



Watershed-based Assessment

Redeye River Partnership

Local Government Unit Partnership Review

Final Report

October 2025

Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources

520 Lafayette Road North

St. Paul, MN 55155

651-296-0768

www.bwsr.state.mn.us

This page was intentionally left blank.

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Watershed Based Report Summary..... | 1 |
| Introduction | 2 |
| Executive Summary | 3 |
| Findings | 5 |
| Findings Part 1: Planning | 5 |
| Findings Part 2: Performance Standards | 13 |
| Findings Part 3: Internal and External Surveys | 14 |
| Internal Surveys: Summary of Self-Assessments by Policy Committee Members | 14 |
| Internal Surveys: Summary of Self-Assessments by Planning Work Group Members | 15 |
| External Surveys: Advisory Committee Members (Agency Partners and Local Stakeholders) | 18 |
| Findings Part 4: Assurance Measures/Watershed-based Implementation Funding | 19 |
| General Conclusions..... | 21 |
| Commendations | 21 |
| Action Items | 21 |
| Partnership Recommendations..... | 21 |
| LGU Comments and BWSR Responses..... | 23 |
| Appendix A. Performance Standards | 24 |
| Appendix B. Assurance Measures Documentation | 26 |
| | 26 |
| Appendix C. Comment Letter..... | 33 |
| Appendix D. Program Data | 34 |

DRAFT

This report has been prepared for the **Redeye River Partnership** by the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) in partial fulfillment of the requirements of Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 103B.102, Subd.3.

Prepared by Don Bajumpaa (don.bajumpaa@state.mn.us; 651-600-8390).

BWSR is reducing printing and mailing costs by using the Internet to distribute reports and information to wider audiences. This report is available in alternative formats upon request.

Watershed Based Report Summary

Redeye River Partnership

What is a PRAP Performance Review?

The Board of Water and Soil Resources supports Minnesota's counties, watershed districts, and soil and water conservation districts that deliver water and related land resource management projects and programs. In 2007, the Board established a program (PRAP) to systematically review the performance of these local units of government to ensure their effective operation. Each year BWSR staff conduct routine reviews of several of these local conservation delivery entities. This document reports the results of one of those reviews.

Key Findings and Conclusions

The Redeye River Water Planning Partnership is commended for their work in implementing actions identified within their Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan. Below is a summary of findings of the PRAP Performance Review.

Resource Outcomes

The Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan contains a total of 43 short-term goals. The partnership is commended for meeting or exceeding several plan goals.

In addition to the goals the plan identifies 79 activities. The partnership is commended for having 8 (10.1%) activities *completed* and 58 activities (73.4%) *in progress*. *No information* was provided to make a decision for 13 actions (16.5%).

Basic Requirements:

- Redeye River Water Planning Partnership reports achievement of 16 of 16 basic requirements.

Action Items (required to address within 18 months):

- **There are no required actions.**

Best Standard/Practice:

- Redeye River Water Planning Partnership reports achievement of 10 of 11 best performance standards/practices.

Commendations

- Redeye River Water Planning Partnership is commended for meeting 7 of 8 high-performance standards.

Partnership Recommendations

Recommendation (Communication): Continue to maintain a high level of communication

Recommendation (Training): The partnership is encouraged to provide training opportunities to the policy committee on watershed related topics.

Recommendation (Annual Workplan): The partnership is encouraged to develop an annual workplan that extends beyond WBIF workplans.

Introduction

This is an informational document prepared by the staff of the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) for the Redeye River Water Planning Partnership. It reports the results of a routine performance review of watershed partnerships/organizations' implementation of their Comprehensive Watershed Management Plans, and overall effectiveness in delivery of conservation projects and programs.

The findings and recommendations are intended to give local government units (LGUs) constructive feedback they can use to enhance their joint and individual delivery of conservation services.

For this review, BWSR has analyzed the Redeye River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan, the Partnership's achievement of basic requirements, best standards/practices, and high-performance standards, and surveyed members of the Policy Committee, Planning Work Group, and Advisory Committee.

This routine performance review is neither a financial audit nor an investigation and it does not replace or supersede other types of governmental review of local government unit operations.

While the performance review reported herein has been conducted under the authority granted to BWSR by Minnesota Statutes Chapter 103B.102, this is a staff report and has not been reviewed or approved by the BWSR board members.

What is PRAP?

PRAP is an acronym for BWSR's Performance Review and Assistance Program. Authorized by the 2007 Minnesota legislature, the purpose of PRAP is to support local delivery of conservation and water management by periodically reviewing and assessing the performance of local units of government that deliver those services. These include soil and water conservation districts, watershed districts, watershed management organizations, and the local water management functions of counties.

The PRAP program includes an Annual Statewide Summary, and three types of assessments. Depending on the program mandates and needs of the local government unit, review types include both routine and specialized. The Annual Statewide Summary annually tabulates all local governmental units' compliance with basic planning and reporting requirements.

Organizational Assessments, conducted by BWSR once every ten years for each local government unit, evaluate operational effectiveness, partner relationships, and whether the LGU has achieved county water plan, watershed management plan, and/or SWCD comprehensive plan implementation goals. This assessment also evaluates compliance with performance standards, and the Wetland Conservation Act, where applicable.

Watershed-based Assessments are routine reviews conducted with partnerships of local governments working together to implement Comprehensive Watershed Management Plans (CWMPs) developed through the One Watershed One Plan Program. This review evaluates progress on plan implementation and analyzes partners working relationships.

Special Assessments are conducted with LGUs experiencing significant obstacles or performance deficiencies and may include BWSR Board action to assign penalties as authorized by statute.

More details can be found on the BWSR PRAP webpage.

Executive Summary

Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) staff met with the Redeye River Water Planning Partnership to discuss an evaluation of the water management functions of the partnership that is actively implementing the Redeye River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan. The findings in this document represent the data collected and the recommendations are a result of the observations and conclusions made based on that data. There are four distinct parts of a Watershed Based Assessment conducted via the BWSR Performance Review and Assistance Program (PRAP) as authorized by M.S. 103B.102.

- Part 1: Evaluation of the progress made by water management entities toward goals stated in their approved and adopted local management or comprehensive plans.
- Part 2: Review of the entities' adherence to basic requirements, best standards and practices, and high-performance standards as directed by statutes, policies, and guidelines via a performance standards certification checklist.
- Part 3: Policy Committee, Planning Work Group, and Advisory Committee surveys to assess internal and external perceptions of performance, communication, partnerships, and delivery of conservation programs and customer service.
- Part 4: Review of the Assurance Measures, completed as part of the Watershed-based Implementation Funding (WBIF) policy.

After thorough review of the data, a list of actions and recommendations were developed to help guide the water management partnership in their continued growth of program delivery. This is done to ensure the partnership continues to work towards effective implementation of conservation practices. A list of commendations was also developed for the great work the partnership does in delivering conservation. Each of the above listed parts of the review are described in the findings section of this document, and the completed documents can be found in the notated appendices for further review. This report will be summarized in conjunction with other PRAP Assessments collected in 2025 to be used as the official BWSR PRAP report delivered to the legislature as part of our reporting requirement under M.S. 103B.102.

Key Findings and Conclusions

The Redeye River Water Planning Partnership is commended for their work in implementing activities identified within their Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan and for exceeding several of the plan goals. The watershed partnership is successfully carrying out its watershed management plan by continuously tracking progress, reviewing results, evaluating actions, and sharing information.

The Partnership is commended for meeting 10 of 11 applicable best standards/practices, and for meeting 7 of 8 high performance standards.

Summary of Partnership Recommendations

Based on an analysis of the information and data collected during this review, BWSR staff developed a few recommendations for the Partnership. BWSR relies heavily on our relationships with staff as well as the input of partners, staff, and board members to make sure recommendations provided are relevant, timely, and helpful for the partnership to implement and improve their operations. The full text of the recommendations can be found in the conclusions section, page 21.

Recommendation (Communication): Continue to maintain a high level of communication.

Recommendation (Training): The partnership is encouraged to provide training opportunities to the policy committee on watershed related topics.

Recommendation (Annual Workplan): The partnership is encouraged to develop an annual workplan that extends beyond WBIF workplans.

DRAFT

Findings

This section describes what BWSR learned about the performance of the Redeye River Water Planning Partnership via the various collection methods as outlined below.

Findings Part 1: Planning

This section describes the Redeye River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan, the planned actions or activities within the plan, and accomplishments made by the local water management entities.

The plan was developed to meet the requirements of the One Watershed One Plan (1W1P) program which is described under Minnesota Statutes 103B.801. This program supports local governments in developing prioritized, targeted, and measurable implementation plans at the major watershed scale.

The entities participating in the planning and implementation of the plan are working through a Memorandum of Understanding between Otter Tail County, Todd County, Wadena County, Becker SWCD, East Otter Tail SWCD, Todd SWCD, and Wadena SWCD.

