

APPENDIX C:

Summary of Civic Engagement Input

- 1. BCWD CAC Minutes 06-10-2024**
- 2. BCWD Initial Planning Meeting Summary 07-09-2024**
- 3. BCWD CAC Minutes 08-12-2024**
- 4. BCWD TAC Minutes 08-20-2024**
- 5. BCWD CAC Minutes 10-14-2024**
- 6. BCWD TAC Minutes 10-22-2024**
- 7. BCWD CAC Minutes 12-09-2024**
- 8. BCWD TAC Minutes 02-25-2025**
- 9. Brown's Creek Watershed District Regulatory Review: Report and Recommendations**
- 10. CAC-TAC Prioritization Memo 05-28-2025**
- 11. Flood Vulnerability Assessment and Community Meetings Summary**

Project Name	Brown's Creek Watershed District (BCWD) Watershed Management Plan Update	Date	06-10-2024
Meeting Location	Stillwater Public Library		
Regarding	Watershed management planning process; issues and goals overview; Education and Outreach issue category discussion		
	CAC – Anne Maule-Miller, George Vania, Jyneen Thatcher, Yihong Gao		
Attendee(s) + Info.	Board Liaison - Celia Wirth		
	District Staff – Karen Kill, Cameron Blake, Camilla Correll (EOR), Alexander Furneaux (EOR)		
	Public - Quinn Judge		
Recorded By	Alexander Furneaux, EOR		

Meeting Overview

EOR staff attended the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) to provide an introductory presentation on the BCWD Watershed Management Plan (WMP) update. Camilla explained the purpose of the WMP, described the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the planning process, what is new to this fifth-generation plan, and the plan development schedule as well as touchpoints for engagement with the CAC and other stakeholders. The remainder of the meeting was used to begin the discussion of the issue category “Education and Outreach”, one (1) of five (5) issues identified by EOR and BCWD staff for discussion during CAC meetings over the WMP update lifespan.

CAC members were invited and encouraged to attend the Project Initiation meeting on July 9th, 2024 (in the afternoon/early evening). More details to come.

Discussion

- Concern regarding the inclusion of measuring PFAS. This was viewed as a city problem and beyond the scope of the watershed district. Acknowledged that the State is the lead through the County groundwater plan and therefore may acknowledge the presence of the issue but not assign responsibility to the watershed district to address it beyond monitoring (potentially) to identify presence in District resources (i.e., VBWD’s involvement in monitoring for PFAS in Lake McDonald).
- Interest in ideas to measure and track goals going forward, noted that it is challenging to view accomplishments. Some discussed a dashboard or dots on a map recording points of improvement.
 - Washington County Parks has an annual report of accomplishments. CAC members suggested that some metrics the BCWD could report include: Millbrook stormwater flows into Brown’s Creek, Buckthorn removal, bird inventory at 110th Street.
 - Anne Maule-Miller volunteered to help with this initiative.
- Concern about vagueness of “Ecological Health” issue.
- Curious to know if the District is aware of the “pain points” faced by municipalities and/or the development community. It would be good to share these so the CAC can review the concerns against the Sub-Issue Area statement for *Municipality and Developer/Contractor Education and Outreach* as well as the goals and the actions.
- Should businesses be added as an audience or Sub-Issue Area.
- Important to value and maintain the momentum of CAC interests so that documentation does not fall off over time if the expertise of certain individuals is no longer available. Possible

strategies discussed included expanding the CAC to create opportunities for more people to get involved on initiatives, and demonstrating the value of CAC activities to the BCWD Board so that if the CAC is unable to meet a need this can be filled by staff.

- CAC has excellent technical expertise at events, but struggles to communicate this with watershed district residents to get people involved/interested (aware that some event attendees come from outside the watershed). They are struggling to tell the story of the watershed improvements so that it captures peoples' attention.
 - o There is a mailing list, but no method of capturing information at events currently.
 - o Public member noted that it is challenging tracking down the BCWD and was unaware of many events (e.g. Croixwood Blvd rain garden).
 - o Consider business outreach and sponsorship-style projects like "Adopt-a-Highway" to boost involvement.
 - o Consider outreach to similar interest groups (i.e., Trout Unlimited, Pheasants Forever) so the District can leverage their networks by having them share the BCWD's accomplishments when highlighting a resource like Brown's Creek in their communications.

Actions

The following actions stem from this discussion:

- BCWD following up with Washington County Parks regarding their annual report of accomplishments.
- CAC members to provide Cameron with additional information on the "Education and Outreach" worksheet.
- EOR will continue to lead the "Education and Outreach" conversation at the next CAC meeting along with "Ecological Health" and "Land Conversation".
 - o EOR will provide information on these issues in advance (i.e., a month) of the next CAC meeting.

meeting summary



Project Name	Brown's Creek Watershed District (BCWD) Watershed Management Plan Update	Date	07-09-2024
Meeting Location	Stillwater Public Library		
Regarding	Initial Planning Meeting		
Attendee(s) + Info.	TAC members, Board Members, BCWD Staff, EOR Staff, and Members of the Public Full list documented separately in BCWD WMP Update Participation Record		
Recorded By	Alexander Furneaux, EOR		

Meeting Overview

EOR staff attended the Initial Planning Meeting as a kick-off to the Watershed Management Plan Update (the "Plan Update"). This meeting involved two parts including a meeting with the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) comprising municipalities and state agencies in the Brown's Creek Watershed, followed by a public Open House.

During the TAC meeting, EOR and BCWD staff provided an introductory presentation on the Plan Update. BCWD staff provided a review of the BCWD's accomplishments from the 2017-2026 Plan. Small group discussions followed these presentations to discuss reflections on the 2017-2026 plan and how they apply to the Plan Update, TAC member plans for the next 5-10 years with opportunities for coordination with the BCWD, and opportunities for partnership and relationship evolution.

During the Open House, members of the public were invited to circulate amongst three stations with maps displaying: a general overview of the watershed, locations of monitoring programs, and locations of projects completed and events held in the past 10 years. Prompt questions for each map focused on gathering feedback to understand how people interact with watershed resources, their concerns and aspirations for these resources, opportunities for involvement, and positive or negative changes in watershed resources. Open House participants were also encouraged to complete the "Are You Watershed Wise?" survey.

Technical Advisory Committee Feedback

2017-2026 Watershed Management Plan Accomplishments

TAC members identified accomplishments from the 2017-2026 Watershed Management Plan that stood out to them. Participants were instructed to sort these accomplishments into three categories:

Start – New (or previously identified but not enacted) ideas

- Increasing funding for education and outreach
- Creating better name recognition, awareness, and visibility in the watershed
 - Share success stories, accomplishments
- Developing stronger research partnerships (UMN, Met Council)
- Using more plain language in plans and permitting requirements
- Greater involvement in Wellhead Protection Planning – there is an added co-benefit of the opportunity access funding through wellhead protection to implement BCWD projects.
- Work emphasizing chloride management
- Creating a shareable list of stormwater projects and locations

- Analyzing PFAS in groundwater management by BCWD and USAS

Stop – Ideas that were less effective to consider reworking or abandoning

- Existing as 1.5 full-time staff – the work to-be completed requires more support.

Continue – Ideas that have proven effective to work to replicate

- Adaptive management projects and implementation project successes, such as: stream improvements, rock cribs, thermal stormwater management, lake and stream buffer protection and management, BMP maintenance
- Increase emphasis on climate change resilience and adaptation, such as: flood risk assessment
- Partnership and relationship building with watershed partners such as development review
- Innovative approaches to engagement, education, and outreach opportunities
- Considering all the funding sources to write a plan that achieves broad eligibility
- Good that the BCWD didn't create another groundwater model – several exist from the Metro, WBL USGS, WBL DNR, and 3M settlement and community specific models
- Improvements to streamline permits
- Strengthen relationships with neighboring watershed districts
- Developing a partner list/identified liaison
- Involving the CAC with identifying and promoting events and educational opportunities

Plans for the Next 5-10 Years

TAC members identified several plans for the next 5 to 10 years that present opportunities for alignment with BCWD actions, including:

- **Road Reconstruction:** Washington County Road 5/96 is being returned to the County, 58th Street N reconstruction, Memorial Avenue reconstruction, Washington Avenue & North Frontage Road realignment, miscellaneous street reconstructions.
- **Site Redevelopment:** Long Lake development, Lakeview Hospital, Central Commons, Anderson Parcel, Gadiant property, miscellaneous parking lot reconstructions
- **Programs:** DWAMP Water Ambient Monitoring Program (MDH), Met Council relaunching subregional engagement with a “One Water” perspective, Met Council creating/updating technical tools and information trainings for planning and implementation with municipalities
- **Data and Monitoring:** Mulberry Ravine (MSC-WMO partnership), flood plain mapping, flood forecasting management

Partnering with the BCWD

TAC members identified opportunities for how relationships between watershed partners and the BCWD could evolve over the next 10 years, including:

- Training and education for realtors and developers, HOAs, UMN practitioners
 - Topics for education referenced included: water reuse practices, BMPs, regulation and registration, operations and maintenance, PFAS

- Proactively engaging with watershed partners by going out to meet these partners where they are and connecting with them (e.g. calling with questions)
- Coordination of rules across watershed districts to reduce the burden on municipalities managing rule compliance in multiple watersheds.
- Work with municipalities to understand potential areas of flexibility on regulations based on their application – Oak Park Heights referenced a recent permit for a Panera development.
- Attendance at regular meetings, such as a standing TAC meeting.
- Ensure materials are provided in Plain Language so they are accessible and easy to understand (not dumbed down).
- Minnesota Department of Health is eager to improve relationships and help watershed districts.
- Relationships should address environmental justice, equity, and inclusion through the planning and implementation stages.

Open House Feedback

Staff conducted one-on-one conversations with participants during the Open House to gather information about watershed experiences. Common themes that emerged from these conversations included:

- Interest in stream restoration opportunities and improvements to water access.
- Support for the projects BCWD is leading to improve water resources and interest to learn more about the environmental value of these projects in addition to their recreational value.
- Opportunities may exist for the BCWD to collaborate with Washington County on an upcoming CIP road reconstruction of Highway 96 which is now under County ownership.
- Projects implemented from over 10 years ago are still in place in places such as the Stillwater Country Club and there may be further opportunities for outreach
- Interest in understanding what is within the BCWD's jurisdiction for permitting, specifically related to the Liberty Classical Academy campus near the North Chain of Lakes
- Support for BCWD's involvement in the East Metro Water Resources Education Program (EMWREP).

Impacts on the Plan Update Process

Relating these experiences and perspectives on the watershed provides helpful information that can inform the following aspects of the Plan Update process:

- Watershed partners are eager to collaborate with the BCWD on projects, evolving relationships so that the BCWD is involved early (such as the case of the Highway 96 CIP road reconstruction) and involved regularly (such as the case of re-establishing the relationship with previous partners at the Stillwater Country Club).
- Watershed partners are supportive of the BCWD's efforts to protect and restore watershed resources and are eager to work together.
- Many watershed residents continue to have a low understanding of the BCWD's role, the work being done, and opportunities to get involved. Opportunities for education, outreach,

and awareness of BCWD actions and work remains a priority with multiple pathways to address this Issue area.

- Watershed partners are interested in the intersections of their work with the watershed, particularly in areas of site redevelopment, wellhead protection, and flood management.
- Watershed partners are supportive of the direction to pursue initiatives with mindfulness towards environmental justice, equity, and inclusion.

This feedback will be considered through the review of the Issues in the Plan Update process.

Project Name	Brown's Creek Watershed District (BCWD) Watershed Management Plan Update	Date	8-12-2024
Meeting Location	Stillwater Public Library		
Regarding	Watershed Management Plan Update; Education, Outreach, and Stewardship; Recreation CAC – Anne Maule-Miller, George Vania, Jyneen Thatcher, Hallie Chasensky, Sandy Noreen-Ruben, Dory Herman		
Attendee(s) + Info.	Board Liaison - Celia Wirth District Staff – Karen Kill, Cameron Blake, Alexander Furneaux (EOR) Public - Quinn Judge		
Recorded By	Alexander Furneaux, EOR		

Meeting Overview

EOR staff attended the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) to lead a discussion on two issues in the BCWD Watershed Management Plan (WMP) update. Alexander provided a summary of the initial plan meeting of the WMP, the work completed since the CAC last met, and the list of issues to be discussed with the CAC. The remainder of the meeting was used to discuss two issue categories “Education, Outreach, and Stewardship” and “Recreation”.

CAC members were asked to identify concerns/threats, management strategies, monitoring opportunities, and engagement opportunities associated with these issues. Of importance was understanding how these issues are evolving and what updates are required to ensure the relevance of the Issue for the coming 10 years.

Discussion

The following summary of the meeting discussion includes input received from the CAC during the meeting, input on these Issues received following the meeting (if any), and input on the issue received through prior engagement as part of the Watershed Management Plan update.

This input is summarized in **Table 1** and **Table 2** and separated by content discussed that is Within the Plan Currently¹, New to the Update, or Out of Scope of the District's authority (if applicable)

Information from these tables will be used to update the following subsections of the issue statements in the plan in the following ways:

- **Concerns/Threats** – Informs potential updates to the General Issue Statement (3.X.1), Relevance to the District (3.X.2), and Sub-Issue Areas (3.X.3).
- **Management Strategies** – Informs potential Goals (new or updated).
- **Monitoring Opportunities** - Informs potential Implementation Items (new or updated).
- **Engagement Opportunities** – Informs potential Implementation Items (new or updated).

¹ This refers to content within the Plan currently that was discussed by CAC members. More content on the Issue is available but was not referenced by participants.

Table 1. Education, Outreach, and Stewardship (EOS)

	Concerns/Threats	Management Strategies	Monitoring	Engagement Opportunities
Within the Plan Currently	Challenge of how to make communication more impactful.	Broader public should know they can connect and trust the BCWD. <i>Consider how to incorporate this as a metric.</i>	- Documenting participant information. <i>Consider how to incorporate this as a metric.</i> - Maintaining a list of partners. <i>Consider how to incorporate this as a metric.</i>	- Continue building the BCWD's potential partners through relationships that help further name recognition (e.g. Master Gardeners) - Explore opportunities for innovative engagement - Geographically focused outreach targeting for specific Issues (e.g chloride in Long Lake); could include a kiosk with rotating information. - Tote of BCWD information and material to bring or provide to events. - Combine multiple techniques to reach people (e.g. kiosk and local outreach directing people to attend virtual webinar or meeting). - Opportunity for involvement in Summer Tuesdays . - May require Stillwater Chamber membership. - Weekly involvement time intensive.
New to the Update	- Poor name recognition of the BCWD and awareness of its role; BCWD is often encountered late in the process because people aren't aware of its role. - Loss of knowledge and expertise from retiring CAC members. - Struggle to communicate the story of watershed improvements to watershed partners and broader public. - More HOAs have emerged meaning fewer centralized points to contact (previously was builders) making it more resource intensive to conduct outreach. - HOAs struggle to understand their responsibilities with stormwater management.	- Expanding the CAC to create more opportunities for involvement and ways to pass on knowledge/expertise - Integrate the CAC into coordination with watershed partners to share information and partner on EOS opportunities.		- Work to highlight project achievements so people recognize work as BCWD led/involved. - Continue to develop business and organizational outreach. - Online information sessions during COVID-19 pandemic attracted interest; consider a directory to meeting recordings; consider online webinars. - Consider developing a directory to the State's Stormwater BMP guide.

Table 2. Recreation

	Concerns/Threats	Management Strategies	Monitoring Opportunities	Engagement Opportunities
Within the Plan Currently	Private land barrier to lake access.	- Recreation can be a pathway to greater knowledge, pride of place, and desire for stewardship of a resource. - Coordination with enforcement authorities to manage recreation-related resource degradation. - Goal of the BCWD to provide recreation improvements with public benefit.		
New to the Update	Habitat degradation from recreation activities (e.g. unofficial mountain bike trails, tree clearing).	Goal of the BCWD is not to become a park manager.	Tracking recreation-related degradation impacts. <i>Consider how to incorporate this as a metric.</i>	- Coordination with landowners near resources where there is recreation potential (creek, 110th St property). - Outreach to local HOAs to coordinate lake tour event. - Developing greater understanding of how watershed partners are using resources for recreation; this may include small interactions (e.g. ECFE summer series in Brown's Creek). - Connecting recreational opportunities to changes in water quality.

Project Name	Brown's Creek Watershed District (BCWD) Watershed Management Plan Update	Date	8-20-2024
Meeting Location	Stillwater Public Library		
Regarding	Watershed Management Plan Update; Stormwater Management; Stream Management		
Attendee(s) + Info.	TAC Members		
Full attendance in Appendix A	CAC Members		
	Board Members		
	District Staff and Consultants		
Recorded By	Alexander Furneaux, EOR		

Meeting Overview

EOR staff attended the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to lead a discussion on two Issues in the BCWD Watershed Management Plan (WMP) update. Camilla and Alexander provided a summary of the Initial Plan Meeting of the WMP, the work completed since the TAC last met, and the list of Issues to be discussed with the TAC. The remainder of the meeting was used to discuss two Issue categories "Stormwater Management" and "Stream Management".

TAC members were asked to identify concerns/threats, management strategies, monitoring opportunities, and engagement opportunities associated with these Issues. Of importance was understanding how these Issues are evolving and what updates are required to ensure the relevance of the Issue for the coming 10 years.

Discussion

The following summary of the meeting discussion includes input received from the TAC during the meeting, input on these Issues received following the meeting (if any), and input on the Issue received through prior engagement as part of the Watershed Management Plan Update.

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Table 1. Stormwater Management

	Concerns/Threats	Management Strategies	Monitoring Opportunities	Engagement Opportunities
Within the Plan Currently	• Poor maintenance record of BMPs, some residents find maintenance challenging; HOAs not investing in maintenance. • Developers under-designing stormwater management for property alterations (e.g. pool, larger driveway). • Infill becoming more challenging to proactively address needed changes. • Stormwater is considered late in the development process. • Increasing impervious surface, generally.	• Improving relationships between township leadership and BCWD Board. • Retrofit opportunities remain on areas before watershed rules (stormwater treatment in Croixwood for Long Lake). • Reviewing rule triggers to reflect current state of infill development. • Continue conservation easement/credits. • Below-ground storage with optiRTC. • Maintenance cost-sharing with BCWD.	• Examine monitoring to optimize data efficiently. • Continue partnering with SAFL connecting monitoring to latest research.	

