

Mississippi River Sartell Watershed Policy Committee Meeting Agenda

Date / Time: Wednesday, June 11 8:30am - 10:00am

Location: Watab Town Hall
660 75th St NW, Sauk Rapids, MN 56379

Invitees:

Organization	Policy Member	Staff
Benton County	Primary: Ed Popp Alternate: Scott Johnson	Roxanne Achman, Luke Edlund
Benton SWCD	Primary: Chuck Rau Alternate: Wade Bastian	Emily Forbord, Mike McMillian
Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe	Primary: Kelly Applegate Alternate: Susan Klapel	Perry Bunting, Robert Wall
Morrison County	Primary: Randy Winscher Alternate: TBD	Amy Kowalzek
Morrison SWCD	Primary: Scott Saehr Alternate: Dave Hubner	Shannon Wettstein, Destiny McDonald
Stearns County	Primary: Joe Perske Alternate: Tarryl Clark	Becky Schlorf, Angela Beckman
Stearns SWCD	Primary: Arlyn Lawrenz Alternate: Tom Gregory	Kyle Weimann, Stephanie Hatzenbihler
BWSR	N/A	Zach Guttormson, Brad Wozney

Agenda Topic	Action	Time
Pre-meeting networking (optional) https://arcg.is/1fnGPG1	Networking	8:15 - 8:30am
Call to order Introductions and Check-in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Name, Title, Organization - What's your favorite community/local event to attend? 	Discussion	8:30 - 8:40am 10 minutes
Approve Meeting Minutes from 4.18.2025	Decision	8:40 - 8:45am 5 minutes
Consider an addition to the TAC membership LegacyWorks Group - Kayli Overland, Sentinel Landscapes	Discussion, Decision	8:45 - 8:50am 5 minutes
Planning Vision Statement Selection	Discussion, Decision	8:50 - 9:05am 15 minutes
Community Engagement Plan and Kickoff Event Proposal	Discussion, Decision	9:05- 9:20am

Mississippi River Sartell Watershed Policy Committee Meeting Agenda

		15 minutes
Introduction to Watershed Primer	Information, Discussion	9:20 - 9:35am 15 minutes
Proposed process for issue identification and prioritization	Information, Discussion	9:35 - 9:50am 15 minutes
Check out and Adjourn	Discussion	9:50 - 10:00am 10 minutes
Post-meeting networking (optional) https://arcg.is/1fnGPG1	Networking	15 minutes following meeting

Mississippi River Sartell Watershed Policy Committee Meeting Minutes

Date/Time: Friday April 18, 2025 9:00am-12:00pm

Location: Royalton City Hall, 12 N Birch St N, Royalton, MN 56373

Voting members present: Chuck Rau (Benton SWCD), Ed Popp (Benton County), Aryln Lawrenz (Stearns SWCD), Joe Perske (Stearns County), Scott Saeher (Morrison SWCD)

Voting members absent: Kelly Applegate (MLBO), Randy Winscher (Morrison County)

Staff present: **Stephanie** Hatzenbihler (Stearns SWCD), Robert Wall (MLBO), Mike McMillin (Benton SWCD), Angela Beckman (Stearns County), Zach Guttormson (BWSR), Shannon Wettstein (Morrison SWCD)

Minute taker: Angela Beckman, Stearns County

1. **Call to order/approve agenda:** Chair Popp called the meeting to order at 10:04am. Introductions made and check-in question answered by those in attendance. Member Lawrenz moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Member Rau, motion carried.
2. **Meeting Schedule.** Ms. Hatzenbihler presented the upcoming Policy Committee Meeting dates to confirm if there were any known conflicts. It is not anticipated that the group will need to meet every month, the current goal is to meet every other month unless additional meetings are necessary. A monthly calendar invite will be sent so that members can ahead and respond should any conflicts come up. Chair Popp indicated that there may be a conflict with the current timeframe of 9:00am-12:00pm and suggested 8:30am-10:30am as a possible alternative. At this time, the 2nd Wednesday of the month is the only date that appeared to work for all members.

