

One Watershed, One Plan: Minnesota River – Mankato
PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
October 14, 2024

The One Watershed, One Plan: Minnesota River – Mankato Policy Committee met at 3:00 p.m. on Monday, October 14, 2024 at the Nicollet County Government Center – Emergency Operations Center. Present at the in-person meeting: City of Lake Crystal – Gina Cooper; City of Mankato – Mike Laven, *Vice Chair*; City of Saint Peter – Darrell Pettis; Le Sueur County – Steven Rolfing, *Secretary*; Nicollet County – Marie Dranttel, *Chair*; Nicollet SWCD – John Kral; Facilitator: Nicollet SWCD – Mackenzie Bratsch; and Drew Kessler – Houston Engineering. Le Sueur SWCD – Earle Traxler joined at 3:30 p.m. Steering Team members present: Le Sueur County – Holly Bushman; Le Sueur SWCD – Mike Schultz; Board of Water & Soil Resources (BWSR) – Shane Bugeja & Jeremy Maul.

Approval Agenda

A motion was made by Pettis and seconded by Laven to approve the meeting agenda. All voted in favor of the motion, and the motion passed.

Board of Water & Soil Resources Intro

Maul introduced Shane Bugeja, Board Conservationist, who will be working with this watershed.

Approve Minutes

A motion was made by Laven and seconded by Rolfing to approve the September 9, 2024 meeting minutes. All voted in favor of the motion, and the motion passed.

Meeting Facilitator Change

Mackenzie Bratsch & Blake Honetschlager with Nicollet SWCD have taken over the role of watershed facilitator for the foreseeable future.

Advisory Committee

Bratsch explained that all the Advisory Committee members have confirmed they are willing and available to participate in the watershed's Advisory Committee meetings. There will opportunities for the public to participate if a special interest group was removed from the roster. A motion was made by Pettis and seconded by Laven to approve the Advisory Committee roster. All voted in favor of the motion, and the motion passed.

Land and Water Resources Narrative

Kessler with Houston Engineering, Inc. (HEI) shared that the Land and Water Resource Narrative is a brief summary of the combined watershed studies, which provides an overview of what's within the watershed. This narrative is a part of BWSR's plan content requirement for the One Watershed, One Plan program. HEI brought the first draft to the Steering Team for comments, created a second draft, which the Steering Team then approved at their September 25th meeting to come before the Policy Committee today. The focus of the plan will fall on high and medium priority issues; high priority issues are expected to be worked on once the plan is implemented. Low priority issues can be addressed with other funding sources. Maul explained to the group that this section is meant as a high-level overview of the plan, and will not go into detail by mentioning every watershed study. The narrative is meant to explain the watershed in a general way, and to highlight some of the watershed issues. Based on agency and public feedback, flooding was designated as a low priority item. Pettis questioned why flooding studies weren't

included in the narrative, such as the updated FEMA's flood maps or the Minnesota River flood elevations, considering the historic flooding that has recently occurred. Kessler explained that flooding can be addressed within the priority issues section.

The Policy Committee recommended the following revisions to the Land and Water Resources Narrative:

- Page 2-6 under the Agriculture header concerning the average watershed's farm size of "280 acres". Kessler will verify this is the most current reference document and value.
- Dranttel stated page 2-6 City of Saint Peter photo needs to be updated. Kessler requested members submit updated photographs for HEI to use within the plan documents.

A motion was made and seconded by Rohlifing to approve the Land and Water Resources Narrative working draft with the suggested revisions. All voted in favor of the motion, and the motion passed.

Priority Issues

A motion was made by Pettis and seconded by Rohlifing for Flooding to be moved from medium to high priority. During discussion, Bratsch questioned Maul about how other plans address measurable goals for flooding. Maul stated that the MN River - Mankato watershed is different than others he has worked on concerning flooding. Kessler said that he will start to combine water management into an acre/feet goal. Bushman stated that in Lower East watershed they used acre/feet of storage as a broad goal for reporting. Kessler encouraged we keep simple goals for reporting. All voted in favor of the motion, and the motion passed.

A motion was made by Laven and seconded by Rohlifing to approve the priority issue statements. All voted in favor of the motion, and the motion passed.

Next Steps

Kessler reported the draft Priority Issues section will go to the Steering Team for review next. Developing the measurable goals for the plan will occur concurrent to approving the Priority Issues. The goals must be kept simple, realistic and reportable. Geospatial: Defining where the issues are most prevalent and where they are located within the watershed. One of the most intensive Advisory Committee and Steering Team workshops will go through area by area within the watershed, to verify that the data available reflects local knowledge of where the priority areas are. Pettis requested the Steering Team meeting packets be provided to the Policy Committee for their review in the future.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Dranttel at 3:50 p.m.



Marie Dranttel, Policy Committee Chair

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Date