity for the Minnesota Agriculture Resilience Initiative (MARI) to provide input as the Clean Water Council begins to develop recommendations for the FY28-29 fiscal year. With less than ten years remaining of the dedicated Clean Water, Land, and Legacy fund, MARI encourages the council to prioritize recommendations that support systems-level changes in technical assistance needed to support farmers in adopting the regenerative agriculture practices necessary to meet the state's clean water goals. We provide recommendations that support durable, effective technical assistance with a strong return on investment that is built into the fabric of state agencies and private sector agriculture retailers. To measure the effectiveness of these approaches, we support the development of better indicators and monitoring across programs and agencies to track the efficacy of these approaches in reaching state goals.

Background: Stakeholders across Minnesota—government agencies, agricultural companies, farmer groups—have set ambitious climate and nutrient reduction goals for the agricultural sector that cannot be met through individual action alone. Implementing agricultural practices that increase carbon storage, improve nutrient management, and benefit water quality are key to reaching these goals. Technical assistance is a critical support for farmers to adopt practices successfully. Implementing regenerative agriculture practices requires different technical expertise than conventional practices. Technical assistance providers have holistic knowledge of implementing regenerative agriculture practices that can meet farmer demand and achieve these climate and nutrient reduction goals. Even as regenerative agriculture practices get adopted, the state lacks comprehensive measurement across scales, lacking indicators of whether the approaches scale from project acres to achieving state goals.

Minnesota Agriculture Resilience Initiative: The Minnesota Agriculture Resilience Initiative (MARI) is a coalition of stakeholders convened across the public sector, private sector, and civil society working together to increase coordination and collaboration across the agricultural landscape in Minnesota. Organizations participating in MARI include The Nature Conservancy, Minnesota

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[nature.org](https://www.nature.org)

Farmers Union, MBOLD, General Mills, UNFI, and the University of Minnesota Water Resources Center. This coalition aims to improve soil health, water quality, farm profitability, climate resilience, and rural vitality across the state.

One of MARI's objectives is to collectively develop recommendations to scale and improve public and private technical assistance to accelerate the adoption of regenerative agricultural practices in support of Minnesota's water and climate goals. Since September 2025, the MARI Technical Assistance (TA) working group has conducted interviews, stakeholder meetings, and a literature review to develop the recommendations in a recently completed report. MARI has also convened a monitoring, measurement, reporting, and verification (MMRV) working group to develop recommendations for enhanced collaboration between the public and private sector to track uptake of regenerative agriculture practices and track progress towards Minnesota state and local goals.

Why focus on technical assistance?

Regenerative systems are complex, highly context specific, and often require years of experimentation, learning, and adjustment. Effective approaches must be tailored to an operation and supported by advisors who understand both local conditions and producer priorities. According to the 2021 Purdue University Large Producer Survey, 26% of respondents said they chose not to adopt a conservation practice because of the technical requirements of adoption. Another 12% identified lack of technical support as a reason.

Farmers already rely on a wide network of agronomic, financial, and peer advisors. Trust within these relationships strongly shapes whether new practices are considered or adopted. Technical capacity—across both public agencies and private service providers—is an opportunity to invest in technical assistance providers who can help farmers navigate the transition to regenerative agriculture.

Recommendations

Minnesota will not reach its water quality goals without increasing regenerative agriculture practices, and it will not increase regenerative agriculture practices without sufficient technical assistance. MARI has developed the following categories of recommendations to increase the amount of technical assistance available and bring innovative approaches to scale for the long-term.

Category 1: Support emerging, innovative, and holistic TA programs and practices

There are promising emerging, innovative, and holistic TA programs and practices in Minnesota that could make a significant impact if given proper support.

- Leverage existing relationships and trusted information sources by bringing conservation agronomists to where farmers already seek technical support, especially through public-private partnerships with the agriculture retail sector.
 - Example 1: Partnership agreements between MDA or NGOs and agriculture retailers to support a conservation agronomist position in an agriculture retail location.
 - Example 2: 4R Nutrient Management certification for agriculture retailers and other agronomic service providers.
 - Example 3: Flexible program models, such as the Nitrates in Groundwater program or the Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP), where farmers can become MAWQCP-certified with technical support from MDA, their local SWCD, or a participating agriculture retailer. Public-private sector technical assistance partnerships should be expanded within and beyond these two programs. Supporting more conservation agronomists through these program models could make a significant impact on farmer adoption of regenerative agriculture practices.

Category 2: Expand and enhance education, training, and resources for TA providers

Regenerative agriculture TA represents only a portion of agriculture technical assistance. To meet the state goals, it will be critical to equip TA providers with knowledge and skills in regenerative agriculture practices and make sure there are employment and market opportunities for those pursuing this work.

- Foster connections and learning about regenerative agriculture for TA providers through MDA's Technical Assistance Program and BWSR's Accelerated Implementation Program with private certified providers, Certified Crop Advisors, and others providing trusted service to farmers.
 - Support and build on existing precompetitive, peer-to-peer networks for conservation agronomists and other TA providers (e.g. [Northern Plains TAP](#)) and contribute support to wider network infrastructure that connects peer to peer

- networks across states and regions (e.g. the [Iowa Soybean Association Conservation Agronomist Network](#)).
- Leverage and enhance farmer-to-farmer support networks (e.g. [Minnesota Soil Health Coalition](#), [Wisconsin Producer Led Watershed Protection Grants](#))
 - Establish mechanisms for ongoing peer learning, case-sharing, and problem solving among TA providers across regions and roles (e.g. [Minnesota Office for Soil Health's forum](#), the Minnesota Soil Health Coalition's [Premier Soil Health Event](#))
 - Strengthen coordination and awareness of existing resources through an integrated information structure (e.g. [CTIC's Conservation Connector](#))

As these programs are deployed, we need MMRV systems that are consistent, are compatible across programs and agencies, and use available technologies like remote sensing to measure efficacy of different programs in making progress towards statewide goals. These programs and systems should be updated and available for use by the public and private sector partners. We recommend [BWSR's Tillage and Erosion Survey Project](#) be updated to improve accessibility and annual reports. Updating the program to inform efficacy of soil health program outreach and implementation and including private sector partners when sharing results.

We encourage you to consider these insights when making your own funding recommendations for the Clean Water Fund. Thank you for your consideration.



June 9, 2026

To: John Barten
Chair, Clean Water Council
520 Lafayette Road N
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Jen Kader
Administrator, Clean Water Council
520 Lafayette Road N
Saint Paul, MN 55155

RE: Clean Water Council Recommendations from Minnesota Farmers Union

Dear Chair Barten and Administrator Kader:

On behalf of Minnesota Farmers Union (MFU), thank you for the opportunity to provide input as the Clean Water Council begins to develop recommendations for the FY28-29 fiscal year. The next Clean Water Fund budget will be especially vital for maintaining and implementing new conservation practices on Minnesota's agricultural lands.

MFU is a grassroots organization that has represented Minnesota's family farmers, ranchers and rural communities since 1918. Through our locally led process, our members have identified natural resources, conservation, and climate resilience as priorities for our work. Over the past year there has been a reduction in federal conservation assistance, and we are currently in a challenging agricultural economy with low crop prices and high input costs. In this context, Minnesota farmers are relying even more on the Clean Water Fund's working lands programs for the funding and technical assistance needed to improve their operations with changes that promote water quality.

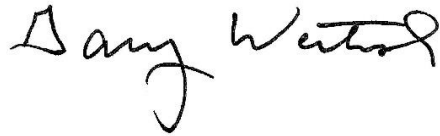
To support farmers as partners in protecting and improving water quality, we recommend the following budget priorities:

- **The Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP) and voluntary incentives** - MFU strongly supports voluntary incentives and the MDA's MAWQCP. The MAWQCP's unique design empowers farmers and builds relationships that facilitate continuous improvement during and beyond the 10-year certification. The MAWQCP provides high quality, locally based technical assistance where farmers and advisors walk the land together, identify risks to water quality, and make a plan to address those risks.
- **Soil Health Equipment Grants** - MDA's Soil Health Financial Assistance Program is an innovative model that expands access to equipment that is required for cover cropping, reduced tillage, managed grazing, and similar practices through the tangible result of equipment. Investing in new farm equipment is a significant barrier for farmers, often requiring intensive financial capital. Implementing a new practice is also risky, and with the current state of the ag economy it is even more difficult for farmers to take on such debt and risk.

- **New markets – Forever Green and Oats** - The agronomic and environmental benefits of diversifying rotations with cool season annuals such as oats and continuous living cover crops are well documented. However, farmers often face barriers to adoption, including market limitations, agronomic knowledge gaps, and transition risks. Supporting new markets for these crops including farmer learning and supply chain development are key for accelerating adoption of these environmentally important crops.
- **Technical Assistance** - Recent funding cuts to NRCS offices and USDA grant programs have significantly reduced the key personnel that have, to-date, been the primary experts delivering conservation services to farmers. Over the past year, Minnesota has lost approximately one third of its NRCS staff. Supporting local technical assistance, such as that provided through the MDA's MAWQCP, is essential for both maintaining and increasing agricultural conservation practices across the landscape.

Thank you for your support and for your work on the Clean Water Council. If you have any questions, please contact our Climate and Working Lands Director, Ariel Kagan at ariel@mfu.org. Thank you for considering the needs and perspectives of Minnesota's farm families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary Wertish". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Gary Wertish
President, Minnesota Farmers Union



318 Landmark Center
75 West Fifth Street
Saint Paul, MN 55102
www.MEPartnership.org
(651) 290-0154

John Barten
Chair, Clean Water Council
520 Lafayette Road N
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Jen Kader
Administrator, Clean Water Council
520 Lafayette Road N
Saint Paul, MN 55155

RE: Clean Water Council funding priorities

June 5, 2026

Dear Chair Barten, Administrator Kader, and council members,

On behalf of the Minnesota Environmental Partnership and our member organizations signed below, we would like to thank the Clean Water Council for this opportunity to provide comments on the process of developing Council recommendations for the FY 2028-29 Clean Water Fund allocations. We especially appreciate the Council's revised process and commend it for being significantly more transparent and openly deliberative.

This is an important moment for the Clean Water Fund. With this next round of appropriations, the Clean Water Fund will have completed 20 of its 25 years of authorized funding.

Yet, we know that we are far from solving our water quality challenges and adequately protecting our state's drinking and other waters.

Guidance from 2025 Pollution Control Agency Nutrient Reduction Strategy (NRS)

This recently released update to the state's nutrient reduction strategy documents our modest gains to date in addressing perhaps the most significant and intractable challenge of nutrient loading to our lakes, rivers and groundwater. The Mississippi River drainage is responsible for 83% of the total nitrogen load leaving our state and the Strategy estimates that more than 70% of this is from agricultural practices. The ongoing drinking water crisis in SE Minnesota and other areas of the state is a clear sign of the urgency to reassess current practices and adopt and fund strategies that are capable of protecting our drinking water sources and meeting water quality goals.

The NRS is refreshingly clear in calling for a shift in how we address this challenge. It states; "nitrogen reduction goals cannot be achieved without transformative changes in crop system rotations and maintaining living cover for more months each year." In fact, it calls for a Continuous Living Cover (CLC) Campaign to advance this work. We were pleased to see the NRS also develop a model scenario designed to achieve water quality goals that includes eight million acres of increased CLC adoption. This is roughly the total acreage of soybeans grown in Minnesota annually. We fully endorse this call to recalibrate the approach that has been pursued for the last 18 years and provide substantially greater support for developing and implementing a

wide range of living cover options. These include perennial pastures, winter cover crops, oats and the suite of Forever Green crops.

This is the time to reexamine and refocus the allocation of our limited Clean Water Fund resources. As we look at what strategies are capable of achieving our water quality goals, we should also proportionally align the available CWF resources to match these strategies.

Scoring Rubric Comments

The rubric is an important part of the benefits of the revised recommendation process. Please consider these comments as you determine how to use this going forward.

- The focus on measurable water quality impacts in the water is critical. But it is important not to think about this in just one- or two-year increments. As agricultural and other impacts on our water are a long-term problem, we must consider which strategies are capable of achieving water quality goals over the longer term. A key part of this is scale. What can be done now - that as scaled over time - and can actually meet our water goals. Historically, we have pursued many agricultural practices that, even if fully implemented, would not achieve our stated overall goals.
- Alignment with state plans is important, but approval of a watershed plan should not automatically trigger state funding for all plan activities. As we recalibrate and refocus the use of CWF resources, we should evaluate how effectively the plans lay out a strategy to achieve WQ goals within a defined timeline, not just supporting helpful, but piecemeal, activities. The council should prioritize state resources for those practices, or an intentional mix of practices, that are capable of meeting state water quality goals.

Clean Water Fund substituting for traditional funding sources

When voters approved of the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment, they did so with the clear expectation that funds would not be used as a substitute for traditional sources of funding. Repeatedly, there have been several programs included in the CWF allocations that were traditionally funded through the use of fees, including fees related to pesticides, fertilizer, chemigation, irrigation and urban stormwater. In these instances, the Clean Water Fund has become a way to continue and expand existing programs while avoiding the challenge of funding these programs from those activities that create the problem.

A sample of these Clean Water Fund programs that had previously been funded in whole or part by fees include:

- MN Department of Agriculture - Monitoring for pesticides in surface water and groundwater
- MN Department of Agriculture - Pesticide testing in private wells
- MN Department of Natural Resources - Aquifer monitoring for water supply planning
- MN Pollution Control Agency - Accelerated implementation of MS4 permit requirements
- MN Department of Agriculture - Nitrate in groundwater

We ask the Council to examine how these programs have migrated away from their historic reliance on fees, determine which of these programs effectively substitute CWF dollars for fee revenues, and act to restore their traditional reliance on fees to operate these programs. The Council should ensure that funded projects are not using Clean Water Fund resources to substitute for traditional fee funding, including periodic fee increases needed to maintain program integrity.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on this process. We hope the Council will carefully consider how to recalibrate to make the best use of current information to meet the needs of our time.

Sincerely,



Steve Morse
Executive Director

Submitted on behalf of the organizations listed below.

Austin Chapter 10 Izaak Walton League of America
Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota
Clean Water Action Minnesota
Climate Land Leaders
CURE
Environmental Working Group
Friends of the Mississippi River
Land Stewardship Project
League of Women Voters of Minnesota
Lutefisk Technologies, Inc.*
Minnesota Division Izaak Walton League of America
Minnesota Well Owners Organization
Vote Climate
WaterLegacy

**denotes non-MEP member*

Clean Water Council,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on programs funded by Clean Water Dollars. I provide the perspective of a landowner, a private well owner, contractor that works directly with landowners and the agencies and organizations who work with landowners.

I did not comment on specific proposals. The comments provided are primarily around the following pieces that have application to many of the proposals and existing programs offered through BWSR and MDA:

- Programs: Development and Delivery
 - Accountability/Reporting
 - Coordination
1. Programs – There are many programs. We need an examination of existing programs before creating more programs and develop them on a needs-based assessment
 - a. **RIM Easements**
 - i. Too many
 1. Shoreland Easements – duplicative of others. Align with others (e.g. DNR and MLT), coordinate services and resources through a small Local Technical Team that includes DNR, NGOs, Consultants, LGUs, etc.
 2. Coordinate with other programs and efforts for better program delivery
 - ii. Have regional pots of RIM \$
 1. Must be tied to Landscape Stewardship Plans & 1W1Ps
 2. Build better programs locally through a coordinated process with all service providers working with private landowners, work through a Local Technical Team, e.g. Local Forestry Teams
 - iii. Work with service providers that includes all who work with private landowners through a small technical team process, e.g. Local Forestry Teams
 - iv. “Working lands” – need strict criteria and appropriate for the landscape to stack benefits.
 - v. Need to be permanent
 - vi. Expensive – lots of training, lots of delivery overhead
 - vii. Need consistent rates, align with other easement programs, e.g. MN Land Trust and Forest Legacy
 - b. Duplicative programs – combine, e.g. “Conservation Equipment Assistance” and “AgBMP Loan,” “Pesticide Testing of Private Wells” and “Private Well Initiative” – turn well testing over to MDH to work with MN Well Owners Organization
 - c. **Technical assistance/training costs**
 - i. Need an examination of costs for training, staff time spent on training, staff time spent attending meetings and workshops

- ii. Need an accounting of others doing this work on the landscape
 - iii. Do not duplicate efforts
 - iv. Use existing work force who do these activities, e.g. consulting foresters or others
 - d. Delivery
 - i. Staff are trained to programs and standards, not having the professional knowledge, experience and understanding of ecological outcomes
 - ii. Work through a technical team, e.g. Local Forestry Team
 - iii. Use existing service providers and systems that are delivering on programs more effectively, e.g. Consulting foresters or other professionals
- 2. Accountability and reporting
 - a. Accomplishments at a landscape level
 - b. Compare changes on the landscape against projects
 - c. Overhead costs – project development, training, overhead and implementation
 - i. Need an accounting of the cost of program development, training costs and compare to existing processes
 - d. Rates and policies
 - i. Need consistency from BWSR and SWCDs on developing set rates, e.g. 1W1Ps set different rates and policies, these rates may be different than the SWCD's. Confusing, poor service delivery and costly overhead expenses
 - ii. Need consistency from BWSR, SWCDs and NRCS for consistency in program delivery, e.g. Cover Crops seeding plan reviewed by 3 counties and the area soil health specialist, all had different perspectives and none were following the standard per the NRCS State Agronomist.
 - iii. Long-term adoption
- 3. Lack of coordination
 - a. Development of more programs seemingly doing the same work and trying to get the same outcomes
 - b. Work with others who do the work better and fund that

I can provide additional comments on programs and specific examples with the focus on:

- Need for coordination
- Program delivery and implementation

Thank you,
Jen Wahls

From: Michael Kinney <michael.kinney@cflwd.org>
Sent on: Tuesday, June 9, 2026 9:09:00 PM
To: Kader, Jen (She/Her/Hers) (MPCA) <Jen.Kader@state.mn.us>
CC: Jackie Anderson <jackie.anderson@cflwd.org>
Subject: RE: Priorities for the Next Clean Water Fund Budget
Attachments: CLFLWD_Response to Clean Water Fund Ask.pdf (119.19 KB), MN Statute 103D.711.pdf (274.78 KB), CLFLWD_Sequential Diagnostic Monitoring Plus Protocol.pdf (1.56 MB)

Follow up: Follow up
Follow up status: Completed
Completed on: Wednesday, June 10, 2026 8:12:00 PM

You don't often get email from michael.kinney@cflwd.org. [Learn why this is important](#)

This message may be from an external email source.

Do not select links or open attachments unless verified. Report all suspicious emails to Minnesota IT Services Security Operations Center.

Jen,

As indicated earlier today, please see the revised cover memo along with the MN Statute 103D.711 for reference. The Sequential Diagnostic Monitoring Plus Protocol document is the same as sent on Friday. If you could please confirm receipt of this email, it would be greatly appreciated.

Thanks,



CLFLWD
WATERSHED DISTRICT

Mike Kinney, M.S.
District Administrator

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CLFLWD RESPONSE TO CLEAN WATER FUND ASK

BWSR Clean Water Fund administration is not aligned with governing watershed statutes as to what is eligible for coverage in grants, loans and other reimbursable costs for WATERSHED PROJECTS, including preliminary scientific work performed by Civil Engineers to identify and evaluate best projects to meet prioritized, targeted, and measurable criteria. We ask the Clean Water Council to provide for reimbursement of all costs to date not covered by BWSR for these activities due to a structured rule denying access – for all Watershed Districts.

Whereas: Minnesota Statute 103D.325.SUBD 3 requires a watershed to have a chief engineer who acts as superintendent for all of the works and improvements undertaken by the district and to make a full annual report to the managers, and more often as necessary...:

Whereas: Minnesota Statute 103D.711 outlines the necessity for a comprehensive engineer's report proving each project feasibility (see attached full guidance);

Whereas: Minnesota Statute 103D.905.SUBD 6 stipulates that "a Preliminary Fund is to be used for preliminary work on proposed works of the watershed district,"

Whereas: Minnesota Statute 103D.921.SUBD 3 states, If the managers incur expenses for preliminary work on a proposed project, all expenses connected with the work shall be included in the cost of the construction or implementation of the project. If construction or implementation of the project is authorized by the managers, the money advanced from the implementation fund shall be repaid.

NOW, THEREFORE , BE IT RESOLVED: that the Clean Water Council will work with CLFLWD and BWSR to change the current rule denying watershed districts access to Clean Water Funds for necessary scientific and civil engineering protocols to guide their identification and feasibility work necessary to select cost-effective, highly targeted projects as currently allowed in MN Statutes.

We also seek full compensation for the past costs of these necessary preliminary steps engineers must take to complete their identification and feasibility reports to produce highly focused Prioritized, Targeted and Measurable projects to attain clean water for Minnesotans.

We have provided an example of one of our projects to illustrate the success of our approach.

Submitted by Jackie Anderson, President and Michael Kinney, Administrator

103D.711 ENGINEER'S REPORT.

Subdivision 1. MS 2022 [Repealed, 2024 c 90 art 3 s 88]

Subd. 2. **Requirements.** (a) The engineer's report must include findings and recommendations about the proposed project. If the engineer finds the project feasible, the engineer must provide a plan of the proposed project as part of the report. The plan must include:

(1) a map of the project area, drawn to scale, showing the location of the proposed improvements, if any;

(2) the estimated total cost of completing the project including construction, operation, implementation, supervision, and administrative costs;

(3) the acreage required as right-of-way listed by each lot and 40-acre tract or fraction of the lot or tract under separate ownership, if required to implement the project; and

(4) other details and information to inform the managers of the practicability and necessity of the proposed project with the engineer's recommendations on these matters.

(b) The map of the area must include:

(1) the location and adequacy of the outlet, if the project is related to drainage;

(2) the watershed of the project area;

(3) the location of existing highways, bridges, and culverts;

(4) the property, highways, and utilities affected by the project with the names of the known property owners;

(5) the location of public land and water affected by the project; and

(6) other physical characteristics of the watershed necessary to understand the area.

Subd. 3. **State and federal projects.** The engineer may adopt, approve, and include as a part of the engineer's report a project of the state or federal government that is pertinent to the project and may accept data, plats, plans, details, or information pertaining to the state or federal project given to the watershed district by the state or federal agency. The engineer may omit the items required in subdivision 2 from the engineer's report if the data given by the state or federal government is sufficient to meet the requirements of subdivision 2.

Subd. 4. **Hearing after unfavorable engineer's report.** (a) If the project has been initiated by petition and the engineer's report is unfavorable, the managers shall, by order, within 35 days set a time and place within the watershed district for a hearing for the petitioners to demonstrate why the managers should not refer the petition back to the petitioners for further proceedings or dismiss the petition.

(b) The hearing notice must state:

(1) that the engineer's report is unfavorable;

(2) that the engineer's report is on file with the managers and may be reviewed; and

(3) the time and place for the hearing.

(c) The managers shall mail a copy of the notice to each of the petitioners at least 14 days before the hearing.

Subd. 5. **Advisory reports.** (a) When the engineer's report is filed with the managers, the managers shall send a complete copy to the director and to the board.

(b) The director and the board shall examine the engineer's report and by 30 days after receiving the report, the director shall make a director's advisory report and the board shall make a board's advisory report which must include:

(1) a statement on whether the engineer's report is incomplete and not in accordance with this chapter;

(2) a statement of whether the engineer's report is approved as being a practical plan;

(3) if the project as planned does not meet approval, recommendations for changes considered advisable must be stated or an opinion that the proposed project or improvement is not practical; and

(4) a recommendation as to whether a soil survey appears advisable.

(c) The director's advisory report and the board's advisory report shall be directed to and filed with the managers.

(d) The director's advisory report and the board's advisory report shall be considered advisory only.

Subd. 6. **Notice for final hearing; timing.** A notice may not be issued for the final hearing until the board's advisory report and the director's advisory report are filed or the time for filing the reports with the managers has expired. For projects initiated by the managers according to section 103D.707, the managers may decide at any time not to proceed to final hearing.

Subd. 7. **Form.** The findings, recommendations, and content of the engineering report shall conform as nearly as practicable to the requirements of this section.

Subd. 8. **Soil survey.** If a soil survey is recommended to be made in the director's advisory report or the board's advisory report, the engineer shall make the soil survey and a soil survey report. The soil survey report must be submitted to the managers before the final hearing.

History: 1990 c 391 art 4 s 55; 1995 c 199 s 43; 2024 c 90 art 3 s 49-51



CLFLWD
WATERSHED DISTRICT

Sequential Diagnostic Monitoring Plus Protocol

Developed for the *Lower St. Croix*

One Watershed One Plan

by the

Comfort Lake–Forest Lake Watershed District

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Foreword

The Comfort Lake – Forest Lake Watershed District (CLFLWD) has been conducting Sequential Diagnostic Monitoring Plus (SDM+) for over a decade. SDM+ methods have allowed the CLFLWD to achieve 91% of our watershed wide phosphorus reduction goals within a 10-year period. In 2021, the CLFLWD was approached by the Lower St Croix One Watershed One Plan (LSC) regarding the CLFLWD’s Sequential Diagnostic Monitoring program. Though we did not have an officially written out protocol, we agreed to document our methods for the LSC. We offer this protocol as a way to help our partners in the LSC, greater MN, and across the Midwest to rapidly achieve their pollution reduction goals. We feel that the CLFLWD SDM+ is a novel approach that utilizes robust datasets to target and select projects, resulting in the best Return on Investment (ROI) for grant and taxpayer dollars. This approach uses fundamentals of standard monitoring but applies these fundamentals and interprets the data from the monitoring in an innovative manner.

As such, the protocol presented herein may not align with other targeting protocols, and in part, this is the point. Continuing down the current “standard” project identification and targeting path will only continue to result in the limited successes in reducing pollutant loading in the region that we have historically seen. We, as a water resource community, need to evolve and

innovate, find new paths to achieving our water quality goals and objectives. We offer the CLFLWD's SDM+ method as this new way.

Introduction

Sequential Diagnostic Monitoring Plus (SDM+) is a combination of traditional sequential diagnostic monitoring efforts combined with historical reviews of past (legacy) land use activities, interviews with long standing landowners, and the use of the economic principal known as the Pareto Principle. This highly effective method of using actual data to focus on a small number of activities and/or projects that possess the greatest loads can reduce both the cost and time needed to achieve water quality goals. Internal cost and time estimates of several approaches (SDM+ and SWA) suggest that the SDM+ approach can reduce the time needed to achieve water quality goals by up to 1/7th that of most current efforts.

SDM+ has been shown to be a critical tool in positively identifying sources of external nutrient loading to a waterbody. Through the collection and review of collected water quality samples, SDM+ can identify excessively high loads that may not be visible by mere field observations or modeling of the land management within the watershed of interest. The data analysis and calculations needed to identify high return on investment sites is more than just a review of sampling data often used to estimate baseline water quality data in lakes. The CLFLWD has found that using District staff to coordinate and perform the sampling combined with the expertise of outside professionals to provide recommendations has produced the most efficient results. These results have been further verified by post-construction "effectiveness monitoring" to ensure that both the analysis and use of public funding achieve maximum efficacy.

This SDM+ technique can be applied to a variety of waterbodies and enables targeting of load sources for mitigation and/or restoration. Proper identification of the source of the nutrient and its impact on the target waterbody allows direct, targeted treatment of the cause of the nutrient source. As such, Sequential Diagnostic Monitoring Plus enables both timely reduction of pollution loading sources as well as documented data to verify the high return on investment of public and/or private funding.

Focusing restoration efforts on projects that have the largest, most cost-effective load reduction to the target waterbody of concern, as opposed to edge-of-field calculated projects, is key. Some projects may seem to have a large nutrient reduction (at the edge-of-project) but due to drainage patterns in the watershed and intermediary treatment systems, these reductions may not be fully realized at the target waterbody. Even more importantly, desktop modeling has no ability to include 'legacy' nutrient loads that exist throughout the landscape. By contrast, legacy loads can be identified through SDM+. Legacy loads may account for as much as 1/3 of all external loading to state waterbodies but current restoration efforts have no means to take them into account, let alone identify them. As such, SDM+ can eliminate the potential of missing sizable nutrient loads within a watershed, and thus lead to better project identification and subsequent load reductions at the target waterbody.

A key element of the way the CLFLWD employs SDM+ is focused on the Pareto Principle, or more commonly known as the 80-20 rule. This principle asserts that 80% of outcomes (or outputs) result from 20% of all causes (or inputs) for any given event. A goal of the 80-20 rule (restated in water resources/restoration terms) is to identify inputs (nutrient sources) that are potentially the most

productive (contributing the highest watershed loads) and make them the priority (for restoration/mitigation). For instance, once (water resource) managers identify factors that are critical to their company's (target waterbody's) success, they should give those factors the most focus. Thus, maximizing the return on investment (ROI).

Sequential Diagnostic Monitoring Plus is the tool that can enable the identification of the “input” factors and thus determine the “20%” of sources accounting for “80%” of the total nutrient load. It should be noted that SDM+ *does* require an initial investment of both staff time and funds. However, this initial investment will pay for itself more than several times over in the end through more timely and efficient reductions in watershed load and subsequent water quality improvements in the target waterbody. Furthermore, in some cases, watershed load reductions cannot be achieved without SDM+ efforts since the load can be from a historical ‘legacy’ activity that discharged to a wetland and still continues to discharge nutrients decades after the activity has ceased. To address the upfront investment hurdle of SDM+ costs, this CLFLWD protocol offers two diagnostic monitoring overviews. Traditional diagnostic monitoring utilizing staff and external consultants, and commercial laboratory analysis; and a low-cost alternative using staff and readily available technology. The latter hereby referred to as do-it-yourself (DIY) diagnostic monitoring. Both utilize the same monitoring techniques but differ in technology and cost.

Methodology Overview

In its most basic form, sequential diagnostic monitoring entails sampling all significant water inputs into a waterbody for a contaminant or a nutrient of concern. Sampling efforts should take place throughout the entire year (if possible) or over several years to capture a statistically valid range of environmental conditions and precipitation events to achieve the highest level of confidence in the dataset. However, even a partial season’s worth of data is sufficient to provide enough information to suggest focusing additional sampling in a particular tributary or area. Monitoring should be timed to correspond with precipitation events and ideally water samples are collected during or immediately after such an event to determine the nutrient load being transported in the storm runoff. This approach will provide a general idea of the source of the target nutrient in the watershed. It does not, however, inform on the volume of the nutrient load. To determine a true “hot spot” or source of an excess nutrient, both the nutrient concentration and the stream flow to deliver the nutrients downstream to the target waterbody are needed.

Nutrient load can be determined by incorporating stream discharge monitoring into the monitoring methodology. With both nutrient concentration and stream discharge, a flow-weighted mean load can be calculated and thus the 80-20 rule can be applied to determine which subwatershed(s) should be prioritized for restoration/mitigation. In most cases, further refinement of the nutrient source is needed within the subwatershed. This is accomplished by applying the same SDM+ methodology again at the subwatershed scale to refine the specific source of the excess nutrient loading (e.g., an abandoned manure storage lagoon, highly erodible agriculture field, ditched wetland complex, etc.).

This protocol provides two strategies of SDM+ – traditional and do-it-yourself diagnostic. Each method has strengths and weaknesses, but both share the general methodology described above and in greater detail below in this document. Traditional monitoring can be rather expensive as it is often conducted by a third party (consultant) and water grab samples are analyzed by a commercial laboratory. As such, it does offer a higher degree of certainty in monitoring results and could be considered more robust as it is

conducted by specialists in the field. DIY monitoring, as indicated by name, is conducted by in-house staff using readily available and inexpensive equipment. As such, DIY is less expensive but still requires a great deal of staff time, and results from the effort are not considered as accurate as those from a commercial laboratory. In addition, most DIY technology is limited in its scope, and can generally only monitor one nutrient per device, and in the case of phosphorus, only the ortho-phosphate form of this nutrient can be quantified at this time. Traditional monitoring is only limited by the laboratory used for the analysis. Most laboratories can analyze all forms of a nutrient, or multiple nutrients present in the water sample – thus providing an elevated level of analysis. The DIY diagnostic technique is a useful screening tool to narrow down nutrient sources, but traditional diagnostic monitoring may still be needed to fully verify results and accurately identify the nutrient source.

Application to the Lower St Croix Basin

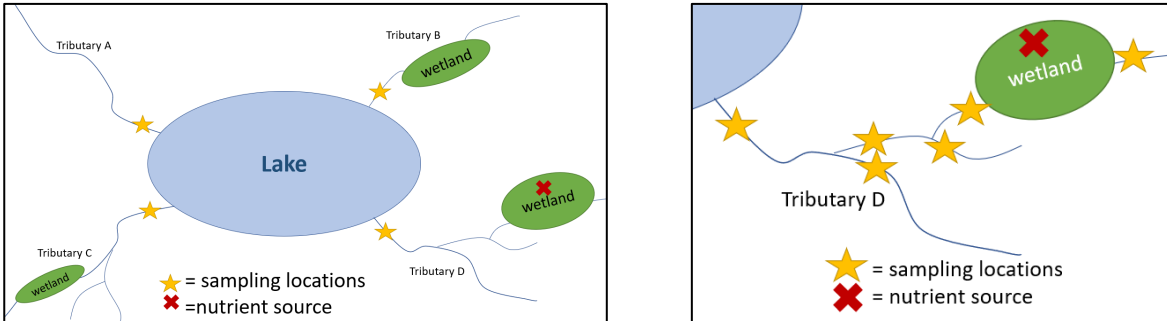
The Lower St. Croix (LSC) is a large watershed and has an estimated phosphorus load reduction target of 64,395 lbs./year needed to achieve state standards for all priority waterbodies in the basin ([LSC CWMP Tables 5-2 and 5-3](#)). Sequential diagnostic monitoring and application of the Pareto Principle may be the most efficient and cost-effective way to meet the load reductions goals for the Lower St. Croix. Application of the SDM+ methodology on this large of a watershed could leverage the already acquired data obtained through WRAPS and other such efforts. A limited amount of additional DIY screening to inform the need for any focused monitoring effort could also be employed.