	Concerns/Threats	Management Strategies	Monitoring Opportunities	Engagement Opportunities
New to the Update	Greater consideration of the ramifications (cost) if operation and maintenance needs are not met. <i>BCWD has not conducted a cost-benefit analysis.</i>	- Revisiting rules regarding infiltration, MDH willing to review/strength with guidance for ground/drinking water protection. - Encouraging oversizing BMPs based on anticipated climate change impacts to precipitation. - Targeted restorations that would reduce flooding. - Encouraging natural landscaping for new large lot developments; developing rules to discourage blue grass lawns. - Sensitivity analysis ensuring freeboard is sufficient for 200-year events. <i>Tie-in to Floodplain Management.</i> - Incorporate larger scale water reuse opportunities (challenging for internal use due to code).	- Support/partner on efforts to understand impacts of infill groundwater quality. <i>Tie-in to Groundwater Management.</i> - Groundwater monitoring in response to pumping/wells in north. <i>Tie-in to Groundwater Management.</i> - PFAS surface water monitoring.	- Educating new HOA owners when the development is completed, plus a 5-year follow-up. - Sharing stormwater management resources with approachable language. <i>Tie-in to Groundwater Management.</i> - Using multiple communication approaches (e.g. signage, social media) to share information. <i>Tie-in to Groundwater Management.</i> - Personalizing stormwater management experiences to make them more relatable. <i>Tie-in to Groundwater Management.</i>

	Concerns/Threats	Management Strategies	Monitoring Opportunities	Engagement Opportunities
Out of Scope		- Ordinance change to encourage preferred development patterns/outcomes. <i>BCWD does not have land use authority, can work with municipalities to explore and encourage other development patterns</i> - Protect mature trees in development (conservation development approach), strengthen tree replacement policies. <i>BCWD cannot regulate this but can work with municipalities to establish goals.</i> <i>Tie-in to Land Conservation.</i>		

Table 2. Stream Management

	Concerns/Threats	Management Strategies	Monitoring Opportunities	Engagement Opportunities
Within the Plan Currently	- Climate change resulting in more short but intense storms, less infiltration, more runoff (TSS, nutrient runoff, erosion, water temperature issues). - Increased impervious surface and turfgrass conversion. - Over pumping of groundwater due to increased development. - Denuded soils in floodplains and gorge slopes due to Buckthorn, TSS impacts.	- Promoting natural landscapes, reduce turf grass. - Habitat, wetland, and floodplain preservation. - Remediating the Brown's Creek buffer zone to improve water quality.	- Most critical: TSS, stream temperature, dissolved oxygen, flow monitoring, and nutrient concentrations. - Habitat monitoring surveys (birds and plants).	- Demonstration projects for native plantings and education about turf alternate options. - Involving leaders, attending Council meetings. - Support for local permit reviews. - Engaging community development and land use planners (Met Council subregional engagement).
New to the Update	- PFAS contamination - Chloride from SSTs (water softener). - Areas of unknown legacy loading, CMSCWD working on this.	- Separate areas of concern by the north and south portions of the watershed, different concerns. <i>Would create a new format for the Plan.</i> - Reduce irrigation <i>from the groundwater system. Water conservation strategy. Tie-in to Groundwater Management.</i>	- Important to monitor trends in PFAS and chlorides. - Challenge to determine frequency of monitoring.	- Continuing education credits and targeted engagement for developers, HOA maintenance management companies. - Education on soil health.

Appendix A – Attendance

Roles	Name	Organization
Board	Klayton Eckles	
	Celia Wirth	
CAC	George Vanya	
	Anne-Maule Miller	
TAC	Abby Shea	Minnesota Department of Health
District Staff	Karen Kill	Brown's Creek Watershed District
	Cameron	
	Camilla Correll	Emmons & Olivier Resource Inc. (EOR)
	Alexander Furneaux	

Project Name	Brown's Creek Watershed District (BCWD) Watershed Management Plan Update	Date	10-14-2024
Meeting Location	Stillwater Public Library		
Regarding	Watershed Management Plan Update; Land Conservation and Ecological Health		
Attendee(s) + Info.	CAC – Anne Maule-Miller, George Vania, Yihong Gao, Sandy Noreen-Ruben, Board Liaison - Celia Wirth District Staff – Karen Kill, Cameron Blake, Camilla Correll (EOR), Alexander Furneaux (EOR)		
Recorded By	Alexander Furneaux, EOR		

Meeting Overview

EOR staff attended the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting to lead a discussion on two issues being revised as part of the BCWD Watershed Management Plan (WMP) update. Alexander provided a summary of Plan progress input received from the TAC on the Issues of Stormwater Management and Stream Management. Alexander noted that the BCWD Board provided initial comments on the Issues discussed with the CAC and TAC in August. EOR also shared the approach to considering climate change impacts and DEI in the planning process. The remainder of the meeting was used to discuss two Issue categories “Land Conservation” and “Ecological Health”.

CAC members were asked to identify concerns/threats, management strategies, monitoring opportunities, and engagement opportunities associated with these Issues. Of importance was understanding how these Issues are evolving and what updates are required to ensure the relevance of the Issue for the coming 10 years.

Discussion

The following summary of the meeting discussion includes input received from the CAC during the meeting, input on these Issues received following the meeting (if any), and input on the Issue received through prior engagement as part of the Watershed Management Plan Update.

This input is summarized in **Table 1** and **Table 2** and separated by content discussed that is Within the Plan Currently¹, New to the Update, or Out of Scope of the District's authority (if applicable).

Information from these tables will be used to update the following subsections of the Issue Statements in the Plan in the following ways:

- **Concerns/Threats** – Informs potential updates to the General Issue Statement (3.X.1), Relevance to the District (3.X.2), and Sub-Issue Areas (3.X.3).
- **Management Strategies** – Informs potential Goals (new or updated).
- **Monitoring Opportunities** - Informs potential Implementation Items (new or updated).

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- **Engagement Opportunities** – Informs potential Implementation Items (new or updated).

Prior to the small group discussion, EOR shared revisions to the Ecological Health Issue Statement and Relevance to the District. The group agreed that characterizing the issue as a watershed health issue and speaking to the ecosystem services of upland areas was an important revision to this section of the Plan. The CAC was supportive of the changes presented at the meeting.

Table 1. Land Conservation

	Concerns/Threats	Management Strategies	Monitoring Opportunities	Engagement Opportunities
Within the Plan Currently	- Habitat loss/fragmentation. - Loss of groundwater recharge zones. - Climate change.	- Standards for development near/within land protection corridors. - Prairie, wetland, and woodland restoration. - Buckthorn and invasive species management.	- January 2017 BCWD Conservation Easement Baseline Report. - Bird and plant species sampling/surveying. - Unique Species Inventory. - Continue to measure stream flows to understand if the water is cold enough at the Conservation Easement to support trout and other cold-water dependent species. - Trail camera capturing mammal species mostly.	- Collaboration with partners to protect land. - CAC and community stewardship.
New to the Update	- DEI in this Issue should read “Equitable access <i>and protection</i> to land and natural resources” - More new development and subdivision potential as agriculture in the area decreases. - People who want to put their properties into conservation easement when they pass away but don’t formalize it. Inheritors selling the land against their family’s wishes.	- Developing tree preservation goals with municipalities. - Consider developing an incentive program for native plantings along shorelines. - Engagement with homeowners who live next to the Conservation Easement. - Encouraging native planting as an adaptation strategy to more extreme wet/dry conditions. - Where possible conserve land without having to purchase the property, help people understand what they can do themselves on their property.	Macroinvertebrate sampling	- Relationship building between BCWD and community, and BCWD as a facilitator of connecting the community with other resources. E.g: - BCWD working with people to get them to participate in entering an easement (newsletter, neighbor outreach). - BCWD connecting people to representatives at the County and Minnesota Land Trust. - Engagement at the Conservation Easement. Discussion of extent to which BCWD opens the Conservation Easement to broader public access. Also discussed during the August meeting.

				○ Add “Who to contact” portion to the property sign if people want a tour. ○ Consider a geocaching event on the property, locations show comparison between now and past. ○ Tie-in to <i>Recreation</i> with opportunities for tours with organization (e.g. scouts) to learn about conservation activities. ○ Consider <i>Recreation</i> potential of squirrel hunting, recognized as a practice in the area. ○ Engage Conservation Easement neighbors to collaborate on the management of the area (Nature Conservancy model), protect land without having to buy it all
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Table 2. Ecological Health

	Concerns/Threats	Management Strategies	Monitoring Opportunities	Engagement Opportunities
Within the Plan Currently	- Degraded fisheries. - Aquatic and terrestrial invasive species (AIS & TIS). - Lack of understanding of ecosystem services. - CAC noted it would be helpful to have a graphic in the plan conveying interrelated elements contributing to a healthy watershed. - Climate change. - Habitat fragmentation.	- Native plant preservation and restoration. - Cost-sharing invasive species management where there is water quality benefit. - Upland management.	- Bird and plant species sampling/surveying - TSS monitoring - Pollutant loading monitoring - Unique Species Inventory - Routine monitoring of fish in lakes and streams, increased frequency would be a value-add.	- Invasive species management <i>Education and Outreach</i> - Collaboration on vegetation maintenance practices - Citizen amphibian and reptile survey
New to the Update	- DEI in this Issue should read “Equitable access <i>and protection</i> to clean water” - People releasing pets (e.g. bullfrogs and goldfish) into water resources, e.g Long Lake. “Unique features” currently captures trails and scenic areas, compared to biological unique areas (Section 1.2.6.)	How to wean people off seeing BCWD as the “doer” so that people take action on their own/assume the actions BCWD undertakes.	Fish surveys on lakes and ponds conducted when Lake Management Plan developed	- How do we define “Ecological Health”; what ways the district help convey the components of a healthy watershed. <i>Education and Outreach</i>, invasive species information on the website - Sharing stories of what is being monitored, what needs improvement, and how landowners can contribute to these improvements on their properties. Could include attending township board meetings to share these stories. <i>Education and Outreach</i>, work with the Gateway Trail Association along the trail. - Ongoing discussion of increasing name recognition, how the BCWD should engage renters, businesses, etc...

				• <i>Education and Outreach</i>, connecting with more diverse audiences.
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Project Name	Brown's Creek Watershed District (BCWD) Watershed Management Plan Update	Date	10-22-2024
Meeting Location	Washington County Conservation District Office		
Regarding	Watershed Management Plan Update; Lake Management; Wetland Management		
Attendee(s) + Info.	TAC Members		
Full attendance in	CAC Members		
Appendix A	District Staff and Consultants		
Recorded By	Alexander Furneaux, EOR		

Meeting Overview

EOR staff attended the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting to lead a discussion on two Issues that will be revised as part of the BCWD Watershed Management Plan (WMP) update. Camilla and Alexander provided a summary of the work completed since the TAC last met, including updating them on the CAC and Board meetings, and the list of Issues to be discussed with the TAC. EOR also shared the approach to considering climate change impacts and DEI in the planning process. The remainder of the meeting was used to discuss two Issue categories "Lake Management" and "Wetland Management".

TAC members were asked to identify concerns/threats, management strategies, monitoring opportunities, and engagement opportunities associated with these Issues. Of importance was understanding how these Issues are evolving and what updates are required to ensure the relevance of the Issue for the coming 10 years.

Discussion

The following summary of the meeting discussion includes input received from the TAC during the meeting, input on these Issues received following the meeting (if any), and input on the Issue received through prior engagement as part of the Watershed Management Plan Update.

This input is summarized in **Table 1** and **Table 2**. Information from these tables will be used to update the following subsections of the Issue Statements in the Plan in the following ways:

- **Concerns/Threats** – Informs potential updates to the General Issue Statement (3.X.1), Relevance to the District (3.X.2), and Sub-Issue Areas (3.X.3).
- **Management Strategies** – Informs potential Goals (new or updated).
- **Monitoring Opportunities** - Informs potential Implementation Items (new or updated).
- **Engagement Opportunities** – Informs potential Implementation Items (new or updated).

Table 1. Lake Management

	Concerns/Threats	Management Strategies	Monitoring Opportunities	Engagement Opportunities
Within the Plan Currently	- Nutrient impairment. <i>E. Coli</i> impairment. - TSS. - Invasive aquatic species. - Lake level fluctuation, worsening due to climate change.	- Lake management (subwatershed, shoreline, in-lake, containment). - Lake management plans and implementation.	- Water quality. - Water level. - Lynch and Goggins aquatic macrophyte (plant) surveys which have uncovered some rare plant species.	Meetings with lakeshore owners during the Pond/Lake Management Plans.

New to the Update	• PFAS contamination. • Chloride impairment. • Loss of natural shoreline and native shoreline vegetation (habitat degradation). • Little or no enforcement of shoreland ordinances. • Increased flood elevations from larger storms. • Increased intensity of lake use; more boats, bigger motors, bigger wakes. • Interest in understanding if development patterns around lakes are impacting the lakes, how is zoning influencing land use and land cover near lakes? • Lack of public access to most lakes. • Encroachment on the Long Lake public trail by private landowners.	• Shoreline bioengineering only, no rock or sand; alternates including vegetation and stormwater management for shoreland lots. • Rip rap and sand blankets being installed without a permit requirement, DNR rule issue; desire to see more BCWD oversight. • Set a measurable goal for native shoreline per lake; informed by current status and tied to monitoring activities. • Consider where investments are being made relative to the people who have access to the benefits; are there ways to increase equitable access to lakes? • AIS not a watershed issue, leave it alone unless there is a direct water quality benefit. BCWD can help people stay informed on AIS; clearly define the BCWD's role on AIS to manage expectations (define where the BCWD stops and where DNR and Washington County lead); partner with these organizations. ◦ Acknowledge AIS as an issue but not necessarily a priority for BCWD to lead. • Learn more about Lake Improvement Districts to see if this would be a good fit for some lakes. • Consider dust suppressants and water softeners as additional sources of chlorides, in addition to road salt. • Will the H/H model map the floodplain in the developed parts of	• DNR score the shore monitoring. • Conduct monitoring routinely; 3-year rotations. ◦ While it was suggested that BCWD could do the public-access and impaired resources, and use citizen science to assist with the other resources, the group concluded that the use of volunteers may create too much inconsistency in the data (something that needs to be weighed) • Aerial and on-lake monitoring. • Evaluate potential pollutant loads from septic systems including the impact of water softeners. • Set a goal of a % of natural shoreline. • Look for a reference that ties lake score to an understanding of the status of the lake.	• Setting expectations about the ecosystem functions of wetlands compared to lakes; people wanting to cut down shoreline vegetation for a better view. • Increased public education about these resources; consider signage near lakes, direct HOA outreach and outreach to shoreline properties. ◦ Realtor workshops – ensuring these individuals are representing these resources responsibly and accurately. ◦ Shoreland owner workshops – what can these property owners do with their land. • Coordination with LGUs protection and enforcement. • Formalize lake names. • Native shoreline restoration/management cost-share. • Free/discounted/cost-shared shoreline rehabilitation design from a landscape architect. • Highlighting shoreline conservation efforts of specific properties as good examples for others to replicate.
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	Concerns/Threats	Management Strategies	Monitoring Opportunities	Engagement Opportunities
		the city and in landlocked portions of the watershed? What events are we running?		Partnership to determine how to address discharge to Lake McKusick

Table 2. Wetland Management

	Concerns/Threats	Management Strategies	Monitoring Opportunities	Engagement Opportunities
Within the Plan Currently	• Encroachments, such as development, filling, and vegetation removal. ○ Loss of wetland area, type, and value; important to consider. • Aquatic invasive species. ○ Loss of wetland plants to invasive species (phragmites, thin leaf cattails). • Decreased groundwater contributions. ○ As appropriations increase, do we anticipate wetlands drying up? • Nutrient loading. ○ Historically nutrient loaded wetlands releasing Phosphorus.	• Vegetation management, UMN phragmites management. • Pond management plans. • Restoration and enhancement of high priority wetlands. • Wetland buffer quality.	• GIS database of recorded buffers.	

New to the Update	• Chloride impacts. • Failing septic systems with a lack of back-up sites needing intervention. • Flooding, depending on the wetland type.	• WCD invasive species control needs funding. • High replacement ratios for high quality wetlands, localize mitigation so replacements occur within the watershed. • BCWD taking on some WCA responsibilities through permitting? Is this possible with staff capacity? • Sub-issue regarding loss of wetland area and type; degradation and loss, degradation can be more nuanced (e.g. wetlands that have too much water causing aquatic species die-off).	• New and emerging invasive species monitoring. • Monitoring loading including historic high loading review • H/H future flood footprint.	• Managing expectations of ecosystem functions for wetlands and lakes. • Pollinator and wildlife wetland workshops. • Locker with stand-up paddleboards. • Ducks Unlimited – connect people that aren't normally connected within the watershed; don't normally see ducks any more. • City of Stillwater partnership to provide boating opportunities off the pier/dock in the Liberty Development. • Trout Unlimited and Pheasants Forever connection. • DNR fishing in the neighborhood program, connect with this program. • Increase public access to small lakes and large wetlands. • Stillwater in support of reuse, especially with redevelopment of the athletic center.
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Appendix A – Attendance

TAC Members

- Jay Riggs, WCD
- Mike Isensee, CMSCWD
- Jessica Collin-Pilarski, Washington County
- Daniel Scollan, DNR
- Michelle Jordan, BWSR
- Abby Shea, MDH Wellhead Protection
- Steve Christopher, Metropolitan Council
- Matt Oldenburg-Downing, Middle St. Croix Watershed Management Organization
- Jesse Farrell, City of Stillwater
- Miranda Nichols, MPCA

CAC Members

- George Vania
- Jyneen Thatcher
- Anne Maule Miller

Staff

- Karen Kill
- Cameon Blake
- Hannah Peterson
- Camilla Correll
- Alexander Furneaux

Project Name	Brown's Creek Watershed District (BCWD) Watershed Management Plan Update	Date	12-9-2024
Meeting Location	Stillwater Public Library		
Regarding	Watershed Management Plan Update; Land Conservation and Ecological Health		
Attendee(s) + Info.	CAC –George Vania, Jyneen Thatcher, Yihong Gao, Aimee Eberle, Sandy Noreen-Ruben, Board Liaison - Celia Wirth District Staff –Cameron Blake, Hannah Peterson Camilla Correll (EOR), Alexander Furneaux (EOR)		
Recorded By	Alexander Furneaux, EOR		

Meeting Overview

EOR staff attended the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting to lead a discussion on climate change impacts as part of the BCWD Watershed Management Plan (WMP) update. Alexander provided a summary of the Plan's progress, including input received from the TAC on the Issues of Lake Management and Wetland Management. Alexander noted that the BCWD Board provided initial comments on the Issues discussed with the CAC and TAC in October. The remainder of the meeting was used to discuss applying a climate change impact lens to the WMP update through a climate change storytelling workshop process, inspired by [Climate Stories Project](#)'s approach.