For planning purposes, the Redeye River Watershed plan identified four planning regions. These areas include Redeye, Wing, Middle Leaf, and Upper Leaf. See map inset.

Planning Regions



Redeye

The Redeye Planning region includes the Redeye River and tributaries and City of Sebeka.



Wing

The Wing Planning Region includes the Wing River, the Lower Leaf River, and the watershed pour point. Cities include Parkers Prairie, Hewitt, and Verndale.



Middle Leaf

The Middle Leaf Planning Region includes Bluff Creek and the middle portion of the Leaf River. Cities include New York Mills, Bluffton, and Wadena.



Upper Leaf

The Upper Leaf Planning Region includes the Leaf Lake Chain and the headwaters of the Leaf River. Cities include Henning and Deer Creek.

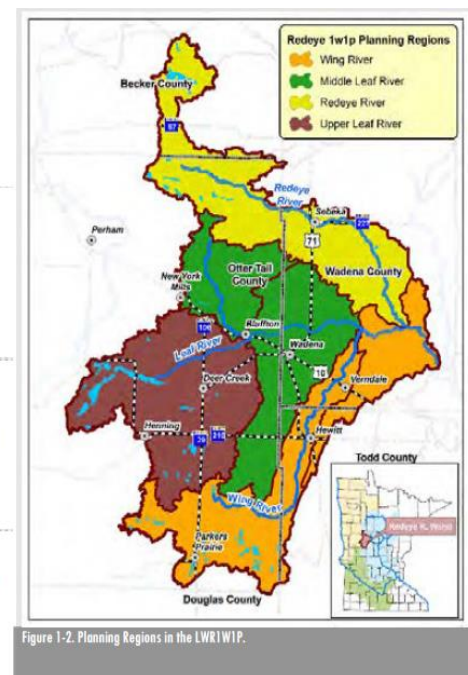


Figure 1-2. Planning Regions in the LWR1W1P.

In addition, the plan identifies four priority resource categories. These include groundwater, surface water, habitat, and land stewardship.

In addition, the plan identifies 11 priority issues. These issues are prioritized as high, medium, or low for each planning regions. This approach promotes targeted implementation ensuring staff time and funding are directed to the planning regions that need them most.

As part of this review, the partnership provided a series of tables that summarize the current progress made toward plan goals. Each goal table is accompanied by an *Action or Activities* table to document whether the action or activity is completed, not started, in-progress, or if *no information* is available to decide. Planning staff are encouraged to use these tables to continue to evaluate actions and identify next steps as they reflect on future strategies related to implementation.

The following goal and action tables were provided by the partnership.

| Goal Statement (Land Management): Promote and increase known land management, including soil health practices, sustainable grazing practices and forest management by 20% in first priority acres identified per planning regions. | | | |
|---|------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Measurable Outcomes (Short term/plan goals) | | | |
| Metric | Short-term Goal | Total Progress (all actions) | Percent Progress Toward Goal |
| Redeye (acres) | 3,459 | 4,747.3 | 137% |
| Middle Leaf (acres) | 3,998 | 2,475.6 | 62% |
| Upper Leaf (acres) | 7,146 | 2,464.2 | 35% |
| Wing (acres) | 6,846 | 5,821.2 | 85% |

| Objective/Strategy: Land Management Implementation Schedule | | | | | |
|---|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|--|
| Planned Actions or Activities | Completed | Not started | In-progress | No Information | Next Steps |
| Design and maintain a method to inventory current practices and track new practices. <i>Complete tracking system</i> | x | | | | Houston Engineering designed a tracking spreadsheet to inventory implemented practices that support watershed goals. |
| Provide technical assistance for land management programs (crops, pasture, and forest). <i>Minimum of 1 FTE</i> | | | x | | Staff continue to provide technical assistance for land management programs. |
| Develop a media campaign about land management options. <i>1 complete media campaign strategy</i> | x | | | | Sent postcards to landowners in the Redeye River planning region on Land Management options. Still working on additional media campaign on land management. |
| Hold an annual land use coordination meeting to update on any ordinance changes. <i>Annual meeting</i> | | | x | | MACPZA discussions at quarterly meeting with counties. |
| Update comprehensive plan and consider county-wide zoning. <i>Plan adopted</i> | | | x | | Wadena County is considering an update of the comprehensive plan. Todd County is in-process of updating comprehensive plan (completed in 2026) |
| Provide financial assistance for writing and assisting in rotational grazing plans. <i>2 systems/year</i> | | | x | | SWCDs and NRCS are providing assistance. |
| Establish a managed pasture program (similar to an SFIA model). <i>5% of priority pasture acres (table 5-1)</i> | | | x | | USFW and working land easement program. BWSR working land easement program. |
| Implement soil health practices such as cover crops, reduced tillage, etc. <i>1,000 acres/yr; 40 parcels/year</i> | | | x | | |
| Connect members of the public and lake associations with farmers to build relationships. <i>Annual Breakfast on the farm and farm demonstration</i> | x | | | | Invitation and news release are sent to the OTCCOLA about breakfast on the farm. |
| Develop individual farm plans that are resource driven and incorporate long-term management practices. <i>2 plans per year</i> | | | x | | |
| Facilitate and foster a peer-to-peer learning exchange and crop advisory teams. <i>1 complete media strategy</i> | | | x | | Staff coordinate Café Talks with producers annually to discuss soil health practices. |
| Provide education and outreach to co-ops and producers to build trust and increase coordination. <i>1 meeting/year</i> | | | x | | Annual Irrigation Clinic. |
| Implement the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) <i>maintain current acres (22,000 acres in 2019)</i> | | | x | | USDA program. |
| Increase the number of farms and acres with Minnesota Ag Water Quality Certification Program. <i>2 farms per year</i> | | | x | | In 2022, three producers with a total of 433 acres. In 2023, four producers with a total of 1,658 acres. In 2024, six producers with a total of 3,205 acres. All have been MN Ag Water Quality Certified in the watershed. |
| Support and encourage the development of local markets for alternative crops (barley, hemp, hops). <i>Complete market analysis</i> | | | | x | |
| Conduct university research locally and promote more research in the watershed <i>at least 1 local research plot</i> | | | | x | |

| | | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|---|---|
| Continue the SWCD tree sale. <i>Continue local program</i> | | | x | | |
| Develop forest stewardship plans. 20% of 1 st priority forest acres (table 5-1). Pace 400 acres/yr; 3 plans/yr | | | x | | 1st Priority Wing River Planning Region: In 2022, completed four FSP on 437 acres. In 2023, completed one FSP and one SFIA on 422 acres. In 2024, completed three FSP on 982 acres. |
| Integrate forest health, water quality, and habitat benefits into Forest Stewardship Plan format. <i>Revised forest stewardship plan format</i> | | | x | | Follow format from DNR and BWSR publication titled "Private Forests. Pristine Waters". |
| Implement urban best management practices (rain gardens, salt BMPs, stormwater management outlets, urban tree planting). 200 acres | | | | x | Continue to promote practices and work with landowners as projects come in. |

Goal Statement (Nitrogen Management) Implement nutrient management practices on 12% of first priority acres with high nitrogen infiltration risk to maintain nitrates in public and private wells below the state standard of 10 mg/L.

| Measurable Outcomes (Short term/plan goals) | | | |
|---|-----------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Metric | Short-term Goal | Total Progress (all actions) | Percent Progress Toward Goal |
| Redeye (acres) | 283 | 3,018 | 1,066% |
| Middle Leaf (acres) | 1,816 | 1,892 | 104% |
| Upper Leaf (acres) | 1,888 | 2,233 | 118% |
| Wing (acres) | 5,389 | 4,027 | 75% |

Objective/Strategy: Nitrogen Management Implementation Schedule

| Planned Actions or Activities | Completed | Not started | In-Progress | No Information | Next Steps |
|--|-----------|-------------|-------------|----------------|--|
| Continue screening of wells and nitrate testing clinics. 1 clinic/year; MDA central sands nitrate testing | | | x | | |
| Provide financial assistance to implement nutrient management plans. 1,000 acres/year; 10 landowners/year | | | x | | In 2024, between the SWCD and NRCS twelve landowners received financial assistance on 3,374 acres. |
| Provide financial assistance to implement irrigation water management. 1,000 acres/year; 10 landowners/year | | | x | | Irrigation Scheduler Program and IMA Tool. |
| Provide financial assistance for precision agriculture practices. Add 2 more producers/year | x | | x | | Precision irrigation through RCPP and EQIP programs. |
| Implement the nutrient management initiative (NMI) program. Add 2 more producers/year | | | x | | In 2022, had 10 producers, in 2023, had 5 producers, in 2024, had 4 producers. |
| Develop a media campaign and conduct workshops with farmers and lawn care businesses about fertilizer application. 1 workshop/year; 1 complete media campaign | | | x | | Workshops/events provide information on fertilizer application to farmers. |
| Increase staff knowledge and expertise with new technologies such as precision fertilization application. Maintain job approval authority for at least one technical staff | | | x | | |
| Purchase equipment and materials for nitrate screening. Purchase one additional Hach meter and/or supplies | x | | | | |

