



LOWER MINNESOTA RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT

Minutes

Citizen Advisory Committee

Tuesday, November 2, 2021

Teleconference via WebEx

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 9 a.m. by President Diederichs. The following members were present: Judy Berglund, Craig Diederichs, Greg Genz, and Jenny Karkowski. In addition, the following individuals joined the meeting: Linda Loomis; Naiad Consulting, LLC; Lower Minnesota River Watershed District (LMRWD) Administrator; Jen Dullum; Young Environmental Consulting Group, LLC (YECG); and Carrie Jennings, Freshwater.

2. Approval of the Agenda

Berglund moved to approve the November agenda and this was seconded by Karkowski. Upon taking a vote, the following individuals voted in favor of the motion: Berglund, Diederichs, Genz, and Karkowski. The following voted against: none.

3. Approval of the August Minutes

Genz moved to approve the September minutes and this was seconded by Berglund. Upon taking a vote, the following individuals voted in favor of the motion: Berglund, Diederichs, Genz, and Karkowski. The following voted against: none.

4. Citizen Input on Non-Agenda Items

There was no input.

Theresa Kuplic joined the meeting.

5. New Business

a. Speaker Carrie Jennings, Freshwater

Linda Loomis introduced Carrie Jennings from Freshwater. Carrie is a hydrogeologist who has investigated sediment deposition in the Minnesota River. Throughout her career, Carrie has studied the landscape of the Minnesota River and mapped sediment deposition throughout the watershed. Her presentation will focus on sediment in the Minnesota River and its changes over time. Carrie noted that major sediment loads come from the Le Sueur and Blue Earth rivers. Tile drainage, wetland loss, and vegetation alteration are major factors in sediment deposition and increases in river flow. Approximately 200 tons of sediment per mile per year accumulate in the river channel. Lake Pepin, on the Mississippi River, is filling in nine times faster than pre-settlement. Recent legislation passed in Minnesota will provide financial incentives to landowners willing to temporarily store water on their property. The legislations' purpose is to hold water back in order to slow erosion. This program is administered by the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR). After Carrie's presentation, she opened the floor for questions.

Greg Genz pondered the effects of increased flow from expanded growth in cities adjacent to the Minnesota River. Carrie noted that cities are regulated under state mandate to hold water back and slow stormwater runoff. The focus has largely been on tile drainage, which covers a larger percentage of the watershed, because there is no legal authority regulating agricultural runoff. Greg also asked if Freshwater was gauging the changes in the upper Mississippi watershed. Carrie stated that The Nature Conservancy and Friends of the Mississippi River (FMR) are leading that effort regarding the conversion of forest to cropland.

Craig Diederichs asked what the solution is to increased sediment deposition. Carrie replied that the water storage program from BWSR will help and that she would like to see demonstrated reductions in flow occur through this program.

Theresa Kuplic asked what citizens can do to help. Carrie told her that just by being on the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) is doing something. She noted that applying pressure to the BWSR advisory board is another way to help ensure that funds are spent efficiently and that the pilot program continues into the future. Judy Berglund suggested reaching out to local legislators. Greg Genz mentioned that working with barge operators and producers who use the river for transportation should be brought into the conversation.

6. Old Business

a. Review of Steep Slopes handout

Jen Dullum asked for feedback on the Steep Slopes handout draft. Comments included adding more contact information and project examples. Staff will review the CAC comments and deliver a new version for review and comment in December.

b. Review of rain and native garden external resources

The CAC was asked to review external resources related to rain and native gardens for possible inclusion on the LMRWD website. Positive feedback was received. Staff will wait to hear from more members if the resources are deemed appropriate.

c. Resident education materials

Staff will revise the Steep Slopes handout and begin developing a handout on rain barrels.

7. Communications

Jen Dullum shared a virtual event with the CAC. FMR is hosting Dr. John Anfinson on Tuesday, November 2, at 6 p.m. to discuss the future of the Mississippi River in the Twin Cities.

The CAC December meeting will be held virtually on Tuesday, December 7, at 9 a.m. Mark Nemeth from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MNDNR) will speak about fish in the Minnesota River.

8. Adjournment

Berglund moved to adjourn the meeting and this was seconded by Kuplic. Upon taking a vote, the following individuals voted in favor of the motion: Berglund, Diederichs, Genz, Karkowski and Kuplic. The following voted against: none.