

Application Guidelines

- Proposals should demonstrate significant, measureable project outputs and outcomes targeted to critical pollution source areas that will help achieve water quality objectives for the water resource of concern; consistent with a watershed management plan that has been state approved and locally adopted or an approved total maximum daily load study (TMDL), Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy (WRAPS), surface water intake plan, or well head protection plan.
- As appropriate, outputs should include scientifically credible estimates of pollutant reductions expected as a result of the project, as well as other measures such as acres of wetlands/forest, miles of riparian buffer or stream bank restored, acres treated by stormwater BMPs, or acres of specific agricultural conservation practices implemented including acres treated by the installation of the practice. Unrealistic pollution reduction estimates will not be considered.
- Proposals submitted under the Clean Water Fund must request state funds that equal or exceed \$30,000 for Projects and Practices and Accelerated Implementation Grants. The minimum request is \$5,000 for the Community Partners Grants. Applications submitted that do not meet this minimum dollar amount will not be accepted. Actual awards may be less than this minimum when applications receive partial funding.
- Proposals for projects meeting a waste load allocation and located on publicly owned land and exceeding \$750,000 should consult with the [Minnesota Public Facilities Authority](#) before applying for BWSR Clean Water Funds.
- Projects and practices must be of long-lasting public benefit. LGUs must provide assurances that the landowner or land occupier will keep the project in place for the expected life of the project. Such assurances may include easements, enforceable contracts, and termination or performance penalties.
- BMPs must be designed and maintained for a minimum effective life of 10 years.
- Capital Improvement Projects must be designed and maintained for a minimum effective life of 25 years. Capital Improvement Projects may be part of but are not expected or required to be listed in a Capital Improvement Program.
- Effective life is the length of time that a project or practice provides the anticipated environmental benefits for which it was designed and the length of time that it is intended to remain in place. Periodic routine maintenance activities may be required to preserve treatment capacity for the life of the project or practice. Information defining expected life not provided in the application must be defined in the workplan.

Proposals must have plans for long-term maintenance and inspection monitoring for the duration of the project's effective life. Work plans developed for funded applications will rely on this information for operation, maintenance and inspection requirements.

- For projects that are proposing to infiltrate stormwater, the Minnesota Department of Health provides guidance that should be taken into consideration at:
<http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/water/swp/stormissue.pdf>
<http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/water/swp/stormwater.pdf>.
- Drinking Water Supply Management Area maps (DWSMA), Wellhead Protection Area map (WHPA), Emergency Response Area maps (ERA), Surface Water Protection Areas, and vulnerability information can be found at: <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/water/swp/maps/index.htm>
- Applications will be submitted via eLINK. Eligible applicants without a current eLINK user account must submit a request to establish an eLINK account no later than 7 days prior to the application deadline. As part of the application, eLINK will require applicants to map the location of the proposed project area.

- Proposals may include one image file (.jpg, .tiff, .png) as an application image within eLINK. General attachments will not show up as a part of the application report in eLINK.
- Applications may receive partial funding for the following reasons: 1) an absence of or limited identification of specific project locations, 2) budgeted items that were not discussed in the application or have no connection to the central purpose of the application were included by an applicant; 3) to address budget categories out of balance with the project scope and 4) insufficient funds remaining in a grant category to fully fund a project. Prior to final selection, the Board may engage applicants to resolve questions or to discuss modifications to the project or funding request.
- Proposals from applicants that were previously awarded Clean Water Funds will be considered during the review process for applications submitted in response to this RFP. However, applicants that have expended less than 50% of previous award(s) at the time of this application will need to demonstrate organizational capacity to finalize current projects and complete new projects concurrently.

Applicant Eligibility

- LGUs are eligible to receive grant funds if they are working under a current (as defined in the FY 2016 Clean Water Fund Competitive Grant Policy) water management plan that has been **state approved and locally adopted by October 1, 2015**. Partner organizations such as non-profits, watershed groups, school districts or lake associations must work in conjunction with eligible applicants.
- Any LGU eligible to receive grants may request AgBMP Loan funds; however, successful projects will be awarded the funds under existing AgBMP contracts for their jurisdiction.

