



Elm Creek
Watershed Management Commission
2013 Annual Activity Report

Elm Creek Watershed Management Commission 2013 Annual Activity Report

Table of Contents

	page
Annual Activity Report	1
The Elm Creek Watershed Management Commission	1
Meetings.....	1
Consultants.....	1
The Elm Creek Watershed	1
Area of Members within the Elm Creek Watershed	1
Watershed Management Plan.....	1
Third Generation Watershed Management Plan	2
Local Watershed Management Plans	2
Status of 2013 Objectives.....	2
2014 Work Plan	4
Financial Reporting.....	5

Appendices

- 1 Commissioners, Staff and Consultants
- 2 Project Reviews
- 3 Lake Monitoring
- 4 Stream Monitoring
- 5 River Watch
- 6 Wetland Health Evaluation Program (WHEP)
- 7 Education and Public Outreach
- 8 2013 Financials
- 9 2014 Financials

This report was prepared
for the Elm Creek Watershed Management Commission
by JASS, Inc.

For more information about this report, contact Judie@jass.biz

We gratefully acknowledge the assistance of:
Ali Durgunoğlu, Hennepin County Department of Environmental Services (HCDES)
James Fallon, U S Geological Service (USGS)
Brian Johnson, Metropolitan Council
Mary Karius, Hennepin County Department of Environmental Services (HCDES)
James Kujawa, Hennepin County Department of Environmental Services (HCDES)
Rich Brasch, Three Rivers Park District

Cover photograph by
Beverly Love, JASS

Annual Activity Report. This annual activities report has been prepared by the Elm Creek Watershed Management Commission in accordance with the annual reporting requirements of Minnesota Rules Chapter 8410.0150, Subp. 2 and 3. It summarizes the activities undertaken by the Commission during calendar year 2013.

The Elm Creek Watershed Management Commission was established to protect and manage the natural resources of the Elm Creek watershed. A Board of Commissioners comprised of representatives appointed by the member communities was established as the governing body of the Commission. Its current members are the cities of Champlin, Corcoran, Dayton, Maple Grove, Medina, Plymouth, and Rogers. *Appendix 1* includes the names of the Commissioners appointed to serve in 2013.

Meetings. The Commission meets monthly on the second Wednesday at 11:30 a.m. at Maple Grove City Hall, 12800 Arbor Lakes Parkway. The meetings are open to the public and visitors are welcome. Meeting notices, agendas and approved minutes are posted on the Commission’s website, www.elmcreekwatershed.org.

Consultants. Also listed in *Appendix 1* are the individuals/firms serving as the Commission’s administrative, legal and technical support staff along with the members of the Commission’s Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). The Commission has no employees.

The Elm Creek Watershed covers approximately 130.68 square miles and lies wholly within the north central part of Hennepin County, Minnesota. The Crow and Mississippi Rivers demarcate the northern boundary. Although some areas in the north drain to the Crow and Mississippi Rivers, they are within the legal boundaries of the Elm Creek watershed. The table below shows the area share of the member communities in the watershed. A map of the watershed can be viewed on the Commission’s website.

Area of Members within the Elm Creek Watershed		
Local Government Unit	Area (Square Miles)	%age of Watershed
Champlin	3.08	2%
Corcoran	36.09	28%
Dayton	25.06	19%
Maple Grove	26.37	20%
Medina	9.35	7%
Plymouth	4.45	3%
Rogers	26.27	20%

Watershed Management Plan. The Elm Creek Watershed Management Commission adopted its second generation *Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan* on December 8, 2004. The second generation Plan includes a section that identifies a number of goals and policies that conform to the overall purpose specified in Minnesota Statutes Section 103B.201. These goals and policies were developed to preserve and use natural water storage and retention systems. They address issues related to water quantity, water quality, recreation, fish and wildlife, enhancement of public participation, information and education, and management of the public ditch system, groundwater, shorelands, wetlands, and soil erosion.

In 2008, the Commission adopted a Minor Plan Amendment revising its Water Quality standards. In 2012, the Commission adopted a Major Plan Amendment revising, updating and prioritizing projects in its Capital Improvement Program and extending the anniversary date of the plan from July 2013 to October 2014. The plan is available for viewing at <http://www.elmcreekwatershed.org/mgmtplan.shtml>.

Third Generation Watershed Management Plan. In 2013 the Commission contracted with Wenck Associates to develop its Third Generation Watershed Management Plan. Diane Spector serves as project manager. The planning process began with a kick-off meeting on April 10, 2013, where the Commissioners received input from review agencies and member cities and began identifying water-resource issues and goals to be addressed in the Third Generation Plan. This was followed by a gaps analysis and visioning process to further shape goals for the upcoming ten years.

