



Agenda

Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Board Meeting

October 26, 2023, 1 p.m., in-person and teleconference via Microsoft Teams

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Audience Comments on Items Not on the Agenda
(please limit audience comments to five minutes)
4. Consent Agenda Action
 - a. Approval of Agenda Page 1
 - b. Approval of Minutes from the August 24, 2023 Meeting Page 3
 - c. Acceptance of Treasurer's Reports and Draft Fund Statements Page 9
5. Approval of Expenses Action Page 12
6. Business Items
 - a. Update on the 2023 Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization Capital Improvement Projects Information Page 14
 - b. Update on Stakeholder Engagement Plan for the Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization Watershed Management Plan Update Information Page 39
7. Staff Reports
8. Adjourn Action

Please note, the October 26, 2023, Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Board meeting will take place **in-person** in Conference Room A at the Extension and Conservation Center, 4100 220th Street West, Farmington Minnesota **and via teleconference** on the web-based application, Microsoft Teams.

Microsoft Teams meeting

Join on your computer, mobile app or room device

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 275 521 637 624

Passcode: VNWtZm

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Or call in (audio only)

[+1 651-273-3070](tel:+16512733070), [565156223#](tel:+165156223) United States, St. Paul

Phone Conference ID: 565 156 223#

[Find a local number](#) | [Reset PIN](#)

Other Information

Next Meeting Date: **December 7, 2023**, at 1 p.m.

You will be notified if the meeting is cancelled due to an anticipated lack of quorum.



Meeting Minutes

Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Board (JPB) Meeting

August 24, 2023, 1 p.m., in-person and virtual via Microsoft Teams

Board Members in Attendance

Dakota County Commissioner Mike Slavik
Dakota County Commissioner Mary Hamann-Roland
Scott County Commissioner Tom Wolf

Others in Attendance

Dakota County Commissioner Bill Droste, VRWJPB alternate
Bruce Johnson, Dakota County Soil & Water Conservation District Supervisor
Nikki Stewart, Dakota County, Environmental Resources Department Director
Jennifer Wolf, Assistant Dakota County Attorney, Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization (VRWJPO) Counsel
Travis Thiel, Dakota County, VRWJPO Senior Watershed Specialist
Brita Moore-Kutz, Dakota County, VRWJPO Communications and Outreach Specialist
Brian Watson, Dakota County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) Manager
Valerie Neppel, Dakota County, Groundwater Protection Unit Supervisor
Paula Liepold, Dakota County, Water Resources Educator
Jessica Schaum, City of Apple Valley (virtual)
Melissa Bokman-Ermer, Scott County, VRWJPO Co-Administrator (virtual)

Agenda

1. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 1 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Commissioners Slavik, Hamann-Roland, and Wolf were in attendance.



3. Audience Comments on Items Not on the Agenda

No comments.

4. Approval of Consent Agenda

- a. Approval of Agenda
- b. Approval of Minutes from the July 27, 2023 Meeting
- c. Acceptance of Treasurer's Reports and Draft Fund Statements
- d. Authorization to Approve Drainage and Ravine Maintenance Easement for Ravenna Trail Ravines Stabilization Project

Res. No. VRW 23-24: Motion by Commissioner Hamann-Roland to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Commissioner Wolf. Motion carried on a 3-0 vote.

5. Approval of Expenses

Valerie Neppl presented expenses from July 15-August 14 totaling \$40,478.86.

Res. No. VRW 23-25: Motion by Commissioner Hamann-Roland to approve the expenses, seconded by Commissioner Wolf. Motion carried on a 3-0 vote.

6. A. Public Hearing to Receive Comments on and Adopt the 2024 Vermillion River Watershed Draft Budget and Tax District Levy

Valerie Neppl reviewed the proposed tax levy and budget breakdown. The overall impact of the tax levy on individual homeowners decreased in both Dakota and Scott Counties.

Commissioner Slavik said that at some point he'd like to know how VRWJPO's tax levy compares to other local watersheds.

No comments in the public hearing.

Res. No. VRW 23-26: Motion by Commissioner Wolf to close the public hearing, seconded by Commissioner Hamann-Roland. Motion carried on a 3-0 vote.

Res. No. VRW 23-27: Motion by Commissioner Hamann-Roland to adopt the 2024 Vermillion River Watershed Draft Budget and Tax District Levy, seconded by Commissioner Wolf. Motion carried on a 3-0 vote.



B. Schedule and Public Notice an Initial Planning Meeting to Develop Priorities and Issues for the 2026 Update of the Vermillion River Watershed Management Plan

Valerie presented the potential dates for the initial planning meeting for the 2026-2035 Vermillion River Watershed Management Plan development. This meeting is required by Minnesota Rule 8410. The Board settled on Thursday, October 12, 2023, from 4-6 p.m. as an open house and comment period for the public, with a backup date of Thursday, October 26, 2023.

Brita Moore-Kutz said she'd drafted a public notice for the meeting.

Res. No. VRW 23-28: Motion by Commissioner Hamann-Roland to set the meeting date for October 12, 2023 seconded by Commissioner Wolf. Motion carried on a 3-0 vote.

C. Authorization to Execute a Contract with HKGi for Vermillion River Watershed Management Plan Stakeholder Engagement Services and Amend the 2023 Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization Budget

Travis Thiel shared that VRWJPO had distributed a Request for Proposals (RFP), evaluated seven submitted proposals, and selected HKGi as the consultant for stakeholder engagement. Stakeholder engagement services was not initially identified in the 2023 budget, and staff felt it was prudent to amend the budget to reflect this service. The total cost of the consultant service will be paid out in both 2023 and 2024.

