

OKABENA-OCHEDA WATERSHED DISTRICT 2020 ANNUAL REPORT



Lake Ocheda's level drawn down two feet before winter

OKABENA-OCHEDA WATERSHED DISTRICT
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OKABENA-UCHEDA WATERSHED DISTRICT

BOARD OF ANAGERS

President	Rolf Mahlberg 29403 Paul Avenue Worthington, MN 56187
Vice-President	Casey Ingenthron 26962 Plotts Avenue Worthington, MN 56187
Secretary	Jeff Rogers 1627 Fairway Lane Worthington, MN 56187
Treasurer	Jay Milbrandt 27494 Read Avenue Worthington, MN 56187
Manager	Steve Bousema 1040 Maplewood Drive Worthington, MN 56187

STAFF

Administrator	Dan Livdahl 960 Diagonal Road, P.O. Box 114 Worthington, MN 56187
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ADVISORY COMMITTEE

John Ahlers 31431 330th Street Bigelow, MN 56117	Logan Ahlers 31384 330 th Street Bigelow, MN 56117
Doug Anton 2335 West Ridge Road Worthington, MN 56187	Robert Demuth, Jr. 1404 Indian Hill Road Worthington, MN 56187
Caleb Fellows 29856 Plotts Avenue Worthington, MN 56187	Galen Gordon 23797 Oliver Ave. Worthington, MN 56187
Dwayne Haffield City of Worthington P.O. Box 279 Worthington, MN 56187	Les Johnson 28967 Co. Highway 35 Worthington, MN 56187
Ben Krohn 31161 Quine Avenue Worthington, MN 56187	Justin Langseth 35702 280 th Street Worthington, MN 56187
Paul Langseth 35505 280 th St. Worthington, MN 56187	Eric Roos Worthington Public Utilities P.O. Box 458 Worthington, MN 56187
John Shea 1619 Birchwood Place Worthington, MN 56187	Matt Widboom 22487 Highway 59 Worthington, MN 56187

OKABENA-OCHEDA WATERSHED DISTRICT Annual Report

2020 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

COVID-19 Pandemic State of Emergency

The Governor declared the COVID-19 state of emergency in March and issued a stay-at-home order for non-essential employees in April. Essential duties were identified and carried out during the state's stay-at-home order period. District staff worked from home but also did maintenance on district property and created a new Bella Park trail during this time. Staff returned to work from the office when the stay-at-home order expired.

Monthly board meetings were held from May through December using Zoom video conferencing software. In person meetings will likely begin in 2021 when COVID-19 vaccines are widely available and public health officials determine group meetings are an acceptable risk.

Clean Water Partnership

Worthington and the Okabena-Ocheda Watershed District formed the Okabena-Ocheda-Bella Clean Water Partnership Joint Powers Organization (JPO) in 1998 to accomplish the goals established by the 1993 Clean Water Partnership Implementation Plan. The governing board consists of two members from the city council, two managers from the watershed district and a city resident appointed at-large.

Since its formation, the JPO has paid annual incentives to install and maintain grass buffer strips, restored a wetland, installed water quality improvement basins, monitored surface water quality, measured lake water levels, and conducted studies on the sediment deposition in Sunset Bay and causes of Lake Okabena's impairments.

The district completed the following JPO activities in 2020:

1. Provided administrative and technical assistance to manage board affairs and structures.
2. Conducted water quality monitoring of Okabena and Ocheda lakes from June through September.
3. Completed sediment removal from the Prairie View sand filter benches.
4. Hired contractor and completed removal of sediment from the forebay of the W9 water quality basin.
5. Issued incentive payments for 128.4 acres of grass filter strips covering 90 percent of the streams in the Lake Okabena sub-watershed.

The district will continue to work with Worthington in 2021 to monitor lake water quality, provide filter strip incentives and operate and maintain the Prairie View project site.

Conservation Practices

The district budgets money annually to install Best Management Practices to prevent flooding, and improve and protect surface water and groundwater resources. Below is a summary of how the money was spent in 2020.

