



BROWN'S CREEK WATERSHED DISTRICT

Preserving the integrity of the watershed for future generations

www.bcwd.org | 455 Hayward Ave N, Oakdale, MN 55128 | 651-330-8220

MEMORANDUM

TO: Brown's Creek Watershed District Board
FROM: Karen Kill and Camilla Correll
RE: MN Department of Health – groundwater protection initiative grant
DATE: March 10, 2026

Background

Minnesota Department of Health has made a call for grant proposals for groundwater protection initiatives due April 3, 2026. The eligible grant request is between \$10,000-\$50,000 and has no match requirements. The grant period is July 1, 2026 to January 31, 2028. These funds are for pre-project identification, planning and design work that is required before on-the-ground projects can be implemented. Implementation projects are not eligible.

Issue

Staff recommend applying for the grant for the following 2027-2036 Watershed Management Plan Groundwater Activity:

Address issues related to modern water utility management by leading the development of an integrated water utility roadmap with financial support from District communities. This roadmap will explore opportunities to break down the silos among water, wastewater, and stormwater to create a more sustainable water future. It will establish a framework for member communities so that as opportunities to upgrade or repair systems arise, utilities are not only examining existing needs but making changes to modernize and make systems more resilient.

NEW sub-tasks to help the Board envision what this would entail:

- Convene a project kickoff meeting with district staff and community representatives.
- Establish a technical advisory group composed of public works directors, utility managers, planners, and finance staff.
- Develop a baseline understanding of how water utilities are currently structured and managed.
- Identify Challenges, Risks, and Opportunities
 - Evaluate infrastructure condition and capital investment needs.
 - Identify climate-related risks such as flooding, drought, or changing precipitation patterns.
 - Assess operational challenges such as aging infrastructure, regulatory pressures, or limited staffing capacity.
 - Identify opportunities where coordinated planning could improve outcomes, such as stormwater reuse, infiltration, or watershed-scale / District projects.
- Explore Integration Opportunities

Managers:

Klay Eckles, President | Chuck LeRoux, Vice President | Celia Wirth, Treasurer
Debra Sahulka, Secretary | Griffin Brod, Manager

- Evaluate opportunities for integrated planning and project delivery.
 - Explore opportunities for joint infrastructure projects or shared services.
 - Identify policy or program changes that support cross-department coordination.
- Develop the Integrated Water Utility Roadmap that translates findings into a clear, implementable framework for communities

Collaborators:

- City of Stillwater
- City of Oak Park Heights
- Metropolitan Council
- MPCA
- Washington County
- East Metro Water Resource Education Program (EMWREP)

Requested Action

Provide feedback on grant application and direct staff accordingly.