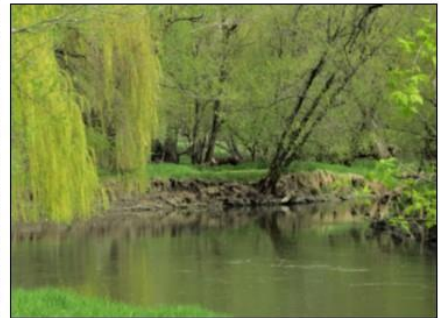


# TURTLE CREEK WATERSHED DISTRICT

## 2019 ANNUAL REPORT



Photo by Rena Langowski



### 2019 Board of Managers

*(Pictured left to right)*

**Dave Vanderploeg**  
*Vice President*

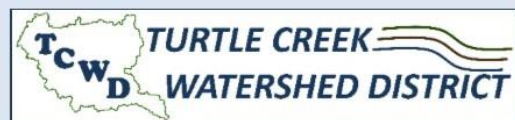
**Pete Van Erkel**  
*Secretary*

**Jeff Ravenhorst**  
*Member*

**Nancy Finley**  
*Recording Secretary*

**Jon Erichson**  
*Treasurer*

**Michelle Miller**  
*President*



**Turtle Creek Watershed District**

1408 21st Ave NW, Ste. #2

Austin, MN 55912

(507) 434-2603, ext. 5

[www.turtlecreekwd.org](http://www.turtlecreekwd.org)

*The following Officers for 2020 were elected:*

Chairperson	Michelle Miller
Vice Chairman	Dave Vanderploeg
Treasurer	Jon Erichson
Secretary	Peter Van Erkel
Manager	Jeff Ravenhorst

*Turtle Creek Watershed District Advisory Committee  
elected March 2020:*

Allen Ravenhorst	Hollandale, Mn. 56045	507-383-6893
Brad Edwards	Hollandale, Mn 56045	507-383-9445
Dean Reed	Hollandale, Mn. 56045	507-402-0403
Mike DenHerder	Hollandale, Mn 56045	507-383-1078
Arlen Schamber	Austin, Mn. 55912	507-993-3985

Turtle Creek Watershed District

Established: November 14<sup>th</sup>, 1968

Mailing Address 1408 21st Ave NW Suite 2  
Austin, Mn. 55912

Meeting Date: 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month 0500 PM  
City of Hollandale and Riceland Township Government Center  
Hollandale, Mn. 56045

Attorney; Kurt A. Deter—Rinke-Noonan  
1015 W. St .Germain St. Suite 300 PO Box 1497  
St. Cloud, Mn. 56302  
320-251-6700 email: [Kdeter@rnoon.com](mailto:Kdeter@rnoon.com)

Recording Secretary Nancy K. Finley  
24701 515<sup>th</sup> Ave  
Austin, Mn. 55912  
email: [nancykfinley@gmail.com](mailto:nancykfinley@gmail.com)  
507-438-4473

Terms: 3 years

Michelle Miller	28933 872nd Ave Austin, Mn. 55912 507-438-1939 email: <a href="mailto:shell.ann@outlook.com">shell.ann@outlook.com</a>	Freeborn 11-13-21
Jeff Ravenhorst	82329 290th St. Hollandale, Mn 56045 507-383-6428 email: <a href="mailto:jeffRaven@hotmail.com">jeffRaven@hotmail.com</a>	Freeborn 11-13-20
Jon Erichson	911 18th St. SW Austin, Mn. 55912 507-438-2339 email: <a href="mailto:jon.erichson@austinhra.org">jon.erichson@austinhra.org</a>	Mower 11-13-22
Dave Vanderploeg	28674 810th Ave Hollandale, Mn. 56045 507-383-4981 email: <a href="mailto:daveandkarenp@gmail.com">daveandkarenp@gmail.com</a>	Freeborn 11-13-22
Peter H. VanErkel	27843 825 <sup>th</sup> Ave Hollandale, Mn. 56045 507-383-3079 email: <a href="mailto:phvanerk@gmail.com">phvanerk@gmail.com</a>	Freeborn 11-13-20

The Turtle Creek Watershed Board of Managers held 12 regular meetings during the year of 2019.

