



Ecological and Water Resources
1200 Warner Road
St. Paul, MN 55106

January 15, 2023

North Cannon River Watershed Management Organization
Ashley Gallagher, Senior Resource Conservationist Dakota SWCD (WMO Administrator)
4100 220th Street West
Farmington, MN 55024

Dear Ashley,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the North Cannon River Watershed Management Organization (WMO) Watershed Management Plan. Our Area Hydrologist, Taylor Huinker, participated in the Technical Advisory Committee for this plan and finds that the plan incorporates many of the priority concerns brought forward by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in the initial comment letter. The DNR commends North Cannon River WMO on including climate change as an emerging issue. More information on climate trends and current conditions within the North Cannon River Watershed can be found using the [Minnesota Climate Trends Tool](#). Another DNR resource you may find useful is a nearly final report called an Evaluation of Hydrologic Change (EHC), which utilizes the Welch gauge on the Cannon River. The EHC can be a resource to understand a changing hydrology in the watershed and is designed to inform resource management decisions through the assessment of hydrologic changes within the watershed. We will be happy to share it with you when complete or upon request.

Although the Watershed Management Plan contains many of the priority concerns brought forward by the DNR, the plan could be improved with suggestions below:

Section 3.0 Issue Assessment Prioritization and Measurable Goals

The prioritization contains two separate rankings. Although the rationale for two priority rankings is outlined in the plan, the resulting two lists appear to contradict each other. We suggest limiting the priority ranking to the resource ranking only, to strengthen the targeting and give order to importance of projects.

Section 5. Implementation Program

- a. **BMP Table.** There are many great best management practices (BMP's) listed along with reduction goals by action. As laid out, the implementation schedule is more of an even rotation of sub-watersheds, instead of need based. Defining more precise locations for the BMP's and targeting of sub-watersheds by resource needs would provide for clearer prioritization.

b. **Implementation Table - Actions.** The implementation table contains stream and shoreline protection and restoration of 400 linear feet. There is potential to increase the number of targeted feet, especially as a form of protection on trout streams. Over a period of ten years, 400 feet of shoreline protection and restoration is easily achievable. As an example, Trout Brook through Miesville Ravine is an incised stream and provides large opportunities for more bank protection and restorations. Also on Trout Brook, a fish passage barrier has been identified as a possible stream improvement project. The crossing of Trout Brook at Miesville Trail has a 2.5 foot drop, causing a wide scour pool immediately downstream (seen in Figure 2-16 in the management plan). Designing a stream crossing for fish passage while maintaining sediment balance is important. This can be achieved by but not limited to:

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Thank you again for including the DNR on the Technical Committee and for the opportunity to review and comment on the updated plan. Please feel free to contact Taylor Huinker with any questions on these review comments. We look forward to working with the North Cannon River Watershed Management Organization on implementation of the plan.

Sincerely,



Megan Moore

Central Region EWR South District Manager

CC: Steve Christopher, BWSR Board Conservationist
Anne Sawyer, BWSR Board Conservationist
Jeffery Berg, Minnesota Department of Agriculture
Travis Hirman, Minnesota Department of Agriculture
John Freitag, Minnesota Department of Health
Maureen Hoffman, Metropolitan Council
Jeff Risberg, Minnesota Pollution control Agency
Jason Swenson, PE., Minnesota Department of Transportation
Dan Lais, Central Region EWR District Manager;
Jack Gleason, Central Region South District Hydrologist Supervisor
Taylor Huinker, South Metro Area Hydrologist
David De Paz, Acting South Metro Area Hydrologist

**Metro District, Water Resources Engineering
Waters Edge**
1500 W. County Road B-2
Roseville, Minnesota 55113

Office Telephone: (651) 234-7539

January 18, 2023

Ashley Gallagher, Administrator via Dakota County SWCD
c/o Dakota Soil and Water Conservation District
4100 220th Street West Suite 102
Farmington, MN 55024

RE: 60-Day Review: DRAFT North Cannon River Watershed Management Organization
Watershed Management Plan

Dear Ashley Gallagher,

MnDOT Metro Water Resources Engineering (WRE) has completed the 60-day review of the 4th Generation North Cannon River Watershed Management Organization's (NCRWMO) Watershed Management Plan (Plan) dated November 2022. We thank the NCRWMO for allowing us to participate in the development and review of the plan.

