



Minnesota River Basin Joint Powers Board

Plan of Work

July 1, 2008 - June 30, 2009 (FY09)*

*some aspects of the work plan extend beyond FY09

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Submitted by 
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Minnesota River Board Basics

In 1992, the Minnesota River Citizen's Advisory Committee (MRCAC) was formed. In 1994, the MRCAC released the report, *Working Together: A Plan to Restore the Minnesota River*. The report detailed ten recommendations (listed below) that the participants believed would improve Minnesota River health.

- restore floodplains and riparian areas,
- restore wetlands,
- manage drainage ditches and storm sewers as tributaries,
- improve land management practices,
- monitor water quality throughout the Minnesota River Basin,
- establish a "Minnesota River Commission" to oversee the clean-up effort,
- establish local joint powers agreements,
- improve technical assistance to local governments,
- engage the general public, and
- enforce existing laws

As a result of the MRCAC recommendations and increasing Minnesota River awareness, the Minnesota River Basin Joint Powers Board (hereafter referred to as MRB) was forged in 1996 (*Minnesota Statute 103F.378*). The MRB was founded on

- the desire to collaborate and leverage in a judiciously appropriate manner and
- the desire to assume a leadership role and be more pro-active in the coordination of efforts at the local level.

Mission and Vision

The MRB is founded on and conducts its business based on the principles and objectives outlined in our Mission and Vision statements.

MRB Mission Statement

"To provide leadership, build partnerships, and support efforts to improve and protect water quality in the Minnesota River Basin"

MRB Vision Statement

"Conservation and restoration of Minnesota River resources and our way of life can only be achieved by a cooperative effort between citizens and all levels of government and business."

Organizational Structure

The MRB partnership structure (Figure 1) has been in place since 2003 and remains a desirable and productive organizational profile. The internal structure of the Minnesota River Board itself should be evaluated, possibly for greater inclusion of basin partners. The relationship between the Water Resources Center (WRC) and the MRB has been very good and has been highlighted by legislators during MRB negotiations. The WRC has facilitated stability and progress for both entities. Significant dedication to re-establishing relations and partnerships with the watershed programs needs to and will occur over the next few years.

