

Sauk River Watershed Collaborative Implementation Team Meeting

MEETING INFORMATION	
<i>Date and Location:</i>	Wednesday, February 25th, 2026; Sauk River Watershed District Office
<i>Time:</i>	9:00am- noon
<i>Attendees:</i>	<p>Attendees (In Person) Abi Borgerding (SRWD), Deja Anton (Todd Co SWCD) Kory Klebe (SRWD), Emily Forbord (Stearns Co), Becky Shlorf (Stearns Co), Jon Roeschlein (SRWD), Stephanie Hatzenbihler (Stearns CD), Holly Kovarik (Pope Co SWCD), Steve Zeece (SRWD), Allison Schugel (SRWD)</p> <p>Online via Teams: Ben Ruley (Stearns CD), Danielle Anderson (Douglas SWCD), Noah Czech (St. Cloud).</p>

Review of Previous Meeting Minutes & Agenda

The previous meeting minutes were reviewed. No corrections were proposed.

Agenda additions included discussion regarding monitoring equipment procurement and the addition project status updates as a standing agenda item under General Updates.

Fiscal Agent Updates

FY2022 Grant Status & Supplemental Funds

The fiscal agent reviewed [FY2022 balances](#) and reported that figures remain largely unchanged from the prior meeting due to invoices still being processed. Interest earned to date- \$36,164.97.

A reminder was provided that partners are expected to submit invoices within 30 days after the end of each quarter. Several invoices were recently submitted years after project completion, which complicates tracking available balances.

FY2024 WBIF Grant Status

The [FY2024 budget](#) summary was reviewed. Additional invoices are expected to be submitted by the end of the month, and updates will be reflected at the next meeting. Interest accrued to date: \$43,727.55

Objective 1 FY24 Reallocation; Fiscal Agent Admin

The City of St. Cloud will not proceed with the previously planned street sweeper purchase due to internal budget constraints.

Consensus Decision: \$30,000 will be reallocated from Objective 3 (Supplies & Equipment; St. Cloud Street Sweeper) to Objective 1 (Administration/Fiscal Agent) to support fiscal agent admin time and transition work. Remaining funds will stay within Objective 3 for future needs.

CRP Incentives

Remaining [CRP incentive funding](#) was reviewed. Partners were encouraged to identify eligible projects before the spending deadline of 12/31/2026.

\$17,339 remains unencumbered. Pope and Todd SWCD expressed they have landowner-leads.

TEA Invoicing Discussion

The group discussed Technical Engineering Assistance (TEA) invoicing prior to project encumbrance. TEA invoicing to objective 6 may occur after preliminary eligibility review but before Implementation Team approval & final encumbrance, with partners assuming the risk if a project does not proceed.

Objective 6 TEA reimbursement remains limited to 20% of the total project cost.

Reimbursement Streamlining Discussion

The team discussed potential process improvements to simplify reimbursement procedures. Current procedures include multiple approval steps and timelines. Other watersheds use streamlined encumbrance processes allowing projects to proceed more quickly.

Stearns CD have begun an exercise comparing & contrasting processes and procedures from other local 1W1P groups.

Future updates to collaborative procedures and policies will be explored as part of the fiscal agent transition.

SWCD Cost-Shared Projects Review

Stearns CD Wicker- Tabled. Final Plans are not yet complete.

Stearns CD – Thellin TEA Overage

Stearns CD reported a TEA overage of \$646.80 resulting from a reduction in final project costs that lowered the allowable 20% TEA limit.

Consensus approval was given for payment of the \$646.80 overage using Stearns CD's existing TEA allocation.

General Updates

Cost Share Project Updates (New Standing Agenda Item): This item was added to the agenda at this meeting. No updates were reported.

Monitoring Equipment Discussion

SRWD staff presented a quote for monitoring equipment including pressure transducers, radar units, and data loggers.

Estimated equipment cost is between \$7,500 and \$9,000, with \$15,000 budgeted under Objective 3.

Staff will submit the quote to the fiscal agent and BWSR to confirm eligibility prior to purchase.

Installation time and mileage that are not reimbursable may be tracked as local match if properly documented.

Getchell CIP

A meeting is currently scheduled with landowners, SRWD, and Stearns CD Staff in freeport to advance the RIM application for additional flowage/conservation easement. Stearns CD have coordinated with RIM staff and will be seeking a contiguous area adjacent to the Stream totaling 70+ acres. It was reported that RIM applications with less than 40 acres will not be awarded funding due to competition.

JD2 PT & USACE Alternatives Analysis Project

SRWD & Houston Engineering have completed their deliverables. USACE is now running "alternatives" through their Lake response model. The Army Corp has currently have expenses totaling \$214,903.46. which is credited as match.

SRWD & Houston Engineering are approximately \$17,000 over the initial \$240,000 budgeted due to additions to the scope of work requested at the workshop including septic/wastewater and lake fetch. SRWD will work with BWSR to fund these over-budget expenses, possibly through funds remaining leftover from the St Cloud street sweeper line item in FY24.

SRWD reported they will seek additional funding in FY2027 to advance the top 5-10 projects identified in this Alternatives Analysis into a feasibility study that will outline costs, permit-ability, and constructability relative to location.

Fiscal Agent Transition Update

Stearns Conservation District reported that their board has voted to pursue assuming fiscal agent responsibilities for the collaborative.

A target transition date of June 30, 2026 is being considered. A transition team of Stearns County and CD staff will assist with implementation during the changeover period.

Education and Outreach Update

Focus groups are currently underway as part of the soil health practices adoption analysis in partnership with the UofM’s Sarah Roth. A list of over 100 producers was provided to the UofM by the EO Committee. Those producers selected for the focus groups will remain anonymous to encourage open & honest discussion. Only demographic information will be part of the report.

