

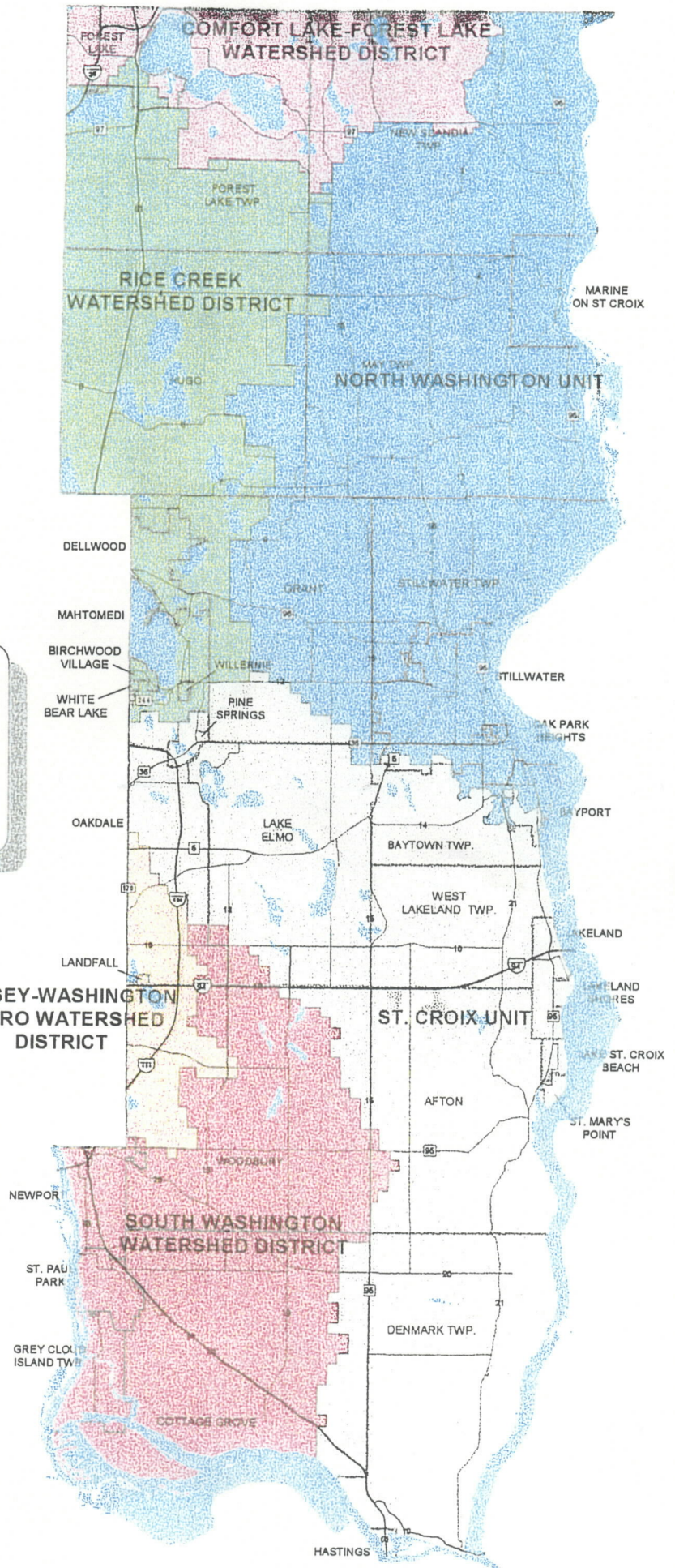
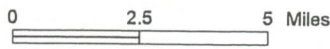
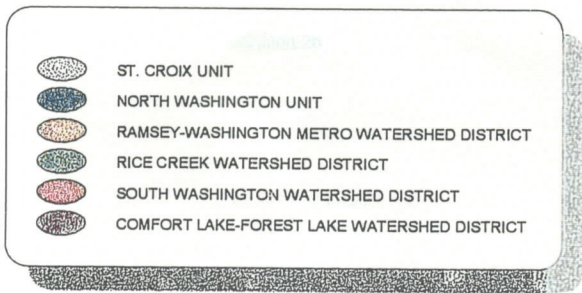
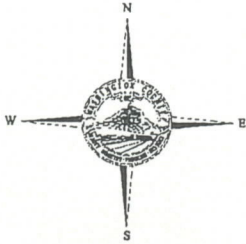
# **Appendix A. Washington County Water Governance Study**

WASHINGTON COUNTY  
WATER GOVERNANCE STUDY  
REVISED IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

ADOPTED BY  
THE WASHINGTON COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
APRIL 16, 2002

# Washington County Water Units

## Proposed Governance Structure



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The water unit data depicted on this graphic was provided by Bonestroo, Rosene, Anderlik & Associates.

