

BUFFALO-RED RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT

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BUFFALO-RED RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT

One Watershed, One Plan Policy Committee Meeting May 29, 2019

The One Watershed, One Plan (1W1P) Policy Committee held a meeting on Wednesday, May 29, 2019, at 10:30 AM in the Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD) office, located at 1303 4th Avenue NE, Barnesville, MN.

The Policy Committee members present were Jay Leitch, BRRWD President; Wayne Johnson, Otter Tail County Commissioner; Jerome Flottesmesch, Becker Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Supervisor; and Barry Nelson, Becker County Commissioner. It was noted that the Policy Committee lacked a quorum.

Advisory Committee members present were Nicholas Brown, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and Erik S. Jones, Engineer, Houston Engineering, Inc. (HEI).

Planning Team members present were Moriya Rufer, Water Planner/Scientist, Bruce E. Albright, BRRWD Administrator, and Kathy Fenger, BRRWD Assistant Administrator, HEI; and Brett Arne, Board Conservationist, Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR).

BRRWD Administrator Bruce E. Albright called the meeting to order at 10:33 AM. He explained that Matt Jacobson, who usually facilitated the 1W1P meetings, recently left HEI to become the new Clay County Planning and Zoning Administrator. Moriya Rufer, Water Planner/Scientist, HEI, will be filling in while Rachel Olm, who started the BRRWD's 1W1P process, is on maternity leave. Albright asked the group to introduce themselves.

Meeting Minutes. Albright distributed the 4/24/19 Advisory Committee minutes for the group's review and approval at the next Policy Committee meeting.

Financial Report. Bruce Albright, BRRWD Administrator, explained that the BRRWD is the fiscal agent and manages the monthly expenditures. He distributed a report of the 1W1P income and expenditures beginning May 8, 2017, ending 5/13/19. Wayne Johnson asked if it is anticipated that the expenditures will exceed the grant revenue. Brett Arne, BWSR, noted that the BRRWD can request the next 40% of the grant funding as soon as the first 50% has been spent. Albright explained that expenditures incurred prior to the formal signing of the grant agreement on 7/16/18, are not eligible for BWSR reimbursement and will be BRRWD expenditures.

Plan Section 2 Resource and Issues Identification and Prioritization. Rufer explained that at the 4/24/19 Advisory Committee meeting, the Committee members recommended to move four issues from Priority Level B to Level C:

- Issue 8. Increased nitrogen loading contributing to elevated concentrations in waterbodies approaching (protection) or exceeding (restoration) water quality standards for aquatic life, aquatic recreation, and drinking water.
- Issue 9. The need to prioritize protection of surface water and groundwater drinking water supplies.

- Issue 11. 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).
- Issue 15. Insufficient suitable outdoor recreation access and opportunities.

Only Priority Level A and B issues will have goals written for them. The rationale for moving these four issues are that they will be addressed through other Levels A and B implementation actions. Also, as Level C issues, they will remain in the Plan so that actions can still be identified for addressing them and there will be opportunities to elevate them at the five-year and 10-year Plan updates.

The group discussed the justification for including the issues in Level B. At an earlier meeting, Jerome Flottesch had advocated elevating these issues. He felt that the public was interested in water quality and public access in association with the Legacy Amendment, and these issues should be included somewhere in the Plan, even if it wasn't in Level A or B. Wayne Johnson pointed out that many times these issues will be addressed by achieving the goals for the higher ranked issues. Rufer explained that as Level C issues, these items are still included in the Plan and can be listed as multiple benefits with other projects. The group consensus was to approve the proposed changes, but lacking a quorum, no official vote was taken. Arne suggested that the other Committee members should be advised by email regarding today's discussion and consensus, encouraging them to submit any objections to the proposed changes to Rufer prior to the next meeting, so that the process can continue to move forward. Rufer will continue the goal development process for the Level A and B issues, and if the issues under discussion are moved back up, they can easily be added.

The next agenda item was Plan Section 3: Measurable Goal Development. Rufer explained that the Planning Team and Advisory Committee are responsible for developing the Measurable Goals for Priority Levels A and B issues. Goals will have either a watershed-wide or Planning Region focus and should include evidence, support, and rationale for its selection for the issue. Goals will be expected to address the primary issue and if possible, show multiple benefits for secondary issues. Short term goals are those that are achievable within the 10-year lifespan of the Plan with the available resources. Long-term goals would reflect desired future conditions. A Metric is a method used to measure the success of a goal. The group reviewed and discussed an example of a measurable goal targeted for the Lakes Planning Region.

Wayne Johnson asked how the goals will be prioritized. Brett Arne explained that through the planning process, we will develop a targeted implementation schedule/table based on measurable goals rather than planning regions or watershed. The implementation schedule will be evaluated every two years when the watershed based funding becomes available. The 1W1P Steering Committee, appointed following the completion of the Plan, will be tasked with developing and submitting a workplan to BWSR. Arne added that funding competition shouldn't be a factor between agencies/governments because the issues/goals identified in the Plan should all be completed within the Plan's 10-year lifespan through Steering Committee consensus. Rufer explained that funding and project timing will be addressed when the 2-year action implementation table/schedule is developed. In reference to Johnson's concerns about funding/priority competition between groups, Albright acknowledged that this could definitely be a problem, but he pointed out that we should be able to build on the successes we've had in partnering on projects, and the excellent working relationships the BRRWD has developed with the other agencies and local governments over the years. Rufer explained that the 1W1P member agencies will still be able to conduct business as usual with their constituents. The 1W1P process/funding will just be one option for developing projects. State competitive grant programs like the Clean Water Fund will still be available.

Rufer discussed the Plan status:

Completed:

- Land and Water Resources Inventory

- Section 1: Plan Introduction
- Section 2: Identification and Prioritization of Resources and Issues

Under Development:

- Section 3: Establish Measurable Goals (Close to completed draft)
- Section 4: Targeted Implementation Plan

Up Next:

- Section 5: Implementation Programs

Albright asked about the status of the summary of the past funding history reports from the nine 1W1P member entities. Rufer said that they have all submitted their reports.

Albright distributed a letter from a landowner who farms east of Moorhead. The group discussed his concerns regarding the 1W1P and government regulation overreach and the impacts on agriculture. His hopes are that the 1W1P would find a way to work with landowners/farmers to get a variety of things done on the land that will benefit all.

Jay Leitch, BRRWD President, had editorial comments for the documents under review. Rufer will review his comments and make changes as needed.

The group discussed possible meeting dates and agreed to schedule the next Policy Committee meeting on July 24, 2019, at 10:30 AM-Noon in the Barnesville BRRWD office. The next Advisory Committee/Planning Team meeting is scheduled on June 19, 2019, from 1:00-3:00 PM in the BRRWD Office.

There being no further business to come before the Policy Committee, Albright adjourned the meeting at 11:34 AM.