



**Minnesota Watersheds
2025 Annual Conference
December 3 - 5
Grand View Lodge, Nisswa, Minnesota**

Member Meeting Materials

Enclosed are the following items:

1. Notice of Annual Meeting
2. Delegate Appointment Form
3. 2025 Delegate/Alternate Checklist
4. Annual Business Meeting Agenda
5. 2024 Annual Business Meeting Minutes
6. Proposed Fiscal Year 25 Financial Report and Proposed Fiscal Year 26 Budget
7. Proposed Strategic Plan Revisions
8. Proposed Legislative Platform Updates
9. Proposed Bylaws Changes
10. Proposed Resolutions

Please note that the Delegate Appointment Forms are **REQUIRED**. Delegates appointed for the special meeting of the membership or the Annual Meeting on Resolutions and Petitions and the Annual Business Meeting are considered appointed. *Email confirmation of those appointed delegates is required. A new delegate form is required if there new delegates.*

Please submit your Delegate Appointment Forms or email confirmation to Jan Voit at jvoit@mnwatersheds.com at your earliest convenience.

This packet has been distributed to administrators and managers via email. No paper copies of this packet will be sent via the U.S. Postal Service.

We are looking forward to seeing you at this year's conference!

PLEASE BRING THIS INFORMATION PACKET WITH YOU TO THE CONFERENCE.

EXTRA COPIES WILL NOT BE AVAILABLE ON SITE. THANK YOU!!

Minnesota Watersheds | 1005 Mainstreet | Hopkins, MN 55343 | 507-822-0921

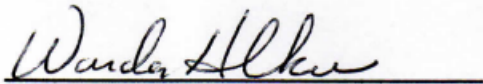
www.mnwatersheds.com

Minnesota Watersheds 2025 Annual Business Meeting Notice

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the 2025 Annual Business Meeting of Minnesota Watersheds will be held at the Grand View Lodge, Nisswa, Minnesota beginning at 8:00 a.m. on Friday, December 5, 2025 for the following purposes:

1. To receive and accept the reports of the President, Secretary, and Treasurer regarding the business of the association of the past year;
2. To receive the report of the auditor;
3. To consider and act upon the Fiscal Year 26 budget;
4. To consider and act upon proposed Strategic Plan revisions;
5. To consider and act upon proposed Bylaws changes;
6. To consider and act upon proposed Legislative Platform updates;
7. To consider and act upon proposed Resolutions;
8. To elect three directors, one from each region, for terms ending in 2028; and
9. To consider and act upon any other business that may properly come before the membership.

Sincerely,



Wanda Holker
Secretary

Minnesota Watersheds 2025 Delegate Appointment Form

The _____ hereby certifies that it is

name of watershed organization

a watershed district or watershed management organization duly established and in good standing pursuant to Minnesota Statutes 103B or 103D and is a member of Minnesota Watersheds for the year 2025.

The _____ hereby further certifies

name of watershed organization

the following individuals have been appointed as delegates, or as an alternate delegate, all of whom are managers in good standing with their respective watershed district or watershed management organization.

Delegate #1: _____

Delegate #2: _____

Alternate: _____

Authorized by: _____

Signature

Date

Title

** Please return this form to ivoit@mnwatersheds.com at your earliest convenience. **

REGION 1	Delegate 1	Delegate 2	Alternate
Bois de Sioux Watershed District	Linda Vavra	Allen Wold	
Buffalo-Red River Watershed District	Peter Fjestad	Cathy Affield	Bill Davis
Cormorant Lakes Watershed District	None		
Joe River Watershed District	None		
Middle-Snake-Tamarac Rivers	Bill Petersen	Lein Schiller	Keith Szczepanski
Pelican River Watershed District	Laurie Olson	Rick Michaelson	Orrin Okeson
Red Lake Watershed District	LeRoy Ose	Gene Tiedemann	Allan Page
Roseau River Watershed District	Jim Johnson	LaVerne Voll	
Sand Hill River Watershed District	Don Andringa		
Two Rivers Watershed District	Jerry Olsonawski	Daryl Klegstad	
Warroad River Watershed District	None		
Wild Rice Watershed District	Duane Erickson	Mike Christensen	Curt Johannsen
REGION 2	Delegate 1	Delegate 2	Alternate
Buffalo Creek Watershed District	None		
Cedar River Watershed District	None		
Clearwater River Watershed District	None		
Crooked Creek Watershed District	None		
High Island Creek Watershed District	None		
Kanaranzi-Little Rock Watershed District	None		
Lac Qui Parle-Yellow Bank Watershed District	Andrew Weber		
Middle Fork Crow River Watershed District	Ruth Schaefer	Jeff Gertgen	
North Fork Crow River Watershed District	Bob Brauchler	Jim Barchenger	Jim Weller
Okabena Ocheda Watershed District	Casey Ingenthron	Tom Ahlberg	
Shell Rock River Watershed District	Mike Lee	Brad Kramer	
Turtle Creek Watershed District	None		
Upper Minnesota River Watershed District	Wanda Holker	Jon Bork	Travis Sandberg
Yellow Medicine River Watershed District	Tim Buysse	Randy Kamrath	Bill Briggs
REGION 3	Delegate 1	Delegate 2	Alternate
Bassett Creek WMC	Shaun Kennedy	Joan Hauer	Paula Pentel
Brown's Creek Watershed District	Celia Wirth	Kayton Eckles	Chuck LeRoux
Capitol Region Watershed District	Hawona Sullivan Janzen	Shawn Mazanec	Joe Collins
Carnelian Marine St. Croix Watershed District	Paul Richert	Nick Bancks	Pat Gleason
Comfort Lake - Forest Lake Watershed District	Jackie Anderson	Steve Schmaltz	
Coon Creek Watershed District	Jim Hafner	Jason Lund	Dwight McCullough
Minnehaha Creek Watershed District	Bill Olson	Steve Sando	Sherry White
Mississippi WMO	None		
Nine Mile Creek Watershed District	Chris-Ann Lauria	Brian Kirk	
Prior Lake Spring Lake Watershed District	Beverly Burnett	Bruce Loney	Frank Boyles
Ramsey Washington Metro Watershed District	Val Eisele	Benjamin Karp	Mark Gernes
Rice Creek Watershed District	Mike Bradley	Marcie Weinandt	
Riley Purgatory Bluff Creek Watershed District	Jill Crafton	Tom Duevel	Bonnie Nelson
South Washington Watershed District	Mike Madigan	Emily Stephens	
Vadnais Lake Area WMO	None		
Valley Branch Watershed District	Don Pereira	Ed Marchan	John Brach



Minnesota Watersheds
2025 Annual Conference
Grand View Lodge, Nisswa, MN

Annual Business Meeting
AGENDA
Friday, December 5, 2025 | 8 a.m.

GENERAL BUSINESS

- 8:00 a.m. Call to Order and Confirm Quorum
- 8:01 a.m. Approval of Agenda (Action)
- 8:02 a.m. Approval of 2024 Annual Business Meeting Minutes (Action) – Brad Kramer
- 8:05 a.m. Treasurer’s Reports – Brad Kramer
 - 2025 Year End Financial Report (Action)
 - 2025 Review of Financial Procedure Report (Action)
 - FY 25-26 Proposed Budget (Action)

REPORTS

- 8:30 a.m. President’s Report – Brad Kramer
- 8:40 a.m. Caucus Election Results Report – Brad Kramer
- 8:45 a.m. Executive Director’s Report – Jan Voit
- 9:00 a.m. Board of Water and Soil Resources Report – Assistant Director Justin Hanson

ACTION ITEMS

- 9:15 a.m. **STRATEGIC PLAN** (Action) – Brad Kramer
- 9:30 a.m. **BYLAWS HEARING** (Action) – Brad Kramer
- 9:45 a.m. **LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM** (Action) – Brad Kramer
- 10:00 a.m. **RESOLUTIONS HEARING** (Action) – Brad Kramer

Note: There will be two microphones in the room – One to use if you are “FOR” an amendment and one if you are “AGAINST” an amendment. If you wish to testify on a resolution, please proceed to the appropriate microphone and limit your comments to two minutes. Any resolutions considered at the annual business meeting must be recommended by the board of directors and require a two-thirds majority vote of the delegates present to be adopted.

- **Resolution 4** – Seeking Revision to Minnesota Statute 471.617 to Include Watershed Districts and Watershed Management Organizations
- **Resolution 5** – Improving Mitigation Under the Minnesota Endangered Species Act
- **Resolution 6** – Supporting a Legislative Amendment to Clarify the Deadline for Watershed Districts to Certify Levies

10:30 a.m. **2026 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES**

11:00 a.m. **ADJOURNMENT**

Minnesota Watersheds Annual Business Meeting

December 6, 2024



1. CALL TO ORDER

The 2024 Minnesota Watersheds Annual Business Meeting was convened at 9:07 a.m. by President Linda Vavra, Bois de Sioux Watershed District (BdSWD). Having 51 delegates registered when the business meeting opened, a quorum was present. The list of delegates can be found at the end of these minutes.

2. GENERAL BUSINESS

Agenda

David Ziegler, Riley Purgatory Bluff Creek Watershed District (RPBCWD) moved to approve the agenda. Sherry White, Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD) seconded the motion. The motion passed by voice vote.

Secretary's Report

President Vavra presented the minutes of the 2023 Annual Business Meeting. David Ziegler, RPBCWD, moved to approve the Secretary's Report. Jill Crafton, RPBCWD seconded the motion. The motion passed by voice vote.

Treasurer's Report

President Vavra presented the following reports:

- 2024 Year End Financial Report and Statement of Financial Position. David Ziegler, RPBCWD, moved to approve the 2024 Year End Financial Report. Jackie Anderson, Comfort Lake Forest Lake Watershed District (CLFLWD), seconded the motion. The motion passed by voice vote.
- Independent Accountant's Report on Applying Agreed upon Financial Procedures. The report dated November 22, 2024, was prepared by Redpath and Company, Ltd. David Ziegler, RPBCWD, moved to accept the Report on Applying Agreed upon Financial Procedures. Bill Petersen, Middle Snake Tamarac Rivers Watershed District (MSTRWD), seconded the motion. The motion passed by voice vote.
- 2025 Proposed Budget. Jeff Gertgen, Middle Fork Crow River Watershed District (MFCRWD), moved to approve the 2025 Proposed Budget. Jackie Anderson, CLFLWD, seconded the motion. The motion passed by voice vote.

3. REPORTS

President Vavra, Executive Director Voit, and Board of Water and Soil Resources Assistant Director Hanson gave reports.

4. STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATES

President Vavra reported on the proposed updates to the Strategic Plan as provided in the annual business meeting packet. David Ziegler, RPBCWD, moved to approve the Strategic Plan updates. Jeff Gertgen, MFCRWD, seconded the motion. The motion passed by voice vote.

5. LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM CHANGES

President Vavra reported on the proposed changes to the Legislative Platform as provided in the annual business meeting packet. Jackie Anderson, CLFLWD, moved to approve the Legislative Platform changes. Ruth Schaefer, MFCRWD, seconded the motion. The motion passed by voice vote.

6. BYLAWS HEARING

Mike Bradley, Rice Creek Watershed District (RCWD) moved to open the Bylaws Hearing. David Ziegler, RPBCWD, seconded the motion. The motion passed by voice vote.

President Vavra reported on the proposed changes to the Bylaws as provided in the annual business meeting packet. Mike Bradley, RCWD moved to approve the proposed changes to the Bylaws. David Ziegler, RPBCWD, seconded the motion, which passed by voice vote.

Jackie Anderson, CLFLWD, moved to close the Bylaws Hearing. Bill Petersen, MSTRWD, seconded the motion, which passed by voice vote.

7. RESOLUTIONS HEARING

David Ziegler, RPBCWD, moved to open the Resolutions Hearing. The motion was seconded by Bill Olson, Minnehaha Creek Watershed District, which passed by voice vote. Don Pereira, Valley Branch Watershed District, presided over the Resolutions Hearing.

Resolution 2024-01 Resolution to Develop Regulatory Approaches to Reducing Chloride Contamination

Michael Welch, Smith Partners presented the resolution on behalf of Nine Mile Creek WD. David Ziegler, RPBCWD, moved to adopt Resolution 2024-01. Celia Wirth, Brown's Creek WD (BCWD) seconded the motion.

The vote on the motion to adopt Resolution 2024-01 was passed by voice vote.

- **Adopted Resolution 2024-1: NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that Minnesota Watersheds supports development, adoption, and implementation of regulatory approaches to reducing chloride contamination in waters of the state.

Resolution 2024-02 Resolution Allowing Alternative Notice of Watershed District Proceedings by Publication on the District's Website

Terry Jeffery, RPBCWD, presented the resolution. David Ziegler, RPBCWD, moved to adopt Resolution 2024-02. Celia Wirth, BCWD, seconded the motion.

The vote on the motion to adopt Resolution 2024-02 was passed by voice vote.

- **Adopted Resolution 2024-02: NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that Minnesota Watersheds supports amending Watershed Law to provide for publication on a watershed district's website as an alternative to publication in a legal newspaper.

Resolution 2024-03 Resolution Providing for Watershed Management Organization Representation on Wetland Technical Evaluation Panels

Terry Jeffery, RPBCWD presented the resolution. Jackie Anderson, CLFLWD moved to adopt Resolution 2024-03. David Ziegler, RPBCWD, seconded the motion.

The vote on the motion to adopt Resolution 2024-03 was passed by voice vote.

- **Adopted Resolution 2024-03: NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that Minnesota Watersheds supports amendment of Minnesota Statutes 103G.2242, subdivision 2 to include a watershed management organization representative on TEPs that are convened in cases where the organization is not the WCA LGU.

Resolution 2024-04 Resolution Seeking the Ability to Allow Resale of Acquisition Buyout Property

Tara Jensen, Wild Rice WD presented the resolution. David Ziegler, RPBCWD, moved to adopt Resolution 2024-04. James Johnson, Roseau River WD seconded the motion.

The vote on the motion to Adopt Resolution 2024-04 was passed by voice vote.

- **Adopted Resolution 2024-04: NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that Minnesota Watersheds seeks federal legislation to allow the conveyance by an LGU of flood acquisition buyout real

estate to a public entity or to a qualified conservation organization, or alternatively a resale to a private taxpayer, subject to the FEMA Model Deed Restrictions as stated in Exhibit A.

Resolution 2024-05 Resolution Seeking the DNR to Establish a “Comprehensive Guideline for Calcareous Fen Management”

Mori Maher, MSTRWD presented the resolution. LeRoy Ose, Red Lake WD (RLWD), moved to adopt Resolution 2024-05. Linda Vavra, BdSWD, seconded the motion.

The motion to adopt Resolution 2024-05 was passed by voice vote.

- **Adopted Resolution 2024-05: NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that Minnesota Watersheds supports DNR establishing a “Comprehensive Guideline for Calcareous Fen Management” as a tool for project proposers to analyze a project’s feasibility or cost effectiveness.

Resolution 2024-06 Resolution Seeking Clarification of the Statutory and Rule Language Regarding the Alteration of Calcareous Fens

Mori Maher, MSTRWD presented the resolution. Jill Crafton, RPBCWD moved to table Resolution 2024-06. Mike Lee, Shell Rock River WD, seconded the motion. The motion to table the resolution passed by a show of hands.

Resolution 2024-07 Resolution Seeking the DNR to Adopt a Program to Incentivize Calcareous Fen Management on Private Lands

Mori Maher, MSTRWD presented the resolution. Chris Jasken, Pelican River WD (PRWD), moved to adopt Resolution 2024-07. Marcie Weinandt, RCWD, seconded the motion.

