



Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts
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Memorandum

DATE: August 1, 2022
TO: MAWD Members
FROM: Jan Voit, MAWD Support Services
RE: MAWD Strategic Plan

MAWD Strategic Plan

Over the last several months, the MAWD Strategic Plan Committee has met to develop a new Strategic Plan (Plan). This is a bold, member-driven plan. The Plan content reflects feedback from the member survey, the Minnesota Association of Watershed Administrators, and the Strategic Plan Committee.

The committee recommended that the Plan:

- Contains a mission and vision that are ambitious and aspirational.
- Includes defined values.
- Ensures strong leadership from an open and transparent board.
- Develops concentrated communication efforts.
- Modernizes the organization by changing its name and focuses on inclusivity of its members, MAWA, and the board.
- Reduces the number of board and committee meetings and changes committee structures for efficient and effective management.
- Supports members' efforts in watershed management.
- Acknowledges the importance of partnerships and building relationships.
- Develops long-standing legislative policies and revises the legislative platform and resolutions development processes and focuses lobbying efforts.

The following components were included:

- Mission: the roadmap of strategic planning to work toward the vision.
- Vision: describes what the organization is building toward in the future.
- Values: form the foundation on which we will perform our work in both relationships and processes.
- Goal: a broad statement of what we hope to achieve.
- Objective: defines the improvement that needs to happen.
- Strategy: how we accomplish the objective.
- Tactics: specific activities to undertake.

Following are a few examples to compare the current and draft Plans.

Mission

- Current: MAWD provides relevant educational opportunities information, training, and advocacy for WDs and WMOs.
- Proposed: to support and advocate for leaders in watershed management.

Vision

- Current: Establish MAWD as the leading resource and advocate regarding water and watershed management.
- Proposed: to establish excellence and innovation in all watershed-based organizations.

Values

- Current (no definitions were included):
 - Integrity
 - Communication
 - Collaboration
 - Relevance
 - Science-based
- Proposed:
 - Collaborate: work with partners to enhance members' watershed management skills and initiatives.
 - Efficient: provide services to maximize effective science-based principles for watershed management.
 - Support: promote and assist members' efforts in watershed management.
 - Member-driven: seek and consider input to ensure the organization's decisions reflect members' voices.
 - Transparent: communicate information about the performance, financial position, and governance of the organization in an open honest manner

Goals

- Current: 1) Education and Training, 2) Communication and Collaboration, and 3) Lobbying and Advocacy
- Proposed (including a proposed name change): 1) Fortify the infrastructure of Minnesota Watersheds to ensure reliable delivery of services; 2) Build a watershed community that supports one another; 3) Serve as a liaison to collaborate with statewide agencies and associations; 4) Ensure strong legislative policies are in place for watershed management; and 5) Enhance the skills of watershed officials.

This Plan is **YOUR** Plan. The Strategic Plan Committee respectfully requests that you review this draft Plan at your August board meeting(s) and send responses on behalf of your entire board by August 31. Responses should be sent to Jan Voit at jrvoit@outlook.com.

DRAFT

MINNESOTA WATERSHEDS

Strategic Plan

August 2022 Draft

Abstract

This document defines Minnesota Watersheds' mission and vision for the future and identifies goals, objectives, strategies, and tactics.

MINNESOTA WATERSHEDS

STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

MISSION: To support and advocate for leaders in watershed management.

VISION: To establish excellence and innovation in all watershed-based organizations.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:



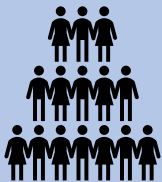
Fortify the infrastructure of MW to ensure reliable delivery of services.

- Ensure MW governance and management are aligned with the Strategic Plan.
- Provide focused leadership training for the MW Board.
- Develop concentrated communication efforts.
- Empower MW to accomplish its goals and objectives.
- Invest in technological resources to accommodate access to information.
- Reduce the number of board and committee meetings without sacrificing quality of input.



Build a watershed community that supports one another.

- Enhance member engagement through inclusivity.
- Increase membership.
- Increase attendance at MW events.
- Increase member involvement on committees and the MW board of directors.



Serve as a liaison to collaborate with statewide agencies and associations.

