

Integrated Watershed Management Committee Update

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Wetland Study Council and Integrated Watershed Management Committee

Goals:

- 1) Explore watershed-scale based approaches for storm and flood water management
 - Includes potentially incorporating wetlands into storm and flood water planning
- 2) Explore multiple approaches to storm and flood water management
 - Upper watershed management in addition to point source management
- 3) Develop recommendations for DNR's consideration related to the above factors

Wetland Study Council and Integrated Watershed Management Committee

January 2022 – WSC acknowledges Committee's recommendations to DNR:

- 1) Continue agency-wide efforts to clarify policies and develop guidance surrounding wetlands and storm water management
- 2) Explore incorporating wetland-based and watershed-based hydrologic restoration considerations in the review and implementation of storm and flood water control actions.
- 3) Explore additional recommendations addressing policy and program-specific issues and opportunities related to wetlands and storm and flood water control/management

DNR Waterway, Wetland, and Storm Water Permitting Reviews – Primary Partner Programs

Environmental Management Division

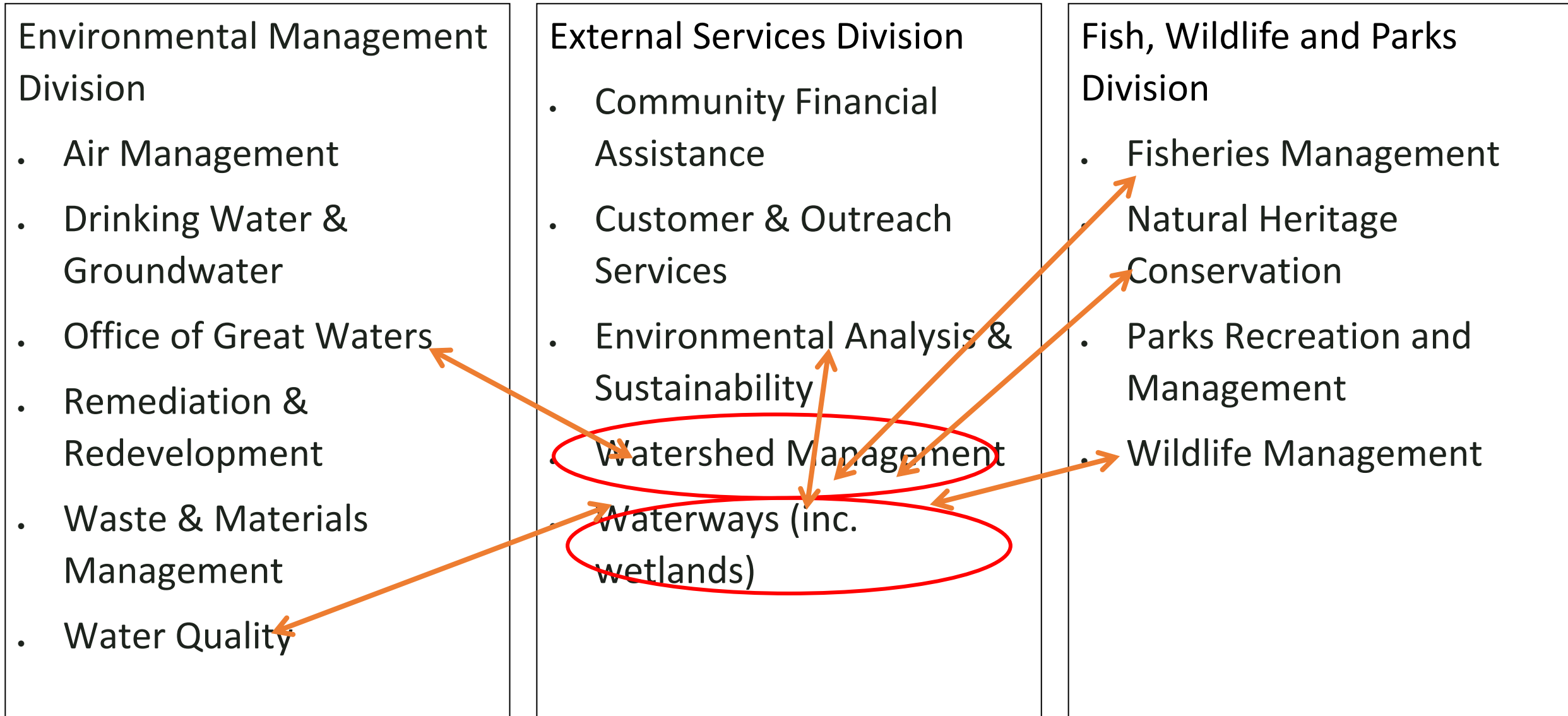
- Air Management
- Drinking Water & Groundwater
- Office of Great Waters
- Remediation & Redevelopment
- Waste & Materials Management
- Water Quality

External Services Division

- Community Financial Assistance
- Customer & Outreach Services
- Environmental Analysis & Sustainability
- Watershed Management
- Waterways (inc. wetlands)

Fish, Wildlife and Parks Division

- Fisheries Management
- Natural Heritage Conservation
- Parks Recreation and Management
- Wildlife Management



Integrated Watershed Management Committee Interviews

What we did

- 1) Interviewed 9 staff with ~10 years minimum experience in the Wetland/Waterway and Stormwater Programs
 - 5 Wetland/Waterway Experience
 - 3 Stormwater Experience
 - 1 Managerial Experience in both Programs

Integrated Watershed Management Committee Interviews

Goals

- 1) Gain knowledge of existing policies related to wetlands, waterways, and stormwater management.
- 2) Gain knowledge of how those existing policies are interpreted and implemented.
- 3) Gain knowledge of barriers that prevent watershed-based approaches to stormwater management.
- 4) Gain staff perspective on how Waterways and Storm Water Program could incorporate watershed based factors into decision making processes.

Integrated Watershed Management Committee Interviews

Identified Themes

- More collaboration needed between programs that implement wetland and waterway regulations, stormwater regulations, and water quality programs
- Flexibility exists for decision making related to wetland, waterway, and stormwater policies and regulations, but training related to applying flexibility is needed
- Barriers to taking a wholistic watershed approach exist in the regulatory context
- Staff have ideas for better incorporating watershed-based needs into permitting decisions

Integrated Watershed Management Committee Recommendations

- 1) Continue working cooperatively with WSC on these topics. – **Ongoing**
- 2) Validate the Storm Water related themes with less experienced staff - **Completed.**
- 3) Assign liaison roles to water quality-based programs (I.e., Storm-water, Water Quality.)
- **In process as part of the Waterways restructure**
- 4) Develop job aids for both Waterways and Storm Water Programs that explain the considerations that can be examined for utilizing flexibility (such as “net environmental benefit” or “maximum extent practicable”). – **Not yet initiated**

Integrated Watershed Management Committee Recommendations Continued

- 5) Develop a team within the Waterways Program, whose core focus is working with municipalities that need to implement MS4 water quality projects. – **Initial conversations for pilot project held with potential partners**
- 6) Distribute a list of Watershed Planning tools/information that can be shared with staff from the Waterways and Storm Water Programs. - **Not yet initiated**
- 7) Establish regular collaborative opportunities between Waterways, Storm Water and other water quality based programs (TMDL, Non-Point, etc.). – **Initiated at management team level**