The motion to adopt Resolution 2024-07 was passed by a show of hands.

- **Adopted Resolution 2024-07: NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that Minnesota Watersheds supports the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources adopting a program through which a fee is paid to landowners to incentivize them to manage the quantity and quality of the Calcareous Fens on private lands, which program is made similar to the USDA Conservation Reserve Program or similar to a perpetual easement through the Board of Water and Soil Resources Reinvest in Minnesota.

Resolution 2024-08 Resolution Seeking Removal of the Water Resource Enforcement Officer

Mori Maher, MSTRWD presented the resolution. Jeff Gertgen, MFCRWD moved to table Resolution 2024-08. Paul Richert, Carnelian Marine St. Croix WD, seconded the motion. The motion passed by a show of hands.

Resolution 2024-09 Resolution Seeking Identification of Calcareous Fens on All State Wetlands by December 31, 2030

Mori Maher, MSTRWD presented the resolution. LeRoy Ose, RLWD, moved to adopt Resolution 2024-09. Linda Vavra, BdSWD, seconded the motion. The motion failed by a show of hands.

Resolution 2024-10 Resolution Seeking a Formal Process to Distribute a Complete List of Calcareous Fens Annually

Mori Maher, MSTRWD presented the resolution. Chris Jasken, PRWD, moved to adopt Resolution 2024-10. Jackie Anderson, CLFLWD, seconded the motion.

The motion to adopt Resolution 2024-10 was passed by a show of hands.

- **Adopted Resolution 2024-10: NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that Minnesota Watersheds supports the Board of Water and Soil Resources establishing a formal process to distribute on an annual basis an accurate and complete list identifying Calcareous Fens to all watershed districts, watershed management organizations, and soil and water conservation districts.

Resolution 2024-11 Resolution Seeking Regular Reevaluation of the Designated Species List

Mori Maher, MSTRWD presented the resolution. Shaun Kennedy, Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission, moved to table Resolution 2024-11. David Ziegler, RPBCWD, seconded the motion. The motion passed by show of hands.

Resolution 2024-12 Resolution Seeking the Development of a Calcareous Fen Work Group

Mori Maher, MSTRWD presented the resolution. Jackie Anderson, CLFLWD, moved to adopt Resolution 2024-12. Jeff Gertgen, MFCRWD, seconded the motion.

The motion to adopt Resolution 2024-12 was passed by a show of hands.

- **Adopted Resolution 2024-12: NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that Minnesota Watersheds supports the relevant state agencies, together with relevant stakeholders (including watershed districts), convene a work group to develop by consensus clear, objective and measurable criteria for determining the presence and quality of Calcareous Fen, which criteria shall thereafter be used by all state and local units of government.

Resolution 2024-13 Resolution Requesting Minnesota Watersheds Support to Request New Legislation to Set Permit Review Time Limits upon the Department of Natural Resources

Andy Henschel, Shell Rock River WD presented the resolution. Ruth Schaefer, MFCRWD, moved to adopt Resolution 2024-13. Linda Vavra, BdSWD, seconded the motion.

The motion to adopt Resolution 2024-13 was passed unanimously by a show of hands.

- **Adopted Resolution 2024-13: NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that Minnesota Watersheds supports amending Minnesota Statutes to implement a 60-day permit review limit following a negative declaration on an EAW.

8. ADJOURNMENT

President Vavra thanked the members for their participation in the business meeting and the annual conference. Bill Olson, MCWD, moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:47 a.m. David Ziegler, RPBCWD, seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Wanda Holker
Secretary

Watershed Organization	Region	Delegate #1	Delegate #2	Alternate
Bois de Sioux	Region I	Allen Wold	Linda Vavra	
Buffalo Red River	Region I	Cathy Affield	Curt Stubstad	<i>Peter Fjestad</i>
Cormorant Lakes	Region 1			
The Two Rivers	Region 1	Roger Anderson		
Warroad	Region 1			
Wild Rice	Region 1	Duane Erickson	Curt Johannsen	<i>Greg Holmvik</i>
Joe River	Region 1			
Middle Snake Tamarac Rivers	Region 1			
Pelican River	Region I	Chris Jasken	Laurie Olson	<i>Charles Jusken</i>
Red Lake	Region 1	LeRoy Ose	Gene Tiedemann	<i>Grant Nelson</i>
Roseau River	Region 1	Jim Johnson	Carter Diesen	
Sand Hill River	Region 1			
Watershed Organization		Delegate #1	Delegate #2	Alternate
Buffalo Creek	Region 2			
Cedar River	Region 2			
Clearwater River	Region 2			
Crooked Creek	Region 2			
Heron Lake	Region 2			
High Island	Region 2			
Kanaranzi Little Rock	Region 2			
Middle Fork Crow River	Region 2	Ruth Schaefer	Jeff Gerten	

North Fork Crow River	Region 2	Bob Brauchler	Jim Barchenger	
Okabena Ocheda	Region 2	Casey Ingethron	Tom Ahlberg	
Shell Rock River	Region 2	Brad Kramer	Mike Lee	
Turtle Creek	Region 2			
Upper Minnesota River	Region 2	Gene Meyer	Jon Bork	<i>Wanda Holker</i>
Yellow Medicine River	Region 2	Bill Briggs	Tim Buysse	<i>Randy Kamrath</i>
Lac qui Parle Yellow Bank	Region 2	Andrew Weber	Jon Olson	<i>Mike Knutson</i>
Watershed Organization		Delegate #1	Delegate #2	Alternate
Bassett Creek WMC	Region 3	Joan Hauer	Shaun Kennedy	<i>Catherine Cesnik</i>
Brown's Creek	Region 3	Celia Wirth		
Capitol Region	Region 3	Hawona Sullivan Janzen	Shawn Mazanec	<i>Joe Collins</i>
Carnelian Marine St. Croix	Region 3	Paul Richert	Kristin Tuenge	<i>Mike White</i>
Comfort Lake Forest Lake	Region 3	Jackie Anderson	Stephen Schmaltz	<i>Dave Bakke</i>
Coon Creek	Region 3			
Minnehaha Creek	Region 3	Bill Olson	Sherry Davis-White	
Mississippi WMO	Region 3			
Nine Mile Creek	Region 3	Robert Cutshall	Larry Olson	<i>Peggy Kvam</i>
Prior Lake Spring Lake	Region 3	Ben Burnett	Bruce Loney	
Ramsey Washington Metro	Region 3	Val Eisele	Mark Gernes	<i>Benjamin Karp</i>
Rice Creek	Region 3	Mike Bradley	Marcie Weinandt	<i>John Waller</i>

Riley Purgatory Bluff Creek	Region 3	Jill Crafton	David Ziegler	<i>Tom Duevel</i>
South Washington	Region 3	Mike Madigan		
Vadnais Lake Area WMO	Region 3			
Valley Branch	Region 3	Don Pereira	John Brach	<i>Rick Gelbmann</i>

DRAFT



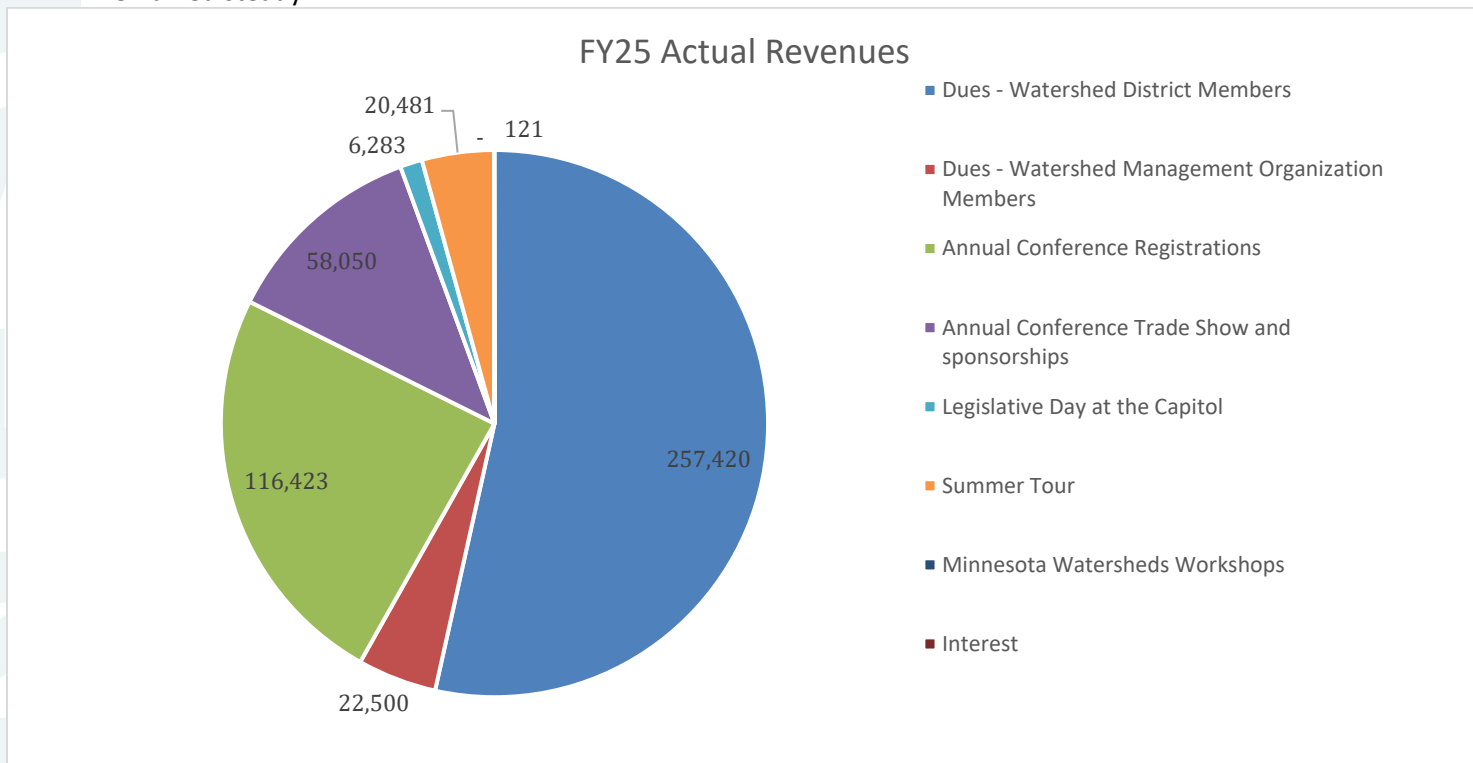
Memorandum

DATE: October 31, 2025
TO: Minnesota Watersheds Members
FROM: Finance Committee Co-chairs Don Pereira, Valley Branch WD and Tera Guetter, Pelican River WD
RE: **Draft FY25 Financial Statement, Review of Financial Procedure Report, and Proposed FY26 Budget**

It is important to note that most of Minnesota Watersheds revenue is generated through payment of dues.

INCOME FY25 ACTUAL

- The FY25 dues were based on the dues structure adopted by the membership at the 2022 annual business meeting. We had reduced income from losing the membership of the Heron Lake WD.
- The income for the Legislative event and Annual Conference increased. The income from the Summer Tour remained steady.



EXPENSES FY25 ACTUAL

Administrative and Program Management

- Administrative and Communications Support – Contract: funds paid to the Executive Director.
- Event and Communication Management – Contract: funds paid to the Program Manager for managing Minnesota Watersheds events.
- Newsletter formatting, Website, social media, etc. – Contract: funds paid to the Program Manager for these tasks.

Government Relations

- Lobbying – Contracted Services: funds paid to lobbyists Ray Bohn and Lockridge Grindal Nauen.

Professional Services

- Legal Fees - General: funds paid for general legal services.
- Legal Fees – Drainage Work Group: funds paid to represent members at the DWG. The cost is shared 50/50 with the Red River Watershed Management Board (RRWMB).

- Legal Fees – Attorney General Water Task Force: funds paid for legal counsel to testify at a task force meeting on behalf of Minnesota Watersheds and the RRWMB. The cost is shared 50/50 with the RRWMB.
- Legal Fees – M.S. Chapter 103D modernization: funds paid for legal counsel to assist with statutory language changes and testifying at the legislature. This has been completed.
- Legal Fees – Amicus Brief JD 39: funds paid to draft and submit a brief to the Minnesota Supreme Court regarding Red Lake JD 39. This has been completed.
- Legal Fees – Legislative Process Changes: funds paid to assist with language changes to the Bylaws and Manual of Policy and Procedures (MOPP) for updating the resolutions and legislative priorities processes.
- Drainage Work Group – Contract: costs for Myron Jesme to represent Minnesota Watersheds at DWG meetings and subcommittee meetings.
- Accounting and Audit Fees: funds paid to Obremski Ltd. for monthly accounting and bookkeeping services and to Redpath Ltd. for the agreed upon procedures report.
- Insurance: funds paid for insurance coverage for errors and omissions insurance for the Minnesota Watersheds Board of Directors, and for general coverage for office, records, and office equipment.

Office Expenses

- Rent: funds paid to Capitol Region WD for storage and office rent.
- Mileage and General Office Expenses: for directors and contractors, as well as office supplies.

Board and Committee Meetings

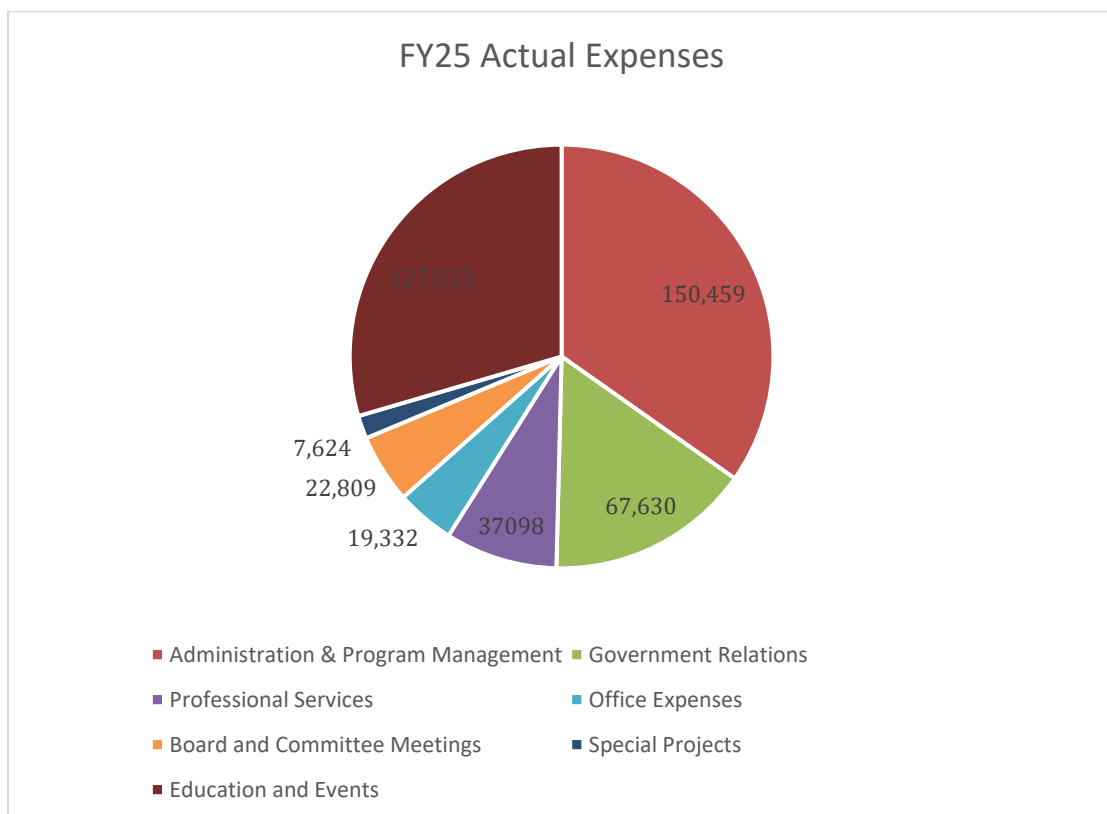
- Per Diems and Expenses - Directors: funds paid to directors for serving on the Board of Directors and Minnesota Watersheds Committees.