- Increase collaborative efforts between the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) and MW.
- Increase partnership activities with statewide entities.



Ensure strong legislative policies are in place for watershed management.

- Streamline the resolutions and legislative platform processes.
- Articulate clearly defined legislative policies so members and MW representatives can accurately state our positions.
- Focus and prioritize lobbying efforts
- Increase member engagement in the legislative process.



Enhance the skills of watershed officials.

- Provide guidance and direction for efficient and effective member operations.

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DRAFT

Strategic Plan

Mission

To support and advocate for leaders in watershed management.

Vision

To establish excellence and innovation in all watershed-based organizations.

Values

Collaborate: work with partners to enhance members' watershed management skills and initiatives.

Efficient: provide services to maximize effective science-based principles for watershed management.

Support: promote and assist members' efforts in watershed management.

Member-driven: seek and consider input to ensure the organization's decisions reflect members' voices.

Transparent: communicate information about the performance, financial position, and governance of the organization in an open honest manner.

Goals, Objectives, Strategies, and Tactics

Goal 1: Fortify the infrastructure of MW to ensure reliable delivery of services.

Background

With only one staff person, it has been challenging to get consistent communication out to members. MW has consistently heard that more communication was needed. Upon further review, the most valued method of receiving information has been through newsletters. Social media does not seem to hit our target audience and may not be worth the investment. It is recommended that a communications plan be developed that brings structure and consistency to this activity. The organization would also benefit from streamlining its operations to ensure staff are spending their time on the most important tasks.

Objectives, Strategies, and Tactics to Achieve Goal 1

1. Ensure MW governance and management are aligned with the Strategic Plan.
 - Focus the organization's efforts on defined goals, strategies, objectives, and tactics.
 - i. Confirm, each month, that board actions are done in accordance with the Strategic Plan.
 - ii. If new issues arise that require significant resources, seek member support before pursuing.
 - iii. Do not adopt major policies or expenditures without staff review and recommendations that consider pros and cons, alternatives, costs, and member perspectives.
2. Provide focused leadership training for the MW Board.
 - Roles and responsibilities for the MW Board.
 - i. Adopt roles and responsibilities for the MW Board within six months of Strategic Plan approval.
 - Orientation document for the MW Board.
 - i. Develop an orientation document that covers MW Board roles and responsibilities, governance documents, committee scopes of work, and communication that is presented to the MW Board in an annual workshop.
 - Leadership training for the MW Board.
 - i. Work with Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR), League of MN Cities (LMC), Pryor Learning, and other entities to develop leadership training.

3. Develop concentrated communication efforts.
 - Newsletters.
 - i. Adhere to a consistent process for newsletter development and distribution, as well as a process for posting newsletters on the website.
 - ii. Ensure newsletters are distributed to members and non-members.
 - MW Board agendas and meeting packets.
 - i. Distribute agendas and meeting packets directly to each member organization ahead of each meeting and post on the website.
4. Empower MW to accomplish its goals and objectives.
 - Sufficient staffing.
 - i. Invest in sufficient staff to complete identified strategies and tactics.
 - Suitable policies.
 - i. Set policies that ensure adequate funding for staffing and technological resources.
 - ii. Develop an annual work plan for the MW Board.
5. Invest in technological resources to accommodate access to information.
 - Robust website.
 - i. Update the website to be an up to date and complete resource for boards and administrators.
 - Efficient internal communication tool.
 - i. Work with MAWA to launch a platform for data sharing.
 - ii. Transition electronic files to the cloud for reliable backup and document sharing among staff.
6. Reduce the number of board and committee meetings without sacrificing quality of input.
 - Reduced MW Board meeting schedules.
 - i. Adopt a schedule and cancel meetings if no time-sensitive decisions are needed.
 - Member committees.
 - i. Maintain four member committees: Awards, Events/Education, Legislative, and Resolutions/Policy.
 - ii. Adjust committee leadership to one manager and one administrator who serve as co-chairs. Continue to populate the committee with one manager and one administrator from each region.
 - iii. Refine committee scopes of work annually.
 - iv. Develop annual work plans for committees.
 - Executive committees.
 - i. Form three executive committees: Governance, Personnel, and Finance.
 - ii. Governance Committee: Members include one MW Board member from each region and the Executive Director.
 1. Combine the bylaws, MOPP, and Strategic Plan committee into one executive governance committee. This committee would handle minor issues and make recommendations to the board. When major reviews or revisions are warranted, form a member committee, as defined above, to perform the assigned work.

