

elm creek Watershed Management Commission

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Technical Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes | January 8, 2025

I. A meeting of the **Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)** of the Elm Creek Watershed Management Commission was called to order at 10:03 a.m., Wednesday, January 8, 2025, in the Plymouth Community Center, 14800 34th Avenue North, Plymouth, MN, by Vice Chair Ben Scharenbroich.

Present: Heather Nelson, Champlin; Lauren Letsche, Corcoran; Kent Torve, Dayton; Derek Asche, Maple Grove; Ben Scharenbroich, Plymouth; Andrew Simmons, Rogers; Kevin Ellis, Hennepin County Environment and Energy (HCEE); Brian Vlach, Three Rivers Park District (TRPD); Diane Spector and Erik Megow, Stantec; and Amy Juntunen, JASS.

Not represented: Medina.

Also present: Doug Baines, Dayton, and Talori Dunsworth, Plymouth.

II. The **AGENDA** was approved with the addition under item 5. Other Business of:

a. North Fork Rush Creek, development of base flood elevations.

Motion by Simmons, second by Nelson to approve the **minutes of the November 13, 2024, meeting.** *Motion carried unanimously.*

III. **PROPOSED 2025 WORK PLAN.***

A. Staff's January 2, 2025, memo* outlined highlights of the proposed **2025 Work Plan.** They include:

1. Complete development of the **Fourth Generation Watershed Management Plan**; the current Plan expires in Fall 2025.

2. The **Watershed-wide TMDL Ten Year Review** currently underway will be wrapped into the Fourth Generation Plan in the same manner as the original TMDL and WRAPS. Implementation strategies and actions from those studies were incorporated into the Third Generation Plan.

3. The **BWSR Watershed-Based Implementation Funding (WBIF) for FY25** (\$373,590) has been contracted and entities will start implementing improvements in 2025.

4. Continue to **partner with WMWA and Hennepin County on enhanced education and outreach**, with leadership and assistance from the shared outreach coordinator. The Commission will also sponsor one or more shoreline restoration/resilient yards workshops with the shared coordinator and Metro Blooms as part of the WBIF funding.

5. **Chloride management** is a priority topic, and the successful grant application to develop a chloride management plan jointly with the Shingle Creek and West Mississippi WMOs will fund a plan that clarifies the problem assessment, identifies the different stakeholders and their actions and messages, and includes goals and options for implementation. This work will begin in

Spring 2025 following execution of a contract with BWSR, expected by March.

6. Admin staff will update the **Commissioners' Handbook** and make it available on the website for ease in keeping it current.

B. Other segments of the proposed Work Plan focus on Special Studies and Projects, the Monitoring Program, Education and Outreach, Agricultural Outreach, and Routine and Administrative Actions.

Members noted that they would like to see the Commission's policies on the website, and that the website be reorganized and updated.

Vlach recommended changes to the 2024 monitoring program in review. Vlach will review the proposed 2025 lake monitoring program and return to the February meeting with his recommendations.

IV. FOURTH GENERATION PLAN – RULES AND STANDARDS.* Staff advised the members that this is the best time to make any revisions to the Commission's Rules and Standards. So far, no real changes have been proposed except that brought forth by the **City of Champlin.***

A. **Linear Projects.** The City of Champlin approached Elm Creek staff to discuss the stormwater management requirements for the reconstruction of city roads in a residential neighborhood within the Lemans Lake watershed. After discussing alternatives outlined in their memo, attached, City and Commission staff wished to discuss the requirements and due diligence expected from cities for future residential road reconstruction projects.

The Commission's current stormwater requirements for linear projects sets forth certain volume control reduction standards and contains a provision that if those cannot be met cost-effectively, other minimum standards apply.

When that Rule language was considered, the TAC and Commission discussed but elected not to define what "cost-effectively" means. For the project alternatives outlined by Champlin, volume control for this project is feasible, but the cost is approximately \$15,000-\$30,000 per pound of phosphorus treated/removed. City staff believe this *cost per lb. TP removed* is not a cost-effective BMP for the City.

Staff believe that the Rules and the NPDES Construction and Stormwater permits require entities to 1) make a good faith effort to explore a range of potential BMPs that could meet wholly or partially the required load and volume reductions, 2) document those options and the entities' rationale for selecting or rejecting the proposed BMPs, and 3) document off-setting BMPs that the city is undertaking within the watershed. It would be helpful if the Rules could clarify and outline the sequencing requirements for linear requirements to further align with the MS4 requirements. **Staff recommend adding** language for linear projects similar to the Shingle Creek Rules

What the City of Champlin is proposing in their recommended alternative would meet the sequencing requirements by documenting the alternatives considered and eliminated and by at least maintaining rates and adding water quality BMPs within the right-of-way to reduce TSS and TP loads below the existing conditions.