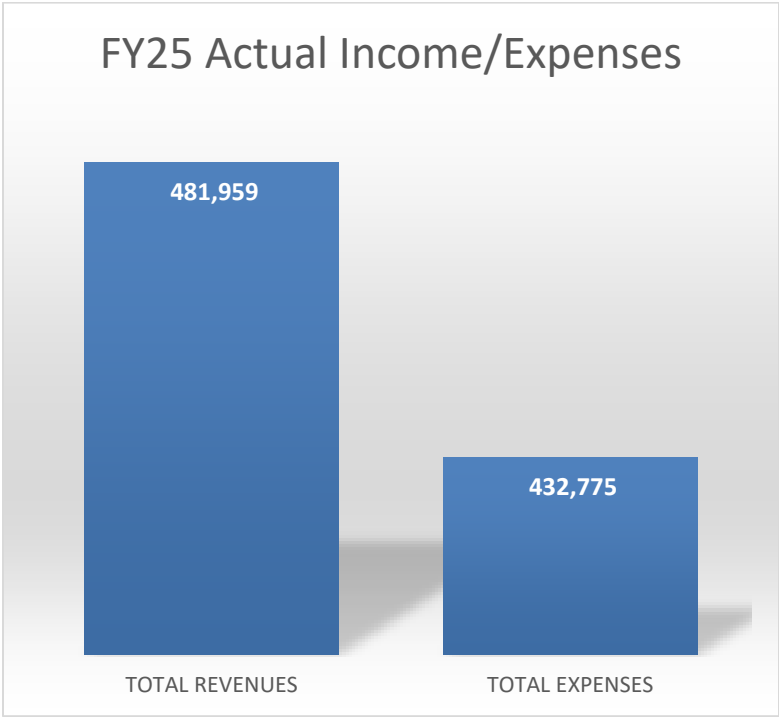
Special Projects

- Funds paid to Houston Engineering, Inc. to participate in the Wetland Conservation Act rulemaking.

Education and Events

- The actual costs incurred for implementing the Legislative Briefing and Day at the Capitol, Summer Tour, and Annual Conference.



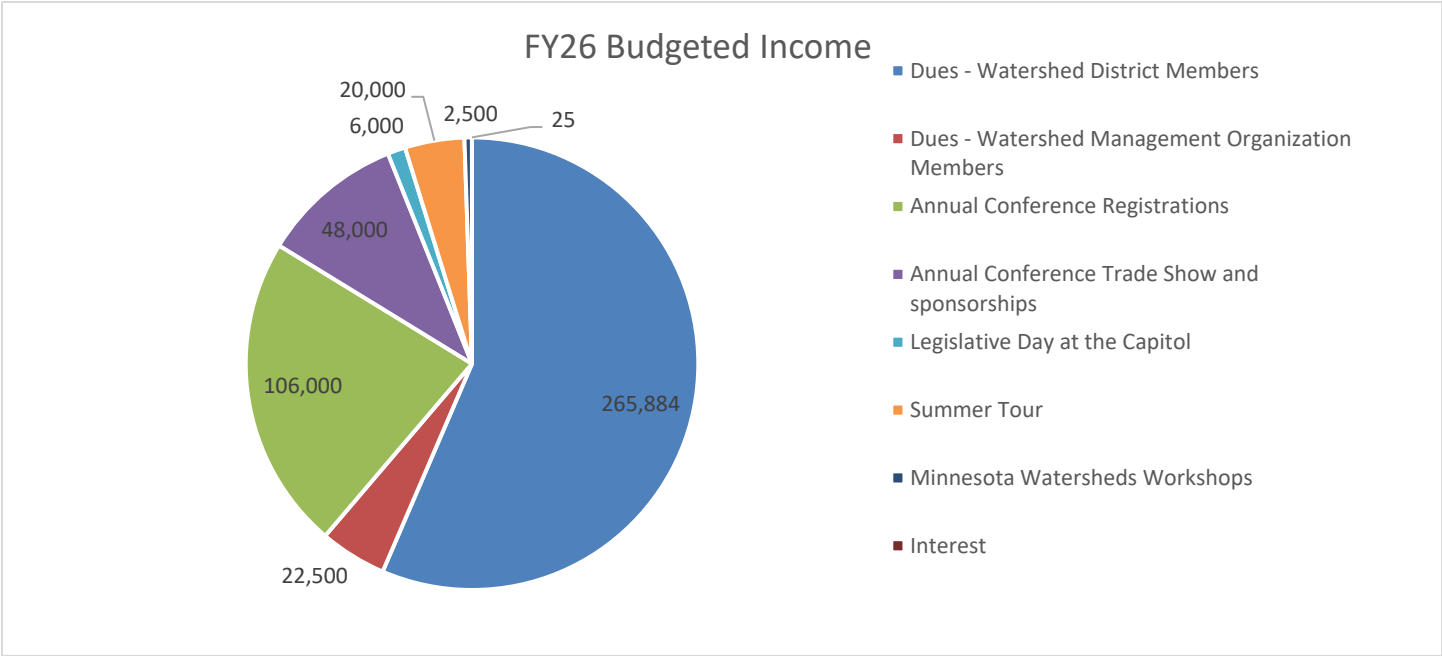


2025 REVIEW OF FINANCIAL PROCEDURE REPORT

The report from Redpath Ltd. for the agreed upon procedures has not been submitted. It will be distributed to members as soon as it is available.

INCOME PROPOSED FY26 BUDGET

- The estimated dues for FY26 are based upon payment in full by current members with the dues structure that was approved by the membership in 2022.
- The estimated income for the annual conference in FY25 is anticipated to be less than in FY24 based upon estimated fewer registrations, sponsorships, and exhibitors.
- The estimated costs for the Legislative Day at the Capitol and Summer Tour are based on actual costs for FY25.



EXPENSES PROPOSED FY26 BUDGET

Administrative and Communications Support

- Administrative and Communications Support: projected expense for the Executive Director.
- Event and Communication Management: projected expense for Program Manager for managing Minnesota Watersheds events (Legislative Briefing and Day at the Capitol; Summer Tour; and Annual Conference).
- Newsletter formatting, website, social media, etc. - Contract: projected expense for Program Manager.
- Communication Platform: The following excerpt from the Minnesota Watersheds Strategic Plan addresses the communication platform: Work with Minnesota Association of Watershed Administrators (MAWA) to launch and house a platform for data sharing and networking. The amount is for an annual commitment of up to \$10,000 for a communication platform that could be used by not only MAWA members, but also Minnesota Watersheds members, the board of directors, our committees, executive director, and program coordinator.

Government Relations

- Lobbyist Contract: for the Lockridge Grindal Nauen lobbying team.

Professional Services

- Legal Fees - General: funds paid for general legal services.
- Legal Fees – Drainage Work Group: funds paid to represent members at the DWG. The cost is shared 50/50 with the Red River Watershed Management Board (RRWMB).
- Drainage Work Group – Contract: costs for Myron Jesme to represent Minnesota Watersheds at DWG meetings and subcommittee meetings.
- Accounting and auditing funds paid to Obremski Ltd. for monthly accounting and bookkeeping services and to Redpath Ltd. for the agreed upon procedures report.
- Insurance coverage for errors and omissions insurance for the Minnesota Watersheds Board of Directors, and for general coverage for office, records, and office equipment.

Office Expenses

- Rent: funds paid to Capitol Region WD for storage and office rent.
- Mileage and General Office Expenses: for directors and contractors, as well as office supplies.

Board and Committee Meetings

- Per Diems and Expenses - Directors: Funds paid to directors for serving on the Board of Directors and Minnesota Watersheds Committees.

Special projects

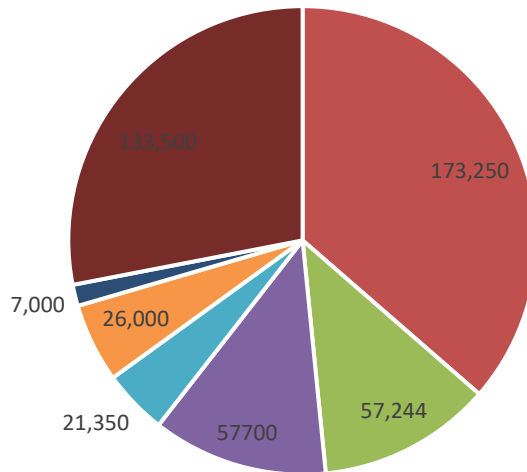
- Funds for anticipated costs for continued work in the Wetland Conservation Act rulemaking.

Education and Events

- Estimated costs for implementing the Annual Conference, Legislative Briefing and Day at the Capitol, Summer Tour, credit card processing fees, and special workshops.

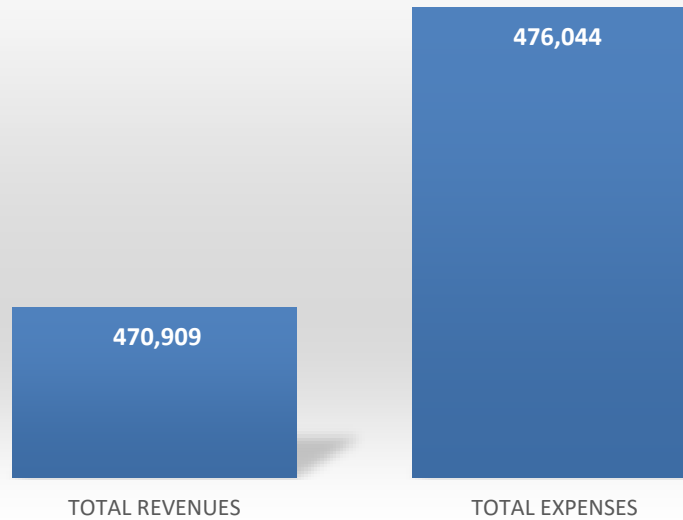
Even with a projected budget deficit of approximately \$5,000, the committee did not recommend increasing dues.

FY26 Budgeted Expenses



- Administration & Program Management
- Government Relations
- Professional Services
- Office Expenses
- Board and Committee Meetings
- Special Projects
- Education and Events

FY26 Budgeted Income/Expenses



Questions regarding the FY25 proposed budget and/or the FY24 financial information should be directed to Don Pereira, Treasurer (dpereira@vbwd.org or 651-968-9788), Tera Guetter (Tera.Guetter@arvig.net or 218-846-0436), or Jan Voit (jvoit@mnwatersheds.com or 507-822-0921).

	FY2026**	FY2025*	FY2025*	FY2024*
			Oct'24-Sep'25	Oct'23-Sep'24
INCOME	BUDGET	BUDGET	FY 2025 ACTUAL	FY 2024 ACTUAL
Dues - Watershed District Members	265,884	262,421	257,420	255,986
Dues - Watershed Management Organization Members	22,500	22,500	22,500	22,500
Annual Conference Registrations	106,000	91,000	116,423	120,885
Annual Conference Trade Show and sponsorships	48,000	42,300	58,050	13,000
Legislative Day at the Capitol	6,000	5,500	6,283	5,339
Summer Tour	20,000	20,000	20,481	28,250
Minnesota Watersheds Workshops	2,500	2,500	-	-
MAWA Fall Meeting	-	-	565	-
Other Income	-	-	116	-
Interest	25	25	121	563
TOTAL REVENUES	470,909	446,246	481,959	446,523
EXPENSES				
Administration & Program Management				
Administrative and Communications Support - Contract	113,750	105,000	101,675	95,532
Event and Communication Management - Contract	45,000	45,000	44,550	43,200
Newsletters, Website, Social Media, etc. - Contract	4,500	4,500	4,234	3,354
Communication Platform	10,000	-	-	-
Government Relations				
Lobbying - Contracted Services - Ray Bohn, MGA	-	11,250	11,250	45,000
Lobbying - Contracted Services - Lockridge Grindal Nauen	56,244	56,244	56,250	22,500
Lobbyist Expenses	1,000	1,000	130	450
Professional Services				
Legal Fees				
General (ongoing)	25,000	25,000	6,997	5,327
Drainage Work Group (ongoing)	7,500	7,500	3,161	8,115
Attorney General Water Task Force (ongoing)	2,500	-	182	-
M.S. Chapter 103D Modernization (completed)	-	-	1,264	28,161
Amicus Brief JD 39 (completed)	-	-	734	7,005
Legislative Process Changes (completed)	-	-	7,499	-
Drainage Work Group - Myron Jesme contract	5,000	5,000	1,229	2,217
Accounting and Audit Fees	16,000	14,400	14,400	13,100
Insurance	1,700	1,700	1,632	734
Office Expenses				
Rent	2,400	2,400	2,400	2,400
Mileage and General Office Expenses	15,000	15,000	13,673	13,810
Dues, Other Organizations	-	-	525	-
Other Special Items-Registration Fees/Sponsorships	3,700	3,700	1,889	1,700
Memorials	250	250	-	-
Board and Committee Meetings				
Per Diems and Expenses - Directors	25,000	25,000	22,809	19,915
Board and Committee Meeting Expenses	1,000	1,000	-	-
Special Projects				
Other Special Items	7,000	5,000	1,031	44
Engineering Review of WCA Rules	-	-	6,593	-
Education and Events				
Annual Conference	97,000	75,000	96,920	74,778
Legislative Day at the Capitol	6,000	5,500	5,486	5,778
Special Meeting of the Membership	-	-	2,692	-
Summer Tour	20,000	20,000	15,538	22,840
Special Workshops	2,500	3,700	-	-
MAWA Fall Meeting	-	-	350	-
Credit Card Processing Fees	8,000	4,100	10,298	1,534
TOTAL EXPENSES	476,044	437,244	435,390	417,494
REVENUES OVER (LESS THAN) EXPENSES	(5,135)	9,002	46,569	29,029
STATEMENT OF NET POSITION				
Assets, Cash and Equivalents, actual			347,150	293,210
Dues receivable			-	-
Deposits received - deferred, prepaid expenses			-	1,347
Liabilities, accounts payable, taxes payable			(25,819)	(20,571)
ENDING NET ASSETS			321,331	273,986

*These are final numbers. **Approved by Finance Committee on 10/8/2025.



Memorandum

DATE: October 31, 2025
TO: Minnesota Watersheds Members
FROM: Committee Co-Chairs Don Pereira, Valley Branch WD and Andy Henschel, Shell Rock River WD
RE: **Proposed Strategic Plan Updates**

In December of 2022, the Minnesota Watersheds membership adopted the 10-Year Strategic Plan. Over the course of the last three years, many of the strategies and tactics have begun and some have been completed. With those accomplishments in mind, the Strategic Plan Committee met in August to review the plan.

