MINNEHAHA CREEK
WATERSHED DISTRICT
QUALITY OF WATER, QUALITY OF LIFE

Title:	Authorization to release Request for Proposals for Phase II Website design and build
Resolution number:	21-093
Prepared by:	Name: Helen Schnoes Phone: (952) 641-4524 hschnoes@minnehahacreek.org
Reviewed by:	James Wisker, Administrator
Recommended action:	Authorize staff to release Request for Proposals for Phase II Website design and build
Schedule:	• Request for Proposals released December 17, 2021 • Letter of Interest + Questions due January 7, 2022 at 11:59pm CST • Answers returned January 11, 2022 • Proposals due January 19, 2022 at 11:59pm CST • Finalist interviews January 31, 2022 – February 4, 2022 • Vendor selected February 24, 2022 • Phase II begins March 2022 • New website launches October 2022
Budget considerations:	Fund name and code: 1-1003-4320 and 4-4002-4320 Fund budget: $103,000 Expenditures to date: N/A Requested amount of funding: N/A
Past Board action:	Res #: 19-060 Authorization to contract for web content strategy
	Res #: 20-088 Acceptance of Phase I website content strategy

Summary:

On November 19, 2020, the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD or the District) Board of Managers (Board) approved and adopted the Phase I Website Content Strategy (Res #20-088). This plan defined the site's architecture and the key content items needed to achieve the District's goals for the website, and lay the foundation for a Phase II design and build. It was the product of nearly two years of work and engagement with staff, Board Managers, Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) members, and external stakeholders. Phase II, designing and building the website, was placed on hold due to turnover within the Outreach Program.

At the December 16, 2021, Board meeting, staff will seek Board authorization to release a request for proposals (RFP) to complete the design and launch of the District's new website. During the meeting staff will provide a high-level summary of the website planning to date, efforts taken to prepare for the Phase II RFP, and the proposed scope, schedule and budget for the Phase II design and build.

Background:

Phase I Content Strategy

MCWD selected the firm Vendi (Res #19-060) through a competitive process to develop a content strategy to serve as a foundation to guide the design and building the new website. In 2019, in coordination with the development of the

District's new outreach strategy, Vendi led a discovery and planning process that included user surveys, focus groups, a CAC work session, and a series of content planning sessions. Based on this input, MCWD and Vendi defined the following overarching website goals, in order of priority:

1. Connect people to the information they value
2. Highlight the value MCWD provides across the watershed
3. Provide transparency and organizational information

Through that process, a few key principles emerged for developing the plan:

1. Begin with a judicious focus on the most important content.
2. Weave in MCWD's brand position throughout.
3. Leverage high-quality third-party content whenever possible.

The Board-approved Phase I Content Strategy outlines the major sections of the website, the key content needed to achieve the goals of each section, and outlines guidelines for design, copywriting, and coding. At the time of approval, it was understood that design and copywriting decisions would occur during Phase II.

Phase II Website Redesign Summary:
Aging Website and Technology:
The District's website relies on an aging content management system Drupal 7.82, and general purpose scripting language known as PHP 7.4. Security support for PHP 7.4 is scheduled to sunset November 28, 2022. This will leave the current website vulnerable. Migration to Drupal 9 and PHP 8 would be as rigorous and costly as redesigning and building a new website. This information offers two key insights regarding the District's website, (1) the planned website build must be completed by mid-fall 2022; (2) the new website should be maintained and updated more frequently.

Phase II Preparation:
Website update work resumed following the hiring of a MCWD Outreach Manager in Fall 2021. Phase I deliverables were reviewed in detail, in coordination with Program Managers. Outreach staff conducted targeted research to inform timeline and approach with peers at other agencies and potential website vendors. This included identifying five web development firms from which to gain general perspective and guidance. The firms were both local and national, with specialization in government or non-profit websites. Similar conversations were held with the Phase I vendor, Vendi, and the current website hosting company, fjorge. Feedback through this process indicates that the District should be able to successfully complete the design and launch of its new website before Fall 2022, within the budget that has been developed.

Phase II Scope:
The Phase II Scope of work will build directly on the approved Phase I Content Strategy.

The major tasks outlined in the RFP are:
1. Review Phase I research, Content Strategy, and current organizational needs
2. Determine workplan to launch new site no later than October 2022
3. Establish design elements for website and MCWD communications based on content strategy
4. Create content for new website and edit current content selected for migration
5. Website build and development
6. Test site pre-launch and train staff for content management
7. Launch new website
8. Create plan for on-going support, maintenance, and enhancement projects

Timeline
The RFP process and design/build project will unfold on the following timeline:
• Released December 17, 2021
• Letter of Interest + Questions due January 7, 2022

- Answers returned January 11, 2022
- Proposals due January 19, 2022 at 11:59pm CST
- Finalist interviews January 31, 2022 – February 4, 2022
- Vendor selected February 24, 2022
- Project kickoff March 2022
- Design / Build April 2022 – August 2022
- Quality Assurance and Quality Control Testing – September 2022
- Launch of updated website – October 2022
- Possible website enhancements – November 2022 – Beyond

The end of the Phase II contract will depend on the timeline and proposal of the selected vendor. On-going site hosting and general maintenance will not be included in the Phase II contract, but proposals will include an overview of such services and fees offered by vendors.

Budget
The budget for Phase II is $103,000. The 2022 budget allocates funding from the IT and Outreach program areas to support the website design/build (about three-quarters) and content creation (about one-quarter). The RFP lists a budget range of $80,000 – $100,000.

RFP Solicitation
MCWD staff will solicit the RFP to potential vendors through posting the RFP on the MCWD website, with the League of Minnesota Cities, and through direct outreach to pre-vetted vendors who staff feels are well positioned to submit strong proposals.

Supporting documents (list attachments):
- Phase II Request for Proposals
  - Attachments:
    - Phase I Website Analysis
    - Phase I Content Plan
    - Suggested Phase II Technological Requirements
    - MCWD Brand Manual
    - MCWD Template Contract (in editing by legal counsel)

RESOLUTION

Resolution number: 21-093

Title: Authorization to release Request for Proposals (RFP) for Phase II Website Design/Build

WHEREAS   in 2019 the MCWD Board of Managers approved resolution 19-026 to release a Request for Proposals for Phase I consultant services to create a content strategy for a new website and adopted resolution 19-060 authorizing staff to contract with website design firm, Vendi Advertising; and

WHEREAS   throughout 2019 and 2020 District staff and Vendi led an intensive input process that resulted in a Phase I website content strategy report to serve as the blueprint for designing, copywriting, and building the new website, which was accepted by the Board of Managers in resolution 20-088; and

WHEREAS   activities in Phase I anticipated project continuation in a competitive Phase II process to select a qualified vendor to design and build the new website, using the content strategy as a foundation; and

WHEREAS   in Fall 2021 MCWD staff learned from the website host that the current site will not be able to be maintained after November 28, 2022, due to upgrades in technology and the age of the site; and

WHEREAS   in Fall 2021 Outreach staff conducted Phase II preparation activities including conversations with experienced peers, vetting of preliminary approach, budget, and timeline ideas with potential website design/build firms, and internal program manager review of the Phase I content strategy to develop a sound approach for successful website update by October 2022; and

WHEREAS   the approved 2022 budget allocated $103,000 for the full design and build project, approximately three-quarters for website design and build and one-quarter for website content creation and photography;

WHEREAS   the MCWD staff Information Technology (IT) lead and Outreach program manager briefed Board IT Liaison Olson on December 9, 2021, about the Phase II context and approach;

WHEREAS   the MCWD staff presented a draft RFP to the Board of Managers on December 16, 2021, which the Board finds to support the implementation of the approved content strategy otherwise to be sound;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District Board of Managers authorizes the District administrator to distribute an RFP, with any final modifications to that RFP on advice of counsel, for Phase II website design and build services.

Resolution Number 21-093 was moved by Manager _____, seconded by Manager _____. Motion to adopt the resolution ___ ayes, ___ nays, ___abstentions. Date.

_____ Date: _____
Secretary

Request for Proposals: Website Design/Build

A. Project Overview

Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD or District) seeks a contractor to design and build a new website that will provide a rich, engaging, and successful user experience within the proposed timeline. The redesigned website will reflect MCWD's brand identity as a leader in sound science and building partnerships to implementing high-impact water quality projects and policy change that integrates land use and water planning. MCWD desires a website that is visually compelling, easy to navigate, accessible to all users, integrates MCWD Application Programming Interfaces (APIs)/web services, and is easy to administer and maintain. In addition to the website development, the contractor will bring holistic design support and create content (written and visual) to best show and tell the organization's story and meaningfully present water and project data. This project is Phase II of MCWD's website rebuild process and will use the Phase I audience research and Content Strategy from 2019-2020 as a foundation to inform the design/build and content creation. The new website will launch in October 2022.

A.1 Proposal and Project Timeline

- RFP released December 17, 2021
- Letter of Interest + Questions due January 7, 2022 by 11:59pm CST
- Answers returned from MCWD by January 11, 2022
- Proposals due January 19, 2022 by 11:59pm CST
- Finalist interviews January 31, 2022 – February 4, 2022
- Contractor selected by February 24, 2022
- Project kickoff March 2022
- Launch of updated site October 2022

A.2 Project Contact

All questions, letters of interest, and proposals must be directed via email to:

Helen Schnoes
Outreach Manager
Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD)
15320 Minnetonka Blvd
Minnetonka, MN 55345
952-641-4524
hschnoes@minnehahacreek.org

A.3 Project Budget

MCWD anticipates the budget for this project to be $80,000 – $100,000.

Contents

B. Organizational & Project Background

B.1 Mission and Authority

MCWD believes that **water is a central organizing element in the development of sustainable cities**. We know that our lakes, streams, and wetlands have the power to underpin community identity, and grow social, environmental, and economic value. This is why we are dedicated to building a landscape of vibrant communities where nature and the built environment exist in balance, creating value and enjoyment. We pursue a vision of A Balanced Urban Ecology through public-private partnerships that protect and improve water while creating a sense of place within the watershed.

The Minnehaha Creek Watershed is **one of the largest and most heavily-recreated urban watersheds in Minnesota**. The watershed encompasses 178-square miles, 29 cities from Minnetrista to south Minneapolis, and includes Lake Minnetonka, the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes, Minnehaha Creek, and Minnehaha Falls. It includes eight major creeks, 129 lakes, and thousands of wetlands.

Over the past 50 years, MCWD has **collected and maintained extensive water and natural resources data** which have supported implementation of over 70 capital projects, resulting in the conservation and restoration of over 700 acres of land. As a local unit of government, we are responsible for managing and protecting the water resources through permitting, capital projects (development, implementation, and maintenance), water quality research and monitoring, management of the Gray's Bay Dam, outreach and community engagement, and policy change. As a regional organization, we are actively working to understand how we can best support our communities as they respond to climate change.

MCWD is more than a leader in watershed management. We strive to push the boundaries of what we thought was possible. Our culture thrives on imagination, initiative, and the power that diverse perspectives bring to our collective mission. We enjoy the challenge of deep, meaningful work and know the power of teamwork to achieve excellence in a dynamic environment. **We seek a partner in this website design/build process that understands our mission and aligns with our cultural outlook.**

B.2 Website Background

MCWD's current website, https://www.minnehahacreek.org, is built on an open-source Drupal content management software and was last designed in 2009 and updated in 2011. The site fails and underperforms on many fronts: outdated design, mobile responsiveness, accessibility per Section 508 and WCAG 2.1 AA accessibility standards, content and data visualization needs of MCWD staff and its communities, and ease of administering, maintaining, and updating. The website is burdened by legacy content and currently serves, in part, as an untended archive. Up to ten staff engage with the website.

The District's current website is built on Drupal 7.82 and utilizes PHP 7.4. Security support for PHP 7.4 is scheduled to sunset November 28, 2022, leaving the current website vulnerable. Through preliminary research, the District understands that updating its current website to Drupal 9 to accommodate PHP 8.0 would require updates and testing on all modules/dependencies and would be more expensive than a website rebuild.

B.2.1 Analytics

Phase I included discovery activities that assessed current use patterns and other website analytics. Some high-level findings and data points include:

- Seasonality of page use, especially for water levels pages during periods of flooding and paddling the creek during summer
- Higher than average number of users accessing from desktop, although desktop vs. mobile traffic is more evenly split during peak summer months
- Top pages visited in rank order, starting with most frequent (% page views)
    1. [Water Levels](#) (18.67%)
    2. [Homepage](#) (16.58%)
    3. [Canoe Minnehaha Creek](#) (5.61%)
    4. [About](#) (2.41%)
    5. [MCWD Staff](#) (1.85%)

To fully understand the analytics of current website performance and use, review the Website Redesign Discovery Report that is included as Appendix A.

B.2.2 Current Content

The current site includes 27 different content types, listed in the Discovery Report. There are 132 modules/sub-modules enabled and 15 custom modules. Not all current modules will be migrated into the new website. MCWD anticipates that a significant amount of current content will not be migrated to the new site due to deletion or editing/rewriting to best fit the new site's Content Strategy.

A site crawl performed by the current site host in November 2021 revealed over 2000 content pages and over 1300 PDFs on the current site. MCWD has begun reviewing this information to be prepared for a content audit in Phase II to inform migration and creation. A significant portion of current content and PDFs consist of past agendas and minutes related to public meetings, MCWD projects, and legacy communications assets that do not align with the current strategic direction for MCWD Outreach.

B.3 Audiences

As a public agency, MCWD serves and communicates with multiple audiences. In 2020, MCWD adopted a new Outreach Strategy that increased emphasis on supporting high-impact interpersonal outreach tied to key District initiatives, decreasing emphasis on broad-based messaging. To achieve this shift in emphasis while continuing to meet the needs of residents and partners, MCWD's new website must effectively fulfill many of the common requests for information that were often addressed by MCWD's previous broad-based outreach programs and the staff that administered them. It must do so by effectively connecting people to the information they want or need.

MCWD summarizes key audiences in three important categories captured in the table below. In addition, we recognize that the website serves as an important tool for District staff and contractors to easily access important watershed information, and implement projects, and respond to public inquiries.

Target audience	People who must visit website	People who want to visit website
• Policymakers and community leaders looking for information on MCWD's policy and project initiatives • Community members curious about a policy or project near them	• Homeowners applying for a permit • Developers applying for a permit • Public agencies and organizations applying for a permit	• People interested in watershed recreation (specifically paddling Minnehaha Creek) • Homeowners in search of best practices for stormwater management and water quality • Community members in search of volunteer opportunities

B.4 Current Technological Integrations and Databases

In tandem with the website redesign, MCWD has worked to improve how it integrates information technology (IT) and serves data on the website through external links and embedding. The three primary features of this are the following:

- **Geospatial Information Systems (GIS):** MCWD operates an enterprise web GIS for data collection, analysis, communication, and engagement. ArcGIS Enterprise is the District's GIS solution for internal users, which is hosted on-prem including an enterprise geodatabase (SQL) and web/application servers. For external audiences and data sharing, MCWD utilizes ArcGIS Online – a SaaS solution. With ArcGIS Online, maps, applications, and dashboards are hosted in the cloud, and will be served to external audiences using embedding and iframes on the rebuilt website. https://www.minnehahacreek.org/maps

- **Permitting:** ElementsXS, created by Novotx, is the District's web-based permitting platform. The SQL backend and application server are hosted on-prem. The application has a public facing portal, where applicants can apply, track, and pay for a permit, and an internal portal, where staff review and approve permits. ElementsXS is tightly integrated with ArcGIS and the District's enterprise geodatabase – any data collected through ElementsXS will be analyzed, visualized, and served through GIS. MCWD's rebuilt website will need to link to the public facing portal: https://exs5cm.minnehahacreek.org/Account/Login?cguid=ee627211-727f-4341-8059-310d495ea0e6

- **MCWD Water Data API:** MCWD collects water quality and water quantity data that is used to support project stories that are data driven. These data are stored in the District's Kisters WISKI database, which also has a web hosted API that allows the District's data to be seamlessly integrated into web dashboards and interactive data stories. The District's API has already been incorporated into web dashboards to test real time water level communication and integrated enterprise ArcGIS web displays. The District expects that data accessible from the Water Data API can be used to develop pages on the rebuilt website such as dashboards to display water level for the public and municipal partners. Example of MCWD water level API example: https://www.mcwdtest.org/

B.5 Phase I Content Strategy

The Content Strategy delivered in Phase I of the website rebuild process offers a strong foundation for the selected contractor to build upon for Phase II design/build activities. The full Content Strategy was accepted by the MCWD Board of Managers in November 2020 and is included in Appendix B. All research conducted to inform the Content Strategy will be available for Phase II activities. Research included user surveys, focus groups, and content planning sessions; MCWD also executed a separate contract with strategic communication consultants who conducted research with external audiences.

The Content Strategy provides a preliminary site map, flow chart, and feature recommendations for the full site and individual sections/page features. It also provides guidance on overall voice, tone, copywriting, Search Engine Optimization, and visual strategy (imagery, color, and use of infographics and maps to reduce text reliance to present information). We anticipate that a significant amount of content within the new website will not be migrated.

Because of the delay between Phase I and Phase II (the result of internal staffing changes in the MCWD Outreach program), MCWD staff reviewed the Content Strategy and reaffirmed it is the right direction for the organization. Several areas were identified as needing some reassessment in the beginning of Phase II, including the Water Data section, level of information included on Project pages, and scaling back the resident education information to fit within the new Outreach direction.

C. Project Description

C.1 Project Goals

Through Phase I, three goals and principles emerged to guide the website update:

Website Goals	Website Principles
1. Connect people to the information they value	1. Begin with a judicious focus on the most important content
2. Highlight the value MCWD provides across the watershed	2. Weave in MCWD's brand position throughout
3. Provide transparency and organizational information	3. Leverage high-quality third-party content whenever possible

C.2 Scope of Work

MCWD anticipates the Phase II scope of work to comprise the following eight tasks. All proposals should clearly incorporate this scope. Tasks presented are roughly sequential but may be tackled simultaneously and iteratively as supports an effective project approach. MCWD invites proposers to identify any adjustments to described tasks or elements that should be included for the project to fully achieve its goals. MCWD looks forward to a highly collaborative, creative, and efficient process with regular check-ins throughout. Ownership of work products will vest in MCWD on creation.

- **Task 1: Review of Phase I research, Content Strategy, and current organizational needs (technological, data, communications).**

a. Contractor will lead an audit of current pages and facilitate MCWD staff assessment of what content will (1) migrate to the new site as-is, (2) migrate and edit, (3) delete, and (4) will be created for the new site.
b. Contractor will document outcomes of the audit and any updates to the Phase I Content Strategy.
c. MCWD will review draft versions of Task 1(b) documents, provide feedback to contractor, and approve a final version to complete this Task.

- **Task 2: Determine workplan to launch new site no later than October 2022**
  a. Contractor will facilitate a prioritization exercise with MCWD staff to determine the content, page templates/components, and technological elements that will be in place for October 2022 launch and create list of content, page templates/components, and technological elements to implement through post-October 2022 enhancement projects.
  b. MCWD will participate in the prioritization exercise.
  c. Contractor will document the outcomes of the prioritization exercise and define how all technical capabilities anticipated for integration subsequent to launch in October 2022 will be planned for and feasible during initial design and build.
  d. MCWD will review draft versions of the Task 2(c) document, provide feedback to contractor, and approve a final version to complete this Task.

- **Task 3: Establish design elements for website and MCWD communications**
  a. Contractor will lead the MCWD staff and Board Members though "brand refresh" activities that review the current Brand Manual (Appendix C) and Phase I Content Strategy design and style recommendations (Appendix B) to create a new, holistic Brand Manual for MCWD's website and other communications channels. The updated Brand Manual for MCWD should address the visual look and feel as well as the voice and tone of written content.
  b. Contractor will create a preliminary portfolio of website themes, including how suggested directions will present on desktop and mobile devices for up to 5 page types/layouts.
  c. MCWD will review draft versions of the themes, provide feedback to contractor, and approve a final theme to advance for full website design.
  d. Contractor will use the approved website theme to develop detailed designs for website page templates/components as identified in the Phase I Content Strategy and refined in Tasks 1 and 2.
  e. MCWD will review draft versions of design elements in Task 3(d), provide feedback to contractor, and approve final versions.
  f. Contractor will finish creation of design elements and compile them with any necessary guidance for consistent use by MCWD staff in a Website Style Guide.
  g. MCWD will review the draft Website Style Guide, provide feedback to contractor, and approve a final version to complete this Task.

