

Citizen Advisory Committees in Joint Powers Watershed Management Organizations

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Citizen advisory committee roles:

Citizen advisory committee roles are not fixed and vary between watershed management organizations. A given watershed management organization's joint power agreement and watershed plan needs to be consulted to determine the specific roles of its citizen advisory committee.

The following are potential roles that citizen advisory committees can take on:

- Identify water resource issues of concern ;
- Assist in establishing goals for water resources protection and improvement;
- Generate new ideas and approaches to watershed and project management;
- Serve as a communications link between the watershed organization and the community;
- Review development of watershed plans;
- Review implementation of watershed plans;
- Carry out information and education activities;
- Carry out watershed improvement work projects; and,
- Collect information and data.

Authority:

Citizen advisory committees draw their authority from their watershed management organization's board of managers.

Structure:

Structure of citizen advisory committees varies between watershed management organizations. A given watershed management organization's joint power agreement and watershed plan needs to be consulted to determine the specific structure of its citizen advisory committee. Committee structure includes such factors as committee size, composition, officers, meeting schedule, and support staff.

Requirement:

Joint powers watershed management organization operation is authorized and regulated by Chapter 103B of Minnesota State Statutes, and by Chapter 8410 of Minnesota State Rules. The role of public participation is outlined in three places in these chapters:

Chapter 103B.231 Minnesota State Statutes: *The (watershed management organization) board shall adopt rules to establish . . . public participation process requirements for amendment and implementation of watershed plans.*

Chapter 8410 Minnesota State Rules: *Joint power agreements establishing a watershed management organization must . . . contain . . . a procedure providing for the establishment of citizen and technical advisory committees or other means of public participation.*

Chapter 8410 Minnesota State Rules: *(Watershed management organization plans) must outline goals and policies describing who will participate and when public participation will be encouraged. Goals and policies must at least address the creation and purposes of advisory committees and public information programs.*

Although the creation of citizen advisory committees is the most cited means of providing public participation, other methods for public participation are allowed if they are clearly defined in the watershed management organization's joint power agreement and watershed plan.

More information:

For more information on watershed management organization citizen advisory committees, contact the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources at 651-296-3767.