

**INFORMATION
FOR CITY
COUNCILS
ABOUT THE UPPER
RUM RIVER
WATERSHED
MANAGEMENT
ORGANIZATION**

Upper Rum River WMO Annual Mini-Report to Cities

APRIL 2019

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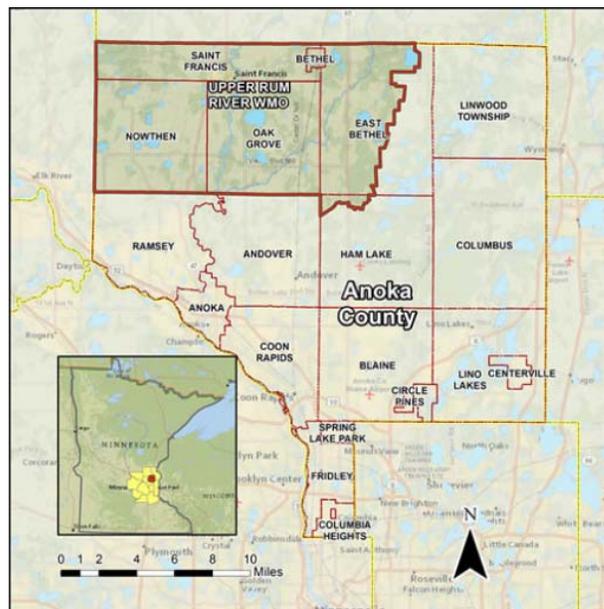
City of St. Francis

Lan Tornes
Jerry Tveit

Yes, this is new!

To keep you informed, the URRWMO plans to begin giving its member communities mini-reports annually. Preferably, they'll go out when you are considering our next year's budget. You may also get in-person updates from your watershed board representatives. Please make time to hear from them.

If you like this report but want more detail, we have a full annual report on www.URRWMO.org



Map of the URRWMO

Watershed Plan in Final Reviews

After much gnashing of teeth, the URRWMO's new 10-year watershed management plan is being considered by the MN Board of Soil and Water Resources (BWSR). Approval, we anticipate, will be in late May. Thanks to all of you who contributed!

The new plan lays out activities for the URRWMO. It includes water monitoring, public education and water quality improvement projects. Focus areas are the water quality decline in Lake George and the Rum River. The river is an exceptional scenic and recreational waterway, but near the State's

threshold for impairment due to excess nutrients.

Planning took longer than anticipated. There were widely differing viewpoints between the URRWMO, State agencies and stakeholders. The URRWMO took a strong stance of seeking a "modest but effective" budget. The work planned is backed by our constituents and science.

The expenditures in this plan are greater than past URRWMO budgets. Yet, it's much less than some state agencies wanted. A comparison of our past and expected

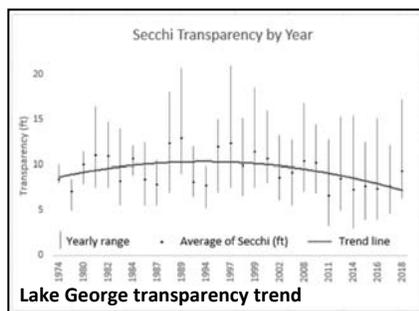
future budgets helps to illustrate. Our 2016-2019 budgets have averaged \$28,100. That is likely the lowest in the State. Our 2020-2023 budgets are expected to average \$54,600.

We intend to multiply many of the dollars in this watershed plan. We'll be relying on grants for the biggest projects. Local dollars serve as the 10-25% required grant match. Without grants those projects will not be done.

To see the most recent draft of the watershed plan, please go to www.URRWMO.org

2018 Accomplishments

- ◆ **Watershed plan completion**—Completed our URRWMO 10-year plan draft.
- ◆ **Water condition monitoring**—Monitored water quality in the Rum River and 3 major tributaries.
- ◆ **Ditch 19 weir replacement** - Anoka Co Parks secured funding and is replacing the weir that controls Lake George.
- ◆ **Website overhaul**—Our old website was old and vulnerable. It was hacked twice with usernames like Vladimir and Boris. Yes, seriously. We put an end to this with a new website that has better security.
- ◆ **Lake George study**—Anoka Conservation District completed study of the Lake George watershed, ranking projects to address water quality declines.



2019 Plans

- ◆ **Lake George project planning**—We'll meet with the Lake George residents to review 2018 lake study results and discuss projects.
- ◆ **Water condition monitoring**—We'll monitor lakes and streams, but not as much as in 2018 because some waterbodies only need testing every few years.
- ◆ **Grant pursuit**—Last year we were not eligible for county-wide Watershed Based Funding because we didn't have an approved watershed plan. This year the grant program will be different, but we should be eligible.
- ◆ **High school biomonitoring**—We're restarting the Rum River biomonitoring program with St. Francis High Schools. At the teachers' request and with funding from the American Legion, students will catch macroinvertebrates (bugs) and use them as a gauge of river health.



One Watershed, One Plan Underway

The URRWMO's jurisdictional area is not based on water drainage, like most similar organizations. A new State-funded planning effort is underway to coordinate the URRWMO and other water planning entities in the Rum River watershed.

The new planning is called One Watershed, One Plan (IWIP). It doesn't create a new layer of government. It does create coordination amongst the existing organizations.

The planning process is State-funded, and so is implementation of the plan. It's very important that our communities' priorities get into IWIP so they are eligible for the funding that follows.

IWIP is also important from a

practical standpoint—much of the water coming to our communities comes from the north. That applies to both rivers and groundwater that we drink. Protecting and improving our water means working with those upstream.

Others formally participating in the Rum River IWIP include the Anoka Conservation District, and the counties and soil and water conservation districts from Anoka, Sherburne, Isanti, Mille Lacs, Aitkin, Crow Wing and Morrison counties.

Matt Downing and Lan Tornes from the URRWMO Board are representing us at IWIP meetings. The IWIP will be complete in approximately December 2020.

Rum River 1W1P Boundaries

