



LOWER MINNESOTA RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT

Executive Summary for Action

Lower Minnesota River Watershed District Board of Managers Meeting
Wednesday, April 16, 2025

Agenda Item

Item 7. C. – State of the Minnesota River Listening Session

Prepared By

Linda Loomis, Administrator

Summary

At the March 19, 2025, meeting the Board approved a communication and public engagement strategy to build on momentum from the Listening Session. Young Environmental is completing the process of selecting an interested PR firm and will make a recommendation for the Board of Managers at the May Board of Managers meeting. Details of the work completed in the past month are attached for the Board's information.

Attachments

Technical Memorandum – Public Relations Firm Subcontract – Education and Outreach dated April 10, 2025

Recommended Action

No action recommended

Technical Memorandum



To: Linda Loomis, Administrator
Lower Minnesota River Watershed District (LMRWD)

From: Suzy Lindberg, Communications Manager

Date: April 10, 2025

Re: Public Relations Firm Subcontract—Education and Outreach

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Young Environmental drafted a Public Engagement and Communications Strategy (Attachment 1), which was presented and approved at the March meeting as part of the Public Listening Session report. Our team is currently in the process of solidifying costs and detailed proposals from public relations (PR) firms who submitted their information for consideration. This consultant will work as an extension of the Young Environmental team, being managed by Suzy Lindberg and Della Schall Young, using funds already approved as part of the Education and Outreach 2025 work plan (Attachment 2).

Funds will specifically be applied from the following tasks:

- **Task 1.4: Coordinate complementary communications:** *Young Environmental will work with external consultants as directed to publish advocacy work through maintained channels.*
- **Task 2.2: Adaptable Community Outreach and Engagement for High-Profile Issues and Special Resources:** *Adaptable community outreach uses funding resources to support and provide adaptability to all objectives as they relate to community outreach and engagement throughout the year. The LMRWD Board will coordinate the communications it deems necessary to reach decision-makers with targeted messaging and opportunities.*
- **Task 2.3: Maintain Social Media Accounts:** *Social media campaigns will target the LMRWD's mission-relevant goals and serve as a supplement to these goals. If the Board authorizes work from advocacy groups and develops such content, Young Environmental will coordinate its publication through social media channels.*

Next Steps

Young Environmental is completing the selection process with interested PR firms to subcontract to formalize a Communications and Engagement Strategy based on the initial draft, and create three campaigns related to findings from the Public Listening Session, culminating in the Minnesota River Boat Tour.

Schedule to Subcontract PR Consultant and Implement Strategy:

1. **April 2025:** Education and Outreach team requesting detailed scope of work and budgets for subcontract. Reviewing scope of work and develop subcontract agreements.
2. **May 2025:** Submit selected subcontractor for final Board approval. Kick off project with meeting to develop Communications and Engagement Strategy.
3. **June 2025-September 2025:** Develop, approve, and publish three campaigns identified in Communications and Engagement Strategy.
4. **September 2025:** Close out subcontract, revisit next steps to adaptively use Communications and Engagement Strategy moving forward. Discuss and memorialize lessons learned from strategy implementation and key data from campaigns to inform next steps.

Attachments

- Attachment 1—Public Listening Session Communications and Engagement Strategy Memo
- Attachment 2— 2025 Education and Outreach Approved Work Plan (Young Environmental)



Technical Memorandum

To: Linda Loomis, Administrator
Lower Minnesota River Watershed District

From: Suzy Lindberg, Communications Manager
Della Schall Young, CTF, CPESC, PMP, Principal Scientist

Date: March 12, 2025

Re: Public Listening Session—Public Engagement and Communications Strategy

On January 8, 2025, Young Environmental helped Lower Minnesota River Watershed District (LMRWD) coordinate a public listening session that gathered insight and feedback from dozens of stakeholders regarding issues, challenges, and opportunities facing the Minnesota River. The LMRWD Board of Managers has identified a need to respond to this feedback while producing strategic actions and measurable outcomes for upcoming advocacy, communications planning, and policy updates.

