

RED LAKE WATERSHED DISTRICT

June 25, 2026

9:00 a.m.

Agenda

9:00 am	Call to Order	Action
	Review and approve agenda	Action
	Requests to appear	Information
	June 11, 2026 Minutes	Action
	Financial Report as of June 24, 2026	Action
	League of Minnesota Cities Property & Casualty Coverage Premium	Info/Action
	League of Minnesota Cities Worker's Compensation Premium	Info/Action
	Mud River, RLWD Project No. 180C Phase 2 LSOHC Funding Application	Information
	Red Lake River 1W1P Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan Final Plans Submittal	Information
	Chiefs Coulee, RLWD Project No. 46S Change Order No. 5 Set Final Payment Hearing Date - July 23, 2026 @ 9:15 am	Action Action
9:15 am	Clearwater River Streambank Stabilization Project, RLWD Project No. 149B Bid Opening	Info/Action
9:30 am	RLWD Project No. 179, Improvement to Polk County Ditch 39 Final Hearing	Info/Action
10:15 am	RRWMB & Park Street Public – Legislative Update	Information
	Branch A/JD2, RLWD Project No. 48 Pay Estimate No. 2/Final – Davidson Construction	Action
	Moose River/JD21, RLWD Project No. 149A Pay Estimate No. 2/Final – Davidson Construction	Action
	RLWD Project No. 114, Turtle Connection Cross Lakes	Information
	RLWD Project No. 181, SD 83 Project Team Meeting	Information
	Permits: 26016 and 26055	Action

RLWD Summer Tour	Information
Administrator's Report	Information
Legal Counsel Update	Information
Managers' Updates	Information
Adjourn	Action

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

June 25, 2026	RLWD Board Meeting, 9:00 am
July 3, 2026	RLWD Closed – HOLIDAY Observed
July 9, 2026	RLWD Board Meeting, 9:00 am
July 21, 2026	RRWMB Meeting, 10:00 am, Ada
July 23, 2026	RKWD Board Meeting, 9:00 am

RED LAKE WATERSHED DISTRICT
Board of Manager's Minutes
June 11, 2026

President, Gene Tiedemann, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. at the Red Lake Watershed District Office, Thief River Falls, MN.

Present: Managers: Gene Tiedemann, Tom Anderson, Brian Dwight, Grant Nelson, Terry Sorenson, LeRoy Ose, and Allan Page. Staff Present: Tammy Audette, Corey Hanson, Melissa Bushy, and Elaine Rychlock.

The Board reviewed the agenda. A motion was made by Nelson, seconded by Page, and passed by a unanimous vote that the Board approve the agenda, with additions as noted. Motion carried.

A request to appear was made by David Myrher, East Valley Township.

The Board reviewed the May 28, 2026, Board meeting minutes. Motion by Sorenson, seconded by Nelson, to approve the May 28, 2026, Board meeting minutes. Motion carried.

The Board reviewed the Financial Report as of June 10, 2026. Motion by Sorenson, seconded by Anderson, to approve the Financial Report as of June 10, 2026. Motion carried.

Staff member, Elaine Rychlock, reviewed the current Certificate of Deposit rates for the following area banks: Dakota Heritage Bank, Northern State Bank of Thief River Falls, Ultima Bank MN of Fosston, Edward Jones, and American Federal Bank-Fosston. There is one CD maturing 6/18/26 at Edward Jones. After much discussion, a motion was made by Anderson, seconded by Nelson, to renew the maturing CD (\$239,000) with Edward Jones for twelve months at 4.05%. Motion carried.

David Myrher was present and wanted to comment on the Mud River EAW that appeared in the local newspaper.

The Board reviewed the MPCA draft 2026 impaired waters list. Public comment period is open through July 22, 2026. Staff member Corey Hanson will discuss further details at a later date.

The Board reviewed a draft Technical Memorandum regarding the potential of a best management practice to offset total phosphorus numbers that various cities in Northern Minnesota are dealing with.

The final payment hearing for Northern Harbor, LLC for the Thief River Streambank Stabilization Project 2025 (Muzzy, Thief River LLC), Thief River 1W1P, RLWD Project No. 149A, was called to order at 9:15 a.m. Administrator Audette stated that Northern Harbor, LLC completed all construction in the final amount of \$6,088.17. After opening the hearing for public comment and no public comment being received, President Gene Tiedemann closed the hearing. Motion by Page, seconded by Ose, to approve the Final Pay Estimate to Northern Harbor, LLC

in the amount of \$6,088.17 for the Thief River 1W1P 2025 Streambank Stabilization Project , RLWD Project No. 149A. Motion carried.

Matt Fischer, Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) appeared before the Board to discuss the results from the recent BWSR Assessment Survey that took place. This was an overall organizational evaluation. Staff and Board, Partners and Community members were given the survey to participate and provide their feedback.

Olivia Morton, Brady Martz & Associates, P.A., presented the 2025 Annual Audit Report. After various questions by the Board, a motion was made by Anderson, seconded by Ose, and passed by unanimous vote that the Board approve the 2025 Annual Audit Report, as presented.

Administrator Audette discussed legal fees and a Bond for the Improvement to Polk County Ditch 39, RLWD Project No. 179.

Administrator Audette provided an update on RLWD Project No. 114, Turtle Connection Cross Lakes.

The Board reviewed the following permits for approval. Motion by Sorenson, seconded by Nelson, to approve the following permits with conditions stated on the permit: No. 26017, Greg Sparby, Spruce Grove Township, Beltrami County; No. 26020, Timothy Calillier, Red Lake Falls Township, Red Lake County; No. 26025, Moore Engineering, Red Lake Falls Township, Red Lake County; No. 26030, David Bachand, Numedal Township, Pennington County; No. 26033, Marshall County Highway Dept., Rollis Township, Marshall County; No. 26038, Cole Schmitz, Red Lake Falls Township, Red Lake County; No. 26039, Randy Larson, Rollis Township, Marshall County; No. 26040, Marshall County Highway Dept., Veldt Township, Marshall County; No. 26041, Pennington County Highway Department, Wyandotte Township, Pennington County; No. 26042, Pennington County Highway Dept., Rocksbury Township, Pennington County; No. 26043, Pennington County Highway Dept., Rocksbury Township, Pennington County; No. 26044, Pennington County Highway Dept., Hickory Township, Pennington County; No. 26045, Pennington County Highway Dept., Kratka Township, Pennington County; No. 26046, Pennington County Highway Dept., Sanders Township, Pennington County; No. 26047, Brent Strickler, Brandt Township, Polk County; and No. 26052, Mike Tiedemann, Belgium Township, Polk County. Motion carried.

Administrator Audette reviewed the 2026 MN Watersheds Resolutions Comment Period.

Administrator Audette discussed the proposed 2027 Budget & Salary Schedule. The Budget and Salary Committee will meet with Audette in late June to start discussions.

Administrator's Update:

- **Red Lake County Soil Erosion Ordinance:** Included in the packet is a soil ordinance implemented by Red Lake County.
- **Middle Snake Tamarac Watershed District Groundbreaking:** The RLWD will be the host office for the MSTRWD Nelson Coulee Groundbreaking ceremony on June 30th.

MSTRWD and the RRWMB are working hard to get local legislators and LSOHC Committee members in attendance.

- **BWSR Snapshots:** Included in the packet is the BWSR Snapshots newsletter that includes an article on the Clearwater River Bank Stabilization and the District's Assessment Survey.
- **RRWMB/River Watch Update:** Included in the packet is a RRWMB update and photos from the River Watch Program and their presentation to the Clean Water Council.
- **Goose Lake-Audette discussed local drainage concerns in the Goose Lake area.**
- **RLWD Project No. 119 – Audette updated the Board on the need for sediment removal from high winds.**

Manager Ose shared that he attended the recent Red River Basin Commission Conference in Winkler, MB.

Motion by Ose, seconded by Page, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

LeRoy Ose, Secretary

RED LAKE WATERSHED DISTRICT
Financial Report as of June 24, 2026

Ck#	Check Issued to:	Description	Amount
online	EFTPS/MN Withholding	Withholding FICA, Fed, Medi, & MN Tax (pp 6/17/26)	\$6,859.47
online	PERA	pp 6/17/26	\$3,331.93
42282	Northern Harbor, LLC	Final Pmt #4 Muzzy & TR LLC Sites (approved 6/11/26)	\$6,088.17
42283	VOID	printer issue	\$0.00
42284	TRF Hardware	Pollinator garden hoses	\$40.13
42285	Brady Martz	2025 Audit & Accounting Services	\$15,500.63
42286	David Meyer	PWT SD 83 Mileage for project #181	\$20.30
42287	David Rodahl	PWT SD 83 Mileage for project #181	\$14.50
42288	Fastenal Company	Hardware for Moose River staff gauges #13	\$89.87
42289	Houston Engineering	***see details below	\$46,524.25
42290	Jeremy Nelson	PWT SD 83 Mileage for project #181	\$25.37
42291	Karvacko	Eng. for Northhome Stormwater 1W1P #149C	\$2,600.00
42292	Kristie Huseh	Cleaning Services	\$647.50
42293	L & M Fleet Suply	Gloves- (2) Waders	\$169.67
42294	Lonnie Peck	Beaver Removal #60D Grand Marais Brandt	\$100.00
42295	Marco	Monthly Phone Expenses	\$355.24
42296	Mike Illies	Gopher Removal on #113 Winsor Hang.	\$50.00
42297	Mitchell Mack	Mowing on Grand Marais Cut Chan. #60FF	\$13,125.00
42298	Nathan Bukowski	PWT SD 83 Mileage for project #181	\$34.80
42299	Oil Boyz Express Lube	Oil Change on Equinox	\$66.49
42300	Patrick Erickson	PWT SD 83 Mileage for project #181	\$143.55
42301	Pennington SWCD	Admin for Midpoint #149 1W1P Red Lake	\$34.98
42302	Randy Eckert	Gopher Removal on #176A Black River Imp.	\$830.00
42303	Rinke-Noonan	Legal Fees project #179 Polk Co. #39	\$93.00
42304	RMB Enviromental Services	Lab Analysis & Courier Fees #46 Water Qual.	\$8,436.00
42305	Terry Beich	PWT SD 83 Mileage for project #181	\$26.10
42306	The Exponent	Notice of Final Hearing Ad #179 Polk Co #39	\$489.15
online	WEX	Medical Care Reimbursement	\$80.19
online	City of Thief River Falls	Utilities	\$426.87
online	Les's Sanitation	Garbage Services	\$36.46
online	Voya	Staff Health Care Savings Plan 6/17/26 pp	\$451.96
online	Sun Life Financial	Staff Life Insurance	\$144.64
online	Intuit Quick Books	Monthly Fee	\$523.00
online	WEX	Medical Care Reimbursement	\$24.76
online	Purewater	Office H2O	\$38.00
direct	Tom Anderson	Mileage	\$162.40
direct	Terry Sorenson	Mileage	\$108.76
direct	Board & Staff Payroll	pp (6/17/26)	\$19,411.28
	Total Checks		\$127,104.42

***Houston Clearwater River Channel Stab.	\$3,317.00
SD #83 T&E Services	\$2,784.75
Thief River FDR T&E Services	\$25,192.00
Brule Streambank Stab. T&E	\$15,230.50
	\$46,524.25

NSB	Balance as of June 10, 2026		\$1,695,404.33
	Total Checks Written		-\$127,104.42
	Receipt #12526	Roseau County Tax Settlement	\$489.21
	Receipt #12527	Red Lake County Del. Tax & Special	\$4,063.78
	Receipt#12528	State of MN - DNR 32% for Project #14	\$16,000.00
	Receipt#12530	Dakota Heritage Interest on CD xxx730	\$361.92
	Receipt#12531	Edward Jones Int on roll over \$239,000 12 mo.	\$10,277.00
	Receipt#12532	Mahnomen County Taxes	\$3,110.36

