

# RCRCA

## AREA II / RCRCA

March 6, 2026 – Board of Directors Meeting  
Lyon Government Center, Marshall, MN

**AREA II Members Present:** Jeff Veerkamp, Larry Anderson, Gary Crowley, Loy Woelber, Luke Johnson, Rick Wakefield and Glen Kack.

**RCRCA Members Present:** Jeff Veerkamp, Mark Wellner, Larry Anderson, Ron Bunjer, Gary Crowley, Allen Deutz, Loy Woelber, Luke Johnson, Rick Wakefield, Ed Carter and Glen Kack.

**Others Present:** Kerry Netzke – Executive Director, Courtney Williams – RCRCA Watersheds Coordinator, and Joy Bruns – RCRCA Office Manager.

The meeting was called to order at 9:02 AM by RCRCA Chairman Johnson and Area II Chairman Anderson. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**ADOPT AGENDA.** There were no additions to the agenda. **RCRCA** – Motion by Carter, seconded by Bunjer, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

**Area II** - Motion by Crowley, seconded by Veerkamp, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

### **AGENCY AND MEETING REPORTS.**

**AMC** – The Legislative Conference was held March 3-5 in St. Paul. It was lightly attended with approximately 200 commissioners in attendance.

**APPROVE RCRCA MINUTES of February 2026 Board Meeting.** Motion by Wakefield, seconded by Bunjer, to approve February 2026 Minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

**APPROVE AREA II MINUTES of February 2026 Board Meeting.** Motion by Johnson, seconded by Wakefield, to approve February 2026 Minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

**RCRCA TREASURER’S REPORT – February 2026.** The financials were reviewed with the board. Revenue received: \$1,660.19 Contract Services Income, \$25,017.98 Grant Income,

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\$34,650.00 Appropriations FY26, and \$1,978.05 Interest Income. Bill for approval: \$5,712.50 Houston Engineering (RR-1W1P Grant). Motion by Anderson, seconded by Veerkamp, to approve February 2026 Treasurer’s Report subject to audit. Motion carried unanimously.

**Revenue as recorded:**

Canoe/Kayak Rental	\$ 0.00	Contract Services Income	\$ 1,660.19
Interest-Cash Sweep/CD	\$ 0.10	Interest-Checking Acct	\$ 14.02
Grant Funds	\$ 25,017.98	Misc Income	\$ 0.00
Appropriations	\$ 34,650.00	Investment/MAGIC Interest	\$ 1,963.93

**Paid bills are summarized below:**

Operations/Occupancy	\$ 922.13	Travel Expenses	\$ 231.40
Monitoring/Evaluation	\$ 468.00	Personnel	\$ 21,990.06
Project Costs	\$ 0.00	Contract Services - Area II	\$ 5,200.43
Capital Outlay	\$ 0.00	Other Services & Charges	\$ 12,080.68
Promotion/Education	\$ 150.74	Contract Service–Moldestad	\$ 0.00

**Bills for Approval:**

Professional Services	\$ 5,712.50
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**AREA II TREASURER’S REPORT – February 2026.** Financials were reviewed with the board. Motion by Veerkamp, seconded by Woelber, to approve February 2026 Treasurer’s Report subject to audit and to approve payment of the bills. Motion carried unanimously.

**RCRCA - APPROVE/AMEND/PAY COMPLETED COST SHARE CONTRACTS.** None

**AREA II – APPROVE/AMEND/PAY COMPLETED COST SHARE CONTRACTS.** None

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

**AREA II**

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- **Bonding Bill Language** Senator Dahms’ office confirmed that they will resubmit the language to request \$1.5 million in bonding. If successful, this funding would replace the MMB General Fund Construction Grant that would be returned.

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### • **Alta Vista 27 Road Retention (Lincoln County)**

- The new Round 2 - Water Quality & Storage Grant was awarded on February 9 in the amount of \$767,938.00 (minimum of \$76,793.00 local match required).
- The Grant Agreement (expires 12/1/2027) has been signed and we await the ACH deposit of \$383,969.00 (50%) upon workplan approval.
- The DNR Public Waters/Dam Safety permit has been submitted and comments addressed.
- The Joint Notification that involves WCA and the Corps of Engineers is in draft form and is awaiting the results of the TEP meeting on March 4. With Local Government Road Wetland Replacement Program (LGRWRP) mitigating wetland impacts, discussion involves that practices to minimize impacts were used.

• **LQP Floodways** The kickoff meeting was held on February 13<sup>th</sup> with project partners and Barr Engineering. Much of the project's history, challenges, and Barr's approach and timeline were shared. Netzke will draft a letter to the adjoining property owners to make them aware of the grant received and the modeling proposed to adequately redesign the floodway and restore the river channel. The property owners will be invited to meetings to review proposed options (June/July 2026) and again before the selected option is finalized. This project does not require any funding from the landowners as match.

## **RCRCA**

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• **Redwood CWMP Update** The BWSR Southern Region Committee met virtually on February 19<sup>th</sup> to review/ approve the Plan. Netzke presented the PowerPoint summarizing the planning process, 10-year plan goals and implementation strategies. The committee asked a few questions and recommended the plan for approval by the BWSR Board on March 25<sup>th</sup>. Netzke and Williams presented the draft WBIF workplan, policy, budget and scoring/ranking sheet to the Steering Team on February 9<sup>th</sup>. The only item that met opposition was scoring/ranking farmable vs nonfarmable basins differently. The argument is that the tile is the largest cost with this practice and the size/lengths of tile does not change whether it is farmable or nonfarmable. After reviewing some past basin projects, cost savings would range between \$3000-\$6000 per contract just based on dirt volumes. The Policy Committee will meet on Monday, March 9 at 1:00 PM to discuss this further.

• **Cottonwood-Middle MN CWMP Update** The workplan amendment to add \$200,000 to Ag Practices (\$50,000 from Technical/Engineering and \$150,000 from Non-structural Practices) was approved by BWSR. Williams collected non-structural practices information from the Redwood SWCD (federal RCPP and MN Alliance) and entered the information into MS4Front. This information increased the nitrogen and phosphorus reductions greatly with a large advancement made towards the Plan goals.

• **WPLMN / SWAG Update** The annual WPLMN training was held virtually on February 19<sup>th</sup> with a focus on nitrogen. Some sampling sites have been equipped with automated nitrogen sensors around the state; our Sleepy Eye Creek site has a sensor. In August 2024, TKN (total Kjeldahl nitrogen) tests were eliminated as the labs around Minnesota were not able to produce consistent results. Due to other programs needing the TKN data (EPA, etc.),

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TKN has been added back into the testing regime for the major and basin sites. For RCRCA, this is the Redwood River near Redwood Falls, Cottonwood River at New Ulm, and the Minnesota River at Morton.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle of WRAPS (Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies) begins with a 2-year SWAG (Surface Water Assessment Grant) grant. In 2017-2018, RCRCA collected this information for both the Cottonwood and Redwood watersheds. RCRCA intends to do this again in 2027-2028. The kickoff meeting was held February 12<sup>th</sup> to outline the process and allow partners to submit sites for monitoring that may not have been productive during the 1<sup>st</sup> cycle. Brawner Lake at Camden State Park (dam failed in 2017) and Lake Redwood (not considered a lake at that time) will be submitted by RCRCA. Once the MPCA's selected sites are reviewed, staff may add additional monitoring sites for consideration. Sampling would begin Spring 2027.

- **Pell Creek/Plum Creek CWF Grant Reconciliations** BWSR staff returned on February 25<sup>th</sup> to follow up on Pell Creek questions and begin the Plum Creek files. Due to some project contract errors where the project lifespan was left blank, or cost-share percentages were incorrect or omitted, RCRCA will likely receive a noncompliance letter for both grants. BWSR is formalizing the process to bring these grants into compliance which will involve amending those contracts to include the missing or correct information with new signatures obtained from all parties. BWSR is addressing the grants together for compliance since the errors were similar and occur in both grants. BWSR will expedite their review and provide amendment language to bring the contracts into compliance. The 10% reimbursement of the Pell Creek grant cannot be made until compliance is gained.

### **AREA II ENGINEER'S REPORT.**

**Holly 22 Road Retention, Murray County.** This proposed road retention project has been modernized from a design that previously existed. It involves downstream channel realignment/mitigation. Since the last project update, a meeting with the DNR was held to discuss the specific project constraints for stream mitigation. Additional survey data was acquired for upstream channel re-alignments as a result of that meeting as mitigating downstream is not possible. A meeting with the township will be forthcoming to review the design. The project is funded by a BWSR Water Quality & Storage Grant. **Alta Vista 27 Road Retention, Lincoln County.** Funding for this project has been secured with a second BWSR Water Quality & Storage Grant that expires December 1, 2027. This grant is 90/10 cost-share as opposed to the previous 75/25 grant. This project is progressing and in the stages of permit acquisition. DNR Dam Safety has reported back, and we have made plan alterations per their recommendations. The Joint Notification for the Corps of Engineers permit and Wetland Conservation Act is drafted, however some guidance on wetland impacts has been requested from BWSR due to WCA rule changes. The tree removal portion of the project has been completed ahead of anticipated construction of the structure to follow next spring/summer. **Florida Creek Restoration, Lac qui Parle County.** The Lac qui Parle-Yellow Bank Watershed District has awarded the project to Sitter Excavating and contract documents have been completed. A virtual preconstruction

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meeting was held on February 17<sup>th</sup> with all interested parties. Sitter Excavating is preparing a work schedule for project completion which may be delayed due to unusually warm winter weather. Surveying and construction duties will be provided by the DNR with assistance from LQP SWCD. **Springdale 17 Road Retention, Redwood County.** This potential road retention project is located northeast of Tracy on a failing box culvert/township bridge. During the preliminary design, it was found that additional survey data would be required as the extents of the proposed structure were larger than anticipated. This survey data has been gathered and implemented into a preliminary design that has since been updated and nearly completed. **Paxton 3 Dam Repair, Redwood County.** A preliminary design has been completed for this grade stabilization repair project with an updated hydraulic model that includes upstream BMPs that have been constructed since the original dam construction. A meeting with the owners (Lower Sioux Community) to discuss the plans and cost estimate is forthcoming. **Shelburne 18 Grade Stabilization, Lyon County.** Engineering services were requested for this grade stabilization project for off-channel storage along a judicial ditch that would double as a field access crossing. A preliminary design and cost estimate have been prepared and a meeting with staff and the ditch authority is planned for March 4<sup>th</sup>. BWSR Water Quality & Storage Grant funds will be utilized for this project and will reimburse engineering costs.

**AREA II – Yellow Medicine River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan.** Netzke presented a Resolution supporting YMRWD’s request to extend the plan to December 31, 2028. The watershed is waiting for MCPA to furnish information so the Plan may establish new goals and new priority areas. Motion by Crowley, seconded by Wakefield, to approve the Resolution and authorize signatures. By roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

### **OTHER BUSINESS.**

Double Lake Public Access. Commissioner Anderson reported that at Double Lake, a public access to the south lake is wanted, however, the landowner is unwilling to sell. Red Rock Sportsmen’s Club desires a new culvert that connects the two lakes that would allow for boat passage. Hydraulics do not support a larger culvert. DNR Trails and Waterways have been contacted; the larger culvert may be a possibility. Wakefield asked if a letter of support from our organizations would be helpful. Netzke will speak with DNR and will offer a letter if it will assist in decision making.

MN Paid Leave. Commissioner Crowley asked if any county has encountered issues so far. Lyon County had to change policy for intermittent leave, from 8-hour to 15-minute increments as an employee had a doctor’s note requiring 15 minutes per day of leave. Johnson reported from the AMC meeting that 75% of the claims are being handled by the state, and program cost is trending 20% higher than anticipated. Met Life is handling the other 25% of the claims. An example of an error in a claim (\$17/hr employee receiving \$73/hr payments) was shared; Paid Leave staff reported being too busy to deal with the error and that the employee will likely have to pay it back eventually. Crowley noted that the State of Minnesota deposited \$66.5 million into Paid Leave Fund to start it off. He also

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noted that our legislators are exempt from Paid Leave – paying in and collecting. As a county commissioner, an elected official, he is not eligible to collect, but is required to pay in. All hope for legislation that will make some effective changes to the program.

**ADJOURNMENT.** With no other business, Chairman Anderson and Chairman Johnson declared the meeting adjourned at 10:02 AM.

**UPCOMING MEETINGS:**

April Board Meeting	Thursday, April 2, 2026	Redwood County Learning Center
May Board Meeting	Thursday, May 7, 2026	Lyon County Government Center

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Luke Johnson, RCRCA Chairman      Date