

Snake River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan	Partnership makeup Meeting Agenda Meeting #7 <u>Location:</u> Kanabec Co. Courthouse Basement room #3-4 317 Maple Ave E Mora MN 55051	Date: Friday, April 22, 2024
		Time: 9:30 am – 11:30 pm
		In-Person Or Remote via. Google Meet

Partnership Members: Dan Gravley, Travis Leiviska, Kevin Belkholm, Kurt Beckstrom, Michael Cummins, Terry Lovgren, Tom Roeschlein

Alternates: Jon Sanford, Bob Hoefert, Kim Johnson, Bob Janzen, Joshua Mohr, Rick Mattson, Bret Sample, Kelly Henry

Invitees:

Staff: Ryan Carda, Deanna Pomije, Paul Swanson, Mara Jade, Josh Tank, Jeremy Williamson, Susan Shaw, Keenan Hayes, Janet Smude, Mitch Gindele, Willow Dean, Erin Hoxsie, Jody Grund

Agencies: Barb Peichel, Zach Guttormson

Public: Don Duetsch, Kathy Nielsen

Meeting Material & Homework:

- Meeting Outcomes 4/5/24
- Draft Buffer Policy & Pine SWCD Snake River assessment proposal

In-Person Meeting in the basement room of the Kanabec Co. Courthouse 317 Maple Ave E Mora MN 55051 OR

Remote Google Meet via. Computer or phone:

(If you haven't previously tested your computer/phone system using Google Meet, please log-in/call-in 10 min. early.)

Google Meet joining info:

Video call link: <https://meet.google.com/wvm-fnxj-whm>

Or dial: (US) +1 513-760-6891 PIN: 178 233 446#

More phone numbers: <https://tel.meet/wvm-fnxj-whm?pin=6170535169271>

Agenda Items

*Agenda Items for Approval / Roll Call Vote

Chair: Kurt Beckstrom, Mille Lacs SWCD

Vice Chair: Kevin Belkholm, Kanabec SWCD

Snake Watershed Mission: The mission of the Snake River Watershed Plan Partnership (SRWPP) is to implement the Snake River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan. The Partnership seeks to facilitate collaboration across its member entities and connect landowners with the resources needed to manage their natural resources. The SRWPP strives to work with and empower landowners and partners in the restoration and protection of the watershed's natural resources.

Start 9:30 am (120 min)		(Meeting Recorded)	
Partnership Meeting	Purpose	Lead	Start Times
Welcome – Introductions, as needed 'If you could have any superpower, what would it be?' <u>Meeting Purpose</u> – Buffer policy proposal & Snake River assessment proposal	INTRO	Chair	9:30 am
*Approve Agenda – suggest other agenda items	APPROVE	Chair	9:40
*Approve meeting outcomes: 4/5/24	APPROVE	Chair	9:45
*Proposal – Snake River assessment for projects (approving also the SOW)	REVIEW / APPROVE	Pine SWCD	9:50
BREAK (5 min.)			10:20
Public Input (10 min.)	HEAR COMMENTS	Chair	10:25

Funding Work Flow Process	PRESENT / COMMENT	Staff	10:35
*Project Policies (buffers)	REVIEW / APPROVE	Staff	10:55
Update: Outreach & Project Development	UPDATE	Staff	11:15
<p><u>2024 Meeting Schedule</u> 9:30 am unless otherwise noted Basement room of the Kanabec Courthouse June 24, 2024 July 22, 2024 Sept. 23, 2024 Nov. 25, 2024 (meeting scheduled as needed)</p> <p><u>Future Agenda Items:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forestry practices policy <p>Anyone want to sign-up to bring treats for our next meeting?</p>	REVIEW	Chair / Staff	End 11:30 am

Snake Watershed Partnership Meeting Outcomes – April 5, 2024, 9:30am-11:30 am

Location: Kanabec Co. Courthouse or Remote Google Meeting

Board: *Kurt Beckstrom (non-voting) (Mille Lacs SWCD), Kevin Belkholm, Jon Sanford (non-voting) (Kanabec SWCD); Terry Lovgren (Pine Co); Michael Cummins (Pine SWCD), Dan Gravely (Atkin SWCD)

*remote attendees

Staff:

Kanabec SWCD: Deanna Pomije; Pine SWCD: Mara Jade, Josh Tank; Pine Co: Erin Hoxie, Mike Gainor; BWSR:

*Barb Peichel

Cross Lake: Don Duetsch

Purpose for the meeting

Forestry presentation, Approval on buffer & forestry policies

10:10 Roll Call – Belkholm chairing

Belkholm led the group in a round robin with everyone introducing themselves by answering an ice breaker question on a favorite or most unique pet name they’ve had.

