



LOWER MINNESOTA RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT

Executive Summary for Action

Lower Minnesota River Watershed District Board of Managers Meeting

Wednesday, July 21, 2021

Agenda Item

Item 6. G. Education & Outreach

Prepared By

Linda Loomis, Administrator

Summary

i. Tour of LMRWD projects

At the meeting on June 16, 2021, the Board authorized staff to investigate a fall 2021 tour of the watershed for the Board of Managers, the members of the Citizen Advisory Committee, and staff. Below is a high-level logistics of the tour for consideration:

Date: Sometime between September 7 and September 10. A backup rain date for this tour can be chosen for as late as September 24.

Time: 4:00 p.m.–8:00 p.m. This time is flexible if the Board chooses. This time should to avoid potential rush-hour traffic and still provide enough daylight to view projects.

Route: The tour will most likely depart from the Carver County Government Center in Chaska. Recommended tour sites include the East Chaska Creek stabilization project, the Shakopee 101 Ravine project, the cost-share site in Savage, Boiling Springs, and the dredge site. A map with tour sites will be created for participants.

Transportation: Rented coach bus.

Food and beverages: Boxed meals will be provided along with a variety of beverages.

The District has \$7,500 in the 2021 Budget for a River Tour. This event would be charged to that line of the Budget. Costs for the tour should come in well below this amount. The Board should set a date and offer direction to staff regarding the recommendations

Attachments

No attachments

Recommended Action

The Board should set a date (and decide if they would like to set up a rain date) and provide direction as to staff recommendations

ii. LMRWD River and Creek Crossing Signage Update

One of the tasks of the Education and Outreach work plan was to develop a plan for signage. An update of staff activities regarding a signage plan is attached.

Attachments

LMRWD River and Creek Crossing Signage Update dated July 14, 2021

Recommended Action

Provide direction to staff

iii. Schools Partnership Update

Staff has been investigating opportunities to work with local schools. An update of staff activities is attached.

Attachments

School Partnership Update dated July 14, 2021

Recommended Action

No action recommended - for information only

iv. City Partnership Update

LMRWD staff has been investigating opportunities to collaborate with cities and bring awareness of the LMRWD to residents. The LMRWD occasionally receives invitations to table at events. Tabling was discussed with the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) and the July CAC meeting and they will assist staff develop information to hand out at tabling events.

An update of staff activities is attached.

Attachments

City Partnership Update dated July 13, 2021

Recommended Action

Motion to authorize LMRWD participation in events identified and develop handouts for distribution.

Technical Memorandum

To: Linda Loomis, District Administrator
Lower Minnesota River Watershed District

From: Jen Dullum, Education and Outreach Coordinator
Della Schall Young, PMP, CPESC

Date: July 14, 2021

Re: LMRWD River and Creek Crossing Signage Update

The approved Lower Minnesota River Watershed District (LMRWD or District) 2020–2022 Public Education and Outreach Plan includes a review of potential signage locations at river and creek crossings and high-value resource areas. The following is an update since the April 21 board of managers meeting.

I. Crossing Signs

As presented at the April 21 board meeting, Young Environmental first explored crossing signs in both directions on roads traversing the Minnesota River. Additional crossing signs on major interstate corridors and other transportation systems (e.g., Interstate 35W, Trunk Highway [TH] 77, TH494, TH62, TH101, and TH169) along the Minnesota River under Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT) jurisdiction are unviable and should be rendered complete because of complex intersection geometry; lack of available room for post-mounted signs; and the cost, structural design, and maintenance issues associated with attaching signs to bridges.

Next, Young Environmental investigated minor trunk highway and county roads under MNDOT jurisdiction. MNDOT is in the process of designing a sign renewal project and will consider adding signs to the locations noted below. Young Environmental will continue to coordinate with MNDOT as it moves through its project.

