



MEMORANDUM

To: MCWD Board of Managers

From: Becky Christopher

Date: July 23, 2018

Re: PPC Item 4.1 – Policy-Responsive Program Development

Purpose:

To begin discussing a scope and process for developing the District's policy and responsive programs.

Background:

The District's Watershed Management Plan (Plan), adopted in January 2018, solidified the District's Balanced Urban Ecology policy as the underlying organizational strategy. This strategy prioritizes partnership with the land use community to integrate policy, planning and implementation and to leverage the value created when built and natural systems are in harmony. To implement this strategy, the Plan articulated an approach that is two-pronged:

- **Focusing** in areas of high need and opportunity to achieve significant, measurable resource improvement
- **Remaining responsive** to needs and opportunities district-wide through coordination with partners

The draft 2019 Watershed-wide work plan (included in the packet as Item 5.2) further describes the District's strategy for remaining responsive and addressing water resource needs across the watershed as follows:

- **Protect water resources** from degradation that can occur as a result of land use change
- **Improve water resources** through implementation of opportunity-based projects and programming by:
 - **Scanning for threats and opportunities** created by land use change and partner initiatives by promoting open flow of information and early coordination
 - **Evaluating opportunities** against the resource needs and priorities defined in the District's Watershed Management Plan
 - **Responding to needs and opportunities** across the watershed by mobilizing a range of services to support partner efforts

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

As the District begins implementing its new Plan, staff are working to further develop programming to support the District's Balanced Urban Ecology strategy and the responsive side of its approach. As outlined in the draft 2019 Watershed-wide work plan, priority activities for 2019 will include:

- Collaborating with local, regional, state and private entities to identify **policy and procedural changes** that would improve land-use water integration at a MCWD and broader regional scale
- Developing **education, engagement and communications** efforts to promote early coordination of public and private planning and investments
- Collaborating with public and private partners to **improve MCWD's regulatory process and rules** to streamline and simplify requirements and create incentives for partnership while maintaining protections
- **Develop incentive program** to provide financial contribution for public and private projects that are well coordinated and align with water resource needs and priorities

Next Steps:

Throughout the remainder of 2018, staff will be working to develop the scope, process, and initial concepts to advance these efforts in coordination with the Planning and Policy Committee (PPC) and the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC). Staff is then proposing to initiate an external stakeholder process in early 2019, similar to what was done for the development of the Plan, to gather input and vet ideas through the use of advisory committees and focus groups.

At the July 26, 2018 PPC meeting, staff will provide an overview of the initial scope and process for advancing this work.

If there are any questions in advance of the meeting, please contact Becky Christopher at 952-641-4512 or bchristopher@minnehahacreek.org.

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