

**Le Sueur River Watershed Network**  
**January 30, 2014, 6-8 pm – Planning Meeting**  
**Loose Moose Conference Center, Mankato**

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**Present:**

Chris Hughes, Greg Mikkelson, Anne Queenan, Joanne Boettcher, Phil Slingsby, Brooke Hacker, Mark Bosacker, John Stephanie, Randy Schindle, Steve Kittelson, Jessica Nelson, Rick Moore, Don Waskosky, Ryan Braulick, Mark Leiferman, Pat Duncanson, Kim Musser

**Grant Overviews**

**McKnight Grant Overview (Kim)**

The broad McKnight Grant goals over the next year are to:

**1. Continue the Momentum**

We will work with existing group of leaders that have emerged and connect with new ones. In the course of the next 12 months we will meet to clearly establish roles and an organizational entity that can carry forward the citizen-led component of the work in the Le Sueur Watershed.

Funds would be used to pay for community organizers to provide coordination and operational support.

**2. Solidify the Citizen Group**

Citizens and watershed professionals are interested in continuing a multi-county, watershed based approach to the issues but don't yet have a formal entity (joint powers board, non-profit organization etc.) to lead the effort. We will provide support to this emerging group to formalize a watershed group.

**3. Advance the Recommendations**

We plan to work with these strategies to prioritize and clarify efforts moving forward.

**Targeted Conservation Practices Grant (Rick)**

- Focus is on mapping Geographic Information System (GIS) and targeting BMPs
- Project needs a steering committee; hoping this group can help advise throughout the process
- Our goal is to target BMPs that citizens will be willing to implement
- Many people have collected GIS data in watershed. We will pull existing data together and make quality of GIS consistent
- Overall goal is to perform analysis and link with citizens

**Discussion Question #1: What should we continue to do? What has been working well?**

Participants put their top three ideas on post it notes and the following themes emerged.

## **Meeting & Discussions**

- Small group conversations
- Informal evening meetings
- Providing a wide variety of events at a variety of locations to attract a wide group of participants
- Meetings at Indian Island Winery and Amboy have drawn good crowds (General ideas)
- Continue to hold public meetings around the watershed
- You have been finding appropriate forums to bring the range of interested people together for discussion AND allowing them to be heard
- Creating lively discussions
- Local meetings
- Discussions on the science and hashing out the agreements and disagreements
- Provided options for people to consider when issues are presented
- Make it easy to talk to each other and learn from each other

## **Share Information, Science, Data & Stories**

- Based on good science and facts
- Providing data for people to discuss (i.e. maps, summaries)
- Personal stories and issues of the river help identify areas of concern
- Continue to communicate latest information
- Understand and explain water quality issues

## **Field trips**

- See what's going on in the watershed
- Finding out what stakeholders are "doing"
- Continue to get people together on the water (i.e. canoeing, etc.)
- Fun events that draw a wide audience

## **Building a Network of People**

- Building a network of people
- Getting different stakeholders in the same room
- Participants seem committed – keep showing up!
- Group meeting in a relaxed setting to alleviate the "us vs. them" idea
- Many agency people who work with water quality
- Variety of people who have fun

## **Breaking Barriers/Stereotypes**

- Very good in getting farmers, lake owners, etc. together
- Getting more agency staff to see what is out there
- Good network created to draw people in
- Bring local residents together to get to know each other

## **Discussion Question #2: What are our critical next steps moving forward with this group?**

Participants put their top three ideas on post it notes and the following themes emerged.

### **Share Information & Science**

- Measurability of science
- More good data
- Provide up-to-date summaries/data
- Gather information and discuss what we can change
- What are the facts?
- Continue the momentum by updating your participants
- Get experts to answer questions that arise
- Keeping good discussion going should be leading toward solutions when knowledge is applied

### **Formalize the Group**

- Commit to steering committee
- Commit to roles and responsibilities
- Develop leadership, citizen-based
- Form the citizen group with technical advisory
- Group structure and statement of goals and methods
- What is the problem we are trying to solve? (Identify the problem)
- What is the good? What are we aiming for?
- Organize/agree our mission
- Get citizens to take the reigns

### **Show Demonstrations & Results**

- Focus on the most practical conservation practices people are willing to implement and find existing programs to implement
- Getting demonstration projects on the ground
- Target practices
- Show some tangible results

