



Summary of 2025 Watershed Management Plan
Issue Priority Recommendations
Developed by the Plan Steering Committee
August 1, 2023

The Plan Steering Committee (PSC) met three times (May 25, July 11, and August 1, 2023) to review and discuss potential issues to be addressed by the Plan. The PSC considered issues identified from the following sources, as well as issues raised by PSC meeting participants:

- [2015 Watershed Management Plan Section 3](#)
- [2025 Plan Gaps Analysis](#)
- Results of the July 11, 2022 Issue Identification Workshop
- Agency Responses to Plan Update Notification Letter (June 2022)
- Member City Survey Responses (May-June 2022)
- Public Survey Responses (June 2022-January 2023)
- Input from the February 28, 2023 Public Kickoff Meeting

All items included in [Summary of Input Document](#)

The PSC reached consensus on both the delineation between issues and tools and recommendations for the priority of 21 unique issues and 8 tools as **High, Medium, or Low**. Tools that are considered performance standards have a separate priority for utilization vs. revision. The tools included in Table 2 do not include all tools available to the Commission. The assigned priority level of issues and tools is intended to reflect the BCWMC’s level of effort and resources that would be used to address each issue through policies, projects, programs, requirements, etc.

Table 2 presents the PSC prioritization recommendations and key notes from PSC discussion (see “proposed 2025 priority” column). With goal of improving focus and communication to stakeholders, issues were categorized into the following groups:

- **Waterbody & Watershed Quality**
- **Climate Resilience**
- **Education and Outreach**
- **Organizational Effectiveness**

While all issues considered by the PSC are important, not everything can be a high priority. Table 1 summarizes the number of unique issues in each priority level according to the categories listed above.

Table 1. Summary of Priority Issues by Category

Issue Category	Low Priority	Medium Priority	High Priority	Total
Waterbody and Watershed Quality	3	5	2	10
Climate Resiliency	1	--	2	3
Education & Outreach	1	1		2
Organizational Effectiveness	2	1	3	6
Total	7	7	7	21

NEXT STEPS

The PSC recommends the attached issues and their priority levels for discussion, revision, and approval by the Commission. The Commission needs to establish priority issues in order to focus further Plan development efforts on the most important items. While we seek direction at this stage in the process, the Commission may revise priorities at any point during Plan development.

Table 2. Issue Priority Recommendations

Proposed Issue Category	Item ID	Issue Description	Proposed 2025 Priority ¹	Notes from PSC discussion
Waterbody & Watershed Quality	1	Impaired waterbodies – several lakes and streams are impaired for recreation and aquatic life due to one or more stressors (e.g., nutrients, chloride, and biological factors)	High	Specific issue of “stream biotic impairments” was added to this issue.
	2	Chloride loading – chloride loading is significant in some areas of the fully developed watershed and impacts lake and stream water quality	High	High priority due to the need for additional data, mitigation strategies, and pilot programs (e.g., Parkers Lake chloride reduction project)
	3	Streambank and gully erosion – erosion issues impact stream health and contribute to downstream pollutant loading	Medium	Related to both water quality and climate resiliency
	4	Lake shore erosion – erosion issues impact lake ecology and water quality	Medium	Private land ownership may limit BCWMC and city actions
	5	Aquatic invasive species – the presence and density of AIS can negatively impact water quality (e.g., curlyleaf pondweed) and native plant ecology	Medium	
	6	Wetland health and restoration – wetland areas in BCWMC have been impacted by development; there are opportunities to protect or enhance the health of existing wetland areas	Medium	BCWMC role focused on restoration and enhancement (not creation or banking)
	7	Ground-/surface water interaction – flow between surface- and groundwater (including infiltration) may impact quality and hydrology	Medium	This topic includes infiltration requirements and restrictions
	8	Degradation of riparian areas – degraded areas can contribute excess pollutants to waterbodies and may contribute to stream IBI impairments	Low	Additional information is needed to assess; high priority to learn more; low priority to address but may be relevant to specific projects
	9	Degradation/loss of upland areas – natural areas in the watershed are frequented by residents and may be subject to stressors of development	Low	Data (e.g., critical corridors map) may be useful input in planning for specific projects (but not as a driver for projects)
	10	Groundwater quality – groundwater quality can impact public health and may be threatened by infiltration of stormwater and associated pollutants	Low	
	11	Sediment deltas in streams and lakes – upstream sediment loading results in the formation of deltas at downstream pour points	Remove from Plan	Issue listed in 2015 Plan; Considered a maintenance issue; addressed in part via City MS4 requirements
	12	Impact of urbanization on streams – development of the watershed over time has cumulative impacts on stream hydrology and ecology	Remove from Plan	General issue from 2015 Plan; Issue is more directly addressed by other, more specific issues
	13	Poor ecosystem health – the 2015 Plan notes that ecosystem health is poor in some areas of the watershed	Remove from Plan	General issue from 2015 Plan; Issue is too vague and addressed by more specific issues
Climate Resiliency	14	Impact of climate change on hydrology, water levels, and flood risk – increasing precipitation amounts, intensities, and drought cycles can increase flood risk and contribute to water level and flow fluctuations that may negatively impact ecology, water quality, and recreation	High	BCWMC should be a leader in multi-jurisdictional solutions; flood risk and flood recovery efforts need to consider equity issues; specific issue of “water level variability” was added into this issue.
	15	Bassett Creek Valley stormwater management – projects in the Bassett Creek Valley would provide an essential opportunity to reduce flood risk and promote implementation of partner-coordinated projects	High	Related to organizational effectiveness (via implementation and Commission’s role) as well as climate resilience (via project outcomes)
	16	Groundwater quantity – groundwater sustainability may be negatively impacted by overuse and loss of recharge	Low	
Education and Outreach	17	Insufficient outreach to and relationships with diverse communities – additional efforts are needed to reach communities under-represented in past BCWMC planning and projects	Medium	Combine with issue #22 (projects and programs are implemented through equity lens)
	18	Protect recreation opportunities – Minnesota Statutes 103B references WMOs’ role in protecting recreation facilities	Low	Secondary benefit of many projects includes protection of recreation opportunities
Organizational Effectiveness	19	Organizational assessment of capacity and staffing – current capacity may not be sufficient to achieve intended goals and execute projects and programs	High	
	20	BCWMC funding mechanisms – assessment of funding sources is necessary to determine if intended actions can be reasonably achieved and goals met	High	
	21	Progress assessment – Rules 8410 require WMOs to assess progress towards measurable goals every 2 years	High	

