

**Clean Water Council
Budget and Outcomes Committee (BOC) Meeting Agenda
Friday, September 5, 2025, 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.**

Hybrid Meeting: In person at 520 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, MN 55155 & on Webex

2025 BOC Members: Steve Besser (BOC Chair), Dick Brainerd (BOC Vice-Chair), Steve Christensen, Warren Formo, Brad Gausman, Holly Hatlewick, Annie Knight, Fran Miron

9:30 Regular Business

- Introductions
- Approve agenda & May meeting minutes
- Chair and Staff update

9:45 Public Comment

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

10:00 (DISCUSSION ITEM) Rubric

Members will review changes to the draft rubric based on the beta test in August.

10:15 (DISCUSSION ITEM) Application form

The application form is intended to include questions that Council members want to make sure are asked of *every* program in order to feel comfortable making an informed decision regarding funding recommendations. It is not intended to include all questions a Council member may want to ask of individual programs. The application form used for FY26-27 has been updated based on input over the last couple of years and, specifically, the development of the rubric. Members will have an opportunity to react to the draft form—what they like, are unsure of or uncomfortable with, and what might be missing.

10:45 Break

11:00 (DISCUSSION ITEM) Draft process and calendar

Now that Council members have seen both the draft rubric and application, this final agenda segment will look at how those will be incorporated into an overall process. The first page provides a more detailed look at the process itself, with the remaining pages outlining the flow and back-and-forth between November 2025 and December 2026.

12:00 Adjourn

Budget and Outcomes Committee Meeting Summary

Clean Water Council (Council)

August 1, 2025, 10:45 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Committee Members present: Steve Besser (Committee Chair), Dick Brainerd (Committee Vice Chair), Steve Christenson, Warren Formo, Brad Gausman, Annie Knight, and Fran Miron.

Members absent: Holly Hatlewick.

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

Regular Business

- Introductions
- Approval of the August 1st meeting agenda and the July 11th meeting minutes, motion to approve by Steve Christenson, seconded by Annie Knight. Motion carries unanimously.
- Chair and Staff update
 - Jen Kader attended the Workshop on Water event hosted by the Lower St. Croix Watershed Partnership. Upcoming events will be sent out as opportunities for Council members to engage with their constituents, be sure to watch for these in the Council's newsletter. The Minnesota Management and Business (MMB) is looking into long range water planning, so Council members may be pulled into that discussion at some point.

No public comments provided (Webex 00:13:00)

Beta-test outcomes and discussion (Webex 00:13:30)

- Members tested the rubric between for one hour this morning. This is time to evaluate the rubric as a tool (not the programs reviewed) and discuss changes to both it and the process for its use.
- Application content was submitted before the rubric was created, so the applications may or may not have had the necessary information available to address rubric criteria. Most applications were background information heavy and lead into presentations. The presentations may have had the content that may be useful for the rubric scores, or it may have been completely absent. Imperfect, but still useful to use the previous content to test the tool.
- Scores were submitted. The results reveal eight box-and-whisker plots from the eight program applications reviewed using the rubric. The plots help demonstrate degree of agreement, range of opinion, and overall support or lack of support.
- For this discussion, it is about how the tool worked, and not about actually evaluating the programs. What changes might make sense, or what questions do members have? What was noticed, what stood out, what is the general impression in using it as a tool?

Comments/Questions on the beta-testing exercise:

- Steve Besser: I think the rubric is revealing and will work well. The priorities we have been in support of, are revealed in these results here. I think it is a good reflection of our previous discussions.
- Steve Christenson: I thought it was fun to look back on these programs in hindsight; essentially re-review them. I thought the scoring rubric worked well. I think it captured what we were looking at for scoring. I thought doing them on paper was good for scoring before submitting electronically – it helped to compare some, so I could tweak my scores. An overarching question that was unresolved, is that the rubric has a bias in favor of boots on the ground actions as opposed to research, planning, measuring. I think they received lower scores, versus programs that are immediate actions, which seem to receive higher scores. If that is what we want, the rubric will deliver. In general, I am in favor of it. I wanted to flag it for discussion, so we can discuss it. Additionally, community value and outreach and communication overlapped a lot. I thought maybe we could consolidate it together but also do not feel too strongly about it. If it were just me, I would combine those.
- Dick Brainerd: I looked at this from a different perspective. I was wondering what the tool will do for us overall. I came away thinking, I didn't look at them until it started, and there are eight, and they are not

presenting the information the same way either. I'm not sure how to balance that moving forward. A lot of them say they've been funded over time, so it makes me wonder about the accomplishments over time. I also wondering about the outcomes, we are getting further in the use of Clean Water Funds (CWFs). So, how important should that be to the overall score too. Additionally, new initiatives need to be included as well compared to others' work over time. So, I am wondering if we are allowing enough for innovation or new programs. Overall, thinking about the number we need to review, how will we use this for the Council. I printed them all out. I would like paper copies, because that helped me have them to look over. Also, I only had what I could read, versus getting input during the presentations. We are only making recommendations, and the Legislators are going to make changes for them. So, I want to make sure we balance all of this.

- Steve Besser: To address the two concerns you mentioned. We could receive a spreadsheet at each meeting and can score it as we are listening. We can turn the sheets in on the way out to staff. Once the rubric is approved, the folks submitting the proposals could structure them to address the issues we are looking for, and we can even ask it directly to the presenters. We are doing this on the spot.
- Steve Christenson: I spent two hours reviewing these, allocating fifteen minutes to each, and found it to be adequate. However, one hour was not enough. One theme that struck me was the measurable outcomes – most talked about project measurement (looking at activities), and only a few talked about water quality measurements.
- Brad Gausman: I noticed some of my scores were lower than others. The idea of consistency made me almost break it down into thirds. I think it drove my scores to be lower, but I am trying to be consistent. I am having trouble with scoring the communication part. It was not as obvious, and I was confused, and it gave a hiccup in my score. There were not examples. Something I desired was if similar work is being done in this area. Specifically on the weather stations, trying to see how it fits in with others. I see the ranks for the WBIF were high for our group. I almost didn't do that one, because I did not find the links to be active for outcomes. I'm wondering how others ranked it high. Was it with the information we have? If I didn't have the knowledge, I'm not sure I could have even utilized the rubric for that one.
- Annie Knight: This was good feedback. The pros were: it was helpful to dive in, the proposal form was short, the time was enough for me to review quickly. Cons were more about how we structure the proposal application than the rubric. I don't think we set the applicants up for success for scoring the rubric. I was looking for the water quality impact. Perhaps, we can switch the wording around to maybe have the abstract as an overview. Then, we have a section dedicated to the water quality impact because that is going to be our largest scoring items on the rubric. Revising the outcomes section would be good too because many programs have been receiving CWFs for many years. Perhaps, splitting that out, if funded previously, listing the outcomes to date. Also, if funded, what are the future outcomes so they can say this is where we are at, and this is where this is going. For the Strategic Plan items, I like that it is listed out but would like a description of how they are trying to reach that goal instead of just listing it. So, we can see how it will move us forward. For the community value, I scored it for clear local support and people are invested in the project. It is different than the communications piece because people might be invested, but they might not know where the funds are coming from. That is a big piece as we move towards reauthorization. For the Outreach and Communication, I checked the links and looked at the websites to see if the Clean Water Funds were acknowledged on the website and is the logo present. Perhaps, we could expand it in the proposal form to include a website, or some public communications materials previously used. That is a nice visual for Council members as they are looking at programs as well. I also added notes as I went, if those are to be reviewed.
 - Jen Kader: Yes, we can stop and look at those items. It seems like people were taking notes to keep track of their own reactions. There were also questions for the programs. We could download them and send them to the agencies to help answer those questions during the process, if this was done in advance to the presentations taking place. Another approach would be needed if the rubric is being used in real time. Do the Council members feel looking at this in advance would help identify questions the Council may want to ask? Or is there another way that it would be useful?
 - Steve Besser: We get a meeting packet before the proposals. If we ask questions during the presentation, that can help answer questions then. I still see the value in real time scoring this.