Naturally, efforts should be focused on the most known impaired waterbodies (lakes or streams with poorest water quality) and the contributing inputs to these waterbodies. Through sequential diagnostic monitoring, combined with historic aerial photography investigations (discussed below), the potential 20% of subwatersheds contributing 80% of the total load should become readily apparent. Through additional subwatershed SDM+ efforts, these nutrient sources can be pinpointed, and restoration or mitigation actions taken to reduce or eliminate them. Though the initial SDM+ effort may take several years to complete across the full scale of the already known priority areas of the LSC, and require a local investment of funding, the cost savings from implementation of only ~20% or less of the potential projects would provide a great ROI for this initial investment *and* greatly compress the timeframe for achieving the potential phosphorus load reduction of over 50,000 lbs. in the LSC basin.

Sequential Diagnostic Monitoring Methodology

The following is a general methodology for conducting sequential diagnostic monitoring. It is presented in two phases (Figures 1 and 2). Phase 1 encompasses the entire watershed and includes desktop analysis and planning, field verification, pollutant monitoring, flow monitoring, and data analysis. The goal of phase 1 is to identify the subwatershed(s) that contain the sources of excess nutrient. The second phase is a focused reiteration of these steps on the subwatershed scale with the goal of refining the location of the source of the excess nutrient identified in phase 1. This document is intended to provide a general outline of how to approach diagnostic monitoring with links to established protocols for each monitoring element, and helpful tips and resources along the way.

This document should be used as a guide with the understanding that each monitoring program should be tailored to the specific goals of the waterbody and the available staff/resources. It is highly recommended that the professionals that will ultimately use the results of the monitoring data be consulted before embarking on SDM+ to ensure that the appropriate amount and type of data is collected.



Figures 1 and 2. Schematic drawing of Phase 1 - whole watershed sequential diagnostic monitoring (left panel) and Phase 2 – focused subwatershed sequential diagnostic monitoring (right panel).

Desktop Analysis

Using all available data, identify all flow paths/drainages into the target waterbody. GIS and other mapping sources are particularly useful in this effort. Other useful data tools include: wetland inventories, stream layers, LiDAR elevations, watershed delineation layers, hydrologic & hydraulic modeling, drain tile location and data, direct drainage information, municipal stormwater infrastructure, road ditch networks, culvert inventories, septic field location data, road networks (access for monitoring), known feedlot information, Total Maximum Daily Load studies (TMDL), Subwatershed Assessment (SWA) reports, and any other pertinent information - such as local knowledge. Much of this information can be obtained from local government partners or the state GIS Geospatial Commons database (<https://gisdata.mn.gov/>). It may also be beneficial to solicit public input (e.g., lake associations or local residents) regarding known outfalls or ditches that may not be indicated on map layers or in watershed studies. These data are easily compiled and accessed using GIS software.

From this effort, a list and map can be generated of all known potential inputs into the waterbody. These inputs should be temporarily numbered or identified to aid in the next steps of the process – field verification. However, prior to field verification, additional effort should be made to refine the list of potential nutrient sources.

Landlocked basins, or those which would only contribute to the watershed during an extreme precipitation event can be eliminated as potential source locations. Use professional judgement as to what precipitation event return interval is considered extreme (50 or 100-year event may be an appropriate starting point). Remember, to be considered a true source of excess nutrient, both high levels of nutrient concentration and the flow volume to deliver these excess nutrients downstream to the target waterbody are needed. Also take into consideration intermediary treatment (e.g., wetlands, ponds, etc.) that could act as natural treatment to a nutrient source. These areas should still be included in the monitoring effort but should be weighted accordingly in the final analysis. To achieve the greatest results

at the target waterbody, you will need to address the highest loading sources which aren't being naturally treated.

Field Verification

The information developed by the desktop analysis should be evaluated in the field prior to designing the monitoring plan. All potential water inputs should be evaluated to ensure that they are in fact flow paths to the target waterbody, that they do in fact contain flow or show evidence of recent/active flow and can be routinely accessed/monitored. In many cases, the flow path indicated in a GIS may be a dry road ditch or other drainage networks that cannot be readily monitored. Field verification can be difficult during dry periods of the year or in dry years. Look for signs of active flow such as recent erosion, sediment deposits, water marks, stained or bent vegetation, and/or hydrophytic plant species.

One of the key elements of field verification is identifying potential monitoring locations along the verified inputs/flow paths. The simplest approach is to focus on access to the input from public property – the most common being public road crossings. Most road rights-of-way are wide enough to allow sufficient access for monitoring of the input water resource. In remote areas, private access may be needed, and the outreach process for this type of access can be both difficult and time consumptive. As such, try to target public road access whenever possible. It may also be useful to reach out to local governments and road authorities to both verify the status of road ownership (public vs private) and give notice of the monitoring effort as to avoid conflicts or issues with disturbed equipment during the monitoring effort.

Monitoring Planning

Based on the information gathered during the field verification step, a monitoring plan can be developed that should effectively cover the entire watershed, while focusing on inputs that can be readily accessed for monitoring. This is often accomplished by sampling inputs low in the basin, close to the target waterbody (e.g., the outflows from the subwatersheds). Remember that this is the first step in the process and as such, the watershed should be viewed from the "10,000-foot" level. During this first phase of SDM+, it is important to assess the entire watershed and identify subwatersheds that may be contributing excess nutrients. Refinement of the actual location of the nutrient source will come in later phases of the monitoring effort that occur on the subwatershed scale.

To ensure coverage of the entire watershed, start with primary tributaries (highest stream order) closest to (or lowest in the watershed) the target waterbody. Monitoring sites will be dependent on access, so some flexibility may be needed. Also note that the details of the monitoring plan are contingent on the size of the waterbody. Some lakes may only have one or two tributaries (in that case monitor all tributaries), while others could have dozens and it may not be practical to monitor them all. In the latter case, it may be necessary to break the watershed in to sections and monitor over multiple years rotating between areas of the watershed to get full coverage of all major inputs into the target waterbody or focus your monitoring effort based on current and historic land use (see the historic aerial photography review section below).

The monitoring plan should incorporate a well thought out monitoring site naming convention. A simple and logical system should be developed that allows some adjustment in future phases yet avoids confusion during this phase. A numbering system to consider is "numbering clockwise by 5's" (e.g.,

monitoring locations 5, 10, 15, 20 for a 5's numbering system, Figure 3). This will allow for infilling if additional monitoring locations are identified during the monitoring effort (e.g., previously unknown drain tiles or ditches).

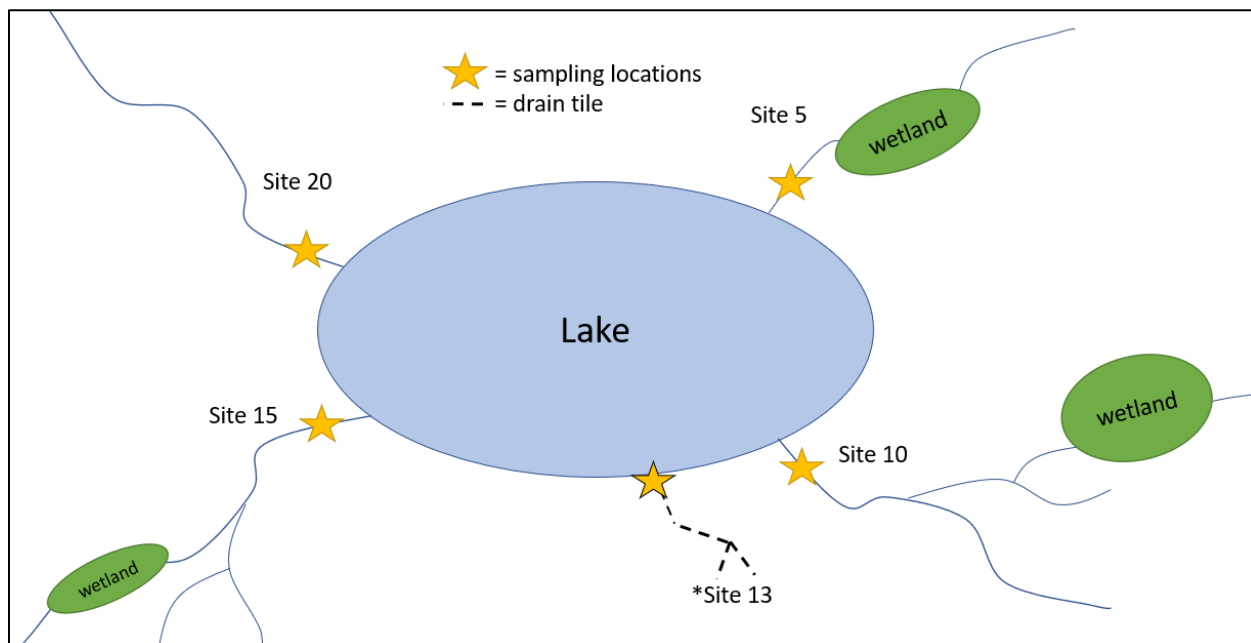


Figure 3. Schematic drawing of a typical sampling site numbering system – clockwise by 5's. This type of system can accommodate additional future sampling locations such as the drain tile (Site 13) depicted in the schematic. Note that the monitoring locations are low in the subwatershed (close to the target waterbody) to be sure to sample water from the entire subwatershed of each input.

It is also important during this planning phase to identify the commercial laboratory or technology that will be used for analyzing the water quality grab sample collected during the monitoring effort. It is recommended to investigate and obtain quotes from several laboratories prior to selecting a facility to analyze your water samples.

DIY Consideration: If using the DIY approach, it is important to select the best technology for the nutrient of concern in your waterbody. In most instances, the DIY colorimeter technology that is readily available will only analyze for one parameter, so multiple pieces of equipment may be needed if focusing on several nutrients. It is very important to fully understand the technology that will be used and make sure that staff are properly trained on the technology as it may involve the use of potentially hazardous chemicals. Each piece of equipment should come with detailed instructions on proper operation and processing of water samples. Additional training resources are also generally available from the manufacturer or can be viewed on websites like Youtube.com.

The planning phase is also a good time to procure all sampling equipment and supplies. The type of monitoring (traditional vs DIY) will determine the supplies needed. Both monitoring strategies will require similar equipment with the exception that DIY diagnostic will require syringes and filters (0.45 μm), a nutrient colorimeter(s) and associated reagent(s). If including flow monitoring in the SDM+ or DIY effort,

a set of discharge monitoring equipment will also be needed. A complete equipment list, with product links, can be found at the end of this document.

Phase 1 – Sequential Diagnostic Monitoring (The Early Years)

Flow monitoring and stream stage monitoring are key elements to the SDM+ effort in that they allow for the calculation of total discharge over a period of time, which in turn, allows for the total nutrient load to be determined. Discharge can be determined in multiple ways including area-velocity dataloggers for culverts and pipes, v-notch weirs, and flow meters and ratings curves for natural channels. For natural channel, these calculations require the development of a discharge ratings curve based on multiple measurements of discharge (over a wide range of flow regimes) as plotted against observed stream stage. Continuous level data, as collected by level logger, can then be applied to the developed ratings curve to determine the discharge for any given time (when the level logger was active). With these data, the total discharge, total nutrient load, and a flow-weighted load can be determined. This information allows for comparison of subwatersheds and the identification of the subwatershed containing the source of excess nutrient.

The main pieces of equipment needed for the SDM+ effort include: a flow meter or area-velocity data logger to measure discharge, staff gages to monitoring stream level or stage at each monitoring location, sample bottles to collect the water quality samples, and level loggers to measure a continuous stream stage. DIY SDM+ will also require the colorimeter or other equipment appropriate for monitoring the nutrient of concern.

Install Monitoring Equipment

As early as possible (ideally during spring melt) all monitoring equipment should be deployed at each sampling location, and sampling should begin. It is important to capture early spring runoff events as they often carry a large pulse of nutrient. If spring thaw occurs early, water grab samples and flow measurements can be taken before all monitoring equipment has been installed, provided the monitoring occurs at the location where the level loggers will eventually be installed. If monitoring before level logger and staff gage equipment is installed, be sure to capture the stream stage – this can be accomplished by measuring the vertical distance from a local benchmark (or set structure) to the water surface for a stage reference (typically the top or crown of a road culvert). If this benchmark is not already established, it can be set later on in the field season and the stage can then be back calculated.

Level Loggers and Staff Gages - Level loggers (either vented or non-vented) should be installed at the lowest point in the flow channel at each monitoring location to ensure they remain wet during the entire monitoring period. Reference the manufacturers recommendations for logger set up, installation, and maintenance. They should be installed in a stilling well and preferably be located near a culvert crossing where a local elevation benchmark or staff gage (Figure 4) can be established using survey grade GPS. If staff gages are not available, the top of the culvert often makes a good permanent benchmark. The benchmark/staff gage level should be recorded during each sampling event and during all discharge measurements as these readings must be applied to the level logger data to calibrate or verify the actual

recorded water surface elevations. To record stage from a benchmark, measure the vertical distance from the benchmark to the water surface and subtract this number from the known benchmark elevation – this value is the stage (as would be read from a staff gage). The stage data, combined with the discharge data is used later to calculate a discharge rating curve used to determine total flow over the monitoring season.

Non vented level loggers require the use of a secondary “open air” barometric pressure logger to compensate for the effects of atmospheric pressure. This secondary logger needs to be installed above the highest expected flow stage (in open air) at a given site. Generally, one barometric pressure logger can supply data for several non-vented level loggers installed within a ~5-mile radius. The data from this “open air” barometric logger will be used to correct the data from the “wet” level loggers. Vented level loggers do not require this data correction.



Figures 4 and 5. Stilling wells, staff gages (left panel), and level loggers (right panel) are essential tools in sequential diagnostic monitoring.

Stilling Wells - Level loggers should be installed in a stilling well (Figure 5, [BWSR Hydrologic Monitoring of Wetlands](#)) to secure and protect the logger. A stilling well is essentially a protective enclosure (usually made of PVC) for the level logger that holds the logger in the same position throughout the monitoring season as well as provides greater water surface stability and reduces the effects of wave action. Stilling wells can be purchased online from several scientific equipment dealers or constructed by drilling vent or flow holes into an appropriately sized PVC pipe. Hole size and pattern are subjective, but some recommendations can be found by searching online.

Data Collection

Flow Monitoring - Flow or discharge monitoring should be conducted at each monitoring location throughout the monitoring year over a range of stages such as low flow, base flow, small precipitation events, and large precipitation events ([USGS Guidance](#)). Flow monitoring involves taking a series of flow measurements (with a flow meter) and water depths across a cross section of a stream or culvert. This allows the calculation of discharge at each location (cell) along the cross section. When the values are added, flow or discharge for that cross section is determined with great accuracy ([EPA Guidance](#)).

Discharge and stream depth for each cross-section cell should be recorded on a data sheet or a field notebook and entered into simple spreadsheets back at the office to calculate discharge. A template discharge spreadsheet can be downloaded from the internet ([link](#)) or be obtained from a government agency such as the USGS or DNR. Modern flow meters have the capacity to calculate the discharge for the cross-section instantaneously during the monitoring event. This can save time and reduce the likelihood of data transfer error, but these meters are often costly.

The flow data will be used along with staff gage data to develop a rating curve for stream discharge and will ultimately be paired with the water quality grab sample results to determine “flow-weighted loads” or the amount of load being exported by the tributary over a given time (discussed in later sections).

Stream Stage and Level Loggers – Stream stage should be recorded during each water quality grab sample event and during discharge monitoring (to help develop a discharge ratings curve). Typically, stage is measured by noting the staff gage reading (if installed) or measuring down from the established benchmark to determine the water surface elevation or stream stage (benchmark elevation minus the vertical distance to water surface equals the actual water surface elevation).

Level loggers should be retrieved, downloaded, and redeployed periodically throughout the monitoring season, typically every 2 to 3 weeks to ensure the logger data is being recorded properly, and to determine if logger malfunctions have occurred - this will require close inspection of the data after download to assess quality and/or identify abnormalities in the data set. See the manufacturer’s recommendations for downloading and data QA/QC.

Data downloads are usually planned during flow monitoring efforts to reduce field and travel time. A rugged weather resistant laptop or tablet with the logger software installed can be used for such field work. After download, be sure to reinstall the logger at the same elevation as before to maintain a consistent data set– a stilling well can help to ensure this. Also, remember to remove all level loggers at the end of the monitoring season before frost as ice can rupture the logger sensor diaphragm and may damage the internal components of the logger. Note: If using a non-vented level logger, barometric pressure must be accounted for, and logger data must be corrected accordingly (see the level logger manufacturer’s guidance for this procedure).

Water Quality Grab Samples – Water quality (WQ) grab samples should be collected during or immediately after a precipitation event of a given value that is dependent on watershed size and land use. Professional judgement should be used to determine what amount of precipitation yields flow in the target subwatershed. In the Comfort Lake – Forest Lake Watershed District, rain events greater than 0.75 inches result in increased flow in a natural flow channel. Flashier or urban systems may warrant monitoring of

smaller events.. Remember, runoff is dependent on rainfall frequency and intensity, the dominant land use of the subwatershed (i.e., urban, agricultural, mixed land use, forested), and slope of the drainage area. Consider these factors when determining the minimum precipitation event for monitoring. Other considerations regarding WQ sampling frequency are staffing and the need to monitor a representative number of precipitation events over the entire open water season. In this regard, adaptive management may come into play if there are wet or dry periods with a monitoring season. Websites like weatherunderground.com, noaa.gov or cocorahs.org are good resources for precipitation estimates and totals.

Collecting WQ grab samples is quick and fairly straightforward – simply collect a small volume of water from the thalweg of the flow channel during or immediately after a storm event. Care should be taken to avoid disturbance of the stream bed and to ensure the collection bottle has been properly cleaned to prevent cross contamination (see the Sample Collection Procedures and Notes section at the end of this document for additional detail and recommendations). Commercial laboratory water grab sample analysis may require that a fixative chemical is added to the sample for preservation – laboratories usually provide the bottles and fixative. WQ samples should be kept on ice and delivered to the lab or analyzed (DIY) in a timely manner after collection, usually within 24 hours for lab processing or within a few hours for DIY analysis (see the DIY colorimeter manufacturer’s recommendations.)

An important aspect of WQ grab sampling is documentation. All samples should be labeled with the date, time, monitoring location, and staff who collected the sample. Similarly, a monitoring data sheet (See example in the Additional Resources section below) with this same information and any additional notes should be recorded and kept for each monitoring event. The data sheet should also contain additional information such as the stage or gage reading at the time of the sample and the precipitation total for the monitoring event (if known). This information should be entered into a database upon return from the field.

As many of the samples will be collected from road rights-of-way, safety should be considered during all monitoring events. Park vehicles as far off the roadway as is possible, wear brightly colored clothes or hi-visibility vests and collect the data in a timely manner. Consider installing flashing safety lights on vehicles or use the vehicle’s emergency lights during monitoring and be sure to use extra caution when merging back into traffic from the road shoulder. Some roadways may be too dangerous, thus parking a distance away and walking to the site may be the safer option.

DIY Considerations: DIY WQ grab sampling follows the same steps as presented above, except that no fixative chemicals are needed to preserve the grab samples and the data sheets/database should include a section for results as all WQ grab samples should be analyzed within a few hours of collection. Analyzing the samples should follow the protocols included with the colorimeter or other technology chosen for the DIY monitoring effort. Generally, the processing and analysis steps include filtering the water sample through a 0.45-micron filter, adding a chemical reagent, waiting for several minutes for a color change and then running the sample through the colorimeter (Figure 6). Total time per sample is usually less than 3-5 minutes. Alternatively, WQ samples can be filtered and frozen for later analysis. Care should be taken to ensure no cross contamination of samples (proper rinsing/cleaning between samples) and proper PPE should be employed as the chemical reagents needed may be caustic or otherwise hazardous. Sample readings/results should be immediately recorded on the monitoring data sheet and entered into

a database upon completion of the sampling event. All data sheets should be kept for future reference as they are useful during the data analysis phase.



Figure 6. HACH Colorimeter and accessories used by the Comfort Lake–Forest Later Watershed District for their DIY sequential diagnostic monitoring orthophosphate monitoring effort. Total cost for all equipment and supplies pictured was less than \$700. After the initial investment in equipment, it costs less than \$50 to analyze 100 water samples, or ~\$0.50 per sample (not including staff time).

Data Entry/Database – Data tracking and organization is key to any SDM+ program. Information collected during a sampling event, however minor, may prove invaluable when interpreting the data. All observations and notes should be recorded on field data sheets and kept until completion of the diagnostic investigation – if not longer. All data should be entered into a database immediately after the monitoring event to decrease the likelihood of entry error or general loss of data. Databases can be as simple as an Excel or Access spreadsheet (see example below in the Additional Resources section), or a more robust form for large complicated diagnostic efforts. At a minimum, the database should be set up to allow future analysis with minimal data reformatting.

Data Analysis

Upon completion of the first year of diagnostic monitoring, all data should be analyzed to determine if any nutrient load trends can be identified. Depending on the amount of precipitation (or lack thereof) during the monitoring season, or the complexity of the watershed, one year of data collection may not be sufficient to properly identify sources of nutrient load within a watershed or subwatershed. Furthermore, one monitoring season may not properly account for any year-to-year variability of nutrient loading. During drought and/or wet years, data can be skewed, and this may lead to misinterpretation of the

results. Therefore, it is recommended that the first phase of diagnostic monitoring occurs over several years and includes at least one precipitation year with “near-normal” precipitation.

Flow Data – Discharge and stage data can be used to develop a discharge ratings curve that, when combined with level logger stage data, will allow for the determination of the discharge at any given point in time (based off stage height). These values then allow for the calculation of total discharge for a period of time (e.g., during the monitoring season). This information, when combined with the water quality data, enables the calculation of flow-weighted mean load concentrations. These flow-weighted mean load values are of particular importance as they consider the effect of discharge on nutrient load transport and thus allow for direct comparison between subwatersheds as potential sources of nutrient loading to the water resource of concern.

The discharge rating curve can be developed based on data from the discharge monitoring (flow gauging) and stage measurement readings collected during flow monitoring. A rating curve correlates the actual measured discharge to the measured stage or staff gage reading and thus determines discharge for a given stage point ([USGS Guidance](#)). The ratings curve can then be used to determine a “discrete” discharge value by referencing the continuous stage measurements from the level logger to the ratings curve. In this manner, discharge can be determined for any point in time, thus informing the discharge when a water quality grab sample was taken. These data can also then be used for calculating the total discharge (for a period of time) needed to determine both total load and flow-weighted mean load concentrations (see section below).

DIY Considerations: A DIY alternative to the use of level loggers and the development of a ratings curve is to take a discharge measurement during every sampling event at each monitoring location for a “real time” discharge. This would allow for the calculation of load during a precipitation event but would not allow for the calculation total load for the monitoring season nor allow for calculation of the flow-weighted mean load concentrations (as there is no record of continuous flow). As such, this approach is only practical for a very small-scale or a preliminary “screening” DIY diagnostic monitoring effort as it will only provide a portion of the data needed to fully understand nutrient loading in the watershed.

An advantage of the ratings curve and level logger methodology is that discharge monitoring and WQ sampling can be independent of each other, thus allowing field time to be spread over the work week as opposed to during a storm event. Some of the flow measurements can be (and should be) taken during non-monitored WQ events or at base flow to improve the accuracy of the ratings curve.

Water Quality Grab Samples – At the end of the monitoring season, look for values in your water quality dataset that are higher than what are considered normal background levels for a particular nutrient. Normal nutrient background levels will differ regionally based on land use, soils, and parent geology. For example, phosphorus background levels in the Comfort Lake–Forest Lake Watershed District are generally under 0.15 mg/l, and readings above this value are considered elevated. This background value was determined through the SDM+ process by collecting numerous samples across the watershed over several years of diagnostic monitoring. As such, it may take several years of monitoring and data to get a sense of

both normal background and elevated nutrient levels for your area. Other resources include state (MPCA) and federal nutrient standards and values from scientific literature.

When looking for true hot spots or sources of nutrient, values that are double or triple the normal background level should be flagged as opposed to values at or just above background readings. These highly abnormal readings are a strong indication of a potential nutrient hot spot. However, do not fully discount readings that are slightly elevated. If no “hot spots” are identified, and if there is steady stream flow, a subwatershed with moderately elevated nutrient levels may be a “chronic” contributor of a nutrient to the target waterbody (e.g., a steady flow of moderately elevated nutrient loads.) Thus, it is important to consider the effect of flow on nutrient load delivery.

Flow-Weighted Mean Load – Once potential areas with elevated nutrient levels have been identified, these subwatersheds should be viewed in the context of how discharge impacts nutrient loading. Remember, to be considered a true source of excess nutrient, both high levels of nutrient and the flow to deliver these excess nutrients downstream to the target waterbody are needed. As such, water quality data and flow data should be used to calculate an average flow-weighted mean load for each tributary or flow path monitored during Phase 1. This will allow for direct comparison of subwatersheds and properly identify the sources of excess nutrient loading.

Flow-weighted mean load concentrations can be calculated by dividing the total load over the estimation time period by the total streamflow. The time-weighted mean concentration is calculated as the average of the daily concentrations for the same time period ([EPA Guidance](#)). When viewed in this context, data can be properly compared and subwatersheds that are potentially contributing excess nutrient to the target waterbody can be identified. This is, however, only the culmination of the first phase of the systematic diagnostic monitoring effort. Further refinement of the actual nutrient source within a watershed or subwatershed is needed to maximize the mitigation of these excess nutrients in a timely and cost-effective manner.

DIY Considerations: Flow monitoring may not be practical for some DIY diagnostic monitoring efforts as it requires specialized equipment, software, and is time consuming. As such, a qualitative approach can be employed to get a sense of the impact of discharge on nutrient loading. Monitoring staff should take note of flow (visual estimation) during grab sampling and this information can be used to provide some context when comparing grab sample data. For example, staff may indicate flow is stagnant or no flow (standing water), low flow (just a trickle), steady flow (noticeable flow within the bankfull prism of the tributary), or high flow (swift flow at or above the bankfull stream stage). Though no numbers can be applied to determine a flow weighting for this data, potential sources can be eliminated based on a lack of flow to transport the load downstream to the target water body. Thus, by a process of elimination the nutrient source can be refined. This approach can be used as a good screening tool before embarking on a more targeted traditional SDM+ effort.

Phase 2 - Subwatershed Monitoring (Refinement / Targeting)

During the first phase of Sequential Diagnostic Monitoring, all the main inputs into the target waterbody should have been monitored (Figure 1). This process hopefully identified the key subwatersheds

responsible for the majority of load exported to the target waterbody (remember the Pareto Principle). In Phase 2, focus should now switch to the subwatershed scale (Figure 2), to identify the main source or location within the subwatersheds (identified in Phase 1) that are exporting the excess nutrient. Identification of the nutrient sources allows for targeted mitigation/restoration to remove or reduce these sources. This targeting enables rapid and cost-effective reduction of the nutrient load to the waterbody.

Subwatershed diagnostic monitoring is conducted in a similar manner as described above, only on the subwatershed scale. Similar to full watershed SDM+, desktop, field verification, and planning steps are needed to identify all inputs into the subwatershed and identify appropriate monitoring locations. Both WQ grab sampling and flow monitoring would be conducted in accordance with the protocol outlined in phase 1. In some cases, the subwatershed requires a more thorough and detailed monitoring plan as there may be a large number of potential inputs (tributaries, wetlands, or other water resources) or nutrient sources. If funds are limited, it may be necessary to focus on a single sub-shed or catchment within the subwatershed and rotate through the subwatershed in subsequent years or have a multi-year sequential approach looking at the major inputs in the subwatershed in year 1 and then narrowing in on the sources in subsequent years.

An additional resource or tool that can be used to focus the subwatershed monitoring efforts is historic aerial photography. The University of Minnesota has an online repository of historic aerial photos dating back to the 1930's (<https://apps.lib.umn.edu/mhapo/>). Investigation of historic aerial photos may point to historic land management practices that may no longer be visible 50 to 100 years later but may have a lasting impact on current water quality. A historic photo review may identify historic cattle, dairy, or livestock operations and associated manure storage areas [traditionally in an adjacent low (wetland) area], wetland ditching, stream straightening/manipulations, or other land clearing/alterations. These areas may be a good starting point for the subwatershed diagnostic monitoring effort or at least should be included in the effort.

Remote areas or areas with contiguous wetland complexes present a monitoring challenge. If there is no access to a contributing tributary/wetland, attempt to sample the main flow path (if accessible) both directly upstream and downstream of the confluence (Figure 7) with the isolated (non-accessible) area. The results from these upstream and downstream monitoring locations can then be compared to determine if the load originates from the isolated area – a noticeable increase in nutrient levels in the downstream location, as compared to the upstream location would be seen. When monitoring large contiguous wetland complexes or areas with no direct drainages, consider taking grab samples along the main channel or “road pinch points” at accessible locations along its flow path (Figure 8). This approach can help identify where the load begins to increase on the main flow path/channel by comparison of upstream to downstream results – thus identifying where within the wetland complex the load may originate. If the nutrient load steadily increases longitudinally from upstream to downstream, the entire wetland complex may be degraded to such an extent that the entire complex may be exporting nutrient. In this case, consider mitigation at the most downstream location of the wetland complex or restoration of the hydrology of the entire complex.

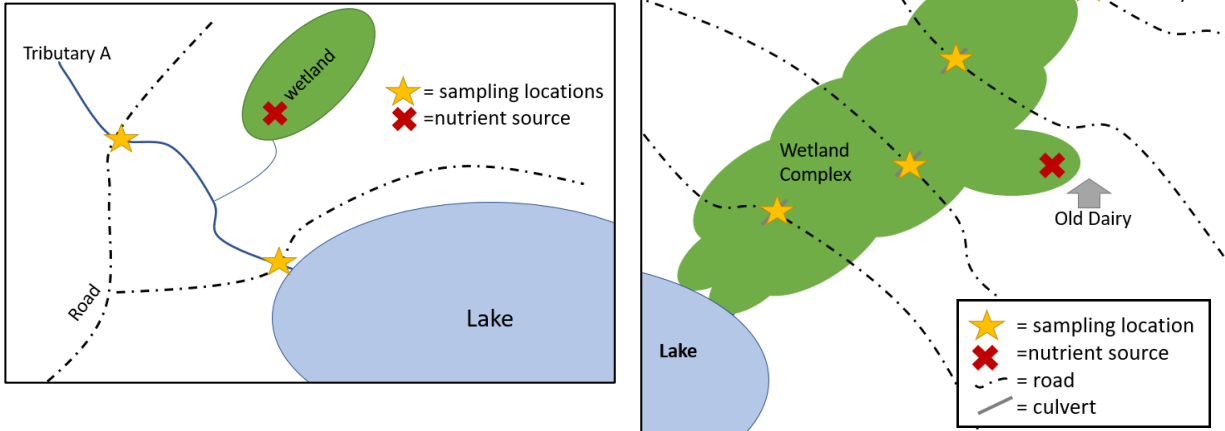


Figure 7 and 8. Schematic drawing of sampling locations for remote or inaccessible sites (left panel) or for large wetland complexes (right panel).

Additional Refinement Techniques

The following are a few additional refinement techniques or tools that could be used in conjunction with the SDM+ effort to identify or refine the location of a nutrient load. The techniques are not implicit to a SDM+ effort but can be useful to further locate a nutrient source after the SDM+ effort has been completed or can be useful during the SDM+ planning process.

Historic Photography

As mentioned earlier, in the Phase 2 SDM+ section above, historic aerial photography can be a useful tool in identifying past land practices that may have been visually erased due to recent changes in land uses, yet still physically remain on the landscape (<https://apps.lib.umn.edu/mhapo/>). One hundred years ago there were an estimated 178,500 farms throughout Minnesota, many of which were adjacent to, and dependent upon open water. As we know, many of the land management practices during this period were not focused on the long-term sustainability of the landscape nor the protection of the adjacent water resource – as is evident in the common practice of routing manure and wastewater directly into wetlands, streams, and lakes. These historic legacy loads, or “land management baggage”, left on the landscape may represent a significant source of hidden nutrient load for much of the state of MN, presently and into the future, if not addressed.

Since the turn of the century, the number of active farms throughout the state has steadily declined to a number today that is approximately 38% of what it was (~68,500 farms in total, but just a 15.6% reduction in farm acres, https://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Minnesota/index.php). The abandoned farmsteads have been developed, build over, and sprawled upon to the extent that most people would not know that they were once agriculture fields or cattle barnyards. As such, there may be remnant or legacy sources of nutrients “hidden” in plain sight.

Historic aerial photography allows a glimpse, however fleeting, into our past and provides some indication of past land management. Aerial photography may allow for the identification of past livestock yards,

areas of erosion, shoreline recession, loss of riparian vegetation, and wetland alteration. Further investigation into these areas may reveal a legacy load of nutrient, often in an adjacent wetland or other water resource. Figures 9 and 10 indicate just such a situation near Bone Lake in Washington County, where a wetland adjacent to a past dairy farm was found to have highly elevated phosphorus levels in its soils. The contaminated wetland soils were eventually excavated to remove this chronic source of nutrient from flowing into Bone Lake.



