

Meeting of Policy Committee for Root River One Watershed One Plan
Wednesday, November 28, 2018, 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM
Room 108, Fillmore County Office Building, 902 Houston St. NW, Preston, MN
Minutes

Policy Committee Members in attendance: Fred Arnold (Houston County), Jerry Mueller (Winona SWCD), Bob Pickett (Fillmore SWCD), Paul Fruechte (Crooked Creek Watershed District), Rodney Peterson (Dodge County), Marcia Ward (Winona County), Duane Bakke (Fillmore County), Polly Glynn (Mower County), Jim Kellogg (Mower SWCD). Not Present: Matt Feldmeier (Root River SWCD), Steve Connelly (Olmsted SWCD), Glenn Hahn (Dodge County), Matt Flynn (Olmsted County). Also attending: Adam Beilke (BWSR), Shaina Keseley (BWSR), Sheila Harmes (Winona County), Skip Langer (Olmsted SWCD), Daryl Buck (Winona SWCD), Dave Walter (Root River SWCD), Adam King (Dodge SWCD), Tim Ruzek (Mower SWCD), Paul Hunter (Mower SWCD).

The meeting was called to order by Chair Bakke at 9:07 a.m. Those present introduced themselves.

Ward moved to approve the agenda; Arnold seconded; the motion carried unanimously.

Ward moved to approve the minutes from the June 11, 2018 minutes, Policy Committee meeting; Peterson seconded; motion carried unanimously.

Old Business:

1. Report on 1W1P project updates from the Work Plan.
 - a. Work has begun in the Root River vulnerable DWSMA's (Chatfield and Utica wellhead protection areas). This summer, Chatfield held a field day highlighting the benefits of Kernza by means of soil health, water quality and forage/grains. Utica is starting to discuss options for their wellhead protection area.
 - b. 15% of the Area Soil Health position is being funded from the 1W1P work plan for work in the planning area. The position covers an eleven county area. Also, 80% of the Nutrient Management position is being funded through the 1W1P work plan. This position covers the five counties in the planning area.
 - c. Crooked Creek Watershed District is working on a significant flood control structure. The Watershed District is supplying funds for the engineering and development. Awaiting EQIP funds this spring to start the proposed project.
 - d. Farm walkovers in the upper headwaters of Middle and South Branch Root River will be completed. Now working on outreach and conservation planning with the producers in these watersheds.
 - e. PTMapp analysis is in progress with a focus on the South Fork/Riceford Creek watersheds. Bridgette Timm of the Water Resources Board has been contracted to perform hydro conditioning and analysis in these areas.
 - f. Root River SWCD in Houston County has completed a grade stabilization project in Riceford Creek watershed and hopes to add another this spring with anticipated EQIP dollars.
 - g. The Rush-Pine Farmer Led Council plans to hold a meeting on December 7th, 2018 to discuss the use of possible funds to be spent in the watershed. Most likely a "farm walk over" approach similar to what has been done in the Field to Stream Partnership watersheds along with education and outreach and practice incentives.
 - h. RCPP-Regional Conservation Partnership Program. We are anticipating receiving Federal funds of about \$500K to the Root River Watershed. We have budgeted \$156,243 as match dollars

from the One Watershed One Plan funds. Of which, \$56K for practice implementation and \$52,500 for Technical Assistance. The remaining \$47,500 can be used for TA or moved around to wherever needed within the RCPP budget.

- i. The 319 Grant request for the Root River was denied. We were encouraged to re-apply again next year.
- j. We applied for funding through the Regional Sustainable Development Partnership for assistance on civic engagement planning; we were approved.
- k. There was discussion from commissioners on what projects are funded through 1W1P and what projects are from other funding sources (e.g. Conservation Planning Initiative, RCPP) and what role the Policy Committee has on the decision-making for other funding sources. A map presented during the meeting identified projects through 1W1P along with Local Work Group focus areas and Field to Stream Partnership (MDA). It was agreed to now create maps with only 1W1P projects along with a separate map of other projects going on in the watershed and a third map of all projects happening in the planning area.
- l. Minutes should reflect "Root River SWCD" (Houston Co. SWCD) vs "Root River 1W1P" when discussing items to avoid confusion when referring to "Root River".

New business:

- a. ACTION: Financial Report approval. Arnold moved to approve the Financial Report; Mueller seconded; motion carried unanimously.
- b. Report from Policy Committee Members: Feedback from their respective boards. Marcia Ward, Winona County will be attending an upcoming 1W1P workshop at the AMC convention called "Considerations for Working Together". Chair Bakke, Fillmore County, attended the latest Southeast Minnesota Water Resources Board meeting. He also stated Fillmore County has only one parcel left to come into compliance with the buffer law. Chair Bakke thinks we should try to keep funding focused in the same prioritized areas to get the best measurable results. Polly Glynn, Mower County, reported Mower commissioners have to rotate on committees every year. This process can make it difficult to keep all the information straight. Polly is serving on this committee for one year taking the place of Tim Gabrielson. Jim Kellogg, Mower SWCD, headwaters work is being done along highly traveled county roads. Signage is being considered to show where tax payer dollars are being spent. Fred Arnold, Houston County, said their board has some concerns with being able to come up with measurable outcomes, although, they like what is happening throughout the watershed. Jerry Mueller, Winona SWCD, said their board is informed and generally is in favor of what is happening throughout the watershed. Mr. Mueller likes what the Planning Work Group and Advisory Committee do by putting projects together and then relaying them back to the Policy Committee. There was discussion at their SWCD board meeting about the funding going to the Rush Pine Farmer Led Council. Paul Fruechte, Crooked Creek Watershed, said their board is satisfied with money and the help that is coming into their watershed district. They are currently working on a large water retention structure project. They are having some frustrations with the engineering right now but working through it. For the large rains this year, the existing structures have held excess runoff really well.
- c. Partner project updates: Dave Walter, Root River SWCD, provided an update on the Conservation Planning Initiative. The planning position is funded for three years. The main goal is to complete 100 conservation plans in the Root River watershed, targeting Torkelson and Money Creek for now. Work can be done anywhere in the HUC8 Root River watershed. Dan Wermager is the technician from Root River SWCD completing the work. He has about 15 plans done along with good feedback on the work that has been done. His first whole farm plan is in Winona County. The farm walkover is completed and resource concerns have been identified.

- d. Review of new online survey for data collection from partner organizations: An online data collection process was created by Ashley Ignatius, MPCA, using Survey123. It was presented to the Policy Committee. It contains a brief survey capturing the Who, What, Where and When of projects happening throughout the watershed that will not be reported in eLink. This will make it easier for 1W1P members and the public to better understand all the projects happening in the watershed. An excel spreadsheet can be downloaded from the data that was captured. This is currently the easiest way to collect data from multiple agencies in one location. Discussions are in progress with BWSR for a way to upload this information into eLink when that system is updated.

Next Meeting:

- a. The next Policy Committee Meeting is planned for Thursday, February 28th, 2019 at 9:00 a.m. in room 108 of the Fillmore County Office Building. The Planning Work Group will be scheduling a meeting at the beginning of February at the latest with an Advisory Committee meeting tentatively scheduled for some time in March.
- b. Agenda items: review of Implementation Policy (cost share rates and eligibility), annual evaluation of the plan, and annual watershed report.

Motion made by Mueller, seconded by Jim Kellogg to adjourn at 11:14 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marcia Ward, Secretary