



LOWER MINNESOTA RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT

Executive Summary for Action

Lower Minnesota River Watershed District Board of Managers Meeting

Wednesday, February 19, 2020

Agenda Item

Item 6. B. - Proposal from Friends of the Minnesota Valley

Prepared By

Linda Loomis, Administrator

Summary

Ted Suss the Executive Director of the Friends of the Minnesota Valley contacted the LMRWD with two proposals. The first one involves a program called River Watch. Friends has organized a River Watch program for the Minnesota River Basin. They are looking for funding for the program and have asked the LMRWD to contribute \$10,000. This program enlists High Schools to have students monitor water quality during the school year. Mr. Suss has been contacting schools to sign up more schools to monitor more locations. I have asked him to put together a proposal for the Board and a report on the program so far. Some information is available on the [Friends website](#) and I have attached a brief summary of the program from the website.

The second proposal is to have a booth at county fairs in the Minnesota River Basin, similar to the project that we did with Friends two summer ago. I have asked Mr. Suss to prepare a proposal for the Board on this project too.

No action is needed, but the Board should provide direction to staff if they are interested in hearing more about both of these proposals

Attachments

Friends of the Minnesota Valley River Watch Program

Recommended Action

Provide direction to staff

Friends of the Minnesota Valley



River Watch Program

River Watch is a high school based student activity through which teams of high school students are trained on basic river water quality data collection and reporting procedures using Minnesota Pollution Control Agency protocols. River Watch teams also perform other monitoring and data collection activities such as macroinvertebrate counts and identifying sources of water pollution and excess sediment. The data the students will collect and submit is the same data the MPCA and others use.

A successful River Watch program is operating in the Red River Valley under the leadership of the International Water Institute. Technical assistance and advice in creating and implementing a Minnesota River Basin River Watch program is being provided by the Red River Watch program managers.

Friends of the Minnesota Valley is establishing a River Watch program in the Minnesota River Basin including the major tributary rivers and streams leading to the main channel of the Minnesota River..

The first operational year of the River Watch project, July 2017-June 2018, goal is the enrolling a minimum of 5 teams and perhaps as many as 20 teams.

River Watch school based teams will inventory and study local pollution and sediment sources, promote river quality activities and Best Management Practices within the community, meet with other teams to share successes and ideas for activities, and participate in a basin wide conference.

In addition to collecting a wide range of valuable and much needed data about river water quality and educating a new generation on the need for taking positive action to preserve and protect the river and lands of the basin, the River Watch program will build a cooperative cadre of persons from across the basin who will be motivated to work cooperatively in future years to preserve the water and other natural resources of the Minnesota River Basin.

Annual end of year conference/forum and team competition

All members of each River Watch team; all adult advisors, and as many concerned citizens as possible, specifically elected officials and Watershed District and Watershed Management Organization board members and staff, will be invited to an annual Conference/Forum. The main purpose of the forum will be to allow each watershed team to present a report on team activities during the previous year. This report presentation will be judged both on extent of team activities and the quality of the presentation.