

# ***BUFFALO-RED RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT***

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## **BUFFALO-RED RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT One Watershed, One Plan Joint Advisory Committee/Planning Team Meeting March 27, 2019**

A One Watershed, One Plan (1W1P) Joint Advisory Committee/Planning Team Meeting was held on Wednesday, March 27, 2019, at 9:00 AM in the Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD) office, located at 1303 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, Barnesville, MN.

Advisory Committee members present were George Minerich, Minnesota Department of Health (MDH); Anthony Nelson, Pheasants Forever (PF)/Clay Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD); Lynn Foss, Clay SWCD; Ed Musielewicz, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS); Jim Grier, North Dakota State University (NDSU)/Citizen; Henry Van Offelen, Clean Water Specialist, Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR); Nicholas Brown, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR); Erik Jones, BRRWD Engineer, Houston Engineering, Inc. (HEI); Jim Lahn, East Otter Tail SWCD; Mike Sharp, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA); Scott Schroeder, MPCA; Phil Doll, Becker SWCD; and Annette Drewes, DNR.

Planning Team members present were Brett Arne, Board Conservationist, BWSR; Don Bajumpaa, District Manager, Wilkin SWCD; Peter Mead, District Manager, Becker SWCD; Jonah Olson, West Otter Tail County SWCD (Alternate); Ben Underhill, East Otter Tail County SWCD (Alternate); Bruce E. Albright, BRRWD Administrator, Matt Jacobson, Water Planner/Scientist, and Rachel Olm, Scientist, HEI (via conference phone).

Others attending included Policy Committee members Jay A. Leitch, BRRWD President, and Barry Nelson, Becker County Commissioner; and Gerry Zimmerman, Landowner.

Matt Jacobson, Plan Writer and Facilitator, HEI, called the Advisory Committee meeting to order at 9:06 AM and asked the group to introduce themselves. He reviewed the meeting agenda items:

- Recap on Progress & Direction
- Plan Section 2
- Measurable Goals Workshop
- Action Items and Next Meeting

The group reviewed the 1W1P status:

- Completed:
  - Land and Water Resources Inventory
  - Section 1: Plan Introduction
  - Draft Section 2: Identification and Prioritization of Resources and Issues
    - Advisory Committee recommendation on content today, Planning Team review/revise, then to Policy Committee for approval
- Under Development:
  - Plan Section 3: Measurable Goals
    - Each Plan Section 2 Priority Level A & B Issue will have a Measurable Goal

- Up Next
  - Section 4: Targeted Implementation Plan
    - Actions to make progress towards the Measurable Goals will be developed
  - Section 5: Implementation Programs
    - Plan funding
    - Implementation responsibilities

Jacobson explained to the group that the Plan is about one month behind schedule, but since we are already on an accelerated timeline, our status is still in good shape. He felt that the time the group took with the Issues prioritization process was well spent. The timeline follows a process where the Planning Team develops Plan content for Advisory Committee's review/comment/feedback, which goes back to the Planning Team for more revision, and then the draft content is presented to the Policy Committee for approval.

Jacobson discussed the Advisory Committee's work on Plan Section 2, Identification and Prioritization of Resources and Issues, which resulted in a list of prioritized issues that can be addressed within the 10-year lifespan of the Plan. The Group reviewed the draft BRRW 1W1P Issues Prioritization list, and Jacobson discussed the Committee's process to develop the list, containing 30 issues: six Priority Level A, and nine Priority Level B. The remainder Level C issues are recognized in the Plan but will be addressed after the Levels A and B issues are completed. During the 5-year Plan update, the Level C issues could be revisited. He added because the issues can be interrelated and actions can have multiple benefits, Level C issues potentially could be dealt with when the higher Leveled issues are addressed. Jacobson also discussed the Resource Concern maps for each Planning Region. The purpose of the maps is to provide orientation to important resources and issues in the watershed. They were developed using publicly available data sets on a planning region scale to provide greater detail. He explained that the Planning Team has attempted to match up most of the Priority Issues with resource features on the maps. Emerging issues are also included in the Draft Prioritization List, which could be addressed during the life of the Plan, during the 5-year update, or if funding unexpectedly becomes available.

Jacobson asked for feedback from the group regarding Plan Section 2.

Jim Grier noted that the Resources and Issues content should be switched around so that the narrative leads with the Issues, not the Resources. He also had a correction about the headings.

Lynn Foss, Clay SWCD, commented about consistency in capitalization and terminology in the Resources narrative to eliminate confusion.

As part of the Measurable Goals discussion, Henry Van Offelen, BWSR, asked about the status of the BRRWD ditch system inventory that Jones offered to provide. Jonah Olson noted that during their recent meeting, the Planning Team used a map Jones provided to identify drainage features within their area to highlight critical areas. Jacobson noted that the map in question is available for review. Committee members are encouraged to add potential measurable goal markers to the map during the map review portion of the meeting today to indicate any ditch outlet instability.

Phil Doll, Becker SWCD, had a formatting question for Table 2 and also suggested that since the issues in each Level are not ranked numerically, the numbering should be removed from the Issues list. Grier pointed out that the numbers could be used for reference only and a note could be included in the beginning Plan Section 2 that the numbers don't indicate rank or priority. Jacobson explained that he had planned to use the numbered issues as a reference when linking an issue to a measurable goal. He added that once the entire Plan is completed in draft form, all Committee members and the public will have a final chance to review and comment on the contents.

