



**Title:** Authorization to Renew Metro Watershed Partners Membership

**Resolution number:** 25-011

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**Recommended action:** Authorize Metro Watershed Partners membership renewal and participation in their Clean Water MN and Adopt-a-Drain programs

**Schedule:** Date: 1/1/2025  
Date: 12/31/2025

**Budget considerations:** Fund name and code: Dues and Subscriptions - 4250  
Fund budget: \$10,000  
Expenditures to date: \$0  
Requested amount of funding: \$6,000

**Past Board action:** Res # 24-007 [Authorization to Renew Metro Watershed Partners Membership](#)

**Summary:**

Outreach staff recommend authorizing \$6,000 to participate in Metro Watershed Partners and their Clean Water MN and Adopt-A-Drain programs in 2025. The \$6,000 annual membership fee provides the benefits outlined in detail below.

**Background:**

On February 27, 2020, the Board adopted [Resolution 20-018](#), approving a new Strategic Direction for Outreach that shifted focus away from broad-based efforts aimed at brand awareness and individual action, toward relationship-based engagement of stakeholders and community members around MCWD's major projects and initiatives. The new Strategic Direction for Outreach suggested identifying automated tools and third-party resources, such as the website and select contracted programs, which could continue to serve the needs of broader audiences without a significant draw on limited Outreach resources.

The Metro Watershed Partners membership is an existing contract identified to help the District maintain quality broad-based programming with minimal staff time. The membership provides access to two valuable broad-based outreach tools: Adopt-a-Drain and Clean Water MN. The Adopt-A-Drain program allows MCWD to connect residents interested in volunteering to tangible clean water action that is centrally coordinated and quantitatively tracked. The Clean Water MN program provides the District access to high quality digital communications materials on topics such as residential best management practices.

**Clean Water MN and Adopt-a-Drain Program:**

[Clean Water MN](#) is an outreach program that educates metro area residents on water-friendly practices with curated written materials. Clean Water MN is sponsored by the Metro Watershed Partners, a coalition of over seventy public, private, and non-profit organizations in the Twin Cities metro area working to inspire people to protect water quality in their watershed. Founded in 1997, Metro Watershed Partners is a project of Hamline University in Saint Paul, Minnesota. Twenty-two watershed districts and watershed management organizations are members of the group, in addition to numerous municipalities. MCWD joined Metro Watershed Partners in 2012.

Adopt-a-Drain, a metro-wide program created by Metro Watershed Partners, encourages residents to adopt storm drains in their neighborhood to protect their local lake or river from pollution. By adopting a storm drain, they commit to keeping it clear of debris throughout the year. Participants sign up for the program online at [www.Adopt-a-Drain.org](http://www.Adopt-a-Drain.org) and create an account that allows them to adopt and un-adopt drains, report the amount of debris they collect, and share stories and photos on social media. This provides interested residents with a tangible activity to protect clean water and results in quantifiable metrics. The program allows MCWD to offer a compelling volunteer opportunity to its residents with minimal administrative overhead.

#### **Preliminary Watershed Partners 2024 Annual Report:**

Each year Metro Watershed Partners issues metro-wide and watershed-specific reports which track the impact of the Clean Water MN and the Adopt-a-Drain programs. Key Adopt-a-Drain-program data from the preliminary 2024 report included:

- 1,328 new participants (10,033 total participants)
- 2,221 drains adopted (18,464 total adoptions)
- 102,713 pounds of debris collected
- 4,155 hours of volunteer time spent

A comprehensive annual report for Adopt-a-Drain program participation in the Minnehaha Creek watershed will be provided by Metro Watershed Partners in Q1 of 2025, when 2024 data is finalized.

#### **Program Membership Costs and Benefits:**

Members of Metro Watershed Partners—cities, counties, watershed districts, and non-profits—pay an annual membership fee. Cities pay seven cents per person (based on total population) per year, and watershed districts pay a recommended fee based on their annual operating budget. For an annual budget of \$5,000,000+, memberships range from a high of \$20,000 to a low of \$6,000. MCWD’s membership level, \$6,000, is at the low end of this range. Membership is required to participate in the Clean Water MN and Adopt-a-Drain programs.

The two programs provide a range of benefits for supporting watershed districts and cities:

- Help in meeting Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit requirements for public participation, outreach, and education, including key data about related activities
- Communications materials for residential best management practices and volunteer opportunities
- A list of area residents who are interested in water issues
- Professional networking and peer learning among program staff with watershed districts, state and local water resource professionals, academia, and non-government organizations
- Improved water quality and reduced flood risk by engaging residents to remove and prevent pollutants from clogging storm drains and entering waterways

