



Yellow Medicine *ONE WATERSHED, ONE PLAN* Partnership Policy Committee Meeting

DATE: Monday, Feb. 12th, 2024
TIME: 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM
PLACE: Watershed Office, Minneota

Attendance:

Board: Dale Fier (Lincoln SWCD); Rick Anderson (Lyon Co.); Mike Croatt (LQP SWCD); Gary Laleman (Lyon SWCD); Ron Antony (YM Co.); Tom Remmele (YM SWCD); Tom Andries (Lyon Co.)

Staff: Kerry Netzke, Brayden Anderson, Luke Olsen, Jolene Johnson, Dale Sterzinger, Michelle Overholser, Jeremiah Timm, Blake Giles, Noah Steffen

Minutes

1. Approve the Agenda: Remmele asked that Administration be added to the Agenda **Fier moved to approve the agenda with the addition of Administration, Anderson seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**
2. Approve Minutes/Update – Approve minutes for the August 14th meeting. **Croatt moved to approve the minutes, Fier seconded. Motion passed unanimously.** There was no quorum for the November meeting. During the November meeting, Overholser gave an update. **Croatt moved to approve the update, Fier seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**
3. 2024 Election of Officers – **Fier nominated Crowley for Chair, Anderson seconded. Motion passed unanimously. Fier nominated Ron Antony for Vice Chair, Croatt seconded motion passed unanimously.**
4. Partner Updates: Kerry Netzke gave an update on two projects they currently have in the watershed. Dale Sterzinger reported that he currently has 10 nonstructural projects waiting for funding and 7 structural projects. Brayden Anderson reported that there are a few projects in the works. Blake Giles reported that Lyon doesn't currently have much for projects, but there is some current interest from Cottonwood to do some work around the lake.
5. Updates/Discussion (New Business)
 - a. Grant Progress/Update
 - 2020/2021 – All funds were spent, and final report was submitted to BWSR. Overholser presented the Noncompliance letter that was

received from BWSR regarding the 2020/2021 WBIF grant. There were 6 financial adjustments that needed to be made in e-link as the result of the audit, and two items that were listed as violations to the grant policy. The violations were not having the percentage of total financial assistance filled in correctly on line 4 under the applicant signatures section. The other policy violation was that a project was constructed on 2 separate parcels and only the primary landowner signed the contract or any other type of agreement. BWSR recommends that in the future all landowners sign the contracts, or a group addendum is completed. Overholser will be completing a corrective action plan and submitting that to BWSR. When that is completed, it will also be sent out to the policy committee. In addition to the corrective action plan, Overholser is developing contract and voucher checklists that should assist in eliminating these types of clerical errors.

- 2022/2023 – Overholser reported on the status of the grant.
 - Admin - \$32,551.68 Balance - \$17,448.32
 - Tech - \$15,431.50 Balance - \$13,000
 - BMPs – Spent \$542,015.12 + Encumbered = \$620,999.38 (\$2,942.07 Left)

- b. 22-23 WBIF Supplemental Funds Request – Awarded \$342,085. This will be added to our current FY22-23 Grant.
 - Dollar Amount – Plan to accept the full amount.
 - Work Plan Items – Plan to put toward nonstructural.
 - Grant Agreement Expiration Date – the group does not anticipate needing an extension.
 - Cap – Group had a discussion regarding if there should be a cap for nonstructural contracts on all future funds. Different options were discussed. A cap of \$50,000 per operator was an option discussed, it was also discussed to do \$50,000 per operator per practice type. For example, 1 operator could have two \$50,000 contracts, one for cover crops and one for no till. These were the two main options the group was discussing. During the discussion, no clear consensus was forthcoming. **Anderson then moved that a \$60,000 cap be placed on nonstructural contracts and that is be per operator. Remmele seconded. Motion carried with Fier opposing the motion.**

- c. 2024/2025 WBIF Work Plan – Discussion was had on what the group would like to see for a budget in the new grant. From previous discussions the group had discussed separating out nonstructural and structural BMPs in the work plan for this grant, and adding funding to data collection which could potentially include some sub watershed modeling. With the midpoint planning grant providing SAMs modeling and the new Water Storage modeling being done through a grant BWSR secured, it's probably better allocated those funds straight to projects at this time. After discussion it was recommended that \$100,000 goes into administration, this is higher than in previous grants in order to have the funding available if additional staff is necessary. \$100,000 is recommended to be allocated to technical assistance. This would cover engineering costs and other technical assistance needed to implement projects. \$15,000 is recommended for Education and Outreach. For practices \$400,000 was recommended to be allocated to nonstructural practices with the remaining \$708,460 going towards structural practices.

- d. MidPoint Planning Grant – Overholser reported that she had sent RESPEC a lot of project data that they were missing. Most of it was projects that had not been

reported in e-link for 2023. RESPEC has recently made some significant updates to SAM which should improve our results. They are scheduling an update meeting in March, so there should be more to report at the next meeting in April.

- e. Watershed Storage Modeling – BWSR received a grant to do some work on a new water storage model and the Yellow Medicine Watershed was asked if it was interested in being one of the 3 pilots. A group met with BWSR and the engineer to hear what the process would be and what the deliverables would be. After hearing the presentation, the group felt this was a project that they would like to be involved in and that it should move forward. At the end, we should get a list of potential water storage projects that have been ranked. The ranking will be done with input for the local partners.
- f. Project in non-priority areas – A partner asked if the group could have a discussion regarding funding projects in non-priority areas. While it is acknowledged that all conservation projects have a benefit to the watershed, the way this grant is structured, practices funded by the grant need to be tied to a line item in the comprehensive water management plan.
- g. CRP Incentive Grant – The District holds a \$53,000 grant that was part of a pilot program offered through BWSR. The grant is meant to offer an incentive payment to landowners who place land in the NRCS CRP program. The group is recommending that a cap be put on the total payment, CRP payment plus the incentive. After discussion, **Fier moved that the incentive be set to \$50/acre up to a max of \$300 when combined with the CRP payment. Croatt seconded the motion. Motion carried with Remmele opposing the motion.**
- h. 2024 RCPP – Information was received from BWSR regarding the upcoming RCPP that will be available in the YM1W1P planning area.

Yellow Medicine River			
Fiscal Year	Allocation	Obligated	Remaining
2024	\$ 107,635.50		\$ 107,635.50
2025	\$ 143,514.00		\$ 251,149.50
2026	\$ 107,635.50		\$ 358,785.00
TOTAL	\$ 358,785.00		

- i. Cost-share Projects – The following projects were reviewed and recommended for funding
 - Charles Olson – Vallery 15 - \$65582.37 **Remmele moved to recommend. Anderson seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**
 - Sidnee Olson – Vallery 1 - \$30170.70 **Remmele moved to recommend. Fier seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**
 - Brad Pederson – Norman 35 - \$47979.84 **Croatt moved to recommend. Remmele seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**

- j.* Administration – It was asked to open up a discussion about the future administration/coordination of the plan. It was asked if Lac qui Parle 1W1P may be interested in sharing a coordinator but members who are part of both groups reported that at this time that is not something they are interested in. The group would like to see improvements and changes in the administration from the Yellow Medicine River Watershed District. Specifically better meeting prep and more complete and comprehensive board meeting packets.

6. Adjournment

Next Meeting April 8th or 1st TBD 9:00 a.m.