A motion was made by Member Saeher to approve the meeting dates to be the 2nd Wednesday of the month from 8:30am-10:30am. Seconded by Member Perske. Motion carried.

3. **Primer to Consultant Presentation.** Ms. Hatzenbihler provided background on the consultant review process. Two proposals were submitted, one by Houston

Engineering, Inc. (HEI) and one by ISG, Inc. (ISG). The Steering Committee reviewed the proposals and brought forward the top proposal, which was determined to be HEI. This recommendation was driven by a significantly lower bid and contents of the proposal. Members of the Steering Committee indicated that they have had experience with both consultants in previous projects. Shannon noted some key differences and experiences with both HEI and ISG and indicated that HEI was the more efficient consultant to work with.

- 4. Consultant Presentation.** Rachel Olm and Moriya Rufer from HEI presented their proposal. The presentation was broken down into three key areas: providing a smoothly managed process, expertise along the Mississippi River Corridor, and effective, engaging facilitation and outreach.

Noted history of remaining on or under budget, remaining on schedule, learning from other partners, and setting the stage for tracking and implementation.

Noted experience in 1W1P projects along the Mississippi River Corridor, familiarity with goals of other plans in this area. Have led, facilitated, and advised on planning efforts in the next two watersheds upstream. Have experience in working with Landscape Stewardship plans.

Noted expertise in using models and tools to understand sources of pollution loading and to recommend effective solutions. Example model was HSPF-SAM, which was included in HEI's proposal.

HEI also offers assistance tailoring public events with custom outreach materials offered as well as facilitation expertise on committee meetings and citizen advisory groups.

A Q&A session was held.

Member Rau inquired if HEI has experience in identifying and leveraging other funding sources for projects and how common it is for groups to look beyond the scope of the WBIF funding. Rufer and Olm both indicated that HEI has had experience working with groups that have utilized WBIF as an opportunity to acquire funding from additional sources through pooling funds, matching, and other strategies for finding funding without restricting all projects solely to the scope of WBIF alone.

Member Perske inquired if decisions on federal budgeting could affect funding for projects within the plan. Member Rau clarified that the BWSR funding for 1W1P is through Environmental Trust Fund/Clean Water Fund lottery proceeds and that while there may be some fluctuation, it has been a stable funding mechanism that likely won't be affected by federal funding decisions.

Perske asked about public engagement and how it will be managed in this plan, and how issues might be addressed. Ms. Rufer explained that they have held separate citizen meetings in other plans to address public complaints and concerns. Member Rau pointed out the importance of public input but that it shouldn't derail the plan. Ms. Olm further noted the importance of refocusing on the plan goals and importance of the projects when addressing public concerns.

Chair Popp also pointed out that more education has been provided over time that has eased the amount of public contention with 1W1P plans and projects.

- 5. Consultant Selection.** A brief discussion was held regarding the presentation and experience of the proposer. Member Rau made a motion to recommend HEI as the consultant to the Fiscal Agent, seconded by Member Lawrenz. Motion carried.
- 6. Technical Advisory Committee Formation.** Ms. Hatzenbihler provided background on the purpose of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to be formed. The Steering Committee previously discussed and created a recommended list of organizations to be included in the TAC, which was presented to the Policy Committee.

There was discussion surrounding which specific staff from each county would be invited to the TAC. Shannon inquired what was considered a quorum for this group, as Member Rau had to leave the meeting at 11:30am. Ms. Hatzenbihler confirmed a quorum would be half of the committee, plus one. Therefore, there was a quorum present.

Member Perske made a motion to approve the recommended list for the Technical Advisory Committee, seconded by Member Saehr. Motion carried.

7. **Planning Vision Statement Brainstorm.** The committee was provided with questions to consider for brainstorming goals for the 10-year plan including desired future state, impacts, tangible outcomes that will demonstrate success, and how success will be measured. Results of activity will be shown at the next meeting.
8. **Check Out and Adjournment.** Check-out question answered by those in attendance. Chair Popp adjourned the meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 12:02pm.

