

Mississippi River – Brainerd

One Watershed One Plan

Advisory Committee Meeting Report

June 28, 2022

Attendees

In Person: Melissa Barrick (Crow Wing SWCD), Bethany Chaplin (Crow Wing SWCD), Brian Steffen (NRSC), Shelly Larson (Hayland Woods Native Nursery), Janet Smude (Aitkin SWCD), Tim Terill (MHB), Nicole Erikson (Crow Wing County), Deja Anton (Todd SWCD), Greg Blaine (Morrison County Commissioner), Rick Johnson (Todd County Board of Adjustments), Chris Pence (BWSR), Jeff Hrubes (BWSR), Chad Anderson (MDH), Brendan L. (Region 5 Green Corps), Tad Erickson (Region 5), Moriya Rufer (Houston Engineering)

Online: Bonnie Finnerty (MPCA), Trevor Johnson (Baxter Assistant Engineer), Lance Chisholm (Morrison SWCD), Greg Kimons (Little Falls Public Works)

Meeting Purpose

The purpose of this first Advisory Committee meeting was mainly to get the group acquainted with one another, share existing priorities from state agencies and other local organizations, and brainstorm watershed issues.

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.



Presentations

Agencies and local organizations were invited to summarize their priorities for the watershed. Letters received from state agencies during the 60 Day Notification to plan will be posted on the project's website.

- **Board of Water and Soil Resources (Chris Pence and Jeff Hrubes)**
 - Reviewed the Plan Content Requirements document which basically states that plans need to be sufficiently detailed to identify with certainty what projects, what locations, and what pollutants/resource concerns will be addressed. He also listed the required plan sections or divisions: Executive Summary, Land and Resource Narrative, Priority Resource Issues, Measurable Goals, Targeted Implementation Schedule, Implementation Programs, and Administration and Coordination. Jeff Hrubes emphasized that it is important to ask questions as the hardest task is to tell BWSR what it is that we want to do, specifically.
- **Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (Bonnie Finnerty)**
 - MPCA would like to see a focus on the Nearly/Barely Impaired Lakes, Urban Stormwater, and Livestock Management. Most pollution indicators are non-point source related. She described to newcomers that TMDLs are studies completed by the MPCA on specific lakes and streams that are not meeting water quality standards. These reports are submitted to the EPA.
- **Minnesota Department of Health (Chad Anderson)**
 - MDH wants to see emphasis on Groundwater and Drinking water- particularly issues brought out in the Clean Water Act:
 - Wells being up to code
 - Source water Protection
 - DWSMAs- Drinking Water Supply Management Areas
 - Sealing abandoned wells that are a direct conduit to underground aquifers
 - Protection of Private Wells
- **Natural Resource Conservation Service (Brain Steffen)**
 - Local work group priorities include cattle fencing and watering source, waste pit closures, and nutrient management.

Chad mentioned that of the wells tested (%unknown) that 7.7% have tested above the 10mg/kg standard (10 ppb) and 0.07% have tested above the 10 mg/L standard (10 ppm). There are approximately 8,135 private wells in the watershed. Also the City of St. Cloud sources drinking water from the Mississippi River.

- **Mississippi Headwaters Board (Tim Terrill)**
 - Cover the first 400 miles of the river, including zoning authority
 - Priorities include protection of the river for habitat, recreation, and downstream drinking water sources
 - One way of looking at it is to think of the headwaters of the Mississippi not as Mark Twain's Mississippi (muddy), but as Zebulon Pike's Mississippi (fresh and clean).

Watershed Maps

Melissa Barrick walked the group through a variety of data maps for the watershed. Participants are encouraged to bring these along to the meetings for reference during discussions.

Public Kickoff Meeting Update

The public kickoff for this watershed plan was held on June 6 at Camp Ripley. It was attended by over 60 people. An online public survey was also distributed to watershed residents. The results will be summarized and shared with this committee when it is completed.

Issues Brainstorm

The meeting participants split into four groups: three in-person and one online. They were asked to brainstorm issues for the watershed in the following areas:

- Surface Water (lakes, streams, wetlands)
- Groundwater (drinking water and aquifer)
- Habitat (riparian, upland, and aquatic)

These brainstormed issues will be used to develop issues statements in the plan. At the next Advisory Committee meeting, participants will prioritize the issues to determine the focus of the plan. Brainstorm results are on the next page of this report.

1. Group 1- Orange
2. Group 2- Blue
3. Group 3- Green
4. Online- Yellow

Next Steps

- July 26, 1:00-3:30pm: Advisory Committee Meeting, Crow Wing County Land Services Building
- July 26, 4:00-6:00pm: Citizen Advisory Committee Meeting, Crow Wing County Land Services
- August 23, 1:00-3:30pm: Advisory Committee Meeting, Crow Wing County Land Services Building
- August 23, 2:00-4:00pm: Policy Committee Meeting

Lack of Understanding

TMDL Streams & Lakes- Declining Trends

Altered Hydrology

Wetlands

Sediment

Industrial Stormwater

Resorts/Golf Course/Farming Practices

Septic- Rising Lake Levels (Not Enough Separation)

Legacy Impacts of Shore Development

Lakes as Habitat- Fisheries, Plants, & Whole Ecosystems

Huge Conversion of Forests to Ag Fields

Cost- Best Bang for Buck

Chemicals

Stormwater - urban and along lakeshore

drain tiling from farms

ditching/ altered hydrology

Livestock - in/near waterbodies and manure runoff

TTS- Mississippi

Shallow Lakes- How do we treat them?

Protection of Lakeside Wetlands

Intensification of development on lakes and streams

Field erosion and runoff causes sediment and nutrient loading and low dissolved oxygen.

Wastewater discharge

Changing weather patterns.

Shallow impaired lakes with large watersheds.

Lack of public understanding of how their actions impact lakes

Recreation

Bacteria Impairments- Long Lake, & Swan

Wakeboarding/Lake Use Impacts to Shoreland

Regulatory Consistency- Needs Improvement

Too Much Development (Riparian)- Development Pressure (Impervious)

Erosion in rural areas and stormwater runoff contaminants in urban areas.

Flood Hazards- Wetlands

Water Management

Aitkin Diversion Channel

Brainerd Dam

Stormwater Runoff

Phosphorous

Bacteria and nutrient runoff from animal ag impacts water quality.

Ordinance Restraints to Protecting Buffer/Riparian/Water Quality

Chlorides

Streambank Stability

New Development

Water Quality- Recreational Limitations, Wildlife Habitat, Agriculture, Impairment

Turf Grass Runoff

Flood Plains

Chlorides

Brainerd Dam

Streambank Stability

New Development

Water Quality- Recreational Limitations, Wildlife Habitat, Agriculture, Impairment

AIS

Watershed Erosion- Agriculture, Nutrients, Restricting Livestock Access

Wild Rice Production

Long Lake- Still Good But Threatened

Irrigation Water Impacts

Addressing "Nearly Barely"

Impacts from High Water Events, Runoff, "Bounce", and Hard Armor

Protection of Native Rice Beds

Water Quality- Recreational Limitations, Wildlife Habitat, Agriculture, Impairment

Surface Water Issues

PFAS
Concerns

Wetland and
Groundwater
Interface

Recharge

DWSMA
protection

Feedlot Rule
Consistency/Regulatio
n Across Watershed

Pipe Lines
and
Impacts

Pit
Closures

Chemical
Infiltration

Livestock
Feedlots

Chloride

contamination
from spills, oil
and rail

Retention
Ponds Up to
Specifications

Irrigation

Shallow
groundwater
and sandy
soils.

Salt Use In
Poultry
Facilities/Road
Salt/Water
Softeners

Arsenic
and
Nitrates

Overapplication of
Nutrient/Lawns,
Shoreline

High
Water
Table

Fragmentation and
conversion of
uplands by changes
in land use

Well Head
Protection

Stormwater
Impacts

Identify
Groundwater
Recharge
Areas

Abandoned
Manure Pits

Feed Lot
Regulations

Septic
Systems

Systems
Not Up To
Code

Stockpiles-
Poultry

Aquifer
Depletion

Gravel
Pits

Ash

Landfills

Peat
Harvesting

Dog and
Pet Poop
Near
Wells

Laundromats

Industrial
and
Chemical
Disposal

VRBO-
Septic
Capacity

Water
Quantity

Shallow
Aquifers/Sandy/Porou
s Soils

Unsealed
Wells

Urban
Development

Microplastics

Best
Management
Practices

Agriculture
Over
Development

Recharge

Forestry/Habitat Issues

