

Minnesota River Board



Procedures Guide and Strategic Plan (2006-2010)



Minnesota River near New Ulm
(courtesy Coalition for a Clean Minnesota River)

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Note from the Chair:

In 2006, the Minnesota River Board took a step into the future with new vigor and purpose. The days of simply “getting by” are in the past. As we move ahead, I challenge all of the MRB delegates to make the effort to step up and play a more active role. Now is not the time to fall back, but rather to surge ahead. We are on the brink of moving into new roles, roles that fulfill a more active and influential program in water and soil management of the Minnesota River Basin. To all of the counties that have stood by the MRB through the rough years – thank you. For those that have stepped back, we invite you to rejoin us. The MRB is forging into new areas of managing nutrients, promoting conservation programs, and coordinating funding opportunities. These are exciting times for the MRB and this strategic plan will help carry us into a productive future. If we all stick together and demonstrate a unified approach and common mission, we can make great things happen.

Bill Stangler, Le Sueur County Commissioner
Minnesota River Board Chair
31925 Cedar Lawn
St. Peter, MN 56082

Note from the Director:

The Minnesota River Board (MRB) was born amid lofty goals and high hopes; however, only with great expectations can great results occur. I applaud the individuals with the foresight to envision the values of this organization. Because of the high standards that we have set upon ourselves, many view the MRB as an underachiever; however, the MRB has had great benefits. Through our collaborations and programs, we have catalyzed substantive progress in county water planning, pollution and land management awareness, stakeholder cooperation, and basin-wide GIS and database development. The MRB has worked along side other organizations and elevated Minnesota River issues from insignificance to the mainstream. The MRB, however, has an immeasurable amount of untapped and unrealized potential. This document is intended to guide us toward achievement of our common vision through 2010. Through hard work, dedication, and creativity, we can achieve the goals we have set. Is a fishable and swimmable Minnesota River within reach? If we stop now, we may never know. Thank you for the opportunity to serve.

Dr. Shannon J. Fisher, Director
Water Resources Center and Minnesota River Board
184 Trafton Science Center South
Mankato, MN 56001
(507) 389-5492
shannon.fisher@mnsu.edu

Minnesota River Board Website: www.minnesotariver.org

**Minnesota River Board
184 Trafton Science Center South
Minnesota State University, Mankato
Mankato, MN 56001
Phone 507-389-5491**

Section 1. Mission and History

A. Mission

The Minnesota River Basin Joint Powers Board (MRBJPB) was established for the purpose of coordinating efforts to improve water quality in the Minnesota River and achieve the goal of making the Minnesota River suitable for fishing and swimming by 2005. The MRBJPB, also known as the Minnesota River Board (MRB), revised the mission statement in 2003 and strives to achieve the following:

“To provide leadership, build partnerships, and support efforts to improve and protect water quality in the Minnesota River Basin”

The MRB conducts its affairs on the following premise and vision:

“Conservation and restoration of Minnesota River resources and our way of life can only be achieved by a cooperative effort between citizens and all levels of government and business.”

The MRB mission was built upon three objectives: 1) to provide leadership, 2) build partnerships, and 3) support water quality efforts. This document is intended to bring forth a plan for us to realize this mission and catalyze progress towards our vision for the entire Minnesota River basin.

B. History

In 1992, the Minnesota River Citizen’s Advisory Committee (MRCAC) was formed. The MRCAC released the report, *Working Together: A Plan to Restore the Minnesota River* in 1994. The action plan developed by MRCAC detailed areas that needed to be addressed in order for the health of the Minnesota River to improve.

The action plan was composed of the following ten recommendations:

- 1) restore floodplains and riparian areas,
- 2) restore wetlands,
- 3) manage drainage ditches and storm sewers as tributaries,
- 4) improve land management practices,
- 5) monitor water quality throughout the Minnesota River Basin,
- 6) establish a "Minnesota River Commission" to oversee the clean-up effort,
- 7) establish local joint powers agreements,
- 8) improve technical assistance to local governments,
- 9) engage the general public, and
- 10) enforce existing laws.

As a result of the MRCAC recommendations and changes in the political climate in 1995, a backdrop for interested stakeholders to re-focus on environmental issues in the Minnesota River basin was present. Based on the recommendations and

prevalent viewpoints, the Minnesota River Basin Joint Powers Board was forged from:

- 1) the desire to collaborate and leverage in a judiciously appropriate manner and
- 2) the desire to assume a leadership role and be more pro-active in the coordination of efforts at the local level.

The original intent for the Minnesota River Basin Joint Powers Board (MRBJPB) was to establish a group of elected officials that would assume the duty of moving Minnesota River issues forward. As the Board matured, the outcome of these desires found fruition in a return to “grass roots” government – moving back to a “bottom up” approach to policy.

At the Legislative Conference in March of 1995, with Ken Albright from Nicollet County convening, there was unanimous support from 37 Minnesota River counties present to do something about their basin. A steering committee was formed and met for several months to come up with the by-laws. A joint powers agreement was signed by 37 counties (Otter Tail County abstained from signing).

Governor Arne Carlson and a delegate from each of the 37 counties signed an official proclamation on July 12, 1995 at the confluence of the Blue Earth River and the Minnesota River in Mankato. The MRBJPB was born and received funding from the State of Minnesota.

The original executive committee included: Ken Albrecht (Chair), Orville Meints (Vice Chair), Donald Ziegler (2nd Vice Chair), Charles Guggisberg (Treasurer), Ralph Malz (Secretary). The MRBJPB then took a leap of faith into their future when Steve Hansen was hired as its first Executive Director.

As budgets tightened, the MRBJPB lost its line item in the state budget and moved to secure financial resources from the member counties and through grants. During this same period, the MRBJPB mission and goal statements were modified several times – reflecting the priorities of its members; however, it has never been clear if any official language to express our visions have been adopted. In 2000, then Blue Earth delegate Al Bennett asked the question, “What business are we in?” As a result of this question, the MRB worked on the premise that we are here to facilitate the following statement:

*“Preservation and restoration of the Minnesota River
can only be achieved by a cooperative effort between citizens
and all levels of government and business.”*

Director Hansen resigned in 2001 and directorship has changed hands several times, with Diane Ovrebo notably serving as Interim Director before Director Fisher came on board in 2005. The MRBJPB has gone through many changes in focus, personnel, and vision; however, the group has persevered.

On July 15, 2002, the MRBJPB had a meeting of great significance – many questions were called to the table and considerable input was gathered (minutes are

attached as Attachment A). Also in 2002, MRBJPB Chair Madsen convened a legislative task force and an organizational task force. These task forces established two sets of recommendations that were published in the 2002 Annual Report (the recommendations are attached as Attachment B). As a result of one of these recommendations, the MRBJPB passed a resolution in 2003 that adopted the simplified name of Minnesota River Board (MRB) and an organizational structure to capture various relationships that the MRB desired to maintain (Figure 1).

Between 2003 and 2005, the MRB lost a few member counties (Figure 2), but continued to work on discussions about septic pollution issues and ditch/drainage concerns. On July 19, 2004, under Chair Ische, another meeting of great importance occurred – including discussions about pivotal decisions for the future of the MRB (minutes are attached as Attachment C). Resolutions were passed to encourage point-of-sale or other type of regular septic compliance inspections and the MRB supported the Clean Water Legacy Act. In 2005, the MRB was again faced with an uncertain future, as funding came into question.

In 2006, Director Fisher, along with a planning committee of Commissioners, including, John Schueller, Jim Dahlvang, Harold Solem, and Bill Stangler developed a Strategic Plan to define our vision of leading conservation efforts and bringing increased visibility and function to the MRB through 2010. Our vision statement was modified to express our focus and direction (see Section 1A above) and on July 17, 2006, an important step forward was taken with the final approval of this strategic plan - and great expectations.

C. MRB Organizational Structure

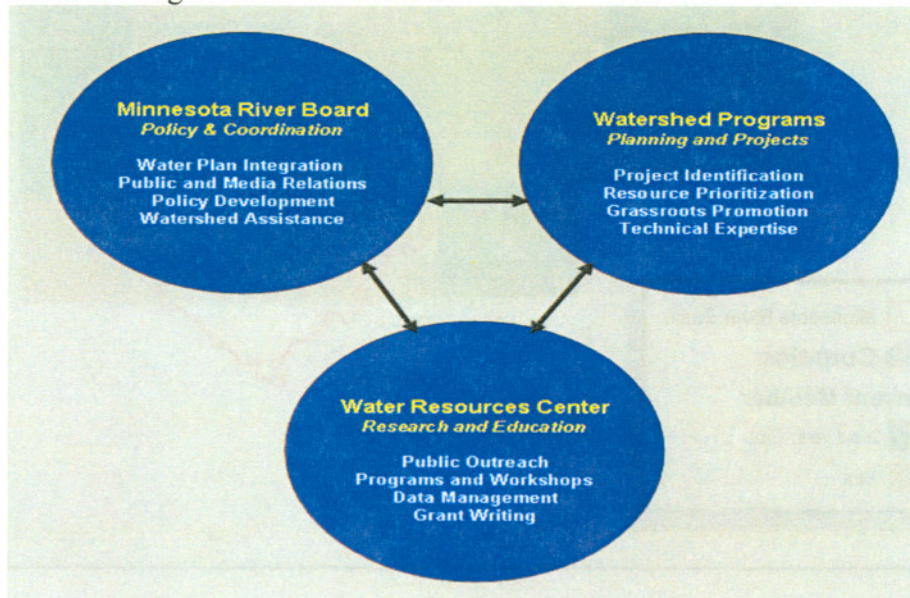


Figure 1. The MRB structure depicted above remains a desirable structure; however, various aspects of the relationships need to be further defined and reformulated. This is a good model and should be preserved.