The following permit applications were approved by the Managers during this year: 35 tiling, 6 Wetland Restoration, 1 pump station, 5 Bridge/culvert, 2 clean ditch, and 4 permits for 4 landowners for Water & Sediment control basin & grass waterway project.

The budget for 2020 is as follows:

Attorney fees (Rinke Noonan)	\$ 11,800.00
Recording Secretary & Expenses	\$ 5,100.00
Managers	\$ 6,250.00
Administrative Services (Mower SWCD)	\$ 16,000.00
Audit & Monthly financial services	\$ 6,500.00
Viewers Assoc & MAWD dues	\$ 3,500.00
Insurance	\$ 2,200.00
Advertising & Postage	\$ 1,500.00
Rent	\$ 625.00
Water Monitoring & Water Plan	\$ 7,500.00
Incentives, cost share & Project funding	\$ 16,500.00
Tree Removal	\$ 20,000.00
Beaver Tails	\$ 2,000.00
Clean Water Legacy	\$ 15,000.00
Total	\$ 114,475.00

At the January 2019 meeting Viewers Chris Christianson and Kendall Langseth attended the meeting to update the Managers on J24 viewing. Chris reports they are preparing to start scheduling landowner meetings according to townships and hope to have two sessions each day one in the morning and one afternoon. Tentatively to start in March when Pat Martinson is available to do the mailing list.

Also at the January meeting, Steve Penkava handed out a copy of the Freeborn County Crop Damage Rate for 2019:

It is the policy of Freeborn County to set a rate of pay for crop damages that may occur due to repair, improvement, or construction projects. This is done at the beginning of the year for the entire year.

The yield is determined by using a three year average yield for Freeborn County from data received from the USDA. (National Agricultural Statistics Services)

The sale price is determined by using an average sale price for corn and beans from four local elevators on January 7th 2019.

Corn damage rate 202.3 bushels @ \$3.38 = \$684 per acre

Bean damage rate 57.7 bushels @ \$8.24 = \$475 per acre

This form has been signed by the Viewers and Pat Martinson Freeborn County Auditor-Treasurer.

The Managers met at the February meeting at 0400 P.M. for their annual workshop to review and discuss the tasks and goals from 2018 and going into 2019.

Before the workshop started the Managers along with Steve Lawler and Steve Penkava surprised Nancy with a beautiful cake and framed photo done by Dr. Tim Rietz as a recognition for 40 years as Recording Secretary.

At the regular February board meeting, Dave gave a report on his meeting with the Freeborn County commissioners and Jon gave his report with the Mower County Commissioners who also received copies of the annual report. Both Dave and Jon reported they felt they were welcome and had good response.

Steve Lawler and Steve Penkava discussed briefly the Landowners informational meetings scheduled for Re-Determination of Benefits Freeborn/Mower County JCD J-24 to be held at the Hollandale/Riceland Township Government Center in Hollandale, Minnesota for Geneva twsp it will be Monday March 4th, 2019. Steve Penkava also clarified there would be two sessions one at 9 AM and one at 4 P.M. which ever is convenient for you to attend.

Reimbursement of beaver tails was discussed. Pete made a motion to adjust the payment for beaver tails to \$60.00 per tail which is the same payment as Mower County seconded by Jon and carried. This rate will be effective immediately.