- Dick Brainerd: This is a tool, and not the end results. We don't want to lose sight of other things going around that could influence the Council funding a program. I don't want to lose sight of something that should get funded.
- Steve Christenson: I agree with Dick. I thought the application form was good; it was simple. Perhaps there should be more about water quality, and education and outreach. We can help the state agencies on their expectations if we provide them what we are looking for. I thought the process we used a year and a half ago was good, so we could ask them questions in real time.
- Annie Knight: Responding to Dick Brainerd, I don't want a scoring system to pigeonhole us to making decisions. I think we continue to bring up, that we do not want this to be the end all be all. Regardless of score, we have the flexibility to fund a program over another. With the conversations, that will be top of my mind as we go into our funding decisions. I don't think we will lose sight of that. I think this is a tool, and it is helpful to see where we are in terms of their scores. It is not the end all be all. I am looking forward to the presentations too. I think it is a helpful tool.
- Dick Brainerd: We have had a lot of discussion about this. This was good to approach here in this meeting. We will receive feedback from the Council. We know this tool because we've worked on it. It will be interesting to see what the other Council members think. We need to try it.
- Warren Formo: I think the items I was going to bring up have already been brought up. This was a very good tool, can be useful. It will not do everything; we will still need to put a lot of thought into subjective areas. It is a good start. It is something we have not had, as a launch point. Over time, the proposers will learn what the Council is looking for, which will help us with our scores. I agree with everything that has been said. The questions asked to the proposers were good, and on the rubric were good, we can still change it moving forward, but kudos for the way this has been put together. I thought the box-and-whisker plots lined up well. As more Council members as included, those plots will reflect it.
- Fran Miron: I thought it worked well. I agree with what has been said. I was interested in seeing how my scores fit in. I fit in well and fit in with the group. I think the rubric is a means of consensus building. It is not the end all. I agree, the application process was simple but provided a wealth of information on the projects. I took the full amount of time given, and it really forced me to work in the timeframe. I am glad I didn't look at these documents ahead of time. I had adequate time, but not enough to look at the added information provided (like the links). Those links provided are important to the decision-making process. We probably need to provide that adequate time to justify the effort they have put into them. Some added information on water quality efforts and communication would be helpful. We all bring our different expertise and priorities. I think the rubric worked really well.
- Steve Besser: Thinking about the links and information. Dick Brainerd mentioned he did not have access to some. Perhaps, after the presentations we could take the scoring sheet with us and take 72 hours to review, research, and decide our scores. We could scan and email back, or type back. If someone had a question, that could be followed up as well.
 - Jen Kader: There has been discussion on real time versus 72 hours (or end of the week) to get their scores in. Do folks want to have that additional time?
 - Steve Christenson: Either is fine as long as it is communicated in advance.
 - Annie Kight: Same.
- Tannie Eshenaur (Minnesota Department of Health (MDH)): It is a valuable communication tool from the Council back to the agencies. Our CWF@MDH team looked at it this week and expressed appreciation for it.
- Steve Christenson: I clicked through to all the links to look for mentions of CWF. This took an additional 5-10 minutes for each application though.
- Glenn Skuta, MPCA: One of the first comments made by Steve Christenson, looking at implementation projects versus the monitoring projects. The projects reviewed look like implementation projects, so I wanted to see if you'd like to review something that was more of a monitoring project? Or do you think the rubric is going to work okay? I wanted to check back on that item.
 - Fran Miron: I didn't notice that in it.
- Dick Brainerd: What do the state agencies think?
 - Justin Hanson, Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR): We are listening. We are paying attention to the priorities. We will adjust appropriately.