Minnesota River Board County Members

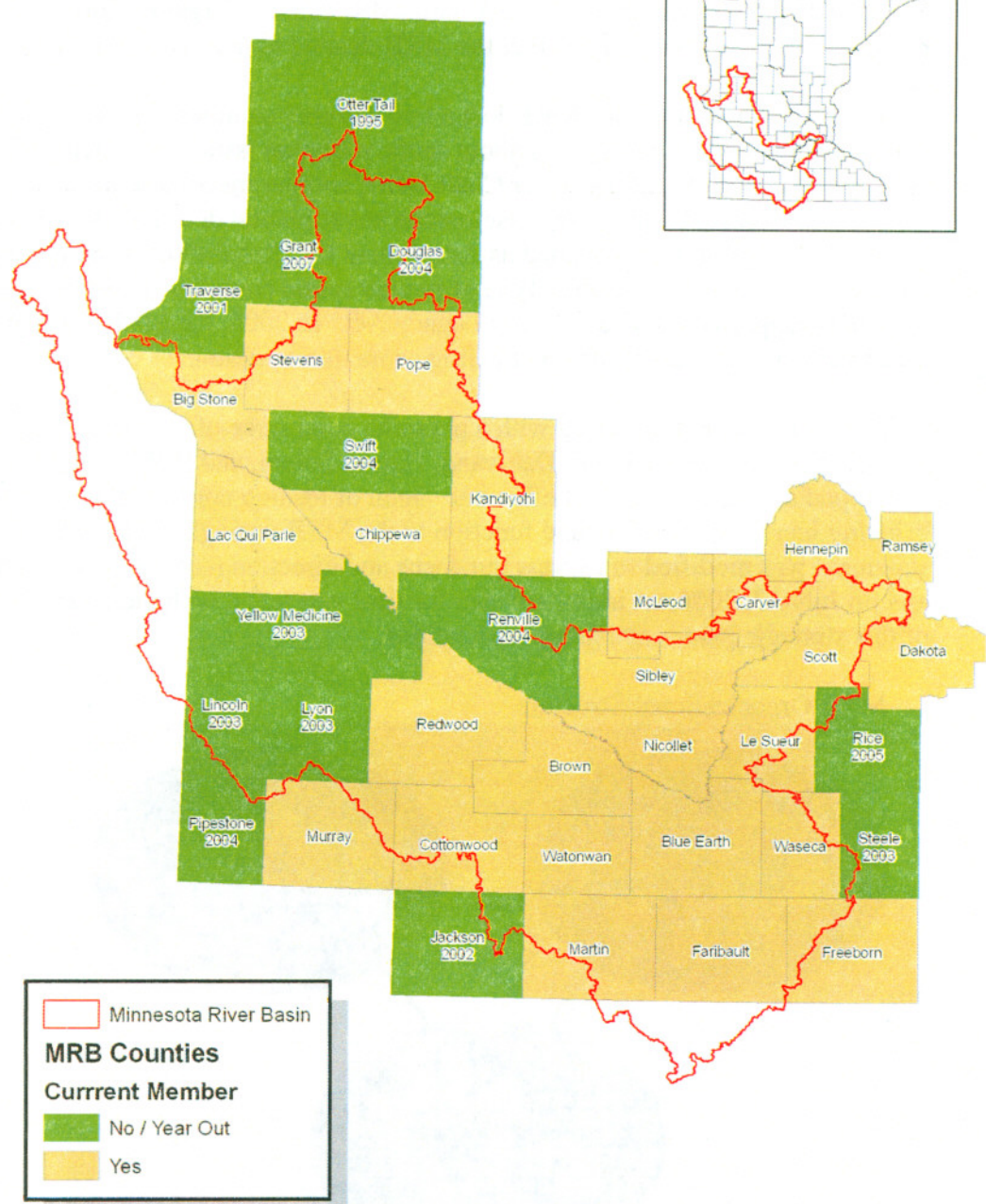


Figure 2. Figure denotes the Minnesota River watershed and the counties involved in the Minnesota River Basin Joint Powers Board. Counties noted in tan are members of the Minnesota River Board (as of 2006). The counties in green have opted out of the Minnesota River Board and the year they officially ended their membership is noted.

Section 2. Minnesota River Basin Joint Powers Board Authorization

Minnesota Statute 103F.378 Minnesota River Basin Joint Powers Board.

Subdivision 1. **Duties.** The Minnesota River Basin Joint Powers Board, established under section [471.59](#) for the purpose of coordinating efforts to improve water quality in the Minnesota River and achieving the goal of making the Minnesota River suitable for fishing and swimming by the year 2005, has the following duties:

(1) coordination of comprehensive cleanup goals for the Minnesota River by coordinating the work plans of the 12 major watersheds and the member counties of the joint powers board, state agencies, and the University of Minnesota in cleanup efforts and submission of periodic river cleanup plans for submission to the governor and the legislature;

(2) advising on the development and use of monitoring and evaluation systems in the Minnesota River and the incorporation of the data obtained from these systems into the planning process;

(3) conducting public meetings of the board on at least a quarterly basis at locations within the Minnesota River basin;

(4) conducting an ongoing information and education program concerning the status of the Minnesota River, including an annual conference on the state of the Minnesota River;

(5) providing periodic reports and budget requests to the governor's office and the chairs of the agriculture and environment and natural resources committees of the senate and the house of representatives regarding progress on meeting river water quality management goals and future funding required for this effort;

(6) advising on the development of projects within the 12 major watersheds that are scientifically sound, have landowner support, and reduce inputs of pollutants into the Minnesota River basin; and

(7) administering the distribution of project implementation funds for the 12 major watersheds by approving projects, identifying matching components for each project, and tracking the results achieved for each project.

Subd. 2. **Membership.** Upon acceptance of the joint powers agreement, each member county that agrees to join the board shall have one county commissioner as its delegate to the board and one county commissioner as an alternate. A technical and citizen advisory committee shall be established to advise the board consisting of a technical representative from each of the counties in the basin and citizens who are not county employees but who have an interest in agriculture, conservation, sporting activities, and other relevant areas as determined by the board.

Section 3. Joint Powers Agreement and Operating By-Laws

The *Minnesota River Basin Joint Powers Agreement* and the *Operating By-Laws Minnesota River Basin Joint Powers Board* are attached (see copy of the signed Blue Earth County agreement in Attachments D and E).

Section 4. Review of Statutory, Joint Powers Agreement, and By-Law Obligations

Legal guidance for entities created by the legislature can be found within the authorizing legislation. Given our dedication to the MRBJPB duties, obligations, and future, it is imperative that we review and consider the language ascribed to the MRBJPB (working name changed to MRB) in Minnesota Statutes, 103F.378. Our statutory authorizations are spelled out in Section 2 above; however, if we condense this information, the following general duties emerge:

- A. Coordination of Comprehensive Clean Up Goals
- B. Development and Use of Monitoring and Data Management Systems
- C. Conducting Public Meetings
- D. Provision of Informational and Educational Programs
- E. Provision of Progress Reports and Budget Proposals
- F. Advising Project Development
- G. Administration of Implementation Funds
- H. Maintenance of Membership Requirements and Duties

As part of the strategic plan and review in Section 5, each component of our statutory duties is reviewed and discussed in terms of: 1) Component Description, 2) Status, and 3) Strategies to Improve Component.



Hydrology of the Minnesota River watershed has changed dramatically over the past 150 years. Surface water management has a broad range of advantages and disadvantages that the Minnesota River Board works to understand and address.

Section 5. Strategic Plan Components

The following evaluations of our statutory obligations have been reviewed by the MRB members and other stakeholders. Input has been gathered and for each recommendation listed in part 5 for each component (Strategies to Improve Component), a full board approval has been obtained. Recommendations that failed to attain a majority approval vote were removed from this document.

A. Coordination of Comprehensive Clean Up Goals

1) Component Description

The intent of the joint powers agreement was for the MRB to provide a locally-driven mechanism for the coordination of comprehensive cleanup goals for the Minnesota River. The MRB was asked to coordinate watershed, agency, and county work/water plans that address water quality issues in the Minnesota River basin. As a result of this coordination, the MRB is to submit periodic integrated river cleanup plans to the governor and the legislature.

