



Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission

MEMO

To: BCWMC Commissioners, Alternate Commissioners, TAC Members
From: BCWMC Plan Steering Committee
Date: August 7, 2024

RE: August 15th Watershed Management Plan Development Workshop Agenda and Materials

During the regular BCWMC meeting on August 15th, we'll hold a whole-Commission workshop to review recommendations from the Plan Steering Committee (PSC) on some of the draft issue statements and goals for the 2025 Watershed Management Plan (plan). As a reminder, the plan is the most important document you will help develop in your tenure as a commissioner. The plan will guide every aspect of the Commission's work for ten years (2026 – 2035). Commissioner input on the issue statements and goals discussed at this workshop is a critical step in the plan development process. The issue statements and goals provide the basis for developing the rest of the plan - where the BCWMC will prioritize its work, the actions and policies it will set in place, and the level of time, effort, and funding that will go into implementation of projects and programs. Ultimately, implementation of the plan will result in improvements in the watershed and its waterbodies.

Ahead of the workshop, please review the following information:

- Commission-approved prioritized list of issues across four categories (approved August 2023) (Attachment A).
- Commission-approved issue statements, desired future conditions, and 10-year goals for fourteen goals in the Waterbody and Watershed Quality category (approved January 2024). The final content for those issues can be found [here](#).
- NEW: PSC-recommended issue statements, desired future conditions, and 10-year goals for the remainder of the Waterbody and Watershed Quality category (Attachment B).
- NEW: PSC-recommended issue statements, desired future conditions, and 10-year goals for the Flooding and Climate Resiliency category (Attachment C).

All 2025 Watershed Planning materials can be found at: <https://www.bassettcreekwmo.org/document/2025-plan-update>.

Workshop Outline (approximately 90 minutes)

1. Introduction and background information
 - A. Prioritized watershed issues (Attachment A)
 - B. Overview of plan structure and content
 - C. Overview of PSC process and progress

2. Small group discussions: review and discuss draft issue statements, desired future conditions, and 10-year goals for remaining issues in Waterbody & Watershed Quality category (Attachment B) and all issues in Flooding & Climate Resiliency category (Attachment C)
 - A. Review and discuss sections in orange:
 - i. Issue Statement: Brief statement defining the problem and why it should be addressed. (Additional context about the issue will be included in the narrative of the plan.)
 - ii. Desired Future Condition: This is the overarching, long-range goal related to the issue but not a goal that can likely be reached within the 10-year life of the plan.
 - iii. 10-year Goal: This is a measurable outcome that should be attainable within the life of the plan for distinct waterbodies, resources, or watersheds.
 - B. Some things to keep in mind:
 - i. Some of these goals (and previously finalized goals) may seem too ambitious for the BCWMC with its current funding and staffing capacity. At a future workshop the PSC will present recommendations for goals in the Organizational Effectiveness category which will include a comprehensive evaluation of options for organizational structures and funding mechanisms.
 - ii. While education is a tool that can be used to help reach nearly every goal, goals for the Education and Outreach issue category will be discussed at a future workshop.
 - C. Consider these questions about the 10-year goals as you review and discuss:
 - i. Which goals are you most excited to get working on?
 - ii. Are there any goals that make you nervous or give you pause?
 - iii. What are you still curious about? Where do you need more information?
 - iv. Are there any local issues or goals missing?
 - v. If the goals are achieved, will they result in noticeable improvements for ecosystems and communities?
 - vi. Are there any goals that you believe are likely unachievable?
 - D. Grayed sections won't be discussed at this workshop - they include a non-exhaustive list of potential implementation activities that will be considered in the future when the implementation section of the plan is developed. The PSC keeps a list of these possible activities as a placeholder for future discussions.

