

BCMWC 2015 Watershed Management Plan

Section 1 – Introduction

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1.0 Introduction

The Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission (BCWMC) *Watershed Management Plan* sets the vision and guidelines for managing the water resources within the boundaries of the BCWMC. This section summarizes the location and history of the BCWMC, as well as its purposes, goals, powers, and management structure.

1.1 The Role of Watershed Management Organizations

Like all watershed management organizations (WMOs), the BCWMC is a special purpose unit of local government that manages water resources on a watershed basis. Watershed management organization boundaries generally follow natural watershed divides, rather than political boundaries. Thus, they may include several municipalities and counties.

Recognizing that water does not follow political boundaries, the State of Minnesota established the Watershed Act (Minnesota Statutes 103D) in 1955, which provided for the creation of watershed districts anywhere in the state. In 1982, the Minnesota Legislature enacted the Metropolitan Surface Water Management Act (Minnesota Statutes 103B.201 – 103B.255). This act required the formation of a watershed management organization (WMO), and the development and implementation of a watershed management plan, for each of the watersheds in the seven county Twin Cities metropolitan area. WMOs can be organized as joint powers agreement organizations among municipalities (e.g., BCWMC), as watershed districts (e.g., Minnehaha Creek Watershed District – MCWD), or under county government (e.g., Scott County WMO).

The Metropolitan Surface Water Management Act states that the purposes of watershed management organization water management programs are as follows (quoted from Minnesota Statutes 103B.201):

1. Protect, preserve, and use natural surface and groundwater storage and retention systems.
2. Minimize public capital expenditures needed to correct flooding and water quality problems.
3. Identify and plan for means to effectively protect and improve surface and groundwater quality.
4. Establish more uniform local policies and official controls for surface and groundwater management.
5. Prevent erosion of soil into surface water systems.
6. Promote groundwater recharge.
7. Protect and enhance fish and wildlife habitat and water recreational facilities.
8. Secure the other benefits associated with the proper management of surface and groundwater.

1.2 BCWMC Location and History

1.2.1 Location and Boundaries

The Bassett Creek watershed is located entirely within Hennepin County, in the northwestern portion of the Twin Cities. Figure 1-1 shows the location of the BCWMC in relation to the other WMOs in the seven-county metropolitan area. The BCWMC is adjacent to the following WMOs:

- Mississippi WMO (formerly Middle Mississippi River WMO) – along eastern boundary of BCWMC
- Minnehaha Creek Watershed District – along southern and western boundary of BCWMC
- Shingle Creek WMC – along northern boundary of BCWMC
- Elm Creek WMC – along extreme northwestern boundary of BCWMC

The watershed of Bassett Creek and its three branches covers all or part of the following nine cities:

- | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|------------------|
| • Crystal | • Minneapolis | • Plymouth |
| • Golden Valley | • Minnetonka | • Robbinsdale |
| • Medicine Lake | • New Hope | • St. Louis Park |

The downstream end of the BCWMC is a tunnel which conveys Bassett Creek under downtown Minneapolis and flows into the Mississippi River below St. Anthony Falls. The total drainage area of the BCWMC upstream of the tunnel is 39.6 square miles (25,337 acres). Overall, the watershed is heavily developed (see Figure 2-1). Except for a very small amount of land along the western edge of the BCWMC, in western Plymouth, all of the land in the BCWMC is within the 2030 Metropolitan Urban Service Area (MUSA). Five major lakes (Medicine, Sweeney, Twin, Wirth, and Parkers) lie within the watershed, as well as numerous smaller lakes, ponds, and wetlands.

In 2000, the BCWMC and the Mississippi WMO entered into a joint and cooperative agreement for a boundary change. A legal description of the revised boundary is included as part of the agreement and is also included in Appendix H. This boundary change transferred 1,002 acres from the BCWMC to the Mississippi WMO to reflect the changed drainage conditions upon completion of the Bassett Creek Flood Control Project. With the project in place, the watershed area tributary to the old tunnel no longer flows to Bassett Creek. The City of Minneapolis has assumed responsibility for maintenance of the old tunnel. A 1985 order by the Minnesota Water Resources Board (now the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources – BWSR) revised the legal boundary between the BCWMC and the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District. A 1979 BCWMC document provides a legal description of the BCWMC boundary within the city of Plymouth. The boundaries between BCWMC, Shingle Creek WMC, and Elm Creek WMC closely follow the natural watershed divides. A legal description for the entire Bassett Creek watershed was prepared on June 27, 2003, and is included in Appendix I.