Goal Statement (Drinking Water Protection) Protect groundwater by sealing 30 unsealed wells, protecting DWSMAs, and addressing emerging contaminants.

| Measurable Outcomes (Short term/plan goals) | | | |
|---|-----------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Metric | Short-term Goal | Total Progress (all actions) | Percent Progress Toward Goal |
| Redeye (# wells) | 5 | 0 | 0% |
| Middle Leaf (# wells) | 5 | 1 | 20% |
| Upper Leaf (# wells) | 5 | 0 | 0% |
| Wing (# wells) | 15 | 0 | 0% |

| Objective/Strategy: Drinking Water Protection Implementation Schedule | | | | | |
|---|-----------|-------------|-------------|----------------|--|
| Planned Actions or Activities | Completed | Not Started | In-Progress | No Information | Next Steps |
| Continue to provide cost share to seal private unused wells. <i>DWSMAs and areas with shallow aquifer</i> | | | x | | |
| Develop a media campaign to reach private drinking well owners on wellhead protection including arsenic and any emerging contaminants. <i>1 complete media strategy</i> | | | x | | Sent postcards to landowners in high nitrate areas to promote our well sealing cost-share program. |
| Continue household hazardous waste program. <i>Continue local program</i> | | | x | | All Counties have household hazardous waste program that are ongoing. |
| Participate in wellhead protection teams. <i>5 meetings</i> | | | x | | |
| Continue low interest loan and grants program for upgrading Subsurface Sewage Treatment Systems. <i>2/year</i> | | | x | | All Counties have MDA Ag BMP Loan Program. |
| Implement land use change in the DWSMA to minimize drinking water contamination. <i>Included in goal 2</i> | | | x | | City and MDA. |
| Consider point of sale SSTS compliance in Becker County. <i>Discussion with county board</i> | | | | x | |

Goal Statement (Bacteria Reduction) Develop and implement 20 bacteria management practices to address sources of bacteria and make progress toward delisting impairments.

| Measurable Outcomes (Short term/plan goals) | | | |
|---|--------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Metric | Short-term Goal | Total Progress (all actions) | Percent Progress Toward Goal |
| Redeye (# projects) | 10 | 10 | 100% |
| Middle Leaf (# projects) | 5 | 5 | 100% |
| Upper Leaf (# projects) | 0 - No impairments | 3 | |
| Wing (# projects) | 5 | 3 | 60% |

| Objective/Strategy: Drinking Water Protection Implementation Schedule | | | | | |
|---|-----------|-------------|-------------|----------------|--|
| Planned Actions or Activities | Completed | Not Started | In-Progress | No Information | Next Steps |
| Enforce ordinances related to Subsurface Sewage Treatment Systems (SSTS). <i>Continue local program</i> | | | x | | All Counties administer and enforce a SSTS program. |
| Enforce ordinances and rules related to feedlot compliance. <i>Continue local program</i> | | | x | | MPCA and Counties continue to administer feedlot programs. |
| Implement manure management BMPs and waste systems in priority feedlots. <i>2 projects</i> | | | x | | Two priority feedlot and manure management BMPs projects were completed in the watershed |
| Conduct feedlot windshield surveys in Otter Tail and Becker counties. <i>2 completed surveys</i> | | | x | | Otter Tail County and Wadena SWCD completed surveys. |
| Implement prescribed grazing, cattle fencing, and watering facilities. <i>10 projects</i> | | | x | | |
| Enhance riparian buffers near impaired streams "beyond buffer law". <i>7 projects</i> | | | x | | |
| Close inactive or failing manure pits. <i>1 project</i> | x | | | | |
| Conduct DNR source testing in WRAPS cycle 2. <i>3 sites</i> | x | | | | Continue to monitor <u>E.Coli</u> . |

Goal Statement (Phosphorus Reduction) Reduce phosphorus loading to lakes with declining water quality trends by 5% through implementing BMPs within the lakeshed.

| Measurable Outcomes (Short term/plan goals) | | | |
|---|-----------------|---|------------------------------|
| Metric | Short-term Goal | Total Progress (all actions) | Percent Progress Toward Goal |
| Wolf Lake (monitor) | monitor | | |
| West Leaf Lake (lbs. reduction) | 53 | TP Reduction obtained from BMPs installed 0.0 <u>lbs</u> (TP reduction need 10.4 <u>lbs</u>). | 0% |
| Middle Leaf Lake (lbs. reduction) | 90 | TP reduction obtained from BMPs installed 2.6 <u>lbs</u> (TP reduction needed 34.9 <u>lbs</u>) | 7% |

Objective/Strategy: Phosphorus Reduction Implementation Schedule

| Planned Actions or Activities | Completed | Not Started | In-Progress | No Information | Next Steps |
|--|-----------|-------------|-------------|----------------|---|
| Continue to enforce shoreland ordinances. <i>Continue local program</i> | | | x | | |
| Install near shore stormwater infiltration BMPs on developed lots (rain gardens, etc). <i>5 projects</i> | x | | | | |
| Develop a media campaign for outreach to lakeshore owners about good land management choices and BMP options. <i>1 complete media campaign strategy</i> | | | x | | Sent postcards to landowners on Middle Leaf Lake to promote shoreline restoration projects. |
| Implement agricultural land management practices in the Leaf Lake Chain lakeshed. <i>53 & 90 lbs annual phosphorus reduction</i> | | | x | | |
| Complete Score Your Shore on lakes and use as an outreach tool for shoreline restoration projects. <i>Score your Shore completed for 25% of parcels</i> | | | | x | |
| Continue long-term water quality monitoring on Leaf Lake Chain and begin on Wolf Lake (phosphorus, chlorophyll a, transparency). <i>10-year trend analysis</i> | | | x | | Lake Associations monitor water quality. |

Goal Statement (Land Protection) Increase protection of forest cover, water quality, habitat, and surficial sand aquifers by 10% in priority minor watersheds based on the protection goals from the Redeye Landscape Stewardship Plan.

| Measurable Outcomes (Short term/plan goals) | | | |
|---|-----------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Metric | Short-term Goal | Total Progress (all actions) | Percent Progress Toward Goal |
| Redeye (acres) | 1,095 | 1,972.5 | 180% |
| Middle Leaf (acres) | 0 | 953 | >100% |
| Upper Leaf (acres) | 553 | 464 | 84% |
| Wing (acres) | 1,062 | 1,928 | 181% |

Objective/Strategy: Land Protection Implementation Schedule

| Planned Actions or Activities | Completed | Not Completed | In-Progress | No Information | Next Steps |
|---|-----------|---------------|-------------|----------------|---|
| Maintain 100% compliance with the Minnesota Buffer Law through monitoring, education, and buffer installation. <i>100% compliance</i> | | | x | | SWCD monitors 1/3 of the County every year. |
| Develop a media campaign for private landowners about land protection programs. <i>1 complete media strategy</i> | x | | | | LCCMR Forestry Pilot Mailings. |
| Permanently protect undeveloped land with conservation easements or acquisition. <i>200 acres</i> | | | | x | |
| Sustainable Forest Incentive Act (SFIA) to encourage private landowners to keep their wooded areas undeveloped. <i>1,510 acres; 30 landowners</i> | | | | x | SFIA numbers, continue to promote |
| Protect wild rice stands by protecting land in the minor watersheds of wild rice designated lakes. <i>10% of nearshore habitat within targeted lake-sheds</i> | | | | x | Continuing to promote RIM easements around these areas. |
| Implement land retirement program (CREP, RIM). <i>1,000 acres</i> | | | | x | Currently, a total of 205 acres are enrolled in CREP and RIM program. |

Goal Statement (Wetland Protection) Maintain current coverage of wetlands within watershed and increase awareness of wetland protections.

| Measurable Outcomes (Short term/plan goals) | | | |
|---|-----------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Metric | Short-term Goal | Total Progress (all actions) | Percent Progress Toward Goal |
| Redeye (acres) | Maintain | Maintain | 100% |
| Middle Leaf (acres) | Maintain | Maintain | 100% |
| Upper Leaf (acres) | Maintain | Maintain | 100% |
| Wing (acres) | Maintain | Maintain | 100% |

Objective/Strategy: Wetland Protection Implementation Schedule

| Planned Actions or Activities | Completed | Not Started | In-Progress | No Information | Next Steps |
|---|-----------|-------------|-------------|----------------|--|
| Enforce the Wetland Conservation Act (WCA). <i>Continue local program</i> | | | x | | |
| Work with landowners on wetland restoration projects through site visits, project reviews, permit applications, and agency coordination. <i>Maintain current wetland coverage</i> | | | x | | |
| Develop a media campaign for outreach to realtors (brochures, workshops, training credits). <i>1 complete media campaign strategy</i> | | | x | | Todd County completed a workshop to provide information to local realtors. EOT and Wadena SWCDs are having conversations on media campaigns. |