Figures 9 and 10. 1964 aerial photography indicating an active dairy farm near Bone Lake in Washington County (left panel) and a 2019 Google Earth image of the same area. No evidence of the farm remains in 2019. The 1964 image indicates cows in the barnyard right down to the wetland boundary. Soil samples taken from the wetland found phosphorus levels three to ten times normal background levels – likely from manure laden runoff entering into the wetland over several decades given the natural swale that drained from where the barnyard was located toward the wetland.

Local Knowledge

The Bone Lake dairy mentioned above was not initially identified via a historic aerial photography review. It was identified by another useful source of information – a local historian who grew up near the dairy farm and was one of the few people to remember its existence. In instances where the source of nutrient is unclear or difficult to determine through the SDM+ effort, it may prove useful to seek out a longtime resident to discuss the water resource of concern and ask them about landscape level change, past land management, and changes in water quality. Their historical knowledge may point to or direct the SDM+ effort toward an area of the subwatershed or help to narrow the scope of a historic aerial photography review – as was the case for the Bone Lake dairy farm. Additional data will, of course, be needed to verify this location as a nutrient source. This can be accomplished through a localized diagnostic monitoring effort, or by collecting and analyzing soil samples directly from the area of interest – ideally through both efforts.

Soil Samples

Soil samples can be collected by hand from an area of interest, whether it be a floodplain, riparian area, wetland, or lake to identify the presence of remnant legacy nutrients. For the Bone Lake dairy mentioned

above, this involved taking a series of soil samples from the wetland adjacent to the past farm operation. Samples focused on the area nearest the historic dairy yard, but also covered the entirety of the wetland to determine the extent of the contamination (Figure 11).

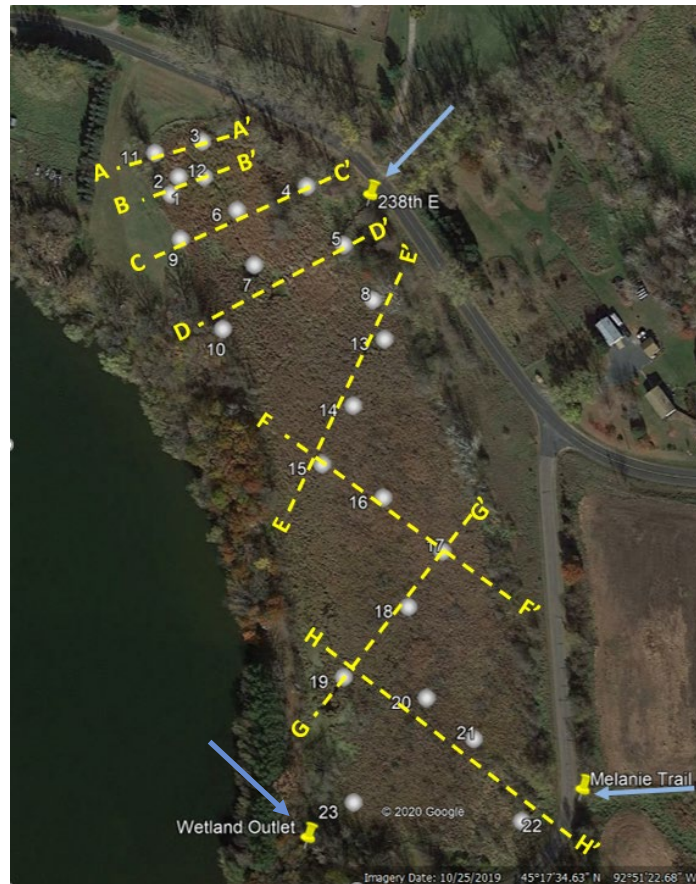


Figure 11. Plan view of the Bone Lake dairy wetland soil boring locations (grey dots) and transects (yellow dashed lines). The blue arrows and yellow pins indicate sampling locations for the localized diagnostic effort that was also employed to further evaluate this wetland as a source of excess nutrients for Bone Lake.

Soil samples were taken using a hand auger (Figure 12) to a depth of approximately four feet or down to the confining layer (clay) or native wetland soils (peat). Each soil layer within the boring was identified by soil type and color (Munsell), and an approximately 50 to 100-gram soil sample was collected for later laboratory analysis. Soil samples should be clearly labeled with the sample location and soil sample depth or layer indicated on the sample bag and all information collected should also be entered onto a field data sheet. Data sheets should be retained for later use in submitting samples to the laboratory and for reference during data interpretation. For the Bone Lake dairy wetland, the top 14 to 24 inches of mucky soils contained the highest concentrations of phosphorus – generally at levels of three to ten times the natural background levels for this type of wetland (Table 1, Figure 13). Soil samples collected through this effort should be kept on ice or frozen prior to delivery to the laboratory for analysis. To reduce costs, a subsample of these soil samples could be submitted for analysis, and based on results, additional samples

could be submitted to fill in the data set. For example, from the initial laboratory results, it may be apparent that a legacy load does not exist, or that the nutrients are not elevated in a certain soil type, thus reducing the need for analysis in this soil type or in certain locations.



Figure 12. Soil borings being collected using a hand auger in the Bone Lake dairy wetland (left panel) and a representation of the soil samples collected (right panel).

Table 1. An excerpt of the results from the Bone Lake dairy Wetland soil borings for transect B (northern end of the wetland near the historic dairy yard). The upper table represents phosphorus concentration in mg/l and the lower table indicates soil type. Normal wetland background levels for this type of wetland are less than 550 mg/l for phosphorus. In the table below, cells in green are within normal ranges and those in red or dark red are considered elevated.

Transect B-B'								
<i>TP Concentrations:</i>								
Soil Boring	1-6"	7-12"	13-18"	19-24"	25-30"	31-36"	37-42"	43-48"
1	3,100		5,210					802
2	260				678		880	309
12	2,800		910					
<i>Soil Type:</i>								
Soil Boring	1-6"	7-12"	13-18"	19-24"	25-30"	31-36"	37-42"	43-48"
1	P/M-P	M-P	M	M	M	M	M	M
2	M-S	M	M	M	M	M	M-P	P-M/ P
12	M-P	M-P	M-P/P	P	P	P	P	P



Figure 13. Plan view of the Bone Lake dairy wetland soil boring locations nearest to the past dairy feedlot with the soil boring phosphorus concentration results overlaid. The green colors indicate phosphorus levels in the normal ranges and the red or dark red colors indicate elevated levels. The yellow dashed line indicates the approximate area of the wetland that was excavated to remove the nutrient laden soils.

Equipment/Tools

The following is a brief list of some of the available equipment, tools, and guidance documents that can be used for sequential diagnostic monitoring. It is by no mean an all-inclusive list. It represents equipment and tools that are familiar to the authors of this protocol, and as such, should be only used as a starting point when researching or purchasing monitoring equipment or searching for guidance documents.

General Monitoring Protocols and Guidance

MN Pollution Control Agency – Basic Water Quality Monitoring Techniques

<https://www.pca.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/wq-iw3-50-8.pdf>

MN BWSR – Hydrologic Monitoring of Wetlands 2013 -

https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwjB2KHP2uH0AhV3AZ0JHTGYDGkQFnoECAwQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fbwsr.state.mn.us%2Fsites%2Fdefault%2Ffiles%2F201812%2FWETLANDS_delin_Hydrologic_Monitoring_of_Wetlands_Guidance_BWSR.pdf&usg=AOvVaw0bRVLFCMi2Ble0n0w5csiP

EPA Load Estimate guidance

<https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwjG8IWk8>

=

[P0AhXQWM0KHUOABRgQFnoECAIQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.epa.gov%2Fsites%2Fdefault%2Ffiles%2F201605%2Fdocuments%2Ftech_notes_8_dec_2013_load.pdf&usg=AOvVaw2CORXZ8nxmG1DCMypaW55D](https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/201605/documents/tech_notes_8_dec_2013_load.pdf&usg=AOvVaw2CORXZ8nxmG1DCMypaW55D)

USGS Discharge Monitoring Guidance - https://www.usgs.gov/special-topics/water-science-school/science/how-streamflow-measured?qt-science_center_objects=0#qt-science_center_objects)

UMN Historic Aerial Photography - <https://apps.lib.umn.edu/mhapo/>

GIS and Appropriate Data Layers

ArcGIS – Esri product, subscription needed. <https://www.esri.com/en-us/home>

QGIS – free GIS. <https://qgis.org/en/site/>

[Minnesota Geospatial Commons. https://gisdata.mn.gov/](https://gisdata.mn.gov/)

Level Loggers and Associated Software

Vented level loggers: when purchasing **any** level logger, choose the lowest PSI/level range expected at the site; usually loggers that can measure water level between 0-15 feet will be the most accurate.

1. In-Situ LevelTROLL 500: <https://in-situ.com/us/level-troll-500-data-logger>
2. Solinst LevelVent 5: <https://www.solinst.com/products/dataloggers-and-telemetry/3250-levelvent/levelvent.php>
3. Global Water Logger: https://www.forestry-suppliers.com/product_pages/products.php?mi=40911&itemnum=90714&redir=Y

Non-vented level loggers - will also need to purchase and install a barometric pressure logger

1. Solinst Levellogger 5: <https://www.solinst.com/products/dataloggers-and-telemetry/3001-levellogger-series/levellogger/>
2. In-Situ LevelTROLL 400: <https://in-situ.com/us/level-troll-400-data-logger>
3. Onset Hobo logger: <https://www.onsetcomp.com/products/data-loggers/u20-001-04/>

Barometric pressure logger - only needed if using non-vented level loggers

1. Solinst Barrologger 5: <https://www.solinst.com/products/dataloggers-and-telemetry/3001-levellogger-series/levellogger/datasheet/barometric-compensation.php>
2. In-Situ BarroTROLL: <https://in-situ.com/us/rugged-barotroll-data-logger>

Stilling wells - slotted PVC pipe with screen to house the loggers

https://www.shop-esp.com/2-x-48-PVC-Water-Well-Screen-020brPlain-Ends-Sch40-P3592.aspx?gclid=EAlaIqobChMIg6e8hLbD9AIvP2xvBB34-QJmEAQYBCABEGKuB_D_BwE

associated mounting post (i.e., T-post, fence post, etc.)

PVC caps (to be installed at the bottom of the well- drill a few ¼” holes through well cap to allow water drainage through the bottom of the well & cap)

Discharge Monitoring

Flow meter

1. Hach FH950: <https://www.hach.com/fh950-portable-flow-meter-velocity-depth-system-with-20-cable/product?id=12287984105&source=googleshopping&locale=en-US>
2. Sontek FlowTracker2: <https://www.sontek.com/flowtracker2>

Associated Accessories – 50 ft tape measure, wading rod, field book or data sheet

Universal Top-set Wading Rod: <https://prph2o.com/wading-rods/> (formerly Rickly.com)

Water Quality Grab Samples

Water sample collection bottles (100 -500 ml) with stabilizing reagents (i.e., H₂SO₄ for TP)

May be available from the laboratory contracted to analyze the grab samples

DIY Specific Equipment

Colorimeter or alternative meter

Hach DR300 Colorimeter: <https://www.hach.com/colorimeters/dr300-pocket-colorimeter>

Nutrient Specific Reagents

<https://www.hach.com>

Grab Sample Bottles: (100 - 200 ml)-no stabilizing chemicals needed

Syringe and 0.45-micron filters (with Luer locks)

1. 100ml Syringe with Luer lock: available at Amazon.com
2. 0.45 micron filters with Luer lock: https://www.amazon.com/Simsii-Syringe-Filter-NylonDiameter/dp/B01BNA0280/ref=sr_1_5?keywords=0.45+micron+filters+with+lure+locks&qid=1637354477&sr=8-5

Additional Equipment Considerations

First aid kit

reflective vest or safety outerwear

wader, hip boots or knee-high (muck) boots

life jacket

Additional Resources

Citizen Assisted DIY Monitoring

Natural Resource agencies often lament that they don't have the funding or "cannot afford to do monitoring." While the balance between implementation and monitoring can be appreciated, this protocol strives to offer a cost-effective alternative to the standard SDM+ effort – the DIY diagnostic monitoring strategy. Though not as precise as a traditional SDM+ effort, it is a useful tool and can go a long way in narrowing in upon a nutrient load.

To further reduce the expenses associated with a DIY monitoring diagnostic effort, citizen scientists can be utilized for water quality grab sample collection. Local residents can be organized and trained to collect grab samples during or immediately after a precipitation event near their residences. This has the advantage of both reducing staff time and allowing for sample collection after normal work hours or on the weekend - when precipitation events often occur. Samples can be kept chilled and delivered to the agency for analysis the next workday or filtered by the citizen scientist and frozen for later drop off and analysis. Drawbacks of this strategy include the amount of staff time dedicated to volunteer outreach, coordination, and training, and the availability of volunteers to collect samples during a precipitation event - as they may be reluctant to change their schedules to accommodate water quality grab sampling (e.g., prioritize the monitoring event). As such, Citizen Assisted DIY monitoring can provide some inexpensive data, but may not provide a data set as robust as is needed for a full diagnostic effort. Staff may need to follow up and collect grab samples missed by the citizen scientists or evaluate the data set with the proper context in mind.

Example Forms

DIY Monitoring Event				Date:	Staff:	Drainage:	known Precip: _____ inches
sample	Site	time	staff gage / stream stage	notes			Reading mg/l Ortho P
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							
9							
10							
11							
12							
13							
14							
15							
16							
17							
18							
19							
20							

Example of a basic DIY field data sheet

AutoSave WQ Data_Compiled_2020_EOR_vs_CAT (version 2).xlsx - Last Modified: Just now


File Home Insert Page Layout Formulas Data Review View Help Acrobat

Clipboard Font Alignment Number Styles

UPDATES AVAILABLE Updates for Office are ready to be installed, but first we need to close some apps. Update now

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
1	Moody Lake											
2												
3	Site name	Date	Time	TP [mg/L]	Ortho P [mg/L]	TSS [mg/L]	Fe [mg/L]	Ortho:TP	Fe:TP	Notes		
4	4THO	3/12/2020	10:40	0.239	0.198	4.0	1790	83%	7.5	Snowmelt grab		
5	LENDT	3/12/2020	11:00	0.035	0.006	2.8		17%		Snowmelt grab		
6	LOFT	3/12/2020	11:12	1.041	0.597	38.0		57%		Snowmelt grab		
7	M250	3/12/2020	9:22	0.207	0.125	4.6		60%		Snowmelt grab		
8	M256	3/12/2020	9:41	0.196	0.140	5.8	1330	71%	6.8	Snowmelt grab		
9	MINL	3/12/2020	10:23	0.238	0.179	4.2		75%		Snowmelt grab		
10	PETD	3/12/2020	10:10	0.244	0.178	6.0		73%		Snowmelt grab		
11	SINL	3/12/2020	9:12	0.261	0.167	6.0		64%		Snowmelt grab		
12	WAB	3/12/2020	9:18	0.181	0.101	3.6		56%		Snowmelt grab		
13	WETC	3/12/2020	9:55	0.222	0.158	3.2	1540	71%	6.9	Snowmelt grab		
14	4THO	3/26/2020	8:25	0.091	0.038	4.8	698	42%	7.7	Post snowmelt event		
15	LENDT	3/26/2020	8:45	0.023	0.003	1.4		13%		Post snowmelt event		
16	M250	3/26/2020	9:15	0.166	0.101	4.2		61%		Post snowmelt event		
17	M256	3/26/2020	8:55	0.111	0.061	7.0	778	55%	7.0	Post snowmelt event		
18	MINL	3/26/2020	10:25	0.140	0.077	4.2		55%		Post snowmelt event		
19	PETD	3/26/2020	10:15	0.163	0.084	3.6		52%		Post snowmelt event		
20	SINL	3/26/2020	9:37	0.132	0.088	1.4		67%		Post snowmelt event		
21	WAB	3/26/2020	9:27	0.156	0.098	2.8		63%		Post snowmelt event		
22	WETC	3/26/2020	9:55	0.160	0.089	3.0	785	56%	4.9	Post snowmelt event		
23	4THO	4/16/2020	9:08	0.072	0.044	2.0		61%		Post snowstorm grab sample		
24	LENDT	4/16/2020	9:29	0.047	0.023	1.4		49%		Post snowstorm grab sample		
25	M250	4/16/2020	9:56	0.123	0.080	2.6		65%		Post snowstorm grab sample		
26	M256	4/16/2020	11:52	0.036	0.019	<1.00		53%		Post snowstorm grab sample		
27	MINL	4/16/2020	8:58	0.129	0.075	2.6		58%		Post snowstorm grab sample		
28	PETD	4/16/2020	10:15	0.145	0.097	25.0		67%		Post snowstorm grab sample		
29	SINL	4/16/2020	9:42	0.107	0.079	<1.00		74%		Post snowstorm grab sample		
30	WAB	4/16/2020	9:49	0.122	0.073	<1.00		60%		Post snowstorm grab sample		
31	WETC	4/16/2020	10:04	0.129	0.091	2.4		71%		Post snowstorm grab sample		
32	4THO	4/29/2020	10:01	0.089	0.05	2.2		56%		Post rain event sample		
33	LENDT	4/29/2020	10:13	0.094	0.066	20		70%		Post rain event sample		
34	M250	4/29/2020	11:03	0.152	0.103	4		68%		Post rain event sample		
35	M256	4/29/2020	10:50	0.081	0.054	1.2		67%		Post rain event sample		
36	MINL	4/29/2020	9:46	0.055	0.016	4.8		29%		Post rain event sample		
37	PETD	4/29/2020	10:32	0.155	0.114	5.6		74%		Post rain event sample		
38	SINL	4/29/2020	11:13	0.18	0.15	5.2		83%		Post rain event sample		

Example of a basic monitoring Excel database

 Emmons & Olivier Resources, Inc. 7030 6th Street North Oakdale, MN 55128 water ecology community				Project:	South Moody Wetland (SMW)
				Location:	
			Date:	11/2/2020	
			Boring Number:	16	
(651) 770-8448			Personnel:	JM/BE	
Soil Boring Log - Bucket Auger					
Depth [in]	Soil Type	Color	# Mottles/Color	Moisture Content	Notes
0-10	loamy peat	10YR 2/2		saturated	4" surface water
10-14	muck	10YR 2/1		not saturated	
14-35	sand	10YR 3/2		saturated	sloppy, unconsolidated sand - difficult to collect
35-40	sandy clay	10YR 3/2		saturated	

Example of a Soil Boring Data Sheet from a wetland near Moody Lake, Chisago County.

Sample Collection Procedures and Notes

Sample Collection/ Safety

Access from the Stream Bank

Wherever practical, samples should be collected at mid-stream rather than near the shore. Samples collected from mid-stream reduce the possibilities of contamination from shore effects such as back eddies, seepage from near-shore soils, and atmospheric components such as pollen concentrated in slow moving water. Samples should not be taken in back eddies or brackish waters unless required by the monitoring program objectives. The most important issue to consider when deciding where the sample should be collected from is SAFETY. If the flow is sufficiently slow that the collector can wade into the stream without risk, then the sample may be collected at a depth that does not pose a safety threat to the sampler. Never wade into water that appears deep or is fast flowing. When conditions dictate that the sample be taken from the stream bank, deviations from the standard protocol should be accurately documented on the field data sheet or in a logbook and transferred to the database as soon as possible. Samplers must be wary of a non-visible bottom under turbid conditions.

Sampling While Wading Protocol

1. Obtain labeled bottles and wade into the river downstream from the point at which you will collect the samples, and then wade upstream to the sample site. This ensures that you will not disturb sediments upstream of the sample point. Attach safety line if conditions have any significant risk
2. Stand perpendicular to the flow and face upstream
3. Remove the lid and hold it aside without touching the inner surface. If rinsing is required for the type of bottle, fill and rinse three times (Note: No need to rinse lab bottles, they are clean and some bottles contain a preservative)
4. With your other hand, grasp the bottle well below the neck. Plunge it beneath the surface in front of you with the opening facing directly down, then immediately orient the bottle into the current. Avoid collecting surface scum and film
5. Once the bottle is full, remove it from the water by forcing it forward (into the current) and upwards
6. Replace the cap immediately
7. Note: If the lab bottle contains a preservative (TP or total iron bottles) do not invert the bottles or the preservative will be lost! Fill these bottles using another clean non-preservative bottle. One option is to fill the TSS/Ortho P bottle and transfer the contents into the preservative bottle so as to not spill the preservative. Once the preservative bottles are full, the TP/TSS bottle can be filled. Another option is to fill a clean bucket with sample water and transfer the contents to all the lab bottles.

Sampling from the Stream Bank Protocol

This method is to be used when the current is too strong, the water too deep, or the ice too thin.

1. Secure yourself to a solid object on shore (with a safety harness and line, if necessary). As a safety precaution, the second person must remain nearby while the first is collecting the samples
2. Remove the cap from a labeled bottle
3. Hold the bottle well below the neck or secure it to a pole sampler

4. Reach out (arm length only) and plunge the bottle beneath the water surface with the opening facing directly down, then immediately orient it upstream into the current
5. When the bottle is full, pull it up through the water while forcing it into the current
6. Immediately recap the bottle
7. See note above about filling preservative bottles

The TP bottle contains sulfuric acid (H₂SO₄) and the total iron bottle contains nitric acid (HNO₃). The TSS/Ortho P bottles are unpreserved. The lab usually pre-fills each bottle with the appropriate amount of preservative. Caution should be exercised with working with any acid preservation chemicals. Utilize all pertinent personal protection equipment and follow all chemical handling recommendations for each preservative or chemical.

Make sure to completely fill out each lab bottle label with the site name/number, date/time, and sampler initials.

All water quality samples should be immediately be cooled or refrigerated and then shipped or delivered to the lab in a cooler with enough ice to cover and sufficiently cool the sample bottles.

Field Notes

Always record the site name/number, date, and time in a field book or on the data sheet when each sample is collected, along with weather conditions and air temp. If no staff gage is present at the sampling location, use a ruler or wooden tape to measure the distance from the top of the monitoring fence post or culvert to the water surface. This measurement is used to calibrate the logger stage data. The monitoring fence posts are usually obvious and are typically located within the stream channel at the downstream ends of the culverts.

Holding Times:

Holding times for several common parameters are given below, the shortest being 48 hours for Ortho Phosphorus. As such, water samples should be submitted to the laboratory as soon as is possible, ideally the day of collection.

Ortho Phosphate is 48 hours

TSS is 7 days

TP is 28 days

Total Iron is 6 months

From: Mary Thompson <mary.thompson@rockmn.gov>

Sent on: Friday, February 20, 2026 12:34:32 AM

To: Kader, Jen (She/Her/Hers) (MPCA) <Jen.Kader@state.mn.us>; Wagner, Margaret (MDA) <margaret.wagner@state.mn.us>

Subject: Ag BMP

You don't often get email from mary.thompson@rockmn.gov. [Learn why this is important](#)

This message may be from an external email source.

Do not select links or open attachments unless verified. Report all suspicious emails to Minnesota IT Services Security Operations Center.

Hello Jen and Margaret –

I wanted to touch base with both of you regarding the Ag BMP program. First of all, thank you for all your hard work with and for the Clean Water Funds and for the additional money allocated to the program in 2025, we appreciate all of it so much!! I work with the Rock Soil and Water Conservation District in Luverne, MN. I and my job share partner, Shayla Rock, administer the Ag BMP program here at the local level. We work closely with our area lenders and they with us to promote water quality practices through this program.

We were been able to fund 14 loans in 2025 with 11 of them being for Ag Waste, 2 Conservation Tillage and 1 Septic System totaling \$995,737.00 and have completed one loan for \$200,000 thus far in 2026.

We currently have funds allocated and producers working on two more projects totaling \$170,000.00 and have a wait list of 22 that have applied for funding totaling \$2,317,800.00 with projected repayments for 2026 of \$482,500.27. Two projects totaling \$50,000 having already been ear marked for part of these funds. As you can see, with the average repayments of around \$500,000 producers are having to wait quite some time to be funded. Needless to say, the high interest rates the past several years have driven the demand for funding in this program to an all-time high and our current number of requests to an all-time high as well.

This program is important to our office and our producers in their efforts to improve water quality by making upgrades to feedlots, manure management, septic systems and conservation tillage more affordable with the 3% interest rate. Rock County landowners have also shown a great interest in conservation tillage and cover crops. We currently have approximately \$800,000 in soil health contracts which has also led to a higher number of requests for conservation equipment. Each and every Ag BMP project improves water quality and we could do so much more if funding were available. I am asking you to please consider this program for additional funds so we can continue to help more producers secure loans for practices that help improve our water quality.

Thanks again for all your work and if there is anything we can do on our side to further promote this program and how it is used here in Rock County, please let us know.

Mary Thompson

Rock SWCD

Dear Council Members,

Protecting drinking water and groundwater is a top priority across the state but specifically in Southeast Minnesota, where agriculture and natural resource protection must work hand in hand. The Ag BMP Loan Program is an important and necessary tool available to farmers as they work to reduce environmental impacts while maintaining productive and profitable operations.

Increased funding for the Ag BMP program is critically needed to meet growing demand, address expanding water quality challenges, and ensure more producers can access this essential financing tool.

Why Southeast Minnesota Is Especially Vulnerable

Southeast Minnesota sits atop karst geology — a landscape characterized by thin soils and fractured limestone bedrock. In these conditions, water and dissolved nutrients such as nitrate can move rapidly from farm fields into groundwater supplies. With many residents relying on private wells, groundwater protection is not just an environmental concern — it is a public health priority.

The region's vulnerability is shaped by several factors:

- Karst geology and nitrate vulnerability
- Hilly, erosion-prone terrain
- A strong agricultural economy
- Increasing heavy rainfall events linked to climate variability

Nitrate Contamination: A Documented Concern

Nitrate contamination remains one of the most significant water quality challenges in the region. According to the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, 2024 monitoring of 376 private wells in southeast Minnesota found:

- 68.6% had nitrate levels below 3 mg/L
- 21.5% were between 3–10 mg/L
- 9.8% were at or above the federal health limit of 10 mg/L

Regionally, approximately 16% of private wells exceed the safe drinking water standard, compared to about 9% statewide. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency estimates that roughly 70% of nitrate pollution in Minnesota's waters comes from cropland, largely associated with fertilizer and manure applications.

These statistics underscore the urgency of implementing soil health and water conservation practices that reduce nutrient loss and protect groundwater.

The Role of the Ag BMP Loan Program

The Ag BMP (Best Management Practices) Loan Program provides low-interest financing to farmers implementing conservation practices that protect water quality. It is particularly valuable for limited-income producers and pairs effectively with programs such as the Minnesota Department of Agriculture Soil Health Equipment Grant, helping make equipment investments feasible during difficult economic times in farming.

The program:

- Safeguards groundwater and drinking water quality
- Supports long-term farm profitability
- Aligns agricultural production with environmental sustainability
- Provides economic assistance beyond traditional cost-share limits
- Frequently maintains waitlists due to high demand in the region

Supporting Soil Health and Farm Resilience

Practices supported through Ag BMP financing include:

- Reduced and no-till systems
- Cover crop implementation
- Manure injection equipment
- Precision application technologies
- Emerging innovations such as solar-powered systems and drone-seeded cover crops

Local examples highlight the program's impact. A beginning farmer was able to purchase manure injection equipment, transitioning from surface application to injected manure. This change eliminated the need for commercial fertilizer while significantly reducing nutrient runoff risk. By keeping more nitrogen in the soil and minimizing runoff, these practices reduce nitrate leaching, improve soil structure, enhance water infiltration, and strengthen resilience during heavy rainfall events.

Environmental Stewardship and Economic Risk Management

In Southeast Minnesota, soil health and water conservation are not optional enhancements — they are essential strategies. Because of the region’s vulnerable geology and heavy reliance on agriculture, conservation practice’s function both as environmental safeguards and economic risk-management tools.

Continued investment in education, technical assistance, and cost-share and loan programs will be critical to protecting drinking water, improving soil sustainability, and ensuring farm profitability for future generations. I ask for continued support and funding for the Ag BMP program from the Clean Water Council to promote further adoption of water quality improving farming practices as well as allowing more people to utilize the program for projects and practices across Minnesota.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Sara West

Nutrient Management Specialist

Fillmore Soil & Water Conservation District

From: Paul Drackley <PaulDrackley@ffmbank.com>

Sent on: Tuesday, May 19, 2026 6:46:13 PM

To: Barten, John <bbarten79@gmail.com>; Richard Biske <rbiske@tnc.org>; Kader, Jen (She/Her/Hers) (MPCA) <Jen.Kader@state.mn.us>

Subject: public input for funding

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Dear Chair, Vice Chair and Administrator,

My name is Paul Drackley and I am branch President of the White Rock location of First Farmers & Merchants Bank. Yesterday I attended an informational zoom meeting with Richard Guernes from the MN Department of Ag, in reference to funding for the AgBMP program. Right now he said there are no federal funds or state funds that have been or will be allocated for this program but the public input for funding from the Clean Water Council was open until June 15th.

Our charter is located in Cannon Falls, Goodhue County and I have been the branch President of the White Rock location since September 2, 1997. In 1998 we were 1 of 2 banks in Goodhue County that signed up with the county to help administer funds for the ISTS & Well Loan program where funds came from the state to our county to specifically be used for the replacement of failing septic systems and wells. This program had revolving loan funds that helped many property owners replace systems that were deemed non-compliant with loan interest loans. This program was used to it's fullest potential until it eventually sunset with all of the funds getting paid back to us and eventually back to the state. In the early 2000's we also began using the AgBMP general pool of funds to help our farm customers with low interest money to be able to replace structures, purchase equipment and fix-up facilities to help reduce run-off, reduce soil erosion and help maintain a more ecological friendly environment. I don't have the exact numbers but I know our charter alone has completed well over 100 loans and multiple millions of dollars at a low interest rate in order to help our customers accomplish these goals. Over the past several years the only complaint I have with this AgBMP program is the lack of funding available to help all of our customers and potentials customers. Our county currently has funding backlogged until April 2027 and I would like to voice concern for this and ask the Clean Water Council to consider additional funding to help Goodhue County and others out by allocation additional funds to this program that has been put in place to help our state improve our water quality through these types of projects.

If you should have any questions please feel free to reach out to me via my email or direct call.

Thank you for your consideration.

Paul J. Drackley

President

NMLS ID# 500362

First Farmers & Merchants Bank

13313 County 1 Blvd

Cannon Falls, MN 55009

(651)385-6081 (Direct)

(651)258-4430 (Main)

(507)358-3347 (Mobile)

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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.

Understanding Our Urban Watershed

BOARD OF MANAGERS: Bob Cutshall • Brian Kirk • Peggy Kvam • Chris-Ann Lauria • Larry Olson

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,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Erica Sniegowski".

Erica Sniegowski
Administrator
Nine Mile Creek Watershed District

From: Laura Jester <laura.jester@keystonewaters.com>
Sent on: Monday, June 1, 2026 5:31:07 PM
To: Kader, Jen (She/Her/Hers) (MPCA) <Jen.Kader@state.mn.us>
CC: April Swenby <april.swenby@sandhillwatershed.org>
Subject: Comments on FY28-29 biennium proposals
Attachments: BCWMC Letter to the MPCA Commissioner - signed.pdf (240.59 KB)

Follow up: Follow up
Start date: Monday, June 1, 2026 12:00:00 AM
Due date: Monday, June 1, 2026 12:00:00 AM

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Hello Jen,

I hope your week is off to a good start! I am writing on behalf of the BCWMC to 1) share the attached letter that was submitted to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) in January requesting increased financial support for the MPCA's Chloride Reduction Program; and 2) advocate for enhanced funding for chloride reduction initiatives within Clean Water Council priorities.

Lakes and streams in the BCWMC continue to be threatened by high chlorides, primarily coming from winter deicing activities. As noted in the letter to MPCA, despite sustained local efforts, meaningful progress will require stronger statewide coordination, expanded technical support, and increased financial investment.

As you consider priorities for the FY28-29 biennium, we respectfully ask that you support enhanced funding for chloride reduction initiatives. Increased investment in chloride reduction activities is critical to accelerate progress toward protecting the health and ecology of Minnesota's lakes, rivers, and streams.

Thank you for the past and future work of the CWC! Please let me know if you have any questions or request additional information.

Take care,
Laura Jester
Administrator
Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission
www.bassettcreekwmo.org
P.O. Box 270825 ~ Golden Valley, MN 55427
952-270-1990 ~ Laura.jester@keystonewaters.com



January 21, 2026

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

Dear Commissioner Kessler,

On behalf of the Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission, 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 is the primary pollutant of concern in the *Ĥaĥá Wakpádaŋ* / Bassett Creek watershed. Of our 14 priority waterbodies, six of them are impaired for chloride – including four lakes and two streams. Chloride has a persistent impact on water quality and we have limited tools available to effectively address it. Despite multiple projects, education, and training sessions, chloride levels continue to increase in our lakes and streams. And we are beginning to see a biological response to this pollution with an inverse relationship between chloride concentrations and the zooplankton population in Crane Lake. While the BCWMC and our city partners 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 move the needle and begin making significant progress toward protecting Minnesota's water resources from chloride pollution.

Sincerely,

Catherine Cesnik

Catherine Cesnik, Chair

cc: BCWMC commissioners and alternate commissioners
Laura Jester, BCWMC Administrator

Protecting and improving the Ĥaĥá Wakpádaŋ / Bassett Creek watershed, homeland of the Dakota people.

June 8, 2026

To the Clean Water Council:

Most Minnesotans we speak with in our role as a Minnesota Water Stewards are shocked when we explain that our lakes, rivers, and wetlands are becoming saltier and saltier every year because of road salts. Their mood drops further as we discuss how there is no viable way to remove those salts from our waters — they are permanent once dissolved. Also, despite what they might have heard, there is no effective replacement product for salt is on the horizon. If we want to keep Minnesota's freshwater fresh and ecosystems viable, we have one choice, and that is to reduce the amount of salts we are applying.