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Proposed Issue Category	Item ID	Issue Description	Proposed 2025 Priority ¹	Notes from PSC discussion
Organizational Effectiveness <i>(continued)</i>	22	Projects and programs implemented through a DEI lens – additional focus is needed to ensure equity in BCWMC projects and programs.	Medium	
	23	Public ditch management – the Plan must address management of three public ditches within BCWMC jurisdiction (per MN Statutes 103B)	Low	No change recommended from 2015 Plan
	24	Carbon footprint of BCWMC projects – carbon released in the construction and ongoing maintenance of BCWMC projects is not currently considered and contributes to climate change	Low	
Tools <i>(originally considered as issue topics)</i>	T1	Pollutant loading hotspots – knowledge of nutrient and chloride sources in the watershed allows actions to be focused where the most benefit can be achieved	High	Pollutant hotspot mapping is a tool to support actions to address impaired waters; maintain as part of CIP prioritization
	T2	Flood Control Project inspection, maintenance and repair – proper function of the FCP is necessary to maintain its effectiveness and is an ongoing responsibility of the BCWMC	High	Operation of the FCP is a tool to minimize flood risk and address drainage issues and is a core function of the BCWMC
	T3	CIP development, prioritization, and implementation – review of the process is necessary to determine effectiveness	High	
	T4	Standards for linear projects – effective and reasonable performance standards limit negative impacts of linear development on water quality and hydrology	High	Standards are a tool to achieve goals; high priority to continue application of standards; medium priority to revise performance standards
			Medium	
	T5	Standards for non-linear projects – effective and reasonable performance standards limit negative impacts of non-linear development on water quality and hydrology	High	Standards are a tool to achieve goals; high priority to continue application of standards; medium priority to revise performance standards
			Medium	
	T6	Buffers and buffer widths – the presence of vegetated buffers benefits streams, lakes, and wetlands by filtering pollutants and slowing runoff	High	High priority to confirm cities comply with current buffer performance standards; low priority to revise current standards
Low				
T7	Education programs to help cities meet requirements – BCWMC education efforts can help cities meet their MS4 permit requirements	Medium	Education programming is a tool to address multiple resource issues	
T8	Training for new commissioners – education for commissioners is necessary to establish a common knowledge base and level of confidence to make well-informed resource management decisions	Medium	Priority varied within PSC; shared responsibility of BCWMC and cities.	

(1) Proposed 2025 priority is based on consensus opinion expressed by Plan Steering Committee at 8/1/2023 meeting.