

## Rum River Watershed Partnership Board Meeting Minutes

**September 26th, 2024 4:30PM – 7:30PM**

In-Person Meeting and Project Tour

Princeton Area Library



**Coming together** to identify shared goals.  
**Planning together** to leverage unique capacity.  
**Working together** to achieve results.

**Note taker:** Molly Clyne, Mille Lacs SWCD

**Voting Members Present:**

Laurie Westerlund – Aitkin County  
 Colleen Werdien – Anoka Conservation District  
 Wade Bastian – Benton SWCD  
 Ed Popp – Benton County  
 Al Koczur – Isanti SWCD  
 Alan Duff – Isanti County  
 Kim Johnson – Kanabec SWCD  
 Jake Janski – Mille Lacs SWCD  
 Kelly Applegate – Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe  
 Dale Scholl – Morrison SWCD  
 Bobby Kasper – Morrison County  
 Chris Jurek – Sherburne SWCD – Sherburne County

**Alternates Present:**

**Partners and Staff Present:**

Jamie Schurbon – Anoka Conservation District  
 Gerry Maciej – Benton SWCD (*virtual attendance*)  
 Emily Forbord – Benton SWCD  
 Tiffany Determan – Isanti SWCD  
 Lydia Godfrey – Isanti SWCD  
 Mary Poelman – Kanabec SWCD  
 Jaren Peplinski – Kanabec SWCD (*virtual attendance*)  
 Susan Shaw – Mille Lacs SWCD  
 Molly Clyne – Mille Lacs SWCD  
 Robert Wall – Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe  
 Dan Cibulka – Sherburne SWCD

*Isanti SWCD Project Tour Staff:*

Willow Dean

Todd Kulaf

Doug Page

Matthew Remer

**Voting Members  
Absent:**

Bob Janzen – Aitkin SWCD

Andrew Hulse – Sherburne County

Scott Soderman, Isanti County

Michelle Jordon, BWSR

**Others:**

1. Meeting called to order by Janski at 4:31pm. Introductions led by Janski.

2. Approve Agenda

**Motion by Popp to approve the agenda;** second by Kasper. Affirmative: All.  
Opposed: None. **The Motion carried.**

3. Approval of June 27th, 2024 JPE meeting minutes

**Motion by Westerlund to approve the minutes as amended;** second by  
Applegate. Affirmative: All. Opposed: None. **The Motion carried.**

4. Administrative reports/updates

*Financials:* Summary of financials included in the agenda packet. Schurbon noted that all FY23 funds are encumbered, 28% of which are spent. This money expires at the end of next year. Schurbon will be contacting each project partner to get timelines for expected projects. The first installment of FY25 money will be received soon.

**Motion by Popp to approve the financial report;** second by Koczur. Affirmative: All.  
Opposed: None. **The Motion carried.**

*Audit:* Schurbon explained that Anoka Conservation District had a conversation with Peterson Companies about the audit for Anoka CD. It was brought up that the audit for the RRWP could be done with the Anoka CD's annual audit, resulting in a lower cost for the Partnership. It was a last-minute decision so the executive decision to move forward

with this arrangement for this year was made, but going forward, the Partnership will need to decide if they want to do it this way each year.

**Motion by Kasper to approve the decision for the Partnership's audit to be done through the Anoka Conservation District's audit;** second by Werdien.

Affirmative: All. Opposed: None. **The Motion Carried.**

*Progress Updates:* Determan pointed out how many project items are switching over to "blue" or complete, and most are on track. There is a lot of progress happening, but reporting is quarterly, so you can't see expenditure happen very quickly.

Forbord updated on a WASCOB Benton SWCD project. It was originally thought some money might not be used, but they now expect to use all their project funds. Forbord will keep the group posted.

Discussion ensued on whether or not completed items should be removed from future progress reports so it doesn't get crowded. The group agreed that completed items can be removed from subsequent reports.

There was also discussion on the attorney. Schurbon said that Gilcrest is retaining his current rates as discussed in the previous JPE meeting. Determan noted that she did utilize his services by asking him about the open meeting law in which he suggested we post it on the agenda.

## 5. Education and Outreach Updates

*Type A:* Godfrey noted that the first soil health field day for the Partnership occurred in August. It was well attended with 43 people. It was raining, so the outdoor portion was cancelled, but it otherwise went well. The speakers discussed tillage, equipment, cost-share and more. There was also attendance from co-ops and equipment dealers. Godfrey also noted that information was gathered from the attendees. Otherwise, lots of work has been done towards the outreach work plan and the project tour.

*Type B:* Clyne described how she has continued to work on internal group organization, such as the agricultural tech team and the local forestry team. The next agricultural tech team meeting is on October 15<sup>th</sup> on the topic of drone seeding. There's also been discussion on forestry topics, such as eligibility for WBIF-funded forest stewardship plans. Additionally, the RRWP webpage, hosted by the Mille Lacs SWCD, has been updated. She encouraged partners to look over it and give her any suggestions they might have.

## 6. Approve FY23 WBIF Grant

*3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2024 Funding Requests and Budget Revision:* Determan pointed out that the funding requests and amendments were included in the agenda packet. If approved, a work plan revision will have to be done. The revision request is also included in the packet, which shifts funds from one category to another. Additionally, language in the Rural BMP category would be revised to allow for inclusion of wetland restorations.

**Motion by Johnson to approve the funding requests and budget revision;** second by Westerlund. Affirmative: All. Opposed: None. **The Motion carried.**

7. FY25 WBIF grant

Work Plan Revision: At the June JPE meeting, the group approved the work plan and Determan submitted it into BWSR's work plan system. However, a mistake was noted that excluded tier 3 waterbodies, when it was discussed that the group wanted to allow for work to be done on tiers 1, 2, and 3. Since the work plan was accepted by BWSR, a work plan revision must be done. Once it is approved, Determan will submit it to BWSR, and then the grant agreement will be signed.

**Motion by Applegate to approve the work plan revision and to authorize the chair to sign the FY25 grant agreement;** second by Bastian. Affirmative: All. Opposed: None. **The Motion carried.**

8. 2025-2026 Education and Outreach Plan

The work plan was formed around the goals in the comp plan. In-depth overviews were done at multiple outreach hours and the last IPC meeting and feedback was integrated. Items are arranged by Type A or Type B, and Godfrey noted that priority levels of high, medium, and low will determine how the order of work.

Discussion ensued on metrics and the importance of them. Jordan noted how it can be difficult to quantify the impacts of outreach and relationships versus in projects, which can often be quantified by numbers like tons or pounds reduced.

**Motion by Bastian to approve the Education and Outreach work plan;** second by Koczur. Affirmative: All. Opposed: None. **The Motion carried.**

9. Updated WBIF Policies

Determan presented the updated policies. They have not changed since the June JPE meeting. The project policies is a three part document that describes project selection and approval, contracting and payment, and cost-share rates and specific policy practices. Eligibility expanded from just tier 1 and tier 2 waterbodies to including tier 3. Also added to policy that partners must wait a full year of the grant before we can shift funds from one activity to another, unless otherwise voted upon by the members. In the cost-share section, the biggest addition was in forestry practices. They must have a water quality benefit to be funded. Similarly, woodland stewardship plans must also address water quality.

Applegate asked if federal plan writers can write woodland stewardship plans. Shaw explained that at the moment, plan writers must be on the DNR-approved list, but that is something that can be investigated.

**Motion by Duff to approve the updated WBIF policies;** second by Kasper. Affirmative: All. Opposed: None. **The Motion carried.**

10. Next Meeting Date: December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

11. Janski called the meeting to adjourn at 5:13pm for the project tour.