

June 14, 2022

Laura Jester
Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission
16145 Hillcrest Ln
Eden Prairie, MN 55346

RE: Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission's 2025 Watershed Management Plan Update

Dear Ms. Jester:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit our priority concerns for inclusion in Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission's (BCWMC) 2025 Watershed Management Plan (Plan), as well as Council expectations for the Plan outcomes. I have included a list of Council resources that may be of use in the Plan preparation.

Council Expectations and Priorities for Plan Preparation and Review

Council staff will review the plan through the lens of the Council's *Thrive MSP 2040* document which is the Regional Development Framework for the seven county Twin Cities Metropolitan Area and the *2040 Water Resources Policy Plan*, both of which can be found on the Council's web page (www.metrocouncil.org).

In particular, the *2040 Water Resources Policy Plan* (Policy Plan) includes policies and strategies to achieve the following goal:

To protect, conserve, and utilize the region's groundwater and surface water in ways that protect public health, support economic growth and development, maintain habitat and ecosystem health, and provide for recreational opportunities, which are essential to our region's quality of life.

The Policy Plan takes an integrated approach to water supply, water quality, and wastewater issues. This approach moves beyond managing wastewater and stormwater only to meet regulatory requirements by viewing wastewater and stormwater as resources, with the goal of protecting the quantity and quality of water our region's needs now and for future generations.

The Policy Plan includes policies and strategies to:

- Maximize regional benefits from regional investments in the areas of wastewater, water supply and surface water management and protection.
- Pursue reuse of wastewater and stormwater to offset demands on groundwater supplies.
- Promote greater collaboration, financial support, and technical support in working with partners to address wastewater, water quality, water quantity and water supply issues.
- Promote the concept of sustainable water resources through collaboration and cooperation, with the region taking steps to manage its water resources in a sustainable way with goals of:

- Providing an adequate water supply for the region
- Promoting and implementing best management practices aimed at protecting the quality and quantity of our resources
- Providing efficient and cost-effective wastewater services to the region
- Efficiently addressing nonpoint and point sources pollution issues and solutions, and,
- Assessment and monitoring of lakes, rivers, and streams to direct adequate management, protection, and restoration of the region's valued water resources.

The updated watershed management plan should include policies related to the protection of area water resources with these strategies in mind, with the end goal of water sustainability.

In addition to being consistent with the Council's policy plan, the Plan also should include quantifiable and measurable goals and policies that address water quantity, water quality, recreation, fish and wildlife, enhancement of public participation, groundwater, wetlands, and erosion issues.

Council staff will be looking for the Plan to address the issues and problems in the watershed and to include projects or actions and funding to address them. At a minimum the Plan should address:

1. Any problems with lake and stream water quality and quantity, including information on impaired waters in the watershed and the Organization's role in addressing the impairments,
2. Flooding issues in the watershed,
3. Climate and resilience planning,
4. Information on emerging contaminants within the watershed, outlining watershed district and partners' roles.
5. Storm water rate control issues in the watershed,
6. Impacts of water management on the recreation opportunities,
7. Impact of soil erosion problems on water quantity and quality,
8. The general impact of land use practices on water quantity and quality,
9. Policies and strategies related to monitoring of area water resources,
10. Policies and strategies related to use of best management practices,
11. Issues concerning the interaction of surface water and groundwater in the watershed,
12. Erosion and sediment control standards and requirements,
13. Volume reduction goals at least as restrictive as requirements in the NPDES construction general permit, and,
14. Capital improvement plan with itemized list of actions, estimated costs, and timeline.
15. Specifics on long-term maintenance of projects identified in the capital improvement plan, including identification of entities responsible for funding and conducting maintenance, as well as how long-term maintenance will be documented,
16. Specify to what degree the Plan may be adopted by reference by a local government unit for all or part of its local water plan. Additionally, please include information in the Plan on what information local municipalities must include in their local water management plans to receive approval from BCWMC.