*Approval of Agenda

Motion by Lovgren, second by Gravely to approve the agenda as presented.

Affirmative: Belkholm, Cummins, Lovgren, Gravely

Opposed: None

Abstain: None

Motion Passed.

*Approval of the 2/26/24 Outcomes

Motion by Lovgren, second by Gravely to approve the 2/26/24 outcomes as presented.

Affirmative: Belkholm, Cummins, Lovgren, Gravely

Opposed: None

Abstain: None

Motion Passed.

Project Policies – board questions follow-up

Pomije reviewed with the board a memo from the packet to address board questions from the last 2/26 meeting. Questions that were brought up previously were on cost overruns and project bidding processes. Cost overruns are listed in the Master agreements under 1. (c). Compliance with project bidding and the prevailing wage fall under MN Statutes, which all partners individually are responsible to comply. These items are also addressed in the Master agreement on page 8 (a) all applicable contracting laws and page 9 (i) under legal compliance. The board decided no action was needed as these questions are addressed in the Master agreements.

***Proposal – Snake River assessment for projects**

(approving also the SOW)

Jade (Pine SWCD) presented a proposal for a project assessment to be completed on the main stem of the Snake River. This would involve traversing the whole river and assessing the river, looking for potential project sites. This is planned to be completed with a consultant (Freshwater Society) and Pine SWCD staff. From Mora down to the outlet with the St. Croix staff will also be assessing the plan's flooding concerns as well as assessing a 60' bluff potential project site in Pine Co. (If the bluff project were completed; the soil saved on this project alone will meet our 10-year erosion soil saved goal.) The cabin is close to the bluff's edge and is losing 1' per year into the river. Through this assessment meetings are planned with the DNR, TSA and landowners and could also be used as an educational opportunity. Jade is requesting \$10,000 from the engineering grant category to fund this assessment project. The board commented that they believed the cost would run higher given the extra time needed to go down the river with all its' bends. Seeking a bid from the consultant. This item was tabled until our 4/22 meeting.

Forestry presentation

- Forest Stewardship Planning
- Forestry practices

Josh Tank (shared forester Pine/Kanabec SWCD) presented the benefits of Forest Stewardship Planning with landowners within the Snake Watershed. According to our Snake Plan forestry planning is prioritized within 3 areas. (A map was shown of these priority areas.) He also addressed a few questions the board had on Emerald Ash Borer, the now invasive beetle recently identified in Kanabec County.

***Forestry Policy Presentation / Discussion**

Tank reviewed with the board a forest stewardship fact sheet for landowners explaining this cost-share program. He presented a potential proposal of requiring landowners that receive funding for plans to enroll within the Sustainable Forest Incentives Act (SFIA) within the 1st year and also complete 1 plan identified forestry practice within the first 5-years of the plan. The board and staff discussed the pros and cons of this. In the end it was decided to only recommend landowners enroll in SFIA for those that receive plan funding. Tank also reviewed a draft landowner contract between the landowner and partnership for plan funding.

Motion by Lovgren, second by Gravely to approve a forestry policy to offer funding for Forest Stewardship Plans to landowners within the Snake Watershed priority areas. The rate of funding to follow the DNR cost-share rate for Forest Stewardship Plans. No requirements are to be tied to receiving funds on forest plans, only that staff will recommend the enrollment into SFIA for protection purposes.

Affirmative: Belkholm, Cummins, Lovgren, Gravely

Opposed: None

Abstain: None

Motion Passed.

Tank also reviewed options for how to proceed with the procedures of this work. Whether or not a statement of work is needed with a member partner and how to proceed with the landowner contracts for plan funding. Tank, as the watershed forester may be contacting for this work with all or most of the landowners within the watershed. Options were presented as well as written comments from Paul Swanson (Pine SWCD) as he could not attend this meeting. The board and staff discussed how to encumber the funds and simplify this process.

*** Forestry Policy Actions**

Motion by Cummins, second by Gravely to encumber up to \$5,000 for forest stewardship planning to be tracked by Tank with the fiscal agent oversight. No statement of work is needed as the work is being done watershed wide.

Affirmative: Belkholm, Cummins, Lovgren, Gravely

Opposed: None

Abstain: None

Motion Passed.

Motion by Lovgren, second by Gravely to authorize Josh Tank (or successor) to sign landowner contracts for forest stewardship planning within the whole Snake Watershed. The contracts will be backed by the Partnership Board as needed for unusual or non-complaint circumstances.

Affirmative: Belkholm, Cummins, Lovgren, Gravely

Opposed: None

Abstain: None

Motion Passed.

Public Input: none

***2024 Meeting Schedule**

The board agreed to the following meeting schedule for 2024, to be posted on our webpage. The May meeting was moved to June to avoid the Memorial Day conflict.

