

**MEETING MINUTES**

**Riley-Purgatory-Bluff Creek Watershed District**

**January 19, 2023, RPBCWD Board of Managers Work Session**

PRESENT:

Managers: Jill Crafton, Treasurer  
Tom Duevel  
Larry Koch, Vice President  
Dorothy Pedersen, Secretary  
David Ziegler, President

Staff: Amy Bakkum, Administrative Assistant  
Zach Dickhausen, Water Resources Technician II  
Terry Jeffery, District Administrator  
Joshua Maxwell, Water Resources Coordinator  
Louis Smith, Attorney, Smith Partners  
Scott Sobiech, Engineer, Barr Engineering Company

Other Attendees: Andrew Aller, CAC Bonnie Nelson, CAC  
Rod Fisher, Duck Lake EP Maya Santamaria  
Karen Galles, Hennepin County Marilynn Torkelson, CAC  
Eric Holthaus, Hennepin County

*Note: the Board workshop and meeting were held remotely via meeting platform Zoom because it was deemed not prudent to meet in person due to the COVID-19 pandemic.*

**1. Call to Order**

1 President Ziegler called the Board work session to order at 7:01 p.m.  
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**2. Approval of Agenda**

3 Manager Crafton moved to adopt the agenda as written. Manager Duevel seconded the  
4 motion. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 5-0 as follows:

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<i>Manager</i>	<i>Action</i>
Crafton	Here/Yes
Duevel	Here/Yes

Koch	Yes
Pedersen	Here/Yes
Ziegler	Yes

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Manager Koch stated the Board is holding the meeting via Zoom out of an abundance of caution because of the pandemic.

**3. Presentation: Hennepin County Climate Action Plan**

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Administrator Jeffery said the Board and staff have talked about taking a more holistic view and approach as it considers development opportunities within the watershed. He said managers and staff have also talked about leveraging partnerships, and he has invited Hennepin County to present its Climate Action Plan to the Board. He said the goal is to learn about the County’s Plan in order to help the District dovetail its plan as best possible. Administrator Jeffery introduced Ms. Karen Galles and Mr. Eric Holthaus of Hennepin County.

Mr. Holthaus said he is the Climate Administrative Manager for Hennepin County. He explained he will provide an overview of the County’s Climate and Resiliency Department and its efforts. He shared his screen. Ms. Karen Galles introduced herself, noting she works in Hennepin County’s Environment and Energy Department and is a supervisor in the Department’s land and water unit. She explained her sphere of influence includes the County’s partnerships with watersheds, working with partners and residents on stormwater and water quality best management practices, habitat protection and improvement, and aquatic invasive species prevention, along with other responsibilities.

Mr. Holthaus shared a PowerPoint presentation and explained the charge of the Climate and Resiliency Department is to foster climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts focusing on building a resilient and equitable Hennepin County. He summarized the goals of the County’s Climate Action Plan:

- Cut greenhouse gas emissions to prevent the problem from getting worse; and,
- Adapt to climate change and prepare for the project impacts.

Mr. Holthaus presented the results of the County’s greenhouse gas inventory, which has measured since 2005 county-wide nitrous oxide, carbon dioxide, and methane, which cause climate change. He displayed a table illustrating that the greenhouse gases levels have gone down over the years, as the grid has been getting greener, particularly due to more wind power, more solar power, and more energy efficient buildings and homes.

Mr. Holthaus talked about the ways the County is planning to achieve reductions in the greenhouse gas emissions, such as through electrifying buildings, vehicle travel reductions

38 meaning reducing the number of miles being traveled in vehicles, and transitioning to low-  
39 and zero-emission vehicles. He also talked about ways the County plans to adapt to a  
40 changing climate by building more resilience.

41 Mr. Holthaus said buildings, transportation systems, and infrastructure need to be built to  
42 withstand higher heat events and more flooding events. He said the County wants to make  
43 sure the landscapes it builds and incentivizes others to build is capable of infiltrating water  
44 where it falls to reduce runoff. He said the plan also includes water reuse, making better use  
45 of the water where it falls. Mr. Holthaus said natural areas and agricultural lands are big  
46 parts of the plan, because carbon can be captured in healthier landscapes.

47 Mr. Holthaus spoke about equity and presented the Center for Disease Control’s social  
48 vulnerability index tool including the layover layer showing climate vulnerability. He  
49 explained the tool helps the County see which areas are the highest vulnerability so the  
50 County can see where it can make more efforts. He said the areas that are more vulnerable  
51 will be impacted disproportionately by the changing climate.

52 Mr. Holthaus presented the seven foundational strategies of the County’s Climate Action  
53 Plan:

- 54 • Strengthen community and individual resilience;
- 55 • Transition to renewable energy sources and reduce energy use overall;
- 56 • Cut greenhouse gases from transportation;
- 57 • Prevent food waste and divert organic material from the trash;
- 58 • Design infrastructure, buildings, and property to future climate conditions;
- 59 • Build and maintain green infrastructure and sequester carbon on all county-owned  
60 properties; and,
- 61 • Decrease the heat island effect, especially in areas with the highest vulnerability.

62  
63 Mr. Holthaus talked about the County’s goal to plant one million trees through community  
64 partnerships by 2030. He summarized the Climate and Resiliency Department’s 2023  
65 priorities:

- 66 • Strengthening resilience:
  - 67 ○ Community engagement strategy with communities in climate vulnerable  
68 areas;
  - 69 ○ Promote and expand access to community lifelines; and,
  - 70 ○ Support the implementation of resilience hubs.
- 71
- 72 • Transportation decarbonization:

- 73 ○ Implement 20% vehicle miles traveled reduction goal by 2040;
- 74 ○ Create electric vehicle engagement model; and,
- 75 ○ Lead County-wide electric vehicle planning with City cohort.
- 76
- 77 • Tree expansion and urban agriculture
- 78 ○ Implement roadmap toward one million trees; and,
- 79 ○ Develop County-wide food security and urban agriculture plan.
- 80

81 Ms. Galles said she will share her thoughts about the key roles water resources  
82 organizations and managers have in galvanizing and supporting climate action policy and  
83 actions. She said she thinks the organizations should leverage their mission, history, and  
84 experience. Ms. Galles highlighted some of the strategies and related actions included in the  
85 Climate Action Plan, including:

- 86 • The strategy of planning for and mitigating anticipated ecosystem and open space  
87 impacts, and the related action to ensure responses to climate change do not  
88 exacerbate water quality problems downstream.
- 89 • The strategy of reassessing policies and practices to manage increased stormwater  
90 and the relevant actions to design projects to manage flows from mid-century  
91 forecasted rainfalls, reduce volume of and pollutant load in stormwater runoff, and  
92 protect and restore streams, wetlands, floodplains, and uplands.

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94 Ms. Galles stated she thinks it is important for water management organizations and  
95 managers to advance natural systems and green infrastructure as solutions that achieve  
96 water quality goals and deliver climate resilience. She highlighted other strategies from the  
97 Climate Action Plan:

- 98 • Plan for and mitigate anticipated ecosystem and open space impacts, and the related  
99 actions to protect, restore, and connect streams, wetlands, floodplains that can help  
100 manage stormwater and help mitigate flooding.
- 101 • Motivate and enable County residents to sequester carbon through the action of  
102 assisting residents with activities such as tree planting, habitat improvement, and  
103 shoreline plantings.

104

105 Ms. Galles pointed out another key role for water managers is to consider vulnerable  
106 populations when planning and prioritizing systems and green infrastructure that deliver  
107 climate resilience. She explained another strategy in the County's Climate Action Plan is to  
108 mitigate disproportionate impacts associated with climate change. Ms. Galles said actions  
109 for this strategy include addressing flooding in housing, especially where people most

110 vulnerable to flooding impacts live, by promoting and providing financial support for  
111 preventative measures such as sump pumps and landscaping to redirect water away from  
112 structures.

113 Ms. Galles said she has noticed that people working in the fields of water resources and  
114 climate resiliency are good systems thinkers and are good at thinking across jurisdictions  
115 and property lines and on larger scales than city boundaries. She said that type of thinking is  
116 not something that people in all fields are comfortable doing, but addressing climate change  
117 really needs people with those skills. She explained another role water management  
118 organizations have in galvanizing and supporting climate policy and actions is by offering to  
119 convene and facilitate across jurisdictions and sharing its systems thinking expertise.

120 Ms. Galles said to support climate action and policy it is key that groups talk to each other  
121 and develop partnerships.

122 Manager Crafton commented she agrees the District needs to be partnering with the County  
123 and there are opportunities. She said the challenges of climate change are accelerating the  
124 need to partner and to undertake opportunities. She said it sounds like the District can talk  
125 with the County about ways the District can work with and address the needs of vulnerable  
126 communities. Manager Crafton said the District has also been talking about the need for  
127 more easements.

128 Manager Koch asked Mr. Holthaus and Ms. Galles if they could provide the District with  
129 the slides they presented tonight. Mr. Holthaus and Ms. Galles indicated yes. Mr. Koch  
130 talked about the industrial density in Hennepin County and the amount of square footage of  
131 rooftops. He said he thinks there is a tremendous amount of favorable climate impact that  
132 can be done by marshaling those rooftops, such as by incorporating green rooftops, solar  
133 panels, or reflective coatings. Mr. Koch said another initiative the County could focus on is  
134 how enough electricity can be generated to meet the supply needed to service a greater  
135 number of electric vehicles.

136 Manager Koch commented that there are so many areas along Minnesota highways that do  
137 not have trees and it would be good to look at those areas for adding trees. He said he thinks  
138 the County's initiative could be getting two million trees planted. Manager Koch talked  
139 about the Noble Hills area of Eden Prairie and said in his view that would be a property ripe  
140 for some type of conservation easement project and buying a good portion of that property  
141 to limit development .

142 President Ziegler stated the District struggles with carbon sequestering and asked if the  
143 County has resource materials to help inform the District on carbon sequestering benefits of  
144 different ecosystems, like wetlands and forests.

145 Ms. Galles said if the focus is exclusively on carbon storage, then dense, well-managed  
146 hardwood forest is going to be capable of storing the most carbon. She said the County's  
147 approach is to do its best to consider what that parcel wants to be, for example, what was it  
148 historically. Ms. Galles said it will lead to a more successful project if the project transitions  
149 the parcel in the direction the parcel naturally wants to go. Ms. Galles reminded the Board

150 the County is almost always working with a private landowner. She said the project has to  
151 be practical about what is possible with each site.

152 Manager Pedersen asked if the District has an overlay of the vulnerable areas map so it can  
153 see the locations of the vulnerable areas in the District. Administrator Jeffery said yes, the  
154 District has access to it and the vulnerable areas are basically the area surrounding the Eden  
155 Prairie Mall. Manager Pedersen suggested the District think about how its grant program  
156 scoring could take into consideration the factor if the project is in a vulnerable area.

157 Manager Pedersen asked if the District could have a list of Hennepin County's grant  
158 programs, so the District can promote them. Ms. Galles said her department has a list of all  
159 of the grants offered by the Environment and Energy Department and she will share that  
160 with the District.

161 Manager Pedersen asked if the Lawns to Legumes program is still operating. Ms. Galles  
162 said it is a State of Minnesota Program, and it is still operating and in fact the state has asked  
163 for more funding for it because it is a popular program.

164 Manager Duevel noted Covid impacts such as downtown Minneapolis and St. Paul retail  
165 leases are only at 50% to 60% of retail capacity and asked if there are discussions about  
166 long-term impact of population moves on planning. Mr. Holthaus said he has not been part  
167 of any such discussions although he concurs with Manager Duevel's sentiment in terms of  
168 urban downtowns.

169 Mr. Holthaus commented that with the Inflationary Reduction Act legislation, tax credits  
170 will become relevant to non-tax paying entities, such as nonprofit organizations and local  
171 and state governments. He said these credits will be available for these organizations for any  
172 equipment they purchase that would reduce emissions and improve energy efficiency.

173 Administrator Jeffery said the District will be updating its 10-Year Watershed Management  
174 Plan and will put together an ecosystems health plan that will look holistically at the  
175 watershed. He asked if the County has examples of working through barriers. He said, for  
176 example, say the County and a partner identify an opportunity but the finances of complying  
177 with rules get in the way. Administrator Jeffery asked if the County has found a way to step  
178 in and work with that partner, in these types of scenarios. Ms. Galles said the County's  
179 approach is that the County is willing to invest in advancing projects if the end result will go  
180 above and beyond the permit requirements and then it becomes a contract negotiation. Ms.  
181 Galles said so far each project she can think of as an example of this scenario has been  
182 structured a little differently.

183 Administrator Jeffery said a lot of the ancillary benefits of these types of projects cannot be  
184 quantified in the same ways as is documented, say, in the District's stormwater rules. Ms.  
185 Galles said she is open to talking about this topic and she knows that the cost to try to  
186 quantify all the benefits of these types of projects would be astronomical and so likely they  
187 will not ever be completely quantified. She said she thinks more work can be done to better  
188 quantify some of the benefits for some of these types of projects to then be used as  
189 benchmarks and used to identify where projects fall along the spectrum.

190 Ms. Torkelson talked about the soft landing concept, which is a different approach to urban  
 191 tree planting in that it starts with a native keystone species and then native plants are  
 192 installed under the drip line. She said this tactic results in sequestering more carbon and  
 193 supporting biodiversity. She said she hopes these types of best management practices can be  
 194 handed down to cities, which are designing the areas.

195 Manager Koch asked if Hennepin County has any ground water initiatives. Ms. Galles said  
 196 the County does not do much on ground water. She said there was an initiative in the 1980s  
 197 to develop a county-wide ground water plan, but it was not advanced or adopted. Ms. Galles  
 198 explained one of the actions identified in the County's Climate Action Plan is to try to  
 199 revive the idea of having a ground water plan.

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#### 4. Project Discussion

201 Administrator Jeffery shared a PowerPoint presentation and said staff has had discussions  
 202 with potential partners about the following possible projects in anticipation of staff bringing a  
 203 work order to the Board for review at its February meeting.

##### 204 a. Carver Beach Shoreline Stabilization

205 Administrator Jeffery displayed a map showing the location of Carver Beach Park in  
 206 Chanhassen on the west side of Lotus Lake. He said the park has more of a retaining wall  
 207 than actual rip rap, made up of 24-inch to 36-inch boulders. Administrator Jeffery  
 208 explained the boulders have a 12- to 18-inch gap behind them. He reported he talked with  
 209 the City of Chanhassen's Parks Director and Park Facilities Superintendent about the  
 210 District's interest in restoring the shoreline using bioengineering techniques. He said this  
 211 would be a great demonstration project about bioengineering techniques that tolerate the  
 212 wave action and that meet the requirements of minimizing shoreline erosion.

213 Manager Koch said based on the engineering study done on Lotus Lake, he would have to  
 214 see another engineering study that would demonstrate that the proposed techniques would  
 215 withstand the force from wake boats. He said the study he references concludes rock is the  
 216 only technique able to withstand the wave force created by wake boats. Manager Koch  
 217 said the City of Chanhassen needs to restrict the use of wake boats. He said he sees no  
 218 reason why the District should spend money to fix this shoreline in any other way besides  
 219 hard armoring it with rip rap.

220 Administrator Jeffery noted the rip rap has been there since before 2006 and it was  
 221 already failing in 2006 and was not installed correctly. He explained the bioengineering  
 222 techniques he referenced would have fabric wrapping that will accommodate the waves  
 223 that go over top. Manager Koch said he thinks more study is needed before moving  
 224 forward.

##### 225 b. Lake Susan Park Pond Reuse Maintenance

226 Administrator Jeffery talked about reconsidering how to approach the intake component  
 227 of this system. He showed a schematic of the system and explained the intake has to go  
 228 out into Lake Susan Park Pond roughly 75 feet. Administrator Jeffery said staff believe  
 229 that with the current design, the intake is losing its prime. He said staff would like to come  
 230 to the Board with a new design that includes an installed manhole and then the intake  
 231 would come out of the manhole.

232 Manager Koch said he would like to see if there are other alternatives, such as better  
 233 pumps or self-priming pumps. He said he would like to see some comparison of  
 234 alternatives.

235 **c. Duck Lake Outlet Design**

236 Administrator Jeffery reported staff met with members of the Duck Lake Association. He  
 237 said options regarding the outlet design include:

- 238 • Leave the outlet in place as it is;
- 239 • Try to go through the permitting process to raise the outlet, although in previous  
 240 discussions with the MNDNR this option seems to be a non-starter; or,
- 241 • Change the hydraulic condition of the outlet, meaning basically restrict the outlet  
 242 so it would mimic the conditions there prior to the outlet design change that  
 243 resulted in the elevation change.

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245 Administrator Jeffery said the third option would still require a permit from the Minnesota  
 246 Department of Natural Resources (MNDNR) and there is no guarantee the MNDNR will  
 247 approve the permit, but they were favorable to it in discussions staff had with them.  
 248 Administrator Jeffery said he communicated to the City of Eden Prairie the idea that the  
 249 District would do the design work and the City would do the construction. He said the  
 250 City agreed to the idea. Administrator Jeffery said staff would like to bring this proposal  
 251 forward to the Board at its February meeting, for Barr to do the design for the outlet.

252 Manager Koch said he can appreciate people wanting to get the Duck Lake level back to  
 253 where it was but the proposal seems to him to be a dishonest way to try to get something  
 254 that really is not permissible.

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256 **d. Upper Riley Creek Status**

257 Administrator Jeffery updated the Board that the District needs to get a no-rise certificate  
 258 of the floodplain of this creek. He reported Barr has been doing the modeling and until the  
 259 District gets that certificate, the District cannot get the Army Corps of Engineers  
 260 certificate to proceed. Engineer Sobiech said the District wants to avoid the need and  
 261 process of changing FEMA’s maps, which is why the District is trying to get to the no-rise  
 262 condition.



263 Manager Duevel asked for an explanation of a rise. Engineer Sobiech explained rise has to  
 264 do with an increase in flood elevation. He said staff is modifying the project because  
 265 modeling showed the proposed design would result in as much as a 1.5-foot rise in flood  
 266 elevation in some areas of the project, and the modifications are trying to get the elevation  
 267 rise to be zero in all project areas, meaning no increase in flood elevation.

268 Administrator Jeffery explained this work to modify the design has delayed the project  
 269 schedule. He reported the District’s legal counsel is drafting a cooperative agreement for  
 270 the project and the project will probably go out for bid in July or August. He said the bid  
 271 opening will likely be in September or October and then hopefully the notice to proceed  
 272 will be granted in October.

273 Administrator Jeffery displayed a slide listing upcoming and proposed District projects.  
 274 He reported Starring Lake’s response to the fluoridone treatment was good. He said there  
 275 is not much vegetation right now and it could be a good point in which to introduce native  
 276 vegetation. Administrator Jeffery announced the District is holding the lake association  
 277 summit on February 21<sup>st</sup> and will talk about lake management plans.

278 Manager Koch said he would like to get the preliminary report on where the District  
 279 stands in terms of its 10-Year Plan to give the Board an idea of what has been done, what  
 280 has not been done, and where the District is going, to make sure whatever the District  
 281 talks about either fits in the 10-Year Plan or the District knows it needs to change the  
 282 Plan. He said he is lost in terms of knowing if the District is following its 10-Year Plan  
 283 and he assumes the District is but everyone knows what assume means.

284 Administrator Jeffery said he thinks it would be easy to take the implementation tables  
 285 from the Plan and update them with a column to indicate the status of the projects. He said  
 286 he will pull that together.

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**5. Adjournment**

288 Manager Koch moved to adjourn the meeting. Manager Pedersen seconded the motion. Upon a  
 289 roll call vote, the motion carried 5-0 as follows:

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<i>Manager</i>	<i>Action</i>
Crafton	Yes
Duevel	Yes
Koch	Yes
Pedersen	Yes
Ziegler	Yes

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The meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

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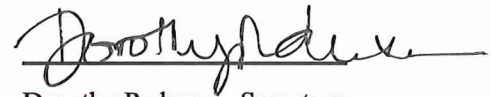
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Respectfully submitted,

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Dorothy Pedersen, Secretary