Proposed revisions:

- Many of the proposed changes throughout the plan are minor wordsmithing to reflect plan accomplishments.
- In Goal 1, revisions to the committee section were made to reflect the committee makeup and processes described in the Manual of Policy and Procedures.
- Clarifying language was added in Goal 4 to describe the changes in the resolutions and legislative processes adopted by the membership in March of 2025.
- It was noted that the communication platform is included in the plan and will take time and resources to determine the best option.
- The executive director's work with the lobbying team was added to the board of directors' work plan.
- Follow-up will be done with Minnesota Watershed representatives on the Board of Water and Soil Resources board for more consistent reporting.
- The executive director's work plan covers a two-year period and is based on working 1,750 hours per year. The Annual Meeting on Resolutions and Petitions will be added as a task.

It should also be noted that the Resolutions and Legislative Committee recommended changing the name of the committee to the Legislative Committee at their meeting on October 7.

Questions regarding the Strategic Plan and/or the proposed revisions should be directed to Don Pereira (dpereira@vbwd.org), Andy Henschel (andy.henschel@co.freeborn.mn.us), or Jan Voit (jvoit@mnwatersheds.org).



MINNESOTA WATERSHEDS

Connecting People. Protecting Water.

10-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

2023 - 2032

Updated: December ~~65, 2024~~2025

Abstract

This document defines Minnesota Watersheds' mission and vision for the future and identifies goals, objectives, strategies, and tactics.

Contents

- Introduction 2
- Definitions 2
- Strategic Plan 2
 - Mission 2
 - Vision 2
 - Values 2
 - Goals, Objectives, Strategies, and Tactics 2
 - Goal 1: Fortify the infrastructure of Minnesota Watersheds to ensure reliable delivery of services. . 2
 - Objectives, Strategies, and Tactics to Achieve Goal 1 2
 - Goal 2: Build a watershed community that supports one another. 4
 - Objectives, Strategies, and Tactics to Achieve Goal 2 4
 - Goal 3: Serve as a liaison to collaborate with statewide agencies and associations 5
 - Objectives, Strategies, and Tactics to Achieve Goal 3 5
 - Goal 4: Ensure strong legislative policies are in place for watershed management. 5
 - Objectives, Strategies, and Tactics to Achieve Goal 4 5
 - Goal 5: Enhance the skills of watershed district and watershed management organization boards. . 7
 - Objectives, Strategies, and Tactics to Achieve Goal 5 7
- Supporting Resources 7
 - Bylaws 7
 - Manual of Policy and Procedures 7
 - Organizational Chart 7
 - Board of Directors Annual Work Plan 8
 - Minnesota Watersheds Representatives Expectations for Support and Advocacy 10
 - Tactics Timetable 10

MINNESOTA WATERSHEDS

STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

MISSION: To support and advocate for leaders in watershed management.

VISION: To establish excellence and innovation in all watershed-based organizations.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:



Fortify the infrastructure of Minnesota Watersheds to ensure reliable delivery of services.

- Ensure Minnesota Watersheds governance and management are aligned with the Strategic Plan.
- Develop concentrated communication efforts.
- Empower Minnesota Watersheds to accomplish its goals and objectives.
- Invest in technological resources to accommodate access to information.
- Better utilize member and executive committees for healthy and sustainable Minnesota Watersheds' operations.



Build a watershed community that supports one another.

- Enhance member engagement through inclusiveness.
- Grow membership.
- Expand participation at Minnesota Watersheds' events.
- Increase member involvement on committees and the Minnesota Watersheds Board of Directors to assure member needs are met.



Serve as a liaison to collaborate with statewide agencies and associations.

- Increase collaborative efforts between the Board of Water and Soil Resources and Minnesota Watersheds.
- Increase partnership activities with statewide entities.



Ensure strong legislative policies are in place for watershed management.

- Streamline the resolutions and legislative platform processes.
- Articulate clearly defined legislative policies so members and Minnesota Watersheds' representatives can accurately state our positions.
- Focus and prioritize lobbying efforts.
- Increase member engagement in the legislative process.



Enhance the skills of watershed district and watershed management organization boards.

- Provide guidance and direction for efficient and effective member board operations.

Introduction

This document is intended to be a **long-range, 10-year Strategic Plan**. Each year the Strategic Plan Committee will make recommendations to the Minnesota Watersheds Board of Directors on the organization's top priorities. The Annual Work Plan for the Minnesota Watersheds Board of Directors will be developed based on the goals, objectives, strategies, and tactics described in this plan, as well as the day-to-day operations described in the Manual of Policy and Procedures. The Tactics Timetable will be developed based upon priorities determined by the Strategic Plan Committee and recommended to the Minnesota Watersheds Board of Directors as follows: two-year work plan for the Executive Director based on Strategic Plan Committee priorities and work accomplished. This process will be done to better ensure accomplishing the goals and setting expectations for member watershed districts, watershed management organizations, the Minnesota Watersheds Board of Directors, and the Executive Director.

Definitions

Members – dues paying Watershed districts and Watershed management organizations

Non-members – Watershed districts and Watershed management organizations that have chosen not to pay dues

Strategic Plan

Mission

To support and advocate for leaders in watershed management.

Vision

To establish excellence and innovation in all watershed-based organizations.

Values

Collaborate: work with partners to enhance members' watershed management skills and initiatives.

Efficient: provide services to maximize effective science-based principles for watershed management.

Support: promote and assist members' efforts in watershed management.

Member-driven: seek and consider input to ensure the organization's decisions reflect members' voices.

Transparent: communicate information about the performance, financial position, and governance of the organization in an open and honest manner.

Goals, Objectives, Strategies, and Tactics

Goal 1: Fortify the infrastructure of Minnesota Watersheds to ensure reliable delivery of services.

Objectives, Strategies, and Tactics to Achieve Goal 1

1. Ensure Minnesota Watersheds' governance and management are aligned with the Strategic Plan.
 - Focus the organization's efforts on defined goals, strategies, objectives, and tactics.
 - i. Confirm, each month, that Board of Directors' actions reflect the Strategic Plan.
 - ii. If new issues arise that require significant resources, seek member support before pursuing.
 - iii. Do not adopt major policies or expenditures without staff review and recommendations that consider pros and cons, alternatives, costs, and member perspectives.

2. Develop concentrated communication efforts.
 - Communication plan.
 - i. Maintain the adopted communication plan that brings structure and consistency to all Minnesota Watersheds' communication efforts.
 - Newsletters.
 - i. Adhere to a consistent process for newsletter development and distribution, as well as a process for posting newsletters on the website.
 - ii. Ensure newsletters are distributed to members and non-members.
 - Minnesota Watersheds Board of Directors agendas and meeting packets.
 - i. Distribute agendas and meeting packets directly to each member organization ahead of each meeting, send agendas to non-members and partners, and post agendas on the website.
3. Empower Minnesota Watersheds to accomplish its goals and objectives.
 - Sufficient staffing.
 - i. Invest in sufficient staff to complete identified strategies and tactics.
 - Suitable policies.
 - i. Set policies that ensure adequate funding for staffing and technological resources.
 - ii. Develop an annual work plan for the Minnesota Watersheds Board of Directors.
4. Invest in technological resources to accommodate access to information.
 - Robust website.
 - i. Maintain an up-to-date website that is a resource for boards and administrators.
 - Efficient internal communication tool.
 - i. Work with Minnesota Association of Watershed Administrators to launch and house a platform for data sharing and networking.
 - ii. Transition electronic files to the cloud for reliable backup and document sharing among staff.
5. Better utilize member and executive committees for healthy and sustainable Minnesota Watersheds' operations.
 - Member committees.
 - i. Maintain ~~four~~ member committees: Awards, Bylaws-Manual of Policy and Procedures, Events/Education, Finance, Legislative, and ~~Resolutions~~Strategic Plan.
 - ii. Support committee leadership of one manager-board member and one administrator who serve as co-chairs. ~~Continue to p~~Populate the Bylaws-Manual of Policy and Procedures, Events-Education, and Finance committees Committees with one manager-board member and one administrator from each region. Populate the Awards committee with one manager and two administrators from each region. Populate the Legislative Committee with three board members and two administrators from each region, as well as three at-large members based on legislative priorities.
 - iii. Review committee scopes of work annually.
 - Executive committees.
 - i. Retain three executive committees: Governance, Personnel, and Finance.
 - ii. Governance Committee: Members include the Minnesota Watersheds President, Vice President, Secretary, and except for the Personnel Committee, the Executive Director.
 1. ~~This~~The executive committees will handle day-to-day issues and make recommendations to the board of directors. Member committees will

~~meet annually to review and make recommendations to the board of directors regarding~~ ~~When reviews or revisions to~~ the Bylaws, Manual of Policy and Procedures, and/~~or~~ the Strategic Plan ~~are warranted, the appropriate member committee will meet to perform the assigned work.~~

- iii. Personnel Committee: Members include the Minnesota Watersheds President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer.
- iv. Finance Committee: Members include the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Executive Director.
 1. The Executive Finance Committee will prepare a budget, with the assistance of the member finance committee and the accountant and make the annual recommendation to the board of directors regarding dues. ~~Form a member~~ The member finance committee, as defined above, will meet and make recommendations to the board of directors when major projects are warranted, such as proposing a new dues structure.
- v. Review committee scopes of work annually.

Goal 2: Build a watershed community that supports one another.

Objectives, Strategies, and Tactics to Achieve Goal 2

1. Enhance member engagement through ~~inclusivity~~ inclusiveness.
 - Retain Minnesota Watersheds the name of the organization to accurately represent membership.
2. Grow and sustain membership.
 - Develop and share membership benefits information.
 - Meet individually with members to understand their needs, address concerns, and strengthen the partnership with Minnesota Watersheds.
 - Meet individually with non-members to address concerns and increase the number of watershed districts and watershed management organizations as Minnesota Watersheds members.
 - i. Continue discussions with the five-six non-member watershed districts and 15 non-member watershed management organizations on the benefits of membership.
 - ii. Use the Minnesota Watersheds Board of Directors and/or Administrators to advocate for Minnesota Watersheds around the state.
3. Expand participation at Minnesota Watersheds events.
 - Increase the number of members that attend Minnesota Watersheds events.
 - i. ~~Be inclusive of~~ Include members and non-members ~~for in~~ Minnesota Watersheds events and meetings.
 - ii. Hold regional caucuses in conjunction with all Minnesota Watersheds events.
 - iii. Increase the current average attendance of members at Minnesota Watersheds events.
4. Increase member involvement on committees and the Minnesota Watersheds Board of Directors to assure member needs are met.
 - Promote the importance of member involvement in the Minnesota Watersheds Board of Directors and on the committees to provide direction and guidance for the organization.
 - i. Ensure members have opportunities to voice concerns and provide input at board and committee meetings.

- ii. Advocate for Minnesota Watersheds activities through newsletters, email correspondence, and the website.

Goal 3: Serve as a liaison to collaborate with statewide agencies and associations.

Objectives, Strategies, and Tactics to Achieve Goal 3

1. Increase collaborative efforts between ~~the Board of Water and Soil Resources~~ state agencies and Minnesota Watersheds.
 - Work with the Board of Water and Soil Resources, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, and Minnesota Pollution Control Agency leadership to address member concerns.
 - i. Strengthen the working relationship with ~~the Board of Water and Soil Resources~~ state agencies by identifying points of contention, developing a plan to address issues, and improve opportunities for reducing concerns.
2. Increase partnership activities with statewide entities.
 - Identify opportunities to work with the Minnesota Association of Watershed Administrators, Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, the Association of Minnesota Counties, the League of Minnesota Cities, Local Government Water Roundtable, Drainage Work Group, Clean Water Council, Red River Watershed Management Board, Department of Natural Resources, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, and others as deemed appropriate to promote watershed management.
 - i. Ensure Minnesota Watersheds staff attend Board of Water and Soil Resources, Clean Water Council, and Drainage Work Group meetings and provide updates for members.
 - ii. Strengthen the partnership with the Minnesota Association of Watershed Administrators through the Executive Director's attendance at Minnesota Association of Watershed Administrators meetings and collaboration on education opportunities at Minnesota Watersheds events.
 - iii. Increase opportunities to partner and track collaboration with Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, League of Minnesota Cities, Local Government Water Roundtable, and Association of Minnesota Counties.
 - iv. Advocate for the appointment of effective watershed district board members with the Board of Water and Soil Resources and the Association of Minnesota Counties.

Goal 4: Ensure strong legislative policies are in place for watershed management.

Objectives, Strategies, and Tactics to Achieve Goal 4

1. ~~Modernize Streamline~~ the resolutions and legislative priorities processes.
 - ~~Evaluate the current resolutions and legislative priorities process. Identify methods to achieve concurrence on resolutions and legislative priorities.~~
 - i. ~~Identify alternative methods to achieve concurrence on resolutions, adopt a revised process, or reaffirm that the current process works for the membership~~ Engage the Legislative Committee in the review and recommendation of resolutions and legislative priorities.
 - ii. ~~Identify alternative methods to achieve concurrence on the legislative priorities, adopt a revised process, or reaffirm that the current process works for the membership~~ Hold an Annual Meeting on Resolutions and Petitions and adopt resolutions.
 - iii. Members will discuss and adopt legislative priorities at the annual business meeting.

2. Articulate clearly defined legislative policies so members and Minnesota Watersheds representatives can accurately state our positions and priorities.
 - Maintain a comprehensive legislative platform of clearly defined policies.
 - i. Work with the Minnesota Association of Watershed Administrators Legislative Platform Committee and the Legislative Committee, ~~and the Resolutions Committee~~ to annually review the Legislative Platform that includes policies and priorities that can remain on the books indefinitely or until members approve changes to those positions, including a process to handle emerging issues at the legislature.
 - ii. ~~Draft~~ Annually review expectations for support and advocacy ~~for~~ with Minnesota Watersheds representatives that serve on the Board of Water and Soil Resources Board, Clean Water Council, and the Local Government Water Roundtable.
3. Focus and prioritize lobbying efforts.
 - Identify legislative issues impacting the most members.
 - i. Support legislation that promotes watershed management.
 - ii. Fend off legislation that limits member abilities to protect and restore water resources.
 - iii. Ensure the Minnesota Watersheds ~~lobbyist(s)~~ lobbying team ~~have~~ has clear direction on Minnesota Watersheds legislative priorities.
 - iv. Manage member expectations regarding the Minnesota Watersheds legislative program.
 - v. Serve as a legislative point of contact for members to answer questions and provide direction.
 - vi. Maintain the adopted Legislative Coordination and Communication Plan that describes how Minnesota Watersheds and the Red River Watershed Management Board coordinate and communicate before, during, and after the Minnesota legislative sessions.
4. Increase member engagement in the resolutions and legislative processes.
 - Encourage member ~~involvement on the Resolutions and Legislative Committees~~ input on resolutions and legislative priorities.
 - ~~i. Solicit more direct input from members when setting legislative priorities by surveying members or provide another avenue for members to get feedback to the committee before they make a recommendation to the board.~~
 - i. Promote committee membership to ensure members' voices are reflected in the resolutions, the legislative platform, and the legislative priorities.
 - ii. Solicit more direct input from members through a 10-day comment period on resolutions. Comments will be considered by the Legislative Committee when developing recommendations on resolutions. ~~when setting legislative priorities by surveying members or provide another avenue for members to get feedback to the committee before they make a recommendation to the board.~~
 - ~~ii-iii.~~ iii. Members will discuss and adopt legislative priorities at the annual business meeting.
 - ~~iii-iv.~~ iv. Encourage members to develop personal relationships with legislators.
 - Increase communication with members about legislative activity.
 - i. Provide timely and useful reminders to members about how and when engagement with legislators is needed.
 - ii. Present members with information that describes how they can assist the Minnesota Watersheds lobbying team during and outside of the legislative session.

