



Minnesota River – Mankato 1W1P

Policy Committee Meeting

Monday, December 9, 2024 • 3:00 – 5:00 PM

Meeting Location

**Nicollet County Health & Human Services
River Rooms (basement)
622 S. Front Street, Saint Peter, MN 56082**

Agenda Items	Action	Time
1. Welcome and Business Items • Approve agenda and 10/14 minutes • Approve financials: HEI 9/30 & 11/22 invoices	Approve	10 min
2. Advisory Committee Summary • Summary of first Advisory Committee, attendees, and feedback received	Discuss	5 min
3. Plan Section 3: Priority Issues • Approve as working draft section of the plan	Approve	15 min
4. Measurable Goals and Priority Locations • Introduce draft goals and priority resources and subwatersheds	Introduce	20 min
5. Next Steps • Measurable Goals plan section • Targeted Implementation Schedule	Introduce	15 min
6. Action Items and Next Steps • Steering Committee: December 19 • Policy Committee: January 13	--	5 min



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: Mackenzie Bratsch - Nicollet SWCD; 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 Rohlfing 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 Rohlfing 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 Rohlfing 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.

STEVEN ROHLFING, Policy Committee Secretary
One Watershed, One Plan: Minnesota River - Mankato

Date

MONTHLY EXPENSES	\$29,000 Administration Coordination	\$42,800 Meeting Facilitation	\$149,000 Plan Development	\$22,080 Contingency
May	14,500	21,400	74,500	11,040
Jul		(1,711)		
Aug			(19,210)	
Sep			(13,449)	
Oct		(30)		
Nov		(467)	(9,757)	
BALANCE	\$14,500.00	\$19,191.04	\$32,084.29	\$11,040.00



Budget Overview

BWSR Grant ID: P24-0722
Grant Total: \$242,880.00
Grant Execution Date: 5/1/2024
Grant End Date: 6/30/2026

										Invoice Breakdown by eLink Activity Description			
Month/Yr	Date	Invoice	Organization	Credit (+)	Debit (-)	Balance	Status	PC Date	Comments/Description	\$29,000 Administration Coordination	\$42,800 Meeting Facilitation	\$149,000 Plan Development	\$22,080 Contingency
May-2024	5/15/2024		BWSR	\$ 121,440.00		\$ 121,440.00	DEPOSIT		SWIFT BWSR GRANT PAYMENT #1	\$ 14,500.00	\$ 21,400.00	\$ 74,500.00	\$ 11,040.00
Jul-2024	7/15/2024	MASTERCARD: SR	Hy Vee		\$ (533.14)	\$ 120,906.86	PAID		Public kickoff meeting event supplies		\$ (533.14)		
Jul-2024	7/16/2024	MASTERCARD: KF	Webstaurantstore		\$ (95.69)	\$ 120,811.17	PAID		Public kickoff meeting event supplies		\$ (95.69)		
Jul-2024	7/19/2024	MASTERCARD: SR	Michaels Stores		\$ (73.92)	\$ 120,737.25	PAID		Public kickoff meeting event supplies		\$ (73.92)		
Jul-2024	7/20/2024	1RXY-DQDP-KF1K	Amazon.com		\$ (139.22)	\$ 120,598.03	PAID		Public kickoff meeting event supplies		\$ (139.22)		
Jul-2024	7/21/2024	1MXH-HLLV-QDY4	Amazon.com		\$ (112.63)	\$ 120,485.40	PAID		Public kickoff meeting event supplies		\$ (112.63)		
Jul-2024	7/21/2024	1LDG-QNL7-TXR3	Amazon.com		\$ (177.53)	\$ 120,307.87	PAID		Public kickoff meeting event supplies		\$ (177.53)		
Jul-2024	7/22/2024	MASTERCARD: SR	Hy Vee		\$ (40.87)	\$ 120,267.00	PAID		Public kickoff meeting event supplies		\$ (40.87)		
Jul-2024	7/23/2024	MASTERCARD: SR	Tableclothsfactory		\$ (115.36)	\$ 120,151.64	PAID		Public kickoff meeting event supplies		\$ (115.36)		
Jul-2024	7/24/2024	MASTERCARD: SR	Hy Vee		\$ (50.19)	\$ 120,101.45	PAID		Public kickoff meeting event supplies		\$ (50.19)		
Jul-2024	7/24/2024	MASTERCARD: SR	Hy Vee		\$ (298.89)	\$ 119,802.56	PAID		Public kickoff meeting event supplies		\$ (298.89)		
Jul-2024	7/29/2024	1HHK-LJLW-PTWQ	Amazon.com	\$ 32.99		\$ 119,835.55	PAID		Returned item invoice 1RXY-DQDP-KF1K		\$ 32.99		
Jul-2024	7/29/2024	MASTERCARD: KF	St. Peter Lumber		\$ (196.87)	\$ 119,638.68	PAID		Public kickoff meeting event supplies		\$ (196.87)		
Jul-2024	7/29/2024	1RQP-1DDK-PRKM	Amazon.com	\$ 32.99		\$ 119,671.67	PAID		Returned item invoice 1MXH-HLLV-QDY4		\$ 32.99		
Jul-2024	7/29/2024	1YKQ-L1PV-QJTH	Amazon.com	\$ 32.99		\$ 119,704.66	PAID		Returned item invoice 1LDG-QNL7-TXR3		\$ 32.99		
Jul-2024	7/31/2024	1GMG-49FF-36CY	Amazon.com	\$ 23.99		\$ 119,728.65	PAID		Returned item invoice 1LDG-QNL7-TXR3		\$ 23.99		
Aug-2024	8/22/2024	72322	Houston Engineering		\$ (19,209.50)	\$ 100,519.15	PAID		Services: > 8/17/24			\$ (19,209.50)	
Sep-2024	9/30/2024	73058	Houston Engineering		\$ (13,448.75)	\$ 87,070.40	Approval	12/9/2024	Services: 8/18/24 - 9/28/24			\$ (13,448.75)	
Oct-2024	10/25/2024	IN4677661	Innovative Office Sol.		\$ (30.17)	\$ 87,040.23	PAID		Office supplies: Steering Team binders		\$ (30.17)		
Nov-2024	11/11/2024	IN4691266	Innovative Office Sol.		\$ (197.12)	\$ 86,843.11	PAID		Office supplies: Steering Team binders		\$ (197.12)		
Nov-2024	11/7/2024	MASTERCARD: SW	Costco.com		\$ (88.52)	\$ 86,754.59	PAID		11/22/24 Advisory Committee Meeting		\$ (88.52)		
Nov-2024	11/21/2024	MASTERCARD: JK	Erbert & Gerberts		\$ (181.80)	\$ 86,572.79	PAID		11/22/24 Advisory Committee Meeting		\$ (181.80)		
Nov-2024	11/22/2024	73866	Houston Engineering		\$ (9,757.46)	\$ 76,815.33	Approval	12/9/2024	Services: 9/29/24 - 11/16/24			\$ (9,757.46)	

