

BUFFALO-RED RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT

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BUFFALO-RED RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT One Watershed, One Plan Joint Advisory Committee/Planning Team Meeting October 23, 2019

A One Watershed, One Plan (1W1P) Joint Advisory Committee/Planning Team Meeting was held on Wednesday, October 23, 2019, at 1:00 PM in the Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD) office, located at 1303 4th AVE NE, Barnesville, MN.

Advisory Committee members present were Matt Jacobson, Clay County Planning and Zoning Director; Rodger Hemphill, Department of Natural Resources (DNR); Jill Wilkey, River Keepers; Lynn Foss, Clay Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD); Jim Lahn, East Otter Tail SWCD; Erik Jones, BRRWD Engineer, Houston Engineering, Inc. (HEI); Scott Schroeder, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, (MPCA); Mike Sharp, MPCA; Brian Winter, The Nature Conservancy (TNC); Ed Musielewicz, Natural Resources Conservation Service, (NRCS); Ryan Lemickson, Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA); and George Minerich, Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) (via conference phone).

Planning Team members present were Rachel Olm, Scientist, HEI, and Peter Mead, Becker SWCD District Manager.

Policy Committee members present were Jay A. Leitch, BRRWD President.

Rachel Olm, HEI, called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM and asked the group to introduce themselves.

Recap on Plan Progress and Direction. Olm informed the group that the Policy Committee has approved the Measurable Goals. The Draft Implementation schedule has been completed, and the focus is to review the schedule for Watershed-Wide Action. The Planning Team is working on revamping the Project and Practices part of the Implementation Schedule, so it most accurately reflects their needs. Draft Plan Section 4 will be completed soon. Draft Plan Section 5 has been completed and distributed for review. Draft Plan Section 6 should be ready by the end of the year for internal review.

Draft Implementation Table Watershed-Wide Actions. Meeting Goal: Review draft watershed-wide actions. Revise cost, responsibility, and actions as needed. Olm informed the group that the implementation schedules for Project and Practices and Capital Improvement Projects are not included in the handouts. The Planning Team is still working on them. Olm referred to the Draft Implementation Table on the overhead monitors and explained that the actions listed on the Education and Outreach table came from a combination of resources, including the Policy Committee's contribution, local water plans, and Watershed Restoration Protection Strategy documents.

Olm reviewed the information in the Education and Outreach table and informed the group that the Planning Team has prioritized the actions they want to pursue during implementation. She discussed the information in the Regulatory Table, listing the regulatory items needed for implementation because of the focus on policy. She also discussed the information in the Capital Improvements Projects table and explained that it will be summarized Watershed-Wide and in the Planning region summaries.

The group had a short discussion regarding revisions to the Draft Implementation Table.

Draft Plan Section 5 (Implementation Programs). Meeting Goal: Review and discuss Draft Plan Section. Revise as needed and recommend for Policy Committee. Implementation programs are the funding mechanism to implement actions and make progress toward achieving Plan Measurable Goals. Olm referred to the Section 5 Implementation Programs handout shown on the overhead monitors. This includes Projects and Practices Cost-Share Program, Capital Improvements, Data Collection, Monitoring, and Analysis, Education and Outreach, and Regulatory and Enforcement, and Operations and Maintenance (Still under development with the Planning Team). Olm also explained that Section 5 is used to develop a framework for each of the Implementation Programs for members to use as guidelines.

- Projects and Practices
 - This is a cost share program that the Planning Team is recommending for implementation purposes. The Projects and Practices Cost-Share Program funds actions pertaining to the planning, design, and implementation of structural projects (i.e. grassed waterways, controlled drainage) and management practices (i.e. nutrient management, conservation tillage) and on the landscape to make progress toward goals. Actions funded by the Projects and Practices Cost-Share Program are typically much smaller in size than capital improvements. Grant applications to fund the Projects and Practices Cost-Share Program will be prepared jointly as the Buffalo-Red River Watershed (BRRW) 1W1P Planning Group instead of an individual entity. Grant dollars received by the Planning Group will be distributed to Plan participants for projects and practices.

The group discussed revisions regarding Projects and Practices.

- Capital Improvements
 - A Capital Improvement is defined as a major non-recurring expenditure for the construction, repair, retrofit, or increased utility or function of physical facilities, infrastructure, or environmental features. Capital Improvements are beyond the “normal” financial means of the BRRW 1W1P Planning Group and therefore require external funding. To be considered a capital improvement for purposes of this Plan, a project must have an anticipated cost of at least \$250,000. Drainage authorities will be highly encouraged to coordinate and be involved during implementation of the targeted implementation schedule to make progress towards measurable goals, including sediment delivery, natural storage and hydrology, and aquatic habitat.

The group discussed revisions regarding Capital Improvements.

