



Wednesday, May 20, 2026

CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

MCWD Boardroom

www.minnehahacreek.org

Board of Managers:

Sherry White, President; William Olson, Vice President; Eugene Maxwell, Secretary; Ricardo Bonner, Manager; Arun Hejmadi, Manager; Steve Sando, Manager; Janet Schaefer, Manager-Designate

Board Liaison: Manager Bonner

Citizens Advisory Committee Members:

Cait Caswell, Joshua Foschi, Robert Glisky, Laurie Goldsmith, Steve Hage, Suzanne Jiwani, Will Mulhern, Rich Nyquist

CAC Members Absent:

Sheri Wallace, Drew McGovern, John Iverson

MCWD Staff Present: Samatha Hoppe, Maia Irvin, and James O'Brien

Members of the Public Present: Gary Dukes, John Costello

6:30 pm

1. **Committee Meeting Call to Order**
Chair Glisky called the meeting to order.
2. **Approval of Agenda (Additions/Corrections/Deletions)**
2.1 May 20, 2026 agenda
Goldsmith, Nyquist. All approved.
3. **Approval of Minutes (Additions/Corrections/Deletions)**
3.1 March 18, 2026 minutes
Jiwani, Foschi. All approved.
4. **Action Items**
No action items.

6:45 pm

5. **Discussion Items**
5.1 Lake Management Framework & Campaign – **Irvin**

Outreach Coordinator Maia Irvin opened the meeting by providing an overview of the goals of a proposed Lake Management Engagement Campaign. Irvin facilitated a brief Mentimeter exercise to gauge CAC members' interests and understanding of lake management. Members shared what they value about public waterbodies and reflected on what lake management means to them. Discussion highlighted the balance between human use and intervention, water quality and quantity considerations, and the complexities of managing interconnected hydrologic and ecological systems.

Irvin reviewed the meeting agenda, which included an overview of MCWD's role and approach to lake management, the rationale behind a Lake Management Campaign, discussion of a campaign concept, and an introduction to a proposed Lake Management Framework resource.

Irvin provided background on the complex governance structure that influences water resource management, including the roles of state agencies, counties, watersheds, and municipalities. She introduced the concept of Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs), which establish pollutant sources and reduction targets for impaired lakes to meet state standards. Through TMDLs, the state assigns waste load reductions to land use authorities, such as MS4 permittees, which are often municipalities and transportation agencies responsible for stormwater systems.

Within this TMDL framework, MCWD is not typically assigned reductions and instead supports partner cities in achieving water quality goals through capital improvement projects, technical assistance, and funding support. Irvin noted that as a 178-square mile watershed with 129 lakes, MCWD focuses its resources for greatest regional impact, implementing capital projects through its two-track approach: [Focal Geographies](#) and the [Land & Water Partnership Program](#). She explained MCWD's issues-drivers-strategies framework, which guides project implementation to achieve long-term restoration.

This lake management approach begins with identifying and quantifying resource issues, such as poor water quality, flooding, or ecological degradation. MCWD then evaluates the drivers contributing to those issues, often linked to land use practices and stormwater runoff. Finally, MCWD identifies and prioritizes a suite of data-driven restoration strategies. These typically begin with efforts to reduce external pollutant loading through projects such as regional stormwater treatment and wetland restoration before considering whether in-lake management strategies, such as alum treatment, are necessary to achieve water quality goals.

CAC members asked questions about additional water quality improvement strategies, including rough fish management, aquatic plant management, alum treatment, and dredging.

Irvin illustrated an example of this approach in the Long Lake Creek Subwatershed, where MCWD partnered with the Cities of Long Lake, Medina, and Orono, and the Long Lake Waters Association to develop a [collaborative Subwatershed Roadmap](#). The Roadmap outlines the Subwatershed's issues and drivers, as well as effective restoration strategies and a project implementation plan for all of the partners.

Following the presentation on MCWD's lake management role and approach, Irvin discussed common challenges associated with competing public perspectives of lake management across MCWD's 29 communities. She explained that residents, lake associations, and other stakeholders often become engaged following visible events of concern in their local waterbody, such as algal blooms, and seek information about causes, solutions, and responsible parties. MCWD is frequently contacted with requests to provide data, technical information, and support for project implementation.

Irvin noted that following research and data discovery, concerned stakeholders often desire in-lake management strategies because they can produce short-

term, visible improvements in a local waterbody. This desired approach can lead to misalignment between stakeholder expectations and MCWD's long-term regional restoration approach, which emphasizes addressing external pollutant sources before turning inside a lake.

