

MEETING DATE: January 22, 2018

TITLE: Authorization to Renew the Contract with Freshwater Society for the Watershed Association Initiative

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 18-007

PREPARED BY: Darren Lochner

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REVIEWED BY: Administrator Counsel Program Mgr. (Name):__Telly Mamayek____
 Board Committee Engineer Other

WORKSHOP ACTION:

<input type="checkbox"/> Advance to Board mtg. Consent Agenda.	<input type="checkbox"/> Advance to Board meeting for discussion prior to action.
<input type="checkbox"/> Refer to a future workshop (date):_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Refer to taskforce or committee (date):_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Return to staff for additional work.	<input type="checkbox"/> No further action requested.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (specify): Seeking approval of contract at January 25, 2018 Board Meeting	

PURPOSE or ACTION REQUESTED: Authorization to renew the contract with Freshwater Society for the Watershed Association Initiative (WAI).

PROJECT/PROGRAM LOCATION: Minnehaha Creek Watershed

PROJECT TIMELINE: January 1, 2018 – December 31, 2018

PROJECT/PROGRAM COST:

Fund name and number: Education - 4002
Current budget: \$25,000
Expenditures to date: \$0
Requested amount of funding: 25,000
Is a budget amendment requested? No
Is additional staff requested? No

PAST BOARD ACTIONS: None

SUMMARY: The Initiative started in September of 2006 and has continued through December 2017. The contract under consideration covers January 2018 through December 2018. See the Watershed Association Initiative: Scope of Services for 2018.

This contract with Freshwater Society will authorize the twelfth year of the Watershed Association Initiative (WAI) for 2018. The WAI program budget includes the contract amount of \$25,000 for Freshwater Society to complete the items outlines in the Scope of Services.

Please see attached Year 11 Year End Report for 2017 with details on recent WAI activities.

In year twelfth, MCWD will once again hire Freshwater Society to provide a Watershed Organizer to engage and empower citizens in the District, and assist MCWD staff in evaluating the WAI program, focusing on a civic organizing framework. These citizen groups will gain an increased understanding of the District's water quality goals and will improve their capacity to interface with local governments and the District. These activities will ultimately aid the District in meeting its established water quality goals. See Scope of Services, attached, for more detail on specific program areas.

The MCWD strategic planning process examined the WAI program and its alignment with the District mission. MCWD staff have been working with WAI organizer from the Freshwater Society to plan for the upcoming year. Some of items highlighted during the strategic planning process were – aligning of WAI with District mission and priorities, managing staff demands in relations to WAI and lake associations, and further assessing outcomes of WAI programming. Staff will be working closely with the WAI program in 2018 to address these items.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval to authorize the renewal of the Freshwater Society contract for the twelfth year of the Watershed Association Initiative. The contract with Freshwater Society is for \$25,000.

PAST BOARD ACTIONS:

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| April 6, 2006 | The MCWD Board of Managers approved resolution 019-06, Authorization to Hire Minnesota Waters to Execute a Lake Association Initiative. |
| July 12, 2007 | The MCWD Board of Managers approved the 2008 Communications and Education Work Plan, which contained the following item for 2008:

<i>Lake Association Initiative: This is an extension of the initiative started in summer 2006. Lake associations provide increased community involvement on a subwatershed level, and interest in high profile lakes in the District, resulting in better stewardship of those lakes and subsequent improvement in water quality. The District has provided a grant to Minnesota Waters, who is hiring a person that will carry out the initiative with District support and oversight.</i> |
| July, 2008 | The MCWD Board of Managers approved the 2009 Communications and Education Work Plan, which included funding for the continuation of the Watershed Association Initiative. |
| July, 2009 | The MCWD Board of Managers approved the 2010 Communications and Education Work Plan, which included funding for the continuation of the Watershed Association Initiative. |
| August, 2010 | The MCWD Board of Managers approved the 2011 Communications and Education Work Plan, which included funding for the continuation of the Watershed Association Initiative. |
| August, 2011 | The MCWD Board of Managers approved the 2012 Education Work Plan, which included funding for the continuation of the Watershed Association Initiative. |

- August, 2012 The MCWD Board of Managers approved the 2013 Education Work Plan, which included funding for the continuation of the Watershed Association Initiative.
- June, 2012 MN Waters Organization dissolved and the 2012 MN Waters contract was transferred per approval of the MCWD Administrator to Freshwater Society, to continue the WAI contracted work.
- June 2013 The MCWD Board of Managers approved the 2014 Education Workplan and Budget, which included funding for the continuation of the Watershed Association Initiative as well as funds to cover community capacity assessments throughout the District.
- November 2014 The MCWD Board of Managers approved the 2015 Education Workplan and Budget, which included funding for the continuation of the Watershed Association Initiative.
- December 2015 The MCWD Board of Managers approved the 2016 Education Workplan and Budget, which included funding for the continuation of the Watershed Association Initiative.
- December 2016 The MCWD Board of Managers approved the 2017 Education Workplan and Budget, which included funding for the continuation of the Watershed Association Initiative.
- December 2017 The MCWD Board of Managers approved the 2018 Education Workplan and Budget, which included funding for the continuation of the Watershed Association Initiative.

RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 18-007

TITLE: **Authorization to Renew the Contract with Freshwater Society for the Watershed Association Initiative**

WHEREAS, the MCWD Board of Managers approved the 2018 Education Work Plan and Budget, which includes \$25,000 for the Watershed Association Initiative; and

WHEREAS, the District's strategic education and communications plan identifies a need to work on a localized, subwatershed basis to develop strong partnerships with lake associations, thereby enhancing community capacity to reach the District water quality goals; and

WHEREAS, the MCWD recognizes the importance of an informed and involved citizenry in managing aquatic resources; and

WHEREAS, active lake associations provide the District with a mechanism to work directly with informed and involved citizens in lake management projects; and

WHEREAS, Freshwater Society has expertise in building community capacity and assisting citizens with the formation and growth of effective lake associations; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District Board of Managers authorizes the District Administrator to enter into a contract not to exceed \$25,000 with Freshwater Society to continue the Watershed Association Initiative;

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the District Administrator is authorized to sign necessary documents to carry out the Watershed Association Initiative, pending approval of form and execution by the District counsel.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District Board of Managers

Resolution Number 18-007 was moved by Manager _____, seconded by Manager _____.
Motion to adopt the resolution ___ ayes, ___ nays, ___ abstentions. Date: _____.

Secretary Date: _____

Watershed Association Initiative 2018 Scope of Services

Minnesota's lakes and rivers belong to all of us, and so does the work of protecting them. Minnehaha Creek Watershed District, among other work it leads, assists those within its borders with this crucial work. One way it does this is through the Watershed Association Initiative (WAI), a program which educates and empowers lake associations, community groups, and individuals interested in water resource protection to self-organize and effectively use their time and energy to meet their and MCWD's goals.

Over the last eleven years, WAI has worked with more than 30 lake associations and community groups, and the focus of the program has shifted over time. In 2016 and 2017, the Organizer and MCWD staff met several times to discuss the scope and content of the program, seeking to ensure that the program offerings met the needs of the community and watershed district. This evaluative approach continues to bring additional clarity to the program and will continue in 2018, resulting in an iterative approach that will be used to continue to adapt the program so it aligns with MCWD's new strategic plan and remains responsive to needs that exist in the community. While this will result in some fluctuations and/or modifications, the scope of the work is detailed in the following pages.

Program Summary:

WAI is designed to support community members in MCWD who care about protecting their freshwater resources. From providing assistance to active Lake Associations to helping new groups form, WAI increases the capacity of community groups so they may be successful in their efforts to care for their lake, stream, or wetland while aligning this work with the goals and resources of MCWD. The program also fosters increased communication between community groups and MCWD to leverage opportunities for actions that groups take to be in sync with Watershed District efforts and priorities. In essence, WAI serves to create the framework through which lake associations can be adequately leveraged as partners in achieving strategic objectives.

Description of Services:

With the adoption of the comprehensive plan, the beginning of 2018 will involve in-depth conversations with MCWD staff about developing strategies for lake association engagement by subwatershed. Objectives of individual lake associations will be factored into these conversations, looking for overlap and opportunities for synergy.

Existing Services

In 2018, Freshwater Society will build on successful proactive features of the WAI to enhance its ability to offer member organizations and individuals professional development, networking, and engagement opportunities. Through the WAI, we will continue to offer the following services:

- **Outreach** to lake associations through in-person meetings as well as newsletters highlighting funding opportunities and other relevant announcements.
- **Education, training, and informal networking opportunities** and events as appropriate
- **Develop partnerships** between Master Water Stewards with Lake Associations to help leverage the passion, energy, and expertise Stewards bring to community-based water resource work in MCWD

Alongside these proactive features, Freshwater will continue to offer assistance to existing

and newly forming lake groups through the WAI. This is largely a responsive component of the program, as each group has a unique structure, set of participants, and lakeshed context. By nature of group development, there are ebbs and flows in activity, with some groups needing more attention than others at different times. Services in this responsive category are conducted with an eye towards the future, recognizing the importance of relationships both internal and external to the groups. These services can be:

- **Relationship coaching**, to help groups build and maintain positive and productive working relationships with key players and decision makers in their community
- **Development of Action and/or Lake Management Plans** to help provide direction for new groups or those groups struggling to build and maintain momentum
- **Connecting groups to each other** to foster subwatershed and watershed-wide collaboration and allow groups to learn from each other
- **Connecting groups to resources** to help them continue their own development and increase their independence

Working Relationships:

WAI is carried out through a contract with Freshwater Society. The Organizer is an employee of Freshwater Society. To streamline the relationship between the Organizer and MCWD, the Organizer will work from MCWD offices once per month, meet quarterly with staff involved with the program, and work collaboratively with staff to develop processes to track communications with lake groups and set priorities. The Organizer will provide regular reports as requested to the MCWD Education Program Manager on overall initiative progress. Written materials and major initiative decisions must be reviewed and approved by the MCWD Education Program Manager. The MCWD Education Program Manager will evaluate contract progress and will approve invoices according to the payment schedule as outlined in the contract.

Timeline: This Scope of Services proposal is for calendar year 2018.

Payment Agreement

Minnehaha Creek Watershed District will pay \$25,000 to Freshwater Society for the services described above. Payments will be made in three installments, as identified in the schedule below:

\$12,500 (50%) February 1, 2018

\$10,000 (40%) July 1, 2018 (upon receipt and approval of written progress reports)

\$2,500 (10%) Dec 1, 2018 (upon receipt and approval of written progress reports)

2017 WAI Year in Review

November 28, 2017

2017 was billed as a year of transition in the new scope of services—transitioning away from conducting a program as it had always been done to a program that leveraged MCWD resources, reduced demand on staff, and increased peer-to-peer learning and subwatershed coordination. Conversations between staff and the organizer in late 2016 and early 2017 helped streamline communication and develop new procedures for working with lake groups, especially new or recently dormant organizations.

In 2017, the organizer's time was mostly spent in strengthening relationships with groups across the watershed and working with groups individually to meet specific needs and contexts. A lake group-by-lake group breakdown is included below the solid black line. Additionally, three newsletters were distributed over the course of the year to all lake associations (in addition to in-person presentations and more directed communications), the organizer presented on policy and behavior change to Master Water Stewards and encouraged their involvement with lake associations, and planned the informal networking opportunity in December that will help to inform 2018 programming. This event was also an opportunity for peer-to-peer networking and conversation, as many groups are working on similar issues. Likewise, a Facebook page has been started that can be used as a vehicle for immediate conversation between groups that does not need to first pass through the organizer.

In 2018, continued and more formalized subwatershed coordination of groups will help to leverage resources and opportunities between lake associations as well as between those groups and MCWD, especially as it relates to MCWD and local community priorities. This can take several shapes, such as convened meetings to address specific issues, informal networking events, educational offerings specific to subwatershed needs, or otherwise. To help streamline communication between MCWD and Freshwater, monthly office hours will also be set up where the Organizer is present at the office for meetings with lake association contacts, MCWD staff, or both.

APPLE

I met with the organization's board to discuss the ditch leading into Pierson that is the source of much of the nutrient load. The group was interested in a public campaign via op-ed to pressure the land owner into making changes. I worked with the group to ease up on the tactics and work through the SWCD and other existing relationships the farmer has to try to find a solution. While the group is pursuing this course of action, they feel that it is not going to go anywhere. Doing something about drainage and ag runoff continues to be a primary focus, though monitoring and perseverance when it comes to zebra mussels is still a priority area.

Bass

In January, I brokered an agreement involving operating principles and shared goals that led to the start of quarterly updates between Scott and Phillip. This has proven to be very beneficial, allowing each to share updates, express concerns, and brainstorm next steps in a productive and collegial manner. As such, it has allowed me to reduce my involvement with the group, as they reached a point where they a) have a working relationship with city staff and b) are motivated by a project they are leading that doesn't directly involve the city. I continue to stay in touch with the group, and they know to call on me if needed. On their own, FOBL continues to host frequent buckthorn removal events as they seek to establish a new public space in "Bass Lake Woods". The concept for this area was derived through a conversation I facilitated with the group that asked them to look beyond the immediately available to the possible. Being involved in a visible, tangible project and a productive relationship with the city is rejuvenating volunteers and breathing new life into the organization.

Christmas

Christmas Lake continues to not need assistance from WAI, but they have been willing to network with other lake associations and help them troubleshoot or brainstorm solutions.

Church

With the development that galvanized the group off the table and the lead organizer otherwise occupied, the group appears to have fizzled.

