

Meeting of the Advisory Committee for Root River One Watershed One Plan
Tuesday, November 13, 2018, 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM
Room 108, Fillmore County Office Building, 902 Houston St. NW, Preston, MN
Meeting Notes

In attendance: Tim Ruzek (Mower SWCD), Skip Langer (Olmsted SWCD), Daryl Buck (Winona SWCD), Dan Wermager (Root River SWCD), Tim Connolly (USFWS), David Schmidt (TNC), Justin Watkins (MPCA), Dean Thomas (Area Soil Health Technician), John Beckwith (Hiawatha Valley RC&D), Bridgette Timm (SE MN Water Resources Bd.), Matt Drewitz (BWSR), Adam Beilke (BWSR), Nicole Lehman (DNR), Jennifer Ronnenberg (MDH), Donna Rasmussen and Caleb Fischer (Fillmore SWCD)

Open meeting and introductions

Updates re: 2018-2019 watershed work plan activities and funding

- Project updates: A review of the work plan and budget –no changes to what was presented at the March meeting.
 - ✓ DWSMAs: Olmsted, Winona, Fillmore: *A kernza field day was held in August in the Chatfield DWSMA. Terraces are being installed in Mill Creek; 2/3 completed this year and 1/3 next year using ~\$8000 from the watershed grant. There are some leads for additional structural practices in the Chatfield DWSMA and in Mill Creek watershed. MDA and MDH will be involved in initiating activities in the Utica DWSMA.*
 - ✓ Soil Health and Nutrient Management: *There are funds for 15% of Dean Thomas' time to provide technical assistance with soil health practices, and for 80% of Sara West's time for nutrient management planning assistance. Sara was hired in April for the five counties in the 1W1P area. Nitrates in groundwater, drinking water and in impaired streams are a priority, stressing the need for these positions for reducing nitrates.*
 - ✓ Crooked Creek watershed-Root River SWCD: *There were some design changes completed. The watershed district is paying for the engineering costs. An EQIP application has been submitted so it should be 100% cost shared. They have encountered some wetland issues, but hope to complete construction by summer/fall 2019. This may free up watershed grant funds for other practices in the watershed.*
 - ✓ Upper South and Middle Branch Root River-Mower SWCD: *The new watershed conservation planner/ technician is Paul Hunter. He was the feedlot officer and already has good relationships with the farmers. Outreach/ project development will follow the farm walkover process used in the Field to Stream Partnership study watershed.*
 - ✓ PTMApp-Fillmore SWCD and SEMNWRB: *Fillmore SWCD staff met with Bridgette last month to get the data she needs, especially the culvert inventory data for Fillmore County. We will begin with a small segment of Riceford Creek watershed upstream of Mabel to identify water storage sites and compare to LiDAR imagery that shows existing structures. The locations will be prioritized using the cost/benefit tool in PTMApp. Root River SWCD projects: A structure was installed in Riceford Creek which will use the 1W1P funds for Riceford.*
 - ✓ Rush-Pine watershed-Winona/Fillmore: *A December 7th meeting is set with the council leaders to discuss use of funds for cost share and education/outreach. They are considering the farm walkover approach.*
 - ✓ Civic Engagement Plan Development: *The Project Idea form submitted to SE Regional Sustainable Development Partnership for assistance from U of M Extension was approved by the Natural Resources Work Group. Now it goes on to the full board for their consideration on Nov. 26th. U of M Professor Amit Pradhananga (who works with Mae Davenport-CE guru) is interested in taking on the project and is working on a budget proposal. Beth Kallestad with Extension is also interested in helping.*
 - ✓ Noxious Weed Projects: *Fillmore SWCD received \$25,300 from MDA in 2018 to hire a private contractor to treat Japanese hops along the Root River corridor from Preston to Lanesboro. Only a portion of the work was completed, so the funds were extended for use until June of 2019. A 2019 grant application was submitted to continue the work to the Fillmore/Houston county line. Houston County has also*

applied for a grant to continue through Houston County. Fillmore SWCD is also submitting a request to Conservation Corps MN for crew labor to continue land-based treatments along the Root River Trail, at public access areas and on some private land away from the river.

