

# MINUTES

## Metro Chapter Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts Tuesday, April 18, 7:00 PM Capitol Region Watershed District Office

Metro Watersheds Board Member Attendees:	Staff and Guest Attendees:
Sherry White, Minnehaha Creek WD	Tina Carstens, Ramsey Washington Metro WD
Mary Texer, Capitol Region WD	Laura Jester, Bassett Creek WMO
John Waller, Rice Creek WD	Nick Tomczik, Rice Creek WD
Jackie Anderson, Comfort Lake–Forest Lake WD	Terry Jeffery, Riley-Purgatory-Bluff Creek WD
Rick Sanders, Capitol Region WD	Kevin Reich, Mississippi WMO
Grace Butler, Nine Mile Creek WD	Anna Eleria, Capitol Region WD
Mike Bradley, Rice Creek WD	Joni Giese, Prior Lake-Spring Lake WD
David Ziegler, Riley-Purgatory-Bluff Creek WD	Linda Loomis, Lower Minnesota River WD
Bill Olson, Minnehaha Creek WD	James Wisker, Minnehaha Creek WD
Shawn Mazanec, Capitol Region WD	Dan Henely, Met Council Environmental Services
Steve Sando, Minnehaha Creek WD	Jason Swenson, MnDOT
Marcie Weinandt, Rice Creek WD	Melissa Lewis, MPCA
	Dereck Richter, MN Department of Health

### I. Call to Order

Chair White called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. and thanked Capitol Region WD for providing the meeting space. A meeting secretary was assigned: Anna Eleria

#### A. Attendance, Introductions & Approval of the Agenda

Attendees introduced themselves around the room.

**MOTION:** Mary Texer moved to approve the agenda. Bill Olson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### II. Action Items

#### A. Approve January 17, 2023 Meeting Notes

**MOTION:** Mary Texer moved to approve the notes from the January 17 2023 meeting. Rick Sanders seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### III. Special Reports and Presentations

James Wisker, Administrator with the Minnehaha Creek WD presented on the District's Climate Action Framework

Purpose of the framework:

Define MCWD's role in field of climate change to bring clarity of focus and scope

Identify near term actions and resources needed which impacts funding and staffing

Communicate clearly to drive partnerships

Set the stage for policy engagement and midterm planning

5-year planning context and set a road map for 2027 Watershed Management Plan

Reflect unique context of MCWD from geographic, landscape, political

Do not want to be climate gurus – add climate as a lens for their work and ensure it does not take away from integrated planning and partnerships

Started with discovery and framing work

Climate science - prepared the MCWD CAC Climate Action Series Report

Governance scan of existing climate plans and initiatives

Issues and opportunities - SWOT analysis conducted

Reviewed MCWD capabilities

Strategy framing – The most significant connection to MCWD is the flooding threat

Climate Action Framework is defined by three pillars.

Pillar 1 – Understand and Predict – data collection to predict vulnerabilities and risks

Pillar 2 – Convene & Plan – Collaborate and develop a coordinated project and policy strategy

Pillar 3 – Implement, Measure, and Adapt

Today, MCWD is implementing Pillar 1 with three priorities including real-time water level monitoring, flood forecasting, and vulnerability and scenario planning.

Pillar 2 – learning the challenges of partners, use watershed model and address issues

Pillar 3 – deliver high impact projects that build resilience, shape policies

Discussion and questions followed:

Question: How does the MCWD determine their level of involvement in climate action projects?

Response: Grid level projects that do not provide regional benefits or have stacked benefits are municipal projects and not MCWD. Navigating through these questions with regulatory lens

Question: Besides Gray's Bay Dam, what other conveyance systems does MCWD own?

Response: Some ditches only

Question: How is MCWD engaging the different City departments at the same time so they are hearing the same message?

Response: Its challenging but it's a requirement for success so they are speaking with TAC members

who are the brokers but are not the decision makers.