B. Buffers. Staff noted that one other Rule that sometimes causes some discussion with applicants is the minimum buffer width requirement. Where the 10-foot minimum can't be met, there's usually wetland alteration/mitigation impacts. The Rules also do not specifically address retaining walls. Staff typically work with applicants to direct runoff for alternative treatment or otherwise minimize impacts to the wetland.

C. Compensatory storage for linear projects with floodplain impacts is an issue when roadway or redevelopment projects replace or widen channel crossings, requiring fill in the floodplain/floodway. Any time volume is reduced from floodplain, hydrology must be updated. Need to show *no rise and provide compensatory storage*, or go through the *CLOMR/LOMR* process. Without compensatory storage, DNR and FEMA will ask for hydrologic updates and likely will require the city to go through the CLOMR/LOMR process.

D. Discussion

In the Champlin scenario, Nelson is looking for feedback on how other members are handling this. Rules currently state volume reduction practices are not required if they can't be provided cost-effectively. Commission does not define "cost effectiveness." At a minimum, project must provide BMPs that don't increase rates or TSS/TP loads (zero degradation).

Especially for city projects, realizing the cities are undertaking other water quality projects as well, those "other projects" should be taken into consideration. Be cautious when counting on the city's capital program as part of these linear projects. Don't want to construe that capital projects are offsetting linear projects or "trading."

[Asche arrived 10:26 a.m.]

Cities have rules and MS4 permits. TAC consensus is to leave flexibility up to cities to report. We want the Commission to have flexibility to ask if the water quality could be offset elsewhere in the city. We do the same for private companies.

The Commission's Rules do not currently provide guidance on cities' determination of cost-effectiveness. Each city may have a different amount deemed cost-effective. Do we leave it to each city to make that determination? Ultimately it is between the MPCA and the City, and there hasn't been any guidance from the MPCA either. It was noted that the Minnesota Cities Stormwater Coalition (MCSCS) is working on this as well, and it would be worth touching base with that staff.

The proposed sequencing language could be added as a guidance or procedure, not a rule change. Note that right now, Rules just say "maximize treatment." Adding the sequencing procedure gives reviewing team guidance in the submittal.

There was no clear consensus except that the minimum standard should be non-degradation. The TAC was interested in continuing the discussion at the February meeting. One option discussed was the Rules could just say something like "For MS4s, provide volume and water quality in accordance with NPDES permit requirements," then provide the sequencing guidance, with non-degradation being the minimum requirement.

Staff will provide draft proposed language for the next meeting.

V. WINTER SALT WEEK.*

The TAC reviewed information provided about the upcoming Winter Salt Week, January 27-31, 2025, a collaboration of governmental and non-governmental organizations across the United States and Canada with the goal of raising awareness around salt pollution and reduction solutions.

www.wintersaltweek.org has a rundown of the daily webinars including Minnesota speakers providing public works' perspectives and presenting on the policy solutions panel. The event consists of a series of online presentations over four days. The fifth and final day offers an opportunity for cities, watershed organizations, and others to hold their own events.

The Low Salt, No Salt MN team has developed a toolkit to help promote Winter Salt Week at [Winter Salt Week Toolkit](#).

Online Workshop for Community Leaders about Chloride Pollution. The MPCA is sponsoring a [Smart Salting: Community Leaders Workshop](#) on January 31, 2025, 11 am-1 pm..

Locally, [Plymouth](#) is hosting a Winter Maintenance Open House on January 30.

The **Joint Chloride Management Plan** that will be developed by the Shingle Creek, West Mississippi, and Elm Creek WMOs will incorporate Winter Salt Week into its education and outreach plan. WMWA, Hennepin County Chloride Initiative (HCCI) and Watershed Partners are working with the MPCA to develop Low Salt No Salt and Winter Salt Week into a cohesive, statewide campaign.

VI. OTHER BUSINESS.

A. North Fork Rush Creek.* The cities of Corcoran, Dayton and Maple Grove are all expecting development in this area, which is a FEMA A zone. Downstream of this area is at elevation 913, Zone AE. Upstream is at elevation 914, Base Flood Elevation (BFE). The latest HUC8 study shows elevations just below 910.


Cities are asking for guidance on the appropriate BFE. Models are not available showing the best available data. Existing effective models do not have best crossing data that the HUC8 study does. If FEMA corrects the model in the future resulting in homes being located in the floodplain, that would be not acceptable. But by keeping the model conservative as it is currently, then some development may not be able to occur.

Motion by Scharenbroich, second by Simmons to recommend an expenditure of \$5,000 from general funds to update the modeling to come to a consensus on the best flood elevations using the most up to date information for this area. Motion carried unanimously.

B. The **next meeting** of the Technical Advisory Committee is scheduled for 10:30 on Wednesday, February 12, 2025.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:31 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Judie A. Anderson

for Amy Juntunen, Recording Secretary