In June 2013 the Commissioners developed the framework, guiding principles, and goals for the Third Generation Monitoring Program. This program will include routine flow and water quality monitoring in the lakes and streams; volunteer monitoring; and periodic special monitoring to evaluate progress towards meeting TMDL or other goals. Each year the Commission will evaluate this proposed program and make modifications as necessary based on the most current data needs.

The Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) was convened in the fall of 2013 to develop the Third Generation Plan Education and Public Outreach Program. The goal of the education and outreach program is to educate and engage everyone in the watershed by increasing awareness of water resources and creating and supporting advocates willing to protect and preserve the resources in the watershed. Six general stakeholder groups were identified: homeowners, lakeshore owners, elected officials, educators and students, ag (production), ag (hobby), and commercial. Multi-family housing and homeowner's associations are included in the commercial group. The CAC went on to identify education topics for each stakeholder group.

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) met throughout the fall of 2013 to review and revise the Commission's existing Rules and Standards for development and redevelopment projects in the watershed. Since the Second Generation Plan process there have been significant regulatory revisions that will impact the Commission's requirements. Six of the seven member cities are MS4s regulated under the State of Minnesota's General NPDES/SDS Permit, which was revised and reissued effective August 1, 2013. Development and redevelopment in those communities must enforce water quality, rate control, and volume management requirements that are more stringent than the Commission's current standards. In addition, the lake and stream TMDLs in the WRAPS study now underway will likely require significant phosphorus load reductions.

The final stages of the planning process include development of an Implementation Plan and populating the Capital Improvement Program. These will occur early in 2014. It is anticipated the Third Generation Plan will be reviewed by the member cities and reviewing agencies, approved by the Board of Water and Soil Resources, and adopted by the Commission by December 2014.

Local Watershed Management Plans. Upon adoption of the Commission's Third Generation Watershed Management Plan, every member community will have two years to prepare and adopt its own water management plan. Local plans must comply with MN Statutes, Sec. 103B.235 and MN Rules 8410.0160 and 8410.0170 regarding local plan content and the requirements of the Commission's most current Watershed Management Plan.

Status of 2013 Work Plan. Following is a summary of the work undertaken by the Commission in 2013 to meet the goals, objectives, and projected work plan outlined in its *2012 Annual Activity Report*.

Review local development/redevelopment plans for conformance with the standards outlined in the Commission's second generation Watershed Management Plan. *The Commission's technical staff performed 53 project reviews in 2013. (Appendix 2) The Commission does not have a permit program.*

- ☑ Serve as the local government unit (LGU) for administering the Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) for the cities of Champlin and Corcoran. *In 2013 the Commission reviewed 17 plans involving wetlands, participated in three Technical Evaluation Panels (TEPs), and received no wetland banking applications. Four new potential WCA violations were also investigated. The Elm Creek Commission does not have a wetland banking program.*

- ☑ Conduct lake and stream monitoring programs to track water quality and quantity conditions. *The Commission monitored Diamond, Fish, French, Rice (west and main basins), and Weaver lakes and the Champlin Mill Pond, and conducted grab sampling at the discharge point of Elm Creek in cooperation with Three Rivers Park District. (Appendix 3)*

- ☑ *The Commission also funded the monitoring of Dubay, Laura and Sylvan lakes through Metropolitan Council's Citizen Assisted Monitoring Program (CAMP). (Appendix 3) . The Commission's lake monitoring history is also found in Appendix 3.*

- ☑ Conduct stream monitoring in cooperation with the United States Geological Survey (USGS). *Continued to operate the monitoring station in Champlin. (Appendix 4)*

- ☑ Promote river stewardship through the River Watch program. *Students from Wayzata High School, Kaleidoscope Charter School and Spectrum High School monitored four sites on Elm and Rush Creeks. (Appendix 5) The complete River Watch report is available by contacting mary.karius@co.hennepin.mn.us.*

- ☑ Participate in the Minnesota Wetland Health Evaluation Program (WHEP). *In partnership with the Hennepin County Department of Environmental Services (HCES), four wetlands in the Elm Creek watershed were monitored in 2013. (Appendix 6) The report, 2013 Hennepin County Wetland Health Evaluation Program, can be viewed at http://www.hennepin.us/~media/hennepinus/your-government/get-involved/documents/WHEP_2013_EvalProgram.pdf*

- ☑ Partner with HCES in the Stream Health Evaluation Program (SHEP). *SHEP monitoring efforts were unsuccessful in 2013.*

