



LOWER MINNESOTA RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT

Executive Summary for Action

Lower Minnesota River Watershed District Board of Managers Meeting
Wednesday, February 19, 2025

Agenda Item

Item 7. B. – 2024 Annual Report Update

Prepared By

Linda Loomis, Administrator

Summary

At the December 11, 2024, Board of Managers meeting, the Board authorized the preparation of the 2024 Annual Report. Staff have since met to discuss the report's contents. The Technical Memorandum – 2024 Annual Report Development, dated February 13, 2025, outlines the general direction staff intends for the report.

The Board is asked to provide any feedback to staff by Wednesday, February 26, 2025, so that it can be considered when preparing the draft report for the Board's March 19, 2025, meeting.

Attachments

Technical Memorandum – 2024 Annual Report Development, dated February 13, 2025

Recommended Action

Provide feedback to staff by Wednesday, February 26, 2025

Technical Memorandum



To: Linda Loomis, Administrator
Lower Minnesota River Watershed District (LMRWD)

From: Suzy Lindberg, Communications Manager

Date: February 13, 2025

Re: 2024 Annual Report Development

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Annual reporting is one of the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) requirements for metro watershed districts, due 120 days from the end of the calendar year (due April 30, 2025). Although it is a primary statutory requirement to report on activities, it also provides an opportunity to create a showcase, a communications piece that provides value to a wider audience.

The LMRWD staff met to kick off the annual report process and are working to create the report to summarize work completed in 2024. Staff will maximize the return on investment by using existing materials, a LMRWD-branded template created in 2023, quarterly reports from Young Environmental, and information in Board packets, combined with updated information and photos to provide a unique annual report that is high quality and consistent with previous deliverables.

[View the previous annual report here.](#)

Outline

BWSR has established an outline for material that must be included in the annual report (see MN [Rule 8410.0150 Subp.3](#)). Although their requirements are prescriptive, there is still an opportunity to infuse creativity through the use of photos, highlights, and graphics that showcase the uniqueness of the LMRWD, the progress made in 2024, and the challenges faced—such as extreme flooding in the District.

Key Themes

Through collaboration, LMRWD staff have identified the following key themes to consider for the 2024 Annual Report. These themes may be reinforced through the cover photo, the cover letter from the Administrator, and callout boxes throughout the document.

Themes provide an avenue to reinforce key messages of importance through many sections of the document.

- **Theme 1: Flooding Impacts on the Minnesota River**

In 2024, the LMRWD experienced a major flooding event with notable impacts to the areas along the Minnesota River in the western portion of the watershed district. The annual report will introduce the challenges of flooding and the increased impact as climate change produces more frequent and extreme rainfall events. Staff will research and compile information on the amount of material dredged compared to previous years, material shipped from Cargill and CHS Inc. (if information is made available), and the days the nine-foot navigation channel was closed by the US Army Corps of Engineers. We will highlight the District's response to the flooding and how the LMRWD is responsible for flood control.

- **Theme 2: Fens as a Unique Resource**

In 2024, the LMRWD progressed on stewardship plans and creating partnership with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MnDNR) to protect calcareous fens as an extremely rare and precious natural resource. We will introduce readers to the importance of the resource and preservation, highlighting the sensitivity of protecting these resources in one of the fastest growing counties in the state. We will highlight some of the known issues with resource management (i.e. stormwater and pumping) and showcase what readers can do to get involved with fen protection. As the LMRWD explores ways to repair past issues, we can share lessons learned from uncovering previous harmful activities to ensure we are protecting these fragile resources moving forward.

- **Theme 3: Partnerships in Action**

Last year included a wide range of partnerships with cities, advocacy organizations, educators, and subject-matter experts. With this theme, we will showcase the importance of partnership and the level of collaboration and support necessary to take on large, basin-wide challenges to protect the Minnesota River and the surrounding areas. Highlights will include the late-summer boat tour, educator mini grants, the River Watch program, and more.

Annual Report Sections

The annual report will also highlight the people that make the LMRWD special. We will showcase progress made on projects, share plans, and showcase education and outreach work. We will also highlight the permit program and changes that were implemented in 2024 to improve the process.

The outline includes the following sections:

- i. Cover (Featuring Recent, Compelling Photos)
- ii. Cover Letter (Key Themes Introduced)
- A. Board of Managers, Citizen Advisory Committee, Technical Advisory Committee, Staff, and Consultants
- B. Contact Person
- C. Previous Year Work Plan Summary
- D. Work Plan and Budget

- E. Progress on Goals
- F. Summary of Significant Trends in Monitoring Data
- G. Annual Communication (includes ways to connect with LMRWD, Education and Outreach Summary)
- H. Solicitation for Consultant Proposals
- I. Local Water Plan Adoption
- J. Status of Locally Adopted Ordinances
- K. Summary of Permits/Variations

Next Steps and Recommendations

The LMRWD staff will compile a draft annual report, for review at the March 2025 Board of Managers meeting. We will also provide the annual report to the Citizen Advisory Committee and welcome any feedback they'd like to share to improve the document and messaging from a public interest perspective. Our team will make revisions and finalize the document to submit to BWSR by mid-April.

We request that the Board of Managers submit any feedback on the outline or approach for LMRWD staff consideration by **Wednesday, February 26, 2025**, through our brief survey. [Complete a two-minute survey to provide input!](#) Board of Managers feedback is optional but will provide staff direction if there are any considerations you'd like us to include during annual report development