

Rum River Watershed Partnership Board Meeting

March 26, 2026

4:30-6:30 PM



Location: Mille Lacs County Courthouse, lower level, Conf rm D, 635 2nd St SE, Milaca, MN 56353

Members and public may join remotely using Zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85365090490?pwd=hhp5RHy2flZZd5PTgMXHzSFdltgIbE.1>

Phone: 1 312 626 6799

Meeting ID 853 6509 0490

Passcode: 161897

Coming together to identify shared goals.

Planning together to leverage unique capacity.

Working together to achieve results.

Vision Statement

- Clean, abundant water for consumption, recreation, and habitat
- Collaborative partnership among communities, working together towards a common goal
- Community members and decision makers understand the challenges and opportunities facing the watershed
- Innovative strategies to meet our goals

Primary representatives:

Aitkin County- Laurie Westerlund

Aitkin SWCD- Bob Janzen

Anoka CD- Danielle Holder

Benton County-Ed Popp

Benton SWCD- Mike Winkelman

Isanti County- Alan Duff

Isanti SWCD- Al Koczur

Kanabec SWCD- Marv Stutz

Mille Lacs SWCD- Jake Janski

Mille Lacs County- Dan Whitcomb

Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe-Kelly Applegate

Morrison SWCD- Dale Scholl

Morrison County- Bobby Kasper

Sherburne County- Andrew Hulse

Sherburne SWCD- Josh Krenz

CCd: member staff representatives, others requested to be on cc list

Topic	Purpose	Lead
1. Call to Order & Introductions		Chair
2. Approve agenda	DECIDE	Chair
1) Annual Meeting Items: a) Election of Officers: Chair, Vice Chair b) 2026 Meeting Schedule and location c) Budget	DECIDE	Chair
3. Approve December 19, 2025 minutes	DECIDE	Chair
4. Administrative d) Financial Report e) Resolution Authorizing Membership in the 4M fund* f) Interest Fund Policy* g) Progress updates *Motion needed	INFO/DECIDE	Schurbon/Determan
5. Education/Outreach	INFO	Clyne/Olson
6. 1st Quarter Statements of Work(s):	DECIDE	Chair
7. FY27 WBIF Process and Timeline	DECIDE	Chair
8. 2025 Annual Report	INFO	Clyne/Cibulka
9. Communication & announcements	INFO	Chair
10. Next Meeting Date: June 26	DECIDE	Chair
11. Adjourn	DECIDE	Chair

Additional Attachments:

Bank Financials: [Village Bank](#), [4M account](#)

MEMO

Rum River Watershed Partnership Joint Powers Entity Board

Agenda Item: 1b 2026 Meeting schedule and location

Meeting Date: March 26, 2026

Prepared by: Tiffany Determan



PURPOSE/ACTION REQUESTED

Set 2026 meeting schedule and location.

SUMMARY

With the start of the new year, a new meeting schedule is needed. The suggestion from staff is to follow the schedule set out in the Project Policies document. The schedule results in meetings in **March, June, September and December**. The meetings are currently held the fourth Thursday of the Month at 4:30 at the Historic Mille Lacs County Courthouse.

Proposed 2026 meeting dates:

March 26, 2026

June 25, 2026

September 24, 2026- tour of practices following a short board meeting. Location TBD

December 17, 2024- regular date would fall on December 24th

MEMO

Rum River Watershed Partnership Implementation Planning Committee

Agenda Item: 1c 2026 Budget

Meeting Date: March 26, 2026

Prepared by: Tiffany Determan



Purpose

The RRWP Joint Powers Agreement and Bylaws indicate that the RRWP shall annually approve a budget. The RRWP funding consists solely of Watershed Based Implementation funding (FY23 & FY25) and interest and dividends earned. Attached you will find the 2025 approved budget, an adjusted 2025 budget based on actual income and expenses, and a proposed 2026 budget.

PURPOSE/ACTION REQUESTED

Approve the 2026 budget as provided



RUM RIVER

WATERSHED PARTNERSHIP

2026 Budget

APPROVED X-XX-XXXX

Notes:

	2025	2025	2026
	Approved	Actual	DRAFT
Revenues			
BWSR WBIF FY23 Grant	\$737,507.35	\$394,885.23	\$202,347.88
BWSR WBIF FY25 Grant	\$421,329.50	\$57,679.22	\$740,088.52
Interest & Dividends	0	\$59,190.70	\$0.00
TOTAL REVENUE	\$1,158,836.85	\$511,755.15	\$942,436.40
Expenses-			
	2025	2025	2026
	DRAFT	Actual	DRAFT
Administration			
Legal	\$1,500.00	\$266.21	\$500.00
MCIT	\$5,000.00	\$0.00	\$4,500.00
Audit	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$6,000.00
Administration	\$51,969.87	\$28,630.75	\$90,439.81
SUBTOTAL	\$59,469.87		
Education/Outreach	\$141,151.64	\$92,710.56	\$182,236.84
Staff Time/Contracted Services	\$388,076.04	\$204,313.21	\$354,456.80
Projects	\$570,139.30	\$126,643.72	\$245,112.25
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$1,158,836.85	\$452,564.45	\$883,245.70
YEAR END BALANCES			
Unrestricted Funds (Interest & Dividends)	\$0.00	\$59,190.70	\$59,190.70
FY23 WBIF	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
FY25 WBIF	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
YEAR END BALANCE	\$9,988.90	\$59,190.70	\$59,190.70

Rum River Watershed Partnership Board Meeting Minutes

December 18th, 2025 4:30PM-6:30PM

In-Person & Virtual Meeting

Mille Lacs Historic Courthouse
Lower Level, Conference Room D

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: Bob Janzen, Aitkin SWCD (*Virtual*)
Mike Winkelman, Benton SWCD
Alan Duff, Isanti County (*Virtual*)
Al Koczur, Isanti SWCD (*Virtual*)
Kim Johnson, Kanabec SWCD (*Virtual*)
Kelly Applegate, Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe
Dan Whitcomb, Mille Lacs County
Jake Janski, Mille Lacs SWCD
Bobby Kasper, Morrison County (*Virtual*)
Dale Scholl, Morrison SWCD
Brad Schumacher, Sherburne County (*Virtual*)
Chris Jurek, Sherburne SWCD (*Virtual*)

Alternates Present N/A

Partners & Staff Present: Jamie Schurbon, Anoka CD
Mike McMillin, Benton SWCD (*Virtual*)
Tiffany Determan (*Virtual*)
Jaren Peplinski (*Virtual*)
Mary Poelman (*Virtual*)
Lynn Gallice, Mille Lacs SWCD
Molly Clyne, Mille Lacs SWCD
Susan Shaw, Mille Lacs SWCD
Dan Cibulka, Sherburne SWCD

Others: Zach Guttormson, BWSR

1. Meeting called to order by Janski 4:34pm.

Will be doing roll call votes due to some board members attending and voting virtually.

2. Approve Agenda

Motion by Scholl to approve the agenda; second by Koczur. Affirmative: All. Opposed: None. **The motion passed.**

3. Approve September 25th, 2025, minutes

Motion by Janzen to approve the September 25th, 2025 minutes; second by Applegate. Affirmative: All. Opposed: None. **The motion passed.**

4. Administrative reports/updates

Financials: Schurbon began the update by reporting that all but one certificate of deposit (CD) has matured. The 4M account is now being used for investments. The remaining CD will mature in January. For the FY23 WBIF grant, funds are fully encumbered, with 73% expended to date. Schurbon reiterated that this grant has been extended through the end of 2026. For the FY25 WBIF grant, 70% of funds are encumbered, 3% has been expended, and the match currently stands at 82% of the required amount.

Audit: Schurbon explained that at the previous board meeting there had been some uncertainty regarding guidance from the Office of the State Auditor. Michael Peterson, the auditor, has since confirmed that the Partnership's 2024 audit may proceed through the Anoka Conservation District as planned and will be completed within the month. Future audits should be conducted separately. Conducting a separate audit is estimated to cost between \$3,000 and \$6,000. However, in 2025 the State Legislature increased the threshold amounts for audits. If the RRWP have revenues >\$1M in any given year an audit will be required. If the threshold is not exceeded in any year, an audit or agreed upon procedures engagement is required every fifth year. Audits for special districts are due in June.

Although the Partnership's bank account is separate from Anoka Conservation District's accounts, it is currently held under Anoka Conservation District's name because the Rum River Watershed Partnership does not yet have its own tax identification number. To complete audits separately, the Partnership will need both a standalone bank account and its own tax identification number. The board previously authorized Mr. Schurbon and the Chair to work together to secure these items and others that may be needed.

The RRWP still needs to select a banking institution. Schurbon recommended First Bank and Trust due to its presence in multiple counties within the watershed and its offered interest rate of 3.1%. In addition, authorization is needed for check signers. The ACD,

as fiscal agent, is authorized to make payments so Schurbon suggested that they follow the current Anoka CD policy and keep the authorized check signers without change.

Motion by Winkelman to select First Bank and Trust as the RRWP's banking institution and to authorize the Fiscal Agent to designate authorized check signers following the current Anoka CD policy. Current signers to be authorized are Chris Lord, Kathy Berkness, Jim Lindahl, and Kate Luthner. Second by Koczur. Affirmed: All. Opposed: None. The motion passed.

