

YELLOW MEDICINE **ONE WATERSHED, ONE** PLANNING WORK GROUP (PWG)
MEETING MINUTES
AUGUST 13, 2015 – 9:00 a.m.
BWSR Conference Room – Marshall, MN

Present:

Emily Javens – RESPEC, Jolene Johnson, Lou Ann Nagel, Kerry Netzke, Pauline VanOverbeke, Mark Hiles and Jason Beckler - BWSR, Lucas Youngsma –DNR, and Mike Weckwerth--MPCA.

As determined by consensus of the Advisory Committee, the PWG was to meet to establish the 1W1P goals, targets, and future direction. At the August 5, 2015 Advisory Committee (AC) meeting, Weckwerth requested that comments on the Strategies table (Table 12A) be submitted to Joanne Boettcher at MPCA by August 11. The full Advisory Committee was not comfortable making these recommendations as many did not understand the technical components that went into the strategies. It was determined that a smaller, more technically based group should get together to form recommendations.

Javens provided a handout outlining the needs addressing the Executive Summary section of the Plan, establishing the “zone” boundaries as discussed at the last AC meeting, Priority Issues and Resources, Measurable Goals, and Targeted Implementation Plan. Javens reviewed the handout and noted an additional map illustrating the runoff in the watershed from the time periods of 1996-2012 and 2008-2012. These maps are very different if climate is the only factor taken into consideration.

□ Summary of Priority Issues and Goals Addressed in the Plan

The two issues identified by the AC included: Mitigate Altered Hydrology, and Reduce Transport of Excess Nutrients, Sediment and Bacteria. Groundwater was discussed and added as the third issue as: Preserve Groundwater (GW) Quality and Quantity. The PWG stressed the importance of inclusiveness/multiple benefits for future funding opportunities in addition to the three Priority Issues. It is important to prioritize outside of what the WRAPS identified. Youngsma added that GW is an emerging issue and that all the information is not available at this time. Weckwerth agreed as the newest well serving the City of Marshall is pulling water out of the Yellow Medicine Watershed. A statement will be added to the Plan that emerging issues will be addressed as they appear.

□ General Map, Description of Boundary, and Smaller Management Areas

One question stemming from the WRAPS is where the measuring point is for the reductions. Is it at the mouth of the Yellow Medicine River or at the lowest point of the Plan boundary? RESPEC has tried to duplicate the HSPF maps published in the WRAPS without success. Javens would like to work with MPCA on this to develop confidence in the maps. VanOverbeke asked why there were three different sets of maps presented during WRAPS development, and all were different. Youngsma added that the resegmentation and calibration issues would likely explain this. Weckwerth will relay Javen’s request to the MPCA modelers. Youngsma offered another suggestion that instead of, or in addition to the management zones, priorities could be based on first or second order streams or depressional areas. Many of the most applicable BMP areas will be in the upper watershed on the first and second order streams versus the mainsteam river.

Terrain Analysis of the watershed (being completed by MN State University – Mankato) is moving forward and we are a few weeks away from having the Stream Power Index (SPI) completed as well as the depressional areas identified. This will be advantageous when using the SAM tool.

The PWG prefers the “zone” method and established 4 zones: **Coteau, Transition, Flatlands, and Knick Zone.**

A question was raised concerning the Redwood County portion of the YM Watershed. Redwood County opted out of the 1W1P planning, but does this also apply to implementation? Yes -- implementation for the YM River located within Redwood County will be included as part of the Redwood River 1W1P.

Hiles reminded the PWG that this is a Comprehensive Plan and capital improvements need to be kept in mind. In regards to the YMRWD, capital improvements have not been pursued as compared to Area II’s work. PWG feels the monitoring component of the implementation plan would be an ideal fit for the YMRWD.

Upon reviewing the maps generated by WRAPS and RESPEC, the following priorities were identified:

Coteau/Transition

1st Priority – Upper YM Medicine

2nd Priority -- North Branch YM River, start at Lake Shaokotan and work downstream. *This would be in line with the State’s NonPoint Funding Plan to work on resources that are closest to being restored.*

Netzke added that crossover flooding occurs between the LQP River and the YM River (Mud Creek). There are no easy solutions to the problem as the upstream topography does not provide obvious retention areas. This issue should be noted in the YM Plan. Streambank stabilizations have been implemented in Wergeland Township, Section 5, however any future work would have to be done upstream in the LQP Watershed.

Javens added that upon her review, the impaired lakes are extremely impaired in comparison to others around the state. Hyper-eutrophication is a major problem and the measurements were off the charts. Discussion followed of all the impaired lakes, focusing on Shaokatan, Wood, Perch and Cottonwood. Instead of prioritizing lakes, the presence of these lakes is a criteria used the following priority zones.

Transition/Flatlands

1st Priority – Mud Creek

2nd Priority – North Branch YM River

Flatlands

1st Priority – Judicial Ditch 10

2nd Priority – Judicial Ditch 17

3rd Priority – Stony Run Creek

4th Priority – Judicial Ditch 23

Flatlands/Knick Zone

No priority areas identified as consensus of the PWG is that more beneficial work can be done upstream. Conservation work within this zone is generally expensive due the steep slopes.

