

# Performance Review and Assistance Program (PRAP)

BWSR’s Performance Review and Assistance Program (PRAP) was authorized by the legislature (Statute 103B.102) in 2007 as a means to monitor and assess the performance of local water management entities. In addition to conducting reviews, BWSR uses this program to provide organizational improvement or assistance grants to local government units (LGUs) in need and prepares an annual report to the legislature outlining the work conducted under the program.

## PRAP Review

The program uses four levels of review to assess performance ranging from statewide oversight in Level I, to a focus on individual LGU performance in Levels II and III, and to remediation in Level IV.

**Level I** is an annual tabulation of required plans and reports for all LGUs.

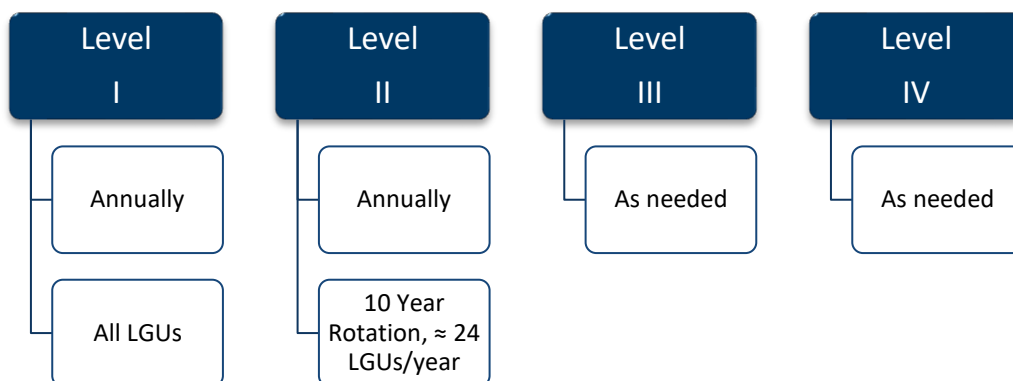
**Level II** is a routine, interactive review intended to cover all LGUs at least once every 10 years. A Level II review evaluates progress on plan implementation, operational effectiveness, and partner relationships. This review includes assessing compliance with Level II performance standards and compliance with the Wetland Conservation Act (added in 2017).

**Level III** is an in-depth assessment of an LGU’s performance problems and issues. A Level III review is initiated by BWSR or the LGU and usually involves targeted assistance to address specific performance needs.

**Level IV** is for those LGUs that have significant performance deficiencies and includes BWSR Board action to assign penalties as authorized by statute. Levels I through III are designed to avoid the need for Level IV.

### Program History

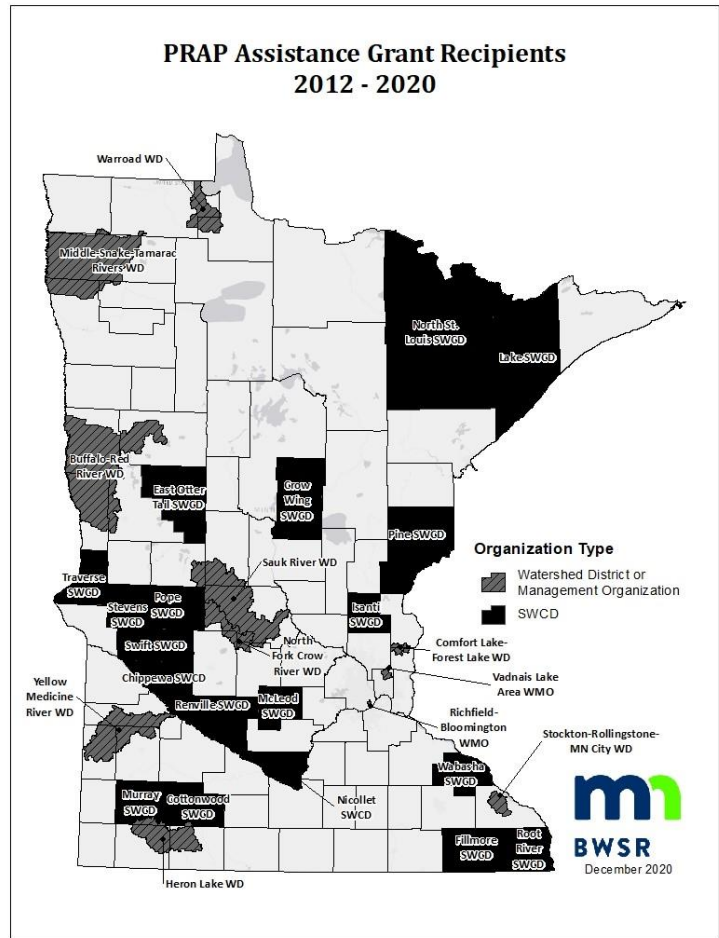
*Since 2008, BWSR’s Performance Review and Assistance Program (PRAP) has assessed the performance of the units of government that constitute Minnesota’s local delivery system for conservation of water and related land resources. The program goal is to assist these local government partners to be the best they can be in their management of Minnesota’s land and water resources. Review of LGU compliance with the Wetland Conservation Act was added in 2017.*