3. Whole group discussion: report out highlights, questions, key critiques

Attachment A

Issue Category	Item ID	Issue Title and Description	Priority Level
Waterbody & Watershed Quality	1	Impaired waters – Some lakes and streams within the Bassett Creek watershed do not meet State water quality standards; some are listed as impaired for aquatic life function and recreational use due to pollutants such as nutrients, chloride, bacteria, and other stressors.	High
	2	Chloride loading – High chloride loading from use of winter deicers across the Bassett Creek watershed negatively impacts lakes streams, and groundwater water quality.	High
	3	Streambank and gully erosion – Excessive erosion along streambanks and gullies negatively impacts stream geomorphology, water quality, aquatic habitat, and floodplain function.	Medium
	4	Lakeshore erosion – Erosion along lake shorelines degrades water quality and negatively impacts lake ecology.	Medium
	5	Wetland health and restoration – The function, value and quantity of wetlands within the Bassett Creek watershed have been negatively impacted by development and the changing climate.	Medium
	6	Aquatic invasive species – Aquatic invasive species (AIS) present in the Bassett Creek watershed negatively impact water quality, lake and stream ecology, and are exacerbated by climate trends.	Medium
	7	Ground-/surface water interactions – The uncertainty of groundwater and surface water interactions complicates our ability to protect, restore, and responsibly manage natural resources.	Medium
	8	Degradation of riparian areas – Degraded riparian areas allow excess pollutant loading to water resources, contribute to impairments (water quality and biological), and result in decreased ecological function and habitat.	Low
	9	Degradation of upland areas – Natural areas in uplands may be threatened by development pressure, lack of proper management, and negative impacts from climate change.	Low
	10	Groundwater quality – Groundwater quality impacts public health as a source of drinking water and may be threatened by infiltration of stormwater and associated pollutants.	Low
Flooding and Climate Resiliency	11	Impact of climate change on hydrology, water levels, and flood risk – Extreme fluctuations in precipitation amounts and intensities increase flood risk and prolonged drought cycles that contribute to significant changes to water level and stream flow and may negatively impact the natural and built environment, (e.g. ecology, water quality, public health and safety, economy, and recreation)	High
	12	Bassett Creek Valley flood risk reduction and stormwater management opportunities – Current conditions in the Bassett Creek Valley present significant challenges to sustainable development and resilient, healthy ecosystems and people due to floodplain extents, environmental hazards, and limited space for stormwater management.	High
	13	Groundwater quantity – Groundwater levels may be negatively impacted by overuse, loss of recharge, or extreme changes in precipitation.	Low
Education and Outreach	Newly Proposed	Public Awareness and Action - Ability and interest of watershed residents and stakeholders to be good caretakers of the BCWMC waterbodies and ecosystems may be limited by the lack of knowledge and resources for action.	Medium
	14	Engagement of diverse communities – Efforts are needed to engage and build relationships with communities that have been under-represented in past BCWMC planning, programs, and projects.	Medium
	15	Recreation opportunities – Opportunities to protect or enhance recreational use of, and access to, natural areas in the watershed may be lost without proactive consideration by the BCWMC and its partners in their activities.	Low
Organizational Effectiveness	16	Organizational capacity and staffing – Current BCWMC staff capacity and organizational structure are likely not sufficient to achieve intended goals and effectively execute projects and programs.	High
	17	BCWMC funding mechanisms – Funding sources and funding mechanisms for BCWMC administration and implementation are not adequate to achieve the most efficient, equitable, and robust outcomes.	High
	18	Progress assessment – Evaluation of progress toward achieving 10-year goals is critical to process improvement.	High
	19	Projects and programs implemented through a DEI lens – Additional focus is needed to ensure equity in the delivery of BCWMC projects, programs, and decision making.	Medium
	20	Public ditch management – The Plan must address management of the public ditches within BCWMC jurisdiction (per MN Statutes 103B)	Low
	21	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

