



March 25, 2026

Bassett Creek Watershed Management
Commission c/o Laura Jester, Administrator
P.O. Box 270825
Golden Valley, MN 55427

Dear Chair and Commissioners:

I am pleased to inform you that the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (Board) has approved the Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission (BCWMC) Watershed Management Plan (Plan) at its regular meeting held on March 25, 2026. For your records I have enclosed a copy of the signed Board Order that documents approval of the Plan. Please be advised that the BCWMC must adopt and implement the Plan within 120 days of the date of the Order, in accordance with MN Statutes 103B.231, Subd. 10.

The commissioners, plan steering committee members, consultants, and all others involved in the planning process are to be commended for their work on developing the Plan. With continued implementation of your Plan, the protection and management of the water resources within the watershed will be greatly enhanced to the benefit of the residents. The Board looks forward to working with you as you implement this Plan and document its outcomes.

Please contact Board Conservationist, Jen Dullum at 651-308-6956, jen.dullum@state.mn.us, or at the central office address for further assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

Todd Holman, Chair

Enclosure

cc: Reid Christianson, MDA (via email)
Abby Shea, MDH (via email)
Megan Moore, DNR (via email)
Katie Kowalczyk, DOT (via email)
Maureen Hoffman, Met Council (via email)
Melinda Neville, MPCA (via email)
Marcey Westrick, BWSR (via email)
Jen Dullum, BWSR (via email)
File Copy

Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources
520 Lafayette Road North
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155

In the Matter of the review of the Watershed Management Plan for the Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission, pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Section 103B.231, Subdivision 9.

ORDER
APPROVING
A WATERSHED
MANAGEMENT PLAN

Whereas, the Board of Commissioners of the Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission (BCWMC) submitted a Watershed Management Plan (Plan) on January 12, 2026, to the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (Board) pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Section 103B.231, Subd. 9, and;

Whereas, the Board has completed its review of the Plan;

Now Therefore, the Board hereby makes the following Findings of Fact, Conclusions and Order:

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. **Watershed Management Organization Establishment.** The Bassett Creek Flood Control Commission was formed in 1968 primarily to study flooding issues in the watershed and adopted a watershed management plan in 1972. In 1984, the Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission (BCWMC) was created after revising the Flood Control Commission's Joint Powers Agreement. The Commission prepared its first-generation watershed management plan that the Board approved in July 1989.
2. **Authority of Plan.** The Metropolitan Surface Water Management Act requires the preparation of a watershed management plan for the subject watershed area which meets the requirements of Minnesota Statutes Sections 103B.201 to 103B.251. The current BCWMC watershed management plan was approved by Board Order on August 27, 2015. Subsequently, the BCWMC completed two minor amendments between 2015 and 2025.
3. **Nature of the Watershed.** The BCWMC is located in Hennepin County in the northwest portion of the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area. It is bound by the Elm Creek and Shingle Creek Watershed Management Commissions to the north, on the south and west by the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District, and on the east by the Mississippi Watershed Management Organization. The watershed covers approximately 40 square miles and all or part of nine communities: Crystal, Golden Valley, Medicine Lake, Minneapolis, Minnetonka, New Hope, Plymouth, Robbinsdale, and St. Louis Park. There are 10 priority lakes and four priority streams in the Bassett Creek watershed. The watershed drains to Bassett Creek and ultimately enters the Mississippi River through the Bassett Creek tunnel that runs under downtown Minneapolis. The watershed is influenced by urban and suburban land uses, and the population is anticipated to continue increasing.
4. **Plan Development and Review.** On April 14, 2022, the BCWMC sent notification of initiation of the planning process for the 2026-2035 Watershed Management Plan (Plan) to the plan review agencies and other parties as required by MR 8410, and solicited each agency's priority issues, summaries of relevant water management goals, and water resource information. An initial planning meeting was hosted by the Board of Commissioners on February 28, 2023. Regular meetings were held with the Plan Steering Committee between May 2024 and November 2025. The BCWMC also conducted Commission workshops and periodically invited additional

participants to the plan steering committee meetings, as needed. The BCWMC also created a press kit for stakeholder engagement which included a watershed equity workshop, online survey, and meetings with underrepresented community groups, among other engagement actions.

