

One Watershed, One Plan: Minnesota River – Mankato

STEERING TEAM MEETING MINUTES

May 22, 2024

The One Watershed, One Plan: Minnesota River – Mankato Steering Team met at 9:36 a.m. on Wednesday, April 24, 2024 at the St. Peter Community Center: St. Peter Room #217. Present at the meeting for Blue Earth County: Scott Salsbury; Blue Earth SWCD: Jerad Bach; City of Lake Crystal: Angela Grafstrom; City of Mankato: Jeff Johnson; City of North Mankato: Luke Arnold; City of St. Peter: Curtis Thompson; Le Sueur County: Holly Bushman; Le Sueur SWCD: Mike Schultz; Nicollet County: Kenny Famakinwa; Nicollet SWCD: Blake Honetschlager & Mackenzie Bratsch; and BWSR: Jeremy Maul.

May 13th Policy Committee Meeting Update

Policy Committee voted to hire Houston Engineering, Inc. (HEI) as the watershed consultant.

Model(s)

Both the Prioritize, Target, and Measure Application (PTMApp) & Hydrological Simulation Program FORTAN - Scenario Application Manager (HSPF-SAM) models were discussed. The cost to use a hybrid of both models will be \$13,000, since HEI will have access to existing watershed PTMApp data. If PTMApp is the primary model used the cost is \$20,000, since some watershed partners don't already have existing data. Famakinwa explained that during the HEI Scope of Work meeting, it was recommended that by HEI that this watershed use the PTMApp model.

Salsbury explained that HSPF-SAM is easier to calibrate to water quality data. Bushman cautioned there may be additional data conversion involved by strictly using PTMApp. Maul explained that once model(s) have been decided upon and added to the Plan, that same model data would be used for reporting to BWSR once the plan is implemented. For example, if the PTMApp model is used, then achievements would need to be reported using PTMApp's specific reporting methods. With that said, Maul agreed that strictly using PTMApp could incur additional costs compared to HSPF-SAM. The general consensus from team members that have watershed reporting experience is that HSPF-SAM is the preferred model.

Maul explained that HSPF-SAM is a broad watershed analysis that uses averages for practices within the watershed, while PTMApp provides a more detailed analysis using hydro-conditioning. The problem is that many of the watersheds don't have existing hydro-conditioning data available.

The team consensus is to use HSPF-SAM for modeling purposes, and PTMApp along with the existing hydro-conditioning data within the watershed for targeting and ranking specific projects and locations during implementation. Additionally, Salsbury suggested using Iowa State's Agricultural Conservation Planning Framework (APCF) in the future as a user-friendly tool to deliver a list of practices.

Famakinwa stated he will go back to HEI to find out the cost for using HSPF-SAM as the primary model, since using a hybrid of the two tools or only PTMApp cost estimates were initially discussed.

HEI Scope of Work

Famakinwa, Salsbury and Honetschlager met with HEI on May 20th to discuss scope of work and deliverables. The group consensus is to pay HEI for time worked on each deliverable instead of a lump sum payment. HEI agreed to include deliverable percent completion on each invoice if the deliverable would take a longer period of time to complete.

The formal agreement structure was discussed. With the Memorandum of Agreement, Nicollet County is the final approver and fiscal agent until a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) is in place; a JPA will be completed in the future. The by-laws were checked and there was no stipulation concerning Policy Committee bill approval before the County Board approves payment of the bill. The Scope of Services will

outline the invoice payment process and the criteria used to release payment. Invoice → Policy Committee approval → County Board of Commissioners approval → Payment

The consultant contract will be submitted to the Nicollet County Attorney's Office once received for review.

The team decided to allow the consultant to compile a watershed issue priority list using Minnesota River WRAPS and Intent to Plan responses from the agencies.

Consultant contract total meetings was discussed and the consensus is to keep the total meetings as they currently stand in the Request for Qualification, and to offer the consultant the option of attending meetings virtually to cut down on travel time and costs.

Maul suggested the group discuss the level of review agencies involvement at meetings during the next Steering Team meeting; having the review agencies participate in Steering Team meetings rather than only Advisory Committee meetings to keep the agencies more involved in the planning and decision-making process.

Public Meetings

HEI suggested a 15-minute overview of the watershed followed by an open house with small group water resources station tables as a format for the public kick-off meetings. Local staff will be assigned to the stations for public discussion and feedback. Cities requested drinking water be a separate table. HEI suggested a sticky-dot activity and participant survey. The same survey would be accessible to those that aren't able to make the public meetings. Public Kick-Off Meeting dates and times are as follows:

1. Tuesday, July 23rd at the Nicollet Conservation Club from 4:00 – 7:00 PM
2. Tuesday, July 30th at the Land of Memories Park Floyd Roberts Jr. Pavilion from 4:00 – 7:00 PM

HEI will be invited to the June Steering Team meeting, but the group will offer HEI the option for a special meeting before June 26th, if they require one.

Nicollet County will compile a food estimate to report to the group. Appetizers and drinks will be provided.

The public notice process will be used to advertise the public meetings. Social media will also be used to share meeting details.

A mid-point checking meeting was suggested by HEI to include the Advisory Committee and Policy Committee members for HEI to present an update on where things are at within the plan implementation process.

Advisory Committee

A list of Advisory Committee members was provided to the group. Famakinwa asked the team to send him missing contact information.

Schedule Next Meeting

The next scheduled Steering Team meeting is on Wednesday, June 26th.