

Lower Minnesota River East Watershed

Steering Team Meeting Minutes

Date & Time: 10:00am-12:00pm, Thursday, February 6th 2025

Location: Microsoft Teams

Attendees at meeting: Holly Bushman (Le Sueur County), Trevor Rudenick (Le Sueur County), Mike Schultz (Le Sueur SWCD), Meghan Darley (Scott SWCD), Steve Pahs (Rice SWCD)

Welcome & Review Agenda

- The Lower Minnesota River East Meeting was held on Thursday, February 6th 2025. The meeting was held virtually.
- The agenda covers January JPB approval updates, reporting requirements, education and outreach updates, and a request for a workplan amendment.

Recap Last Meeting

- Last ST meeting we were finishing up some conversations and edits about a few additional items and documents that are needed prior to implementation efforts starting.

FY'25 CRP Incentive Grant Program

- Went to JPB for Approval at January 2025 Meeting
 - There were a few revisions and edits that the JPB suggested (the incentive funding suggested to be reduced). Additionally, they did not want the enrollment period to be a first come first serve. Applicants that are closed to water resources should be prioritized over others.
- Mike stated that the CRP program is up in the air now. We are waiting to see how the Farm Bill goes.
- The ST talked about the enrollment period and how it typically works.

LoMRE Reporting Implementation Efforts

- Project database
 - Each project or practice will be required to be entered into the project database excel spreadsheet.
 - Holly updated the eligible projects and practices that are listed in the drop down menu.
- This will be a trial period, and the ST will have to see if this database form will work.

- Additionally, the ST needs to make sure they can access the shared drive as that is where all documentation for projects and practices will need to be entered.

Legal Counsel RFP

- An update draft of the Legal Counsel RFP was provided to the ST.
- The timeline of the RFP shifted due to the JPB meeting quarterly.
 - RFP would be sent out in early March and the JPB would finalize the decision of the firm at the April JPB meeting.
- As of now, no projects have been completed, very low risk.
- The ST had no revisions or additional discussions on the document.
- The 3 year window for the length of the agreement was worked for the ST members.
- The RFP will go to the January JPB meeting for approval.

Education and Outreach Campaign Update

- Kourtney has developed a rough draft of the Education and Outreach Campaign Plan/Framework that is complete.
 - She received comments from Rice and Scott SWCD staff as well.
- Her goal is to have a Facebook page developed for the LoMRE by February.
- For the website, Kourtney has had some issues accessing it due to restrictions. Meghan and Kourtney were going to work on this.
 - Kourtney mentioned she would like to get photos of staff and board members to be included on the website.
- Mike wanted to share that a soil health meeting would be hosted in Le Center on February 26th which would include Scott SWCD as well.
 - He may need some funding to help for the event.
 - It is an eligible expense.
- Holly wanted to ask the ST if they would be supportive of a GIS story map of LoMRE efforts. ST members were in agreeance but wanted us to start small with just a point on a map with project information.
 - We will need to look into options on how to get this set up and who will be doing this.

Workplan Amendment Request

- Mike and Holly would like discussion amongst ST members prior to bring to JPB.
- We have a few projects that need feasibility studies prior to implementation. Holly provided additional details about the projects and how much they would cost.
 - Dam Removal-Le Sueur Creek (BMP.7)
 - Ravine Stabilization along Road (BMP.12)

- Suggest removing Stream Erosion Study and Lake/Stream Subwatershed Assessment under studies and assessments. Add under project development Complete 1 Stream Restoration Feasibility Study and Complete 1 Ravine Stabilization Feasibility Study.
 - Right now Le Sueur is working on a few of these projects with AIG funds and currently there is no interest from others to pursue these projects right now.
- Other suggestions to the workplan include adding funds for native planting projects and removing the water quality storage project.
- Holly recommended that everyone review the existing workplan and see if there are any other edits that the ST would like to make and funds to shift around.
 - We will discuss these at the March meeting.
- There was discussion about Holly checking in with BWSR to see what amendments require JPB approval.

Updates & Next Steps

- The Streambank Stabilization project is still moving forward and is in the works.
- Next Steering Team Meeting: **Thursday, March 6th 2025, 10:00am-12:00pm**
- Next JPB Meeting: **Thursday, April 17th, 3:00pm-5:00pm**