

County board gets update on watershed

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Carver County commissioners heard an annual report on Tuesday, Oct. 17, from officials with the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD).

The vast 178-square-mile watershed extends from the heart of the Twin Cities out to Carver County. It encompasses 129 lakes and eight major creeks. The MCWD partners with Hennepin and Carver counties, and a broad group of communities, lake associations, park districts and state agencies to manage water levels, runoff, and water quality, and enhance recreational opportunities.

At the county board meeting, Bill Olson, the county's appointment to the MCWD, and James Wisker, district administrator, highlighted actions the MCWD is taking across the 14-lake, 5,000-acre Six Mile Creek – Halsted Bay portion of the watershed in Carver County. The broad restoration strategy includes understanding water runoff and nutrient loading, managing carp populations, and restoration of impaired waters – all efforts that we have featured in more detail on these pages in the spring and summer.

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In a nutshell, some of the actions include harvesting carp and placing barriers to block carp migration, alum treatments of selected lakes to reduce phosphorous and algae blooms, stormwater management and wetland restorations.

Wisker said that MCWD currently is advancing projects in the wetland between Wassermann Lake and East Auburn Lake, and expects the organization to be involved in planning for the proposed Minnesota Landscape Arboretum transportation improvements which will cross Lake Minnewashta wetlands.

He also pointed out that following a nine-year record wet period, the watershed has experienced the flip side – two years of extreme drought, leading the MCWD to deal with “both ends of the spectrum” – erosion and runoff from flooding and high-water levels, to higher concentrations of nutrients when water levels are low.