



CRWD board sending draft rules for state review

Managers plan more talks with City of Austin on its major flood project

AUSTIN, Minn. – Friday, March 18 – Managers of the Cedar River Watershed District voted Wednesday night to send a draft set of rules for a mandatory, 60-day state review.

The CRWD – formed in 2007 to reduce flooding and improve water quality in the Cedar River and its tributaries – has a watershed management plan in place, as required by state law for watershed districts. That plan, however, needs rules and a permitting program.

With the draft rules – which have gone through a process started in 2009 – the CRWD will address its top priorities of reducing stormwater flows as well as protecting and improving water quality. A Rules Advisory Committee of citizens from various sectors worked for more than a year on developing the draft rules.

One of the rules' main goals ensures that new work or projects won't increase peak flows in the watershed. "Many meetings and a lot of hard work have gone into drafting the rules, and the CRWD board took a big step forward in sending the proposed rules for a state review," said Bev Nordby, CRWD administrator.

At Wednesday's regular CRWD meeting, the board of managers voted 4-3 to send the proposed rules to the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources to review and give recommendations on the document. BWSR oversees the state's watershed districts as well as water and soil conservation districts.

Some board members voted against sending the rules to BWSR because they were not comfortable enough yet with how the rules might apply to or affect the City of Austin's major North Main flood project, which is scheduled to begin significant construction this year along the Cedar River.

CRWD leaders emphasized that they will continue discussions with the City of Austin, with the goal of creating a memorandum of agreement between the city and watershed district in relation to the rules and how they relate to the North Main flood project.

Wednesday's vote had been delayed by the CRWD board since January, when the board agreed to hold off on sending the draft rules to the state so CRWD officials could talk more with the City of Austin.

In December, CRWD officials submitted the draft rules to affected local government units for review in the watershed's four counties – Dodge, Freeborn, Mower and Steele. Mower County has a large majority of the land that makes up the Cedar River Watershed District in Minnesota.

State and local officials formed the CRWD in April 2007 in response to the Cedar River watershed's top worst-known floods that occurred in 2000 and 2004. Overall the Cedar River Watershed District has experienced its four worst-known floods in the past decade – 2000, 2004, 2008 and 2010.

Copies of the draft rules are available at the Mower County Soil & Water Conservation District office in Austin or online at the CRWD's website – www.cedarriverwd.org.

Cedar River Watershed District, 1408 21st Ave. N.W., Austin, MN, 55912, 507.434.2603

www.cedarriverwd.org

Who: Cedar River Watershed District's Board of Managers.
What: Approved sending draft rules for governing the CRWD to the state for review.
When and where: Wednesday, March 16, at a regular board meeting in Austin.
Why: The CRWD's watershed management plan needs to have rules and a permit program.
Contact: **Bev Nordby**
CRWD administrator
507.434.2603