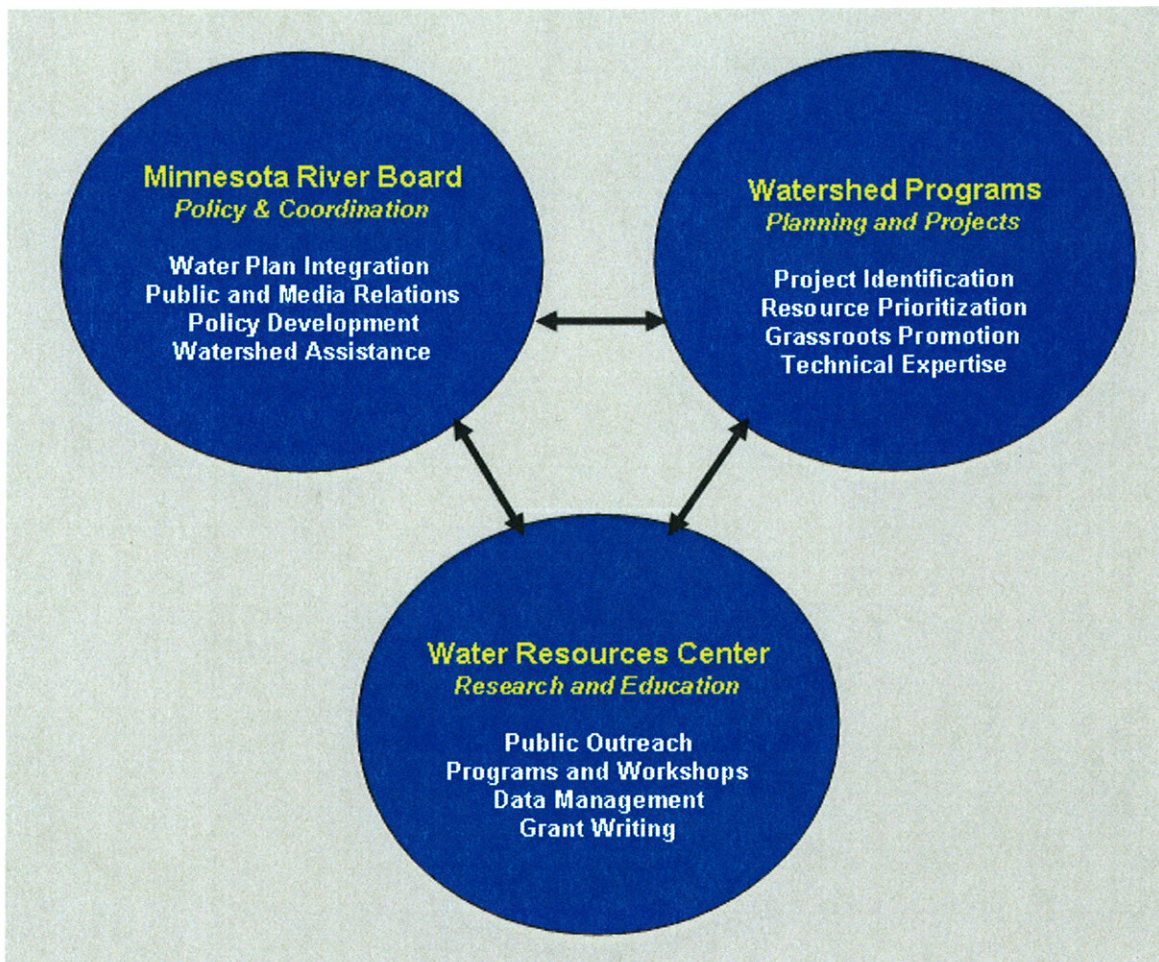


Figure 1. MRB Organizational Structure

Membership

The MRB is a joint powers board charged with coordinating efforts to improve water quality in the 38-county Minnesota River Basin and providing reporting for and assistance to 12 major watersheds (Figure 2). Upon acceptance of the joint powers agreement, each county with dues paid in full shall have one county commissioner as its delegate to the board and one county commissioner as an alternate. A technical and citizen advisory committee was established to advise the board and consisted of a technical representative from each participating county in the basin and citizens who are not county employees, but who have an interest in agriculture, conservation, sporting activities, and other relevant areas as determined by the board. This committee has not been active and should be revitalized, as input from these basin stakeholders is critical for the positive advancement of the board's mission. For counties wishing to return to the board, a new policy detailing re-admission procedures was approved in January of 2008. Contact the MRB staff for more information.

