



2010 Activity Report



Greenfield • Independence • Loretto • Maple Plain • Medina • Minnetrista

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This report was prepared
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Annual Activity Report.

This annual activity report has been prepared by the Pioneer-Sarah Creek Watershed Management Commission in accordance with the annual reporting requirements of Minnesota Rules Chapter 8410.0150, Subps. 2 and 3. It summarizes the activities undertaken by the Commission during calendar year 2010.

In 2008 the Commission participated in a Level II Performance Review and Assistance Program (PRAP) review by the Board of Water Resources (BWSR). In response to the review, it is a goal of the Commission to ensure timely submittal of its annual activity report. In the past the Commission's annual report provided a great amount of detail and served for the Commission and the public record as a stand-alone compendium of all the activities, studies, and programs undertaken in the previous year. It contained extracts and summaries from reports produced not only by Commission staff but also by other agency staff as well as the annual financial audit. Many of those reports are generally not available until at least April or even later, depending on how monitoring samples are processed and the results compiled.

The Commission now limits the contents of its *Activity Reports* to the information required by the Rules and will incorporate detailed information about monitoring findings and other special studies into its appendices, which will be published as the information becomes available. The Commission will focus the Activity Report on a more detailed self-assessment of progress toward management plan goals and the preparation of a more detailed annual work plan. In future years, this work will be accomplished prior to the Commission's annual budget work session so it can be incorporated into the annual activity report for submittal by the end of April. These discussions will also be used to develop budgets for the coming year.

The Pioneer-Sarah Creek Watershed Management Commission was established to protect and manage the natural resources of the Pioneer and Sarah Creek watersheds. It is a joint powers watershed organization formed as required under MN Statutes 103B.201-103B.255 and MN Rules Chapter 8410. A Board of Commissioners comprised of representatives appointed by the member communities was established as the governing body of the Commission. Its current membership is comprised of the cities of Greenfield, Independence, Loretto, Maple Plain, Medina, and Minnetrista. The table in *Appendix 1* shows the names of the Commissioners appointed to serve in 2010.

Meetings. The Commission meets monthly at 4:00 p.m. on the third Thursday at Independence City Hall. The meetings are open to the public and visitors are welcome. Meeting notices, agendas, and approved minutes are posted on the Commission's website, www.pioneersarahcreek.org.

Staff and Consultants. The Commission has no employees. Independent consultants perform technical, legal, administrative, auditing, and wetland services for the Commission and are selected biannually. The current staff and consultants are also listed in *Appendix 1*.

The Watershed. Located entirely within western Hennepin County, the Pioneer-Sarah Creek watershed covers approximately 70.5 square miles and includes the watersheds of Pioneer and Sarah Creeks. The Crow River demarcates most of the northern boundary. Portions or all of the six member cities are within the legal boundaries of the Pioneer-Sarah Creek watershed and are listed in Table 1. A map of the watershed can be viewed on the Commission's website.

Table 1
Area of Members within the Pioneer-Sarah Creek Watershed

Local Government Unit	Area Within Watershed (Square Miles)	Percent of Watershed
Greenfield	21.5	30%
Independence	29.7	42%
Loretto	0.3	0.4%
Maple Plain	0.8	1.1%
Medina	7.5	10%
Minnetrista	10.7	15%
TOTAL:	70.5	

Watershed Management Plan. The Pioneer-Sarah Creek Watershed Management Commission adopted its second generation Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan on December 16, 2004. The plan can be viewed at <http://pioneersarahcreek.org/mgmtplan.shtml>.

The second generation plan includes a section that identifies a number of goals and policies that conform to the overall purpose specified in Minnesota Statutes Section 103B.201. These goals and policies address issues related to water quantity, water quality, recreation, fish and wildlife, enhancement of public participation, information and education, and management of the public ditch system, groundwater, shorelands, wetlands, and soil erosion.

No amendments to the Management Plan have been adopted.

Local Water Management Plans. Member communities must prepare and adopt their own water management plans. Local plans must comply with MN Statutes, Sec. 103B.235 and MN Rules 8410.0160 and 8410.0170 regarding content. Under the statutes, member cities are required to revise their plans to conform with the Commission's plan. Table 2 shows the status of the members' local plans.

Table 2
Status of Local Stormwater Management Plans

Community	Status at 2010 Year-End
Greenfield	Approved May 2010
Independence	Approved October 2010
Loretto	Approved January 2009
Maple Plain	Approved December 2008
Medina	Approved July 2009
Minnetrista	Approved April 2009

Status of 2010 Objectives. Following is a summary of the work undertaken by the Pioneer-Sarah Creek Watershed Management Commission in 2010 to meet the goals, objectives, and projected work plan outlined in its *2009 Annual Report*.

§ *Continue to review Local Stormwater Management Plans for conformance with the Commission's Watershed Management Plan.* The plans for Greenfield and Independence were approved in 2010. Local plans for all six member communities have now been approved.

§ *Continue to review local development/redevelopment plans for conformance with the standards outlined in the Commission's second generation Watershed Management Plan.* Projects were reviewed for erosion and sediment control, wetland, floodplain and stormwater management, as well as Department of Natural Resources (DNR) permits. The Commission's technical staff reviewed seven projects in 2010. Staff also reviewed the comprehensive plan and local water management plan from two cities. A list of each project, its location, and the critical areas reviewed is attached as *Appendix 2*.

§ *Serve as the local government unit (LGU) for administering the Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) for the cities of Greenfield, Loretto and Maple Plain.* The Commission reviewed no plans involving wetlands and received no new wetland banking applications in 2010. They participated in four TEPs and one new potential WCA violation within the watershed was investigated in 2010. The Commission's goal is to assure that WCA rules are properly implemented, wetland violations are resolved and replacement plans are reviewed.

§ *Conduct stream monitoring program to track water quality and quantity conditions.* After a hiatus due to budget constraints, the Commission resumed its stream monitoring program in 2010. Automated monitoring stations located at the outlets of Pioneer and Sarah Creeks provide both flow and water quality monitoring data. Tipping bucket rain gauges are also maintained at both sites. The Commission works with the Three Rivers Park District (TRPD) to operate these stations. It is a goal of the Commission to determine pollutant loading and measure continuous flow in both creeks. Details of the monitoring program and results will be included in *Appendix 3* when they come available.

§ *Conduct lake monitoring program to track water quality conditions.* Monitored Halfmoon, Independence, Sarah, Spurzem and the east and west bays of Whaletail lakes in cooperation with Three Rivers Park District. The District's 2010 lake sampling results are included in *Appendix 4*.

Funded the monitoring of Ardmore, Hafften, Little Long and Peter Lakes through Metropolitan Council's Citizen Assisted Monitoring Program (CAMP). Excerpts from the 2010 CAMP Report regarding these lakes will be included in *Appendix 4* when they are available. The full report can be requested from Brian Johnson of the Metropolitan Council, brian.johnson@metc.state.mn.us. A table in *Appendix 4* shows the Commission's lake monitoring schedule. As the Commission continues to implement its second generation Management Plan, goals for these lakes will be constantly evaluated.

§ *Promote river stewardship through the River Watch program. Encourage participation by local school students and their teachers.* Under the guidance of the Hennepin County Department of Environmental Services (HCDES), students from Rockford High School and West Lutheran High School monitored sites on Pioneer Creek and the Crow River. *River Watch 2010*, available from HCDES, includes results from all the Hennepin County monitoring sites. Excerpts from the report on these sites are included in *Appendix 5*. The complete report is available at <http://www.co.hennepin.mn.us>, keyword River Watch.

