



Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission

MEMO

To: BCWMC Commissioners and Alternates
From: Administrator Jester
Date: August 12, 2026

RE: West Metro Water Alliance Updates and Agreement

Recommendation:

- Review the update on WMWA's strategic planning efforts
- Approve the updated WMWA agreement with Shingle Creek Watershed Management Commission

Background

The West Metro Water Alliance (WMWA) is a collaboration among BCWMC, Elm Creek WMC, Shingle Creek WMC, and West Mississippi WMC. Since 2006, this group has pooled funding for education and outreach initiatives across these watersheds. More recently, Hennepin County has also been closely involved with WMWA by sharing a staff person and facilitating the implementation of projects funded through Watershed Based Implementation Funding from the State of Minnesota. WMWA activities are a critical part of the BCWMC's education and outreach efforts.

Vision: The West Metro Water Alliance (WMWA) is a collaborative group working to create educational opportunities to protect and improve water resources.

Mission: Improve water resources through education and outreach by:

- Identifying and implementing common education and outreach strategies to promote consistency of messages
- Pooling resources to undertake activities in the most cost-effective manner
- Promoting interagency cooperation and collaboration

Goals:

- Inform the public about the watershed organizations and their programs
- Provide useful information to the public on priority topics
- Educate the public and encourage environmentally and water-friendly behaviors
- Help member cities meet MS4 permit education requirements

2025 WMWA Annual Report:

https://www.bassettcreekwmo.org/application/files/5517/8122/5943/Item_7D_2025_WMWA_Annual_Report.pdf

Operations:

WMWA operates through an agreement with Shingle Creek WMC which is the fiscal agent for the collaboration and whose staff perform administrative functions such as budgeting, reporting, and meeting facilitation. WMWA partners and other interested stakeholders meet monthly to hear updates from partners and contractors, review the budget, and develop or expand programs and materials. As a representative from BCWMC, I regularly attend the monthly meetings and contribute to the overall work and guidance of the collaboration.

Through Shingle Creek WMC, WMWA contracts with other groups or individuals to implement its programs. This includes contracting with an educator to deliver curriculum in 4th and 5th grade classrooms in the WMWA area. In 2025, hundreds of students across ten different schools in BCWMC received at least one “Watershed PREP” lesson from the WMWA educator. Additionally, the educator participates in school science nights and community events. WMWA maintains (and is currently overhauling) a website and is present on social media. Recent education materials developed by WMWA include the often-distributed [“10 Things”](#) brochure and the interactive “Native Roots Display” for use at events.

In 2023, WMWA partners pooled some of their Watershed Based Implementation Funds (granted through the MN Board of Water and Soil Resources) with Hennepin County to help support a limited duration conservation specialist half-time position. This dedicated half-time WMWA coordinator has become a key part of the education and outreach efforts of WMWA and the WMOs, and a supplement to the member cities. For smaller cities who may have limited staff, WMWA is essential to meeting their education and outreach goals and obligations.

Strategic Planning

Several factors recently led WMWA partners to start a strategic planning process including:

- WMWA has largely operated informally as a “committee of those who show up”
- WBIF grant funding that currently supports the part-time coordinator may not be sustainable long-term
- WMWA would like to more closely emulate the work of the [East Metro Water Resource Education Program](#) with a dedicated, full-time staff person

A Strategic Planning Committee (of which I am a member) was established in 2025 and gathered input from the WMOs and their TAC members and held a focus group meeting with a broad group of stakeholders from the WMWA area and beyond. The committee found that there is a desire to continue working collaboratively on education, while assisting cities with MS4 education requirements and coordinating consistent messaging without duplicating the efforts of cities or others.

To strengthen WMWA operations and work toward a more self-sustaining future, the group developed governance standards that formalize membership, establish a steering committee and voting rights, provide organizational structure, and sets a meeting schedule and general administrative expectations. The current form of the standards document is attached below and is slated to be finalized and adopted in early 2027.

Additionally, WMWA developed a financing plan that includes increasing the member dues by \$3,000 per year starting in 2027 and phasing out the reliance on WBIF funds. The goal is to fund a 0.8 FTE position by

2031. In 2025 and 2026 BCWMC contributed \$15,000 to WMWA. The BCWMC 2027 budget includes \$18,000 for WMWA. Future contributions are subject to BCWMC approval through the budgeting process.

Finally, WMWA partners recommend updating and renewing the agreement with Shingle Creek Watershed Management Commission to clarify fiscal and administrative responsibilities. The agreement attached with meeting materials was reviewed by Commission Attorney Anderson. Staff recommends approval.

Governance Standards of the West Metro Water Alliance

1. Article 1 – Membership

1.1. Membership in the West Metro Water Alliance (WMWA) shall consist of cost-participating watershed management organizations (WMOs), watershed districts, cities, counties, and other contributing agencies or organizations aligned with WMWA's goals.

1.1.1. Entities may become cost-participating members by executing a participation agreement and paying a membership fee established annually through the budget process.

1.1.2. Cities that are partly or wholly within the boundaries of cost-participating member WMOs are also members of WMWA at no additional cost.

