

Planning Work Group for Root River One Watershed One Plan

Meeting Notes

Monday, October 21, 2019

Conservation Building, Preston, MN

In attendance: Adam King, Kevin Stark, Daryl Buck, Dan Wermager, Skip Larsen, Adam Beilke, Emily Zannon, Shelia Harmes, Justin Hanson, Dave Walter – afternoon attendance: Jessica Bronson, Sue Glendin, Mary Peterson, Gary Larson, Paul Hunter

PTMapp Discussion – Kevin Stark, St. Mary's University:

Kevin expressed that Geospatial Services of St. Mary's would be happy to offer GIS analysis needs for Root River 1W1P. They have downloaded the desktop tools needed. He talked about the "C" factor and how it is important to have good resolution for analysis. Kevin introduced Optimus as a possible program/company to take advantage of. He stated obtaining raster data vs summaries would be preferential. Kevin ensured the Planning Workgroup his staff have the competency to complete this work. He expressed that the application has limitations and is not able to assess near channel sedimentation. ACPF tool fills in depressions. Questions still arise and there is sometimes need to go out on site and survey.

Daryl stated stream power index may have been done in the Rush-Pine Watershed.

MPCA is currently mapping BMP's (WASCOBS) by using LiDAR.

Fillmore SWCD will look at their office for portable hard drive of the information HEI had completed. There is also a web version.

Kevin will look into what Geospatial Services of St. Mary's services would cost. 17 full-time employees are employed on Winona campus with additional students.

Funding updates

Watershed-Based Funding grant update – Daryl Buck, Winona SWCD

Discussed how the Utica & Chatfield Wellhead Protection Areas category is our least spent area. Skip says he will be having a meeting regarding the Chatfield (Waylen Valley) Protection area and as result of that meeting, the majority of the project funding will likely be encumbered. Discussed how if we wait another year for cover crops, these projects will need to be paid up-front vs over three years due to the grant ending December 2021. Discussion was had regarding brining Spring Grove into this Wellhead Protection prioritization area category as there are a potential of 500 acres of cover crops to be implemented (roughly 13 landowners) meaning there are currently 500 acres of cropland. Dave will give us an update regarding producer interest. Adam will unlock eLink so Daryl can make this update.

Watershed-Based Funding program update – Adam Beilke, BWSR

FY2020 -FY2021 Watershed-based Implementation Funding Grant Allocations should be rolled out in eLink within the next few months. The total funding amount awarded was near 14 million dollars. The total funding amount awarded for the Root River Watershed, once requested by the fiscal agent Winona County, is \$1,469,595.

Watershed-Based Funding group discussion and planning

Discussed implementing larger, high cost projects (capital improvement) using consultant services.

Daryl gave a NRCS update from Sue saying EQIP will be down 20% and RCPP will be paid at same rate as EQIP in 2020. RCPP has a 50-50 matching requirement so this may have been done so the state can better match the federal dollars.

PTMapp - Discussed the use of St. Mary's University Geospatial Services. There was an overall consensus that it would likely be a good arrangement. Daryl expressed current reservation of Winona SWCD/Winona County contracting with another party. Adam B. volunteered to help develop/review the second party contract.

Root River 1W1P also outlines the nearly/barely impaired streams.

Expressed need to come up with timeline for workplan creation.

Adam B. proposed the idea to continue Middle and South Branch watershed priority area into Fillmore County.

Consider Civic Engagement Plan vs Farmer-led Council when deciding where to allocate 1W1P dollars.

Consider using 1W1P funds for feedlot projects as current Feedlot RCPP expires June 2021. It is unknown if it can/will be renewed.

Have Advisory Committee meeting come up with ideas to bring to the Planning Work Group.

Erin Meyer w/ U of M (she is no longer employed at this position) – Fillmore SWCD will check into and follow up with Civic Engagement piece.

Advisory Committee meeting – November 4, 2019

Advisory Committee will be updated with a follow up email to the Planning Workgroup.

Planning Workgroup Meeting – November 18th

Policy Committee Meeting – First weeks of January

WCPI Update

Dan gave an update on his progress with WCPI providing two handouts. He is well on track in comparison to his expected workload and tasks. He has completed 50 plans and received his Conservation Planner Certification. He has made 102 follow-up phone calls since 6/15/19.

WCPI Internal Strategy Team Meeting

Mary provided a statewide WCPI review. She provided a budget, timeline and engineering requests. 1.5 million dollars has been upfronted. Based on reports and how activity reports are coming in, Mary doesn't see an issue with reimbursement.

Engineering dollars must be tied to a conservation plan. We should concentrate projects toward the 100 conservation plans that are already reported. This engineering money will expire with the grant.

It needs to be decided how Root River SWCD will allocate the money to sub-contracted SWCDs. It was mentioned that Root River could focus on using the engineering dollars, saving dollars for other SWCDs to use within the 1W1P Implementation funds.

As long as the conservation plan is signed and in eLink, the engineering dollars can be spent. Dollars are reported in eLink, not plans.

Sue reported that EQIP 410s decreased by 22%.

It was mentioned that it may be best to keep priority areas the same.