

Minnehaha Creek Watershed District

2015 Work Plan Summary

Date: June 5, 2014

Department/Activity: Communications

The 2015 workplan for the District’s Communications Program continues many of the activities conducted in 2014 with a few notable additions: 1) Develop and implement an outreach and engagement plan for the District’s Comprehensive Water Resources Management Plan, 2) Develop and implement a workshop for realtors and developers to educate them about the role of watershed districts in protecting water quality, watershed rules and how watershed districts can partner with landowners on water improvement projects, 3) Develop and implement direct mail campaigns that connect landowners to their local water body and inform them about steps they can take to protect it.

In all of these activities and others included in the 2015 workplan, the communications program will coordinate efforts with other relevant District programs with a focus on priority projects and geographies. The program’s work also will be informed and guided by the District’s Balanced Urban Ecology policy framework, which reinforces the District’s commitment to working in partnership with others.

Highlights of Notable Changes for 2015:

- Comprehensive Water Resources Management Plan Outreach \$ 25,000
- Realtor/Developer Outreach \$ 10,000
- Direct Mail Campaigns \$ 8,000

Financial Implications (no change to budget/levy)

	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>
Communications Fund budget proposed:	\$ 201,791	\$ 168,600
Communications Fund tax levy	\$ 168,600	\$ 168,600

Minnehaha Creek Watershed District

2015 RECOMMENDED PROJECT/PROGRAM WORK PLAN

PREPARED BY: Telly Mamayek DATE: June 1, 2014

<u>Project</u>	Communications (2303)
<u>Description</u>	<p>The Communications Program is comprised of broad-based and targeted outreach strategies designed to support the goals of the District, including promoting the abstraction and infiltration of surface water; promoting activities that maintain, support and enhance ecological integrity of water resources; maintaining or reducing volume of stormwater runoff; promoting stormwater best management practices; enhancing public participation and knowledge of District activities; promoting recreational use of surface waters and soliciting input from the general public on District projects and programs, among others.</p> <p>The Communications Program conducts broad-based outreach via the District’s website, social media, media outlets and participation in community events; engages target audiences including local government officials and staff, citizen-led neighborhood, lake and creek associations, landowners and developers through special events, presentations, and direct mail campaigns; supports the communications needs of the District’s other program areas and maintains internal communications with staff, CAC and board members.</p>
<u>Communication Goals</u>	<p>The goals of the Communications Program are outlined in the board-approved 2014-15 Strategic Communications Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase awareness of MCWD, its mission and programs • Maintain and increase transparency and accountability • Build and maintain MCWD relationships with elected officials, partner organizations and community leaders • Establish and sustain partnerships that broaden impact of MCWD’s programs • Assist MCWD’s efforts to increase voluntary participation by residents to protect and improve water resources in the District
<u>Location</u>	District-wide
<u>Program Elements</u>	<p>The MCWD believes that a public that understands the importance of clean water will become engaged and help achieve the District’s goals of protecting and improving water quality. An effective communications program also will increase stakeholder support and involvement, which will enhance the success of MCWD initiatives and programs. The program’s work will be informed and guided by the District’s <i>Balanced Urban Ecology</i> policy framework, which reinforces the District’s commitment to working in partnership with the public, private and civic sectors to</p>

improve our natural systems, make wise investments in public infrastructure and improve the quality of water and quality of life in our communities.

For 2015, the Communications Program will focus on five main areas of work:

1. Base program (\$54,100)

The goal of the base program is to communicate information to a general audience, increase public awareness of the District, its mission and programs, provide accountability and transparency, make information available for those who seek it and position the MCWD as a leader in water quality information and programs.

