

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 Policy Committee Meeting February 27, 2019

The One Watershed, One Plan (1W1P) Policy Committee held a meeting on Wednesday, February 27, 2019, at 11:00 AM in the Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD) office, located at 1303 4th Avenue NE, Barnesville, MN.

The Policy Committee members present were Lyle Hovland, Wilkin County Commissioner; Frank Gross, Clay County Commissioner (Alternate); Jay Leitch, BRRWD President; Jerome Flottesmesch, Becker Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Supervisor; Ross Aigner, Wilkin SWCD Supervisor; and Rick Drevlow, West Otter Tail SWCD Supervisor.

Planning Team members present were Matt Jacobson, Water Planner/Scientist, Rachel Olm, Scientist, Bruce Albright, BRRWD Administrator, Houston Engineering, Inc. (HEI); Brett Arne, Board Conservationist, Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR); Henry Van Offelen, Clean Water Specialist, BWSR; and Don Bajumpaa, District Manager, Wilkin SWCD.

Others present were Kathy Fenger, BRRWD Assistant Administrator, HEI.

Policy Committee Chair Lyle Hovland called the meeting to order at 11:08 AM and asked the group to introduce themselves. He announced that the meeting was being recorded and asked the group to state their names for the record when making or seconding a motion.

Meeting Minutes. The Committee reviewed the 12/20/18 Policy Committee meeting minutes. **Motion** by Gross to approve the minutes. **Seconded** by Leitch. **Approved.**

Financial Report. Bruce Albright, BRRWD Administrator, reported that the BRRWD has been managing the monthly expenditures. We received the first half payment of our BWSR grant on 7/6/18 (\$116,235). The current balance to date is \$34,737.30. We will contact BWSR for the second half payment when we need additional funds. Albright noted that the BRRWD had accrued approximately \$18,000 in 1W1P expenses prior to the BWSR grant approval. Either this amount will be assumed by the BRRWD or allocated to the planning partners. Albright plans to have a full accounting of the bills, including mileage costs, at the next meeting. Jacobson noted that the Grant Recording Team submitted a progress/expenditure report to BWSR.

Issue Prioritization. Matt Jacobson gave a status report of the Issue Prioritization process. We started with a list of 85 issues, which the Advisory Committee and the Planning Team narrowed down to 30 issues. The Policy Committee approved the Issues Table pending the results from the 1/8/19 Public Kickoff Open House questionnaires. All 29 public comments from the Open House matched issues that were already identified. Using an online survey, the next step in the process was for the Planning Team and Advisory Committee to prioritize the issues from the Issues Table. The Advisory Committee discussed the survey results at their 1/23/19 meeting, and the Policy Committee had the same online survey opportunity. At the 2/11/19 Planning Team meeting, they develop a draft priority issues list based on all the survey results, taking into consideration the public input and two Policy Committee member responses.

The issues were ranked by the number of "votes" received as a percent of the total votes. Issues receiving more than 80% were placed in Priority Level/Tier A. These are the highest priority issues that will be focused on during the 10-year lifespan of the Plan. Issues receiving 60%-80% were placed in Tier B. These medium priority issues could be addressed during the life of the Plan with the potential to shift in importance. The issues ranked lower than 60% are in Tier C, which will not be focused on during the duration of the Plan. Albright noted that issues can be reevaluated when the Plan is updated in five years. Arne added that the Plan can be amended at any time. Measurable Goals and Actions/Implementation Strategies will be developed for Priority Levels A and B. Many of the actions will have multiple benefits and address more than one issue.

Priority Level A:

- Increased erosion and sedimentation from upland sources in excess of natural rates.
- Altered hydrology associated with a change in the water quantity, timing, and variability of flow in water courses, which impacts stream geomorphology and is a stressor for aquatic life.
- Increased surface runoff contributes to flood conditions which has economic, environmental, social, and health and safety implications.
- Instability impacting stream and river bank and channel integrity.
- Increased phosphorus loading contributing to elevated concentrations in waterbodies approaching (protection) or exceeding (restoration) water quality standards for aquatic life.
- Decreased soil health and its impact on agricultural productivity, water quality and water-holding capacity.

