



2024 Performance Review and Assistance Program

Report to the Minnesota Legislature

January 22, 2025

Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources

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2024 PRAP Legislative Report

This report has been prepared for the Minnesota State Legislature by the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) in partial fulfillment of Minnesota Statutes Chapter 103B.102, subdivision 3.

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MINNESOTA BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES Performance Review and Assistance Program (PRAP)

Executive Summary

Since 2008, BWSR's Performance Review and Assistance Program has assessed the performance of the local units of government constituting Minnesota's delivery system for conservation of water and related land resources. These local units of government include 88 soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs), 87 counties, 45 watershed districts (WDs) and 18 watershed management organizations (WMOs). The program goal is to assist these local government partners to be the best they can be in their management of Minnesota's land and water resources.

PRAP focuses on three aspects of Local Governmental Unit (LGU) performance:

- 1) Plan Implementation—how well an LGU's accomplishments meet planned objectives.
- 2) Compliance with performance standards—meeting administrative mandates and following best practices.
- 3) Collaboration and communication—the quality of partner and stakeholder relationships.

BWSR's PRAP uses four levels of review to assess performance ranging from statewide oversight in the statewide summary, to a focus on individual LGU performance in the Organizational Assessment, review of comprehensive watershed management plan progress in the Watershed-based Assessment, and Special Assessment for organizations needing additional assistance.

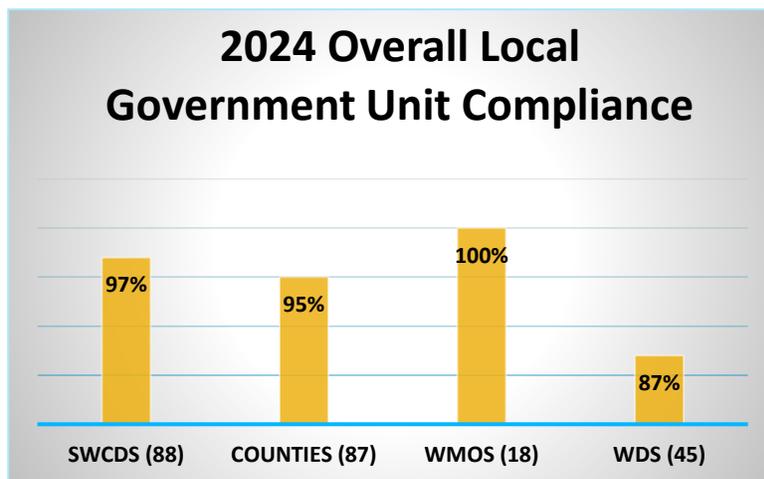
2024 Program Summary

- Continued training new PRAP Coordinator hired in 2023.
- Tracked 238 LGU's performance via Statewide Summary.
- Continued efforts to improve statewide summary performance review reporting of all LGUs through LGU cooperation and persistent follow-up by BWSR staff and increase compliance with SWCD audit requirements.
- Completed three Watershed-based Performance Reviews, with 34 LGU partners.
- Completed 13 Organizational Assessments.
- Evaluated PRAP Program and developed changes to process materials based on findings.
- Emphasized the importance of measuring outcomes in PRAP reviews, ways of demonstrating resource outcomes resulting from plan implementation, and set specific expectations for reporting resource outcomes to LGUs.
- Surveyed LGUs from 2021 Organizational Assessment PRAP review to track LGU implementation of PRAP recommendations.
- Monitored and review compliance with Action Items identified during Organizational Assessment review to measure progress toward the goal of 100% compliance within 18 months for required Action Items.
- Continued to promote PRAP Assistance Grants to enhance LGU organizational effectiveness.
- Updated Watershed-based PRAP Performance Standards checklist, guidance document and Survey questions for Watershed-based PRAP process.
- Provided PRAP Assistance Grants for nine LGUs.
- Continued review of Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) program implementation as part of Organizational Assessments to measure local government unit compliance.
- Met with BWSR easement staff to discuss incorporating future assessments related to the Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve program.

- Completed two PRAP onboarding trainings for new organization administrators to help them prepare for future organizational assessments.
- Completed seven PRAP onboarding trainings for watershed partnerships to help them prepare for 2025 watershed-based assessments.

2024 Results of Annual Tracking of 238 LGU Plans and Reports (PRAP Annual Statewide Summary)

In 2024, overall compliance with LGU plan revision and reporting requirements was 94%, the same as 2023. All drainage buffer reports were submitted on time. Annual audit submittals increased from the previous year. In 2024, reminders were sent to improve compliance. Staff efforts will continue in 2025 to identify issues and improve overall LGU compliance.



Long-range Plan Status:

The number of overdue plans is one in 2024 (*same as 2023*).

- Counties: No water plans are overdue.
- Soil and Water Conservation Districts: No plans are overdue.
- Watershed Districts: One watershed plan is overdue (Two Rivers).

(Plan Revision in Progress)

- Watershed Management Organizations: No watershed management plans are overdue.

LGUs in Full Compliance with Level I Performance Standards: 94%.

- Soil and Water Conservation Districts: 97% compliance (85/88), down from 98% in 2023.
- County Water Management: 95% compliance (83/87), same as 2023.
- Watershed Districts: 87% compliance (39/45), up from 82% in 2023.
- Watershed Management Organizations: 100% compliance (18/18), up from 94% in 2023.

Selected PRAP Program Objectives for 2025

- Track 238 LGUs' performance via Statewide Summary.
- Continue efforts to improve Statewide Summary performance review reporting of all LGUs through LGU cooperation and persistent follow-up by BWSR staff.
- Complete up to seven watershed-based reviews and 22 organizational reviews.
- Continue to evaluate the PRAP Program and make changes to processes and materials based on findings.
- Emphasize the importance of measuring outcomes in PRAP reviews, ways of demonstrating resource outcomes resulting from plan implementation, and set specific expectations for reporting resource outcomes by LGUs.

- Survey 16 LGUs and one Watershed Partnership from 2022 Organizational and Watershed-based PRAP reviews to track LGU implementation of PRAP recommendations.
- Continue monitoring and reviewing compliance with Action Items identified during Organizational and Watershed-based Assessments (One Watershed One Plan) to measure progress toward the goal of 100% compliance within 18 months for required Action Items.
- Continue the promotion and use of PRAP Assistance Grants to enhance LGU organizational effectiveness.
- Explore opportunities to secure stable funding source for PRAP assistance grants.
- Explore opportunities to increase staff capacity to provide more assistance to organizations with organizational effectiveness needs.
- Complete up to 12 PRAP onboarding training opportunities for new organization administrators to help them prepare for future organizational assessments.
- Complete up to six PRAP onboarding opportunities for watershed partnerships to help them prepare for 2026 watershed-based assessments.

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What is the Performance Review & Assistance Program?

Supporting Local Delivery of Conservation Services

PRAP is primarily a performance assessment activity conducted by the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR). The subjects of the assessments are the local governmental units (LGUs) that deliver BWSR's water and land conservation programs, and the process is designed to evaluate how well LGUs are implementing their long-range plans. The LGUs reviewed include soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs), watershed districts (WDs), watershed management organizations (WMOs), and the water management function of counties—a total of 238 distinct organizations. PRAP, authorized in 2007 (see Appendix A, pages 16-17), is coordinated by one BWSR staff member, with assistance from BWSR's Board Conservationists, Clean Water Specialists, Wetland Specialists, and Regional Managers, who routinely work with these LGUs.

Guiding Principles

PRAP is based on and uses the following principles adopted by the BWSR Board.

- Pre-emptive
- Systematic
- Constructive
- Includes consequences
- Provides recognition for high performance
- Transparent
- Retains local ownership and autonomy
- Maintains proportionate expectations
- Preserves the state/local partnership
- Results in effective on-the-ground conservation

The principles set parameters for the program's purpose of helping LGUs to be the best they can be in their operational effectiveness. Of note is the principle of proportionate expectations. This means that LGUs are rated on the accomplishment of their own plan's objectives. Moreover, BWSR rates operational performance using both basic and high-performance standards specific to each type of LGU. (For more detail see <https://bwsr.state.mn.us/prap>)

Current Multi-level Structure

PRAP has three operational components:

- performance review
- assistance
- reporting

The **performance review** structure for 2024 includes an Annual Statewide Summary and three types of assessment.

Statewide Summary review is an annual tabulation of required plans and reports for all 238 LGUs. The Statewide Summary review is conducted entirely by BWSR staff and does not require additional input from LGUs.

Organizational Assessment is a routine, interactive review intended to cover all LGUs at least once every 10 years. An Organizational Assessment evaluates progress on plan implementation, operational effectiveness, and partner relationships. This review includes assessing compliance with Level II performance standards. Thirteen organizational assessments were completed in 2024. Organizations were assessed through the Watershed-based Assessment process.

Watershed-based Assessment is a routine review conducted with partnerships of local governments working together to implement comprehensive watershed management plans (CWMPs) developed through the One Watershed, One Plan Program. This review occurs at roughly the five-year plan adoption point, evaluates progress on plan implementation and analyzes partners working relationships. Three watershed-based assessments were completed in 2024 and involved a total of 34 LGUs.

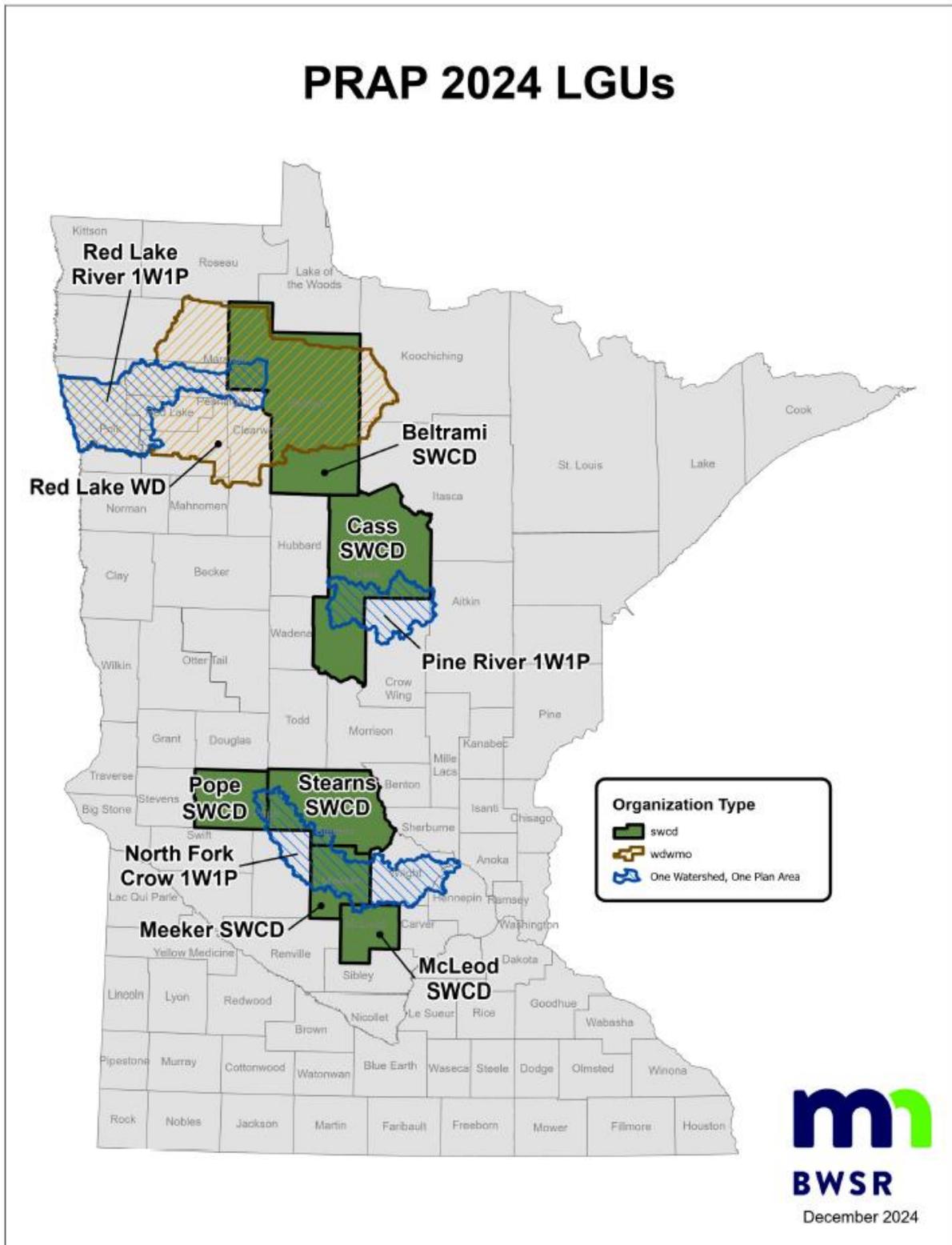
Special Assessment is an in-depth assessment of an LGU faced with performance challenges. A Special Assessment is initiated by BWSR or the LGU and usually involves targeted assistance to address specific performance needs. BWSR regularly monitors all LGUs for challenges that would necessitate a Special Assessment. No Special Assessments were completed in 2024.