We respect that the comment period officially ended on January 16, 2023. However, MnDOT provides these comments for your use and believes they are not significant comments overall.

We offer the following comments to help improve the plan and its contents:

1. Page 9: Acronyms: MnDOT is listed in the acronym table, but the acronym does not appear to be used anywhere within the document. As such, we suggest that it may be removed entirely from the table.
2. Page 36: This page contains the statement: *"Due to the lack of urban areas in the Watershed, stormwater infrastructure such as treatment ponds and underground stormwater pipes is limited."* MnDOT notes that it owns and operates a not insignificant number of culverts and storm sewers throughout the Trunk Highways that cross the watershed, such as MN 3, MN 20, MN 50, US 52, MN 56, and US 61. MnDOT is willing to share information regarding its assets upon request. While not as intense of a network as may be found in more urbanized areas, MnDOT recognizes its systems play a role. For the purposes of this plan, no changes are necessary. In order to obtain this information, you may contact either the MS4 Engineer, Jason Swenson at 651-234-7539 or jason.swenson@state.mn.us or the MS4 Asset Management Specialist, Adam Schramka, at 651-234-7544 or adam.schramka@state.mn.us.



Thank you for including MnDOT in your plan review, and we welcome opportunities to collaborate in the future. Feel free to reach out to me at 651-234-7539 or jason.swenson@state.mn.us with questions or concerns over these comments.

Respectfully,

Jason Swenson, PE
MnDOT Metro MS4 Engineer
MnDOT Metro Water Resources Engineer

Cc: Steve Christopher, BWSR (via email)
Anne Sawyer, BWSR (via email)

January 9, 2023

Ashley Gallagher
WMO Administrator
North Cannon River Watershed Management Organization
4100 220th St W, Ste 102
Farmington, MN 55024

RE: 60-Day Agency Review – Draft North Cannon River Watershed Management Organization 4th
Generation Watershed Management Plan

Dear Ashley Gallagher:

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) has appreciated the opportunity to provide input throughout the development process of the North Cannon River Watershed Management Organization (NCRWMO) 4th Generation Watershed Management Plan (Plan) through participation in meetings of the Technical Committee in 2022. On November 17, 2022, the Plan was made available for review by agencies. The MPCA staff appreciate the opportunity to review and submit comments on the Plan.

The MPCA's staff review of the Plan is guided by the MPCA's priority concerns letter, sent to you in October 2021. The agency's priority concerns are primarily addressed in the Tier One Issues and Priority Rankings, however, the following are recommendations from MPCA staff:

- Primary pollutant reduction estimates are provided within the Best Management Plan (BMP) Implementation Table, however, these reductions are not compiled nor related to achieving the Measurable Goals provided in the Surface Water Priority Issue Table. The MPCA staff recommend the total pollutant reduction estimates be calculated and used to determine the level of progress made toward the watershed restoration and protection strategy (WRAPS) and total maximum daily load (TMDL) goals listed in the Surface Water Priority Issue Table.
- The ranking strategy used in the Plan does not appear to lead to targeted implementation as intended. The Resource Ranking and Drainage Area Ranking ultimately neutralize each other and do not aid in targeting within the watershed. The implementation table does not target practices to where they are needed, rather it cycles all activities through all subwatersheds over the 10-year planning period. We recommend using Hydrological Simulation Program - Fortran (HSPF) model outputs, the prioritization utilized in the Cannon River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (e.g: Figure 3-16 *Prioritized Targeted Implementation Areas for Trout Brook Drainage Area within the Tier One Stream Area: Total Sediment Delivered (tons/acre/year)*) or another tool to determine where practices are most needed, and outreach can be more targeted and meaningful.
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Ashley Gallagher

Page 2

January 9, 2023

- The MPCA recommends that the Plan's actions support continued monitoring of the water resources within its boundaries, especially Pine Creek, the springs in Trout Brook Subwatershed, and consider the addition of occasional sampling in Mud Creek as a protection priority.
- Chub Lake is classified as a Wild Rice water body and was studied in the 2019 Paleolimnological Study of Phosphorus-Impaired Lakes in the Cannon River Watershed. This information should be used to inform restoration/rehabilitation expectations for Chub Lake in the Adaptive Management Plan.
- To ensure the protection of these sensitive resources, the MPCA staff recommend adding a list of groundwater dependent ecosystems to the Groundwater Priority Issue section.
- Climate change is discussed briefly in the Land and Water Resource Inventory, including anticipated increased precipitation during the winter and spring seasons, reduced lake ice coverage, and their impacts. How will the NCRWMO address these changes and prioritize BMP implementation to reduce the negative impacts?

