

April 28, 2014 – Eagle Lake Legion Meeting Notes

Agenda

6:00-6:45 PM	Potluck at Legion and informal small group discussions
6:45-7:00	Welcome and Overview
7:00-7:45	Craig Soupir, MDNR Fisheries –Fisheries & Lake Shoreland Protection
7:45 -8:00	Group History & Mission Statement
8:00-8:45	Small Group Discussions: Mission Statement Review

Desired Meeting Outcomes

- Discuss and/or decide on mission statement
- Learn about lakes and fisheries and shoreland protection
- Build the Network - Reach out to Lake Associations |

“The Ask” to the group

- Come learn and talk about this emerging watershed group
- Decide on a mission statement
- Brainstorm about future projects or demonstration sites

About 50 people came to the Eagle Lake Legion on a blustery, stormy day to learn about area fisheries and lakes and discuss the mission and future of the Le Sueur River Watershed Network. The group brought potluck items and enjoyed cheesy turkey and pies from Uncle Albert’s Café. Keynote speaker Craig Soupir, Waterville Area Fisheries Supervisor from Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, talked about area fisheries trends, shoreland protection and area water quality projects. The evening concluded with small group discussions evaluating some proposed mission statements. The steering committee will review revised mission statements and provide more examples to review and vote on at the next meeting.

Fisheries and Lake Shoreland Protection

Craig Soupir, Waterville Area Fisheries Supervisor, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Craig Soupir described the Waterville area as managing for nine counties in south-central Minnesota including a fish hatchery. They manage for particular species (Walleye, Northern Pike, Largemouth Bass, Bluegill). Broadly statewide fishery trends include increasing walleye for SE, largemouth bass increasing across the state and decreasing trend for yellow perch. The challenges for fishery management in the Le Sueur include: degradation, disconnection with the floodplain, shallow and wide streams and rivers that do not make good fish habitat. Many lakes have impairments and algae problems and he notes significant erosion problems along lakeshores. Possible culprits are eco-unfriendly development, altered watershed hydrology and water level management and climate change. For example, northern pike

require healthy stream and move into seasonally flooded wetlands. There has been a tremendous loss in this type of habitat. They stock 35 lakes that can't naturally sustain populations.

Lakeshore Impacts

We learned about the cumulative impact of lakeshore development and importance of well-managed shorelands for lake health. He provided good and bad examples of shoreland development and stressed the importance of leaving habitat in lakeshore and upland buffer zones. Stormwater management like rain gardens and permeable surfaces and planting native turf grasses or other plants with deep roots can all help. Trees falling in the water also make good habitat. DNR can help landowners restore the shore.

There are many great examples in this region of diverse partners working together to improve watersheds and lakesheds. He profiled the Nicollet County's Seven Mile Creek buffers and drainage structures. Jackson County's Fish Lake that includes nitrogen bioreactor. He explained that the Waterville DNR office has been focused on strategic acquisitions of over 1,600 acres of land that includes 7.1 miles of shoreland on 27 lakes. For example, Horseshoe Lake has one mile of shoreland under protection and they have removed and daylighted drain tiles. He stressed the importance of collaborative partnerships.

Mission Statement - General Feedback

General feedback about the initial two options was that it was a good start but Option #1 was too short and Option #2 was too long. The group felt that we needed something in the middle.

The group suggested that we have the steering team review the feedback from this meeting and then bring back some mission statements to review and decide upon at the next meeting.

Mission Statement Revisions

The following are revised mission statements developed during small group discussions.

Le Sueur River Watershed Stewards working together to preserve and improve water resources in the Le Sueur River Watershed through education, increased awareness and improvements.

We will work to protect water and land quality for today and future generations.

The Le Sueur River Watershed Stewards (Group, Project, Network) exists to encourage citizen understanding and actions to improve and protect water quality and recreational opportunities with the Le Sueur River Watershed.

To encourage stewardship among residents for the benefit of communities within the watershed and downstream

To accomplish the "7 steps" in a non-regulatory methods

A citizen group formed to encourage people to take action

(1) To protect and enhance the water quality of the Le Sueur River and

(2) To engage the public to foster an understanding of our unique river and watershed

We are a volunteer organization of residents, landowners and recreational users to encourage citizen action

To protect and improve water quality in the watershed by implementing our own "Seven Steps towards cleaner water and River Health"

Promote and sponsor demonstration sites and better access for the public

Considerations

- Make the mission statement simple (KISS)
- Keep the mission statement concise and to the point, straight forward
- Mission should include broad goals
- Need to develop the mission based on cause (who we serve), action and result
- Should be a statement that is easy to remember, roll off the tongue and flow easily and should reflect our passion
- It should reflect action, be an action statement

- Mention the Seven Steps in another part such as action steps (rather than within the mission), seems too specific to include in a mission statement
- One way to phrase it: To encourage citizen action by demonstrating the Seven steps
- Could also integrate the intentions of the seven steps into the words, not referencing the document
- General feeling was that we should somehow reaffirm the Seven Steps and make it part of our effort

- Incorporate recreation into the mission statement
- Focus could be to create an access to the river, broadly increased recreational access
- CURE and CCMR have recreational purpose and water quality as expressed goals
- There are logs all of the place in the Le Sueur – can't canoe the Le Sueur because it is widening

- Lots of discussion about managing water and that should be a frontline position

- Our focus should be to slow or hold back the water
- Better stormwater management should be central
- "To protect and enhance water quality in the Le Sueur River" – what does this mean to everyone?

- Mission statement should be broader than water quality to encompass protecting and enhancing quality of life (includes economics, recreation, etc) Needs to be inclusive and not favor anybody. Could state "to protect and enhance land and water quality and lifestyle)

- Focus should be to encourage citizen understanding
- Need to explain how we are going to do things, do things to make a difference: Projects and demonstration sites

- Need to connect people to the concept that they live in a watershed
- We need to emphasize that we are all connected to the river, people don't realize that they live in a watershed, that everyone can make a difference

- Should include that we are benefiting communities within the Le Sueur as well as downstream
- Leave a legacy
- Make it clean again

- We are a volunteer organization of residents, landowners and recreational users to encourage citizen action

Potential Next Meetings

Tuesday, May 20th – Lynne Kolze is available to talk about governance and structure with the group. The large group expressed interest but mentioned that May is a busy time for farmers and local staff. We'll ask if she can come to Steering Committee Meeting, maybe larger group as well later.

Thursday, June 26 – Day long CD 57 Event in Mankato and Mapleton put on by many organizers

AM – Mankato Verizon Center

PM - Mapleton

Pat Duncanson invited the group to meet in his garage during some part of this day or evening for a meeting and tour

July or August – Event in New Richland, St. Olaf Lake, with guest speaker Al Batt TBD