Match

All BWSR CWF grants require a minimum non-state match equal to at least 25% of the amount of Clean Water Funds requested and/or received. The match must be cash or in-kind cash value of goods, materials, and services directly attributed to project accomplishments.

Application Deadline and Timeline

No late submissions or incomplete applications will be considered for funding.

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| • July 6, 2015 | Application period begins |
| • August 28, 2015 | Application deadline at 4:30 PM* |
| • December 16, 2015 | BWSR Board authorizes grant awards (proposed) |
| • January 2016 | BWSR grant agreements sent to recipients |
| • February 19, 2016 | Work plan submittal deadline |
| • March 18, 2016 | Grant execution deadline |

*The application must be submitted by 4:30 PM. Late responses will not be considered. The burden of proving timely receipt is upon the grant applicant.

Eligible Activities

The primary purpose of activities funded with grants associated with the Clean Water Fund is to restore, protect, and enhance water quality. Eligible activities must be consistent with a watershed management plan that has been state approved and locally adopted or an approved total maximum daily load study (TMDL), Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy (WRAPS), surface water intake plan, or well head protection plan. Local

governments may include programs and projects in their grant application that are derived from an eligible plan of another local government. BWSR may request documentation outlining the cooperation between the local government submitting the grant application and the local government that has adopted the plan. Eligible activities can consist of structural practices and projects, non-structural practices and measures, project support, and grant management and reporting. Technical and engineering assistance necessary to implement these activities are considered essential and are to be included in the total project or practice cost. See FY 2016 Clean Water Fund Policy for more detail.

Project Period

The project period starts when the grant agreement is executed, meaning all required signatures have been obtained. Work that occurs before this date is not eligible for reimbursement with grant funds and cannot be used as match. All grants must be completed by December 31, 2019.

If a project receives federal funds, the period of the grant agreement may be extended to equal the length of time that the federal funds are available subject to limitation. Applicants using federal funds are encouraged to contact BWSR soon after award of funds to ensure the grant agreement can be developed appropriately. AgBMP Loans from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) are available upon execution of the respective contract amendment and are available to the LGU in perpetuity or until rescinded in accordance with existing contracts.

Payment Schedule

Grant payments will be distributed in three installments to the grantee. The first payment of 50% of the grant amount will be paid after work plan approval and execution of the grant agreement provided the grant applicant is in compliance with all BWSR website and eLINK reporting requirements for previously awarded BWSR grants. The second payment of 40% of the grant amount will be paid once the grantee has provided BWSR with notification and BWSR has reconciled expenditures of the initial payment. The last 10% will be paid after all final reporting requirements are met, the grantee has provided BWSR with a final financial report, and BWSR has reconciled these expenditures.

MDA AgBMP Loan funds will be disbursed to participating lenders on a cost-incurred basis in accordance with existing contracts.

Permitting

If applicable, successful applicants will be required to provide sufficient documentation that the project expects to receive or has received all necessary federal, state and local permits and meets all water quality rules, including those that apply to the utilization of an existing water body as a water quality treatment device. Applicants are encouraged to contact the appropriate regulatory agencies early in the application development process to ensure potential projects can meet all applicable regulatory requirements.

For information regarding MPCA storm water permitting requirements, please go to:

Construction stormwater permit overview

<http://www.pca.state.mn.us/index.php/view-document.html?gid=7386>

Common Plan of Development

<http://www.pca.state.mn.us/index.php/view-document.html?gid=7396>

Untreated Stormwater Runoff to Lakes, Streams, and Wetlands

<http://www.pca.state.mn.us/index.php/view-document.html?gid=11864>

For specific questions related to NPDES permits or the utilization of a water body for water quality treatment, please contact **Ryan Anderson** at the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) at 651-757-2222.