**Paid by Warrant #**

INVOICE



Remit to:

1401 21st Ave N, Fargo, ND 58102

Phone: 701.237.5065

Fed Tax ID: 45-0314557

Interest of 1%/month applied to past due invoices

Nicollet County (MN) Soil & Water Conservation District

PO Box 457

Nicollet, MN 56074

Invoice Number: 73058

Date: September 30, 2024

Project Number: R008364-0005

Minnesota River - Mankato Watershed One Watershed, One Plan Copy

For Professional Services Rendered Through: September 28, 2024

Summary of Work Performed:

Phase 002: Create planning region boundaries; Revise Land and Water Resources Narrative; Draft and rank list of priority issues; Draft Plan Section- Priority Issues

Phase 004: Prepare materials, travel to, and facilitate Steering Committee meetings (8/28/2024 and 9/25/2024); Virtually facilitate Policy Committee meeting (9/9/2024)

002 - Draft Plan

Professional Services

	Hours	Rate	Amount
GIS Analyst 2	7.00	123.00	\$861.00
Project Assistant 4	.75	108.00	\$81.00
Project Assistant 6	.75	120.00	\$90.00
Scientist 2	24.00	150.00	\$3,600.00
Scientist 6	11.00	221.00	\$2,431.00
	43.50		\$7,063.00

002 - Draft Plan Total:

\$7,063.00

004 - Meetings and Engagement

Professional Services

	Hours	Rate	Amount
Scientist 6	8.25	221.00	\$1,823.25
Scientist 7	18.25	250.00	\$4,562.50
	26.50		\$6,385.75

004 - Meetings and Engagement Total:

\$6,385.75

Invoice Total

\$13,448.75

NICOLLET
COUNTY EST. 1853



Name & Address of Claimant:

INNOVATIVE OFFICE SOLUTIONS

LOCKBOX #131434

PO BOX 1414

MINNEAPOLIS MN 55480

Return completed form to:

Nicollet County Finance Dept.

501 S. Minnesota Ave.

St. Peter, MN 56082

507.934.7813

507.934.7858 HHS CLAIMS

Vendor # 9464

Date	Invoice #	DESCRIPTION (Attach Invoice)	Account #	Amount
10/25/2024	IN4677661	Office supplies: see attached list	01.127.575.0000.6401	\$ 30.17
TOTAL:				\$ 30.17

TOTAL:	\$	30.17
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Approved By (signature):

Department: Property Services

Date: 10/31/2024

I declare under the penalties of law that this account, claim or demand is just and correct and that no part of it has been paid.

VERIFIED BY WARRANT

Billing Instructions:

1. Bills must be itemized, showing dates, quantities, units & total prices.
2. Voucher must be signed.
3. Checks in payment of claims cannot be issued until claim is approved by the Nicollet County Board of Commissioners.

Your cooperation in following these instructions will enable us to process your claim quickly. Thank you.

