



## **Special Board Workshop Meeting Agenda**

Wednesday, February 4, 2025

5:00 PM

*The special Board workshop will be held at the district office, 2665 Noel Drive, Little Canada, MN 55117 via Zoom.*

*The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the watershed management plan update mission, core value, and issue statements.*

*Board members, staff, consultants, and the general public can join in person OR via video and/or phone. The general public can listen to the workshop but not participate. Instructions for joining the Zoom meeting are available after the agenda.*

1. **District Mission Statement**
2. **Core Principles**
3. **Priority Issues**
4. **Feedback and Next Steps**
5. **Adjourn**



# **RAMSEY-WASHINGTON**

## **METRO WATERSHED DISTRICT**

### **NOTICE OF SPECIAL BOARD WORKSHOP**

**Wednesday, February 4, 2026**

**5:00 PM**

**Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District Office  
2665 Noel Drive, Little Canada, MN**

The Board will meet with District staff to discuss issue prioritization for the Watershed Management Plan update.

To access the **Board workshop** via webcast, please use this link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88911562054>

The meeting room will open at 4:50 pm with the meeting starting at 5:00 pm. To connect to audio you may choose to use your computer audio options or you may use your mobile device to call. The phone access number is (312) 626-6799. The Meeting ID is 889 1156 2064. The meeting password is 616734.

# Memorandum

**To:** Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District Board of Managers  
**From:** Greg Williams and Erin Anderson-Wenz, Barr Engineering Co.  
Tina Carstens and Paige Ahlborg, RWMWD  
**Subject:** Watershed Management Plan Update – Draft Mission, Core Principles, and Issue Statements  
**Date:** January 29, 2025  
**Project:** 23621496

The Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District (RWMWD) is in the early stages of updating its 2027 Watershed Management Plan (Plan). The Board of Managers (Managers) recently established a working prioritization of high-level issues (i.e., “Level 1 issues”) and discussed sub-issues (i.e., “Level 2 issues”) to be specifically identified in the Plan at their January 7, 2026, meeting.

Barr and District staff have updated the proposed Plan elements based on that discussion, including:

- District mission statement
- District core principles
- Priority issues
  - Brief issue statements to characterize “Level 2” issues

This memorandum presents the draft Plan content listed above for Manager review and comment (see Section 4).

## 1 District Mission Statement

Conversations with staff and Managers during the initial stages of Plan development suggest that the 2027 Plan will be an evolution of the 2017 Plan. Issue priorities remain similar, with the addition of emerging or growing concerns, including climate resilience, equity considerations, and others. Staff propose modest changes to the District’s mission statement to reflect the District’s current position:

**Current Mission:**

*To preserve and improve water resources and related ecosystems to sustain their long-term health and integrity and contribute to the well-being and engagement of stakeholders within the community.*

**Proposed Updated 2027 Mission:**

*To preserve, restore, and enhance water resources and related ecosystems to ensure their long-term health and resilience, driven by inclusive engagement and stewardship of our shared environment.*

The updated mission reflects our commitment to proactive, inclusive stewardship in a rapidly changing environment. It extends beyond preservation to include restoration and enhancement as two pathways to resource improvement. It emphasizes resilience in response to climate and environmental challenges and explicitly acknowledges the importance of community well-being and inclusive engagement consistent with Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) principles.

## 2 Core Principles

The core principles included in the District's 2017 Plan (see image below) established a strong foundation in leadership, stewardship, science-based decision-making, collaboration, and education. Since then, evolving watershed challenges, technological advances, increased transparency expectations, and a stronger focus on DEIA have shaped the District's work. The proposed 2027 Core Principles build on existing values with clearer, current language. The proposed 2027 core principles also include a dedicated DEIA principle and emphasize sustainability and resilience, measurable outcomes, adaptive management, and lasting partnerships. Proposed 2027 core principles include:

### Core Principles

The Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District (RWMWD or District) will adhere to the following core set of principles that will guide their efforts to achieve the mission stated above.

