

**Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization  
Technical Commission (TEC) Minutes  
April 9, 2025  
Vadnais Heights City Hall, Council Chambers  
800 County Road E East, Vadnais Heights, MN 55127**

**Commission Members Present:**

Gloria Tessier	Gem Lake (GL)
Susan Miller	North Oaks (NO)
Tom Hoffman	City of Lino Lakes (LL)
Jami Philip	White Bear Township (WBT)
Terry Huntrods	City of White Bear Lake (WBL)

**Absent:** Nick Ousky, Vadnais Heights (VH)

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

**I. Call to Order**

Vice Chair Tessier called the meeting to order at 8:17 am.

**II. Approval of Agenda**

It was moved by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Philip to approve the April 9, 2025 TEC agenda as revised. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

**III. Approval of Minutes (February 12, 2025)**

It was moved by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Philip to approve the March 12, 2025 meeting minutes as presented. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

**IV. Administration & Operations**

**A. April Financial Report and Consider Authorization for Payment**

Administrator Belfiori summarized the April financial statement as included in the meeting materials. He highlighted that half of the BWSR Watershed-based Implementation Funding grant was received and is noted under income. He explained the most significant expenses of the month were regarding Watershed Management Planning (WMP) work, the Tamarak alum project, and Carp Solutions' work at Pleasant Lake.

Staff recommended approval of the April financial report for payment.

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

B. April TEC Report to the Board

Administrator Belfiori presented the April TEC Report to the Board. He highlighted the Polar Lakes Park reuse project and the associated LCCMR application for the project. He noted staff are continuing to look for grant opportunities if the LCCMR grant is unsuccessful. He stated the 2024 audit report and draft 2026 preliminary draft budget will be brought forward at the April 23<sup>rd</sup> Board meeting, and said several grant program projects are occurring that will be discussed more today.

Staff recommended approval of the TEC Report to the Board for April.

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

## **V. Programs**

A. Consider Recommendation on Draft 2024 Annual Report/Monitoring Report and Summary

Corcoran presented the draft 2024 Monitoring Report. He noted key components of the monitoring report and program highlights from 2024, including an overview of VLAWMO's monitoring sites, season timeline, and pollutant indicators. He discussed that staff complete special projects that involve testing for additional pollutant indicators, such as the Wilkinson deepwater wetland project and Oak Knoll spent lime project. This extra data is used for grant reporting.

Corcoran explained precipitation levels can affect nutrient loading of waterbodies. He highlighted that East Goose Lake had an increase in total phosphorus loads likely due to high amounts of runoff from significant precipitation events. He shared that overall the total phosphorus trends from 2019-2024 have stayed pretty consistent.

Corcoran highlighted creek monitoring of Lambert Creek and noted that the creek flowed during the whole monitoring season last year due to receiving three inches of above average rainfall.

Commissioner Miller asked why Black Lake doesn't have a trophic state index value for 2024. Corcoran responded that Black Lake wasn't sampled last year because we have 12 years of data on its quality and it continues to be the best quality lake in the watershed.

Huginin presented the draft documents of the 2024 Monitoring Report Summary, Annual Report, and Annual Report Summary. She explained the Monitoring Summary is a way to

provide the water quality data in a digestible format for the public. She said the Annual Report Summary is a way to share what VLAWMO does in a more tangible way for the public. She provided an overview of six projects highlighted on the Annual Report Summary including the Wilkinson deepwater wetland, Watershed Management Plan community outreach, the White Bear Lake street rehabilitation project, the Elmwood Park curb cut raingarden, Deep Lake shoreline restoration project, and groundwater conservation partnerships.

Huginin discussed the content contained in the draft Annual Report, including year-end information on the education and outreach program, grant programs, and the water quality monitoring program. It also included partnership project highlights, a 2024 workplan with the outcomes achieved in 2024, a 2025 workplan with new goals, and financial information. She noted that some of the content is required information for BWSR, but is also a great chance for staff to reflect on what worked well last year.

Staff requested TEC approval of a recommendation to the Board for approval of the 2024 Monitoring Report, Monitoring Report Summary, Annual Report, and Annual Report Summary with non-material changes.

Commissioner Miller stated all of the reports were really well done.

It was moved by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Philip to recommend Board approval of the 2024 Annual Report, Annual Report Summary, Water Monitoring Report, and Water Monitoring Report Summary with non-material changes Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

#### B. SHG 2025-03 Valdez & Smith Property Restoration Phase 2

Sampedro shared a Soil Health Grant application from landowners in North Oaks for a 70-square foot downspout raingarden and native plantings on the northwest side of their property, over a total area of about 3,600 square feet.

Sampedro explained that this is the second phase of a multi-phase property restoration project that began in fall 2023. She shared an overview of the location of the project, noting its proximity to Pleasant Lake, and summarized the work done as part of the first phase of their project and the proposed second phase of the project. The homeowners' project goal is eliminating all stormwater runoff from their property.

Staff recommended approval of SHG 2025-03 in the amount of \$1,000 for phase 2.

It was moved by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Philip to recommend approval of SHG 2025-03 in the amount of \$1,000 for phase 2. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

#### C. SHG 2025-04 Redding & Lynch Downspout Raingarden Phase 2

Sampedro presented a Soil Health Grant application from landowners in Vadnais Heights for a 120-square foot downspout rain garden project. This application is for the second phase of their two-year native plant project that began on their 0.28-acre property in summer 2024.

Sampedro shared an overview of the project location and its proximity to Sucker Lake. She shared photos and noted the homeowners' overall project goal of having no turfgrass in their front yard. She explained the landowners' proposed plan for the rain garden, noting some of the key plant species that will be included.

Staff recommended approval of SHG 2025-04 in the amount of \$1,250 for phase 2.