### **Build Network & Coordinate with other Efforts**

- Get landowners/residents/farmers to keep coming
- Get even more citizen involvement
- Get more citizens involved farmers, river bank owners, etc.
- Continue to create more trust between people with differing viewpoints
- Continue to network & develop relationships with all groups and agencies
- Get more stakeholder groups involved
- Use combination of big citizen events and smaller focused groups
  - Keep people engaged – good quality meeting formats

- Coordinate with MPCA's Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy (WRAPs) - Joanne Boettcher

### **Discussion Question #3: How do we make this group sustainable and locally empowered moving forward? What are the roles and responsibilities?**

#### **Next steps**

- Diverse voices, seek everyone's involvement
- Everyone should be welcome to join the discussion
- Communicate common values and purpose
- Strive for common values
- Cook it down, get speakers and experts, use information to form a group
- Caution about too much conversation and not enough action
- Find some concrete effort to work on together
- Provide updates – what work on the land?

#### **Leadership**

- Foster democratic, participatory leadership
- There are many assets in this room.... what role should you play?
- Leadership role – who's interested?
- Ask the broader group at the next meeting
- Amboy example – Have noticed that their community group will get behind an idea if the person is willing to lead it
- Community ownership is important. Others in the watershed are interested that aren't here today. Leaders will come forward with time. Structure will become clearer
- Don't know what we're going to be yet. We can still start doing things even if we're trying to figure it out
- People are out there and looking to help and want to be a part of it
- Needs to be lead and supported by citizens to be successful

#### **What type of group are we interested in forming?**

- Non-profit 501c3
- Watershed group
- We need background information about the types of watershed groups out there
- When evaluating the success of other area groups, a cautionary note that if the group is very democratic and loose, it is easier to dissipate.
- We need a steering committee of key core group and a focused structure would be helpful
- Keep science a focus and continue university involvement

#### **Non profit**

- Need mission statement and purpose, bylaws, funding, elected officers or board

- Examples: Amboy community Club, GBERBA, Cannon River Watershed Project, CURE, CCMR, Mankato Paddling and Outings Club
- Iowa example – group got focused and organized, now seeking big funds (millions)
- How big do we want to be?
- Invite speakers to a future meeting to explain what they did (e.g. Beth Kallestad, Cannon River Watershed Partnership; Scott Sparlin, CCMR; Linda Meshcke, Rural Advantage)

### **Mission Statement Ideas**

- Clean up water quality in this watershed
- Maintain what we value
- Improving the health, land and water for future generations

### **Recommendations**

- What role do the Recommendations play? Can we use the Recommendations as a roadmap? How can we use them moving forward?

### **Continue to put on Events**

- Caution about energy being dissipated
- People show up with good ideas
- Momentum is important

### **Stakeholders**

- Keep in mind that people are coming for different reasons
- Bring in others – youth, Boy Scouts, Lake Associations, other groups

### **Landowner Focus**

- Need to cater to landowners who want to get educated about the watershed. Need resources for landowners
- Ducks Unlimited brought sportspeople out to sloughs and explained management strategy. Many people learned about restoration and valued in a different way after personally seeing it
- Provide concrete examples of what improves water quality (targeted information)
- Show the cause of pollution and illustrate solutions

### **Involve Lake Associations & Recreationalists**

- There are many people involved in Lake Associations. They are invested in lakes and the region. They want to know what can I do to improve lakes and are motivated to change. It is a large number of people
- People are looking for information, what to do to make a difference
- Who do you talk to? Who has field experience?
- Talk about both rivers and lakes
- Recreationalists are interested stakeholders

### **Agency Resources & Networking**

- USDA NRCS can help to communicate programs - (AG) especially targeted erosion issues and financial opportunities out there
- Many people in network have connections within state and local agencies

### **Next Meeting**

- We talked about the potential of using “Open space format” where participants decide on the topics to be discussed at the meeting (could do in future)
- For the next meeting, we have some obvious topics we need to discuss and focus on. We should get experts and people with experience to help further the discussion. We need volunteer note takers and facilitators from the Network.
- Could have speaker on geology of region. Maybe Chad Wittkop MSU Geology Professor who did research on Le Sueur Paleo channel
- Further discussion about location needed. Indian Island Winery popular choice but expensive.