

## **2.0 Introduction: VBWD Purposes, Vision & Mission, Location, and History**

---

This section provides introductory information about Valley Branch Watershed District (VBWD), including the purposes, vision and mission, location, and history of the VBWD.

### **2.1 General Purposes and Requirements of Watershed Districts**

Like all watershed districts, the VBWD is a special purpose unit of local government that manages water resources on a watershed basis (a watershed is an area of land that drains to a given lake, river, stream or wetland). Watershed district boundaries generally follow natural watershed divides, rather than political boundaries.

Recognizing that water does not follow political boundaries, the State of Minnesota established the Watershed Act (Minnesota Statutes 103D) in 1955, which provided for the creation of watershed districts anywhere in the state. Of the 46 watershed districts in the state (as of 2004), 14 of these are located in the seven county Twin Cities metropolitan area.

In 1982, the Minnesota Legislature enacted the Metropolitan Surface Water Management Act (Minnesota Statutes 103B.201 – 103B.255). This act required the formation of a watershed management organization (WMO), and the development and implementation of a watershed management plan, for each of the 46 watersheds in the seven county Twin Cities metropolitan area. WMOs can be organized as watershed districts (e.g., VBWD), as joint powers agreement organizations among municipalities (e.g. Middle St. Croix Water Management Organization), or under county government (e.g., Carver County).

Watershed districts within the Twin Cities metropolitan area come under the guidance of both the Watershed Act (Minnesota Statutes 103D) and the Metropolitan Surface Water Management Act (Minnesota Statutes 103B).

Minnesota Statutes 103B and 103D require watershed districts to prepare watershed management plans. In addition to the plan requirements given in statute, watershed districts in the Twin Cities metropolitan area must also follow the detailed plan requirements of Minnesota Rules 8410. The rules, adopted by the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) in 1992, also contain requirements for local plans, and require the establishment of the necessary authorities to ensure implementation of programs.

The general purposes of a watershed district are to conserve natural resources through land use planning, flood control, and other conservation projects to protect the public health and welfare and for the wise use of the natural resources (Minnesota Statutes 103D.201).

Watershed districts can be involved with a number of issues, including protection or enhancement of water quality, prevention and alleviation of flood damage, prevention and alleviation of soil erosion and sedimentation, regulation of streams, lakes and water courses for domestic, recreational and public use, and protection and regulation of groundwater uses.

In addition, the purposes of watershed management organization water management programs in the metropolitan area (quoted from Minnesota Statutes 103B.201) are as follows:

1. Protect, preserve, and use natural surface and groundwater storage and retention systems.
2. Minimize public capital expenditures needed to correct flooding and water quality problems.
3. Identify and plan for means to effectively protect and improve surface and groundwater quality.
4. Establish more uniform local policies and official controls for surface and groundwater management.
5. Prevent erosion of soil into surface water systems.
6. Promote groundwater recharge.
7. Protect and enhance fish and wildlife habitat and water recreational facilities.
8. Secure the other benefits associated with the proper management of surface and groundwater.

Minnesota statutes (103D.335 in particular) give watershed districts a number of broad authorities, including the authority to:

- Collect data
- Conduct studies and investigations
- Construct improvements
- Levy property taxes and assess properties for benefits received
- Adopt rules to regulate, conserve and control the use of water resources
- Contract with private and public entities for the construction, maintenance, and operation of projects and other activities
- Hire staff and consultants
- Acquire property

- Incur debts, liabilities, and obligations
- Acquire, operate, construct and maintain dams, dikes, reservoirs, and water supply systems
- Enter lands for surveying and other investigations

Additional authorities are given in the statute.

## 2.2 VBWD Vision and Mission

In 2003, the VBWD Managers adopted a vision and mission statement to guide them through the planning process for this Plan.

