

**MEETING DATE:** December 11, 2014

**TITLE:** Authorization to execute a Memorandum of Understanding with Great River Greening

**RESOLUTION NUMBER:** 14-105

**PREPARED BY:** James Wisker

**E-MAIL:** Jwisker@minnehahacreek.org      **TELEPHONE:** 952-641-4509

**REVIEWED BY:**     Administrator                       Counsel                       Program Mgr.                       Board Committee  
                                  Engineer                                       Other

**WORKSHOP ACTION:**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Advance to Board mtg. Consent Agenda.	<input type="checkbox"/> Advance to Board meeting for discussion prior to action.
<input type="checkbox"/> Refer to a future workshop (date):_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Refer to taskforce or committee (date):_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Return to staff for additional work.	<input type="checkbox"/> No further action requested.
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify): _____	

**PURPOSE or ACTION REQUESTED:**

Authorization to execute a Memorandum of Understanding with Great River Greening

**PROJECT/PROGRAM LOCATION:**

Describe location or attach map.

**SUMMARY:**

Great River Greening is a non-profit organization that works to secure the legacy of Minnesota land and water through community-based restoration, stewardship and partnerships.

Great River Greening has partnered with over 600 public and private entities, including cities, counties and community groups, empowering restoration and stewardship initiatives by providing:

- Matching funds
- Ecological expertise,
- Project management and
- Community engagement

During recent exploratory meetings District staff assessed the potential benefit of building a long term partnership with Great River Greening. It was determined that Great River Greening specializes in developing effective, mutually-beneficial relationships to address the long-term ecological restoration goals of partners.

Great River Greening has the distinguishing core competencies of highly trained ecological staff, a dynamic community and youth involvement program, and a collaborative philosophy. In addition, they are able to help leverage funds from sources including the State of Minnesota Environmental Trust Fund and the Outdoor Heritage Fund.

**DRAFT for discussion purposes only and subject to Board approval and the availability of funds.  
Resolutions are not final until approved by the Board and signed by the Board Secretary.**

Accordingly, District staff is recommending authorization to execute a Memorandum of Understanding with Great River Greening as a policy tool to establish a preliminary partnership in advance of formal contracts. Staff believes there are opportunities for partnership to achieve the goals of the District, with Great River Greening helping to identify financial resources, provide ecological expertise, and engage and mobilize the support of communities.

Areas of identified partnership within the attached MOU, include:

- a. Minnehaha Creek Urban Corridor:
  - i. Developing a community capacity collaborative among public agencies, private sector leaders, education institutions and the public at large, to facilitate field learning for youth, broad education programming, subwatershed awareness, and community stewardship of the public investment in the corridor;
  - ii. Designing, funding and performing focused restoration and maintenance (e.g., streambank maintenance, buckthorn management, plantings);
  - iii. Exploring the restoration and linking of riparian lands that are not currently sites for District capital projects;
  - iv. Developing an integrated investment plan to achieve strategic objectives within the corridor.
  
- b. Six-Mile Creek Corridor:
  - i. Advancing informal/formal project and investment planning within the subwatershed;
  - ii. Building community capacity and engagement;
  - iii. Developing sources of external funding for conservation and green infrastructure work within the subwatershed.
  
- c. Land Restoration:
  - i. Refining, financing and implementing natural resource management plans on District lands and in key conservation corridors.
  
- d. Streambank Stabilization:
  - i. Responding to flood-related streambank destabilization in coordination with the Federal Emergency Management Agency and other stakeholders;
  
- e. Partnerships:
  - i. In the collaboration, the parties will work together to build broader partnerships toward achieving water resource goals including public agencies such as the Three Rivers Park District.

**RESOLUTION**

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**RESOLUTION NUMBER:**     14-105

**TITLE:**                **Authorization to execute a Memorandum of Understanding with Great River Greening**

WHEREAS,     the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District has invested substantial public resources in targeted creek corridors, including Minnehaha Creek and Six Mile Creek, to acquire conservation rights, restore riparian lands and establish natural riparian corridors in order to pursue and achieve the District's water quality and water resource protection goals; and

WHEREAS,     the District's efforts have been guided by its balanced urban ecology approach that rests on planning, partnering with other interests to achieve multiple goals from public and private investments including economic growth and community livability, remaining opportunity-based in implementation and building community capacity to support and advance the District's goals; and

WHEREAS,     in order to preserve and build on the District's investments to date, it is timely to focus resources on efforts including planning for strategic infill in support of conservation corridors; vegetation restoration and management on existing conservation lands; and addressing localized needs such as streambank erosion that can undermine water resource benefits of District investments; and

WHEREAS,     Great River Greening, in collaboration with public agency sponsors, works to advance conservation and water resource goals through a combination of staff scientific expertise, strategic partnering, developing external funding support, and public engagement; and

WHEREAS,     utilizing the capacities of Great River Greening can be a cost-effective way for the District to pursue its corridor work and can be an important means through which the District can advance its public education and engagement goals and build partnerships with constituencies within identified riparian corridors; and

WHEREAS,     the parties wish to express their interest in integrating their strengths and capacities in order to develop and carry out a program to preserve, enhance and extend the District's conservation property through expertise, partnership, community capacity building and creative funding;

WHEREAS,     this MOU does not state any legally binding responsibilities or obligations but documents mutual goals and establishes a cooperative framework within which the potential for beneficial and cost-effective projects and programs may be explored.

