

SECTION 8.0 PLAN ADMINISTRATION AND COORDINATION

8.1 Funding

This section describes how priority plan actions and existing efforts within the WRW will be funded. Plan participants expect to pursue grant opportunities collaboratively to fund implementation of the targeted implementation schedule (Section 6). Within the targeted implementation schedule, actions are assigned implementation programs. Table 8-1 (following page) shows the sources of funding that will be used to fund the implementation programs.

This plan sets an ambitious implementation schedule. Current funding sources will not be enough to meet the targeted implementation schedule. As such, the success of implementing the WRCWMP will depend on collaboratively sought state, federal, and private grant dollars (NGOs, Foundations, etc). This plan also envisions reliable allocations from the State of Minnesota's Watershed Based Funding Initiative (WRCWMP Enhanced Funding, Section 6).

Table 8-2 (page 8-3) shows the most used programs and grants for executing the implementation programs described by this plan and used within the targeted implementation schedule. These funding grants and programs are cross-referenced to the Structural and Management Practices Cost-Share Incentive Program, the Education and Outreach Implementation Program, and the Research and Monitoring Implementation Program, thereby showing potential sources of revenue for implementation.

Table 8-1: Summarized budget for the WRCWMP targeted implementation approach*

Implementation Program	Local (Baseline)**		State (WBIF)***		Federal		NGOs****		All Sources	
	Annual	Total	Annual	Total	Annual	Total	Annual	Total	Annual	Total
Structural and Management Practices Cost-Share Incentive Program	\$21,500	\$215,000	\$268,500	\$2,685,000	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	\$290,000	\$2,900,000
Education & Outreach Implementation Program	\$35,200	\$352,000	\$24,000	\$240,000					\$59,200	\$592,000
Research and Monitoring Implementation Program	\$7,900	\$79,000	\$7,875	\$78,750					\$15,775	\$157,750
Regulatory Administration Implementation Program	\$68,500	\$685,000	\$0	\$0					\$68,500	\$685,000
Capital Improvements Implementation Program	\$18,000	\$180,000	\$37,000	\$370,000					\$55,000	\$550,000
Operations and Maintenance	\$530,000	\$5,300,000	\$0	\$0					\$530,000	\$5,300,000
TOTAL	\$681,100	\$6,811,000	\$337,375	\$3,373,750	-	-	-	-	\$1,018,475	\$10,184,750

* Targeted implementation scenario includes local baseline funding plus enhanced funds from BWSR's Watershed-Based Funding Initiative (Enhanced Scenario). Competitive funds are not shown here, as they are not considered a portion of the targeted implementation scenario. Budget values are estimated totals.

**Inclusive of consistent operational funding from the state.

***Watershed-Based Implementation Funding

**** Non-Governmental Organization

Table 8-2: Prospective implementation programs and related funding sources for the WRCWMP. Refer to each program policy for specific requirements about what is or is not eligible.

Organization	Program/ Grant Name	Primary Assistance Type	Structural and Management Practices	Research and Monitoring	Education and Outreach
Federal					
NRCS	Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG)	Financial	x		
	Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)	Financial/Technical	x		
	Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)	Financial/Technical	x		
	Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)	Easement	x		
FSA	Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)	Easement	x		
	Farmable Wetlands Program (FWP)	Easement	x		
	Grasslands Reserve Program (GRP)	Easement	x		
FSA/USDA/ NRWA	Source Water Protection Program (SWPP)	Technical			x
USFWS	Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program (PFW)	Financial/Technical	x		
FEMA	Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)	Financial	x		
	Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM)	Financial	x		
	Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA)	Financial	x		
	Risk Mapping, Assessment, and Planning	Technical	x		
EPA	Water Pollution Control Program Grants (Section 106)	Financial			x
	State Revolving Fund (SRF)	Loan	x		
	Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF)	Loan	x		
	Section 319 Grant Program	Financial	x		
State					
DNR	Aquatic Invasive Species Control Grant Program	Financial/Technical	x		
	Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program	Financial	x		
	Pheasant Habitat Improvement Program (PHIP)	Financial	x		
	Flood Hazard Mitigation Grant Assistance	Financial	x		x

