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St. Paul District

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Public Affairs

Corps Facts

Minnehaha Creek Study

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Project Background

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District began working together in 2002 to establish the goals and objectives for a watershed planning study. The watershed district signed a formal partnering agreement with the Corps on Jan. 14, 2003, leading to the current study, called the Minnehaha Creek Watershed Feasibility Study. The Minnehaha Creek Watershed District, or MCWD, is located primarily in Hennepin County, within the Twin Cities metropolitan complex. The watershed covers approximately 181 square miles in the Minneapolis metropolitan area and western suburbs. It drains into the Mississippi River below Lock and Dam No. 1 in Minneapolis.

Project Description

The feasibility study is focusing on the following objectives related to developing a comprehensive watershed management plan:

- Determine the flow regime in Minnehaha Creek that meets both human and ecosystem needs through a highly involved stakeholder process.
- Preserve and enhance connective ecosystems, or greenway corridors, on creeks leading to Lake Minnetonka and along Minnehaha Creek.
- Improve the chemical and physical quality of surface water both in creeks and lakes.
- Investigate options for improving the water quality in Painters Creek/Jennings Bay and 6-Mile Creek/Halsted Bay.
- Minimize obstructions to recreational boating and fish passage along Minnehaha Creek.
- Integrate public recreation features into multipurpose project formulation whenever possible.
- Preserve, protect and restore the natural appearance and function of riparian/shoreline ecosystems throughout the watershed.
- Reduce the severity and frequency of flooding along Minnehaha Creek.
- Investigate projects in the basin that may have a federal interest (e.g. ecosystem restoration, flood control).

These objectives will be further refined and quantified as part of a public/stakeholder involvement process during plan formulation. Conflicts between objectives will be resolved through this process.

Timeline

The Corps and the MCWD completed a project management plan in May 2004. A comprehensive watershed management plan was completed in 2007. Basin wide mapping was collected in 2007 and will be ready for us in early 2008. Currently, a revised dam operating plan for Gray's Bay Dam is being develop and site identification for a potential ecosystem restoration in the 6-mile Creek sub basin. The current working estimate is \$4 million, with the federal government paying 50 percent and the watershed district paying 50 percent.