The MPCA is committed to providing assistance in interpreting and applying the substance of the WRAPS and TMDL reports, the Nutrient Reduction Strategy, models, Stressor Identification conclusions, etc. going forward as these and other priority concerns are installed and addressed in the planning framework.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the draft Plan. If we may be of further assistance, please contact Kristen Dieterman at 507-206-2626 at the MPCA's Rochester regional office.

Sincerely,

Kristen Dieterman

This document has been electronically signed.

Kristen Dieterman
Environmental Specialist
Watershed Division

KD:jdf

January 12, 2023

Ashley Gallagher, Administrator via Dakota County SWCD
c/o Dakota Soil and Water Conservation District
4100 220th Street West, Suite 102
Farmington, Minnesota 55024

RE: 60-day Review: DRAFT North Cannon River Watershed Management Organization Watershed Management Plan

Dear Ms. Gallagher,

The Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) has completed the 60-day review of the 2023-2032 draft North Cannon River Watershed Management Organization's (NCRWMO) Watershed Management Plan (Plan). We would like to thank the NCRWMO for inviting us to participate in the various meetings that were part of the development of this Plan and commend the NCRWMO for efforts to engage residents and partners on development of Plan content.

Following our review, we offer the below comments to help improve and bring the Plan into compliance with the requirements of MN Rule Chapter 8410 and MN Statute Chapter 103B.231. In addition to these 60-day review comments, please refer to BWSR's early input letter dated August 23, 2021, which provided guidance on Plan development along with required and recommended components of the Plan.

1) Section 1. *Executive summary*

- a. Per Minnesota Rule 8410.0050, the Executive Summary must include main goals of the Plan, major actions in the Plan, and the responsibilities of local governments related to implementation of the Plan including any changes in responsibilities from the previous plan. These requirements are missing.
- b. Past accomplishments make minimal progress toward water quality improvement. Language largely includes "assist" or "advocate" without direct action steps (other than landowner technical assistance and cost-share). This Plan should incorporate a stronger leadership role for the WMO in identifying what needs to be done and following through with implementation.
- c. While not a component of the main section of the Plan (Appendix A), we recommend review of the NCRWMO Joint Powers Agreement at least once every ten years. This schedule will ensure continued commitment among the member entities and provide increased predictability for implementation.

2) Section 2. *Land and Water Resource Inventory*. Per Minnesota Rule 8410.0060 Subp. 1, the Plan must contain information and a general analysis based on existing records, plans, and publications for several

components. Incorporation by reference for data that is freely-available is acceptable, provided the data is generally described in the Plan. The following components were lacking or incomplete:

- a. Precipitation (Subp. 1.D). There is a discussion of trends in precipitation, but no description of present-day conditions, e.g. average annual precipitation or seasonal precipitation.
- b. Storm water systems (Subp. 1.H). Unclear what is meant by “limited” storm water infrastructure.
- c. Fish and wildlife habitat (Subp. 1.J). Discussion of (terrestrial) wildlife habitat is missing, yet woodland, prairie, and riparian corridor habitat are specifically mentioned in the Tier 2 “Habitat” issue statement.
- d. Priority areas for wetland preservation, enhancement, restoration and establishment (Subp. 1.M): No priority areas discussed.

3) Section 3. *Issue Assessment Prioritization and Measurable Goals.*

- a. Several required components outlined in MN Rule 8410.0080, Establishment of Goals, are missing, including Subp. 2, Water quantity, Subp. 6, Public drainage systems, and Subp. 8, Wetlands. In addition to other requirements outlined in Section 8410.0080, Plan goals must be specific and measurable, contain sufficient detail to provide direction to the WMO, and allow for success or failure to be measured. Furthermore, a procedure must be established to evaluate progress for each goal at a minimum of every two years.
- b. The Tier One priority issues of surface water quality and groundwater quality and quantity are good, but they should be targeting specific resources. The WMO is very large, and without waterbodies or groundwater recharge areas targeted for improvement, no measurable change will be made.
- c. The Outreach and Education issue statement is also good but should include specific measurable goals such as number of events, number of landowners contacted, or other indicators drawn from activities identified in the O&E Implementation Table.