Mississippi River Sartell Watershed (MRSW)

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

2025-2026

Purpose:

The purpose of an advisory committee is to make recommendations on the MRSW Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan content and plan implementation to the policy committee. The committee will assist and provide technical support and make recommendations to the Policy Committee on the development and content of the plan. This is a required committee in BWSR's Operating Procedures in order to meet public and stakeholder participation goals and requirements identified in rule and statute for existing local water plans.

Meeting Information:

- Monthly from May 2025 - June 2026, then as needed until local plan adoption.
- Plan for 3 hour meetings, but may be able to shift to 2 hours later in the process.
- We will aim to establish a regular meeting schedule and send out calendar invites through June 2026.
- Meetings will mostly be held in person at a location in the watershed; however, an online attendance option will be offered to accommodate members as needed. Meeting locations under consideration are:
 - Royalton City Hall
 - Rice City Hall
 - Watab Township Hall

Membership:

Organization	#	Organization	#
Department of Natural Resources	1	Todd SWCD	17
Pollution Control Agency	2	Crow Wing County	18
Department of Agriculture	3	Crow Wing SWCD	19
Department of Health	4	Mille Lacs County	20
Environmental Quality Board	5	Mille Lacs SWCD	21
Board of Water and Soil Resources	6	Mississippi Headwaters Board	22
NRCS	7	LegacyWorks Group - Sentinel Landscapes	23
US FWS - Crane Meadows	8		
Department of Transportation	9		
Benton County	10		
Benton SWCD	11		
Morrison County	12		
Morrison SWCD	13		
Stearns County	14		
Stearns SWCD	15		
Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe	16		

Mississippi River Sartell Watershed (MRSW) Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) 2025-2026

Primary Contact Person:

Stephanie Hatzenbihler, Water Plan Coordinator, Stearns Conservation District

Stephanie.hatzenbihler@mn.nacdnet.net

office: 320-345-6492

cell: 320-293-9311

Backup Contact Person:

Shannon Wettstein, District Manager, Morrison Soil and Water

shannon.wettstein@morrisonswcd.org


office: 320-631-3553

cell: 320-547-1651

Resources:

<https://www.pca.state.mn.us/watershed-information/mississippi-river-sartell>

<https://bwsr.state.mn.us/one-watershed-one-plan>

 **1W1P Planning Grant Application Watershed #65 Mississippi River Sartell Watershed.pdf**

 **Exhibit A: MRSW CWMP 1W1P work plan**

 **Exhibit C: FINAL MOA MR Sartell Watershed.pdf**

 **Exhibit D: 3.0 1W1P Plan Content Requirements.pdf**

 **PROPOSAL FOR 1W1P PLAN WRITER AND FACILITATOR_HEI.pdf**

(Policy Committee recommended this consultant to the Fiscal Agent - Morrison SWCD, we anticipate the Fiscal Agent to take action on 4.25.2025)

Utilizing input from the Policy Committee, here are some draft vision statements for consideration.

Option 1 -

Our Vision: A thriving Mississippi River Sartell Watershed with healthy natural resources, accessible to all, for a sustainable future.

Option 2 -

Our Vision: A healthy and accessible Mississippi River Sartell Watershed, ensuring sustainable natural resources for our community's future.

Option 3 -

Our Vision: To cultivate a thriving Mississippi River Sartell Watershed where healthy natural resources are accessible to all, sustaining our community for generations.

Option 4 -

Our Vision: For a future where the Mississippi River Sartell Watershed flourishes with healthy natural resources, equitably accessible to everyone.

Option 5 -

Our Vision: A legacy of a healthy Mississippi River Sartell Watershed, rich in accessible natural resources, for a sustainable and vibrant community.

Mississippi River Sartell Watershed Collaborative Community Engagement Plan

Section 1: Purpose and Goals

Purpose:

To foster a collaborative and inclusive process that empowers stakeholders to actively participate in the development and implementation of a comprehensive watershed management plan, ensuring the vitality of the Mississippi River Sartell Watershed for generations to come.

