

Rum River "One Watershed, One Plan"

Policy Committee Outcomes		<p>Coming together to identify shared goals. Planning together to leverage unique capacity. Working together to achieve results.</p>
Meeting #3		
<p>January 23, 2020 5:00-8:00 PM</p> <p>Mille Lacs County Historic Courthouse, lower level, conf. rm D, 635 2nd Street SE, Milaca MN 56353</p>		
		Note taker: Maggie Kuchenbaker, Mille Lacs SWCD
Voting Members Present:	<p>Bob Janzen – Aitkin SWCD Laurie Westerlund – Aitkin County Steve Laitinen – Anoka CD Jake Scherer – Benton SWCD Ed Popp – Benton County Leonard Koering – Crow Wing SWCD Greg Anderson – Isanti County Al Koczur – Isanti SWCD Dennis McNally – Kanabec County Kevin Belkholm – Kanabec SWCD Jake Janski – Mille Lacs SWCD Genny Reynolds – Mille Lacs County Dale Scholl – Morrison SWCD Lisa Fobbe – Sherburne County Kerry Saxton – Sherburne SWCD</p>	
Alternates Present:	<p>Jerry Turnquist – Isanti County</p>	
Partners and Staff Present:	<p>Barb Peichel – BWSR Jason Weirnerman – BWSR Dan Cibulka – Sherburne SWCD Susan Shaw – Mille Lacs SWCD Tiffany Determan – Isanti SWCD; Jamie Schurbon – Anoka CD Amanda Guertin – Benton SWCD Jen Kader – Freshwater Society</p>	
Voting Members Absent:	<p>Bill Brekken – Crow Wing County Todd Haas – Lower Rum River WMO Matt Downing – Upper Rum River WMO</p>	

Chair Fobbe called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Minutes:

Motion by Steve Laitinen to approval of November 20, 2019 outcomes as presented;
second by Kerry Saxton. Affirmative: All. Opposed: none. **The Motion Carried.**

Project Updates:

- Budget – Cibulka presented the updated budget.
- Project Progression – Determan presented the pre-planning phase is complete and outreach is ongoing. The planning phase has two of seven complete.
- Outreach – Shaw reported the first Implementation Advisory Committee was held and the committee gave great feedback on the issue statements. Shaw reported if you are new to the Policy Committee and have any questions, to please reach out to the partners.
- Technical Advisory Committee Policy Committee Liaison – Fobbe reported she attended the meeting.

Policy Committee Liaison to the Advisory Committee:

Fobbe reported the Advisory Committee meetings are very valuable and want to give an opportunity to all to attend. She created a sign-up sheet and passed it around. She reported the Advisory Committee meetings are held on the 2nd Monday of each month at 12:30-3:30 in Conference Room D at Mille Lacs County.

February 10	Al Koczur
March 9	Kerry Saxton
April 13	Ed Popp
May 11	Laurie Westerlund
June 8	
July 13	
August 10	
September 14	
October 12	
November 9	
December 14	Genny Reynolds

Implementing the Plan:

- Introduction to Watershed Based Funding – Peichel gave a presentation on how the watershed based funding works. She reviewed the funding procedures and how the funds are allocated. She reported that a new Policy Committee will need to be created to implement the approved plan in 2022. She reminded the committee that PTM (prioritize, target, measure) needs to be part of the plan and that there is a possibility that work may be done in one county after the plan is written. This is all dependent on what the committees choose to prioritize. Peichel reviewed some of the activities that are ineligible with these funds.
- Introduction to Organizational Agreements – Schurbon presented different organizational arrangement options. Discussion of pros and cons of JPC (joint powers collaboration) and JPE (joint powers entity). This will need to be decided before the plan is completed. Suggested that Policy Committee members can start reaching out to their County Attorneys for their advice. Schurbon encouraged the attorneys to send him emails with questions, so in the end questions will be answered in advance and the process can go smoothly. Weinerman offered to give presentations regarding the options to the committee members respected Boards.

Vison Statement:

Kader presented the vision statement. Laitinen pointed on "common goal" and "our goals" offered suggestion to change the wording. General agreement.

