



## Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission

### MEMO

To: BCWMC Commissioners and Alternate Commissioners  
From: Laura Jester, Administrator  
Date: January 8, 2020

**RE: Appointing Representative to BWSR Watershed Based Funding Convene Meeting**

Within in the next several weeks, staff with the MN Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) will gather watershed organizations and representative cities within each planning area to an initial “convene meeting” to discuss and make decisions about how and where watershed funding should be spent. As a reminder, the BCWMC is included in the “West Mississippi” planning area and will be convening with other Metro watersheds that drain to the Mississippi River from the west. In the current biennium, there is \$874,153 available for projects or programs in the West Mississippi Planning Area.

The Commission should appoint a representative to attend and vote on behalf of the BCWMC at the initial and subsequent convene meetings. During the pilot program for this in 2017-2019, I was appointed as the BCWMC representative. This worked well as I have knowledge about our various CIP projects and collaborated well with representatives (staff members) from the collaborating watersheds. I recommend appointing me as the BCWMC representative to be involved throughout this process again.

For additional background, the following is an excerpt from BWSR’s guidance on the funding program: [https://bwsr.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/2019-12/191213\\_Metro%20Area%20Watershed-Based%20Funding%20Process.pdf](https://bwsr.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/2019-12/191213_Metro%20Area%20Watershed-Based%20Funding%20Process.pdf).

#### **Prerequisites for the Convene Meetings**

Prior to the initial meeting, individual organizations must identify who will be their representative to the partnership in development of the budget request. Each watershed district, watershed management organization, soil and water conservation district, county with a county groundwater plan, and at least two municipalities within the allocation area will have one decision making representative. To help the representative prepare for the Convene Meetings (see below), organizations may also want to:

1. Discuss the organization’s ability, policies, and procedures for committing to the required 10% match for these funds.
2. Review and discuss the Watershed-based Implementation Funding Policy and the local plan of the organization to determine if there are priorities or activities in the local plan, consistent with the policy, for the representative to emphasize at the Convene Meetings.
3. Review the FY20-21 Metro Watershed-based Implementation Funding Project Template.

#### **Convene Meetings**

The initial meeting of the partnership and any subsequent meeting will be called a Convene Meeting. At these meeting(s), the partnership will jointly:

1. Agree on a method for making decisions (e.g. majority, super-majority, or consensus)
2. Establish criteria the partnership will use to select activities to include in the budget request. In selecting activities, participants of the partnership must consider how they will:

- **Prioritize** surface water and groundwater resources and/or issues from individual local plans. At a minimum, each partnership should consider the high-level priorities of the Nonpoint Priority Funding Plan
  - Restore those waters that are closest to meeting state water quality standards
  - Protect those high-quality unimpaired waters at greatest risk of becoming impaired
  - Restore and protect water resources for public use and public health, including drinking water

The partnership should also consider overarching regional priorities within the watershed when establishing priorities.

- **Target** implementation activities that will be most effective for addressing prioritized resources and issues. At a minimum, each partnership should consider incorporating the following NPFP criteria into their decision-making process for projects:
  - Measurable effects
  - Cost-effectiveness
  - Multiple benefits
  - Longevity of proposed activity
  - Organization Capacity to deliver
  - Project readiness and urgency

The partnership may also want to consider additional criteria such as land use, soils, surface water types, demographics when targeting. For programs (soil health, outreach, etc.) and pre-implementation site investigations and assessments (e.g. subwatershed analyses, feasibility studies, etc.), the partnership may want to use different criteria than those used for projects or practices.

- **Measure** the benefit of planned implementation activities on water resource goals. Actions must have estimated measurable outcomes associated with them.

3. Review and decide on the highest priority, targeted, and measurable practices, projects and programs to be submitted to BWSR as a budget request (see submittal process below). BWSR has developed a project template for participants to consistently describe individual practices, projects and/or programs from their local plans and to facilitate consideration of these activities by the partnership. All practices, projects and programs must be eligible.

To determine eligibility of proposed projects, see the Watershed-based Implementation Funding Policy ([https://bwsr.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/2019-10/190925\\_Final%20Watershed%20Based%20Funding%20Policy.pdf](https://bwsr.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/2019-10/190925_Final%20Watershed%20Based%20Funding%20Policy.pdf)). If there are questions regarding eligibility, BWSR field staff should be consulted as early as possible.

4. Identify whether the budget request will be implemented through a single fiscal agent and one grant agreement in the allocation area or through multiple fiscal agents and grant agreements. Note: Unlike the pilot program, no backup projects, programs, or practices will be allowed to be submitted with the budget request. If an activity is unable to be completed within the grant period, BWSR will work with the grantee as outlined in the Grants Administration Manual, which may include returning the funds to the state.

The goal of the initial Convene Meeting will be to complete items 1 and 2 above. Depending on the criteria the partnership selects for deciding on activities to include in the budget request, items 3 and 4 above may need additional time for partners to review their plans and hold subsequent meetings to finalize the budget request.