At the April meeting Lowell Schlotzhauer from Newry Twsp attended the meeting in regard to road damage near Deer Creek which has been an on going issue for some time. Steve Penkava will assess the damage and possible solutions to discuss to improve the area at the next meeting. At the May meeting Lowell Schlotzhauer from Newry Township attended the meeting in regard to road damage near Deer Creek on 890<sup>th</sup> Ave. After discussion Pete made a motion for Turtle Creek and Newry Township to cost share to stabilize the East shoulder of 890<sup>th</sup> Avenue on Lateral 1-2 of Deer Creek in the SW ¼ NW ¼ Section 35 Newry Township. All costs will be split 50/50 up to and not to exceed amount of \$3000.00. Seconded by Jeff and carried. At the May meeting at 4:30 a “meet and greet” was enjoyed to welcome Emily Javens and Ruth Schaefer from MAWD to the Hollandale area followed by a Power Point presentation by Pete VanErkel sharing how Hollandale came into being and a brief history of the area. Following questions and answers the group shared refreshments during the meeting that was called to order at 5 P.M.

The first agenda item was the presentation of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary award to the Board of Managers from Emily and Ruth. They complimented the Board on the history and longevity of the Watershed Board with such a strong bond to the community. We thank them for making the long trip and the award presentation for this honor. The plaque will be displayed at the government Center for all to share.

In May Steve Lawler distributed a draft of a Memorandum of Understanding between TCWD and Freeborn SWCD for the Managers review. This outlines responsibilities for both parties in the administration of both 103E (Ditch law) and 103F (the new buffer law). Hopefully this will help to eliminate any confusion and duplication when implementing the Buffer requirements on JCD J 24. After brief discussion Pete made a motion to sign the agreement seconded by Jeff and carried.

At the June meeting Steve Lawler distributed copies of the MAWD summer tour this year which begins on June 26<sup>th</sup> 2019 in the Red River Basin for any of the Managers that would be able to attend.

Steve Penkava reviewed the Mn DOT’s proposed SH 251 culvert work, the plan project, where the culverts were located and each plan crossing would have a permit attached to each plan. MDOT plans to submit permits for the culvert work at the August meeting.

At the July meeting Jon distributed a proposed copy of the 2020 budget and explained the changes he proposed After discussion Dave made a motion for Nancy to publish the proposed budget for the hearing to take place on Tuesday August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2019 at 5:30 P.M.at the Government Center in Hollandale Minnesota during the regular meeting , Jon seconded the motion. Publications are in the Austin Daily Herald in Mower County and the Albert Lea Tribune in Freeborn County according to statute.

Steve Lawler received the following email from Jeanine regarding Geneva Lake as she was unable to attend the July meeting: [There is mixed news regarding the lake. As you can imagine with all the rain the progress toward the summer drawdown objective is minimal. The lake level is only about 4” below normal runout \(our goal was about 18” by this point in the growing season\). To the casual observer, the lake level may seem much lower as we have become used to seeing water levels higher than normal the last few summers. Water clarity is poor and the lake is green with algae. Nevertheless, submersed vegetation, particularly sago](#)



pondweed, a valuable wildlife plant, is growing in moderate densities and is widespread across the lake and appears to our identified objective for coverage. With the stop logs out water levels in the lake have been more stable without the rapid “bounces.” We plan to leave stop logs out for the near future and will re-evaluate in late summer.

In August Correspondence was received from Mn Counties Intergovernmental Trust stated they are again able to declare a dividend. MCIT's ability to provide dividends reflects positive investment income, members' dedication to risk management and loss control, net income from conservative fiscal program management and better than expected claims development on a pool wide basis.

Steve Lawler reports there will be a Governance 101 Conference on September 12 & 13 2019 at the Airport Marriott 2020 American Blvd East, Bloomington Mn. The Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts is partnering with the Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts to provide governance training for our members. Anyone available to attend should contact Steve Lawler for registration information.

The Managers congratulated Nancy on adjusting the legal notices for publication to include all pertinent information but, reducing the size of the ad to save the District a total of \$ 637.50 for the proposed budget notices.

At 5:30 P.M. Pete made a motion to recess the regular Board meeting for the Hearing on the 2020 Proposed Budget seconded by Jeff and carried.