- iii. Personnel Committee: Members include the President, Vice President, an appointed director from each region not represented by the President and Vice President, and the Executive Director.
- iv. Finance Committee: Members include the President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Executive Director.
 - 1. The executive finance committee will prepare a budget and make the annual recommendation to the board on dues. Form a member committee, as defined above, when major projects are warranted, such as proposing a new dues structure.
- v. Refine committee scopes of work annually.
- vi. Develop annual work plans for committees.

Goal 2: Build a watershed community that supports one another.

Background

Some members have voiced they do not find value in the services of MW and some have left the association. It has also been a struggle to find enough volunteers to serve on the board of directors and committees. This leads to a less unified voice, a weaker understanding of what issues are most important to members, and difficulties associated with an unstable revenue stream.

Objectives, Strategies, and Tactics to Achieve Goal 2

- 1. Enhance member engagement through inclusivity.
 - Change the name of the organization to accurately represent membership.
 - i. Review work done by the MAWD Board in 2020.
 - ii. Recommend a new name.
- 2. Increase membership.
 - Meet individually with watershed organizations that are not members to address concerns.
 - i. Start discussions with non-member watershed organizations on the benefits of membership.
 - ii. Use MW Regional Directors and/or Administrators to advocate for MW around the state.
- 3. Increase attendance at MW events.
 - Increase the percentage of organizations that attend MW events.
 - i. Be inclusive of members and non-members for MW events and meetings to maintain a sense of fairness, apply discounts to members.
 - ii. Hold regional caucuses in conjunction with all MW events.
- 4. Increase member involvement on committees and the MW Board.
 - Promote the importance of member involvement in the MW board and on the committees that provide direction and guidance to the organization.
 - i. Ensure members have opportunities to voice concerns and provide input at board and committee meetings.
 - ii. Advocate for MW activities through newsletters and the website.

Goal 3: Serve as a liaison to collaborate with statewide agencies and associations.

Background

Some members have expressed a desire for BWSR to balance their focus more equitably between SWCDs, WDs/WMOs, and counties, especially in areas of advocacy, policymaking, funding, and training. MAWA has expressed interest in taking a more active role within MW but has met resistance by the MAWD

Board. Maximizing these relationships ranked as a high priority by members as the best way to advance initiatives, especially with the legislature.

Objectives, Strategies, and Tactics to Achieve Goal 3

1. Increase collaborative efforts between BWSR and MW.
 - Work with BWSR leadership to address member concerns.
 - i. Identify points of contention, develop a work plan to address issues, and develop opportunities for reducing concerns.
2. Increase partnership activities with statewide entities.
 - Identify opportunities to work with MN Association of Watershed Administrators (MAWA), MN Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (MASWCD), the Association of MN Counties (AMC), the League of MN Cities (LMC), Local Government Water Roundtable (LGWRT), Drainage Work Group (DWG), Clean Water Council (CWC), and others as deemed appropriate to promote watershed management.
 - i. Attend BWSR, CWC, and DWG meetings and provide updates for members.
 - ii. Develop a plan that articulates the opportunities to partner and track collaboration with entities like MAWA, MASWCD, AMC, LMC, LGWRT, and AMC.
 - iii. Pursue collaborative education and training opportunities with MAWA, MASWCD, AMC, LMC, LGWRT, DWG, and others.
 - iv. Advocate for the appointment of effective watershed board members with BWSR and AMC.

Goal 4: Ensure strong legislative policies are in place for watershed management.

Background

Members have expressed disappointment that more resolutions have not passed at the Capitol. Others feel the setting of the legislative platform does not consider enough input from members. There has been interest in improving the resolutions process to be less chaotic.

