



MISSISSIPPI RIVER ST. CLOUD WATERSHED ENTITY

FY27 Watershed Based Implementation Funds Work Plan

Vision Statement: Collaborating to conserve, improve, and achieve measurable progress toward natural resource goals in our shared watershed.

JPE Board Approval Date: XX/XX/XXXX

BACKGROUND

Biennially, the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) allocates funding for the implementation of water quality activities outlined within Comprehensive Watershed Management Plans (CWMP) throughout the State of Minnesota. These funds, known as Watershed Based Implementation Funds (WBIF), serve as the primary baseline source of funding for CWMPs. For Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27), the anticipated allocation of funding for the Mississippi River St. Cloud Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan is \$1,279,055. These funds, which expire on December 31, 2029, can be put towards many of the activities outlined within the MRSC CWMP. The MRSC Joint Powers Entity Board (MRSCJPE Board) will consider and then approve a Work Plan for this funding source, execute a grant agreement with BWSR, guide program and project selection, confirm expenditures, and regularly review progress towards CWMP goals.

FY27 WBIF WORK PLAN SUMMARY

FY27 is the second round of WBIF that will be used to carry out the MRSC CWMP. The partnership will utilize the funds in a variety of ways, addressing all applicable priority issues within the CWMP. A summary of this work is provided below while a detailed accounting of activities is provided at the end of this document in Table 1.

Administration: \$96,500 (7.5%, approximately 1,100 staff hours) of funding will be used to administer the grant and JPE. Activities in this category include:

- Watershed Coordinator (Sherburne SWCD)
- Fiscal Agent (Stearns SWCD)
- Meeting Note Taking and Minutes (Sherburne SWCD)
- Website Maintenance (Mille Lacs SWCD)
- Third-Party Attorney Representation (to be determined)
- Financial Audit expenses
- JPE Board insurance (Minnesota Counties Intergovernmental Trust, MCIT)

Staff Time: Due to the lack of reliable and sufficient staff capacity funding, an estimated \$321,000 (25.1%) will provide support for staff to carry out tasks pertaining to existing projects as well as develop future projects:

- Project Development (8.2%, approximately 1,240 staff hours): Staff time to provide direct conversations with landowners, leading to the development of targeted water quality programs and implementation of projects.
- Education and Outreach (5.4%, with material expenses as well as 180 staff hours): Staff time to produce outreach materials, coordinate local or regional workshops or field days, and otherwise promote targeted water quality programs for future projects. The MRSCWE partners anticipate that both individual office outreach efforts as well as coordinated, watershed-wide outreach efforts will occur.
- Technical Assistance and Engineering (11.5%, approximately 1,700 staff hours): Support for site assessment, surveys, preliminary analysis, and design construction supervision and inspection of completed projects. Funds may be used for staff with appropriate Job Approval Authority (JAA), or staff assisting

those with JAA, including but not limited to local County staff, SWCD staff, Technical Service Area staff, third-party consultants or engineers, etc.

Project and Program Installation: Approximately \$861,555 or 67.4% is anticipated to be used for program implementation or installation of individual projects. Activities identified for this biennium include:

- Agricultural Practices: engineered or ecological practices primarily associated with agriculture such as diversions, grade stabilizations, filter strips, water and sediment control basins, grassed waterways, etc.
- Forestry Practices: Establishment or improvement of long-term forestry practices to improve or protect water quality or control soil erosion such as tree and shrub planting and establishment, riparian forest buffer, etc.
- Groundwater: For constructed practices. The sealing and permanent closure of water wells and irrigation water management.
- Livestock Waste Management: Constructed practices that improve water quality through work completed within or around feedlots, managing livestock wastewater and controlling runoff on applicable sites.
- Non-Structural Management Practices: Ecological or other practice types that are non-structural in nature including, but not limited to, cover crops, conservation tillage (reduced tillage, no till), residue management, nutrient management, prescribed grazing, ecological plantings, etc. Carp management is included within this category.
- Planning and Assessment: For grants where specifically allowed, category reflects development of specific plans or special studies, such as nutrient management plans, farm planning/ certification, LIDAR analysis, subwatershed assessment, in-lake practice feasibility studies, and feedlot inspection and compliance plans.
- Streambank or Shoreland Protection: Constructed or vegetated solutions to stabilize and protect the banks and beds of streams and lakes.
- Urban Stormwater Practices: Primarily constructed practices associated with the development and redevelopment of urban areas, designed to accept and treat stormwater runoff. Examples include, but not limited to, bioretention, biofiltration, permeable surfaces, water reuse, sediment basins, grade stabilizations, diversions, etc.
- Wetland Restoration / Creation: The re-establishment of wetlands.