1.2.2 History

Prior to the adoption of a formal joint powers agreement, the cities in the Bassett Creek watershed acted together as a committee, which was formed to study flood control issues in the watershed. The committee members were the city engineers and/or city council members. In 1968, the Bassett Creek Flood Control Commission was formed by adoption of a joint powers agreement (JPA) between the nine communities in the watershed. As required by the joint powers agreement, the BCWMC adopted the *Watershed Management Plan for Bassett Creek* in February 1972.

In accordance with provisions of the 1982 Metropolitan Surface Water Management Act, the Bassett Creek Flood Control Commission revised its JPA in 1984 and created the Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission (BCWMC). The BCWMC prepared the *Bassett Creek Water Management Plan* in 1986 and adopted the Plan on December 18, 1986. The Minnesota Water Resources Board (now the Board of Water and Soil Resources – BWSR) approved the plan on July 26, 1989, and the BCWMC printed the plan in 1990 (1990 Plan).

In accordance with provisions of the Metropolitan Surface Water Management Act set forth in Minnesota Statutes 1992 and Minnesota Rules relating to Metropolitan Area Local Water Management, the BCWMC revised its JPA in 1993. The 1993 JPA remained in effect until 2014, when the nine member cities agreed to extend the joint powers agreement to 2025. The current JPA is included in this Plan as Appendix F. The powers and duties of the BCWMC are outlined in the joint powers agreement.

1.3 BCWMC Vision and Purpose

1.3.1 BCWMC Overall Purposes

Minnesota Statutes 103B defines the statutory purposes and authorities of watershed management organizations including the BCWMC (see Section 1.1). Within the context of the statutory authority granted to WMOs and contained in its JPA, the BCWMC has established the following vision to provide strategic direction to its work. The following vision helps to focus the organization's efforts and is a reminder of what the BCWMC is working to achieve:

Stewardship of water resources to protect and enhance our communities

The BCWMC has established goals and policies to promote the above vision. The goals and policies of the BCWMC are presented in Section 4 of this Plan. The BCWMC's goals are also listed in Section 1.3.2.

1.3.2 BCWMC Goals

The BCWMC has established goals that are closely aligned with the general purposes of watershed management organizations as described in Section 1.1. The BCWMC goals are to:

- Manage the surface water resources of the watershed to meet or exceed state standards and BCWMC water quality goals for wetlands, lakes, and streams.

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- Improve the quality of stormwater runoff reaching the Mississippi River by reducing nonpoint source pollution.
 - Protect and enhance fish and wildlife habitat in the BCWMC.
 - Consider aesthetics and recreational opportunities within the watershed when completing BCWMC projects.
 - Reduce stormwater runoff volume for the purposes of improving water quality.
 - Protect against flood risks along the Bassett Creek trunk system.
 - Protect human life, property, and surface water systems that could be damaged by flood events.
 - Reduce stormwater runoff rates and volumes to minimize flood problems, flood damages, and the future costs of stormwater management systems.
 - Provide leadership and assist member cities with coordination of intercommunity stormwater runoff issues.
 - Notwithstanding that which occurs from natural processes, minimize erosion and sedimentation to protect the BCWMC's water resources and health, safety and welfare.
 - Maintain or improve shoreland integrity and implement stream restoration measures to maintain or enhance ecological functions as well as human health, safety, and welfare.
 - Increase the quality and quantity of wetlands in the BCWMC.
 - Protect the quantity and quality of groundwater resources.
 - Manage public ditches in a manner that recognizes their current use as urban drainage systems and as altered natural waterways.
 - Raise awareness of the BCWMC's existence and its role in protecting and improving water quality, minimizing flooding, and preserving the watershed's ecological functions and aesthetics.
 - Strengthen public confidence in the BCWMC's expertise and enable meaningful public participation in the planning process and ongoing projects conducted by the BCWMC.
 - Raise awareness of the impact that individuals, businesses, and organizations have upon water resources and motivate these audiences to change personal/corporate behavior that has a negative impact on the watershed.
 - Minimize the spread and manage the adverse impacts of harmful aquatic invasive species.

