

COTTONWOOD-MIDDLE MINNESOTA ONE WATERSHED, ONE PLAN

POLICY COMMITTEE – IN-PERSON & VIRTUAL **

MEETING MINUTES

AUGUST 21, 2024 – 1:00 PM



Policy Committee (PC) Present: Larry Anderson-Area II, Bill Eckstein-RCRCA, Jeff Veerkamp-Brown County, Mark Wellner-Brown SWCD, Tom Appel-Cottonwood County, Daryl Tasler-Cottonwood SWCD, Lori Gunnink-Murray County, Mona Henkels-Murray SWCD, and Rick Wakefield-Redwood County.

Steering Team (ST) Present: Allison Kletscher and Jaden Sandgren-Brown County, Melanie Krueger-Brown SWCD, Kay Clark-Cottonwood SWCD/County, Craig Christensen-Murray SWCD, and Kerry Netzke-RCRCA/Area II, Mark Hiles and John Shea-BWSR.

Consultant: Rachel Olm, Houston Engineering Inc.

Vice Chairman Wellner welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 1:02 PM.

There were no additions or corrections to the Agenda. Minutes from the June 24, 2024 meeting were reviewed. Motion by Tasler, seconded by Gunnink, to approve the Agenda and the June 24, 2024 minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Financials for month-ended July 31 were reviewed. Expenses to date include \$126,361.90 for consultant services; \$23,626.63 for administration, and total grant expenditure of \$149,988.53. Remaining grant funds amount to \$103,011.47. Motion by Veerkamp, seconded by Appel, to approve the financials as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was turned over to Rachel Olm, Houston Engineering.

Formal Review

We are nearing the end of the 60-day Formal Review which runs through August 30 with the Public Hearing scheduled for the morning of September 18 hosted by the Policy Committee. Steering Team attendance is encouraged.

Comments received to date include a formal comment from MPCA, and informal comments from DNR, Cottonwood SWCD, and USFWS.

- MPCA's letter commended the planning effort which was responsive to MPCA's priorities, concerns and comments.
- USFWS pointed out on page 2-7 (Table 2-1) that WPAs in line 1 are included in the USFWS Lands in line 8. Olm suggested deleting the WPAs line to eliminate the duplication.
- Cottonwood SWCD (Sediment & Nutrients, page 4-4) asked for the inclusion of "urban" with agricultural conservation practices in the last paragraph. On page 4-14, urban forestry will be added to the text.
- DNR asked where debris maintenance was addressed in the Plan as it was set as a Medium Priority issue, but no action or funding is listed on page 5-8. Education and Outreach was offered as a location for an action item will be added stating that debris maintenance will be a collaborative effort between local/state/federal entities. DNR Rule requires that the debris must show impact in order to allow for DNR to permit removal of the blockage. Language will include something to effect of 'protecting infrastructure while considering water quality,

aquatic habitat and hydrology'. Partner funding should also be added to this action line item.

- Table 7.2 Level 1 Funding The zeroes in this table do not fully reflect the situation. The zero will be removed and replaced with 'anticipated but unknown'. Text will be added that 'federal funding is a critical source but not a reliable baseline funding source'.
- Change 'WBIF' to 'State Funding' in the event of a name change in the future.
- The Plan needs to project outcomes with more than just WBIF. NRCS will be asked to provide the amount of federal funding per watershed (EQIP, CSP, RCPP, etc.) to help fill in the federal contributions.
- Revisit the CIP to clarify when a CIP is eligible for WBIF under this Plan. Bridge replacements and a drainage improvement project are listed on page 5-32.

Public Hearing

The agenda for the Public Hearing will include a 15-20 minute presentation of One Watershed, One Plan – what it is, and what it isn't. Highlights of the Cottonwood-Middle MN CWMP will be presented. An Open Forum will be held to hear comments from the public not already addressed. If a number of citizens attend, a limit of 3 minutes per person will be announced, if needed. A Comment Response Table will be added to the appendices that lists the comment and how it was addressed. The Public Hearing will be adjourned, and a short Policy Committee will be held to approve the revisions/response table and to send the plan to the partner boards for approval and to submit to BWSR.

The Steering Team recommends the Public Hearing to be held at 10:00 AM on Wednesday, September 18 at the Springfield Area Community Center. Netzke relayed a concern from Commissioner Rick Anderson that most citizens will not attend a morning meeting and consideration of a 4:00 or 5:00 meeting is requested. The majority felt that very few citizens will attend regardless of the time, especially when afterschool functions will have started and possibly harvest. Motion by Tasler, seconded by Eckstein, to set the Public Hearing for 10:00 AM on Wednesday, September 18 at the Springfield Area Community Center. Motion carried unanimously.

Each county (Brown, Cottonwood, Lyon, Murray and Redwood) must publish the public notice of the public hearing. Depending on your local newspapers, these notices may need to be submitted in early September as it is to be noticed ten (10) calendar days prior to the hearing. Olm will draft the notice language which Netzke will distribute. The notices should also be placed on websites and social media pages to advertise the hearing. It was also suggested to have one printed copy of the Plan available for viewing for those who do not have internet access or simply prefer to view the document on paper. The location of this printed copy should be part of the public notice.

Following the Public Hearing, each local board (county, SWCD, JPO and city) will need to adopt resolutions to submit the plan to BWSR, and to adopt and implement the plan upon BWSR approval. This must be completed prior to submitting the Plan to BWSR for approval. Mark Hiles provided sample resolutions for each board. By including the implementation language, it eliminates the need for that local board to adopt a separate resolution for implementation.

The BWSR Southern Region Water Plan Committee will review the plan in late October/early November and recommend approval to the BWSR Board. Plan approval will be on the December BWSR Board agenda.

Formal Agreement Update

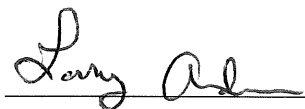
The county and SWCD partners who will be joining by joint powers agreement for implementation of this Plan wish to utilize RCRC's existing joint powers agreement with revisions made to include the entire watershed area and not just the mainstem river watersheds. Netzke will contact Ann Goering at Ratwik, Roszak & Maloney, PA who worked on GBERBA's joint powers agreement.

Motion by Gunnink, seconded by Anderson, to utilize RCRC's existing joint powers agreement for Plan implementation. Motion carried unanimously.

Action Items and Next Steps

the Steering Team will meet virtually on Wednesday, September 4 from 10:00AM to 12:00 PM to review the comments and discuss responses and/or plan revisions. The entire time may not be necessary depending on the number and nature of the comments received.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:42 PM.

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

Larry Anderson, Secretary
Cottonwood-Middle Minnesota Partnership

Future Meetings:

September 18, 2024 10:00 AM Public Hearing at Springfield Area Community Center
The Policy Committee will meet immediately following the hearing.