To address this need, Young Environmental has drafted a preliminary public engagement and communication strategy and contacted several specialized public relations firms to provide on-call support for additional strategy implementation. The goal would be to build momentum and collaboration among the general public, municipal agencies, and local governments.

Finalizing and Releasing Public Listening Session Report

The draft Public Listening Session report will be submitted to the Board of Managers at the March 19, 2025, meeting. The managers will review and approve the report, recommending any final changes to its content. The following activities must be completed to finalize and release the report:

1. **Board of Managers:** Review and advise on the recommended prioritization of requests in both **3: Policy and Legislative Considerations** (external audience) and **5: Board Action Items and Implementation Plan** (internal audience). Complete review by April 2 and return feedback to staff to finalize the action plan.
2. **LMRWD Staff:** Build LMRWD webpage with **2: Testimony Aggregation**, once approved. House public-facing reports: **3: Policy and Legislative Considerations** and **4: Data and Supporting Evidence** on the website. Complete by April 9, 2025.
3. **LMRWD Staff:** Develop a mass email with the content from the website page summary to drive traffic to the Public Listening Session report. Release by April 9, 2025.
4. **LMRWD Staff:** Explore contracting with a public relations firm based on Board recommendations, to be completed in April 2025. Begin working on key milestones and roles to implement the **6: Public Engagement and Communications Strategy**,

introduced below.

5. **LMRWD Staff:** Document internal-facing documents on a shared site for future reference, including **1: Review of Process, 5: Board Action Items and Implementation Plan,** and **6: Public Engagement and Communications Strategy.**

Communications and Public Engagement Strategy

For: Lower Minnesota River Watershed District

Focus: Traction on Communications and Public Engagement Related to Key Water and Natural Resource Management Challenges and Opportunities

Duration: January– December 2025

Goals

1. Build on momentum from the Public Listening Session to continue conversations and progress on shared issues and solutions.
2. Increase public awareness about water-related issues (e.g., flooding and water quality) and natural resource protection.
3. Foster collaboration with stakeholders (including elected representatives and government officials, nongovernmental organizations, state and federal agencies, cities and counties, partner water management organizations, businesses, community groups, and educational institutions).
4. Encourage public participation in water and natural resources protection initiatives while creating awareness about challenges and issues facing the watershed district.
5. Establish transparent communication between upstream and downstream partners. Promote policy compliance and behavior change toward water resources protection.

Engagement Methods

The following engagement methods should be considered as primary avenues to continue the public engagement and communication strategy:

- **Digital Outreach:** Website updates, social media campaigns, and email newsletters. Led by Young Environmental with key campaigns developed in collaboration with the third-party public relations consultant. The Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) is also interested in creating content to be released through digital methods through their quarterly article assignments.
- **Community Events:** Public tabling events, tours of key resources, additional listening sessions and workshops on key topics, and community cleanup events, such as buckthorn removal at fens or along the Minnesota River, to build cohesion and ownership of unique resources. Led by Young Environmental with support from the CAC and potentially a public relations firm (e.g., to design pop-up events).

- **Stakeholder Collaboration:** Partner meetings, technical advisory committee check-ins, and meet-and-greets on joint initiatives. Primarily led by the Board of Managers and the District Administrator with content creation and support from Young Environmental and/or the public relations firm. Finalize a Board of Managers presentation and leave-behind for key outreach meetings. Create a digital video for broader reach, particularly upstream and downstream.
- **Educational Programs:** Continue outreach to schools and educators, bolstering the mini-grant program with additional resources like webinars, handouts/infographics, and/or curriculum design. Led by Young Environmental with support from the CAC.
- **Traditional Media:** Press releases, TV/radio spots, and brochures. Potentially led by a public relations firm, preferably as strategic campaigns based on key topics.

Draft Public Engagement and Communication Strategy

The following strategy can be employed by Young Environmental in coordination with LMRWD leadership and a third-party public relations/media specialist to respond to key feedback in the Public Listening Session and to build momentum around shared priorities. It is intended to provide high-level structured engagement methods with a clear responsiveness to stakeholders and coalition-building, and, with enough flexibility for adaptation.

