



Appendix L.

Formal Review Comments

South Fork Crow River Watershed CWMP

Formal Review Comments

Comment #	Commenter	Section	Page	Comment	Change Needed (Y/N)	Material	Editorial	Note	Resolution
1	BWSR	Measurable Goals	39	In the last paragraph on page 39, it says, "The short-term goal focuses on implementation of conservation practices (e.g., WASCObS, grade stabilization structures, filter strips) to reduce peak flows and volume in receiving waters and reduce erosion and sedimentation issues associated with public drainage systems." The issues your goals need to address are Peak Flows and Erosion/Sedimentation. The number of projects completed will not indicate progress toward addressing the issues (Peak flow and Erosion/Sedimentation). While we've had much discussion about simplicity for the sake of this goal, this issue, Drainage Water Management, was the number one issue identified at the public kickoff event (Figure 3.2, page 25). As this was the number one issue identified, we feel that measurable goals that can clearly show a planned pace of progress towards addressing the issues are necessary beyond what is specified in this draft. We recommend the goals include a reduction in TSS in tons/year and water storage goal. The Stacking Multiple Benefits Column adds some confusion to reviewers. For example, under the Drainage goal, Erosion and Sedimentation list s 165 tons/year TSS reduced. Is this the Erosion and Sedimentation Goal for the watershed as a whole or what you plan to accomplish via the Drainage projects? While useful information, the way it's presented adds confusion.	Y	X			Anticipated benefits from those 250 drainage practices is included in the "Stacking Benefits" section. Stacking Benefits section revised to indicate it is 36% of the overall goal for Erosion and Sedimentation / Nutrients. This solution will also apply to each goal.
2	BWSR	Targeted Implementation Schedule	69	Several of the measurable goals are not adequately reflected in the tables. For example, in the Upper South Fork Planning Region Action Table, the currently identified metric for the Drainage Goal (from the measurable Goals section) is the number of projects. While we have issue with this measurable goal as stated in item 3 above, there is not a corresponding line in the Implementation Table. So, assuming its part of the agricultural practices and non-structural practices, there is a ten-year output reflected in both items as acres treated. From what is provided, we have no way to determine the intended pace of progress towards achieving measurable goals.	Y		X		Added load reduction benefits of practices implemented to output for structural / nonstructural practices
3	BWSR	Targeted Implementation Schedule	69, 71, 73, 75, 76, 77	We have the same concern for the water storage goals, and erosion and sedimentation goals and for the other sub-watershed action tables. Short term measurable goal metrics should correspond to these 10-year outputs.	Y	X			Outputs added for water storage benefits of conservation practices and Capital Improvements. Water Storage goal language revised accordingly.
4	BWSR	Targeted Implementation Schedule	77	The last row in the table on page 77 has no 10-year output. This should not be blank.	Y	X			Output revised: one partner meeting per year, and 1 enrollment per year
5	BWSR	Targeted Implementation Schedule	78	Is Technical assistance reflected in the cost of implementing the plan on page 78? We assume its part of the "Support" identified on page 78 in Table 5.7, but it should be more clearly specified.	N		X		Technical assistance is already the last action of each planning region action table.
6	BWSR	Plan Implementation		Per Plan Content Requirements There should be a paragraph on Drainage. There is a small paragraph under Capital Improvements Projects but should be given its own heading and expanded on, especially considering it is a Tier 1 Priority for this plan.	Y	X			Section on drainage added with language "County boards and the Buffalo Creek Watershed District serve as the drainage authorities for public drainage systems in the South Fork Crow River Watershed. "
7	BWSR	Land and Water Resource Inventory		Should include paragraphs on Stormwater, Drainage systems and control structures.	Y	X			Sections added to LWRN
8	BWSR	Plan Administration and Coordination	93	Page 93 there is still placeholder language for the formal agreement decision that needs to be finalized.	Y	X			Placeholder language struck as it is not necessary to include information about what the implementation group will be referred to
9	BWSR	Plan Administration and Coordination		The revisions to this portion of the plan since the internal review draft clearly identifies amendment procedures. Thank you for working with us on this and we recommend that all Policy Committee members are aware of how the Water Management Districts differ from the rest of the plan.	N			X	Comment noted with thanks
10	BWSR	Plan Administration and Coordination	104	On page 104, the statement that reads, "Policy Committee and will proceed according to the procedure described in State statute." Should be changed to, "Policy Committee and will proceed according to the procedure described in State statute BWSR Policy."	Y		X		Edited as requested to BWSR policy
11	BWSR	Appendices	Appendix F	Appendix F still looks like it's in draft form with strikeout and underlined portions. This should be fixed.	Y	X			Document for Appendix updated as available