Native Vegetation

Vegetative practices must follow the Native Vegetation Establishment and Enhancement Guidelines found at http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/native_vegetation/seeding_guidelines.pdf

Minnesota Session Law 114, Article 4, Section 12 (b) requires that any prairie planting conducted with state funding include pollinator habitat through the growing season. For information regarding pollinators, see information at:

http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/native_vegetation/Pollinator_Fact_Sheet.pdf

http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/native_vegetation/Incorporating_Pollinator_Habitat.pdf

Incomplete Applications

Applications that do not comply with all application requirements will not be considered for funding, as provided below.

- Components of the application are incomplete or missing including information on pollution reduction estimates where applicable;
- Any required documentation is missing;
- The match amount does not meet grant requirements; and
- The minimum grant dollar amount is not met.

CWF Project Reporting Requirements

- All grant recipients are required to report on the outcomes, activities, and accomplishments of Clean Water Fund grants. Outputs will serve as surrogates for outcomes and will be reported as estimated pollutant reductions and progress toward goal based on the best available information.
- All BWSR funded projects will be required to develop a work plan and budget, including detail relating to the outcome(s) of the proposed project. All activities will be reported via the eLINK reporting system. Grant funds may be used for local grant management and reporting that are directly related to and necessary for implementing this activity. For more information go to <http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/outreach/eLINK/index.html>.
- BWSR Clean Water Funds will be administered via a standard grant agreement. BWSR will use grant agreements as contracts for assurance of deliverables and compliance with appropriate statutes, rules and established policies. Willful or negligent disregard of relevant statutes, rules and policies may lead to imposition of financial penalties on the grant recipient.
- When practicable, grant recipients shall prominently display on their website the legacy logo. Grant recipients must display on their website either a link to their project from the Legislative Coordinating Commission Legacy Site(<http://legacy.leg.mn>) or a clean water project summary that includes a description of the grant activities, including expenditure of grant funds and measurable outcomes (<http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/cleanwaterfund/stories/>).
- When practicable, grant recipients must display a sign with the Legacy Logo at the project site or other public location identifying the project was built with assistance from Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment. When practicable, grant recipients must display the Legacy Logo on printed and other media funded with money from the Clean Water Fund. The logo and specifications can be found at <http://www.legacy.leg.mn/legacy-logo>.

- Completed MDA AgBMP Loan projects must be submitted in accordance with established MDA AgBMP procedures and be included in the LGU's annual report to the MDA.

Habitat Restoration Evaluations

All Clean Water Fund restoration projects with habitat restoration benefits may be subject to an evaluation in accordance with Minn. Stat. 114D.50 Subd. 6. Primary goals of the restoration evaluation program are to evaluate the projects relative to the law, current science, and the stated goals and standards in the restoration plan and to improve future habitat restorations by creating a feedback loop from lessons learned in the field.

Grants and Public Information

Under Minnesota Statute 13.599, responses to an RFP are nonpublic until the application deadline is reached. At that time, the name and address of the grantee, and the amount requested becomes public. All other data is nonpublic until the negotiation of the grant agreement with the selected grantee is completed. After the application evaluation process is completed, all data (except trade secret data) becomes public. Data created during the evaluation process is nonpublic until the negotiation of the grant agreement with the selected grantee(s) is completed.

Prevailing Wage

It is the responsibility of the grant recipient or contractor to pay prevailing wages on construction projects to which state prevailing wage laws apply (Minn. Stat. 177.42 – 177.44). All laborers and mechanics employed by grant recipients and subcontractors funded in whole or in part with state funds included in this RFP shall be paid wages at rates not less than those prevailing on projects of a character similar in the locality. Additional information on prevailing wage requirements is available on the Department of Labor and Industry (DOLI) website:

<http://www.dli.mn.gov/LS/PrevWage.asp> . Questions about the application of prevailing wage rates should be directed to DOLI at 651-284-5091.

Conflict of Interest

State Grant Policy 08-01, (see http://www.admin.state.mn.us/ogm_policies_and_statute.html) Conflict of Interest for State Grant-Making, also applies to BWSR grantees. Grantees' conflicts of interest are generally considered organizational conflicts of interest. Organizational conflicts of interest occur when:

1. A grantee is unable or potentially unable to render impartial assistance or advice due to competing duties or loyalties,
2. A grantee's objectivity in carrying out the grant is or might be otherwise impaired due to competing duties or loyalties, or
3. A grantee or potential grantee has an unfair competitive advantage through being furnished unauthorized proprietary information or source selection information that is not available to all competitors.

