

# **One Watershed, One Plan: Minnesota River – Mankato**

## **STEERING TEAM MEETING MINUTES**

March 27, 2024

The One Watershed, One Plan: Minnesota River – Mankato Steering Team met at 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, March 27, 2024 at the Nicollet County Government Center. Present at the meeting for Nicollet County: Kenny Famakinwa and Crystal Madden; Nicollet County SWCD: Blake Honetschlager and Mackenzie Bratsch; City of North Mankato: Luke Arnold; City of Mankato: Jeff Johnson; Blue Earth County: Scott Salsbury; Le Sueur County: Holly Bushman; Le Sueur County SWCD: Mike Schultz; City of St. Peter: Curtis Thompson; BWSR: Adam Beilke.

### **Meeting Agenda**

The meeting agenda reviewed.

### **Memorandum of Agreement (MOA)**

Famakinwa updated the group that the finalized MOA was submitted to BWSR on March 26th.

### **Binder Update**

At one time BWSR provided plan binders, but received feedback from previous watershed groups that the website's electronic documents were sufficient. It was decided by the Team that plan binders are not necessary.

### **Website Discussion**

Nicollet County will create a dedicated watershed page on their website, including: Policy Committee meeting agendas & packets, approved minutes, and watershed maps. A link will be provided to the Team for distribution.

### **Request for Qualifications (RFQ)**

Famakinwa submitted the RFQ to ISG, Barr Engineering Co., and Houston Engineering, Inc. Famakinwa will follow up if he doesn't hear back from them in the next few weeks.

### **60-Day Notice**

Famakinwa submitted the Plan notification to agencies on March 4<sup>th</sup>; making May 3<sup>rd</sup> the end of the sixty (60) day period for Plan comment and feedback. See attached Agency Notification List. *BWSR suggested at the February meeting that once the notice window is closed, Famakinwa will compile all the feedback received for the Team members to finalize higher level project priorities with their respective Policy Committee members.*

### **Policy Committee Meeting**

The next scheduled Policy Committee meeting will be held at 3:00 p.m. on Monday, April 8<sup>th</sup> at the St. Peter Community Center in the Senior Room/Community Room #219. The Policy Committee meetings will be held at this alternate location during the Government Center remodel. The calendar invitations for the April 8<sup>th</sup>, May 13<sup>th</sup> and June 10<sup>th</sup> meetings will include a map with directions. Additionally, there will be directional signage within the building.

## **Consultant Interviews & Deliverables**

The Consultant Interview Committee was finalized with the following members:

Policy Committee: Marie Dranttel – Nicollet County; Earle Traxler – Le Sueur County SWCD; Mike Laven – City of Mankato. Steering Team: Scott Salsbury – Blue Earth County; Blake Honetschlager – Nicollet County SWCD; Luke Arnold – City of North Mankato.

Famakinwa will confirm that those members are available for consultant interviews on May 2<sup>nd</sup>, with the first interview at 9:00 a.m. If all three (3) consultants are interviewed, the process is expected to take somewhere around six (6) hours to allow for presentations, over-time, Q &A, as well as committee discussion afterwards.

The Team reviewed consultant interview questions. It was decided that the sample scoring rubric be updated with emphasis on providing a description of the scoring range for consistency. Famakinwa will update the example documents and submit them to the Team for review. See attached updated interview question document.

The example document including deliverable list from the Lower Minnesota watershed plan was reviewed and discussed. Bushman recommended we use their template, and Famakinwa tailor it to this watershed.

## **Public Kick-Off Meeting**

Team members with watershed experience expect around one-hundred (100) members of the public at our first Kick-Off Meeting. They cautioned against outdoor venues, and recommended having a nearby indoor facility for inclement weather. Hosting near a watershed water feature was proposed as a means to boost attendee interest and enthusiasm. Suggested locations: Seven Mile Creek Park in St. Peter and Sibley Park in the City of Mankato.

The Team decided our watershed will host two (2) public meetings in an “open house” format, held mid-July through early-August, with one meeting after-hours during the work week (4:00 – 7:00 pm) and the other held on a weekend. City administrators noted that Tuesday – Thursday evenings work best. The Policy Committee will be consulted prior to making any location reservations.

Minnesota State University’s Water Resources Center will be involved with public engagement for the Kick-Off Meetings. Public engagement ideas include: Fake dollar bill game for residents to “spend” on the project they prioritize; Pin your location on the watershed map; Project ranking survey – post link on website and keep open for a few weeks for additional feedback. Famakinwa will invite the MSU Water Resources Center staff to next month’s Team meeting.