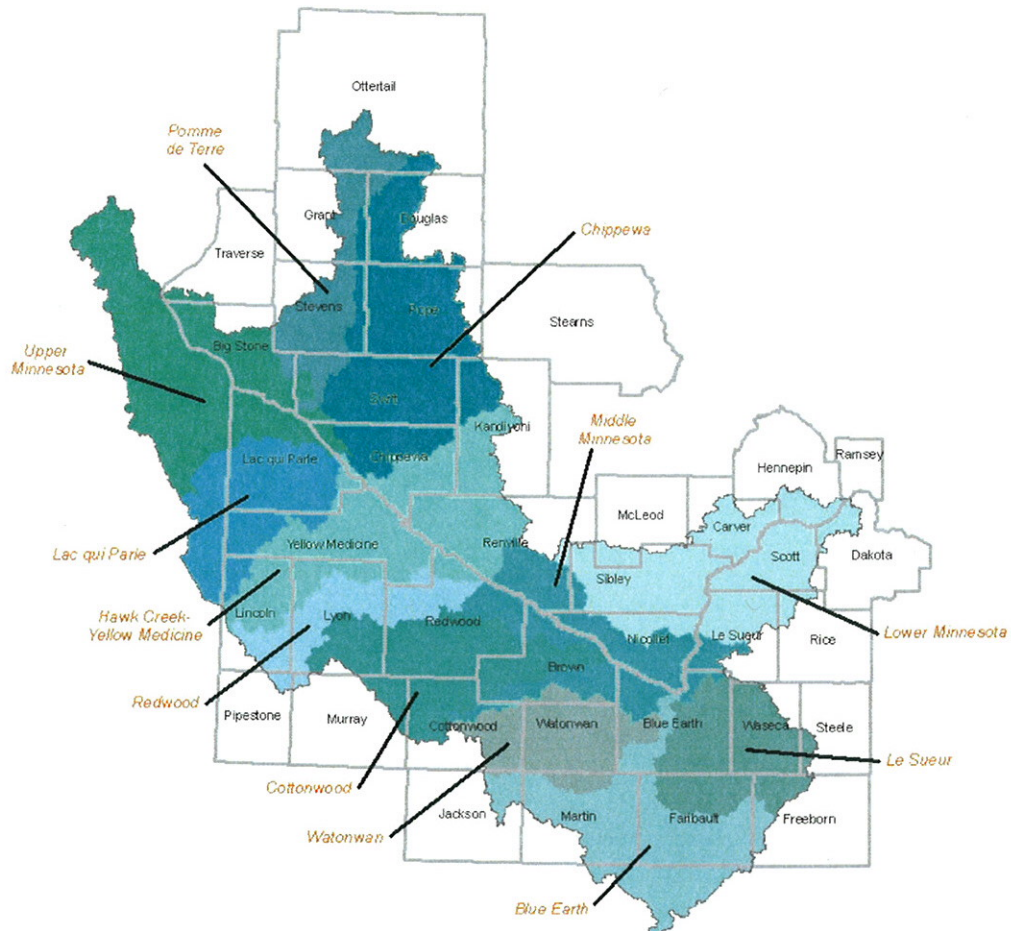


Figure 2. Figure denotes the Minnesota River basin made up of 12 major watersheds and 38 counties associated with the Minnesota River Basin Joint Powers Board.

FY09 Plan of Work

In 2006, the MRB completed a "Procedures Guide and Strategic Plan (2006-2010)" to guide our work (<http://www.minnesotariver.org>) and in FY08 produced the first work plan under the renewed legislative funding scenario. As a result of these plans, a substantive review of our statutory obligations and an ongoing assessment of what the MRB could and should be for the Minnesota River and our partners have been completed.

In FY08, we attempted to address all of the various statutory components where additional work was needed. For each of those components, we identified strategies for improvement; however, over this past year, the executive committee, MRB staff, and many of our partners thought it would be better to focus on areas where our services can be the most beneficial, rather than trying to be all things to all people. We quickly realized that there were several sections of the FY08 work plan that collectively were too much to handle given our available resources. We address our progress, shortcomings, and items to be carried forward (from the FY08 work plan to the FY09 work plan) in our FY08 end-of-year progress report.

Some uncompleted progress measures from the FY08 work plan were due to the magnitude of the work load, a work load that experienced several setbacks due to delays in state funds transfer to the MRB, which further delayed our hiring process. Although the funding was approved to start July 1, 2007, funds were not received until October 1, 2007 and our new staff person largely responsible for many aspect of the FY08 work plan was not hired until early January of 2008. Therefore, Director Fisher and the staff will utilize some remaining funds to get the critical aspects of the FY08 work plan completed during FY09.

The work plan for FY09 is structured using a set of goal statements that are then followed by a series of actions and products that will serve as our progress measures in FY09. Certain aspects of the FY09 plan rely heavily on completion of FY08 progress measures; therefore, several FY08 actions have been carried forward and are noted. The targeted completion dates for each item are noted in parentheses (month/year).

GOAL 1. Efficiently complete MRB administrative duties on schedule and be accountable for expenditures of public funds.