Organization	Program/ Grant Name	Primary Assistance Type	Structural and Management Practices	Research and Monitoring	Education and Outreach
	Forest Stewardship Program	Technical	x		
	Aquatic Management Area Program	Easement	x		
	Wetland Tax Exemption Program	Financial	x		
BWSR	Clean Water Fund Grants	Financial	x		x
	Drinking Water Subgrant (Clean Water Fund)	Financial	x		x
	Erosion Control and Management Program	Financial	x		
	SWCD Capacity Funding	Financial	x	x	x
	Natural Resources Block Grant	Financial	x	x	x
	Watershed-Based Implementation Funding	Financial	x	x	x
	Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM)	Financial	x		
MPCA	Surface Water Assessment Grants (SWAG)	Financial		x	x
	Clean Water Funds	Financial	x	x	x
	Clean Water Partnership Loan Program	Financial	x		
MDH	Source Water Protection Grant Program	Financial	x	x	x
MDA	Agriculture Best Management Practices (BMP) Loan Program	Financial	x		
	Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP)	Financial / Technical	x		x
Other					
MN Initiative Foundations	MN Thrive, Farmland Retention	Financial	x	x	x
Pheasants Forever	Pheasants Forever	Financial/Easement	x		x
Ducks Unlimited	Ducks Unlimited	Financial/Easement	x	x	x

Local/State Baseline Funding

The amount of funding needed to implement the actions at Baseline Funding Level (Section 6) from local sources is an estimated \$681,000 annually and \$6,810,000 for the ten-year Plan life cycle. Local revenue is defined as money derived from either the local property tax base or in-kind services of any personnel funded from the local tax base. Dedicated state funding is also included in the Baseline Funding level (Natural Resources Block Grant, State Cost Share Program, Conservation Delivery Grants, etc.)

These funds will be used for locally focused initiatives where opportunities for state and federal funding are lacking because of misalignment of an initiatives purpose with state or federal objectives. These funds will also be used for matching grants.

State Enhanced Funding

The amount of funding needed for WRCWMP implementation from the BWSR Watershed-Based Implementation Funding program (WBIF) is \$337,375 annually and \$3,373,750 for the ten-year Plan life cycle. The WBIF will be allocated to the WRW biannually throughout the life of the plan.

While the WRCWMP will apply as an entity for collaborative grants, which may be competitive or non-competitive, the assumption is that future base support for implementation will be provided to the WRCWMP as one or more non-competetive implementation grants, namely the WBIF program. Where the purpose of an intitiative aligns with the objectives of various state, local, non-profit, or private programs, these dollars will be used to help fund the implementation programs described by this Plan.

Federal Funding Sources

Federal funding includes all funds derived from the Federal tax base. This includes programs such as the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), and Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG). The Environmental Protection Agency also has Section 319 funds, which traditionally have been used for implementation to improve water quality.

An opportunity exists to leverage state dollars through federal cost-share programs. Where the purpose of an intitiative aligns with the objectives of various federal agencies, federal dollars will be pursued to help fund the programs described by this in this section.

Other: Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Non-Profits, and Private Entities

Several non-governmental or non-profit organizations may provide technical assistance and fiscal resources to implement the WRCWMP targeted implementation schedule. For example, locally active Pheasants Forever and Ducks Unlimited Chapters are potential funding sources that differ from the other categories. The WRCWMP partners will seek to engage all NGOs and non-profits as a means of exploring opportunities to fund specific aspects of the targeted implementation schedule.

Private sector companies, including those specifically engaged in agribusiness, are often overlooked as a potential source of funding for implementation. Many agribusiness companies are working to improve water quality. Some of the agribusiness companies are providing technical or financial support for the implementation of structural and management practices because they are interested in agricultural sustainability. An example of this is work conducted through Field to Market (<https://calculator.fieldtomarket.org>). The WWPP remains receptive to mutually beneficial interests and funding opportunities with agribusiness.



8.2 Plan Administration and Coordination

Decision-Making and Staffing

The WWPP divided into three committees for purposes of drafting this plan: The Policy Committee, the Advisory Committee, and the Steering Team. The make-up and roles of these committees is expected to shift to three new committees during implementation: The Policy Committee, the WRW Technical Committee, and Greater Blue Earth River Basin Alliance (GBERBA) Staff. During implementation, these committees will be collectively referred to as the Watowan River Watershed Partnership (WRWP).

Presented below (Table 8-3) are the probable roles and functions of the WRWP committees. The WRWP fiscal and administrative duties will be assigned to a planning entity through a Policy Committee decision as outlined in the formal agreement. Responsibilities for annual work planning and serving as the central fiscal agent will be revisited by the WRWP on an annual basis.

Initially, the WRWP anticipates use of a Watershed Coordinator housed within the watershed whose role will be to administer implementation of the plan. Technical Service Areas (TSAs) and GBERBA will be utilized as available. Throughout implementation, each local government will annually evaluate the need for additional technical or administrative assistance to implement the plan.

Table 8-3: Anticipated roles for WRCWMP implementation.

Committee Name	Description	Primary Implementation Role/Functions
Policy Committee (Fiscal Agent)	Same as planning Policy Committee (one County Commissioner and one SWCD Board Supervisor appointed from each of the participating counties and SWCDs in the watershed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approve the annual local workplan and any associated revisions Approve grant workplan(s) and review/approve grant revisions and amendments Review and approve priority issues and projects
WRW Technical Committee	Same as planning Steering Team (local SWCD and county staff, regional BWSR staff) with state agency representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare annual local workplan Prepare grant workplan(s) Pursue funding opportunities for WRCWMP implementation Review and confirm priority issues and projects
GBERBA Staff	This organization was not formally part of plan development. However, many of their members were part of the planning Steering Team and Policy Committee.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit annual local workplan Submit grant applications, workplans, and funding requests Coordinate annual local workplan Coordinate grant workplans

Collaboration

Collaboration with Other Units of Government

The WRWP will continue coordination and cooperation with other governmental units at all levels. This cooperation and coordination are both horizontal and vertical. Coordination between the WRWP and agencies including but not limited to BWSR, US Army Corps of Engineers, DNR, and the MPCA are mandated through legislative and permit requirements. Cooperation between municipalities, township boards, county boards, soil and water conservation district boards, joint powers boards, and other water

management authorities are a practical necessity to facilitate watershed wide activities. Priorities addressed in this plan will be discussed with federal partners at local work group meetings.

Further, the group intends to explore opportunities to share services in effort to become more efficient in managing WRCWMP implementation. Examples of these types of services already being shared in portions of the WRW include Watowan and Brown Counties feedlot inspections and Watowan and Cottonwood Counties for Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) administration. Examples of services that will be shared as part of future WRCWMP implementation efforts include area 5 and 6 TSA support, and area 5 and 6 Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP) staff outreach support.

The WRWP will exercise intergovernmental coordination and cooperation as an absolute necessity for it to perform its required functions. The content of the WRCWMP aims to foster an environment that enhances coordination and cooperation to the maximum extent possible throughout the implementation of this Plan.

The WRWP has identified that agency goals, objectives, directions, and strategies are generally compatible with the content of the WRCWMP. The implementation actions and goals were defined through a collaborative effort. However, some agency goals, objectives, directions, and strategies for resource management within the WRW have not been selected as priority issues. The responsibility for achieving the goals associated with lower priority tier issues remains with the respective agency or organization. Due to logistical issues that local funding, technology limitations, and other capacities present, Tier 2 issues (Section 4) that were not prioritized are encouraged to be implemented with agency-led efforts.

Collaboration with Others

During implementation, plan partners expect to build on existing collaboration with others, including non-governmental organizations. Many of these existing collaborations are aimed to increase habitat and recreational opportunities within the WRW, while providing education and outreach opportunities. Partners for these collaborations include, but are not limited to Pheasants Forever, Ducks Unlimited, and The Nature Conservancy.

Lastly, there are lake associations and other coalitions within the WRW. Planning partners collaborate frequently with these groups for education, outreach, and project implementation. This collaboration will continue through the WRCWMP.

Work Planning

Local Work Plan

The WRWP strives to ensure collaborative watershed implementation. Therefore, annual work planning is envisioned to align priority issues, the availability of funds, and the roles and responsibilities for implementation.

An annual work plan will be developed by the WRW Technical Committee based on the targeted implementation schedule (Section 6) and any adjustments made through self-assessments. The annual work plan will be presented to the Policy Committee, who will be responsible for approval. The intent of these annual work plans will be to maintain collaborative progress toward completing the targeted implementation schedule.

State Funding Request

The WRWP will collaboratively develop, review, and submit a biennial watershed-based implementation funding request to BWSR. This request will be submitted to and ultimately approved by the Policy Committee, prior to submittal to BWSR. The request will be developed based on the targeted implementation schedule and any adjustments made through self-assessments.



Assessment and Evaluation

Partnership and Accomplishment Assessments

During implementation, the Technical Committee will evaluate progress toward plan goals through GBERBA monthly meetings. This information will be compiled via monthly implementation tracking sheets submitted by WRCWMP entities, to ensure accurate characterization of plan progress.

The Technical Committee will also conduct an annual evaluation on the effectiveness of the implementation partnership. This will include fulfillment of committee purposes and roles, efficiencies in service delivery, collaboration with other units of government, and success in securing funding. This information will be provided to the Policy Committee.

During this annual evaluation process, feedback will be solicited from the Policy Committee and local entity boards. The Advisory Committee formed to provide input on WRCWMP development will be allowed to continue to engage in plan implementation by reaching out to members of their local county and SWCD boards during the annual review process. This feedback will be presented to the Policy Committee to set the coming year's priorities for achieving the defined goals and decide on the direction for grant submittals. In addition, this feedback will be documented and incorporated into the five-year evaluation.

Five-year Evaluation

The WRCWMP has a ten-year life cycle beginning in 2021. Over the course of the plan life cycle, progress towards reaching goals and completing the implementation schedule may vary. In addition, new issues may emerge and/or new monitoring data, models, or research may become available. As such, in 2026, a five-year evaluation will be undertaken to determine if the current course of actions is sufficient to reach the goals of the plan, or if a change in the course of actions is necessary. This five-year evaluation will also consider information gained from initiation of WRAPS Cycle 2, tentatively scheduled for monitoring in 2023/2024.

Reporting

Reporting related to grants and programs developed collaboratively through establishment of the WRCWMP will follow the established mechanism of WRWP work through Policy Committee approval. In addition to annual reports, the WRWP will also develop an annual State of the Watershed Report. Annual partnership and evaluation assessments will serve the basis for an annual State of the Watershed Report. This report will be provided to WRWP entities, distributed through local media publications and the watershed website, and promoted through annual outreach efforts. The WRCWMP will also comply with all grant reporting requirements. The GBERBA and Watershed Coordinator will be the entities responsible for completing these reports.

Plan Amendment Process

This plan extends through 2030. Revision of the WRCWMP may be needed through an amendment prior to update if significant changes emerge in the priorities, measurable goals, administrative procedures, or implementation programs. Revision may also be needed if issues emerge that are not addressed in this version of the WRCWMP.

All amendments to this plan will be initiated by WRW Technical Committee Consensus, and subsequent presentation to the Policy Committee. Only by Policy Committee approval may the amendment process be initiated. All recommended amendments must be submitted to the Policy Committee along with a statement of the problem and need, the rationale for the amendment, and an estimate of the cost to complete the amendment. However, the existing authorities of each LGU within the WRW is still maintained. As such, CIPs need only be approved by a local board to be amended to the plan, with notification to the Policy Committee.



The WRWP recognizes the plan may need to be periodically amended to remain useful as a long-term planning tool. However, the structure and intent of this plan is to provide flexibility to respond to short-term emerging issues and implementation opportunities. The Policy Committee will review and revise its long-range work plan and/or implementation programs through the annual budget and annual and short-range work plan.

Technical information (especially water quality data) will require frequent updating, such as when new, site-specific data is generated by state, federal, and regional agencies, counties, cities, or individuals. Generally, these technical updates and studies are considered part of the normal course of operations consistent with the intent of this plan and not a trigger for an amendment. However, when the technical information results in a significant change of direction from this plan, or implementation results in the achievement of a defined measurable goal (Section 5), an amendment may be required. Amendment process and criteria specific to the WRCWMP can be reviewed in the by-law section in **Appendix U (forthcoming)**.

Criteria and Format for an Amendment

Plan participants recognize the large work effort required to manage water-related issues. The WRCWMP provides the framework to implement this work by identifying priority issues, measurable goals, and action items. No amendment will be required for the following situations:

- ✦ Any activity implemented through the normal statutory authorities of an LGU, unless the activity is deemed contrary to the intent and purpose of this plan;
- ✦ The estimated cost of a non-capital improvement project action item is different than the cost shown in the long-range work plan or within the implementation schedule of the WRCWMP; and

The addition or deletion of action items, programs, initiatives or projects, so long as they are consistent with the goals identified in Section 5. Such additions will be proposed, discussed and adopted as part of the annual budgeting process which involves public input.

Formal Agreements

The WRWP is a coalition of counties and soil and water conservation districts within southcentral Minnesota. The entities previously entered into a formal agreement through a Memorandum of Agreement for development of the WRCWMP (Appendix A). The parties plan to re-structure an existing Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) under GBERBA (**Appendix T; forthcoming**) for WRCWMP implementation.

GBERBA is a JPA that contains the entire WRW, in addition to the Blue Earth River and Le Sueur River Watersheds. The GBERBA board is made up of SWCD Supervisors and County Commissioners from each of the WRW member organizations. The GBERBA JPA is currently being redone to accommodate watershed planning and implementation.