Stage 1: Listening to Stakeholders (January – March 2025)

Goal: Understand public concerns, priorities, and stakeholder perspectives.

January – Stakeholder Outreach & Public Listening

- **Method:** Request testimony and hold Public Listening Session

February – Community Engagement & Research

- **Method:** Compiling key themes from the Public Listening Session for next steps. Soliciting additional capacity from PR consultants.

March – Data Review & Key Themes Identification

- **Method:** Finalize Public Listening Session report with key data and findings.

Stage 2: Responding Through Key Campaigns (April – July)

Goal: Develop and implement targeted communication campaigns addressing stakeholder input.

April – Campaign 1: Key Theme 1

- **Method:** Publish the Public Listening Session report, and launch public awareness campaign on Listening Session Key Theme 1.

- **Channels:** Use website, social media, infographics, video testimonials from local leaders, and in-person meetings with Board and County Commissioners to introduce overview of campaigns.
- **Press:** Release media feature on Listening Session Key Theme 1.

May – Campaign 2: Key Theme 2

- **Method:** Launch of public awareness campaign on Listening Session Key Theme 2.
- **Channels:** Use website, social media, infographics, in-person meetings with other identified stakeholders or partners.
- **Press:** Release media feature on Listening Session Key Theme 2.

June – Campaign 3: Key Theme 3

- **Method:** Launch of public awareness campaign on Listening Session Key Theme 3.
- **Channels:** Use website, social media, webinars, and printed brochures for outreach events.
- **Press:** Conduct interview with expert on Key Theme 3.

July – Campaign 4: Policy Awareness & Compliance

- **Method:** Public education on policy and legislative stances and opportunities.
- **Channels:** Use FAQ section on website, and interactive quizzes on social media.

Stage 3: Building Coalitions & Partnerships (August – October)

Goal: Strengthen collaboration among government, community groups, businesses, and nongovernmental organizations.

August – Strengthening Stakeholder Collaboration

- **Method:** Establish working groups to tackle key concerns and shared initiatives.
- **Channels:** Use website hub for coalition resources, and stakeholder email updates.
- **Event:** Host the Minnesota River Boat Tour.
- **Press:** Release an announcement of coalition-building efforts and event promotion.

September-October – Grassroots and Volunteer Engagement

- **Method:** Continue ongoing initiative to engage partners following river tour.

- **Channels:** Use outreach emails, LinkedIn articles, and social media posts of event.
- **Press:** Release media story on partner contributions to conservation.

Stage 4: Revisiting, Analyzing, and Adapting (November – December)

Goal: Evaluate progress, share impact, and plan for 2026.

November – Measuring Impact and Public Feedback

- **Method:** Conduct post-engagement survey and collect case studies.
- **Channels:** Website impact report, and social media recap.
- **Press:** Year-end reflection article.

December – Strategy Adaptation and Future Planning

- **Method:** Conduct an internal review and refine strategy based on findings. Develop work plan for 2026, and evaluate partnership with Young Environmental and PR/media consultant.
- **Channels:** Use website update on 2026 priorities, and thank-you messages to stakeholders.
- **Press:** Release an announcement of 2026 engagement roadmap.

Recruiting and Onboarding a Public Relations Firms

To add capacity and specialization to the Education and Outreach strategy, Young Environmental staff circulated a request for information (RFI) to gauge the range of costs and level of interest to support the existing team with additional communications and public engagement activities. The RFI was circulated to the following firms:

- **Tunheim:** Liz Tunheim Sheets
- **Goff Public:** Jennifer Hellman (CEO) and Heidi Larson (CFO/COO)
- **Clear Edge:** Michelle Meek
- **Zan Associates:** Joy Miciano

We received responses and interest from three of the four firms contacted. The next page includes a summary of information received through the interview process with recommendations for next steps. The responses received have been included in the package for reference.