Res. No. VRW 23-29: Motion by Commissioner Wolf to authorize the contract execution and budget amendment, seconded by Commissioner Hamann-Roland. Motion carried on a 3-0 vote.

7. Staff Reports

Nikki Stewart

Nikki was working on hiring for the VRWJPO Administrator and Water Resources Engineer.

She also reached out to County Finance to clarify what Commissioners already see in terms of fund balances.

Paula Liepold

Paula said she was very happy with the collaborative Watershed Tour the previous day. The tour introduced Commissioners and state agency staff to watershed projects in person and applauded the



partnerships that made these projects possible. She had heard from recently retired VRWJPO Administrator Mark Zabel, a Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) Board member, that the Board had “exuberant accolades” for staff in planning the tour. The tour was fully covered financially by BWSR. Next, VRWJPO will send a brief article about each tour stop to its respective local partners.

Jennifer Wolf

Counsel Wolf accepted a new position and is leaving the County. Paul Beaumaster is set to return as VRWJPO Counsel in September.

Brian Watson

The Dakota SWCD is working in partnership with VRWJPO, Dakota County, the City of Hastings, and Forever Green on potentially developing a Kernza growing plot on eighty-two acres owned by the City, in conjunction with a local farmer. It could provide an education and outreach opportunity for the community.

Travis Thiel

Travis submitted three applications to the BWSR this week for competitive Clean Water Fund grants. The first is a stormwater treatment project at Green Ridge Park in Lakeville, benefiting North Creek, for \$475,000. The second is in the city of Farmington, a hydrodynamic separator on 4th and Willow discharging to the Vermillion River for \$115,000. The third is for the alum treatment in Alimagnet Lake, requesting \$317,000. The total request is \$907,000. BWSR has about \$7 million in Clean Water Funds available. Dakota SWCD and the City of Apple Valley have also submitted applications for the funds.

Jessica Schaum reported that the Apple Valley request is for just over \$750,000 for Whitney Pond.

The Commissioners complimented Travis on his presentations during the tour.

Brita Moore-Kutz

Brita spent four days at the County Fair along with several other staff. The Natural Resources Building included many local and state partners of the VRWJPO and the We Are Water MN panels that Dakota County got to keep from their exhibit. She had a lot of positive conversations with fairgoers, including many from Hastings reflecting on their experience with the River and some from the headwaters area. She included a map of the watershed in her exhibit to help people understand the area better.



Commissioner Slavik said he'd heard positive comments about the VRWJPO website and gratitude for the interactive projects map.

Brita added that the website fees will be paid on an annual basis starting in 2024.

Valerie Neppi

Commissioners had previously asked about the investment fund balances in the budget. Valerie included more details intended to answer their questions in the August Treasurer's Report.

The Minnesota Well Owners Organization and Minnesota Groundwater Association are holding a well water test clinic in Elko New Market on September 30. They reached out to VRWJPO and Dakota County staff for event support. Brita will provide education and outreach materials, though she cannot attend in person. The County Groundwater Unit will provide staff to help explain test results.

Melissa Bokman-Ermer

Melissa worked with Scott County staff to provide a QR code to direct people to purchase water testing kits at the Scott County website.

8. Adjourn

Commissioner Slavik asked that staff send mid-month updates in September.

Motion by Commissioner Wolf to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Slavik. Motion carried on a 3-0 vote.

Next Meeting Date: Thursday, September 28, 2023, at 1 p.m. in Conference Room A at the Dakota County Extension and Conservation Center, 4100 220th Street West, Farmington, MN.

Respectfully submitted by

Brita Moore-Kutz

Communications & Outreach Specialist for the Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization



Attest

Commissioner

Secretary/ Treasurer

Date



**2023 Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization
Treasurer's Report**

September 2023 - Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Board Meeting

	<u>Budget Amounts</u>	<u>Expenses to Date</u>	<u>Expenses Pending</u>	<u>Account Balance</u>
A. Administration & Operations (601-5010001-0000000)	\$ 240,500.00	\$ 104,025.19	\$ 10,623.34	\$ 125,851.47
B. Research & Planning (601-5010001-50100130)	\$ 41,600.00	\$ 10,047.97	\$ 9,894.45	\$ 21,657.58
C. Monitoring & Assessment (601-5010001-50100230)	\$ 156,900.00	\$ 70,302.34	\$ 11,726.83	\$ 74,870.83
D. Public Communications & Outreach (601-5010001-50100330)	\$ 167,900.00	\$ 130,696.71	\$ 7,149.30	\$ 30,053.99
E. Irrigation and Irrigation Audit (601-5010001-50100431)	\$ 20,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 20,000.00
F. Regulation (601-5010001-50100530)	\$ 55,900.00	\$ 7,459.33	\$ 497.96	\$ 47,942.71
G. Coordination & Collaboration (601-5010001-50100531)	\$ 50,600.00	\$ 12,278.04	\$ 713.69	\$ 37,608.27
H. Feasibility/Preliminary Studies (601-5010001-50100631)	\$ 220,000.00	\$ 50,131.49	\$ 5,439.86	\$ 164,428.65
I. Capital Improvement Projects (601-5020001-50200130)	\$ 480,920.00	\$ 77,284.44	\$ 7,711.87	\$ 395,923.69
J. CWF BWSR- Watershed Grant (601-5010001-50100848)	\$ 12,000.00	\$ 7,665.88	\$ 627.18	\$ 3,706.94
K. WBIF Grant (BWSR) 2020-2023 North Creek (601-5010001-50100853)	\$ 387,500.00	\$ 163.03	\$ -	\$ 387,336.97
L. WBIF Grant (BWSR) 2020-2023 Farmington Direct (601-5010001-50100854)	\$ 30,030.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 30,030.00
M. WBIF Grant (BWSR) 2020-2023 Hastings Direct (601-5010001-50100855)	\$ 30,030.00	\$ 29,380.18	\$ -	\$ 649.82
N. WBIF Grant (BWSR) 2020-2023 Ravenna Basins (601-5010001-50100856)	\$ -	\$ 3,511.13	\$ -	\$ (3,511.13)
O. Lakeville East Lake Restoration (601-5010001-50100858)	\$ 93,000.00	\$ 39,905.86	\$ -	\$ 53,094.14
P. CWF Comp Grant (BWSR) Foxborough TSS (601-5010001-50100859)	\$ 376,500.00	\$ 1,383.77	\$ 64.88	\$ 375,051.35
Q. CWF Comp Grant (BWSR) Ravenna Trail (601-5010001-50100860)	\$ 545,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 545,000.00
R. 2022-2023 WBIF Grant (BWSR) Middle Creek (601-5010001-50100861)	\$ 363,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 363,000.00
S. 2022-2025 WBIF Grant (BWSR) Alimagnet Alum (601-5010001-50100862)	\$ 45,000.00	\$ 30,217.28	\$ 1,827.50	\$ 12,955.22
T. 2023 CWF Competitive Grant (BWSR) East Lake (601-5010001-50100863)	\$ 337,500.00	\$ 7,521.06	\$ 562.30	\$ 329,416.64
U. Wetland Bank (601-5010001-50100930)	\$ 189,800.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 189,800.00
VRW JPO Revised Budget Expense TOTAL	\$ 3,843,680.00	\$ 581,973.70	\$ 56,839.16	\$ 3,204,867.14

