

elm creek

Watershed Management Commission

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Regular Meeting Minutes October 8, 2025

I. CALL TO ORDER. A meeting of the Elm Creek Watershed Management Commission was called to order at 11:31 a.m., Wednesday, October 8, 2025, in the Plymouth Community Center, 14800 34th Avenue North, Plymouth, MN, by Chairman Doug Baines.

Present: Bill Walraven, Champlin; Loren Evenrud, Corcoran; Doug Baines, Dayton; Terry Sharp, Medina; Catherine Cesnik, Plymouth; and Dave Katzner, Rogers.

Not represented: Maple Grove.

Also present: Heather Nelson, Steven Touney, and Laura Rescorla (WSB), Champlin; Lauren Letsche, Corcoran; Shane Awalt, Maple Grove; Lilly Bowman, Plymouth; Mike Albers, Rogers; Kevin Ellis, Audrey Robeson and Kristine Maurer, Hennepin County; Brian Vlach, Three Rivers Park District; Eric Osterdyk and Diane Spector, Stantec; Rebecca Carlson, Resilience Resources; and Judie Anderson, JASS.

II. AGENDA. Motion by Cesnik, second by Walraven to approve the agenda* with the addition of item 6.b. Cartway Bridge in Champlin. *Motion carried unanimously.*

III. CONSENT AGENDA. Motion by Walraven, second by Cesnik to approve the Consent Agenda:

Minutes of the September 10, 2025, meeting and public hearing.*

October Treasurer's Report and Claims totaling \$58,636.02.*

Motion carried unanimously.

IV. OPEN FORUM.

V. PROJECT REVIEWS.

A. 2025-015 Dayton PSA #21.* This is a 6.6-acre site located south of the 116th Avenue North and Minnesota Lane intersection. The site is comprised of two existing parcels. Land cover is cultivated herbaceous vegetation, and 0.20 acres of impervious exist on site. The parcels are located mostly within the Rush Creek subwatershed, with 0.36 acres of the northeastern corner within the Elm Creek subwatershed. The existing site is a proposed city park area. The applicant proposes new pavement, stormwater culverts, stormwater management basins, and associated site improvements. The proposal will disturb 5.55 acres of the 6.62-acre site, resulting in 1.02 acres of new and reconstructed impervious. The project was reviewed for Rules D and E. In their findings dated April 7, 2025, Staff recommended approval conditioned on escrow reconciliation.

On September 30, 2025, the City informed Commission Staff that this project is under construction with completion expected in Spring of 2026. On review of Commission files, it was noted

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RULE E - EROSION AND SEDIMENT CONTROL
RULE F - FLOODPLAIN ALTERATION

RULE G - WETLAND ALTERATION
RULE H - BRIDGE AND CULVERT CROSSINGS
RULE I - BUFFERS

*indicates enclosure

CHAMPLIN - CORCORAN - DAYTON - MAPLE GROVE - MEDINA - PLYMOUTH - ROGERS

that this project had been in technical review but that no findings had been submitted for Commission review and approval. It was determined that somehow the project review was not forwarded into the April meeting packet. Since the only condition for approval is reconciliation of the escrow fee, the findings are being included in the October 8, 2025, meeting packet for Commission action. Motion by Katzner, second by Cesnik to approve this project with that condition. *Motion carried unanimously.*

B. 2025-036 Life Time Fitness, Maple Grove.* This project proposes redevelopment of existing agricultural land to construct a commercial building with associated parking on a 17.5-acre site located south of Highway 610 and north of 99th Place. Development will result in approximately 8.0 acres of impervious surface and will trigger Rules D and E. A findings of fact memo dated September 30, 2025, was included in the packet for the October 8 meeting wherein Staff recommended approval with two conditions: (1) escrow reconciliation; and (2) an O & M Plan approved by the City. Motion by Walraven, second by Katzner to approve this project with those conditions. *Motion carried unanimously.*