WATERBODY AND WATERSHED QUALITY

Aquatic Invasive Species – Medium Priority		
Issue Statement: Aquatic invasive species (AIS) present in the Bassett Creek watershed can negatively impact water quality, lake and stream ecology, and are exacerbated by climate trends.		
Desired Future Condition	Goal (10-year)	Implementation Activities (some potential examples; highlight = new activity)
No new AIS infestations in lakes or creeks. Existing AIS managed such that they are not negatively impacting beneficial functions.	Prevent new AIS infestations in lakes or creeks throughout the watershed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement BCWMC’s aquatic plant management/aquatic invasive species (APM/AIS) policies (\$40,000) - Assist TRPD, Hennepin County, and others with AIS inspection programs (\$5,000) - Work with partners and agencies to identify and track emerging AIS threats – new activity (\$ unknown) - Work with Hennepin County, member cities, and other partners to provide signage, education, and early detection training to residents, boaters, anglers, and lakeshore landowners (\$46,000 current education programs)
	Mitigate the impact of existing AIS infestations through application of BCWMC policies and practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement BCWMC’s aquatic plant management/ aquatic invasive species (APM/AIS) policies (\$40,000) - Work with TRPD and MnDNR to manage and assess curly-leaf pondweed, starry stonewort, and zebra mussels in Medicine Lake (included in \$40,000 above) - Follow AIS Rapid Response Plan when needed - \$ unknown

WATERBODY & WATERSHED QUALITY
PSC Recommendations for Commission Workshop Aug 2024
 (Find previously finalized issues and goals in this category [here](#))

Groundwater – Surface Water Interactions – Medium Priority			
Issue Statement: The uncertainty of groundwater and surface water interactions complicates our ability to protect, restore, and responsibly manage natural resources.			
Desired Future Condition	Goal (10-year)	Implementation Activities (some potential examples; highlight = new activity)	
<p>Areas with significant groundwater – surface interaction are identified and potential negative impacts due to interaction are minimized.</p> <p>Hennepin County develops and implements county groundwater plan.</p>	<p>Understand groundwater-surface water interaction characteristics of BCWMC priority waterbodies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work with Met Council or other agencies to map groundwatersheds and evaluate groundwater-surface water interactions and groundwater dependency of BCWMC priority waterbodies – new activity (\$50,000 possible estimate) - Lobby Hennepin County to develop county-wide groundwater management plan (similar to Dakota and Washington Counties) – new activity \$0 	
	<p>Reduce or mitigate negative impacts of groundwater-surface water interactions during development and project implementation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assist with development of regional or statewide policies regarding infiltration of stormwater – new activity (\$5,000 possible estimate) - Through BCWMC Requirements Document: maintain requirements detailing circumstances where stormwater infiltration is limited or prohibited for the protection of groundwater resources (consistent with the MPCA Construction Stormwater General Permit) – fee for service - Consider updating BWCMC requirements so infiltration is also consistent with MDH guidance 	

WATERBODY & WATERSHED QUALITY

PSC Recommendations for Commission Workshop Aug 2024

(Find previously finalized issues and goals in this category [here](#))

<h2>Degradation of Riparian Areas – Low Priority</h2>		
Issue Statement: Degraded riparian areas allow excess pollutant loading to water resources, contribute to impairments (water quality and biological), and result in decreased ecological function and habitat.		
Desired Future Condition	Goal (10-year)	Implementation Activities (some potential examples; highlight = new activity)
Riparian areas throughout the watershed are ecologically healthy with well established, diverse native vegetation.	Establish and maintain native vegetation along streams through BCWMC buffer requirements, wherever triggered.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Require vegetated buffers adjacent to priority streams for projects triggering BCWMC review (ensure enforcement of existing stream buffer standard – new activity \$ unknown) - Provide education to creek homeowners including riparian protection/restoration workshops – new activity (\$5,000)
	Restore degraded riparian areas adjacent to 75% of BCWMC CIP projects, where applicable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assess the condition of riparian areas on BCWMC priority streams and lakes and prioritize areas for action – new activity (\$ included in activities under other issues) [determine where this activity would apply – along all waters or only where CIP projects are proposed?] - Incorporate elements to improve riparian areas on all stream-focused and lake-adjacent BCWMC capital improvement projects. - CIP