- iii. Host an annual event for members to learn about Minnesota Watersheds' legislative platform and priorities and to receive guidance on how to discuss and interact with legislators on issues.
- iv. Urge members to personally contact and invite legislators to attend their local events as well as Minnesota Watersheds events.
- v. Set up appointments with members and legislators.

Goal 5: Enhance the skills of watershed district and watershed management organization boards.

Objectives, Strategies, and Tactics to Achieve Goal 5

1. Provide guidance and direction for efficient and effective member watershed district and watershed management organizations board operations.
 - Offer comprehensive training for watershed district and watershed management organizations boards.
 - i. Provide training sessions at all Minnesota Watersheds events.
 - ii. Increase opportunities for the sharing of knowledge between members at Minnesota Watersheds events.
 - iii. Maintain an up-to-date watershed handbook by reviewing the handbook annually and revising it as warranted.
 - iv. Work collaboratively with the Board of Water and Soil Resources to provide regional training.
 - v. Utilize the expertise, knowledge, and experience of Minnesota Watersheds staff and the Minnesota Association of Watershed Administrators in the development of education and training for watershed district and watershed management organization boards.

Supporting Resources

In addition to the Strategic Plan, Minnesota Watersheds has developed supporting resources for its governance and management. The Bylaws and Manual of Policy and Procedures will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary. The Minnesota Watersheds Board of Directors can update all documents except the bylaws which require adoption by the membership. For the most up-to-date versions of these documents, visit [Minnesota Watersheds \(mnwatersheds.com\)](http://mnwatersheds.com).

Bylaws

Bylaws are the written rules for conduct of the organization. The Bylaws can be found [here](#).

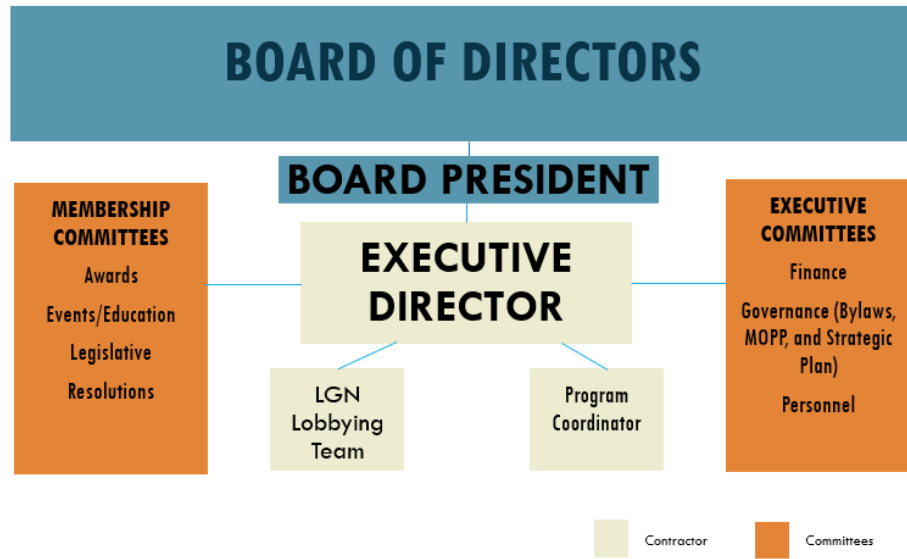
Manual of Policy and Procedures

The Manual of Policy and Procedures is designed to regulate all major decisions, actions, and principles of Minnesota Watersheds. The Manual of Policy and Procedures can be found [here](#).

Organizational Chart

An organizational chart shows the chain of command within an organization and can be found below.

ORGANIZATION CHART



Board of Directors Annual Work Plan

The Board of Directors Annual Work Plan was developed based on the goals, objectives, strategies, and tactics identified in the Strategic Plan, as well as the day-to-day operations described in the Manual of Policy and Procedures.



Minnesota Watersheds Board of Directors 2025-2026 Work Plan

Purpose	The Minnesota Watersheds Board of Directors will work with the Executive Director to ensure the Bylaws, Manual of Policies and Procedures (MOPP), and Strategic Plan of the organization are kept up to date and adequately guide the organization.
Tasks	<p>Goal 1. Fortify the infrastructure to ensure reliable delivery of services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work together to ensure daily operations align with the Bylaws, MOPP, and Strategic Plan • Review the Communication Plan annually • Provide funding for website maintenance • Provide funding for a platform for data sharing • Support the committee framework as described in the Strategic Plan • Read weekly communication • Review recommendations from committees <p>Goal 2. Build a watershed community that supports one another</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When requested, meet individually with non-members to address concerns with the goal of increasing membership • Provide for and participate in the Legislative meeting, Summer Tour, and Annual Conference <p>Goal 3. Serve as a liaison to collaborate with statewide agencies and associations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the work of the executive director to strengthen the working relationship with <u>the Board of Water and Soil Resources</u> state agencies and the Minnesota Association of Watershed Administrators • Support the executive director’s attendance at Board of Water and Soil Resources, Clean Water Council, and Drainage Work Group meetings • Support opportunities to partner with the Local Government Water Roundtable, Red River Watershed Management Board, and other entities <p>Goal 4. Ensure strong legislative policies are in place for watershed management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the legislative platform is provided to all member organizations • Support the executive director’s work with representatives on the Board of Water and Soil Resources and Clean Water Council • Provide for lobbying services <u>and support the executive director’s work with the lobbying team</u> <p>Goal 5. Enhance the skills of watershed district and watershed management organization boards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide for watershed handbook maintenance • Provide funding for training opportunities at Minnesota Watersheds events
Meeting Logistics	The Minnesota Watersheds Board of Directors will meet in person at the Legislative event, Summer Tour, and Annual Conference. They will meet as needed throughout the remainder of the year.

Minnesota Watersheds Representatives Expectations for Support and Advocacy

Goal 4 of the Minnesota Watersheds Strategic Plan is to ensure strong legislative policies are in place for watershed management. Objective 2 under this goal is to articulate clearly defined legislative policies so members and Minnesota Watersheds representatives can accurately state our positions.

At the 2023 Annual Business Meeting, the membership adopted a comprehensive platform of clearly defined policies that was developed in partnership with the Minnesota Association of Watershed Administrators and the Resolutions Committee. Tactic 2 under this objective is to draft expectations for support and advocacy for Minnesota Watersheds representatives that serve on the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) Board, Clean Water Council (CWC), and Local Government Water Roundtable (LGWRT).

Review of the BWSR and CWC websites indicates that each entity is supported by several committees. These committees meet at least annually. However, there is little or no interaction between the watershed representatives on these committees and the Minnesota Watersheds Executive Director.

To improve communication, watershed representatives on the BWSR Board, CWC, and LGWRT are asked to inform the Minnesota Watersheds Executive Director in advance of each committee and monthly board meeting. If necessary, the representative(s) and Minnesota Watersheds Executive Director will meet to discuss agenda items to ensure our position(s) on a topic or topics is accurately presented. The watershed representative will take meeting notes and follow up with the Minnesota Watersheds Executive Director after each meeting. Updates will be provided to the Minnesota Watersheds Board of Directors when requested.

BWSR Committees	Watershed Representative
Administrative Advisory	
	Joe Collins
	Jill Crafton
	LeRoy Ose
Audit and Oversight	
	Joe Collins
Buffers, Soils, and Drainage	
	LeRoy Ose
Dispute Resolution	
	Joe Collins
Grants Program and Policy	
	Jill Crafton
	LeRoy Ose
RIM Reserve	
	LeRoy Ose
Water Management and Strategic Plan	
	Joe Collins
Wetland Conservation	
	Jill Crafton
Drainage Work Group	
	None

Clean Water Council Committees	Watershed Representative
Budget and Outcomes	
	None
Policy	
	Marcie Weinandt
Steering	
	None

Tactics Timetable

The Tactics Timetable¹ was developed based upon priorities determined by the Strategic Plan Committee and recommended to the Minnesota Watersheds Board of Directors as follows: two-year work plan for the Executive Director² based on work accomplished. This is done to better ensure accomplishing the goals and setting expectations for member watershed districts, watershed management organizations, the Minnesota Watersheds Board of Directors, and the Executive Director.

Goal 1. Fortify the infrastructure to ensure reliable delivery of services	Start Date	Completed	Process	2025 Hours	2026 Hours
Tactics					
<i>Governance and Management</i>					
Confirm, each month, that Board of Directors actions reflect the Strategic Plan (#8 priority)	1/1/2023		Staff review	5	5
Staff review and recommendations for major policies or expenditures	1/1/2023		Staff review	12	12
<i>Communication</i>					
Maintain a communication plan (#3 priority)	3/7/2023	5/22/2023	Staff development Board approval	8	8
Adhere to a consistent process for newsletter development and distribution	1/1/2023		Staff development	75	75
Distribute meeting packets directly to members	1/1/2023		Board approval	2	2
Post agendas on website	1/1/2023		Board approval	2	2
<i>Technological Resources</i>					
Maintain website	1/1/2023		Board approval Staff development	15	15
Work with Minnesota Association of Watershed Administrators to launch a platform for data sharing (#6 priority)	2/15/2023		Board approval Staff development	20	20
<i>Committees</i>					
Events-Education	1/1/2023		Co-chairs and staff	15	15
Resolutions	4/12/2023		Co-chairs and staff	19	19
Awards	8/1/2023		Co-chairs and staff	1	1
Legislative	6/7/2023		Co-chairs and staff	9	9
Finance	8/5/2023		Co-chairs and staff	6	6
Governance (Bylaws-MOPP and Strategic Plan)	1/1/2023		Co-chairs and staff	19	19
Personnel			Executive Committee	0	0

¹ Hours in the Tactics Timetable are ESTIMATED.

² In addition to the information contained in the Tactics Timetable, the Executive Director also carries out the daily operations of Minnesota Watersheds as shown in the table on page 13. The Tactics Timetable and Daily Operations tables together form the two-year Work Plan for the Executive Director. All hours are ESTIMATED and based on an average time commitment of 1,750 hours per year.

Goal 2. Build a watershed community that supports one another	Start Date	Completed	Process	2025 Hours	2026 Hours
Tactics					
<i>Enhance member engagement through inclusivity</i>					
Retain Minnesota Watersheds as the name of the organization (#7 priority)	1/1/2023	3/14/2023	Membership approval	0	0
<i>Grow membership (#5 priority)</i>					
Develop and share membership services information	2/2/2023		Staff development	2	2
Meet individually with non-members to address concerns and increase membership	12/23/2022		Staff development Partnership with MW BOD & MAWA	10	10
<i>Expand participation at Minnesota Watersheds events</i>					
Legislative Meeting	1/4/2023		Staff and committee	25	25
Summer Tour	2/2/2023		Staff and committee	60	60
Annual Meeting on Resolutions and Petitions	3/21/2025		Staff and committee	0	60
Annual Conference	4/12/2023		Staff and committee	120	120
Goal 3. Serve as a liaison to collaborate with statewide agencies and associations					
Tactics					
<i>Increase collaborative efforts between Board of Water and Soil Resources and Minnesota Watersheds (#4 priority)</i>					
Strengthen the working relationship with BWSR by identifying points of contention, developing a plan to address, and reduce concerns	1/1/2023		Staff development	50	50
<i>Identify Opportunities to Partner to Promote Watershed Management</i>					
Attend Board of Water and Soil Resources, Clean Water Council, and Drainage Work Group meetings and provide updates (#10 priority)	1/1/2023		Staff attendance	200	200
Strengthen partnership with Minnesota Association of Watershed Administrators through the Executive Director's attendance at Minnesota Association of Watershed Administrators meetings and collaboration on education opportunities at Minnesota Watersheds' events	1/1/2023		Staff attendance	60	60
Increase opportunities to partner and track collaboration with Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, League of Minnesota Cities, Local Government Water Roundtable, Association of Minnesota Counties, and Red River Watershed Management Board	1/1/2023		Staff development	65	55

Goal 4. Ensure strong legislative policies are in place for watershed management	Start Date	Completed	Process	2025 Hours	2026 Hours
Tactics					
<i>Develop Comprehensive Platform of Policies</i>					
Maintain a comprehensive legislative platform (#1 priority)	3/9/2023	12/1/2023	Staff development Partnership with MW BOD & MAWA	5	5
Draft expectations for representatives on BWSR board, CWC, LGWRT			Staff development Partnership with MW BOD & MAWA	25	25
<i>Identify Legislative Issue Impacting Members (#2 priority)</i>					
Support legislation that promotes watershed management	1/1/2023		Staff time	40	40
Fend off legislation that limits abilities to protect and restore water resources	1/1/2023		Staff time	40	40
Ensure lobbyist(s) have clear direction on legislative priorities	1/1/2023		Staff time	75	55
Align workload with the resources set aside for lobbying and manage member expectations			Staff time	20	10
<i>Evaluate Current Resolutions and Legislative Platform Process (#2 priority)</i>					
Identify alternative methods, adopt revised process, or reaffirm current process			Staff development Partnership with MW BOD & MAWA	5	5
Goal 5. Enhance the skills of watershed district and watershed management organization boards					
Tactics					
<i>Offer comprehensive training for watershed district and watershed management organization boards</i>					
Maintain an up-to-date watershed handbook by reviewing it annually and revising it as warranted (#9 priority)	1/1/2023	10/2/2023	Staff development Partnership with MW BOD & MAWA	65	45
Work with BWSR on regional training				25	25
Utilize the expertise of staff and Minnesota Association of Watershed Administrators in the development of education and training for watershed officials (#11 priority)	3/7/2023		Staff development in partnership with MAWA	10	10
				2025 Hours	2026 Hours
				1110	1110
Administration	1/1/2023			259	259
General Communication	1/1/2023			300	300
MW Board Meetings	1/13/2023			68	68
Meetings with Program Manager	1/3/2023			13	13
TOTAL HOURS				1750	1750



Memorandum

DATE: October 31, 2025
TO: Minnesota Watersheds Members
FROM: Brad Kramer, Minnesota Watersheds President
RE: **Proposed Bylaws Changes**

The Bylaws-Manual of Policy and Procedures (MOPP) Committee met on October 13 to discuss proposed Bylaws changes. The proposed changes were also discussed at the Minnesota Watersheds Board of Directors (Board) meeting on October 27. The proposed changes are shown in track changes throughout the document.

There are a few wordsmithing changes throughout the document. The following language was inadvertently omitted from Article 3.3 in the draft document presented to the members and so was not adopted at the special meeting in March.

- Members may participate and vote in such meetings by telephone or other electronic means approved by the Board in the Manual of Policy and Procedures and determination of quorum and voting shall be as provided in sections 3.4 and 3.5.
- The Resolutions and Legislative Committee recommended changing the name of the committee to the Legislative Committee. This change was made throughout the document.

Questions regarding these proposed changes should be directed to Brad Kramer at brad@provenioconsulting.com or Jan Voit jvoit@mnwatersheds.com.

BYLAWS

MINNESOTA ASSOCIATION OF WATERSHED DISTRICTS, INC.

Doing business as Minnesota Watersheds

St. Paul, Minnesota

ARTICLE I.

Offices and Corporate Seal

- 1.1 Official Name. The official name of the corporation is the Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts, Inc., which conducts business under the registered assumed name of, and is hereinafter referred to as, Minnesota Watersheds.
- 1.2 Purpose. The purpose of Minnesota Watersheds is to provide educational opportunities, access to information resources, interface with other agencies, facilitate tours, meetings, and lobby on behalf of members. Additionally, Minnesota Watersheds will facilitate the exchange of information to help members better comply with governmental regulations and laws while offering an informed interface with the community or communities being served. Minnesota Watersheds will work to secure the capacity of its members to implement their statutory powers and purposes.
- 1.3 Organized. The corporation is organized as a 501(c)(4) organization. Notwithstanding any provision of the Articles of Incorporation or Bylaws which may be interpreted to the contrary, Minnesota Watersheds shall not authorize or undertake any actions which jeopardize its status as a 501(c)(4) organization.
- 1.4 Office. The registered office of the corporation shall be designated by the Board of Directors.
- 1.5 Corporate Seal. The corporation shall have no corporate seal.
- 1.6 Manual of Policy and Procedures. The Board of Directors has established a management document identified as the Manual of Policy and Procedures to support the orderly and timely details of regular operation. It may be revised at any time by a majority vote of the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE II.

