



Council of Metropolitan Area
Leagues

Established in 1962 as an ILO
and composed of the
members of local LWVs
in the seven metro counties
Anoka, Carver, Dakota,
Hennepin, Ramsey,
Scott and Washington

CMAL
Board of Directors

Officers
Karen Schaffer, Chair
Wes Volkenant, Vice Chair
Peg DuBord,
Secretary/Treasurer

Directors
Joann Ellis
Thana Ross

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Greetings to Metro Area League Members,

It was a pleasure to see so many of you via Zoom at our Annual Meeting on May 11. CMAL Board has tentatively decided to host our 2025 Annual Meeting in person. The date is fixed – Wednesday, April 30, at 6:30 p.m., location to be determined. If you have an idea for an attractive, centrally located venue, please let us know!

We were fortunate to have Ryan O’Connor, Regional Director for the Metropolitan Council as our keynote speaker. He had just assumed his official duties on March 15, but he was able to give us a fantastic view of his vision for the metropolitan area.

As those of you who were there, we were treated to an extremely energetic presentation. O’Connor noted that the Metro Area is the engine of growth for the State as a whole and that the Metro Council’s structure is unique upon metropolitan governing bodies across the country, combining long-range planning and operations in a single body.

The Met Council is the federally mandated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) in order to receive federal transportation funds and at the same operates housing, transit, wastewater and other functions directly. This requires a balance to be struck between future planning and ongoing operations.

O’Connor highlighted the importance of both waste and water as resources, making water reuse a key strategy for the future.

He agreed that the supply of affordable housing is insufficient, conceding that more regulatory teeth for the Metro Council and/or legislation to constrain local authority could be in order. With respect to transit, he adheres to the “8 to 88” principle meaning transit should be available to everyone from age 8 to age 88. He also noted that he intends to delegate some administrative tasks to his management team, so that he can spend his time interacting with federal, state and local leaders to achieve Metro Council goals.

Following O’Connor’s presentation. CMAL delegates took care of official business and also discussed the progress to date of the CMAL Watershed Study.

I am honored to be working again with a terrific board, Wes Volkenant (Vice Chair), Peg DuBord (Secretary/Treasurer), and Directors Thana Ross and Joann Ellis. Once again, I invite metro area LWV members to consider being appointed to a one-year directorship, as a way of getting to know CMAL.

I always think of the immediate post-Annual Meeting period as the gateway to summer and its pleasures. I hope that all of you are finding some pleasures or joys in this very warm and wet season!

Warmly,

Karen

Karen Schaffer, Chair - Council of Metropolitan Area Leagues

A SURPRISE FROM THE CMAL ARCHIVES

Karen Schaffer

CMAL is rightly proud of its current project studying the 33 watershed management organizations in the metro area, their structure, planning, projects, finances and civic engagement.

While perusing the CMAL paper archives currently in my possession, I found a folder labeled "WMO Survey 1985-1986." Yes, our current study reprises and updates earlier CMAL work.

CMAL's 1985-1986 study occurred three years following the 1982 legislation ("Chapter 509") which mandated the creation of watershed management organizations (WMOs) in the metro area where none previously existed. Existing watershed districts (WDs) would serve as the WMOs for their areas.

New WMOs would be created either by a petition for a watershed district or by formation of a joint powers agreement (JPA). The deadline was June 30, 1985. Areas not meeting the deadline would become a county responsibility. When CMAL issued its Report, there were 10 WDs (all pre-existing 1982) and 33 JPAs (three pre-existed). Two areas failed to meet the deadline. Inaugural watershed plans were due December 31, 1986.

CMAL's 1985 Survey document was as thorough as our current questionnaire, seeking information about the governing body, sources of technical support, planning process, known surface water issues, the need for capital improvements, funding sources and amounts, interlocal relations and community participation. Members from the 31 metro area LWV chapters were deployed to conduct interviews.

Where no LWV was assigned, the Survey was sent to the WMOs to complete and return. Responses were received from all WMOs.

CMAL issued its report "Survey Results on Watershed Management Organizations" in January 1986. There are eight pages of single-space text (prepared on an IBM Selectric) plus 3 Tables and an 8 ½ x 11 map. The report summarizes the survey results.

Its final sentence suggests a roadmap for the future: "The 509 process needs continued monitoring to determine its effectiveness and to determine possible legislative remedies for problems encountered."

Alas, the original survey responses do not seem to be available...unless there is another surprise in the wings. We have scanned this report and if you are interested in receiving a copy, please let us know.

WATERSHED STUDY UPDATE

CMAL's study of the 33 metro area watershed organizations continues!

A Zoom Watershed Study Update meeting was held on July 9; 26 of the 33 Metro Watershed Organizations were represented. The other seven watersheds have been adopted by a local leagues, but members were not able to attend the meeting.

Spring and summer are busy times for us! We are so happy with the results of the efforts by our members thus far!

Here are the results:

- 3 Completed and turned in
- 3 Completed but not turned in
- 9 Almost done
- 3 In process
- 12 Not started, but have teams ready to start working
- 3 Unknown due to lack of representation at the meeting

A Lot Of Good Information Was Shared

- The existence of the West Metro Water Alliance Communications Project
- The lack of authority to regulate non-point salt pollution caused by private landowners and HOAs
- Communication efforts among the watershed organizations themselves (e.g., Minnesota Watersheds, f/k/a/ Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts), and
- Ideas for items to be included in CMAL's final report.

A Few More Hands On Deck Would Be Appreciated!

If you or someone you know might be able to lend a hand with one of the watersheds, please let us know.

CMAL is a metro organization, so you don't need to limit yourself to your local LWV geographic area. You know the saying, "reach out and touch someone." There are many environmental activists in LWV; this project is in their wheelhouse.

- Participants said that the watershed websites were great sources for most of the information needed to complete the questionnaire.
- Sometimes the financial data wasn't easy to figure out or easily available. Don't hesitate to ask the watershed staff/consultants to help find that information!
- Another virtual check-in meeting will be held mid-August.
- Tentative (ambitious) goal: all questionnaires turned into Peg (as Word documents) by September 1!

Contact Peg at peg.dubord@gmail.com or Karen at schafferka@gmail.com if you have questions or would like to participate in this study.

NOTE TO CURRENT METRO LEAGUE LEADERSHIP - DELEGATE APPOINTMENT

As we start our next year, it is important that CMAL has a list of the Delegates that will represent their league for CMAL. We want to keep in close contact with all who are involved/interested in what's happening at CMAL.

Metro League Leadership

1. Send the contact information for the President/Co President(s) for your league.

2. Send the contact information for the Delegates that will represent your league on CMAL
3. If there are any interested parties wishing to be included in the CMAL mailings, please email your contact information to CMAL at: lwvcmal@lwvmn.org.

CMAL Calendar for 2024-2025

In response to the discussion held on at the Annual Meeting, the CMAL Board has decided on a new and different approach to the meeting schedule. We are switching the meetings to the 5th Wednesday of a month.

We hope that League members and presenters will like not meeting on Saturday.

Quarterly Meetings via Zoom

Wednesday October 30, 2024 6:30 p.m. Zoom - program TBD

Wednesday January 29, 2025 6:30 p.m. Zoom - program TBD

Annual Meeting

Wednesday April 30, 2025 6:30 p.m. In Person - location TBD