



Item 4K.
BCWMC 2-19-15

Contact: Laura Jester, BCWMC Administrator
Laura.Jester@keystonewaters.com
952-270-1990

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Bassett Creek Water Quality Improves Except for Chloride Levels

Golden Valley, Minnesota, February 20, 2015 – The Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission (BCWMC) received the positive news from the Metropolitan Council Environmental Services (MCES) that water quality in Bassett Creek has improved over the past five years. The MCES reports that concentrations of pollutants like sediment, phosphorus, and nutrients have decreased in the creek since 2009. The concentration of chloride, however, has increased over the same period.

MCES' evaluation of the Bassett Creek monitoring station data shows that over the last five years the total suspended solids concentration in the creek has dropped by 30 percent, the nitrate concentration has dropped by 27 percent, and the phosphorous concentration has dropped by 17 percent.

“We’re encouraged by this news,” says Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission Chair Jim de Lambert. “Our watershed management organization is dedicated to improving and preserving our watershed’s resources. Through our Capital Improvement Program, channel maintenance program, and other work and partnerships, we facilitate projects that lead to water quality improvements such as the reduced pollution loads in Bassett Creek.”

One pollutant has increased in concentration in Bassett Creek. The amount of chloride present in the creek has increased by 13% in the last five years. “Pollution to Minnesota’s waters from chloride is a serious issue facing our state,” says de Lambert. “Chloride, coming mainly from deicers applied on roads and parking lots, is soluble. Once it enters water it is nearly impossible to remove and it only takes one teaspoon of salt to pollute five gallons of water. Our challenge is to find ways to significantly decrease salt use without compromising public safety.”

Since 2000 the MCES has operated an automated water monitoring station on Bassett Creek to determine the extent of non-point source pollution and to measure progress toward achieving water quality goals. The station is one of twenty-three the MCES operates in the metro area. The BCWMC partners with the MCES to collect water samples and maintain flow records. Prior to 2013, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board acted as the local partner. The MCES used statistical software to identify the water quality trends and noted that factors affecting water quality vary from season to season and year to year.

For more information and a fact sheet see “Mississippi River Tributary Streams” on the Met Council’s Stream Assessment Webpage at: <http://www.metrocouncil.org/streams>.

###

About the Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission: The BCWMC is a joint powers water management organization comprising nine municipalities: Crystal, Golden Valley, New Hope, Medicine Lake, Minneapolis, Minnetonka, Plymouth, Robbinsdale, and St. Louis Park. Originating from the Bassett Creek Flood Control Commission formed in 1969, the BCWMC was established in 1982. The BCWMC’s Watershed Management Plan sets the vision and guidelines for the management of surface water in the Bassett Creek watershed. The watershed is approximately 40 square miles, divided into four subwatersheds. For more information, visit www.bassettcreekwmo.org.