- Develop a greater understanding of climate change and its impact on water resources, including stormwater infrastructure capacity and flooding, and develop strategies to appropriately manage future impacts.

1.4 Management Structure, Power, and Duties

The Board of the BCWMC consists of nine commissioners and nine alternates appointed by the member cities. Each of the nine member cities appoints one commissioner and one alternate. Alternate Commissioners are voting Board members when the primary commissioner is absent. The JPA gives each member city the responsibility to determine the eligibility or qualifications of its representative (commissioner) on the board.

The term of each commissioner and alternate is three years and until their successors are selected, staggered as shown in Table 1-1. Commissioner vacancies must be filled in accordance with the JPA. Commissioners cannot be removed from the Commission prior to their term expiration except under the conditions given in the JPA. The commissioners serve without compensation from the BCWMC. Table 1-1 lists the Commissioner terms and Table 1-2 is the historical listing of BCWMC commissioners and their terms.

At the time of this writing, regular meetings for the BCWMC are held at 8:30 AM at the Golden Valley City Hall on the third Thursday of each month. The fiscal year extends from February 1 through January 31.

The powers and duties of the BCWMC, taken from the joint powers agreement, include, but are not limited to:

1. Prepare and adopt an “overall plan” (watershed management plan).
2. Acquire necessary personal property to accomplish its purposes.
3. Contract for space, material, and supplies.
4. Make necessary surveys or use other information and develop projects to accomplish the purposes for which the BCWMC is organized.
5. Enter into contracts or cooperate with governmental agencies, private/public organizations, or individuals to accomplish the purposes for which the BCWMC is organized.
6. Order any member city to construct, clean, repair, alter, abandon, consolidate, reclaim or change the course or terminus of any ditch, drain, storm sewer or water course, natural or artificial, within BCWMC.
7. Order any member city to carry out improvements necessary to implement the BCWMC watershed management plan.
8. Regulate, conserve and control the use of stormwater, surface water and groundwater within BCWMC.

9. Contract for or purchase insurance, as needed.
10. Establish and maintain devices for acquiring and recording hydrological and water quality data within BCWMC.
11. Enter upon lands to make surveys and investigations to accomplish the BCWMC's purposes.
12. Provide any member city with technical data or other information to assist the city in preparing its local watershed management plan.
13. Provide legal and technical assistance in connection with litigation or other proceedings between one or more of its members and any other unit of government relating to drainage or water quality within BCWMC.
14. Accumulate reserve funds and invest funds not currently needed for BCWMC operations.
15. Collect money from the BCWMC members, Hennepin County, and from any other BCWMC-approved source.
16. Make contracts, employ staff or consultants, incur expenses and make expenditures.
17. Obtain an annual audit of the BCWMC books and accounts.
18. Make its books, reports, and records available for and open to inspection by its member cities.
19. Recommend changes to the joint powers agreement to its member cities.
20. Exercise all other powers necessary and incidental to the implementation of the purposes and powers set forth in the joint powers agreement and state law.
21. Cooperate with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resource (MDNR) in obtaining protected waters permits and complying with Minnesota law regarding protected waters.
22. Member cities may conduct separate or concurrent studies on any matter under study by the BCWMC.
23. Establish a procedure for establishing citizen or technical advisory committees and to provide other means for public participation.

1.4.1 Regulatory Environment and Agency Responsibilities

Various units of government are involved in regulating water resource related activities and have jurisdiction overlapping that of the BCWMC, including municipalities, counties, and state and federal agencies. Several state and federal agencies have established regulatory standards that are applicable within the BCWMC. Agencies with regulatory or oversight roles related to the management of water resources within the BCWMC include:

- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MDNR)

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- Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR)
 - Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA)
 - Minnesota Department of Health (MDH)
 - Minnesota Environmental Quality Board (EQB)
 - Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT)
 - United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)
 - Metropolitan Council

The specific roles of these entities are described in greater detail in Section 5.1.3 of this Plan.

