

OKABENA-OCHEMA WATERSHED DISTRICT

2023 ANNUAL PLAN AND BUDGET



Fall colors along the Bella Park trail

OKABENA-OCHEMA WATERSHED DISTRICT
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OKABENA-OCHEDA WATERSHED DISTRICT 2023 ANNUAL PLAN

Implement Clean Water Partnership Joint Powers Board Projects

- Conduct monthly water quality monitoring of Okabena and Ocheda lakes during June through September.
- Continue to offer Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) filter strip incentive payments throughout the district.
- Continue to provide administrative and technical services, and financial support, for Okabena-Ocheda-Bella Clean Water Partnership Joint Powers Board.
- Read staff gauges at least monthly during the ice-free season on Okabena, Ocheda, and Bella lakes. Report data annually to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR).
- Do the work needed to maintain and manage the vegetation on the Prairie View site. Provide funding as needed for weed and volunteer tree control.
- Manage Prairie View outlets to minimize the pond water level until vegetation is established around the sand filter benches.
- Do maintenance on the sand filter benches as needed to maintain their designed capacity.
- Continue discussions with Worthington about ownership and management of the Prairie View property.
- Do monthly inspections of the Prairie View ponds project site as required by the operation and maintenance plan. Perform maintenance as needed.
- Cooperate with Worthington, Olson Trust, Lake Okabena Improvement Association, Nobles County and other partners to take next steps in a multi-year Lake Okabena carp population control program.
- Implement tasks in the Crailsheim Water Quality Improvement Plan project work plan including:
 1. Sign the Clean Water Legacy grant agreement for the project. Work with Worthington and other partners to secure the grant's matching funds.
 2. Work with the Worthington School District to develop and record an easement for the project construction, operation, and maintenance.
 3. Contact with Houston Engineering, Inc to complete the project design.
 4. Apply for and receive approved permits from the DNR and Worthington to construct the project.
 5. Prepare and plan for project bidding and construction in 2024.

Land Acquisition

- Continue to acquire property, as it becomes available, for wetland restorations, groundwater protection, stormwater storage and water quality improvement projects.

Lake Management Projects

- Evaluate the costs, effectiveness, and feasibility of in-lake treatments for reducing the frequency and severity of late season algae blooms in Lake Okabena.
- Monitor vegetation on existing floating island wetlands. Perform maintenance as needed to keep them anchored in place and vegetated.
- Work with Lake Ocheda plan management team to assess the success of the 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 winter drawdown attempts. Monitor vegetation recovery and water quality. Support restocking the lake with gamefish.
- Manage Ocheda dam fish barrier to prevent carp migration into the lake.
- Investigate using Best Management Practices, including conservation easements, CRP programs, and local and state partnerships for land purchases to address surface water, groundwater and flooding problems throughout the district.

Plan Implementation and Rules Update

- Work with the local governmental units in the Missouri River Watershed Partnership (MRWP)Joint Powers Organization to receive the state grant and implement the Missouri River Watershed Comprehensive Water Management Plan. A manager will serve as a director on the MRWP joint powers board and staff time will be provided as needed to help implement the plan.
- Review and update district rules.

Implement Information and Education Programs

- Develop and implement a social media campaign to educate the public about improving water quality in Lake Okabena and Lake Ocheda.
- Work with Nobles County to provide invasive species education and prevention programs for the county's lakes.
- Work with Worthington to implement the public education components of the city's Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan.
- Work with Worthington Public Utilities to implement the best management practices and educational components of the wellhead protection plan and plans to supplement the city's water supply.
- Work with the Lake Okabena Improvement Association (LOIA) to do water quality monitoring and non-point source pollution prevention education programs.
- Produce brochures, press releases or newspaper advertisements or website factsheets on non-point source pollution prevention.
- Financially support and provide staff for educational programs at the Prairie Wetlands Learning Area.
- Lead watershed district tours as requested for Worthington High School classes, Minnesota West Classes and interested community groups.
- Provide presentations, as requested, for school classes and community groups.
- Support with staff time the Prairie Ecology Bus Center environmental education programs.

Implement Best Management Practices (BMPs)

- Work with the advisory committee and other partners to update the district's BMP cost-share and incentive programs.
- Identify landowners interested in conservation programs benefitting water quality, reducing flooding, preventing pollution, or improving wildlife habitat. Refer landowners to agencies with appropriate BMP programs for technical or financial assistance.
- Offer CRP filter strip incentives throughout the district.
- Offer cost-share on terraces, waterways, well sealing, septic system replacement, rain gardens, and conservation use acres.
- Create and implement innovative programs, using District levy funding, if necessary, to address water quality and flood prevention problems.