- Website – \$10,000
Keep website up to date with timely information about MCWD activities and programs. Use it for cross-promotion of other organizations' events in the spirit of cooperation and strengthening partnerships. Develop layers of new District interactive map to support education and communications efforts and demonstrate their reach. Continue to build the video component of the web site to serve as a library of how-to videos, media coverage, mini-documentaries, etc. Additionally, the following upgrades are planned:
 - Create pages for each lake and stream that feature related pages, projects, events, news, water quality grades and other information, photos, information from the comprehensive plan, information about the lake group
 - Work on integrating the interactive mapping system into the website structure
- Visibility Tools – \$10,000
Purchase and distribute branding items, including water bottles, t-shirts and tote bags, with the MCWD logo, at community events, including the Minnehaha Creek Cleanup. Develop additional banners and materials for use at community events and informational and historical displays for the District's new office. Assist the Education Program in implementing displays to interpret the stormwater management practices that are demonstrated on the MCWD office site. Additional funding of \$45,000 is included in the 2015 Education workplan.
- Videos – \$10,000
Continue to create videos about the District's projects and programs, including the restoration of Minnehaha Creek through Hopkins and St. Louis Park. A video component is also anticipated to be part of the outreach during development of the Comprehensive Water Resources Management Plan.
- Publications- \$8,000
Design and print project and program-specific materials, including fact sheets, brochures, postcards and posters, as needed. Update and print core publications including the Lake Minnetonka Map and Minnehaha Creek Canoe Map, which will be updated in 2015. Purchase advertising in publications that align with MCWD goals.
- Media Relations - \$5,500
Write and distribute news releases, respond promptly to media inquiries,

accommodate interview requests and act as the District's spokesperson. Keep District Administrator, staff, Board of Managers and CAC informed on how the MCWD is being portrayed in the media with regular email updates on media coverage and outreach activities. Maintain an archive of news articles about MCWD activities and programs

- Sponsorships – \$5,100
Support partner organizations that share MCWD's mission to protect and improve water quality by endorsing and funding their programs and initiatives.
- Year in Review – \$5,000
The Year in Review, launched in 2014, is an annual publication summarizing the District's achievements during the previous year. The publication is sent to elected federal, state, county and local government officials, city and county administrators and key partner organizations in the District. The goal of this publication is to keep these stakeholders informed about the MCWD's initiatives and programs.
- E-updates/Social Media- \$500
Provide regular updates about District activities and programs to subscribers of the Splash e-newsletter. Issue regular updates on the District's AIS program via Splash. Use Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to communicate with followers about MCWD programs and partner organizations and promote clean water practices. Pursue unique ways to use social media to interact with key audiences and solicit input from stakeholders.
- Writing – \$0
Draft newspaper columns and articles District projects and programs for city, neighborhood and lake association newsletters. Write feature-length and short articles for area magazines and other media outlets.
- Participation at Community Events – \$0
Coordinate with the Education Program to represent the MCWD at events that target strategic audiences and outcomes in alignment with priority projects and geographies. Use event prioritization worksheet to assess level of involvement that most effectively achieves the District's goals. Levels of involvement include staffing a booth; coordinating volunteers to represent the District; making presentations; and providing financial support, educational materials, and/or promotional items.

2. Engagement Program (\$85,000)

The goal of the engagement program is to build and maintain relationships with elected officials, partner organizations and community leaders, establish and sustain partnerships that broaden the impact of the District's programs and assist in efforts to increase voluntary participation by residents to improve water quality..

While the nature of this targeted engagement work will vary to support the District's projects and initiatives, much of this effort will focus on the priority geographies of the Minnehaha Creek and Six Mile Creek Subwatersheds.

- Comprehensive Water Resources Management Plan Outreach – \$25,000 (NEW)

As the District develops its next 10-year comp plan, outreach to stakeholders will be needed to assess community needs, engage them in the District's work and keep them informed. The Communications Program will coordinate with other District programs including Planning and Education to design an outreach plan that solicits public input and informs target audiences in a strategic fashion.

This outreach will include focus groups and community meetings, media outreach, social media campaigns and creation of materials including potential videos. This effort also could incorporate an open house that would be an annual event going forward. This yearly gathering, which was among the recommendations coming out of the District's Weigh in on Clean Water initiative in 2013, would seek input from public officials and the community-at-large on expectations and goals related to water quality, requirements to meet the goals and the best ways to accomplish them.

- Minnehaha Creek Cleanup – \$25,000

The District's single-biggest event of the year will mark its 9th year in 2015. The cleanup, which attracted a record-breaking 1,200 people in 2013, was marketed to an even broader audience in 2014 to involve attendees of the Pride Festival and residents and businesses in the vicinity of Minnehaha Creek in St. Louis Park and Hopkins – a priority geography where the District has been working with community partners to restore the creek. Another location may be added further upstream in 2015 to make the cleanup a creek-wide event. By continuing to expand the reach of the cleanup, the District will have a bigger impact on water quality and will involve a larger number of people involved in this key citizen-engagement activity.

