



LOWER MINNESOTA RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT

Executive Summary for Action

Lower Minnesota River Watershed District Board of Managers Meeting
Wednesday, December 11, 2024

Agenda Item

Item 9. C. – State of Minnesota River Listening Session

Prepared By

Linda Loomis, Administrator

Summary

Staff continue to work on the listening session. We are looking for a company to bring in video and audio equipment and may have more to report at the meeting as we are visiting MCN6 on Tuesday.

Young Environmental Consulting Group has prepared a memo for the Board. There are some changes to be made to the list of additional contacts and speakers.

Attachments

Technical Memorandum – Public Listening Session – January 8, 2025 – Event Planning Update dated December 5, 2024

Recommended Action

No action recommended

Technical Memorandum



To: Linda Loomis, Administrator
Lower Minnesota River Watershed District (LMRWD)

From: Della Schall Young, PMP, CTF, CPESC, Principal Scientist
Suzy Lindberg, Communications Manager
Nick Voss, Water Resources Scientist

Date: December 5, 2024

Re: Public Listening Session – January 8, 2025 —Event Planning Update

At the July Board of Managers meeting, Manager Barisonzi introduced a proposal for a public hearing on flooding in the Lower Minnesota River Watershed District (LMRWD). In August 2024, the LMRWD staff met with Manager Barisonzi to clarify the vision for the event and begin planning logistics. The following memo captures progress to date and key next steps to implement a successful event in January 2025.

Event Goals

The event planning is aligned with the following goals established at the beginning of the project:

- Reach targeted audience (county boards, soil and water conservation districts, and other relevant policy-makers) to gain traction on legislative progress following a high-impact flood.
- Receive sufficient information from participants to create a report that summarizes recommendations based on science-based information.
- Convert the hearing to a legislative agenda while building partnership across overlapping management strategies.

Call for Testimonies

The LMRWD released a call for testimony through multiple channels, beginning on October 17. Following the announcement, our team sent three reminder emails to the LMRWD mailing list to promote testimony. The LMRWD staff also hosted a Q&A session to facilitate conversations around the event, remove potential barriers to submitting testimony, and gauge level of interest for the event. Six participants attended the Q&A call and the video was placed on the website for further reference.

The call for testimony closed on November 27 at close of businesses. The LMRWD received six testimony submissions from partners. Although the quantity of testimony did not meet the original goal for available five-minute timeslots in the agenda, the quality of the testimony received is strong. Several of the submissions provide in-depth discussion that span multiple themes and problems, solutions, outcomes; therefore, the speakers who responded could be granted additional time to speak beyond the five minutes originally proposed.

Testimony was received from the following participants (full testimony available on request):

- 1) Holly Bushman, Lower Minnesota River East Partnership
- 2) Kirby Templin, City of Shakopee
- 3) Norm Senjem, Lake Pepin Legacy Alliance
- 4) Scott Sparlin, Minnesota River Congress
- 5) Tom Crawford, Friends of the Minnesota Valley
- 6) Tom Worthington, Friends of the Minnesota Valley Refuge

Next Steps – Agenda and Additional Speakers

To round out the agenda, LMRWD staff has compiled a targeted list of speakers that includes legislative representatives (local and federal level); municipal partners; water management organization partners; and representatives from state agencies, non-profit organizations, and academia. In early December, staff will reach out to these contacts with an invitation to present at the January 8, 2025, event. Our primary goal is to fill the agenda with confirmed speakers, with the secondary goal of driving attendance through personalized invitations for key stakeholders.

Attachment 1 includes a summary of contacts who will receive a personalized invitation to speak or submit a statement to be read during the event.

Event Promotion

A **full invitation email** has been drafted and will be circulated to the attendee list during the week of December 9. The mailing list will receive at least two reminder emails as the event approaches, strategically avoiding the busy holiday season.

