

**Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization
Technical Commission (TEC) Minutes
May 13, 2026
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)
Terry Huntrods	White Bear Lake (WBL)
Tom Hoffman	Lino Lakes (LL)

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 8:14 am.

II. Approval of Agenda

It was moved by Commissioner Philip and seconded by Commissioner Tessier to approve the May 13, 2026 TEC agenda as presented. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

III. Approval of Minutes (April 8, 2026)

It was moved by Commissioner Philip and seconded by Commissioner Tessier to approve the April 8, 2026 meeting minutes as presented. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

IV. Administration & Operations

A. May Financial Report and Consider Authorization for Payment

Administrator Belfiori summarized the May financial statement as included in the TEC packet. He highlighted expenses from the previous month including the remaining audit payment; payment to complete review of SSU parcels; final work with HEI for BWSR WMP review; a loan payment on sheet pile weir repair along Lambert Lake; payment for the final phase of alum application on Tamarack Lake, and work with HEI to continue preliminary design work for the project upstream of Wilkinson Lake. He also noted early design and planning work for erosion control at two sites along Lambert Creek. Administrator Belfiori recommended approval of the May financial report and payment of the bills.

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

B. Reminder – Commissioner Huntrods to represent TEC at May 20 Subcommittee Meeting

Administrator Belfiori shared a reminder that the TEC voted to have Commissioner Huntrods represent the TEC at the Board Subcommittee's budget discussion meeting on May 20th. He thanked Commissioner Huntrods for his willingness to attend the meeting.

V. Programs

A. Update on Recent Outreach Events

Huginin shared outreach program updates from April. She described the Planting for Clean Water workshop, which saw strong attendance and interest from prospective grant applicants. Huginin outlined volunteer events from April, including Tamarack Nature Center's volunteer appreciation dinner, a lake cleanup event, and a Watershed Action Volunteers (WAV) planning meeting. She thanked those involved in the events and the TEC for helping to spread the word. She called out upcoming events including the educational field day at the Rotary Nature Preserve, a Smart Salting for Community Leaders workshop through the MPCA, the Vadnais Heights Ice Cream Social, and two neighborhood garden tours.

B. Update on Digital Accessibility Requirements

Huginin presented the digital accessibility requirements VLAWMO must comply with beginning in April of 2028, noting that this requirement comes from updates to Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act. She shared that this would ensure that VLAWMO's resources are digitally accessible for all, regardless of ability, then shared examples of what the compliance process may entail for VLAWMO. She stated that the TEC will be notified of any pertinent updates in the future.

VI. Projects

A. Update on HEI Technical Memos/Task Orders on Stabilization at Two Locations on CD 14

Corcoran presented that the 2026 Public Drainage Inspection Report identified erosion issues on the creek banks at the Koehler and Oakmede monitoring sites on Lambert Creek/CD14. He said that due to significant velocities in these locations, the project engineer (HEI) recommends hard armoring these sites to stabilize the banks.

Corcoran provided background on both sites in question—Oakmede in White Bear Township, just downstream of Rice Lake, and a site just south of Koehler Road. He described previous efforts that helped stabilize the creek banks but pointed out where these efforts have since shown signs of degradation. Since prior restoration efforts, increased creek velocities have eroded the stream banks. Corcoran stated that VLAWMO's Board approved HEI's scopes at the April meeting.

Commissioner Miller asked if Corcoran feels that the water quantity and speed have increased over time at the sites in question. Corcoran affirmed, citing increased storm intensity over time. He pointed out that the ditch system also has limited ability to meander given it was a ditch designed to move water quickly.

Chair Ousky asked what kinds of materials are typically utilized for soil lifts as shown in the earlier photos. Corcoran stated that these are typically made with coconut coir logs that are staked down before being planted. While initially effective, the biodegradable nature of these materials means that they decompose over time.

