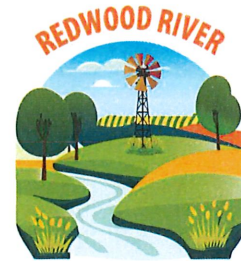


REDWOOD ONE WATERSHED, ONE PLAN
POLICY COMMITTEE – IN-PERSON & VIRTUAL
MEETING MINUTES
JULY 14, 2025 – 1:00 PM
**joined virtually*



Policy Committee (PC) Present:

Gary Crowley-Area II, Tom Andries-Lyon County, Allen Deutz-Lyon SWCD, Jackie Meier-Murray County, Luke Johnson-Pipestone County, Larry Anderson-RCRCA, Ed Carter-Redwood SWCD, Rick Wakefield-Redwood County, Bob Byrnes-City of Marshall and Larry Arentson-City of Redwood Falls.

Steering Team Members: Dale Sterzinger-Lincoln SWCD, Kerry Netzke-RCRCA/Area II, and *John Shea & Mark Hiles-BWSR.

Consultant: *Rachel Olm, Houston Engineering Inc.

Chairman Johnson called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. All were asked to rise for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Motion by Anderson, seconded by Meier, to adopt the Agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Byrnes, seconded by Wakefield, to approve the May 12, 2025 Minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously. Netzke noted that the Minutes from the June 9th Advisory Committee/Steering Team were provided for informational purposes.

The Financial Reports for grant expenditures for the months of May and June 2025 were presented. Through June 30th, total expenses to date include \$125,599.19 in consultant fees and \$21,766.06 for administration, totaling \$147,365.25. Total grant remaining is \$91,334.75. Motion by Meier, seconded by Carter, to approve the May and June 2025 financial reports as presented. Motion carried unanimously. Chairman Johnson asked about the remaining funds and if extra work, such as developing the BEAST spreadsheet and MS4Front Tracking System, could be paid with the planning grant dollars. Netzke will discuss this with Houston Engineering and will inform the Committee at the next meeting.

Rachel covered the Agenda items for today and provided a summary of the plan progression.

Internal Review

Olm thanked those who provided comments as the review period went from May 27 to June 27. Overall, 76 comments were received and have been included in the comment/response table provided. Some comments stemmed from the June 9th Advisory/Steering Team meeting. The table identifies the comment, its location in the plan, the revision made, or if the comment was flagged for further discussion or clarification. Flagged comments included:

- 1) Pg 2-6, Adding acres of CRP or CREP. With both of these programs being federal, privacy data applies. Consensus of the Steering Team was to keep the information general but add the number of acres that are held in BWSR easements in the watershed.
- 2) Pg 4-18, 5-23, Fish barriers. MPCA provided barriers for the Middle Minnesota portion of the boundary. Netzke will check with the Yellow Medicine River Watershed District, and Jon Lore with DNR to see if there is information on that portion of the watershed that can be added.

Olm added that the current map in the Plan identifies all bridges/culverts/dams posing as potential barriers. Olm shared a different map provided by DNR that illustrates the barriers. Discussion followed on which map to use. Consensus of the Steering Team was to keep the current map and add black dots to identify the known barriers from the DNR map, revise the legend, and add language to pg 5-22. On pg 4-17, Wabasha Creek and the other subwatersheds will be added to the 28 identified sites.

- 3) Pg 5-8, CIP Table. The project on Three Mile Creek does not have a cost estimate. Lyon County is not present today, so Netzke will discuss this with them.
- 4) Pg 4-20, Wabasha Planning Region goal. 8 acres is the goal; however, the City of Redwood Falls is almost a 50/50 split between the Wabasha and Redwood planning regions. Consensus of the Steering Team was to split the 8 acres; add 3 acres to Redwood and reduce Wabasha to 5 acres.
- 5) Pg 7-3, Table 7-2 local cost. The local cost of \$436,000 for existing Education & Outreach seems too high and may raise a question as to why WBIF would be necessary for additional E&O efforts. Discussion followed and submitted data was reviewed. Olm will forward the submitted data table to the partners and ask for a final review/revision. BWSR feels that SWCD Aid may have been included in this amount and should be included in Projects and Practices instead. The table on pg 5-7 may change as a result.