Goals:

- **Raise Awareness and Understanding:** Increase community knowledge about the watershed, its resources, challenges, and the importance of watershed management.
- **Gather Diverse Perspectives:** Actively solicit input, concerns, and ideas from a wide range of stakeholders, including residents, landowners, businesses, agricultural producers, recreational users, and local organizations.
- **Build Trust and Relationships:** Establish open communication channels and foster trust among stakeholders, creating a sense of shared ownership and responsibility.
- **Encourage Active Participation:** Provide meaningful opportunities for community members to contribute their expertise and engage in decision-making processes.
- **Promote Stewardship and Action:** Inspire long-term commitment to watershed protection and encourage the adoption of best management practices.

Challenges:

- Balance local knowledge and scientific data and modeling
- Confined timeline
- Many potential areas of focus, but we need to prioritize and target efforts.

Mississippi River Sartell Watershed Collaborative Community Engagement Plan

Section 2: Target Audiences & Level of Participation

Target Audiences - See full list in google drive

- **Residents:** Homeowners, renters, and individuals living within the watershed boundaries.
- **Landowners:** Private property owners, including agricultural and forested land.
- **Businesses:** Commercial and industrial operations within the watershed.
- **Agricultural Producers:** Farmers and other agricultural operators.
- **Recreational Users:** Anglers, boaters, hikers, and others who enjoy the watershed's natural resources.
- **Local Organizations:** Environmental groups, civic associations, lake associations, and other community-based organizations.
- **Local Government Officials and Staff:** City and county representatives involved in planning, zoning, and natural resource management.
- **Educational Institutions:** Schools, colleges, and universities within or near the watershed.

Levels of Participation

Due to constraints with time and the large geographic region, we aim to utilize these levels from IAP2: Involve, Consult, Inform



Mississippi River Sartell Watershed Collaborative Community Engagement Plan

Section 3: Engagement Strategies and Activities:

Participation Level: Involve

Objective: Creating opportunities for the target audiences to provide input and ideas to develop the plan. Stakeholders are involved early in the process and are part of developing the ideas. The MRSW Collaborative will make a final determination of how to move forward but commits to considering input and ideas from stakeholders in the final decisions.

Promise to the public: We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the resources and issues that are developed. We will provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.

Activities:

- Public Kickoff Event
 - Summer 2025
 - Dinner and a facilitated discussion
- Community Advisory Committee
 - Fall 2025 - Spring 2026, Meets at critical phases during planning
 - 1st meeting goals:
 - Provide input and feedback on priority issue statements, priority resources lists, and desired future conditions
 - Brainstorm ideas for measurable goals
 - 2nd meeting goals:
 - Provide input and feedback on measurable goals, targeting criteria, and additional review from 1st meeting if needed
 - Brainstorm ideas for implementation strategies and programs (public participation & engagement, data collection & monitoring, regulation & enforcement, financial assistance programs)
 - 3rd meeting goals:
 - Provide input and feedback on priority areas, implementation table format, implementation program frameworks, and additional review from prior meetings if needed
 - Discuss process for draft plan review
 - 4th & 5th meetings - draft plan review or additional items as needed.

Mississippi River Sartell Watershed Collaborative Community Engagement Plan

Participation Level: Consult

Objective: To gather feedback from watershed stakeholders on the proposed content of the comprehensive watershed management plan, ensuring their perspectives are heard and considered in the development of the CWMP.

Promise to the public: We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge your concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced decisions.

Activities:

- Pre-collected feedback
 - Data collected through hosting We are Water MN
 - Watershed stories
 - Visitor surveys
 - Participation in community events
 - Consulting neighboring comprehensive watershed management plans
- Online Surveys
 - Develop and promote an online survey to collect stakeholder feedback on critical components of the plan, such as, priority issues, priority resources, desired future conditions, measurable goals, implementation strategies, implementation programs, and vision for the watershed's future legacy.
- Public Comment Period and Public Hearing
 - Hold a public comment period to gather and respond to comments on the draft CWMP
 - Hold a public hearing to gather and respond to final feedback from the public prior to BWSR review

Mississippi River Sartell Watershed Collaborative Community Engagement Plan

Participation Level: Inform

Objective: To provide the public and stakeholders with balanced information to create awareness and understanding of the planning process and the content included in the comprehensive watershed management plan.

