

MINUTES
Chisago County Water Plan Policy Team
Monday, September 9, 2024

The Chisago County Water Plan Policy Team met for their bi-monthly meeting at 3:00 p.m. Monday, September 9, 2024, 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 (Citizen at Large), David Kern (Citizen at Large), 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 Annalise Wiger (Public Health).

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.

Also present: Susanna Wilson Witkowski (Water Resource Manager), Ben Elfelt (Chisago Lakes Lake Improvement District - LID), Madelyn Kinny (AIS Specialist), Monica Kinny (Water Resource Specialist - LID), Eric Alms (Minnesota Pollution Control Agency), Jackie Anderson (Comfort Lake – Forest Lake Watershed District), Victoria Deitschman (Chisago County), and Abby Shea (Minnesota Department of Health, MDH).

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 Klatt offered a motion to approve the minutes of the July 8, 2024, Chisago County Water Plan Policy Team meeting. Motion seconded by Water Plan Policy Team Member Eret and, upon a vote being taken thereon, the motion **carried** as follows: **IN FAVOR THEREOF:** Dahlberg, Eret, Kern, Klatt, Mell, Schneider, and White. **OPPOSED:** none. **ABSENT:** Noland and Wiger.

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

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Updates

- a. Aquatic Invasive Species Treatment and Education Grants Reimbursement Requests -

Wilson Witkowski reviewed with the Policy Team that three lake associations have currently submitted requests for reimbursement. The remaining lake associations have until October 4 to submit requests for 2024.

- b. Lake Management Planning – Wilson Witkowski reviewed with the Policy Team that on August 21, 2024, the Chisago County Board of Commissioners approved the scope for Assessment, Monitoring (modeling and project identification) for a countywide strategic lake management plan provided by Emmons & Olivier Resources, Inc. (EOR).

LSC CWMP

Wilson Witkowski provided updates on the following agenda items:

- a. Lower St. Croix, Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (1W1P), and
 - i. St. Croix Riverway Signage Project – Team Member White and Eret provided an update on the effort to post consistent signage throughout the riverway to define public and private land boundaries. The Policy Team discussed possibly having a short presentation to the Policy Team on the signage. White and Eret will reach out to the National Park Service staff to see how the county can assist with the project.
 - ii. Community Assistance Package for Stormwater Runoff – Team Member White provided an update on Lower St. Croix Partnership staff willingness to present on the assistance package. Team Member Mell stated that that Watershed Based Implementation Funding (WBIF) for Minimal Impact Design Standards (MIDS) and local unit of government ordinance revisions encourages low-impact development and storm water management. The Policy Team discussed interest from cities and rural areas in the county.

Drinking Water in Chisago County

Wilson Witkowski provided an update on where county residents can test their well water and the links and information on drinking water grants provided by Abby Shea, including private well testing and financial assistance available. The Policy Team discussed providing well water testing services year-round and how to increase testing education and awareness. Team Member Mell provided an update on the well water testing services at the Chisago SWCD and recent Lower St. Croix Partnership testing clinics. Abby Shea discussed grants available for residents. Team Member Mell and Abby Shea shared recent testing results and patterns in North Branch and southwest area of Chisago County.

Aquatic Invasive Species Program Updates

Wilson Witkowski provided an update on the following agenda items:

- a. Introducing the new county AIS Specialist/Lead Watercraft Inspector – Madelyn Kinny,
- b. Watercraft Inspections and Decontaminations,
- c. Starry Trek held on August 10, 2024, and the
- d. Decontamination Blitz held on August 16 -18, 2024.

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.

Invasive Phragmites

Wilson Witkowski and Elfelt provided an update on the recent county invasive phragmites planning committee tour of the Chisago Lakes Joint Sewage Treatment commission facility and discussion with the facility on removing invasive phragmites from their drying beds. The Policy Team discussed the type of sewage treatment facilities in North Branch and Rush City and that invasive phragmites are not used at those sites.

Children's Water Festival

Wilson Witkowski provided an update on volunteers needed for the Chisago County Children's Water Festival on September 26, 2024.

We Are Water MN Exhibit

Wilson Witkowski provided an update on the exhibit in Chisago County from June 20 - August 12, 2024, including the following events:

- a. Poetry Contest Winners, and
- b. Closing Webinar on September 17, 2024.

Lakeshore Development

Wilson Witkowski provided an update on the Lakeshore Development series of articles published by Minnesota Public Radio. The Policy Team discussed compensation for lakeshore owners to maintain a natural shoreline and to continue the discuss at a future Policy Team meeting.

Workshops/Conferences

Wilson Witkowski provided an update on the following workshops and conferences:

- a. SWEEP Volunteer Summit on September 16, 2024,
- b. Aquatic Invasive Species Showcase on September 25, 2024,
- c. St. Croix River Workshop on the Land on September 30, 2024, and
- d. St. Croix River Research Rendezvous on October 8, 2024.

Water Plan Policy Team Member Mell offered a motion to fund up to 3 Citizen at Large members of the Policy Team to attend the Aquatic Invasive Species Showcase on September 25, 2024, St. Croix River Workshop on the Land on September 30, 2024, and or the St. Croix River Research Rendezvous on October 8, 2024. 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, Kern, Klatt, Mell, Schneider, and White. **OPPOSED:** none. **ABSENT:** Noland and Wiger.

Agency Updates

None.

The next meeting of the Chisago County Water Plan Policy Team is scheduled for Monday, November 18, 2024, at 3:00 pm. The meeting will be hybrid in-person and virtual.

Water Plan Policy Team Member Mell offered a motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:04 p.m. Motion seconded by Water Plan Policy Team Member Kern and, upon a vote being taken thereon, the motion carried as follows: **IN FAVOR THEREOF:** Dahlberg, Eret, Kern, Klatt, Mell, Schneider, and White. **OPPOSED:** none. **ABSENT:** Noland and Wiger.