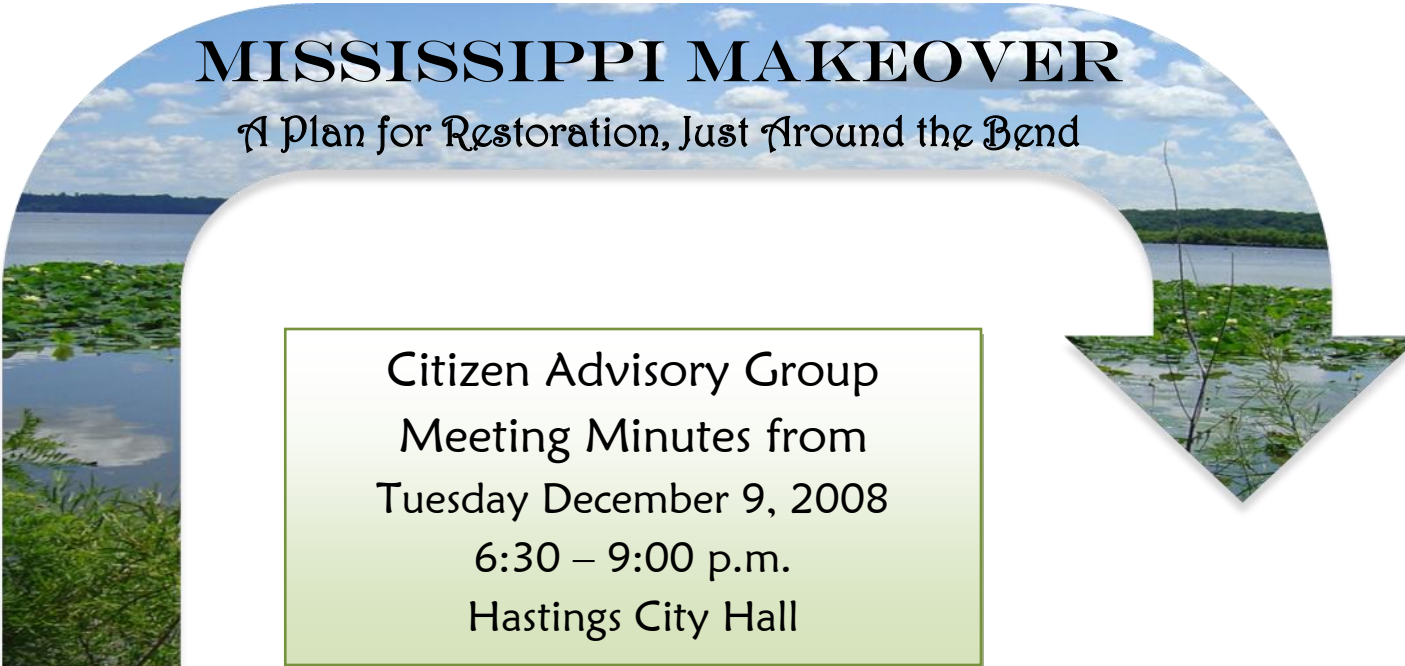


# MISSISSIPPI MAKEOVER

A Plan for Restoration, Just Around the Bend



Citizen Advisory Group  
Meeting Minutes from  
Tuesday December 9, 2008  
6:30 – 9:00 p.m.  
Hastings City Hall

A. Welcome and Introductions: Laura Jester, Dakota County SWCD, welcomed the group; introductions were made around the table. Participants included:

1. Commissioner Joseph Harris, Dakota County Board of Commissioners
2. Councilmember Mike Slavik, City of Hastings
3. Mayor Katie Himanga, City of Lake City
4. Brad Geise, Xcel Energy
5. Brent Kuhl, Xcel Energy
6. Don Kern, Flint Hills Resources
7. Trevor Russell, Friends of the Mississippi River
8. Kevin Smith, Hastings Environmental Protectors; City of Hastings
9. Phil Vieth, Hastings Environmental Protectors
10. Dave Hokanson, Upper Mississippi River Basin Alliance
11. Tracy Fredin, Hamline University – Center for Global Environmental Education
12. Suzanne Blue, Waucota Resident
13. Missi Blue, Waucota Resident
14. Mike McKay, Waucota Resident
15. Joe Beattie, Vermillion River Watershed Planning Commission
16. Mark Swanson, Waucota Resident
17. Laura Jester, Dakota County Soil and Water Conservation District
18. Norm Senjem, MN Pollution Control Agency
19. Jennifer Ender, MN Pollution Control Agency
20. Tim Schlagenhaft, MN Department of Natural Resources
21. Scot Johnson, MN Department of Natural Resources
22. Janell Miersch, MN Department of Natural Resources
23. Jeff Janvrin, WI Department of Natural Resources
24. Steve Johnson, National Park Service
25. Jeff Luehrs, Dakota County Water Resources Department
26. Jon Hendrickson, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

B. Lake Pepin TMDL Update: Norm Senjem, MN Pollution Control Agency, gave a brief presentation on the status and findings of the Lake Pepin TMDL. (See power point.)

C. Mississippi Makeover Project Overview: Laura Jester gave a short presentation on the Mississippi Makeover Project including project description, goals, and timeline. She also included information on objectives of the evening: to discuss possible indicators of successful restoration; to make recommendations on one or more indicators after consensus is reached; not to worry about sources or causes of pollution (that's the goal of the TMDL); and not to worry about how restoration may be accomplished (that's a topic for future discussion). (See power point.)