Assistance (pages 11-12). In 2012, BWSR began awarding PRAP assistance grants to assist LGUs in obtaining practical and financial assistance for organizational improvements or to address performance issues. The grants are typically used for consultant services for activities identified by the LGU or recommended by BWSR in a performance review. In 2024 BWSR awarded nine PRAP assistance grants to LGUs.

Reporting (pages 13-14) makes information about LGU performance accessible to the LGUs' stakeholders and constituents. Reporting methods specific to PRAP include links to performance review summaries and this annual report to the Legislature, which can be accessed via the PRAP page on BWSR's website <https://bwsr.state.mn.us/prap-legislative-reports>. In addition, the PRAP Coordinator presents results from Organizational and Watershed-based Assessment performance reviews to LGU boards at the completion of the review, and to additional boards/committees upon request.

Accountability: From Measuring Effort to Tracking Results

The administration of government programs necessitates a high degree of accountability. PRAP was developed, in part, to deliver on that demand by providing systematic local government performance review and then reporting results. In 2017, BWSR added review of LGUs' implementation of the WCA program.



Report on PRAP Performance

BWSR’s Accountability

BWSR continues to hold itself accountable for the objectives of the PRAP program. In consideration of that commitment, this section lists 2024 program activities with the corresponding objectives from the 2023 PRAP legislative report.

PERFORMANCE REVIEW OBJECTIVES

What We Proposed	What We Did
Track 238 LGU performance via Statewide Summary	All LGUs were tracked for basic plan and reporting compliance. Overall, Level I performance in 2024 was 94% compliance, the same as 2023. Overdue long-range water management plans totaled one in 2023.
Continue efforts to improve reporting of all LGUs through cooperation and persistent follow up by BWSR staff.	WD compliance increased to 87% in 2024 as compared to 82% in 2023. In 2024, 100% of Watershed Management Organizations met reporting or auditing requirements, as compared to 94% in 2023. SWCD compliance decreased to 97% as compared to 98% in 2023, and Counties remained the same at 95%.
Complete up to 18 performance reviews.	Completed three watershed-based and 13 organizational assessments.
Evaluate PRAP Program and make changes to processes and materials based on findings.	Worked with 1W1P Program Coordinator, Wetland Specialists, Regional Managers, Board Conservationists and Chief Financial Officer to identify areas for improvement and efficiencies. Also, met with Easement Programs Coordinator to consider a future process to measure organizational performance.
Survey LGUs from 2021 organizational assessment PRAP reviews to track LGU implementation of PRAP recommendations.	In 2021, 17 LGUs were reviewed. Of the 17, two LGUs received a total of four action items, each of which was implemented within 18 months.
Continue monitoring and reviewing compliance with action items identified during an organization or watershed-based review to measure progress toward the goal of 100% compliance withing 18 months for required action items.	<p>All action items identified during the 2021 were completed within the 18-month timeline.</p> <p>All action items identified during the 2023 watershed-based and organizational assessments were assigned an 18-month timeline for completion.</p>

ASSISTANCE OBJECTIVES

What We Proposed	What We Did
<p>Continue the promotion and use of PRAP Assistance Grants to enhance LGU organizational effectiveness.</p>	<p>The PRAP assistance grant program was updated in 2021 to acknowledge the need for partnerships, newly formed or existing to access adequate assistance funding for their development. Beginning in 2021 partnerships are eligible for up to \$20,000 in assistance funds, while individual LGUs remain eligible for up to \$10,000. A total of nine LGUs received funding in 2024. These included Comfort Lake-Forest Lake WD (strategic planning), SW Prairie Technical Service Area (strategic workload analysis and staffing needs), Isanti SWCD (strategic planning and staffing plan), Morrison SWCD (workload analysis), Swift SWCD (updated policies/employee job descriptions), Wilkin SWCD (workload analysis), Wright SWCD (update position descriptions/pay scale), Lake of the Woods (update policies), and Wabasha SWCD (update position descriptions/pay scale). Total grant funds awarded in 2024 is \$92,500.</p>

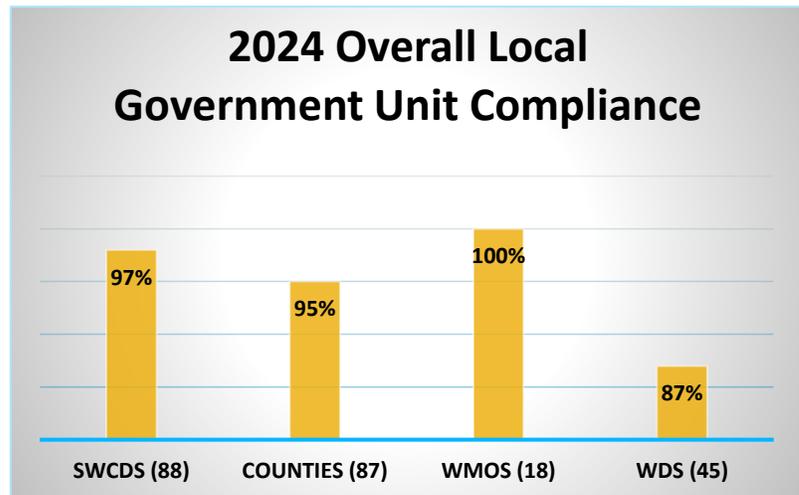
REPORTING OBJECTIVES

What We Proposed	What We Did
<p>Provide leadership in communicating the importance of measuring outcomes in Watershed-based Assessments (One Watershed One Plan) and Organizational Assessment performance reviews, ways of demonstrating resource outcomes resulting from plan implementation, and set specific expectations for reporting resource outcomes by LGUs.</p>	<p>In 2024, three Watershed-based Assessments were completed with watershed partners in the Red Lake River, North Fork Crow River, and Pine River Watersheds. These Watershed-based Assessments measured the watershed partners progress towards their plan goals and whether assurance measures for Watershed-based Implementation funding are being met. Monitoring plan progress and compliance with assurance measures will continue to be a requirement of the comprehensive watershed management plans developed via the One Watershed One Plan program.</p> <p>A total of 13 Organizational Assessments were also completed in 2024, in conjunction with the Watershed-based Assessments above.</p> <p>PRAP coordinator completed seven watershed-based and two organizational onboarding (training) sessions to help partnerships and organizations prepare for future PRAP assessments.</p>

2024 LGU Performance Review Results

Statewide Summary Results

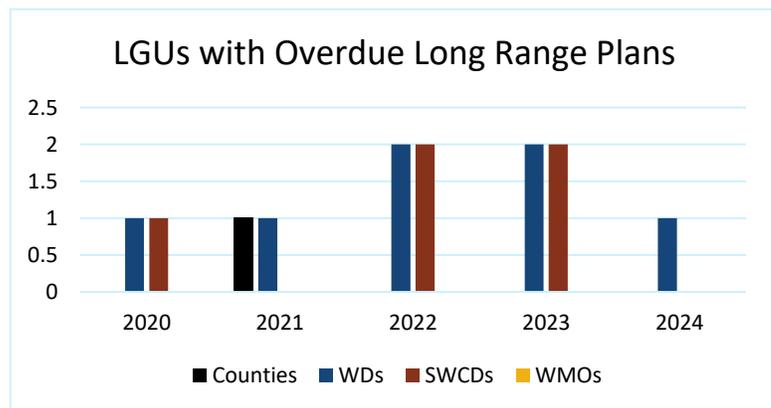
The Annual Statewide Summary monitors and tabulates all 238 LGUs’ long-range plan updates and their annual reporting of activities, ditch buffer reports, grants, and finances. BWSR tracks these performance measures each year to provide oversight of legal and policy mandates, but also to screen LGUs for indications of potential problems. Chronic lateness in financial or grant reporting, for example, may be a symptom of operational issues that require BWSR assistance.



Overall, LGU compliance with Level I standards remained the same at 94% in 2024. BWSR began tightening Level I compliance tracking in 2013, and compliance percentages have remained high from 2018 - 2024, as seen above.

Long-range plans

BWSR’s legislative mandate for PRAP includes a specific emphasis on evaluating progress in LGU plan implementation. Therefore, helping LGUs keep their plans current is basic to that review. The Annual Statewide Summary tracks whether LGUs are meeting their plan revision due dates. For this review, LGUs that have been granted an extension for their plan revision are not considered to have an overdue plan.



Many Local Water Management plans were operating under extensions granted by the BWSR as LGUs continue transitioning to development of One Watershed One Plans. The number of overdue in 2024 has decreased from 2023. Just one WD water management plan is overdue at the end of 2023. No county local water plan and watershed management organization plans have expired as of December 31, 2024. LGUs without an approved water management plan are not eligible for Clean Water grant funds awarded by BWSR.

Appendix D (page 21) lists the LGUs whose plans are overdue for a plan revision.

Annual activity and grant report

LGU annual reports are an important means of providing citizens and BWSR with information about LGU activities and grants expenditures. The Annual Statewide Summary review tracks both missing and late reports.

In 2024, there was complete on-time submittal of drainage system buffer strip reports by both County and WD drainage authorities. Of the 96 LGUs that must submit annual buffer reports, 100% met the February 1, 2024, deadline, maintaining the 100% reporting compliance achieved from 2015 through 2024. This continued compliance is attributed to persistent efforts by BWSR staff to contact LGUs with missing reports before the due date.

On-time submittal of grant status reports via BWSR's on-line eLINK system is slightly lower in 2024 with 97% of LGUs reporting on time compared with 99% in 2023, 2022, and 2021, and 98% in 2020.

Watershed district compliance with the annual activity report requirements increased in 2024 with 87% compliance, this compared to 84% in 2023, 89% in 2022, 91% in 2021, 89% in 2020, and 87% in 2019. Continued improvement in reporting will continue to be an objective of BWSR staff in 2025, with a goal of reaching 100% compliance.

Appendix E (page 22) contains more details about reporting.

Annual financial reports and audits

Starting in 2020, all SWCDs were required to prepare annual audits of their financial record and submit audited financial statements to BWSR. In 2024, 100% of SWCD completed financial reports and audits. A reminder was sent out to SWCDs regarding the due date for audit report submissions to BWSR.

WDs and WMOs are also required to prepare annual audits. In, 2024 91% of WDs met the audit performance standard, compared to 82% in 2023. In 2024, 100% of WMOs met this standard, as compared to 94% in 2023. See Appendix F (page 23) for financial report and audit details.

BWSR does not track county audits because counties are accountable to the Office of the State Auditor.

Organizational Reviews

Organizational reviews are designed to give both BWSR and the individual LGUs an overall assessment of the LGU's effectiveness in their delivery of conservation efforts. The review looks at the LGU's compliance with BWSR's operational performance standards and includes surveys of board members, staff, and partners to assess the LGU's effectiveness and existing relationships with other organizations. In 2024, LGU staff spent an average of about 8.3 hours on Organizational Assessments while BWSR staff spent an average of about 40 hours for each assessment.



BWSR conducted organizational review for 13 LGUs in 2024: **Beltrami County, Beltrami SWCD, Cass County, Cass SWCD, McLeod County, McLeod SWCD, Meeker County, Meeker SWCD, Pope County, Pope SWCD, Red Lake Watershed District, Stearns County, and Stearns SWCD.** Appendix G (pages 24-40) contain summaries of the 2024 Organizational Assessments reports. Full reports are available from BWSR by request.

Common Organizational Assessment Recommendations in 2024

While none of the findings or conclusions from these reviews apply to all LGUs, there were general observations and commonly used recommendations to improve LGU performance worth noting.

1. **Develop and enhance communication and outreach strategies to improve communications with the public and partners.**
2. **Develop a public information and education strategy to track measures and determine their effectiveness in meeting plan objectives.**
3. **Develop orientation and continued education plans for both board and staff.**
4. **Develop and use short-term strategic planning to set priorities for annual workplans and budgets.**
5. **Utilize water quality information to report progress and trends made in achieving resource goals.**

Watershed-based Performance (One Watershed One Plan) Review Results

There have been significant changes in the way that Minnesota approaches water management since PRAP started in 2008. In particular, the transition to watershed-based management plans have changed the way water planning is occurring at a local level. In 2023, BWSR determined that an evaluation of the PRAP program was needed to review the effectiveness of the program and to identify any areas for improvement or efficiencies.

