

## Minutes

# Rum River Watershed Comprehensive Management Plan – Implementation Planning Committee Meeting

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Date: September 9, 2024

Time: 12:30-2:30 PM

Location: Virtual, Zoom

Meeting called by: Planning Partners

Type of meeting: Work Planning Meeting

Facilitator: Tiffany Determan

Note taker: Molly Clyne, Mille Lacs SWCD

### Attendees:

#### Voting members:

Tiffany Determan, Isanti SWCD  
Lydia Godfrey, Isanti SWCD  
Molly Clyne, Mille Lacs SWCD  
Lynn Gallice, Mille Lacs SWCD,  
Sam Seybold, Aitkin SWCD  
Emile Sow, Aitkin SWCD  
Jamie Schurbon, Anoka SWCD  
Emily Forbord, Benton SWCD  
Dan Cibulka, Sherburne SWCD  
Shannon Wettstein, Morrison SWCD  
Chad Weiss, MLBO  
Robert Wall, MLBO  
Perry Bunting, MLBO  
Matt Danzl, Sherburne County  
Scott Soderman, Isanti County  
Al Koczur, Isanti SWCD Supervisor

#### Advisory Members:

Barb Peichel, BWSR

Michelle Jordan, BWSR

1. **Welcome and Introductions** led by Tiffany Determan, Isanti SWCD

2. **Planning Team Updates (INFO)**

**a. Administration**

- i. Budget:** Schurbon presented the budget updates. There is still money in the FY23 grant, and the FY25 money is expected to come soon. There's about \$90k in the bank from FY23, of which \$14k is dividends/interest. There is \$207k invested in CDs. Most of the remaining FY23 money is in residential and urban BMPs.
- ii. Updated Statements of Work:** Determan presented the updates SOW process. The SOWs are agreements that each district holds with Anoka CD for funds for projects. The new way that the group will be doing SOWs is that there will be just one statement of work that gets amended with each activity and funding request. There may be 1 SOW per grant (FY23/FY25). After project funding requests go through, Schurbon will begin the contract process with each district. This new SOW format will make it much shorter. Like usual, activities be approved by the IPC then JPE.

**Discussion:**

Determan brought up that it might be beneficial to have an intro to SOWs meeting for new members, which many of the members agreed on. Then, members discussed the use of the word project versus program, such as in the case of a singular rain garden being a project versus a collection of raingardens in a targeted area being a program. For our purposes, they are one in the same. Back to the formatting of a SOW, a member asked if they plan to do different types of project, such as forestry, stormwater, soil health, would it still be in one SOW? Schurbon confirmed that yes, you would have one statement of work with a row for each separate type of project.

- iii. Updated Ranking Sheet (FY25 WBIF):** To be discussed later in the meeting.

**b. Implementation Tracking:** Cibulka has been working on some implementation tracking behind the scenes and notes that the information is slowly coming together.

**c. Education and Outreach**

- i. **Type A:** Godfrey noted that the Soil Health Field Day in Pease was successful. Due to the rainy date, we could not do the field visit part, and are planning on a potential make up. Otherwise, Godfrey noted that she sent out details on the September JPE tour. We will meet at the regular time of 4:30pm at the Princeton Library and will then go to three different projects in Isanti County with a return time of around 7:30pm.
- ii. **Type B:** Clyne noted that she is continuing to work on organizing and coordinating the Agriculture Tech Team and the Forestry Tech Team. The next Agriculture Tech Team meeting is on October 10<sup>th</sup> from 10am-11am at the Isanti SWCD office with a topic of drone cover crop seeding by a specialist. She is continuing to coordinate the LCCMR pilot, and recently completed another round of outreach and an open house event.

### 3. 2025-2026 Education and Outreach Plan

- a. The FY25 outreach plan has been discussed and reviewed at the monthly outreach office hours. BWSR left comments which will be reviewed by the outreach coordinators. Godfrey started off presenting the plan and noted that things were kept general so we can decide on specifics later.

#### ***Discussion:***

There were questions on the eligibility of a well water testing clinic as proposed in the plan. The staff time and materials are eligible, but it is less clear if paying to send out the samples to labs is an eligible expense. BWSR will be looking further into this.

Partners said that it might be helpful for tracking purposes to have an associated plan activity number for each proposed outreach activity. Outreach coordinators will add this to the plan.

Partners brought up the break-down of the outreach budget. Determan brought up a spreadsheet that showed the budget breakdown. Godfrey described that when using the outreach funding and the outreach plan, items listed as high importance will be completed first, then medium, and finally low if budget allows.

Partners recommended the outreach plan to move forward to the JPE board, understanding that there will be changes in sections regarding BWSR's comments.

### 4. Forest Stewardship Plans

- a. Clyne described the LCCMR Tree Planting Project's forest stewardship plan cost-share policy. It provides \$300 towards the cost of a Forest Stewardship Plan that meets certain requirements, such as: the plan must include Information about land protection opportunities, specifically about the Sustainable Forest Incentives Act (SFIA) and easements. The plan must also include details on the land's potential for reforestation and tree planting. Clyne sent this info to plan writers in the Rum, as well as to at least one person per district. If a district has a landowner who wants to receive cost-share, the district can complete a sub-agreement with the fiscal (Mille Lacs SWCD).

