



One Watershed, One Plan

Guidance for committees and getting ready to plan

October 2016



Purpose: The purpose of this document is to provide guidance for working with One Watershed, One Plan committees and steps in getting ready to plan.

The [Operating Procedures](#) for One Watershed, One Plan require two committees (see below) and suggest a workgroup. This document provides further guidance about coordinating these committees. This guidance was developed based on the experiences of the One Watershed, One Plan pilot areas and reflects best practices.

One significant learning from the pilot areas is the importance of communication and preparation. Some overarching principles and processes apply to work with One Watershed, One Plan groups:

- A schedule with meeting dates and milestones
- Meeting agendas and materials in advance, with sufficient time for attendees to prepare
- Clear goal(s) for each meeting, clear action item(s) in the agenda
- Clear, concise meeting notes including well-defined follow-up actions and well-organized meeting records and materials
- Chairs appointed for the Planning Work Group and for the Advisory Committee (can be rotating)
- A shared understanding of a process for reaching a decision and/or shared expectations for reaching consensus

Planning Work Group

The planning work group consists primarily of local government staff. This group, or further subsets of it, are generally responsible for logistical organization of the planning process and associated meetings. The purpose of this group (rather than a single water planner or project manager) may also be to distill feedback from the Advisory and Policy Committees and provide specific direction to the plan writer.

In the pre-planning process, this group will likely need to meet three to four times to develop the grant work plan, memorandum of agreement, processes for selecting consultants, work with a BWSR-hired consultant on partnership development capacity building, and any other actions associated with getting ready to plan. BWSR staff will work with the Planning Work Group to set the agendas.

The plan development process starts after the grant agreement has been executed. The frequency of meetings for the planning work group during this process depends on the planning approach used (e.g. the work plan with the consultant and how fully the planning work group is integrated into the Advisory Committee).

Advisory Committee

The purpose of an advisory committee is to **make recommendations** to the Policy Committee on the plan. The bulk of input in the development of the plan will come from this group. Similar to the current county water planning process, the Advisory Committee is the original forum for vetting of ideas and providing feedback on the plan to the plan writer.

Depending on size and scope, more than one advisory committee (or a subcommittee structure) may be necessary. The Advisory Committee should not start meeting until after the pre-planning phase is complete and a planning consultant has been selected. Regularly scheduled meetings (approximately monthly) maintain the momentum of the project, keeping members engaged in the planning process. Advisory Committee members should anticipate eight to ten meetings throughout plan development, with the potential for more total meetings depending on structure (for example if subcommittees are used).

One of the challenges in the pilot watersheds is the potential size of the Advisory Committee and whether enough meaningful stakeholder input can be achieved in a committee that could have twenty or more members. Some of the solutions included holding separate citizen and technical advisory committees, and engaging existing local government committees outside of the Advisory Committee, such as a county water plan task force. This latter solution requires additional commitment from lead staff from each local government unit to engage their local committees at appropriate times.

Policy Committee

The Policy Committee consists of one Board member from each local water planning authority (County, SWCD, and Watershed District) participating in the Memorandum of Agreement. The purpose of this group is to review recommendations of the Advisory Committee and **make final decisions** about the content of the plan and its submittal. Members are also responsible for representing their respective local government in the development of the plan and to report back to their respective boards about the progress and direction of the plan.

Policy Committee members should anticipate two meetings in the pre-planning process, and five to seven additional meetings of the policy committee throughout plan development. Policy Committee members can be invited to Advisory Committee meetings and should be encouraged to do so, as long as members recognize they are attending to listen and not participate in development of recommendations.

More Good Ideas

The following are additional good ideas identified by the pilot areas for working with any committee.

- Provide a **three-ring binder** with background materials and for storing meeting information for all participants.
- Hold **weekly conference calls or web meetings with project team** (generally lead staff and project consultants) to report on progress and keep on task.
- Consider using **web-based collaboration tools** that allow for document sharing with project team and Advisory Committee (e.g. Google Docs, Dropbox, SharePoint)
- Have **respectful and open communication** and be thoughtful of input provided by others.
- It is the responsibility of all the partners to **keep track of how project is progressing** relative to the budget and making changes when necessary.
- It is the responsibility of the project managers/coordinators (consultant and/or lead) to be **very organized and makes sure everyone is comfortable** with the direction project is moving in. Disorganization (e.g. poor meeting preparation, not meeting deadlines, not being responsive, not keeping track of budget) of project coordinators is a red flag for both the grant work plan and the consultant contract.
- **Good facilitation skills** are critical to keeping Advisory Committee meetings focused and achieving the goals established for the meeting. BWSR will provide training and skill-building for planning work group members in facilitation and other best practices for effective partnerships.
- Don't be afraid to **speak up** if there are questions or concerns. The BWSR Board Conservationist is there to support the planning work group and help work through issues that arise during the process.