Progress updates: The Board reviewed the project progress updates. For FY23, most activities are on pace for completion. Some items within Mille Lacs SWCD have experienced delays, including work related to animal feedlots; however, a staff member will be taking over responsibility for this work to help move it forward. Well-sealing activities, which are funded jointly between Mille Lacs SWCD and Isanti SWCD, are progressing more slowly. Both districts continue to conduct outreach and identify interested landowners. If well sealing projects are not identified for implementation in the spring, the Board may revisit the allocation and discuss potential reallocation of these funds. All FY25 activities are currently on track.

Discussion: Janski asked whether the well-sealing funds are available watershed-wide or limited to Mille Lacs and Isanti counties. It was clarified that the funding was initially planned for those two districts; however, if the work cannot be completed there, the funds may be offered more broadly within the watershed.

Other: Staff will begin planning for the FY27 grant cycle in February. By June, a draft framework will be prepared for Board review to ensure readiness for submission as early as July, the earliest possible application period. Early submission is preferred to allow for smooth implementation and continuous availability of funds to partners' projects. If awarded before December 31, 2026 as expected, the Partnership will be managing three grants concurrently. The anticipated FY27 request is approximately \$1.3 million, similar to FY25. Materials will be brought to the Board for review in June.

5. Education/Outreach

Type A outreach: Khan provided an overview of the outreach and education programming she has been working on. Regarding wake boating, she has developed a series of infographics, which were shared with the group and received positive feedback. These materials have also been discussed with the outreach team. The goal of this effort is to increase community awareness of the impacts of powerboats and to promote responsible use.

In forestry outreach, Khan is planning a webinar on emerald ash borer (EAB) scheduled for February. The webinar will focus on engaging landowners and providing practical guidance on actions they can take, such as diversifying tree species in their woodlands.

She also discussed upcoming shoreline-focused outreach, including plans for a webinar intended for both technical staff and the public. The webinar will feature an Isanti SWCD technician as well as a landowner who has completed do-it-yourself shoreline work.

Finally, Khan noted that she is working on a longer-term effort to gather testimonials and highlight project success stories.

Type B outreach: Clyne will be describing Type B work in the board training section of the meeting.

6. 4th Quarter Statements of Work(s):

Isanti SWCD FY25: Amended additions— Add \$74,000 of Technical Engineering Funds for surveys, concept plans, 90% designs and construction administration for wetland restorations draining to priority waters: Green & Skogman Lakes

Sherburne SWCD FY25: Amended additions— Add \$6,000 of Project Development funds for staff to complete Project. Development on areas within the Trott Brook Watershed. Trott Brook is a direct tributary to the Rum River, an impaired waterbody, and Tier 3 Prioritized Resource for implementation Activities. Staff would promote soil health ag practices, urban habitat plantings, forestry, and wetland restorations with landowners. Interested landowners would be placed on a waiting list for future funding (FY27 WBIF or other sources).

Discussion: Guttormson recommended omitting the final line for the Sherburne SOW, as “project development” is defined as projects furthering actions outlined in the grant workplan.

Motion by Duff to approve both the Isanti and Sherburne SWCD 4th Quarter funding requests and Statements of Work, with the omission of the final sentence in the Sherburne SWCD FY25 Statement of Work; second by Winkelman. Affirmative: All. Opposed: None. **The motion passed.**

7. 2026 Party-funded Work Plan

Determan described how a party-funded work plan is a requirement of our Joint Powers Agreement, plan and bylaws. We must have a budget, every other year a WBIF work plan, every other year a non WBIF work plan (plans funded by non-wbif). The non-WBIF work plan shows that we are using other funds and doing work for plan implementation by our members. This is a simple document to describe initiatives with little impact on the board but does need to be approved.

Motion by Koczur to approve the 2026 party-funded work plan as presented; second by Winkelman. Affirmative: All. Opposed: None. **The Motion passed.**

8. Board Training: Mille Lacs SWCD, Type B outreach and shoreline progress

Lynn Gallice (Mille Lacs SWCD) presented on shoreline project development, highlighting landowner engagement, outreach, and project implementation. She shared examples of DIY shoreline buffers; collaboration with the Mille Lacs Lake Watershed Group; participation in Healthy Land, Healthy Lake Expo; and the use of mailings and webinars to reach landowners. Gallice emphasized that shoreline work often involves negotiating project design with landowners and partners, that some projects do not move forward due to logistical constraints, and that providing technical assistance for DIY projects remains an important option. She also noted that visible shoreline projects often lead to interest from neighboring landowners.

Molly Clyne (Mille Lacs SWCD) presented on Type B outreach and engagement, noting that Outreach and Engagement are a Level A priority in the Comprehensive Plan. She described Type B outreach as relationship-based work focused on building trust and stakeholder buy-in, distinct from traditional awareness-based outreach. Clyne outlined a civic engagement approach that considers social, environmental, and economic impacts and emphasizes shared decision-making. Examples included the Local Forestry Team, Ag Technician Team, and a farmer-led group, which support coordination, shared learning, and progress toward plan goals. She also highlighted progress on forestry objectives, including Woodland Stewardship Plan cost-share implementation, and noted opportunities for future engagement efforts.

9. Communications & announcements

Determan informed the Board that BWSR has expressed interest in featuring the Rum River Watershed Partnership in an upcoming highlight. The feature will be part of a BWSR Snapshot series focused on watershed successes using Clean Water Funds. The RRWP will be the first watershed highlighted in the series. BWSR will be interviewing Determan, additional staff, and the Board Chair as part of the feature.

10. Next Meeting Date: March 26, 2026

11. Adjourn: **Janski adjourned the meeting at 6:00PM.**

Financial Report - Rum River Watershed Partnership

3/16/2026



Bank Account

1/1/2026	Grant funds	\$283,308.44
	Unrestricted funds (dividends)	\$44,310.62
2026 YTD Transactions	Grant funds - debits	\$156,157.56
	Grant funds - credits	\$125,000.00
	Unrestricted - debits	\$0.00
	Unrestricted - credits	\$6,063.23
2/6/2026	Balance	\$302,524.73
	Bank statement	\$302,524.73

4M Investment Account

1/1/2026	Grant funds	\$307,826.01
	Unrestricted funds (dividends)	\$6,642.86
2026 YTD Transactions	Grant funds - debits	\$0.00
	Grant funds - credits	\$100,000.00
	Unrestricted - debits	\$0.00
	Unrestricted - credits	\$2,173.99
2/6/2026	Balance	\$416,642.86
	4M statement	\$416,642.86

Funds On-Hand by Type

Grant Funds	Bank Account	\$252,150.88
	4M	\$407,826.01
	Total	\$659,976.89
Unrestricted Funds	Bank Account	\$50,373.85
	4M	\$8,816.85
	Total	\$59,190.70

FY23 Watershed Based Implementation Funding (WBIF) Grant

Expires 12/31/2025

Activity	Grant Funds					Match Funds				
	Beginning	Encumbered	Not Encumbered	Spent	Remaining	Beginning	Encumbered	Not Encumbered	Spent	Remaining
Admin	\$101,133.00	\$101,862.05	-\$729.05	\$101,862.06	-\$729.06	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Forest Practices	\$13,152.00	\$13,152.00	\$0.00	\$13,152.00	\$0.00	\$3,133.00	\$3,139.00	-\$6.00	\$3,872.90	-\$739.90
Outreach	\$221,219.00	\$221,219.00	\$0.00	\$193,705.16	\$27,513.84	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Prioritizing Studies	\$66,000.00	\$67,897.05	-\$1,897.05	\$67,271.29	-\$1,271.29	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Project Devel	\$116,225.00	\$114,472.09	\$1,752.91	\$106,896.30	\$9,328.70	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$2,000.00
Rural BMPs	\$242,522.78	\$227,522.78	\$15,000.00	\$167,522.78	\$75,000.00	\$18,000.00	\$97,568.00	-\$79,568.00	\$157,396.78	-\$139,396.78
Soil Health	\$50,000.00	\$46,300.00	\$3,700.00	\$46,300.00	\$3,700.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Tech/Eng	\$307,111.27	\$331,111.27	-\$24,000.00	\$310,552.38	-\$3,441.11	\$14,872.10	\$12,872.10	\$2,000.00	\$360.00	\$14,512.10
Residential & Urban BMPs	\$132,684.95	\$111,045.79	\$21,639.16	\$61,484.95	\$71,200.00	\$80,000.00	\$21,535.19	\$58,464.81	\$28,357.12	\$51,642.88
Groundwater	\$30,000.00	\$30,000.00	\$0.00	\$8,953.20	\$21,046.80	\$12,000.00	\$12,000.00	\$0.00	\$8,878.80	\$3,121.20
Match - General	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$19,762.47	\$0.00
TOTAL	\$1,280,048.00	\$1,264,582.03	\$15,465.97	\$1,077,700.12	\$202,347.88	\$130,005.10	\$149,114.29	-\$19,109.19	\$198,865.60	-\$68,860.50
		98.8%	1.2%	84.2%	15.8%		114.7%	over matched	153.0%	-53.0%