Discussion continued based on the question whether cost-share recipients should be required to attend one Education or Outreach event. Deutz spoke about targeting perennials around critical areas and how many have found this to be more effective than cover crops. The majority of the committee felt favorable towards this requirement to help reach those who have always done it one way, and will continue to do it that same way.

- 6) Map font size too small for printed pages. Netzke had a printed copy to review. Consensus of the Steering Team was that the font size is fine.
- 7) Mission Statement. BWSR does not require a mission statement, but it is a question on their review checklist. HEI sees more mission statements for the northern Minnesota plans. Consensus was to not include a mission statement as the Introduction serves this purpose.
- 8) Soil Health measurements related to water quality. This comment most likely relates to calculating the water storage provided by cover crops/healthy soils. No standardized calculator exists although research at Virginia Tech is working to develop this. Consensus of the Steering Team was to keep the language general at this time.
- 9) Pg 1-8, Figure 1-4, text appears smaller than in Figure 1-5. Consensus was in agreement to increase the font size, particularly in the callout boxes with the planning regions.
- 10) Ed Carter's comments. There are few comments that are not clear, so Ed will be asked to explain further. Ed's comments were sent in early morning hours and he said that they could be disregarded.
- 11) Johnson asked an additional question regarding the Soil Health map on pg 4-4. The entire watershed is either medium or high priority without any low priority areas. As we have been told, if everything is a priority, then nothing is a priority. Olm responded that the original map produced by PTMApp data did have low priority areas, which she shared with the committee. She explained that the Steering Team was encouraged to have everything have at least medium priority due to the amount of funding that has become available for soil health practices. Shea added that this encouragement was based on low priority areas not receiving any funding, or very little funding unless a special circumstance exists. All plans are instructed to be very careful funding projects in low priority areas. With the majority of ag lands in conventional tillage, low quality soil health results. Based on that knowledge alone, it is justified to assign a minimum of medium priority to remaining watershed for owners/cooperators to be eligible to apply for the

soil health funding. Discussion followed. Consensus of the Policy Committee was to keep the High and Medium priority areas and for the Steering Team to structure the Scoring & Ranking worksheet to focus soil health on the High priority areas.

Olm added that the redlined version of the plan with the changes made by HEI was emailed out to all.

Based on the Steering Team recommendation to approve the Comment/Response table, motion by Crowley, seconded by Wakefield, to approve the revisions to the Plan as discussed. Motion carried unanimously.

Formal 60-Day Review

Motion by Crowley, seconded by Wakefield, to release the Redwood River CWMP for Formal 60-day Review (August 1 through September 30) following the edits to be made by Houston Engineering. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Hearing

The Steering Team and Policy Committee will both meet on October 13 to review the formal comments received and address responses. The Public Hearing is hosted by the Policy Committee and provides an opportunity for the public to ask questions or comment. The hearing agenda will include HEI providing an overview of the planning process, providing plan highlights, providing the comment/response table, providing the opportunity for in-person comments, and then closing the hearing. The hearing cannot be held sooner than 14 days after the Formal 60-Day Review. The Policy Committee usually meets immediately following to approve submitting the plan for BWSR approval with the pending changes.

Motion by Deutz, seconded by Andries, to schedule the Public Hearing for Monday, November 10, 2025 at 1:00 PM at the Lyon County Government Center. Motion carried unanimously

It was also noted that the local partners must pass a resolution to approve the plan and adopt the plan following BWSR approval. This language prevents the need for a second resolution to adopt the approved plan. The BWSR Southern Region Committee will hear 3 plans: Redwood, Minnesota River-Mankato, and Blue Earth. That meeting will either be December or early January 2026.

Action Items and Next Meeting

Netzke announced that a Watersheds Coordinator has been hired to oversee the implementation of both the Cottonwood-Middle Minnesota and Redwood CWMPs – Courtney Williams from Lyon SWCD. August 11 is her tentative start date. Crowley added that she will be missed at the SWCD but will be great in this new position.

Netzke will begin preparing to send the plan out for the Formal Review and also prepare the resolution that the local partners will need to present to their respective Boards for plan approval and adoption.

The Policy Committee will meet October 13, 2025 at 1:00 PM at the Lyon County Government Center – Commissioner's Room.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:28 PM.



Jackie Meier, Secretary