Budget Funding Sources

Wetland Bank	\$189,800.00
CIP Reserve	\$226,800.00
CIP Reserve Grant Match	\$136,660.00
Fund Balance from Underspending in Previous Year	\$271,810.00
Grant Carryover	\$12,000.00
CWF Grant (BWSR) Competitive 2022	\$841,500.00
CWF Grant (BWSR) Competitive 2023	\$300,000.00
CWF Grant WBIF (BWSR) 2020-2023	\$487,180.00
CWF Grant WBIF (BWSR) 2022-2025	\$396,000.00
CPL Grant (DNR) 2022-2025	\$90,000.00
Fee's on Permitting Activities	\$1,000.00
Dakota County Levy	\$964,900.00
Scott County Levy	\$35,100.00
Investment Earnings	\$14,000.00
Total	\$3,966,750.00

**DAKOTA COUNTY
MINNESOTA**

**GOVERNMENTAL FUND BALANCE SHEET AND
GOVERNMENTAL ACTIVITIES - STATEMENT OF NET POSITION
VERMILLION RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT
SEPTEMBER 30, 2023**

Assets

Cash and investments	\$ 2,084,926
Taxes receivable	
Current	-
Prior - net	-
Accounts receivable	-
	<hr/>
Total Assets	<u><u>\$ 2,084,926</u></u>

Liabilities

Current liabilities	
Accounts payable	\$ 10,119
	<hr/>
Total Liabilities	<u><u>\$ 10,119</u></u>

Fund Balance/Net Position

Unrestricted	\$ 2,074,806
	<hr/>
Total Fund Balance/Net Position	<u><u>\$ 2,074,806</u></u>
Total Liabilities and Fund Balance/Net Position	<u><u>\$ 2,084,926</u></u>

**DAKOTA COUNTY
MINNESOTA**

**ENVIRONMENTAL FUND STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES, AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCE
AND GOVERNMENTAL ACTIVITIES - STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
VERMILLION RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT
FOR THE MONTH ENDED SEPTEMBER 30, 2023**

Revenues	
Taxes	\$ 573,647
License and permits	20
Intergovernmental	
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources	38,929
Board of Water & Soil Resources	150,000
Local Government	18,862
Miscellaneous	7,458
	<hr/>
Total Revenues	\$ 788,915
Expenditures/Expenses	
Current	
Operating Expenses	\$ 480,354
Capital Expenses	19,260
	<hr/>
Total Expenditures/Expense	\$ 499,614
Net Change in Fund Balance/ Net Position	\$ 289,301
Fund Balance/Net Position - January 1	1,785,505
	<hr/>
Fund Balance/Net Position - December 31	\$ 2,074,806
	<hr/> <hr/>



Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization

4100 220th St. W., Suite 103, Farmington, MN 55024

Date: October 26, 2023
To: Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Board
From: Staff
Subject: Joint Powers Organization Expenses

**Agenda Item 5
August 2023**

Expenses from the invoices submitted between July 15, 2023 and August 14, 2023 totalled \$40,478.86

The invoices submitted between August 15, 2023 and September 15, 2023 total:

<u>Invoice</u>	<u>Vendor</u>		<u>Amount</u>
	DC Staff Time	\$	24,852.50
IN29940	Scott County	\$	193.85
2121134	Stantec	\$	1,443.25
23-4008	144Design	\$	95.00
23-10410-b	144Design	\$	95.00
23-4007	144Design	\$	95.00
23-104009b	144Design	\$	210.00
617609	Spartan	\$	324.43
617610	Spartan	\$	881.20
960154	ECM Publishing	\$	128.10
23-104014b	144Design	\$	95.00
2023-050	Scott County Soil & Water Conservation District	\$	7,023.50
34663	Moore Engineering	\$	10,062.04
8/18/2023	City of Hastings	\$	28,483.50
23191497.00-4	Barr Engineering	\$	9,827.50
23191497.00-5	Barr Engineering	\$	9,895.00
Total expense as approved on October 26, 2023		\$	93,704.87

