

Sauk River Watershed Collaborative Implementation Team Meeting Minutes



Date, Time, and Location: Wednesday, August 26, 2026, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m., Sauk River Watershed District Office, 642 Lincoln Road, Sauk Centre, MN 56378.

Invitees & Attendees:

Implementation Team: Adam Ossefoort (Todd County), Emily Forbord (Stearns County), Becky Schlorf (Stearns County), Danielle Anderson (Douglas SWCD), Dave Rush (Douglas County), Deja Anton (Todd County & SWCD), Holly Kovarik (Pope SWCD), Jon Roeschlein (Sauk River WD), Kyle Weimann (Stearns CD), Ralph Hanson (Pope County), Stephanie Hatzenbichler (Stearns CD), Steve Zeece III (Sauk River WD) Jerry Rapp (Douglas Co, PC Ex Officio)

Implementation Team CC: Jason Weinerman (BWSR), Brad Wozney (BWSR), Zach Guttormson (BWSR), Noah Czech (City of St Cloud), Garrett Munson (Moore Engineering), Jerome Haggemiller (Douglas SWCD), Drew Kessler (Houston Engineering), Annie Felix (MDH), John Maile (Stearns CD), Greg Berg (Stearns CD) Tim Kalina (Douglas Co, PC Ex Officio Alternate), Renee Thell (Stearns CD)

Review of Previous Meeting Minutes, Agenda Additions, and Introductions

The meeting was called to order shortly after 9:00 a.m. Introductions were held. The agenda was amended to include additional fiscal-agent updates and a review of commissioner and SWCD supervisor appointments under General Updates, then approved. The July meeting minutes were also reviewed and approved by consensus.

Fiscal Agent Report

Stearns CD reviewed the new fiscal reporting format used for the August Policy Committee meeting. July 31st balances were used, and no new activity was presented while the first post-transition invoices were being processed.

FY22 WBIF Work Plan Revision and Grantee Discretion

The Policy Committee supported the Implementation Team's recommended FY22 work plan revision. The Plan Coordinator and fiscal agent will work with BWSR to enter it in eLINK; the original September 1 target may shift until after Labor Day. Completion will reset the grant's \$50,000 grantee-discretion allowance for final closeout.

FY24 WBIF Extension and Work Plan Revision

The Policy Committee supported requesting a one-year extension through December 31, 2027. The unchanged draft resolution will be distributed to all Collaborative member boards, preferably for September agendas. Resolutions are targeted for completion by October 16 so the eLINK request and grant agreement amendment can be completed before the November Policy Committee meeting.

Partners should identify FY24-eligible projects expected in 2027 and potential work plan reallocations. Remaining grantee discretion may support urgent requests before the full revision is completed.

FY27 WBIF Funding Request and Targeting

The total requested exceeds the anticipated allocation. Partners should remove duplicates and trim requests based on capacity, using FY24 first for 2027-ready projects and reserving much of FY27 for 2028 and 2029. Two meetings remain before a November recommendation. A February 1 execution goal is desirable but not required to meet BWSR deadlines.

An informational allocation worksheet modeled 30 percent held off the top - 15 percent for SRWD implementation, 10 percent for administration and coordination, and 5 percent for education and outreach - and 70 percent distributed by watershed area.

Discussion favored a less prescriptive grant work plan and a flexible internal work plan combining baseline commitments with a shared funding pool. Priorities include project readiness, equitable access, water-quality outcomes and delistings, and drinking-water protection.

FY25 CRP Incentives

Partners with encumbered funds should finalize incentive contracts and generally authorize payments after FSA contracts take effect October 1. All funds must be spent by December 31. No material FSA delays were reported. Todd SWCD and Stearns CD will finish remaining reimbursement documentation.

Fiscal Agent Transition

Stearns CD has received the transferred funds and is officially performing fiscal-agent duties. Reimbursements will be processed monthly with the Stearns CD board's second-Tuesday schedule; invoice deadlines will generally be about two weeks earlier, while project reviews continue as submitted. Stearns County remains the grantee, so some state payments may pass through the County to Stearns CD with a short delay.

Cost-Share Project Review

Sundermann Roof-Over and Stacking Slab

Todd County/SWCD reported that the project could have yet to advance. No approval action was taken.

Pope SWCD Cover Crop Project

Pope SWCD presented a one-year, 195-acre single-species rye cover crop project for an organic producer. The project is within Plan Reach 75, a confirmed priority area. Using the current EQIP rate rounded to \$75 per acre, the requested cost share is \$14,625. FY24 Objective 10 had \$12,090 available, leaving the project \$2,535 short to fund the project.

Decision: By consensus, the Implementation Team approved the \$14,625 Pope SWCD cover crop project, contingent on completion of the required project request materials and final approval by the Plan Coordinator and fiscal agent. The team also authorized the fiscal agent to move \$2,535 through grantee discretion from an appropriate unused FY24 objective into Objective 10. The source objective will be reported at the next meeting. Final authorization to proceed will be provided through an encumbrance email from the fiscal agent.

General Updates

- **Getchell CIP and Project Development:** No material Getchell change was reported. The FY27 request includes a City of Freeport stormwater management plan addressing runoff and ponding concerns.
- **Education and Outreach:** The committee will reconvene in September to review shoreline, agricultural, and urban outreach. Partners reported water festivals, about 70 Weber Farm field-day registrations, a well-screening clinic expected to process 200-300 samples, and an early-October Cold Spring river cleanup.
- **Partner Appointments:** Commissioner Tim Kalina will continue serving through the end of 2026 but did not seek reelection. Partner boards should formally appoint replacements and notify the Collaborative. An orientation and refresher is tentatively planned for February 2027.
- **Groundwater and Drinking Water:** The team discussed nitrate and arsenic screening, treatment limits, and private-well funding. A source-water protection presentation was tentatively added for September.
- **Open Discussion:** Jerry Rapp requested a recurring opportunity to raise water-resource issues, including aquatic herbicides and data-center groundwater withdrawals. The group will retain open discussion under General Updates; members may also request agenda additions.
- **BMP Calculator:** The new BMP Effects Estimator Tool (BEET) is available; calculations should remain consistent with the model used for the applicable work plan.

Upcoming Policy Committee Agenda Items (November 2026)

- a. Previous meeting minutes
- b. Fiscal Agent Transition
- c. Fiscal Agent Report & Grantee Discretion
- d. FY24 WBIF Workplan Extension Request
- e. FY24 workplan revision if ready
- f. WBIF 27 update & workplan draft
- g. Cost-share Policy & procedures overview
- h. Project Highlight TBD- volunteers? (SCD Cover Crop Field day?) (Private well testing clinic?)
- i. Plan Tracking Tool Dashboard

Close Out & Next Meetings

The next Sauk River Watershed Collaborative Implementation Team meeting is scheduled for:

Wednesday, September 23, 2026, from 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

The October meeting remains scheduled for October 28. By consensus, the November meeting was moved from November 25 to Monday, November 23, and the December meeting was moved from December 23 to Wednesday, December 16. Both rescheduled meetings will begin at 9:00 a.m.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 11:05 a.m.