



MEMORANDUM

To: MCWD Board of Managers
From: James Wisker
Date: June 9, 2016
Re: Investment Task Force Preliminary Recommendations

Purpose:

On May 31, 2016 the Board appointed Investment Task Force held its first meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to begin defining goals and to recommend next steps. This memorandum summarizes the Task Force's progress to the Board of Managers.

Background:

Over the last several years the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD) Board of Managers has continuously assessed its methods and progress used to improve the watershed functions. This assessment redefined the Vision, Mission, Goals, and Guiding Principles for the organization, including a shift in the District's approach to capital project planning and implementation.

This shift recognizes the benefits of focus and prioritization. The focal track of MCWD's "Two Track Approach" to capital project planning, implementation and programming is largely based on:

- Prioritizing resources and actions on a geographic basis creating relational capital, collaboration and partnership in support of an integrated systems approach to watershed implementation on a landscape scale.

While the Board of Managers has identified the strength of working at this scale, it has also identified the limitation of the District's tax levy to support this scale of capital project implementation.

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To proactively attack this problem the MCWD Board of Managers appointed an “Investment Task Force” to work in partnership with staff on the development of a strategic approach to securing outside funds that will complement the use of tax levy authority and debt, in pursuit of the District’s vision.

Investment Task Force Preliminary Recommendations:

As a first step in strategically pursuing additional outside funds, the Investment Task Force has collaborated with staff and recommends that a white paper be developed with the following goals and content:

Investment Task Force White Paper Goals:

To develop a clear and consistent understanding among the Board and staff of:

- Outside funding opportunities, and the benefit and cost to the District in securing these funds.
- To develop evaluative criteria that prioritize funding source programs, given available District resources and the planning required to prepare applications to funding bodies.
- To inform the development of a short, mid, and long term plan to:
 - Obtain ongoing supplemental funding to implement restoration and implementation objectives identified within focal subwatershed plans, such as Six Mile Creek.
 - Seek specific one-time project funding for capital improvements identified through responsive track planning.
 - Seek specific one-time funding for work identified in the District’s operation and maintenance plan, or other programmatic work, otherwise historically funded through levy resources.
 - Identify non-profit partners that can act as fiscal pass through agents for grants the District may otherwise be not considered competitive.

Investment Task Force White Paper Content:

- Identify specific funding source categories and uses, and federal, state, regional designations, and scheduled cycles/deadlines for each.

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- Address the resources required to seek and manage funds from the specific funding bodies.
- Outline the considerations and concerns regarding participation in the identified programs, including a risk assessment of seeking and participating in specific funds.
- Identify short term priorities for seeking funds, outline the rationale for the selected recommendations, and include a high level schedule for the next 2-3 years listing tasks on a quarterly basis beginning third quarter of 2016.
- Address the Board's role in seeking funding, including the Board's approval function.

This recommendation will be discussed at the June 9 Planning and Policy Committee to obtain additional input before staff and the Investment Task Force produce a first draft white paper.

Should you have any questions or comments in advance of the meeting, please contact James Wisker at Jwisker@minnehahacreek.org or 952.641.4509

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