

**Project Name** | BCWD Watershed Management Plan Update**Date** | 05/28/2025**To / Contact info** | BCWD Board of Managers**Cc / Contact info** | Karen Kill <kkill@mnwcd.org>  
Camilla Correll <ccorrell@eorinc.com>**From / Contact info** | Alexander Furneaux <afurneaux@eorinc.com>**Regarding** | CAC and TAC WMP Prioritization

## Purpose

BCWD and EOR staff met with the Community Advisory Committee on April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025 and the Technical Advisory Committee on April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2025. The purpose of these meetings was to discuss how priorities have evolved over the past 10 years with the goal of identifying priorities for the 2027-2036 Watershed Management Plan (WMP) from the perspective of community representatives involved in watershed work and technical partners. The input gathered through these meetings and summarized in this memo is intended to help the Board of Managers understand perspectives on what priorities to establish for the WMP's next generation as the Plan's implementation plan and schedule is developed and reviewed.

The CAC and TAC were asked to provide feedback through three activities on:

- **Issue Prioritization** – Looking at all the issue areas identified in the Plan, what issues or sub-issues do participants feel are the most critical to address imminently and prepare the District to address in the next 10 years?
- **Community Improvement Plan (CIP) Prioritization** – How and where should the District spread funding for shovel ready projects across different resources?
- **Program and Project Prioritization Approaches** – What values to we hold most strongly when considering which approaches are most important when determining whether or not to pursue?

## Feedback

### Issue Prioritization

The CAC and TAC were asked to identify what they feel are the most critical issues (or sub-issues within an issue) for the WMP to address. These priorities are summarized in

Table 1. Issues were assigned a prioritization score by tallying the number of comment slips received for each issue where "critical" comment slips were assigned a point value of 1, and "concerning" comment slips were assigned a point value of 0.5.

Table 1. Issue Priorities

Issue	Prioritization Score	Priorities
<b>Stormwater Management</b>	4.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Important to meet TMDL goals</li> <li>• Issue will require proactive planning for rainfall impacts with projected climate change conditions</li> <li>• Threat to water quality from increased impervious surfaces</li> <li>• Stormwater infrastructure needs to be consistently maintained</li> </ul>
<b>Stream Management</b>	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creek is a keystone resource at the heart of the district that has seen a lot of improvement and is so close to being healthy</li> <li>• Creek is where you will see the outcomes of upstream work but not necessarily the place that needs the most investment</li> <li>• Restoration and habitat projects will remain important, for trout as well as other species</li> </ul>
<b>Lake Management</b>	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is important to prioritize/incentivize natural shorelines and plant buffers for filtration and habitat</li> <li>• Lakes also a place where you will see outcomes of upstream/upland work</li> <li>• Concerns related to invasive species, chlorides, and other contaminants</li> </ul>
<b>Wetland Management</b>	2.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Important surface and groundwater connections</li> <li>• Wetlands haven't been a major focus in the past however they have the potential to deliver major water quality and habitat improvements downstream, prioritize projects with legacy loading and greatest opportunity for downstream improvements</li> <li>• Consider taking WCA administration so permittees only need to coordinate with one entity to get permitted</li> </ul>
<b>Floodplain Management</b>	4.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issue will require proactive planning for flood impacts with projected climate change conditions, will benefit from ongoing study and modelling</li> <li>• Co-benefit opportunities with floodplain restoration to enhance ecological health and connected corridors</li> <li>• District has a good handle on the issue including strong processes to manage flooding, but will need to continue to adapt</li> </ul>
<b>Groundwater Management</b>	4.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closely tied to improvements/degradation in other resource areas</li> <li>• Important to coordinate with the county on roles, projects, and priorities</li> <li>• Identified as a community concern overheard through informal conversations with community members</li> </ul>

Issue	Prioritization Score	Priorities
<b>Erosion Prevention and Sediment Control</b>	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concerns related to land destabilization and vegetation changes</li> <li>Opportunities to manage the issue through stormwater ponds and stream meander projects</li> </ul>
<b>Monitoring and Data Collection</b>	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Valued for its role in contributing to better decision-making, even though it's not the most exciting thing</li> <li>Desire for groundwater monitoring and data</li> </ul>
<b>Regulations</b>	7.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Important to continue focusing on pollutant removal</li> <li>Greatest opportunity to reduce pollutant loads is during development rather than retrofits</li> <li>Developing rule consistency region-wide</li> <li>Set the bar, help people meet it</li> </ul>
<b>Land Conservation</b>	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development is constant so it remains important to find ways and place to preserve habitat corridors and natural spaces, enforcement of buffer protection, invasive species removal, replanting, supporting local conservation priorities</li> </ul>
<b>Ecological Health</b>	2.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Should provide value to all residents not just waterside residents</li> <li>Watershed contains unique ecosystems under threat, important to</li> </ul>
<b>Recreation</b>	0	Participants identified that the lack of public access poses a barrier to the District pursuing more recreation work that is typically handled by the state or local government. Collaboration with these partners to increase public will and interest remains important. Recreation can be a helpful method to deliver education and outreach.
<b>Education and Outreach</b>	5.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Harder to meet goals without community involvement, important to increase community buy-in and support</li> <li>Need for improved communication of the actions and benefits provided through District work</li> </ul>
<b>Pollutants of Emerging Concern</b>	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concerns with chlorides and PFAS</li> </ul>
<b>General</b>	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partnerships will remain an effective way to deliver projects</li> </ul>

**Participants attributed the highest prioritization scores to Regulations, Education and Outreach, and Stream Management.** Subsequent conversations revealed that many participants view the overarching priority of the plan to be the outcome of improved water quality in Brown's Creek. They identified that taking a watershed-wide approach, particularly at projects across multiple resources in the headwaters that provide downstream benefits to the creek. Understanding which specific resources to target in the headwaters as evidence from monitoring of projects and programs will help achieve desired outcomes.

They identified that an emphasis on regulations (particularly considering how regulations will guide future development) and community involvement through education and outreach will play important roles to achieve improved creek outcomes. For some, improvements to the creek may be seen as indicative of improvements upstream helping to demonstrate the work the District is involved in.

### CIP Prioritization

The CAC and TAC were asked to review the CIP priorities developed by the Board for the 2017-2026 WMP to determine if specific resources warranted greater allocations of the CIP budget for shovel-ready projects aimed at improving water quality. In the 2017-2026 WMP the Board allocated:

- 70% to Brown's Creek
- 15% to Long Lake
- 5% to South School Section Lake
- 10% to all other impaired waterbodies

Participants were asked to allocate an imaginary \$100 across eleven resource areas using dot stickers in denominations of \$20, \$10, and \$5. Resources were separated between restoration (of impaired or degraded resources) and conversation (protection of resources) to distinguish between these two types of activities. The results of this exercise are summarized in Figure 1.

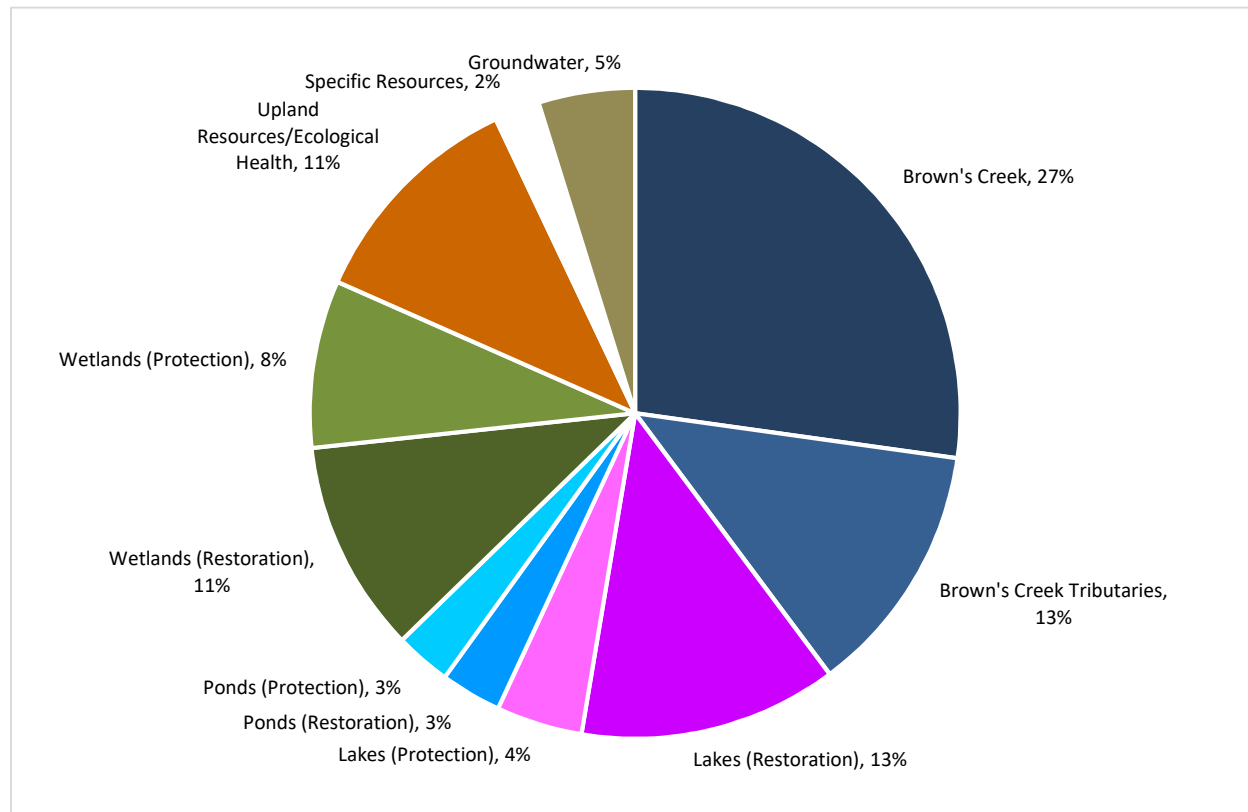


Figure 1. CAC and TAC CIP allocations

Some considerations regarding the data gathered in this exercise include:

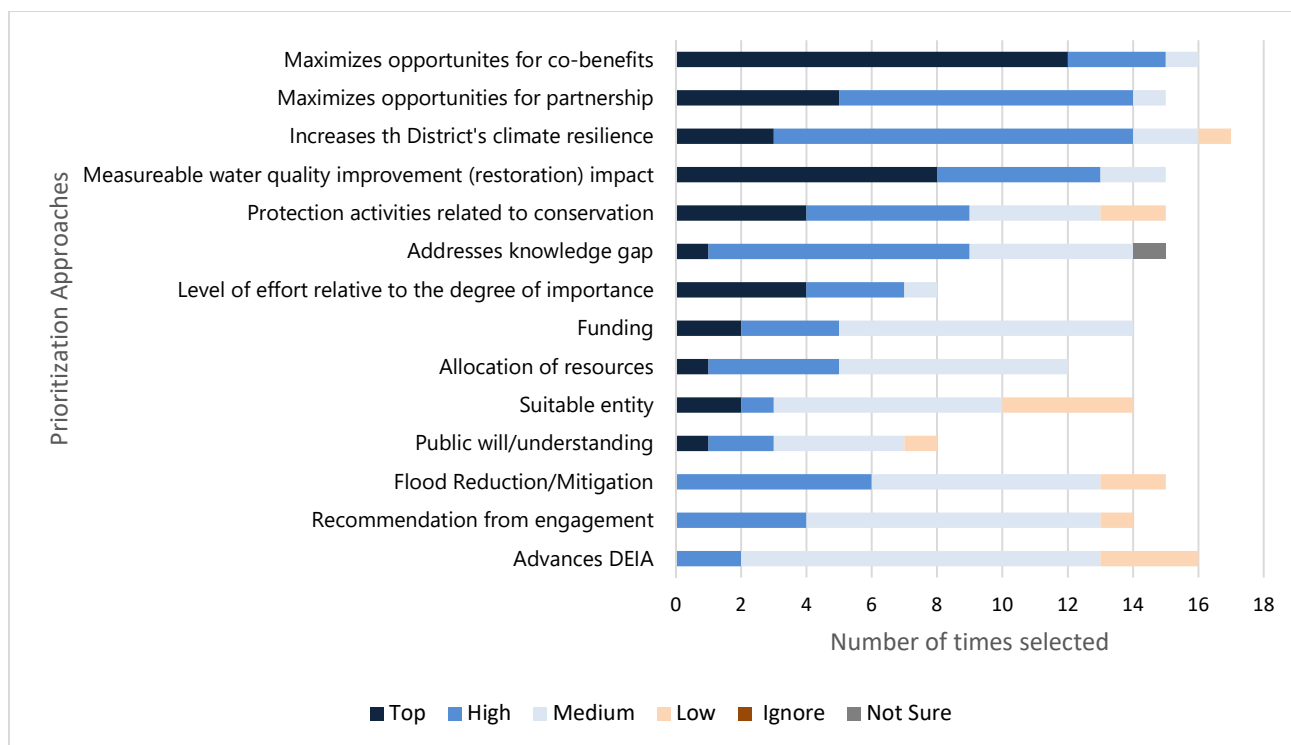
- Most CAC and TAC participants placed their high-value dot stickers (\$20 and \$10) under Brown’s Creek and its tributaries, and Lakes (Restoration). This represents feedback consistent with the previous plan - **work to improve the creek, its tributaries, and lakes remains a priority** for these stakeholders.
- TAC members noted that it is important to **consider indirect benefits to downstream resources through investments in upstream resources** – for instance achieving improvements to Brown’s Creek’s TMDL loads may be achieved through upstream wetland, lake, and upland projects.
  - Some participants noted that some resources, such as wetlands, have greater potential to achieve these stacked benefits for downstream resources which should be a priority.
- TAC participants noted they were confused what was meant by ponds, and assumed “stormwater ponds” was implied here, rather than small waterbodies. Following the discussion, TAC members indicated that they would spread more of their funding to these small waterbodies, seeing investments in ponds and wetlands as closely associated to each other given that the distinction between ponds, small lakes, and wetlands is often misunderstood or subjective to members of the public. Again **participants were most interested in understanding where investments in conservation and restoration could help contribute to downstream improvements in the creek.**