2) Status

The MRB has worked to bring stakeholders together and has served an advisory role on watershed management plans; however, no official integration of work/water plans has ever been completed by the MRB. The MRB has contributed to county water plan development by providing support to the Minnesota River Basin Data Center and Water Resources Center who in turn provided substantive services to counties. During the early years after MRBJPB formation, reports were periodically prepared as part of our annual funding request (See E below); however, these reports were not clean-up plans and when access to general funds ended, so did the reports. A basin-originated clean-up plan has been requested by agencies and legislative officials.

3) Strategies to Improve Component

- i. Compile water plans from counties, watersheds, and other entities (e.g., agencies) and provide a summary that highlights the commonalities and differences among the plans,
- ii. Bring together a stakeholder group, including watersheds and non-member counties, to develop a comprehensive basin water plan that includes clean up goals and a clean up plan that is consistent with the MRB goals and vision and supports the common themes of the water plans,
- iii. Open communications with South Dakota and Iowa stakeholders to determine interest and partnership potential for involvement in basin-wide efforts, and
- iv. Submit a triennial Basin Water Plan to the agencies, stakeholders, governor, and legislature.

B. Development and Use of Monitoring and Data Management Systems

1) Component Description

The MRBJPB was given the responsibility of providing input about the development and use of monitoring and evaluation systems in the Minnesota River. The MRB was asked to promote the incorporation of the data obtained from these systems into the planning processes.

2) Status

The MRB has supported the efforts of the Water Resources Center and provided critical support for the procurement of funds that led to the development of the Minnesota River Basin Data Center at Minnesota State University, Mankato. The MRB has not been heavily involved in the discussion of river monitoring schematics, as that has been within the work plans of the watershed groups and agencies.

3) Strategies to Improve Component

- i. Continue to support the services and research conducted by the Water Resources Center and Minnesota River Basin Data Center,
- ii. Increase policy, public relations, and local government support (non-financial) of research and data collections conducted by non-government organizations, agencies, and watershed entities, and
- iii. Support additional data-based management tools, such as the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers Integrated Watershed Model, education about soil and water models (e.g., SWAT), and support of additional data tool development by the Water Resources Center, MPCA, and other entities.

C. Conducting Public Meetings

1) Component Description

The MRBJPB was mandated to conduct public meetings at least four times per year at locations within the Minnesota River basin.

2) Status

The MRB has conducted six meetings per year since its inception. For the past few years, the meetings have been primarily held on alternating turns in Montevideo and Gaylord; however, some meetings have been held elsewhere. In addition, the Executive Committee of the MRB meets 4-6 times during the year on months when the full board does not meet. Director Fisher has started to utilize conference calls to conduct some Executive Board meetings.

3) Strategies to Improve Component

- i. Continue bi-monthly full board meetings in the odd months (i.e., January, March, May, July, September, November),
- ii. Change annual meeting structure to 2 meetings in Gaylord, 2 meetings in Montevideo, and 2 meetings at alternate locations. Use of alternative sites will facilitate a capacity to highlight local issues, increase involvement of stakeholders, and incorporate field trips,
- iii. Continue to hold the executive committee meetings (4 in-person and 2 via conference call) on the even months (i.e., February, April, June, August, October, and December) and utilize these meetings more heavily as “planning sessions” with designated planning duties for each session (e.g., use the October meeting to finalize the annual work plan and April meeting to prepare the upcoming budget proposal).

D. Provision of Informational and Educational Programs

1) Component Description

The MRB is responsible for conducting a public education program about Minnesota River issues, including an annual conference on the state of the Minnesota River.

2) Status

The MRB has conducted an annual meeting with a workshop and/or forum component to help educate the public, local officials, and watershed program staff about Minnesota River issues. Public participation in these meetings has been limited; however, county commissioner, agency staff, water planner, and watershed representative attendance has typically been good. Outside of the annual conferences, the MRB has not directly completed a substantial education component, but through continued support of the Water Resources Center, the MRB has been indirectly supporting a wide range of education programs and technical workshops.

3) Strategies to Improve Component

- i. Prepare a collection of speaking points that commissioners and others could use to discuss the MRB efforts and mission,
- ii. Continue sponsorship of an annual conference (either independently or in cooperation with other organizations) related to Minnesota River topics of interest,
- iii. Develop a committee to provide annual awards to deserving projects and/or basin organizations at the annual conference,
- iv. Work with watershed projects to build relationships and sponsor two additional workshops, tours, educational experiences, and/or lecture opportunities per year,
- v. Support the efforts of the Minnesota River Watershed Alliance, including their efforts to secure a Communications Coordinator that will work to increase cohesion among all the Minnesota River stakeholders, and
- vi. Develop and distribute a MRB quarterly newsletter that highlights the MRB's progress, gives recognition to local projects, provide information of interest, and promotes basin events.

E. Provision of Progress Reports and Budget Proposals

1) Component Description

The MRBJPB is to provide periodic reports and budget requests to the governor's office and the chairs of the agriculture and environment and natural resources committees of the senate and the house of representatives regarding progress on meeting river water quality management goals and future funding required for this effort.

2) Status

The MRB has not filed such a report or budget request since Steve Hanson resigned as Executive Director. The MRB discontinued the preparation of these reports and budget requests after the legislature removed funding for the MRBJPB. It was not deemed to be worthwhile to continue preparing these reports if no funding was going to be provided.

3) Strategies to Improve Component

- i. Develop an annual report that includes a work summary and expenditure report for the previous year that highlights accomplishments, discusses failures, and describes how funds were utilized,
- ii. Develop an annual work plan and budget for approval by the full board, including a funding plan for each year,
- iii. Submit annual reports, work plans, and budget requests to the legislature, governor's office, member counties, and other interested stakeholders.

F. Advising Project Development

1) Component Description

The MRBJPB, based on the basin water plan to be integrated under Component A above was to advise on the development of projects within the 12 major watersheds (Figure 3) that are scientifically sound, have landowner support, and reduce inputs of pollutants into the Minnesota River basin.

2) Status

The MRB has worked to provide local perspectives on project ideas and provided support, as needed, to advance projects. The MRB has promoted project and policy development by formulating and passing Resolutions. Because the integrated water plan was never formulated, we have often relied on the MPCA's Minnesota River Basin Plan as a guide to promote projects that will benefit the basin. The MRB relies heavily on input from watershed and county staff – as the relationship should be mutually beneficial.

3) Strategies to Improve Component

- i. Provide copies of the integrated basin water plan to the 12 major watershed coordinators, county boards and water planners, and other interested stakeholders,
- ii. Provide additional support, in the form of lobbying and policy development input (e.g., resolutions) from the commissioners that demonstrates the views of a multi-county body,
- iii. Provide substantive technical assistance from the Water Resources Center to projects and entities to MRB member counties, and
- iv. Work with watersheds and other stakeholders to determine how the MRB can be an effective partner and provide assistance and support that will have a meaningful positive impact on localized efforts.



Figure 3. Map of the 12 major watersheds in the Minnesota River Basin.

G. Administration of Implementation Funds

1) Component Description

The original intent of the legislation that authorized the MRBJPB was to have us administer the distribution of project implementation funds for the 12 major watersheds by approving projects, identifying matching components for each project, and tracking the results achieved for each project.

2) Status

The MRB has never had a mechanism, or the desire, to implement this component in an authoritative manner. The component's statutory language indicates the MRB would have some level of authority over watershed spending; however, the MRB does not wish to assume this role. The MRB does, however, desire to serve as a fiscal agent to support watershed project and other basin organizations to coordinate and utilize flow-through funds and leverage federal grants. The MRB desires to work on basin-wide policy issues and projects that will enhance water plan development and implementation in the basin. The MRB has attempted to serve as a policy and coordination support entity; however, the relationships between the MRB and the watershed organizations has been difficult to maintain.

3) Strategies to Improve Component

- i. Work to identify funding sources and strategies that will help stabilize county and watershed infrastructure that promote water planning, water quality, and good stewardship,
- ii. Express to the entities in the basin that the MRB is here to support their programs and assist in basin-wide coordination of project and policy, and
- iii. Work with basin partners to provide coordination of basin projects for Clean Water Legacy funding applications.

H. Maintenance of Membership Requirements and Duties

1) Component Description

The MRBJPB includes counties that agreed to join the board and provide a county commissioner as a delegate and another commissioner as an alternate. The MRBJPB is to also utilize a technical and citizen advisory committee that advises the board. The advisory committee shall consist of a technical representative from each of the counties in the basin and citizens who are not county employees but who have an interest in agriculture, conservation, sporting activities, and other relevant areas as determined by the board.

2) Status

As of April 2006, the MRB included 26 counties. There are 37 counties with at least a portion of their land mass in the Minnesota River watershed; however, some counties have elected to dissolve their association with the MRB and have not maintained the joint powers agreement (Figure 2). Participation in the technical and citizen advisory committee has been limited, as no organized committee has been in place for several years.

