

Memorandum

Date: February 19, 2026

To: Southern Regional Committee

From: John Shea, Board Conservationist

Review of the Redwood River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan

The following memo outlines the BWSR staff review and recommendations for the Redwood River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (Plan), developed through the One Watershed, One Plan (1W1P) program.

The Redwood River partnership was selected for a 1W1P Planning Grant in August of 2023 and established a Memorandum of Agreement between the planning partners for the purposes of writing a Plan on April 8, 2024. The partners include: The Counties of Lincoln, Lyon, Murray, Pipestone and Redwood and The Lincoln, Lyon, Murray, Pipestone and Redwood Soil and Water Conservation Districts, The Area II Minnesota River Basin Projects and Redwood-Cottonwood Rivers Control Area Joint Powers Organizations (RCRCA), and the City of Ghent, Marshall, and Redwood Falls. The 1W1P Planning Grant was executed on March 7, 2024. The Policy Committee was formally established with signing of bylaws on May 13th, 2024. The partnership decided to contract with a consultant on May 13, 2024.

Plan Development

The partners initiated Plan development on April 16, 2024 by notifying designated plan review authorities (State agencies, counties, cities, SWCDs, watershed districts, etc.) and other watershed stakeholders. The notification included an invitation to submit priority issues and plan expectations by June 14, 2024. Three Public Open House Kickoff gatherings were held on June 25 and 26 2024. A survey was also posted online for watershed residents within the planning area to complete, with over 60 responses collected. Combined, the letters, comments, and survey responses were used to develop and prioritize a list of watershed issues to be addressed in the Plan.

An Advisory Committee was established by the partnership to assist in finalizing the priority issues and development of measurable goals for each. Measurable goals were based on existing reports (WRAPS, TMDLs, local water management plans), outputs from the Prioritize, Target, and Measure Application (PTMApp), and local expertise from the public meetings and local planning committee members.

Priority resources were identified based on a review of scientific data and expertise of the local planning committees. 13 issues were identified. The identified issues were organized into one of four resource categories,

reflecting the resource most affected by that issue. The RRW resource categories are: Surface Water Quality, Groundwater/Drinking Water, Water Quantity and Hydrology, and Land Use and Urban Areas. In addition to priority resources, the Plan identifies 5 Planning regions (HUC-10 scale) that should be the initial focus of implementation efforts specific to each goal. These subwatersheds were identified based on a geospatial analysis that considered information including the prominence of priority resources present in each subwatershed, WRAPS data, SWAT data, and loading information from PTMApp.

PTMApp was also used to target locations where conservation practices are needed and feasible and to estimate the cost of implementation, the water quality benefits, and the anticipated progress that implementation of conservation practices will have toward goals.

Additionally, implementation programs were detailed to identify where funds will be utilized to accomplish the measurable goals within the targeted implementation section.

The partnership held a 60-day review process that ended September 30, 2025 and the required public hearing On November 10, 2025. The final draft of the Plan, a record of the public hearing, and copies of all written comments and responses were submitted on December 19, 2025, to the state review agencies. The partnership has incorporated most of the agency and public comments received throughout the Plan development process.

Plan Summary

Section 1-Executive Summary provides a high-level overview of the watershed and planning partners, a summary of the issue identification and prioritization process, a description of the processes used to develop the measurable goals, an overview of the targeted implementation schedule programs and actions and the estimated funding needed, and the anticipated roles and responsibilities of partnership members in the implementation process.

Section 2 - Land and Water Resources Narrative gives a summary of watershed characteristics and features. Information was included on People: History, demographics. Land Use: Topography and Geology, Land use. Climate, Habitat, Surface Water: lakes and stream. Groundwater, Storm water, and the future of the watershed

Section 3 – Priority Issues describes the information and process used to develop watershed issues. Plans and reports used to compile these issues include the local water management plans, MPCS’s Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy (WRAPS) reports, Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). Redwood River Watershed Stressor Identification Report (MPCA, 2021), and the Redwood River Watershed Characterization Report (DNR, 2020). Agency letters were received from DNR, BWSR, Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA), MPCA, Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), and the City of Marshall. Public input was incorporated through the public kickoff meeting, a survey, and the input of the Advisory Committee. The Plan identifies Five High Priority Issue Themes which are most important and will be addressed first within the lifespan of the Plan. Five Issues Themes were categorized as Medium Priority, which are less of a priority and will be partially addressed throughout the lifespan of the Plan. The plan addresses Lower Priority which may be addressed through partner groups or may be addressed as a secondary benefit from higher priority issues therefore they are not prioritized.

Emerging issues include contaminants of emerging concern (PFAS) , chloride, invasive species, Watershed streambank stabilization.

