



Request for Board Action

Attachment 6.4

Agenda Item: Stewardship Fund Action and Planning Grants

Presenter: Emmy Baskerville Doeckel and Adam Flett

Meeting Date: 08 Sept 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: 08 Sept 2026

Background

As directed by Stewardship Fund guidance, staff are recommending the second-round of 2026 Action and Planning Grant applications. These applications have been reviewed and supported by both staff and the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC).

Three (3) Action grant and 3 Planning Grant pre-applications were received, reviewed, and invited back to complete a full application. If approved, funding for this second round of 2026 will total \$180,507.50. Previous application round resulted in a total of \$120,000 grant funds being allocated for grantees, resulting in a total of \$300,507.50 Stewardship Grant funds being spent in 2026.

The following is a summary of each grant application:

1. Augsburg University – Living with Rivers Conference & Pilot Research Workshops (Action Grant - \$47,807.50)

- a. Applicant: Augsburg University
- b. Location: Cedar Riverside
- c. Partners: many

- d. Summary: Augsburg University's River Semester program will host a three-day conference in June 2027, and a follow-on undergraduate research project. The goals of the conference and research are to connect on-water education and recreation to the ongoing work of urban stormwater management. The conference, entitled "Living with Rivers," would be followed by a pilot research project in the Fall of 2027 that examines stormwater flows, urban wetlands, and ecosystem services in the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood.

2. MPRB – Restoration Improvement Plans for East River Flats Park (Action Grant - \$50,000)

- a. Applicant: MPRB
- b. Location: University of Minnesota (UMN)
- c. Partners: UMN, Studio Gro, Fishing For All, East Bank Neighborhoods Partnership
- d. Summary: East River Flats Park is an 18-acre regional park located along the Mississippi River. The proposed restoration project will address approximately 10.31 acres of degraded natural areas, including 4.11 acres of riparian woodland restoration, 4.39 acres of upland woodland restoration, 1.51 acres of prairie restoration, and 0.30 acres of basin restoration. Restoration activities will include the removal and treatment of invasive woody and herbaceous species, management of emerald ash borer-infested ash trees, stabilization of steep slopes and shoreline areas, conversion of maintained turfgrass to native prairie, rehabilitation of stormwater basins, installation of native seed mixes and plantings, and placement of biodegradable erosion-control blankets.

3. We All Need Food and Water – Green Light Puppets Ripple Effect: Cross-Age Environmental Education Through Storytelling (Action - \$27,000)

- a. Applicant: WANFAW
- b. Location: Near North; Willard Hay
- c. Partners: Minneapolis Public Schools (North Career and Technical Education [CTE] Tech Center, North Community High School, Franklin Middle School, Elizabeth Hall STEM Academy), Hennepin County Library

- d. Summary: This apprenticeship-style model of older middle and high school youth teaching early elementary-aged students combines environmental education, performing arts, and youth leadership. Middle and high school students will develop performance, communication, and teaching skills while serving as environmental ambassadors for younger students. These older students learn about water, stormwater management, the MWMO, the art of puppetry, and leadership skills. Then, these trained middle and high school students will perform water-focused puppet shows for elementary students during an all-school assembly and after-school programming at Hall STEM Academy. The youth will take the shows “on the road,” performing a minimum of three times at nearby Hennepin County Libraries (such as Webber Park, North Regional, Northeast, Pierre Bottineau, and/or Sumner)

4. Lyndale Neighborhood Association – Patio Drainage Correction (Planning - \$15,700)

- a. Applicant: Lyndale Neighborhood Association
- b. Location: Lyndale
- c. Partners: TBD
- d. Summary: The patio at the back of the Lyndale Neighborhood Association’s office was installed in 2011 as part of a major storm water management project with financial support from MWMO. In the 15 years since the previous patio was installed, issues have arisen with the patio space including drainage sloping towards the building, water leakage into the building’s first floor and basement, and cracked and deteriorating brick pavers along the building wall. The grant will be used to evaluate the site and identify the best approaches to mitigate damage, address drainage issues, and restore a community-supported example of functional stormwater infrastructure.

5. McKinley Community – McKinley Green and Grow Together (Planning - \$20,000)

- a. Applicant: McKinley Community
- b. Location: McKinley
- c. Partners: Master Gardeners Program, Step Up Youth Employment Program, McKinley residents and volunteers,

- d. Summary: The McKinley Community Center proposes the development of a comprehensive Green Infrastructure and Community Stewardship Plan for our campus and adjacent community garden sites located in North Minneapolis. The planning process will evaluate opportunities to improve stormwater management, increase native plantings, expand pollinator habitat, reduce runoff, and create educational spaces that connect residents to environmental stewardship practices.

6. Towerside Innovation District – Stormwater Management for MN Textile Center, MPHA’s Glendale Townhomes, and Prospect Park Properties (Planning - \$20,000)

- a. Applicant: Towerside Innovation District
- b. Location: Prospect Park
- c. Partners: MN Textile Center, Prospect Park Properties, LLC, Minneapolis Public Housing Authority / Glendale Townhomes
- d. Summary: The Towerside Innovation District (TID) will lead a collaborative process to help determine how a district stormwater system would be able to serve four properties that are contiguous within the TID. The properties include the Minnesota Textile Center at 3000 University Ave SE, the Minneapolis public Housing Authority Glendale Townhomes, Prospect Park Properties at 2828 university Ave., and the M-Flats condominiums at 2900 University Avenue SE.

MWMO staff is requesting approval of a not-to-exceed amount of \$180,507.50 in Capital Project funding for professional engineering services to advance to 90% Design Plans for the Little Earth Stormwater and Habitat Improvements project.

Mississippi Watershed Management Organization

RESOLUTION 2026-025

A RESOLUTION APPROVING FUNDING THE 2026 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 has created the Stewardship Fund to engage the community in the protection of said resources; and

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

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the MWMO Board of Commissioners approves not-to-exceed \$180,507.50 from the Stewardship Fund and authorizes MWMO staff to take

Adopted this the 8th day of September, 2026.

Review for the Board: _____

Connie Buesgens, Chair

Review for Administration: _____

Kevin Reich, Executive Director