9:30 am unless otherwise noted

Basement room of the Kanabec Courthouse

April 22, 2024

June 24, 2024

July 22, 2024

Sept. 23, 2024

Nov. 25, 2024

*Adjourn Meeting at 11:40 am

Motion by Cummins, second by Gravely to adjourn meeting at 11:40 am

Affirmative: Belkholm, Cummins, Lovgren, Gravely

Opposed: None

Abstain: None

Motion Passed.

Next Meeting:

April 22, 2024, 9:30 am start

Future Agenda Items:

Review / approve buffer policies

Snake project assessment proposal from Pine SWCD

STATEMENT OF WORK 2024

Pine County Soil & Water Conservation District

TO THE MASTER PROJECT AGREEMENT BETWEEN SNAKE RIVER WATERSHED PLAN PARTNERSHIP AND PINE COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

This Statement of Work is issued and agreed to pursuant to the Master Project Agreement entered into between Snake River Watershed Plan Partnership ("**SRWPP**") and the Pine County Soil & Water Conservation District ("**Partner**") and is subject to the terms and conditions of the Master Project Agreement. All grant activities associated with Project specified and detailed herein shall be performed in accordance with the Master Project Agreement, SRWPP Partnership Policy, the funding source's grant agreement, BWSR Grant Administration Manual (if BWSR is the funding source), and applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules, regulations, and ordinances.

I. SCOPE OF PROJECT

Partner will carry out certain activities to accomplish the Project as follows:

- A. **Project Name and ID:** Project Scouting and Surficial Geologic History of Snake River Watershed CY2024-26, Pine County SWCD, Within the Plan's priority areas.
- B. **SRWPP Grant Funding Source:** SRWPP WBIF FY24 C24- 0093
- C. **RRWP Plan Goals:** Describe how the Project advances the goals in the SRWPP Snake River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (SRCWMP) and grant funding source work plan:

This project request is for the funds required for engineering assistance from Freshwater Society employee Carrie Jennings. The purpose of these field days is to identify potential project locations, collect information to develop a report on flooding between Mora and the Snake River's outlet, and educate staff on the geologic history of the landscape and how that influences the resource concerns of the watershed. The field days will comprise of approximately 4 field days traveling the Snake River State Trail and 1 field day in support of a project under development by Pine SWCD.

This work will pursue plan goals for 2024 in the following areas:

- Direct accomplishment of plan goals
 - SWQuan-1 - Develop a report to investigate the flooding causes and impact areas between Mora and the Snake River's outlet with the St. Croix and provide outreach/education to the stakeholders on the report's results
 - H-8 – Carry out dams and culverts inventory, where incomplete
 - Supporting the planning of large bluff project (~900 ft of structural BMP installation) on the main stem of the Snake River
 - SWQual-23 – Install 10-14 structural BMPs
 - SWQual-24 - Complete 1,400+ feet of streambank buffers for habitat improvement and channel stabilization
 - H-12 – Complete stream restoration projects
 - H-16 – Implement 10 stream restoration and channel stabilization projects
- Indirect accomplishment of plan goals through project scouting
 - SWQual-23 – Install 10-14 structural BMPs

- SWQual-24 - Complete 1,400+ feet of streambank buffers for habitat improvement and channel stabilization
- SWQual-25 - Implement 10 stream restoration and channel stabilization projects
- SWQual-27 – Promote and install feedlot runoff management and other BMPs, targeted first within shoreland areas
- SWQuan-4 – Establish permanent streamflow monitoring locations at outlets on the mainstem Snake River
- SWQuan-8 - Install lake and stream shoreland restoration projects with a focus on retention and infiltration within the floodplain areas
- E-2 - Install or adopt 5–7 restoration/soil saving BMPs (shoreland buffers, forest riparian plantings, etc.)
- H-12 – Complete stream restoration projects
- H-13 – Complete feasibility studies for stream restoration projects
- H-16 – Implement 10 stream restoration and channel stabilization projects
- Indirect accomplishment of plan goals through better educated employees at member entities

D. Project Timeline: Project must be completed between the date of the execution of this agreement and December 31, 2025. Expenses incurred outside of these dates are not eligible for reimbursement.

E. Grant Funding Source Work Plan Activity: Project Development

Activities must be completed in a manner consistent with the Grant Work Plan (exhibit A) and align with the Snake River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan’s Implementation Actions & Plan Implementation Programs, attached hereto as exhibit B.

