



## 2012 Activity Report



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



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This report was prepared  
for the Pioneer-Sarah Creek Watershed Management Commission  
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*Cover Photograph:* Western Hennepin County  
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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 2012.

**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 2012.

**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<br>(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. A major amendment to the Plan was approved by the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) on January 25, 2012, and adopted by the Commission on February 16, 2012. The amended 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.

**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**

| Community    | Status at 2012 Year-End |
|--------------|-------------------------|
| Greenfield   | Approved May 2010       |
| Independence | Approved October 2010   |
| Loretto      | Approved January 2009   |
| Maple Plain  | Approved December 2008  |
| Medina       | Approved July 2009      |
| Minnetrissa  | Approved April 2009     |

**Status of 2012 Objectives.** Following is a summary of the work undertaken by the Pioneer-Sarah Creek Watershed Management Commission in 2012 to meet the goals, objectives, and projected work plan outlined in its *2011 Annual Report*.

- Reviewed local development/redevelopment plans for conformance with the standards outlined in the Commission's second generation Watershed Management Plan. Projects are 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 eight projects in 2012. The Commission approved a revised project review fee schedule. It became effective August 1, 2012.* A list of each project, its location, and the critical areas reviewed, a location map, and the revised fee schedule are 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 2012. They participated in three Technical Evaluation Panels (TEPs) and two new potential WCA violations within the watershed were investigated in 2012. The Commission's goal is to assure that WCA rules are properly implemented, wetland violations are resolved and replacement plans are reviewed.*
- Conducted lake monitoring programs to track water quality and quantity conditions. Funded the monitoring of primary lakes in cooperation with Three Rivers Park District (TRPD). *Lakes Independence, Spurzem, Half Moon, Sarah, and Whaletail (east and west basins) were monitored in 2012. Results are included in Appendix 3. TRPD also monitored six lakes (Irene, Mud, Rattail, Rice, Robbina and Schauppauff) as part of the Surface Water Assessment Grant (SWAG).*

- *Little Long Lake was selected for monitoring through CAMP in 2012. Because the Commission was unable to get a volunteer to monitor this lake, Met Council staff performed the monitoring in 2012. (Appendix 3)*
- *Partnered with Three Rivers Park District (TRPD) to conduct stream and lake monitoring programs to track water quality and quantity conditions. Monitored two stream reaches - Sarah Creek where it crosses County Road 50 and Pioneer Creek at Copland Road. (Appendix 4)*
- *Promoted river stewardship through the River Watch program. Encouraged participation by local school students and their teachers. Site 24, located adjacent to a city park in Independence south of Pagenkopf Road, was monitored in 2012 by students from Rockford High School. River Watch 2012, 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. (Appendix 5)*



- *Completed elements of the Surface Water Assessment Gant. All elements of the project were completed in 2012. The final report was published July 2, 2012.*
- *Continued to identify TMDL implementation projects. Sought grant funding to assist with the costs associated with those projects. Wrote letters of support for city-implemented projects.*
- *Received the Pioneer Creek Channel Review report. Evaluated and considered remedial actions. Hakanson-Anderson provided an overview of findings from their survey of the channel from Independence Road to County Road 90. The firm was authorized to move forward with a feasibility study for a project to remove vegetation and other material from the channel.*
- *Continued as a member of the West Metro Water Alliance (WMWA). Continued to develop programming as identified in the WMWA Education and Public Outreach Plan. The members are developing an e-newsletter, Water Links, for dissemination to a Hennepin County-wide audience.*
- *Adopted a major amendment to its second generation Watershed Management Plan. The major plan amendment was adopted by the Commission on February 16, 2012.*
- *Developed a work plan and issued a request for proposals to begin the third generation Watershed Management Plan process. The RFP was approved and the solicitation for proposals was published in the October 15, 2012 edition of the State Register.*
- *Adopt personnel policies such as filing for per diem, travel expenses and conference or special meeting attendance, as recommended by BWSR. The Commission will consider adopting these policies as part of its third generation Watershed Management Plan.*
- *Adopted a 2013 operating budget. On June 28, 2012, the Commission adopted an operating budget of \$94,225, a CIP budget of \$14,000, and a third generation plan budget of \$7,500, with assessments to the member cities totaling \$115,725. (Appendix 7)*

- Revise its existing Shoreline, Erosion and Sediment Control, and Stormwater Management model ordinances. *Revisions will be considered as part of the third generation Watershed Management Plan process.*
- Working with local agricultural producers, drafted 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. *Draft Technical Standards for Management of Manure from Livestock Operations were presented and discussed. The proposed ordinance will be reviewed for consistency with the rules of other agencies and presented to the Commission with a recommendation for adoption in the third generation plan.*
- Continued to participate in and/or coordinated curlyleaf pondweed treatment for Lake Sarah and identify and implement nutrient reduction controls for the Spurzem wetland and Dance Hall Creek. *A vegetation management plan for Lake Sarah was submitted to the Dept. of Natural Resources (DNR) for review. In 2012 the Lake Sarah Improvement Association (LSIA) implemented an in-lake pilot treatment program funded by the association and lakeshore owners on 50 acres of the lake. It is their goal to apply to the DNR for a permit to treat the entire lake in 2013. The full lake treatment will be undertaken by the lakeshore owners in cooperation with the Commission and TRPD.*