WHEREAS     at the MWCD Board Workshop dated December 11, 2014, it was moved by Manager Blixt, seconded by Manager Casale and passed 7-0 that this resolution be forwarded to the next Board Meeting for final action;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the MCWD Board of Managers hereby authorizes the District Administrator to execute the attached MOU with Great River Greening, on advice of legal counsel; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the MCWD Board of Managers hereby authorizes non-substantive revisions to the MOU on advice of legal counsel.

Resolution Number 14-105 was moved by Manager \_\_\_\_\_, seconded by Manager \_\_\_\_\_.  
Motion to adopt the resolution \_\_\_ ayes, \_\_\_ nays, \_\_\_ abstentions. Date: \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary

## MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is made between the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District ("District"), a watershed district and political subdivision with powers at Minnesota Statutes Chapters 103B and 103D, and Great River Greening, a non-profit corporation located in St. Paul, Minnesota.

### Recitals and Statement of Purpose

WHEREAS the District has invested substantial public resources in targeted creek corridors, including Minnehaha Creek and Six Mile Creek, to acquire conservation rights, restore riparian lands and establish natural riparian corridors in order to pursue and achieve the District's water quality and water resource protection goals;

WHEREAS the District's efforts have been guided by its balanced urban ecology approach that rests on planning, partnering with other interests to achieve multiple goals from public and private investments including economic growth and community livability, remaining opportunity-based in implementation and building community capacity to support and advance the District's goals;

WHEREAS in order to preserve and build on the District's investments to date, it is timely to focus resources on efforts including planning for strategic infill in support of conservation corridors; vegetation restoration and management on existing conservation lands; and addressing localized needs such as streambank erosion that can undermine water resource benefits of District investments;

WHEREAS Great River Greening, in collaboration with public agency sponsors, works to advance conservation and water resource goals through a combination of staff scientific expertise, strategic partnering, developing external funding support, and public engagement;

WHEREAS utilizing the capacities and expertise of Great River Greening can be a cost-effective way for the District to pursue its corridor work and can be an important means through which the District can advance its public education and engagement goals and build partnerships with constituencies within identified riparian corridors; and

WHEREAS the parties wish to express their interest in integrating their strengths and capacities in order to develop and carry out a program to preserve, enhance and extend the District's conservation property through expertise, partnership, community capacity building and creative funding;

THEREFORE this MOU does not state any legally binding responsibilities or obligations but documents mutual goals and establishes a cooperative framework within which the potential for beneficial and cost-effective projects and programs may be explored.

### Terms of Understanding

1. Spheres of Collaboration. The District and Great River Greening will explore collaboration in a number of areas. Specifically, but not exclusively, potential mutual efforts include:

- a. Minnehaha Creek Urban Corridor:
  - i. Developing a community capacity collaborative among public agencies, private sector leaders, education institutions and the public at large, to facilitate field learning for youth, broad education programming, subwatershed awareness, and community stewardship of the public investment in the corridor;
  - ii. Designing, funding and performing focused restoration and maintenance (e.g., streambank maintenance, buckthorn management, plantings);
  - iii. Exploring the restoration and linking of riparian lands that are not currently sites for District capital projects;
  - iv. Developing an integrated investment plan to achieve strategic objectives within the corridor.
  
- b. Six-Mile Creek Corridor:
  - i. Advancing informal/formal project and investment planning within the subwatershed;
  - ii. Building community capacity and engagement;
  - iii. Developing sources of external funding for conservation and green infrastructure work within the subwatershed.
  
- c. Land Restoration:
  - i. Refining, financing and implementing natural resource management plans on District lands and in key conservation corridors.
  
- d. Streambank Stabilization:
  - i. Responding to flood-related streambank destabilization in coordination with the Federal Emergency Management Agency and other stakeholders;
  
- e. Partnerships:
  - i. In the collaboration, the parties will work together to build broader partnerships toward achieving water resource goals including public agencies such as the Three Rivers Park District.

3. Legally Binding Agreements. When the District and Great River Greening are prepared to proceed to implement a specific capital project or program, the parties will establish binding roles, responsibilities and financial obligations in a written agreement.

4. Primary Contacts. The following individuals will be the primary contacts between the Watershed and the City. Either party may change the designated contact by notifying the other party:

Great River Greening

MCWD

Deborah Karasov, Executive Director  
Great River Greening  
35 West Water Street, Suite 201  
St. Paul, MN 55107  
651-665-9500 x14  
dkarasov@greatrivergreening.org

James Wisker, Director of Planning  
MCWD  
15320 Minnetonka Blvd.  
Minnetonka, MN 55345  
952-641-4509  
jwisker@minnehahacreek.org

5. Term. Either party may terminate this MOU on thirty (30) days advance written notice to the other party.

**GREAT RIVER GREENING**

**MINNEHAHA CREEK WATERSHED DISTRICT**

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Deborah Karasov, Executive Director

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Jeff Spartz, District Administrator

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