- ☑ Begin development of the Commission's Third Generation Watershed Management Plan. *Plan development began in April 2013 and is discussed in more detail in the previous pages.*

- ☑ Continue development of a Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy (WRAPS), (formerly called the watershed-wide TMDL), and implementation plan. *Due to the extended absence and departure of a key staff person at Three Rivers Park District (TRPD), technical work on the WRAPS, mainly development of the watershed SWAT model, fell behind schedule. A consultant has been hired to complete development of the SWAT model.*

- ☑ *As part of an expanded civic engagement effort, a Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices (KAP) survey focusing on the agricultural areas of the watershed was completed as part of the WRAPS. Results of the survey can be found in the KAP final report found on the Commission's website.*

- ☑ Continue as a member of the West Metro Water Alliance (WMWA). *Focus continued on two elements. 1) expanding its e-newsletter Water Links and 2) supporting the WMWA Educator Program. A goal of WMWA is to provide its monthly e-newsletter to readership in the nine-county metro area. HCES will continue to host the listserv and send out the newsletter, but has requested assistance in obtaining and editing content. A volunteer will regularly contact the cities and watersheds for content, edit submittals, and coordinate getting text, photos, and links to the county. At year-end two volunteer writers were identified to assist in gathering and writing articles of interest to the member cities and the general public.*

*Three individual lessons meeting State education standards were developed into the Watershed PREP (Protection, Restoration, Education, and Prevention) program with a goal to reach every 4th grade science class in the four member watersheds (Elm Creek, Bassett Creek, Shingle Creek, and West Mississippi WMOs). Lesson 1, *What is a Watershed and Why do we care?*, provides an overview of the watershed concept and is specific to each school's watershed. It describes threats to the watershed. Lesson 2, *Water Cycle - More than 2-dimensional!*, describes*

the movement and status of water as it travels through the water cycle. Lesson 3, Stormwater Walk, investigates movement of surface water on schools grounds. At year-end, Lesson 1 had been presented in 70 classrooms to a total of 1,848 students in six school districts and two private/charter schools. In addition, Lesson 2 was presented in nine classrooms in four schools to 230 students. (Appendix 7)

In November 2013 the educators completed and submitted a Green Partner Grant (ROOT) application to Hennepin County to enhance the Watershed PREP initiative. The project goals are to triple the number of classrooms visited and develop a stronger connection to action by introducing the Storm Drain Goalie into the program. Funds requested total \$7,940.

Participate in Plymouth's Yard and Garden Expo. *Participated as an exhibitor at Plymouth's Yard and Garden Expo on April 12-13, 2013. Over 1,000 people attended the event.*

Continue to collaborate with other education-based organizations. *Continued as a member of Blue Thumb, a consortium of agencies and vendors partnering to increase outreach and awareness, and WaterShed Partners, a coalition of agencies, educational institutions, WMOs, Watershed Districts, and Soil and Water Conservation Districts that coordinate water resources education and public outreach planning in the Metro area. Become a partner in the NEMO (Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials) program that provides educational and skill-building programming to elected and appointed officials and community leaders to increase their knowledge of the connection of land use and management decisions to water quality and natural resources.*

Participate in Metro Blooms Raingarden Workshop Program. *Co-sponsored Rain Garden Workshop in Plymouth in conjunction with the Commission's Education and Public Outreach Program. (Appendix 7)*

Continue to populate and maintain the Commission's website www.elmcreekwatershed.org. *Updated website to provide news to residents of the watershed, developers seeking project review requirement information, and educators inquiring about education opportunities. Updates include monthly meeting packets and progress reports regarding development of the Third Generation Management Plan and the WRAPS.*

Solicit interest proposals for administrative, legal, technical and wetland consulting services. *The required biennial solicitation for interest proposals for administrative, legal, technical and wetland consulting services was published in the January 22, 2013 edition of the State Register. At their February 13, 2013 and March 13, 2013 meetings the Commission approved for 2013-2014 the consultants listed in Appendix 1.*

Adopt a 2014 operating budget. *At its June 12, 2013 regular meeting, the Elm Creek Watershed Management Commission approved its 2014 operating budget. The approved budget resulted in total operating expenses of \$289,390 and total operating revenue of \$262,100. The capital budget includes projects totaling \$335,625. Member assessments total \$203,000. (Appendix 9)*

Publish an annual activities report summarizing the Commission's yearly activities and financial reporting. *The 2012 Annual Report was accepted at the Commission's April 10, 2013 meeting.*

2014 Work Plan. The Commission has identified the following activities in 2014.

o Continue to review local development/redevelopment plans for conformance with the standards outlined in the Commission's second generation Watershed Management Plan.

o Serve as the local government unit (LGU) for administering the Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) for the cities of Champlin and Corcoran.

o Conduct lake and stream monitoring programs to track water quality and quantity conditions. The Commission will monitor Diamond, Fish, and Weaver Lakes, Rice Lake Main Basin, and the Champlin Mill Pond in cooperation with Three Rivers Park District. The Commission will also fund the monitoring of Dubai, Laura and Sylvan lakes through Metropolitan Council's Citizen Assisted Monitoring Program (CAMP).

