

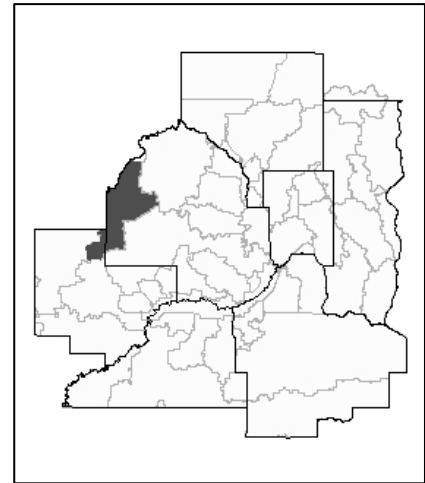
2008 Performance Review

Level II (Pilot): Summary of Full Report

LGU: Pioneer Sarah Creek Watershed Management Organization <i>Hennepin and Carver Counties</i>
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Summary of Conclusions:

The ability of the P-SC WMC to implement planned goals and policies has been significantly affected by large project initiatives that were unforeseen at the time the second generation watershed management plan was adopted. These initiatives, TMDL plans for Lakes Independence and Sarah and a Clean Water Legacy grant for nutrient management of the Lake Independence watershed, while consistent with the broad goals of land and water resource management, have diverted commission resources away from other plan priorities. The additional workload assumed by the commission for implementation of these initiatives needs support from the member cities. These factors make it difficult to provide a definitive review of the commission's performance in accomplishing planned goals and policies.



The delay in implementation of member cities' local stormwater plans is an unfortunate result of the focus on other priorities. The lack of local stormwater planning reduces the ability of the member cities to address priority water quality issues in a systematic manner. It also places additional workload on the commission as these water management issues must be addressed by the commission rather than at the municipal level.

Based on the commission's own assessment, its assumption of large-scale water management projects and regulatory responsibilities without commensurate financial support is taxing their ability to meet basic rule compliance and policy standard development.

The commission has shown an interest in improving its operations by using the results from this performance review to pursue changes or additions to its operation as suggested by the performance review documents.

Recommendations:

1. Conduct a strategic planning exercise to address priorities and redefine objectives
2. Address local stormwater plan development
3. Adopt personnel policies
4. Conduct a stakeholder survey

Summary of LGU Response:

[BWSR note: The Commission provided extensive and thorough responses to the draft report. This summary includes their responses to the recommendations and a concluding comment.]

Response to Recommendation 1: The Commissioners will meet with Staff in January 2009 to develop a written strategic plan. The plan will identify the “non-specific policies” referenced above and attempt to attach measurable objectives, goals, timelines and budgets. When the strategic plan has been fleshed-out, it will be presented by the Commissioners to their City Councils for review and comment before finalizing a projected 3-5 year budget and possible major plan amendment.

Response to Recommendation 2: See no. 1, above. A deadline of February 17, 2009 was established for receipt of the cities’ draft plans. May 31, 2009 is the deadline for final approval of the local plans. The follow-up letter will cite consequences for non-compliance.

Response to Recommendation 3: Each member city determines how their representative is compensated for time spent on Commission business. The Commission reimburses Commissioners for Education expenses, primarily registration to attend seminars and workshops, etc., on an event-by-event basis. A reimbursement policy will be considered at the strategy session. As prescribed by Statute, the Commission solicits interest proposals biannually for administrative, legal, technical and wetland consultants. They serve at-will and are not extended contracts. Again, if BWSR has model language for an ex-parte communication policy, please share it with the Commission. The Commission has developed and/or updated its Rules, Code of Ethics, Data Practices Policy and Public Data Access Policy.

Response to Recommendation 4: With the reticence of the City Councils to spend money on required projects such as TMDLs, and the Commission’s past failure to connect with citizens on the CWLA grant, any survey would need to be carefully crafted by professionals, with guidance from the Commissioners and Staff, in order to generate the information the Commission needs to move forward or change direction. If it is the desire of the Commission to conduct a survey, the Commission would have to start that process in early 2009 in order to budget for its costs in mid-2009 for 2010. At this time, the Commission has chosen to consider using the results from the existing Hennepin County and Joint Education and Public Outreach Committee (EPOC) surveys rather than go through this time-consuming and costly process. This feels like micromanagement. Question: What does BWSR anticipate we will we get from a survey?

The Commissioners and Staff found this review to be an interesting and useful exercise. However, as a point of information, to date this review and associated activity have taken the Commission’s administrator 34.39 hours (\$1,946.45) to complete. That equals 5.12% of the total 2008 administrative budget of \$38,000! In addition, the costs of the strategic planning session were not included in the Commission’s 2009 budget. Will BWSR be requesting funding from the Legislature to reimburse LGUs for these costs or is it just another unfunded mandate?