



MEMORANDUM

To: PPC

From: Telly Mamayek, Communications and Education Manager

Date: July 22, 2019

Re: MCWD Strategic Communications and Engagement Plan – Discovery Phase report

Purpose:

To review findings from the Discovery phase and the plan for the Research Phase of MCWD's Strategic Communications and Engagement Plan.

Background:

To accomplish measurable change in water quality, water quantity and ecological integrity within the watershed, the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District has adopted an organizational strategy focused on implementing high-impact capital improvements and integrating land-use and water policy to enhance opportunities for partnership.

Executing this strategy requires the awareness, understanding, support from the public and private land use community (policy makers, community development, planning and zoning, public works, developers, architects, landscape architects, civil engineers, etc.).

Generally, the Strategic Communications and Engagement planning process involves conducting research into target audiences, synthesizing insights from that research, and using those insights to focus and align MCWD communication and outreach programming.

Equally important, the information gathered will help inform other strategic initiatives the District is currently planning, including shaping policy within the Permitting and Responsive Programs, guiding the content strategy for the District's website, and informing the District's overall approach to cultivating value added partnerships within the land use community.

Following an RFP process for a strategic communications consultant that resulted in none of the candidates being selected, the MCWD Board of Managers on June 13, 2019 authorized the execution of a contract with Himle LLC (John Himle) to assist in the development of the Strategic Communications and Engagement Plan. Himle's deep understanding of the MCWD, gained through the past completion of many successful communications initiatives for the District, and his extensive expertise make him uniquely qualified for the project.

Staff worked with Himle LLC to develop the scope of work for the project, and Himle secured the assistance of his former colleague Tom Horner (Horner Strategies LLC) as a sub-contractor.

The first deliverable for the plan, which will also be used to inform the redesign of MCWD's website, is the Discovery Phase report. The Discovery Phase is a summary of information that MCWD already knows about its audiences. It is comprised of research done by MCWD, Himle/ Horner, and the website redesign consultant (Vendi).

In a parallel process, staff is doing an assessment of current outreach to inform the implementation of the strategies that are outlined in the Strategic Communications and Engagement Plan.

Goals

The general purpose of the MCWD Strategic Communications and Engagement Plan is to ensure the effective delivery of key messages to stakeholders to achieve the following goals, which align with the strategic priorities outlined in MCWD's 2017 Watershed Management Plan.

1. The MCWD has the support and assistance of local and state officials for its major capital project initiatives
2. The MCWD has the support of local government officials and developers for early coordination on land use change
3. The MCWD receives more funding and leverages more partnership contributions for its capital projects, operations and programs
4. The MCWD's responsive program has the support of its key stakeholders across the District, especially those in non-focal geographies
5. The MCWD is perceived by its key stakeholders and the general public as a credible, transparent and responsive agency that adds value in its communities.

Audiences

The primary target audiences for the plan are the land use community (developers, real estate agents/brokers, trade associations) and government officials (elected and appointed local, regional and state policymakers and key agency staff). The secondary audiences for the plan are interested publics such as paddlers, permit applicants, volunteers and others who come to MCWD for information.

Scope

The development of the Strategic Communications and Engagement Plan will consist of the following stages, starting with an external audience analysis. Data collected about the secondary audiences will inform the website redesign process.

Discovery – The strategic communications and website redesign consultants and MCWD will aggregate information that is already known about MCWD's positioning and the perceptions of MCWD's target audiences, and MCWD will conduct an assessment its outreach programming.

We collaborate with public and private partners to protect and improve land and water for current and future generations.

Research – The strategic communications and website redesign consultants and MCWD will do primary research of key stakeholders.

Insights – The strategic communications consultant will collect the data from the research and work with MCWD and the website redesign consultant to develop an insights report.

Strategy Development – The strategic communications consultant will collaborate with MCWD to create a Strategic Communications and Engagement Plan that includes measurable objectives, strategies, suggested tactics, estimated costs, and evaluation methods to help the MCWD successfully communicate and engage with key stakeholders to accomplish the Plan’s goals. The Plan will be tailored to MCWD’s major initiatives over the next 3 years.

Implementation Plan – MCWD will develop a plan to execute the new strategy for outreach programming, and identify the operational and programmatic changes and timeline needed for implementation.

Project approval – The strategic communications consultant will work with the project manager to present the Plan for approval to the MCWD Board of Managers.

On a parallel track, staff is evaluating current outreach methods which will inform the implementation plan once strategies are identified.

Summary:

The Discovery Phase portion of developing MCWD’s Strategic Communications and Engagement Plan was implemented by MCWD staff in coordination with Himle LLC and sub-contractor Horner Strategies LLC (the consultants retained to assist with the plan), and Vendi (the website redesign consultant). Vendi will be using findings from the research to inform the content and structure of the District’s new website.

The three components of the Discovery Phase report are the following:

1. Himle Horner Discovery Phase summary - Environmental scan, review of past MCWD audits and surveys, and public comments on MCWD’s work
2. MCWD Audience Assessment summary and detail - District’s current experience with its target audiences
3. Vendi website redesign discovery report - Review of MCWD website analytics and peer websites

The information included in this report is being used to develop a research plan that will be implemented in August. The research plan includes interviews with primary audience members including elected officials, key government agency staff, developers and others. Those interviews will be conducted by the strategic communications consultants using a questionnaire and an interview list developed in coordination with MCWD.

Secondary audience research includes a focus group of MCWD’s Citizen Advisory Committee as well as a survey to be distributed via email and social media.

We collaborate with public and private partners to protect and improve land and water for current and future generations.

The research plan, including categories of questions and a list of people who the consultants will interview, will be discussed in more detail at the meeting.

Next Steps:

Following presentation of the Discovery Report and research plan to the PPC on July 25, 2019, the Research Phase portion of the plan's development will begin.

Research phase – August

Preliminary Research Phase findings presented to PPC – September 26

Preliminary Research Phase findings presented to CAC – October 2

Draft Insights Report presented to PPC – October 24

Draft Insights Report presented to CAC – November 13

If there are questions in advance of the meeting, please contact: Telly Mamayek at (952) 641-4508 or tmamayek@minnehahacreek.org.

We collaborate with public and private partners to protect and improve land and water for current and future generations.

MCWD STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS PLAN – DISCOVERY PHASE SUMMARY

*Insights from Review of Relevant Information
Outline for Research Phase – Qualitative Audit Interviews*

Prepared by Himle LLC and Horner Strategies LLC – July 16, 2019

DISCOVERY INSIGHTS – REVIEW OF RELEVANT INFORMATION

This section includes three areas of insights:

1. Highlights of MN public opinion survey research related to water issues
2. Selected materials/articles that address issues relevant to MCWD
3. High-level summary of prior MCWD research

HIGHLIGHTS OF MN PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH

For purposes of context, we thought it might be useful to show the results of various public opinion quantitative surveys administered to Minnesota residents in recent years testing views related to water issues. These results represent more than one survey each year designed by Himle testing identical questions among a random-sample of generally 800 respondents across the state (MOE: +/-3.5% @ 95% confidence).

Perception of the water quality of MN lakes, rivers and streams

- 11% Excellent
- 61% Good
- 24% Fair
- 4% Poor

Note: these numbers have remained almost identical each year from 2016 – 2019

How important is it to protect the water quality of MN lakes, rivers and streams

	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>
○ Very important	63%	76%	84%	80%
○ Somewhat important	35%	22%	15%	20%
○ Not too important	2%	2%	1%	0%
○ Not at all important	0%	0%	0%	0%

Most important problem that needs to be addressed to protect water quality

	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>
○ Manufacturing	21%	32%	27%	42%
○ Homeowner practices	31%	21%	24%	24%
○ Failing septic	17%	18%	11%	9%
○ Farm runoff	21%	17%	21%	16%
○ Mercury	10%	11%	16%	7%

Vegetative buffers on farms to protect water quality

	<u>2016</u>	<u>2019</u>
○ Good idea strongly	25%	33%
○ Good idea	<u>57%</u>	<u>60%</u>
○ Total good idea	82%	93%
○ Bad idea	12%	3%
○ Bad idea strongly	<u>1%</u>	<u>2%</u>
○ Total bad idea	13%	5%

Primary threats to water quality of MN lakes, rivers, streams – farmers or a larger problem?

	<u>2016</u>	<u>2019</u>
○ Primarily farmers	33%	17%
○ Larger problem than farmers	64%	75%

Are there contamination problems that jeopardize quality of drinking water in some areas of MN

	<u>2016 only</u>
○ Yes	46%
○ No	47%

If “Yes” – is this a bigger problem in rural/outstate areas or the metro

○ Rural/Outstate	13%
○ Metro	31%
○ Both	56%

Primary cause of contaminated drinking water (open end)

○ Lawn chemicals	33%
○ Farm chemical runoff	14%
○ Animal waste runoff	10%
○ Poor water filtering	9%
○ Manufacturing	9%
○ Household products down the drain	8%
○ Failing septic systems	4%

Key Conclusions:

1. Perceptions of the quality of MN lakes, rivers and streams has stayed constant for four years
 - Nearly $\frac{3}{4}$ view MN water quality as excellent or good
 - About $\frac{1}{4}$ + see it as fair/poor
2. The importance of protecting water has intensified over the last four years (80% very important)
 - Protecting water quality is a core MN value
3. MN residents see threats to water quality from multiple sources
 - Threats by manufacturing/energy viewed as highest threat
 - Many residents blame homeowner practices
 - Despite attention to farm practices, assigning blame primarily to farmers has actually declined
 - Protecting water will require a multi-faceted approach

SELECTED MATERIALS/ARTICLES OF RELEVANCE TO MCWD

Based on our review of external sources of information, the following stories, materials and studies offered some interesting insights.

Priced Out: The True Cost of Minnesota's Broken Housing Market

Housing Affordability Institute (Housing First)

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5c51e0890dbda309881ce7b1/t/5c585f07ee6eb0443f80db67/1549295407935/PricedOut-ResearchPaper_HAI.pdf

Key findings: Regulations can make up one-third of the cost of building a home in the Twin Cities.

LOCAL REGULATIONS

The largest variable in housing costs stemmed from local government regulations and policies across the Twin Cities.

LOCAL & REGIONAL WATER MANAGEMENT

Requirements made by local water management organizations, oftentimes promulgated by appointed officials, can add thousands of dollars to the price of a new home.

LAND SUPPLY CHALLENGES

The Metropolitan Council's growth boundary is unique to the region and has resulted in significantly higher land prices inside the established line. In concert with municipal land decisions, a land shortage has emerged which has a rationing effect in key areas, driving up prices.

Land inside the Metropolitan Council's growth boundary can be 3.8-12.8 times more expensive than comparable land outside of the boundary. In cities around the country that do not have urban growth boundaries, we do not see these kinds of price discrepancies.

STATE REGULATIONS

State-level regulations, including the administration of federal rules, also affects affordability. Recently enacted state-level regulations in Minnesota have added more than \$13,000 in costs per home.

League of Minnesota Cities counter to Priced Out

<https://www.lmc.org/page/1/HousingReport.jsp?ssl=true>

Concerns about the study

The League has several concerns about the report's data and conclusions, including:

- **Cost variables.** The report addressed only local regulations, local and regional water management, land support challenges, and state regulations as the cost variables, leaving out as part of the review issues such as labor and materials, which in the report accounts for approximately 50 percent of the total price of a home.
- **Cost comparisons.** The report compared cities with city water and sewer infrastructure to cities without the same utilities, and corresponding differences in development costs.
- **Metro emphasis.** While the report only focuses on the Twin Cities area, housing development throughout the state is needed to address housing needs statewide.
- **Average price of homes studied.** While the report emphasized the desire to have more affordable housing, it used homes with an average price of \$394,726.

Ground Level Survey

APM Research Lab & Analyst Group, a division of American Public Media

<https://www.apmresearchlab.org/stories/2017/11/13/ground-level>

Topline Results N = 1654, age 18+ in Minnesota

Margin of Error: ±3.5% (90% Confidence)

August 22-September 14, 2017

1. Generally speaking, how much of the time do you think you can trust news media, including TV, newspapers, and radio in Minnesota to do what is right? Would you say ...?
Just about always 10%
Most of the time 33%
Only some of the time 45%
Never 11%
Don't know 1%
Refused 0%
2. Do you think Minnesota is generally on the right track or the wrong track when it comes to protecting lakes and rivers for things like swimming, boating, and fishing?
Right track 80%
Wrong track 14%
Don't know 5%
Refused 0%
3. If you think about all of the infrastructure, regulation, and services provided by the government in Minnesota, and all of the taxes you pay, do you generally think that the government in Minnesota is providing a good value for the taxes you pay?
Yes 59%
No 37%
Don't know 4%
Refused 1%

<https://www.americanpublicmedia.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/opinions-about-water-gl-brief-april-2018.pdf>

- The answers to the two questions regarding providing safe drinking water and protecting lakes and rivers for things like swimming, boating, and fishing reveal insights about Minnesotans' views on the state's water resources. Of note, more Minnesotans said we were on the right track for providing safe drinking water (85%) and protecting lakes and rivers (80%) than for any other topic asked (education, strengthening the economy, health care, older adult services, welcoming immigrants).
- Among residents of Twin Cities suburbs, 84% say MN is on the right track in protecting lakes and rivers; 81% of Minneapolis-St Paul residents say we are on right track.