3) Strategies to Improve Component

- i. Develop a presentation about the benefits and value of participating in the MRB and bring this presentation to the county boards and staff in the Minnesota River basin,
- ii. Work to demonstrate the value of MRB membership and participation to increase MRB county attendance, technical staff participation, and interest by municipals, and
- iii. Re-establish the technical and citizen advisory committee that can provide requests of assistance to the MRB, help the MRB prioritize projects, identify policy concerns, and provide technical and public opinion guidance to the MRB.



The Minnesota River has been both a resource and liability for the city of Mankato. The photo shows the flood of 1965. The Minnesota River Board addresses flooding concerns and works to understand the impacts of increased water quantity directed to our river corridors.

Section 6. Financial Considerations

The MRB is developing into a more proactive entity; however, it will be difficult to bring our obligations and new strategies to fruition without a stable, and increased funding source. Current funding is inadequate to support our administrative staff and programming needs. It has been voiced that the citizens do not support Minnesota River efforts, such as the MRB. In 2005, the MRB provided financial support, with other cooperators, to complete a survey of citizen perceptions about the Minnesota River basin. This survey provided a fairly strong indication that citizens in the basin feel that they have personal responsibility for the Minnesota River, that they think clean up should be done faster, and that they understand there is a wide range of potential water quality issues. Forty-eight percent of the survey participants indicated a willingness to annually contribute financial resources to help clean up the Minnesota River. Seventeen percent didn't know if they would or not – it depended largely on how the money would be used.

Given the survey information, the MRB must identify and pursue funding options that move us beyond simply “getting by” to being proactive and providing the leadership for the basin that we were created to achieve – and that we believe the citizens desire. This section outlines several options to secure stable funding that will preserve baseline needs and allow for the expansion of MRB capacity to facilitate stabilization of watershed staff, promote project funding, and enable a basin-wide approach. There are several options described, however, none are exclusive of the others, and all are being pursued.

A. Continuation of County Dues

- i. Establish “base” dues at the levels paid by each county in 2006. Base dues can be modified with full board approval.
- ii. A budget will be prepared in May of each year for the following calendar-year budget cycle. At that time, income estimates for the following calendar year from base dues, grants, donations, conferences, etc.... will be tallied. If the approved budget exceeds estimated income, the counties in the MRB will support the annual budget needs by dividing the additional need proportionally among the counties. Proportions will be based on the each counties proportion of the total dues collected each year and may change annually. If the estimated income exceeds the proposed budget needs, no supplemental dues will be requested.
- iii. The annual budget would be based on MRB base needs to be determined by the executive committee and approved by the full board. This method will provide limited funding for projects and additional educational programs. Larger-scale projects and programs will be developed, but funding from external sources or special revenue requests will be pursued.

B. Grant Writing

- i. As has been completed in the past, the Director and members of the MRB shall continue to identify funding sources (e.g., grant programs, foundations, etc....) that are willing to support projects and educational programs promoted and supported by the MRB and our stakeholders,
- ii. Grant writing is not an effective mode of securing funds for administrative expenses. Grants will not be sought for this purpose, except where some limited administrative funds are allowed in a grant program to implement programs.

C. Legislative Requests

- i. The re-development of an annual work plan and budget proposal will provide a mechanism to solicit funds from the legislature and governor's office for administrative expenses, project support, and education programs.
- ii. With Clean Water Legacy funds gaining approval and appropriations likely to increase in upcoming years, the timing to regain legislative funding might be very good. The MRB members, along with the Director, will all need to be involved in a lobbying effort to regain state funding.

D. Water Plan Levy

- i. The MN River Board is not actively pursuing this option; however, general agreement about the potential value of this funding mechanism continues to make it a viable option. In 2007, a discussion about the potential application of Water Plan Levy funds to support local and regional water quality programs will be considered. The MRB would work with all the participating counties to leverage federal and foundation grants (lack of matching funds has been prohibitive for many grants in the basin) that would bring additional grant revenue to projects in the levy collection counties.
- ii. We keep coming back to this model because the Red River Basin model has proven itself to be effective. There, the Watershed Districts collect funds with a portion staying within the watershed and a portion being used for broad basin-wide projects.
- iii. The Minnesota River Basin does not have sufficient watershed district coverage to utilize the same mechanism as the Red River Board. Therefore, utilizing the counties as the collection mechanism would be more effective – leaving each county fully in control of their participation and funds allocations.



The Minnesota River Board is responsible for assisting in the identification and promotion of large-scale basin wide programs and projects that enhance water quality while promoting economic and recreational utility of the landscape. The Minnesota River Board could play a major role of support and funding for member counties and watersheds with access to increased revenue.

Section 7. Resolutions

Resolutions from the MRB have significant potential to support various efforts; however, the lack of education, promotion, and visibility of our resolutions has weakened this facet of our efforts. The development of “Resolutions Procedures” is an important area for future MRB credibility and success. The process below outlines the Resolutions Procedures:

- A. Resolutions must be sponsored by 2 full board member delegates.
- B. Ideas for Resolutions can be presented to the Executive Committee at any time and the Executive Committee shall act to either reject the resolution concept or request the Director to prepare a draft Resolution for the sponsors.
- C. When the Sponsors and Director are satisfied with the Resolution, the Executive Board shall make a recommendation to require more revision or send to the Full Board for consideration.
- D. The Sponsors and the Director will work together to present the Resolution to the Full Board and the Executive Committee shall conduct a discussion on the matter and send back for further revision. If deemed appropriate, the Full Board can move to accept or reject the Resolution with or without modifications.
- E. The Resolution sponsors and the Director shall then prepare an action plan. The Action Plan will at a minimum include:
 - i. The development of a stakeholder list who needs to be informed about the resolution,

- ii. The development of an informational/educational campaign, including the formulation of speaking points, posters, and presentations as warranted,
 - iii. The development of a press release, and
 - iv. The establishment of dates and entities to whom the resolution will be presented.
- F. Upon passage, the Resolution shall be numbered and entered into the MRB permanent record and copies of the resolution and action plan shall be sent to all MRB members and stakeholders of interest.

All of the previous Resolutions passed by the MRB need to be compiled and stored in a common booklet with the Director. The Director shall evaluate the past resolutions and prepare a document that summarizes the resolutions for distribution to member counties and stakeholders.

Section 8. Director Evaluation

To provide a formal mechanism of feedback to the Director and to protect the best interest of the MRB, the Director shall receive an annual evaluation signed by the MRB Chair. The evaluation should be completed by the Executive Committee during the April Executive Committee meeting and a copy of the annual evaluation should be provided to the Director and be included in the pre-meeting packets sent to the MRB members before the May full Board meeting. The evaluation shall be on the full board agenda at our May meeting for discussion and a motion for approval or rejection. A motion should also be made about the Directorship for the upcoming fiscal year (July 1 – June 30), to either extend another year to the current Director, or to seek other Director services. A copy of the evaluation shall be provided to the Dean of the College of Science, Engineering, and Technology at Minnesota State University, Mankato.



An area of the Cottonwood River, a Minnesota River tributary. The Minnesota River Board strives to provide policy and research support to the watersheds of the basin and the stakeholders that reside there.

Section 9. Visibility and Outreach

The MRB desires to increase our visibility and outreach to the public, county staff, legislatures, and granting organizations. Prior to conducting a full-blown public relations and visibility campaign, the MRB must adopt professional appearance items, to include new stationary and the development of an independent website. The MRB needs to also develop a brochure that briefly describes who we are, what we do, and how we can be of assistance to the residents and local governments in the Minnesota River basin.

There are several strategies built into the component improvement sections above that will aid in promoting our visibility. These strategies, along with a few not listed above include the addition of two additional workshops or MRB-sponsored events, development of regular press releases, distribution of brochures at various meetings, involvement in the Shallow Lake Forum, movement of the meetings to more diverse areas of the basin, development of a newsletter, development of a display, and providing informational presentations to MRB member counties and watersheds.

Section 10. Action Items and Calendar

The calendar on the following page highlights the numerous action items suggested in this plan. Most of the plan would be initiated in 2006 and 2007, with 2008-2010 used to evaluate success. An annual work plan addendum will be created starting in 2007. Although it would be nice to have all of these items done in 2006, it is not realistic to bring all of these items to the table immediately. The components listed match up with the components in Section 5. If the component is listed, it implies that this action item would help improve that component. The year marked for each action item is the year by which each action item should be completed and/or implemented. It should be assumed that the action item will be ongoing after the year noted for initiation.

