



MISSISSIPPI
WATERSHED
MANAGEMENT
ORGANIZATION

Request for Board Action

Attachment 6.2

Agenda Item: Stewardship Fund — 2026 Action & Planning Grants

Presenter: E. Baskerville Doeckel and A. Flett

Meeting Date: 10 March 2026

Flexibility: Yes No

Estimated Time: Consent Agenda 10 Min. 15 Min. 30 Min. 45 Min. 1 Hour

Action Request: Information/Review Motion to approve Budget Change Other

Board Action: Approved Denied Tabled Accepted Report Other

Date of Action: 10 March 2026

Background

As directed by Stewardship Fund guidance, staff is presenting the first round of Action and Planning Grant applications of 2026. These applications have been reviewed and recommended by both staff and the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC).

One Planning Grant and two Action Grant pre-applications were accepted and invited back to complete a full application. If approved, total funding for the first round of 2026 will total \$120,000.

1. NRRC Demonstration Site Rehabilitation— \$50,000 (Action)

- a. Grantee: Northside Residents Redevelopment Council
- b. Location: North Minneapolis
- c. Partners: GreenCorps, Mortenson Family Foundation, Barr Engineering, AmeriCorps, Hennepin County, West Broadway Business & Area Coalition
- d. Summary: The NRRC is repurposing an existing water collection cistern at their Demonstration Site in north Minneapolis to divert water from the rooftop to utilize for backyard pollinator gardens, bee lawn, and fruit trees and bushes in their

residential backyard demonstration site. The purpose of this project is to provide an example of a viable alternative to traditional turf and lawn landscaping. This Action Grant will allow NRRC to provide residents with a sustainable example of alternative ground cover, rainwater capture and reuse, and alternatives to traditional turf and landscaping.

2. PFG Raingarden — \$50,000 (Action)

- a. Grantee: Seward Redesign
- b. Location: South Minneapolis
- c. Partners: Metro Blooms
- d. Summary: Seward Redesign will work with the property owner (Phelan Manufacturing Group) to install 4 raingardens on-site to capture nearly all stormwater from the site's impervious surfaces, serving as a capstone to a years-long campus greening effort. Working with Metro Blooms, the 6-inch deep rain gardens will infiltrate 100% of the 1.25"/24-hour rainfall event and 99% of runoff from the connected impervious surfaces annually. At present, roof and parking lot runoff flows out to the street, and this project will intercept that runoff and infiltrate a significant portion of it. Additionally, this reduces the parking lot's size, thereby reducing the impervious footprint in general. Community engagement with local neighborhood and business groups, along with targeted outreach messaging in newsletters, will help share the project's story with the community. The new space will be tended to and cared for by PFG employees, as it will also serve as their break area.

3. Community Planning for the Future of the Locks and Dams— \$20,000 (Planning)

- a. Grantee: Friends of the Mississippi River
- b. Location: Mississippi River; Minneapolis, St. Paul
- c. Partners: National Parks Conservation Association, American Rivers, University of Minnesota, Macalester College. Community groups, neighborhood associations and river recreation groups, agency and elected leaders from local, state, tribal and federal governments who will serve on the TAC for the project.
- d. Summary: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is conducting disposition studies of two Mississippi River locks and dams in the heart of the Twin Cities: the Lower St. Anthony Falls Lock and Dam and Lock and Dam 1. These structures have drastically altered the river for over a century, but no longer serve the barge traffic for which they were built. Removing these functionally obsolete dams could restore rare habitat, improve water quality, and enhance river recreation, yet it's not clear whether dam removal is the right choice after accounting for all trade-offs and costs. The Corps'

study is a high-level review that lacks a comprehensive assessment of habitat changes, water quality impacts, and other impacts. The Corps has said its study will likely recommend transferring the dams to any willing owner. This could foreclose the potential for dam removal before the question is even fully studied. Elected officials at the local, state, federal, and tribal levels will all have authority over aspects of this decision. Quantifying the costs and benefits of dam removal, and disseminating that information swiftly, will enable our leaders to make the best decision about these structures before they deteriorate to the point of requiring major reinvestment—or fail. Friends of the Mississippi River is playing a leading role in filling this crucial gap. FMR has been recommended for \$923,000 in funding from Minnesota’s Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF), pending legislative approval in early 2026. These funds are for a dam removal feasibility study for the Lower St. Anthony Falls Lock and Dam and Lock and Dam 1. This project will support scientifically sound decision-making to improve the health of the Mississippi River in the Twin Cities and downstream. The study will examine habitat restoration opportunities, water quality impacts, impacts on endangered species, sediment transport, and recreational changes. FMR was not awarded funding for community engagement and information dissemination. MWMO funding for engagement and dissemination will ensure that the study is used as intended: as an informative decision-making tool for community members and policymakers.

Mississippi Watershed Management Organization

RESOLUTION 2026-009

A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE 2025 ACTION AND PLANNING GRANTS.

WHEREAS, The Mississippi Watershed Management Organization works to protect and improve water quality, habitat and natural resources in an urban watershed that drains directly into the Mississippi River; and

WHEREAS, The MWMO Board of Commissioners created the Stewardship Fund to engage the community in the protection of said resources; and

WHEREAS, Three applications were submitted which meet the MWMO Board guidance of the Stewardship Fund; and

WHEREAS, Staff and the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) have reviewed the applications; and

WHEREAS, Staff and the Citizen Advisory Committee recommend funding to implement the Action and Planning Grants described above; and

WHEREAS, There is funding available in the Stewardship Fund for Community, Planning and Action grants in FY 2026.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the MWMO Board of Commissioners awards the 2026 Action and Planning Grants to the following applicants — Northside Residents Redevelopment Council, Friends of the Mississippi River, and Seward Redesign — committing \$120,000 from the Stewardship Fund, authorizes MWMO staff to take all necessary administrative actions to implement the resolution, and authorizes the MWMO Executive Director to sign the Grant Agreements.

Adopted this on the 10th day of March, 2026.

Review for the Board:

Connie Buesgens, Chair

Review for Administration: _____

Kevin Reich, Executive Director