The draft Plan was submitted to the Board, other state agencies, and local governments for the formal 60-day review on August 1, 2025, pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Section 103B.231 Subd. 7. The BCWMC prepared a written response to the 60-day comments, made revisions, and sent responses to reviewers on November 21, 2025. A public hearing was held on December 18, 2025. The BCWMC sent a final draft Plan to State Review Agencies and the Board on January 12, 2026. Comments received during the 90-day review period indicated that most reviewers did not have additional comments, however the Minnesota Department of Health recommended that one incorrect statement be addressed in the future.

5. **Local Review.** The BCWMC distributed copies of the draft Plan to local units of government for their review pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Section 103B.231 Subd. 7. During the 60-day comment period Hennepin County's remarks highlighted aquatic invasive species prevention, chloride reduction, carbon footprint consideration, goals and actions integrating Dakota knowledge, work with underrepresented communities, and support for education and community engagement. They also commented on development of a watershed-wide wetland inventory and assessment and identifying partnership opportunities for a county groundwater plan. The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) also provided comments. Many of the comments were in agreement with the Plan contents or shared suggestions for partnership and projects. Comments also noted improvements for Plan accessibility, organization, and document navigation. The MPRB commended the BCWMC for focus on equity, climate resilience, and Dakota place-naming, and supported investigation into the BCWMC's best-fit for governance structure and regular plan reassessments to ensure goals are met. The City of Minneapolis provided several comments, of those a few highlighted general Plan accessibility and organization. They also voiced support for an organizational assessment to evaluate options for the appropriate governance structure and funding options, wanted to ensure goals are measurable, and hoped to see that water quality improvement projects are highest priority. Lastly, the Friends of the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden also commented on the Plan which included requests for studies and restoration projects.
6. **Metropolitan Council (Council) Review.** During the 60-day review, the Council commended the BCWMC for developing a watershed management plan that includes a comprehensive list of issues, goals, and strategies, ambitious chloride loading goals, and that highlights partnership effort implementation. They welcomed the Plan's focus on water equity and feel the Plan is consistent with the Council's policies. They did office several comments which included adding a discussion on deicer, supporting work with partners, supporting BCWMC collaboration with the Council on studies and research, and encouraging goal measurability. During the 90-day review, the Council again commended the BCWMC for developing an inclusive Plan with comprehensive issues, goals, policies and strategies. They again applauded the ambitious chloride goals and welcomed the focus on water equity. The Council felt their 60-day comments were addressed and that the Plan was consistent with Council policies and the Council's Water Policy Plan.
7. **Department of Agriculture (MDA) Review.** At the 90-day review the MDA thanked the BCWMC for the opportunity to review, and did not provide any comments, but recommended approval.
8. **Department of Health (MDH) Review.** During the 60-day review, MDH commended the BCWMC on its well-organized and visually accessible draft plan, specifically highlighting the effective executive summary and layout of the Plan goals. MDH appreciated the inclusion of groundwater quality and multiple-benefit projects while suggesting improvements to the Plan by clarifying MDH roles, ensuring specific and measurable Plan goals, expanding on chloride loading in groundwater, considering surface water-groundwater interactions near drinking water supply management areas, and considering unused and unsealed wells as a potential contamination source. During the 90-day review, MDH noted that their comments, concerns, and priorities had been addressed. They noted that one comment provided during the 60-day resulted in an inaccurate statement in the final draft Plan. MDH recommends rewording during the next opportunity to edit the Plan.

