



Bassett Creek Watershed Management

Report on 2025 BCWMC Watershed Management Plan Public Meeting

April 11, 2023

On Tuesday, February 28, 2023, the Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission (Commission) hosted a public open house to engage with watershed residents and stakeholders and gather input for development of its 2025 Watershed Plan. The open house fulfilled the requirements of Minnesota Rules 8410.0045 Subp.5 to host an “initial planning meeting presided over by the organization’s governing body to receive, review, and discuss input” on the 2025 Plan.

The meeting was publicly noticed and was held at the Golden Valley Library from 4:00 – 7:00 p.m. The Commission used an open house format to provide flexibility for visitors to come and go on their own schedules. Free childcare was offered to promote accessibility and was used by four families.

Invitees and Attendance

Groups directly invited to the open house included:

- Member city staff, council members, city clerks, city commission members
- Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Association
- Harrison Neighborhood Association
- Jordan Area Community Council
- Northside Residents Redevelopment Council
- Hennepin County staff
- Hennepin County Commissioners Fernando, Greene, and Lunde
- Met Council staff
- MN Board of Water and Soil Resources staff
- MN Department of Natural Resources staff
- MN Pollution Control Agency staff
- MN Department of Health staff
- MN Department of Transportation staff
- Three Rivers Park District staff and commissioners
- Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board staff and commissioners
- Metro Blooms staff
- Freshwater staff
- BCWMC meeting announcement recipients
- Former BCWMC commissioners
- Volunteers monitoring lakes in the watershed
- Lake association/lake group leaders
- Friends of Bassett Creek
- Members of the Native Community in Golden Valley
- Wellington Management
- Minnesota Renewable Now
- Survey respondents who listed an email for further updates (79)

Attendees included:

- 34 residents, partners, and stakeholders from BCWMC communities
- 3 BCWMC staff
- 11 BCWMC commissioners/alternate commissioners
- 8 BCWMC TAC members
- At least five member cities were represented by commissioners or alternates at all times, maintaining the mandatory quorum for this public meeting.

Event Materials and Content

The event included general educational displays and materials, a scrolling slide show of watershed photos (water resources, projects, people), and six “boards” on easels with information on various topics including:

- General BCWMC information and map
- Map showing subwatersheds and flow paths through the watershed
- Graphic depicting the planning process and milestones
- Map with location of BCWMC Capital Improvement Projects
- Results of public input survey
- Summary of input from member cities and agencies

About the Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission (BCWMC)

The vision: stewardship of water resources to protect and enhance our communities

About the BCWMC

- Regional government organization formed in 1969 to focus on flood control along Bassett Creek
- Operates under 1982 Metropolitan Surface Water Management Act
- Focused on providing flood management and improving and protecting the water quality of Bassett Creek and lakes/streams
- Nine member cities: Crystal, Golden Valley, Medicine Lake, Minneapolis, Minnetonka, New Hope, Plymouth, Robbinsdale, St. Louis Park
- Area: approximately 40 square miles

Commission funding

- Contributions from nine member cities (approximately \$400,000 per year)
- Hennepin County tax levy for major projects (approximately \$1.5-2 million per year)
- Grant funds and application fees (varies)

Commission activities

- Implements capital improvement projects that reduce flooding and improve lakes, streams, and wetlands throughout the watershed
- Monitors water quality, performs studies, maps resources
- Provides water resource education and watershed-wide coordination
- Reviews developments for compliance with standards and requirements

WHAT IS A WATERSHED?

A watershed is all the land draining to a common location or waterbody - in this case Bassett Creek. Precipitation falling or snow melting on the land generates runoff that flows over land, through storm sewers, and through wetlands, ponds, lakes, and streams before reaching Bassett Creek. At the downstream end of the watershed, the creek enters a 2.7-mile tunnel that flows into the Mississippi River near the Stone Arch Bridge.

Bassett Creek

A slide show of photos and the boards listed above are available online at:

www.bassettcreekwmo.org/document/2025-plan-update.