We established an Eventbrite landing page to capture registrations. It will allow users to register for various options including Speaker Tickets (receive time slot on agenda), Non-Speaker Tickets (audit and listen the session in-person), and Virtual Tickets (hybrid option to listen, not testify).

The page will also allow staff to monitor progress toward attendance and offer an additional request to obtain speakers who wish to participate and add to the public record during the event.

Expectations of Board

To support the ongoing success of the event, we request that the Board of Managers continue to communicate with existing partners in your network to garner attendance and participation. If the Board has successful conversations through the Board Outreach phase undertaken in early November, please communicate key notes to LMRWD staff.

To facilitate the original vision of the event, LMRWD staff anticipate that the Board Managers will be present in-person for the entirety of the Public Listening Session from 1:00-4:00pm on Wednesday, January 8, 2025. The venue will have a panel set up for the Board Managers, similar to the monthly Board meetings, and the agenda will incorporate time for the Board to ask speakers questions as needed. President Barisonzi will moderate the session, including a welcome and closing as well as the direction of speakers and Q&A. Although speakers are still being confirmed, a draft agenda is included to demonstrate the initial vision for the afternoon. Please note that current timeslots as shown are likely to change as the agenda is finalized.

Attachment I: Action Plan for Additional Speakers

State Legislators: MN Senate		
Name	Representing	Notes/Contact
Eric Pratt	Scott County (R)	sen.eric.pratt@senate.mn
Lindsey Port	Scott County (DFL)	https://www.senate.mn/members/email-form/1245
Steve Cwodzinski	Hennepin County (DFL)	https://www.senate.mn/members/email-form/1234
Melissa Halvorson Wiklund	Hennepin County (DFL)	https://www.senate.mn/members/email-form/1209
Scott Dibble	Hennepin County (DFL)	https://www.senate.mn/members/email-form/1010
Zaynab Mohamed	Hennepin County (DFL)	https://www.senate.mn/members/email-form/1273
Julia Coleman	Carver County (R)	sen.julia.coleman@senate.mn
Jim Carlson	Eagan, Mendota, Mendota Heights (DFL)	https://www.senate.mn/members/email-form/1140
Glenn Gruenhagen	Carver (R)	sen.glenn.gruenhagen@senate.mn
Matt Klein	Lilydale (DFL)	https://www.senate.mn/members/email-form/1235
State Legislators: MN House of Representatives		
Rep. Lucy Rehm	Chaska and Chanhassen (DFL)	rep.lucy.rehm@house.mn.gov Legislative Assistant: Carl.Kaase@house.mn.gov
Rep. Tom Emmer	Chaska (R)	https://emmer.house.gov/contact

Rep. Brad Tabke	Shakopee (DFL)	rep.brad.tabke@house.mn.gov
Rep. Nathan Coulter	Bloomington (DFL)	rep.nathan.coulter@house.mn.gov
Rep. Kaela Berg	Burnsville (DFL)	rep.kaela.berg@house.mn.gov
Rep. Bobbie V. Harder	Carver (R)	rep.bobbie.harder@house.mn.gov
Rep. Bianca Virnig	Eagan, Mendota, Mendota Heights (DFL)	rep.bianca.virnig@house.mn.gov
Rep. Carlie Kotyza-Witthuhn	Eden Prairie (DFL)	rep.carlie.kotyza-witthuhn@house.mn.gov
Rep. Mary Frances Clardy	Lilydale (DFL)	rep.mary.frances.clardy@house.mn.gov
Rep. Ben Bakeberg	Louisville Township (R)	rep.ben.bakeberg@house.mn.gov
Rep. Jessica Hanson	Savage (DFL)	rep.jessica.hanson@house.mn.gov
Rep. Michael Howard	Fort Snelling Area (DFL)	rep.michael.howard@house.mn.gov
US Senate and House of Representatives		
Angie Craig	US House – 2 (DFL)	https://craig.house.gov/
Dean Phillips Kelly Morrison	US House -3 (DFL)	https://phillips.house.gov/contact/contactform.htm
Amy Klobuchar	US Senate (DFL)	https://www.klobuchar.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/email-amy
Tina Smith	US Senate (DFL)	mnscheduling@smith.senate.gov