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12	MDH	Land and Water Resource Narrative	16	First paragraph of Groundwater and Drinking Water Resources. MDH's comment in the first draft was to have the plan reflect the fact there are 5,859 private wells with known locations throughout the watershed, or something to that effect. The current draft states that the watershed is estimated to have over 5,800 private wells that are used for drinking water consumption. MDH appreciates this edit.	N			X	Comment noted with thanks
13	MDH	Land and Water Resource Narrative	17	final sentence of the first paragraph. MDH had suggested that the Partnership include "downstream surface water communities" as a focus Resource where applicable in the Action Tables, as many of the activities proposed in the Action Tables include activities that will have a positive influence on downstream surface drinking water quality. The statement included on page 17 satisfactorily addresses MDH's comment.	N			X	Comment noted with thanks
14	MDH	Priority Issues	30	Table 3.6 lists arsenic as a potential groundwater contaminant, and Page 16, final sentence of the penultimate paragraph notes that MDH has identified elevated levels of arsenic as an additional issue with private wells. MDH had previously commented that the plan does not address/emphasize the relatively high incidence rates of arsenic (33.2% of samples exceed the Safe Drinking Water Act standard of 10 µg/L and nearly 50% exceed 5 µg/L). Additionally, the lack of activities in the plan that focus on arsenic outreach, education, and possible testing clinics in the Action Tables may be a missed opportunity, and MDH encouraged the inclusion of possible ideas such as website postings and/or pamphlet mailings; arsenic clinics; outreach to realtors to ensure testing for real estate transactions; partnerships with Local Public Health, others. MDH noticed the current draft does not include this suggestion.	N	X			As groundwater is a Tier 3 issue, action will not be added to the implementation schedule, but the local partnership supports MDH's efforts in this matter.
15	MDH	Targeted Implementation Schedule	69	Table 5.3 Upper South Fork Planning Region Action Table. MDH had commented that the Action Description titled "Provide cost-share for well sealing" had listed in the Focus Resources column: Drinking Water Source Management Areas, or DWSMAs. MDH had requested that the Focus Resource be changed from DWSMAs to Watershed-wide. The change was made and MDH appreciates this edit.	N			X	Comment noted with thanks
16	MPCA	Land and Water Resource Narrative	13	Figure 2.2: There are two stream layers being labeled – difficult to read. Example: Buffalo Creek labels are overlapping.	Y		X		Stream labels revised
17	MPCA	Land and Water Resource Narrative	14	Incorrect calculation; should be 72.5% instead of 71%	Y		X		Text amended to 73%
18	MPCA	Land and Water Resource Narrative	15	Table 2.1: If definitions are of classes, may want to adjust descriptions unless you were integrating from elsewhere: a. The 2B, 2Bg, and 2Bm, do not include 'also protected for drinking water' b. 2B: Cool and warm water aquatic life and habitat c. 2Bg: Aquatic life and recreation – General Cool and Warm Water Aquatic Life Habitat d. 2Bm: Aquatic life and recreation – Modified Cool and Warm Water Aquatic Life Habitat e. Clip to support definitions: (Spec is over in HEI Notes)	Y	X			Revised based on feedback from MPCA
19	MPCA	Measurable Goals	40 & 55	Could these be more concrete goals? a. With only recording the number of projects, will you get the desired reductions and thereby meet target goals to be successful? A project could be small and not get significant changes.	N	X			Projects will be selected based on scoring and ranking. Projects will rank higher if in a priority area and if load reduction benefits are substantial.
20	MPCA	Appendix		I don't believe the reference section was added to the report.	Y			X	References added to Appendix
21	DNR			We are pleased that implementation projects offering multiple stacked benefits are emphasized and prioritized throughout the plan. These projects provide a higher benefit/cost ratio	N			X	Comment noted with thanks
22	DNR			It is excellent to see specific Capital Improvement Projects directly addressing the loss of water storage and altered hydrology detailed within the plan	N			X	Comment noted with thanks