- **Task 4: Create content for new website and edit current content selected for migration**
  a. Contractor will lead content planning and outlining sessions with MCWD content experts to inform content editing and creation. This will include both written content and visual content.
  b. MCWD staff will provide technical expertise, existing written materials, and draft content review to contractor throughout the content creation process to ensure accuracy in information and strategic alignment in framing.
  c. Contractor will create a robust library of high-quality visual elements to support the goals of an engaging, visually-rich website. This will likely include original photography of MCWD sites and projects in multiple seasons, graphic design, infographics, icons, and other visual enhancements and techniques.
  d. MCWD will review drafts of written content and visual elements created, provide feedback to contractor, and approve final versions of written and visual elements to complete this Task.

- **Task 5: Build and develop the new website**
  a. Contractor will lead website build and related development based upon decisions made in Tasks 1-3. Integrations will include the MCWD GIS portal (embedded), permitting portal (external link), MailChimp newsletter sign-up (embedded/external link), and visualization of project and water data (custom dashboard or embedded) as the primary recommendations. See Section C.3 and C.4 for more information.
  b. MCWD will review drafts of webpage templates/components created, provide feedback to contractor, and approve final versions to complete this Task.

- **Task 6: Test site pre-launch and train staff for content management**
  a. Contractor will perform rigorous testing of every component of the new website, including overall performance and display based upon design (specific to various browsers and mobile devices), security, accessibility, user experience/interface (usability testing), and ease of administration. All testing will be complete prior to October 2022 launch of the new website.
  b. Contractor will provide up to three thorough trainings for all staff identified as potential editors (approximately 5-10) and supply documentation (written, graphic, and video-recordings) suitable for troubleshooting and new staff trainings. MCWD anticipates that any staff member will be able to easily use the new website regardless of previous website experience based upon contractor training and supporting documentation.
  c. Contractor will provide a Site Testing Report upon the completion of testing prior to site launch, including improvements to be completed pre-launch and those planned for post-launch. Contractor will also provide a Site Use and Maintenance Manual for staff about on-going website content creation, maintenance, and troubleshooting.
  d. MCWD will participate in training and testing activities as agreed to with contractor.

e. MCWD will review the draft Site Testing Report and draft Site Use and Maintenance Manual, provide feedback to contractor, and approve final versions to complete this Task.

- **Task 7: Launch new website**
    a. Contractor must successfully complete Tasks 1-6 before working on this task, and must complete the task by the end of October 2022.
    b. Contractor and MCWD will agree to the details, logistics, and timing of the website launch in Task 2. The launch will happen in such a manner that there is no interruption to the web presence of MCWD. Final decision-making rests with MCWD for launch date.
    c. Contractor will coordinate with MCWD's IT managed service provider to ensure domain, DNS, SSL certificates are configured and applied as needed.
    d. Contractor will monitor website for at least 2-4 weeks following launch to troubleshoot and resolve bugs and other issues.

- **Task 8: Create plan for on-going support, maintenance, and enhancement projects**
    a. Contractor will pursue website enhancements if documented in contract and/or agreed to in Tasks 1 and 2. Contractor will create an Enhancement Project Summary document (including purpose, level of effort, technical requirements, estimated cost, and timeline) of future enhancement projects for MCWD to consider and pursue after Phase II. This may include specific visualizations and dynamic stories of MCWD projects and data.
    b. MCWD will review the draft Enhancement Project Summary document, provide feedback to contractor, and approve a final version.
    c. Contractor will provide a recommendation, including costs and services, for long-term website hosting, maintenance, and support.
    d. MCWD will make the final determination on hosting services and website support and maintenance.

C.3 Technological Requirements + Functionality

In Phase I, the contracted vendor provided MCWD with a list of technological requirements. All proposals must be written to meet the standards presented on the list in Appendix D.

In addition to the technological requirements, MCWD's website rebuild should bring to life the vision established in the Content Strategy (Appendix B) and have the following functionality:

- **Must have**
    o Google Analytics tracking and related website performance features
    o Easy and intuitive site navigation and keyword search
    o Real-time display of water levels based on flow gauge data
    o Social media sharing integration
    o Flexibility to serve future custom data visualizations

- Ability to embed content, such as videos, data visualizations, web maps, and dashboards through iframes or similar
- Responsive pages
- Calendar for meetings and events (updated manually)
- Display of board meeting materials and minutes that can be filtered by date and searchable by keyword without reliance on PDFs
- Public notices display
- MailChimp integration (or we're open to shifting to new email/newsletter software)
- Industry standard security features, including (1) staff login and other guards against unauthorized access, (2) privacy protection for data entered on site forms and payment applications, and (3) compliance with General Data Protection Regulation.

- **Desired**
  - Language options (i.e. individual homepages for major languages in the watershed)
  - Ability to schedule article publishing and expiration
  - Integration of community engagement tools like polling, Q&As, and forums

C.4 Content Management System

When MCWD began Phase I, staff leading the effort desired to stay with Drupal as its Content Management System (CMS) due to familiarity, and the selected vendor worked under that assumption. For Phase II, MCWD is no longer committed to staying with Drupal.

MCWD is open to a number of options for CMS and is looking to the Phase II contractor to articulate their CMS expertise and preferred platforms in the Proposal (see D.2). If the selected contractor is skilled in multiple CMS, they may facilitate the final decision in Tasks 1 and 2. MCWD wants a platform that will best meet its needs and bring the Content Strategy and Phase II goals to life, including:

- Easy to administer and maintain
- Cost-effective long-term
- Delivers a highly-visual, engaging, and accessible content to promote our brand and value
- Works with third-party integrations at launch and in anticipated enhancement projects

We are open to contractors who work with Drupal, WordPress, Umbraco, or a proprietary CMS.

C.5 Current Areas of Uncertainty

Several areas of uncertainty remain as MCWD enters Phase II of our website redesign process. These will be primary areas of discussion for Tasks 1 and 2.

1. **Water Data:** MCWD is looking to the contractor to help us determine the details of what water data we want to feature and how to most effectively present that data. MCWD is hesitant to follow the model on other public agency sites of simply providing an online mapping portal with lots of data that the user needs to sift through on their own. We aspire to offer a more curated, story-based user experience and interface to support user access of meaningful, targeted data in

highly visualized ways (figures, graphs, etc.). MCWD has many data sets and wants to present them thoughtfully and strategically to meet the needs of our audiences. Related, we are sensitive to the level of staff effort required to maintain data accuracy and performance of the site pages comparative to the level of use and access from the public.

2. **Content Creation:** While we estimated some thresholds for content creation in the D.2 Proposal Requirements, MCWD is looking for collaboration in Tasks 1 and 2 to bring greater precision to the amount of new text, number of photographs, number of graphic elements, and other content necessary to create to ensure a successful launch of the website in October 2022. MCWD welcomes contractor recommendations in the proposal process based upon industry standards and experience with previous project relevant to MCWD's situation and vision.

D. Proposal Process & Requirements

D.1 Timeline Details

The full proposal timeline is included in the cover page section A.1. Key deadlines for potential contractors to be aware of include:

- **January 7, 2022 at 11:59pm CST: Letter of Interest + Project Questions Due**
  - o Interested contractors must submit a one-page letter of interest and supplementary list of questions no later than this date and time. All respondents will receive an email confirmation of receipt by January 8.
  - o *Only those contractors who submit a letter of interest and any related questions will (1) receive aggregated answers to all questions received by January 11, 2022 for use in preparation of the final proposal, and (2) be considered for finalist interviews.*
- **January 19, 2022 at 11:59pm CST: Final Proposals Due**
  - o Proposals meeting all requirements in Section D.2 and with thoughtful consideration of the Section C Project Description must be received via email by this date and time. All respondents will receive an email confirmation of receipt by January 20, 2022.
- **Week of January 31-4: Finalist Interviews**
  - o MCWD will evaluate proposals and invite finalists to interview during this week. All contractors interested in participating should ensure availability of key staff.
- **Contractor selected February 24, 2022**
  - o Final selection will occur per staff recommendation to the MCWD Board of Managers and decision made by the Board of Managers.
  - o MCWD staff and contractor will agree to final adjustments to contractor's proposal to serve as attached scope of work for project agreement.

D.2 Proposal Requirements

Proposals must be submitted in an electronic form via email. No paper submissions will be accepted or considered. Proposal must take into account the Section C Project Description and address requirements in a complete and concise fashion as articulated in sub-sections C.3 and C.4.

Proposals must include the following sections:

1. **Company and/or Project Team Background**
   a. Brief description of the lead contractor company and project team (website design, development, and content creation). Clearly state if contractor will use subcontractors as part of the project completion.
   b. Name and contact information for the person(s) to be contacted about proposal.
2. **Qualifications**
   a. Contact information and resume for designated project manager.
   b. Names of project team members, members' roles, level of effort, and resumes/credentials.
   c. Description of and work samples from at least three similar past projects (website design/build, public projects, etc.)
   d. References (contact person, title, email, and phone number) for at least three clients and project summary.
3. **Project vision and approach**
   a. Describe your interest in this project and vision for your approach, including how you would lead it, work with MCWD staff and Board of Managers, (possibly) engage stakeholders, and use creativity and collaboration.
   b. Provide your recommendations for a Content Management System (or how you would facilitate such a decision) and other technological features or tools to be considered.
   c. Describe how you will execute Task 2 to identify the website development elements and scheduling of those that will be completed before, and those after, Oct 2022.
   d. Describe how you will execute site testing prior to launch, including methodology and metrics.
4. **Project process and work schedule**
   a. Using the eight tasks and related subtasks described in C.2 Scope of Work as a foundation, describe your process and overall project flow. This should include:
      - Milestones and major activities
      - Interrelation of tasks and activities
      - Timeline and work schedule
      - Roles of project team members
      - Expected role of MCWD staff
      - Information needed from MCWD and when it will be needed
      - Additional activity considerations you would like to add
5. **Support and services following launch**
   a. Describe services provided specific to a post-launch warranty period and regular, on-going support. This may include response time for regular issues and disaster recovery/crisis events, fee structure, and other relevant information for on-going hosting and website support. MCWD is open to changing its web hosting vendor as makes sense with the overall direction for Phase II and beyond.

b. Preliminary suggestions for project enhancements to follow launch, both within scope and as additional services, are invited.

6. **Project Cost**
   a. Total cost proposal should consider MCWD's anticipated project budget as described in A.3 on the cover page.
   b. Provide a cost estimate for each project task identified in C.2 and additional activity in "Project process and work schedule" (D.2.4). Proposals should indicate a total cost for each milestone/task plus hourly rates of project staff and an estimated number of hours to complete.
   c. For the purpose of proposal development, MCWD would like estimates to use the following parameters for anticipated project elements, with the understanding that elements will be refined though the interview, selection, and Tasks 1 and 2 discovery.
      ▪ Primary webpage templates: 10 – 20
      ▪ Webpage components: 15 – 30
      ▪ Current webpages with text to migrate and edit: 30 – 50 pages
      ▪ New webpages content to write: 60 – 90 pages
      ▪ Photography: Half- or full-day shoots in Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall
      ▪ Graphics library: 10 – 20 images/icons

D.3 Review and Selection Criteria

MCWD will use the following criteria to select finalists to interview (A-C) and to select the contractor (A-D). The indicated weighting communicates relative importance. However, the District retains the right to select the contractor through the exercise of its best judgment.

Criteria Category	Elements	Weight
A. Experience	Company and project staff demonstrate the experience needed to successfully complete the project and possess areas of knowledge necessary. Examples and references provided are strong and relevant to MCWD's project.	**20%**
B. Proposal project vision, alignment, & process	Proposal demonstrates a clear understanding of MCWD's vision and project needs. Project process and schedule are specific and complete, offering a realistic approach to launch new site in October 2022.	**30%**
C. Cost	Cost is competitive, clearly justified, and aware of MCWD's budget. On-going support fees and future enhancements are explained and reasonable.	**30%**
D. Interviews	Presentation is high-quality, professional, and reflects MCWD's vision. Questions from MCWD are answered well. Approach and style of proposer is collaborative and creative.	**20%**

E. Appendices

MINNEHAHA CREEK WATERSHED DISTRICT

Website redesign discovery report

JULY 16, 2019

Overview

As part of the discovery and strategy phase of the website redesign process, Vendi conducted a thorough review of the existing website, performance data and other industry/peer websites. The following report includes observations and recommendations related to:

- Website traffic and engagement
- Search engine optimization and performance
- Server settings
- Accessibility
- Website CMS
- Site architecture and content
- Overall user experience

Analytics review

Analytics highlights

- Some pages show high seasonality
- The MCWD website has a higher than average amount of visitors using legacy versions of Internet Explorer
- Pages for water levels have high traffic spikes during major floods
- The majority of visitors have English as their browser's primary language
- Desktop traffic accounts for a larger than average number of users
- Higher than expected percent of new website users

Overview

Jan 1, 2018 - Jun 30, 2019

Sessions	**New users**	**Avg. session duration**	**Pages/session**	**Bounce rate**
171,534 total	**89,584** total (82%)	**1:56** average	**2.24** average	**50.5** percent

Site traffic over time
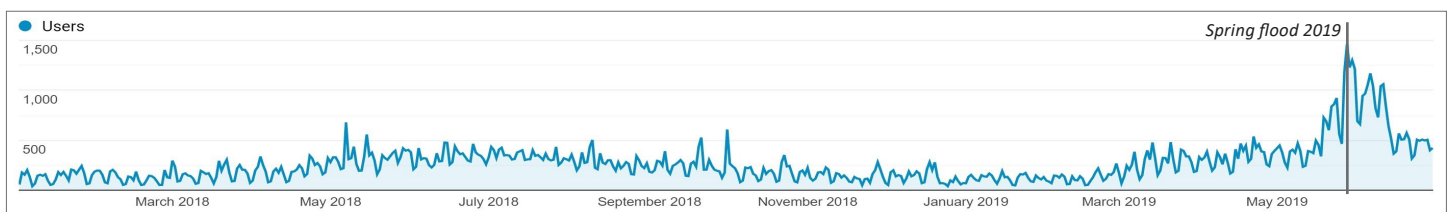
▶ Total website traffic over time

Seasonality

- Traffic typically peaks May-July, with a month or two of ramping up and down
- Peak monthly traffic is about 6,000-8,000 users per month
- Winter traffic is about 2,500-3,500 users per month

Flood season traffic

Overall website traffic and water levels page traffic increases significantly during periods of flooding.

Summer flood 2014

- Average daily traffic increased between 150% and 1,000%
- Water levels page traffic increased 591% compared to the previous year and increased 660% as a landing page
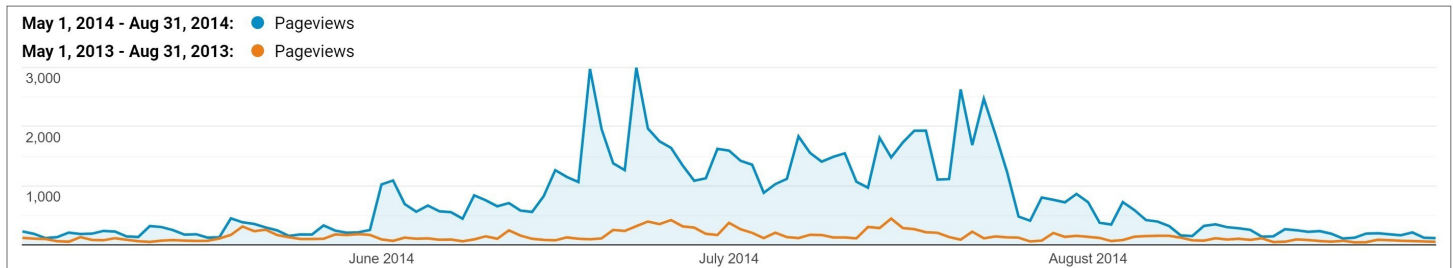
▶Water levels page traffic over time

Spring flood 2019

- Average daily traffic increased between 75% and 200%
- Water levels page traffic increased 609% compared to the previous year and 596% as a landing page
- Home page traffic increased 91%
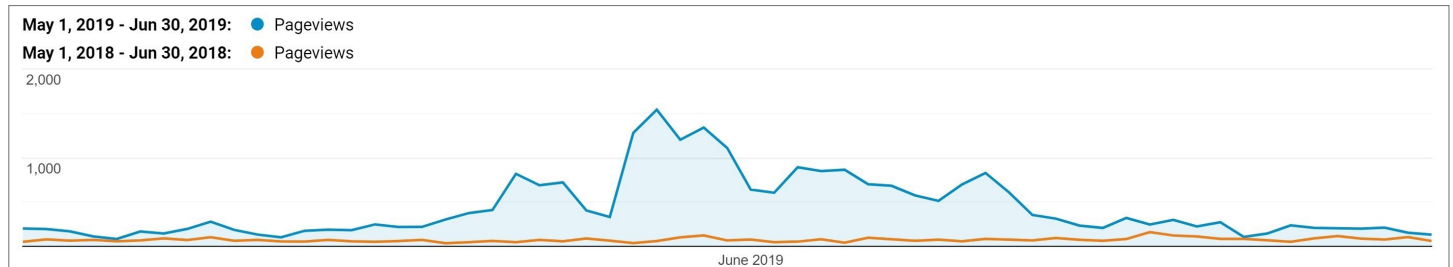
▶Water levels page traffic over time

Site content

- The home page and water level pages tend to be top pages on the site, with 18% and 32% of total pageviews during peak months, and 15% and 7% during off-season months
- The Paddling Minnehaha Creek page shows high seasonality with 7% of pageviews during peak months compared to 3% during off-season

Content seasonality

- Pageviews over time for major content areas is illustrated below. To observe trends over time, pageviews for the months of May and June 2019 have been removed as the site saw major spikes in traffic during the spring flooding season.
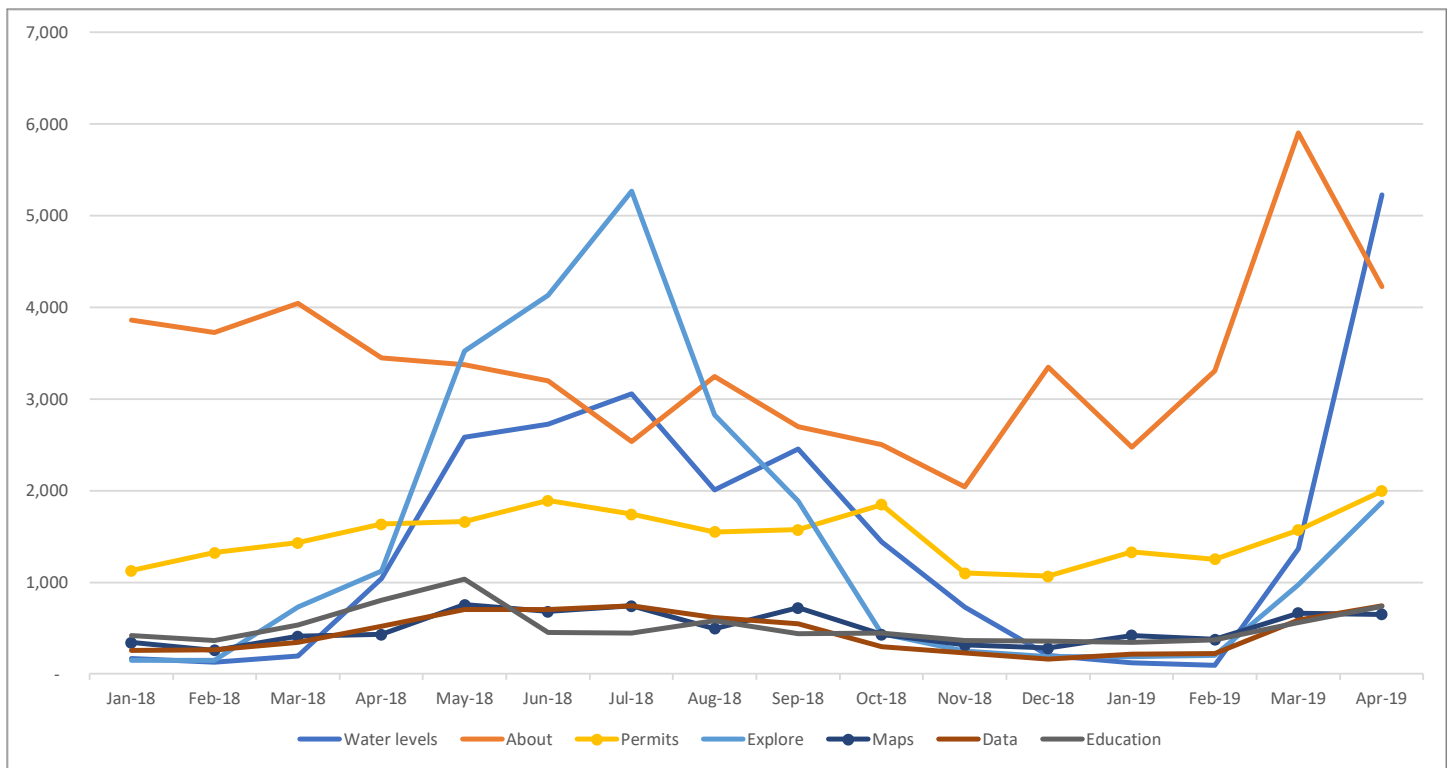
Top pages

