



# Watershed Districts – Greater MN

## Performance Standards Checklist Guidance

Spring 2016

**General Instructions:** The Performance Standards checklist is to be used as part of BWSR's Level II PRAP review process. The purpose of this part is to provide an overview of your district's operations in four areas: administration, planning, execution, and communication/coordination.

**The performance standards cover basic or required practices (■) and high performance practices (★).** We expect each district to meet all of the basic practice standards. The high performance standards describe the practices of high performing districts and are met less frequently. Districts will receive BWSR commendations for compliance with high performance standards. Any unmet high performance standards can serve as stretch goals for performance improvement.

## Administration

■ **Annual report: submitted by mid-year**

*This standard records whether the annual report that is due to BWSR has been submitted, is received within a "reasonable time" (i.e. mid-year for the previous year's activities). ([MS Chap. 103D.351](#)).*

■ **Financial audit: completed within last 12 months**

*The audit is required by [MS Chap. 103D.355](#). The district should have completed an audit for the previous year within the last 12 months. Audit reports are due 180 days from the end of the watershed district's fiscal year.*

■ **Drainage authority buffer strip report submitted on time**

*If the watershed district is the local drainage authority, the annual buffer strip establishment and inspection report required by [MS Chap. 103E.067](#) must be submitted to BWSR by February 1 each year. If your district is not the drainage authority, enter N/A for this item.*

■ **eLink Grant Report(s) submitted on time**

*Reporting the results of work done with BWSR grant funds is via the web-based eLink system. Grant results reporting must be completed by February 1st and meet the content requirements of the particular grant. Districts without grants requiring eLink reporting should enter N/A. Further guidance is available at <http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/grants/reporting.html>.*

■ **Rules: date of last revision or review**

*The date of the last revision, review or adoption of district rules (month and year) should be entered in the space on the form. Rules reflect the authority of the district and must be kept relevant to the changing conditions within the district.*

■ **Personnel policy exists and reviewed/updated within last 5 years**

*A personnel policy includes such procedures as how staff are compensated, hired and dismissed, and also how benefits are provided and used. A written policy document provides*

*consistency in the board's decisions on staff-related issues. If there are no district staff, enter N/A for this standard.*

- Data practices policy: exists and reviewed/updated within last 5 years  
*A data practices policy describes how the district responds to requests for information submitted under the Minnesota Data Practices Act (MS Chap. 13). Guidance for local governments is available at <http://www.ipad.state.mn.us/docs/accessmain.html>. To check "yes" the district must have a local policy and have reviewed it (determined that it is up-to-date) or updated it within the past 5 years.*
- Manager appointments: current and reported  
*This standard reports compliance with [MS Chap. 103D.311 Subp. 4](#). BWSR is one of the entities that must be notified of appointments made to the board of managers.*
- ★ Administrator on staff  
*Record "yes" if the district contracts for or employs a person designated as the district administrator. In general the administrator serves as lead staff to the board of managers and coordinates the overall administrative, project, regulatory, and public relations operations of the district.*
- ★ Board training: orientation and cont. ed. plan and record for each board member  
*Districts who meet these standards will provide for mandatory orientation class(es) for new board members. There will also be a training plan, which can be individually tailored, for each board member to enhance skills or technical expertise related to their service to the district. The district will also maintain a record of what elements of the plan each board has completed.*
- ★ Staff training: orientation and cont. ed. plan and record for each staff member  
*Districts who meet these standards will provide for mandatory orientation class(es) for new staff members. There will also be a training plan, which can be individually tailored, for each staff person to enhance skills or technical expertise related to their service to the district. The district will also maintain a record of what elements of the plan each staff member has completed. Districts without staff should enter N/A for the staff training item.*
- ★ Operational guidelines exist and current  
*Operational guidelines are written procedures and policies that are used to inform and guide the operation of the district. There is no prescribed format or content for these. However, the Minnesota Office of the State Auditor website <http://www.auditor.state.mn.us/default.aspx?page=pitfalls> has helpful information regarding procedures for local government, as does BWSR.*
- ★ Public drainage records: meet modernization guidelines  
*Districts that serve as the public drainage authority will meet this standard if they have upgraded their drainage system records to meet the Drainage Records Modernization Guidelines. These guidelines are explained at [www.bwsr.state.mn.us/drainage/index.html](http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/drainage/index.html). Districts that are not the public drainage authority should enter "N/A" for this item.*

## Planning

- Watershed management plan: up-to-date  
*This standard identifies whether the district is operating under a current management plan that is not overdue for revision.*
- ★ Biennial Budget Request (BBR) submitted on time