Section 11. Attachments

- A. Minutes from July 15, 2002**
- B. Recommendations from the 2002 Annual Report**
- C. Minutes from July 19, 2004**
- D. Minnesota River Joint Powers Agreement**
- E. Minnesota River Joint Powers Board Operating By-laws**

Work Plan Outline for the Minnesota River Board (2006-2008)

Components	Action Item	2006	2007	2008
A	Compile County/Watershed Water Plans		X	
A, B	Convene Basin Water Plan Advisory Group		X	
A, B	Develop Triennial Basin Water Plan		X	
	The following Meetings are intended to collect information about MRB relations and services to better evaluate what we can do to support the MN River:			
A, D, F	MRB Delegates	X		
A, D, F	Watershed Coordinators	X		
A, D, F	Agency Staff	X		
A, D, F	Other Stakeholders	X		
A, C, D	Diversify Full Board Meeting Locations		X	
C, D	Initiate Executive Committee Planning Sessions		X	
D	Develop an MRB Awards Committee		X	
B, D	Develop Program of additional workshops, tours, etc....		X	
D	Help MinnRivWA secure Communications Coordinator	X		
D	Develop MRB quarterly newsletter		X	
E	Re-initiate annual report preparation	X		
E, F	Develop annual work plan and budget request	X		
H	Develop MRB Benefits Presentation		X	
E, G, H	Update County dues formula and determine proportions		X	
A, G, H	Develop water plan levy guidance for discussion			X
A, G, H	Reconvene the technical and citizen advisory committee		X	
B, D, F	Compile pre-2006 Resolutions and prepare summary	X		
E	Re-initiate Director Evaluations	X		
A, C, D, H	Develop visibility plan		X	
A, C, D, H	Develop MRB brochure		X	
A, C, D, H	Get MRB stationary printed	X		
A, C, D, H	Develop a MRB display for events		X	
ALL	Evaluate Efforts (2007-2010)		X	X→

ATTACHMENT A
Minutes from July 15, 2002

Minnesota River Basin Joint Powers Board

FULL BOARD MEETING

Unapproved Minutes: July 15, 2002

9:30 a.m. –12:30 p.m.

New Ulm Senior High School, New Ulm

PRESENT – BOARD MEMBERS: Jeanne Krueger, Big Stone; Andrew Johnson, Blue Earth; Charles Guggisberg, Brown; Jim Ische, Carver; John Oeltjenbruns, Cottonwood; Ralph Prescher and Paul Meyer, Faribault; Glen Mathiason, Freeborn; Harlan Madsen, Kandiyohi Co.; Albert Hoffman, Lac qui Parle; Curt Blumeyer and Larry Hansen, Lincoln; Phil Nelson, Lyon; Steve Donnelly and Jack Potter, Martin; Ray Bayerl, McLeod; Steve Johnson, Murray; Judy Hanson, Nicollet; Marvin Tinklenberg, Pipestone; Bruce Thorfinnson, Pope Co.; Deb Hess, Redwood; Leo Bauer, Sibley; Bruce Kubicek, Steele; Herb Kloos and Neal Hofland, Stevens; John Thompson, Swift Co.; Wendell Armstrong, Waseca; Noren Durheim and John Baerg, Watonwan.

PRESENT - WATERSHED COORDINATORS: Kerry Netzke, Area II; Kevin Bigalke, Lower MN River Watershed District and Sheila Faber, Pomme de Terre Watershed District.

PRESENT - AGENCIES: Jeff Nielsen, BWSR; Jack Frost, Met Council; Larry Gunderson, MPCA; Bob Finley, MSU Water Resources Center, Tina Rosenstein, Nicollet County Water Planner.

PRESENT - CITIZENS: None

- 1. Call to Order and Roll Call:** Chair Harlan Madsen called the meeting to order at 9:40 a.m. Twenty-two (22) counties were present, enough for a quorum.
- 2. Approval of Minutes:** The following are corrections on the minutes: On May 2, Executive Committee meeting minutes, Brian McNeil represents Swift County Extension Service. On June 20, (Executive Committee with Data Center Board) second page, last paragraph, second sentence should read as "By definition of a joint powers agreement the MRBJPB can set policy. With those corrections, Jeanne Krueger made a motion to approve the minutes and Glen Mathiason seconded the motion. All in favor; minutes approved.

3. Agency, Citizen, County and Watershed Updates:

Pomme de Terre Watershed – Sheila Faber: Their technical committee is developing a TMDL plan.

Lower Minnesota River Watershed – Kevin Bigalke: He expressed his thanks for being invited to the June 24th Executive Committee meeting and allowed to take part in 'planning the plan.' Lori Nelson from the Friends of the Minnesota Valley has hired two new coordinators. Scott Sparlan will be taking care of the southwest portion while Sue Magdalene for the eastern portion; the six sub-watersheds will be served by these two coordinators.

BWSR – Jeff Nielsen: BWSR is having a state-wide meeting on July 25th at the Prairie Wood Environmental Center in Spicer. The MRBJPB members and watershed coordinators are welcome to attend.

The finalization process needs to be completed by the end of September for CREP. He reminded that in February of 2002 there were 103,000 acres enrolled. Again he thanked the MRBJPB for the role they played in making this program successful.

The LCMR information is about 90% complete and when he has received all the information Jeff will be sending it to Diane for a final report to be completed. This report is due by August 9, 2002.

MET Council - Jack Frost:

Area II – Kerry Netzke: Budget cuts are affecting them and they are looking for renewed federal interest. See Watershed Update handout for further information.

MPCA – Larry Gunderson: Larry brought with him copies of the MPCA Minnesota River Plan. This plan is also available on the MPCA web site along with the TMDL list that is being reviewed. The last TMDL list was 1998. If anyone has disagreement with this list or wants to comment on it they are welcome to give their input.

This year the Clean Water Partnerships may not be taking any diagnostic projects.

On June 25th Larry and his wife had a baby girl named Clare. Congratulations to the three of them!

Chippewa River Watershed Project – Kylene Olson: The second east branch is submitting a fall application for third priority. They have also applied for an EPA educational grant for a workshop in August. A research assistant has been working on sediment nutrients and will be reporting in August on his findings. Signs for the Shakopee Creek are up and have received very good comments. Identifying drainage ditches were not feasible but identifying projects appear to work. Public Works made the signs as in-kind contribution. This project was a good buy for both the watershed and the county and both would support it again. Chair Harlan Madsen recommends it to all. Ralph Prescher felt it was good advertisement in telling that this is an environmental friendly place to live. Ray Bayerl mentioned the silt problem stemming from Nicollet County and coming into the Rush River. This is a problem that could be worked out by both counties.

COUNTY Updates: None

CITIZEN Updates: None

4. Unfinished Business:

Annual Report 2001: The report has not been approved by the Full Board yet. Chair Madsen had hoped everyone had read this report as it contained a good deal of information and would serve as advertisement for the MRBJPB. Ray Bayerl made a motion to approve the Annual Report 2001 and Charles Guggisberg seconded the motion. No discussion. All in favor; motion carried.

Planning the Plan:

Chair Madsen informed the group that today would be challenging and he was looking for thoughtful, open and honest discussion about the future of the MRBJPB. He asked that all listen carefully but be free with ideas. We are looking to the future and sorting through those ideas for what is in the best interest of the MRBJPB and the citizens we serve.

As a history note, the Executive Committee met with Bob Finley from the Data Center last Friday, July 12th and that was the 7th anniversary date of the signing of the Minnesota River Basin Joint Powers agreement. The original goals included restoring the Minnesota River (improving water quality), assisting counties and enabling counties to share in this responsibility, supporting water management by revitalizing watershed organizations in order to maintain local control with maximum efficiency, and asserting county leadership rather than having the State do things to and for them.

The State of Minnesota was asked for assistance for both technical and financial components. Some state organizations were enthusiastic, some were hesitant to relinquish power, some did not think that counties

could cooperate and some truly wanted to see the MRBJPB fail so that the State could continue with their own strategic planning on water management initiatives. The MRBJPB from the onset was to be a policy board and a think-tank. This board was never designed to be an implementation board. At its inception the statement was made that there was implementation already established in the form of SWCDs and other such organizations. The 37-Counties did not sign the agreement with their hands out for money but with a commitment and resolve that we could be a facilitator and vehicle for water quality through awareness, education and support through projects. These projects would be implemented by local individuals, watershed and various organizations already working on water quality.

We have already had many successes; an awareness of the condition and existence of the Minnesota River has been raised amongst citizens (A blunt remark of what is flushed upstream is drunk downstream paints a graphic picture of the importance of water quality). The MRBJPB recognized that accurate data, information and education are integral to achieving improvement in the river basin. The Watershed Institute initiative was an outgrowth and follow-through of that realization. Workshops were initiated by the MRBJPB with a broad base of support. Some of these workshops focused on bacteria, phosphorus, drainage, holding water on the land, team building and working at a watershed level. We also participated in a series of TV and radio call-ins at informational town meetings. We dialogued with citizens, engaging them in finding out what others were doing within the basin, the successes and challenges. As a result of this initiative, the Watershed Institute has been instrumental in assisting water team implementation and also invaluable to the MRBJPB for conferences and workshops. Conferences and tours put on by the MRBJPB have also raised awareness. Groups have been brought together with a common interest. The Watershed Institute has become a vital component in the team that is moving ahead on clean water issues of the Minnesota River. The Institute is now located under the auspices of University of Minnesota, Mankato State Water Resources Center (Data Center).

