Steering Committee Meeting

Wednesday, September 8, 2021

Post- Meeting Summary

Planning Process

Prioritize Issues

The Steering Committee broke into two in-person groups and one remote group to prioritize issues in the Final Issues Table. Using a worksheet, each group reviewed half of the issues and designated each issue (with a rationale) as one of three priority levels:

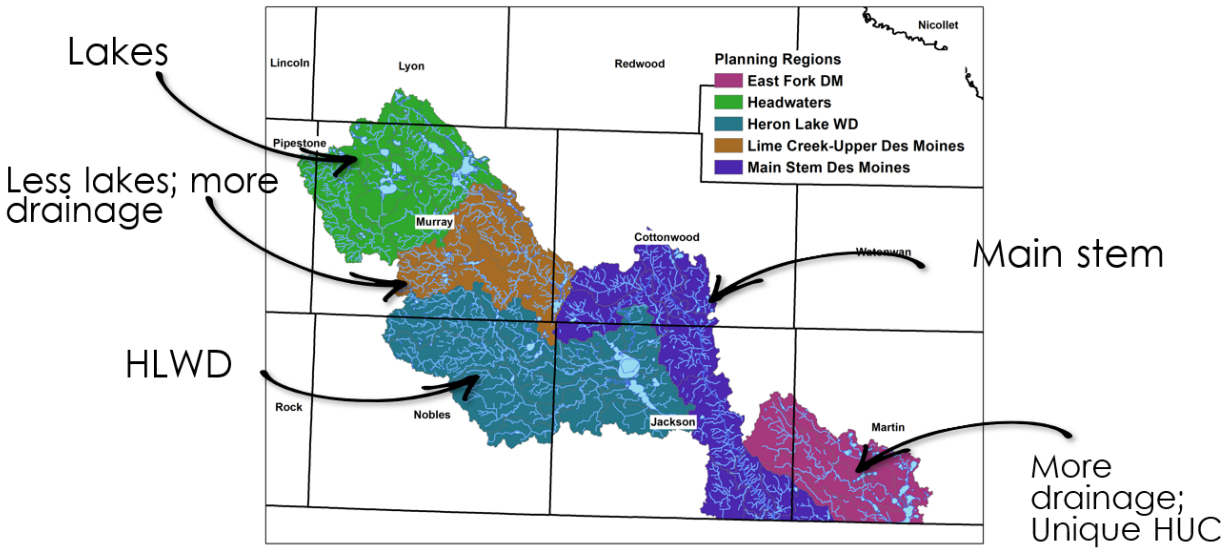
- Priority A: We intend to address these issues first within the lifespan of this plan. These are the most important!
- Priority B: We intend to address some of these issues. Still important, but less of a priority.

- Priority C: We may address some of these issues through collecting additional data or funding, or issue may be addressed by a partner group. Still important, but the lowest priority items.

Then, the groups traded worksheets. If there was disagreement with a priority level designation, the groups wrote in a new priority level with a rationale. At the end of the exercise, the Steering Committee discussed results as a group, and agreed to a priority level designation for each issue in the Final Issues Table. The Steering Committee recommendation for priority issues are included as Attachment A.

Planning Regions

Planning regions are useful in a watershed plan for tailoring priorities by area, goals, and actions. The Steering Committee reviewed three options for planning regions, and decided to create planning regions for the planning process as shown below:



Prioritizing Resources / Subwatersheds

Prioritizing resources or subwatersheds for each issue is helpful for informing where efforts and dollars should go for action focused on that issue. The Steering Committee reviewed a list of criteria

that HEI will review in order to recommend subwatershed and resources for prioritization. Recommendations informed by these criteria will be reviewed and refined at the next Steering Committee meeting.

Priority Resource Points

PTMApp (Prioritize, Target, and Measure Application) is a tool used in watershed planning that can identify problem areas and the costs and benefits of solutions on the ground. Point persons were assigned to aid in the identification of priority resource points for the watershed.

Priority resource points are locations on the landscape for estimating phosphorus, nitrogen, and sediment loading in PTMApp. Typically, they are located:

- At watershed and subwatershed inlets and outlets
- Downstream of impaired waters
- At lakes
- At locations of large projects

Ashley B. and Sarah S. agreed to be a small subcommittee for defining priority resource point locations for the Des Moines River Watershed PTMApp project.

