



Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission

MEMO

Date: July 10, 2019
From: Laura Jester, Administrator
To: BCWMC Commissioners
RE: **Administrator's Report**

Aside from this month's agenda items, the Commission Engineers, city staff, committee members, and I continue to work on the following Commission projects and issues.

CIP Projects (more resources at <http://www.bassettcreekwmo.org/projects>.)

2019 Medicine Lake Road and Winnetka Avenue Area Long Term Flood Mitigation Plan Implementation Phase I: DeCola Ponds B & C Improvement Project (BC-2, BC-3 & BC-8) Golden Valley: A feasibility study for this project was completed in May 2018 after months of study, development of concepts and input from residents at two public open houses. At the May 2018 meeting, the Commission approved Concept 3 and set a maximum 2019 levy. Also in May 2018, the Minnesota Legislature passed the bonding bill and the MDNR has since committed \$2.3M for the project. The Hennepin County Board approved a maximum 2019 levy request at their meeting in July 2018. A BCWMC public hearing on this project was held on August 16, 2018 with no comments being received. Also at that meeting the Commission officially ordered the project and entered an agreement with the City of Golden Valley to design and construct the project. In September 2018, the City of Golden Valley approved the agreement with the BCWMC. The [Sun Post](#) ran an article on this project October 2018. Another public open house and presentation of 50% designs was held February 6, 2019. An EAW report was completed and available for public review and comment December 17 – January 16, 2019. At their meeting in February 2019, the Commission approved the 50% design plans. Another public open house was held April 10th and a public hearing on the water level drawdown was held April 16th. 90% Design Plans were approved at the April Commission meeting. The project is currently out for construction bids. It was determined a Phase 1 investigation of the site is not required. Dewatering and temporary berm construction is expected to happen September 2 through September 15 and tree removal can begin on October. Remaining construction will happen over the winter with restoration in the late spring/early summer 2020. Construction bid opening was scheduled for June 26th. Project website: <http://www.bassettcreekwmo.org/index.php?cID=433> .

2020 Bryn Mawr Meadows Water Quality Improvement Project (BC-5), Minneapolis (no change since May): A feasibility study by the Commission Engineer began last fall and included wetland delineations, soil borings, public open houses held in conjunction with MPRB's Bryn Mawr Meadows Park improvement project, and input from MPRB's staff and design consultants. At their meeting in April, the Commission approved a TAC and staff recommendation to move this project from implementation in 2019 to design in 2020 and construction in 2021 to better coincide with the MPRB's planning and implementation of significant improvements and redevelopment Bryn Mawr Meadows Park where the project will be located. A draft feasibility study was presented at the October meeting. At direction of the Commission, staff discussed Penn Pond function and maintenance with MnDOT to better understand treatment options. The final feasibility study was approved at the January 2019 Commission meeting. Staff recently discussed the maintenance of Penn Pond with MnDOT again and received written confirmation that pond maintenance will occur prior to the park's reconstruction project with coordination among the BCWMC, MPRB, and MnDOT. Project website: <http://www.bassettcreekwmo.org/projects/all-projects/bryn-mawr-meadows-water-quality-improvement-project>

2020 Jevne Park Stormwater Improvement Project (ML-21) Medicine Lake: At their meeting in July 2018, the Commission approved a proposal from the Commission Engineer to prepare a feasibility study for this project. The study got underway last fall and the city's project team met on multiple occasions with the Administrator and Commission Engineer. The Administrator and Engineer also presented the draft feasibility study to the Medicine Lake City Council on February 4, 2019 and a public open house was held on February 28th. The feasibility study was approved at the April Commission meeting with intent to move forward with option 1. The city's project team is continuing to assess the project and understand its implications on city finances, infrastructure, and future management. The city is planning to seek proposals from select engineering firms for project design and construction. Project webpage: <http://www.bassettcreekwmo.org/index.php?CID=467>.

2019 Westwood Lake Water Quality Improvement Project (WST-2) St. Louis Park: At their meeting in September 2017, the Commission approved a proposal from the Commission Engineer to complete a feasibility study for this project. The project will be completed in conjunction with the Westwood Hills Nature Center reconstruction project. After months of study, several meetings with city consultants and nature center staff, and a public open house, the Commission approved Concept 3 (linear water feature) and set a maximum 2019 levy at their May meeting. 50% designs were approved at the July meeting and 90% design plans were approved at the August meeting. The Hennepin County Board approved a maximum 2019 levy request at their meeting in July. A BCWMC public hearing on this project was held on August 16th with no comments being received. At that meeting the Commission officially ordered the project and entered an agreement with the City of St. Louis Park to design and construct the project and directed the Education Committee to assist with development of a BCWMC educational sign for inside the nature center. The draft sign was presented at the October meeting and was finalized over the winter. Construction on the new building started this spring. The Sun Sailor printed [an article](#) on the project in October. Project website: <http://www.bassettcreekwmo.org/projects/all-projects/westwood-lake-water-quality-improvement-project> The educational sign about the BCWMC and water quality is undergoing final revisions. The sign related to the bog is shown here (with a few minor revisions to be made).