Goal Statement (Groundwater Sustainability) Increase understanding of groundwater usage and recharge and continue current conservation programs to be able to maintain an aquifer that is sustainable for natural, economic, and human consumption uses.

| Measurable Outcomes (Short term/plan goals) | | | |
|---|-------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Metric | Short-term Goal | Total Progress (all actions) | Percent Progress Toward Goal |
| Redeye (recharge priority) | complete geologic atlas | complete geologic atlas | 100% |
| Middle Leaf (water conservation priority) | complete geologic atlas | complete geologic atlas | 100% |
| Upper Leaf (recharge priority) | complete geologic atlas | complete geologic atlas | 100% |
| Wing (water conservation priority) | complete geologic atlas | complete geologic atlas | 100% |

Objective/Strategy: Groundwater Sustainability Implementation Schedule

| Planned Actions or Activities | Completed | Not Started | In-Progress | No Information | Next Steps |
|--|-----------|-------------|-------------|----------------|--|
| Develop a media campaign for outreach and host irrigation workshops. <i>1 workshop/year; 1 complete media campaign strategy</i> | | | x | | Coordinate Irrigation Clinic annually. |
| Provide financial assistance to implement irrigation water management. <i>(Redeye) 293 acres; (U. Leaf) 1,888 acres; (M. Leaf) 1,816 acres; (Wing) 5,389 acres</i> | | | x | | |
| Increase the number of people participating in rain gage networks. <i>5 more participants</i> | | | | x | |
| Develop a media campaign for outreach to homeowners and cities for water conservation practices. <i>1 complete media campaign strategy</i> | | | | x | |
| Provide financial assistance to install precision irrigation technology. <i>5 units</i> | | | x | | |
| Create or obtain a watershed-wide database for water level monitoring (cities, observation wells, others). <i>Complete geologic atlas</i> | | | x | | Monitoring conducted by DNR. |
| Complete the Geologic Atlas for the full watershed and utilize the contents. <i>Complete geologic atlas</i> | | | x | | Geologic Atlas is done for all Counties. Otter Tail County is waiting for part B (in-process). |
| Complete a study to better understand sustainable withdrawal from aquifer. <i>Complete study</i> | | | | x | |

Goal Statement (Riparian Habitat Enhancement) Enhance 1.2 miles of riparian vegetation on streams and lakes with more than 40% disturbed area, biological impairments, and/or a declining water quality trend through outreach to private citizens.

| Measurable Outcomes (Short term/plan goals) | | | |
|---|-----------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Metric | Short-term Goal | Total Progress (all actions) | Percent Progress Toward Goal |
| Redeye (miles) | 0 | 0 | n/a |
| Middle Leaf (miles) | 0.7 | 0.75 | 107% |
| Wing (miles) | 0 | 0 | n/a |
| Upper Leaf (miles) | 0.5 | 0 | 0% |

Objective/Strategy: Riparian Habitat Enhancement Implementation Schedule

| Planned Actions or Activities | Completed | Not Started | In-Progress | No Information | Next Steps |
|---|-----------|-------------|-------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| Install riparian buffers and expand the size, diversity, and coverage of buffers to enhance pollinator and wildlife habitat and water quality along Union Creek and West Leaf Lake. <i>1.2 miles enhanced</i> | | | x | | |
| Install riparian buffers and expand the size, diversity, and coverage of buffers to enhance pollinator and wildlife habitat and water quality. <i>10% of total (table 5-3)</i> | | | x | | |
| Use land retirement programs to develop habitat corridors/larger blocks. <i>10% of total (table 5-3)</i> | | | x | | CRP and RIM programs. |

Goal Statement (Aquatic Habitat Enhancement) Enhance aquatic habitat connectivity by fixing 3 culverts that are affecting resource condition and modifying Hewitt Dam to allow for fish passage.

| Measurable Outcomes (Short term/plan goals) | | | |
|---|-----------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Metric | Short-term Goal | Total Progress (all actions) | Percent Progress Toward Goal |
| Redeye (# culverts) | 0 | 0 | n/a |
| Middle Leaf (# culverts) | 2 | 0 | 0% |
| Wing (# culverts) | 0 | 0 | n/a |
| Upper Leaf (# culverts) | 1 | 0 | 0% |

Objective/Strategy: Aquatic Habitat Enhancement Implementation Schedule

| Planned Actions or Activities | Completed | Not Started | In-Progress | No Information | Next Steps |
|--|-----------|-------------|-------------|----------------|--|
| Conduct a culvert inventory in Otter Tail, Becker, and Todd Counties (Wadena is completed for county roads). <i>Complete inventories</i> | | | x | | |
| Work with townships to correctly install culverts and restore poor and fair road crossings and culverts. <i>Replace 3 culverts</i> | | | x | | |
| Remove beaver dams that are acting like a fish barrier or causing local flooding. <i>Remove dams prohibiting fish passage</i> | | | | x | |
| Modify the Hewitt Dam to construct fish passage. <i>complete dam modification</i> | | | x | | Todd SWCD received a grant from DNR and is plan development (scheduled to be completed in 2027). |
| Restore degraded sections of stream impacted by ditching with goal of improving natural channel flow. <i>1 project</i> | | | x | | Todd SWCD and Stowe Prairie Township are in planning development. |

Goal Statement (Water Retention) Maintain the current average discharge relative to climate norms of 368,196 acre-feet at the pour point of the watershed.

| Measurable Outcomes (Short term/plan goals) | | | |
|---|-----------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Metric | Short-term Goal | Total Progress (all actions) | Percent Progress Toward Goal |
| Redeye (acre-feet) | 265 | 98.5 acre-feet | 37.2% |
| Middle Leaf (acre-feet) | 627 | 51.5 acre-feet | 8.2% |
| Wing (acre-feet) | 3,020 | 359.6 acre-feet | 11.9% |
| Upper Leaf (acre-feet) | 984 | 119.7 acre-feet | 12.2% |

Objective/Strategy: Water Retention Implementation Schedule

| Planned Actions/Activities | Completed | Not Started | In-Progress | No Information | Next Steps |
|--|-----------|-------------|-------------|----------------|--|
| Quantify storage from soil health (Goal 2). 3,020-acre feet | | | x | | Water Storage Calculator provided by BWSR. |
| Maintain and enhance forests in the watershed, especially in areas of high groundwater recharge (Goals 2, 6). Goals 2, 6 | | | x | | |
| Maintain current wetland cover to maintain storage in the watershed (Goal 7). Goal 7 | | | x | | |
| Maintain and enhance stream, ditch, and lakeshore buffers to minimize erosion during storm events (Goal 9). Goal 9 | | | x | | County Ditch Systems. |
| Keep water local to maintain local aquifer (Goal 8). Goal 8 | | | x | | |

In summary, the partnership is commended for meeting or exceeding many goals and for having 8 (10.1%) activities *completed* and 58 activities (73.4%) *in progress*. *No information* was provided to make a decision for 13 actions (16.5%).

The success in implementing the plan and in meeting plan goals can be attributed to the partnership continually tracking progress, reviewing results, evaluating actions, and sharing information. The partnership is encouraged to continue to use these principles into the future.

Findings Part 2: Performance Standards

BWSR has developed a set of performance standards that describe basic requirements, best standards/practices and high-performance standards related to the overall operation and function of an organization. The standards are different depending on the type of organization or LGU. The watershed-based performance standards address five specific performance areas of operation and groupings: 1) General Administration; 2) Policy Committee; 3) Advisory Committee; 4) Steering Committee; and 5) Communication and Coordination.

The basic requirements are items that are either statutorily required or required via policy. In these instances, if items are not completed, action items will be developed for the partnership to gain compliance. *There are no action items required by the partnership.*

The best standards/practices are those items that would be in the best interest of the partnership to complete. The partnership reports achievement of 10 of 11 best standards/practices.

The high-performance standards describe practices of high performing partnerships and are met less frequently. Partnerships will receive BWSR commendations for compliance with high performance standards. Any unmet high-performance standards can serve as stretch goals for performance improvement. The partnership reports achievement of 7 of the 8 high performance standards.

The performance standards checklists submitted and reviewed for the Redeye River Water Planning Partnership is contained in Appendix A.

A list of high-performance achievements include:

- Project tracking systems used to track all work that contributes to plan goals
- Shared service opportunities are leveraged between partners
- Technical advisory committee reviews members
- Agency members provide updates on agency initiatives, projects, and other information related to the watershed
- Water quality trends are tracked for priority water bodies
- Partnerships annually review progress toward water quality goals identified in CWMP
- Watershed partners have developed new partnerships with partners outside of the planning/implementation partnership

Findings Part 3: Internal and External Surveys

Part 3 of this performance assessment is based on responses to an online survey of individuals within the partnership as well as external partners. The survey consists of questions related to Communication, Initiative, Timeliness, Cooperation, Working Relationships, and Plan utilization during decision making.