	Pageviews		Unique pageviews		Avg. time on page	Bounce rate
/water-levels-lake-minnetonka-and-grays-bay-dam	31,618	(18.67%)	25,894	(18.57%)	00:03:30	60.22%
/	28,071	(16.58%)	22,736	(16.31%)	00:01:29	33.65%
/explore/canoe-minnehaha-creek	9,507	(5.61%)	8,038	(5.77%)	00:06:07	47.48%
/about	4,082	(2.41%)	3,273	(2.35%)	00:00:40	45.31%
/about/mcwd-staff	3,130	(1.85%)	1,218	(0.87%)	00:00:44	42.44%
/maps	2,515	(1.49%)	2,150	(1.54%)	00:02:54	67.14%
/lake-minnetonka-water-levels	2,344	(1.38%)	2,011	(1.44%)	00:03:07	77.29%
/permits	2,339	(1.38%)	1,788	(1.28%)	00:00:56	31.15%
/project	2,298	(1.36%)	1,745	(1.25%)	00:00:37	27.41%
/about/employment	1,904	(1.12%)	1,483	(1.06%)	00:03:26	55.84%

▶January 1–June 30, 2019

Top landing pages

	Sessions		% New sessions	Bounce rate	Pages/ session	Avg. time on page
/	20,987	(26.73%)	42.69%	33.79%	2.71	00:02:27
/water-levels-lake-minnetonka-and-grays-bay-dam	20,055	(25.54%)	27.90%	60.73%	1.46	00:01:24
/explore/canoe-minnehaha-creek	6,965	(8.87%)	54.39%	48.05%	1.39	00:01:55
/lake-minnetonka-water-levels	1,814	(2.31%)	41.84%	77.29%	1.39	00:01:05
/water-levels-update-2	1,024	(1.30%)	60.35%	56.45%	1.43	00:01:24
/permits/additional-information/how-determine-100-year-floodplain-elevation	943	(1.20%)	95.44%	30.97%	1.43	00:01:04
/water-levels-lake-minnetonka-and-grays-bay-dam?field_date_value[value][year]=2019	894	(1.14%)	13.09%	66.67%	1.46	00:01:06
/project/arden-park-restoration	887	(1.13%)	59.08%	69.00%	1.29	00:02:00
/about/employment/job-openings	801	(1.02%)	60.67%	64.67%	1.90	00:01:35
/about/employment	798	(1.02%)	49.87%	57.52%	2.12	00:02:30

▶January 1–June 30, 2019

Acquisition overview

- More than half (54%) of users arrive at the website through organic search
- Google accounts for 93% of total organic search traffic followed by Bing (5%), Yahoo (1.5%) and DuckDuckGo (.5%)
- Referral traffic visitors spend the most time on the site and bounce less frequently than other traffic sources
- Top referral sources include waterdata.usgs.gov, hoigaards.com and minneapolismn.gov
- Facebook accounts for 75% of total social traffic followed by Twitter (17%) and LinkedIn (6%)

	Users	New users	Sessions	Bounce Rate	Pages/ session	Avg. session duration
	38,141 % of Total: 100.00% (38,141)	37,612 % of Total: 100.05% (37,594)	78,524 % of Total: 100.00% (78,524)	51.57% Avg for View: 51.57% (0.00%)	2.16 Avg for View: 2.16 (0.00%)	00:01:52 Avg for View: 00:01:52 (0.00%)
Organic Search	21,640 (54.15%)	20,662 (54.93%)	46,029 (58.62%)	45.36%	2.11	00:02:07
Direct	13,033 (32.61%)	12,813 (34.07%)	22,625 (28.81%)	63.21%	2.37	00:01:23
Social	2,586 (6.47%)	2,359 (6.27%)	3,935 (5.01%)	64.12%	1.53	00:01:07
Referral	2,543 (6.36%)	1,626 (4.32%)	5,748 (7.32%)	46.24%	2.15	00:02:17
Email	160 (0.40%)	152 (0.40%)	187 (0.24%)	71.12%	1.11	00:00:54

▶January 1–June 30, 2019

Linking to external sites

- During the winter months, about 12% of sessions result in the user clicking a link that takes them away from the site. During the peak season this number almost doubles to 22.22%

Top outbound events:

- waterdata.usgs.gov from /explore/canoe-minnehaha-creek page (28% total events)
- waterdata.usgs.gov from /water-levels-lake-minnetonka-and-grays-bay-dam (20% of total events)
- waterdata.usgs.gov from home page (13% of total events)
- twitter.com/graysbaydam from /water-levels-lake-minnetonka-and-grays-bay-dam page (3% of total events)
- kayakthecreek.com from /explore/canoe-minnehaha-creek page (3% of total events)

Audience overview

- The site has an almost 70%/30% male/female split during peak months, and a 60%/40% split during off-season months
- Visitors ages 25-54 make up about 70% of total site traffic during peak months and 80% of site traffic during off-season months
- Not including those from outside of North America, 99.45% of website visitors have US English set as their primary language
- Approximately 20% of visitors are returning visitors
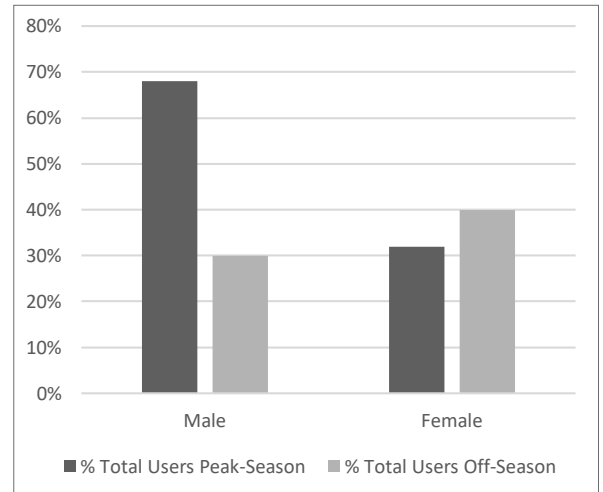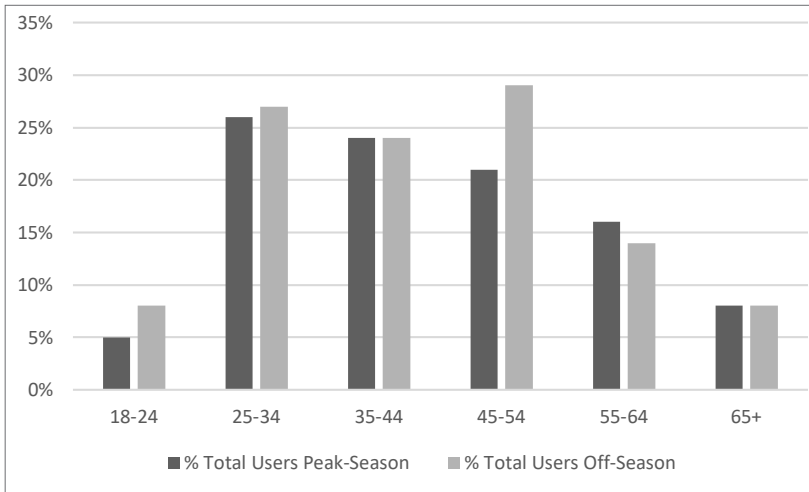
- Residents of Minnesota account for about 72% of peak traffic and 61% of off-season traffic, followed by Illinois (10% peak-season traffic, 9% off-season traffic)
- Top Minnesota cities include Minneapolis, Saint Paul, Minnetonka, Edina and Chanhassen

Location	Users	
Minneapolis	10,115	(34.52%)
Saint Paul	2,218	(7.57%)
Minnetonka	1,569	(5.36%)
Edina	1,315	(4.49%)
Chanhassen	1,237	(4.22%)
St. Louis Park	817	(2.79%)
Plymouth	793	(2.71%)
Orono	754	(2.57%)
Eden Prairie	662	(2.26%)
Bloomington	604	(2.06%)
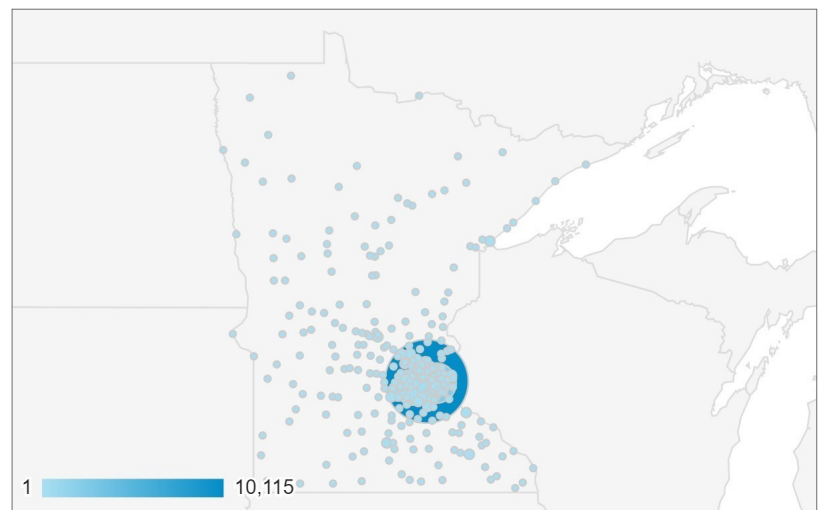
Technology

- MCWD website visitors are heavier users of Internet Explorer compared to national trends
- Desktop traffic increases during the winter months and accounts for approximately 63% of total site traffic
- Desktop and mobile traffic is more evenly split during peak months

Legend: ■ % Total Users Peak-Season   ■ % Total Users Off-Season
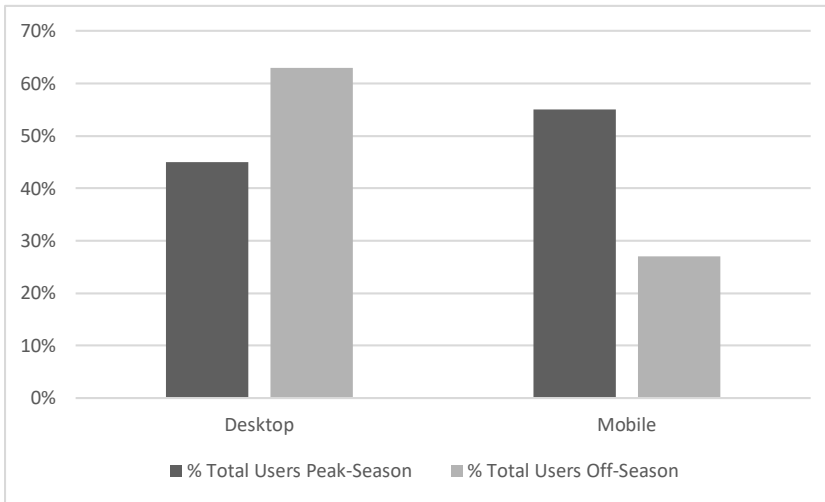
Desktop traffic breakdown

"Modern" and "evergreen" browsers - 73%

Internet Explorer - 15%

      IE11- 8% of IE traffic

      IE9 - 7% of IE traffic

Semi-modern browsers - 11%

Legacy, non-upgradable browsers - 1%

Mobile traffic breakdown

"Modern" and "evergreen" browsers - 80%

Limited version of Safari (used in embedded applications) - 8%

Semi-modern browsers - 12%

For comparison, national browser use statistics according to statcounter:

Chrome - 61.9%

Internet Explorer - 10.3%

Edge - 9.1%

Firefox - 8.9%

Safari - 8.4%

Opera - 0.9%

It is generally accepted in the development community to support any browser type/version that has at least 2% share of website users. Based on current analytics, Vendi recommends supporting back to IE 9 as part of the website rebuild, as this browser accounts for 3.5% of total website traffic.

Website audit

Server settings

Vendi observed that the server is not sending out any cache headers for non-HTML content. To improve site speed, we recommend all non-HTML content have cache headers set to a far-future date to make subsequent page loads faster.

The server responds to both https://www.minnehahacreek.org and https://minnehahacreek.org which can cause confusion and/or incorrect reporting with various analytics and performance tools. We recommend the server pick one domain as canonical and 301 redirect the other to it. For instance, the URL below links to both WWW and non-WWW versions of the site: https://minnehahacreek.org/permits/full-mcwd-rules/stormwater-management-rule

Some pages (such as https://minnehahacreek.org/permits/full-mcwd-rules/stormwater-management-rule, *Fees Rule* section, *Fee Schedule* link) still link to non-secure portions of the site. Although the server automatically redirects to the secure version, we recommend updating these links to point to the correct version.

Responsive

The current website is not responsive. As part of the website redesign, Vendi recommends designing and developing a fully responsive website to optimize the user experience for website visitors using mobile devices, tablets and/or smaller screens. A responsive website will also improve search engine optimization as Google considers mobile friendliness when assigning search rankings.

Accessibility

The site has a dedicated Web Accessibility page, however it references the legacy Section 508 standards instead of the updated rules published on January 18, 2017. The current version of Section 508 requires conformance with WCAG 2.0 levels A and AA (with some exceptions). However, to be further future-compatible, we recommend targeting the most recent WCAG, currently 2.1.

Positive accessibility observations

- Most color combinations in use, including the green side bar headlines, table headers, links and body copy, pass contrast ratio tests
- Most form fields have properly identified labels
- Most PDFs appear to be text-based and about half are properly tagged

Accessibility issues

- The "accordion-like" components used to show/hide content on many pages are missing ARIA attributes describing their states to non-visual users
- The primary light blue (#00b4f7) does not meet minimum contrast rules for any font size when used with white
- The site uses the legacy viewport mode, which means mobile devices will show the site "zoomed out" and require users to pinch-and-zoom to access and explore content. Doing this creates two-dimensional scrolling which is against WCAG 1.4.10. Instead, content should reflow to accommodate the available space.
- Focus indication for some site elements including links and buttons is explicitly disabled (2.4.7)
- Links with the same exact text on a given page go to different pages in some instances (2.4.4). For example, the sidebar *Upcoming Meetings and Events* widget uses just Board Meeting for several links. This can be fixed by using link-specific context or adding dates to the links.
- Most pages do not have a primary H1 header

SEO

- According to Google Search Console, the MCWD website was converted to "Mobile First Indexing" and reports that all pages fail their mobile testing, which can cause the site to be ranked lower for SEO.
- Many pages do not use the meta description tag. Search engines use this information to give users an overview of the site.
- All pages are missing an H1 tag. Search engines use this as a primary grouping mechanism for content.

Overall site observations and recommendations

- Utilize standard functionality across common page components throughout the site for a consistent user experience
- Elevate content including maps, images and headlines currently hidden within an accordion to improve scannability and user experience
- Incorporate external link indicators to alerts users when they will be taken off of the site
- Optimize the permit page for search engines and overall user experience by incorporating more effective heading structures and linking to actual pages within the site (instead of hidden pages)
- Consider turning top-performing PDFs into page content to improve user experience and provide additional forward paths. Top PDFs include the FEMA floodplain and stormwater ruling document.
- Look for opportunities to better utilize Glossary system functionality including navigation to/from the glossary within the site
- If possible, include additional good/bad or safe/dangerous indicators in the water level and discharge rate widget on the *Explore* pages
- Introduce caching for common queries on the Maps page to increase page speed
- Clicking an external link causes the user's session to be marked as "not bounced." This is neither good nor bad, but it should be understood that non-bounced users do not necessarily mean multiple page views.

Vendi has additional content and UX recommendations that we would like to confirm and share after content workshop sessions and usability testing.

CMS review

Content

Overall, the website does not leverage many complex or complicated modules to deliver front-facing content. It currently has 132 modules/sub-modules enabled, which is considered light compared to other websites. Because this site was developed and launched during the infancy of Drupal 7, more modern delivery methods of admin and front-facing content were not leveraged and most likely were not available at the time.

The website uses 15 custom modules. Per Vendi's initial discovery, most won't need to be migrated to the website with the exception of the MCWD Map and Water Levels modules. It is expected that most of the existing website functionality can be handled through native Drupal views as part of the rebuild. We also anticipate most admin experiences can be retained and improved in Drupal 8.

The website includes 27 different content types that are listed below. Many are currently being used, others have been noted with the last time an update has been made to any content of a particular type.

Agenda packets

Article

Banner (last updated April 2018)

Basic page

Blog post

Board

Book page (last updated February 2015)

CAC Minutes and Agendas

Clean Water Tip (last updated February 2018)

Community Event (last updated February 2017)

Event

Internal Project Tasks (last updated December 2012)

Job opening

Lake grades (currently no content)

Lake Minnetonka water levels

Master water steward volunteer request (last updated August 2017)

Minutes

News item

Permit rule by project type and city (currently no content)

Press release

Projects

Public notices

Resources (last updated October 2014)

Staff bio

Violations (last updated December 2012)

Water body

Webform

Competitive review

Overview

Vendi conducted an extensive review of peer organization and land conservation websites throughout the United States to:

• Assess overall website architecture, content, design, user experience and key features

• Gain an understanding of how other watershed districts present similar content and data to segmented audiences

• Observe ways that other industry organizations present maps, data and other interactive information

In general, many watershed districts take an administrative approach to look, feel and structure. In these cases, permitting, monitoring, regulatory and organizational information are primary areas of focus. Most sites are functional but do not encourage repeat visitors from the general public (homeowners, volunteers, people recreating in the watershed).

Websites that appear more engaging tend to elevate public and consumer content, integrate clear calls to action throughout, strategically use photography and video, organize content by audience and present information in a clean, organized and intuitive way.

The following pages contain a deeper dive into observations and recommendations related to design and user experience, content, navigation and features.

Design and user experience

- Photography and video unique to the watershed, lakes, streams and locales enhance each website's relatability, beauty and friendliness and inspire viewer participation and action

- Maps and infographics are helpful when paired with effective and expected functionality

- Animated/interactive infographics, timelines, icons and features engage users and simplify complex data

- Headers and graphic elements effectively break content into digestible and understandable sections.

- Website design and UI optimized for both desktop and mobile provide a consistent experience across all devices

▶ www.walnutcreekwatershed.org

▶ www.walnutcreekwatershed.org

2,000
people help improve our water quality

1,712
completed clean water projects to date

296
million gallons of stormwater runoff treated annually

▶ www.capitolregionwd.org

Content and site architecture

- Different content is adapted (and organized) for different audience segments, with consideration given to technical audiences, office holders, educators, citizens, recreationists and others

- Headlines, subheads, bulleted lists, numbered lists, links and strategically placed graphics, photographs, icons, etc. help enhance readability (and scannability)

- Presenting content in smaller sections make content more readable, scannable and understandable, regardless of type or complexity

- Calls to action, such as "Get Involved," "Act Now," or "Donate Now," when made prominent and readily accessible on the home page and throughout the website, encourage interaction and engagement with the organization

- Dividing information into sub-pages for specific audiences and making that information easily accessible through search/feature functionality is helpful

- Search functionality is important for site visitors who have specific topics in mind

Support for educators to incorporate water resources into their teaching

(2019 applications now open)

Do you have an idea for a lesson plan or activity involving water resources? The watershed district is offering mini grants to help cover the cost of the materials and support your ideas. Grant awards range from $50 to $250 and are available to teachers and informal educators. Applications are accepted throughout the year until funds run out.

Criteria

- Projects must take place within the watershed district
- Projects must have a water resources component
- You are eligible for one grant per year

Awards

- Amount: $50 - $250
- Grants are awarded as a rebate for purchases made

▶ www.rpbcwd.org

Stay Updated

JOIN OUR MAILING LIST

Sign up for Nine Mile News and receive the latest information first!

SIGN UP

▶ www.ninemilecreek.org

Search this site | Go | ✕ CLOSE

I am a... Find information just for you ▾

Find information just for you

Resident

Teacher

Business

Local Leader

About

Am

▶ www.rpbcwd.org

Navigation

- Main and sub-navigation should be clear, consistent, intuitive and easy to use

- Breadcrumbs show users where they are on the site and how they got there

- Footers often repeat top-level navigation categories and feature key links, contact information and opportunities for users to connect with the organization (links to social profiles, newsletter sign-ups and contact forms)

- Super navigation with drop-down/expandable menus are a helpful way to organize content-rich websites

Home / 2 Understanding the Watershed / 2.3 Geology

▶ www.upperiowariver.org

▶ new.azwater.gov

▶ www.prrcd.org

Unique or interesting features

• Multilingual sites with the ability to change the language is helpful for diverse audiences

• Interactive "Explore the watershed" maps feature engaging image callouts and links to more information

• Flow charts help users choose the proper permit

• Use of illustrations and animations more powerfully present statistics or complex data
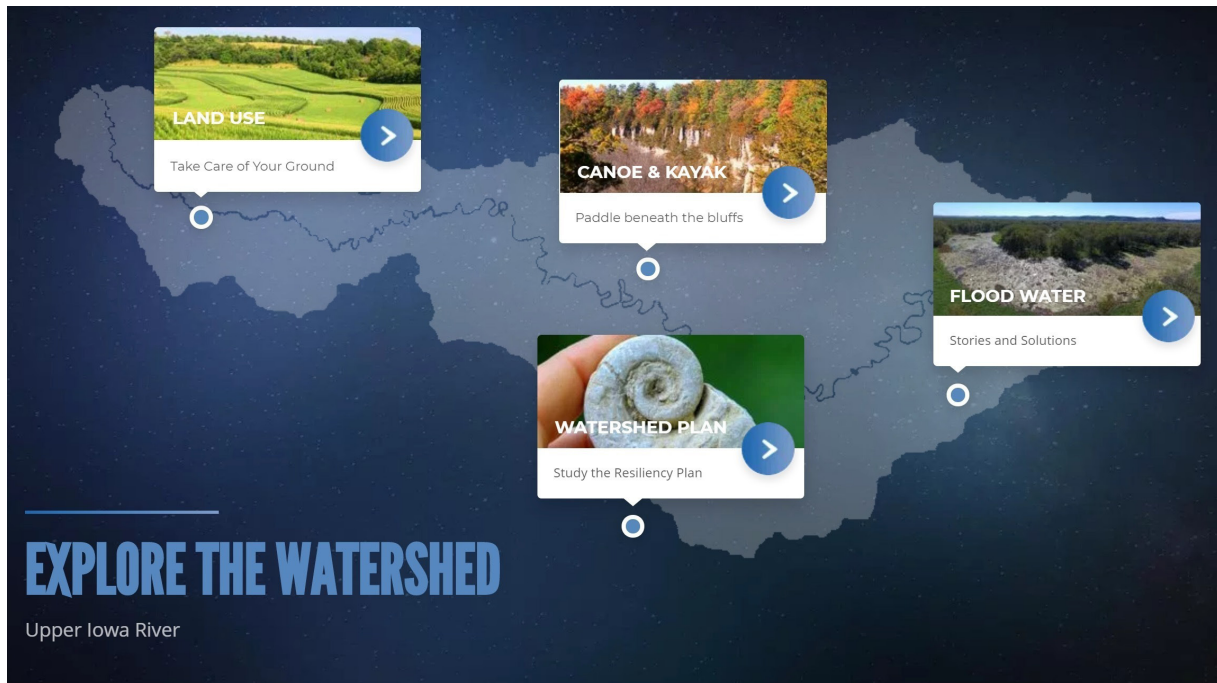
▶ www.upperiowariver.org
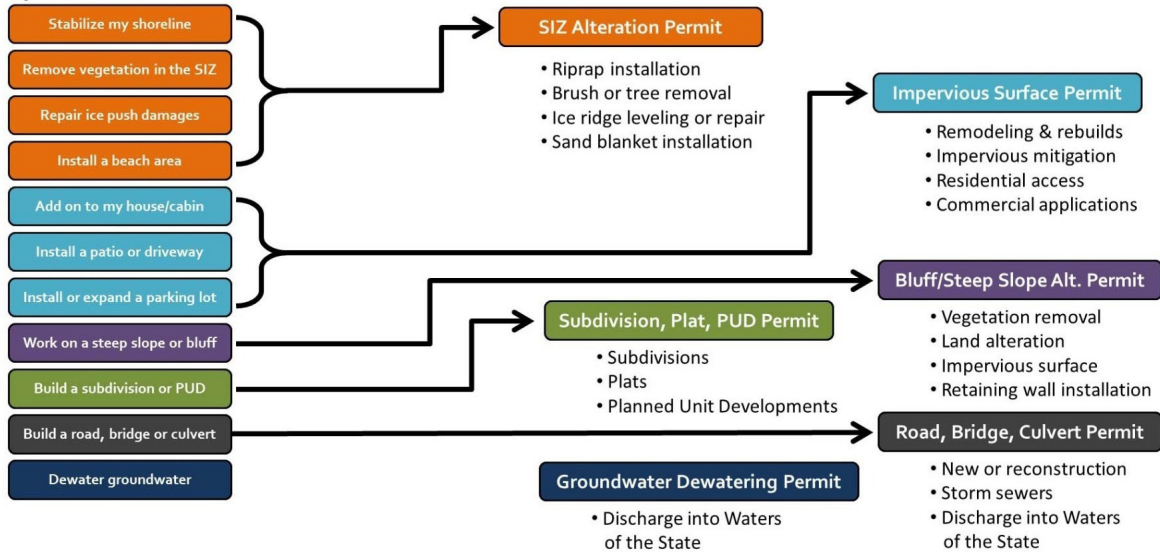
▶ www.prwd.org

Featured websites

Riley Purgatory Bluff Creek Watershed District
http://www.rpbcwd.org/

This website is welcoming and friendly. The design incorporates photography, maps, icons, graphics and water-inspired blue divider bars. Content on this site is strongly geared to the consumer and less focused on administrative aspects or the organization itself. Many pages are content-heavy but use headers and graphic elements to break copy up into digestible sections.

Key features

- Map of the district prominently featured on the home page is visually engaging and encourages user interaction with the website

- Hamburger menu features a site search and filter for multiple audience segments, allowing users to quickly find and jump to relevant content

- Content is organized by both topic area and audience segment

- Website is responsive and optimized for mobile, providing a consistent user experience across devices
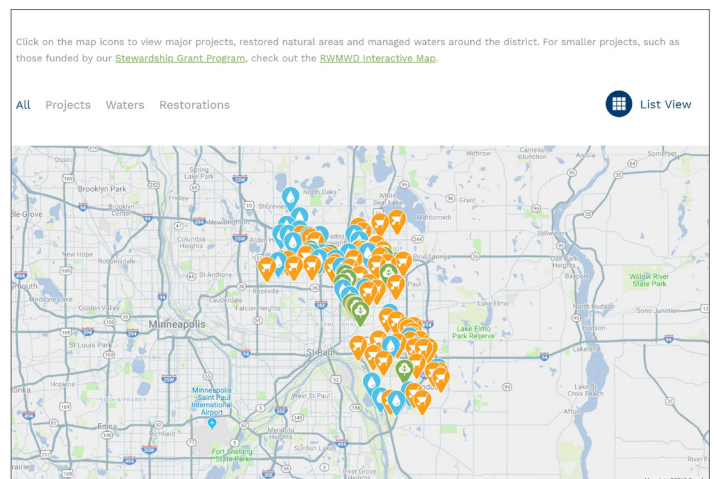
Featured websites

Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District
https://www.rwmwd.org/

This website design is welcoming with a blue and green color scheme and inviting photography of local lakes and projects. Clean, straightforward design allows visitors to easily navigate the site and find the information they're looking for.
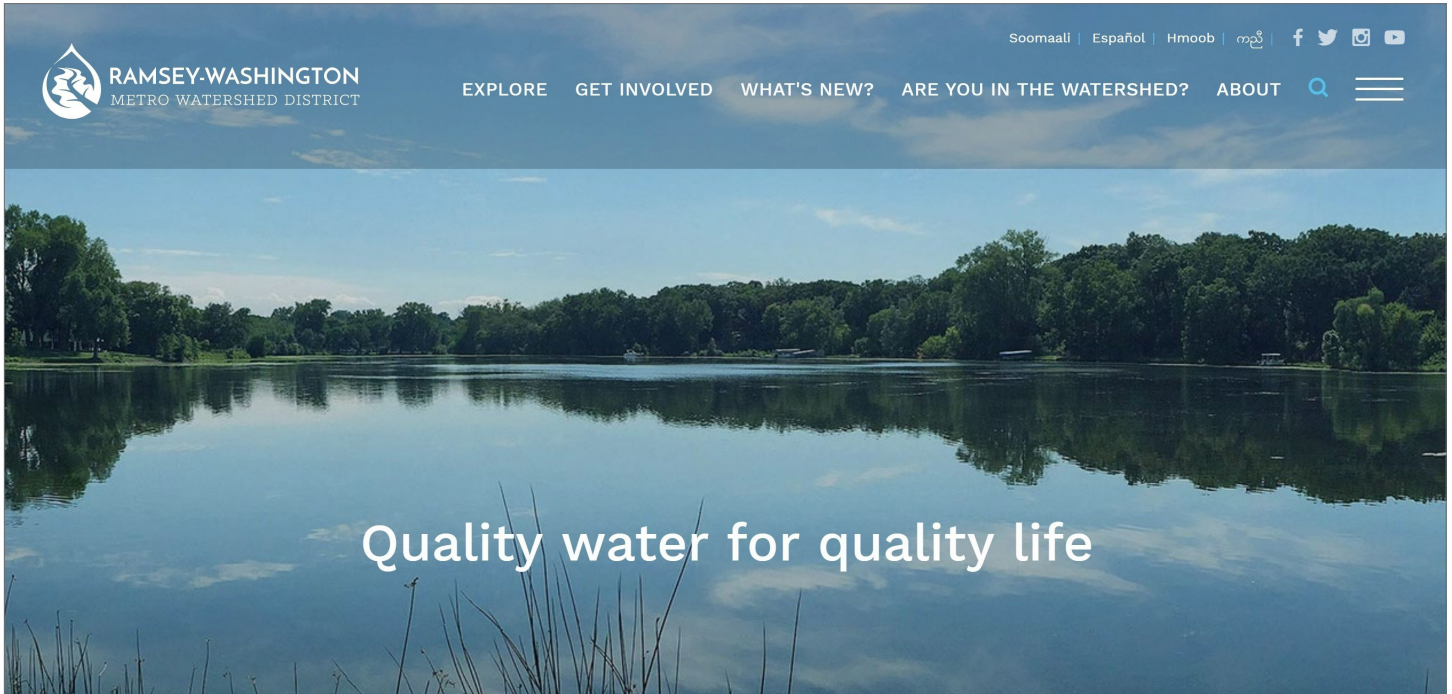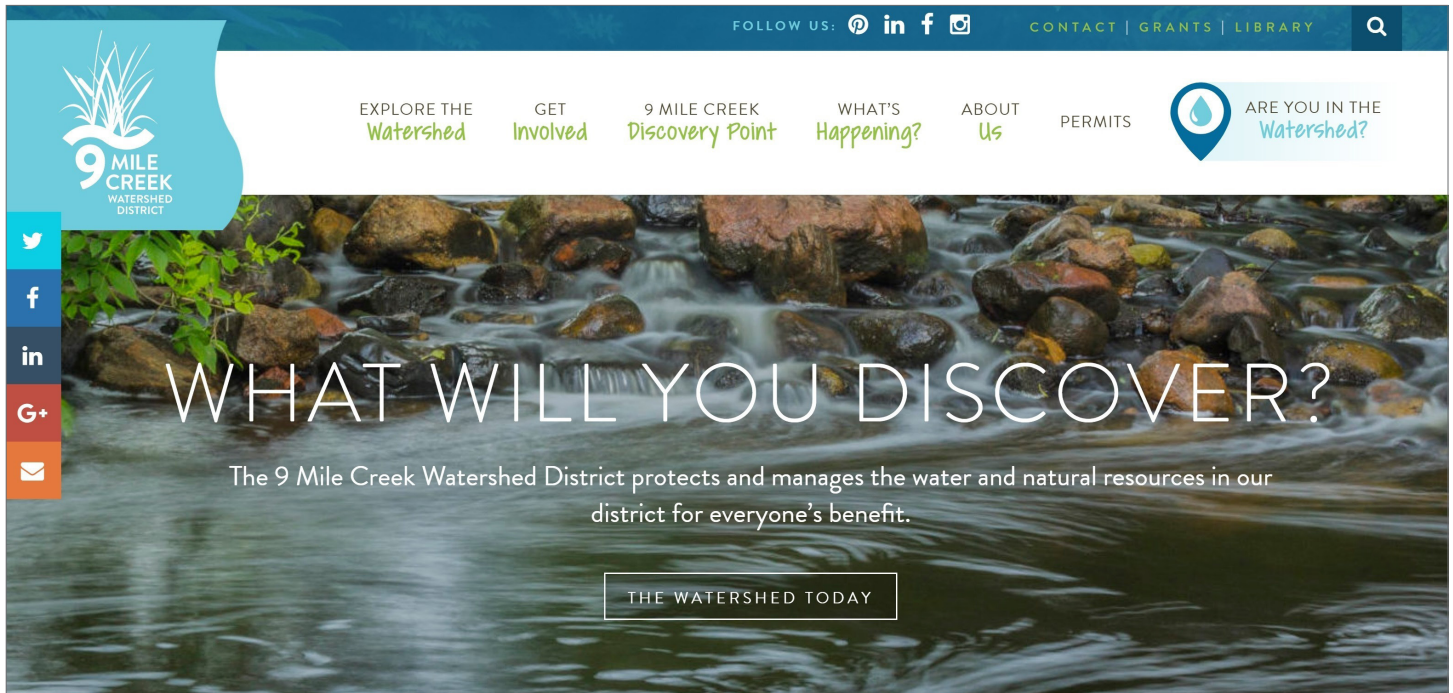

Key features

- Content is straightforward, easy to understand and length is appropriate to the subject matter

- Content is broken into sections by subheads, color boxes, graphics and icons

- Primary content is related to public use of the district (exploring, getting involved)

- Website is multilingual (available in five languages)

- CTA links and buttons are highly visible

- District projects and waters can be filtered by type and displayed in list or map view
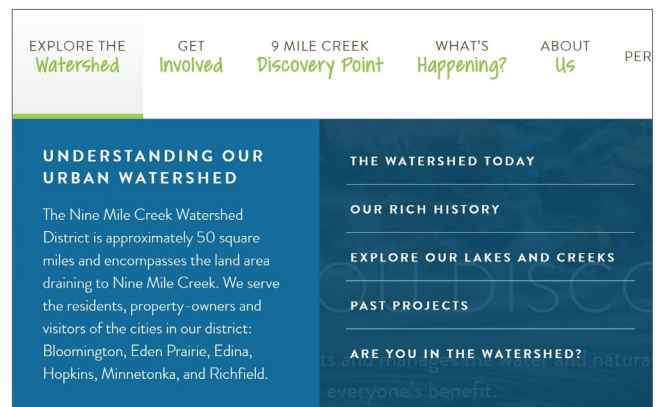
Featured websites

Nine Mile Creek Watershed District
https://www.ninemilecreek.org/

Home page graphics and content are immediately inviting with "What will you discover?" and "Are you in the watershed?" at the top of the page. This website is very user-friendly with many opportunities for interaction and involvement and encourages repeat visitors with upcoming events, announcements and seasonal highlights featured throughout.
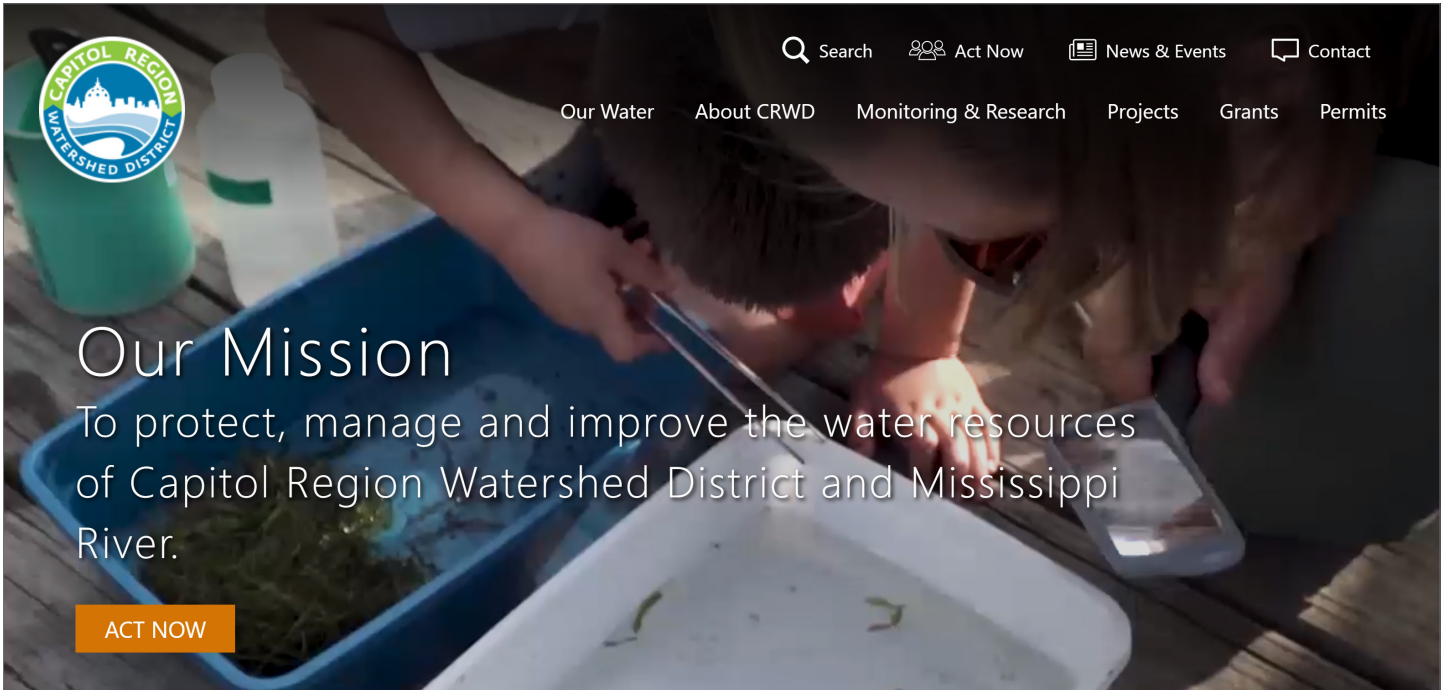

Key features

- Great use of subheads, color blocks and photos to organize content
- Instagram photo tagging feature encourages social media interaction
- Content is well-organized, of an appropriate length and geared to the consumer
- Main menu includes overview information for each section of the website and clear navigation to pages deeper within the site
- Comprehensive footer with key links, contact information, mailing list sign-up and social media icons

Featured websites

Capitol Region Watershed District
https://www.capitolregionwd.org/

This site is well organized, straightforward, user friendly and attractive due to local and regional photography, imagery and videos. Interesting, bite-sized infographics enhance several pages. Content draws people in, is logically organized by subject matter and is scannable throughout the site.

Key features

- Video hero on home page provides a sense of what the watershed district does

- Animated statistics and supporting illustrations are engaging and impactful

- Interactive map with current watershed projects that allows users to view projects on the map or as a list

- Scannable timeline with history of the watershed and accompanying photos

1,712
completed clean water projects to date

1998
CRWD Created

2000
First Watershed Management Plan Adopted

MINNEHAHA CREEK WATERSHED DISTRICT

WEBSITE

Site map, flow chart, features and content strategy foundation

OCTOBER 02, 2020
Final report

VENDI WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT LIFETRACK

PHASE ONE:
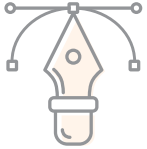## PLANNING

PHASE TWO:
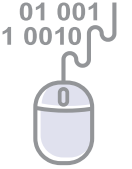## CREATIVE

PHASE THREE:
DEVELOP

PHASE FOUR:
LAUNCH

PROJECT KICKOFF
- Project review
- Timeline
- Roles

DISCOVERY
- Audit
- Research
- Competitive analysis
- Goals
- User personas

CORE MODEL WORKSHOP
- Engagement path
- Content themes
- Priority content
- Features and functions
- Site map

CONTENT STRATEGY
- SEO focus keywords
- Voice
- Data model

CONCEPTS
- Site design
- Component design
- Prototypes

CONTENT DEVELOPMENT
- Copywriting
- Photography
- Video
- SEO meta data

ASSETS
- Testimonials
- Resources
- Maps
- Infographics

CODE
- CMS build out
- Data integration

ACCESSIBILITY
- WCAG
- Testing

CONTENT
- Migration
- Populate

USABILITY
- Testing

TESTING
- Browser
- Device

TRAINING
- Manual
- CMS training

MAINTENANCE
- Security
- SEO optimization
- Development
- Analytics
- User engagement tracking

GOALS AND STRATEGY

Business goals

– Automate common requests for information by effectively connecting people to information they value

– Highlight the value Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD) delivers

– Provide transparency and organizational information

– Uncover opportunities for strategic partnerships

User goals

– Get a permit

– Recreate in the watershed

– Take action to protect clean water

– Learn about a water body that is relevant to them

– Access organizational information about MCWD

– Learn about a project that is relevant to them

Site map | flow chart | feature recommendations

Secondary navigation

News	Events	Search	Login

Main navigation

Permits	Water data	Recreation	What you can do	Projects	About us	Contact us

Home

Permits
- Apply for a permit
- Partnership benefits
- Why regulations and permits
- Resources

Water data
- Water budget
  - Dam management plan

Recreation
- Paddle Minnehaha Creek

What you can do
- Best practices
  - Best practices detail pages
  - Best practice detail pages
- Educate myself
  - Water issues
- Educate others
- Take action
  - Join the CAC
  - Adopt my storm drain
  - Lake associations
  - Educate my community

Projects
- Comprehensive plan
  - Focal geography detail pages
  - Project detail pages

About us
- Balanced Urban Ecological Approach
- Upcoming meetings
- Board of managers
  - Meeting pages
- Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC)
  - Meeting pages
- Our team
  - Work for MCWD
  - Team bio pages

Contact us

Permits
— Projects

Water data
— Water body map

Water budget
— Real-time water levels

Recreation
— Opportunities map
— Projects

Paddle Minnehaha
— Creek map
— Current water flow

What you can do

Projects/Focal geographies

Comments
Modal

Project
— Project map
— Survey
— Community engagement comments map
— Project resources
— Project news
— Staff contacts
— Photo gallery
— Related projects

About us
— What our watershed covers map

Our team

Team member bio
— Projects involved in

Contact
Allow users to drop a pin on a map (geographically reference their question), attach a photo, and include an option for categorizing the request (e.g., Report an obstruction, question on permit, sharing a nice photo)

Thanks!
Modal

FOOTER
Newsletter sign up
Facebook
Twitter
Linkedin
Privacy policy
Accessibility

Legend

- Main parent pages
- Child pages (not to be included in nav)
- External link

PERMITS SECTION

Core model workshop results - content priorities

– Decision tree — Am I in the watershed? Which city? What kind of project? Which benefits of partnering apply? Leading to action steps segmented by type of project (SFH, commercial, dock, shoreline)

  – Do I need a permit based on my circumstances/project details? If so, which one? What are the associated costs, processes, requirements?

– Permit processes and timelines

– Education — why a permit is necessary, why we regulate, what we regulate compared to other organizations

– Partnering with MCWD — case studies/success stories of early coordination with MCWD

Outside influencers

– In-person meetings

– Interpersonal communications

– Referrals — citizen groups, other related organizations, city websites

– MCWD communications — newsletters, postcards, social, digital ads

– Organic search

Ideas to explore

– Partner program

– Partner pledge (community members, developers) - support badge or signage that can be applied for

– Permits map

– Project packet — packet creation wizard to determine document needs for project, download project packet/checklist
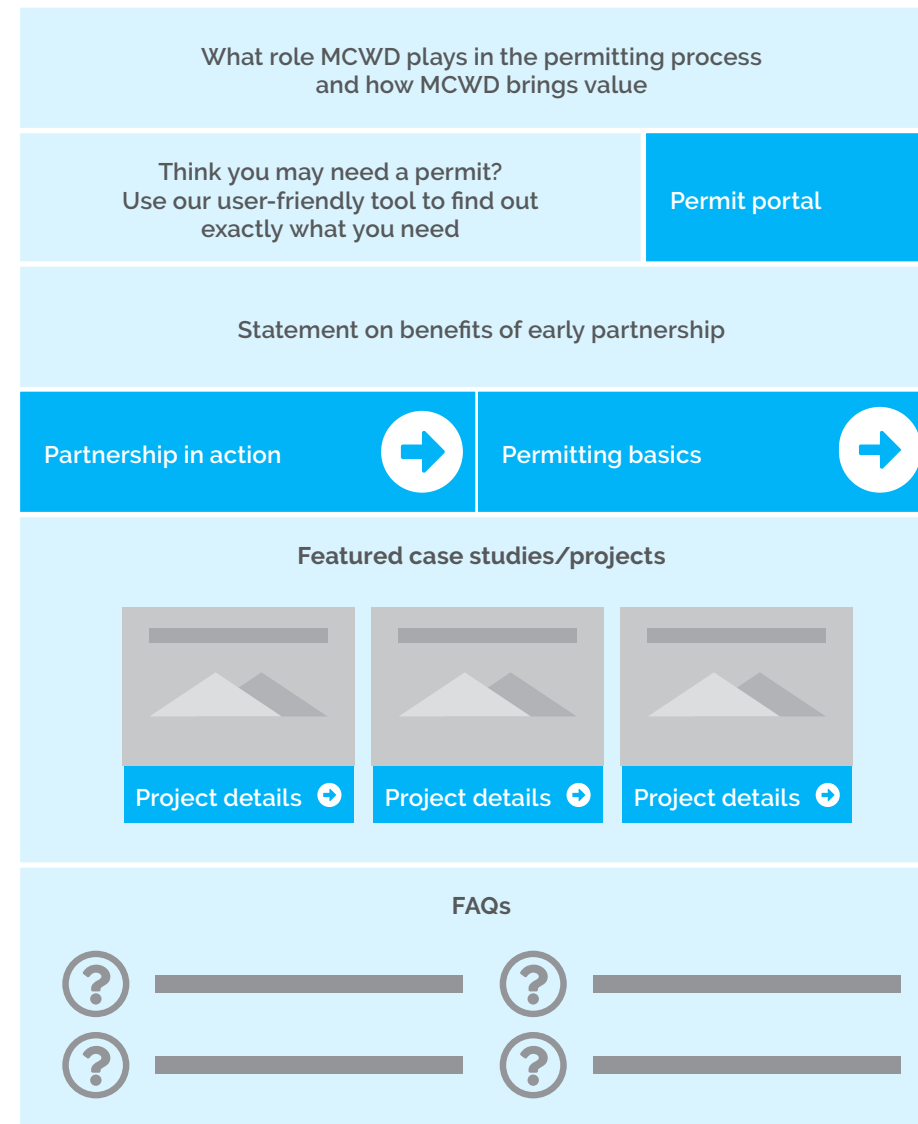
Content strategy foundation
Permits main page

Business goals

– Help users easily learn about and apply for permits

– Minimize opportunities for conflict in the permitting process

– Make process more streamlined/friendlier overall

– Promote early coordination with district and communicate value to applicant

– Clearly communicate permitting process

– Direct non-MCWD partners and permit seekers to appropriate agency

– Minimize "hand holding"

User goals

– Apply for permit

– Learn when and why a permit is needed

– Learn about permit rules and fees

– Understand status of permit/permitting process, access customized information about "my permit"

– Learn about or comment on another permit (significant or controversial projects)

– Submit inquiries and comments/complaints about: existing permits or projects, perceived needs and/or perceived violations from others in the District

– Partner with MCWD

Permits navigation

Permits

Apply for a permit
Partnership benefits
Why regulations and permits
Resources

What role MCWD plays in the permitting process and how MCWD brings value

Think you may need a permit?
Use our user-friendly tool to find out exactly what you need

Permit portal

Statement on benefits of early partnership

Partnership in action ➔

Permitting basics ➔

Featured case studies/projects

Project details ➔   Project details ➔   Project details ➔

FAQs

? ———————   ? ———————
? ———————   ? ———————

Content strategy foundation
Partnership benefits page

Permits navigation

Permits

- Apply for a permit
- Partnership benefits
- Why regulations and permits
- Resources

MCWD's approach to responsive partnership

Partnership benefits

Partnership success stories

Schedule partnership consultation

Balanced Urban Ecology approach

Featured case studies

Developer partnership

Municipal partnership

Landowner partnership

Content strategy foundation
Why a permit page

Permits navigation

- Permits
  - Apply for a permit
  - Partnership benefits
  - Why regulations and permits
  - Resources

Why a permit is necessary

Think you may need a permit?
Use our user-friendly tool to find out
exactly what you need

Permit portal →

Why we regulate permits

What are the costs and requirements

Pre-application meeting request →

Featured case studies/projects

Project details →

Project details →

Project details →

WATER DATA AND RECREATION SECTIONS

Core model workshop results - content priorities

– Report real-time conditions on the creek and other water bodies

– Real-time water levels and flow

– Information on the health/characteristics of the water body of interest to the user

– Flooding outlook (when applicable)

– Information about Gray's Bay Dam

– Education

– Understand goals, issues, priorities for each water body/subwatershed and how they all work together

– Information on paddling Minnehaha Creek

– Conditions of recreational assets

Outside influencers

– External resources

– Funding for AIS management

– LMCD water restrictions for recreation

– What you can do section

– Project portfolio section

Ideas to explore

– Leverage infographics or video animation for education

– How Gray's Bay Dam works

– Where water goes when it hits your roof or driveway

– Create water condition alerts sign up

Content strategy foundation
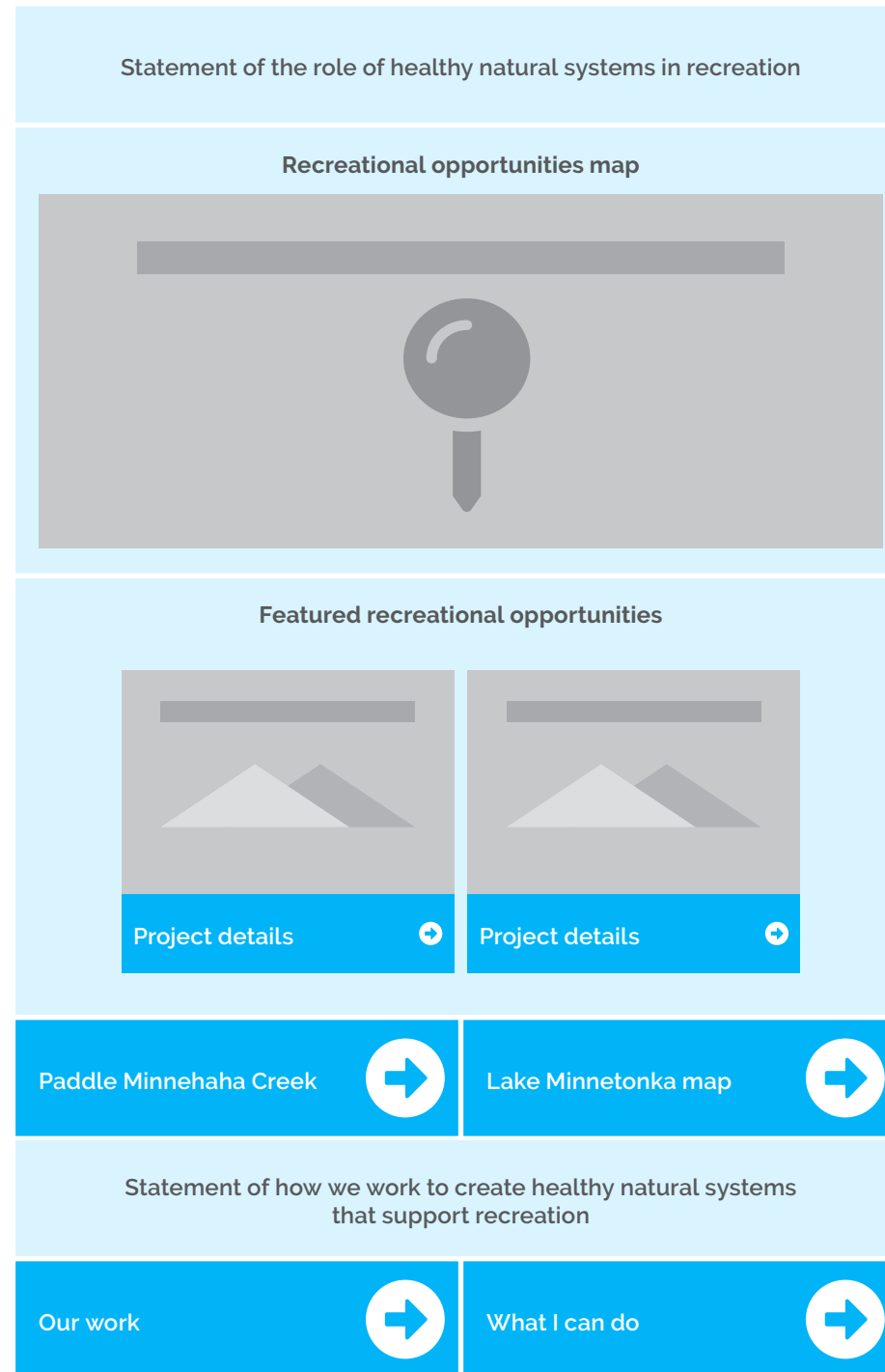Recreation main page

Business goals

– Answer common requests for water data (to help reduce the number of calls to MCWD)

– Enhance water planning initiatives

– Support outreach initiatives

– Provide and clarify information we regularly collect

– Promote best practices

– Provide education/manage expectations

User goals

– Learn about the water body I care about

– Understand flooding risk

– Plan recreation around water conditions

– Provide business professionals with data specific to their project

Recreation navigation

Recreation

Paddle
Minnehaha Creek

Statement of the role of healthy natural systems in recreation

Recreational opportunities map

Recreation highlights include:
- *Trails*
- *Paddling*
- *Regional parks*
- *Beaches*
- *Boat launches*

Each item includes forward path to:
- *Information page hosted by the appropriate agency*
- *Water data listing for nearby water body*

Featured recreational opportunities

Project details →   Project details →

Highlight 2 projects with strong recreational aspects

Paddle Minnehaha Creek →   Lake Minnetonka map →

Statement of how we work to create healthy natural systems that support recreation

Our work →   What I can do →

Content strategy foundation
Paddle Minnehaha Creek page

Recreation navigation

Recreation

Paddle
Minnehaha Creek

Flooding outlook alert

Activated when applicable

Statement about paddling Minnehaha Creek

Minnehaha Creek map

Features include:
- *Route*
- *Stops*
- *Amenities*

User-submitted obstructions
- *Notification sent to appropriate contact based on city location*

Current water flows

Color-coded to represent current conditions

Statement about how MCWD manages
its water budget

Water budget →

Report an obstruction or issue

Contact us →

Statements about best paddling conditions, safety
and other general information

Statement of our work to improve the
health of the Minnehaha Creek corridor

Focal geography →

Content strategy foundation
Water data main page

Water data navigation

Water data
  Water budget
    Dam management plan

Statement on how MCWD protects, preserves and manages the watershed

Learn about your water body map
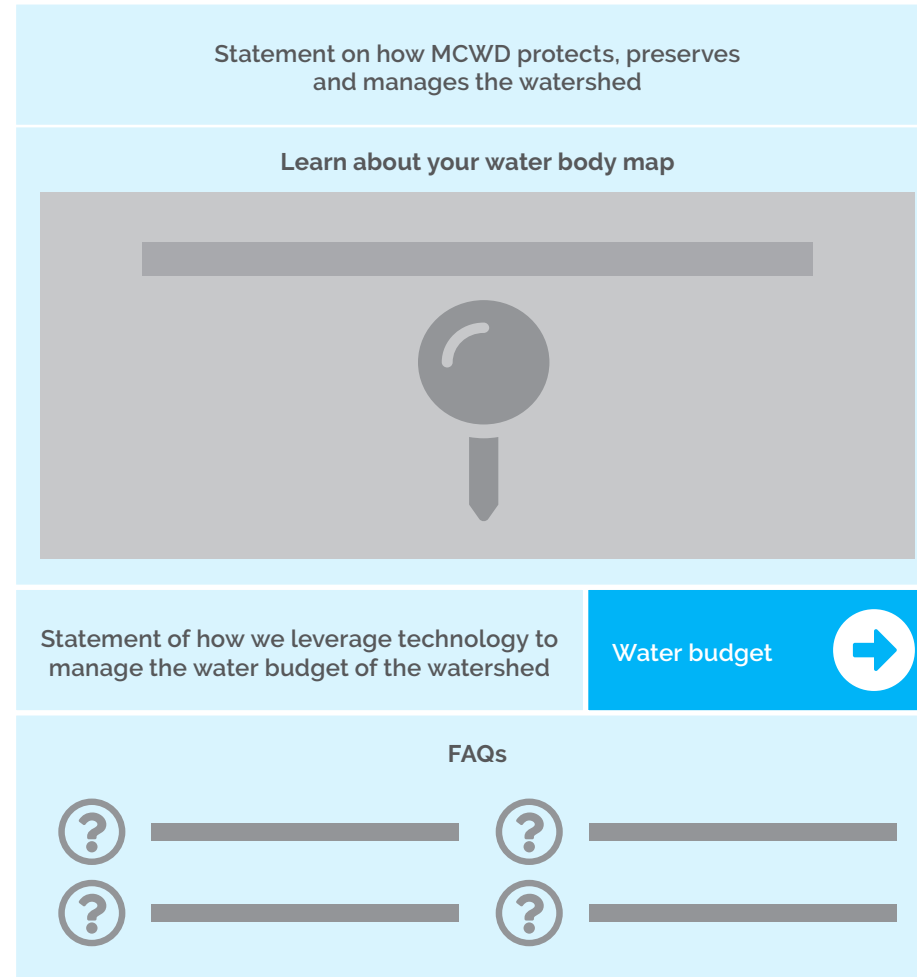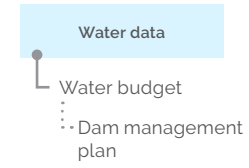
Clickable water bodies
Details include:
  • *Water quality facts*
  • *Subwatershed - forward path to comp plan*
  • *Lake association (when applicable)*
  • *Link to DNR LakeFinder*
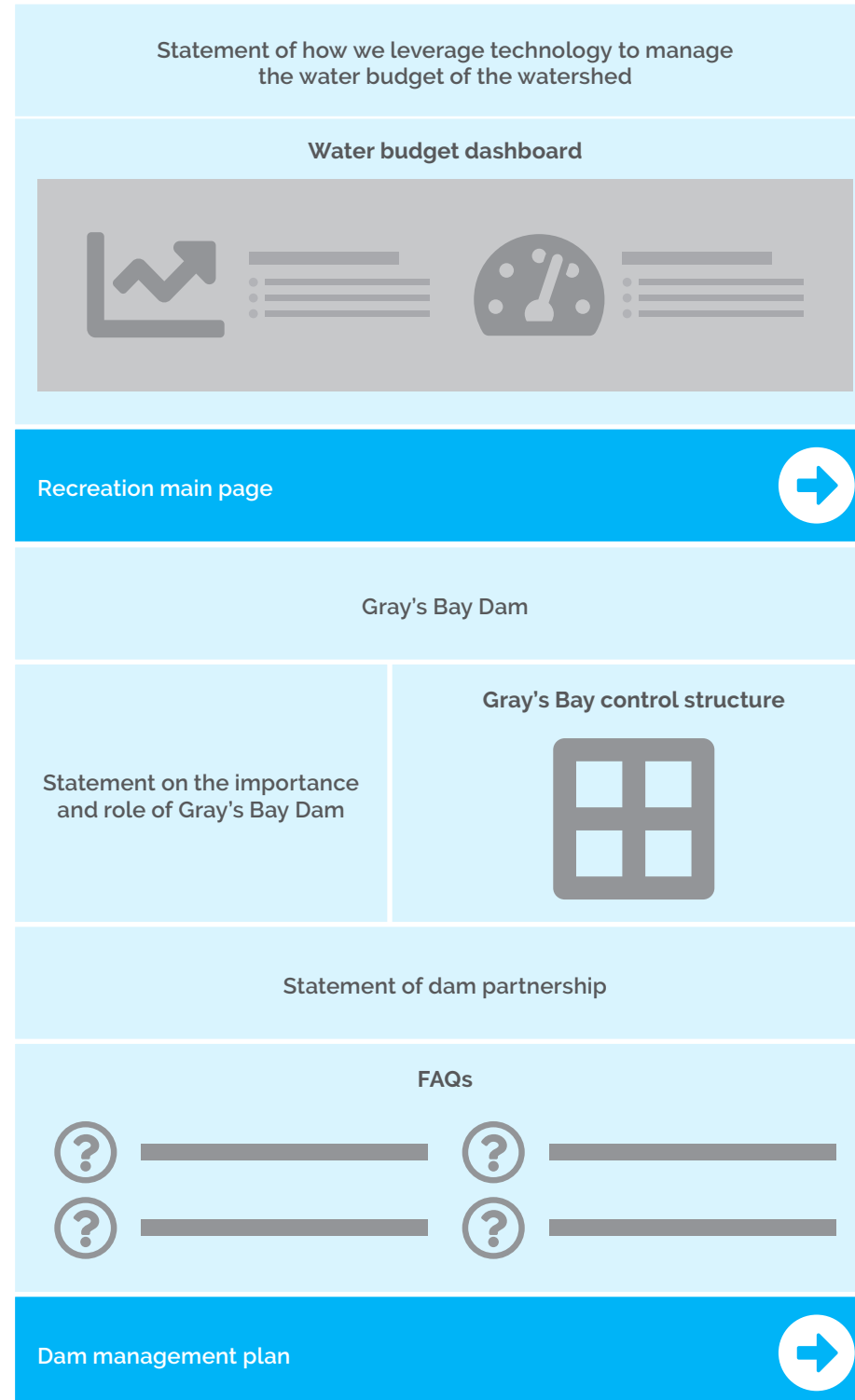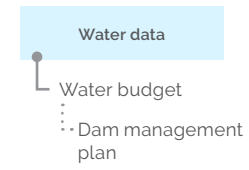 • *Link to MPCA water quality database listing*

Statement of how we leverage technology to manage the water budget of the watershed

Water budget

FAQs

? _____
? _____

? _____
? _____

Topics covered could include:
  • *Water quality*
  • *Water conditions*

Content strategy foundation
Water budget page

Water data navigation

Water data
- Water budget
  - Dam management plan

Statement of how we leverage technology to manage the water budget of the watershed

Water budget dashboard

○ Real-time water levels fed by RESNET sensor network

Recreation main page →

Gray's Bay Dam

Statement on the importance and role of Gray's Bay Dam

Gray's Bay control structure

○ Current dam discharge, displayed overlaid on the "operating zones" graphic

Statement of dam partnership

FAQs

? ____ ? ____
? ____ ? ____

Dam management plan →

WHAT YOU CAN DO SECTION

Core model workshop results - content priorities

– Resource hub/library

  – Information about implementing best practices

  – Resources for grants from partners

  – Information about joining citizen groups

  – Toolkits

  – Collaboration with other watershed organizations (if/when applicable)

– Automate display reservation process

Outside influencers

– Implement a best practice

– Join a resident group

– Apply for a grant

– Explore third-party resources/external organizations for opportunities to volunteer, get involved

Ideas to explore

– Best practices video series

  – Managing storm water

  – How to build a rain garden

Content strategy foundation
## What you can do main page

Business goals

– Guide residential best practices

– Provide info on how to get involved

– Provide resource and referrals

– Promote partnership across agencies/developers/residents
(connect to useful third-party resources)

User goals

– What actions can I take?

– How can I get involved?

– What additional resources can I explore?

What you can do navigation

We all have a role in protecting the watershed
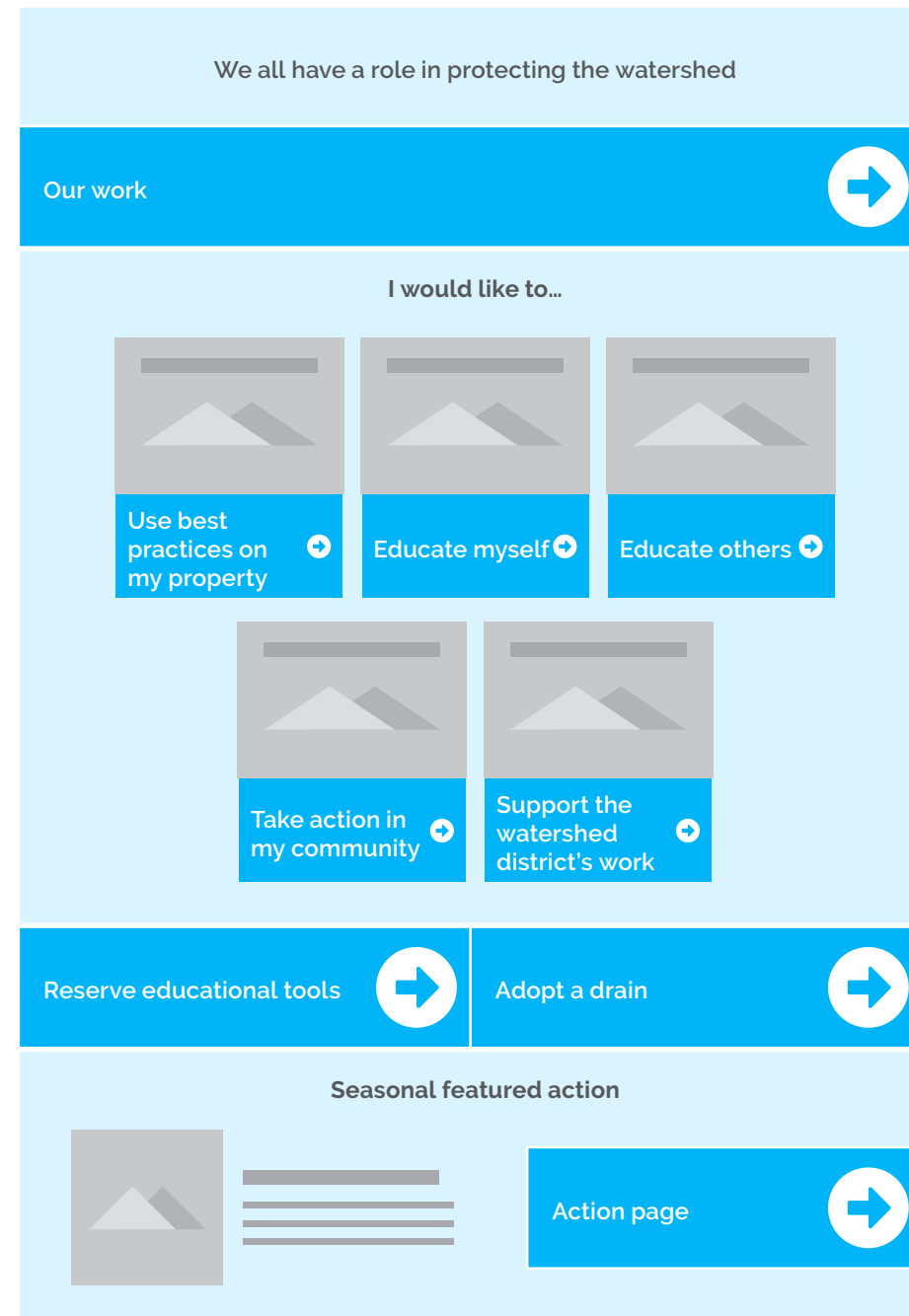
Describing how the role of the public complements the role of the District

Our work

I would like to...

Use best practices on my property

Educate myself

Educate others

Take action in my community

Support the watershed district's work

Reserve educational tools

Adopt a drain

Seasonal featured action
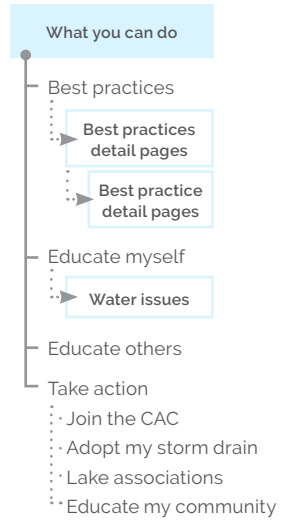
Action page

Seasonal action will rotate based on current month

Content strategy foundation
Best practices detail page

e.g. Use best practices on my property

What you can do navigation

- What you can do
  - Best practices
    - Best practices detail pages
    - Best practice detail pages
  - Educate myself
    - Water issues
  - Educate others
  - Take action
    - Join the CAC
    - Adopt my storm drain
    - Lake associations
    - Educate my community

Statement on what benefits best practices will bring to the watershed

Best practices

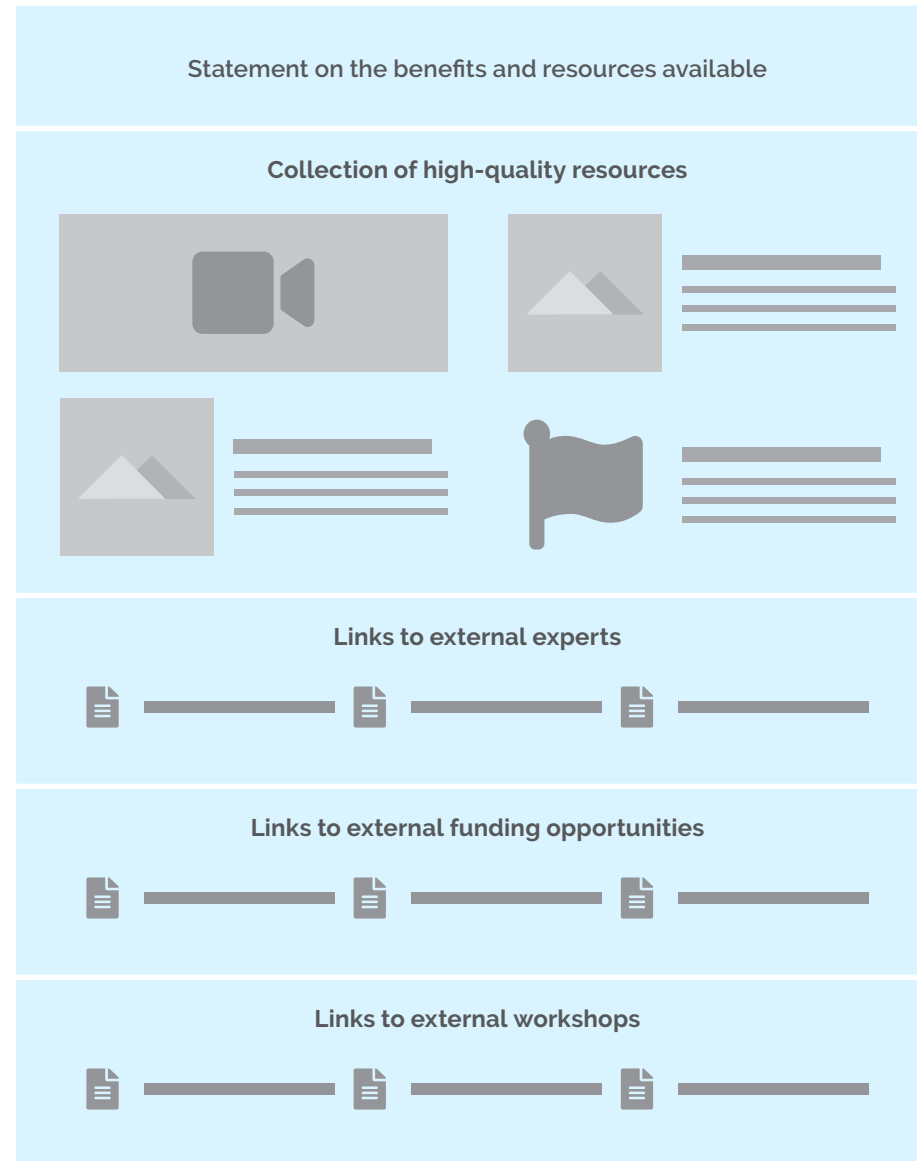| Rain gardens ➡ | Rain barrels ➡ | Lawn care and landscaping ➡ |
| Shoreline maintenance and restoration ➡ | Winter maintenance ➡ | Adopt a drain ➡ |

Forward paths to key practices

Content strategy foundation
Best practice detail page

e.g. Rain gardens

What you can do navigation

- What you can do
  - Best practices
    - Best practices detail pages
    - Best practice detail pages
  - Educate myself
    - Water issues
  - Educate others
  - Take action
    - Join the CAC
    - Adopt my storm drain
    - Lake associations
    - Educate my community

Statement on the benefits and resources available

Collection of high-quality resources

Links to external experts

Examples:
- *Certified rain garden installers*
- *Winter maintenance professionals*

Links to external funding opportunities

Links to external workshops

When applicable

Content strategy foundation
Educate myself page

What you can do navigation

- What you can do
  - Best practices
    - Best practices detail pages
    - Best practice detail pages
  - Educate myself
    - Water issues
  - Educate others
  - Take action
    - Join the CAC
    - Adopt my storm drain
    - Lake associations
    - Educate my community

Statement on learning about the watershed and issues it faces

Water issues

What is a watershed?

Water governance

Stormwater pollutants

Climate change and water

Learn about a specific water body

Forward paths to key water issues

Learn about taking action on your property

Attend a workshop or event

Only displayed when active upcoming events are posted

Balanced Urban Ecology

Content strategy foundation
Educate others page

What you can do navigation

- What you can do
- Best practices
  - Best practices detail pages
  - Best practice detail pages
- Educate myself
  - Water issues
- Educate others
- Take action
  - Join the CAC
  - Adopt my storm drain
  - Lake associations
  - Educate my community
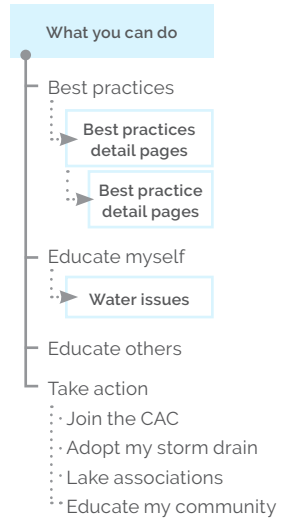
Statement on how you can educate others to help MCWD protect the watershed

Resources for educators

Mix of resources
- *Sample curriculum*
- *External links to classroom speakers*
- *Other external resources*
- *Forward path to display/activity/resource check out*

Resources for community members

Mix of resources
- *Fact sheets on water issues and what you can do*
- *Videos*
- *etc.*

Content strategy foundation
Take action in my community page

What you can do navigation

- What you can do
  - Best practices
    - Best practices detail pages
    - Best practice detail pages
  - Educate myself
    - Water issues
  - Educate others
  - Take action
    - Join the CAC
    - Adopt my storm drain
    - Lake associations
    - Educate my community

Statement on supporting the watershed through various outlets like programs, committees and volunteering

Take action in my community

Join the CAC ➡

Adopt my storm drain ➡

Join or form a lake association ➡

Educate my community at an event ➡

Support the watershed's work ➡

Attend a local event ➡

ABOUT MCWD SECTION

Content priorities

– Mission, district goals

– Authority/why they exist

– How MCWD is different from other agencies (DNR, city, county)

– Ongoing public outreach strategy

– Highlight key case studies/projects

– History (brief)

– Budget/levy

– Agendas/minutes

– "Am I in the watershed?" search functionality

– Comp plan

– Requests for applications and proposals

– Job postings

– Board of Managers

– MCWD staff

– Committees, task forces and commissions

– Publications/annual report/strategic plans

Outside influencers

– Community outreach

– Concerned citizens

– Media coverage

– Social

Ideas to explore

– Elevate key staff members, include more information about what they do

– Video - overview of MCWD

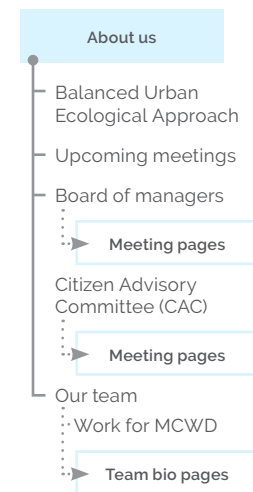# Content strategy foundation
About us main page

Business goals
– Inform public and private sectors of ongoing missions and goals
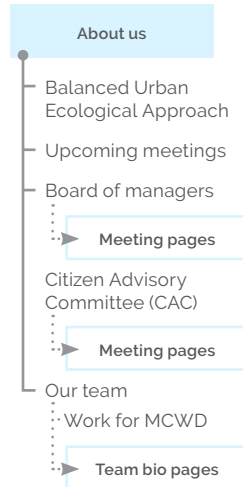– Provide public transparency

User goals
– Learn about MCWD

About us navigation

About us
– Balanced Urban Ecological Approach
– Upcoming meetings
– Board of managers
    Meeting pages
  Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC)
    Meeting pages
– Our team
  Work for MCWD
    Team bio pages

What is a watershed district statement

"What our watershed covers" map

Our work

Display communities
Search by address and/or city

Watershed key stats

No. of lakes
No. of streams
No. of communities
No. of wetlands
Populations
Highlight popular lakes

Statement of our approach of integrating land and water

Balanced Urban Ecology

Statement about our governance setup and commitment to good government

Upcoming meetings

Board of managers

Citizen Advisory Committee

Our team

Content strategy foundation
Balanced Urban Ecology Approach page

About us navigation

About us

- Balanced Urban Ecological Approach
- Upcoming meetings
- Board of managers
  - Meeting pages
- Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC)
  - Meeting pages
- Our team
  - Work for MCWD
  - Team bio pages

Statement on managing the watershed's resources within a broader ecological context

Detailed description of BUE

BUE policy statement →

Focal geographies
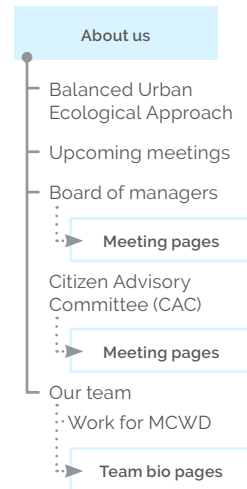Statement about our focal geography approach

Focal geography #1 →

Focal geography #2 →

Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan →

Content strategy foundation
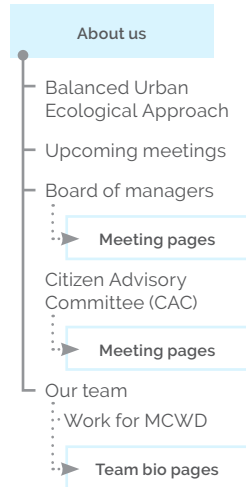Board of managers page

About us navigation

About us

- Balanced Urban Ecological Approach
- Upcoming meetings
- Board of managers
  - ▶ Meeting pages
- Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC)
  - ▶ Meeting pages
- Our team
  - Work for MCWD
    - ▶ Team bio pages

Statement on managers overseeing district activities and protecting water quality and preventing flooding

Board members

Meeting information

Links to meeting pages
Filter by:
  • Year
  • Meeting type

Content strategy foundation
Citizen Advisory Committee page

About us navigation

About us

- Balanced Urban Ecological Approach
- Upcoming meetings
- Board of managers
  - Meeting pages
- Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC)
  - Meeting pages
- Our team
  - Work for MCWD
    - Team bio pages

Statement on CAC's role in the district

CAC members

Meeting information

Join the Citizen Advisory Committee

More ways to get involved

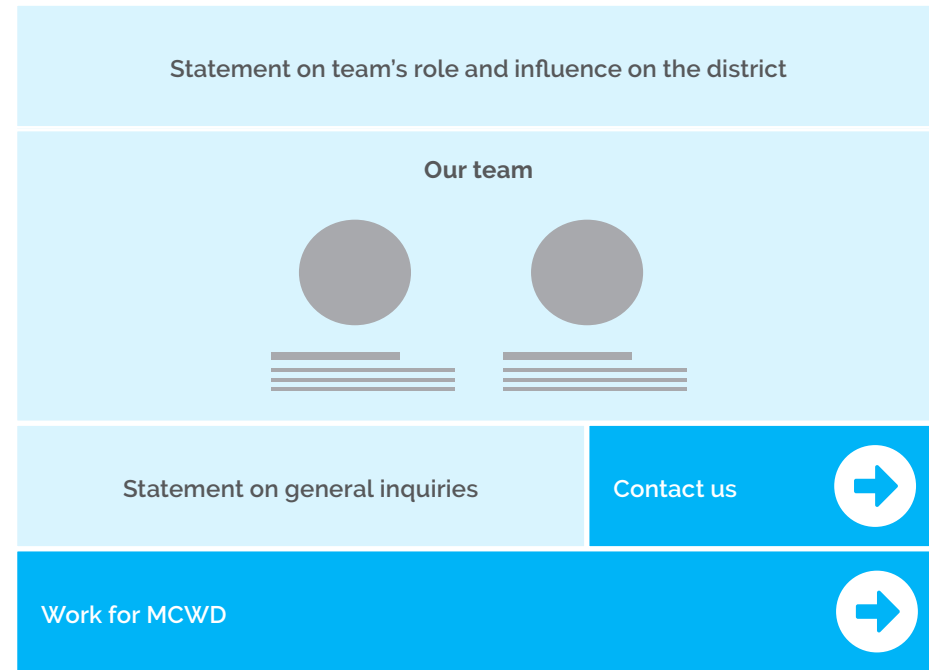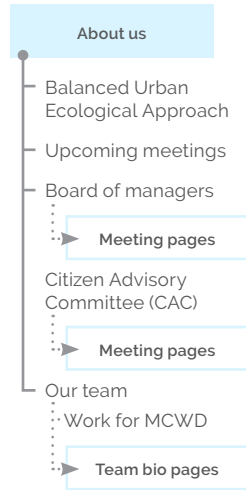Take Action in my Community

Links to meeting pages
Filter by:
   · Year

Content strategy foundation
Our team page

About us navigation

About us
- Balanced Urban Ecological Approach
- Upcoming meetings
- Board of managers
  - Meeting pages
- Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC)
  - Meeting pages
- Our team
  - Work for MCWD
    - Team bio pages

Statement on team's role and influence on the district

Our team

Statement on general inquiries | Contact us →

Work for MCWD →

Organized by program
  · Program sections to include a brief description
Link to team bio page

PROJECTS SECTION

Content priorities

– Ability to filter project list/presentation by:
  – Project type
  – Residential/commercial (user type)
  – Subwatershed
  – Status
  – City
– Intro section
  – Short explanation of how & why MCWD is involved with projects —"feel-good" content
  – Key (or highlighted) projects, recently completed
– Project map
– Outreach
  – Informational materials
  – News and press releases
  – Project update emails/communications
  – Information for people who live nearby and may have also received a postcard
  – What to expect as a business or resident near a planned or in-progress project
  – Sign up for alerts/updates on this project
– Location search — see nearby projects
– Project status
  – Completed projects
  – Projects in progress
– Permits issued
– Project overview
  – Project timeline
  – Goal of the project
  – Followup, results
    – Ex. Increased property value/aesthetics, reduced AIS (would want filtered by user type to show relevant outcomes)
  – How this project benefits the watershed and the public
  – MCWD staff contacts for project
  – Associated/related projects

– Success stories highlighted
– Partners and contractors
– Related water body
– Reports/related documents
– Studies, etc.
– Ability to feature significant projects

Outside influencers

– Community outreach
– Public forum
– Concerned citizens
– Partner with us section of the website
– News articles

Ideas to explore

– Icon system
– Robust search and filter functionality
  – Leverage categories/topics/tags
– Project highlights/summary — elevate key project details for an "at a glance" view
– Case study approach to content

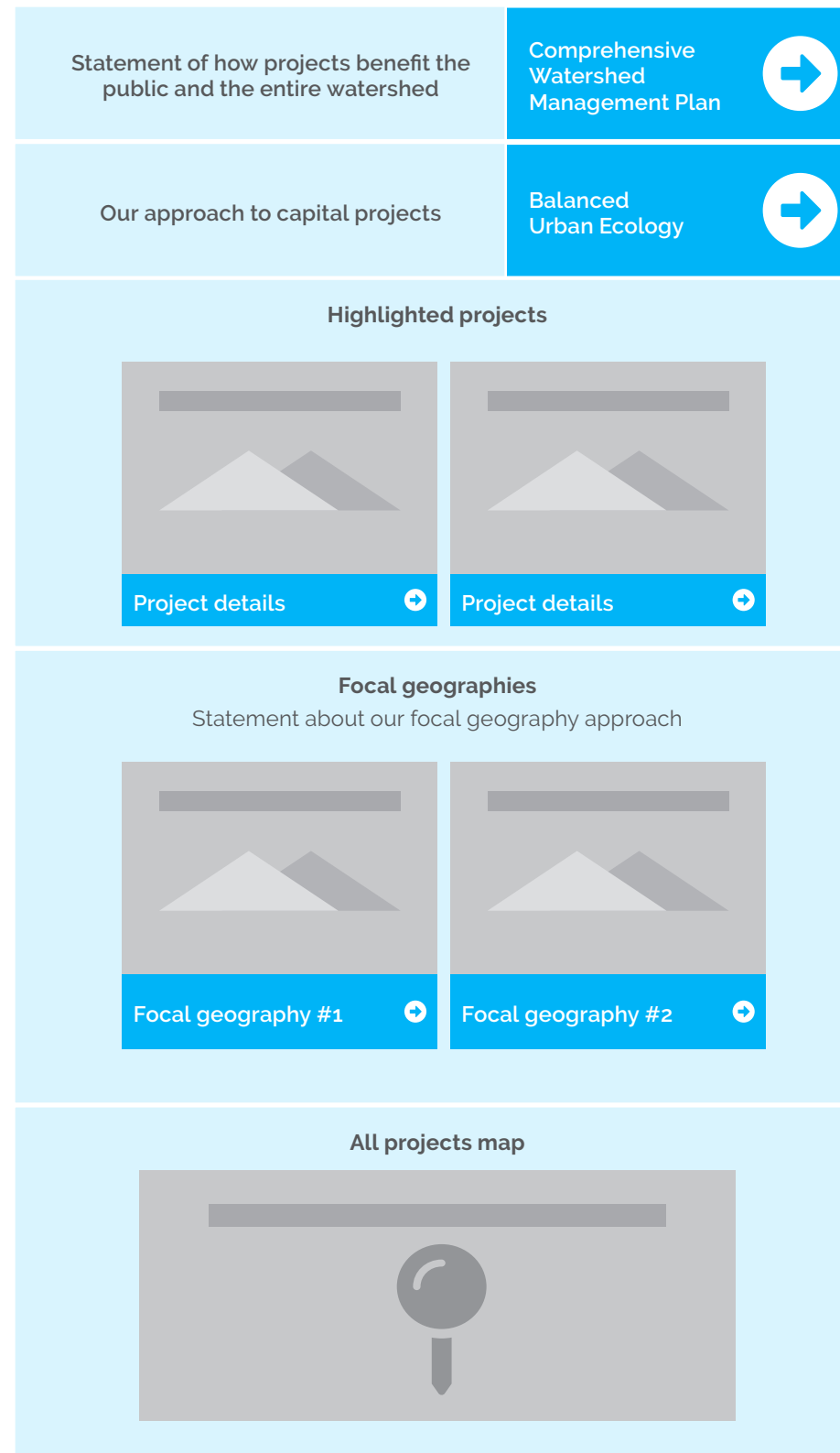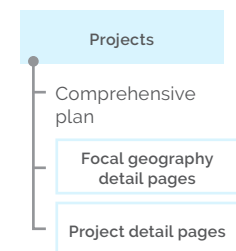# Content strategy foundation
Projects main page

Business goals

– Keep users up to date and educated on current and past projects

– Gain stakeholder & public support

– Promote partnership opportunities by showing relevant success stories and positioning MCWD as the area's expert in water management

User goals

– Updates

– Impacts

– Benefits

Projects navigation

Projects

Comprehensive plan

Focal geography detail pages

Project detail pages

Statement of how projects benefit the public and the entire watershed

Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan →

Our approach to capital projects

Balanced Urban Ecology →

Highlighted projects

Project details →   Project details →

Focal geographies
Statement about our focal geography approach

Focal geography #1 →   Focal geography #2 →

A landing page for each of the 1-3 active focal geographies in MCWD

All projects map
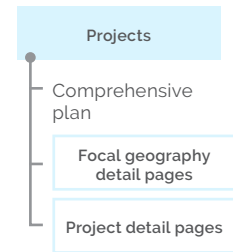
Filter projects by:
- *Status*
  - *Planned*
  - *In progress*
  - *Completed*
- *Partnership type*
  - *Government*
  - *Developer*
  - *Business*
  - *Private landowner*
View projects by map or tile view

Content strategy foundation
Project detail page

Projects navigation

Projects

Comprehensive plan

Focal geography detail pages

Project detail pages

Hero banner

Project-at-a-glance summary

Highlights can include:
- City
- Subwatershed
- Completion date
- Current status
- Cost
- Funding sources
- Partners

Leverage icon system

Statement of why this project is happening

Project by the numbers

Key metric icons
- No. jobs created
- Lbs. carp removed
- Lbs. algae prevented

Project background narrative

Brief description of how the project is part of a larger effort to improve a particular subwatershed or water body

Statement of subwatershed context

More about this subwatershed →

Directs users to the corresponding section of the Comprehensive Plan

The focal geography (if applicable) →

Project map

GIS map outlining project boundaries

Project survey

Community engagement map

Blocks would be turned on and off at various points of a project's life cycle

Community engagement includes:
- Real-time comments on project portion
- Link to public engagement session(s)

Key partners

Partner with MCWD →

Dynamic project timeline

Project start   Project end

Custom admin workflow reminders to staff to update content

Photo gallery

Project resources

Mix of content
- Reports
- PDF downloads
- Videos

Project news

Mix of internal and external news
- Construction updates
- Community engagement opportunities
- Etc.

Staff contact(s)

Related projects

Related project #1 →   **Related project #2** →

Content strategy foundation
Focal geography detail page

Projects navigation

Projects

Comprehensive
plan

Focal geography
detail pages

Project detail pages
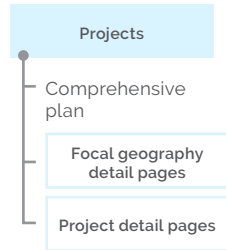
Hero banner

Opportunity statement: Why we are focused on this area

Highlights can include:
- City
- Subwatershed
- Completion date
- Current status
- Cost
- Funding sources
- Partners

Leverage icon system

Statement of MCWD's focal geography approach

Focal geography 2 →

Project by the numbers

Highlights of outcomes

Sign up for updates on this focal geography →

Map of work within focal geography map

GIS map displaying all the project pages within the subwatershed

Key partners

Partner with MCWD →

Focal geography resources

Mix of content
- Reports
- PDF downloads
- Videos

Staff contact(s)

CONTENT STRATEGY RECOMMENDATIONS & GUIDELINES

Overall voice

The Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD) website should speak to visitors in a friendly, understandable way, regardless of subject matter. Much of MCWD's subject matter is highly technical and scientific in nature, but all visitors appreciate direct, easy-to-read/scannable content. A significant number of visitors will possess only limited/basic knowledge of water parameters, watersheds and watershed projects.

Additionally, research shows the average visitor most appreciates content that is delivered at a seventh- to eighth-grade level, so keep content simple and straightforward to reach the most people. We recommend applying the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level Readability Test or another readability tool to each page to determine the level of difficulty within your words and sentences. The tool also identifies whether content is written in active voice, which is a desirable quality. If your content registers as difficult to read or in passive voice, you may wish to edit it for better comprehension and retention. Readability tests/tools are often integrated into content management systems and may also be found online.

Overall tone

MCWD has worked to protect and support the health and longevity of the District's water resources since 1967. And with more than 50 years of experience, MCWD has earned a well-deserved reputation as a true authority within the District and overall region.

Content presented within the website must reflect MCWD's authoritative, expert status without confusing or talking down to visitors. Content must also emphasize MCWD's commitment to creating solutions, preventing problems and increasing awareness of both planned and existing water resource solutions/projects.

Copywriting guidelines

Adopt a comprehensive style guide such as the AP Stylebook or Chicago Manual of Style. Then, develop and follow a customized-content style guide that defines District-related common usage or exceptions such as:

– Preferred voice

– Preferred tones

– General guidelines

– Recommended/preferred terms, such as these examples:
    – residents vs. landowners
    – communities vs. cities or towns
    – permit vs. license

– Preferred capitalization for headings, lists, etc.
    – Title Capped
    – Sentence capped

– Common spelling errors to avoid, such as these examples:
    – Grey's Bay vs. Gray's Bay
    – hydrodata vs. hydro data

– Preferred punctuation, such as:
    – No periods at the end of bulleted list entries
    – Use of the serial comma
    – When to use en and em dashes vs. dashes/hyphens

– When to use numerals or words for numbers within content

– Parallel structure within a list (starting all entries in the list with either a verb or a noun, not mixing the two

– Additional matters specific to MCWD

NEVER assume your users/viewers understand "the who, what, when, where, or why" of MCWD.

– Don't demonstrate your advanced knowledge with big words or complex descriptions

– Don't use industry-specific acronyms without first spelling them out/providing their full description (acronyms on secondary references are fine)

– Aim to answer questions—rather than create them—with everything you present within the website

Strive to provide content that anticipates and addresses your users' needs based on the way they are thinking at that point in time.

Keep copy brief and use short sentences. Write copy that's just long enough to clearly communicate crucial details. Include only the necessary details or risk overwhelming your visitors and losing their interest/attention.

Keep copy factual and direct, but not dry. Visitors want engaging content. Write with enthusiasm and authority.

Copywriting guidelines continued

Make copy reader-friendly ALWAYS. Visitors have neither the time nor the desire to read paragraph after paragraph of narrative copy. Too-long copy overwhelms readers and causes them to lose interest.

– Break copy up into "chunks" with subheads, photos and/or graphic elements like divider lines—think about what you'd want to communicate if visitors read ONLY the subheads and no supporting copy

– Use bulleted lists liberally
– Especially when describing components, processes or related thoughts

– Use bolded words and phrases where appropriate, but don't overuse them

Write in active voice vs. passive voice to keep copy engaging, easier to understand and generally shorter. Consider these examples:

– Minnehaha Creek Watershed District staff compiled the report. (Active voice)

– The report was compiled by Minnehaha Creek Watershed District staff. (Passive voice)

The first sentence is much friendlier, more direct and understandable.

Write in second-person perspective whenever possible. Readers gravitate more strongly to "you" and "your" statements than "we" and "our." They want to know exactly what your organization can and will do for them. Consider these two sentences about the same subject:

– Six Mile Marsh and Halstead Bay now offer you and your neighbors the beauty and serenity of 16 restored acres of wetland, increased wildlife habitat and new marsh-adjacent open space for outdoor fun.

– We restored land near Six Mile Marsh and Halstead Bay.

The first sentence impacts your audience much more strongly because it speaks directly to each reader and clearly describes how life will improve because of MCWD's efforts. The second sentence simply says that MCWD worked on this project.

Show, don't tell. Whenever possible and appropriate, communicate your ideas with infographics or other graphical elements that communicate complex ideas in a friendly format.

Avoid unnecessary repetition in content.

– Don't simply repeat the point you made in a headline or subhead in its adjacent/supporting description

– If you can link your visitor to an in-depth PDF or other resource, do so without first describing its content in great detail. Feel free to provide the document title or a statement of purpose, but don't post large portions of document content adjacent to its link.

Make calls to action straightforward, visible and accessible. Never make visitors wonder what you want them to do (Learn more, Sign up, Filter map, etc.).

Whenever possible, avoid writing headings, phrases, callouts or sentences IN ALL CAPS. Lengthy all-caps content, regardless of where it's located, is difficult to read.

SEO considerations

Thoughtful Search Engine Optimization (SEO) ensures that MCWD's website ranks highly in search engine results. When a site is optimized for SEO, search engines such as Google, Yahoo and Bing regard it as more relevant than similar sites and display it higher in the list of search results. Higher ranking increases the likelihood that viewers will see and click through to your website. MCWD should consider SEO an ongoing project, since website optimization will change and grow according to project, focus, current events and/or other factor(s).

Keywords—crucial building blocks of individual page content

– Before writing a page's content, search for and collect major relevant keywords, then plan to incorporate them into your content

– When writing content around your keywords, stay focused on the purpose/description of the page

– Need help determining which keywords are ideal? Use a search tool like Google Ads' Keyword Planner tool or SEMrush's Keyword Magic tool.

Each page within the MCWD website should include search-friendly tagging, including:

– Title tags

– Meta description tag

– Header tags

– Image alt tags

– Links and anchor text tags

– Canonical tags

– Schema tags

– Open graph meta tags

SEO software such as Yoast can help simplify search-friendly tagging.

Visual strategy

The Minnehaha Creek Watershed District website is a hub of organized data, resource material, advocacy, answers and action.

The structure, design and content should present widely accessible information, served in bite-sized chunks. The structure, navigation, visual cues and copy should make getting the information—through site search or navigation—simple and quick. The navigation should "suggest" related content of interest to encourage a deeper understanding of the mission of the District.

Imagery

The website should bring to life the District's vision of "a landscape of vibrant communities where the natural and built environments in balance create value and enjoyment." Visuals should tie to the environment at first glance with beautiful photography of the watershed and people enjoying completed projects.

Color

The website should feature a color palette that reflects nature and the Districts' values. All elements should support a realistic, natural and contemporary look and feel.