Action Requested: Approve all above expenses as presented on October 26, 2023



Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization

4100 220th St. W., Suite 103, Farmington, MN 55024

Date: October 26, 2023
To: Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Board
From: Staff
Subject: Joint Powers Organization Expenses

**Agenda Item 5
 September 2023**

Expenses from the invoices submitted between August 15, 2023 and September 15, 2023 totalled \$93,704.87

The invoices submitted between September 16, 2023 and October 16, 2023 total:

<u>Invoice</u>	<u>Vendor</u>		<u>Amount</u>
	VRW Staff	\$	21,226.46
	CoAttyJun23	\$	1,463.22
	CoAttyJul23	\$	1,040.51
	CoAttyAug23	\$	243.87
IN30015	Scott County	\$	742.14
023-048-1	HKGi	\$	7,235.73
2137852	Stantec	\$	6,776.69
91102117	Dept of Interior	\$	4,340.00
967574	ECM Publishing	\$	146.40
1HKY-V414-VD9D	Amazon: Tally Counter	\$	7.89
23-199005	144Design	\$	95.00
35092	Moore Engineering	\$	4,228.75
23191497.00-6	Barr Engineering	\$	1,827.50
34621	City of Lakeville	\$	7,465.00
Total expense as approved on October 26, 2023		\$	56,839.16

Action Requested: Approve all above expenses as presented on October 26, 2023

6a. Update on the 2023 Capital Improvement Projects

Meeting Date: 10/26/2023
Item Type: Regular-Information
Contact: Travis Thiel
Telephone: 952-891-7019
Prepared by: Travis Thiel
Reviewed by: N/A N/A



PURPOSE/ACTION REQUESTED

- Information only. Provide an update on the progress of capital improvement projects identified in the 2023 Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization (VRWJPO) Budget.

SUMMARY

The 2023 VRWJPO Budget identifies a number of physical projects that will be implemented throughout the watershed. These projects have or are being completed in partnership with local communities, and often using various grant funding sources. Staff will provide a presentation to update the Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Board on the progress of the various projects identified in the VRWJPO Budget.

Supporting Documents:

Attachment A: 2023 CIP Project Update PowerPoint

Previous Board Action(s):

RESOLUTION

6a. Update on the 2023 Capital Improvement Projects

Information only.

2023 Capital Improvement Projects

Travis Thiel

VRWJPO Administrator

CIP Projects in 2023 Budget

- **Cost Share (General)**
 - Rosemount Public Works/Police Campus Infiltration Basins
- **2020-2023 WBIF Grant (BWSR)**
 - North Creek Channel Improvement
- **2022-2025 CPL Grant (DNR)**
 - East Lake Habitat Improvement--\$90,000 grant, \$3,000 match
- **2022 CWF Competitive Grant (BWSR)**
 - Foxborough Park TSS Reduction
 - Ravenna Trail Ravine Stabilization
- **2022-2025 WBIF Grant (BWSR)**
 - Middle Creek at Dodd Channel Improvement
- **2023 CWF Competitive Grant (BWSR)**
 - East Lake Fish Barrier and Rough Fish Removal

Rosemount Public Works/Police Campus Infiltration Basins

- Goals
 - Improve groundwater quality
 - Maintain or improve groundwater quantity
- Outcomes
 - Two infiltration basins constructed-2024
- Est. >\$100,000 total
 - VRWJPO \$25,000

Rosemount Campus Infiltration Basins (Pre-project)



Rosemount Campus Infiltration Basins (Mid-project)



North Creek Channel Improvement

- Goals
 - Reduce sediment load in North Creek
 - Improve in-stream biological populations
- Outcomes
 - Erosion and incision addressed
- Est. \$400,000 total
 - Grant \$337,500; VRWJPO \$50,000

North Creek Channel Improvement (Pre-project)



North Creek Channel Improvement (Post-project)



East Lake Habitat Improvement

- Goals
 - Improve conditions in and around East Lake
- Outcomes
 - Invasives/noxious species removed
 - Seeding and stabilization
- Est. \$102,000 total
 - Grant \$90,000; VRWJPO \$3,000

East Lake Habitat Improvement (Pre-project)



East Lake Habitat Improvement (Mid-project)



Foxborough Park TSS Reduction

- Goals
 - Reduce sediment load in North Creek
 - Improve in-stream biological populations
- Outcomes
 - Stormwater basin constructed
- Est. \$436,500 total
 - Grant \$346,500; VRWJPO \$30,000

Foxborough Park TSS Reduction (Pre-project)



Foxborough Park TSS Reduction (Post-project)



Ravenna Township Ravine Stabilization

- Goals
 - Reduce sediment load in Lower Vermillion River
 - Reduce flooding and sediment deposition on CR54
- Outcomes
 - Ravines stabilized-Fall/Winter 2023
- Est. \$695,000 total
 - Grant \$495,000; VRWJPO \$50,000

Ravenna Township Ravine Stabilization (Pre-project)



Middle Creek at Dodd Channel Improvement

- Goals
 - Reduce sediment load in Middle Creek
 - Improve in-stream biological populations
- Outcomes
 - Erosion and incision addressed
- Est. \$396,000 total
 - Grant \$360,000; VRWJPO \$3,000 in-kind

Middle Creek at Dodd Channel Improvement (Pre-project)



Middle Creek at Dodd Channel Improvement (Mid-project)



East Lake Fish Barrier and Rough Fish Removal

- Goals
 - Reduce lake internal phosphorus load
- Outcomes
 - Barrier installation-Fall 2023
 - Rough fish removal-2024 and 2025
- Est. \$375,000 total
 - Grant \$300,000; VRWJPO \$37,500

East Lake Fish Barrier and Rough Fish Removal (Pre-project)



East Lake Fish Barrier and Rough Fish Removal (Mid-project)



Questions?