The good news is there is a clear pathway for reduction, the **MPCA's Chloride Reduction Program**. But it needs more funding. Today we are asking for your support for a budget increase for this program. More funding will increase the program's reach and curb unnecessary salt applications, reducing the salts that enter Minnesota's waters.

The Chloride Reduction Program includes the Smart Salting training program where applicators and property managers 1) learn to manage their property to require less salt and 2) in places where salt is necessary, to choose the latest precision application technologies and tools. Using this approach, properties have reported reducing salt usage by 30% to 70% and saving their organizations hundreds of thousands of dollars without compromising safety. The Chloride Reduction Program also includes low-interest loans and a grant program for equipment and retrofit projects.

As Stewards we have attended Smart Salting Trainings and experienced the impact of its content and training approach. If you have any hesitancy to saying yes to increasing the budget for the Chloride Reduction Program, consider attending a training yourself to see how transformational this program is.

Reduction of salt use is the only answer to retaining Minnesota's freshwater and all that Minnesotan's love about it.

Sincerely,

Sue Nissen and Randy Holst
Minnesota Water Stewards
Members, Stop Over Salting

1 tsp of salt permanently pollutes five gallons of fresh water





April 30, 2026

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

Dear Members of the Clean Water Council,

On behalf of Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District (RWMWD), I am writing to share our concerns regarding chloride pollution and to request increased support for the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's (MPCA) chloride reduction program.

Chloride pollution remains one of the most difficult pollutants for the RWMWD 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 within waterbodies in our jurisdiction continue to increase.

Four waterbodies within RWMWD are considered impaired by State of MN standards due to high chloride levels and many others are exhibiting notable worsening trends (10-year RWMWD monitoring average). This level of impairment 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,

Tina Carstens

Tina Carstens
Administrator, RWMWD
Tina.carstens@rwmwd.org

06/04/2026

John Barten
Clean Water Council Chair
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155
bbarten79@gmail.com

Jen Kader
Clean Water Council Administrator
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155
Jen.Kader@state.mn.us

Subject: Clean Water Council Draft Recommendations

Dear Mr. Barten, Ms. Kader, and members of the Clean Water Council,

We appreciate the opportunity to provide stakeholder comments while the Council considers proposals for funding recommendations. The following program supports our work at the Minnesota Department of Health to help ensure drinking water is safe for everyone, everywhere in Minnesota, and we suggest that its priority in funding recommendations reflects our shared priority of protecting drinking water in Minnesota for future generations.

Drinking Water Contaminants of Emerging Concern.

The Drinking Water Ambient Monitoring Program with the Minnesota Department of Health has worked with the Contaminants of Emerging Concern Program to assess emerging contaminants in drinking water systems throughout the State. We have partnered with the Contaminants of Emerging Concern Program on pesticide and PFAS analysis at public water systems. The Contaminants of Emerging Concern Program offers an investigative form of water analysis, "Nontarget analysis" (NTA), that allows us to get more information than typical laboratory methods provide on the number and type of contaminants present in the sample.

Monitoring public water systems for emerging contaminants helps to ensure that users of public water systems have safe, sufficient, and equitable drinking water. We have been able to assess a large number of unregulated pesticide and PFAS chemicals in both source water and finished drinking water at drinking water treatment plants. This helps us both to monitor conditions in source water and to assess the efficacy of treatment systems and removal of emerging contaminants.

If the Contaminants of Emerging Concern program did not exist there would be a notable gap in our ability to assess threats to source and finished drinking water. Working with the Contaminants of Emerging Concern Program has allowed us to better understand threats to drinking water sources and to public health through finished drinking water monitoring.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jane de Lambert
Environmental Health Supervisor
Minnesota Department of Health

From: <atstonearch@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent on: Tuesday, June 2, 2026 5:29:18 PM
To: Kader, Jen (She/Her/Hers) (MPCA) <Jen.Kader@state.mn.us>
Subject: Increase Clean Water Fund support for Forever Green

Follow up: Follow up
Follow up status: Completed
Completed on: Tuesday, June 9, 2026 2:42:00 PM

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Dear Administrator Jen Kader,

I am writing to urge members of the Clean Water Council to support an increase in funding for the University of Minnesota's Forever Green Initiative in the FY 28-29 Clean Water Fund recommendations.

This fund does critical work for all of our community's humans and animals not only in Minnesota but in every water system north of us!

Forever Green is an internationally respected research and commercialization effort designed to develop new, perennial crops and winter annual crops (cover crops) that protect our environment while enhancing farm prosperity. Forever Green crops greatly improve water quality, soil health, habitat and climate resilience, while helping farmers and our rural economy thrive.

Please designate the University of Minnesota's Forever Green Initiative as a high-priority item deserving of an increase in funding in your FY 28-29 Clean Water Fund recommendations.
I really appreciate your time and consideration

Sincerely,
Abigail Turner
Roseville, MN 55113-1934

From: Chase Krug <krug0111@umn.edu>
Sent on: Friday, June 5, 2026 6:43:28 PM
To: Kader, Jen (She/Her/Hers) (MPCA) <Jen.Kader@state.mn.us>
Subject: Clean Water Council Feedback - Forever Green Initiative

Follow up: Follow up
Follow up status: Completed
Completed on: Wednesday, June 10, 2026 5:52:00 PM

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Hi Jen,

Please see the public comment below for the Clean Water Council:

Dear Members of the Clean Water Council,

Thank you for your long-standing support of the Forever Green Initiative. Your investment has been instrumental in advancing research and development of perennial and winter annual crops that improve water quality, enhance soil health, and create new economic opportunities for Minnesota farmers. This support has enabled significant progress toward building more sustainable agricultural systems across the state.

My work focuses on breeding silflower (*Silphium integrifolium*), a perennial oilseed crop being developed as part of the continuous living cover (CLC) vision. Through recurrent selection and population improvement, we are developing silflower cultivars with greater productivity, improved agronomic performance, and enhanced adaptation to Minnesota growing conditions. These efforts help move silflower closer to commercial viability while maintaining the environmental benefits associated with perennial agriculture.

Continued support for this work is especially important at this time. Research costs have increased substantially in recent years, affecting everything from field operations and greenhouse production to labor and analytical services. At the same time, uncertainty surrounding federal research funding has made stable state investments increasingly critical for maintaining momentum and ensuring that long-term crop development efforts can continue to progress.

Additional funding would allow us to accelerate breeding progress by expanding field evaluations, increasing the number of populations and individuals we can assess, and implementing new tools to improve selection efficiency. These investments would help bring improved silflower cultivars to farmers more quickly and advance the broader goals of CLC agriculture.

I encourage the Clean Water Council to increase funding for the Forever Green Initiative. Continued and expanded investment will help ensure that Minnesota remains a leader in developing agricultural systems that protect water resources while supporting resilient and profitable farming operations.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued commitment to Minnesota's natural resources and agricultural future.

Thank you,
Chase Krug
PhD Student at the University of Minnesota - Department of Agronomy & Plant Genetics

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Dear Administrator

Kader:

Thank you
for the Clean Water Council's ongoing support for the Forever Green Initiative (FGI). We could not do our work without it.

I grow Continuous
Living Cover (CLC) crops on my farm and I operate a custom farming operation planting CLC crops for my neighbors.

I believe
that the suite of Continuous Living Cover crops represent the best path forward for our State and our communities to reach our shared economic, environmental and water quality goals quickly. As I describe the opportunity to my farmer neighbors and colleagues,
it's a win-win-win. We can increase our level of entrepreneurship directly in our communities while reaching our environmental goals and making our farms more productive.

I was a founding
Board member and the former Vice President of the Perennial Promise Growers Cooperative (PPGC) which is the first farmer-led cooperative for a perennial crop, and I have recruited many Kernza growers. In recent years I have added Winter Camelina and Hybrid
Winter Rye - all crops developed at the Forever Green Initiative - into my rotation and recruited others to do the same.

I am so committed
to this work that after collaborating for several years on the Kernza CAP, I have recently joined the FGI team as an Agronomy Associate where I will scale farmer to farmer technical assistance and outreach statewide.

The Clean
Water Council's funding is crucial right now due to rising costs of research and uncertainty of Federal funding. With more support from the Clean Water Council we can scale Continuous Living Cover Crops statewide by improved research and new varieties to improve
the triple bottom line for our environment, our communities and our farms.

Please increase
the level of funding for the Forever Green Initiative so we can reach our goals together.

Sincerely,

Ben Penner

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Dear Jen,

My name is Waïld Sadok, and I am an associate professor in plant physiology, working on improving crop resilience, while minimizing their impact on the environment. I am writing to thank you and the Clear Water Council, for your long standing support of my research through the Forever Green Initiative. Your investment has enabled significant progress toward developing and scaling continuous living cover crops that improve water quality, protect soil resources, and strengthen Minnesota agriculture. The advances we have made would not have been possible without your commitment to this work.

My current research focuses on improving freezing tolerance in perennial and winter-hardy crops that can function as continuous living cover in Minnesota agricultural systems. By developing crops that better survive Minnesota's harsh winters, we can expand opportunities for farmers to maintain living roots in the ground year-round, reducing nutrient losses while creating new economic opportunities through productive cropping systems.

This funding is especially important today. Research costs have increased substantially in recent years, affecting everything from field operations to laboratory analyses and personnel. At the same time, growing uncertainty surrounding federal research funding has created challenges for maintaining the long-term, consistent investment needed to develop and commercialize new crops.

Continued state support is essential for sustaining momentum and ensuring that promising innovations reach Minnesota farmers.

I encourage the Clean Water Council to increase funding for the Forever Green Initiative. Continued and expanded investment will help ensure that Minnesota remains a national leader in developing agricultural systems that protect water resources while supporting rural economies. With additional funding, we could accelerate breeding and evaluation efforts, expand field testing across diverse environments, and more rapidly develop winter-hardy crop varieties capable of delivering water-quality benefits at scale. Increased resources would help shorten the timeline from research discovery to on-farm adoption.

Thank you again for your consideration and continued support.

Sincerely,

Walid Sadok

--

Walid Sadok
Associate Professor
Department of Agronomy and Plant Genetics
University of Minnesota
411 Borlaug Hall, 1991 Upper Buford Circle
St. Paul, MN 55108-6026

msadok@umn.edu
Office: 546 Borlaug Hall
Phone: 612-625-8291
<http://sadoklab.cfans.umn.edu>

May 1st, 2026

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

Re: Support for enhanced University of Minnesota Forever Green Initiative funding

Dear Clean Water Council members,

We, the undersigned organizations, respectfully request that the Clean Water Council recommend an increase in funding for the Forever Green Initiative at the University of Minnesota in your FY28-29 Clean Water Fund recommendations.

As described in the updated Minnesota Nutrient Reduction Strategy (NRS), our state can only achieve its long-term clean water goals through sustained investment in the “continuous living cover” strategy that lies at the core of Forever Green’s mission. The Council’s longstanding and prescient support of Forever Green has given Minnesota a significant foundation to build on in the years ahead; we ask for your continued backing as this work reaches critical inflection points for research, farmer adoption, and market development.

The Forever Green Initiative

Forever Green is an internationally respected program that works to develop and commercialize the perennial and winter-annual crops that are essential to achieving our clean water goals. Integrating such crops into existing farming systems – thereby creating “continuous living cover” (CLC) systems – dramatically helps to protect and enhance water quality, soil health, wildlife habitat and climate resiliency. By providing producers with new revenue streams from high-value feed and fuel products, this approach also harnesses market forces to achieve the scale necessary to transform our landscapes.

CLC crops can:

- Protect drinking water and secure public health;
- Improve water quality in surface waters and groundwater;
- Enhance soil health and climate resilience;
- Enhance habitat for wildlife and pollinators;
- Diversify crop rotations and farm income streams;
- Enable production of biofuels with strong sustainability attributes;
- Foster new economic opportunities for Minnesota family farmers;
- Attract new investment and employment in emerging agricultural industries;
- Attract high-quality talent to the University of Minnesota to meet the future state workforce needs of the agriculture, food, energy and natural resource industries.

CLC agriculture is increasingly recognized as a core strategy for achieving Minnesota’s water quality goals: As we noted above, the 2026 [NRS](#) calls for the creation of a CLC Campaign and Work Group to “achieve the first million new acres of CLC, also recognizing that many more millions of acres will ultimately be needed to achieve the NRS goals.” Additionally, the 2026 update of the state’s [Climate Action Framework](#) emphasizes the need for investment in CLC crop research, supply chains, and market development.

The state-supported Forever Green Partnership has laid the groundwork for this push through cross-sector collaborations that attract investments from private and philanthropic sectors, leverage public investments, and build resources needed for the successful deployment of Forever Green crops and other CLC systems.

Investing in the farmers of today and the crops of tomorrow

Multiple Forever Green cropping systems have reached an inflection point, moving beyond field trials and into landscape production and market development. Forever Green’s unique *Environmental and Economic Clusters of Opportunity* (EECO) Program provides Minnesota farmers with technical and financial assistance in order to protect early adopters from undue risk and feed real-world lessons back into University researchers’ breeding and agronomic work. EECO is a partnership with the MN Department of Agriculture and has been made possible due to investment from the Clean Water Fund.

Forever Green also partners with dozens of supply chain businesses – ranging from local “mom & pop” operations to some of the world’s largest agribusiness companies – to create the products and grow market opportunities that are fundamental to the success of this enterprise. One outgrowth of this work is the MN Department of Agriculture’s *Developing Markets for CLC Crops* grant program, which for the past three years has invested in small and mid-sized businesses involved in supply chain and market development in communities across the state.

Maintaining and enhancing funding for such farmer- and business-facing efforts will be critical to maintaining momentum and scaling up implementation. However, as our friend, the late Forever Green co-founder Dr. Don Wyse used to say, **“If you don’t have the crops, you don’t have anything.”**

Robust, long-term funding for Forever Green is particularly important because successfully breeding and commercializing new crops requires dedicated researchers and supply chain specialists. Already, Forever Green crops like winter camelina (a winter-hardy oilseed crop with immense potential for livestock feed and biofuel markets) and Kernza perennial grain are rapidly advancing due to the Council’s sustained support of foundational research, with more winners on the horizon. State investments in continuous living cover through Forever Green have historically been leveraged many times over (around 7X) in federal grants and other funding that supports this increasingly high-profile effort, while major players in the private sector are bringing their own capital and expertise to bear.

With your continued support, we can make Minnesota the unquestioned leader in developing sustainable, profitable and diversified cropping systems that improve habitat, water quality, and soil health while boosting farm prosperity and rural economies.

We urge you to support robust funding for Forever Green in your FY28-29 Clean Water Fund recommendations.

Sincerely,

40 Century Grain, Inc
Albert Lea Seed House, Inc.
Alliance for Sustainability
American Hazelnut Company
Applegate Farms LLC
Audubon Upper Mississippi River
Bang Brewing
Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota
Cargill, Incorporated
Citizens' Climate Lobby Minnesota
Clean River Partners
Climate Land Leaders
Compeer Financial
Delta Air Lines
Environmental Working Group
Friends of the Mississippi River
General Mills
GREATER MSP Partnership
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
Land Stewardship Project
League of Women Voters of Minnesota
Lutheran Advocacy - Minnesota
Minnesota Division Izaak Walton League of America
Minnesota Environmental Partnership
Northern MN New Iron and Clean Energy
Perennial Pantry
Perennial Promise Growers Cooperative
Pine SWCD
Savanna Institute
Sierra Club North Star Chapter
SUN Consulting, Inc. — representing Gertens Nursery
The American Hazelnut Company LLC
Wild Farm Alliance

From: Hannah Rusch <hirusch09@gmail.com>
Sent on: Friday, June 5, 2026 3:40:22 AM
To: Kader, Jen (She/Her/Hers) (MPCA) <Jen.Kader@state.mn.us>
Subject: Continue support for FGI

Follow up: Follow up
Start date: Friday, June 5, 2026 12:00:00 AM
Due date: Friday, June 5, 2026 12:00:00 AM

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Dear Ms. Kader,

Thank you for your support of the Forever Green Initiative (FGI) through the Clean Water Council. I am writing to encourage you to continue this support. As a researcher in the Agronomy and Plant Genetics department at the University of Minnesota, it is exciting to see all of the top quality research and development work that has been made possible through state funding for the FGI. I am pleased to be starting a new project this summer that will build data and compile the current knowledge of the effects of three FGI winter annuals crops on water quality in southeast Minnesota when incorporated into traditional cropping systems like the corn/soybean rotation.

I urge you to continue to provide funding to advance the work done by members of the FGI team. This work aims to benefit the environment, rural livelihoods and entrepreneurship in our state.

Thank you for your attention.

Regards,
Dr. Hannah Rusch
Minneapolis, MN 55414

From: Matthew Ott <ottxx142@umn.edu>
Sent on: Saturday, June 6, 2026 3:56:27 AM
To: Kader, Jen (She/Her/Hers) (MPCA) <Jen.Kader@state.mn.us>
Subject:

Follow up: Follow up
Follow up status: Completed
Completed on: Wednesday, June 10, 2026 6:19:00 PM

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Greetings Jen Kader!

Thank you and your team for your continued support of the University of Minnesota's Forever Green Initiative! Public funding of research into finding solutions for challenges related to rural economies, clean lakes and streams, fuel prices, and climate change is a bit tight these days, but there is a lot of bang for the buck in terms of the private sector also making investments in parallel to public teams working on this research.

Just a little about me and my research - here is an abstract I just submitted for the Crop Science Society of America annual meeting:

Demand for sustainable aviation fuel has been steadily increasing to mitigate climate change and promote energy independence. In response to this market pull, an increasing number of US and global farm acres are being planted with the winter annual intermediate oilseed crop species, *Camelina sativa* (winter camelina). Winter camelina is an allohexaploid species with a limited population of only 13 accessions available in the University of Minnesota breeding program. Besides a limited population size, another challenge is that winter camelina has a number of undesirable traits such as moderate seed pod shatter, small seed size, antinutritional seed glucosinolates, and suboptimal seed oil content, yield, and harvest maturity. In parallel to our classical breeding approaches for improving these undesirable traits, we developed an ethyl-methanesulfonate (EMS) mutant population of winter camelina using the public accession known as 'Joelle'. Initial phenotypic screening of this population did not show obvious mutant phenotypes likely due to its allohexaploid nature. With continued cost reductions in whole genome sequencing and library preparation, we were able to sequence 352 unique mutants from this population and we will be sequencing another batch of 100 in 2026. With the sequence data, we developed a mutant gene index (MGI) variant file that includes annotations such as Arabidopsis gene ortholog names (using a high throughput computing approach with NCBI's Basic Local Alignment Search Tool) and predicted variant effects (using Pablo Cingolani's SNPEff software). Using this MGI variant file, we have already found disruptive mutations in key genes in all three subgenomes of Joelle that we expect will improve the associated key traits. When necessary, we plan to make crosses among mutants to stack mutations in these key genes from each subgenome with the expectation that a stacked line will confer a desirable phenotype.

Thank you for considering continuing to support our work and perhaps budgeting a bit extra for it if possible.

Onwards,

Matthew

Matthew Ott, PhD (he/him)
University of Minnesota
Winter Oilseeds Assistant Breeder
1991 Upper Buford Circle
411 Borlaug Hall
St. Paul, MN 55108



Protecting, restoring and enhancing the metro Mississippi River and its watershed since 1993.

106 W. Water St., Ste. 600 | St. Paul MN 55107-2032
 (651) 222-2193 | fmr.org | info@fmr.org

May 1st, 2026

Dear members of the Clean Water Council Budget & Outcomes Committee,

As you continue your FY 28-29 Clean Water Fund deliberations, Friends of the Mississippi River (FMR) respectfully requests that you recommend an increase in funding for the University of Minnesota's Forever Green Initiative.

The Forever Green Initiative

As you know, the University of Minnesota's Forever Green Initiative is a nationally respected research effort designed to develop new, economically viable 'Continuous Living Cover' (CLC) cropping systems.

Integrating perennial and winter-annual crops into existing farming systems holds soil in place and stops pollutants from leaching into ground and surface water, while providing producers with new revenue streams that can bolster our agricultural economy through the development of high-value, commercially marketable food, feed, and fuel products.

Alignment with Nutrient Reduction Strategy and drinking water protection goals

Minnesota's [Nutrient Reduction Strategy](#) (NRS) calls for millions of acres of CLC cropping systems in Minnesota.

The NRS makes CLC cropping systems a foundational pillar of success, and notes that:

“Nitrogen reduction goals cannot be achieved without transformative changes in crop system rotations and maintaining living cover for more months each year.”

Figure ES-1-12. Example scenario showing the magnitude of change needed to achieve nutrient reduction goals in the Mississippi River Basin.



Similarly, CLCs can help protect our drinking water, especially in [vulnerable areas](#) such as coarse-textured soils or karst topography. When it comes to protecting groundwater, few strategies are as effective or scalable as CLC cropping systems. For example:

- Kernza, a pioneering perennial grain, can reduce soil water nitrate concentration by up to 97% compared to corn.¹
- Winter annual oilseeds crops like camelina and pennycress can reduce nitrate concentrations by up to 97% compared to no cover (standard practice).²
- Perennial crops can reduce nitrate losses through tile lines by over 95%.³

Scaling up CLC cropping systems over time

While CLC acreage goals and associated water quality improvements are certainly ambitious, they are achievable with sustained support over time.

- **Putting Down Roots:** The 2023 [Putting Down Roots](#) report, prepared by FMR and the University of Minnesota, found that under a moderate adoption scenario, Forever Green CLC cropping systems could reduce nitrogen loss by 23% and soil erosion by 35% in Minnesota by 2050 while enhancing on-farm profits by 20%.
- **Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) market.** Winter annual oilseeds are particularly well-positioned as a low-carbon aviation fuel feedstock. The emergence of the Minnesota SAF Hub, improved State SAF tax credit, industrywide low-carbon fuel commitments, and federal SAF production incentives have opened the door to rapid commercialization. With robust public investment and policy support, researchers estimate that statewide camelina acreage could - under the right circumstances - achieve [one million acres](#) within as little as 10 years.
- **One Million Acres Scaling Study (IMASS):** The University of Minnesota, MBOLD, and many project partners (including FMR) are collaborating on a [One Million Acres Scaling Study for Camelina](#), identifying a pathway to securing the 1st million acres of camelina.

Alignment with the Clean Water Council Strategic Plan

Investments in Forever Green align with multiple strategies and actions included in the [Final Clean Water Council Strategic Plan for 2024-2028](#), including:

- **Vision: Groundwater is clean and available to all in Minnesota**
 - Goal 1: Protect groundwater from degradation and support effective measures to restore degraded groundwater.
 - Measure: Alternative land management activities supported that protect groundwater such as easements, [perennials, and market-based continuous living cover](#).
- **Vision: Drinking water is safe for everyone, everywhere in Minnesota.**
 - Goal 1: Public Water Systems

¹ Jungers et al. 2019. Agriculture, Ecosystems and Environment.

² Weyers et al. 2019. Journal of Environmental Quality.

³ Randall et al. 1997. Journal of Environmental Quality. strategic and

- 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 resource
 - Measure: Number of acres with continuous living cover, with a target of five million acres 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 resource
 - Measure: Acres of income-generating continuous living cover planted.

A Seven-to-One Return

State investment in Forever Green is leveraged many times over in federal grants and other funding that support this increasingly high-profile effort. Historically, for every one dollar of Clean Water Fund support, Forever Green has secured roughly seven additional dollars in complementary funds.

A deserving investment

While traditional on-farm education and BMP cost-share programs remain important, we must acknowledge that BMPs can't do the job alone. Getting to clean water is not just about 'how we grow' our crops - it is about 'what we grow'.

We must find ways to keep the soil covered year-round through economically viable CLC cropping systems that work for farmers and our environment.

We urge you to support increased funding for Forever Green in your FY28-29 Clean Water Fund recommendations process.

Sincerely,



Trevor Russell
Water Program Director
Friends of the Mississippi River

From: Beth Dooley <hello@bethdooleyskitchen.com>
Sent on: Wednesday, June 3, 2026 3:33:18 PM
To: Kader, Jen (She/Her/Hers) (MPCA) <Jen.Kader@state.mn.us>
CC: Ann Kirby McGill <akirby@umn.edu>
Subject: Forever Green Initiative Funding

Follow up: Follow up
Follow up status: Completed
Completed on: Tuesday, June 9, 2026 11:17:00 AM

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Good morning Jen,

I'm writing to express my gratitude for the Clean Water Council's ongoing support of the Forever Green Initiative which has allowed FGI to accomplish so much.

As a James Beard Award winning food writer and cookbook author, I have engaged with the FGI CLC crops by writing cookbooks with recipes and stories about the impact of these crops, on our ecosystem, our health, our rural communities, and in addressing food insecurity and food justice. My focus is encouraging home cooks and professional chefs and teachers to use them in their kitchens. These foods are delicious and nutritious, their impact on clean water cannot be understated.

Given the rising cost of research and the continued uncertainty around federal research funding, this support is extremely important.

With more funding, we'll see more of these foods, better foods, in our stores and kitchens, and the benefits will flow "downstream" to our farmers, rural economies, our pollinators, wildlife, and finally, to us. Here's to clean water .. here's to supporting good change.

Thank you for your consideration.

Beth Dooley
Endowed Chair, MISA
James Beard Award



Beth Dooley
hello@bethdooleyskitchen.com | 612-325-0203
bethdooleyskitchen.com | @dooleys_kitchen

Follow up: Follow up
Follow up status: Completed
Completed on: Tuesday, June 9, 2026 3:09:00 PM

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Dear Ms. Kader,

My name is Christopher Sherve, and I am a researcher on the Winter Oilseed Breeding Team working with the Forever Green Initiative at the University of Minnesota. I am writing to express my sincere gratitude, and that of my colleagues, for the Clean Water Council's investment in the Forever Green Initiative. That sustained support has been foundational to the progress we have made in advancing Continuous Living Cover (CLC) agriculture across Minnesota.

My work focuses on breeding improved varieties of Winter Camelina (*Camelina sativa*) and Pennycress (*Thlaspi arvense*) as winter cover crops. These crops offer farmers a new revenue stream that are grown opposite their primary cash crops, while also reducing nutrient runoff, improving soil health, and providing early season habitat for pollinators. Our most promising lines are also strong candidates as feedstocks for Sustainable Aviation Fuel.

We are at a particularly critical juncture in this research. We have identified Winter Camelina lines with significantly larger seed size, which serves as a reliable proxy for increased oil content per seed. Promising lines have shown seed size increases of 50% or more, equating to substantially greater total oil volume compared to current accessions. Larger-seeded Winter Camelina and Pennycress also support farmer adoption by requiring minimal equipment adjustments. Confirming these gains requires replicated field trials across diverse Minnesota environments, work that needs resources beyond what we currently have available.

Increased funding would allow us to advance these elite lines through applied field testing more rapidly, accelerate variety release, and support the farmer outreach needed to drive real adoption of CLC practices in Minnesota agriculture.

Thank you for your continued partnership.

Sincerely,
Christopher Sherve
Winter Oilseed Breeding Team
University of Minnesota

--

Christopher Sherve M.S.
Department of Agronomy and Plant Genetics
Department of Plant and Microbial Biology
411 Borlaug Hall
1991 Upper Buford Circle
St. Paul, MN 55108

I acknowledge that the University of Minnesota stands on Miní Sóta Makhóche, the homelands of the Dakhóta Oyáte.

From: Ann Kirby <akirby@umn.edu>
Sent on: Friday, June 5, 2026 9:47:59 PM
To: Kader, Jen (She/Her/Hers) (MPCA) <Jen.Kader@state.mn.us>
Subject: Forevre Green: Thank you and a request for increased support

Follow up: Follow up
Follow up status: Completed
Completed on: Wednesday, June 10, 2026 6:07:00 PM

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To Jen Kader and the Clean Water Council,

I am grateful to live in a state that has constitutionally funded its commitment to clean water. I am grateful to the Clean Water Council for its stewardship of those funds, and for its strong and long-term support of Forever Green. This is work that isn't happening in this way anywhere else.

My own role as Director of Partnerships and Outreach has been made possible, in part, through the Council's support. The intention to expand the multi-sector network dedicated to Continuous Living Cover agriculture as one way to address water quality is being realized. The new capacity has brought additional expertise to the team in communications, stakeholder engagement, organizing, fundraising, operations, and advocacy. More importantly, the support freed others up to focus on crucial areas for development, namely research and development and farmer adoption strategies.

Circumstances have changed over my two-year tenure. The federal research landscape is far more constrained and farmers face mounting challenges. The support that comes from the Clean Water Council is critical to the continued advancement of solutions needed to achieve our shared goals. I have witnessed the force multiplier effect of this core public investment in the vision for Continuous Living Cover agriculture, and there is so much more that can be done with it.

Additional funds could help expand and deepen the research that fuels both environmental benefits and economic vitality; support more farmers in their quest to adopt these practices without overly risking their operations; and reach more of them with the most up-to-date technical information, guidance, and support.

As you consider future allocations from the Clean Water Fund, I urge your continued and increased funding for Forever Green, as a partner in the work to achieve the constitutional intent.

Respectfully,

Ann Kirby

--
Ann Kirby
Director of Partnerships and Outreach
[Forever Green Initiative](#) | [University of Minnesota](#)
411 Borlaug Hall
1991 Upper Buford Circle
St. Paul MN 55108
d: 612-624-1130
c: 651-983-9750

From: Jacob Jungers <junge037@umn.edu>
Sent on: Friday, June 5, 2026 5:41:46 PM
To: Kader, Jen (She/Her/Hers) (MPCA) <Jen.Kader@state.mn.us>
Subject: Funding for FGI

Follow up: Follow up
Follow up status: Completed
Completed on: Wednesday, June 10, 2026 5:44:00 PM

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Hi Jen,

I hope you're doing well! First of all, thanks for all you do for the Clean Water Council. As you've seen first-hand at our field days, Clean Water Funds are integral to the development and deployment of new crops through the Forever Green Initiative. I'm very grateful for the funding that the Clean Water Council has provided.

I'm lucky to work with agricultural researchers across the US and have traveled internationally to see how other countries tackle the same challenges we face here in Minnesota - supporting a robust agricultural economy to feed and fuel our population while minimizing the environmental impacts of farming.

I can honestly say that the research model developed by Forever Green is the most impactful I've seen. My colleagues from around the country are blown away when I tell them about the Clean Water Council and Minnesota's commitment to innovative agriculture and water conservation. I'm grateful for the opportunity to be part of this cutting-edge work.

That said, the \$5-6 million allocated to Forever Green per biennium is small relative to federal and industry funding allocated to other aspects of agricultural research - aspects not necessarily related to environmental sustainability. Any additional funding from the Clean Water Council to Forever Green would be incredibly valuable.

I've worked hard with many other Forever Green researchers to leverage state funds to acquire federal funds. Our approach has worked, many of us have brought in millions of federal dollars in large part due to the foundation of research that was supported by the Clean Water Council. Federal funding has shrunk substantially and the competition for what's left is intense. Clean Water Funds give MN researchers a leg-up against that competition, so now is an ideal time for the Clean Water Council to increase Forever Green funding.

Thanks again for your support and I hope to see you at a field tour this summer!

Best,

Jake

--
Jacob M. Jungers, PhD
Associate Professor
McKnight Presidential Fellow
Dept. of Agronomy and Plant Genetics
University of Minnesota
409 Hayes Hall
1991 Upper Buford Circle
St. Paul, MN 55108

From: Cesar Augusto Medina Culma <medin297@umn.edu>
Sent on: Friday, June 5, 2026 1:59:16 PM
To: Kader, Jen (She/Her/Hers) (MPCA) <Jen.Kader@state.mn.us>
Subject: Gratitude for support the Forever Green Initiative

Follow up: Follow up
Follow up status: Completed
Completed on: Wednesday, June 10, 2026 3:54:00 PM

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Good morning, Ms. Kader,

My name is Cesar Medina, and I am a Researcher 5 in the alfalfa breeding program at the University of Minnesota. I am writing to express my sincere gratitude for your long-term support of the Forever Green Initiative (FGI).

In my role as a bioinformatician, I analyze data for our alfalfa breeding projects (part of the portfolio of crops of FGI). Throughout our work, we consistently highlight alfalfa's critical ecological benefits, particularly its emerging role in bioremediation. Alfalfa is highly effective at absorbing excess nutrients, such as phosphorus, preventing them from leaching into our water sources. Therefore, this crop is incredibly valuable not only for its high forage quality but also for its direct and positive impact on watershed health.

However, in recent years, the availability of agricultural and ecological big data has increased exponentially. But also, the costs associated with acquiring, analyzing, and translating this data into actionable decisions have risen significantly.

An increase in funding support from the Clean Water Council would be incredibly valuable. It would allow us to accelerate solutions across FGI's diverse crops. For example, additional funding would enhance our ability to use advanced drone and satellite imaging to analyze and monitor the real-time impact of different living cover crops on water sources.

Thank you once again for your past and ongoing support of the Forever Green Initiative, and thank you for considering this request to expand funding for this critical work.

Sincerely,

Cesar Medina

--

Cesar A. Medina
Researcher 5
Department of Agronomy and Plant Genetics
University of Minnesota
411 Borlaug Hall, 1991 Upper Buford Circle
Saint Paul, MN 55108
phone: 509-460-9644
email: medin297@umn.edu

From: Tammy Kimbler <takweber@mac.com>
Sent on: Monday, June 1, 2026 9:15:30 PM
To: Kader, Jen (She/Her/Hers) (MPCA) <Jen.Kader@state.mn.us>
Subject: Increase funding for Forever Green

Follow up: Follow up
Follow up status: Completed
Completed on: Monday, June 8, 2026 5:30:00 PM

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Dear Jen Kader-

I live and work in Minnesota. The Minnehaha Creek and the Mississippi watersheds are literally my backyard in South Minneapolis.