LMRWD Organization		
Greg Genz	CAC	Rapidan Dam and downstream impacts testimony.
Agency Partners		
Contact TBD	Minnesota DNR	Impact of the failure of the Rapidan Dam.
Joel Groten	USGS – Upper Midwest Water Science Center	jgroten@usgs.gov
Rita Weaver	BWSR	rita.weaver@state.mn.us
Contact TBD	US Army Corps of Engineers	Flooding and boat traffic, locks and dams
Kenny Blumenfeld	Office of Climatology	Kenneth.blumenfeld@state.mn.us
Watershed Management Partners		
Victoria Ranua	Eagan/Inver Grove Heights Water Management Organization	victoria.ranua@co.dakota.mn.us
Terry Jeffery	Riley Purgatory Bluff Creek Watershed District	tjeffery@rpbcwd.org
Erica Sniegowski	Nine Mile Creek Watershed District	esniegowski@ninemilecreek.org
Paul Moline	Carver County Water Management Organization	pmoline@carvercountymn.gov

Lezlie Vermillion Vanessa Strong	Scott Water Management Organization	lvermillion@co.scott.mn.us
Academia		
Andy Erickson, PhD, PE	St. Anthony Falls Laboratory, University of Minnesota	Eric0706@umn.edu
Kim Musser	Associate Director – Water Resources Center – MN State University - Mankato	kimberly.musser@mnsu.edu
Maggie Karschnia	Water Resources Center	maggiel@umn.edu
Relevant Organizations		
Carrie Jennings	Freshwater Society	cjennings@freshwater.org
Michelle Stockness	Freshwater Society	MStockness@freshwater.org
Mike Harley	Environmental Initiative	mharley@environmental-initiative.org
Becca Nash	Legislative Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources	becca.nash@lccmr.mn.gov
Jim Stark	Legislative Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources	Jim.Stark@lcc.mn.gov
Municipal Partners		
Bryan Gruidl	Bloomington	bgruidl@bloomingtonmn.gov

Ryan Peterson Mark Ray	Burnsville	ryan.peterson@burnsvillemn.gov
Brent Mareck Chad Shell	Carver	bmareck@cityofcarver.com
Charlie Howley	Chanhasen	chowley@chanhasenmn.gov
Matt Clark	Chaska	MClark@chaskamn.com
Jenna Olson	Eagan	jolson@cityofeagan.com
Lori Haak	Eden Prairie	lhaak@edenprairie.org
	Lilydale	cityoflilydale@comcast.net
	Mendota	cityofmendota@gmail.com
Ryan Ruzek	Mendota Heights	rruzek@mendotaheightsmn.gov
Seng Thongvanh	Savage	SThongvanh@cityofsavage.com



PUBLIC LISTENING SESSION

WED. JANUARY 8, 2025
1-4PM

Draft Agenda

Listening Session Opens | 1pm-1:10pm

The Lower Minnesota River Watershed District (LMRWD) will open the listening session. The Board of Managers will introduce the need and intent for the listening session and provide next steps for testimony.

Listening Session Testimony | 1:10pm-3:35pm

Selected speakers will then share oral presentations on thematic topics of note. Each speaker will provide testimony for the record using their scheduled time. The Board will close each thematic phase of the listening session by asking questions and/or sharing a formal response to testimony.