Priority Level B:

- Reduced integrity, health, and functionality of high-value wetlands.
- Increased nitrogen loading contributing to elevated concentrations in waterbodies approaching (protection) or exceeding (restoration) water quality standards for aquatic life and drinking water.
- The need to prioritize protection of surface water and groundwater drinking water supplies.
- Low dissolved oxygen conditions in streams not attributable to natural conditions.
- Lack of public awareness and understanding of water issues like drainage, erosion, salt application, chemical contaminants (e.g. fertilizers, pesticides, household waste, prescription drugs) and legacy contaminants (e.g. mercury and PCBs).
- Increased bacteria (*E. coli*) loading contributing to elevated concentrations in waterbodies approaching (protection) or exceeding (restoration) water quality standards for aquatic recreation

The PT added two issues to Level B that they thought should have measurable goals included in the Plan:

- Instability impacting public drainage system performance.
- Instability impacting lake shore integrity.

Flottesch commented that the 1W1P is a water plan for 9 separate agencies and three watersheds with significant topographical and land use differences. He noted that the development of the priorities should be up to the technical experts, leaving the Policy Committee to react to their work on behalf of the public they represent. He suggested that the Plan's focus should have less emphasis on agricultural drainage and flood reduction and more on clean water. He thought that the Tier C issues dealing with water quality and aquatic recreation should be moved up to the Tier B just from a political viewpoint, considering that the Clean Water Legacy legislation was passed to provide clean water in Minnesota for fishing and water recreation. Van Offelen observed that issues should be prioritized in the Plan based on the ability to identify a measurable goal/action to address the issue. The group had a brief discussion regarding Flottesch's suggestions and possible language to make the issue more generic. Rachel Olm pointed out that if reworded to take in a variety of recreational opportunities, this issue could fit in with all the other higher ranked water quality protection issues. The Committee tasked the staff with crafting an alternate description for the clean water/recreation issue and adding it to the Issues Table and to Tier B on the Prioritization List. **Motion** by Drevlow to

recommend the Issues Prioritization List with the proposed changes to the Policy Committee for approval. **Seconded** by Aigner. **Approved.**

Measurable Goals. Jacobson introduced Plan Section 3 regarding the establishment of Measurable Goals. Each of the priority issues from Tiers A and B must have a measurable goal that is reportable and achievable within the life-span of the Plan. When setting goals, it is advised to take regional priorities into consideration. Olm noted that goal measurement should not be limited to monitoring because this metric can be influenced by many variables, including weather.

Each Goal should include the following information and be presented in this format:

- Goal
 - Name and Description
- Basis
 - Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL); Minnesota Nutrient Reduction Strategy; Flood Damage Reduction; Locally-defined
- Issue(s) Addressed
 - Primary Issue-Related directly to Reportable Metric
 - Multiple Benefits-Other related issues Goal might address
- Geographic Focus
 - Watershed-wide
 - Planning Region
- Short-Term Goal
 - Achievable in lifespan of plan
- Long-Term Goal
 - Desired Future Condition
- Metric
 - Measurement of progress
 - Reportable-process should be feasible and achievable.

Jacobson noted that the Planning Team will be meeting this afternoon to discuss this format in more detail. Albright noted that the HEI staff will work with the Planning Team in the development of the goals. Jacobson and Olm will guide the process based on their experience working with other 1W1P efforts. Bajumpaa noted that the Planning Team expects that the HEI staff will provide information from the existing Plans that are already in place with appropriate and adequate measurable goals for them to review and to use as a starting point for their work. The Advisory Committee will review the draft goals at their next meeting in March. They will break into smaller groups based on expertise/interest to work on the draft goals and then come back together as a group for a final review.

The Committee discussed the timeline for this next Plan phase. Olm thought that the next Policy Committee meeting would be at the end of April, following the Planning Team and Advisory Committee work on the Measurable Goals. Jacobson noted that by April, the Policy Committee would also have a draft Plan Section 2 to review and approve.

Bajumpaa commented about the process to keep the public apprised of the Plan status. He mentioned that there had been a discussion about having a summary/report about each meeting's outcomes for dissemination to the other Committee members, as well as other local government officials and the public. The Committee agreed that a summary report should be provided after Committee/Team meetings.

There being no further business to come before the Policy Committee, Chair Hovland adjourned the meeting at 11:54 AM.