- Margaret Wagner, Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA): I am here listening. Over time the process has grown. This is a step further and places some scores to it. I appreciate the discussion and thinking about how we can move forward with the process. It was a great idea to go through the rubric; it has brought it to life.
- Jason Moeckel, DNR: However you proceed, there is a lot of value in the questions and dialogue we are engaging in at the large full Council meetings as well as the BOC meetings. We want to help you understand, so we want to make sure we answer your questions. What in the process facilitates that to happen? Otherwise, I'm also just listening in.
- Judy Sventek, Met Council: I think the rubric is good. I think we just need to refine the application process a bit to help us fill it out more consistently and better fit your needs, to be able to score things better across the board.
- Tannie Eshenaur, MDH: This is one part of a more robust process. We need to revise what the state agencies submit. Steve Christenson's note about its bias towards direct immediate actions, but I think that represents some of the strategies for how the CWFs are used. The program the Council evaluated today from MDH is really on strategy and planning, it is prework that has to be done to make sure we are using the funds well. We are using the science to protect people and protect drinking water. We scored just fine, and it is nice to see that flexibility in the rubric. I feel reassured.
- Steve Christenson: I think we should be spending eighty percent of our CWFs on actions and twenty on measuring and planning. From my scores, the planning for the water future it got the lowest score, and I didn't like that. So, it surprised me. That is why I am bringing it up as an issue.
- Jen Kader: I was curious if anyone would have any scores that surprised them.
 - Annie Knight: I was surprised at how low I ranked the Voyageurs National Park. I think it was based on how the proposal was written. I personally like an outside group coming in, so I was excited to review it and disappointed in how incomplete it felt.
- Next steps include refining the proposals (what it could look like), update the application form so it is connected to the rubric, update the rubric where additional clarity is needed. The September BOC meeting will be for reviewing these items.
 - Steve Besser: Sounds good.
 - Jen Kader: Anything else we should keep in mind?
 - Annie Knight: Would it be helpful to enter score, to segment out the scores to the state agencies. So, they know how they scored in each category. Alternatively, if the Council wants to look at that. *Answer from Jen Kader:* I think it would be helpful to have it. We can have it for discussions. That will help tease out if things need to be answered in questions, or if an issue is something more holistic.
 - Brad Gausman: We are reviewing the rubric, not the application? *Answer from Jen Kader:* At the September meeting, I plan to have the updated application form, and an updated proposed process for how to use it during the proposal process.
 - Bard Gausman: The supply versus supplant question – if everyone is giving a one-word answer, should we utilize another question on the form if we have limited space? Alternatively, they could pull more helpful information to it. I understand it is a complex system of funding. *Answer from Jen Kader:* Perhaps, have a key section to affirm the eligibility items are met, and keep it separate.
- Steve Christenson: Regarding the Strat Plan KPI Dashboard, the sub-group has been working on it. We expect to have a proposed draft outline for discussion with the BOC at the October meeting. Anyone can join this group, just connect with Steve Christenson, or Kim Laing (MPCA). Additionally, I would propose that we also talk about the Council's mission statement, given the various versions of the Council's mission statement that have been utilized.
- *Motion to adjourn by Dick Brainerd, seconded by Brad Gausman. Motion carries.*

Adjournment (Webex 01:10:02)

Clean Water Council Scoring Rubric (9/5/2025)

Purpose and Prioritization: The Clean Water Council's scoring rubric is a tool to help the Council formally and consistently evaluate proposals using clear, shared criteria. While the rubric provides a structured evaluation framework, the Clean Water Council may prioritize proposals for funding based on its collective judgment, regardless of score.