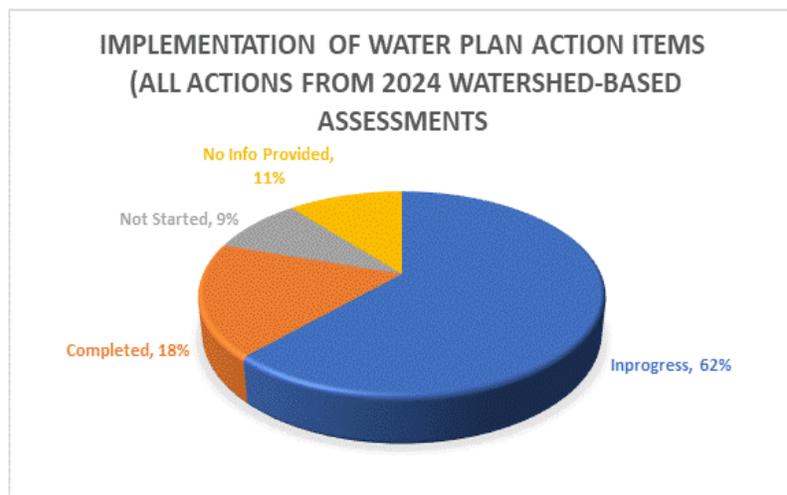
Program evaluation continued to occur after a new PRAP coordinator was hired in October of 2023. This work, in conjunction with necessary onboarding and training for a new coordinator resulted in three watershed-based reviews scheduled for 2024 being completed.

In 2024, BWSR conducted Watershed-based PRAP Assessments for three Comprehensive Watershed Management Plans: **Red Lake River, North Fork Crow River, and Pine River Watersheds.**

Appendix G (pages 24-40) contains summaries of the 2024 performance review reports. Full reports are available from BWSR by request.

Implementation of Water Plan Action Items

Three Watershed-based Assessments were completed in 2024 to review progress made towards their One Watershed, One Plans (Red Lake River, North Fork Crow River, and Pine River Watersheds). Those plans identified a combined 153 action items. Of those action items, 95 (62%) had at least some progress made, with 28 (18%) actions being completed, and 14 (9%) action items that were not started or dropped. Eighty percent of the total actions were implemented to some extent (either completed or ongoing).



Common Watershed-based Recommendations in 2024

While none of the findings or conclusions from these reviews apply to all LGUs, there were general observations and commonly used recommendations to improve LGU performance worth noting.

- 1. Increase engagement with Advisory Committee (including stakeholders).**
- 2. Annually Conduct Work Planning Exercise.**
- 3. Improve Plan Progress Tracking and Consider Articulating Goals in Concrete/Measurable Fashion in Future Plan Amendments.**

Action Items

During Performance Review Assessments, an LGU’s compliance with performance standards is reviewed. Action items are based on the LGU’s lack of compliance with BWSR’s basic practice performance standards. LGU’s are given an Action Item in the PRAP Report to address lack of compliance with one or more basic standards.

All Action Items identified during the 2024 PRAP Assessment reviews will be verified within 18 months to ensure completion. A PRAP follow-up survey demonstrated that all four of the action items assigned for 2021 LGUs were implemented within 18 months.

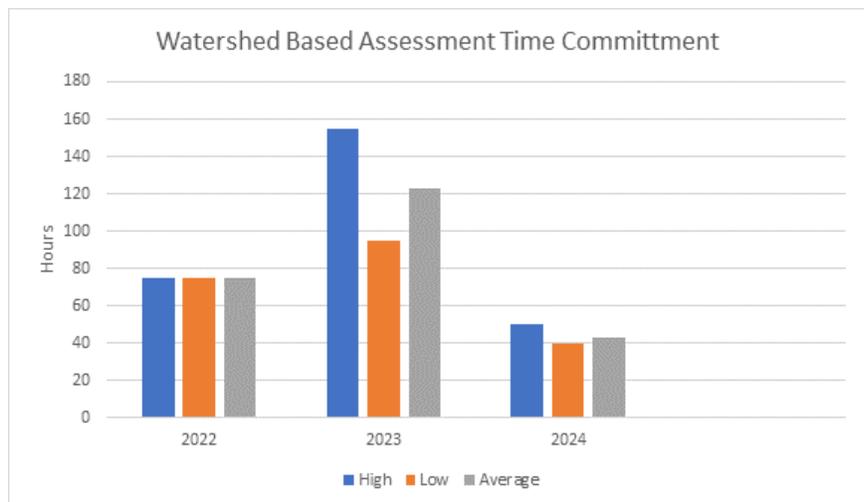
Special Assessment Results

No Special Assessment reviews were completed in 2024 as there was no expressed desire by BCs or regional supervisors to conduct this level of review on any LGUs.

Performance Review Time

BWSR tracks the time spent by LGUs in a performance review as a substitute for accounting their financial costs. Factors affecting an LGU’s time include the number of action items in their long-range plan, the number of staff who help with data collection, and the ready availability of performance data.

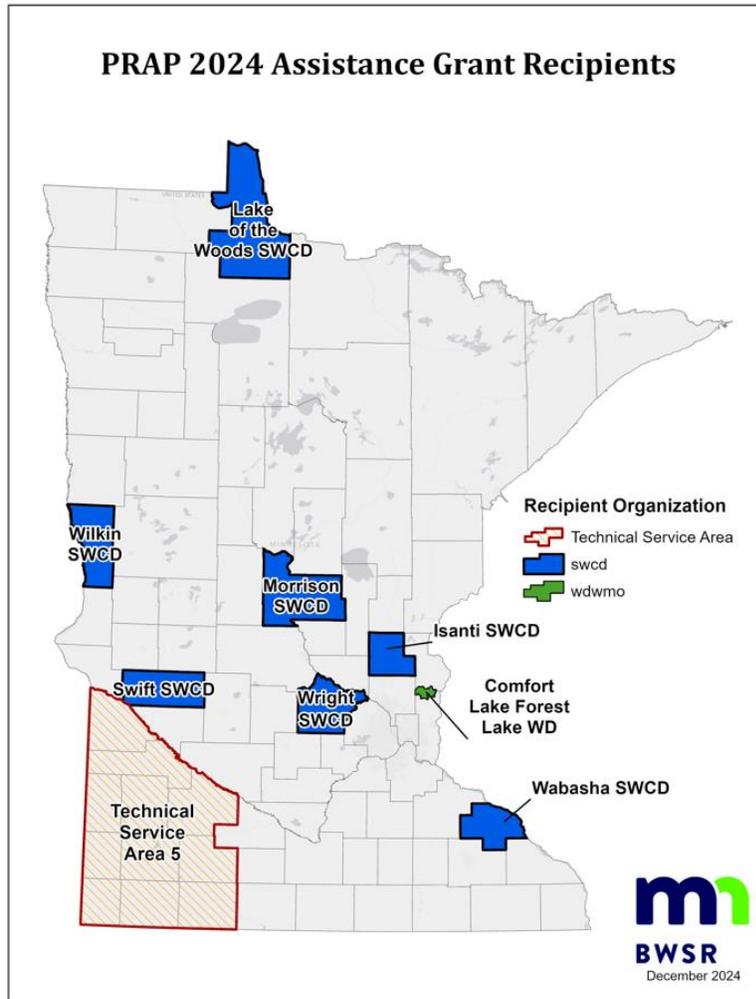
In 2024, LGU staff within each partnership, spent an average of about 43 hours on their Watershed-based Assessment. This is lower than the previous year’s 123-hour average. The amount of LGU staff time to conduct the Watershed-based Assessment is trending higher than an Organizational Assessment because it includes time from several partners as compared to a single LGU. Not including overall performance review administration and process development, BWSR staff spent an average of 80 hours for each Watershed-based Assessment.



BWSR seeks to maintain a balance between getting good information and minimizing the LGU time required to provide it. Our goal is to gather as much pertinent information as needed to assess the performance of the LGU and offer realistic and useful recommendations for improving performance.

Assistance Services to Local Governments

PRAP Assistance Program



In 2012, BWSR developed the PRAP Assistance program to provide financial assistance to LGUs for improving operating performance and executing planned goals and objectives. Since the program started, more than \$382,000 has been awarded to LGUs around Minnesota. Priority is given to applicants submitting projects related to eligible PRAP Organizational Assessment or Special Assessment recommendations, but other organizations are also eligible. The grants are made on a cost-share, reimbursement basis with a cap of \$10,000 per single LGU or \$20,000 for partnerships applying as a group. The application process requires basic information about the need, the proposed use of funds, a timeline, and the source of match dollars. BWSR staff assess the LGU need as part of the application review process, and grants are awarded on a first-come, first-serve basis if funds are available.

In 2015, the BWSR Board delegated authority to the Executive Director to award grants or contracts for the purpose of assisting LGUs in making organizational improvements (see resolution in Appendix B (page 17)). The Executive Director regularly informs Board members of assistance grant status.

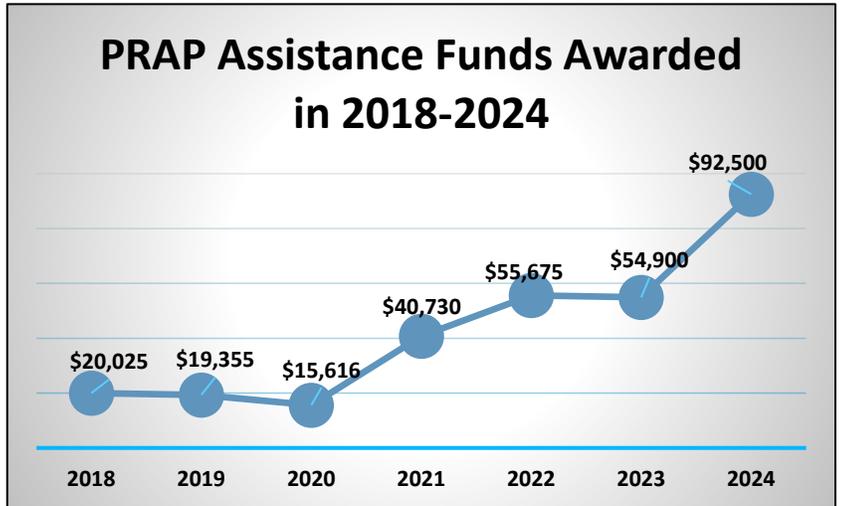
In calendar year 2024, nine PRAP Assistance Grants, totaling \$92,500, were provided for Comfort Lake-Forest Lake WD, Isanti SWCD, Lake of the Woods SWCD, Morrison SWCD, Swift SWCD, Southwest Prairie SWCD,

Wabasha SWCD, Wilkin SWCD, and Wright SWCD. Board Conservationists were encouraged to work with LGUs who could benefit from PRAP Assistance grants. LGUs undergoing an Organizational Assessment were also notified of PRAP assistance funding when recommendations were made for activities that would be eligible for PRAP funds.

The awarded funds will be used for the development of operating policies, organizational assessments, strategic planning, and goal setting.

The application information for PRAP assistance grants can be found in Appendix C (pg. 19-20).

Potential applicants can find information on the BWSR website <http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/PRAP/index.html>.



Reporting

Purpose of Reporting

BWSR reports on LGU performance to:

- meet the legislative mandate (M.S. 103B.102) to provide the public with information about the performance of their local water management entities, and
- provide information that will encourage LGUs to learn from one another about methods and programs that produce the most effective results.

Report Types

PRAP either relies on or generates different types of reports to achieve the purposes listed above.

LGU-Generated

These include information posted on the LGU websites and the required or voluntary reports submitted to BWSR, other units of government, and the public about fiscal status, plans, programs, and activities. These all serve as a means of communicating what each LGU is achieving and allow stakeholders to make their own evaluations of LGU performance. PRAP tracks submittal of required, self-generated LGU reports in the Statewide Summary review process.

BWSR Website

The BWSR website contains a webpage devoted to PRAP information. The site provides background information on the program including:

- Guiding principles for the program
- A description of the three types of assessments (Organization, Watershed-Based and Special Assessment)
- Application information for PRAP grants
- Background on the PRAP Legislative Report
- Description of the Annual Statewide Summary

For more information see: <https://bwsr.state.mn.us/prap>

The BWSR website also includes regularly updated maps of long-range plan status by LGU type. Visitors to the PRAP webpage can find general program information, tables of current performance standards by LGU type, summaries of Organizational Assessment performance review reports, and copies of annual legislative reports.

Performance Review Reports

BWSR prepares a report containing findings, conclusions, and recommendations for each LGU subject of an Organizational Assessment performance review. The LGU lead staff and board, or water plan task force members receive a draft of the report to which they are invited to submit comments. BWSR then sends a final report to the LGU. A summary from each review is included in the annual legislative report (see Appendices G and H, pages 24-46).

Annual Legislative Report

As required by statute (M.S. 103B.102, Subd. 3), BWSR prepares an annual report for the legislature containing the results of the previous year's program activities and a general assessment of the performance of the LGUs providing land and water conservation services and programs. These reports are reviewed and approved by the BWSR board and then sent to the chairpersons of the senate and house environmental policy committees, to statewide LGU associations and to the office of the legislative auditor.

