



**APPLICATION PACKET  
FOR WATER QUALITY PROGRAM**

**APPROVED MARCH 10, 2020**

**BACKGROUND:** This application packet contains materials and process information related to the Red River Watershed Management Board (RRWMB) Water Quality Program. Member watershed districts of the RRWMB are the only eligible applicants for funding of water quality projects that meet the criteria of this Program. The RRWMB approved a Strategic Plan in December 2019 that includes water quality as a priority. The RRWMB is implementing this strategic plan in accordance with enabling legislation and current authority under law as described below.

**HISTORY:** In 1976, the Minnesota legislature passed legislation which enabled existing watershed districts within the Minnesota portion of the Red River Basin (RRB) to partner in a common effort under a Joint Powers Agreement to form the Lower Red River Watershed Management Board (LRRWMB). This organization was created for the purpose of instituting, coordinating, and financing projects and programs to alleviate flooding and to assure the beneficial use of water in the watershed of the Red River of the North and its tributaries. The 1976 legislation originally gave the LRRWMB authority for "construction and maintenance of projects of common benefit" and allowed member watershed districts to levy up to two mills ad valorem tax to be utilized for flood water retention projects. One-half of the tax collected is retained by the individual member watershed district for projects within the district while the other half is transferred to the LRRWMB.

**CURRENT AUTHORITY UNDER LAW:** Legislation in 1991 changed the name of the LRRWMB to the RRWMB and redefined the authority of the Board to include "development, construction, and maintenance of projects and programs of benefit to the RRB." Legislation in the 1989 Special Session changed the mil levy rate to the current ad valorem tax levy limitation of 0.04836 percent of the taxable market value of all property within the watershed districts that are members of the RRWMB.

**OVERVIEW:** The RRWMB included \$3 million for water quality projects and initiatives in July 2019 for the 2020 operating budget. The RRWMB Managers will reassess program and budgetary needs before the annual budget and levy is set in July of each year.

**SECTION I. APPLICATION REVIEW AND APPROVAL PROCESS:** The RRWMB meets the third Tuesday of the month unless otherwise noted. To efficiently process applications, the following process will be used by the RRWMB to discuss, consider, and review information submitted by its member watershed districts. Action will not be taken by the RRWMB Managers at the same RRWMB meeting that the application is first presented. Action on applications presented may be taken after Water Quality and Monitoring Advisory Committee (WQMAC) recommendations are submitted to the RRWMB Managers.

**A. Submittal of Application to the RRWMB:** Applications must be submitted to the RRWMB by the first Monday of the Month. Electronic submittals via e-mail are acceptable. Applications received will be considered at the next RRWMB regular meeting.

**B. Presentation to the RRWMB Managers:** The RRWMB will invite each application to be presented by the sponsoring member watershed district at a regular monthly meeting of the RRWMB. The short presentation shall describe how the water quality project will address priority water quality issues. The presentation shall include summarized information to be considered in the WQAMC review and noting how the proposed project will affect:

- The tributaries to the Red River or other streams and water bodies within a watershed district's jurisdiction; and/or,
- The Red River main stem.

The presentation shall also contain a description of the duration of the proposed activity and the total cost through completion. Cooperating participants in the funding of the proposed activity shall be identified with verification that funding will be available through completion if the RRWMB Managers determine that the project should move forward through this process.

**C. Review by the RRWMB WQMAC:** Following an applicant's presentation, if the RRWMB Managers determine the project merits consideration, it shall refer the application to the WQMAC for in-depth review. The RRWMB Managers may also defer the project to the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) for technical and engineering review as needed. Upon completion of this review(s), the WQMAC shall return a recommendation to the RRWMB Managers. The RRWMB Managers shall have final authority to award funds or to decline funding, and to choose the level of funding to be awarded. In reviewing applications and recommending appropriate funding levels, the WQMAC shall take the following additional points into consideration:

- The magnitude of load reduction or water quality improvement projected due to project implementation. Performance against this criterion will be enhanced if the project also demonstrates a substantial contribution towards achieving the goals or objectives of the applicable local water management plan.
- The areal or linear extent of benefits in terms of length of stream reaches or area of water bodies receiving treatment.
- Duration of the benefits provided by the project. Projects that offer strong assurance of permanent or long-term benefits are preferred.

- Whether benefits include protection or improvement of a community drinking water source (surface water or directly connected to surface water) and the number of people that obtain drinking water from that source.
- Initial project construction costs and longer-term operation and maintenance costs will be considered.
- Whether the RRWMB funding of the project will leverage other funds or resources that would not be available in the absence of the RRWMB funding contribution. Projects that include leveraging of other funds/resources are preferred.
- Whether RRWMB funding of the project will create opportunities for other types of benefits, such as flood damage reduction, or natural resource enhancements apart from water quality benefits.
- Whether the project contributes to water-quality objectives on the main stem Red River, in addition to improving water quality in tributary streams or other water bodies. Projects that demonstrate improvement of water quality both to tributaries (or other local water bodies) and to the main stem Red River are preferred over projects benefitting only tributaries.

