

**Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization
Technical Commission (TEC) Minutes
February 12, 2025
Vadnais Heights City Hall, Council Chambers
800 County Road E East, Vadnais Heights, MN 55127**

Commission Members Present:

Nick Ousky	Vadnais Heights (VH)
Gloria Tessier	Gem Lake (GL)
Jami Philip	White Bear Township (WBT)
Susan Miller	North Oaks (NO)
Terry Huntrods	City of White Bear Lake (WBL)

Absent: Tom Hoffman, City of Lino Lakes (LL)

Others in attendance: Phil Belfiori, Brian Corcoran, Dawn Tanner, Lauren Sampedro, Angela Hugunin (VLAWMO staff); Jeremy Erickson, SPRWS; Ed Shapland, WAV.

I. Call to Order

Chair Ousky called the meeting to order at 8:15 am.

II. Approval of Agenda

It was moved by Commissioner Tessier and seconded by Commissioner Miller to approve the February 12, 2025 TEC agenda. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

III. Approval of Minutes (January 8, 2025)

It was moved by Commissioner Huntrods and seconded by Commissioner Tessier to approve the January 8, 2025 meeting minutes as presented. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

IV. Administration & Operations

A. February Financial Report and Consider Authorization for Payment

Administrator Belfiori summarized the February financial statement as included in the meeting materials. He highlighted income from VLAWMO's partnership with NOHOA. He also noted payments for Watershed Partners membership, payment to NOHOA for the Wilkinson Deep-Water Wetland restoration, payment to the City of Vadnais Heights for Elmwood Park Raingarden and East Vadnais Lake resiliency work, and Landscape Level 2 reimbursements. Staff recommended approval of the February financial report for payment.

It was moved by Commissioner Huntrods and seconded by Commissioner Miller to approve the February financial report and authorize for payment. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

B. February TEC Report to the Board

Administrator Belfiori presented the February TEC Report to the Board. He highlighted the East Vadnais Lake Resiliency Study's follow up work and the continued seeking of grant funds for the Polar Lakes Park Reuse Project. Administrator Belfiori noted updates on the Tamarack Lake alum treatment project, carp management, and the annual report. He highlighted continued work to prepare the Watershed Management Plan with the TEC+ and member communities, as well as meetings at the staff level to go more into depth on Plan content. Staff recommended approval of the TEC Report to the Board for February.

It was moved by Commissioner Tessier and seconded by Commissioner Huntrods and Commissioner Miller to approve the February TEC Report to the Board. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

V. Programs

A. SHG 2025-01 Raeth Pollinator Garden

Sampedro provided an overview of the proposed project location, explaining that it is in a VLAWMO priority zone for volume reduction and in the Lambert Creek subwatershed. Sampedro shared visuals of the proposed project area in the homeowner's yard and explained that the landowner has already begun preparing removal of the lawn. Sampedro highlighted a number of unique outreach opportunities for this project site and noted that the applicant's neighbors have already been curious about this project. Staff recommended approval of this grant application.

Commissioner Miller asked if the applicant had been successful with initial efforts to smother the turfgrass, which Sampedro affirmed. Commissioner Miller shared that it is nice to see such a comprehensive project plan.

It was moved by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Tessier to approve SHG 2025-01 in the amount of \$1,250. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

B. SHG 2025-02 Addis & Zink Native Plant Restoration

Sampedro shared a grant application for a proposed native plant restoration project in North Oaks. Sampedro described the potential of this project for outreach opportunities given the site's proximity to a walking path, also noting that these landowners have already expressed interest in eventually becoming a tour stop on future neighborhood grant recipient tours. Sampedro gave background on the current nature of the site, noting the project's goal to restore the area's native plant community. Sampedro shared species highlights for the proposed plan. Staff recommended approval of this application.

Commissioner Miller asked if the requested funding would go primarily to seed. Sampedro confirmed and noted that funding will also cover some trees and shrubs.

It was moved by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Huntrods to approve SHG 2025-02 in the amount of \$1,000. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

C. Update on FY '24-25 BWSR WBIF Grant Program Process

Sampedro shared an update on BWSR's Watershed-Based Implementation Funding Program for water quality-based projects. An initial convene meeting was held, where partners agreed VLAWMO would serve as the grantee and provide the 10% match. Partners also agreed the funding should go to supporting additional Landscape Level 2 grant program projects.

VI. Projects

A. Sports Center Bioswale Partnership Project

Sampedro shared that VLAWMO has partnered with the City of White Bear Lake and Ramsey County Soil and Water Conservation Division on this project, which aims to reduce the amount and speed of stormwater flowing into Birch Lake. Filtration was deemed the most effective way to combat this issue. 100% construction plans have been received from SRF Consulting Group, and the Technical Commission can expect a grant application relating to the project this spring/summer.

B. Update on BWSR Accelerated Implementation Grant Application with City of Vadnais Heights

Sampedro gave an update on this new BWSR grant opportunity. VLAWMO partnered with the City of Vadnais Heights to submit a proposal exploring the possibility of a Green Streets project for Greenhaven Drive. Sampedro shared that a "Green Street" reduces stormwater runoff by incorporating various BMPs and reduced roadway widths. The City was awarded \$250,000 to explore a Green Streets approach for Greenhaven Drive. Commissioners can expect more project updates over time.

Commissioner Miller expressed excitement for the project, noting curiosity about whether permeable pavement will be built into the roadway.. Chair Ousky noted that Greenhaven is one of the City's widest streets, so there is exploring to be done there.

C. Update on WMP and Next TEC+ Meeting

Tanner gave an update on the development of the 2027-2036 Watershed Management Plan and requested a recommendation to bring revised sections 1 and 2 to the Board of Directors. Development is ongoing for sections 3 and 4. Tanner noted the proposed TEC+ meeting timing of April 9, 2025.

It was moved by Commissioner Huntrods and seconded by Commissioner Miller to recommend presenting sections 1 and 2 of the draft WMP to the Board at the meeting on February 26, 2025.

D. Update on Partnership with NOHOA for Deep Lake Shoreline Restoration

Tanner explained that work is ongoing for the Deep Lake shoreline restoration, which is now entering its third year of partnership. Tanner noted that NOHOA and NOC are moving

forward with their work, advancing the project toward complete restoration this year. Yellow iris removal efforts are complementary to this work.

Commissioner Miller noted that this restoration work has been transformative for the area.

E. Tamarack Alum Amendment

Tanner shared the amendment, noting the negotiations and approvals it has gone through so far. Tanner explained that phase two of this project will begin after iceout, noting the prepared amendment to bring to the next BOD meeting. Staff requested a recommendation to the Board.

It was moved by Commissioner Philip and seconded by Commissioner Tessier and Commissioner Miller to recommend to the Board the authorization and signing of the Tamarack Lake contract amendment at its regular meeting in February.

F. SEH Memo on Potential Wilkinson Meander Project and Feasibility in Partnership with RCSWCD

Tanner gave an update on project origins, noting that the SEH memo was also shared with Ramsey County. Staff requested a recommendation to the Board to accept the Wilkinson Lake Field Investigations SEH memo, as well as approval to share the memo with NOC.

It was moved by Commissioner Huntrods and seconded by Commissioner Miller to recommend to the Board the acceptance of the Wilkinson Lake Field Investigations SEH memo and to share the memo with NOC.

G. Update on Rotary Park CPL Grant Process and MOU with City of WBL

Tanner provided updates on the Rotary Park wetland restoration project, which was selected for MN DNR CPL grant funding. VLA WMO staff has partnered with the City of White Bear Lake to prepare materials and accept the grant contract. Staff anticipate bringing this to the Board in February. Staff requested a recommendation to the Board to authorize and sign the grant contract, as well as to authorize signing the MOU and returning it to the City of White Bear Lake.

It was moved by Commissioner Huntrods and seconded by Commissioner Miller to recommend to the Board the authorization and signing of the grant contract with the MN DNR/CPL program for the Rotary Nature Preserve Wetland Restoration in partnership with the City of WBL, and to authorize signing the MOU and returning the fully executed MOU to the City of WBL.

H. Carp Solutions 2024 Annual Report

Tanner gave an update on the 2024 Annual Report for Carp Solutions, noting that this report documented information that was shared with the TEC throughout the last year.

It was moved by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Philip to recommend to the Board the acceptance of the 2024 Pleasant Lake System Carp Management Report.

I. RCSWCD and Great River Greening Biochar Demonstration Event

Tanner highlighted a recent collaborative event between RCSWCD and Great River Greening. Tanner provided context on the problem of biomass, explaining the challenge of organic material left after events such as Emerald Ash Borer infested tree removal and buckthorn removal. Tanner explained that creating biochar is one possible use of material. Tanner gave an overview of the biochar demonstration event, noting that this could be of interest for VLAWMO.

VII. Commissioner Reports

None

VIII. NOHOA

None

IX. Ramsey Soil & Water Conservation Division

None

X. St. Paul Regional Water Services

None

XI. Public Comment

None

XII. Next Meetings

Board Meeting: February 26, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.; TEC: March 12, 2025 at 8:15 a.m.; TEC+: April 9, 2025 at 9:00 a.m.

XIII. Adjourn

It was moved by Commissioner Tessier and seconded by Commissioner Miller to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 am. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.