## **WASHINGTON COUNTY WATER GOVERNANCE STUDY REVISED IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

On January 15, 2002, the Washington County Board of Commissioners met with representatives of watershed districts and joint powers water management organizations to reevaluate the consolidation plans and the implementation strategy recommended in the 1999 Water Governance Study. All organizations except the Comfort Lake Forest Lake and Ramsey/Washington Metro watershed districts were present.

The original implementation strategy had Washington County taking an active role in consolidating the water management organizations from eleven to six. The County filed three petitions with the Board of Water and Soil Resources to enlarge the respective watershed districts to incorporate all the areas governed by joint powers water management organizations. One of the joint powers management organizations filed a legal challenge of the BWSR's favorable ruling on the petitions. On September 11, 2001, the Minnesota Court of Appeals overturned BWSR's ruling and ruled that a watershed district could not be enlarged to include territory governed by a joint powers water management organization.

The County Board held this workshop to discuss how to move forward in light of the Court of Appeals ruling. Participants at the workshop made the following points when asked about their organization's current position regarding the consolidation plans:

- Most organizations like how water management is currently organized; they like local control.
- Several community representatives expressed concern about the large budgets of watershed districts.
- All organizations expressed concern that the current five-member boards of managers are inadequate to represent the larger districts.
- Many organizations expressed concern over how watershed districts would finance major projects.
- Carnelian Marine Watershed District is willing to consolidate with the Marine Water Management Organization but not with the Brown's Creek Watershed District.
- New Scandia Township has passed a resolution to not participate in the Marine Water Management Organization.
- Stillwater Township is rethinking its position. It favors the water management organization with its small budget over the watershed district with its large tax levy.

As a result of the workshop, the County Board reiterated its support of the goals of the Water Governance Study and adopted this revised implementation plan. The Plan lays out the expectations for the water management organizations for actively managing the water resources of the County. It focused more on results than structure.

## GOALS OF WATER GOVERNANCE STUDY

1. To create a water management structure that will provide long-term protection for surface and ground water resources.
2. To create local water management units with the fiscal capacity and authority to govern efficiently and effectively.
3. To identify financing mechanisms that are fair and adequate to meet the needs of the county.
4. To coordinate surface water, ground water, land-use and natural resources management to provide for a more comprehensive approach to resource management.
5. To adopt a proactive rather than a reactive approach to countywide water governance.
6. To increase the accountability of the water management structure.

## PLAN OF ACTION

### **East Mississippi Water Management Organization (EMWMO)**

*Goal:* Combine the EMWMO with the South Washington Watershed District (SWWD).

The County will continue to encourage the SWWD to initiate a petition to enlarge to incorporate the area included in the EMWMO. The Administrator or County Board Chair will send a letter to the SWWD offering the County's assistance and support. The County will assist by providing tax impact information. The SWWD Administrator will meet with each local unit of government during the spring 2002 to discuss their concerns.

*Key Action.* The participating cities dissolve the EMWMO and the SWWD files an enlargement petition with the Board of Water and Soil Resources by September 1, 2002.

### **Marine on St. Croix Water Management Organization (MWMO)**

*Goal:* Combine the MWMO with the Carnelian/Marine Watershed District (CMWD) and include the orphan area north of the MWMO.

The Administrator or County Board Chair will send a letter to the MWMO and the CMWD requesting the organizations to develop a plan for the enlargement. The plan should set a target consolidation date that allows for a smooth transition and identify the steps that will be taken to complete the enlargement.

*Key Action:* The Marine Water Management Organization includes the consolidation plan in its updated management plan and structures its updated plan so that it can be incorporated into the Carnelian Marine Watershed District plan after enlargement.

**Carnelian Marine Watershed District (CMWD) and Brown’s Creek Watershed District (BCWD) Consolidation**

*Goal:* Consolidate the CMWD and the BCWD into a North Washington County watershed district.

The Administrator or County Board Chair will send a letter to the CMDW and BCWD asking them to prepare a plan to consolidate the two districts. The plan should include a target date for consolidation; the steps that will be taken to complete the consolidation; how to deal with current assets, liabilities and obligations of each organization; the process to transfer support services from the current organizations; how future projects will be financed; and recommended membership for the new Board of Managers.

*Key Action:* The County will request the Carnelian Marine and Brown’s Creek watershed districts to prepare the consolidation plan after the Carnelian Marine Watershed District enlargement has occurred.

**Middle and Lower St. Croix Water Management Organizations (MSCWMO and LSCWMO)**

*Goal:* Enlarge the Valley Branch Watershed District (VBWD) to incorporate the LSCWMO and the southern portion of the MSCWMQ and enlarge the BCWD to incorporate the northern portion of the MSCWMO.

The timing of these enlargements will be dependent upon the ability and willingness of the water management organizations to responsibly manage the water resources, both surface and ground water, and to provide satisfactory customer service. The County will use the following criteria to determine whether the water management organizations have effective water management programs.

Criteria #1: The organization has a current joint powers agreement that meets the standards established by the Board of Water and Soil Resources.

Criteria #2: The organization has a current management plan that meets the content requirements and schedule established by the Board of Water and Soil Resources.

Criteria # 3: The organization is actively implementing the water resources management plan. At a minimum:

- A. The current water issues in the area are being addressed.
- B. The organization is actively implementing programs and projects that address both water quantity and quality issues.
- C. The organization is actively implementing programs to prevent problems from occurring.

D. The organization has set performance standards for priority water bodies and has an ongoing monitoring program to assess whether the standards are being met.

Criteria #4: The organization is actively implementing the recommended actions defined for the watershed districts and water management organizations in the Washington County Ground Water Management Plan.

Criteria #5: The organization has mechanisms in place for citizens to advise the organization on planning, budgeting, and projects that may benefit the area.

Criteria #6: The organization has a clear point of contact for customers. The point of contact is able to answer questions about the organization and is able to assist local governments and citizens in resolving their concerns.

Criteria #7: The organization is using the Washington County Standardized Chart of Accounts for Water Management Organizations to track its revenues and expenditures.

Criteria #8: The organization submits, to the County, an annual report that includes a financial statement, work accomplishments, and how the organization is implementing the goals of the Water Governance Project.

*Key Action:* Annual reports are submitted to Washington County by January 31 of each year.

### **Water Management Coordinating Council**

*Goal:* Form a Water Management Coordinating Council of the chair, or designee, of each watershed district and joint powers water management organization to work together to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of water management within the County.

Membership of the Coordinating Council should also include managers of other organizations and units of government that are actively involved in water management within Washington County, such as the Washington Soil and Water Conservation District, Washington County Department of Public Health and Environment. The Coordinating Council is expected to:

1. Define and implement a strategy that will achieve the goals of the Water Governance Project.
2. Establish joint priorities, guidelines and policies for issues of common concern, including such things as shared services, shared office space, joint project funding, staff compensation, use of subwatershed taxing authority, legislative needs, etc.
3. Work closely with the Washington County Water Consortium in carrying out joint studies and research on water management issues.

4. Work with Washington County to ensure effective implementation of the Washington County Ground Water Management Plan.
5. Provide a progress report to the County Board by January 31 of each year.

Washington County will designate a staff person to the Water Management Coordinating Council to serve as the liaison with the County Board and the Administration Office.

*Key Action:* Submit a report to the County Board by January 31 of each year describing actions that the Water Management Coordinating Council has taken to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of water management within Washington County and progress that has been made to meet the goals of the Water Governance Plan.

### **Watershed District Managers**

*Goal.* Appoint watershed district managers that will actively work toward furthering the goals of the Water Governance Study and are willing to initiate consolidation if necessary.

The County Board will continue to thoroughly interview all candidates for Board positions and will strive for a balance in geography, philosophy and professional/technical knowledge among the members of each Board of Managers.

*Key Action.* During the appointment interviews, the County Board will ask each prospective candidate for Board positions what their views are on these issues.

### **County Board**

*Goal.* To regularly evaluate the implementation strategy and progress being made toward achieving the goals of the Water Governance Study.

Performance will be evaluated through the annual reports submitted by the watershed districts, joint powers water management organizations, and the Water Management Coordinating Council. The County will use the eight criteria listed above as the key evaluation criteria.

*Key Action:* Evaluate performance in March of each year.