

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 District Overview

### 1.1.1 Jurisdictional Area and Member Cities

The South Washington Watershed District (SWWD) is located entirely in Washington County and contains portions of ten cities and townships: Afton, Cottage Grove, Denmark Township, Grey Cloud Island Township, Hastings, Lake Elmo, Newport, Oakdale, St. Paul Park and Woodbury. The jurisdictional area (i.e. legal boundary) of the District and location of member cities is shown in Map 1.1. The area comprised by the eight cities and townships is presented in Table 1.1.

*Table 1.1 – Area of member cities within the watershed\*.*

<i>Member City</i>	<i>Acreage</i>	<i>Square Miles</i>	<i>Percent of District</i>
Cottage Grove**	21,011	32.8	32
Denmark	19,275	30.1	30
Woodbury**	16,397	25.6	25
Newport	2,490	3.9	4
Grey Cloud Island	2,432	3.8	4
St. Paul Park	1,498	2.3	2
Lake Elmo**	704	1.1	1
Oakdale**	643	1.0	1
Afton**	448	0.7	1
Hastings	254	.4	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>65, 152</b>	<b>101.8</b>	<b>100</b>

\*Based on legal boundary

\*\* Original five cities comprising the Cottage Grove Ravine WMO

A narrative history of the SWWD is provided in Appendix A and only briefly discussed in this Section. The Cottage Grove Ravine Watershed Management Organization (WMO) was formed in 1984 to manage the resources of the watershed. The WMO was based on a joint powers agreement among the five cities in the watershed. A draft watershed management plan for the WMO was completed in April 1988. However, this plan was never approved or adopted by the WMO. The WMO was later disbanded, and, in 1993, the Cottage Grove Ravine Watershed District was formed as the 42nd watershed district

in Minnesota. The watershed district changed its name to the South Washington Watershed District in 1995. Completion and approval of the first SWWD WMP was completed in September, 1997 and later amended in 2002.

In April 2003, the SWWD petitioned the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources to enlarge the boundary and include the East Mississippi Water Management Organization. The East Mississippi Water Management Organization included all or portions of Grey Cloud Island Township, Cottage Grove, Woodbury, St. Paul Park and Newport. The enlargement was completed as part of recommendations from the Washington County Water Governance Study (1999). The enlargement petition was approved on May 28, 2003 by the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR).

In 2009, Washington County petitioned BWSR to enlarge SWWD's boundary to include 4 of the 5 subwatersheds of the former Lower St. Croix Watershed Management Organization (LSCWMO), which had dissolved. BWSR approved the petition; however, later in 2009 they contracted SWWD's boundary by moving 3 of the new subwatersheds to the Valley Branch Watershed District in approving a citizen petition. May 2010, the SWWD petitioned BWSR in response to a mediated agreement, with the support of all affected local municipalities and organizations, to again enlarge the boundary to include the 3 additional subwatersheds from the former LSCWMO, which lie in the Lower St. Croix River Basin. The enlargement petition was approved in September 2010 by BWSR.

### 1.1.2 Board of Managers

The Board of Managers, the terms they served, and the City they represented since inception is as follows:

Richard Hammero	1993-1998	Cottage Grove
Robert Koch	1993-1998	Oakdale
Patrick Rice	1993-1998	Cottage Grove
Christian Hiniker	1993-1998	Woodbury
James Wessman	1993-2002	Woodbury
Jack Lavold	1998-Present	Cottage Grove
Carol Hockert	1999-2000	Cottage Grove
Mike Gallagher	1999	Oakdale
Don Wodek	1999-2004	Woodbury
Don Pereira	2000-Present	Cottage Grove
Mike Pouliot	2002-Present	Woodbury
Denny Hanna	2003-Present	Grey Cloud Island
Brian Johnson	2004-Present	Woodbury

Managers are appointed by the Washington County Board of Commissioners and serve three year terms. A Manager can serve multiple terms.

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## 1.2 Plan Purpose

The South Washington Watershed District (SWWD) faces many opportunities and challenges associated with managing the water and natural resources within southern

Washington County. The primary challenge is managing these resources within a rapidly urbanizing landscape within the Minneapolis – St. Paul metropolitan area.