**D. Funding Agreement For Approved Projects:** A funding agreement shall be developed between the member watershed district and the RRWMB. The RRWMB will approve funding agreements by resolution. The funding agreement will include timelines for project implementation and completion. Extensions or other modifications to the funding agreement shall be submitted to the RRWMB three months prior to expiration on a form provided by the RRWMB to allow for adequate processing time. Requests for modification must be approved by the RRWMB Managers.

**E. Documentation of Project Outcomes:** A plan for documenting project outcomes must be submitted to the RRWMB that illustrates or describes how financial investments in the project and actions taken will meet the goal(s) of the project, and outcomes will be achieved. A final report shall be submitted to the RRWMB upon completion of the project.

**SECTION II. WATER QUALITY FUNDING CATEGORIES:** The RRWMB will consider funding requests in the Base Funding and Water Quality Projects categories. Costs cannot be incurred prior to receiving funds from the RRWMB for either of these categories.

**A. Base Funding (Non-competitive):** Each RRWMB member watershed district shall be eligible to apply for up to \$100,000 for use during the RRWMB fiscal year to promote or advance priority water quality objectives as identified in a local water management plan. These funds are intended to augment and support day to day water quality activities. A description of how funds will be utilized will be submitted by the member watershed district to the RRWMB on the attached Request for Base Funding Form (Appendix A). Member watershed districts seeking base funds shall:

- Complete the Request for Base Funding Form.
- Receive approval from the RRWMB for Base Funding.

- Provide an annual progress report during the duration of the project to the RRWMB in writing and shall present progress at a regular monthly meeting or other RRWMB regular event.
- Seek reimbursement for expenditures consistent with the activities in the approved Request for Base Funding form. The RRWMB will follow financial processes in accordance with the RRWMB Internal Controls and Treasurers Policy Manual on August 21, 2018 and amended on April 16, 2019.
- Funding in the “base funding” category may be applied to activities that support the “projects” category, if consistent with the approved submittal and supporting materials.
- Provide 25 (twenty-five) percent cash match of the local share to be eligible. The RRWMB will provide up to 75 percent of the local cost-share for base funding.

**B. Water Quality Projects (Competitive):** Each RRWMB member watershed district is eligible to apply for funding to plan, design, permit, and/or construct, operate, and maintain projects that protect, restore, or improve surface water quality in its area of jurisdiction or on the main stem of the Red River of the North. This may also include studies or field monitoring activities that support the mission of the RRWMB and local priorities. This category of funding shall be subject to the minimum threshold requirements listed in the next section. The RRWMB Funding Application Form for Water Quality Projects (Appendix B) shall be completed by the applicant.

**Note:** Watershed districts can apply for both Base Funding and Water Quality Project Funding at the same time.

**SECTION III. CRITERIA FOR FUNDING WATER QUALITY PROJECTS:** A project proposed for RRWMB funding must meet the following criteria:

- A. Meeting Goals and Objectives of Locally Adopted Water Management Plan:** The applicant must demonstrate the project contributes to implementing the surface water quality actions or achieving the surface water quality goals and objectives listed in a current, locally adopted water management plan. For example, this may be a Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies (WRAPS) plan, a One-Watershed One Plan (1W1P), or other approved plan that directs local units of government to address water quality issues. The RRWMB may also consider new and emerging issues as identified by the applicant not specifically listed in an adopted water management plan.
- B. RRWMB Membership:** The applicant must be a member of the RRWMB. However, the applicant may pass funds through to a partner organization to achieve the purposes stated in the application. A description of how funds will be used by partner organizations shall be illustrated in the application and supporting materials.
- C. Effects on Flooding:** The project cannot cause, increase, or exacerbate flooding problems that would be contrary to the RRWMB mission of flood damage reduction and beneficial use of water. In connection with this requirement, for projects that include a drainage component, consistency with the Basin Technical and Scientific Advisory Committee (BTSAC) Technical Paper 3 must be demonstrated.

**SECTION IV. COST-SHARE RATES FOR WATER QUALITY PROJECTS:** The RRWMB Managers will use discretion for each project and will consider the overall benefits and merits of projects submitted for funding. The RRWMB will use the following for determining cost-share rates for Water Quality Projects:

- A. State Share – 50 (fifty) percent.
- B. Local Share – 50 (fifty) percent:
  - RRWMB: 2/3s (two-thirds) of local project costs.
  - Applicant: 1/3 (one-third) of local project costs.
- C. Applicants shall be responsible for securing funds for the remaining share of 50 (fifty) percent of overall project costs from other sources including but not limited to state and federal partners.