DRAFT

WHAT IS A PEAT BOG?

Bogs are a special type of wetland found on saturated, acid peat soils. They support a unique collection of trees, low shrubs and herbs, growing on a mat of sphagnum moss. In Minnesota, most bogs are found north of the twin cities.

You can find a bog not too far from here at Theodore Wirth Park in Minneapolis.

HOW IS A BOG CREATED?

Bogs originate on a floating mat of sedges usually at the edge of a lake that becomes colonized by sphagnum mosses. Over thousands of years, the mat thickens and becomes more stable. It becomes populated by evergreen shrubs of the heath family (Ericaceae). Eventually, tamarack and black spruce trees can be supported by the mat. Peat accumulates when plant material does not fully decay because of cold, acidic and low-oxygen conditions.

In peat bogs the annual rate of biomass production is greater than the rate of decomposition. This makes bogs very efficient at absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

HOME TO THESE SPECIES

SPHAGNUM MOSS
Sphagnum mosses are the characteristic species of bogs. They play an important role in keeping the bog environment acidic by their production of organic acids. Sphagnum mosses are commonly known as peat moss. Approximately 20 species of Sphagnum are found in Minnesota.

PITCHER PLANTS
Peat bogs are low in nutrients, so only certain plants thrive there. Pitcher plants are extremely well-adapted to the environment of peat bogs. Pitcher plants are carnivorous. They "eat" insects that get trapped in the water held by their leaves. Dissolving (rather than eating) the insects is how they get nutrients to survive.

TAMARACK TREES
Tamaracks are hardy, cold-tolerant deciduous conifers. The needles turn golden in autumn, drop off, and regrow in the spring. Tamarack is the only conifer in Minnesota that sheds all its leaves (needles) each fall. Both tamaracks and black spruce trees are found in fully developed peat bogs.

WOODLAND CARIBOU
Woodland Caribou are a threatened subspecies of reindeer that primarily live in bogs, marshes, lakes and river regions. The majority live in Canada in unbroken tracts of boreal forest. There have been no reported sightings in Minnesota since the 1980s.

Sponsored by

2018 Bassett Creek Park Pond Phase I Dredging Project: Winnetka Pond, Crystal (BCP-2) (No change since June): The final feasibility study for this project was approved at the May 2017 meeting and is available on the project page online at <http://www.bassettcreekwmo.org/index.php?cID=403>. At the September 2017 meeting, the Commission held a public hearing on the project and adopted a resolution officially ordering the project, certifying costs to Hennepin County, and entering an agreement with the City of Crystal for design and construction. Hennepin County approved the 2018 final levy request at their meeting in November 2017. The City of Crystal hired Barr Engineering to design the project. At their meeting in April, the Commission approved 50% design plans. A public open house on the project was held May 24th where four residents asked questions, provided comments, and expressed support. 90% design plans were approved at the June 2018 meeting. An Environmental Assessment Worksheet was recently approved and a construction company was awarded the contract. A pre-construction meeting was held December 14th and construction began in January. A large area of contamination was discovered during excavation in February 2019. At their meeting February 21, 2019 the Commission approved additional funding for this project in order to properly dispose of the contamination and continue building the project as designed. An amended agreement with the city of Crystal was approved at the March Commission meeting. Pond dredging is complete; the contractor completed storm sewer work at the site and installed the outlet trash rack. The City executed a contract with Applied Ecological Services for buffer establishment which recently got underway.

2017 Plymouth Creek Restoration Project, Annapolis Lane to 2,500 feet Upstream (2017CR-P) (No change since Feb): All project documents including the feasibility study and 90% design plans are available online at <http://www.bassettcreekwmo.org/index.php?cID=284>. The BCWMC executed agreements with the BWSR for a \$400,000 Clean Water Fund grant and with Hennepin County for a \$50,000 Opportunity Grant and a subgrant agreement with the City was executed. Project design was completed by the city's contractor, Wenck Associates, with 60% and 90% design plans approved by the Commission at the April and August 2017 meetings, respectively. Plymouth City Council awarded a construction contract in early December 2017 and construction got underway on December 11, 2017. Streambank restoration work is complete in all three reaches. Vegetation is currently being established. Requests for reimbursement to the city were approved at the June and July BCWMC meetings. I recently submitted a Clean Water Fund grant interim report.