Travis Thiel
VRWJPO Administrator
(952) 891-7546

travis.thiel@co.dakota.mn.us

6b. Stakeholder Engagement Plan for 2026-2035 Vermillion River Watershed Plan Development

Meeting Date: 10/26/2023
 Item Type: Regular-Information
 Contact: Brita Moore-Kutz
 Telephone: 952-891-7967
 Prepared by: Brita Moore-Kutz
 Reviewed by: N/A N/A



PURPOSE/ACTION REQUESTED

- Information only.

SUMMARY

To ensure the next generation Vermillion River Watershed Management Plan (Plan) reflects the concerns and priorities of the diverse communities in its jurisdiction and other stakeholders, watershed staff and consulting firm HKGi have prepared a stakeholder engagement plan for the public input portion of the Plan development. It sets forth the objectives for the public engagement process, demographics of the watershed, stakeholders to work with, types of engagement, and questions to be asked of engagement participants.

Stakeholders will have both in-person and virtual opportunities to provide input and comment on the Watershed Plan development directly to staff, as well as use online tools to provide feedback on their own time. A web page at <https://bit.ly/vrw2026> contains an interactive map and a link to a survey to comment. VRWJPO will schedule two in-person Community Conversations and six virtual stakeholder meetings as part of Phase One of the engagement process.

EXPLANATION OF FISCAL/FTE IMPACT

None

Supporting Documents:

Attachment A: VRW Plan Update Stakeholder Engagement Plan

Previous Board Action(s):

- ;
- ;
- ;
- ;
- ;

RESOLUTION

Information only.

Vermillion River Watershed Management Plan Update

Final Public Engagement Plan

Contents

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1. Introduction

The Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization (VRWJPO) will be conducting stakeholder engagement as part of the Vermillion River Watershed Management Plan update. The public engagement process will provide the VRWJPO with timely, relevant, and candid feedback on public concerns and strategies proposed to be included in the Watershed Management Plan.

The Vermillion River Watershed encompasses 335 square miles in Dakota and Scott counties. The current 2016-2025 [Watershed Management Plan](#) and subsequent updates and amendments include a range of actions to protect and improve surface water and groundwater quality in the watershed. The Watershed Management Plan also provides an overview of the watershed's physical and biological conditions and water quality.

The Watershed Planning Commission (WPC), a citizen advisory committee, will be VRWJPO's primary advisory committee. Consulting services will be secured for development and facilitation of the Public Engagement Plan. The consultant will work closely with VRWJPO project team to develop, facilitate, organize, and summarize the public engagement process to inform the revision of the Watershed Management Plan. Public engagement efforts are projected to beginning in 2023 to support completion of the Watershed Management Plan update by the anticipated deadline.

This Public Engagement Plan guides the public engagement by involving all affected stakeholder groups and creating effective and inclusive engagement methods tailored to each group to motivate and involve stakeholders who may not normally be engaged. A successful Public Engagement Plan will produce meaningful and pointed feedback to guide the development of proposed Watershed Management Plan strategies.

2. Background

The VRWJPO was formed through a Joint Powers Agreement between Dakota and Scott counties in September of 2002. The purpose of the VRWJPO is to “exercise leadership in the development of policies, programs, and projects that will promote the accomplishment of the purposes found in Minn. Stat. § [103B.201](#), including the preparation, adoption and implementation of the plan required by Minn. Stat. § [103B.211](#) for the Vermillion River Watershed” and “guide and assist Dakota County and Scott County in acting jointly and individually to take actions that will promote the goals listed in Minn. Stat. § 103B.201 and fulfill their responsibilities under Chapter 103 B.”

The Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Board (VRWJPB) consists of one county commissioner from Scott County and two county commissioners from Dakota County. The VRWJPB is responsible for preparing, adopting and implementing a Watershed Management Plan that meets requirements of Minn. Stat § [103B.231](#). The WPC consists of eight members from Dakota County and one from Scott County. The WPC is responsible for advising the VRWJPB, which includes the review, comment and recommend upon the proposed Watershed Management Plan.

The Watershed Management Plan framework and goals are influenced by Minn. Stat. §[103B](#), and Minn. Rules [8410](#). The ten-year plan update is a comprehensive update of the Watershed Management Plan done not less than five years and not more than ten years after approval of the current plan by the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR). The current Vermillion River Watershed Management Plan was approved in June 2016. The revised Watershed Management Plan is anticipated to be completed in February 2026. The following are Minn. Statute and Rule requirements to be incorporated into the public engagement and plan review process:

- Before development of a plan or ten-year plan amendment, the VRWJPO will send notifications to the plan review agencies, counties, cities, townships, soil and water conservation districts, and to known stakeholders, of plan initiation and request input on local water-related issues and information, water management goals, official controls, and programs. This step was completed by the VRWJPO April 3 to June 5, 2023.
- The VRWJPO will hold an initial planning meeting presided over by the organization's governing body to receive, review, and discuss input. This meeting is scheduled for October 12th, 2023.
- Upon completion, but before final adoption of the Watershed Management Plan by the VRWJPB, the VRWJPO will submit the draft plan for a 60-day review and comment period to all counties, the Metropolitan Council, the state review agencies, the Board of Water and Soil Resources, soil and water conservation districts, towns, and statutory and home rule charter cities having territory within the watershed. The VRWJPO will hold a public hearing no sooner than 14 days after the 60-day review period of the draft plan.
- After the review and comment period and any resulting changes to the document are incorporated and approved by the VRWJPB, the Watershed Management Plan will be submitted to the Metropolitan Council, the state review agencies, and the Board of Water and Soil Resources for final review. The VRWJPO will adopt and implement the plan within 120 days after approval by the Board of Water and Soil Resources.