FY25 Watershed Based Implementation Funding (WBIF) Grant

Expires 12/31/2027

Activity	Grant Funds					Match Funds				
	Beginning	Encumbered	Not Encumbered	Spent	Remaining	Beginning	Encumbered	Not Encumbered	Spent	Remaining
Admin	\$126,600.00	\$116,600.00	\$10,000.00	\$36,184.19	\$90,415.81	\$12,000.00	\$0.00	\$12,000.00	\$0.00	\$12,000.00
Agriculture-Structural	\$127,000.00	\$15,000.00	\$112,000.00	\$0.00	\$127,000.00	\$32,500.00	\$15,000.00	\$17,500.00	\$0.00	\$32,500.00
Outreach	\$322,400.00	\$322,400.00	\$0.00	\$29,009.76	\$293,390.24	\$11,005.90	\$0.00	\$11,005.90	\$0.00	\$11,005.90
Forestry Practices	\$10,000.00	\$240.00	\$9,760.00	\$120.00	\$9,880.00	\$2,000.00	\$128.85	\$1,871.15	\$501.48	\$1,498.52
Well Sealing	\$5,000.00	\$0.00	\$5,000.00	\$0.00	\$5,000.00	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	\$2,000.00
Non-Structural Ag	\$15,000.00	\$15,000.00	\$0.00	\$3,335.50	\$11,664.50	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Prioritizing Studies & Forest Stewardsh	\$109,500.00	\$21,100.00	\$88,400.00	\$4,853.88	\$104,646.12	\$2,400.00	\$400.00	\$2,000.00	\$8,128.00	-\$5,728.00
Project Devel (Type C Outreach)	\$22,200.00	\$18,000.00	\$4,200.00	\$0.00	\$22,200.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Streambank & Shoreline Protection	\$90,000.00	\$41,128.99	\$48,871.01	\$0.00	\$90,000.00	\$22,500.00	\$18,000.00	\$4,500.00	\$0.00	\$22,500.00
Tech Assist. & Eng.	\$308,859.00	\$276,500.00	\$32,359.00	\$0.00	\$308,859.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Urban Stormwater	\$70,000.00	\$20,000.00	\$50,000.00	\$0.00	\$70,000.00	\$17,500.00	\$5,000.00	\$12,500.00	\$0.00	\$17,500.00
Wetland Restoration	\$125,000.00	\$145,000.00	-\$20,000.00	\$0.00	\$125,000.00	\$31,250.00	\$85,000.00	-\$53,750.00	\$0.00	\$31,250.00
TOTAL	\$1,331,559.00	\$990,968.99	\$340,590.01	\$73,503.33	\$1,258,055.67	\$133,155.90	\$123,528.85	\$9,627.05	\$8,629.48	\$124,526.42
		74.4%	25.6%	5.5%	94.5%		92.8%	7.2%	6.5%	93.5%



MEMO

To: Rum River Watershed Partnership Board
From: Jamie Schurbon, Watershed Projects Manager
Date: March 26, 2026
Re: 4M Investment

Summary

The attached resolution needs to be approved to establish a new 4M (Minnesota Municipal Money Market Fund) investment account for the RRWP.

Reasoning

The Office of the State Auditor informed us that RRWP funds need to be in accounts owned by the RRWP and the RRWP needs audits separate from its fiscal agent (the Anoka Conservation District). Currently, Rum River Watershed Partnership (RRWP) funds are in a 4M investment account and a bank account owned by the Anoka Conservation District. Only RRWP funds are in those accounts. In the future, the RRWP will have two financial accounts: 1) First Bank and Trust checking and 2) 4M investments.

Available Upon Request

The resolution the board is approving refers to the 4M "Declaration of Trust" which is their forming document. That 39-page document is available from Jamie upon request.

jamie.schurbon@anokaswcd.org or 763-434-2030 ext. 210.

Recommended Motion

Approve the resolution authorizing membership in the 4M Fund.

It is hereby certified that the Board of the Rum River Watershed Partnership adopted this Resolution at a duly convened meeting of the Board held on the ____ day of _____, 20__, and that such Resolution is in full force and effect on this date, and that such Resolution has not been modified, amended, or rescinded since its adoption.

Secretary to the Board

Dated: _____

MEMO

Rum River Watershed Partnership Board Meeting

Agenda Item: 4f WBIF Interest Policy

Meeting Date: March 26, 2026

Prepared by: Tiffany Determan



Purpose

This memo provides a summary of the Interest Income Policy for consideration by the RRWP Board. It is intended to describe how the Partnership will use funding from interest income or investment dividends. The Implementation Planning Committee (IPC) reviewed the draft policy on March 6 and provided several recommendations for improving clarity, transparency, and administrative efficiency. These recommendations are incorporated below.

Recommended Interest Income and Reserve Funding Policy

Reserve Funding

- Interest income or investment dividends will be maintained for a reserve funding balance of \$50,000 as a baseline.
- Increase the reserve annually by \$1,000.

Reasons for maintaining a reserve include:

- Protection against legal exposure (e.g., if the RRWP were sued).
- Continuity of operations in the event of temporary grant funding stoppage.
- Cash-flow stabilization if the insufficient grant funds are temporarily on-hand to reimbursement partners.

Uses of Interest Income Above Reserve Level

- **Incidental expenses** - The watershed coordinator and fiscal agent may jointly approve minimal non-WBIF eligible expenses, such as tour/boat rental, holiday gatherings, or other small operational needs, up to a limit of \$500 per expenditure and \$2,000 per year.

- **First priority** - Funds may be requested by members for projects that support the Rum River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan and that are not eligible for WBIF.
- **Secondary priority** - Requests may be considered on a case-by-case basis after primary priority needs are met. Examples include match contributions or supplemental support for implementation activities. Such requests will be considered in the same manner as grant funding requests.

Fund Request Process

- Requests from partners for use of interest income will be considered quarterly. The watershed coordinator will develop a simple request form to support consistent submissions across members. Such requests will be considered by the same process as requests for grant funds.

Consistency with the Joint Powers Agreement (JPA)

These recommendations appear to be fully consistent with the JPA. No conflicts have been identified related to reserve practices, administrative approvals, or the structured quarterly request process. However, if requested by the board we will have our attorney review it.

Board Action Requested

Approve the Interest Income and Reserve Funding Policy.

MEMO



Rum River Watershed Partnership Joint Powers Entity Board

Agenda Item: 7 1st Quarter Agreements and Statements of Work(s)

Meeting Date: March 26, 2026

Prepared by: Tiffany Determan

PURPOSE/ACTION REQUESTED

Approve 1st quarter project funding requests and Amended Statement of Works (SOWs) as provided.

Summary

Partner	Grant	Description
Isanti SWCD	FY25	Amended additions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Add \$20,000 of grant and \$5,000 match for Urban Stormwater Reduction for Up to 3 Stormwater projects (likely rain gardens) installed in areas draining to Tier 1-3 waters targeted to Green, Blue, Skogman, Long, Spectacle and Fannie Lakes- these lakes have subwatershed assessments completed to identify priority locations. (Restore and Protect issues addressed).• Add \$20,000 of grant and \$5,000 match for At least 100 linear feet Shoreline protection projects installed on Tier 1-3 waters targeted to Green, Blue, Skogman, Long, Spectacle and Fannie Lakes-these lakes have subwatershed assessments completed to identify priority locations (Restore and Protect issues addressed)
Aitkin SWCD	FY25	Amended additions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Add \$7,000 of Project Development funds for staff to secure projects to meet the goals in bullet point #2.• Add \$12,000 of grant and \$4,000 match for at least 100 linear feet of shoreline protection on Round Lake identified in Prioritizing Study.

Detailed Statements of Work here: [Isanti](#), [Aitkin](#)

MEMO

Rum River Watershed Partnership Implementation Planning Committee

Agenda Item: 7 FY27 WBIF Timeline and Process

Meeting Date: March 26, 2026

Prepared by: Tiffany Determan



Purpose

The purpose of this memo is to request the RRWP Board's approval to proceed with the FY27 Watershed-Based Implementation Funding (WBIF) work plan development process as outlined in the timeline below. Additionally, I request authorization to distribute the draft FY27 WBIF Work Plan to non-voting members and partner boards for review and comment prior to the June 26th RRWP Board meeting, at which the board will consider approving the work plan for submission to BWSR.

Our goal is to get the FY27 grant as early as possible to allow for a seamless transition of funding and to give members the most time to implement meaningful projects.

Summary of Proposed Timeline and Process

Below is a condensed overview of the development steps for the FY27 WBIF Work Plan, following the detailed timeline already reviewed by the Implementation Planning Committee (IPC):

March:

- February 23–March 23: Members to submit budget needs for projects/programs.

May

- In-person IPC meeting to revise budget and work plan. Non-voting members are invited to meeting.
- Draft work plan sent to RRWP Board and all member boards for courtesy review (May 19–June 2).

June

- RRWP Board receives final draft FY27 WBIF Work Plan for approval.
- Additional revisions are made as needed.

July

- Watershed Coordinator to submit Funding Request/Work Plan to BWSR.
-

Board Approval Requested

I am requesting the Board's approval for the following items:

1. Approval of the FY27 WBIF Work Plan timeline and development process as presented.
The board will see the work plan two times—once via email and again in June for final approval.
This timeline ensures sufficient time for partner input, IPC review, budget refinement, and preparation for BWSR submission.
2. Authorization to distribute the draft FY27 WBIF Work Plan for courtesy review to:
 - Non-voting RRWP members
 - Local partner boards

This courtesy review will occur prior to the June RRWP Board meeting to ensure transparency and allow for meaningful feedback without delaying the approval schedule.