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23	DNR	Goals	39	Agricultural drainage system repair, maintenance, and management were identified as one of the highest priorities in the plan due to increased erosion and sediment delivery to receiving waters. The plan's storage and altered hydrology sections consider options to offset the impact of increased water delivery to downstream areas and identify goals to address altered hydrology by storing water on the landscape. While the DNR is hopeful the plan will influence future public and private drainage projects, the options considered in the plan for offsetting drainage impacts may not be enough to produce measurable results. Consider seeking more firm and specific commitments from the drainage authorities to <u>develop projects with numeric goals, moderate drainage coefficients, and landscape-suitable water storage alternatives</u> . The DNR suggests <u>identifying where Watershed Based Implementation Funding (WBIF) can be utilized to implement projects that are not required to offset impacts from drainage projects, and that will result in positive gains in water storage</u> on the landscape	N	X			103E requires storage to be considered. WBIF will be used to fund practices with water quality and storage benefits. Action has already been included for early coordination on drainage projects (see action #W5)
24	DNR	Goals		In our priority concerns letter, we commented that the watershed plan must influence public and private drainage. We noted that the cumulative effect of increased drainage is straining public infrastructure, contributing to stream channel erosion, and increasing the risk of flooding for homes and farmland. Per statute requirements, the DNR's role is to review and comment on drainage improvement projects' adherence to MN Statutes, including MN Statutes §103E.015, which involves environmental considerations and identifying alternative measures in locally adopted water management plans. It states, "This investigation shall include early coordination with applicable soil and water conservation district [SWCD] and county and watershed district water planning authorities about potential external funding sources and technical assistance for these purposes and alternative measures. The drainage authority may request additional information about potential funding or technical assistance for these purposes and alternative measures from the executive director of the Board of Water and Soil Resources [BWSR]". The DNR recognizes the importance of early coordination with the drainage authorities, drainage engineers, and local conservation agencies. DNR also understands the complexity of achieving adequate drainage and mitigating the negative environmental consequences of increased drainage system capacity.	N			X	Importance of early coordination recognized by local Partnership, with thanks.
25	DNR	Issues	33	Page 33 "Storage, Resiliency and Drainage": Restoring and enhancing drainage function and installing conservation practices for drainage systems can lower sediment transport and peak flow within localized systems; however, implementation practices should consider prioritizing mitigation of potential increased peak flows to downstream receiving waters	N			X	Comment noted with thanks. Additional goal for "Loss of Water Storage and Altered Hydrology" also aimed at mitigating potential increased peak flows.
26	DNR	Goals	39,42	Descriptions within "Drainage Partnerships and Drainage Management" on page 39 and "Loss of Water Storage and Altered Hydrology" on page 42 emphasize increasing water storage and reconnecting to the floodplain, restoring wetlands, and building infiltration basins, but the associated action tables and goals include strategies that only indirectly address these goals. While several capital improvement projects have strategies to address the loss of water storage/altered hydrology, we suggest including action items in the regional action tables to promote water storage and watershed flow reductions. Consideration of smaller-scale water storage practices in addition to the large capital improvement projects to show actionable goals addressing the loss of water storage and altered hydrology may also be a beneficial strategy.	N	X			Action #1-3 in each Planning Region Action Table is inclusive of the practices that will be the focus of the local Partnership in achieving these goals, including multipurpose drainage management practices, wetland restorations, soil health practices, stormwater ponds, etc.