1.2. Members of WMWA shall have the following responsibilities and benefits:

1.2.1. Members shall be invited to participate in monthly Steering Committee meetings and periodic general meetings.

1.2.1.1. Members shall designate a representative or representatives to attend WMWA meetings.

1.2.1.2. Members may vote for nominees to the Steering Committee and provide feedback at Steering Committee meetings.

1.2.2. Members shall have access to all available WMWA resources, including online resources, exhibits and physical resources, and staff support for in-person workshops, classroom visits, and outreach.

1.2.3. Other entities who are not cost-participating members may attend meetings and have free access to and use of all general-use education and outreach materials, but there may be a charge for staff support for in-person workshops, classroom visits, and outreach.

2. Article 2 – Governance and Meetings

2.1. The governing body of WMWA shall be a Steering Committee comprised of representatives selected from WMWA members.

2.1.1. Seats on the steering committee shall be open to representatives from participating WMOs, watershed districts, counties, cities, and other agencies.

2.1.2. The number of seats on the Steering Committee shall be seven, one from each cost-participating member and three at-large. This number shall be adjusted as new cost-participating members join.

2.1.3. Committee members shall serve fixed 2-year terms.

2.1.3.1. Elections shall be held annually at the first WMWA meeting in January each calendar year, for half the Committee seats , such that committee terms are filled on a staggered basis.

2.1.3.2. The nomination period shall extend from the December WMWA meeting to the time of election at the January WMWA meeting. WMWA members may nominate candidates for open Steering Committee positions. Election to the Steering Committee is by a majority vote of all WMWA members present at the meeting.

2.1.4. Unless otherwise requested by a current officer or majority of representatives, the Steering Committee shall meet monthly.

2.1.4.1. Steering Committee Representatives shall attend at least 75% of Committee meetings to remain in good standing. Representatives may designate an alternate to attend in their place.

2.2. The duties of the Steering Committee shall be as follows:

2.2.1. Manage and direct the day-to-day affairs of WMWA.

2.2.2. Select and assign staff personnel to complete core tasks.

2.2.3. Prepare a plan, including a budget, each year, the timing of which aligns with the planning and budgeting requirements of members

2.2.4. Determine the strategic direction and goals of WMWA and allocate financial and staff resources to achieve these goals.

2.2.5. To appoint as necessary a fiscal agent for the organization and any other professional services necessary

2.2.6. Organize periodic all-member meetings on topics of interest related to water resources

2.2.7. Prepare or direct the preparation of an annual report summarizing WMWA's education and outreach activities for the prior year.

2.2.8. Create ad hoc committees as necessary to fulfill organizational goals

2.3. Items requiring a vote of the steering committee include, but are not limited to: financial matters, annual workplans, and annual reports.

2.3.1. A voting quorum for the steering committee shall be a simple majority of members.

2.4. The Steering Committee shall select from its membership Officers in the following roles and duties:

2.4.1. Chair

2.4.1.1. The Chair shall preside over all meetings of the Steering Committee and execute documents on behalf of WMWA.

2.4.2. Vice Chair

2.4.2.1. The Vice Chair shall assist the Chair and perform the duties of Chair in the latter's absence.

2.4.3. Secretary

2.4.3.1. The Secretary shall be responsible for recording minutes, maintaining organizational records, and overseeing clerical services as required.

2.4.4. Treasurer

2.4.4.1. The Treasurer shall be responsible for maintaining financial records, budgets, and coordination with the Fiscal Agent for WMWA.

2.5. Officers shall be selected annually, at the first Steering Committee meeting after elections of every calendar year.

2.5.1. In the event that an Officer cannot complete their term of office, the Steering Committee shall, at the next regularly scheduled meeting, select from among its members an individual to fill the vacant position.

2.5.2. A member of the Steering Committee who has served as an Officer may not continue in the same role for more than two consecutive (annual) terms.

3. Article 3 – Dues and Fees

3.1. Budget

3.1.1. The Steering Committee shall each year by majority vote adopt a budget for the coming year, including a proposed fee structure, and submit to the membership said budget and fees by March 1 of each year. If no objections are received by April 15 the budget will be deemed final. If any Member has any objections, they must submit them in writing to the Steering Committee prior to April 15. After hearing the objections, the Committee may modify, amend, or affirm the proposed budget by majority of all eligible votes.

3.1.2. The members agree to designate a member to serve as Fiscal Agent to provide financial, legal and administrative services on behalf of WMWA. The Fiscal agent shall:

3.1.2.1. Arrange a time and place for meetings and give notice of such meetings.

3.1.2.2. Take and keep records of meetings and perform other administrative or professional duties as assigned.

3.1.2.3. Maintain records of costs, revenues and disbursements.

3.1.2.4. Invoice for services and make payments.

3.1.2.5. Be subject to an annual public audit

3.1.2.6. Serve as the contracting agent for any consultants retained by WMWA.

4. Article 4 – Amendments

4.1. Addition to, alteration, or repeal of any part of these standards may be made at any Steering Committee meeting by a majority vote of the Steering Committee, provided that thirty (30) days advance written notice of the proposed change has been given to each member of the Committee.