

**Packet for Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan Workshop - 6:00pm on April 24, 2024.**

**Required to be presided over by the VLAWMO Board of Directors.**

To: VLAWMO Board of Directors

From: Phil Belfiori, Dawn Tanner, Lauren Sampedro, and Nick Voss, with support from Rachel Olm from Houston Engineering, Inc. (HEI)

Date: April 17, 2024

Re: **Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (WMP): April 24 Workshop**

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The VLAWMO Board is hosting its required Initial meeting on April 24, 6:00-7:00 pm. VLAWMO and HEI staff are facilitating the special workshop session.

The Initial meeting provides an opportunity to bring together input and results of public engagement toward development of VLAWMO's new Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (WMP) 2027-2036. Engagement so far has been conducted through:

1. The required 60-day comment period with State and local review entities
2. A watershed-wide and promoted public survey
3. A TEC/CAC/Partner survey
  
4. A Board survey that was created using a synthesis of results received from numbers 1-3 (above) and results of that survey

VLAWMO appreciates all of the input and involvement that has been part of the engagement process so far.

During the workshop, we will provide a brief summary of results received and focus in-person time on an activity to look closely at priority issue identification and have an opportunity to hear from attendees.

In preparation for the workshop, please review the following attachments and links.

**Attachments and Links:**

1. PowerPoint (attached)
2. 60-day letters received from review entities  
[https://www.vlawmo.org/index.php/download\\_file/4850/](https://www.vlawmo.org/index.php/download_file/4850/)
3. Public survey results  
[https://www.vlawmo.org/index.php/download\\_file/4851/](https://www.vlawmo.org/index.php/download_file/4851/)
  - a. Appendix 1: Public survey coding for Question #4  
[https://www.vlawmo.org/index.php/download\\_file/4852/](https://www.vlawmo.org/index.php/download_file/4852/)
  - b. Appendix 2: Public survey coding for Question #4 (why) and Question #6 (link)  
[https://www.vlawmo.org/index.php/download\\_file/4853/](https://www.vlawmo.org/index.php/download_file/4853/)
4. TEC/CAC/Partner survey results  
[https://www.vlawmo.org/index.php/download\\_file/4854/](https://www.vlawmo.org/index.php/download_file/4854/)
5. Board survey results  
[https://www.vlawmo.org/index.php/download\\_file/4855/](https://www.vlawmo.org/index.php/download_file/4855/)

Attachment 1

# Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan: Engagement Process Results and Initial Planning Meeting

April 24, 2024  
VLAWMO Special Meeting, 6:00-7:00 pm



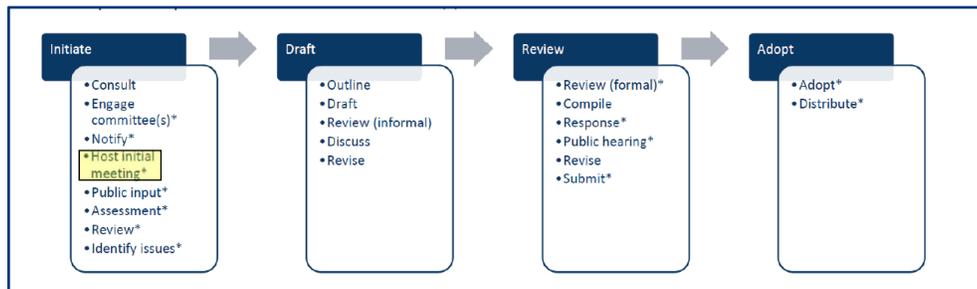
## Agenda for tonight's meeting

- Welcome and thank you for attending
- Thank you for your feedback
- Review engagement process to date
  - Initiate steps completed
  - 60-day comment period responses received
  - Public feedback: 3 surveys
    - General public survey
    - TEC/CAC/Partner survey
    - VLAWMO Board survey
- Priority issue identification exercise



## Background: Initiate

- VLAWMO staff working closely with Houston Engineering, Inc.
- **Initiate** process begun Nov. 2023
  - Consult with BWSR (Nov. 16)
  - Engage committees (Nov. 8/Dec. 13)
  - Board Resolution passed to formally initiate (Dec. 13)
  - Notify review entities and open 60-day comment period (Dec. 14, 2023–Feb. 13, 2024)
  - Host initial meeting (April 24, 2024)



## Background: 60-day comment period

- Email sent on Dec. 14, 2023
- Reminder email sent on Feb. 6, 2024
- Comments received by Feb. 13, 2024

Plan Review Agencies	Local Plan Review Authorities	Neighboring WDs
Metropolitan Council	Anoka County, Anoka SWCD	Ramsey-Washington Metro WD
MN Department of Natural Resources	Cities of Gem Lake, Lino Lakes, North Oaks, Vadnais Heights, White Bear Lake, White Bear Township	Rice Creek WD
MN Department of Agriculture	North Oaks Home Owners' Association	
MN Pollution Control Agency	Ramsey County, Ramsey County SWCD	
MN Department of Health	St. Paul Regional Water Services	
MN Board of Water and Soil Resources		
MN Department of Transportation		

## Background: 60-day letters received

Plan Review Agencies	Local Plan Review Authorities
Metropolitan Council	City of White Bear Lake
MN Department of Natural Resources	
MN Department of Agriculture	
MN Pollution Control Agency	
MN Department of Health	
MN Board of Water and Soil Resources	
MN Department of Transportation	

Thank you!

## Background: 60-day letter feedback

- General categories of responses categorized into draft priority issues and used to inform Board survey
- Many requested tasks fit into priority issues identified to date; will require consideration of available staff, funds, and be considered during drafting of new Plan
- At this time, specific tasks are included in work Excel spreadsheet
- **Full packet of letters provided to the VLAWMO TEC and Board**

## Background: Public input; 3 separate surveys

- **Public survey:** Available online and in-person: Feb. 5 – March 13
- **TEC/CAC/Partner survey:** Requested and emailed link to TEC with follow-up (6 members), requested and emailed to CAC (9 members), and requested and emailed to partners with whom VLAWMO meets annually for project planning (10 people)  
Available online: Feb. 5 – Feb. 26
- **VLAWMO Board survey:** Available online: March 15 – March 28

## Background: Public survey

- **Online and in-person opportunities**
  - Online option promoted on VLAWMO website, with partner organizations, flyers in each city hall, ad in Press Pubs, direct email to VLAWMO list, and mailed to Environmental Justice (EJ) watershed area in Vadnais Heights
  - In-person opportunities
    - Shoreview library
    - White Bear library
    - Tamarack Nature Center

**You're Invited:**  
**Provide input for the next  
10-year Watershed Management Plan**

*What are your priorities and concerns  
when it comes to local water resources?*

*How can the public be involved and in the know?*

Learn more and help us assemble the 2027-2036 watershed management plan by:

- \* Take a brief survey: Open Feb 5 – March 13
- \* Consider attending one of our February – April plan-focused events (in-person or virtual)

The finished plan will be a tool for completing studies, budgeting, applying for grants, and completing projects that help improve community water resources.

The VLAWMO watershed covers all or parts of Vadnais Heights, White Bear Lake, White Bear Township, North Oaks, Lino Lakes, and Gem Lake.



**VLAWMO**  
Vadnais Lake Area  
Water Management Organization



**Learn more and participate at:**  
[vlawmo.org/watershedplan](http://vlawmo.org/watershedplan)

## Background: Additional events to support public survey

- Virtual coffee house “chats”
  - 3 events: 3 attendees
- In-person events: Grant Program 101
  - 1 event: 6 attendees

**A New Chapter for the Watershed**   
 Add your voice to the next  
**10-year Watershed Management Plan**

Virtual Coffee Houses Open house style	Feb 13 10 AM Feb 20 Noon Feb 27 6 PM
VLAWMO Grant Program 101 Gem Lake Heritage Hall	March 7 6 PM
Initial Plan Meeting Vadnais Heights City Hall Window for public input Survey results presented	April 24 6 PM

Visit [vlawmo.org/events](http://vlawmo.org/events) for times and locations. What's this plan and what does it have to do with me? Learn more at [vlawmo.org/watershedplan](http://vlawmo.org/watershedplan)

Contribute to our 6-question survey:

- Online at [vlawmo.org/watershedplan](http://vlawmo.org/watershedplan)
- Find a hardcopy paper survey at these locations Feb 5 - March 13  
*Kiosk available during regular business hours*
  - Ramsey County Libraries: Shoreview, White Bear Lake
  - Tamarack Nature Center

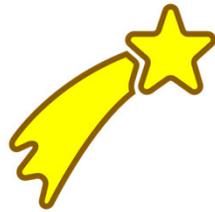
## Background: Public survey

- 6-question survey
- Asks about priorities and places people value
- Includes opportunity for more-detailed responses
- Responses were used to inform the Board survey and today's priority issue identification activities
- **Report provided in Board packet**



## Background: Public survey

- 146 completed surveys received



**A New Chapter for the Watershed**  
 Add your voice to the next  
**10-year Watershed Management Plan**

**Virtual Coffee Houses**  
 Open house style

- Feb 13 10 AM
- Feb 20 Noon
- Feb 27 6 PM

**VLAWMO Grant Program 101**  
 Gem Lake Heritage Hall

**Initial Plan Meeting**  
 Vadnais Heights City Hall  
 Window for public input  
 Survey results presented

March 7 6 PM  
 April 24 6 PM

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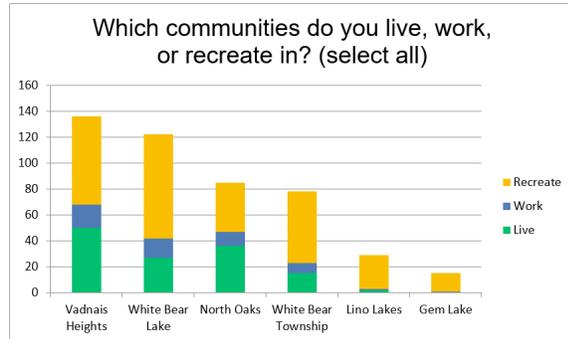
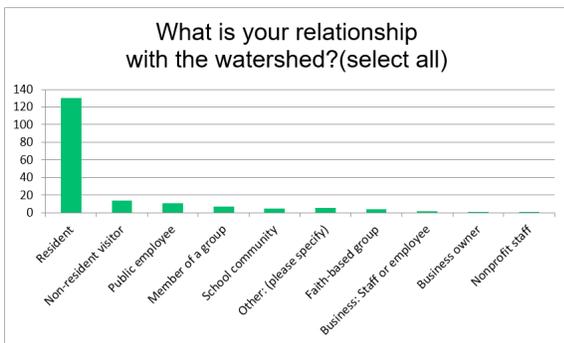
What's this plan and what does it have to do with us? Learn more at: [vlawmo.org/watershedplan](http://vlawmo.org/watershedplan)

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## Background: Public survey

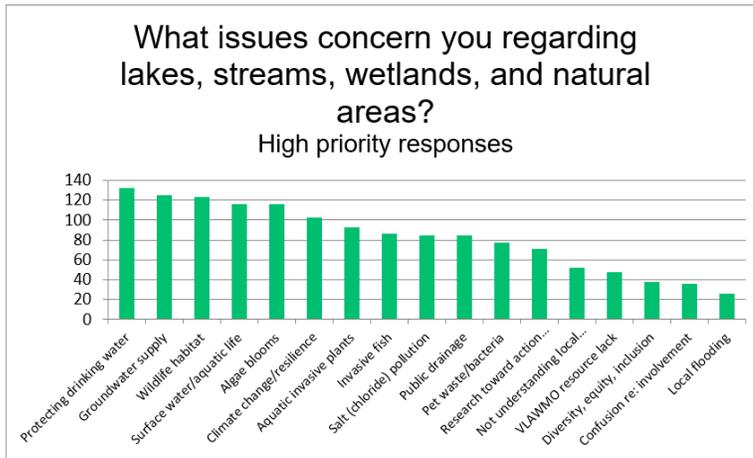
- Respondents asked for relationship to watershed (Q1); where they live, work, recreate (Q2)



- Watershed residents #1
- Nice distribution for member communities with Vadnais Heights and White Bear Lake scoring highest

## Background: Public survey

- Respondents asked for high priority issues (Q3)



1. Protect drinking water
2. Groundwater supply
3. Wildlife habitat
4. Surface water/aquatic life

## Background: Public survey

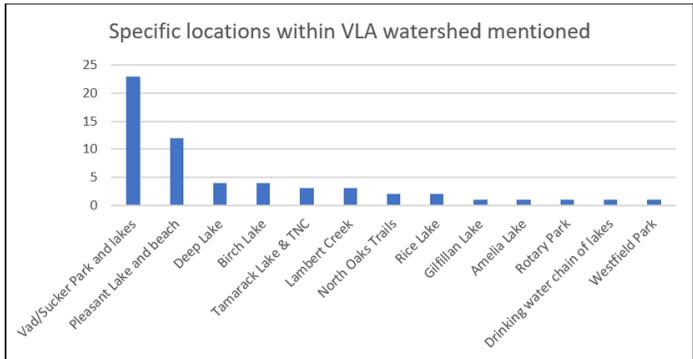
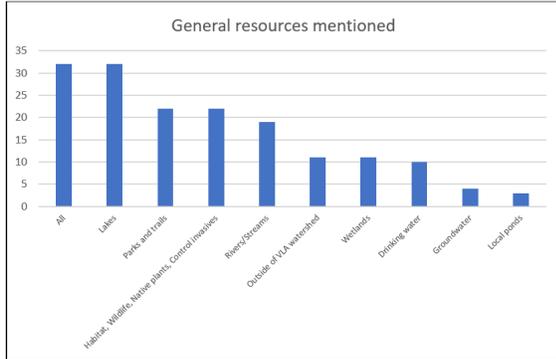
- Respondents asked for open-ended response (Q4)

Q4: What resources (lakes, rivers, streams, parks, trails) are you most passionate about, and why?

What resources (lakes, rivers, streams, parks, trails) are you most passionate about, and why?	
Answered	127
Skipped	19

- Responses were coded by VLAWMO staff to show general resources responses and specific watershed locations that were mentioned; a response could be coded for multiple categories depending upon what was mentioned in the comment

## Background: Public survey (Q4)



- High value for all watershed resources, lakes, and parks and trails
- Vadnais Sucker Lakes Regional Park and Pleasant Lake

## Background: Public survey

Identifying the “why” (Q4)

Response Theme #1

Recreation, wildlife, and value of natural resources.

*“We recreate around them all year.”*

Response Theme #2

What’s close to home, visible, and interconnected.

*“We see it from my home every day”*  
*“Quality of all life in our community.”*

Response Theme #3

Water quality, groundwater, drinking water, and water conservation.

*“I worry about water quality.”*

## Background: Public survey

Identifying the “why” (Q4)

Response Theme #4

Future use of water and natural resources.

*"So next generation will also have utility."*

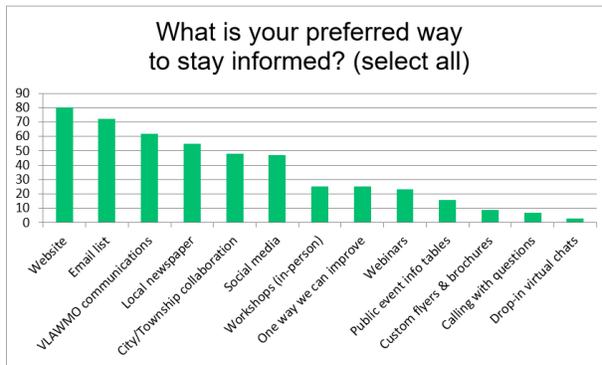
Response Theme #5

Aquatic vegetation, climate change, flooding, and organizational.

*"Protecting wetlands from invasive species."*

## Background: Public survey

- Respondents asked for preferred way to stay informed (Q5); anything else we should know (Q6); and email address if they wished to be added to VLAWMO list



- Website preferred, with email/VLAWMO communication, and local paper highest
- 45 new email contacts were added to VLAWMO list

## Background: Public survey

"Anything else you'd like us to know?" (Q6)

Response Theme #1

Suggestions that fit  
VLAWMO's focus.

*"I also strongly encourage VLAWMO to include an environmental justice lens in their approach to the work."*

Response Theme #2

Organizational support.

*"Keep up the great work!"*

Response Theme #3

Appreciation for the  
opportunity to provide  
feedback and concerns.

*"Thank you for the opportunity to offer feedback!"*

## Background: TEC, CAC, Partner survey

- 7-question survey
- Similar goals as public survey with more technical language
- Working to identify priorities for new Plan
- Asks for ranking of previously established priorities and to select top 7 from a list of 21
- Asks for possible priorities not already included
- **Report included in Board packet**



## Background: TEC, CAC, Partner survey

- 10 respondents, with 100% participation from TEC

### Q1: Who

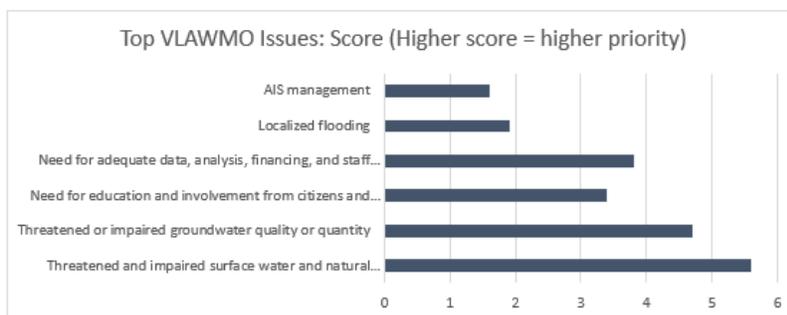
- Gloria Tessier
- Terry Huntrods
- Susan Miller
- Nick Ousky
- Jami Philip
- Michael Grochala
- Andy Nelson
- Celia Shapland
- Ed Shapland
- Dale Reed

### Q2: Organizations Represented

VLAWMO Tech Committee  
 Water Steward & Citizen Advisory  
 WAV  
 White Bear Township  
 City of Lino Lakes  
 City of North Oaks  
 NOHOA NEST

## Background: TEC, CAC, Partner survey

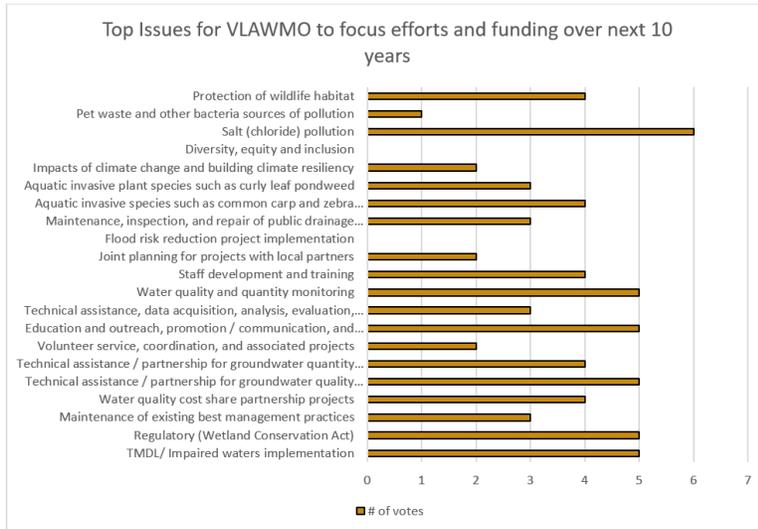
- Rank issues from previous plan (Q3)



1. Threatened and impaired surface water and natural resources
2. Threatened or impaired groundwater quality or quantity
3. Need for adequate data, analysis, financing, and staff capacity

## Background: TEC, CAC, Partner survey

- Top issues for new Plan (respondents asked to rank top 7) (Q4)



1. Salt (chloride pollution)

Tie for:

- Water quality and quantity monitoring
- Education and outreach
- Technical assistance/partnership on groundwater
- Regulatory (WCA)
- TMDL impaired waters implementation

7. Protection of wildlife habitat

## Background: TEC, CAC, Partner survey

- Are there issues that we missed? (Q5)

### Response Themes

No

Transfer knowledge of what hard data means on the landscape to landowners.

Communicate data to local users.

Share benefits of alternatives.

Cross training.

Team work.

## Background: TEC, CAC, Partner survey

- Which resources are most important to you? (Q6)

### Response Themes

Lakes & Streams  
Water quality of lakes  
Sucker Lake  
West Vadnais Lake  
East Vadnais Lake  
Lambert Wetland  
Regional Park  
Creeks & Ditches  
Smaller tributaries  
Wetlands

## Background: Board survey

- The Board survey had similar questions to TEC/CAC/Partner survey and included a synthesis of input received from surveys and 60-day comments
- Focus on refining and finalizing priority issues



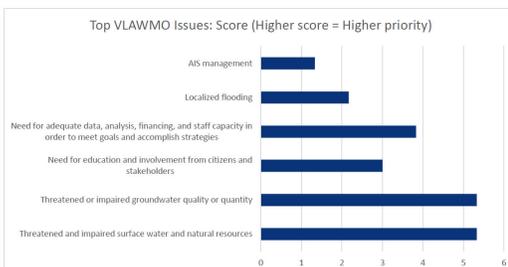
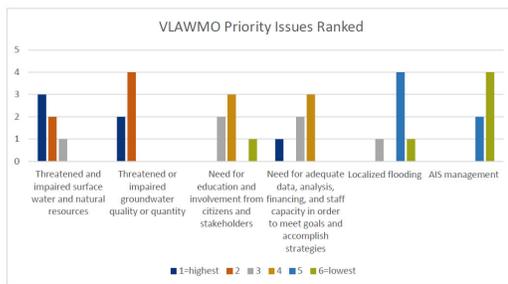
## Background: Board survey

- Q1 Who? 6 respondents, with 100% participation

Thank you!

## Background: Board survey

- Rank issues from previous plan (Q2)



1. Threatened and impaired surface water and natural resources
2. Threatened or impaired groundwater quality or quantity
3. Need for adequate data, analysis, financing, and staff capacity

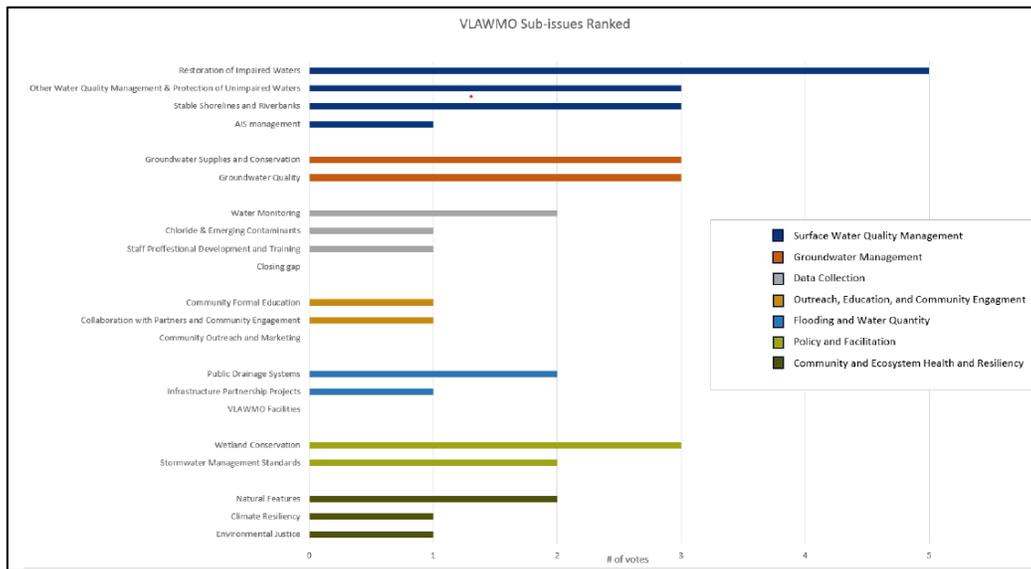
Same order as TEC/CAC/Partner ranking

## Background: Board survey

- Top sub-issues as selected by the Board with 3+ votes (respondents asked to rank top 7) (Q3)
  1. Restoration of impaired waters (5)
  2. Other water quality management and protection of unimpaired waters (3)
  3. Stable shorelines and riverbanks (3)
  4. Groundwater supplies and conservation (3)
  5. Groundwater quality (3)
  6. Wetland conservation (3)

## Background: Board survey

- Top issues for new Plan (respondents asked to rank top 7) (Q3)



## Background: Board survey

Question 4: Are there issues or opportunities you think are important for VLAWMO to prioritize that have not been considered in this survey? If so, please list.

### Response Themes

Pleasant Lake- North Oaks

Transfer West Vadnais Lake to Rasmey Washington Metro WD

## Background: Board survey

Question 5: Which watershed resources by name (e.g., specific names of lakes, rivers, streams, parks, trails) do you feel VLAWMO should prioritize in working to protect or restore?

### Response Themes

Pleasant Lake

Goose Lake

Deprioritize West Vadnais Lake

## Background: Board survey

Question 6: Is there anything else you'd like us to know or consider in the planning process?

### Response Themes

Work with MN Department of Health & DNR for algae solution on Pleasant Lake

Possible impacts from WBL Lawsuit.

## Bringing it all Together

- Looking Back: There are 6 "resource categories" in the current plan:



Surface Water  
/ Natural  
Resources



Groundwater



Data, Analysis,  
Financing,  
Capacity



Education and  
Involvement



Flooding



Aquatic Invasive  
Species

# Bringing it all Together

- Consistent top “issues” within each “resource category”



Public	TEC/ CAC/ Partners	Board
Protecting drinking water	Salt / chloride pollution (new)	Restoration of impaired waters
Groundwater supplies	Water quality and quantity monitoring	Water quality mgmt. and protection of unimpaired waters (new)
Wildlife habitat (new)	Education and outreach	Stable shorelines and riverbanks (new)
Surface water / aquatic life	Groundwater quality	Groundwater supplies and conservation
Algae blooms	Wetland conservation	Groundwater quality
Climate change / resilience (new)	Restoration of impaired waters	Wetland conservation

# Building on Feedback

- Initial “resource categories” and “issues”
- Each issue is important- focus of WMP Update will be to PRIORITIZE which issues should be addressed first

						
<b>Surface Water and Natural Resource Management</b>	<b>Groundwater Management</b>	<b>Data Collection for Effective Solutions</b>	<b>Outreach, Education, and Community Engagement</b>	<b>Flooding and Water Quantity</b>	<b>Policy and Facilitation</b>	<b>Community and Ecosystem Health and Resiliency</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Restoration of impaired waters</li> <li>Other surface water quality mgmt. and protection of unimpaired water</li> <li>Stable shorelines and riverbanks</li> <li>(Wetland conservation)</li> <li>AIS mgmt.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Groundwater quality</li> <li>Groundwater quantity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chloride and emerging contaminants</li> <li>Water monitoring</li> <li>Data gaps</li> <li>Staff professional development and training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community formal education</li> <li>Outreach and marketing</li> <li>Partner collaboration and community engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public drainage systems</li> <li>Infrastructure partnership projects</li> <li>VLA WMO facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(Wetland conservation)</li> <li>Stormwater management standards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Environmental Justice</li> <li>Climate resiliency</li> <li>Natural features supporting water quality</li> </ul>

# Hearing from You

VLAWMO Board, followed by agency / partners and members of the public...

Please use the podium (or, if you'd rather, speak from your seat) to tell us:

- Are there issues you think are missing?
- Are the priorities emerging in a way you would expect?

Your feedback will be recorded and used to inform the plan update.



# Hearing from You

- Are there issues you think are missing?
- Are the priorities emerging in a way you would expect?

**Surface Water and Natural Resource Management**

- Restoration of impaired waters
- Other surface water quality mgmt. and protection of unimpaired water
- Stable shorelines and riverbanks
- (Wetland conservation)
- AIS mgmt.

**Groundwater Management**

- Groundwater quality
- Groundwater quantity

**Data Collection for Effective Solutions**

- Chloride and other contaminants
- Water quantity
- Data management and analysis

**Outreach, Education and Community Engagement**

- Community formal education
- Outreach and marketing
- Partner collaboration and community engagement

**Flooding and Water Quantity**

- Public drainage systems
- Infrastructure partnership projects
- VLAWMO facilities

**Policy and Facilitation**

- (Wetland conservation)
- Stormwater management standards

**Community and Ecosystem Health and Resiliency**

- Environmental Justice
- Climate resiliency
- Natural features supporting water quality



## Thank You and Next Steps

- Thank you for attending and for your feedback
- Next Steps:
  - Incorporate feedback heard in a summary document for discussion and consideration in June 26 Board Meeting
  - Begin plan writing after June 26 Board Meeting
  - Standing opportunities for public engagement and feedback:
    - Monthly TEC meetings
    - Bimonthly Board meetings
  - Follow VLAWMO Website for more updates during planning process

