

# Minutes

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

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Date: December 9<sup>th</sup>, 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  
Val Anderson, Isanti SWCD Supervisor  
Molly Clyne, Mille Lacs SWCD  
Lynn Gallice, Mille Lacs SWCD  
Jake Janski, Mille Lacs SWCD Supervisor  
Jamie Schurbon, Anoka SWCD  
Emily Forbord, Benton SWCD  
Dan Cibulka, Sherburne SWCD  
Robert Wall, MLBO  
Perry Bunting, MLBO  
Scott Soderman, Isanti County  
Jaren Peplinski, Kanabec SWCD

#### Advisory Members:

Barb Peichel, BWSR  
Michelle Jordan, BWSR  
Zach Guttormson, BWSR

#### Other:

Jason Carlson, MN DNR

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

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

**a. Administration**

**i. Budget:** We now have two grants in hand, FY23 and FY25. FY23 is almost fully encumbered, with a little over one third spent. By next spring, it's anticipated that 50% will be spent. For FY25, the total funding is \$1.3 million, with encumbrances so far covering insurance, audit, and attorney fees. Requests for funding will begin in early January.

Discussion: Determan highlighted the need to assess encumbered but unused funds to determine whether they will be utilized. Schurbon noted the importance of having a clear understanding of fund use by February, with a "drop-dead" deadline in June. Partners will have more accurate budget calculations by the end of the year.

**b. Implementation Tracking:** *Cibulka provided an update on tracking this year's activities, which will follow a similar process as last year. This includes compiling all grant-funded projects under WBIF, which are easy to track due to their submission to Schurbon. In addition, Cibulka will be gathering information on projects completed without WBIF funding that align with plan goals and actions. The aim is to showcase progress towards the plan's objectives. Assistance will be needed from the team to identify projects.*

This year, a new tool will be used: Survey 123, accessible via a weblink. Cibulka demonstrated the form, explaining that it will be the primary method for submitting project data. The form will feed into a dashboard with automatic calculations and filters.

*Discussion:* Shaw asked if there will be a dropdown for outreach activities. Cibulka confirmed there would be and shared examples of how their office handles dashboard displays for outreach data, suggesting a side conversation with outreach staff. Determan asked about what data they'll need to submit, and Cibulka explained that there will be a "read-me" Word doc outlining instructions and requirements before using the survey. He also raised questions about whether the data will be publicly displayed or kept internal, noting the need to consider privacy issues.

**c. Education and Outreach**

- i. **Type A:** FY25 work is beginning, and initial steps will be discussed at the upcoming outreach meeting. Numerous workshops are being planned to support this effort.
- ii. **Type B:** The Rum River Local Forestry Team (LFT) met on December 5th, with the next meeting scheduled for February 27th. This meeting will be held in person and focus on 2025 planning. Attendees are encouraged to bring their forestry representatives. The public-facing resources page is also live on the Mille Lacs SWCD website.

### 3. Evaluation of Hydrologic Change Report Overview by Jason Carlson DNR

- a. Determan introduced the topic by noting that some goals and actions in the plan, particularly those related to surface water quantity, are based on the Evaluation of Hydrologic Change (EHC) report. Updates from this report can influence next steps.

Carlson provided an overview of the EHC results for the Rum River Watershed, one of 47 across the state. The study requires at least 30 years of discharge records to identify hydrologic changes, examining pre and post-change data to assess trends over time. For the Rum River, data extends back to 1930, with drainage area represented by the gage covering most of the watershed.

Key findings include (but are not limited to):

- i. Hydrologic change point: Identified to be 1998, using 17 tests.
- ii. Baseflow: increased by 40% since 1998. The baseflow volume as a percentage of average discharge has remained steady at 73%.
- iii. Flood flows: stable.
- iv. Channel-forming flows: occurring 50% more frequently since 1998.
- v. 1.5-year return interval flow: increased 40% compared to pre-1998 levels, with a 50% increase in the time these flows are equaled or exceeded.
- vi. Annual precipitation: increased by 14%, or approximately 3.2 additional inches per year.
- vii. Annual discharge: increased by 31%.

A summary table from the EHC report uses color coding to identify levels of impact and concern. Overall, these findings emphasize the importance of protecting storage capacity within the watershed. Permanent access to the EHC report is available through the [Minnesota Water Research Digital Library \(MNWRL\)](#).

*Discussion:* Peichel asked about storage projects that could benefit the watershed. Carlson noted the importance of understanding the watershed in greater detail but emphasized that maintaining floodplain connectivity is a good

strategy for temporary water storage. Long-term storage feasibility depends on wetland quality and quantity.

Shaw then inquired about comparisons between forested areas and other practices, such as WASCOBs, for water retention. Carlson stated that trees and forests are highly effective at soaking up water and reducing runoff, as evidenced by data from northeastern Minnesota.

Attendees were encouraged to review the EHC report for additional insights.

#### **4. FY25 WBIF 4<sup>th</sup> Q Funding Requests**

- a. All requests were voted “fund” for the next JPE meeting.

#### **5. CWMP Actions for Collaboration/training**

- a. Determan opened the discussion by revisiting the idea of advancing plan actions that don’t require WBIF funding or aren’t eligible. Following the previous meeting, Determan sent out a simple spreadsheet for members to provide input. Most responses were positive, indicating satisfaction with progress, though one action stood out as particularly feasible: addressing groundwater knowledge issues.

Groundwater knowledge workshops for staff and elected officials were identified as an action in the outreach plan that could align with this goal. An example of this type of outreach is a nitrate testing clinic. Cibulka mentioned a potential connection with the DNR to enhance staff knowledge on groundwater issues but emphasized the need to clarify what specific aspects of groundwater people are interested in learning about. Cibulka also noted that during the initial planning process, there was limited focus on groundwater issues but expressed willingness to reach out to potential resources on behalf of the group.

Shaw highlighted that one of the primary goals for groundwater is the development of a geologic atlas for Mille Lacs County. Shaw feels confident that progress could be made on this project this year. Schurbon suggested leveraging support from counties that have already completed similar atlases. Shaw shared that discussions with Mille Lacs County department heads have been positive, and a proposal is planned for January. Shaw also noted that this project could involve two partners—Mille Lacs County and the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe (MLBO)—a topic for future discussion.

Determan suggested making this topic part of an outreach hour, where plan goals could be reviewed, and progress could be evaluated collaboratively.

**6. Member Updates/Info to Share**

- a. *Representative Updates:* A reminder will be sent out to ensure updated representatives from the boards are identified.
  - b. *JPE Meeting Preparation:* For the upcoming JPE meeting, updates on the status of the Statements of Work will need to be provided. An email reminder will be sent regarding this task.
  - c. *Onboarding New JPE Members:* Peichel inquired whether there would be onboarding for new JPE members. It was noted that a refresher would be beneficial, particularly with NOFO 3 Forestry receiving funding.
  - d. *Transition in IPC Representation:* Jordan announced that this would be her last IPC meeting, as Zach Guttormson will be taking over her role. Both Jordan and Zach will attend the Rum JPE Board meeting before Zach assumes full responsibility.
- 7. Wrap-up and Next Meeting:** The next JPE meeting is scheduled for December 19<sup>th</sup>. An agenda will be sent out by Thursday of this week. Additionally, the IPC calendar invite will be restarted with an updated contact list.
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