

Advisory Committee Meeting Summary

November 28, 2022

Ely, MN



Meeting Participants

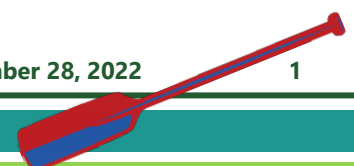
Becca Reiss (NSLSWCD), Phil Norvitch (NSLSWCD), Ada Tse (St. Louis County), Amy Mustonen (MPCA), Beth Kleinke (NRCS), Christine McCarthy (Lake County), Erin Loeffler (BWSR), Ilena Hansel (Cook SWCD), Kari Hedin (Lake SWCD), Kim Boland (DNR), Mitch Travis (Cook County), Tara Solem (Lake SWCD), Moriya Rufer (HEI), Aaron Frankle (HEI), Marty Rye (USFS), Ryan Maki (NPS), Ryan Clark (Carlton SWCD).

Meeting Purpose

The purpose of this meeting was to review the draft issue statements and indicate which local governments, agencies, and organizations would be the lead for each one.

Timeline

This graphic is a simplified version of the overall timeline. This timeline is a general guide, and the process can be adapted to fit as we go.



Issue Review and Prioritization

The first step in the planning process is to determine the priority issues that the plan will address. "Issues" are concerns or opportunities that can be addressed to protect or restore natural resources in the watershed.

Issues have been gathered from numerous sources including existing county water plans, the Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy (WRAPS), 60 Day Letters from state agencies and organizations, and public kick-off events. These issues have been synthesized into the following draft issue statements on the next few pages. The main theme of the issue statement is in bold letters.

In October, the Steering Committee reviewed and revised the draft issue statements. At this meeting, the Advisory Committee broke into small groups to review the issue statements and discuss which agencies or organizations would take the lead on each issue in implementation. There were three groups in person and one group online. The results from the meeting discussion were compiled into Table 1 on the next page.

For the small group discussion, maps of land ownership (Figure 1) were given for reference in talking about lead agencies for each issue.

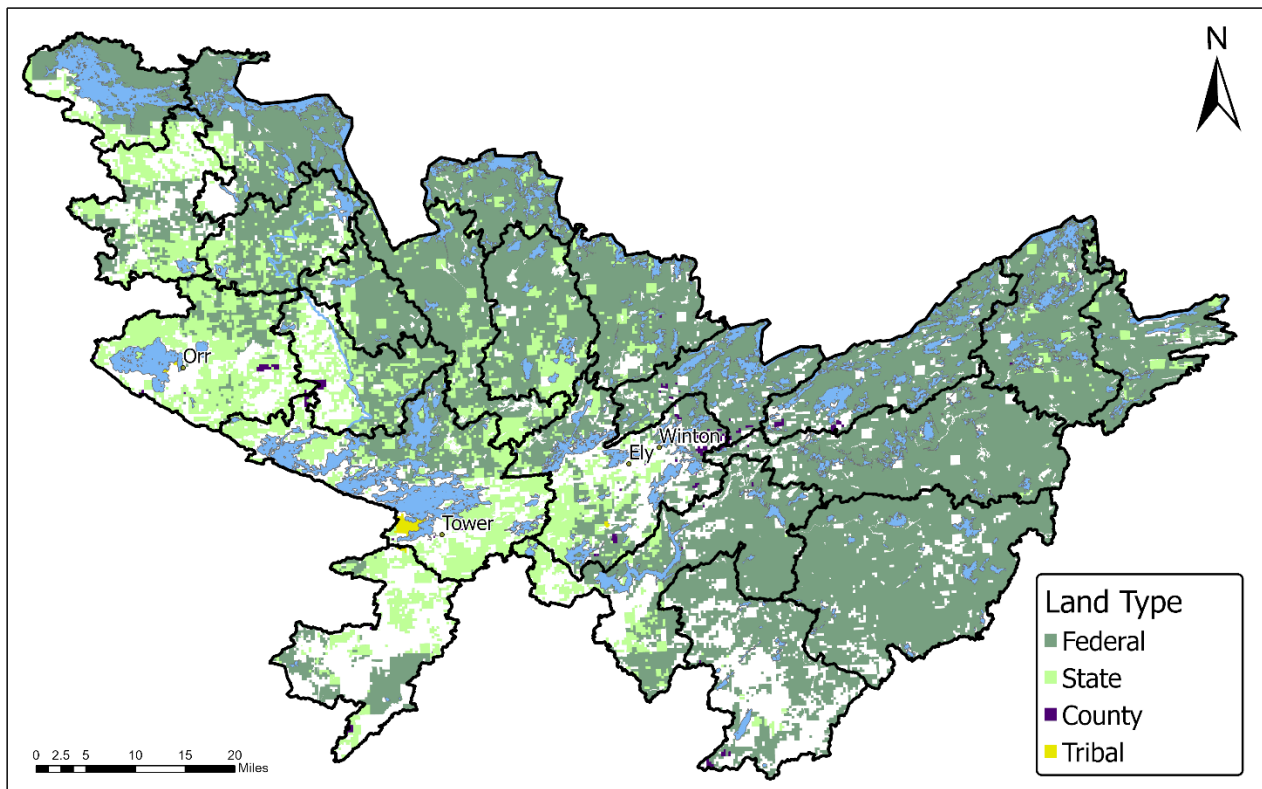
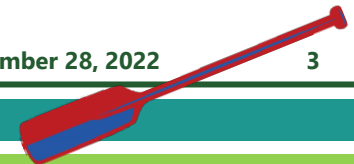


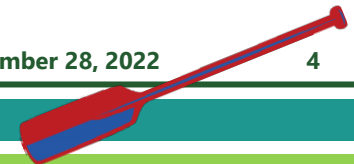
Figure 1. Land ownership in the Rainy Headwaters - Vermilion Watershed.

Table 1. Results of the meeting discussion about which government agencies and organizations are responsible for each issue in implementation.

Issue Statement	Local Government	Federal or State Government	Other	Rationale
Pollutants have the potential to impact water quality, aquatic recreation, and aquatic life.	SWCDs, Counties City of Ely, Burntside, Cities/road authorities	MPCA/EPA, DNR, MDH, NRCS, NPS	Lake associations WICOLA	SWCDs for implementation, DNR, MPCA, Counties (permitting), MDH (groundwater), Forested land partners being identified (managers of that public land)
Individual waste treatment systems contribute pollutants to groundwater and surface water.	Counties, SWCDs (outreach)	MPCA (Regs, funding)		MPCA (rules/regulation) Counties lead, SWCDs in support IPHT
Stormwater runoff increases peak flows and contributes pollutants to streams and lakes.	SWCDs, Counties, Cities	MPCA, DNR, MDH, FS	Sportsman groups Municipalities Lake associations	SWCDs- implementation (lead?) Counties (ordinances) In support MDH, FS, DNR (logging)
Shoreline erosion caused by increased development and the removal of natural buffers impacts habitat and water quality.	SWCD, Counties (shoreland ordinance enforcement)	DNR, FS, MDH	Lake associations, Fisherman groups, Contract or support of native staff, townships	DNR-permitting (lead?) Counties-ordinances SWCDs- implementation MDH (drinking water)
Land use change from development, resource extraction, and outdoor recreational use can impact water quality and habitat.	Counties, Cities, SWCD	USACE, BWSR, FS DNR, TEP-WCA		Cities (ordinances), SWCDs (wetlands)
Groundwater quality and sustainability needs protection.	Counties, SWCDs	MDH, NRCS		Counties-ordinances MDH
Eroding streambanks contribute to turbidity impairments and reduced habitat quality.	SWCDs	DNR, USACE, NRCS, MPCA DNR	Sportmen's groups NRCS	DNR- permitting SWCDs (cattle issues) MPCA-studies



Issue Statement	Local Government	Federal or State Government	Other	Rationale
Connectivity barriers impact biological communities and stream geomorphology.	SWCD	DNR		Road authorities generally- (Counties, DNR or anyone else who takes part in this), DNR permitting, USACE, FS for crossings
Altered hydrology including channelized streams and ditch systems, increase erosion and flow, with the potential to impair water bodies.	Road authorities County	DNR/USACE	IJC	DNR/USACE (permitting), road authorities, IJC flooding
Forest management is needed to improve forest health, resiliency, habitat, and diversity.	Counties, SWCDs.	USFS, DNR, NRCS	Loggers association groups	NRCS/SWCDs (private landowners)
Wild Rice requires protection from climatic changes, contaminants, and invasive species.	Counties, SWCDs	DNR, BWSR, USFS, MPCA/EPA		DNR- ordinances (development), BWSR easements, private orgs as well for easements, MPCA/EPA (sulfate)
Sufficient protection is needed for outstanding resources and sensitive species to maintain water and habitat quality.		NPS, USFS, MPCA, DNR		NPS/USFS- all waters in the park are outstanding Easement programs for implementation
Aquatic invasive species impact recreational activities and may result in reduced biodiversity in lakes and streams.	Counties, SWCDs	DNR, NPS, USFS,		DNR- regulations NPS regulations (above state regulations) SWCDs programming



Vision Statement Brainstorming

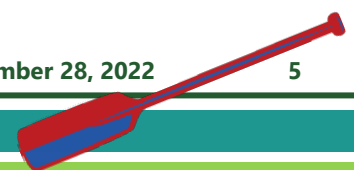
The last item on the agenda was to start developing a vision statement for the watershed. A vision is an inspirational statement of an idealistic emotional future of a company or group.

Elements of a good statement

1. Who we are: what is uniquely identifiable
2. Our impact: changes for the better
3. Short and to the point

What is unique about this watershed?

- Forests
- Lots of recreation
- Shared border with Canada
- Good water quality
- Long history of humans
- Sparsely populated
- Edge of Canadian shield
- Boreal forest
- Large public ownership
- Seasonal vs long-term residents (impacts implementation)
- Number of lakes
- Wetland coverage
- Shallow soils on much of watershed
- Interesting geology
- Heart of the continent (cooperation between BWCA, Quetico, Voyageurs)
- Crystalline bedrock
- Continue protection/preservation started with BWCA, Voyageurs...
- Historic / present mining activity (first underground mine in the state)
- Clear water
- Some of the best water quality in the continent
- Diverse in people and culture
- Glacially scoured
- Low nutrient lakes
- Canoes



What is our ideal future?

- Maintaining what we have
- Maintaining healthy systems
- Planting forests for the future – for our grandchildren
- Ideal future – fishery becomes edible without controls
- Proactive controls – ahead of the game with increased population, vacation rentals, etc
- Sustainable

Other notes:

- when discussing mining - should recognize the economic benefits and trade-offs, so would suggest managing impacts as opposed to a protection from type of language

Next Steps

- **January 6:** Policy Committee
 - Review draft issue statements
- **January 30:** Advisory Committee (Virtual)
 - Resource Prioritization and introduction to goals