



Policy Committee Meeting

Friday, October 7, 2022

Immediately Following 9AM Public Hearing

Meeting Location

MN Department of Natural Resources Office

175 County Road 26

Windom, MN

<i>Agenda Items</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Time</i>
1. Welcome and Introductions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Approve minutes 	Approve	5 min
2. Approving the Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review Comment / Response table and plan revisions from Formal Review and Public Hearing ● Approve plan for Local Boards 	Discuss / Approve	30 min
3. Other Business Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Printing costs ● Updates 	Discuss	20 min
4. Action Items and Next Meetings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Next Policy Committee meeting 	Discuss	5 min

Des Moines River One Watershed One Plan Policy Committee Meeting

Thursday, August 18, 2022

Members Present: Tom Appel, Cottonwood County Commissioner; Gary Crowley, Lyon County Commissioner; Paul Nelson, Jackson SWCD; David Thiner, Murray County Commissioner; Linda Meschke, Martin SWCD; Karen Hurd, Murray SWCD; Paul Langseth, Nobles SWCD; Daryl Tasler, Cottonwood SWCD; Karen Hurd, Murray SWCD; Steve Prairie, Lyon SWCD

Staff Present: Kay Gross, Cottonwood County; Dave Bucklin, Cottonwood SWCD; Ashley Brenke, Martin SWCD; Sarah Soderholm, Murray County; Craig Christianson, Murray SWCD; Shelly Lewis, Murray SWCD; Jean Christoffels, Murray County; Mark Koster, Nobles County; Dan Bartosh, Jackson SWCD; Andy Geiger, Jackson County; Doug Goodrich, BWSR; Mark Hiles, BWSR; Davis Harder, HLWD

Meeting was called to order at 9:03 a.m.

Implementation Structure/ Function Discussion

Murray County and Murray SWCD have volunteered for admin/fiscal. The policy board decided that these two entities will fill those roles. It was discussed that cost share contracts will be created in the county that they are physically located in versus the admin/fiscal county. The board made small changes to the verbiage of how subcommittees will be structured and formed, and also all executive committee members should have an alternate. It was decided that the HLWD will have a representative on executive committee every year. It was added the steering committee will meet at least 4 times per year.

Motion was made by Paul Langseth and seconded by Karen Hurd to approve the by-laws and have an attorney review them. Motion passed unanimously.

Next Steps

The next policy meeting was scheduled for October 7th at 9 a.m. at the Windom DNR office.

Linda Meschke made a motion to adjourn and Steve Prairie second. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 10:09 a.m.

Submitted respectfully,

Tom Muller

Secretary

**Des Moines River 1W1P
Formal Review Comments**

Commenter	Plan Section	Page / Paragraph
MDH	5	81- Education and C
MDH	Multiple	10, 66, 74
MPCA		
MPCA	5	84- RA-4
MPCA	6	84- RA-5
MDA	6	89, below table
MDA	Whole document	
DNR	Whole document	
DNR	Whole document	
DNR	Whole document	
DNR	3	21

DNR	4	
DNR		
DNR	4	35
DNR		
DNR		
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DNR		
BWSR	Whole Document	
BWSR	Whole Document	
BWSR	Whole Document	
BWSR	ES	6
BWSR	2	9

BWSR	5	55
BWSR	5	57-58
BWSR	5	Targeted Implementation Tables
BWSR	5	80
BWSR	7	98
BWSR	7	Whole section