D. Understanding Water Quality – How it affects river resources and river users: Tim Schlagenhaft, MN Department of Natural Resources, gave a presentation describing how the river functions and how river components are interconnected. He included examples of possible indicators including sedimentation rates, numbers of waterfowl, percentage of aquatic plant cover, and others. (See power point.)

E. Facilitated Discussion on possible indicators of successful restoration: Before heading for a short break, group members were asked to write down 2 or 3 indicators that were most important to them. After the break, each member was asked to share what he/she had written with the rest of the group. (This exercise did not involve agency staff members present. Agencies were asked to simply observe the following discussion and only become involved if directly asked a technical question.) Please see the pages 3 and 4 for notes on this discussion.

F. Recommending indicators for future discussion and refinement: Group decided they needed more information before being able to make informed decisions on appropriate and detailed indicators. Group would like to know pre-settlement history and conditions in these areas including history of lock and dams, water clarity, native plant and animal communities, etc. There were also questions about what appropriate reference reaches would be either within or outside of this area.

In wrapping up, the group agreed that the major categories of indicators included:

- Water clarity
- Vegetation
- Sedimentation
- Fish
- Invertebrates

It was decided that technical experts on these topics would present current and historical information to the group at the next meeting and further discussion and decisions on appropriate indicators would follow.

G. Adjourn: The group adjourned at approximately 9:05 p.m. The next meeting anticipated to be in late February 2009.

Indicators Discussion (from E above):

List of Most Important Indicators as Shared Around the Room ----

- More waterfowl
- More native plants along shore
- Improve water clarity
- Invertebrates
- More good fish and less rough fish
- Fish catch
- Fisherman satisfaction
- Series of indicators
- Able to see canoe paddle - improve water clarity
- More diverse invertebrates and vertebrates
- More diverse plants
- Reduced sediment
- Hunting
- Habitat restoration/islands
- Improve water clarity
- Quantity of vegetation
- Lake longevity
- Swimming
- Emergent and submerged vegetation
- Increase water clarity
- Bird diversity
- Lake Pepin sedimentation
- Water quality standards being met
- Park & recreation infrastructure investment including access points
- Sustainable restoration of vegetation
- Public appreciation of Mississippi River
- Knowledge of Mississippi River
- Public engagement
- Improve water clarity
- Decrease sedimentation
- Economics
- Human components
- Quiet/natural recreational opportunities
- Navigable surface area of lake
- Drinking water
- Less smell, less slime
- Increase in natural banks opposed to rip rap
- Birds, fish and mammals
- Mussels- economic/harvesting
- Decrease flooding and increase base flow for boating
- Sedimentation
- Vegetation
- Less non-natural shoreland erosion
- Lake Pepin sedimentation
- Biodiversity all around

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Discussion turned toward specific indicators in specific areas

Water clarity in Spring Lake: There were many questions raised about the current and historic conditions in the lake.

- What is the average water clarity in the summer?
- What is the water clarity in other seasons?
- Where in the lake should we be concerned with clarity; where are we looking?
- What are the historical conditions of Spring Lake?
- Is Spring Lake filling in?
- Should we be looking for places along the Mississippi River where sedimentation can and should occur in order to lessen impacts downstream?
- What level of clarity is needed to provide the maximum benefit to habitats for bugs, fish and plants?

- Clarity should be restored to whatever's needed for native habitats to be restored.
- The older Spring Lake Master Plan by Dakota County Parks included the goal of restoring the lake to its original conditions. The new Master Plan abandoned that goal but includes a new boat launch, camping, and a wildlife management area on the western end.
- Water clarity should be such that it allows boaters to see the many stumps that lie just below the surface.
- Water clarity should be a minimum of 2 feet in order to establish submerged aquatic vegetation
- Many in the group thought that 2 -3 feet of water clarity sounded reasonable, but much more data was needed to make an informed decision.

Water clarity in Lower Vermillion River: Again, many questions were generated.

- What are natural background clarity levels?
- What levels are appropriate to aim for?
- What is the history of the sloughs?
- More information is needed on the hydrologic connections between the Lower Vermillion and the Mississippi River.
- There is much sedimentation below the Etter Bridge (or water levels have decreased here)
- There is much sedimentation in bullfrog pond (below 10<sup>th</sup> St. bridge).
- Sedimentation hampers the possibility of establishing a canoe trail.
- The ability to have a viable canoe trail would be an indicator in itself.
- What is the clarity of the Lower Cannon River where there is commercial tubing trips? What level of clarity is aesthetically acceptable for tubers and boaters in that stretch of the Cannon?
- Water clarity may be a more important indicator to the public than bugs and vegetation.
- The Truedale dike used to hold back more water from Mississippi River than it currently does.
- Would like to see a canoe paddle to the handle/neck – about 2 feet of clarity.

Water clarity in Pool 3 of Mississippi River:

- Recreational use is high including boating and fishing.
- City of Hastings is promoting the riverfront and recreation on river.
- The ability to swim, including off islands, would be an indicator. There are bacterial concerns.
- North and Sturgeon Lakes are prime resources.
- There is much sedimentation between the Mississippi River and Mud Hen Lake.

The group also briefly discussed water clarity issues and goals in Lake Pepin.