Activity Deliverables:

- WBIF grant activity type: Engineering Assistance
- Conservation practice: NA
- Priority benefitting waterbody: Snake River Main Stem
- Project deliverables and description: A report detailing the potential projects found.
- Timeline: Complete tasks by Dec. 31, 2025
- Landowner name (if applicable): NA
- Pollutant reductions (if applicable): NA
- Project effective life for which the Partner will be responsible for operations & maintenance of the Project: NA
- Activity location map, if applicable: Snake River Main Stem to be served by this project.
- Activity photos, if applicable: NA

2. Staff Involvement and Roles:

Pine County SWCD staff (or successor), Pine County SWCD, has primary responsibility for oversight and administration of the above grant activities.

Pine County SWCD staff (or successor) will provide project development and outreach/education to implement the Project.

II. ALLOCATION OF GRANT FUNDS

Partner will be reimbursed in **an amount not to exceed \$10,000 for Engineering Services,**

Follow policies and procedures in the MN Board of Water and Soil Resources Grants Administration Manual, including but not limited to:

- a) Invoicing the Snake Partnership's Fiscal Agent at hourly rates allowable in the "Determining a Billing Rate" section if applicable.
- b) Documenting expenses according to the "Time and Effort Documentation" section. Invoicing only for expenses allowed by the MN Board of Water and Soil Resources One Watershed One Plan document titled "Allowable Costs for Planning Grants," or future modifications of that document.

III. COMMITMENT OF GRANT MATCHING FUNDS

Partner will contribute at least **\$0** of non-state match to the Activity's grant funding source.

IV. SIGNATURES

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have executed this Statement of Work the day and year signed below.

**SNAKE RIVER WATERSHED PLAN
PARTNERSHIP**

**Pine County Soil & Water Conservation
District**

By: _____

By: _____

Title: _____

Title: _____

Dated: _____

Dated: _____

**Exhibit A: Snake River Watershed Plan Partnership Grant Work
Plan 2024-25** (ver. 12/8/23) Attached...

EXHIBIT B:

**SECTION 3.0
PLAN**

SNAKE RIVER COMPREHENSIVE WATERSHED MANAGEMENT

IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

Table 3.3 Surface Water Quality Implementation Table:

Water Quality — Goal 1: Reduce phosphorus loading to priority impaired lakes by a combined total of 4,200 pounds over the 10-year plan

SWQual-8	Complete sub-watershed analysis to identify priority BMP locations	Goal 1 Priority Lakes (Figure 3-1)	2-6 sub-watershed analyses completed	SWCDs, Counties / LA	■		■	\$60,000◊
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SRWPP Proposed Funding Work Flow



Admin - WBIF 2024	\$145,000.00
Edu/Info - WBIF 2024	\$98,666.00
Prog Devel - WBIF 2024	\$194,466.00
Tech/Eng - WBIF 2024	\$50,000.00
Plan/Assess - WBIF 2024	\$104,418.00
Ag Practices - WBIF 2024	\$80,131.40
Livestock Waste Practices - WBIF 2024	\$30,701.50
Nonstructural Practices - WBIF 2024	\$20,883.60
Shoreline Protection - WBIF 2024	\$167,395.40
Forest Practices - WBIF 2024	\$38,286.60
Groundwater - WBIF 2024	\$1,740.30
Urban Practices - WBIF 2024	\$5,220.90
Wetland Restoration - WBIF 2024	\$17,403.00
SSTS - WBIF 2024	\$70,158.30
	\$1,024,471.00



* SRWPP may pay a contractor directly, pending Board approval, if project costs are high/burdensome on the partner entity and/or landowner

Proposed Shoreline Buffer Policy:

Critical Area Planting, NRCS Practice Standard 342, will be followed in the design and implementation of shoreline buffers. For shoreline buffer plantings with an average width equal to or less than 10ft, a cost share rate of 50% will be used. For shoreline buffer plantings and average width of 11ft to 25 ft, a cost share rate of 75% will be used. For shoreline buffer plantings greater than an average width greater than 25%, a cost share rate of up to 90% may be used. Up to 25% of the shoreline may be excluded from the shoreline buffer for the purpose of recreational use and/or water access and still be eligible for cost share.

Rationale presented by Mara:

Utilizing Critical Area Planting NRCS Practice Standard 342 because it is the practice I was able to receive Job Approval Authority for designing and installing shoreline buffers.

In my experience in working with shoreline owners, asking for a 25 ft minimum width is a non-starter when it comes to shoreline buffers. This can be for a number of reasons, from landowner willingness to limited shoreline area.

I have seen a growing interest in buffer plantings during the last 3 years. I see value in establishing some conservation instead of no conservation as well as an opportunity to develop relationships/outreach with shoreline owners and lake associations. I also think it's important to give shoreland owners an opportunity to have some investment in their lake's water quality.