Comment	Material	Editorial	Note
MDH recommends Output for Activity EO-2 could be 1 clinic or outreach event / year	X		
Red Rock Rural Water Drinking Water Supply Management Areas (DWSMAs) in figures		X	
The MPCA suggests that tasks focusing on education and outreach be targeted to respective priority areas to coincide with reaching priority goals.			
MPCA is listed twice as an implementation partner and should only be listed once.		X	
The task of reviewing septic system records for compliance assessment will be primarily the responsibility of the counties. Please list the counties first as the lead organization while keeping MPCA underlined as a second lead agency.	X		
In addition to the MDA's Township Testing Program, please also include "MDA's Pesticide Water Quality Monitoring." The MDA collects water samples from agriculture and urban areas of Minnesota and analyzes water for up to approximately 150 different pesticide compounds that are widely used and/or pose the greatest risk to water resources.	X		
One of MDA's roles that relates to the 1W1P process is technical assistance. The MDA maintains a variety of water quality programs including research, on-farm demonstrations, as well as ground and surface water monitoring. Our goal is to provide you with the data from the programs to help address resource concerns and further engage the agricultural community in the 1W1P process, including the watershed wide and planning region focus of the implementation schedule.			X
A recent DNR evaluation of hydrologic change in the watershed indicates that channel erosion and prevalent flooding have been increasing unabated since the early 1980s, putting additional strain on public infrastructure.			X
The plan identifies the importance of groundwater recharge and water storage on the landscape. A potential conflict may develop with the increasing dominance of agricultural drain tile and drainage systems throughout the planning area.			X
As a goal, the plan seeks to minimize local and downstream impacts by restoring hydrologic functions and keeping precipitation and runoff on the landscape. This will aid in achieving the surface water quality goals noted in our priority concerns letter. Targeted best management practices will help restore streams, rivers, and lakes. The plan recognizes this and will pursue targeted implementation projects that significantly reduce nitrates and phosphorus while improving soil health.			X
As noted on page 21 of the plan, these goals are complicated by the threat of invasive species like the zebra mussels at the top of the watershed in Lake Sarah.			X

<p>The measurable goals in Section 4 are established using PTMApp Phosphorous (P) and Nitrogen (N) loading estimates. This is highly effective for land management practices, but the absence of in-channel sources of P and N from the PTMApp data should be emphasized more throughout the goals. Stream stability issues result directly from ineffective or erroneous land stewardship decisions that cannot be mitigated after the excess water volumes enter the stream, river, or lake system.</p>	<p>X</p>		
<p>In this heavily altered and impaired watershed, the DNR applauds the 1W1P Steering Committee for prioritizing funding to address “nearly” and “barely” impaired waters. However, with 23 lakes in the watershed impaired by excess nutrients, this challenge is daunting.</p>			<p>X</p>
<p>As detailed in the plan, the desired future condition of 2.34 inches of water storage across the entire watershed is a bold goal. We will work confidently with all partners to meet or exceed this goal.</p>			<p>X</p>
<p>Historically, most public drainage improvement projects in the Des Moines River Watershed have not met the goals of this plan. The storage and altered hydrology section of the plan considers options to offset the impact of tiled drainage and recognizes that drain tile density is likely to expand into currently undrained areas. While the DNR is hopeful the watershed plan will influence future public and private drainage projects, the options considered in the plan for offsetting tile drainage impacts may not be enough to produce measurable results. Consider seeking more firm and specific commitments from the drainage authorities, so as to develop projects with numeric goals, moderate drainage coefficients, and landscape-suitable water storage alternatives.</p>			<p>X</p>
<p>(cont) Per statute requirements, the DNR is responsible for reviewing and commenting on drainage improvement projects’ adherence to the MN Statute including 103E.015 that includes environmental considerations and identifying alternative measures in locally adopted water management plans. It states, “This investigation shall include early coordination with applicable soil and water conservation district and county and watershed district water planning authorities about potential external sources of funding and technical assistance for these purposes and alternative measures. The drainage authority may request additional information about potential funding or technical assistance for these purposes and alternative measures from the executive director of the Board of Water and Soil Resources.</p>			<p>X</p>
<p>(cont) Drainage authorities must strive for accurate hydrology modeling for proposed drainage projects to demonstrate reductions in peak flows, flow event duration and total annual flow contributions. The DNR will also strive for such accuracy and mitigation commitments from the drainage authorities on future projects, to ensure public waters, fish and wildlife habitats are protected.</p>			<p>X</p>