WATERBODY & WATERSHED QUALITY
PSC Recommendations for Commission Workshop Aug 2024
 (Find previously finalized issues and goals in this category [here](#))

<h2>Degradation of Upland Areas – Low Priority</h2>			
Issue Statement: Natural areas in uplands may be threatened by development pressure, lack of proper management, and negative impacts from climate change.			
Desired Future Condition	Goal (10-year)	Implementation Activities (some potential examples; highlight = new activity)	
<p>Natural areas throughout the watershed are well managed, ecologically healthy, and accessible to the public, where possible. High quality uplands are not lost or negatively impacted by development projects.</p>	<p>Consider and support preservation or enhancement of upland natural areas and greenway corridor connections within BCWMC interest and authority.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evaluate aesthetics, habitat, and accessibility during CIP project selection and prioritization - CIP - Encourage and support public and private landowners to maintain, preserve or restore open space and native habitats (\$46,000 current education programs) - Member cities shall consider opportunities to maintain, enhance, or provide new open spaces and/or habitat. \$0 - Cooperate with the MDNR and other entities, as requested, to protect rare and endangered species under the State’s Endangered Species Statute. The BCWMC will review the Natural Heritage Information System during the design phase of Commission projects – CIP - Cooperate, when appropriate and as resources allow, with partners and organizations that identify and work to preserve connected greenway corridors and other natural areas - Incorporate trails, parks, and natural areas into BCWMC watershed map. (to be included with current map update) 	

WATERBODY & WATERSHED QUALITY
PSC Recommendations for Commission Workshop Aug 2024
 (Find previously finalized issues and goals in this category [here](#))

Groundwater Quality – Low Priority			
Issue Statement: Groundwater quality impacts public health as a source of drinking water and may be threatened by infiltration of stormwater and associated pollutants.			
Desired Future Condition	Goal (10-year)	Implementation Activities (some potential examples; highlight = new activity)	
Groundwater is safe to drink, meets all drinking water standards, and is not adversely impacted by pollutants.	Reduce negative impacts to groundwater quality from proposed projects reviewed by the BCWMC.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Through BCWMC Requirements Document: maintain requirements detailing circumstances where stormwater infiltration is limited or prohibited for the protection of groundwater resources (consistent with the MPCA Construction Stormwater General Permit) – fee for service - Review all MDNR groundwater appropriation permit applications in the BCWMC excluding applications for temporary appropriations permits - \$3,000 - Consider updating BWCMC requirements so stormwater infiltration practices are consistent with MDH guidance 	
	Prevent negative impacts to groundwater quality from BCWMC projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evaluate CIP projects for potential impacts to groundwater before implementation - CIP 	

FLOODING AND CLIMATE RESILIENCY

Impact of climate change on hydrology, water levels, and flood risk – High Priority

Issue Statement: Extreme fluctuations in precipitation amounts and intensities increase flood risk and prolonged drought cycles that contribute to significant changes to water level and stream flow and may negatively impact the natural and built environment, (e.g. ecology, water quality, public health and safety, economy, and recreation)

Desired Future Condition	Goal (10-year)	Strategy, Action, or Task (some potential examples; highlight = new activity)
Watershed residents, businesses, and infrastructure are protected from flood damages and water fluctuations	Identify areas, populations, and ecosystems most vulnerable to flooding and hydrologic risk resulting from existing and future climate trends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Perform a risk analysis and prioritization considering vulnerable populations, critical infrastructure, and priority resources - Identify potential flood risk reduction projects - Maintain/update watershed-wide hydrologic and hydraulic model - Encourage/assist cities or partners with development of flood emergency response plans
	Reduce flood risk for structures and infrastructure within the floodplain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Update implementation program to include flood risk reduction projects that increase watershed storage and/or reduce peak flows – CIP - Create a grant or cost-share program to reduce flood risk for habitable structures - Review development and redevelopment projects for compliance with BCWMC floodplain requirements – fee for service - Help with promotion of FEMA’s Flood Insurance Study and Community Rating System among residents and property owners - Review overall BCWMC Flood Control Project for effectiveness; continue inspection and maintenance program - Maintain H&H model - Implement CIP projects that reduce flood risk on structures or infrastructure
	Implement 3 CIP projects that reduce flood risk on structures or infrastructure.	
Waterbodies are resilient to changes in water levels and climate such that	Evaluate impacts of climate trends on hydrology, ecology, and recreation of priority streams and lakes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monitor water quality of priority waterbodies - Maintain/update watershed-wide hydrologic and hydraulic model - Develop climate resilience study/plan that evaluates potential impacts to priority waterbodies