4) Section 4. *Policy and Regulation.* Per MN Rule 8410.0105 Subp. 6, controls or performance standards must be described in the Plan and include implementation and enforcement processes along with other requirements as described in the Rule. While NCRWMO acknowledges that it is not a permitting authority, the WMO still needs to develop standards for local municipalities to adopt and implement in order to protect water resources.

5) Section 5. *Implementation Program.*

- a. Overall, there is a general lack of prioritization for implementation activities. Targeting needs to be identified further in the BMP Implementation Table. The rotating focus on priority water bodies, with identical rates of implementation for each, does not adequately address resource concerns specific to each watershed. For example, if the topography of Miesville Ravine and the Trout Brook subwatershed indicates a need for water and sediment control basins and grassed waterways (p. 62), why not target those practices to those priority areas rather than distributing them evenly across the WMO? Another example is the distribution of 100 linear feet of streambank stabilization across priority resources in the implementation table. Is there an opportunity for a capital improvement project to produce greater benefit to a target resource, rather than spreading stabilization across the watershed?
- b. Several required components outlined in MN Rule 8410.0105, Implementation Actions, are missing or incomplete, including:

- i. Subp. 1. C: Define the WMO's process for evaluating implementation of local water plans and procedures to address local government units failing to implement their plan.
 - ii. Subp. 1. D: Include a procedure to establish an advisory committee or other means of public and technical participation for making recommendations on a ten-year plan amendment.
 - iii. Subp. 2: Capital Improvement Program. Potential capital improvement projects should be identified and prioritized in the plan. We appreciate the theoretical framework of Table 5.1, but the content does not meet MN Rule 8410 requirements for setting out details of contemplated capital improvements that include project need, schedule, cost, and funding source.
 - iv. Subp. 3: Operation and maintenance programs.
 - v. Subp. 6: Regulatory program (as described in 5, above).
 - vi. Subp. 7: Incentive programs.
 - vii. Subp. 9. B: A schedule for local water plan adoption that includes language requiring local plans to be adopted not more than two years before the local comprehensive plan is due.
- c. Reporting on measurable outcomes should include pollution reductions as well as the outputs identified within the BMP implementation table, not just acres or linear feet.
 - d. The potential partners and potential funding options should be separate columns in the implementation table.
 - e. The NCRWMO has done an excellent job considering ideas for Outreach and Education. However, the activities should include prioritization to target audiences and resource areas of concern. The O&E "menu" is a great idea with lots of opportunities, but the format is difficult to follow.
 - f. The Outreach & Education table includes "Execute Surface Water [Groundwater] O&E Plan". Do these plans exist? If so, please provide references. If not, will they be created as part of this plan? Please describe.
 - g. The landowner survey efforts are commendable and will hopefully yield useful data. However, does a single survey development point in years 1-2 allow for adaptation and refinement of the surveys based on feedback? How will you know if you are capturing what you had intended? Would recommend revisiting the surveys to revise as needed.
 - h. The NCRWMO does great work in monitoring water resources, but the program should be clearly described to include how the monitoring measures progress with respect to implementation activities, including data analysis and sampling frequency for parameters, per MN Rule 8410.0105 Subp. 5. Trends based on water quality monitoring data should be included in the biennial self-evaluation.
 - i. In the Data and Studies Implementation table, should the outcome of "advocating for research on effects of dam operation" be recommendations for research or identification of implementation activities rather than "improvements to lake wildlife"?
 - j. In the Data and Studies Implementation table, the identification of culvert replacement projects could be an opportunity for doing those replacements as capital improvement projects. The NCRWMO should be prepared to add such activities to its implementation program.

- k. We recommend developing a plan evaluation template to be included in this draft plan that provides clarity of the metrics that the WMO will use for self-evaluation. BWSR staff can provide templates from other watersheds for reference.