Action Requested at the Next RRWP Board Meeting

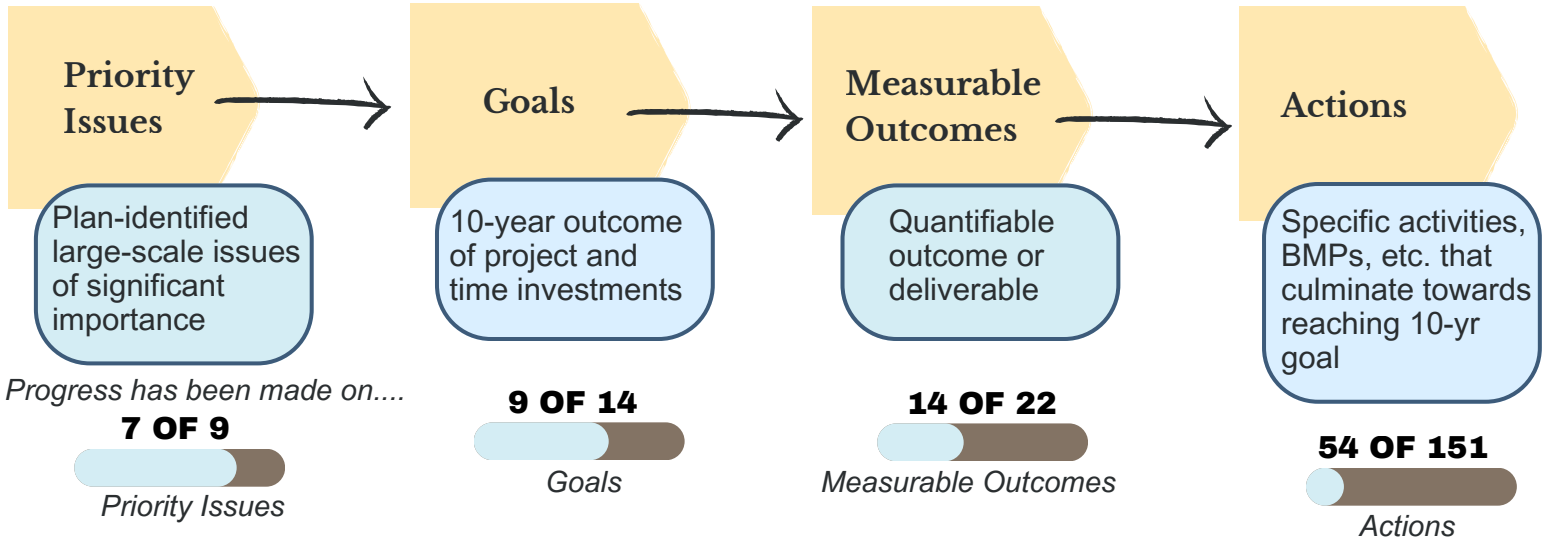
“Approve the FY27 WBIF work plan development process and authorize the distribution of the draft FY27 WBIF Work Plan to RRWP non-voting members and partner boards for review prior to the June Board meeting.”

2025 Rum River Watershed Partnership Annual Report



The Rum River Watershed Partnership (RRWP) is a joint powers entity formed by 6 counties, 8 SWCDs, and the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe. The group's purpose is to implement a state-approved Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan. Any work partners complete using WBIF or other funding sources contributes progress towards plan goals. This report details the progress made in 2025, which marks the third year of implementation.

GOAL PROGRESS



★ WE ARE ON TRACK

We are 39% into the life of the plan. We would like to see close to 39% of progress being made.

- 36% of Action IDs have some level of activity
- 32% of Action IDs have greater than 10% progress made
- 23% have greater than 50% progress made
- 17% of Action IDs are complete

Water Storage



Protected Land



POLLUTANT REDUCTIONS

PHOSPHORUS	NITROGEN	SEDIMENT
2,537 lbs/yr 100%	16,666 lb/yr	9,591 tons/yr

To see detailed progress information, see our [online tracking tool](#):

Best viewed on a computer or large screen.



Progress by Management Zone

MILLE LACS LAKE

TP	TN	SEDIMENT
30 lbs/yr	0 lb/yr	35 tons/yr

MILACA

TP	TN	SEDIMENT
24 lbs/yr	0 lb/yr	22 tons/yr

W. BRANCH RUM RIVER

TP	TN	SEDIMENT
362 lbs/yr	6,572 lb/yr	178 tons/yr

ST. FRANCIS

TP	TN	SEDIMENT
1,068 lbs/yr	1,327 lb/yr	1,805 tons/yr

ONAMIA

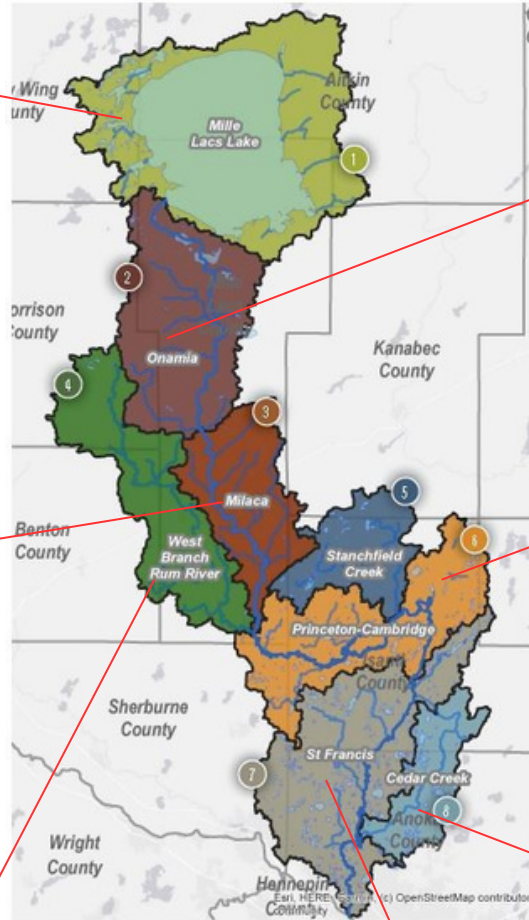
TERRESTRIAL HABITAT	TOTAL BMPS
17 acres	5

PRINCETON-CAMBRIDGE

TP	TN	SEDIMENT
1041 lbs/yr	8,498 lb/yr	7,543 tons/yr

CEDAR CREEK

TP	TN	SEDIMENT
11 lbs/yr	269 lb/yr	6 tons/yr

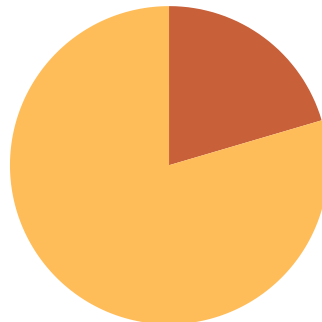


Funding

Funding for implementation comes from Watershed-Based Implementation Funds (WBIF) along with other local, state, and federal sources. To date, the Rum River Watershed Partnership has secured \$4.3 million in grant funding, leveraged with \$1.7 million in match for a total investment of over \$6 million in conservation across the watershed. These funds have supported 300+ projects with landowners providing match on more than half of projects.

Project expenses from all sources have totaled....

\$4,332,620



64 projects have been funded using WBIF

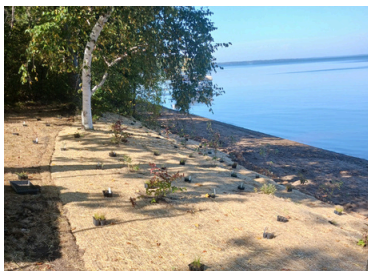
249 projects were funded from 26 other funding sources

Project Gallery

109 activities were completed in the watershed in 2025. Here are a few examples of some on-the-ground projects that were completed to accomplish plan goals.



Cartwright Phase 2
Wetland Restoration
Isanti SWCD



Shoreline Project on
Mille Lacs Lake
Mille Lacs SWCD



Shoreline Restoration
on Spectacle Lake
Isanti SWCD



Tree Planting Project
in West Branch
Morrison SWCD



Shoreline Restoration
on the Rum River
Anoka CD



Cover Crop near Bogus
Brook
Mille Lacs SWCD



Critical Area Planting
on the Rum
Anoka CD



Stormwater Project on
Lake Sandy
Sherburne SWCD

Watershed Wide Outreach

Outreach activities are detailed in the FY25 RRWP Outreach Plan and led by staff at Isanti SWCD and Mille Lacs SWCD. In 2025, outreach focused on improving communication, collaboration, and utilizing resources among partners.

COMPLETED Goal: 10 outreach efforts every biennium

✔ 70/50

COMPLETED Goal: 25 new groups engaged over 10 yrs

✔ 26/25

Outreach completed includes:



18 partner activities, including workshops, mailings, webinars, and more!



