



MEMORANDUM

TO: Brown's Creek Watershed District Board
 FROM: Karen Kill
 RE: Minnesota Watersheds Summer Tour June 20-21, 2023
 DATE: May 5, 2023

Background

The MN Watersheds (formerly MN Association of Watersheds) is holding a summer tour June 20-21 in Albert Lea, MN.

Expenses:

- Registration \$99
- Hotel \$119-\$149/night

Recommended Action:

Authorize staff to attend and expenses for MN Watersheds summer tour. Authorize managers at attend with paid per diem and expenses.

Managers:

Klayton Eckles, President • Celia Wirth, Vice-President • Chuck LeRoux, Secretary • Gerald Johnson, Treasurer

MINNESOTA WATERSHEDS SUMMER TOUR

Albert Lea, MN | June 20-21, 2023



**MINNESOTA
WATERSHEDS**
Connecting People. Protecting Water.



Tuesday, June 20

Location: Wedgewood Cove Golf Club, 2200 W 9th St, Albert Lea, MN 56007

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| 9:00—12:00 | MAWA Meeting |
| 12:00—12:30 | Grab and Go Lunch |
| 12:25—12:30 | Welcome |
| 12:30—1:30 | Agency Partner Updates |
| 1:30—5:00 | Educational Workshops |
| 1:30—2:15 | Common Carp
TBD, Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center |
| 2:15—3:00 | Developing Stewardship Grant Opportunities for Enhanced Street Sweeping
Paige Ahlborg, Ramsey Washington Metro Watershed District
Michael McKinney, Barr Engineering Co. |
| 3:00—4:15 | Multi-purpose Drainage Management
Mark Origer, ISG |
| 4:15—5:00 | Partnerships with Private Industry
Brad Kramer, Shell Rock River Watershed District |
| 5:00—5:45 | Welcome Reception and Cash Bar |
| 6:00—6:45 | Dinner |
| 6:45—8:00 | Opening Remarks and Tour Overview |

Wednesday, June 21

Bus Tour Itinerary

8am – 4:30pm

8:30 a.m. Buses depart from Hotel (Country Inn and Suites, 2214 E. Main Street, Albert Lea, MN)

The project stops included in the tour are listed below in no particular order.

[Albert Lea Lake Dam](#)

The existing outlet structure and access bridge for Albert Lea Lake was installed in 1922 and needed repair. The SRRWD saw the opportunity to not only build a new dam but manage rough fish populations and aquatic vegetation by creating a 3-in-1 project. Groundbreaking for the construction of the new Albert Lea Lake Dam and Fish Barrier Project began in August of 2014, and consists of a dam, fish barrier, and draw down structure. The \$2 million-dollar project was funded by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Fund.

[Upper Twin Lake Pump Station](#)

The pump station is intended to allow conjoined Upper and Lower Twin Lake's water levels to be managed independently of each other which can simulate drought conditions for rough fish management. Construction included the removal and installation of a box culvert under County Road 80. This project is funded by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC) and is a partnership between U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, MN Department of Natural Resources, and Freeborn County. The pump station was commissioned on June 16, 2020.

[Miller, Orr, IC&E Project](#)

Building on a U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service acquisition and using funds from Lessard Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC), the restored property, east of Alden, will add to over 250 acres of continuous native prairie and wetlands. Project plans include abandoning and rerouting public tile systems, creating wetlands via tile modifications, wetland scrapes, berm installations, and native prairie plantings.

[Confined Disposal Facility](#)

A Confined Disposal Facility (CDF) is a dewatering site in the dredging process. When dredging takes place, a mixture of water and sediment is pumped to the disposal facility and the CDF will be used to settle and siphon off the water. The Shell Rock River Watershed District (SRRWD) purchased the properties for the CDF in 2016. These properties are located adjacent to each other, north of Interstate 90 and 1 1/2 miles north of Fountain Lake.

[Edgewater Bay Pavilion and Fountain Lake Restoration Presentation](#) **Lunch will be served at this location**

The restoration of Fountain Lake is a multi-phased project. The SRRWD began active dredging in 2018, utilizing \$7.5 million in state funds and \$9.5 million in local option sales tax funds. Leveraged funding provided dredging and disposal of the first two phases of the project through 2021 and the removal of approximately 1.2 million cubic yards of accumulated sediment. The SRRWD is requesting \$9 million from the Minnesota Legislature in 2023 to complete the third and final phase of the Fountain Lake Restoration Project. In 2023, SF172 (Sen. Gene Dornink) and HF277 (Rep. Peggy Bennett) introduced bills to provide funding for the project, Phase 3 - Main Bay (East Basin), Bancroft Creek and parts of Bancroft Bay. It is critical for the success of the project to complete Phase 3, in the heart of Albert Lea.

[Van Erkel Farms](#)

The rich history of the Hollandale area, including early drainage management activities and the scope of vegetable production operations that existed here in the 1900's will be explained, as well as the critical role of the Turtle Creek Watershed District in guiding water management within the Hollandale basin and associated uplands.

[Dobbins Capital Improvement Projects \(CIPs\) and EPA 319 Grant Water Quality Research](#)

The Dobbins Creek watershed's high local priority for flood reduction and water quality will be described, as well as CIPs and best management practices (BMP) targeting that have improved water quality and reduced flows.

The water monitoring efforts that have and are currently taking place to evaluate the effects of intensive targeted BMP adoption in the Dobbins Creek watershed including surface water, macroinvertebrate IBI and fish IBI monitoring. The amount of work in Dobbins along with the monitoring makes this one of the most studied watersheds in the Midwest.

Jay C. Hormel Nature Center and Discover Austin

We will visit Austin’s city-owned Jay C. Hormel Nature Center, which was started more than 50 years ago and opened a \$7 million interpretive center in 2017. A naturalist will give a presentation about the center’s vibrant history and activities, including its growth from 123 acres to nearly 530 today. The Nature Center offers a sanctuary for people and features native prairie, woods, wetlands and wildlife. The Nature Center offers an environmentally based curriculum for preschool through high school students. Classes and courses are available for families, home school groups, and other public and private schools outside of Austin.

Nancy Schnable, Executive Director of Discover Austin, will give a presentation about what makes our community special in so many ways. Welcome bags will be provided that contain materials highlighting different attractions in the community. We will have some time to tour the nature center’s exhibit room that highlights many things, including soil health, wetlands, local animals, and a new exhibit on native mussels and the DNR’s efforts to restore them in the Cedar River State Water Trail.

On the drive back to Albert Lea a *Discover Austin* tour guide will introduce you to local points of interest and lesser-known quirky sites around Austin that may merit further attention.

4:30 p.m. Arrive back at the hotel (Country Inn and Suites)

Special THANKS to the Minnesota Watersheds 2023 Summer Tour Sponsors