The SWWD is required to prepare a Watershed Management Plan (WMP) that inventories resources, assesses resource quality, and establishes regulatory controls, programs or infrastructure improvements needed to manage the resources within the watershed. The WMP provides the guidance for the SWWD to manage the water and natural resources of the watershed into the foreseeable future extending through 2017. The WMP must comply with Minnesota Rules Chapter 8410, "Metropolitan Area Local Water Management," (May 27, 1992), the Metropolitan Surface Water Management Act, Minnesota Statute 103B and Minnesota Statute 103D.

Land use changes affect the rate, volume, and quality of surface water runoff. Therefore, some assumption about future land use is needed for plan development. To ensure an adequate supply of urban land to accommodate future regional growth the Metropolitan Council monitors and guides the region's land supply via the Metropolitan Urban Service Area (MUSA). The MUSA boundary set for 2020 growth management is shown as Map 1.2 This WMP is based upon probable land use described in the 2020 municipal comprehensive plans of the Cities comprising the District, which are reviewed by the Metropolitan Council. A connection to land use decisions through planning and management of the resource ensures the future quality of the natural resources while accommodating growth in the watershed.

The SWWD Board of Managers intends to cooperate with and seek the assistance of municipalities, Washington County, additional governmental agencies, and the citizens of the SWWD, to accomplish the goals of the WMP. Since land use zoning and planning are a municipal responsibility, the District expects to work closely with its member Cities during their planning, review and development approval processes The District anticipates working closely with these Cities to establish a common technical framework for achieving mutual goals and objectives.

The mission of the SWWD reflects the cooperative resource management approach believed so critical by the Board of Managers. The mission of the SWWD is:

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*"To manage water and related resources of the South  
Washington Watershed District in cooperation with our  
citizens and communities."*

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The SWWD's implementation activities focus on three dominant resource issues: water quantity, water quality, and natural resources. Further, implementation activities can be categorized into three general types:

- 1) Studies / Evaluations / Assessments – Monitoring or modeling programs intended to develop a sound scientific basis for decision-making.
- 2) Technical framework development – Establishing consistency with respect to managing District resources by creating a uniform set of design standards, performance specifications and technical methods.
- 3) On-the-ground watershed improvements – Projects to complete recommended actions or designated initiatives, including structural / infrastructure elements as well as non-structural elements.

Projects and programs for implementation form a Long Range Work Plan for the District. They are grouped into ten management areas representing the priorities established by the Board of Managers (see Chapter 2).

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## **1.3 Plan Structure and Function**

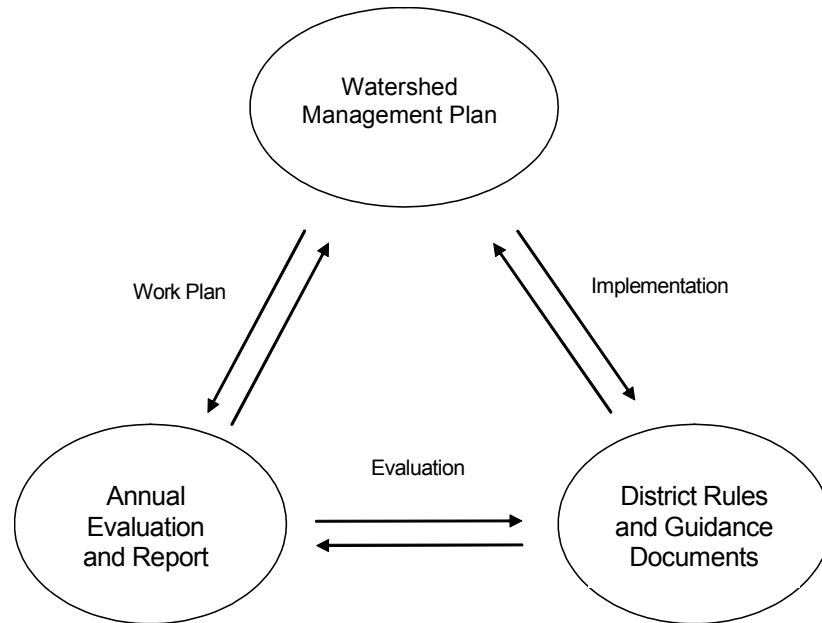
Watershed management plans are traditionally organized according to the order of required contents described by Minnesota Rule Section 8410.0160 General Structure. These traditional plans are written as if read from front to back at one time, although this is rarely if ever done. The portion of the plan addressing implementation is usually located at the end of the plan. Because the SWWD places great emphasis on implementation, this WMP is structured with the implementation portion of the plan near the front. The organization of this WMP is intended to be modular. The reader need not read a previous section in order to gain context for a subsequent section. Cross-references are provided for ease of navigation.