Increased partner communication by hosting technical staff meetings, including the Ag Tech Team and Local Forestry Team



Created informational hand-outs on safe wakes and continued to add materials to the public-facing resources page

in 2025 we reached

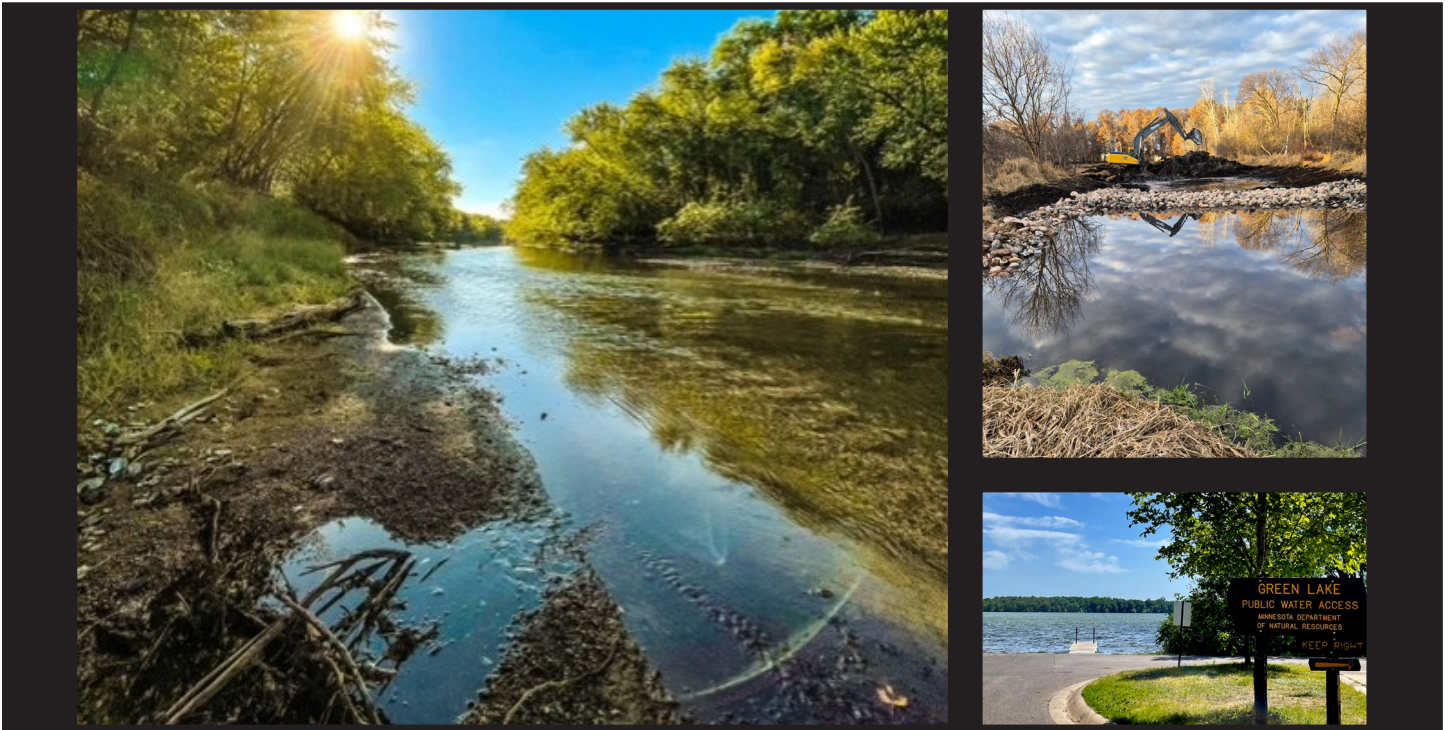
1,023 people



												On Track	Slow Progress	On Hold/significant setbacks	CANCELLED												
												↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	IPC to use for progress updates				
Project Summary	Partner	Activity	Project	Project Deliverables and Description	Timeline	WBIF Funding Award (\$)	WBIF Grant Match Commitment (\$)	Priority Benefitting Waterbody	TP Reduction (lb/yr)	TSS Reduction (ton/yr)	Project Life (yrs)	Progress Status	NOTES														
Anoka CD	Education/Information	2023-ASWCD-E-1	Type A outreach based on E&O Work Plan. Work plan tasks to be coordinated amongst Isanti SWCD & Anoka CD.	2023-2024	\$36,600.00	\$0.00	N/A	0.00	0.00	0	Slow Progress	On track, with 2 big video projects upcoming															
Mille Lacs SWCD	Planning, Assessment, & Special Studies	2023-MLSWCD-PAS-5	Inventory animal operations including but not limited to registered feedlots, and possible land application of manure approx 1000 ft from Bogus Brk or a ditch of trib of the stream that could be contributing to the impairment. Will utilize aerial review, owner/producer review/survey, develop list of recommended BMPs for each site and rank by cost effectiveness and landowner readiness. Identified in the work plan within the tier 1 priority stream Bogus Brook, Milaca GMZ	2023	\$22,600.00	\$0.00	R-Bogus Brook	0.00	0.00	0	On Track	Mapped individual farmer interests from the past year to better understand operation types and soil health interests in relation to location and vulnerable resources.															
Mille Lacs SWCD	Project Development	2023-MLSWCD-PD-1	Motivate establishment and installation of buffers on private ditches and buffer enhancements on public and private ditches	2023-2024	\$5,000.00	\$0.00	R-Bogus Brook	0.00	0.00	0	On Track	Utilized landowners interests in what is and is not allowed with the Buffer Law to have conversations regarding the benefit of buffers. No projects, but 3 landowners planning their own buffer enhancements															
Benton SWCD	Tech/Engineering	2023-BSWCD-3	Conservation planning and design of WASCOB or equivalent.	2023-2024	\$10,000.00	\$0.00	R-West Branch Rum River	0.00	0.00	0	On Track	\$8,300 has been used of the \$10,000 for TSA and staff time. Project is scheduled to be completed this spring as soon as weather allows.															
Isanti SWCD	Groundwater-Well Sealing	Well Sealing	Up to 10 wells sealed	2024-2025	\$15,000.00	\$6,000.00	Watershed-Wide (Wells only)	0.00	0.00	25	Slow Progress	3 wells sealed, City of Cambridge trying to move forward with several wells															
Isanti SWCD	Project Development	PD Well Sealing	Staff time to administer and promote Well Sealing with a goal of 10 wells sealed	2024-2025	\$10,000.00	\$1,000.00	Watershed-Wide (Wells only)	0.00	0.00	0	On Track	Outreach to Cities of Cambridge, Isanti and Braham. Articles in SWCD Newsletter, local paper, and social media.															
Mille Lacs SWCD	Groundwater-Well Sealing	Well Sealing	Up to 10 wells sealed	2024-2025	\$15,000.00	\$6,000.00	Watershed-Wide (Wells only)	0.00	0.00	25	Slow Progress	5 wells sealed. Funds extended to Dec 2026. Two projects in development.															
Mille Lacs SWCD	Project Development	PD Well Sealing	Staff time to administer and promote Well Sealing with a goal of 10 wells sealed	2024-2025	\$10,000.00	\$1,000.00	Watershed-Wide (Wells only)	0.00	0.00	0	Slow Progress	working on outreach with 2 landowners with wells to seal.															
Isanti SWCD	Structural Urban BMPs	Tier 1 and 2 Lakes, Near Shore Stormwater Reduction	3 Projects with designs and contracts ready to go and additional project development in progress for additional projects. There is a significant amount of interest. Projects are identified or prioritized within a subwatershed assessment. Projects will include shoreline/hillside restorations, bioretention basins and or projects to capture and treat stormwater runoff and prevent erosion. Annual TP reduction is estimated at 6.1 lbs	2024-2025	\$50,000.00	\$12,500.00	P-Blue Lake	6.10	0.50	10	On Track	6 projects installed. Remaining will be installed spring/summer 2026															
Mille Lacs SWCD	Planning, Assessment, & Special Studies	Bogus Brk-Milaca GMZ, feedlot ID	Inventory animal operations including but not limited to registered feedlots, and possible land application of manure approx 1000 ft 4,000 ft from Bogus Brk or a ditch of trib of the stream that could be contributing to the impairment. Will utilize aerial review, owner/producer review/survey, develop list of recommended BMPs for each site and rank by cost effectiveness and landowner readiness. Identified in the work plan within the tier 1 priority stream Bogus Brook, Milaca GMZ <u>Amended timeline is needed due to departure of key staff and re-hiring the position. Amended scope of work is needed due to lack of feedlots within close proximity to the waterway.</u>	2023-2025	Extension only	\$0.00	R-Bogus Brook	0.00	0.00	0	Slow Progress	Inventory via mapping in progress															
Aitkin SWCD	Tech/Engineering	Mille Lacs Lake Shoreland Protection /Restorations	Planning and Technical Assistance for 6 lake shore projects on Mille Lacs Lake prioritized by the Mille Lacs Lake Prioritizing Study	2024-2025	\$10,000.00	\$0.00	P-Mille Lacs Lake	0.00	0.00	0	On Track	1 project done. Other projects started and on track for 2026															
Benton SWCD	Tech/Engineering	W. Branch Rum River, Schafer gully stabilization	Conservation planning and design of WASCOB or equivalent. An amendment is needed for additional tech/engineering, some of which has already occurred on the WASCOB or equivalent project beginning 6/26/2023 and anticipated to go through 11/30/2024.	2023-2024	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	R-West Branch Rum River	0.00	0.00	0	Slow Progress	Benton SWCD will keep the TA funds and help with the project.															
Mille Lacs SWCD	Structural Rural BMPs	W. Branch Rum River, Schafer gully stabilization	Construction of a WASCOB or equivalent practice that will be treating 118 acres, in the direct drainage to the W. Branch Rum. The drainage area is predominantly ag, with a ~500 ft buffer area of grass. We anticipate the designs to be completed by TSA. The implementation planning committee determined through consensus that this project was a priority in part due to the severity of the erosion, its location in a priority watershed, and the limited number of erosion control projects available. This project funding was previously awarded to Benton SWCD who is coordinating construction. Because the project is in Mille Lacs Co, the construction money is shifted to MLSWCD.	2025	\$60,000.00	\$15,000.00	R-West Branch Rum River	43.40	12.07	10	on track	Still on track for spring 2026. The contractor would have started early March but for the latest snow. So, if the weather holds should be going in sometime soon. Still waiting on final plans for the section 34 project.															
Aitkin SWCD	Structural Urban BMPs	ASWCD - Mille Lacs Lake Shoreland Projects	2 stream and shoreland protection projects	2025	\$4,500.00	\$1,500.00	P-Mille Lacs Lake	0.72	0.58	10	Slow Progress	In Process															
Aitkin SWCD	Tech/Engineering	ASWCD - Mille Lacs Lake Shoreland Projects	Technical Assistance with Stream & Shoreland Protection Projects	2025	\$10,000.00	\$0.00	P-Mille Lacs Lake	TBD	TBD	10	On Track	Projects started for 2026															
Benton SWCD	Tech/Engineering	W. Branch Rum River, Schafer Gully Stabilization	Technical assistance time for 40 hours of inspection and certification of current plans/design and 20 hours of planning/design for another basin on his property that was previously ruled out due to WCA rules. With the WCA change of 2024, that basin is now eligible.	2025	\$6,000.00	\$0.00	R-West Branch Rum River	0.00	0.00	10	On Track	Project is schedule to be installed this spring, funds will cover TSA and SWCD staff time for construction inspection and certification.															