**SECTION V. GENERAL PROGRAM NOTES:**

- A. Variations from these requirements may be allowed for all proposals but only in accordance with the provisions set forth in the RRWMB Governing Documents.
- B. The RRWMB reserves the right to adjust this process if there are more applications than funding available for Water Quality Projects. At that time, a scoring and ranking process will be developed by the WQMAC and will be approved by the RRWMB Managers.
- C. In order to reduce paperwork, the RRWMB may accept application materials, pollution reduction calculator results, and other information the applicant has submitted to state and federal agencies.
- D. Ground water quality is currently not a goal of this funding program. However, best management practices that treat surface waters that provide secondary or incidental benefits to groundwater are eligible. For example, bioreactors or saturated buffers to treat subsurface tile water are eligible practices while the installation of subsurface tile is not an eligible expense.
- E. The use of the word “benefit” within this document relates to projects, practices, or programs that protect, enhance, or improve water quality parameters. Benefit is not intended to mean or equate to benefit cost analysis or general economic analysis.



**APPENDIX A  
REQUEST FOR BASE FUNDING**

Member watershed districts of the RRWMB who wish to request Base Funding must complete this form. Completed forms can be submitted to the RRWMB at [rob.sip@rrwmb.org](mailto:rob.sip@rrwmb.org) or by mailing to the RRWMB office at:

11 Fifth Avenue East  
Suite B  
Ada, MN 56510

If you require additional space to complete any of the questions below, please attach additional sheets as necessary.

**Requesting Entity:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date Requested:** \_\_\_\_\_

1. How will this project advance priority water quality objectives as identified in a local water management plan?
2. Please cite the local water management plan(s) that your work will focus on.
3. How will Base Funding augment and support day to day water quality activities of your watershed district?
4. What are long-term goals of your Base Funding request and what outcomes will be achieved?



**APPENDIX B  
RRWMB FUNDING APPLICATION FORM FOR WATER QUALITY PROJECTS**

Member watershed districts of the RRWMB who wish to request funding for Water Quality Projects must submit this application form in accordance with RRWMB funding processes and procedures. Completed applications can be submitted to the RRWMB at [rob.sip@rrwmb.org](mailto:rob.sip@rrwmb.org) or by mailing to the RRWMB office at:

11 Fifth Avenue East  
Suite B  
Ada, MN 56510

If you require additional space to complete any of the questions below, please attach additional sheets as necessary.

**1. Requesting Entity:** \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Program Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Project Partners:** \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Location of Project (County and Township):** \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Description of Request** (Please indicate if the Water Quality Project is new or relates to an existing Water Quality Project).

A. For New Water Quality Projects (Please describe your Water Quality project here):

B. For Existing Water Quality Projects (Please describe completed past efforts that relate to this Water Quality project):

**6. Relation to the RRWMB Vision, Mission, Principle Objective, and Supporting Objectives:** Please describe how this project contributes to water-quality objectives on the main stem Red River. How does your project reduce, mitigate, or eliminate pollutant loading to local tributaries and the Red River main stem?

**7. Relation to Local Plans:** Please describe how your project relates to or meets goals and objectives in local water management plans and how water quality will be improved in tributary streams or other water bodies.

**8. Project Area Map:** Please include a map illustrating where the project will be completed along with the areal or linear extent of benefits in terms of length of stream reaches or area of water bodies receiving benefits.

**9. Project Duration and Maintenance:** What is the life expectancy of your project and how will the project be maintained? Please explain your plan to maintain, expand, or enhance the project in the next 5 years. Include costs for operations and maintenance in addition to initial project construction.

**10. Drinking Water Benefits:** Does the proposed project include protection or improvement of a surface water used for a community drinking water source?

**11. Other Project Benefits:** Please describe if the project will create opportunities for other types of benefits, such as flood damage reduction, or natural resource enhancements apart from water quality benefits.

**12. Monitoring Plan:** Describe your plan for quantitative monitoring and documentation of project benefits.

**13. Leveraging of Funds:** Will the project leverage funds from other sources? Please list all funding sources in Table 1 Below:

**Table 1. Project Funding Sources:**

<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Federal		
State		
Local		
RRWMB		
Other (NGO, Etc.)		
<b>TOTAL</b>		

**14. Project Timeline** (Please describe the proposed project timeline):

**15. Additional Information** (Please list or discuss any other information that you wish to submit as part of this application):