- Watershed Heroes Awards – \$12,000

The annual awards program recognizing significant contributions by volunteers in the District is being further reworked in 2014 to generate more publicly submitted nominations and increase attendance. Among the improvements under consideration is adding a category to recognize environmental stewardship in the business community and bringing on a media partner. Strategy will be evaluated in 2015.

- Realtor/Developer Outreach – \$10,000 (NEW)

To help inform realtors, developers and other large landowners of the District and its programs, the communications and education programs will develop a new workshop in 2015. The workshop, offered through the Minneapolis Area Association of Realtors' certification program, will educate participants about the role of watershed districts in protecting water quality, watershed rules and how watershed districts can partner with landowners on water resource improvement projects. Additional funding for this effort is included in the 2015 Education Workplan.

- Direct Mail Campaigns – \$8,000 (NEW)

Following a pilot direct mail campaign in three unique test areas of the watershed district in 2014, it's anticipated the communications and education programs will implement future direct mail campaigns that target other priority areas of the district in 2015. This effort seeks to connect landowners with their local water body and inform them about steps they can take on their property to protect it. Additional funding for this effort is included in the 2015 Education workplan.

- Government Relations – \$5,000

Keep apprised of potential public issues that may affect MCWD projects and program areas and advise District Administrator, staff, Board of Managers and CAC on how to address them. Develop and maintain good relations with local units of government in the District. Produce written communications, including letters, op-ed pieces and commentaries for submission to local newspapers. Attend meetings with key government staff and officials as needed.

- Presentations – \$0

Make regular presentations about District projects and initiatives at meetings of business, civic and community organizations, lake associations, local governments and other subwatershed-related groups. These "check-ins" with communities in the District will foster good communications and relationships with these target audiences

3. MCWD Program Support (\$28,000)

The goal of the program support function of the MCWD Communications Program is to provide communications support to the Board of Managers, District Administrator, Program Managers and their staff to ensure all levels of District communications are consistent in their voice and message.

- Communications Assistance for Projects and Programs – \$25,000

Develop and implement outreach support for District projects and initiatives, with an emphasis on activities in priority geographies. Among the work planned for 2015:

- Support for AIS-prevention messaging, including potential refinement and updates of social marketing signage at boat launches that were developed in 2014; fact sheets, brochures and other publications; creation of new tools for boaters to prevent the spread of AIS, etc.
- Support for implementing the District's new E-Grade program, including outreach that may be needed to stakeholders while the program is being developed
- Outreach to the Six-Mile Subwatershed on various activities including Dr. Sorensen's carp study; ongoing restoration of the Halverson/Dimler property; work with lake associations, etc.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Outreach to the Minnehaha Creek Subwatershed with particular emphasis on stakeholders in the vicinity of the District’s creek restoration work in St. Louis Park and Hopkins ○ Support for the Watershed Association Initiative, which aims to engage citizens to protect their local lakes and streams ○ Support the Regulatory Program in its outreach to city planners, developers and others on the benefits of working with MCWD and incorporating stormwater management practices in their projects ○ Support for the Cost Share Program, which helps fund these stormwater management practices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · <u>Professional Development Training – \$3,000</u> Coordinate training for staff and board members to improve their presentation and communication skills and how to effectively talk to the media. Arrange professional development programming for the staff retreats. · <u>Internal Communications – \$0</u> Continue efforts to provide an effective method of maintaining a consistent flow of information to the staff, board and CAC that is current and pertinent. Continue to provide regular email updates to MCWD Board of Managers, Citizen Advisory Committee and staff on outreach activities and media coverage about the District. Incorporate news from other program areas into these updates. <p>4. Continuing Education/Staff Training (\$1,500) Funding and time for communications staff to attend training as appropriate in the areas of outreach, marketing, graphics, presentations, website maintenance, stormwater management and low impact development.</p> <p>5. Program Administration (\$0) This area of work refers to the administrative aspects of the program, including budget development and oversight, work plan development, reporting, board communications/support, managing staff/hiring and training new staff, and interdepartmental coordination. Because these tasks must be done by staff, no dollars are budgeted for this work area.</p>
<p><u>Outcomes</u></p>	<p>The MCWD’s Communications Program aims to raise awareness and understanding about the MCWD, its mission and programs, resulting in enhanced public participation in efforts preserve, maintain and improve water quality. It also seeks to establish and maintain strong relationships with key stakeholders including, but not limited to, government officials and staff, media representatives, business and community leaders and lake associations.</p> <p>The anticipated outcomes of this effort include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Awareness and knowledge about MCWD programs and initiatives is

