

**MINUTES OF THE TAC/CAC STAKEHOLDER MEETING
FOR THE UPDATE OF THE
COMFORT LAKE -FOREST LAKE WATERSHED DISTRICT (CLFLWD)
WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN**

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 17, 2010

Welcome and Opening Remarks

The CLFLWD Watershed Management Plan Update TAC/CAC Stakeholder Meeting convened at 1:00 p.m. on March 17, 2010, at the Forest Lake City Offices, 220 North Lake Street, Forest Lake, Minnesota. Randy Anhorn, Administrator for CLFLWD, welcomed the group to the first of a planned series of five to six (6) TAC/CAC stakeholder meetings to provide input throughout the District's watershed management plan (Plan) update process. Anhorn stated that the District's initial Plan was adopted in 2001 and that the District is required to complete a new updated Plan by September, 2011.

Those in Attendance:

Erik Anderson	(WCD)
Randy Anhorn	(CLFLWD)
Doug Borglund	(City of Forest Lake)
Jack Frost	(Met Council)
Paul Hudalla	(WSB Engineering—City of Wyoming)
Anne Hurlburt	(City of Scandia)
Melissa Lewis	(BWSR)
Craig Mell	(Chisago SWCD)
Rod Negus	(CLFLWD TAC/CAC)
Jessica Pilaski	(Washington County)
Steve Schmaltz	(CLFLWD TAC/CAC)
Jyneen Thatcher	(WCD)
Lisa Tilman	(EOR—CLFLWD)
Craig Wills	(DNR)

Background Information

After stakeholder introductions, Mr. Anhorn gave way to Lisa Tilman of Emmons and Olivier Resources (EOR) who provided the agenda for the meeting, the purpose and need for the watershed management plan (Plan) update, as well as an outline for the watershed management plan (Plan) sections and process, anticipated schedule, and interaction of the District Plan with Municipal plans.

- Watershed Management Plan Development
 - Plan for the next 10 years (2011-2021)
 - Gather and evaluate resource data
 - Set direction and activities of the District
 - Programs
 - Capital Improvements
 - Estimated Costs
 - General Schedule
- Plan
 - Mission
 - Issue, Goals
 - Resource Inventory

- Measurable Objectives
- Implementation Section
- Impact on Local Governments
- Watershed Administration
- Plan Amendment
- Interaction of Watershed Plans and Municipal Plans
 - Watershed Plan
 - Sets direction and activities for the watershed district.
 - Establishes the minimum standards for the Local Water Management Plan
 - Reviewed by municipalities, counties, and state agencies
 - Local Water Management Plan
 - Sets direction for city activities
 - Update to be consistent with watershed Plan (within two (2) years of adoption)
 - Reviewed and approved by watershed district.

Resource Inventory

Ms. Tilman then provided highlights information gathered for the Plan’s Resource Inventory section. Ms. Tilman went over information collected so far on:

- Climate and Precipitation
- Topography and Geomorphology
- Soils
- Groundwater
- Surface Waters
 - Lakes
 - Streams
 - Wetlands
- Natural Communities
- Fish and Wildlife
- Land Use
- Pollutant Sources

Ms. Tilman stated that they are still working on gather more information and asked if there were areas that the group knew there were gaps and that if the group thought of any after the meeting to forward to her or Administrator Anhorn.

Mission Statement

Administrator Anhorn presented the Mission Statement form the District’s 2001 Plan:

The Mission of the District is to protect and conserve its water resources. The District will use sound scientific water management approaches, technologies, and methods to develop a uniform, integrated approach to water management within a rapidly changing and urbanizing area.

Administrator Anhorn then highlighted the discussions the Board had on its new Mission and the desire to include “improve” its water resources, its emphasis on adaptive management approaches, education and being fiscally responsible, all while shortening to a tagline. Anhorn presented the Board’s proposed revised Mission:

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

Administrator Anhorn stated that the Mission section of the Plan would have supporting information as to what a adaptive management approach s and how it will emphasize education and outreach as well as fiscal responsibility.

The TAC/CAC discussed the presented Mission statement and felt that it could be shortened slightly without losing meaning, and that the supporting paragraphs should include verbiage as to how protecting and improving water resources means everything from water quality and quantity to biota and protection from aquatic invasive species. The groups resulting edited Mission was:

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

Administrator Anhorn stated that he would bring the revised Mission to the Board of Managers to seek their comments.

