



## 2011 Activity Report



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



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*Cover Photograph:* Baker Park  
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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 2011.

**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 2011.

**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](http://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%
<b>TOTAL:</b>	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>.

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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.

As of December 31, 2011, 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 to the Commission’s plan. Table 2 shows the status of the members’ local plans.

**Table 2  
Status of Local Stormwater Management Plans**

<b>Community</b>	<b>Status at 2010 Year-End</b>
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 2011 Objectives.** Following is a summary of the work undertaken by the Pioneer-Sarah Creek Watershed Management Commission in 2011 to meet the goals, objectives, and projected work plan outlined in its *2010 Annual Report*.

§ *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 five projects in 2011. A list of each project, its location, and the critical areas reviewed is attached as Appendix 2.*

§ *Served 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 five plans involving wetlands and received no new wetland banking applications in 2011. They participated in four Technical Evaluation Panels (TEPs) and three new potential WCA violations within the watershed were investigated in 2011. The Commission’s goal is to assure that WCA rules are properly implemented, wetland violations are resolved and replacement plans are reviewed.*

§ *Partnered with Three Rivers Park District (TRPD) to conduct stream and lake monitoring programs to track water quality and quantity conditions. Monitored three stream reaches and six lakes as part of the Surface Water Assessment Grant (SWAG) awarded to the Commission in 2010. The three stream reaches (Sarah Creek Mouth, Pioneer Creek Mouth and Pioneer Creek at Copland Road) are being monitored using a range of water chemistry measurement endpoints. Originally, seven lakes were identified in the SWAG; however, Buck Lake is not being monitored because of lack of accessibility. The remaining six lakes are Irene, Mud, Rattail, Rice, Robbina and Schauppauff.*

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§ *Funded the monitoring of Peter Lake through Metropolitan Council's Citizen Assisted Monitoring Program (CAMP). The 2011 CAMP Report contains the results of the monitoring conducted on all the lakes in the 2011 program. The report will be available mid-summer 2012 and can be requested from Brian Johnson of the Metropolitan Council, [brian.johnson@metc.state.mn.us](mailto:brian.johnson@metc.state.mn.us). A table in Appendix 3 shows the Commission's lake monitoring schedule. As the Commission continues to implement its second generation Management Plan, goals for these lakes are constantly evaluated.*

§ *Funded the monitoring of Lake Independence, Spurzem Lake, Half Moon Lake, Lake Sarah, and Whaletail Lake (east and west basins). Monitored these primary lakes in cooperation with Three Rivers Park District. Their report is included in Appendix 3. Also included in Appendix 3 is a summary of monitoring data for Lake Rebecca. In 2011 Three Rivers Park District completed a batch alum treatment to reduce internal loading from enriched sediments in the lake.*

§ *Promoted river stewardship through the River Watch program. Due to high-water and low-water conditions, no sites were monitored by students in the watershed in 2011. River Watch 2011, available from Hennepin County Department of Environmental Services (HCDES), includes results from all the Hennepin County sites that were monitored. It can be viewed at <http://www.co.hennepin.mn.us>, keyword River Watch.*

§ *Partnered with the Hennepin County Department of Environmental Services (HCDES) in the Stream Health Evaluation Program (SHEP). One site in the watershed was monitored in 2011. Results are currently being analyzed and will be available in 2012.*

§ *Continued to complete elements of the Surface Water Assessment Grant awarded to the Commission to undertake a condition assessment for unassessed or partially assessed lakes and streams throughout the Pioneer-Sarah Creek watershed. Details of the monitoring program and results will be included in the final SWAG report, available in mid-2012.*

§ *Completed the Implementation Plan for the Lake Sarah Nutrient TMDL. The Implementation Plan was approved by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency on September 16, 2011. Implementation projects are being inserted into the Commission's Capital Improvement Program (CIP).*

§ *Continue to seek grant funding to assist with the costs associated with development of a watershed-wide TMDL and implementing impairment-reducing projects. This task was not aggressively pursued with the consideration to extend the time frame for developing the Watershed Restoration and Protection Project (WRAPP), as the watershed-wide TMDL has been renamed.*

§ *Continued as a member of the West Metro Water Alliance (WMWA). 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. In 2011, along with partners, the Three Rivers Park District, Hennepin County Department of Environmental Services and the Freshwater Society, developed and presented a series of workshops - Protecting Our Water Resources – A Forum Series for Policymakers. (Appendix 4)*

§ *Maintained the Commission's website, [www.pioneersarahcreek.org](http://www.pioneersarahcreek.org), to provide news to area residents. The current Watershed Management Plan, monthly meeting materials, project reviews, Annual Reports, water monitoring results, and other watershed-related information are posted there. (Appendix 5)*

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§ *Continued to develop a Capital Improvement Program (CIP) that reflects the needs and concerns of the Commission, its member communities and watershed residents.* The Commission focused primarily on projects identified in the Lake Independence and Lake Sarah TMDL Implementation Plans. The revised CIP was incorporated into a major amendment to the Commission’s second generation Watershed Management Plan. The proposed amendment began its required agency review process in 2011.

