

YELLOW MEDICINE **ONE WATERSHED, ONE PLAN** ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
April 29, 2015
Lyon County Government Center, Marshall MN

Committee Members Present:

Galen Boerboom, Mike Gunlogson, Dennis Johnson-NRCS, Mitch Kling, Tyler Knutson-Yellow Medicine SWCD, Robert Olson, Dick Pesek, Dale Sterzinger-Lincoln SWCD, and Emma Volz-YMRWD.

Planning Work Group Members Present:

John Biren-Lyon SWCD, Matt Drewitz-BWSR, Mark Hiles-BWSR, Jolene Johnson-Yellow Medicine County, Kerry Netzke-Area II, Cindy Potz-YMRWD, Pauline VanOverbeke -Lincoln SWCD, and Terry Wittnebel-Lac qui Parle SWCD.

Agency Members Present:

Spencer Herbert-MDA, Amanda Strommer-MDH, Mike Weckwerth-MPCA, and Lucas Youngsma-DNR.

Others Present:

RESPEC Consultants -- Emily Javens and Julie Blackburn.

Kerry Netzke called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. and welcomed everyone. Introductions were made. A list of Advisory Committee members was distributed with email contact information.

One Watershed, One Plan (1W1P) Initiative

Netzke discussed the vision and purpose statements for 1W1P as printed on the **One Watershed, One Plan** Guiding Principles document. The rest of this document was reviewed as it most clearly states the intents and purposes of the State's newest water planning effort. A question was asked if this committee was going to be formal with a chairman presiding over the committee and majority voting. It was discussed that an informal committee is preferred where consensus building is encouraged. Netzke and Emily Javens from RESPEC plan to facilitate the meetings.

Community Readiness Survey Results

At the onset of the 1W1P project, the U of M Extension conducted a survey of primarily county and SWCD staff along with Area II and the Yellow Medicine River Watershed District. At that time, only 4 of the 5 pilot projects were operational. While the survey focused on six dimensions of readiness, the Yellow Medicine River Watershed had the highest overall readiness score. It scored particularly high and in comparison to the other pilot watersheds surveyed on two domains: program capacity and relationships among LGUs. Another survey will be conducted at the end of the project. Copies of the report were provided to the Committee and will be made available on the website.

Discuss AC's Roles and Responsibilities

Netzke provided guidance from BWSR's 1W1P Operating Procedures which discusses the establishment of committees. An Advisory Committee is required to meet the public and stakeholder participation goals and requirements identified in the rule and statute for existing local water plans. The purpose of the Advisory Committee is to make recommendations on the plan and plan implementation to the Policy Committee, including identification of priorities. When the watershed is large and/or the committee is specialized enough, it may be split into separate citizen and technical subcommittees. A membership list of the Policy Committee was distributed as well as the Work Plan where the Advisory Committees importance to Tasks 3.2.2, 3.2.3, 3.2.4, and 3.2.5 was presented.

Agree on Ground Rules for Discussing Tough Issues

Javens presented information that she obtained from a few blog posts as well as from the City of Elk River's City Council Agenda that listed several ways to conduct successful meetings and build consensus. The committee was asked to pair off to discuss these points and then share their top priorities with the group. A list of Ground Rules were adopted by the Advisory Committee including: Attack the issues, not the person or entity that he/she represents; Check your understanding by asking questions; Agree to disagree; No sidebar discussions; Respect the views of others; Be Brief, Be on Time, Be organized. The complete list will be provided at the next meeting.

Review PTM – Prioritize, Target, and Measure

Matt Drewitz, BWSR Clean Water Specialist, narrated a brief PowerPoint presentation for the Advisory Committee addressing PTM – Prioritize, Target, and Measure. Prioritize means to organize and rank the issues with the most important being considered first. Information is available to help in the prioritization such as the WRAPS (Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies) document, TMDLs (Total Maximum Daily Loads), water plans or ordinances/rules. Targeting means to identify specific geographic locations or zones within priority areas for implementation of practices or activities. Inventories, interactive tools (SAM – Scenario Application Manager), GIS analysis, and tailoring to a subwatershed are some ways to target. Measure means to demonstrate progress towards achieving restoration. Measuring can be done through water quality monitoring and data, biota and wildlife counts, model results or engaging citizens. Drewitz presented an example of the Cedar River Watershed District, Dobbins Creek Targeted Watershed. It was recommended to think of PTM like a football game: make a game plan for the season, make adjustments at half time, and compete to win.

Public Comments Received

Netzke provided a summary of the public comments received from each of the three Kick-Off Meetings plus comments received via email or phone. Additionally, comment letters from the State agencies were provided. Discussion followed. These comments, as well as meeting minutes for the Kick-Off meetings, have been posted on the Area II website – **One Watershed, One Plan** link.

Next Steps and Critical Deadlines

Javens presented committee members with a 3-ring binder and a set of 11 maps (Soil Erodibility Index, Land Use, Environmental Benefits Index, Ownership, Impaired Waters, Groundwater Contamination Susceptibility, Percent Slope, Wildlife Management Areas, Soil Flooding Frequency, FEMA-Flooding Analysis, and Restorable Wetlands) to study. Combining the map information with the public/agency comments, the prioritization of resource concerns should be less difficult at our next meeting. The next Advisory Committee meeting will be on Wednesday, June 10, 2015 at 9:00 a.m. at a location to be determined. The reason that we are not meeting until June is that we are anticipating the completion of the Yellow Medicine River WRAPS (Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies) document. There are two scheduled meetings in May where the WRAPS Technical Committee will help MPCA draft the final document. That document should be available for our use by June 10.

With no other business, Netzke declared the meeting adjourned at 10:25 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kerry Netzke, Executive Director
Area II Minnesota River Basin Projects, Inc.

After a 5-minute break, Joanne Boettcher from MCPA joined the technical subcommittee while a few of the citizen subcommittee members chose to leave the meeting due to its technical content.

HSPF Model Review – Julie Blackburn, RESPEC

Blackburn reviewed the basics of Hydrologic Simulation Program Fortran (HSPF) models in hopes of providing a better understanding of the model and its capabilities, inform the stakeholders of the model's current form, present some results along with reasonable expectations from the model, and how the model can be used with WRAPS and 1W1P.

MPCA's approach has been to develop HSPF models for the 81 HUC-8s (Hydrologic Unit Code) in Minnesota to support: TMDLs (Total Maximum Daily Loads studies) and WRAPS, permit evaluations, implementation planning, LGU planning, and future modeling (such as lakes). Additionally, the models will be updated on a 10-year cycle, or sooner if need be.

The HSPF model for the Yellow Medicine River is based on a 17-year data log. The model replicated past conditions and can be used to predict how alterations due to ag drainage or climate would have responded to the weather events that occurred over that 17-year period of record. Each watershed has a lot of variability in its system and the drivers need to be understood in process-based modeling. Models are not a substitute for monitoring.

HSPF is a model used for over 40 years and is a continuous simulation model that handles complex multiple land uses, multiple pollutants, surface and subsurface processes, as well as stream and lake processes. This model is the base of other widely used watershed models.

Calibrating a model is rigorous where you try to adjust to model to known monitoring results and natural conditions. On the Yellow Medicine River, there are only two gauging stations which are less than ideal, but what we have to work with. The goal of calibration is to set the overall model performance based on several parameters. There are 49 calibration sites and 21 reaches in the model where the fit has been deemed good overall. One problem exists when the water level of the river is less than 2'; the model shuts down and doesn't know how to handle that situation or the chemical processes. Boettcher added that no model is perfect, but all are useful.

Netzke explained the need for this HSPF review as it stemmed from the April 2nd WRAPS workshop. As part of that meeting, some of the models results and calibration were being questioned and some doubts were expressed. After consulting with RESPEC, it was suggested that this presentation be made to offer an explanation as to why the results were being questioned as well as answer some questions as to the assumptions made in the model.

RESPEC was thanked for the presentation as it successfully cleared up many of the concerns and questions raised regarding the HSPF model.

Meeting was adjourned at 12:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kerry Netzke, Executive Director
Area II Minnesota River Basin Projects, Inc.