The Council also encourages the plan to leverage partnership opportunities where possible and to state them clearly within the Plan. The Council believes that to achieve productive and effective water

governance within Minnesota we must all work together, this includes partnering with the cities and townships within the watershed.

Specific Priority Issues

Based on Council policies, the following issues are specific to the BCWMC and are viewed as priorities by the Council for inclusion in the Plan:

- French Lake Regional Park is located in the watershed. The Council has made a substantial investment in the regional park system through its park implementing powers. Improvement of water quality in the watershed would likely have a positive impact on the park, through improving fisheries and wildlife and/or by reducing risks to public health. The Plan needs to address any issues, problems, capital projects, or land use changes related to the regional park.
- The Council is currently updating its Priority Waters list, formerly know as the Priority Lakes list, which will now include streams. Outreach has been provided several times for feedback on the draft list. Currently, the draft list has the following waters in the BCWMC: Medicine Lake, Parkers Lake, Wirth Lake, and Bassett Creek. While the list is subject to change based on feedback, if possible, it would be appreciated if the BCWMC could include a placeholder in the Land and Water Resources Inventory and update it once the list is finalized. We will send the final updated list when the Priority Waters list is approved.

Available Council Resources

The Council has collected monitoring data for numerous water bodies within BCWMC.

Site	Monitoring Program†	Years data available
Bassett Creek	WOMP	2000-2022
Cavanaugh Lake	CAMP	2020-2022
Lost Lake	CAMP	2013-2021
Medicine lake	CAMP	2004-2021
Northwood Lake	CAMP	2000-2021
Parkers Lake	CAMP	1999-2021
South Rice Lake	CAMP	2000-2008
Sweeney Lake	CAMP	2000-2021
Twin Lake	CAMP	2010-2021
Westwood Lake	CAMP	2000-2021

†CAMP = Citizen Assisted Monitoring Program; WOMP = Watershed Outlet Monitoring Program

River, stream, and lake data can be downloaded by visiting the Council's EIMS website:

<https://eims.metc.state.mn.us/>.

- **Place-based equity research dataset:** The Metropolitan Council has published a new dataset, "Equity Considerations for Place-Based Advocacy and Decisions in the Twin Cities Region," that provides equity-relevant characteristics for each of the 704 census tracts in the Twin Cities

region. Formerly known as the Areas of Concentrated Poverty dataset, it has been expanded to provide a much more nuanced portrait of neighborhoods and their residents.

[Place-based Equity Research - Metropolitan Council \(metro council.org\)](https://metro council.org/Place-based-Equity-Research)

- **Climate vulnerability assessment (CVA):** The CVA is a tool that can assist in Council and community planning efforts in preparing and adapting to climate change because the CVA can reveal system vulnerabilities to currently occurring and, to some extent, expected climatic changes. Tools and resources currently include an extreme heat map tool and localized flood map screening tool.

[Climate Vulnerability Assessment - Metropolitan Council \(metro council.org\)](https://metro council.org/Climate-Vulnerability-Assessment)

- **Growing shade, tree canopy enhancement and preservation tool:** Growing Shade combines local stories and an interactive mapping tool to inform tree canopy enhancement and preservation. The tool, designed in partnership with The Nature Conservancy and Tree Trust, allows users to generate reports based on various presets like climate change, conservation, environmental justice, and public health at a range of scales from city-township to census block groups. By combining different variables of your choosing, you can generate data to meet your specific needs, whether you want to set canopy goals for a community or produce supporting data for grant applications.

[Tree Canopy - Metropolitan Council \(metro council.org\)](https://metro council.org/Tree-Canopy)

I will be happy to direct you to load spreadsheets and any other MCES data and analyses, as well as any spatial data. Please contact me at maureen.hoffman@metc.state.mn.us.

Finally, please feel free to me call at 651-602-1279 with questions about my comments or for any assistance during the plan preparation.

Sincerely,

Maureen Hoffman

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cc: Steve Christopher, Board of Soil and Water Resources
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