Paid by Warrant #



Innovative Office Solutions LLC
151 East Cliff Road
Burnsville, MN 55337

INVOICE: IN4677661

BILLING INQUIRIES AND 952-808-9900 | 866-574-5389
CUSTOMER SERVICE [INNOVATIVEOS.COM](https://innovativeos.com)

CUSTOMER NUMBER 9993061-018
DEPARTMENT # 018
SALES ORDER SO-4550850
INVOICE DATE 10/25/2024
TERMS Net 30 days
DUE DATE 11/24/2024
SALES REP John Townsend

To view and pay online, please visit: <https://innovativeos.billtrust.com>
Use this enrollment token to sign up: **SPV RKT DGD**

SHIP TO:

NICOLLET COUNTY PROPERTY SERVICES
501 S MINNESOTA AVE
SAINT PETER, MN 56082-2507
Crystal Madden

NICOLLET COUNTY PROPERTY SERVICES
501 S MINNESOTA AVE
SAINT PETER, MN 56082-2507

Customer PO #: 2024.10.24

ITEM	ITEM DESCRIPTION	UNIT	QTY	PRICE	TOTAL
FEL0086201	FILE,PLASTIC,BOX,CLR	EA	1.00	\$15.57	\$15.57
CRD60518	INDEX,BNDR,LTR,5CLR/ST	ST	10.00	\$1.46	\$14.60

SUBTOTAL: \$30.17

TAX: \$0.00

CREDITS/PREPAYMENTS: \$0.00

TOTAL CHARGES CURRENT SHIPMENT (USD): \$30.17

To ensure proper payment application, please write your account number on your check, and include the attached coupon with your payment.



TERMS & CONDITIONS innovativeos.com/terms

DUE DATE 11/24/2024

AMOUNT DUE \$30.17

INVOICE NUMBER IN4677661

INVOICE DATE 10/25/2024

CUSTOMER NUMBER 9993061-018

Bill To:

NICOLLET COUNTY PROPERTY SERVICES
501 S MINNESOTA AVE
SAINT PETER, MN 56082-2507

Payable To:

Innovative Office Solutions, LLC
LOCKBOX #131434
PO BOX 1414
MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55480-1414

CLAIMS VOUCHER



Name & Address of Claimant:

INNOVATIVE OFFICE SOLUTIONS

LOCKBOX #131434

PO BOX 1414

MINNEAPOLIS MN 55480

Return completed form to:

Nicollet County Finance Dept.

501 S. Minnesota Ave.

St. Peter, MN 56082

507.934.7813

507.934.7858 HHS CLAIMS

Vendor # 9464

Date	Invoice #	DESCRIPTION (Attach Invoice)	Account #	Amount
11/12/24	IN4691266	Office supplies: see attached list	01.127.575.0000.6401	\$ 197.12
			TOTAL:	\$ 197.12

TOTAL:	\$	197.12
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Approved By (signature):

Department: Property Services

Date: 11/12/2024

I declare under the penalties of law that this account, claim or demand is just and correct and that no part of it has been paid.

VERIFIED BY WARRANT

Billing Instructions:

1. Bills must be itemized, showing dates, quantities, units & total prices.
 2. Voucher must be signed.
 3. Checks in payment of claims cannot be issued until claim is approved by the Nicollet County Board of Commissioners.
- Your cooperation in following these instructions will enable us to process your claim quickly. Thank you.

Paid by Warrant #



Innovative Office Solutions LLC
151 East Cliff Road
Burnsville, MN 55337

INVOICE: IN4691266

BILLING INQUIRIES AND	952-808-9900 866-574-5389
CUSTOMER SERVICE	INNOVATIVEOS.COM
CUSTOMER NUMBER	9993061-018
DEPARTMENT #	018
SALES ORDER	SO-4555687
INVOICE DATE	11/12/2024
TERMS	Net 30 days
DUE DATE	12/12/2024
SALES REP	John Townsend

To view and pay online, please visit: <https://innovativeos.billtrust.com>
Use this enrollment token to sign up: **SPV RKT DGD**

NICOLLET COUNTY PROPERTY SERVICES
501 S MINNESOTA AVE
SAINT PETER, MN 56082-2507

SHIP TO:
NICOLLET COUNTY PROPERTY SERVICES
501 S MINNESOTA AVE
SAINT PETER, MN 56082-2507
Crystal Madden

Customer PO #: 2024.10.31

ITEM	ITEM DESCRIPTION	UNIT	QTY	PRICE	TOTAL
AVE68038	BNDR,FRAMED VU,3",NVBE	EA	16.00	\$12.32	\$197.12
FREIGHT	FREIGHT	EA	1.00	\$0.00	\$0.00

SUBTOTAL: \$197.12

TAX: \$0.00

CREDITS/PREPAYMENTS: \$0.00

TOTAL CHARGES CURRENT SHIPMENT (USD): \$197.12

To ensure proper payment application, please write your account number on your check, and include the attached coupon with your payment.



INVOICE DATE 11/12/2024
CUSTOMER NUMBER 9993061-018

TERMS & CONDITIONS innovativeos.com/terms
DUE DATE 12/12/2024
AMOUNT DUE \$197.12
INVOICE NUMBER IN4691266

Bill To:
NICOLLET COUNTY PROPERTY SERVICES
501 S MINNESOTA AVE
SAINT PETER, MN 56082-2507

Payable To:
Innovative Office Solutions, LLC
LOCKBOX #131434
PO BOX 1414
MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55480-1414



Order Details

Order Number 1149145571	Payment Method  Mastercard ending in 1780	Shipping Address Crystal Madden 501 S MINNESOTA AVE SAINT PETER, MN 56082-2507 5079347070	Billing Address Stephen Weyer 501 S MINNESOTA AVE SAINT PETER, MN 56082-2507
Order Date 11/07/2024			
Membership Number 111859944743			

Item	Quantity	Status	Total Price
LaCroix Sparkling Water, Variety Pack, 12 fl oz, 24-count Item #897342 \$11.49	1	Delivered	\$11.49
Frito Lay Classic Mix, 1 oz, Variety Pack, 54-count Item #1627770 \$23.49	1	Delivered	\$23.49
Coca-Cola Mini, Variety Pack, 7.5 fl oz, 30-count Item #1579880 \$19.99	1	Delivered	\$19.99
SunChips Whole Grain, Variety, 1.5 oz, 30-count Item #1481558 \$21.99 Discount \$5.00	1	Delivered	\$21.99
Nature's Garden Organic Trail Mix Snack Packs, Variety Pack, 1.2 oz, 24-count Item #1123591 \$14.99	1	Delivered	\$14.99

Order Summary

Subtotal (5 Items)	\$91.95
Shipping	\$0.00
2-Day Delivery Fee	\$0.00
Tax	\$1.57
Order Total	\$88.52



Erbert and Gerberts
St. Peter

Order# 788a7747-138c-4425-a66d-8b0d066dd6d
5

Call Number# 45

Pick Up

Customer: Crystal Madden

Date: 11/22/24, 6:01 AM

#9 NARMER	\$11.98
no provo sub cheddar	
no mayo	
no provolone cheese	
gluten free bread	
2 COLOSSUS BOX	\$135.98
\$67.99 each	
tullius	
morehouse	
flash	
narmer	
variety bread	

Total Item Count: 3

Subtotal: \$147.96

Total Tax: \$11.65

Total: \$159.61

Credit + MASTERCARD \$159.61

Tip: \$22.19

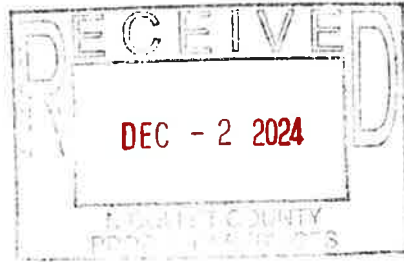
Total Paid: \$181.80

Applied Deposit: \$159.61

Due Date: 11/22/24, 11:35 AM

**Paid by Warrant #**

INVOICE

**Remit to:**

1401 21st Ave N, Fargo, ND 58102

Phone: 701.237.5065

Fed Tax ID: 45-0314557

Interest of 1%/month applied to past due invoices

Nicollet County (MN)

501 South Minnesota Avenue

Saint Peter, MN 56082

Invoice Number: 73866

Date: November 22, 2024

Project Number: R006162-0014

County Ditch 61 Improvement**For Professional Services Rendered Through: November 16, 2024**

Work completed this period:

Phase 001: Complete feasibility report for improvement

Phase 002: Complete a field survey. Coordinate televising. Begin plan writing; Complete early coordination call with DNR. Begin preparing mapping for preliminary engineer's report.

001 - Concept Plan**Professional Services**

	Hours	Rate	Amount
Engineer 11	2.75	238.00	\$654.50
Engineer 3	4.75	158.00	\$750.50
Engineer 9	4.25	218.00	\$926.50
GIS Analyst 1	1.50	112.00	\$168.00
	13.25		\$2,499.50

001 - Concept Plan Total:**\$2,499.50****002 - Preliminary Engineers Report****Professional Services**

	Hours	Rate	Amount
Engineer 11	6.50	238.00	\$1,547.00
Engineer 3	14.25	158.00	\$2,251.50
GIS Analyst 1	8.50	112.00	\$952.00
Technician 2	1.00	126.00	\$126.00
Technician 7	1.00	166.00	\$166.00
Two Person Crew	8.50	222.00	\$1,887.00
	39.75		\$6,929.50

Reimbursable Expenses

	Units	Rate	Amount
Unit - ATV w/Tracks (MPL)	2.0000	30.000	\$60.00
Unit - Company Survey/Inspection Mileage (MPL)	208.0000	.870	\$180.96
Unit - GPS (MPL)	3.5000	25.000	\$87.50
			\$328.46

Project R006162-0014 County Ditch 61 Improvement

Invoice 73866

002 - Preliminary Engineers Report Total:

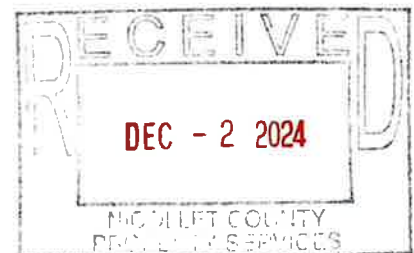
\$7,257.96

Invoice Total

\$9,757.46

Outstanding Invoices

Invoice Number	Invoice Date	0 - 30	31 - 60	61-90	Over 90	Balance
Total Prior Billing						





3. Priority Issues

This **Priority Issues** plan section identifies issues affecting watershed resources and covers:

- Issue development
- Public input
- Implementation regions
- Priority Issues
- Emerging issues

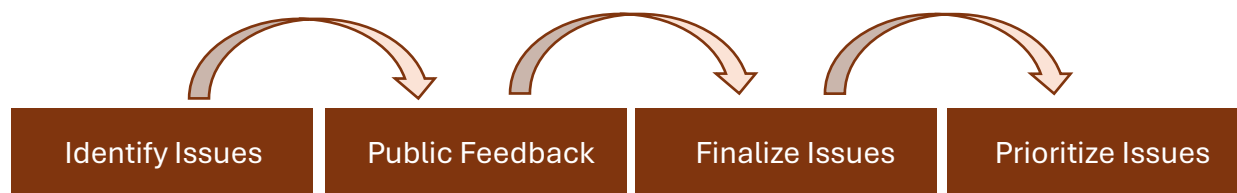
Issue Identification

This plan identifies actions that will be carried out over the next ten years to address watershed natural resource issues. In order to focus efforts, issues affecting the watershed were identified and prioritized. An “issue” is generally defined as a problem, risk, or opportunity related to a resource. A “resource” is generally defined as a landscape feature that can be impacted by an issue, such as surface water, groundwater, habitat, or agricultural land.

