

COON CREEK WATERSHED DISTRICT BOARD OF MANAGERS' MEETING

The Board of Managers of the Coon Creek Watershed District held their regular meeting on Monday, September 28, 2026, at the Coon Creek Watershed District Office.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM

Board Members Present: Jim Hafner, Mary Campbell, Dwight McCullough and Nathaniel Schneider

Board Member Absent: Jason Lund

Staff Present: Jon Janke, Justine Dauphinais, Corinne Elfelt, Hattie Hillukka and Michelle Ulrich

Zoom Attendees: Tyler Thompson

2. Approval of the Agenda

Board Member Campbell moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Seconded by Board Member Schneider. The motion carried with four (4) yeas (Board Members Hafner, Campbell, McCullough and Schneider) and no nays.

3. Announcements

No Announcements

4. Open Mic/Public Comment

No one was present for comment

CONSENT ITEMS

5. Approval of Minutes September 14, 2026

6. Bills/Accounts Payable

Claims totaling \$235,226.49 on the following disbursement list will be issued and released upon Board approval.

Vendor	Amount
V0025--CITY OF BLAINE	8,910.00
V0026--CITY OF COON RAPIDS	5,220.00
V0071--SUNRAM CONSTRUCTION INC	38,495.55
V0096--RANDY WESP EXCAVATING LLC	1,100.00
V0110--RESPEC COMPANY LLC	8,537.50
V0138--RMB ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORIES INC	1,715.00
V0138--RMB ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORIES INC	152.00
V0138--RMB ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORIES INC	228.00
V0138--RMB ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORIES INC	228.00
V0138--RMB ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORIES INC	152.00
V0138--RMB ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORIES INC	195.00
V0138--RMB ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORIES INC	1,715.00
V0195--STANTEC CONSULTING SERVICES INC	21,325.50
V0195--STANTEC CONSULTING SERVICES INC	67,145.00
V0195--STANTEC CONSULTING SERVICES INC	12,101.00
V0221--ABDO LLP	18,130.52
V0348--BLUE CROSS BLUE SHIELD OF MN	26,321.27
V0350--FIRST UNUM LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY	749.21
V0351--DELTA DENTAL OF MN	1,958.93
V0352--HEALTH EQUITY INC	1,158.35
V0360--PAYLOCITY	594.61
V0362--PUBLIC EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT ASSOCIATION	9,052.05
V0363--MINNESOTA STATE RETIREMENT SYSTEM	1,365.00
V0451--GORHAM DEVELOPMENT LLC	8,677.00
	235,226.49

Board Member McCullough moved to approve the Consent Items. Seconded by Board Member Campbell. The motion carried with four (4) yeas (Board Members Hafner, Campbell, McCullough and Schneider) and no nays.

POLICY ITEMS

7. Water Quality Cost Share Awards

Presented by Water Quality Coordinator Justine Dauphinais, the purpose of this item is to ensure progress towards achieving required pollutant reductions and addressing identified stressors to aquatic life by administering a cost share program for water quality improvement and protection projects. This item specifically addresses applications received during the request for proposals with an application deadline of September 11, 2026.

The program supports projects that reduce pollutants and other stressors affecting impaired waterways, including sediment, phosphorus, E. coli, and chloride. Several local creeks are impaired, and municipalities and other MS4 permittees share responsibility for meeting pollutant-reduction goals by 2045.

Recommended projects

Project	Applicant	Recommended funding	Main purpose
2027 Street Reconstruction Outfall Retrofit	Andover	\$16,030	Add stormwater treatment to reduce sediment/phosphorus
Targeted Goose Management	Coon Rapids	\$10,000	Reduce E. coli and phosphorus
Public-Private Sanitary Investigation	Coon Rapids	\$20,250	Identify sanitary leaks and maintenance needs
Fridley Low Salt Design Pilot	Fridley	\$26,250	Reduce chloride from road salt
Anoka County Low Salt Design Pilot	Anoka County	\$27,375	Integrate low-salt practices into county projects
Mapping for Low Salt Solutions	Anoka County	\$22,500	Map road salt demand and target chloride reductions
Epiphany Pond Sediment Investigation	Coon Rapids	\$7,814.50	Study sediment contamination and phosphorus release

Total recommended: \$130,219.50.

All seven applications were found eligible, and staff recommend funding 100% of each requested amount.

The 2026 program has \$248,875 remaining after \$41,125 was awarded in the first application round. The seven new applications would use \$130,219.50, leaving \$118,655.50 unallocated, or about 41% of the available funds.

Board Member Campbell questioned whether it would be more efficient for the cities to combine their bids rather than having each city independently solicit bids for the same work. Mrs. Dauphinais responded that this option has been discussed and that the City of Fridley is willing to participate as early as this year. Other cities would like to see how the process works for Fridley this year before deciding whether to participate in the future.

Based on the findings and exhibits presented in the Staff Report, the staff recommendation was to Award cost-share funds to identified projects in accordance with Staff recommendations and authorize staff to re-open request for proposals through December 31, 2026.

Board Member Campbell moved to Award cost-share funds to identified projects in accordance with Staff recommendations and authorize staff to re-open request for proposals through December 31, 2026. Seconded by Member Schneider. The motion carried with four (4) yeas (Board Members Hafner, Campbell, McCullough and Schneider) and no nays.

8. Request to Seek Proposals Compensation Study

Presented by District Administrator Jon Janke, the purpose of this item is to authorize staff to seek proposals for the 2027 Compensation Study. The 2027 District budget includes \$30,000 for a Compensation Study and no project costs would be incurred before 2027 funds are available.

The Study is intended to provide an independent review of the District's classification and compensation system and practical recommendations for maintaining a clear, consistent, and competitive system. Staff anticipate seeking proposals this fall, selecting a consultant by year end, beginning work when funding is available in early 2027, and completing the study by March 2027.

Staff will finalize and distribute the draft RFP to qualified firms with relevant Minnesota public-sector classification and compensation experience. The RFP may be refined based on Board direction and staff review before release.

Board Member Hafner suggested some changes in the wording currently in the draft stating "should" and would like that replaced with "will" as to be more direct and eliminate confusion.

Authorizing solicitation of proposals does not authorize a consultant contract or commit the District to proceed. Staff will return to the Board with proposal results and a recommended consultant selection before contract award. Work would not begin before 2027 funds are available.

Based on the findings and exhibits presented in the Staff Report, the staff recommendation was to Authorize staff to seek proposals for the Compensation Study.

Board Member McCullough moved to Authorize staff to seek proposals for the Compensation Study. Seconded by Member Schneider. The motion carried with four (4) yeas (Board Members Hafner, Campbell, McCullough and Schneider) and no nays.

9. Request to Seek Bids Lower-Level Remodel Project

Presented by Mr. Janke, the purpose of this item to authorize staff to seek bids for the 2027 Lower-Level Remodel Project that includes adding a break space for staff, a conference room and staff offices.

In spring 2026, the District completed an evaluation and concept plan for remodeling the lower level of the District office and on June 8, 2026, the Lower-Level Remodel Project was highlighted during the District Open House. On September 14, 2026, the Board adopted the 2027 budget, which includes

funding for the Lower-Level Remodel Project. Public bids are required for this project because the cost exceeds \$175,000, which is a state requirement.

Mr. Janke explained that although this is a 2027 budget item, it would be beneficial to get started on the project early in 2027 because the staff currently using the lower level are primarily field staff and will have a lighter workload during the winter months. This will allow staff to work from home or in other offices during construction, minimizing disruption. With completion projected for March 2027, the timing will allow the project to be completed ahead of the busy field season beginning in April.

Based on the findings and exhibits presented in the Staff Report, the staff recommendation was to Authorize staff to seek bids for the 2027 Lower-Level Remodel Project.

Board Member Campbell moved to Authorize staff to seek bids for the 2027 Lower-Level Remodel Project. Seconded by Member Schneider. The motion carried with four (4) yeas (Board Members Hafner, Campbell, McCullough and Schneider) and no nays.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

10. Water Quality Model Update (ABM)

Presented by Mrs. Dauphinais, the purpose of this item was to provide an update on the water quality model of pollutant loading across the District, to inform strategic targeting of future restoration and protection projects, and evaluation of progress towards achieving required reductions.

In 2025, funds were budgeted to pursue development of a water quality model to simulate sediment and nutrient loading across the District and evaluate progress towards achieving the required pollutant total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) established in 2016. Modeling is a powerful and cost-effective tool to simulate continuous data with expanded spatial coverage compared to discrete, highly localized field-collected data.

Mrs. Dauphinais acknowledged Planning Coordinator Erik Bye, who spearheaded this effort and will present Part 2 of the presentation at a later date. Water Quality Specialist Chase Vanderbilt was also recognized for his dedication and attention to detail with the quality and quantity of water samples and water quality measurements he has accomplished.

A brief description of what this effort entails was given to the Board. The TMDL was defined as the allowable amount of a pollutant that can be present in a body

of water that still meets the clean water standards that the federal legislature requires with a numeric target to meet.

There is a weighted equation that includes three sources of water that are tested. First through regulated wastewater that comes from things like stormwater and sewage, second through natural landscapes like ditches and lastly through reserve and buffers.

Previously, water quality modeling efforts were conducted in a piecemeal manner as part of rotating subwatershed assessments. District staff recognized challenges with this approach including lack of agreement between disjointed models and inefficient workflows. It was determined that a comprehensive, Districtwide effort would result in more useful data products, cost-savings long-term, and better integration of monitoring data.

In early 2025, Stantec was tasked to first evaluate available water quality model methodologies and to provide a recommended approach to best meet stated objectives. Six options were reviewed and compared, with a final recommendation of the Soil and Water Assessment Tool (SWAT). A strength of SWAT is that it models landscape and watershed processes to simulate pollutant transport in both surface and groundwater and can predict impacts of changing land cover and management practices across a wide range of land uses.

Development of a Districtwide SWAT model was initiated in June 2025 with completion of a calibrated, validated model by December. The model was tested against and fitted to field-collected data at 11 long term stream monitoring sites. The validated model was then used to generate a variety of data products including updated flow and pollutant loading summary figures for all impaired streams and major tributaries as well as a variety of geospatial products such as pollutant loading heatmaps. A summary report of methods, results, and major findings was finalized in September 2026. This report includes a 10-year evaluation of progress towards achieving required pollutant load reductions since approval of the CCWD TMDL study by US EPA in 2016. Overall, this work showed significant progress has been made toward pollutant load reductions and provided updated reduction benchmarks, while also laying the foundation for better targeted projects which will enable the District to achieve its TMDL goals in the most cost-effective manner.

Member McCullough excused himself early from the meeting at 6:32pm.

11. Watershed Management Videos

The Board discussed the video series that is available through the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) that helps managers understand their role on the Board. Mr. Hafner explained that as time allows the Board may view a video at a Board Meeting. Due to the length of this meeting, the Board chose not to view one of the videos.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

12. Article Many Minnesotans Don't Value Aquatic Plants

Mr. Janke explained that native aquatic plants are vital to the health of Minnesota's lakes but are often mistakenly viewed as weeds.

Aquatic plants provide major ecological benefits and a 2021 study comparing historical lake surveys with modern surveys found that Native plants are declining. More than half of the lakes examined had lost at least one plant species that had been common a century earlier.

Removing these native plants can create problems. Homeowners can remove limited amounts of submerged vegetation without a permit, while larger removals and chemical herbicide use generally require DNR approval. The DNR says it aims to protect aquatic ecosystems while allowing reasonable lake access. Researchers and lake advocates worry that removing native plants can disrupt ecosystems and create opportunities for invasive species such as Eurasian water milfoil.

Scientists and Indigenous resource managers argue that many people see aquatic vegetation primarily as an obstacle to swimming or boating rather than as an integral part of a healthy lake ecosystem.

The article's central message is that Minnesota's lakes are healthier when they retain diverse native aquatic vegetation, and researchers hope greater public understanding will encourage people to preserve plants while finding ways to accommodate recreation.

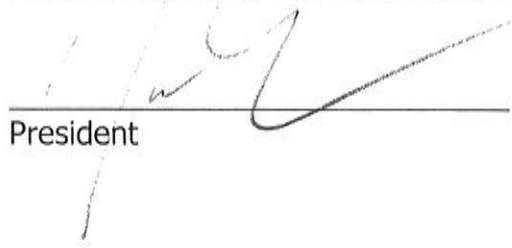
13. We Are Water Exhibit Northtown Library

The purpose of this item is to introduce information regarding the upcoming "We Are Water Exhibit" at Northtown Library.

Posters and bookmarks were provided by Engagement Coordinator Jessica Lindemyer for Board Members to view.

ADJOURNMENT

Board Member Campbell moved to adjourn at 6:35 pm. Seconded by Board Member Schneider. The motion carried with three (3) yeas (Board Members Hafner, Campbell, and Schneider) and no nays.



President