Grier commented that he like the emerging issues portion of Section 2. Jacobson briefly discussed some of the emerging issues he thought were important to include, such as invasive species.

Annette Drewes, DNR, asked what was meant by the word "suitable" in reference to the recreational access to lakes, rivers, and streams issue. She felt the word should be clarified when assigning a measurable goal, as "suitable" is a subjective term. Ben Underhill, West/East Otter Tail SWCD, suggested that the issue needs to be reworded. Jacobson will do a revision and bring it back to the Policy Committee for review at their next meeting.

The Advisory Committee recommended that the Planning Team make the noted revisions and Policy Committee should approve the Issues Table as presented with the noted revisions.

The next agenda item was to workshop and discuss the draft Priority Level A and B Measurable Goals. Jacobson explained how the Goals were developed:

- Developed for each A and B Priority Level Issues
- Planning Team developed the Goals for each Issue over the course of two meetings
- Watershed-wide or Planning Region Focus
- Basis for each Goal-evidence, support, rationale
- Primary Issue(s)-for each issue the goal addresses
- Secondary Issue(s)-multiple benefits towards multiple goals
- Short-Term Goal-achievable in 10 years with resources available
- Long-Term Goal-Desired Future Condition
- Metric-yardstick for measuring success, considering man-power issues

Don Bajumpaa, Wilkin SWCD, noted that goal setting and measurement must take into consideration realistic benchmarks and staffing limitations. Jacobson commented that the Short-term goals should be more realistic while the Long-term goals could be more idealistic. The goals could change when the 5-year update is implemented.

Jacobson identified the tools and resources to develop measurable goals:

- Altered Hydrology Analysis-Study supported by the Minnesota Soybean Research and Promotion Council
  - Altered Hydrology Goal
  - Study doesn't identify any definitive causes
- Prioritize, Target and Measure Application
  - Sediment Goal
  - Phosphorus Goal
  - Nitrogen Goal
- Cropland Erosion Risk Analysis
  - Soil Health Goal
- Geomorphic Assessment (*Forthcoming*)
  - Stream Stability Goal
- Local LGU and Engineering Knowledge
  - Ditch Stability Goal
- Nitrate Risk Analysis (*Forthcoming*)
  - Groundwater component of Nitrogen Goal

The formal meeting was recessed for about 45 minutes to allow the group to review and comment on the Measurable Goals tables distributed around the room. The Committee members were asked to provide

written input on the worksheets in their area of expertise. Jacobson noted that the short-term goal could be an area where goals could be prioritized.

At 11:08 AM, Jacobson reconvened the meeting. He asked for input about the goal setting exercise. In general, the group indicated that it was useful. Don Bajumpaa, Wilkin SWCD, commented that it is important to define the variables for the goals. Jacobson explained that when today's comments are presented to the Planning Team, they will draft a more complete Plan Section 3, including a narrative to set up each goal to explain the origin and components in more detail.

Annette Drewes, DNR, commented on the need for detailed maps for each resource. Jacobson noted that today's input should guide where goal prioritization/implementation should be focused in the watershed during the lifespan of the Plan.

Henry Van Offelen, BWSR, commented that the Planning Team needs to give the hydrology and storage/runoff goals a closer examination.

It was suggested that a metric related to base flow should be added to the altered hydrology goal because of its impact as a major stressor for aquatic life in several of the subwatersheds. The group discussed the best verbiage to phrase the goal.

Ben Underhill asked what the term "extended short-term goal" meant. Jacobson explained that when that term was used, it indicated that the goal couldn't be identified as a definitive long-term goal, or it could be a case where the actions would be done continuously. He said the Planning Team will take a look at the extended short-term goals to add some specificity. Drewes noted that the stabilize lake shoreline goal was one of these extended goals, and she suggested that a small group could work on those areas to set some long-term goals. Jacobson noted that there is no BWSR guidance regarding the term limit for achieving the long-term goals. An extended discussion followed regarding the definition of short and long-term goals and the time frame allowed for each. The five-year Plan update could be viewed as the point where we can evaluate the progress made on the short-term goals. The group also discussed methods to measure progress. Jacobson explained that BWSR considers goals that can be achieved in 10 years to be a short-term goal. He suggested that short-term goals could be measured numerically, as required, and long-term goals could be included in the Plan as a narrative outlining a future desired condition. The group briefly discussed the DNR's Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan, focusing on the protection/restoration/enhancement of the grassland/wetland landscapes from Canada to Iowa. Jacobson noted that the long-term goals in the 1WIP reference similar long-term goals and metrics, and we could align our Plan with the Prairie Plan 25-year long term goals to improve funding opportunities.

Jacobson summarized the next steps for the planning process:

- Compile the Advisory Committee's comments on the measurable goal worksheets
- Present the comments to the Planning Team at their 4/1/19 meeting
- Incorporate the comments into the Measurable Goals
- Planning Team will also consider goal timelines (short and long-term) and format (numeric/narrative)
- Advisory Committee will meet again 4/24/19 to review the Planning Team recommendations

Jay Leitch suggested that the group should consider adding a public welfare metric for how the goals affect social wellbeing. He asked for time at the next Advisory Committee meeting to address the group regarding this issue.

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 11:36 AM.