



Le Sueur River One Watershed One Plan POLICY COMMITTEE

Date: January 28, 2022

Meeting #8

Time: 10:00 am

Location: Waseca County East Annex – Board Room

Attending: *Policy Committee Members:* Don Kropp (Freeborn SWCD) - virtual, Ted Herman (Freeborn Co.), Randy Feist (Faribault SWCD), De Malterer (Waseca Co.), Kevin Paap (Blue Earth Co.), Chris Hughes (Blue Earth SWCD), (Blue Earth SWCD), Larry Muff (Waseca SWCD), Tom Loveall (Faribault Co), Brad Krause (Waseca Co)

Staff/Other: Rachel Wehner (Freeborn Co.), Brenda Lageson (Freeborn SWCD) - virtual, Mark Schaetzke (Waseca SWCD) - virtual, Haley Byron (Waseca Co), Jill Sackett Eberhart (BWSR) - virtual, Julie Blackburn (ISG) – virtual, Shaina Keesley (BWSR) – virtual

Meeting called to order by De Malterer at 10:05 am, beginning with introductions and ice breaker.

Agenda:

Agenda modified to move ‘next steps’ up under ‘policy committee process’. Motion to approve the agenda as changed made by Randy Feist, Seconded by Kevin Paap.

Roll Call: Paap: Yes Hughes: Yes Loveall: Yes Feist: Yes Kropp: Yes Malterer: Yes Muff: Yes

Minutes:

Motion to approve the minutes, made by Larry Muff, Seconded by Randy Feist.

Roll Call: Paap: Yes Hughes: Yes Loveall: Yes Feist: Yes Kropp: Yes Malterer: Yes Muff: Yes

Financial Report

- Mark Schaetzke presented the financial report for expenses. Approximately \$36,000 paid out to ISG through 2021, \$5000 paid out for administration. Budget appears to be on track.

Motion to recommend Waseca SWCD to pay bills as presented, made by Kevin Paap, Seconded by Tom Loveall.

Roll Call: Paap: Yes Hughes: Yes Loveall: Yes Feist: Yes Kropp: Yes Malterer: Yes Muff: Yes

Policy Committee Process: What do we base our decisions on? What do we view as a successful plan?

De Malterer: Decisions are based on data, which is quite robust, and what the residents of Waseca County would want. A successful plan is one that qualifies us for funding for projects that address things that most need addressing without conflict.

Kevin Paap: Negative enough we have a need but positive enough and not too complex and complicated it’s too hard to accomplish. Prioritize. We can’t fix everything nor can we as fast as we like. Slow improvement is still improvement.

Larry Muff: Wants to be knowledgeable on the topic and be successful with an identified/ background data that residents can understand the reasoning and justification.

Ted Herman: It’s a lot of information, but things can be prioritized to what’s best for the watershed and water quality. What is most at need for the area?

Tom Loveall: The science matters, but facts and science can be questioned. People have to be comfortable with the facts. The public perception matters. This is their government and they have to feel the process is open. There is a balance between doing the peoples will and leading.

Randy Feist: Make sure when projects are being implemented, that we’re not creating new problems. We can’t fix everything, so prioritization matters. More input from municipalities would be beneficial because the focus needs to be more than agriculture.

Chris Hughes: Ownership aspect of the plan as we go forward. We need to work together to be successful. Make sure the people we represent are comfortable with what we’re doing.



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Donn Kropp: Keep it simple. Look at the data. Prioritize. Don't remake the wheel.

Next steps:

Haley Byron went over the planning timeline from December to first draft of the plan. The February meeting will be to discuss and approve issue statements and measurable goals. March and April will be for implementation table. A 2nd public meeting will also be in this time frame. In May all tables will be hopefully be complete and approved with the first draft done in June. We have been able to expedite the process because we have so much data for the watershed. We're not creating something new, we're building on what has been done.

Issue Statements: Water Quality in Lakes, Riparian and Shorelands, and Groundwater Protections

Water Quality in Lakes:

Haley Byron went through the issue statements and measurable goals for these Lakes. Muff requested an explanation for why certain lakes were chosen, what their issues are, and what solutions there are to fix. Some data was included in the packet. A summary of why those specific lakes were chosen would be sufficient. Question was posed by Muff how we would increase Citizen Lake monitoring program. The MPCA has a program for citizens to supply water samples. Lake associations are avid participants. The goal would be to expand this program and participation.

Targeting criteria was discussed. Local support was the highest ranking criteria. Subwatershed assessment, WRAPS priorities, and citizen priority followed also as a high ranking a criteria. Bass, Reeds, Madison, Freeborn, Lura, St Olaf, and Rice were the highest ranking lakes based on that criteria. Malterer stated success in smaller lakes may be more important than taking on a massive endeavor like Lake Elysian. Hughes asked what will happen for Elysian if not addressed in this plan. Byron said it's likely it will not be addressed as thoroughly in this first 10 years but may still have projects separate from the watershed on a county level. It comes down to what we can feasibly tackle in 10 years. Malterer states that Reeds has so much citizen by-in. Steering and TAC committees will revisit the topic of Elysian Lake, if it should be added or not.

Potential strategies were reviewed. Alum treatments and dredging were discussed why we have those as a questionable item. This is due to cost, time, and feasibility with this group. May be more of an individual entity that takes on a project of that level. Ordinance changes were questioned. Byron stated this was maybe something to consider to get consistency throughout the watershed (ie shoreland). Sometimes ordinance changes happen because the locals want the change. Invasive species funding was discussed as options as well. This plan will include projects that will be funded by other means than our implementation dollars.

Shoreland/ Riparian:

Haley Byron went through the issue statements and measurable goals of riparian and shoreland areas. Any erosion issues within shoreland will be addressed in the erosion section. Loveall asked if buffer would be included in this section. Byron stated it would. A discussion was had about the measurable goal related to voluntary adoption of expanded perennial cover and what is included in this. This could be ditches, lakes, buffers, wetlands, rivers, streams, etc. The group is not looking to expand the buffer law requirements in any way. Any expansion of an already existing buffer would be voluntary.

Targeting of shoreland will be priority lakes from list given, but priority watercourses will be decided at next meeting. Riparian areas targeting will be based on critical habitat, enhancements with impacts of alter hydrology, infrastructure protection, areas that could benefit from additional buffering. Strategies were discussed, with a question posed about what ordinance/ policy changes would be. This is more of a comparison between counties.



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Changes could come from these comparisons as counties do learn from each other. Lovell asked if an annual review of shoreland areas on lakes could be done. Byron stated shoreland surveys are taken in certain counties and this could be looked at as an option.

Groundwater Protection:

Haley Byron went over groundwater protection issue statement, desired future conditions, measurable goals, targeting, and strategies. Question was posed how we would help with septic systems. Wehner stated it typically is funding for low income residents for upgrades. Targeting will be focused on vulnerable areas as it relates to private and public wells. Pollution sensitivity map shows a defined line in Waseca County. Is this accurate or from a lack of data? Steering committee will check this.

Next meeting dates:

- Next TAC meeting will be attended by De Malterer Feb 3rd at 9am, virtually.
- Next Policy Committee meeting is February 25th at 10am in Blue Earth.

Motion to adjourn made by Randy Feist, seconded by Kevin Papp.

Roll Call: Paap: Yes Hughes: Yes Loveall: Yes Feist: Yes Kropp: Yes Malterer: Yes Muff: Yes

Meeting Adjourned at 12:00pm.

Secretary – Commissioner Ted Herman

Submitted by: Rachel Wehner (Freeborn County)