



**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  
Carol Barclay, Vice Chair  
Peg DuBord, Treasurer**

**Directors**

**Dick Ottman  
Joann Ellis  
Thana Ross  
Wes Volkenant**

**LETTER FROM THE CHAIR**

**Greetings to Metro Area League Members!**

First, I would like to thank everyone who attended our 2023 Annual Meeting on May 20. We accomplished much that day, including a decision to undertake a study of watershed districts in the metro area.

We were also treated to a fabulous presentation on the LWV Upper Mississippi River Region (UMMR) Interleague Organization (ILO) by Gretchen Sabel... its Communication Chair.

Thanks to Zoom we were able to hear from Gretchen while she was on a road trip visiting family.

**Watershed District Study**

The CMAL Board has begun to outline the watershed district study. We have identified a leadership team of Wes Volkenant, Peg DuBord and Carol Barclay, as well as a list of individuals attending the Annual Meeting who volunteered to work on the study.

As the study gets underway, there will be many opportunities for others to volunteer to work on it, including interviewing watershed district officials and/or staff. Watch for more information on an organizational meeting where we will get started!

I am looking forward to this coming year, especially the watershed district study. I thank you for your confidence in my leadership by electing me to a new two-year term. Here is a quote from Gretchen Sabel on May 20: "We all know our zip code, our area code and all should know our watershed." That is exactly what we will be doing!

Warmly,

*Karen*

Karen Schaffer  
CMAL Chair

## CONSIDER A CMAL BOARD POSITION

CMAL is always looking for new people to join the Board. Currently we have the vacancies for Secretary and Director.

CMAL is dedicated to learning about and understanding issues that affect the seven-county metro area. We need members from all parts of the metropolitan area to join and collaborate.

The commitment is a monthly zoom meeting. It is a wonderful opportunity to work with League members from across the metro whom you would never otherwise meet - It's fun and there is lots of enjoyable conversation!

Let Karen know if you are interested! [schafferka@gmail.com](mailto:schafferka@gmail.com)

### SAVE THE DATES

October 14, 2023	Quarterly Meeting
January 13, 2024	Quarterly Meeting
March 9, 2024	Quarterly Meeting
May 11, 2024	Annual Meeting

## REMEMBERING DEEANN CHRISTENSEN

The CMAL 2023 Annual Meeting Booklet missed the passing of CMAL friend in December 2022.

DeeAnn, in addition to being a retired social studies teacher and a labor activist, was an active member of LWV A/B/C for many years.

We at CMAL are grateful for her for work on the Anoka County part of CMAL's County Government Study and participation on the committee that edited the final report.

## LWV UPPER MISSISSIPPI RIVER REGION (UMRR)

We were privileged to have Gretchen Sable present information on the Upper Mississippi River Region or UMMR as they would like to be referenced, at the CMAL Annual Meeting in May.

Gretchen is the founding president of UMRR and is currently the Communications Director. She is also the president of the LWV Anoka, Blaine, Coon Rapids chapter.

Her presentation responded to our question - "What is UMRR"?

Established in 2015, UMRR is a LWV Inter-League Organization comprised of leagues in Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois and Wisconsin - all states that abut the Upper Mississippi. UMRR reports directly to the LWV US.

The purpose of UMRR is to address both water quality and quantity in the upper Mississippi region.

Areas of interest include:

- Gulf of Mexico dead zone
- Transportation of hazardous materials on the Mississippi River
- Aquatic invasive species
- Commercial navigation
- Nutrient pollution from urban, suburban and rural sources and
- Increasing public understanding, promoting resource conservation and advocating for effective and efficient government action.

As Communications Director, Gretchen produces a monthly newsletter, supports their Facebook page, and writes a regular blog.

UMMR has bi-monthly educational meetings that are open to league members.

LWVUMMR is funded exclusively through membership dues from local Leagues and contributions from Individuals or organizations.

Two questions:

- Is your local League a member of UMRR?
- Have you made an individual financial contribution to UMRR?

Online UMRR Information - Great information and perspective regarding this vital water resource.

- Gretchen's PowerPoint presentation is attached for your reference
- [UMRR Website](#)
- Facebook: [UMRR Facebook](#)

# LEGISLATURE ESTABLISHES METROPOLITAN COUNCIL GOVERNANCE TASK FORCE

By Karen Schaffer

CMAL conducted a study in 2019 regarding the governance of the Metropolitan Council, it was a great study, which led to several consensus positions.

During the 2023 Legislative Session, it was decided the Met Council governance structure should be reviewed. Pursuant to HF 2092 2<sup>nd</sup> Engrossment 93<sup>rd</sup> Legislature a task force will be appointed by July 15, 2023, to make recommendations to reform and reconstitute governance of the Metropolitan Council.

In particular, the task force is directed to evaluate the membership of Metropolitan Council particularly focusing on whether members should be directly elected, appointed or a combination of both.

There is also a question of should there be a creation of a Council of Governments (COG) to replace the Metropolitan Council and reapportioning Metropolitan Council duties to state agencies and/or local governments. Recommendations are due to the legislature by February 1, 2024.

It has been less than three years since the Blue Ribbon Committee appointed by Governor Walz evaluated some of the same issues and recommended retention of the current system of appointment, albeit with the reestablishment of staggered terms for Council members.

Blue Ribbon Report includes all of the testimony presented to it, including a brief history of the Metropolitan Council and its governance, as well as easy-to-read summaries of Council authorities and programs. It also includes CMAL's October 26, 2020, testimony on Metropolitan Council governance as well as our January 2019 report detailing our study and press release announcing CMAL's updated position (pp. 88-124). [Blue Ribbon Panel Report Final Recommendations](#)

CMAL will monitor the activities of this new task force and, if hearings are held, will volunteer to testify on the basis of CMAL's recently updated position (2019) on Metropolitan Council governance.

I spent time reviewing the Blue Ribbon Committee report from December 2020. It is a great resource for information about all of the regional transit services. It also includes the Legislative Auditor recommendations (which differ from ours) and of course all the CMAL Study Recommendations!

## BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

March - July

- Annual Meeting Planning
- Appointed Dick Ottman to a one-year term as Director
- Wrapped up the County Government Study
- Wrapped up the Annual Meeting and started planning for the 2024 Annual Meeting
- Decided to pursue a Study on Watershed Districts in the Metro
- Decided on topics for the August newsletter