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27	DNR	Goals	43	The DNR highly encourages prioritizing water storage projects that leverage natural features and processes and demonstrate multiple benefits not only to water quantity and quality but also to aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems, fish and wildlife species, and public and private infrastructure/property. Temporary storage via channels with well-connected floodplains and restored natural wetlands for long-term retention are preferred methods to achieve those objectives, especially in the upper reaches of the watershed. These practices aid in flood damage reduction to help curb the effects of flooding and should be considered a higher priority. The plan mentions water storage, flood damage reduction, and reduced flooding as auxiliary benefits of another practice and not explicitly emphasized as an individual actionable item goals. The plan addresses flooding locally within the context of public drainage ditch functionality but not regionally or watershed-wide. Flooding and reconnection to the floodplain are classified as a Tier 3 issue (Table 3.6 Tier 3 Issues, page 30) to be addressed by others or other funding sources. Consider including strategies in the plan to emphasize the importance of flood damage reduction and restoring floodplain connectivity	Y	X			Added sentence to 'what can be done' water storage section emphasizing the importance of restoring connections to the floodplain
28	DNR			Significant alterations of stream channels have occurred, especially in headwater areas. These altered watercourses generally exhibit limited floodplain connectivity, excessive bank erosion, and poor fish and wildlife habitat. Combating this degradation requires adopting resilient and progressive land management practices. This plan builds on a framework to address the principles detailed in the South Fork Crow Watershed Characterization Report published by the DNR in 2016. Natural channel restoration, dam removal, and enhanced buffers are considered Tier 3 priorities in the plan. The DNR encourages prioritizing these and other practices related to natural channel processes and restoration	N			X	Local planning staff will support our partners in channel restoration, dam removal, and enhanced buffer efforts as time and funding allows, but WBIF and the focus of this plan will be on addressing Tier 1 and 2 priority issues.
29	DNR	Goals	43	Stream connectivity benefits the health of a watershed, aquatic organisms, and floodplain access. Stream connectivity concerns are a Tier 3 issue in the plan with other agencies managing and funding these practices. The DNR suggests more emphasis in the plan on increasing stream connectivity. As implementation work proceeds and conservation practices are installed throughout the watershed, stream connectivity can be considered and incorporated into many of these practices	Y	X			Added text saying stream connectivity should be a consideration of practices in the 'what can be done' section for altered hydrology
30	DNR	Issues	30	The DNR recommends the plan consider the importance of perched culvert replacement or restoration and culvert sizing to enhance stream connectivity. Healthy streams with longitudinal connectivity can transport the water and sediments of their watershed over time in a sustainable balance. Perched or improperly sized culverts require long-term maintenance and are at risk of failure during flood periods. Improving lateral connectivity (floodplain access) should also be prioritized in this watershed, and the DNR may be able to assist with project selection and design implementation	N	X			Culverts are a Tier 3 issue, because only a number of issues could be priorities for realistic plan implementation. Local planning staff will support our partners with improving connectivity projects as time and funding allows, but implementation of plan actions addressing Tier 1 and 2 priority issues are the priority.
31	DNR	Implementation	60	The plan addresses habitat restoration and preservation and protection of natural features, native species, and landscapes by preserving what remains and adding 825 acres of permanently protected land within ten years (Short-Term Goal, page 60). The DNR applauds this approach and suggests a strong emphasis on preserving and protecting riparian areas in particular.	Y	X			Added text emphasizing the importance of protecting riparian land
32	DNR	Implementation		In this heavily altered and impaired watershed, the DNR applauds the 1W1P Steering Committee for prioritizing funding to address "nearly" and "barely" impaired waters. However, this challenge is daunting, with over 70% of lakes in the watershed impaired	N			X	Comment noted with thanks
33	DNR	Goals?	60?	The DNR recommends consideration of in-basin strategies like water level management/temporary drawdown in shallow lakes and some wetlands. DNR staff have partnered with LGU staff, NGOs, and local landowners in many areas to complete such projects, which temporarily lower water levels to promote emergent vegetation growth, improve water quality, and enhance wetland wildlife habitat. We are available to help prioritize and implement these types of projects	N	X			Comment noted for implementation purposes. Lake Internal Loading and In-Lake Management is a Tier 3 issue. Local planning staff will support our partners with these efforts as time and funding allows, but implementation of plan actions addressing Tier 1 and 2 priority issues are the priority.
34	DNR			It is excellent to see the vast extent of agricultural and urban BMP implementation and proposed goals incorporated in the plan	N			X	Comment noted with thanks