<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> COMPLETED On Track Slow Progress On Hold/significant setbacks CANCELLED </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> ↓ </div> </div>														
Project Summary			Project Detail				Funding Awarded		Costs/Benefits to Water Quality			IPC to use for progress updates		
Funding Round	Partner	Activity	Project(s)	Conservation Practice	Project Deliverables and Description	Timeline	WBIF Funding Award (\$)	WBIF Grant Match Commitment (\$)	Priority Benefitting Waterbody	TP Reduction (lb/yr)	TSS Reduction (ton/yr)	Project Life (yrs)	Progress Status	NOTES
2024-4	Anoka CD	Administration	ACD - Fiscal Agent 2025-2026	Admin/Coord	Fiscal agent services.	FY25 WBIF grant execution thru 12/31/2026.	\$31,000.00	\$0.00	N/A	NA	NA	NA	On Track	
2024-4	Aitkin SWCD	Prioritizing Studies	ASWCD FY25 - Round Lake Study	Planning, Assessment or Special Study	Prioritizing Study Round Lake (Aitkin)	2025-2026	\$6,000.00	\$0.00	P-Round Lake (Aitkin)	NA	NA	NA	On Track	Drone flight done. Video being analyzed and parcels prioritized for projects.
2024-4	Aitkin SWCD	Prioritizing Studies	ASWCD FY25 - Woodland Stew Plans	Planning, Assessment or Special Study	2 Forest Stewardship plans	2025-2026	\$2,000.00	\$400.00	P-Mille Lacs Lake	NA	NA	NA	On Track	
2024-4	Aitkin SWCD	Streambank or Shoreland Protection	ASWCD FY25 - Mille Lacs Lake Shoreland Projects	580-Streambank & Shoreline Protection	Construction labor and materials for 6 shoreland projects on Mille Lacs Lake identified in Prioritizing Study	2025-2026	\$36,000.00	\$9,000.00	P-Mille Lacs Lake	TBD	TBD	TBD	On Track	Projects started
2024-4	Isanti SWCD	Administration	ISWCD - Watershed Coordinator 2025-2026	Admin/Coord	Watershed Coordination services	FY25 WBIF grant execution thru 12/31/2026.	\$48,700.00	\$0.00	N/A	NA	NA	NA	On Track	
2024-4	Isanti SWCD	Outreach	ISWCD - Type A Outreach 2025-2026	Education/Information	Type A outreach based on E&O Work Plan	FY25 WBIF grant execution thru 12/31/2026.	\$50,000.00	\$0.00	N/A	NA	NA	NA	On Track	
2024-4	Sherburne SWCD	Administration	SSWCD - Implementation Tracking 2025-2026	Admin/Coord	Implementation Tracking Services	FY25 WBIF grant execution thru 12/31/2026.	\$5,300.00	\$0.00	N/A	NA	NA	NA	On Track	Online tracking system completed in early 2025. Will be refined and improved over coming months. Continued support and maintenance of system and entries will be ongoing.
2025-1	Benton SWCD	Prioritizing Studies	BSWCD FY25 - Zulawski Conservation Planning	Planning, Assessment or Special Study	Conservation plan evaluating feedlot/manure storage, soil health (tillage), pasture management, and nutrient management. The completed plan will propose water quality improvement projects for the Zulawski farm.	2025	\$5,600.00	\$0.00	R-West Branch Rum River	NA	NA	1	On Track	Will be working with landowner this summer on conservation planning
2025-1	Isanti SWCD	Prioritizing Studies	ISWCD FY25-Erosion Inventory- Rum River	Planning, Assessment or Special Study	Identification of erosion from upland (primarily agriculture) adjacent to the Rum River in Princeton-Cambridge and St. Francis management areas (within Isanti County). Process will be completed using aerial photos and lidar. Field verification if necessary. Product will be a shapefile. Erosion locations will be prioritized and used for future implementation funding requests.	2025	\$3,500.00	\$0.00	P-Rum River (Princeton-Cambridge)	NA	NA	NA	On Track	Winter 2025
2025-1	0	Administration	0	Admin/Coord	MCIT, Attorney, Audit	0	\$19,000.00	\$0.00	0	0.00	0.00	0	On Track	
2025-2	Morrison SWCD	Non-Structural Ag	MSWCD FY25 - Cover Crops	340-Cover Crop	Approximately 150 acres of Cover Crops or combination of other Soil Health practices. Will prioritize West Branch Rum section in Morrison County.	2025-2026	\$7,500.00	\$0.00	R-West Branch Rum River	TBD	TBD	TBD	On Track	Pete Ratka fulfilled half of this in 2025. Paid out \$3335.50 on 12/5/2025. \$4,164.50 remaining for 2026.
2025-2	Isanti SWCD	Tech/Engineering	ISWCD FY25-Land Protection	666-Forest Stand Improvement	Maintain 1 FTE to implement portions of the Rum River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (CWMP) and/or Landscape Stewardship Plan (LSP) by connecting with 50 landowners for land protection or enhancement programs including Forest Stewardship planning, conservation easements, wetland restoration/banking, or others. Implementation areas, in priority order, will be (a) parcels in proximity to those identified in the interim prioritization on pages 132-133 of the CWMP and any subsequent prioritization, (b) those with highest RAQ scores in the LSP or subsequent analyses, and (c) any other location in the watershed. Emphasis will be on the Mille Lacs and Isanti County areas. We are targeting a minimum of 5 completed or in-progress conservation easements and 5 enhancement or management plans Forest Stewardship Plans (contracted or completed by FTE). Forest Stewardship Plans may be completed by a contractor. Funding will cover ~1.5 years of staff time.	2026-2027	\$202,500.00	\$0.00	Rum River (Princeton-Cambridge)	0.00	0.00	0	On Track	
2025-3	Isanti SWCD	Wetland Restoration	ISWCD FY25 - Green Lake Wetland Restorations	657-Wetland Restoration	2 acres wetland restorations along county ditch 16 or 23 draining directly to Green Lake. Designs compiled by ISG and construction oversight by Isanti SWCD. Projects identified in MDM and landowner onboard.	Winter 2026-2027	\$145,000.00	\$85,000.00	R-Green Lake	20.00	TBD	25	On Track	Foster & Cartwright P3, -Foster complete March 2026
2025-3	Mille Lacs SWCD	Outreach	MLSWCD FY25- Type B Outreach	Education/Information	Type B outreach based on E&O Work Plan	4th Qtr 2025 through 2027.	\$267,400.00	\$0.00	N/A	NA	NA	NA	On Track	Continued to establish relationships with key connections within the watershed. Examples: Minnesota Lakes and Rivers, Isanti County Environmental Coalition, Mille Lacs Lake Watershed Group. Continued to coordinate internal groups like the Local Forestry Team, Ag Tech Team, and Outreach Hour, in addition to hosting an EAB and DIY Shoreline webinar.
2025-3	Mille Lacs SWCD	Outreach	MLSWCD FY25-Groundwater workshops	Education/Information	2 events/workshops annually for the biennium targeting ML Lake and the broader watershed in the Milaca/Princeton area. One week-long nitrate testing event with 1:1 info provided to people. One workshop on a weekend at ML lake for out of town residents.	2026-2027	\$5,000.00	\$0.00	N/A	NA	NA	NA	On Track	In pre-planning for when and where workshops will take place.
2025-3	Mille Lacs SWCD	Non-Structural Ag	MLSWCD FY25-Non-Structural	340-Cover Crop	Continue Soil Health implementation Onamia, Milaca, WB into 26-27: Approximately 200 acres of Cover Crops or combination of other Soil Health practices.	2026-2027	\$7,500.00	\$0.00	R-West Branch Rum River	TBD	TBD	3	On Track	Outreach ongoing.
2025-3	Mille Lacs SWCD	Administration	MLSWCD FY25-Coordination	Admin/Coord	Basic posting website notices (~10hr/yr x 3 yrs) and notetaking for IPC and JPE meetings (64 hrs/yr x 3 yrs)	4th Qtr 2025 through 2027	\$12,600.00	\$0.00	N/A	NA	NA	NA	On Track	Continued to take notes at both JPE and IPC meetings and post website materials.
2025-3	Mille Lacs SWCD	Project Development	MLSWCD FY25-Ag Project Development	327-Conservation Cover	Continue to build: FY23 Rum WBIF - PD-1 - Bogus Brook (SWR.15) and West Branch (SRW.18) Project Dev of Ditch Buffers - motivate establishment and installation of buffers on private ditches and buffer enhancement on public and private ditches. Pair w/type C outreach for soil health.	4th Qtr 2025 through 2027	\$5,000.00	\$0.00	R-Bogus Brook	NA	NA	NA	On Track	Met with stakeholders for pre-planning on how such community conversations will go.
2025-3	Isanti SWCD	Agricultural - Structural	ISWCD FY25-Livestock Crossing	472/382-Use Exclusion/Fencing	1 livestock exclusion on County Ditch 16 draining to Green Lake. Project identified in MDM.	Winter 2025-2027	\$15,000.00	\$15,000.00	R-Green Lake	2.00	1.75	20	On Track	Bidding complete-construction spring 2026
2024-4	Isanti SWCD	Tech/Engineering	ISWCD FY25-Wetland Design	657-Wetland Restoration	Surveys, concept plans, 90% designs and construction administration for wetland restorations draining to priority waters: Green & Skogman Lakes	2025-2026	\$74,000.00	\$0.00	R-Green Lake	N/A	N/A	N/A	On Track	Cartwright 3, Skoglund
2025-4	Sherburne SWCD	Project Development	SSWCD-FY25-ProjectDevelopment	657-Wetland Restoration	Staff would complete Project Development on areas within the Trott Brook Watershed. Trott Brook is a direct tributary to the Rum River, an impaired waterbody, and Tier 2 Prioritized Resource for implementation	2026	\$6,000.00	\$0.00	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	On Track	