***Discussion:***

Determan asked how quick the turnaround time is, and if the sub-agreement must go through the board. Clyne said no, as the District Manager has board authorization to sign off on sub-agreements that do not exceed \$5k.

**5. FY25 WBIF 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Funding Requests**

- a. There are currently 4 requests. One is from Morrison SWCD for a Forest Stewardship Plan, one is a wetland design for Isanti SWCD, then a partial funding for the installation of the wetland, and the last is a request from Mille Lacs SWCD to amend an existing SOW to extend the end-date. Discussion ensued over the shifting of money from category to category. Exceeding a shift of \$50k requires a budget revision.
- b. The group made the recommendation to approve the revisions and requests.

**6. WBIF Policies**

- a. The policy is available in the member's lounge. There will be just one policy document no matter the funding year. Some changes were made to the policy and were discussed in past meetings and will be brought to the JPE board meeting in September for approval. Some of the notable changes is that in FY23, we allowed projects only for Priority Waters 1 and 2, but it will allow 1, 2, and 3 for FY25. Some language on funding requests was also added, stating that the Coordinator will send out an email when funding requests are being accepted. Additionally, the policy change covers the timeline for shifting money between categories and when that can happen. Policy for FY25 states that it must wait for the first full year of the grant to pass to shift money from one line to another. Determan then discussed the cost-share policy section. To be eligible for WBIF funding, projects must meet the requirements in the BWSR's WBIF Policy for the fiscal year. The new policy features updated language for ag non-structural cost-share. Additionally, there is now the addition of forestry practices policy—it must have a water quality benefit. For any projects to be eligible, they must be vetted

by the IPC then approved by the JPE board. It also must be connected to a plan activity and priority area. There's only a small amount of money for FY25 for forestry, allowing us to pilot forestry practices in the Rum River Watershed.

***Discussion:***

Peichel asked if we are requiring SFIA enrollment as part of cost-sharing for forest stewardship plans, and noted that some other watersheds do. Determan noted that the JPE board had discussed it in the past and did not want to make it a requirement. Staff echoed that thought.

- b. The group voted to recommend the policy changes and additions to the JPE board.

**7. FY25 WBIF**

- a. There is an approved work plan in E-Link. Determan noted that the policy change to allow for projects in all water tiers was not adjusted in the work plan.

***Discussion:***

Determan asked if a work plan revision should be done to correct the mistake. However, since it's not yet been signed by our board, Jordan said that there's no agreement to amend and rather, a work plan revision request should be completed. To keep things on track, we will look for the JPE board to recommend a revision, then the revision will be completed, and subsequently execute the updated plan.

- b. ***Ranking Sheet:*** Schurbon noted that he got rid of stuff that we weren't using on the project ranking sheet, so it's more concise now. He noted that the most important part of the ranking sheet is the project description, and partners should fill it in with detail as the language used there will be going into the SOW.
- c. ***Discussion:*** Sow from Aitkin SWCD noted that Sam Seybold wanted to request \$10k from the Technical and Engineering line, and partners agreed that it seemed to make more sense to put the request in FY23 rather than FY25 to keep spending that pot down. Jordan asked if that adjustment would put the money shifting over \$200k, which would turn it into a grant amendment rather than agreement, but Determan's calculations placed the total amount shifted just under the threshold.
- d. ***Match:*** Determan brought up how to track match for staff time for attending WBIF meetings. BWSR recommended that it is tracked to Administration.

**8. CWMP Actions for Collaboration/Training**

- a. Determan described how there are a number of different actions in the plan that the group said they'd do but aren't necessarily actions that will be funded with WBIF. Determan asked the group to look at the actions and see if there are any that still resonate with them that they'd like to push forward.

***Discussion:***

Partners asked where these actions would be reported. Determan said that when Sherburne SWCD sends out the non-WBIF implementation tracker tool at the end of the year/the beginning of the year, they would be tracked there. These actions are in the plan because at some point, they were important to somebody at the table. It is easy to put them on the backburner and suddenly must complete a bunch of action items in year 8, 9, and 10, so Cibulka noted that it's helpful to get some done each year. Peichel asked if Determan could send out a spreadsheet with each of the items and a vote yes/no column to determine which actions we still want to pursue.

**9. Federal IRA Forestry Grant Support**

- a. Clyne briefly described the Federal IRA Forestry Grant that Lindberg Ekola from BWSR and Gary Michael from DNR are heading. It is a state-wide grant which would provide for 1. An extension of the LCCMR tree planting project and 2. Up-front cost-share payments for landowners to put trees on the ground, without some of the acreage and program enrollment restrictions currently faced in the LCCMR pilot. She noted that they are looking for letters of support from the districts prior to September 30<sup>th</sup> and encouraged partners to look into it.

***Discussion:***

Peichel asked about the feasibility of getting more forestry funds when the LCCMR funds are not being spent. Why go for more? Clyne described that this project lessens the strictness and allows us to more easily get money to people without requiring them to enroll in land protection programs. Determan also noted that this is a state-wide grant and is not just for the Rum River Watershed.

**10. Member Updates/Info to share:** Determan reminded partners to RSVP to the September Project Tour, and to make sure their board member also RSVPs.

**11. Wrap-up & Next Meeting:** The next meeting is the September 26<sup>th</sup> JPE board meeting and Project Tour.

## 12. Adjourn