



2013 Activity Report



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

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This report was prepared
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*Cover Photograph Lake Rebecca
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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 2013.

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 2013.

Meetings. The Commission meets monthly 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, wetland, legal, administrative, and auditing 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 the table below. A map of the watershed can be viewed on the Commission's website.

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. 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 on the Commission's website, <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.

Third Generation Watershed Management Plan. In 2013 the Commission contracted with Wenck Associates to develop its Third Generation Watershed Management Plan. Diane Spector serves as project manager. The planning process began with a kick-off meeting on January 17, 2013, where the Commissioners received input from review agencies and member cities and began identifying water-resource issues and goals to be addressed in the Third Generation Plan. This was followed by a gaps analysis and visioning process to further shape goals for the upcoming ten years.

In June 2013 the Commissioners began developing the framework, guiding principles, and goals for the Third Generation Monitoring Program. This program will include routine flow and water quality monitoring in the lakes and streams; volunteer monitoring; and periodic special monitoring to evaluate progress towards meeting TMDL or other goals. Each year the Commission will evaluate this proposed program and make modifications as necessary based on the most current data needs.

The Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) was convened in August 2013 to develop the Third Generation Plan Education and Public Outreach Program. The goal statement developed as a group by the CAC states: The goal of the PSC Education and Outreach program is to engage all people in the community in the protection and improvement of lakes, rivers, streams and wetlands through education, increased water awareness and community participation. Target audiences identified by CAC members included: elementary and high school students, crop growers, cattle owners, milk producers, horse owners, horse boarders, elected/appointed officials, lakeshore owners, general residents, youth groups, service organizations, church groups, local businesses, boat owners/ anglers/resource users, park users/campers, pet owners, developers, property managers, seniors, lake associations, livestock associations, co-ops, teachers, and the media. Education topics were identified for each stakeholder group and members agreed different materials would be necessary for different targets. The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) met throughout the fall of 2013 to review and revise the Commission's existing Rules and Standards for development and redevelopment projects in the watershed. Since the Second Generation Plan process ten years ago there have been significant regulatory revisions that will impact the Commission's requirements. Five of the six member cities are MS4s regulated under the State of Minnesota's General NPDES/SDS Permit, which was revised and reissued effective August 1, 2013. Development and redevelopment in those communities must enforce water quality, rate control, and volume management requirements that are more stringent than the Commission's current standards. In addition, the current lake TMDLs and upcoming lake and stream TMDLs in the WRAPS study now underway will likely require significant phosphorus load reductions.

The final stages of the planning process include development of an Implementation Plan and populating the Capital Improvement Program. These will occur in 2014. It is anticipated the Third Generation Plan will be reviewed by the member cities and reviewing agencies, approved by the Board of Water and Soil Resources, and adopted by the Commission by December 2014.

Local Water Management Plans. Upon final adoption of the Third Generation Plan the member communities will have two years to 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.

Status of 2013 Objectives. Following is a summary of the work undertaken by the Pioneer-Sarah Creek Watershed Management Commission in 2013 to meet the goals, objectives, and projected work plan outlined in its *2012 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 seven projects in 2013. A list of each project, its location, and critical areas reviewed along with a location map 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 2013. They participated in two Technical Evaluation Panels (TEPs) and one new potential WCA violation within the watershed was investigated in 2013. The Commission's goal is to assure that WCA rules are properly implemented, wetland violations are resolved and replacement plans are reviewed. The Pioneer-Sarah Creek Commission does not have a wetland banking program.*
- 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 2013. Results are included in Appendix 3.*
- Conducted volunteer lake monitoring through Metropolitan Council's Citizen Assisted Monitoring Program (CAMP). *Hafften Lake was selected for monitoring through CAMP in 2013. Monitoring results for this lake will be available in the 2013 CAMP report, available in June 2014. (Appendix 3) A history of the Commission's lake monitoring program is also included in Appendix 3.*



Rockford High School students monitoring at Site 24

- 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 south of Pagenkopf Road in Independence, was monitored in 2013 by students from Rockford High School and their teacher Jason Hester. The site contains a thick stand of cattails and water flow is slow. River Watch 2013, 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.hennepin.us/business/work-with-henn-co/environmental-education-programs>. (Appendix 4)*



Students capturing macroinvertebrates at Site 24.

- Continued development of the Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy (WRAPS), (formerly called a watershed-wide TMDL,) and implementation plan. *A contract between the Commission and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) to cover the first phase of a two phase effort to prepare the WRAPS was finalized in February 2013. Field data collection to close data gaps was conducted on nine water bodies and four stream reaches for a variety of parameters. Organization and analysis of the data was begun in preparation for meetings with stakeholders in early 2014. A Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices Survey (KAPS) of watershed residents was completed by the University of Minnesota as part of the WRAPS. The WRAPS project is supported by Three Rivers Park District and funded by the MPCA.*
- Began development of the Commission's Third Generation Watershed Management Plan. *Plan development began in January 2013 and is discussed in more detail in the previous pages.*
- Adopted a 2014 operating budget. *On June 20, 2013, the Commission adopted an operating budget of \$100,060, with assessments to the member cities totaling \$101,000. (Appendix 6)*



Aquatic vegetation clean out of Lake Independence Outlet Channel, December 2013. Project undertaken with cooperative funding from the cities of Medina and Independence, Three Rivers Park District, and the Pioneer-Sarah Creek Watershed Management Commission.

Photo courtesy of Hakanson-Anderson Associates.

- Continued to review and evaluate the Pioneer Creek Channel/Lake Independence Outlet Channel feasibility study prepared by Hakanson-Anderson. *The feasibility study provided two options to remove obstructions in the outlet channel. One option involved dredging the channel and removing the material, the second option included excavating only the vegetation and bog material and side-casting it in place. The Commission agreed to fund ten percent of the costs of vegetation/bog removal for the area between Independence and Pagenkopf Roads. A DNR permit was received to side-cast the vegetation and bog materials in place. The channel was cleared of materials to three feet below the water surface. The project was completed by year-end. The DNR permit also requires the weir to be rebuilt. Additional investigational work on the condition of the existing weir and the extent of restoration work necessary to complete the DNR permit requirements will be made in 2014.*
- *Resigned its membership in the West Metro Water Alliance (WMWA) as a means to reduce the Commission's operating expenses.*
- *Supported an effort to fund an agriculture specialist at the County level to help build relationships and communications with the agricultural area of the watershed in order to assist in TMDL implementation.*
- *Viewed presentation by Three Rivers Park District showing ways TRPD addressed internal and external loading and the effectiveness of the alum treatments in Lake Rebecca, resulting in the lake meeting water quality standards. The in-lake alum treatment was undertaken after other areas of internal and external loading were addressed.*
- Continued to consider new nutrient management regulations as part of Phase 2 of the Lake Independence TMDL Implementation Plan. *A draft livestock ordinance was reviewed for consistency with the rules of other agencies and current state law, particularly as it would apply to pasture and feedlot regulations.*
- *Participated in the Wright Hennepin Clean Water Resource Fair. The Commission's booth served as an open house venue. Project manager Diane Spector, Wenck Associates, provided an overview of the Third Generation Watershed Management planning process.*



- Supported the Lake Sarah curlyleaf pondweed CIP project. *Partnered in a cost-share agreement with Three Rivers Park District for a whole lake herbicide treatment. The treatment was completed on May 15, 2013. A DNR Aquatic Invasive Species Control Project grant was awarded to the Lake Sarah Improvement Association to help fund this project. More information about Lake Sarah is included in Appendix 3.*

- *Cost-shared in the Sarah and Independence Lakes Subwatershed Retrofit Analysis. Both projects were funded in part with a grant from the Metropolitan Association of Conservation Districts.*
- *Supported an Eagle Scout project to install a rain garden at Independence City Hall.*
- *Passed a resolution allowing the Commission to recover costs of Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) violations from the member cities where the Commission acts as the WCA LGU.*
- *Continued to identify ways to implement nutrient reduction controls for Dance Hall Creek. Met with land owners adjacent to the creek to discuss the Lake Sarah TMDL and possible BMPs. Requested access to private properties to assess opportunities for implementation of BMPs. Took grab samples along the creek to determine total phosphorus levels. The flow analysis of the creek and other tributaries to Lake Sarah was also evaluated. The City of Greenfield sought funding for a subwatershed assessment. The Commission agreed to support this application financially.*
- *Continued to seek grant funding for implementation of nutrient reduction of the Spurzem wetland. Three Rivers Park District applied for Lessard Sams Outdoor Heritage grant funds but the project was not recommended for funding.*
- *Sought grant funding to assist with the costs associated with Commission- or City-sponsored projects. Commission continued to seek grants and other cooperative funding mechanisms in order to implement projects.*
- *Continued to maintain the Commission's website, www.pioneersarahcreek.org, to provide news to residents of the watershed.*
- *Solicited interest proposals for administrative, legal, technical and wetland consulting services. The required biennial solicitation for interest proposals for administrative, legal, technical and wetland consulting services was published in the January 22, 2013 edition of the State Register. At their February 21, 2013 meeting the Commission approved for 2013-2014 the consultants listed in Appendix 1.*
- *Published an Annual Activity Report summarizing the Commission's yearly activities and financial reporting. The 2012 report was accepted at the Commission's April 18, 2013 meeting.*