Objectives, Strategies, and Tactics to Achieve Goal 4

1. Streamline the resolutions and legislative platform processes.
 - Evaluate the current resolutions and legislative platform process.
 - i. Identify alternative methods to achieve concurrence on resolutions, adopt a revised process, or reaffirm the current process.
2. Articulate clearly defined legislative policies so members and MW representatives can accurately state our positions.
 - Develop a comprehensive platform of clearly defined policies.
 - i. Work with MAWA and the Resolutions Committee to develop a full legislative policy document that is inclusive of policies that can remain on the books indefinitely or until members approve changes to those positions.
 - ii. Draft expectations for support and advocacy for MW representatives that serve on the BWSR Board, CWC, and LGWRT.
3. Focus and prioritize lobbying efforts.
 - Identify legislative issues impacting the most members.
 - i. Support legislation that promotes watershed management.
 - ii. Fend off legislation that limits member abilities to protect and restore water resources.
 - iii. Ensure the MW lobbyist(s) have clear direction on MW legislative priorities.

- iv. Align workload with the resources set aside for lobbying and manage member expectations.
4. Increase member engagement in the legislative process.
 - Encourage member involvement on the resolutions and legislative committees.
 - i. Solicit more direct input from members when setting legislative priorities by surveying members or provide another avenue for members to get feedback to the committee before they make a recommendation to the board.
 - ii. Promote committee membership to ensure members' voices are reflected in the legislative platform.
 - Increase communication with members about legislative activity.
 - i. Host an annual event for members to learn about MW's legislative platform and receive guidance on how to discuss and interact with legislators on issues.
 - ii. Personally call and invite legislators to attend MW events.
 - iii. Set up appointments with members and legislators.

Goal 5: Enhance the skills of watershed officials.

Background

The MW Board has approved updating the watershed handbook. There seems to be consensus that MW should focus its education efforts on the board managers and allow MAWA to coordinate efforts for staff.

Objectives, Strategies, and Tactics to Achieve Goal 5

1. Provide guidance and direction for efficient and effective member board operations.
 - Offer comprehensive watershed officials training.
 - i. Provide training sessions at all MW events.
 - ii. Enhance the sharing of knowledge between members at MW events.
 - iii. Maintain an up-to-date watershed handbook by reviewing the handbook annually and revising it as warranted.
 - iv. Work collaboratively with BWSR to provide regional training opportunities.
 - v. Utilize the expertise, knowledge, and experience of MW staff and MAWA in the development of education and training for watershed officials.

Supporting Resources

In addition to the Strategic Plan, MW has developed supporting resources for its governance and management. The documents listed below will be reviewed annually and updated as warranted. The MW Board of Directors can update all documents except the bylaws which requires adoption by the membership. For the most up-to-date versions of these documents, visit www.mnwatershed.org.

Bylaws

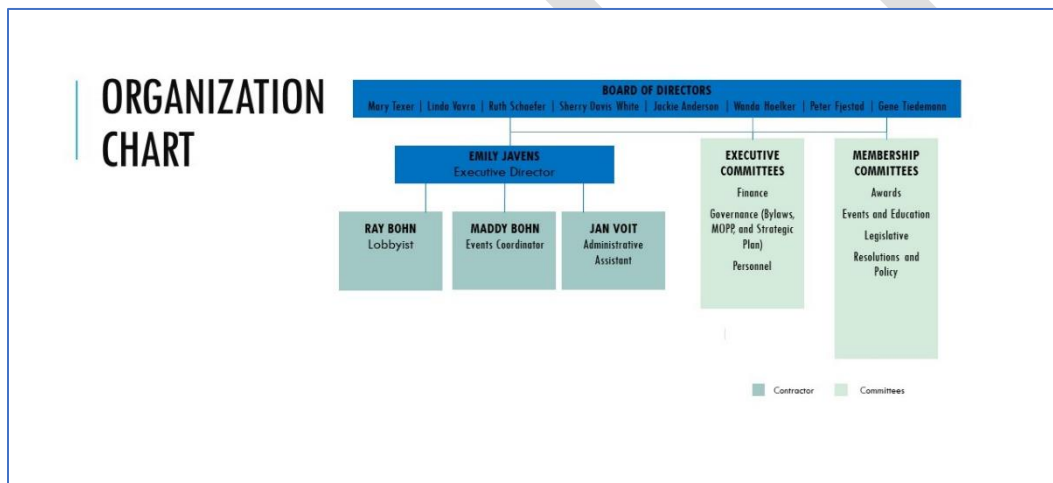
Bylaws are the written rules for conduct of the organization. The Bylaws can be found [here](#).

