

Lower Minnesota River East One Watershed One Plan

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, September 1st 2022

Attendees at meeting: Holly Kalbus (Le Sueur County), Mike Schultz (Le Sueur SWCD) Emmie Scheffler (Rice SWCD), Meghan Darley (Scott SWCD), Melissa Bokman (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 September 1st, 2022. The meeting was held via hybrid. Holly briefly went over the agenda. The main goals of the meeting were review the data aggregation information that was put together from ISG, start conversations about priority issues, discuss what we liked and didn't like about other plans' priorities, and go over the first advisory committee meeting.

Recap Last Meeting

- Holly briefly went over discussion at our last meeting which was August 4, 2022. We reviewed the 60-day public notification process and review state agencies priorities, received an update about the public kickoff meetings, created an agenda for the policy committee meeting, and briefly discuss meeting dates and process of starting Advisory Committees.

Data Aggregation Discussion

- The steering team went through the data aggregation summary sheet and detailed priority issues document that ISG provided. The detailed priority issues document we did not go in depth due to the amount of data that was in the report. Additionally, ISG has developed exercises for us to go through these.
 - The summary sheet tallied how many times each issue was identified/mentioned in reports, studies, public notification letters, and the public kickoff meetings.
 - The summary sheet was consistent with priorities issues; surface water, habitat & natural resources, and groundwater were the top 3 issues identified.
 - The results for some issues were not so surprising to the steering team. For example, erosion and runoff issues.
 - The steering team also discussed the issues that were identified that we were not so familiar with and may have been taken by surprise. For

example: silica mining, landfills, and quarries. How do we want to address in the plan? Might be useful to have someone come in for these land use activities to discuss.

- Monitoring, data, and studies was mentioned as an issue. The steering team talked about what does this look like? There are areas within the watershed that have a significant amount of data/studies to support a need to improve or protect a watershed or resource. We talked about addressing data gaps.
 - Barb asked where we want this in the plan? We can identify this as an issue, but it may not be applicable to every activity or resource. We can list this later in the plan and mention there are resources or subwatersheds that have gaps in data.
 - The steering team thought this would be more appropriate.
 - The same can be applied for Policy/Regulation. Some resources, activities, issues will need more work than others.
- Education/Outreach could be included throughout the entire plan. They are more all-encompassing and it is more of a collective action.
- Barb asked if ISG had mentioned next steps with the planning process?
 - She was curious if we were going through the detailed priority issues document or if they had something else in mind?
 - Holly and Meghan stated they were planning on developing exercises to help the advisory committee go through everything. ISG suggested we at some point narrow down our top priority issues (5-10).
 - They will give us something to react to and then we will provide comments.

Priority Issues Discussion

- ISG is going to develop processes for us to determine our priorities. The second advisory committee meeting is when we will really start focusing on priority issues and resources.
- Looking across the board with all of the data that was collected; Surface Water, Habitat & Natural Resources, and Groundwater were the top priority issues.
 - Can add different activities into the plan to address these priority issues in different ways.
- Education and Outreach can fit into each topic area and the same goes with Policy and Regulations.
 - These will vary by resources and issues.

- Typically, with data, monitoring, and studies, plans have identified existing data and what gaps there are. This can be included later in the plan and not necessarily a priority issue.
- The steering team felt we could add emerging issues into surface water and groundwater.

Discussion about Other 1W1Ps Priorities

- Holly had a few examples to share with the steering team; Saint Croix and Rum. The Saint Croix was similar to the Lower Minnesota River East due to having both metro and non-metro entities and a diversity of land use activities and resources to prioritize. The Rum was completed by ISG. It was nice to see different ways the plan can be written.
 - Saint Croix
 - Listed broad priority areas and priority activities.
 - Holly really liked that they distinguish priority activities they wanted to complete in the plan.
 - Melissa liked how they described the main resources areas and why they were important.
 - Barb mentioned that they couldn't narrow down their issues, and had 100 listed. Granted there were different tiers, but there are quite a bit of priority issues listed and would be considered too many.
 - Now having a hard time spending the money and picking which activities to focus on.
 - The steering team hasn't come to a final conclusion to help prioritize the issues more.
 - Mike commented and stated that some areas are going to be easier to spend funds than others. That might be one way of prioritizing. You can have the funds to get projects done, but if there is no willingness from landowners it will be difficult for implementation efforts.
 - Rum
 - Barb really liked the visuals of the plan, but wasn't super fond of the zones.
 - Meghan commented and said that it kind of defeats the purpose of watershed planning efforts.
 - Barb further commented and stated the implementation table is really large and there is a lot of repetition.
 - The Steering team agreed to try to be as concise as possible with the plan and keep it as short as possible.

- Building off of the visuals, there are some tools that ISG used that are really effective and will help guide someone who is reading the plan to navigate it.
 - The steering team discussed that many of these plans are quite large and often people do not know where to start.
 - Some of these visuals may be able to help with that.
- The steering team talked about how tiers seem to be a common theme in plans. Melissa has some examples of how tiers were developed with Capital Improvement Projects that she would be happy to share when we get to the discussion of tiers.
- Barb wanted us to look at the Rum plan and see how they provided examples of the lakes. She thought this was a good example to build off of when we start looking at priority issues and resources.
- The discussion with how the steering team wants the plan to look and display information was vague, but we definitely would want clear visuals that are effective. Additionally, no zones listed when prioritizing.

Advisory Committee Meetings

- The first advisory committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 28th from 1:00pm-4:00pm.
 - The first meeting will be in person. Depending on content and what is covered will depend if the meeting is in person or virtual. The steering team was all on board with hosting an either or option, but not hybrid for these meetings.
 - Hoping to schedule a reoccurring Advisory Committee meeting date at the first meeting.
 - The steering team discussed that we would prefer to host the steering team and advisory committee meeting on the same day. It is easier to set aside one day versus multiple.
- Holly and Meghan discussed the rough agenda/outline for the meeting.
 - Start with an icebreaker/introduction
 - Describe roles of committee
 - Explain the expectations of each advisory committee member
 - Review kickoff meeting information
 - Discussion visions of how we want this plan to be
 - Review data aggregation and watershed overview
 - Share 1-3 top priorities
 - We will not dive into content too deep at the first meeting.

- Barb recommended that since there will be a lot of staff new to One Watershed One Plan we should make sure to go slower and do a good job describing the process. Just take our time to make sure everyone has a good idea on what the expectations are.

Meeting Attendance Discussion

- Staff hopefully will be able to attend more consistently once we get a reoccurring meeting date scheduled. Preference is to have to have the Advisory Committee and Steering Team meeting on the same day.

Updates & Next Steps

- The next steering team meeting will be held on Thursday, October 6th from 10:00am-1:30pm
- The next policy committee meeting will be held on Thursday, October 20th from 3:00pm-5:00pm
- Materials/documents were uploaded in Microsoft Teams.