

Coon Creek Watershed District

2020 Annual Report

Board of Managers

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Approved by Board of Managers XXXX

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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 2019 performed by the Minnesota State Auditor. The Audit of 2019 has been ordered by the Board of Managers on December 10, 2019.

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.

COON CREEK WATERSHED DISTRICT AT A GLANCE

Background

The Coon Creek Watershed District was established in 1959 under the Minnesota Watershed District Law (Minnesota Statutes 103D). The District is a special purpose unit of government that addresses comprehensive water and related resource management within the 107 square mile District. The District includes the drainage area of Coon Creek as well as several other smaller watersheds that also drain directly to the Mississippi.

District Mission

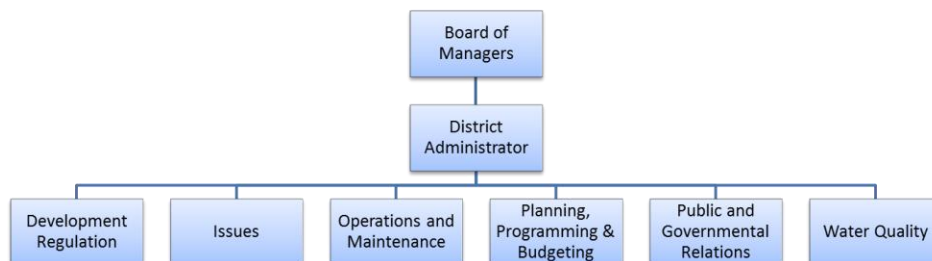
The District's most basic mission is **to manage surface and ground water systems**. That fundamental, legislatively mandated mission will not change.

The District's current intent **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** also will not change.

Vision

The District will remain drainage basin postured and ready to collaborate, deter and correct issues and concerns across the range of conservation needs and drainage area sizes as part of a joint effort. The District will leverage **adaptive and innovative evidence-based practices, empower professionals and citizens and collaborative work efforts** capable of delivering water resource management capabilities to enable city staff and decision makers to achieve success in preventing, repairing and correcting water resource problems and issues.

Coon Creek Watershed District
2020 Organizational Chart



District Goals

The District has adopted five mission goals and three issue goals. Pursuit of these goals is articulated in the District Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan.

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
6. 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.
7. To gather and disseminate weather data and climatic information and provide meteorological expertise in support of water and related resource management decisions and weather-related management activities.
8. 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.

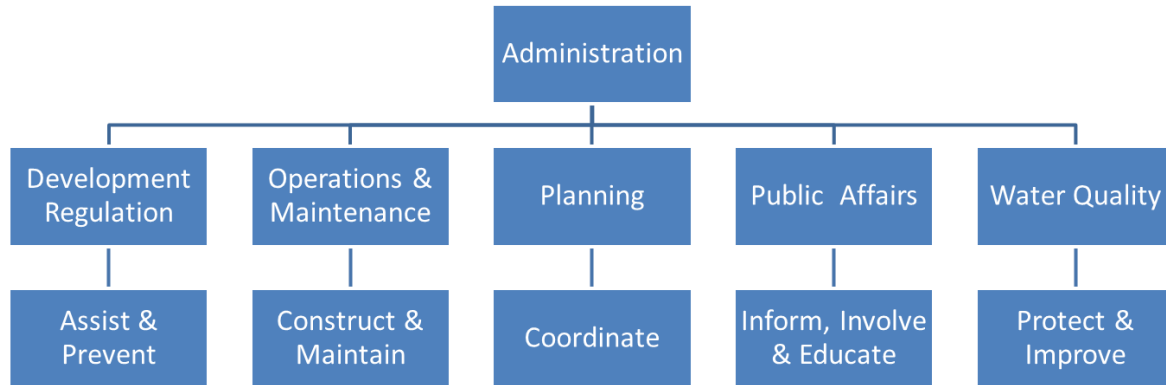
Management Priorities

1. Protect Drinking Water Supplies
2. -Prevent Flooding
 - Improve water quality in impaired or impacted waters
 - Maintain and enhance water quality in waters that are not impaired.
3. Groundwater Recharge
4. Aquatic Life
5. Recreation
6. Hunting & Fishing
7. Irrigation
8. Watering: Livestock & Wildlife
9. Aesthetics
10. Industrial Use and Cooling

Strategy and Concept of Operations

The District's current strategy and concept of operations is founded on watershed-based collaborative management actions.

Lines of Operation and Effort



Financial Report

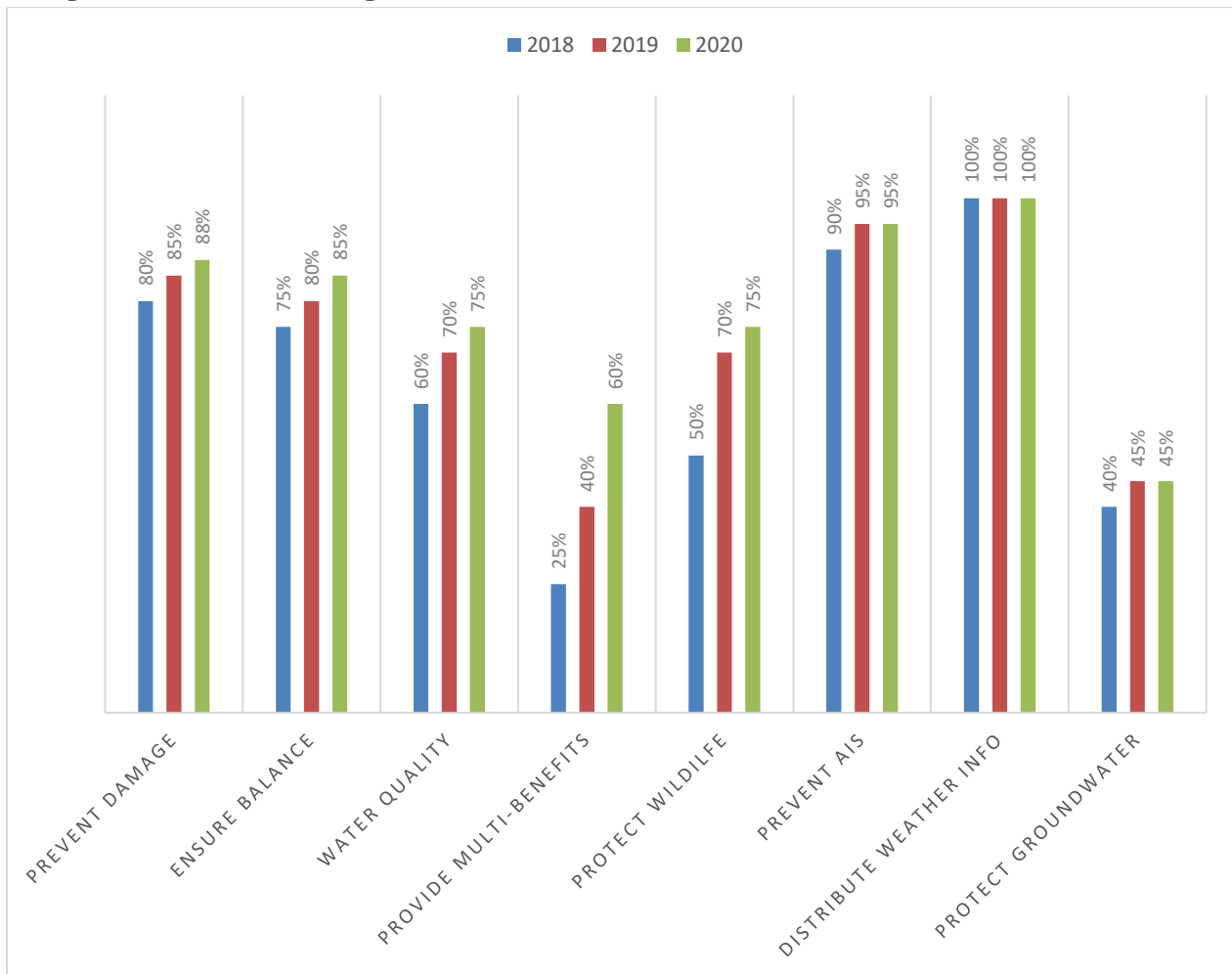
On September 9, 2019 the Board of Managers unanimously adopted the following budget for 2020. Also shown is the performance of both revenues and expenditures through December 2020.

Revenue Sources	2020 Budget	YTD Budget	YTD Actual	Variance	Pct Var
Property Taxes	2,577,244	2,577,269	2,551,959	25,285	1%
Special Assessments	-	-	-	-	
Fees & Charges	214,313	214,313	297,126	(82,813)	-39%
Grants	800,820	736,121	739,828	60,992	8%
Other Revenue	6,490	6,490	37,591	(31,101)	-479%
Fund Balances	59,230	59,230	59,230	-	0%
	3,658,097	3,593,423	3,685,735	(92,312)	0%
Expenditure Sources	2020 Budget	YTD Budget	YTD Actual	Variance	Pct Var
Salaries & Benefits	1,151,929	1,151,929	1,096,881	55,048	5%
Professional Services	261,213	261,213	325,155	(63,942)	-24%
Operating Expenses	223,426	223,427	152,167	71,259	32%
Program Expenses	1,980,635	1,741,310	1,903,293	77,342	4%
Capital Equipment	40,894	35,307	34,328	6,566	19%
	3,658,097	3,413,186	3,511,823	(98,637)	0%

Evaluation of Progress in Implementing the 2013–2023 Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan

Implementation of the 2013 – 2023 Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan is progressing well. The District has successfully implemented approximately 78% of its management goals. The sections below address recent management actions (2020); the degree to which the District has accomplished the management goals supporting the District’s mission each mission and issue goal in the District’s Comprehensive management plan; progress in

Progress Towards Long Term Goals



Significant Resource Management Actions in 2020

Administration	2019	2020
Board Meetings (Including the Tour):	24	24
Total Agenda Items	380	381
Consent Item Considered:	80	160
Policy Items Considered:	51	31
Permit Reviews Considered	166	130
Discussion Items Considered:	47	36
Informational Items Presented:	36	24

- Converted all work, workers and communications systems to remote working
- Equipped all staff for remote work
- Applied for and received \$5000 Grant to assist in purchase of laptop computers for staff for remote work
- Created and implemented a Covid Preparedness Plan (safety of employees, less time away from work to lack of transmission of Covid to other employees)
- Moved invoice payment to an electronic process rather than having to make multiple trips to the County (more efficient)

Development Regulation	2019	2020
Permit Applications:	97	89
Permits on agenda:	163	130
Permits issued:	103	80
Technical Assistance:	112	114
New Wetland applications:	60	68

Operations and Maintenance

Activity	2019	2020
Bank stabilization projects	9	5
Beaver Issues	14	24
Beaver Removed	15	12
Channel tree clearing and obstruction removal	15	18
Ditch Repairs	2	3
Drainage Issues	12	6
Erosion Issues	13	5
Flooding Issues	24	11
Illicit Discharge Issues	4	2
Information/Questions/complaints	90	127
Miles of Contracted Municipal Channel Inspections	4.8	6.5
Miles of Ditch Inspected	24.5	27.0

Activity	2019	2020
Number of Contracted Municipal Channel Inspections	2	3
Number of Drainage System Inspections	6	3
Obstruction Complaints	30	13
Obstruction Issues	33	18
Percent of Total Drainage System Inspected	17.8%	20%
Public Safety Issues	0	0
Routine or follow-up inspections.	82	82
Spring flooding responses	6	1
Spring Snow Pack Investigations	22	13
Technical Assistance Requests	91	113

Planning	2019	2020
Special Study: FEMA HUC 8 Flood Risk Study	1	1
Special Study: Watershed Based Funding	1	1
Develop Subwatershed Management Plans	1	1
Annual Reports	2	2
Boundary Investigations &/or Ammendments	1	1
Land and Water Resource Analysis	1	1
Annual Implementation Plan	1	1
Local Water Plans Reviewed	6	1
Capital Improvement Plan	1	1
Conduct public hearings & Meetings on planning and budgeting	11	12

Public Affairs

Education

- Initiated 2 major education projects: Community Survey focused on Pet Waste Reduction in Pleasure Creek Subwatershed
- Installed 6 Pet Waste Stations in The Lakes of Radisson HOA
- Awarded 3 Water Education Grants: Hosted 1 public works training reaching 6
- Coordinated with 2 -K12 & 1 community college on digital engagement reaching 120 students

Information

- Social Media (Facebook and Instagram): 341 posts, 1828 likes;
- Website: 293,980 website hits -new record
- City newsletter articles-22 published
- Northtown Library Display
- Created and installed signage for two major CIP grant projects:
- New Logo & Branding completed

Involvement

- 13 events attended, 491 interactions
- One material distribution coordinated, 400 brochures
- One clean-up event hosted, 16 participants, 70 lbs of trash removed
- Started citizen chloride monitoring program- 54 volunteers took 65 samples
- Subscribed to the Adopt-a-Drain program; 102 drains adopted and 203 cleanings reported in 2020
- Instead of in-person SWPPP public meeting, used social media to do SWPPP outreach due to COVID-19 Safer at Home orders. Received 1 comment.

Technical Assistance	2020	2021
Government	55	19
Residential	56	52
Commercial		43
Total	111	114

Water Quality

Monitoring specialist hired	1
Sites Monitored	71
Monitoring Visits	420
Grab Samples Collected	1500
Parameters analyzed	7
Sonde Measurements	396
Flow/Level Measurements	105
AIS early detection surveys	10
Grants applications & awards	2 of 2
Active grants administered	6
Cost share projects funded	4
Stream habitat restoration projects	2
Regional stormwater BMPs	2

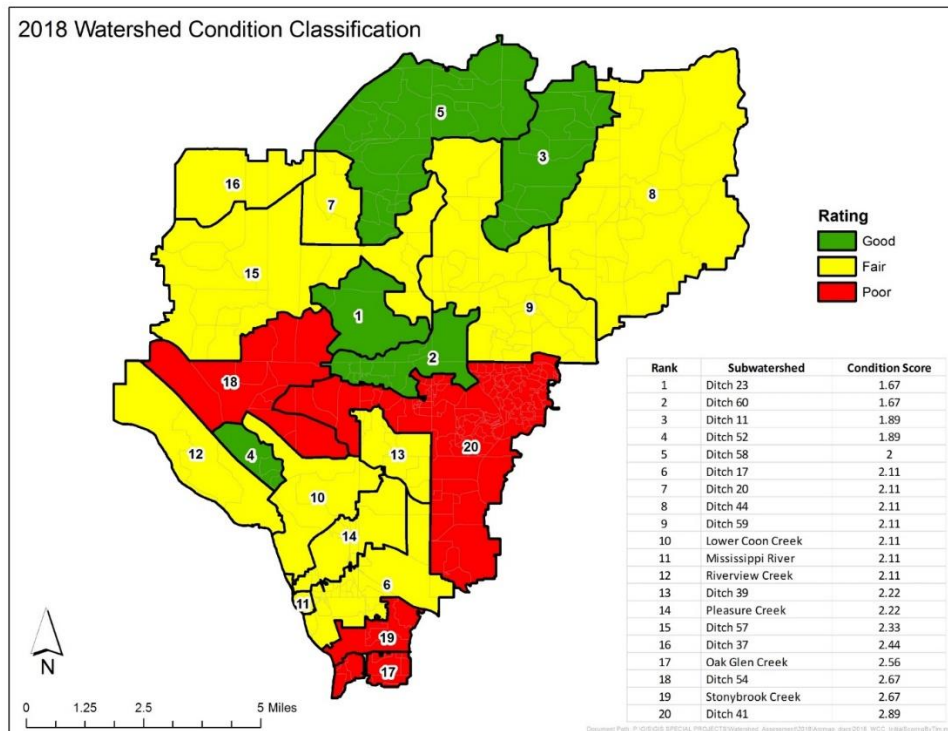
Evaluation of District Condition and Capability

Condition

The state of a watershed based upon physical and biological characteristics and processes affecting hydrologic and soil functions. It addresses the behavioral characteristics of a watershed described in terms of ability to sustain favorable conditions of water flow. Favorable conditions of water flow are defined in terms of water quality, quantity, and timing.

Watershed Condition Classes: Watershed condition is described using the following three classes:

1. **Good Condition.** Watersheds exhibit high geomorphic, hydrologic, and biotic integrity relative to their natural potential condition. The drainage network is generally the most stable in the District stable. Physical, chemical, and biologic conditions suggest that soil, aquatic, and riparian systems are predominantly functional in terms of supporting beneficial uses.
2. **Fair Condition.** Watersheds exhibit moderate geomorphic, hydrologic, and biotic integrity relative to their natural potential condition. Portions of the watershed may exhibit an unstable drainage network. Physical, chemical, and biologic conditions suggest that soil, aquatic, and riparian systems are at risk in being able to support beneficial uses.
3. **Poor Condition.** Watersheds exhibit low geomorphic, hydrologic, and biotic integrity relative to their natural potential condition. A majority of the drainage network may be unstable. Physical, chemical, and biologic conditions suggest that soil, riparian, and aquatic systems do not support beneficial uses.



Capability

Capability is the District’s ability to conduct the full range of water management operations it has been asked to perform. It is the state of the District relative to its ability to conduct work. Condition is a function of how well programs are staffed, equipped, trained, and led. It is evaluated in terms of shortfalls of resources to meet requirements needed to achieve mandates and responsibilities.

Factor	Definition	Capability Status
Collaboration – Building Partnerships	The ability to interact with partners, applicants, property owners or relevant populations by developing and presenting information and conducting activities to affect their perceptions, will, behaviour and capabilities in order to build effective, legitimate, interoperable and self-sustaining partnerships	High: District can accomplish this goal to established standards
Coordination	The ability to project and sustain a knowledgeable and equipped work force through the deliberate sharing of knowledge, skills and abilities to effectively support operations, extend operational reach and provide the involved agencies the freedom of action to meet objectives	High: District can accomplish all of its mandated goals to established standards
District Management and Support	The ability to provide strategic senior level, enterprise-wide leadership, direction, coordination, and oversight through a chief management officer function	High: District can accomplish all of its mandated goals to established standards
Management	The ability to exercise authority and direction by a qualified manager or decision maker(s) over staff and collaborators and resources in the accomplishment of the District’s mission	High: District can accomplish this goal to established standards
Net-centric	The ability to provide a framework for full human and technical connectivity and interoperability that allows all District users and mission partners to share information they need, when they need it, in a form they can understand and act on with confidence	Low: District is unable to accomplish this goal to prescribed standard and conditions at this time

Factor	Definition	Capability Status
Protection	The ability to prevent and/or mitigate adverse effects of actions on staff, the water and related resource and the physical assets of the District and its collaborators	Medium: District can accomplish all or most of this goal to standard under most conditions. Total success is blunted by violations, the complexity and fairness of the rules in a given circumstance and occurrences of vandalism.
Situational Awareness	The ability to understand the physical, social and managerial dispositions, tendencies and intentions, as well as the characteristics and conditions of the operational environment that bear on water resource decision making by leveraging all sources of information including inspections and monitoring.	Medium: District can accomplish all or most of this goal to standard under most conditions. Staff is still new to both the situational awareness model and integrating physical, social and political economic factors into a single assessment
Staff Application	The ability to integrate the use of sound scientific principles, public relations and best management practices in all environments to create the effects and results necessary to achieve the District mission	Medium: District can accomplish all or most of this goal to standard under most conditions. Staff is still new to both the situational awareness model and integrating physical, social and political economic factors into a single assessment
Staff Support	The ability to establish, develop, maintain and manage staff capable of pursuing the District’s mission	High: District can accomplish all of its mandated goals to established standards

Capability Issues and Concerns

1. **Issue:** Net-centric
2. **Purpose & Scope:** - This concern relates to the District facilitating a framework for full staff and technical connectivity and interoperability that allows all District staff and mission partners to share information they need, when they need it, in a form they can understand and act on with confidence.
3. **Background/Context:** Over the past two years the demand for and value of being able to coordinate with, and benefit from, shared information with the cities across all District programs has indicated tremendous potential in increasing both the efficiency and effectiveness of water management by all involved agencies.
4. **Issues/Concerns/Opportunities:** In 2020 District regulatory staff initiated use of a “common” platform for permit reviews which allows access to and authorship of reports and findings. The platform has served to increase collaboration and thereby provide a more efficient review by allowing multiple access and/or document access over various times and allowing staff more freedom and control over their work schedules. The same “common platform” approach has received considerable interest by city staff in facilitating both permit review, comment and coordination but in enforcement, construction, maintenance and monitoring.
5. **Implications for Resource/Organization:** Facilitating and developing a shared or common platform provides an excellent way to handle the increased complexity that exists in water management and a more efficient and effective way to benefit from and make the most of available staff and expertise.
6. **Conclusions:** Efficiency and effectiveness at the District and municipal levels could be enhanced through a networked system that allows all District and city staff to share information they need, when they need it, in a form they can understand and act on with confidence.

Collaborative operations and activities integrated by common information networks are key to enabling the District and the Cities to overcome a wide and fluid assortment of problems and meet all organizations larger public health, safety and welfare needs. By combining effects from every domain (planning, engineering, information and outreach and public works), allowing any unit of any program or organization to draw upon the whole, and permitting new levels of coordination and collaboration, all else being equal. Already inspectors and field staff using coordinated communications and monitoring equipment can respond to and address violations and issues in real time – a critical but near-impossible task without collaboration or network-enabled jointness.

Identify and Adopt New Ways to Improve Capabilities for Accomplishing Results and Remove Barriers

The District's operating concept of *unified operations executed through decisive action by means of two core competencies; collaborative efforts and watershed-based approach* will remain unchanged.

Perhaps the most significant way to improve District capabilities would be to:

1. Adopt formal training for staff on collaboration that fosters the ability to interact with partners, applicants, property owners or relevant populations by developing and presenting information and conducting activities to affect their perceptions, will, behaviour and capabilities in order to build effective, legitimate, interoperable and self-sustaining partnerships.
2. The District has already set aside money for software to assist in managing the watershed development process. A key criterion for that software should be the ability of District collaborators and the applicant's consultant's to remotely access information on the status and issues and concerns with their project and then, along with select city staff to make comments and potentially corrections in real time.
3. All staff need to continue training in the ability to understand the physical, social and managerial dispositions, tendencies and intentions, as well as the characteristics and conditions of the operational environment that bear on water resource decision making by leveraging all sources of information including inspections and monitoring.

Adjustments in Management Direction to Reasonably Assure Achievement of the District's Mission and Strategic Goals

Adjustments in Direction

1. Reconfigure the Development and regulation Program into the Watershed Development Program. This adjustment has been proposed to the Board in April 2021 the change along with a redrafting of position descriptions