Promise to the public: We will keep you informed.

Activities:

- Develop a dedicated project webpage with information about the watershed, the planning process, upcoming events, and contact information.
- Create visually appealing brochures, fact sheets, and infographics explaining key watershed concepts and challenges.
- Issue press releases to local newspapers, radio stations, and online news outlets announcing the project and upcoming engagement opportunities.
- Utilize social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, local groups) to share updates, information, and engage in online discussions.
- Host a Watershed Bus Tour, Summer 2026

Mississippi River Sartell Watershed Collaborative Community Engagement Plan

Section 4: Evaluation

Evaluation:

The effectiveness of the community engagement plan will be evaluated based on the following metrics:

- Number of participants in engagement activities.
- Diversity of stakeholders involved.
- Quality and relevance of community input received.
- Level of awareness and understanding of the watershed plan.
- Feedback from stakeholders on the engagement process.
- Long-term participation in implementation and stewardship activities.

Key Considerations for Success:

- **Accessibility:** Ensure that engagement activities are accessible to all community members, considering factors such as location, time, and language.
- **Transparency:** Maintain open and transparent communication throughout the planning process.
- **Inclusivity:** Actively seek out and engage underrepresented voices and perspectives.
- **Responsiveness:** Demonstrate that community input is valued and considered in the development of the plan.
- **Clear Communication:** Use clear, concise, and jargon-free language in all communication materials.
- **Dedicated Resources:** Allocate sufficient staff time and budget to support effective community engagement.
- **Flexibility:** Be prepared to adapt engagement strategies based on community needs and feedback.

Mississippi River Sartell Watershed Public Kickoff Event Proposal

Purpose:

This evening is an opportunity for residents, stakeholders, and experts to connect, share insights, and develop strategies that will help preserve and enhance the vitality of our watershed for generations to come.

Event Title Options:

- Watershed Table Talk
- Currents & Conservations
- Flowing Forward: A Watershed Dinner & Discussion
- Ripple Effect Dinner: Conservations for a Connected Watershed
- Dine & Dive In: A Watershed Discussion
- The Great Watershed Get-Together

Dates & Time Options:

- Tuesday, July 22 at 4:30-7pm
- Wednesday, July 23 at 4:30-7pm
- Thursday, July 24 at 4:30-7pm
- Tuesday, July 29 at 4:30-7pm
- Wednesday, July 30 at 4:30-7pm
- Thursday, July 31 at 4:30-7pm
- Tuesday, August 5 at 4:30-7pm
- Thursday, August 7 at 4:30-7pm

Location:

- Crane Meadows NWR (Little Falls, MN - Morrison)
 - Sedge Classroom
 - Set up for 50 people, able to accommodate up to 70 people
 - Can add more space in adjacent garage
 - Plenty of parking
 - Centrally located in the watershed

Event Schedule:

4:30 - 5:30 pm	Registration and Dinner
5:00 - 5:25 pm	Welcome, Short Presentation (15 minutes), introduction to discussion
5:30 - 6:30 pm	World Cafe (or similar)
6:30 - 7 pm	Wrap up and check out

Catering Ideas:

- Bravo Burrito
- The Royal Catering
- Subway
- Sanchez Burrito
- Ciao Thyme
- others?

Registration:

- We will require registration for the event due to needing a headcount for food and to ensure we have enough space and we are aware of who plans to attend.

Promotion Plan:

- ☐ Send email invitations to our list of watershed stakeholders (see final pages)
- ☐ Post on SWCDs' websites (Benton, Morrison, Stearns)
- ☐ Create Facebook posts and share on SWCDs' page, then invite other partners to share
- ☐ Press Release to local newspapers
- ☐ Policy Committee members invite stakeholders directly

Children's Activity

- Suggested idea: offer a children's activity from 5-7pm to enable parents to attend. Additional registration will be needed for this item.