A comprehensive list of issues impacting resources in the Minnesota River-Mankato Watershed was developed with Steering Committee input after review and consideration of the following:

- Agency reports: Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies Report (WRAPS), Watershed Characterization Report, Stressor Identification Report
- Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs): Minnesota River/Blue Earth River Total Suspended Solids TMDL, Minnesota River-Mankato Watershed TMDL
- County Water Plans: Blue Earth, Le Sueur, Nicollet, and Sibley
- 60-Day Letters received from state agencies on this plan: MPCA, DNR, BWSR, MDH

After issues were identified, feedback from the public was solicited. Then issues were finalized and prioritized to focus efforts related to this plan.



This plan relies on voluntary implementation. The issues described here affect residents throughout the watershed. For this reason, it was important to receive feedback from the public about issues that are important to them and provide an opportunity to comment on the planning process. This feedback was achieved through public kickoff meetings held on July 23 and July 30, 2024 in Nicollet and St. Peter, respectively. These meetings were attended by approximately 40 people. The goal of these meetings was to share information about the planning process and the purpose of a watershed plan and provide opportunities to identify issues and resources most important to members of the community.



At the meetings, community members discussed issues facing their watershed, voted on resources most important to them using mock money, and were invited to take a survey. The survey was also available online for those that did not attend the meetings. In total, there were 75 responses to the public survey. Results of that survey, resource voting, and meeting discussions are summarized in Appendix X.

[illegible]

Priority Issues • 3-2



Participants were also asked to choose up to five issues in the watershed that they care most about. This question was asked to help inform future issue prioritization efforts. Results from that question are summarized below in **Figure 3-2**. The most common answer was sediment, nutrients, and bacteria, followed by wetlands and drinking water protection. Additionally, when asked what specific resource was of the largest concern, the most common answer was the Minnesota River.

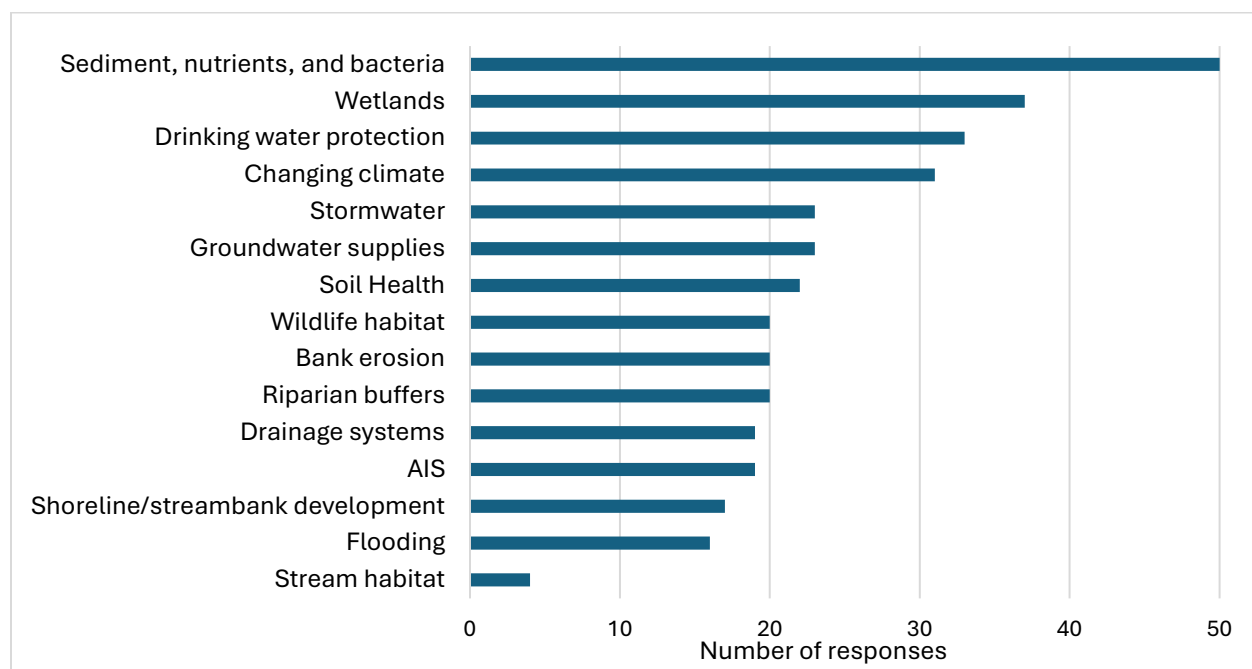


Figure 3-2. Survey responses to top issues/concerns in the watershed.

