



Title: **Statewide Carp Management Effectiveness Assessment**

Prepared by: **Name:** Jill Sweet
Phone: 952-930-1976
jsweet@minnehahacreek.org

Purpose:

At the April 10, 2025, Operations and Programs Committee (OPC) Meeting, staff will introduce the [Statewide Carp Effectiveness Assessment](#) to the Board of Managers (Board), facilitating a discussion of how the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD or District) can use the study results to support MCWD's approach to watershed management.

Background:

Common Carp Context at MCWD

In September 2017, the Lessard Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC) recommended the [Six-Mile Creek-Halsted Bay \(SMCHB\) Habitat Restoration Project](#) for \$567,000 to the Minnesota State Legislature. The funding bill was approved, and the grant period began on July 1, 2018.

The project took a comprehensive approach to managing common carp in the SMCHB Subwatershed, based on the University of Minnesota's SMCHB carp assessment (2014-2017). This assessment developed a carp population census for each waterbody, identified migration patterns, and located reproduction areas. To address the carp population, the University researchers collaborated with District staff to develop a management plan, which received funding through the LSOHC grant.

MCWD successfully executed the LSOHC grant between 2018 and 2022 by implementing a three-pronged management strategy in the SMCHB Subwatershed that addressed carp migration and recruitment to reduce carp biomass. Now in the maintenance phase, the project focuses on three primary objectives:

1. Assessing water quality and vegetation response to carp management through field data collection;
2. Maintaining infrastructure and continuing to control carp biomass to ensure continued success;
3. Communicating MCWD's carp story with project partners and other interested public agencies.

MCWD's management efforts successfully limited carp populations across the system. However, the system's lakes have shown varied vegetation and water quality improvements following successful reductions in carp.

Industry Need for Carp Effectiveness Study

In November 2023, MCWD staff engaged with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), since they also have a role in carp management. MCWD and its state partners discussed the nuanced results from the District's SMCHB carp management program and recognized no comprehensive assessment has been conducted on the numerous carp management projects that have been implemented throughout the State of Minnesota over the past 10 years. These discussions highlighted the need to better understand the variables that may affect carp management effectiveness and the impact of carp management on vegetation conditions and water quality.

University of Minnesota Analysis: Evaluating the Effectiveness of Common Carp Management in Minnesota

After engaging in discussions with its partners, MCWD staff partnered with University of Minnesota researchers [to study statewide carp management efforts](#) and understand how carp management impacts carp biomass, water quality, and aquatic vegetation in different types of lakes and lake ecosystems. The project began in 2024 with data discovery, compilation, and analysis. A partner team — including staff from the MPCA and DNR — has met quarterly to review initial findings and guide the direction of the analysis. Input from carp industry consultants has also been integrated throughout the process. Additionally, on April 3, 2025, a meeting was held at MCWD's Offices with lake managers who contributed data to the study, to share findings and begin discussions to determine next steps.

Anticipated project deliverables include a technical report, which is expected to be completed by Summer 2025, as well as summary factsheets, a scientific journal publication, and presentations of findings at relevant conferences. Building on this foundation, a key next step will be to continue collaboration among the partner team and other industry leadership to develop management recommendations based on the assessment's findings.

April 10, 2025 OPC Meeting:

At the April 10, 2025, OPC Meeting, staff will provide an overview of the findings of the Statewide Carp Effectiveness Assessment and facilitate a discussion with the Board.

The following questions are offered in preparation for the discussion:

1. How can these results inform MCWD's carp management strategy?
2. How does carp management fit into MCWD's overall strategy for water resource management and restoration?
3. What key messages should be highlighted when communicating these findings to stakeholders and the public? What findings would be the most impactful to watershed managers?
4. How should MCWD memorialize the results to help guide our management decisions?
5. What role, if any, should MCWD play in advancing the next phase of this work?