Washington County Water Consortium Three Year Work Plan March 2012 – March 2015

Purpose

The purpose of the Washington County Water Consortium is to preserve and improve the quality of the county's water resources, in the most efficient manner, by partnering and facilitating collaboration with watersheds, communities, state and local agencies, and county departments on shared water resource issues.

The Washington County Water Consortium (consortium) has been active since the year 2000. Over the past decade the consortium's purpose hasn't changed, but the issues it deals with have evolved. In order to effectively address the current water resource challenges the consortium created a work plan to guide its work over the next 3 years.

Background and Top Priorities

The consortium held three facilitated sessions from December 2011 through February 2012 with the purpose of re-establishing a shared vision and to set direction for its future. The question the consortium worked to answer was, "What are the most important water management topics and opportunities that should be addressed by the consortium in the next three to five years and why?"

The first meeting resulted in 12 topics of interest (see Appendix A). The second meeting resulted in an obvious divide of topics into two categories: 1) Resources and 2) Management (see Appendix B). To focus the consortium's efforts, members took a survey to prioritize the topics under the resource and management categories. The survey showed that the consortium's interests were fairly evenly split between resources and management categories. The top priorities identified by the survey are in Appendix C. For each top-ranked topic, the consortium identified what accomplishments should be reached, the implementation steps needed, and the expected outcomes. These documents are in Appendix D. From this information came the consortium's 3-year work plan.

Another category that will be addressed is Water Consortium Management. Topics the consortium developed for this category will move forward at the lead of the Washington County Public Health and Environment (PHE) (shown on page 6). The PHE will continue to coordinate the work of the Water Consortium. However, the consortium's success is dependent on the leadership and initiative of all participants.

The top four priorities are:

- Better LGU and WMO collaboration on permitting and water quality standards.
- Work together on the Lake St. Croix TMDL and other TMDL studies in addressing issues and implementation.
- Increase coverage of BMP topics at Water Consortium meetings, including discussion on what works and doesn't work for BMP's, tour sites, and bring in outside opinions regarding storm water management projects and innovative/new BMP's.

• Water Consortium management.

Four additional topics that ranked high on the survey are:

- Promote ideas for the Local Government Roundtable (LGR) to help create a water governance structure for the metro and pilot (for example: identify appropriate scale such as HUC 81, state, basin, metro, county, WMO, municipality, or shared services, for implementation).
- Facilitate larger joint ventures between agencies shared resources.
- Regulatory uniformity, triggers, standards, unified-tiered standards by water body type (resource based).
- Continue collaboration on groundwater and surface water interaction (studies, communication, and rules).

These topics will be addressed by the water consortium in the future and therefore require some explanation in this work plan. They are shown on page 7.

Work Plan: Better LGU and WMO collaboration on permitting and water quality standards.

Goals of Project

- To gain consistency and increase efficiency in the permitting process.
- To strengthen relationships between LGU's and WMO's.
- To develop a permitting process that is transparent and makes sense to the larger community while still protecting the resource.

Measure of Success

- 1) At least one team member is a representative of a city or township.
- 2) LGU's are involved in the process.
- 3) A collaborative method of permitting for LGU's and WMO's is put in place and used.
- 4) An established check-in mechanism to evaluate how the permit process is working and how to go about making changes if necessary is put in place and used.

Objectives	Activities	Data/Evaluation	Timeframe	Team members
 Analyze current permitting processes of WMO's and LGU's to identify inefficiencies and inconsistencies. Recommend improvements to existing permitting processes and gain buy-in from WMOs and LGUs. Create a process to evaluate if the improvements are working effectively. 	 Identify stakeholders and get their input. Identify and collect data on existing processes for permitting, including key standards, pollutants, volume, and buffers. Identify similarities and differences in permitting processes among watershed districts. Develop method to analyze and compare different programs for efficiency and effectiveness for all involved. 	Existing WMO and LGU rules and standards. Watershed District Rules Comparative Study prepared by the Water Consortium in 2002.	December 2012 - Evaluate what has been done in the past and determine the scope of the work and how to move forward.	Doug Thomas - Lead Cliff Aichinger John Hanson Melissa Lewis