Criteria	Criteria Description	Points Available
Water Quality Impact	Water quality is the top priority , with a focus on measurable improvements to surface water, groundwater, or drinking water . Prioritizes implementation of proven or innovative practices, with research included if it directly supports implementation. May also provide co-benefits that address other environmental concerns, including water quantity.*	0-15 _____
Strategic Alignment	Aligns with Clean Water Council Strategic Plan and state-approved water plans ; coordinates effectively across local, state, and federal initiatives.	0-10 _____
Measurable Progress & Feasibility	Defines clear, outcome-based goals and measurable indicators; shows historical progress or a feasible path to long-term systems change. May include research, monitoring, or planning activities that support measurable outcomes.	0-10 _____
Financial Leverage & Sustainability	Supplements vs supplants; potential for leveraging local or partner support; if partially funded, project is scalable	0-5 _____
Community Value	Engages landowners, local communities, and underserved groups ; addresses environmental justice and equity considerations; direct community support is evident.	0-5 _____
Outreach & Communications	Clear plan on communicating outcomes; includes outreach strategies; has a plan or has demonstrated how to raise awareness of CWF through this program (e.g., Logo displayed, CWF mentioned)	0-5 _____

Total Points Received: _____ /50

Scoring Rubric Guide for Council Members

The scoring rubric provides a clear, consistent framework for evaluating proposals in alignment with the Clean Water Council's strategic priorities. Here are a few guiding steps to help with the scoring process:

1. Review Each Proposal Thoroughly

Read each proposal carefully and assess how it addresses each rubric criterion.

2. Score Each Section Independently

Assign a score within the specified range for each section, based on how strongly the proposal meets that criteria.

3. Be Consistent

Use a consistent scoring approach across all proposals you review. For example, if you tend to score conservatively, apply that same approach for each project.

4. Provide Comments and Questions

Where possible, include comments or questions for each section. These notes are valuable for agencies and the Interagency Coordination Team to address during or after presentations. This is especially helpful when reviewing multiple proposals over time, as it provides context for Council discussion and follow-up.

5. Maintain Flexibility

The rubric is a decision-making tool, not an automatic approval or denial mechanism. Final funding recommendations reflect both rubric scores and the Council's collective judgment.

* Key Considerations for Water Quality Impact:

- **Water Quantity:** While water quality is the top priority, proposals may provide co-benefits for water quantity, such as improving water availability, storage, or flow conditions within a watershed.
- **Other Environmental Concerns:** Additional environmental co-benefits may include habitat restoration, biodiversity, climate resiliency, or protection of natural resources that directly support water quality and quantity goals.

FY26-27 CLEAN WATER FUND PROPOSAL

Program Title:	
Program Number (if applicable):	
Agency/Organization Name:	
Program website:	

Program Contact	
Name	
Email	
Phone	

Person Filling Out Application Form	
Name	
Email	
Phone	

Eligibility Requirements

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

- Eligible Use of Funds:** Requested funds will be used in accordance with Minnesota law and Clean Water Fund requirements, outlined in full in [Minnesota Statutes 114D.50 Subd. 3](#). This includes confirmation that this funding request supplements rather than supplants previous non-legacy state funding.
- Accounting and Reporting Capacity:** The applicant has experience with or ability to meet accounting and reporting requirements in order ensure appropriate use of funds, as stipulated in [Minnesota Statutes 114.50 Subd. 4](#).
- Mandate Alignment (if applicable):** This proposal supports or fulfills state or federal mandates (i.e. TMDL, Nonpoint Source Pollution, Nutrient Reduction Strategy, Wild Rice protection, etc.).

If yes, please cite applicable statute or rule: _____

Abstract

Provide a one-paragraph summary (100–150 words) that clearly states the purpose of the program, its intended water quality impact, and who it serves.

Water Quality Impact

Overall, how will this program protect, enhance, and restore water quality in lakes, rivers, and streams, protect groundwater from degradation, or protect drinking water sources.

Measurable Outcomes

1. Outcomes from Prior Clean Water Fund Appropriations (if applicable):
 - a. Describe measurable outcomes achieved to date. Outputs may be included in addition to outcomes. Please explain how they contribute towards the desired outcomes.
 - b. How close is the program to reaching its long-term goals?
2. Expected Outcomes for FY28–29 Request:
 - a. Describe measurable and outcome-based goals for the current funding request.
 - b. Describe how outcomes will be tracked, evaluated, and reported.
 - c. (If applicable) For past recipients, describe any planned changes to this program from previous funding cycles, if any.