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35	DNR	Goals	61	Invasive species are classified as a Tier 3 issue in the plan. We suggest treating invasive species as issues and impacts within watershed strategies and goals – especially strategies to prevent, contain, and/or control the spread of both aquatic and terrestrial invasive species. In addition, please consider leveraging local efforts with state programs with the goal of simultaneously improving water quality and reducing the spread of invasive species	Y	X			The wildlife habitat goal will be focused on protecting native species and controlling invasives. Text adding this consideration added to the wildlife goal.
36	DNR	Issues		Groundwater/drinking water protections are included in the plan as a Tier 3 issue; please consider making them a higher priority, given the importance of groundwater sustainability and future impacts in this watershed. Surface water infiltration is essential in increasing aquifer recharge, especially in areas dominated by shallow glacial sediment aquifers like the SFC watershed. The installation of drainage tile and impervious surfaces, particularly within low-lying or depressional areas, should be limited to help promote infiltration and aquifer recharge. Additional benefits of more infiltration can include less surface water runoff and less flooding. The DNR can assist with strategy development to encourage groundwater sustainability, including helping to identify groundwater recharge areas.	N				All watershed issues are important, but only a few could be Tier 1 or Tier 2 issues for realistic plan implementation. Increasing priority of drinking water protection will be considered in future plan amendments.
37	Renville SWCD	Appendix		The Renville SWCD would like an appendix added to denote the potential conservation practices that will be implemented to address the goals and priorities outlined in the South Fork Crow River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan.	Y	X			Appendix of conservation practices added
38	Kandiyohi SW	Issues, Programs	22, 85	We understand that Table 3.6 Tier 3 Issues of the plan includes Aquatic Invasive Species: "The priority tier definitions are important for communicating why some issues were not deemed a focus of this plan. For example, aquatic invasive species was one of the highest-ranking issues in the public kick-off meeting but is a Tier 3 issue for this plan. This is because aquatic invasive species are handled by partners instead of the South Fork Crow River Partnership." Page 27. However, in 2018, Big Kandiyohi Lake association contracted Wenck to complete a sediment analysis to understand total phosphorus concentrations in Big Kandiyohi Lake as well as a Carp assessment. Big Kandiyohi needs water control structure with a carp barrier to alleviate some of the carp issues within the basin. Can this be added to the Table 6.3? And in the section of identifying issues on page 20, under 'existing local information,' could you also include the assessment was completed in 2018 describing the recommendations: Technical Memo Big Kandiyohi Lake Sediment Analysis.	Y	X			Water control structure added to CIP table. Added Tech Memo to existing local information on pg. 22
39	Carver WMO	Acronyms	91	Pg. 91 – under Wetland Conservation Act it identifies that the "WMO is the LGU for Carver County". Either add WMO to the list of acronyms or change to CCWMO and add CCWMO to list of acronyms.	Y		X		Text changed to CCWMO, and CCWMO added to acronym list
40	Carver WMO	Executive Summary	1	Pg.1 - BWSR has approved a Water Management Plan for the CCWMO which is the governing plan in most of the Carver County portion of the SFCR. BWSR and this plan should clarify what "plan area" means in this document as it creates duplicate plan areas and funding confusion. A brief discussion of metro planning area requirements from state statute and existing CCWMO plan would be useful as well.	Y	X			Explanation of planning area along HUC 8 boundary, and overlap with metro area planning area requirements added
41	Carver WMO	Programs	90	Pg. 90 - Carver County is a delegated feedlot county	Y		X		Added Carver to the list
42	Carver WMO	Programs	91	Pg. 91 – Carver County has a Comprehensive Plan which was adopted in 2020, which controls land use in the incorporated portions of Carver County within the SFCR. Each of the cities within Carver County also have their own comprehensive plans, which can be found on their websites.	Y		X		Added Carver Co Comprehensive Plan to the table

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43	Carver WMO	Implementation		<p>If possible, it would be helpful for some of the education and outreach items to be more specific. For example, the action step "Conduct an annual meeting with SWCDs, BCWD, and drainage inspectors to gain a deeper understanding of drainage system operation to conduct proactive maintenance rather than reactive" (pg. 75) specifically outlines what is to be achieved, when, with who, and why it is needed. Here are a couple actions that it would be helpful if they could be more defined:</p> <p>1) "Continue and expand surface water monitoring efforts to understand water quality, trends, and impacts of conservation action" (pg. 75) - Expand on how this will be done. Are new monitoring sites going to be added? New monitoring parameters? Is this action step perhaps to identify where and how to expand monitoring efforts in order to increase this understanding?</p> <p>2) "Continue and expand watershed education and outreach programming in each jurisdictional area." (pg. 75) – How will education and outreach programming be expanded? Through offering more programs? Attending public events?</p>	Y	X			Added reference to Implementation Programs section

South Fork Crow River One Watershed, One Plan Public Hearing: November 27th, 2023 6 P.M.
Public Comments and Response

1. Doug Rathke

- a. He is concerned about being notified; wants to know why farmers are not being notified directly via physical letter.

Response: Comment noted. The notification process appropriately followed state statute and is uniform to all other One Watershed, One Plan public hearings taking place statewide.

2. Kevin Buss

- a. He stated Mcleod County created the problem on their own; is concerned about larger tile than what the ditches can handle. He does not want to be told how to operate his land and is not happy with non-profit organizations (i.e. Pheasants Forever).

Response: Comment noted. The Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan is a document that offers methods to improve water quality through a voluntary approach, this is a non-regulatory document and will not control how land is operated and/or sold.

3. Dave Jutz – Elsworth TWP, Meeker County

- a. He stated that Elsworth has the greatest number of lakes in Meeker County and expressed interest in doing projects with the lakes. Concerned about private and public water courses that are not regulated by county controls. Issues include pipes that are set too high or too low, sediment filled, etc. He is looking for funds or ways to find funds to take care of said water courses without suing the landowners.

Response: Comment noted. Dealing with drainage and public water courses can be a tasking process that usually involves agencies such as the Department of Natural Resources as well as the Army Corps of Engineers. We hope that the plan can aid in the reduction of erosion issues on properties that are contributing to the sedimentation problems expressed. This will need to happen voluntarily as this plan cannot and will not force actions. The Drainage Partnership goal will hopefully expand education to those interested as to who (or what agency or entity) is responsible for drainage issues throughout the watershed.

4. Tom Dahl – Acoma TWP

- a. He reiterated what Dave Jutz spoke on and spoke about issues with dikes and the Crow River. Commented on heavy costs on rip rap to protect their ditches.

Response: Comment noted. The planning partnership hopes that the efforts revolving around reducing peak flows stated in the plan can help eliminate the heavy flows coming from upstream and reduce the erosion occurring as a result.

5. Jim Steinbach

- a. He claimed that BWSR was not on the notice. He showed contents of the plan, stating government agencies are unconstitutional. He showed maps from the plan and is concerned that the high priority regions are on the west end. He is concerned about the number of projects being proposed in the plan. He is concerned about the buffer law and drainage ditches. Went over his 3 minutes of allotted time.

Response: Comment noted. The plan utilized a computer model (HSPF SAM) to determine areas for conservation projects that would provide the greatest benefits from investment of

South Fork Crow River One Watershed, One Plan Public Hearing: November 27th, 2023 6 P.M.
Public Comments and Response

funds. This is largely how the high priority, medium priority, and low priority areas were determined. The number of projects stated in the plan are an estimated number of projects that can be implemented with the anticipated amount of dollars received via Watershed Based Implementation Funds. These sites are largely unidentified and are hypothetical at this time.

6. Doug Benson

- a. He is confused about the water plan, is it about help or control? He brought up previous conversations regarding drainage system projects. His brother feels that people who vote for this plan are traitors of government.

Response: Comment noted. Water plans have been in place since the 1980s and are used by local governments to steer efforts to make change toward water quality. This plan is to look at the watershed as a whole and not just the boundaries of each entity within the South Fork Crow River Watershed. It is not about control, but rather to establish an accurate means to direct efforts and funds to improve the water resources within the region.

7. Earl Schealler – Cosmos, MN

- a. He is concerned about the budget and how much money will be spent. He claims it will be spent on meetings and not using the backhoe. He wants to see ditches and waterways cleaned out. He feels he can't farm/make hay along the river due to how it has been managed over the last 30 years.

Response: Comment noted: The planning partnership intends to use a vast majority of the funds for the implementation of Best Management Practices, both structural and non-structural, that will aid in water quality improvements.

8. Reed Seifelt

- a. He asked about generational farmers in the crowd and asked how many folks in the crowd know how to farm.

Response: Comment noted. Irrelevant to plan content.

9. Rick Willey

- a. He referenced history, the Constitution of the United States, and stated we the people quotes regarding the 4th branch of government.

Response: Comment Noted. Irrelevant to plan content.

10. Warren Klammer

- a. He asked about appointments to the BWSR board, concerned that the carrot will be held out to the farmer and they will be expected to chase it. He was a member of the High Island Creek Watershed District, has not seen anything from BWSR that was good.

Response: Comment noted. The funds will be available to those who wish to utilize them, the plan will not force anyone to use the Watershed Based Implementation Funds.