## **Advisory Committee**

Famakinwa requested Team members submit recommended Advisory Committee member lists for compilation and distribution. The following entities and members were recommended during discussion: Ducks Unlimited, Mount Simon-Hinckley Aquafer, Xcel Energy, local water treatment plants, area colleges and universities, sportsman groups, city and township boards, Farm Bureau, Nicollet Conservation Club, Lake Hallett Association – St. Peter, Crystal Waters Project – Mankato, Minnesota River Congress, Friends of the Minnesota River, etc. Recommended subcommittee membership includes: Local mining companies, environmental health groups, wells, sanitarian/septic, and waste treatment centers.

Plan funding can be used for public infrastructure – not for individual land owner improvement projects. Other funding resources should be considered for solid waste violations.

Johnson asked Beilke if funding may be used for feasibility studies and analysis. Beilke affirmed that funding can be used. Consultants will pull together feedback and prioritize projects.

Team members will provide a high-level list of their known projects/priorities for review by the group at the next Team meeting. Project priorities will eventually be detailed in the Plan: Habitats, education efforts – workshops, collection events, etc.

### **Steering Team Meeting Schedule**

The next scheduled Steering Team meeting will be held at 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, April 24<sup>th</sup> at the St. Peter Community Center in the Saint Peter Room #217. The Steering Team meetings will be held at this alternate location during the Government Center remodel. The calendar invitations for the April 24<sup>th</sup>, May 22<sup>nd</sup>, and June 26<sup>th</sup> meetings will include a map with directions.

### **Next Steps**

Nicollet County will create a dedicated page on their website for this watershed plan, and provide the link to all interested parties.

Famakinwa will send the following updated documents to the Team for review: Consultant interview questions and scoring rubric, as well as an Excel template for recommended Advisory Committee members. Famakinwa will provide the Team updates concerning: Consultant Interview Committee members' May 2<sup>nd</sup> availability, MSU Water Resources Center staff availability to participate in the next Steering Team meeting, and will include "discussion for known project priorities" on the agenda for the next team meeting.

Famakinwa will update the consultants concerning the interview timeframe of fifteen (15) minute presentation and thirty (30) minute question and answer portion.

Steering Team member tasks: Submit an Advisory Committee member list and a high-level project priority list for their area(s) to Famakinwa, and prepare questions for MSU Water Resources Center.