Resources

Ultimately, 16 issues were identified based on existing agency reports, county water plans, agency letters, and feedback from the public. These issues are summarized in this plan section. This is a large number of issues to manage without further organization; therefore, issues were placed into one of four resource categories intended to reflect the resource most affected by that issue.



**Surface Water
Quality**



**Drinking Water and
Groundwater**



**Flood Damage
Reduction and
Hydrology**



**Land Use and
Habitat**



Implementation Regions

As introduced in **Section 2-Land and Water Resources Narrative**, the Minnesota River-Mankato Watershed is a diverse area spanning over 370,000 acres. The issues impacting resources (and importance of those issues) can change from the western to eastern, and southern to northern extents of the watershed.

In recognition of this, local planning partners organized the watershed into four implementation regions based on HUC-10 boundaries (**Figure 3-3**; next page): The Minnesota River Area, Swan-Sevenmile Area, Shanaska Creek Area, and Minneopa Creek Area. The creation of implementation regions keeps the focus on watershed-wide management, but allows issues, goals, and actions to be tailored to the area of the watershed where they matter the most. These implementation regions will be referenced throughout the Plan.

Issue Prioritization

While there are numerous issues impacting the watershed and all are important in some way, there are limits in time, staffing, and financial resources to accomplish everything in a ten-year plan. Part of the planning process is identifying select issues to direct staff capacity and funding moving forward into implementation. This plan placed the 16 identified issues into three priority groups: high, medium, and low.



High Priority: Most important issues.



Medium Priority: Important issues, but secondary priority to high priority issues.



Low Priority: Not a focus of the plan but may be addressed by partners or with additional funding.

Issues were initially prioritized based on how prominent the issue was mentioned in existing agency reports and TMDLs, county water plans, agency letters, and responses from the public survey. Priority rankings of the issues were then reviewed and adjusted by the Steering and Policy Committees to better reflect local priorities and expertise.

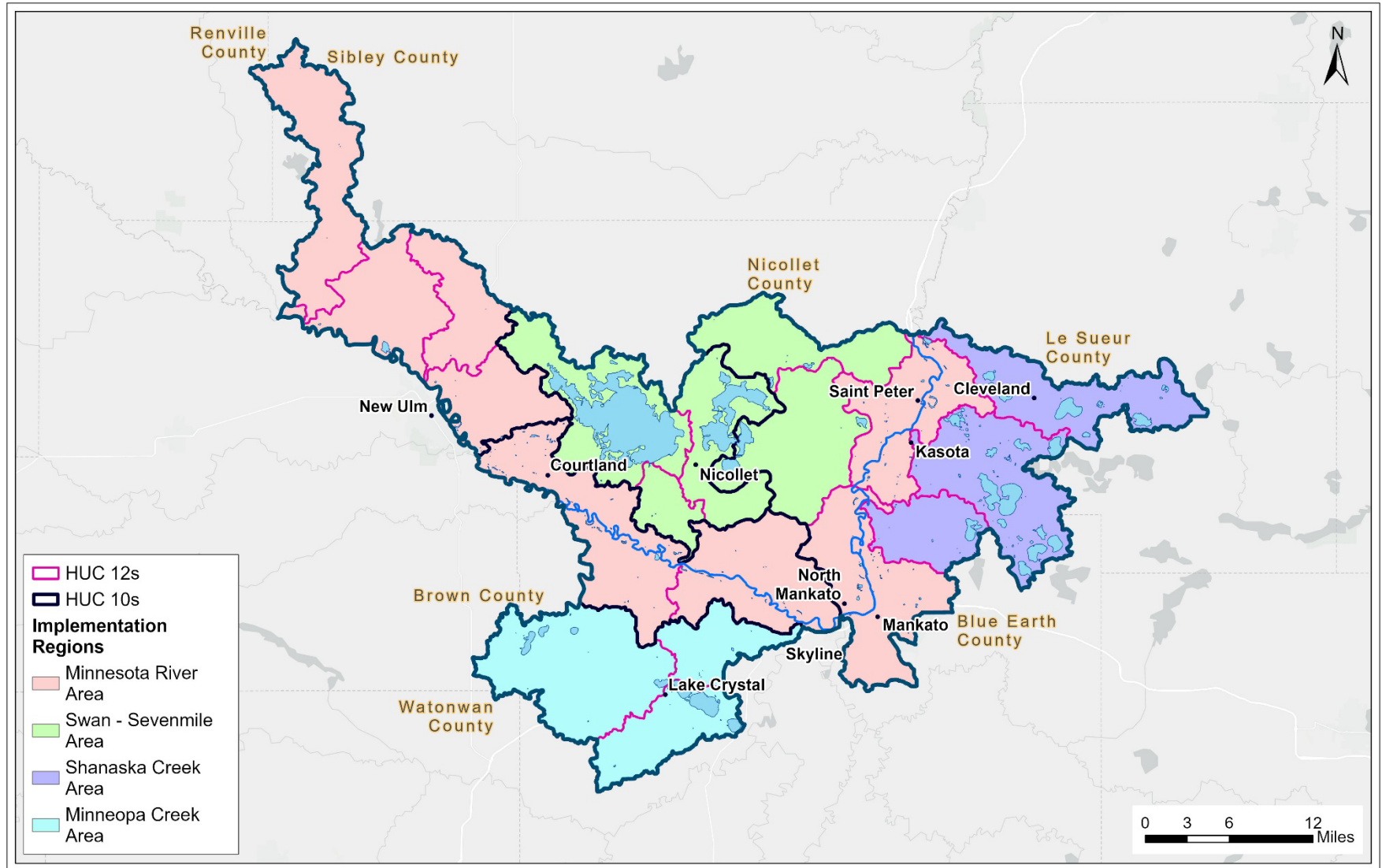


Figure 3-3. Implementation regions in the Minnesota-Mankato Watershed



Issue Priorities

High priority issues are the primary focus of the plan and each is addressed by at least one measurable goal in Section 4. High priority issues are listed below in no order of priority.