Budget: Grant work plan has \$3,000 budgeted; however we recommend utilizing \$1,500 or less for the event.

Stakeholder List

Category	Organization	Recommended contact person
Wildlife organizations	Pheasants Forever	
	Ducks Unlimited	
	Trout unlimited	
	Minnesota National Wild Turkey Federation	
	Deer organization?	
Sportsmans Club	St. Stephen Sportsmans Club	
	Royalton Sportsman Club	
	Albany Sportsmen's Club	
	Eastern Morrison County Sportsmen's Club	
Lake Associations	Little Rock Lake Association	
	Two Rivers Lake Association	
	Platte Lake Property Owners Association	
	Lake Sullivan Association	
Agriculture Organizations	Farm Bureau	
	Farmers Union	
	Corn Growers Association	
	Soybean Growers Association	
	Irrigators Association	
	Dairy Association	
	Cattlemans	
	Prairie Farms	
Agriculture Co-ops	Centra Sota Co-op	
Agriculture Retailers		
Environmental Non-profits	Avon Hills Folk School	
	Avon Hills Initiative	
	Friends of Crane Meadows	
	The Nature Conservancy	
	Northern Waters Land Trust	
	Great River Greening	
Education	St. John's University	
	College of St. Ben's	

	University of Minnesota	
Cities	Sartell	
	Albany	
	Avon	
	Holdingford	
	St. Stephen	
	St. Joseph	
	Rice	
	Sauk Rapids	
	Upsala	
	Elmdale	
	Bowlus	
	Royalton	
	Buckman	
	Genola	
	Pierz	
	Hillman	
	Lastrup	
	Little Falls	
	Harding	
	St. Cloud (drinking water)	
State Agencies	Department of Transportation	
	Department of Natural Resources	
	Pollution Control Agency	
	Department of Agriculture	
	Department of Health	
	State Climatology Office	
	Environmental Quality Board	
	Board of Water and Soil Resources	
Dam Operators	Blanchard Dam operated by MN Power	
	Sartell Dam (aka Champion Dam) operated by Eagle Creek Renewable Energy	
	Sartell WMA - DNR Dam	

Townships	Grey Eagle (Todd)	
	Millwood (Stearns)	
	Krain (Stearns)	
	Holding (Stearns)	
	Brockway (Stearns)	
	Albany (Stearns)	
	Farming (Stearns)	
	Collegeville (Stearns)	
	Avon (Stearns)	
	St. Joseph (Stearns)	
	St. Wendel (Stearns)	
	Le Sauk (Stearns)	
	Sauk Rapids (Benton)	
	Watab (Benton)	
	Langola (Benton)	
	Graham (Benton)	
	Mayhew Lake (Benton)	
	Elmdale (Morrison)	
	Two Rivers (Morrison)	
	Swan River (Morrison)	
	Bellevue (Morrison)	
	Buckman (Morrison)	
	Morrill (Morrison)	
	Little Falls (Morrison)	
	Agram (Morrison)	
	Pierz (Morrison)	
	Hillman (Morrison)	
	Mount Morris (Morrison)	
	Leigh (Morrison)	
	Granite (Morrison)	
	Buh (Morrison)	
	Belle Prairie (Morrison)	
	Richardson (Morrison)	
	Pulaski (Morrison)	
	Platte (Morrison)	

	Kathio (Mille Lacs)	
	Roosevelt (Crow Wing)	
	Platte Lake (Crow Wing)	
Federal Agency	NRCS	
Residents/landowners	Lake Shore	
	Agriculture	
	Retired local water planners	
MRSW LGU Partners	Benton County	
	Benton SWCD	
	Crow Wing County	
	Crow Wing SWCD	
	Mille Lacs County	
	Mille Lacs SWCD	
	Morrison County	
	Morrison SWCD	
	Stearns County	
	Stearns SWCD	
	Todd County	
	Todd SWCD	
	Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe	