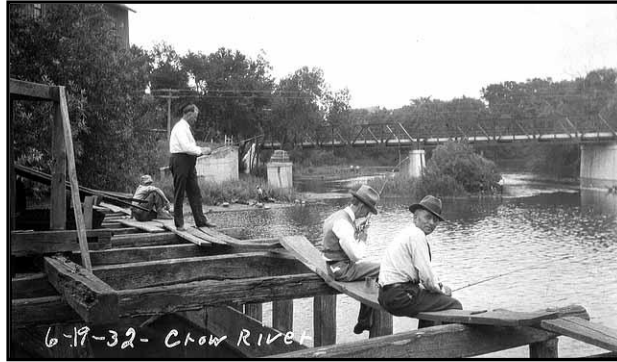


Executive Summary: North Fork Crow River Watershed Management Plan



Fishing on the Crow River, 1932

This document; adopted February 14, 2011; establishes a Watershed Management Plan for the North Fork Crow River Watershed District (NFCRWD, herein called the “District”). The primary purpose of the Plan is to provide a “vision” for water resource management for the next ten years. The Plan consists of this Executive Summary and four Chapters. Each of these sections is briefly described below:

- **Executive Summary** – This section provides background information on Watershed Law, the formation of the Watershed District, the organizational structure of the District, the District’s Mission Statement, a summary of the District’s major accomplishments, and a summary of the goals identified in this Plan.
- **Watershed District Profile** - Chapter One profiles the social and physical characteristics of the District, including sections on the District’s location, demographics, subwatersheds, and natural resources.
- **Priority Issues and Resource Assessment** - Chapter Two presents the priority issues of the District, as determined by input throughout the planning process. The issues are organized into the following four categories: 1) reducing priority pollutants; 2) drainage and surface water management; 3) improving stakeholder involvement; and 4) raising public awareness.
- **Goals, Objectives, and Policies** - Chapter Three contains the District’s Goals, Objectives, and Policy Guidelines that will guide the District in water resource management over the next ten years (2011-2020). The goal areas follow the same four categories identified in the Issues Chapter.
- **Implementation and Plan Administration** - Chapter Four provides detailed information on future implementation projects, plan administration, and a profile for each of the Watershed District’s key stakeholders.

A. Watershed Law

In 1955, the Minnesota State Legislature passed the Watershed Act, now codified in Minnesota Statutes Chapter 103D (“Watershed Law”), to better address water-related issues occurring in the State within a watershed context. According to the enabling legislation, a watershed district is a special purpose unit of local government that is created “to conserve the natural resources of the State by land use planning, flood control, and other conservation projects by using sound scientific principles for the protection of the public health and welfare and the provident use of the natural resources”. Pursuant to M.S. 103D.201, a watershed district may be established for one or more of the following purposes:

- To control or alleviate damage from flood waters;
- To improve stream channels for drainage, navigation, and any other public purpose;
- To reclaim or fill wet and overflowed land;
- To provide a water supply for irrigation;
- To regulate the flow of streams and conserve the streams' water;
- To divert or change all or part of watercourses;
- To provide or conserve water supply for domestic, industrial, recreational, agricultural, or other public use;
- To provide for sanitation and public health, and regulate the use of streams, ditches, or watercourses to dispose of waste;
- To repair, improve, relocate, modify, consolidate, and abandon all or part of drainage systems within a watershed district;
- To control or alleviate soil erosion and siltation of watercourses or water basins;
- To regulate improvements by riparian property owners of the beds, banks, and shores of lakes, streams, and wetlands for preservation and beneficial public use;
- To provide for hydroelectric power generation;
- To protect or enhance the water quality in watercourses or water basins; and
- To provide for the protection of groundwater and regulate its use to preserve it for beneficial purposes.

In accordance to M.S. 103D.401, a watershed district must prepare and adopt a watershed management plan for the purposes for which it was established. The watershed management plan must provide a narrative description of water-related issues and identify possible solutions to problems. The plan must also conform closely to the guidelines of the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR), as amended from time to time.

B. Formation of the District

The North Fork Crow River Watershed District (NFCRWD) was formed on May 10, 1985, by Order of the Minnesota Water Resources Board after being petitioned by residents in the Rice and Koronis Lakes area. The first Overall Plan for the Watershed District was adopted on August 12, 1987. According to Minnesota Statutes, Section 103D, the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) directs the Watershed District Board of Managers to develop a current Watershed Management Plan (approximately once every 10 years or sooner). The Watershed District encompasses approximately 348 square miles of natural drainage and over 48 miles of the North Fork Crow River (NFCR). The location of NFCRWD with the District's political boundary, municipalities, and major highways, is displayed in Map One (found on Page 3 of Chapter 1).