### Prioritization Approaches

The CAC and TAC were asked to review the eight prioritization approaches developed by the Board for the 2017-2026 WMP to evaluate which projects and programs it funds, three additional prioritization approaches were also included to review stemming from discussions on the management plan issues, and two other approaches added by participants through these discussions Table 2. Participants were asked to identify the degree of priority these approaches should used to inform how projects and programs are selected for the next 10 years of the watershed management plan. The results of these selections is summarized in Figure 2.

**Table 2. Prioritization Approaches**

2017-2026 WMP Prioritization Approach	New approaches to consider	Participant suggested approaches
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximizes opportunities for co-benefits</li> <li>• Protection activities related to conservation</li> <li>• Suitable entity</li> <li>• Maximizes opportunities for partnership</li> <li>• Addresses knowledge gap</li> <li>• Recommendation from engagement</li> <li>• Measurable water quality improvement (restoration) impact</li> <li>• Allocation of resources</li> <li>• Funding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advances DEIA</li> <li>• Increases the District’s climate resilience</li> <li>• Flood reduction/mitigation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Level of effort relative to the degree of importance</li> <li>• Public will/understanding</li> </ul>



**Figure 2. CAC and TAC Feedback on Project and Program Prioritization**

Aggregating the “Top” and “High” priority responses, **participants prioritized approaches that maximize co-benefits, partnerships, increasing climate resilience, achieving water quality improvement (restoration) impacts and protection activities relating to conservation.** Across the prioritization approaches participants generally emphasized that these approaches are all valuable ways of examining the merit of projects and programs, however these top and high priorities are important considerations. Participants expanded upon their selection of these approaches, noting the following key themes in their responses:

- Project and program priorities should help communicate the District’s role and how/where it targets investments.
- Increasing climate resilience ties into multiple aspects of the Districts work including flood management, biodiversity, stream temperature.
- Partnerships remain important to getting projects done. Coordination with partners, local municipalities in particular, is very important to achieving this.
- Water quality improvement in specific resources is important, however projects should not exacerbate or create new issues elsewhere
- Important to communicate to communities how investment decisions are made so people understand the District’s role and priorities.
- Being responsive to public requests is an important balance between individual requests (which can help foster involvement) and ensuring the District’s remains aligned with its plan priorities.
- Several participants noted “allocation of resources” was unclear.

- Participants noted that it is challenging to get projects done without funding sources, however this shouldn't mean that the District loses sight of projects are more challenging to fund but meet other priorities.
- Consider how low effort, high-impact and low-effort, low-impact projects can serve as stepping stones for future efforts through scaling, relationship development, and increasing public awareness/involvement.

**Attendance**

<b>CAC Meeting (4/14/2025)</b>	<b>TAC Meeting (4/22/2025)</b>
George Vania	Jessica Collin-Pilarski (Washington County PHE)
Jyneen Thatcher	Abby Shea (MDH)
Yihong Gao	Jay Riggs (WCD)
Dory Herman	Mike McMahon (Stillwater Township)
Visitor (name?)	Kevin Peterson (Washington County)
	Kate MacDonald (MPCA)
	Dan Scollan (DNR)
	Jen Kader (Met Council)
	Michelle Jordan (BWSR)
	Angie Hong (WCD)
	Mike Isensee (CMSCWD)
	George Vania (CAC)
Hannah Peterson (BCWD)	Karen Kill (BCWD)
Camilla Correll (EOR)	Camilla Correll (EOR)
Alex Furneaux (EOR)	Alex Furneaux (EOR)