

BUFFALO-RED RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT

BARNESVILLE, MINNESOTA 56514

1303 4th AVE NE
Email: general@brrwd.org

PO BOX 341

PHONE 218-354-7710
Website: www.brrwd.org

BUFFALO-RED RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT One Watershed, One Plan Joint Advisory Committee/Planning Team Meeting November 1, 2018

A One Watershed, One Plan (1W1P) Joint Advisory Committee and Planning Team Meeting was held on Thursday, November 1, 2018, at 9:00 AM in the Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD) office, located at 1303 4th Avenue NE, Barnesville, MN.

Policy Committee members present were Jay Leitch, BRRWD President, and Dennis Larson (alternate), Wilkin County Commissioner.

Planning Team members present were Brett Arne, Board Conservationist, Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR); Erik S. Jones, Engineer, Bruce Albright, BRRWD Administrator, Kathy Fenger, BRRWD Assistant Administrator, and Matt Jacobson, Water Planner/Scientist, Houston Engineering, Inc. (HEI); Aaron Larson, West Otter Tail Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD); Kevin Kassenborg, District Manager, Clay SWCD; and Don Bajumpaa, District Manager, Wilkin SWCD.

Advisory Committee members present were Ed Musielewicz, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS); Phil Doll, Becker SWCD, Erin Lentz, United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS); George Minerich, Minnesota Department of Health (MDH); Mike Sharp, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA); Jill Wilkey, River Keepers; Anthony Nelson, Pheasants Forever (PF), Clay SWCD; Lynn Foss, Clay SWCD; Jim Grier, Biologist, North Dakota State University (NDSU); Gerald L. Van Amburg, BRRWD Manager; and Jerry Nordick, Wilkin County landowner.

Others attending via telephone/Skype: Marshall Johnson and Sarah Hewitt, Audubon Dakota, Annette Drewes, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR); and Aicam Laacouri, Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA).

BRRWD Administrator Bruce Albright called the meeting to order at 9:02 AM and asked the group to introduce themselves. He briefly discussed the 1W1P process and circulated the meeting attendance sheet.

Matt Jacobson, HEI, discussed the items on the meeting agenda. He gave an overview of the Participation Plan and meeting schedule, including a map of the 1W1P Planning boundary and a discussion of the roles and responsibilities of the stakeholder groups: Policy Committee, Advisory Committees, Planning Team, and the general public. Regarding meeting schedules, the Planning Team will meet once per month, combined with either a Policy or Advisory Committee meeting, alternating every other month. Jacobson reviewed the planning process timeline. The end date for the process is 12/19/19, which is also the expiration date for the BWSR grant. Albright noted that we are still in the process of contacting candidates for the Advisory Committees. Jacobson suggested that the group review the Participation Plan and forward any comments or suggestions to him via email by 11/15/18.

The group discussed setting specific dates and starting times for the meeting schedule. The fourth Wednesday of each month was suggested for the meeting date. According to this schedule, the Planning Team meeting would be held on November 28, 2018, from 9:00 AM to 11:30 AM in the BRRWD office in Barnesville with the Policy Committee and on December 19 with the Advisory Committee. Don Bajumpaa, Wilkin SWCD,

suggested that if the Committee meetings are held on the same day, the start times should overlap, so there will be no time wasted between meetings. Scheduling the Public Kickoff meeting was also discussed.

Jacobson presented an overview of the Land and Water Resource Narrative, which includes a listing and description of the BRRWD planning regions, ecoregions, geology/soils/topography, climate and precipitation, land use and land cover, surface waters, and groundwater. He noted that copies of this document would be made available for the public kickoff meeting. The group should provide comments and suggestions to Jacobson by 11/15/18. They discussed methods for submitting comments. Jacobson suggested that if people weren't familiar with the Review option in Microsoft Word, they could provide the comments in written form and forward them to him for documentation. It was suggested that the documents under review could have line number notations and be dated for better reference. Jacobson will send today's documents in separate e-mails to the attendees with the formatting changes.

The group reviewed the Issues Table Excel workbook. Jacobson explained that this document is a result of an aggregation of watershed issues from a variety of sources including local water management plans, MPCA Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies Reports (WRAPs), Total Maximum Daily Load Studies (TMDL), 60-day Plan notification responses, and other reports and studies relevant to the watershed. These issues were originally combined into a comprehensive list of 74 issues, which the Planning Team reviewed and commented on after the 9/28/18 meeting. Issues in this table were then further consolidated and refined down to a list of 25 issues, based on the comments received. The Committees now have another opportunity to comment on the Issues Table by using the Issues Table Comments and Revisions Excel Tracking worksheet. The Issues Table represents an early step in the process to draft a set of prioritized issues for the watershed that can be addressed through the development of measurable goals and implementation actions. Once the Committees arrive on a final Issues Table, it will be used during the public kickoff meeting and during future planning meetings as a tool to prioritize issues that will be addressed during the 10-year lifespan of the Plan.

Jay Leitch commented on the issue identification process. Jim Grier had questions about where in the overall process would project funding be addressed and the term "benefit determination". Jones explained that landowners within a legal ditch system "benefit area" will help pay for any project for that ditch. Some ditch systems benefit areas haven't been reevaluated since the early 1900s and should be updated to be sure those who drain into the ditch are paying for maintenance and repairs. In response to Leitch's comments about the Issues Table not reflecting a specific problem, Don Bajumpaa explained that the Issues Table is the result of an earlier, broader problem identification process that took place when the above referenced sources were produced. He added that the problem identification work has already been completed by local government units (LGUs) and agencies, and the Issues Table is a rendering of those problems down to specific issues that could be addressed by agreed upon actions within the scope of the IWIP. Additional issues may be identified during the public meeting process.

Bajumpaa asked Jacobson to explain the process he used to condense the original issues table with 74 items down to the revised list of 25 issues. Jacobson explained that he and Rachel Olm, HEI Planning Team member, looked for areas of overlap, commonality, and redundancy in the list of 74 items and condensed those issues by considering potential measurable goals and actions that could be implemented to address similar issues. For example, one action could address multiple issues. Bajumpaa suggested that the revised issues worksheet could include another column that references which of the original issues are included in each issue in the revised list to be sure that items of importance to each agency/LGU are not overlooked. Annette Drewes, DNR, agreed with Bajumpaa's request. Jacobson pointed out that if the group would be more comfortable reverting to the original issues table, we could go back and start over again. Grier commented that Jacobson's clarification of how the revised issues list was created answered his question, and he didn't think we should start over.

Leitch reiterated his concern that the Issues Table wasn't the right way to start the planning process. He thought the group needed to focus on problem identification before issues. Aaron Larson, West Otter Tail SWCD, explained to Leitch that the "problem" level was already identified when information from pre-existing LGU, local agency resources, and public input was reviewed. The original problems were identified during the development of local county water management plans and state agency comments received during 60-day notification periods, plus other reports and studies relevant to the watershed. Then the information was reviewed, assembled, and combined at the beginning of the process into the original issues list.

Leitch commented that we aren't right to assume the originally identified problems are correct and should be utilized. He didn't agree with having the Plan based on what state Agencies thought our problems were in the BRRWD. Larson pointed out that the original problems came from existing approved local county water plans, not just from state agencies. Jacobson clarified that the problems were a combination of information taken from local water plans and the local/regional state agencies' 60-day comment period responses. Requests for comments also went out to the local municipalities and townships within the BRRWD, but none sent back responses. Jacobson noted that the goal of the 2-week review process is for the group to suggest revisions, additions, or subtractions for the revised issues list.

Bajumpaa suggested that the group needed to consider if the 1W1P is going to be based on the concept of a watershed-wide Plan approach or one based on the planning regions. Brett Arne, BWSR, commented on how the Issues Table could be used as a "road map" for how the Plan will be developed. A top tier of issues will be identified that can be addressed within the 10-year life of the Plan. Leitch questioned if the 1W1P was supposed to be a strategic plan or a tactical/workplan.

Jerry Nordick, Wilkin County landowner, discussed prioritizing the issues list. He felt that the 1W1P should be a flexible document so that issues can be addressed in all areas of the watershed district with the local entities in control, not state agencies. Jacobson agreed and explained that the goal of the planning process is to develop a list of 10-12 issues from the Issues Table that can be addressed from a local perspective in the 10-year life-span of the 1W1P. He hopes the group will be able to start ranking and prioritizing issues at their next meeting.

Van Amburg noted that BWSR is currently working on providing a funding source to assist Watershed Districts to pay for 1W1P generated projects.

Arne commented on Leitch's earlier question by explaining that the 1W1P will be a strategic plan, using the identified priorities to develop actions to achieve identified goals that can be addressed within the 10-year life span of the Plan. The BRRWD will develop a workplan that will identify the highest ranked priority issues that will be addressed with BWSR funding on a biennial basis. Albright commented that BWSR has certain minimum requirements for the Plan. Arne noted that it is his responsibility to monitor our progress as we work through the planning process to ensure that we have included all the necessary Plan components.

Jacobson explained that the current goal for the Committees is to develop a set of locally prioritized issues that will form the basis for the BRRWD's focus for the next 10 years in terms of goals and ultimately actions to make progress towards achieving those goals. This prioritization process will take place during and following the public input meeting. BWSR's project funding eligibility requirements incorporate the process of "prioritizing, targeting, and measuring". He explained that the group will have until the next meeting to review, add, or subtract issues from the Revised Issues Table. He will add a column to the Table, linking the original issues list by number to the revised list. There was a discussion regarding formatting options for the Issues Table.

The group discussed the format and scheduling for the public meeting component of the Plan development. Bajumpaa commented that at the 9/28/18 meeting, the group had discussed holding the preliminary public

kickoff meeting in association with a regular BRRWD meeting sometime in December or January. At the meeting, we would provide a basic introduction to the 1W1P process and provide an opportunity for the public to comment or vote on the issues table, using large wall maps of the BRRWD's planning regions as a reference. Albright suggested that the group set a goal of holding the preliminary public meeting on Tuesday, January 8, 2019, at 6:30 PM in the Barnesville office. Jacobson has the Plan Outline, Introduction, Participation Plan, and Land and Water Resources in draft form for the Advisory Committee to review and the Policy Committee to approve. He noted that the group has a lot of work to do before the Plan is completed. He reiterated that the Plan deadline is 12/19/19, after which time, there will be no more BWSR funding for Plan development.

The Advisory Committee's consensus was that the Policy Committee should approve the proposal that the public meeting should include the wall maps and a means for the public to vote/comment on the issues.

In summary, the Advisory Committee and Planning Team will have the next two weeks to review and comment on the Participation Plan, the Land and Resource narrative, and the Issues Table, using a comment table/Excel spreadsheet that Jacobson will provide. He will also provide the group with the BWSR Plan Requirements and a sample wall map. The next meeting will be held on 11/28/18 at 9:00 AM-11:00 AM in the Barnesville BRRWD office. A Policy Committee meeting will overlap the Advisory Committee meeting, starting at 10:00 AM. The group agreed to recommend to the Policy Committee that we hold a public input meeting on January 8, 2019, at 6:30 PM and to use wall maps and issues comment sheets during the meeting to record public comments.

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 11:00 AM.