

Lower Minnesota River East One Watershed One Plan

Steering Team Meeting Minutes

December 21, 2022

Attendees at meeting: Holly Bushman (Le Sueur County), Mike Schultz (Le Sueur SWCD) Steve Pahs (Rice SWCD), Brad Behrens (Rice County), Meghan Darley (Scott SWCD), Melissa Bokman-Ermer (Scott County/WMO), Linda Loomis (LMRWD), Anne Sawyer (BWSR), Barb Peichel (BWSR)

Welcome & Review Agenda

- The Lower Minnesota River East Meeting was held on December 21, 2022. The meeting was held virtually. Holly briefly went over the agenda. The main goals of the meeting were followed up with further discussion about the priority areas and resources that were discussed at the Advisory Committee meeting, touch base about Quarter 4 reporting deadline, and discuss when to schedule the next policy committee meeting.

Recap Last Meeting

- We discussed any follow up items from the Advisory Committee meeting. The steering team had started conversations and discussion about priority resources and issues. ISG had sent out a survey with numerous criteria to help us rank different water resources. Additionally, we discussed our issue statements and mentioned further refining the habitat issue statements. Lastly, the steering team talked about planning effort timelines and more than likely we will not have a January policy committee meeting.

Advisory Committee Meeting Recap/Discussion

- Holly asked the steering team how they thought the Advisory Committee meeting went? What do we think we should do for next steps for prioritizing resources and areas? Lots of good discussion at the meeting, but it is taking up a significant amount of time.
 - Barb thought individuals turning on their cameras during the virtual meeting was helpful and we should continue to do that if we host virtual meetings.
 - Prioritization of Lakes
 - Barb thought we got to a good place, at least was able to narrow down the number of criteria in order to choose priority lakes. The discussion at the Advisory Committee was to focus on nearly/barely impaired lakes.

- Prioritization of Streams

- Barb mentioned the conversations around bluffs were really good and thought they raised important questions. Additionally, it sparks the question on how achievable is it to define a measurable goal?
 - Mike mentioned there was a project completed near Blakely that is a good example of what we would like to accomplish with the near channel erosion issues adjacent to rivers and streams within the watershed. He is unsure about the numbers available that provide reductions and improvements. Additionally, Mike mentioned we just do not have a lot of studies and data available to target areas to implement these kinds of projects.
 - Melissa mentioned there were a couple of ravine stabilization projects that were completed by the WMO that we could use as a template/example of what we are looking for.
 - Barb stated ravine projects would be great for competitive funds. We could use WBIF funds for some feasibility studies and assessments to target a few areas for in/near channel erosion. Might be able to pair the studies with the HSPF subwatershed TSS loading impairments. She suggested reaching out to David to see if he has ideas on where we should first start with for these studies/assessments.
 - Melissa wanted to clarify that TSS would be split into two different priority areas?
 - Holly said yes, one is just for in/near channel erosion and the other would be for the subwatershed TSS Loading.
- Barb stated we still need to address the hydrology issues that are going on within the watershed. We could try to pull in macro/invert impairments with this?
- With streams we should just pick a few reaches/bluff areas. We could also tier the different areas to have studies/assessments completed to give us more room to expand in the future.
- Barb stated that maybe for prioritizing streams we look at multiple impairment listings. If they have multiple impairments, they rank higher. She also stated it might be helpful to have a big chart of the different reaches and see what their impairments are.
- Melissa stated that it is hard to prioritize when we don't have resource outcomes identified.
 - Barb asked the steering team what feels like success?

- Mike stated that it would be foolish to not get those sites and areas that are close to meeting water quality standards up to par and meet those standards. He is also worried that it may limit the work available for the partnership.
 - Linda commented and stated that we might know landowner willingness until we start. If they aren't willing can we move onto a different project?
 - Holly stated that from her experience with 1W1P if the priority areas/resources are too small it can limit efforts that we are able to do. Need a good balance.
 - Barb thought that if we had the streamsheds and lakesheds mapped out it might help with prioritization efforts as well. That way we know the area that we would be working with. She also suggested creating big charts for impairments for the streams. It would be helpful to see E.coli impairments and the public accesses mapped out. Lastly, she mentioned that Chloride would only be located within Scott County.
 - Melissa commented on Chloride reduction efforts and stated that within Scott County they do a lot of education and outreach efforts. By changing up equipment used for plowing they have seen reductions up to 30-40% in some areas. Could provide cost-share to have different equipment purchased to help reduce chlorides during snow removal. Just some options that have been used and we could utilize for planning efforts.
- Mike wanted to bring up the topic about funding since we are discussing priorities and the different metro and nonmetro funding may affect how we prioritize our efforts.
 - How are we going to divide the metro and nonmetro WBIF?
 - Barb stated we will receive a minimum of \$250,000/year for this watershed.
 - Mike stated based off some of the projects that we would like to do that is not going to get us very far. Especially when looking at streambank/ravine stabilization projects.
 - Melissa stated if we could have some type of explanation on how the funds can be spent that would be helpful for her to bring back to her board for discussion.
 - Meghan stated that she is concerned the vast majority of priorities and resources would be located in Scott County.
 - Steve and Mike commented on how we see these metro WBIF dollars coming into play with the plan. That will help us determine our priorities within the plan itself.

- Melissa mentioned that the Scott WMO wants the Upper Sand Creek Watershed prioritized.
 - Linda mentioned that Scott County is not precluded to spend Metro WBIF in the metro areas as long as mentioned within the plan then funding can be used outside of the metro.
- We as a partnership need to determine how we want to split up the different funding streams and how we would like to move forward? Who decides where the funding is going for the different funding streams?
- We didn't even discuss at the Advisory Committee meeting on how to prioritize groundwater or habitat.
 - Barb suggested collecting groundwater data that is available and see how other efforts worked with prioritizing groundwater. These priority issues should be easier to focus on specific areas.
 - Habitat on the other hand is much trickier. Barb mentioned there really isn't a plan that has done a superb job on habitat issue statements. She believes the issue statements are way too broad and we need to narrow this down.
 - Holly suggested riparian areas. That would cover still a significant number of resources that we want to prioritize within the plan.
 - Barb suggested at the 5-year mark we can reassess these issue statements to see if we are missing anything with habitat.

LMRE Reporting 2022-Quarter 4

- Holly asked Meghan when Q4 reporting information is due?
- Meghan stated anytime after the 1st of the year.
- Holly said she would try to get her documents in by the first week in January.

Policy Committee Agenda

- Holly wasn't sure if we should have a Policy Committee meeting or not in January. We don't have a ton of new items to bring forward to the board.
- Election of officers will need to occur, we can provide updates about the Land and Water Resources Narrative, and that is all we currently have available to present.
- Barb thought providing a quick email update to the Policy Committee about the priority resources and areas process would be good if we decide to host a meeting in February instead of January.

Updates & Next Steps

- The next steering team meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 18th from 1:00pm-3:00pm.

- The next policy committee meeting will be held either on Thursday, January 19th or Thursday, February 16th from 3:00pm-5:00pm.
- Next Advisory Committee Meeting will be held either Wednesday, January 18th from or Wednesday, February 15th from 10:00am-1:00pm.

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