

# Rum River Watershed Partnership Board Meeting Minutes

December 18<sup>th</sup>, 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 at 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 25<sup>th</sup>, 2025, minutes

**Motion by Janzen to approve the September 25<sup>th</sup>, 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 been transferred into the 4M account. The remaining CD will mature in January and will then be transferred. He noted that progress with the 4M account has been positive to date. For the FY23 grant, funds are fully encumbered, with 73% expended to date. Schurbon reiterated that this grant has been extended through the end of 2026. For FY25, 70% of funds are encumbered, 3% has been expended, and the required match currently stands at 82%.

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. However, the Office of the State Auditor has indicated that future audits should be conducted separately.

Although the Partnership's bank account is separate from Anoka Conservation District's accounts, it is currently held under Anoka Conservation District because the Rum River Watershed Partnership does not yet have its own tax identification number. Conducting a separate audit is estimated to cost between \$3,000 and \$6,000. To complete audits independently, the Partnership will need both a standalone bank account and its own tax identification number. Audits for special districts are due in June.

Under new requirements, an annual audit is triggered only if expenditure exceeds \$1 million. It is unlikely the Partnership will meet this threshold annually, but an audit would still be required every five years.

Schurbon noted that the Board has previously authorized the Fiscal Agent to obtain a bank account and tax identification number on behalf of the Partnership. The remaining step is 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. Schurbon suggested that they follow the current Anoka CD policy and keep the authorized check signers.

**Motion by Winkelman to go with the recommended First Bank and Trust 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. If awarded, the Partnership could manage up to 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. 4<sup>th</sup> 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 4th Quarter 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 workplan (plans funded by non-wbif). To show the board 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.**