

**Root River One Watershed, One Plan (1W1P)**  
**Public Hearing**  
**Thursday, September 8, 2016**  
**7:30 PM**  
**Houston County Criminal Justice Center, Caledonia, MN**

In attendance:

Root River 1W1P Policy Committee: Duane Bakke (Fillmore County), Glenn Hahn (Dodge SWCD), Leonard Leutink (Fillmore SWCD), Marcia Ward (Winona County), Dana Kjome (Houston County), Loren Lapham (Root River SWCD), Bob Mierau (Crooked Creek Watershed District)

Root River 1W1P Planning Work Group: Adam Beilke (BWSR), Bob Scanlan (Root River SWCD), Dave Walter (Root River SWCD), Sheila Harmes (Winona County), Daryl Buck (Winona SWCD), Jennifer Ronnenberg (Fillmore SWCD), Donna Rasmussen (Fillmore SWCD)

Others present: Matt Feldmeier (Root River SWCD), Glen Haag (farmer), Bill Rowekamp (farmer), Wayne Feldmeier, Tom Fairbanks (Houston), Glen Kruse (Eitzen), Tim McCormick (Crooked Creek WD), Roger Stenhoff (Bear Creek Watershed), Maynard Welscher (Crooked Creek WD), David McGuire (Olmsted County), Daniel Goetzinger (Crooked Creek WD), Jim Nissen (citizen), Bonita Underbakke (citizen), Marie Kovcesi (Winona County), Jeff Weiss (DNR), Cynthia Christensen (Houston County Farm Bureau)

Following the Open House from 6:30 to 7:30 pm, the Public Hearing was called to order at 7:30 pm by Chair Duane Bakke. The Policy Committee members present introduced themselves. Chair Bakke also named the remaining Policy Committee members that were not present. Jennifer Ronnenberg, Fillmore SWCD Water Management Coordinator, provided an overview of the Root River 1W1P process including the next steps involved in approving and implementing the plan.

After explaining the ground rules for the hearing, the public was invited by Chair Bakke to provide their comments.

Matt Feldmeier, Root River SWCD: 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.

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.

Glen Haag, farmer: 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?

This committee will not serve a purpose different than what it has been. 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.

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.

Acknowledged with thanks.

Bill Rowekamp, farmer from Winona: 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?

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.

Wayne Feldmeier, citizen from Houston County: 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 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. Local powers remain in place. The focus of 1W1P is on planning and how to target implementation.

Tom Fairbanks, citizen from Houston: 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?

There are aquifer maps available from such agencies as USGS, MDH, MGS, and DNR. 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.

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.

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.

Wayne Feldmeier: How much money will it take to do this? This plan is to get money but others will set the regulations?

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.

After a call by Chair Bakke for further comments with no response, he closed the public hearing. Marcia Ward moved to adjourn the public hearing at 8:27 pm; Glenn Hahn seconded; motion carried unanimously.