**Steering Committee Meeting**

**Wednesday, May 25: 2-3:30pm**

To join the Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81644480415?pwd=TGx6a1ZrN3Z0bGJBM3psRHUxa3dndz09>

Meeting ID: 816 4448 0415

Passcode: 732347

**NOTES**

1. Check-ins and planning team updates
   * Attending: Barbara Heitkamp and Angie Hong - EMWREP and LSC; Jennifer Hahn - LSC and Extension; Craig Mell – Chisago SWCD; Emily Heinz – CLFLWD; Mike Isensee – CMSCWD; Stephanie Souter – Washington County; Jerry Spetzman – Chisago LID; Matt Moore – SWWD; Todd Kulaf – Isanti SWCD; Matt Downing – MSCWMO; Paul Swanson – Pine SWCD; Jamie Schurbon – Anoka SWCD and Sunrise JPWMO; Susanna Wilson-Witkowski – Chisago County; Eric Alms and Brett Nagle – MPCA; Michelle Jordan and Barb Peichel – BWSR; Beck Wozney – Anoka SWCD; Mike Kinney - CLFLWD
   * Local approvals for 22-23 Annual Plan of Work
     + Approvals received so far:
       - BCWD
       - CLFLWD
       - Isanti SWCD
       - Sunrise JPWMO
       - WCD
     + Change format for next year?
       - Let Emily and planning team know if you have ideas of how to structure for easy review by local boards and policy committee
       - Tiffany D is developing one right now for the Rum River 1w1p and will share with our group if it is better
   * Round 2 of WBIF funds – Stephanie Souter
     + Metro convening meeting – planned for June 22, immediately before the LSC steering committee meeting. Tom Dietrich from Washington County will send out an email to metro partners to schedule the meeting
       - Craig M– our LSC steering committee can’t move forward with allocating funds for the second round of WBIF grant funds until the metro group meets and determines what portion of the metro funds will be shared within the full watershed
       - Matt M – he and Jay Riggs will promote combining the funds again to use throughout the watershed
       - Stephanie – WashCo board also prefers to share the funds across the watershed.
   * Lower St. Croix interactive map – Emily Heinz
     + Updates and migration complete – Barr migrated the old map to a new platform and added new layers, as requested.
     + Map layers for WBIF priority areas – Jennifer H will be working with Barr to incorporate a few additional layers to help select best locations for projects and make eLink reporting easier. Currently we are working within the approved contract amount but there is the possibility we might need to allocate slightly more funds next summer if we run out of funds in the map maintenance budget.
     + Local partners will not have access to the backside of the map platform while it is hosted on Barr’s site. However, we could set it up to interface with an ArcGIS online layer that would allow for real-time updates.
   * Craig Mell – our contracts with outside consultants do not currently contain a penalty clause for not completing work on time. We may need to consider that in the future for other contracts. We currently have several contract projects with EOR that are months behind schedule.
   * New streamlined approach to project review and approval
     + Schedule for steering committee review?
       - Angie – we will be reviewing five potential projects this month. When does it make sense to schedule the next review meeting – July, Aug, Sept?
       - Paul – would prefer to set the date later – Aug or Sept. Are we considering designating two separate pools of money for large and small projects?
         * Angie – has wondered the same thing. It seems like we need to decide ahead of time if we want to fund numerous small projects or only a few large projects. Or do we decide to allocate a certain amount for small projects and use the rest for big ones?
         * Emily – could we incorporate a cost-benefit analysis or recommend that partners bundle several small projects together?
         * Craig – would like to bundle several small projects together and focus on specific sub-watersheds. For the next round of WBIF funds, it would be good to decide ahead of time what portion of our WBIF grant we designate for small vs large grants. Currently, both the SWWD and CLFLWD proposed projects will require additional policy committee review and changes to the WBIF work plan.
         * Matt M – SWWD is hoping to begin the Trout Brook project this fall and complete it next spring. They are also working on ravine projects that go directly into the St. Croix River just north of Afton State Park. Don’t know the schedule for that yet.
         * Mike I – supports the idea of targeted projects in priority subwatersheds. Identifying a bundle of projects in a specific area is a strategy that works well as long as you identify a minimum P reduction.
         * Matt M – we don’t always need to go to the detail of calculating cost-benefit. Prefers to just fund small projects instead of setting aside a special fund for those. We should just fund small projects if there are ready to go.
         * Craig – the policy committee wants to support small non-structural projects with farmers like what Jennifer will be promoting.
         * Angie – the policy committee strongly supports small, non-structural projects with ag land owners. It’s a different question when it comes to smaller CIP projects. There is a value everyone recognizes in changing social norms within farming.
         * Emily – need to make sure that we are not funding projects as first come, first serve. The policy committee definitely does not support that.
         * Jennifer – keep in mind that some projects she’ll be doing with farmers will be considered structural (ie. conversion of row crops to perennial cover)