Show, don't tell

When possible, employ well-designed infographics and simple maps to provide a less text-intense experience.
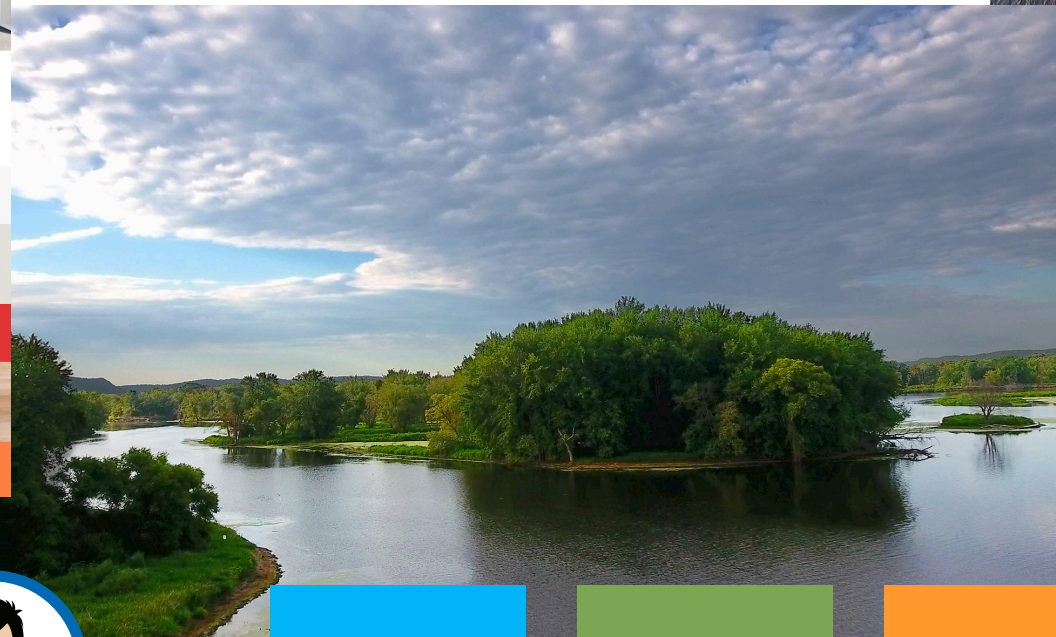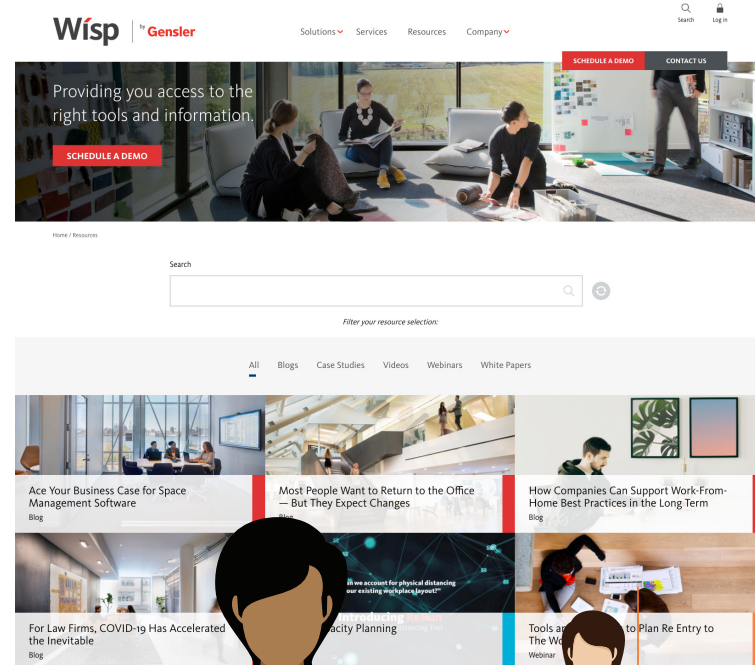
MCWD
BRAND MANUAL

MINNEHAHA CREEK
WATERSHED DISTRICT

MCWD BRAND MANUAL

THE LOGO

A graphic identity unifies an organization. Using our logos in a consistent way results in an integrated promotion for our institution – which leads to brand awareness and a perceived value of what we have to offer. It also demonstrates to the world the importance we place on the management of our resources. By managing our logos well, we give the appearance of managing all areas well, thereby gaining trust and credibility.

EPS FILES

The EPS files contain vector copies of the logo for use in electronic documents created in Adobe or Quark programs. These vector copies can be enlarged or reduced in size (guidelines for minimum sizing are explained in the following sections) without becoming pixelated. The EPS file type should be used when creating large or professionally-printed items like posters, banners, business cards, signs, or wherever the logo must appear larger than 4" in size. When designing anything to be printed, make sure you are using CMYK color profiles in your design software.

The EPS versions of the logo have a transparent background and can be used when placing the logo over a solid color background in Adobe and Quark programs.

JPEG & PNG FILES

The JPEG and PNG copies of the logo can be used for documents created in Microsoft Office and on the Internet. These copies should not be used for professionally printed materials. The PNG file type is preferred for usage on the Internet since the background is transparent, though it can be used most anywhere a JPEG can. The PNG's transparent background can also be usefull in Microsoft Office documents.

PRIMARY LOGO

MINNEHAHA CREEK
WATERSHED DISTRICT

MCWD LOGO COLORS

	Rich Black	Process Cyan
SPOT	Rich Black	Process Cyan
CMYK	c37 m38 y15 k100	c100 m0 y0 k0
RG B	r6 g0 b10	r0 g180 b247

MCWD LOGO

The MCWD logo is the main representation of the brand. It is composed of rich black, white, and cyan. In all possible instances, it should be staged over a white background with the proper margins on all four sides.

There are three versions of the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD) logo: vertical, horizontal, and banner. The vertical and horizontal logos are available with or without the MCWD tagline, though the banner logo always includes the tagline. The primary, secondary, and banner versions of the logo are available in color (CMYK and RGB) and grayscale. The one-color logo is available in black, cyan, and white. The respective files are available in the Brand Manual Folder on file with the MCWD.

PRIMARY LOGO

The vertical version of the logo with the tagline is the primary signature of the Minne-haha Creek Watershed District. The primary logo has the strongest visual presence of the MCWD logo set, but it does have its limitations, so be mindful of the minimum size, and use a secondary version of the logo when the primary logo won't look its best. The color version is always preferred over the grayscale versions.

For all electronic materials, the RGB colorspace (in Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign) and corresponding color codes should be used from the color guide section of this manual. For all printed materials, the CMYK colorspace should be used, and the corresponding CMYK color codes. For printing in one-color, the alternate one-color logo should be used. The logo should not be altered in any way when being used. Please see the the following sections for detailed guidlines.

SECONDARY LOGOS

The secondary logos include a vertical version without the tagline, and a horizontal version with the tagline.

MINNEHAHA CREEK
WATERSHED DISTRICT

MINNEHAHA CREEK
WATERSHED DISTRICT
QUALITY OF WATER, QUALITY OF LIFE

MINNEHAHA CREEK
WATERSHED DISTRICT

BANNER LOGO

The banner version of the logo, inspired by the historic MCWD logo, should be used for special materials like letterhead, business cards, banners, and other promotion materials.

MINNEHAHA CREEK **WATERSHED DISTRICT**
QUALITY OF WATER   QUALITY OF LIFE

ONE-COLOR LOGO

Due to the nature of the MCWD logo, the primary design is not suitable in instances when it must be used in one color or in reverse. In these instances, the alternative one-color logo may be used. The other appropriate use for the one-color logo is when a logo is needed that is smaller in size than the primary and secondary logos can accommodate (see page 5 on minimum sizes).

MCWD
MINNEHAHA CREEK
WATERSHED DISTRICT

MCWD
MINNEHAHA CREEK
WATERSHED DISTRICT

MINNEHAHA CREEK
WATERSHED DISTRICT
QUALITY OF WATER, QUALITY OF LIFE

CLEAR SPACE

Whenever using a the MCWD logos, a margin of clear space, without text or objects, must always surround the logo on all four sides. This margin is equal to the height of the words "Minnehaha Creek Watershed District" as demonstrated below.

MINNEHAHA CREEK
WATERSHED DISTRICT

MINNEHAHA CREEK
WATERSHED DISTRICT

MINNEHAHA CREEK
WATERSHED DISTRICT

MINNEHAHA CREEK **WATERSHED DISTRICT**
QUALITY OF WATER   QUALITY OF LIFE

MCWD
MINNEHAHA CREEK
WATERSHED DISTRICT
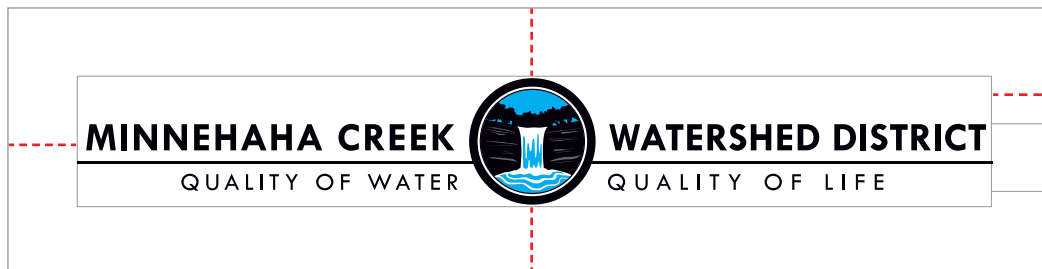
MINIMUM LOGO SIZES

BANNER LOGO

1/2"

MINNEHAHA CREEK WATERSHED DISTRICT
QUALITY OF WATER   QUALITY OF LIFE

MINIMUM LOGO SIZES

Below are the miniumum sizes allowed for using the respective MCWD logos.

HORIZONTAL LOGO W/ TAGLINE

5/8"

MINNEHAHA CREEK
WATERSHED DISTRICT
QUALITY OF WATER, QUALITY OF LIFE

**VERTICAL LOGO
W/OUT TAGLINE**

5/8"

MINNEHAHA CREEK
WATERSHED DISTRICT

**VERTICAL LOGO
W/ TAGLINE**

1"

MINNEHAHA CREEK
WATERSHED DISTRICT

ONE-COLOR LOGO

1/2"

MCWD
MINNEHAHA CREEK
WATERSHED DISTRICT

HORIZONTAL LOGO W/OUT TAGLINE

1/2"

MINNEHAHA CREEK
WATERSHED DISTRICT

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

11.

12.
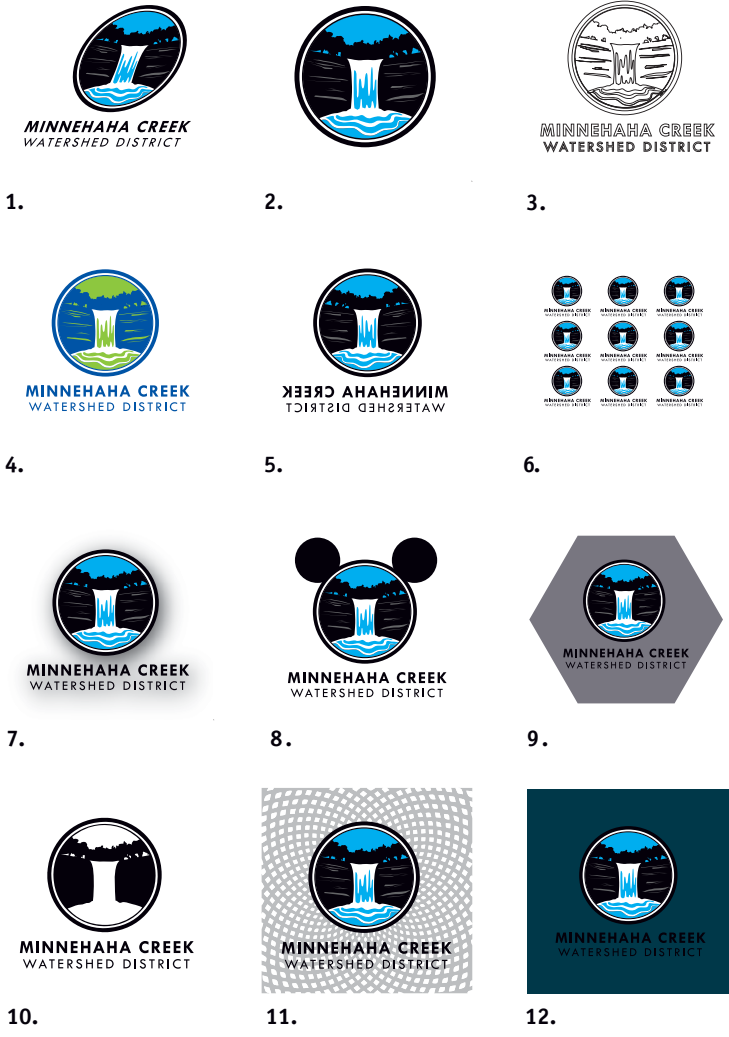
LOGO DON'TS

Shown are several of the most common examples of unacceptable handling of the MCWD logo. These examples and any other non-standard variations are discouraged in any and all media unless otherwise permitted and approved by MCWD.

1. DO NOT skew, distort, bevel, rotate or fold the logo.

2. DO NOT omit portions of the logo, or use the icon independentlly

3. DO NOT outline the logo.

4. DO NOT alter the colors of the logo.

5. DO NOT reverse the logo.

6. DO NOT create decorative patterns with the logo.

7. DO NOT add drop shadows or graphic elements to the logos.

8. DO NOT use the logos as part of another logo or graphic symbol.

9. DO NOT enclose the logos in a shape other than a four-cornered square.

10. DO NOT re-create the logos by hand or computer drawing.

11. DO NOT use our logos over backgrounds or photographs with distracting patterns or elements.

12. DO NOT place our logos on top of dark colored backgrounds (unless using the alternate one-color logo).

MCWD TYPEFACES

MCWD TITLE BAR

The MCWD Title Bar is a five row dotted horizontal bar that is used to distinguish sections of information from one another. The title text should use the Avenir Next typeface in bold and all caps. The title bar should be slightly narrower than the title text. The space between the title text and the beginning of the bar should be about one letter width. Do not stretch or warp the title bar. The length can be adjusted by refitting the clipping mask around it. The title bar is not limited to this use, so use it creatively with your best judgment. A vector copy (EPS) of the MCWD Title Bar is available on request.

TITLE BAR

EXAMPLE TITLE

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat.

EXAMPLE SUBHEADING

Duis aute irure dolor in reprehenderit in voluptate velit esse cillum dolore eu fugiat nulla pariatur. Excepteur sint occaecat cupidatat non proident, sunt in culpa qui officia deserunt mollit anim id est laborum.

MCWD TYPEFACES

The Avenir Next and Myriad Pro typeface families are the official fonts of the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District. When creating print and electronic communications, use Avenir Next (in all caps) for headings (**16pt bold**) and subheadings (**11pt or 13pt bold**), and Myriad Pro for body copy (**10pt regular**). Other weights of these fonts can be used when it suits the application. These fonts files are available by request from the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District.

AVENIR NEXT
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
1234567890

Myriad Pro
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
1234567890

HEADING 16PT BOLD

SUBHEADING 13PT BOLD

SUBHEADING 11PT BOLD

Body copy 11pt regular

MCWD "NOTCH"

AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES

MCWD uses education and awareness, research, grants and other tools to assist communities in preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species. To promote understanding and collaboration on these efforts, the District hosted AIS Symposiums in 2012 and 2014 that attracted audiences from across the state.

MCWD "NOTCH"

The Notch is a visual element that can be used to tie two sections together. It's particularly useful when connecting a caption to a graphic or photo, as seen in the example on the left. The Notch is a vector triangle that can be paired with a variety of rectangle sizes, but the notch itself should always be dimensions specified here in the brand manual. The notch should match the color rectangle it's paired with exactly, and should always overlap the rectangle by .07 inches to prevent any visible seem between the two shapes (as shown in grey). Using the Notch is not required, but use it when you feel it enhances the design and helps communicate the information more effectively.

overlap

.48"

.65"
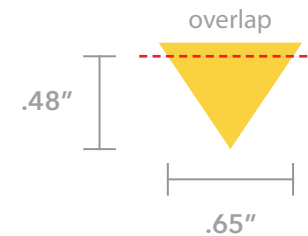
MCWD COLOR GUIDE

Neutral

Opacity
75%
50%
25%
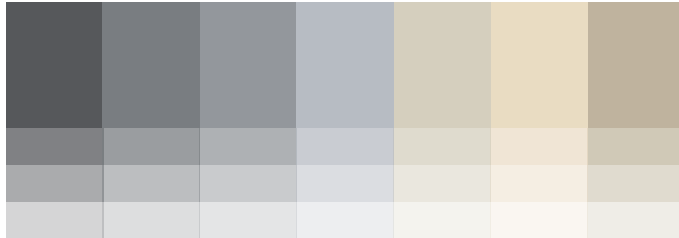
Dynamic

Opacity
75%
50%
25%

Color Codes (CMYK, RGB, HEX)

c65 m56 y52 k29
r85 g87 b90
#55575a

c55 m45 y42 k8
r121 g124 b128
#797c80

c46 m36 y33 k1
r145 g149 b154
#91959a

c29 m20 y18 k0
r182 g188 b194
#b6bcc2

c17 m14 y25 k0
r212 g206 b189
#d4cebd

c8 m11 y24 k0
r232 g219 b193
#e8dbc1

c26 m26 y38 k0
r191 g178 b157
#bfb29d

c97 m71 y42 k31
r15 g64 b91
#0f405b

c100 m0 y0 k0
r0 g173 b239
#00adef

c59 m3 y0 k0
r77 g194 b240
#4dc2f0

c42 m7 y6 k0
r142 g199 b225
#8ec7e1

c25 m4 y43 k0
r195 g214 b163
#c3d6a3

c2 m15 y86 k0
r250 g210 b63
#fad23f

c2 m42 y96 k0
r243 g161 b38
#f3a126

MCWD COLOR PALETTE

The original MCWD color palette has been expanded to include the use of both dynamic and neutral colors that complement each other and can be used in any combination as long as the integrity of the brand is not diminished. Also, remember that white space is your friend (and best friends with the MCWD logos) in clean, attractive layouts, so always incorporate it into your designs.

When should I use CMYK and RGB colors?

RGB colors are intended for any media that will be viewed on a computer monitor. This would include all electronic media like Powerpoint presentations, websites, emails, videos, or PDFs. You can find RGB copies of the MCWD logo in both the horizontal and vertical formats and with or without the tagline (i.e. "MCWDrgbHoriz.jpeg" or "MCWDrgbHoriz.eps").

CMYK colors are intended for any media that will be printed onto paper stock or any other medium. This would include brochures, maps, banners, posters, business cards, letterhead, envelopes or any other printed documents. You can find CMYK copies of the MCWD logo in both the horizontal and vertical formats and with or without the tagline (i.e. "MCWDcmykHoriz.jpeg" or "MCWDcmykHoriz.eps").

Pantone/Spot Colors are intended only when specific color matching is required when printing materials. Since both of the MCWD logo colors are process colors (CMYK), on most occasions specifying Pantone colors is not necessary. Pantone colors may be used, but not required, when less than two other colors are being used besides the MCWD logo colors.

MINNEHAHA CREEK WATERSHED DISTRICT

WEBSITE REDESIGN

Features and technical requirements

SEPTEMBER 21, 2020

REQUIREMENTS

Based on the documentation provided by WSB and the provided content strategy, we recommend the following features and technical requirements be considered for Phase 2 of the MCWD website redesign project:

– Ability to deploy and manage third-party data visualizations, maps and dashboards through oEmbeds, iframes or third-party JavaScript

– Ability to serve real-time data through REST API

– Workflow feature to handle content creation, editing, approval and publishing

– Reusable media asset library, including but not limited to: images, videos (remote and local), documents and audio

– Ability to manage users, define roles and assign permissions

– Notification system or integration to send out regular alerts and announcements

– Commenting feature to allow for collaboration or feedback

– Form creation and management tool

– WCAG 2.1 (or latest) at AA or greater

– Responsive layouts

– Site search, potentially with faceted results

– Structured data where appropriate (breadcrumbs, FAQs, etc.)

– Extensible templating system which allows for future growth of the site

– Ability for content editors to place dynamic displays of content via content components or equivalent layout builder

Hosting requirements

The site should be hosted on servers that support the current site's traffic as well as projected future traffic. Seasonal peak traffic should be accounted for as well as traffic spikes from events such as flooding.