

**LOWER ST. CROIX ONE WATERSHED, ONE PLAN
ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

FEBRUARY 14, 2019 NOTES

Review Revisions to Issue Statements

Jen Kader presented the revisions to the issue statements proposed by the Policy Committee at the last Policy meeting.

Groundwater- none

Lakes- the policy committee wanted the content of the parenthetical statements included to mirror the other resource categories' structure. John Freitag asked for clarification on the wording of protection against recreation. He thought that may be confusing given that one of the intentions of water resource protection is to provide for recreational use.

Rivers and Streams- none

Upland Habitat- the desired future acreage was changed to "increased quality habitat".

St. Croix River and Lake St. Croix- none

Social Capacity- the policy committee wanted the statements to be re-stated in a positive manner about the issues.

There was discussion about what was included in the Rivers and Streams desired future condition in relation to supporting economic and recreational needs. John Freitag, Jason Carlson, and Caleb Anderson suggested specifying "high impact recreation" as part of the issue statement for this resource area.

Finalize Priority Locations for Rivers and Streams, and Lakes

Rivers and Streams

The process has changed from producing "measurable goals" to producing a "goal and measurable outputs". This arose from conversations with BWSR to accommodate for the fact that it's not always possible for the overall goal to be measurable. The Rivers and Streams resource area was partly completed but is missing some priority locations for some of the measurable goals and outputs.

Protect and improve in-stream and riparian ecosystems and biota- There was discussion around how to use IBI scores as a measurable output. There was discussion around the different strategies that might be employed to address "no new" impaired streams vs. "improving" IBI scores. Karen Kill proposed making the distinction between the "maintain and no new impaired" vs. "improve IBI score" goals to reflect the different approach and strategy required. Tiffany Determan suggested the priority location for this goal be "biologically impaired streams as identified in WRAPS reports", but Laura Jester reminded the group that the priority locations had already been selected. Craig Mell and Jamie Schurbon suggested the priority location be "all direct tributaries to the St. Croix". There was discussion around if this goal statement is where development standards to adapt to climate change could be included. Laura Jester said this may be sufficiently covered in the Groundwater Resource area. Mike Isensee suggested that "all tributaries identified in the Lake St. Croix TMDL" be added as a map layer to the Land and Water Resource Inventory.

Protect landuse in sensitive watershed and riparian areas- There was discussion around how to choose a priority location for this goal. Tiffany Determan suggested the West branch of the Sunshine River.

There was discussion around what is a sensitive area and if that included upland areas, groundwater recharge areas, areas with high erodible sensitivity, or if it was referring to protection of areas that are already healthy. Jay Riggs said that Washington County has an assessment for high priority protection areas. Erin Loeffler questioned the strategy that could result from this statement and if the protection of unimpaired streams and rivers could be addressed by land acquisition by watershed districts. There was discussion around what streams and rivers have been identified as unimpaired and good. Laura Jester suggested adding unimpaired streams and rivers as a priority location since the goal is protection. Jamie Schubon suggested using existing inventories of biologically significant natural areas.

Jason Carlson suggested changing the wording “improve streambank and riparian area stability” to “restore and improve streambank and riparian areas” to avoid the promotion of stabilization projects over restoration projects. Barb Peichel asked how this section could be made measurable, and it was suggested that a number of projects or amount of money could be used.

Manage basin to mimic natural hydrologic conditions and adapt to future conditions- BWSR had some recommended measurable outputs for this statement. There was discussion on how to re-word the recommended output of no increased flow during storm events. Suggestions included decreasing the “flashy-ness” of hydrographs, increasing storage capacity, or staying within historic ranges of hydrographs during precipitation events. Mike Isensee said MIDS uses wording about natural conditions using vegetation and soils as the basis for a natural model, and suggested using the wording “baseflows and hydrographs trend toward mimicking natural systems”.

Geomorphological assessments demonstrate no physical or functional degradation of the stream- there was discussion to broaden the assessment definition to say “standardized assessments”. The priority location was discussed with the challenge of staying broad enough to not limit future activities while still prioritizing. There was discussion around specifying developed and altered areas as the main challenge. The group decided on “tributaries to the St. Croix identified in the TMDL”.

