



MINNESOTA WATERSHEDS

Connecting People. Protecting Water.

COMMUNICATION PLAN

May 22, 2023

Abstract

The document describes the methods and tools used to communicate with Minnesota Watersheds stakeholders.

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Overview

The Strategic Plan identified the need to develop a communication plan for Minnesota Watersheds. The purpose of the communication plan is to bring structure and consistency to all Minnesota Watersheds communication efforts. Communication plan activities will be tracked and reported by the Executive Director through the 2023-2024 Work Plan.

This plan will be reviewed by the Strategic Plan Committee, which is responsible for reviewing Strategic Plan goals, objectives, strategies, and tactics on an annual or as-needed basis. The committee will make recommendations to the Minnesota Watersheds Board of Directors about potential adjustments to this plan.

Primary contact for Minnesota Watersheds communication

The Minnesota Watersheds Executive Director is the primary contact for all communication activities.

Funding commitment to communication

The Minnesota Watersheds Board of Directors has committed an annual budget of \$800 toward communication. The annual budget includes the costs for newsletter software, website domain, and email addresses. It does not include the Executive Director's or the Program Manager's time. In addition, Minnesota Watersheds works on joint communication issues with other partner organizations.

Communication Methods and Tools

The following tools and methods will be used for communication efforts and to obtain member feedback and input.

Monthly meeting packets

Monthly meeting packets are developed and distributed to member watershed districts and watershed management organizations by email. Agendas are posted on the Minnesota Watersheds website and distributed to non-member watershed districts and watershed management organizations and state agencies by email.

Committees

Information about upcoming committee meetings is developed by the Minnesota Watersheds Executive Director and committee co-chairs. The information is distributed to committee members and is available to members upon request. Meeting summaries are created and shared with members through the monthly newsletter, as well as the pertinent committee page on the Minnesota Watersheds website.

Executive Governance

The Executive Governance Committee works together to ensure daily operations align with the Bylaws, MOPP, and Strategic Plan. The committee meets as needed.

By-Laws-Manual of Policy and Procedures (MOPP)

The purpose of the Bylaws-MOPP Committee is to ensure the Bylaws and MOPP are kept up to date and adequately guide the organization. The committee meets annually or as needed.

Strategic Plan Committee

The purpose of the Strategic Plan Committee is to ensure the Strategic Plan adequately guides the organization. The committee meets annually to prioritize the work plan for the Executive Director and to review the Strategic and Communication Plans.

Executive Finance and Finance Committee

The Executive Finance Committee will handle the day-to-day financial decisions. The Finance Committee will deal with the larger picture issues, such as preparing an annual budget and making recommendations on the annual dues structure.

Events-Education Committee

The purpose of the Events-Education Committee is to ensure Minnesota Watersheds events provide high quality educational and networking opportunities for members and non-members. The committee annually reviews the education work plan, provides input before and after events, and sets the convention presentation schedule, including recommendations for the staff development workshop. This committee is supported by the Executive Director and the Program Manager. The committee meets in January, February, April, June, July, September, and December.

Resolutions Committee

The purpose of the Resolutions Committee is to oversee the resolutions process. The committee meets in October to review and recommend resolutions.

Legislative Committee

The purpose of the Legislative Committee is to provide focus and direction to the Minnesota Watersheds lobbyist and Executive Director. They annually review the legislative program work and make recommendations to the Board of Directors on a legislative platform. The committee meets in June and December.

Awards Committee

The purpose of the Awards Committee is to promote, manage, and present the annual Minnesota Watersheds Project and Program of the Year Awards. The committee conducts its business almost exclusively by email.

Newsletters and social media

Minnesota Watersheds distributes a monthly newsletter that contains general news, monthly meeting highlights, and highlights watershed programs and projects. It uses Facebook, email, press releases, and newsletters for communication.

Website

The Minnesota Watersheds website was redesigned in February 2023. It features committee information, newsletters, monthly meeting calendar, job opportunities, and partner organizations. It also contains a members-only site that hosts an online library, watershed handbook, and legislative information.

Surveys

Minnesota Watersheds uses Survey Monkey or other electronic survey tools to obtain input and feedback from member and non-member watershed districts and watershed management organizations.

Fact sheets

Fact sheets have been developed to describe member services.

Presentations

It is the goal of Minnesota Watersheds to attend meetings of its member watershed districts and watershed management organizations. The purpose is to present information regarding finances, the Strategic Plan, and legislative efforts.

Legislative Program

The Minnesota Watersheds Lobbyist is responsible for carrying out the legislative platform with assistance from the Executive Director and members. The legislative platform is developed in December of each year, following the annual conference, and adopted by the Minnesota Watersheds Board of Directors in January of each year.

The legislative platform is used as the basis for the lobbyist to prepare legislation, secure authors, and advocate for the legislative program. When Minnesota Watersheds bills receive hearings, the lobbyist works with the Executive Director to secure testifiers and helps develop testimony. The lobbyist attends committee hearings, tracks and analyzes proposed legislation that affects watersheds, and monitors legislative action, activity, or issues in discussion or pursued by any state or local government agency.

Minnesota Watersheds will host one event each year to present information to members that describes how they can assist the lobbyist during and outside the legislative session, to learn about the legislative platform, and to receive guidance on how to discuss and interact with legislators on issues.

Legislative Updates

During the legislative session, the lobbyist and Executive Director meet weekly (electronically) with the Board of Water and Soil Resources, Association of Minnesota Counties, Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and the Red River Watershed Management Board (RRWMB) staff to discuss the week's legislative activities and to plan for the upcoming week. In addition, the Executive Directors and lobbyists for Minnesota Watersheds and the RRWMB will meet weekly (electronically) to be better prepared to respond to bills, hearings, and the need to testify in support or against specific bills or legislative actions. Meetings may also be in person as needed. Lobbyists working for a MW or RRWMB member watershed district or watershed management organization will also be invited to attend the weekly meeting, if they have authority from the organization they represent. Having these lobbyists attend would keep them informed about what MW and the RRWMB are doing as a whole and would garner support and assistance, depending on the direction the lobbyists are given.

Legislative updates will be sent weekly, and/or as needed, to member watershed districts and watershed management organizations. Following distribution, the legislative updates will be available in the members-only portion of the website.

Legislative alerts will be developed and distributed as needed to explain how an issue affects members, any legislative activity that is taking place, steps for members to take – including talking points, and the need for testimony in support of or against proposed bills.

Legislative Platform

As identified in the Strategic Plan, a complete legislative policy document will be developed over the next two years in partnership with the Minnesota Association of Watershed Administrators and the Resolutions Committee.

Stakeholders

Minnesota Watersheds primary stakeholders are its member watershed districts and watershed management organizations. Minnesota Watersheds also works closely with partners including, but not limited to the Minnesota Association of Watershed Administrators, Red River Watershed Management Board, Board of Water and Soil Resources, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, and Minnesota Department of Agriculture. Other stakeholders include our Platinum Sponsors.

Events

Minnesota Watersheds hosts three events annually: Legislative Briefing and Reception, Summer Tour, and an Annual Conference. Minnesota Watersheds may also participate in state agency and other partner organizations’ events.

Key Dates

To assist members in understanding the key dates for the Resolutions, Finance, and Legislative Committees, as well as information related to the annual conference and annual business meeting, a schedule of key dates is provided in the table below.

Key Dates	Meetings, Events, and Deadlines
January 3, 2023	Beginning of 2023 Legislative Session
January 13, 2023	Minnesota Watersheds meeting - set Legislative Platform
January 31, 2023	Dues payable date
May 22, 2023	End of 2023 Legislative Session
July 1, 2023	Request for Resolutions distributed
July 31, 2023	Request for Abstracts distributed
October 1, 2023	Resolutions submission deadline
October 10, 2023	Resolutions Committee meeting - review and recommend resolutions
October 12, 2023	Finance Committee meeting - review and recommend budget and dues
October 16, 2023	Bylaws/MOPP Committee meeting - review MOPP and Bylaws
October 23, 2023	Minnesota Watersheds meeting - review budget, dues, and resolutions
October 24, 2023	Distribute dues statements
October 31, 2023	Distribute annual meeting packet to members
November 28-30, 2023	Annual Conference (Alexandria)
December 8, 2023	Legislative Committee meeting - set preliminary platform

Tentative Calendar

Following is a tentative calendar of Minnesota Watersheds meetings and events.

Date	Meetings or Events	Responsible Parties
December 6, 2022	Events-Education / Resolutions Committee Meeting	Events-Education/Resolutions Committee
December 9, 2022	Legislative Committee Meeting	Legislative Committee
December	Work on marketing materials for 2023 platform	ED
December 12, 2022	Strategic Plan Committee Meeting	Strategic Plan Committee
January 3, 2023	Beginning of 2023 Legislative Session	
January 13, 2023	MW Board Meeting (via Zoom at 9 am)	MW Board and ED
January 31, 2023	Dues payable date	Members
February 15, 2023	MW Board Meeting (in-person at Radisson Hotel, 1:00 p.m.)	MW Board and ED
February 15, 2023	MAWA Meeting (in-person at Radisson Hotel, 9:00 a.m.)	MAWA
February 15, 2023	Meeting of the Membership - Resolution regarding Assumed Name and Bylaws 3:30 pm	Members
February 15-16	Legislative Briefing and Day at the Capitol	Members
March 8, 2023	Strategic Plan Committee Meeting	Strategic Plan Committee
March 20, 2023	MW Board Meeting	MW Board and ED
April 17*	MW Board Meeting	MW Board and ED
May 22, 2023	End of the 2023 Legislative Session	
May 22*	MW Board Meeting	MW Board and ED
June	Awards Program is announced	Awards Committee
June 20*	MW Board Meeting (in-person at Summer Tour, time and location TBD)	MW Board and ED
June 20*	MAWA Meeting (in-person at Summer Tour, time and location TBD)	MAWA
June 20-22*	MW Summer Tour	Staff and host watersheds
July 1, 2023	MW staff distributes Request for Resolutions packet	ED
July 14, 2023	Legislative Committee Meeting	Legislative Committee
July 31*	MW Board Meeting	MW Board and ED
July 31, 2023	MW staff distributes request for abstracts packet	Program manager and ED
July/August	Members submit resolutions	Members
~August	Events-Education Committee Meeting	Events-Education Committee
August 21*	MW Board Meeting	MW Board and ED
~September	Awards Committee reviews nominations, announces finalists	Awards Committee
September 18*	MW Board Meeting	MW Board and ED
September*	MAWA Meeting (time and location TBD)	MAWA
October 1, 2023	Deadline for resolutions	Members
~October	Awards Committee reviews finalist nomination forms	Awards Committee
October 6, 2023	MW staff distributes dues statements	ED
October 10, 2023	Resolutions Committee Meeting	Resolutions Committee
October 12, 2023	Finance Committee Meeting	Finance Committee
~October	Resolutions, Bylaws/MOPP Committee Meetings (if needed)	Resolutions, Bylaws
October 23, 2023	MW Board Meeting - review budget, dues, resolutions	MW Board and ED
October 31, 2023	MW staff distributes annual meeting and resolutions packet	ED
~November	Awards Committee notifies winners, presentations created	Awards Committee
November	Members discuss resolutions, select delegates at monthly meetings	Members
November 28, 2023	MW Board Meeting (in-person at Annual Conference)	MW Board and ED
November 28, 2023	MAWA Meeting (in-person at Annual Conference)	MAWA
November 28-Nov 30	MW Workshops and Annual Conference	Members
November 30, 2023	Awards presented	Awards Committee
December 1, 2023	Members vote at annual business meeting	Members
December 1, 2023	MW Board Meeting (in-person at Annual Conference)	MW Board and ED
December 8, 2023	Legislative Committee Meeting	Legislative Committee
December 11, 2023	Events-Education / Resolutions Committee Meeting	Events-Education/Resolutions Committee
December 18, 2023	MW Board Meeting - approve 2024 Legislative Platform	MW Board and ED
~ Date to be determined		
* Tentative		