The Clean Water Council's long-time support for the Forever Green Initiative is critical to the future of agriculture and the watersheds it relies on and empties into throughout the state.

My work at [The Land Institute](#) to advance continuous living cover crops like Kernza perennial grain and silphium perennial oilseed would not be possible in Minnesota without our partnership with Forever Green.

I encourage you to increase Forever Greens funding to advance, scale, and accelerate the adoption of these crops across the landscape, so farmers have more viable alternatives that benefit and protect our water resources like those in my backyard.

Sincerely,

Tammy Kimbler
Minneapolis, MN

From: Carmen Fernholz <fernholz001@gmail.com>
Sent on: Friday, June 5, 2026 2:03:38 PM
To: Kader, Jen (She/Her/Hers) (MPCA) <Jen.Kader@state.mn.us>
Subject: Increased funding for Forever Green Initiative

Follow up: Follow up
Follow up status: Completed
Completed on: Wednesday, June 10, 2026 3:59:00 PM

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Jen,

I would like to express my support for additional funding for the Forever Green Initiative. As a farmer I was one of the early collaborators with this research and have watched the results evolve over the past 15 years. Because of the issues and challenges to agriculture that this research is working at solving, its continued support through research dollars is critical. What is sometimes not readily apparent is the understanding that this type of research requires long term funding because the results do not become known quickly. Plant breeding is a long term work in progress especially considering the tasks that we are asking from these crops.

Living in the western part of Minnesota I see quite vividly the need for continuous living covers to protect our soils and keep our waters safe for drinking and recreational purposes. But more importantly as a farmer I see this research as one of the most viable means of introducing a third crop into our rotations while providing new marketing opportunities that can create a more robust financial safety net for farmers across the state.

And finally, as we see in farming, costs continue to rise each year. Sound long term research like long term farming requires increased funding. So increasing the funding for the Forever Green Initiative will assure its viability and positive outcomes well into the future.

Thanks of course for your generous support in the past. It is what has gotten the development of these crops to where they are today because of your generous support. Increasing the funding will only make this work even more possible into the future.

Sincerely
Carmen Fernholz

Carmen Fernholz
2484 HWY 40
Madison, MN. 56256
320-212-3008

June 5, 2026

Minnesota Clean Water Council

Dear Ken Kader and Members of the Clean Water Council,

I am writing to express my sincere gratitude for the financial support provided through the Clean Water Legacy–MDA Fund and the University of Minnesota Forever Green Initiative (FGI). This support has been instrumental in advancing our research efforts.

I have been involved in Forever Green research for many years, focusing on the interaction between soybean cyst nematode (SCN) and pennycress. Pennycress is one of the key crops being developed through the FGI as a winter oilseed cover crop for Minnesota cropping systems. It offers significant potential to improve water quality, reduce soil erosion, and provide environmental benefits while generating additional farm income. However, pennycress is also a host of SCN, the most destructive pest of soybean, one of Minnesota's most important crops. Therefore, it is critical to understand the impact of pennycress on SCN populations and the subsequent soybean crop.

Our research has demonstrated that pennycress used as a winter oilseed cover crop has little effect on SCN population densities during the following soybean season. However, additional research is needed to develop effective SCN management strategies for cropping systems that include pennycress. We have received valuable support for SCN research through MDA funding and the Forever Green Initiative. However, increasing research costs and the growing number of projects within FGI have limited the resources available for this work.

For example, additional studies are needed to develop effective tools for mitigating SCN damage in pennycress–soybean production systems, including the use of SCN-resistant pennycress varieties. Unfortunately, funding limitations have prevented us from pursuing some of these important research opportunities.

Pennycress is among the most promising winter cover crops for protecting water quality while providing farmers with an additional source of income. Addressing the SCN challenge is essential for the successful commercialization and long-term adoption of pennycress in Minnesota. For these reasons, I strongly encourage increased funding for the Forever Green Initiative. Additional investment will accelerate the development and commercialization of pennycress and other Forever Green crops, enhancing their contributions to clean water, environmental protection, and agricultural sustainability.

Thank you for your continued support of this important work.

Sincerely,



Senyu Chen, Ph.D.

Professor and Nematologist

From: Amy Teller <asteller@umn.edu>
Sent on: Wednesday, June 3, 2026 5:35:23 PM
To: Kader, Jen (She/Her/Hers) (MPCA) <Jen.Kader@state.mn.us>
Subject: Message in support of increasing Forever Green Initiative funding

Follow up: Follow up
Follow up status: Completed
Completed on: Tuesday, June 9, 2026 11:48:00 AM

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Hello Jen,

I'm writing to the Clean Water Council as a researcher with the Forever Green Initiative (FGI). First, thank you for your long-term support of FGI, which has allowed for so much great work in the effort for continuous living cover agriculture (CLC) and clean water. I do social science research on CLC systems, including crops such as Kernza, winter camelina, and hazelnuts. This means I learn from growers, value chain businesses, and other partners - through methods like focus groups, interviews, and surveys - about how CLC crops fit into and move forward the visions they have for their work and their communities. I am developing metrics to assess the social impacts of CLC crops, researching what the crop adoption process is like for growers, and evaluating novel support programs like EECO. I also study the network itself of people and organizations involved in the development and scaling of CLC agriculture. My work helps Forever Green and its partners continually improve in how they advance CLC agriculture, and be accountable and responsive to the people supporting and adopting these crops.

This state funding is so crucial now given the uncertainty in and loss of federal funding. Personally, because of how challenging this moment is for funding, and especially for social science, I likely would not still have my job at University of Minnesota, as of this year, if it wasn't for the funding I secured through an FGI Systems Science grant. This funding truly directly allows me to continue this work I love, and that helps Minnesotans and our environment. I encourage you to increase funding for Forever Green. More resources could allow the many thoughtful people who I know are part of this effort to advance CLC crops both more rapidly and responsibly. Thank you for your consideration.

With appreciation,
Amy Teller

--
Amy Teller, PhD (*she/her*)
Interdisciplinary Sustainability Research Professional
University of Minnesota
732.232.8298

From: Madeleine Luskey <luske016@umn.edu>
Sent on: Friday, June 5, 2026 2:53:19 PM
To: Kader, Jen (She/Her/Hers) (MPCA) <Jen.Kader@state.mn.us>
Subject: Please increase funding for Forever Green

Follow up: Follow up
Follow up status: Completed
Completed on: Wednesday, June 10, 2026 4:26:00 PM

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Hi Jen and broader Clean Water Council,

I wanted to express my gratitude for your continued support of the Forever Green Initiative. I am a staff member on our Commercialization, Adoption, and Scaling Team. My specific focus is on developing and supporting programs that collaborate with businesses to advance the market for Continuous Living Cover (CLC) crops. I have worked closely with two cohorts of [small businesses](#) and am currently supporting the launch of our [industry engagement](#) program.

It's been incredibly encouraging to see compounding interest in building markets for these crops. As market interest grows, two things remain crucial: the foundational R&D at the heart of Forever Green and supporting farmer adoption of CLC crops through the [EECO program](#). Research funding has become scarce, and so public support is more important than ever. Two-way public-private dialogue is critical, and our researchers need funding to sustain.

I ask that you increase funding to Forever Green to advance our mission of supporting environmentally economically sustainable crops so that we build and maintain resilient ecosystems.

Thank you,
Madeleine

--
Madeleine Luskey
Product and Market Development Associate
[UMN Forever Green Initiative](#)
612-760-6709 (c)

From: Lois Braun <brau0259@umn.edu>
Sent on: Friday, June 5, 2026 10:34:08 PM
To: Kader, Jen (She/Her/Hers) (MPCA) <Jen.Kader@state.mn.us>
Subject: Request for increased funding for the Forever Green Initiative

Follow up: Follow up
Follow up status: Completed
Completed on: Wednesday, June 10, 2026 6:12:00 PM

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Dear Jen,

I am writing to express my gratitude for the support of the Clean Water Council for my work developing hybrid hazelnuts. My team would not still be working on hazelnuts if it had not been for funding from CWC through the Forever Green Initiative. In the ten years since our first FGI grant in 2015, we have 1) identified five 1st generation selections that we are now commercializing and planting out on farms, 2) moved over 30 2nd generation selections into replicated trials, 3) established a 3rd generation, and 4) nearly completed genomic prediction models that will enable us to better plan the crosses for our 4th generation. We have also made significant progress with propagation, which has been the biggest bottleneck for getting our selections out on farms, and have also improved our agronomic recommendations for growers.

I estimate that over a quarter of the funding required to make this happen has come from FGI grants. Almost all the rest has come from multi-state, multi-institutional USDA-NIFA Specialty Crop Research Initiative (SCRI) grants awarded to the Upper Midwest Hazelnut Development Initiative, which includes the University of Wisconsin and several other regional non-profits. Although we have received two SCRI grants since our inception, competition for federal grant is intense and growing more so. We are currently writing yet another SCRI pre-proposal, our third attempt since our last SCRI grant ran out. Writing this many proposals is a big demand on our time. I estimate that I personally spent about a month working on our last funded SCRI proposal. That was time not spent doing the research and outreach that directly advances our objectives. Larger and longer grants improve our output by reducing the time we researchers must spend chasing funding. Thus I am especially grateful for our latest FGI, for \$640K. However, even that will not last long, since our personnel costs alone are nearly \$200K per year. Additional funding is needed for entomology research, for more genomics testing, and for technology. Our farm crew's work would be much easier with some specialized orchard management equipment. A hazelnut harvester would be great, with a trailer to transport it. I am terribly grateful for the funding we've already received but more will be needed to make hazelnuts into a commercially viable crop.

Sincerely,

Lois Braun

Hazelnut Researcher (Plant Breeding and Genomics)

Dept of Agronomy and Plant Genetics

University of Minnesota

From: Erin Meier <tegtm003@umn.edu>
Sent on: Friday, June 5, 2026 4:30:25 PM
To: Kader, Jen (She/Her/Hers) (MPCA) <Jen.Kader@state.mn.us>
Subject: Support for CWC funding to Forever Green

Follow up: Follow up
Follow up status: Completed
Completed on: Wednesday, June 10, 2026 5:09:00 PM

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Hi, Jen - I'm writing today in support of **continued and increased** Clean Water Council funding for U of MN's Forever Green Initiative (FGI) - and, of course, I thank the council for its strong and ongoing support of FGI to date as a Minnesota resident and Director of Green Lands Blue Waters (GLBW).

GLBW is a 100% self/soft-funded regional consortium in the Upper Midwest that supports the development of and transition to multi-functional agricultural systems that integrate perennials and other forms of continuous living cover (CLC). Through work with a broad network of partners including University of Minnesota and other universities, researchers, educators, producer associations, environmental groups, businesses, nonprofits, governmental agencies, and practitioners, GLBW actively supports the development and commercialization of perennial crops and cropping systems and highlights models of positive agricultural transformation that can inspire and inform agricultural stakeholders and practices.

As you know, CLC agriculture is particularly important for addressing water quality concerns, reducing nitrate leaching and soil erosion. Minnesota's 2026 Nutrient Reduction Strategy states that expanding CLC will be critical to achieving the state's clean water goals. This approach to farming also has broader benefits, including supporting pollinators and other wildlife, improving soil health, and enhancing climate resilience.

At the core of all of this goodness is FGI's research infrastructure advancing CLC crops and systems for Minnesota and beyond. We are all looking for ways to counter the decreasing and increasingly uncertain funding landscape, and this is a critical time to bolster FGI's existing programs and help advance "next step" research projects that are conceived of and in the pipeline. More than ever environmental urgency is meeting funding urgency. We need to press on - stronger and faster at creating productive agricultural systems that nurture and provide opportunity rather than extract from our natural resource base and our farmers and their communities.

Thank you for your consideration!
Erin

Erin Meier

Director | Green Lands Blue Waters
at the University of Minnesota
Dept of Agronomy and Plant Genetics
1991 Upper Buford Circle, 411 Borlaug Hall
St. Paul, MN 55108-0010
tegtm003@umn.edu

Ofc: 612-625-3709 | Mobile: 507-272-1956

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From: Helene Murray <murra021@umn.edu>
Sent on: Monday, June 1, 2026 8:53:19 PM
To: Kader, Jen (She/Her/Hers) (MPCA) <Jen.Kader@state.mn.us>
Subject: Support for Forever Green

Follow up: Follow up
Start date: Monday, June 1, 2026 12:00:00 AM
Due date: Monday, June 1, 2026 12:00:00 AM

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I am writing express my thanks for the on-going support the Clean Water Council has provided to the Forever Green Initiative. The funding supports important research and demonstration work, outreach and incentives for farmers to provide Continuous Living Cover on Minnesota land helping the Clean Water Council to reach their goals to improve water quality.

I hope the Council will continue to provide this important funding for the Forever Green Initiative! If you have any questions for me, please be in contact.

--
Helene Murray (*she, her*)
Executive Director, Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture
411 Borlaug Hall, 1991 Upper Buford Circle
Saint Paul, MN 55108
cell: 651-341-0104 (voice/text)

I will be retiring in June. My last day in the office will be June 12, 2026.

After June 12 please reach out to misamail@umn.edu for help with MISA-related work or projects

murra021@umn.edu
www.misa.umn.edu

From: Cora Gertjeanssen <gertj008@umn.edu>
Sent on: Wednesday, June 3, 2026 10:06:01 PM
To: Kader, Jen (She/Her/Hers) (MPCA) <Jen.Kader@state.mn.us>
Subject: Support for Forever Green

Follow up: Follow up
Follow up status: Completed
Completed on: Tuesday, June 9, 2026 4:17:00 PM

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Greetings,

I would like to acknowledge and thank the Clean Water Council's past and long-term support of the Forever Green Initiative, which has allowed us to accomplish so much. My work is centered around outreach and communications - building a communications program, telling the story of Forever Green, organizing events, managing our inventory, and handling general administrative tasks to ensure the team and researchers are able to do their work the best they can. It's been incredible over the past year of my employment to see how far we've come in new research findings, new products, new hires, and new operating systems. However, the work doesn't stop here.

As you know, the costs of research are rising and R&D is essential to Forever Green's work. Without it, we can't develop these novel crops and ensure they are ready for farmers and businesses. Increased uncertainty around federal research and funding makes the Clean Water Council's support more important than ever. With more resources we could fund more projects, resulting in faster progress on developing continuous living cover crops, and in turn, reducing nitrate leaching into Minnesota waterways and preventing soil erosion.

I ask you to increase funding for Forever Green's important work developing new crops that will protect our water. Together, we can shape the future of Minnesotan agriculture in a way that is sustainable for people and the planet.

With gratitude,
Cora

--
Cora Gertjeanssen
Communications and Outreach Specialist
[UMN Forever Green Initiative](#)
gertj008@umn.edu | 651-558-6460 (c)

From: James Anderson <ander319@umn.edu>
Sent on: Thursday, June 4, 2026 10:30:50 PM
To: Kader, Jen (She/Her/Hers) (MPCA) <Jen.Kader@state.mn.us>
CC: akirby@umn.edu
Subject: support for Forever Green

Follow up: Follow up
Follow up status: Completed
Completed on: Wednesday, June 10, 2026 4:09:00 AM

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Dear Jen and members of the Clean Water Council:

Thank you for your long--standing support of the Forever Green Initiative at the University of Minnesota. Your commitment has been essential to the progress we have made in developing continuous living cover (CLC) crops that protect Minnesota's water resources while strengthening rural economies. I am deeply grateful for the Council's role in sustaining this work.

I oversee four Forever Green crop breeding programs, Kernza, perennial rye, pennycress, and camelina, each focused on advancing new CLC species from early development toward commercial readiness. This work has already leveraged millions of dollars in federal funding and helped establish new industry partnerships that are accelerating commercialization. The Council's support has been a critical foundation for these successes.

At the same time, the costs of research continue to rise, and federal funding has become increasingly uncertain. Maintaining momentum—and retaining the experienced scientists who are driving these innovations—requires stable and expanded state investment. With additional resources, we could move these crops through the improvement pipeline more rapidly, shorten breeding cycles, and deliver water--protective crops to Minnesota farmers sooner.

Forever Green is working, and the progress is real. Increased support now would allow us to build on this momentum and ensure that Minnesota remains a national leader in developing crops that improve water quality, enhance soil health, and create new economic opportunities.

I respectfully encourage the Clean Water Council to increase its investment in the Forever Green Initiative so we can continue delivering the environmental and economic benefits that Minnesotans expect and deserve.

Thank you again for your partnership and for considering this request.

Jim Anderson, Professor and Plant Breeder
Dept. of Agronomy & Plant Genetics
University of Minnesota
St. Paul, MN 55108

From: Maciej Kazula <mkazula@umn.edu>
Sent on: Friday, June 5, 2026 3:22:14 PM
To: Kader, Jen (She/Her/Hers) (MPCA) <Jen.Kader@state.mn.us>
Subject: Support for Increased Funding for Forever Green Initiative

Follow up: Follow up
Follow up status: Completed
Completed on: Wednesday, June 10, 2026 4:32:00 PM

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Dear Jen Kader,

Thank you for your longstanding support of the Forever Green Initiative (FGI). The Clean Water Council's investment has been instrumental in advancing Continuous Living Cover (CLC) crops and building the partnerships needed to move these innovations from research into real-world adoption. The progress in developing winter camelina, pennycress, and other CLC crops would not have been possible without this sustained support.

I recently joined FGI as a Winter Oilseed Specialist, working across research, commercialization, industry partnerships, policy, and grower engagement to advance winter camelina and pennycress in Minnesota. I hold a Ph.D. in Agronomy and Soil Science and have more than 17 years of experience advancing agricultural systems in the Upper Midwest through applied research and collaboration with farmers, researchers, and industry partners.

Winter oilseeds fill a critical gap in row-crop systems by providing living cover from late fall through early spring, when soils are most vulnerable to erosion and nutrient loss. They capture residual nutrients that might otherwise reach Minnesota's waters, while improving soil health and supporting pollinators. Importantly, they do not compete with food crops, as they fit between primary commodity rotations. Their oil is also a proven low-carbon fuel feedstock, creating new market-driven opportunities.

Additional funding is especially important now as research costs rise and federal support becomes more uncertain due to shifting priorities and global instability. Continued and increased support from the Clean Water Council is critical to maintaining momentum. More resources would accelerate breeding, agronomy, commercialization, and farmer adoption, speeding progress toward more resilient cropping systems, cleaner water, healthier soils, and expanded low-carbon energy production.

I respectfully encourage the Clean Water Council to increase funding for FGI so this work continues delivering lasting environmental and economic benefits for Minnesota.

Sincerely,

Maciej

--
Maciej Kazula, PhD (he/him)
Winter Oilseed Specialist
Forever Green Initiative
Dept. of Agronomy and Plant Genetics
University of Minnesota
608-770-6463 (c)
mkazula@umn.edu
forevergreen.umn.edu

From: Fernanda Furlan Goncalves Dias <ffgdias@umn.edu>
Sent on: Friday, June 5, 2026 2:09:11 PM
To: Kader, Jen (She/Her/Hers) (MPCA) <Jen.Kader@state.mn.us>
Subject: Support for Increased Funding for the Forever Green Initiative

Follow up: Follow up
Follow up status: Completed
Completed on: Wednesday, June 10, 2026 4:04:00 PM

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Dear Ms. Kader,

Thank you for the Clean Water Council's long-standing support of the Forever Green Initiative. This investment has been instrumental in advancing CLC and building the scientific foundation needed to support their adoption across Minnesota.

My research focuses on the lipid and flavor characterization as well as developing sustainable technologies to increase the value and market potential of CLC crops, including camelina, pennycress, winter pea, wheatgrass, and hazelnuts. Specifically, I work on green extraction technologies to produce protein and oil ingredients, as well as flavor characterization to better understand quality and functionality throughout processing. This research helps create new food and ingredient markets that can improve the economic viability of these environmentally beneficial crops.

Support for this work is particularly important now. Research costs have increased substantially in recent years, while uncertainty surrounding federal research funding has made it more difficult to sustain long-term innovation programs. Continued state investment is critical to maintaining momentum and translating scientific discoveries into practical agricultural solutions.

With additional funding, we could accelerate the development of value-added products, expand pilot-scale validation, and more rapidly identify market opportunities that incentivize growers to adopt CLC crops.

I respectfully encourage the Clean Water Council to increase funding for the Forever Green Initiative. Continued investment will help advance water quality goals while supporting innovation, economic development, and resilient agricultural systems in Minnesota.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Fernanda

*Fernanda Dias
Assistant Professor of Analytical and Food Chemistry
Department of Food Science and Nutrition
University of Minnesota
1334 Eckles Avenue
Phone: 612-624-3683
St. Paul, MN 55108-1038*

From: George Annor <gannor@umn.edu>
Sent on: Friday, June 5, 2026 4:43:50 PM
To: Kader, Jen (She/Her/Hers) (MPCA) <Jen.Kader@state.mn.us>
Subject: Support for Increased Funding for the Forever Green Initiative

Follow up: Follow up
Follow up status: Completed
Completed on: Wednesday, June 10, 2026 5:13:00 PM

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Dear Ms. Kader,

Thank you for the Clean Water Council's long standing support of the Forever Green Initiative. Your investment has helped advance innovative agricultural solutions that improve water quality while creating economic opportunities for Minnesota farmers and rural communities.

I am an Associate Professor in the Department of Food Science and Nutrition at the University of Minnesota and a member of the Forever Green Initiative. My research focuses on improving the nutritional quality, functionality, and market potential of perennial grains such as Kernza® and other continuous living cover (CLC) crops. This work supports the development of food products and markets that encourage adoption of crops that reduce nutrient losses and protect Minnesota's water resources.

Increased funding for Forever Green is particularly important now. Research costs continue to rise, and uncertainty surrounding federal research funding threatens our ability to maintain momentum in developing and scaling these crops.

Additional support from the Clean Water Council would allow us to accelerate research, expand product and market development, strengthen partnerships with growers and industry, and more rapidly deliver environmental benefits across Minnesota's agricultural landscape.

I respectfully encourage the Clean Water Council to increase funding for the Forever Green Initiative. Continued investment will help advance cleaner water, more resilient farming systems, and new economic opportunities for Minnesota communities.

Thank you for your consideration and continued commitment to Minnesota's water resources.

--
Kind Regards

George Amponsah Annor, Ph.D.
Director, Food Science Undergraduate Program
Associate Professor and McKnight Presidential Fellow
General Mills Land-Grant Professorship in Cereal Chemistry and Technology
145 Department of Food Science and Nutrition
College of Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Sciences
University of Minnesota
1334 Eckles Ave
St. Paul, MN 55108

From: Anthony Brusa <abrusa@umn.edu>
Sent on: Thursday, June 4, 2026 9:27:40 PM
To: Kader, Jen (She/Her/Hers) (MPCA) <Jen.Kader@state.mn.us>
Subject: Support for the Clean Water Council funding of Forever Green Initiative research

Follow up: Follow up
Follow up status: Completed
Completed on: Tuesday, June 9, 2026 9:34:00 PM

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To the members of the Clean Water Council,

I want to take a moment to recognize the history of support from your organization which has allowed Forever Green Initiative researchers to accomplish so much. As a recipient of the most recent round of Forever Green funding, your support is allowing my team to move forward with development of a genomic resource that will greatly accelerate the development of new agronomic traits for Forever Green crops. By more rapidly identifying novel genetic variants, our tools will enable large scale screenings of important traits without needing a large amount of field space for our work. This work will benefit plant development efforts, bringing us closer to adoption of winter oilseed crops for Minnesota growers. The reduction in soil erosion and fertilizer and pesticide runoff will benefit all Minnesotans.

Your support has come at an important time; cost for supplies, facility rental, travel, and personnel have all been rising at the same time that federal funding has been sharply cut. State level funding has been critical to continuing our work. The Forever Green Initiative has a large number of talented and motivated teams who have high quality research plans, but were unable to pursue them due to limited funding. I hope that the members of the Clean Water Council will consider an increase in funding to the Forever Green Initiative, which would enable funding of agronomic research in pursuit of cleaner waters for the people of Minnesota.

Regards,
Dr. Anthony Brusa
Researcher 5
Department of Agronomy and Plant Genetics, University of Minnesota
230 Borlaug Hall, 1991 Upper Buford Circle
St. Paul, MN 55108

From: Grace Doyle <doyle588@umn.edu>
Sent on: Wednesday, June 3, 2026 6:28:40 PM
To: Kader, Jen (She/Her/Hers) (MPCA) <Jen.Kader@state.mn.us>
Subject: Support for the Forever Green Initiative

Follow up: Follow up
Follow up status: Completed
Completed on: Tuesday, June 9, 2026 11:53:00 AM

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Hello Jen,

I want to first express my deep gratitude for the Clean Water Council's significant support of the Forever Green Initiative. The support has been instrumental to the accomplishments FGI has made in the sustainable agriculture sector. I am a PhD student at the University of Minnesota working with FGI to ease agronomic barriers to the adoption of continuous living cover systems on the Minnesota landscape. I feel so fortunate to have this opportunity to work with this group of passionate researchers and farmers on the cutting edge of the sustainable agriculture movement.

With the rising cost of research and high uncertainty around federal funding, the past year and a half have been extremely challenging for sustainable agriculture research at a time when it is more important than ever to be funding environmentally informed research. The support of the Clean Water Council is so important to the advances FGI is making in developing sustainable crops and getting them incorporated into cropping systems in Minnesota. I believe increasing the funding for the Forever Green Initiative would make an impactful difference to the progress we as a state can make in addressing water quality and soil health challenges connected to agricultural practices.

Thank you again for your support and for your continued consideration of the Forever Green Initiative. Sincerely,
Grace

--
Grace Doyle (she/they)
University of Minnesota - Twin Cities
PhD Student - Applied Plant Sciences
Agronomy and Agroecology Track

From: Frank Forcella <forcellafrank@gmail.com>

Sent on: Wednesday, June 3, 2026 8:20:29 PM

To: Kader, Jen (She/Her/Hers) (MPCA) <Jen.Kader@state.mn.us>

Subject: Support for UMN's Forever Green Initiative

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Jen Kader
Clean Water Council Administrator

First, I would like to thank the Clean Water Council for its past support of UMN's Forever Green Initiative (FGI). Such support has been critically important for FGI to fulfill its mission of protecting the environmental and economic integrity of Minnesota's agricultural landscapes and enterprises.

Although I am currently retired, for several years I participated in FGI-related research projects, especially those involving winter oilseeds (pennycress and winter camelina) and relay cropping with corn and soybean. I also worked with the perennial crop, kernza. We found that all of these crops were extremely useful for preventing soil erosion and enhancing water quality (both for groundwater and surface water). Additionally, despite not being an entomologist, while working with pennycress and winter camelina, one could not help but notice the extraordinary attraction the flowers of these crops have for pollinating insects in early spring. Accordingly, we documented the astonishing abundance and diversity of insect pollinators hosted by both of these new crops.

From a public relations standpoint, agriculture largely suffers because of its perceived environmental impact. One important aspect of the mission of FGI is to develop and document novel agricultural systems that contribute positively to the environment while simultaneously maintaining or enhancing economic outcomes for farmers and food/feed suppliers. Just one of many examples of this is the environmentally sound production of sustainable aviation fuels (SAF) by relay cropping with winter camelina (and/or pennycress). SAFs are not only highly attractive at this moment in time, but almost certainly will be even more attractive in the future.

Lastly, my personal bias is that through FGI, agriculture in Minnesota can lead the nation, if not the world, in developing perennial field crops, in particular oilseed crops from perennial forms of flax, sunflower, and native North American species in the mustard family (Brassicaceae). Naturally, more work on flax and sunflower, as well as new research on perennial mustards would require new and additional funds. FGI's history of success in working with new crops more than justifies enhanced funding for this important work.

Again, thank you for past support of FGI.

Frank Forcella
USDA Research Agronomist & UMN Adjunct Professor (retired)

From: Yesuf Mohammed <moha2490@umn.edu>
Sent on: Wednesday, June 3, 2026 9:50:25 PM
To: Kader, Jen (She/Her/Hers) (MPCA) <Jen.Kader@state.mn.us>
CC: Ann Kirby <akirby@umn.edu>
Subject: Thank you and more!

Follow up: Follow up
Follow up status: Completed
Completed on: Tuesday, June 9, 2026 4:13:00 PM

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Dear Jen Kader,

Clean Water Council Administrator

My name is Yesuf Assen Mohammed (Ph. D.), a Research Agronomist for winter camelina and domesticated pennycress. My research program focuses on developing agronomic practices that enable growers to successfully integrate winter camelina and pennycress into existing corn–soybean rotations. We are extremely grateful for your support in helping us develop and introduce these novel oilseed crops across the Midwest, particularly in Minnesota. I cannot thank you enough for your continued commitment to this important work.

Thanks to your support, interest in these winter oilseed crops has grown significantly among stakeholders, including industry partners, policymakers and agricultural organizations. This growing attention reflects the tremendous potential of these crops to deliver agronomic, economic and environmental benefits. Winter camelina and pennycress provide soil cover during fallow season, generate additional income opportunities for growers, create new jobs throughout the value chain, protect water resources from nutrient runoff and provide valuable forage for pollinators.

Despite this progress, we are facing significant challenges in securing federal funding. For example, one of our recent proposals was ranked among the top projects selected nationally and was awarded \$10 million over five years to support research, outreach, marketing and related activities for these crops. Unfortunately, funding for this grant has been placed on hold by the current federal administration for reasons that remain unclear.

Given these circumstances, your continued and increased support is especially critical. Additional investment during this challenging period would enable us to maintain research momentum, expand outreach efforts and accelerate the adoption and commercialization of these promising crops. Increased support would have a substantial impact on our ability to deliver meaningful benefits to Minnesota growers, rural communities and the environment.

Therefore, I respectfully request your consideration for continued and increased funding to support our ongoing efforts.

Thank you for your continued support to advancing agricultural innovation in Minnesota.

Sincerely,

Yesuf Assen Mohammed (Ph. D).

Moha2490@umn.edu

From: Robert Stupar <stup0004@umn.edu>
Sent on: Monday, June 1, 2026 11:39:05 PM
To: Kader, Jen (She/Her/Hers) (MPCA) <Jen.Kader@state.mn.us>
Subject: Thank you for your support of the Forever Green Initiative

Follow up: Follow up

Start date: Tuesday, June 2, 2026 12:00:00 AM

Due date: Tuesday, June 2, 2026 12:00:00 AM

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Dear Ms. Kader,

I am writing to first thank you for past support of the Forever Green Initiative and express how valuable this program is to the future of the agricultural economy and ecological conservation of our state. I am a UMN researcher and have been involved for several years in the development of winter annual and perennial crops for Minnesota farmers. Specifically, I work on the breeding of winter-hardy pea, winter-hardy hairy vetch, and perennial sunflower. We are particularly excited about how these crops can be used on the landscape to reduce soil erosion and protect our waterways from nutrient run-off and pollution. We have made great strides in this area of research, but there is still important work to do. As you know, federal support for this type of research has suffered vast reductions recently, while the cost of such research has climbed due to inflation and other externalities. We are hopeful that an increase in the funding for the Forever Green Initiative could help to offset these challenges. An increased budget would be a game-changer for research programs like mine and the results we can deliver to the state.

I am proud of the progress made so far, but realize that transformational change in our agricultural system will require an even greater effort from our research team and enhanced collaborations with agronomists, farmers, and state partners. Developing environmentally-friendly crops that can survive Minnesota winters is a tall order, but we have the capacity, technology, and partnerships to make it a reality. With your increased support, we can bring more sustainable cropping systems to the landscape more rapidly, at a time when they are desperately needed. Minnesota can be THE leader in this critical mission.

Please feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions.

Best regards,

Bob Stupar

Robert Stupar
Professor - Department of Agronomy and Plant Genetics
University of Minnesota
1991 Upper Buford Circle
411 Borlaug Hall
St. Paul, MN 55108-6026
Office: 612-625-5769
Fax: 612-625-1268

From: Jessica Gutknecht <jgut@umn.edu>
Sent on: Wednesday, June 3, 2026 4:13:33 PM
To: Kader, Jen (She/Her/Hers) (MPCA) <Jen.Kader@state.mn.us>
Subject: Thank you for your support of UMN Forever Green!

Follow up: Follow up
Follow up status: Completed
Completed on: Tuesday, June 9, 2026 11:36:00 AM

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Dear Clean Water Council,

I'm writing as a UMN professor of soil and environmental science who has been highly engaged in the Forever Green Initiative for the past 10 years. I've seen in those 10 years how much advancement of novel, environmentally friendly cropping systems, and the university capacity to support them, has been made possible by your support. Thank you deeply!

My personal focus is on soil health, climate adaptation, and other soil, carbon, and water quality benefits of sustainable cropping systems. At this time, with many funding sources at risk, and with recent developments in FGI cropping system advancement, now is a great time to support increased funding of the Forever Green Initiative and I encourage you to do so.