Minimum Browser Requirements

The applicant must use Microsoft (MS) Internet Explorer 9 and above or Mozilla Firefox.

Questions

This RFP and the 2016 Clean Water Fund Competitive Grants Policy adopted by the BWSR provide the framework for funding and administration of the 2016 Clean Water Fund Competitive Grant Program (www.bwsr.state.mn.us/grants/apply/index.html).

Questions regarding grant applications should be directed to your area Board Conservationist or Clean Water Specialist; a map of work areas and contact information is available at www.bwsr.state.mn.us/contact/BC_areas.pdf. Questions may also be submitted by email to cwfquestions@state.mn.us. Responses will be posted on the BWSR website weekly.

Questions about the MDA AgBMP Loan Program and requesting funds through this application can be answered by calling Dwight Wilcox (651) 201-6618 or emailing AgBMP.Loans@state.mn.us.

Questions about the MPCA Clean Water Partnership Loan Program can be answered by calling Peter Fastner at 651-757-2349.

BWSR Projects and Practices Grants

This grant makes an investment in on-the-ground projects and practices that will protect or restore water quality in lakes, rivers or streams, or will protect groundwater or drinking water. Examples include stormwater practices, agricultural conservation practices, livestock waste management, lakeshore and stream bank stabilization, stream restoration, and SSTS upgrades.

Specific Requirements – Projects and Practices

- Through the Nonpoint Priority Funding Plan, the following three high-level state priorities have been established for Clean Water Fund nonpoint implementation:
 1. Restore those waters that are closest to meeting state water quality standards
 2. Protect those high-quality unimpaired waters at greatest risk of becoming impaired
 3. Restore and protect water resources for public use and public health, including drinking water.
- Proposals must include a measureable goal that the activities are trying to achieve. For projects proposed to help meet a Total Maximum Daily Load, measurable goals need to be quantified as the needed pollution load reduction.
- SSTS project landowners must meet low income thresholds. Applicants are strongly encouraged to use existing income guidelines from U.S. Rural Development as the basis for their definition of low income.
- Feedlot Practices must follow the MN NRCS practice docket, which is found on the NRCS website: http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/mn/programs/financial/eqip/?cid=nrcs142p2_023513.

Ineligible Use of Grant Funds – Projects and Practices

Projects or practices that address the following will not be considered:

- Land acquisition or easement payments with the exception of community wastewater systems;
- Stormwater conveyances that collect and move runoff but do not provide water quality treatment;
- Municipal or industrial wastewater treatment or drinking water supply facilities;
- Routine maintenance activities within the effective life of an existing practice;
- Projects with a primary purpose of water quality monitoring or assessment;
- Community wastewater treatment systems serving over 10,000 gallons per day with a soil treatment system; and
- A community wastewater treatment system that discharges treated sewage effluent directly to surface water without land treatment.

Ranking Criteria – Projects and Practices

BWSR staff initially review all applications for eligibility. Eligible applications are further screened and forwarded to an interagency work team (BWSR, MPCA, MDA, MDH and DNR) that will review and rank Projects and Practices applications in order to make a funding recommendation to the BWSR.

Table 2: Projects and Practices Ranking Criteria	
Ranking Criteria	Maximum Points Possible
<u>Project Description:</u> The project description succinctly describes what results the applicant is trying to achieve and how they intend to achieve those results.	5
<u>Prioritization:</u> The proposal is based on priority protection or restoration actions listed in or derived from an approved local water management plan.	15
<u>Targeting:</u> The proposed project addresses identified critical pollution sources or risks impacting the water resource identified in the application.	25
<u>Measurable Outcomes:</u> The proposed project has a quantifiable reduction in pollution and directly addresses the water quality concern identified in the application.	35
<u>Project Readiness:</u> The application has a set of specific activities that can be implemented soon after grant award.	10
<u>Cost Effectiveness:</u> The application identifies a cost effective solution to address the non-point pollution concern(s).	5
<u>Biennial Budget Request (BBR):</u> A BBR was submitted by the applicant organization in 2014.	5
Total Points Available	100

