



**Title:** 2027 Watershed Management Plan Scoping

**Prepared by:** Name: Becky Christopher and Kate Moran  
Phone: 952-641-4512  
[bchristopher@minnehahacreek.org](mailto:bchristopher@minnehahacreek.org)

**Purpose:**

The purpose of the September 26, 2024 Policy and Planning Committee (PPC) meeting will be to initiate scoping discussions for the District's 2027 Watershed Management Plan (Plan) update. This will be the first of a series of discussions focused on developing a framework and engagement plan for the Plan update. This first discussion will focus on framing the themes, topic areas, and general scope of work.

**Background:**

The District's current Plan was approved by the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) on December 20, 2017 and is due for revision ten years from that date, giving the District a deadline of December 20, 2027. The District's Plan serves four primary purposes:

- Fulfill statutory requirements outlined in MN Statutes §103B.231 and Minnesota Rules 8410
- Provide authorities for MCWD programs and projects
- Guide the integration and alignment of District projects and programs
- Communicate the District's vision, mission, goals, and priorities to its stakeholders

The 2017 Plan reflected a significant shift in the District's approach to watershed management, centered around the Balanced Urban Ecology (BUE) policy. This philosophy prioritizes partnership with the land use community to integrate policy, planning, and implementation to leverage the value created when built and natural systems work together. By integrating its work with land use change -- such as economic development, infrastructure, and parks and open space -- MCWD not only achieves its environmental goals, but also broader social and economic objectives, thereby delivering maximum value to the taxpayer.

This approach of partnership and integrated planning has received strong support from the District's communities and other stakeholders, and has led to the successful implementation of several high-impact projects. It is staff's intent that the 2027 Plan will carry forward the direction set in the 2017 Plan, including the BUE philosophy, goals, and implementation model while building out several key areas.

The primary area of focus for the 2027 Plan update, as has been identified by the Board through its strategic planning discussions, will be climate adaptation and the development of a regional framework for volume management. The District recognizes that climate change is already impacting the state and its water resources, and the effects of climate change are expected to accelerate in the coming decades. In order for the District to continue to work toward its BUE vision, it must develop a strategy to ensure that the watershed remains as resilient as possible. The Board adopted the [Climate Action Framework](#) (CAF) on December 15, 2022, which outlines MCWD's approach to enhance its understanding of vulnerabilities across the watershed and collaborate with partners to develop shared goals and a coordinated strategy to be memorialized in the 2027 Plan.

**Summary:**

Staff have begun developing a scope of work and stakeholder engagement plan for the Plan update. At the September 26 PPC meeting, staff will present preliminary thoughts on Plan themes, areas of focus, and general scope of work within each focus area. The Board will be asked to provide feedback on the proposed scope of work as well as input on the Board's goals for the Plan update.

This first discussion will be used to inform the stakeholder engagement plan, which will be the focus of discussion for the October PPC meeting. This will include discussion of audiences, engagement methods, and the process and timeline for stakeholder engagement. Following these discussions, staff aims to seek Board authorization to initiate stakeholder engagement by the end of this year.