Lakes

The group moved onto the Lakes natural resource area to identify priority locations, goals, and measurable outputs. Barb Peichel started by saying that BWSR needed a water quality output goal and not just amount of land conversion to BMPs. Barb Peichel suggested attaching a separate table for water quality outputs and priority locations, and to look at the natural area lake layer, and impaired lake layer on the map to choose some specific locations as there are 170 water bodies to choose from.

Address failing and “nonconforming” SSTS- There was lengthy discussion around the difference between the definitions “nonconforming” vs “noncompliant” and what this means regarding state standards for SSTS. There was discussion around what role and place watershed districts had in creating goals for SSTS, and how to show progress towards this goal. There was discussion around state legal requirements around SSTS inspection results. There was confusion on if the watershed’s goal was inspection of SSTS or compliance. The group decided there was clarification needed for this goal area.

Address internal loading in impaired lakes- There was discussion around which lakes to select for this goal. Jamie Schurbon said some lakes that have TMDL’s do not have a thorough internal load diagnosis and suggested that all participants pick two lakes they want on the list. Karen Kill identified some of the proposed lakes on the list as already having a Lake Management Plan and so could be removed.

There was discussion around the need for external loading to be identified before internal loading information could be useful, and that this information is included in TMDL and WRAP's. Jason Carlson stated that carp removal should not be considered effective in reducing internal loading, and Jen Kader agreed that this could be addressed in the strategy section of the plan. There was also discussion around including alum treatments as a strategy with the measurable output being to reduce internal loading.

Protect sensitive lakes- It was proposed that a measurable output for this section could be to increase sustainable development in 100% of sensitive lakesheds for all new and re-development. Jay Riggs and Matt Moore proposed a different way of choosing the priority locations than the categories that were suggested. They proposed using the DNR's Priority Waterbodies list plus "lakes identified as high priority in local management plans". Jim Shaver pointed out that this would miss lakes in the northern part of the watershed that did not have local plans. Mike Isensee suggested a third category to cover those lakes such as "lakes identified by local agencies as priority water bodies". Matt Moore stated that he believed local plans and guidance documents should be able to be used as they are based in scientific study and would serve as the justification for planned activities. Laura Jester said that based on her discussions with BWSR, she didn't believe the group could use local plans in the 1WIP to select priority locations or implementation schedules. She believed this was due to BWSR's position around watershed based and metro funding as they are in the process of deciding how that funding allocation may change. The group asked Barb Peichel for clarification on if local plans could be referenced by the 1WIP or if they will become ineligible for watershed based funding if they aren't included in the 1WIP. Barb Peichel said that the fund allocation was still being figured out. Jay Riggs and Matt Moore want to be able to use local plans as a reference/guidance document rather than listing everything that was identified in all the local plans in the 1WIP. Barb Peichel said that the lakes could be identified in a separate table.

Craig Mell asked the group about the statement "data are lacking" and if the group remembers why mapping was lumped into this section. Mike Isensee remembered soil health and other categories being lumped together, and that mapping was included because it was part of the effort to identify what was missing in the data gap. Mike Kinney offered to help with this section.

Mike Isensee's table had similar questions about how to select priority locations- and suggested using the DNR Priority Waterbodies list, local plans, and what is identified as a priority by local authorities in agricultural watersheds. Karen Kill proposed adding language to the goal statement about decreasing impacts of agricultural cropland or reducing nutrient loading to lakes to allow for installation of BMP's as a strategy. There was discussion around specifying feedlots as they are not included in the vegetation-based goal. There was discussion around the Policy Committee re-directing agricultural specific language, but that there was a need to specify it in this section as the goal is agriculture focused. There was discussion around soil health and infiltration and if that is reflected in agricultural BMP's that retain water on the landscape.

Schedule next Advisory Committee meeting

The next meeting will continue with priority resource areas and measurable goals for Wetlands while Lakes are tabled for now. Laura Jester requested the pre-work for the Wetland resource area be complete by 2/28/19.

The next meeting will take place on March 14th.