

**MINUTES OF THE WATERSHED MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP
OF THE
COMFORT LAKE -FOREST LAKE
WATERSHED DISTRICT**

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 14, 2010

1) **Open Workshop**

The President called the Watershed Management Plan (Plan) Workshop to order at 5:00 p.m. at the Forest Lake City Offices, 220 North Lake Street, Forest Lake, Minnesota

Present: President Richard Damchik, Secretary Wayne Moe, Manager Jon Spence.

Absent: Vice President Jackie Anderson, Treasurer John Lynch

Staff: Randy Anhorn, Lisa Tilman (EOR)

2) **Discuss District Mission Statement**

Administrator Anhorn passed out a copy of the slightly revised Mission statement stemming from the March TAC/CAC meeting (a copy is incorporated by reference and annexed within). Anhorn asked for discussion on the revised Mission statement. Following discussion, the Board liked the revisions suggested by the TAC/CAC. The resulting Mission statement is as follows.

The Mission of the District is to protect and improve its water resources through adaptive management approaches, education, and partnerships with stakeholders.

3) **Discuss 2011-2021 goals/policies/objectives, including comments from TAC/CAC**

Ms. Tilman presented a memo reviewing draft issues and goals (including comments for the TAC/CAC), and potential objectives and/or objective topic areas that could be included for each goal/issue (a copy of the memo is incorporated by reference and annexed within). The provided potential objectives/topic areas were to promote Board discussion and to seek suggestions and objectives/topic areas staff may have missed. Ms. Tilman mentioned that after the meeting, actual objective sentences will be formed in a format to meet the Board's goals on how to measure the success of accomplishing the objective (discussed latter in the meeting).

The Board and staff went through the draft issue areas and goals for the 2011-2021 Plan as determined through passed meetings. The Board then held discussion on potential objectives and topic areas for each goal as presented in the memo. Following Board discussion on the presented, the Board provided some specific direction to staff areas the goals and objectives should be edited including:

- The Board thought that baseline monitoring and general education were mentioned as objectives in many of the issue areas, and that it may be better to have an umbrella issue for all the areas where they baseline monitoring and general education are mentioned as opposed to putting the same objective down in multiple areas. The Board did mention, however, that in areas where monitoring other than the District's baseline program is needed to meet a specific issue (i.e. monitoring to determine if a wetland is a nutrient source) than it should be listed separately.

- Under the floodplain issue area, the Board thought that “floodplain” needed further clarification as to its meaning and areas which would be temporarily inundated with water during a 100-year event and that if a City does not have a floodplain ordinance that the District would provide regulatory oversight.
- The Board thought that there were multiple areas where goals seemed duplicative and could be combined. For this reason they directed staff to combine goals where they can in order to be more succinct.
- The Board also discussed the possibility of combining many of the issue statements and resulting objectives in the Upland Resources issue area, and reorganizing the goals in the Wetland issue area.
- The Board thought that recreational and non-recreational lakes needed to be defined and named.
- The Board thought that addressing aquatic invasive species (AIS) was important and that objectives should include staying up-to-date on the science of AIS management.
- The Board also asked staff to include a roles section in the Interagency Partnership issue area to provide more information and direction on which of the issues/objectives, the District would be addressing, which they anticipated partnering or providing support to achieve, and which were likely handled best by the local municipality, county or state agency.

The Board then held discussion on and edited the issue statement for Upland Resources to read as follows:

Vegetated upland areas provide habitat for wildlife and enable the watershed to retain, filter and/or infiltrate rainwater and stormwater runoff prior to discharge to District water resources. Land use practices that reduce coverage of native vegetation increase stormwater runoff, erosion, and pollutant loading and degrade the biodiversity of District water resources by fragmenting wildlife habitat. Land use practices that incorporate diverse vegetated areas, stormwater treatment areas, buffers, and greenways provide a balance needed to sustain water quality and habitat while also providing community needs. While the primary focus of the District is on water resources, the health of the upstream ecosystem must be preserved or maintained, as applicable to protect and improve the water quality and habitat of the District.

Following discussion on the draft issues/goals/objectives, the Board directed staff to bring the re-edited issue areas, goals and draft objectives back to the Board and to also present at the upcoming TAC/CAC workshop to get their comments.

4) **Discuss methods of measuring success**

Lisa Tilman presented a memo discussing the need and alternatives to measure progress in the overall implementation of the Plan (a copy of the memo is incorporated by reference and annexed within). Ms. Tilman discussed guidance provided by BWSR as well as the pros and cons of some options including a) simply determining the number of actions accomplished (similar to that used in the District 2001-2011 Plan), or b) determining specific metrics with measureable results.

The Board thought that the best method, which proved helpful in reviewing successes and shortfalls in the District’s 2001-2011 Plan, was by determining the number of actions accomplished. The Board thought that the very nature of its adaptive management approach was to assess, design, and implement, and if the measureable goal is not met, that the District would continue to evaluate and address problem areas. So, the District could be successful in undertaking a specific project in an attempt to meet a specific measurable

goal, but for an unknown reason be unsuccessful at actually meeting the measureable goal. The District would then have to re-evaluate options to meet the measureable goal.

The Board also thought that this would provide direction throughout the course of the 10-year plan as the District's reviews annual accomplishments as compared to the stated goals and objectives in the Plan. This would then provide clarification on future directional needs. That said, the Board did mention that in the writing of the goals/objectives, there could be certain areas where an actual measureable result could be the measuring stick and if that is the case, the objective should be set up that way.

5) **Question how in-depth to go on Stormwater Utility in Plan Revision**

Administrator Anhorn presented a memo discussing the use of stormwater utility fees to fund District projects, and what is required to set up such fees. A copy of the memo is incorporated by reference and annexed within. Staff went through what was discussed as part of the District's recent Plan update in 2008, where lake management districts were set up as were discussions on how fees per parcel could be determined, and for how long they would be in place. Staff then discussed what would be needed in order to go the next step and actually implement the fee, if so desired, and what would need to be included as part of the 2011 Plan revision.

Staff asked the Managers if this was something they were interested in, or if they liked having the structure set up similar to that in the recent 2008 Plan update, and to hold off on needed policy decisions, the determination of the actual fee calculation method to be used, resulting per parcel fee determination, and the setting of annual fees, until the Board officially decides to use stormwater utility fees as a funding method.

The Board held discuss on the merits of a fee based on the water running off the actual parcel as opposed to a tax on the value of the property. While the Board thought that the stormwater utility fee was a more fair structure, for now they felt that establishing the lake management districts, and stating the process of establishing the fees similar to that in the 2008 update, was best and that they could actually undertake the exercise of making needed policy decision (i.e. providing credit for on-site volume control facilities) and to choose the actual fee determination method (runoff volume, pollutant load, or both) in the future when a stormwater utility fee would actually be undertaken and a Plan amendment needed.

Following discussion on the presented, the Board, by consensus, adjourned the Manager's Watershed Management Plan workshop.

Wayne S. Moe, Secretary