<p>Clean drinking water is a precious limited resource that we often take for granted. Increasing demand from domestic, agricultural, municipal and industrial water users can strain shallow aquifers and well fields. This watershed does not exhibit a surplus of available drinking water sources from deep aquifers. Therefore, conservation initiatives and new technologies designed to reduce overall water use must continue to be addressed by municipal councils and staff, rural water boards and even private well owners. A sustainable water supply requires consistent monitoring, management and implementation of water conservation measures throughout this watershed.</p>			X
<p>(cont) The 5,000 acres of conservation practices within DWSMA areas is a significant step towards this groundwater protection need. Nearly all the city and rural residents in this watershed are using water from these shallow aquifers where the water has only been retained in these aquifers for 10 years or less. So daily decisions in these key shallow aquifer recharge areas will have a significant impact within a relatively short timeframe while also protecting this replenishable water resource for future generations.</p>			X
<p>All lakes in this watershed can benefit from improved water quality and quantity, entering and leaving the lakes. The focus area watersheds identified in this Plan appear to largely target lakes noted in the DNR priority letter. Measuring improvements to each of these lake resources varies greatly depending on the water quality impairment. For example, the aquatic recreation impairment on lakes such as Shetek, Sarah, Talcot, Lime, Buffalo and Heron Lake may benefit from being within the <i>High Goal Focus watersheds of the Plan</i> . However, several other recreational lakes including, East and West Graham, Currant and Yankton could benefit from similar practices regardless of the documented impairment.</p>	x		
<p>About 75% of streams in the Upper Des Moines, and 80% of streams in the East Fork Des Moines, have been channelized or impounded. These altered watercourses exhibit limited floodplain connectivity, excessive bank erosion and poor fish and wildlife habitat. To combat this degradation requires adopting resilient and progressive land use and land management practices. This local watershed plan builds on a framework to address the principles detailed in the DNR watershed characterization report. This includes increases in perennial vegetation to slow and filter runoff, increase water retention, reduce erosion, filter sediment and nutrients, stabilize banks, provide fish and wildlife habitat and connect habitat corridors. Streambank and Channel Erosion and Enhanced buffers are only a Priority B in the Plan while we believe these need to be a Priority A. The DNR recommends that the portions of Lime Creek, Okabena and Jack Creek, Beaver Creek and the Des Moines River systems currently demonstrate altered hydrology and suffer from substantial stream bed and bank erosion and could benefit significantly from adding or enhancing riparian buffers and streambank practices. As an example, Beaver Creek in Murray County exhibits some of the most significant stream bank erosion, detachment from the floodplain and stream bed aggradation, which are all reasons why Beaver Creek should be consider a Priority A initiative response.</p>	x		

<p>The Des Moines River watershed has abundant natural resources unique to Minnesota, however protecting, restoring, enhancing habitat and additional public recreation opportunities need more consideration. The watershed is home to many documented Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) as well as endangered and threatened species. Many of these are grassland dependent species. Several of the measurable goals of this Plan will improve habitat for SGCN. This watershed provides critical habitat for the Blanding’s Turtle, Dakota Skipper, Poweshiek Skipper and Prairie Bush Clover.</p>			X
<p>The enhancement of recreational opportunities is a great chance to partner with other funding agencies toward improvements on such key resources as the Casey Jones State Trail, Lake Shetek State Park, Kilen Woods State Park and many other municipal and county parks. One significant underutilized recreational opportunity in this watershed is the Des Moines River. Working to develop a State Water Trail on this river system would enhance this use and appreciation for this significant natural resource. Important bird watching areas are also adjacent along the Des Moines River valley, around Heron Lake, and the Prairie Coteau Complex providing other benefits.</p>			X
<p>Scheldorf Creek is the only stream in the watershed that is groundwater dependent and meets water temperature thresholds for supporting a trout fishery. Protection of groundwater recharge for this stream is critical to maintain consistently cooler water temperatures and sustainable stream flows for the fishery. The Groundwater Recharge protection (priority A) measurable goals, including the areas of DWSMA protection can help improve and protect this key groundwater resource.</p>			X
<p>Dam modification projects are advised on Lake Shetek, Lake Sarah, and Talcot Lake since these aging structures were not designed for today’s escalating hydrologic conditions nor do they support aquatic organism and fish passage. It is likely that one or more of these dams will need to be critically evaluated within the next 10 years. This Plan help establishes hydrology and aquatic connectivity goals and a framework that should simplify guidance to LGUs or other entities proposing removal, repair or replacement projects.</p>			X
<p>We appreciate that the group has identified a tiered implementation based on funding levels. Identifying efficiencies using known funds when compared to the total amount needed is valuable information in determining necessary funding allocations</p>			X
<p>The baseline implementation level assumes statutory obligation and ordinance implementation levels will go unchanged. Will the local government units (LGU) self-report an audit to the partnership to ensure that this is taking place?</p>	X		
<p>The progress toward goal breakdown charts by planning region will be useful in building implementation plans, the planning group is to be commended for building implementation schedules specific to planning regions.</p>			X
<p>Good summary of targeted implementation goals; will be a useful starting point for pace of progress and measuring progress toward the plan in reporting</p>			X
<p>Figure 2.4 – the corresponding plan view of this cross section with an outline of the Des Moines River would be helpful</p>	X		