FLOODING & CLIMATE RESILIENCY

PSC Recommendations for Commission Workshop Aug 2024

their beneficial functions are maintained or enhanced		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work with Met Council or other agencies to map groundwatersheds and evaluate groundwater-surface water interactions – new activity (\$50,000 possible estimate)
	Enhance climate resilience through BCWMC projects and programs by incorporating climate mitigation and adaptation functions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop climate resilience study/plan that evaluates potential impacts to priority waterbodies - Continue to implement APM/AIS rapid response plan - Update APM/AIS rapid response plan (if needed based on findings of above study/plan) - Encourage and support public and private landowners to maintain, preserve or restore open space and native habitats to improve climate resiliency (\$50K in 2024 for current education programs)
	Incorporate climate resiliency improvements into the majority of CIP projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement CIP projects to protect or restore ecological functions of priority waters and tributary watersheds - CIP - Evaluate CIP projects relative to climate trends before implementation. – CIP

Bassett Creek Valley flood risk reduction and stormwater management opportunities – High Priority

Issue Statement: Current conditions in the Bassett Creek Valley present significant challenges to sustainable development and resilient, healthy ecosystems and people due to floodplain extents, environmental hazards, and limited space for stormwater management.

Desired Future Condition	Goal (10-year)	Strategy, Action, or Task (some potential examples; highlight = new activity)
The Bassett Creek Valley supports healthy ecosystems and communities with reduced flood risk, improved water quality, and neighborhood access to the creek corridor.	Collaborate on evaluation, sequencing, and implementation of multi-beneficial projects within the Bassett Creek Valley to create regional flood storage, reduce floodplain by at least 8 acres, and improve regional stormwater management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assist multi-jurisdictional partners with evaluating and prioritizing multi-benefit project opportunities within the Bassett Creek Valley - Implement CIP project(s) to increase storage, reduce peak flow, and/or improve water quality in the Bassett Creek Valley while providing multiple benefits - CIP

Groundwater quantity – Low Priority

Issue Statement: Groundwater levels may be negatively impacted by overuse, loss of recharge, or extreme changes in precipitation.

Desired Future Condition	Goal (10-year)	Strategy, Action, or Task (some potential examples; highlight = new activity)
Groundwater levels support drinking water needs and do not negatively impact groundwater-sensitive resources	Reduce negative impacts to groundwater quantity from proposed projects in the Bassett Creek watershed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review development and redevelopment projects for compliance with BCWMC requirements – fee for service - Review MDNR groundwater appropriation permit applications in the BCWMC that are forwarded to the BCWMC - \$3,000 - Coordination with the MDNR to ensure its review of proposed water appropriation projects prevents negative impacts to groundwater quantity (i.e., ensure water appropriations are not negatively impacting adjacent creeks, lakes, wetlands and other water resources, including groundwater)
	Incorporate water reuse practices into 2 BCWMC CIP projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CIP projects are evaluated relative to groundwater quantity impacts before implementation. - CIP
	Increase the use of groundwater conservation practices among watershed residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encourage and support public and private landowners to pursue conservation practices (\$50K in 2024 for current education programs) - Support cities in the implementation of their water conservation grant or cost-share programs - Advocate that Hennepin County map and prioritize groundwater recharge areas