Manual of Policy and Procedures (MOPP)

The MOPP is designed to regulate all major decisions, actions, and principles of MW. The MOPP can be found [here](#).

Organizational Chart

An organizational chart shows the chain of command within an organization and can be found on the next page.



Position Descriptions

MW Board of Directors

The position description for the Board of Directors guides roles and responsibilities of serving on the MAWD Board.

Executive Director

The position description for the Executive Director specifies the work to be completed by this person.

Executive Committees – Scopes of Work

Finance

The Executive Finance Committee handles day-to-day financial decisions, prepares a budget, and makes recommendations to the board on membership dues. Members include the President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Executive Director.

Governance (Bylaws, MOPP, and Strategic Plan)

The Executive Governance Committee ensures the Bylaws, MOPP, and Strategic Plan are kept up to date and adequately guide the organization. Members include one MW Board member from each region and the Executive Director.

Personnel

The Personnel Committee provides guidance, oversight, and support to the MW Board as it reviews and recommends performance management and compensation systems. Members include the President, Vice President, an appointed director from each region not represented by the President and Vice President, and the Executive Director.

Membership Committees – Scopes of Work

Member committees have six voting members, are co-chaired by one manager and one administrator, and supported by one staff or contract worker. At least one manager should be a MAWD Board Director. The MAWD Board appoints the managers and MAWA appoints the administrators.

Awards

The Awards Committee promotes, manages, and presents the annual MW Project and Program of the Year Awards. This committee has an extra administrator from each region making for nine committee members and is supported by the event manager.

Education/Events

The Education/Events Committee ensures that MW events provide high quality educational and networking opportunities for members and non-members. The committee annually reviews the education work plan, provides input before and after events, and sets the convention presentation schedule. This committee is supported by the assigned education program manager.

Legislative

The Legislative Committee provides focus and direction to the MW lobbyist(s) and Executive Director who also support the committee. They annually review the legislative program work plan and make recommendations on a legislative platform.

Resolutions/Policy

The Resolutions/Policy Committee oversees the resolutions process and is supported by staff assigned to the committee.

Program and Project Work Plans

Work plans describe a project or program from beginning to end, providing detail on what needs to be done, when it needs to be done, and when appropriate how much should be spent. Developing annual work plans for the MW Board and its committees is important. To date, the following have been approved.

Education Program

The education program work plan can be found here.

Legislative Program

The legislative program work plan can be found here.

Note:

The program work plans will eventually be uploaded to the website and will have links included. For now, they are in the development process.

Tactics Timeline

Goal 1. Fortify the infrastructure to ensure reliable delivery of services	Start Date	Complete by	Process	2023 Staff Hours	2024 Staff Hours	2025 Staff Hours	2026 Staff Hours	2027 Staff Hours
Tactics								
<i>Governance and Management</i>								
Confirm that board actions are done in accordance with the Strategic Plan								
Seek member support if new issues arise that require significant resources								
Staff review and recommendations for major policies or expenditures								
<i>Board Leadership</i>								
Adopt roles and responsibilities within six months of Strategic Plan adoption								
Develop an orientation document for the Board and hold annual workshop								
Work with entities to develop leadership training								
<i>Communication</i>								
Adhere to a consistent process for newsletter development and distribution								
Post newsletters on website								
Distribute newsletters to members and non-members								
Distribute agendas and meeting packets directly to member organizations								
Post agendas and meeting packets on website								
<i>Empower Accomplishing Goals and Objectives</i>								
Invest in sufficient staff to complete identified strategies and tactics								
Set policies that ensure adequate funding for staffing and technology								
Develop an annual work plan for the Board								

Note:

The Tactics Timeline is a work in progress. Its purpose is to show that time and resources will be required to achieve the goals. Once the Plan is approved, the strategies and tactics will be prioritized.

