

BUFFALO-RED RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT

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BUFFALO-RED RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT One Watershed, One Plan Joint Advisory Committee and Planning Team Meeting December 20, 2018

A One Watershed, One Plan (1W1P) Joint Advisory Committee/Planning Team Meeting was held on Thursday, December 20, 2018, at 9:00 AM in the Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD) office, located at 1303 4th Avenue NE, Barnesville, MN.

Advisory Committee members present were Henry Van Offelen, Clean Water Specialist, Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR); Rodger Hemphill, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR); Annette Drewes, DNR; Chuck Anderson, Citizen; George Minerich, Minnesota Department of Health (MDH); Brian Winter, The Nature Conservancy (TNC); Ryan Lemickson, Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA); Erik Jones, BRRWD Engineer, Houston Engineering, Inc. (HEI); Scott Schroeder, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA); Mike Sharp, MPCA; Nicholas Brown, DNR; Jim Grier, Citizen; Jill Wilkey, River Keepers; Ed Musielewicz, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS); and Lynn Foss, Clay Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD).

Policy Committee members present were Jerome Flottesch, Becker SWCD Supervisor; Barry Nelson, Becker County Commissioner; Randy Schellack, Clay SWCD Supervisor (Alternate); Ross Aigner, Wilkin SWCD Supervisor; Jay Leitch, BRRWD President; Peter Fjestad, BRRWD Vice President (Alternate); Rick Drevlow, West Otter Tail SWCD Supervisor; and Wayne Johnson, Otter Tail County Commissioner.

Planning Team members present were Brett Arne, Board Conservationist, Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR); Aaron Larsen, Project Manager, West Otter Tail SWCD; Peter Mead, District Manager, Becker SWCD; Kevin Kassenborg, District Manager, Clay SWCD; Don Bajumpaa, District Manager, Wilkin SWCD; and Matt Jacobson, Water Planner/Scientist, Bruce E. Albright, BRRWD Administrator, and Kathleen K. Fenger, BRRWD Assistant Administrator, HEI.

Others attending: Kim Melton, District Technician, Wilkin SWCD.

Matt Jacobson, Plan Writer and Facilitator, HEI, called the Advisory Committee meeting to order at 9:03 AM and asked the group to introduce themselves. He reviewed the meeting agenda items, including potential recommendations to the Policy Committee for the Public Kickoff Open House details, the draft Introduction, and draft Issues Table. They will also discuss Issues Prioritization, the draft Resource Concern Maps, and Emerging Watershed Issues for Plan Section 2 and Measurable Goals in Plan Section 3.

The group reviewed the Planning Team's recommendations for the Public Kickoff Open House, which will be held on Tuesday, January 8, 2019, from 6:30-8:30 PM in the BRRWD office. Jacobson discussed the Team's recommendations:

- Presentation of Planning Effort Story Board by various Planning Team members-15 min.
- Planning Region Stations, manned by local agency staff, will feature regional wall maps and the Issues Table for public review and comment on the Issues form.

Albright noted that the BRRWD office staff will work with the local newspapers to publish a Kickoff meeting notice, plus we will also have the Kickoff meeting flyer, created by Peter Mead, Becker SWCD, and the notice posted on the BRRWD's website. Notices and flyers will also be mailed to all the Township Chairs within the BRRWD. The meeting will also be publicized via social media and word-of-mouth. Mead noted that the Junkyard Brewery in Moorhead has been contacted to provide beer samples following the meeting, and he is waiting for a response before finalizing the flyer. The Issues form will also provide an option for the public to share their contact information to receive Plan updates.

Jacobson provided an overview of the current status of the Draft Introduction. Don Bajumpaa, Wilkin SWCD, thought visuals/pictures could be incorporated into the Introduction. Jacobson noted that this is not the final version of the Introduction and encouraged the group to share photographs or other content for inclusion in the Plan. Once the Plan is completed in draft form, there will still be an opportunity to comment on each of the sections. He called for further questions or comments on the Introduction. The group agreed to recommend the Draft Introduction to the Policy Committee for approval.