CAC members were asked to share personal observations of climate change, drawing upon sensory experiences such as sight, smell, sound, and touch to communicate how these changes are unfolding. CAC members were encouraged to draw on observations they have experienced in areas within the BCWD, however they often spoke to more geographically broader experiences from places they have lived in Minnesota and elsewhere. CAC members were invited to share a recorded climate story with EOR following the CAC meeting.

Discussion

A climate change storytelling approach utilizes three modules to construct a narrative of individual's stories. These modules are based on understanding places, resources, and experiences that people care about, an exploration of the experiences of climate change on the things people care about, and how the impacts of climate change move people to be motivated or take action to help address climate change. Responses from the CAC are organized as follows according to these modules.

Places, Resources, and Experiences the CAC Cares About

- Recreational opportunities such as cross-country skiing, ice fishing, sledding, running, biking, and getting out on the water.
- Access to clean air and water.
- Scenery.
- Animals and their habitats.
- Seeing the life in Brown's Creek.

Experiences of Climate Change

- Losing a sense of the Minnesota identity of braving/bragging about cold tolerance, and loss of winter traditions for outdoor activities.
 - People used to have skating rinks in their yards as an afterschool activity.
 - Shorter and more inconsistent cross country ski season – used to be December to April, now January to early March.
- Change in bird species.
 - More Northern Cardinals singing year-round.
 - House Finches displacing House Sparrows – House Sparrows now seen mostly in non-residential areas, while House Finches seen in residential areas.
- Inconsistent rainfall resulting in conditions that are too dry for plants to produce nectar for bees, the pollen is still there but the nectar can be lacking.
- Snowplow only came once in 2024. There is less consistent snowfall generally.
- Smokey summers present concerns about health impacts, reducing opportunities to enjoy time outside in summer.
- Observing the increased growth of Buckthorn due to warming temperatures.
- Observing the change in selection of plant species for the area as the hardiness zone changes, assisted migration.
- Shift towards extremes such as the big snow in 2023 followed by no snow in 2024.
- Precipitation and temperature variation creating bigger snows, bigger melts, and potential for bigger flooding and flash freezing.

Motivations and Actions to Address Climate Change

Motivations

- Personal costs of living.
- Feeling like we are doing our part to address climate change as individuals.
- Inspired by people's innovation to adapt.
- Inspiring a culture and mindset change, "if you do it, the neighbors will catch on".

Actions

- Tree preservation.
- Participating in the Climate Impact Corps (AmeriCorps).
- Communicating environmental issues to family, friends, colleagues, and the broader public.
- Driving less.
- Planting prairie instead of turfgrass.
- Reducing energy use through efficient appliances and passive cooling (shade trees on home).
- Taking steps to get off the grid (solar panels, geothermal).
- Recycling.
- Advocating internally within organizations to change behavior. For example, planting native seed mixes instead of turfgrass.

Project Name	Brown's Creek Watershed District (BCWD) Watershed Management Plan Update	Date	2-25-2025
Meeting Location	Washington County Conservation District Office		
Regarding	Watershed Management Plan Update; Floodplain Management; Groundwater Management; Erosion Prevention and Sediment Control		
Attendee(s) + Info.	TAC Members		
Full attendance in Appendix A	CAC Members		
Recorded By	District Staff and Consultants		
	Alexander Furneaux, EOR		

Meeting Overview

EOR staff attended the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting to lead a discussion on three Issues that will be revised as part of the BCWD Watershed Management Plan (WMP) update. Camilla and Alexander provided a summary of the work completed since the TAC last met, including updating them on the CAC and Board meetings, and the list of Issues to be discussed with the TAC. EOR also shared the approach to considering climate change impacts and DEI in the planning process. The remainder of the meeting was used to discuss three Issue categories "Floodplain Management", "Groundwater Management", and "Erosion Prevention and Sediment Control".

TAC members were asked to identify concerns/threats, management strategies, monitoring opportunities, and engagement opportunities associated with these Issues. Of importance was understanding how these Issues are evolving and what updates are required to ensure the relevance of the Issue for the coming 10 years.

Discussion

The following summary of the meeting discussion includes input received from the TAC during the meeting, input on these Issues received following the meeting (if any), and input on the Issue received through prior engagement as part of the Watershed Management Plan Update.

This input is summarized in **Table 1**, **Table 2**, and **Table 3**. Information from these tables will be used to update the following subsections of the Issue Statements in the Plan in the following ways:

- **Concerns/Threats** – Informs potential updates to the General Issue Statement (3.X.1), Relevance to the District (3.X.2), and Sub-Issue Areas (3.X.3).
- **Management Strategies** – Informs potential Goals (new or updated).
- **Monitoring Opportunities** - Informs potential Implementation Items (new or updated).
- **Engagement Opportunities** – Informs potential Implementation Items (new or updated).

Other Topics

Through discussions on these Issues, additional considerations were noted related to the Lake Management issue:

- Follow-up with landowners to understand where well and septic systems are located. Most people responded during previous outreach efforts however there are a few the BCWD didn't hear back from. These are the 180 gaps noted in the presentation table under "Accomplishments: Floodplain Management" (Slide 10).
- MDH noted private wells are not included in the County well index.

- EOR used the County Well Index and MN Well Index Data layers, and acknowledged there are gaps. For example, location reporting was not required until the 1970s meaning some wells pre-dating the requirement may not be captured.
- MDH has educational materials on well protection they can share. This should be referenced in the Plan. Also included risks and steps homeowners can take from community meeting presentations.
- Consider in the Land and Water Resource Inventory (LWRI). There are no Nonmunicipal Community Water Supply Systems servicing residential properties in the BCWD. They are just servicing workplaces and schools. If we want more information about which workplaces and which schools, contact MDH.
- Verify DWSMA for City of Minneapolis drinking water system. Include in LWRI if applicable.

Table 1. Floodplain Management

	Concerns/Threats	Management Strategies	Monitoring Opportunities	Engagement Opportunities
Within the Plan Currently	• Loss of flood storage • Groundwater contributing to flooding • Urban flash flooding • Determining roles and responsibilities of the District (e.g. Kimbro Basin flooding) • More severe precipitation events and prolonged wet cycles • Flooding in landlocked basins	• Ensuring no net loss of flood storage through regulatory standards • Assessing potential for flooding • Special attention to minimizing flood risk in landlocked basins	• Lake level and stream flow monitoring	

New to the Update	• Inadequate freeboard • Insurance companies pulling coverage • Changes to FEMA floodplain footprints • Soil compaction during development still an issue • Deteriorating soil health • Flooding impacts to wells • Reduced infiltration in high intensity storm events • DEI consideration: days without clean drinking water when wells flooded	• Flood vulnerability assessment with H/H model updates to NOAA Atlas 14 • Greater regional stormwater management • Acquisition of at-risk properties where there are co-benefits, identifying qualifying co-benefits • Rule language change; allow mitigation without exacerbating on-site flood risk • Partnering with cities to implement stormwater management retrofits or regional treatment solutions • Green infrastructure and soil health BMPs • Turf reduction programs • Public ownership of stormwater facilities (stormwater ponds in outlots) • Update to Atlas 15 when it comes out • Requiring planning for existing conditions in the Rules while providing information about projected conditions ○ High value, critical, and infrequently replaced infrastructure should be futureproofed to projected conditions • Consider active management with a smart outlet system • Discussion of cost-benefit of maintaining water levels for some on Long Lake while risking flooding to others	• Identify large waterbodies where rising water levels could threaten infrastructure • Mapping areas of flooding and intersections with infrastructure (e.g. septic systems, lift stations, and other infrastructure), <i>to date only done for lakes in the District</i> • Collaboration with HOAs on monitoring and identifying flooding issues • Met Council Blue Dot Model/Localized Flood Map Screening Tool	• Help landowners better understand their changing flood vulnerabilities (requiring mitigation to current levels, while informing about projected levels) • Using updated H/H model in municipal comprehensive review process to understand vulnerabilities and develop a comprehensive approach. • Sharing data with communities, neighborhoods, and County as a technical resource, including emergency management • Engage emergency management professionals in floodplain mapping review • Community reporting. Social media campaign to get pictures of where flooding is happening to help ground-truth the model • Determine watershed role in emergency flood preparedness and resident education
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Table 2. Groundwater Management

	Concerns/Threats	Management Strategies	Monitoring Opportunities	Engagement Opportunities
Within the Plan	- Groundwater flooding - Maintaining baseflow to groundwater dependent natural resources	- Working towards pre-settlement conditions - Sealing unused wells - Regulatory standards - Groundwater preservation practices	- Groundwater data collection (only monitoring level currently) - Groundwater data sharing with municipalities	Lawn and road maintenance BMPs
New to the Update	- PFAS contamination - Chloride loading changing soil structure, sealing off infiltration - Data centers and high-volume water users - Reduced groundwater availability in drought - Potential for increase groundwater temperature (warmer water infiltrating) impacting baseflow temperature to resources - Soil compaction during development still an issue - Deteriorating soil health - Flooding impacts to wells - Reduced infiltration in high intensity storm events due to climate change - Pet waste - Potential impacts of geothermal heat exchange from buildings to ground and groundwater system; <i>adoption of the technology is still low so impact is likely small but may evolve in future, not studied well.</i>	- Abatement of unused septic systems - Limiting infiltration and pollution generating development in high vulnerability DWSMAs - Soil amendments and enhancements - Incentivize healthy soil systems to reduce irrigation needs (e.g. native and drought-tolerant landscaping) - Ordinances for groundwater conservation - Discouraging groundwater-based irrigation systems - Incentives for septic inspection	- Groundwater monitoring in landlocked basins - Consider monitoring groundwater temperature	- Promoting mindful use of groundwater; education regarding septic systems, salt storage and application, overuse and degradation of groundwater; water testing resources - PFAS engagement - Promoting water harvest and re-use rather than groundwater pumping for irrigation - Support local governments in drought plan development - Identify groundwater impacts for local plan reviews - Engagement with MPH

Table 3. Erosion Prevention and Sediment Control

	Concerns/Threats	Management Strategies	Monitoring Opportunities	Engagement Opportunities
Within the Plan Currently	• Soil disturbance due to development • Soil disturbance due to agriculture, <i>being deemphasized in the Plan given declining agriculture in BCWD</i>	• Cost-share erosion and sediment control retrofits by private properties • Addressing bluff instability projects • Assistance for agricultural landowners implementing soil BMPs, <i>supporting WCD work going forward</i>	• Annual stream channel assessments (alternative foot surveys and drone flights) • Determining sediment and chloride loading from gravel roads and parking lots • Site inspection during construction to monitor erosion and sediment control	
New to the Update	• Soil moisture variation impacting its functions and values • Shoreline erosion under climate change and wind erosion ◦ DNR noted ice ridges/heaving can have benefits, residents have the option to leave these in-place. Cross reference in Lake Management. • Deteriorating soil health • Upland and shoreline invasive species increasing erosion • Soil movement due to development and HOA landscaping • Chlorides in dust suppressants	• Rule revision allowing natural landscapes as a stormwater BMP in new development to meet permit requirement • Rotational livestock (sheep, goats) grazing to maintain turf in parks/HOAs • Incentive program for turf conversion retrofits • Invasive species management • Enforcement of topsoil and soil compaction mitigation regulations • Manage utilities (including irrigation) to better facilitate soil restoration and protection to promote health	• Soil chlorides • Inventory degraded soil areas e.g. Buckthorn denuded slopes • Soil restoration load reduction benefits study	• Share MDA, BSWR, DNR and other actions related to limiting soil disturbance; e.g. new homeowner packets, Lawns to Legumes promotion • Work with HOAs to see value in biodiverse and resilient landscapes and their ongoing habitat, stormwater management, and improved water quality • Educate developers and HOAs regarding value of low disturbance landscapes • Buckthorn removal events • Working with County Master Gardeners • Hobby farm education regarding BMPs

Appendix A – Attendance

TAC Members

- Jen Kader, - Met Council
- Debra Sahulka- BCWD board
- Celia Wirth-BCWD Board
- Dan Scallon- MN DNR
- Jay Riggs-WCD
- Abby Shea- MDH
- Anneke Munsell - MDH
- Jesse Farrell- City of Stillwater
- Michelle Jordan- BWSR
- Kate MacDonald- MPCA

Staff

- Karen Kill
- Hannah Peterson
- Camilla Correll
- Alexander Furneaux



Browns Creek Watershed District Regulatory Review: Report and Recommendations

May 5, 2025

Facilitator: Beth Carreño

Browns Creek Watershed District Regulatory Review: Report and Recommendations

Purpose Statement

The purpose of the Brown's Creek Watershed District (BCWD) regulatory review and facilitated partner meetings was to gain feedback on the current BCWD regulatory program and recommendations for the BCWD Board of Managers to consider when developing the updated (2026-2035) Watershed Management Plan and future initiatives of the regulatory program. Participants were asked to consider the three components of the regulatory program: rules, processes, and outreach and information.

Summary

The purposes of watershed districts are to conserve the natural resources of the state by land use planning, flood control, and conservation projects by using sound scientific principles for the protection of the public health and welfare and the use of the natural resources. BCWD has rules required by Minnesota Statute to conserve the natural resources of the State and Watershed. The regulatory program addresses stormwater management, erosion and sediment control, buffers, shoreline alterations, water crossings, and flood control.

The BCWD regulatory review process included a facilitated partner meeting held November 21, 2024; a presentation and discussion of initial recommendations with the Board on January 8, 2025; and a second facilitated partner meeting on April 4, 2025. Thirty-nine individuals attended the November meeting, and 19 individuals attended the April meeting. Recommendations in this report are based on feedback from all three sessions. While not all-encompassing, the feedback from the Board and partners was accompanied by a review of the website and existing processes of the District. This was to improve and provide context to the recommendations.

BCWD staff put a great deal of planning and effort to ensure attendance and participation at the meeting. They worked with a facilitator for planning and hosting partner meetings and reporting to the Board. Partner meetings benefit from a facilitator who ensures balanced participation, guides discussions and activities, manages the group and conflicts, improves communication and collaboration, and provides non-biased recommendations for problem solving. It builds trust in a process, allows staff and Board members to listen, and increases the likelihood of achieving the desired outcomes.

Appendix One provides an overview of the planning process. Appendix Two is the BCWD Regulatory Review: Amended Partner Meeting Feedback Summary, and it contains the initial feedback summary from the first partner meeting, additional comments received after the first partner meeting, and the feedback from the second partner meeting. It has been updated from earlier draft versions of the report to include all comments from the second partner meeting in April 2025. Appendix Three is a review of the icebreaker activity, "Defining Simple," which was designed to encourage participants to focus on providing detailed feedback with specific strategies.

The recommendations included in this report are based on specific feedback, identification of themes in the feedback, and an interpretation of the information received from partners. BCWD will likely require additional staff to support the recommendations related to the rules review, changes to processes, and

improved outreach. It's notable that BCWD is already allocated additional resources and staff to support and improve delivery of its programs.

Recommendations with Board Direction

Participants were asked multiple questions during the facilitated exercises at the November and April meetings and were frequently reminded to consider the three components of the regulatory program: rules, processes, and outreach and information.

Participants provided detailed feedback and specific strategies for improving the BCWD regulatory program. However, *participants also consistently complimented current BCWD staff, BCWD efforts to protect water resources and provide good service, and this process.* This is a good foundation for building the next stage of BCWD efforts.

All comments from both sessions were recorded and reviewed. Three themes emerged during the first meeting and the synthesis of the feedback:

- **Theme 1:** The BCWD regulatory program should be transparent, efficient, equitable, consistent, and not unduly complicated.
- **Theme 2:** The BCWD regulatory program should protect and improve the resource and properties in the District, and there should be accountability.
- **Theme 3:** Communication is critical, should be consistent, and should lead to improved engagement and understanding with the public, partners, permittees, and other specific audiences including engineers representing permittees and the business community.

A fourth theme emerged after the second partner meeting:

- **Theme 4:** BCWD should collaborate with other entities including neighboring watershed districts, cities, counties, and private partners to improve its programs.

The Board will ultimately decide the degree to which these can be implemented. For example, it may not be possible to have rules that are in plain language and can be understood at or below the standard 7th grade comprehension standard for public documents. Instead, the Board may consider guidance documents and allocate staff support for some applicants to ensure better understanding of the rules.