Goal 1. Fortify the infrastructure to ensure reliable delivery of services	Start Date	Complete by	Process	2023 Staff Hours	2024 Staff Hours	2025 Staff Hours	2026 Staff Hours	2027 Staff Hours
Tactics								
<i>Technological Resources</i>								
Update website								
Work with MAWA to launch a platform for data sharing								
Transition electronic files to the cloud for reliable backup and document sharing among staff								
<i>Reduce the Number of Board and Committee Meetings</i>								
Adopt a schedule and cancel meetings if no time-sensitive decisions are needed								
<i>Maintain member committees: Awards, Events/Education, Legislative, Resolutions/Policy</i>								
Adjust committee leadership to one manager and one administrator who serve as co-chairs. Continue to populate the committee with one manager and one administrator from each region								
Refine committee scopes of work annually								
Develop annual work plans for committees								
<i>Form executive committees: Governance, Personnel, and Finance</i>								
Governance: one Board member from each region and executive director								
Personnel Committee: Board president, vice president, an appointed director from each region not represented by the president and vice president, and executive director								
Finance: Board president, vice president, treasurer, and executive director								
Develop scopes of work for all committees								
Develop annual work plans for committees								
Goal 2. Build a watershed community that supports one another								
Tactics								
<i>Change Organization Name</i>								
Review work done by MAWD Board in 2020								
Recommend a new name								
<i>Meet with Non-Members</i>								
Start discussions on benefits of membership								
Use directors or administrators to advocate								
<i>Increase Attendance Percentage</i>								
Include members and non-members in events								
Hold regional caucuses in conjunction with events								
<i>Promote Member Involvement</i>								
Ensure members have opportunities to voice concerns and provide input at board and committee meetings								
Advocate for activities through newsletters and the website								

Goal 3. Serve as a liaison to collaborate with statewide agencies and associations	Start Date	Complete by	Process	2023 Staff Hours	2024 Staff Hours	2025 Staff Hours	2026 Staff Hours	2027 Staff Hours
Tactics								
<i>Work with BWSR to Address Member Concerns</i>								
Identify points of contention and develop opportunities for reducing concerns								
<i>Identify Opportunities to Partner to Promote Watershed Management</i>								
Attend BWSR, CWC, and DWG meetings and provide updates								
Develop a plan that articulates opportunities to partner and track collaboration								
Pursue collaborative education and training opportunities								
Advocate for the appointment of effective watershed board members with BWSR and AMC								

Goal 4. Ensure strong legislative policies are in place for watershed management	Start Date	Complete by	Process	2023 Staff Hours	2024 Staff Hours	2025 Staff Hours	2026 Staff Hours	2027 Staff Hours
Tactics								
<i>Evaluate Current Resolutions and Legislative Platform Process</i>								
Identify alternative methods, adopt revised process, or reaffirm current process								
<i>Develop Comprehensive Platform of Policies</i>								
Work with MAWA and the Resolutions Committee to develop a full legislative policy position document								
Draft expectations for support and advocacy for representatives on the BWSR Board, CWC, LGWRT								
<i>Identify Legislative Issue Impacting Members</i>								
Support legislation that promotes watershed management								
Fend off legislation that limits abilities to protect and restore water resources								
Ensure lobbyist(s) have clear direction on legislative priorities								
Align workload with the resources set aside for lobbying and manage member expectations								
<i>Member Engagement in Resolutions and Legislative Committees</i>								
Solicit more direct input from members when setting legislative priorities								
Promote committee membership to ensure members' voices are reflected in the legislative platform								
Increase Communication about Legislative Activity								
Host an annual event for members to learn about the legislative platform and receive guidance on legislator interaction								
Personally call and invite legislators to attend MW events								
Set up appointments with members and legislators								

Goal 5. Enhance the skills of watershed officials	Start Date	Complete by	Process	2023 Staff Hours	2024 Staff Hours	2025 Staff Hours	2026 Staff Hours	2027 Staff Hours
Tactics								
<i>Offer comprehensive watershed officials training</i>								
Provide training sessions at all MW events								
Enhance the sharing of knowledge between members at events								
Maintain an up-to-date watershed handbook by reviewing it annually and revising it as warranted								
Work collaboratively with BWSR to provide regional training								
Utilize the expertise of staff and MAWA in the development of education and training for watershed officials								