Chairperson Dave called the hearing to order. Nancy verified the publications in the Austin Daily Herald in Mower County and the Albert Lea Tribune in Freeborn County. Each Manager received a copy of the proposed budget for 2020 as follows:

Attorney fees (Rinke Noonan)	\$ 11,800.00
Recording Secretary & Expenses	\$ 5,100.00
Managers	\$ 6,250.00
Administrative Services (Mower SWCD)	\$ 16,000.00
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Clean Water Legacy	\$ 15,000.00
Total	\$ 114,475.00

After discussion Pete offered the following resolution and moved for it's adoption for the 2020 Administrative Levy budget of \$ 114,475.00. The motion was seconded by Jon Erichson and carried. Dave Vanderploeg signed the resolution as acting Chairperson. Nancy will forward copies to Freeborn County and Mower County Auditor-Treasurer.

Pete made a motion to adjourn the hearing and re-open the regular Board meeting seconded by Jeff and carried.

The Bar 2 group Project was discussed at length which included input from BWSR staff and landowners involved in the project.

Steve Lawler opened the discussion on the utilization of our water quality data already collected and if we should continue to sample. Most of the water quality data collected in

Minnesota is managed in the use of MPCA's EQUIS (Environmental Quality Information System) Steve states we could submit our past and any future data into EQUIS. The agency then has the opportunity to generate reports based on all data from the Watershed including ours. After lengthy discussion Pete made a motion to coordinate a spread sheet with data available at this point and then decide if the Board wishes to do further research seconded by Jon and carried.

Steve Penkava reports at the October 2018 meeting the Board addressed work done without a TCWD permit and is in violation of the District Rule 3.2 H and Minnesota State statute 103E. Lynn Huston and Dustin Meyer had agreed to replace the structure having the same capacity as the original 60 inch concrete culvert on 890<sup>th</sup> Ave on Lateral 1-1 of Deer Creek Branch to joint County Ditch No. J24 in SE ¼ section 3 Moscow twsp. This work has not been completed at this time. The Board directed Att'y Deter to draft a letter to the township to have this completed.

Steve Penkava distributed a copy of the Repair fund Levy status from 2009-2019 for yearly comparisons. After discussion Dave made a motion to levy \$200,000.00 for the 2020 repair levy fund seconded by Pete and carried. Pete signed the appropriate forms that Nancy will forward to each county Auditor-Treasure and keep a copy of our records

Steve Lawler reports the bids for the Multi-purpose drainage grant above CD #8 came back fairly reasonable. We committed approx. \$9000. to this project. The new bids will increase our contribution to around \$12,500. The project will construct 3 water and sediment control basins, 1 drop basin, 1 drop structure and ½ mile of waterway. CD # 8 outlets directly into Geneva Lake so this project will no doubt reduce phosphorus in the lake.

In October Steve Lawler informed the Managers the 2019 MAWD Annual meeting will be held on December 5-7, 2019 at the Arrowwood Conference Center in Alexander, Mn. Pete made a motion to approve 2 Managers to attend the conference seconded by Dave and carried. Steve will assist in making reservations for anyone who is available to attend

At the November meeting Mark Behrends and Chris Christianson attended the meeting to give an update on the redetermination of benefits for JCD-J24. The Viewers are just finishing up on the assessment numbers and are close to preparing for the second information meeting to be scheduled by Townships. More information will be available in the next month after they meet with Pat to finalize the names.

