



# Red Lake Watershed District

1000 Pennington Avenue South  
Thief River Falls, MN 56701  
(218) 681- 5800

## **GOVERNMENT DATA PRACTICES**

### ***RIGHT TO ACCESS PUBLIC DATA***

The Data Practices Act (Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 13) presumes that all government data are public unless a state or federal law says the data are not public. Government data is a term that means all recorded information a government entity has, including paper, email, flash drives, CDs, DVDs, photographs, etc.

The Data Practices Act also provides that Red Lake Watershed District (RLWD) must keep all government data in a way that makes it easy for members of the public to access public data. The public has the right to look at (inspect), free of charge, all public data that RLWD keeps. The public also has the right to obtain paper or electronic copies of public data. The Data Practices Act allows RLWD to charge for copies.

Please be advised that members of the public can obtain certain data available at no charge by viewing or retrieving the data that the District has made available on their website: [www.redlakewatershed.org](http://www.redlakewatershed.org) This data includes, among other things, information relating to projects, water quality, permitting, board meeting minutes and mapping.

### ***HOW TO MAKE A DATA REQUEST***

To look at data or request copies of data that RLWD keeps, the public must make a written request. Written requests for data must be made to the District Administrator by mail, fax or email using the data request form found at the end of this document. If the data request form is not used, the written request must include:

- A statement that the request for data is under the Data Practices Act, MN Statutes, Chapter 13;
- Whether the request is to look at the data, get copies of the data, or both; and
- A clear description of the data to be inspected and/or copied.

RLWD cannot require members of the public to identify themselves or explain the reason for the data request. However, depending on how the data request is to be processed (for example, emailed or mail), RLWD may need contact information. If no identifying information is provided, it will be the responsibility of the requesting party to contact RLWD to check the status of the request. If RLWD does not understand the request no contact information is provided, RLWD will not be able to begin processing the request.

### ***HOW RED LAKE WATERSHED DISTRICT RESPONDS TO A DATA REQUEST***

Upon receiving a written request, RLWD will work to process it.

- If it is not enough specific information from the request, RLWD will ask for clarification.
- If RLWD does not have the data, the requestor will be notified in writing as soon as reasonably possible.
- If RLWD has the data but the data is not public, the requestor will be notified in writing as soon as reasonably possible of which Minnesota Statute requires such privacy.
- If RLWD has the data and the data are public, a response to requests will be provided appropriately and promptly, within a reasonable amount of time, by doing one of the following:

- Arrange a date, time, and place to inspect data for free if the request is for inspection; or
- Provide the requestor with copies of the data as soon as reasonably possible. Copies may be picked up, mailed, or emailed. We will provide electronic copies (e-mail) upon request if we keep the data in electronic format. Pre-payment is required.
- If the requestor does not understand some of the data (technical terminology, abbreviations, or acronyms), clarification will be provided upon request.

The Data Practices Act does not require RLWD to create or collect new data in response to a request if RLWD does not already have the data, or to provide data in a specific form or arrangement if RLWD does not keep the data in that form or arrangement. For example, if the data requested is on paper only, RLWD is not required to create electronic documents. If RLWD agrees to create data in response to requests, RLWD will work with the requestor on the details of the request, including cost and response time. In addition, the Data Practices Act does not require RLWD to answer questions that are not requests for data.

### ***REQUESTS FOR SUMMARY DATA***

Summary data are statistical records or reports that are prepared by removing all identifiers from private or confidential data on individuals. The preparation of summary data is not a means to gain access to private or confidential data. RLWD will prepare summary data if requests are made in writing and pre-payment for the cost of creating the data is received. Upon receiving written requests, the data request form at the end of this document may be used. RLWD will respond within ten business days with the data or details of when the data will be ready and how much will be charged.

### ***COPY FEES***

RLWD charges the requesting party for all costs associated with fulfilling the data request, including staff time, materials, and copy expenses. Charges are authorized under Minnesota Statutes, sections 13.03, subd 3c. and subd. 10. The charge for time is the actual cost of searching for and retrieving the data and making the copies or electronically transmitting the data. In determining the actual cost of making copies, RLWD factors in employee time, the cost of the materials onto which the data are copied (paper, CD, DVD, etc.), and mailing costs (if any). If requests are for copies of data that RLWD cannot reproduce internally, such as photographs, the actual cost paid to an outside vendor will be charged.

### ***RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITY***

Tammy Audette  
 1000 Pennington Avenue South  
 Thief River Falls, MN 56701  
 218.681.5800

### ***DATA PRACTICES COMPLIANCE OFFICIAL***

Melissa Bushy  
 1000 Pennington Avenue South  
 Thief River Falls, MN 56701  
 218.681.5800  
[RLWD@redlakewatershed.org](mailto:RLWD@redlakewatershed.org)



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## Data Request Form

A. TO BE COMPLETED BY REQUESTER			
Name:		Phone Number:	
Street Address:		Email Address:	
City, State, Zip:		Date of Request:	
Signature:		Date Needed By:	
*According to MS§13.05, subd. 12, persons are not required to identify themselves, or state a reason for, or justify a request for public data.			
Description of the information requested (be as specific as possible):			
Quantity: _____ Color Format: <input type="checkbox"/> Color <input type="checkbox"/> Black & White			
Media: <input type="checkbox"/> Paper <input type="checkbox"/> Electronic( <input type="checkbox"/> gif <input type="checkbox"/> eps <input type="checkbox"/> jpg <input type="checkbox"/> pdf) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____			
*MS§13.05, subd. 3, authorizes the District to charge fees to recover costs to provided copies of data, including cost associated with searching, compiling, copings, or otherwise transmitting data. Payment is required prior to receiving copies of data.			

B. TO BE COMPLETED BY RLWD PERSONNEL	
Handled by:	Date Received:
Information Classified As: <input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private	Action: <input type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Denied <input type="checkbox"/> Approved in Part (explanation below)
Remarks or basis for denial:	
Costs to Requestor:	
___ Pages x \$0.25 per black/white pages (Subd 3c.)	= _____
___ Pages x \$1.00 per black/white page	= _____
___ Pages x \$1.25 per color page	= _____
___ Employee time charged at billable rate	= _____
Other Charges: _____	= _____
	Total Cost: \$ _____

Authorized Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_