Recognition for Exemplary Performance

The PRAP Guiding Principles include a provision for recognizing exemplary LGU performance. Each year this legislative report highlights those LGUs that are recognized by their peers or other organizations for their contribution to Minnesota’s resource management and protection, as well as service to their local clientele. (See Appendix I, page 47).

For those LGUs that undergo an Organizational or Watershed-based Assessment, their report lists “commendations” for compliance with each high-performance standard, demonstrating practices over and above basic requirements. The following are common commendations shared by LGUs in 2024:

- Active partner/participant in at least one 1W1P planning or implementation process.
- Received competitive Clean Water Grants within the past two years.
- Water management ordinances are on county website.
- Annual report to water plan advisory committee on plan progress.
- Partnerships: cooperative projects/tasks with neighboring districts, counties, watershed district, non-government organizations.

Program Conclusions and Future Direction

Conclusions from 2024 Reviews

All Action Items identified during 2024 Watershed-based Assessment PRAP were assigned an 18-month timeline for completion. In 2024, BWSR completed follow up of all Organizational Assessment (previously Level II review) PRAPs for the year 2021.

Action Items from previous Organizational Assessment PRAP are being implemented. In 2021, two organizations received a total of four action items, each of which were implemented within 18 months.

Common recommendations for watershed partners in 2024 was to: annually conduct a work planning exercise; improve plan progress tracking; and consider articulating goals in a concrete/measurable fashion in future amendments.

Reminders and incentives contribute significantly to on-time reporting by LGUs. Overall LGU reporting performance and non-expired plans improved in 2024. Buffer strip reporting was maintained at full LGU compliance after reaching 100% compliance in 2015 through 2024 which can be attributed to close attention from BWSR staff. Overall compliance was 94% in 2024, the same as 2023.

PRAP Program Evaluation

In January 2023, the BWSR contracted with Management Analysis and Development (MAD) to evaluate the core components of the PRAP and make recommendations for internal process improvements. Information for the evaluation was gathered through a series of interviews with BWSR staff, and with LGU partner staff that had been part of the PRAP review within the last two years, document review and process mapping.

Feedback about the program was generally positive, and it appears that BWSR and LGU partners find value in the reviews. The report also provided recommendations on how to improve the program moving forward. In 2024 BWSR prioritized the recommendations and began to integrate changes into the program implementation. In 2024, the PRAP Coordinator worked with BWSR's 1W1P Program Coordinator, Wetland Specialists, Regional Managers, Board Conservationists and Chief Financial Officer to reinforce the importance of utilizing existing reporting tools to track LGU level one reporting requirements and to implement internal process to conduct assessments more efficiently. The PRAP coordinator also met with BWSR's Easement Programs Coordinator to consider a process to measure organizational performance.

PRAP Program Objectives for 2025

- Track 238 LGUs' performance via Statewide Summary.
- Continue efforts to improve Statewide Summary performance review reporting of all LGUs through LGU cooperation and persistent follow-up by BWSR staff.
- Complete up to seven watershed-based reviews and 22 organizational reviews.
- Continue to evaluate PRAP Program and make changes to processes and materials based on findings.
- Emphasize the importance of measuring outcomes in PRAP reviews, ways of demonstrating resource outcomes resulting from plan implementation, and set specific expectations for reporting resource outcomes by LGUs.
- Survey 16 LGUs and one Watershed Partnership from 2022 Organizational and Watershed-based PRAP reviews to track LGU implementation of PRAP recommendations.
- Continue monitoring and reviewing compliance with Action Items identified during Organizational and Watershed-based Assessments to measure progress toward the goal of 100% compliance within 18 months for required Action Items.
- Continue the promotion and use of PRAP Assistance Grants to enhance LGU organizational effectiveness.
- Explore opportunities to secure stable funding source for PRAP assistance grants.
- Explore opportunities to increase staff capacity to provide more assistance to organizations with organizational effectiveness needs.
- Complete up to 12 PRAP onboarding training opportunities for new organization administrators to help them prepare for future organizational assessments.
- Complete up to six PRAP onboarding opportunities for watershed partnerships to help them prepare for 2026 watershed-based assessments.

Appendix A

PRAP Authorizing Legislation

103B.102, Minnesota Statutes 2013

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103B.102 LOCAL WATER MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTABILITY AND OVERSIGHT.

Subd. 1. Findings; improving accountability and oversight.

The legislature finds that a process is needed to monitor the performance and activities of local water management entities. The process should be preemptive so that problems can be identified early and systematically. Underperforming entities should be provided assistance and direction for improving performance in a reasonable time frame.

Subd. 2. Definitions.

For the purposes of this section, "local water management entities" means watershed districts, soil and water conservation districts, metropolitan water management organizations, and counties operating separately or jointly in their role as local water management authorities under chapter 103B, 103C, 103D, or 103G and chapter 114D.

Subd. 3. Evaluation and report.

The Board of Water and Soil Resources shall evaluate performance, financial, and activity information for each local water management entity. The board shall evaluate the entities' progress in accomplishing their adopted plans on a regular basis as determined by the board based on budget and operations of the local water management entity, but not less than once every ten years. The board shall maintain a summary of local water management entity performance on the board's Web site. Beginning February 1, 2008, and annually thereafter, the board shall provide an analysis of local water management entity performance to the chairs of the house of representatives and senate committees having jurisdiction over environment and natural resources policy.

Subd. 4. Corrective actions.

(a) In addition to other authorities, the Board of Water and Soil Resources may, based on its evaluation in subdivision 3, reduce, withhold, or redirect grants and other funding if the local water management entity has not corrected deficiencies as prescribed in a notice from the board within one year from the date of the notice.

(b) The board may defer a decision on a termination petition filed under section [103B.221](#), [103C.225](#), or [103D.271](#) for up to one year to conduct or update the evaluation under subdivision 3 or to communicate the results of the evaluation to petitioners or to local and state government agencies.

History:

[2007 c 57 art 1 s 104](#); [2013 c 143 art 4 s 1](#)

Appendix B

Board Authorization of Delegation for PRAP Assistance Grants



BOARD DECISION # 21-22

BOARD ORDER

Performance Review and Assistance Program (PRAP) Assistance Service Grants

PURPOSE

Authorize PRAP Assistance services and delegate approval of payment to the Executive Director.

FINDINGS OF FACT / RECITALS

1. The Board of Water and Soil Resources (Board) regularly monitors and evaluates the performance and activities of local water management entities and provides assistance in improving performance under the authorities and requirements of Minnesota Statutes §103B.102.
2. In December 2018, the Board through Resolution #18-71 "approved the allocation of designated or available funds to eligible local water management entities and reconfirmed the delegation of authority to the Executive Director to approve individual PRAP Assistance grants up to \$10,000 requires that program awards are reported to the Board at least once per year."
3. The Board continues to receive requests for PRAP assistance services to address operational or service delivery needs identified through a PRAP assessment or specialized assistance request noting an increase in requests from multiple entities or partnerships.
4. The Board has authorities under Minnesota Statutes §103B.3369 and 103B.101 to award grants and contracts to accomplish water and related land resources management.
5. The Grants Program and Policy Committee, at their August 11, 2021 meeting, reviewed this request and recommended the Board approve this order.

ORDER

The Board hereby:

1. Approves the allocation of designated or available funds, consistent with the appropriation of the designated or available funds, to eligible local government water management entities for fulfilling the provisions of Minnesota Statutes §103B.102.
2. Confirms the delegation of authority to the Executive Director to approve PRAP Assistance grants or contracts up to \$10,000 per contract for single entity requests and \$20,000 for projects that involve multiple entities or partnerships and requires that program awards are reported to the Board at least once per year.
3. Establishes that all PRAP Assistance awards be cost shared by the grantee at a percentage determined by the Executive Director.
4. Authorizes staff to enter into grant agreements or contracts for these purposes.
5. Establishes that this order replaces previous Board resolution #18-71.

Dated at Austin, Minnesota, this August 26, 2021.

MINNESOTA BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES



Gerald Van Amburg, Chair
Board of Water and Soil Resources

Date: August 26, 2021

Appendix C

PRAP Assistance Grant Application Information

The PRAP Assistance program provides financial assistance to LGUs to improve operating performance and execution of planned goals and objectives. Funding priority is given to activities recommended as part of an Organizational Assessment, Watershed-based Assessment or Special Assessment.

Examples of eligible activities: facilitation, mediation or consulting services related to organizational improvement such as reorganizations/mergers, strategic planning, organizational development, assessments for shared services, benchmarking, non-routine audits, and staff and board capacity assessments.

Activities that are not eligible for grant funds, or to be used as LGU match: Technology upgrades (computer equipment, software, smartphones, etc.), infrastructure improvements (vehicles, office remodel, furniture), staff performance incentives (bonuses, rewards program), basic staff training (BWSR Academy fees and expenses; Wetland Delineator Certification, subjects offered at BWSR Academy, training for promotion, basic computer training), water planning, conservation practices design or installation, publication or publicity materials, food & refreshments, (other than costs associated with meetings and conferences where the primary purpose is an approved, eligible grant activity) lodging, staff salaries, and regular board member per diems.

Note: Board member per diems and associated expenses outside of regular meetings, and associated with an approved, eligible activity are eligible for grant funds or can be used as match.

Grant Limit: \$10,000 for individual LGUs, \$20,000 for LGU partnerships. In most cases a 50 percent cash match will be required.

Who May Apply: County water management/environmental services; SWCDs; watershed districts; watershed management organizations. In some cases, LGU joint powers associations or boards, or other types of LGU water management partnerships will be eligible for grants. Priority is given to applicants submitting projects related to eligible Organizational Assessment, Watershed-based Assessment, or Special Assessment recommendations.

Terms: BWSR pays its share of the LGU's eligible expenditures as reimbursement for expenses incurred by the LGU after the execution date of the grant agreement. Reporting and reimbursement requirements are also described in the agreement. Grant agreements are processed through BWSR's eLINK system.

How to Apply: Submit an email request to the PRAP Coordinator with the following information:

- 1) Description, purpose, and scope of work for the proposed activity (If the activity or services will be contracted, do you have a contracting procedure in by-laws or operating guidelines?)
- 2) Expected products or deliverables.
- 3) Desired outcome or result

- 4) Does this activity address any recommendations associated with a recent Level II, III or IV PRAP Assessment? If so, describe how.
- 5) How has your Board indicated support for this project? How will they be kept involved?
- 6) Duration of activity: proposed start and end dates
- 7) Itemized Project Budget including
 - a. Amount of request
 - b. Source of funds to be used for match (cannot be state money nor in-kind)
 - c. Total project budget
- 8) Have you submitted other funding requests for this activity? If yes, to whom and when?
- 9) Provide name and contact information for the person who will be managing the grant agreement and providing evidence of expenditures for reimbursement.

Appendix D

Annual Statewide Summary: 2024 LGU Long-Range Plan Status as of December 31, 2024

Soil and Water Conservation Districts

(Districts have a choice of option A or B)

A. Current Resolution Adopting County Local Water Management Plan

All resolutions are current.

B. Current District Comprehensive Plan

All comprehensive plans are current.

Counties

Local Water Management Plan Revision Overdue: Plan Revision in Progress

- All plans are current.

Watershed Districts

10-Year Watershed Management Plan Revision Overdue: Plan Revision in Progress

- Two Rivers Watershed District

Watershed Management Organizations

- All plans are current

Appendix E

Annual Statewide Summary: Status of Annual Reports for 2023 as of December 31, 2024

Soil and Water Conservation Districts

eLINK Status Reports of Grant Expenditures

Late Reports:

- Winona SWCD
- Rice SWCD
- West Polk SWCD

Counties

Drainage Authority Buffer Strip Reports

All reports submitted on time.

eLINK Status Reports of Grant Expenditures

Late Reports:

- Clay County
- McLeod County
- Isanti County
- Lac qui Parle County

Watershed Districts

Drainage Authority Buffer Strip Reports

All reports submitted on time.

Annual Activity Reports Not Submitted (or submitted late):

- Joe River WD
- Middle Fork Crow River WD
- Stockton Rollingstone WD

Metro Joint Powers Watershed Management Organizations

Annual Activity Reports not submitted (or submitted late):

All reports submitted on time.

Appendix F

Annual Statewide Summary: Status of Financial Reports and Audits for 2023 as of December 31, 2024

Soil and Water Conservation Districts

Annual Audits

Annual Audits Not Submitted (or submitted late)

- All audits submitted

Watershed Districts

Annual Audits Not Completed (or submitted late):

- Joe River
- Heron Lake
- Lower Minnesota River *

Metro Joint Powers Watershed Management Organizations

Annual Audits Not Submitted (or submitted late):

- All audits submitted

** dropped by auditor, complete in 2025*

Appendix G

Watershed-based Assessment Performance Review Final Report Summaries

Red Lake River Partnership (Watershed-based PRAP)

Key Findings and Conclusions

The Red Lake River Partnership is commended for their work in implementing activities identified within their Comprehensive Watershed Plan. In general, Advisory Committee members feel the partnership is doing an effective job in implementing projects on the ground to meet plan priorities.