DISTRIBUTION OF FY27 WBIF DOLLARS

Figure 1 displays the anticipated breakdown of FY27 WBIF dollars. The categories displayed are standard BWSR-defined categories often used in reporting on state grants in the program "eLink".

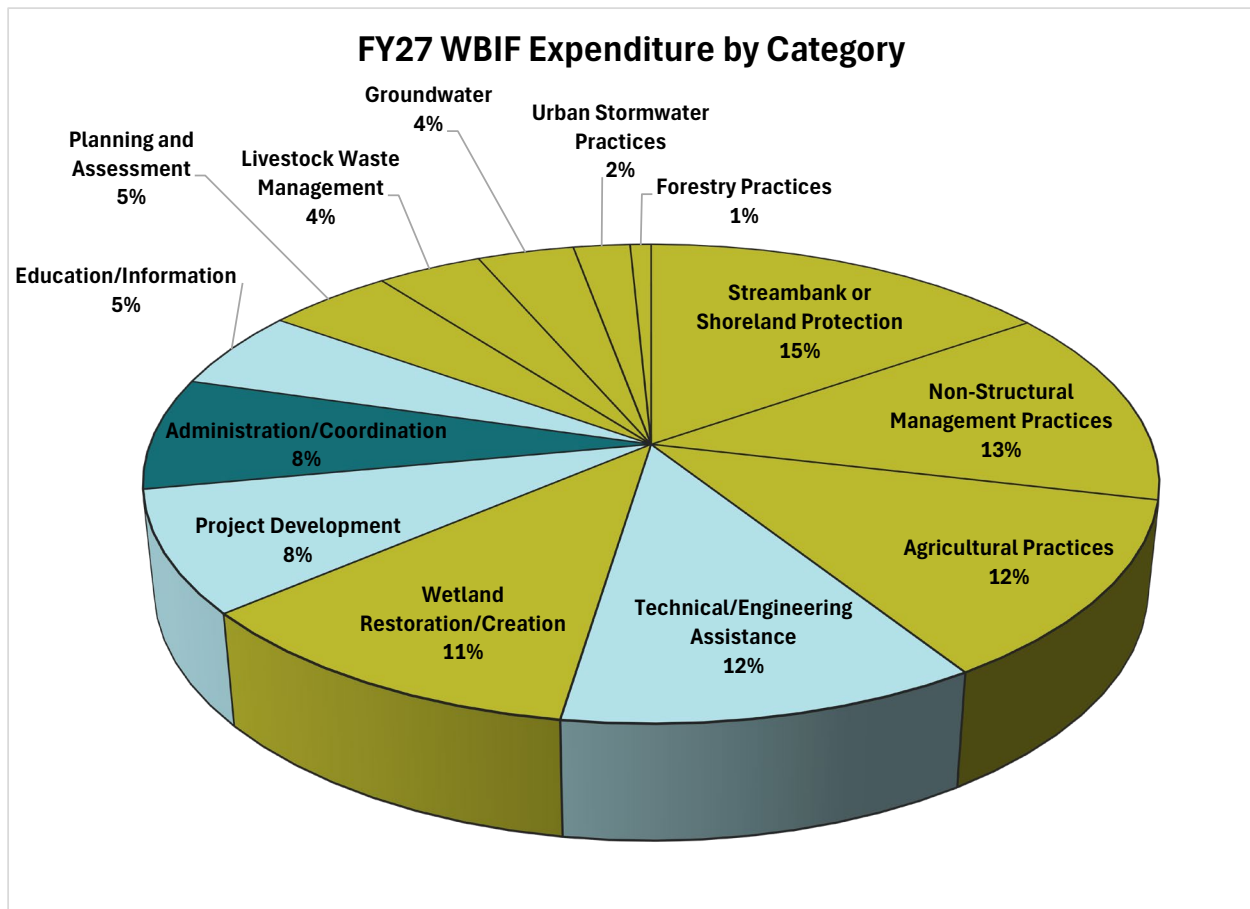


Figure 1: FY27 WBIF Dollars by Category. Light blue = staff capacity and planning, Dark blue = grant and JPE administration, Yellow = projects and programs.

Note that the amounts for each category are estimated at this time. The MRSCWE Grant Program Policies document details reassignment or reallocation of grant funds.

MEASURABLE OUTCOMES

Upon completion of the proposed activities outlined in this Work Plan, the following anticipated outcomes are described below and summarized in Table 1.