### **VBWD Vision:**

*Always be careful stewards of the water resources within our watershed boundaries.*

### **VBWD Mission:**

*To manage and protect our water resources: lakes, ponds, creeks, streams, wetlands, drainages, and groundwater by:*

- A. *Promoting open communication with our constituents, both our citizen base and pertinent governmental units.*
- B. *Improving and protecting the quality of water for all water bodies within the VBWD.*
- C. *Managing the quantity of water and minimizing the negative impact on the VBWD from floods, high flows, and droughts by providing public works projects and other prudent measures.*
- D. *Understanding the effects of community growth and other activities on groundwater, initially focusing on the groundwater-surface water interface.*
- E. *Continuing to enforce the Wetland Conservation Act requirements as the responsible local unit of government.*
- F. *Educating our constituents and the local units of government within the VBWD on water quality and quantity issues, management, and means of improvement.*

In addition to the above mission statements, the VBWD believes that the current size of the VBWD, both geographically and the number of managers on the board, is the most efficient for managing the watershed's water resources. At its current geographic size, the VBWD Managers are able to keep abreast of events in the watershed without having to increase the number of managers on the board or hire staff. If the VBWD were increased in geographic size, it would be more difficult for the VBWD

Managers to do this, and it is possible that the number of managers would need to be increased and staff might need to be hired. It is also important that the VBWD not be any smaller in geographic size – its current size is large enough to generate the needed fiscal capacity to “run” the watershed.

## 2.3 Board of Managers

Watershed districts are governed by a local board of managers of from three to nine individuals who are appointed by the boards of the counties with land in the watershed district. In the Twin Cities metropolitan area, the number of managers may not be less than five. In the VBWD, a five-member board of managers is responsible for the control and management of the water resources of the VBWD. Four managers are appointed by the Washington County Board and one manager is appointed by the Ramsey County Board. The appointments are for staggered three-year terms. Watershed district managers must be voting residents in the watershed, and cannot be a public officer of the county, state, or federal government, except that a soil and water conservation district supervisor may be a manager. For watershed districts within the Twin Cities metropolitan area, the managers must fairly represent the various hydrologic areas within the watershed district (Minnesota Statutes 103D.311), and the managers cannot be staff of local units of government that are members of the watershed management organization (Minnesota Statutes 103B.227).

Since its inception, 27 different individuals have served on the VBWD Board of Managers. Table 2-1 and Table 2-2 list all of these individuals and their terms of office. Table 2-2 includes the officer positions held by the manager.

The regularly scheduled meetings of the VBWD Board of Managers are held twice a month, on the second and fourth Thursdays. The meetings are open to the public and are held at the Lake Elmo City Council Chambers, located at 3800 Laverne Avenue North.

## 2.4 General VBWD Boundaries

VBWD is located on the eastern edge of the Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan area and covers approximately 65 square miles. Approximately one square mile is in Ramsey County, the remainder of the VBWD lies in Washington County. Figure 2-1 shows the location of the VBWD and the communities that lie or partially lie within the VBWD. The following is a list of these communities:

Ramsey County Communities	Washington County Communities		
Maplewood	City of Afton	City of Mahtomedi	City of St. Mary’s Point
North St. Paul	Baytown Township	City of Oak Park Heights	West Lakeland Township
White Bear Lake	City of Grant	City of Oakdale	City of Woodbury
	City of Lake Elmo	City of Pine Springs	

The VBWD is adjacent to the following watershed districts and joint powers watershed management organizations:

- Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District, along west-northwest boundary of VBWD
- Rice Creek Watershed District, along north-northwest boundary of VBWD
- Browns Creek Watershed District, along north-northeast boundary of VBWD
- Middle St. Croix Water Management Organization, along east boundary of VBWD
- Lower St. Croix Water Management Organization, along southeast boundary of VBWD
- South Washington Watershed District, along southwest boundary of VBWD

The legal boundary of VBWD has been altered a number of times to more closely conform to actual drainage patterns. These alterations are listed below:

- 1974 – altered to exclude a portion of White Bear Lake
- 1984 – altered in the western portion of VBWD
- 1987 – altered boundary with Middle St. Croix Water Management Organization
- 2001 – altered boundary with Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District that affected one lot in Oakdale
- 2002 – altered entire common boundary with Browns Creek Watershed District
- 2003 – altered entire common boundary with South Washington Watershed District

## **2.5 VBWD History**

*VBWD was established on November 14, 1968 to address existing flooding problems and prevent future flooding problems in the watershed.*

In the post-World War II era, prior to the formation of VBWD, St. Paul area residents began building permanent homes on the shores of lakes in rural areas east of St. Paul, including areas that are now within the VBWD. One such area included the “Tri Lakes” area of Lake Elmo (at that time it was called East Oakdale Township), which includes Lakes Jane, Olson and DeMontreville. When the lakes began to rise in the mid-1960s, homeowners realized that the lakes were landlocked and that dozens of homes were in danger of flooding. Although proposals were made to provide outlets from these lakes, and actions were taken or proposed to prevent flows from entering these lakes, residents and local government officials were unable to reach agreement on a plan for solving the flooding

problems (and potential flooding problems) in the watershed. Recognition of the need for a plan and an agency to administer the plan provided much of the impetus for forming the VBWD.

On March 8, 1968, a petition signed by 103 residents of the VBWD area was submitted to the Minnesota Water Resources Board (now the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources) requesting formation of a watershed district and the appointment of managers for the watershed district. A public hearing was held in Lake Elmo on August 6, 1968. Much of the testimony at the hearing was concerning drainage problems and flooding between Silver Lake and Lake Jane. Other testimony was given regarding the damage of road beds as a result of standing water and flooding in the area. After considering the petition and the testimony at the public hearing, the Minnesota Water Resources Board established VBWD on November 14, 1968.

For the first 15 to 20 years, VBWD focused on how to solve the flooding problems in the watershed. This major effort culminated in the construction of the VBWD's Project 1007, a \$4.25 million project (completed in 1987) to relieve flooding problems on many of the lakes within VBWD. Project 1007 links the major lakes in the northwest and central portions of VBWD to an outlet pipe along Interstate Highway 94, eventually discharging to the St. Croix River. The project included construction of new outlets for Long Lake, Lake Olson, Deer Pond, Hedges Pond, Hedges Bog, Lake Jane, Crombie Pond, Beutel Pond, Eagle Point Lake, Lake Elmo, Horseshoe Lake, West Lakeland Storage Site, and the Minnesota Department of Transportation's Rest Area Pond. Project 1007 also included construction of a regional storage site (West Lakeland Storage Site) that acts as a regional infiltration and detention basin. The Project 1007 outlet system is comprised of approximately five miles of pipe, 60 manholes and water level control structures, two dams, approximately two miles of open channels, and over forty catch basins/manholes. Project 1007 also incorporated water quality features.

The VBWD rules and regulations have been an essential tool in preventing problems. In 1972, VBWD adopted rules and regulations and began reviewing proposed developments and other projects in the watershed. In 1975, VBWD began its formal permit program. The VBWD rules and regulations have always addressed the water quantity impacts of stormwater (e.g. flooding, rate control). At first, the VBWD rules indirectly addressed the water quality impacts of stormwater, but since 1995 have directly addressed the impacts (upon implementation of the 1995 VBWD Plan).

The VBWD has been concerned about water quality since its formation. Since 1971, VBWD and other authorities have been monitoring the water quality of lakes in the watershed. Streams have been monitored since 1972.

Since 1995, VBWD has concentrated on solving remaining flooding problems and conducting water quality studies. Between 1997 and 2001, the VBWD completed nine water quality studies for 24 water bodies within VBWD.