Maintain and Improve District Property

- Perform spraying or mowing as needed to maintain native vegetation on the St. John property buffer strip.
- Monitor the water level on the St. John property to determine whether the ditch plug facilitates storage of additional stormwater and improves wetland vegetation. Perform maintenance or improvements to the structure as needed.
- Identify whether it is advantageous to donate the Herlein-Boote diversion ditch property to the DNR or keep it for future watershed district management purposes.
- Perform weed control, litter cleanup, picnic area maintenance and beaver, muskrat and gopher control on district property.
- Maintain roads, trails, and structures at Bella Park.
- Work with Kiwanis to establish and maintain a bike trail on the St. John property.
- Trim trees as necessary to maintain woody cover at Bella Park.

- Maintain and manage the dock at the Lake Bella boat landing.
- Mow fire breaks and complete controlled burns as needed at Bella Park to maintain native prairie cover.
- Install willow plantings on the western shore of Lake Bella during early spring if the lake water level permits.
- Work with the US Fish and Wildlife Service to manage district property consistently with the adjacent Lake Bella Waterfowl Production Area.
- Remove beaver dams from streams and culverts as needed.
- Maintain and operate the fish barrier on the Lake Ocheda dam from April 15th through October.

Act on Permit Applications and Monitor and Enforce Permit Program Compliance

- Review permit applications and issue permits when projects comply with district rules and policies.
- Review drainage project notification forms for compliance with district rules.
- Inspect and monitor construction erosion control permit sites. Enforce compliance when necessary to avoid off-site sediment and nutrient pollution.
- Work with Worthington to inspect construction sites of one acre or larger for compliance with state NPDES storm water permit requirements and City and District rules for pollution prevention and erosion control.

Coordinate District Activities with other Local, State and Federal Agencies

- Appoint two managers to the Okabena-Ocheda-Bella Clean Water Partnership Joint Powers Organization board and participate in meetings.
- Appoint a board representative and an alternate to the Missouri River Watershed Partnership Joint Powers Board. Participate in meetings as needed.
- Participate in Worthington wellhead protection taskforce meetings.
- Contract with the Nobles Soil and Water Conservation District for technical services.

Okabena-Ocheda Watershed District 2023 Budget

REVENUES	2023
Nobles County - Administrative Levy	\$250,000.00
Nobles County - Insurance Levy	\$3,000.00
Local Government Aid	\$0.00
Property Income	\$1,400.00
Investment Interest	\$900.00
Permit Inspection Fees	\$200.00
Miscellaneous	\$1,000.00
Worthington Stormwater Program	\$6,000.00
Crailsheim Pond Clean Water Legacy Grant	\$485,000.00
TOTAL REVENUES	\$747,500.00
EXPENDITURES	
Legal/ Accounting	\$5,000.00
Board Compensation & Expenses	\$8,000.00
Insurance and	\$4,000.00
Bonds	
Miscellaneous	\$1,000.00
Office Expenses	
Rent	\$2,700.00
Phone, Internet	\$1,000.00
Office Supplies	\$1,024.46
Photocopies	\$350.00
Postage & Box Rental	\$500.00
Bookkeeping Software	\$1,000.00
Computer and Printer	\$500.00
Personnel	
Salary	\$67,683.00
PERA	\$4,913.79
Social Security & Medicare	\$5,177.75
Health Insurance & HSA	\$12,669.00
Mileage Reimbursement	\$4,500.00
Property Maintenance	\$4,000.00
MAWD Dues	\$2,482.00
MAWD Meeting & Training Expenses	\$2,500.00
Public Notice Publications	\$1,000.00
SWCD Administrative & Technical Services	\$5,000.00
Public Education	\$4,000.00
Watershed District Cost-Share	\$8,500.00
Filter Strip Incentive Program	\$38,000.00
Okabena Carp Management	\$20,000.00
Crailsheim Pond Engineering, Easements, Permits – CWL	\$240,000.00
Other Watershed Projects	\$50,000.00
Prairie View Project Maintenance	\$1,000.00
Joint Powers Board Operations	\$3,000.00
Storm Water Education Contract Expenses	\$1,000.00
Water Quality and Flow Monitoring	\$2,000.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$502,500.00