Keep it Rooted Campaign (Citizen Norms Messaging): Seeking to partner with CMWEA (Central MN Water education Alliance) on a digital messaging campaign. Budget room exists.

Tasks	Amount
Storyboarding	1,125.00
Video Editing	2,400.00
Facebook, Email, & Google Asset Production	2,025.00
Website Updates	900.00
Costs	
	Amount
Facebook & Google Campaigns Media Placement (3 Month Duration)	\$1,450.00
Total	\$7,900.00

Planning Commissions/Board of Adjustments Presentation:

The EO Committee will be working to develop a presentation detailing outreach strategies, programs, and recommendations for local planning commissions & boards of adjustment.

Cold Spring Dam Feasibility Minor Amendment:

The Policy Committee made formal motion to recommend approval from each Collaborative Member’s Boards for a minor amendment this feasibility study in the CWMP Implementation Tables. SRWD and Stearns CD will lead work, assisted by

Stearns County and BWSR staff to draft a resolution for consideration at the next possible board meeting.

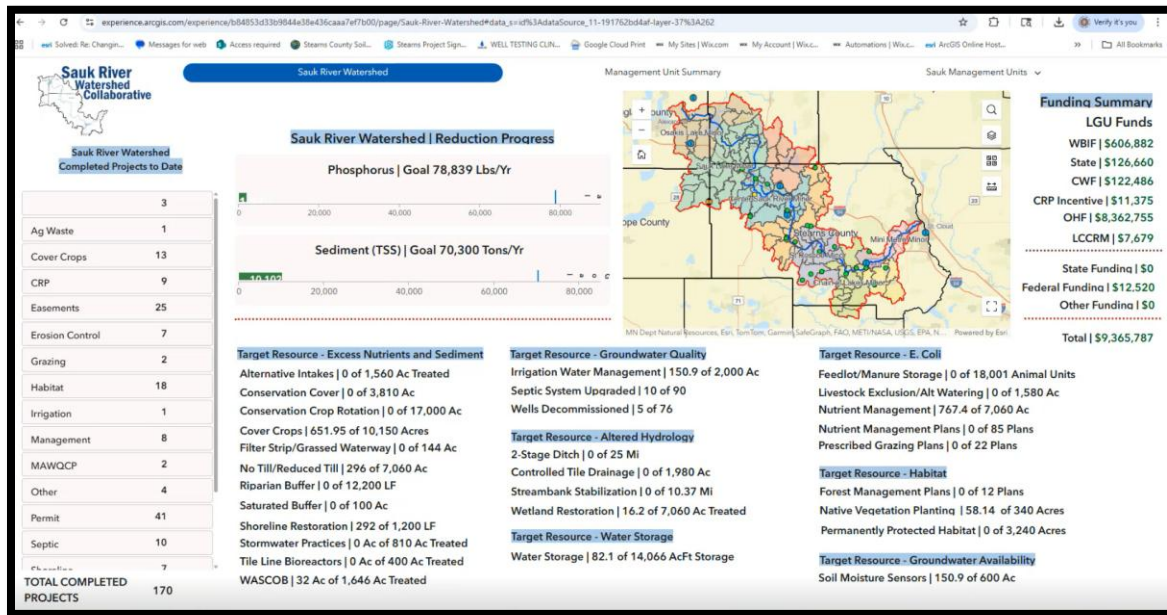
State Plan Review Authority will additionally have 30 days to review this plan minor amendment. The State must occur before the PC meeting in May. At the May 21st PC meeting, a public hearing will be held.

Timeline: All passed resolutions must be in hand by Friday April 17th to allow 30 days for state review to occur before the PC meeting & public hearing on May 21st.

Plan Tracking Tool Demonstration

Ben Ruley of Stearns CD demonstrated updates to the watershed implementation tracking dashboard. The tool summarizes watershed implementation progress including phosphorus and sediment reduction goals, project locations, practice metrics, and funding sources.

Implementation Team members will review the dashboard and provide feedback before presenting it to the Policy Committee.



WBIF FY2027 Wishlist:

Please add your proposed project to the spreadsheet on SharePoint:

<https://stearnscountymn.sharepoint.com/sites/ESSaukRiverWatershedCollaborative/Shared%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx?id=%2Fsites%2FESSaukRiverWatershedCollaborative%2FShared%20Documents%2FGeneral%2FFY27%20WBIF%20Grant%2FWorkplan%20Wish%20List&viewid=79fcd9a2%2D91c2%2D4ea0%2Da1c9%2D04b5b9244d55>

New BWSR Billing Rate Calculator: Increased from 10% to 15% modified base rate to account for MN Paid Family Medical Leave.

https://stearnscountymn.sharepoint.com/:x:/r/sites/ESSaukRiverWatershedCollaborative/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7B69C24026-59C6-464B-A41A-B359B5B27AE0%7D&file=How to Calculate Billing Rates using MBR%2B15 Percent.xlsx&action=default&mobileredirect=true

***Note- BWSR uses **2088** hours per year to calculate FTE.

Upcoming Policy Committee Agenda Items

The next Policy Committee meeting is scheduled for May 21, 2026. Proposed agenda items include:

1. Previous meeting minutes
2. fiscal agent updates
3. plan tracking tool updates
4. public hearing- minor amendment for cold spring dam feasibility
5. Fiscal agent transition
6. Cost share Project highlight tbd

Closeout & Next Meetings

Upcoming Implementation Team meetings were confirmed for March 25, 2026 and April 22, 2026. The collaborative reaffirmed the 2026 schedule of fourth Wednesday monthly meetings from 9:00 AM to Noon.

The meeting adjourned at 2:40 pm.