In addition to Project 1007, the Valley Branch Watershed District has implemented several programs and projects over the years to improve the quality of life in the watershed. Some of the more significant programs and projects include:

- Completing, operating, and maintaining a flood relief project for the Olson Lake Estates neighborhood,
- Completing a flood duration reduction project for the Downs Lake neighborhood,
- Collecting monthly water levels on more than a dozen lakes,
- Collecting groundwater levels from nearly two dozen VBWD groundwater observation wells,
- Collecting water quality data and developing baseline data for almost every surface water within the VBWD,
- Completing water quality studies to determine if a water body’s quality is achieving its goal and developing water management plans to improve or protect a water body’s quality,
- Reviewing and/or permitting about 30 development proposals per year

More information about VBWD history is provided in the individual watershed management plans of Section 5 and the following individual subsections of Section 4:

4.1 Public Involvement and Public Information	4.6 Groundwater Management
4.2 Surface Water Quality	4.7 Wetland Management
4.3 Stream Management and Restoration	4.8 Erosion Prevention and Sediment Control
4.4 Stormwater Runoff Management	4.9 Funding
4.5 Water Level and Floodplain Management	

As previously stated in this section, Minnesota Statutes 103B and 103D require watershed districts to prepare watershed management plans. Watershed districts generally cannot implement programs and projects unless they are included in the management plan. This watershed management plan (VBWD Plan) is the fourth VBWD Plan approved by the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) or its predecessor. The previous VBWD Plans were:

1. 1970 – *Overall Plan, Valley Branch Watershed District*
2. 1987 – *Valley Branch Watershed District Water Management Plan* (The Minnesota Water Resources Board (now BWSR) approved the Plan in March 1986, but the order formally approving the plan was not issued until September 1987; the Plan was printed in 1988).
3. 1995 – *Valley Branch Watershed District Water Management Plan*

Except for the minor boundary changes noted earlier in Section 2.4, VBWD has covered the same geographic area since its formation. In 2001, VBWD briefly became an enlarged watershed district

with a different name – Lower St. Croix Valley Watershed District. It came about as the result of a 2000 Washington County petition to BWSR to eliminate all of the joint powers watershed management organizations within the County, which, among other changes, involved enlarging the size of VBWD to include the area currently covered by the Lower St. Croix Water Management Organization and the southern portion of the Middle St. Croix Water Management Organization. In November 2000, BWSR held a public hearing on the county’s petition, and in January 2001, BWSR issued an order to enlarge the VBWD and change its name to the Lower St. Croix Valley Watershed District. In March 2001, the Middle St. Croix Water Management Organization filed an appeal to BWSR’s order. In September 2001, the Minnesota Appeals Court reversed BWSR’s decision, finding that BWSR exceeded its statutory authority in granting Washington County’s petition to enlarge the VBWD to include territory already within a joint powers watershed management organization. Between January 2001 and September 2001, VBWD went by the name Lower St. Croix Valley Watershed District. After September 2001, the watershed district reverted back to its original name (Valley Branch Watershed District) and previous geographic size.

VBWD has no central office and no full-time staff. All services, including engineering, legal, accounting, inspection and secretarial services are provided by consultants. The VBWD has a website ([www.vbwd.org](http://www.vbwd.org)), which includes VBWD permitting information, manager and consultant information, agendas and minutes from managers’ meetings, annual reports, lake level and water quality data, and other information. The VBWD’s mailing address is:

Valley Branch Watershed District  
P.O. Box 838  
Lake Elmo, MN 55042-0538

**Table 2-1  
VBWD Managers and Terms of Office**

<b>Manager</b>	<b>Term</b>
Dale Borash	1996-current
Ray Brenner	1981-1998
James Buelow	1994-1996
David Bucheck	1995-present
Allen Dornfeld	1973-1993
Maynard L. Eder	1968-1972, 1978-1981
Lincoln Fetcher	1999-present
Steve Foley	1996-1999
Francis Franta, Jr.	1968-1977
George Hedges	1975-1981
A.W. Horning	1968-1983
Duane Johnson	2000-present
Russell Kirby	1987-1994
Diane Kruse	1991-1993
Eugene Moynagh	1968-1972, 1986-1987
Gordon Moosbrugger	1983-1995
Richard Murray	1981-1987
Tom Novak	1996-1997
David Parkin	1994-1996
Jeff Peterson	1995-1996
William Rohrer	1988-1991
Robert Rosas	1973-1982
Donald Scheel	1999-present
Joyce Sommerdorf	1982-1985
Edward G. Whitman	1968-1974
Dan Winter	1997-1999
J. Peter Zetterberg	1993-1995