3. Public Engagement Objectives and Approaches

The primary public engagement objectives are:

1. Collect data to best inform the VRWJPO staff and Board throughout the Watershed Management Plan revision process, including attitudes, behaviors, and priorities related to the watershed.
2. Discuss and receive feedback on any proposed Watershed Management Plan strategies with relevant stakeholder groups.
3. Request feedback, ideas, and opinions from the stakeholder groups to:
 - Identify and assess challenges within the watershed for groundwater and surface water restoration and protection and determine strategies for addressing those challenges.
 - Identify opportunities for and barriers to implement and/or to follow proposed Watershed Management Plan strategies.
 - Understand the level of support for prospective Watershed Management Plan strategies.
4. Provide accurate, relevant, and timely information to help all of those involved understand the Plan revision process and prospective strategies for them to make informed comments and recommendations.

The VRWJPO's public engagement approach is designed to solicit ideas, responses, feedback, and opinions from a varied group of stakeholders. The public engagement process will bring together multiple points of view to inform decisions, give legitimacy to the Watershed Management Plan revision process, identify potential problems and solutions, and articulate and clarify key strategies. The engagement process will connect the VRWJPO with new collaborators and foster relationships with existing partners to encourage change and raise awareness of the Watershed Management Plan revision. The VRWJPO's engagement process will include visibility, transparency of the process, and appreciation for a range of viewpoints, and it will employ multiple communication methods to engage stakeholders.

The stakeholder groups affected by the plan revision are varied, with different and occasionally conflicting drivers and

desired outcomes. Therefore, the VRWJPO with support of the consultant will use a broad range of engagement approaches, including:

- Creating an inclusive engagement process to encourage participation that reflects the demographics of the watershed and its various stakeholder groups
- Establishing, renewing, and maintaining relationships with stakeholders
- Providing a variety of opportunities using multiple engagement techniques for all stakeholders to share diverse ideas
- Informing, listening, inviting, and responding to feedback from stakeholders
- Incorporating feedback into the revision process or addressing it in other ways
- Providing opportunities for ongoing communication with stakeholders
- Updating stakeholders throughout the revision process
- Recognizing and thanking stakeholders for the contributions during the revision process

Supportive Work Efforts: The Vermillion River Watershed Management Plan update will be written by VRWJPO staff and the Dakota County Office of Planning, with assistance from the Environmental Resources Department. HKGi will advise and facilitate the public engagement process and provide summary reports to the VRWJPO of the outcomes of the various stakeholder engagement sessions.

4. Major Groups to Engage

A holistic public engagement process requires a diverse group represented by various populations that are involved from start to finish. A process that involves diverse stakeholders assists in achieving a project that is reflective of the VRWJPO's diverse interests and ever-changing population. However, in order to effectively reach and involve various stakeholders, different types of specific engagement methods need to be used as their effectiveness can vary from one group to another. Major groups to engage include the following:

1. **Residents:** Over 167,000 people live in the Vermillion River Watershed, based on the 2010 U.S. Census
 - Single-family residents
 - Multi-family residents
 - Underrepresented residents, including non-native English speakers, low-income households, older adults, racial/ethnic minorities, and people with disabilities
2. **Business and Industry:**
 - Agricultural and farming type businesses, industry, and operations
 - Commercial entities
 - Industrial businesses
 - Construction businesses
 - Business owners
 - Landlords and commercial property owners

- Chambers and trade associations
- Real estate developers and homeowner associations
- High volume water users
- Golf course operators
- Other landscape irrigators
- Underrepresented businesses, including those owned or managed by Black, Indigenous and People of Color

3. Nonprofits, advocacy and special interest groups (list is not all inclusive):

- Friends of the Mississippi River
- Nature Conservancy
- Izaak Walton League
- Freshwater
- MN Environmental Partnership
- Hastings Environmental Protectors
- Trout Unlimited
- Ducks Unlimited
- Pheasants Forever
- Conservation Minnesota
- Sierra Club
- Minnesota Farmers Union
- Minnesota Farm Bureau
- Hmong American Farmers Association
- Lakeville Friends of the Environment
- Apple Valley Eco-Advocates
- MN Center for Environmental Advocacy
- Prairie Island Indian Community

4. Technical Advisory Group (TAG): technical stakeholder representatives from cities, townships, counties, state agencies, environmental consulting firms, universities, and other interested partners

5. Cities and Townships: 20 Dakota County and Scott County cities (11) and townships (9) that lie entirely or partly within the boundaries of the Vermillion River Watershed

Cities	Townships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apple Valley • Lakeville • Burnsville • Rosemount • Farmington • Hastings • Elko New Market • Vermillion (city) • Coates • Empire • Hampton (city) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Market Township • Nininger Township • Marshan Township • Eureka Township • Douglas Township • Ravenna Township • Castle Rock Township • Hampton Township • Vermillion Township

6. State and Regional Agencies:

- Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR)

- Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA)
- Minnesota Department of Health (MDH)
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
- Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT)
- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA)
- Metropolitan Council

7. VRWJPO staff will have responsibility to directly engage the following organizations:

- Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Board (VRWJPB): will be responsible for approving the Watershed Plan
- Watershed Planning Commission (WPC): will be responsible for providing committee advice and recommendation of issues, goals, and strategies to the VRWJPB
- Dakota County government leaders and County Departments
- Scott County government leaders and County Departments
- Dakota and Scott County Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD)