#### **Supporting documents:**

- 2024 Watershed Partners Preliminary Annual Report



**RESOLUTION**

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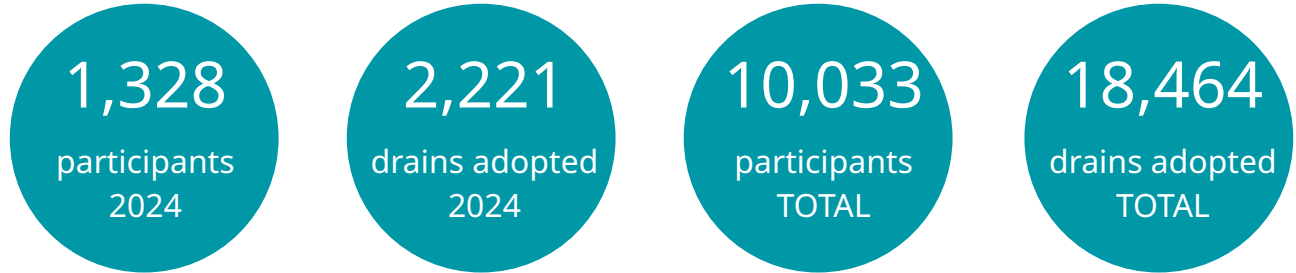
- WHEREAS, In 2020, the MCWD Board of Managers set a new direction for the Outreach program that shifted focus from broad-based outreach toward targeted, strategic engagement of stakeholders and community members around key District projects and initiatives;
- WHEREAS, To achieve that shift in focus, the Strategic Direction for Outreach suggested identifying automated tools and third-party resources that could continue to serve the needs of broader audiences outside of District initiatives;
- WHEREAS, The Metro Watershed Partners membership was one such contract identified to maintain quality broad-based programming with minimal staff time;
- WHEREAS, Members of Metro Watershed Partners are provided access to their programming and educational resources, which includes Clean Water MN and Adopt-A-Drain programs that promote water resource stewardship and individual action;
- WHEREAS, The outreach and education activities provided through these programs help MCWD meet the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit requirements and promote its mission;
- WHEREAS, The Board of Managers has reviewed the benefits provided by Metro Watershed Partners membership and finds the program to be aligned with the goals of MCWD Outreach;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District Board of Managers authorize the District Administrator to spend \$6,000 to renew MCWD’s Metro Watershed Partners annual membership.

Resolution Number 25-011 was moved by Manager \_\_\_\_\_, seconded by Manager \_\_\_\_\_. Motion to adopt the resolution \_\_\_ ayes, \_\_\_ nays, \_\_\_ abstentions. Date: 1/23/2025

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Secretary Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## 2024 WATERSHED PARTNERS SUMMARY



2,622, or 26.1%, of WSP participants, reported cleaning drains in 2024

WSP participants collected 102,712.5 lbs of debris from their adopted storm drains in 2024

| Debris Type            | Amount (lbs) |
|------------------------|--------------|
| Brown Leaves           | 59,264.5     |
| Grass and Green Leaves | 5,582.3      |
| Sediment and dirt      | 32,361.2     |
| Trash                  | 4,978.9      |
| Pet Waste              | 11.9         |
| Recyclables            | 0.0          |
| Salt                   | 513.8        |

| Month         | New Participants | Drains Adopted | Debris collected (lbs) | Time spent (hrs) | Drains cleaned |
|---------------|------------------|----------------|------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| January       | 34               | 57             | 20,905.80              | 665.0            | 620.0          |
| February      | 26               | 40             | 2,773.28               | 92.5             | 205.0          |
| March         | 42               | 94             | 3,516.28               | 92.9             | 202.0          |
| April         | 111              | 254            | 14,971.54              | 241.8            | 535.0          |
| May           | 88               | 139            | 6,912.91               | 468.8            | 385.0          |
| June          | 75               | 132            | 8,982.80               | 135.4            | 344.0          |
| July          | 78               | 179            | 10,193.32              | 1396.2           | 361.0          |
| August        | 432              | 623            | 8,499.59               | 149.3            | 360.0          |
| September     | 218              | 383            | 5,426.35               | 116.5            | 352.0          |
| October       | 112              | 166            | 8,952.73               | 145.4            | 303.0          |
| November      | 95               | 125            | 32,152.72              | 552.6            | 946.0          |
| December      | 17               | 29             | 7,310.78               | 98.4             | 174.0          |
| <b>TOTALS</b> | <b>1328</b>      | <b>2221</b>    | <b>130,598.1</b>       | <b>4,154.6</b>   | <b>4,787.0</b> |

### 1 Adopt-a-Drain

A Project of Hamline University's Center for Global Environmental Education.



## PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

## Annual Report Watershed Partners Summary

### Participant Types

| Participant type       | Number of participants in 2024 | Total number of participants | Percent of participants in 2024 | Percent of total participants |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Individual             | 1254                           | 9680                         | 94.4%                           | 96.5%                         |
| School or Classroom    | 39                             | 129                          | 2.9%                            | 1.3%                          |
| Business               | 18                             | 110                          | 1.4%                            | 1.1%                          |
| Community Organization | 17                             | 115                          | 1.3%                            | 1.1%                          |

### How Participants heard about Adopt-a-Drain

| Referral Type                      | Number of participants in 2024 | Number of participants total | Percent of participants in 2024 | Percent of total participants |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Other                              | 506                            | 1245                         | 38.1%                           | 12.4%                         |
| Friend, family or neighbor         | 268                            | 803                          | 20.2%                           | 8.0%                          |
| My city or watershed district      | 172                            | 653                          | 13.0%                           | 6.5%                          |
| Family's teacher or school         | 104                            | 178                          | 7.8%                            | 1.8%                          |
| Social media (Facebook, Next Door) | 74                             | 484                          | 5.6%                            | 4.8%                          |
| News outlet                        | 62                             | 234                          | 4.7%                            | 2.3%                          |
| Yard sign                          | 47                             | 142                          | 3.5%                            | 1.4%                          |
| Door hanger or flyer               | 17                             | 203                          | 1.3%                            | 2.0%                          |