

PUBLIC HEARING COMMENTS		Stewartville Public Hearing held Wednesday, September 7, 2016, at 7:30 pm at the Stewartville Civic Center Caledonia Public Hearing held Thursday, September 8, 2016, at 7:30 pm at the Houston County Criminal Justice Center				
Committer	Comment #		Comment	Plan Change Made (Yes/No)	Plan Section	Comment Response / Action
Public Comment-Stewartville Public Hearing	1	Dave Erickson	How is this project different from a watershed district? What about taxing authority?	No		This project is not intended at this time to form a watershed district but rather to work collaboratively together on a watershed basis to set local priorities and coordinate efforts across county boundaries for more effective and efficient water management. The county's could choose to levy additional taxes to pay for activities in the watershed plan, but that is not the intent at this time. Funding is expected to continue to come from the state to the counties and SWCDs through competitive and non-competitive grants, some from the Clean Water Fund, the difference being that implementation will be within the watershed boundary versus the county boundaries. A watershed district has taxing authority and can set its own rules and regulations. To form a watershed district, there is a specific process required involving petitions and county board approvals that can take more than a year to complete.
Public Comment-Stewartville Public Hearing	2	Ted Olson	What conservation practices are being done on state-owned land, such as dams, wider grass waterways, diversions, etc? I've not seen any of this being done.	No		State-owned lands are managed by state agencies, and like private lands, best management practice implementation is voluntary. DNR and the other state agencies have been involved in the planning process so it is expected that the state agencies will take actions on state-owned land that help meet the priorities in the watershed plan.
Public Comment-Stewartville Public Hearing	3	Nick Feltis	Nitrogen cycling in the soil, organic matter and natural soil materials may be contributing a higher percentage of nitrogen and sediment as a natural source through the natural cycling of nutrients. This needs to be considered in the calculations of point and nonpoint sources of nitrogen and sediment.	No		We acknowledge that there are natural sources of nitrogen and sediment. The reduction goals in this plan are aimed at the human-caused sources. The goals do not expect a 100% reduction in any of the parameters.
Public Comment-Stewartville Public Hearing	4	Lori Feltis	Is this program voluntary or mandatory? Are municipalities required to follow this plan?	No		The plan is built on voluntary adoption of practices using many existing programs. No new rules or ordinances are proposed in the plan. Anything that is mandatory would already be required under existing ordinances and rules. Municipalities are included in this plan as partners for implementation and are encouraged to participate, but they are not required to adopt or be held to this plan.
Public Comment-Stewartville Public Hearing	5	Dave Erickson	What does the Policy Committee expect as a result from this hearing? What are they hoping to receive as comments from the public?	No		We are seeking good comments that can help to improve the plan and how it is implemented. Holding a public hearing is a requirement in the planning process to ensure that the public has a chance to voice any concerns about the plan's contents.