	<p>increased among the general public and its key stakeholders who take action to preserve, maintain and improve water quality and ecological systems.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased awareness of the connection between land use and water quality, and an understanding of where stormwater flows in individual residents' neighborhoods via subwatershed-based education. • Increased awareness of the impact of AIS and how to stop the spread. • MCWD increases awareness about recreational issues and develops a broader base of public support for its programs through promotion of appropriate recreational use of surface waters. • Greater public understanding and knowledge of MCWD's efforts to manage water quantity to reduce flooding and maintain water levels and flow. • MCWD is established as a trusted leader in water quality information and programs; media view MCWD as a credible and reliable source of information; and public officials turn to MCWD to problem solve. • MCWD increases its effectiveness as a result of partnerships with other governmental units and stakeholder groups. • MCWD District Administrator, board, CAC and staff provide a consistent voice in their communications as a result of presentation training and regular updates about District activities and programs.
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<p><u>Schedule</u></p>	<p>2015</p> <p>1st quarter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Present annual report to the Board in January - Prepare year-in-review newsletter for release by the end of February - Begin Creek Cleanup event planning - Ongoing outreach to local officials, media and community groups - Ongoing implementation of education/communication plans <p>2nd quarter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Present first quarter report to the Board in April - Begin Watershed Heroes event planning - Continue Creek Cleanup event planning - Begin work on 2016 budget and work plan - Ongoing outreach to local officials, media and community groups - Ongoing implementation of education/communications plans <p>3rd quarter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement Creek Clean-up - Present second quarter report to the Board in July - Present 2016 budget and work plan to the Board - Continue Watershed Heroes event planning - Ongoing outreach to local officials, media and community groups - Ongoing implementation of education/communications plans <p>4th quarter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement Watershed Heroes event
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Present third quarter report to the Board in October - Ongoing outreach to local officials, media and community groups - Ongoing implementation of education/communications plans
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Five Year Budget /Levy History:

Year	Budget	Tax Revenue	Expenditures	Transfers In (Out)	Carryover
2004					\$ 66,790
2005	\$126,765	\$132,129	(\$ 91,408)		\$ 107,511
2006	\$172,000	\$ 62,384	(\$119,028)	\$23,790	\$ 74,657
2007	\$184,900	\$128,738	(\$145,533)		\$ 57,738
2008	\$175,100	\$161,205	(\$175,100)*		\$ 83,005
2009	\$175,100	\$167,362	(\$155,100)*	(20,000)	\$ 75,267
2010	\$203,000	\$78,916	(\$182,083)	\$16,283	\$ 0
2011**	\$203,000	\$102,807	(\$97,393)		\$ 5,415
2012	\$109,600	\$109,600	(\$115,015)		\$ 0
2013	\$168,600	\$168,600	(\$135,409)		\$ 33,191
2014	\$201,791	\$168,600	(\$201,791)*		

**Estimated amount*

** Education and Communication Budgets were split in 2011.

Recommended 2015 Budget and Levy:

Budget: \$168,600

Levy: \$168,600

Budget	Planning and Policy Development	
	Contracted Services	
Survey/Data Collection		
Engineering/Consulting		
Equipment/Supplies		
Meetings/Seminars		
Maintenance Plan Dev.		
Legal		
Other/Miscellaneous		
	sub-total	
Project/Program Implementation		
Training		
Contracted Services		
Project Management		
Property or Easement Acquisition		
Engineering		
Supplies/Equipment		
Construction		
Landscaping/restoration		
Legal		
Meetings/Seminars		
Monitoring/Lab Analysis/Inventories		
Other/Miscellaneous		
Permit Research		
Permit Acquisition		
Operations/Maintenance		
Grants/Awards/Loans Given		
	sub-total	
Communications-Education-Stakeholder Involvement		
Training	4,500	
Supplies	20,000	
Meetings/Seminars	0	
Printing	10,000	
Publishing	8,000	
Postage	2,000	
Dues/Subscriptions	500	
Other/Miscellaneous	18,500	
Computer Services	10,000	
Contracted Services	85,000	
Engineering/Consulting	0	
Legal	5,000	
Construction	0	
Teacher Stipend	0	
Grants/Awards/Loans Given	5,100	
	sub-total	
	\$168,600	