CAC members asked about the challenges MCWD faces in responding to these public inquiries. Irvin explained that while MCWD is, and will continue to be, a resource for the public, these inquiries can require significant staff time and internal coordination, resulting in delays to other mission-driven work. Misalignment can also impact the public's trust in MCWD and lead to a lack of role clarity among all of the entities involved in lake management.

Outreach Coordinator James O'Brien then facilitated a discussion regarding potential components of a Lake Management Campaign. CAC members identified lake associations as a key audience, noting their role as a primary information source for residents and an important voice for individual lakes. Members discussed the value of engaging with and convening lake associations to share experiences, compare approaches, and build a broader understanding of effective lake management at a watershed-wide scale.

Members also discussed potential risks associated with the campaign, including perceptions of assigning blame, challenges associated with change management, and the importance of avoiding unrealistic expectations. CAC members shared ideas for mitigating these risks through clear communication and expectation-setting.

When discussing desired outcomes, CAC members emphasized the importance of increasing public understanding of lake management, improving awareness of MCWD's role as a facilitator and partner, and increasing transparency in decision-making processes. Members also noted the value of highlighting practical actions residents can take, such as implementing shoreline best practices or participating in programs like Adopt-A-Drain. CAC members stated the engagement campaign would be successful if it fostered greater public alignment around effective lake management approaches and suggested gathering stakeholder feedback throughout the campaign to evaluate success.

Irvin asked CAC members to reflect on their role in the campaign. Members noted they could serve as community representatives and provide feedback on how residents and lake associations may interpret messages.

Irvin concluded by presenting an outline of a draft Lake Management Framework, which could serve as a resource within the campaign, and soliciting feedback. CAC members expressed appreciation for the issues-drivers-strategies approach and its visual organization. Members suggested expanding explanations of various management strategies, incorporating a case study, including a compelling introductory quote, adding an infographic illustrating pollutant loading sources, and providing a watershed-wide map to reinforce the scale of MCWD's work, priorities, and organizational capacity.

Members also emphasized the importance of maintaining an accessible reading level, ensuring the resource is easy to navigate and scan, avoiding overstating MCWD's role, and clearly communicating the importance of municipal responsibilities and partnerships.

8:10 pm

6. Informational Items + Updates

6.1 CAC Member Updates

- Jiwani shared a brief update on the Executive Team's effort to develop CAC Engagement Guidelines, which will be shared for review at the July meeting before adoption by the CAC. Once adopted, these guidelines will serve as a resource for new members on expectations for CAC engagement in meetings, outside of meetings, and involvement in annual recruitment efforts.
- Nyquist shared a Low/No Phosphorus Fertilizer Vendors resource created in 1999 by MCWD's CAC.

6.2 Board Liaison Updates

- Manager Bonner shared that the Board kicked off its 2027 budget process with the first presentation of the preliminary budget at its [May 14 Operations & Programs Committee](#) meeting.
- Manager Bonner also shared that the Board recently approved [90% design plans](#) and authorized solicitation of construction bids for the [Greenway-Cedar Trail Connection](#) in St. Louis Park. The project will include streambank restoration and the construction of a trail to link Minnehaha Creek Greenway projects and connect them to regional transportation networks, including the Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail.

6.3 Staff Updates

- O'Brien reminded the group of the upcoming field trip to Arden Park, scheduled for June 4, 2026.
- O'Brien also shared a final reminder for CAC members to request MCWD logo wear.
- O'Brien shared an update on the DEI Task Force, which has its first meeting scheduled next week, oriented around MCWD's DEI Framework.
- O'Brien shared that both the [County Road 6 Pond Retrofit](#) and [East Auburn Wetland Restoration](#) projects have reached substantial completion and are in the final rehab and vegetative restoration phase. O'Brien also shared footage from the recent prescribed burn at 6300 Painter Road in Minnetrista.
- O'Brien provided updates on recent and current hiring processes, as MCWD continues to grow.
- O'Brien shared that Gray's Bay Dam opened for the season on April 28 and was discharging at 20 cubic feet per second, in accordance with the operating plan. He noted that while recent rainfall slightly elevated water levels, they are lower than this time last year, due to below-normal precipitation to date.

8:30 pm

7. Adjournment

Mulhern, Nyquist, All approved.

Upcoming Meeting

Wednesday, July 15, 2026, Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting