



PRESS RELEASE: For immediate release

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Wanted: Your Thoughts and Ideas for Lakes and Streams in the Bassett Creek Watershed By Judy Arginteanu

Suffering from insomnia? Read this for a quick cure: Stormwater runoff. Infiltration. Watershed management .

Yawn, right? Feeling sleepy now?

OK, now try this: Shrinking back yards. Stinky creeks. Flooded basements.

Kind of wakes you up again, doesn't it?

That's why the Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission wants to hear from you. The commission is made up of ordinary residents like you who focus on improving water quality and preventing flooding – issues that affect all of us – in the 40-square-mile Bassett Creek watershed. Every 10 years the commission updates its management plan for protecting and improving the watershed, which includes Medicine, Parkers and Sweeney lakes, Wirth Park, and, of course, Bassett Creek. The commission is starting to update its plan for the next 10 years and needs input from you. Residents and businesses can air their thoughts and concerns through a quick and easy online survey at www.bassettcreekwmo.org, at meetings in their communities, or at a Bassett Creek Watershed Summit scheduled for 7 p.m., June 13, 2013, at the Plymouth City Hall.

If you think your voice won't make a difference, Terrie Christian knows otherwise. When she bought her property on Medicine Lake in the mid-'80s, she found "a very, very sick lake," filling with sediment and full of algae blooms that turned the lake into a smelly mess and drove away walleye and other game fish – not to mention swimmers.

Some 25 years later, through the commission, Christian and other lake-area residents have seen their concerns not only heard, but acted on. While the lake still faces some issues, it's in far better health. The commission needs to hear from people like Terrie on the front lines, who serve as the commission's eyes and ears, says commissioner Ginny Black. "We need people to tell us what they're seeing. We can't be everywhere, all the time." And you don't have to live on a lake, or even take regular walks by a stream, either. For example, you may find your backyard is slipping away because of erosion – caused by what's happening upstream. Or you might have a strong opinion about the importance of green corridors and

parks, says state conservationist Brad Wozney, because how land is used directly affects the quality of water resources.

Citizen input is also a good way to help direct where your tax dollars are going, he says. Plus, he notes, a well-drafted plan – which includes adequate citizen input so the commission can be as specific as possible – can help local governments get state grants for projects, which in turn help local dollars go further toward improvements.

Since the Bassett Creek watershed is mostly developed, the commission focuses on opportunities to retrofit best management practices into the landscape and restore degraded areas along streams. Improving water quality and reducing flooding are the main goals of the Commission. Additional areas of focus come through feedback from people like you.

Those goals are important to people like Deacon Warner, who says he never knew about Bassett Creek until he and his family moved to Minneapolis' Harrison neighborhood (and later to Bryn Mawr). Now he, his wife, and their two kids, 8 and 12 years old, spend much of their time near the creek – walking, kayaking, even skiing along it in winter. “Bassett Creek is like a test microcosm of how we want to treat nature. It's had an incredible history – it used to be incredibly polluted, it was treated as a sewer, it was buried. It seems so important that we don't turn our backs on nature even in our urban environment. We have choices about how we want to treat it,” says Warner.

Terrie Christian would agree. The point, she says, is to speak up: “Citizen input is really important. And it can be really powerful.”

The Bassett Creek watershed covers parts or all of Crystal, Golden Valley, Medicine Lake, Minneapolis, Minnetonka, New Hope, Plymouth, Robbinsdale and St. Louis Park. To see a map of the watershed, find out more about the watershed planning process, answer survey questions, or find out how you can get involved, visit the Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission's website at www.bassettcreekwmo.org, attend the Bassett Creek Watershed Summit on June 13, or contact their administrator, Laura Jester, at laura.jester@keystonewaters.com or 952-270-1990.

Invitation to the Bassett Creek Watershed Summit

Join us in a conversation about the watershed. Learn the results of the survey, visit with other residents of the watershed, and help us prioritize watershed issues!

**Thursday June 13, 2013
7–9 p.m.
Plymouth City Hall**

Registration is requested but not required.
Register with bcra@barr.com

Provide Input on the Bassett Creek Watershed

Visit www.bassettcreekwmo.org to complete a survey about your thoughts on water resources in your community!