Board Direction: Direct staff to begin implementing

Recommendation	Strategies	Notes	Rules, Processes, or Outreach & Information	Theme
Website	Review the General Permitting Info page of the website and identify opportunities for improvement Improve transparency on the program by including a statement of how many applications, permits, projects, pre-app meetings, how the program is paid for, and estimated costs Complete FAQs Continuously look for opportunities to increase readability, plain speak, and user experience on the website		Outreach & Information	1,3
Annual Reports & Newsletters	Include information on regulatory program in newsletters and annual reports Mission and purpose – why is there a regulatory program? Improve transparency and perspective on the program by including a statement of how many applications, permits, projects, pre-application meetings, how the program is paid for, and estimated costs		Processes	3

Board Direction: Direct staff to explore issue and get more information (cost, time commitment, consequences, limitations)

Recommendation	Strategies	Notes	Rules, Processes, or Outreach & Information	Theme
Develop and implement a process for follow-up on closed projects, additional inspections, and enforcement			Processes	2
Assess the viability of an application portal and electronic payment process	Complete a cost-benefit analysis to determine feasibility Consider fixed <i>and</i> variable costs, number of applications, risks, and opportunities – <i>there were 20 permit approvals in 2023</i> Identify other practices to communicate permit status to applicants (or to improve current communication)	Improve transparency and perspective on the program by communicating on the number of applications, permits, projects, and pre-app meetings; how the program is paid for; and estimated costs If you choose not to develop an application portal or electronic payment process, be transparent and communicate “why.” Return on investment (ROI)?	Processes	1

Board Direction: Take the recommendation into the WMP process for more consideration

Recommendation	Strategies	Notes	Rules, Processes, or Outreach & Information	Theme
HOAs – identify and implement strategies to improve “hand-off” from developers and HOAs	Require a meeting with a checklist with HOA obligations Improve HOA guidance on website to include more information on obligations, processes, and resources	Board direction included a desire to identify some additional ideas / information that could be considered during the WMP process	Processes, Outreach & Information	2, 3, 4
Develop guidance documents for permittees and potential permittees	Rules guidance document Videos / vlogs to provide guidance / instruction Flow charts to explain permitting requirements and/or process		Outreach & Information	1, 3

Board Direction: Take the recommendation into the WMP process and future rules revisions

Recommendation	Strategies	Notes	Rules, Processes, or Outreach & Information	Theme
Review permit fee structure to ensure they are clearly communicated and equitable	Consider caps on fees and other requirements for single family projects Identify opportunities to increase transparency, full-cost accounting, and standardized fees Determine who should bear the weight of the regulatory program and permits	Can't make money on the regulatory program; permit fees have to match the level of review required	Processes	1, 4

Board Direction: Direct staff to explore and prepare for future rule revisions

Recommendation	Strategies	Notes	Rules, Processes, or Outreach & Information	Theme
Prepare for future rule revisions	Review the specific rules that were identified by participants at partner meeting – are there opportunities to make changes? Create an inventory of rules that could be considered during a formal rules update Complete a comparison of rules to those of nearby and/or similar watersheds – look for opportunities to align, ideas for clarity Identify opportunities to clarify rules or allow for increased flexibility in meeting the rules	Review the specific rules that some partners identified for change during the engagement process This would include things that staff have noted or were noted by partners	Rules	1, 2, 3, 4
Begin rule revision process after the watershed management plan is completed, selected process/ outreach strategies have been implemented, and additional partner meetings have been held <i>and</i> only if specific rules have been identified		Estimated timeline: 2026 – 2029 • This work requires a commitment from partners • Continue engagement & outreach to see how this improves and/or addresses some concerns • When and how do partners want to give time, meet, or do this shared work? <i>See comments from 2nd meeting</i>	Rules	1, 2, 3

Board Direction: Request additional information or clarification from partners

Recommendation	Strategies	Notes	Rules, Processes, or Outreach & Information	Theme
Identify opportunities in the rules to increase administrator / Board's ability to provide flexibility without increasing the number of variances	Identify opportunities to engage additional feedback from partners / permittees	*Offering "regional" solutions was recommended in feedback. BCWD currently offers regional solutions. QUESTION: is the flexibility we offer good, and people just don't know OR is there a different flexibility wanted? What does flexibility mean to you? Examples / demonstrate where BCWD offers, but ask if there is more wanted from partners and get specific examples	Rules, Processes	1,3,4
Review the current appeals process and assess opportunities to improve the process, timeline, and communication; ensure that applicants are provided with information on the appeals process		There is not appeals process. What do partners want to appeal, when, and why? What needs to be fixed?	Rules	1,3,4

Synthesis of Feedback from 2nd Partner Meeting - Flexibility

Partners spent a significant amount of time discussing “flexibility” and providing specific ideas for consideration in the regulatory program at BCWD. There was also significant overlap with the discussion on “regional solutions.” Full responses are included in the appendixes.

- Variances – review variances and identify trends
 - Determine if a rule change should be considered
- Communication – use existing and improving communication strategies to present, promote, and explain the District’s flexible solutions and opportunities to meet rules
 - Guidance documents and explanations for specific rules, options for erosion control, showcasing standards and examples of *how* rules could be met, coordinate language (and possibly approach) with other watershed districts and local government units (LGUs)
- Determine if administrator approval can be expanded
- Determine if there are alternatives or lesser requirements for applications that can demonstrate protection of the resource, clear stormwater disconnect, etc
 - Consider reduced fees or credit when a project results in improved habitat, restoration, or other resource benefit
- Review MIDs and MIDs+ for potential expanded flexibility

Synthesis of Feedback from 2nd Partner Meeting - Appeals

Some participants encouraged the District to look to other LGUs for possible appeals processes. However, there was significant consensus that addressing other recommendations from the regulatory review and the following ideas would be a possible alternative to address “what needs to be fixed” instead of a formal appeals process:

- Improved communication
 - Promotion of timelines and processes
 - Options for coordination, discussion, and the pre-application process
 - Identifying processes for how to address disagreements on the interpretation of rules and how to meet them

Board Direction: Request additional information or clarification from partners and have staff explore issue and get more information (cost, time commitment, etc.)

Recommendation	Strategies	Notes	Rules, Processes, or Outreach & Information	Theme
Allow regional solutions	Review how other watershed districts (and State partners) support regional solutions and identify opportunities for BCWD – <i>this may require a rules change</i>	*BCWD does offer opportunities for regional solutions / treatments; utilize outreach / information strategies to communicate this and including this in future partner meetings • Regional solutions is tied to flexibility. Are the regional solutions / flexibility we offer good, and people just don't know about it OR is there a different flexibility / regional solution wanted? • Monitor future feedback on this to determine if rules or process changes are needed • What regional solutions are you looking for? Wetland banking? Larger stormwater management facilities?	Rules, Processes, and Outreach & Information	1, 2, 3, 4

Synthesis of Feedback from 2nd Partner Meeting – Regional Solutions

Partners spent a significant amount of time discussing “regional solutions” and providing specific ideas for consideration in the regulatory program at BCWD. There was also significant overlap with the discussion on “flexibility.” Full responses are included in the appendixes.

- Collaborate and coordinate
 - Work with land use authorities, the county, LGUs, developers to plan, identify, and promote regional solutions; consider agreed upon priorities or methodology

- Mapping
 - Map existing regional solutions and potential locations
- Communication
 - Promote regional solutions and awareness of the options, coordination, share success stories
- Consider the feasibility of the watershed district purchasing properties to become a regional system / solution – evaluate pros and cons

Board Direction: Request additional information or clarification from partners and then include in WMP process

Recommendation	Strategies	Notes	Rules, Processes, or Outreach & Information	Theme
Host ongoing engineering workshops / meetings	Initial facilitated conversation / focus group Ongoing discussions / training	Additional ideas: Continuing ED? Opportunities to meet staff and learn about rules, processes, expectations, obligations, and opportunities <i>and provide feedback – could this be done regionally (EMWREP)</i> Lunch and learns, virtual sessions, breakfasts Incentivize their participation	Outreach & Information	1,3, 4
Increase outreach opportunities	Inventory where touchpoints are and look for opportunities to share BWCD info - city billing inserts, realtor communication Create information cards or standard language (for documents / websites) for other permitting LGUs to provide to applicants Schedule consistent meetings with partners – city-county partner meetings, city coordination meetings, partner meetings – determine a schedule that is do-able and set expectation	Incentivize participation	Outreach & Information	1, 3, 4

Increase outreach opportunities – cont.	Opportunities for developers and/or contractors to meet staff and learn about rules, processes, expectations, obligations, opportunities – lunch and learns, virtual sessions, breakfasts			
Committee membership	Provide opportunities for developers, contractors, and the regulatory audience to participate in the District This could include Board, CAC, and/or TAC appointments, inviting them to information sessions with members of the above groups, and staff presenting at meetings where business leaders are present Provide opportunity for this group to identify ways they want to participate	Integrate them and don't leave them on an island.	Outreach & Information	1, 2, 3, 4

Synthesis of Feedback from 2nd Partner Meeting – Combined Feedback on Increased Participation by Engineers and All Partners

- Host ongoing engineering workshops / meetings
- Increase outreach opportunities
- Committee membership

The feedback from these questions is best summarized together. This is in part due to the limitation of time for discussion in the second partner meeting and the overlap of ideas. Also, there were no engineers in attendance at the second partner meeting; this presented a challenge to determine what would be most successful from their perspective.

- Continue to consistently engage and strengthen relationships
 - Follow best practices for meetings including consistently held meetings, varying meeting times, alternative participation options, and expanded invitations (consider public notice)
 - Attend partner meetings (ex: staff or Board members attend city council meetings)
 - Invite participation at “change moments” (rule making, plan development)
 - Resource: IAP2 (International Association for Public Participation – www.iaps.org)

- Collaborate with other organizations including the county and other watershed districts to reduce the separate asks on cities, developers, and engineers
 - Identify and use existing partnerships like Water Consortium to convene communities around watershed topics
 - Work with multiple partners to co-deliver events for specific audiences (engineers, developers)
 - Co-host meetings, events, trainings
 - Co-create outreach materials (general watershed, specific solutions, fact sheets, videos)
- Continue to seek feedback from multiple audiences
 - Use tools like surveys to get feedback from permit applicants after the permitting process or to get information from individuals that did not attend facilitated partner meetings

Initial Recommendations reviewed by the BCWD Board of Managers:

Rules	Recommendation	Theme(s)
	Prepare for future rule revisions • Review the specific rules that were identified by participants of the partner meeting ○ Are there opportunities to make changes? • Create an inventory of rules that could be considered during a formal rules update • Complete a comparison of rules to those of nearby and/or similar watersheds ○ Look for opportunities to align, ideas for clarity • Identify opportunities to clarify rules or allow for increased flexibility in meeting the rules	1,2,3
	Identify opportunities in the rules to increase administrator / Board's ability to provide flexibility without increasing the number of variances • Identify opportunities to engage additional feedback from partners / permittees • May include some process opportunities	1,3
	Begin rule revision process after watershed management plan is completed, selected process / outreach strategies have been implemented, and additional partner meetings have been held and only if specific rules have been identified • Estimated timeline: 2026 – 2029	1,2,3

	Allow regional solutions – rules, processes, & outreach • Review how other watershed districts (and State partners) support regional solutions and identify opportunities for BCWD – <i>this may require a rules change</i> • Note: BCWD does offer opportunities for regional solutions / treatments; utilize outreach / information strategies to communicate this and including this in future partner meetings ○ Monitor future feedback on this to determine if rules or process changes are needed	1,2,3
Processes		
	Develop and implement a process for follow-up on closed projects, additional inspections, and enforcement	2
	HOAs – identify and implement strategies to improve “hand-off” from developers and HOAs – <i>this also requires implementation of improved outreach and information strategies</i> • Require a meeting with a checklist with HOA obligations • Improve HOA Guidance on website to include more information on obligations, processes, and resources	2,3
	Allow regional solutions – rules, processes, & outreach • Review how other watershed districts (and State partners) support regional solutions and identify opportunities for BCWD – <i>this may require a rules change</i> • Note: BCWD does offer opportunities for regional solutions / treatments; utilize outreach / information strategies to communicate this and including this in future partner meetings ○ Monitor future feedback on this to determine if rules or process changes are needed	1,2,3
	Assess the viability of an application portal and electronic payment process • Complete a cost-benefit analysis to determine feasibility • Consider fixed <i>and</i> variable costs, number of applications, risks, and opportunities – <i>there were 20 permit approvals in 2023</i> • Identify other practices to communicate permit status to applicants (or to improve current communication)	1

	• Improve transparency and perspective on the program by communicating on the number of applications, permits, projects, and pre-app meetings; how the program is paid for; and estimated costs	
	Review permit fee structures to ensure they are clearly communicated and equitable • Consider caps on fees (and other requirements) for single family projects • Identify opportunities to increase transparency, full-cost accounting, and standardized fees • Determine who should bear the weight of the regulatory program and permits	1
	Review the current appeals process and assess opportunities to improve the process, timeline, and communication; ensure that applicants are provided with information on the appeals process	1,3
Outreach & Information		
	Host ongoing engineering workshop / meeting • Initial facilitated conversation • Ongoing discussions / training	1,3
	Increase outreach opportunities • Inventory where touchpoints are and look for opportunities to share BCWD info (city billing inserts, realtor communications) • Create information cards or standard language (for documents / websites) for other permitting LGUs to provide to applicants • Schedule consistent meetings with partners ○ City-county partner meetings; city coordination meetings; partner meetings – determine a schedule that is do-able and set an expectation ○ Identify opportunities to collaborate with regional groups – county, neighbor watersheds, etc. ○ Opportunities for developers and/or contractors to meet staff and learn about rules, processes, expectations, obligations, and opportunities ▪ Lunch and learns, virtual sessions, breakfasts ▪ Incentivize their participation ▪ Ex: A city with two watersheds within its borders co-hosts a developer / contractor breakfast with both watersheds; rules presentation highlighting requirements	1,3

	Develop guidance documents for permittees and potential permittees • Rules guidance document • Videos / vlogs to provide guidance / instruction	1,3
	Website • Review the General Permitting Info page of the website and identify opportunities for improvement ○ Improve transparency on the program by including a statement of how many applications, permits, projects, pre-app meetings, how the program is paid for, and estimated costs • Complete FAQs • Continuously look for opportunities to increase readability, plain speak, and user experience on the website	1,3
	Annual Reports and Newsletters • Include information on regulatory program in newsletters and annual reports ○ Mission and purpose focus – why is there a regulatory program? ○ Improve transparency and perspective on the program by including a statement of how many applications, permits, projects, pre-app meetings, how the program is paid for, and estimated costs	3
	Committee membership • Provide opportunities for developers, contractors, and the regulatory audience to participate in the District. ○ This could include Board, CAC, and/or TAC appointments, inviting them to information sessions with members of the Board, CAC, and/or TAC, and staff providing presentations at meetings where business leaders will be present. ○ Provide opportunity for this group to identify ways that they want to participate at follow-up meeting(s).	1,2,3

Appendix 1

Process

For the November partner meeting, Staff developed the invitation list based on local and regional partners, individuals and companies with a history of participating in the permitting process, individuals who have interacted with the watershed district in the past, and through an additional equitable partner engagement review. A survey was conducted to select the date of the meeting, invitations were emailed with multiple reminders, and staff reached out directly through email and phone calls to improve attendance. The same process was followed for the April meeting.

Thirty-nine individuals attended the November meeting; this was 33% of the 118 invited. Participants represented residents, homeowner associations, permittees, developers, BCWD communities, Washington County, state agency partners, other watershed districts, and members of the Citizen Advisory Committee and Board of Managers. It was noted during the meeting that many of the engineers that were invited weren't in attendance. This is noteworthy because engineers often work with clients during the permitting process, and their feedback would have been valuable. Recommendations related to this audience are included later in the report.

The participants represented diverse audiences with often differing priorities. This diversity was essential to get a full range of feedback. It also provided an opportunity to gather feedback from partners that may not have the same ability or opportunity to communicate with the watershed district but still have a perspective that should not be overlooked.

The meeting included introductions, an icebreaker, an overview of the current BCWD regulatory program, and multiple facilitated large and small group discussions. Multiple techniques were used so participants would interact with different people throughout the morning. In addition to BCWD capturing feedback, it was important that participants also heard the perspectives of the others in the room.

To ensure transparency and accountability, staff sent the initial draft of meeting feedback to all participants and invitees with a request that they provide any additional clarification or feedback and to provide those that had not attended an opportunity to give feedback.

The feedback from the first partner meeting with recommendations was presented to the BCWD Board of Managers at the January 8, 2025, Board Meeting. **The Board had the opportunity to review the feedback and recommendations, discuss and identify priorities, provide direction for obtaining additional clarification from partners, and ultimately incorporate selected priority activities into the watershed management plan and BCWD work plans.** Another partner meeting was always planned to present Board direction on the recommendations. However, the Board requested additional partner feedback on several recommendations, and this was integrated into the April meeting.

Nineteen individuals attended the April meeting with less representation of the partner groups than the first. This was noted with participants and ideas for engagement of different audiences was discussed. The meeting included an overview of the process to date, a review of Board direction for the initial recommendations, and small group discussions on recommendations where the Board had asked for additional partner feedback.

After the April meeting, staff met with the facilitator again to review the partner feedback and a final report was prepared.

Appendix 2

BCWD Regulatory Review: Amended Partner Meeting Feedback Summary

The original Partner Meeting Feedback Summary has been amended to include comments received by email in the extended comment period from December 6, 2024, through December 13, 2024. An additional amendment to feedback summary was made in May 2025 to include comments received during the second partner meeting on April 4, 2025.

Meeting Overview

A partner meeting was held November 21, 2024, to gain feedback on the current Browns Creek Watershed District (BCWD / the District) regulatory program and recommendations for future activities for the BCWD Board of Managers to consider when developing the updated (2026 – 2035) Watershed Management Plan.

The meeting included an overview of the current BCWD regulatory program including information on its regulatory authority, past updates, current processes and rules, and accomplishments due in part to the District's regulatory program.

There were 118 individuals invited and 39 individuals, or 33% of those invited, in attendance with participants representing residents, homeowner associations, permittees, developers, BCWD communities, Washington County, state agency partners, other watershed districts, and members of the Citizen Advisory Committee and Board of Managers. Participants were asked to introduce themselves, who they represent, and how they interact with BCWD. Several participants noted that there weren't many engineers at this meeting. It's important to note that engineers were invited, and staff are continuing to develop and implement strategies to engage this critical audience.

An icebreaker was led to create a definition for the word "simple." Simple and its variations are frequently used to provide direction for what the BCWD rules and regulatory program should be. Seventy-eight responses were offered with many of these unique. It was established that "simple" would not be a word used in the day's feedback, and participants would focus on providing specific strategies and detailed feedback.