Range of Costs and Specializations for Public Relations and Media Consulting

Firm Name	Services	Range of Costs	Available Staff and Rates	Specialties	Interested in Contract
Clear Edge					Did not respond to request
Goff Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public relations Creative services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customized communications and media strategy: \$15,000 On-call support for media and communications campaigns: \$5,000 per month Drafting and circulating press releases: \$3,000 <p>Total Range of Costs: \$15,000-\$39,000</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sarah Swenson Madeleine Rush Cali Torell Grace Rose Caroline Burns James Schueneman Jenny Alvermann Kamilah Jester Nate Kass Chris Beeth Liv Hultgren Adam Darragh 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public sector, local government clients Creative storytelling and campaigns Experience with Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts and Natural Resources Conservation Service 	Yes
Tunheim	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review stakeholder feedback from Public Listening Session Immersion meeting with LMRWD team Develop customized communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop customized communications strategy: \$11,725 On-call retainer: \$2,500-4,500 per month On-call media and communications support can be 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liz Sheets, Project Manager Charlie Vander Aarde Ashley Pettingill Miles Plueger, Associate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liz is the Natural Resources Commissioner in Mendota Heights 	Yes

Firm Name	Services	Range of Costs	Available Staff and Rates	Specialties	Interested in Contract
	and media strategy	<p>provided on a monthly basis (\$2,500-\$4,500) or a campaign basis depending on preferences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Media relations and messaging support: \$1,750-\$3,500 per campaign - Social media and public engagement support: \$2,500-\$5,000 per campaign - Strategic communications: \$4,500-\$8,500 per campaign <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drafting and circulating press releases: \$1,000-\$2,250 per release <p>Total Range of Costs: \$11,725-31,975</p>			

Firm Name	Services	Range of Costs	Available Staff and Rates	Specialties	Interested in Contract
Zan Associates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project management • Scoping workshop for communications and engagement plan with media strategy • Draft and final plan • Media strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project management: \$5,368.70 • Scoping workshop for communications and engagement plan with media strategy: \$1,889.80 • Draft and final plan: \$5,221.00 • Media strategy: \$9,325.20 <p>Total Project Cost: \$21,804.70</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President: \$232.95 • Vice President: \$216.30 • Senior Associate 3: \$201.35 • Senior Associate 2: \$184.80 • Senior Creative 2: \$184.80 • Senior Associate 1: \$148.40 • Senior Creative 1: \$148.40 • Associate 2: \$115.80 • Creative 2: \$115.80 • Associate 1: \$99.30 • Creative 1: \$99.30 • Admin: \$80.40 • Intern: \$80.40 • Media Specialist: \$258.15 	Not highlighted	Yes

Recommendations

Three qualified public relations and media firms are available to provide support to Young Environmental and the LMRWD to build momentum surrounding the communications and public engagement strategy. We recommend a meeting to discuss the level of support needed and finalize the budget available to bring on added capacity and welcome initial recommendations from the Board.

Attachment 2

LOWER MINNESOTA RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT

2025 Education and Outreach Plan

Work Plan—October 2, 2024

Young Environmental continues to administer the Lower Minnesota River Watershed District's (LMRWD's) public education and outreach program. The tasks below fulfill the Watershed Management Plan, Goal 9: Public Education and Outreach, which works to increase public participation and awareness of the Minnesota River and its unique natural resources.

For the work plan, **education** is the action of sharing resources with the intent of educating a targeted audience about science-based problems and solutions related to water and natural resources. **Outreach** is the act of reaching out to targeted audiences, with the strategic intent of delivering key messages intended to build partnerships, drive engagement, and elicit a desired action. Outreach also refers to the sharing of news specific to the LMRWD.

Summary

Outcome:	2025 Education and Outreach Plan
Project Partners:	City partners, residents, and businesses of the LMRWD; US Fish and Wildlife Service; nongovernmental organizations (NGOs); Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC); and public and private schools
Timeline for Completion:	January 2025–December 2025
Total Fees:	\$84,700
Total Project Budget:	\$150,000

Note: The LMRWD has created a total budget of \$150,000 for education and outreach. This work plan introduces services and deliverables related only to Young Environmental.