KSTP-TV: Attempt to eliminate Lake Minnetonka Conservation District

<https://kstp.com/news/coalition-lake-minnetonka-conservation-district-eliminated/5383150/>

KSTP-TV, Jay Kolls

June 10, 2019 09:56 AM

A coalition of city leaders, businesses and property owners told 5 EYEWITNESS NEWS the Lake Minnetonka Conservation District has "outlived its usefulness and duplicates government services" and should be "eliminated".

"Gabriel Jabbour owns and operates four marinas on Lake Minnetonka and he told KSTP the LMCD is overreaching its taxation authority and is a government agency whose services could be handled by the DNR, the 14 cities on Lake Minnetonka and the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District.

"It is a money grab right now," said Jabbour. "I used to be on the LMCD Board and I can tell you the taxes it is levying on cities and businesses is no longer needed because the services the LMCD provides can be folded into other government agencies....

"The LMCD is simply a duplication of services and their authority to tax cities, impose fees on businesses and some homeowners for certain types of boat slips is just something that is not needed anymore." Evenson said when the LMCD was created more than 50 years ago there was a strong need for a government agency to protect the lake from pollution and control shoreline erosion.

"The LMCD was needed in the mid--60s when there was not much out here and the development was starting to come," said Evenson. "But now, with 14 cities on the lake, there are more than enough resources out here to manage the lake's future, keep it clean and monitor its health without the LMCD and, in my opinion, it does more harm than good."

"LMCD Executive Director, Vickie Scheuling, told KSTP the opposition to the government agency is "wrong" because it does not duplicate services and eliminating the LMCD would actually "do more harm than good....

"Jabbour said he and other members of his coalition are considering taking legislative action at the state Capitol next year which would, effectively, end the LMCD as a government agency."

Opinion article, Star Tribune: "Water, water everywhere in Minnesota — but it needs help"

Jan. 22, 2106

<http://www.startribune.com/water-water-everywhere-in-minnesota-but-it-needs-help/366263681/>

Paul Austin is executive director of Conservation Minnesota; Gene Merriam is a former DFL state senator and DNR commissioner; Darby Nelson is a former DFL legislator, a biologist and the author of "For Love of Lakes," and Dave Legvold is a Rice County farmer and environmental educator.

"...clarity has been missing in much of our state's water quality planning. Over the years, we have seen many different plans come and go. There has been no way for the average Minnesotan to track where we are, let alone where we are headed. And when the state has set clear goals, they have not been inspiring. "

Opinion article, Star Tribune: "So, does Minnesota have a water crisis?"

July 23, 2017

<http://www.startribune.com/minnesota-must-admit-it-has-a-serious-water-quality-problem/435946713/>

Bruce Bomier (Board chairman of the nonprofit Environmental Resource Council and the former CEO of IEA, an engineering firm with offices throughout Minnesota.)

So, does Minnesota have a water crisis?

The state supports a battery of overlapping state agencies, each with typically inconsistent water plans and water-control policies and approaches. At local levels, water is managed by a scrambled mixture of watershed districts, county soil and water boards, zoning authorities, river and lake councils, and unique sets of local joint powers agreements.

These odd and erratic clusters of state and local governments that control waters are typically staffed by competent people; however, given the Byzantine system in which they work, and no comprehensive state water plan, serious and necessary reform is an illusion.

Despite the Legacy Amendment and other well-meaning programs, huge amounts of surface water are constantly polluted. Even Minnesota's 2014 Clean Water Roadmap aspires to clean up only 8 percent of lakes over the next 20 years. The groundwater issues are obvious, with nitrogen burdens threatening drinking water safety.

We must accept that:

1. Minnesota's water management system is incapable of addressing its water challenges.
2. Help isn't coming from the federal government.
3. We need a single, clear, transparent state water plan.
4. State agencies and local governments must accept No. 3.
5. Reform will create disruptions — but it's necessary.

It just might be that we finally have one of John Kennedy's crisis-generated opportunities.

The State of Minnesota's Water

McKnight Foundation, July 2018

<https://www.mcknight.org/wp-content/uploads/McKnight-RiverReport.pdf>

SDK Communications (Stephanie Devitt)

(Qualitative research conducted through interviews with 22 people:

Environmental Advocates 5

Agriculture Interests 2

Business 1

Public Health 3

Local Government 4

State Government 3

Rural Thought Leaders 4

Excerpts of the Findings—

Stakeholders Cited a Diverse Mix of Information Sources for Understanding Water in Minnesota

- The specific go-to information sources varied by constituency. For example, among advocacy oriented environmental stakeholders, Minnesota Environmental Partnership, Friends of the Mississippi, and the Land Stewardship Project were mentioned as go-to information sources on water and water quality topics. However, state and local government leaders, as well as rural thought leaders, referenced local and state agencies as reliable sources of information on water issues.

- Rural thought leaders and agriculture respondents also emphasized the importance of local information sources on water. Watershed districts, soil and water districts and the Board of Water & Soil Resources were the most consistently cited organizations among non-advocacy respondents.
 - “Land Stewardship Project, Friends of the Mississippi River, and Minnesota Environmental Partnership have been most strategic on shifting policy.” – ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCATE
 - “There’s a cluster of easement groups—Land Stewardship Project, Nature Conservancy, and the like— that is using market forces for improving water quality. That’s important work. Pheasants Forever is a statewide group with a strong network. Corn Growers are a huge player.” – ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCATE
 - “BWSR and the state government know a lot, but good information starts through the partnerships on the ground created to address a specific goal. I look at co-ops and engineering firms. We need those public-private partnerships.” – AGRICULTURE STAKEHOLDER
 - “I look to state agencies and watershed districts. The watershed districts are where good ideas are born. In terms of nonprofits, I respect Fresh Water Society, Conservation Corps, youth development groups like Wilderness Inquiry, and Urban Roots in St. Paul are developing the next generation.” – RURAL THOUGHT LEADER
 - “Right now the commodity groups are doing good work—the Minnesota Corn Growers and co-ops. The University of Minnesota and MnSCU have pockets of good data too. BWSR [Board of Water and Soil Resources] has a lot of data, but there’s a mistrust of data from the government. Nature Conservancy is an environmental group I would trust.” – AGRICULTURE STAKEHOLDER

Local Government Was Seen as a Frontline Voice on Water by Many Respondents

- Metro area respondents noted that water quality issues in core cities were not as precarious as in many rural communities, and stakeholders of all perspectives recognized that water service was a basic function of municipal government. It’s the small, rural communities’ struggle to maintain effective drinking water and wastewater services that most respondents saw as the greatest need and opportunity.
 - “With the Legacy money in the field now, there are a lot of nonprofits that go off and do their own thing without working with local governments and knitting conservation into the local community. That can create animosity and hurt us, I think.” – ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCATE
 - “Cities and counties are on the front lines of water. [It’s] one of the basic functions of a city government. But the challenge then becomes getting good information to the cities on how water impacts people, and how it can impact health. Governments come to the table as problem solvers, and that helps. Small local governments are in a world of hurt right now.” – STATE GOVERNMENT LEADER
 - “We recently did a study of the sewer system in [town], with a population of 400. These pipes are from 100 years ago and they are leaking. But we don’t have a population base or the capital to take on updating infrastructure or sewer lines. I appreciate Governor Dayton saying that we need to do something to help small towns.” – LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEADER
 - “In general, cities and counties don’t have a big role to play in agriculture. Most of Greater Minnesota gets its water from wells, which is subject to pollution from agriculture. The government’s role is to test water, make sure it’s protected. Maybe one thing they can do is pursue an aggressive zoning policy. But in this political environment, there’s not as much openness to regulatory approaches.” – ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCATE “Local governments are on the forefront of water. I’m working with some watersheds on the One Watershed / One Plan initiative. The question in front of many watersheds is: How does health and human services trump water quality? In the state’s general fund, less than 2 percent goes to agriculture. Those dollars from the state tend to translate into capacity

at the county level, and that's not a lot of capacity to address these issues." – STATE GOVERNMENT LEADER

- "Cities are critical because they have the majority of people. Urban people are underwriting the regulatory burdens that rural Minnesota has avoided. The 2030 census will show a new distribution of our population. Cities have to be at the table because that's where all the people will be." – ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCATE
- "Cities and counties have an important role to play, but education on that role needs to get elevated through their associations. We need to help them build a deeper awareness of water issues and what's going on. Local government leaders have a lot on their agendas and a passing understanding of most issues. But absolutely they have a role to play." – RURAL THOUGHT LEADER

SUMMARY OF PRIOR MCWD RESEARCH

We reviewed three pieces of prior research that had been conducted for the MCWD:

- 2010 Communications/Education Program Audit (qualitative research) conducted by Himle Horner
 - 38 total individual interviews -- 29 external (policymakers/staff, partners, opinion leaders) and 9 internal interviews (7 MCWD Managers and 2 staff)
- 2013 Communications Audit (qualitative research) conducted by Himle Rapp & Company
 - 24 total individual interviews (policymakers/staff, business and civic leaders)
- 2015 Public Opinion Survey of District Residents (quantitative research); Himle Rapp & Co.
 - 600 random-sample telephone interviews among residents in the MC watershed

The following are high-level summaries of relevant conclusions/recommendations of the research and current comments/observations (where noted).

2010 Communications/Education Program Audit Summary/Highlights

1. There was an identified need for greater internal consensus among the Managers and staff regarding goals, expectations and measurements of the ed/comm program.
2. We also found there was too much process and it was impeding the success of the MCWD.
Comment: Our impression is that there is much more clarity today regarding MCWD goals/expectations and that process has been streamlined.
3. There was an identified appetite for the MCWD to act as more of a partner with external stakeholders and collaborate more with cities, residents and other in support of water protection.
Comment: Here, again, the MCWD has made progress in becoming a more valued and active partner to water stakeholders and the current strategic planning process will identify strategies to take this positioning to an even higher level of partnership and effectiveness.
4. The Audit also identified opportunities to incorporate new approaches/tactics to improve communications, including the use of more storytelling of MCWD water success stories.

2013 Communications Audit Summary/Highlights

1. From the respondents we interviewed, there was a sense that MCWD communications had improved and that the MCWD is a leader among MN watershed districts in seeking innovative approaches to protecting water.
2. Having said that, most were of the view that the MCWD did not have a high level of awareness and understanding among the general public.

3. The Audit recommended that the MCWD website could be enhanced to provide more information and tools for District residents and partners. Also, more robust social media outreach was identified as an opportunity to target audiences with useful information.
4. Other tactical recommendations were offered to reach targeted resident audiences as well as other stakeholders important to the District.
Comment: There was a view in 2013 that the MCWD would devote more focus to reaching a resident/consumer audience with water protection information and engagement tools. In the current strategic planning process, the consumer/resident audience will be a second-tier audience so that the MCWD can allocate resources to more aggressively reach other public partners and private entities developing projects.
5. The Audit suggested there were opportunities for Managers and senior staff to cultivate personal relationships with potential partners and key District stakeholders.
6. It was also recommended that the MCWD conduct quantitative survey research of District residents to measure current attitudes/awareness and to help inform the next comprehensive plan process.
Comment: The District did invest in a quantitative survey in 2015 and senior staff and the Board have conducted more targeted outreach.

2015 Public Opinion Survey Research of District Residents

1. Reported awareness among District residents was fairly high, especially for an organization that does not invest a significant budget for marketing and brand awareness.
Comment: Awareness of the MCWD is probably enhanced due to the visibility of Minnehaha Creek running through several cities and the success of the District getting included in news stories about water issues in metro media.
2. The awareness, however, is “soft” – only 9% claimed they were “very aware” of the MCWD.
3. We found higher levels of awareness among residents who are more engaged/informed on civic matters, college graduates and people who live close to water. Residents who reported higher levels of familiarity of the MCWD were more likely to view the District favorably.
4. A significant majority of residents said they have reasons to believe or assume the MCWD is an effective organization in protecting water quality throughout the watershed.
5. Water quality issues were cited as the top environmental priority in the Twin Cities.
6. About half of residents reported that they believe water quality near where they live has stayed about the same; 31% said water quality has improved and 19% said it has become worse.
7. When asked an open-end question to describe what “water quality” means to them, 59% cited clean drinking water, 23% said water without chemicals and only 9% said clean wetlands/lakes/rivers.
8. The survey sample was split into three geographic clusters: west (Carver, Lake Mtka); Central (suburbs east of Lake Mtka) and East (Mpls.). There was no statistically significant variation among the three geographic areas in reported awareness of the MCWD or in their view of the District’s effectiveness.
9. Residents were highly favorable to the concept of a single-purpose agency such as the MCWD to protect water quality (93% support) and were also very supportive of the MCWD to work in partnership with other entities, both public and private.