Issue Identification

Administrator Anhorn went through the seven (7) goals and 47 measureable objectives from the 2001 Plan and discussed where the District had reached a high amount of objectives for each goal, and where only a low amount were reached. Anhorn discussed areas where objectives were not met including;

- Need to better inventory and address groundwater recharge areas
- Need to better classify stream stretches
- Need to better inventory wetland (function and value assessments)

Draft Issue Identification

Lisa Tilman lead the discussion on the draft issues and goals updated previously based on discussion at the Board Workshop. Draft issues and goals and the comments received are presented below.

Overall Comments:

- Make the goals more specific, e.g. education for lake associations regarding buffers, increase enrollment in conservation programs for grazing, conduct evaluations of programs and implementation actions after completion.

Discussion regarding Watershed Role:

- *Role as providing additional funding to support needed projects is beneficial.*
- *Determine who's best to meet each of the goals below, and clearly define that in the plan, it may not always be the Watershed.*
- *When have enough permit applications in to be able to evaluate the process and effectiveness, review the rules and tweak them further to reinforce the teamwork that is defined so far. The goal with the rules should be to work together to streamline the process as we move forward.*
- *Apply the intergovernmental coordination principle throughout the plan as develop the more specific strategies, actions, or objectives.*
- *The watershed could provide direction to the cities on addressing the TMDL that would be beneficial for the municipalities.*

Floodplain

Issue: Waterbodies and constructed stormwater management facilities within the District provide storage of flood waters. Flooding is a natural occurrence that is vital to the health of many ecosystems. However, the District risks losing flood storage volume through land and basin alterations. The loss of flood storage

volume and alterations to floodplains or stormwater facility outlets can increase the frequency, elevation, and duration of flooding and cause increased impacts to infrastructure, property and the natural environment.

Goals:

- Prevent floodplain encroachment and conserve water storage capacity to maintain floodplain hydrology.
- Limit flood damage to infrastructure and natural resources.

Comments:

- *Is the District's goal to adopt ordinances to allow landowners to be covered by flood insurance where that is not currently available?*
- *Make sure that the plan is consistent with DNR standards for floodplain ordinances so that municipalities are not required to change their ordinances when they are already state approved.*
- *Is there a goal to do floodplain mapping?*

Lakes

Issue: Lakes are popular recreational assets in the District. In addition, lakes provide detention of flood waters, feeding grounds for wildlife, and habitat for fish and other aquatic organisms. Lakes can also provide a certain degree of pollutant settling, treatment through in-lake processes, and cooling of stormwater runoff while still maintaining good water quality. However, land use and land management practices have caused excessive discharge of pollutants, impacting the water quality and recreational use of a number of lakes within the District. Other lakes are at risk of impacts to water quality and recreational use due to current land use practices or land use and land management changes. This changing backdrop requires adaptive management.

Goals:

- Adaptively manage District lakes to protect and improve water quality as appropriate to each lake.
- Preserve and improve the quality of recreation on recreational lakes including fishing, boating, and swimming.
- Maintain and improve the variety of functions and values of non-recreational lakes.
- Be proactive in aquatic invasive species management through education and projects that improve lake water quality.
- Preserve existing shoreland buffers and lakescaping and encourage the establishment of buffers and lakescaping for water quality and habitat benefits.

Comments:

- *Goals B and D are good and should be part of the mission.*
- *Be clear on the District's role in invasive species management, perhaps by strengthening the connection to water quality.*
- *How will the District weigh the different desires for water quality and recreation (e.g. with invasives management)?*
- *Education should be a focus of invasive species management, to keep invasives out instead of fixing the water body after they're in.*
- *Volume control and anti-degradation would be good to add here.*
- *There should be a monitoring goal*

- *Goal C is very broad; make it somewhat more specific, like Goal B which is very specific to exactly which recreational uses are important. Include a description of what the functions and values of the non-recreational lakes are.*
- *The word “quantity” is used in an odd manner in Goal B, remove or reword it.*
- *If water levels are a concern that should be included here as well, especially for landlocked lakes.*
- *Goal E should include lakescaping as well because the vegetation in the lake at the shoreline is important as well.*
- *The Plan should define which lakes are recreational and which are non-recreational and how that corresponds to the shoreline classification. Non-recreational lakes may still have many passive recreational opportunities, such as birdwatching and hunting.*

Streams

Issue: Streams are an essential element to the hydrology and ecology of the District. Streams convey baseflow and floodwaters, connect District lakes, and provide habitat to both aquatic and terrestrial organisms. Stream reaches can interact with groundwater as discharge or recharge areas. District watercourses have been affected by ditching and by alterations in land use and land management that have disrupted the hydrology and ecology of the stream ecosystem. Man-made ditches in particular generally lack the water quality, habitat and diversity of natural systems without proper restoration and management.

