Our Organization

Mission

To enhance the quality of water in the lakes within its jurisdiction. It is understood that to accomplish this, the District must ensure that wise decisions are made concerning the management of streams, wetlands, lakes, groundwater, and related land resources which affect these lakes.

What is a Watershed District?

A watershed district is a special purpose unit of local government in charge of managing water resources within designated watershed boundaries. Watershed Districts work to protect and improve water quality in the lakes, rivers, and wetlands, and to protect residents against flooding.

Because Minnesota is the land of 10,000 lakes, it established watershed Districts as legal entities through the Minnesota Watershed Act of 1955. Minnesota has 48 watershed districts working to protect our lakes, streams, wetlands, and natural habitat.

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Background

Acting on a nominating petition submitted by a small group of dedicated citizens on September 15, 1965, the Minnesota Water Resources Board (MWRB) established the Pelican River Watershed District (PRWD) on May 27, 1966—the first district in the state to be formed because of water quality issues and concerns. In explaining its action, the Board found that the...

"principal bodies of water in the upper reaches of the watercourse of the Pelican River, Detroit Lake, Lake Sallie and Lake Melissa, have become at certain times during the summer recreational months, unhealthy and unsightly due to excessive weed and algae growths. Such undesirable growths along the shores of the above lakes have interfered with boating, fishing and swimming; and have denied lake home owners the enjoyment of water scenery. In addition, weeds and algae growths have affected lake property value." (MWRB, 1966)

The perception that conditions of area lakes were rapidly deteriorating was the primary motivation for creating a watershed district, and has guided formulation of the District’s 1967 Overall Plan and the subsequent efforts of the District Managers since that time. These efforts have included research, storm water management, advocacy of sewer projects and improvement of sewage treatment facilities, aquatic plant management activities, prevention and control of invasive species especially flowering rush, and many other conservation and enhancement activities.

About the District

Located within Becker and Ottertail counties, the Pelican River watershed District covers 120 square miles and includes the City of Detroit Lakes. PRWD drains to the Ottertail river and on to the Red River of the North up to Lake Winnipeg, Canada. Floyd, Detroit, Long, Fox, Monson, Peari, Sallie, Melissa, and other smaller lakes are located in the PRWD.

A board of seven managers appointed by the Becker County Board of Commissioners guides the work of PRWD. Meetings are held the third Thursday of the month and are open to the public. Officers are elected at the annual meeting, which is generally held in January. PRWD works with other government units, cities, and neighboring watershed districts to protect and improve PRWD’s lakes, streams, wetlands and the Ottertail and Red River of the North.

Finances

State statutes 103D and 103E provide watershed districts the authority to levy property taxes and the amount is included on property tax statements. A budget is developed annually and approved after comments are received and a public hearing is held. The funds received through the property tax levy can be used for projects, grants, programs, and administration as recommended in the Pelican River Revised Water Management Plan (2005-14). More detailed information about PRWD’s finances can be found on www.prwd.org


Established by State on May 27, 1966 by community and lake association leaders to address deteriorating lake water quality conditions.

**District Size:** 120 Square Miles  
**Wetlands:** 11,957 Acres  
**Pelican River:** 8.3 miles  
**Lakes:** 144  
**Ditch Systems:** 3  
Becker County 11-12, 13, 14

The District encompasses 75,160 acres in Becker and 1,747 acres in Ottertail County for a total of 76,907 acres. The area includes the upper reaches of the Pelican River, and several large lakes.

**City/Townships:** City of Detroit Lakes; Erie, Richwood, Detroit, Lakeview, Lake Eunice, and Holmesville Townships

**Major Lakes:** Big & Little Floyd, North Floyd, Big & Little Detroit, Sallie, Melissa, Long, Pearl, Fox, St. Clair, Munson, Abbey, Meadow, Johnson, and Reeves.

**Board of Managers:** 7
Water Management Planning

The District's 2005-14 management plan water quality goals have remained essentially the same as in the 1995 Plan and 1997 Plan Amendments as follows:

**Goal 1:** The water quality in District lakes shall not be further degraded.  
**Goal 2:** Lake water quality for any lakes classified as Eutrophic shall be improved to Mesotrophic.

The following conditions are identified in the plans as causing potential water quality problems in District Lakes:

1. Incomplete treatment of sanitary wastes, especially septage  
2. Inadequately treated storm water effluent  
3. Nutrient enriched surface discharges to lake and streams  
4. Nutrient enriched groundwater discharges to lakes and streams  
5. Removal of wetlands which serve as a natural sediment and nutrient buffers  
6. Excessive aquatic plant biomass in lake littoral zones  
7. Channelization of drainage ways, and drainage of wetlands which enhances sediment and nutrient discharges to lakes  
8. Existence of nutrient-enriched wetlands and lake-bottom sediments wherein nutrients are released under conditions of unusual runoff or anoxia.

Every ten years the District is required to complete a Revised Management Plan which encompasses all avenues of the District’s work. The District has started the process of updating its current plan which will be completed by December 31, 2016. The District will be using the One Watershed, One Plan outline for it’s next generation plan which will coordinate with other water management organizations, including Becker and Ottertail Counties Soil and Water Conservation Service, MN Department of Natural Resources, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Board of Water and Soil Resources, Department of Health, Becker County, City of Detroit Lakes and townships.

This 2014 Annual Report is submitted to the Board of Water and Soil Resources, the Commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources, and the Director of the Division of Waters. Copies are available in the District office and in the District’s Website at www.prwd.org.
Our Organization

Water Management Plan

Legend
LWQMA Areas
LWQMA
- Brandy
- Detroit-Rice
- Floyd-Campbell
- Fox-Munson
- Long
- Pearl-Loon
- Sallie-Melissa
- Small lakes

PRWD Water Management District

0 1.25 2.5 5 Miles