- A) Prepare, obtain MRB and BWSR approval for, and implement FY09 Work Plan and budget. (9/08)
- B) Evaluate and implement, if approved by the MRB, a plan to dissolve the existing Assistant Director Position and hire an administrative assistant (0.5 FTE; 9/08)
- C) Finalize a calendar of events for FY09 and future years that establishes the upcoming calendar year's meeting times and locations, officer nominations and installments, budget preparation, staff reviews, award nominations, annual meetings, etc.... (10/08)
- D) Provide a progress report to BWSR by February 1, 2009. (2/09)
- E) Complete Executive Committee planning sessions in September of 2008 and April of 2009. (4/09)
- F) Complete an annual internal audit. (5/09)
- G) Conduct performance reviews as scheduled for the staff (6/09).
- H) Continue to visit and communicate with county boards, water planners, SWCD representatives, and other water-quality related partners in the Minnesota River basin. (6/09)
- I) Strive to bring non-member counties back to the MRB, with an objective of securing at least 1. (6/09)
- J) Hold 6 full board meetings (bi-monthly), one of which will serve as the annual meeting, and two of which will be in partnership with basin organizations. (6/09)
- K) Provide an Annual Report to BWSR and basin legislators by June 30, 2009. (6/09)
- L) Write at least two grant and/or contract applications to bring external funds into the MRB to support our financial foundation and bring needed projects to the basin and provide significant cash and in-kind contributions to the projects. (6/09)

GOAL 2. Reconvene the technical and citizen advisory board to the MRB.*

**Completion of this goal will likely extend into FY10*

- A) Establish and utilize a budget to defray the costs of participant travel to an initial advisory board meeting, to include county water planners, SWCD representatives, watershed organizations, and nongovernmental organizations. (9/08)
- B) Utilize the collective experience of the basin citizens and technical staff to better develop a suite of services that the MRB can package for the basin. (12/08)
- C) Establish a committee structure and process of technical representatives and citizen representatives whose input is critically important to the future work of the MRB. (1/09)
- D) Develop a plan on which to formally gather input from and to provide services to the advisory group. (1/09)
- E) Establish a meeting schedule and format based on input from the advisory committee. (1/09)
- F) Establish a platform based on policy, education, and service, not implementation. (4/09)

GOAL 3. Resolve the real and perceived MRB identity problem.

- A) Establish a committee to take another look at important questions surrounding the MRB identity, including further definition of our role(s), services that we could/should offer, and what sets the MRB apart from other watershed organizations. (9/08)
- B) Provide recommendations to the MRB regarding the results of Goal 3A. (9/08)
- C) Develop a proposed statutory revision based on the recommendations from Goal 3B and with input from the advisory committee. (11/08)
- D) Request assistance from and work with basin legislative leaders to submit bills to make suggested modifications on Minnesota Statute 103F.378 in the 2009 legislative session (in conjunction with Goal 9 as appropriate). (11/08)

GOAL 4. Develop and implement a visibility plan.

- A) Convene a committee to discuss visibility options and to develop a set of recommendations to the MRB regarding the visibility plan. (9/08)
- B) Develop a brochure that highlights the MRB mission, programs, services, and strategic objectives. (11/08)
- C) Develop a high quality display for use at county fairs, basin events, etc... (11/08)
- D) Begin implementation of visibility plan components. (12/08)
- E) Reformat the MRB website into a more user friendly and easily updated venue that can serve as a "go to" place for a variety of information. (12/08)

GOAL 5. Facilitate a process to improve and increase the level of communication within the MRB and between the MRB and our partners.

- A) Implement bi-monthly MRB newsletters (2-4 pages), including features written by delegates, county staff, watershed professionals, and others. (10/08)
- B) Begin to profile delegates/watershed professionals in each newsletter. (9/08)
- C) Include condensed articles on major Minnesota River issues, similar to Envision 2020 reports. (9/08)
- D) Develop and utilize a set of committees to draw on the expertise and input of delegates and our partners into the mainstream workings of the MRB. (11/08)
- E) Enhance communications in conjunction with other media/outreach such as the Minnesota River Watershed Alliance, local newspapers, etc... (12/08)

GOAL 6. Elevate MRB involvement in continuing education and outreach.