The MRBJPB has had other successful initiatives and these were supported in part through grants applied for by the MRBJPB. Establishing watershed teams at a local level was one of the initial goals in 1995. We assisted in the establishment of watershed teams at a local level. Supporting these watershed teams was not done with the idea of 'padding' our coffers. In addition, we were successful in securing \$300,000 implementation dollars from LCMR that was leveraged with local dollars. Those dollars supported water quality projects throughout the watersheds; projects such as rock inlets and other improvements were accomplished over a three-year period. With assistance from The McKnight Foundation, we worked with BWSR on marketing CREP. Our CREP involvement and assistance also promoted water quality through good land management practices throughout the Minnesota River basin. We, through our watershed coordinators, supported and played a role at the state level in the water unification plans requested by the State of Minnesota. These comprehensive plans are of a significant benefit to all Minnesota citizens.

However, the major accomplishment was in bringing 37 counties together. In 1995, the MRBJPB was the largest joint powers agreement in the **nation**. Are we first? Yes. Are we different? Yes. Are we best? Not yet. For the first five years the MRBJPB has been building relationships with a wide variety of organizations. The ten-year goal promoted by the State was perhaps unrealistic but it was a start in addressing water quality issues. It has worked against the MRBJPB and other organizations because there was no broad buy-in due to the perception of it being a top-down approach. In the beginning there was too much finger pointing. The MRBJPB recognizes that there needs to be more collaboration and a prioritization of projects amongst organizations. Finances, demographics and rules are all changes that pose challenges but in turn they also present opportunities. Although funding has been significantly reduced for this organization, our responsibility as counties has not been reduced or eliminated.

Our Board's future accomplishments will be:

- ✓ establishing a mission and goals that are understandable, acceptable to stakeholders and doable in both the short-term and long-term
- ✓ increasing involvement by stakeholders and watersheds,
- ✓ educating, embracing diversity and informing
- ✓ advocating for the entire basin on a state and federal level

- ✓ working closer county to county
- ✓ telling our story to all, proposing federal initiatives
- ✓ becoming more action orientated
- ✓ building on strengths and using those strengths to lobby
- ✓ collaborating and sharing with partners
- ✓ reaffirming goals
- ✓ reconnecting with partners and making new connections
- ✓ consistently leading the efforts of cleaning the Minnesota River
- ✓ leading the effort to locally establish consistent and complimentary policies that are in the best interest of the basin. A current example will be the TMDL process.

The Executive Committee has met several times, as you can see by noting all the meeting minutes listed on the agenda and included in this board packet. We have met with state agencies and staff, Bob Finley from the Data Center and Watershed Coordinators to determine the future needs of the MRBJPB. This has been hard work and there are no easy answers. The Executive Committee is now asking you for your help and input. We have the time to accomplish this task properly. We don't have to make any decisions today. The financial statement shows that with the reserves and upcoming dues we have an approximate 18-month time frame in which to plan and to begin implementing the plan. Many questions and concerns have been raised: rotating sites for the board meetings, hiring an executive director, restructuring the organization, partnering, in-kind contributions, and so forth. Lobbying efforts need to be emphasized. Do we know what it will cost us if we do this planning? No, but what will it cost us and the citizens if we don't do this? In order to determine our destiny we must ask many more questions, and make decisions. WE, as counties, have a unique opportunity to most effectively deal with water management – some of our responsibilities are managing public utilities and infrastructures, creating and carrying out policies in zoning and land use, and supporting SWCDs and similar organizations. WE are responsible for all appointments and support of watershed districts. WE are responsible for prioritizing and carrying out policy. WE have the local connections and know the pulse of the community. WE can be a neutral party. WE can be the catalyst for success through our ability to create joint powers boards. WE are responsible for the development and implementation of local county water plans. WE act on behalf of the State with the feedlot and shoreland management programs.

Chair Madsen stated the beliefs the Executive Committee are in agreement:

We believe that water quality must be improved in the Basin to sustain present and future generations.

We believe that counties must stay together for a stronger voice, and to compete against other basins for funding, not within our own basin.

We believe that given the political climate and changing attitudes it is more important than ever to build this organization.

We believe that we have not fully utilized the political resources and power of the MRBJPB at the state or federal level.

We believe that the counties are uniquely poised to reassert their roles in water management.

We believe that citizens need to be better informed with sound scientific data.

We believe that we can advocate for funding priority projects using a basin-wide approach; some projects will be global while others local.

We believe that better communication is essential in order to improve productivity. We need to tell our story.

We believe that there are many opportunities to forge ahead such as TMDLs, Data Center cooperation, federal dollars for watersheds and urban/rural water management.

We believe that united we stand and divided we fall. We are striving for community and unity.

Chair Madsen reviewed the input of the Executive Committee during their planning sessions. This input was debated vigorously, with limited conclusions and some suggestions. The growth of the MRBJPB was explained via a chart. In the beginning there was a sharp incline due to great excitement, energy and participation. After about four years there was a plateau, around the time when Steve Hansen proposed "The

Bus” and changes. When the first director left there was a slight decline that was increased after Aaron Colson resigned. Now is the time for each of us to individually and collectively recommit and determine our own destiny; now it is up to us to determine if there is a further decline or upswing in activity. Several options were presented: 1) Do we support the establishment of 13 Watershed Districts? 2) Do we initiate more cooperative ventures? 3) Do we do nothing? 4) Do we sunset? 5) Do we set global goals? 6) Do we start over as a new organization? 7) Do we hire a new executive director? 8) Do we form more of an alliance with the Data Center? 9) Do we restructure – maybe implement more of a team approach? 10) Do we create a foundation that will assist in obtaining and allocating funding?

The Executive Committee has five recommendations:

Stay together as counties and keep this board viable.

Delay up to 6 months in the hiring of an executive director.

Establish a Legislative Task Force by October 1, 2002 to develop priorities and initiatives that we can support and advance.

Establish an Internal Organization Task Force to review our structure.

Continue to build collaborative support for watersheds on all levels.

The members were then given the charge to answer three questions in a new group setting and one question anonymously. They were split into four groups and led by one of the Executive Committee. The charge was to discuss and answer the three following questions:

- 1) What do you view as the PURPOSE of the MRBJPB?
- 2a) Where do you envision the MRBJPB in the SHORT-TERM FUTURE?
- 2b) Where do you envision the MRBJPB in the LONG-TERM FUTURE?
- 3) In your opinion, how might the MRBJPB best serve the citizens of the Minnesota River Basin?
- 4) What is your level of support for the Minnesota River Basin Joint Powers Board?

After 30 minutes each group reported back a synopsis of their discussion on the three questions. The following is the response by each of the groups and then the combined consensus:

What do you view as the PURPOSE of the MRBJPB?

Group 1

- Educate.
- Coordinate between watersheds and different entities.
- Move to action.
- Coalition building.
- Create local ownership.
- Big picture – basin wide awareness.

Group 2:

- Advocate for Citizens, landowners, everyone in TMDL implementation.
- Collaboration catalyst for Watershed groups/ MRBJPB to implement clean water.
- Political voice for recommended actions in the basin.

Group 3:

- Educate.
- Coordinate between watersheds.
- Create local ownership.
- Coalition Building.
- Move to action.
- Basin-wide awareness – The Big Picture.

Group 4:

- Coordination.
- Lobbying.
- Prioritizing.

Where do you envision the MRBJPB in the SHORT-TERM FUTURE?

Group 1:

- Re-evaluation and focusing on the direction.
- Stalled out for now.
- Funding for dues doubtful.

Group 2:

- Figure out how to keep going during political and economic change.
- Restructure (study structure).
- Clarify Mission.
- Largeness of group (are we too big?) must be addressed.
- Need an executive director once mission is clarified.

Group 3:

- Stalled out for now.
- Evaluate where we are going.
- Funding is doubtful.

Group 4:

- Survival, funding issues.
- Need implementation of 2 or 3 projects
- Spinning wheels, floundering, dying, treading water.

Where do you envision the MRBJPB in the LONG-TERM FUTURE?

Group 1:

- Need to increase monetary support for the Data Center.
- Possible meshing of Data Center & MRBJPB.
- Strong executive director with lots of finesse.

Group 2:

- Keep growing, going.
- Clarify mission.
- Need an executive director once mission is clarified.

Group 3:

- Maybe consolidate with Data Center – needs more support.
- Strong director is needed if we continue.
- Survival, funding issues.
- Need implementation of 2 or 3 projects
- Spinning wheels, floundering, dying, treading water.

Group 4:

- Advocate for river
- Major watershed boards
- Too cumbersome.
- Need basin coordination.

In your opinion, how might the MRBJPB best serve the citizens of the MN River Basin?

Group 1:

By developing legislative clout at state and federal level.
Drainage law 103e.

Group 2:

Information & Education of accomplishments (past & present).
Be a reliable, trusted source of information – Data Center.
Seek dollars for citizen projects (advocate) for federal dollars.
“We can do it, give us the money!”
Be a forum for people to express their needs and wants.
Know the political powers and use them.

Group 3:

• Legislative clout. Have legislative committee.