- *The Commission is seeking cooperative granting funding to apply an alum treatment or other nutrient reduction techniques in the Spurzem wetland as part of the Lake Independence TMDL implementation plan.*
- *Met with land owners around Dance Hall Creek to discuss the Lake Sarah TMDL and possible BMPs. Requested access to private properties to assess opportunities for implementation of BMPs.*

*Dance Hall Creek Inlet*

- Developed a work plan for the Watershed Restoration and Protection Project (WRAPP). *The start of the WRAPP has been scheduled for early 2013. The project team is developing the work plan on a two-phase timeline extending through 2016. The Civic Engagement team met to begin discussions regarding the public outreach element of the WRAPP.*
- Sought grant funding to assist with the costs associated with Commission- or City-sponsored projects. *The Commission provided letters of support for two DNR Conservation Partners Legacy Grant applications – Shoreline Emergent Planting Project (City of Independence) and 2012 Watercraft Access Inspections (LICA/City of Medina). Both projects were funded. The City of Medina also received a Clean Water Legacy Grant to fund the Loretto Ballfields project.*
- Continued to redesign and maintain the Commission's website, [www.pioneersarahcreek.org](http://www.pioneersarahcreek.org), to provide news to residents of the watershed.
- Published an Annual Activity Report summarizing the Commission's yearly activities and financial reporting. *The 2011 report was accepted at the Commission's April 19, 2012 meeting.*



**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*. *This process will be repeated in 2013.*

**Financial Reporting.** *Appendix 6* includes the Commission's approved budget for 2012 and a report of actual revenues and expenditures for 2012. 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 2012 cost allocations to the members are shown as part of the Operating Budget.

Of the \$203,894 operating budget approved by the Commission for 2012, revenue of \$9,000 was projected as proceeds from application fees, \$101,744 from grants and cooperative programs, and \$100 from interest income, resulting in assessments to members totaling \$89,260. \$3,790 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 2012 Audit, prepared by Johnson & Company, Ltd., Certified Public Accountants, (*Appendix 6*) are as follows:

|                        |           |
|------------------------|-----------|
| General engineering    | \$ 17,288 |
| General administration | \$ 60,653 |
| Education              | \$ 4,752  |
| Programs               | \$ 12,100 |
| Projects               | \$ 15,673 |
| Total                  | \$110,466 |

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 Watershed Management Commission does not have a wetland banking program.

**2013 Work Plan.** The Commission has identified the following activities in 2013:

- Continue to review local development/redevelopment plans for conformance with the standards outlined in the Commission's second generation Watershed Management Plan.
- Continue to serve as the local government unit (LGU) for administering the Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) for the cities of Greenfield, Loretto and Maple Plain. Consider revisions to wetland project review fee schedule.
- 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.
  - Continue to identify TMDL implementation projects. Seek grant funding to assist with the costs associated with those projects.
  - Begin development of the Commission's third generation Watershed Management Plan including review of existing and adoption of new model ordinances.
  - Consider adoption of personnel policies as recommended by BWSR. Incorporate into Management Plan or Rules of Commission.
  - Adopt a 2014 operating budget.
  - Revise existing Shoreline, Erosion and Sediment Control, and Stormwater Management model ordinances as part of the third generation Watershed Management Plan process. (See I.P.)
  - Complete development of new nutrient management regulations and wetland buffer model ordinances as part of the third generation Watershed Management Plan process. (See II.P.)
  - Continue to provide assistance to the Lake Sarah Improvement Association (LSIA) as they seek a permit from the DNR to treat the entire lake for curlyleaf pondweed. (CIP-2)
  - Continue to identify ways to implement nutrient reduction controls for Dance Hall Creek. (CIP-4)
  - Continue to seek grant funding for implementation of nutrient reduction of the Spurzem wetland.
  - Begin Phase 1 of the Watershed Restoration and Protection Project (WRAPP), including stream and lake sampling to fill data gaps, technical analyses, and establishment of public support for the WRAPP through a civic engagement process.
  - Seek grant funding to assist with the costs associated with projects identified on the Commission's CIP. Seven projects were identified for funding in 2013.
  - Support City-sponsored projects as they are identified.
  - Pursue recommendations of 2012 Feasibility Study (CIP-6) to remediate high water conditions in Lake Independence.
  - Review and consider updates to the Commission's Joint Powers Agreement and Rules as part of the third generation Plan process.
  - Continue as a member of the West Metro Water Alliance (WMWA). *During budget discussions, the Commission elected not to participate in WMWA in 2013.*
  - Continue to maintain the Commission's website to provide news to residents of the watershed.
  - Publish an Annual Activity Report summarizing the Commission's yearly activities and financial reporting.
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