**Lower St. Croix Policy Committee Minutes**

July 26th, 2021 – 4-6 pm  
Chisago County Government Center

**Attending:**

Anoka SWCD: Sharon LeMay

Chisago County:

* Chris DuBose (arrived at 4:15pm)
* Lance Petersen (attending virtually)
* Mike Mergens

Chisago SWCD: Jim Birkholz

Comfort Lake Forest Lake WD: Jackie Anderson

Isanti County: Susan Morris (arrived at 4:15pm – attending virtually)

Isanti SWCD: Jerry Schaubach

Pine County: Steve Hallan

Pine SWCD: Doug Odegard

South Washington WD: Kevin ChapdeLaine

Sunrise River JP WMO: Janet Hegland (arrived at 4:56pm)

Washington County: Fran Miron

Washington SWCD: Diane Blake (attending virtually)

**Absent:**

Brown's Creek WD: Klayton Eckles

Carnelian Marine St Croix WD: Wade Johnson

Middle St. Croix WMO: John Fellegy

Valley Branch WD: Ed Marchan

**Also in attendance:**

Angie Hong, EMWREP   
Susanna Wilson-Witkowski, Chisago County, Chisago LID

Craig Mell, Chisago SWCD  
Stephen Schmaltz, CLFLWD Alternate  
Jay Riggs, WCD  
Jaime Schurbon, Sunrise River WMO, Anoka SWCD  
Emily Heinz, Comfort Lake Forest Lake WD  
Tiffany Determan, Isanti SWCD  
Barb Peichel, BWSR  
Matt Moore, SWWD  
Maureen Hoffman, Washington County

1. **Call to Order at @ 4:00 pm**
   1. Fran Miron calls meeting to order, introductions made around room and online
   2. Craig Leiser, integral policy committee member passed away on July 18th - moment of silence
   3. Motion to approve agenda – 1st – Doug Odegard, 2nd Jackie Andersen
   4. Any objections to making voice votes as needed? – No objections raised
2. **Approval of May 24th Meeting Minutes – Fran Miron**
   1. Any discussion warranted? – No issues raised
   2. Jim Birkholz votes to approve as published, Doug Odegard 2nd
3. **Financial Update – Craig Mell**
   1. Please refer to information in packet of materials sent with agenda
   2. Includes information re: SWWD subagreement for first project – more information on this later in subcommittee updates
   3. BWSR financial report due August, was submitted first of July
   4. **QUESTION**: Mike Mergens - are match funds being sent or not collected? Why negative number on sheet?
      1. Craig – a negative number actually means match has been met and exceeded for the watershed education portion of this grant
4. **Subcommittee Updates**
   1. Agronomy outreach – Jay Riggs
      1. Process moving along – made a decision to hire a dedicated embedded UMN extension agent who will work full time in the LSC
      2. Cost of embedded agent was very competitive, benefits outweighed negatives
      3. Position description created (see packet of agenda materials)– sent to UMN, they made minor changes
      4. WCD board supports process and concept - UMN will be posting job soon and ok doing so without full agreement between WCD/UMN finalized
      5. 2-3 LSC members will be on the interview panel, including Lance Petersen as a policy committee member
      6. **INPUT:**
         1. Jackie Andersen very supportive, Steve Hallan also indicates support – U reputation and access to resources appealing
         2. Fran Miron – assuming this will give us more access to U resources and assistance?
            1. Jay – yes, they will be dedicated to us, but will have access to full U extension and leverage those resources
         3. Fran Miron – tough thing – timing of their hire – very long wonky process
            1. Jay – that’s on our mind, doing what we can to be aggressive with the timeline
         4. Lance Petersen – exciting news. This will be good for our watershed.
   2. Urban and Ag Projects – Craig Mell
      1. Subcommittee met twice - June 10th, July 21
         1. June 10 - focused on McQuade project and working through that process. Construction was started before funding fully approved
         2. July 21 – talked about non-structural projects and using BWSR approved rates and policies. Waiting to begin promoting non-structural projects until the agronomist is hired.
      2. Another project coming down the pipeline - Pine SWCD – Hinze livestock use exclusion project – hoping to get steering committee meeting approval this week
      3. More information about McQuade project – Matt Moore
         1. Thank all for supporting the project, this group is moving forward quickly, glad to see all jumping on board
         2. Can see some material in packet of agenda materials
         3. Fairly steep ravine in Denmark Township – last year there were two large events in Denmark township and really blew it out, survey and design were very different – got so much bigger
         4. Project objective is to stabilize ravine bottom and hope ravine sides slough in and vegetate (Craig Mell showed pictures of after project photos)
         5. This isn’t the way we’re going to do business in the future re: starting project before full approval - subcommittees and steering committee will work to make sure all approvals are done before starting construction
         6. Still need to figure out match and work with Chisago SWCD on final invoice
         7. Landowners are happy – helps protect their driveway (secondary benefit), but helps Lake St. Croix – our primary objective
      4. Matt Moore – SWWD will have another project on Trout Brook near Afton Alps next year
      5. **SUGGESTION**: Jackie Andersen brings up need for an emergency project approval process/policy to help alleviate this type of situation in the future
         1. Kevin ChapdeLaine concurs – he was part of a process where such a policy was created and it helped alleviate issues
            1. Process had about a dozen criteria to be considered for emergency approval and project would need to fulfill a certain number of them to proceed
         2. Chris DuBose and Jim Birkholz also indicated agreement
         3. Fran Miron – Requested that staff work up a policy before the next policy committee meeting
   3. Education Updates – Angie Hong
      1. Barbara Heitkamp is on board and here!
         1. Barbara’s initial activities revolving around relationship building, getting the lay of the land, and thinking through how to best integrate communication between partners and events, helping Angie as needed
      2. eNewsletter – Angie asks whether all have seen the eNewsletter with education updates?
         1. Some did NOT receive the email – Steve Hallan and Janet Hegland did not
         2. We can track in MailChimp next time to see who opens emails
      3. We will be buying some of Emily Johnson’s time in Anoka Co to leverage resources and connections for education and outreach in that portion of the watershed
      4. Proposal to organize a project tour on September 27th from 4 – 6pm in lieu of a policy committee meeting
         1. Tour would visit the McQuade property as well as 1-2 other demonstration sites in the area. Nearby locations offer opportunities to see and discuss conservation easements, cover crops, pollinator plantings, trout stream re-meander, and conversion of ag to prairie
         2. Meeting would NOT include a sit down/regular meeting period. A meeting could be held on Oct. 25 instead.
         3. Suggestion to meet at the Washington Conservation District office in Oakdale and ride down together on a bus.
         4. No objections made
      5. LSC Partnership Logo
         1. At events, recognizing the need to highlight the overall partnership and effort – would be great to have something to put on banner/brochures
         2. But do YOU all think we need a logo?
            1. Jackie Anderson – absolutely – need to have something that highlights the partnership and group
         3. Group reviewed 3 potential logos (see eNewsletter sent on July 19th)
            1. “Wave” logo – group overall likes the simplicity of it, the wave fades which indicates consistent movement, no beginning/end, like the emphasis on the word “Partnership”
            2. “Circle” logo – four sections show water, land, fish, and plants – more inclusive than just water, some in the group worried about how the graphic would scale (lose detail when small), doesn’t emphasize word “partnership” enough