- **Best Management Practices (BMPS):** These are on-the-ground structural or non-structural projects that reduce pollution, retain or infiltrate water, control erosion, and often provide wildlife habitat. Policies that are implemented with water quality in mind may also be considered BMPs. A total of 43 BMPs are anticipated to be completed.
- **Planning Efforts or Studies:** Planning efforts may be led to design specific projects, determine the feasibility of a slate of BMP options or target the best location on the landscape for establishing a BMP or BMPs. A total of 4 planning efforts are anticipated to be completed.
- **Education and Outreach Activities:** An informed public can choose to manage their soils, forests, shorelines, or urban settings with water quality in mind. Bringing information about water concerns and local conservation technical or

financial programs can generate support for further conservation implementation as well. A total of 8 events, along with 4 sets of promotional materials, are anticipated to be completed.

PRIORITIZING AND TARGETING

The MRSCWE Joint Powers Board and staff wish to ensure that the most impactful activities receive first consideration of available funding. With this goal in mind, activities will be considered and selected based upon Prioritizing and Targeting.

Prioritizing: The MRSC CWMP outlines areas that are the most impactful to work within and will likely produce benefits to multiple Priority Issues (groundwater, surface water, habitat, etc.). For the second round of WBIF implementation, the partnership will focus approximately 97% of project implementation dollars within areas deemed High Priority and Priority as determined by the Multiple Benefit Analysis (MBA) presented within the MRSC CWMP (pg. 103). A single project representing 3% of the WBIF project implementation dollars has been identified in an "Opportunistic" area of Benton County. This project demonstrates a number of key components that make it a great opportunity including a low grant-cost-to-funds-leveraged ratio, substantial local support with multiple parties, and benefits to a Priority Lake located downstream.

Targeting: The MRSC CWMP defines targeting as including three subcomponents - Activity Type, Timing, and Location. Every effort will be made to ensure that the most effective practice is selected, the scheduling of the Implementation Plan is referenced, and the location of the activity is most effective possible to achieve the greatest conservation benefit. Where possible, projects and programs will be proposed and approved that have considered and met appropriate targeting elements. The use of subwatershed assessments, feasibility studies, conservation plans, or other such tools shall guide implementation of practices by the MRSCWE.

Table 1: FY27 WBIF Activities, Outcomes and Plan Reference

eLink Activity Category	Grant Budget non-State Match		Measurable Outcomes	Plan Reference
Administration / Coordination	\$96,500	\$0	Administration and coordination of watershed plan and JPE activities	Plan administration (pg 199 of CWMP)
Agricultural Practices	\$156,555	\$45,000	BMPs: 6	HWER: 04 ER: 04 SFR: 04 CWR: 01, 02, 03, 04 SCOC: 01, 02, 03 OCMR: 01, 02, 03
Education / Information	\$68,500	\$0	Events: 8 Promotions: 4	All Education and Outreach Action IDs
Forestry Practices	\$10,000	\$2,500	BMP acres: 10	HWER: 07, 08 ER: 07, 08 SFR: 07, 08
Groundwater	\$46,000	\$6,250	BMPs: 4	HWER: 02, 03, 04 ER: 02, 03, 04 SFR: 02, 03, 04 CWR: 03, 11 PCJC: 03, 11 OCMR: 09
Livestock Waste Management	\$50,000	\$12,500	BMPs: 2	HWER: 02, 03, 04 ER: 02, 03, 04 SFR: 02, 03, 04
Non-Structural Management Practices	\$170,750	\$25,500	BMPs: 7 BMP acres: 1,170	HWER: 01, 04, 07 ER: 01, 04, 07 SFR: 01, 04 07 SCOC: 01 OCMR: 01 CWR: 01 PCJC: 10, 12
Planning and Assessment	\$60,000	\$0	Planning acres: 125 Studies: 4	ER: 14, 17, 19 SFR: 14, 19 SCOC: 05, 06 WW: 12
Project Development	\$105,500	\$0		n/a
Streambank or Shoreland Protection	\$196,250	\$77,750	15 BMPs	HWER: 05, 06 ER: 06, 12 SFR: 06, 12 SCOC: 06, 08 PCJC: 06, 07
Technical / Engineering Assistance	\$147,000	\$0		n/a
Urban Stormwater Practices	\$27,000	\$3,000	BMPs: 2	HWER: 09 ER: 09 SFR: 09
Wetland Restoration / Creation	\$145,000	\$36,250	BMPs: 7	HWER: 05 ER: 05 SFR: 05 CWR: 05 SCOC: 05 PCJC: 05
Grand Total	\$1,279,055	\$208,750	BMPs: 43 BMP acres: 1,305 Educational Events: 8 Educational Promotions: 4 Planning Efforts or Studies: 4	97 of the CWMP's 159 individual Action IDs will be worked upon with FY27 WBIF grant dollars.