Membership

- 2.1 Membership. Each dues-paying watershed district or watershed management organization duly established and in good standing pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 103B or 103D, shall be entitled to membership in this corporation.
- 2.2 Delegates. Alternates. When a watershed district or watershed management organization becomes a member of this corporation, it shall designate from among its board members two delegates to represent it in this corporation. In addition, each member may designate alternate delegates to represent such member in the absence of any originally designated delegate. Thereafter, each member shall annually designate its delegates and alternate delegates so long as it remains a member in good standing of this corporation.

- 2.3 Termination of Membership. Any member that has failed to pay its dues is not in good standing and shall be stricken from the membership roll.
- 2.4 Resignation of Member. Any member may withdraw from this corporation effective immediately by notifying the secretary in writing. Regardless of the date of termination, there shall be no refund of the annual dues paid by the member.

ARTICLE III. Meetings of Membership

- 3.1 Annual Business Meeting. An annual meeting of this corporation shall be held to transact such business as shall properly come before them. Notice of the time and place of such annual meeting shall be mailed, either physically or electronically, by the secretary to all members at least thirty (30) days in advance thereof.
- 3.2 Annual Meeting on Resolutions and Petitions. An annual meeting of members of the corporation shall be held for the purpose of considering resolutions and petitions as set forth in Article IX. Notice of the time and place of such meeting shall be mailed, either physically or electronically, by the secretary with the assistance of the executive director to all members at least thirty (30) days in advance thereof. Delegates may participate and vote in such meetings by telephone or other electronic means approved by the Board in the Manual of Policy and Procedures, and determination of quorum and voting shall be as provided in sections 3.4 and 3.5.
- 3.3 Special Meeting. Special meetings of the members of the corporation shall be called by the president upon request of a majority of directors of the Board of Directors or upon the written request of one-third of the members of the corporation in good standing. This request shall be in writing addressed to the president or the secretary of the corporation. Within thirty days of receipt of said request, the Board of Directors shall mail (either physically or electronically) notice of said special meeting to all members. This notice shall state the objective of the meeting and the subjects to be considered. Members may participate and vote in such meetings by telephone or other electronic means approved by the Board in the Manual of Policy and Procedures and determination of quorum and voting shall be as provided in sections 3.4 and 3.5.
- 3.4 Quorum for Meetings.
- a. Annual Business Meeting. Each dues-paying watershed district or watershed management organization may appoint up to two delegates. A quorum consists of the majority of the delegates registered at the annual conference and in attendance irrespective of whether some have departed. Once a quorum has been established there shall be no further question as to the quorum.
- b. Annual Meeting on Resolutions and Petitions, Special Meetings. A quorum for the Annual Meeting on Resolutions and Petitions or Special Meetings consists of at least one delegate from each of fifty percent plus one of the member watershed organizations and must include at least one delegate from each of the three regions described in Article IV.
- 3.5 Voting. Any action taken by the members shall be by majority vote of the delegates present unless otherwise specifically provided by these Bylaws. Each member shall be entitled to one (1) vote for each delegate present.

ARTICLE IV. Board of Directors

- 4.1 General Powers. The business activities of the corporation shall be directed and managed by the

Board of Directors. The Board of Directors shall be authorized to pay officers and directors of the corporation per diem allowances and expenses as may from time to time be submitted to the Board of Directors, and such other expenses as may from time to time be necessary for the furtherance of the corporation's business, consistent with the rate and provisions of watershed board member per diem allowances and expense reimbursement provided in state law. The Board of Directors is authorized to hire and/or contract for services needed.

- 4.2 Directors to be Elected by Regions. For the purpose of election of the Board of Directors, members are grouped into three regions; three Directors shall be elected from each region, with staggered three-year terms. Members from each region shall elect one director for a three-year term at the annual business meeting of Minnesota Watersheds. No watershed district or watershed management organization shall have more than one board member elected to be a Director on the Board of Directors of the corporation. In the event of a vacancy on the Board of Directors, the Board of Directors may appoint a member for the remaining term from a watershed district or watershed management organization with an existing representative on the Board of Directors if there are no other candidates from the region requesting appointment to the position. In the event a vacancy is filled by the Board of Directors, such appointment shall be submitted to the regional caucus for approval at the next regional caucus meeting. Regional caucuses shall elect a Chairman and Recording Secretary report the election results to the Convention at a designated time. The member watershed districts and watershed management organizations present at the Regional Caucus meeting shall have full authority to elect a Chairman, Recording Secretary, and representatives to the Board of Directors.
- 4.3 Regions. The Board of Directors may re-align the regions or the members contained therein, it being the intent and purpose that each region ~~contain~~contains the approximate same number of members. Any watershed district or watershed management organization in ~~Minnesota~~Minnesota, not presently a member of this corporation, upon admission to membership, will be assigned to a region by the Board of Directors. Regional membership shall be listed in the Manual of Policy and Procedures.
- 4.4 Number, Qualification, and Term of Office. The number of directors constituting the Board of Directors shall be nine. Each director elected at the annual meeting shall be elected for a three-year term. Directors shall be on the board of a watershed district or watershed management organization that is a member in good standing of this corporation.
- 4.5 Vacancies. If there be a vacancy among the officers of the corporation or among the directors by reason of death, resignation, termination of membership, or removal as provided by law, the Articles of Incorporation, or these Bylaws, or otherwise or for non-excused absences for three consecutive meetings, such vacancy shall be filled by the Board of Directors until the next Annual Meeting of Minnesota Watersheds.
- 4.6 Removal of Directors. At a special meeting of the Board of Directors called solely for that reason, the notice of which meeting shall have been given in writing to members of the Board of Directors at least thirty days prior thereto and not more than fifty days prior thereto, a super majority of seven members of the Board of Directors may remove one or more directors from their term of office without cause.
- 4.7 Meetings, Actions. The Board of Directors shall hold the annual meeting of the Board of Directors immediately after the annual meeting of the members of this corporation, and at such annual meeting shall elect the officers as above provided. Regular meetings of the Board of Directors shall be held at a time and place to be fixed by resolution or adopted by the majority of the Board of

Directors.

The majority of the Board of Directors shall constitute a quorum. Directors may participate and vote in Board of Directors meetings by telephone or other electronic means approved by the Board in the Manual of Policy and Procedures.

Actions may be taken by a majority vote of those Directors present or participating by telephone or other electronic means approved by the Board in the Manual of Policy and Procedures. The Secretary of the Board of Directors, with the assistance of the executive director, shall give written or electronic notice to each director at least seven calendar days in advance of any regular or special directors' meeting. Special meetings may be called at the discretion of the President of the Board of Directors or upon demand in writing to the Secretary by three (3) directors of the Board of Directors.

- 4.8 Conflicts of Interest. Members of the Board of Directors shall act at all times in the best interests of the corporation. This means setting aside personal self-interest and performing their duties in transacting the affairs of the corporation in such a manner that promotes public confidence and trust in the integrity, objectivity, and impartiality of the Board. No Director shall directly or indirectly receive any profit from his/her position as such, and Directors shall serve without remuneration other than as provided in Section 4.1 of these Bylaws for the payment for reasonable expenses incurred by them in the performance of their duties. The pecuniary interests of immediate family members or close personal or business associates of a director are considered to also be the pecuniary interest of the director.
- 4.9 Indemnification. All directors and officers of the corporation shall be indemnified against any and all claims that may be brought against them as a result of action taken by them on behalf of the corporation as provided for and subject to the requirements of Chapter 317A of Minnesota Statutes as amended.

ARTICLE V. Board Officers

- 5.1 Officers and Duties. There shall be four officers of the Board of Directors, consisting of a President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. All officers shall be directors of the corporation. Their terms and duties are as follows:
- 5.2 President. The President shall serve a term of office of one year and may, upon re-election, succeed himself/herself for two additional successive terms. The President shall have the following duties:
- Convene and preside over regularly scheduled and special meetings of the Board of Directors and annual or special Minnesota Watersheds membership meetings.
 - Have general powers and duties of supervision and management as directed by the Manual of Policy and Procedures.
 - Appoint such committees as he/she shall deem necessary with the advice and consent of the Board of Directors.
- 5.3 Vice President. The Vice President shall serve a term of office of one year and may, upon re-election, succeed himself/herself for two additional successive terms. The Vice President shall have the following duties:
- Assume and perform the duties of the President in case of his/her absence or incapacity; and shall chair committees on special subjects as designated by the President.

- Have general powers and duties of supervision and management as directed by the Manual of Policy and Procedures.

5.4 Secretary. The Secretary shall serve a term of office of one year and may, upon re-election, succeed himself/herself for two additional successive terms.

The Secretary shall be responsible for preparing and keeping all records of board actions, including overseeing the taking of minutes at all board meetings, sending out meeting announcements, distributing copies of minutes and the agenda to each director, and assuring that corporate records are maintained.

5.5 Treasurer. The Treasurer shall serve a term of office of one year and may, upon re-election, succeed himself/herself for two additional successive terms.

The Treasurer shall Co-chair the finance committee, maintain account of all funds deposited and disbursed, disburse corporate funds as designated by the Board of Directors, assist in the preparation of the budget, collect membership dues, and make financial information available to board members and the public.

ARTICLE VI. Committees

6.1 Committees. Committee co-chairs shall be appointed by the Board of Directors. All committees shall have co-chairs.

ARTICLE VII. Fiscal Year, Dues and Annual Review of Financial Procedures

7.1 Fiscal Year. The fiscal year of the corporation shall end on September 30 each year.

7.2 Membership Dues. Dues will be determined annually by the Board of Directors as specified in the Manual of Policy and Procedures.

7.3 Annual Dues. Annual dues shall be payable in January of each year. If a member's dues are not paid on or before April 30 of each year, such member's name shall be stricken from the membership roll. Reinstatement shall be upon such terms and conditions as prescribed by the Board of Directors.

The Board of Directors shall have the authority to suspend or defer dues of any newly organized watershed district or watershed management organization that joins this association until such member watershed district or watershed management organization is in actual receipt of its first authorized fund. The Board shall send out the annual dues statement with payment directed to the Minnesota Watersheds accounting firm. The Board of Directors may consider deferring, suspending, or reducing dues to new members or on an individual case basis when an appeal is made by a member because of hardship or funding problems.

7.4 Annual Review of Financial Procedures. The Board of Directors of this corporation shall provide for an annual review of financial procedures of all its resources and expenditures. A full report efon such review and financial status shall be furnished at each annual meeting of the members. This review will be conducted by an auditing firm selected by the Board of Directors with experience in the field of government and water management. The review results shall be furnished to all members within forty-five days after receipt thereof by the Treasurer.

**ARTICLE VIII.
Employees**

- 8.1 Employees. At the discretion of and under the direction of the Board of Directors, Minnesota Watersheds may choose to hire and administer various employees. Their positions and job expectations shall be individually developed and included in the Manual of Policy and Procedures.

**ARTICLE IX.
Resolutions and Petitions**

- 9.1 Resolutions: The Co-Chairs of the Minnesota Watersheds ~~Resolutions and~~ Legislative Committee will send a request for resolutions, along with a form for submission, to the membership at least four months prior to the Annual Meeting on Resolutions and Petitions. Resolutions and their justification must be submitted to the Minnesota Watersheds ~~Resolutions and~~ Legislative Committee in the required format at least two months prior to the Annual Meeting on Resolutions and Petitions for committee review and recommendation. The committee will present these resolutions and their recommendations to the Board of Directors and the Minnesota Watersheds membership at least one month prior to the Annual Meeting on Resolutions and Petitions. The Board of Directors may make additional recommendations on each proposed resolution through its board meeting process. This same procedure will be used when policy issues are to be considered at any special Minnesota Watersheds membership meeting. All resolutions adopted at the Annual Meeting on Resolutions and Petitions shall be considered adopted by the members. Any resolutions to be considered at the Annual Business Meeting must be recommended by the board of directors and require a two-thirds majority vote of the delegates present to be adopted.
- 9.2 Petitions: Any member or group of members may submit to the Board of Directors at any time a petition requesting action, support for, rejection of, or additional information on any issue of potential importance to the members. Such petitions require signed resolutions from at least 15 members before a special meeting of the membership will be convened.

**ARTICLE X.
Chapters**

- 10.1 Chapters. Members may form chapters to further the purposes stated in Article II of the Articles of Incorporation, to carry out policies of the Board of Directors, and to suggest policies for consideration by the Board of Directors.

**ARTICLE XI.
Rules of Order**

- 11.1 Rules. When consistent with its Articles of Incorporation and these Bylaws, the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall provide guidance to the proceedings of this corporation. For consistency in operation, a copy shall be available for consultation if requested at every scheduled meeting of the Board of Directors and Membership meetings.

**ARTICLE XII.
Amendments**

- 12.1 Amendments. These Bylaws may be amended by a majority vote of the members of this corporation only as provided below.

12.2 Annual Business Meeting. At the annual business meeting of the members of this corporation, the Bylaws may be amended by the majority of the members present if there is a quorum at said annual meeting and due notice has been given to the membership of the changes 30 days in advance of the meeting.

12.3 Special Meeting. These Bylaws may be amended by the members at a special meeting called for that reason but only by a majority vote at a meeting where fifty percent plus one of the member watershed organizations are present including at least one delegate from each of the three regions described in Article IV, and only if there has been thirty days' written notice to all members of such special meeting. Such special meeting may be called upon the request of one-third of the members of this corporation by notice in writing to the secretary or president, which notice shall ask for said special meeting and shall state the proposed Bylaws changes, and upon receipt of such request, the Secretary or President must send written, either by mail or electronically, notice of the meeting to the members of this corporation within thirty days of receipt of such request, which shall be not less than thirty days nor more than fifty days of the date of the written notice.

DRAFT



Memorandum

DATE: October 31, 2025
TO: Minnesota Watersheds Members
FROM: Brad Kramer, Minnesota Watersheds President
RE: **Legislative Memo**

The Minnesota Watersheds Board of Directors (Board) met on October 27 and reviewed the recommendations made by the Resolutions and Legislative Committee at its October 7 meeting.

Bylaws

The Board moved to the membership the recommendation to change the committee's name to the Legislative Committee.

Legislative Platform

The Board moved to the membership the recommendation to include the following statement in the Legislative Platform: When a resolution sunsets at the end of five years, it is removed from our Active Resolutions but remains as a policy in the Legislative Platform.

Resolutions

The Board moved a resolution to the membership from Prior Lake-Spring Lake Watershed District. The resolution is seeking revision to Minnesota Statutes 471.617 to include watershed districts and watershed management organizations on the list of political subdivisions allowed to self-insure for employee health benefits. The Resolutions and Legislative Committee recommended adoption of this resolution. (See Resolution 2025-04)

Since the Resolutions and Legislative Committee meeting, two additional resolutions were submitted.

