
Executive Summary

Plan Context

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 (SWWD) in 1995. Completion and approval of the first SWWD Watershed Management Plan (WMP) occurred in September, 1997. The WMP was later amended in 2002.

The first WMP was heavily oriented towards inventorying and assessing the District resources. Currently the SWWD is well-positioned to take extensive watershed actions based upon the assessments and studies performed since 1997 under the first WMP. Because the SWWD places great emphasis on implementation, this WMP is prepared with the implementation portion of the plan near the front. The overall 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.

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 constituents during resource management and implementation of projects and programs.

Plan Implementation

Underpinnings

Ten management areas have been defined through which the SWWD will work to execute the WMP. A single goal is associated with each management area (see Table ES.1). The District recognizes that often one issue can affect several management areas (e.g., stormwater infiltration practices). Numerous policies and specific action items support the identified goal for a management area.

The goals, policies, and actions establish a clearly linked framework to address the specific issues and problems outlined in the WMP. The issues and problems are characterized on a District-wide (regional) basis as well as on a subwatershed (local) basis. The issues reflect specific project-related elements as well as broader program and regulatory elements. Together the issues and policies / actions create a work plan for the District to implement.

*The terms SWWD and District are used interchangeably.

Table ES.1 –SWWD management areas and related goals.(from Section 5.2)

<i>Management Area</i>	<i>Goal</i>
Floodplain Management	Opportunistically manage floodplains for multiple non-development uses.
Stormwater Runoff Rate and Volume	Minimize existing and future potential damages to property, public safety, and water resources due to flood events
Water Quality	Maintain, or where practical improve, the water quality of wetlands and water bodies within the District.
Wetlands	Manage the quantity and quality of wetlands within the watershed for their best function in a rapidly urbanizing environment.
Natural Resources and Recreation	Participate in conservation or creation of key natural areas with respect to habitat, wildlife, or recreation.
Groundwater	Pursue a sustainable balance between surface water management, land use activities, and groundwater integrity.
Erosion and Sediment Control	Facilitate erosion control and reduce impacts to wetlands and water bodies from sedimentation.
Education	Heighten the awareness of key constituencies within the District, sufficiently to modify behavior to improve the recognition and implementation of District policies, programs and activities.
Long Range Work Planning and Financing	Utilize District funds to initiate or support long range work plan projects which reduce flooding or otherwise benefit key District resources.
Data Management	Collect and manage data in a manner which maximizes the availability to and use by constituents of the District.

The SWWD will utilize a long range work plan to identify, prioritize, and prepare for District implementation activities. The long range work plan will generally guide District activities for the foreseeable future. The District will annually develop a condensed list from the long range work plan which will constitute targeted efforts for the coming year. The condensed list represents the annual work plan for the SWWD.

The annual work plan is intended to be a fluid document which may change from year-to-year according to the District's achievements, new opportunities or emerging issues. An annual progress evaluation tool provides feedback necessary to revise and adjust the work plan each year. The tool is an essential component of this WMP to provide an evaluation mechanism regarding the success of plan implementation.

Administration

The SWWD's implementation activities focus on three overarching 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. The implementation activities are organized under the management areas shown in Table ES.1 and represent the priorities established by the Board of Managers.

Plan Standards and Guidance

District standards in the WMP incorporate the key findings and outcomes of critical studies and plans. Analysis of resource data collected within the District serves as a foundation for standards where there is no existing Guidance Document (e.g, lake management plan). The standards and guidance structured in this WMP are intended to address site-specific issues as well as broader watershed-wide issues.

Eight general areas have been established for which standards are identified, including:

- ❖ Wetland Classification and Management;
- ❖ Receiving Water Classification and Management;
- ❖ Requirements for Land Disturbance and Land Development;
- ❖ Critical Storage Areas;
- ❖ Regional Assessment Locations;
- ❖ Utilization of Infiltration;
- ❖ Open Channel Stability; and
- ❖ Bluff Buffers.

The resource monitoring and data collection underway since the mid-1990's provides a management context for the condition of a resource. The data analysis included in this WMP also offers valuable insight to member cities who are characterizing local resource conditions through modeling. Cities can choose to either use the information herein directly as model inputs or as reference checks to model outputs. In this manner, guidance for meeting regulatory programs is supplied in the WMP.