



# Minutes

## Vermillion River Watershed Planning Commission (WPC) Meeting

August 9, 2023 – 4:30 p.m.

In-person and Microsoft Teams Videoconference

### WPC Members in Attendance

Linda Larson    Brad Blackett  
Josh Borton    Andy Riesgraf  
Steve Hamrick  
Kevin Chamberlain

### Others in Attendance

Paula Liepold, Dakota County  
Curt Coudron, Dakota County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD)  
Nikki Stewart, Dakota County (Virtual)  
Valerie Neppel, Dakota County

### 1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Josh Borton at 4:31 p.m.

### 2. Roll Call

All members present except Jim Kotz and Sandra Weber.

### 3. Audience Comments on Items Not on the Agenda

No comments.

### 4. Approval of Agenda

*Motion by Commissioner Larson to approve the agenda, seconded by Commissioner Chamberlain.  
Motion carried on a 6-0 vote.*

### 5. Approval of Minutes from the July 12, 2023 Meeting

*Motion by Commissioner Blackett, seconded by Commissioner Riesgraf. Motion carried on a 6-0 vote.*

### 6. Business Items

#### a. Recommend Adoption of the Draft Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization (VRWJPO) 2024 Budget and Watershed Management Tax District Levy

Valerie Neppel presented the draft budget, which totals \$2,058,300 for both expenses and revenues. The proposed tax district levy is for \$1 million, with \$965,600 coming from Dakota County property taxes and \$34,400 from Scott County. The draft budget reflects recommendations from VRWJPO staff and

partners and items from the implementation section of the Vermillion River Watershed Management Plan.

Valerie walked through the draft budget, as a review from the previous meeting when the budget was presented as an information item. She noted the “right-sizing” of the budget with Dakota County SWCD programs funded by VRWJPO and the funding set aside for the 2026-35 Vermillion River Watershed Management Plan development, including for a stakeholder engagement consultant.

A detailed summary of the budget can be found in the meeting minutes for the July 12, 2023 WPC meeting.

*Motion by Commissioner Larson to recommend adoption, seconded by Commissioner Blackett. Motion carried on a 6-0 roll call vote.*

**b. Update on 2023 Summer Tour with the Minnesota Board of Water & Soil Resources (BWSR) and Partners in the Vermillion River Watershed**

Paula Liepold presented an overview of the tour stops and context about why the tour is longer this year than in past years. BWSR approached the VRWJPO several months ago about having their annual Board tour in the Vermillion River Watershed, so VRWJPO decided to combine that with the scheduled biannual watershed tour for elected officials. The tour is a collaborative effort between BWSR and several partners within the Vermillion River Watershed. Several WPC members have signed up to attend the tour. At the time of this meeting, 65 people total are signed up for the tour. It will take place on Wednesday, August 23, 2023, starting with registration at 7:30 a.m. at the GrandStay Hotel, Apple Valley, MN.

Projects and practices scheduled to visit:

1. East Lake Habitat Restoration, Lakeville
2. Erickson Park Stormwater Improvements, Apple Valley
3. King Park Stormwater Reuse System, Lakeville
4. Rambling River Park Stream Restoration, Farmington  
Lunch at Glenhaven Events Center
5. Groundwater Protection at Chuck Louis Farm
6. Braun Wetland Bank Easement
7. Prairie Strips and Climate Resilience at Kimber Contours
8. South Branch Vermillion River Nitrate Treatment Wetland

Returning to GrandStay by 5 p.m. VRWJPO is excited to showcase these projects.

Commissioner Larson reminded everyone to wear appropriate outdoor walking shoes.

*Information only.*

**7. Updates**

**a. Chairperson’s Report**

No updates.

## **b. Staff Updates**

### **Curt Coudron**

Curt has been doing a lot of project planning with designs and seeding for cover crops. All Landscaping for Clean Water workshops are wrapped up for the year and had great participation. The Vermillion River Watershed had 20 applications for grants for raingardens, native gardens, and shoreline restorations.

### **Paula Liepold**

Paula shared about the recent interview with WCCO-TV about the Dakota County Wetland Health Evaluation Program (WHEP) and Starry Trek on Saturday, August 19, which will receive coverage by FOX 9 and KARE 11. Starry Trek is a search for starry stonewort. Paula is also responsible for helping secure presenters for the Metro Children's Water Festival, which is projected to host 1,900 fourth graders at the Minnesota State Fairgrounds at the end of September.

### **Valerie Neppi**

Several watersheds have gone into a drought warning phase from the Department of Natural Resources Drought Task Force. Dakota County is working with the cities to encourage water conservation. Valerie encouraged attending the County Fair and visiting the Natural Resources and Parks exhibits

### **Nikki Stewart**

Nikki discussed the two vacancies at the VRWJPO, the Administrator position and Water Resources Engineer. She plans to interview five candidates in-person next Friday (8/18) for Administrator after interviewing 14 candidates on Zoom. She encouraged WPC members to distribute the Water Resources Engineer job post.

## **8. Adjourn**

*Motion by Commissioner Chamberlain, seconded by Commissioner Hamrick. Motion carried on a 6-0 vote.*