



LOWER MINNESOTA RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT

Executive Summary for Action

Lower Minnesota River Watershed District Board of Managers Meeting

Wednesday, March 20, 2024

Agenda Item

Item 7. D. - Proposed Partnering with the MN River Collaborative on the Water Storage Study

Prepared By

Linda Loomis, Administrator

Summary

At the February 21, 2024, Board of Manager Meeting, the Board directed staff to explore how the LMRWD might partner with the LMRWD with the Minnesota River Collaborative (Collaborative). The Collaborative is not a registered legal entity, so it would be problematic to enter into an agreement.

An email was sent to the Board in the time between the February and March Board meetings. In addition, Lisa Frenette and I met with Rita Weaver. In addition, a meeting was held with the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Della Young, and Rita Weaver. David Wall, MPCA, was invited to attend, but had a conflict. Suzanne Jiwani from the Collaborative was invited to the meeting.

At the meeting with Rita Weaver and Lisa Frenette, Rita cautioned that only \$3 million of the \$17 million water storage funds has been released for this round of competitive grants. She also explained the priorities for evaluation of grant requests. The evaluation team will be looking for projects that are shovel ready and that have willing landowners to implement projects. She said that studies such as Minnesota River Hydrology study will lose points automatically.

At the meeting with the USACE, the USACE suggested funding a project under the Planning Assistance for States program. No commitments for funding were made by any agency. It was suggested that the scope of the project needs to be developed to be considered for funding. The scope should be more manageable and not as large a project as including the entire Minnesota River basin. It was also suggested that a lot of work has been done and many of the studies that have already been done might be used to inform the scope for this project.

This was discussed with President Barisonzi and there are a couple of options to proceed:

1. Developing a scope of study could be assigned to the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC). Members of the Collaborative could then apply to be appointed to the CAC.
2. A separate committee could be formed and volunteers from the Collaborative could be appointed to the Committee.

I am not sure which option would be the most expedient. The timing would depend a lot on when applications for appointment to the CAC were received. Under the second option the committee could be formed as soon as the Board has names of persons who are interested. In either case I would suggest that the Board adopt a Resolution detailing the charge to the CAC/Committee.

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There is no guarantee that funding will be available once the scope of study is complete. The attached Resolution will be circulated to Young Environmental, BWSR, the USACE, MPCA and the Collaborative for input.

The Board can plan to adopt the Resolution at the April Board meeting.

BWSR has a final draft of a report [“Water Storage: A Planning and Decision Support Framework”](#) that may be of interest to the Board. BWSR currently has water storage studies underway in several watersheds, one of which is the Yellow Medicine Watershed in the Minnesota River basin.

Attachments

Draft Resolution 24-05 Forming a Committee to Develop a Scope of Study to Identify Areas of the Minnesota River Basin Suitable for Upland Storage.

Recommended Action

Review Resolution, make recommendations and determine committee appointment procedure

Manager _____ introduced the following resolution and moved its adoption:

LOWER MINNESOTA RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT

RESOLUTION 24-05

RESOLUTION DEVELOPING A SCOPE OF STUDY TO IDENTIFY
AREAS OF THE MINNESOTA RIVER BASIN SUITABLE FOR UPLAND STORAGE

WHEREAS, in 2018, the Lower Minnesota River Watershed District (LMRWD), a public body with purposes and powers set forth in Minnesota Statutes Chapters 103B and 103D, identified the need for a study to assess water storage opportunities and benefits associated with water storage in the Minnesota River basin, and;

WHEREAS the LMRWD, as the local sponsor to the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) maintenance of the Minnesota River navigation channel, has an interest in reducing the amount of sediment accumulating in the lower Minnesota River; and

WHEREAS water storage is one component of integrated water management at a watershed scale; and

WHEREAS the USACE was asked to partner in the assessment of water storage opportunities and indicated willingness to consider funding under its Planning Assistance to States program for said assessment; and

WHEREAS, the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) have grants available that may be suitable to match funds provided by the USACE; and

WHEREAS, after a meeting between the USACE, BWSR and the LMRWD, to discuss a study to assess water storage opportunities and benefits associated with water storage in the Minnesota River basin, that an assessment of the entire Minnesota River basin is too broad and expensive; and

WHEREAS it has been determined that a more targeted and manageable scope of study be developed; and

WHEREAS the LMRWD Board of Managers supports development of a scope of study.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Board of Managers of Lower Minnesota River Watershed District supports the development of a scope of study that would address the following:

- The purpose of an assessment of water storage opportunities
- Measurable Goals and Objectives of an Assessment, including:
 - Identify a manageable study area;
 - Utilize existing efforts going on in the basin to determine flow reduction benefits received from placing storage measures in key locations in the study area;
 - Identify water storage options and set priorities to achieve goals;
 - Connect storage goals to actual reductions in peak flows; and
 - Consideration of water management partnerships

- Potential Audiences
- Estimated Cost
- Proposed Phases, including:
 - Goals and Objectives by Phase;
 - Estimated timelines ; and
 - Estimated Cost per Phase
- Resource needed

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the scope of study will be submitted to the USACE for consideration for funding under the Planning Assistance to States and that the LMRWD will apply to BWSR, LCCMR and other state partners for funds to be used as the match required by the USACE.

The question on the adoption of the Resolution was seconded by Manager _____.

Upon a vote being taken there were ___ yeas and ___ nays as follows:

	<u>Yea</u>	<u>Nay</u>	<u>Absent</u>	<u>Abstain</u>
AMUNDSON	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BARISONZI	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
KUPLIC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
LAMMERS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SALVATO	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Adopted by the Board of Managers of the Lower Minnesota River Watershed District this 20th day of March 2024.

Joseph Barisonzi, President

ATTEST:

Lauren Salvato, Secretary

I, Lauren Salvato, Secretary of the Lower Minnesota River Watershed District, do hereby certify that I have compared the above Resolution with the original thereof as the same appears of record and on file with the LMRWD and find the same to be a true and correct transcript thereof.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I hereunto set my hand this 20th day of March 2024.

Lauren Salvato, Secretary