



Staying on Track for Success

February 2017 Snapshots



At the request of the legislature and the Local Government Roundtable, in 2014 the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) began developing and piloting the One Watershed, One Plan (1W1P) program. Five pilot areas were selected to engage in the work, supported by local contributions and BWSR Clean Water Fund grants. The work of the pilots was also supported by consultants who were used to help develop the plans. Two of the five pilots, the Root River and Yellow Medicine River Watersheds, have final plans that were approved by the BWSR Board in December of 2016. Of the remaining three, the Red Lake River and Lake Superior North plans will be approved in early 2017 and the North Fork Crow River in mid-July, 2017.

As part of our learning and adaptive management processes, BWSR has actively sought the input of our local partners on the good, the bad and the ugly of the 1W1P Pilot Process. The agency also hosted a feedback and listening session with the consulting engineering community to provide their insights on the solicitation, contracting and execution phases of development of 1W1P. The consultants have been providing valuable expertise on the integration of complex watershed modeling with the value driven process of developing watershed plans that are going to deliver projects that are Prioritized, Targeted and Measurable. The consultants have also provided the capacity needed to staff and drive the planning process so our local partners can stay on track with their other work.



One Watershed, One Plan pilots provided valuable feedback for process improvement.

The first five plans are a significant leap forward in the evolution of watershed planning and management in Minnesota. As with any pilot process, there are lessons learned and adjustments to be made to smooth the process for the next round of plan development. We took feedback from the five pilot programs and invested in a number of new trainings for BWSR staff and our LGU partners to enhance our collective skillsets. In addition to covering the life-cycle of Project Management and introducing various project management tools, we have developed and provided training on how to identify when we need to hire a consultant, selecting the right consultant, contracting and then successfully executing work.

Two of the specific challenges encountered were budget and schedule overruns. There are a number of reasons a project can go off course: a change in scope, a change in schedule, budget fluctuations are just a few. Statistically speaking, the number one reason is the human element: a staffing shift, or change in project managers, can have a dramatic impact on the trajectory of a project.

Thanks to the training we've developed, our local government partners are better equipped to spot problems early and keep their projects on track for success. As in much of what we do as an agency, it is about people, training and education. As we continue to enhance these areas, we will see improvements in both the delivery and quality of projects that enhance and protect our natural resources.