Balance as of June 24, 2026	Current interest rate is 3.25%	\$1,602,602.18
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American	Balance as of June 10, 2026		\$4,440,094.99
Federal	Receipt #12529	Polk County May Settlement	\$1,490,596.52
Fosston	Balance as of June 24, 2026	Current interest rate is 3.35%	\$5,930,691.51

CD's	Dakota Heritage	7 month CD 3.89% Expiry 11-12-26	<u><u>\$ 500,000.00</u></u>
	Dakota Heritage	12 month CD 4.04% Expiry 2-11-27	<u><u>\$ 250,000.00</u></u>
	Ultima Bank	12 month CD 3.75% Expiry 2-27-27	<u><u>\$ 500,000.00</u></u>
	Ultima Bank	6 month CD 4.0% Expiry 11-29-26	<u><u>\$ 237,000.00</u></u>
	Dakota Heritage	12 month CD 4.04% Expiry 3-4-27	<u><u>\$ 500,000.00</u></u>
	Dakota Heritage	12 month CD 4.04% Expiry 3-4-27	<u><u>\$ 250,000.00</u></u>
	Dakota Heritage	12 month CD 4.04% Expiry 5-06-27	<u><u>\$ 500,000.00</u></u>
	Edward Jones	12 month CD 4.05% Expiry 6-23-27	<u><u>\$ 239,000.00</u></u>
	Rolled @ new rate 4.05% approved 6/18/26		
	Total CD Investments		\$2,976,000.00

NSB, AFB +CD's

\$10,509,293.69

Cash that has been received and earmarked for projects:

(taken from remaining balance on financials)

2024 Grant Red Lake River 1W1P Project #149	\$258,286.70
2024 Grant Thief River 1W1P Project #149A	\$51,780.12
2023 Grant Clearwater 1W1P Project #149B	\$155,385.76
2025 Grant Clearwater 1W1P Project #149B	\$678,651.08
2024 CRP Payment Red Lake 1W1P	\$2,132.00
2025 CRP Payment Red Lake 1W1P	\$100,000.00
2026 Grant Thief River 1W1P Project #149A	\$352,474.00
2026 Grant Red Lake River 1W1P Project #149	\$856,311.50
2026 MIDPOINT Red Lake River Project #149	\$10,000.00
2025 MIDPOINT Thief River Project #149A	\$38,198.00
	\$2,503,219.16

Payables committed to by board action:

City of Grygla	\$12,500.00
Mud River 180C	\$500,000.00
	\$ 512,500.00

Total accessible cash (Est.)

\$ 7,493,574.53



**League of Minnesota Cities Insurance Trust
Liability Coverage Waiver Form**

Members who obtain liability coverage through the League of Minnesota Cities Insurance Trust (LMCIT) must complete and return this form to LMCIT before their effective date of coverage. Use the submit button below, otherwise, print and email to pstech@lmc.org, or fax to 651.281.1298.

Members who obtain liability coverage from LMCIT must decide whether to waive the statutory tort liability limits to the extent of the coverage purchased. *The decision to waive or not waive the statutory tort limits must be made annually by the member’s governing body, in consultation with its attorney if necessary.* The decision has the following effects:

- *If the member does not waive the statutory tort limits*, an individual claimant could recover no more than \$500,000 on any claim to which the statutory tort limits apply. The total all claimants could recover for a single occurrence to which the statutory tort limits apply would be limited to \$1,500,000. These statutory tort limits would apply regardless of whether the member purchases the optional LMCIT excess liability coverage.
- *If the member waives the statutory tort limits and does not purchase excess liability coverage*, a single claimant could recover up to \$2,000,000 for a single occurrence (under the waive option, the tort cap liability limits are only waived to the extent of the member’s liability coverage limits, and the LMCIT per occurrence limit is \$2,000,000). The total all claimants could recover for a single occurrence to which the statutory tort limits apply would also be limited to \$2,000,000, regardless of the number of claimants.
- *If the member waives the statutory tort limits and purchases excess liability coverage*, a single claimant could potentially recover an amount up to the limit of the coverage purchased. The total all claimants could recover for a single occurrence to which the statutory tort limits apply would also be limited to the amount of coverage purchased, regardless of the number of claimants.

Claims to which the statutory municipal tort limits do not apply are not affected by this decision.

Select one of the options below.

- The member **DOES NOT WAIVE** the monetary limits on municipal tort liability established by [Minn. Stat. § 466.04](#)
- The member **WAIVES** monetary limits on municipal tort liability established by [Minn. Stat. § 466.04](#), to the extent of the limits of the liability coverage obtained from LMCIT

LMCIT Member Name: _____

Date of member’s governing body meeting: _____

Name and title of person completing this form: _____

Signature of person completing this form: _____

SUBMIT

League of Minnesota Cities Insurance Trust

Group Self-Insured Workers' Compensation Plan
145 University Avenue West St. Paul, MN 55103-2044 Phone (651) 215-4173

Notice of Premium Options for Standard Premiums of Less than \$25,000

RED LAKE WATERSHED DISTRICT
1000 PENNINGTON AVE S
THIEF RIVER FALLS, MN 56701-4013

Agreement No.: WC 1003703_Q-10
Agreement Period:
From: 07/12/2026
To: 07/12/2027

Enclosed is a quotation for workers' compensation deposit premium. **Note: Renewal Coverage will be bound as per the expiring coverage arrangement, including coverage for elected and appointed officials, with the premium indicated on the quote, unless the member or agent sends a written request not to bind renewal coverage.**

<u>PAYROLL DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>CODE</u>	<u>RATE</u>	<u>ESTIMATED PAYROLL</u>	<u>DEPOSIT PREMIUM</u>
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SEE ATTACHED SCHEDULE FOR DETAILS

Manual Premium				2,704
Credit		0.97		-81
Standard Premium				2,623
Deductible Credit		0.00%		0
Premium Discount				0
Net Deposit Premium				\$2,623
Adjustment for Commission*				0
Total Net Deposit Premium				\$2,623

*Workers compensation rates assume a 2% standard commission. The commission adjustment accounts for the commission difference, above or below 2%.

Agent:

00449 North Risk Partners LLC
622 Roosevelt Rd Ste 240
Saint Cloud, MN 56301-6363

Notice of Premium Options for Standard Premiums of Less than \$25,000 (Con't)

OPTIONS

Please indicate below the premium option you wish to select. You may choose only one option and you cannot change options during the agreement period.

1. <input type="checkbox"/> Regular Premium Option	Net Deposit Premium	Commission Adjustment	Total Net Deposit Premium
	2,623	0	2,623

2. **Deductible Premium Option**
 Deductible options are available in return for a premium credit applied to your estimated standard Premium of \$ 2,623. The deductible will apply per occurrence to paid medical costs only. There is no aggregate limit.

	Deductible per Occurrence	Premium Credit	Credit Amount	Net Deposit Premium	Commission Adjustment	Total Net Deposit Premium
<input type="checkbox"/>	\$250	0.60%	-16	2,607	0	2,607
<input type="checkbox"/>	\$500	1.10%	-29	2,594	0	2,594
<input type="checkbox"/>	\$1,000	1.90%	-50	2,573	0	2,573
<input type="checkbox"/>	\$2,500	3.50%	-92	2,531	0	2,531
<input type="checkbox"/>	\$5,000	5.00%	-131	2,492	0	2,492
<input type="checkbox"/>	\$10,000	7.00%	-184	2,439	0	2,439
<input type="checkbox"/>	\$25,000	11.50%	-302	2,321	0	2,321
<input type="checkbox"/>	\$50,000	15.00%	-393	2,230	0	2,230

This quotation is for a deposit premium based on your estimate of payroll and selected options. Your final actual premium will be computed after an audit of payroll subsequent to the close of your agreement year and will be subject to revisions in rates, payrolls and experience modification. While you are a member of the LMCIT Workers' Compensation Plan, you will be eligible to participate in dividend distributions from the Trust based upon claims experience and earnings of the Trust.

If you desire the coverage offered above, please return this signed document for the option you have selected.

This quotation should be signed by an authorized representative of the member requesting coverage.

Signature	Title	Date
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**Notice of Premium Options for Standard Premiums of Less than \$25,000
(Con't)**

CONTINUATION SCHEDULE FOR QUOTATION PAGE

<u>REMUNERATION</u>	<u>RATE</u>	<u>CODE</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>EST. PREM</u>
250,000	0.309	8810	CLERICAL OFFICE EMPLOYEES NOC	773
326,000	0.569	9410	MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES	1,855
43,000	0.000	9411	ELECTED OR APPOINTED OFFICIALS	76
Manual Premium				2704.0

Re: [EXTERNAL] Mud River USFWS committment

From Graham, James <james_graham@fws.gov>
Date Thu 6/18/2026 8:20 AM
To Tammy Audette <tammy.audette@redlakewatershed.org>

Hi Tammy,

The USFWS - Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge will be able to provide project leverage in the form of staff oversight and specialized equipment (tracked vehicle) for site access. Additional services provided will be in the form of administering project development, monitor on-refuge construction and provide funding for the development of the Environmental Assessment including final impact statement. On-site monitoring to evaluate the project will also be provided by USFWS staff.

Thanks
Jim

From: Tammy Audette <tammy.audette@redlakewatershed.org>
Sent: Thursday, June 18, 2026 8:09 AM
To: Graham, James <james_graham@fws.gov>; Dalager, Nate <nate.dalager@hdrinc.com>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Mud River USFWS committment

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

Jim

Could you send me an email explaining the leverage explanation commitment of federal funds for the Mud River Project? I need to attach it to the proposal.

Tammy

Tammy Audette
Administrator
Tammy.Audette@redlakewatershed.org
Red Lake Watershed District
1000 Pennington Avenue South
Thief River Falls, MN 56701
218.681.5800



Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Mud River Enhancement Phase II

ML 2027 Request for Funding

General Information

Date: 06/22/2026

Proposal Title: Mud River Enhancement Phase II

Funds Requested: \$3,200,000

Confirmed Leverage Funds: \$655,000

Is this proposal Scalable?: No

Manager Information

Manager's Name: Tammy Audette

Title: Administrator

Organization: Red Lake Watershed District

Address: 1000 Pennington Avenue South

City: Thief River Falls, MN 56701

Email: tammy.audette@redlakewatershed.org

Office Number: 2186815800

Mobile Number: 2186815800

Fax Number: 2186815839

Website: redlakewatershed.org

Location Information

County Location(s): Marshall.

Eco regions in which work will take place:

Forest / Prairie Transition

Activity types:

Enhance

Restore

Priority resources addressed by activity:

Wetlands

Narrative

Abstract

The Mud River drains thousands of acres of agricultural lands before flowing into the Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge (NWR). ML 2026 successfully began Phase I of this project. ML 2027-Phase II is intended to acquire full funding and complete 100% of the goals of the project, and provide 372 additional acres of riparian habitat. Both Phases I and II will bring riparian benefits back to a 6-mile segment of the original channel by restoring natural function.

Design and Scope of Work

Altered hydrology, flashiness, and incoming sediment from the Mud River watershed has multiple, harmful effects on the NWR. These include wetland bounce, attributed to runoff events during the nesting season which have negative effects on many waterfowl species, loss of meandered riparian habitat for species associated with this habitat type, deterioration of habitat quality as sediment accumulates in wetlands that then become infested with invasive cattail, increased flood impacts as sediment displaces storage volume within the NWR pools, rapid increases in and periodic spikes in turbidity levels in the Thief River when releases of water transfer sediment out of the NWR.