The planning group is to be commended for its prioritization planning issues as opposed to political geography; we encourage the planning group to observe the planning area's "high" priority subwatersheds of each issue when ranking for implementation and consider them to be the place to start with funds.			X
"Planning Region Summaries" (Figure 5.6) – This is a good section; adds benefit to this plan which should make implementation tracking as well as grant goal pace of progress explanation easier			X
May be helpful to reference relevant priority issue page and attendant map in the "focus area" column of each action item		X	
Capital Improvement Projects chart – expand on the description of the Martin SWCD project.	X		
Table 7.4*– Funding Level 2 – "Plan Admin" pie slice is maroon should be plum colored (*Should be "Figure 7.1" thereby making Table 7.5 into "7.4" along with all verbiage changes)		X	
An Implementation Agreement should be developed to further identify the structure of decision making, financial and admin responsibilities			X

Change (Y/N)	Resolution
Y	Revised as suggested
Y	Maps revised in figures suggested
Y	Actions in watershed-wide tables revised to target priority areas
Y	Revised as suggested
Y	Counties added to action as lead
Y	Added MDA's Pesticide Water Quality Monitoring to narrative
N	Noted for implementation, with thanks
N	Comment noted for implementation. Altered hydrology and streambank erosion are priority issues in the plan (Priority A and B, respectively).
N	Comment noted for implementation
N	Noted for implementation, with thanks
N	Comment noted for implementation

N	See page 24: "Second, PTMApp only accounts for the loading coming from surface runoff, and therefore does not consider point-source contributions or in-channel sources. More information on the theory and mechanics of PTMApp may be found in Appendix F."
N	Comment noted for implementation
N	Noted for implementation, with thanks
N	Comment noted for implementation
N	Comment noted for implementation
N	Comment noted for implementation

N	Agreed- Groundwater recharge is a Priority A issue
N	Comment noted with thanks
N	See pages 34 and 46: Lakes are in High goal category for either lake shoreline and/or phosphorus loading (request clarification on Buffalo).
N	Issues have been considered and prioritized by the Steering Committee and TAC, and have been confirmed by the Policy Committee for this plan.

N	Comment noted for implementation. Wildlife habitat is a Priority B issue for this plan with goals and action items accordingly.
N	Comment noted for implementation with thanks
N	Comment noted for implementation with thanks
N	Comment noted for implementation with thanks
N	Comment noted for implementation with thanks
TBD	For local discussion
N	Comment noted for implementation with thanks
N	Comment noted for implementation with thanks
TBD	Figure provided by local group- for discussion

N	Comment noted for implementation with thanks
N	Comment noted for implementation with thanks
Y	Revised as suggested
Y	More detailed added
Y	Revised as suggested
N	Noted for action