Financial Reporting. *Appendix 5* includes the Commission’s approved budget for 2013 and a report of actual revenues and expenditures for 2013. 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 2013 cost allocations to the members are shown as part of the Operating Budget.

Of the \$96,250 general operating budget approved by the Commission for 2013, revenue of \$2,000 was projected as proceeds from application fees and \$25 from interest income, resulting in assessments to members totaling \$94,225. In addition revenue of \$77,926 was projected from grants and cooperative programs. Member assessments totaling \$14,000 and \$7,500 were designated for CIPs and the Third Generation Plan, respectively.

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 2013 Audit, prepared by Johnson & Company, Ltd., Certified Public Accountants, (*Appendix 5*) are as follows:

General engineering	18,303
General administration	45,828
Education	3,636
Programs	3,120
Projects	<u>117,429</u>
Total	\$188,336

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.

2014 Work Plan. The Commission has identified the following activities in 2014:

- 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.
- Partner with Three Rivers Park District (TRPD) to conduct monitoring of Lake Independence, Lake Sarah, and both basins of Whaletail Lake and conduct discharge monitoring at three stream reaches - Sarah Creek at County Road 92 and Pioneer Creek at Pagenkopf and at County Road 90.
- Participate in Metropolitan Council’s Citizen Assisted Monitoring Program (CAMP) with one lake.
- Promote river stewardship through the River Watch program. Encourage participation by local school students and their teachers. Two sites in the Pioneer-Sarah Creek Watershed will be monitored in 2014.
- Complete development of the Commission’s Third Generation Watershed Management Plan. The final stages of the planning process include development of an Implementation Plan and populating the Capital Improvement Program. It is anticipated the Third Generation Plan will be reviewed by the member cities and reviewing agencies, approved by the Board of Water and Soil Resources, and adopted by the Commission by December 2014.

- Continue Phase I of the WRAPS. Anticipated project activities in 2014 consist of meetings with stakeholders including a meeting with technical stakeholders from the various cities and road authorities, and refining the civic engagement strategy for the project. Collection of additional field information to support internal load estimates for impaired lakes will be completed and organization and analysis of technical data to support modeling activities will be undertaken. Phase I will conclude in June 2015. Phase II will continue through December 2016.
 - Complete the Pioneer Creek Channel/Lake Independence Outlet Channel project. A DNR permit was issued to allow the clearing of materials from the outlet channel, which occurred in 2013. The permit also requires the weir to be rebuilt. Additional investigation work on the condition of the existing weir and the extent of restoration work necessary to complete the DNR permit requirements will occur in 2014.
 - Adopt a 2015 operating budget.
 - Consider participating in collaborative education efforts such as the West Metro Water Alliance (WMWA).
 - Complete the Dance Hall Creek subwatershed assessment and identify BMPs for implementation.
 - Work in partnership with Hennepin County's agriculture specialist to help build relationships with the agricultural community in the watershed in order to encourage TMDL implementation.
 - The Lake Sarah Improvement Association (LSIA) will complete a second whole-lake curlyleaf pondweed treatment in 2014.
 - Continue to identify ways to implement nutrient reduction controls for Dance Hall Creek.
 - Continue to identify TMDL implementation projects. Seek grant funding to assist with the costs associated with those projects.
 - Seek grant funding to assist with the costs associated with projects identified on the Commission's CIP.
 - Continue to support City-sponsored projects as they are identified.
 - Review and consider updates to the Commission's Joint Powers Agreement and Rules as part of the Third Generation Plan process. Consider adoption of personnel policies as recommended by BWSR.
 - 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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APPENDICES