§ *Adopt personnel policies as recommended by the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) in its 2009 Performance Review and Assistance Program (PRAP) Level II Report.* 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. This task will be undertaken as part of the Commission’s third generation Watershed Management Plan process.

§ *Adopted a 2012 operating budget.* At its June 23, 2011 meeting, the Commission approved a 2012 operating budget totaling \$203,894. Assessments to the member communities equal \$74,260; revenue derived from project fees, wetland fees, and interest income totals \$9,100; funding from grants and cooperative programs is estimated at \$101,744; and \$3,790 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 6*)

§ *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, which occurred in 2010, and will be undertaken as part of the Commission’s third generation Watershed Management Plan process.

§ *Developed 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.* This task is currently underway. A small group of ag producers has been meeting periodically to discuss manure management issues with a goal of creating viable regulations and model ordinances.

§ *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, are included as projects in the Commission’s CIP. It is anticipated the curlyleaf pondweed treatment will be undertaken by the lakeshore owners. The Commission is corresponding with the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) regarding best management practices/projects that could be implemented in the Dance Hall Creek basin.

§ *Participated in a Lake Independence Summit to identify ways to overcome barriers to implementation of the phosphorus load reduction measures identified in the Lake Independence TMDL’s Implementation Plan.*

§ *Considered a request from the Lake Independence Citizens Association (LICA) for support to revise the lake’s existing high water/no-wake city (Medina and Independence) ordinances.* Response from Three Rivers Park District (TRPD) included a request to investigate the reason for the high water levels. The Commission approved an expenditure of up to \$6,000, to be divided among the cities, LICA and the Commission, for an initial study. A visual reconnaissance and survey of the outlet channel began in late fall 2011.

§ *Published an Annual Activity Report summarizing the Commission’s yearly activities and financial reporting.* The 2010 Annual Activity Report was accepted by the Commissioners at their April 21, 2011 meeting.



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**Interest Proposals.** The required biennial solicitation for interest proposals for administrative, legal, technical and wetland consulting services was published in the January 3, 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 2011 and a report of actual revenues and expenditures for 2011. 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 2011 cost allocations to the members are shown as part of the Operating Budget.

Of the \$164,070 operating budget approved by the Commission for 2011, revenue of \$11,000 was projected as proceeds from application fees, \$33,280 from grants and cooperative programs, and \$500 from interest income, resulting in assessments to members totaling \$89,260. \$30,030 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 2011 Audit, prepared by Johnson & Company, Ltd., Certified Public Accountants, (*Appendix 8*) are as follows:

General engineering	\$ 9,286
General administration	\$ 67,002
Education	\$ 8,976
Programs	\$ 6,740
Projects	<u>\$ 31,838</u>
Total	\$123,842

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.

**2012 Work Plan.** The Commission has identified the following activities in 2012:

§ *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.*

§ *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).*

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- § 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. Publish final report.*
  - § Continue to identify TMDL implementation projects. Seek grant funding to assist with the costs associated with those projects.*
  - § Receive the Pioneer Creek Channel Review report. Evaluate and consider remedial actions.*
  - § Continue as a member of the West Metro Water Alliance (WMWA). Along with its partners, Three Rivers Park District, Hennepin County Department of Environmental Services and the Freshwater Society, continue to develop programming as identified in its Education and Public Outreach Plan.*
  - § Continue to redesign and maintain the Commission’s website, [www.pioneersarahcreek.org](http://www.pioneersarahcreek.org), to provide news to residents of the watershed.*
  - § Adopt a major amendment to its second generation Watershed Management Plan.*
  - § Develop a work plan and issue a request for proposals to begin the third generation Watershed Management Plan process.*
  - § Adopt personnel policies as recommended by BWSR. 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 as part of the Commission’s third generation Watershed Management Plan process.*
  - § Adopt a 2013 operating budget.*
  - § Revise its existing Shoreline, Erosion and Sediment Control, and Stormwater Management model ordinances as part of the third generation Watershed Management Plan process.*
  - § Working with local ag producers, 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.*
  - § Continue to participate in and/or coordinate curlyleaf pondweed treatment for Lake Sarah and identify and implement nutrient reduction controls for the Spurzem wetland and Dance Hall Creek.*
  - § Publish an Annual Activity Report summarizing the Commission’s yearly activities and financial reporting.*
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