

**BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES  
520 LAFAYETTE ROAD NORTH  
ST. PAUL, MN 55155  
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23, 2025**

**AGENDA**

**9:00 AM CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

**MINUTES OF MARCH 26, 2025 BOARD MEETING**

**PUBLIC ACCESS FORUM** (10-minute agenda time, two-minute limit/person)

**INTRODUCTION OF NEW STAFF**

- Ara Gallo, NGO/Tribal Grants Specialist

**REPORTS**

- Chair & Administrative Advisory Committee – Todd Holman
- Executive Director – John Jaschke
- Audit & Oversight Committee – Joe Collins
- Dispute Resolution and Compliance Report – Travis Germundson/Rich Sve
- Grants Program & Policy Committee – Mark Zabel
- RIM Reserve Committee – Jayne Hager Dee
- Water Management & Strategic Planning Committee – Joe Collins
- Wetland Conservation Committee – Jill Crafton
- Buffers, Soils & Drainage Committee – LeRoy Ose
- Drainage Work Group – Neil Peterson/Tom Gile

**AGENCY REPORTS**

- Minnesota Department of Agriculture – Thom Petersen
- Minnesota Department of Health – Steve Robertson
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources – Jason Garms
- Minnesota Extension – Joel Larson
- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency – Katrina Kessler

**ADVISORY COMMENTS**

- Association of Minnesota Counties – Brian Martinson
- Minnesota Association of Conservation District Employees – Mike Schultz
- Minnesota Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts – LeAnn Buck
- Minnesota Association of Townships – Eunice Biel
- Minnesota Watersheds – Jan Voit
- Natural Resources Conservation Service – Troy Daniell

## **COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

### ***RIM Reserve Committee***

1. RIM Drinking Water Program – Sara Reagan and Sharon Doucette – ***DECISION ITEM***
2. Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Easement Payment Rates – Sharon Doucette and Kristina Geiger – ***DECISION ITEM***

### ***Water Management & Strategic Planning Committee***

1. 2025 Nonpoint Priority Funding Plan Approval – Julie Westerlund – ***DECISION ITEM***
2. Update on BWSR's Strategic Plan – Jenny Gieseke – ***INFORMATION ITEM***

## **NEW BUSINESS**

1. MN Drinking Water Action Plan – MN. Dept. of Health – ***INFORMATION ITEM***

## **UPCOMING MEETINGS**

- Grants Program and Policy Committee is scheduled for May 19, 2025 at 9:00 a.m. in St. Paul and by MS Teams.
- BWSR Board meeting is scheduled for May 28, 2025 at 9:00 a.m. in St. Paul and by MS Teams.

## **ADJOURN**

**BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES  
520 LAFAYETTE ROAD NORTH  
LOWER-LEVEL BOARD ROOM  
ST. PAUL, MN 55155  
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 26, 2025**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Joe Collins, Jill Crafton, Jayne Hager Dee, Mike Runk, Neil Peterson, Ted Winter, LeRoy Ose, Eunice Biel, Todd Holman, Ron Staples, Mark Zabel, Tom Schulz, Melissa Lewis, MPCA; Joel Larson, University of Minnesota Extension; Jeff Berg, MDA; Steve Robertson, MDH; Jason Garms, DNR

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Lori Cox, Rich Sve

**STAFF PRESENT:**

John Jaschke, Rachel Mueller, Melissa Sjolund, Janna Fitzgerald, Adam Beilke, Julie Hendrickson, Lucy Dahl, Tom Gile, Travis Germundson, Karli Swenson, Suzanne Rhees, David Weirens, Sharon Doucette, Dusty Van Thuyne, Ryan Hughes, Chad Severts, Don Bajumpaa, Denise Lauerman, Jeff Hrubes, Jenny Gieseke, John Shea

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Jan Voit, Minnesota Watersheds; Carl Stenoien, MPCA; Amanda Gorton, MPCA; Erick Schenck MFRC; Pete Aube, MFRC; Jaime Thibodeaux, MFRC ; David Wilson, MFRC; James Aasen, Koochiching SWCD; Pam Tomevi, Koochiching SWCD

**Chair Todd Holman called the meeting to order at 9:01 AM**

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**\*\***  
**25-13** **ADOPTION OF AGENDA** - Moved by Ted Winter, seconded by LeRoy Ose, to adopt the agenda as presented. ***Motion passed on a roll call vote.***

**\*\***  
**25-14** **MINUTES OF JANUARY 22, 2025 BOARD MEETING** – Moved by Joe Collins, seconded by Ron Staples, to approve the minutes of January 22, 2025, as circulated. ***Motion passed on a roll call vote.***

**PUBLIC ACCESS FORUM**

No members of the public provided comments to the board.

**INTRODUCTION OF NEW STAFF**

Adam Beilke introduced Melissa Sjolund NGO/Tribal Grants Specialist and Janna Fitzgerald, eLINK Coordinator. Lucy Dahl introduced Julie Hendrickson, Easement Acquisition Specialist.

**Chair Holman read the statement:**

*“A conflict of interest, whether actual, potential, or perceived, occurs when someone in a position of trust has competing professional or personal interests, and these competing interests make it difficult to fulfill professional duties impartially. At this time, members are requested to declare conflicts of interest they may have regarding today’s business. Any member who declares an actual conflict of interest must not vote on that agenda item. All actual, potential, and perceived conflicts of interest will be announced to the board by members or staff before any vote.”*

**REPORTS**

**Chair & Administrative Advisory Committee** – Chair Todd Holman reported he conducted John Jaschke’s annual review with Rich Sve and will report on it at the next meeting. Attended the Environmental Quality Board’s Environmental Review Implementation Subcommittee meeting on March 19th. Also attended the RIM Committee yesterday and will be attending the Tribal-State Relations Training in May.

**Executive Director’s Report** - John Jaschke reported on the Governor’s budget revisions following the updated forecast. The Clean Water fund had a reduction caused by a long running Dept. of Revenue error. Stated BWSR paused the soil health program funds that were tied to the federal match until they get better clarity. Kelly Kirkpatrick did not win city council reelection so will no longer serve on the board. A thank you note and gift on behalf of the board and staff was sent. Annie Felix, BWSR’s Clean Water Fund Coordinator, started a new role working with groundwater programs at the Department of Health.

John reminded members to note if they had a conflict of interest in any of today’s items.

John reviewed the day-of-packet. There was a minor change to Peatland Restoration Order in item number four. Reviewed the memo regarding mileage reimbursement and Snapshots. Noted BWSR staff will be updating the website.