The survey was given to three groups: the Policy Committee, Planning Work Group, and the Advisory Committee.

- The Policy Committee consists of one board member from each local water planning authority (ex. County, SWCD, and watershed district).
- The Planning Work Group consists primarily of local government staff (ex. Water Planners, SWCD Managers or District Technicians)
- The Advisory Committee consists of (but is not limited to) state agency partners, local nonprofits, municipalities, citizen based environmental groups, sporting organizations, drainage authorities, and agricultural/farm groups.

Because each group serves a different role, each of the three groups were asked different questions. Survey questions are designed to elicit information about successes and difficulties in implementing plan goals and objectives and assessing the extent and quality of the partnership during implementation. A total of 22 surveys were sent and with 17 (77.2%) individuals participating.

Internal Surveys: Summary of Self-Assessments by Policy Committee Members

Please note: Information in this section has been analyzed and paraphrased to keep responses anonymous.

Policy Committee members were asked how frequently the committee meets. (28.57%) stated that they meet *once every six months*, and (71.43%) *reported other – as needed*. Of the meetings being held, (14.29%) of the Committee stated that the number of meetings held was *not enough* and (85.71%) indicated *about right*.

The policy committee members were asked to assess performance in five areas. Most of the respondents *agree or strongly agree* that the partnership is doing a good job in all performance areas. A few respondents indicated that they neither agree nor disagree in three of the five performance areas. Both communication and cooperation categories received *disagree* ratings indicating that there may be some room for improvement in those areas.

| Performance Area | Policy Committee Ratings (percent) | | | | | |
|---|------------------------------------|----------|----------------------------|--------|----------------|------------|
| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree Nor Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree | Don't Know |
| Communication: keep us informed and seek input | 0.0% | 14.29% | 0.0% | 71.43% | 14.29% | 0.0% |
| Completing Plan Priorities: projects consistent with plan goals and objectives | 0.0% | 0.0% | 28.57% | 57.14% | 14.29% | 0.0% |
| Initiative: willing to do what's needed to get work done, including initiate change | 0.0% | 0.0% | 14.29% | 71.43% | 14.29% | 0.0% |
| Timeliness and Follow-through: reliable and meet deadlines | 0.0% | 0.0% | 42.86% | 42.86% | 14.29% | 0.0% |
| Cooperation: easy to work with and seek opportunities to address priorities | 0.0% | 14.29% | 0.0% | 57.14% | 28.57% | 0.0% |

During the project selection process, (42.86%) of policy committee respondents felt the partnership focused on priority areas for implementation *all of the time*, (28.57%) *some of the time – the partners try to get projects in the priority areas*, and (28.57%) indicated they are *unsure – we are not involved*.

Policy committee members were asked to describe how well informed they are on partnership efforts, with (71.43%) indicating *great, we are kept well informed and know what is happening*, (14.29%) *good, we receive communication but could receive more*, and (14.29%) indicated *unsure*.

Policy committee members were also asked how often they report back to their board on the partnership's efforts, with (50.0%) indicating *annually*, and (16.67%) for each of the following, *twice annually, quarterly, or monthly*.

Finally, policy committee members were asked to rate the working relationship of the LGU partnership, with (66.67%) indicating *strong, they work well together most of the time*, (16.67%) *good, there are clearly some minor issues they occasionally work through that may cause issues*, and (16.67%) *poor, they have some clear issues that impact their ability to function as a unit*.

Respondents were asked if they had any additional thoughts on how the partnership could improve at this stage of implementation. One response was provided below.

- Discovered that goal of well sealing was probably lacking in reporting. Will need to consider methods of improving discovery of wells sealed in the watershed and also target vacant and abandoned building sites to increase activity in this area. Also noted that “white pages” are no longer a go to source for contact information for landowners.

Internal Surveys: Summary of Self-Assessments by Planning Work Group Members

Survey respondents were asked if the partnership had a formal working agreement for implementation, 100% stated Yes.

Below is a summary of the respondents' assessment of the successes and challenges of their current organizational structure:

Most Successful Aspects of the Current Structure

- Partner SWCDs still allowed to make their own policies and decide what practices work for their landowners.
- The TAC meets quarterly to review workplans and budgets, discuss potential projects, and targeted outreach efforts.
- Local government partners are meeting on at least a quarterly basis, sharing project information, reviewing budgets, reviewing progress towards the plan goals, and coordinating outreach activities targeting priority areas. This has led to more partnering and sharing.
- A group of people that work well together and are open to ideas to help each other out.
- Policy is developed by local boards for implementation of projects. Their decisions are based on the priorities of the plan.

Biggest Limitation or Challenge of the Current Structure

- Differing cost share rates for practices among the partners.
- Communicating between quarterly meeting, and project and financial tracking. However, as we have developed better systems and an understanding of what is needed this challenge is becoming less of a challenge.
- Tracking of funds between on our organization and the fiscal agent is a challenge as each has a different system. That takes extra time and effort to ensure we match each quarter.

When asked what kind of changes you would like to see made to make things work more smoothly and easily:

- More frequent detailed updates on our progress with the goals set up for us.
- A reduced number of work activity categories in eLINK.
- We are considering billing monthly as opposed to quarterly to see if that makes a difference in tracking grant balances.

Planning Work Group members were also asked to assess seven performance areas. All of the performance areas received high marks. Addressing *plan priorities, communication and coordination, and timelines and follow-through* received a few fair ratings. None of the performance areas received poor ratings.

| Performance Area | Planning Work Group Ratings (percent) | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--------|--------|-----------|-----------|
| | Poor | Fair | Good | Very Good | Excellent |
| Accomplishing stated plan goals | 0.00% | 0.00% | 40.00% | 40.00% | 20.00% |
| Addressing plan priorities | 0.00% | 20.00% | 20.00% | 40.00% | 20.00% |
| Communication and Coordination | 0.00% | 20.0% | 40.00% | 20.00% | 20.00% |
| Equal Efforts made by partners | 0.00% | 0.00% | 40.00% | 40.00% | 20.00% |
| Timelines and Follow-through | 0.00% | 20.00% | 0.00% | 60.00% | 20.00% |
| Sharing Resources | 0.00% | 0.00% | 20.00% | 60.00% | 20.00% |
| Willingness to Accept and Incorporate new Data | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 80.00% | 20.00% |

Regarding the Day-to-Day implementation of the Redeye River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan, planning members provided an assessment of their day-to-day work (see table).

| Day to Day Work in Implementing Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan | Planning Work Group Ratings (percent) | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|---------|------------|----------|-----------|
| | Weekly | Monthly | Biannually | Annually | As Needed |
| How often you consult the CWMP | 33.33% | 33.33% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 33.33% |
| How often are priority projects discussed | 16.67% | 50.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 33.33% |
| How often do non-priority projects get implemented | 16.67% | 16.67% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 66.67% |
| How often is the policy committee consulted on project funding decisions | 0.00% | 0.00% | 16.67% | 50.00% | 33.33% |
| How often are policy documents and bylaws reviewed and updated | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 50.00% | 50.00% |
| How often are plan goals or outcomes reviewed | 0.0% | 0.0% | 50.00% | 16.67% | 33.33% |
| How often are new data and trends discussed | 0.0% | 0.0% | 16.67% | 16.67% | 66.67% |

The survey included questions about projects funded using WBIF. Group members stated that projects were located within the highest priority areas, with (40.00%) stating *often or sometimes* and (20.0%) *always*. Respondents had differing opinions as to whether cost-effectiveness is considered before implementing projects, with (40.0%) stating *always*, (20.0%) *sometimes*, and (40.0%) stating *rarely*. The partners were divided in their response related to adjusted cost-share rates as well, with (20.0%) stating adjustments are made *often*, *sometimes*, and *rarely*, and (40.0%) *never*.

| Projects Funding by WBIF Only | Plan Work group Ratings (percent) | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|--------|-----------|--------|--------|
| | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Always |
| Are projects located within the highest priority areas | 0.00% | 0.00% | 40.00% | 40.00% | 20.00% |
| Is cost-effectiveness considered before implementing a specific project | 0.00% | 40.0% | 20.00% | 0.00% | 40.00% |
| Do you provide outreach to specific landowners | 0.00% | 0.00% | 40.00% | 40.00% | 20.00% |
| Do you adjust cost-share rates based on priority levels | 40.00% | 20.00% | 20.00% | 20.00% | 0.00% |
| Do you have any shared services with other partnerships | 0.00% | 20.00% | 20.00% | 0.00% | 60.00% |

Survey responses reflect that outreach is provided to specific landowners *sometimes or often* at (40.0%) and (20%) *always*.

