Carver County Water Management Organization

Citizen Advisory Committee

1. **Roll call**
2. **Approval of the February 25, 2025, minutes**
3. **Approval of the March 25, 2025, agenda**
4. **Notes from the field**
   a. Permit enforcement
5. **Business items**
   a. Smartwater 2025 program
   b. Monitoring updates 2024 & 2025 plan
   c. Cost Share Background and Clemons Cost Share
6. **Information items & project updates**
7. **Next meeting**
8. **Adjournment**

March 25, 2025

Meetings held at the Carver County Government Center, EOC conference room, 600 East 4th St. Chaska, MN 55318. Virtual option with Microsoft Teams. Contact mseveland@co.carver.mn.us for details.

6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Committee Mission

Work with CCWMO staff to proactively make recommendations to the County Board on matters relating to water management including;

- **projects and project prioritization**
- **Funding and water levy**
- **Water Plan, Groundwater Plan & Solid Waste Plan**
- **Water quality and TMDL program and projects**
- **Education program and projects**
- **Feasibility studies**

MEETING OF THE
CARVER COUNTY WATER MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday February 25, 2025

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Attending virtually

Kevin Zahler	*Citizen representing Commissioner District 2*
Kayla Pascoe	*Citizen representing Carver Creek watershed*

Attending in person

Michael Wegner	*Citizen representing the Crow River watershed*
Mary Stasson	*Citizen representing East & West Chaska Creek watershed*
Jim Boettcher	*Citizen representing Commissioner District 1*
Joe Polunc	*Citizen representing Commissioner District 5*
Kellen Schmidt	*Citizen, Bevens Creek*
Megan White	*Citizen representing Commissioner District 3*
Marcus Zbinden	*SWCD Board Representative alt*

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT

Stan Wendland	*SWCD Board Representative*
Mike Lynch	*Citizen representing Commissioner District 4*

STAFF PRESENT

Paul Moline	*Carver County Planning & Water Mgmt.*
Madeline Seveland	*Carver County Planning & Water Mgmt.*
Abby Janey	*Carver County Planning & Water Mgmt.*
Tim Sundby	*Carver County Planning & Water Mgmt.*
Lea Payette	*Carver County Planning & Water Mgmt.*
Mike Wanous	*Carver County Soil & Water Conservation District*
Jacob McLain	*Carver County Environmental Services*

Meeting Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 6:03 by Chair Jim Boettcher.

1) Roll call and introductions completed.

2) Approval of the January 28, 2025, meeting minutes
   Schmidt moved to approve the January 28, 2025, meeting minutes. Polunc seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

3) Approval of February 25, 2025, agenda
   Wegner minutes moved to approve the February 25, 2025, agenda. Pascoe seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

4) Notes from the field

Moline shared that we do not have a notes from the field presentation for tonight but provided a background on the purpose of this section of the agenda.

5) Business items

- **Subsurface Sewage Treatment Systems 2025 program**

Moline shared that that Subsurface Sewage Treatment System Direct Discharge program is one of our programs that helps reduce bacteria is streams. Jacob McLain, a Senior Environmental Specialist from Carver County Environmental Services, presented the program and recommendation.

Program background

- County adopted the direct discharge incentive program in 2008 to reduce bacteria sources to Bevens Creek, Carver Creek, and the Crow River which were impaired for E. coli bacteria.
- A conventional septic system has main line from the house to a septic tank and then a drain field.
- Direct discharges occur when a septic system lacks a septic tank and treatment field and the wastewater goes directly from the house to a drain tile, surface water, etc. There is no treatment in these systems.

2024 direct discharge program summary

- 13 systems installed.
- 9 systems utilized the low interest loan program to a total amount of $178,140.
- 13 system utilized the new SSTS low-income grant with $125,528.69 distributed.
- Since 2008 we have replaced 564 systems and provided 178 loans to landowners.
- There are 10 site installations are pending because of delays with weather or busy contractor schedules. These systems must be installed by June 30, 2025.

Grant and loan program eligibility

The grant program will pay landowners a cash incentive of $2,500 per subsurface sewage treatment system. The loan program will provide loans up to $25,000.

To be eligible for the program, a property must be located in a priority sub-watershed and have no previous trigger (i.e. current enforcement or compliance inspection because of property transfer, complaint, or building permit).

Program implementation and roles

- Carver County WMO provides approximately $100,000 as a revolving fund in the WMO budget.
- The WMO advisory committee recommends the priority sub-watershed annually.