Joe Collins asked if the Governor could come back later with any future changes from the federal government. John stated there is a possibility, but there is a lot of uncertainty about what’s actually going to happen or when.

**Audit and Oversight Committee** – Joe Collins reported the committee has not met.

**Dispute Resolution and Compliance Report** – Travis Germundson reported there have been two new appeals filed since the last report and there are two appeals pending. The following two appeals have been on acted on.

File 25-3 is an appeal of a WCA notice of decision for a property located in St. Louis County. The appeal regards the denial of a replacement plan application for fill in a wetland for shoreland access. The initial staff decision was affirmed under local appeal proceedings by the St. Louis County Board of Adjustment and that decision was appealed to the Board and has been denied.

File 25-2 is an appeal of a WCA Restoration Order for a property located in Cass County. The appeal regards the placement of fill in a wetland along both sides of Seven Mile Creek (DNR Public Watercourse). A DNR Public Waters Restoration and Replacement Order was also issued for the placement of culverts and fill in Seven Mile Creek. The appeal has been denied and the restoration order affirmed.

**Grants Program & Policy Committee** – Mark Zabel reported they have not met.

**RIM Reserve Committee** – Jayne Hager Dee reported they have three items on the agenda for today and had a productive committee meeting yesterday.

**Water Management & Strategic Planning Committee** – Joe Collins reported they met to review the drafts of the non-point priority funding plan and the BWSR Strategic Plan. The final plans will be presented at a future board meeting.

**Wetland Conservation Committee** – Jill Crafton reported they are looking to set a date for a future meeting.

**Buffers, Soils & Drainage Committee** – LeRoy Ose reported they have not met.

**Drainage Work Group (DWG)** – Neil Peterson reported they have not met since January and will expect an upcoming meeting in June.

## **AGENCY REPORTS**

**Minnesota Department of Agriculture** – Jeff Berg reported they are still dealing with High Pathogenic Avian Influenza. The drought monitors show most of the state is abnormally dry or in drought conditions.

**Minnesota Department of Health** – Steve Robertson reported the Safety Water Act and the Clean Water Act of revolving loan funds were approved at the 2024 levels. Public Water Systems were required to file their inventories last fall. There were uncertainties with some of the inventories of not knowing the material used. They are looking at having them resolve those uncertainties and are offering grants or technical service assistance. The deadline to apply for assistance is March 28<sup>th</sup>. Activities are taking place in response to the EPA petition in southeast Minnesota, they've had over 1,200 people request testing kits in the eight-county area. Private wells that have nitrate levels testing above 10 are eligible for a Reverse Osmosis Systems.

Jill Crafton asked if the Department of Health is being affected by the federal actions taking place. Steve stated they have some uncertainties.

Joe Collins asked what the percentage rate is of well tests coming back at a high level. Steve stated he does not have those numbers.

Ted Winter asked if the results are reported to the Department of Health and if they know who needs reverse osmosis systems. Steve stated they receive the results.

**Minnesota Department of Natural Resources** – Jason Garms reported they have a lot of legislative items in play. They are working on a program for the helium gas discovered in Minnesota. They will be having some fee increases. They are set up for an active fire season with the drought and limited snow falls.

Ron Staples asked for an update on the Public Water Inventory. Jason stated hydrologists have been hired and the IT tool will be rolling out soon.

**Minnesota Extension** – Joel Larson reported they hosted an annual Soil Management Summit in January in Mankato. In February they hosted the Nitrogen Conference and Nutrient Management Conference in Mankato and St. Cloud with an option to attend in-person or remotely. Extension colleagues hosted a meeting in southeast Minnesota on nitrate and resources and research that's available at the University. Abstract submissions for the Minnesota Water Resources conference are open until April 4<sup>th</sup>. Jeff Peterson the Water Resources Center Director is returning to a faculty position at the University and they are in search of a new director.

**Minnesota Pollution Control Agency** – Melissa Lewis reported on their legislative budget priorities. It includes an operating budget for the agency and permitting reform that will bring additional accountability and efficiency. They are working on an e-waste stewardship program provides resources to raise awareness around and enforce the ban on mercury and skin lightening creams. They have been testifying to keep strong laws banning PFAS, lead, and cadmium. They are continuing to implement the first phase of Amara's Law, which came into effect on January 1<sup>st</sup>. They are participating in conversations about the need to maintain reliable funding for EPA states that carry out the delegated work from the EPA. Stated they are continuing work on the Nutrient Reduction Strategy.

## **ADVISORY COMMENTS**

**Association of Minnesota Counties** – No report was provided.

**Minnesota Association of Conservation District Employees** – No report was provided.

**Minnesota Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts** – No report was provided.

**Minnesota Association of Townships** – Eunice Biel reported the annual meetings and elections for Township Officers were held on March 11<sup>th</sup>. Staff are traveling for the spring short courses. Eunice attended the short course in Rochester. Reported they have been active at the legislative sessions.

**Minnesota Watersheds** – Jan Voit reported in February they had their legislative briefing and networking event. There was a panel discussion with John Jaschke, Dana Vanderbosch and Sarah Strommen on permitting. Held a special meeting of their membership last Friday where they made

changes to their bylaws. They will be starting their resolutions process April 1<sup>st</sup> and will hold a special meeting in August for legislative issues. Summer tour will be in Roseau River Watershed District June 24<sup>th</sup> through 26<sup>th</sup>.

Jill Crafton asked if there was a way to improve the agency permitting process. John Jaschke stated there are some approaches being evaluated that could be taken between agencies to do better together.

**Natural Resources Conservation Service** – No report was provided.

Chair Holman called a recess at 10:17 a.m. and called the meeting back to order at 10:25 a.m.

## **COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **RIM Reserve Committee**

**RIM Easement Alteration Request for Benton County Public Road Improvements - Easement #05-01-20-18** – Karli Swenson presented RIM Easement Alteration Request for Benton County Public Road Improvements - Easement #05-01-20-18.

The Benton County Highway Department is requesting release of 1.1 acres from RIM Easement 05-01-20-18 to accommodate upcoming bridge replacement, roadway reconstruction and right-of-way expansion along CSAH #22 and CSAH #7, to improve public safety and to meet current MnDOT design standards. CSAH #22 right-of-way runs along the northern boundary of the RIM easement and CSAH #7 right-of-way runs along the eastern boundary of the easement.