Increasing communication within the partnership will help improve conservation delivery in the watershed.

The partnership is commended for meeting nine of 11 applicable best standards/practices, including reviewing the committee membership and updating annually, having current operational guidelines for fiscal procedures, and updating agency partners on accomplishments regularly.

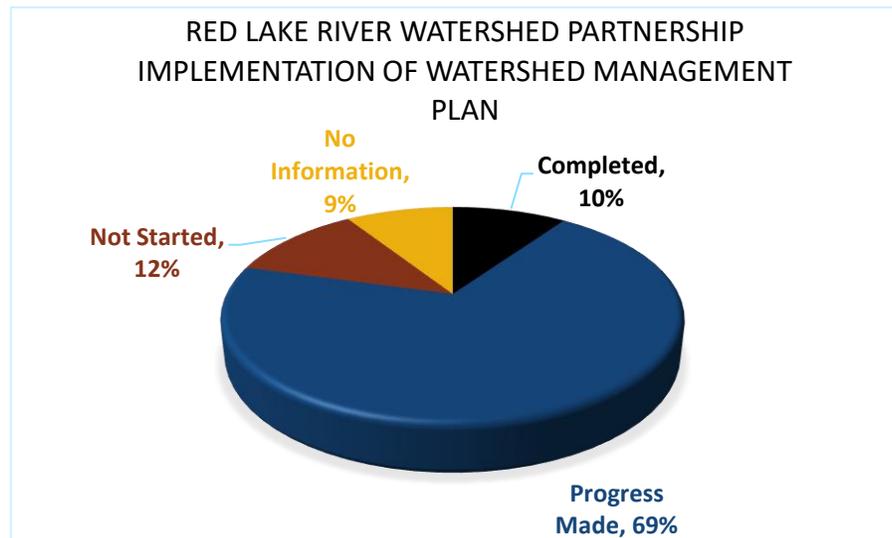
The partnership is also commended for meeting four of six high priority performance standards, a testament to the efforts made by the Red Lake River Partnership.



Resource Outcomes The Red Lake River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan was approved in 2017 and runs through 2027. For planning purposes, the plan is divided into three planning zones. Each zone is a sub watershed located upstream of a targeted resource concern. A total of 23 management areas were defined within the greater watershed to target implementation efforts. Measurable goals were developed to address issues on a resource-by-resource basis and partners used the Prioritize, Target, and Measure

Application (PTMapp) to define goals related to implementation of best management practices and to develop potential costs for various strategies. Best management practices were identified for each planning zone and management area to address planning strategies such as protection, source reduction, storage, filtration, and flood damage reduction. The plan contains 52 action items. Of those, 36 (69.3%) were identified as *In Progress/Ongoing*, six (11.5%) were identified as *Not Started*, five (9.6%) were identified as *Completed*, and the remaining five (9.6%) had no information provided to make a determination.

The Red Lake River Partnership is commended for making progress on over 69% of the action items/activities identified within the implementation section of the plan.



Summary of Partnership Recommendations

Based on an analysis of the information and data collected during this review, BWSR staff developed several recommendations for the Partnership. BWSR relies heavily on our relationships with staff as well as the input of partners, staff, and board members to make sure recommendations provided are relevant, timely, and helpful for the partnership to implement and improve their operations.

- **Recommendation 1:** Consider Updating the Plan to Simplify Priority Concerns, Management Areas, and Goals.
- **Recommendation 2:** Develop a Unified Strategy for Tracking Progress.
- **Recommendation 3:** Increase Transparency on Progress Toward Plan Goals.
- **Recommendation 4:** Increase Communication Between Staff and Partners.
- **Recommendation 5:** Develop an Orientation/Training Program on Comprehensive Watershed Management Plans.
- **Recommendation 6:** Review Governing Documents such as bylaws and formal agreements once every 5 years (minimum).

North Fork Crow River Watershed Partnership (Watershed-based PRAP)

Key Findings and Conclusions

The North Fork Crow River Water Planning Partnership is commended for their work in implementing activities identified within their Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan. In general, Advisory Committee members feel the partnership is doing an effective job in implementing projects on the ground to meet plan priorities.

Increasing communication with both the Policy and Advisory Committees will help improve conservation delivery in the watershed. Focused implementation can also be increased through targeted marketing campaigns. 7.14% of Plan Work Group members stated that the partnership *rarely or sometimes* provided direct outreach to specific landowners.



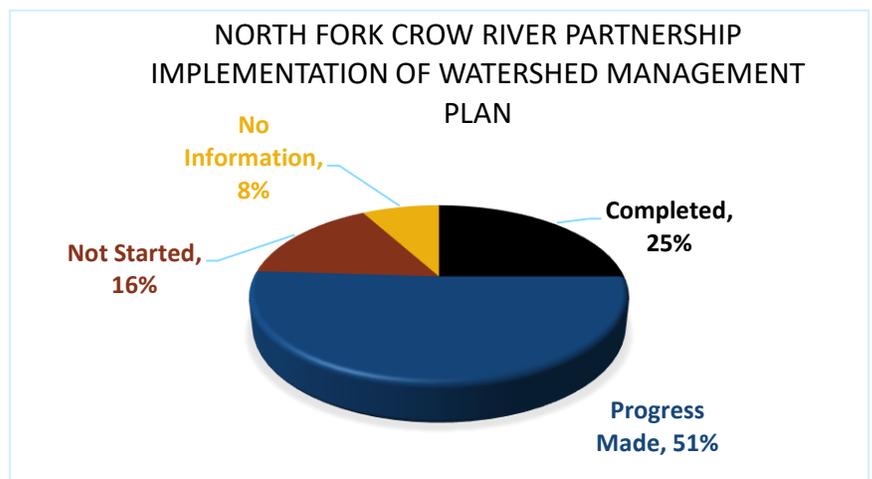
The Partnership is commended for meeting 11 of 12 applicable best standards/practices, including reviewing the committee membership and updating annually, having current operational guidelines for fiscal procedures, and updating agency partners on accomplishments regularly.

The Partnership is also commended for meeting five of eight high performance standards, a testament to the efforts made by the North Fork Crow River Watershed Planning Partnership.

Resource Outcomes:

The North Fork of the Crow River Partnership includes six counties, six soil and water conservation districts, two watershed districts and a joint powers board. This partnership has been working together since 2016 to develop a comprehensive watershed management plan.

For planning and implementation purposes the partnership developed a list of priority concerns. These concerns are Level A (Highest Priority), Level B (Second



Highest Priority) and Level C (Third Highest Priority).

The plan contains a total of 37 action items related to short-term/plan goals and objectives were provided to BWSR. Of those, 19 (51%), were identified as *In Progress/Ongoing*, six (16%), were identified as *Not Started*, nine (25%), were identified as *Completed*, and the remaining three (8%) had *no information* provided to make a determination.

The North Fork Crow River Partnership is commended for making significant progress on activities identified within the implementation section of the plan and for utilizing prioritized, targeted, and measurable approaches to achieving clean water goals. A total of 40% of the completed items were targeted towards the highest priority concerns (level A), 30% in the second highest priority concerns (level B), and 30% in the third highest priority concerns (level C). For those activities that are in-progress, 58% are targeted towards highest priority concerns (level A), 32% in the second highest priority concerns (level B), and 10% in the third highest priority concerns (level C).

Summary of Recommendations Based on an analysis of the information and data collected during this review, BWSR staff developed several recommendations for the Partnership. We rely heavily on our relationships with staff as well as the input of partners, staff, and board members to make sure we provide recommendations that are relevant, timely, and helpful for the partnership to implement and improve their operations.

- **Recommendation 1:** Annually Conduct a Work Planning Exercise
- **Recommendation 2:** Improve Plan Progress Tracking
- **Recommendation 3:** Develop a Conflict-of-Interest Policy
- **Recommendation 4:** Training and Orientation on Comprehensive Water Management Plan
- **Recommendation 5:** Increase Communication Between All Partners
- **Recommendation 6:** Increase Transparency in Progress Towards Goals
- **Recommendation 7:** Conduct a Workload Assessment to Evaluate Staff Capacity for the Partnership

Pine River Watershed Partnership (Watershed-based PRAP)

Key Findings and Conclusions

The Pine River Watershed Partnership is commended for their work in implementing activities identified within their Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan. In general, Advisory Committee members feel the partnership is doing an effective job in implementing projects on the ground to meet plan priorities.

Increasing communication between all partners will help improve conservation delivery in the watershed. Evaluating the staffing needs of the partners to ensure workload and reporting needs are met should be conducted on a regular basis to ensure workload and reporting needs are met. Consideration should be given to updating the plan to simplify project tracking and reports.



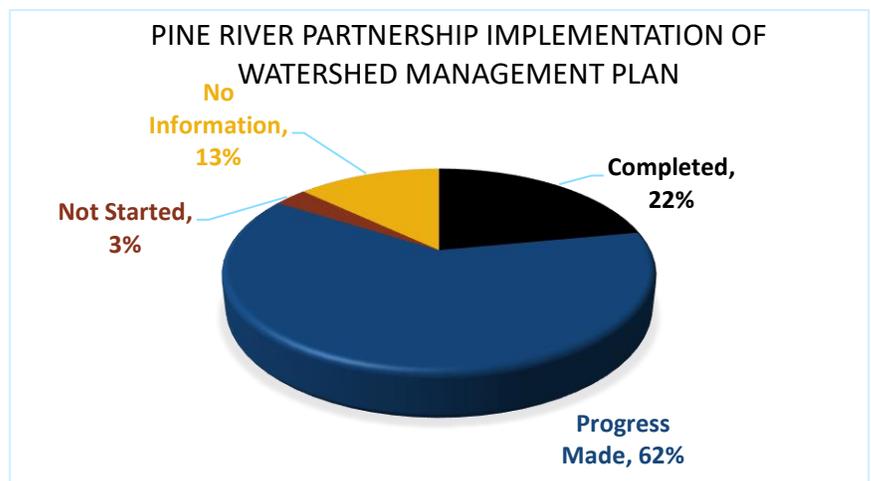
The Partnership is commended for meeting 12 of 12 applicable best standards/practices, including reviewing the committee membership and updating annually, having current operational guidelines for fiscal procedures, and updating agency partners on accomplishments regularly.

The Partnership is also commended for meeting six of eight high performance standards, a testament to the efforts made by the Pine River Watershed Partnership.

Resource Outcomes

The Pine River Partnership includes two counties and two soil and water conservation districts. This partnership is working together through a Memorandum of Understanding between Cass County, Cass SWCD, Crow Wing County, and Crow Wing SWCD.

For planning purposes, the Pine River Watershed is divided into six planning regions based sub-watershed (HUC10). Each watershed has a different makeup of land use, lake quality and risk and has an overall management focus assigned for it.



Management focus priorities fall into three categories which include: *Vigilance* (efforts focus on protecting resources where protection goals are already met), *Protection* (management focus is to maintain and increase protection levels) and *Enhance/Protect* (management focus on resources with declining trends).

The Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan contains eleven goal statements and 64 planned actions or activities. Of those, 14 (22%) were identified as being completed, 40 (62%) as *In Progress/Ongoing*, two (3%) were identified as *Not Started*, and the remaining eight (13%) had no information provided to make a determination.

The Pine River Partnership is commended for making progress on over 62% of the action items/activities identified within the implementation section of the plan.

Summary of Recommendations

Based on an analysis of the information and data collected during this review, BWSR staff developed several recommendations for the Partnership. We rely heavily on our relationships with staff as well as the input of partners, staff, and board members to make sure we provide recommendations that are relevant, timely, and helpful for the partnership to implement and improve their operations.

- **Recommendation 1:** Continue to annually conduct a work planning exercise.
- **Recommendation 2:** Provide training opportunities to inform committee members and partners on watershed related topics.
- **Recommendation 3:** Increase transparency in progress toward plan goals.
- **Recommendation 4:** Increase communication between all partners.
- **Recommendation 5:** Continue to evaluate staffing needs within the partnership to ensure workload and reporting needs are met.
- **Recommendation 6:** Consider updating the plan to simplify project tracking and reporting.

Organizational Assessment Performance Review Final Summaries

Beltrami County and Beltrami Soil and Water Conservation District



Key Findings and Conclusions

Beltrami SWCD and Beltrami County are commended for their work in implementing core programs, the Wetlands Conservation Act, and for participating in planning and implementation activities in several One Watershed, One Plans. Workload emphasis is targeted in the Mississippi and Upper/Lower Red Lake watersheds. The LGUs are also active in implementation activities in the Thief River and Clearwater River plans, and assist with activities in the Leech Lake River, Rainy/Rapid River, and Roseau plans as requested. The board and staff of both local governments are viewed favorably by their partners which aids in the planning and implementation of activities identified within their One Watershed, One Plans.

