

Mississippi River- Brainerd 1W1P Technical Advisory Committee Meeting September 27, 2022

Location: Crow Wing County Land Services, Brainerd

Present:

Tad Erickson, Region 5 Development

Bethany Chaplin, Crow Wing SWCD

Melissa Barrick, Crow Wing SWCD

Kaysie Maleski, Aitkin County

Todd Holman, Nature Conservancy

Mitch Brinks, TSA 8

Janet S Aitkin SWCD

Chris Pence, BWSR

Jeff Hrubes, BWSR

Moriya Rufer, Houston Engineering Consultant

Deja Anton, Todd SWCD District Manager

Lee Buchholz, Todd SWCD Supervisor

Bruce Johnson, Burnhamville TWP- Todd County

Tim Terrill, Mississippi Headwaters Board

On Line attendees:

Greg Kimman, Little Falls

Lance Chisholm, Morrison SWCD

Nicole Erickson, Crow Wing County

Brian Steffen, NRCS

Jeff Weiss, DNR

Bonnie Finnerty, MPCA

Agenda Item 1. Opened meeting with introductions and name of favorite fall activity

It was decided to “scratch” agenda item number 3 to bring forth at a later time

Agenda Item 2. Discussed the changes made to the Issue Statements by the Policy Board. They added a new issue statement for Forest Health which includes prescribed burning, forest stand improvement, regenerative forestry, invasive terrestrials and impacts by Oak Wilt, particularly for Morrison County.

Forest Health was assigned as a High Priority for the South and Central management regions and a Medium priority for the Upper management region.

Soil Health was bumped to a High Priority for the South and Central management regions and to a Medium Priority for the Upper management region.

Deja, Todd SWCD, brought up the concern from the Big Swan Lake Association, wanting Alum treatment to be added as an approved method for treating internal loading. It was noted that there will be an action added to sufficiently address Alum treatments when the committee gets to that phase of planning. Jeff Hrubes, BWSR, also wanted it noted that though Alum can be used to treat internal phosphorous loading, if a balanced approach is not taken, new problems could arise. The resulting clarity of the water allows for more sunlight encouraging weed growth which typically is frowned on by lake users as well. Comment was noted.

Greg Kimman, Little Falls, asked if the committee is considering connectivity for fish and the impacts dams have on fish habitat. Moriya will add fish passage to the connectivity issue statement. He also questioned the terminology of “cattle exclusions”. *What did this term mean? Are we excluding cattle from this issue statement?* It was explained that cattle exclusion is in reference to a code that fences cattle off from surface waters. It was decided to change the term “cattle exclusion” to “fencing and alternative waterers” to make it clear.

Scratched Agenda Item 3.

Agenda Item 4. Resource Prioritization. Moriya discussed changing terminology from Priority/Target Areas to Focus Areas. It was discussed how the plan might determine Focus Areas based on four descriptors: **Vigilance, Protect, Enhance, and Restore**. Each descriptor was defined. Enhancements could be made to nearly impaired water bodies as defined by the MPCA or lakes with a declining water trend. Impairments can include biologic impairments. **Restore** lakes are usually impaired for TSS, bacteria, and nutrients. Does the team want to include dissolved oxygen and turbidity impairments as well? The committee asked for the term **Vigilance** to be defined in the plan- it could be defined by 75% protected but what defines the 75% exactly? It was thought that protections include easements or measures in place that could prevent future conditions of impairment (as long as they stay in place). It was suggested to use “anthropogenic measures” as sometimes there are natural impairments that humans cannot fix. Anthropogenic refers to an issue originated by humans. Moriya said she would “massage the wording” to make it reader friendly and understandable.

For Enhancement Focus Areas, the committee will need to decide where exactly the plan should work and in what ways to make conditions better in those Focus Areas.

Nitrogen infiltration was discussed along with the MDH well testing results. A team member suggested we clarify when discussing results of the testing that these results were *based on a study* narrow in scope and are not fully representative of potential results if all wells were tested. It was thought that land use, such as center pivot irrigation near shallow wells, could be looked at. It was mentioned that the County Well Index does list results for nitrates for all new wells. Moriya pointed out that the South management region was actually in a surface water DWSMA for the City of St. Cloud as the city accesses drinking water from surface water.

It was mentioned that there needed to be a focus on education for lake owners/users in Crow Wing County because citizens do not understand the impacts their land use choices have on the drinking water supply. People often do not understand the impacts of spraying lakes with herbicides to control weeds and the impacts drinking water.

A question was posed as to how much of the focus areas are already protected?

BREAK- 10 min.

Lakes labeled as “Restore Lakes” are those that are nutrient impaired. Bonnie Finnerty, MPCA, felt that we should include lakes with an existing TMDL as those lakes are already considered High Priority lakes by the MPCA.

It was noted that all of the declining lakes are in Aitkin County.

It was thought that the plan should include a matrix indicating the economic value made by the suggested improvements.

Melissa Barrick, Crow Wing SWCD, said she would try to get her hands on the % of disturbed shoreline per year data from Paul Radomski. It would be nice to include this data as well. It was summarized that to date ½ of the available shoreline has been developed and the rate of current/ future development adds another 2% per year.

Discussion was held on habitat vs. water quality.

Streams. Stream Focus potentials were not yet complete, but it was thought that the plan should look at the minor watershed condition when evaluating streams. Melissa, Crow Wing SWCD, asked what the turning point or threshold is for stream water quality in relation to percent developed. Moriya, Houston Engineering, responded: A stream or river having more than 60% disturbance indicates negative trends in water quality.

A discussion on Buffalo Creek was held. It was thought that the best category to place it under was “Restore”. It is eligible to be addressed as many of its tributaries have gully erosion.

Item 4. Draft Goal Themes.

How does the committee want to measure each issue? Connectivity for example could be measured in miles of stream. (Fish passage will be added to the notes section).

Stormwater- Do we want to inventory how many pipes are flowing to the river and then determine how many were improved? We could also show reduction in peak flows through stormwater control installments. We could measure by the number of cities/villages that have stormwater mgt. plans before vs. after. Finally, do we want to include in the budget “updates” to current stormwater plans?

How do we measure Ag land improvements? Perhaps by acres treated. Committee concurred that bacteria is not a good way to measure progress- too variable.

We could use soil erosion predictive models.

5. Close of Meeting.

Todd Hollmann mentioned that Camp Ripley is developing a report to be concluded next Spring (2023) that would be relative to this planning grant but the report will not get done in time, unfortunately. Jeff Hrubes, BWSR, said that the plan can note the report and perhaps include it in the appendix if received on time.

Moriya and Tad asked the team to *please review* the Land and Resource Narrative and the Priority Resource Issues. Send Comments by October 21st.

The next Technical Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled for November 1, 2022 at 1:00 at the Crow Wing Land Services Building. It will focus on Resource Prioritization & Goals.

The meeting closed at 3:25 pm.