- Minnesota River at TH41 in Chaska, MN
- Eagle Creek at TH13 in Savage, MN
- Credit River at TH13 in Savage, MN

Finally, Young Environmental reviewed crossings under local jurisdiction. Table 1 below presents our findings. Table 1 lists waterbodies and the roads that cross them where a

potential crossing sign could be placed. The city and county of the crossing location are also listed. The findings column presents Young Environmental’s opinion on the feasibility of a creek crossing sign at the identified location. As noted below, creek crossing signs are prohibited on county highway rights-of-way in Carver County.

Table 1: Potential LMRWD Crossing Sign Locations

Waterbody	Road Crossing	City	County	Findings
Carver Creek	No road crossing within District	Carver	Carver	No road crossing and not allowed per Carver County
Assumption Creek (trout stream)	County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 61/Flying Cloud Drive	Chanhassen	Carver	Not allowed per Carver County
Bluff Creek	Flying Cloud and 101	Chanhassen	Carver	Not allowed per Carver County
East Chaska Creek	CSAH 61	Chaska	Carver	Not allowed per Carver County
Chaska Creek	CSAH 61	Chaska	Carver	Not allowed per Carver County
Kennaley’s Creek (trout stream)	No road crossing within District	Eagan	Dakota	No road crossing
Black Dog Creek (trout stream)	Nicols Road	Eagan	Dakota	Dead-end road— location not visible
Nine Mile Creek	No road crossing within District	Bloomington	Hennepin	No road crossing
Riley Creek	No road crossing within District	Eden Prairie	Hennepin	No road crossing
Purgatory Creek	Riverview Road	Eden Prairie	Hennepin	Road is on boundary with Riley Purgatory Bluff Creek Watershed District; determining jurisdiction is difficult
Staff will check on this - information is not correct as CSAH 61/Flying Cloud Drive crosses Riley Creek				

Based on the above information, Young Environmental believes river and creek crossings at the listed sites are unfeasible because (a) signage is not allowed, (b) there is no road crossing, and (c) there is a case where jurisdictional boundary is subjective.

II. Interpretive Signs

Young Environmental investigated several locations for interpretive signage that convey the overview of a District-sponsored project and/or educational information about the local habitat or ecosystem. Below are our findings.

- Regarding the recently completed East Chaska Creek Stabilization Project at Crosstown Boulevard across from Lions Park, the City of Chaska must provide approval but is willing to look into the location and work with the District.
- Seminary Fen already has an up-to-date sign and has been eliminated from consideration.
- Eagle Creek and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MNDNR) Aquatic Management Area have several potential locations on City of Savage and MNDNR property. Both the City of Savage and the MNDNR are willing to review any proposal the District submits.
- Finding a publicly accessible and owned parcel for interpretive signage at the dredge site near river mile post 14 has been difficult. Young Environmental will continue to evaluate this site.

Recommendation

Staff recommends moving forward with interpretive signs at East Chaska Creek and Eagle Creek. This will include taking the following actions:

- Working with local entities on processes for interpretive sign location approval
- Soliciting design and fabrication firms for quotes for interpretive signs
- Drafting a contract with a design and fabrication firm
- Bringing a contract to the board for review and approval consideration
- Proceeding with design and fabrication if the board approves
- Working with local partners on installation if the board approves



Technical Memorandum

To: Linda Loomis, District Administrator
Lower Minnesota River Watershed District

From: Jen Dullum, Education and Outreach Coordinator
Della Schall Young, PMP, CPESC

Date: July 14, 2021

Re: LMRWD Education and Outreach—Schools Partnership Update

As presented in the approved Lower Minnesota River Watershed District (District) education and outreach plan, Young Environmental Consulting Group (Young Environmental) continues to move forward investigating collaborative District education and outreach programming opportunities. The following is an update of what Young Environmental has accomplished and the next steps.

- Young Environmental identified all public and private K–12 schools, after-school programming, and school-sponsored clubs that could benefit from District watershed education and outreach resources.
- Young Environmental contacted four schools within the District to determine partnership opportunities. Those schools were Oak Grove Middle School in Bloomington, Thomas Jefferson High School in Bloomington, Burnsville High School in Burnsville, and Sweeney Elementary School in Shakopee. These schools were chosen because of their proximity to the Minnesota River. Young Environmental chose primary, middle, and secondary schools to contact.
- Young Environmental met with the four science teachers from Burnsville High School who responded to their contact. Staff met with these teachers in May 2021 to discuss the needs and wants for their classrooms and students. Teachers hope that any partnership/programming will bring local, hands-on, long-term learning to their students.
- Young Environmental began an investigation into programming that would fit the needs of Burnsville High School while also aligning with the District watershed management plan.

- Young Environmental contacted Friends of the Minnesota Valley, Three Rivers Park District, Great River Greening, Wilderness Inquiry, Dakota County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), and the City of Burnsville for potential programming partnership. The City of Burnsville is working with School District 191 (Burnsville) and the Dakota County SWCD on potential programming and curriculum. The District will continue to monitor this potential partnership opportunity.

With the momentum Young Environmental has established with Burnsville High School, we anticipate proposing the below plan before August 2021. Young Environmental suggests, for the 9th-grade earth science classrooms, a primer into water resources through Wilderness Inquiry. Wilderness Inquiry will provide an all-day water resources activities day with Voyager Canoeing for between \$2,550 and \$3,600, depending on the number of students. This outdoor activity will be preparation for hands-on citizen science in 10th-grade life science, when it is proposed that students participate in River Watch through the Friends of Minnesota River Valley. The District currently supports the River Watch program. Young Environmental is investigating additional funding that may be required to support a third high school team in the District through River Watch.

In addition to classroom learning, Young Environmental is suggesting that the Burnsville High School Environmental Club participate in hands-on environmental activities. These activities could be provided through Great River Greening and may include water chemistry testing; geocaching; plant scavenger hunt; and/or hands-on restoration or, through Three Rivers Park District and their Adopt-A-Woodlot, invasive species removal and prairie seed collection programming. There is no cost associated with programming through Three Rivers Park District. Young Environmental is still waiting on cost information from Great River Greening.

Young Environmental will continue to work toward sustainable programming that will advance the District toward meeting engagement goals. The goal will be to ensure programming will align with watershed management plan Policy 9.1 and Strategy 9.1.2, which suggest developing an education outreach program to familiarize the public with District activities.

Technical Memorandum

To: Linda Loomis, District Administrator
Lower Minnesota River Watershed District

From: Jen Dullum, Education and Outreach Coordinator
Della Schall Young, PMP, CPESC

Date: July 13, 2021

Re: LMRWD Education and Outreach—City Partnership Update

As presented in the approved Lower Minnesota River Watershed District (District) education and outreach plan, Young Environmental Consulting Group (Young Environmental) continues to investigate opportunities for collaborative District education and outreach programming opportunities. In the following, we summarize what has been accomplished and recommend future action.

Young Environmental contacted several District cities and partners regarding in-person, public outreach events (e.g., Earth Day and fall cleanup programs). Those contacted include the cities of Bloomington, Burnsville, Chaska, Eden Prairie, Savage, and Shakopee as well as the Carver County Water Management Organization. The following are public events in which the District could participate:

- Carver County: Carver County Fair, Summer 2021
- Dakota County: Dakota County Fair, Summer 2021
- Bloomington: Old Cedar Bridge Celebration, Fall 2021
- Chaska: Native Plant Workshop (Carver Soil and Water Conservation District), Fall 2021
- Burnsville: Native Plant Market, Spring 2022
- Eden Prairie: Arbor Day, Spring 2022
- Eden Prairie: Chamber of Commerce Spring Expo, Spring 2022
- Shakopee: Tree Sale, Spring 2022
- Carver: Public Works Open House, to be determined

With the support of the citizen advisory commission, we recommend that the Board of Managers authorize District participation in these events and the development of handouts for distribution.

The goal of any outreach will align with Policy 9.1 and Strategy 9.1.2 of the watershed management plan. These provisions suggest developing an education outreach program to familiarize the public with District activities.