

Meeting Minutes
Bois de Sioux and Mustinka Watersheds
1W1P [Policy](#) Committee
September 3, 2020 at 1:00 pm
PHONE CONFERENCE CALL & ONLINE SCREENSHARE & IN PERSON

Member Organizations

Big Stone County
Big Stone SWCD
Grant County
Grant SWCD
Otter Tail County
West Otter Tail SWCD
Stevens County
Stevens SWCD
Traverse County
Traverse SWCD
Wilkin County
Wilkin SWCD
Bois de Sioux Watershed

Committee Representative

Commissioner Jay Backer
Supervisor Dan Morrill
Commissioner Bill LaValley
Supervisor Randy Larson
Commissioner John Lindquist
Supervisor John Walkup **[Absent]**
Commissioner Ron Staples
Supervisor Greg Fynboh
Commissioner Tom Monson
Supervisor Chester Raguse **[Absent]**
Commissioner Eric Klindt **[Absent]**
Supervisor Kyle Gowin **[Absent]**
Manager Linda Vavra

Designated Alternate

Commissioner Doyle Sperr **[Absent]**
Sup. Odell Christenson **[Absent]**
Com. Lee Rogness **[Absent]**
Supervisor Richard Viger **[Absent]**
Commissioner Neil Wiese **[Absent]**
Supervisor Debbie Anderson **[Absent]**
Commissioner Kevin Leininger **[Absent]**
Supervisor Carol Johnson **[Absent]**
Commissioner Dennis Larson **[Absent]**
Supervisor Josh Deal **[Absent]**
Manager Allen Wold **[Absent]**

Also Present

Henry Van Offelen, BWSR
Pete Waller, BWSR
Reed Peterson, Grant County
Rachel Olm, HEI
Jeremiah Jazdzewski, HEI **[Absent]**

Big Stone County	Danny Tuckett
Big Stone SWCD	Joseph Otto
Grant County	Greg Lillemon
Grant SWCD	Jared House
West Otter Tail SWCD	Brad Mergens
West Otter Tail SWCD	Ben Underhill
Traverse SWCD	Sara Gronfeld
Wilkin County	Breanna Koval
Wilkin SWCD	Craig Lingen
Bois de Sioux Watershed	Jamie Beyer

1. Call to order

2. Approve Last Meeting's Minutes

Backer motioned, seconded by Lindquist, to approve the August 6, 2020. Motion carried unanimously.

3. Recommend for Approval Claims

Vavra motioned, seconded by Monson, to approve payment to HEI in the amounts of \$5,263.25 and \$14,802.25. Motion carried unanimously.

4. Review Most Recent Financial Report

Olm presented total expenses vs. the plan budget. For the pre-planning and planning phases, HEI expenses are \$2,137 below budget. There has been continued savings by using conference calls rather than in-person meetings.

5. Introduce Agenda

LaValley motioned, seconded by Vavra, to approve the agenda. Motion carried unanimously.

6. Draft Bois de Sioux & Mustinka CWMP

Committee members discussed the upcoming timeline. If the draft is approved for notice publication today, the earliest that the required public hearing could be held is mid-November. Each comment received during the 60-day notice will be tabulated, and preliminary response will be drafted prior to the required public hearing. Based on the outcome of the public hearing, there may be additional plan revisions. Committee members suggested that the public hearing be held in the Herman Community Center. Following these revisions, each of the 13 entities must approve the plan before submission to BWSR. The required BWSR hearings could be held in January. Committee members inquired as to what situations, in the future, will require a plan amendment. Olm referred members to Section 5.12.

Olm reviewed changes to the plan since the last draft, which include:

- An acknowledgement page, with support from the Legacy Amendment, Clean Water fund included, as required by our 1W1Plan planning grant
- Figure 2-3 maps
- CRP contracts expiring 2020-2030 was previously reported as the number of contracts; it now appears as an estimate of acres
- Estimated start and end times in the actions tables has been refined
- Appendices have been provided, which include: Land and Water Resources Inventory, copies of the planning Memorandums of Agreement, BdSWD District Rules, and Participation Plan

LaValley motioned, seconded by Fynboh, to publish the documents, and begin the 60-day notice on September 8, 2020. Roll call vote: Backer – aye; Morrill – aye; LaValley – aye; Lindquist – aye; Staples – aye; Monson – aye; Vavra – aye; Larson – aye. Motion carried.

7. Plan Administration Structure

Committee members discussed options under implementation, reviewed information gathered from other organizations, and discussed important timeline considerations in discussion with Waller.

Baseline of what is needed by BWSR for implementation:

- One entity to receive grant funds; operating structure must be finalized
- Does not need to be enacted before the plan is approved; must be done before grant funds can be received

Before a grant agreement is made with BWSR:

- Comprehensive plan must be state approved (maybe January)
- All entities must pass a resolution saying they are adopting and agreeing to implement this plan under their jurisdiction
- Develop a 2-year work plan and the implementation structure must approve the work plan

- Request the grant funds

Grant Agreements

- 3-year agreements; every-other-year grants; one year of overlap
- Develop 2-year budget, but an extra year to close out projects; to go beyond the extra year, there may be a possibility of an extension
- Weather impacts project completion
- 3rd Year overlap also allows you to use funds for more than one of the grants for a large project

Our unaccessed 2020-2021 \$1,064,000 implementation grant:

- (Waller will verify) If the workplan isn't submitted by March or April, these funds will be made available to the First Come First Group for unfunded 1W1Plan planning grants

Use a more streamlined process than the Chippewa JPA

- Individual organizations made edits and then it needed to be resent to all boards for approval
- Send to entity attorneys first for their review, and then send to all the boards
- Includes counties and SWCD's

Yellow Medicine River Watershed Administrator Michele Overholser joined the meeting, and presented her experience with implementation following their 1W1Plan. Their plan was approved December 2016, and they started spending funds in July of 2018. They are currently on their second round of grant funding. They operate under several MOA agreements, as they didn't want to enact a new, separate layer of government. The watershed is the ditch authority for nine drainage systems; several counties continue to be the ditch authority. Their overall goal under implementation was, to the extent possible, use their existing organizations and the types of work they already do to accomplish similar tasks during implementation.

Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watershed acts as the fiscal agent; all funding runs through the watershed board • Watershed formally approves/ratifies grants approved by the Policy Committee • Watershed holds fiscal responsibility, is the official grant holder • Hold harmless clauses protect SWCD's from fiscal failures by the watershed; hold harmless clauses protect watershed from construction/structural failures by the SWCD's • Watershed officially holds the contract with the landowner; Jared indicated that PDT has chosen to put contracts between SWCD and landowner • This additional grant activity has little impact on the fiscal agent's annual audit • Fiscal agent provides a monthly update for the Policy Committee • Watershed has a district-wide view, avoids arguments about what is happening in <i>my county</i> and more objectively compares impacts of upstream projects vs. downstream projects • Watershed makes sure the project guidelines are being adhered to, that dates are correct, and that project files are complete
Policy Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy Committee decided that they only wanted to meet 4 times per year • Each entity nominates their own Policy Committee member representative • Reviews any grants over \$15,000 (per their own policy). To streamline and add predictability, grants under this amount do not require PC approval • They have found \$15,000 may be too low – thinking about making it \$30,000 or \$50,000 • Implemented a shared Google Doc scoring sheet – projects must score high enough to be considered for funding • Scoring sheet can be adapted to reflect different priorities; committee can change the point values; scoring sheet was developed during implementation – don't do this too early, you will change your mind too many times

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The threshold for funding via the scoring sheet is currently set low to accommodate a lot of projects that were ready but had been denied for EQIP. If there is an overall decrease in grant funds available, the threshold will be raised. • The comprehensive plan is reviewed periodically
SWCD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All projects start with landowners meeting with SWCD staff. SWCD put together the project, and rank and score it • Provide landowners the state cost-share policy and state cost-share rules • Inspect projects per the requirements of state cost share contracts • Individual offices decide if and when projects should be approved by their boards, prior to submission to the Policy Committee or watershed • Enter project data in Elink; map and report; no reimbursement until the reduction calculations are entered and reporting is done • Project responsibility during construction remains with the SWCD
Grant Agreements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include \$15,000-\$25,000/year for grant administration; 15 hours per month of work, but will be higher in months with reporting • Workplan includes frequency of grant administration reimbursement, and at what rate • State cost-share plans with landowners require the project/practice remain for 10 years; if the landowner disrupts or removes the project, they must repay up to 150% of the cost (BWSR will enforce this) • The Yellow Medicine River Watershed has not submitted any projects (limited staff and technical expertise). The counties have not submitted any projects either; there is potentially one county project, and they may be working with an SWCD first to bring the project through the grant process • 319 and EQIP grants are being used for the state cost-share matching funds – these amounts will cover the amount of cost-share needed for the entire WBIF amount • The largest project they have done so far is \$100,000 between four landowners • They made sure they left a lot of “may’s” in their agreements to add flexibility
Workplans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Steering Committee puts together the work plans • Their workplan is based on the HUC-10 level, but they have to report on the HUC-12 level

Committee members discussed the different implementation structures, stating an aversion to the establishment of a separate entity, and a desire to retain positive working relationships between landowners and SWCD reps.

Policy Committee members requested that the Steering Committee map out the roles/responsibilities and the need for legal instruments to enact an implementation structure without creating a separate legal entity. These may include: an overall organizational memorandum of agreement, individual memorandums of agreement, Policy Committee polices, cost-share agreements, and scoring sheets. Pomme de Terre has used Stevens County Attorney Aaron Jordan to draw up their legal documents. Vavra motioned, seconded by Lindquist, to authorize the Steering Committee to present this information at the next meeting on October 1st. Roll call vote: Backer – aye; Morrill – absent; LaValley – aye; Lindquist – aye; Staples – aye; Monson – absent; Vavra – aye; Larson – aye; Fynboh – aye. Motion carried.

Vavra motioned, seconded by Fynboh, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

NEXT POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING: October 1st at 1:00 PM