

# Lower Minnesota River East One Watershed One Plan

## Steering Team Meeting Minutes

March 15, 2023

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

### Welcome & Review Agenda

- The Lower Minnesota River East Meeting was held on March 15, 2023. The meeting was held in person at the Scott SWCD Office. Holly briefly went over the agenda. The main goals of the meeting were to continue conversations about the measurable goals activity went at the Advisory Committee meeting, discuss formatting of the implementation table, begin conversations about existing programs, regulations, and funding, continue conversations about Organizational Arrangement of the partnership, and lastly discuss the agenda/discussions items for the Policy Committee meeting tomorrow.

### Recap Last Meeting

- We discussed any follow up items from the Advisory Committee meeting. The steering team continued conversations and discussions about priority resources and areas as well as started working with measurable goals. Lastly, the steering team worked through creating an agenda for the Policy Committee meeting in March.

### Advisory Committee Meeting Recap/Discussion

- Before the steering team discussed measurable goals, Holly wanted to touch base on some of the discussions for the priority areas and resources.
  - A comment was made about including Upper and Lower Prior Lake as part of the priority lakesheds for the plan since they are already a local priority.
    - Holly will reach out to Joni to see what her thoughts are since she was unable to make the Advisory Committee meeting.
  - For the Natural Resources and Habitat Priority Areas, the Advisory Committee decided to have two separate maps. One map is for protection and one map is for restoration. Additionally, we discussed adding a ½ mile buffer instead of the 1,500 feet.

- For Groundwater priority areas, there needs to be more discussion the buffer around each well and what distance is considered part of the priority area. Additionally, we would like to reach out to MDH to ask ideas for activities to protect groundwater resources and see if there is something specific we should include within these priority areas.
- For the measurable goals discussion at the advisory committee meeting, there was really good discussion amongst members. We were unable to get through everything but had enough information for ISG to develop a “rough draft” of the measurable goals. The different groups were able to further refine goals and make it more simplified.
  - At an upcoming Policy Committee (hopefully in April), we will present the “rough draft of measurable goals”. Get some concurrence from all partners this is the direction we want to head. Then we will split up into sections the different issue statements, priority areas, measurable goals, and activities to present to the Policy Committee.
    - Otherwise it will be too encumbering some to look at everything at once.

### **Implementation Table**

- Holly stated the intent of this discussion was to get the steering team to start thinking about how we want to format the implementation table.
  - ISG would like some feedback on this.
  - Holly provided a few different examples to start the conversation.
- This part of the plan may be one of the most important, but it often can be very difficult to navigate and utilize.
- Barb mentioned there a variety of different ways to format the implementation table.
  - Too busy with too much information can be difficult.
  - Some plans keep their tables really simple.
  - Some partnerships have made their implementation table similar to a workplan so they can just copy and paste into elink.
  - Barb likes the idea of including your 10-year measurable goal, listing your strategy/action within the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> column, and stating the priority location.
- Holly asked the steering team about listing the funding streams.
  - Mentioned that it can be confusing what funds are eligible and are being used/intended for each activity.
  - Would like to have a funding stream listed somewhere that indicates at least WBIF funds or other funds.
- Holly stated the table can be organized a variety of different ways such as by priority area, practices, or priority resources.
  - Something for the steering team to start thinking about.

- Holly started to write a list of pros and cons from different tables. Homework for the steering team will be to look at different examples of implementation tables before the next meeting so we can discuss how we want to format the table and provide recommendations to ISG.
  - So far we have briefly discussed: use of icons, listing 10-year measurable goal, list a funding source category, listing where to put the action/strategy for activity, budgeted amounts and how we want to show them in the table for the 10 years, lead/supporting roles for each strategy/activity, and color coding.

### Existing Programs and Funding Discussion

- Holly printed off examples of tables that listed the existing programs for each LGU within the Cannon. Furthermore, Holly wanted to have some discussions about existing capacity and funding sources that each LGU has. We were unable to cover everything at the meeting, but did start to have some good discussions.
- Staff Capacity
  - Barb had mentioned other watersheds have increased their capacity in many different ways. It all depends on what the partnerships wants/needs for capacity. Roles to think about: GIS, agronomist, marketing, educator, separate coordinator for the partnership, fiscal staff member, and legal services.
  - Scott SWCD mentioned they have great staff that already work on education and outreach efforts as well as fiscal. Could potentially fill those roles with watershed based funding.
  - Ann mentioned that social sciences, working with your peers, and one on one collaboration has been really important for behavior change. It is really important to have an investment in human connections in order to make a difference.
  - Steve mentioned we would like to see a conservation agronomist.
    - Scott SWCD stated they do have crop advisors on staff.
  - Scott County mentioned they have a really good GIS department.
  - Linda stated that requiring dues for operation would be really helpful, but it depends on the type of entity that is formed.
  - We also talked about engineers and TSAs
    - There are 3 different TSAs within this watershed.
      - There are multiple engineers and technical staff available; however, their availability is dependent on their existing projects.
    - We also talked about experience with hiring engineers through consulting firms which is always an option.

- Another thing we will have to think about is the percent of WBIF that will be used for staff capacity (admin, fiscal, TA, and others).
- Existing Programs
  - There is quite a bit of programs out there.
  - Holly will develop a table to send out to the steering team and then have them mark which programs they have and add ones if they are already not included within the table.
  - Barb mentioned another watershed listed how well functioning each program is working. Might be useful for this partnership.
- Technical Expertise
  - Holly wanted to gauge the types of experiences, certifications, and expertise each LGU has.
  - Scott SWCD has 7 staff with JAA (robust in a lot of different programs)
  - Le Sueur SWCD has 2 staff with JAA (in both structural and ecological practices)
  - Staff that have certifications in crop advisor, wetland delineations, erosion & sediment control, resource management, herbicide use
  - Technology-Scott SWCD has a robust database for tracking projects, staff hours, and benefits of practices. Additionally, Scott SWCD has staff who would be knowledge in some models.
- Equipment
  - We have available interseeder, UTVs, ATVs, tractor, drills, boom spray, mowers, boat, water monitoring equipment, dew drop, survey equipment, and a drone.

### **Policy Committee March Meeting Agenda**

- The bulk of the meeting is about Organizational Arrangement of the partnership.
  - We are having guest speakers come in to share their experiences with a Joint Powers Collaboration and Joint Powers Entity.
    - Action isn't required for the Policy Committee to decide on organizational arrangement.
  - The steering team is also providing a few different examples of joint powers agreements to the Policy Committee.
- This policy committee meeting will be recorded for other board members.
- Holly wanted to run Policy Committee agenda items for the February Meeting by the Steering Team.

### **Updates & Next Steps**

- The next steering team meeting will be held on **Wednesday, April 19<sup>th</sup>** from **1:30pm-3:00pm**.

- The next policy committee meeting will be held **Thursday, April 20<sup>th</sup>** from **3:00pm-5:00pm**.
- Next Advisory Committee Meeting will be held either **Wednesday, March 17<sup>th</sup>** **10:00am-1:00pm (Tentative)**.

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