- On October 16, Coon Creek Watershed District submitted a resolution to improve mitigation under the Minnesota Environmental Species Act. (See Resolution 2025-05)
- On October 21, Comfort Lake-Forest Lake Watershed District submitted a resolution to clarify the deadlines for watershed districts to certify levies. (See Resolution 2025-06)

The Board moved these two resolutions to the membership, noting that they have not been reviewed by the Resolutions and Legislative Committee and have received no recommendation regarding adoption.

Our Bylaws state that *any resolutions considered at the annual business meeting must be recommended by the board of directors and require a two-thirds majority vote of the delegates present to be adopted.*

Legislative Priorities

The Board moved the following recommended legislative priorities to the membership:

- state agency permitting efficiency,
- chloride management, and
- self-insured health benefits pools.

Questions regarding these items should be directed to Brad Kramer at brad@provenioconsulting.com, Don Pereira at dpereira@vbwd.org or Jan Voit jvoit@mnwatersheds.com.



MINNESOTA WATERSHEDS

Connecting People. Protecting Water.

2025-2026 LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

Abstract

This document articulates clearly defined legislative policies so members and Minnesota Watersheds representatives on the Board of Water and Soil Resources Board, Clean Water Council, and Local Government Water Roundtable can accurately state our positions.

Adopted August 25, 2025

Contents

Purpose	3
Emerging Issues.....	3
Finance	3
1. Capacity.....	3
2. Grant Funding	4
Urban Stormwater	4
1. Stormwater Quality Treatment	4
2. Water Reuse	4
Water Quantity	4
1. Drainage	5
2. Funding	5
3. Flood Control	5
4. Regulation	5
5. Policy	5
Water Quality	6
1. Lakes.....	6
2. Wetlands	6
3. Rivers and Streams.....	6
4. Policy	6
Watershed Management and Operations	6
1. Watershed Powers	6
2. Watershed Duties.....	7
3. Watershed Planning.....	7
Agency Relations	7
1. Advocacy	7
2. Representation.....	7
3. Regulation	7
Regulations.....	8
Natural Resources	8
1. Planning	8
2. Policy	8
3. Habitat	8

Results 9

 Water Quantity..... 9

 Drainage (2024)..... 9

 Watershed Management and Operations 9

 Watershed Duties (2025) 9

 Watershed Planning (2024)..... 9

Purpose

Minnesota Watersheds represents both watershed districts and watershed management organizations (collectively referred to as Watersheds). That representation underscores the necessity of protecting Watershed powers, duties, and planning responsibilities on a watershed basis.

This legislative platform outlines Minnesota Watersheds positions on legislative matters and serves as the foundation for our organization to support or oppose various local, state, and federal legislation. The legislative platform is based on adopted resolutions and emerging issues as identified by the MAWA Legislative Platform Committee and the Minnesota Watersheds Resolutions and Legislative Committees and adopted by the membership. It also is designed to clearly articulate defined legislative policies so members and Minnesota Watersheds representatives on the Board of Water and Soil Resources Board, Clean Water Council, and Local Government Water Roundtable can accurately state our positions.

When a resolution sunsets at the end of five years, it is removed from our Active Resolutions but remains as a policy in the Legislative Platform.

Emerging Issues

New or developing problems or concerns may arise that require attention before or during the legislative session. Those problems or concerns likely have not been addressed through the resolutions process, may or may not be identified in the legislative platform, but will need to be addressed by the lobbying team and executive director through attendance and meetings, written comments, testifying at hearings, or legislation. Flexibility is necessary so that the lobbying team and executive director can be proactive on behalf of Minnesota Watersheds with state agencies, non-governmental organizations, and at the legislature.

The Minnesota Watersheds Manual of Policy and Procedures states: *In the event legislation or state agency policy is introduced that may cause harm to Minnesota Watersheds members and there is no policy adopted by Minnesota Watersheds on the issue, the Minnesota Watersheds Board of Directors may review the legislation or policy and adopt a temporary position on the issue on behalf of the organization. The policy position will be in effect until the next annual resolutions hearing. At that time, the membership must review the policy position and vote on whether it should become a permanent policy position or should expire.*

Finance

Watersheds are tasked with many responsibilities by Minnesota statute and local priorities are set by their boards. To effectively perform those duties, adequate funding is necessary. Although some Watersheds have levy authority, there are many other avenues of funding that are important for achieving local water management, as well as water quality and quantity goals.

1. Capacity

- a. Support Clean Water Funds for implementation, not capacity (Resolution 2021-01A and B)
- b. Support capacity funding for watershed districts (Resolution 2021-02)
- c. Support General Fund repayment of Soil and Water Conservation District capacity funds to the Clean Water Fund

2. Grant Funding

- a. Support metro watershed-based implementation funding for approved 103B plans only (Resolution 2021-07)
- b. Support a more equitable formula for watershed-based implementation funding in the metro
- c. Lobby for watershed-specific grant funding
- d. Lobby for the flood hazard mitigation grant program

Urban Stormwater

Watersheds and land use management partners work to reduce polluted stormwater runoff and/or increase infiltration from urbanization and hard surfaces. Many Watersheds in the state have adopted regulatory standards and/or official controls to successfully manage urban stormwater when land alterations occur. Watersheds also implement a variety of urban stormwater management practices to treat runoff before it enters our lakes, streams, and wetlands.

1. Stormwater Quality Treatment

- a. Support limited liability for certified commercial salt applicators (Resolution 2022-02)
- b. Support, partner/collaborate with a municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4s – municipal separate storm sewer system) (if/where appropriate) in permit compliance activities
- c. Support the use of green infrastructure and minimizing impervious surfaces, where practical, in urban development and planning
- d. Where it may exist, support removing duplication of urban stormwater regulatory standards and controls
- e. Support the rescission of the Department of Labor and Industry/Plumbing Board Final Interpretation of Inquiry PB0159, storm drainage surcharge to return to common engineering practice for stormwater pond design

2. Water Reuse

- a. Support the Stormwater Reuse Task Force and for the Minnesota Department of Health to complete a review process (Resolution 2022-01)
- b. Support efforts to clarify and simplify State Plumbing Board rulings and requirements to facilitate more reuse of rainwater/stormwater

Water Quantity

Watersheds are directed by statute to conserve the natural resources of the state by land use planning, flood control, and other conservation projects. Specific purposes refer to flood damage reduction, stream flows, water supply, and drainage systems, as well as to identify and plan for effective protection and improvement of surface water and groundwater, and to protect and enhance fish and wildlife habitat and water recreational facilities. Numerous past, present, and future legislative initiatives have affected how water quantity issues are managed at the local level. This very broad-based topic includes management of the volume of water (drought, flooding, water supply), the flow of water (drainage, storm water, channel restoration, habitat), and recreational (lakes, rivers, wetlands) activities like fishing, boating, and hunting.

1. Drainage

- a. Support the current statutory requirements for notification and coordination in the development of petitioned repairs, drainage improvement projects, and new drainage systems
- b. Support the addition of a classification for public drainage systems that are artificial watercourses
- c. Seek increased support for and participation in the Drainage Work Group (Resolution 2022-03)
- d. Oppose the drainage registry information portal
- e. Oppose incorporating increased environmental, land use, and multipurpose water management criteria (M.S. 103E.015 requirements)
- f. Support new legislation modeled after HF2687 and SF2419 (2018) regarding Department of Natural Resources regulatory authority over public drainage maintenance and repairs (Resolution 2023-03)
- g. Oppose mandatory Environmental Assessment Worksheets for drainage projects
- h. Investigate ways of maintaining water flow during periods of drought and explore opportunities for aquifer recharge.

2. Funding

- a. Obtain stable funding for flood damage reduction and natural resources enhancement projects (Resolution 2022-05)
- b. Clarify county financing obligations and/or authorize watershed district general obligation bonding for public drainage projects

3. Flood Control

- a. Support crop insurance to include crop losses within impoundment areas (Resolution 2021-05)
- b. Seek action for streamlining the Department of Natural Resources Flood Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (Resolution 2023-04)

4. Regulation

- a. Support temporary water storage on Department of Natural Resources wetlands during major flood events (Resolution 2020-04)
- b. Support managing water flows in the Minnesota River Basin (statewide) through increased water storage and other strategies and practices
- c. Work with Minnesota Department of Transportation to support flood control and how to handle increased water volume issues along state and federal highway systems (example from Bemidji district of the Minnesota Department of Transportation)

5. Policy

- a. Support funding for watershed-based climate resiliency projects and studies
- b. Support funding for best management practices that protect and enhance groundwater supply
- c. Seek the ability to allow resale of acquisition buyout property (Resolution 2024-04)

Water Quality

Protecting and improving the quality of surface and ground water in our Watersheds is an essential component of managing water resources on a watershed basis.

1. Lakes

- a. Support limiting wake boat activities (Resolution 2022-06)
- b. Support designation change and research needs for the Chinese Mystery Snail
- c. Support temporary lake quarantine authorization to control the spread of aquatic invasive species
- d. Support streamlining permit applications for rough fish management
- e. Support dredging as a best management practice to manage internal phosphorus loads in lakes

2. Wetlands

- a. Support a statutory requirement for water level control structures in wetland restorations and wetland banks
- b. Support federal, state, and local funding for wetland restoration and protection activities
- c. Seek clarification of the statutorily modified definition of wetlands and the effects on watershed implementation of the Wetland Conservation Act ([Minnesota Laws 2024, Chapter 90, Article 3, section 77](#))

3. Rivers and Streams

- a. Support a statutory deadline for Department of Natural Resources Public Waters Work Permits (45-60 days)
- b. Support automatic transfer of public waters work permits to Watersheds (M.S. Chapter 103G.245 Subd.5)

4. Policy

- a. Support funding for watershed-based climate resiliency projects and studies
- b. Support funding for best management practices that protect groundwater quality
- c. Support development, adoption, and implementation of regulatory approaches to reducing chloride contamination in waters of the state (Resolution 2024-01)

Watershed Management and Operations

Protecting, enhancing, defending, and supporting existing Watershed statutory powers, duties, and planning responsibilities is necessary for effective and efficient watershed management and operations. Specific Watershed powers, duties, and planning responsibilities are contained in Minnesota Statutes [Chapter 103B](#) and [Chapter 103D](#).

1. Watershed Powers

- a. Support and defend eminent domain powers for watershed districts
- b. Support Watershed powers to levy property taxes and collect special assessments
- c. Support a watershed district's power to accept the transfer of drainage systems in the watershed; to repair, improve, and maintain the transferred drainage systems; and to construct all new drainage systems and improvements of existing drainage systems in the watershed

- d. Support a Watershed's power to regulate the use and development of land within its boundaries

2. Watershed Duties

- a. Support a Watershed's duty to initiate projects
- b. Support a Watershed's duty to maintain and operate existing projects
- c. Allow alternative notice of watershed district proceedings by publication on the district's website (Resolution 2024-02)

3. Watershed Planning

- a. Support a Watershed's ability to jointly or cooperatively manage and/or plan for the management of surface and ground water
- b. Support the connection between watershed-based implementation and funding
- c. Support development of a soil health goal for metropolitan watershed management plans (Resolution 2020-03)
- d. Support education and outreach to encourage formation of watershed districts in unserved areas (Resolution 2023-06)

Agency Relations

Watershed organizations work with many federal and state agencies to accomplish their mission. While relationships vary from administrative to funding and regulatory, agency policies and procedures can have a major impact on Watershed operations and projects. Maintaining strong, positive relations and ensuring Watersheds have a role in policy making is key to successful watershed management and operations.

1. Advocacy

- a. Require a 60-day review period before state agencies adopt new policies related to water and watershed management (Resolution 2021-06)
- b. Increase collaborative efforts between Minnesota Watersheds and all state agencies involved in water management

2. Representation

- a. Support watershed district managers being appointed, not allowing county commissioners to serve as managers

3. Regulation

- a. Streamline the Department of Natural Resources permitting process by increasing responsiveness, decreasing the amount of time it takes to approve permits, providing a detailed fee schedule prior to application, and conducting water level management practices that result in their reaction more quickly to serious, changing climate conditions
- b. Require watershed district permits for all state agencies (Resolution 2023-01)
- c. Oppose mandatory Environmental Assessment Worksheets for drainage projects
- d. Request support to request new legislation to set permit review time limits upon the Department of Natural Resources (Resolution 2024-13)

Regulations

Watershed representation on state and local panels and committees and the ability for Watersheds to regulate development and use of land within the organization's boundaries without prohibitive regulatory restrictions is necessary.

- a. Oppose legislation that forces spending on political boundaries
- b. Support the ability to appeal public water designations (Resolution 2020-01)
- c. Seek Watershed membership on Wetland Technical Evaluation Panels (Resolution 2024-03)

Natural Resources

Minnesota Statutes direct Watersheds to conserve the natural resources of the state. Some of the purposes listed in statute are to conserve water in streams and water supply, alleviate soil erosion and siltation of water courses or water basins, regulate improvements by riparian property owners of the beds, banks, and shores of lakes, streams, and wetlands for preservation and beneficial public use; protect or enhance the water quality in water courses or water basins; and protect and preserve groundwater resources.

1. Planning

- a. Ensure timely updates to Wildlife Management Area plans
- b. Support Watershed inclusion in development of state plans (i.e., Prairie Plan, State Water Plan, etc.) related to water and watershed management

2. Policy

- a. Support funding for climate resiliency
- b. Seek clarification in the statutory language regarding funding for and updating the public waters inventory ([Minnesota Laws 2024, Chapter 116, Article 3, section 47](#))
- c. Seek the Department of Natural Resources to establish a "Comprehensive Guideline for Calcareous Fen Management" (Resolution 2024-05)
- d. Seek the Department of Natural Resources to adopt a program to incentivize calcareous fen management on private lands (Resolution 2024-07)
- e. Seek a formal process to distribute a complete list of calcareous fens annually (Resolution 2024-10)
- f. Seek the development of a calcareous fen work group (Resolution 2024-12)

3. Habitat

- a. Clarify buffer rule issues
- b. Support funding to reduce erosion and sedimentation
- c. Support funding for the enhancement, establishment, and protection of stream corridors and riparian areas
- d. Support funding for the enhancement and protection of habitats

Results

This section will document when an issue is resolved.

Water Quantity

Drainage (2024)

- Comply with the legislative mandate to review outlet adequacy and notification requirements in the Drainage Work Group
 - During the 2023 legislative session ([Minnesota Laws 2023, Chapter 60, Article 5, section 21](#)), BWSR and the DWG were directed by the legislature to evaluate and develop recommendations on the definition and application of outlet adequacy as provided in M.S. Chapter 103E.261 and public notice requirements for drainage activities, including a drainage registry portal. The report was developed during DWG meetings following the 2023 legislative session. The report was submitted to the legislature on February 1, 2024 as required by the statutory language.

Watershed Management and Operations

Watershed Duties (2025)

- Support increased flexibility in the open meeting law
 - During the 2025 legislative session, the Open Meeting Law was amended to remove some of the requirements for remote meeting participation using interactive technology. Watershed boards and other local government bodies may conduct their meetings using interactive technology so long as:
 - all members of the body participating in the meeting, wherever their physical location, can hear and see one another and can hear and see all discussion and testimony presented at any location at which at least one member is present;
 - members of the public present at the regular meeting location of the body can hear and see all discussion and testimony and all votes of members of the body;
 - at least one member of the body is physically present at the regular meeting location; and
 - all votes are conducted by roll call so each member's vote on each issue can be identified and recorded.