It was moved by Commissioner Huntrods and seconded by Commissioner Miller to approve SHG 2025-04 in the amount of \$1,250 for phase 2. Vote: all aye. Motion passed

#### D. SHG 2025-05 Troyer Turf Replacement

Sampedro shared a Soil Health Grant application from a landowner in Vadnais Heights for replacing 1,726 square feet of turf grass with native plantings at her 0.41 acre property.

Sampedro shared an overview of the location of the project and its proximity to a neighboring wetland. She noted the visibility of the proposed project from the street. She highlighted key native plant species proposed for various areas of the yard to replace existing turf grass.

Staff recommended approval of SHG 2025-05 in the amount of \$1,250.

Commissioner Miller noted that the costs seemed low for the proposed project and asked whether the homeowner planned to do the work by herself. Sampedro confirmed this and noted that seed mixes and landowner effort will lower prices.

It was moved by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Huntrods to approve SHG 2025-05 in the amount of \$1,250. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

## VI. Projects

#### A. JPA Update as Part of WMP Process

Tanner gave an update on staff's work with legal counsel to update the Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) that forms the VLAWMO organization and establishes authorities. She stated that the JPA will be updated to reflect how VLAWMO currently functions, which will be brought to the April Board meeting and the May or June TEC meetings. She noted staff are working on the draft JPA concurrently with the WMP update. The JPA draft is planned to be included in the WMP 60-day review materials.

B. 319 Update: Remaining Scope for Round 1 and Workplan Preparation for Round 2 Projects

Tanner shared that VLAWMO staff and project partners have been working closely with the MPCA to finalize the Wilkinson deep-water wetland project by August 31, 2025 through the small priority watershed grant. She noted there is about \$75,000 remaining, and the funding needs to be spent by the end of August 2025. Partners are working closely with HEI and MPCA to determine remaining activities, obtain and select a quote (if deemed appropriate), and complete remaining activities at the site.

Staff and partners met with HEI in the field last week to consider remaining potential activities, which may be addressing bank erosion from a misaligned culvert at the north end of the Wilkinson deepwater wetland project. She noted Houston Engineering is currently is developing a cost estimate to repair the erosion and are hoping to go out for quotes soon.

Tanner highlighted that development of the 319 work plan for round 2 is also underway. She stated there is some uncertainty about the funding, and the MPCA staff are assisting to the best of their ability. The current plan is to submit a workplan to the MPCA, which is due by May 1, assuming funding will still go forward as planned. Tanner said another update will be provided to the TEC at the May meeting.

C. Rotary Nature Preserve Restoration Update

Tanner gave an update on staff's work with legal counsel and the City of White Bear Lake for the Rotary Nature Preserve Restoration project. Since the last TEC meeting, the project has gone out for quotes, and two were received; one from Minnesota Native Landscapes and one from Natural Shore Technologies (NST). Staff are recommending accepting the quote from NST, as they have completed other restoration projects areas with the City and have prior experience with managing Rotary Park.

Staff, with support from the City of WBL, requested that the TEC approve a recommendation to the VLAWMO Board of Directors accepting the quote received from NST and authorizing VLAWMO staff to work with legal counsel to prepare a contract with NST to complete the restoration elements as identified in their scope and the attachment documentation.

Commissioner Miller asked if the City of White Bear Lake prefers the NST quote. Tanner confirmed and said the TEC packet includes a letter of support from the City for accepting the quote.

It was moved by Commissioner Huntrods and seconded by Commissioners Philip and Miller to approve a recommendation to the VLAWMO Board of Directors accepting the quote received from NST and authorizing VLAWMO staff to work with legal counsel to

prepare a contract with NST to complete the restoration elements as identified in their scope and the attachment documentation. Vote: all aye. Motion passed

**D. Spring Project Update: Tamarack Alum, Common Carp Removal, and Birch AIS**

Tanner provided an update that the Tamarack Lake alum project phase 2 alum is currently underway as of this week. She said it is anticipated that the alum will be applied for the rest of the week. Barr Engineering is tracking the pH levels to ensure the project doesn't exceed the State standards.

Tanner stated that carp removal preparation is also underway. The carp barrier was completed and is fully operational at Chickadee lane. She said beavers left behind some debris at the permanent barrier at Wilkinson, and Carp Solutions is working to ensure it doesn't block the other temporary barrier between Deep/Wilkinson Lakes. She noted a trap netting effort will be occurring at the Pleasant Lake culvert location to hopefully capture fish attempting to enter the culvert/pond to spawn. This is a location that VLAWMO has been watching for the past couple of years, and residents in the area also alert VLAWMO staff when carp aggregate there. Tanner said the carp removal project may transition to maintenance next year, depending on biomass levels that will be checked after spring removals are completed.

Tanner also provided an update that the Birch Lake pre-survey for Curly-leaf pondweed was scheduled for last week, but has been delayed due to weather conditions. She said it will be attempted with Ramsey County SWCD this Friday the 11<sup>th</sup>. (Update note since the TEC meeting: the survey has been rescheduled anticipated for April 16.)

**VII. Commissioner Reports**

**VIII. NOHOA**

None

**IX. Ramsey Soil & Water Conservation Division**

None

**X. St. Paul Regional Water Services**

None

## **XI. Public Comment**

None

## **XII. Next Meetings**

TEC+: April 9, 2025 at 9:00 a.m.; Board Meeting: April 23, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.; TEC: May 14, 2025 at 8:15 a.m.

## **XIII. Adjourn**

It was moved by Commissioner Hoffman and seconded by Commissioner Miller to adjourn the meeting at 9:01 am. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

## **XIV. TEC+ Watershed Plan review meeting – 9:00 a.m.**

Vadnais Heights City Hall, Council Chambers, 800 County Road E East, Vadnais Heights MN 55127