

Watershed District Plans

Managers are required to prepare, and then operate within, the general framework of their Overall Plan, now called the Watershed Management Plan or the Revised Watershed Management Plan. The law requires such plans to be revised at least once every ten years

The first District plan was prepared in 1966 and 1967 by the Managers with the direct assistance of an Advisory Committee. Comprised of a wide range of community leaders, the Advisory Committee, included City and County officials, local businessmen and professionals, federal and state officials, lake association representatives, and educators. The committee was divided into work groups which prepared portions of the plan (modeled after existing Watershed District plans that had been made available). The notes and recommendations for the various parts of the plan were pulled together by Reverend Emerson Harris (Detroit Lakes Congregational church) who wrote the final draft of the plan.

Advisory Committee, 1966-1967

Bill Corwin, Emerson Harris, John Johansson, Tom Keenen, Jr, Winston C. Larson, Duane Lidstrom, Irvin Lidstrom, Frank Long, Mrs. E. S. Lorentzen, Ernest Nelson, Orville Nordsletten, John Pearson, Carl Randolph, Donald CV. Reedstromg, William Reid, Wayne Ruona, Parnell Sanford, J.A. Sauer, Jr, Jack Baker Smith, Jerry B. Stroud, Clem TeVogt, Al M. Ungerecht, Arlo Weimer, A.R. Bergeson, Allan Rice, John Rutledge.

The 1967 plan focused on eutrophication problems of area lakes; it noted the gaps in information and indicated that a principal task of the District would be to conduct basic research and obtain data on the nature and causes of the water quality problems. A hearing was held on October 19, 1967; very strong community support for the plan and District's managers was reported by city and county officials, lake association groups, and other citizens. The County Auditor noted that property values had decreased on those lakes which had deteriorated the most, and that the community would be threatened if steps were not taken to correct the problems. The District's Overall Plan was approved by the State in December, 1967, and served the District for almost 27 years.

With the passage of time, the original plan no longer served the needs of the District. For that reason, and in order to comply with State Law, the District began to consider revisions to its management plan in the late 1980's. From 1990-1992 several different drafts were prepared for agency review. In each instance, the draft was found to be deficient in some respect.

In the meantime the District had entered into a Clean Lakes Partnership with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, an arrangement that lead to significant improvement in understanding of lake water quality problems and their causes. Therefore it was decided to postpone the preparation of the District's Revised Water Management Plan (RWMP) until it had completed comprehensive diagnostic study for the PCA.

Accordingly, in mid-1994, a RWMP revision, bearing little resemblance to earlier versions finally was prepared and sent to BWSR for review. It reflected major re-thinking of District goals and the status of various programs. It benefited substantially from the completion of a report for a Clean Lakes Partnership which assisted the District in assessing the condition of lakes, identifying certain problems, and the developing of goals, strategies and measures to address the problems. The new plan utilized a geographic information system (GIS) approach which facilitated data retrieval, mapping and analysis. The plan received expedited review and was approved in December, 1994.

In 1997 the Revised Water Management Plan was amended, mainly to take in to account the County's assignment of responsibility for four public ditches to the District. The Amendments also enabled the adoption of a new funding approach, charging fees for stormwater discharge.

A complete revision of the Water Management Plan was approved in 2005. This relied heavily upon strategies, previously adopted by the District, but added considerable detail in the form of implementation plans tailored to each of eight Lake Water Quality Management Areas.