9. **Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Review.** The DNR did not provide formal comment during the 60-day. During the 90-day review, DNR indicated that the Plan is consistent with DNR goals and priorities. The DNR appreciated the BCWMC's focus on ecosystem health and identification of climate change impacts on hydrology.
10. **Pollution Control Agency (PCA) Review.** During the 60-day review, the PCA commended the BCWMC on including the Native American stream name into the Plan, demonstrating completed work, and highlighting what is new in the updated Plan. Suggestions provided included listing PCA ID numbers, updating table descriptors for the general reader, correcting mislabeled TMDL dates, and using more current references. These edits were all for specific tables or Plan sections. A more general recommendation was to include numerical targets for goals to help evaluate success where appropriate. During the 90-day review, the PCA had no additional comments and recommended the Plan for approval.
11. **Department of Transportation (DOT) Review.** The DOT did not provide formal comment.
12. **Board Review.** During the 60-day review, Board staff thanked the BCWMC for hosting various Plan development meetings, noted appreciation of the inclusion of priorities related to chloride pollution, climate change, addressing inequities and authentic engagement, and noted that the Plan was well written and utilized plain language. Board staff suggested clarifications to several parts of the Plan for increased reader comprehension. Staff also had comments on goal measurability and other suggestions to help bring the plan into conformance with Minnesota Statutes Sections 103B.201 to 103B.251 and Minnesota Rules 8410. Staff also sent unofficial typographical, grammatical, and formatting comments. Staff felt the Plan was revised as necessary to provide required Plan content.
13. **Plan Summary.** The BCWMC identified issues into four categories: waterbody and watershed quality, flooding and climate resilience, education and engagement, and organizational effectiveness. The Plan sets six high priority issues with associated goals to address them. There are additional medium and low priority issues also with associated goals to help reach Plan objectives. The updated Plan will build on previous success through the continuation of many current programs and activities and introduction of new activities such requiring winter maintenance plans, targeting future work through surveys and assessments, and using indigenous land and water care practices where appropriate. Other programs include building connection with diverse communities, trainings for commissioners and local official, and potential public-private partnerships.
14. **Central Region Committee Meeting.** On March 2, 2026, the Board's Central Region Committee and staff met in St. Paul and online to review and discuss the final Plan. Those in attendance from the Board's committee were Joe Collins (in-person), Mike Runk (in-person), Jill Crafton (online), Mark Zabel (online), Lori Cox (online), Steve Robertson (online), and Heather Johnson (online). Board staff in attendance were Marcey Westrick (Central Regional Manager, in-person), Jen Dullum (Board Conservationist, in-person), and Josh Norman (Board Conservationist, online). Others in attendance included Laura Jester (BCWMC Administrator, in-person), Catherine Cesnik (BCWMC Commission Chair, in-person), Shaun Kennedy (BCWMC Alternate Commissioner, in-person), and Stephanie Johnson (BCWMC Engineer – Barr Engineering – in-person) who provided overview of the watershed, highlights of the Plan, and responded to comments. Joan Hauer (BCWMC Commissioner, online) was also present. After a presentation and discussion, the committee recommended approval of the Plan to the full Board.

CONCLUSIONS

1. All relevant substantive and procedural requirements of law and rule have been fulfilled.
2. The Board has proper jurisdiction in the matter of approving the Watershed Management Plan for the Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission (BCWMC) pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Section 103B.231, Subd. 9.

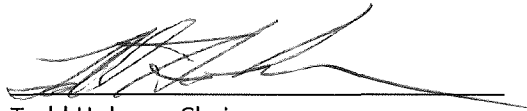
3. The BCWMC Watershed Management Plan, attached to this Order, defines the water and water-related problems within the BCWMC's boundaries, possible solutions thereto, and an implementation program through 2035.
4. The attached Plan is in conformance with the requirements of Minnesota Statutes Sections 103B.201 to 103B.251.

ORDER

The Board hereby approves the attached Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission Watershed Management Plan submitted on January 12, 2026.

Dated at Saint Paul, Minnesota this 25th day of March 2026.

MINNESOTA BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Todd Holman', is written over a horizontal line.

Todd Holman, Chair
Board of Water and Soil Resources