The West Fork Rum River runs through the RIM easement, and there are two bridges along the adjacent highways that have been deemed structurally deficient. Exposed rebar, cracked concrete, and corroded steel reinforcements were noted. Therefore, replacement of both bridges is inevitable to protect the safety of the traveling public. In addition to the structural deficiencies, the road and bridge width is less than minimum standards and needs to be widened to safely accommodate use by large agricultural vehicles and equipment traveling over the bridge, and to allow traffic to flow safely in both directions. Further, the shoulders also need to be widened to accommodate gentler slopes and increase clear zone widths to meet current safety standards. An additional 27 feet of right-of-way is required to accomplish all necessary improvements.

The proposed width increases of the right-of-way to both CSAH #22 and CSAH #7 will result in a 1.1 acre overlap with the existing RIM easement. Because all the existing trees along the new right-of-way will need to be cleared, an easement boundary alteration is necessary.

BWSR's Easement Alteration Policy for public benefitted projects allows for release of land from the easement if the public entity compensates BWSR for the released acres at two times the current RIM payment rate, reimburses the state any funds paid for conservation practices, plus a \$500 administrative fee. Benton County has submitted the \$500 fee and has agreed to pay BWSR \$3,666.00 to release the 1.1 acres as calculated below. Note: 0.1 acres of the release area consists of a public water that was donated to the RIM easement, so no compensation is required. Compensation is calculated for 1.0 easement acre.

Current RIM Rate for this parcel (based on 60% of 2024 tax assessed value) is \$1,833/acre.

Our policy requires compensation at 2x the current rate for the easement alteration. To release 1.0 acre at  $2 \times \$1,833 = \$3,666$ .

The state expended \$0 on conservation practices on this area since it was existing trees when the easement was acquired, so no conservation practice payment is required for the release.

#### *Recommendation*

The RIM Reserve Committee recommends approval to formally amend easement 05-01-20-18 to release 1.1 acres, as proposed. The Benton SWCD Board is also recommending approval of the easement alteration request and has submitted a letter of recommendation.

Jill Crafton asked if there was a way to add more trees within the easement area to make up for the loss. Karli stated it's something they could consider outside of this request. It would require a conservation plan amendment.

**\*\***  
**25-15** Moved by Jayne Hager Dee, seconded by Ted Winter, to approve RIM Easement Alteration Request for Benton County Public Road Improvements - Easement #05-01-20-18. ***Motion passed on a roll call vote.***

**Climate Pollution Reduction Grant for Peatland Restoration** – Suzanne Rhees, David Weirens, Sharon Doucette presented Climate Pollution Reduction Grant for Peatland Restoration.

BWSR has been awarded \$8 Million through the MPCA as part of a Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) from the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). BWSR will plan and implement restoration of peatlands on private and other non-state lands, through RIM-Wetland easements and other agreements. BWSR will work with counties, state and federal agencies, Tribal governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other interested parties to identify suitable restoration sites and plan and implement restoration projects. CPRG funds will supplement and leverage the 2024 General Fund appropriation for peatland-focused easements.

Joe Collins asked if the federal money is available. Suzanne stated the funds are available and hope to be utilizing those funds as soon as possible.

LeRoy Ose asked how they are going to spend the money. Suzanne stated most will go to easement acquisition and restoration.

**\*\***  
**25-16** Moved by LeRoy Ose, seconded by Jill Crafton, to approve the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant for Peatland Restoration. ***Motion passed on a roll call vote.***

**Minnesota Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program Extension and Expansion** – Dusty Van Thuyne presented Minnesota Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program Extension and Expansion.

Board Resolution 17-14 (January 25, 2017) authorized staff to: 1) utilize existing and anticipated appropriated RIM funds (Clean Water Fund, Outdoor Heritage Fund, and Capital Investment) and other (Environmental and Natural Resources Trust Fund) appropriated funds to implement MN CREP.

The purpose of the MN CREP was to permanently protect 60,000 acres of buffers, wetlands and wellhead areas with landowners by partnering the Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve program with the Federal Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) program (administered by USDA- Farm Service Agency - FSA). Landowners participating in MN CREP enroll in the USDA-FSA- administered CRP for 14-15 years, and in the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR)-administered RIM Reserve program — a state-funded perpetual conservation easement program. MN CREP is a voluntary conservation



program that permanently protects environmentally sensitive land in targeted Minnesota counties by leveraging state and federal funds.

The BWSR and the USDA-FSA expanded the MN CREP to provide additional water quality, habitat and economic benefits to Minnesota communities. A recently approved amendment to the original MN CREP agreement authorized in 2017 will expand opportunities to 12 additional counties and increased the enrollment goal to 75,000 acres of buffers, wetlands, grasslands, and wellhead areas for Minnesota agricultural producers. The amendment also extended the agreement through 2039.

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25-17 Moved by Jayne Hager Dee, seconded by Tom Schulz, to approve the Minnesota Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program Extension and Expansion. ***Motion passed on a roll call vote.***

### **Northern Region Committee**

**Rainy River-Rainy Lake Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan** – LeRoy Ose and Ryan Hughes presented Rainy River-Rainy Lake Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan.

The Rainy River-Rainy Lake Watershed planning area was approved for a One Watershed, One Plan program planning grant at the regularly scheduled meeting of the BWSR on August 16, 2022. The planning partners established a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for the purposes of writing a Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan. The organizations signing the MOA included Koochiching County, Koochiching Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), City of Ranier, and City of International Falls.

The partnership held a 60-day plan review process that ended on November 29, 2024, and held the required public hearing on December 17, 2024. The final draft of the Plan, a record of the public hearing, and copies of all written comments were submitted to the state review agencies on January 8, 2025. The partnership has addressed and documented agency and public comments received throughout the Plan review process.

On March 5, 2025, the Northern Regional Committee met to review and discuss the Plan. The Committee's decision was to recommend approval of the Rainy River-Rainy Lake Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan as submitted to the full Board per the attached draft Order.

Joe Collins asked about gray water management. Chad Severts stated it mainly deals with houseboat traffic.

Ted Winter asked about the parameters of the forest health activities. James Aasen, Forest Resource Specialist with Koochiching SWCD stated forest management is a critical component to the hydrology of the watershed. Securing stewardship plans and working on watershed forest land protection will be a major component.

Jill Crafton asked about the tribal nations. Ryan Hughes stated Red Lake Nation has been involved in the process.

LeRoy Ose asked if there were ways to encourage people not to leave ice fishing garbage or waste on lakes. Pam Tomevi, District Administrator of Koochiching SWCD stated they are signed on with the Keep it Clean Initiative and it will continue to be part of their education and outreach in this watershed.

