

Mississippi River – Brainerd One Watershed One Plan

Advisory Committee Meeting Report
July 26, 2022

Attendees

In Person: Melissa Barrick (Crow Wing SWCD), Bethany Chaplin (Crow Wing SWCD), Lance Chisholm (Morrison SWCD), Shelly Larson (Hayland Woods Native Nursery), Nicole Erikson (Crow Wing County), Deja Anton (Todd SWCD), Bruce Johnson (Burnhamville Township, Todd Co), Chris Pence (BWSR), Jeff Hrubes (BWSR), Chad Anderson (MDH), Tad Erickson (Region 5), Moriya Rufer (Houston Engineering)

Online: Bonnie Finnerty (MPCA), Tim Terrill (MHB), Brian Steffen (NRSC), Todd Holman (TNC), Chad Weiss (MLB), Perry Bunting (MLB)

Meeting Purpose

The purpose of this Advisory Committee meeting was to review draft issue statements and prioritize them by Management Zone.

Timeline

This graphic is a simplified version of the overall timeline. This timeline is a general guide, and the process can be adapted to fit as we go.

We are here:



Issue Prioritization

Since the last Advisory Committee meeting, draft issue statements were written combining all the different sources of information gathered. These issue statements were reviewed and revised. Then, participants spent most of the meeting prioritizing the issue statements by management zone. Participants were split into three small groups: two in-person and one online. The in-person groups worked through a worksheet with accompanying maps to prioritize the issues. The online group worked electronically with the same worksheet. Then all the groups came together, compared results, and came to a consensus on the final prioritization. The results from this activity can be found in the summary on the next page. These issues and the prioritization will be reviewed again at the next Advisory Committee meeting on August 23, and then presented to the Policy Committee for approval.

Next Steps

- August 23, 1:00-3:30pm: Advisory Committee Meeting, Crow Wing County Land Services Building
 - Review and finalize issue prioritization
 - Introduce Resource Prioritization
- August 23, 2:00-4:00pm: Policy Committee Meeting
 - Approve issue statements and prioritization
- September 27, 1:00-3:30pm: Advisory Committee Meeting, Crow Wing County Land Services Building
 - Resource Prioritization
 - Introduce Goal setting

Mississippi River – Brainerd 1W1P

Issue Development

Over the past two months, the Mississippi River – Brainerd Watershed Planning Group has been working on gathering issues for the watershed. Issues have been gathered from numerous sources including existing county water plans, the Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy (WRAPS), 60 Day Letters from state agencies and organizations, an online public survey, a public kick-off event, a Citizen Advisory Committee meeting, and an Advisory Committee meeting (Figure 1). These issues have been synthesized into the following draft issue statements on the next few pages.

At an Advisory Committee meeting on July 26, 2022, participants prioritized the issues by Management Zone using maps and data. The watershed is split into three Management Zones: Northern Forests, Central Mixed, and Southern Prairie (Figure 2). Any issue with a high ranking in any of the Management Zones is considered a Primary Issue to be addressed in this plan. Any issue with just medium or “as opportunities arise” ranking is considered a Secondary issue to be addressed in this plan.

These issues and their ranking will be reviewed and discussed again at the next Advisory Committee meeting on August 23. Then they will be presented to the Policy Committee for approval.

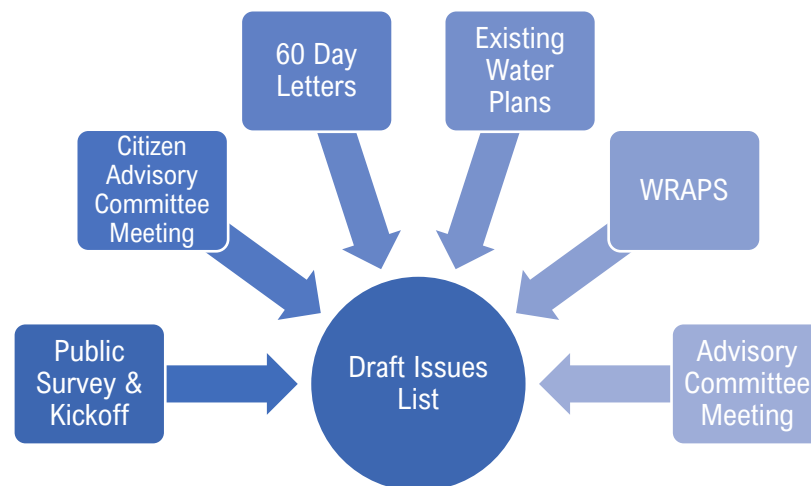


Figure 1. Process for gathering issue statements.