Participants were asked to consider the BCWD regulatory program as its rules, processes, and outreach and information. Activities focused on getting feedback around these three components. Multiple facilitation approaches were used to increase engagement, encourage participants to interact with different people, allow participants to hear multiple perspectives, and for everyone to share their ideas in multiple conversations.

There were three facilitated discussions. The first was done with the whole group, the second was completed in small groups, and the third had participants moving around the room in changing small groups (a variation of a known facilitation technique called World Café). Participants were asked to respond to multiple questions or prompts. After each activity, participants reported back to the entire group and shared ideas. The meeting ended with a brief wrap-up discussion, and participants were asked if they felt anything was missed in the questions asked or the conversation. Individuals were asked to share something they heard another participant say that was a new perspective for them.

Questions & Response Summary

A summary of the questions and a generalization of the responses follow. A complete list of all answers is included in this report and were used to inform recommendations.

Who and what benefits from the regulatory program?

The answers reflected the group's shared beliefs that the community, property owners, and the resources benefited from this program. Half of all responses identified individuals (in the community or property owners) as beneficiaries as a result of a healthy resource or protection from harm (flooding, etc). Of nearly 100 responses given, only five identified engineers, consultants, and watershed staff as the beneficiaries of the regulatory program.

What are the most important factors or components of a successful regulatory program?

Themes that were present in the answers focused on consistency and fairness; flexibility; efficiency; clarity; value and cost; public engagement, awareness, and communication; effectiveness and enforcement; the process; and a focus on the resource.

There was broad agreement that a successful regulatory program has sound and clearly communicated processes that are applied fairly and consistently while also valuing flexibility, cost-effectiveness, and efficiency. Public engagement and informational materials should be used to increase knowledge and understanding of the regulatory program and the applicable rules. Enforcement was identified in addition to a number of process suggestions.

What are improvements or changes that you would like to see in the regulatory program?

A significant amount of feedback focused on changes in communication, outreach materials, administrative efforts, and fees. There was less focus on the specific topics identified for possible rule changes; however, one individual provided a list of items for consideration.

What would those improvements or changes result in?

Responses could be categorized into improved communication and engagement, efficiency and expense, administration, and the resource and water quality. They identified outcomes for resident and permit applicant experiences, processes or activities of the watershed district, and the effect on the resource.

What is working in the current BCWD regulatory program?

Participant responses identified current success with resource protection and improvement; administrative practices and staff; current flexibility; and communication and engagement. Many of these were implemented after the last facilitated effort around the regulatory program. All of the things identified serve as a strong foundation for the regulatory program and future changes.

Provide specific suggestions and strategies for BCWD rules, processes, and outreach and information.

There were many similarities between what participants wanted to keep or build upon and aspects of the regulatory program that were identified as "working."

Suggestions for the District's rules encouraged flexibility and innovation; consistency; and some specific rules that could be reviewed.

Suggestions for the District's processes focused on steps to improve communication and transparency; cost-effectiveness; efficiencies; and permittee resources.

Suggestions for the District's outreach and information efforts included the continuation of partner meetings and community engagement; ideas for what and how to share the BCWD story and requirements; and identification of audiences.

Questions and All Responses

Large Group Facilitated Discussion: Idea Pools

Large Group Question One: *Who and what benefits from the regulatory program?*

Topic Areas	Specific Comments
COMMUNITY	• Community – 2 ○ Reduced flooding • Individuals in the watershed – 2 ○ Users in the watershed district • Individuals downstream • Residents - 6 ○ Current residents ○ All residents within the District • Future ○ Property owners ○ Generations – 2 ○ Future residents • Citizens - 4 ○ Of state, watershed, etc. ○ “Citizens should” • The public (in general) - 2 • People near the water • Those who use the resource ○ Recreationists - 2 • Anyone drinking water • Public health
PROPERTY OWNERS	• Homeowners • Property owners - 3 ○ Flooding • Landowners - 2 ○ Downstream landowners • Old homesites that were built before planning for runoff • Taxpayer ○ Property values - 2 ○ Resource quality • Business owners
OTHER PEOPLE	• The watershed district employees, staff, engineers ○ Watershed district employees • Consultants – 2 ○ Consultants / engineers currently benefit ○ Engineers and their firms Economics
THE RESOURCE	• Resources – 3 ○ The resource

	○ Shared resources ○ Natural resources – 2 ▪ Natural resources should • Water ○ Water resources – 4 ▪ Lakes, streams, wetlands, groundwater ▪ Lakes ○ Browns Creek Water Quality ▪ Browns Creek ○ Water quality - 2 ○ Groundwater – 2 ○ Surface water • Lakes, rivers, streams, wetland • Ecosystems ○ Ecosystem health • The environment - 8 • Habitat – 2 • Aquatic environment • Aquatic life ○ Trout ○ Animals near the water ○ Fish, bugs, plants • Wildlife • Nature
Additional comments and questions	• Recreation • Who suffers if not enforced? • How do the rules account for climate change? • Rules not enforced versus when rules are enforced ○ Benefit: environment, landowners, future residents

Large Group Question Two: *What are the most important factors or components of a successful regulatory program?*

Topic Areas	Specific Comments
CONSISTENCY	• Consistent – 3 ○ Consistency - 2 • Predictable • Implemented consistently
FAIRNESS	• Fair – 6 ○ Applied Consistently • Fairness • Fair implementation • Fair application • Implemented equally • Equitable
FLEXIBILITY	• Flexibility ○ Flexibility for landowners • Nimble / flexible – 2
EFFICIENT	• Efficient – 4 ○ Efficient for BCWD, applicant, municipality ○ Efficient to administer • Timely - 3 • Timeliness
COST / VALUE	• Cost-effective • Pre-determined fees ○ Fees that do not require calculations ○ 1 garden = \$100 • Demonstrated value to stakeholders • Minimum cost for the most value • Technical assistance at low cost • Area wide fees and developer fees
UNDERSTANDABLE	• Clear ○ Clear rules • Clarity • Straightforward • Decipherable • Understandable • Easy to understand • Easily understandable by all • Easy to understand by all parties • Easy • Easy to accomplish • Step by step notice • Easy to implement

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT & AWARENESS	• Shared understanding of long-term maintenance / limitations (stormwater BMPs + buffers) • Buy-in by watershed residents ○ Buy-in ○ Buy-in from both the regulator and the regulated • Awareness of rules that can be followed • Community involvement • Value to stakeholders • Educated public • Participation by all parties – with clear responsibilities ○ BCWD ○ Applicant • Municipality
COMMUNICATION	• Communication • Open communication of permittee and regulator • Clear communication between staff and applicant • Well-communicated and clear rules that applicants can understand • Clear guidance materials (contributes to streamlined processes)
ENFORCEMENT & FOLLOW-UP	• Enforced • Enforcement with leverage and a process • Follow-up and reporting – w/out lose benefit of project / plan • Ensuring permit requirements are enforced both short and long term • Way to establish accountability for maintenance and potential negative impacts
EFFECTIVENESS	• Effective ○ Permits issued, permits closed) • Regulations are effective ○ Ex: when applied they protect the resource they are meant to • Provides intended results • Successful best management practices ○ Ensure solutions are / can be perpetual • Implementable • Does it actually produce the desired result and at what cost – accountability
PROCESS	• Process • Shared regulatory authority • Local government participation and involvement ○ Local / county involvement • LGU implemented • A succinct end point with a clear punch list • Data driven • Streamlined process • Everyone knows their role • Everyone involved understands the process • Workshop with the engineering community to see what they need; what formulas to use; what steps to take; it's not clear to them • Good plan (BMPs) • One online access portal for permits

	• Accountability - 2 • Appeals Processes ○ Ease of appeals
RESOURCE	• Protective of resource ○ Protect / improve the resources • Adequate protection of water resources (quantity / quality) for future generations • Objective resource protection
OTHER	• Purposeful • Supported • Appropriate rules • Comprehensive and well thought out rules • Not unduly burdensome – 2 • Projects able to occur without harming the environment • The program is forward thinking (looking ahead for changes in population, climate, etc)

Small Group Facilitated Discussion

Small Group Question One: *What are improvements or changes that you would like to see in the regulatory program? Think rules, processes, and outreach / information.*

Topic Areas	Specific Comments
COMMUNICATION / INFORMATION / OUTREACH / RESOURCES	• Better targeting • Better guidance / expectation setting ◦ Communicate expectations ◦ Increased communication for buyers who are responsible for maintenance of stormwater / sediment control structures • Conciseness of rules • Ease of access to rules • Better follow-up • Portal – submit permits; monitor status • Engineering ◦ Clear calculations for engineers ◦ Better engineer information • Resources online for permittee • Link to well index, watershed health assessment tool, etc.
ADMINISTRATIVE / FEES / FLEXIBILITY / EFFICIENCY	• More pre-permit coordination • More administrative approvals • 30 day staff review instead of 60 day • Appeals ◦ Clearly defined appeals process • Fee structure – easy to calculate • Create rules that place high value on alternative improvement efforts • Flexibility • Regional ponding • Efficiency • LGU implementation of WMO rules w/ WMO support (or WMO does if LGU prefers) • Consistency among watershed districts
DEFINITIONS	• Rule 7 defined • Re-use calculator defined
DEVELOPMENT	• Should not be in charge of land use planning – leave to townships / cities • Hold developers responsible for their part in stormwater structure maintenance and protection of features during construction
OTHER RULE REVISION SPECIFIC TOPICS	• Site specific analysis – setback review on a cliff but not near a creek • Change “steep slope” criteria • Remove “landlocked versus not” rules difference • Enable farming to remain ◦ How to permit / address? • Reduce setbacks by 25 – 50% • More stormwater controls for shoreland development (single lots) • MID – watershed wide (higher standard for / if trout & flooding) • SINGLE FAMILY and SMALL PROJECTS

	○ Less rigorous process for small individual projects (homes) ▪ Very expensive • WCA ○ Support WCA plus ○ Local mitigation priority sequence ○ Higher replacement ratio for high quality wetlands • DRINKING WATER, GROUNDWATER, PRIVATE WELLS • Drinking water protection • More rules tied to drinking water / private wells (SWSMA) ○ Limitations of infiltration near wells or in SWSMA ○ Floodplain & well considerations An individual provided this feedback during the process: • Consultant fees ○ Create transparency of fees collected • Create a quick appeal process when consultants disagree • Endeavor to appoint at least one manager with a background in real estate • Limit requirements of declarations and extractions • Buffers in excess of 20' • Any rule prohibiting buffer averaging • Allow reasonable activities in buffer zones • Requirement to mimic pre-settlement conditions • Allow variances based on practical difficulties • Eliminate landowners obligation to demonstrate that landowner facilities will not have an adverse impact – very subjective standard • Release financial assurances and eliminate need for posting LOL and then paying fees
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Small Group Question Two: *What would those improvements or changes result in?*

Topic Areas	Specific Comments
COMMUNICATION / ENGAGEMENT	• Communicated expectations • Clearer communication – the HOA receives outlining the rules when they assume responsibility from the developer / seller / title • Acceptance of enforcement
EFFICIENCY / TIME / COST / EXPENSE / FEES	• Faster / shorter review timeline will reduce \$ for waiting and eventually obtaining permits • Less rigorous program for small projects would save time and money ○ Also might get more protection with “un-engineered” solutions • Less costs - 3 ○ Less upfront costs ○ Predetermined fees / precalculated • Efficiency • Simplification / consolidation of rules ○ Watershed district wide rule would result in increased regulations but simplification • Increased complexity
ADMINISTRATION	• More staff (needed to speed up processes) • Faster approval process • Faster timelines • A more fair and equitable system • Less variances required • On-line portal ○ Permit & submission ○ Follow-up in portal ○ Appeal application • Appeal process ○ Ability to appeal a permit decision in a reasonable time • More cities as LGU • More direct involvement of the Board in rule making ○ Less engineer and legal review / comments
RESOURCE	• Better follow up keeps integrity of projects / plan • Increased / regulated ○ Protection of groundwater • Increased costs • Increased water quality of groundwater • Limit potential contamination / liability of drinking water

Small Group Question Three: *What is working in the current BCWD regulatory program?*

Topic Areas	Specific Comments
RESOURCE	• Water quality is improving! – 2 • Protection / improvement of Browns Creek • Surface water quality in areas of watershed ○ Meeting goals – phosphorus, temperature, sediment • Volume control is being achieved • Resources are being protected ○ Resource protection • Phosphorus reduction and improvement of resources
ADMINISTRATIVE	• More administrative review – efficient • Staff wants to help you through the process • Staff is proactive, but restrictive / inflexible • Good staff that cares about the community • Staff is approachable • Application process
FLEXIBILITY	• Flexibility on reconstruction vs. rehabilitation (roads projects) • Board flexible but responsible
COMMUNICATION / ENGAGEMENT / OUTREACH	• Pre-application meetings ○ Initial free meeting • Collaboration ○ WCDs ○ Cities ○ Developers • Board of managers understanding of projects / reality • Communications / connections • Listening to feedback / outreach ○ This type of collaboration and asking for input • Partnerships ○ Good with partnerships • Processes on website • Information is accessible and available • Trying to make it easy for the applicant
OTHER	• Consistent • Rules are good • Attentiveness to rules

Facilitated Discussion: World Café Variation

Instructions:

- *Rotate through tables - provide comments - Be Specific*
- *What is good / important to keep? Suggest changes - don't use the word "simple"*

Topic Areas	Specific Comments
PROCESSES	• Grant opportunities for BCWD priorities • Appeal process ○ Implement an appeal process • Portal to see where the permit is at in the process – 4 ○ Coon Creek has permit portal now online (as an example) • Fees ○ Easier fee or automated calculator ○ Fee caps as a % of total cost for single families or ????? • Small, medium, large projects • Shorten process as much as possible • Interagency coordination of permits – 2 • Less legal review ○ Let engineers / admin review and approve ○ Administrative approval ○ Less attorney review by staff • Developer maintain integrity of stormwater feature during construction ○ District enforce • KEEP ○ Keep Citizen Advisory Committee – 2 (could also apply to outreach & info) ○ Admin review ○ Pre-application meetings ○ Stakeholder engagement & involvement (could also apply to outreach & info) ○ Continue these meetings with cross-education exercises (could also apply to outreach & info) • CHANGE ○ Landlocked basins ○ Better communication ○ Easier to figure out if it applies ○ Less rigorous process for solo single family permits ○ Change undue hardship on variances to practical difficulty ○ Simplify appeal of technical / consultant / disputes ○ Strengthen maintenance agreements ○ Communicate expectations better ○ Make release of financial assurances easier / quicker
OUTREACH & INFORMATION	• Keep partnership meetings – 2 • Keep attending project-specific public project meetings • Keep pre-meetings (free) – 2

	• Community events • Maintain Citizen Advisory Committee – 2 ○ More CAC outreach / communication to increase attendance at events • Share outcomes of implementation • Highlight uniqueness of BCWD • Identify conflict and highlight positives • Maintain relationship with the WCD ○ Utilize shared services • Improve relationships with land use authorities • Share what BCWD does with tax bill, benefits, programs • Budget process • Knowledge of needing a permit • Clear permitting authority when multiple entities have regulations • Give explanation / justifications for each role • Links to more resources like MN Well Index, watershed health assessment framework tool, etc • Engineer list for stormwater / flood mitigation projects • Have \$\$ available • Videos - 2 ○ Permit application video for builders / owners ○ Target primarily homeowners / HOAs ▪ How-tos ▪ Overview ▪ Importance • Website works ○ Well laid out ○ Rules are easy to find on website
RULES	• Encourage flexibility – options - 2 ○ Encourage flexible options ○ Innovative practices ○ Regional ponding – 2 ▪ Prioritize regional ponding opportunities • Stormwater credits? ○ Look for multi-benefit projects / extra flexibility • More flexibility for recon projects – especially public ○ Keep rehab versus recon • Consistency with other watershed districts – 3 • Equitable application of rules • Reconsider decompaction – 2 • Rule 7 defined – 2 • Re-word re-use • Less engineering required for homeowners • Farm friendly rules • Pre-settlement (?)

	○ Pre-settlement conditions a challenge to meet; existing conditions preferred • Buffers in excess of 25' • Provide clear responsibilities for HOA stormwater facility maintenance - 2 ○ Include enforcement ○ City versus watershed district • Protect private / drinking wells / source not just public supplies – 2 ○ Both could be explicit in rule – thinking regarding stormwater & floodplain • KEEP ○ Permit Threshold triggers ○ Volume control – maintain standards • CHANGE ○ Single family home rules – 3 ○ Where statute does not define specific language, make it less technical ○ Forcing landowners to solve MNDOT runoff issues with no compensation
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Additional Feedback:

Participants and the invitee list were emailed the “Partner Meeting Feedback Summary” on December 6, 2024, and encouraged to provide comments on the summary and/or submit additional feedback on the BCWD regulatory program. The email requested that additional comments be sent by December 13, 2024; a reminder was sent on the morning of December 13, 2024. Limited feedback was received and has been considered in preparing the final report and report and recommendations.

Summary of those comments is below:

Attended	• Document captures the comments well • Many may support comments even if they were shared by one individual • The Board will have to determine what to focus on and in what order
Could not attend	Enforcement and Follow-up • Enforcement and follow-up are lacking • An example was provided (and has been shared with staff) • Would like to see resources and tools made available to improve enforcement
Attended	Follow-up on the rules for stronger protections for groundwater and drinking water and that the specific suggestions provided during the meeting were opportunities / possibilities and not dictated expectations. • Specific ideas were presented to staff

All comments received during April 4, 2025, partner meeting:

Request Clarification from Partners:

1. Regarding Recommendation:

Identify opportunities in the rules to increase administrator / Board's ability to provide flexibility without increasing the number of variances

Strategy:

- Identify opportunities to engage additional feedback from partners / permittees

*Offering "regional" solutions was recommended in feedback. BCWD currently offers regional solutions. QUESTION: is the flexibility we offer good, and people just don't know OR is there a different flexibility wanted?

What does flexibility mean to you?