 Show Washington County is meeting TMDL goals. For Washington County to be an example of coordination. To gain efficiencies in addressing TMDL studies. 		1) Goals of the Lake St. Croix TMDL are met. 2) A process is in place to communicate about the happenings and status of the Lake St. Croix TMDL. 3) Host one TMDL implementation plan meeting.			
 Determine how best to coordinate the activities needed to address the Lake St. Croix TMDL. Standardize a process to be used for cross-boundary TMDL's. Create a process to evaluate if the implementation activities are working effectively. 	 Identify and connect with stakeholders. Identify cross-boundary TMDLs and the status of each. Develop priorities county-wide for the Lake St. Croix TMDL implementation. Host a TMDL implementation plan team meeting and collaborate on the best way to tackle the TMDL issues. Have a representative on the development team who is also a consortium member keep the consortium up to date on activities and efforts. Develop a template for consistent reporting with a uniform format/database/etc. Share internal needs and lessons learned on individual TMDL's. Use the consortium as a sounding board. Develop a hot topics segment and hold quarterly. Have a technology exchange forum (i.e. bubbler fish barrier, iron sand). 	Lake St. Croix TMDL study	December 2012 - Evaluate what has been done and determine how to move forward.	The exact team members will be determined when the consortium moves forward with this initiative. The team will include a representative from the St. Croix TMDL implementation team, other key leaders of TMDL studies and implementation plans.	

Work Plan: Increase coverage of BMP topics at Water Consortium meetings, including discussion on what works and doesn't work for BMP's, tour sites, and bring in outside opinions regarding storm water management projects and innovative/new BMP's.

Measure of Success

Goals of Project

 Develop a broader knowledge of c To understand what BMP's work, t Meeting topics that are a strong in 	 A minimum of two water consortium meetings off site that include BMP tours. An increase in attendance at the BMP meetings by approximately five people. 			
Objectives	Activities	Data/Evaluation	Timeframe	Team members
 Schedule leading experts to speak at consortium meetings about cutting edge BMP's. Schedule a minimum of two offsite meetings with BMP tours a year, where the BMP's are of particular interest to the consortium. Redistribute meeting time; for one hour presentation and one hour field/technical data and design considerations. Consider the meeting audience and tailor presentations accordingly. 	 Identify the leaders in the industry of cutting edge BMP's. Schedule the leaders in the BMP field to come to the consortium or for the consortium to go to them for presentations and/or tours. Develop method to check in with the water consortium members to verify that this lines up with their vision. Presentations that analyze and compare different BMP's for efficiency and effectiveness. Information of interest: MIDS In-lake treatment Iron enhanced sand Raingardens Tree trenches Water re-use General understanding of BMP's, planning and design. Cost/benefit and performance (\$/long term maintenance). Update on agricultural BMP's. 	BMP Studies	Ongoing Tours during summer months. December 2012 - Evaluate what has been done and determine how to move forward.	WMO's, U of MN, State Agencies, Consultants

Work Plan: Water Consortium Management						
The Water Consortium is managed to best meet the needs of its members.		 Measure of Success An updated website that allows for posting current events. Members share information about their knowledge of projects, current events, and new technologies. Meeting "wrap ups" are emailed each month that summarize the take home messages and updates. 				
 Objectives Group determined mission statement. Update website. Continue exposure to new technology and new political realities. Consortium members speak up and share information. Encourage dialogue. Make sure members not present get the take home message and updates from the meeting. Involve consultants and other professional staff. 	 Meet to discuss current mission statement/purpose. Include information on the website about the group's purpose and post current events. Use consortium member's knowledge to find speakers to present on new technology and happenings in the political scene. Ask each attendee update the group on at least one or two items. Change room layout. Create meeting "wrap ups" to send to the consortium members with the take home message and updates from each meeting. Develop a hot topics segment and hold quarterly. Have a technology exchange forum (i.e. bubbler fish barrier, iron sand). Develop a standard survey to continually get feedback and new ideas from the consortium members. Compare attendance and representation to topic being presented. Determine how to pull in representatives of other 	Data/Evaluation Track attendance, how many and who represent. Track number of updates given at each meeting. Track and categorize meeting topics; use to ensure topics on new technology and politics are occurring. Track survey data.	Timeframe December 2012 - Evaluate what has been done and determine how to move forward.	Team members Washington County PHE Washington Conservation District Input of all consortium members Representative of each Work Team		
	 organizations into assisting with consortium management. Hold team meeting annually to evaluate how things are doing and to set focus for upcoming meetings. 					

Water Consortium Work Plan Additional Priorities - Action Items

Work Plan: Promote ideas for the Local Government Roundtable (LGR) to help create a water governance structure for the metro and pilot (for example: identify appropriate scale such as HUC 81, state, basin, metro, county, WMO, municipality, or shared services, for implementation).

Action:

The LGR is working on legislation to move forward with its efforts. The consortium will monitor the progress of House File 1596 and Senate File 1885 and the expected delete all amendment, or any other legislation that comes forward with regard to the LGR. The actions to be taken by the consortium would depend on what legislation is passed. The consortium will review adopted legislation in determining how to move forward with this work plan item.

Work Plan: Facilitate larger joint ventures between agencies - shared resources.

Action:

Larger joint ventures between agencies will be a product of each of the work plan items.

Work Plan: Regulatory uniformity, triggers, standards, unified-tiered standards by water body type (resource based).