Table 3-1. High priority issues.

High Priority	Resource	Issue	Issue Statement
		Nutrient Loading	Nutrient loading (phosphorus and nitrogen) has led to numerous impairments and an increase in algae blooms.
		Sediment and Erosion	Excess sediment, largely from channel erosion, ravine erosion, and cropland, is the cause of numerous aquatic life impairments
		Surface Water / Groundwater Interaction	Much of the watershed obtains drinking water from groundwater that is influenced by surface water, which makes contamination (especially with nitrate) more likely.
		Loss of Water Storage	Land use change has led to a loss of water storage in the landscape, which contributes to excess flow and pollutants in streams.
		Altered Hydrology	Altered hydrology due to changes in land use and drainage and combined with an increase in precipitation has led to flooding and high flow volume.
		Soil Health	Degraded soil health on productive land can lead to more erosive soils.

Medium priority issues are also a focus during implementation and are addressed by at least one measurable goal in Section 4. Medium priority issues are listed below in no order of priority.

Table 3-2. Medium priority issues.

Medium Priority	Resource	Issue	Issue Statement
		Bacteria	Bacteria from livestock, human, and wildlife waste contribute to <i>E. coli</i> and fecal coliform impairments.
		Groundwater Quality	Groundwater that is used for drinking water can be contaminated with pollutants such as nitrate and arsenic, making it a public health problem.



	Resource	Issue	Issue Statement
		Stormwater	Stormwater from developed areas contains salt, sediment, nutrients, fertilizer, and more that pollutes receiving waters.
		Flooding	Altered hydrology combined with an increase in annual and heavy rain events has increased the likelihood of flooding, which is costly to infrastructure or farmland in impacted areas.
		Invasive Species	The presence of aquatic and terrestrial invasive species degrades habitat quality and recreation opportunities.

Low priority issues are not specifically addressed through a measurable goal but may be indirectly addressed through plan actions. Low priority issues are not unimportant, rather, they may be addressed by partner organizations, existing regulations, or as funding allows. Issues that were acknowledged through the issue development process but ended up as a low priority for implementation are listed below.

Table 3-3. Low priority issues.

Low Priority	Resource	Issue	Issue Statement
		Groundwater Quantity	Protection of groundwater supplies through increasing recharge and wise water use is important to ensure the future drinking water supply as well as adequate base flow supply to streams.
		Stream Connectivity	Natural and built barriers such as perched or improperly sized culverts limit stream connectivity, impeding fish passage.
		Precipitation	An increase in annual precipitation and changes to historic weather patterns impacts agricultural productivity, increases peak stream flows, and exceeds design of infrastructure.
		Wildlife Habitat	Historic wetlands, forest, and prairie have been lost, reducing available habitat and associated ecosystem benefits.
		Riparian and Shoreline Areas	Insufficient vegetation in riparian and shoreland areas decreases riparian and shoreline stability, increases water temperatures, and degrades aquatic habitat.



Emerging Issues and Planning Lenses

There are additional issues facing the watershed that are not a traditional issue as summarized in the previous section. This may be because it lacks data, is new or not fully understood, or does not fit into the 1W1P issue definition. These issues include climate, environmental justice, and chloride.

Climate

Feedback from the public kickoff and survey included concern over heavy rains, which are becoming more common in Minnesota. Precipitation patterns are becoming more variable and have shifted in recent years to have less precipitation in early summer and more in the fall (MPCA, 2019a). Climate records going back to 1895 show an average increase in annual temperatures in the watershed of 0.24 °F per decade and an increase in annual precipitation by 0.20 inches per decade. Monthly rainfall has decreased by 0.02 inches per decade in June and increased by 0.04 inches per decade in October (DNR, 2024).

Precipitation is included in the plan as a “low” priority issue, but climate is discussed as an emerging issue due to the broader issues and implications of a variable climate. In addition to changing rainfall patterns, temperatures are shifting as well. In a highly agricultural watershed, a stable climate protects livelihoods and the local economy.

Resiliency to climate impacts is the ability to withstand extremes like flooding, drought, or temperature. Resilience is an aspect of planning that is becoming increasingly popular, especially as extreme floods are occurring more often and causing significant damage. This plan was developed through a climate lens and will build resiliency to climate into plan actions where possible. BWSR provides a climate resiliency toolbox, which provides tools for partnership and science-based actions to build resiliency in multiple sectors that are included within this plan, such as in water planning, agricultural landscapes, and community outreach. The toolbox is available at: <https://bwsr.state.mn.us/bwsr-climate-resiliency-toolbox>.