DISCUSSION RELATED TO PHASE TWO – RESEARCH

The Strategic Planning work scope specifies we will interview approximately 35 key stakeholders important to the MCWD. The final number of completed interviews could be somewhat higher, depending on whether we believe additional interviews are warranted.

Potential Areas/Questions to Explore

Perceptions of Water Quality/Threats

1. How would you characterize the water quality of lakes, rivers and streams in the Twin Cities?
 - Rank metro water quality on a scale of 1-10: 1= poor & 10=excellent
 - Is the water quality in the metro getting better, worse or about the same?
2. When you think about some of the most critical water quality issues – especially in the Twin Cities metropolitan area – which ones come to mind first/are most important to the area? On the issues you think are most important, what organization (public, private, non-profit) is in the forefront of creating and managing effective solutions?

Water Policy/Regulation

3. Are regional planning and regulatory agencies viewed by policymakers as an asset in the Twin Cities or is the sense their functions could better be handled by city, county or state governments and agencies?
4. Who/what organization (public, private, non-profit) is creating a broad and important vision for how the metro area should develop, how land-use should be managed and the future of water quality?
5. Who/what are the most trusted sources of information and expertise on water management in the metro area?
6. Water quality at the local and regional level is managed by several entities, including municipal governments, watershed districts, county soil and water boards, river and lake councils, and unique sets of local joint powers agreements. Some critics say that this creates an overlapping and confusing jumble of regulations. Others say that the local entities assure that local priorities prevail in managing development and water resources. Should some policymakers give up jurisdiction to streamline the process or is there value in the different perspectives each regulatory/governing level brings?
7. Do local regulatory bodies promote an agenda that is too narrow or too broad? If so, how is the agenda best described?

Views Related to MCWD

8. What would you say is the core purpose of the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District?
9. What is the critical value of MCWD to area policymakers?
10. Is MCWD able to negotiate the sometimes competing agendas of the municipalities in its region?
11. Is MCWD proactive in identifying creative solutions to water quality, wetlands restoration, and other water-related issues in the communities throughout the region?
12. Is MCWD an effective partner with local communities in making the region attractive for economic development?
13. Is MCWD a barrier to economic development?
14. Can MCWD be a broker between the strong public support for protecting the quality of Minnesota's water (Minnesotans believe the state's protection of water quality is on the right track, more so than other topics) and a growing sentiment that water regulations/permitting come at the cost of job growth, affordable housing and other economic needs?

15. Would Minnesota's water quality goals be better met by reducing the number of oversight agencies?
By coordinating more policies at the state level?
16. Is MCWD well integrated with state policy and goals on water quality?

MCWD As a Partner

17. Is the MCWD easy to work with?
18. Do you trust/value the expertise of MCWD staff?
19. Do you believe that an entity like the MCWD can be an effective partner in helping enhance a community's built and natural environment through the application of integrated land use and water planning and adoption of best practices?
20. Do you view the MCWD as strictly a water regulator, or, do you also see it as a partner to cities, developers and builders by assisting with integrated land use and water planning when doing projects?
21. The MCWD Board and staff are transforming the District's approach and services so that is seen as a partner and resource to developers, builders and cities -- help them plan and permit projects in a manner that accelerates permitting and ensures use of best practices. In practical terms, this means the MCWD will act less as a rigid "top-down regulator" and more as a planning resource and partner. What will be required to encourage developers of projects to approach the MCWD early in their process?
22. What would be some effective strategies or tactics to effectively communicate this new approach with cities, developers and builders? Credible messengers?

Possible Categories to Target for Interview Respondents

MCWD Project Partners

- Successful projects
- Projects and/or relationships that were not successful

Local Officials

- Select cities in District
- Hennepin & Carver counties

State Officials

- Key legislators: some in District and state policy leaders
- Agencies, Governor's office
- Met Council?

Development Community involved in Projects

- Developers
- Builders
- Architects

Development Stakeholders

- Housing First (formerly BATC)
- MN Multi-Housing Assn.

Conservation Stakeholders

- Lake associations
- Some state associations (TNC, Conservation MN, Sierra Club, etc.)

Media

- Select reporters
- Is there an influential blogger in the District?

Other?

**2019 MCWD Audience Assessment
Executive Summary**

BACKGROUND

The Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD or District) is in the process of developing a Strategic Communications and Engagement plan to identify effective outreach strategies that will help accomplish its strategic goals. There are two components of this work: an assessment of audiences and an assessment of its outreach.

For the audience assessment, the MCWD has retained the services of Himle LLC and subcontractor Horner Strategies LLC to collect research about the MCWD's primary audiences and to help develop strategies for the plan. MCWD has contracted with Vendi Advertising to assist in researching MCWD's secondary audiences to inform the redesign of MCWD's website. MCWD staff is also collecting audience information for the plan.

For the outreach assessment, the MCWD is assessing the effectiveness of its outreach and exploring potential new ways to support the organization's priorities of building high impact capital projects and changing policy to integrate land use and water planning while remaining responsive to needs across the watershed. This assessment will inform how best to implement the strategies identified in the Strategic Communications and Engagement Plan. While the outreach assessment is not included in this summary, it is mentioned here for reference.

OVERVIEW

The audience assessment is an integral element of the Discovery Phase portion of the Strategic Communications and Engagement Plan development process. During this phase, MCWD staff collected information that's already known about its target audiences and outreach. The information collected will inform the research plan and provide a baseline to compare against the new information gathered during the Research Phase.

There are three elements of the Discovery Phase work, each conducted by a separate work group involved in the project:

1. Environmental scan, review of past audits/surveys and public comments on MCWD's work – Himle LLC/Horner Strategies LLC
2. Review of MCWD website analytics and peer websites – Vendi Advertising
3. Assessment of target audiences – MCWD

The Audience Assessment summary that follows includes the information collected by MCWD about its target audiences. A more detailed report on the findings of MCWD's audience assessment is attached.

Staff met in three separate work sessions during the month of June 2019 to discuss what is already known about each of the following audience groups:

Primary audiences

- Policymakers and staff (elected & appointed government officials, key agency staff)
- Land use community (developers, real estate agents & brokers, trade associations, etc.)

Secondary audiences

- Interested public (lake/neighborhood associations, Master Water Stewards, homeowners, permit applicants, paddlers, etc.)

Given the broad scope of the policymakers and staff audience category, staff limited its discovery phase research to the group with which it's had the most experience – city officials and staff.

For each of these groups, staff identified the following:

1. Desired actions we want the audience to take
2. Outreach methods we use to reach that audience
3. Outcomes of those outreach methods
4. Barriers to desired outcomes
5. Perceptions of MCWD

Detailed findings from those discussions are included in the attachment. The following summary captures high level findings for each audience.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Primary audiences

Desired actions

Early coordination - Among our primary audiences, the desired actions the MCWD wants them to take are understanding the value that MCWD can bring to their work and coordinating with MCWD early in the development of a project.

Systems approach - In addition, the MCWD would like policymakers and government agency staff to take a systems approach to their projects. By viewing each project through a wide lens, they will be able to see the inter-relationship among all of their projects, including those involving the MCWD, and the benefits of managing stormwater on a systems scale. This will facilitate an approach that maximizes benefits to water quality and local communities.

Outreach methods

The main means of communicating with our primary audiences is through face to face communication, both relational and through formal processes.

Land use community – The MCWD's relational methods of communicating with the land use community include offering to meet with developers prior to submitting a permit application and to conduct preliminary reviews, and presenting at conferences and trade group gatherings.

Policymakers/staff - The MCWD has a wider variety of face-to-face communication experiences with city officials and staff. The MCWD has built relationships with agency staff through permitting projects (including working individually with cities to route new projects through the MCWD), and has built relationships with policymakers through one-on-one meetings that also

involve members of the MCWD Board of Managers. Other more formal inter-personal communication includes convening advisory committees comprised of policymakers and agency staff (e.g. 2017 Watershed Management Plan) and making presentations at agency meetings.

The MCWD also uses a combination of traditional and digital outreach to reach its primary audiences. This outreach spans the spectrum from targeted to broad.

Targeted - The most targeted traditional outreach for policymakers and staff are the MCWD's annual and mid-year newsletters and fact sheets. The most targeted digital outreach for all of its primary audience members are project-based email newsletters such as the Six Mile Creek Halsted Bay Subwatershed Project Update and the Arden Park Restoration Update.

Broad - Other digital outreach that has content relevant to primary audiences but is more broad in reach is MCWD's social media channels (most notably its LinkedIn account), and the MCWD website. Achieving positive news coverage through media relations is also an outreach tool for these audiences, especially when that coverage reflects positively on MCWD's partners.

Outreach outcomes

What works best - The MCWD has experienced the most success with its primary audiences through face-to-face communications that establish trust and positive relationships. These relationships often continue past the project completion date, paving the way for future collaborative efforts, and resulting in positive word-of-mouth communications about the MCWD.

What is challenging - However, these relationships can suffer with turnover in policymakers and agency staff, especially in cases where institutional knowledge about the benefits of working with MCWD declines with those departures. To insulate the MCWD against this risk, the MCWD relies upon MOUs and other formal agreements, and should consider establishing formal written processes.

What is not known - While there's agreement that broad non-targeted outreach through digital channels (social media, website) and traditional means (printed materials, media relations) is not as effective in reaching MCWD's primary audiences, there is a lack of data to confirm that assumption.

Barriers

Organizational and resources - A significant barrier to achieving the desired actions by the MCWD's primary audiences is siloed organizational structures that don't facilitate a systems approach to problem solving. There's also a long-held practice of coming to the MCWD for a permit approval late in the development of a project. And the time and financial resources needed to coordinate are often lacking.

Knowledge and priorities - In addition to these structures and practices is a lack of understanding of the benefits of working with the MCWD, and confusion about the rules and MCWD's approach. Also, the MCWD's primary audiences are prioritizing other factors above water quality. For cities these include such topics as housing, transportation and infrastructure. For developers, there's an inherent conflict between land use and water quality protection.

Process - Lack of a defined process of coordination is also a barrier for both the land use community and policymakers/staff. Not having a process in place makes it more difficult when staff or policymakers leave an agency, as they take that institutional knowledge and working relationship with them.

Perceptions

The most negative perceptions of MCWD among its primary audiences is that it's a rigid regulator, technocratic and has a big budget. The land use community's impression of MCWD also can be negatively affected by its interactions with other watershed districts.

The most positive perceptions of MCWD is that we're responsive, credible and have expertise to help them with their projects.

Secondary audiences

Desired Actions

Among our secondary audiences, the desired actions the MCWD wants them to take is to understand watersheds and how they work, be aware of MCWD and its role in watershed management, follow MCWD's rules when doing projects on their property, and understand what actions they can take to provide and protect clean water

Outreach methods

Inter-personal communication - The MCWD has a system of communicating directly with the interested public through programs like the Watershed Association Initiative and Master Water Stewards, and workshops/trainings on topics ranging from water-friendly landscaping to smart salting practices. It also has an established practice of providing excellent customer service by being responsive to email and phone inquiries about permits, water levels and other information.

Digital & traditional outreach - Complimenting this inter-personal communication is a robust set of digital outreach tools including six social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, NextDoor, and YouTube), a series of email newsletters (the weekly Splash newsletter and regular, assorted project e-news updates), and the MCWD website. Also part of this outreach is traditional communication, including printed fact sheets and newsletters, postcards notifying residents of projects in their neighborhood, and media coverage.

Outreach Outcomes

Inter-personal communication - The effectiveness of the WAI and Master Water Stewards programs is currently being evaluated. More needs to be known about how these programs can benefit. The MCWD's responsiveness to inquiries from secondary audiences has resulted in a reputation as being responsive, however it often is time consuming for staff. The MCWD would benefit from having a strategy for ending communication that is no longer productive. Time would also be saved by providing more information that's easy to find and understand on the MCWD website, reducing the amount of time staff are spending with these audiences.

Traditional and digital outreach - Using digital and traditional channels to reach MCWD's secondary audiences has resulted in positive media coverage and social media engagement that is at or above the industry average. However, there is a lack of data about these methods' effectiveness in changing these audiences' attitudes and behaviors.

Another common method of communicating with residents is through postcards notifying residents of projects in their neighborhoods. These postcards are largely considered not effective because they are not visually appealing (e.g. text heavy, no images) and do not contain organizational messaging.

Barriers

The primary barriers secondary audiences have to taking the desired actions are lack of awareness and understanding about watersheds, the MCWD, and its role in water management/protection. They also are confused by the regulatory process, are motivated by self-interests and not water quality protection, and lack the time needed to fully understand the issues.

Perceptions

The most negative perceptions among MCWD's secondary audiences are that it's a rigid regulator and that it's not trustworthy or accountable to the public.

The most positive perceptions among this group are that the MCWD is responsive, credible and effective. This has been especially apparent this year as a result of MCWD's management of water levels via the Gray's Bay Dam.