C. 2025-039 Culvers, Maple Grove.* The project consists of a 1.2-acre site located south of the intersection of County Roads 101 and 10. This development is a part of previously approved HyVee-Markets at Rush Creek (Project Review 2009-004). The project proposes the construction of a restaurant and surface parking along with associated utility improvements, and landscaping. The project triggers Rules D and E. A finding of fact memo dated September 30, 2025, was included in the packet for the October 8 meeting wherein Staff recommended approval with two conditions: (1) escrow reconciliation; and (2) an O & M Plan approved by the City. Motion by Sharp, second by Walraven to approve this project with those two conditions. *Motion carried unanimously.*

VI. OLD BUSINESS.

A. North Fork Rush Creek.* In April 2023 the Commission authorized the North Fork Rush Creek Remeander Study, funded by a Watershed-Based Implementation Funding (WBIF) grant from BWSR. The impetus for this was the pending acquisition by Rogers of a large tract of high-quality maple-basswood forest south of the creek known as Steig Woods. The City intends to manage the site as open space with limited access and is interested in enhancements to the surrounding area, including remeandering the creek.

The Study Area is between Fletcher Lane (CSAH 116) and Brockton Lane (CSAH 101). The creek in this Study Area is part of County Ditch #21. The North Fork is an Impaired Water listed for low dissolved oxygen (DO) and fish and macroinvertebrate assessments. A future county road extension and regional trail are planned to cross the stream within the Study Area. This Feasibility Study was intended to evaluate potential improvements to the creek, to both address the impairments and to accommodate the future alignment of the county road extension.

The full report is posted on the website at [Minutes & Meeting Packets - Elm Creek Watershed](#). Some potential design options were previously reviewed by the TAC. Those options have been refined and further developed, and probable costs estimated. The report was presented to the TAC at the August 13 meeting. There were no additional comments. The WBIF grant funding expires December 31, 2025.

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Motion by Katzner, second by Cesnik to accept the report. *Motion carried unanimously.*

B. WMO Website–Memo of Understanding.* As discussed previously, the Commission’s website is currently hosted on the platform Weebly, which is transitioning its service to ecommerce. This is an opportunity to migrate and update the website. The websites for Shingle Creek/West Mississippi and Pioneer-Sarah Creeks are in the same position. These sites are all very similar and primarily maintained by JASS and Commission staff. It makes sense to collectively work together and hire a single consultant to accomplish the update work for all three, since there are likely some economies of scale. A small group of representatives of the four WMOs and technical staff prepared an RFP for this work. That RFP has been distributed to select vendors recommended by the partners, and responses are due October 15, 2025. It is expected that a contract for services will be considered at the November 13, 2025 Shingle Creek meeting.

The Shingle Creek/West Mississippi Attorney has drafted a Memorandum of Understanding* (MOU) defining the project and setting forth how the work will be accomplished. This MOU has been reviewed and approved by the Elm Creek and Pioneer-Sarah Creek attorney. Key provisions include:

1. Shingle Creek WMO will award and manage the contract, designating a staff member to serve as Project Manager.
2. Each WMO will appoint at least one staff member and one Commissioner to serve as a Steering Committee to provide guidance in selecting and working with a vendor.
3. It is expected that the base work will include initial visioning and design of the basic page structure and navigation. The cost of this work will be split evenly. Any site customization and the cost of migrating files and updating content will be the responsibility of each WMO. The Project Manager will work with the vendor to track that work separately and will bill that work to the respective WMO.

The Commission had previously appointed Ben Scharenbroich (Plymouth) and Commissioner Cesnik to serve on the Steering Committee. Additional volunteers are welcome to join.

Staff recommend approval of the MOU.

C. WMWA Website – Memo of Understanding.* The West Metro Water Alliance (WMWA) also plans to refresh and update its website. A small group of representatives of the four WMOs in WMWA (Elm, Bassett, and Shingle Creeks, and West Mississippi), technical staff, and Hennepin County worked to prepare an RFP for this work. That RFP has also been distributed to select vendors recommended by the partners, and responses are due October 15, 2025. It is expected that a contract for services will be considered at the November 13, 2025 Shingle Creek meeting. Shingle Creek is the fiscal agent for WMWA.