Track 1: Scientific Causes of Flooding and Climate Change (1:10pm-2:00pm)

This track includes a general discussion of: Analysis of historical rainfall data and flood events; Changes to the landscape that affect flooding; Impact of recent developments in river management; Contributions of climate change to increased rainfall and flooding; Projections for future climate impacts on the region

Timeslot	Testimony	Speaker Name and Role	Organization	Abstract
1:10pm	Altered Hydrology and Flooding and the Need for Funding	Holly Bushman, Watershed Coordinator	Lower Minnesota River East Watershed Partnership	The impacts of altered hydrology have created a stressor in the watershed. The impacts of flooding will be discussed.
1:20pm	Significant Bank Erosion Leading to Sediment and Water Quality Impairments of the Minnesota River	Kirby Templin, PE Water Resource – Environmental Manager	City of Shakopee	Stabilizing streambanks along the Minnesota River can reduce erosion during times of high flows and flooding. Water quality studies are an important tool to reduce impairments.

1:30pm	Minnesota River Flooding Causes, Impacts, and Amelioration	Norm Senjem	Lake Pepin Legacy Alliance	Historic context for Minnesota River flooding as well as solutions found in controlled erosion. Proposed incentives will be discussed.
1:45pm	Board Response to Track 1			
<p>Track 2: Water Storage Along Minnesota River and Natural Mitigation Strategies (2pm-2:50pm)</p> <p>This track includes a general discussion of: Current capacities for natural and constructed water storage; Analysis of gaps and potential improvements; Recommendations for nature-based solutions (e.g., wetland restoration, reforestation, floodplain management); and Exploration of alternative cropping practices and soil health as mitigation strategies</p>				
Timeslot	Oral Testimony	Speaker Name and Role	Organization	Abstract
2:00pm	Flood Storage Projects and Policy Changes	Kirby Templin (<i>Testimony Part 2 TBD</i>)	City of Shakopee	Reducing Regional Flooding Issues through flood storage projects and policy changes
2:10pm	Legislative Support for new statewide Water Quality and Storage Program	Scott Sparlin (<i>Testimony Part 2 TBD</i>)	MN River Congress	BWSR Water Quality and Storage Program is receiving a high level of interest from landowners. LMRWD should support legislative progress to fund this program.
2:20pm	Water Storage and Incentives for Participation	Norm Senjem (<i>Testimony Part 2 TBD</i>)	Lake Pepin Legacy Alliance	Discuss on-landscape practices to reduce erosion and incentives for participation.
2:30	Board Response to Track 2			
2:40	10-minute recess			

Track 3: Financial Costs of Flooding and Costs/Benefits of Proposed Solutions (2:50-3:40pm)

This track includes a general discussion of: Data related to the total financial impacts on property, infrastructure, and public utilities caused by flooding; Identification of the financial burden on various stakeholders; Estimation of costs for implementing solutions; Highlighting of long-term benefits; and Analysis of target water flow for the river and watershed allocation

Timeslot	Oral Testimony	Speaker Name and Role	Organization	Abstract
2:50pm	Developing a Minnesota River Commission/ Management Board to Oversee Restoration	Scott Sparlin	Minnesota River Congress	A framework for a joint commission that will oversee restoration, including the financial need for operation.
3:00pm	Funding Watershed Initiatives in Greater Minnesota	Holly Bushman <i>(Testimony Part 2 TBD)</i>	Lower Minnesota River East Watershed Partnership	Discuss the need for funding and policy changes to implement solution based on upstream needs and tax base in Greater Minnesota.
3:10pm	Solutions for Clean Water Advocacy	Tom Crawford	Friends of the Minnesota Valley	Introduce solutions including legal responsibility for water quality and downstream impacts. Provide leadership and funding for increased education for student-age youth and chloride management.
3:20 pm	Solutions for Ike's Creek	Tom Worthington	Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge	Discuss proposed realignment and restoration of the Ike's Creek stream, by removing old infrastructure.
3:30pm	Board Response to Track 3			

Public Forum – Q&A Session | 3:30-3:50pm

Members of the public are invited to speak and provide testimony or questions for the record. Anyone who registers as a walk-in speaker will be numbered in a queue for order of speaking. Additional testimony for those not in attendance will be read into the record by the LMRWD.

Listening Session Closes | 3:50-4pm

The Board of Managers will close the listening session and reiterate next steps for testimony from listening session.

DRAFT