Regular Planning Meetings

- Steering Committee: Monthly; Second Wednesday, 9AM
- Advisory Committee: Quarterly; Third Thursday, 9AM
- Policy Committee: Every other month, or as needed; Third Thursday, 9AM (or immediately following Advisory meeting)

Steering Committee Priority Recommendations

Priority A Issues

Category	Resource	Issue Statement	Notes
	Aquifer	Protection of existing groundwater recharge areas and promotion of additional recharge and infiltration to augment limited groundwater supplies	DWSMAs are different than recharge practices which may be 6-7 miles away
	Drinking Water	Protection of drinking water quality from contaminants, including nitrates and pesticides, especially in areas with groundwater and surface water interaction	Red Rock Rural Water Source wells, DWSMAs
	Drinking Water	Protection of drinking water quality from contamination from unused wells and noncompliant septic systems	
	Streams, Ditches	Peak flow from altered hydrology (tile and drainage ditches) and its impact on channel stability, infiltration rates, and water quality degradation	Ditches and drainage management; tile drainage; flashy river systems
	Streams	Excess nitrates and ammonia in streams impacting aquatic life	Manure application; Feedlot runoff
	Lakes & Streams	Excess delivery of sediment from upland wind and water erosion to lakes and streams impacting aquatic life and recreation	
	Lakes & Streams	Excess phosphorus loading from runoff and resuspension in lakes causing nuisance algal blooms, impacting aquatic life and recreation	Fertilizer runoff; Feedlot runoff
	Rural and Urban Communities	Insufficient storage on the landscape, especially in upland areas, and its impact on flooding	Worthington, Currie, Windom, Jackson, and Lake Shetek area, Lake Wilson.
	Agriculture	Low crop diversity and lack of conservation tillage or residue management on fields, leaving soil exposed and impacting soil health	Carbon release, groundwater infiltration

Priority B Issues

Category	Resource	Issue Statement	Notes
	Streams	Need for continued enhancement of buffers along ditches, stream systems, and non-protected waters, impacting water quality and habitat	
	Streams	Streambank and in-channel erosion contributing sediment to water, impacting water quality and habitat	
	Streams	Livestock access to streams causing degradation in water quality and instability to streambanks	
	Lakes & Streams	Urban / impervious runoff, stormwater runoff, and other urban point sources impacting dowstream water quality conditions	City of Worthington MS4 Was a “C”; moved to B based on public survey
	Lakes	Inadequate lake shoreline habitat to provide habitat and protect against shoreline erosion	
	Drainage Ditches	Uncoordinated and inadequate drainage management to meet drainage network needs and promote water quality	
	Rural and Urban Communities	Increasing extremes from a changing climate (drought and increasing precipitation patterns), and the need to plan for resiliency	
	Wetlands	Loss and degradation of wetlands and its impact on wildlife habitat and water storage	
	Upland Habitat	Degradation and fragmentation of wildlife habitat, including native prairie, woodlands, grasslands, and other areas	Protection of pollinators; CRP; Was a “C” and moved to “B” based on public / agency comment; umbrella for protection of rare features

Priority C Issues

Category	Resource	Issue Statement	Notes
	Aquifer	Need for coordinated use of groundwater supply due to sensitivity from climate and increasing appropriations for industry, rural water, and agricultural irrigation	High concern; low ability to address as a local group acting under a local plan
	Drinking Water	Availability of domestic drinking water due to poor groundwater quality from natural background sources	
	Streams	Lack of habitat within stream systems to support aquatic life	
	Streams	Excess insecticides in streams impacting aquatic life	
	Streams	Lack of stream connectivity impacting fish passage and altering the flow of water	
	Lakes & Streams	Excess bacteria impacting aquatic recreation in lakes and streams	Covered by other issues
	Lakes	Lack of plant habitat in lakes impacting terrestrial and aquatic life	
	Lake	Overabundance of rough fish (carp and bullhead) threatening other fish species and resuspending sediment	
	Lakes	Presence of aquatic invasive species (fish and plants) threatening native species and water quality	

Category	Resource	Issue Statement	Notes
	Mining	Management of sand and gravel pits in the Des Moines River valley to protect nearby sensitive features	High concern; low ability to address as a local group acting under a local plan; encourage land use planning
	Landfills	Monitoring and oversight of landfills to prevent degradation of surface and groundwater quality	Lack of actions; covered by regulatory actions
	Agriculture	Promotion of land protection programs for long-term or short-term protection (e.g. CRP)	Lack of actions; covered by other habitat issues
	Unique Habitats	Protection of rare and declining habitats (oak savanna, calcareous fens, trout stream, etc.)	
	Upland Habitat	Presence of terrestrial invasive species threatening native species richness and diversity	

