



LOWER MINNESOTA RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT

Executive Summary for Action

Lower Minnesota River Watershed District Board of Managers Meeting
Wednesday, December 20, 2023

Agenda Item

Item 10. B. – MPCA Lower Minnesota River Watershed Surface Water Monitoring Request Guidance

Prepared By

Linda Loomis, Administrator

Summary

Planning has started for the MPCA's next round of Intensive Watershed Monitoring (IWM) for the Lower Minnesota River Watershed that will be used to inform the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Studies and Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy (WRAPS) Updates at a future date. The Lower Minnesota River Watershed will start IWM in approximately May 2025 and continue through approximately October 2026.

As part of the planning process the MPCA will be gathering information on local monitoring needs through a Surface Water Monitoring Request (SWMR) process. The MPCA will also be developing a Project Charter for the watershed to guide the TMDL and WRAPS Update reports. This is where local needs for planning and implementation will be important.

The MPCA plans to hold a meeting to describe the Surface Water Monitoring Request process, demonstrate how to use the ArcGIS Online tool for site requests, and to discuss preliminary site selection for IWM.

October 31, 2023, at the kick-off meeting for this project, the MPCA stated that funding for surface water quality monitoring would be available to local government units. Subcontracting to conduct monitoring is acceptable. President Barisonzi has suggested that the LMRWD apply for a grant. MPCA's Surface Water Quality Grant fact sheet is attached for the Board's discussion.

Attachments

Cycle II Condition Monitoring through SWAG fact sheet

Recommended Action

No action recommended

Cycle II Condition Monitoring through SWAG

Surface Water Assessment Grants

The SWAG program provides funding for surface water quality monitoring for two years at designated lakes and streams. Monitoring tasks and objectives fall under Cycle II of the Intensive Watershed Monitoring (IWM) approach. Joint Powers Agreements are executed non-competitively and are typically awarded to a local government unit. Subcontracting is encouraged if multiple groups are interested or where local capacity is a concern and collaboration with a nonprofit, for profit, or educational institution is an option. Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) will monitor core locations not selected by local partners. If State and Local Need (SLN) locations are not contracted through SWAG the MPCA may monitor if resources are available.

What will the agreement fund?

Eligible expenses include:

- Staff (including allowable indirect expenses)
- Per diem (if traveling further than 35 miles from home office)
- Monitoring equipment and supplies – this includes repairs or replacement of probes on existing equipment, if necessary for sampling. MPCA has a limited supply of meters for loan.
- Laboratory analysis
 - Minnesota Department of Health accreditation required
 - Electronic data submission through LAB_MN format is required
 - [MPCA Sampling and Laboratory Analysis Services](#) rates are applicable
- Shipping/courier costs
- Vehicle mileage (IRS rate)
- Boat rental reimbursement (lakes only).

Additional information on eligible/ineligible expenses are available online. Visit the MPCA at <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/swag/supported-activities-and-expenses>.

What work is required?

Tasks and objectives include preparing for and sampling lake and/or stream sites, data management (lab/field data, stream photos, calibration logs, and data review), and project management (interim and final reports, budget management and invoicing). In person training is offered for both sampling and administrative tasks. Standard Operating procedures are available at <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/swag/guidance>.

How is the contract executed?

The SWAG Program Coordinator will work with you to develop your work plan and cost proposals. A draft work plan, budget template, complete monitoring and parameter schedule will be provided. March 1 is the targeted contract start date.

What does the schedule look like?

Final schedules vary based on sites selected and MPCA/Local needs.

Example Stream sampling schedule

Core Year One	May		June			July			August			September	
	Early	Late	Early	Mid	Late	Early	Mid	Late	Early	Mid	Late	Early	Late
TSS	X		X			X			X			X	
TP	X		X			X			X			X	
Chloride	X												
Hardness as CaCO3	X												
E coli			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Secchi tube	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Specific Conductance	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Temperature	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
pH	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
DO	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Upstream Photo	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Rec Suitability, appearance, stage	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	

Core Year Two	May		June			July			August			September	
	Early	Late	Early	Mid	Late	Early	Mid	Late	Early	Mid	Late	Early	Late
TSS	X		X			X			X			X	
TP	X		X			X			X			X	
Chloride	X												
Hardness as CaCO3	X												
E coli			X		X	X		X	X		X		
Secchi tube	X		X		X	X		X	X		X	X	
Specific Conductance	X		X		X	X		X	X		X	X	
Temperature	X		X		X	X		X	X		X	X	
pH	X		X		X	X		X	X		X	X	
DO	X		X		X	X		X	X		X	X	
Upstream Photo	X		X		X	X		X	X		X	X	
Rec Suitability, appearance, stage	X		X		X	X		X	X		X	X	

Example Lake sampling schedule

Lakes Year One	May	June	July	August	September
TP	X	X	X	X	X
Chl-A	X	X	X	X	X
Chloride				X	
Hardness as CaCO3				X	
Secchi Disk	X	X	X	X	X
Specific Conductance	X	X	X	X	X
Temperature	X	X	X	X	X
pH	X	X	X	X	X
DO	X	X	X	X	X
Rec Suitability, Appearance	X	X	X	X	X

Lakes Year Two	May	June	July	August	September
TP	X	X	X	X	X
Chl-A	X	X	X	X	X
Secchi Disk	X	X	X	X	X
Specific Conductance	X	X	X	X	X
Temperature	X	X	X	X	X
pH	X	X	X	X	X
DO	X	X	X	X	X
Rec Suitability, Appearance	X	X	X	X	X

Where can I find additional information?

Program information is available at <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/water/surface-water-assessment-grants>.

Program Coordinator, Kelly O'Hara, can be reached at 651-757-2226 or 1-800-657-3864 or via email at kelly.ohara@state.mn.us.