Vision Statement Amended:

- Clean, abundant water for consumption, recreation and habitat
- Collaborative partnership among communities, working together toward common goals
- Community members and decision makers understand the challenges and opportunities facing the watershed
- Innovative strategies to meet our goals

Motion by Steve Laitinen to approve revised vision statement; second by Laurie Westerland. Affirmative: All. Opposed: none. **The Motion Carried.**

Check-in on status of Issue Statements, Desired Future Conditions:

Kader reported that the goal today was to check that we are moving in the right direction with the issue statements, desired future conditions and 10-year plan goals. Reviewed each concern. See attachment with comments on each concern. A fist to five vote was cast per resource area to measure buy-in to give the ranking context. Each resource area received mainly threes and fours.

Next Steps & Next Meeting:

Determan presented next steps:

- Next meeting will be on March 26, 5:00-8:00 at Mille Lacs County
- Janski requested that an email of materials summarizing any new work done at Advisory Committee meetings be sent out for review, since the next meeting may not be until March. Kuchenbaker reported the meeting materials for the Advisory Committee and the Policy Committee meetings are the website, so members can reference them at any time. Fobbe thanked the committee members who signed up to attend an Advisory Committee meeting.

Motion by Laurie Westelund to adjourn the meeting at 7:02 pm; second by Genny Reynolds. Affirmative: All. Opposed: none. **The Motion Carried.**

Resource area: Surface Water

Concern #1: Surface water rate and flow, quantity, flooding

Issue Statement:

Human-caused changes to the landscape have modified flow rate and volume and water storage causing flooding, streambank erosion, and low base flow. This risk may be compounded due to the effects of climate change.

Desired Future Condition:

Water rate and volume have not increased on average.

10-year plan goals:

1. Infiltration and storage will increase proportionate to land use and climate change. **Saxton – is this measurable?**
2. Protect non-contributing (hydrologically landlocked) areas so they continue to not discharge.
3. No increase in rate and volume from new development. **Belkholm is this flow rate? How would it be determined? Schurbon reported it would be long term average. Saxton – no increase is not practical**

Concern #2: Surface water quality.

Issue Statement:

The lakes and streams are threatened or impaired due to excess pollution including E.coli, nutrients, and sediment. These excess pollutants can cause low oxygen and eutrophication, impact aquatic life and recreational use opportunities, and degrade downstream resources. **Janski – why aren't all pollutants listed?**

Desired Future Condition:

Lakes and streams are meeting water quality standards “or better” (except mercury.)

10-year plan goals:

1. __# (to be determined later, or reference wraps, etc.) of currently impaired lakes and streams meet water quality standards.
2. __% nutrient reduction at the **outlet monitoring station** of the Rum River (Rum River currently near impairment, but not impaired, 5% is a margin of safety).

Concern #3: Surface water protection.

Issue Statement:

There are many high-quality water resources in the Rum River watershed that are threatened by changing land use, changes to the landscape that impact runoff and the ability for water to soak into the ground, and pollution. Protecting these high-quality resources from the threat of degradation is of primary concern. **Saxton – salt is not listed?**

Desired Future Conditions:

1. Water quality is the same or better in waters that do meet state standards.
2. The Rum River is swimmable, drinkable, fishable. **Popp – drinkable?**

10-year plan goals:

1. No increase in treatment needed for drinking water.
2. Maintain or enhance watershed-based ecosystems to maintain water quality (metrics TBD).
3. No previously assessed water bodies exceed water quality standards

Resource area: Groundwater

Concern #1: Groundwater and drinking water quality.

Issue Statement:

Groundwater and drinking water quality are negatively impacted by human actions, including manure and nitrogen fertilizer application, use of chlorides from salt, land management, non-compliant septic systems, pesticides, and contaminants of public health concern.

Desired Future Condition:

Groundwater is safe to drink.

10-year plan goals:

1. Increase decision makers and tech staff and citizen knowledge of where drinking water contaminants exist.
2. Decrease nitrates in vulnerable areas by ____.
3. Decrease non-compliant septic systems by ____.
4. Locally understand and protect vulnerable areas not developed or without land use that negatively impacts GW.