The event also included 5 tables, each focused on a different topic, where visitors could engage with commissioners, staff, and/or TAC members about the topic. Relevant materials were available on each topic along with discussion prompts to help engage with visitors. “Table topics” included:

- Water Quality & Pollution (with map of impaired waters and highly impervious land uses)
- Flooding/Water Levels and Climate Resiliency (with map of 100-year flood inundation areas)
- Equity/Inclusion/Outreach
- Natural Habitats & Stream/Lake Shorelines (with map of wetlands, parks, and areas of biodiversity)
- BCWMC Roles & Responsibilities (Who, How, \$\$)

Before leaving the room visitors were asked to:

- Rank the importance of the topics listed above according to how much effort and resources BCWMC should use in addressing or improving the issue
- List anything missing from the issues and opportunities presented
- Relay the most important thing the BCWMC could do to improve waters in their community.

Feedback Gathered

It was clear that many participants learned new things about water resources, the BCWMC, and the BCWMC's work and activities at the event. There was a lot of good discussion and engagement with residents, partners, and stakeholders. Actual comments recorded included (by topic):

Natural Habitats and Stream/Lake Shorelines

- Suggestion to create and distribute new homeowners packet of information for new lakeshore and streambank homeowners so they know how lakes and streams “work” and why restored shorelines and streambanks are important, etc.
- Need more access to the creek for nearby residents in the Bassett Creek Valley

Water Quality and Pollution:

- Too much trash including tennis balls and plastic in Parkers Lake
- Need new/stronger stormwater requirements for street projects (Plymouth resident)

Equity/Inclusion/Outreach

Diversity and Equity:

- Consider hosting more “drop in” events like this – especially at libraries; have open houses or workshops in diverse communities. Consider spaces for outreach like Y's, community centers, churches, Three Rivers Park District parks
- Can be difficult to address diversity issues as some populations are transient
- Might reach new audiences with text messages
- Difficult for some community members to worry about surface water issues when more pressing and immediate needs are present (like food security, housing, public safety)

General Education Ideas:

- Need to communicate how everyday contaminants damage the water
- Combine efforts and share resources, events, and information with other cities
- Adopt a Drain Program is valuable and effective – especially when neighbors have signs at the storm drain indicating that it drains to a water body
- Bassett Creek Watershed sign at Westwood Nature Center is effective
- Need residents to identify Bassett Creek as being “THEIR creek” - develop a stronger sense of identity with water
- New homeowners guides for lawn care, shoreline care
- Youth education at elementary schools

Where People Get Their News:

- U of M, BCWMC website, Department of Natural Resources, Educational Fair, Minnesota Public Radio, Clean Water Action, newspapers, talking with neighbors, Washington Post, blogs, Sun Sailor, daily paper, city hall, summer picnic held by city, 10:00 news, Minnehaha Creek Watershed website

Ideas for Updating Watershed Map (green paper/folded map):

- Population density
- Areas of focus or concern
- Biking and walking trails
- Add QR code for more information
- Name the minor watersheds (rather than enumerating)

BCWMC Roles & Responsibilities:

(from Shingle Creek WMC Commissioner)

- BCWMC should work more with the West Metro Water Alliance (WMWA) (education activities)
- Fully fund WMWA’s educator position to full time
- More collaboration

Final Prompts:

Did we miss any issues or opportunities important to you?

- Work with school to educate kids and summer camps
- Education around dredging
- Monitor/regulate wake boating (this comment also received an “awesome” from another person)
- #1 invasive species like starry stonewort

What is the ONE most important thing BCWMC can do to improve waters in your community?

- Make Medicine Lake cleaner and the entire watershed will be better and cleaner!
- Help on salt reduction
- Use small amounts of chlorine to kill the carp
- Educate property owners on how to improve banks (shorelines/streambanks)
- Educate homeowners on best practices (mulching, composting, less fertilizers)
- Educate homeowners on the benefits of buffers and encourage planting through education and helping to source plants

Participants ranked the issues from lowest (bottom of paper) to highest (top of paper) according to the amount of effort and resources BCWMC should use in addressing or improving the issue.

Flooding/water levels and climate resiliency were generally grouped as a high priority, followed by water quality and pollution; and natural habitats and lake/creek shorelines. Education, outreach and equity appear to rank lower, followed by BCWMC work (who, how, funding).

Color coding:

- Flooding/Water Levels & Climate Resiliency
- Water Quality & Pollution
- Natural Habitats & Lake/Creek Shorelines
- Education, Outreach, & Equity
- BCWMC Work: Who, How, Funding

