



Le Sueur River One Watershed One Plan POLICY COMMITTEE

Date: June 25, 2021

Meeting #4

Time: 8:30am

Location: Virtual – GoToMeeting

Attending: *Policy Committee Members:* Don Kropp (Freeborn SWCD), Ted Herman (Freeborn Co.), Randy Feist (Faribault SWCD), De Malterer (Waseca Co.), Kevin Paap (Blue Earth Co.), Chris Hughes (Blue Earth SWCD), Todd Stencel (Waseca SWCD)

Staff: Brenda Lageson, (Freeborn SWCD), Scott Salsbury (Blue Earth Co.), Mark Schaezke (Waseca SWCD), Nate Carr (Faribault SWCD), Brandee Douglas (Faribault Co.), Brian Zabel (Waseca Co.), Kimberly Musser (Water Resources Center MNSU- Mankato)

Meeting called to order by De Malterer at 8:34 am via GoToMeeting.

Agenda:

Mr. Schaezke stated that there was one addition to the agenda with Nate Carr from Faribault SWCD presenting on the state of the watershed and projects that Faribault County has been working on.

Motion to approve the agenda, made by Kevin Paap, Seconded by Randy Feist.

Roll Call: Paap: Yes Hughes: Yes Feist: Yes Herman: Yes Kropp: Yes Malterer: Yes Stencel: Yes

Motion approved.

Minutes:

- Motion to approve the minutes, made by Randy Feist, Seconded by Chris Hughes.
 - **Roll Call:** Paap: Yes Hughes: Yes Feist: Yes Herman: Yes Kropp: Yes Malterer: Yes Stencel: Yes
- Motion approved.**

State of the Watershed

Nate Carr – Faribault SWCD:

- Nate Carr presented on the following projects involving the Faribault SWCD:
 - Faribault County Soil Health Team - Created in 2016 with farmers. As a result of their efforts, over 6,000 acres of cover crops have been funded. Nate showed a story map that is available through their website that promotes the project and has profiles on the members of the Soil Health Team.
 - Partnership between the Faribault County Drainage Authority and SWCD. Worked to fund over 75 side inlets, grade stabilization structures and waterways in the last 5 years.
 - Rice Creek 319 Small Watershed Grant through the MPCA which is in the Le Sueur River Watershed in Faribault County and Blue Earth County.
 - Chris Hughes asked about the water quality in Rice Creek and whether that was a creek that had better water quality than other areas of the watershed.
 - Nate Carr explained that the water quality in Rice Creek is close to meeting the various water quality standards, and that it was a goal of the DNR, MPCA, and the project to prevent the Creek from being listed for water quality impairments.

MSU Water Resources Center Proposal:

- Kimberly Musser presented on the following:
 - Overall strategies and processes for civic engagement and public participation. The importance of making the role of the public clear in the planning process.



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- Background on past civic engagement in the Le Sueur River Watershed, such as the MPCA Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy (WRAPS) process and the meetings that have been held throughout the watershed.
- Background on the Le Sueur River Watershed Network, their seven recommendations for the Le Sueur River Watershed, and their current priorities which are improving communication, soil health, water storage, and sub-watershed collaboration.
- The potential kickoff meeting for One Watershed One Plan would tentatively be planned for September. The kickoff meeting would be an in-person meeting where the plan and process would be explained. Input on priorities and priority areas would be gathered at the meeting and with an online survey for those who are not able to attend. The desired outcomes would be to:
 - Have the public understand the planning process and timeline.
 - Summarize the main issues and research in the watershed.
 - Identify citizen concerns in the watershed and priorities.
 - Identify citizen-based strategies for watershed improvement.
- The second meeting would be used to gather input and review a draft of the plan and the results of the modelling.

Todd Stencil asked who the target audience for the civic engagement would be. Kimber Musser stated that the target would be any interested citizen who lives in the Le Sueur River Watershed.

The policy committee discussed whether to have the kickoff meeting in-person or virtually. The consensus was to have an in-person meeting, but if possible, to potentially have a hybrid in-person/virtual meeting option to ensure that as many interested people can be involved in the process as possible. The difficulties of having a successful hybrid meeting was also discussed. Having an in-person kickoff meeting on a Wednesday or Thursday evening after Labor Day, and before the harvest season starts was the consensus.

- Motion to have Waseca SWCD begin negotiations with the MSU-Mankato Water Resources Center for the civic engagement process, made by Randy Feist, Seconded by Todd Stencil.
- **Roll Call: Paap: Yes Hughes: Yes Feist: Yes Herman: Yes Kropp: Yes Malterer: Yes Stencil: Yes**
Motion approved.

ISG Contract Update:

- Mark Schaezke provided an update on the contract negotiations with ISG. He stated that the process is going well and that ISG is asking a lot of good questions to ensure that expectations and roles with the various partners and subcontractors, like the Freshwater Society, are clearly identified. Mark also stated that he would be providing an email update to the group listing recent information that he had received from ISG.

Meeting Location/Format/Location:

- The policy committee discussed having in-person meetings for all upcoming meetings. It was discussed that having them in the public buildings in the member counties and having a hybrid option for those who are unable to attend would be beneficial. It was also discussed that changing the meeting time to 10:00 AM would allow staff and policy members more time to travel to the meetings.
- Motion to have in person Policy Committee Meetings at 10:00 AM on the fourth Friday of each month, with the location rotating throughout the watershed and starting in Waseca County, made by Chris Hughes, Seconded by Randy Feist.



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- **Roll Call: Paap: Yes Hughes: Yes Feist: Yes Herman: Yes Kropp: Yes Malterer: Yes Stencel: Yes Motion approved.**

Other Updates

Rachel Wehner will take over day to day duties for next three months while Haley Byron is on leave. If State of Minnesota does not pass budget by end of June, nothing will be able to be charged to the grant from July 1 until whenever a budget is signed by the Governor.

Meeting schedule: Next meeting will be at 10:00 AM on July 23, 2021 in Waseca, at the Waseca County East Annex.

- Motion to adjourn by Randy Feist, seconded by Kevin Paap.
- **Roll Call: Paap: Yes Hughes: Yes Feist: Yes Herman: Yes Kropp: Yes Malterer: Yes Stencel: Yes Motion approved.**

Meeting Adjourned at 9:38 AM.

Secretary – Commissioner Ted Herman

Submitted by: Scott Salisbury (Blue Earth County)