Some people confuse the MCWD with other agencies, like the DNR, or think it's a non-profit organization and don't understand the scope of its authority or work.

COMMON THEMES

While each audience has unique needs and MCWD staff members' experiences with each of these audiences have been varied, some common themes emerged from the discussions. The following are some high-level takeaways from the audience assessment.

Perceptions

Among MCWD's primary and secondary audiences there are some consistent perceptions about the organization's effectiveness. On the positive side, the MCWD's practice of offering excellent customer service has cultivated a reputation among its audiences as being responsive. MCWD's use of sound science has established a reputation as a credible source of information that is often tapped by others, including partner organizations and the news media.

On the other hand, negative experiences with other watershed districts, confusion about MCWD's regulatory role, and audiences' overall distaste for regulation have contributed to the perception of the District as a rigid regulator. Some audiences also view the MCWD as not transparent or accountable due, in part, to its organizational structure (managers are appointed, not elected) and the lack of understanding about watershed districts and their role in water management in Minnesota.

Barriers

Several barriers were identified that apply to one or more audiences. They include the following:

- Anti-regulation bias and confusion about MCWD's permitting process and broader regulatory matrix
- Audiences are self-focused on their interests, generally not motivated by improving water quality
- Silos and long-established work flows at partner organizations make it difficult to coordinate
- Staff and policymaker turnover can disrupt progress made in coordination
- Lack of time and financial resources for both MCWD and its audiences

- Audiences' lack of understanding about watersheds, the MCWD and its role in water management

Outreach outcomes

Primary audiences - The most effective means of communication with primary audiences is face-to-face through relational interactions and more formal interpersonal communication. Additionally, the MCWD has found success in tailoring messages to audiences' needs and motivations.

Conversely, based on the information the MCWD currently has about its broad-based outreach including social media, the website and media relations, these methods are not as effective as face-to-face outreach in reaching MCWD's primary audiences.

Secondary audiences – Most of the face to face communication with secondary audiences occurs through WAI and the Master Water Stewards, educational workshops, and phone/email about District activities including permitting and managing water levels. While the effectiveness of the established programs are under evaluation, the phone/email contact has built good will with members of the interested public.

However, the traditional outreach of sending postcards to residents about projects in their neighborhood are not as effective as they could be in communicating organizational messaging. And more information is needed on how MCWD's broad-based outreach including social media, the website, and media relations changes behaviors and attitudes.

Suggested improvements

In the process of examining the effectiveness of MCWD's outreach to its audiences and the barriers that might contribute to audiences not taking the desired actions, staff developed a list of suggested improvements to the District's outreach efforts. Among the list are the following:

- Utilize steps in the permitting process for outreach about MCWD
 - Revise the project notice post cards to be more visually appealing and contain organizational messaging
 - Create a fact sheet about the MCWD to include with permits
- Create a written process for permitting and coordination
- Establish direct outreach to shoreland property owners to improve understanding about permitting, water levels, stewardship, etc.
- Continue the level of excellent customer service, but develop a strategy for exiting a conversation that is no longer productive
- Buffer the impact of policymaker and staff turnover by ensuring the support of agencies through MOUs, resolutions, and other formal agreements
- Use plain language, infographics and other graphic design methods to visualize data and make the MCWD's messaging clear and easy to understand
- Utilize the website for tool kits for homeowners, cities and developers; establish an online permitting application system accessible through the website
- Tailor the messaging to what audiences care about
 - Explain the outcome of MCWD's work to inspire others; instill confidence in work; encourage continued investment and partnership
 - Connect with audiences with timely, relevant messaging that applies to their needs

Policymakers and city staff

Desired Action	Outreach Methods			Outreach Outcomes			Barriers				Perceptions		Suggestions for Improvement
	Relational	Formal Process	Digital/Print	What works	What doesn't	Don't know	Process	Motivation	Knowledge	Resources	Positive	Negative	
<p>We want policymakers/staff to coordinate with us early, understand MCWD and the value that we bring and to advocate on our behalf.</p>	<p>Build relationships with staff through permitting (e.g. phone, email, meetings)</p>	<p>Notification of permit violations</p>	<p>E-newsletters (general and targeted by project)</p>	<p>Face to face communication builds relationships, encourages early coordination</p>	<p>Relationships can suffer with city staff changes</p>	<p>Effectiveness of digital, print outreach in achieving the desired actions</p>	<p>Historic business practice of coming to watershed last</p>	<p>Cities are prioritizing other things, not water</p>	<p>Lack of understanding about MCWD and benefits of working with us</p>	<p>Limited staff time and financial resources (MCWD and cities)</p>	<p>We are responsive, credible, and have expertise</p>	<p>We have a big budget</p>	<p>We need to buffer the impact of staff changes by ensuring support of councils, planning commissions, etc. through MOU's and other methods</p>
<p>We want policymakers/staff to take a systems approach both internally and externally to better integrate water (and other projects) into their work</p>	<p>One-on-one meetings with policymakers</p>	<p>Advisory committees (e.g. 2017 comp plan)</p>	<p>Printed newsletters (A Look Forward, Mid-Year Highlights, Six Mile Newsletter)</p>	<p>Understanding cities' drivers and how MCWD's goals align</p>	<p>Broad, non-targeted outreach</p>	<p>Demographics of people who read our materials, interact with digital channels</p>	<p>Not systems thinkers, micro-focused on problems</p>	<p>Personalities</p>		<p>Lack of creativity/flexibility</p>		<p>We are rigid regulators and technocratic</p>	<p>It's important to ensure a good customer service experience for all, since one negative experience can harm perceptions of MCWD</p>
	<p>Work individually with cities to route new projects through us</p>	<p>Project-focused presentations at agency meetings (to gain approvals to move project forward)</p>	<p>Social media</p>	<p>Developing buy-in early and maintaining contact throughout duration of projects</p>	<p>Mandated requirements</p>	<p>Change in attitudes/perceptions as a result of our outreach</p>	<p>Internal and external silos resulting in uncoordinated projects, efforts</p>	<p>Fear of trying something new</p>					<p>Early coordination helps identify and avoid conflict, facilitates MCWD participation in land use change</p>
		<p>Formal agreements (e.g. resolutions of support, MOUs)</p>	<p>Website Media relations</p>	<p>Word of mouth is a powerful tool to build credibility (e.g. past project partners Methodist, St. Louis Park)</p>			<p>Staff/council changes can derail projects</p>						<p>Utilize our professional networks to promote coordination</p>

Land Use Community

Desired Action	Outreach Methods			Outreach Outcomes			Barriers				Perceptions		Suggestions for improvement
	Relational	Formal Process	Digital/Print	What works	What doesn't	Don't know	Process	Motivation	Knowledge	Resources	Positive/neutral	Negative	
<p>We want the land use community to coordinate with us early, understand MCWD and the value that it brings, and advocate on our behalf.</p> <p>In Six Mile, additional actions include wanting the land use community to be excited about partnering with us and attracting a more diverse, creative group to the table.</p>	Offer to provide pre-permit application meetings, preliminary reviews (not required)	Notification of permit violations	E-newsletters (general and targeted by project)	Capitalizing on opportunities and challenges	Lack of written permitting process that can be easily shared with the land use community	Effectiveness of digital, print outreach in achieving the desired actions	Lack of clear, universally accepted process of early coordination	Partners are prioritizing other things, not water	Lack of understanding about MCWD and benefits of working with us	Limited staff time and financial resources (MCWD and partners)	Won't partner unless there's something in it for them	Anti-regulatory bias (will cost more, they'll lose land)	We need to proactively mitigate the anti-regulatory threat with a partnership model that resonates with developers and gets them to take action
	Inform permit applicants about the process (verbally – no written process)	Provide letters confirming application of MCWD rules to projects (when required by city)	Social media	Relationships/face to face communication	Relationships can suffer with city staff changes	Demographics of people who read our materials, interact with digital channels	Lack of clear, written process for permitting	There's inherent conflict between land use and water			Confusion about regulatory matrix, MCWD mission	MCWD lumped with other WD negative experiences	We need to sell our new and improved permitting process, underscoring how easy it is
	Present to trade groups and at land use-related conferences, events		Website	Consistent good customer service	Broad, non-targeted outreach	Change in attitudes/perceptions as a result of our outreach	Confusion about requirements/regulation matrix	Sub-consultants want to keep happy, blaming issues on MCWD					
			Media relations	Specifically in the Minnehaha Creek subwatershed, problem solving approach (with common sense solutions) and messaging about stacked benefits	Specifically in the Six Mile Creek subwatershed, we have missed out on the mid-size developers amid lack of targeted outreach		In SMCHB, we're seeing greenfield developments that are more standardized and offer fewer opportunities to engage in creative problem solving around water and natural resource planning						There are three primary channels for reaching the land-use community 1. Cities 2. MCWD's permitting process 3. Marketing to land use community
				Promoting value of legacy developments & MCWD coordination opportunities to developers in SMCHB			The dual role of permitting (primary/first contact and enforcer) poses big challenge in changing perceptions						It's important to ensure a good customer service experience for all, since one negative experience can harm perceptions of MCWD
													Early coordination helps identify and avoid conflict, facilitates MCWD participation in land acquisition

Interested Public

Desired Action	Outreach Methods			Outreach Outcomes			Barriers				Perceptions		Suggestions for improvement
	Interpersonal	Broad		What works	What doesn't	Don't know	Process	Motivation	Knowledge	Resources	Positive/neutral	Negative	
		Digital	Traditional										
They understand what a watershed is and MCWD's role in it	Door knocking to access property	Website	Fact sheets	Interpersonal outreach has generated reputation as being responsive	Permitting postcards	Effectiveness of digital, traditional outreach in achieving the desired actions	confusion about permitting process	Distrust of government, science, facts	Don't know what a watershed is, who we are	Not tech savvy, can't access websites/social media	We are responsive and provide good community service	We are not trustworthy, accountable or transparent	<p>Explain the outcome of our work to inspire others</p> <p>Use plain language</p> <p>Visualize data</p> <p>Update permitting notice postcards so they're full color, larger, and tell the District's story, include maps instead of location descriptions, and link to more info on website</p>
They know and follow the rules, get permits, maintain their projects	One on one meetings	E-newsletters	Signage	Social media analytics are at or above industry average	Lack of targeted outreach to shoreline property owners	Demographics of people who read our materials, interact with digital channels		Lack of interest in water issues	Don't understand how regulations apply to them	Lack of time to receive, send information due to information overload/staff resources	We are credible and effective (e.g. water levels management)		<p>Include an informational insert with permits</p> <p>Develop a written guide to permitting process</p>
They engage in our projects/programming	Community meetings	Social media	Printed newsletters	Media coverage has been predominantly positive	interpersonal outreach that is no longer productive	Change in attitudes/perceptions as a result of our outreach		Only motivated to act when their property/way of life is perceived to be threatened or impacted	Misinformation from others		We are the DNR, or a non-profit, and deal with drinking water		<p>Create a card to leave behind when staff knock on doors to request access to property</p> <p>Direct outreach to shoreland property owners through neighbors, direct mail, realtors</p>
They understand the actions they can take to protect and improve water quality, and take action	Volunteer groups	Storymaps	News media	The use of fact sheets helps ensure MCWD's messages don't get misconstrued (e.g. telephone game)	Too much data that is not visualized, lack of plain language, not gearing information to what people care about						The rules don't apply to them		<p>Need to determine how to exit unproductive customer service/social media interactions</p>
	Trainings, workshops, tours	Photos/video	Permitting postcards	Staffing the front desk helps people find what they want. The majority of calls that come in are redirected elsewhere: permitting, projects, paddling (e.g. creek obstacles), requests to speak with a specific employee	Not having information compiled in an easy to access format						We have more authority than we do		<p>Develop a document for how citizens can engage effectively on water issues</p> <p>Create an online package of resources for lake associations</p> <p>Outreach to these audiences should be more digitally focused combined with good customer service</p> <p>Deliver messages through professional network groups like Watershed Partners</p> <p>Evaluation method: add question to e-newsletter sign-up asking where people heard of us</p>



MINNEHAHA CREEK WATERSHED DISTRICT

Website redesign discovery report

JULY 16, 2019

Overview

As part of the discovery and strategy phase of the website redesign process, Vendi conducted a thorough review of the existing website, performance data and other industry/peer websites. The following report includes observations and recommendations related to:

- Website traffic and engagement
- Search engine optimization and performance
- Server settings
- Accessibility
- Website CMS
- Site architecture and content
- Overall user experience

Analytics review

Analytics highlights

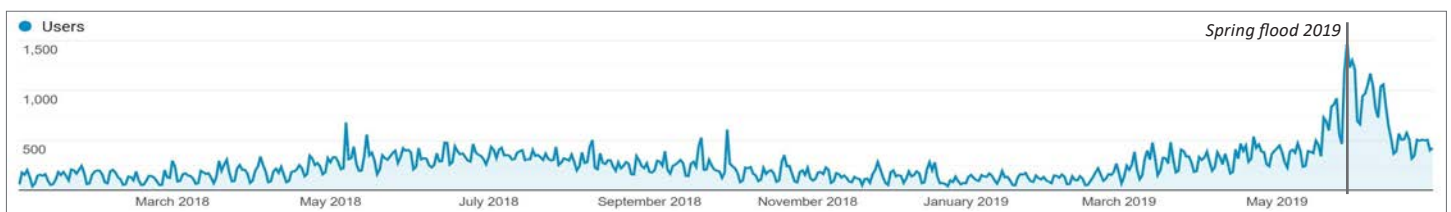
- Some pages show high seasonality
- The MCWD website has a higher than average amount of visitors using legacy versions of Internet Explorer
- Pages for water levels have high traffic spikes during major floods
- The majority of visitors have English as their browser's primary language
- Desktop traffic accounts for a larger than average number of users
- Higher than expected percent of new website users

Overview

Jan 1, 2018 - Jun 30, 2019

Sessions 171,534 total	New users 89,584 total (82%)	Avg. session duration 1:56 average	Pages/session 2.24 average	Bounce rate 50.5 percent
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Site traffic over time



► Total website traffic over time

Seasonality

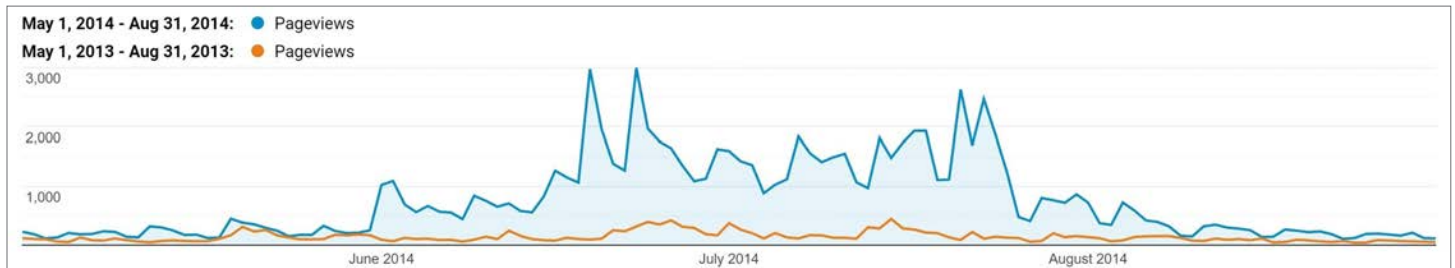
- Traffic typically peaks May-July, with a month or two of ramping up and down
- Peak monthly traffic is about 6,000-8,000 users per month
- Winter traffic is about 2,500-3,500 users per month

Flood season traffic

Overall website traffic and water levels page traffic increases significantly during periods of flooding.

Summer flood 2014

- Average daily traffic increased between 150% and 1,000%
- Water levels page traffic increased 591% compared to the previous year and increased 660% as a landing page



► Water levels page traffic over time

Spring flood 2019

- Average daily traffic increased between 75% and 200%
- Water levels page traffic increased 609% compared to the previous year and 596% as a landing page
- Home page traffic increased 91%



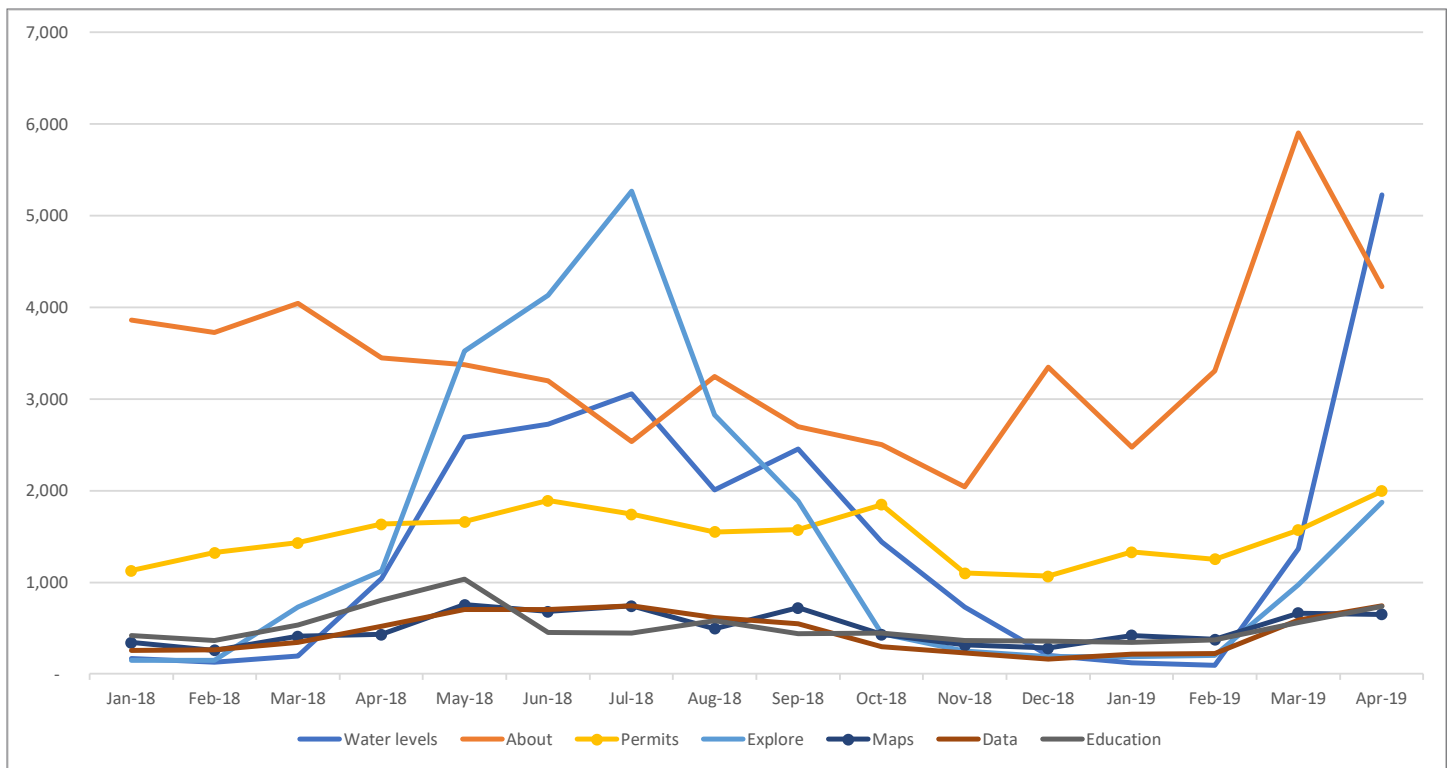
► Water levels page traffic over time

Site content

- The home page and water level pages tend to be top pages on the site, with 18% and 32% of total pageviews during peak months, and 15% and 7% during off-season months
- The Paddling Minnehaha Creek page shows high seasonality with 7% of pageviews during peak months compared to 3% during off-season

Content seasonality

- Pageviews over time for major content areas is illustrated below. To observe trends over time, pageviews for the months of May and June 2019 have been removed as the site saw major spikes in traffic during the spring flooding season.



Top pages

	Pageviews	Unique pageviews	Avg. time on page	Bounce rate
/water-levels-lake-minnetonka-and-grays-bay-dam	31,618 (18.67%)	25,894 (18.57%)	00:03:30	60.22%
/	28,071 (16.58%)	22,736 (16.31%)	00:01:29	33.65%
/explore/canoe-minnehaha-creek	9,507 (5.61%)	8,038 (5.77%)	00:06:07	47.48%
/about	4,082 (2.41%)	3,273 (2.35%)	00:00:40	45.31%
/about/mcwd-staff	3,130 (1.85%)	1,218 (0.87%)	00:00:44	42.44%
/maps	2,515 (1.49%)	2,150 (1.54%)	00:02:54	67.14%
/lake-minnetonka-water-levels	2,344 (1.38%)	2,011 (1.44%)	00:03:07	77.29%
/permits	2,339 (1.38%)	1,788 (1.28%)	00:00:56	31.15%
/project	2,298 (1.36%)	1,745 (1.25%)	00:00:37	27.41%
/about/employment	1,904 (1.12%)	1,483 (1.06%)	00:03:26	55.84%

► January 1–June 30, 2019

Top landing pages

	Sessions	% New sessions	Bounce rate	Pages/session	Avg. time on page
/	20,987 (26.73%)	42.69%	33.79%	2.71	00:02:27
/water-levels-lake-minnetonka-and-grays-bay-dam	20,055 (25.54%)	27.90%	60.73%	1.46	00:01:24
/explore/canoe-minnehaha-creek	6,965 (8.87%)	54.39%	48.05%	1.39	00:01:55
/lake-minnetonka-water-levels	1,814 (2.31%)	41.84%	77.29%	1.39	00:01:05
/water-levels-update-2	1,024 (1.30%)	60.35%	56.45%	1.43	00:01:24
/permits/additional-information/how-determine-100-year-floodplain-elevation	943 (1.20%)	95.44%	30.97%	1.43	00:01:04
/water-levels-lake-minnetonka-and-grays-bay-dam?field_date_value[value][year]=2019	894 (1.14%)	13.09%	66.67%	1.46	00:01:06
/project/arden-park-restoration	887 (1.13%)	59.08%	69.00%	1.29	00:02:00
/about/employment/job-openings	801 (1.02%)	60.67%	64.67%	1.90	00:01:35
/about/employment	798 (1.02%)	49.87%	57.52%	2.12	00:02:30

► January 1–June 30, 2019

Acquisition overview

- More than half (54%) of users arrive at the website through organic search
- Google accounts for 93% of total organic search traffic followed by Bing (5%), Yahoo (1.5%) and DuckDuckGo (.5%)
- Referral traffic visitors spend the most time on the site and bounce less frequently than other traffic sources
- Top referral sources include waterdata.usgs.gov, hoigaards.com and minneapolis.gov
- Facebook accounts for 75% of total social traffic followed by Twitter (17%) and LinkedIn (6%)

	Users	New users	Sessions	Bounce Rate	Pages/ session	Avg. session duration
	38,141 % of Total: 100.00% (38,141)	37,612 % of Total: 100.05% (37,594)	78,524 % of Total: 100.00% (78,524)	51.57% Avg for View: 51.57% (0.00%)	2.16 Avg for View: 2.16 (0.00%)	00:01:52 Avg for View: 00:01:52 (0.00%)
Organic Search	21,640 (54.15%)	20,662 (54.93%)	46,029 (58.62%)	45.36%	2.11	00:02:07
Direct	13,033 (32.61%)	12,813 (34.07%)	22,625 (28.81%)	63.21%	2.37	00:01:23
Social	2,586 (6.47%)	2,359 (6.27%)	3,935 (5.01%)	64.12%	1.53	00:01:07
Referral	2,543 (6.36%)	1,626 (4.32%)	5,748 (7.32%)	46.24%	2.15	00:02:17
Email	160 (0.40%)	152 (0.40%)	187 (0.24%)	71.12%	1.11	00:00:54

► January 1–June 30, 2019

Linking to external sites

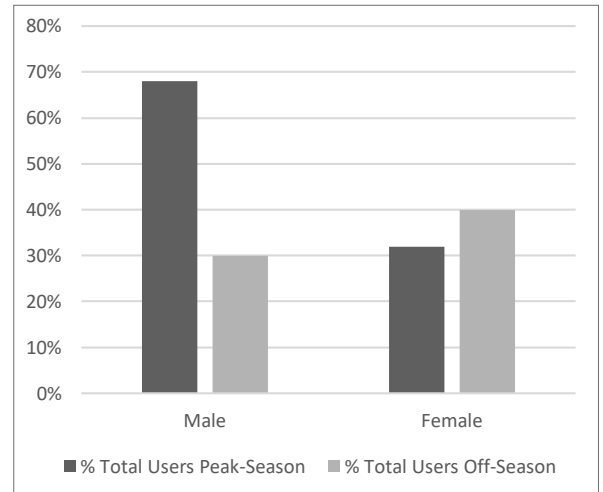
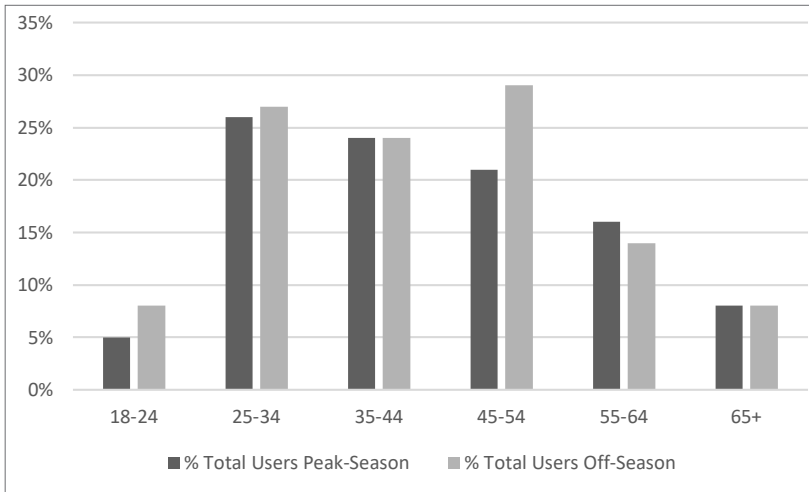
- During the winter months, about 12% of sessions result in the user clicking a link that takes them away from the site. During the peak season this number almost doubles to 22.22%

Top outbound events:

- waterdata.usgs.gov from /explore/canoe-minnehaha-creek page (28% total events)
- waterdata.usgs.gov from /water-levels-lake-minnetonka-and-grays-bay-dam (20% of total events)
- waterdata.usgs.gov from home page (13% of total events)
- twitter.com/graysbaydam from /water-levels-lake-minnetonka-and-grays-bay-dam page (3% of total events)
- kayakthecreek.com from /explore/canoe-minnehaha-creek page (3% of total events)

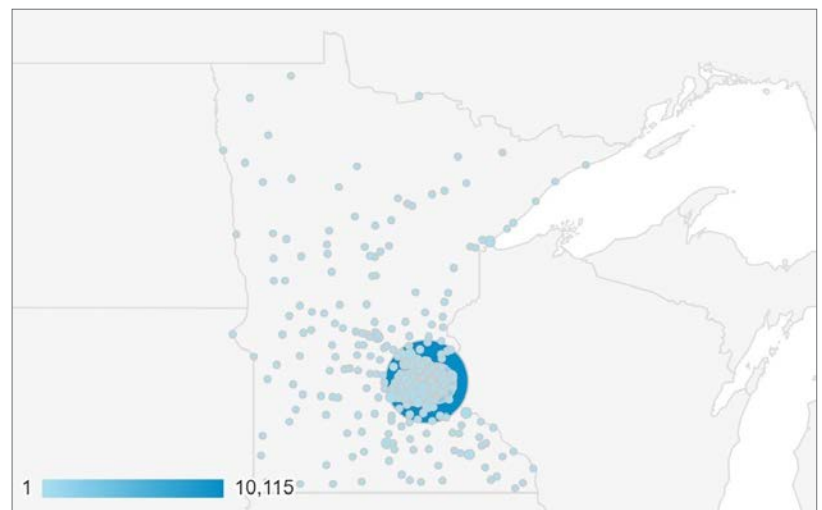
Audience overview

- The site has an almost 70%/30% male/female split during peak months, and a 60%/40% split during off-season months
- Visitors ages 25-54 make up about 70% of total site traffic during peak months and 80% of site traffic during off-season months
- Not including those from outside of North America, 99.45% of website visitors have US English set as their primary language
- Approximately 20% of visitors are returning visitors



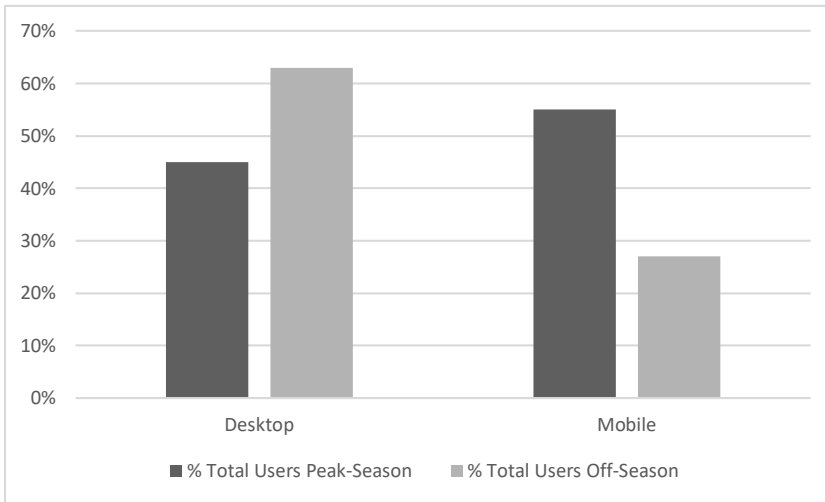
- Residents of Minnesota account for about 72% of peak traffic and 61% of off-season traffic, followed by Illinois (10% peak-season traffic, 9% off-season traffic)
- Top Minnesota cities include Minneapolis, Saint Paul, Minnetonka, Edina and Chanhassen

Location	Users
Minneapolis	10,115 (34.52%)
Saint Paul	2,218 (7.57%)
Minnetonka	1,569 (5.36%)
Edina	1,315 (4.49%)
Chanhassen	1,237 (4.22%)
St. Louis Park	817 (2.79%)
Plymouth	793 (2.71%)
Orono	754 (2.57%)
Eden Prairie	662 (2.26%)
Bloomington	604 (2.06%)



Technology

- MCWD website visitors are heavier users of Internet Explorer compared to national trends
- Desktop traffic increases during the winter months and accounts for approximately 63% of total site traffic
- Desktop and mobile traffic is more evenly split during peak months



Desktop traffic breakdown

"Modern" and "evergreen" browsers - 73%

Internet Explorer - 15%

IE11 - 8% of IE traffic

IE9 - 7% of IE traffic

Semi-modern browsers - 11%

Legacy, non-upgradable browsers - 1%

Mobile traffic breakdown

"Modern" and "evergreen" browsers - 80%

Limited version of Safari (used in embedded applications) - 8%

Semi-modern browsers - 12%

For comparison, national browser use statistics according to statcounter:

Chrome - 61.9%

Internet Explorer - 10.3%

Edge - 9.1%

Firefox - 8.9%

Safari - 8.4%

Opera - 0.9%

It is generally accepted in the development community to support any browser type/version that has at least 2% share of website users. Based on current analytics, Vendi recommends supporting back to IE 9 as part of the website rebuild, as this browser accounts for 3.5% of total website traffic.

Website audit

Server settings

Vendi observed that the server is not sending out any cache headers for non-HTML content. To improve site speed, we recommend all non-HTML content have cache headers set to a far-future date to make subsequent page loads faster.

The server responds to both <https://www.minnehahacreek.org> and <https://minnehahacreek.org> which can cause confusion and/or incorrect reporting with various analytics and performance tools. We recommend the server pick one domain as canonical and 301 redirect the other to it. For instance, the URL below links to both WWW and non-WWW versions of the site:

<https://minnehahacreek.org/permits/full-mcwd-rules/stormwater-management-rule>

Some pages (such as <https://minnehahacreek.org/permits/full-mcwd-rules/stormwater-management-rule>, *Fees Rule* section, *Fee Schedule* link) still link to non-secure portions of the site. Although the server automatically redirects to the secure version, we recommend updating these links to point to the correct version.

Responsive

The current website is not responsive. As part of the website redesign, Vendi recommends designing and developing a fully responsive website to optimize the user experience for website visitors using mobile devices, tablets and/or smaller screens. A responsive website will also improve search engine optimization as Google considers mobile friendliness when assigning search rankings.

Accessibility

The site has a dedicated Web Accessibility page, however it references the legacy Section 508 standards instead of the updated rules published on January 18, 2017. The current version of Section 508 requires conformance with WCAG 2.0 levels A and AA (with some exceptions). However, to be further future-compatible, we recommend targeting the most recent WCAG, currently 2.1.

Positive accessibility observations

- Most color combinations in use, including the green side bar headlines, table headers, links and body copy, pass contrast ratio tests
- Most form fields have properly identified labels
- Most PDFs appear to be text-based and about half are properly tagged

Accessibility issues

- The "accordion-like" components used to show/hide content on many pages are missing ARIA attributes describing their states to non-visual users
- The primary light blue (#00b4f7) does not meet minimum contrast rules for any font size when used with white
- The site uses the legacy viewport mode, which means mobile devices will show the site "zoomed out" and require users to pinch-and-zoom to access and explore content. Doing this creates two-dimensional scrolling which is against WCAG 1.4.10. Instead, content should reflow to accommodate the available space.
- Focus indication for some site elements including links and buttons is explicitly disabled (2.4.7)
- Links with the same exact text on a given page go to different pages in some instances (2.4.4). For example, the sidebar *Upcoming Meetings and Events* widget uses just Board Meeting for several links. This can be fixed by using link-specific context or adding dates to the links.
- Most pages do not have a primary H1 header

SEO

- According to Google Search Console, the MCWD website was converted to "Mobile First Indexing" and reports that all pages fail their mobile testing, which can cause the site to be ranked lower for SEO.
- Many pages do not use the meta description tag. Search engines use this information to give users an overview of the site.
- All pages are missing an H1 tag. Search engines use this as a primary grouping mechanism for content.

Overall site observations and recommendations

- Utilize standard functionality across common page components throughout the site for a consistent user experience
- Elevate content including maps, images and headlines currently hidden within an accordion to improve scannability and user experience
- Incorporate external link indicators to alerts users when they will be taken off of the site
- Optimize the permit page for search engines and overall user experience by incorporating more effective heading structures and linking to actual pages within the site (instead of hidden pages)
- Consider turning top-performing PDFs into page content to improve user experience and provide additional forward paths. Top PDFs include the FEMA floodplain and stormwater ruling document.
- Look for opportunities to better utilize Glossary system functionality including navigation to/from the glossary within the site
- If possible, include additional good/bad or safe/dangerous indicators in the water level and discharge rate widget on the *Explore* pages
- Introduce caching for common queries on the Maps page to increase page speed
- Clicking an external link causes the user's session to be marked as "not bounced." This is neither good nor bad, but it should be understood that non-bounced users do not necessarily mean multiple page views.

Vendi has additional content and UX recommendations that we would like to confirm and share after content workshop sessions and usability testing.

CMS review

Content

Overall, the website does not leverage many complex or complicated modules to deliver front-facing content. It currently has 132 modules/sub-modules enabled, which is considered light compared to other websites. Because this site was developed and launched during the infancy of Drupal 7, more modern delivery methods of admin and front-facing content were not leveraged and most likely were not available at the time.

The website uses 15 custom modules. Per Vendi's initial discovery, most won't need to be migrated to the website with the exception of the MCWD Map and Water Levels modules. It is expected that most of the existing website functionality can be handled through native Drupal views as part of the rebuild. We also anticipate most admin experiences can be retained and improved in Drupal 8.

The website includes 27 different content types that are listed below. Many are currently being used, others have been noted with the last time an update has been made to any content of a particular type.

Agenda packets	Lake Minnetonka water levels
Article	Master water steward volunteer request (last updated August 2017)
Banner (last updated April 2018)	Minutes
Basic page	News item
Blog post	Permit rule by project type and city (currently no content)
Board	Press release
Book page (last updated February 2015)	Projects
CAC Minutes and Agendas	Public notices
Clean Water Tip (last updated February 2018)	Resources (last updated October 2014)
Community Event (last updated February 2017)	Staff bio
Event	Violations (last updated December 2012)
Internal Project Tasks (last updated December 2012)	Water body
Job opening	Webform
Lake grades (currently no content)	

Competitive review

Overview

Vendi conducted an extensive review of peer organization and land conservation websites throughout the United States to:

- Assess overall website architecture, content, design, user experience and key features
- Gain an understanding of how other watershed districts present similar content and data to segmented audiences
- Observe ways that other industry organizations present maps, data and other interactive information

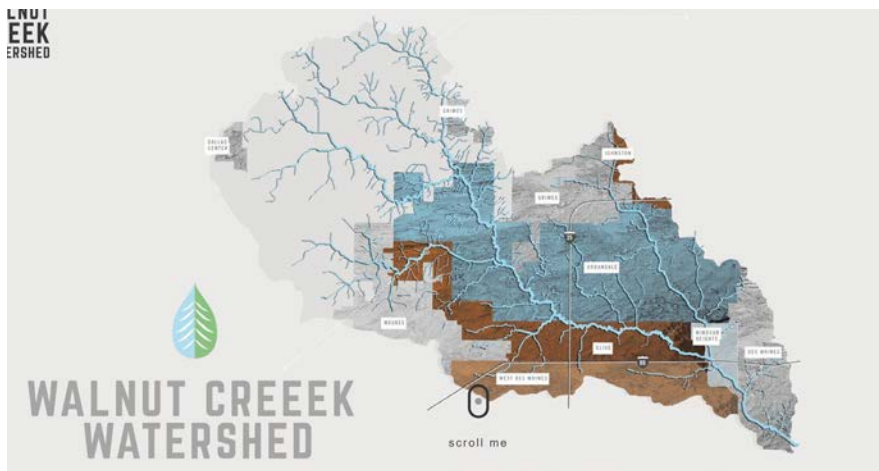
In general, many watershed districts take an administrative approach to look, feel and structure. In these cases, permitting, monitoring, regulatory and organizational information are primary areas of focus. Most sites are functional but do not encourage repeat visitors from the general public (homeowners, volunteers, people recreating in the watershed).

Websites that appear more engaging tend to elevate public and consumer content, integrate clear calls to action throughout, strategically use photography and video, organize content by audience and present information in a clean, organized and intuitive way.

The following pages contain a deeper dive into observations and recommendations related to design and user experience, content, navigation and features.

Design and user experience

- Photography and video unique to the watershed, lakes, streams and locales enhance each website's relatability, beauty and friendliness and inspire viewer participation and action
- Maps and infographics are helpful when paired with effective and expected functionality
- Animated/interactive infographics, timelines, icons and features engage users and simplify complex data
- Headers and graphic elements effectively break content into digestible and understandable sections.
- Website design and UI optimized for both desktop and mobile provide a consistent experience across all devices



▶ www.walnutcreekwatershed.org

<p>ONE</p> <p>Reduce flooding through improved stormwater management and soil health.</p>	<p>TWO</p> <p>Improve water quality, with an emphasis on sediment, nitrate, phosphorus and E.coli reductions.</p>
<p>THREE</p> <p>Enhance recreation and public health through improved water quality, habitat restoration, stream accesses, improved connectivity to parks/trails and cultural opportunities.</p>	
<p>FOUR</p> <p>Deliver enriched conservation education and programming with emphasis on water quality, quantity management, wildlife/habitat, urban and agricultural needs within the watershed.</p>	<p>FIVE</p> <p>Support community vitality and maintain economic health through implementing multi-purpose projects producing benefits in public, natural resources and economic health that can be documented.</p>
<p>SIX</p> <p>Develop ongoing means for collaboration and implementation of effective policies and practices, taking a consistent watershed and/or regional scale approach as much as practical.</p>	

▶ www.walnutcreekwatershed.org



2,000

people help improve our water quality



1,712

completed clean water projects to date



296

million gallons of stormwater runoff treated annually

▶ www.capitolregionwd.org

Content and site architecture

- Different content is adapted (and organized) for different audience segments, with consideration given to technical audiences, office holders, educators, citizens, recreationists and others
- Headlines, subheads, bulleted lists, numbered lists, links and strategically placed graphics, photographs, icons, etc. help enhance readability (and scannability)
- Presenting content in smaller sections make content more readable, scannable and understandable, regardless of type or complexity
- Calls to action, such as "Get Involved," "Act Now," or "Donate Now," when made prominent and readily accessible on the home page and throughout the website, encourage interaction and engagement with the organization
- Dividing information into sub-pages for specific audiences and making that information easily accessible through search/feature functionality is helpful
- Search functionality is important for site visitors who have specific topics in mind

Support for educators to incorporate water resources into their teaching

[2019 applications now open]

Do you have an idea for a lesson plan or activity involving water resources? The watershed district is offering mini grants to help cover the cost of the materials and support your ideas. Grant awards range from \$50 to \$250 and are available to teachers and informal educators. Applications are accepted throughout the year until funds run out.

Criteria

- Projects must take place within the watershed district
- Projects must have a water resources component
- You are eligible for one grant per year

Awards

- Amount: \$50 - \$250
- Grants are awarded as a rebate for purchases made

► www.rpbcd.org

A banner with a light blue background and a white cloud graphic. At the top, a dark blue box contains the text "Stay Updated" in white. Below this, the text "JOIN OUR MAILING LIST" is written in green. Underneath, it says "Sign up for Nine Mile News and receive the latest information first!" in a dark grey font. At the bottom, a dark blue button with white text says "SIGN UP".

► www.ninemilecreek.org

A screenshot of a website's navigation and search area. At the top, there is a search bar with the text "Search this site" and a blue "Go" button. To the right is a blue "CLOSE" button with a white 'X' icon. Below the search bar, there is a dark blue navigation menu. On the left, it says "I am a..." followed by a dropdown menu with the text "Find information just for you". Below this, there are two rows of navigation items: "About" with an information icon and "About" with a water drop icon. To the right of these icons is a list of user roles: "Resident", "Teacher", "Business", and "Local Leader".

► www.rpbcd.org

Navigation

- Main and sub-navigation should be clear, consistent, intuitive and easy to use
- Breadcrumbs show users where they are on the site and how they got there
- Footers often repeat top-level navigation categories and feature key links, contact information and opportunities for users to connect with the organization (links to social profiles, newsletter sign-ups and contact forms)
- Super navigation with drop-down/expandable menus are a helpful way to organize content-rich websites

Home / 2 Understanding the Watershed / 2.3 Geology

▶ www.upperiowariver.org

Arizona Department of Water Resources
Protecting & Enhancing Arizona's Water Supplies For Current And Future Generations.

ABOUT US HOW DO I? ADWR NEWS PROGRAMS ONLINE SERVICES CONTACT US

Active Management Areas
General Stream Adjudications
Assured and Adequate Water Supply
Colorado River Management
Community Water Systems
Conservation

Dam Safety
Drought
Engineering
Floodplain Management and Flood Warning
Governor's Water Augmentation, Innovation and Conservation Council

Hydrology
Irrigation Non-Expansion Area
Laws, Rules, & Policies
Recharge
Rural Programs

Surface Water
Permitting and Wells
Water Banking Authority
Water Protection Fund

ARIZONA WATER PROTECTION FUND

[Team Acts Fast to Cover Dangerous Open Wells](#)
[Arizona Participates in Historic Agreement To Protect The CO River System & Lake Mead](#)

[MORE NEWS](#)

<https://new.azwater.gov/#>

▶ new.azwater.gov

ABOUT US
Prairie Rivers of Iowa is a 501(c)(3) non-profit with a mission to promote economic development through the restoration and conservation of Iowa's cultural and natural resources.

SOCIAL MEDIA
Facebook - Prairie Rivers
Facebook - Lincoln Highway Heritage Byway
Twitter - Prairie Rivers
Twitter - Watersheds/Waterways
Youtube
Pinterest - Lincoln Highway Heritage Byway

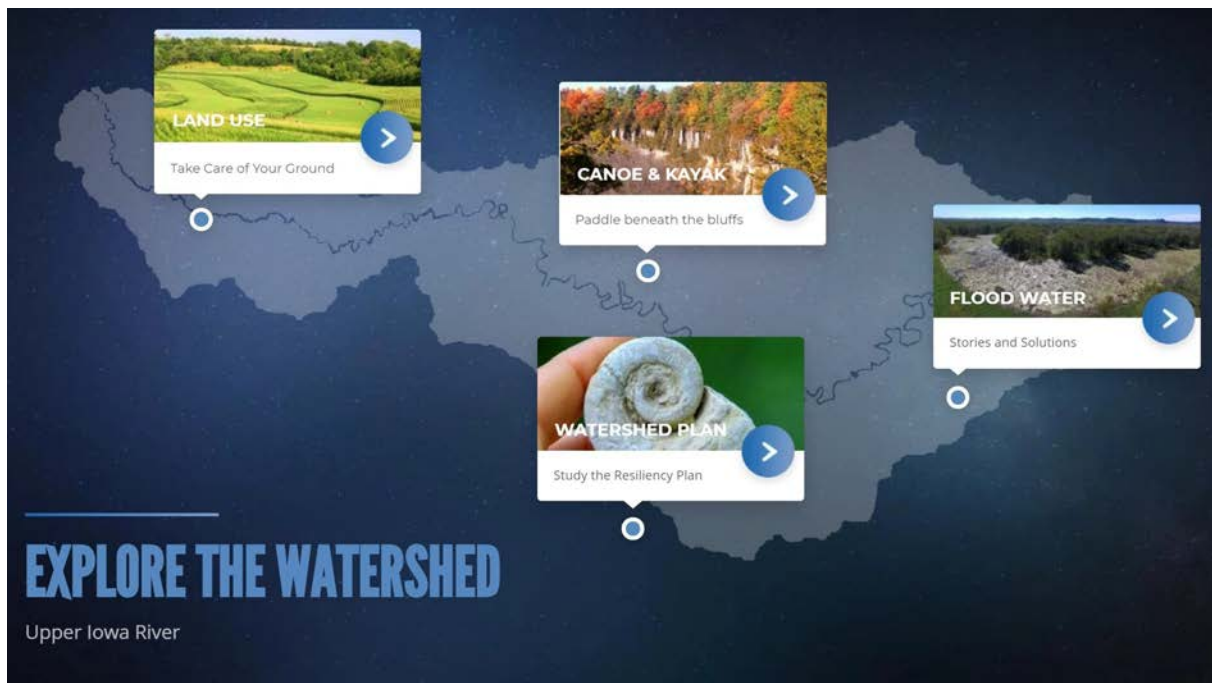
QUICK LINKS
Lincoln Highway Heritage Byway
Outdoor Learning Environments
Watersheds & Waterways
Sitemap
Contact Us
Donate

CONTACT US
+15152320048
prrcd@prrcd.org
<http://www.prrcd.org>
2335 230th Street
Suite 101
Ames, Iowa 50014
Monday - Friday:
9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

▶ www.prrcd.org

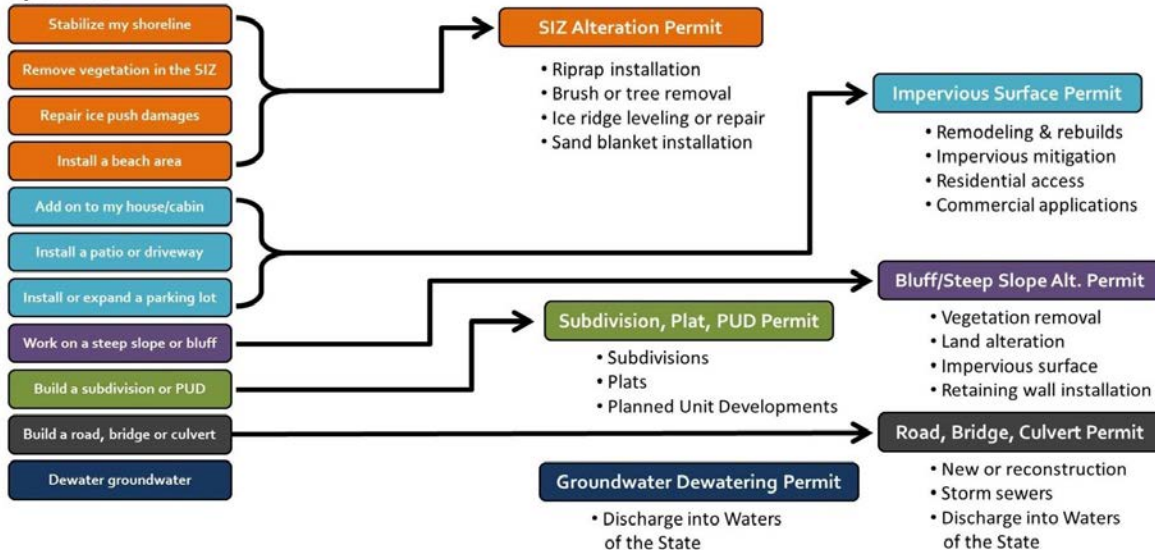
Unique or interesting features

- Multilingual sites with the ability to change the language is helpful for diverse audiences
- Interactive "Explore the watershed" maps feature engaging image callouts and links to more information
- Flow charts help users choose the proper permit
- Use of illustrations and animations more powerfully present statistics or complex data



► www.upperiowariver.org

I plan to:



► www.prwd.org

Featured websites

Riley Purgatory Bluff Creek Watershed District
<http://www.rpbcwd.org/>

This website is welcoming and friendly. The design incorporates photography, maps, icons, graphics and water-inspired blue divider bars. Content on this site is strongly geared to the consumer and less focused on administrative aspects or the organization itself. Many pages are content-heavy but use headers and graphic elements to break copy up into digestible sections.

RILEY PURGATORY BLUFF CREEK WATERSHED DISTRICT

Welcome to your watershed

LEARN ABOUT WHAT WE DO

50TH ANNIVERSARY - COME EXPLORE WITH US!

In 2019 we will be hosting a series of activities and events to mark 50 years of watershed protection. Join us as we celebrate our community with opportunities to get out and explore the lakes, creeks, and wetlands of your watershed.

VIEW DETAILS

Key features

- Map of the district prominently featured on the home page is visually engaging and encourages user interaction with the website
- Hamburger menu features a site search and filter for multiple audience segments, allowing users to quickly find and jump to relevant content
- Content is organized by both topic area and audience segment
- Website is responsive and optimized for mobile, providing a consistent user experience across devices

Explore the watershed
Enter your address to see if you are in the watershed. Or click on a waterbody to learn more about it.

GROUNDWATER WETLANDS

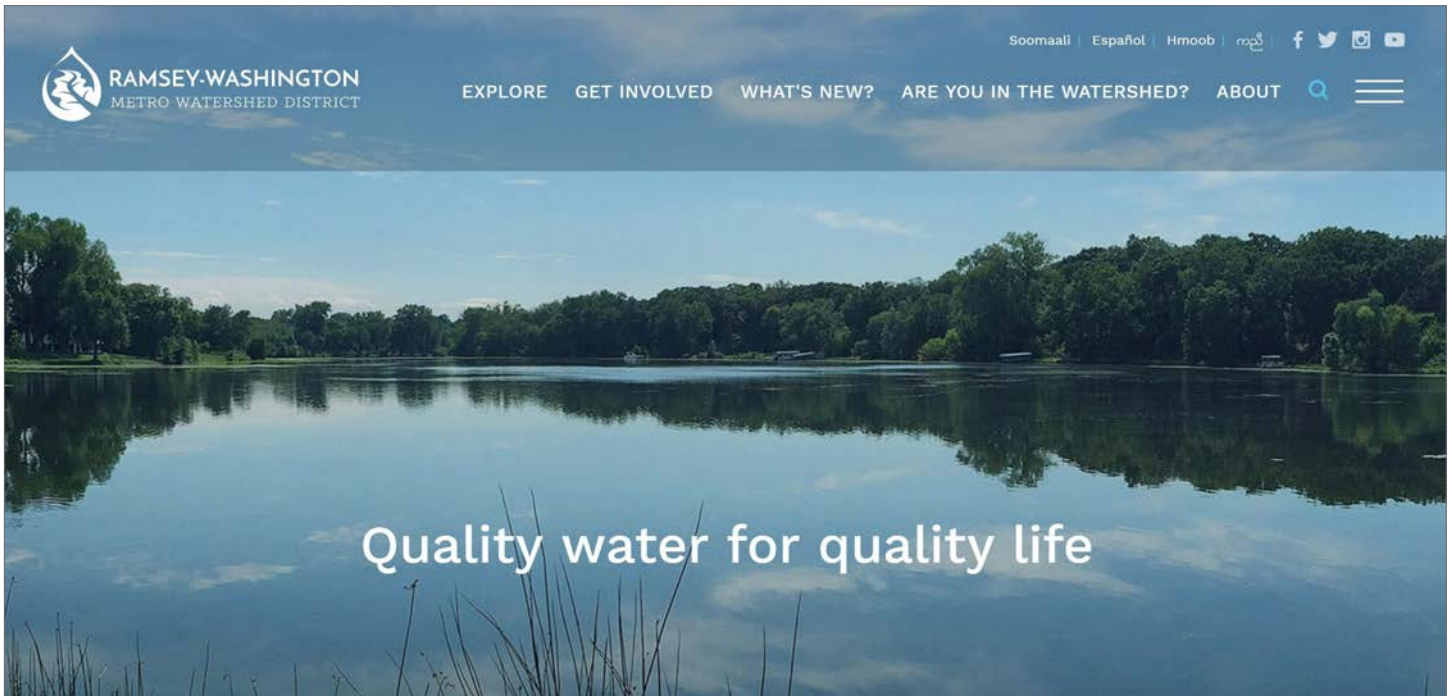
Search this site **Go** **CLOSE**

I am a... Find information just for you

Featured websites

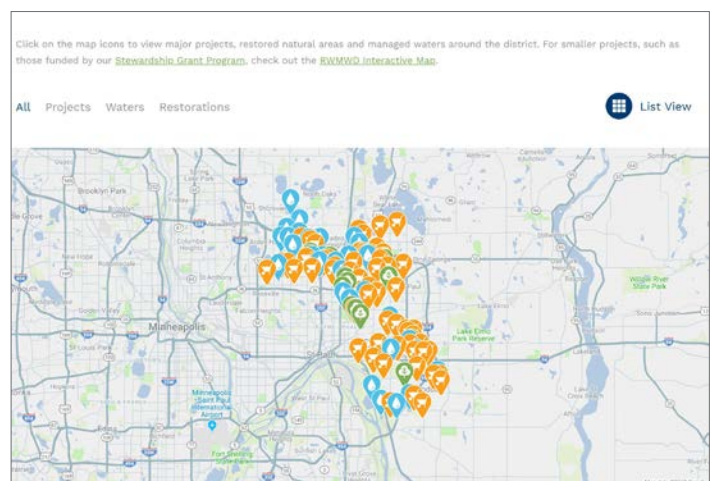
Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District
<https://www.rwmwd.org/>

This website design is welcoming with a blue and green color scheme and inviting photography of local lakes and projects. Clean, straightforward design allows visitors to easily navigate the site and find the information they're looking for.



Key features

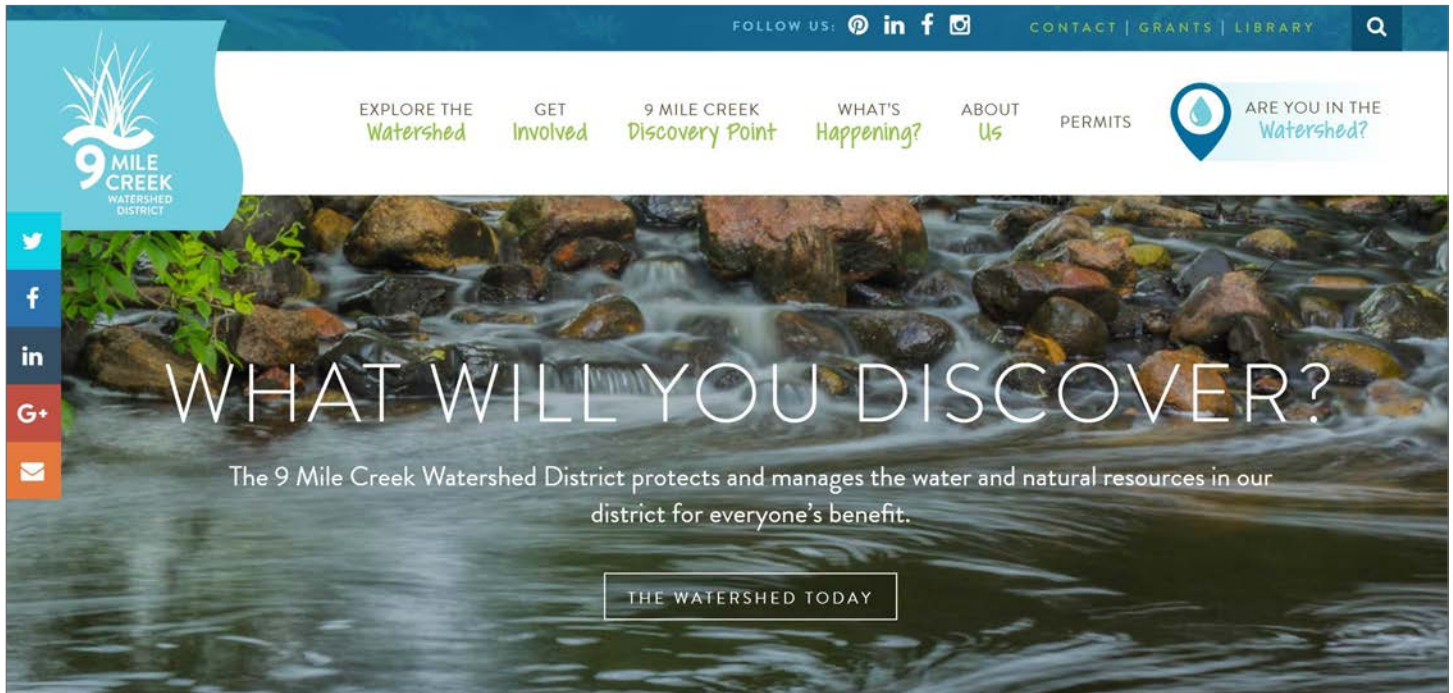
- Content is straightforward, easy to understand and length is appropriate to the subject matter
- Content is broken into sections by subheads, color boxes, graphics and icons
- Primary content is related to public use of the district (exploring, getting involved)
- Website is multilingual (available in five languages)
- CTA links and buttons are highly visible
- District projects and waters can be filtered by type and displayed in list or map view



Featured websites

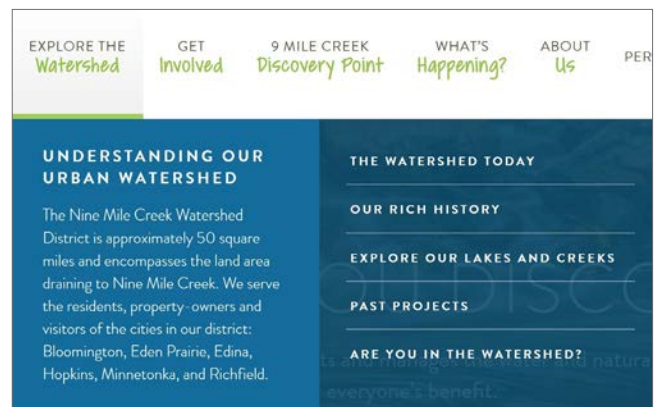
Nine Mile Creek Watershed District
<https://www.ninemilecreek.org/>

Home page graphics and content are immediately inviting with "What will you discover?" and "Are you in the watershed?" at the top of the page. This website is very user-friendly with many opportunities for interaction and involvement and encourages repeat visitors with upcoming events, announcements and seasonal highlights featured throughout.



Key features

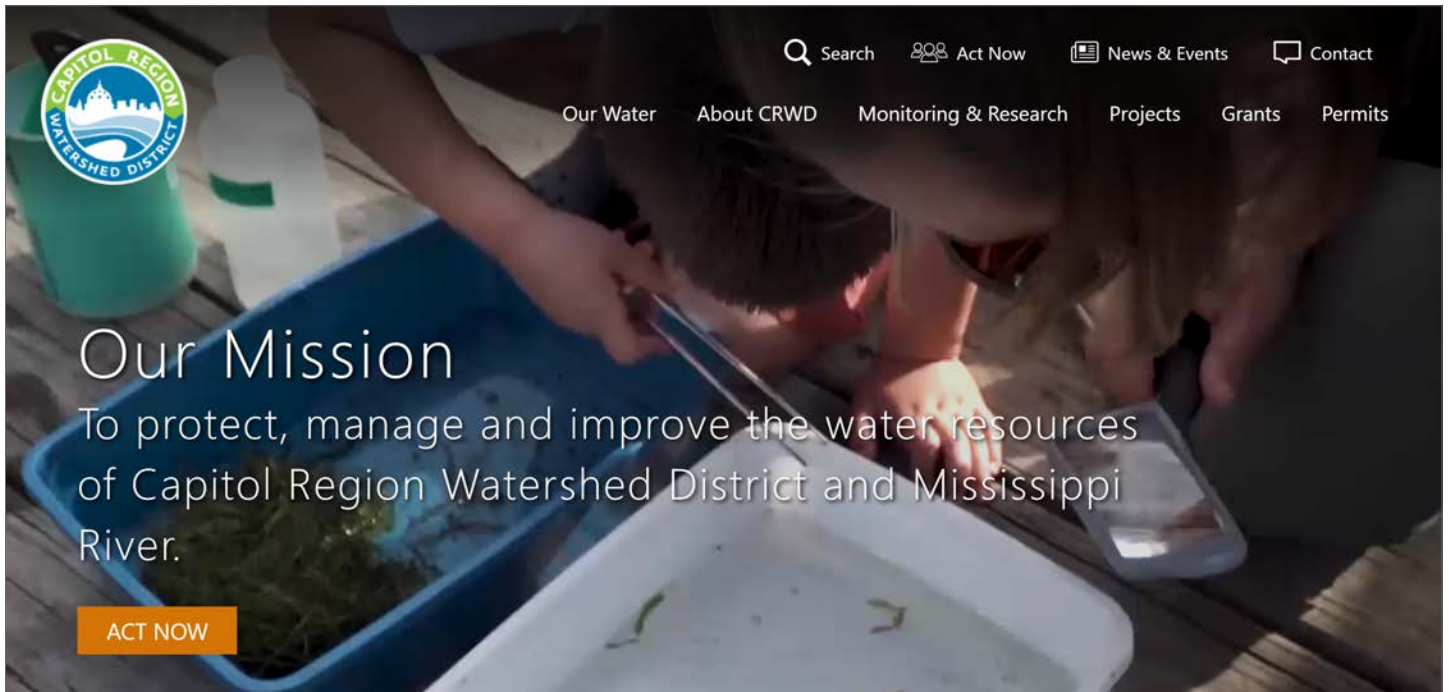
- Great use of subheads, color blocks and photos to organize content
- Instagram photo tagging feature encourages social media interaction
- Content is well-organized, of an appropriate length and geared to the consumer
- Main menu includes overview information for each section of the website and clear navigation to pages deeper within the site
- Comprehensive footer with key links, contact information, mailing list sign-up and social media icons



Featured websites

Capitol Region Watershed District
<https://www.capitolregionwd.org/>

This site is well organized, straightforward, user friendly and attractive due to local and regional photography, imagery and videos. Interesting, bite-sized infographics enhance several pages. Content draws people in, is logically organized by subject matter and is scannable throughout the site.



Key features

- Video hero on home page provides a sense of what the watershed district does
- Animated statistics and supporting illustrations are engaging and impactful
- Interactive map with current watershed projects that allows users to view projects on the map or as a list
- Scannable timeline with history of the watershed and accompanying photos



1,712
completed clean water projects to
date