Objective 1. Project Management and Board of Managers Coordination

Target Audiences: Board of Managers, Subconsultants

Task 1.1. Project plan development and plan management. Finalize the work plan, assign project tasks, determine whether additional resources are needed, set dates for deliverables, generate and maintain project schedule, and perform monthly invoicing.

Task 1.2. Consensus and partnership building. Maintain alignment between the Education and Outreach Plan and the Board of Managers' goals and vision by soliciting feedback twice a year through a digital survey. Young Environmental will administer the survey, synthesize results, and propose adjustments to the work plan through a technical memo for approval. Young Environmental will also maintain one list of existing education and/or sustainability program

partnerships with local cities, counties, nonprofits, and NGOs, and potential new partnerships that the CAC will evaluate for relevancy.

Task 1.3. Quarterly updates. Young Environmental will provide quarterly updates on Education and Outreach Plan tasks and deliverables to keep the Board of Managers informed on progress, evolving needs, and lessons learned from the CAC and the broader community as applicable.

Task 1.4. Coordinate complementary communications. Maintain a dual-purpose outreach strategy while differentiating roles of the Board and Young Environmental. Dual-purpose strategy consists of (a) Young Environmental providing education and outreach campaigns based on water resource science and watershed behavior best practices, and (b) the Board providing locally engaged advocacy as it sees fit to carry out its mission or achieve advocacy-oriented objectives. Young Environmental will work with external consultants and stakeholders as directed to publish advocacy work through maintained channels (Task 2.3–2.5). The Board and Young Environmental will reference this task through quarterly updates (Task 1.3) as appropriate to either party.

Task 1.5. Printing, postage, and other expenses. Printing, postage, and other expenses are covered as needed across any of the listed objectives and tasks. Expenses may include in-person events within the watershed (travel, materials) or production of educational handouts for community events. We may investigate the purchase and rental of interactive displays and present the cost findings to the Board. Displays and prints will be organized and maintained through a print memorandum. We have budgeted expenses up to \$5,000.

Objective 2. Districtwide Education and Outreach

This objective includes districtwide education and outreach to inform a variety of audiences using many channels. The outreach and engagement activities that Young Environmental leads will reach the community of decision-makers and residents with water quality and natural resources messaging and will involve targeted outreach to the LMRWD's specific work, progress, and needs. Outreach will take place through both in-person and digital channels to reach a variety of stakeholders through a diversified approach.

Outreach Channels

Young Environmental will plan and execute a number of special events to reach key decision-makers needed to promote the LMRWD's mission.

Target Audiences: State Officials, County Boards, Legislators, and City Officials

Task 2.1. Minnesota River boat tour. Young Environmental will coordinate the annual Minnesota River boat tour, including event promotion and staffing. The tour serves as a venue to gather valuable stakeholders such as soil and water conservation districts, local government staff and elected officials, and partners from county, school, nonprofit, and business representations.

To enhance engagement, targeted discussions will focus on specific policy areas, and stakeholders will receive structured engagement materials both before and after the event to foster continued dialogue. The event is likely to occur in the fall; however, we will set the date in January 2025.

Task 2.2. Adaptable community outreach and engagement for high-profile issues and special resources: Adaptable community outreach and engagement uses funding resources to support

and provide adaptability to all objectives as they relate to community outreach and engagement throughout the year. Examples include but are not limited to special events such as a Flood Listening Session (January 2025), tabling activities, relevant training and seminars for the CAC or Board with partnering organizations, and invitation of specialists for speaking engagements, demonstrations, and workshops. The LMRWD Board will coordinate whatever communications it deems necessary to reach decision-makers (legislative, county, city, elected officials, and state agencies) with targeted messaging and opportunities. This task also includes coordination of the Fen Technical Work Group, developing education and outreach materials to assist the public in understanding fens' unique characteristics. We will provide materials to landowners during permitting and public events. This task also involves necessary coordination with the LMRWD's legislative advisor. *Instead of hosting independent events, the LMRWD will focus on supporting partner organizations by participating in their established community events through tabling and informational displays to build visibility and goodwill.*

Educational Channels

Young Environmental will maintain the following educational channels to reach all intended audiences. In addition to educational themes on water quality best practices and water and natural resource management, the content will focus on LMRWD-specific issues, news, projects, and updates.