## PRAP Assistance

The “assistance” part of the PRAP program comes through grants made to LGUs to improve operating performance and execute planned goals and objectives. Grant activities typically include facilitation, mediation or consulting services related to organizational improvement activities such as reorganizations/mergers, strategic planning, organizational development, benchmarking, audits, and staff and board capacity assessments. LGUs do not need to have been the subject of a PRAP performance review to apply for these grants, but funding priority is given to activities recommended to an LGU as part of a Level II, III or IV PRAP review.

Since the program began in 2012, more than \$90,000 has been awarded to LGUs around Minnesota.



## PRAP Reporting

BWSR prepares an annual PRAP report for the Minnesota legislature containing the results of the previous year’s program activities as well as a general assessment of the performance of LGUs that provide land and water conservation services and programs. These reports contain Level I data regarding reporting and plan status for all LGUs, as well as summaries and findings from all Level II, III and IV reviews completed during the reporting year.

To learn more about the PRAP program, or to view past Legislative reports, visit the PRAP page of the BWSR website at <http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/PRAP>



# Metro Watershed Districts & WMOs

## Performance Standards Checklist Guidance

January 2019

### General Instructions

The Performance Standards checklist is to be used as part of BWSR's Level II PRAP review process. The purpose of this part is to provide an overview of your district's operations in four areas: administration, planning, execution, and communication/coordination.

**The performance standards cover basic or required practices (■) and high performance practices (★).** We expect each organization to meet all of the basic practice standards. The high performance standards describe the practices of high performing organizations and are met less frequently. Organizations will receive BWSR commendations for compliance with high performance standards. Any unmet high performance standards can serve as stretch goals for performance improvement.

### Administration

- **Activity report: annual, on-time**  
Annual activity reports are due to BWSR within 120 days of the end of the calendar year. The content is specified in [MN Rule 8410.0150 Subp. 3](#).
- **Financial report and audit completed on time**  
The financial and audit reports are required by [MN Rule 8410.0150](#) and must be submitted within 180 days of the end of the organization's fiscal year.
- **Drainage authority buffer strip report: submitted on time**  
If the organization is the local drainage authority, the annual buffer strip establishment and inspection report required by [MS Chap. 103E.067](#) must be submitted to BWSR by February 1 each year. If the organization is not the drainage authority, enter "N/A" for this item.
- **eLink Grant Report(s): submitted on time**  
Reporting the results of work done with BWSR grant funds is via the web-based eLink system. Grant results reporting must be completed by February 1<sup>st</sup> and meet the content requirements of the particular grant. Organizations without grants requiring eLink reporting should enter N/A.
- **Rules: date of last revision or review**  
Watershed Districts only. The date of the last revision or adoption of district rules (month and year) should be entered in the space on the form. Rules reflect the authority of the district and must be kept relevant to the changing conditions within the district. Organizations other than Watershed Districts should enter N/A.
- **Personnel policy: exists and reviewed/updated within last 5 years**  
A personnel policy includes such procedures as how staff are compensated, hired and dismissed, and also how benefits are provided and used. A written document provides consistency in the board's decisions on staff-related issues. If there are no in-house staff, enter N/A for this standard.

■ **Data practices policy: exists and reviewed/updated within last 5 years**

A data practices policy describes how the organization responds to requests for information submitted under the Minnesota Data Practices Act (MS Chap. 13). Guidance for local governments is available at <http://www.ipad.state.mn.us/docs/accessmain.html>. To check “yes” the organization must have a local policy and have reviewed it (determined that it is up-to-date) or updated it within the past 5 years.