C. Organizational Structure & Board of Managers

The organizational structure of the District consists of a Board of Managers, which are responsible for the oversight of all District-related business, and an Advisory Committee. The Board is comprised of five members who are residents of the District and are appointed to staggered, three-year terms. Board representation is based upon the relative area of each county within the District. Table A lists the District's current Board of Managers.

The managers have the authority to undertake projects involving construction repair, changing the course of a waterway, and regulating the flow and use of streams or other watercourses for the purpose of disposing wastewater. The managers also have the power to undertake surveys and collect data for the development of projects, which enables them to accomplish improvements in the District. Administrative funds can be levied, which consists of a tax on property within the District and the levied funds are used for general administrative expenses and for the construction and maintenance of projects of common benefit to the District.

The overall plan is designed to gather information on almost every aspect of the watershed district. These include a description of the watershed which lists: the general features of the watershed district, the economy, the hydrologic characteristics, the general water quality, the water uses, fish and wildlife resources, water resource projects, water-related problems in the District, and management policies and regulations.

**Table A:
North Fork Crow River
Watershed District Board of Managers**

~ January 2011~

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>
Jim Wuertz	President
Bob Brauchler	Vice President
Joe Borgerding	Secretary
Jim Barchenger	Treasurer
Rick Hazelwood	Manager

D. Intent of the Overall Plan

The Overall Plan provides a strategy for establishing water management and conservation programs that incorporate the desires of the local residents and officials of the cities, townships and counties within the District. Minnesota Statutes 103D prescribes the contents of the overall plan, including identifying possible solutions (or implementation steps) to the problems and the general objectives of the Watershed District.

E. Mission Statement

The District Mission for the NFCRWD is to improve and enhance water quality, to control water flow, to reduce erosion and sedimentation, to promote wise public, private and natural use of water while maintaining, enhancing and preserving public and private drainage for present and future residents of the Watershed District.

F. Advisory Committee

Pursuant to M.S. Chapter 103D.331, the District must maintain an Advisory Committee of at least five members and should include a representative from each soil and water conservation district, a representative of each county, a member of a sporting organization, and a member of a farm organization. Other advisory committee members may be appointed at the discretion of the Board. Table B lists the District's current Advisory Committee Members.

**Table B:
North Fork Crow River
Advisory Committee Members**

~ March 2010 ~

<i>Name</i>	<i>Representing</i>
Peter Jacobson	Koronis Lake Association
Jim Ellickson	Rice Lake Association
John Hanson	Rice Lake Association
Dennis Fuchs	Stearns County SWCD
Steve Lawrence	Pope County Land and Resource Management
Mark Herickoff	Agricultural Producer
Jason Solvig	Pheasants Forever

G. Purpose of the Watershed District

The District's primary purpose is the conservation of the quality and quantity of water within the Watershed District boundaries. A watershed is the area within the geographic boundaries of land that drains into a surface water feature such as a stream, river, or lake and contributes to the recharge of ground water. Due to the continuous movement of water within a watershed, it is difficult to manage based upon linear public boundaries. As a result, a Watershed District consists of a local unit of government that assists in the management of water quality and water quantity issues residing within the boundaries of a watershed district. A Watershed District is a local unit of government that is used to help prevent and solve water-related problems.

The North Fork Crow River Watershed District is one of 45 Watershed Districts in the State of Minnesota. A board of five managers governs the Watershed District appointed by the Pope, Kandiyohi, Stearns, and Meeker Counties Board of Commissioners.

Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 103.405D, Subdivision 1, requires that the Watershed District update the overall watershed management plan. The overall plan serves as a guide for District operation. This Statute prescribes that the Revised Overall Watershed Management Plan must contain the following:

1. Updates and supplements of the existing hydrological and other statistical data of the watershed district.
2. Specific projects to be completed.

3. A statement of the extent that the purposes for which the watershed district had been established have been accomplished.
4. A description of problems requiring future action by the Watershed District.
5. A summary of completed studies on active or planned projects, including financial data.
6. An analysis of the effectiveness of the watershed district's rules and permits on achieving its water management objectives in the Watershed District.

The overall watershed plan seeks to establish water management and conservation programs that incorporate the desires of local residents and officials of the cities, townships and counties within the watershed district.

The overall plan includes specific work items and contemplated plans on a watershed wide and comprehensive manner, including: a comprehensive water quality monitoring program, a comprehensive hydrologic and hydraulic computer modeling, a watershed wide comprehensive drainage facilities repair and improvement, regional erosion, non-point source pollution control and comprehensive land management.

The philosophy of the overall plan will be used as a basis for recommendations, review and regulation to minimize the potentially degrading effects of water related problems in the district. All projects will be reviewed and evaluated on a regional watershed wide basis.

The Board of Managers of the NFCRWD instructed its administrator to develop an updated Overall Plan according to the requirements of Minnesota Statute 103.405D. This Statute directs the managers to "revise the watershed management plan for the watershed district at least once every ten years after the original watershed management plan is approved". The overall watershed plan is to be composed of narrative statements, updates and supplements of existing hydrological and statistical data, specific projects to be completed, purpose and water related problems within the district, possible solutions there to and the general objectives of the district.

H. Watershed District Accomplishments

Since its inception in 1985, the North Fork Crow River Watershed District has completed a number of water quality and quantity accomplishments. In the interest of saving space in the Executive Summary, *the full list of accomplishments is provided in Appendix A*. Please notice the list follows the major categories prescribed in the State's "Watershed Law" (Minnesota Statutes Chapter 103D), which is also listed in Section A of this Executive Summary.

I. Watershed District Projects and Costs (1985 – 2009)

The North Fork Crow River Watershed District has numerous projects and corresponding costs that were completed between 1985 and 2009. In the interest of saving space in the Executive Summary, *the projects and costs are summarized in Appendix A*. The following list provides a summary of the major projects:

Rice Lake / Lake Koronis Restoration CWP Phase II Part I: Started in 1997 and completed in 2000 the project included septic upgrades, feedlot upgrades, erosion site repairs, BMP's (*Cost of project including in-kind – \$1,069,250*).

Grove Lake Phase II CWP: The project started in 1997 and completed in 2000. Included SRF Loan Money of – \$143,030.00, Monitoring, Erosion site repair, Septic upgrades, Feedlot upgrade and BMP's (*Cost of project including in-kind – \$263,906*).

Rice and Koronis Lakes Phase II CWP Part II: The project started in 1996 and had several project extensions included in the project SRF Loan Money and Grant used for Septic upgrades, Feedlot upgrades and BMPS, Erosion site repair on Rice Lake, Monitoring and other BMP's (*Cost of the project including in-kind – \$716,774*).

319 Middle Watershed Project: The project started in 2001 it included SRF loan money for septic upgrades and feedlot upgrade, and funds for monitoring, erosion prevention, site repair and BMP's (*Cost of the project including in-kind – \$184,283*).

CWP Watershed Wide Project: The project started in 2005 included SRF Loan money for Septic Upgrades, Feedlot upgrades, BMP's, and Monitoring (*Cost of the project including in-kind – \$418,087*).

Septic Certification Project: WD Board approved in 2006 and started in 2007, this is a five year project contracted with Stearns County with Joint Power Agreements' with Kandiyohi, Meeker and Pope Counties, to be completed in 2011 (*Cost of the 5 year project is – \$250,000*).

SRF Loans: There have been 184 SRF Loans processed through the WD and certified for collection through the property tax system (*Total SRF Loans distributed in the WD – \$2,014,893*).

TMDL RICE Lake: The MPCA has contracted with the WD to do a TMDL study on Rice Lake, project to finish in 2010 (*Cost of TMDL - \$138,837*).

Please refer to Appendix A for a complete list of projects

J. Summary of North Fork Crow River Watershed District's Goals

The NFCRWD is involved in a number of key water-related issues throughout the District and will continue to cooperate on a vast amount of activities to properly address these issues. For the purpose of this Plan, however, the following four goal areas were identified in Chapter Three:

GOAL 1:

*TO ENSURE THAT DRAINAGE AND SURFACE WATER
IS PROPERLY MANAGED THROUGHOUT THE DISTRICT*

GOAL 2:

*TO MINIMIZE OR REDUCE PRIORITY
POLLUTANTS TO SUSTAINABLE LEVELS*

GOAL 3:

*TO IMPROVE STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION,
COOPERATION AND COORDINATION IN IMPLEMENTING
THE DISTRICT'S INITIATIVES*

GOAL 4:

*TO RAISE PUBLIC AWARENESS ON A NUMBER OF
KEY ISSUES AND DISTRICT ACTIVITIES*

K. North Fork Crow River Watershed District's Contact Information

For more information on the North Fork Crow River Watershed District or the contents of this plan, please contact the Watershed District directly.

North Fork Crow River Watershed District

100 Prairie Avenue North; PO Box 40

Brooten, MN 56316

Phone: (320) 346-2869

Fax: (320) 346-2410

E-Mail: nfcrwsd@tds.net

www.nfcrwd.org

NOTE: The Watershed District meets monthly on the 2nd Monday of the month at 8 p.m. at the District Office (100 Prairie Avenue North; Brooten, MN 56316) and at 1:00 p.m. during the Winter months (December through March).