Target Audiences: All Audiences

Task 2.3. Maintain social media accounts. Manage social media sites on behalf of the LMRWD and publish content for a variety of project, event, and watershed best practices communications. Starting in 2025, we will audit the effectiveness of the current channels used and recommend discontinuations and adoption of new platforms (e.g., retiring X and adopting LinkedIn to reach commercial businesses). Young Environmental will monitor statistics, maintain public input, and report any significant conversations gained through social media. This social media monitoring will take place on a campaign basis, organized by a content calendar and using CAC input for photos and storytelling. Social media campaigns will target the LMRWD's mission-relevant goals and serve as a supplement to these goals. Campaigns may include networking and use of relevant partner content from counties and other local watershed organizations. If the Board authorizes work from advocacy groups and develops such content, Young Environmental will coordinate its publication through social media channels with citation of the contribution to the Board.

Task 2.4. Maintain content updates on website. Young Environmental will continue to maintain website content, periodically updating projects, technical resource pages, LMRWD staff and advisory group photos and bios, and the news page with relevant stories. Information published on the website will mirror campaigns on social media, and we will collaborate with the technical consultant to ensure resource information and data are up to date. Our team will contribute content updates up to the \$5,700 approved annual retainer and work in coordination with the LMRWD's technical website consultant, HDR.

Task 2.5: District signage. Identify sites for LMRWD project and resource interpretive signage and make recommendations for proposed interpretive sign locations. Young Environmental will continue to work with local partners and the CAC on locations and messaging and with the current signage contractor for design and fabrication. The Board of Managers will receive estimates for proposed signs as project completion occurs and as relevant local events promote public understanding. Signage may be large, small, permanent, or temporary depending on context and need.

Objective 3. Empowering Successful Advisory Committees (CAC and Technical Advisory Committee)

Target Audiences: Citizens (i.e., residents, homeowners' associations, recreationists, youth, businesses) accessed through the CAC and technical advisory partners (i.e., cities, soil and water conservation districts, counties, state agencies) accessed through the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

CAC: Young Environmental supports the CAC by preparing meeting agendas and minutes; securing educational presentations, tours, and learning opportunities; creating educational materials; coordinating attendance at local events; and increasing membership. With success in growing membership throughout 2024, the current CAC has the numbers and enthusiasm to meet its education and outreach goals in 2025. Throughout the coming year, Young Environmental will continue to provide resources that empower the CAC to grow and lead meaningful work on the LMRWD's behalf. Based on the October 2024 CAC meeting and vision of the CAC's new membership, Young Environmental will create a structure that empowers an engaged, dedicated, and self-directed CAC. This includes creating CAC-approved roles, processes (scheduling assignments for content creation and member attendance at Board meetings), and meeting frameworks that give the CAC the required tools to succeed.

TAC: We understand that effective education and outreach will involve a high level of collaboration with TAC members. This targeted audience includes city, county, and state partners with concurrent education and outreach responsibilities. Our team will continuously look for opportunities to partner on projects and use of resources with aligned goals and expand outreach through existing networks by maintaining regular communication with these partners.

Task 3.1. Maintain CAC recruitment support. We will contribute to maintaining a strong CAC membership and incorporate CAC recruitment efforts as needed using a combination of digital announcements (website and social media), in-person events, and direct mail campaigns throughout the year. Young Environmental will also continue to provide resources for CAC members to engage in recruitment.