Question: Where is the money coming from for this work?

Response: Good question. Looking for proxies like Hennepin County

MCWD is creating a flood response plan so they can rapidly communicate information. Messaging of Gray's Dam was easy because of the flooding. The challenging part is inefficiency of communication with agencies and communication with residents in upper watershed who are located in low lying areas or poorly draining soils.

Climate Action Framework can be found online at: <https://www.minnehahacreek.org/climate>.

#### **IV. Agency and Association Updates**

##### **A. Minnesota Watersheds Update, Jan Voit**

- a. Legislative Update
- b. Summer Tour

Tina Carstens shared Jan's update including information on testifying on general levy bill and the Summer Tour to be held June 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> cohosted by Shell Rock WD with a MAWA meeting followed by agency update, evening reception, and dinner. More information to come.

##### **B. BWSR Update - Michelle Jordan, Board Conservationist**

- 5 Watershed Management Plans recently approved.
- April 26th BWSR Board meeting – packet available online
- FY24-25 WBIF preparation - will not change the boundaries for allocation areas; intent to make the process easier
- BWSR Board tour in the South Metro - Vermillion WMO
- 1W1P Implementation tracking discussions - takeaway was identification of tracking standards
- BWSR Academy planning - met with local partners to plan this year's academy - 9 tracks

##### **C. MPCA Updates – Melissa Lewis**

- a. Environmental bill has passed in the House, which is the source of resiliency grants.
- b. Federal infrastructure bill will also include resiliency funding.
- c. Volunteer monitoring program is celebrating its 50 year anniversary.

##### **D. DNR Updates – No report**

##### **E. MDH Updates, Dereck Ritcher**

- a. American Water Association Drinking Water Conference - Focus on climate change
- b. New hydrologist in metro area
- c. Suggest reaching out to public water agencies about grant funding that is not typical
- d. MDH has grants specifically for drinking water facilities but there may be connection to WD/WMO work.
- e. DNR has interactive watershed webpage which includes precipitation.

- F. MNDOT Updates – Jason Swenson
  - a. Current acting water resources engineer, transition in staffing, cannot actively work with WDs/WMOs due to staffing constraints
  
- G. Met Council Updates, Dan Henely
  - a. Regional climate planning tool pending in legislation
  - b. Water resource policy plan
  - c. Training volunteers
  
- H. Clean Water Council Update, Marcie Weinandt
  - a. Senate accepted the Council’s recommendation for \$315M for biennium
  - b. Clean Water Fund is up for renewal in 2030 – needs to be reauthorized
  
- I. Local Government Water Roundtable Update, Sherry White - no update
  
- J. Minnesota Stormwater Research Council, John Bilotta
  - a. Tina gave an update provided by email
  
- K. MAWA (Minnesota Association of Watershed Administrators) Update, Tina Carstens
  - a. Executive Committee is working with BWSR leadership on training opportunities through BWSR academy and working on a questionnaire for administrators across the state.

**V. Updates from Watersheds**

Grace Butler, NMCWD: Salt limited liability legislation did not pass. Lack of agreement and timeline was too fast. Need to work together and get trained on how to advocate effectively.

Jill Crafton (via email) announced a local ecology solutions event at Barr Engineering on April 26th.

John Waller, RCWD: Need a metro version of the lobbying effort by Red River Valley WD. Others support this idea. We need a Metro wide (regional) platform and approach for passing metro watershed legislation.

Additional discussion: Need to find common denominator for metro watersheds. Need better training on advocacy in order to be ready for the next legislative session. Might not need lobbyist, just better trained managers. There are different needs for different parts of the state that require different approaches.

Grace Butler, NMCWD: Would like a future meeting topic on carp issues including policies and protocols as it’s a complicated issue.

**VI. Future meetings**

- A. Next Metro Watersheds Meeting – July 18, 2023 via Zoom

**VII. Adjournment** - Meeting was adjourned at 8:40 pm