



Title: Authorization to Apply for BWSR Water Quality and Storage Grant to Support Climate Action Framework Scenarios

Resolution number: 25-020

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Recommend action: Authorize staff to apply for BWSR grant

Past Board action: Resolution #22-084 Adoption of MCWD's Climate Action Framework
Resolution #24-012 Awarding Contract for 2D Watershed Model for Climate Planning
Resolution #24-069 Authorization to Initiate Stakeholder Engagement for the 2027 Plan

Summary:

The Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD) recognizes that climate change is already impacting the state and its water resources, and the effects of climate change are expected to accelerate in the coming decades. In order for the MCWD to continue to work toward its Balanced Urban Ecology vision, it must develop a strategy to ensure that the watershed remains as resilient as possible.

Climate Action Framework

With this understanding, the Board adopted the [Climate Action Framework](#) (CAF) in December 2022, which outlines MCWD's approach and actions we will take leading up to our 2027 Watershed Management Plan (Plan). The Climate Action Framework is built on three pillars. First, we must have the ability to understand and predict vulnerabilities across the watershed. Next, we will convene with our partners and plan for a coordinated watershed adaptation strategy. Then, we will implement high-impact projects and policies with regional benefit, measure their effectiveness, and continue to learn and adapt.

The first pillar of the MCWD's CAF is to "Understand and Predict" the impacts of climate change using new data sets and modeling to understand vulnerabilities, forecast scenarios, evaluate management strategies, and support decisions surrounding adaptation options. A key tool identified within Understand and Predict pillar is the development of a high-resolution watershed-wide 2D model. To fund this work, MCWD successfully secured a grant of \$738,000 from the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR). In May 2024, MCWD initiated the 2D model build, which will be completed in October 2025.

At the [December 19, 2024](#) meeting, the Board adopted the 2027 Plan Framework and authorized staff to initiate the stakeholder engagement process for the 2027 Plan. A primary area of focus for the 2027 Plan update, and its respective engagement process, will be the development of a watershed-wide flood management strategy utilizing the 2D model to better understand climate scenarios and potential regional flood management strategies as outlined in the CAF's "Convene and Plan" pillar. This process will include identification of priority areas where storage is needed as well as areas of opportunity based on how water moves through the system, current and future land use, and partner input.

BWSR Water Quality and Storage Grant

The Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) has a [Water Quality and Storage Grant](#) program that provides financial assistance to model, design, and construct projects and practices that will control water volume and rates to protect infrastructure, improve water quality, and mitigate climate change impacts. This program purpose aligns well with the

MCWD's effort and could be used to support identification of potential storage locations and conceptual design of projects to understand the potential flood mitigation and water quality benefits. If awarded, MCWD would have until the end of 2028 to use these funds.

Staff seeks authorization from the Board to apply for funding through the BWSR Water Quality and Storage Grant to support the identification and conceptual design of storage projects. Upon Board approval, staff will prepare the application and request letters of support from key partners.



RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD or District) region is already experiencing the impacts of climate change, including localized and regional flooding, and MCWD recognized the need for a comprehensive strategy to improve the watershed’s resilience;

WHEREAS, in December 2022, the MCWD Board adopted a Climate Action Framework (CAF) that provides a roadmap for MCWD to enhance its understanding of vulnerabilities across the watershed and collaborate with partners to develop shared goals and a coordinated strategy to be memorialized in the 2027 Plan;

WHEREAS, to support this strategy, the District is developing a watershed-wide two-dimensional (2D) model that will help the District and its partners understand vulnerabilities, forecast scenarios, evaluate management strategies, and support decisions surrounding adaptation options;

WHEREAS, in December 2024, the Board of Managers staff adopted the 2027 Plan Framework and authorized staff to initiate the stakeholder engagement process for the 2027 Plan which will be focused on the development of an integrated flood risk management strategy;

WHEREAS, this process will include the identification of priority areas where storage is needed as well as areas of opportunity based on how water moves through the system, current and future land use, and partner input;

WHEREAS, the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) has a Water Quality and Storage Grant program that provides financial assistance to model, design, and construct projects and practices that will control water volume and rates to protect infrastructure, improve water quality, and mitigate climate change impacts; and

WHEREAS, this program purpose aligns well with MCWD’s effort and could be used to support identification of potential storage locations and conceptual design of projects to understand the potential flood mitigation and water quality benefits;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the MCWD Board of Managers hereby authorizes the District Administrator and staff to prepare and submit a grant application for the BWSR Water Quality and Storage Grant to support the identification and conceptual design of storage projects.

Resolution Number 25-020 was moved by Manager _____, seconded by Manager _____.
Motion to adopt the resolution ___ ayes, ___ nays, ___ abstentions. Date: 3/27/2025

Secretary Date: _____