Moved by LeRoy Ose, seconded by Neil Peterson, to approve the Rainy River-Rainy Lake Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan. ***Motion passed on a roll call vote.***

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**Greenhouse gas emissions in Minnesota 2005-2022 Legislative Report** – Carl Stenoien and Amanda Gorton, MPCA presented Greenhouse gas emissions in Minnesota 2005-2022 Legislative Report.

This report summarizes what we know about Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions in Minnesota, including the major sources and trends over time. Tracking GHG emissions and identifying their sources are two important ways that state government can help Minnesotans understand how our actions contribute to our changing climate and how we can curb our climate pollution.

Jill Crafton asked if mercury is considered a GHG. Carl stated mercury is not considered a GHG.

LeRoy Ose asked how much GHG is given off after a peatland has been drained. Carl stated they segregate those into their current land uses and that it's several million metric tons per year.

Joel Larson stated with emissions increasing they will continue to have challenges and it's important to be connecting with partners.

LeRoy Ose asked how many pounds of carbon are burned from approximately 6 ½ pounds of gasoline. He also asked if you gain anything when charging your electric car with a coal fired plant. Carl stated these are not in his area of expertise. Provided an example of carbon burned from gasoline. Stated electric engines for cars are more efficient and would have lower emissions when using electricity from coal to power than by powering it by gasoline.

Tom Schulz asked about the residential population growth and energy being used. Carl stated they have more houses and the population has grown. There is a lot more cooling that's happening than in previous decades. They've completed a statewide look per capita emissions since 2005 and they've gone down but haven't done the analysis for the residential sector. Amanda stated we have a trend of larger house and SUVs that create more emissions.

Mark Zabel stated he owns an electric vehicle where he charges it off peak hours and shared the benefits.

**Minnesota Forest Resources Council Report** – Erick Schenck and Pete Aube presented Minnesota Forest Resources Council Report.

This report summarizes what we know about GHG emissions in Minnesota, including the major sources and trends over time. Tracking GHG emissions and identifying their sources are two important ways that state government can help Minnesotans understand how our actions contribute to our changing climate and how we can curb our climate pollution.

Ted Winter asked about options for private landowners. Erick stated there are several different programs to encourage landowners to keep their forest and land forested.

Tom Schulz stated local people are a good source of getting information to the land.

Jayne Hager Dee asked with most of the forest products used for paper and cardboard, has there been an effect on the industry with the regularity of recycling programs in communities. Erick stated they are supportive of it. Recycling works well to make sure the carbon in that forest product can be used as long as possible.

Jaime Thibodeaux stated the Regional Landscape Program does a lot of coordination on forested areas across Minnesota.

Jill Crafton asked if there was built in tree diversity to check on balance. Erick stated there is a lot of diversity and it depends on different factors.

Ted Winter asked if fallen trees could be put into this bioenergy. Erick stated they can use that wood but not a lot of markets value that type of wood.

#### **UPCOMING MEETINGS**

- Water Management and Strategic Planning Committee is scheduled for April 7<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 p.m. in Rogers and by MS Teams.
- Next BWSR Meeting is scheduled for 9:00 AM, April 23, 2025 in St. Paul and by MS Teams.

Chair Holman adjourned the meeting at 12:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Todd Holman  
Chair

## Overview: Minnesota Drinking Water Action Plan

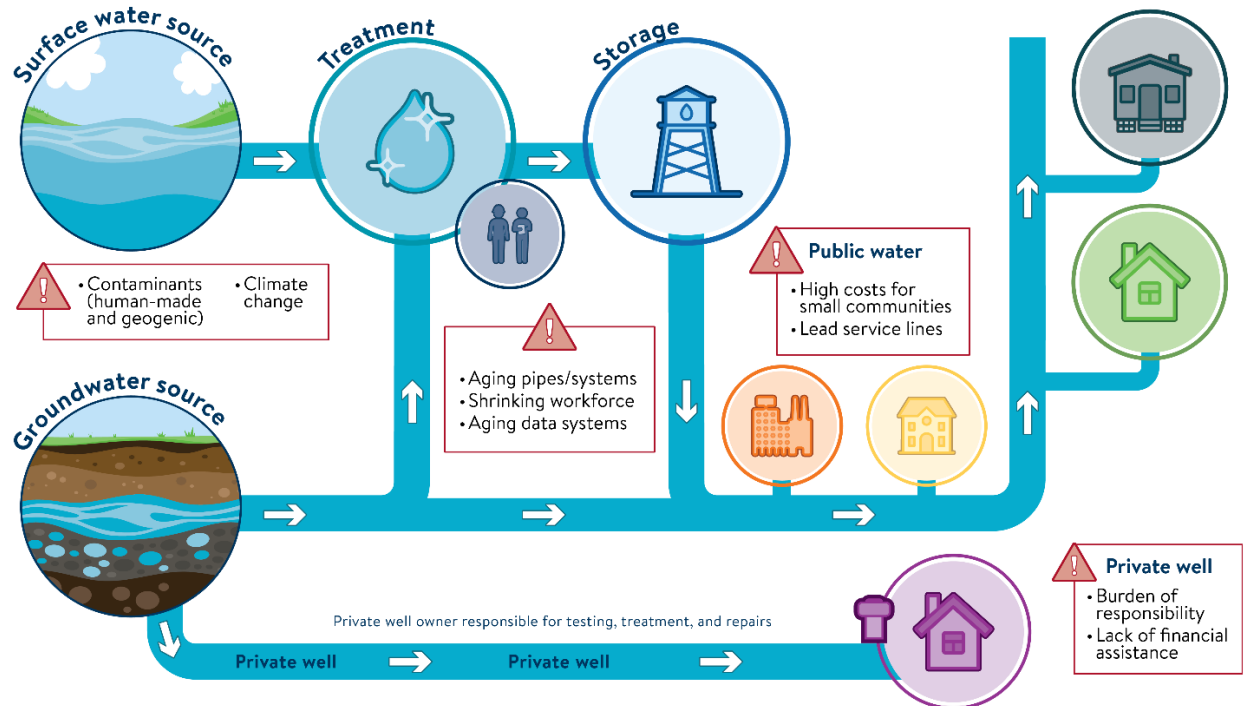
*Vision: Everyone, everywhere in Minnesota has equitable access to safe and sufficient drinking water.*

### Minnesota's 10-year framework to ensure safe and sufficient drinking water

While much progress has been made toward achieving the vision of safe and sufficient drinking water, multiple challenges remain. The *Minnesota Drinking Water Action Plan* (the Plan) incorporates expertise and feedback from water professionals; state and local governments; researchers; and Minnesotans who drink water to name the key challenges and strategies to address the challenges.

