COON CREEK WATERSHED DISTRICT
Request for Board Action

MEETING DATE: February 9, 2015
AGENDA NUMBER: 23
ITEM: MAWD 2015 Legislative Agenda

POLICY IMPACT: Policy
FISCAL IMPACT: Budgeted

REQUEST

BACKGROUND
Each year after the annual MAWD conference the Board of Directors convene to review the resolution and establish Legislative priorities.

1. Support the Clean Water Council Budget Recommendations during the legislative budget process

2. Support Deficiency Funding for Disaster Relief for Local Governments

3. Support clarifying usage of leasing lands purchased with State GO bonds (administrative or legislative clarification)

4. Support $500,000 for engineering study on Area II (Minnesota River Watershed) floodwater retention pond (bonding).

5. Draft legislation to authorize watershed district manager participation in meetings via conference call or other electronic means with local approval.

6. Assist watershed districts with various bonding requests for local projects.

ISSUES/CONCERNS
Clean Water Council Budget Recommendations:
In November 2008, Minnesotans passed the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment to the Minnesota Constitution to: protect drinking water sources; to protect, enhance, and restore wetlands, prairies, forests, and fish, game, and wildlife habitat; to preserve arts and cultural heritage; to support parks and trails; and to protect, enhance, and restore lakes, rivers, streams, and groundwater. Thirty-three percent of the sales tax revenue from the Legacy amendment is dedicated for the Clean Water Fund, and may only be spent to protect, enhance, and restore water quality in lakes, rivers, and streams and to protect groundwater from degradation. At least five percent of the Clean Water Fund must be spent to protect drinking water sources. The 2011 Special Session law requires that the
Clean Water Council make recommendations to the Governor and Legislature on how Clean Water Fund monies be appropriated.

**Fiscal years 2014-15 Clean Water Council funding priorities**

The following are the Clean Water Council’s priorities for FY 2014-15, assuming a $185 million biennial budget:

- **Monitoring and assessment:** The Council endorsed the 10-year watershed approach framework to monitor and assess ongoing flow, chemical, and load data at 81 outlets of the watershed and to intensively monitor biological, chemical and physical data at strategic points throughout the watershed on a 10 year cycle. The Council will reassess this priority after the first 10-year cycle is completed in 2017. Until that time, the Council anticipates funding will remain steady. For the 2014-15 biennium, the Council recommends funding these activities in the range of 11-15% of total Clean Water Funds available.

- **Watershed restoration and protection strategies:** On-the-ground activities are essential to a successful 10-year watershed approach. These strategies will target the most serious water quality and groundwater issues. Once all 81 watershed strategies have been written, the Council will reassess this priority. Until that time, the Council anticipates funding will remain steady. For the 2014-15 biennium, the Council recommends funding these activities in the range of 11-14% of total Clean Water Funds available.

- **Groundwater/drinking water protection and implementation:** The Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment requires at least five percent of the Clean Water Fund must be spent to protect drinking water sources. The Council supports funding a variety of activities, including groundwater monitoring, implementing best management practices, modeling and aquifer protection activities. Funding for these activities has increased and the Council anticipates that it will continue to increase over time. For the 2014-15 biennium, the Council recommends funding these activities in the range of 7-9% of total Clean Water Funds available.

- **Restoration and protection implementation:** The Council endorsed the 10-year watershed approach framework to include implementation activities and agrees with the public’s desire to see successful on-the-ground activities. The Council recognizes there are vast needs for non point source protection, restoration and preservation activities, and sees a need for point source activities to improve infrastructure to meet wastewater and stormwater treatment requirements for preventing and restoring impaired waters. The Council recognizes Clean Water Fund dollars provide opportunities to leverage funding from other local and federal entities and anticipates that funding for on-the-ground implementation activities to target water quality issues will increase over time. For the 2014-15 biennium, the Council recommends funding these activities in the range of 57 – 60% of total Clean Water Funds available.
• Education and civic engagement: To have a successful education and civic engagement program, a framework must be established to actively engage local organizations, and strengthen rather than duplicate or displace local watershed and land use planning. Even though the Council's recommendation to include funding for these activities was not included in the FY12-13 biennial appropriation, the Council will continue to endorse education and civic engagement activities. These efforts focus on stakeholders whose behavior can have the most significant impact on improving water quality. The Council anticipates funding for these activities will increase over time. For the 2014-15 biennium, the Council recommends funding these activities up to 1-5% of total Clean Water Funds available.

• Applied research and tool development: The Council recommended funds in the FY 12-13 biennium to develop tools and applied research that will better target critical areas ensuring implementation efforts are effective. The Council anticipates funding for these activities will remain steady over time. For the 2014-15 biennium, the Council recommends funding these activities in the range of 6-8% of total Clean Water Funds available.

OPTIONS
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RECOMMENDATION
None