Finally, the partners indicated it shares services within other partners, (60.0%) *always*, (20.0%) *sometimes*, and (20.0%) *rarely*.

External Surveys: Advisory Committee Members (Agency Partners and Local Stakeholders)

When asked the frequency of interaction with the planning partnership, (50.0%) stated a *few times* a year, (25.0%) *several times* a year and (25.0%) *monthly*. Of those interactions, (100.0%) stated the amount of Advisory Committee meetings held was *about right*. Committee members unanimously agree (100.0%) that the level of consultation is about right and that they are kept informed.

Advisory committee members provided ranking in six performance areas. Their ratings were favorable in all categories. Overall, it appears that the working relationship between the advisory committee and local partners is good.

| Performance Area | Advisory Committee Ratings (percent) | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|----------|----------------------------|--------|----------------|------------|
| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree Nor Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree | Don't Know |
| Communication: keep us informed and seek input | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 75.00% | 25.00% | 0.0% |
| Completing Plan Priorities: projects consistent with plan goals and objectives | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 25.00% | 75.00% | 0.0% |
| Equal Efforts made by Partners: Everyone's willing to pull their weight | 0.00% | 0.00% | 25.00% | 25.00% | 50.00% | 0.0% |
| Initiative: willing to do what's needed to get work done, including initiate change | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 25.00% | 75.00% | 0.0% |
| Timeliness and Follow-through: reliable and meet deadlines | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 25.00% | 75.00% | 0.0% |
| Cooperation: easy to work with and seek opportunities to address priorities | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 100.00% | 0.0% |

Advisory committee members were asked to rate the working relationship of the Local Government Unit partners, with (100.0%) indicating *strong, they work well together most of the time*.

Finally, advisory committee members were invited to provide additional thoughts on how well the CWMP process has worked for the watershed at this stage of implementation. The following response was provided.

- This is a smaller watershed with fewer partners than some, and the partners are relatively familiar with each other and work very well together with good review of how things are progressing in each area, or not, and willingness to re-evaluate needs and dispersal of funds.

Findings Part 4: Assurance Measures/Watershed-based Implementation Funding

Watershed Based Implementation Funding (WBIF) is an alternative to BWSRs traditional competitive funding process. Once the entities within a partnership have a BWSR Board Approved and Locally Adopted Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan meeting the requirements of the One Watershed One Plan Program, they are eligible for WBIF to fund eligible activities identified within their plan. In the Twin Cities metro, approved plans may include the Metropolitan Surface or Groundwater Management Plan.

The Watershed Based Implementation Funding Policy includes four assurance measures that BWSR uses to supplement the existing grants accountability system. Assurance measures are designed to define expectations for how these large, non-competitive grants are used and to demonstrate to key audiences that WBIF dollars are being spent effectively to address the highest priority clean water needs in the watershed. The four Assurance Measures are:

1. Prioritized, targeted, and measurable work is making progress toward achieving clean water goals.
2. Programs, projects, and practices are being implemented in priority areas.
3. Grant work is on-schedule and on-budget.
4. Leverage of non-state funds.

BWSR staff most recently reviewed these Assurance Measures for the FY21 WBIF Grant (C21-3238). Documentation of the Assurance Measure review is found in Appendix B of this report.

As a result of the most recent Assurance Measures, BWSR staff identified that the partnership is making measurable progress towards plan goals utilizing the Watershed Based Implementation Funding. A summary of the review and recommendations are provided below:

Assurance Measure 1 – PTM Efforts Making Progress to Clean Water Goals

Measurable outcomes proposed in the grant work plan were achieved 90% or more of the time for WBIF grants. The partnership is commended for meeting or exceeding a few outcomes including nitrogen reduction, feedlot improvement projects (groundwater), and forest stand improvement projects (groundwater).

Proposed outcomes shifted over the life of the grant due to shifts in funding from structural and nonstructural projects to feedlot improvement projects. In addition, the group successfully got an RCCP grant for irrigation management, allowing them to do more work in other areas.

Assurance Measure 2 – Programs, Projects, and Practices Implemented in Priority Area

The partnership is commended for directing project development efforts in priority areas 90% or more of the time. The findings related to assurance measures documented that outcomes were achieved in priority areas between 50% and 70% of the time.

Based on these findings the partnership is encouraged to continue to use a process to prioritize, measure, and target program and project activity.

Assurance Measure 3 – Grant Work is On-Schedule and On-Budget

The partnership requested and received an extension on the grant. The need for the extension included project implementation delays of getting required items for a feedlot project and supply issues for upgrading irrigation systems. No grant funds were returned.

Assurance Measure 4 – Leverage of Non-State Funds

The partnership is commended for leveraging \$449,237 (landowner contributions) for projects. They are also commended for applying for and receiving \$210,719 (RCPP-irrigation) and \$164,500 (LCCMR-forestry) grants for projects in the watershed.

The partnership is encouraged to continue to pursue non-state funds to support the implementation of plan goals.

DRAFT

General Conclusions

After a thorough review of the provided information including the Redeye River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan implementation progress, the watershed-based performance standards checklist, and analysis of survey results, BWSR staff have developed some recommendations for the partnership.

In brief review, the Redeye River Partnership is successfully carrying out its watershed management plan by continuously tracking progress, reviewing results, evaluating actions, and sharing information. The partnership is encouraged to continue to use these principles into the future.

The Redeye River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan contains 43 goal statements and 79 planned activities. The partnership is commended for meeting or exceeding several goals. The partnership is also commended for having 58 (73.4%) of their planned 79 activities underway/in-progress. Eight (10.1%) were identified as *completed*, and the remaining 13 (16.5%) had *no information* to make a determination.

The partnership reports achieving 16 of 16 basic performance standards, 10 of the 11 best standards or practices, and 7 of 8 high performance standards.

The Partnership is encouraged to incorporate training for policy committee members with a focus on watershed related topics and to consider developing an annual workplan outside of WBIF. Based on the survey some partners from both the Policy Committee and Planning Work Group desire more communication.

Commendations

Commendations are based on achievement of BWSR's high performance standards (see Findings, Part 2 and Appendix A). These practices reflect above average operational effectiveness and level of effort.

The Redeye River Partnership is commended for:

- Project tracking systems used to track all work that contributes to plan goals
- Shared service opportunities are leveraged between partners
- Technical advisory committee reviews members
- Agency members provide updates on agency initiatives, projects, and other information related to the watershed
- Water quality trends are tracked for priority water bodies
- Partnerships annually review progress toward water quality goals identified in CWMP
- Watershed partners have developed new partnerships with partners outside of the planning/implementation partnership

Action Items

Action items are based on compliance with BWSR's basic requirement performance standards (see Findings, Part 2 and Appendix A). Action items address lack of compliance with statutory requirements.

Redeye River Partnership does not have any required actions.

Partnership Recommendations

This section contains recommendations offered by BWSR staff to the Redeye River Partnership. The intention of these recommendations are to build upon the existing strengths of the partnership as they continue to deliver land and water related programs and service to the residents of the watershed. BWSR financial assistance through the Performance Review and Assistance Program grant program may be available to support the implementation of some of these recommendations. See BWSR website for more information:

<https://bwsr.state.mn.us/prap-grants>.

Recommendation (Communication): Continue to maintain a high level of communication

This recommendation is based on findings related to responses from the online survey. While the majority of policy committee, local work group members, and external partners agree they are kept informed there is a desire for more communication from some individuals on the policy committee and local work group. As a result, the partnership is encouraged to spend time talking about communication to clarify any areas where more communication is desired. Reviewing who, how, when, and through what channels communication will occur could benefit the partnership.

Recommendation (Training): The partnership is encouraged to provide training opportunities to the policy committee on watershed related topics.

This recommendation is based on findings related to the watershed-based performance checklist (Policy Committee Section-Appendix A) and is offered as a stretch goal for the partnership.

Sharing information about watershed related topics through training sessions, workshops, or updates will help policy committee members stay informed.

Recommendation (Annual Workplan): The partnership is encouraged to develop an annual workplan that extends beyond WBIF workplans.

This recommendation is based on findings related to the watershed-based performance checklist (Steering Committee Section-Appendix A) and is offered as a stretch goal for the partnership.

Watershed-based implementation funding covers only a portion of the work that is getting done in the watershed. Creating an annual workplan that extends beyond watershed-based implementation funding will help the partnership capture the broader efforts you are making through other grants, programs, or partnerships and may be helpful as you consider the best use of current and future WBIF grants.

LGU Comments and BWSR Responses

(Optional) The Redeye River Partnership was invited to comment on the findings, conclusions, and recommendations in the draft version of this report. No formal comments were received.