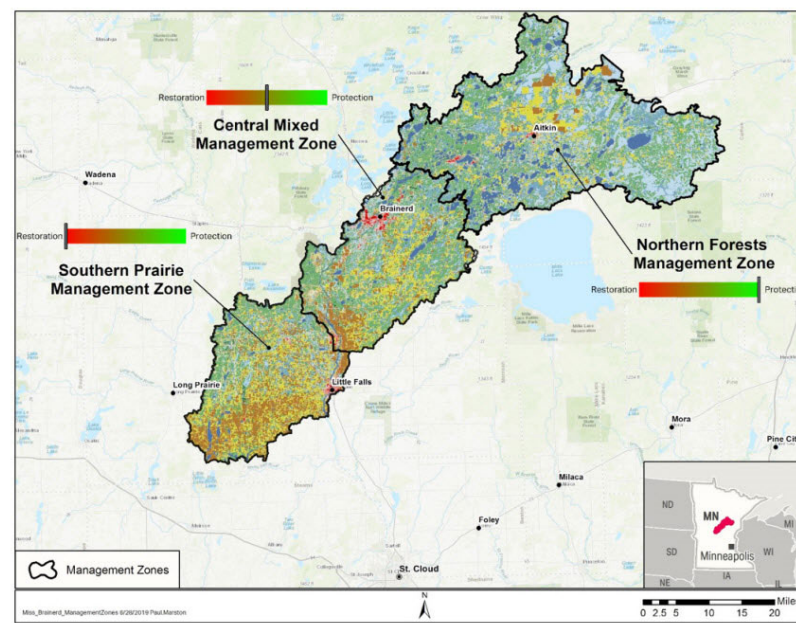
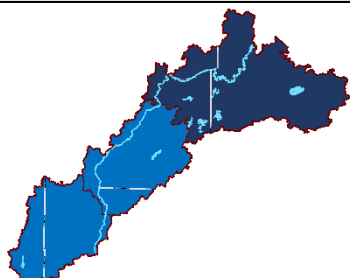
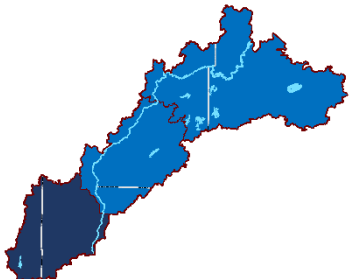


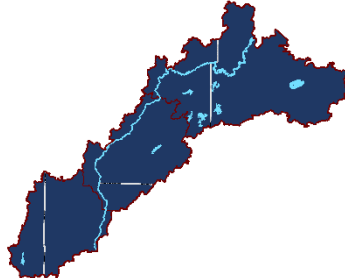
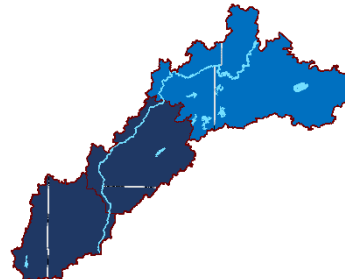
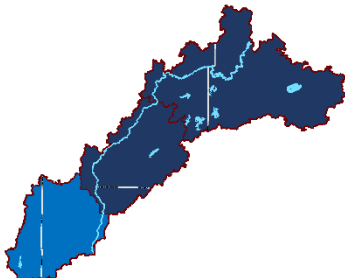
Figure 2. Management Zones in the MRB Watershed.

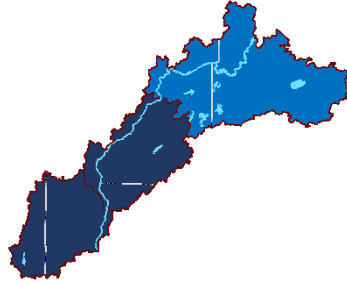
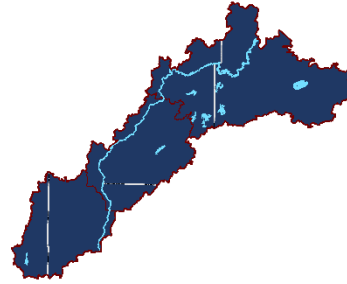
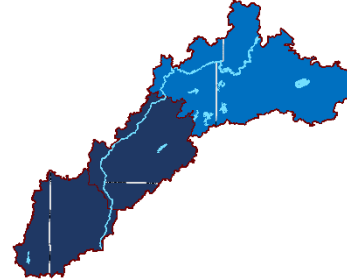
Primary Issues

Primary issues are the most important issues that will be the focus of implementation efforts in the 10-year plan. They had a “high” ranking in at least one Management Zone. The main theme of the issue statement is shown in **bold** text.

Management Zone Prioritization:  High  Medium  As Opportunities Arise

Resource Concern	Issues Statement	Management Zone Prioritization	Notes
<i>Resource impacted by the issue</i>	<i>BWSR requires a “brief issue statement that describes the relevance of the issue for the planning area”. Below are draft issue statements with their main themes in bold.</i>	<i>On 7/27/2022 the Advisory Committee prioritized the issues by Management Zone.</i>	<i>This column lists notes about what is covered by this issue statement.</i>
Surface water: Lakes, Streams, Wetlands, Mississippi River	Altered hydrology (channelized streams and ditch systems) increases peak flows and erosion and has led to biologically impaired streams.		Dams, culverts, Aitkin Diversion Channel, Brainerd Dam, Ditches, Need to reconnect streams to the floodplain, and identify areas to reduce runoff/peak flows to improve habitat and nutrient attenuation. Schwanke Creek in the south.
Surface water: Lakes, Streams, Wetlands, Mississippi River	Bacteria in runoff can cause aquatic recreation and aquatic life impairments.		Bacteria impairments, cattle exclusions. Feedlots in the south, pasture management in central and north.

