



Elm Creek

Watershed Management Commission

2014 Annual Activity Report

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

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Cover photograph:
Stream Restoration in Medina

Annual Activity Report

This annual activity 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 2014.

The Commission

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.

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.

Commissioners and Staff

Appendix 1 includes the names of the Commissioners appointed to serve in 2014. Also listed there 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 Watershed

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. Table 1 shows the area share of the member communities in the watershed. A map of the watershed can be viewed on the Commission's website.

The Watershed 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.

Table 1 - 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%

Amendments to the Plan

In 2008, the Commission adopted a Minor Plan Amendment revising its Water Quality standards. Four years later, 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.

In 2014, as part of the Third Generation Plan development, the Commissioners adopted a second Minor Plan amendment revising its development and redevelopment Rules and Standards. (See below.)

The plan is available for viewing at <http://www.elmcreekwatershed.org/mgmtplan.shtml>

In 2013 the Commission contracted with Wenck Associates to develop its Third Generation Watershed Management Plan. Diane Spector serves as the project manager.

The Commission is in the final stages of development of its Third Generation Plan. In 2014 the Commissioners requested, and the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) agreed, to put the Third Generation Plan on hold until early 2015 so that the Elm Creek Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies (WRAPS) study and Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) results could be integrated into the Plan.

During the Third Generation Plan process, the Commission revised its development and redevelopment Rules and Standards in order to be consistent with the NPDES General Stormwater and Construction Stormwater Permits and MS4 requirements. While adoption of the Third Generation Plan has been postponed until 2015, the Commissioners expressed a desire to have the proposed revised Rules and Standards adopted as soon as possible so they could start being implemented. BWSR agreed that this could be done as a Minor Plan Amendment.

Since the current development standards are scattered throughout the goals and policies detailed in Appendix F of the Second Generation Plan, the Minor Plan Amendment was comprised of two parts -- adoption of new Appendix O, which contains the Third Generation Rules and Standards; and deletion of all of existing Appendix F except for certain key policies and standards that will be retained until the Third Generation Plan is adopted. The Minor Plan Amendment was adopted by the Commission on October 8, 2014.

Third Generation Plan

Third Generation Plan, *continued*

Appendix O may be found on the Commission's website at elmcreekwatershed.org/files/935. Revised Appendix F is found at elmcreekwatershed.org/files/934.

The revised Rules and Standards are effective January 1, 2015.

The final stage of the Third Generation planning process, populating the Capital Improvement Program, was underway at 2014 year-end and is expected to be completed early in 2015. 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 mid-2015.

Local Plans

Upon adoption of the Commission's Third Generation Watershed Management Plan, member communities have two years to prepare and adopt their own water management plans. 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.

2014 Work Plan in Review

Following is a summary of the work undertaken by the Commission in 2014 to meet the goals, objectives, and projected work plan outlined in its *2013 Annual Activity Report*.

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| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continue to review local development/re-development plans for conformance with the standards outlined in the Second Generation Watershed Management Plan. | <p><i>Forty-five projects were reviewed by the Commission in 2014. The Commission does not have a permit program. A list of the projects and the criteria for which they were reviewed is included in Appendix 2.</i></p> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Serve as the local government unit (LGU) for administering the Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) for the cities of Champlin and Corcoran. | <p><i>The Commission continues to serve as the LGU for the cities of Champlin and Corcoran. In 2014 the Commission reviewed nine plans involving wetlands, participated in eight Technical Evaluation Panels (TEPs), and received one wetland banking applications. Two new potential WCA violations were also investigated. The Elm Creek Commission does not have a wetland banking program.</i></p> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Conduct lake monitoring and stream monitoring programs to track water quality and quantity conditions. | <p><i>The Commission monitored Diamond, Fish, and Weaver Lakes, Rice Lake Main Basin, and the Champlin Mill Pond in cooperation with Three Rivers Park District. The Commission also funded the monitoring of Dubay, Laura and Sylvan lakes through Metropolitan Council's Citizen Assisted Monitoring Program (CAMP). (Appendix 3)</i></p> |