The project was developed using the Flood Damage Reduction Project Work Team approach. This team included Federal, State and Local units of government and both upstream and downstream stakeholders. Alternatives were developed, discussed and consensus reached on the preferred alternative. Project engineering focused on enhancing a six (6) mile segment of an abandoned natural stream. This project will direct at least 80% of the Mud River flow to the enhanced channel, returning it to a functioning state with natural meanders, base flow, low flow channel connected with the floodplain, and a design based on fluvial geomorphic principals. Habitat improvements will include restoring a diverse plant community along the floodplain gradient from emergent wetland vegetation up to forested margins.

The proposed Project consists of a diversion structure at the upstream end, a sinuous excavated two stage channel with low flow channel that conveys a 1 to 2 year design flow and a floodplain bench where needed to convey the 10-year flow. Also included is placement of spoil piles to add topographic variability and provide for increased vegetative diversity. The existing ditches will remain in place with the new channel providing increased flow capacity as compared to existing conditions. The recommended option allows the 10-year event to spread out across the floodplain as compared to being confined to the straightened ditch system. By allowing the flow to spread out there is a decrease in downstream peak flow from 675 cubic feet per second (cfs) to 575 cfs (15% reduction).

For ML 2027 the Project Work Team has considered additional design elements after further analysis, the need to include a large box culvert at the downstream end of the project, which is reflected in the overall cost of the project. In this Phase II request we are also accounting for inflation, resulting in a higher anticipated cost.

Explain how the proposal addresses habitat protection, restoration, and/or enhancement for fish, game & wildlife, including threatened or endangered species conservation

Ditching in the early 1900's straightened the historic flow patterns of this watershed and separated a historic channel from its water source. The result was wetland destruction, increased flow into the water conveyance systems and increased erosion and transportation of sediment downstream.

This project will provide a water feature within the wildlife refuge that meets the purpose for which the refuge was established and, continues to maintain the function of the water conveyance for the watershed and improving wildlife habitat on both a local, state, and national level. By returning natural stream geomorphology to a segment of the Mud River, fish and wildlife species will benefit from the restoration of base flow and by returning a natural sinuous wetland and stream type to the wildlife refuge. The alteration of riparian wetland systems that occurred over 100-years ago, were constructed to facilitate efficient removal of water from the landscape. Straight, linear conveyance systems were, and still remain, an efficient method of draining wetland habitat, effecting many fish and wildlife species. This project is supported by the Thief River One Watershed One Plan and complements other best management practices being implemented in the watershed to improve fish and wildlife habitat, improve water quality and reduce effects of flooding. By restoring meandering wetland characteristics to the landscape, resident populations of reptiles, amphibians and mammals will utilize the newly provided habitat. A wide representation of migratory birds, from wading and shore birds to passerine species up to waterfowl will make use of the diversity of habitat types this project will provide. With North American bird populations having experienced a 30% decrease since 1970, habitat enhancement projects, such as the Mud River Enhancement Project will help address this loss.

What are the elements of this proposal that are critical from a timing perspective?

Private land acquisition has been one of the most challenging tasks in the development of conservation projects. With appropriate funding, this project is ready for final design and implementation as it is located within the Elm Lake WMA and Agassiz NWR, eliminating the need for land acquisition. This project can be a showcase example of the positive impact that wetland and stream restoration can have on building climate resiliency into habitat management. The current RLWD Board of Managers and the MN DNR WMA, and NWR Managers are supportive of the project, and they will bring important community support required to accomplish and maintain the project goals.

Describe how the proposal expands habitat corridors or complexes and/or addresses habitat fragmentation:

By nature, streams and rivers are the original corridors providing travel pathways that connect various habitat types and provide population and species migration on a spatial scale. These interchange/exchanges of wildlife and habitat are what historically sustained strong, healthy populations of plants and animals in Minnesota. The linear habitat that replaced our natural stream and river corridors in the early 1900's due to ditching forever disrupted and fragmented this historic natural system. This project will restore a six-mile segment of the historic Mud River corridor, providing meandered habitat that eliminates the long sight lines of traditional man-made ditches that adds to disturbance and predation.

Meandering waterways provide the intimate and secretive setting that is critical to wildlife during the breeding and nesting seasons. This project will restore a natural corridor and the function of how wildlife historically utilized it.

Which top 2 Conservation Plans referenced in MS97A.056, subd. 3a are most applicable to this project?

North American Waterfowl Management Plan

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Strategic Habitat Conservation Model

Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this proposal?

Forest / Prairie Transition

Protect, restore, and enhance habitat for waterfowl, upland birds, and species of greatest conservation need

Describe how this project/program will produce and demonstrate a significant and permanent conservation legacy and/or outcomes for fish, game, and wildlife:

The primary purpose of the Agassiz NWR is to provide a refuge and breeding ground for migratory birds and other wildlife. This project is designed to provide a wetland feature type that is lacking in NW Minnesota for the benefit of the wildlife that use the landscape. The project incorporates climate modeling to reduce the stressors that are attributed to the extensive ditching in the watershed. The Project will be designed to reduce these harmful effects within and around the Agassiz NWR, while maintaining or improving the Mud River’s outlet capacity from upstream agricultural areas through the NWR and into the Thief River.

This project will implement a passive wetland system where a more natural nutrient exchange exists between the floodplain and the meandered channel, and increases hydrological connectivity between the channel and floodplain, thus, restoring the wetland function to be self-adapting to dry and wet periods.

If this project/program does not have permanent outcomes, describe why it is important to undertake at this time:

Outcomes

Programs in forest-prairie transition region:

Increased waterfowl and upland bird migratory and breeding success ~ *Meandering waterways provide the intimate and secretive setting that is critical to wildlife during the breeding and nesting seasons. This project will restore a natural corridor and the function of how wildlife historically utilized it. By restoring 6 miles of riparian habitat several species of birds and mammals will once again be able to use this historic corridor. Water quality and quantity monitoring will be conducted to determine project benefits. Wildlife and vegetation response will be monitored by both the USFWS and the MnDNR.*

Per MS 97A.056, Subd. 24, Please explain whether the request is supplanting or is a substitution for any previous funding that was not from a legacy fund and was used for the same purpose.

The Mud River Enhancement Project has not requested funding from sources other than LSOHC. This request does not supplant nor substitute funds from other previous local, state, or federal funding sources.

How will you sustain and/or maintain this work after the Outdoor Heritage Funds are expended?

This project is located entirely on State WMA and Federal Refuge lands. The MnDNR and USFWS will maintain these habitats to provide for the purposes for which these lands were acquired.

Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2029+	FWS Agassiz Refuge	Annual Inspection	Vegetation monitoring	Reporting - Repairs
2030+	RLWD	Annual Water Quality Monitoring	Reporting	-
2030+	FWS Agassiz Refuge	Species Monitoring	Reporting	-

Provide an assessment of how your program may celebrate cultural diversity or reach diverse communities in Minnesota, including reaching low- and moderate-income households:

The Project will provide: Free public access hunting near a population center (cities of Thief River Falls, Grygla, Gatzke, Middle River) No-cost access to wildlife viewing. Outreach to tribal authorities on natural resource benefits is on-going.

Project Partners plan additional education outreach on the cultural significance and history of the area.

Activity Details

Requirements

Will restoration and enhancement work follow best management practices including MS 84.973 Pollinator Habitat Program?

Yes

Is the restoration and enhancement activity on permanently protected land per 97A.056, Subd 13(f), tribal lands, and/or public waters per MS 103G.005, Subd. 15 or on lands to be acquired in this program?

Yes

Where does the activity take place?

Refuge Lands

WMA

Land Use

Will there be planting of any crop on OHF land purchased or restored in this program, either by the proposer or the end owner of the property, outside of the initial restoration of the land?

No

Will insecticides or fungicides (including neonicotinoid and fungicide treated seed) be used within any activities of this proposal either in the process of restoration or use as food plots?

No

Previous OHF Appropriations

Have you received OHF dollars through LSOHC for this program or project in the past?

Yes

Are there any of these past appropriations still OPEN?

Yes

If needed, please include any explanation of unspent funds.

The prior allocation (ML 2026) has not been spent because funds have not been released at the time of this application.

Open OHF Appropriations - Data from Most Recent Status Update

Project	Funding Amount Received	Amount Spent to Date	Funding Remaining	% Spent to Date
ML 2026 - Mud River Enhancement Project	\$2,917,000	-	\$2,917,000	0.0%

Totals	\$2,917,000	-	\$2,917,000	0.0%
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Timeline

Activity Name	Estimated Completion Date
Planning, design and permitting	July 1, 2027
Construction	July 1, 2029

Budget

Totals

Item	Funding Request	Total Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	-	\$155,000	RLWD, USFWS, MnDNR	\$155,000
Contracts	\$3,000,000	\$500,000	RLWD	\$3,500,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	-	-	-	-
Professional Services	\$200,000	-	-	\$200,000
Direct Support Services	-	-	-	-
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	-	-	-	-
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	\$3,200,000	\$655,000	-	\$3,855,000

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Total Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Wildlife Manager	0.1	3.0	-	\$35,000	MnDNR	\$35,000
Refuge Manager	0.1	3.0	-	\$40,000	USFWS	\$40,000
Technician	0.2	3.0	-	\$50,000	RLWD	\$50,000
Administrator	0.1	3.0	-	\$30,000	RLWD	\$30,000

Amount of Request: \$3,200,000

Amount of Leverage: \$655,000

Leverage as a percent of the Request: 20.47%

DSS + Personnel: -

As a % of the total request: 0.0%

Easement Stewardship: -

As a % of the Easement Acquisition: -

Leverage Funding Table

	Leverage Amount Committed	Leverage Amount Confirmed (of Committed Funds)	Leverage Amount Anticipated	Total Leverage
Amount:	\$655,000	\$655,000	-	\$655,000
% of Total Leverage:	100.0%	100.0%	0.0%	

N/A

Detail leverage sources and confirmation of funds:

RLWD - \$580,000, USFWS - \$40,000 and MnDNR - \$35,000 are partners in the project and are committed to completion of construction.

Does this proposal have the ability to be scalable?

No

Please explain why this project can NOT be scaled:

The Phase 1 request was funded in ML 2026 at 57%. Full funding would allow completion of the project under this Phase II application.

What other dedicated funds may collaborate with or contribute to this proposal?

Contracts

What is included in the contracts line?

Contracts would be for construction of the project.

Professional Services

What is included in the Professional Services line?

Design/Engineering

Federal Funds

Do you anticipate federal funds as a match for this program?

Yes

Are the funds confirmed?

Yes

In Kind : \$40,000

Is Confirmation Document attached?

Yes, on file

Output Tables

Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Acres
Restore	22	0	0	0	22
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	350	0	0	0	350
Total	372	0	0	0	372

Restoration/Enhancement Acres Breakdown of Existing Protected Lands (Table 1a.2)

	RESTORE: Lands acquired with OHF	RESTORE: Lands NOT acquired with OHF	ENHANCE: Lands acquired with OHF	ENHANCE: Lands NOT acquired with OHF
DNR Lands (WMA, State Forests, etc.)	-	6	-	-
Non-DNR Lands (city, state, federal, etc.)	-	16	-	350
Easements	-	-	-	-
Total	-	22	-	350

Total Requested Funding by Resource Type (Table 2)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Funding
Restore	\$2,500,000	-	-	-	\$2,500,000
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	\$700,000	-	-	-	\$700,000
Total	\$3,200,000	-	-	-	\$3,200,000

Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Acres
Restore	0	22	0	0	0	22
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	0	350	0	0	0	350
Total	0	372	0	0	0	372

Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section (Table 4)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Funding
Restore	-	\$2,500,000	-	-	-	\$2,500,000
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	\$700,000	-	-	-	\$700,000
Total	-	\$3,200,000	-	-	-	\$3,200,000

Average Cost per Acre by Resource Type (Table 5)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat
Restore	\$113,636	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-

Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-
Enhance	\$2,000	-	-	-

Average Cost per Acre by Ecological Section (Table 6)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest
Restore	-	\$113,636	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	\$2,000	-	-	-

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

6 miles

Parcels

Sign-up Criteria?