The group reviewed the revised Issues Table. The final list contains 30 issues and issue statements. The group discussed possibly including the original issues list and reference numbers in an appendix to the Plan. Since the Committees and Planning Team have finalized the list, Van Offelen suggested that we might not want to include the original issues as an appendix to keep the Plan to a manageable length. Jacobson noted that the Committee members could have a copy of the original list for their reference. Bajumpaa explained that the Planning Team incorporated the 11/28/18 Advisory Committee meeting Issues Table comments into the final list for the group's review. After discussion, the Committee decided to recommend that the Policy Committee approve the current Issues Table.

The next agenda item the group worked on was Issues Prioritization. Using the current Issues Table, the Committee discussed the Planning Team's recommendations and a framework for setting priority issues, as identified by the Committees and the public. Van Offelen commented that a tiered group approach focusing on issues with similar importance has worked well in other Plans and provides flexibility. Higher ranked issues could be worked on simultaneously. Lower tiered issues could be addressed when funding is available. Brett Arne, BWSR, advised that their prioritization structure should be representative of the various planning regions based on the public comments collected at the upcoming Public Open House. Van Offelen agreed that priorities will need to be adjusted according to watershed planning regions.

Bajumpaa asked about prioritization and funding availability. Arne explained that tier description will dictate how project development will be implemented and funded. He explained that top tier priority group would be issues where there is a recognized need and available funding. However, if funding becomes available for a lower tier issue, the Plan should be flexible enough to allow refocusing on that issue. It was noted that state funding is tied to the targeted local priority issues. Arne explained that the Advisory Committee is responsible for defining the tier framework, which will take time to develop. Jacobson noted that the Planning Team will also continue to work on prioritization recommendations for the Advisory Committee.

Jacobson discussed prioritization options for the Committee's consideration:

- One method would be for the Committee members to go through the Issues Table and circle their top five issues. Jim Grier suggested the members could use a process of elimination in setting the top five priorities. Starting with the full list, select the most important and the least important issue, then continue through the list repeating the selection process until you have identified the top, middle, and bottom tier issues. The group discussed ways to evaluate the responses from the public issues input forms. Peter Mead stressed that the public should be made to understand that while their comments matter, the ultimate decisions will be made by the Committees.

- Another option would be for Committee members to only rank watershed-wide specific issues, and the eight regional issues could populate a separate tier category or be automatically be prioritized in one of the tiers. Jacobson noted that this option gives more weight to the regional issues and ensures that the region focus would be retained in the Plan.
- Apply a weight to planning region-specific issues based on the number of planning regions impacted. More weight would be given to an issue that impacts one specific region over an issue that impacts several regions.
- Prioritize by specific planning region. Members would only rank issues based in their specific planning region and not have input on issues outside of their region. Jacobson noted that this option could limit the members' engagement in the prioritization process. He added that most members would be allowed to provide input for two regions of their choosing and essentially have a double vote on all watershed-wide issues.
- Make all issues watershed-wide issues, dropping the planning region focus. Jacobson noted that this would be the easiest method, but not necessarily the best option. Mead referred to the issues list and suggested that the watershed-wide issues should be the top priorities. The region-specific issues, based on the significance to the watershed, would be lower priority. Jacobson noted that even though we might lose the regional specific issues in the prioritization phase of the process, those areas could come back into play when the planning process gets into establishing Measurable Goals and Implementation Actions. Grier agreed with the idea of approaching the 1WIP process as a watershed-wide effort, keeping the planning regions in mind, but not ranking issues specifically on a regional basis. Bruce Albright agreed with the idea of setting priorities based on a watershed-wide perspective without losing the planning regions. Jacobson noted that maps based on planning regions have already been prepared for the Kickoff meeting, but he thought the public input would still be valid.

The group discussed the resource concern maps concepts and drafts for Plan Section 2. Jacobson explained that BWSR expects the Plan to include maps illustrating/locating the resource concerns. As noted, these maps have already been prepared for the Kickoff Meeting by region. He noted that if the group wished, he could revise them to reflect a more watershed-wide view. He encouraged the Committee to review the printed wall maps during the Kickoff meeting. Grier suggested that the cities should be added to the maps for reference and to reconfigure the page layout by moving the individual panels on the larger maps to different locations. Jacobson agreed to add the major municipalities and roads. Scott Schroeder was concerned about how the maps will be displayed in the Plan document. He thought the 4-panel display maps would be nearly impossible to read on a standard 8.5" x 11" page. Jacobson noted that each map could be inserted into the plan on 11" x 17" sheets. Grier observed that posting high-resolution maps on the website should be adequate for anyone requiring closer examination of the maps.

The next agenda item for the group's review was Emerging Issues in the Plan Section 2, which would be problems not listed in the Issues Table that we might not be able to address in the 10-year life span of the Plan but might become active issues in the future. The group discussed a draft list of potential emerging issues (Note that these were issues discussed for *potential* inclusion in the emerging issues section):

- Pump and dump geothermal in lake homes and their impacts on shoreline stability and water quality.
- Agricultural irrigation
- Implementation rate of tile drainage
- Renewal energy sources
- Waters of the United States Definition

- National Pollutant Discharge Elimination Systems Program
- Wetland regulation
- Groundwater planning
- Drought planning
- Ethanol production
- Increased water use
- Minnesota Drainage Law
- Land use change
- Floodplain Management
- Shoreland Management

Grier asked if local legislators should be included in the Advisory Committee since emerging issues include potential legislative initiatives. Jacobson explained that the Emerging Issues discussion is really designed to track or to be aware of issues not necessarily addressed in the Plan. He noted that some of the listed items are also in the Issues Table. The group discussed combining some of the items under broader categories. Kevin Kassenborg, Clay SWCD, commented that the BWSR/Legislature is taking a slower approach to the soil loss ordinance than they did for the Buffer effort. He suggested that the soil loss concern could be listed as an emerging issue. Arne discussed BWSR's approach to the ordinance implementation. Jacobson asked the Advisory Committee to send him comments regarding the Emerging Issues question by 1/4/19. Jones asked if the emerging issues could be included on the Issue Table comment form. Jacobson said that he would add this item to the form.

Jacobson introduced the group to Plan Section 3, Measurable Goals. He discussed the goal setting process. He explained that in Section 3, we will describe an impaired resource and include measurable goals with a breakdown of how we will reach, or at least make progress toward, the desired future conditions, expressed in terms of percent of progress. Social goals are harder to measure than resource goals. There was a brief discussion regarding ways to measure progress on social goals, like "education". Other considerations when setting goals is to determine if they are watershed-wide or planning region specific, if the goal is realistically achievable, and to allow for changes in goals and priorities.

Jacobson discussed BWSR's Plan content versions. The BRRWD signed the Plan contract with BWSR early enough so that we are under Version 1.0. Version 2.0 has some requirement changes. For example, in Plan Section 3, based on Clean Water Council recommendations, we would have to have a measurable goal related to water storage expressed in acre-feet. Jacobson will forward both BWSR's Plan guidance and content requirements for measurable goals to the Advisory Committee.

Jacobson summarized the Advisory Committee actions:

- The Public Kickoff meeting is scheduled for January 8, 2018, at 6:30-8:30 in the BRRWD office. Peter Mead will finalize the meeting flyer and forward it to the BRRWD office, who will handle distribution of a notice to the local newspapers and township officials.
- The draft Introduction was reviewed and recommended for Policy Committee approval
- The draft Issues Table was reviewed and recommended for Policy Committee approval
- Discussed issue prioritization, noting that the Committee's work doesn't prevent the inclusion of public input
- Recommended changes to the Resource Concern Maps prior to the Kickoff Meeting
- Discussed Emerging Issues in the watershed. The group will provide feedback to Jacobson by 1/4/19.
- Discussed Measurable Goals. Jacobson will forward both BWSR's Plan guidance and content requirements for measurable goals to the Committee members

The next Advisory Committee/Planning Team meeting is scheduled for January 23, 2018, at 9:00 AM in the BRRWD Barnesville office. Jacobson will e-mail meeting agenda/materials prior to the next meeting.

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 11:10 AM.