Action:

This initiative ties closely to the work plan item regarding better LGU and WMO collaboration on permitting and water quality standards and will be considered as the group moves forward with that work item.

Work Plan: Continue collaboration on groundwater and surface water interaction (studies, communication, and rules).

Action:

Washington County PHE will be updating the county's 10-year groundwater plan beginning this summer. The consortium will be directly involved in plan development that will include priorities for collaboration on groundwater and surface water.

APPENDIX A

Appendix A

Washington County Water Consortium - A meeting to explore and identify a shared vision of what the Water Consortium could focus on over the next 5+ years: December 7, 2011 (first of two meetings)

Workshop Question: What are the top 3-5 water management topics and opportunities that your organization thinks should be addressed by the Water Consortium?

Project/Reporting and Lessons Learned • Discussing what works and desen't work for BMP's and take tours of sites • Monitor stormwater BMP • Rules Major Watershed Governance St. Croix TMDL Government Involvement • Local Government Involvement Government Involvement • Local Government Involvement Shared Services Consortium Meeting Management Management • Wetland Protection Management • Wetlands works and (triggers, standards) look activities: State, Basin Plan & Board tours of sites • Monitor stormwater BMP • Regulatory uniformity Rules Major Watershed Government Involvement • Local Government Involvement • Local Government Involvement • Local Government Involvement • Meeting Management • Continue exposure to new of expertise new of expert	Α
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performance over • Unified, tiered then advocate • Lake St. governments, • The water personalities development and addressed by purpose, count	•
time standards by • Further Croix TMDL cities/townships roundtable • More sharing of implementation the county, history all on	
• Bring in outside water body consolidation Implementa- • Input from HUC concept projects vs. • Groundwater failing one page	-
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APPENDIX B

Appendix B

Washington County Water Consortium - A meeting to explore and identify a shared vision of what the Water Consortium could focus on over the next 5+ years: January 4, 2012 Meeting Results Summary

Workshop Question: What are the top 3-5 water management topics and opportunities that your organization thinks should be addressed by the Water Consortium?

		Management					Resourc	ces		
Reporting	Rules	Major Watershed Governance	Local Government Involvement	Shared Services/ Collaboration	Surface Water Quality	Wetland Protection	Groundwater	Septic	Education	Aquatic and Invasive Species
 Combined reporting to replace annual reports (could be City, WMO, County, Basin) Annual reporting to county board Newsletters Collaborative MS4/TMDL/etc. One, two, and three year work plans and budget 	Regulatory uniformity, triggers, standards, unified, tiered standards by water body type (resource based) Co/Metro-wide Promote standards/rules with cities, townships, and counties	Local Government Roundtable (LGR) LGR-Discuss LGR and the impacts to Washington County LGR-Promote ideas for the LGR to help create a water governance structure for the metro and pilot ideas (for example identify appropriate scale such as HUC 81, state, basin, metro, county, WMO, municipality, or shared services, for implementation) Continue collaboration with Chisago County regarding St. Croix Basin activities, such as creating a basin plan and board to address TMDL, etc. Continue discussion of further consolidation of watershed organizations Tax rates, levy, and project financing guidance	Better LGU & WMO Collaboration on permitting and water quality standards Engage and increase meeting attendance of local government (cities/townships) Identify and communicate what the WMO and LGU needs from the county Citizen involvement	 Facilitate larger joint ventures between agencies-share resources Coordinate WMO areas of expertise for cost savings Collaborate for long-term maintenance of BMP's Offer the consortium "Model" to other counties Develop rewards for performance - positive incentives Human Resources services Legal services Strategic planning 	Work together on the Lake St. Croix TMDL and other TMDL studies toward issues and implementation Discuss WMO and county role in increasing land conservation Discuss what works and doesn't work for BMP's and take tours of sites Bring in outside opinions regarding storm water management projects and innovative/new BMP's Monitor surface water features for impact from groundwater withdrawals	Wetlands monitoring/reconstruction	 Determine consortium role in water system planning and management Coordinate with LGU's to determine placement of storm water infiltration (when to? when not to?) with regard to well head protection areas Groundwater management and protection Continue collaboration on groundwater and surface water interaction (studies, communication, rules) 	• Septic testing: are they being addressed by the county? see more inventories around lakes and rivers to find failing systems, may need funding to encourage homeowners to be a part of	County	 Aquatic invasion specifics: roles, responsibilities, techniques, etc. AIS: Collaborative county projects

Topics developed under the Water Consortium Management category will be addressed by the consortium planning team with continued group input as needed.