The District will be:

- A leader and innovator in watershed management that integrates natural and built environments.
- An organization focused on high levels of performance and results.
- An organization that uses adaptive management, accurate information, and sound science to guide decision-making.
- A trusted and accountable steward of public resources and moneys.
- An active collaborator with a wide variety of public and private organizations.
- An important and reliable source of information, services, and projects.
- An effective advocate of watershed management principles and values.
- An organization that educates and inspires current and future stewards of the watershed.

#### • **Leadership & Innovation**

Drive innovation through adaptive watershed management while considering the natural and built environments.

#### • **Performance & Results**

Deliver measurable outcomes through high performance, continuous improvement, and organizational excellence.

#### • **Science-Based Decision-Making**

Use adaptive management, sound science, and reliable data to guide transparent, informed decisions.

#### • **Stewardship & Accountability**

Be a trusted steward of public resources through responsible, ethical, and transparent management.

#### • **Collaboration & Engagement**

Build strong partnerships to increase impact through strategic engagement and community collaboration.

#### • **Information, Services & Projects**

Provide reliable information, services, and projects that support effective watershed action.

#### • **Advancement of Watershed Principles**

Champion watershed management principles that promote resilience, sustainability, and long-term community benefit.

#### • **Education & Inspiration**

Educate, inspire, and support stewards in caring for and protecting the watershed and beyond.

#### • **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Accessibility (DEIA)**

Foster an inclusive organization that creates and sustains equitable and accessible programs, services, and partnerships so all communities benefit from watershed investments.

### 3 Priority Issues (Level 1 and Level 2)

On December 12, 2025, the Managers discussed the results of the District's Plan update partner engagement efforts. The Managers reached consensus on the priority of high-level, broad resource issues (referred to herein as "Level 1 issues") as follows:

1. Surface water quality; water quantity/flood risk
2. Ecosystem health
3. Groundwater

On January 7, 2025, staff presented a proposed table of contents for the issues section of the Plan. The proposed table of contents presented the four level 1 issues and several more specific issues (referred to herein as "Level 2 issues") within the Level 1 categories. The table of contents also included several non-resource issues related to District operations and administration. Staff did not assign explicit priority to the non-resource issues, noting that their inclusion and sequence within the table of contents may imply a priority.

The Managers shared feedback on the draft table of contents and inclusion of level 2 priorities. The revised issues table of contents below reflects changes made in response to those comments.

3. Issues and Goals
  - 3.1 Surface Water Quality
    - 3.1.1 Nutrient, Sediment, and Other Pollutants
    - 3.1.2 Chlorides and Toxic Pollutants
    - 3.1.3 Threatened and Impaired Waters
    - 3.1.4 Erosion and Sedimentation
  - 3.2 Water Quantity and Flood Risk
  - 3.3 Ecosystem Health
    - 3.3.1 Wetlands
    - 3.3.2 Invasive Species
    - 3.3.3 Shoreline Integrity
    - 3.3.4 Upland Management
  - 3.4 Groundwater
  - 3.5 Groundwater-Surface Water Interaction
  - 3.6 Groundwater Quality
  - 3.7 Groundwater Sustainability
  - 3.8 Communication and Engagement
  - 3.9 Regulation
  - 3.10 Operations and Maintenance
  - 3.11 Organizational Efficacy

Key changes made in the organization of the Issues and Goals section include:

- Topics previously presented as **Overarching Themes** (e.g., climate resiliency, partnerships, and collaboration) are removed from the draft Issues and Goals section. Staff propose to discuss these topics elsewhere in the Plan, including **Core Principles**, where applicable.

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- Discussion of emerging toxic contaminants (e.g., PFAS, microplastics) will be included in the **Stormwater Management and Pollutant Loading** Level 2 issue area. The Managers did not reach consensus on including emerging contaminants as a standalone Level 2 issue area.
- **Drought** was removed as a Level 2 resource issue.
- **Operational Issues** (i.e., non-resource issues) as a separate heading has been omitted, leaving all issues under the same heading and not distinguishing between resource-based and non-resource-based issues.
- **Regulation** was added as an issue area.
- **Operations and Maintenance** was added as an issue area.
- **Evaluation and Assessment** was expanded as an issue area, becoming **Organizational Efficacy**. This issue area will discuss the challenges of managing increasing data volumes, evaluating progress, assessing the costs and benefits of District programs, and leveraging technology and partners to improve efficiency.
- **Funding** was removed as an issue area. Funding concerns specific to other operational focus areas will be discussed within those sections. Overall funding strategies will be discussed in the Implementation section of the Plan.

The Level 1 and Level 2 issues in the Issues and Goals section will be presented as short statements that briefly describe the problem in accessible language. Draft issues statements are attached to this memo.

#### **4 Feedback and Next Steps**

The draft mission statement, core principles, issues, and goals section table of contents TOC, and issue statements are presented for the manager's consideration and discussion.

Discussion at the workshop should focus on concept edits instead of specific language edits (e.g., *"The AIS issue statement should reference recreation impacts"*).

Following Manager feedback, Barr and RWMWD staff will revise the Level 1 and Level 2 issues and issue statements, develop supporting issue narrative text, and draft goals for each issue.

## **Draft Issues Statements**

**Nutrient, Sediment, and Other Pollutants:** Excess nutrients, sediment, bacteria, and other pollutants in our waters degrade water quality, affecting recreation and aquatic life.

**Chlorides:** High chloride loading from winter deicers negatively impacts the quality of lakes, wetlands, streams, and groundwater.

**Threatened and Impaired Waterbodies:** Some lakes and streams within the RWMWD do not meet or are at risk of not meeting state water quality standards; some are listed as impaired for aquatic life and recreational use due to pollutants such as nutrients, chloride, bacteria, and other factors.

**Erosion and Sedimentation:** Excessive erosion and sedimentation from development, redevelopment, and extreme precipitation degrade water quality, stormwater infrastructure, aquatic habitats, and floodplain functions.

**Water Quantity and Flood Risk:** Extreme precipitation, climate trends, and human development increase flood risk and associated impacts on the natural and built environments, affecting ecology, water quality, public health and safety, the economy, and recreation.

**Wetlands:** The function, values, and quantity of wetlands in the watershed are threatened by development and redevelopment activities and a changing climate.

**Aquatic Invasive Species:** Aquatic invasive species (AIS) contribute to phosphorus loading and poor water quality, negatively impact ecological health, and may be exacerbated by climate trends.

**Shoreline Integrity:** Degraded shorelines and riparian (i.e., near-shore) areas allow excess pollutant loading to water resources, contribute to water quality and biological impairments, and result in decreased ecological functions.

**Uplands:** Degradation or loss of natural upland areas due to development pressure or lack of protections reduces wildlife habitat and impacts ecosystem health.

**Groundwater-Surface Water Interaction:** Complex groundwater-surface water interactions challenge the District's ability to preserve, restore, and enhance surface water and groundwater resources.

**Groundwater Quality:** Groundwater quality may be threatened by infiltration of stormwater and associated pollutants, impacting public health as a source of drinking water.

**Groundwater Sustainability:** The sustainable use and ecological functions (e.g., stream baseflow) of groundwater is threatened by consumptive use, loss of recharge, and climate trends.

**Communication and Engagement:** Limited knowledge about the watershed, its resources, and programs may diminish opportunities for those seeking to engage in watershed preservation, restoration, and enhancement.

**Regulation:** Appropriate stormwater regulations are necessary to limit negative environmental consequences from human activity while balancing community development and redevelopment needs.

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**Operations and Maintenance:** Aging infrastructure and expanding District and partner programs result in increased operations and maintenance needs that stress available resources.

**Organizational Efficacy:** Understanding the impact of District projects and programs on watershed resources and communities is necessary to promote the best use of District and partner resources.