■ **Manager appointments: current and reported**

Watershed Districts only. This standard reports compliance with [MS Chap. 103D.311 Subp. 4](#). BWSR is one of the entities that must be notified of appointments made to the board of managers. Organizations other than Watershed Districts should enter N/A.

■ **Consultant RFP: within 2 years for professional services**

[MS Chap. 103B.227 subd. 5](#) requires biennial solicitations for consultant services. Organizations that check “yes” will have requested interest proposals within the previous two years.

■ **WD/WMO has an adopting resolution assuming WCA responsibilities and appropriate decision delegation resolutions as warranted.** LGU must have an adopting resolution assuming its responsibilities under the WCA. LGU may through resolution, rule or ordinance place decision-making authority with staff. Copies of resolutions, rules and/or ordinances will be reviewed to determine if the LGU has an appropriate adopting resolution and if all decision-making authorities have been formally and properly delegated. (N/A if not WCA LGU)

■ **WD/WMO has a knowledgeable and trained staff member that manages the WCA program and/or has secured a qualified delegate.** WCA rules require an LGU to provide a knowledgeable and trained staff to manage the program or for them to secure a qualified delegate to manage the program on their behalf. BWSR wetland specialists will evaluate the background, training and experience of the LGU’s designated WCA program coordinator to determine if they are qualified to effectively administer the program. (N/A if not WCA LGU)

★ **Administrator on staff**

Watershed Districts only. Record “yes” if the district contracts for or employs a person designated as the district administrator. In general the administrator serves as lead staff to the board of managers and coordinates the overall administrative, project, regulatory, and public involvement operations of the district. Organizations other than Watershed Districts should enter N/A.

★ **Board training: orientation and cont. ed. plan and record for each board member**

Organizations who meet these standards will provide for a mandatory orientation session(s) for new board members. There will also be a training plan, which can be individually tailored, for each board member to enhance skills or technical expertise related to their service to the organization. The organization will also maintain a record of what elements of the plan each board member has completed.

★ **Staff training: orientation and cont. ed. plan and record for each staff member**

Organizations who meet these standards will provide for a mandatory orientation session(s) for new staff members. There will also be a training plan, which can be individually tailored, for each staff person to enhance skills or technical expertise related to their service to the organization. The organization will also maintain a record of what elements of the plan each

staff member has completed. Organizations without in-house staff should enter “N/A” for the staff training item.

- ★ **Operational guidelines for fiscal procedures and conflicts of interest exist and are current**  
Operational guidelines are written procedures and policies that are used to inform and guide the operation of the organization. There is no prescribed format or content for these. However, the Minnesota Office of the State Auditor website <http://www.auditor.state.mn.us/default.aspx?page=pitfalls> has helpful information for local government, including guidelines for fiscal procedures and conflicts of interest. BWSR also has examples of good operating guidelines.
- ★ **Public drainage records: meet modernization guidelines**  
Organizations that serve as the public drainage authority will meet this standard if they have upgraded their drainage system records to meet the Drainage Records Modernization Guidelines. These guidelines are explained at [www.bwsr.state.mn.us/drainage/index.html](http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/drainage/index.html). Organizations that are not the public drainage authority should enter “N/A” for this item.

## Planning

- **Watershed management plan: up-to-date**  
This standard identifies whether the organization is operating under a management plan that is not overdue for revision.
- **City/twp. local water plans not yet approved**  
Record the total number of cities or townships that are overdue for approval by the organization.
- **Capital Improvement Program: reviewed every 2 years**  
A capital improvement program is defined in [MS Chap. 103B.205 Subp. 3](#) and is listed as a required management plan component in [MR 8410.0150 Subp. 3e](#). Organizations that meet this standard will review their capital improvement program at least once every 2 years.
- ★ **Biennial Budget Request submitted on time**  
BWSR encourages watershed organizations contemplating applying for competitive grants to use the Biennial Budget Request (BBR) form and process as a planning tool and means to notify funding sources of planned projects in advance. As BBRs are only submitted biennially, the organizations that meet this high performance standard will have submitted a BBR within the past 24 months.
- ★ **Strategic plan identifies short-term activities & budgets based on state and local watershed priorities**  
Organizations that meet this high performance standard will periodically develop and use a short-term, strategic plan to set priorities for annual budgets and work plans based on the watershed management plan objectives, state agency watershed priorities, and the CIP. State watershed priorities include the schedule for intensive watershed monitoring and watershed restoration and protection strategies.

