

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The Middle Fork Crow River Watershed District (MFCRWD) was formed by order of the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) on April 27, 2005, in accordance with Minnesota Statutes Chapter 103D (Watershed Law). The action concluded a process that began with an establishment petition that was signed by more than 350 concerned citizens. The petition stated that the formation of the District was necessary because of the degradation of water resources in recent decades and the need to address issues including erosion, sedimentation, and best management practices.

The organizational structure of the District consists of a Board of Managers and an Advisory Committee. The Board, which is comprised of five members, is responsible for the oversight of all District-related business. Board representation is based upon the relative area of each county within the District; three managers represent Kandiyohi County, while Meeker and Stearns County each have one manager. The Advisory Committee assists the Board of Managers on matters affecting the interests of the District. The Committee consists of 31 Board-appointed members, most of which are residents of the District.

Pursuant to M.S. 103D.401, the District is required to prepare and adopt a watershed management plan for the purposes for which it was established. The intent of this Plan is to fulfill this requirement and provide a “vision” for water resource management for the next ten years (April 2007-April 2017). The Plan consists of an introduction and five chapters. A description of each of these components is provided below.

- **Introduction** - This section includes background information on the Watershed Law, formation of the District, organizational structure, and a description of the planning process. Also included in the introduction is a profile of key stakeholders and recently completed water resource studies.
- **Chapter One: Inventory of Resources** - Chapter One provides a general overview of the District. It inventories the physical, social, and economic characteristics that are important to understanding the unique nature of the District. The Chapter is divided into four sections: District Setting, Environmental Context, Water Resources, and Land Resources.
- **Chapter Two: Assessment of Resources** - Chapter Two provides a detailed analysis of the District’s important water and land resources. Included in this Chapter are sections on water quality and quantity, invasive aquatic species, soils, and land use.
- **Chapter Three: Priority Issues** - Chapter Three presents the priority issues of the District, as determined by input from the public informational meeting, Watershed Management Plan Taskforce (WMPT), and Advisory Committee. Included in this Chapter is a description on how priority issues were identified, along with profiles of each of the District’s ten subwatersheds.
- **Chapter Four: Implementation** - Chapter Four contains the District’s Implementation Plan. This Plan identifies the goals, objectives, and initiatives that will guide the District in water resource management over the next ten years.
- **Chapter Five: Administration** - Chapter Five provides detailed information on Plan administration with sections on plan schedule, plan coordination, plan implementation, definition of a basic water management project, establishment of water management districts, available funding mechanisms, types of projects, project initiation, recommendations to agency programs, intergovernmental conflict resolution, plan evaluation, plan amendment procedure, and references to statutes and rules.

A multi-step planning process was utilized in the development of this Plan, with special emphasis placed on involving residents, other local governmental units, and State and Federal agencies. The initial phase of the process involved a Public Informational Meeting, which was held on March 30, 2006, to identify issues facing the District; minutes from this meeting are included as Appendix B. Issues identified at this meeting were then used to focus the scope of the Plan.

The second phase of the planning process involved the appointment of a Watershed Management Plan Taskforce (WMPT), consisting of representatives from the public, other local governmental units, and State and Federal agencies. The WMPT met three times during the planning process to identify the priority issues that are specific to each of the District's subwatersheds, as well as formulate recommendations on how the District should address each issue. Minutes from each of the WMPT meetings are included in Appendix C. The findings of the Taskforce were then submitted to the Advisory Committee for their comments. Comments submitted by Committee members are included in Appendix D. The most prominent issues of the District are presented below in alphabetical order:

- Agricultural Drainage
- Erosion and Sediment Control
- Feedlot Management
- Groundwater Contamination
- Invasive Aquatic Species Control
- Lake Management
- Shoreland Management
- Stormwater Management
- Wellhead Protection
- Wetland Preservation/Restoration

Input from the WMPT was used to formulate the Implementation Plan, which consists of the eight goals listed below. The initiatives contained within the Plan were prioritized for implementation based upon input gathered from an Open House, which was held on November 16, 2006 and was attended by approximately 70 residents and other stakeholders. A detailed transcript of the input gathered from the Open House is contained in Appendix E.

- Goal 1: Protect and improve surface water quality.
- Goal 2: Protect groundwater quality.
- Goal 3: Maintain an adequate supply of surface and groundwater for all users.
- Goal 4: Protect and restore critical areas.
- Goal 5: Promote wise land use management.
- Goal 6: Expand our knowledge and understanding of the watershed.
- Goal 7: Engage residents in water resource management.
- Goal 8: Provide for efficient and effective administration.

The District's Board of Managers formally adopted the Plan on February 8, 2007. Final approval from the BWSR occurred on April 25, 2007, thus commencing implementation of the Plan. The District will ensure coordination and implementation of the Plan through its Board of Managers and Advisory Committee, both of which will regularly review progress and identify emerging issues and opportunities. An annual Work Plan will be developed and approved by the Board of Managers that identifies the initiatives targeted for implementation on an annual basis. The District will utilize all available funding sources to finance the implementation of this Plan, including, but not limited to the following: Ad valorem tax levies, assessment levies, bond sales, and grants.

The Board of Managers and Advisory Committee shall regularly review the Plan in order to ensure that the District's goals and objectives remain both accurate and constructive. The Plan can be amended through the procedures outlined in M.S. Chapter 103D.411. A complete revision of the Plan is scheduled to occur prior to its expiration in April 2017.

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