## AGENCY NOTIFICATION LIST

One Watershed, One Plan: Minnesota River - Mankato

| REVIEW AGENCY                      | CONTACT NAME        | CONTACT TITLE                                               | EMAIL ADDRESS                                                                          | TELEPHONE      | ADDRESS | CITY, MN | ZIP |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|---------|----------|-----|
| Brown County                       | Allison Kletscher   | Environmental Specialist                                    | <a href="mailto:Allison.kletscher@co.brown.mn.us">Allison.kletscher@co.brown.mn.us</a> | (507) 233-6640 |         |          |     |
| Brown County SWCD                  | Melanie Krueger     | District Manager                                            | <a href="mailto:melanie.krueger@brownswcdmn.org">melanie.krueger@brownswcdmn.org</a>   | (507) 794-2553 |         |          |     |
| MN Board of Water & Soil Resources | Jeremy Maul         | Board Conservationist                                       | <a href="mailto:jeremy.maul@state.mn.us">jeremy.maul@state.mn.us</a>                   | (507) 344-2824 |         |          |     |
| MN Board of Water & Soil Resources | Ed Lenz             | Southern Region Manager                                     | <a href="mailto:ed.lenz@state.mn.us">ed.lenz@state.mn.us</a>                           | (507) 766-5424 |         |          |     |
| MN Board of Water & Soil Resources | Julie Westerlund    | One Watershed, One Plan Coordinator                         | <a href="mailto:julie.westerlund@state.mn.us">julie.westerlund@state.mn.us</a>         | (651) 600-0694 |         |          |     |
| MN Department of Agriculture       | Reid Christianson   | Supervisor, Clean Water Technical Assistance Unit           | <a href="mailto:reid.christianson@state.mn.us">reid.christianson@state.mn.us</a>       | (651) 201-6026 |         |          |     |
| MN Department of Health            | Scott J. Hanson     | Regional Planner                                            | <a href="mailto:scott.j.hanson@state.mn.us">scott.j.hanson@state.mn.us</a>             | (507) 206-2734 |         |          |     |
| MN Department of Health            | Carrie Raber        | Groundwater Restoration & Protection Strategies Coordinator | <a href="mailto:carrie.raber@state.mn.us">carrie.raber@state.mn.us</a>                 | (651) 201-4695 |         |          |     |
| MN Department of Natural Resources | Al Gleisner         | Hydrologist                                                 | <a href="mailto:alan.gleisner@state.mn.us">alan.gleisner@state.mn.us</a>               | (320) 753-0344 |         |          |     |
| MN Department of Natural Resources | Korey Woodley       | Regional Manager                                            | <a href="mailto:korey.woodley@state.mn.us">korey.woodley@state.mn.us</a>               | (507) 884-8791 |         |          |     |
| MN Department of Natural Resources | Barbara Weisman     | Clean Water Operations Consultant                           | <a href="mailto:barbara.weisman@state.mn.us">barbara.weisman@state.mn.us</a>           | (651) 259-5147 |         |          |     |
| MN Environmental Quality Board*    | Catherine Neuschler | Executive Director                                          | <a href="mailto:catherine.neuschler@state.mn.us">catherine.neuschler@state.mn.us</a>   | (651) 757-2607 |         |          |     |
| MN Pollution Control Agency        | Bryan Spindler      | Watershed Project Manager                                   | <a href="mailto:bryan.spindler@state.mn.us">bryan.spindler@state.mn.us</a>             | (507) 344-5267 |         |          |     |
| MN Pollution Control Agency        | Jeff Risberg        | Watershed Unit Coordinator                                  | <a href="mailto:jeff.risberg@state.mn.us">jeff.risberg@state.mn.us</a>                 | (651) 757-2670 |         |          |     |
| Renville County                    | Kelly O'Neill       | Website Coordinator                                         | <a href="mailto:kellyO@renvillecountymn.com">kellyO@renvillecountymn.com</a>           | (320) 523-3825 |         |          |     |
| Renville County SWCD               | Holly Hatlewick     | District Administrator                                      | <a href="mailto:hollyh@renvilleswcd.org">hollyh@renvilleswcd.org</a>                   | (320) 522-4624 |         |          |     |
| Sibley County                      | John Wenninger      | Ditch Inspector                                             | <a href="mailto:JohnWenninger@co.sibley.mn.us">JohnWenninger@co.sibley.mn.us</a>       | (507) 237-4095 |         |          |     |
| Sibley County SWCD                 | Jack Bushman        | Water Resources Coordinator                                 | <a href="mailto:Jackbushman@sibleyswcd.org">Jackbushman@sibleyswcd.org</a>             | (507) 702-7077 |         |          |     |
| Watonwan County                    | David Haler         | Land Management Director                                    | <a href="mailto:David.Haler@co.watonwan.mn.us">David.Haler@co.watonwan.mn.us</a>       | (507) 375-1225 |         |          |     |
| Watonwan County SWCD               | David Haler         | Land Management Director                                    | <a href="mailto:David.Haler@co.watonwan.mn.us">David.Haler@co.watonwan.mn.us</a>       | (507) 375-1225 |         |          |     |

# **ONE WATERSHED, ONE PLAN**

## **Minnesota River - Mankato**

### **CONSULTANT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

#### **PROJECT TIMELINE**

1. With BWSR's grant agreement deadline requirements: Do you think the work can be done within the timeline provided?
2. What do you anticipate will most likely cause delays?

#### **MEETING FACILITATION**

1. Will you provide examples of your experience with facilitating meetings?
2. Do you have access to technology which will accommodate virtual & hybrid meetings?

#### **PLAN DEVELOPMENT**

1. In your opinion, what are the most difficult tasks when developing a watershed plan?
2. What is the most controversial step in developing and finalizing the watershed plan?
  - a. How do anticipate avoiding and addressing controversy?
  - b. Will you give an example of a difficult situation with a project, and tell us how you handled it?
3. Which models do you have experience using in developing watershed plans?
  - a. What is your preferred model to work with, and why?
    - i. Which specific tools may be used with this model?
    - ii. How does this model work for Cities?
    - iii. Does this model also work for ground water?
4. Do you have any suggested models that will fit within this plan's budget?

#### **CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT & INVOLVEMENT**

1. What type of communication have you found to be most effective for engaging citizens in watershed plans?
2. How many citizens stay involved with the watershed plans you have worked on?
3. Does the involvement of Minnesota State University's Water Resources Center with public outreach, as indicated in the RFQ, impact your plan?

#### **STAFFING**

1. Who will be our main contact assigned to this project?
2. What is your organization's process to manage replacing staff when staff changes occur in the middle of a project?