Coon Creek Watershed District

2015 Annual Report and

2016 Management and Work Plan

Board of Managers

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Reporting Requirements

The Coon Creek Watershed District (District) is required to annually report on a variety of activities. These requirements and the state and federal laws that mandate the reporting are:

1. The Minnesota Watershed Act (M.S. 103D.351)
2. The Metropolitan Water Management Act (M.S. 103B.231)
3. The Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act (M.S. 103A)
4. The National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Program.

NOTE: A review and audit of the District’s finances is provided in the District’s Annual Financial Report and Audit of 2014 performed by the Minnesota State Auditor.

REPORT and REVIEW OBJECTIVES

Additionally, the objectives of this report and management review are to:

1. Monitor the implementation of the 2013 – 2023 Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan as a whole and of its component projects in relation to changes in the context, operating environment and circumstances of their implementation.

2. Provide a method of evaluating District management and operations.

3. Validate the goals, priorities and program focus areas in the Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan.

4. Evaluate the progress towards long term results and identify barriers to achieving those results.

5. Identify and adopt new ways to improve capabilities for accomplishing results and remove barriers.

6. Adjust management direction to reasonably assure achievement of the District’s mission and strategic goals.

7. Implement a rapid problem identification system as well as a system for internal communications to various stakeholders.

8. Facilitate evaluation procedures during and other activities through the definition of specific indicators.
COON CREEK WATERSHED DISTRICT
AT A GLANCE

District Mission
To manage ground water and the surface water drainage system to prevent
property damage, maintain hydrologic balance and to protect water quality for the
safety and enjoyment of citizens and the preservation and enhancement of wildlife
habitat.

To carry out its mission, the District:
1. Advocates a conservation ethic in promoting the health, productivity, diversity, and beauty
of water and related land resources.

2. Listens to citizens and responds to their diverse needs in making decisions.

3. Protects, restores, and manages the watershed’s water and related resources for sustainable
multiple-use management of water resources.

4. Provides educational, technical and financial assistance to Cities, Anoka County and
private landowners, encouraging them to practice good stewardship and quality land
management in meeting their specific objectives and improve their water resources.

5. Help communities to wisely use the water and related resources to promote economic
development and a quality environment.

6. Develops and provides scientific and technical knowledge and educational programs aimed
at improving the capability to protect, restore, manage, and use water and related resources.

District Roles
The Coon Creek Watershed District serves the following specific and required statutory roles:
(1) Drainage Authority over all public drainage ditches within the watershed under M.S.
103E

(2) Comprehensive Surface Water Management Organization (WMO) for Coon Creek
Watershed and select adjacent subwatersheds under the Metropolitan Water Management
and Watershed Acts (M.S. 103B & MS 103D)

(3) Local Governmental Unit (LGU) administering the Wetland Conservation Act (WCA)
except for the City of Spring Lake Park where the District provides assistance and
oversight when and where needed.

(4) Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permittee to the Minnesota Pollution
Control Agency under the Federal Clean Water Act NPDES program.
Goals
The District has adopted five mission goals and eight issue goals. Pursuit of these goals is articulated in the District Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan.

**Mission Goals**
1. To prevent property damage from flooding, erosion or degraded water quality
2. To ensure balance between inflow, outflow and storage of water
3. To protect and enhance water quality
4. To provide for multiple beneficial uses including the safety and enjoyment by the watershed's residents
5. To preserve and enhance wildlife

**Issue Goals**
6. To minimize the harmful ecological, economic and human health impacts of aquatic invasive species (AIS).
7. To be proactive in aquatic invasive species management through education and projects that improves lake and stream water quality and/or reduces the risk of entry of invasive species.
8. To control the spread of AIS and minimize their impacts on native habitats and species.
9. To gather and disseminate weather data and climatic information, and provide meteorological expertise in support of Watershed water and related resource management decisions and weather related management activities.
10. To ensure validity, integrity, and utility of weather information provided for Watershed use.
11. To provide precipitation frequency estimates for the Coon Creek Watershed
12. To manage surficial ground water resources for multiple-uses by balancing present and future resource use with domestic water supply needs.
13. To manage groundwater dependent ecosystems under the principles of multiple use and sustainability, while emphasizing protection and improvement of soil, water and vegetation, particularly because of effects upon aquatic and wildlife resources.