Alignment with Clean Water Council Strategic Plan

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

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

Interconnection

Please identify which part of the water management framework this program fits under, and share other Clean Water Fund-supported programs it informs and/or is informed by. Please describe how Clean Water Funds add to existing efforts in this case.

Water Management Framework step:

Connected CWF-supported programs:

Connected non-CWF-supported programs:

Long-term funding vision

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

Non-CWF Funding

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

If so, please describe what funds are being leveraged, at what ratio, and what is your degree of certainty that the funding is secure.

If not, leave blank.

Funding Recipients

Please share the amount of funding from this request that is anticipated to be pass-through. If this program has been funded in previous fiscal years, please identify the entities that received funding from the last appropriation, and how much.

Engagement and Community Value

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

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

Environmental Justice and Equity

Please describe how this program advances environmental justice and promotes equity.

CWF Communication Plan

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

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

FY28 Request	FY29 Request	FY28-29 TOTAL REQUEST

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

State Employees

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

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

Draft Budget Process

FY28-29 Budget Cycle

Draft process based on previous CWC and BOC input

- Post the application and rubric to the website.
- All applications submitted by the same time. Links to materials posted online.
- A subset shared with Council members a month in advance, with reminders to review them ahead of time (and score if they'd like)
 - Links to the applications
 - Links to their rubric
- Scores and questions submitted to Jen in advance, for those who complete scoring in advance
- Council members able to score (or adjust their scores) in real time in the meeting, asking questions as they go.
- Scores submitted by the EOD Wednesday the week of the presentations.
 - Jen sends copies of people's scores and comments back to them
 - Jen consolidates the information to share with applicants (preserving the breakdown of scores by category—should these be credited or anonymous?)
- Applicants take until the following Friday (7 business days) to respond to questions in writing.
- Scores, questions, and responses from applicants sent to the BOC the Monday preceding their meeting.
- At the BOC meeting:
 - BOC asks additional questions of applicants as needed.
 - BOC deliberates and sets preliminary suggestions for which of the applications to add, increase, hold steady, decrease, or drop.
- At the next full council meeting:
 - Questions and answers included in the meeting packet, along with preliminary BOC suggestions.
 - BOC presents the preliminary suggestions for initial response by the full council.
- Once ALL applications have been reviewed, the final scores and initial funding suggestions come together for the initial deliberations.
 - Now that we've seen all of the presentations, are there considerations for what to adjust on funding suggestions?
 - Is there any other direction to the applicants that we would like to make at this time?

November 2025

Applications and instructions posted to the Clean Water Council website

December 2025

Budget targets discussed, Q&A Session for interested applicants?

January 2026

Applications submitted by Friday, January 16.

Full Council (1/26): Overview of applications submitted shared with the Clean Water Council. Schedule for presentations set. Instructions given to both Council members and applicants for next steps.

February 2026

Full Council (2/23): First presentation meeting

March 2026

BOC (3/13): First deliberation and suggestion, budget target discussed

Full Council (3/23): Second presentation meeting, budget target discussed

April 2026

BOC (4/10): Second deliberation and suggestion

Full Council (4/20): Third presentation meeting

May 2026

BOC (5/8): Third deliberation and suggestion

Full Council (5/18): Fourth presentation meeting

June 2026

BOC (6/5): Fourth deliberation and suggestion

Full Council (6/15): First third: Review BOC suggestions from Fourth presentation round and all in aggregate. Second third: public input. Final third: Deliberation and direction to BOC based on input.

July 2026

BOC (7/10): Provide draft funding direction suggestions for all applications, including high priority, medium priority, and low priority.

Full Council (7/20): Review and advance draft funding direction suggestions for applicants for their response.