Jeanine Vorland arrived at the meeting just after it was adjourned so I asked her to send me an email that I could add to the minutes for your November update. The following is Jeanine's email: Unfortunately, other duties kept me from attending the November Turtle Creek Watershed District Meeting. I wanted to provide an update on Geneva Lake and habitat conditions. A brief summary of our October survey results and my water management recommendations follow. I appreciate your sharing these comments with the Managers. Shallow Lake Specialist Steve Kittelson and I performed an index survey of Geneva Lake habitat conditions in October. An index survey is a systematic survey using our standard survey protocols, but does not include as many survey plots as a full lake survey. As anticipated the survey documented that submersed vegetation responded well to the partial drawdown. Water clarity was good to excellent with our Secchi disk visible to the bottom in most locations and frequently the water was clear to the bottom. Of course, shorter days and cooler water conditions in fall are not as favorable to algae growth as warm water and sunshine in mid-summer, but nevertheless, this is good news and some other local lakes remained turbid well into fall. We took a water sample for analysis of total phosphorus, chlorophyll and some other parameters. We don't have the results back yet. We saw no carp or evidence of carp.

Submersed aquatic plants, including plants such as sago pondweed and wild celery that are highly favored by waterfowl, were widespread across the basin and sago was found on nearly every plot sampled. There was a reasonable diversity of species. Submersed plants had moderate to good abundance in most locations sampled.

Emergent plants such as rushes and cattails did not show much positive response to the summer drawdown and in some locations showed continued decline. The lower water in summer was too little and too late to provide for much growth from the seed bank even with the growing season extending as late as it did.

I am recommending another attempt for a major summer drawdown next growing season to regenerate more emergent plants. A major summer drawdown would attempt to lower the lake at least 18 inches below normal runout. I also recommend we keep the lake somewhat lower than normal through this upcoming fall and winter. I plan to set the stop logs as 1 foot below the normal runout. While it appears we have had an impact on rough fish abundance holding the lake low for the winter season may give what little emergent extension we did gain a better chance for survival as well as improving chances for a second winter kill of rough fishes. As I am sure you are all aware, we are still seeing plenty of base flow through the lake.

In December Attorney Deter reported (with a letter due to his absence) to Mark Behrends –(Viewer) he had the opportunity to review the proposed Viewers' Report for the Redetermination of Benefits for JCD #24 in conjunction with Minnesota Statutes 103E.321 and found the items required under a Viewers report have all been met in this report. Mark has talked to Pat Martinson and decided that the landowners in the eleven ditches that will have outlet benefits into JCD#24 will need to be notified of the meetings. Mark will work with Brad Edwards to reserve the space and work with Pat to get the information out. Once the final meetings are complete the Viewers will work with the Board to set up the public hearing.

Pete made a motion to hold the 2020 planning workshop at 4 P.M. on January 21<sup>st</sup> 2020 before the regular Board meeting, seconded by Jeff and carried.

Jon made a motion to recommend CliftonLarsonAllen LLP to do the auditing services for the fiscal year ending December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2019 as in the past, seconded by Pete and carried

Dale Krystosek from BWSR attended the meeting to talk to the Board about the Performance Review and Assistance Program. LGU's are selected by BWSR every 10 years or so to be evaluated through this program. Dale explained the program (Level II) and states is a routine interactive review of an LGU with the goal of covering all LGUs at least once every 10 years. A Level II review evaluates progress on plan implementation, operational effectiveness, and partner relationships. This review includes assessing compliance and performance standards. Dale passed out Performance standard sheet and ask the Board to complete them and also will be receiving a survey that can be completed either on the computer or hand written and ask the managers to please complete it. He will attend the meeting again approximately March to discuss the results.

At the December 2019 meeting the Turtle Creek Watershed District received an award from Minnesota Counties Intergovernmental Trust Certificate of Excellence in recognition of an Outstanding Loss Ratio under 50% Property and Casualty plan year 2014-2018.

Several area landowners attending meetings for permits, questions, concerns and project solution suggestions throughout the year.

Other topics discussed during the year were brush control, tree removal, grass strip maintenance, buffer laws, Geneva Lake, incentive grants, and miscellaneous discussions.

This concludes the annual report for the year 2019.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Nancy K Finley  
Recording Secretary  
Turtle Creek Watershed District.