



To: MCWD Board of Managers
From: Tiffany Schaufler
Date: December 19, 2019
Re: Discussion 12.3 – MCWD’s Partnership Model for Predicting, Measuring, Managing, & Communicating Water Level Impacts

Purpose:

At the December 19, 2019 Board of Managers meeting staff will share a presentation with the Board which outlines the external partnerships the District has formed since the record 2014 flooding to better predict, measure, manage, and communicate water level impacts across the District.

Background:

From 2013-2018, the Twin Cities metro experienced the wettest six-year period on record. During those six years, an extra year’s worth of precipitation fell (~30 inches), meaning the area has received seven years’ worth of rain in a six-year period. 2019 has continued this exceptionally wet trend and currently is the wettest year on record.

Under Minnesota’s new climate “normal”, how can water managers successfully predict how much precipitation is coming, track fallen precipitation, monitor its subsequent effects to water bodies, and effectively communicate observed impacts to their communities and citizens?

To monitor and manage the impacts of this record precipitation, the District reached out to the National Weather Service (NWS), the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), and Hennepin County Emergency Management (HCEM) to identify areas for collaboration. All four agencies quickly realized that they have common missions/visions that work to provide scientific data and warnings that enhance and protect the health, safety, and quality of life for our communities and citizens.

This multi-agency collaboration allows MCWD to utilize real-time scientific expertise to predict, observe, manage, and communicate about water levels across the watershed. Using its partners’ expertise, MCWD has been able to further refine how it tracks and manages the water budget across its entire 178 square mile watershed and limit the duration of high water in spite of record precipitation.

MCWD, NWS, USGS, and HCEM believe we have created a successful collaborative model that could be replicated by other organizations throughout the state and have recently been invited to present on this partnership at the 2019 Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts (MAWD) Conference and the upcoming 2020 Minnesota Climate Adaptation Conference.

For the December 19, 2019 Board of Managers meeting, staff have prepared an abbreviated presentation of the one that was presented at the 2019 MAWD Conference.

If there are questions in advance of the meeting, please contact Tiffany Schaufler at tschaufler@minnehahacreek.org or at 952-641-4513.

We collaborate with public and private partners to protect and improve land and water for current and future generations.