

Mississippi River – Brainerd One Watershed One Plan

Technical Advisory Committee Meeting Report September 27, 2022

Attendees

In Person: Bethany Chaplin (Crow Wing SWCD), Melissa Barrick (Crow Wing SWCD), Janet Smude (Aitkin SWCD), Kaysie Maleski (Aitkin SWCD), Deja Anton (Todd SWCD), Lee Buchholz (Todd SWCD Supervisor), Bruce Johnson (Burnhamville TWP- Todd County), Mitch Brinks (TSA 8), Chris Pence (BWSR), Jeff Hrubes (BWSR), Tim Terrill (MHB), Todd Holman (TNC), Bonnie Finnerty (MPCA), Tad Erickson (Region 5), Moriya Rufer (Houston Engineering)

Online: Lance Chisholm (Morrison SWCD), Nicole Erikson (Crow Wing County), Jeff Wiess (DNR), Greg Kimman (City of Little Falls), Brian Steffen (NRCS).

Meeting Purpose

The purpose of this Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting was to finalize issue statements and begin resource prioritization and goals.

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.



Issue Statements

At the last Advisory and Policy Committee meetings, some minor changes were recommended to the issue statements including:

- Soil health rankings were moved higher based on Policy Committee recommendations (high for southern and central zones and medium for northern zone)
- New issue statement was added for Forest Health, which includes prescribed burning, forest stand improvement, regenerative forestry, invasive terrestrials and impacts by Oak Wilt. Forest Health was assigned as a high priority for the southern and central management regions and a medium priority for the northern management region.
- Changed the southern zone to high priority for Altered Hydrology

These changes were discussed, and the Advisory Committee came to consensus that these revisions should be completed.

Resource Prioritization

Moriya Rufer presented an introduction to Resource Prioritization, which will be the next step in the planning process. This is the process to narrow down which lakes, streams, and groundwater areas to focus implementation in the next 10 years to make measurable progress. Data/criteria are used to narrow down which resources have the highest quality and the highest risk.

Common definitions for management focus in northern Minnesota protection watersheds:

VIGILANCE	Has already achieved the 75% permanent land protection goal. Management Actions include opportunity-based projects and maintaining protected lands.
PROTECT	Natural resources are generally in good condition, risks to natural resources are low, and the management focus is to maintain and increase protection levels with strategies such as private forest stewardship and conservation easements.
ENHANCE/ PROTECT	Some lakes have degrading trends and some natural resources need enhancement, and there are potential risk factors that could negatively impact the surface water and ground water systems of the watershed. Projects include enhancement such as pasture management, stormwater management, shoreline buffers and conservation easements in ecologically sensitive areas in addition to protection strategies as stated in the Protect focus above.
RESTORE	The resource is impaired (phosphorus, dissolved oxygen, total suspended solids, or <i>E. coli</i>). Focus on resources that are barely impaired. Reduce pollutant loading through stormwater and agricultural best management practices.

These category definitions were discussed, and then some data was presented for groundwater, lakes, and streams.

Groundwater

ENHANCE

Focus on areas with high nitrogen infiltration risk to groundwater and vulnerable Drinking Water Supply Management Areas (DWSMAs).

DWSMAs with high potential contaminant risk due to connection with surface water:

- Brainerd
- Baxter
- Crosby
- Little Falls

DWSMAs with high potential contaminant risk due to land use:

- Camp Ripley
- Swanville

PROTECT

Focus on high groundwater recharge value. Protect forests and wetlands. Cover crops on ag lands.

Lakes

RESTORE

Focus on barely impaired lakes? MPCA reported that lakes with a TMDL completed are a higher priority because there is something (projects) that can be done.

ENHANCE

Lakes with declining trends and/or >25% disturbance in their minor watershed (disturbance includes agriculture, development, and urban areas). Narrow focus by risks and qualities.

PROTECT

Lakes with no trend, improving trends, or insufficient data for trends. Narrow focus by risks and qualities. Split shallow lakes as a habitat focus and different management than deep lakes.

Streams

RESTORE

Focus on *E. coli*, TSS, and Turbidity impairments.

ENHANCE

Streams with biological impairments or nearly impaired for *E. coli*, TSS, or Turbidity. Threshold for protection/disturbance is 60% (based on Sandy Verry guidance). Add Whisky Creek (Baxter), which has a large urban drainage and fits into climate resiliency/storage focus for the future. Include the tributary for Little Buffalo Creek.

PROTECT

Streams with the exceptional use standard. Aim for 60% protection in the minor watershed.

Measurable Goals

The next step in the planning process is to develop measurable goals. The group began this process by looking at each issue and how they would measure progress. For example, connectivity could be measured in miles of stream.

The two issues discussed were how to measure stormwater management and agricultural land management. Stormwater could be measured in number of pipes flowing to the river improved, and agricultural land management could be measured in acres of practices.

Measurable goals will be continued at the next Advisory Committee meeting in November.

Plan Section Review

The **Land and Water Resource Narrative** is Section 2 of the plan and is meant to be a narrative of the past, present, and future of the watershed in laymen's terms. It will be emailed to the TAC for review in October and comments are due to Moriya Rufer mrufer@houstoneng.com by October 28.

Section 3. Priority Issues is completed now that the Advisory Committee has finalized the issue statements. It will be emailed to the TAC for review in October and comments are due to Moriya Rufer mrufer@houstoneng.com by October 28.

Next Steps

All meetings are held at the Crow Wing County Land Services building.

- **TAC – November 1, 1:00-3:30-pm**
 - Resource Prioritization
 - Goals

- **TAC & PC November 22, 1:00-4:00-pm**
 - Resource Prioritization
 - Goals