A planning lenses section has been added as The lenses are not issues but instead provide a different perspective to view the issues in the watershed. The RRW planning partners have integrated climate resiliency and environmental justice as lenses for this plan and implementation.

Section 4 – Measurable Goals determined by reviewing existing information, modeling data, and input from the Steering, Advisory, and Policy Committees. This CWMP establishes Nine goals that collectively work to address all plan priority issues: Soil Health and Working Lands; Nutrients and Bacteria; Protection and Restoration; Groundwater Contamination; water Storage and Flooding; Bank erosion; Riparian and Shoreline Management, Barriers to Fish Passage; Stormwater; This section also includes fact sheets for each of the Nine measurable goals created to address the High Priority and Medium Priority issues in the Plan. Each fact sheet includes background on the priority issue(s) the goal seeks to address, the priority issues that are addressed with the goal, the short-term goal and desired future conditions (long-term goal), stacking benefits from meeting the goal, what work will be done, and heat maps showing Milestones and Focus Areas and subwatersheds where work will be focused.

Section 5 – Targeted Implementation identifies actions that will be implemented in the next 10 years with current and additional funding available to address priority issues and make progress toward measurable goals. Actions are organized and summarized into “action tables” that include Action Description, Program, focus area, Trackable output, Goals that are directly or indirectly affected by the action, LGU’s and organizations Responsible for action, Timeline, Funding level and estimated cost. Three Funding Levels established: Funding Level 1 Baseline, this is current funding available to LGU’s within the plan area. Funding level 2 Baseline plus Watershed Based Implementation Funding (action tables based on this level). Funding Level 3 Partner and other This level recognizes there are other organizations and agencies doing work in the watershed that can help make progress towards plan goals. Plan actions fall into one of five implementation programs: Projects and Practices, Research and Data Gaps, Capital Improvements, Education and Outreach and Local controls. Targeting practices the resulting comprehensive priority ranking map will be used to prioritize where work should take place for actions aimed at multiple benefits. Each action in the action table lists a focus area for implementation, some of which refer to previous goal-specific priority areas. Planning regions milestones are specified for each of the 5 planning regions. Action tables identify specific actions in each planning region that will address goals for not only the watershed but for each planning region.

Section 6 – Implementation Programs further describes the five implementation programs introduced in Section 5 that support the targeted implementation action tables and details how these programs will be coordinated between the local water management responsibilities.

Section 7 – Plan Administration and Coordination details how the partnership will administer and coordinate the implementation of the Plan. The plan will be implemented through RCRCAs’ JPA. Entities involved in the JPA include the counties and SWCD’s of Brown, Cottonwood, Lincoln, Lyon, Murray, Pipestone, Redwood and Yellow Medicine. While not part of the JPA, Ghent, Marshall Redwood Falls and Area II will fork through RCRCAs during implementation RCRCAs will administer the Plan and apply for future funding. Funding is further discussed in this section, with a total estimated cost of \$9,527,000 over the 10-year life of the Plan under Funding Level 2

Commented [MH1]: Are they proposing to amend and use the existing RCRCAs JPA?

Plan Review

The final draft of the Plan, a record of the public hearing, and copies of all written comments and responses were submitted to the State review agencies on December 18, 2025. The following State agency comments were received by BWSR:

- Minnesota Department of Agriculture: Received the Plan for Final Review December 19, 2025, and No comments.
- Minnesota Department of Health: Received the Plan for Final Review December 19, 2025, and recommended approval of the Redwood River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan on January 15, 2026.
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources: Received the Plan for Final Review December 19, 2025, and recommended approval of the Redwood River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan on January 9, 2026.
- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency: Received the Plan for Final Review December 19, 2025, and recommended approval of the Redwood River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan on January 20, 2026.
- Minnesota Environmental Quality Board: Received the Plan for Final Review December 19, 2025, and conformation of receipt with no comments.
- Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources regional staff: Received the Plan for Final Review December 19, 2025 and recommended approval of the Redwood River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan on February 6, 2026.

BWSR staff has completed its review and recommends approval of the Plan.

Enclosure

- Link to the Plan: https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/8d5fb9a9-c4fe-425d-87c5-0e956eecb4b8/downloads/4e1fa0a2-fff8-4533-bd9b-d6c7232eb50b/Redwood%20River%20CWMP_BWSR%20Approval%20Draft_Nov2025.pdf?ver=1765404630952
- Link to the Plan Appendices: https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/8d5fb9a9-c4fe-425d-87c5-0e956eecb4b8/downloads/a0a558fa-75f0-478b-9786-e52bddfd5790/Redwood%20River%20CWMP%20Appendix_BWSR%20Approval%20Draf.pdf?ver=1765404630952
- 60 day review letters (attached)
- Draft Board Order for Plan Approval