No

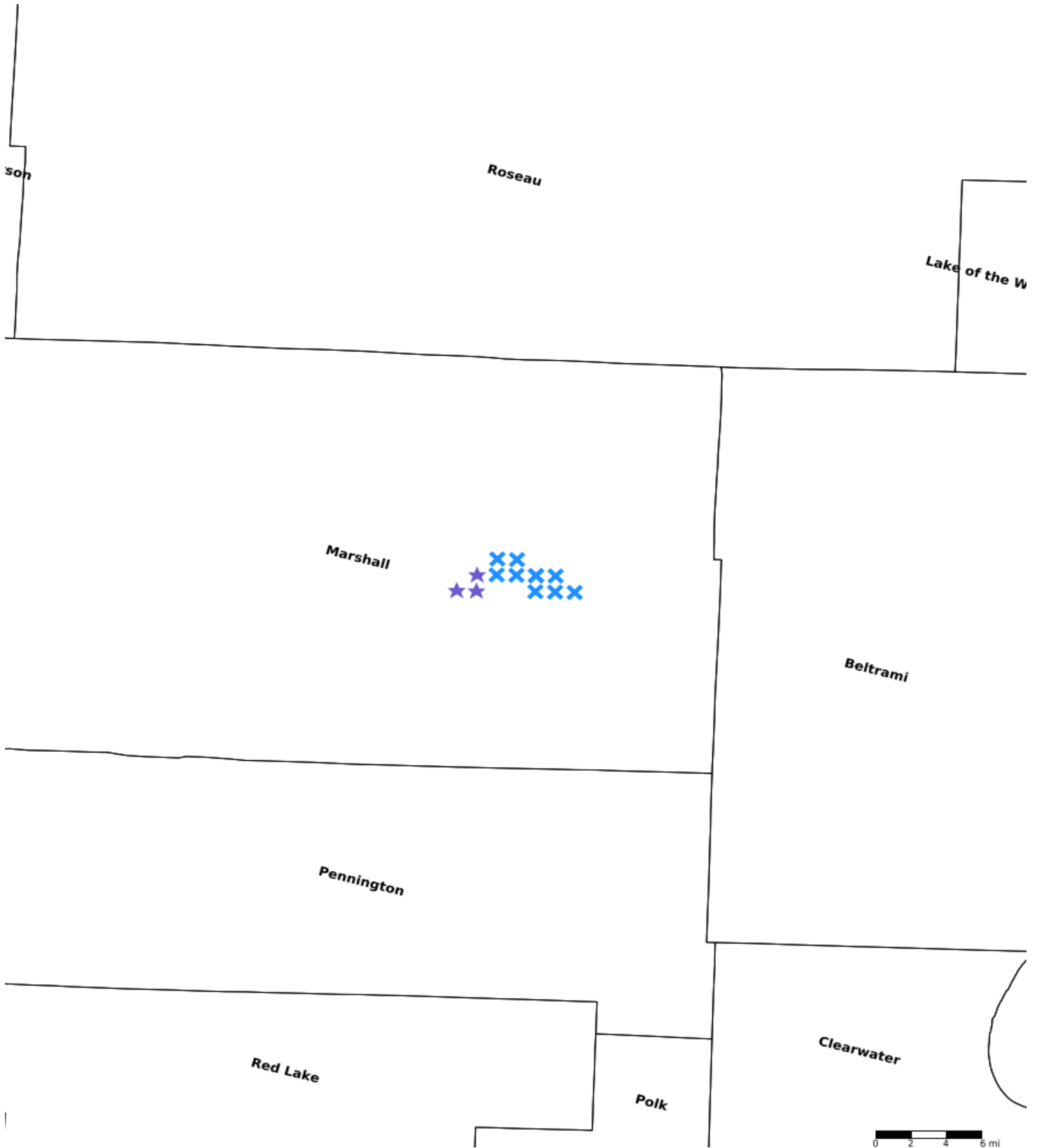
Explain the process used to identify, prioritize, and select the parcels on your list:

Project site is currently owned by federal and state agencies.

Restore / Enhance Parcels

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection	Description
14-4017-001	Marshall	1564005	480	-	Yes	AGASSIZ NATL WILDLIFE REFUGE
14-4018-001	Marshall	1564006	599	-	Yes	AGASSIZ NATL WILDLIFE REFUGE
14-4018-002	Marshall	1564007	636	-	Yes	AGASSIZ NATL WILDLIFE REFUGE
14-4018-003	Marshall	1564008	640	-	Yes	AGASSIZ NATL WILDLIFE REFUGE
14-4018-007	Marshall	1564009	320	-	Yes	UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
14-6018-004	Marshall	1564009	320	-	Yes	DNR REAL ESTATE MANAGEMENT
14-6018-005	Marshall	1564010	240	-	Yes	DNR REAL ESTATE MANAGEMENT
14-6039-001	Marshall	1564014	160	-	Yes	DNR REAL ESTATE MANAGEMENT
14-6042-002	Marshall	1564015	560	-	Yes	DNR REAL ESTATE MANAGEMENT
14-6042-003	Marshall	1564016	640	-	Yes	DNR REAL ESTATE MANAGEMENT
60-0001-00	Marshall	1564112	640	-	Yes	MUD LAKE NATL WILDLIFE REFUGE
60-0001-00	Marshall	1564114	640	-	Yes	MUD LAKE NATL WILDLIFE REFUGE
60-0001-00	Marshall	1564113	640	-	Yes	MUD LAKE NATL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Parcel Map



- Protect in Easement
- ▲ Protect in Fee with PILT
- Protect in Fee W/O PILT
- ★ Restore
- ✕ Enhance
- ⊕ Other



Outlook

Red Lake River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan, final plan submittal

From Peter Nelson <Peter.Nelson@Pennington.mnswcd.org>

Date Wed 6/17/2026 9:57 AM

To Matt Fischer <matt.fischer@state.mn.us>; Ryan Huges <ryan.hughes@state.mn.us>; Julie Westerlund <julie.westerlund@state.mn.us>; Reid Christianson <reid.christianson@state.mn.us>; Carrie Raber <carrie.raber@state.mn.us>; Dan Disrud <Dan.Disrud@state.mn.us>; Stephanie Klamm <stephanie.klamm@state.mn.us>; Nathan Kestner <nathan.kestner@state.mn.us>; Barbara Weisman <barbara.weisman@state.mn.us>; catherine.neuschler@state.mn.us <catherine.neuschler@state.mn.us>; Costin, Molly (MPCA) <molly.costin@state.mn.us>; melinda.neville@state.mn.us <melinda.neville@state.mn.us>

Cc Tammy Audette <tammy.audette@redlakewatershed.org>; Corey Hanson <Corey.Hanson@redlakewatershed.org>; Bryanna Grefthen <Bryanna.Grefthen@Pennington.mnswcd.org>; Tanya Hanson <tanya.hanson@redlake.mnswcd.org>; Nicole Bernd <nicole.bernd@wpolk.mnswcd.org>; Rachel Olm <rolm@houstoneng.com>; klein.eastpolk@gmail.com <klein.eastpolk@gmail.com>; Lindsey Deselich <lindsey.deselich@redlakewatershed.org>; Marisa Newton <marisa.newton@pennington.mnswcd.org>

State Review Agencies,

The Red Lake River Planning Partnership, on behalf of the members, is pleased to submit the Red Lake River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan for final review. Prior to this submittal, a review period was held from February 13, 2026 to April 15, 2026 to gather comments, and a public hearing was held on April 30, 2026. The plan, a record of the public hearing(s), and a summary of responses to comments including comments not addressed and changes incorporated as a result of the review process are enclosed/can be found at website: <https://www.penningtonswcd.org/>

Click the link and scroll down to find the PDF documents.

Inquiries about this submittal can be made to:

Peter Nelson
District Manager
201 Sherwood Ave. S.
Thief River Falls, MN 56701
218-683-7075
peter.nelson@pennington.mnswcd.org

Thank you on behalf of the members of the Red Lake River Partnership,

- Red Lake Watershed District
- Red Lake County SWCD
- West Polk SWCD
- East Polk SWCD
- Pennington SWCD
- Polk County
- Red Lake County
- Pennington County

Peter Nelson

Change Order No. 5

Project Name: Chief's Coulee Flood Reduction and Water Quality Project	HDR Project No.: 10134290
Project Owner: Red Lake Watershed District	Owner's Project No.: 46S
	Date of Issuance: 6/10/2026
Project Contractor: Quality Spray Foam LLC dba Anderson Exc.	Date of Contract: 11/22/2024
	Contract Period: 11/22/2024 – 9/30/2025

It is agreed to modify the Contract referred to above as follows:

CPR #	ITEM AND DESCRIPTION OF CHANGES	CHANGE IN CONTRACT PRICE	CHANGE IN CONTRACT TIME
5.1	Johnson's Garage Slab, installed in Spring of 2026. Estimated cost for labor and materials = \$6,412 Miscellaneous Additional field orders, including: Additional gravel and landscaping for garage slab. Extra rock added in above ground drainage swale. Additional diversion ditch grading to tie into existing ditch. Removal of one pipe section to make room for additional grading within right-of-way. Estimated labor = \$2,500	\$9,412	N/A
Difference Net		\$9,412	

Summary: It is agreed to modify the Contract referred to above as follows:

Contract Price prior to this Change Order

\$ 2,072,475.14

Net Increase (decrease) of this Change Order

\$ 9,412.00

Revised Contract Price with all approved Change Orders

\$ 2,081,887.14

Contract Time prior to this Change Order

Net Increase (decrease) of this Change Order

Revised Contract Time with all approved Change Orders

The changes included in this Change Order are to be accomplished in accordance with the terms, stipulations and conditions of the original Contract as though included therein.

Accepted for Contractor by:

Andrew Anderson

Date:

June 18, 2026

Recommended for Approval by (HDR Engineering, Inc.):

Jacob Reed Howe

Date:

6-17-26

Approved for Owner by:

Attest:

Date:

Approved: (Other - when required)

Date:

Distribution: Owner Contractor Office Field Other

RED LAKE WATERSHED DISTRICT
Application for Payment
Estimate of Work Completed

ESTIMATE NUMBER: 2
 PROJECT NAME: JD 2 Branch A Stabilization Project
 OWNER: Red Lake Watershed District
 CONTRACT AMOUNT: \$45,240.00
 CONTRACTOR: Davidson Construction

DATE: June 23, 2026
 PROJECT NUMBER: 48
 CONTRACT DATE: August 7, 2025
 WORK COMPLETED:

ITEM NO.	SPEC. NO.	DESCRIPTION	UNIT	CONTRACT QUANTITY	UNIT PRICE	QUANTITY COMPLETED			TOTAL AMOUNT
						PREVIOUS	CURRENT	TOTAL	
1		Mobilization	LS	1	\$5,000.00	1	0	1	\$5,000.00
2		Clearing & Grubbing	LS	1	\$1,500.00	1	0	1	\$1,500.00
3		Random Riprap Class I	CY	35	\$120.00	35	0	35	\$4,200.00
4		Random Riprap Class III	CY	217	\$120.00	217	0	217	\$26,040.00
5		Traffic Control	LS	1	\$2,000.00	1	0	1	\$2,000.00
6		Turf Establishment	LS	1	\$5,000.00	0	1	1	\$5,000.00
7		Rolled Erosion Prevention Category 25	SY	500	\$3.00	0	500	500	\$1,500.00
								Subtotal	\$45,240.00

Change Orders

	0	\$0.00
		Total <u>\$45,240.00</u>

SUMMARY:

Total of Work to Date	\$45,240.00
Less Retainage	\$0.00
Amount Paid on Previous Payments	\$38,740.00
Amount Due this Estimate	\$6,500.00
Percentage of work completed	100%
Original Contract Amount Due	\$45,240.00
Amount Deleted from Original Contract	\$0.00
Additional Quantities	\$0.00
Change Orders	\$0.00
Total Estimated Contract Costs	\$45,240.00

RECAP OF PAYMENTS:

DATE	PAYMENT AMOUNT
09/15/25	\$ 38,740.00
06/23/26	\$ 6,500.00
Total	\$45,240.00

Approved by Contractor: Dustin Holmstrom, Davidson Construction

_____ Date

Approved by Administrator: Tammy Audette, Red Lake Watershed District

_____ Date

RED LAKE WATERSHED DISTRICT
Application for Payment
Estimate of Work Completed

ESTIMATE NUMBER: 2

PROJECT NAME: Moose River/Judicial Ditch 21 Channel Stabilization

OWNER: Red Lake Watershed District

CONTRACT AMOUNT: \$73,700.00

CONTRACTOR: Davidson Construction

DATE: June 23, 2026

PROJECT NUMBER: 13

CONTRACT DATE: August 7, 2025

WORK COMPLETED:

ITEM NO.	SPEC. NO.	DESCRIPTION	UNIT	CONTRACT QUANTITY	UNIT PRICE	QUANTITY COMPLETED			TOTAL AMOUNT
						PREVIOUS	CURRENT	TOTAL	
1	2021.501	Mobilization	LS	1	\$5,000.00	1	0	1	\$5,000.00
2	2511.507	Random Riprap Class II	CY	10	\$105.00	10	0	10	\$1,050.00
3	2511.507	Random Riprap Class III	CY	530	\$105.00	530	0	530	\$55,650.00
4	2511.602	Rock Boulders (36" Diameter)	EA	1	\$250.00	30	0	30	\$7,500.00
5	2575.501	Turf Establishment	LS	1	\$4,500.00	0	1	1	\$4,500.00
								Subtotal	<u>\$73,700.00</u>

Additional Quantities

		Random Riprap Class II	CY	10	\$105.00				\$1,050.00
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Total \$74,750.00

SUMMARY:

Total of Work to Date	\$74,750.00
Less Retainage	\$0.00
Amount Paid on Previous Payments	\$66,737.50
Amount Due this Estimate	\$8,012.50
Percentage of work completed	101%
Original Contract Amount Due	\$73,700.00
Amount Deleted from Original Contract	\$0.00
Additional Quantities	\$1,050.00
Change Orders	\$0.00
Total Estimated Contract Costs	\$74,750.00

RECAP OF PAYMENTS:

DATE	PAYMENT AMOUNT
12/08/25	\$66,737.50
06/23/26	\$8,012.50
Total	\$74,750.00

Approved by Contractor: Dustin Holmstrom, Davidson Construction

Date

Approved by Administrator: Tammy Audette, Red Lake Watershed District

Date

Fw: 103G.407 meeting recap

From Kludt, Nicholas (DNR) <Nicholas.Kludt@state.mn.us>

Date Mon 6/15/2026 11:24 AM

To Tammy Audette <tammy.audette@redlakewatershed.org>

Cc Olson, Nathan W (DNR) <nathan.olson@state.mn.us>; Klamm, Stephanie (DNR) <stephanie.klamm@state.mn.us>; Dalager, Nate <Nate.Dalager@hdrinc.com>; Redmond, Nick (DNR) <Nick.Redmond@state.mn.us>

Hi Tammy,

We received an answer from DNR's General Counsel office regarding our inquiry about the T-C-C lake runout elevations, given the court-ordered establishment thereof.

The GREAT news is our counsel thought 1.) we did not need to go back to court, and 2.) we could do what amounts to "standard 103G" process with an asterisk. His thoughts are outlined in the email below.

The ask is relatively straight-forward. As this is a District project, our Counsel asked that we demonstrate the District checked if any parcels would be affected by an increase in runout elevation, even if not directly abutting the current public water basins. If so, those acres would require the District to secure a flowage easement. This is what we're already doing 😊 This will be documented by the submittals the District will do as part of permitting and the 103G.407 process.

I had a follow-up conversation with Nick Redmond today (6.15.26) to confirm this understanding. I outlined the modelling (inundation maps, etc.) already completed, which illustrated existing conditions vs. outcomes of an increased runout elevation and all subsequently affected parcels, whether abutting or not. I also outlined that the District is pursuing easement on all affected parcels. I confirmed that this addresses his only concern, and these data will be submitted as part of the standard permitting process. Nick agreed that was adequate documentation, and we did not need to follow up with his office again.

Cordially,

Nicholas Kludt, Ph.D.

Red River Fisheries Specialist | Fish and Wildlife Division

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

14583 County Highway 19

Detroit Lakes, MN 56501

Phone: 218-846-8298

Mobile: 218-314-8924

Fax: 218-846-8397

Email: Nicholas.Kludt@state.mn.us

mndnr.gov



From: Redmond, Nick (DNR) <Nick.Redmond@state.mn.us>
Sent: Friday, June 12, 2026 2:29 PM
To: Kludt, Nicholas (DNR) <Nicholas.Kludt@state.mn.us>
Cc: Klamm, Stephanie (DNR) <stephanie.klamm@state.mn.us>; Olson, Nathan W (DNR) <nathan.olson@state.mn.us>; Hilding, Derek (DNR) <derek.hilding@state.mn.us>
Subject: RE: 103G.407 meeting recap

Hello Nicholas,

Perhaps a simpler way to put it is that we want to see that the watershed district considered potential flowage easements beyond just abutting properties for parcels that may be affected by the raise in elevation. Not strictly the § 103G.417 "abutting" parcels, given the number of flowage easement interests that could exist from the 1932 decree.

There could be a property, for example, that isn't abutting but still has a flowage easement that would be affected by the raise in elevation. It's unlikely that many, if any, of those that exist, but we'd like to see that the due diligence has been done.

-Nick

Nick Redmond

Senior Associate General Counsel | Office of General Counsel

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

651-259-5430

Email: Nick.Redmond@state.mn.us

From: Kludt, Nicholas (DNR) <Nicholas.Kludt@state.mn.us>
Sent: Friday, June 12, 2026 11:00 AM
To: Redmond, Nick (DNR) <Nick.Redmond@state.mn.us>
Cc: Klamm, Stephanie (DNR) <stephanie.klamm@state.mn.us>; Olson, Nathan W (DNR) <nathan.olson@state.mn.us>
Subject: 103G.407 meeting recap

Hi Nick,

I wanted to document our discussion regarding Red Lake Watershed District's water level control project which will alter lake runout elevations originally established by Polk County court proceedings.

From our discussion, the District should follow the 103G.407 process with additional documentation. The District should document that public ownership or permanent easement, per 103G.407 requirement, has been obtained for all "successors in interest" for the original parcels/subdivisions thereof which would be affected by the change in runout elevation. These may not be directly abutting the current basin extents. The form of this documentation was not prescribed, which gives the District some flexibility in how they will demonstrate this due diligence.

The discussion group agreed this is consistent with the current statute and process, and the documentation will accompany the District's permitting application. This will be retained in DNR's permit files for records purposes.

Please confirm this is your understanding, too.

Cordially,

Nicholas Kludt, Ph.D.

Red River Fisheries Specialist | Fish and Wildlife Division

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

14583 County Highway 19

Detroit Lakes, MN 56501

Phone: 218-846-8298

Mobile: 218-314-8924

Fax: 218-846-8397

Email: Nicholas.Kludt@state.mn.us

mndnr.gov



Red Lake Watershed District

Permit # 26-016

Status Report: **Approved**

Expiration: **06/23/2027**

Applicant Information

Name	Organization	Address	Email	Phone Number(s)
Kyle Jore		15452 140th St NE Thief River Falls, MN 56701	kpjore@gmail.com	tel: 218-689-8712

General Information

- (1) The proposed project is a: **Channel Stabilization or Restoration, Erosion Control, and Other Water Related Facilities,**
- (2) Legal Description
- (3) County: **Polk** Township: **Lessor** Range: **41** Section: **20**
- (4) Describe in detail the work to be performed: Survey the Township Road Ditch bottom for proper flow.
- (5) Why is this work necessary? Explain water related issue/problem being solved.

Status

Status	Notes	Date
Approved	The Red Lake Watershed District (RLWD) approves the recommendation to clean a ditch located in sections 18, 19, and 20 of Lessor Twp. contingent on approval from Fish and Wildlife Service and approval from the State of Minnesota as the ditch is located on these properties. Applicant shall contact East Polk SWCD to discuss the potential project that will be in close proximity to wetlands, and shall comply with East Polk SWCD requirements. It is also recommended that the Applicant contact East Polk SWCD to discuss any wetlands that are located on this parcel as well. If any work is within a public road and/or public ditch Right-of-Way, applicant shall contact the appropriate road/ditch authority for their approval and must meet their specs/conditions. Note: Please be aware of and review the 'bullet points' on the bottom half of the application. This application does not exempt the permit applicant from local, state, or federal authority that might require their approval. If any of the work is done near adjacent wetlands or public watercourse, applicant shall contact the appropriate jurisdictional authority prior to disturbing any dirt. Directly downstream of the outlet, applicant shall ensure that adequate grade and drainage is provided. Applicant is responsible for utility locates by calling Gopher 1. (1-800-252-1166)	06/23/2026
Received		04/15/2026



Permit # 26-055

Status Report: Approved

Expiration:06/23/2027

Applicant Information

Name	Organization	Address	Email	Phone Number(s)
Mark Nelson		610 Vance Ave S Erskine, MN 56535	cindynelson610@gmail.com	tel: 218-280-8141

General Information

- (1) The proposed project is a: **Culvert Installation / Removal / Modification**,
- (2) Legal Description
- (3) County: **Red Lake** Township: **Lambert** Range: **41** Section: **35**
- (4) Describe in detail the work to be performed: Installation of a new culvert and crossing.
- (5) Why is this work necessary? Explain water related issue/problem being solved. **New crossing for access to new platted parcel. No current access to the new parcel.**

Status

Status	Notes	Date
Approved	The Red Lake Watershed District (RLWD) approves to install an 18" culvert for a new crossing and access to property. Install new culvert at the current inverts. If any work is within a public road and/or public ditch Right-of-Way, applicant shall contact the appropriate road/ditch authority for their approval and must meet their specs/conditions. Applicant shall install black dirt and re-seed any disturbed land with approved seed mixtures. *Note: Please be aware of and review the 'bullet points' on the bottom half of the application. This application does not exempt the permit applicant from local, state, or federal authority that might require their approval. Applicant is responsible for utility locates by calling Gopher 1. (1-800-252-1166)	06/23/2026
Received		06/16/2026

Conditions

NOTE: This permit does not relieve the applicant of any requirements for other permits which may be necessary from Township, County, State, or Federal Government Agencies.

- Work in road right-of-way is subject to approval of road authority (Township, County, or State).
- For work within Legal drainage system right-of-way or RLWD Project Easement Areas, applicant agrees to move their utilities at their own expense if it is determined that the utility needs to be moved in the future by the RLWD.
- Unless otherwise noted, all approved permit applications expire one year from the date of board approval. A permit renewal can be applied for prior to the expiration date by contacting the district office.
- This Permit does not relieve you of any requirements for other permits, which may be necessary from Township, County, State, or Federal Government Agencies.
- Please be aware of the requirements of the Rules of the District, found on our web-site at http://www.redlakewatershed.org/PDF_Files/RED%20LAKE%20WATERSHED%20DISTRICT%20RULES_Adopted%208-27-15.pdf



June 21, 2026

Karl Abrahamson, Chair
Minnesota Plumbing Board
375 Jackson St., Ste 220
St. Paul, MN 55102

Dear Chair Abrahamson.