This WMP is structured to afford the District the highest degree of long-term flexibility. Flexibility is achieved by relying upon both existing and future supporting Guidance Documents (e.g., Wetland Management Plan) to help provide direction to the District and its member cities during resource management and implementation of projects and programs. The documents will be prepared on an as-needed basis by the SWWD.

The WMP establishes a long range work plan for the District and will be used to establish annual work and financial priorities. The WMP acts as one leg of a three-legged stool which supports District operation. The remaining two legs are the District Rules, which reference various SWWD Guidance Documents, and an annual evaluation tool to assess implementation success. The Guidance Documents (e.g., the Comprehensive Wetland Management Plan or Greenway Corridor Plan) provide a detailed framework for the District to manage resources and set rules. The conceptual figure illustrates the interrelationship between the approaches and tools used by the District during operation.

The WMP provides the foundation for implementing Guidance Documents, and incorporating outcomes into District Rules. The Guidance Documents further build upon standards described within the WMP (see Chapter 6). Data collected by the District through its monitoring programs and presented in the WMP forms the basis for rules established by the District. Guidance documents and rules can be efficiently revised without modifying the WMP (see Section 7.1.2 for additional discussion). The result is a flexible, modular framework for managing the District, which minimizes the need to revise the WMP. The annual evaluation tool allows the District to assess implementation efforts and adjust priorities and finances annually through the annual Work Plan.

Figure 1.1. – Conceptual relationship of tools and activities of the SWWD.



## 1.4 Previous Plan Success

The previous WMP adopted in 1997 identified broad areas for resource management activities and specific implementation items. Generally, the 1997 WMP guided District activities well. Successfully completed efforts identified by the WMP include establishing the Greenway Corridor plan, developing a Comprehensive Wetland Management Plan, and implementing a monitoring program for lakes, surface water runoff, and groundwater infiltration. The WMP was amended in 2002 to include the infrastructure improvements identified within the District's 2002 Engineer's Report ("Central Draw Project And Flood Storage Area Maps") which provided flood storage capacity for the watershed. The study defined, among other things, discharge hydrographs at critical locations between member cities (i.e., intercommunity flows) to reduce flooding hazards and needed improvements.

Some elements of the 1997 WMP were met with only partial success. Mitigation measures to address the affect of urbanization on receiving waters do not appear to sufficiently protect water quality based upon the monitoring data collected by the District (see Chapter 4). Implementation of erosion and sediment control goals, as well as education goals and program objectives, in the 1997 WMP were lacking. The 1997 WMP set forth specific projects. These projects and their completion status is provided within Table 1.2.

*Table 1.2 – Priority projects proposed in the SWWD 1997 WMP.*

<i>Priority Ranking</i>	<i>Proposed Project</i>	<i>Nature of Project</i>	<i>Status</i>	
			<i>Planning</i>	<i>Implementation</i>
1	Central Draw Outlet Study	Water Quantity	Completed	On-going
2	West Draw Drainage Improvements	Water Quantity	Completed	On-going
3	Central Draw Interim Ponding	Water Quantity	Completed	On-going
4	Wetland Assessment and Management Plan	Natural Resources	Completed	Pending
5	Public Education Learning Centers	Water Quality	Not implemented <sup>1</sup>	Not implemented <sup>1</sup>
6	Powers Lake Management Plan	Natural Resources	Completed	On-going
7	Lake Assessment Studies	Natural Resources	On-going <sup>1</sup>	Pending
8	Greenway Concept Plan	Natural Resources	Completed	On-going
9	Pond/Wetland Treatment System in Westerly Drainageway	Water Quality	Not implemented <sup>2</sup>	Not implemented <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> These items are included in this WMP.

<sup>2</sup> Item is no longer considered a priority at this time.