- A) Gather information as part of Goal 2 to determine what educational needs are truly warranted. (10/08)
- B) Prepare a fact sheet for distribution to our various partners that highlights our programming options, available services (including funding assistance), and upcoming events. (11/08)
- C) Increase activity with and visibility to the Minnesota River Watershed Alliance, watershed organizations, private partners, and county staff. (4/09)
- D) Complete at least one major and one minor workshop in the basin, preferably based on needs identified from the technical advisory committee. (6/09)

GOAL 7. Serve as a “voice” and ‘resource” for the Minnesota River Basin.*

**Completion of this goal will likely extend into FY10 and be ongoing*

- A) Provide services as requested to support the various watershed and water quality interests in the Minnesota River basin, allowing the voice of 38 counties to be heard on issues in local areas, St. Paul, across the region, and beyond. (6/09)
- B) Provide assistance to agencies, counties, watersheds, etc.... in the dissemination of information regarding policy changes, funding opportunities, and staffing/project service options. (6/09)
- C) Provide *pro bono* grant preparation assistance/consulting services as requested, with a target of at least 2 collaborations that benefit MRB members and/or local partners. (6/09)
- D) Provide a minimum of 2 presentations on behalf of the MRB and our partners as requested.(6/09)
- E) Continue to provide assistance as needed to existing partnerships, such as BNC septic initiative, the BMP Challenge, and the Crystal Lake Clean Water Partnership. (6/09)
- F) Serve as a resource for program information, legislative updates, etc.... (6/09)
- G) Serve in a lobbyist capacity for approved MRB topics/legislation. (6/09)

GOAL 8. Evaluate progress measures identified in FY08 and develop a progress report for the Minnesota River Basin in FY09 that covers all the major watersheds.

- A) In partnership with BWSR and water quality professionals from the Minnesota River Basin, evaluate the FY08 Progress Report Measures submitted to BWSR and the basin legislators, including ongoing collection of additional input received from agency, watershed, county, SWCD, private partner, and citizen representatives. (9/08)
- B) Finalize the measures to be used and refine the data collection and reporting strategy, to include, but not be limited to, funding acquired, projects implemented, potential water quality improvements, future needs, and partner perceptions. (11/08)
- C) Complete and submit a full Minnesota River Water Quality and Watershed Improvement Progress Report using the measures described above, to the legislature, governor, basin stakeholders, and other interested parties. (4/09)
- D) Include in this report a summary of the county water plan updates and priorities and in conjunction with the progress report, include recommendations for measures of success on which to gauge water plans. (4/09)
- E) Use the information garnered during this effort to assist MPCA, US Corp of Engineers, and others develop an updated Minnesota River Management Plan as opportunities arise. (6/09)

GOAL 9. Evaluate MRB membership structure and watershed funding and implement recommendations.

- A) Form a committee to evaluate and consider revisions to the current MRB membership process and structure, to include a full consideration of the addition of watershed, citizen, and technical representatives as delegates to the MRB. (9/08)
- B) Evaluate watershed-based funding scenarios, including a per household fee for water quality and watershed improvements. (11/08)
- C) Work with legislators and watershed staff on future watershed-based management legislation. (11/08)
- D) Utilize the information here to prepare draft bill language for the formation of a modified watershed management unit in the Minnesota River Basin in conjunction with Goal 3. (11/08)

GOAL 10. Recognize the contributions of professionals, citizens, and students in the Minnesota River Basin.

- A) Re-evaluate an awards/incentive program for junior and senior high students from the basin participating in sanctioned science fair programs. (9/08)
- B) Modify nominations process to allow staff to nominate after deadlines pass if no nominations are brought forward. (9/08)
- C) Develop and implement an undergraduate scholarship program for students in the basin studying water quality issues. (10/08)
- D) Award two deserving participants from the basin with the "Confluence" and "Tributary" awards. (6/09)

GOAL 11. Effectively manage the first year of the Conservation Innovation Grant from the NRCS for Water Quality Credit Trading

- A) Provide support services for the \$999,997 CIG grant to develop and implement a water quality credit trading program here in the Middle and Lower Minnesota River Watersheds, the Greater Blue Earth River Basin, and to provide administrative support for the Sauk River Watershed.
- B) Provide significant administrative services and work with various partners to enhance market-driven water quality improvement via land use modifications.
- C) Contract technical services with appropriate entities based on work plan requirements.

