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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wirth Lake Water Quality Improvements Drive State's Delisting Action and Recommendation to U.S. EPA

Golden Valley, Minnesota, June 23, 2014 – The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) has removed Wirth Lake from the state's Impaired Waters List. The lake has been on the list since 2002 due to excess nutrients, specifically phosphorous. The MPCA has submitted the action, termed 'delisting,' to the United States Environmental Protection Agency for final approval.

Wirth Lake, located in Golden Valley on Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board property and in the Bassett Creek watershed, has seen statistically significant water quality improvements through collaborative efforts to divert and treat all significant sources of watershed phosphorous loading. For example, average summer water transparency has experienced a significant increase from 3.8 feet in 1992 to where it has consistently remained between 8.3 and 10.5 feet since 2008.

These improvements were achieved through the concerted and coordinated efforts of the Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission (BCWMC), City of Golden Valley, City of Minneapolis, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, and MPCA as well as assistance from the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources through its Legacy Funds grant program. Through these joint efforts, water quality improvement projects were identified and constructed, resulting in Wirth Lake's water quality improving to meet state water quality standards and the MPCA's delisting criteria.

"The delisting of Wirth Lake from the Impaired Waters List is a success to celebrate and is a testament to the focus and resolve of everyone involved, from residents providing comments and attending public hearings to the agencies, cities, and organizations involved in the monitoring, planning, and implementing of projects," states Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission Chair Jim de Lambert.

Among the projects contributing to Wirth Lake's reduction in phosphorous were the water quality pond improvements constructed in 2005-2006 just west of Wirth Lake. The pond was a cooperative project between the BCWMC and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board. A more recent project was identified in the Wirth Lake Total Maximum Daily Load Implementation Plan and involved the innovative modification of the Wirth Lake outlet in 2012. The project was a collaborative effort between the BCWMC and the City of Golden Valley. The modified outlet reduced phosphorous loading into Wirth Lake by preventing backflow from Bassett Creek into Wirth Lake during flood events.

"Our waters are valuable resources, and we are proud of the work dedicated to improving and protecting them," says de Lambert.

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About the Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission: The BCWMC is a Joint Powers water management organization comprising nine municipalities: Crystal, Golden Valley, New Hope, Medicine Lake, Minneapolis, Minnetonka, Plymouth, Robbinsdale, and St. Louis Park. Originating from the Bassett Creek Flood Control Commission formed in 1969, the BCWMC was established in 1982. The BCWMC's Watershed Management Plan sets the vision and guidelines for the management of surface water in the Bassett Creek watershed. The watershed is approximately 40 square miles, divided into four subwatersheds. For more information, visit www.bassettcreekwmo.org.