Environmental Justice

Everyone in the Minnesota River-Mankato Watershed is affected by environmental issues, but historically marginalized and vulnerable groups can be disproportionately affected by pollution and access to natural spaces. MPCA developed areas of concern based on areas where a high proportion of residents are in poverty, are people of color, have limited English proficiency, or are in federally recognized tribal land (**Figure 3-4**).

Environmental inequities can impact accessibility and public health. This plan was written with the principles and areas of environmental justice in mind, and implementation of the plan will also consider environmental justice in decision making and project implementation.

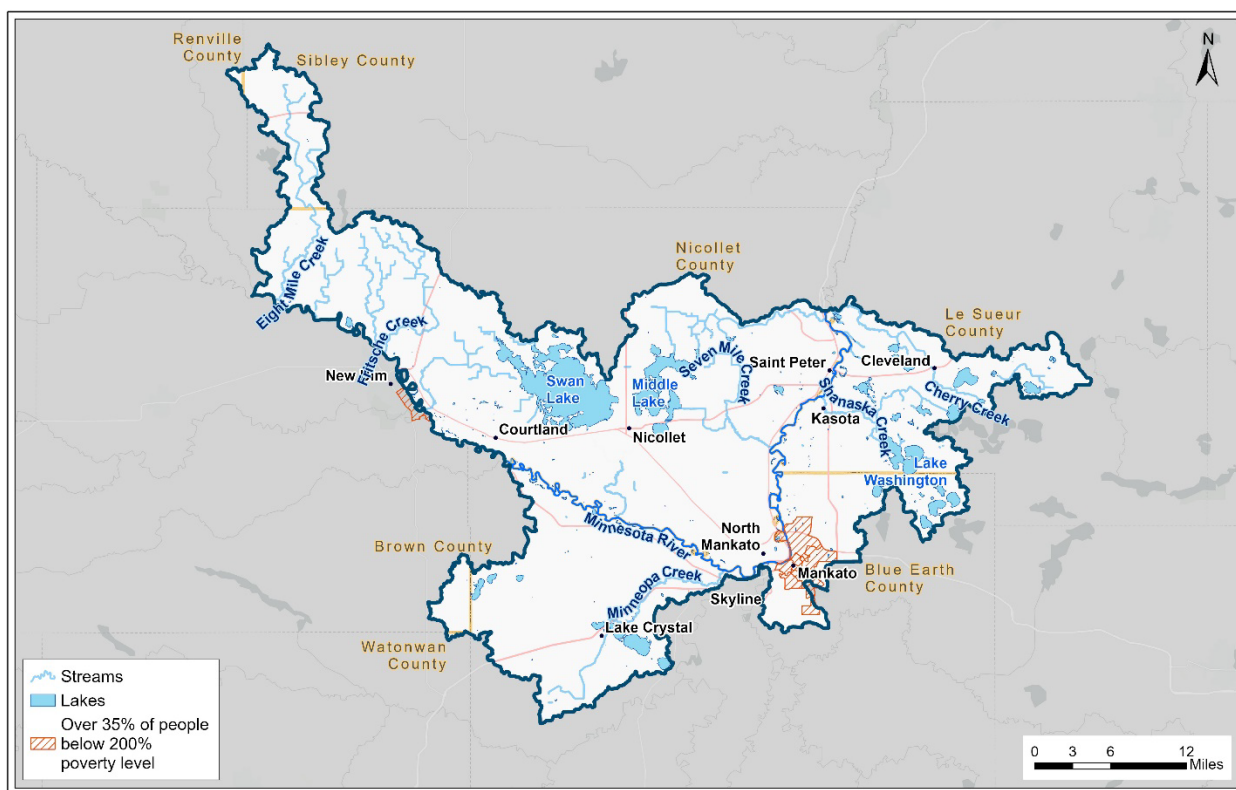


Figure 3-4. Environmental justice areas as defined by the MPCA in the Minnesota River-Mankato Watershed.



Chloride



Photo: Mankato photo contest, Bridget Woller

Concern over chloride in surface water is growing, as concentrations in streams and lakes have been increasing in recent decades due to road salt application. Road salt is applied to pavement as an anti-icer and de-icer to enhance winter driving and walking safety but does not degrade in the environment and thus is a source of salinity in runoff. Water softeners can also be a source of chloride in the environment.

The principal concern over the presence of chloride in the environment is in surface waters, where it is toxic to aquatic life at high concentrations. Other resource concerns over the presence of chloride include groundwater contamination and toxicity to roadside vegetation. Road salt corrodes infrastructure, is toxic to roadside vegetation, and is reaching groundwater in some locations. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) set short-term and long-term chloride standard in freshwater, and MPCA has begun to declare waters impaired for chloride. However, most Minnesota waterbodies have not been assessed for chloride impairments. No waterbodies in the watershed are impaired due to chloride, but this does not mean that chloride is not a pollutant of concern, especially near urban areas.

A report on chloride in the watershed is available at: <https://freshwater.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Mankato-Chloride-Management-Plan.pdf>

The report discusses chloride as relevant to the Mankato area and suggests training on salting best practices and education to the public on chloride to reduce chloride loading. MPCA offers Smart Salting training to road salt applicators and has educational materials available for watersheds. Building on existing relationships and efforts to address chloride contamination will continue during plan implementation.