Barbara – can modify logo as you please, make another iteration with suggested changes

Chris DuBose and Mike Mergens like this one a lot

* + - * 1. “Drop” logo –

No strong response here from group – ‘shrugs’

* + - 1. Fran Miron – What do we want to do? Do another iteration? Make a decision now?
         1. Group overall wants to avoid a lengthy process of logo development
         2. Perhaps start with one of these as an interim logo and we have a logo contest that involves the public (artists/graphic designers) at a later time?
         3. Group votes on 3 logos

Drop logo – no takers

Circle logo – scattered hands

Wave logo – clear majority

* + - * 1. Wave logo wins!
  1. Wetland Restoration Updates – Jamie Schurbon spoke for Becky Wozney, who was not able to attend the meeting
     1. Group has been meeting regularly, smallest activity in grant - $38K
     2. Project criteria already outlined in watershed plan
     3. Major concern - since there isn’t much money for funding these projects, we want to make sure we get a good list of proposal projects before deciding which will be funded (don’t want it to be just a first come, first serve type of process). The grant may realistically only be able to fund one project.
     4. SUGGESTION: Jackie Andersen – while steering committee helps decide overall project approval, policy committee would still like to see what projects the partners are proposing– having a nice summary list of that information would be appreciated.
  2. Internal analysis – Susanna Wilson Witkowski
     1. Subcommittee met last week, working to draft a project application form that will be reviewed at steering committee
     2. Looking at application deadline timelines and application requirements, compiling a set of items that consultants will need to include in their quotes and selection criteria
     3. The group wants to ensure that funded projects are addressing external loading before looking at internal loading
     4. Chris DuBose - who can submit the application?
        1. Susanna – still working that out too – will it just be agencies or could lake association submit proposals as well?
     5. This is also a lower funded activity ($50K available for two analyses) so similar struggle as wetland restoration folks to choose best project proposals to fund
  3. Targeting Analyses – Jay Riggs
     1. The subcommittee has met multiple times, working to update prioritization protocols – will likely last into fall/winter
     2. Much of the work ties in with other subcommittees. It will also include guidance for wetlands and street sweeping.
     3. Will submit a work plan to fund staff time for work that will happen this fall and winter
     4. Partners can submit potential projects for funding before protocols are updated

1. **Project Update/Progress - Emily Heinz** 
   1. Progress update – will provide this update via e-newsletter (4x per year) and at meetings
   2. Working on a template that people can use to better understand project process and progress
   3. The McQuade project will reduce 250T per year of sediment and 220lb per year of phosphorus. This accomplishes 73% of the goal established in our WBIF grant for structural ag projects.
   4. The overall phosphorus reduction goal for the entire 2yr grant is 915lb, so we have achieved 24% of that goal.
2. **Future meetings**
   1. September 27th meeting will be project tour – more updates to come
   2. Angie – hope to have a larger space in the future – Chris DuBose mentioned we can get a larger room in the Chisago Center, but also Wyoming Library and Forest Lake City Center have good meetings spaces
   3. Fran Miron – any preference?
      1. Group has no strong preference
3. **Motion to adjourn meeting** – Chris DuBose 1st, Susan Morris 2nd
   1. Craig Mell – wants to recognize Dan Fabian, our BWSR representative, before he retires next week
   2. Meeting was adjourned at 6pm.