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MEMO

TO: Nine Mile Creek Board of Managers
FROM: Randy Anhorn
DATE: July 14, 2021
RE: MAWD Policy Recommendation Related to Watershed Based Implementation Funding (WBIF) Program

Background/Information

The District received the attached information from Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts (MAWD) President Mary Texer requesting WMO/WD support for the MAWD policy recommendation related to watershed based implementation funding (WBIF) program.

In non-metro areas where comprehensive watershed management is not as widespread, the One Watershed, One Plan (1W1P) program aims to bring together the stakeholders to prioritize projects. Those 1W1P areas are given funds from BWSR to implement those projects. The Metro WBIF program is meant to provide funding in the same way but recognizing that the watershed plans meet the intent of the 1W1P and, therefore, a separate 1W1P process is not needed.

MAWD has been working with Metro MAWA (Minnesota Association of Watershed Administrators) to provide feedback and offer a long-term solution for how this program is administered. This solution is targeted at addressing the concerns of watersheds from the two pilot years and the lack of input from the program's stakeholders. For instance, in the FY 20-21 pilot, SWCD's were deemed eligible for the funding if they submitted an annual work plan that didn't have the same requirements as watershed plans. Also, under the current guidelines, cities would be eligible for watershed-based funding. MAWD's position is that metro watersheds already go through a comprehensive planning process involving all stakeholders, including the cities, counties, residents, and state agencies. BWSR approves the plan after a lengthy review process. Stakeholder priorities and input as it relates to watershed management are reflected in our watershed plans. WBIF should fund the projects called out in our plans and not require a messy process, including all the stakeholders involved in our work in a redundant process.

In summary, this MAWD policy position requests that BWSR provide continued stable funding to WMO/WD's with comprehensive BWSR approved watershed plans (like NMCWD) in the metro area given those plans are the best way to efficiently deliver prioritized, targeted and measurable clean water implementation at a watershed scale.

Request

For discussion.