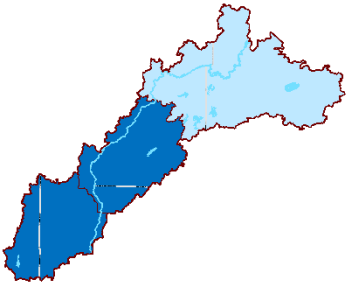
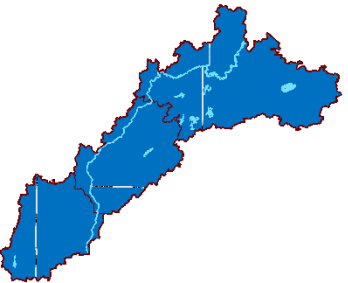
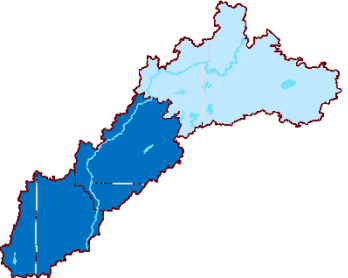
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Surface water: Lakes	Excessive nutrients due to lakeshore development, internal loading, and land use changes contributes to algal growth, and recreational and biological impairments.		TP lake impairments, internal loading, declining lake trends, wastewater discharge, septic systems, nutrient application
Surface water: Lakes, Streams, Wetlands, Mississippi River	Stormwater runoff contributes sediment, nutrients, and pollutants to water bodies.		MRBW has 3 MS4s, Little Buffalo Creek is a priority stream impacted by high flow from stormwater, chloride is included in this issue statement. High = Brainerd/Baxter, Little Falls.
Surface water: Lakes, Streams, Mississippi River	Sufficient protection is needed for outstanding resources and sensitive species to maintain water and habitat quality.		Landscape Stewardship Plan, wild rice, cisco, Nokasippi River, outstanding biological significance, priority shallow lakes. Wild rice is a high priority for the Mille Lacs Band. Mining issues, trout creeks, trout lake in Morrison Co.

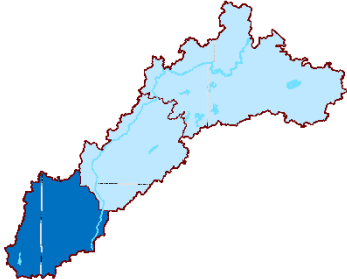
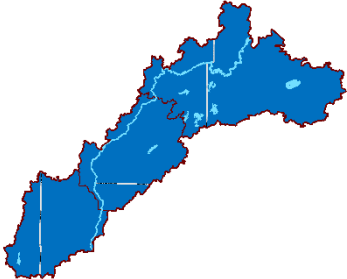
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Groundwater: Quality	Groundwater quality is vulnerable to contamination.		Nitrates, Surficial Sand Aquifer, protect DWSMA, high water table, arsenic, chloride, wellhead protection, pipelines, manure stockpiles, land application.
Habitat: Riparian, Aquatic	Riparian and in-lake alteration from development impacts water quality, lake health, and fish communities.		Development pressure, shoreline ordinances, impervious surface, clearing shoreline and in-lake vegetation. No wake zones. Identify where there are lake associations.
Habitat: Uplands	Forest fragmentation due to urban and agricultural land use changes impacts water quality, infiltration, and habitat.		50% of the watershed is forested, specifically protect the Mississippi River Corridor, conversion of forest to ag land, forest management, Landscape Stewardship Plan priorities Private forest management, Reforestation.

Secondary Issues

Secondary issues will be addressed during the 10-year plan, likely with additional funding and/or with partners. The main theme of the issue statement is shown in **bold** text.

Management Zone Prioritization:  Medium  As Opportunities Arise

Resource Concern	Issues Statement	Management Zone Prioritization	Notes
Surface water: Streams, Mississippi River	Eroding streambanks contribute to turbidity impairments and reduced habitat quality.		Mississippi River TMDL, Aitkin Diversion Channel, Riparian Buffers, stream channel. Focus on smaller streams: Little Buffalo Creek, Fletcher Creek.
Surface water: Wetlands	Wetland restoration and protection is necessary to store water, provide habitat, and improve downstream water quality.		Longitudinal connectivity, wetland restoration
Surface water: Lakes, Streams, Wetlands, Mississippi River	Soil health is important for agricultural productivity, water quality, and climate change resilience.		Cover crops, no till, soil organic matter, rotational grazing.

Resource Concern	Issues Statement	Management Zone Prioritization	Notes
Groundwater: Quantity	Groundwater sustainability is vulnerable to overuse and loss of recharge.		Irrigation, groundwater use
Habitat: Aquatic	Aquatic invasive species decrease biodiversity and impact recreation.		Note: the AIS program already has its own plan and dedicated funding, so even if it is a priority in the watershed, it may not be a priority in this plan.