Reference: All Issues

Yellow = Priority A; Blue = Priority B; Grey = Priority C

Category	Resource	Issue Statement	Notes
	Aquifer	Need for coordinated use of groundwater supply due to sensitivity from climate and increasing appropriations for industry, rural water, and agricultural irrigation	MDH: areas with limited GW resources and aquifer availability.
	Aquifer	Protection of existing groundwater recharge areas and promotion of additional recharge and infiltration to augment limited groundwater supplies	DWSMAs are different than recharge practices which may be 6-7 miles away
	Drinking Water	Protection of drinking water quality from contaminants, including nitrates and pesticides, especially in areas with groundwater and surface water interaction	Red Rock Rural Water Source wells, DWSMAs
	Drinking Water	Protection of drinking water quality from contamination from unused wells and noncompliant septic systems	
	Drinking Water	Availability of domestic drinking water due to poor groundwater quality from natural background sources	
	Streams	Need for continued enhancement of buffers along ditches, stream systems, and non-protected waters, impacting water quality and habitat	
	Streams, Ditches	Peak flow from altered hydrology (tile and drainage ditches) and its impact on channel stability, infiltration rates, and water quality degradation	Ditches and drainage management; tile drainage; flashy river systems
	Streams	Streambank and in-channel erosion contributing sediment to water, impacting water quality and habitat	
	Streams	Lack of habitat within stream systems to support aquatic life	

Category	Resource	Issue Statement	Notes
	Streams	Excess nitrates and ammonia in streams impacting aquatic life	Manure application; Feedlot runoff
	Streams	Excess insecticides in streams impacting aquatic life	Chlorpyrifos
	Streams	Livestock access to streams causing degradation in water quality and instability to streambanks	
	Streams	Lack of stream connectivity impacting fish passage and altering the flow of water	Shetek and Talcot lakes as priority sites for dam removal and/or modification projects
	Lakes & Streams	Excess delivery of sediment from upland wind and water erosion to lakes and streams impacting aquatic life and recreation	
	Lakes & Streams	Excess phosphorus loading from runoff and resuspension in lakes causing nuisance algal blooms, impacting aquatic life and recreation	Fertilizer runoff; Feedlot runoff
	Lakes & Streams	Excess bacteria impacting aquatic recreation in lakes and streams	Manure applications; Fertilizer runoff; Feedlot runoff
	Lakes & Streams	Urban / impervious runoff, storwater runoff, and other urban point sources impacting dowstream water quality conditions	MS4 General Permit: City of Worthington
	Lakes	Lack of plant habitat in lakes impacting terrestrial and aquatic life	
	Lakes	Inadequate lake shoreline habitat to provide habitat and protect against shoreline erosion	

Category	Resource	Issue Statement	Notes
	Lake	Overabundance of rough fish (carp and bullhead) threatening other fish species and resuspending sediment	
	Lakes	Presence of aquatic invasive species (fish and plants) threatening native species and water quality	
	Drainage Ditches	Uncoordinated and inadequate drainage management to meet drainage network needs and promote water quality	
	Rural and Urban Communities	Insufficient storage on the landscape, especially in upland areas, and its impact on flooding	Impact of upland drainage downstream; Worthington, Currie, Windom, Jackson, and Lake Shetek area, Lake Wilson.
	Agriculture	Low crop diversity and lack of conservation tillage or residue management on fields, leaving soil exposed and impacting soil health	Carbon release, groundwater infiltration
	Rural and Urban Communities	Increasing extremes from a changing climate (drought and increasing precipitation patterns), and the need to plan for resiliency	
	Mining	Management of sand and gravel pits in the Des Moines River valley to protect nearby sensitive features	
	Landfills	Monitoring and oversight of landfills to prevent degradation of surface and groundwater quality	
	Upland Habitat	Degradation and fragmentation of wildlife habitat, including native prairie, woodlands, grasslands, and other areas	Protection of pollinators

Category	Resource	Issue Statement	Notes
	Agriculture	Promotion of land protection programs for long-term or short-term protection (e.g. CRP)	
	Unique Habitats	Protection of rare and declining habitats (oak savanna, calcareous fens, trout stream, etc.)	Trout stream - Scheldorf Creek
	Upland Habitat	Presence of terrestrial invasive species threatening native species richness and diversity	
	Wetlands	Loss and degradation of wetlands and its impact on wildlife habitat and water storage	