Diamond

Met with the group in early 2017 to discuss ways to increase their member base, get more members to volunteer, and retain existing volunteers. Of the recommendations and discussion points, one that the group ran with was that of volunteer recognition, and they gave their first awards at this year's annual meeting. At the close of 2017, I am in conversation with the leadership about collaborating with other lake associations on shoreline restoration. They are interested in restoring their own shoreline, but would like to learn from others about what has worked for them and pursue the option of bulk pricing by working with other groups wanting to address shoreline stabilization and runoff. I have connected them with resources in the community, other lakes interested in working on this issue, and am convening a pre-planning meeting in early 2018 to begin working towards projects in the ground within the year.

Dutch

In collaboration with MCWD staff, I presented to Dutch Lake Association in May on options for them to consider in tackling their water resource challenges. Aside from providing resources to the association after the meeting was over, I offered further assistance in helping the group identify their specific next steps, but the group did not contact me.

Gleason

Gleason Lake Association did not request any assistance from WAI, but were willing to network with other lake associations and help them troubleshoot or brainstorm solutions, especially as they relate to working with schools and youth groups.

Hannon Lake

Neighbors have expressed interest in organizing, and I will work with them to get started in 2018.

Hiawatha

The group largely operated independently in 2017, conducting regular Saturday cleanups of the shoreline throughout the year and street cleaning in the fall. I helped the group define and refocus their messaging for yard signs which drew increased attention to the group from a wide array of stakeholders in time for the fall election, and continue to bring new people to the group. Now that the group has solidified their priorities and operating structure, I led the association through an exercise to map out action plans for each of their priority areas. Based on side conversation with several members, I will also be meeting with the "board" of the group to begin the process of group formalization so they can become more organized, have a defined leadership structure, and increased clarity for others about who FOLH is and how they can get involved.

Long Lake Waters Association

The group has formally become a 501c3 organization, complete with mission and vision statements, by-laws, an elected board, and website. In the spring, I met with them to hone their mission and vision, update their action plans, and think through funding. Following their 2nd Annual Summit, we discussed possible next steps and met in December to draft new 30/60/90 day goals/steps and discuss funding strategies as they determine the structure of their revenue stream. I have encouraged the group to connect with neighboring and similar lake associations as they go through their exploratory phase. This fall, I set up a meeting between LLWA and Mooney Lake Association to begin a more formal partnership between the two groups--something especially important considering they share two cities between their subwatersheds.

Lowry Hill East Neighborhood Association

No contact from the neighborhood. However, I continue to work with Joe Knaeble in his chloride reduction activities.

Minnewashta

The group did not request any assistance from WAI, but encouraged their members to participate in a water resources workshop being hosted by City of Chanhassen in March at my suggestion.

Mooney

I met with Mooney's President and VP to discuss challenges to Mooney Lake and opportunities to do something about it. The group is mostly challenged by runoff entering the lake from Plymouth, and they are very interested in pursuing an end-of-pipe treatment option. I presented at the Mooney Lake Annual Meeting on effecting policy change and options available to the group to educate their neighbors and community and scale up their impact. I am continuing to work with the group to consider more upstream options and policy alternatives, and researched city policy and other documents that the group should be aware of as they prepare to meet with the city. To discuss these documents and the options on the table, I set up a conversation between the President and Darren to discuss and chart a path forward for working with the City of Plymouth. Additionally, I have connected Mooney and Long Lake Waters Association to build a partnership that will help them a) learn from each other, b) leverage each other's resources and c) build political clout to effect systems change for at least the two cities they have in common.

Schutz

No contact with Schutz Lake Association but a secondary group--Schutz Lake Stewardship--has formed. In April, I coordinated with MCWD staff to develop a presentation/workshop to guide the group through the initial phases of developing an action plan steeped in an understanding of the issues facing Schutz Lake as well as understanding of MCWD's role and next steps. The meeting summary included things about the lake that the community loved, things they want to see happen, and things they were willing to do to make changes for the lake. Following this meeting, the group is working on setting up a website and Facebook page, sent out a newsletter, and is preparing to provide an update on the goals identified in the April meeting. They are working with the city to address stormwater challenges and opportunities to work through city planning to improve water quality. They promoted the comprehensive plan community input process as one such opportunity. I also recommended the organizer for Schutz Lake Stewardship to participate in the Master Water Stewards program, which she is currently participating in.

Wassermann

Wassermann did not request any assistance from WAI, but were willing to network with other lake associations and help them troubleshoot or brainstorm solutions.

William

Runoff has been identified as a serious concern. Neighbors are planning to organize and have reached out for initial assistance, to begin in 2018.