

Lower Minnesota River East Watershed

Steering Team Meeting Minutes

Date & Time: 10:00am-12:00pm, Thursday, March 6th 2025

Location: Microsoft Teams

Attendees at meeting: Holly Bushman (Le Sueur County), Trevor Rudenick (Le Sueur County), Mike Schultz (Le Sueur SWCD), Steve Pahs (Rice SWCD), Brad Behrens (Rice County), Barb Peichel (BWSR), and Anne Sawyer (BWSR)

Welcome & Review Agenda

- The Lower Minnesota River East Meeting was held on Thursday, February 6th 2025. The meeting was held virtually.
- The agenda covers general updates, education and outreach campaign updates, and a request for a workplan amendment.

Recap Last Meeting

- At the last ST meeting, staff mentioned the CRP Incentive Grant Program submittal and the CRP program, LoMRE Reporting for implementation efforts and the project database requirements, Legal Counsel RFP final review, Education and Outreach Campaign progress that is being made, and a workplan amendment request.

General Updates

- Holly mentioned that the CRP Incentive Grant Program Policy which was approved by the JPB, and she submitted an application to BWSR. Once we receive an update with the Federal Budget, we will be able to determine how to proceed with this program.
- The Legal Services RFP has been finalized and will be sent out in March.
- MCIT has request a resolution be passed by the JPB for insurance; board minutes of approval was not sufficient. That will be added to the April 17th Board meeting.

Education and Outreach Campaign Update

- Kourtney has developed a rough draft of the Education and Outreach Campaign Plan/Framework that is complete.
 - She received additional comments from Anne and will be incorporating them into the Plan for the April meeting.
- The website and facebook page should be ready by the April JPB meeting.
- For the website, Kourtney would like to take pictures of JPB members and staff at the April meeting and add to the website.

- Barb mentioned that the JPA, Bylaws, and Policies and Procedures should be added as well.
- Holly wanted to further discuss GIS for LoMRE efforts. We discussed this at the last meeting and staff were supportive and wanted to start small with just a point on a map with project information.
 - Anne suggested that we double check the workplan and make sure GIS/mapping is included as part of education/outreach.
 - Staff had discussions and thought we could see if local GIS departments would be willing to do this. If not, we could hire out.
 - Barb was going to send staff some examples of what other watersheds have done to show visuals of plan progress.

Workplan Amendment Request

- At the last ST meeting, staff had an in depth discussion about amending the existing workplan to accommodate for 2 projects that have willing landowners but need a feasibility study completed prior to implementation. Additionally, staff had some discussion about some activities that we thought would not get done for 2025.
- Holly Revised the workplan and updated the following changes:
 - Project Development
 - Added 2 feasibility studies
 - Dam Removal-Le Sueur Creek (BMP.7)
 - Ravine Stabilization along Road (BMP.12)
 - Added Increase Permanently Protected Land Mailings activity
 - Revised all 3 mailing activities to 300 mailings or 80 contact hours and \$4,000 per activity
 - Removed Studies and Assessments
 - Le Sueur County received grant funds for a Lake Subwatershed Assessment and Stream Erosion Study through competitive funding and there was no further interest from other partners to pursue these for this year.
 - Added native plants activity to cost-share projects.
 - Sending out mailings already. The thought would be to add funding opportunities in case folks want to install native plants.
 - Added \$2500 for budget and 250 LF for goal.
 - Reduce the budget for smart salting from \$12,500 to \$2,500.
 - Staff will not work on this again until late summer/early fall. There a quite a bit of existing resources.

- In addition to those revisions there was still additional funds remaining that needed to be allocated (\$40,203). Put remaining funds into cost-share projects (Ag BMPs and Structural Ag BMPs). Staff were confident we could spend funds here.
 - Allocated additional funds to Le Sueur SWCD, knowing that we can easily shift allocations amongst LGUs without board approvals and workplan amendments. Staff just need to have a discussion prior to doing so.
- Holly asked Anne and Barb if workplan revisions require JPB and BWSR approval.
 - Anything at or under 10% that is shifted amongst workplan categories can be done right away and does not require a workplan amendment (only if the existing workplan categories do not change).
 - If changing workplan categories and over 10% of total budget, require workplan revisions.
 - JPB will need to approve our suggested workplan revisions. Will bring up as an agenda item to see how the JPB would like to address this moving forward.

Updates & Next Steps

- Next Steering Team Meeting: **Thursday, April 3rd 2025, 10:00am-12:00pm**
- Next JPB Meeting: **Thursday, April 17th, 3:00pm-5:00pm**