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| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Continue to operate the monitoring station in Champlin in cooperation with the United States Geological Survey (USGS). | <i>Stream monitoring continued at the Champlin monitoring station where both grab samples and storm runoff samples were collected and analyzed for various parameters. Monitoring results are found in Appendix 4.</i> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Promote river stewardship through the River Watch program. | <i>Four sites on Elm and Rush Creeks were monitored in 2014. See Appendix 5 for results from the 2014 program.</i> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Participate in the Minnesota Wetland Health Evaluation Program (WHEP). | <i>Six wetlands in the Elm Creek watershed were monitored in 2014. Appendix 6 includes assessment results.</i> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Partner with the Hennepin County Dept. of Environmental Services (HCES) in the Stream Health Evaluation Program (SHEP). | <i>Eight sites in the Elm Creek watershed were monitored in 2014. A listing of SHEP monitoring sites is included in Appendix 7. Results will be available in 2015 on the Hennepin County website.</i> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Complete development of the Commission's Third Generation Watershed Management Plan. | <i>Completion of the Third Generation Plan was postponed to 2015 in order to integrate the Elm Creek Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies (WRAPS) study and Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) results into the Plan. As part of the planning process, in 2014 the Commission revised its current development and redevelopment Rules and Standards in order to be consistent with the revised NPDES General Stormwater and Construction Stormwater Permits and MS4 requirements. This was done as a Minor Plan Amendment to the Second Generation Plan. The amendment was adopted in October 2014.</i> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Continue development of the WRAPS and Implementation Plan. | <i>The focus in 2014 was on completing technical analyses (including stressor identification for all biotic impairments), modeling, preparation of loading capacities, and draft allocations. The draft WRAPS report, including a multi-water body, multi-parameter TMDL report, will be prepared and submitted for public and agency review in early 2015.</i> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Continue as a member of the West Metro Water Alliance (WMWA). | <i>Continued to support the WMWA Educator Program and contributed to its e-newsletter Water Links. Promoted the Watershed PREP (Protection, Restoration, Education, and Prevention) program to reach every 4th grade science class in the watershed. Over 671 students in 22 classes in the Osseo and Elk River School Districts participated in Lesson 1. 120 students in 4 classes also participated in Lesson 2. (Appendix 8)</i> |

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| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Participate as an exhibitor at Plymouth's Yard and Garden Expo. | <i>The Commission participated in the Expo on April 11-12, 2014. The Kids Environmental Fair was held in conjunction with the Expo this year.</i> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continue as a member of Blue Thumb and WaterShed Partners and a partner in the NEMO (Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials) program. | <i>The Commission continued to support these organizations/programs with financial and in-kind contributions.</i> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Co-sponsor Rain Garden Workshops in conjunction with the Commission's Education and Public Outreach Program. | <i>Raingarden workshops were conducted in the cities of Champlin and Plymouth in 2014. 29 residents attended the two workshops.</i> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Work in partnership with Hennepin County's agriculture specialist. | <i>It is an ongoing goal of the Commission to build relationships with the agricultural community in the watershed in order to encourage TMDL implementation.</i> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Seek grant funding to assist with the costs associated with projects identified on the Commission's CIP. | <i>In 2014, two CIP projects, Tower Drive Improvements in Medina and the Elm Creek Dam at the Mill Pond in Champlin, were certified through the ad valorem taxing process for funding by Hennepin County. Grant funding was solicited by both cities to aid in the payment of the costs of these projects.(Appendix 9)</i> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continue to support City-sponsored projects as they are identified. | <i>The Commission continues to identify projects on its CIP for funding either through the Commission's CIP budget or grant funding.</i> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Review and consider updates to the Commission's Joint Powers Agreement and Rules as part of the Third Generation Plan process. | <i>This task was completed early in the Third Generation Plan development process. No revisions to the JPA were made.</i> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adopt a 2015 operating budget. | <i>At its June 11, 2014 regular meeting, the Commission approved a 2015 operating budget totaling \$388,380. (Appendix 10)</i> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continue to populate and maintain the Commission's website www.elmcreekwatershed.org to provide news to residents of the watershed. | <i>Maintenance and updating of the website is an ongoing task.</i> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Publish an annual activities report summarizing the Commission's yearly activities and financial reporting. | <i>The 2013 Annual Activity Report was accepted by the Commission at its April 9, 2014 meeting.</i> |

Financial Reporting

Appendix 10 includes the Commission's approved budget for 2014. 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 2014 cost allocations to the members are also found in *Appendix 10*.