§ *Undertake elements of a Surface Water Assessment Grant awarded to the Commission to complete a condition assessment for all unassessed or partially assessed lakes and streams throughout the Pioneer-Sarah Creek watershed.* Begun in spring 2010, this project will utilize volunteer monitoring for ~30% of the effort to assess the health of Schwappauff, Rattail, Robina, Irene, Rice, Mud and Buck lakes and three stream reaches (Sarah Creek Mouth, Pioneer Creek Mouth and Pioneer Creek at Copland Road) using a range of water chemistry measurement endpoints. The project will be implemented as a collaborative effort through the Commission, Hennepin County Environmental Services and Three Rivers Park District. Results from this project will be used to implement a watershed-wide TMDL in the coming years. The SWAG project will be completed in 2012.

§ *Continue to develop the Nutrient TMDL and Implementation Plan for Lake Sarah.* The Draft TMDL

was forwarded to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for preliminary review in summer 2010 and was returned with a few minor comments. At year-end the draft was under MPCA review. The public comment period ended on November 10, 2010. The Commission held a public informational meeting after their regular October 21, 2010 meeting.

§ *Seek grant funding to assist with the costs associated with development of a watershed-wide TMDL and implementing impairment-reducing projects.* This goal will be pursued more aggressively as the timing of the TMDL nears (anticipated 2013-2014).

§ *Continue as a member of the West Metro Water Alliance (WMWA).* The group was formalized in 2010. Its mission is to create joint educational programming for citizens, municipal employees and educators. Along with the Bassett Creek, Elm Creek, Shingle Creek and West Mississippi Watershed Management Commissions created a west metro-wide education and public outreach plan. Members of WMWA and other metro watershed organizations collaborated to develop and distribute two brochures, *Commercial Snow and Ice Care* and *Residential Snow and Ice Care*.

§ *Redesign and maintain the Commission's website to provide news to area residents.* The Watershed Management Plan, monthly meeting materials, project reviews, Annual Reports, water monitoring results, and other watershed-related information are posted there (*Appendix 6*). In 2009 the Commission accepted a bid to redesign the website to incorporate the latest technologies and interactive capabilities. The website is being updated as budget allows.

§ *Adopt personnel policies as recommended by BWSR.* The Commission has no employees. Staff will work with BWSR to address administrative guidance for Commissioners such as filing for per diem, travel expenses and conference or special meeting attendance. Since BWSR deemed this recommendation to be a low priority, it will be addressed in 2011.

§ *Adopt a 2011 operating budget.* At its June 17, 2010 meeting, the Commission approved a 2011 operating budget totaling \$164,070. Assessments to the member communities equal \$74,260; revenue derived from project fees, wetland fees, and interest income totals \$11,500; funding from grants and cooperative programs is estimated at \$33,280; and \$30,030 will be taken from reserves. In addition, the Commissioners also approved a supplemental assessment to the membership of \$15,000 for development of the Commission's third generation Watershed Management Plan. (*Appendix 7*)

§ *Undertake a survey of lakeshed residents to determine the extent of their knowledge of how runoff affects the health of their lakes.* Supported the Minnesota Lakes at Risk Campaign conducted by the Lake Sarah Improvement Association. The *MN Lakes at Risk* CD along with a seven question assessment was mailed to 185 lakeshore owners, 100 lakeshed homeowners, and 100 lakeshed farm owners.

§ *Conduct a strategic planning session to address relevance of current rules and standards and considered updates where necessary.* Discussed elements of a revised Capital Improvement Program and developed a proposed budget to fund the projects identified in the CIP. This discussion was ongoing at 2010 year-end.

§ *Publish an Annual Activity Report summarizing the Commission's yearly activities and financial reporting.* The 2009 report was accepted by the Commission at their April 15, 2010 meeting.

Interest Proposals. The required biennial solicitation for interest proposals for administrative, legal, technical and wetland consulting services will be published in the January 31, 2011 edition of the *State Register*. The Commission's current consultants are listed in *Appendix 1*.