Shoreline Buffers in the Plan:

- SWQual-6 – protect, stabilize, or restore 1,000+ feet of shorelands using native buffers and other BMPs
- SWQual-24 – Complete 1,400+ feet of streambank buffers for habitat improvement and channel stabilization
- LC-8 – Install shoreland buffers, un-mowed buffers, buffer demonstrations, and rain gardens or similar urban BMPs (goal being 400-2,400 linear feet of buffers installed)
- SWQuan-8 – Install lake and stream shoreland restoration projects with a focus on retention and infiltration within the floodplain areas
- E-2 - Install or adopt 5–7 restoration/soil saving BMPs (shoreland buffers, forest riparian plantings, etc.)

Snake River Watershed Plan Partnership WBIF Project Policies

Purpose: This policy establishes an administrative process regarding how the Watershed Based Implementation Funds (WBIF) will be spent implementing the Snake River Watershed Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (SRCWMP).

This document outlines:

- 1) Project selection and approval process;
- 2) Contracting and payment process and policies; and
- 3) Cost share rates and policies

This policy is intended to be reviewed annually and may be altered at any time to adjust for unforeseen projects and funding opportunities upon approval by the Snake River Watershed Plan Partnership (SRWPP) board.

Additional documents should be used in conjunction with this document: 1) Projects ranking application form, 2) MN BWSR applicable grant policy and grants administration manual.

Roles and Parties Definitions

Fiscal Agent: Pine County, Erin Hoxsie

Coordinator: Kanabec Soil and Water Conservation District

Members: Any local government that has signed the Joint Powers Agreement establishing the SRWPP.

Steering Committee: The Steering Committee consists of one staff member from each party of the JPA.

Board: The SRWPP Board consists of one representative from each party to the JPA.

Project: Any request for SRWPP WBIF funds. Projects may include requests for staff time funding, consultant(s) work services (with SRWPP Board approval) or labor and/or materials to install a best management practice.

Section 1. Project selection and approval process

Project Eligibility

The first step in project selection is to determine whether the project is eligible for WBIF funding.

Eligibility:

The following criteria determine whether a project is eligible to be implemented with WBIF Funds:

1. Projects must meet the eligibility requirements of the Board of Water and Soil Resources WBIF.
2. Projects must be identified within an activity/category of the current fiscal year's grant's work plan.
3. Eligible projects must be within a **Priority Areas as identified in section 3.0 in the Snake River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (CWMP)** or for projects that maintain or enhance watershed-based ecosystems.

The Eligibility and Ranking Sheet score must be a "yes" for all eligibility questions for a project to be eligible to use WBIF. All "yes" projects are eligible to move on to the funding ranking step in the project selection process.

Funding Request Components

Each funding request from a member must include a completed Project Ranking Sheet and Statement of Work. The Project Ranking sheet will be located on a central database and should be filled out there. The activity statement of work can be downloaded from the database and sent to the coordinator.

Funding Request Ranking

All projects determined to be eligible for WBIF funds will be scored using the Eligibility and Ranking Sheet, except for projects requesting funds for plans/assessments, education/outreach purposes, staff time, and technical/engineering services. The spreadsheet must be completed by the member wishing to receive funding for a project. The sheet determines if a project's eligibility for grant funds and scores the projects against comparable criteria.

For projects that are eligible the coordinator will send the completed Eligibility and Ranking Sheet, where applicable, and any supplemental information by email to the Steering Committee for electronic review (See Funding Request Periods). Each Steering Committee member shall reply within the timeframe specified by the coordinator with their recommendation to "fund," or "do not fund,". The Steering Committee will meet to discuss proposed projects. Steering Committee meetings will typically be held the morning of the second Monday of the month. All Steering Committee approved funding requests equal to or above \$20,000 will be referred to the Board for consideration where funding approval is by majority vote.

Steering Committee and Board funding decisions may include consideration of available funding, cost effectiveness, matching funds leveraged, degree to which other funding has been pursued, and criteria as established in the SRCWMP and the accompanying WBIF work plan. If insufficient grant funds exist to fulfill current and anticipated funding requests, projects will be scored against each other. If tied, the project with a better value calculation on the dollars spent per pollutant reduced will be funded. Additionally, projects specifically mentioned in the grant work plan will receive priority over those that are not.

Staff Time Funding Requests

Certain WBIF activities are primarily to fund staff time but are nonetheless often referred to as “projects” in this policy. These activities include Education/Information; Administration/Coordination; Project Development (PD); Technical/Engineering Assistance (TA); and planning, assessment, and special studies. Funding requests for these activities use the same process described above. Consideration of these requests shall focus on achieving the CWMP goals consistent with the grant work plan and policies.

Summarized Project & Program Approval Process



Project Ranking Sheet: Member fills out form on central database and notifies Coordinator by the first Monday of the month prior to a Partnership Board meeting month (January, March, May, July, September, November).

Steering Committee Review: Coordinator notifies the Steering Committee of potential project(s). The Steering Committee meets to discuss projects and votes on projects, using board approved criteria.

Funding Decision:
All Steering Committee approved projects equal to or greater than \$20,000 move forward for final funding approval by SRWPP Board at their meeting (January, March, May, July, September, November)

Funding Request Periods

Funding requests must be submitted to the coordinator by the first Monday of the month with a planned Partnership Board meeting (Partnership Board meetings: January, March, May, July, September, November or as needed), one week prior to the Steering Committee meeting. Steering Committee recommended projects equal to or over \$20,000 in requested grant costs will go to the SRWPP Board during any of the regularly scheduled meeting months (January, March, May, July, September, November). The Partnership Board may schedule meetings as needed outside of the every other month schedule.

Cost Share Rates and Policies

Approved funding requests must comply with the SRWPP Cost Share Rates and Policies found in Section 3.

Appeals

The Board will review and make a funding decision on all projects equal to or over \$20,000. Decisions of the Board are final. Projects may be re-submitted for reconsideration if changes are made in response to input from the Steering Committee or board.

Approved by SRWPP Board: 2/26/2024

Project Splitting or Grouping

Members may make a single funding request for a grouping of similar projects.

Requests for Future Funds

Requests will not be considered for future rounds of WBIF grant funding that is not yet in-hand. However, Members are encouraged to make future projects known during grant work planning.

Revisions to the Project Ranking Application From

The Steering Committee may revise the Project Ranking Application From. Grammatical, formula and other edits that do not change project eligibility may be made at the discretion of the Coordinator and Fiscal Agent. Other edits shall be approved by the Steering Committee and notice provided to the Board.

Section 2. Contracting Process and Policies

Contracts

Upon approval of a funding request by a Member, the Member will execute an agreement and statement of work with the SRWPP. The Board may choose to authorize the Chair or Coordinator to execute the agreement.

The Member must execute a cost share contract with landowner for any structural or non-structural best management practices. That agreement must contain operation and maintenance provisions throughout the duration of the project's anticipated life. Such agreements must contain a deed recording for projects with a grant cost equal to or greater than \$20,000. Such deed restrictions shall expire at completion of the anticipated project life, as specified in the landowner agreement. Deed recordings are not required for publicly or tribally owned land, permanently protected land, or fee to trust land.

Payments

All requests for reimbursement must be submitted to the Fiscal Agent and made on forms provided by the Fiscal Agent that include signatures of responsible parties overseeing the work. Requests for reimbursement of direct payments must be substantiated by receipts, paid invoices, or similar documentation in accordance with Grant policy and acceptable to the Fiscal Agent. Requests for staff time reimbursement must be substantiated by a log of hours worked and billing rate calculations in accordance with Grant policy and acceptable to the Fiscal Agent. All documentation must include dates of services. It is the Member's responsibility to know and comply with State grant and the Snake River Watershed Plan Partnership Policies.

Fiscal Agent authorization to issue payments: The Fiscal Agent is authorized by the Board to issue payments for approved projects and report these transactions quarterly at Board meetings.

Payment Process: The Member will pay all expenses up front. The Fiscal Agent will reimburse the Member as directed by the Fiscal Agent's board, within work plan limits, and considering recommendation of the Member.

10% Retainage: The Fiscal Agent will issue reimbursement payments, except 10% may be retained. Any retained amounts will be paid after Board of Water and Soil Resources releases the final 10% of grant

funds.

Payment as grant funds are available: The Fiscal Agent will issue reimbursement payments as grant funds are available. Grant funds are provided to the Fiscal Agent by the State in 50%-40%-10% payments with reconciliation processes that may cause delays between those payments. The Fiscal Agent's board may prioritize payments and may issue partial payments if available funds are insufficient to pay all reimbursement requests.

Progress Payments: Members may request progress payments before final completion of work on project contracts, provided they comply with grant requirements. Prior to authorization for progress payment, the Member must attest that the request for payment has merit, the payment request is equal to or less than the percent of work that is complete, and that the project will still be completed within the contract timeline.

Documentation required with payment requests:

- Executed landowner contract (if applicable).
- Operation and Maintenance Plan. Typically included in the landowner contract.
- Payment voucher. Vouchers should include sign-off by the designer or technical staff with project oversight and Member administrator.
- Vendor invoices. Invoices must include the vendor name; materials, labor or equipment provided; component unit costs; invoice date; and date(s) work was performed.
- Staff time and hourly rate documentation (when applicable) consistent with grant policy.
- Pollutant reductions (for completed projects, if applicable). Calculations or models must be consistent with BWSR grant guidelines.
- Certified as-build design (for completed projects, if applicable).
- Before and after photos.
- Certifies that the project complies with any prevailing wage requirements (if applicable).

Advance payments: Advance payments of grant funds are discouraged but may be considered. Such requests will be made during the request for funds and project ranking process. If the funding request is approved, a recommendation of advance payment may be provided to the Fiscal Agent by the Board. The Fiscal Agent shall make the final decision regarding whether to issue advance payment and provide reasoning.

Invoicing frequency: Staff time payment requests may be submitted up to quarterly. Installation or other requests can be submitted up to monthly.

Project Statement of Work Amendments

A Project statement of work amendment may include (a) requests for additional Partnership funding or (b) a change to the scope and type of work that results in reduced benefits such that the Partner agreement for the project must be modified.

Changes in funding or scope will be approved as follows:

≤10% funding change and if the change of scope remains proportional to the original agreement: The Member submits a request to the Fiscal Agent. **The Steering Committee will review the amendment request against approved vetting criteria and grant procedures.** The Fiscal Agent can approve the amendment.

>10% funding change or if the change of scope is not proportional to the original agreement: Member must submit the request to the Fiscal Agent. The Fiscal Agent will notify the coordinator to place the

Approved by SRWPP Board: 2/26/2024

item on the next scheduled Partnership Board meeting agenda. The member must present the requested change to the Partnership Board for approval/denial.

After the Fact Funding Requests

Work to be paid or reimbursed must occur after a funding request is approved and associated contracts executed.

Designer Credentials

Project designs must have sign-off by a person with credentials acceptable under grant policy such as job approval authority or professional engineer. The NRCS Field Office Technical Guide, MN Stormwater Manual, BWSR Native Vegetation Establishment and Enhancement Guidelines, or other standards generally accepted by the engineering profession must be used for project design, construction, operations and maintenance.

Section 3. Cost Share Policies

Cost-share and local match

General funding rates for all project types are described in the table below. The rates below are guidelines with each Member having discretion to modify the rate based on their individual board’s policies. If Members increase the cost share rates from the listed below; they will be asked to consult with the Steering Committee to ensure plans are in place to satisfy the grant’s overall required match (WBIF 10%).

Match for the WBIF grant must be from a non-state source and comply with all grant policy. Non-state funding sources may be used to fund any project at 100% if consistent with the administrative requirements of the funding source.

Grant activity	WBIF Cost Share Funding Rate Guidance	Non-State Match Required*
Administration/Coordination	100%	0%
Education/Information	100%	0%
Project Development	100%	0%
Tech/Engineering	100%	0%
Planning, Assessment, & Special Studies	100%	0%
Ag Non-Structural	Incentive-Based	0%
Ag Practices	75%	25%
Livestock Waste Practices	75%	25%
Shoreline Protection	75%	25%
Forestry Practices	75%	25%
Groundwater	75%	25%
Urban Practices	75%	25%
Wetland Restoration	75%	25%
SSTS	TBD	TBD

*Percentage of WBIF grant funds.

Ineligible Projects

Required projects - Cost share is not available for projects required by local, state or federal rules or ordinances.

Grant work plan & policies – Projects must be consistent with the funding source grant work plan or grant policies.

Non-Structural Agriculture Practice Policy and Incentive Rates

Incentives to install or adopt non-structural best management practices that improve or protect water quality are eligible for use of funds. The goal of these practices is ongoing landowner adoption unless otherwise approved by BWSR.

Non-structural BMPs will be planned and implemented according to the Natural Resource Conservation Service standards and specifications found on the Electronic Field Office Technical Guide (EFOTG). However, seeding dates for cover crops may follow Midwest Cover Crop Council seeding guide recommendations.

For all non-structural BMP practices, cost share funding will be comprised of a flat per acre rate incentive based on the Minnesota NRCS Practice Average Annual Cost Information Spreadsheet FY2018 (or more recent as it becomes available) and the Practice Cost Information Workbook Tool 2019 (or more recent) found in the EFOTG.

Contract length

Practices will be planned for 1- or 3-years of implementation.

1-year contracts are available to allow landowners to start small by trying a practice with little commitment. 1-year contracts apply to only cover crops.

For practices with 3 years of implementation, practices may be implemented on the same acres for the 3-year duration (required for nutrient management and prescribed grazing), practices may move with the rotation but must implement the same amount or greater acres in years 2 and 3, or two or more practices may be implemented on the same acres for the 3-year period alternating years (i.e.: Plant cover crops after corn harvest, no-till soybeans the following year).

