

## **Little Fork River Watershed Planning Group**

### **Minutes of the Policy Committee**

**Date:** Thursday, June 12, 2025 at 10:00 am

**Location:** Littlefork Community Center  
220 Main Street, Littlefork, MN 56653



#### **Policy Committee Members Present:**

Loren Lehman, City of Littlefork Deputy Mayor/Councilor  
Cal Saari, Itasca SWCD Supervisor  
Destry Hell, Koochiching County Commissioner  
George Aitchison, Koochiching SWCD Supervisor  
Chuck Bainter, North St. Louis SWCD Supervisor

#### **Steering Committee Members Present:**

Pam Tomevi, Koochiching SWCD  
Matt Gutzmann, Itasca SWCD  
Anita Provinzino, North St. Louis SWCD  
Jolen Simon, Koochiching SWCD  
Whitney Sims, Koochiching Environmental Services  
Andy Arens, Itasca SWCD (remote)  
Tom Nelson, Itasca SWCD (remote)

#### **BWSR Saff Present:**

Jeff Hrubes, BWSR (remote)  
Chad Severts, BWSR (remote)

#### **Others Present:**

Moriya Rufer, Houston Engineering, Inc. (remote)

Tomevi opened the meeting at 10:02 a.m.

#### **Welcome and Introductions**

Attendees introduced themselves. Tomevi introduced the new draft logo developed by Dain Erickson for the Little Fork River Watershed.

#### **1W1P Overview & Orientation**

Tomevi provided an overview of the planning process including watershed boundaries, planning timeline, budget, and committees. Tomevi noted that this is a voluntary plan and does not impact local laws or ordinances.

Main planning committees:

- Policy Committee – Decision-making group
  - Approve plan content
  - Guide overall direction of planning process
  - Report back to individual Boards about plan content and progress
  - Adopt the final Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan
- Steering Committee
  - Staff from each participating government unity and BWSR representative(s)
  - Provide day-to-day organization and coordination
  - Active throughout the planning process and engages with all other committees
- Advisory Committee
  - Professional and community topic experts
  - Provide technical input and local perspective
  - Collaborate to identify:
    - Resource issues and concerns in the watershed
    - Action strategies to address resource concerns
    - Measureable goals to track progress

Planning schedule reviewed.

- Discussion of Public Kickoff Meetings:
  - Proposed Dates (In-person, 5:00-7:00 p.m.):
    - July 22<sup>nd</sup> – Cook Community Center
    - July 24<sup>th</sup> – Littlefork Community Building
- Advisory Committee Monthly Topic Meetings Draft Schedule (with meetings to be held around the watershed, both online and in-person):
  - August 7, 2025 – Lakes and Streams
  - September 4, 2025 – Forests & Wetlands
  - October 2, 2025 – Urban Stormwater & Drainage
  - November 6, 2025 – Farms & Groundwater
  - January 8, 2026 – Full Priority Issues List & Priority Areas

Budget reviewed: \$250,800.00 total (details on file). Tomevi reported that 50% of the grant has been received and the funds have been transferred to a separate bank account (Border Bank, International Falls) for tracking as recommended by Peterson Company.

A format for partners to bill eligible activities to the planning grant using sub agreements was discussed. A collective decision was made for Koochiching SWCD to develop sub agreements for each partner. Tomevi will work with Provinzino to draft a template.

### **Policy Committee Bylaws**

The group discussed details of the bylaws as presented and offered the following revision:

#### **ARTICLE VIII: MEETING LOCATION**

1. Regular meetings of the Policy Committee will be held at a location within the Little Fork River or Big Fork River watersheds.

**2025/6-1      Motion by Saari, seconded by Hell approving the Policy Committee bylaws as revised.**

**Voting yes: Lehman, Saari, Hell, Aitchison, Bainter. Motion carried.**

**2025/6-2      Motion by Saari, seconded by Lehman approving Chuck Bainter as Chair.**

**Voting yes: Lehman, Saari, Hell, Aitchison, Bainter. Motion carried.**

The Policy Committee will move forward without a Vice-Chair at this time and will reconsider at the next Policy Committee meeting.

### **Notification Process & Advisory Committee**

Tomevi reviewed the Notice of Intent to Plan, offering the opportunity for edits.

Each agency will make a list of media to share information with the public.

**2025/6-3      Motion by Saari, seconded by Aitchison approving the release of the draft Notice of Intent to Plan letter as presented.**

**Voting yes: Lehman, Saari, Hell, Aitchison, Bainter. Motion carried.**

The Advisory Committee list was reviewed.

**2025/6-4      Motion by Hell, seconded by Saari approving the draft technical Advisory Committee list as presented subject to additions.**

**Voting yes: Lehman, Saari, Hell, Aitchison, Bainter. Motion carried.**

### **Plan Writing Consultant**

**2025/6-5      Motion by Aitchison, seconded by Lehman authorizing Houston Engineering, Inc. as the planning consultant for the Little Fork River Watershed 1W1P.**

**Voting yes: Lehman, Saari, Hell, Aitchison, Bainter. Motion carried.**

### **Wrap Up/Actions and Next Steps**

Future Policy Committee meetings schedule, as shown in the packet. These will likely change and the group will continue discussion.

Note: The Big Fork PC meeting is August 27<sup>th</sup>, we may be able to coordinate on the same day.

### **Adjourn**

**2025/6-6      Motion by Aitchison, seconded by Lehman to adjourn at 11:45 a.m..**

**Voting yes: Lehman, Saari, Hell, Aitchison, Bainter. Motion carried.**