2. Lower St. Croix Watershed Monitoring Assessment – Eric Alms and Brett Nagle, MPCA
   * <https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/mpca.data.services/viz/WaterQualityAssessmentResultsDataViewer/HomePage>
   * In early May, MPCA sent out a draft monitoring trends report. The report is much shorter than previous reports (13pgs vs 160)
   * Biological communities are very similar to what they were ten years ago. Not the case with many other watersheds. IBI scores went up slightly, but not statistically significant.
   * If you have any additional comments or revisions, let Brett Nagel know by TOMORROW. [eric.alms@state.mn.us](mailto:eric.alms@state.mn.us) and [brett.nagle@state.mn.us](mailto:brett.nagle@state.mn.us)
3. Outreach and agronomy updates – Barbara Heitkamp and Jennifer Hahn
   * Jennifer and Barbara have been meeting with farmers and creating short videos about their BMP practices. Jennifer is working to finalize dates for the three large field seminars. Jennifer is speaking monthly on FM radio.
   * Submitted a Clean Water Funds grant application for additional funds. Will also be submitting an LCCMR application and are requesting a no-till drill for Washington County. WCD recently received a grant to work with Big River Farms, which is a nonprofit that works with BIPOC and immigrant farmers.
     + Mike I – could Jennifer share the Clean Water grant app out so that he can use the same dollar
     + Barbara has created a flyer that can be customized for each local partner to promote nonstructural BMPs.
   * Save the Date: July 20, 5-8pm – Southern St. Croix WOW
   * Barbara is also working to plan a northern WOW and shoreline realtor workshop. She’s also been attending lake association’s annual meetings.
   * July 27 – Farm Bureau board of directors annual meeting
   * [Non-structural ag and urban BMP policies](https://lower-st-croix-partnership.mobilize.io/main/groups/51936/lounge/resources?path=%2FSteering%20Committee%2FNon-structural%20ag%20and%20urban%20BMP%20policies) – Jennifer Hahn
     + The subcommittee will perform the following tasks:• Develop a process for how to fund projects• Establish cost-share/incentive rates and policies which will entail:• 1. Subcommittee will draft proposed non-structural land management policy, including cost-share/incentive rates.• 2. Subcommittee will send proposed policy to BWSR for review.• 3. Steering Committee will review proposed policy and distribute to LSC partners for approval (for partners interested in utilizing grant funds for non-structural practices)• 4. LSC partners will not proceed with any projects until their board locally adopts the non-structural land management policy.• Establish cost-share ranking criteria that includes non-state match requirements• Meet intermittently to rank projects and make recommendations to Chisago SWCD Board for approval• Project selection will follow the targeting and prioritization process described in Section VII.B and Appendix C of the CWMP.• This subcommittee will also select non-structural agriculture
     + Questions:
       - Paul – if farmers are moving cover crops do they need to stay in the same field?
         * Yes
     + Angie requested votes to approve each of the nonstructural policies. Both were approved unanimously.
     + Jennifer will send out an email to partners detailing what each local entity will need to include in their policy. After policies are approved at a local level, let Craig Mell know by June 14 or July 12. Anyone who wants to request funding will need to put in a request directly to Chisago SWCD.
       - CLFLWD wants to request funds to do a street sweeping study for City of Wyoming. My understanding is I still need to wait to do that. Wyoming does not need to approve the policy, just CLFLWD.
4. Proposed projects
   * [Big Marine Boat Launch – CMCSCWD](https://lower-st-croix-partnership.mobilize.io/main/groups/51936/lounge/resources?path=%2FSteering%20Committee%2FBig%20Marine%20Boat%20Launch%20-%20CMCSCWD) – Mike Isensee
     + $35-45K total. Requesting $10k in LSC grant funding.
     + Project design has not yet started. The purpose of the project is to redirect and treat water that flows down a road into Big Marine Lake.
     + Questions:
       - Craig Mell – will all match funds be non-state? Yes
       - Mike Kinney – has CMSCWD considered crushed asphalt instead of crushed limestone? No
       - Angie – which grant category would this come from? Urban (A5)
       - Angie – does the group want to hear all proposals before voting on which to approve? Yes
       - Jamie – are their financial limitations that would prevent us from approving all?
         * Craig – the first four fit within the current WBIF grant budget but the last one would require a grant amendment
   * [Goose Lake Wetland – CMSCWD](https://lower-st-croix-partnership.mobilize.io/main/groups/51936/lounge/resources?path=%2FSteering%20Committee%2FGoose%20Lake%20Wetland%20-%20CMSCWD)
     + Requesting $10k in LSC grant funding.
     + There is currently an iron-enhanced filter that is working well
     + The proposed wetland restoration would remove (dredge) organic soils that have accumulated in the wetland and greatly reduce dissolved P loading to Goose Lake. CMSCWD has collected soil cores and is conducting soil analysis.
     + Questions:
       - Craig – is this within an identified priority area?
         * All of the priority area for wetland restoration is right next to the wetland, not where the actual wetland is.
         * Is the receiving lake in a priority area?