Type of Engagement	Target Audience						
	Technical Advisory Group (TAG)	Watershed residents	Cities / Townships	VRWJPO Boards, County, SWCD	Under-represented Groups	Stakeholders (businesses, industry, non-profits)	Partner agencies
WPC and VRWJPO Meetings				✓			
City /TownshipBoard Meetings		✓	✓				
Electronic media (Project Website, Questionnaire, Social Pinpoint)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Community Conversations		✓		✓	✓		
Stakeholder Listening Sessions/focus groups	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓
Public events/pop-up meetings		✓			✓		

5. Engagement Methods

Electronic and Paper Questionnaires: Electronic and paper surveys for residents and stakeholders to provide opinions and ideas about the watershed, providing a framework for strategies. One questionnaire will be posted per round electronically, and hard copy surveys will be provided at local libraries in Farmington, Lakeville, Hastings, and Elko New Market to be collected and results tallied and compiled along with the digital surveys.

Map-based Online Engagement (Social Pinpoint): During Phase 1, an interactive online map will be embedded into VRWJPO’s website in order to collect comments about issues and opportunities tied to geographic locations throughout the watershed and within the subwatersheds. An “idea wall” will also be posted on the VRWJPO

website to provide a place for people to offer up thoughts related to the plan.

In-person Community Conversations: The public will be invited to attend 2 community conversations per phase to share thoughts on the Watershed Management Plan revision, and to provide comments on proposed issues and strategies. Multiple events are anticipated to cover the geographic area of the watershed.

Virtual Stakeholder Meetings: Six virtual meetings will be offered each phase to inform and fully engage stakeholders (businesses, NGOs, non-profits, agency partners, the TAG, underrepresented groups, and City/Township representatives) in the revision process, by inviting participation of all contributors while the draft strategies are being formed. A variety of meeting times will be offered, and meeting content/questions can be customized based on attendees, once representatives select a meeting to attend.

Intercepts at Existing Events/Meetings: Two opportunities to engage stakeholders at existing VRWJPO or County events will be scheduled per phase.

Two rounds of stakeholder engagement are anticipated to (1) receive input on perceptions of issues and thoughts on potential opportunities and solutions; and (2) receive feedback on draft plan goals and strategies.

6. Tools to Promote Participation in Stakeholder Engagement

Effectively promoting and advertising the engagement opportunities will be crucial to their success. Tools for promoting the plan engagement opportunities may include email marketing, social media, direct mail, counties' print newsletters, newspaper notices, direct outreach to community leaders, community events, etc. VRWJPO staff will help develop and distribute materials to explain the Watershed Management Plan revision process and potential strategies.

Type	Outlet	Contact/Distribution	Timing/Number
In Person	Community Conversations	Advertised on website and via press releases (2 weeks before events)	Phases 1 & 2 (2 per phase)
	Pop-up Intercepts	Advertised on website	Phases 1 & 2 (2 per phase)
	WPC and VRWJPO Meetings	Travis to attend (HKGi to provide engagement summaries as needed for updates)	Throughout project
	City and Township Board Meetings	Travis to split attendance with Matt Belanger (who attends two township meetings/month) and provide updates	Goal to interface with each at least once throughout the process (supplemented by email notification of engagement and invites to the stakeholder meetings).
Electronic	Stakeholder Meetings	6 separate meeting options emailed to stakeholders each phase to select one meeting to attend.	Phases 1 & 2 (6 per phase)
	VRWJPO Website	Brita to update with materials/notices (staff or HKGi provided)	As needed

Type	Outlet	Contact/Distribution	Timing/Number
	Social Pinpoint & SurveyMonkey	Posted on website and advertised on project materials. Brita to notify project partners and encourage them to distribute opportunities to their network.	Phase 1: October 12 th -December 2023
	Konveio	HKGi to provide link to draft document for review by stakeholder groups & the public	Phase 2 (summer-fall 2024)
Social Media	VRWJPO Social Media- Facebook, X, Instagram, etc.	Brita	As needed, in advance of open houses/events/on-line input
Print	Hardcopy Survey	Local libraries (Hastings, Farmington, Lakeville, Elko New Market). Have librarians collect and coordinate periodic pickup.	October-December and for Phase 2 (June-August)
	Mailed paper surveys	Business reply postage. Identify distribution to farmers/large landowners based on acreage	As needed (if rural resident response is lacking)
	Dakota county rural newsletter	Brita to prepare post each year	Once per phase

Type	Outlet	Contact/Distribution	Timing/Number
	Poster displays at parks: Spring Lake Park Reserve, Whitetail Woods	Katie Pata for distribution in DC parks	Once per community engagement phase
	Poster display at select churches, township halls, farm bureau and/or farmers union as needed (if participation is lacking)	TBD (reach out to Watershed Planning Commissioner who is part of Farmers' Union)	As needed
	Poster display at Libraries:	Local libraries (Hastings, Farmington, Lakeville, Elko New Market)	October-December and for Phase 2 (June-August)
	Press release	Brita to coordinate	2 weeks before Community Conversations

7. Key Questions to Ask

Asking the right question is exceptionally important in ensuring that the engagement of stakeholders leads to information that is valuable for the planning process. A mix of open-ended and quantitative questions will be asked of stakeholders through the various engagement methods described above, striving to answer these broad, overarching questions:

- Discuss mission of the VRWJPO and the plan update
- What goals and priorities exist around groundwater and surface water issues in the Vermillion River Watershed?
- What are perceived major issues in the Vermillion River Watershed, and what is the level of concern? What perceptions and misperceptions should be addressed?
- What are challenges and suggested changes to existing official controls and Standards?
- What are the barriers and opportunities to protect groundwater and surface quality and quantity (policy, legal, technical, operations, etc.)? What tradeoffs are willing to be made?
- What strategies could address challenges and support work toward goals? What are potential strategies

to overcome identified barriers?