Financial Reporting. *Appendix 7* includes the Commission's approved budget for 2010, a report of revenues and expenditures for 2010, and the 2010 Audit Report prepared by Johnson & Company, Ltd., Certified Public Accountants. The Commission's Joint Powers Agreement provides that each member

community contributes toward the annual operating budget based on its share of the total market value of all property within the watershed. The 2010 cost allocations to the members are shown as part of the Operating Budget found in *Appendix 7*.

Of the \$134,500 operating budget approved by the Commission for 2010, revenue of \$14,000 was projected as proceeds from application fees and \$500 from interest income, resulting in assessments to members totaling \$72,800. \$47,200 was projected as coming from reserves.

The Pioneer-Sarah Creek Watershed Management Commission maintains a checking account at US Bank for current expenses and rolls uncommitted monies to its account in the 4M Fund, the Minnesota Municipal Money Market Fund. Amounts paid by the Commission per the 2010 Audit (*Appendix 7*) are as follows:

General engineering	\$ 8,664
General administration	\$ 54,776
Education	\$ 9,972
Programs	\$ 7,870
Projects	<u>\$ 30,275</u>
Total	\$111,557

General engineering work includes review of local plans, review of development/redevelopment projects, attendance at meetings and other technical services. General administration includes support to technical staff, attendance at meetings, insurance premiums, annual audit, legal counsel, tracking grant opportunities, management plan amendments, and other non-engineering services.

Wetland Banking. The Pioneer-Sarah Creek Commission does not have a wetland banking program.

2011 Work Plan. The Commission has identified the following activities in 2011:

§ *Continue to review local development/redevelopment plans for conformance with the standards outlined in the Commission's second generation Watershed Management Plan.*

§ *Serve as the local government unit (LGU) for administering the Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) for the cities of Greenfield, Loretto and Maple Plain.*

§ *Conduct stream and lake monitoring programs to track water quality and quantity conditions.*

§ *Complete elements of the Surface Water Assessment Grant awarded to the Commission to complete a condition assessment for unassessed or partially assessed lakes and streams throughout the Pioneer-Sarah Creek watershed.*

§ *Complete the Implementation Plan for the Lake Sarah Nutrient TMDL.*

§ *Continue to seek grant funding to assist with the costs associated with development of a watershed-wide TMDL and implementing impairment-reducing projects.*

§ *Continue as a member of the West Metro Water Alliance (WMWA). Along with Three Rivers Park District, Hennepin County Department of Environmental Services and the Freshwater Society continue to develop a series of workshops - Protecting Our Water Resources – A Forum Series for Policymakers.*

§ *Continue to redesign and maintain the Commission's website, www.pioneersarahcreek.org, to provide news to residents of the watershed.*

§ *Continue to develop a Capital Improvement Program that reflects the needs and concerns of the Commission, its member communities and watershed residents. Due to funding constraints, the Commission will focus primarily on projects identified in the Lake Independence and Lake Sarah TMDL*

Implementation Plans and consider other projects as funding becomes available.

§ *Adopt personnel policies as recommended by BWSR.*

§ *Adopt a 2012 operating budget.*

§ *Promote river stewardship through the River Watch program. Encourage participation by local school students and their teachers.*

§ *Partner with the Hennepin County Department of Environmental Services (HCDES) in the Stream Health Evaluation Program (SHEP).*

§ One of the objectives the Commission identified in 2009 was to consider revising its existing Shoreline, Erosion and Sediment Control and Stormwater Management model ordinances. This objective was delayed pending approval of all six local plans. This goal will be consolidated with the one below.

§ Develop new nutrient management regulations and wetland buffer model ordinances for adoption by member cities as part of Phase 2 of the Lake Independence TMDL Implementation Plan.

§ Participate in and/or coordinate curlyleaf pondweed treatment for Lake Sarah and identify and implement nutrient reduction controls for the Spurzem wetland. These projects, included as goals for 2010, will be included as projects in the Commission's CIP.

§ *Publish an Annual Activity Report summarizing the Commission's yearly activities and financial reporting.*



Appendices