Rum River Watershed Partnership advances clean water protections



YOUR Clean Water Fund AT WORK

Clean Water Funds are the sole source of Watershed-Based Implementation Funding.

The partnership currently draws from 29 funding sources.

With dedicated Clean Water Funds, focused priorities and trust among its 15 members, the Rum River Watershed Partnership in two years exceeded several of the goals set out in its 10-year [comprehensive watershed management plan](#).

As diverse as it is vast, the 997,085-acre watershed encompasses forest, wetlands, farm fields and urban development, stretching from rural Aitkin County to suburban Anoka County. The Rum River flows about 150 miles, from Mille Lacs Lake to the Mississippi River, a source of drinking water for St. Paul. It's also a state-

“ To have a real lasting, sustainable impact, we need to do this bigger, harder work. ... I think we’re laying the foundation for a new approach to conservation. ”

— Jake Janski, chairman,
Rum River Watershed Partnership

designated Wild and Scenic River and a State Water Trail.

Partners reflected on what makes the partnership work, and how it has used Watershed-Based Implementation Funding (WBIF) from the Minnesota

The Rum River [Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan](#) was finalized in 2022. The Rum River Watershed Partnership has since received two rounds of Watershed-Based Implementation Funding from BWSR: \$1,280,050 in 2023 (including supplemental funding) and \$1,331,560 in 2025. Within the plan, references to streams and rivers start on Page 95; drinking water on Page 111.

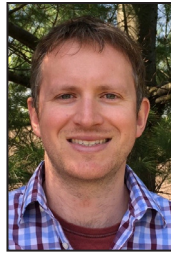
Left: The Rum River, a state-designated Wild and Scenic River, flows from Mille Lacs Lake to the Mississippi River. **Bottom:** Nutrient-impaired Green Lake will benefit from wetland restorations. Photos Courtesy of Isanti SWCD **Top:** Steve Cartwright has worked with the Isanti SWCD on two wetland restorations, including this one completed in late 2025. Both filter water from a county ditch. **Photo Credit:** Steve Cartwright



Janski



Determan



Cibulka



Page



Gallice

Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) to make progress on three of its plan goals: restoring and protecting priority lakes, restoring and protecting priority streams and rivers, and protecting drinking water.

“It’s really allowed us to look at the common good of the community at large, beyond the cities, towns and townships that we’re all from,” said Mille Lacs Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) Board Chairman and Rum River Watershed Partnership Chairman Jake Janski. “It makes the work we’re doing feel like part of the bigger picture, which conservation inherently has to be. You can’t do conservation that’s impactful and long-lasting on a small scale.”

Eight SWCDs, six counties and the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe make up the partnership.

By mid-February 2026, with \$4.4 million in federal, state, local and non-government-organization grants plus \$1.7 million in matching dollars, the partnership had funded 289 activities — including projects installed, practices implemented, protections secured, monitoring tracked and outreach accomplished.

State grants included two rounds of WBIF from BWSR: \$1.28 million in 2023 and \$1.33 million in 2025.



The Rum River flowed through Mille Lacs County. Water levels were low because of a drought. Photo Courtesy of Ann Wessel

Across the watershed, the partnership’s accomplishments achieved estimated annual reductions including 9,611 tons of sediment, nearly 2,590 pounds of phosphorus and nearly 16,580 pounds of nitrogen; contacted 2,600 individuals and engaged 52 groups through outreach.

By mid-February 2026, the partnership had surpassed several of the comprehensive watershed management plan’s goals. Among them: Partners’ work with landowners restored 89 acres of wetlands, exceeding the 60-acre goal; enrolled 2,436 acres in soil health practices, more than double the 1,000-acre goal; enrolled 414 acres of aquatic habitat in conservation easements, more than double the 180-acre goal; and enrolled 359 acres of upland habitat in conservation easements, double the 175-acre goal.

“Having money for both staff and projects that’s essentially non-competitive,

we’re able to find the projects and move forward,” said Isanti SWCD District Manager and Rum River Watershed Partnership Coordinator Tiffany Determan. “It’s accelerated our ability to move on projects and get things done.”

While creating the plan took time, Janski said the framework clarifies decisions about the best use of taxpayer dollars.

“Taking the competitiveness out of some of these funds has helped us focus on more important conservation goals and less fighting for dollars,” Janski said. “It’s been really good being able to work across the county line boundaries with the other districts and supervisors and staff. I feel like we are gaining a lot of efficiencies.”

Besides leveraging implementation funds, WBIF supports three staff positions. It partially funds two watershed-wide

outreach workers. They organize workshops, find landowners interested in conservation projects and build community support. And it fully funds a land protection specialist, shared between Isanti and Mille Lacs SWCDs, to work with landowners to fund, develop and design conservation easements.

Determan said the complexity of the plan itself was challenging, but having a core group in place to navigate the changes and bring new staff up to speed made a difference.

“We’ve been able to leverage each partner’s expertise in the areas where they’re best suited, and it kind of comes together like a puzzle. We all do our small parts and it just melds,” Determan said.

The Anoka Conservation District is the fiscal agent. Sherburne SWCD Senior Water Resource Specialist Dan Cibulka tracks implementation on the ArcGIS Online dashboard he built. Mille Lacs SWCD Administrator Susan Shaw leads civic organizing efforts.

The sheer number of partners could have derailed the plan. Among the factors contributing to speedy implementation: longevity and trust.

Staff turnover is low; some have 10 or 20 years on the job. Partners’ working relationships predate



A 1.25-acre wetland restoration completed in late 2025 will help to improve Green Lake's water quality. Steve Cartwright and his family grew up fishing and water-skiing on the lake, which will also benefit from his previous work with the Isanti SWCD on a 1.7-acre wetland restoration. Both filter water from Isanti County Ditch 23. Photo Courtesy of Isanti SWCD

2017, when they developed the Rum River Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy ([WRAPS](#)). Both Determan and Janski, who attends implementation planning committee meetings, said the joint powers board trusts staff recommendations.

“There’s a lot of pretty solid processes in place to allow for a lot of transparency in what’s going on behind the scenes, how decisions around projects, budgets, policies are being made. So when (it) does come to the board, we know it’s gone through a rigorous process to get to us,” Janski said.

“To have a real lasting, sustainable impact, we need to do this bigger, harder work. And it takes a lot of time, and it takes a lot of energy and input,” Janski said. “I think we’re laying the foundation for a new approach to conservation, thinking about it at a broader systems level, and getting — hopefully — more of the population in that mindset. Everyone can do a little something on their own, but we also have to look at the big issues and actions that we have to take collectively.”

The following illustrate results of some of that collective work.

“I’m just a temporary tenant of this land. While I own it, I want to do the most I can to make it better than what I found it.”

— Steve Cartwright, Isanti County landowner



Lakes

Green Lake is the largest lake in Isanti County, and one of its top recreational lakes, with two public boat accesses, about 400 lakeshore homes and an active Lake Improvement District. Two county ditches drain into the lake. It was listed as nutrient-impaired in 2008.

Improving water quality — and, ultimately, removal from the state’s impaired waters list — is a top-level goal of the partnership for priority impaired lakes listed in the plan, including Green Lake. Green Lake is also a watershed-wide priority, as Green Lake Brook connects it to the Rum River.

“It’s impaired, but the numbers aren’t skyrocketing,” Determan said. “We think we can enhance the recreational suitability of the lake.”

A previous Green Lake [watershed study](#) pinpointed

the most cost-effective sites for water-quality projects. Clean Water Funds from BWSR supported the study, and leveraged U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) [grants](#) from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) for projects including a bioretention basin and eight lakeshore restorations. Stormwater treatment reduced phosphorus entering the lake from Wyanett Creek and North Brook.

“It’s helped us to leverage the plan dollars,” Determan said of the previous work and federal funding sources, “because we have all these project locations and plans to get a lot of work done.”

Retired real estate broker Steve Cartwright’s work with the Isanti SWCD on two wetland restorations, 1.7 acres completed in summer 2024 and 1.25 acres in winter 2025, filters water from Isanti

County Ditch 23. The ditch cuts across his property and eventually becomes Wyanett Creek.