Task 3.2. Plan and facilitate CAC meetings. To create effective meetings that accomplish their intended purpose, we will plan and facilitate regular meetings, co-create agendas with input from the LMRWD and CAC as directed by the Board, and submit meeting minutes for Board approval. Young Environmental can serve as a timekeeper and offer support in keeping conversations targeted and on message. As part of agenda development, Young Environmental may also organize guest speakers and visits to projects and high-value resource sites. Young Environmental and the CAC will formulate agendas with a blend of opportunities for local and regional learning, networking, and outreach. To plan for 2025, we will audit the effectiveness of monthly meetings and explore models for frequency and venues (i.e., virtual and in-person) that are most engaging to recruiting and retaining members. This audit will explore the CAC's availability and align activities with the most return on investment to create an active group that lends unique talents to the LMRWD's mission. We will also promote the adoption of roles defined in the bylaws—chair, vice-chair, and secretary—to improve meeting function. *Sixty percent of the CAC's efforts will focus on providing quarterly reports and recommendations to the Board of Managers to align with the LMRWD's key initiatives. The remaining 40 percent will focus on outreach initiatives, particularly in collaboration with partner organizations.*

Task 3.3. TAC and CAC assistance. Provide communications support such as fielding questions or providing technical information to make necessary mission-related connections among the TAC, CAC, Board of Managers, and LMRWD staff. Young Environmental will draft technical memos and requests to formalize recommendations and requests from the CAC to the Board of Managers. In support of the TAC, we may employ regular meetings or communication to ensure that relevant education and outreach is occurring and that we are not duplicating work already done through existing programs (i.e., municipal separate storm sewer requirements). We will continue to coordinate with TAC members to ensure they align with LMRWD news, issues, projects and solutions, and opportunities for partnership. *Integrate River Watch and monitoring programs with Soil and Water Conservation Districts to ensure cohesive data collection and promote broader participation involving schools and local organizations.*

Task 3.4. Develop and maintain CAC roles and responsibilities. Young Environmental will work closely with the CAC to define and establish clear roles and responsibilities that empower members to contribute independently to the LMRWD's mission. CAC members will take on various responsibilities, including representing the LMRWD at community events to promote initiatives and engage directly with the public, facilitating informal public tours of project and resource sites to enhance community understanding of water resource management, and conducting outreach activities on watershed best practices. They will also promote key LMRWD initiatives such as the mini-grant program through both digital and in-person outreach. Additionally, CAC members will assist in tracking and addressing recurring issues from the public and summarizing them for consideration by the Board of Managers. The CAC will also play a key role in recruitment efforts to expand membership and will support the development of localized educational resources and public outreach campaigns.

Young Environmental will provide templates and supportive structures and materials for the CAC to build familiarity and routines for the resulting roles and responsibilities. We will create a calendar of meetings and coordinate with both the Board and TAC to maintain the flow of communication annually. Young Environmental and the CAC will codevelop this effort in 2025, potentially developing subcommittees that the CAC and the Board identify. Young Environmental will serve as an editor to formalize and publish materials, ensuring that items are technically sound and compliant with LMRWD branding.

Objective 4. Facilitate Schools Engagement

Target Audiences: Youth and Educators

School-age youth and college students are a primary targeted audience for education and outreach. Education not only involves community members in watershed management from a young age, but it also provides inroads to other adult family members who can take action. Throughout the previous years, Young Environmental has actively built a mailing list of educators within and surrounding the LMRWD and continued to gain more traction for mini-grant opportunities. We recommend a systematic approach that packages curriculum, resources, and grant opportunities to local educators, allowing replicable outreach to multiple schools rather than infrequent one-off events. Our team can also serve as a conduit to connect educators with resources such as local county technical partners and nonprofit organizations.

Task 4.1. Develop formal education resources. Develop water resource curriculum and supplemental educational resources for students within our partner cities to grow and expand our relationship with schools. Young Environmental will develop education plans for the 2024–2025

and 2025–2026 academic years. Resources may include strategies such as a DIY curriculum for teachers, local resources such as county and state education tools, and/or local guest speakers. Based on CAC discussion, consider outreach to colleges in the district with environmental programs.