**Table 2-2  
VBWD Managers, Officer Position, and Terms of Office**

<b>Year</b>	<b>President</b>	<b>Vice President</b>	<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Manager</b>			
1968	Edward G. Whitman	A.W. Horning	Eugene Moynagh	Maynard L. Eder	Francis Franta, Jr.			
1969	Edward G. Whitman	A.W. Horning	Eugene Moynagh	Maynard L. Eder	Francis Franta, Jr.			
1970	Edward G. Whitman	A.W. Horning	Eugene Moynagh	Maynard L. Eder	Francis Franta, Jr.			
1971	Edward G. Whitman	A.W. Horning	Eugene Moynagh	Maynard L. Eder	Francis Franta, Jr.			
1972	A.W. Horning	Francis Franta, Jr.	Eugene Moynagh	Maynard L. Eder	Edward G. Whitman			
1973	A.W. Horning	Francis Franta, Jr.	Robert Rosas	Allen Dornfeld	Edward G. Whitman			
1974	A.W. Horning	Francis Franta, Jr.	Robert Rosas	Allen Dornfeld	Edward G. Whitman			
1975	A.W. Horning	Francis Franta, Jr.	Robert Rosas	Allen Dornfeld	George Hedges			
1976	Francis Franta, Jr.	A.W. Horning	Robert Rosas	Allen Dornfeld	George Hedges			
1977	Francis Franta, Jr.	A.W. Horning	Robert Rosas	Allen Dornfeld	George Hedges			
1978	Allen Dornfeld	Robert Rosas	George Hedges	Maynard L. Eder	A.W. Horning			
1979	Allen Dornfeld	Robert Rosas	George Hedges	Maynard L. Eder	A.W. Horning			
1980	Allen Dornfeld	Robert Rosas	George Hedges	Maynard L. Eder	A.W. Horning			
1981	Allen Dornfeld	Robert Rosas	Jan. 1 – June 4	George Hedges	Jan. 1 – Apr. 9	Maynard L. Eder	Jan. 1 – Jun. 3	A.W. Horning
			Jun 4 – Dec. 31	A.W. Horning	Apr. 9 – Dec. 31	Ray Brenner	Unknown – Dec. 31	Richard Murray
1982	Allen Dornfeld	Jan. 1 – Nov. 13	Robert Rosas	Richard Murray	Ray Brenner	Jan. 1 – Nov. 13	A.W. Horning	
		Nov. 13 – Dec. 31	A.W. Horning			Nov. 13 – Dec. 31	Joyce Sommerdorf	
1983	Allen Dornfeld	Jan. 1 – Nov. 13	A.W. Horning	Richard Murray	Ray Brenner	Jan. 1 – Nov. 13	Joyce Sommerdorf	
		Nov. 13 – Dec. 31	Joyce Sommerdorf			Nov. 13 – Dec. 31	Gordon Moosbrugger	
1984	Allen Dornfeld	Joyce Sommerdorf	Richard Murray	Ray Brenner	Gordon Moosbrugger			
1985	Allen Dornfeld	Joyce Sommerdorf	Richard Murray	Ray Brenner	Gordon Moosbrugger			
1986	Allen Dornfeld	Gordon Moosbrugger	Richard Murray	Ray Brenner	Eugene Moynagh			
1987	Allen Dornfeld	Jan. 1 - May	Eugene Moynagh	Richard Murray	Ray Brenner	Jan. 1 - May	Gordon Moosbrugger	
		May – Dec. 31	Gordon Moosbrugger			May – Dec. 31	Russell Kirby	
1988	Allen Dornfeld	William Rohrer	Russell Kirby	Ray Brenner	Gordon Moosbrugger			
1989	Allen Dornfeld	William Rohrer	Russell Kirby	Ray Brenner	Gordon Moosbrugger			
1990	Allen Dornfeld	William Rohrer	Russell Kirby	Ray Brenner	Gordon Moosbrugger			
1991	Allen Dornfeld	Jan. 1 – Aug.	William Rohrer	Russell Kirby	Ray Brenner	Jan. 1 – Aug. 22	Gordon Moosbrugger	
		Aug. 22 – Dec. 31	Gordon Moosbrugger			Oct. 24 – Dec. 31	Diane Kruse	
1992	Allen Dornfeld	Gordon Moosbrugger	Russell Kirby	Ray Brenner	Diane Kruse			

**Table 2-2  
VBWD Managers, Officer Position, and Terms of Office**

<b>Year</b>	<b>President</b>		<b>Vice President</b>		<b>Secretary</b>		<b>Treasurer</b>		<b>Manager</b>	
1993	Jan. 1 – Nov. 10	Allen Dornfeld	Gordon Moosbrugger		Russell Kirby		Ray Brenner		Jan. 1 – Feb. 19	Diane Kruse
	Nov. 10 – Dec. 31	J. Peter Zetterberg							Mar. 25- Nov. 10	J. Peter Zetterberg
									Nov. 10 – Dec. 31	Vacant
1994	J. Peter Zetterberg		Gordon Moosbrugger		Jan. 1 – Nov. 13	Russell Kirby	Ray Brenner		Jan. 1 – Nov. 13	David Parkin
					Nov. 13 – Dec. 31	David Parkin			Nov. 13 – Dec. 31	James Buelow
1995	Jan. 1 – Dec. 1	J. Peter Zetterberg	Jan. 1 – Nov. 13	Gordon Moosbrugger	Jan. 1 – Dec. 1	David Parkin	Ray Brenner		James Buelow	
	Dec. 1 - 31	David Parkin	Nov. 13 – Dec. 31	David Bucheck	Nov. 13 – Dec. 31	Jeff Peterson				
1996	Jan. 1 – Oct. 10	David Parkin	David Bucheck		Jan. 1 – May 9	Jeff Peterson	Ray Brenner		Jan. 1 – May 15	James Buelow
					May 15 – July 25	James Buelow			May 15 – July 25	Vacant
					Aug. 8 – Dec. 31	Steve Foley			July 25 – August 8	Steve Foley
	Oct. 10 – Dec. 31	Vacant			Sept. 12 – Dec. 31	Dale Borash				
					Nov. 14 – Dec. 31	Tom Novak				
1997	David Bucheck		Dale Borash		Steve Foley		Jan. 1 – Dec. 11	Tom Novak	Ray Brenner	
							Dec. 23 – Dec. 31	Dan Winter		
1998	David Bucheck		Dale Borash		Steve Foley		Dan Winter		Jan. 1 – Nov. 12	Ray Brenner
									Nov. 12 – Dec. 31	Vacant
1999	David Bucheck		Dale Borash		Jan. 1 – Dec.	Steve Foley	Jan. 1 – Nov. 13	Dan Winter	Lincoln Fetcher	
					Dec.	Vacant	Nov. 13 – Dec. 31	Donald Scheel		
2000	David Bucheck		Dale Borash		Donald Scheel		Lincoln Fetcher		Duane Johnson	
2001	David Bucheck		Dale Borash		Donald Scheel		Lincoln Fetcher		Duane Johnson	
2002	Dale Borash		David Bucheck		Donald Scheel		Lincoln Fetcher		Duane Johnson	
2003	David Bucheck		Lincoln Fetcher		Donald Scheel		Dale Borash		Duane Johnson	
2004	David Bucheck		Lincoln Fetcher		Donald Scheel		Dale Borash		Duane Johnson	