Planning Steps

The required steps for developing a comprehensive watershed management plan through the One Watershed, One Plan process are outlined in the One Watershed, One Plan [Operating Procedures](#). The following provides additional guidance and references for meeting these requirements.

Pre-Planning

1. Process Requests for Qualifications for plan development consultants
2. Establish and Maintain Committees, Teams, and Workgroups
 - 2.1. The **Planning Work Group** is established first in the planning process. The **Policy Committee** should be established soon after the Planning Work Group is established. The **Advisory Committee** should be established once a planning consultant has been hired. The figure at the end of this document outlines a potential meeting schedule for the first 4-6 months of committees meetings.
 - 2.2. A routing list for the state review agencies can be found on the BWSR website: www.bwsr.state.mn.us/planning/1W1P/index.html.
 - 2.3. **Aggregate** and presentation of data. **Consider the purpose** of the aggregated data while pulling it together:
 - i. For use with Committees to better understand watershed. Consider presenting in map format; consider also methodology of getting feedback on data (see prioritization below). Suggested maps:
 1. Map(s) of pollutant loading from HSPF model
 2. Map(s) of high valued resources (named creeks, recreational lakes, critical habitat, etc.)
 3. Map of impaired waters
 4. Map of land use
 5. Maps of floodplains, drainage, public waters inventory, known flooding areas
 - ii. For use at kick-off meeting to inform attendees of watershed (maps refined? Other method or means of presenting data?).
 - iii. For use in plan development, incorporating feedback from notifications and kick off meetings.
 - 2.4 Hold Public Information/Kickoff Meeting

Meetings. Anticipate 3-4 meetings to get there:

- 1-2 with planning workgroup to make decisions on purpose, presentation, and use of data.
- 1 kickoff meeting
- 1 with advisory committee to review/discuss data (after notifications and kickoff meeting)

Planning

3. Write Plan
 - 3.1. **Continue to Aggregate Watershed Information**
 - 3.2. **Watershed-wide prioritization** through analysis of existing priorities in current local and state plans, stressors identified in WRAPS, and issue areas identified in the Plan Content Requirements for One Watershed, One Plan. Purpose is for stakeholders to view and consider the watershed planning area as a whole (without political boundaries).

Exercises (process) for this task:

Use of GIS/maps: Zonation? Other methods?

Use of facilitation tools: Affinity Mapping as possible tool/method to organize existing priorities in current plans, stressors identified in WRAPS, issue areas identified in the plan content document, and any other identified gaps. Organizes issues into categories; gains group consensus.

Meetings. Anticipate 3 meetings to get there:

- 1 joint meeting with **policy and advisory committee** (and/or staff subset of advisory committee) where facilitated methods or exercise are used to come to an initial consensus on watershed priorities.
- 1 meeting with **advisory committee** to refine the priorities/categories
 - Discuss watershed-wide vs. subwatershed-specific priorities
 - Consider ‘splitting’ the watershed into logical management areas
- 1 meeting of policy committee to review and accept the refined priorities and management areas if applicable (and to introduce the concepts for measurable goals).

- 3.3. **Set initial measurable goals** based on the accepted priorities. Initial use of PTM Tools possible at this point.

Meetings. Anticipate 3-4 meetings to get there.

- 2-3 advisory committee meetings to discuss and refine possible goals.
- 1 policy committee meeting to review and accept initial goals (and to introduce concepts for the implementation plan). Anticipated that a few of these goals may change through discussion of implementation plan.

- 3.4. **Develop Targeted and Measureable Implementation Plan.** Determine scope of what needs to be accomplished to achieve the goals; refine the goals based on scope of implementation. Identify where gaps might be in implementation. **Tools** for PTM will be put to use here – target and prioritize potential actions, determine scale of action needed to meet goals, reassess goals as necessary.

Meetings. Number of meetings depends on structure, e.g. if management areas are used.

- 2-4 meetings with advisory committee as a whole; exact number depends on if using management areas and/or how work of developing implementation plan is divided up.
- Multiple meetings with subsets of advisory committee, if applicable. Subsets may be based on management areas and/or issue areas (such as a smaller group focusing on a watershed-wide monitoring plan)
- 2 meetings with the policy committee (this is the most significant part of the plan and the most important to have buy-in – critical to have these meetings be informative and productive).

- 3.5. **Draft of Plan.** Pull all the pieces together

Meetings. Anticipate 3-4 meetings to get there.

- 1 policy committee meeting to provide final okay to submit plan (should be only 1 if process to this point has been thorough and conflicts dealt with as they arise).
- 1 Public Hearing – If policy committee was identified in the MOA as the “host” for the public hearing; otherwise, each individual LGU will hold public hearing.
- 1 meeting at BWSR to present plan (may want representation from advisory and policy committees)