The Red River Watershed Management Board (RRWMB) is submitting comments related to the Minnesota Plumbing Board's proposal to regulate the beneficial use and reuse of stormwater. It is our understanding that the Plumbing Board is proposing that stormwater be expressly prohibited as an alternate water source for non-potable applications. If indeed your purpose in this proposal is broadly to prohibit stormwater reuse in settings having no contact with indoor plumbing systems, it fundamentally conflicts with well-established state policy and would seem to venture far beyond the Plumbing Board's charge and expertise.

Background on RRWMB: The RRWMB is a Joint Powers Board of seven watershed districts in the Red River Basin (RRB) of Northwest Minnesota. A map of the RRWMB's membership is included on Page 4. The RRWMB was granted specific taxing authority by the Minnesota Legislature in 1976 to control the effects of flooding and to assure the beneficial use of water in the RRB. We are approaching our 50th anniversary in August 2026 and our mission is to institute, coordinate, and finance projects and programs to alleviate flooding and assure the beneficial use of water in the watershed of the Red River of the North and its tributaries. As a joint powers authority, the RRWMB coordinates planning and implementation of projects and programs through its member watershed districts to:

- Construct, operate, and maintain large-scale flood mitigation – water storage projects.
- Build farmstead ring dikes and city flood levees.
- Purchase flood-prone properties.
- Implement water quality projects that involve stormwater and beneficial use/reuse.
- Restore fish and wildlife habitat.

- Conduct and/or participate in scientific and technical studies, educational initiatives, and related efforts.

The RRWMB has funded 70+ flood mitigation projects, 300+ farmstead ring dikes, over 35 water quality projects, and is now involved in three major habitat restoration projects of its member watershed districts. A map of projects funded by the RRWMB since 1976 is included on Page 5.

Stormwater Reuse in the RRB: As directed by the Minnesota Legislature, the Minnesota Department of Health and other agencies have studied and recommended a path forward for water reuse in the January 30, 2025, EOR report titled "Update on Developing a Clear Process for Implementing Stormwater Capture and Use in Minnesota." Based on this report, seven state agencies signed a Letter of Acknowledgement Regarding Stormwater Capture and Reuse. These seven state agencies are committed to advancing the development and implementation of safe and sustainable stormwater capture and use.

Stormwater reuse is an important and growing element of the RRWMB's work to alleviate flooding and to promote beneficial water uses. The RRWMB, its partners, and agencies in Minnesota and North Dakota have recently commenced discussions regarding how floodwater in the Basin can be used for crop irrigation or subirrigation, water for livestock, groundwater recharge, water for spraying crops, firefighting, and related uses. The RRWMB also recently held a facilitated discussion at its annual conference in March 2026 regarding the future of water management in the RRB. The report titled "Water Supply Management – From Flood Problem to Regional Asset" was developed as a result of this discussion at our conference. The report is attached for your reference.

There is growing interest among farmers in the RRB in constructing water-holding areas to capture spring snowmelt or water from summer rain events to irrigate crops. For example, there is a large dairy operation in Norman County, Minnesota that is capturing rainwater and clean water from impervious surfaces for beneficial use/reuse. These practices reduce pressure on groundwater aquifers and other surface waters in the RRB.

Comments on Plumbing Board Proposal: The RRWMB's membership has 50 years of experience planning and implementing flood mitigation projects and promoting beneficial water use. As directed by the Minnesota Legislature and affirmed by seven state agencies, stormwater reuse is one key strategy in flood mitigation and water use management. In this setting, there is no reasonable connection to the plumbing systems the Plumbing Board regulates.

Therefore, the RRWMB recommends that the Plumbing Board pause its rulemaking in order to gain more awareness of how proposed regulation of stormwater and related beneficial use/reuse will impact our work and that of many other state, regional, and local government partners in water management. It would seem simple and prudent, for example, for the Plumbing Board to exempt stormwater reuse that has no contact with potable water plumbing systems from its regulations.

The RRWMB will continue to work with our legislators, agricultural partners, and local government partners including Minnesota Watersheds and the Association of Minnesota Counties to assure that stormwater reuse remains a water management tool to advance our mission.

Should you need clarity on RRWMB comments or recommendations, please contact our Robert Sip, our Executive Director via email at rob.sip@rrwmb.us or at 218-474-1084 (cell). Thank you for considering our comments.

Sincerely,



John Finney
RRWMB President

Sincerely

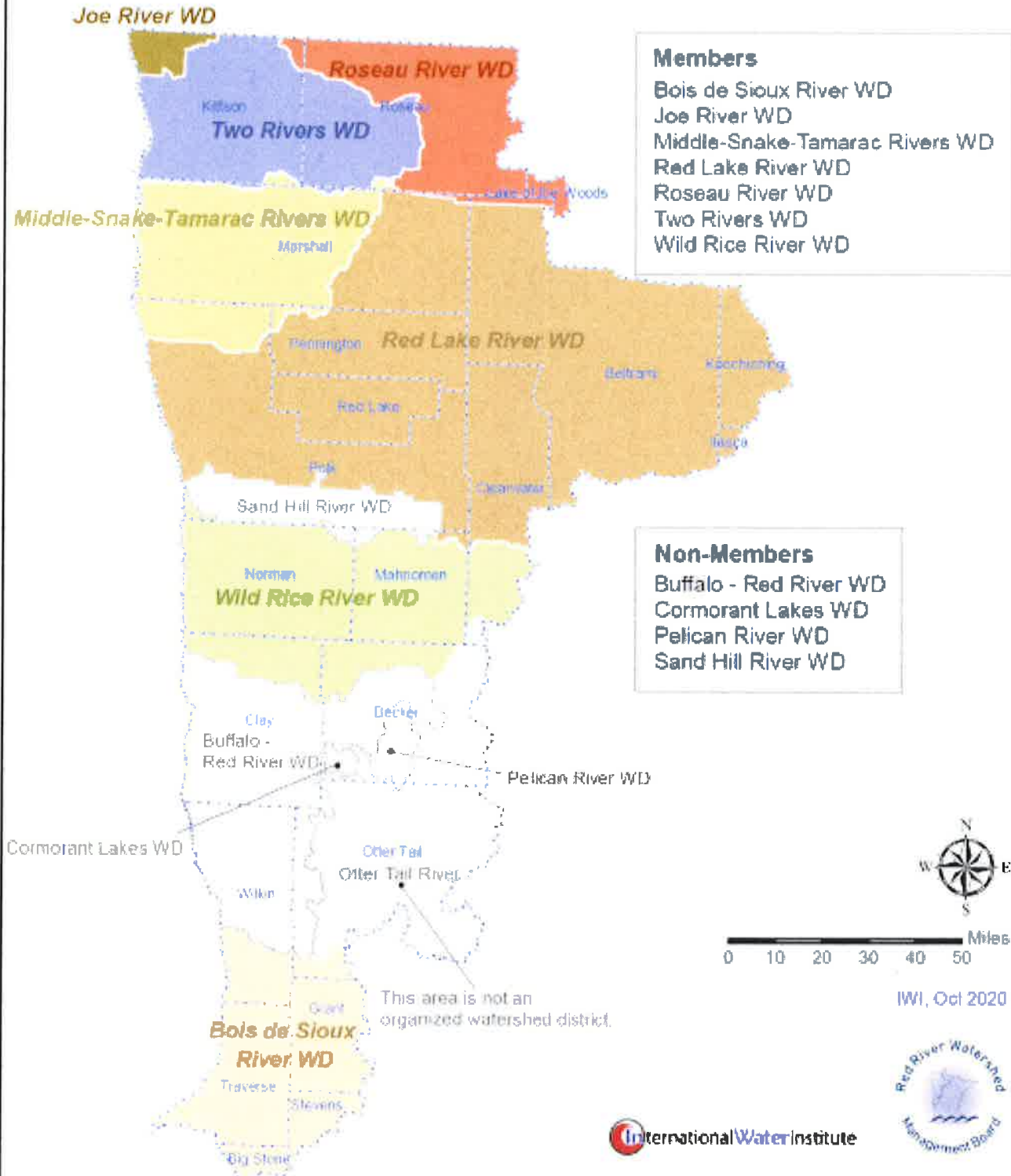


Robert L. Sip,
RRWMB Executive Director

CC: RRWMB Managers and Membership

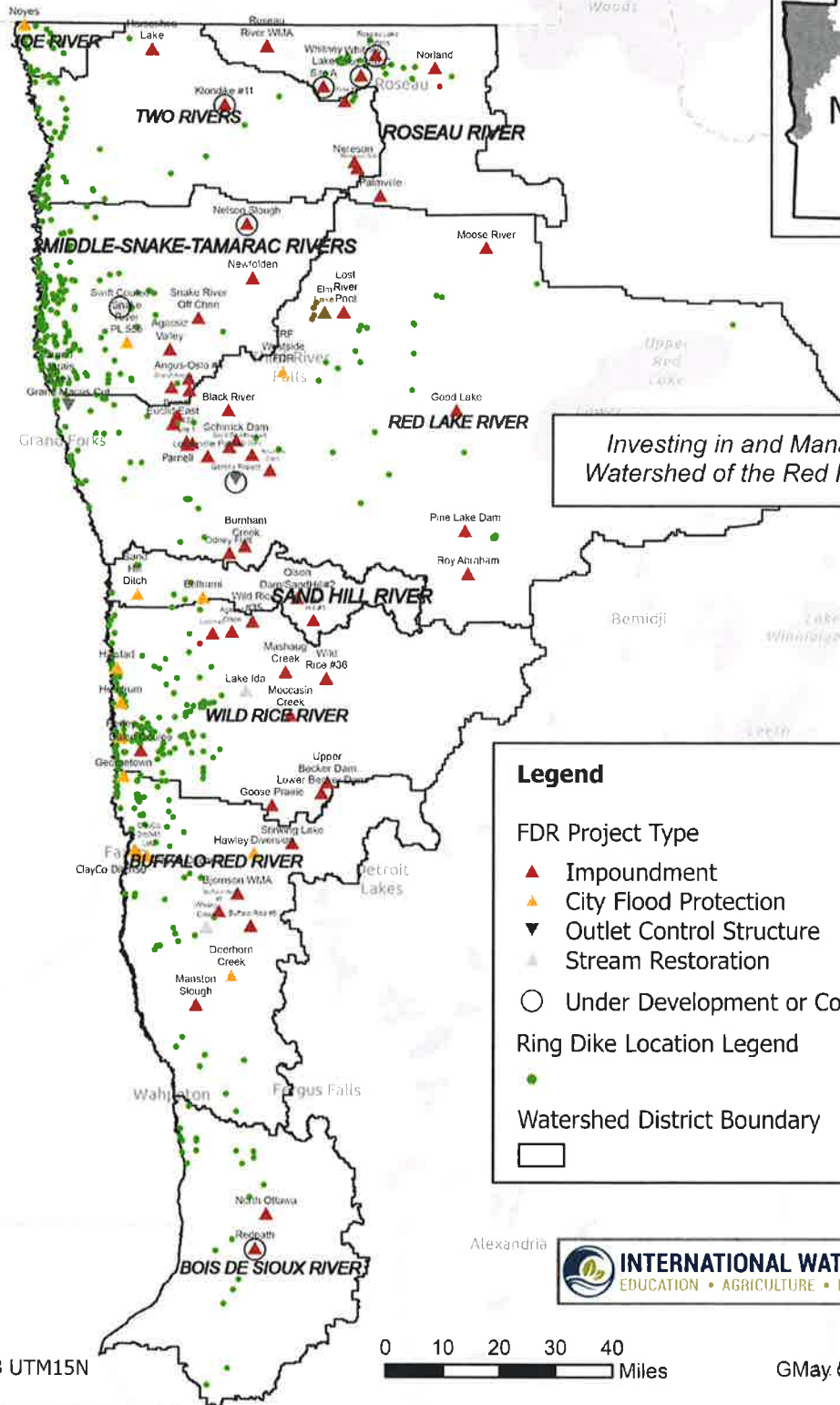
Red River Water Management Board

Member Watershed Districts



Protection of Agricultural Land and Property

Flood Mitigation Infrastructure in the Red River Basin in Minnesota



Investing in and Managing the Watershed of the Red River Basin

Legend

FDR Project Type

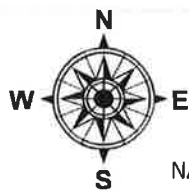
- ▲ Impoundment
- ▲ City Flood Protection
- ▼ Outlet Control Structure
- ▲ Stream Restoration
- Under Development or Construction