*BWSR encourages watershed districts considering applying for competitive grants to use the BBR form and process as a planning tool and means to notify funding sources of planned projects in advance. The BBR is submitted biennially, and covers a 2-year period. There is detailed guidance at <http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/grants/bbr/index.html>.*

- ★ Strategic plan identifies short-term activities & budgets based on state and local watershed priorities  
*Districts that meet this high performance standard will periodically develop and use a short-term, strategic plan to set priorities for annual budgets and work plans based on the watershed management plan objectives, state agency watershed priorities, and the CIP. State watershed priorities include the schedule for intensive watershed monitoring and watershed restoration and protection strategies.*
- ★ Member of County Water Plan Committee  
*Districts that meet this high performance standard be members of water plan advisory committees for Counties located within their watershed district.*

## Execution

- Engineer Reports: submitted for DNR & BWSR review  
*Record a “yes” if during the last five years all required engineer reports for district projects have been submitted for DNR and BWSR review and comment, as required by [MS Chap. 103D.711 Subd.5](#).*
- Total expenditures per year for past 10 years; operations/project split  
*This is the district’s total expenditures from all sources of funds for operations vs projects for each of the last 10 years for which data are complete. This information provides indications of any trends in the level of district activity. The information can be included at the bottom of the checklist, or attached separately.*
- ★ Water quality trends tracked for key water bodies  
*Districts that meet this standard will have identified key water bodies in their district and have an established monitoring program to track the water quality of those water bodies. The water quality data can be used to set priorities for strategic and annual activity planning and projects.*
- ★ Watershed hydrologic trends monitored / reported  
*Districts that meet this high performance standard will regularly measure one or more hydrologic parameters for their watershed or sub-watersheds and report the results. Selected parameters should be indicators of the effectiveness of water retention efforts, changes in impervious surface coverage, and hydrologic connectivity and be used to identify trends in peak flows, runoff volumes, baseflow, and other hydrologic characteristics related to the district’s watershed management objectives.*

## Communication and Coordination

- Functioning advisory committee(s): recommendations on projects, reports; maintains 2-way communication with board  
*Districts have both a citizens’ and a technical advisory committee or can combine them into one. To meet this standard the district’s advisory committee(s) meets regularly, submits recommendations and/or comments on district projects and reports, or other products. There is regular communication between the advisory committee(s) and the board.*

- Communication piece sent within last 12 months; indicate target audience  
*A communication piece can be a newsletter, press release for publication in local newspapers, enclosure with regular local government mailings, etc. that highlight the work and program opportunities of the watershed organization. Check “yes” if your District has sent out a communication piece within the last 12 months, and indicate who the primary target audience for the piece was.*
- ★ Website: contains annual report, financial statement, board members, contact info, grant report(s), watershed management plan, meeting notices, agendas & minutes, updated after each board mtg.  
*Districts that meet this standard will include the listed items on their website, update them regularly (i.e., monthly) and can include other items such as news updates, project status reports, or links to monitoring data. For website grant reporting requirements, see guidance at <http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/grants/reporting.html>.*
- ★ Obtain stakeholder input: within last 5 years  
*Districts that meet this high performance standard will have obtained stakeholder opinions or interests in water management issues within the past 5 years. This effort can take several forms and need not be a scientifically based, random sample survey. BWSR recommends seeking such broad-based public input in conjunction with major plan updates in order to give district stakeholders an opportunity to inform priority setting.*
- ★ Track progress for I & E objectives in Plan  
*Districts that meet this high performance standard will have public information and education objectives in their management plan, and will track measures to determine their progress in meeting those objectives. Types of outcomes could include changed attitudes and behaviors, increased participation in district programs, and increased demand for district assistance with water management projects.*
- ★ Coordination with County Board, SWCD Supervisors and City/Twp officials  
*Districts that meet this high performance standard will have regular contact and coordination by their managers or staff with their county commissioners, SWCD Supervisors, and city and township officials. Coordination activities include giving periodic status reports at county or municipal board meetings, inviting local elected officials or staff to attend board of managers meetings, or establishing a liaison person for regular consultation with local government staff.*
- ★ Partnerships: cooperative projects/tasks with neighboring districts, counties, soil and water districts, non-governmental organizations  
*Districts that meet this high performance standard will have conducted or coordinated programs and projects with other local governments, or non-governmental entities (e.g., Pheasants Forever, local lake association). Programs will include sharing in education, monitoring, planning, and project implementation efforts.*