Group 4:

• Adequately funding the MRBJPB
• Lobbying
• Communication
• Compromise between Agriculture and Environmental

Combined Responses to 3 Questions

(Full Board consensus)

1. What do you view as the PURPOSE of the MRBJPB?

- Voice for Clean Water in the Minnesota River Basin:
 - Lobbying.
 - Coordination.
 - Convening.
 - Education – Data Center.
 - Communication – Tell the Stories.
 - Prioritizing.
 - Celebrating successes.

2. Where do you envision the MRBJPB in the SHORT-TERM FUTURE?

- Clarify mission.
- Evaluate structure.
- Continue with projects – TMDLs, Legislative Action, etc.
- Recommitment.
- Self education (on-going).
- Partnering.
- Communication.

Where do you envision the MRBJPB in the LONG-TERM FUTURE?

- Hire an executive director.
- Sustainable funding.
- Lobbying – legislative action platform.

3. In your opinion, how might the MRBJPB best serve the citizens of the MN River Basin?

- Lobbying Efforts for
 - Money support.
 - Many other areas to be explored.
 - Local work – tiling and drainage.
 - Communication.

4. What is your level of support for the MRBJPB?

This question was anonymous. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest level of support, the average level of support from the 28 responses was 6.75. Out of those 28 responses, 13 submitted comments. Those comments were negatively positive. Some suggested that a change in organizational structure would result in their level of support increasing substantially. Some respondents stated that it is difficult to give a higher level of support and get excited about the future given the uncertainty of state and local budgets. Some indicated that goals need to be more clearly stated. Clear concise mission and goals are intertwined with financial support and connectivity. In conclusion, we have a strong base of support that could be more effective with reevaluation and a recommitment.

The short-term goals determined setting up two task forces – one for lobbying/political and the other for assessing the organization/ making recommendations. A letter will be sent out to all members asking them to be a part of the task forces or serve in another capacity.

5. New Business:

Letter to The McKnight Foundation: A draft copy of a letter to The McKnight Foundation was handed out. There was consensus that this letter should be sent; Diane will revise it to reflect this meeting and then mail it.

6. Other:

Framed Print: This framed print was provided by Pheasants Forever for the CREP Celebration on June 25 in Mankato, Minnesota. The print was accepted by First-Vice Chair James Ische. Al Bennett, Judy Hanson, John Thompson and Steve Johnson were also present at this event.

7. Next Meeting:

The next meeting will be August 19th for the Executive Committee, and September 12 will be the annual meeting/conference for the Full Board.

For the most current information, please view our web site at <http://mrbdc.mankato.msus.edu>.

8. Adjourn:

Chair Harlan Madsen adjourned the meeting at 12:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Diane K. Ovrebo
Administrative Assistant

ATTACHMENT B
Recommendations from the 2002 Annual Report

LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE : RECOMMENDATIONS

Harlan Madsen, Chair; Jim Ische, First Vice-Chair; Wendell Armetrong, Waseca Co.; Bob Finley, Water Resources Center; Larry Gunderson, MPCA; Terry Schwalbe, Lower MN River Watershed District; and Lauren Klement, Sibley County Water Planner.

- Name change to Mr. B (Minnesota River Board)
- Find out about the BWSR appointments and work on getting someone into those offices who are amenable to rock inlets.
- Prepare a brief synopsis that encompasses what has been done, what needs to be done and how it will be accomplished (work plan).
- Keep a presence at the capitol, talking with Senator Frederickson, legislators and state agencies.
- Work for a year on visiting across the basin and asking 'If we had the money, what can we do for you?'
- Focus on restructuring to create efficiencies and less bureaucracy without sacrificing quality.
- Come up with a clear, concise and consistent message of what the MRBJPB is accomplishing.
- Review Basin Plan and other strategy water plans for incorporation into own work plan.
- Develop a consistant plan, message and collaborative effort.
- Recommend having 1 or 2 commissioners from each watershed on Board rather than one from each county -it would focus on the watersheds, providing a more intimate and consistant form of communication.

THREE OBJECTIVES :

- ① Have a presence at legislature.
- ② Gather information, data and history (stories) across the basin and publicizing.
- ③ Embark on the 319 grant or some demonstration project that will show results.

Judy Hanson, Nicollet Co./Chair; Noren Durheim, Watonwan Co.; Bob Melhouse, Renville Co.; Bob Finley, Data Center; Deb Holmstrom, Data Center; Sheila Faber, Pomme de Terre Watershed Coordinator; Julie Conrad, Le Sueur River Watershed Coordinator.

- 1 Same location for every meeting
- 2 Have three area meetings (upper, middle & lower) on a monthly basis with an Executive Committee member in charge. Have watershed coordinators, SWCDs, nonprofits, water planners, city officials, local business, citizens, etc. at these meetings—more involvement. Commissioners from each of these areas can bring to quarterly Full Board meetings issues specific to the area with discussion of commonality and policy.
- 3 Invigorate the meetings with a pep rally or something of that nature—the Executive Committee can start it off.
- 4 Formulate and review a checklist of roles and responsibilities for members and staff.
- 5 Implement a joint venture with Minnesota State University, Water Resources Center, Mankato. Relocate the office in Chaska to the University / Water Resources Center/ Data Center.
- 6 Utilize the expertise of retiring members.
- 7 Investigate various forms of funding for a more stable operation.
- 8 Develop a marketing plan. Prepare and send a concise message for the Basin. Prepare a coordinated response to any inquiries on the state of the River.
- 9 Develop a communication strategy. Consistency is key. Use the strategy in connecting with our partners and citizens, keeping all informed. More participation at legislation -develop the delivery and message.
- 10 Propose three options for a new Purpose Statement to the Full Board in January 2003. Continue to work on getting exposure to that Statement and evaluate it periodically.

ATTACHMENT C
Minutes from July 19, 2004

Minnesota River Board
FULL BOARD MEETING
Unapproved Minutes: July 19, 2004
9:30 a.m. –12:30 p.m.
Sibley County Courthouse Annex, Gaylord, MN

PRESENT – BOARD MEMBERS: Katy Wortel, Blue Earth; Charles Guggisberg, Brown; Jim Ische, Carver; Jim Dahlvang, Chippewa; John Oeltjenbruns, Cottonwood; Joe Harris, Dakota; Tom Warmka, Faribault; Glen Mathiason, Freeborn; Richard Larson, Kandiyohi; Harold Solem, Lac qui Parle; William Stangler, Le Sueur; Steve Donnelly and Jack Potter, Martin; Ray Bayerl, McLeod; Steve Johnson, Murray; Judy Hanson and James Stenson, Nicollet; Jeanne Olson, Pope Co.; Joseph Schouvieller, Redwood; Jerry Hennen, Scott; Charles Whoeler, Sibley; Wendell Armstrong, Waseca; Noren Durheim, Watonwan.

Catherine Rasmussen, Leadership & Civic Engagement, University of Minnesota Extension Service, Hutchinson.

PRESENT - WATERSHED COORDINATORS: Loren Engelby, Hawk Creek; Scott Kudelka, High Island; Scott Matteson, Rush River; Lori Nelson, Scott Sparlin and Kevin Bigalke, Friends of the MN Valley.

PRESENT - AGENCIES: Jeff Nielsen, BWSR; Jack Frost, Met Council; Ellen Sones, Hennepin County Environmental Services; and Larry Gunderson and Robert Finley, MPCA.

PRESENT - CITIZENS: Bob Austin and Larry Granger.

Kevin Kuehner from the Brown-Nicollet-Cottonwood Water Quality Board-Little Cottonwood River Clean Water Partnership presented. He provided handouts on the Brown County Conservation Tour held Thursday, June 17, 2004 to give policy makers a first hand view of recent conservation efforts that help protect and enhance soil and water quality. There were 10 stops ranging from a dairy farm to recently restored wetlands and prairies. Kevin talked about two major projects: 1) Little Cottonwood which involves three counties and deals with conservation practices. The main issue is flooding. Over 4,500 acres were eligible for CREP with 2,500 of those acres enrolled. Over half those acres are located in the 100 year flood plain. Since CREP enrollment was completed in 2002, CRP is being emphasized and filter strips encouraged. 2) In the Lake Hanska Watershed Project special emphasis has been placed on protecting and enhancing the 1800 acre lake. The project is replacing intakes with rock inlets. Rock inlets deliver up to 40% less sediment and particulate phosphorus than open tile intakes.

Another tour, starting in St. Peter, will be given on September 2nd and will illustrate partnering efforts with South Central agencies. There are new programs in regard to wetlands and they are educating the public and land owners. Contact Kevin to get on their mailing list.