All applicants have 2 weeks to submit draft dollar amounts by the week prior to August BOC meeting.

August 2026

BOC (8/7): Review draft dollar amounts submitted by applicants and develop first draft of preliminary budget recommendations.

Full Council (8/17): Review draft budget recommendations and provide direction to BOC.

September 2026

BOC (9/11): Amend recommendations per Full Council input.

Full Council (9/21): Preliminary recommendations set by the Council.

October 2026

BOC (10/2): First discussions on increases or decreases depending on the budget forecast

Full Council (10/19): Include discussion of adjustments based on the budget forecast. Direction to BOC.

November 2026

BOC (11/6): Final discussions on increases or decreases depending on the budget forecast. Full

Council (11/16): ratify plan for what to do based on the budget forecast.

December 2026

BOC (12/4): Review forecast, develop final proposal for recommendations based on established plan.

Full Council (12/14): Final recommendations made by the Council.

Kader, Jen (She/Her/Hers) (MPCA)

From: RRHF LLC <rootsreturn@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, September 5, 2025 8:18 AM
To: Kader, Jen (She/Her/Hers) (MPCA)
Subject: Budget & Outcomes Committee today

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.

Good morning Jen,
I'm sorry I have a standing meeting Fridays so will not be able to attend.

An item of concern for this committee and CWC members as a whole is adherence to statutes (law) for CWF usage. This affects and is affected by all Minnesotans for responsible usage of taxpayer funding for clean water outcomes.

[114D.50](#), Subd 3 and even more importantly, Subd 4. Any rubric, matrix, or scoring for projects or programs to be considered for CWFs provided by state agencies or other entities, should clearly state (not a link, but the language itself) the mandate there are repeatable measurements (physical, not modeled) and resulting outcomes. 'It'll take a while' is not an answer. 'It's too expensive to measure' is not an answer. This ensures public funds are being used in accordance with defined rigor. It's concerning when programs do not appear to measure up to the law, and hope is that CWC takes this seriously. Public access to all forms submitted for funds should be readily available for anyone to look up a project/program, how it's measured, and what are/have been outcomes.

As an example, I spent 6 yrs serving on the MN Ag Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP) advisory board. Their claims to 'remove' or 'guarantee' water quality risk once a farm or acreage is 'certified' is simply not true. CWC likely knows the conservation practices 'approved' for usage in certification are derived from NRCS-approved practices, but not deemed 'guaranteed' for any water quality outcomes. The problem with verbage used for this program's efficacy is simple: there are no guarantees. There are too many factors at play (environmental, user familiarity, climate variance, soils, tools, etc) and NRCS deems it not possible to achieve any water quality measurements. Troy Daniel of NRCS-MN affirms this.

This committee and CWC should ask: if practices utilized within this program do not and cannot affirm a specific result just by implementing them, then how can this program comply with CWF statutes? No state agencies point to this program to describe via measurements it has an impact on water quality and it's now 12 yrs old.

The statistics read and reported out of this program are a result of the tool's estimations of what the conservation practices *could* achieve. Since there are no on-the-ground measurements for this program since inception, how is this a compliant program? How is this program getting \$MM of CWF to continue not measuring or achieving outcomes? MDA has other measuring tools, stations, a lab, but this program does not reference any of those activities or reports.

I would urge this committee and CWC to further scrutinize projects or programs which do not follow or appear to follow statutes, and ensure they provide required information for every submission or request for renewal.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and serving to help all Minnesotans.

--

Lori D. Cox, Owner

Roots Return Heritage Farm, LLC

Consulting, Mentoring, Advocating New/Emerging Farmers

MN Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) (BOD - Citizen rep)

CURE MN (BOD)

Climate Land Leaders

MEP Water and Pollinator Cluster

2017 Carver Cty SWCD Outstanding Conservationist

NACD Soil Health Champion Network Farm

UMN CFANS Mentor Program

UMN CFANS Borealis Night of Excellence 2024 - Outstanding Friend Award