1. Issued 46 CRP filter strip incentive payments totaling \$36,162 and covering 272.4 acres district wide. The filter strips protect about 10 miles of stream courses and 14 miles of lake and wetland shorelines.
2. Issued cost-share payments totaling \$10,345.50 to seven landowners to seal five wells, repair three septic systems and build one grass waterway.

The district will continue to pay filter strip incentives and provide cost-share payments for eligible best management practices in 2021.

Wellhead Protection

The district received a \$264,600 pilot Wellhead Protection Partners Pilot Grant from BWSR to help Pheasants Forever purchase and retire approximately 56 acres of agricultural land in the Lake Bella Wellhead Protection Area. Pheasants Forever bought the land in July and deeded the property to the DNR in December. It will be planted to native vegetation and managed as part of the Wachter Wildlife Management Area in the future.

Lake Ocheda Enhancement

The Lake Ocheda management plan was approved by the DNR in December 2017. The plan allows for periodic lake level drawdowns to reduce carp populations, improve water quality and promote submerged vegetation. Construction modifying the outlet dam to make the drawdown possible was mostly done in December 2019. Below are tasks completed in 2020.

1. Stoplogs and fish screens were installed for the first time in the renovated dam structure in April. The lake was at its full service level elevation within 24 hours.
2. Adjustments and finishing touches were completed on the dam structure in April.
3. The plan management team met in late July and public notices of a fall and winter draw down were emailed to the Globe for publication and mailed to the lake's riparian landowners on July 31st.
4. Stoplogs were removed from the dam structure to begin the water level drawdown during the week of August 17th.
5. An automated water level logger and staff gauge were installed to measure drawdown progress.
6. Debris was removed from the dam fish screens at least weekly from April until the stoplogs were taken out in August.
7. Beaver dams were removed daily from the 310th Street culverts from September until the beaver were trapped out in December.

Lake water levels were at the dam sill elevation at freeze up in December. The stoplogs will be reinstalled in the dam in mid-April 2021. The plan management team will meet during 2021 to evaluate the success of the lake level drawdown at eliminating carp and promoting vegetation growth. Game fish will be stocked in the lake during spring 2021 if the winter fish kill is successful.

Lake Okabena Carp Population Analysis and Control Project

In 2018, Worthington allocated approximately \$52,000 for a multi-year carp population analysis and control project. The Olson Trust board approved approximately \$35,000 more for the project. Radio telemetry tags were implanted in 15 carp and their movements were tracked during the year. Passive integrated transponder (PIT) tags were implanted in about 178 carp to better assess their population during removal events scheduled during the 2019-2020 winter.

1. Radio telemetry tagged carp were located during winter to facilitate seining. Poor ice conditions, heavy snow and the lake's carp not schooling in large numbers prevented fish removal activities during the winter. Planning for a spring seining event was abandoned after the COVID-19 stay-at-home order was issued.
2. Eight living telemetry tagged carp were identified in the spring and their movement was tracked during the year.
3. Radio telemetry tags were implanted in 20 additional carp in early October. Tags with stronger radio transmitters were used to make fish easier to find under the ice.
4. A fish screen barrier is installed in the E.O. Olson Regional Stormwater Pond inlet to exclude carp.
5. The district hired Wenck Associates to evaluate options for capturing carp or excluding them from spawning habitat in Sunset Bay.

If the radio telemetry tags show carp congregating in large schools and ice conditions are adequate, carp seining will be attempted during early 2021.

Carp locations will be tracked again in 2021. Measures to exclude carp from spawning areas will be evaluated and barriers may be installed during the year. Removals will be attempted if the right conditions exist.

Public Information and Education

The district works with partners to provide watershed related educational opportunities for Worthington's residents, area civic groups and schools. COVID-19 pandemic restrictions cancelled most of the in-person educational events during the year. Below are the 2020 accomplishments.

1. Updated the district website monthly.
2. Worked with Worthington to accomplish educational components of the city's Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan including:
 - Distributing three pollution prevention factsheets to Worthington Public Utilities customers.
 - Installing 126 catch basin markers in Worthington.