- Flexible treatment options *
- Flexibility opportunities must be based on data / habitat protection
 - Not political desires / protest or developers ROI
- Examine buffer rules; allow more averaging
- Put process costs towards other solutions (ex: native prairie)
- Create process to allow credit for creating restored areas
 - Native habitat
 - Restoration = volume control credit
 - Adding computation credit system for open space
- Review variances – what are the most common variances? Variance review- what is common?
Rule change necessary?
 - Review variance request for common challenges – how did the Board approve or deny
 - Variance request – how did the board approve or deny; work that into the rule
- Record instances of previous variances to use as references of precedence
- Loosen variance needs
- Instead of a variance process --- a *mitigation* process
- Ongoing Communications Improvement
 - Guidance document or website section on flexibility
 - Providing / directing applicants to information on approaches that they can use to meet regulations
 - Eg: people may not know they could do 6 – 10 things to meet their permit requirements
 - Clear communication of FTOs (Field Testing Operations) for stormwater
 - Communicating other options for erosion control
 - Clear curve number definitions & assumptions (to avoid hydrocad games)
 - Include the "why" for the individual standard requirements for the developer and resident to understand
 - Simplified explanation of each specific rule that is understood by regular people
 - Include indicators that these standards are working
- For education/outreach: What flexibility do we have in rules
 - Also have buffer averaging

- Regional treatment
- MIDS in diversion drainage
- HOW you meet (various ways like decompaction, erosion control types are not all same expense)
- Consistency – coordinate language and approach with neighboring watersheds and cities
- Consider what benefits the rule has for the resource and if that protection is there for a lesser requirement
- More stringent than state standard – prove benefit to the resource or allow more flexibility
 - Meet full rule versus less than but adequate
- Need to be aware of setting precedents
- Allow staff / engineers to provide flexibility in certain circumstances without variance
 - Interpretation flexibility – process to allow consensus *
 - Stormwater / engineering rules that allow benefit to the resources breaking down overly prescribed / prescriptive rules *
- Higher level of engineering review? Frequency? Could add complexity
- MIDS (like VBWD) – Staff availability + staff authority + District wide connecting
 - MIDS in general and MIDS+ for sensitive features (addressing need may require greater than 1.1 inch)
 - Treatment flex per MIDS – watershed district wide (alt treatment standard for trout stream and landlocked)
- Staff availability and authority (private & public) collaboration on higher level of watershed*
- Communicate and potentially expand Admin approval
- Additional things / processes that go through a quicker review
- Review other watershed district rules for flexibility options
- Flexibility between different watersheds
- Cost flexibility for different types of projects for permits
 - Cost flexibility – less expensive for certain types of projects
- Interpretation flexibility if the engineers don't agree on the interpretation of rules; is there a process that can be implemented to facilitate healthy solutions
- Easier permitting for sites that can demonstrate clear stormwater disconnect
- Clear demonstration of stormwater; topography does not make it to resource
- Reduction in fees if treatment exceeds a certain threshold
- Permit threshold review fees in lieu
- Rate of water flow; taking a higher overview of water from a larger perspective
 - De minimis (a legal doctrine by which a court refuses to consider trifling matters)*
- For sites that drain in multiple directions, apply rate control & water quality protection to the overall site not necessarily on a subdrainage drainage basis. Particularly if overall discharge is less post development and dnst (?) properties are not impacted
- Justification of changes in real time versus designed plans *
- Evaluating old design capacity and creating projects to incorporate new design capacity
- *When getting rule comparison data...also ask what flexibility others feel they have in rules, how many permits they issue per year, what variances they have given in past x years, what regional treatment options...looking at cities/county appeal process (Jay says cities have to appeals process)*

*identified as priorities in group

Request additional information or clarification from partners and have staff explore issue and get more information (cost, time commitment, etc)

1. Regarding Recommendation:

Allow regional solutions

Strategies:

- Review how other watershed districts (and State partners) support regional solutions and identify opportunities for BCWD – *this may require a rules change*

Tied into “what does flexibility mean to you?”

*BCWD does offer opportunities for regional solutions / treatments; utilize outreach / information strategies to communicate this and including this in future partner meetings

- Is the flexibility we offer good, and people just don’t know about it OR is there a different flexibility / regional solution wanted?
- Monitor future feedback on this to determine if rules or process changes are needed

What regional solutions are you looking for? Wetland banking? Larger stormwater management facilities?

- Regional solutions summit / planning with LGUs
- Survey developers for ideas
- Work with local land use authorities
- Collaborative effort – how can planning be accomplished together; looking into broader area
- Chicken and egg game – how to streamline the process so all who should be involved are?
- City or township has a plan; approved by watershed district
 - Watershed district encouraging and support
- Task Washington County to build master plan for watershed subareas – then developers can work into prelim plan
- Map existing regional solutions
- Increase cohesiveness of previously approved regional solutions
 - Website
 - Signage
- Stillwater Milbrook Development has been a great success –
 - “I’ve found no overflow to Browns Creek or Carnelian Watershed District”
- Review historic experience of Cub / Walmart development
 - 1st class como after rigid rules failed politically
- Map out and protect / predefine lands for regional solutions
 - Develop regional methodology
- Increase awareness of regional stormwater approaches
- Provide list of recommended ideas – perhaps location specific
- Allow native habitat creation as a solution to volume control
- Prepare outreach to prevent NIMBY-ism
- Not understanding how the regional solutions impact large areas
- Watershed purchase the land for the stormwater BMP (regional) in advance
- Future of planning based upon 50 year
 - Buying land before; capital project; area needs bond; imminent domain, already in place
- Folks do cash in lieu to pay in for areas already on a regional system

- This is a great option but shouldn't be used when great treatment on site exists
 - Communications issue: some people feel like that is extortion
- Prioritize and reward regional solutions - 2
- Overlay of where in the watershed regional solutions already exist
 - Storymap to click, see, pursue
- Diversion drainage
- Wetland banking –
 - Timed out; consistent regional solutions & honoring
 - Expensive – site is developable; other options for creative solutions

2. Regarding Recommendation:

Review the current appeals process and assess opportunities to improve the process, timeline, and communication; ensure that applicants are provided with information on the appeals process

There is not appeals process

What do you want to appeal, when, and why?

What needs to be fixed?

- Approach from a position of partnership
- Be consistent with other appeals processes of other kinds of LGUs
- Get ahead of appeals
 - Early coordination
 - Purposeful communication
 - Co-decision
- If working together, appeals aren't needed
- An appeal aims at doing something not allowed – current process is ok
- When there are clashes between attorney and/or between engineers – how do we have a conversation that isn't always “our guy is right?”
- What happens when a permit is denied? Can an applicant reapply?
- Who is being appealed to? The engineers who don't agree? The board? Attorneys? At what point in the process?
- Can a third party be brought in?
- Developers to share w/ board – more discussion
- Zoning - appeal decision – appeal meeting
 - Planning + town board
 - Discrepancy between parties
 - Made decision
 - Appeal
 - Reasoning entered into at a different meeting
 - Land use, engineers
- Staff level or board
- Watershed district – 60 days or 120 days rarely deny – disconnect between board
 - Work with applicants
- Variance requests or what process are in place

- Process/Education- discussion to board is possible if engineers don't agree on interpretation of rules or how to meet

Request additional information or clarification from partners and then include in WMP process

1. Regarding Recommendation:

Host ongoing engineering workshops / meetings

Strategies:

- Initial facilitated conversation / focus group

Ongoing discussions / training

Additional ideas:

Continuing ED? Opportunities to meet staff and learn about rules, processes, expectations, obligations, and opportunities *and provide feedback – could this be done regionally (EMWREP)*

Lunch and learns, virtual sessions, breakfasts

Incentivize their participation

Is there value in this? Do the partners support it? Someone has to pay for engineers to attend, so would the partners support sending their engineers?

- The best people to ask this question are (maybe) not in the room
- Other ideas for increasing outreach opportunities & committee membership / participation

2. Regarding Recommendation:

Increase outreach opportunities

Strategies:

- Inventory where touchpoints are and look for opportunities to share BWCD info - city billing inserts, realtor communication
- Create information cards or standard language (for documents / websites) for other permitting LGUs to provide to applicants
- Schedule consistent meetings with partners – city-county partner meetings, city coordination meetings, partner meetings – determine a schedule that is do-able and set expectation
- Opportunities for developers and/or contractors to meet staff and learn about rules, processes, expectations, obligations, opportunities – lunch and learns, virtual sessions, breakfasts

Additional ideas:

- Continuing Ed? Opportunities to meet staff and learn about rules, processes, expectations, obligations, and opportunities and provide feedback – could this be done regionally (EMWREP)?
- Lunch and learn, virtual sessions, breakfasts
- Incentivize their participation

What are you interested in? What activities are you most likely to attend?

- Participatory planning + rule making = invite us back at change moments
- Outside of BCWD
 - Met Council's subregional engagement process may be a good additional venue
- Water consortium already does this to some extent; get us back in the room again (how do you get developers' engineers in the room?)

- Flowcharts could be helpful for communication (“dichotomous key”). Flowcharts are useful, but could that end up complicating?
 - Examples:
 - Regs A, B, C
 - Reg B – Options to Achieve Pre Approval (1., 2., 3., 4., etc)
 - If not, not approved or variance required
 - Starting point questions
 - If yes, continue to (permit app or other step) ---- etc
 - If no, revisit x, y, or z ---- verify function ---- back to s

3. Regarding Recommendation:

Committee membership

Strategies:

- Provide opportunities for developers, contractors, and the regulatory audience to participate in the District
 - This could include Board, CAC, and/or TAC appointments, inviting them to information sessions with members of the above groups, and staff presenting at meetings where business leaders are present
- Provide opportunity for this group to identify ways that want to participate

Additional Note: Integrate them and don’t leave them on an island

What kind of involvement are you looking for? Would you be willing and interested in participating?

What would you be willing to do?

- Committee Membership
 - Engineers – private entities; watershed district(s) to hire full time engineers, show up to meetings
 - What’s the motive of each party involved
 - Public notice for all to allow time to communicate w/ Board or people
 - Boards and leaders – technical experts; generalist leaders – strategic direction; allow for more people to participate
 - When asking for more specific feedback, provide questions in advance
 - Hold meetings at different times to accommodate various schedules
- Continued Involvement / Engagement
 - People show up when they are mad about something
 - Meet w/ cities fairly often (quarterly, sometimes want less)
 - Relationship building between meetings (CLFLWD)
 - Board members to attend city/township council meetings (at least once per year)
 - Staff liaisons – help determine which meeting(s) to attend – look at agenda
 - Diversity of people in the room makes more valuable discussions
- Close the loop – build trust, build understanding
- Make collaborative efforts focused
- IAP2 – International Association for Public Participation (www.iap2.org)
- Quick survey to those who didn’t attend asking why not? Would they still like to be included? Bad timing? Not applicable? Feels pointless? Invite back when change opportunities?

Appendix 3

Defining Simple

The icebreaker at the facilitated partner meeting was designed to demonstrate that using single words, like simple, to provide direction on complex issues provided very little benefit to decision makers. The activity also showed that people meant many different things even though they are using the same word. Participants were asked to share what “simple” means or what they mean when they use it.

“Simple” was the word selected for the activity, because the word and its variations are frequently used to provide direction for the BCWD rules and regulatory program. Seventy-eight responses were offered; many of the responses were unique.

During the wrap-up of the icebreaker, participants were encouraged to focus on providing detailed feedback and specific strategies they wanted the Board to consider.

Defining SIMPLE

- Easy - 4
 - Easy to perform, enact, do
 - Easily done
 - Easy to implement
 - Easy to achieve or understand
 - To explain
- Not complicated / uncomplicated- 5
- Easily understood / easy to understand / understandable- 13
 - Understandable to all -2
 - Easily understood at all knowledge levels
- Plain language
- Concise
- Not hard
- Quick – 2
 - quickest
 - Fast
- Practical
- Clear Language
 - Clear definitions
 - Clearly defined terms / rules that don’t encourage discussion
- Nothing more than what is essential
- Can be described within one paragraph
- Efficient – 5
- Effective
- To the point
- Straightforward - 2
- Predictable

- General - 2
- Basic
- Minimal details
- Not specific -2
- Transparent
- Opposite of complex
- Down to essentials
- Least number of steps
 - Most direct way
 - Minimal steps
- Instinctual
- Flexible
- Conservative
- Economical
- Not targeted
- Not unduly burdensome
- Doesn't require technical expertise
- Planned, local input, qualified implementors
- MIDS; MIDS + for cold water fisheries and landlocked basins (so not totally simple...)
- Captured above, "something that is efficient and easily understood by all."
- Process
- Question someone added:
 - For who? How to serve the resource?
 - Feedback

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 14th, 2025 and the Technical Advisory Committee on April 22nd, 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
Stormwater Management	4.5	• Important to meet TMDL goals • Issue will require proactive planning for rainfall impacts with projected climate change conditions • Threat to water quality from increased impervious surfaces • Stormwater infrastructure needs to be consistently maintained
Stream Management	6	• 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 • Creek is where you will see the outcomes of upstream work but not necessarily the place that needs the most investment • Restoration and habitat projects will remain important, for trout as well as other species
Lake Management	3	• It is important to prioritize/incentivize natural shorelines and plant buffers for filtration and habitat • Lakes also a place where you will see outcomes of upstream/upland work • Concerns related to invasive species, chlorides, and other contaminants
Wetland Management	2.5	• Important surface and groundwater connections • 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 • Consider taking WCA administration so permittees only need to coordinate with one entity to get permitted
Floodplain Management	4.5	• Issue will require proactive planning for flood impacts with projected climate change conditions, will benefit from ongoing study and modelling • Co-benefit opportunities with floodplain restoration to enhance ecological health and connected corridors • District has a good handle on the issue including strong processes to manage flooding, but will need to continue to adapt
Groundwater Management	4.5	• Closely tied to improvements/degradation in other resource areas • Important to coordinate with the county on roles, projects, and priorities • Identified as a community concern overheard through informal conversations with community members

Issue	Prioritization Score	Priorities
Erosion Prevention and Sediment Control	2	- Concerns related to land destabilization and vegetation changes - Opportunities to manage the issue through stormwater ponds and stream meander projects
Monitoring and Data Collection	4	- Valued for its role in contributing to better decision-making, even though it's not the most exciting thing - Desire for groundwater monitoring and data
Regulations	7.5	- Important to continue focusing on pollutant removal - Greatest opportunity to reduce pollutant loads is during development rather than retrofits - Developing rule consistency region-wide - Set the bar, help people meet it
Land Conservation	3	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
Ecological Health	2.5	- Should provide value to all residents not just waterside residents - Watershed contains unique ecosystems under threat, important to
Recreation	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.
Education and Outreach	5.5	- Harder to meet goals without community involvement, important to increase community buy-in and support - Need for improved communication of the actions and benefits provided through District work
Pollutants of Emerging Concern	2	Concerns with chlorides and PFAS
General	N/A	Partnerships will remain an effective way to deliver projects

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.

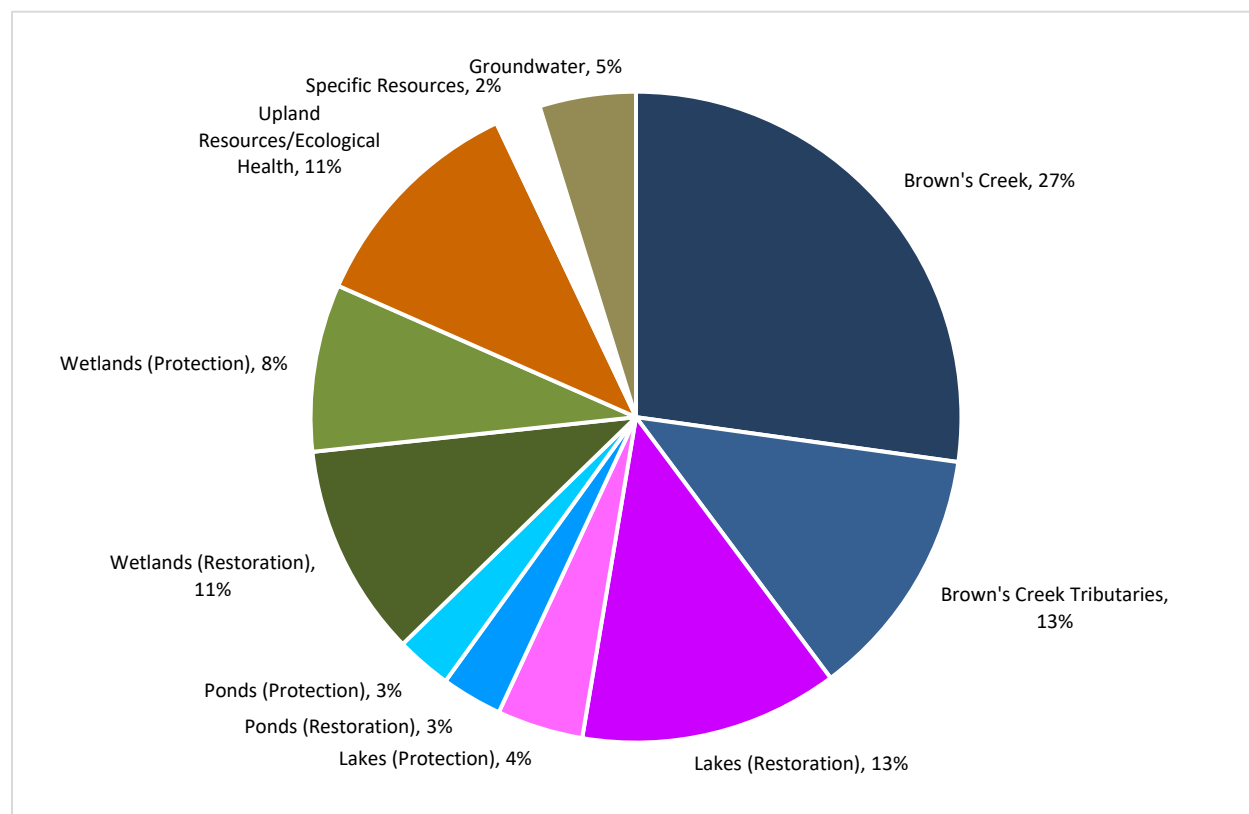


Figure 1. CAC and TAC CIP allocations

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 1. 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 1.

