

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** MCWD Board of Managers – Operations and Programs Committee  
**From:** Darren Lochner, Education Program Manager  
**Date:** January 8, 2018  
**Re:** Watershed Association Initiative discussion

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### **Purpose:**

To discuss the Watershed Association Initiative (WAI) program and future direction. Staff and consultant Jen Kader from Freshwater will provide an overview of WAI, evolution of programming and alignment with MCWD strategic plan. The committee discussion will assist with the refinement of the scope of services for the 2018 WAI contact with Freshwater. The contract renewal will be presented to the Board on January 25<sup>th</sup>.

### **Background:**

The Watershed Association Initiative (WAI) is a program designed to support community members in MCWD who have an interest in protecting their freshwater resources. From providing assistance to active Lake Associations to helping new groups form, WAI increases the capacity of community groups so they may be successful in their efforts to care for their lake, stream, or wetland while aligning this work with the goals and resources of MCWD. The program also fosters increased communication between community groups and MCWD to leverage opportunities for actions that groups take to align with watershed district efforts and priorities. The WAI is carried out through a contract with Freshwater. Jen Kader with Freshwater has been the WAI organizer for the past three years.

The WAI has been a program supported by the watershed district for the past 12 years. In that time the WAI has worked with more than 30 lake associations and community groups. The focus of the program has continued to evolve over that time with less focus on development of new organizations to more emphasis on organization support, capacity building and building a stronger network.

The strategic planning process examined the WAI program and its alignment with the District mission. MCWD staff have been working with Jen Kader from Freshwater to plan for the upcoming year. Some of items highlighted during the strategic planning process were:

- Alignment of WAI with District mission and priorities
- Managing staff demands in relation to WAI and lake associations
- Role of WAI organizer and MCWD in working with lake associations

- Outcomes of WAI programming and return on investment

The committee meeting will include a WAI program overview, summary of recent discussions with MCWD staff and Freshwater and planning for the year ahead.

If there are questions in advance of the meeting, please contact: Darren Lochner, Education Program Manager, [dlochner@minnehahacreek.org](mailto:dlochner@minnehahacreek.org); 952-641-4524