Contract Payments

The timing of payments shall be made at the discretion of the Member contracting the practice with the landowner/operator. Payments may be made all up-front, upon the first season's certification by the Member OR payments may be made after each season's certification by the Member, for both one- and three-year contracts. Certification includes verification of seeding, seed mix, and rate or other required parameter, depending on the practice. The practice must be certified and inspected by the Member annually for three-year contracts to ensure implementation. If the practice is not continued in years 2 & 3 as required, the Member shall recover funds for those years.

Eligibility

1-year Contracts (applies to only cover crops): Eligibility requirements include that planned practices are newly adopted; not previously implemented on the acres by the current owner/operator and did not previously meet NRCS standards and specifications. Up to three consecutive contracts may be applied for on the same land.

3-Year Contracts: Eligibility requirements include that planned practices are newly adopted; not previously implemented on the acres by the current owner/operator and did not previously meet NRCS standards and specifications. For cover crops, a second application is eligible if the cover crops species is enhanced or the practice is enhanced.

Incentive Rates:

- **Cover Crops** - Must follow NRCS Practice Standard 340
 - 1-2 species \$50/acre/year
 - 3+ species \$60/acre/year
 - Prevent plant acres are not eligible for this program
 - Implementation can occur on different acres within the three-year contract or on the same acres consecutively
- **Nutrient Management** - Must follow NRCS Practice Standard 590
 - \$20/acre/year
 - Implemented on the same acres annually
- **Prescribed Grazing** - Must follow NRCS Practice Standard 528
 - \$40/acre/year
 - Implemented on the same acres annually
- **Residue and Tillage Management – No-Till & Strip Till** - Must follow NRCS Practice Standard 329 for No-Till/Strip-Till
 - \$20/acre/year
 - Implementation can occur on different acres within the three-year contract or on the same acres consecutively
- **Residue and Tillage Management - Conservation Tillage** - Must follow NRCS Practice Standard 345 for Conservation Till
 - \$10/acre/year
 - Residue cover following a corn crop at the time of planting the subsequent crop must be 60% or greater.
 - Residue cover following a soybean crop at the time of planting the subsequent crop must be 30% or greater.
 - Residue cover following a small grain crop at the time of planting the subsequent crop must be 60% or greater.
 - Implementation can occur on different acres within the three-year contract or on the same acres consecutively.

Labor Provided by Owners

Unless specified otherwise by Minnesota prevailing wage statutes, the value of labor, equipment, materials and/or services that are proposed to be provided by the landowner to complete the project, shall be estimated at:

- General Labor rate of \$25 per hour. (Date, times and activity must be documented)
- Heavy equipment operation such as skid steers, tractors, backhoes, and scrapers (including labor) at \$75 per hour. (Date, times and activity must be documented)
- Other equipment rates as listed on the most recent Iowa State University – Iowa Farm Custom Rate Survey – Average Charge rate.
- Professional or semi-professional services, such as engineering, labor rate at \$100 per hour. (Date, times and activity must be documented)

NOTE: In-kind labor is non-reimbursable. This is to be used ONLY as match for the grant.

DRAFT:

Proposed Shoreline Buffer Policy:

Critical Area Planting, NRCS Practice Standard 342, will be followed in the design and implementation of shoreline buffers. Up to 25% of the shoreline may be excluded from the shoreline buffer for the purpose of recreational use and/or water access and still be eligible for cost share.

- For shoreline buffer plantings with an average width equal to or less than 10 ft, a cost share rate of 50% will be used.
- For shoreline buffer plantings and average width of 11 ft to 25 ft, a cost share rate of 75% will be used.
- For shoreline buffer plantings greater than an average width greater than 25 ft, a cost share rate of up to 90% may be used.

Shoreline Buffers in the Plan:

- SWQual-6 – protect, stabilize, or restore 1,000+ feet of shorelands using native buffers and other BMPs
- SWQual-24 – Complete 1,400+ feet of streambank buffers for habitat improvement and channel stabilization
- LC-8 – Install shoreland buffers, un-mowed buffers, buffer demonstrations, and rain gardens or similar urban BMPs (goal being 400-2,400 linear feet of buffers installed)
- SWQuan-8 – Install lake and stream shoreland restoration projects with a focus on retention and infiltration within the floodplain areas
- E-2 - Install or adopt 5–7 restoration/soil saving BMPs (shoreland buffers, forest riparian plantings, etc.)

Approved by SRWPP Board: 2/26/2024

Approved by SRWPP Board: 4/5/24

Forestry Policy:

Forest Stewardship Planning - landowners within the Snake Watershed land use priority areas may be eligible for reimbursement for the cost of the plan (according to the current DNR cost-share rate for stewardship plans, currently at \$300 + \$9 per acre). The landowners will be encouraged to enroll their land into the Sustainable Forests Incentives Act Program for increased land protection.