

# Lower Minnesota River East One Watershed One Plan

## Steering Committee Meeting Minutes

August 16, 2023

**Attendees at meeting:** Holly Bushman (Le Sueur County), Mike Schultz (Le Sueur SWCD) Meghan Darley (Scott SWCD), Troy Kuphal (Scott SWCD), Brad Behrens (Rice County), Steve Pahs (Rice SWCD), Linda Loomis (Lower Minnesota River WD), Melissa Bokman-Ermer (Scott County/WMO), Vanessa Strong (Scott County/WMO), Barb Piechel (BWSR), and Anne Sawyer (BWSR)

### Welcome & Review Agenda

- The Lower Minnesota River East Meeting was held on Wednesday, August 16, 2023. The meeting was held in person. Holly mentioned that the agenda was going to be amended today. The first priority was to address concerns that Scott County/WMO staff had with the implementation table. If the Steering Committee had additional time, we would talk about the Policy Committee tomorrow, and lastly discuss the Advisory Committee and related plant content (ex: implementation table).

### Implementation Table Discussion-LGU Feedback

- Vanessa stated she was confused on how the activities work and how they impact existing metro plans.
  - Her concerns were over duplicative efforts and competing with one another.
  - Potentially have multiple funding sources to implement the same projects.
  - Did not want the partnership to account for projects, practices, and funding that the County/WMO is using within the implementation table and funding sources table.
- Multiple staff members from other LGUs were asking follow up questions and expressing thoughts about how they believe it will benefit Scott County/WMO and thought the table was not duplicate, but rather this was a way to leverage more dollars to get projects done and expand opportunities for Scott County/WMO for additional projects.
- After discussion amongst partners, Vanessa requested that we remove activities and funding from Scott County and WMO.
  - Troy suggested that we determine the percentage of projects that are implemented by the SWCD and funded by Scott County/WMO and remove that proportion from the implementation table. This will reduce the total amount of

projects, pollutant loads, and dollars that are within each subwatershed that are located within Scott County/WMO's jurisdictional boundary.

- Vanessa stated that Scott County/WMO will continue to be apart of planning efforts until the plan is complete and approved.

### **Decision Making and Staffing, Organizational Structures Formal Agreements, and Collaboration with other Units of government Sections of Plan**

- Holly mentioned that throughout the next few Steering Committee meetings we will be going through plan content requirements for different sections of the plan. The goal is to first discuss them as staff and then bring forward to the policy committee for review and feedback. All of these sections are summarized and vary by each watershed in details that are provided.
- The first section that the Steering Committee went through is the Decision Making and Staffing Section. Holly provided examples from 4 different watershed partnerships. Each partnership had one or numerous similarities with the Lower MN River East partnership.
  - For the Decision Making process, Holly asked the Steering Committee how they believe we should review and approve projects?
    - There was discussion about having dollar thresholds set. This way projects under a certain dollar amount would not need full Lower MN River East JPB approval. It would make the decision-making process more effective and continue to get projects out the door.
      - The Steering Committee thought this was a good suggestion to bring forward to the Policy Committee.
  - Another discussion item under this section was development of Committees. This has varied across the board within watersheds. There at minimum is some kind of technical committee that involves local, state, and federal agencies (similar to the current TAC). Additionally, many watersheds have some kind of plan implementation work group/committee to discuss workplans, where to prioritize first, budgets, project tracking/reporting, and so forth.
    - Additionally, there are options for other committees. Holly used the example within the Cannon Watershed we have an Executive Committee. The Executive Committee is able to make some decisions without the full board. Again, helps with efficiency and reducing number of meetings.
  - The other part of this section that the Steering Committee discussed was staffing. We will need to identify a day to day, fiscal agent, and legal staff at a minimum.



## Discussion Policy Committee Meeting

- The Steering Committee decided moving forward we would split up the implementation table into a few different meetings for the Policy Committee. Additionally, having a few summary slides before we review the table would be helpful.
- There was a request for the Policy Committee to repeat motions before voting. Sometimes it is difficult for those joining virtually to hear.

## Advisory Committee Meeting Recap and Discussion

- The Steering Committee thought the meeting went well.
- We decided to send the plan to the municipalities and tribal community only during the 60 day review period and not during the informal review process.

## Updates & Next Steps

- The next steering committee meeting will be held on **Wednesday, September 20<sup>th</sup>** from **1:30pm-3:00pm**.
- The next policy committee meeting will be held **Thursday, September 21<sup>st</sup>** from **3:00pm-5:00pm**.
- Next Advisory Committee Meeting will be held **Wednesday, September 20<sup>th</sup>** **10:00am-1:00pm**.