



---

**Title:** Flood Response Summit Debrief

**Prepared by:** Name: Samantha Hoppe  
Phone: 952-641-4518  
[shoppe@minnehahacreek.org](mailto:shoppe@minnehahacreek.org)

**Reviewed by:** Kate Moran, [kmoran@minnehahacreek.org](mailto:kmoran@minnehahacreek.org)

**Purpose:**

At the June 26, 2025, Policy and Planning Committee (PPC) meeting, staff will provide a briefing on the May 29, 2025, Flood Response Summit hosted in partnership with National Weather Service and Hennepin County Emergency Management. Emergency managers, public safety officials, and water resource staff across the Minnehaha Creek watershed were invited to the Summit to learn more about services offered by the partnership and provide feedback on flood response roles to support the development of the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD)'s Flood Response Plan and inform future improvements.

**Background:**

Since 2014, MCWD, Hennepin County Emergency Management, and the National Weather Service – Twin Cities have partnered to share customized forecasts, localized precipitation information, and real-time water level and flow data to improve flood forecasting, support emergency response, and inform proactive management of Gray's Bay Dam.

Recognizing that the watershed has experienced more extreme flooding and drought over the past decade, on [December 15, 2022](#), the MCWD Board of Managers adopted the [Climate Action Framework](#) (CAF) to outline a coordinated strategy for action and guide MCWD's efforts to build resilience in its 2027 Watershed Management Plan Update. The CAF was informed by a discovery process involving state climate experts, MCWD's Board of Managers, staff, Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC), and an analysis of local, regional, state, and federal climate plans. The CAF outlines MCWD's commitment to collaborative planning to prepare for changing weather patterns and is built around three pillars: (1) Understand & Predict, (2) Convene & Plan, and (3) Implement, Measure, & Adapt. Appendix A of the CAF outlines MCWD's near-term work under each pillar, including the development of a Flood Response Plan to streamline MCWD's internal operational response to high water and delineate its role before, during, and after flood events.

**Flood Response Plan:**

Recognizing MCWD's role as a regional water resource agency, the Flood Response Plan will outline MCWD's unique ability to leverage real-time water level and flow data and communicate how that information informs flood risk to emergency managers and the public. The Flood Response Plan will document organizational learnings from a cross-functional team assembled to monitor forecasts, assess water level and stream flow data, make operational decisions for Gray's Bay Dam, and provide timely communications to communities, as well as integrate new flood tiers to inform flood risk at key locations across the watershed. To build awareness of the partnership's service offerings, affirm flood response roles at various levels of government, and collect feedback on additional community needs to inform the Flood Response Plan, MCWD worked with partners at Hennepin County Emergency Management and the National Weather Service-Twin Cities to host a Flood Response Summit.

**2025 Flood Response Summit:**

The partners extended invitations to emergency managers and water resource staff across Hennepin County and the Minnehaha Creek watershed to provide a history of the partnership, introduce the 2025 seasonal outlook, offer an

update on water levels and Gray's Bay Dam operations, review flood response services across the partnership, and collect input from communities to enhance role clarity from federal, regional, to local levels.

Over 25 local officials attended the Flood Response Summit on May 29, 2025. Each partner provided an overview of their key services. MCWD highlighted its role in managing system-wide water level data provided through MCWD's real-time sensor network (RESNET) and distributing this information in regular water level updates to communities. The National Weather Service provided a seasonal outlook, showcasing its localized forecasting resources and weather alerts. Hennepin County emphasized its hazard monitoring resources (Hennepin West MESONET), coordinated planning efforts, preparedness trainings, walked through its physical hazard mitigation resources, and outlined local, state, and national recovery programs amid changes at the federal level.

Through discussion with participants, local officials:

- Affirmed the value of resources provided by each of the partners;
- Expressed the range of services communities provide before, during, and after flood events;
- Stated e-newsletters, web resources, and briefings are the best channels to reach emergency managers before, during, and after flood events;
- Suggested additional actions to support flood response, including access to RESNET data, facilitating regional planning, and participating in seasonal and/or pre-flood briefings;
- Noted that communities are also working to build long-term resilience.

**June 26, 2025, PPC Meeting:**

At the June 26, 2025, PPC meeting staff will present an overview of the summit's content and outcomes, provide an update on the partnership, highlight future RESNET improvements, and discuss next steps.

The following questions are offered in preparation for the discussion:

- What do you see as MCWD's primary role in flood preparedness, response, and recovery?
- What future services would you like to see MCWD provide to better support communities as they respond to flood events?
- What additional information or resources should be documented in the Flood Response Plan?