



One Watershed, One Plan

Frequently Asked Questions about Plan Development

November 2015



Purpose: The purpose of this document is to highlight some of the questions frequently heard regarding One Watershed, One Plan (1W1P) that are more specific to the process of developing a plan. If you have additional questions you would like to see covered in this document, please submit them to julie.westerlund@state.mn.us.

Advisory Committees

Q1. Who is on the Advisory Committee and how is it formed?

The Policy Committee should appoint or at least approve the membership of the Advisory Committee. At a minimum, the Advisory Committee should include at least one staff representative from each participating local government and must include one representative from each state agency (MDA, MDH, DNR, PCA, & BWSR). Including federal agency partners (NRCS, FWS, etc.); representatives of citizens' associations, or sportsman's groups (lake associations, growers' associations, environmental groups, etc.); and possibly city or township representatives is also recommended.

Q2. How big should the Advisory Committee be?

A committee of more than 20-25 people can be unwieldy for effective participation in the process, and other means for stakeholders to contribute to the process may need to be considered. Lessons learned from the pilots include splitting the Advisory Committee into Technical and Citizen Advisory Committees (TAC and CAC) as a way to manage size and ensure participation from a broad group. In this case, the committees met both separately and jointly depending on the topic and presentations. Pilots also leveraged existing County Water Plan committees for additional and broader feedback.

Q3. What is the role of the Advisory Committee?

The Advisory Committee is similar to a County Water Planning task force. Like the current county water planning process, the Advisory Committee is the original forum for vetting ideas, providing feedback on the plan to the plan writer, and providing recommendations to the policy committee. The bulk of input in the development of the plan should come from this group. Depending on size and scope, more than one Advisory Committee (or a subcommittee structure) may be necessary.

Q4. How many Advisory Committee meetings are expected throughout the planning process?

Anticipate at least 7-9 meetings of the full Advisory Committee throughout plan development, although there is potential for more total meetings depending on structure (for example, if subcommittees are used). However, the key is not in the specific number of meetings but instead in how effective the meetings are to the plan development process. A lesson learned from the pilot watersheds is that having fewer or less frequent meetings creates the risk of reduced motivation and participation and less buy-in for the overall plan. Alternately, meetings that are too frequent, poorly facilitated, or are without a clearly defined purpose can result in burnout and dissatisfaction.

Q5. Can Advisory Committee members receive a stipend for attending meetings?

Providing a stipend to committee members is a decision for the local government that appointed the member. For example, if each participating county agrees to appoint one citizen member to the committee, it is up to each individual county to determine if local funds are available to provide a stipend (generally mileage and per diem) for committee appointees.

Policy Committees

Q6. Who is on the Policy Committee?

The Policy Committee consists of one board member from each local water planning authority (County, SWCD, and Watershed District) participating in the Memorandum of Agreement.

Q7. What is the role of the Policy Committee in One Watershed, One Plan?

The purpose of this group is to review recommendations of the Advisory Committee, make final decisions about the content of the plan and its submittal, and approve expenditures of funds allocated for plan development. Policy Committee members are also responsible for representing their respective local governments in the development of the plan, and for reporting back to their respective boards about the progress and direction of the plan. Additional duties may be outlined in the Memorandum of Agreement establishing the partnership to develop the plan.

Q8. How many Policy Committee meetings are expected through the planning process?

Anticipate at least 5-7 meetings of the Policy Committee throughout plan development. However, as with the Advisory Committee, the key is not in the specific number of meetings but instead in how effective the meetings are to the plan development process. A lesson learned in the pilot watersheds is to extend an invitation to the Policy Committee members to attend Advisory Committee meetings when possible. However, a caution is that Policy Committee members are there to observe and learn about the topics, not to participate (unless the meeting is specifically a joint meeting of the committees).

Plan Implementation

Q9. What are BWSR's expectations for administration of the plan after it is adopted by the participating local governments? Who is responsible to report on plan accomplishments?

Local governments participating in plan development make the decisions for how the plan is administered and for who has responsibility for reporting on plan accomplishments. These decisions must be identified clearly in the plan. One of the plan content requirements is a description of how the plan will be administered in the future, and one of the plan development procedures requires the partnership to revisit their formal agreement for plan development prior to completion of the plan. These two requirements should be discussed jointly with the local government staff and the Policy Committee, and with the support of Minnesota Counties Intergovernmental Trust staff and legal counsel.

Q10. What is the best way to address ongoing, watershed-wide activities in the plan?

Programs for implementing watershed-wide and ongoing activities can be described in the implementation section of the plan. Decisions about whether to implement these activities and programs jointly or separately should be made as the implementation programs are developed. More information about the implementation program requirements can be found in the Plan Content Requirements for One Watershed, One Plan:

<http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/planning/1W1P/index.html>.

Q11. The Performance Review and Assistance Program (PRAP) looks at plan implementation, operational effectiveness, and partner relationships. How will One Watershed, One Plan interact with PRAP?

PRAP will continue to look at plan implementation, operational effectiveness, and partner relationships. It is anticipated that PRAP will be implemented at the level of One Watershed, One Plan in much the same way as Watershed-based Level II Performance Reviews are currently conducted.

Q12. What happens if there are activities in the plan that my local government unit does not support? Can my board choose to adopt the plan and also choose to implement only certain preferred projects or programs?

Writing a plan on a watershed basis requires recognition that our local governments charged with water management are just as diverse as the water resources and landscapes that we have in the state. Key discussions of major water resource issues, concerns, problems, goals and objectives, and potential solutions should originate from and be first fully vetted at the stakeholder level. Additionally, two of the guiding principles of One Watershed, One Plan are that *implementation will be accomplished through formal agreements among participating local governments on how to manage and operate the watershed* and that *One Watershed, One Plan is not intended to be a one size fits all model*. With these principles in mind, and with the bottom-up approach for developing the plan, these types of issues should be resolved before the plan comes to the board for adoption.