2017 Main Stem Bassett Creek Streambank Erosion Repair Project (2017CR-M) (No change since April): The feasibility study for this project was approved at the April Commission meeting and the final document is available on the project page at: <http://www.bassettcreekwmo.org/index.php?cID=281>. A Response Action Plan to address contaminated soils in the project area was completed by Barr Engineering with funding from Hennepin County and was reviewed and approved by the MPCA. The Commission was awarded an Environmental Response Fund grant from Hennepin County for \$150,300 and a grant agreement is in the process of being signed by the county. A subgrant agreement with the City will be developed. The City hired Barr Engineering to design and construct the project. Fifty-percent and 90% designs were approved at the August and October Commission meetings, respectively. In September 2017, design plans were presented by Commission and city staff to the Harrison Neighborhood Association's Glenwood Revitalization Team committee and through a public open house on the project. Bidding for construction is complete and a pre-construction meeting was recently held. Construction was to begin summer of 2018 but will be delayed until summer 2019 due to the unanticipated need for a field based cultural and historical survey of the project area required by the Army Corps of Engineers and the preference for Pioneer Paper (a significant landowner and access grantor) for a spring/summer construction window. The cultural and historical survey fieldwork is complete and a final report was sent to the State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO) in February. Construction will begin this summer. The contractor (Sunram Construction) and Barr Engineering staff will meet with landowners regarding access in the coming weeks.

2014 Schaper Pond Diversion Project, Golden Valley (SL-3): Repairs to the baffle structure were made in 2017 after anchor weights pulled away from the bottom of the pond and some vandalism occurred in 2016.

The city continues to monitor the baffle and check the anchors, as needed. Vegetation around the pond was planted in 2016 and a final inspection of the vegetation was completed last fall. Once final vegetation has been completed, erosion control will be pulled and the contract will be closed. The Commission Engineer began the Schaper Pond Effectiveness Monitoring Project last summer and presented results and recommendations at the May 2018 meeting. Additional effectiveness monitoring is being performed this summer. At the July meeting the Commission Engineer reported that over 200 carp were discovered in the pond during a recent carp survey. At the September meeting the Commission approved the Engineer's recommendation to perform a more in-depth survey of carp including transmitters to learn where and when carp are moving through the system. A Federal 319 grant for management of carp in relation to Schaper Pond and Sweeney Lake was recently approved by the MPCA. Funding should be available early next year.

2014 Twin Lake In-lake Alum Treatment, Golden Valley (TW-2): (No change since June 2018) At their March 2015 meeting, the Commission approved the project specifications and directed the city to finalize specifications and solicit bids for the project. The contract was awarded to HAB Aquatic Solutions. The alum treatment spanned two days: May 18- 19, 2015 with 15,070 gallons being applied. Water temperatures and water pH stayed within the desired ranges for the treatment. Early transparency data from before and after the treatment indicates a change in Secchi depth from 1.2 meters before the treatment to 4.8 meters on May 20th. There were no complaints or comments from residents during or since the treatment. Water monitoring continues to determine if and when a second alum treatment is necessary. Lake monitoring results from 2017 were presented at the June 2018 meeting. Commissioners agreed with staff recommendations to keep the CIP funding remaining for this project as a 2nd treatment may be needed in the future.

2013 Four Season Area Water Quality Project/Agora Development (NL-2): At their meeting in December 2016, the Commission took action to contribute up to \$830,000 of Four Seasons CIP funds for stormwater management at the Agora development on the old Four Seasons Mall location. At their February 2017 meeting the Commission approved an agreement with Rock Hill Management (RHM) and an agreement with the City of Plymouth allowing the developer access to a city-owned parcel to construct a wetland restoration project and to ensure ongoing maintenance of the CIP project components. At the August 2017 meeting, the Commission approved the 90% design plans for the CIP portion of the project. At the April 2018 meeting, Commissioner Prom notified the Commission that RHM recently disbanded its efforts to purchase the property for redevelopment. In spring 2019, a new potential buyer/developer is preparing plans for redevelopment at the site. Alternate Commissioner Cesnik and I attended the neighborhood meeting and briefly discussed opportunities for funding above and beyond stormwater management features to improve water quality leaving the area and entering Northwood Lake. The Commission Engineer and I met with city staff and the redevelopment team to review potential "above and beyond" stormwater management techniques.

Other Work

CIP Project Work and Technical Assistance

- Prepared brief presentation on BCWMC and its biological monitoring program; gave presentation at Met Council's Water Monitoring Technical Group meeting at Wirth Park Chalet
- Prepared agenda and participated in TAC meeting; prepared TAC recommendations memo
- Picked up CAMP samples
- Discussed Jevne Park CIP Project timeline, agreement, responsibilities, and feasibility study with Medicine Lake project team and the city's engineering consultant

Administration and Education

- Reviewed and edited July education press release
- Submitted 2020 proposed operating budget to cities for comment by August 1st
- Coordinated and attended watershed tour and 50th anniversary event including development and printing of tour handout, coordinating tour speakers, printing nametags, gathering and setting up historical and education displays, picking up and dropping off compost bins, corresponding with venue and bus operator, sending follow up email to participants
- Invoiced project proposer for Ridgedale Active Adults Project for review fees about \$5,000