Mike - No. The plan does not restrict wetland restorations to priority areas.

Becky – the plan does not explicitly require wetland restoration projects to happen in priority areas. Not sure if that was an oversight or intentional.

* + [Hinze WASCOB - Pine SWCD](https://lower-st-croix-partnership.mobilize.io/main/groups/51936/lounge/resources?path=%2FSteering%20Committee%2FHinze%20WASCOB%20-%20Pine%20SWCD) – Paul Swanson
    - This is the farmer who worked with Pine SWCD on a cattle exclusion last year.
    - Requesting $8400 in LSC grant funds.
    - The project would construct 3 WASCOBs. This will reduce P by 18lb per year and 20 tons of TSS per year.
    - Hinze is now MN Ag Water Quality Certified.
    - Angie noted that people explicitly complained about cattle in Rock Lake when we conducted our 1w1p stakeholder survey three years ago.
    - Emily – are there upland BMPs being implemented as well?
  + [Jones Wetland - Pine SWCD](https://lower-st-croix-partnership.mobilize.io/main/groups/51936/lounge/resources?path=%2FSteering%20Committee%2FJones%20Wetland%20-%20Pine%20SWCD)
    - Requesting $5100 in LSC grant funds. The project is ready to go as soon as the fields dry out.
    - This project will remove organic material and convert some field areas to wetland. There are numerous non-state partners.
    - Craig – there is a rather large pollution reduction estimate. Is that true? (300lb P)
    - Michelle – who will do the technical sign-off for this project?
      * John Reins from USFWS
        + John doesn’t have JAA
      * Paul – if Pine SWCD assures that John has the expertise to design the project, does it qualify for funding?
      * Mike I – what is the total area of wetland restored in this project?
      * Craig – can we table this project until the June SC meeting?
      * Paul – yes that would work and John Rinze can come to that meeting
      * Michelle – it would be good to also bring Erin from BWSR to that meeting too (Pine’s BC)
      * Matt M – this seems like a good opportunity for shared services.
        + Craig – among our group we could bring in an engineer to approve. Could be Rebecca Nestigen from WCD, who also approved numerous projects in Chisago County. Or Wright Co.
  + [Sunrise River-Tax Forfeit - CLFLWD](https://lower-st-croix-partnership.mobilize.io/main/groups/51936/lounge/resources?path=%2FSteering%20Committee%2FSunrise%20River-Tax%20Forfeit%20-%20CLFLWD)
    - Could this one come to the steering committee on June 25? Yes. But CLFLWD would like to get an indication of SC support at that meeting before bringing it to the PC in July.
  + Who is left?
    - CLFLWD
    - Chisago SWCD
    - Pine SWCD
    - SWWD
    - Chisago County
    - Anoka SWCD
    - CMSCWD
    - Isanti SWCD
    - WCD
    - 9/17 members still present – all approve the first three projects presented (Big Marine, Goose Lake wetland, and Hinze WASCOB)
      * Craig and Angie will verify that this meets the requirements of our JPA and that we don’t need to follow-up with a second vote in June.

1. Notes for future SC meetings
   * Jones wetland and CLFLWD Sunrise River projects will be on top of agenda for June 22 steering committee meeting
   * Going forward, we’ll may need to allocate more time for meetings when we are reviewing and approving projects. Could also alternate so that we have group business only at some meetings and projects only at others.

**Additional info on Jones wetland from Paul Swanson, shared 5-26-22**

Phosphorus numbers

John Reins, USFWS, uses the restoration toolbar developed by Dr. Lenhart from UMN (see attached documents). This is what he uses on all of his projects. He is confident in his numbers.

Acres of Wetland Restored

Here is John’s estimate of acres restored. “Since we are eliminating the man-made ditches and other human factors to all the basins identified the delineated wetland boundaries total exactly 9.4527 acres.  This is derived from a topographic survey, Lidar, and Arc GIS.”

Technical Authority/Certification

John suggested that Pine SWCD can pass a motion recognizing him as the technical expert on the project, and to recognize any failure that would occur would fall back on the USFWS. It is something he has gone through with other counties. Paul will follow up with Erin and Michelle at BWSR to make sure this is acceptable.