



MEMORANDUM

To: MCWD Board of Managers

From: Anna Brown

Date: May 21, 2018

Re: Policy and Planning Committee item 5.2: Six Mile Creek-Halsted Bay Habitat Restoration Program Update

Purpose:

To outline the May 24, 2018 Planning and Policy Committee staff update on the Six Mile Creek Halsted Bay Habitat Restoration program.

Background:

In 2014, the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District adopted the SMCHB subwatershed as a priority focal geography due to its abundant natural resources, growth and development pressure, and connection to Halsted Bay. Following its adoption, the Board of Managers approved a two-fold analysis to understand the primary system drivers of declining water quality within this geography:

- The SMCHB Diagnostic Study, which analyzed nutrient dynamics across the subwatershed
- The SMCHB Carp Assessment, which, in partnership with the University of Minnesota, identified the population, reproduction dynamics, and age structure of common carp system-wide

The SMCHB Carp Assessment illuminated the primary role that common carp play in driving declining water quality within this priority geography. As such, the management of common carp is a principal strategy outlined in the SMCHB Subwatershed Plan, approved by the Board of Water and Soil Resources in December of 2017.

Lessard Sams Outdoor Heritage Fund

In May of 2017, the Board of Managers authorized staff to prepare an application to the Lessard Sams Outdoor Heritage Council for a system-wide carp management and habitat restoration program. The funding would be used to restore 2,488 acres of deep and shallow lake habitat

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across 14 lakes through the strategic use of barriers, winter aeration, and adult carp removal. Subsequent phases of the SMCHB habitat restoration program would target the restoration of wetland and contiguous uplands to enhance and connect natural resource corridors.

In September of 2017, the Lessard Sams Outdoor Heritage Council recommended the SMCHB habitat restoration project for \$567,000 to the Minnesota Legislature. The Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage bill has moved through the legislative process with no major amendments and the District anticipates its passage, making funds available July 1, 2018.

SMCHB Habitat Restoration Program Work Plan Update

At a February 22 Planning and Policy Committee meeting, staff provided an overview of the SMCHB restoration program work plan for 2018, focusing on work being done in advance of grant funds becoming available. That update covered the following topics:

- Carp removal approach and permitting update
- Barrier design and proposed timeline
- Necessary land rights, including utility easements for aeration

Following the committee meeting, at the March 8, 2018 Board meeting, the Board approved a design contract with Wenck Associates for the design of carp barriers.

At the May 24 Planning and Policy Committee meeting, staff will provide an update on the progress of the SMCHB restoration program work plan, and preview the items that will come before the Board in the coming months as part of the restoration program.

If there are questions in advance of the meeting, please contact: Anna Brown at 952-641-4522 or ABrown@MinnehahaCreek.org.

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