Proposed MRB FY09 Budget

Line Items (details listed below budget)	Funding Source Used for Line Item Expense			Totals
	State of MN	County Income*	External**	
FY08 Balances (6/30/08 estimates)	\$ 44,372	\$ 1,074	\$ 967	\$ 46,413
FY09 Funds (anticipated)	\$ 100,000	\$ 45,425	\$ 43,473	\$ 188,898
Total Funds for FY09	\$ 144,372	\$ 46,499	\$ 44,440	\$ 235,311
Expenses				
0.5 FTE Executive Director	\$ 13,750	\$ 23,044	\$ 5,000	\$ 41,794
0.45 FTE Administrative Assistant	\$ 7,580	\$ 4,900	\$ 0	\$ 12,480
1.0 FTE Program Director	\$ 42,514	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 42,514
CIG Related Contractual Labor	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 21,739	\$ 21,739
Student Worker	\$ 4,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 0	\$ 6,000
Fringe Benefits (All Staff)	\$ 19,503	\$ 7,158	\$ 6,934	\$ 33,595
MCIT Insurance	\$ 0	\$ 2,600	\$ 0	\$ 2,600
MRB Meeting Expenses	\$ 0	\$ 1,600	\$ 0	\$ 1,600
Communications	\$ 2,400	\$ 1,347	\$ 0	\$ 3,747
Travel	\$ 10,750***	\$ 1,450	\$ 0	\$ 12,200
Printing	\$ 3,500	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 3,500
Awards/Student Incentives Program	\$ 2,600***	\$ 400	\$ 0	\$ 3,000
Supplies/Equipment	\$ 2,000	\$ 0	\$ 10,767	\$ 12,767
Marketing/Promotions	\$ 10,275***	\$ 1,000	\$ 0	\$ 11,275
Outreach/Programming	\$ 25,500***	\$ 1,000	\$ 0	\$ 26,500
Total Expenditures	\$ 144,372	\$ 46,499	\$ 44,440	\$ 235,311

*County Dues for calendar year 2008 to be utilize for FY09 (July 1, 2008 – June 30, 2009). This column also includes other potential funds, such as insurance reimbursements, donations, etc....

**External funds include estimates on grants/contracts for projects and other paid services provided by the MRB.

***Portions of these funds may carry over into FY10 if the availability of appropriate projects is limited.

Executive Director: 50% of the Executive Director Fisher's annual salary

Administrative Assistant: 45% of an to-be-named Administrative Assistant (October-June)

Watershed Specialist: 100% of Program Director Susie Carlin's annual wages

CIG Related Contractual Labor: Funds that will be likely contracted to other organizations to help manage the CIG duties.

Student Worker: 768 hours of student worker assistance (includes internship opportunities)

Fringe Benefits: Estimated Health Insurance, Required Leave, FICA, etc.... for all MRB staff and students listed above

MCIT Insurance: Estimated Annual Insurance Payment

MRB Meeting Expenses: Expenses for 5 MRB business meetings, the annual meeting, 2 executive committee planning sessions, and other required committee meetings

Communications: Postage (\$2,100), cellular phone and data services (\$1,000), and web site expenses (\$647).

Travel: Designated Vehicle for MRB use and lodging (7/08 – 6/09; \$7,950), Guest Travel to various MRB Meetings (\$2,750); staff and executive committee per diem and personal mileage (\$1,500)

Printing: Preparation of various reports, newsletters, stationary needs, in-house copy needs (\$3,500)

Awards Program: "Tributary" and "Confluence" Awards (\$250), MRB Scholarship (\$1,000), Science Fair Awards (\$750), Undergraduate Student Research Award (\$1,000)

Supplies/Equipment: Office furniture for staff, GPS navigator, computer hard/software, office supplies

Marketing/Promotions: MRB program advertising (\$1,500), Brochure development/printing (\$1,200), Display development and construction (\$2,200), Marketing/visibility implementation (\$2,100), Web Site Development/Updates (\$4,275)

Outreach/Programming: Technical/citizen advisory committee meetings (\$4,500), workshop, trainings, and conferences on grants/funding opportunities, ongoing research, program updates, etc... (\$22,000)