

Upper Rum River Watershed Management Organization

MEDIA RELEASE

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New Local Water Plan Near Completion

A new local plan for the Rum River, Lake George and other local waterways is in its final stages. The plan focuses on water quality, but also addresses stormwater management, flood prevention and other topics. Once approved by the State, this management plan outlines projects that will be led by the Upper Rum River Watershed Management Organization (URRWMO) over the next 10 years.

The URRWMO is comprised of representatives from the cities of Bethel, East Bethel, Oak Grove, Nowthen, St. Francis and Ham Lake. Its purpose is to address water management issues which often cross city boundaries. The organization, and its new plan, put emphasis on implementing already-existing rules and finding the highest priority problems upon which to focus limited funding. The plan positions the organization to compete for State water quality grants to fund larger projects. Work outlined in the plan includes water quality improvement projects, fixing shoreline erosion, stormwater inspections, and regular water quality monitoring.

The Rum River and Lake George are two high priorities in the new plan. The Rum River is in relatively good condition, and a highly valued State Scenic and Recreational River. Phosphorus levels are near, but slightly better than state water quality standards. It will continue to be monitored. Lake George has good water quality for this region of the state, receiving an overall B letter grade, however declining secchi transparency is a concern. East Twin Lake, Pickerel Lake, Seelye Brook, Cedar Creek, Ford Brook and Crooked Brook are some other waterbodies also discussed in the plan.

The most updated plan draft and information about the URRWMO is available at www.URRWMO.org or contact Chuck Schwartz at 612-548-3141.