

MEETING MINUTES

Riley-Purgatory-Bluff Creek Watershed District

March 18, 2026 RPBCWD Board of Managers Workshop

Attendees:

Managers Jill Crafton (Secretary), Tom Duevel (Treasurer), Bonnie Nelson (Vice President), Dorothy Pedersen (President), and Leslie Stovring*

Staff/Advisors Shauna Capron* (Natural Resources Technician III), Zach Dickhausen* (Natural Resources Manager), Liz Forbes (Deputy District Administrator), Andrew Hartmann* (Regulatory Program Coordinator), Terry Jeffery (District Administrator), Eleanor Mahon* (Community Engagement Coordinator), Dylan Monahan (Watershed Planner), Skye Slater* (GIS Communications Specialist), Shelby Sterner* (Natural Resources Technician III), Louis Smith* (Smith Partners), Scott Sobiech* (Barr Engineering), and Rachel Whittington* (Education and Outreach Specialist)

Other Attendees: Hannah Peterson*; Larry Koch*; Margaret Milligan (UMN); Dan Shaw (BWSR & UMN); Marilyn Torkelson*

**Attended the meeting virtually.*

Call to Order

President Pedersen opened the Wednesday, March 18, 2026, Board of Managers Workshop at 5:08 p.m. at the District Office, 18681 Lake Drive East, Chanhassen, Minnesota, and she called attendance by roll call as follows:

<i>Manager</i>	<i>Present</i>
Crafton	Yes
Duevel	Yes
Nelson	Yes
Pedersen	Yes
Stovring	Yes

1. Dell Road Property ID 053-3011622410005

Administrator Terry Jeffery displayed the presentation “Riley Creek – Lower Valley.” He mentioned that a property owner indicated potential interest in selling two parcels of property with a private drive in a highly erodible area adjacent to Lower Riley Creek. Administrator Jeffery said the one portion of the property scores a 32 on the District’s Creek

Restoration Action Strategy (CRAS) and the eastern portion, which extends to the Lower Riley Creek reach the District restored in 2017, scores a 40. He reminded the Board that a score over 20 indicates severe erosion and is an area that needs more immediate attention. Administrator Jeffery said he sees this as a good opportunity to gain creek access to an area the District has already identified for restoration. He asked the Board if it wants him to continue the conversation with Doyle and the property owners and noted that he is not prepared to talk about possible purchase costs, but that would be a discussion with the District's legal counsel and specifics could be discussed in a closed session.

Administrator Jeffery raised other points to consider, such as does the District want to own more property, and if the District controls conveyances, there could come a point in which the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) could decide that the District is an MS4 authority and therefore would need to meet MS4 requirements. President Pedersen brought up the long-term costs of maintenance as a consideration.

Manager Duevel said he thinks the idea is something for the District to continue to evaluate. President Pedersen and Manager Crafton agreed. Manager Nelson said she is unsure. Manager Stovring said she is not interested in the conversation continuing about purchasing the property if it leaves us at risk of needing an NPDES permit, but she is interested in discovery about easements.

2. University of Minnesota Presentation on Spring Rd. Restoration

Dan Shaw and Margaret Milligan displayed the slide presentation, "Spring Road Restoration." Ms. Milligan emphasized they are presenting a conceptual plan for the site, and it does not include cost estimates or detailed sequences of restoration events. Mr. Shaw said the next step will be developing a more detailed plan.

Ms. Milligan said the site restoration goals are to:

- Promote habitat for rare species;
- Increase diversity of native plants;
- Improve water quality in Riley Creek;
- Control invasive woody species; and,
- Expand pollinator and wildlife habitat.

Ms. Milligan explained that the target outcomes for the site restoration include:

- Reducing invasive species to less than 5% coverage;
- Increasing rare native plant populations;
- Improving soil stability and water infiltration;
- Reducing Brome and Kentucky Bluegrass; and,

- Achieving high biodiversity (50+ species).

Ms. Milligan highlighted the importance of flexibility within the plan, as different areas of the site might respond differently to the proposed tactics and techniques. She reminded the Board that the site is a very public site and for that reason many of the techniques are non- or low-chemical strategies.

Ms. Milligan and Mr. Shaw summarized the proposed strategies for the different zones on the site. They explained that for the 16-acre Brome Fields zone, the strategy is to conduct a long-term, non-chemical transition of brome-dominated grassland with conifers to a highly diverse dry prairie, using techniques like invasive tree removal, prescribed burns, and prairie plant seeding. Mr. Shaw summarized that for the 3-acre Remnant Prairie zone, the strategy is to protect and encourage threatened plants and rare habitat through prescribed burning at appropriate intervals, control of woody encroachment, and collecting and redistributing native seeds.

Ms. Milligan explained that for the 14 acres of wooded area, which is approximately half of the property, the strategy is to increase plant diversity to raise habitat value and enhance soil health and stability through techniques such as buckthorn removal, encouraging native plant regeneration, and adaptive management. She summarized that for the approximately 4 acres of visual buffer, the strategy is to maintain visual and physical buffer to the road and other development and to gradually replace the buckthorn with native trees, shrubs, and other plants.

Ms. Milligan noted the approximately two-acre Pine Stand is on the southeast side of the property. She explained that the restoration strategy for that area is to maintain a visual buffer of mature conifer trees, including a mature conifer canopy, and to increase habitat and food sources for wildlife and insects, including increasing understory plant diversity with native woodland plants. Ms. Milligan said for the 1-acre Creek and Meadow area, the strategy is to engineer, if technically feasible, a highly diverse bioretention feature with a forebay to capture and filter surface water before it enters Riley Creek. She said the strategy also includes improving stormwater filtration, controlling invasive species along the creek, and planting wet meadow plant species.

Manager Nelson said she is very supportive of the restoration project providing research opportunities because the learning gained from the restoration is important, even more so than the speed of the actual restoration.

Ms. Milligan said she thinks there could be a lot of education opportunities on the property. She described the project's next steps, including developing a detailed plan and clarifying project partnerships and project leadership and management. She said field work components that could commence include GIS mapping, a professional site survey, the woody and Christmas tree removal as well as debris removal.

Administrator Jeffery said that staff has begun conversations with Hennepin County about a possible grant and has been talking with the City of Eden Prairie.

Mr. Shaw reminded the staff and Board to document the project, especially with pictures at all of the stages.

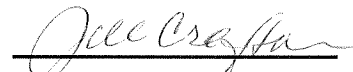
Manager Duevel asked Mr. Shaw if there will be future opportunities to get other University of Minnesota students involved in this project. Mr. Shaw said he believes so.

President Pedersen said the District is grateful for all the work Ms. Milligan, Mr. Shaw and the other University of Minnesota students have done on the project and the District is excited and looking forward to the possibilities.

3. Steering Committee Update

The meeting experienced some technical difficulties with the virtual meeting equipment, and President Pedersen adjourned the workshop at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Jill Crafton, Secretary