Goals:

- Adaptively manage District streams to protect and improve water quality as appropriate to each stream.
- Maintain stream hydrology as appropriate to each stream.
- Maintain and improve the quality, quantity and variety of recreational and non-recreational functions and values of streams.
- Adaptively manage District streams to protect and improve stream habitat as appropriate to each stream.
- Be proactive in aquatic invasive species management.
- Preserve existing stream buffers and encourage the establishment of buffers for water quality and habitat benefits.

Comments:

- *Similar language comments apply as in the lakes goals.*
- *Monitoring should be a goal here as well.*
- *Add a goal to address stream impairments.*
- *Include a goal or objective to assess waterway classifications.*
- *Goals C and D are duplicative, combine them.*
- *Buffers are already required along DNR streams, may not need buffer goal if all streams in District are DNR protected waters.*
- *Will private ditches be managed as streams? This should be clarified in the plan.*

Wetlands

Issue: Wetlands provide valuable ecological and hydrologic functions including water quality treatment, flood attenuation and storage and habitat for both upland and aquatic organisms. Historically and through the mid-1900s the area now designated as the District underwent a significant loss of wetland resources through wetland draining and filling. The District’s remaining wetland resources are at risk of further degradation from land use practices that increase stormwater input, decrease water quality, alter hydrologic

patterns, and limit wildlife habitat within and adjacent to wetlands. Land use changes (including changes in hydrology, topography, soils, and land cover) can alter the natural hydrologic regime of the wetland and can alter the functions of the wetlands and affect downstream water resources.

Following the meeting, Jyneen Thatcher, WCD sent the following specific comment on the Wetland issue statement:

Modify last sentence of issue statement to note that land use changes and other cultural impacts can alter the function of the wetlands, which can in turn affect the other water resources downstream. Don't restrict those changes to "habitat opportunities."

Goals:

- Ensure no net loss of wetland functions and values within the District.
- Increase diversity of habitat and biota of wetlands in order that functions, values and ecological integrity can be more self-sustaining.
- Develop and maintain a wetland inventory to further the water resource protection goals of the District.
- Coordinate with local government units in order to conduct wetland management recognizing the interconnectedness of wetland systems.
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- Identify, investigate and better understand wetlands that act as a source of pollutant loading.
- Preserve existing wetland buffers and encourage the establishment of buffers for water quality and habitat benefits.

Comments:

- *Make Goal C the first goal, clarify to what end the inventory will be used.*
- *Goal C and E seem the same – remove one or combine. Or move Goal E to interagency coordination.*
- *Add a goal to address restoring lost wetlands.*
- *Goal A may be better focused toward working with BWSR to replace wetlands within the District.*

Following the meeting, Jyneen Thatcher, WCD sent the following specific recommendation for the Wetlands goals:

- *Ensure no net-loss of wetland functions and values within the District*
 - *Work with BWSR to gain approval for wetland replacement within the District, in variance from the standards of WCA 8420.0522 subp. 7(A 4-5) and (C).*
 - *Participate in wetland permitting review under WCA, DNR and Corps regulatory programs.*
 - *Preserve existing buffers and encourage the establishment of buffers.*
- *Inventory and assess wetlands within the District*
 - *Use and share inventory results to review project proposals*
 - *Identify opportunities to restore functions to degraded wetland*
- *Develop management plan for inventoried wetlands*

- *Identify management goals, related to existing and desired functions.*
- *Prioritize management activities, in relation to overall District surface water management goals*

Upland Resources

Issue: Vegetated upland areas enable the watershed to retain, filter and/or infiltrate rainwater and stormwater runoff prior to discharge to District water resources. Land use and extent of imperviousness directly affects the health of 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. While the primary focus of the District is on water resources, the health of the upstream ecosystem must be preserved or maintained, as applicable.

Goals:

- Maintain forests and grasslands both adjacent to and away from waterbodies.
- Maintain and improve the quality and quantity of wildlife habitat.
- Increase the biodiversity and abundance of native ecosystems.
- Promote conservation and land protection strategies throughout the District.