BWSR Accelerated Implementation Grants

Before on-the-ground clean water projects get implemented, there is the need for pre-project identification, planning and design. This grant invests in building capacity for local governments to accelerate on-the-ground projects that improve or protect water quality and perform above and beyond existing state standards for protecting and restoring water quality. Whether it is conducting inventories of potential pollutant sites, utilizing existing analytical targeting tools, providing technical assistance or increasing citizen interaction, local governments will be better prepared to increase the installation of water quality projects and practices after receiving these grants.

General Requirements – Accelerated Implementation

- Projects and activities for accelerating implementation of projects and practices that supplement or exceeds current state standards for protection, enhancement, and restoration of Minnesota's surface and ground water resources, including compliance and citizen and community outreach.
- Applications must include a strategy to measure the impact of this funding that includes identifying performance measures in a work plan and milestones for implementation.
- Resulting outputs need to be incorporated into the next water management or comprehensive plan amendment/revision or otherwise be incorporated into routine activities resulting in increased water quality protection or accelerated water quality restoration.
- Geographic Information System (GIS) data created with these funds must be made available upon request.

Ineligible Activities – Accelerated Implementation

Projects or practices that address the following will not be considered:

- Updating local water plans,
- Clean Water Partnership Phase 1 diagnostic studies or equivalent,
- Land acquisition or easement payments, and
- Development of prioritization and targeting tools, and
- Mapping of waters identified in MN Statute 103F.48 (public waters, public drainage systems, and local water resources)

Ranking Criteria – Accelerated Implementation

Table 3: Accelerated Implementation Ranking Criteria

Ranking Criteria	Maximum Points Possible
Clarity of project's goals, standards addressed and projected impact on land and water management and enhanced effectiveness of future implementation projects.	40
Relationship to Plan: The proposal is based on priority protection or restoration actions listed in or derived from an approved local water management plan.	25
Means and measures for assessing the program's impact and capacity to measure project outcomes.	20
Timeline for implementation.	15
Total Points Available	100

BWSR Community Partners Grants

Everyone is responsible for making sure Minnesota's waters are clean. These funds leverage the interest of non-governmental partners such as faith organizations, lake and river associations, boy/girl scout troops, and other civic groups, to install on-the ground projects that reduce runoff and keep water on the land. Examples include but are not limited to: rain gardens and shoreline restorations.

General Requirements – Community Partner Sponsors

- Community partner sponsors include non-profits, citizen groups, businesses, student groups, faith organizations, and neighborhood, lake, river, or homeowner associations.
- Proposals shall indicate the types of structural and vegetative practices proposed for community partner sponsors or the process for soliciting projects that reduce stormwater runoff and retain water on the land. An estimate of outputs (# of projects anticipated) must be included in the grant application.
- The maximum dollar amount an LGU can apply for is \$150,000. The maximum amount per community partner sponsor is \$25,000.

Ineligible Activities – Community Partners

Projects or practices that address the following will not be considered:

- Aquatic invasive species control (curly leaf pondweed, carp control),
- In-lake treatments (alum, iron filings, ferric chloride, barley straw, etc.),
- Educational events such as garbage clean-ups, etc., and
- Project enhancements – i.e., park benches, aesthetic shrubbery/plantings.

Ranking Criteria - Community Partners

Table 4: Community Partners Ranking Criteria	
Ranking Criteria	Maximum Points Possible
Clarity of project goals, projected impact, and involvement with community partners.	40
Relationship to Plan: The proposal is based on priority protection or restoration actions listed in or derived from an approved local water management plan.	30
Plan for assessing the program's impact and capacity to measure project outcomes.	20
LGU capacity to implement the local grant program processes and protocols.	10
Total Points Available	100