Access the Plan and the reports that informed the Plan at [Future of Drinking Water](http://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/cwf/fdw.html)  
([www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/cwf/fdw.html](http://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/cwf/fdw.html)).

### There are risks to our drinking water, from source to tap



## Goals and strategies to address key risks

The Plan addresses the challenges affecting drinking water through a framework of five broad goals. Under each goal, the Plan describes key issues that create challenges for meeting the goal and then lists strategies and actions to address the issues.

### Protect sources of drinking water

- Identify and manage potential threats around drinking water sources for public water systems and private wells.
- Include drinking water considerations in land use planning and zoning decisions.
- Emphasize source water protection in watershed management plans.
- Ensure adequate supply of water for public water systems and private wells.
- Ensure laws, rules, and ordinances adequately protect sources of drinking water.

### Establish resilient drinking water infrastructure

- Support and build capacity for asset management and resiliency planning for drinking water infrastructure.
- Support and grow the public water system and licensed well contractor workforces.
- Transition from legacy data systems to modern, resilient systems.

### Ensure safe tap water

- Prevent and resolve health-based violations in public water systems and private wells.
- Reduce lead in drinking water.
- Establish equitable access to private well testing and mitigation.
- Improve our understanding of unserved populations and inadequate drinking water supplies.

## Legislative direction

The 2023 Minnesota Legislature provided Clean Water Fund dollars to Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) to “...develop public health policies and an action plan to address threats to safe drinking water, including development of a statewide plan for protecting drinking water...”

**(Minnesota Laws of 2023, chapter 40, article 2, section 7e** [<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/2023/0/Session+Law/Chapter/40/1>]).

### Anticipate and manage emerging risks.

- Monitor drinking water sources for emerging contaminants and pathogens.
- Understand how people may be affected by unregulated contaminants and emerging risks.
- Prioritize emerging risks that present the largest public health burdens in the context of established contaminants.
- Advance laboratory capacity and methods to deal with emerging risks.
- Address drinking water risks related to climate change.
- Maintain emergency response protocols to minimize risks if safe public water supplies are disrupted.

### Engage partners

- Communicate with and support public water suppliers and licensed well contractors.
- Provide partners and residents with data on risks and challenges to safe drinking water.
- Facilitate outreach, education, and assistance to communities affected by drinking water contamination.
- Leverage advisory councils to understand, elevate, and prioritize challenges to safe drinking water.
- Create more public-facing (toward residents) explanations of the drinking water supply system.
- Engage with partners and residents to understand their drinking water priorities and concerns.



# Wright County wetland restoration offers flood protection and habitat, aids local road projects

A large-scale wetland restoration project in Wright County's Corrina Township completed through the state's Local Government Road Wetland Replacement Program (LGRWRP) will offer flood protection, drainage and habitat benefits in addition to generating wetland banking credits.

Located roughly 2 miles northwest of Maple Lake, the project involved restoring seven individual wetlands totaling 50 acres, plus 68 acres of upland habitat. Its primary purpose was to restore wetlands and associated uplands to generate wetland banking credits for the LGRWRP. Conservation easements were secured from three neighboring landowners through the state's wetland banking program, allowing the restoration to move forward.

Under Minnesota's Wetland Conservation Act (WCA), wetlands that are filled or drained must be replaced through a process called wetland mitigation. The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) oversees the LGRWRP, which develops wetland mitigation banking credits by restoring previously drained or filled wetlands and adjacent uplands. These credits are used to offset impacts to wetlands that occur when local road authorities — such as counties, cities or townships — repair, restore or replace public roads.

"The Local Government Road Wetland Replacement Program is an important tool for local governments because it allows road related infrastructure



*Aerial photos show the project area before **(top)** and after more than 50 acres of wetlands and 68 acres of upland habitat were restored as part of a Local Government Road Wetland Replacement Program project in Wright County. The restoration involved three landowners.*

**Photo Credits:** Wright SWCD

projects to move forward while ensuring wetlands are restored, offsetting the loss of these valuable natural resources as part of the road impacts," said Dennis Rodacker, BWSR wetland mitigation supervisor. "The LGRWRP takes that burden off local road authorities, providing high-quality wetland replacement much more efficiently."

As part of the project's development and implementation, landowners worked with BWSR and Wright County to petition the local drainage authority to abandon 3,267 feet of subsurface drainage tile that is part of Wright County Ditch 20 (CD 20). In addition, approximately 18,000 feet of private subsurface tile was abandoned as part of the site restoration.

“ Although the driving force behind these restorations is the generation of credits for LGRWRP, the secondary benefits for water quality and storage are significant. ”

— Andrew Grean, Wright SWCD



“The old concrete tile as part of the public drainage system was starting to fail, and the landowners chose abandonment for the upper portion of this drainage system and restoration of these wetlands rather than the costly installation of new tile as part of a system repair,” said BWSR Senior Water Resources Engineer Tom Wenzel, who oversaw project design and construction.

“These restored wetlands can now store and slowly release into the downstream drainage system runoff from about 304 acres of primarily agricultural land. In addition to the water quality and flood control benefits, the project also provides indirect drainage benefits to adjoining areas and downstream lands that are part of the CD 20 public drainage system. Per the design, the main wetland within the site can provide about 74 acre-feet (an acre-foot measures how much water it takes to cover 1 acre 1 foot deep) of detention storage as a result of a 24-hour, [100-year storm event](#).”



*An outlet structure was installed as part of the wetland restoration work. Construction began in July 2024 and concluded in October.*

**Photo Credit:** BWSR

Wright Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Senior Wetland Resource Conservationist Andrew Grean said the project offers a solution to local drainage issues.

“A number of landowners had expressed frustration over crop damages resulting from a failing section of CD 20,” Grean said. “Before going down the path of repairing the system, we wanted to make sure the affected landowners were aware of other options. We viewed restoration through the LGRWRP program as

an option to compensate the landowners, remove a section of failing tile from the CD 20 system, and improve water quality and drainage efficiency downstream.”

SWCD staff helped landowners apply for project funding. They worked with the drainage authority and partnered with BWSR to coordinate survey work, easement acquisition and project implementation.

“There is no doubt that this restoration will

improve water quality downstream,” Grean said. “CD 20 eventually ends up in Locke Lake and the Mississippi River shortly after that. Not only is Locke Lake impaired for nutrients, it sees drastic fluctuations in water levels. Getting large-scale restorations in these watersheds complements the other conservation projects we help get on the ground. Although the driving force behind these restorations is the generation of credits for LGRWRP, the secondary benefits for water quality and storage are significant.”