Of the \$289,390 operating budget for 2014 approved by the Elm Creek Watershed Management Commission on June 12, 2013, revenue of \$53,500 was projected as proceeds from application fees, \$5,500 from partnership revenue, and \$100 from interest income, resulting in assessments to members totaling \$203,000. \$27,290 was projected as coming from reserves. \$20,000 was set aside for WRAPS-related expenses and the Commission will reimburse Three Rivers Park District \$130,985 to undertake and complete the TMDL. Grant revenue from the MPCA totaling \$130,985 will offset this latter expense. \$10,000 was also set aside to complete the Third Generation Management Plan, and an additional \$10,000 was projected for special projects, capital improvement studies and projects.

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 2014 Audit Report prepared by Johnson & Company, Ltd., Certified Public Accountants, is also found in *Appendix 10*. Amounts paid by the Commission per the 2014 Audit are as follows:

General engineering	\$101,952
General administration	77,814
Education	21,564
Programs	34,563
Projects	<u>136,993</u>
Total	\$372,886

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.

Other Activities

In 2014 the City of Medina expressed interest in pursuing options that would remove them as a member of the Pioneer-Sarah Creek Watershed Management Commission. The Executive Committee of the Elm Creek Commission met on June 23, 2014 to discuss an option that would append all of Medina into the Elm Creek Commission. After discussing the water resources that would be absorbed into the Elm Creek watershed as a result of this action, the members of the Executive Committee indicated they found no benefit in appending the areas of Medina and Loretto, or any other part of the Pioneer-Sarah Creek watershed.

2015 Work Plan

The Commission has identified the following activities in 2015.

- Continue to review local development/redevelopment plans for conformance with the standards outlined in the Commission's second generation Watershed Management Plan.
- Conduct lake and stream monitoring programs to track water quality and quantity conditions. The Commission will monitor Rice, Diamond, Fish and Weaver lakes in cooperation with Three Rivers Park District (TRPD). The Commission will also fund the monitoring of Jubert, Laura and Sylvan lakes through Metropolitan Council's Citizen Assisted Monitoring Program (CAMP).
- Partner with the Hennepin County Department of Environment and Energy (HCEE) in the Stream Health Evaluation Program (SHEP) to monitor six sites in the Elm Creek watershed.
- Continue development of the Elm Creek WRAPS project, including an implementation component and requisite TMDLs. The draft WRAPS report, including a multi-body, multi-parameter report, will be prepared for public and agency review in 2015.
- 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. Participate in the *5000 acres by 2025* project.
- Participate as an exhibitor at Plymouth's Home Expo.
- Seek grant funding to assist with the costs associated with projects identified on the Commission's CIP.
- Serve as the local government unit (LGU) for administering the Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) for the cities of Champlin and Corcoran.
- Continue to operate the monitoring station in Champlin in cooperation with the United States Geological Survey (USGS). Commission will also monitor lower Rush Creek (RT) and lower Diamond Creek (DC) in cooperation with TRPD.
- Promote river stewardship through the River Watch program. Six sites will be monitored in 2015.
- Participate in the Minnesota Wetland Health Evaluation Program (WHEP). Four wetlands in the Elm Creek watershed will be monitored in 2015.
- Complete development of the Commission's Third Generation Watershed Management Plan. The final stage of the planning process will be population of the Capital Improvement Program. Following approval by the Board of Water and Soil Resources and adoption by the Commission, 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.
- Continue as a member of Blue Thumb and WaterShed Partners and a partner in the NEMO (Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials) program.
- Co-sponsor Rain Garden Workshops in conjunction with the Commission's Education and Public Outreach Program.
- 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.
- Continue to support City-sponsored projects using the ad valorem funding mechanism.

- Adopt a 2016 operating budget.
 - Publish an annual activities report summarizing the Commission's yearly activities and financial reporting.
 - Continue to populate and maintain the Commission's website www.elmcreekwatershed.org to provide news to residents, students, developers and other individuals interested in the water resources of the watershed.
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Appendices