**Management Priorities**
1. Prevent flooding
2. Improve water quality in impaired or impacted waters
3. Maintain and enhance water quality in waters that are not impaired.
How District Programs Accomplish the Mission
The District provides stewardship and management to more than 68,000 acres and 165,000 people through the following seven programs:

**Administration**: Implements the District mission and the approved policies of the Board of Managers, administers the financial affairs of the Coon Creek Watershed District, and ensures the accountability of public funds and serves the District financial needs. Although these business processes are often out of view to the public, without them the District would be unable to deliver the beneficial uses that the citizens of the District expect. The Administration Program consists of six elements: the Board of Managers, Records, Contract and Personnel Administration, Training and Seminars, Financial Management and Risk Management.

**Development Regulation**: Evaluates, permits and monitors plans and programs affecting the District mission and the water and related resources of the District in an orderly and informed fashion. The Development Regulation and Issue Management Program consist of five activities:
Environmental Review, which includes comments on DNR and Corps of Engineers Permits; Issues and Complaints; Permit Inspection and Enforcement; Permit Review; Permit Issuances.

**Engineering:** Provides accurate and timely geographic information in graphic or digital form for use by water resource managers, planners, and the general public; To achieve uniform District-wide mapping formats and standards; and ensure that District wide engineering activities are performed at an acceptable level. Program consists of the following activities: flood prevention; public drainage and mapping; hydrologic investigations and modeling; and design and construction

**Operations and Maintenance:** Planning, design, construction and maintenance of the District’s ditch system and water control structures and to preserve the location, character and extent of the District’s ditch and conveyance system. Program consists of the following activities: Annual Inspections, Issues & Complaints, Construction, Repair, Routine Maintenance, Demonstration Projects.

**Planning:** Is the framework used to conform to laws and regulations governing the management of the Coon Creek Watershed. The planning process is focused on the concept of sustainability under planning regulations that require the District to perform assessments that include physical, social and management issues across the watershed’s entirety. This program coordinates the planning, prioritizing and financing of the District’s programs and activities and consists of the following activities: Annual Assessment, Reporting and Planning, Budgeting and Program Planning, Comprehensive Planning, Policy and Procedures.

**Public and Governmental Relations:** Ensures that the continued planning and management of the Watershed is responsive to the needs and concerns of an informed public and to coordinate policies and programs of the local, state and federal government agencies to achieve consistency with the plan. A program consisting of three activities has been developed to carry out the District's policies. The components are: Education, Information, and Involvement. In practice, overlap will occur among these three components; all information is educational in nature, and education requires involvement.

**Inventory Assessment and Monitoring** Supports Watershed Management Plan revisions and amendments; budgets, priorities and implementation schedules. Watershed plan monitoring and evaluation is receiving greater emphasis, including through the Performance Review and Assistance Program (PRAP) process and the new planning rule (MR 8410). The research and data collection program purpose is to gather and analyze data that will result in increased efficiency and effectiveness of District programs. The research, monitoring and data collection program provides integrated resource information used in planning, evaluating and decision making within the District. District planning, regulatory and project decision-making depends upon scientifically credible and accurate resource information. This data allows resource managers to make scientifically based management decisions, essential to effective resource management.
INTRODUCTION

District General Budget Policies requires the District Administrator to submit an annual budget to the Board of Managers. The Budget is to accurately reflect the financial needs of the District. Additionally, state law requires that the Board of Managers adopt a budget by September 15, 2014 and then certify a proposed levy to the Anoka County Property Records and Taxation Division by December 15, 2014. In response to these requirements, a draft budget is being submitted to the Board of Managers August 11, 2014 in advance to that deadline. The Board of Managers has held a series of budget-planning and briefing sessions at almost every regularly scheduled meeting since April 2014.

This budget document should be viewed as more than just a collection of financial data, but as the financial plan in which the District will implement and accomplish Board of Manager’s policies, as well as meet the articulated needs of the watershed and residents. In addition to the financial data contained within, this document includes information on the District organization, describes programs and services, and provides statistical values measuring activity performance and workloads. Most importantly, this budget is a reflection of the District’s plans, policies, procedures and objectives regarding services to be provided in 2014.

As part of the budget development process, District staff, performed a comprehensive review of specific program service needs, prioritized spending requests to achieve the most effective operational delivery of services, and then balanced the allocation of the District’s human and financial resources against those needs. It has been our goal to accomplish this in a fair, impartial and balanced manner that meets with the approval of Board and the residents we serve.
BUDGET GUIDELINES

The following are Budget Development guidelines/financial goals presented in the Comprehensive Plan and used by District Staff while preparing their proposed operating budget, and presented with a brief description of the outcome of each guideline as part of the budget process:

1. A commitment to a District Tax Capacity Rate to meet the needs of the District and positioning the District for long-term operation through the use of sustainable revenue sources and operational efficiencies.

   **Note:** The Anoka County Assessor taxable market value figures for the Coon Creek Watershed District reflect a 33.8% increase in total taxable market value from 2013.

2. A fiscal goal that works toward establishing the General Fund balance for working capital at no less than 35% of planned General Fund expenditures and the preservation of emergency fund balances (Natural disasters and emergencies, public safety, facility management and information technology) through targeting revenue enhancements or expenditure limitations.

   **Note:** With property tax revenues making up 85 - 90% of the total General Fund revenues, cash flow designations approaching 40% would be appropriate and are recommended by the State auditor. For the 2014 budget Administration targeted a 35% General Fund balance for working capital.

3. A comprehensive review of the condition of capital equipment to ensure that the most cost-effective replacement schedule is followed. Equipment will be replaced on the basis of a cost benefit analysis rather than a year-based replacement schedule.

   **Note:** This was done by the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) development process. The 2013-2023 CIP for the Comprehensive Plan reviewed and approved by the Board. A review will also be done as part of the 2016 budget process.

4. A team approach that encourages strategic planning to meet immediate and long-term operational, staffing, infrastructure and facility needs.

   **Note:** District Administration is hopeful that the annual strategic review step in the budget process and the Comprehensive Plan policies and program goals for collaboration and cooperation and work with the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) will help achieve this guideline.

5. A management philosophy that actively supports the funding and implementation of Board of Manager policies and goals, and a commitment to being responsive to changing physical, social and management conditions, concerns and demands, and to do so in a cost-effective manner.

   **Note:** The Board of Managers adopted the 2013 – 2023 District Financial Goals on April 22, 2013. These goals pay special attention to fiscal values, collaboration opportunities, and service delivery.
SIGNIFICANT EVENTS in 2014-15

In 2014, 78 projects were reviewed and approved as fully meeting the stormwater, water quality and conservation requirements of the District.

- New commercial development included 30 projects including five middle and elementary school additions. Some examples are Blaine Alzheimer’s Special Care Facility, Clock Tower Commons in Andover, Mercy Hospital/Healthcare Center Parking Addition; Metropolitan Transportation Network Parking Lot Expansion in Fridley; Spring Lake Park Addition Unity Hospital Campus; Vision Woodworking, and National Sports Center Field Expansion.

- New residential development included 29 projects including Carson's Ridge, Enchanted Estates 2nd Addition, Lawrence Estates and the Lakes of Radisson 59th Addition.

- Approximately 20 road and other public works projects were also reviewed and approved including Andover Blvd NW & Crosstown Blvd Turn Lane in Andover, Able Street Reconstruction in Blaine, and Coon Rapids Blvd. at Springbrook Drive in Coon Rapids.

- Another 20 applications were found to not need a permit either because they were exempt under the Wetland Conservation Act, their stormwater was already managed through existing stormwater infrastructure or there were no water or related resource issues.

Noteworthy events/activities that occurred in 2014 and that will influence 2015 operations and the 2016 budget include:

**Mission Goals**

Preventing property damage from flooding, erosion or degraded water quality

- Reviewed and approved 78 projects involving 490 acres.
- Reviewed and approved 23 rate control ponds and 35 water quality ponds.
- Inspections and condition assessments were completed on all structures and 27 miles (20% of system) of public ditch.
- The non-routine/corrective maintenance program addressed 104 issues at a cost $18,915.
- Conducted 3 routine repair and maintenance projects involving tree removal at a cost of $131,600
- Completed the initial construction of a detailed XPSWMM hydrologic model that utilizing LiDAR and Atlas 14 and the District annual inspection program to accurately assess 100 year flood elevations within the watershed.
- Provided technical assistance to the City of Fridley and the Anoka Conservation District in completing the restoration and repair of Oak Glen Creek.
- Initiated 2 e-newsletters; one on establishing a temporary No-Wake zone and one on Blue-green algae alerts.
- Declared an ‘emergency’ on Ditch 44-3, repaired approximately 0.5 mile of public ditch, and lowered the culvert at Lexington Avenue 1.5 feet.
- Removed 11 beaver and dams which were obstructing flows and contributing to local flooding.
Ensuring balance between inflow, outflow and storage of water

- Completed the initial construction of a detailed XPSWMM hydrologic model that utilizes LiDAR, Atlas 14
- Reviewed and approved construction of 23 rate control ponds.

Protecting and enhancing water quality

- Reviewed and approved 78 projects involving 490 acres.
- Reviewed and approved construction of 35 water quality ponds.
- Constructed 11 rain gardens in the Sand Creek and Woodcrest Creek subwatersheds for approximately $102,000
- Constructed three bank stabilization projects in Coon Rapids
- Provided training to approximately 50 public works employees and contractors on efficient winter salt use and turf management BMPs.
- Co-Hosted with the City of Andover training for approximately 50 contractors, public employees and consultants on Erosion Control products at a Minnesota Erosion Control Association Field workshop.
- Initiated 2 e-newsletters; one on CCWD updates for our municipal & agency partners, one specifically for Lake Issues. Newsletters were used to quickly get the word out about No-Wake zone and Blue-green algae alerts and also to broadcast grant & training opportunities to lake associations and the cities in which they reside.
- The District completed an identification of biotic stressors for Coon Creek, Sand Creek and Springbrook Creek as part of the Watershed Restoration Assessment and Plan (WRAP) funded through a grant from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.
- Monitored water quality on two lakes, seven wetlands and 16 stream locations in partnership with the Anoka Conservation District.
- Completed Storm Water Retrofit Assessments for three subwatersheds (Pleasure, Springbrook and Stoneybrook Creeks).

Provide for multiple beneficial uses including the safety and enjoyment of the watershed's residents

- Received a $5,000 grant for an experimental forest thinning/Buck Thorn removal project in Erlandson Nature Center that focused on vegetative stabilization of creek banks
- Processed 154 applications for development and technical assistance compared to 145 in 2013 and 102 in 2012
- Reviewed and approved 78 projects involving 490 acres.
- Reviewed 18 residential projects involving 136 lots on approximately 150 acres
- Conducted 2 Coon Creek Cleanups with a service group, Blaine-Ham Lake Rotary. Picked up ~3000 lbs of trash.
- Assisted the Lake Associations and the cities of Andover, Coon Rapids and Ham Lake and in clarifying the process and evaluating the establishment of No-Wake zones on Crooked Lake and Ham Lake during the high water in the Spring.
- Initiated 2 e-newsletters; one on CCWD updates for our municipal & agency partners, one specifically for Lake Issues. Newsletters were used to quickly get the word out about No-Wake zone and Blue-green algae alerts and also to broadcast grant & training opportunities to lake associations and the cities in which they reside.
Preserving and enhancing wildlife habitat
- Provided technical assistance on 44 wetland projects
- Reviewed 28 wetland delineations
- Initiated development of a Comprehensive Lake Management Plan for Ham Lake
- The District completed an identification of biotic stressors for Coon Creek, Sand Creek, Pleasure Creek and Springbrook Creek as a first step in addressing fishery concerns.
- Completed the first comprehensive watershed assessment which factored in aquatic habitat, flooding, water quality, wetlands, land use, biota, and soils.
- Required four biological assessments on properties potentially containing endangered or threatened species (1 animal, 8 plants).
- Assisted in redesign of Landscape Plan for the Catcher’s Creek development to promote Loggerheaded Shrike (Lanius ludovicianus) habitat.
- Assisted in the planning and construction of a Butterfly Garden for the Leonard Skipper (Hesperia leonardus) at Camilla Rose in Coon Rapids

Issue Goals
Minimizing the harmful ecological, economic and human health impacts of aquatic invasive species (AIS).
- Provided technical and limited administrative Assistance to the Crooked Lake Area Association in the treatment of Eurasian Water Milfoil and Curly Leaf Pond Weed
- Actively assisted the Ham Lake Lake Association in formulating their first chemical treatment to control Eurasian Water Milfoil and in the preparation of the Comprehensive Management Plan for the lake

Being proactive in aquatic invasive species management through education and projects that improves lake and stream water quality and/or reduces the risk of entry of invasive species.
- Assisted the Lake Associations and the cities of Andover, Coon Rapids and Ham Lake in the establishment of No-Wake zones on Crooked Lake and Ham Lake during the high water in the Spring.
- Assisted the Ham Lake Lake Association in formulating their first treatment for Eurasian Water Milfoil and in the preparation of the Comprehensive Management Plan for the lake
- Used e-newsletters to alert lakeshore owners on Ham Lake about a Blue-green algae bloom occurring in the lake.

Controlling the spread of AIS and minimizing their impacts on native habitats and species.
- Involved in the planning and permitting of the Crooked Lake EWM treatment and in avoiding impact to a colony of White water lily (Nymphaea odorata) and Yellow water lily (Nuphar lutea).
Involved in the preliminary assessment of the presence and extent of the newly discovered Eurasian Water Milfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*) infestation on Ham Lake.

Gathering and disseminating weather data and climatic information, and providing meteorological expertise in support of watershed water and related resource management decisions and weather related management activities.
- Published monthly and year-to-date “Water Watch”, which tracks precipitation and flood potential information within the watershed.

Ensuring validity, integrity, and utility of weather information provided for Watershed use.
- The spring of 2014 was the wettest spring on record (140 years) leading to increased patrols and inspections, numerous issues relating to flooding and high water and at least one ‘emergency’ declaration.
- The year ended 26% over a normal of 31 inches per year.

Providing precipitation frequency estimates for the Coon Creek Watershed
- Atlas 14, the most current and accurate precipitation frequency estimates, is available through the District web site.

Managing surficial ground water resources for multiple-uses by balancing present and future resource use with domestic water supply needs.
- The Hydrogeologic Atlas portion of the County Geologic Atlas has been delayed at the MDNR for three years now. This delay has hindered the District ability to conduct a management analysis and develop a plan for managing the surficial groundwater that are a key water source for the District’s lakes and wetlands.
- Participated in development of the North and East Metro Groundwater Management Plan being spearheaded by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Managing groundwater dependent ecosystems under the principles of multiple use and sustainability, while emphasizing protection and improvement of soil, water and vegetation, particularly because of effects upon aquatic and wildlife resources.
- Reviewed and evaluated three long term dewatering permits and their probable impacts on adjacent water resources. Worked with the DNR and the applicant to modify the proposed volume and or time to minimize or eliminate the impact.
District Growth and Economic Trends

The growth within the last several years continues to produce a profound increase in demand for District services and has significantly added to the District’s infrastructure and staffing needs. Consequently, this change will result in significant future operation and maintenance costs. The chart below illustrates the significant growth anticipated for the portion of Anoka County within the watershed.

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<td>Total Population</td>
<td>164,983</td>
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<td>167,467</td>
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<td>Total Households</td>
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<td>Permit Applications</td>
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<td>Inspections</td>
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<td>Single Family Residential Applications</td>
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<td>Additional Single Family Lots</td>
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<td>117</td>
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<td>Total Public Ditch Miles</td>
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<td>Annual Enforcement Incidents</td>
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<td>Annual Wetland Evaluations &amp; Review</td>
<td>35</td>
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<td><strong>New Stormwater Assets</strong></td>
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<td>Annual Infiltration Basins</td>
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Regulatory 2015

Total Applications: 156

Permit Apps

*(sans Technical Assistance Apps or wetland delineations)*
Regulatory 2015
Wetlands (WCA)

Reviews 38
  Boundary
  No Loss
  Exemption
  Utilities

Replacement Plans 15
Issues 2015

Total Issue Log Entries

184

2014 - 170
2013 - 106
2012 - 111
2011 - 136
2010 - 81
O&M Program 2015

Construction Projects

- SC-R3 Sand Creek South Rain Gardens $97,166
- WC-4: Woodcrest Creek Rain Gardens $95,097
- $192,263

Ditch Repair

- Ditch 54 survey
- Tronson Creek feasibility study

Asset Inventory

- Ditch 54 data analysis
- Ditch 44 asset ID
O&M Ditch Inspection Program

Annually inspect 20% of public ditches

2015

1. Lower Coon Creek    no immediate needs

2. Ditch 39            no immediate needs

3. Ditch 41            1 immediate need, Obstruction
Hwy 10 south to Mississippi River

Never been ditched

Length 5.1 miles
Mostly in parkland

No Immediate needs
Bank failures
Tree obstructions
Originally ditched in 1902

Length 3.3 miles

No Immediate Needs

Primarily found Obstructions
Ditch Repair
Largest Tributary to CC
Length 18.3 miles
11.1 sq mile watershed

Immediate Need
$3,200 Obstruction
Coon Rapids

Non-Immediate Needs
1. Bank Failure
2. Obstruction
3. Ditch Repair
O&M Ditch Inspection Program

Annually inspect 20% of public ditches

2016
1. Ditch 11 (Ham Lake)
2. Ditch 17 & its private laterals in Blaine & Coon Rapids
3. Ditch 44 & its private lateral for Blaine
4. Lower Coon Creek private laterals for Coon Rapids
Planning

2015

WRAPS - completed

TMDL – final draft approved at EPA and now taking comments Dec 28, 2015- January 28, 2016

2016

AIS Plan

CIP (10-year)

Comprehensive Plan: water quality chapter update

Lake Comprehensive Plans: Ham Lake, Lake Netta

TMDL Implementation
Education

2015 Trainings
CCWD Reg updates
  City Staff
    Andover
    Coon Rapids
NPDES & Wetland Rules
  Builders
    North CCWD cities
    South Cities

2016
CCWD Permitting 201
  Engineers
  Developers
Education 2015

Grants

1. Green Expo – DIY Non-toxic cleaner supplies
2. Woodcrest Water Education Welcome Garden
3. Jefferson Elementary School 4th Graders transportation to Metro Children's Water Festival

In the Press

31 City Newsletter articles
6 Conservation Columns
Information

Multi-media views  YouTube PSA  255
30 Slideshare ppts  2042

2016

Inter-Governmental Relations

City Council briefings
Outreach 2015

• North Metro Home & Garden Show
• North Suburban Home Improvement Show (2016)
• Green Expo (2016)

K-12 Requests
Woodcrest Elementary 4th grade
   Stormwater pollutants & BMPs

Westwood Intermediate 5th grade
   Onsite stormwater pond monitoring
Monitoring

Annual Water Almanac – 2015 forthcoming
Lower Coon Creek water quality
Lake monitoring
Stream monitoring

AIS Early Detection - new in 2015

2016- develop a Rapid Response Plan
Administrative

Building – continuing on planning

New staff: 2015 - Executive Secretary

2016 – Regulatory Affairs Assistant
Operations & Maintenance Assistant