



## MEMORANDUM

Comfort Lake-Forest Lake Watershed District

**Date:** January 15, 2026  
**To:** CLFLWD Board of Managers  
**From:** Mike Kinney, District Administrator  
**Subject:** Lower St. Croix Policy Committee January Meeting



**District Wide**

### Background/Discussion

The purpose of this agenda item is to provide an update on the Lower St. Croix Watershed Partnership (LSCWP). Related topics were discussed at the [December 18<sup>th</sup>](#) and [January 8<sup>th</sup>](#) CLFLWD regular board meetings. The LSCWP Policy Committee will hold its first meeting of the year on January 26<sup>th</sup> where it may elect the committee's chair and vice chair. Meeting materials will be distributed either January 16<sup>th</sup> or January 20<sup>th</sup>. There are several other topics which may be discussed at the upcoming Policy Committee meeting such as the metro convene meeting, natural shoreline awards, and partnership structure.

### Metro Convene Meeting

This topic was discussed at the last regular board meeting. This memo provides some additional clarification on how the convene meeting process works. The metro convene meeting is a necessary step in the allocation process for Watershed Based Implementation Funding (WBIF) grant funds. The meeting date is still TBD, likely sometime in late March, and information is expected to be confirmed soon.

The metro convene meeting committee must decide how to distribute the \$1.2 million in *metro* WBIF funding for FY27. There are several options for how this can be done. Some examples include:

1. The committee may pool the funds with the broader Partnership, which is generally what has been done in the past.
2. The committee may choose to allocate funding directly to metro organizations in an equitable manner determined by the committee.
3. The committee has the option to determine some combination of pooling and direct allocations to individual organizations. In 2024, the committee directly allocated \$75,000 to the Sunrise River WMO and pooled the remaining metro funds with the Partnership. I do have staff researching how the SRWMO became included in the Washington County WBIF funding as it was not previously. Initial years only included the 10 entities that comprised the LSC within Washington County. A \$75,000 allocation to the SRWMO is potentially equal to its annual budget. No information is available on their website so I have requested copies of their budget.



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At the start of the convene meeting, the committee must decide how it will proceed with voting. In 2022, the committee agreed to vote by super majority (i.e., 8 out of the 11 votes present). In 2024, the committee voted by simple majority. Voting members consist of all the watershed districts, watershed management organizations, and soil and water conservation districts within the metro portion of the LSC. Additionally, counties with approved groundwater plans may have a vote as well; as of now, Washington County is the only such county. This amounts to 11 voting members. Additionally, up to two cities may hold voting seats on the committee. All cities within the metro portion of the LSC are invited to participate, and they must decide among themselves which two will have voting seats, if any are interested. In 2024, the cities of Afton and Columbus held these seats. The 2026 city seats are TBD.

The convene meeting committee may discuss the merits of different funding allocation scenarios. The committee may consider individual metro organizations' priorities and funding needs, as well as the funding needs of the Partnership, such as Shared Services Staffing. The last round of WBIF ([FY25](#)) allocated \$735,000 to shared services staffing and associated expenses including a full-time Agronomy Outreach Specialist (Ellen Badger-Hanson), half-time Educator (Barbara Heitkamp), half-time Engineering Technician (Ben Harker), and educational materials/consultant assistance. Partners may wish to review budgetary needs (i.e., pooled funds) for FY27 WBIF shared services staffing.

### Natural Shoreline Awards

This topic may be added to the January 26, 2026 Policy Committee meeting agenda. It was previously discussed at the July 28, 2025 Policy Committee meeting. One of the winners of the LSC award, a CLFLWD resident, was recognized by the CLFLWD at the CLFLWD's 2025 State of the Watershed Event. The resident was also presented with the LSC award at the CLFLWD's 2025 State of the Watershed Event. More information is available on the [LSCWP website](#).

### Partnership Structure – Collaboration vs Entity

The Partnership has discussed this topic annually since its formation. The Policy Committee reviewed a [comparison of organizational arrangements](#) at its July 28, 2025 meeting.

### Links to More Information

- [Lower St. Croix Watershed Partnership Overview Presentation Slides](#)
- [Lower St. Croix Watershed Partnership Overview Presentation Recording](#)
- Lower St. Croix Meeting Materials: <https://www.lsc1wlp.org/meetings-committees>
- Lower St. Croix Shoreline Awards Page: <https://www.lsc1wlp.org/awards>



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**WBIF Funding Allocations History**

| Biennium     | Basin<br>(Non-Metro) | Metro              | Supplemental<br>WBIF via<br>BWSR <sup>1</sup> | Total              | Direct<br>Allocation to<br>non LSCWP<br>Partner <sup>2</sup> | LSCWP<br>Allocation |
|--------------|----------------------|--------------------|---|--------------------|--|---------------------|
| FY21         | \$471,070            | \$793,461          |   | \$1,264,531        | \$0  | \$1,264,531         |
| FY23         | \$471,070            | \$807,509          | \$167,615                                     | \$1,446,194        | \$0  | \$1,446,194         |
| FY25         | \$778,691            | \$1,266,380        |   | \$2,045,071        | \$75,000   | \$1,970,071         |
| FY27         | \$782,706            | \$1,266,376        |   | \$2,049,082        | TBD <sup>3</sup>   | TBD <sup>3</sup>    |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>\$2,503,537</b>   | <b>\$4,133,726</b> | <b>\$167,615</b>                              | <b>\$6,804,878</b> | <b>\$75,000</b>  | <b>\$4,680,796</b>  |

<sup>1</sup> In FY23, the LSCWP was awarded additional funding as other 1W1P partnerships did not spend their WBIF allocations

<sup>2</sup> In FY25, \$75,000 of the metro allocation was provided directly to the Sunrise River WMO for work in their watershed, per vote at convene meeting

<sup>3</sup> TBD during biennial metro convene meeting to be held sometime in 2026

| Count | Convene Meeting Organizations |
|-------|-------------------------------|
| 1     | Washington County             |
| 2     | Anoka SWCD                    |
| 3     | Ramsey County Parks SWCD      |
| 4     | Washington SWCD               |
| 5     | Brown's Creek WD              |
| 6     | Carnelian Marine St. Croix WD |
| 7     | Comfort Lake Forest Lake WD   |
| 8     | Middle St. Croix WD           |
| 9     | South Washington WD           |
| 10    | Sunrise River WMO             |
| 11    | Valley Branch WD              |
| 12    | Municipal – TBD               |
| 13    | Municipal – TBD               |