**REDWOOD RIVER** ONE WATERSHED, ONE PLAN (1W1P)
POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
January 13, 2025 – 1:00 PM
Lyon County Government Center – Commissioners' Room – Marshall, MN
***Joined virtually***

Members Present:
Tom Andries - Lyon County, Allen Deutz and John Lanoue – Lyon SWCD, Jackie Meier – Murray County, Luke Johnson – Pipestone County, *Rick Wakefield – Redwood County, *Ed Carter – Redwood SWCD and Larry Arentson – City of Redwood Falls.

Others Present: Rachel Olm, Houston Engineering, Mark Hiles and John Shea - BWSR, and Kerry Netzke-RCRCA/Area II.

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

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

Motion by Deutz, seconded by Meier, to adopt the November 18, 2024 Minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Financial reports for grant expenditures for the months of November and December 2024 were presented. Through December, monthly expenses included $2,927.95 in consultant fees and $482.26 for administration, totaling $3,410.21. Total grant expenditure to date is $66,098.45 with $172,601.55 remaining. Motion by Arentson, seconded by Deutz, to approve the financial reports as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

**Plan Section: Priority Issues**
The Steering Team discussed some changes to this section this morning that led into a major change to some of the Measurable Goals maps.

Streambank stabilizations were thoroughly discussed as these projects can be controversial and involve a permitting component to consider in addition to the project's location and long-term benefits. The Redwood River within the city limits of Marshall is considered 'controlled' due to the Diversion Channel. The flow extremes are known, and projects can be designed accordingly. Upstream of Marshall, the Redwood River is simply moving too much to invest in streambank stabilizations that are not protecting vital infrastructure. The SWCD participated in a project where the river has now moved 60 feet, and the project is now useless. WBIF could potentially be used to fund the water quality portion of a streambank project, but not the full cost. DNR permitting has been allowed for the protection of infrastructure (homes, businesses, roads and bridges); however, farm fields and other land uses are not considered as infrastructure. Location is important as fixing one area could potentially pass the erosion problem on further downstream. Deutz, who lives just north of Marshall, spoke of his concerns for passing along the problem and has witnessed this. The overall solution to bank erosion is upstream water storage.

Changes include:
Page 3-8: The inclusion of the Environmental Justice (EJ) map. The most recent map shows a much smaller EJ area than before. MPCA recommended adding an export date to the map for future reference purposes.

Page 3-6: Emerging Issues -- The 1930's era WPA projects within the City of Marshall that are deteriorating from age as well as environmental conditions will be added to the section. A statement regarding streambank stabilizations will also be added explaining the 'controlled' conditions through the City of Marshall but uncontrolled and rapidly changing conditions upstream of Marshall.

Page 3-5: Lower Priority Issues – more language will be added to explain that many Lower Priority Issues contribute to High or Medium Issues and can be included in the Stacked Benefits of those goals.

The Policy Committee asked to see a revised draft of this Section before approving.

**Measurable Goals and Focus Areas**
Each priority issue will have a measurable goal associated with it based on a 10-year timeframe. One goal may be able to cover multiple priority issues. Each issue has a 2-page layout including a "factsheet format" to find information easily, and an associated heat map with milestones and focus areas highlighted. The draft section includes several numeric placeholders that will be determined by PTMApp with the implementation budget numbers.

The Steering Committee has been reviewing/commenting on the maps revised after the November meeting. From this morning's discussion regarding streambank stabilization, the maps on pages 4-12 and 4-14 were essentially flipped. The Bank Erosion map becoming Water Storage and Flooding, and vice versa. The Bank Erosion map will have high priority areas along the Redwood River corridor from Marshall to the Minnesota River. The high priority area at the upper watershed will become low, and the area around the City of Marshall will become high. For the Water Storage and Flooding map, everything above Marshall will be a high priority including Three Mile Creek.

Revisions will be made for the Policy Committee to review in March.

**Next Steps**
Targeted Implementation Schedule
The Steering Team has been taxed with the work of providing the amounts of existing implementation funding available for conservation. Many of the Team members have done this for other watersheds, so it is not entirely new. They are asked to report the entire dollar amount, and then HEI multiplies that number by the percentage of the Redwood watershed in that county. This amount is called "baseline" or Level 1 Funding. When the WBIF and other consistent State funds are added to the baseline, this is Level 2 Funding. Level 3 Funding is Level 2 Funding plus federal funds. Once these dollar amounts are known, they are inputted into the PTMApp to generate a realistic number of conservation practices that can be accomplished with those funds, and to generate the reductions estimated from implementing those practices. The spreadsheet contains a lot of information including a description of the action, where this will occur, the timeframe, responsible parties and cost. The Steering Team was asked this morning to review the information in the table and make needed adjustments. Additionally, federal funds invested into the watershed will be requested from NRCS.

Implementation Programs

Olm presented a chart that illustrated the percentage of existing funds being directed to Projects and Practices, Project Development, Technical Assistance, Research & Data Gaps, Education & Outreach, Capital Improvements, and Administration. Assuming 52% of the WBIF funds that the Cottonwood-Middle MN will receive (based on land area), Olm presented some possible percentages for the Redwood based on Cottonwood-Middle MN distribution as follows:

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| *Projects and Practices* | *53%* | *Project Development* | *15%* |
| *Technical Assistance* | *10%* | *Research & Data Gaps* | *2.5%* |
| *Education & Outreach* | *2.5%* | *Capital Improvements* | *5%* |
| *Plan Administration* | *12%* | | |

The Steering Team would like to use these percentages until the total amount of funding is known.

Formal Agreements

The RCRCA Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) has been revised by the attorneys. Netzke requested a few revisions, and a final copy should be available in February. Bylaws have also been drafted by the attorneys.

When the planning grant began, discussions were had to utilize RCRCA's existing JPA for Plan Implementation. This would not create a new entity and would allow the RCRCA Board of Directors to act upon Plan decisions. The Yellow Medicine and Lac qui Parle-Yellow Bank operate under a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with their respective watershed districts providing fiscal and administrative duties. RCRCA is not a watershed district; it is a Special Purpose District that does not levy taxes like watershed districts. Hiles commented that even though those groups have a MOA, there is reference made to the joint powers law in the document, and they operate similar to a JPA. If RCRCA was not utilized, then a separate Joint Powers entity (collaboration or agreement) would need to be formed with a governing board and staff to handle the fiscal and administrative duties. A meeting date for the governing board would need to be established as well.

Netzke will bring a document called "The ABCs of JPEs" that was drafted by MCIT to help illustrate the differences. A map of Minnesota watersheds and their form of plan governance is also available.

**Action Items and Next Meeting**

The Policy Committee will meet on Monday, March 10, 2025 at 1:00 PM. A virtual link will be provided in case of inclement weather conditions. Agenda items will include approval of the Priority Issues section, review of the Measurable Goals section, Targeted Implementation Schedule draft, and Formal Agreement.

A joint Steering Team/Advisory Committee will be held the morning of March 10, 2025.

With no other business, motion was made by Deutz, seconded by Arentson, to adjourn at 1:57 PM.

Jackie Meier, Secretary