

MINUTES
Chisago County Water Plan Policy Team
Monday, September 11, 2023

The Chisago County Water Plan Policy Team met for their bi-monthly meeting at 3:00 p.m. Monday, September 11, 2023, via an in-person meeting held at the Chisago County Government Center, Conference Room 150B in Center City, MN, and a virtual Meeting with the following Policy Team members present: Dan Dahlberg (County Commissioner), John Eret (Chair), Robert Klatt (Citizen at Large), Craig Mell (Chisago Soil & Water Conservation District), Kurt Schneider (Environment Services), and Dawn White (Chair and Citizen at Large). **ABSENT:** Scott Noland (Vice-Chair and Citizen at Large) and Brian Sandel (Citizen at Large).

Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Section 13D.02, Subd. 3, persons interested in monitoring the meeting electronically from a remote location may view the meeting through the Microsoft Teams meeting link below.

Also present: Susanna Wilson Witkowski (Water Resource Manager), Ben Elfelt (Chisago Lakes Lake Improvement District - LID), and Garrett Miller (Comfort Lake – Forest Lake Watershed District).

Each Policy Team member, and others present, attended the meeting in person or at a location of their choice through a personal device (e.g. laptop, tablet, cell phone or personal computer). Each Policy Team member, and others present, could view documents presented during the virtual Meeting via their devices and to participate in discussion through microphones located in their devices.

The Chair, Dawn White, called the meeting to order at 3:02 p.m.

Team members and visitors were introduced.

Water Plan Policy Team Member Mell offered a motion to approve the minutes of the July 10, 2023, Chisago County Water Plan Policy Team meeting. Motion seconded by Water Plan Policy Team Member Klatt and, upon a vote being taken thereon, the motion **carried** as follows: **IN FAVOR THEREOF:** Dahlberg, Eret, Klatt, Mell, Schneider, and White. **OPPOSED:** none. **ABSENT:** Noland and Sandel.

Water Plan Policy Team Member Eret offered a motion to approve the agenda, as amended. Motion seconded by Water Plan Policy Team member Dahlberg and, upon a vote being taken thereon, the motion carries as follows: **IN FAVOR THEREOF:** Dahlberg, Eret, Klatt, Mell, Schneider, and White. **OPPOSED:** none. **ABSENT:** Noland and Sandel.

We Are Water MN Exhibit

Wilson Witkowski updated the Policy Team on the Minnesota Humanities Center selection of Chisago County to host the exhibit from June 20 – August 12, 2024.

Treatment and Education Grants and Coalition Exploration

Wilson Witkowski updated the Policy Team on the current requests for grant reimbursement from lake associations for the Aquatic Invasive Species Treatment and Education Grant.

Wilson Witkowski reviewed with the Policy Team the draft agenda developed with Team Member Noland for the meeting with lake associations to address forming a Coalition of Lake Associations and reviewing the treatment and education grant program for 2024.

Team Member Eret discussed the importance of lake associations knowing about the Policy Teams work. Elfelt discussed the need for including lake management planning. Team Member Schneider and White discussed including the intended roles of the county, Policy Team, and lake associations during the meeting. Commissioner Dahlberg suggested using the Associations of Townships as a model for lake coalition organization.

The Policy Team and Member Mell discussed holding the meeting after the November Policy Team meeting in a central location, such as the EMS building in North Branch.

Lower St. Croix, Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (LSC CWMP)

Wilson Witkowski and Team Member Mell reviewed with the Policy Team the final LSC CWMP Annual Report for 2022 and Chisago County related action items not yet completed as listed in the report.

Appendix D – Local Priorities Report

Wilson Witkowski updated the Policy Team on the previous Policy Team suggested changes to the 2022 Annual Reporting document for the LSC CWMP Appendix D: Chisago County Local Priorities, including clarifying completed objectives and dollars spent per each objective.

The Policy Team discussed having groundwater issues as a future agenda item, including providing sample groundwater plans and groundwater trend information, and the next steps involved in developing a groundwater plan for Chisago County.

The Policy Team also discussed having per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) as a future agenda item, including providing background and website information on PFAS and next steps required for testing and remediation.

Invasive Phragmites Updates

Wilson Witkowski provided an update on the recent paddle to search for invasive phragmites in the North Pool of the Sunrise River, and the Chisago County Board of Commissioners authorizing a joint powers agreement with the DNR to receive a Great Lakes Restoration Initiative grant of \$6,000 to treat invasive phragmites located along the shorelines in the LID. Elfelt provided an update on the LID shoreline treatment and locations of invasive phragmites.

Plant Grant Application

Wilson Witkowski provided an update the Chisago County applying for the State Noxious Weed and Invasive Plant Grant to receive funding for Wild Rivers Conservancy to complete roadside surveys of invasive phragmites and purple loosestrife countywide.

Aquatic Invasive Species Program Updates

Wilson Witkowski provided an update on the following agenda items:

- a. Watercraft Inspections and Decontaminations,
- b. Prevention, Early Detection, Rapid Response Plan, and
 - i. Starry Trek (August 19, 2023).

Hinckley Area Fisheries

Wilson Witkowski provided an update on the Hinckley Area Fisheries Office, Field Notes for Summer 2023.

Children's Water Festival

Wilson Witkowski provided an update on volunteers needed for the Chisago County Children's Water Festival on September 21, 2023.

Workshops/Conferences

Wilson Witkowski provided an update on upcoming workshops/conferences. These included the Land Protection Bus Tour, Wild Rivers Conservancy (September 12, 2023), the Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center Research and Management Showcase (September 20, 2023), and the St. Croix River Research Rendezvous (October 3, 2023).

Water Plan Policy Team Member White offered a motion to fund up to 3 Citizen at Large members of the Policy Team to attend the Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center Research and Management Showcase in September 2023 (\$25 per person registration totaling \$75) and the St. Croix River Research Rendezvous in October 2023 (\$80 per person totaling \$240). Motion seconded by Water Plan Policy Team member Eret and, upon a vote being taken thereon, the motion carries as follows: **IN FAVOR THEREOF:** Dahlberg, Eret, Klatt, Mell, Schneider, and White. **OPPOSED:** none. **ABSENT:** Noland and Sandel.

Agency Updates

Elfelt provided an update on the invasive phragmites shoreline treatment in the LID. WSB will complete a carp survey for the LID electrofishing carp and attaching radio tags to track movement and populations. LID lakes continue to have low water levels and North and South Lindstrom Lakes have increased Eurasian watermilfoil growth compared to previous years.

Team Member Mell provided an update on recent events the Chisago SWCD sponsored or participated in; the well testing clinic located in North Branch, Field Days event, Shoreline Showcase, and soil health clinic located in Rush City. The upcoming Wild Rivers Conservancy tour will include an SWCD project located on Kroon Lake. SWCD staff will be working with contractors and landowners to install best management projects this fall

The next meeting of the Chisago County Water Plan Policy Team is scheduled for Monday, November 13, 2023, at 3:00 pm. The meeting will be hybrid in-person and virtual.

Water Plan Policy Team Member Eret offered a motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:43 p.m. Motion seconded by Water Plan Policy Team Member Klatt and, upon a vote being taken thereon, the motion carried as follows: **IN FAVOR THEREOF:** Dahlberg, Eret, Klatt, Mell, Schneider, and White. **OPPOSED:** none. **ABSENT:** Noland and Sandel.