Ring Dike Location Legend

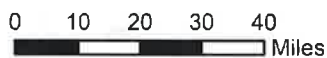
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Watershed District Boundary

- ▭



NAD83 UTM15N



GMay 5.6.2026



RRWMB–FDRWG JOINT CONFERENCE

Water Supply Management: From Flood Problem to Regional Asset

Working Session Summary Report

Date
March 18, 2026

Facilitators
Steve Olson,
Steve@SteveOlsonConsulting.com
Steve Olson Consulting, LLC

Moriya Rufer,
MRufer@HoustonEng.com
Houston Engineering Incorporated

Organizations
Red River Watershed
Mgmt Board (RRWMB)
Flood Damage
Reduction Work Group
(FDRWG)

Prepared by
Steve Olson Consulting, LLC
Houston Engineering

Executive Summary

On March 18, 2026, the Red River Watershed Management Board (RRWMB) and the Flood Damage Reduction Work Group (FDRWG) convened a joint working session as part of their annual conference. The session "Water Supply Management: From Flood Problem to Regional Asset" was designed as an action-oriented facilitated discussion, drawing on participant expertise to advance a fundamental reframe: Surplus water in the Red River Basin (RRB) is not simply a hazard to be managed, but a regional asset to be developed.

The session featured framing presentations from the RRWMB, two expert speakers providing Minnesota and North Dakota perspectives, a landowner interview, and structured table discussions across six questions. Participants represented watershed districts, state and federal agencies, agricultural producers, Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs), and regional planning bodies on both sides of the Minnesota – North Dakota border.

Five themes emerged as top priorities across both the in-room vote and a post-event survey: (1) more intentional use of flood water, (2) coordinate permitting within the same jurisdiction, (3) use existing legal drainage systems to capture water for reuse, (4) improve soil health and infiltration, and (5) invest in new water management technology. The post-event survey — which allowed participants to select up to three priorities as originally intended — confirmed the in-room direction while providing a richer and more reliable picture of group preferences. The working session findings are being brought to the RRWMB Managers for consideration and direction on next steps.

Session Overview

The working session was structured to move participants from a shared problem framing through expert perspectives to collaborative priority-setting – all within a single morning. Co-facilitators Steve Olson (Steve Olson Consulting, LLC) and Moriya Rufer (Houston Engineering Incorporated) designed the session to be distinctly different from a standard conference format. Rather than delivering information to a passive audience, the session tapped into the room's combined expertise and used structured reflection, table discussion, and live polling to surface and prioritize shared priorities.

The session flow proceeded as follows:

- Framing context from Robert Sip (RRWMB) on funding and permitting challenges.
- Expert presentation by Dani Quissell, ND Water Users Association — North Dakota demand and water supply outlook.
- Expert presentation by Jeppe Kjaersgaard, MN Dept. of Agriculture — on-farm water management science and tools.
- Landowner interview with Paul Englestead — ground-level perspective on off-channel storage and creative ownership models.
- Facilitated table discussions using a six-question workbook.
- Report-outs and live theme prioritization via Mentimeter.

The guiding question participants were asked to hold throughout the session: How can we manage surplus water as a regional asset – supporting agriculture, communities, and ecosystems – while continuing to deliver on flood mitigation?

Setting the Stage: The Funding and Permitting Challenge

Robert Sip opened by grounding the discussion in data from the Minnesota Flood Hazard Mitigation Grant Assistance Program (FHMGP) – painting a picture of why the status quo is unsustainable and why this conversation is urgent.

Inconsistent Funding

Though the RRWMB’s membership has received FHMGP funds in the past, five of the last ten years have seen no allocations from the FHMGP through state bond appropriations through the Minnesota legislature. The FHMGP is the state’s primary funding source for flood mitigation and water storage projects. When statewide funding does flow, allocations as low as \$9 million must be shared across every county, watershed district, and city in Minnesota and making meaningful project advancement extremely difficult. This inconsistency undermines long-range planning and creates stop-start project cycles.

The Permitting Burden

In Spring 2025, there were 10 flood mitigation and water storage projects in the RRWMB funding process. These 10 projects required 89 total permits from local, state, and federal agencies, with an average of 9 permits per project. State agencies (primarily water and wetland related permits through the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, and Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources) account for roughly 62% of permits. Non-construction costs, including permitting and environmental review, represent approximately 30% of total project costs.

#	Theme	What Participants Said	Survey
		Survey question: Which themes have the most potential for progress in the next 5 years? (Select up to 3)	Up to 3
1	More Intentional Use of Flood Water	Move from shedding water as fast as possible to capturing, holding, and releasing it with purpose. Dual-use storage for flood control and irrigation supply. Consistent top priority across both votes.	25
2	Coordinate Permitting Within the Same Jurisdiction	Streamline the permit process within each jurisdiction – reducing the 89-permit burden faced by 10 projects. Treat	22

3	Use Existing Legal Drainage System to Capture Water for Reuse	projects holistically rather than component by component. Rose from 3rd (in-room) to strong 2nd in the survey.	14
4	Improve Soil Health + Infiltration	Rather than treating the drainage network purely as a conveyance system, capture and hold water within it for later beneficial use. Redirect tile drainage and surface runoff into storage.	13
5	Invest in New Water Management Technology	Increase organic matter, reduce tillage, establish cover crops, and implement controlled drainage to slow water down and build soil capacity to hold it. Tools exist – adoption is the gap.	9
6	Develop Small Scale Storage Projects for Ag + Industry	Pursue innovative tools for water capture, monitoring, controlled release, and on-farm irrigation. Technology and adaptability seen as key to long-term water management flexibility.	8
7	Capture Water On-Farm and Reuse	Create distributed, small-footprint storage structures that can serve dual purposes – flood mitigation and reliable water supply for agricultural and industrial users.	6
8	Collaborative Communication to Funders and Regulators	On-farm ponds, tile drainage capture, and sub-irrigation systems allow producers to store water when it is available and use it when crops need it most – closing the yield gap documented in the research.	5
9	Capital Investment for Water Production for Ag + Drinking	Tell the regional water story more effectively to legislators, state agencies, and federal funders. Build shared messaging across MN–ND–Canada that strengthens funding competitiveness.	4
10	Coordinate Permitting as a Whole Project	Invest in infrastructure that supports both agricultural production water and community drinking water supply – recognizing these are not competing uses but complementary ones.	2
		Issue project-level permits that cover all components together, rather than requiring separate permits for each element of a complex flood storage or water management project.	

The post-event survey, which allowed participants to select up to three priorities as originally intended confirmed the in-room direction while adding important nuance. “More intentional use of flood water” led decisively with 25 votes. “Coordinate permitting within the same jurisdiction”

surged to a clear second with 22 votes, reflecting how strongly participants feel the permitting burden is holding back progress. “Use existing legal drainage to capture water for reuse” (14 votes) and “improve soil health and infiltration” (13 votes) rounded out the top four. One notable shift: “Collaborative communication to funders and regulators” was the second-highest in-room choice but fell to 8th in the survey, suggesting it was a strong single-choice signal of urgency, but not a top implementation priority when participants had more flexibility. The RRWMB Managers are encouraged to use the survey results as the primary guide for next steps.

Next Moves: 12–18 Month Organizational Actions

Question 5 asked participants what specific actions their organizations would explore or advance in the next 12–18 months. The most actionable and frequently cited commitments included:

- Utilize existing water data, information, and models at the basin scale to better understand regional storage and flow dynamics.
- Maximizing available funds by designing projects with explicitly documented multiple benefits.
- Pursuing feasibility studies to advance current project ideas toward shovel-ready status.
- Consulting with landowners early in project development – not as a final step before construction.
- Continuing and deepening cross-jurisdictional collaboration (MN–ND–Canada).
- Monitoring completed projects for effectiveness and sharing results.
- Building the Soil Health Partnership’s role in on-farm water retention work.
- Standardizing and integrating regulations more consistently across state/national borders.

Five-Year Opportunities with Realistic Traction

Question 6 focused on what participants believed could realistically gain momentum within five years:

- More intentional and coordinated use of floodwater – capturing rather than shedding.
- Improved coordination and alignment across agencies and jurisdictions.
- Investment in water management technology and on-farm infrastructure.
- Repurposing stored water for agricultural and community use.
- Demonstrable improvement in cross-border relationships and shared planning frameworks.

Hidden Agreement and Hidden Disagreement

In any multi-stakeholder working session, some of the most important signals are not what people say explicitly, but what they assume everyone already agrees on, and where real differences quietly persist beneath a surface of polite alignment. Both were present in this session.

Hidden Agreement: What the Room Already Shared

Several areas of deep common ground went largely unstated not because they were unimportant, but because participants assumed shared agreement and moved past them. Naming these is valuable because they represent the stable foundation for action.

- Water is both a problem and an opportunity simultaneously. Every participant accepted the dual framing without debate. No one argued that flood mitigation and water supply are competing goals. The tension is in timing and infrastructure, not intent.
- Environmental quality is non-negotiable. Despite frustration with permitting burden, no one argued for abandoning environmental review. The complaint is about process efficiency, not environmental outcomes – a critical distinction for any policy reform effort.
- Landowners must be partners, not obstacles. Across farmers, watershed staff, and agency representatives, there was quiet consensus that projects fail when landowners are treated as a problem to be solved. Paul Englestead's question – "Can we at least use the water?" was received as obvious good sense, not a controversial ask.
- Cross-border collaboration is necessary, not optional. No one argued that MN and ND should solve this separately. The only question was how to structure that collaboration, not whether to pursue it.
- The science and tools already exist. From Jeppe Kjaersgaard's research to Dani Quissell's North Dakota examples, participants accepted that on-farm practices are available and demonstrated. The gap is adoption, funding access, and regulatory enablement, not knowledge.

Hidden Disagreement: Where Tension Persists Beneath the Surface

Several unresolved tensions surfaced in the room – sometimes directly, more often indirectly. These are not reasons to slow down, but issues that will need explicit navigation as the work advances. Leaving them unnamed risks having them derail projects at a later, more costly stage.

- Who pays, and who benefits? The affordability theme ran throughout the session but was never resolved. Upstream landowners bear the cost of storage – downstream communities receive flood protection. Agricultural users want irrigation supply – municipalities want drinking water security. These are not naturally aligned financial interests, and no cost-sharing model was agreed upon. This is the most consequential unresolved question for any specific project.
- Whose definition of "upstream" governs? The session used upstream and downstream language throughout, but participants noted that the definition shifts depending on where you sit. This is not just semantic as it affects how costs, benefits, and regulatory responsibilities are assigned across jurisdictions.
- Agricultural production versus water storage land use. Paul Englestead named this directly: His son's first reaction was that the proposed site was "pretty good farmland." This tension will not be resolved by goodwill alone. It requires creative land use models,

meaningful landowner compensation, and shared benefit structures that have not yet been developed at scale in this region.

