



DEPARTMENT OF
**PUBLIC
WORKS**

Date: February 10, 2026
To: Utilities Committee
From: Peter Neuberger, City Engineer/Deputy Director of Public Works
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Subject: Adopt-A-Pond Program Overview

Purpose

The purpose of this memo is to provide the Utilities Committee with an informational overview of the City of Appleton's Adopt-A-Pond Program. This item is for information only and does not request Committee action or approval. The Adopt-A-Pond Program Information, Policies, and Procedures document is attached for Committee review.

Program Overview

The Adopt-A-Pond Program is a voluntary community stewardship initiative administered by the Department of Public Works (DPW). The program is designed to encourage residents, community groups, schools, businesses, and nonprofit organizations to assist with basic, non-technical activities at City-owned stormwater ponds, including litter removal, visual inspections, and reporting of maintenance concerns.

Stormwater ponds are an essential component of Appleton's stormwater system, which includes over 300 miles of storm sewer and more than 100 stormwater facilities managed by DPW staff. These ponds help reduce downstream flooding and improve water quality by slowing runoff and capturing sediment and pollutants before discharge to receiving waters.

Participation in the program is voluntary and limited to approved applicants who complete required application forms, participation agreements, waivers, and safety training. Volunteers are required to work in teams, always remain on shore, and follow established safety and liability requirements. The City retains responsibility for all technical, regulated, and safety-sensitive maintenance activities.

Community Benefits

1. Public Involvement and Education

The program provides a structured opportunity for community members to engage directly with the City's stormwater system. Volunteer participation increases public awareness of stormwater infrastructure, its function, and its role in flood mitigation and water quality protection, while promoting long-term stewardship of public resources.

2. Efficient Use of City Resources

By assisting with routine cleanups and visual observations, volunteers help reduce the amount of staff time spent on basic maintenance activities at stormwater ponds. This allows City staff to focus on higher-priority tasks such as inspections, repairs, regulatory compliance, and response to identified issues. Volunteer observations can also assist in early identification of erosion, clogged structures, or illegal dumping.

3. MS4 Permit Compliance

Public involvement is a required component of the City's Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit. The Adopt-A-Pond Program supports this requirement by providing an ongoing, documented public participation activity. Program participation, training, and cleanup events can be tracked and reported as part of the City's MS4 compliance efforts.

Program Oversight

The Adopt-A-Pond Program includes defined policies and procedures addressing eligibility, safety, liability, and responsibilities. The program documents, including participation agreements and waivers, were reviewed and approved by the City's Risk Management and Legal Departments prior to implementation. Agreements are issued for two-year terms with renewal based on continued participation and compliance. Pond eligibility is determined based on ownership, access, and safety considerations.

Conclusion

This memo is provided to inform the Utilities Committee of the Adopt-A-Pond Program and its anticipated benefits to community engagement, operational efficiency, and MS4 permit compliance. No action is requested at this time.