Table 2. Prioritization Approaches

2017-2026 WMP Prioritization Approach	New approaches to consider	Participant suggested approaches
• Maximizes opportunities for co-benefits • Protection activities related to conservation • Suitable entity • Maximizes opportunities for partnership • Addresses knowledge gap • Recommendation from engagement • Measurable water quality improvement (restoration) impact • Allocation of resources • Funding	• Advances DEIA • Increases the District's climate resilience • Flood reduction/mitigation	• Level of effort relative to the degree of importance • Public will/understanding

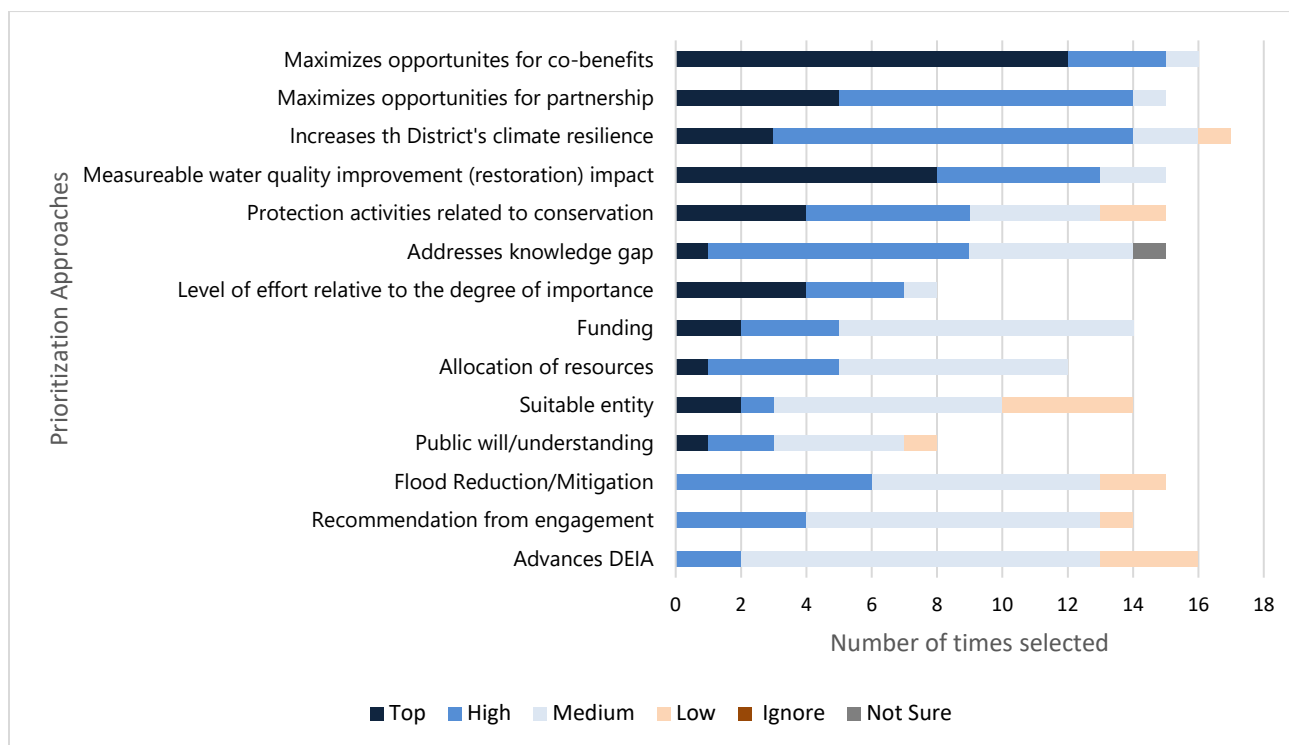


Figure 2. CAC and TAC Feedback on Project and Program Prioritization

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

CAC Meeting (4/14/2025)	TAC Meeting (4/22/2025)
George Vania	Jessica Collin-Pilarski (Washington County PHE)
Jyneen Thatcher	Abby Shea (MDH)
Yihong Gao	Jay Riggs (WCD)
Dory Herman	Mike McMahon (Stillwater Township)
Jeff Young (Stillwater resident)	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)

FLOOD VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT + WMP COMMUNITY MEETINGS

Date | 11/24/2025

To / Contact info | BCWD Board of Managers | Karen Kill, District Administrator

From / Contact info | Camilla Correll, and Paul Nation

Regarding | Community Meetings Summary

Background

One of the final tasks of the Flood Vulnerability Assessment was to host a series of meetings with member communities to share the results of the modeling analysis and identify opportunities to partner of flood reduction strategies as needed. The objective of this memorandum is to summarize the main discussion points that took place in these meetings and to make recommendations for the flood management section of the Watershed Management Plan update.

Meetings

Karen Kill, Camilla Correll, and Paul Nation participated in a series of five meetings with the following communities. As of the date of this memorandum, BCWD has not met with Washington County but is scheduled to do so prior to completing this exercise.

Table 1. Summary of meetings held for the Flood Vulnerability Assessment

Community	Attendees	Meeting Date
City of Oak Park Heights	Andrew Kegley, Director of Public Works Lee Mann, Stantec Erik Peters, Stantec	October 8, 2025
Stillwater Township	Barbara Riehle, TWP Clerk J Maurer, CJ Sycks, TKDA	October 8, 2025
City of Stillwater	Shawn Sanders, Public Works Director Jesse Farrell, Deputy Director of Public Works Jason Zimmerman, Community Development Director	October 9, 2025
City of Lake Elmo	Marty Powers, Public Works Director Nathan Stanley, Stantec	October 15, 2025
City of Hugo and May Township	Rachel Juba, Community Development Director John Pazlar, May Township Board Supervisor Bobbi Hummel, Town Clerk Mark Erichson, WSB Nate Sparks, WSB Kendra Fallon,	October 27, 2025

The main agenda items for these meetings included:

- Introductions
- Purpose of the Meeting
- Modeling Methods and Criteria
- Flood Vulnerability Results (by community)
- Comments/Feedback/Ground Truthing

- Potential Solutions/Priorities
- Topics Related to WMP Update

Meeting Summary

Purpose of the Meeting

Karen Kill explained that the Flood Vulnerability Assessment is a planning level exercise. The BCWD wanted to know what flooding would look like under a higher rainfall scenario recognizing that precipitation patterns are changing and that we are projected to see more extreme precipitation events in the future. The BCWD is sharing the findings of this analysis so communities are aware of areas that are vulnerable to flooding under existing and projected conditions and so opportunities to collaborate on flood reduction projects can be identified for inclusion in the WMP update.

During this portion of the meeting, Camilla Correll explained how the BCWD is applying a climate lens to the Watershed Management Plan update. She asked the communities how they are addressing impacts related to climate change and showed them what information was available in the Plan for incorporation in the comprehensive planning process. For the most part, the communities are planning to address impacts related to climate change as part of the comprehensive planning process. They prefer to use science-based information in evaluating impacts (i.e., Atlas 14) and are aware of the tools that the Metropolitan Council has available to improve resilience.

Modeling Methods and Criteria

The City of Oak Park Heights asked how the BCWD will update the H/H model as new precipitation information (i.e., Atlas 15) becomes available. Karen Kill shared the BCWD's commitment to keeping a live, up-to-date H/H model that reflects the latest land use changes as well as design storm information.

A couple of the communities noted that they have critical infrastructure (i.e., lift stations and wellhouses) that are missing from the data set.

Stillwater Township and the City of Hugo were interested in knowing if groundwater was accounted for in the H/H model. It was explained that the model reflect surface drainage (hydrology and hydraulics) only.

Flood Vulnerability Results (by community)

City of Stillwater noted that they haven't gotten any calls regarding flooding of roads or basements beyond complaints related to groundwater seepage. The City also noted that they haven't seen flooding along County Road 5. They would like more time to review the technical memorandum and the flood vulnerability maps before the BCWD makes any modifications to the H/H model or finalizes opportunities for partnerships.

Potential Projects/Partnerships

The following table summarizes the projects discussed during the series of meetings. Some of the projects are already in Capital Improvement Plans while most were flagged as areas that may need further evaluation. This table identifies which community the potential project is located in, includes a brief description of the concern, and identifies the type of opportunity it is.

Table 2. Summary of potential project/feasibility study locations

Community	Project Location/Description	Type of Opportunity
City of Oak Park Heights	53 rd Street	
	9 th Addition Pond	

Stillwater Township	Roundabout at Hwy 96, Dellwood Road, and County Road 5.	Permitting Program
	Annexation of the Schubert Property.	TBD
City of Hugo	Lynch Road - Subject to flooding under smaller events. No specific comment/request from the city.	Potential Flood Reduction Project
	Lynch Lake - Residential structure subject to flooding under projected conditions. No specific comment/request from the city.	Potential Flood Reduction Project
	July Avenue experiencing flooding for the 25-year event and some structures projected to experience flooding for the 100-year event. No specific comment/request from the city.	Potential Flood Reduction Project
	Keystone Avenue projected to flood for the 25-year event (south of Withrow Ballroom). No specific comment/request from the city.	Potential Flood Reduction Project
	120 th flooding	Potential Flood Reduction Project
	124 th Street isolated depression that has potential flood impacts to two residential structures.	Potential Flood Reduction Project
City of Lake Elmo	Manning Avenue south of Hwy 36 managed by the City of Lake Elmo. There has been flooding in this area.	Potential Flood Reduction Project
	Road reconstruction on Linden Avenue scheduled for 2033.	Potential Flood Reduction Project
	Flooding of County Road 10.	Potential Flood Reduction Project
City of Grant	Residential flooding due to flooding of the wetland north of Dellwood Road (Brabender residence). Karen noted she has gotten calls about flooding in the past. Paul noted this is a landlocked basin.	Potential Flood Reduction Project
	Intersection of 88 th and Dellwood near Lake Masterman. This gravel road was in rough shape after the flooding of 2018/2019 (i.e., rutting). City got a lot of complaints.	Potential Flood Reduction Project
	McKusick Road North west of Lofton Avenue North, hasn't	Potential Flood Reduction Project

	experienced any flooding in the last 10-15 years. Is this an area that was an issue prior to this time period?	
	Flooding along Kimbro Avenue North, north of County Road 12 near Grant Pond.	Potential Flood Reduction Project

Other Opportunities

- Do the communities need resources or want to share resources with potentially impacted landowners?
- Are there Education and Outreach needs?
- Access to the model (or assistance with the model) to vet infrastructure upgrades?

Topics Related to Watershed Management Plan Update

Camilla Correll introduced the work conducted by the BCWD to update the wetland management classifications using the MN-WI Rapid Assessment Method and the groundwater dependent natural resource classifications using additional data sources. Karen Kill explained that the results of these initiatives were going to be included in the 2027-2036 Watershed Management Plan which means that the communities would have to incorporate this information in their Local Surface Water Management Plans (as part of the Comprehensive Plans). She also explained that these management classifications wouldn't apply to the District's rules until the rule revision process which is scheduled for 2027.

All of the communities we talked to agreed that there is a need for a central repository for stormsewer/drainage infrastructure.

- Stillwater TWP is working with Braun Intertec to collect storm sewer infrastructure and save in a central location. They will assess gaps after Braun is done with their work and would need to talk to the Town Board about interest in saving in a central repository.
- The City of Stillwater would be supportive of having Washington County be the entity housing the infrastructure/GIS data.
- Hugo and May TWP see a lot of value in a database of storm sewer infrastructure.
- Lake Elmo is interested in GIS coordination for storm sewer infrastructure, which would help identify data gaps.

Karen Kill asked if the cities have training or resource needs that the BCWD should be aware of for the plan update.

- City of Stillwater offered to host an education event, and nearby communities can come here.
- Lake Elmo is interested in having Angie come to the City to provide training sessions (i.e., a lunch and learn) specifically on the topic of illicit discharge, and stormwater maintenance and inspections. The public works director will check in with the other departments to see if they have needs related to ESC inspections.
- Lake Elmo shared regular meetings that Washington County holds with communities.
- City of Stillwater could use help with smart salting education and outreach to homeowners.

During these discussions, Karen asked member communities about the salt application practices where we learned the following:

- Miller Excavating performs maintenance and/or plowing for the City of Oak Park Heights and Stillwater Township. Oak Park Heights will consider asking Miller Excavating to get Smart Salting Certifications. Stillwater Townships contract language does not include smart salting certification. Invoices come with a salt ticket, so they know how much is applied. City of Hugo and May Township do not include language regarding smart salting certification in their current contracts, but this is something they could include in the future.

- Oak Park Heights has budget for smart salt training.
- City of Stillwater is good with brine usage and getting better as they improve/replace their fleet.
- Stillwater TWP has 6.4 miles of gravel roads. Information is not in a GIS database. Township conducted a cost-benefit analysis of dust suppression versus paving and found it would be cost-prohibitive to pave the roads. They apply dust suppressants on their gravel roads.
- Hugo and May TWP can share the location of their gravel roads. City of Hugo plow the roads themselves and May Township contracts with Dresel Contracting out of Chisago City. Lake Elmo has one gravel road in BCWD (Manning Ave). The City of Hugo and May Township use dust suppression about once a year on their gravel roads. Lake Elmo doesn't use dust suppression on Manning Ave since only 1 resident and maintenance staff use the road. They use the "precise" software for their salting. They have cut their salt usage in half.
- The City of Lake Elmo sweeps everything in the spring. They do chip seal areas throughout the year. In the fall they do chip seals again and a high leaf route. They see the street sweeping needs increasing as the trees in the new development areas grow. City of Stillwater goes above and beyond for street sweeping.

Highlights Specific to Certain Communities

- The City of Lake Elmo has asked staff to consider water conservation efforts. The City requires stormwater reuse as a method of irrigation. In the last year they have seen 5 to 6 systems go in. Currently they have irrigation restrictions limiting irrigation to two days a week and limiting it to certain times of the day. They have zoned off parts of the city, so they aren't pumping at the same time. These requirements help with new development activity. The City of Lake Elmo developed a management plan that the developer needs to complete and hand over to the HOA. Karen requested a copy of this management plan.
- City of Grant is no longer an MS4 community.
- City of Stillwater is interested in the Marketplace Reuse Study and continuing to explore this option as a regional treatment option. The City of Stillwater has contacts that they can share with Karen Kill. The City is also interested in learning more about a One Water approach to manage water more sustainably.

Next Steps

- Share the information including the presentation, Flood Vulnerability Assessment Technical Memorandum and maps shared during the meetings. The member communities are also interested in accessing the District's H/H model. Karen Kill was going to make sure that all of the communities have the agreements in place needed to access the model.
- City of Hugo and May Township are interested in knowing what the starting water levels looked like in their communities. City of Hugo would like to share the information with Public Works.
- Barbara Riehle, TWP Clerk offered to share the information with residents to get feedback on local flooding issues.
- Update the vulnerability assessment to reflect missing infrastructure (i.e., City of Oak Park Heights lift station, City of Stillwater lift station, and City of Lake Elmo well house and PFAS treatment system).
 - o City of Grant is concerned with the accuracy of the information. They would like culvert sizing and conditions to be verified to make sure the information included in the model is as accurate as possible. Karen Kill noted that the Flood Vulnerability Assessment does not include budget for revisions to the model. The City of Grant suggested that the BCWD share a map/culvert inventory with the City so they can make sure the District has the most current information.
 - o City of Grant noted that the model is missing a culvert on 110th Street,
 - o Add missing critical infrastructure to the assessment.

- Facilitate a discussion on levels of service for road and drainage infrastructure prior to the Comprehensive Planning process so communities understand their risk tolerance moving forward.
- It was suggested that the BCWD come to city council meetings to share the types of plant communities that are being found in the watershed.
- Stillwater Townships staff (CJ Sykes) will provide Karen Kill with a presentation which shows the location of gravel roads.

Recommendations for WMP Update

The following table includes a list of implementation activities that should be retained or added to the watershed management plan update based on the discussions held with member communities. They have been organized by the issue and goal that they support.

Table 3. Implementation Activities to include in the watershed management plan update

Issue / Sub-Issue	Goal	Implementation Activity
Floodplain and Flood Management / Flood Prevention	A. Operate with the most current data on flooding and climate change impacts to water resources and infrastructure.	Update the model/Flood Vulnerability Assessment to include all critical infrastructure and missing infrastructure. [NEW]
Floodplain and Flood Management / Protection of Flood Storage Areas	A. Ensure no net loss of flood storage capability within the watershed.	Consider the acquisition of properties vulnerable to flooding in landlocked basins. [NEW]
Floodplain and Flood Management / Protection of Flood Storage Areas	B. Reduce flood hazards under existing 100-year event and the projected 100-year event.	WHAT TO DO WITH THE LIST OF PROJECTS IDENTIFIED ABOVE? WHAT TO INCLUDE IN THE WMP UPDATE?
Monitoring and Data Collection / Monitoring Needs	A. Collect and analyze valuable information about the District's water resources and natural resources.	Work with Washington County and local watershed districts/watershed management organizations to develop a comprehensive database for storm sewer and drainage structures located in the County. [RETAIN]
Education, Outreach, and Stewardship / Municipality and Developer/Contractor Education and Outreach	A. Increase municipal official and staff capacity for and use of development techniques and regulatory strategies that protect natural resources and benefit water quality.	Create a packet of information that summarizes the impacts related to climate change for each community including impacts to surface waters, groundwater, and natural systems. [NEW]
Education, Outreach, and Stewardship / Municipality and Developer/Contractor Education and Outreach	A. Increase municipal official and staff capacity for and use of development techniques and regulatory strategies that protect natural resources and benefit water quality.	Work with member communities to make sure contracting includes requirements for smart salting certification. [NEW]
Education, Outreach, and Stewardship / Municipality and Developer/Contractor Education and Outreach	A. Increase municipal official and staff capacity for and use of development techniques and regulatory strategies that protect natural resources and benefit water quality.	Coordinate multi-community guidance on dust suppressant practices.

