

Memorandum

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Item 4D.
BCWMC 11-19-14

 **Wenck**
Engineers • Scientists
Business Professionals

To: Shingle Creek/West Mississippi WMO Commissioners
Elm Creek WMO Commissioners
Bassett Creek Commissioners

From: West Metro Water Alliance (WMWA)

Date: November 6, 2014

Subject: Possible WMWA Special Project

The West Metro Water Alliance (WMWA) is developing a special project idea and is requesting authorization to expend 2014 Special Project funds to obtain professional assistance in further developing this concept. The reason we come to you with this request is that the JPA establishing WMWA allows the budget for administrative and routine actions to be expended without additional action from the Commissions, but Special Projects must be approved by each of the participating Commissions.

Attached is a short description of what we propose: "5,000 Acres by 2025." There are Impaired Waters in each of the four watersheds, and the TMDLs/WRAPS for each call for reducing pollutant loading and increasing infiltration in the watersheds. This Special Project is a campaign to convert 5,000 acres of turf grass or impervious surface to native vegetation by 2025. The campaign would focus not only on residential properties, but also commercial and corporate properties with large expanses of turf grass and impervious areas such as parking lots.

We envision a high-profile campaign that taps into the resources of our partners such as Three Rivers Park District, Hennepin County, and the Freshwater Society, and potential new partners such as Prairie Restorations and Blue Thumb. We expect there will be a need to contract with someone who can coordinate this project, and to work with a PR firm to develop and implement an outreach campaign. We also expect there will be a need to find grant funding to get the project off the ground.

We request that the Commissions authorize WMWA to expend up to \$6,000 in the WMWA budget (and already in the Commissions' 2014 budgets) for Special Projects to contract with an experienced coordinator who can make connections with partners, flesh out the project for further consideration in 2015, and investigate options for funding.

Recommended Commission Action

Authorize WMWA to expend up to \$6,000 in the 2014 WMWA budget for Special Projects to develop the "5,000 Acres by 2025" campaign for further consideration. If approved, WMWA will invoice each Commission \$1,500.

Possible 2015+ WMWA Project

“5,000 Acres by 2025”

Purpose: Promote planting native vegetation to increase infiltration and filtration, and enhance habitat.

Target: Replace at least 5,000 acres of turf grass or impervious surface with native vegetation

The four watersheds that currently make up WMWA are approximately 152,000 acres (238 sq mi) in size. The Minnesota Land Cover Classification System (MLCCS) classifies about 68,000 acres as Developed Areas with Artificial Surfaces. About 38,000 acres are estimated to be impervious, and about 30,000 acres are pervious, mostly “short grasses.” The goal is to convert at least 500 acres per year.

This project would be an advertising campaign, workshops, technical assistance, plant sales, and financial incentives to convert nonnative or impervious to native plants. Possible project partners are Hennepin County Environmental Services, Freshwater Society, Prairie Restorations, Natural Shore Technologies, Wild Ones Twin Cities, watershed stewards....

Initial needs:

- Flesh out idea
- Contact potential partners
- Estimate cost of 2015-2016 activities
- Evaluate options for funding
- Apply for grant assistance