Thank you again,
Jessica

--
Professor, Department of Soil, Water, and Climate
Fellow, Institute on the Environment
University of Minnesota, Twin Cities
439 Borlaug Hall
1991 Upper Buford Circle
St. Paul, MN 55108

Office: 568 Borlaug Hall
612-626-8435

jgut@umn.edu<https://www.swac.umn.edu/directory/faculty/jessica-gutknecht>[Gutknecht lab website](#)

pronouns she/her/hers

"Returning hate for hate multiplies hate, adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars. Darkness cannot drive out darkness, only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can do that." Dr. MLK J

"If you have come here to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together." Lilla Watson



Sherburne SWCD

5/29/2026

John Barten
Clean Water Council Chair
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155
bbarten79@gmail.com

Jen Kader
Clean Water Council Administrator
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155
Jen.Kader@state.mn.us

Subject: Clean Water Council Draft Recommendations

Dear Mr. Barten, Ms. Kader, and members of the Clean Water Council,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide stakeholder comments as the Council considers proposals for funding recommendations. The following program supports our work at the Sherburne Soil and Water Conservation District to help ensure drinking water is safe for everyone, everywhere in Minnesota, and we encourage the Council to continue prioritizing efforts that protect drinking water for future generations.

The Groundwater Restoration and Protection Strategies

Sherburne SWCD has worked extensively with Clean Water Fund (CWF) initiatives, including our current Accelerated Implementation Grant, to expand our capacity to reach landowners in highly vulnerable groundwater areas. Through this partnership, we have been able to increase both our outreach and our impact on local drinking water protection.

In this most recent round of CWF funding, we have received heartfelt gratitude from township boards and residents who appreciate our continued efforts to promote education and awareness in their communities. This funding made it possible for us to connect with landowners we had not previously been able to reach, strengthening relationships essential for long-term conservation and drinking water protection. These connections have led to countless conversations about private wells, improved awareness of local groundwater vulnerability, and a clearer understanding of the important roles SWCDs and state agencies play in safeguarding drinking water.

The opportunities provided by CWF funding have directly supported our ability to meet the growing demand in Sherburne County for private well testing and education. Traditionally, private well outreach has lacked financial support at the local level. CWF funding has helped fill this gap by enabling Sherburne SWCD to offer accessible testing opportunities, expand

education efforts, and better serve residents who rely on private wells for their drinking water. This investment strengthens our organizational capacity and improves the long-term health of our local groundwater resources.

Thank you for your continued support and consideration.

Sincerely,

Francine Larson
District Manager
Sherburne Soil & Water Conservation District



Spring Yard Care Workshop for Pollinators

April 9th, 2024
5-7pm
Becker City Park Building
10362 County Road 23 SE, Becker, MN 55308

Featured Speakers
Quincy Sadowski, U of M Extension
Grayson Smith, US Fish and Wildlife Service

Topics Covered Include
Native plant alternatives for your garden
Spring tree and shrub care
Upcoming pests and diseases
Turf alternatives
Native prairie establishment



Register by April 1st at www.sherburneswcd.org

Sponsored By:



www.sherburneswcd.org 425 Jackson Ave NW 763-220-3434 mwagner@sherburneswcd.org



June 12, 2026

John Barten, Chair
Clean Water Council
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: Support for Metropolitan Council Clean Water Fund Request

Dear Mr. Barten and Members of the Clean Water Council,

My name is Tim Anderson and I am the Senior Planner for Sustainability with the City of Coon Rapids.

I am writing to support the Metropolitan Council's request for Clean Water Fund funding.

Water is essential to our region's health, economy, and quality of life. Homes, businesses, and public services all depend on a safe, reliable, and affordable water supply.

The Metropolitan Council, working with cities, utilities, and state agencies, has recently updated the regional water supply plan. This plan helps communities work together to meet future water needs and protect our water resources.

Clean Water Fund investments support two key programs that help communities take action:

- **Water demand reduction grants** help communities reduce water use and improve efficiency.
- **Water sustainability support** helps address emerging challenges, protect groundwater, and develop cost-effective regional solutions.

Communities across the region—including ours—have benefited from these programs. They provide practical tools and funding that help us plan ahead, protect our water sources, and use water more efficiently.

We encourage the Clean Water Council to fully support the Metropolitan Council's request.

Sincerely,

Tim Anderson
11155 Robinson Drive
Coon Rapids, MN 55433

cc: Jen Kader, Clean Water Council
Judy Sventek, Metropolitan Council

June 11, 2026

John Barten, Chair
Clean Water Council
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: Support for Metropolitan Council Clean Water Fund Request

Dear Mr. Barten and Members of the Clean Water Council,

As the Utilities Supervisor and Sustainability Specialist for the City of Hopkins, we are writing to support the Metropolitan Council's request for Clean Water Fund funding.

Water is essential to our region's health, economy, and quality of life. Homes, businesses, and public services all depend on a safe, reliable, and affordable water supply.

The Metropolitan Council, working with cities, utilities, and state agencies, has recently updated the regional water supply plan. This plan helps communities work together to meet future water needs and protect our water resources.

Clean Water Fund investments support two key programs that help communities take action:

- **Water demand reduction grants** help communities reduce water use and improve efficiency.
- **Water sustainability support** helps address emerging challenges, protect groundwater, and develop cost-effective regional solutions.

Communities across the region—including Hopkins—have benefited from these programs. They provide practical tools and funding that help communities plan ahead, protect our water sources, and use water more efficiently.

City of Hopkins has participated in water demand reduction grants in program years 2019-2021 and 2024-2026, and is awarded funds in the 2026-2028 Water Efficiency Rebate program. Across the grant program years, 147 products have been installed in the Hopkins community, estimated to save approximately 1,086,000 gallons of water annually.

We encourage the Clean Water Council to fully support the Metropolitan Council's request.

Sincerely,

Andrew Klobe
Utilities Supervisor
11100 Excelsior Blvd.
Hopkins, MN 55343

Mikala Larson
Sustainability Specialist
1010 First Street South
Hopkins, MN 55343

cc: Jen Kader, Clean Water Council
Judy Sventek, Metropolitan Council

June 11, 2026

John Barten, Chair
Clean Water Council
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: Support for Metropolitan Council's Clean Water Fund Request

Dear Mr. Barten and Members of the Clean Water Council,

My name is Beth Holida, and I serve as the Public Works Office Assistant for the City of St. Louis Park. I am writing to express the City's strong support for the Metropolitan Council's Clean Water Fund request currently under review by the Clean Water Council.

Water is essential to the health, prosperity, and quality of life of the Twin Cities metropolitan region. Every sector of our community, including business, manufacturing, construction, healthcare, recreation, and agriculture depends on a reliable, safe, and affordable water supply. Protecting and sustaining these resources is critical to the continued growth and success of our region.

Working in partnership with local government officials, utility directors, and water resource professionals, the Metropolitan Council adopted an updated Metropolitan Area Water Supply Plan that provides a comprehensive framework for coordinated water planning and long-term sustainability throughout the Twin Cities region.

Over the past several years, funding from the Clean Water Fund has played a vital role in implementing this stakeholder-supported plan. Specifically, the funding supports two key Metropolitan Council programs:

1. **Water Demand Reduction Grant Program** – Provides grants to communities for projects that reduce water demand, improve conservation efforts, and help ensure the long-term reliability of drinking water supplies.
2. **Metropolitan Area Water Sustainability Support Program** – Funds projects that address emerging threats to drinking water supplies, promote cost-effective regional solutions, encourage inter-jurisdictional collaboration, strengthen local water supply resiliency, and protect groundwater resources. This program also advances water sustainability across the entire water cycle by supporting efforts to prevent degradation of both surface and groundwater resources throughout the metropolitan region.

Communities across the region, including St. Louis Park, have benefited from these programs. Continued investment through the Clean Water Fund will allow communities to expand water conservation initiatives, improve sustainability efforts, and better protect our shared water resources for future generations.

For these reasons, the City of St. Louis Park respectfully urges the Clean Water Council to fully support the Metropolitan Council's Clean Water Fund request.

Sincerely,

Beth Holida
Public Works Office Assistant
City of St. Louis Park

cc: Jen Kader, Clean Water Council Coordinator
Judy Sventek, Metropolitan Council

June 11, 2026

John Barten, Chair
Clean Water Council
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: Support for Metropolitan Council's Clean Water Fund Request

Dear Mr. Barten and Members of the Clean Water Council,

My name is Evan Glunz and I am the Utility Billing/Administrative Support Specialist in Little Canada.

I am writing in support of Metropolitan Council's Clean Water Fund request, which is in the process of being vetted through the Clean Water Council's Fund request process.

Water is fundamental to the prosperity and quality of life of our Twin Cities region. Every sector of our regional community relies on water – commerce, manufacturing, construction, health care, recreation, and agriculture. Our region needs plentiful, safe, and affordable water supply to grow and thrive.

In partnership with the region's local governmental officials, utility directors, and water agency staff, the Metropolitan Council adopted an updated metropolitan area water supply plan for the Twin Cities region. This plan provides an up-to-date framework for coordinated planning and action toward water supply and overall water sustainability.

Over the past several years, the Metropolitan Council has received funding from Clean Water Fund to support the implementation of this stakeholder-supported plan. The Clean Water Fund supports two Metropolitan Council programs that help communities implement projects that help achieve sustainable water resources and supplies:

- 1) Water demand reduction grant program:** Providing grants to assist communities with implementation of water demand reduction measures to ensure the reliability and protecting of drinking water supplies.
- 2) Metropolitan area water sustainability support:** Implementing 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 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.

Many communities including Little Canada have benefitted from these programs and will continue to benefit from the expansion of these programs, as we strive to use water more efficiently in the region.

Little Canada recommends the Clean Water Council fully support the Metropolitan Council request.

Sincerely,

Evan Glunz
515 Little Canada Road East
Little Canada, MN 55117

cc: Jen Kader, Clean Water Council Coordinator
Judy Sventek, Manager, Water Resources, Metropolitan Council

June 11, 2026

John Barten, Chair
Clean Water Council
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: Support for Metropolitan Council's Clean Water Fund Request

Dear Mr. Barten and Members of the Clean Water Council,

Water is fundamental to the prosperity and quality of life of our Twin Cities region. Every sector of our regional community relies on water – commerce, manufacturing, construction, health care, recreation, and agriculture. Over the past several years, the Metropolitan Council has received funding from Clean Water Fund to support two programs that target water supply sustainability in the Twin Cities metro area:

- Metropolitan Area water sustainability support program
- Water demand reduction grant program

Through these two programs, the Clean Water Fund supports 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.

These programs have fostered partnerships between and within organizations and shed additional light on greater water resource issues. Working together, the Metropolitan Council and metro area cities are moving toward meeting our long-term goal of sustainable water supplies and water resources for current and future generations.

Many communities have benefitted from these programs and will continue to benefit from the expansion of these programs, as we strive to use water more efficiently in the region. I would respectfully request that the Clean Water Council fully support the Metropolitan Council's funding request.

Sincerely,

Evan Glunz
515 Little Canada Road East
Little Canada, MN 55117

cc: Jen Kader, Clean Water Council Coordinator
Judy Sventek, Manager, Water Resources, Metropolitan Council

June 11, 2026

John Barten, Chair
Clean Water Council
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: Support for Metropolitan Council Clean Water Fund Request

Dear Mr. Barten and Members of the Clean Water Council,

My name is Evan Glunz, and I am the Utility Billing/Administrative Support Specialist with Little Canada.

I am writing to support the Metropolitan Council's request for Clean Water Fund funding.

Water is essential to our region's health, economy, and quality of life. Homes, businesses, and public services all depend on a safe, reliable, and affordable water supply.

The Metropolitan Council, working with cities, utilities, and state agencies, has recently updated the regional water supply plan. This plan helps communities work together to meet future water needs and protect our water resources.

Clean Water Fund investments support two key programs that help communities take action:

- **Water demand reduction grants** help communities reduce water use and improve efficiency.
- **Water sustainability support** helps address emerging challenges, protect groundwater, and develop cost-effective regional solutions.

Communities across the region—including ours—have benefited from these programs. They provide practical tools and funding that help us plan ahead, protect our water sources, and use water more efficiently.

We encourage the Clean Water Council to fully support the Metropolitan Council's request.

Sincerely,

Evan Glunz
515 Little Canada Road East
Little Canada, MN 55117

cc: Jen Kader, Clean Water Council
Judy Sventek, Metropolitan Council

June 11, 2026

John Barten, Chair
Clean Water Council
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: Support for Metropolitan Council Clean Water Fund Request

Dear Mr. Barten and Members of the Clean Water Council,

I am writing to support the Metropolitan Council's request for Clean Water Fund funding.

These funds support two programs that help communities protect and manage their water supplies and sustainability of their water resources:

- Water demand reduction grants
- Regional water sustainability support

Together, these programs help communities like mine:

- Use water more efficiently
- Address emerging water supply challenges
- Protect groundwater
- Work across city boundaries on shared solutions

Our community has benefited from this work, and continued funding will help us plan for future growth while protecting our water resources.

Please support the Metropolitan Council's request.

Sincerely,

Evan Glunz
Little Canada

cc: Jen Kader, Clean Water Council
Judy Sventek, Metropolitan Council



June 11, 2026

John Barten, Chair
Clean Water Council
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: Support for Metropolitan Council Clean Water Fund Request

Dear Mr. Barten and Members of the Clean Water Council,

My name is Eric Wilson, and I am the Communications Coordinator with the City of Shorewood.

I am writing to support the Metropolitan Council's request for Clean Water Fund funding.

Water is essential to our region's health, economy, and quality of life. Homes, businesses, and public services all depend on a safe, reliable, and affordable water supply.

The Metropolitan Council, working with cities, utilities, and state agencies, has recently updated the regional water supply plan. This plan helps communities work together to meet future water needs and protect our water resources.

Clean Water Fund investments support two key programs that help communities take action:

- **Water demand reduction grants** help communities reduce water use and improve efficiency.
- **Water sustainability support** helps address emerging challenges, protect groundwater, and develop cost-effective regional solutions.

Communities across the region—including ours—have benefited from these programs. They provide practical tools and funding that help us plan ahead, protect our water sources, and use water more efficiently.

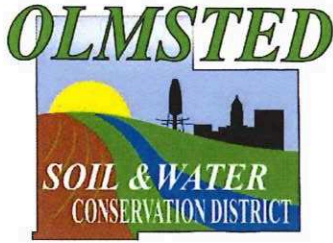
We encourage the Clean Water Council to fully support the Metropolitan Council's request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric Wilson".

Eric Wilson
5755 Country Club Road
Shorewood, MN 55331

cc: Jen Kader, Clean Water Council
Judy Sventek, Metropolitan Council



OLMSTED SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

1188 50th Street SE
Rochester, Minnesota 55904
Phone (507) 328-7070

May 28, 2026

TO: Clean Water Council

FROM: Olmsted Soil & Water Conservation District - Board of Supervisors

Re: Letter of Support – Southeast MN Groundwater Protection & Soil Health Initiative

To Whom it May Concern,

Groundwater is one of Minnesota's most valuable resources and it is the primary source of drinking water for most Minnesotans. This valued resource is susceptible to contamination in our vulnerable, karst region in SE Minnesota, and there is growing concern that nitrate pollution is increasing due to current agricultural land use practices.

In 2023, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) declared that nitrate contamination in groundwater in southeast Minnesota is an imminent public health threat and tasked state agencies and local units of government with addressing these concerns.

Minnesota Soil & Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) are uniquely positioned to work with landowners on private lands to address this issue. We are the "boots on the ground" conservation teams that have a history of relationship building and trust to provide sound conservation-based programming that addresses resource concerns, farm by farm.

Today, SWCDs in Southeast Minnesota are providing short-term solutions to landowners with high nitrate in their private wells by providing free well testing and installing water treatment systems in homes exceeding the safe drinking water standard for nitrate (greater than 10 milligrams per liter).

Olmsted County's Groundwater Protection and Soil Health Initiative is being delivered through Olmsted SWCD to local farmers and should be expanded to serve as a regional model to address leaching of nitrogen to groundwater. The program provides landowners with technical assistance and financial incentives to adopt soil health practices which is a proven long-term solution to the migration of nitrate into groundwater. Practices include planting cover crops, growing alternative crops and small grains, adding haying and grazing acres, and improving management of pastures. Implementing these practices reduces nitrate leaching and is supported with robust data collection from different agricultural settings in SE Minnesota including lysimeter samples, tile water testing, spring monitoring, and cave drip sampling.

The Olmsted Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors supports this Clean Water Council application and continuing its strong partnership with the Board of Water and Soil

CITY OF VICTORIA

Victoria, MN  Est. 1915

June 11, 2026

John Barten, Chair
Clean Water Council
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: Support for Metropolitan Council Clean Water Fund Request

Dear Mr. Barten and Members of the Clean Water Council,

My name is Dana Hardie, and I am City Manager with the City of Victoria.

I am writing to support the Metropolitan Council's request for Clean Water Fund funding.

Water is essential to our region's health, economy, and quality of life. Homes, businesses, and public services all depend on a safe, reliable, and affordable water supply.

The Metropolitan Council, working with cities, utilities, and state agencies, has recently updated the regional water supply plan. This plan helps communities work together to meet future water needs and protect our water resources.

Clean Water Fund investments support two key programs that help communities take action:

- **Water demand reduction grants** help communities reduce water use and improve efficiency.
- **Water sustainability support** helps address emerging challenges, protect groundwater, and develop cost-effective regional solutions.

Communities across the region—including ours—have benefited from these programs. They provide practical tools and funding that help us plan ahead, protect our water sources, and use water more efficiently.

We encourage the Clean Water Council to fully support the Metropolitan Council's request.

Sincerely,



Dana Hardie
City of Victoria City Manager

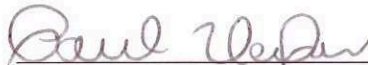
cc: Jen Kader, Clean Water Council
Judy Sventek, Metropolitan Council

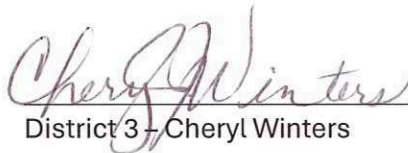
Resources (BWSR) to expand the Olmsted County Soil Health Program to the 11-county southeast Minnesota region.

Thank you for supporting conservation in Southeastern Minnesota!

The Olmsted SWCD Board of Supervisors:


District 1 – James Rentz


District 2 – Paul Uecker (Chair)


District 3 – Cheryl Winters


District 4 – Joe Himmer


District 5 – Louis Seifert (V. Chair)



WHITE BEAR TOWNSHIP

1858
RAMSEY COUNTY
MINNESOTA

Board of Supervisors
ED M. PRUDHON, Chair
STEVEN A. RUZEK
BETH ARTNER

1281 HAMMOND ROAD
WHITE BEAR TOWNSHIP, MN 55110

651-747-2750
adminoffices@whitebeartownship.org

June 11, 2026

John Barten, Chair
Clean Water Council
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: Support for Metropolitan Council Clean Water Fund Request

Dear Mr. Barten and Members of the Clean Water Council,

My name is Patrick Christopherson, and I am Town Clerk-Treasurer with White Bear Township.

I am writing to support the Metropolitan Council's request for Clean Water Fund funding.

Water is essential to our region's health, economy, and quality of life. Homes, businesses, and public services all depend on a safe, reliable, and affordable water supply.

The Metropolitan Council, working with cities/towns, utilities, and state agencies, has recently updated the regional water supply plan. This plan helps communities work together to meet future water needs and protect our water resources.

Clean Water Fund investments support two key programs that help communities take action:

- **Water demand reduction grants** help communities reduce water use and improve efficiency.
- **Water sustainability support** helps address emerging challenges, protect groundwater, and develop cost-effective regional solutions.

Communities across the region—including ours—have benefited from these programs. They provide practical tools and funding that help us plan ahead, protect our water sources, and use water more efficiently.

We encourage the Clean Water Council to fully support the Metropolitan Council's request.

Sincerely,

Patrick Christopherson
1281 Hammond Road
White Bear Township, MN 55110

cc: Jen Kader, Clean Water Council
Judy Sventek, Metropolitan Council





Dodge County Environmental Services

721 Main St N, Dept. 391

Mantorville, MN 55955

(507) 635-6253

www.co.dodge.mn.us

June 4th, 2025

John Barten
Clean Water Council Chair
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155
bbarten79@gmail.com

Jen Kader
Clean Water Council Administrator
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155
Jen.Kader@state.mn.us

Subject: Clean Water Council Draft Recommendations

Dear Mr. Barten, Ms. Kader, and members of the Clean Water Council,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments as the Council considers funding recommendations.

Protection of groundwater resources has long been a top priority for Dodge County, and we have been fortunate to partner with the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) on a variety of groundwater-related initiatives over the years. These collaborative educational and implementation efforts directly support the priorities and goals identified in the Dodge County Comprehensive Land Use Plan, the Greater Zumbro River Watershed Plan, and the Cedar-Wapsipinicon Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan.

Most recently, MDH's Private Well Initiative has provided valuable funding to support private well testing in Dodge County and surrounding areas. This funding has also enabled Dodge County to complete an inventory of wells that were not previously documented in the Minnesota Well Index. Together, these efforts have significantly enhanced our understanding of local groundwater quality and improved our knowledge of the number of residents who rely on private wells for their drinking water supply.

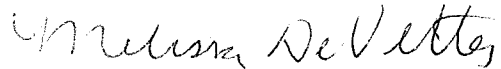
The information generated through these initiatives is critical for helping the County identify areas of greatest need and effectively target limited resources. By strengthening our

understanding of groundwater conditions and private well usage, these projects provide a strong foundation for informed decision making and future water resource protection efforts.

MDH has been an outstanding partner throughout this work, and we greatly value the expertise, support, and collaboration they have provided. We look forward to continued opportunities to work together on initiatives that protect and enhance Minnesota's groundwater resources for future generations.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Melissa DeVetter".

Melissa DeVetter, Project Manager
Dodge County Environmental Services



June 3rd, 2026

John Barten
Clean Water Council Chair
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155
bbarten79@gmail.com

Jen Kader
Clean Water Council Administrator
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155
Jen.Kader@state.mn.us

Subject: Clean Water Council Draft Recommendations

Dear Mr. Barten, Ms. Kader, and members of the Clean Water Council,

We appreciate the opportunity to provide stakeholder comments while the Council considers proposals for funding recommendations. The following program supports our work at Olmsted County to help ensure drinking water is safe for all citizens, and we suggest that its priority in funding recommendations reflects our shared priority of protecting drinking water in Minnesota for future generations.

Private Well Initiative

Olmsted County has worked in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Health through the Private Well Protection Initiative since 2021 to provide water testing services across the Southeast region of Minnesota. We support providing an avenue to ensure that private well owners have access to local and economical testing options and resources that give them peace of mind every time they draw water from their tap.

Through the Private Well Initiative, we developed our regional TAP-IN, Safe Drinking Water program and maintain a collaborative of soil and water districts, local public health, and environmental services staff across 9 SE MN counties. In the two rounds of funding we received through this grant initiative, we were able to offer testing for nitrate-nitrogen, manganese, arsenic, lead, and bacteria to over 320 households, provide nitrate screening to over 500 households, and offer one on one consultation to connect private well users with resources to assist them in addressing their water quality issues. Our outreach effort ensures private well owners understand the need to test their drinking water and perform routine maintenance of their well systems. When testing exceeds safe drinking water limits, the program assists with funding to mitigate the issue with water treatment or well repair for our most vulnerable populations and those experiencing financial hardship.

Olmsted County is dedicated to ensuring the health and well-being of our citizens. We will continue to work alongside other SE Minnesota Counties, and the Minnesota Department of Health, to protect our vulnerable groundwater and drinking water resources. We ask you to continue supporting the Private Well Initiative to expand current programming and ensure our citizens have access to safe drinking water.

Olmsted County would also like to extend our gratitude to the Council for dedicating funding to education, outreach, and private well testing in SE Minnesota to support the State of Minnesota's workplan to address nitrate contamination in drinking water in SE MN. With your programmatic support to the Minnesota Department of Health, our local TAP-IN collaborative has provided free water testing to 2,580 households in the eight-county region. Our staff have provided mitigation support to hundreds of private well users, of which 280 have been referred to the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's program and received a free water treatment system. We appreciate the Council's acknowledgement of this important work and the funding that has been dedicated to SE Minnesota to continue the program.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

Denise Daniels

622DB5070F2B49D...

Denise Daniels

Director, Olmsted County Public Health

Signed by:

Skip Langer

C6C2D89BB8454D2...

Skip Langer

Director, Olmsted Soil & Water Conservation District

5/29/2026

John Barten
Clean Water Council Chair
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155
bbarten79@gmail.com

Jen Kader
Clean Water Council Administrator
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155
Jen.Kader@state.mn.us

Subject: Clean Water Council Draft Recommendations

Dear Mr. Barten, Ms. Kader, and members of the Clean Water Council,

We appreciate the opportunity to provide stakeholder comments while the Council considers proposals for funding recommendations. The following program supports our work at Fillmore Soil and Water Conservation District to help ensure drinking water is safe for everyone, everywhere in Minnesota, and we suggest that its priority in funding recommendations reflects our shared priority of protecting drinking water in Minnesota for future generations.

Private Well Initiative

In southeastern Minnesota, nitrate in groundwater continues to be a significant concern for private well users. In Fillmore County, we have worked to address this issue through a variety of local programs and services, including developing nutrient management plans with farmers to reduce nitrogen inputs, operating an in-house nitrate testing lab where landowners can test their well water at no cost, hosting nitrate screening events, conducting public outreach throughout the county, providing cost-share opportunities for nitrogen-reducing agricultural practices, offering 75% cost-share for well sealing, supporting incentive payments on tens of thousands of acres to implement Climate Smart BMPs, and conducting a county-wide private well inventory.

Many of these efforts are supported by Clean Water Fund dollars, including funding through the Private Well Initiative. This funding provides an important tool for Fillmore SWCD to assist landowners with the complex water quality and land management challenges they face in rural Minnesota. The Private Well Initiative helps us connect residents with testing, education, technical assistance, and resources that directly support public health and groundwater protection.

We encourage the Council to continue supporting the Private Well Initiative and related drinking water protection efforts. Continued investment in this work is essential to helping local partners protect private well users, improve groundwater understanding, and support long-term solutions for nitrate concerns in vulnerable areas of the state.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued commitment to protecting Minnesota's water resources.

Sincerely,

Riley Buley
District Administrator
Fillmore Soil and Water Conservation District



611 Broadway Avenue, Suite 10
Wabasha, MN 55981
Phone: (651) 565-4673

May 29, 2026

John Barten
Clean Water Council Chair
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155
bbarten79@gmail.com

Jen Kader
Clean Water Council Administrator
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155
Jen.Kader@state.mn.us

Subject: Clean Water Council Draft Recommendations

Dear Mr. Barten, Ms. Kader, and members of the Clean Water Council,

We appreciate the opportunity to provide stakeholder comments while the Council considers proposals for funding recommendations. The following program supports our work at Wabasha Soil and Water Conservation District to help move ahead with a well inventory in Wabasha County and raise awareness of private well management. We suggest that its priority in funding recommendations reflects our shared priority of protecting drinking water in Minnesota for future generations.

Private Well Initiative

The Wabasha County Soil & Water Conservation District has been involved in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Health in addressing Source Water Protection Issues over a number of years with partners in drinking water supply management areas, offering water testing clinics, well testing programs, and well inventory. More recently, in response to the EPA petition related to groundwater in southeast Minnesota, we have participated in a coordinated regional response. The Wabasha SWCD is in process of completing a well inventory for Wabasha County and providing information to update the Minnesota Well Index.

Well owners have been responsive to our efforts, and the regional effort has raised awareness of private well management. Many have discovered that they had health limit excesses of contaminants that they would not have been aware of previously. Treatment options and assistance have been used through State partner resources. Wabasha SWCD relies heavily on grant funding for staff time and without funding for the Private Well Initiative, we would not be able to complete the work that has been necessary on current regional efforts.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Terri Peters
District Manager
Wabasha Soil & Water Conservation District



City of Battle Lake

108 East Main Street, PO Box 386
Battle Lake, MN 56515

218-862-2128

publicworks@battlelakemn.org

battlelakemn.org

June 4, 2026

John Barten
Clean Water Council Chair
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155
bbarten79@gmail.com

Jen Kader
Clean Water Council Administrator
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155
Jen.Kader@state.mn.us

Subject: Clean Water Council Draft Recommendations

Dear Mr. Barten, Ms. Kader, and members of the Clean Water Council,

We appreciate the opportunity to provide stakeholder comments while the Council considers proposals for funding recommendations. The Source Water Protection Program supports the City of Battle Lake's work to ensure safe drinking water for our residents, businesses, and visitors. We respectfully ask that the program remain a priority in the Council's funding recommendations as part of our shared commitment to protecting Minnesota's drinking water for future generations.

Battle Lake is a small, lake-centered community in Otter Tail County where safe, reliable drinking water is essential to public health and the continued vitality of our community. The City of Battle Lake Public Water System has worked with the Source Water Protection Program since preparing its first Wellhead Protection Plan. The program's guidance and technical assistance have helped us understand local drinking water risks, prioritize protection strategies, and take practical steps to safeguard our municipal wells.

With the support of the Source Water Protection Program, Battle Lake has also been eligible for financial assistance and has received multiple grants to help implement our wellhead protection plan. For a small city with limited local resources, this assistance has made a real difference in our ability to move from planning to action, complete projects, strengthen protection efforts, and continue planning responsibly for the future.

Continued investment in source water protection directly benefits communities like Battle Lake. It helps local governments protect public health, reduce long-term risk to drinking water supplies, and make responsible use of limited public funds. We appreciate the partnership and support provided, and we encourage continued strong funding for this important work.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Trevor Meece
Public Works Director
City of Battle Lake



6/4/2026

John Barten
Clean Water Council Chair
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155
bbarten79@gmail.com

Jen Kader
Clean Water Council Administrator
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155
Jen.Kader@state.mn.us

Subject: Clean Water Council Draft Recommendations

Dear Mr. Barten, Ms. Kader, and members of the Clean Water Council,

We appreciate the opportunity to provide stakeholder comments while the Council considers proposals for funding recommendations. The following program supports our work at the City of Avon to help ensure drinking water is safe for everyone, everywhere in Minnesota, and we suggest that its priority in funding recommendations reflects our shared priority of protecting drinking water in Minnesota for future generations.

The City of Avon has worked with the Source Water Protection Program since we began preparing our first Wellhead Protection Plan (WHP) in 2011. These activities have helped us to take concrete actions to safeguard our drinking water source. The WHP Program made us eligible for financial assistance, and we have received several Source Water Protection Grants to help us implement our plan. These grants have allowed us to:

- Conduct education and outreach to thousands of area residents and youth, allowing us to increase awareness of groundwater and drinking water issues.
- Install equipment to allow for tracking of static water levels, allowing us to develop a better understanding of our water usage and its impact on our aquifer.
- Install security equipment at our well house, helping to deter potential vandalism on our water system.
- Pull one of our pumps and televise the well casing to determine its suitability as a long-term well for the City.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Justin Kurtz
Water/Wastewater Foreman
City of Avon

June 2, 2026

John Barten
Clean Water Council Chair
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155
bbarten79@gmail.com

Jen Kader
Clean Water Council Administrator
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155
Jen.Kader@state.mn.us

Subject: Clean Water Council Draft Recommendations

Dear Mr. Barten, Ms. Kader, and members of the Clean Water Council,

We appreciate the opportunity to provide stakeholder comments while the Council considers proposals for funding recommendations. The following program supports our work at the City of East Bethel to help ensure drinking water is safe for everyone, everywhere in Minnesota, and we suggest that its priority in funding recommendations reflects our shared priority of protecting drinking water in our Minnesota communities for future generations.

The City of East Bethel has worked with the MDH Source Water Protection Program since we began preparing our first Wellhead Protection Plan in 2017. The plan has helped protect our drinking water and provide guidance for planning in the area. The team at Minnesota Rural Water Association has also greatly assisted us with technical knowledge and support throughout the whole process. We have also benefited from a \$10,000 Implementation Grant to help fund much needed emergency back-up power for two of our municipal wells and have submitted grant requests for additional funding.

Without the funding support from the Clean Water Council and the Implementation and Competitive Grant programs, our city would be greatly hindered financially and lacking in a lot of knowledge involving the protection of our drinking water supply. We hope that funding for these programs continues going forward.

Thank you for your consideration.

Regards,



Nate Ayshford
Public Works Manager
City of East Bethel

Thriving Families, Building the Future



EDGERTON

PO Box 145 • 801 1st Ave W • Edgerton, MN 56128
Phone: (507) 442-7891 • Fax: (507) 442-3567

June 4th, 2026

John Barten
Clean Water Council Chair
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155
bbarten79@gmail.com

Jen Kader
Clean Water Council Administrator
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155
Jen.Kader@state.mn.us

Subject: Clean Water Council Draft Recommendations

Dear Mr. Barten, Ms. Kader, and members of the Clean Water Council,

We appreciate the opportunity to provide stakeholder comments while the Council considers proposals for funding recommendations. The Source Water Protection program supports our work in Edgerton, MN and is helping us decrease the nitrates in our water and we suggest that its priority in funding recommendations reflects our shared priority of protecting drinking water in Minnesota for future generations.

For years Edgerton has been working very hard to protect our Wellhead area. Funding from the Clean Water Council has allowed us to provide cost share to landowners to help reduce nitrate loading to our aquifer and most recently is helping us to potentially install solar on a high priority parcel within the wellhead area to further reduce nitrates.