Saxton – Do we know what others have for regulation of septic systems upon sale? List municipalities?

Concern #2: Groundwater availability and quantity.

Issue Statement:

There is an increasing groundwater withdrawal trend resulting from expanding communities, agricultural irrigation, and non-crop irrigation. In addition to this increased demand on drinking water sources, there is also concern about the loss of recharge areas and water retention. These two trends may threaten the future groundwater balance.

Desired Future Condition:

Withdrawals = recharge (sustainable rate) in all aquifers.

10-year plan goals:

1. Develop a sustainable groundwater budget by quantifying the amount of water being consumed in the watershed and determine how much water is available for consumption.
2. Increase to ## the number of aquifer monitoring wells to ensure any negative long-term trends are noticed.

Popp – are monitoring wells effective?

Popp – climate should be added

Concern #3: Knowledge and data regarding groundwater.

Issue Statement:

There is not enough awareness or understanding of groundwater-surface water interaction and the extent to which land management decisions impact groundwater quality and quantity. More information is needed to identify and target vulnerable areas in protecting groundwater resources from pollution, and enable local governments and communities to take action.

Desired Future Condition:

People understand their impact on groundwater.

Every local government has a clear understanding of their local groundwater picture and what is needed to protect groundwater.

10-year plan goals:

1. Increase decision-makers and technical staff knowledge of vulnerabilities of groundwater-surface water interaction (define spectrum of vulnerabilities).
2. Develop science-based policies to protect groundwater.
3. Support the completion of the Mille Lacs County Geologic Atlas.

No discussion / input

Resource Area: Natural Resources

Concern #1: Degraded aquatic habitat.

Issue Statements:

1. Aquatic habitats are threatened by increasing runoff, pollutant loads, and sedimentation.
2. Shoreland areas lack vegetation and habitat features. There are barriers to fish passage.

Desired Future Condition:

Watershed lakes, streams and wetlands hold connected and quality habitats

10-year plan goals:

1. Identify, protect, and restore critical aquatic and shoreland, habitat areas.
2. Increase connectivity for native aquatic organisms and fish species.

Saxton – difficult to measure

Belkholm – questioned fish passage barriers?

Concern #2: Invasive species.

Issue Statement:

Invasive species threaten the health and quality of upland, wetland, riparian, and aquatic ecosystems and need to be prevented and controlled and their impacts mitigated.

Desired Future Condition:

Minimize by x% OR no new infestations.

10-year plan goals:

1. Reduction of current invasive species populations.
2. Prevent new infestations of invasive species. **Saxton – not going to happen**
3. Increase public involvement in reducing the spread of invasive species through understanding and behavior change.

McNally – conflict with AIS funds.

Weinerman – adding this into the plan could be used as a tool to manage AIS by watershed instead by County boundaries – us it as a tool of communication.

Saxton – the plan needs to concentrate on “real” goals that can be accomplished.

Belkhom - fish passage barriers vs. AIS

Cibulka – terrestrial plants are included in this concern, not just AIS.

Concern #3: Protection, management, and restoration of habitat.

Issue Statement:

Habitat is critical for wildlife, water quality and quality of life. Existing habitat areas have been, or are at risk of being, reduced in size and quality due to fragmentation, pollution, invasive species, intensifying land use, and lack of management. Habitats with high ecological value, particularly those that provide habitat for rare and endangered species, should be protected. Degraded habitats should be restored, especially when water quality benefits could also be achieved.

Desired Future Conditions:

- All current sites of high ecological value are maintained or expanded.
- There are interconnected hubs and corridors of habitat throughout the watershed.

10-year plan goals:

1. Define, identify, rank, and protect high value areas.
2. Increase habitat acreage, quality, and connectivity, as well as resilience to changing precipitation and climate patterns.
3. Restore degraded habitats (wetlands, uplands, forests, etc.) by X.
4. Create and protect interconnected hubs and corridors of habitat, particularly where water quality will also benefit.
5. Increase the use of development tools that create or maintain habitat corridors and complexes.

No discussion / input