Education, Outreach, and Stewardship / Municipality and Developer/Contractor Education and Outreach	A. Increase municipal official and staff capacity for and use of development techniques and regulatory strategies that protect natural resources and benefit water quality.	Help communities adopt dust suppressant practices that minimize water-quality impacts, such as: • Application timing (avoid rain events to prevent immediate runoff). • Proper dosage (prevent over-application). • Identifying road sections near wetlands, streams, or shallow groundwater where alternatives or setbacks should be used. Promoting improved gravel road structures that reduce dust at the source (e.g., fines content, proper crown, drainage improvements).
Education, Outreach, and Stewardship / Municipality and Developer/Contractor Education and Outreach	C. Increase developer, contractor, awareness of the BCWD and the assistance it can provide.	Present on the District rules at the American Public Works Association (APWA) Conference and/or City Engineers Association Conference. Attendees need Professional Development Hours (PDH's) and can select what they want to learn. [RETAIN / MODIFIED]
Stream Management / Water Quality, Aquatic Habitat, and Fisheries Protection	G. Facilitate the implementation of the Brown's Creek TMDL Implementation Plan.	Individual annual meetings with member communities to discuss partnership opportunities as part of budget discussion (April-May timeframe). [RETAIN / MODIFIED]
Stream Management / Water Quality, Aquatic Habitat, and Fisheries Protection	G. Facilitate the implementation of the Brown's Creek TMDL Implementation Plan.	Group meeting with member communities every three years to share updates and explore partnership opportunities. [RETAIN]
Ecological Health / Protect and Restore the Function of Upland Habitat	A. Reduce non-native plant cover and replace it with high-value and functional native landscaping.	Host a tour of high-quality wetlands and invite city council members and staff to attend. [RETAIN]

Board Action

Provide feedback on the implementation activities included in Table 3. These are not the only implementation activities that will be in the 2027-2036 Watershed Management Plan. These are the implementation activities that we recommend keeping in the plan based on the interest expressed by member communities or they are new implementation activities identified during our conversations.

Project Name	Flood Vulnerability Assessment	Date	3/31/2026
To / Contact info	County and Municipal Staff Karen Kill / BCWD Administrator		
From / Contact info	Bill Yu, P.Eng.; Paul Nation, PE; Camilla Correll, PE / EOR		
Regarding	Comments received on draft report		

Background

The Brown's Creek Watershed District (BCWD) recently completed a flood vulnerability assessment using the watershed's updated hydrologic and hydraulic (H&H) model. This assessment used the model to assess flooding impacts from both existing and future rainfall conditions. Resulting flood maps and the assessment report were shared with member communities following meetings with community staff to introduce and discuss the results. The following sections outline the comments received and BCWD's response.

County

Comments were received from Toni Ajala on 1/12/2026.

- For Table 4 in the draft report, consider including a percentage change column to show the difference between the existing and future 100-year HWL, as well as another column detailing the municipality location of the basin.

A column for municipality has been added. Since percent change is small in all cases (<0.2%), a column for "Increase in HWL" was added instead.

- Regarding the maps:
 - The "no overtopping marker" is generally difficult to see on "<15% streams".
 - Consider including the municipality boundaries in the small-scale map of the Brown's Creek Watershed in the legend.

The map set has been updated to incorporate these changes.

City of Hugo

Comments were received from Kendra Fallon, PE and Mark Erichson, PE (WSB) on 1/12/2026.

- H-21 crossing near July Avenue starting elevation (977.86)
 - EOR provided the starting elevation for waterbodies adjacent to the H-21 crossing after it was requested by the City. The starting elevation in the model is 977.86. Is this based on a structural outlet or what is being used to determine the starting elevation?

Water levels from April 2020 (DNR Lake Finder) were used to illustrate what would happen under wetter-than-normal conditions (i.e., conservative assumption). This represents what conditions could look like if a major storm event happened in spring 2020 when water levels were already high. For example, the wetland located at Kimbro Ave and CSAH 12 had a water level of 933.55 in April 2020. After 14 inches of rainfall over the next three months, water levels rose to their highest recorded level of 934.73. This is one of the hazards we expect to see more frequently in the future.

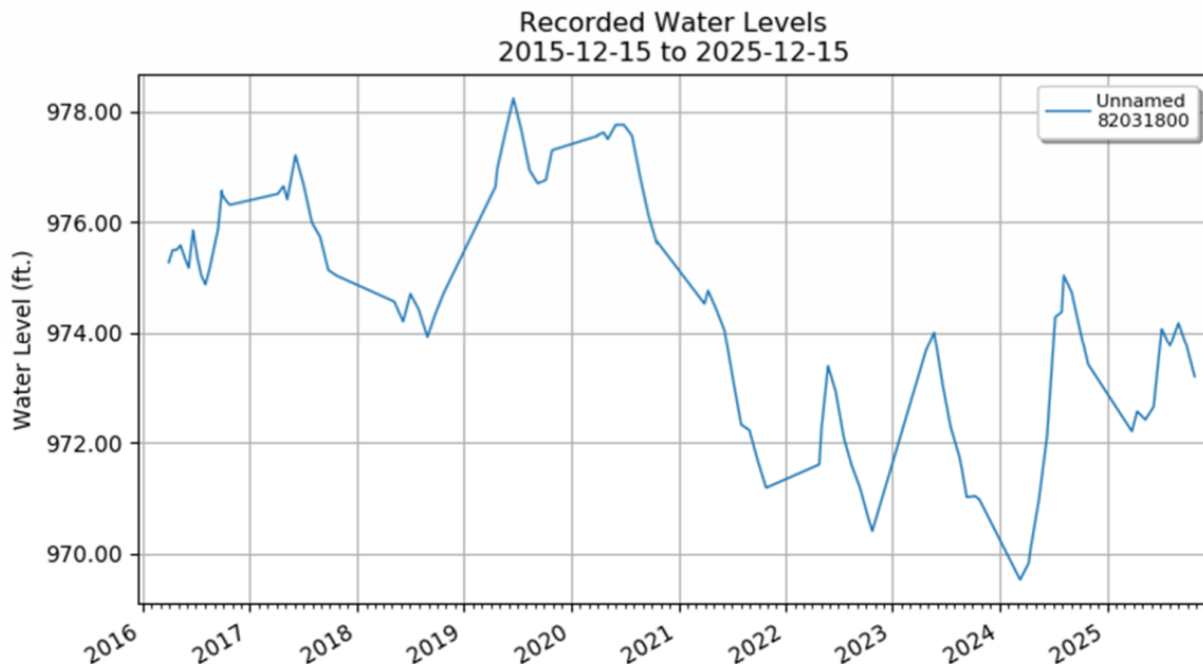
If member communities would prefer to see results related to a range of scenarios (i.e., range of starting water levels that reflect normal, wetter-than-normal, etc. conditions, this is something the BCWD could plan for when it makes future revisions to the Flood Vulnerability Assessment.

- b. DNR Lake Finder shows the waterbody elevation has fluctuated over the last decade but seems to be consistently below a 976 elevation.

Noted. This is one of the scenarios that could be modeled next time.

- c. The starting elevation of 977.86 should be confirmed and is recommended to be lowered based on recorded water levels over the past decade. This would reduce the anticipated overtopping frequency of the roadway.

BCWD's goal for this project was to identify vulnerable locations that would be sensitive to extreme situations driven by high water levels including back-to-back storm events and/or high groundwater levels. As stated previously, the model could be rerun using a lower starting water level for this wetland to address the city's interest in understanding road overtopping frequency under more typical conditions.



2. Plaisted Lake starting elevation (970.67)

- a. Similar to comment 1, what is being used to determine the starting elevation for Plaisted Lake?

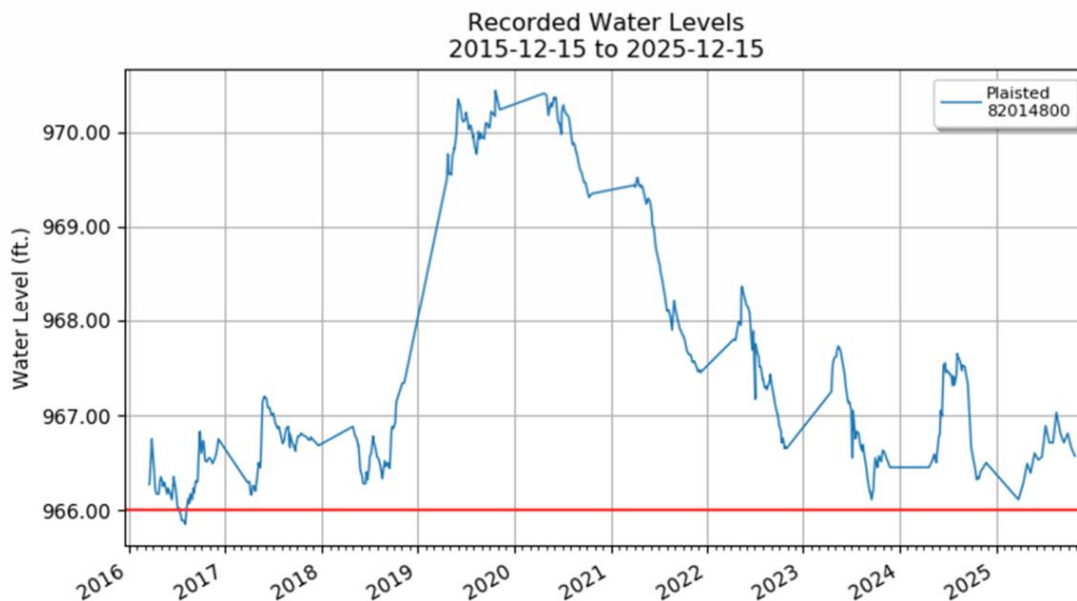
See answer to #1 above.

- b. DNR Lake Finder shows the waterbody elevation has fluctuated over the last decade but seems to be consistently below a 969/968 elevation. Note the OHWL for Plaisted Lake is 966.0.

Noted. This is one of the scenarios that could be modeled next time.

- c. The starting elevation of 970.67 should be confirmed and is recommended to be lowered based on recorded water levels over the past decade. This would reduce the anticipated overtopping frequency of the roadway.

See answer to #1 above.



3. EOR noted that H-02 and H-20 are both governed by downstream Plaisted Lake elevations and the two crossing have the same overtopping elevation (971.90). Based on this, shouldn't both of these crossing have the same symbology (road overtopping existing: 25-year, road overtopping future: 10-year)? They are currently shown with differing symbology.

The map has been updated to correct this error. Both locations are now shown with existing overtopping for the 25-year storm and future overtopping for the 10-year storm.

4. Will proposed improvements at the identified areas of concern be provided to the communities prior to the assessment finalization? Will communities have the opportunity to provide feedback on any proposed improvements?

The goal of this project was to identify potential vulnerabilities in the system and share them with member communities to see if there was interest in evaluating flood reduction strategies for incorporation in the 2027-2037 Watershed Management Plan. If the City of Hugo would like the BCWD to include an evaluation of future improvements at the identified areas of concern, the District would appreciate it if the City made this request so it can be included in the Plan or future amendments.

City of Oak Park Heights

Comments were received from Lee Mann, PE (Stantec) on 1/12/2026.

Community Meetings Summary (dated 12/1/2025):

1. The City has data security concerns regarding sharing utility maps for public use on a BCWD managed central repository for storm sewer and drainage infrastructure. The City does not see such a central repository as a need (see statement on page 3, clip below).

All of the communities we talked to agreed that there is a need for a **central repository for stormsewer/drainage infrastructure**.

Noted. To clarify, the BCWD was asking the City of Oak Park Heights if they would be interested in exploring a central repository that an entity such as Washington County would host. BCWD will modify the meeting summary to clarify that the City of Oak Park Heights does not see a need for sharing this information.

2. BCWD staff at the meeting with Oak Park Heights staff in October stated that this analysis would not lead the BCWD to change its design basis for flood protection. City staff recommended that the BCWD not include this flood vulnerability analysis into BCWD's watershed management plan, but doing so is listed as a BCWD staff recommendation (clip from page 5 below).

Recommendations for WMP Update

The following table includes a list of implementation activities that should be retained or added to the watershed management plan update based on the discussions held with member communities. The have been organized by the issue and goal that they support.

Table 3. Implementation Activities to include in the watershed management plan update

Issue / Sub-Issue	Goal	Implementation Activity
Floodplain and Flood Management / Flood Prevention	A. Operate with the most current data on flooding and climate change impacts to water resources and infrastructure.	Update the model/Flood Vulnerability Assessment to include all critical infrastructure and missing infrastructure in 2026 to incorporate Atlas 15 design storms and every five years thereafter. [NEW]

The Flood Vulnerability Analysis was conducted during the watershed management planning process to identify potential vulnerabilities that could lead to future flood reduction projects. If a community identified a potential project that it would like to explore in partnership with the BCWD, it would be included in the 2027-2036 Watershed Management Plan. During our discussion with the City of Oak Park Heights, we stated that we would not include the Flood Vulnerability Assessment report and figures in the appendices. References to projects identified as a result of this project or to future updates on the model/Flood Vulnerability Assessment (i.e., when Atlas 15 becomes available) are included in the plan so the BCWD can budget for these planned activities.

BCWD regulations will continue to rely on Atlas-14 design standards until more current information is made available by NOAA.

City staff recommended not to include this vulnerability assessment in the BCWD's Plan update for the following reasons:

- a. A watershed boundary error was identified in the modeling.

As noted during the meeting with city staff, subcatchment S_OPH-3 incorrectly includes 1.2 acres along 58th Street that would be conveyed downstream via storm sewer instead of draining to storage node OPH-3. This artificially increases the HWL for this storage node, but should have minimal influence on the downstream system. This boundary will be refined in the next model update.

- b. The analysis and design storm event selection was done without community input.

Community input was solicited in 2021 when BCWD developed a technical memo and conducted a workshop on how best to conduct flood vulnerability assessments. During this workshop, options for simulating future conditions (i.e., storm transposition, using the 90% Confidence Interval from Atlas 14, increasing the existing 100-year design event by 10%) were discussed with Washington County, adjacent watershed districts, and member communities in an effort to agree on a standard modeling approach for communities in Washington county. Additionally, city staff have been invited to participate in Technical Advisory Committee meetings throughout the watershed plan development process.

- c. Road and structure flood vulnerability criteria were not developed with City input or agreement.

The road and flood vulnerability criteria were selected using state requirements and typical engineering design guidelines. In addition, the criteria used for the BCWD analysis match the criteria used for Flood Vulnerability Assessments conducted for the CLFLWD and the CMSCWD. Given the uncertainty related to climate change, it is our understanding that communities may be changing these design standards to meet Level of Service expectations. One of the goals of the meeting with member communities was to better understand how existing criteria are being applied/changed in response to changing precipitation patterns.

- d. The selection of 9.5-inches has no foundational basis outside BCWD. Only when Atlas 15 is complete and published will there be a basis for estimating future trends in precipitation. Even then probabilities will be involved, and probability selection will require a joint discussion.

As noted above, feedback on rainfall event selection was requested in 2021. The 9.5" rainfall depth (90th percentile 100-year, 24-hour Atlas 14 storm event) was selected under advisement of Minnesota's Senior Climatologist and is consistent with the approach being applied by other watershed districts in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area.

- e. Most of the arguments for global warming producing increased rainfall depend on the argument about the atmosphere "holding" more water as temperatures increase. But many other factors modulate the location, intensity, longevity of storms and their ability to produce heavy precipitation.

Noted.

3. Creating a packet of information on climate change based on this analysis is premature (see clip below from page 5). Given there wasn't a discussion with member communities on whether this assessment was desired and there isn't a consensus on the modeling approach, using its results will not be a collaborative effort with member communities.

Education, Outreach, and Stewardship / Municipality and Developer/Contractor Education and Outreach	A. Increase municipal official and staff capacity for and use of development techniques and regulatory strategies that protect natural resources and benefit water quality.	Create a packet of information that summarizes the impacts related to climate change for each community including impacts to surface waters, groundwater, and natural systems. [NEW]
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The Metropolitan Council's minimum requirements for addressing Climate Mitigation and Adaptation includes the "Identification of social, built, and natural systems vulnerabilities for the following climate hazards: Extreme Heat and Localized Flooding". They also require the inclusion of "strategies to address social, built, and natural systems vulnerabilities for the following climate hazards: Extreme Heat and Localized Flooding". Since the BCWD's 2027-2036 Watershed Management Plan includes information regarding vulnerabilities to social, built, and natural systems, it is offering to compile and share this information with member communities in an effort to streamline the planning process and address these requirements.

Flood Vulnerability Assessment Report (dated 12/12/2025):

1. Eliciting input from the City of Oak Park Heights regarding the BCWD's decision to conduct this flood vulnerability assessment would have been an opportunity for collaboration.

As noted above, feedback was elicited during the workshop in 2021 along with Technical Advisory Committee meetings throughout the planning process. We value Oak Park Heights and all our partner input and collaboration. The BCWD administrator appreciated the discussion during our meeting regarding scheduling regular check-ins with the city staff to better coordinate in the future.

2. Incorporating the report into BCWD's Plan update is a concern due to the lack of collaboration. Issues and questions the City would like to resolve with BCWD before incorporating into the Plan update include the following:

As noted above, the report is not included explicitly in the plan but instead informs plan implementation activities. We look forward to continued collaboration on these issues.

- a. New flood risk criteria for roads and structures are described without community consensus. These criteria may not be supported under current stormwater regulations.

See response to this concern above.

- b. The storm event basis for this assessment appears to be premature with the anticipated 2026 publication of Atlas 15. Only when Atlas 15 is complete and

published will there be a basis for estimating future trends in precipitation. Consequently, is there value for incorporating this assessment into the Plan update?

See response to this comment above.

- c. Is BCWD certain that the criteria for unacceptable road flooding should be the same across the entire watershed? City staff know their residents and neighborhoods better than BCWD. Cities may prioritize roads differently.

See response to this comment above.

3. Will BCWD make funding available for Cities to conduct additional hydrologic and hydraulic modeling should a climate change resiliency exercise be desired by BCWD in the future? Having redundant models between the BCWD and Cities may not be cost effective.

BCWD's H&H model is always available for partner use, and we welcome collaboration on refinement of the model in the future. BCWD has included cost-share funding for communities, which includes both water quality improvement and flood reduction projects.