



MN Board of Water and Soil Resources
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155

June 14, 2022

Laura Jester, Administrator
Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission

RE: Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission Watershed Management Plan Update

Dear Ms. Jester:

This letter is in response to your April 14, 2022, email soliciting input for the next iteration of the Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission (BCWMC) Watershed Management Plan (Plan). Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment and preliminary input. I appreciated providing feedback on the BCWMC plan for stakeholder outreach. The BCWMC is already off to a strong process with early Board discussions and the joint Equity in Watershed Management workshop with the Shingle Creek and West Mississippi Watershed Management Commissions. The BCWMC has put a lot of consideration and effort into making a transparent and inviting process to encourage public and partner participation.

The Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) expectations for the Plan update focus on: 1) Process – an opportunity to talk about the right things and affirm, align, or change direction based on the upfront input and issue identification that is brought forward; 2) Coordination – good planning feels collaborative from the beginning, involving multiple local government units and stakeholders, and multiple levels of planning; 3) Plan Contents – revolving plans around priority issues, capturing clear 5-10 year intent, data analysis with trends, short/mid/long-term measurable goals based on science, priorities and frequently updated targeted implementation plans; and 4) Organization Capacity – increased self-evaluation, accountability and efficiency of implementation.

A few specific comments as the BCWMC embarks on this planning effort are provided below.

In BCWMC's 2021 Level II Performance Review and Assistance Program (PRAP) Summary Report, BWSR acknowledged BCWMC as a top performer in meeting the practices that lead to an effective and efficient organization. The report included the below recommendation for consideration in development of the next watershed management plan.

- Develop clear, measurable goals and actions for future plan implementation
- The BCWMC plan process should define a strategy to identify the top resource priorities, identify clear measurable goals and actions, and develop metrics to measure progress. Ensuring that highly prioritized projects are targeted would make it easier to show how the BCWMC impacts its constituents directly and make it easier to communicate the need for projects in terms of achievable water quality improvements.

Table with 8 columns: Bemidji, Brainerd, Detroit Lakes, Duluth, Mankato, Marshall, Rochester, St Cloud. Each column contains address and phone number information for that location.

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The *One Watershed, One Plan State Strategies Summary, Identifying and Prioritizing Resources and Issues, Setting Measurable Goals, and Targeting Implementation Activities* documents located on the BWSR 1W1P webpage (<http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/planning/1W1P/index.html>) may be helpful planning resources.

Implementation Actions (*please refer to MN Rule 8410 for additional requirements*):

- Prioritized Implementation Program (Capital Improvement Program). The implementation program should be clear in identifying what implementation actions the BCWMC will accomplish in the next ten years regardless of whether they receive any new grant funding or not. Be realistic in what the BCWMC has the capacity to accomplish, but at the same time, do not be afraid to stretch those capabilities.
- Include a procedure to evaluate progress for implementation activities at a minimum of every two years.
- Define the BCWMC's process for evaluating implementation of local water plans.
- Define who is responsible for inspection, operation and maintenance of stormwater facilities in the BCWMC.
- The BCWMC should include a reference to the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area Chloride TMDL and incorporate elements of the Chloride Management Plan.
- The BCWMC should continue its efforts to address climate resiliency. The BWSR Climate Resiliency Toolbox (<https://bwsr.state.mn.us/bwsr-climate-resiliency-toolbox>) may serve as a useful tool.

I look forward to providing additional input and BWSR assistance as BCWMC works through development of the Plan. Please invite me to Board workshops, Citizen Advisory Committee meeting, public input events and opportunities, and Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meetings. My priority will be the TAC meetings, but I will likely try to attend some of the other input meetings and opportunities as well. If you have questions or need additional information, feel free to contact me by phone at 651-249-7519 or via email at steve.christopher@state.mn.us

Sincerely,

Steve Christopher

Steve Christopher
BWSR Board Conservationist

Cc: Jeff Berg, MDA (via email)
Megan Moore, MnDNR (via email)
Dan Lais, MnDNR (via email)
Judy Sventek, Metropolitan Council (via email)
John Freitag, MDH (via email)
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