Construction began in July 2024 and wrapped up in October. The \$1.17 million total cost included easement acquisition, project construction and native vegetation establishment. Wenzel said BWSR staff and SWCD staff will closely monitor the project for the next five years to help document success and support the release of qualifying wetland credits.

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



# Feedlot upgrade contributes to groundwater protection effort



YOUR Clean Water  
Fund AT WORK

The Clean Water  
Fund supports  
Watershed-Based  
Implementation  
Funding.

**G**OODHUE COUNTY — When Minneola Township dairy farmer Tony Scheffler installed a manure pit with 14 months' capacity, he gained 15 to 20 hours a week and the ability to apply fertilizer when crops need it most. and Soil Resources (BWSR).

By curbing feedlot runoff in the farmyard and the potential for nitrate leaching in the fields, he is helping to protect both surface water and groundwater. That's why the \$450,000 project completed in 2023 was a priority for the Greater Zumbro River watershed partnership, which offset about 75% of the cost with Watershed-Based Implementation Funding (WBIF) from the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR).

"I spent two to three hours a day



Scheffler

hauling manure. That's a lot of time when you add it up over a year," Scheffler said. "I've got four kids that are coming up, and they all enjoy farming. I believe they will be milking cows for a long time.

They won't get burnt out hauling manure every day."

Along with wife, Maizie, and their children, Scheffler milks 150 cows and raises about 130 acres of alfalfa and corn.

The feedlot upgrade made it possible to avoid applying manure when it's most easily carried off by snowmelt or runoff, and when it's most susceptible to leaching into the groundwater. Now,

*Watershed-Based Implementation Funding supported the feedlot upgrade on Tony Scheffler's Minneola Township dairy farm. Built in 2023, the manure pit contains runoff, preventing it from entering a creek that flows to the North Fork Zumbro River.*

**Photo Credits:**  
Goodhue SWCD



Scheffler hires someone to empty the pit once a year. Manure is knifed into the fields, which also makes the soil less susceptible to erosion.

“Another big advantage is the fertilizer value. Fertilizer is expensive, and we’re able to better utilize the nitrogen we put on our fields for our crops to use,” Scheffler said.

Manure contains nitrogen, a nutrient that helps crops grow. Producers who apply nitrogen other than manure buy the fertilizer.

Well-timed, precise application is important because leaching can drive up nitrate levels in drinking water.

Scheffler’s feedlot project contains the runoff, preventing it from entering a creek that flows to the North Fork Zumbro River and, eventually, the Mississippi River. The pit was designed to hold 2.7 million gallons.

The project also tapped a \$520,000-per-biennium general fund appropriation that BWSR received from the Legislature for feedlot-related projects. The Fiscal Year 2022-23 appropriation was made available to the Southeast SWCD Technical Service Area (TSA 7) to handle a backlog of



*The new manure pit has the capacity to hold 14 months of manure, which means Scheffler can apply that nutrient when conditions are right and the plants need it most.*

**“(Manure storage projects) have a tendency to impact a lot more acres than just a little farmyard. It could (positively) impact hundreds of acres where the nutrients are being applied.”**

— Beau Kennedy, Goodhue SWCD manager



”

unfunded projects. The TSA made funds available to the 11 soil and water conservation districts within its area.

“Manure storage in general in southeast Minnesota is a priority,” said Goodhue Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) Manager Beau Kennedy. This one would rank pretty high — (and) a lot of our other manure storage projects rank really high— because

they have a tendency to impact a lot more acres than just a little farmyard. It could (positively) impact hundreds of acres where the nutrients are being applied.”

Scheffler worked with TSA 7 engineer Kate Bruss, who designed the project, and with Goodhue SWCD Feedlot Compliance Coordinator Kelsey Petit, who helped them with their manure management plan and issued

permits for the project.

Scheffler had contacted SWCD staff several years earlier, seeking assistance with manure storage.

“The funding really helped a lot,” he said. “Our margins are really small. If you spend a lot of money, it’s got to be justifiable.”

WBIF, non-competitive grants awarded to partnerships with comprehensive watershed management plans developed under the One Watershed, One Plan program (or the Metropolitan Surface or Ground Water Management framework), is supported solely by the Clean Water Fund.

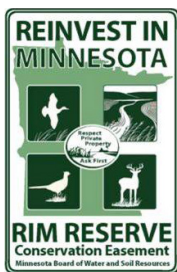
BWSR staff members write and produce Snapshots, a monthly newsletter highlighting the work of the agency and its partners.

# Riparian RIM easement builds upon existing wildlife habitat



YOUR Clean Water  
Fund AT WORK

The RIM Riparian and Floodplain Restoration Program is funded by the Clean Water Fund and the Outdoor Heritage Fund. Both are supported by Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment dollars.



Program applications are accepted during January, July and October.



Seen here in April 2025, the Mud Creek easement connects a 175.1-acre complex and a 139.7-acre complex, creating 479.4 acres of habitat. Most of the easement had been enrolled in the federal Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) for several years. A small section of the easement that had not been enrolled in CRP and was being farmed will be seeded this year with native grasses and forbs. **Photo Credit:** Yellow Medicine SWCD

**A** Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve easement in Yellow Medicine County will permanently protect the banks of a 2,720-foot-long reach of Mud Creek and its associated floodplain. The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) recorded the 164.6-acre [RIM Riparian and Floodplain Restoration Program](#) (RRFRP) easement in October 2024.

It is the largest easement recorded under the RRFRP to date.

By joining two existing RIM easements, the Mud Creek easement created a corridor

for wildlife and expands an existing habitat complex to nearly 480 acres.

“If you’re also including CRP (Conservation Reserve Program) and vegetated acres, the corridor connects almost 2,200 acres. So it’s a pretty significant area of habitat that this kind of pieces together,” said Yellow Medicine Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Director Brayden Anderson.

Mud Creek, a Yellow Medicine River tributary, is biologically impaired for aquatic life, meaning it is too polluted or degraded to support a healthy aquatic ecosystem.

BWSR Easement Programs Coordinator Dusty Van Thuyne said BWSR’s RIM easement program is a critical component of the state’s efforts to improve water quality by curbing soil erosion, reducing phosphorus- and nitrogen-loading, and improving wildlife habitat and flood attenuation on private lands.