In late 2025, he was considering a third restoration.

“We’ve always considered Green Lake our lake,” Cartwright said. In 1943 his grandparents moved to the farm where he lives now, a mile from the lake. He rents the tillable land to a dairy farmer. Over the years, he and other family members have owned lakeshore cabins. A son now lives there year-round.

“It’s got a special importance and meaning to us,” said Cartwright, 76, recalling summers spent fishing and water-skiing on Green Lake when he lived in Minneapolis. Even then, the lake turned green with algae in late summer. “Anything I can do that would help Green Lake, I’m going to do it.”

Wetland restorations help Green Lake by diverting and treating water bound for the lake.

Isanti SWCD Watershed Specialist Todd Kulaf said wetland restorations’ cost-benefit ratio for phosphorus reduction is high. Cartwright’s two projects divert water

from a combined total of 1,050 acres through nutrient-filtering wetlands before it re-enters the ditch bound for Green Lake.

“It’s big-scale projects, and we’re getting awesome numbers from these projects,” Kulaf said.

The estimated annual phosphorus reduction for Cartwright’s two projects together is nearly 107 pounds — more than one-third of the plan’s 300-pound-reduction goal related to external sources. One pound of phosphorus can feed 500 pounds of algae.

“Great cost-benefit, that’s the biggest thing. Awesome pollution reduction. A ton of landowner-partner buy-in. The habitat component. The wildlife component,” Kulaf said. “When you’re prioritizing (projects), these just end up checking all the boxes and are a clear frontrunner in where we should focus our efforts.”

The partnership’s comprehensive watershed management plan’s goal related to surface water: Reduce total phosphorus loading to priority waters by 2,500 pounds over 10 years.

Grants covered the cost of both wetland restorations. WBIF and EPA grants from the MPCA leveraged Isanti County Sportsmen’s Club dollars for the first restoration, which carries a 10-year deed restriction; and The Nature Conservancy dollars for the second, which carries a 25-year deed restriction.

Wetlands also function as flood storage, which, in turn, translates to less ditch maintenance. Habitat improvement is another secondary benefit: replacing degraded monocultures with native species feeds and



Dennis Kresal is in the process of protecting 970 acres across his entire Isanti County property, including MN CREP and RIM Critical Shorelands easements. Photo Courtesy of Isanti SWCD

“ I think the biggest thing is retiring marginal croplands in the county that have other benefits to water quality, some of that being through groundwater. ”

—Douglas Page, Isanti SWCD land protection specialist

shelters migratory birds.

“It’s cool to see that everybody’s coming together and we’re seeing improvements. What we are doing is working,” Kulaf said of the partnership. “It’s very rewarding to know that our efforts are something that is making a difference.”

An archery deer hunter, Cartwright said he also wanted to help wildlife. And he said he liked the look of the ponds, especially the second, which is deeper and surrounded by trees.

“I’m just a temporary tenant of this land,” Cartwright said. “While I own it, I want to do the most I can to make it better than what I found it. And if I’m enhancing just the looks of it, that’s one (thing). If I’m cleaning up the mess that others have left, that’s another. But if I can help the lake at the same time, I’ve got three bonuses.”

Streams and Rivers

Maintaining the water quality of healthy lakes and streams — and avoiding new

impairments — is a top-level goal of the partnership for protecting priority rivers listed in the plan, including the Rum River, which is also a watershed-wide priority.

Conservation easements, most of them through BWSR’s Reinvest in Minnesota ([RIM](#)) [Critical Shorelands program](#), are helping to protect the Rum River.

Isanti SWCD Land Protection Specialist Douglas Page was hired with WBIF funds to work with Isanti and Mille Lacs SWCDs. Because specialized easements work can take years from start to finish, staff with other duties often don’t have time for it.

Since he was hired in June 2024 and began outreach efforts, more than 60 people from both counties have contacted him about potential easements within the watershed; about half showed interest in pursuing an easement. As of mid-February 2026, four easements had been recorded, eight applications had been submitted and five were in the

early conversations stage.

“The properties that we’re targeting have some surface water connection to the Rum River, be it a private ditch, county ditch, smaller stream, or being on the river itself,” Page said. “We’re basically buffering that stream and any of the surface waterways from (development and ag runoff).”

Some properties bordering the Rum River have been restored to native grassland or forest.

Dennis Kresal is working with Page to establish five easements on four 70- to 80-acre parcels, two of them through the Minnesota Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (MN CREP), which became available in Isanti County in 2025, one of them a RIM Critical Shorelands easement, and one property a mix of the two.

Across his entire Isanti County property, Kresal is in the process of protecting 970 acres in three Isanti County townships, and has protected more than 14,000 feet on both sides of Stanchfield Creek where it enters the Rum River.

“I think the biggest thing is retiring marginal croplands in the county that have other benefits to water quality, some of that being through groundwater,” Page said of Kresal’s easements. “It also just buffers the landscape. Anywhere you’re taking ag out of production and restoring it back to grassland or forest, you’re getting all the benefits of an intact ecosystem: soil stability, stabilization, reduced nutrient inputs.”

Wetlands and forest surround Kresal’s ag land, which will be seeded to a native grass mix.

The four parcels are part of

the 970-plus acres Kresal, a retired homebuilder, has permanently protected through a variety of conservation easements.

“I grew up with it being really rural and natural and wild. It’s gradually becoming an urban housing development with blacktop driveways and (2 ½ -acre lots), and I’d like to see some of it stay natural and not full of houses. We can’t lose all our rural properties to urban developments,” Kresal said.

“Some places should be destined to be left natural so people can appreciate rural beauty and wildlife and have a place to go (where they don’t have to look at streets and high-rise apartments,” Kresal said. “If you don’t save some of this property near the metro area, there won’t be any places to go.”

Easements remain privately owned. But Kresal said the property had the potential to one day become city-owned parkland.

Drinking Water

Ensuring groundwater is safe to drink — by decreasing the risk of nitrate contamination,



Kits test for bacteria, nitrates, arsenic, lead and manganese.
Photo Courtesy of Mille Lacs SWCD

in part by increasing awareness of vulnerabilities and what can be done to cut that risk — is a top-level goal of the partnership related to drinking water.

In Mille Lacs County, three Clean Water Fund grants from the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) are in play. The first, an accelerated implementation grant awarded in 2021, built a network of stakeholders, supported an open house and nitrate testing clinics, and pinpointed what residents who attended those clinics said they wanted: additional, economical well water testing.

Each of the two, \$50,000 grants that followed made 150 kits available to detect the Top 5 pollutants for which MDH recommends testing: bacteria, nitrates, arsenic, lead and manganese. The first centered on the Milaca area. The second, awarded in 2025 and still underway, is focused on the northern part of the county near Mille Lacs Lake.

“What really speaks to the health of the community is groundwater,” said Mille Lacs SWCD resource conservationist Lynn Gallice.

Gallice meets with landowners when they pick up a test, and then follows up to discuss results and available resources — including other conservation opportunities for which they might qualify — and other water quality issues in the watershed, such as shoreline buffers, forestry or ag practices.

“What we’re really trying to do is put as much knowledge as we can in the hands of landowners,” Gallice said. “If they have a well, it’s their responsibility. A lot of people don’t understand that. They think someone

else is monitoring that or will monitor it. So (we’re) just giving them as much knowledge as (we) can to be aware of the possible risks to their drinking water and to know what they’re drinking and, if there’s problems, help them solve those problems.”

In addition to supporting nitrate clinics, to date WBIF has sealed 21 wells — 17 in Isanti and Mille Lacs counties, three in Anoka County and one in Benton County (the 10-year plan calls for sealing 70). Additionally, the Anoka Conservation District is tapping WBIF earmarked for the seven-county Twin Cities metropolitan area for well-sealing.

Soil health practices implemented where the risk of nitrate contamination is higher use WBIF to leverage [soil health delivery grants](#) from BWSR, and Regional Conservation Partnership Program ([RCPP](#)) support from the USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service.

BWSR staff members write and produce Snapshots, a monthly newsletter highlighting the work of the agency and its partners.

Online tracker displays partners’ progress

Early in the planning stages, the Rum River Watershed Partnership discussed the need to track its plan goals and actions. Sherburne SWCD Senior Water Resource Specialist Dan Cibulka volunteered — “not entirely knowing what it entailed,” he said.

When the Excel spreadsheet proved too unwieldy, he taught himself ArcGIS Online to build interactive surveying forms and database dashboards. The resulting online tracker displays

dashboards on 151 different actions related to achieving the overarching goal.

For example, reducing phosphorus loading by 2,500 pounds is one 10-year goal related to improving water quality of impaired lakes and streams.

“How do you do that? In a watershed such as the Rum that has a great variety of different land-use types and habitats and a wide degree of different stressors to the water resources within the

watershed, in some areas that might be soil health initiatives. In some of the more urban areas (that might be) shoreline restoration (or) stormwater management,” Cibulka said. It might involve managing in-lake phosphorus. “There are action IDs that relate to that overarching goal of restoring our surface water, and in different areas that looks different.”

While the list of 151 action items is long, Cibulka said it’s manageable across such a large partnership. And it

plainly shows the variety of natural resources and natural resources needs.

“This is a watershed that’s very highly valued by the people in the community, with many waters that are in great condition that we’re working to protect. (It’s) a watershed that directly impacts the drinking water quality of those downstream, so it’s very significant and very important from that perspective as well,” Cibulka said.