

## **Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) Board Meeting**

March 27, 2024

The meeting opened at 9:02 a.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. The agenda was adopted. The minutes of the January 24 BWSR Board (Board) meeting were approved. No one was present to address the Board in the Public Access Forum. New staff were introduced. The Conflict of Interest declaration was read into the record. **Items of note to members are highlighted in gray.**

### **REPORTS**

#### ***Chair & Administrative Advisory Committee***

Todd Holmen was absent. No report was given for the Administrative Advisory Committee.

#### ***Executive Director***

Executive Director Jaschke reported on how correspondence is shared with the Board, the legislative session, and the Strategic Plan. He also provided an overview of the Day-of Packet.

#### ***Audit & Oversight Committee***

Joe Collins reported that the committee has not met.

#### ***Dispute Resolution and Compliance Report***

Chair Rich Sve said that the committee has met. The report will be provided in April. Travis Germundson reported that there are five appeals pending, with two new appeals since the last report.

#### ***Grants Program and Policy Committee***

Mark Zabel reported that the committee met in February. He was not present at the last meeting. There are several items on the agenda for Board action. He highlighted the grant funding for the last three One Watershed One Plan (1W1P) planning process. Once these plans have been completed, there will be statewide coverage for 1W1P implementation.

#### ***Reinvest In Minnesota (RIM) Reserve Committee***

Jayne Hager Dee was absent. Executive Director Jaschke reported that the committee met in February.

#### ***Water Management and Strategic Planning Committee***

Joe Collins said that the committee met on March 21 for an item that is on the agenda.

#### ***Wetland Conservation Committee***

Jill Crafton informed the Board that the committee has not met.

#### ***Buffers, Soils, and Drainage Committee***

LeRoy Ose stated that the committee has not met. Tentatively, the committee is planning to meet on April 23.

#### ***Drainage Work Group (DWG)***

Neil Peterson reported that the DWG has not met. The DWG will meet again after the legislative session.

### **AGENCY REPORTS**

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture, Minnesota Department of Health, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, and Minnesota Extension each gave an update on agency activities.

### **ADVISORY COMMENTS**

Advisory reports were given by the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Minnesota Association of Townships, and Minnesota Watersheds (working with BWSR staff regarding 103D housekeeping, the Legislative Briefing and Reception, Summer Tour, Annual Conference, and leadership training).

[A five-minute break was taken.]

## **COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

### ***Grants Program and Policy Committee***

#### Habitat Enhancement Landscape Program (HELP)

Dan Shaw explained that HELP is focused on restoring and enhancing strategically located, diverse native habitat across Minnesota on conservation lands and natural areas to benefit populations of pollinators, beneficial insects, and other wildlife species with declining populations and provide co-benefits of carbon sequestration, soil health, water quality improvements, and increased landscape resiliency. HELP prioritizes landscape/regional scale initiatives and because of these efforts BWSR hopes to build new partnerships and increase conservation innovation. The Grants Program and Policy Committee was briefed on the program on January 10, 2024 and recommended approval of the request for proposal (RFP) criteria to the full board at their February 28, 2024 meeting. The Board order was approved.

#### Pollinator Pathways RFP

Erin Loeffler and Dan Shaw explained that the Minnesota Pollinator Pathways program is led by local conservation partners who work with Minnesota Residents to promote and establish pollinator plantings and key corridors for at-risk pollinators such as (but not limited to) the Monarch Butterfly and Rusty Patched Bumble Bee, Minnesota's State Bee. This can be done by establishing/connecting pollinator pathways across communities with an emphasis on residences and/or community spaces. Pathways can range from a local neighborhood scale to across watersheds. Creating these pathways, by establishing deep rooted native vegetation, will have climate resiliency benefits, increase biodiversity, and provide other important ecosystem services. The Board order was approved.

#### One Watershed, One Plan Planning (1W1P) Grants

Julie Westerlund explained the 1W1P memo and the 2024 RFP for 1W1P Planning Grants. This is the ninth year BWSR is offering planning grants. Relative to the 2023 RFP, there were a few minor wording changes plus language indicating that BWSR anticipates this will be the last time 1W1P Planning Grants will be offered. This grant program operates under the policy updated by the Board in December of 2022. The Board order was approved.

#### Red River Basin Commission FY24/25 Grant Approval

Henry Van Offelen explained that in 2023, the Legislature appropriated funds to the Board for grants to the Red River Basin Commission (RRBC) for water quality and floodplain management, including administration of programs. The RRBC has received matching funds from the Province of Manitoba and State of North Dakota. The Northern Regional Committee met January 3, 2024 and reviewed the request. The Grants Program and Policy Committee met on January 10, 2024 and recommended approval of the supplemental funding to the RRBC by the full Board. The Board order was approved.

### ***Water Management and Strategic Planning Committee***

#### BWSR Strategic Plan

Jenny Gieseke explained that over the past year, BWSR has been working to update the Agency's Strategic Plan using an inclusive, participatory planning process involving BWSR staff and board members along with key external stakeholders around the state. The updated plan includes a revised mission, a newly developed vision, as well as key long-term goals and strategies to focus on over the next 10-15 years. Staff, board members and key external partners provided input and feedback to the plan through in-person and virtual meetings and surveys. The Water Management and Strategic Planning Committee has recommended adoption of the updated Strategic Plan. The Board order for the Strategic Plan was adopted.

Joe Collins made a request to the Board to consider a 30-day review period for the public before policy decisions are made. Executive Director Jaschke reported that the Administrative Advisory Committee will be considering this topic.

### ***Southern Region Committee***

#### **Upper Minnesota River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (CWMP)**

Ted Winter and Doug Goodrich explained that the Upper Minnesota River Watershed was selected by BWSR as one of the eleven planning areas for the 1W1P program in 2021. The watershed partnership Policy Committee, Advisory Committee, and Planning Work Group members have attended regularly scheduled meetings and submitted the Upper Minnesota River Watershed CWMP to BWSR on December 11, 2023 for review and approval. The Southern Regional Committee (Committee) met on February 27, 2024 to review the content of the Plan, State agency comments on the Plan, and to make a recommendation for approval. The Committee recommended approval by the full Board. The Board order was approved.

#### **South Fork Crow River CWMP**

Jeremy Maul explained that the South Fork Crow River Watershed was selected by BWSR as one of the eleven planning areas for the 1W1P program in 2021. The watershed partnership Policy Committee, Advisory Committee, and Steering Committee Group members have attended regularly scheduled meetings and submitted the South Fork Crow River CWMP to BWSR on January 11, 2024 for review and approval. The Committee met on February 27, 2024 to review the content of the Plan, State agency comments on the Plan, and to make a recommendation for approval. The Committee recommended approval by the full Board. The Board order was approved.

### **UPCOMING MEETINGS**

- April 3: Northern Region Committee in Duluth and by MS Teams.
- April 10: RIM Committee in St. Paul and by MS Teams.
- April 15: Grants Program and Policy Committee in St. Paul and by MS Teams.
- April 23 (tentative): Buffers, Soils, and Drainage Committee in St. Paul and by MS Teams.
- April 24: Administrative Advisory Committee in St. Paul.
- April 24: BWSR Board in St. Paul and by MS Teams.

Notes submitted by Jan Voit