

# Lower Minnesota River East One Watershed One Plan

## Meeting Minutes

Thursday, August 4<sup>th</sup> 2022

**Attendees at meeting:** Holly Kalbus (Le Sueur County), Mike Schultz (Le Sueur SWCD) Steve Pahs (Rice SWCD), Meghan Darley (Scott SWCD), Vanessa Strong (Scott County/WMO), Linda Loomis(LMRWD), Brad Behrens (Rice County), Barb Peichel (BWSR)

### Welcome & Review Agenda

- The Lower Minnesota River East Meeting was held on August 4<sup>th</sup> 2022. The meeting was held via hybrid. Holly briefly went over the agenda. The main goals of the meeting were to go into more detail about the 60-day public notification process and review state agencies priorities, provide an update about the public kickoff meetings and discuss feedback from those meetings, create an agenda for the policy committee meeting, and briefly discuss meeting dates and process of starting Advisory Committees.

### Recap Last Meeting

- Holly briefly went over discussion at our last meeting which was June 2, 2022. We discussed more or less the same items mentioned in today's meeting: public notification update, details about the public kickoff meetings, and had some discussion about advisory committee and subcommittee/stakeholder groups.

### Public Notification Letters

- Holly went through all of the public notification letters that were sent by state agencies. There were a total of 6 agencies and all had provided a formal letter that was well written and easy to read.
- The steering team had discussed at our last meeting to somehow break down the letters and present them in a way to the policy committee that was easy to understand and wasn't so cumbersome.
  - Holly went through the letters and created a powerpoint. She broke down the letters by similar broad priorities, similar resources, different broad priorities, and different resources.
    - Additionally, maps were created for the resources.
- The steering team went through the different slides and had some good discussion about the format as well as the priorities that were listed.

- Holly mentioned that many of the broad priorities were very similar among state agencies as well as local staff.
  - Vanessa suggested trying to rank these broad priorities to see which ones were more of a priority versus others.
- Vanessa also commented and stated that more than likely McMahon lake is on the list due to the high water levels and outlet issues. But it is meeting state water quality standards.
- Barb asked the group on how we want to handle the Minnesota River?
  - Holly stated it is a very big resource and we could focus more on things such as the tributaries to the river or even specific subwatersheds.
  - Barb further commented and said that if the biggest issue is sediment figure out the subwatershed that has the highest loading of sediment.
    - Linda stated that sediment is a huge problem for the Lower Minnesota River WD. Figuring out flow management and slope stabilization would be important.
    - Vanessa agreed and stated that Sand Creek has decreased its sediment load. The slope stabilization and restoration projects are important,
- Barb asked what our thoughts were about water storage? How would we prioritize? We could do subwatersheds.
  - Linda further commented and stated she thought water storage was really important. Additionally, we want to prioritize everything but we could identify specific areas in the plan where we want to focus efforts. We could also set tiers for priorities if we are able to accomplish more than what we initially thought and/or may not be able to have any further progress on higher tiers.
- Barb thought it was really great that there seemed to be a shared understanding of groundwater issues.
- Barb also mentioned that for fens we would need to think about what kind of strategies we would use to protect it.
  - Most of us aren't experts with fens and even other priorities; therefore, it might be helpful to have an expert come in to talk about them at the advisory and policy committee meetings.
- Linda stated that with groundwater resources such as fens, boiling springs and Eagle Creek she would be interested to know the different impacts would be with protecting groundwater.

### **Public Kick Off Meetings**

- Holly wanted to ask the steering team how they thought the public kickoff meetings went?

- Barb stated that she thought the in person meeting went well. There were quite a few policy committee members that showed up and even some state agency staff attend.
- Meghan also thought the meeting went well. She was at money and resource activity. There was some good discussion and thought the activity really helped engage people.

### **Policy Committee Agenda**

- Review and discuss public kickoff meetings
  - We will have the steering team and policy committee reflect on how we thought the public kickoff meetings went.
  - We additionally will go through some of the data that was collected by ISG.
- Review and discuss 60-day notification period letters
  - The steering team will provide a powerpoint presentation to show how state agencies ranked and prioritized issues and resources within the watershed.
    - The full letters will be provided in the policy committee packet, but we are not expecting the board to read through all of them. The summary was put together instead.
    - Barb suggested trying to engage the policy committee a little more. Ask questions and get their input.
- Advisory Committee
  - The policy committee will be able to formally decide on who will be on the committee
  - No other LGUs, other than the Prior Lake Spring Lake WD, were able to join the committee
- There was additional discussion about Stakeholder/sub stakeholder groups that may also be formed.
  - Barb provided example how the Rum invited people to come together and sit at the table to review priority issues and implementation tables. They invited the individuals via email to certain meetings. Another example would be to invite certain stakeholders when we talk about ditches, stormwater, municipalities, etc.
  - There is flexibility on how we do this.
- Another discussion item that was brought up by the steering team was to provide an updated timeframe and timeline.
  - We have completed some steps and now are starting to shift into planning stages.

- Specifically highlight the issues, goals, and strategies that we are going to need to develop.
  - Laying out the next steps.
- The second item that we discussed was reserving the park. Holly mentioned that she was charged a fee, but didn't want to risk losing a spot at the park.
  - The fee was around \$85.
  - Vanessa said to send a copy of the invoice over to her and she will see if she can take care of it.

### **Advisory Committee Agenda**

- The idea for this first meeting was more to get to know one another better as a committee, but also just scratch the surface with discussing our priorities in the watershed.
  - Holly and Meghan mentioned that we talked with ISG about Advisory Committee meetings, and they believe it will take at least a few meetings before we can sort through all of our priorities for the plan. The first meeting may or may not include any activities related to prioritization efforts in the plan.
- Barb suggested having each staff member to highlight a few different things they believe are a top priority for this planning effort.
  - What is most important to them?
  - What will fail if this isn't included?
- Holly stated she will send out a when2meet calendar invite to see what everyone's availability is.
  - The first Thursday of the month does not work for ISG because they have other occurring meetings on this date.
  - Meghan and Holly discussed having a preference of in person meetings, specifically when it is content related. Meetings that are more of updates could be done virtually.

### **Updates & Next Steps**

- The next steering team meeting will be held on Thursday, September 1<sup>st</sup> from 10:00am-1:30pm
- The next policy committee meeting will be held on Thursday, August 18<sup>th</sup> from 3:00pm-5:00pm
- Materials/documents will also be uploaded in Microsoft Teams.