

**COTTONWOOD-MIDDLE MINNESOTA ONE WATERSHED, ONE PLAN**  
POLICY COMMITTEE – VIRTUAL\* & IN-PERSON  
MEETING MINUTES  
FEBRUARY 19, 2025 – 2:00 PM



Policy Committee (PC) Present: Larry Anderson-Area II, Bill Eckstein-RCRCA, Mark Wellner-Brown SWCD, Tom Appel-Cottonwood County, Rick Anderson-Lyon County, John Lanoue-Lyon SWCD, \*Mona Henkel & \*Jason Miller-Murray SWCD, Rick Wakefield-Redwood County, and \*Ed Carter-Redwood SWCD.

Steering Team (ST) Present: Melanie Krueger-Brown SWCD, Kay Clark & Becky Buchholz-Cottonwood SWCD/County, Kerry Netzke-RCRCA/Area II, John Shea-BWSR and Mark Hiles-BWSR.

Chairman Rick Anderson called the meeting to order at 2:00 PM and introductions were made.

Regular Business Items

▪ **Minutes from November 20, 2024**

▪ **Financial Report.** Financial reports for the months ended November 2024, December 2024, and January 2025 were provided. Expenses to date include \$144,536.70 for consultant services; \$31,979.71 for administration, and total grant expenditure of \$177,396.41. Remaining grant funds amount to \$75,603.59. Motion by Wakefield, seconded by Larry Anderson, to approve the November 20, 2024 Minutes and the financial reports as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

▪ **Formal Agreement Update**

The attorneys have revised RCRCA's joint powers agreement and developed bylaws. The RCRCA Board approved the JPA which was sent to the member counties and SWCDs for review/approval and authorization for signatures.

BWSR Board Approvals

▪ **BWSR Southern Region Committee (virtual) – December 9, 2024**

Netzke presented the Plan to the Southern Region Committee. A few questions were asked with several compliments on the Plan contents. The committee recommended Plan approval to the BWSR Board.

▪ **BWSR Board (virtual) – January 22, 2025**

John Shea presented the Plan to the BWSR Board. No questions were asked and only good comments received regarding the ease to read the Plan and reasonable goals. Since the Resolutions to Submit included language to adopt the Plan upon BWSR approval, January 22, 2025 becomes the start date for match and any other work that account toward the Plan goals.

▪ **HEI Deliverables**

The deliverables package should be ready by the end of the week as editors are making the Plan interactive where you can switch from section to section by using the footer. The package will include digital Plan documents, Word documents of the Plan sections, high resolution PDFs, and an ArcGIS map package with shapefiles. The final Plan will be forwarded to Plan partners for website posting.

HEI Amendment #1

The RCRCA Board, as grantee, signed the \$69,600 amendment on February 7, 2025. The additional services include:

▪ **BEAST (Benefits Estimator and Summary Tool) Spreadsheet**

Work is underway and a delivery date of April 1 has been established. A "How To" guide will be included to explain the use of the spreadsheet.

#### ▪ **MS4Front Tracking System**

The data management platform tracks all activities and aggregates that work toward Plan goals. Three modules are developed: 1) Education & Outreach, 2) WBIF (includes the Scoring & Ranking Sheet), and 3) Other Funded Projects & Practices (other grant funds, local and federal funds). A public-facing dashboard is developed that illustrates the progress to the Plan goals. A Data Entry Guide for MS4Front will be provided upon completion.

#### ▪ **Hydrologic Model**

Netzke had a TEAMS meeting with HEI staff to discuss the modeling approach, software, and other factors pertaining to this effort. Netzke will provide hydraulic information for Area II's projects that already exist in the watershed to include that storage into the model. HEI intends to present their findings to the Policy Committee upon completion.

#### Next Steps for WBIF Application

##### ▪ **Grant Amount = \$1,958,370**

The last date to apply is April 30. If this is missed, the next date would be August.

##### ▪ **Grant Application Language**

Gross has graciously shared Word documents for the application and work plan that can be edited for this watershed. Before the application can be finalized, reductions from the BEAST spreadsheet will need to be generated. Now that the Plan has been approved, the RCRC Board will make a motion to apply for the WBIF grant. The Policy Committee will oversee and approve expenditures to complete the planning process.

#### WBIF Implementation Documents

##### ▪ **Procedure for Acquiring Cost-Share Funding**

##### ▪ **Grant Cost-Share Policy**

##### ▪ **Scoring and Ranking Spreadsheet**

The Steering Team met today from 11:30 AM-1:40 PM. After some discussion relating to these documents and the sequence in which they are completed, the Steering Team opted to start with the Cost-Share Policy. The current Des Moines policy was used for guidance and was edited as follows:

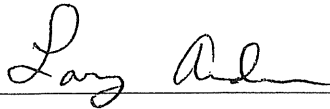
- 1) Ag Practices: State Funding capped at 85%. State + Non-State funding capped at 95%.
- 2) Non-Structural Practices: 1,2 and 3-year contracts will be offered. Subsequent 1-year contracts will require something different from the prior contract (single species to multi species, multi species + tillage change, etc.). The focus will be on the LAND, and not the implementer. Instead of a dollar cap, it was suggested to cap the acres (320 acres is the Alliance cap).
- 3) Groundwater Practices will remain the same (50% cost-share up to \$1,000)
- 4) Forestry will be deleted.
- 5) SSTs: Much discussion followed whether incentive payments are appropriate. BWSR encourages to not offer incentives.

In order to really make progress, team members suggested an all-day meeting be scheduled in order for the Steering Team. to fully discuss these topics so that the documents can be generated with the April 30 deadline in mind.

#### Next Meetings

Consensus of the Policy Committee that no meetings until June 18, 2025 should be necessary. This meeting will be in-person at Springfield Community Center at 2:00 PM.

With no other business to discuss, the chairman declared the meeting adjourned at 2:36 PM.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Larry Anderson", is positioned above a horizontal line.

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Larry Anderson, Secretary  
Cottonwood-Middle Minnesota Partnership