- o Continue to operate the monitoring station in Champlin in cooperation with the United States Geological Survey (USGS).
- o Promote river stewardship through the River Watch program. Eight sites will be monitored in 2014.
- o Participate in the Minnesota Wetland Health Evaluation Program (WHEP). Five wetlands in the Elm Creek watershed will be monitored in 2014.
- o Partner with the Hennepin County Department of Environmental Services (HCES) in the Stream Health Evaluation Program (SHEP) to monitor six sites in the Elm Creek watershed.
- o Complete development of the Commission's Third Generation Watershed Management Plan. The final stages of the planning process will occur in 2014. These include development of an Implementation Plan and populating the Capital Improvement Program. The draft Plan will be reviewed by the member cities and reviewing agencies and a public hearing will be scheduled to receive final comments. The Plan will be approved by the Board of Water and Soil Resources and adopted by the Commission by December 2014. Member communities will have two years from the date of adoption of the Commission's Plan to prepare and adopt their own local water management plans.
- o Continue development of the WRAPS and Implementation Plan. The focus in 2014 will be on completing technical analyses (including stressor identification for all biotic impairments), modeling, preparation of loading capacities as well as draft and final allocations, and report writing so that the WRAPS report can be submitted for public and agency review in 2015.
- o Continue as a member of the West Metro Water Alliance (WMWA). Continue to support the WMWA Educator Program and contribute to its e-newsletter *Water Links*. Promote the Watershed PREP (Protection, Restoration, Education, and Prevention) program to reach every 4th grade science class in the watershed.
- o Participate as an exhibitor at Plymouth's Yard and Garden Expo on *April 11-12, 2014*.
- o Continue as a member of Blue Thumb and WaterShed Partners and a partner in the NEMO (Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials) program.
- o Co-sponsor Rain Garden Workshops in conjunction with the Commission's Education and Public Outreach Program.
- o Work in partnership with Hennepin County's agriculture specialist to help build relationships with the agricultural community in the watershed in order to encourage TMDL implementation.
- o Seek grant funding to assist with the costs associated with projects identified on the Commission's CIP.
- o Continue to support City-sponsored projects as they are identified.
- o Review and consider updates to the Commission's Joint Powers Agreement and Rules as part of the Third Generation Plan process.
- o Adopt a 2015 operating budget.
- o Continue to populate and maintain the Commission's website www.elmcreekwatershed.org to provide news to residents of the watershed.
- o Publish an annual activities report summarizing the Commission's yearly activities and financial reporting.

Financial Reporting. *Appendix 8* includes the Commission's approved budget for 2013. The Commission's Joint Powers Agreement provides that each member community contributes toward the annual operating budget based on its share of the total market value of all property within the watershed. The 2013 cost allocations to the members are also found in *Appendix 8*.

Of the \$272,590 operating budget approved by the Elm Creek Watershed Management Commission for 2013, revenue of \$51,500 was projected as proceeds from application fees, \$5,500 from partnership revenue, and \$150 from interest

income, resulting in assessments to members totaling \$197,000. \$18,440 was projected as coming from reserves. WRAPS-related expenses total \$80,000, Third Generation Management Plan expenses total \$55,000 and \$13,500 is projected for special projects, capital improvement studies and projects. \$17,958 in grant revenue is projected.

The Commission maintains a checking account at US Bank for current expenses and rolls uncommitted monies to its account in the 4M Fund, the Minnesota Municipal Money Market Fund.

The 2013 Audit Report prepared by Johnson & Company, Ltd., Certified Public Accountants, is found in *Appendix 8*. Amounts paid by the Commission per the 2013 Audit are as follows:

General engineering	\$ 79,176
General administration	
Education	81,022
Programs	
Projects	20,929
Total	28,174
	<u>113,234</u>
	\$322,534

General engineering work includes review of local plans, review of development/redevelopment projects, attendance at meetings and other technical services. General administration includes support to technical staff, attendance at meetings, insurance premiums, annual audit, legal counsel, tracking grant opportunities, watershed planning, and other non-engineering services.

Appendices