DRAFT

Appendix A. Performance Standards

Watershed-Based Performance Standards

Watershed Partnership Name: Leaf-Wing-Redeye

| Performance Area | Performance Standard | | Level of Review | | Rating | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|--|------------------------|----|---------------|
| | ★ High Performance standard | | I Annual Compliance | | Yes, No, Unsure or N/A | | |
| | ■ Best Standard/practice | ● Basic Requirement | II BWSR Staff Review & Assessment | | YES | NO | Unsure or N/A |
| General Administration | ● | Each participating member has adopted the comprehensive watershed management plan | I | | X | | |
| | ● | Coordinator or lead staff person(s) identified for the partnership | II | | X | | |
| | ■ | Operational guidelines for fiscal procedures exist and are current | II | | X | | |
| | ■ | Financial Reports provided to Policy Committee on annual basis | II | | X | | |
| | ● | ● SWW Grant Report(s): submitted on time (annual or biannual if funds exceed \$500,000) | I | | X | | |
| | ● | Assurance Measure 1: Prioritized, targeted, and measurable work is making progress toward achieving clean water goals | II | | X | | |
| | ● | Assurance Measure 2: Programs, projects, and practices are being implemented in priority areas | II | | X | | |
| | ● | Assurance Measure 3: Grant work is on-schedule and on-budget | II | | X | | Extra time |
| | ● | Assurance Measure 4: Leverage of non-state funds | II | | X | | |
| | ★ | Project tracking system is used by watershed partnership to track all work that contributes to plan goals | II | | X | | |
| | ★ | Shared service opportunities are leveraged between partners | II | | X | | |
| Policy Committee | ● | Conflict of Interest policy exists and is reviewed/signed by the JPE or fiscal agent (in implementation bylaws Article 1 a. iii) | II | | X | | |
| | ● | The policy committee or board is involved in project funding discussions or decision making, as defined by an implementation agreement | II | | X | | |
| | ● | Committee membership is reviewed/updated annually | II | | X | | |
| | ■ | Training: Orientation on comprehensive watershed management plans is provided to new policy committee members | II | | X | | |
| | ★ | Training: efforts are made to inform on watershed related topics | II | | | X | |
| | ■ | Reviewed governing documents (bylaws, formal agreements) within the last 5 years (if applicable) | II | | X | | |
| Advisory Committee | ● | Technical advisory committee participates in plan development, implementation, and amendments | I | | X | | |
| | ■ | Advisory committee members meet at least once annually | II | | X | | |
| | ■ | Water quality, hydrologic, and monitoring trends are used to evaluate progress towards plan/resource goals | II | | X | | |
| | ★ | Technical advisory committee reviews members | II | | X | | |
| | ★ | Agency members provide updates on agency initiatives, projects, and other information related to the watershed | II | | X | | |
| | ★ | Water quality trends tracked for priority water bodies | II | | X | | |
| Steering Committee | ● | Steering committee meets at least four times a year and reviews plan goals and actions | II | | X | | |
| | ● | Staff has open (2-way) communication about comprehensive watershed management plan activities with policy committee and local boards/councils | II | | X | | |
| | ● | Steering committee coordinates a mid-plan review to evaluate progress toward plan goals | I | | X | | |
| | ■ | Watershed partners solicit stakeholder input within the last year | II | | X | | |
| | ■ | An annual work plan (outside of WBIF grant) is developed and implemented | II | | | X | |

PRAP Watershed-Based Assessment Part 2-Performance Standards

2025

| | | | | | | |
|------------------------------|---|---|----|---|--|--|
| Communication & Coordination | ★ | Partnership annually reviews progress towards water quality goals identified in the CWMP | II | X | | |
| | ● | Partnership website(s): contain board meeting information, partner contact information, and annual ELNK reports – also prominently displays the Clean Water, Land, and Legacy Logo and a link to the Legislative Coordinating Commission website | I | X | | |
| | ● | Partnership website(s) host a current copy of the plan and is maintained and updated regularly | I | X | | |
| | ■ | Communication pieces sent that highlights work and program opportunities | II | X | | |
| | ■ | Public education materials are watershed focused and reinforce high priority issues and actions to address plan goals | II | X | | |
| | ★ | Watershed partners have developed new partnerships with partners outside of the planning/implementation partnership – <i>RCCP irrigation, LCCMR forestry,</i> | II | X | | |

Appendix B. Assurance Measures Documentation



WBIF Assurance Measures Documentation

Instructions for incorporation into eLINK are in the 'Procedure' section at the end of this document. Red text is example language

Watershed: Redeye River Fiscal Year: 2021

WBIF Grant Number: C21-3238

Filled Out By: J. Westerlund On (date): 1/22/2025

Assurance Measure 1: Prioritized, targeted, and measurable work is making progress toward achieving clean water goals

Proposed Measurable Outcomes {insert from WBIF Application. This is what was reported to [the Legislative Coordinating Commission \(LCC\)](#)}:
 Reduce phosphorus by about 570lbs, sediment by about 2505 tons, and nitrogen by about 4568lbs. See attached supplemental information for additional details about measurable outcomes.

Metric: Report the percentage of measurable outcomes proposed in the [current/amended grant work plan](#) that were completed as reported in the [Grant Progress Report](#). (Use the final indicators summary for load reductions. Focus on the proposed outcomes as reported to LCC. You may need to scan the report for other outcomes not described in the LCC narrative. Add outcomes as appropriate).

| # | Outcome or Output Indicator/units | Proposed (work plan) | actual (grant progress report) | percent |
|---|--|----------------------|---|---------|
| | Non-structural management practices (acres) {note that the proposed load reductions above are all from this activity} | 4289 | 2328 reported acres of cover crops and prescribed grazing.) | 54% |
| | Nitrogen reduction (pounds/year) | 4568 | 7089 | 155% |
| | Phosphorus (pounds/year) | 570 | 272 | 48% |
| | Sediment (tons/year) | 2505 | 139 | 5.5%. |
| | Feedlot improvements (projects) {Groundwater protection} | 1 | 12 | 900% |
| | Forest Stand Improvement (acres of practices) | 40 | 157 | 392% |
| | Forest stewardship plans (# plans/acres) | None listed | 18 plans / 2460 acres | |

| | | | | |
|--|--|-------------|-------------------------|------|
| | Groundwater-based practices – nutrient and irrigation mgmt. plans (acres) | 1,878 | 9 plans/896 acres | 48% |
| | Groundwater-based practices – install and monitor precision irrigation (# producers; # on vulnerable GW) | 4; 1 | 9; ? | 2.3% |
| | Wells sealed | None listed | 1 | |
| | Grazing management (plans/acres) | None listed | 7/498 | |
| | Mapping completed projects (systems) | 1 | 1 | |
| | Marketing and Education (staff hours/producer participation) | 1043/4 | ? | |
| | Redeye Media Campaign | None listed | Same as the cell above. | |
| | | | — | |

Indicator Selection (select one. The BC will also need to report this selection in eLINK from the drop-down menu. That information will be reported on the LCC website):

- ☒ Achieved proposed outcomes (achieved 90% or more of what they proposed)
- ☐ Achieved most proposed outcomes (achieved between 70% and 90%)
- ☐ Achieved some proposed outcomes (achieved between 50% and 70%)
- ☐ Did not achieve proposed outcomes (achieved 49% or less of proposed outcomes)

Justification for indicator selection:

include relevant information about discrepancies in calculators, etc. This information can be included in the actual [outcomes narrative](#) for LCC (see above).

Proposed outcomes shifted over the life of the grant due to shifts in funding from structural and nonstructural projects to feedlot improvement projects. In addition, the group successfully got an RCPP grant for irrigation management, allowing them to do more in other areas.

Relevant information found in Grant Progress Report / additional context (optional):

You may decide to pro-rate certain outcomes for linked projects. Factors in that decision could include the proportion of the activity paid for by this grant, the proportion of outcomes from the activity grant relative to the overall grant, and which funding source(s) were linked. See previously completed examples: Yellow Medicine FY20, Bois de Sioux – Mustinka FY21.

Additional information from the BC or Partnership (optional):

Context Questions (optional):

- What helped or hindered the partnership in achieving the goals of the grant work plan?
- Is there anything else you want BWSR to know about implementation in this grant period?

Assurance Measure 2: Programs, projects, and practices are being implemented in priority areas

Metrics

Category A: *Report the proportion, type, and quality of project development effort made in priority areas (even if contacts did not result in a project)* Click or tap here to enter text.

Results

January 2022 - Completed post card mailing to Redeye planning region to educate landowners on cost-share projects for forest land and pasture/grassland. LGUs participated in multiple Media Campaign meetings in 2021 and 2022 to discuss workshops with farmers, private drinking well owners in wellhead protection areas, and to create awareness to landowners on land management.

Provided for staff time for partnering SWCDs to develop marketing materials for outreach to landowners.

Provided for staff time for partnering SWCDs to develop marketing materials for outreach to landowners. EOT and Wadena SWCD created an Education/Outreach committee to target priority areas in the Redeye watershed. EOT and Wadena SWCD staff reported 3,761 individual contacts including direct calls, site visits, and mailings in the Redeye watershed in 2024. EOT SWCD staff mailed a shoreline restoration postcard to 89 landowners on Middle Leaf Lake and conducted 5 site visits.

