WATERSHED DISTRICTS
LAND-USE AND WATER
CONFLICT OF INTEREST
WATER DOESN’T RESPECT POLITICAL BOUNDARIES
“To conserve the natural resources of the state by land-use planning, flood control, and other conservation projects by using sound scientific principles for the protection of the public health and welfare . . .”
INTEGRATION IS LACKING!

2007 Evaluation Report on Watershed Management (Legislative Auditor)

2009 Land and Water Policy Project (MEI)

2011 Water Governance Study (Hennepin County/Humphrey School)

2013 Water Regulation and Governance (MPCA)
CULTURAL BARRIERS

“economists often speak of incentives and marginal rates, ecologists speak of carrying capacity and biodiversity, advocate planners speak of housing rights, empowerment and discrimination, and each side accuses the other of being out of touch” - Campbell

The Planner’s Triangle
BUILDING BRIDGES FOR EFFECTIVE PLANNING
CREATING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES THROUGH FOCUSED PLANNING

The origins of our focused approach can be found in the most urbanized section of Minnehaha Creek on Hopkins and St. Louis Park. As the landscape in this stretch was developed over the past 80 years, wetlands were filled and the creek was straightened, creating a significant tension between the natural and built environments that degraded water quality, increased flood risk, and limited recreational access.

Momentum to bring these two systems in balance began to build following a routine permit application by Methodist Hospital. It sparked a series of natural resource improvements that has become one of the largest urban stream restorations in Twin Cities’ history.

Known as the Minnehaha Creek Greenway, this initiative provides multiple natural resource and community benefits including stormwater management, access to green space, community connections and job creation. By focusing our resources, we were able to successfully incorporate the goals of our partners into our water improvement goals, resulting in a more impactful project than we could accomplish on our own.

- 450 ACRES of stormwater management
- $4.6 MILLION of partner investment
- 1.5 MILES of restored new stream
- 2 MILES of trail network
- 600 new homeless people connected to transit
- 150 new jobs created
- 50 ACRES of newly available green space
METHODIST HOSPITAL
“What we once considered a nuisance is now our greatest asset. Having a healthy stream and wetland incorporated into our Methodist Hospital campus differentiates us from other health care facilities. This place of healing now promotes well-being inside and outside of its walls. We are thrilled with the results we’ve achieved by working with the watershed district.”

— Duane Spiegel, VP of Real Estate and Support Services,
MINNEHAHA PRESERVE
MINNEHAHA PRESERVE
MINNEHAHA PRESERVE

“This project addresses two major community goals for us – transportation connections and environmental benefits. For too long we’ve turned our backs to the creek and we couldn’t be more thrilled to partner with the watershed district to give the creek the attention it deserves.”

– Tom Harmening, City Manager,
"Before these improvements this neighborhood accounted for 20 percent of the crime in the city. Since the new park opened, there has been a significant drop in police calls. It’s been a huge boost to the quality of life in the Blake Road area."

– Mike Reynolds, Police Chief, City of Hopkins
“MCWD’s technical expertise and solid relationships with the Cities of Hopkins and St. Louis Park helped us overcome roadblocks that jeopardized our project while also saving us time and money. I am pleased we were able to donate land that adds green space for an eventual trail connection to the restored creek that flows past our site. It’s a win, win for everyone.”

– Bob Murphy, Chairman, Japs-Olson Company
BALANCED URBAN ECOLOGY
A PARADIGM SHIFT
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IMPLEMENTATION MODEL

Understand Resource Needs

Lakes, Streams + Wetlands

Soils + Groundwater

Uplands + Vegetation

Habitat + Wildlife
GREENPRINT FOR GROWTH
Successful, sustainable, livable communities are built on a foundation of integrated planning – planning that recognizes communities as living organisms and takes into consideration all components of the urban ecology.