Edgerton has worked very hard over the last 20 years to reduce the nitrates in our water from a high of 17-18 ppm to our current levels of 5.5-8 ppm which is under the 10 ppm safe drinking water standard. Funding from the Clean Water Council has been a key factor in helping us achieve this goal.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Joel R Farrington
City Clerk & Treasurer
City of Edgerton

Jeff Snyder
Water & Sewer Manager
City of Edgerton

June 3, 2026

John Barten
Clean Water Council Chair
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155
bbarten79@gmail.com

Jen Kader
Clean Water Council Administrator
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155
Jen.Kader@state.mn.us

Subject: Clean Water Council Draft Recommendations

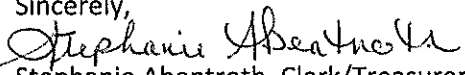
Dear Mr. Barten, Ms. Kader, and members of the Clean Water Council,

We appreciate the opportunity to provide stakeholder comments while the Council considers proposals for funding recommendations. The following program supports our work at the City of Nielsville Water Department to help ensure drinking water is safe for everyone, everywhere in the State of Minnesota, and we suggest that its priority in funding recommendations reflects our shared priority of protecting drinking water in Minnesota for future generations.

The City of Nielsville Water Department has worked with the **Source Water Protection Program** since we began preparing our first Wellhead Protection Plan in 2005. These activities have helped us to take concrete actions to safeguard our drinking water sources. Through this process we were made eligible for financial assistance and we received a Source Water Protection Grant in 2022, which enabled us to protect our two wells with six foot chained linked fences with doors. The City of Nielsville Water Department added locks and no trespassing signage. We also received funding to replace two doors on our well house.

The City of Nielsville is located in the Red River Valley which is in the northwest part of the State of Minnesota, between Fargo, ND and Grand Forks, ND. We are a city of 78 residents so any support is welcomed as our budget burden is considerably much smaller compared to larger metro communities.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Abentroth, Clerk/Treasurer
City of Nielsville

06/04/2026

John Barten
Clean Water Council Chair
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155
bbarten79@gmail.com

Jen Kader
Clean Water Council Administrator
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155
Jen.Kader@state.mn.us

Subject: Clean Water Council Draft Recommendations

Dear Mr. Barten, Ms. Kader, and members of the Clean Water Council,

We appreciate the opportunity to provide stakeholder comments while the Council considers proposals for funding recommendations. The following program supports our work at the City of Richmond to help ensure drinking water is safe for everyone, everywhere in Minnesota, and we suggest that its priority in funding recommendations reflects our shared priority of protecting drinking water in Minnesota for future generations.

City of Richmond's Public Water System has worked with the Source Water Protection Program since we began preparing our first Wellhead Protection Plan in 2025. These activities have helped us to take concrete actions to safeguard our drinking water sources.

The City of Richmond is committed to protecting the quality and sustainability of our drinking water through participation in Minnesota's Source Water Protection Program. This program helps safeguard the groundwater sources that supply clean, safe drinking water to our residents, businesses, schools, and visitors.

Working with the Source Water Protection program has allowed us to target and prioritize threats to our drinking water source. Through the grants program, it has also created funding opportunities for us to partner with local organizations on projects that benefit our community.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Stacy Kalthoff
City Administrator
City of Richmond

City of Riverton
16663 Main Street, Riverton, MN
218-546-5225

June 1, 2026

John Barten
Clean Water Council Chair
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155
bbarten79@gmail.com

Jen Kader
Clean Water Council Administrator
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155
Jen.Kader@state.mn.us

Subject: Clean Water Council Draft Recommendations

Dear Mr. Barten, Ms. Kader, and members of the Clean Water Council,

We appreciate the opportunity to provide stakeholder comments while the Council considers proposals for funding recommendations. The following program supports our work at the City of Riverton to help ensure drinking water is safe for everyone, everywhere in Minnesota, and we suggest that its priority in funding recommendations reflects our shared priority of protecting drinking water in Minnesota for future generations.

The city of Riverton recently finished amending our Wellhead Protection Plan, and very thankful for the help from the Minnesota Department of Health staff and the assistance and guidance from Minnesota Rural Water Association staff. Without this assistance, the process would be very difficult, and the city would have needed a consultant to complete the amendment. Small cities like ours do not have the staffing or the financial resources to complete the process of developing or amending a Wellhead Protection Plan.

Now that our Wellhead Protection Plan amendment has been approved, we are eager to begin implementation of the Plan. One of the first activities we will be completing is the removal of an unused underground storage tank. We are thankful that the staff at Minnesota Rural Water will be able to assist us with the Source Water Protection grant process to hopefully secure the funding needed to have this potential contaminant removed.

Assistance from MDH and MRWA, along with the source water protection grant dollars, allows communities like ours to continue to protect our source of drinking water. Drinking water is important and necessary for all of us, and we are thankful for your support.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Dave Peterson

Dave Peterson, Mayor
City of Riverton, MN

City of St. Hilaire An Equal Opportunity Employer and Provider

*302 Broadway Ave N.
P.O. 296
St. Hilaire, MN 56754*

*Telephone; (218) 964-5257
Facsimile: (218) 964-5744*

June 3, 2026

Paul Gardner
Clean Water Council Administrator
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155

Subject: Clean Water Council Draft Recommendations

Dear Mr. Gardner,

We appreciate the opportunity to provide stakeholder comments while the Council considers proposals for funding recommendations. The following program supports our work at the City of Saint Hilaire to preserve and improve the quality of drinking water resources, and we suggest that its priority in funding recommendations reflects our shared priority of protecting drinking water in Minnesota for future generations.

Source Water Protection

The city developed a wellhead protection plan in 2003 and then 2013 with assistance from the Minnesota Department of Health's Source Water Protection staff. The city does not have the technical knowledge or capacity to complete this work without source water protection program staff taking on the bulk of the work for the city. The Minnesota Department of Health in 2022 helped the city successfully navigate through the federal and state requirements to obtain an extension for our 10-year plan which provided a welcomed relief to city costs to time as well as budget.

Besides reliance on the regulatory and technical assistance provided by Minnesota Department of Health's Source Water Protection Unit, the city counts on the financial resources offered through grant programs administered through that program. Our protection activities to date have been managed through city budgets but knowing that there are other options for the unanticipated events or opportunities to improve our water system resilience for growth and future generations is assuring.

As the Council considers funding recommendations, know that continued support of the source water protection programs for the City of Saint Hilaire and neighboring communities in the northwest area of the state is valued and should remain a priority.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Margaret Peterson
City Clerk/Treasurer
City of Saint Hilaire



CITY OF FAIRMONT – 100 Downtown Plaza – Fairmont, MN 56031
www.fairmont.org

Phone (507) 238-9461

Fax (507) 238-9469

6/3/2026

John Barten
Clean Water Council Chair
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155
bbarten79@gmail.com

Jen Kader
Clean Water Council Administrator
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155
Jen.Kader@state.mn.us

Subject: Clean Water Council Draft Recommendations

Dear Mr. Barten, Ms. Kader, and members of the Clean Water Council,

We appreciate the opportunity to provide stakeholder comments while the Council considers proposals for funding recommendations. The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) supports our work at the City of Fairmont to protect and improve the quality of drinking water resources, and we suggest that their priority in funding recommendations reflect our shared priority of protecting drinking water in Minnesota for future generations.

Source Water Protection

The City of Fairmont utilizes a surface water intake from the Fairmont chain of lakes. Dutch Creek is a major contributor to the chain of lakes that Fairmont takes drinking water from.

We have applied for multiple Source Water Protection Competitive Grants for real time monitoring of turbidity and for nitrate monitoring. In 2023, we worked with MDH on adoption of our Surface Water Intake Protection Plan. Since then, we have also applied for Source Water Protection Implementation Grants for art installations at stormwater inlets and boat landings which share a message regarding drinking water protection. We also are undertaking a new project with MDH grant funding for floating treatment islands which can help reduce nitrogen and phosphorous in tile drainage water before it enters the Fairmont Chain of Lakes and our surface drinking water source.

Fairmont acquired grant funds from the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Fund and the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund for creation of a temperature-moderated bio filtration wetland. The goal is to investigate nitrate removal through passive heating of the source water to promote and enhance biological denitrification at Dutch Creek. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Brady Powers
Water & Wastewater Superintendent, City of Fairmont

CC Via Email: Amanda Strommer, Amanda.Strommer@state.mn.us & Krista Shaaf, Krista.Schaff@state.mn.us

C I T Y O F L A K E S

June 4, 2026

John Barten
Clean Water Council Chair
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155
bbarten79@gmail.com

Jen Kader
Clean Water Council Administrator
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155
jen.Kader@state.mn.us

Subject: Clean Water Council Draft Recommendations

Dear Mr. Barten, Ms. Kader, and members of the Clean Water Council,

We appreciate the opportunity to provide stakeholder comments while the Council considers proposals for funding recommendations. The Source Water Protection Transient Grant program supports our work at Garness Trinity Lutheran Church to help ensure drinking water is safe for everyone in MN. We suggest that its priority in funding recommendations reflects our shared priority of protecting drinking water in Minnesota's for future generations.

Our church applied for a Source Water Protection Transient Grant to reduce nitrogen levels in our drinking water. We wouldn't have been able to do this work without the grant helping us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Teresa O'Connor
Council Member
Garness Trinity Lutheran Church
42081 130th St
Mabel, MN 55954



1902 E 6TH AVE
HIBBING, MINNESOTA 55746-0249
TELEPHONE: 218-262-7700
FAX: 218-262-7702

June 2nd, 2026

John Barten
Clean Water Council Chair
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155
bbarten79@gmail.com

Jen Kader
Clean Water Council Administrator
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155
Jen.Kader@state.mn.us

Subject: Clean Water Council Draft Recommendations

Dear Mr. Barten, Ms. Kader, and members of the Clean Water Council,

We truly appreciate the opportunity to provide stakeholder comments while the Council considers proposals for funding recommendations. The Minnesota Department of Health SWP staff supports our work at Hibbing Public Utilities to help ensure everyone in Hibbing and Northern Minnesota has clean reliable drinking water. We respectfully suggest that its priority in funding recommendations reflects our shared priority of protecting drinking water in Minnesota for current and all future generations.

Hibbing Public Utilities has worked very closely with MDH staff since we reworked our wellhead protection plan in 2020. I have recently taken over all water aspects of Hibbing's public water system and have had the great pleasure of working directly with Crystal Mathisrud, of MDH. Crystal has proven to be an invaluable asset to myself and Hibbing as a whole, especially as I start to lean into my new role here in Hibbing. MDH has already assisted us in submitting an implementation grant and continues to support us pursuing other available grants, including grants from outside sources.

In 2025 alone HPU was awarded funding several times by the MDH to help protect our drinking water and guarantee a safe environment for all residents and visitors. One of our main water sources was next to a local mining operation and has since become unusable due to mine dewatering activities. It is now more important than ever to protect what drinking water supply we currently have available.



1902 E 6TH AVE
HIBBING, MINNESOTA 55746-0249
TELEPHONE: 218-262-7700
FAX: 218-262-7702

The help MDH provides ensures HPU that we are directing our efforts in the most efficient and cost-effective way. Pursuing funding opportunities helps the utility by keeping rates lower for a community that already has a poverty rate of 16.2% which is 7% higher than the rest of the state.

The staff at MDH SWP is an invaluable asset that assists us in ways that trickle down to our smallest customers. With the help of MDH we can guarantee our children and children of generations to come are able to have safe reliable drinking water right here in Hibbing.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'P. Plombon', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Paul Plombon

Energy & Operations Manager

Hibbing Public Utilities

6/9/2026

John Barten
Clean Water Council Chair
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155
bbarten79@gmail.com

Jen Kader
Clean Water Council Administrator
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155
Jen.Kader@state.mn.us

Subject: Clean Water Council Draft Recommendations

Dear Mr. Barten, Ms. Kader, and members of the Clean Water Council,

We appreciate the opportunity to provide stakeholder comments as the Council considers funding recommendations. This program supports the City of Le Sueur's work to keep drinking water safe, and we encourage the Council to prioritize it as part of our shared commitment to protecting Minnesota's drinking water for future generations.

The City of Le Sueur has worked with the Source Water Protection Program since beginning its first Wellhead Protection Plan in 2016. This work has helped us take concrete steps to protect our drinking water sources. It has also made us eligible for financial assistance, including two Source Water Protection Grants that helped us implement our plan.

One Source Water Protection Grant allowed us to hire an excavating contractor to locate an abandoned well identified in our Wellhead Protection Plan. The well was buried 13 feet deep beneath an electric transformer. We also hired a well contractor to raise the casing above grade so the well could be sealed in the future. This work helped us collaborate with Le Sueur County, which then applied for and received a Clean Water Fund Grant to complete the sealing. We are currently working with contractors to finish the project.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Pete Burns
Water/Wastewater Manager
City of Le Sueur





6/5/26

John Barten
Clean Water Council Chair
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155
bbarten79@gmail.com

Jen Kader
Clean Water Council Administrator
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155
Jen.Kader@state.mn.us

Subject: Clean Water Council Draft Recommendations

Dear Mr. Barten, Ms. Kader, and members of the Clean Water Council,

We appreciate the opportunity to provide stakeholder comments while the Council considers proposals for funding recommendations. The following program supports our work at City of Chatfield to help ensure drinking water is safe for everyone, everywhere in Minnesota, and we suggest that its priority in funding recommendations reflects our shared priority of protecting drinking water in Minnesota for future generations.

The City of Chatfield has been working with the Source Water Protection Program since we began our first Wellhead Protection Plan in 2007. We have had meetings with them every year to keep up with ways to safeguard our drinking water sources. The Source Water Protection Program has help us get government grants and programs to help with our work to keep our water clean.

With the Source Water Protection Program we have partnered with the Forever Green Initiative and planted Kernza and now Winter Camelina inside our DWSMA. We have partnered with the Source Water Protection Program to have local meetings with local ag producers and other government agencies to help with our nitrate infiltration into our drinking water (<https://greenlandsbluewater.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Research-Summary-Kernza-Field-Trial-Results-Pipestone-and-Chatfield-MN-Mar2022.pdf>).

In closing, the Source Water Protection Program has been an indispensable partner in Chatfield's efforts to protect our municipal water supply. Funding this program ensures the continuation of essential local collaborations, grant access, and cutting-edge conservation initiatives. We urge the Council to reflect this shared priority in your final funding recommendations.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ryan Priebe
Water Superintendent
City of Chatfield

[6/5/2026]

John Barten
Clean Water Council Chair
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155
bbarten79@gmail.com

Jen Kader
Clean Water Council Administrator
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155
Jen.Kader@state.mn.us

Subject: Clean Water Council Draft Recommendations

Dear Mr. Barten, Ms. Kader, and members of the Clean Water Council,

We appreciate the opportunity to provide stakeholder comments while the Council considers proposals for funding recommendations. The following program supports our work at City of Lewiston to help ensure drinking water is safe for everyone, everywhere in Minnesota, and we suggest that its priority in funding recommendations reflects our shared priority of protecting drinking water in Minnesota for future generations.

The City of Lewiston has worked with the Source Water Protection program since the inception of our first WHP. We have utilized the program multiple times to help ensure our system can provide clean, quality water to our residents through the SWP grant program.

We have implemented this program to include the sealing of multiple wells in the DWSMA for the city and also preparing to install a generator at our well site to guarantee water will always be available, even in storms and natural disasters. This has greatly helped secure a safe drinking water source. These tasks would not have been able to be completed without this assistance.

This program helps to make our jobs easier by knowing that we are able to provide a quality product. The staff that we work with from the State and MRWA are top notch!

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Dan Horvat
Public Works Director
City of Lewiston

Mckenna Properties, LLC

14311 Echo Rd NW
Pinewood, MN 56676
1-218-556-0866

6/3/26

John Barten
Clean Water Council Chair
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155
bbarten79@gmail.com

Jen Kader
Clean Water Council Administrator
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155
Jen.Kader@state.mn.us

Subject: Clean Water Council Draft Recommendations

Dear Mr. Barten, Ms. Kader, and members of the Clean Water Council,

We appreciate the opportunity to provide stakeholder comments while the Council considers proposals for funding recommendations. The following program supports our work at Country Estates Mobile Home Park to help ensure drinking water is safe for everyone, everywhere in Minnesota, and we suggest that its priority in funding recommendations reflects our shared priority of protecting drinking water in Minnesota for future generations.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide stakeholder comments as the Council considers proposals for funding recommendations. The program described below directly supports our work at Country Estates Mobile Home Park to ensure that drinking water remains safe for everyone in Minnesota. We respectfully request that its priority in funding decisions reflects our shared commitment to protecting the state's drinking water resources for future generations.

Country Estates Mobile Home Park has partnered with the Source Water Protection program to develop our Wellhead Protection Plan. Their guidance has enabled us to take meaningful, concrete steps to safeguard our drinking water supply. Participation in this process has also made us eligible for financial assistance, and we are hopeful that we may receive a Source Water Protection Grant to help us implement the improvements identified in our plan.

Through the Wellhead Protection planning process, we have identified several vulnerabilities in our system. Addressing these issues will strengthen our infrastructure, close existing gaps, and enhance long-term protection for both the water system and the

residents who rely on it. Our current priorities include installing a generator to prevent service interruptions, pressure drops, and potential backflow concerns, as well as constructing a second well to eliminate downtime and ensure continuous water service.

Although these improvements are not yet complete, the Wellhead Protection program has been instrumental in helping us identify these needs and chart a path forward. With continued support, we will be able to enhance the reliability of our system and improve the quality of service for the residents of Country Estates Mobile Home Park.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Dale Cloose,
President
Country Estates Mobile Home Park



June 3, 2026

VIA E-MAIL AND REGULAR U.S. MAIL

P.O. Box 779
Moorhead, MN 56561-0779
Phone: 218.477.8000
www.mpsutility.com

Ms. Jen Kader
Clean Water Council Administrator
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155
Jen.Kader@state.mn.us

RE: Clean Water Council Draft Recommendations

Dear Ms. Kader:

Moorhead Public Service (MPS) appreciates the opportunity to provide stakeholder comments as the Council considers funding proposals. The following program supports our work at MPS to preserve and improve the quality of drinking water resources, and we suggest that it be given priority in funding recommendations, reflecting our shared priority of protecting drinking water in Minnesota now and for future generations.

Source Water Protection

MPS has successfully used grants from the Source Water Protection Program for various projects to improve infrastructure and support our mission to supply high-quality drinking water to the cities of Moorhead and Dilworth. Grant projects have been diverse, ranging from Wellhead Protection Plan implementation and updates to the installation of monitoring sensors at our surface water intake, security updates for well houses and portable generator docking stations, well televising, and full water supply well rehabilitation. The support received from the Source Water Protection Program ensures MPS' water supply resiliency and redundancy are maintained through the completion of these projects.

Source Water Protection staff have been instrumental in safeguarding source water bodies. For example, a series of parcels near the MPS' Wellhead Protection Plan - Drinking Water Supply Management Area boundary is frequently at risk of rezoning, posing a direct threat to the main groundwater source that supplies Moorhead and Dilworth. Source Water Protection staff took the time to dial in to the public hearings to speak in support of protecting source water. This kind of effort, complemented by the opportunity for grant-funded projects, is instrumental to the ongoing success and stewardship of the State's valuable water resources.

Working with the Source Water Protection Program has allowed MPS to target and prioritize the items needed to maintain our water utility's resiliency and redundancy as we strive to be the best possible stewards of our state's water resources. MPS' staff appreciates the opportunity to access and receive guidance, planning assistance, and grant funding to carry out these essential projects and objectives. They not only represent assistance in planning and

day-to-day operations, but also prove critical to bolstering utilities' resilience, providing direct benefits to the communities we serve.

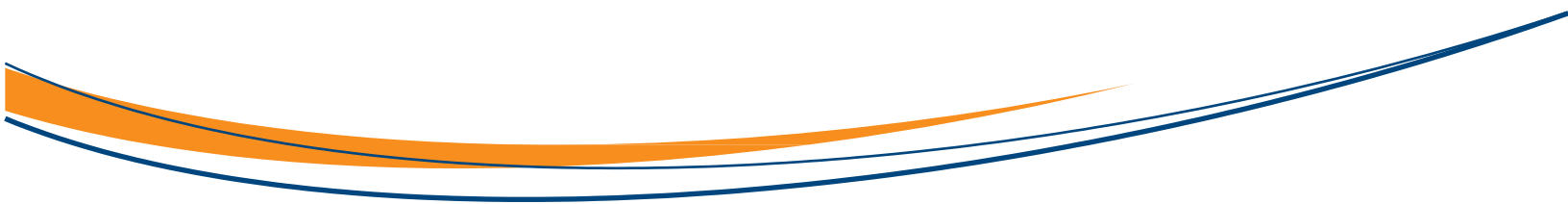
Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Marc Pritchard
Water Plant Manager
Moorhead Public Service
PO Box 779
Moorhead, MN 56561-0779 MP/lm

cc: Krista Shaaf, MDH DWP Communications
Krista.schaff@state.mn.us





June 4, 2026

John Barten
Clean Water Council Chair
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155
bbarten79@gmail.com

Jen Kader
Clean Water Council Administrator
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155
Jen.Kader@state.mn.us

Subject: Clean Water Council Draft Recommendations

Dear Mr. Barten, Ms. Kader, and members of the Clean Water Council,

We appreciate the opportunity to provide stakeholder comments while the Council considers proposals for funding recommendations. The following program supports our work at the City of Northfield to help ensure drinking water is safe for everyone, everywhere in Minnesota, and we suggest that its priority in funding recommendations reflects our shared priority of protecting drinking water in Minnesota for future generations.

The City of Northfield's Public Water System has worked with the Source Water Protection Program since we began updating our Wellhead Protection Plan in 2025. These activities have helped us to take concrete actions to safeguard our drinking water sources.

Providing safe drinking water to residents and businesses of Northfield is an essential service. Protecting Northfield's water source is an essential component of providing safe drinking water to Northfield and that has been aided through the Source Water Protection Program.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Justin Wagner
Utilities Manger
City of Northfield

[6/4/26]

John Barten
Clean Water Council Chair
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155
bbarten79@gmail.com

Jen Kader
Clean Water Council Administrator
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155
Jen.Kader@state.mn.us

Subject: Clean Water Council Draft Recommendations

Dear Mr. Barten, Ms. Kader, and members of the Clean Water Council,


We appreciate the opportunity to provide stakeholder comments while the Council considers proposals for funding recommendations. The Minnesota Department of Health's Source Water Protection Program supports our work at the City of Onamia to help ensure drinking water is safe for everyone, everywhere, and we suggest that its priority in funding recommendations reflects our shared priority of protecting drinking water in Minnesota for future generations.

The City of Onamia has worked with the Source Water Protection Program since we began preparing our first Wellhead Protection (WHP) Plan in 2014. The activities in our WHP Plan have helped us to take concrete actions to safeguard our drinking water source. The WHP Program made us eligible for financial assistance, and we have received several Source Water Protection Grants to help us implement our plan. These grants have allowed us to:

- Purchase and install a natural gas backup generator to continue providing drinking to residents during power outages.
- Seal the City's old creamery well, thereby protecting the City's aquifer from potential sources of contamination.
- Conduct exploratory borings to locate a source to construct a new municipal well, allowing for the replacement of a well with high ammonia levels.
- Connect a low-income homeowner to City water services and seal a private well that posed a risk to the City's aquifer.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Gene Falconer
Public Works Superintendent
City of Onamia

CITY OF REMER

106 Spruce St NW

Remer, MN 56672

Phone 218-566-4156

Voice, TTY, ASCII: 711 or 1-800-627-3529

June 5, 2026

John Barten
Clean Water Council Chair
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155
bbarten79@gmail.com

Jen Kader
Clean Water Council Administrator
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155
Jen.Kader@state.mn.us

Subject: Clean Water Council Draft Recommendations

Dear Mr. Barten, Ms. Kader, and members of the Clean Water Council,

We appreciate the opportunity to provide stakeholder comments while the Council considers proposals for funding recommendations. The following program supports our work at the City of Remer to help ensure drinking water is safe for everyone, everywhere in Minnesota, and we suggest that its priority in funding recommendations reflects our shared priority of protecting drinking water in Minnesota for future generations.

The City of Remer has worked closely with the Source Water Protection Program to ensure the safety and longevity of our vital resources. Notably, a Minnesota Rural Water Association (MRWA) Source Water Protection Specialist, working hand in hand with the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), directly assisted our city with the development of our Wellhead Protection Amendment Plan. This all-inclusive plan outlines the critical, actionable tasks our city can take to protect our drinking water sources, ensuring we provide safe and reliable water to our residents. These activities have helped us take concrete actions to safeguard our drinking water sources, and this structured process has repeatedly made us eligible for essential financial assistance through the Source Water Protection Grant initiative.

This grant funding has delivered tangible safety upgrades and forward-thinking planning benefits directly to our local community. In the past, the City of Remer utilized a \$10,000 Source Water Protection Implementation Grant to install a secure fence around our public drinking water wells, creating a critical physical safeguard for our immediate supply. Building upon that security, we were recently awarded an additional Source Water Protection Implementation Grant for \$11,300.00 to develop a Comprehensive Plan. To achieve this, the City of Remer is teaming up with the Region Five Development Commission to create a unified framework that uniquely pairs comprehensive city planning, climate planning, and drinking water planning into a single, cohesive strategy.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

This collaborative planning process impacts our organization by allowing for expanded, vital conversations on how to navigate the ever-changing landscape of public administration. It prompts us to deeply consider environmental shifts that could directly affect the health and well-being of Remer residents. While the final product will be a formalized Comprehensive Plan, the collaborative journey of plan development is just as valuable to our daily operations. Explicitly pairing our comprehensive city goals with drinking water and environmental protection allows for deeper internal conversations about how external factors affect our current infrastructure. It gives our leadership the tools to proactively identify risks and correct our course before problems arise.

Thank you for your consideration. We respectfully urge the Clean Water Council to continue prioritizing the Source Water Protection Program in its funding recommendations, as it remains a vital resource for communities like Remer in safeguarding public health, ensuring regulatory compliance, and building long-term resilience for Minnesota's drinking water systems. By supporting these efforts, the Council can help ensure that all Minnesotans—now and in the future—have access to safe, reliable, and sustainable drinking water.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Blundell
City Clerk-Treasurer
City of Remer





June 4, 2026

John Barten
Clean Water Council Chair
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155
jbarten79@gmail.com

Jen Kader
Clean Water Council Administrator
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155
Jen.Kader@state.mn.us

RE: Clean Water Council Draft Recommendations

Dear Mr. Barten, Ms. Kader, and members of the Clean Water Council,

We appreciate the opportunity to provide stakeholder comments while the Council considers proposals for funding recommendations. The Source Water Protection program supports our work at the City of St. Cloud to help ensure drinking water is safe for everyone, and we suggest that its priority in funding recommendations reflects our shared commitment of protecting drinking water in Minnesota for future generations.

As a Surface Water Public Water Supplier (PWS), the City of St. Cloud has worked with the Source Water Protection Program to protect our drinking water for more than 15 years. Our planning activities have helped us take concrete actions to safeguard our drinking water source, and the financial assistance we have received from the Minnesota Department of Health's Source Water Protection Grants have allowed the City to:

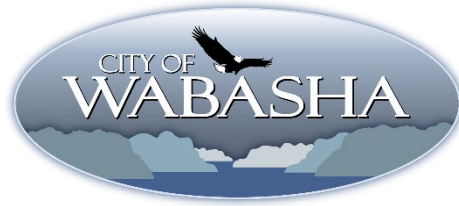
- Purchase necessary equipment for monitoring water quality of the Mississippi River in St. Cloud and Brainerd to implement an early warning system and optimize water treatment at the facility.
- Complete public outreach with residents about stormwater management.
- Implement the Adopt-a-Storm Drain and Storm Drain Art programs.
- Implement a Stormwater Pond Treatment Effectiveness project.
- Coordinate with Minneapolis and St. Paul (two downstream Surface Water PWS) to identify and prioritize stormwater influenced potential contaminant sources.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Shanna Czeck
Assistant Public Utilities Director
City of St. Cloud

CC: Luke Langner, Public Services Director, City of St. Cloud



June 3, 2026

John Barten
Clean Water Council Chair
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155
bbarten79@gmail.com

Jen Kader
Clean Water Council Administrator
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155
Jen.Kader@state.mn.us

Subject: Clean Water Council Draft Recommendations

Dear Mr. Barten, Ms. Kader, and members of the Clean Water Council,

We appreciate the opportunity to provide stakeholder comments while the Council considers proposals for funding recommendations. The Source Water Protection Program to help ensure drinking water is safe for everyone, everywhere in Minnesota, and we suggest that its priority in funding recommendations reflects our shared priority of protecting drinking water in Minnesota for future generations.

The Wabasha Utilities and the City of Wabasha has worked with the Source Water Protection Program since we began preparing our first Wellhead Protection Plan in 2011. These activities have helped us to take concrete actions to safeguard our drinking water sources and educate the public. Additionally, this process has made us eligible for financial assistance and we have received nearly \$50,000 in Source Water Protection Grant to help us implement our plan, such as a grant to help us make improvements to our wells.

Wabasha has been able to protect our drinking water through the following grants:

- FY 2011 Implementation Grant – Analyze drainage patterns and complete stormwater infrastructure mapping throughout the DWSMA: \$9,724.63
- FY 2011 Competitive Grant – Seal an old city well: \$10,000
- FY 2015 Implementation Grant – Collect data, perform inspections, and create a city storm sewer map: \$10,000
- FY 2022 Implementation Grant – Rehabilitate/rebuild a city well: \$10,000
- FY 2024 Implementation Grant – Rebuild well motor, camera and well casing, and reinstall well pipes \$10,000

The process has helped create awareness in our community about protecting our water and taking concrete steps to do so.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Caroline Gregerson

Caroline Gregerson
City administrator
City of Wabasha



Public Works Department

6/8/26

John Barten
Clean Water Council Chair
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155
bbarten79@gmail.com

Jen Kader
Clean Water Council Administrator
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155
Jen.Kader@state.mn.us

Subject: Clean Water Council Draft Recommendations

Dear Mr. Barten, Ms. Kader, and members of the Clean Water Council,

We appreciate the opportunity to provide stakeholder comments while the Council considers proposals for funding recommendations. The following program supports our work at the City of Richfield to help ensure drinking water is safe for everyone, and we suggest that its priority in funding recommendations reflects our shared priority of protecting drinking water in Minnesota for future generations.

Richfield has worked with the Source Water Protection Program extensively since the approval of our current Wellhead Protection Plan in 2018. The activities carried out under this plan, and the financial assistance received through Source Water Protection Grants, have helped us to take concrete actions to safeguard our drinking water sources.

A significant example of this is the work that was undertaken at Woodlawn Terrace – a mobile home cooperative in Richfield. Until 2024, these homes were served by a private well. When this well was found to be contaminated, it became urgent to connect to the municipal water supply and promptly seal the well. The City and the Woodlawn Terrace Co-op both applied for Source Water Protection grants and agreed to jointly fund the well sealing. This critical work to protect public health and the City's drinking water supply was made possible with the support of Minnesota Department of Health staff and the Source Water Protection Program.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Mattias Oddsson

Mattias Oddsson
Water Resources Engineer
City of Richfield



Protect it. Pass it on.

MISSISSIPPI
WATERSHED
MANAGEMENT
ORGANIZATION

2522 Marshall Street NE
Minneapolis, MN 55418

612-746-4970
contacts@mwm.org

www.mwm.org

April 30, 2026

Jen Kader
Clean Water Council
520 Lafayette Rd N
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Dear Ms. Kader,

The Mississippi Watershed Management Organization (MWMO) finds significant value in the Minnesota Stormwater BMP Performance Evaluation and Technology program (also known as the Minnesota Stormwater Research Council). We strongly encourage the Clean Water Council to continue funding this effort at or above the requested levels for the 2028-2029 fiscal years.

This program conducts essential urban stormwater research that addresses the priority needs of the MWMO in our work protecting and improving water quality, habitat and natural resources in our urban watershed that drains to the Mississippi River. As a fully developed watershed, we need to work creatively with our partners on projects that protect the river, often working within small areas and underground. We are able to utilize outcomes from projects funded by the program, such as those that investigated the performance of underground sand filters, compared different phosphorus binding medias, and identified sources of contaminants in urban stormwater, to ensure our stormwater projects will be successful.

The science-based training and outreach provided by this program ensure that local stormwater management is guided by the best information available. We appreciate the Council's continued investment in these vital clean water goals.

Sincerely,

Kevin Reich
Executive Director
Mississippi Watershed Management Organization

June 8, 2026

Ms. Jen Kader
Clean Water Council

Re: Support for the Minnesota Stormwater Research Program (FY 2028-2029)

Dear Ms. Kader,

Barr Engineering Co. (Barr) finds significant value in the Minnesota Stormwater BMP Performance Evaluation and Technology program (also known as the Minnesota Stormwater Research Council). We strongly encourage the Clean Water Council to continue funding this effort at or above the requested levels for the 2028-2029 fiscal years. This program conducts essential urban stormwater research that addresses the priority needs of Barr and the communities we serve. By providing us with cutting-edge research and resources on revised best management practices and management techniques, the program allows us to design and maintain stormwater practices that are both effective and efficient. The science-based training and outreach provided by this program ensure that local stormwater management is guided by the best information available. We appreciate the Council's continued investment in these vital clean water goals.

Sincerely,



Brad Lindaman
Senior Vice President
Water Resources Business Unit Leader
Barr Engineering Co.

From: John Gulliver <gulli003@umn.edu>

Sent on: Tuesday, May 26, 2026 9:48:24 PM

To: Kader, Jen (She/Her/Hers) (MPCA) <Jen.Kader@state.mn.us>

Subject: Clean Water Council funding of the Minnesota Stormwater Research Council

You don't often get email from gulli003@umn.edu. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Dear Jen and the Clean Water Council,

This Email is about the funding available to individuals who perform stormwater research. The Federal government, for the most part, does not consider stormwater as something that they want to or have a need to emphasize in their research funding. The only organization tasked with supporting research is the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, who have many other important areas that need research funding, such as drinking water, wastewater, and atmospheric pollution. They also have been terribly underfunded for decades, and are currently going through a severe cutback in their funding. Aside from the U.S. EPA, there is no funding coming from the USDA, Department of the Interior, the Department of War, etc.

