

Nemadji River Stewardship Committee Meeting 6/18/09 Summary

List of attendees:

Courtney Kowalczyk-Minnesota Waters
Karen Evens-MPCA, Duluth
Tom Schaub-MPCA, Duluth
Jeff Hurbes-BWSR
Marc Hershfield-MPCA, Duluth
Pete Knutson-MPCA, Brainerd
Tom Sjoberg-Landowner
Susan Oswood-Landowner
Mark Thell-Carlton Co. Soil and Water Conservation District
Cordell Manz-Wis DNR, Superior
Deserae Hendrickson-Mn DNR Fisheries, Duluth
Heather Cunningham-Carlton Co. Planning and Zoning
Karl Koller-Mn DNR Ecological Resources, Grand Rapids
Brad Matlack-Carlton Co. Soil and Water Conservation District
Kirstin Swenson-Carlton Co. Soil and Water Conservation District

(Presenters in bold)

Kirstin Swenson-introductions, updates on public outreach

See slide presentation.

Deer Creek TMDL Education Tool Link: http://www.carltonswcd.org/deer_creek.htm

L-THIA link: <http://cobweb.ecn.purdue.edu/runoff/lthianew/>

Additional comments/suggestions for web education tool:

- Add contacts to the web page
- Highlight past projects, show big picture of timeline of this and past projects
- L-THIA important tool for showing commissioners/decision makers the science of watershed issues and how it applies to things such as development pressure
- Include how project will effect engineers (ie: culvert issues)
- Many residents in watershed have limited web access. File sizes may be an issue. Suggestion to have before and after pdf maps of L-THIA model outputs for those who cannot use the model.

Courteny Kowalczyk-Minnesota Waters role in TMDLs

See slide presentation.

Additional comments:

- Reporting example shown by Courtney of supporting/nonsupporting areas is a good outreach tool
- New certification program for SWAG (Surface Water Assessment Grant) volunteers will likely begin in 2010 and be required for SWAG grantees

Kirstin Swenson-monitoring updates, TMDL process recap

See slide presentation.

Karen Evens-Lake Superior Stream Sediment Study and the One Waters Program

See slide presentation.

Additional Comments/Questions:

- The Lake Superior Stream Sediment Study will be done by bundling together the Lake Superior watershed turbidity impaired streams into one study using the WARSSS method (Watershed Assessment of River Stability and Sediment Supply)

See WARSSS introduction on EPA website: <http://www.epa.gov/warsss/index.htm>

- Q: How does the Lake Superior study affect the standard?
- A: The proposed revision would be conservative/simple assuming the project happens. It will likely result in a range of sediment deliveries at different flows.
- Q: Will the Nemadji River TMDL support this new study?
- A: It will be complimentary because the study will be continuing.
- Q: Will the NRCS be involved in any step of the process?
- A: They are usually involved during the restoration planning and BMP implementation.
- Q: Is there an area where NRSC would be more effective?
- A: Due to budget cuts and funding issues, there is some look toward different funding. Possibly looking at Coastal funding.
- One Waters is the name of the MPCA program of assessing Minnesota's 81 major watersheds on a 10-year cycle. The Nemadji River will be coming up on the cycle in 2011. The timing allows for planning to take place prior. SWAG grants give preference to the watersheds current in the cycle year. 2010 will be planning time for putting together possible SWAG grant for additional volunteers to support 2011 monitoring. Once the first year of monitoring takes place, problem areas will be followed up on the subsequent year. Protection project can also be planned during time of cycle assessments. All the information collected through these projects can be broadened to aid in developing a watershed plan.

See Clean Water Council year-end biennial report:

<http://www.pca.state.mn.us/water/cleanwatercouncil/index.html>

Cordell Manz-Wisconsin DNR

Proposed monitoring in the Nemadji Watershed was funded for one year beginning July 1. Turbidity and TSS grab samples will be taken at several sites. Possible flow data collected at a later date.

Marc Hershfield-MPCA-Duluth

- \$475 million dollars have been set aside for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative as a first step in a \$5 billion plan proposed by the president. This will result in a large sum of money available for this area of the great lakes. The MPCA will be putting together a grant when rfps become available later this year. The intention is to include Red Clay Project dam assessments in the plan. The funding appears to be broad and not necessarily limited to one type of project. The funding will cover staffing and land acquisitions. Coordination and outreach is a part of the funding coverage.

For more Great lake Restoration Initiative information:

Great Lakes Commission website:

<http://www.glc.org/> (Check area in the bottom left box “Recent Publications” (1) GLRI FAQs and (2) Fact sheet)

The Environmental Protection Agency site:

<http://www.epa.gov/greatlakes/glri/index.html>

Healing Our Waters (HOW), also has information regarding the GLRI:

<http://www.healthylakes.org/>