

Rainy River - Rainy Lake CWMP

Formal Review: Comment / Response Table



#	Commenter	Section	Page	Comment	Material	Editorial	Note	Change needed	Revision
1	Austin Wallin	4	15	<i>On Ground Truthing and Survey</i> : Description doesn't fit category		x		Y	Added 'identify areas in need of' before description
2	Austin Wallin	4	23	<i>Screen Private Wells for Contamination</i> : Pace test: Total Bacteria, nitrate, E. Coli, Lead, Arsenic, Manganese		x		Y	Revised to: Testing clinics for private wells for potential contaminants (e.g. nitrate, bacteria, arsenic, manganese, chloride, lead)
3	Austin Wallin	5	9	Maybe just something I am not familiar with, but what do the 2 numbers in each box represent		x		Y	Added explanation to caption; Carried over the row heading to the table
4	Austin Wallin	5	16	typo, duplicate stream		x		Y	Removed duplicate "stream" as recommended
5	Austin Wallin	6	4	add comma after Sportsman clubs		x		Y	Added comma as recommended
6	Austin Wallin	6	5	state funds such as conservation delivery grounds, and other grants.		x		Y	Changed to "grants" as recommended
7	Danae Schafer	General		Big plan with big goals; good explanation of how to try and reach those goals.			x	N	Comment noted, with thanks
8	Danae Schafer	1	6	Page 13 under connectivity enhancement there is a numeric 2 in the short term sentence that should be removed. This is a run-on, consider changing to 'Complete and maintain culvert inventory. Based on results coordinate with local, state, and federal partners to address connectivity barriers.'		x		Y	Spelled out "two" as recommended
9	Danae Schafer	2	2	Page 17 last paragraph: Much of the ditching was not successful enough to establish agriculture, due the low slopes and dense peatlands. Add 'to' after due.		x		Y	Added "to" as recommended
10	Danae Schafer	5	4	Page 70 this photo was used earlier on page 9		x		Y	Photo replaced
11	Danae Schafer	5	12	Page 78 this photo was used earlier on page 24		x		Y	Photo replaced
12	DNR	2	4	Map: The area defined as wetlands is predominantly wetland forest and the areas of forest cover are upland forests. This could cause confusion to someone who doesn't understand the landscape.		x		N	Categories assigned by NLCD based on land cover
13	DNR	2	10	There is reference to Figure 2.7 where 16 key habitats were identified for land planning. However, Figure 2.7 on the next page refers to lakes of biological significance and there appears to be no figure or table referencing the 16 key wildlife habitats. It may be beneficial to have this in the plan.		x		Y	Removed reference to 16 key habitats since it is not on the map or a focus of the plan.
14	DNR	3	5	Influence of Big Fork, Little Fork, and Black Rivers. The DNR Ecological and Water Resources Division has completed Evaluation of Hydrologic Change (EHC) Technical Summaries for the Big Fork, Little Fork and Black Rivers that can assist resource professionals in understanding hydrologic change and help select management strategies. The Big Fork and Little Fork Watersheds are outside of the planning areas for the Rainy River/Rainy Lake watersheds, however since they impact the Rainy River, these summaries may also assist with planning and strategy efforts. EHC reports can be found here in the Minnesota Digital Water Research Library: https://wrl.mnpals.net/node/4173			x	N	EHC reports noted for implementation purposes, with thanks. Section 3-Priority Issues also recognizes the input from the rivers in the middle of the planning area.
15	DNR	4	18	Table Wild Rice Protection DNR is pleased to see wild rice protection as an action for the plan. Rat Root Lake is also an area of interest to reduce hybrid cattail as this aggressive species can displace wild rice.	x			Y	Revised priority area to be 'Lakes and streams with wild rice or the potential to support wild rice'

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16	DNR	4	19	Connectivity Enhancement Undersized culverts can also result in barriers to hydrology in wetland areas and non-public waters. Including these as part of the inventory can also be beneficial to restoration of natural hydrology. In some locations this can often be noticed by changes in vegetation types related to the hydrology influence on each side of a roadway.		x		Y	Added wetlands and non-public waters to "Connectivity Enhancement" goal description
17	DNR	4	20	Table Beaver Management Beaver Management is an important action but should emphasize maintenance on pond levelers that are installed. Maintenance is commonly a neglected item which results in pond-leveler failure.		x		Y	Added "and maintenance" to action description in table
18	DNR	4	27	Table Expand and Increase Habitat Open grassland and short brushland communities are vitally important to sharp-tailed grouse. These large brushland communities also provide abundant browse for moose when managed properly. In reviewing the information on forest management and figure 4.11 showing focus areas, most of the current work that DNR is doing for sharp-tailed grouse and moose management is on the eastern side of the planning area near Rat Root Lake. Specifically, the focus area for this mechanical management is lowland brush areas along the shoreline and around spruce stands where they transition into brush. Prescribed fire as mentioned is one of the forest management techniques which would benefit both species by improving the quantity and quality of habitat available in the watershed. DNR Area Wildlife does not see any large threat to these habitat areas being planted since it appears the focus areas for planting do not overlap the brushlands. Both species however utilize the entire watershed and we should consider management actions that are appropriate for the existing native plant communities and the species that depend on them as we implement management in the watershed. By including brushland management as one of the forest management techniques and continuing to work cooperatively with other partners like Minnesota Sharp-tailed Grouse Society (MSGs), we can continue to provide habitat that is beneficial to both sharp-tailed grouse and moose. Grass/forb-based pollinator habitat is also important to sharp-tailed grouse and would be a great conservation action on marginal agricultural lands. It's good to see emerald ash borer (EAB) and eastern larch beetle (ELB) mentioned in action items of this plan as well.	x			Y	Revise action item description for "Expand and Increase Habitat" to add at the end "; Support efforts to manage brushland for grouse and moose." Add DNR as Lead in Roles.
19	MDH	N/A	N/A	The entire WS planning process has been very transparent with ample opportunity to provide comment at many places in the timeline. The concerns I expressed, and data I provided, for addressing source (drinking) water protection were well received and thoughtfully incorporated. Staff have been very accessible throughout the process and have been prompt in their replies to any questions or suggestions I posed.			x	N	Comment noted, with thanks for your participation in this planning process.
20	MPCA	N/A	N/A	We recognize and appreciate that prior comments made during plan development are largely reflected in this Plan and have no further requested revisions as part of the official 60-Day review and comment period.			x	N	Comment noted, with thanks for your participation in this planning process.
21	BWSR	5	Figure 5.2	Please review Figure 5.2 and update. It appears the Environmental Justice Area criteria have changed since the development of the map. The new criteria is 35% of people under 200% poverty income.	x			Y	Map updated to reflect newest dataset from the MPCA
22	BWSR	6	4	Please verify that the "Clean Water Joint Powers Board" is an actual potential partner for collaboration on page 4 of Section 6.		x		Y	Error removed from text, with thanks



Date: Tuesday, December 17, 2024, 12:30 pm

Location: Koochiching County Board Room, 715 4th Street, International Falls, MN 56649

Subject: Public Hearing on the draft Rainy River-Rainy Lake Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan.

Present:

- Pete Kalar – Policy Committee Chair, Rainy River-Rainy Lake 1W1P Partnership
- Destry Hell – Policy Committee Member, Rainy River-Rainy Lake 1W1P Partnership
- Jennifer Lahmayer – Policy Committee Member, Rainy River-Rainy Lake 1W1P Partnership
- Eldon Voigt – Policy Committee Member, Rainy River-Rainy Lake 1W1P Partnership
- Pam Tomevi – Steering Committee Member, Rainy River-Rainy Lake 1W1P Partnership
- Matthew Gouin – Steering Committee Member, Rainy River-Rainy Lake 1W1P Partnership
- Rachel Olm – Consultant for the Rainy River-Rainy Lake 1W1P
- Jeff Hrubes – Board of Water and Soil Resources
- Chad Severts – Board of Water and Soil Resources
- Public attendees:
 - Ricky Roche – Koochiching County Commissioner
 - Adam McIntyre – Koochiching County Commissioner
 - Adam Coe – Koochiching County Administration Director
 - Danae Schafer – Koochiching County Assistant Land Commissioner

Opening Remarks:

- Chair Kalar opened the public hearing by welcoming attendees and explained the purpose of the meeting was to hear public comment on the draft Rainy River-Rainy Lake Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan. Copies of the summary of public and agency comments were distributed to attendees.
- Tomevi provided introductions of planning partners present to those in attendance and turned to Consultant Rachel Olm for the official presentation.

Presentation and Discussion:

- Olm introduced herself and gave a PowerPoint presentation on the planning process, including an explanation of the One Watershed One Plan (1W1P)

process, community involvement, Advisory Committee meetings, resource topics, and highlights of the draft plan goals and objectives.

Public Comment:

- No verbal or written public comment was submitted on the draft plan.

Adjournment:

- The public hearing was adjourned at 1:05 pm

Decision:

The Rainy River-Rainy Lake 1W1P Policy Committee met immediately following the public hearing at 1:05 pm.

Motion by Voigt, seconded by Lahmayer to approve the agenda with corrections; Voting yes: Kalar, Hell, Voigt, Lahmayer. Motion passed.

Motion by Lahmayer, seconded by Hell to approve the Rainy River-Rainy Lake Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan and authorize the plan be submitted to the Board of Water and Soil Resources for final approval; Voting yes: Kalar, Hell, Voigt, Lahmayer. Motion passed.

Adjournment:

- The Policy Committee meeting was adjourned at 1:20 pm

Submitted:

 1-14-2025
Pete Kalar, Policy Committee Chair, Rainy River-Rainy Lake 1W1P Partnership