- Data Collection, Monitoring, and Analysis
 - The Data Collection, Monitoring, and Analysis Implementation Program funds actions which close information and data gaps and continue the development and assembly of existing data and information. A large portion of these data and information are water quality monitoring data. The Data Collection, Monitoring, and Analysis Implementation Program is dedicated to enhancing and maintaining the existing monitoring network in the BRRW 1W1P to capture and document measurable water quality changes resulting from watershed implementation activities.
- Education and Outreach
 - The Education and Outreach Implementation Program funds the implementation of actions that use education and outreach to make progress toward a measurable goal. The Education and Outreach Implementation Program is operated through the BRRW 1W1P sharing of services. Expectations are that a common set of template education and outreach materials will be developed for use across the watershed but delivered by the staff within each county. The implementation program will be locally administered or administered by entities

covering a larger Plan area, with individual local entities operating as their own respective fiscal agent.

- Regulatory and Enforcement
 - Many of the issues in the Plan area can be addressed in part through the administration of statutory responsibilities and ordinances. These actions are funded by the Regulatory and Enforcement Implementation Program.
- Operations and Maintenance
 - Entities within the BRRW 1W1P are engaged in the inspection, operation, and maintenance of capital projects, stormwater infrastructure, public works, facilities, natural and artificial watercourses, and legal drainage systems. Operation and maintenance of legal ditches, impoundments, and small dams will continue under regular operations and maintenance plans of the entities with jurisdiction over these systems. (Note for Advisory Committee review: Plan section under development by members of the Planning Team).

Olm requested approval from the Advisory Committee to forward the Draft Plan Section 5 (Implementation Programs), with proposed changes, to the Policy Committee for their review and recommendation for approval. The Advisory Committee approved.

Draft Plan Section 6 (Plan Administration). Meeting Goal: Review and discuss draft Plan section. Revise as needed and recommend for Policy Committee. Olm referred to the Section 6 Plan Administration presented handout on the overhead monitors. She explained that this section summarizes funding and the roles and responsibilities of the different groups operating under a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) during the Plan implementation.

- Funding
 - This Plan sets an ambitious implementation schedule. The success of implementing the Plan will depend on local funding, reliable watershed-based funding implementation dollars, and collaboratively sought state, federal, and private grant dollars.
- Decision Making and Staffing
 - Expectations are that the roles of each committee will shift and change focus during implementation. The BRRW 1W1P fiscal and administrative duties will be assigned to a member of a Local Government Unit (LGU) through a Policy Committee decision as outlined in the formal agreement. Responsibilities for annual work planning and serving as the central fiscal agent will be revisited by the Planning Team on an annual basis.
- Collaboration:
 - The BRRW 1W1P Planning Group recognizes the value in collaboration between planning partners in order to successfully implement this Plan and will continue coordination and cooperation with other governmental units at all levels. Plan partners expect to continue and build on existing collaboration with others, including non-governmental organizations, while implementing this Plan.
- Work Planning:
 - This Plan envisions collaborative implementation. Therefore, annual work planning is envisioned to align the priority issues addressed, the availability of funds, and the roles and responsibilities for implementation.

- Assessment and Evaluation:
 - Each year the Planning Team will provide the Policy Committee with an annual update on the progress of the Plan's implementation in accordance with Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) Level 1 performance standards. During this annual review process, feedback will be solicited from the boards, Policy Committee, and the Advisory Committee. This feedback will be presented to the Policy Committee to set the coming year's priorities for achieving the Plan's goals and to decide on the direction for grant submittals. In addition, this feedback will be documented and incorporated into annual and five-year evaluations.
- Plan Amendments:
 - This Plan extends through 2030. Revision of the Plan may be needed through an amendment prior to the Plan update if significant changes emerge in the priorities, goals, policies, administrative procedures, or plan implementation programs. Revision may also be needed if issues emerge that are not addressed in the Plan.
- Formal Agreements:
 - The BRRW 1W1P Planning Group is a coalition of counties, SWCDs, and a watershed district within the Red River Basin. The Planning Group previously entered into a formal agreement through a MOA for Planning the Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan for the BRRW 1W1P. The parties will be entering into an agreement for purposes of implementing this Plan and will be known as the Buffalo-Red River Watershed.

The group discussed suggested revisions regarding Draft Plan Section 6.

Action Items and Next Meeting.

- The Advisory Committee will meet in December.
- The Policy Committee will meet November 27, 2019, at 10:30 AM-Noon.

Leitch asked who edits the Draft Plan Sections revisions. Olm replied that the communications staff at HEI reviews the entire document and inputs visual attributes and revises the text for better understanding. Plan changes are tracked for review to make sure the intent was not removed from decisions that had been made at the Planning meetings.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:10 PM.