B. Update on City of Vadnais Heights Partnership MOU for Fire Station Trail

Sampedro provided an update on the Board's approval of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the City of Vadnais Heights and VLAWMO for grant funding for a proposed native plant-lined trail to connect the City Hall campus with the proposed Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR) project site. She stated that this trail may include native plants, trees, stormwater improvement, and interpretive signage. The VLAWMO Board and the Vadnais Heights City Council both approved the MOU. The process is ongoing and further updates will be presented to the TEC as available.

Commissioner Miller commented that this will be a nice new amenity, especially as it will connect the neighborhood to the southwest and to the nearby commercial area. Sampedro affirmed and noted that staff have seen many residents utilizing the existing path that stretches from Walmart back to the adjacent neighborhoods.

C. Update 4/22 BWSR Approval and Order Authorizing WMP

Tanner stated that VLAWMO's Watershed Management Plan (WMP) was brought to the April 22nd Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) meeting. BWSR then issued an approval decision for the WMP. Now that BWSR has approved the WMP, it will be brought to the TEC and Board in June for adoption.

D. Update on 319/Phase 2 Project: Easement Filing, Dashboard

Tanner shared that the fully signed easement is completed and will be filed shortly. The engineering scope was authorized at the previous Board meeting. HEI has sampling and design work underway. Tanner pointed out that the dashboard included in the packet offers a closer look at overall project progress and spending.

E. Update Tamarack Alum Project: Project Completed and initial data

Tanner described phase four of the Tamarack Lake alum project, which was completed on April 9th. She noted that monitoring data has shown a decline in phosphorus and chlorophyll-A. Secchi readings have so far not reflected much change. Additional monitoring will continue, as well as checking the native vegetation response over time.

Commissioner Miller asked for clarification about the treatments not yet translating to visually improved water quality. Tanner responded that, while Secchi readings for clarity have not yet changed, native plant communities are expanding. As this continues, they will take up more nutrients and should help clear the water over time. She also noted that the project engineer has requested color tests to see if tannins or other factors may be impacting Secchi results.

F. Update Carp Removal Program: Spring monitoring ongoing

Tanner presented an update on the carp removal program on Pleasant and surrounding lakes. Staff regularly check the barrier to ensure that native bigmouth buffalo aren't piling up there.

Commissioner Miller asked whether these barriers are opened when accumulation of native fish is detected. Tanner affirmed this, explaining that if fish that are not carp are detected, the piping can be opened temporarily to allow them pass through. She added that no carp have yet been detected at the barrier in 2026.

G. Update on Rotary Nature Preserve Restoration: Spring photos

Tanner shared an update on the Rotary Nature Preserve restoration. Invasive reed canary grass has shown a clear reduction as a response to recent treatment efforts completed in 2025. Tanner shared that last fall, reed canary grass and invasive hybrid cattail appeared dominant when looking across the wetland, but this spring has presented promising results. Tanner stated that a new scope of work will be brought to the June meeting to make sure restoration work can continue without a gap.

Commissioner Miller asked about what sorts of plants are expected to take the place of the reed canary grass. Tanner responded that these will likely be forbs, selected for visibility near the boardwalk and pollinator benefit. In addition, there will likely be native sedges and bulrushes. They are also expecting the patches of existing native plants to expand over time as invasive treatment continues.

VII. Commissioner Reports

Commissioner Philip shared that White Bear Township recently held a tree sale. Last year, 77 tree orders were placed, while this year saw 102 orders. She shared that when people picked up trees, they also received a packet with Earth Day educational information.

Commissioner Miller shared that the City of North Oaks and NOHOA are proceeding with developing a Management Plan for Pleasant Lake. Commissioner Miller stated that she will share updates with the TEC as more information becomes available.

VIII. NOHOA

None.

IX. Ramsey Soil & Water Conservation Division (RCSWCD)

None.

X. St. Paul Regional Water Services

None.

XI. Public Comment

None.

XII. Next Meetings

TEC meeting: June 10, 2026 at 8:15 am; Board meeting: June 17, 2026.

XIII. Adjourn

It was moved by Commissioner Tessier and seconded by Commissioner Miller to adjourn the meeting at 8:46 am. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.