- *BWSR Conservation Planning Initiative-Dan Wermager, Root River SWCD: Two priority watersheds were selected, Torkelson Creek and Money Creek, although planning can be done in any area of the Root River. (This does not include the 1W1P area outside of the Root River watershed.) Letters (511) were sent out to all the landowners in the two watersheds about 6 weeks ago. Dan has had 10 call backs, mostly absentee landowners. About half have requested farm walkovers. A couple of plans have identified conservation needs that the landowners will likely pursue funding to complete. The first year goal is to complete 20 plans, and over half have been completed with assistance from the Houston County DC. Dan is to present at two soil health events/year; one is planned this winter by the Root River SWCD. Contact Dan about others. The NRCS grant funding the soil health position has funds for SWCDs to host 11 soil health events over the next three years; \$1500 is available per event for room rent, speaker fees, advertising, etc.*
- *Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP): The agreement with NRCS is still in progress. BWSR applied for \$2.5 million for the five 1W1P pilot watersheds. It is anticipated that \$400,000-500,000 will be available through EQIP for practices. TA funds in the watershed grant budget represent 20% of the practice dollars. It is possible that the funding could be delayed due to the expiration of the current Farm Bill and the lack of a new Farm Bill. It was noted that all EQIP practice components should be included in the list of eligible practices; the only practices that are not eligible are feedlot practices since there is already an RCPP funding pool for feedlots in southeast Minnesota. BWSR is sponsoring a meeting on Dec. 5th in Mankato for the southern 1W1P pilot watersheds to provide RCPP information and share 1W1P progress.*
- *319 Grant Request: A request was submitted for 319 funding for the Root River focusing on implementation in the Field to Stream Partnership watersheds. Ten watersheds are being selected per year over four years. Forty applied initially, which were screened down to 19. The Root was not among the ten selected from the 19 applicants for the first year of funding. Once selected, projects are eligible for three additional rounds of funding (4 years each) for a total of 16 years of funding. We can apply again in 2019. There is one more round of regular 319 funding; applications due later this winter. Clean Water Funds can be used as a match.*
- *PTMApp updates-Matt Drewitz, BWSR: The server is now housed with MNGeo, so it runs much faster than before. MNGeo has provided a lot of ideas and support for improving speed and scalability. BWSR and MNIT are in preliminary discussions about adding support staff for PTMApp. Houston Engineering has an upcoming vendor contract to maintain the program and fix bugs, provide desktop user support and PINs for access to the toolbar, and conduct PTMApp needs assessment. Enhancements to the web version include updated reports, support for large raster files and an updated table generator. The desktop enhancements include updates to the crop rotations, converting from RUSLE2 to WEPP now used by NRCS, cost/benefit updates, incorporating streambank erosion as a sediment source. Future considerations are to include pollution estimates in the ACPF module, upgrade BMP suitability, and plan for the migration from ArcGIS 10.6 to ArcPro in three years. Training videos are being developed.*
Bridgette Timm, SE MN Water Resources Board: She is gathering the data and modifying and renaming it to work with the tool. She has run into a few hiccups that she needs help with but Houston would charge for providing assistance. Matt has a resource person working in the Red River who may be able to help.

Partner projects and practices update: Last year we used a rather cumbersome manual method of marking projects on paper maps and then consolidating that information on one paper map to scan and show to the Policy Committee. The online survey method being used today is to allow entering information, both here at the meeting or by partners who cannot attend, that can be downloaded as an Excel spreadsheet as well as be shown digitally on a map. This need for capturing projects and practices being implemented in the watershed that help to achieve goals within the 1W1P has been an ongoing discussion not only for the Root 1W1P but in other watersheds. The format is such that it could be used for multiple watersheds. There have been preliminary

discussions with BWSR MNIT staff to try to design this so that the data can be uploaded into eLINK and become part of the Clean Water Accountability report maintained by MPCA. Thanks to Ashley Ignatius, MPCA's GIS Specialist, for helping put the survey together using Survey123. This will be public information, so care should be taken that the data entered does not include private information. After showing an example of how to enter project information, several questions and suggestions were offered by the committee:

- ✓ *Can the survey information be previewed as it would be shown in the table before submitting?*
- ✓ *Move the mapping portion to the end because moving the cursor over the map can change the location.*
- ✓ *Uploading images could include a map with a polygon of the project area since only points can be mapped.*
- ✓ *Add to the BMP implementation: protection/easement/acquisition and education/outreach/civic engagement.*
- ✓ *Because editing of entries is difficult, projects that have not been completed and will need future updates will need to be deleted and the information entered again. This information would be most useful before future Advisory and Policy Committee meetings, so the most recent list of projects will be sent out as a reminder of which projects to update. Clicking on the point on the map will bring up the information in the table also.*
- ✓ *Can subwatershed boundaries be added to the base map?*

Timeline and next meetings

- Policy Committee meeting: Wednesday, November 28th, 9 am, Room 108, Fillmore County Office Building: *Similar agenda to today—project updates, review results from survey, financial report*
- Planning Work Group: Feb. 2019 (or sooner, if needed, following the Dec. 5th RCPP meeting)
- Advisory Committee: tentatively planned for March 2019

Adjourned at 12:00 pm.