Construction Site Inspections

The district works with Worthington to require erosion and sediment control permits for construction sites and complete inspections monitoring compliance with watershed district and state required plans. During 2020, the district conducted approximately 143 inspections of 15 different construction sites with NPDES stormwater permits in Worthington. District staff communicated regularly with Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan responsible parties about installation and maintenance of required Best Management Practices.

District Property Management

The district owns 414 acres of land in four locations. Approximately 15 acres is managed as pollinator habitat, with the balance managed for water quality protection, recreational activities or wildlife habitat. At Lake Bella Park, the district operates and maintains the Stateline Dam structure, a boat landing, park shelters, roads, trails and a restroom. Below are the land management activities completed in 2020.

1. Cut a new 1.2 mile trail on the east side of the lake in Bella Park. Installed signs to guide the public to the trails on both sides of the lake. Mowed old and new trails regularly during the summer.
2. Worked with volunteers from the Okabena Bees 4-H club to pick up litter weekly during spring and summer at Bella Park.
3. Picked up litter and mowed around the picnic shelters and restroom as needed at Bella Park.
4. Removed litter multiple times at the St. John Property.
5. Cut down volunteer cottonwood and willow trees growing in the St. John Property waterway allow for future maintenance.

Permits and Drainage Project Notifications

The district reviewed applications and issued permits for twenty projects in 2020 including:

1. Seven large projects requiring implementation of Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plans,
2. Nine smaller construction projects requiring erosion and sediment control plans, and
3. Four construction projects in Lake Okabena's shoreland protection area.

Okabena-Ocheda Watershed District 2020 Income and Expenses

Ordinary Income/Expense	
Income	
Checking Interest	15.12
District Levy	253,193.80
Insurance Premium Refund	595.00
Local Government Aid	1,891.76
Money Market Account Interest	702.16
Permit Inspection Fees	350.00
Prairie View Project Income	42,800.00
Property Rent	1,400.00
Total Income	300,947.84
Expense	
Audits	3,700.00
Bank Transfer	0.00
BMP Cost-Share	10,345.50
CWP Board Expense Contributions	2,275.00
Filter Strip Incentives	36,162.00
Insurance and Bonds	3,420.00
Lake Ocheda Enhancement Project	70,084.23
MAWD Dues	2,398.00
MAWD Meeting Expenses	405.56
Office Expenses	5,390.20
Payroll Expenses	89,569.78
Property Maintenance	8,493.71
Property Taxes	15.86
Public Notices	650.80
Staff and Managers Training	330.00
Storm Water Education Expenses	1,486.93
SWCD Services	5,000.00
Vehicle Maintenance	77.81
Water Sampling	991.09
Total Expense	240,796.47
Net Ordinary Income	60,151.37
Other Income/Expense	
Other Income	
Prairie View FEMA/State Disaster Assistance	150,700.00
Wellhead Protection Partners	264,600.00
Wells Fargo Checking Interest	1.38
Total Other Income	415,301.38
Other Expense	
ISD 518 Crailsheim Engineering	6,270.85
Okabena Carp Population	21,260.36
Prairie View Project	1,398.00
Wellhead Protection Grant Expense	264,600.00
Total Other Expense	293,529.21
Net Other Income	121,772.17
Net Income	181,923.54

Balance Sheet
December 31, 2020

ASSETS

Current Assets

Checking/Savings

District Checking 220,921.35

Wells Fargo Checking 5,118.44

Wgtn Federal Money Market Acct. 244,539.18

Total Checking/Savings 470,578.97

Total Current Assets 470,578.97

TOTAL ASSETS

470,578.97

LIABILITIES & EQUITY

Liabilities

Current Liabilities

Other Current Liabilities

Payroll Liabilities 0.11

Total Other Current Liabilities 0.11

Total Current Liabilities 0.11

Total Liabilities

0.11

Equity

Opening Bal Equity 193,655.50

Retained Earnings 94,999.82

Net Income 181,923.54

Total Equity 470,578.86

TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY

470,578.97