- Regulatory flexibility versus regulatory certainty. Participants called for more flexible permitting, but producers need regulatory clarity before investing in on-farm infrastructure. “Flexible” and “certain” permitting can be in tension – farmers and watershed districts may mean different things when they ask for reform.
- Non-operator landowner engagement remains unsolved. Both Dani Quissell and table discussions raised the challenge of absentee landowners who don’t see the value of drainage assessments or storage projects on land they don’t farm. No concrete mechanism for reaching or incentivizing this group was proposed and as land ownership continues to shift, this gap will become more consequential.
- Climate variability framing was carefully navigated but not fully resolved. The facilitation explicitly held space for both those who see this as a long-term structural shift requiring proactive adaptation and those who see it as normal weather variation requiring better short-term management. That framing held the room together but the underlying difference in worldview will shape how different stakeholders prioritize investment timelines and planning horizons.

Path Forward: Recommendations for Board Consideration

The working session surfaced strong alignment across a diverse set of stakeholders around a shared vision: Managing the RRB’s water as a regional asset rather than a regional hazard. The RRWMB is asked to consider the following as it evaluates next steps:

A

Endorse the Regional Asset Framing

Formally adopt language that treats surplus water as a regional asset, not just a flood hazard, to guide future planning, funding applications, and partnership communications.

B

Prioritize Permitting Reform Advocacy

Direct staff to develop a formal proposal for permit streamlining including project-level rather than component-level review and advance it through the legislative session in partnership with the FDRWG and regional partners.

C

Complete the Basin-scale Water Storage Feasibility Study

Use data and information from the “RRB Feasibility Study” and technical models to further identify high-value storage sites, estimate water availability for agricultural reuse, and assess the feasibility of dual-purpose (flood control + irrigation supply) structures.

D

Build Upon the MN–ND Cross-border Collaboration Structure

Build on the collaborative energy demonstrated in this session by establishing regular cross-border convenings with ND Water Users Association and ND Department of Water Resources – with a shared agenda focused on competing for state and federal funding.

E

Develop a Watershed Water Stewardship Education Program

Multiple participants identified education as a precondition for action particularly for non-operator landowners, elected officials, and community members who do not yet understand the regional water management picture. Consider a coordinated education initiative as part of the broader communications strategy.

Closing Note

The energy in this working session reflected something that is not always easy to find in multi-agency, multi-jurisdictional water discussions: Genuine alignment around a shared vision and a shared sense of urgency. Participants across the room from watershed district staff to state agency researchers to individual farmers agreed that the RRB's water is an asset, that the current system makes it too hard to act on that, and that the region is stronger when it works across borders.

The job now is to carry that energy from the conference room into specific organizational commitments, policy advocacy, and funded projects. This report and its recommendations are offered as a first step in that direction, for the RRWMB to review and implement possible actions.

Appendix: Speaker Summaries

Dani Quissell

Executive Director, North Dakota Water Users Association. Presented on North Dakota water demand trends, aging PL-566 infrastructure, drainage system viability, water capture and reuse under western water law, aquifer recharge research, and the Red River Valley Water Supply Project. Contact information shared at the session.

Jeppe Kjaersgaard

Research Scientist, Minnesota Department of Agriculture and Adjunct Professor at the University of Minnesota. Presented on crop water availability and use in the RRB, the yield gap attributable to water stress, and on-farm practices including controlled drainage, saturated buffers, cover crops, and drainage water capture and reuse. Referenced the EDWARD tool (Transforming Drainage Network) for on-farm reservoir sizing.

Paul Englestead

Farmer and landowner, farming between Fertile and Beltrami, MN. Member of the Sand Hill River Project team. Presented a landowner's perspective on off-channel storage, the feasibility of dual-use structures (flood control + irrigation supply), and a creative watershed-as-vendor model for water revenue generation and project sustainability.

Robert Sip

RRWMB Executive Director. Presented on funding challenges of RRWMB membership, with a specific focus on the FHM GAP and bond funds, permitting efficiency and streamlining.

Messaging to the Plumbing Board

From Jan Voit <jvoit@mnwatersheds.com>

Date Fri 6/19/2026 7:42 AM

Good morning,

Based on our coalition meeting yesterday, we are sharing the following in preparation for the Plumbing Board meeting on June we

- Participants should remain respectful, factual, and avoid opinions during testimony. The approach should be similar to testifying before a legislative committee.
- There should be a consistent "ask" from all speakers: the plumbing board should drop the proposed changes and defer to existing state agencies like the MPCA, DNR, and Department of Health.
- The argument is that these agencies (MPCA, DNR, and MDH) already regulate stormwater and have established rules and permits.
- Speakers should let the board members talk if they become defensive, as their statements will be on the record.

Jan and Anna

--



Jan Voit
Executive Director

507-822-0921



New Email: jvoit@mnwatersheds.com

Drainage Work Group (DWG) Meeting

June 11, 2026

Following the welcome and introductions, Tom Gile, Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) gave an overview of the agenda.

Information was provided about the following drainage-related events.

- ISG Annual Spring Drainage Tour – May 2026
- Nelson Slough Project Groundbreaking – June 2026
- Minnesota Drainage Program – August 2026
- Minnesota Watersheds Summer – August 2026
- MADI fall meeting in St. Cloud – October 2026

2026 Meeting Schedule

Meetings are scheduled for the second Thursday of the month: July 9, August 13, September 10, and October 8. The November 5 meeting is on the first Thursday due to deer hunting season. The December 17 meeting has a scheduling conflict and may be moved or held virtually.

BWSR is reviewing website accessibility, which may affect how meeting notes are stored. Older notes may be removed from the public site but will be available upon request.

The DWG's process summary document was reviewed, outlining its core purpose to foster science-based understanding of drainage issues and develop recommendations for managing drainage systems under Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 103E. The DWG strives for consensus, meaning members can "live with" a decision.

Multipurpose Drainage Management Grants

The MDM program, funded by the Clean Water Fund, supports water quality projects with multipurpose benefits. It uses a quarterly application cycle and has an explicit list of eligible practices. The most recent cycle had \$900,000 available. The Clean Water Council has characterized the program as a high priority and is considering a funding increase.

There is interest in adding new Best Management Practices to the program. A subgroup of engineers (Houston Engineering, Inc., ISG, and Moore Engineering) and practitioners (Tracy Halstensgard, Roseau River WD and county staff) will be convened to develop recommendations for the main work group.

Legislative Session Updates

Abandonment of Unviable Systems. An issue was raised with legislators regarding old, heavily forested drainage systems where repair costs exceed benefits. Current law makes abandonment difficult if even one landowner objects. There is support for a legislative change to allow a drainage authority to initiate abandonment for financially unviable systems. St. Louis County legislators, the Association of Minnesota Counties, and officials in other affected counties are interested in this solution.

Minnesota Plumbing Board Rulemaking on Stormwater Reuse. The Minnesota Plumbing Board is considering adopting rules that would prohibit the use of stormwater for irrigation statewide. A large coalition is forming to oppose this change, citing impacts on existing and future reuse projects. A special meeting of the Minnesota Plumbing Board is scheduled for June 23, 2026.

Exemption Bill for Public Water Permits. A bill to exempt certain 103E projects from public water permits did not advance and its origin is unknown to the group.

DWG Assessment

BWSR brought in Katie Pratt, Office of Collaboration and Dispute Resolution (OCDR) to assess the effectiveness of the group's collaborative process. The assessment is an "all options on the table" exercise, reviewing everything from the consensus and facilitation models to stakeholder representation and the group's overall scope. OCDR acts as a neutral third party.

- The DWG has operated for 20 years and is recognized by legislators as a valuable forum for vetting drainage issues.
- Katie outlined an assessment → deliberation → implementation process. The current scope is the assessment phase, which involves reviewing background materials and conducting interviews with a representative sample of stakeholders. The goal is to return to the group in October 2026 with compiled themes and recommendations.
- The evaluation will be comprehensive, with topics including the consensus model, facilitation, member representation, and defining success. Preliminary questions are included at the end of these notes.
- Concerns were raised by environmental groups about ensuring representation for downstream landowners and communities. Specifically mentioned were including the League of Minnesota Cities and the Stormwater Coalition.
- Drainage is a topic that many other entities are discussing: the Clean Water Council, the attorney general's task force, BWSR, and MPCA. The DWG has to have a narrow focus.
- Concerns were raised by drainage authorities about environmental groups that bypass the DWG's consensus process to lobby the legislature directly.
- The group discussed the need for commitment to the DWG's mission.
- The court-mandated mediation model from the Red River Valley's Flood Damage Reduction Work Group was shared as a potential example.

Planning for 2026 DWG Meetings

The group established a priority list for substantive discussion topics to be addressed in parallel with the process review. High-priority items are a streamlined system abandonment process and issues related to road/drain tile crossings. Medium priorities include submission requirements for drainage proposals and clarifying statutory notice requirements. A lower-priority item is the 40-acre tract requirement in viewer's reports. Tom will circulate the finalized priority list.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held at the MnDOT office in St. Cloud on July 9 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Meeting notes by Jan Voit

- All options are on the table for the future of the DWG including no change, process updates, redesigning the group, sunsetting the group, or other creative possibilities.

Preliminary assessment question list

OCDR has the following questions about the current and future state of the DWG:

1. Effectiveness and efficiency

- What does success of the DWG look like? Over the next five years, if the DWG was doing its best work, what would that look like?
- How will you know if the DWG is successful? What objective measures could be used to evaluate DWG effectiveness?
- Is Minnesota better off because of the efforts of the DWG?
- If the DWG stopped meeting beyond 2026, what would change in the way Minnesota approached drainage management?
- Is the amount of time invested in convening the DWG worthwhile relative to the accomplishments of the group?
- Which other states have effective systems for drainage management and stakeholder engagement that Minnesota could learn from?

2. Collaboration and consensus

- BWSR is tasked with drainage stakeholder coordination under [Section 103B.101 Subd.13](#).
 - Is that section of law still necessary?
 - Is the DWG the best tool to accomplish that goal?
 - What other tools could be used instead?
- In considering updates to drainage management and [Minnesota Statutes Chapter 103E](#) when is it helpful to build consensus? Which groups or parties should be working towards consensus?
- When is consensus not needed or not desirable?
- Is the DWG equipped to work through impasse to arrive at actionable recommendations? Why or why not?
- How should the level of agreement or disagreement on drainage management be documented and what should happen with that information?
- How do the deliberations of the DWG matter for decision making by a) drainage authorities, b) the legislature, c) BWSR and state agencies, d) the courts.

3. Specific future recommendations and priorities

- What is the most important action needed for Minnesota to best manage public drainage over the next two decades?
- What is the most important change needed to the DWG in the next 1-2 years?
- What specific proposals do DWG members have to improve the work group and how difficult would it be to implement those changes?

Administrator's Report

June 25, 2026

Polk/Red Lake County Legal Ditches: Included in the packet is a meeting notice for Ditch Redetermination for Polk and Red Lake County Joint Ditches. The meeting will be held on July 9, 2026 at 2:00 p.m. at the Red Lake Falls Community Hall.

River Watch Retreat: The River Watch Retreat was held this week from Tuesday-Thursday.

RRWMB: Included in the packet is a letter from the RRWMB to the Minnesota Plumbing Board regarding regulation to reuse stormwater.

Middle Snake Tamarc WD Ground Breaking: The RLWD will be the host office for the MSTRWD Nelson Coulee Groundbreaking ceremony on June 30th.

Drainage Work Group: Included in the packet are the June 11, 2026 Drainage Work Group meeting notes.

Grygla Flood Control: Audette participated in a Teams meeting regarding the Grygla Flood Control Project with individuals from the City of Grygla, Moore Engineering, NRCS, and Baird Associates

Vacation: Administrator Audette plans to take vacation the week of June 29th.