Developing strong working relationships/communication with partners will help in weathering challenges, and further assist in addressing local water management issues and improving conservation delivery in Beltrami County.

Beltrami County is commended for meeting seven of eight applicable basic performance standards, including completion of eLINK reporting and buffer strip reporting on time, as well as having current local water management plans.

Beltrami SWCD is commended for meeting 13 of 15 basic standards, including reviewing of personnel policy within the last five years, completion of eLINK reporting on time, and completing WCA reporting on time.

Both the SWCD and County are commended for meeting several high-performance standards, a testament to the quality of work they are recognized for by their partners.

Commendations

Beltrami SWCD and County are commended for:

- Active partner/participant in at least one 1W1P planning or implementation process.
- Prioritized, targeted, and measurable criteria used for goals, objectives and actions in LWMP.
- Received competitive Clean Water Fund Grants within the past two years.
- Water quality data and trend information collected for planning and to measure progress towards plan goals.
- Water management ordinances on county website.
- Coordination with state watershed-based initiatives.
- Communication piece sent within the last 12 months.
- Annual report to water plan advisory committees on plan progress.
- Communication piece sent within the last 12 months.
- Coordination with state watershed-based initiatives.
- Coordination with County Board by supervisors or staff.
- Job Approval Authority: reviewed and reported annually.
- Partnerships: cooperative projects/tasks with neighboring districts, counties, watershed districts, non-governmental organizations.

Recommendations:

- **Recommendation 1-Joint Recommendation:** Develop and enhance communication and outreach strategies to improve connections with the public and partners.

- **Recommendation 2-Joint Recommendation:** Develop a public information and education strategy to track measures and determine their effectiveness in meeting plan objectives.
- **Recommendation 3-Joint Recommendation:** Develop orientation and continued education plan for both board and staff and keep records of trainings attended.
- **Recommendation 4-Joint Recommendation:** Develop and use short-term strategic planning efforts with local boards and staff to set priorities for annual budgets and workplans based on local and state priorities.
- **Recommendation 5-Joint Recommendation:** Include copies of comprehensive watershed management plans on websites.
- **Recommendation 6-SWCD Recommendation:** Review existing operational guidelines and policies and establish new guidelines and policies as necessary.
- **Recommendation 7-SWCD Recommendation:** Conduct strategic planning assessment to review the districts mission statement, district priorities, and staff capacity to address those priorities.

WCA Administrative

- **Recommendation 1:** BWSR recommends that the Beltrami WCA staff become a certified under the MN Wetland Professional.

WCA Performance Standard

Recommendation 1

- 1) The LGU should consider writing more detailed notices. Information that should be included: key relevant facts, short description of the activity, TEP findings/recommendations, and Rule citation.
- 2) Consider integrating WCA application and enforcement cases into the County permit software.
- 3) Consider reviewing internal processes in handling applications upon submittal such as using date stamps to document the date received.

Recommendation 2

- 1) Consider expanding the use of formal documentation such as the TEP Findings of Fact to better document LGU site visits and TEP recommendations resulting from site visits. This should include both formal and informal documentation even when just one TEP member conducts a site visit.

Recommendation 3

- 1) The County should continue to work with BWSR, DNR, and TEP to refine WCA enforcement procedures outlined in MN Rule 8420.0900 and make use of the Enforcement Procedures Checklist.

Action Items

- Beltrami County: Update websites to include all website requirements.
- Beltrami SWCD is required to update/review its data practices policy.

Cass County and Cass Soil and Water Conservation District



Key Findings and Conclusions

Cass SWCD and ES are commended for their work in implementing core programs, the Wetlands Conservation Act, and for participating in planning and implementation activities in five comprehensive watershed management plans. These include the Mississippi River Headwaters, Leech Lake, Crow Wing River, Upper Mississippi-Grand Rapids, and Pine River comprehensive watershed management plans. The board and staff of both local governments are viewed favorably by their partners which aids in the planning and implementation of activities identified within their One Watershed, One Plans.

Developing strong working relationships/communication with partners will help in weathering challenges, and further assist in addressing local water

management issues and improving conservation delivery in Cass County.

Cass County ES is commended for meeting seven of seven applicable basic performance standards, including completion of buffer strip reports on time, posting BWSR grant reports on county website, and as well as having current local water management plans.

Cass SWCD is commended for meeting 15 of 17 basic standards, including reviewing of personnel policy within the last five years, completion of eLINK reporting on time, and targeting state grant funds in high priority areas.

Both the SWCD and ES are commended for meeting several high-performance standards, a testament to the quality of work they are recognized for by their partners.

Commendations

Cass SWCD and Cass County are commended for:

- Active partner/participant in at least one 1W1P planning or implementation process.
- Prioritized, targeted, and measurable criteria used for goals, objectives and actions in LWMP.
- Received competitive Clean Water Fund Grants within the past 2 years.
- Water management ordinances on county website.
- Coordination with state watershed-based initiatives.
- Communication piece sent within the last 12 months.
- Coordination with County Board by supervisors or staff.
- Job Approval Authority: reviewed and reported annually.
- Partnerships: cooperative projects/tasks with neighboring districts, counties, watershed districts, non-governmental organizations.

Recommendations

- **Joint Recommendation 1:** Utilize water quality information to report progress and trends made in achieving resource outcome goals for priority concerns and priority water bodies.
- **Joint Recommendation 2:** Meet annually to review annual accomplishments and set priorities for the next year.
- **Recommendation 3 - SWCD:** Develop and review a data practices policy.
- **Recommendation 4 - SWCD:** Develop an orientation and education plan for board and staff.
- **Recommendation 5 - SWCD:** Obtain stakeholder input.
- **Recommendation 6 - County:** Track Information and education objectives in the plan.
- **Recommendation 7 – Joint Recommendation:** Tribal relations and outreach.

Action Items: There are no actions items.

McLeod County and McLeod Soil and Water Conservation District



Key Findings and Conclusions

McLeod County SWCD and ES are commended for their work in implementing core programs, the Wetlands Conservation Act, and for participating in planning and implementation activities in three comprehensive watershed management plans. These include South Fork Crow River, Lower Minnesota River West, and North Fork Crow River. The board and staff of both local governments are viewed favorably by their partners which aids in the planning and implementation of activities identified within their One Watershed, One Plans.

Developing strong working relationships/communication with partners will help in weathering challenges, and further assist in addressing local water management issues and improving conservation delivery in McLeod County.

McLeod County ES is commended for meeting three of four applicable basic performance standards, including completion of buffer strip reports on time, posting BWSR grant reports on county website, and as well as having current local water management plans.

McLeod County SWCD is commended for meeting 14 of 15 basic standards, including reviewing of personnel policy within the last five years, completion of eLINK reporting on time, and targeting state grant funds in high priority areas.

Both the SWCD and ES are commended for meeting several high-performance standards, a testament to the quality of work they are recognized for by their partners.

Commendations

McLeod SWCD and McLeod County are commended for:

- Active partner/participant in at least one 1W1P planning or implementation process.
- Prioritized, targeted, and measurable criteria used for goals, objectives, and actions in LWMP.
- Received competitive Clean Water Fund Grants within the past 2 years.
- Water management ordinances on county website.
- Coordination with state watershed-based initiatives.
- Communication piece sent within the last 12 months.
- Coordination with County Board by supervisors or staff.
- Job Approval Authority: reviewed and reported annually.
- Partnerships: cooperative projects/tasks with neighboring districts, counties, watershed districts, non-governmental organizations.

Recommendations

- **Recommendation 1 - Joint Recommendation:** Work to maintain a consistent level of communication between partners to build upon the strong working relationships you have with them.
- **Recommendation 2- Joint Recommendation:** Develop and use short-term coordinated planning with local boards and staff to set priorities for annual budgets and workplans based on local and state priorities.
- **Recommendation 3- Joint Recommendation:** Develop individual development plans for new staff and boards.
- **Recommendation 4- Joint Recommendation:** Conduct a strategic planning assessment to review whether your existing mission, goals, and staff capacity are sufficient to meet organizational priorities and the needs for conservation and watershed management.

- **Recommendation 5 – Joint Recommendation:** Utilize water quality information and data to track outcomes for priority concerns.
- **Recommendation 6 – Joint Recommendation:** Develop a public information and education strategy to track measures and to determine their effectiveness in meeting plan objectives.
- **Recommendation 7 – McLeod County ES:** Look for ways to incorporate comprehensive watershed management plan priorities into land use planning efforts, ordinances, and decisions.

The following recommendations are specific to the WCA review.

WCA Performance Standard Recommendations:

- Update the County Resolution 17-CB-08 to align with current practices.
- Execute new delegation and acceptance resolutions between each city and the SWCD.
- Recommend including a file tracking sheet for all projects.
- Recommend including a copy of the email when an application is submitted electronically in the project file.
- Recommend adding detail to the NOD documents within the TEP findings and LGU findings section(s) when TEP discussion/feedback has occurred, even if official TEP findings are not drafted.
- Recommend Ryan attend MWPCP training followed by obtaining certification if feasible.
- Recommend increasing documentation of the nature and extent of the violation, even if voluntary is used.
- Recommend adding the details of any conversations/emails with DNR Enforcement staff to demonstrate coordination has occurred.

Action Items

- **Action Item – McLeod ES:** All eLINK grant reports must be submitted on time as required by grant agreements.
- **Action item - McLeod SWCD:** Website must include Clean Water Land and Legacy Logo with link to Clean Water Land and Legacy Website (<https://www.legacy.mn.gov>)

Meeker County and Meeker Soil and Water Conservation District



Key Findings and Conclusions

Meeker County SWCD and PZ are commended for their work in implementing core programs, the Wetlands Conservation Act, and for participating in planning and implementation activities in four comprehensive watershed management plans. These include North Fork Crow River, South Fork Crow River, Mississippi River St Cloud, and Sauk River comprehensive watershed management plans. The board and staff of both local governments are viewed favorably by their partners which aids in the planning and implementation of activities identified within their One Watershed, One Plans.

Developing strong working relationships/communication with partners will help in weathering challenges and further assist in addressing local water

management issues and improving conservation delivery in Meeker County.

Meeker County PZ is commended for meeting three of four applicable basic performance standards, including completion of buffer strip reports on time, posting BWSR grant reports on county website, and as well as having current local water management plans.

Meeker County SWCD is commended for meeting 16 of 17 basic standards, including reviewing of personnel policy within the last five years, completion of eLINK reporting on time, and targeting state grant funds in high priority areas. Both the SWCD and ES are commended for meeting several high-performance standards, a testament to the quality of work they are recognized for by their partners.

Commendations

Meeker SWCD and Meeker County are commended for:

- Active partner/participant in at least one 1W1P planning or implementation process.
- Prioritized, targeted, and measurable criteria used for goals, objectives and actions in LWMP.
- Water management ordinances on county website.
- Coordination with state watershed-based initiatives.
- Communication piece sent within the last 12 months.
- Coordination with County Board by supervisors or staff.
- Partnerships: cooperative projects/tasks with neighboring districts, counties, watershed districts, non-governmental organizations.

Recommendations

- **Recommendation 1-Joint Recommendation:** Work to maintain a consistent level of communication between partners to build upon the working relationships you have with them.
- **Recommendation 2- Joint Recommendation:** Develop and use short-term coordinated planning with local boards and staff to set priorities for annual budgets and workplans based on local and state priorities.
- **Recommendation 3- Joint Recommendation:** Develop individual development plans for new staff and boards.
- **Recommendation 4 – Joint Recommendation:** Utilize water quality information and data to track outcomes for priority concerns.
- **Recommendation 5 – Joint Recommendation:** Develop a public information and education strategy to track measures and to determine their effectiveness in meeting plan objectives.
- **Recommendation 6 – Joint Recommendation:** Look for ways to seek broad-based public input to help with priority setting and implementation related planning efforts.
- **Recommendation 7 – Joint Recommendation:** Increase Transparency on progress toward plan goals.

- **Recommendation 8 – Meeker County PZ:** Look for ways to incorporate comprehensive watershed management plan priorities into land use planning efforts, ordinances, and decisions.

The following recommendations are specific to the WCA review.

- Consider modifications to the staff decision making authority resolution to all other staff to make WCA decision if necessary.
- Update the City of Cedar Mills resolution accepting WCA and the delegation agreement with the SWCD.
- Recommend including the date an application is determined complete or incomplete within the tracking log of each file.
- Recommend adding detail to the NOD documents within the TEP findings and LGU findings section(s) when TEP discussion/feedback has occurred, even if official TEP findings were not drafted.
- Recommend that all staff involved in WCA implementation attend additional MWPCP training followed by obtaining certification.
- Recommend increasing documentation of the nature and extend of the violation through TEP findings of fact or the LGU determination form even if a voluntary approach is used.
- Recommend adding the details of any conversations/emails with DNR enforcement staff to demonstrate the coordination occurring.