Task 4.2. Administer mini-grant program. Evaluate proposals, award grants, and compile reports and reimbursement requests for the educator mini-grant program. Young Environmental and the CAC will collaborate on grant promotion, planning, and the sharing of success stories. *Collaborate with partner organizations to use microgrants for expanding their reach within our district rather than run the mini-grant program independently. This could support watershed monitoring projects, educational programs, or habitat restoration efforts. Launch two joint projects annually in collaboration with partner organizations and expand existing programs.*

Objective 5. Sponsorships

As part of the overall education and outreach budget, the LMRWD contributes a number of sponsorships. Young Environmental typically does not provide services related to sponsorships; however, we will publicize them as part of Objective 2.

Task 5.1. Sponsorship support. The LMRWD will continue its membership in and support of the **Scott County Water Education Program**.

Task 5.2. Sponsorship support. The LMRWD will continue its sponsorship of the **Minnesota River Congress**.

Task 5.3. Sponsorship support. The LMRWD will continue its sponsorship of the **Salt Symposium and Water Summit events**.

Task 5.4. Sponsorship support. The LMRWD will continue its sponsorship of the **Metro Children’s Water Festival**.

Task 5.5. Sponsorship support. The LMRWD will continue its membership in and support of the **Friends of the Minnesota (MN) Valley River Watch**.

Task 5.6. Sponsorship support. The LMRWD will continue its membership in and support of the **Coalition for a Clean MN River**.

Task	Deliverable description	Measurable (if applicable)	Budget
Objective 1: Project Management and Board of Managers Coordination			
1.1	Maintain work plan, tasks, schedule, and invoicing	Monthly invoices	\$10,000
1.2	Digital survey	Two per year	
1.3	Quarterly updates	Four per year	

Task	Deliverable description	Measurable (if applicable)	Budget
1.4	Maintain outreach strategy per work plan, reference as needed	N/A	
1.5	Printing, postage, tabling materials, and other expenses (\$5,000)	Printing, mileage, and supply expenses (as needed).	
Objective 2: Districtwide Education and Outreach			
2.1	Minnesota River boat tour (\$4,000)	One boat tour	\$44,700
2.2	Adaptable community outreach and engagement for high-profile issues and special resources (\$15,000)	Minimum one fen outreach campaign per permitting or earth moving activities; other campaigns as needed and relevant	
2.3	Maintain social media accounts (\$10,000)	Minimum of four campaigns per year with minimum three posts per campaign, one content calendar	
2.4	Maintain content updates on website (\$5,700)	Monthly content contributions, updates, or housekeeping as needed	
2.5	District signage (\$10,000)	Minimum of three permanent or temporary signs per year	
Objective 3: Empowering Successful Advisory Committees			
3.1	Recruitment efforts and resources to CAC members for recruitment	Minimum of six recruitment efforts per year	\$15,000
3.2	Facilitate CAC meetings	Minimum of eight CAC meetings and minutes per year	
3.3	CAC assistance	On call	
3.4	Develop CAC roles and responsibilities	Minimum of five role outlines	
Objective 3: Facilitate Schools Engagement			
4.1	Develop formal education resources	Minimum of five DIY teacher activities, minimum of five local partnership opportunities	\$15,000
4.2	Administer mini-grant program	Essential tasks according to number of grant applications	
Objective 5: Sponsorships			

Task	Deliverable description	Measurable (if applicable)	Budget
5.1	Scott County Water Education Program	Outside of Young Environmental Work Plan	\$7,500
5.2	Sponsorship of MN River Congress	Outside of Young Environmental Work Plan	\$400
5.3	Sponsorship of Salt Symposium and Water Summit	Outside of Young Environmental Work Plan	\$500
5.4	Sponsorship of Metro Children's Water Festival	Outside of Young Environmental Work Plan	\$1,650
5.5	Friends of the MN Valley River Watch	Outside of Young Environmental Work Plan	\$20,000
5.6	Coalition for a Clean MN River	Outside of Young Environmental Work Plan	\$5,000
Young Environmental/Consultant Services			\$84,700
Total LMRWD Education and Outreach Budget			\$150,000