



Bassett Creek Watershed Management

MEMO

To: BCWMC Commissioners and Alternate Commissioners
From: Laura Jester, Administrator
Date: June 8, 2022

RE: Minnesota Association of Watershed District (MAWD) Membership

At the May meeting, commissioners discussed the Budget Committee's recommendation to end BCWMC's membership in MAWD, thus saving \$7,500 in dues expenses. I was directed to discuss BCWMC's concerns about high dues relative to the membership benefits gained with MAWD's Executive Director, Emily Javens.

After a good discussion with Emily, further review of MAWD's advocacy work, understanding the opportunities MAWD offers to provide input on State and local watershed priorities, and knowing the importance of representation and opportunities for training, I recommend the BCWMC remain a MAWD member.

Emily provided good examples of how MAWD not only lobbies for legislative priorities (many for non-Metro issues, but also for Metro issues), but also closely monitors and crafts counter-arguments to potential lawsuits, policy, and legislation that could weaken or remove watershed authorities. MAWD is working to strengthen partnerships and collaboration with State agencies and other organizations, and they are refining the resolutions process to avoid lengthy and convoluted annual meetings where resolutions are presented and voted on.

MAWD's new strategic plan is currently being drafted with the primary goals of communicating better with members, providing more support for member needs and priorities, and improving partnerships with other agencies and organizations. A draft of the strategic plan will be available later this summer for review by the whole membership. (It should be noted that all members had an opportunity to provide input to the strategic plan through a survey proctored earlier this year.) Further, members are encouraged to participate on MAWD committees to help improve MAWD functions and impact. The opportunities for being involved with and helping to improve MAWD are certainly there.

Additionally, the current BCWMC recording secretary, Jan Voit (who attended our online meetings and now prepares minutes from recordings), has 38 years of experience working for watersheds in greater Minnesota and was a long-standing watershed administrator before retiring. Not only is she our recording secretary, she also contracts with MAWD to work on special projects. After hearing the discussion about MAWD at the May meeting, she offered her perspectives on the issue, citing many reasons (similar to those above) for BCWMC to remain in MAWD. Among her many good thoughts and observations, she offered a perspective on dues, noting that for many out-state watersheds, member dues are more than 2% of their budgets because they are limited by law in the amount of funding they can raise from property taxes. She also cited the availability of trainings, the work to improve the resolutions process, and the fact that MAWD aims to balance work for both out-state and Metro watersheds.

A flyer from MAWD with member benefits is shown below. Additional reports and documents can be found at <https://www.mnwatershed.org/>. (And I have more reports and documents from Emily if you're interested in reviewing them.)

I think having representation in the broader organization that advocates for watersheds, works to improve State policies, provides education and training, and works to improve partnerships is important. It is also nice to have a "seat at the table" when it comes to providing input on watershed work, priorities, and policy. I recommend keeping a budget line for MAWD membership in the 2023 budget and consider staying in the organization at this time.

MEMBER BENEFITS

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Land and Water Shall be Preserved

What is the Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts?

The Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts (MAWD) is a non-profit organization that represents the local governments that focus on the management of water on watershed boundaries rather than political boundaries such as those of cities and counties. Members benefit from having an organization that provides a **unified voice for watershed management** and works diligently to maximize the availability of the tools and resources that allow members to most effectively and efficiently meet their water management goals. Primary areas of focus include providing education and training opportunities, lobbying and advocacy services, and regular communications.

Education and Training for Watershed Managers and Staff



Every year, MAWD provides members with opportunities to learn from other members, as well as industry experts, at a variety of workshops, a summer tour, and an annual convention and trade show. Training topics typically include the following: watershed planning, permitting, flood control, education and outreach programs, innovative technologies, effective administration, public relations, data collection and assessment, aquatic invasive species, urban and rural best management practices, governance, and leadership.

Lobbying and Advocacy for Effective and Efficient Watershed Management



MAWD lobbies for funding and programs that enhance the restoration and protection of Minnesota's water resources. Members drive the organization's policy issues through an annual resolutions process and the MAWD Board of Directors sets each year's priorities. Although legislative solutions are often needed to maximize resources, sometimes MAWD will find the best solutions by working directly with state agencies and other non-profits such as wildlife groups, lake associations, environmental groups, and farm organizations.

Member Support through Regular Communications and Networking



MAWD maintains regular communication with its members to ensure they are kept informed on the latest watershed news including trainings they may find useful, changes to legislation that may impact them, and information to help them stay in compliance with governmental regulations and laws. Formats used to distribute information include newsletters, social media (Facebook and Twitter), email updates and alerts, fact sheets, press releases, and the organization's website: www.mnwatershed.org. Check us out today!