## Execution

- **Engineer Reports: submitted for DNR & BWSR review**  
 Watershed Districts Only: Record a “yes” if during the last five years all required engineer reports for district projects have been submitted for DNR and BWSR review and comment, as required by [MS Chap. 103D.711 Subd.5](#). Organizations other than Watershed Districts should enter N/A.
- **Total expenditures per year (past 10 years)**  
 This is the organization’s total expenditures from all sources of funds with a dollar amount for each of the last 10 years for which data are complete. These data are one indicator of trends in the level of organization activity. A table is provided at the bottom of the Part 2 checklist to enter these amounts.
- **WCA decisions and determinations made in conformance with all WCA requirements.**  
 WCA requires LGUs to make decisions and determinations in conformance with specific noticing, timeline and other procedural and substantive requirements. BWSR wetland specialists will review a sample of decisions and determinations made by the LGU to determine if WCA rules are being followed. (N/A if not WCA LGU)
- **WCA TEP reviews and recommendations appropriately coordinated.** *WCA rules require that the TEP make findings and recommendations to the LGU in regard to decisions and various technical aspects of rule requirements. The LGU must provide a staff member to serve on the TEP and must coordinate TEP reviews and recommendations to insure that they are technically sound and timely. BWSR wetland specialists will review a sampling of various decisions and associated TEP recommendations to determine if this requirement is met. (N/A if not WCA LGU)*
- **Water quality trends tracked for key water bodies**  
 Organizations that meet this standard will have identified key water bodies in their organization and have an established monitoring program to track the water quality of those water bodies as required by [MR 8410.0060 Subp. 1f](#). The water quality data can be used to set priorities for strategic and annual activity planning and projects.
- **Watershed hydrologic trends monitored / reported**  
 Organizations that meet this high performance standard will regularly measure one or more hydrologic parameters for their watershed or sub-watersheds and report the results. Selected parameters should be indicators of the effectiveness of water retention efforts, changes in impervious surface coverage, and hydrologic connectivity and be used to identify trends in peak flows, runoff volumes, baseflow, and other hydrologic characteristics related to the organization’s watershed management objectives.

## Communication and Coordination

- **Website: contains information as required by [MR 8410.0150 Subp. 3a](#), i.e. board meeting information, contact information, water plan, among others**  
 These basic elements must be available for review on the organization’s website and be updated within a reasonable amount of time after changes to any one element. For website grant reporting requirements, see website.



■ **Functioning advisory committee(s): recommendations on projects, reports; maintains 2-way communication with board**

Organizations have both a citizens' and a technical advisory committee or can combine them into one. To meet this standard the organization's advisory committee(s) meets regularly, submits recommendations and/or comments on organization projects and reports, or other products. There is regular communication between the advisory committee(s) and the board.

■ **Communication piece sent within last 12 months; indicate target audience**

A communication piece can be a newsletter, press release for publication in local newspapers, enclosure with regular local government mailings, etc. that highlight the work and program opportunities of the watershed organization. Content requirements are described in MN Rule [8410.0105 Subp. 4](#). Check "yes" if your County has sent out a communication piece within the last 12 months, and indicate who the primary target audience for the piece was.

★ **Track progress for I & E objectives in Plan**

Organizations that meet this high performance standard will have public information and education objectives in their management plan, and will have developed measures and data that they are tracking to determine their progress in meeting those objectives. Types of outcomes could include changed attitudes and behaviors, increased participation in organization programs, and increased demand for organization assistance with water management projects.

★ **Coordination with County Board and City/Township officials**

Organizations that meet this high performance standard will have regular contact and coordination by their managers or staff with their county commissioners, city and township officials. Coordination activities include giving periodic status reports at county or municipal board meetings, inviting local elected officials or staff to attend board of managers meetings, or establishing a liaison person for regular consultation with local government staff.

★ **Partnerships: cooperative projects/tasks with neighboring organizations, such as counties, soil and water districts, watershed districts and non-governmental organizations**

Organizations that meet this high performance standard will have conducted or coordinated programs and projects with other local government, or non-governmental entities (e.g., local lake association). Programs will include sharing in education, monitoring, planning, and project implementation efforts.