Report created on: 03/06/2025

Generated by iTEXT (<https://itextpdf.com/>).

Results

March and April 2023, Staff had 142 direct contacts with landowners and conducted 17 site visits in the Redeye watershed. Landowners in the Redeye watershed attended an Irrigation Clinic, discussed cover crop planning, and attended a local wee inspector meeting.

Indicator Selection (select one from each category):**Category A**

- ☒ Project development was in priority areas (90% or more)
- ☐ Most project development was in priority areas (between 70% and 90%)
- ☐ Some project development was in priority areas (between 50% and 70%)

Category B: *Report the proportion of outcomes achieved in priority areas. Add outcome categories if needed.*

{To the extent practicable, BWSR staff determine if each project (mapped or described in narrative) is located in a priority area (high or medium-high /Tier 1/etc.) according to the comprehensive watershed management plan. The sum of outcomes from priority areas are compared to the total outcomes for each indicator.}

Outcome 1: feedlot projects (count) = 75% (~210K)

Outcome 2: forestry projects (acres) = 32% (~\$25K)

Outcome 3: groundwater projects (acres) = 33% (~49K)

Outcome 4: nonstructural practices (N, P, S reduced) = 46%, 46%, 50% (~154K)

Indicator Selection *(select one from each category):*

Category B

- ☐ Outcomes were achieved in priority areas (90% or more)
- ☐ Most outcomes were achieved in priority areas (between 70% and 90%)
- ☒ Some outcomes were achieved in priority areas (between 50% and 70%)

Justification for indicator selection:

This analysis included implementation in high (not medium) priority areas. The indicator was selected considering the percentages of implementation in priority areas and the distribution of funding spent in each category.

Context Questions (optional):

- Does the partnership (or individual LGUs in the partnership) have a landowner contact tracking system?
- If more information is needed about project development: What was the level of effort in high priority areas?
 - Who and how many landowners did you contact?
 - What kind of contact was used, and which methods were the most successful?
 - How did partners contribute (time, money, etc.) to the implementation effort?
 - How did landowners become engaged in actions related to water issues?
 - What have you done to better understand what motivates the landowners in your area?
 - What was the rationale for implementing actions in areas not designated as high priority?
- Are there other practices, projects and programs the groups would like to highlight that were not directly funded by WBIF?

Additional information from the BC or Partnership (optional):

Recommendation:

Continue to do project development work in priority areas so that implementation is focused on the places the plan indicates are priorities.

Assurance Measure 3: Grant work is on-schedule and on-budget

Metrics

Category A: Whether or work plan activities were completed within the original grant time frame

Category B: Whether or not funds were returned.

Indicator *(select one from each category):*

Category A (on schedule)

- ☐ Work plan activities were completed according to the original schedule
- ☒ Work plan activities were completed with extra time
- ☐ Work plan activities were not completed, even with extra time

If the work plan activities were not completed according to the original schedule, indicate how much extra time was given.

"The need for the extension includes project implementation delays due to changing of design on a feedlot project and issues with a delay of getting the required pump, contractor availability on other projects, and supply issues for parts for upgrading irrigation systems."

Category B (on budget)

- ☒ Funds were not returned
☐ Funds were returned

Document the dollars returned. If a very small proportion of funds were returned, "funds were not returned" can be selected.

Context Questions (optional):

- How much money was encumbered when the grant was extended?
- If there were changes to the work plan schedule or budget, what was the context/primary cause?
- What did the partnership do to set itself up for success (e.g. staffing plans, landowners lined up, communication plans, studies already completed for targeting)?
- What lessons were learned that will influence the next grant work plan?

Additional information from the BC or Partnership (optional):

Assurance Measure 4: Leverage of non-state funds

Metrics:

- Match Funds Documented in eLINK: \$449,237
- Number of additional grants pursued: 2
- Number of additional grants secured: 2
- Dollar amount of additional grants secured: RCP 210,719 & LCCMR \$164,500

How many dollars in the documented eLINK match were from the grants noted above?

None of the LCCMR \$164,500 because those are not eligible match being state funds. None of the Federal was used as match. All match was from the landowners contribution to projects.

Additional information from the BC or Partnership (optional):

{Irrigation RCP 210,719; LCCMR Forestry \$164,500}

Reporting Note: *Partnerships must document required match in eLINK. Efforts to pursue additional funding and actual leveraged dollars beyond the required match don't need to be reported in the same detail as the required match (associated with specific practices), but BWSR recommends documenting their leveraging efforts via a narrative summary in eLINK reports.*

Measurable Outcomes Narrative For LCC

Complete this after all measures have been analyzed. This will show up on the LCC's website, along with the "proposed measurable outcomes (see AM 1) and the drop-down selection of the extent to which outcomes were achieved.

Measurable Outcomes: This project funded implementation of 2,328 acres of cover crops and prescribed grazing as well as 9 irrigation water management systems and other activities (described below) in the Redeye River Watershed. The work resulted in a reduction of 7,089 pounds per year of nitrogen, 272 pounds per year of phosphorus, and 139 tons/year of sediment. Discrepancies between proposed and reported outcomes are due to two factors: 1) a work plan amendment resulting in a shift in spending from proposed structural projects to feedlot related projects; and 2) a difference in pollution load reduction estimators for sediment.

Funds paid for 12 feedlot improvement projects, woodland stewardship plans on 2,460 acres, and tree planting on 157 acres. Funds also covered costs of staff time to design and engineer projects and for targeted outreach and landowner contacts. Some (50-70%) work was done in priority areas and addressed land management and protection and nutrient reduction which are priorities in the plan.

Work was completed on budget with a one -year extension due to availability of contractors and parts for irrigation systems. In addition to Clean Water Funds, the partnership pursued and secured additional funds totaling \$375,200 from the Natural Resources Conservation Service and Minnesota's Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund.

Sample Measurable Outcomes Statement

This project funded implementation of 162 agricultural best management practices and 5352 linear feet of streambank stabilization in the WBIF Sample Watershed. The work resulted in a reduction of 1044 tons/year of sediment reduction. The original sediment loading goal was not met due to a discrepancy between the calculators used to estimate proposed vs. actual outcomes. However, group exceeded the number of planned practices.

Funds paid for forest stewardship plans covering 1,678 acres, a stormwater management plan for Center City, private well testing. Funds also covered costs of staff to design and engineer projects and work with landowners, including targeted outreach to landowners in priority areas. Work was done in in priority areas identified in the plan and addressed sediment, protection, drinking water, and stormwater management all of which are priority issues in the plan.

Work was completed on budget with a one-year extension due to flooding around Cloudy Creek. Clean Water Funds provided leverage for the partnership to pursue and secure additional funds totaling 850,000 from Friends of the Big River and the Federal Conservation Program.

Procedure

This procedure will be used, starting in 2023, for 1-3 years as BWSR staff learn how to consistently apply assurance measures. The procedure will be revisited after the end of the 2024 reporting season.

- 1) **Grant completion.** BC: notify the 1W1P/WBIF program coordinator that the grant is closed (or all funds are spent if prior to grant agreement expiration date)
- 2) **Assurance measures analysis and final measurable outcomes write-up.** 1W1P/WBIF program coordinator initiates WBIF assurance measures analysis and documentation; coordinator and BC work together to finalize assurance measures. During this time, the BC checks in with the partnership to share our findings and give the partnership an opportunity to provide additional information and context.
- 3) **eLINK documentation.**
 - a. BC copies the final measurable outcomes write-up into the text box in eLINK
 - b. In the Progress Report, BC selects the appropriate choice from the drop-down menu under “did the grantee achieve the proposed measurable outcomes?” according to the determination in Assurance Measure 1.
 - c. BC attaches the assurance measure documentation report (word document) in eLINK. If the final report has already been approved:
 - i. Click on the Journal tab under Manage Grant Details and click the *Add a new journal entry* button it will open the “Add New Journal” page.
 - ii. Pick the Correspondence Type and type something in the Journal Entry field click “Save.”
 - iii. The “Add Attachment” button will become active. Add the document.



Appendix C. Comment Letter

No formal comment letter received.

DRAFT

Appendix D. Program Data

Time required to complete this review

Redeye River Partnership: 80 Hours (estimated)

BWSR Staff: 40 Hours

Schedule of Watershed-based Assessment

BWSR PRAP Performance Review Key Dates

- February 2025: Initial meeting with Plan Work group staff
- March 2025: Survey of Redeye River Policy Committee, Local Government staff and Partners
- August 2025: Presentation of Draft Report to Redeye River TAC
- October 2025: Presentation of Final Report to LGU /Final Plan Submitted

NOTE: BWSR uses review time as a surrogate for tracking total program costs. Time required for PRAP performance reviews is aggregated and included in BWSR's annual PRAP report to the Minnesota Legislature.