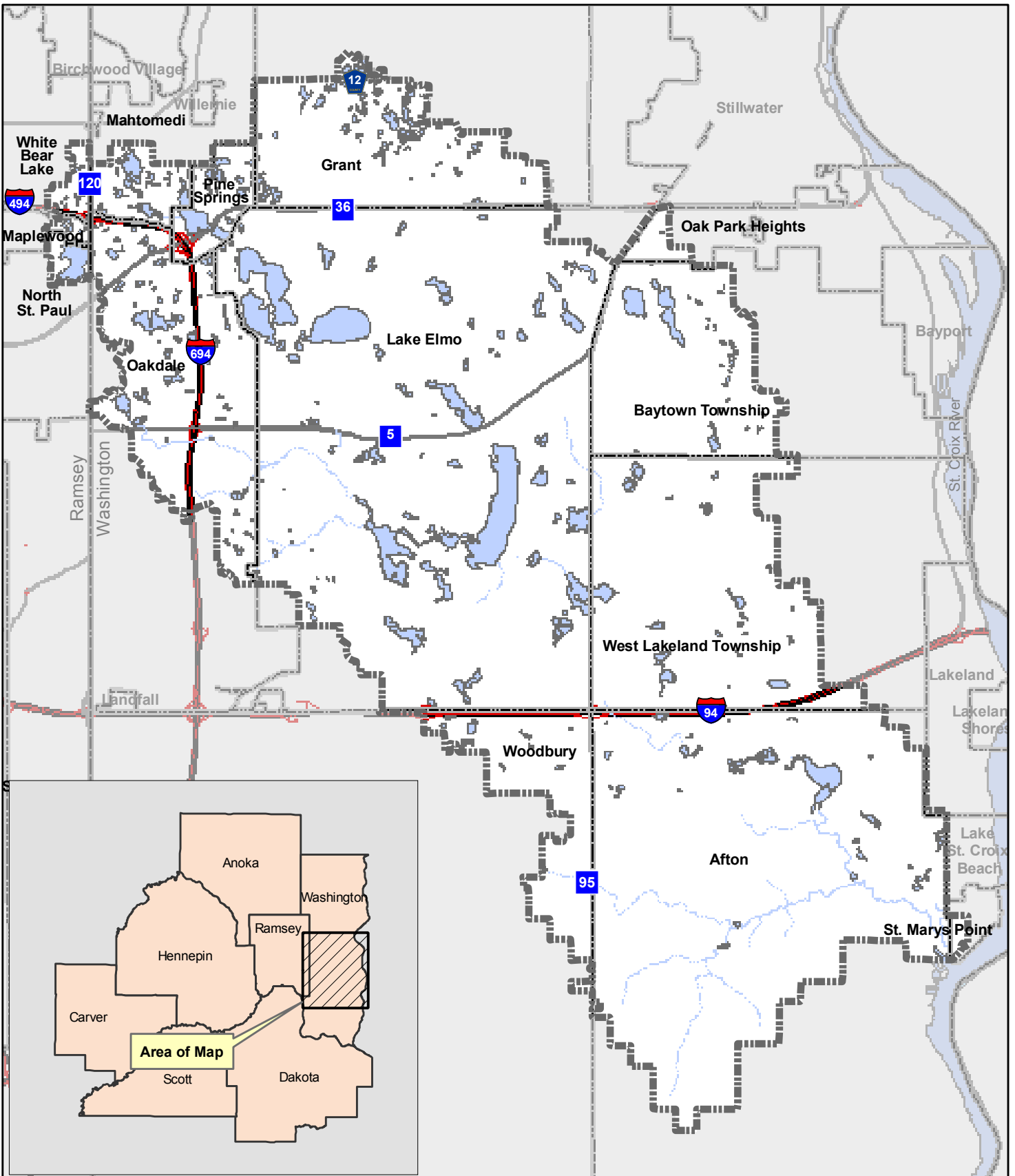


Figure 2.1

LOCATION AND COMMUNITIES  
Valley Branch Watershed District



Scale in Miles