

**LOWER ST. CROIX ONE WATERSHED, ONE PLAN
POLICY COMMITTEE, MEETING 10**

AUGUST 26 , 2019 BOARD MINUTES

PENDING APPROVAL

Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 4:04pm by Co-Chair Wade Johnson.

Members Present: Anoka SWCD – Sharon Lemay
Brown’s Creek WD – Craig Leiser
Carnelian Marian St Croix WD – Wade Johnson
Chisago SWCD – Jim Birkholz
Chisago County - Chris DuBose
Comfort Lake Forest Lake WD – Steve Schmaltz
Isanti SWCD – Greg Swanson
Middle St. Croix WMO – John Fellegly
Pine County – Stephen Hallan
South Washington WD – Don Pereira
Sunrise River JP WMO – Paul Enestvedt
Washington County – Fran Miron
Washington SWCD – Diane Blake
Pine SWCD – Doug Odegard
Isanti County – Susan Morris

Staff Present: Angie Hong – EMWREP
Craig Mell – Chisago SWCD
Jaime Schurbon – Anoka SWCD
Matt Moore – SWWD
Mike Isensee – Carnelian-Marine-St. Croix WD
Tiffany Determan – Isanti SWCD
Jerry Schaubach – Isanti SWCD
Jay Riggs – Washington Conservation District
Mike Kinney – Comfort Lake Forest Lake WD
Caleb Anderson – Pine County

Others attending: Barb Peichel – BWSR
Julie Westerlund – BWSR
Jackie Anderson – CLFLWD alternate
Jen Kader - Freshwater Society
Laura Jester – Keystone Waters

AGENDA ITEMS

Approve August 26, 2019 agenda

Jen Kader asked for her agenda item “Update on project progression and work accomplished by Advisory Committee since July 22nd” to be removed from the agenda as it will be incorporated within other agenda items.

Craig Leiser moved to approve the August 26th, 2019 agenda and Chris Dubose seconded this motion. Motion carried.

Approve July 22, 2019 meeting minutes

Craig Leiser moved to approve the July 22, 2019 minutes and Stephen Hallan seconded this motion. Motion carried.

Review draft implementation tables

Chair Fran Miron arrived at 4:07pm.

Laura Jester explained the structure and organization of the tables and content produced so far. She presented the implementation actions recommended by the advisory committee to achieve measurable outputs. Stephen Hallan asked why the public ditch system activity within the agricultural program area was specific to Chisago. Laura Jester said this issue was identified by Chisago staff as a local priority. Greg Swanson said this issue should be applicable to any organization with ditch authority/jurisdiction. Susan Morris explained that Isanti County has been working on this issue and wondered if funding from the plan could be used to offset the local burden. The group requested that this implementation activity be refined.

Susan Morris asked for clarification about the Wetland Conservation Act avoidance standards activity within the ecosystems services program area. Jay Riggs, Angie Hong, and Laura Jester explained that the first goal under WCA is to avoid impact to the wetland, with the next step being to mitigate in order to replace lost functions. Susan Morris said WCA language can be difficult for people to understand. Laura Jester agreed and explained that in addition, MNRAM is no longer recommended by BWSR as a performance standard. This will need to be revisited by the advisory committee.

There was discussion about activities under the research and monitoring program area. Stephen Hallan said Pine County doesn't have control over the completion of the soil survey, and NRCS has told them it could be 3 years. Craig Leiser asked for the inclusion of a definition section for all of the acronyms and abbreviations in order to overcome barriers to communication. Jim Birkholz asked for clarification on what “centralized leadership” is in the context of improving water quality in the St. Croix River. Mike Isensee explained that there is currently no designated responsible party for tracking progress towards the St. Croix TMDL. The advisory committee's intention was to address this gap through state agencies such as the PCA, or working with the Wisconsin DNR. Jim Birkholz suggested different term be used instead of “leadership” such as implementation rather than a management structure. Laura Jester explained that staff is still working on refining the amount and source of funding identified in the implementation tables.

Continued conversation on future organizational arrangements

Jen Kader presented the results from the small group conversations on organizational arrangements. The group had additional questions and comments.

Craig Leiser requested a section of the plan that spells out the prioritization process as this affords buy-in to the weighting system. Chris Dubose asked for clarification on what the structure will look like. Greg Swanson requested that if staff such as an agronomist is hired, there must be a specific charge to the position in order to reduce ambiguity. Susan Morris asked if there are successful examples of organizational structure from other groups that have been through this process. Jen Kader suggested that members send the facilitators any questions they need answered in order to choose an organizational structure. She suggested these questions could be organized in the form of a decision tree.

Stephen Hallan expressed concern about the creation of another organization Pine County will then belong to and the ambiguity of authority that would follow. John Fellegly asked if the policy committee could be provided with examples and pros/cons of different organizational models (such as JPO's and other collaboration). Jamie Schurbon asked the group to consider scenarios that could guide the creation of a flow chart with different options and details. He gave some examples of resources shared by communities such as school districts and fire stations. Susan Morris suggested a handbook from the League of Minnesota Cities as a resource for the group to use. Jay Riggs asked for a list of existing entities. Jen Kader said of the 6 approved 1W1P's, most chose joint power agreements and collaborative structures rather than forming a new entity. She noted that there are many examples of LGU's that share resources. Fran Miron noted that JPO's have bylaws, etc. Matt Moore noted that the organizational structure is entirely up to the policy committee. Julie Westerlund agreed saying that BWSR doesn't need to approve the policy committee's organizational arrangement.

Prioritization

Jay Riggs introduced the topic of prioritization with the goal of targeted conservation activities. Mike Kinney and Steve Schmatlz presented on watershed-based prioritized, targeted, and measurable planning and using cost-benefit analyses in implementation. Performance monitoring to determine the impact of completed projects was also discussed. Mike Kinney and Steve Schmatlz ended their presentation by suggesting the group focus on improving impaired lakes as they serve as the canary in the coalmine for the watershed. The group revisited the concept of low cost, high impact activities.

Adjournment

The policy committee revisited the topic of funding and organizational structures. John Fellegly said he was looking for staff guidance so he can bring answers back to his board. Julie Westerlund suggested an additional resource: the MCIT Fact Sheet called the ABC's of JPE's. Laura Jester said staff will collect information and links to provide. Susan Morris asked for the potential range of money the 1W1P could expect to receive from the state legislature. Julie Westerlund explained that BWSR is still working on the formula that will determine this distribution but that she had seen \$350,000-\$850,000 for two years for watersheds with approved plans. The facilitators reiterated that there will be many sources of funding included as options in the plan.

The motion to adjourn was made by Craig Leiser and seconded by John Fellegly. Meeting was adjourned at 6:06 p.m. The next scheduled meetings are: September 30th, and October 28th, 4-6pm at the Wyoming Area Library.