Considering this, the funding for stormwater research to improve non-point source pollution from urban systems is very welcomed. In Minnesota, we have a stormwater research program because of the Minnesota Stormwater Research Council. Other states do not have this funding availability, so they have no research program in stormwater. What this means for the cities, water conservation districts, regulatory agencies, etc. is that they do not have access to applied research designed to improve water quality of receiving waters. They are mostly doing the same thing that they always have done, based upon somebody's hypotheses in 1996, when the the first stormwater manual was developed.

So, is the Minnesota Stormwater Research Council doing important applied work? Yes, out of necessity. It is really the only place that practicing scientists and engineers can go to get answers about applied stormwater research. The multiple letters that you have received are evidence of the support from cities, counties, watershed districts, soil conservation boards and the State of Minnesota. There are many more individuals ready to provide support letters, because the service provided meets a real need.

Please contact me if you have any questions about my statements in this Email.

Yours,

John Gulliver

--
John S. Gulliver, Ph. D.
Professor Emeritus
Department of Civil Engineering
Resident Fellow
Institute on the Environment
University of Minnesota
gulli003@umn.edu
<https://stormwater.safl.umn.edu/>
<https://cse.umn.edu/cege>



PRIOR LAKE-SPRING LAKE WATERSHED DISTRICT

Date: April 29, 2026

Subject: Support for the Minnesota Stormwater Research Program (FY 2028-2029)

Dear Ms. Kader,

The Prior Lake-Spring Lake Watershed District is writing in strong support of the Minnesota Stormwater BMP Performance Evaluation and Technology program (also known as the Minnesota Stormwater Research Council). We strongly encourage the Clean Water Council to continue funding this effort at or above the requested levels for the 2028-2029 fiscal years.

Two of the focal priorities of the Prior Lake-Spring Lake Watershed District are water quality and flood reduction. The Minnesota Stormwater BMP Performance Evaluation and Technology program consistently provides essential research to advance our success in these aims and is instrumental in ensuring that our management is effective and efficient.

Supporting this program is **one of the clearest ways the Council can continue to support implementable clean water for the communities we serve.**

Sincerely,

Emily Dick
Water Resources Project Manager
Prior Lake-Spring Lake Watershed District

Jen Kader, Clean Water Council Administrator
jen.kader@state.mn.us.

Subject: Support for the Minnesota Stormwater Research Program (FY 2028-2029)

Dear Ms. Kader,

In my 40 years of consulting, recently retired from leading the water resources group at SRF Consulting Group, Inc., I found significant value in the Minnesota Stormwater BMP Performance Evaluation and Technology program (also known as the Minnesota Stormwater Research Council). As such, I strongly encourage the Clean Water Council to continue funding this effort at or above the requested levels for the 2028-2029 fiscal years.

This program conducts essential urban stormwater research that helps consultants like SRF identify stormwater management practices that achieve real results, not simply meeting permit requirements, for the clients they serve. By providing cutting-edge research and resources on revised BMPs and management techniques, the program allows them to design and maintain stormwater practices that are both effective and efficient.

The science-based training and outreach provided by this program ensure that local stormwater management is guided by the best information available. I appreciate the Council's continued investment in these vital clean water goals.

Sincerely,

David Filipiak, PE
SRF Consulting Group, Inc. (retired)
South Washington Watershed District Manager



April 28, 2026

Ms. Kader
Clean Water Council Administrator

Re: Support for the Minnesota Stormwater Research Program (FY 2028-2029)

Dear Ms. Kader,

WSB continues to find significant value in the Minnesota Stormwater Research Council. We encourage the Clean Water Council to continue funding this effort at or above the requested levels for the 2028-2029 fiscal years. WSB is an annual funding contributor because we feel so strongly about the program and its benefits.

This program conducts essential urban stormwater research that addresses the priority needs of WSB and the communities and clients we serve. By providing us with cutting-edge research and resources on stormwater BMPs and management techniques, the program allows us additional information to help efficiently and effectively design and maintain stormwater practices.

The science-based training and outreach provided by this program helps ensure that local stormwater management is guided by the best information available. We appreciate the Council's continued investment in this program.

Sincerely,

WSB

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jake Newhall", is written over a light grey horizontal line.

Jake Newhall, PE, PMP
Director, Water Resources

Subject: Support for the Minnesota Stormwater Research Program (FY 2028-2029)

Dear Ms. Kader,

City of Duluth, MN, Public Works & Utilities, finds significant value in the Minnesota Stormwater BMP Performance Evaluation and Technology program (also known as the Minnesota Stormwater Research Council). We strongly encourage the Clean Water Council to continue funding this effort at or above the requested levels for the 2028-2029 fiscal years.

This program conducts essential urban stormwater research that addresses the priority needs of City of Duluth, MN, Public Works & Utilities, and the communities we serve. By providing us with cutting-edge research and resources on revised BMPs and management techniques, the program allows us to design and maintain stormwater practices that are both effective and efficient.

The science-based training and outreach provided by this program ensure that local stormwater management is guided by the best information available. We appreciate the Council's continued investment in these vital clean water goals.

Sincerely,

Kevin Petersen, Utility Operations Lead Worker

City of Duluth, MN

Public Works & Utilities

April 30, 2026

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

Dear Members of the Clean Water Council,

On behalf of Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District (RWMWD), I am writing to share our concerns regarding chloride pollution and to request increased support for the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's (MPCA) chloride reduction program.

Chloride pollution remains one of the most difficult pollutants for the RWMWD 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 within waterbodies in our jurisdiction continue to increase.

Four waterbodies within RWMWD are considered impaired by State of MN standards due to high chloride levels and many others are exhibiting notable worsening trends (10-year RWMWD monitoring average). This level of impairment 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,

Tina Carstens

Tina Carstens
Administrator, RWMWD
Tina.carstens@rwmwd.org



SOUTH WASHINGTON WATERSHED DISTRICT

May 5, 2026

Ms. Jen Kader
Clean Water Council
520 Lafayette Road N
Saint Paul, MN 55155

RE: Support for the Minnesota Stormwater Research Program (FY 2028-2029)

Dear Ms. Kader:

The South Washington Watershed District (SWWD) finds significant value in the Minnesota Stormwater BMP Performance Evaluation and Technology program (also known as the Minnesota Stormwater Research Council, or MSRC). We strongly encourage the Clean Water Council to continue funding this effort at or above the requested levels for the 2028-2029 fiscal years.

This program conducts essential urban stormwater research that addresses the priority needs of the SWWD and the communities we serve. This importance is further evidenced by SWWD's ongoing annual financial contributions to the MSRC and our commitment of staff time through involvement on the MSRC Advisory Board. By providing local governments and other practitioners with cutting-edge research and resources on revised best management practices and management techniques, the program allows us to design and maintain stormwater practices that are both effective and efficient.

The science-based technology transfer provided by this program ensure that local stormwater management is guided by the best information available. We appreciate the Council's continued investment in these vital clean water goals.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K. Axtell". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

Kyle Axtell
Planning & Projects Program Manager
South Washington Watershed District

cc: John Bilotta, U of MN Water Resources Center

Dear Minnesota Clean Water Council Members,

I am writing you advocating for the continued funding of the National Park Water Quality Program and the Voyageurs National Park Clean Water Project.

Over the last two decades Voyagers National Park Clean Water Joint Powers Board (VNPCWJPB) has successfully garnered support for promoting clean water within the gateway areas to Voyageurs National Park.

Over the years many clean water projects have been accomplished in St. Louis and Koochiching Counties. These are the successful systems of Crane Lake and areas of Rainy Lake that has improved the water quality throughout the watershed from east to west.

However, there is much more work to do.

We have the communities of Ash River and Kabetogama that are on the docket as next steps for our VNPCWJPB. Much planning has gone into both areas. On deck for system approval is Ash River. There has and will be continued efforts for funding Ash River to completion. The planning efforts and strategy are ongoing and will continue until we have a successful system in the Kabetogama area also.

As more and more people flock to water-based areas for homesteading, business or recreation, it is crucial to continue funding at a sustainable level so we can benefit our clean water goals.

Thank you for your service.

Sincerely,

Jason Sjoblom

Koochiching County
Commissioner District 4

Vice Chair - VNPCWJPB



Saint Louis County

Fourth District County Commissioner • 320 Miners Drive East • Ely, MN 55731
Phone: (218)365-8200 • Fax: (218)365-8205 • mcdonaldp@stlouiscountymn.gov

Paul McDonald

John Barten
Minnesota Clean Water Council
520 Lafayette Rd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

March 30th, 2026

Dear John Barten,

On behalf of the Voyageurs National Park Clean Water Joint Powers Board, thank you for the opportunity to present our FY2028–2029 Clean Water Fund request earlier this week. We are grateful for your time, thoughtful questions, and continued commitment to protecting Minnesota's water resources.

We appreciate the Council's leadership in advancing strategic, science-based investments that deliver measurable water quality outcomes across the state. The Voyageurs National Park Clean Water Project reflects those priorities by implementing proven wastewater infrastructure solutions in environmentally sensitive areas that directly impact surface water, groundwater, and drinking water.

This work is especially critical in and around Voyageurs National Park, Minnesota's only national park, and our nation's only water based national park, where interconnected waters including Rainy Lake, Kabetogama Lake, Crane Lake, and the Ash River are particularly vulnerable to contamination from aging or non-compliant septic systems. Through this program, we are eliminating failing systems, expanding connections to compliant infrastructure, and achieving permanent reductions in nutrient and pathogen loading.

The project is grounded in strong local collaboration and measurable progress. To date, more than \$35 million in wastewater infrastructure projects have been completed or advanced across four sewer districts. Our approach ensures accountability through engineering benchmarks, connection data, treatment capacity expansion, and ongoing coordination with regulatory partners including the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.

Importantly, Clean Water Fund investments provide critical financial leverage—helping unlock and complement federal, state, and local funding sources—while supporting long-term sustainability through district management, user fees, and coordinated capital planning.

This initiative also reflects a strong commitment to community engagement and equity. As a locally governed partnership representing counties, townships, and unorganized areas, we prioritize transparent public involvement through meetings, newsletters, and formal hearings. The project addresses environmental justice by improving water infrastructure in rural and remote communities with limited tax capacity, ensuring residents are not disproportionately burdened while protecting a nationally significant public resource.

We are proud to align this work with the Clean Water Council's Strategic Plan, the Minnesota Nutrient Reduction Strategy, and broader state and federal water quality goals.

Thank you again for your consideration and for your continued leadership in safeguarding Minnesota's waters. We look forward to working in partnership with you to advance this important effort.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul McDonald". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "P".

Paul McDonald
Chair, Voyageurs National Park Clean Water Joint Powers Board
District 4 Commissioner, St. Louis County

Minnesota Senate
Minnesota Senate Building
95 University Avenue West
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155



Minnesota House
Centennial Office Building
658 Cedar Street
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155

Mr. John Barten, Clean Water Council Chair

520 Lafayette Road North

St. Paul, MN 55155

bbarten79@gmail.com

Jen Kader, Clean Water Council Administrator

520 Lafayette Road North

St. Paul, MN 55155

Jen.Kader@state.mn.us

April 14, 2026

Dear Chair Barten, Executive Director Kader, and Members of the Clean Water Council,

We write in support of the Minnesota Clean Water Council's *National Park Water Quality Protection Program* and the Voyageurs National Park Clean Water Joint Powers Board's \$7.4 million funding request within that program.

While Voyageurs National Park and the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness are not located within our legislative district, they are directly adjacent to the communities we represent and are deeply connected to the region's economy, environment, and way of life. The health of these waters has a direct impact on northern Minnesota as a whole, from tourism and outdoor recreation to the long-term sustainability of our natural resources.

Voyageurs National Park is the nation's only water-based national park and a defining feature of our region. Recognizing the importance of protecting these waters, local governments came together more than a decade ago to form the Voyageurs National Park Clean Water Project Joint Powers Board. In partnership with the State of Minnesota, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, the National Park Service, St. Louis and Koochiching Counties, and the Clean Water Council, the Board has implemented a comprehensive and locally driven plan to improve water quality at the park's primary access points.

That effort is delivering results. Sanitary sewer districts and infrastructure projects are now established or underway at three of the four major park entrances—reducing the risk of contamination and protecting water quality for residents and visitors alike. Just as importantly, this work has leveraged strong partnerships and funding support from the Minnesota Public Facilities

Authority, United States Department of Agriculture, the United States Army Corps of Engineers, and others.

The Clean Water Council has been instrumental in advancing this progress. Your investments have helped bring together multiple funding sources, maximizing the return on state dollars and ensuring these projects move forward in a coordinated and efficient manner.

This request represents a continuation of a successful, collaborative approach to protecting some of Minnesota's most valuable natural resources—resources that benefit not just one district, but the entire region and state.

Thank you for your consideration and for your ongoing commitment to clean water in Minnesota.

Sincerely,



Senator Jennifer McEwen (Senate District 8)



Representative Liish Kozlowski (House District 8B)



Representative Pete Johnson (House District 8A)

CC: Voyageurs National Park Clean Water Joint Powers Board
St. Louis County Board
Koochiching County Board
Governor Tim Walz
Commissioner Katrina Kessler

Senator Rob Farnsworth
Senate District 7
2323, MN Senate Building
Saint Paul, MN 55155



Representative Cal Warwas
House District 7B
Centennial Building
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Mr. John Barten, Clean Water Council Chair
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155
bbarten79@gmail.com

Jen Kader, Clean Water Council Administrator
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155
Jen.Kader@state.mn.us

April 14th, 2026

Dear Chair Barten, Executive Director Kader, and Members of the Clean Water Council,

We write in support of the Minnesota Clean Water Council's National Park Water Quality Protection Program and the Voyageurs National Park Joint Powers Board's \$7.4 million funding request within that program.

While Voyageurs National Park and the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness are not located within our legislative districts, they are directly adjacent to the communities we represent and are deeply connected to the region's economy, outdoor recreation opportunities, and way of life. The condition of these waters plays a critical role in supporting tourism, fishing, boating, and the overall visitor experience that drives northern Minnesota's economy.

Voyageurs National Park is the nation's only water-based national park and a defining feature of our region. Its lakes and waterways are central to how people experience the park—whether that's fishing, paddling, boating, or simply enjoying time at a cabin. Maintaining the quality and reliability of that experience is essential not only for visitors, but for the local businesses and communities that depend on a strong recreation economy.

Recognizing this, local governments came together more than a decade ago to form a joint powers board focused on practical, on-the-ground improvements at the park's primary access points. Working in partnership with the State of Minnesota, the Minnesota Pollution Control

Agency, the National Park Service, St. Louis and Koochiching Counties, and the Clean Water Council, they have developed and implemented a coordinated plan to address wastewater and infrastructure needs that directly support the park experience.

That effort is delivering real results. Sanitary sewer systems and related infrastructure are now in place or underway at three of the four major park entrances. These improvements help ensure that visitors can continue to enjoy the park's lakes and shorelines without disruption, while also protecting the long-term usability of these heavily traveled access points.

Just as importantly, this work has brought together multiple funding partners, including the Minnesota Public Facilities Authority, the United States Department of Agriculture, and the United States Army Corps of Engineers. This coordinated approach maximizes the impact of state dollars and ensures these projects are completed efficiently and effectively.

This request represents a continuation of a proven, collaborative effort that supports both the long-term stewardship of the park and the recreation-based economy that depends on it. It is an investment not just in infrastructure, but in preserving access, experience, and opportunity for residents and visitors alike.

Thank you for your consideration and your continued support of projects that strengthen Minnesota's outdoor recreation economy and regional communities.

Sincerely,



Senator Rob Farnsworth (District 7)



Representative Cal Warwas (District 7B)

CC: Voyageurs National Park Clean Water Joint Powers Board
St. Louis County Board
Koochiching County Board
Governor Tim Walz
Commissioner Katrina Kessler

From: Yahoo Messenger <johnstegmeir@yahoo.com>
Sent on: Thursday, June 4, 2026 8:37:54 PM
To: Kader, Jen (She/Her/Hers) (MPCA) <Jen.Kader@state.mn.us>
CC: Jeff Anderson <jeff@costingrouppmn.com>; Paul McDonald <mcdonaldp@stlouiscountymn.gov>
Subject: Kabetogama Township support for VNPCWJPB request for FY28-29 funds

Follow up: Follow up
Follow up status: Completed
Completed on: Tuesday, June 9, 2026 9:05:00 PM

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Jen Kader
Administrator, Minnesota Clean Water Fund

The Kabetogama Township Board of Supervisors supports the funding request from the Voyageurs National Park Clean Water Joint Powers Board (VNPCWJPB) for the FY28-29 biennium.

The grant dollars the VNPCWJPB has received from the Clean Water Fund over the years have been greatly appreciated and indeed have been critical in our efforts to successfully complete sewer infrastructure projects in the Voyageur Park communities of Crane Lake, Ash River, Island View and Kabetogama.

Our communities will continue our commitment to build and manage our sewer infrastructure to promote the protection of water quality in and around Voyageurs National Park. We depend on our local, state and federal partners to continue to provide support as we work together toward a legacy of clean water and environmental stewardship.

Thank you in advance for your consideration and support.

Larry Kec
Kabetogama Board of Supervisors, Chair

Roger J. Skraba
State Representative
District 03A



Minnesota House of Representatives

April 10, 2026

Mr. John Barten, Clean Water Council Chair
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155
bbarten79@gmail.com

Jen Kader, Clean Water Council Administrator
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155
Jen.Kader@state.mn.us

Dear Chair Barten, Executive Director Kader, and Members of the Clean Water Council,

I write in strong support of the Minnesota Clean Water Council's *National Park Water Quality Protection Program* and the Voyageurs National Park Clean Water Joint Powers Board's \$7.4 million funding request within that program.

In addition to serving in the Minnesota House, I have spent years working as a canoe and fishing guide in Voyageurs National Park and the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. I have seen firsthand what makes these waters so special, and how important it is that we protect them. Clean water is not just an environmental priority in northern Minnesota; it is the foundation of our outdoor heritage, our local economy, and our way of life.

Voyageurs is the nation's only water-based national park, known for its pristine lakes and interconnected waterways. More than 13 years ago, local governments surrounding the park came together to form the Voyageurs National Park Clean Water Project Joint Powers Board. Since then, in partnership with the State of Minnesota, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, the National Park Service, St. Louis and Koochiching Counties, and the Clean Water Council, they have taken a thoughtful, locally driven approach to protecting water quality at the park's primary access points.

That work is producing real results. Sanitary sewer districts and infrastructure projects are now in place or underway at three of the four major park entrances—projects that directly reduce the risk of contamination to these waters. These efforts have also brought together an impressive partnership, leveraging funding from the Minnesota Public Facilities Authority, United States Department of Agriculture, the United States Army Corps of Engineers, and others.



The Clean Water Council has played a key role in making this progress possible. Your support has not only advanced critical infrastructure but has also leveraged millions of additional dollars—maximizing the impact of every state investment.

From my perspective on the water, as a guide, a legislator, and someone who cares deeply about this region, this is exactly the kind of smart, collaborative investment we should be making.

Approval of this request will allow the work to continue and ensure that future generations can experience these waters the same way we do today.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued commitment to protecting Minnesota's most treasured natural resources.

Let's keep these waters clean—for today, and for the generations that follow.

Sincerely,



Representative Roger Skraba

CC: Voyageurs National Park Clean Water Joint Powers Board
St. Louis County Board
Koochiching County Board
Governor Tim Walz
Commissioner Katrina Kessler



From: <rmscott@frontiernet.net>
Sent on: Monday, June 8, 2026 12:00:21 PM
To: Kader, Jen (She/Her/Hers) (MPCA) <Jen.Kader@state.mn.us>
CC: Jeff Anderson <jeff@costingroupmn.com>; gcerk@me.com; info <info@clwsd.org>
Subject: Support for Voyageurs NP Clean Water Funding

Follow up: Follow up
Follow up status: Completed
Completed on: Wednesday, June 10, 2026 6:50:00 PM

You don't often get email from rmscott@frontiernet.net. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Good morning

I greatly support the ongoing efforts of the VNP

Joint Power's Board Clean Water Project. The success of this project is directly related to the funding approved by the Minnesota Clean Water Council.

As a member of the JPB and Chair of the Crane Lake Water and Sanitary Board for over 20 years I have seen the continued improvement to the quality of our local water shed. The ability to improve the sewer systems and infrastructure ensures immediate and long term water quality will be sustained.

To continue moving forward and being proactive at the local government level is not fiscally feasible. Only with external resources can these goals be achieved with the Clean Water Project.

The Minnesota Clean Water Council has previously agreed on the merits to provide needed funding.

Thank you for your continued support of the project to ensure long term water quality is maintained.

Rob Scott, Chair CLWSD

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

Senator Grant Hauschild

Senate District 3

Minnesota Senate Building
95 University Ave West
St. Paul, MN 55155-1606

Phone: 651-296-1789

Email: sen.grant.hauschild@senate.mn



Senate

State of Minnesota

Mr. John Barten, Clean Water Council Chair
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155
bbarten79@gmail.com

Jen Kader, Clean Water Council Administrator
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155
Jen.Kader@state.mn.us

April 20th, 2026

Dear Chair Barten, Executive Director Kader, and Members of the Clean Water Council,

I write in strong support of the Minnesota Clean Water Council's *National Park Water Quality Protection Program* and the Voyageurs National Park Clean Water Joint Powers Board's \$7.4 million funding request within that program.

This program, and prior investments in the Voyageurs National Park Clean Water Project, have had a meaningful and measurable impact on protecting the waters of Voyageurs National Park and the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, both of which are vital natural resources within my legislative district in northern Minnesota.

As you know, Voyageurs National Park is the nation's only water-based national park and is widely recognized for its extraordinary beauty and ecological significance. More than 13 years ago, counties, townships, and unorganized areas adjacent to the park came together to form the Voyageurs National Park Clean Water Project Joint Powers Board. In partnership with the State of Minnesota, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, the National Park Service, St. Louis and Koochiching Counties, and the Clean Water Council, the Board has led the development and implementation of a comprehensive plan to protect water quality at the park's four primary public access points.

This collaborative effort has produced strong results. The Board has successfully established sanitary sewer districts and advanced infrastructure projects at three of the four major park entrances. In doing so, they have effectively leveraged partnerships and funding from the Minnesota Public Facilities Authority, United States Department of Agriculture, the United States Army Corps of Engineers, and other key stakeholders.

The Clean Water Council has been an essential partner in this success. Your investments

have not only supported critical water quality improvements but have also leveraged millions of dollars in additional funding, demonstrating the strength and efficiency of this program.

Approval of the Voyageurs National Park Clean Water Joint Powers Board's request will allow this important work to continue and ensure long-term protection of these nationally significant waters.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued commitment to protecting Minnesota's most treasured natural resources.

Let us continue this important work—together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Grant Hauschild". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Grant Hauschild
Senator – District 3

CC: Voyageurs National Park Clean Water Joint Powers Board
St. Louis County Board
Koochiching County Board
Governor Tim Walz
Commissioner Katrina Kessler



Minnesota Clean Water Council
c/o Jen Kader, Clean Water Council Administrator
St. Paul, Minnesota

Dear Members of the Minnesota Clean Water Council,

On behalf of the East Otter Tail (EOT) and Wadena Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) Boards, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide input regarding the Fiscal Year 2028–2029 biennium funding proposals. As the Council works to evaluate the merits of each proposal, strengthen its understanding of the purpose and function of individual programs, and consider how they align with the Council’s Strategic Plan and state statute, we respectfully urge the Council to maintain and ideally increase the Clean Water Fund support for the Board of Water and Soil Resources’ Watershed Based Implementation Funding (WBIF) Program tied to the One Watershed One Plan framework.

The WBIF Program is one of the most effective and efficient mechanisms Minnesota has for delivering measurable water quality improvements on private lands. Through this model, Clean Water Fund dollars are directed to local government units including Soil and Water Conservation Districts, counties, and watershed districts that have effective, long-standing programs that deliver assistance directly to private landowners wanting to implement voluntary conservation practices. These local partnerships are essential because meaningful water quality improvements in Minnesota must occur largely on privately owned agricultural and rural lands.

The strength of the WBIF program is its locally led watershed-based approach. One Watershed One Plan has successfully aligned local governments, state agencies, and stakeholders around shared watershed priorities that are based on sound science, local knowledge, and measurable resource concerns rather than political boundaries. This coordination has reduced duplication, improved targeting of resources, and created a more strategic framework for implementation across Minnesota watersheds.

Most importantly, WBIF dollars translate directly into on-the-ground conservation practices that improve and protect water quality. In our area these investments support projects such as cover crops, no-till and strip till, precision irrigation water management, nutrient management, wetland restoration, shoreline stabilization, water and sediment control basins, grassed waterways, streambank stabilization, grazing management, riparian buffers, forest management, and other practices that reduce sediment, phosphorus, nitrogen, and bacteria loading to Minnesota waters. The program is focused on implementation and measurable outcomes rather than simply planning or administration.



The WBIF program also represents an exceptional return on investment for the Clean Water Fund. Local governments routinely leverage WBIF dollars with federal conservation funding, local contributions, landowner investments, and partner grants. In many cases, state investments serve as the catalyst that allows larger conservation projects to move forward and brings additional funding into Minnesota communities and watersheds. A great example of this is the very successful Minnesota Department of Agriculture's Irrigation Regional Conservation Partnership Program proposals that were awarded over \$15 million dollars in federal funding to address local groundwater quality concerns. Local SWCDs were able to pledge WBIF funding already committed to address groundwater resources concerns in their local plans as match for the proposals to help leverage the federal funding. But for those SWCD commitments to these projects this federal funding may not have come to Minnesota.

It is known that the demand for conservation programs continues to exceed available funding. Across the state, our conservation partners regularly encounter willing landowners who are interested in implementing conservation practices but cannot access funding due to limited program resources. NRCS reports that less than one in four landowners or producers seeking financial assistance are funded through their programs. Increasing investment in WBIF would allow more high-priority projects to move forward and accelerate measurable progress toward Minnesota's water quality goals.

The success of the WBIF program is also rooted in trust. Soil and Water Conservation District staff and local watershed partners have long-standing working relationships with producers and landowners. These trusted local relationships are critical for advancing voluntary conservation and achieving durable long-term stewardship outcomes. Local delivery systems are often far more effective and efficient than top-down approaches because they are tailored to local conditions and community needs.

In addition, stable and reliable funding is necessary to sustain long-term watershed progress. As you know, water quality improvements take time, and consistent funding allows local governments to retain technical staff, build landowner relationships, and maintain implementation pipelines that can deliver projects year after year. Funding instability slows progress, disrupts partnerships, and reduces long-term effectiveness.

The WBIF program has significantly increased the capacity of SWCDs to implement on-the-ground conservation projects and accelerate water quality improvements and protection across our watersheds. For instance, prior to the availability of WBIF, the EOT SWCD provided cost-share assistance for just 15 projects in 2019, totaling slightly more than \$39,000. By 2025, annual implementation had expanded to 72 projects with nearly \$330,000 invested in conservation practices. The Wadena SWCD has seen similar increases. These substantial increases demonstrate how WBIF has enabled the SWCDs to dedicate staff time toward project development, landowner outreach, and practice implementation while providing a stable funding source for priority watershed projects.

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Equally important, the funding has allowed SWCDs to offer meaningful cost-share assistance for higher-cost conservation practices such as water and sediment control basin systems, shoreline stabilizations, erosion control, precision irrigation water management systems, and other practices that address identified priority resource concerns that would often be financially out of reach for landowners without assistance. As a result, more projects are being implemented, larger environmental benefits are being achieved, and watershed plan priorities are being translated into measurable conservation outcomes.

The WBIF program also aligns closely with the goals and priorities identified in the Council's Strategic Plan. It emphasizes measurable outcomes, watershed-scale coordination, leveraging partnerships, local implementation capacity, and protection and restoration of Minnesota's water resources through voluntary and incentive-based conservation efforts.

As the Council evaluates competing proposals for the FY28–29 biennium, we encourage you to recognize the unique role WBIF plays in converting Clean Water Fund investments into real projects, real partnerships, and measurable environmental outcomes across Minnesota. Few programs provide such a direct connection between statewide priorities and local implementation.

Thank you for your continued leadership and thoughtful consideration during this process. We appreciate the Council's commitment to ensuring that Clean Water Fund investments are effective, accountable, and strategically aligned to achieve long-term water quality improvements throughout Minnesota.

Sincerely,

Darren Newville

Darren Newville
District Manager, East Otter Tail & Wadena Soil & Water Conservation Districts



The Local Government Water Roundtable is an affiliation of three of Minnesota's key local government entities in the planning, protection, and restoration of the state's water resources

June 1, 2026

John Barten, Chair
Clean Water Council
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Jen Kader, Administrator
Clean Water Council
651-757-2621
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Chair Barten and Administrator Kader,

On behalf of the Local Government Water Round Table, a coalition of the Association of Minnesota Counties, the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and Minnesota Watersheds, we write to strongly support continued watershed-based implementation funding (WBIF) through the Clean Water Fund.

WBIF is the mechanism that will deliver on the investments and long-term vision established by the Clean Water Council (CWC). It builds on years of planning, monitoring, and data collection by turning those investments into action on the ground. Through the One Watershed, One Plan framework, local and Tribal governments are working together with landowners across watershed boundaries to develop science-based, prioritized, targeted, and measurable plans that are producing real results for Minnesota's lakes, rivers, streams, and drinking water.

This program is working as intended. We are nearly finished planning across all 60 watershed boundaries, covering the entire state. Communities are already seeing the value of that investment through projects that protect drinking water, reduce pollution, improve habitat, and strengthen local resilience. WBIF is the funding stream that makes implementation possible, and it gives local governments, engaging with landowners, the flexibility to address water quality needs along the full continuum from swimmable to drinkable.

WBIF aligns closely with the CWC's current scoring criteria. It clearly advances water quality outcomes, supports measurable progress, fits the Council's strategic direction, leverages local, state, federal, and private dollars, and reflects strong local partnership and community values. Just as important, it has a proven track record and a clear path forward.

When the Clean Water Fund was established through the Clean Water Land and Legacy amendment in 2008, the CWC recognized the importance of implementation at the local level to achieve water quality results. The CWC supported the vision of a watershed-based approach and committed to a funding trajectory that moves toward 60 percent of the Clean Water Fund or \$120 million at that time as their tool to achieve results. That vision has been achieved. The long-term commitment matters. It gives local partners the stability needed to move from planning to implementation and to continue delivering results that benefit all Minnesotans. As the final plans are approved and more projects are ready, continued progress toward that goal remains essential.

For these reasons, we urge the Clean Water Council to support sustained WBIF in its recommendations. This investment is one of the strongest tools we have for turning sound planning into measurable water quality improvements across Minnesota.

Thank you for your continued leadership and for your consideration of this important funding priority.

Sincerely,



Brian Martinson
AMC Environment and Natural
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Long-term vision. Lasting water quality.

After years of strategic investments in watershed protection and restoration through the Clean Water Fund, local communities are beginning to see measurable improvements in the quality of Minnesota’s lakes, rivers, and drinking water. *However, these results did not happen overnight.*

Watershed-scale improvement requires sustained investment, science-based strategies, and strong collaboration among local governments, producers, landowners, state and federal agencies, and Tribal government partners. WBIF funding helps make that work possible by supporting projects that **leverage additional dollars, focus resources** where they have the **greatest impact**, and build **long-term resilience** for Minnesota communities.

The Local Government Water Roundtable collectively represents hundreds of local officials and resource professionals from across Minnesota, and supports the continued, long-term funding of BWSR’s Watershed-Based Implementation Funding (WBIF) for continued success.

Working together to protect groundwater in Thief River Falls



ABOVE: Representatives from three local governments that worked together to protect drinking water in Thief River Falls.

Behind every clean water success story is a long-term commitment to protecting Minnesota’s water resources through science-based, locally driven solutions. One example is the source water protection work in Thief River Falls. Through participation in One Watershed, One Plan, the City, Pennington Soil & Water Conservation District, Red Lake Watershed District, and Pennington County partnered to support major investments in water quality projects, with assistance from WBIF and BWSR competitive drinking water grants.

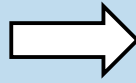


“We want to protect water quality in the Red Lake River because it’s a drinking water source... especially as part of the Red Lake River One Watershed, One Plan. That is one of our priority areas to implement projects to improve water quality.”

- Corey Hanson, water quality coordinator at Red Lake Watershed District



PROJECTS



RESULTS

1,700 structural practices

28,299 Acres of non-structural practices

12,008 acres of forest management & stewardship

190 Wells sealed

32,478 lbs/year phosphorus

105,373 lbs/year nitrogen

44,418 tons/year sediment

65 vulnerable DWSMAs benefited

Coordinated

Locally-led collaboration

Streamlined

Simplified administrative process

Predictable

Reliable support for local water management

Accountable

Prioritized, targeted, and measurable

The Local Government Water Roundtable strongly supports long-term funding for WBIF. Continued investment is essential to maintaining Minnesota’s science-based, comprehensive approach to water protection while building on the progress already underway. Communities across the state are seeing real results through improved drinking water protection, stronger watershed management, and conservation efforts that leverage local, state, federal, and private landowner resources.

As water quality challenges continue to grow, stable WBIF funding remains an urgent priority. Local governments rely on these resources to implement practical, locally driven solutions that deliver measurable outcomes and long-term benefits for Minnesota’s water resources and communities.

