



**Title:** Lake Management Framework & Campaign

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**Purpose:**

Frame the Citizens Advisory Committee's (CAC) May meeting discussion, oriented around the development of a Lake Management Framework and associated campaign, which will inform interested residents, community groups, and partners on the core principles and roles of long-term lake management and restoration.

**Background:**

The Minnehaha Creek Watershed District works at a regional scale to protect and improve water resources within its boundaries, which encompass 129 lakes, 8 major streams, 29 communities, and over 300,000 residents.

Grounded in the District's [Balanced Urban Ecology philosophy](#), MCWD's [2017 Watershed Management Plan](#) (Plan) established its two-track approach to project implementation. To accomplish its mission and deliver measurable, lasting water resource benefits for the watershed, MCWD's approach is guided by principles of focus, flexibility, and partnership.

- MCWD's [focal geography model](#) allows the District to sustain attention in areas of high need, gaining a strong understanding of local priorities, building actionable partnerships, and dedicating the resources necessary to deliver high-impact capital projects that achieve significant, regional benefits while supporting broader community needs.
- MCWD's [Land & Water Partnership \(LWP\) Program](#) allows the District to respond to opportunity-driven, partner-led projects by providing technical or financial assistance. Eligible partners include municipalities, counties, other public agencies, large landowners, private developers, or other organizations with capacity to lead implementation. Lake associations and other non-public organizations may be eligible for LWP Program support with active city sponsorship, to ensure both implementation capacity and alignment with local priorities.

Through the 2027 Plan, MCWD will carry forward its two-track implementation approach, while improving and expanding both implementation models, to deliver the greatest value to the watershed's communities and resources. As MCWD engages public partners and other stakeholders in the Plan's development through advisory committees, subwatershed planning groups, and other community venues, there is a unique opportunity to frame role clarity, expectations, principles, and strategies for effective, lasting lake management and restoration, to support both MCWD-led project implementation and efforts led by partners.

**Lake Management Campaign Purpose:**

Lakes are complex natural systems and managing them toward improvement and restoration is a complex process that requires involvement from various public agencies and can impact many stakeholders. Residents, community groups, lake associations, public agencies, and other organizations across the watershed frequently turn to MCWD, seeking a trusted resource for data, technical expertise, project recommendations, and implementation resources.

A Lake Management Framework and engagement campaign could help proactively educate interested stakeholders on the core elements of an effective approach to long-term lake management and restoration. Building understanding of this complex process could better prepare communities for project implementation and investment, while supporting MCWD's ability to efficiently respond to relevant inquiries and requests.

To be an effective resource, MCWD aims to serve up this information in ways that support the typical process many residents, lake associations, public partners, and other organizations follow as they look for solutions to their local water resource issues. Accordingly, the major components of a Lake Management Framework may include providing water resource data sources, framing the benefits of a system understanding, identifying effective restoration strategies, and outlining implementation considerations and potential action steps.

MCWD staff are actively scoping the key elements of this campaign, which could include a short publication, an interactive web resource, social media collateral, and a multi-step interpersonal engagement process.

**May 20, 2026, CAC Meeting:**

At the May 20, 2026, CAC meeting, MCWD staff will outline key insights and challenges that have informed the need, purpose, and objectives of this campaign, frame core campaign elements, and provide an outline for a short publication that could serve as a primary resource for this work.

Staff will solicit CAC feedback around the following questions:

- How could this campaign strengthen or improve MCWD's overall approach to lake management, engagement, or partnership-building?
- What strategies, messages, or engagement methods could help shift perspectives or build broader understanding of effective lake management approaches?
- How can MCWD clearly articulate lake management principles, roles, strategies, and implementation considerations?
- What components or deliverables of a campaign would yield the highest return on investment (e.g., framework document, summary materials, presentations, partner conversations, visual tools, etc.)?
- What role do you see the CAC playing in shaping and advancing this campaign?