Table 1-1 BCWMC Commissioner Terms

Member City	Termination of Commissioner's Term
Crystal	February 1, 2015, 2018, 2021, 2024, etc.
Golden Valley	
Medicine Lake	
Minneapolis	February 1, 2016, 2019, 2022, 2025, etc.
Minnetonka	
New Hope	
Plymouth	February 1, 2017, 2020, 2023, 2026, etc.
Robbinsdale	
St. Louis Park	

Table 1-2 Historical Listing of BCWMC Commissioner and Terms (not including Alternate Commissioners)

Member City	Commissioner	Term	Member City	Commissioner	Term
Crystal	Robert Dunn	1970-1971	Minnetonka	Al Ilies	1970
	James McLaughlin	1971-1976		Fred Hanus	1971-1976
	Adrian Rygg	1976-1981		Don Asmus	1977-1988
	William Sherburne	1981-1986		David Sonnenberg	1989-1995
	Bill Monk	1986-1994		Lee Gustafson	1995-2002
	Steve Peaslee	1994-1997		Bill Yaeger	2002-2006
	Tom Mathisen	1997-2003		Kris Sundberg	2007-2009
	Pauline Langsdorf	2003-2011		Bonnie Harper-Lore	2010-2011
	Dan Johnson	2012 - 2013		Jacob Millner	2011-
	Guy Mueller	2013 -			
Golden Valley	Gordon O. Garis	1970-1972	Minneapolis	Vern Anderson	1970-1973
	John Bies	1972		Lee Munnich, Jr.	1974-1977
	Ralph Crews	1973-1974		Parker Trostel	1978-1982
	Ed Silberman	1974-2000		Perry Smith	1982-1989
	David Hanson	2000-2004		Marv Hoshaw	1990-1992
	Linda Loomis	2006- 2011		R. Kannankutty	1993-1999
	Stacy Hoschka	2012 -		Michael Welch	1999-

Table 1-2 Historical Listing of BCWMC Commissioner and Terms (not including Alternate Commissioners)

Member City	Commissioner	Term	Member City	Commissioner	Term
Medicine Lake	Roy Winkler	1970-1982	Plymouth	Richard O'Fallon	1970-1979
	James Padden	1983-1989		Sherman Goldberg	1979-1982
	John O'Toole	1989-2005		Fred Moore	1983-1997
	Cheri Templeman	2006-2009		Ron Quanbeck	1997-2002
	Ted Hoshal	2010-2013		Elizabeth Thornton	2002-2005
	Clint Carlson	2013-		Virginia Black	2005 -
Robbinsdale	Z. Joseph Bauer	1970-1971	St. Louis Park	Murray Galinson	1970
	Harvey L. Lange	1971-1972, 1975		Jim Jones	1970-1972
	Raymond A. Mattson	1973		David Rudberg	1973-1977
	Reynold Eckstrom	1973-1974, 1978-1984		Seymour Druskin	1977
	Richard Halverson	1976		R. L. Koppy	1978-1980; 1984-1985
	Merry Olson	1977		Chester Harrison	1981-1984
	Lee Gustafson	1984-1991		Donald Rye	1985-1993
	Wallace Johnson	1991		James Grube	1993-1995
	Jerome Ruffenach	1992-1996		Michael Rardin	1995-2002
	Maria Hagen	1996-1999		Paul Andersen	2002-2004
	William Deblon	1999-2002		Richard Johnson	2005-2007
	Karla Peterson	2002-2008		Manuel Jordan	2008-2009
	Wayne Sicora	2009-		Jim de Lambert	2009-
New Hope	Milton C. Honsey	1970-1971			
	Richard Plufka	1971-1976			
	Peter Enck	1976-1999			
	Guy Johnson	1999-2001			
	Vincent Vander Top	2001-2004			
	Mary Gwin-Lenth	2004 - 2006			
	Daniel Stauner	2007-2009			
	John Elder	2010 -			