We would like to commend the NCRWMO for their partnership with Dakota County SWCD and we hope to see similar relationships developed with other partners. Additionally, we would like to note the well-thought-out and creative opportunities for education and outreach programming within NCRWMO, including the incorporation of survey data to evaluate the program.

Thank you again for including BWSR in the initial planning meeting, advisory committee meetings and various public and NCRWMO meetings to discuss the Plan's development and content. Please feel free to contact me at 651-392-5064 or at anne.sawyer@state.mn.us with any questions on these review comments or if the NCRWMO would like to schedule a time to discuss draft Plan revisions in more detail.

Sincerely,

Anne Sawyer

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Date: 2023.01.11 16:54:38
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Anne Sawyer
BWSR Board Conservationist

CC: Steve Christopher, BWSR (via email)
Jeff Berg, MDA (via email)
Travis Hirman, MDA (via email)
John Freitag, MDH (via email)
Megan Moore, MNDNR (via email)
David DePaz, MNDNR (via email)
Jason Swenson, MNDOT (via email)
Jeff Reisberg, MPCA (via email)
Kristen Dieterman, MPCA (via email)
Maureen Hoffman, METC (via email)



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1200 Warner Road
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January 15, 2023

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Ashley Gallagher, Senior Resource Conservationist Dakota SWCD (WMO Administrator)
4100 220th Street West
Farmington, MN 55024

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Dan Lais, Central Region EWR District Manager;
Jack Gleason, Central Region South District Hydrologist Supervisor
Taylor Huinker, South Metro Area Hydrologist
David De Paz, Acting South Metro Area Hydrologist

January 10, 2023

Ashley Gallagher, Administrator
North Cannon River Watershed Management Organization
c/o Dakota County Soil and Water Conservation District.
4100 220th Street West, Suite 102
Farmington, Minnesota 55024

RE: North Cannon River Watershed Management Organization – Watershed Management Plan
Metropolitan Council Referral File No. 22823-1

Dear Ms. Gallagher:

The Metropolitan Council has completed its review of the North Cannon River Watershed Management Organization's (NCRWMO) draft 4th Generation Watershed Management Plan (Plan). We commend the NCRWMO for putting together a watershed management plan that is stronger and more comprehensive than their past generation plan. In general, the Plan is consistent with Council policies and the Council's *Water Resources Policy Plan*, but we do have recommendations to further strengthen the Plan.

NCRWMO Background, Page 12

- We commend the NCRWMO for their past accomplishments and look forward to seeing the steps NCRWMO take to continue to strengthen their leadership role in water quality problem identification and implementation.

Issue Assessment Prioritization and Measurable Goals, Page 60

- The two ranking priorities are confusing and reduce the overall importance of the resources the Plan has identified as priorities. We understand it is hard to balance priority waters for the community with where the organization can make the most impact, but we recommend prioritizing the drainage area rankings over the resource rankings. A narrative explaining why certain waters are lower on the priority rankings should be sufficient to answer community questions about why culturally important water bodies are lower on the priority list.

BMP Implementation Table, Page 79

- The implementation schedule in the table is confusing and appears to identify a rotation, not a prioritization for each subwatershed. We would like to see targeting performed to identify actions based on the needs of each subwatershed.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on this plan. If you have any questions regarding these comments or wish to discuss them in greater detail, please contact Maureen Hoffman at 651-602-1279.

Sincerely,

Sam Paske

Sam Paske (Jan 11, 2023 09:34 CST)

Sam Paske
Assistant General Manager, MCES, Planning Dept.

cc: Steve Christopher, Board Conservationist, Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources
Wendy Wuff, Metropolitan Council District 16
Judy Sventek, Metropolitan Council Water Resources Manager
Patrick Boylan, Metropolitan Council Sector Representative
Metropolitan Council Reviews Coordinator

Metro District, Water Resources Engineering
Waters Edge
1500 W. County Road B-2
Roseville, Minnesota 55113

Office Telephone: (651) 234-7539

January 18, 2023

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Respectfully,

**Jason
Swenson**

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Swenson
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Jason Swenson, PE
MnDOT Metro MS4 Engineer
MnDOT Metro Water Resources Engineer

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January 9, 2023

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Kristen Dieterman

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Kristen Dieterman
Environmental Specialist
Watershed Division

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