The BWSR-administered program compensates landowners for granting perpetual conservation easements and establishing native vegetation on economically marginal, flood-prone, environmentally sensitive or highly erodible



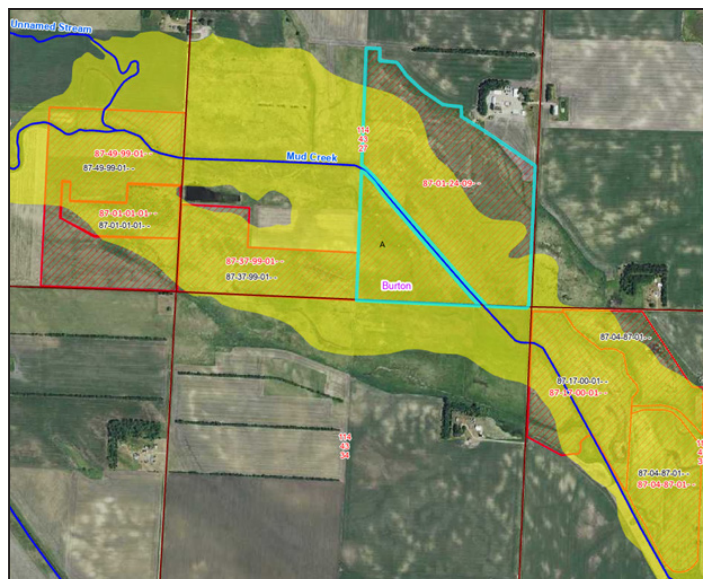
lands. SWCDs implement the voluntary program by working directly with landowners.

Enrolled land remains in private ownership.

The RRFRP focuses on converting land within riparian areas or mapped floodplains from agricultural use to perennial cover.

The program is supported by \$8.56 million in [Outdoor Heritage Funds](#) (OHF) and \$8.87 million in [Clean Water Funds](#) (CWF). Funding was appropriated in 2021, 2022 and 2023. Each funding source has its own parameters. CWF dollars can be used for perpetual or limited-term, 30-year easements that allow working lands activities such as haying, grazing, timber harvesting and planting fruit or nut trees. OHF-funded easements must be perpetual. They do not have the same working lands flexibility, but haying and grazing options are sometimes available.

The 164.6-acre Mud Creek easement, which was secured using OHF dollars, aligns with goals set by the local comprehensive watershed management plan. The Yellow Medicine One Watershed, One Plan (1W1P) includes a



*The RIM Riparian and Floodplain Restoration Program easement, outlined in blue, connects two existing easements, outlined in red. The area highlighted yellow depicts the 100-year floodplain. **Map Credit: BWSR***

watershed-wide goal of converting 450 acres of row crops to perennial cover, with priority given to perpetual protection. The plan also identifies a goal of treating 2% of cropland with wetland restorations, aiming to treat 571 acres.

The Yellow Medicine 1W1P identifies Mud Creek as a priority area for wetland restoration. The plan includes a watershed-wide goal for floodplain retention and reconnection projects.

Anderson said the landowners saw the easement as a way to build the equity needed to buy more land. Most of the RRFRP easement

had been enrolled in the federal CRP for several years and was not being farmed, making it a good fit for the program.

“It is grassland cover, but it always had the opportunity to go back to row crop,” Anderson said. “But now with the easement, we don’t have to worry about that.”

The 2.5-acre section of the 164.6-acre easement that had not been enrolled in CRP and was being farmed will be seeded this year with native grasses and forbs.

Wetland restoration work on the easement slated for this summer includes removing sediment

accumulated during many years of flooding in three scrape areas — shallow ponds that hold water seasonally and provide wildlife habitat. There are plans to reroute drainage tile around the easement and into a wetland.

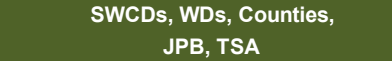
Anderson said the RRFRP easement has created more interest in the program: A relative of the Mud Creek easement property owner has expressed interest in enrolling 80 acres in the RRFRP.

“They kind of saw how they went through the process, and it worked out in their favor. So they’re interested in doing something,” Anderson said.

The Yellow Medicine County easement is one of five RRFRP easements throughout Minnesota recorded since sign-up began in October 2023. Together, they protect 400.1 acres. Twenty-three more have been funded and are in the process of being recorded; BWSR easement staff anticipate those easements would protect an additional 939.3 acres.

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



<input type="checkbox"/> IN-STATE <input type="checkbox"/> OUT-OF-STATE		<input type="checkbox"/> SHORT TERM ADVANCE <input type="checkbox"/> RECURRING ADVANCE		SEMA4 EMPLOYEE EXPENSE REPORT						<input type="checkbox"/> Check if advance was issued for these expenses <input type="checkbox"/> FINAL EXPENSE(S) FOR THIS TRIP?					
Employee Name		Home Address (Include City and State)			Permanent Work Station (Include City and State)			Agency		1-Way Commute Miles		Job Title			
Employee ID		Rcd #	Trip Start Date		Trip End Date		Reason for Travel/Advance (30 Char. Max) [example: XYZ Conference, Dallas, TX]					Barg. Unit		Expense Group ID (Agency Use)	

Chart String(s)	Accounting Date	Fund	Fin DeptID	AppropID	SW Cost	Sub Acct	Agncy Cost 1	Agncy Cost 2	PC BU	Project	Activity	Srcce Type	Category	Sub-Cat	Distrib %	
	A															
	B															

A. Description:

Date	Daily Description	Itinerary		Trip Miles	Total Trip & Local Miles	Mileage Rate
		Time	Location			
		Depart				
		Arrive				
		Depart				
		Arrive				
		Depart				
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		Arrive				
		Depart				
		Arrive				
VEHICLE CONTROL #					Total Miles 0	

B. Description:

Meals ✓			Total Meals (overnight stay)	Total Meals (no overnight stay) taxable	Lodging	Personal Telephone	Parking	Total
B	L	D						
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>						0.00
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>						0.00
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>						0.00
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>						0.00
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<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>						0.00
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>						0.00
			Total MWI/MWO 0.00	Total MEI/MEO 0.00	Total LGI/LGO 0.00	Total PHI/PHO 0.00	Total PKI/PKO 0.00	Subtotal (A) 0.00

MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT CALCULATION

Enter the rates, miles, and total amounts for the mileage listed above. Get the IRS rate from your agency business expense contact.	Rate	Total Miles	Total Mileage Amt.
1. Enter rate, miles, and amount being claimed at <b>equal to the IRS rate</b> .			0.00
2. Enter rate, miles, and amount being claimed at <b>less than the IRS rate</b> .			0.00
3. Enter rate, miles, and amount being claimed at <b>greater than the IRS rate</b> .			0.00
4. Add the total mileage amounts from lines 1 through 3.			0.00
5. Enter IRS mileage rate in place at the time of travel.			
6. Subtract line 5 from line 3.	0.000		
7. Enter total miles from line 3.		0	
8. Multiply line 6 by line 7. This is <b>taxable</b> mileage.			0.00 <small>(Copy to Box C)</small>
9. Subtract line 8 from line 4. If line 8 is zero, enter mileage amount from line 4. This is <b>non-taxable</b> mileage.			0.00 <small>(Copy to Box D)</small>

OTHER EXPENSES – See reverse for list of Earn Codes.