- Group determined Mission Statement
- Updating website: listing purpose, history all on one page
- Continue exposure to new technology, new political realities, and new personalities
- More sharing of projects vs. current informal "any updates" make all have to give 1 or 2
- Change room layout to encourage dialogue
- Two reasons why this affects you... follow up communication take home message
- Involve consultants and other professional staff as needed
- Follow up communication of take home message

APPENDIX C

Appendix C

Water Consortium Survey Results

A total of 33 people voted.

Question 1:

What percentage of time and effort do you want the Water Consortium to focus on Management (topics) vs. Resource (topics)?

90 vs. 10 = 1 vote

70 vs. 30 = 5 votes

50 vs. 50 = 12 votes

30 vs. 70 = 13 votes

10 vs. 90 = 2 votes

Question 2 and 3:

Pick your top 5 management topics in order of priority.

Pick your top 5 resource topics in order of priority.

The results are broken into three tiers and are based on the most votes.

First Tier Results:

Local Government Involvement Topic

Better LGU and WMO collaboration on permitting and water quality standards.

Surface Water Quality Topic

Work together on the Lake St. Croix TMDL and other TMDL studies toward issues and implementation.

Surface Water Quality Topic: Combination Result

Discuss what works and doesn't work for BMP's and take tours of sites.

Bring in outside opinions regarding stormwater management projects and inovative/new BMP's.

Second Tier Results:

Major Watershed Governance Topic

Promote ideas for the Local Government Roundtable to help create a water governance structure for the metro and pilot (for example: identify appropriate scale such as HUC 81, state, basin, metro, county, WMO, municipality, or shared services, for implementation).

Shared Services Topic

Facilitate larger joint ventures between agencies - shared resources.

Third Tier Results:

Rules Topic

Regulatory uniformity, triggers, standards, unified, tiered standards by water body type (resource based).

Groundwater Topic

Continue collaboration on groundwater and surface water interaction (studies, communication, rules).

Management Category

Resource Category

APPENDIX D

TOPI	C.		

Better LGU and WMO collaboration on permitting and water quality standards.

What do we want to accomplish?

• Consistency in the water quality process.

Implementation Steps—how do we address the topic?	Who?	When?	Where?
 Collect/ID existing permits/standards (key), pollutants, volume, buffers. ID inconsistencies in values and format and process. Determine how and measure effectiveness. What makes sense? Who should permit? Consensus from LGU's. Rec. process guidelines. Have discussion of effectiveness in who should permit—eliminate redundancies, fewer permits. (Cost and time comparison of implementing standards through permit vs. through LGU. 			

What are the expected outcomes for the consortium?

- People understand rationale.
- Happy LGU's.
- One stop shop for info and permits.

Work together on the Lake St. Croix TMDL and other TMDL studies toward issues and implementation.

What do we want to accomplish?

• Show Washington County is meeting the goal—example of coordination.

Implementation Steps—how do we address the topic?	Who?	When?	Where?
 Internal—share our needs/lessons learned. Sounding board "hot topics." Representative on development team. Implementation plan team update. Technology exchange (i.e. bubbler fish barrier/iron sand). Reporting consistently—uniform format/database/etc. Prioritize/priorities county wide for St. Croix TMDL implementation. 	Consortium Consortium Team Experts Consortium Consortium	Monthly/quarterly TMDL team meeting 1x As needed Template created and annually updated	Consortium Consortium TMDL team meeting Consortium Forum Consortium Consortium

What are the expected outcomes for the consortium?

• Efficiencies gained.

TOPIC:

Discuss what works and doesn't work for BMP's and take tours of sites.

Bring in outside opinions regarding stormwater management projects and innovative/new BMP's.

What do we want to accomplish?

- Cutting edge BMP's
- What works and what doesn't work
- Broader knowledge of resource protection approaches

Implementation Steps—how do we address the topic?	Who?	When?	Where?
 Pre-design information/presentations on pre-selected process, alternatives, effectiveness. MIDS - Review of research on individual practices (i.e. before a tour review MIDS and where we will be visiting to give a background of the site) Understand BMP's generally – planning and design. What design led up to building BMP – discuss successful and unsuccessful/failure. Tours to see and hear these BMP's. Create a series – cost benefit & performance of issues addressed (\$, long-term maintenance). Topic – special presentation such as in-lake treatment, iron enhanced treatments, raingardens, tree trenches, water reuse – "MID" specific practices. Update on Ag. BMP's. 	Watersheds (staff, consultants) WCD	Summer within consortium communities	Throughout consortium community/counties
Notes from large group discussion: Jane asked about certain BMP's and what are best; List questions for topics and use consortium to answer questions.			

What are the expected outcomes for the consortium?

- Consider one hour presentation; one hour field/technical data and design considerations.
- Consider the meeting audience and tailor presentations to that audience.
- Have some meetings at various locations to tour and hold meeting attract others.

Consortium members participate and the host (tour) leads the meeting.