Watershed Planning (2024)

- Support watershed autonomy during and following a One Watershed, One Plan development process
 - Changes were made to clarify and modernize M.S. Chapter 103D during the 2024 legislative session ([Minnesota Laws 2024, Chapter 90, Article 3, section 42](#)). M.S. Chapter 103D.401 was clarified that a watershed district maintains the authority to adopt a plan even when participating in a comprehensive watershed management planning program under section 103B.801 (One Watershed, One Plan/1W1P).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON MINNESOTA WATERSHEDS

RESOLUTION 2025-04

Resolution Seeking Revision to Minnesota Statute 471.617 to Include Watershed Districts and Watershed Management Organizations

Proposing District: Prior Lake-Spring Lake Watershed District
Contact Name: Joni Giese, Administrator
Phone Number: 952-440-0067
Email Address: jgiese@plslwd.org

Background that led to submission of this resolution:

The Scott County Association for Leadership and Efficiency (SCALE) is currently studying the feasibility of creating a self-insurance pool for employee health benefits. Benefits of a self-insurance pool may include increased flexibility in employee health insurance plan design to better meet employees’ needs. It may also result in lower employee health benefits costs for pool participants. Governmental entities currently investigating the self-insurance pool formation include Scott County, municipalities within Scott County, and the Prior Lake-Spring Lake Watershed District.

Minnesota Statute 471.617, Subdivision 2 states any two or more statutory or home rule charter cities, counties, school districts, or instrumentalities thereof which together have more than 100 employees may jointly self-insure for any employee health benefits. The current statute does not include Watershed Districts or Watershed Management Organizations in the list of political subdivisions allowed to jointly self-insure for employee health benefits.

Prior Lake-Spring Lake Watershed District advocates a revision to the statute to explicitly list Watershed Districts or Watershed Management Organizations to the list of political subdivisions that can self-insure for employee health benefits.

Efforts to solve the problem

The issue has been brought to the attention of a state legislator who indicated an openness to address the issue. It was also brought forward to the SCALE legislative committee as a potential legislative priority for the 2026 session.

Is legislative action the best means of addressing the matter? If yes, what is the purpose or intent of your proposal? If not, what advocacy steps could be taken with state or local government officials?

Legislative action is required to change the statute. The intent of this proposal is to change Minnesota Statutes 471.617, Subdivisions 1 and 2 to include Watershed Districts and Watershed Management Organizations as authorized entities that can self-insure for employee health benefits.

Anticipated support or opposition

Other governmental entities considering the formation of the self-insurance pool for employee health benefits may support this issue. Other Watershed Districts and Watershed Management Organizations who may be interested in a self-insurance approach for employee health benefits may support the issue. Opposition to the statute revision is not anticipated.

This issue: (check all that apply)

Applies only to our district:		Requires legislative action:	X
Applies only to 1 or 2 regions:		Requires state agency advocacy:	
Applies to the entire state:	X	Impacts MW bylaws or MOPP:	

MINNESOTA WATERSHEDS RESOLUTION 2025-04

Resolution Seeking Revision to Minnesota Statute 471.617 to Include Watershed Districts and Watershed Management Organizations

WHEREAS, Minnesota Statute 471.617 Self-Insurance of Employee Health Benefits, Subdivision 1 states a statutory or home rule charter city, county, school district, or instrumentality thereof which has more than 100 employees, may by ordinance or resolution self-insure for any employee health benefits; and

WHEREAS, Minnesota Statute 471.617, Subdivision 2 states any two or more statutory or home rule charter cities, counties, school districts, or instrumentality thereof which together have more than 100 employees, may jointly self-insure for any employee health benefits; and

WHEREAS, governmental entities within Scott County are considering the formation of a self-insurance pool for employee health benefits; and

WHEREAS, Prior Lake-Spring Lake Watershed District would like the opportunity to join the self-insurance pool; and

WHEREAS, Minnesota Statute 471.617, Subdivisions 1 and 2 do not expressly include Watershed Districts or Watershed Management Organizations in the list of political subdivisions allowed to self-insure for employee health benefits.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Minnesota Watersheds seeks revision to Minnesota Statute 471.617, Subdivisions 1 and 2 to explicitly include “Watershed Districts and Watershed Management Organizations” on the list of political subdivisions allowed to self-insure for employee health benefits.

Notes:

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON MINNESOTA WATERSHEDS RESOLUTION 2025-05

Resolution Improving Mitigation Under the Minnesota Endangered Species Act

Proposing District: Coon Creek Watershed District
Contact Name: Jon Janke, Administrator
Phone Number: 763-755-0975
Email Address: jjanke@cooncreekwd.org

ADDRESSING THE CONSERVATION OF ENDANGERED AND THREATENED SPECIES AND ENCOURAGING THE MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES TO DEVELOP SPECIES RECOVERY PLANS, COOPERATE WITH LOCAL LAND AND WATER MANAGEMENT AUTHORITIES, AND DEVELOP A SYSTEM OF AGREEMENTS, MITIGATION BANKING AND GUIDANCE TO AVOID, MINIMIZE AND MITIGATE IMPACTS ON LISTED SPECIES

Background that led to submission of this resolution:

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources is directed by statute to “preserve important existing natural habitats of rare and endangered plants, wildlife and fish, provide for the wise use of our remaining areas of natural habitats, take necessary protective measures where appropriate, and to not issue a “takings” permit until all alternatives have been evaluated (M.S. 84.095; MS 116D.02).

The DNR tends to rely on only two of the three primary types of mitigation.

1. Permittee responsible for mitigation where the permittee carries out all mitigation efforts required by the takings permit and retains legal liability for conforming to the permit standards;
2. In-lieu fee compensation, in which the permittee pays a fee, and in exchange is relieved of any liability for ensuring that mitigation measures are completed and successful.

(NOTE: Third method is banking based on species recovery plans)

Despite the importance of mitigation, the DNR does not have a uniform approach or statewide mitigation policy to guide permitting and mitigation decisions at the local level resulting in inconsistent mitigation outcomes even for the same species, which cost time and is expensive for the applicant, rather than continue to make mitigation more predictable and transparent.

With the state’s water quality mandates, flood risk reduction needs and increasing demand to be fiscally efficient and effective, the need to improve mitigation while continuing to encourage the recovery of listed threatened and endangered species is vital. Most of the projects that led to the permit efficiency initiative, resolution and draft legislation endorsed by the MW Board, have involved endangered or threatened species and have been delayed in part because of DNRs limited options.

Efforts to solve the problem

The need for DNR to identify critical habitats and procedures to ensure the conservation of listed species, encourage their recovery, increase certainty for everyone involved during land use actions that involve these species as well as develop additional tools to preserve and/or restore critical habitats was discussed generally during the January, February and March 2025, Coon Creek Watershed District and Minnesota Watersheds staff met with the MDNR commissioners, Division Directors and lead program staff.

Those meetings have yet to produce any practical or feasible alternatives or clear or practical paths to conserving these species or reducing the risk and uncertainty in pursuing public projects or the waste of public funds.

Is legislative action the best means of addressing the matter? If yes, what is the purpose or intent of your proposal? If not, what advocacy steps could be taken with state or local government officials?

Legislation is needed to effectively address the problem and concerns .

The purpose is to facilitate improvements in mitigation efforts and to confront future challenges arising from infrastructure development and the mandate to restore impaired waters.

Our intent is to develop a third mitigation strategy to reduce the risk and uncertainty in both the preservation of endangered and threatened species and the restoration of natural infrastructure and impaired waters. To do this we must engage the DNR with the legislature’s knowledge to:

1. Develop and implement species recovery plans based on no net loss
2. Use species recovery goals to inform mitigation measures.
3. Change the conversation involving approved local restoration projects to joint problem solving
4. Authorize and encourage DNR to engage in local management and cooperative agreements.
5. Refine the disclosure and documentation of projects in state reviewed and approved plans, studies and strategies that require approval by the state, and
6. Provide for conservation banks that provide the ecological functions and services expressed as credits that are preserved and managed in perpetuity for particular species and used to offset impacts occurring elsewhere.

Anticipated support or opposition

Support:

Watershed Districts
 Soil and Water Districts
 Highway authorities
 Pipeline owners

Opposition:

Environmental groups

This issue: (check all that apply)

Applies only to our district:		Requires legislative action:	X
Applies only to 1 or 2 regions:		Requires state agency advocacy:	\-
Applies to the entire state:	X	Impacts MW bylaws or MOPP:	

MINNESOTA WATERSHEDS RESOLUTION 2025-05

Resolution Improving Mitigation Under the Minnesota Endangered Species Act

WHEREAS, the Minnesota Environmental Policy Act (M.S. 116D.02) and the Threatened and Endangered Species (M.S. 84.095) requires the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to:

- Preserve important existing natural habitats of rare and endangered species of plants, wildlife and fish
- Provide for the wise use of our remaining areas of natural habitat
- Protect Threatened and Endangered Species
- Not issue a takings permit until “all alternatives, including trapping and transplanted, have been evaluated

(M.S. 116D.02 Subd. 2 (10) & M.S. 84.095 Subd. 7 (c))

WHEREAS, the future status of a species, after it is listed, is often dictated by DNR permits and authorizations for activities that affect the listed species, and

WHEREAS, at the crux of permit review is how the proposed impacts might be avoided, minimized, and/or offset, making mitigation one of the most important factors in determining the effectiveness of the Minnesota Endangered Species Act and whether we save or lose species, and

WHEREAS, the Minnesota Department of natural Resources relies on only two of the three primary types of mitigation; (1) Permittee responsible mitigation where the permittee carries out all mitigation efforts required by the takings permit and retains legal liability for conforming to the permit standards; and (2) In-lieu fee compensation, in which the permittee pays a fee, and in exchange is relieved of any liability for ensuring that mitigation measures are completed and successful, and,

WHEREAS, despite the importance of mitigation, the DNR does not have a uniform approach or statewide mitigation policy to guide permitting and mitigation decisions at the local level resulting in inconsistent mitigation outcomes and resulting in timely and expensive processes for applicants rather than make the review and mitigation process more predictable and transparent, and,

WHEREAS, with population and economic growth, the state’s water quality and impaired waters mandates as well as the increasing need to be fiscally efficient and effective, the need exists to improve mitigation while listed threatened and endangered species recover, and,

WHEREAS, these needed improvements in the process will be particularly important given the need to restore the quality of the state’s impaired waters as well as repair and replace the state and local roads, bridges and other infrastructure, and

WHEREAS, many of these mandated and needed activities could impact endangered species and their habitats, better approaches to review and mitigate impacts are needed to minimize the friction between our conservation goals for fish and wildlife and our water restoration goals as well as reduce the costs of studies and planning.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Minnesota Watersheds should pursue legislation that addresses the need to improve threatened and endangered species mitigation by addressing past gaps and future challenges arising from approved water quality restoration projects, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Minnesota Statute 84.0895 should be amended to require the Commissioner of Natural Resources to develop and implement recovery plans for the conservation and survival of state listed endangered and threatened species, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Commissioner shall cooperate to the maximum extent practicable with local land and water management authorities. Such cooperation in implementing the endangered species act shall allow the Commissioner to:

- a) Enter into management agreements with any local land managing unit of government for the administration and management of an area established for the conservation of endangered or threatened species.
- b) Enter into cooperative agreements which establishes and maintains an adequate and active program for the conservation of endangered and threatened species.
- c) Conduct periodic review of locally administered programs at no greater frequency than annual intervals.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Minnesota Statutes 84.0895 Subd 7, which outlines general exceptions, should be amended by adding (f) the commissioner must give approval under this subdivision to water management projects that are part of a state approved:

- a) Comprehensive Watershed Management Plans and capital improvement plans under MS 103B or MS 103D;
- b) Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies (WRAPS);
- c) Load reduction studies,
- d) Impairment monitoring and other studies, particularly studies involving impairments for fish and aquatic life.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Minnesota Statutes 84.0895 should be amended to provide for “conservation banking” defined by a site or suite of sites that provide the ecological functions and services expressed as credits that are conserved and managed in perpetuity for a species and used expressly to offset impacts occurring elsewhere to the same species.

Notes:

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON MINNESOTA WATERSHEDS

RESOLUTION 2025-06

Resolution Supporting a Legislative Amendment to Clarify the Deadline for Watershed Districts to Certify Levies

Proposing District: Comfort Lake-Forest Lake Watershed District
Contact Name: Michael Kinney, Administrator
Phone Number: 651-395-5855
Email Address: michael.kinney@cfllwd.org

Background that led to submission of this resolution:

Watershed districts are "special taxing districts" as defined at Minnesota Statutes §275.066. Under the "Truth in Taxation" statute, Minnesota Statutes §275.065, special taxing districts must certify their levies by September 30 of each year. Previously, this deadline was September 15, but in 2017 the legislature changed this to September 30. However, the watershed law, at Minnesota Statutes §§103D.911 and 103D.915, states a September 15 deadline. It seems nearly certain that when the legislature changed the deadline in the Truth in Taxation law, it simply didn't take account of the specific provisions in the watershed law, and the need to amend these as well. Now there are two different dates in the law.

As a consequence, every year there is confusion. Our county auditors distribute materials advising us of a September 30 deadline and are unaware of the September 15 deadline in the watershed law. We understand this is true for watershed districts in other counties as well. We have spoken with a Mn Department of Revenue representative, who was not aware of the specific term in the watershed law. However, legal counsel advises that as a technical matter, the earlier deadline in the watershed law remains applicable. The purpose of this legislative change is to make a correction that the legislature overlooked in 2017, remove confusion, and allow watershed districts, without risk, the additional two weeks as may be desirable in their annual budgeting process.

Efforts to solve the problem

The matter is resolved only by this legislative change to the watershed law.

Is legislative action the best means of addressing the matter? If yes, what is the purpose or intent of your proposal?

If not, what advocacy steps could be taken with state or local government officials?

Yes, the issue is a conflict between two statutes, and so legislative action is the only means to resolve it. Each watershed district could ask its county auditor(s) to affirm that they will accept levy certifications to September 30, but this is inefficient and still would risk districts being in technical non-compliance with the watershed statute.

Potential solutions include

Amending Minnesota Statutes §§103D.911 and 103D.915 from "September 15" to "September 30."

Anticipated support or opposition

We would expect support from all watershed districts, county auditors, and possibly the Mn Department of Revenue. We would not expect opposition.

This issue: (check all that apply)

Applies only to our district:		Requires legislative action:	X
Applies only to 1 or 2 regions:		Requires state agency advocacy:	
Applies to the entire state:	X	Impacts MW bylaws or MOPP:	

MINNESOTA WATERSHEDS RESOLUTION 2025-06

Resolution Supporting a Legislative Amendment to Clarify the Deadline for Watershed Districts to Certify Levies

WHEREAS, the Minnesota Truth-in-Taxation statute, Minnesota Statutes §275.065, specifies procedures and deadlines for "special taxing districts" to determine and certify property tax levies, and watershed districts are defined, at Minnesota Statutes §275.066, as special taxing districts; and

WHEREAS, the Truth-in-Taxation statute previously required special taxing districts to certify tax levies to county auditors by September 15 each year, but in 2017 was amended to specify a September 30 deadline; and

WHEREAS, since 1994, the watershed law, at Minnesota Statutes §§103D.911 and 103D.915, has specified a September 15 deadline to certify tax levies; and

WHEREAS, it is fairly presumed that when the legislature amended the Truth-in-Taxation levy certification deadline in 2017, it overlooked the deadlines also specified in the watershed law, and did not intend to create two different certification deadlines for watershed districts; and

WHEREAS, the existence of two deadlines creates confusion annually among watershed districts and county auditors, risks technical non-compliance with levy requirements, and risks that a levy certification may be disrupted or deemed ineffective.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Minnesota Watersheds supports the introduction of legislation to amend Minnesota Statutes §§103D.911 and 103D.915 to specify a levy certification deadline of September 30.

Notes: