

**Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization
Technical Commission (TEC) Minutes
October 8, 2025**

**Vadnais Heights City Hall, Council Chambers
800 County Road E East, Vadnais Heights, MN 55127**

Commission Members Present:

Nick Ousky	Vadnais Heights (VH)
Gloria Tessier	Gem Lake (GL)
Susan Miller	North Oaks (NO)
Jami Philip	White Bear Township (WBT)
Tom Hoffman	City of Lino Lakes (LL)

Absent: Terry Huntrods, City of White Bear Lake (WBL)

Others in attendance: Phil Belfiori, Brian Corcoran, Dawn Tanner, Lauren Sampedro, Angela Hugunin (VLAWMO staff); Jeremy Erickson (SPRWS).

I. Call to Order

Chair Ousky called the meeting to order at 8:15 am.

II. Approval of Agenda

Tanner stated staff have an item to add to the agenda for the TEC's consideration, which would be a new VI. E. under projects. The proposed item is: HEI Scope of Services, Task Order No. 2025-02, Wilkinson Lake BMP Access Road Plunge Pool for the Wilkinson Lake phase 2 project.

It was moved by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Philip to approve the October 8th, 2025 TEC agenda as revised. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

III. Approval of Minutes (September 10, 2025)

It was moved by Commissioner Tessier and seconded by Commissioner Philip to approve the September 10, 2025 meeting minutes as presented. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

IV. Administration & Operations

A. October Financial Report and Consider Authorization for Payment

Administrator Belfiori summarized the October financial statement as included in the TEC packet. He noted income from interest and the remaining reimbursement from the 319 grant for phase 2 of the Wilkinson Lake project. He listed the main expenses of the month, which included lake and stream monitoring costs for finishing up the 2025 monitoring season, continued work

on the Watershed Management Plan such as addressing comments received on the draft plan, and disbursement of grant program awards.

It was moved by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Philip to approve the October financial report and authorize for payment. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

B. TEC Report to Board for October

Administrator Belfiori presented some of the highlights from the TEC Report to the Board for October including outreach work for the City of Vadnais Heights' whole-city Resiliency Study, grant program wrap-ups, and many outreach events. He shared that two proposals were received during the biannual solicitation for completing VLAWMO's annual audit. He added that a discussion with the Board will be held at the December Board meeting regarding funds that will be rolled over to the 2026 budget. At the October Board meeting, the Board will be considering the certification of storm sewer utility charges of over 11,000 parcels. Administrator Belfiori also noted that staff are collaboratively working with BWSR on the Watershed Management Plan and addressing remaining comments. He recommended TEC approval of the October TEC Report to the Board.

It was moved by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Philip to approve the October TEC report to the Board.

V. Programs

A. Highlights from September Outreach Activities

Hugunin provided an overview of outreach activities that occurred throughout the month of September. She shared that staff held a rain garden maintenance workshop at the Vadnais Heights Elementary School in partnership with Blue Thumb and Metro Blooms. Metro Blooms staff provided tips and tools for hands-on learning. She noted there was a mixture of past grant recipients and potential new grant applicants present at the workshop.

Hugunin next highlighted that the North Oaks Garden Club invited VLAWMO to present on native plants and pollinators, which led to five site visits requests for VLAWMO's grant programs. She also discussed VLAWMO's tabling at the White Bear Township Celebration Day, which was a connection point for some families unfamiliar with VLAWMO.

She added that VLAWMO and the City of Vadnais Heights collaborated at the Metro Children's Water Festival, an event for fourth grade students. She shared that there were several other watershed management organizations present who had learning stations about how to protect water. At the VLAWMO and Vadnais Heights learning station, she and City staff covered how the students can take care of water with best management practices to help animal friends.

Hugunin highlighted upcoming events of a water social at the Big Woods Brewery on October 23rd for public engagement on the City of Vadnais Heights resiliency study and to celebrate water. She shared a variety of organizations will be there and invited the TEC to attend. She added that the WAV volunteer meeting will be on October 28th, and the next trash clean up event will be on November 8th and invited the TEC to share these events with community members.

VI. Projects

A. Tamarack Lake Fish Survey Update

Corcoran provided an overview of findings from a recent fish survey that was completed at Tamarack Lake the previous week. This was conducted per the recommendation of the engineer for the Tamarack Lake alum project. The engineer is interested in analyzing the fish populations and how they may affect alum dosing. Corcoran explained that this survey's results will direct next steps for the alum project.

Corcoran shared photos from the fish survey that was completed with Blue Water Science. Four live trap nets were set up overnight and surveyed the following day. Corcoran and Blue Water Science staff counted and sorted the different species that were caught in the nets. Corcoran stated that trap net results indicate there is likely a substantial winter fish kill each year on the lake that may be beneficial for the alum treatment project because it keeps the bullhead in check. He said Blue Science will provide a full report with detailed biomass estimates.

Commissioner Miller asked how old a 35-pound turtle would be. Corcoran responded Blue Water Science said about 20 years old. Commissioner Miller asked how the alum treatment would affect the fish populations. Corcoran said it's more that the fish can affect the alum because they can stir up the bottom of the lake and suspend the flocculant, making it less effective. Chair Ousky asked if they were surprised by the number of turtles they caught. Corcoran confirmed and said they were also surprised that they did not find bluegill sunfish.

B. Tamarack Lake Phase 3 Alum Update

Tanner shared that the contractor for the Tamarack Lake alum project is planning to begin phase 3 on October 13th dependent on the weather. She said their start date will be confirmed later this week. The contractor is aiming to be done by October 24th to avoid any potential conflicts with a Tamarack Nature Center Halloween event. Tanner shared Barr Engineering will be completing pH monitoring during the phase 3 application. When phase 3 is complete, staff will be renewing the temporary access agreement with Ramsey County to be ready for the final alum phase next spring.

C. Carp Solutions Recommendation for 2026 Update

Tanner gave an update on staff's work with Carp Solutions to explore cost estimates for continued work in 2026 including reviewing the costs of running the barrier for another year

anticipating low levels of removal, removing the existing carp barrier and storing it, or leaving the barrier in place but not fully activating it unless carp arrive and running an antenna. Tanner said VLAWMO staff recommend leaving the barrier in place while running the antenna and continuing to do minimal removals if needed due to the cost comparison. The cost estimate to activate and run the barrier is \$7,500 with an additional \$2,500 allocated for removals. She shared that removing the barrier and storing it while running the antenna would cost \$9,500. Staff's recommendation is to approve the allocated \$10,000 in the 2026 budget to run the barrier for another year with a low level of removals. That scope is anticipated to be brought to the TEC at the November meeting for recommendation to the Board.

Commissioner Miller asked about the carp that were previously found in the Charley Lake channel. She asked if this is a location we want to focus on for future removals, or if the biomass estimate indicates we don't need to do any more removals here. Tanner responded there are some carp moving in and out of Charley Lake, but they are not solely spending time at that location. The same carp that are detected at the Charley antenna are also detected at the barrier and at the culvert location on Pleasant Lake. It does not appear that there is a small group of carp that are solely in Charley Lake during the removal period that would be missed with the removal effort.

D. Rotary Park Fall Activities Update

Tanner shared an update on the ongoing restoration work taking place at the Rotary Park wetland. The contractor Natural Shore Technologies (NST) has been completing invasive species treatment, especially focusing on the boardwalk area. They are also focusing invasive treatment in the areas where there are high quality remnant native species in order to allow the native seed bed to come up. NST also found the cattails are on floating mats in the wetland, which means they will be able to move around and survive if they are not cut and treated instead of cutting only over ice. She said NST is conducting cattail treatment at this time and will wait to see how they respond to treatment to adjust plans as needed in 2026. Tanner also shared some pictures of pollinator activity in the completed restoration sections.

E. HEI Scope of Services, Task Order No. 2025-02, Wilkinson Lake BMP Access Road Plunge Pool

Tanner shared that North Oaks Company has added a viewing platform adjacent to a trail around the Wilkinson Lake project so the public can view the recently installed educational sign. She stated the scope of work for the TEC's consideration today is for phase 2 of the Wilkinson Lake BMP project which is anticipated to be located just to the north of the phase 1 project. She shared the first phase on the scope of work focuses on defining permit requirements with state agencies and having discussions regarding what permits may be needed. The permitting discussions will inform where spoil placement and access can occur, which will also assist with easement preparation. An in-field wetland delineation is currently underway to inform permitting discussions.

Tanner recommended the TEC recommends approval of the HEI Scope of Services and Task order to the Board, which would be considered at the October Board meeting.

It was moved by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Hoffman to recommend the HEI Scope of Services, Task Order No. 2025-02 to the Board for approval.

VII. Commissioner Reports

None.

VIII. NOHOA

Commissioner Miller stated that North Oaks residents are noticing lowered water levels on Deep Lake and Pleasant Lake. She asked whether the lowered water levels on Deep Lake are a particular concern on if they will impact the shoreline restoration project that occurred last year. Jeremy Erickson responded that the water level changes are usually due to maintenance of the lake channels and conduits but said he will look into it.

IX. Ramsey Soil & Water Conservation Division

None.

X. St. Paul Regional Water Services

None.

XI. Public Comment

None.

XII. Next Meetings

TEC meeting: November 12, 2025 at 8:15 am; Board meeting: October 22, 2025 at 7:00 pm.

XIII. Adjourn

It was moved by Commissioner Tessier and seconded by Commissioner Miller to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 am. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.