- What financial, regulatory, and educational approaches should be considered to reach goals?
- What are the opportunities for collaboration and coordination?
- How much should be invested in watershed restoration and protection in the next 10 years?

These questions will be asked of all stakeholder groups in some form through both in-person and online opportunities. Where specialized knowledge or skillsets need to be called on (such as surface water management, economic development, natural resource preservation, etc.), additional questions will be asked.

8. Action Plan

The below are key project phases and milestones. Approval and adoption of the revised Watershed Management Plan should be completed by February 2026.

1. **Start-Up and Project Organization:** March – August 2023

- Receive authorization from VRWJPO to initiate Plan update process (Completed March 23, 2023)
- Provide notification of Plan update to review agencies, counties, cities, townships, soil and water conservation districts, and known stakeholders (Completed April 4 – June 5, 2023)
- Develop Draft Public Engagement Plan
- Post Request for Proposal (RFP) for public engagement consultant; and select preferred consultant to support public engagement

2. **Research on Issues and Stakeholder Needs:** September 2023– February 2024

- Meet with consultant and finalize the Public Engagement Plan and the implementation structure/schedule; develop engagement materials
- Hold Watershed Management Plan Update initial planning meeting per Minn. Rules 8410 (October 12, 2023)
- Conduct Round 1 Public Engagement to receive input on perceptions of problems and thoughts on potential opportunities and solutions (October 2023-February 2024 timeframe)
- Analyze and summarize technical research findings and stakeholder engagement sessions to inform development of the Watershed Management Plan goals and strategies

3. **Draft Goals and Strategies for the Plan:** February – December 2024

- Review technical research and stakeholder engagement findings with the TAG, WPC, and VRWJPO
- Develop draft goals and strategies based on stakeholder, TAG, WPC, and VRWJPO feedback
- Conduct Round 2 Public Engagement to receive input on draft goals and strategies (start July 2024 timeframe)

4. **Draft Plan Review and Adoption:** May 2025 – February 2026

- Present Plan to WPC and VRWJPB, seek recommendation on plan release for public review and comment (60-days)
- Conduct 60-day review with notification to all stakeholders (May – July 2025)
- Compile and summarize comments; identify needed changes; complete public hearing
- Present Plan to WPC and VRWJPB, seek recommendation for release for Metropolitan Council, the state review agencies, and the Board of Water and Soil Resources for final review and approval.
- Complete 90-day state review period (August – November 2025)
- Achieve Board of Soil and Water Resources approval and VRWJPO Final Plan adoption (February 2026)



Minutes

Vermillion River Watershed Planning Commission (WPC) Meeting

September 13, 2023 – 4:30 p.m.

In-person and Microsoft Teams Videoconference

WPC Members in Attendance

Jim Kotz Brad Blackett
Josh Borton Andy Riesgraf
Steve Hamrick Sandra Weber
Kevin Chamberlain

VRWJPO Staff in Attendance

Travis Thiel, Watershed Administrator
Brita Moore-Kutz, Communications & Outreach Specialist

Others in Attendance

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

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Jim Kotz at 4:30 p.m.

2. Roll Call

All members present except Commissioner Larson.

3. Audience Comments on Items Not on the Agenda

No comments.

4. Approval of Agenda

*Motion by Commissioner Weber to approve the agenda, seconded by Commissioner Chamberlain.
Motion carried on a 7-0 vote.*

5. Approval of Minutes from the August 9, 2023 Meeting

Motion by Commissioner Borton to approve the August 9, 2023 minutes, seconded by Commissioner Blackett. Commissioner Weber abstained due to missing this meeting. Motion carried on a 6-0 vote.

6. Business Items

a. Update on 2023 Capital Improvement Projects

Travis Thiel presented information on the capital improvement projects the watershed is working on or has completed in 2023.

Information only.

7. Updates

a. Chairperson's Report

No updates.

b. Staff Updates

Brita Moore-Kutz

Brita is mostly focusing on public engagement for the watershed plan development process. She reminded members of the October 12, 2023 initial planning meeting and to RSVP to her if attending. The meeting is open to the public, and the watershed hopes to capture feedback from a wide variety of stakeholders.

Brita also pointed out that the end of the year means a few members' terms are expiring, which can be renewed if the member still has eligibility. She hopes to garner more applications for the new terms each year.

Travis Thiel

With his promotion to Administrator, Travis's next task is to hire new staff. He is continuing to look for a Water Resources Engineer and has some potential candidates.

Travis pointed out that most of Dakota County is under a "Severe Drought" classification and the Vermillion River gage on Blaine Ave. in Empire was showing a flow rate of 9 cubic feet per second in early September, which is very low.

Valerie Neppi

There is a well clinic in Elko New Market on September 30, 2023, which will be staffed by members of the Dakota County Groundwater Protection unit, for private well owners. Water can be tested for nitrates, chlorides, and arsenic.

Curt Coudron

Curt said water monitoring and macroinvertebrate monitoring have been challenging with the drought, but they are adjusting as they can. He said the water has been even lower than it was last summer.

The SWCD has been working on projects with landowners, such as cover crops, grassed waterways, and sediment basins. The deadline is October 15, 2023 to seed the cover crops.

Nikki Stewart

Nikki thanked Travis for accepting the Administrator position and Valerie for her administrative support.

8. Adjourn

Motion by Commissioner Borton, seconded by Commissioner Riesgraf. Motion carried on a 7-0 vote.

DRAFT