Date	Earn Code	Comments	Total
Subtotal Other Expenses: (B)			0.00
Total taxable mileage greater than IRS rate to be reimbursed: (C)			0.00 <small>MIT or MOT</small>
Total nontaxable mileage less than or equal to IRS rate to be reimbursed: (D)			0.00 <small>MLI or MLO</small>
<b>Grand Total (A + B + C + D)</b>			0.00

If using private vehicle for out-of-state travel: What is the lowest airfare to the destination? \_\_\_\_\_ Total Expenses for this trip must not exceed this amount.

I declare, under penalty of perjury, that this claim is just, correct and that no part of it has been paid or reimbursed by the state of Minnesota or by another party except with respect to any advance amount paid for this trip. I AUTHORIZE PAYROLL DEDUCTION OF ANY SUCH ADVANCE. I have not accepted personal travel benefits.

Employee Signature _____ Date _____ Work Phone: _____	Appointing Authority Designee (Needed for Recurring Advance and Special Expenses) Signature _____ Date _____
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Approved: Based on knowledge of necessity for travel and expense and on compliance with all provisions of applicable travel regulations.

## EMPLOYEE EXPENSE REPORT (Instructions)

### DO NOT PAY RELOCATION EXPENSES ON THIS FORM.

See form FI-00568 Relocation Expense Report. Relocation expenses must be sent to Minnesota Management & Budget, Statewide Payroll Services, for payment.

### USE OF FORM: Use the form for the following purposes:

1. To reimburse employees for authorized travel expenses.
2. To request and pay all travel advances.
3. To request reimbursement for small cash purchases paid for by employees.

**COMPLETION OF THE FORM: Employee:** Complete, in ink, all parts of this form. If claiming reimbursement, enter actual amounts you paid, not to exceed the limits set in your bargaining agreement or compensation plan. If you do not know these limits, contact your agency's business expense contact. Employees must submit an expense report within 60 days of incurring any expense(s) or the reimbursement comes taxable.

All of the data you provide on this form is public information, except for your home address. You are not legally required to provide your home address, but the state of Minnesota cannot process certain mileage payments without it.

**Supervisor:** Approve the correctness and necessity of this request in compliance with existing bargaining agreements or compensation plans and all other applicable rules and policies. Forward to the agency business expense contact person, who will then process the payments. Note: The expense report form must include original signatures.

**Final Expense For This Trip?:** Check this box if there will be no further expenses submitted for this trip. By doing this, any outstanding advance balance associated with this trip will be deducted from the next paycheck that is issued.

**1-Way Commute Miles:** Enter the number of miles from your home to your permanent workstation.

**Expense Group ID:** Entered by accounting or payroll office at the time of entering expenses. The Expense Group ID is a unique number that is system-assigned. It will be used to reference any advance payment or expense reimbursement associated with this trip.

**Earn Code:** Select an Earn Code from the list that describes the expenses for which you are requesting reimbursement. Be sure to select the code that correctly reflects whether the trip is in state or out-of-state. **Note:** Some expense reimbursements may be taxable.

**Travel Advances, Short-Term and Recurring:** An employee can only have one outstanding advance at a time. An advance must be settled before another advance can be issued.

**Travel Advance Settlement:** When the total expenses submitted are less than the advance amount or if the trip is cancelled, the employee will owe money to the state. Except for rare situations, personal checks will not be accepted for settlement of advances; a deduction will be taken from the employee's paycheck.

**FMS ChartStrings:** Funding source(s) for advance or expense(s)

**Mileage:** Use the **Mileage Reimbursement Calculation** table to figure your mileage reimbursement. Mileage may be authorized for reimbursement to the employee at one of three rates (referred to as the equal to, less than, or greater than rate). The rates are specified in the applicable bargaining agreement/compensation plan. Note: If the mileage rate you are using is above the IRS rate at the time of travel (this is not common), part of the mileage reimbursement will be taxed.

**Vehicle Control #:** If your agency assigns vehicle control numbers follow your agency's internal policy and procedure. Contact your agency's business expense contact for more information on the vehicle control number procedure.

**Personal Travel Benefits:** State employees and other officials cannot accept personal benefits resulting from travel on state business as their own. These benefits include frequent flyer miles/points and other benefits (i.e. discounts issued by lodging facilities.) Employees must certify that they have not accepted personal travel benefits when they apply for travel reimbursement.

**Receipts:** Attach itemized receipts for all expenses except meals, taxi services, baggage handling, and parking meters, to this reimbursement claim. The Agency Designee may, at its option, require attachment of meal receipts as well. Credit card receipts, bank drafts, or cancelled checks are not allowable receipts.

**Copies and Distribution:** Submit the original document for payment and retain a copy for your employee records.

	Earn Code			Earn Code	
Description	In State	Out of State	Description	In State	Out of State
Advance	ADI	ADO	Membership	MEM	
Airfare	ARI	ARO	Mileage > IRS Rate	MIT*	MOT*
Baggage Handling	BGI	BGO	Mileage < or = IRS Rate	MLI	MLO
Car Rental	CRI	CRO	Network Services	NWK	
Clothing Allowance	CLA		Other Expenses	OEI	OEO
Clothing-Non Contract	CLN		Parking	PKI	PKO
Communications - Other	COM		Photocopies	CPI	CPO
Conference/Registration Fee	CFI	CFO	Postal, Mail & Shipping Svcs.(outbound)	PMS	
Department Head Expense	DHE		Storage of State Property	STO	
Fax	FXI	FXO	Supplies/Materials/Parts	SMP	
Freight & Delivery (inbound)	FDS		Telephone, Business Use	BPI	BPO
Hosting	HST		Telephone, Personal Use	PHI	PHO
Laundry	LDI	LDO	Training/Tuition Fee	TRG	
Lodging	LGI	LGO	Taxi/Airport Shuttle	TXI	TXO
Meals With Lodging	MWI	MWO	Vest Reimbursement	VST	
Meals Without Lodging	MEI*	MEO*	Note: * = taxable, taxed at supplemental rates		