The cost of this work is expected to be \$15,000-20,000, paid for by funds accumulated in WMWA’s Special Projects account. The original funding agreements approved by the WMOs require that special projects above and beyond the regular work of WMWA be approved

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by all four WMOs. Because of the magnitude and nature of this work, the Shingle Creek/West Mississippi Attorney has drafted a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) defining the project and setting forth how the work will be accomplished. This MOU has been reviewed and approved by the Basset Creek and Elm Creek attorneys. Key provisions include:

1. Shingle Creek WMO will award and manage the contract, designating a staff member to serve as Project Manager.
2. Each WMWA partner will appoint at least one staff member and one Commissioner to serve as a Steering Committee to provide guidance in selecting and working with a vendor.
3. If additional funding is needed beyond the current balance in WMWA's Special Projects fund, that additional funding will require the written approval of each Party.

Scharenbroich and Cesnik will also serve on this Steering Committee and additional volunteers are welcome to join.

Staff also recommend approval of this MOU.

Motion by Katzner, second by Cesnik to approve both memos of understanding.
Motion carried unanimously.

VII. NEW BUSINESS.

A. Fish Lake Shoreline Restoration.* The Commission dedicated a portion of its 2023 and 2025 Watershed-Based Implementation Funding (WBIF) grants to conservation programming in partnership with WMWA and Hennepin County. Along with funding a half-time conservationist, it also included funds to develop and implement priority BMPs. In Elm Creek, the grant covers two shoreline restoration workshops targeting Fish Lake and, through Metro Blooms, site assessments and restoration designs for up to 20 properties, including a small stipend to defray the homeowner's cost.

Last year the Commission discussed the possibility of providing Partnership Cost Share funding for any larger projects identified that would have a significant improvement to Fish Lake. One such project is presented here today for your consideration. The homeowner attended a workshop last year and requested a restoration plan for their highly sloped back yard.

A design developed by Metro Blooms includes stabilizing the upper areas of the slope with native shrubs, and planting zones along the shoreline with mesic (moisture-loving) and wet shoreline vegetation. In addition, the plan would add new aquatic plantings in the near-shore areas to provide in-lake habitat for fish and other aquatic organisms. The overall project would reduce erosion and sedimentation, add pollinator (upland) and aquatic habitat, and would be a significant benefit to the lake. Metro Blooms has received a cost estimate for this restoration from a contractor they have worked with on other projects of \$43,625.

This project could fall under the Partnership Cost Share Program guidelines prioritizing projects that implement actions in TMDLs. The Elm Creek Watershed TMDL identified

Shoreline Restoration as a general load reduction strategy.

The purpose of this item is to discuss whether the Commission would support cost-share for this project, and at what amount. Commission and Maple Grove staff support up to a 90% contribution. Hennepin County staff are reviewing options with the property owner. No formal application has yet been submitted.

The members requested that this opportunity be brought back as an application. They were contemplating a possible 75-90% cost-share.

B. Cartway Bridge.* The City of Champlin submitted a request to the Third Generation Plan CIP for reconstructing the Elm Creek crossing at Cartway Road, which is just upstream of Mill Pond. This is the last segment of Elm Creek in Champlin to be restored. The project has been carried forward to the Fourth Generation CIP, but the benefits to the watershed of replacing this culvert have not been clear and the Commission contribution undefined. The City has been working with the DNR and Commission staff on design requirements, updating H & H modeling, and preparing construction plans and specifications. Information is now available to determine watershed benefit.

Although this project would be on the 2026 Commission CIP and discussed next spring, the City is preparing to bid the project and would like to convey the amount of watershed cost share to expect, if any, when it brings the contract to the Council later this year. This project was discussed by the TAC in September for a determination of watershed benefit and amount of cost share contribution.

A culvert replacement typically is considered a maintenance project if it is just replacing like with like. However, the TAC agreed that the City is incorporating several design elements that will make an overall improvement to Elm Creek and benefit the watershed as a whole. These design elements address the water quality and habitat improvements suggested in the Elm Creek TMDL. The TAC has concluded that this project would be eligible for CIP cost share.

1. Habitat Benefits. The bottom of the box culverts will be filled with one foot of native sediment mixed with riprap to provide a more natural culvert bottom and reducing the mean 2-yr streamflow velocity through the culverts.

2. Water Quality Benefits. The proposed crossing will reduce velocities in and around the crossing, resulting in reduced erosion and decreased sediment load transport downstream.

3. Floodplain Benefits. The proposed crossing decreases the floodplain elevation and width upstream, reducing flood risk along this portion of Elm Creek. In addition, the culvert opening area is increased, enhancing conveyance capacity.

The overall project cost is estimated at \$2.037 million. The maximum cost share would be 25%, or \$509,000. The TAC agreed that a reasonable contribution would be \$250,000

and recommends that the Commission approve that contribution.

Motion by Walraven, second by Cesnik to include this project on the Commission's 2026 CIP and to approve a \$250,000 contribution as the Commission's share. *Motion carried unanimously.*

VIII. EDUCATION AND PUBLIC OUTREACH.

A. West Metro Water Alliance (WMWA). The October update from Grace Barcelow, Hennepin County Environment and Energy Conservation Specialist, grace.barcelow@hennepin.us, was not available for this meeting.

B. West Metro Water Alliance (WMWA) will meet via Zoom at 8:30 a.m., Tuesday, October 13, 2025. The link to join:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/922390839?pwd=TKlBQW1ZNXVXdzdtTDBTSDZkZmZuQT09>

IX. COMMUNICATIONS.

A. Staff Report. The October 1, 2025, Staff Report* provides updates on the development projects currently under review by Staff.

B. Hennepin County Staff Report.*

1. Lake Henry Hollow Horse Ranch, Rogers. Hennepin County staff surveyed the parcel and completed a level one wetland delineation on site. Information is being provided to the LGU for review. Once the finding of fact has been approved, the County will begin contracting.

2. City of Corcoran. Fields were disked and planted with the mesic native prairie seed mix. Hennepin County staff will walk the site with City staff and discuss next steps for the project including maintenance and management for 2026 and beyond.

3. Christian Sediment Basin, Dayton. The project voucher has been approved and reimbursement is being sent to the landowner. The project has officially been closed. Next inspection for the project will occur Summer 2026.

4. Welcome Ranch, Dayton. County staff are assisting in the development of plans for a manure bunker and heavy use area protections. Landowner has obtained a quote for the manure bunker. Staff are now working through the contracting process for the manure bunker and heavy use area protections.

5. Bottema Wetland Restoration, Corcoran. Construction has been completed on repairs and upgrades to restored wetlands on site. Improvements have corrected erosion and put in place measures to ensure that future erosion is prevented. This includes hard armoring spillways, and the installation of an agri-drain system that will meter flow from one of the larger wetlands on site. County staff walked the property with the technical service provider and got approval on the repairs to the site. Some future seeding may be necessary, but otherwise this project is concluding. Hennepin County staff will work to close out the project and reimburse the landowner. Hennepin County will continue to advise the landowner on future maintenance for the prairie and wetlands.

6. Natural Resources Partner Coalition. Robeson was present to discuss the Coalition; an effort between the County, Three Rivers Park District, and the University of Minnesota to build the data, tools, and partnerships necessary for improving natural systems in a wide variety of contexts countywide. The goal is to build a coalition of cities, watersheds, nonprofits, and private businesses that work across jurisdictions to improve our natural systems through planning and collaborative problem-solving. She discussed some of the planning work that has been done with partners and communities, as well as some of the next steps for the program and some of the relevant deliverables that could be helpful for Elm Creek. Robeson manages the Coalition. She has experience in community engagement, grant writing, and data analysis and is currently completing a PhD at the University of Minnesota, focused on the intersections of policy, decision-making, and the environment.

Current members of the Coalition include Hennepin County, Three Rivers Park District, the University of Minnesota, the Minnesota Land Trust, and the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund. <https://z.umn.edu/nrpc>

7. Information on other **County programming** completes the report.

X. OTHER BUSINESS.

Spector reported that the Commission's draft Fourth Generation Watershed Management Plan will be reviewed by the BWSR Central Region Committee on December 8, 2025, and be presented for approval at the December 15, 2025, full BWSR Board meeting. If approved, the Plan can be approved by the Commission at its January 14, 2026, meeting.

XI. ADJOURNMENT. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Judie A. Anderson
Recording Secretary

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