Comments:

- *There seems to be a disconnect between the goals and what the issue statement says.*
- *What about areas with development – these can provide treatment opportunities as well. Perhaps include statement about improving the function of developed areas, through low impact development and the goal of moving toward pre-development hydrology.*
- *In Goal A the “equal effort” statement sounds odd, take it out or re-word it.*
- *Is there a need to specify forests but not grasslands? Both are important.*

Groundwater

Issue: Groundwater is the drinking water source for District residents. Groundwater discharge can generate baseflow in streams and support lakes and wetlands. Land-altering activities have the potential to impact groundwater resources as well as groundwater dependent natural resources. Without proper land-use and water resource management, many impacts may occur including contaminated drinking water, reduced groundwater recharge, reduced groundwater quality, alterations to drinking water supply and alterations to the function and value of groundwater dependent natural resources.

Goal:

- Protect groundwater from sources of contamination in order to maintain or improve groundwater quality.
- Sustain the quantity of groundwater resources in the District.
- Maintain or improve the function and value of groundwater dependent natural resources within the District.

Comments:

- *Tie groundwater dependent natural resources back into the issue statement.*
- *Discuss interconnectedness for groundwater as is done in the wetlands section.*
- *Groundwater can impact surface water body water levels as well, may be important to include that aspect.*
- *Add a map of wellhead protection areas to the plan inventory section.*

- *Combine Goals A and C, they seem to be subsets of each other.*

Public Education

Issue: Individuals within the community can make a significant difference in protecting District water resources. Effective education programs enhance participation in District activities and increase public knowledge relative to water. Many District residents do not feel a personal connection with water and natural resources and therefore do not have a sense of responsibility or ownership which negatively impacts their ability to change behaviors and increase stewardship. An informed community is empowered to take action in the interest of their land and water resources.

Goals:

- Provide education and outreach services to the public to increase knowledge of and appreciation for surface water, groundwater and natural resources of the District.
- Provide education on stewardship methods to protect and improve surface water, groundwater and natural resources.
- Increase public awareness and participation in the District's activities, plans, and programs.

Comments:

- *Add a goal or action to work with MS4s on their education efforts.*
- *Difficulty with education efforts is determining if they were effective. Should be clear about if the goal is to change behavior or just to tell people about these issues. Could use a survey to determine if education changes perceptions or behaviors, but surveys aren't always conclusive either.*
- *Measurement may be better focused on how many practices get in the ground than on changes in attitudes, etc.*
- *Education is an important part of adaptive management; tie this section in with that topic.*
- *Could include education under each of the other topic areas, since it will be part of the implementation of those activities. However, keeping it as this separate section makes it clear that it is a separately funded activity. Could also have it in both places.*
- *Make sure this has a focus on who to educate (public, MS4s, etc.)*
- *Check in with Angie Hong, WCD to see if she has any thoughts on this section and how to coordinate it with EMWREP efforts.*

Interagency Coordination

Issue: Interagency partnerships result in more cost-effective approaches to water resource management and provide the additional benefit of creating ownership of the resources by a broader constituent base. The District seeks to create and nurture existing partnerships with the counties, municipalities and the state who have common goals and responsibilities for resource protection. The District is in the unique position to be able to identify and support collaborations between various partners/stakeholders with similar projects and programs. The District takes fiscal responsibility and efficiency seriously and is sensitive to the economic status of its residents.

Goals:

- Coordinate efforts with partners to ensure the most efficient and cost-effective use of funds for water resource management.

- Act as the local office for facilitating public input on water resource-related issues; reacting in a timely manner to the concerns of citizens, and operating in an open and transparent manner.
- Actively participate in the establishment of Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) standards for impaired waters within the District.
- Work with St. Croix basin partners toward achieving the goals of St. Croix River basin planning team and future TMDLs.

Comments:

- *Add a goal for securing funding from grants, non-profits, etc.*
- *Add a goal for coordinating regulations, coordinating with municipalities, SWCDs, etc.*
- *Add a goal for facilitating projects across municipal boundaries.*
- *Combine Goals C and D, they are similar.*

Adjournment

Randy Anhorn again thanked all those who attended the TAC/CAC stakeholder meeting, stated that he would send out tentative meeting dates for upcoming TAC/CAC stakeholder meetings, draft minutes from the meeting, and reminded the group to forward additional comments. The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.