Summary of Implementation Actions and Programs

Hiles posed the question of “flooding” as it has been identified by comments as a priority concern, yet full discussion of the topic hasn’t been addressed by this group or the AC. Lengthy discussion followed. The Plan narrative needs to include that flooding is being addressed and explicitly mentioned in the Plan. By reducing flows and mitigating the altered hydrology, the flooding issue is being addressed.

Area II's Strategic Plan does not target specific projects or priorities, such as one large project per county. Measuring flooding reduction by reducing the 10-year peak flows has been done. Hiles suggested talking with Melissa Lewis and Matt Drewitz at BWSR and ask what to do with goals that are difficult to measure, such as flooding. Youngsma noted some language in the *Sediment Reduction Strategy for the MN River Basin* where the 2-year return interval of flow (not precipitation) is defined.

Discussion moved to Table 12A of the WRAPS where comments are desired by MPCA on the overall strategy. Goals and 10-year targets were developed by the WRAPS Technical Work Group. ***One general comment is that the table, in particular tiling/drainage, assumes that new tiling isn't being considered and the goal to restoration assumes status quo. Climate changes are also not taken into consideration. Consensus of PWG is that Table 12A is good and no changes are recommended.***

Table 12B was then reviewed. VanOverbeke noted that Grade Stabilizations/Dams are not listed. Youngsma explained that within the Land Use/Source Type, the items are listed in order of importance. The PWG questioned this order. Youngsma explained Boettcher's analysis as it was explained to him and Beckler. Keep in mind – the WRAPS document addresses what is needed to meet water quality standards, not what is needed for a healthy watershed. In summary, if Table 12B is achieved, a 4.4% reduction in flow would be achieved. ***A comment to relay to Boettcher is that a one sentence statement of the overall result is needed. The “*=strategy footprint is << treated area” footnote needs to be explained in words – for example: grassed waterway will not take 14,100 acres out of production, but will treat 14,100 acres. Instead of the symbols used in the Pollutants/Stressor column, suggest using the symbols used in Consumer Reports with the solid fill, half fill, and no fill circles to stress effectiveness. Netzke recommended that an Executive Summary of the entire WRAPS document would be nice addition as there is so much technical information provided, yet no synopsis is given. This leaves the reader to draw his/her own conclusions.*** Beckler stated that a 2-page Executive Summary is planned.

Additional actions/programs will be identified at a later date utilizing the SAM tool.

□ Implementation Programs

Miscellaneous topics were discussed relating to Plan Administration and Coordination, Plan Implementation Programs, and Appendices.

5.1.1 Decision-making and Staffing – discussion of the YMRWD Administrator position was had and possibility for the WD to hire/conduct the monitoring of implemented practices.

5.1.5 Assessment and Evaluation – The PWG would like to see the YMRWD serve in this role, however the future administrator will determine whether this is possible. Consensus of the PWG is to have a central location to collect and record the performance with intended goals.

5.1.6 Amendments -- MOA will likely be extended to continue Plan discussions on an annual basis.

5.1.7 Formal Agreements – Discussion and listing of existing agreements was compiled. This Fall, the Policy Committee will have a discussion of further collaboration. Consensus was to have the Advisory Committee continue to evaluate the implementation phase, however it may be unlikely for those members to commit to that time frame.

Plan Implementation Programs:

5.2.1 Incentive Programs – SWCDs were asked to provide to Javens a list of incentives that they are currently offering, or ones offered within the past 2 years.

5.2.2 Capital Improvements –

5.2.3 O&M –

5.2.4 Regulation and Enforcement –

5.2.5 Data Collection and Monitoring – Citizen monitoring is still ongoing in the watershed, overseen by MPCA. All other information is available on STORET.

5.2.6 Information, Outreach & Education Programs –

****Netzke to send a request to the partner counties (Planning & Zoning), SWCDs and YMRWD requesting information on the programs listed in 5.2.1 – 5.2.6. The information is desired by Javens by September 1.**

Scenarios

From the last AC meeting, the feeling was that additional scenarios would not be identified and run until after the SAM tool becomes available. The scenarios report that Tetra Tech compiled addressed a 10% increase in buffers. Javens added that this scenario is difficult without knowing where the buffers are required, as well as the 16.5' for 50' widths. Now that Governor Dayton's buffer bill has become law, a scenario showing 100% buffers would be helpful. Regarding the DNR production of buffer maps for the SWCDs, it was suggested that the 1W1P Pilot Projects be prioritized for receiving the maps first. Youngsma suggested that the Policy Committee make this written request to David Leuthe, DNR who is spearheading the mapping effort. ****Consensus of PWG was for Netzke and Youngsma to draft this letter for the Policy Committee to sign on September 9.** Other scenarios discussed included climate change and also converting open ditches into tile. No action will be taken at this time.

A brief discussion of future WRAPS procedures for the Lac qui Parle, Redwood and Cottonwood Watersheds was held. Weckwerth noted that many changes are being made stemming from the WRAPS that are currently being completed.

The Root River Pilot is rumored to have a draft 1W1P report out for preliminary review. Consensus of the PWG was that we did not want to view that report and we'd like to develop our own Plan without outside influence.

With no other business to address, the meeting was adjourned at 2:45 p.m.