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Public Comment- Stewartville Public Hearing	6	Jerry Cleveland	The committee deserves praise for doing this and taking an entire watershed to make it work together.	No		Acknowledged with thanks.
Public Comment – Caledonia Public Hearing	1	Matt Feldmeier	Will funding come through EQIP or other programs? It is a long process for EQIP vs. the capacity funds that SWCDs receive which can be approved quickly. Faster funding will help promote more farmer participation.	No		The same funding streams will be available that exist now, and other funds will hopefully come through the Clean Water Fund. The Local Government Round Table initiated 1W1P, and the Clean Water Council recommends how Clean Water Funds are used. The trend is to get stable funding for 1W1P versus relying on competitive grants.
Public Comment – Caledonia Public Hearing	2	Glen Haag	Are these policies to be put in place or voluntary? How does this go along with the Ag Certainty program? Why do we think this is better on a larger scale rather than on a smaller scale? Does this help us get a better chance at securing money for implementation of practices? How are you going to get at the high priority areas?	No		This committee will not serve a purpose different than what it has been. It has been a voluntary, collaborative approach, and it will remain that way. No zoning rules or policies will come from this committee. Counties will still do zoning. The direction of the state is towards managing water on a watershed basis. The difficult part will be for counties that have more than one watershed. Streamlined reporting is one positive that is hoped for. As a pilot, we are unsure about how it will all work, whether or not we are duplicating, simplifying, or creating another layer of government. The work will still get done locally on a smaller scale.
Public Comment – Caledonia Public Hearing	3	Adam Beilke-BWSR	The purpose of this process is to manage water on watershed basis by looking at upstream and downstream influences. The partners should be commended for being a pilot and for starting from scratch to develop this plan.	No		Acknowledged with thanks.
Public Comment – Caledonia Public Hearing	4	Bill Rowekamp	There are multiple agencies in the counties so what is the people equation? Will this be a smooth transition? Do you think there will be any turf wars or difficulties? Will the funding be the same or more?	No		There are few changes anticipated initially. We will still have SWCD and county staff that will do the work together. There may be employees who work throughout the watershed across county boundaries. The biggest competition for funding may be with state agencies. In Dodge County, where there is a small portion of their county in the watershed, their focus may be more on the Zumbro that makes up the majority of their county. We want to avoid any infighting and maintain high customer service. There are difficulties with writing competitive grant applications which should be reduced by working together.

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Public Comment – Caledonia Public Hearing	5	Wayne Feldmeier	Does this have a lot to do with water quality? There are so many rules and regulations. You need to be careful if making new rules. They may not work as expected.	No		Yes, this is a water quality plan. No new rules are proposed in this plan; this is not a regulating board. The purpose is to collaborate on a watershed basis in order to get funding. BWSR's only rulemaking power lies with the Wetland Conservation Act and the MN Soil Loss Law. Local powers remain in place. The focus of 1W1P is on planning and how to target implementation. Many of the issues (municipal wastewater treatment, DNR water appropriation fees, rip rap, etc.) mentioned by this commentor are discussed in the plan but are regulated by the state agencies.
Public Comment – Caledonia Public Hearing	6	Tom Fairbanks	Does the SWCD have a map of the aquifers in the watershed? Is there monitoring of the aquifer? Has there been a baseline established on current conditions, vis a vis erosion and water quality? How do you measure progress? Does 1W1P impact municipal sewer treatment? Many plants were built in the 1970s. With the amount of tourism, could sandy beaches be developed for recreation? Japanese hops are found along the Root River; does 1W1P have any impact on this?	No		There are aquifer maps available from such agencies as USGS, MDH, MGS, and DNR. There are county geologic atlases available or in progress (Houston and Dodge counties) which include aquifer maps. Comprehensive groundwater monitoring is in progress but is still in the early stages. The Root River has impairments due to bacteria, sediment, and nitrates as shown on the maps in the plan. Fish and macroinvertebrate impairments are also on the maps. The goals in the plan are to improve streams that are impaired so they will meet the water quality standards and to protect those that are not impaired so they don't become impaired. Municipal sewage treatment plants are regulated by MPCA, and that does not change with this plan. Recreation is considered in this plan so projects may be considered that enhance recreation. Invasive species is among the emerging issues mentioned in the plan.
Public Comment – Caledonia Public Hearing	7	Glen Haag	How do you get at the high priority areas with this plan? How do you get those stubborn ones to participate? Pond costs are extremely high, even the cost to clean out existing ponds. It is difficult to get funds; yet these are big issues that need to be addressed.	No		All projects and practices are voluntary unless there is an identified problem that relates to existing regulations, such as existing enforcement mechanisms in feedlot and septic system rules. However, even those that are not out of compliance with any rules can cause problems. The plan places an emphasis on civic/landowner engagement to encourage voluntary adoption of practices. One anticipated outcome of the plan is to secure additional funds for financial assistance to landowners.
Public Comment – Caledonia Public Hearing	8	Wayne Feldmeier	How much money will it take to do this? This plan is to get money but others will set the regulations?	No		The total cost for all the "A" and "B" priority activities in the plan, including capital projects, is estimated to be \$19 million to reach the ten year reduction goals.