- County Board approves the program annually.
- County Env. Services implements the program.

McLain reviewed the steps staff take to identify potential systems using parcel and building permit databases.

2025 priority sub-watersheds

- The 2025 program will focus on following sub-watersheds.
    - Remainder of Crow 20.3 (estimated 7 systems)
    - East Pioneer Creek watershed (estimated 12 systems)
    - Multiple Bevens Creek sub-watersheds (estimated 9 systems)

Zahler inquired where the funds come from. Moline responded that the $2500 cash incentive grant comes from the Carver County Water Management Organization. The rest of cost of the system is paid for by the landowner. The WMO has an excess fund right now that is dedicated for this program and haven't had to contribute new funds for 3 years. There is enough money to fund the recommendation.

Polunc inquired how the contractors are selected for installation. McLain responded that the homeowner selects their own designer and installer. After an initial site meeting, the contractor submits the design to the County to be verified. Then, the homeowner can choose the installer. Polunc inquired if the designer can also be the installer. McLain responded yes; some contractors hold both licenses while others hold only one.

Wegner inquired how many direct discharge systems are likely still out there. McLain responded that there are about 14 remaining sites in Pioneer West. There are a few in previously targeted sub-watersheds that were missed due to insufficient technology. The total is likely less than 50 systems. Moline added that in the next year staff might look at targeting sub-watersheds on the eastern side of the County.

Zbinden moved to accept the recommendation for the 2025 Subsurface Sewage Treatment System Direct Discharge priority sub-watersheds. Schmidt seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

- **2025 projects and workplan highlights**

Tim Sundby introduced himself and informed the committee he is presenting on 2025 projects.

Sundby shared a map showing the 2025 project areas and reviewed each group of projects.

City of Chaska area projects

- Lyman Bridge stream naturalization.
    - Lyman Road/Co. Rd. 18 will be extended to Bavaria Road and a bridge will be placed over 82nd St. Staff received a $180,000 grant from the Board of Water & Soil Resource's

Watershed Based Implementation Funding. This project will restore a 130-foot stream section that currently is piped by daylighting the water into a newly constructed restored stream section. This project is expected to start this spring.

- Grace Chain of Lakes ravine investigations.
    - This project investigates 6 ravine complexes in Chaska, documenting stability through walking the ravine and taking photos. There is currently no information about the stability of these ravines. The County is contracting with Moore Engineering. Total costs are $8,900, where $7,500 is provided by the Board of Water & Soil Resources Watershed Based Implementation Funding, and $1,400 by the WMO. This project is almost completed, and a report is expected by May.
- Big Woods ravine project.
    - This project will hard armor a head cut and reshape the channel bottom with three grade checks to stabilize the channel and slope grading. This erosive head cut needs to be stopped or it could impact Hwy 41. Currently, staff are working with the landowner and MNDOT for access rights and the City of Chaska for a wetland permit. This project is expected to be finished fall in 2025. The total project costs is $85,000, where $76,500 is provided by the Board of Water & Soil Resources Watershed Based Implementation Funding, and $35,708.50 by the WMO. The project is expected to start fall of 2025.
- Goldfish management.
    - The County is waiting on a completed report for a 3-year goldfish removal feasibility study. This study will outline management practices for both Bigs Wood Lake and Lake Hazeltine to manage goldfish and improve water quality in the lakes. Potential projects include lake drawdowns, removal of fish, aeration, restocking of native fish. Staff will return to the committee with project recommendations when report is completed.
- Lake Jonathan ravine feasibility study.
    - This study will provide options for the County and the City of Chaska for how to deal with this ravine. Project costs are around $25,000 and will use the remaining Watershed Based Implementation Funds set aside for the Grace Chain of Lakes ravine studies. The study will be completed during this summer and fall. Once completed, staff will review options for stability and come back to the committee with a recommendation.
- Northwest Lake Grace ravine feasibility study.
    - This is a severe ravine that creates a sediment plum in Lake Grace. The City of Chaska identified this area as a high priority for stabilization. The feasibility study will identify severity of bank failures, options to stabilize the ravine, estimated pollutant load, and estimated costs. Moore Engineering is currently conducting the study. Study expected to be completed by May 2025. The study costs are $13,900, where $11,800 is provided by the Board of Water & Soil Resources Watershed Based Implementation Funding, and $2,100 by the WMO. Having a completed feasibility study will help the County to apply for state grant funds.

Dahlgren Township area projects

- Carver Creek stream restoration project.
    - The bank failed in 2021 after a series of rain events and subsurface flows and the erosion site is still active. A feasibility study was previously completed that suggested the following proposed actions: move the creek 50 feet away from the bank, rebuild a floodplain at the base of the failed bank bluff to reduce the stress of flowing water, put in drain tiles at the top to intercept subsurface flow, regrade, and put in a buffer. The total project costs is $165,000, where $148,500 is provided by the Board of Water & Soil Resources Watershed Based Implementation Funding and $16,500 by the WMO. Working towards a late 2026 construction. In 2025, the county will focus on competing final plan sets and securing all permits and access.

Zahler asked for clarification on past discussions on the farming practices contributing to the bank failure. Sundby said the primary reason for the bank failure was the subsurface flow which destabilized the banks. There is some surface flow that is eating away which will require a buffer. Zahler inquired if the landowner's farming plowing practices contributed to the failure and if they are being held accountable. Sundby responded no to both. The property was sold over the summer. He is not sure what the agreements or plans are for rental and land use.

Wanous added that in past committee meetings, we discussed whether this parcel is in compliance with the state buffer law, and it was before the washout occurred. Typical areas require a 50 buffer by waterbodies, but this area has a negative slope (slopes back from the creek) so the buffer can be smaller. Because a project is being completed, staff want to incorporate a buffer to ensure the surface water is being treated.

Stasson commented that it looks like the perfect place for willows and other stabilizing vegetation. Sundby responded that staff will be working to make sure the vegetation used will stabilize the area. The next phase is to go through an anchoring system and plant shrubs or something similar to lock that soil in.

Schmidt inquired if staff plan to monitor the area and watch for encroachment. Sundby responded yes, staff will have to work with the renter to stake the area out, put posts in to prevent encroachment.

- Maplewood Road ravine feasibility study
    - Landowner contacted Carver County Soil & Water Conservation District in late 2023 because a large ravine is threatening structures on their property, and it is eroding into Bevens Creek. A feasibility study will be completed by Midwest Wetland Improvements to recommend solutions. The total project costs are $22,100 and is funded by the CCWMO. The study will be completed by end of May 2025, after which staff will review options and come back to committee with a final project request.

City of Cologne area projects

- Benton Lake aquatic plant transplant.
    - Since 2016, Benton Lake has had little aquatic vegetation from poor water quality and large carp populations. Staff collected aquatic plants from donor lakes: Young America Lake and Meuwissen Lake. Donor lakes have no aquatic invasive species. Staff selected hardy plants that can survive in poor water quality conditions, harvested them, and transplanted them into Benton Lake. This was done summer of 2024. Staff will be monitoring these sites in 2025. Benton Lake Conservancy Group funded the materials.
- Benton Lake carp management.
    - This is an ongoing project to manage carp populations in Benton Lake. Common carp are the main contributor to internal loading of nutrients in Benton Lake. This has been a long-term effort going on since 2013. Previous projects including installing a fish barrier, removing carp, and a 3-year study looking at the effectiveness of box-netting removals. The current project is a 3-year study looking at the effectiveness of an electrical guidance system along with tracking carp migration and removal.2025 is the final year of the 3-year study. Then, staff will conduct a fish survey to quantify the remaining carp population.

Polunc inquired what is the goal for Benton Lake. Sundby said, it is to manage cap and get water quality to a clean state point where it has healthy aquatic plant and native panfish populations.

Polunc inquired if historically there was a dairy operation near the area. Sundby responded that there is a wastewater treatment facility there nearby that outlets into the Meuwissen Lake which is connected to Benton Lake. Moline responded that there might have been a creamery there.

Zahler stated he would like to know more about why complete removal of carp is not possible. Sundby responded that costs can get very high, and return is limited. Research on common carp shows there is a threshold where you can live with carp being in a lake. When carp populations exceed that threshold and dominate a lake, that is when water quality issues exist. It is possible to have management strategies that reduce the carp population so aquatic plants and panfish, which eat carp eggs, can survive.

Boettcher inquired if there is much of a game fish population is in the lake. Sundby responded there is not a ton. The Benton Lake Conservancy has been stocking, and perch and sunfish are starting to come back.

Moline added that the desire of the Benton Lake Conservancy is that the lake is fishable, and you can canoe or kayak on it. It is not likely ever going to be a swimmable lake, but the goal is to get it to a fishable lake with recreation.

Stasson inquired if aeration has been considered. Sundby responded that the County does install an aerator every winter and that the Benton Lake Conservancy will be taking that over and potentially doing it year-round as the summer months does have low dissolved oxygen. Winter aeration seems to be helping as noticed with the return of bluegills and perch.

- Eagle Lake loading feasibility study
    - Eagle Lake is a shallow lake that has high phosphorus loads with curly leaf pondweed and Eurasian watermilfoil. The internal load of that lake represents 70% of all total phosphorus loading in the lake. An external load from large wetland complex on the south is 29%. The goal of this feasibility study is to look at using aluminum sulfate (alum) to reduce phosphorus in the water column, the water quality impacts of curly leaf pondweed removal, quantify the soluble phosphorus from the wetland complex, and present various options to treat soluble phosphorus from the wetland. Stantec will complete the feasibility study. The total project costs is $52,107, where $45,000 is provided by the Board of Water & Soil Resources Watershed Based Implementation Funding and $7,107 by the WMO.

Boettcher commented that Baylor Park on the lake is very popular for families and inquired if Eagle Lake gets a lot of blue-green algae. Sundby responded that yes and the study will also try to identify the primary driver(s) of blue-green algae in the lake.

2025 active capital improvement project sites

Sundby shared a map showing the following active capital improvement project sites. These are active projects that the WMO is providing funding for.

- Watertown WWTP Filtration Basin
- Watertown SAFL Baffles – Parking Lots off Lewis Ave
- Mullen Property Bank Stabilization
- Carver Parks New Germany Turf to Native
- Carver Parks Mayer Turf to Native
- NYA SAFL Baffle – Main Street
- Waconia Downtown Reuse
- Burandt Blvd Sump Retrofits
- Industrial Blvd Wetland Protection
- Benton Creek Stabilization
- Creek Road Bank Stabilization
- Bavaria Hills Creek Erosion
- Chaska Deerwood Ravine Feasibility Study
- Seminary Fen C2 Ravine Feasibility Study

Stasson inquired if the alum treatment can be used in holding ponds because ponds are seeing blue-green algae too. Sundby responded that he has not heard much about alum treatments being used on ponds. Moline added that says unless the ponds are large alum would not work well. With lots of water passing through the pond sediments get stirred up and would resuspend the sediment and thus the phosphorus. Sundby added that the alum treatment could be buried when new sediments wash into ponds.

Polunc inquired how the Watershed Based Implementation Funding grants work. Sundby responded that the Watershed Based Implementation Funding is a statewide grant administered by BWSR. WMOs, and WDs, with a BWSR approved watershed management plan are eligible for funding. An amount is awarded by BWSR to a watershed. A group of stakeholders within the watershed called a "convene group" is established (cities, other watersheds, the SWCD, etc). The convene group collaboratively identifies projects and allocates funds. . There are other grants that are statewide and competitive.

Zahler inquired how funding is being affected at the state level and if there is a risk of loss of funding. Moline responded that he is working with Andrew Dickhart, who manages the aquatic invasive species program, on plans to address potential cuts to aquatic invasive species funding. The WMO funding is approved by the Carver County Board. Funding is cyclical and our organization is able to adapt. There are lean years and there are years when we receive lots of funding.

Zahler inquired if most of the funding for the projects comes from state and federal and for an estimated guess of percentage of projects costs that comes from government. Moline responded that all projects' costs are covered by government funds, and he estimates 80-90% of project funds come from the state and the rest is local.

Schmidt shared appreciation for all the work on projects and commented on that the Eagle Lake project is high priority for him given the high use of the Baylor Park.

Moline shared that the results of the three feasibility studies (Goldfish Management, Maplewood Road Ravie, and the Lake Jonathan Ravine) shared tonight will be brought back to the committee sometime in 2025 for future comments and recommendations.

6) Information items

Moline provided two staff updates.

- The County Board approved the Water Management Plan project list amendment last week.
- Staff receive a request from the City of Waconia city administrator and are attending a City Council workshop next month to provide education on stormwater and the role of the WMO.

Next meeting March 25, 2025.

Meeting adjourned at 7:37 p.m.

Water Management Organization Advisory Committee

March 25, 2025 Meeting

Business Item
Smartwater program
Water Management Plan Related Goal
Goal 4 Awareness & Behavior. To provide those living, working, and recreating in the CCWMO with the knowledge, skills, and motivation needed to make positive behavior changes that protect surface water and groundwater resources.

Summary:

Carver County's Smartwater program aims to provide cost savings to County residents on smart irrigation system controllers. Smart controllers link to local weather conditions and provide exactly what lawns and gardens need for water, are more efficient, and use less water than timer-based systems. Increasing efficiency of irrigation systems conserves groundwater resources and reduces the creation of stormwater runoff caused by overwatering.

Carver County has partnered with Rachio, Inc. since 2019 for this program. Staff will provide a background of the Smartwater program and the changes to the program's structure for 2025.

Discussion Points:

- Program background and new Rachio redeem program for 2025.

Recommended Committee Action:

- No formal action required. Feedback and discussion only.

Attachments:

- None

CCWMO Advisory Committee

March 25, 2025 Meeting

Business Item
2024 Monitoring results
Water Management Plan Related Goal
Surface Water Quality To preserve and improve the quality of surface water resources within the watershed. The CCWMO has the following interim goals for improving water quality and aquatic life trends over the life of this plan.

Summary:
Presentation of the 2024 stream, lake, and biomonitoring monitoring results.

The Carver County Water Management Organization implements an annual stream and lake monitoring program that includes monitoring five stream systems and 19 lakes county wide. These samples are collected to determine the overall health of Carver County stream and lake systems. Staff utilize this data to assess trends in stream and lake chemistry over historical periods, which aides in prioritizing potential projects to mitigate pollutant loading in each watershed.

Discussion Points:

- Questions about monitoring methodology, results, and trends

Recommended WMOAC Committee Action:

- No formal action required. Feedback and discussion only.

Water Management Organization Advisory Committee

March 25, 2025 Meeting

Business Item
Cost Share Background and Clemons Cost Share
Water Management Plan Related Goals
• Surface Water Quality. To preserve and improve the quality of surface water resources within the watershed. • Surface Water Quantity. To manage the volume and flow of stormwater runoff to minimize the impacts of land use change on surface water and groundwater resources within the watershed. • Awareness and Behavior. To provide those living, working, and recreating in the CCWMO with the knowledge, skills, and motivation needed to make positive behavior changes that protect surface water and groundwater resources.

Summary

Staff will present the Cost Share Program, giving a general outline of what it is and how projects are ranked. Included in the presentation is a cost share project request the committee will be taking action on.

Mr. Clemons is proposing to restore a failed stream bank along a section of Bent Creek (Waconia) with the help of the CCWMO Landowner Cost Share Program. Estimated total project cost is $9,000. He is requesting $5,000 in cost share grant funds. The contractor is not yet chosen by Mr. Clemons.

Due to the severity of the bank failure, it is anticipated that the project will be started prior to the April WMOAC meeting. Usually, staff request a plan set to be submitted with the application, however Mr. Clemons is working with three companies to find the best fit for him and this site. To ensure that the project will meet CCWMO standards, WMO staff and Soil & Water Conservation District staff will work closely with the applicant and contractor on the plan set.

Scoring of this project is a 27 and is above the minimum score of 20 to bring a project forward to the committee. Both Carver Soil & Water Conservation District staff and CCWMO staff have reviewed this project and are recommending approval.

Discussion Points

- Cost share program.
- The attached application with plan sheets.

- Total project cost and requested cost share amount.
- Scoring sheet.

Recommended WMOAC Committee Action

- Approve $5,000 for the Clemons Cost Share Project.

Carver County Water Management Organization Advisory Committee

Upcoming Meetings

Date	Meeting Type	Business Items
April 29, 2025	Regular	Monitoring 2025 plan Capital Improvement Project recommendations
May 27, 2025	Regular	
June 24, 2025	Tour	
July 29, 2025	Regular	

Upcoming Events

April 10, 2025	**Native Plants and Pocket Prairies workshop** In this workshop, learn practical ideas for how to add native plants to your yard including small pocket prairies and large native plantings. Native plants workshop website and registration
April 12, 2025	**Fix it Clinic** Free event connects attendees with volunteers who can repair a variety of household items, including vacuums, clothing, small engines, bicycles, and more. Fix-It Clinics – A Better Society
April 9 – 22	Earth Day story time with Carver County Libraries Carver County Libraries