Action Items

- **Required Action (Meeker SWCD):** Website must include Clean Water Land and Legacy Logo with link to Clean Water Land and Legacy Website (<https://www.legacy.mn.gov>)
- **Required Action (Meeker County PZ):** BWSR grant reports must be posted on county website.

There is one required action related to the WCA review.

- Clarify that appeals of WCA decisions be directed to BWSR.

Red Lake Watershed District



Key Findings and Conclusions

The Red Lake Watershed District is commended for participating in the Red Lake River, Thief River, Clearwater River, and Upper/Lower Red Lakes One Watershed, One Plan watershed planning efforts and is doing an excellent job partnering with others to implement plan goals. The organization is getting important work done within the watershed district and needs to look for more ways to share their success stories.

The Red Lake Watershed District is commended for meeting 14 of 14 basic performance standards including completing and submitting financial audits on time, submitting engineer reports for DNR/BWSR review, and having manager appointments current/reported. They are also commended for

meeting 11 of 15 high-performance standards.

The Watershed District needs to continue to build upon the strong working relationships that are in-place and look for opportunities to develop new partnerships.

The Red Lake Watershed District shows excellent compliance with BWSR's basic and high-performance standards.

The partners who responded to the PRAP survey provided strong to acceptable ratings in their judgement of the performance of the Watershed District.

The WD is commended for meeting several high-performance standards, a testament to the quality of work they are recognized for by their partners.

Commendations

Red Lake Watershed District is commended for:

- Participating in four 1W1P planning and implementation efforts.
- Retaining an administrator on staff.
- Participate and coordinate in the watershed-based initiatives.
- Meeting high performance standards outlined on the BWSR checklist.
- Coordinating with County, SWCD, City/Township partners.

Recommendations

- **Recommendation 1:** Develop orientation and continued education plan for both board managers and staff and keep records of trainings attended.
- **Recommendation 2:** Conduct a strategic planning assessment to review the districts mission statement, district priorities, and staff capacity to address those priorities.
- **Recommendation 3:** Develop and use a short-term strategic plan to set priorities for annual budgets and work plans based on local and state priorities.
- **Recommendation 4:** Develop a public information and education strategy and track measures and to determine their effectiveness in meeting plan objectives.
- **Recommendation 5:** Conduct a survey of watershed residents to determine whether Watershed District is meeting public needs.
- **Recommendation 6:** Structure website information to report and share success stories.

Action Items: There are no actions items.

Pope County and Pope Soil and Water Conservation District



Key Findings and Conclusions

Pope County SWCD and Land and Resource Management Department (LRMD) are commended for their work in implementing core programs, the Wetlands Conservation Act, and for participating in planning and implementation activities in three comprehensive watershed management plans. These include Sauk River, North Fork Crow River, and Chippewa River. The board and staff of both local governments are viewed favorably by their partners which aids in the planning and implementation of activities identified within their One Watershed, One Plans.

Developing strong working relationships/communication with partners will help in weathering challenges, and further assist in addressing local water

management issues and improving conservation delivery in Pope County.

Pope County LRMD is commended for meeting nine of nine applicable basic performance standards, including completion of eLINK reporting and buffer strip reporting on time, as well as having current local water management plans.

Pope County SWCD is commended for meeting 12 of 12 basic standards, including reviewing of personnel policy within the last five years, completion of eLINK reporting on time, and targeting state grant funds in high priority areas.

Both the SWCD and LRWD are commended for meeting several high-performance standards, a testament to the quality of work they are recognized for by their partners.

Commendations

Pope SWCD and Pope County are commended for:

- Active partner/participant in at least one 1W1P planning or implementation process.
- Prioritized, targeted, and measurable criteria used for goals, objectives and actions in LWMP.
- Received competitive Clean Water Fund Grants within the past 2 years.
- Water management ordinances on county website.
- Coordination with state watershed-based initiatives.
- Communication piece sent within the last 12 months.
- Coordination with County Board by supervisors or staff.
- Job Approval Authority: reviewed and reported annually.
- Partnerships: cooperative projects/tasks with neighboring districts, counties, watershed districts, non-governmental organizations.

Recommendations

- **Recommendation 1-Joint Recommendation:** Work to maintain a consistent level of communications between partners to build upon the strong working relationships you have with them.
- **Recommendation 2- Joint Recommendation:** Develop and use short-term coordinated planning with local boards and staff to set priorities for annual budgets and workplans based on local and state priorities.
- **Recommendation 3- Joint Recommendation:** Develop individual development plans for new staff and boards.
- **Recommendation 4 – Pope County LRMD:** Conduct a strategic planning assessment to review whether your existing mission, goals, and staff capacity are sufficient to meet organizational priorities and the needs for conservation and watershed management.
- **Recommendation 5 - Pope County LRMD:** Look for ways to seek broad-based public input to help with priority setting and implementation related to planning efforts.

- **Recommendation 6 – Pope County LRMD:** Develop a public information and education strategy to track measures and to determine their effectiveness in meeting plan objectives.
- **Recommendation 7 – Pope County LRMD:** Look for ways to incorporate plan priorities into land use planning efforts, ordinances, and decisions.
- **Recommendation 8 – Pope County SWCD:** Continue to develop the strategic planning assessment to review whether your existing mission, goals, and staff capacity are sufficient to meet organizational priorities and the needs for conservation and watershed management.

The following recommendations are specific to the WCA review.

WCA Performance Standard Recommendations (Pope County LRMD):

- BWSR recommends lead staff person attend MWPCP trainings to the extent possible.
- Consider adding additional detail to the NOD LGU Findings such as TEP discussion.
- Consider tracking important 15.99 events such as why an application was incomplete, when an application was deemed complete, and when the NOA/NOD was sent.

WCA Performance Standard Recommendations (Joint Recommendation):

- Recommend SWCD and/or LGU coordinate/communicate with DNR enforcement to discuss extensions when appropriate and process extensions prior to deadlines if feasible.

Action Items: There are no actions items.

Stearns County and Stearns Soil and Water Conservation District



Key Findings and Conclusions

Stearns County SWCD and Stearns County Environmental Services (ES) are commended for their work in implementing core programs, the Wetlands Conservation Act, and for participating in planning and implementation activities in four One Watershed, One Plans. These include Sauk River, North Fork Crow River, Mississippi River St Cloud and soon to come, Mississippi River Sartell. The board and staff of both local governments are viewed favorably by their partners which aids in the planning and implementation of activities identified within their One Watershed, One Plans.

Developing strong working relationships/communication with partners will help in weathering challenges, and further assist in addressing local water management issues and improving conservation delivery in Stearns County.

Stearns County ES is commended for meeting nine of nine applicable basic performance standards, including completion of eLINK reporting and buffer strip reporting on time, as well as having current local water management plans.

Stearns County SWCD is commended for meeting 12 of 12 basic standards, including reviewing of personnel policy within the last five years, completion of eLINK reporting on time, and targeting state grant funds in high priority areas.

Both the SWCD and ES are commended for meeting several high-performance standards, a testament to the quality of work they are recognized for by their partners.

Commendations

Stearns SWCD and Stearns County are commended for:

- Active partner/participant in at least one 1W1P planning or implementation process.
- Prioritized, targeted, and measurable criteria used for goals, objectives and actions in LWMP.
- Received competitive Clean Water Fund Grants within the past two years.
- Water quality data and trend information collected for planning and to measure progress towards plan goals.
- Water management ordinances on county website.
- Coordination with state watershed-based initiatives.
- Communication piece sent within the last 12 months.
- Annual report to water plan advisory committees on plan progress.
- Communication piece sent within the last 12 months.
- Coordination with County Board by supervisors or staff.
- Job Approval Authority: reviewed and reported annually.
- Partnerships: cooperative projects/tasks with neighboring districts, counties, watershed districts, non-governmental organizations.

Recommendations

- **Recommendation 1-Joint Recommendation:** Work to maintain a consistent level of communications between partners to build upon the strong working relationships you have with them.
- **Recommendation 2- Joint Recommendation:** Conduct a strategic planning assessment of the Stearns County Environmental Services and Stearns County Soil and Water Conservation District to determine whether their existing mission, goals, and staff capacity is sufficient to meet organizational priorities and the needs for conservation and watershed management.

- **Recommendation 3- Joint Recommendation:** Develop and use short-term strategic planning efforts with local boards and staff to set priorities for annual budgets and workplans based on local and state priorities.
- **Recommendation 4 – Joint Recommendation:** Consider expanding education and outreach efforts to connect with a broader cross-section of the public.
- **Recommendation 5 - Stearns County ES:** Develop a public information and education strategy to track measures and determine their effectiveness in meeting plan objectives.
- **Recommendation 6 -Stearns County ES:** Look for ways to incorporate comprehensive watershed management plan priorities into land use planning efforts, ordinances, and decisions.
- **Recommendation 7 – Stearns County SWCD:** Develop a continued education plan for board and keep records of trainings attended.

The following recommendations are specific to the WCA review. See Appendix D for complete details.

WCA Performance Standard Recommendations (Stearns County):

- Consider fully certifying all staff involved with WCA.
- Consider attending trainings when available.
- Consider adding additional detail to the NOD LGU findings.
- If TEP provides a recommendation, confirm the TEP recommendation box is checked.
- Consider adding basic conditions of approval to NODs when applicable.

WCA Performance Standard Recommendations (Stearns SWCD):

- Consider fully certifying all staff involved in WCA.
- Recommend SWCD and/or LGU coordinate/communicate with DNR enforcement to discuss extensions when appropriate and work toward extensions prior to deadlines if feasible.

Action Items: There are no actions items.

Appendix H

Performance Standards Checklists used in Organizational Assessments

Organizational Assessment- PRAP

Performance Standards

2024

COUNTY LOCAL WATER MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

LGU Name: _____

Performance Area	Performance Standard		Level of Review		Rating	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Basic practice or statutory requirement ★ High Performance standard (see instructions for explanation of standards) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I Annual Compliance II BWSR Staff Review & Assessment (1/10 yrs.) 	Yes, No, or Value			
			YES	NO		
Administration	■ eLINK Grant Report(s): submitted on time	I				
	■ County has resolution assuming WCA responsibilities and delegation resolutions (if needed).	II				
	■ County has knowledgeable and trained staff to manage WCA program or secured a qualified delegate.	II				
	■ WCA Annual Reporting requirements met (if WCA LGU)	II				
	■ Drainage authority buffer strip report submitted on time	I				
	★ Public drainage records: meet modernization guidelines	II				
Planning	■ Local water mgmt. plan: current	I				
	★ Metro counties: groundwater plan up-to-date	I				
	★ Prioritized, Targeted & Measurable criteria are used for Goals, Objectives and Actions in local water management plan	II				
	★ Water quality trend data used for short- and long-range plan priorities	II				
Execution	■ WCA decisions and determinations are made in conformance with WCA requirements.	II				
	■ WCA TEP reviews and recommendations are appropriately coordinated.	II				
	★ Certified wetland delineator on staff or retainer	II				
	★ WCA Communication and Coordination	II				
	★ Water quality data collected to track outcomes for each priority concern	II				
	★ Water quality trends tracked for priority water bodies and/or groundwater	II				
Communication & Coordination	■ BWSR grant report(s) posted on county website	I				
	★ Communication piece sent within last 12 months: indicate target audience below	II				
	Communication Target Audience:					
	★ Obtain stakeholder input: within last 12 months	II				
	★ Partnerships: liaison with SWCDs/WDs and cooperative projects/tasks done (in addition to 1W1P)	II				
	★ Annual report to water plan advisory committee on plan progress	II				
	★ Track progress for I & E objectives in Plan	II				
	★ Coordination with state watershed-based initiatives	II				
	★ County local water plan on county website	II				
	★ Water management ordinances on county website	II				

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

LGU Name:

Performance Area	Performance Standard	Level of Review	Rating	
			Yes, No, or Value	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Basic Practice or Statutory requirement ★ High Performance standard (See instructions for explanation of standards)	I Annual Compliance II BWSR Staff Review & Assessment (1/10 yrs.)	YES	NO
Administration	■ Financial statement: annual, on-time and complete	I		
	■ Financial audit: completed as required by statute (see guidance) or as per BWSR correspondence	I		
	■ eLINK Grant Report(s) submitted on-time	I		
	■ Data practices policy: exists and reviewed/updated within last 5 years	II		
	■ Personnel policy: exists and reviewed/updated within last 5 years	II		
	■ Technical professional appointed and serving on WCA TEP	II		
	■ SWCD has an adopting resolution assuming WCA responsibilities and appropriate decision delegation resolutions as warranted (If WCA LGU)	II		
	■ SWCD has knowledgeable and trained staff to manage WCA program (if WCA LGU)	II		
	■ WCA Annual Reporting requirements met (if WCA LGU)	II		
	★ Job approval authorities: reviewed and reported annually	II		
	★ Operational guidelines and policies exist and are current	II		
	★ Board training: orientation and continuing education plan and record for each board member	II		
★ Staff training: orientation and cont. ed. plan/record for each staff	II			
Planning	■ Comprehensive Plan: updated within 5 years or current resolution adopting unexpired county Local Water Management Plan (LWMP)	I		
	★ Prioritized, Targeted and Measurable criteria used for Goals and Objectives in the LWMP as appropriate	II		
	★ Annual Plan of Work: based on comp plan, strategic plan priorities	II		
	★ SWCD is currently actively involved in at least one 1W1P	II		
	★ SWCD has received a competitive CWF grant in past 2 years	II		
Execution	★ Strategic Plan or Self-Assessment completed within last 5 years	II		
	■ Are state grant funds spent in high priority problem areas	II		
	■ Total expenditures per year (over past 10 years)	II		see below
	■ Months of operating funds in reserve	II		
	■ Replacement and restoration orders are prepared in conformance with WCA rules and requirements	II		
	■ WCA TEP member knowledgeable/trained in WCA technical aspects	II		
	■ WCA TEP member contributes to reviews, findings & recommendations	II		
	■ WCA decisions and determinations are made in conformance with all WCA requirements (if LGU)	II		
	■ WCA TEP reviews/recommendations appropriately coordinated (if LGU)	II		
	★ Certified wetland delineator: on staff or retainer	II		
	★ Effective WCA Coordination and Communication with other agencies and the public	II		
	★ Water quality data collected to track outcomes for each pr. concern	II		
★ Water quality trends tracked for priority water bodies	II			
Communication & Coordination	■ Website contains all required content elements	I		
	★ Website contains additional content beyond minimum required	II		
	★ Coordination with state watershed-based initiatives	II		
	★ Communication piece sent within last 12 months, indicate target	II		
	Communication Target Audience			
	★ Outcome trends monitored and reported for key resources	II		
	★ Track progress on Information and Education objectives in Plan	II		
	★ Obtain stakeholder input: within last 12 months	II		
	★ Annual report communicates progress on water plan goals	II		
	★ Partnerships: cooperative projects/tasks with neighboring districts, counties, watershed districts, NGOs, or private businesses	II		
★ Coordination with County Board by supervisors or staff	II			
Year Expenditure				

METRO WATERSHED DISTRICT and WMO PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

LGU Name: _____

Performance Area	Performance Standard		Level of Review	Rating	
	★	High Performance standard	I Annual Compliance	Yes, No, or Value	
	■	Basic practice or statutory requirement (see instructions for explanation of standards)	II BWSR Staff Review & Assessment (1/10 yrs.)	YES	NO
Administration	■	Activity report: annual, on-time	I		
	■	Financial report & audit completed on time	I		
	■	Drainage authority buffer strip report submitted on time	I		
	■	eLINK Grant Report(s): submitted on time	I		
	■	Rules: date of last revision or review	II		mo./yr.
	■	<u>Personnel policy</u> : exists and reviewed/updated within last 5 years	II		
	■	Data practices <u>policy</u> : exists and reviewed/updated within last 5 years	II		
	■	Manager appointments: current and reported	II		
	■	Consultant RFP: within 2 yrs. for professional services	II		
	■	WD/WMO has resolution assuming WCA responsibilities and appropriate delegation resolutions as warranted (N/A if not LGU)	II		
	■	WD/WMO has knowledgeable & trained staff that manages WCA program or has secured qualified delegate. (N/A if not LGU)	II		
	★	Administrator on staff	II		
	★	Board training: orientation and continuing education plan, record for each board member	II		
	★	Staff training: orientation and continuing education plan and record for each staff	II		
	★	Operational guidelines for fiscal procedures and conflicts of interest exist and current	II		
★	Public drainage records: meet modernization guidelines	II			
Planning	■	Watershed management plan: <u>up-to-date</u>	I		
	■	City/twp. local water plans not yet approved	II		
	■	Capital Improvement Program: reviewed every 2 years	II		
	■	Maintains an active advisory committee during plan development	I		
	★	Strategic plan or self-assessment completed in last 5 years	II		
	★	Strategic plan identifies short-term priorities	II		
Execution	■	Engineer Reports: submitted for DNR & BWSR review	II		
	■	WCA decisions and determinations are made in conformance with all WCA requirements. (if delegated WCA LGU)	II		
	■	WCA TEP reviews & recommendations appropriately coordinated. (if delegated WCA LGU)	II		
	★	Certified wetland delineator on staff or retainer	II		
	■	Total expenditures per year (past 10 yrs.)	II		see below
	★	Water quality trends tracked for key water bodies	II		
Communication & Coordination	★	Watershed hydrologic trends monitored / reported	II		
	■	Website: contains information as required by MR 8410.0150 Subpart 3a, i.e. as board meeting, contact information, water plan, etc.	II		
	★	Maintains a functioning advisory committee that meets a minimum of once per year	II		
	■	Communication piece: sent within last 12 months	II		
		Communication Target Audience:			
	★	Track progress for Information and Education objectives in Plan	II		
	★	Coordination with County Board, SWCD Board, City/Township officials	II		
★	Partnerships: cooperative projects/tasks with neighboring organizations, such as counties, SWCDs, WDs, tribal governments, Non-Government Organizations	II			
Year					
Expenditures					

GREATER MN WATERSHED DISTRICT PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

LGU Name: _____

Performance Area	Performance Standard	Level of Review	Rating	
			Yes, No, or Value	
			YES	NO
Administration	★ High Performance standard	I Annual Compliance		
	■ Basic practice or Statutory requirement <i>(see instructions for explanation of standards)</i>	II BWSR Staff Review & Assessment (1/10 yrs.)		
	■ Annual report: submitted on time	I		
	■ Financial audit: completed on time	I		
	■ Drainage authority buffer strip report submitted on time	I		
	■ eLINK Grant Report(s): submitted on time	I		
	■ Rules: date of last revision or review – Please enter month/year (i.e., 01/20)	II		
	■ Personnel policy: exists and reviewed/updated within last 5 years	II		
	■ Data practices policy: exists and reviewed/updated within last 5 years	II		
	■ Manager appointments: current and reported	II		
	■ WD has resolution assuming WCA responsibilities & appropriate delegation resolutions as warranted. (N/A if not LGU)	II		
	■ WD has knowledgeable & trained staff that manages WCA program or has secured a qualified delegate. (N/A if not WCA LGU)	II		
	★ Administrator on staff	II		
	★ Board training: orientation and continuing education plan and record for board members	II		
	★ Staff training: orientation and continuing education plan/record for each staff	II		
★ Operational guidelines exist and current	II			
★ Public drainage records: meet modernization guidelines	II			
Planning	■ Watershed management plan: up-to-date	I		
	★ Prioritized, Targeted, Measurable criteria used in WD Plan	II		
	★ Strategic plan identifies short-term activities & budgets based on state and local watershed priorities	II		
	★ Member of County Water Plan Advisory Committee(s)	II		
Execution	■ Engineer Reports: submitted for DNR & BWSR review	II		
	■ WCA decisions and determinations made in conformance with all WCA requirements. (N/A if not LGU)	II		
	■ WCA TEP reviews/recommendations coordinated (N/A if not LGU)	II		
	★ Certified wetland delineator on staff or retainer	II		
	■ Total expenditures per year for past 10 years	II		attach
	★ Water quality trends tracked for key water bodies	II		
	★ Watershed hydrologic trends monitored / reported	II		
Communication & Coordination	■ Functioning advisory committee: recommendations on projects, reports, maintains 2-way communication with Board	II		
	■ Communication piece sent within last 12 months	II		
	■ Website: contains annual report, financial statement, board members, contact info, grant report(s), watershed management plan, meeting notices, agendas & minutes, updated after each board meeting	II		
	★ Obtain stakeholder input: within last 12 months	II		
	★ Coordination with watershed based initiatives	II		
	★ Track progress for I & E objectives in Plan	II		
	★ Coordination with County Board, SWCD Board, City/Township officials	II		
	★ Partnerships: cooperative projects/tasks with neighboring districts, counties, soil and water districts, non-governmental organizations	II		
Year Expenditures				

Watershed-Based Performance Standards

Watershed Partnership Name: _____

Performance Area	Performance Standard	Level of Review	Rating		
			Yes, No, Unsure or N/A		
			YES	NO	Unsure or N/A
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ High Performance standard ■ Best Standard/practice ● Basic Requirement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I Annual Compliance II BWSR Staff Review & Assessment 			
General Administration	● Each participating member has adopted the comprehensive watershed management plan	I			
	● Coordinator or lead staff person(s) identified for the partnership	II			
	■ Operational guidelines for fiscal procedures exist and are current	II			
	■ Financial Reports provided to Policy Committee on annual basis	II			
	● Grant Grant Report(s): submitted on <u>time</u> (annual or biannual if funds exceed \$500,000)	I			
	● Assurance Measure 1: Prioritized, targeted, and measurable work is making progress toward achieving clean water goals	II			
	● Assurance Measure 2: Programs, projects, and practices are being implemented in priority areas	II			
	● Assurance Measure 3: Grant work is on-schedule and on-budget	II			
	● Assurance Measure 4: Leverage of non-state funds	II			
	★ Project tracking system is used by watershed partnership to track all work that contributes to plan goals	II			
★ Shared service opportunities are leveraged between partners	II				
Policy Committee	● Conflict of Interest policy exists and is reviewed/signed by the JPE or fiscal agent	II			
	● The policy committee or board is involved in project funding discussions or decision making, as defined by an implementation agreement	II			
	● Committee membership is reviewed/updated annually	II			
	■ Training: Orientation on comprehensive watershed management plans is provided to new policy committee members	II			
	★ Training: efforts are made to inform on watershed related topics	II			
	■ Reviewed governing documents (bylaws, formal agreements) within the last 5 years (if applicable)	II			
Advisory Committee	● Technical advisory committee participates in plan development, implementation, and amendments	I			
	■ Advisory committee members meet at least once annually	II			
	■ Water quality, hydrologic, and monitoring trends are used to evaluate progress towards plan/resource goals	II			
	★ Technical advisory committee reviews members	II			
	★ Agency members provide updates on agency initiatives, projects, and other information related to the watershed	II			
	★ Water quality trends tracked for priority water bodies	II			
Steering Committee	● Steering committee meets at least four times a year and reviews plan goals and actions	II			
	● Staff has open (2-way) communication about comprehensive watershed management plan activities with policy committee and local boards/councils	II			
	● Steering committee coordinates a mid-plan review to evaluate progress toward plan goals	I			
	■ Watershed partners solicit stakeholder input within the last year	II			
	■ An annual work plan (outside of WBIF grant) is developed and implemented	II			
	■ Individual partner governing boards/councils are updated on annual workplan activities	II			

	★	Partnership annually reviews progress towards water quality goals identified in the CWMP	II			
Communication & Coordination	●	Partnership website(s): contain board meeting information, partner contact information, committee membership, and annual ELINK reports – also prominently displays the Clean Water, Land, and Legacy Logo and a link to the Legislative Coordinating Commission website	I			
	●	Partnership website(s) host a current copy of the plan and is maintained and updated regularly	I			
	■	Communication pieces sent that highlights work and program opportunities	II			
	■	Public education materials are watershed focused and reinforce high priority issues and actions to address plan goals	II			
	★	Watershed partners have developed new partnerships with partners outside of the planning/implementation partnership	II			

Appendix I

2024 Local Government Performance Awards and Recognition*

(Awarding agency listed in parentheses.)

SWCD Administrator Award (SWCD) Employee

(Board of Water and Soil Resources)

Kay Gross, District Administrator Cottonwood Soil and Water Conservation District

SWCD Field Staff Award (SWCD) Employee

(Natural Resource Conservation Service)

Chester Powell, Program Tech/Water Plan Coordinator

SWCD Outstanding SWCD (Supervisor) Award

(Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts)

Jim Birkholz, Chisago SWCD

Soil and Water Conservation District of the Year

(Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts)

East Otter Tail Soil and Water Conservation District

Outstanding Administrator of the Year

(Minnesota Association of Watershed Administrators)

James Wisker, Minnehaha Creek Watershed District

Outstanding Watershed District Employee

(Board of Water and Soil Resources)

Emily Dick, Prior Lake-Spring Lake Watershed District

Watershed District of the Year Award

(Department of Natural Resources)

Roseau River Watershed District

WD Project of the Year

(Minnesota Watersheds)

Capitol Region Watershed District, Highland Bridge District Stormwater System

County Conservation Awards

(Association of Minnesota Counties and Board of Water and Soil Resources)

Goodhue County, Mighty Mississippi Cleanup Challenge

Kandiyohi County, Monarch Butterfly Habitat