1. **Call to Order:** Chair James Ische called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m.
2. **Roll Call:** Twenty-one (21) counties were present, enough for a quorum. Chair Ische thanked Sibley County and Commissioner Woehler for hosting the Board today. Blue Earth County Commissioner Al Bennett has resigned to pursue an employment opportunity. Commissioner Katy Wortel will be the new delegate. There will be discussion later about filling his position on the Executive Committee.
3. **Agency, Citizen, County and Watershed Updates:**

Hawk Creek Watershed Project – Loren Engelby: Their septic loan program has 1.4 million dollars to loan out for ISTS. There will be another \$872,000 for three additional years and the expectation is this money will also be used quickly. He submitted two grant proposals to MPCA and both

were funded. Funds will support BMPs. They have teamed with NRCS to push CRP and blind /side inlets. The three counties in this organization work with ditch authorities, commissioners and land owners to do a 50% cost share which helps land owners and is very successful.

High Island Creek Watershed Implementation Project – Scott Kudelka: This is the first year of Phase II. There are low interest loans for septic upgrades, and grant dollars for cost share and incentive payments.

Rush River Watershed Assessment Project- Scott Matteson: Diagnostic studies will be finished this fall and a Phase II application will be submitted in October.

Friends of the Minnesota Valley –Lori Nelson, Kevin Bigalke and Scott Sparlin: Kevin announced that the 2nd Annual Grassroots Celebration will be held on September 18th. This year they are partnering with the Lower Minnesota River Watershed District, and in conjunction with the Minnesota River Audubon Chapter's birding day. The Nye Center will also be involved, as well as a river tour given. The location of the celebration will be at Memorial Park in Shakopee.

Scott Sparlin announced the 1st Annual Rural Land Opportunities will be held this Thursday, July 22nd and Friday, July 23rd at the Le Sueur County Fairgrounds in Le Center. Alternative crops will be highlighted and there will be a free barbeque and band playing in the evening. On Saturday, July 31st, the 1st Giant Fishing contest will be held in Le Sueur. Mankato Paddling and Outing Club will be there providing canoe trips on the river. CCMR is releasing a drainage policy reform report the next month or two. HE is hoping this document contains positive information and will spark debate. Each commissioner will receive a copy of this report.

BWSR – Jeff Nielsen: Stevens County will be working on priority concerns in two weeks. Lincoln and Yellow Medicine are preparing the final drafting of their final plans. Pipestone County is unique in that the water plan is being combined with the comprehensive land use plan. Le Sueur and Martin Counties are starting the process by exploring what is important to citizens and government while keeping a holistic viewpoint within the basin. Fiscal year 2005 grants are becoming available and the grant application process will begin soon.

MET Council - Jack Frost: The monitoring for low flow has been discontinued due to the amount of rain received. However it has provided good data. He has not been reappointed to the BWSR Board; a replacement appointment has not yet been made. Jack also noted that Char Koehler who is also an advocate for county government has not been re-appointed.

MPCA – Larry Gunderson: Lac qui Parle-Yellow Bank Watershed Project and Chippewa River Watershed Projects have TMDL projects out for public review until August 6th. EPA has put pressure to use the 319 funding towards TMDL projects. Hawk Creek Watershed Project is working on phosphorus TMDLs, Lac-qui Parle Yellow Bank Watershed Project on ammonia TMDLs and Chippewa River Watershed Project on fecal coliform TMDLs. MPCA is checking with St. Cloud State University about performing a survey statewide. Larry will give the Board an opportunity to add questions. He suggested that the Board talk to their watershed groups to get their input on what specific questions should be asked in order to obtain certain information.

There was a question about buying and selling pollution credits. Some businesses discharge phosphates to local waters and create impairments. They are not given permits to operate unless they offset the phosphorus. The cost may be too prohibitive for the facility to put reduction technology in place and it may be more cost efficient to have another facility reduce it for them. St. Peter and Mankato have the technology. MPCA sets the policy on nutrient trading. Each case is reviewed individually, permit by permit.

All watersheds have incorporated TMDL reduction in their plans. The MRB should determine how knowledgeable they wish to be about TMDLs and how much they want to be involved in the operation and outcomes of the TMDL process. MPCA will be sharing their findings with the public this fall. Larry can arrange to have a presentation on TMDLs for the Board. Anyone concerned about the permitting process can contact Larry.

Bob Finley announced that he started working for MPCA on July 1, 2004, as the SW Regional Manager, with an office in Willmar. He is in charge of the feedlot program statewide. The program has an advisory task force recommending changes.

COUNTY Updates: None

CITIZEN Updates: None

4. Approval of Agenda: Judy Hanson made a motion to approve the agenda and Tom Warmka seconded the motion. All in favor; agenda approved.

5. Approval of Minutes: Jeanne Olson made a motion to approve the minutes and Ray Bayerl seconded the motion. All in favor; minutes approved.

Approval of Financials: Financial information is in the board packet. Joe Harris made a motion to approve the financials and Jim Dahlvang seconded the motion. All in favor; motion carried.

6. On-Going Business: Pivotal Decisions for the Future of the MRB.

Chair Ische provided a brief history of the MRB. The organization began in 1995 with counties coalescing to prevent being state operated; the mode was one of being reactive rather than proactive. There are a few state legislators who are willing to assist the MRB but they expect the members of the MRB united in their goal(s).

Catherine Rasmussen from the University of Minnesota Extension Service attended the June 30th Executive Committee meeting. She is here today to assist the Board in focusing on making a decision. Although Bob Finley is now working with MPCA, the positive association with MSU-Mankato and Water Resources Center continues. She has heard that the MRB has been status quo and there is a desire to move forward. She is here as a facilitator and neutral party creating a process for structured dialogue. Issues and consequences will be discussed through the use of SWOT/SPOT (Strengths, Weaknesses/Problems, Opportunities and Threats). Strengths are capabilities and successes. Problems are gaps or shortcomings or anything that gets in the way. Opportunities are external and are future projects, services and products. Threats impede or stop the progress. Threats are external and in the future. The process will facilitate a decision either to dissolve or go another route. The group was split into smaller groups and given ten minutes to jot down individual thoughts first and then ten minutes to discuss them as a small group. One person in each group was assigned to combine all the thoughts/ideas and relay them in the large group setting.

Option 1: Joint Venture between MRB and WRC

- Strengths:**
- Save administration dollars.
 - More time for projects.
 - Access to college resources. Shared technology and staff.
 - Large strong voice. Strong legislative voice.
 - Personnel for grant writing and grant writing expertise.
 - Keeps focus on the watershed.
 - Already organized.
- Problems:**
- No desire; lack of direction.
 - Turf battles.
 - Headquarters not centralized in basin.
 - Joint venture costs more than current expenditures.
 - Time constraints between the two organizations.
 - Stable funding.
 - Prioritization of projects.
 - Maintaining MRB identity.
 - May not have all the right partners involved.
 - Lack of mission and the layer of support.
 - Perception of status quo if continue with the venture.
- Opportunities:**
- Greater funding potential.
 - Combined organizational clout, especially in lobbying.
 - Political power.
 - Access to equipment and students.
 - New ideas, different visions.
 - Improvement in river quality.
 - Better understanding of data communicated through policy makers.
 - Bring back the Technical Advisory Committee.
 - Involve the non-profits more.
- Threats:**
- What if we don't do it?
 - More meetings.
 - Partners withdraw.
 - Perception of status quo (outside).
 - Loss of University funding.
 - MRB loses power to WRC – who's using whom?
- BEST POSSIBLE outcome that could happen:**
- Stability and shared costs.
 - Clarity of vision from better interconnectivity of groups.
 - Strength in numbers.
 - Gain a strong voice to use for stable funding opportunities.
 - Keep political power.
- WORST POSSIBLE outcome that could happen:**
- Unstable leadership and chaos.
 - Status quo.
 - Communication gap.
 - Lack of support by member counties – spinning wheels.
 - Loss of focus on the Minnesota River and projects.

II. OPTION 2: DISSOLUTION

- Strengths:** Free up time and dollars
Fresh start with the river problems.
Less stress.
Less meetings.
- Problems:** Once gone it is difficult to bring the organization back.
Legislature gets even more confused.
Loss of creditability for local government.
Lose lobbying power.
Diminishing county commitment.
Loss of political clout.
Less knowledge of what citizens want.
Lose strategic improvement opportunities.
Funding competition.
Cost involved in sun setting the organization.
- Opportunities:** Watersheds get stronger.
Focus on local projects.
Much more virulent organization formed involving new alliances, such as cities.
More manageable organization; strategically organized.
Non-profits might get more involved.
- Threats:** Less monitoring of streams and rivers.
Other watersheds in the state take our funding- funding goes elsewhere.
Negative legislative response.
Fragmentation and duplication of efforts.
Possible state or federal takeover.
Basin-wide initiatives more difficult to achieve.
Lose collaborative effort with state and federal agencies.
Increased pollution.
- BEST OUTCOME that could happen:**
Strength of local efforts.
Refocused time and funding on local projects.
Improved organization that would include cities.
More concentration on local watershed groups.
No dues.
- WORST OUTCOME that could happen:**
No more projects; no more monitoring.
In the next 5 years we learn that we should have kept the organization going.
Chaos, confusion or hostile takeover.
Lose overall unified voice in lobbying.
Some other organization takes over (could be good or bad).

With this exercise the Board can make the best informed decision as possible, with as much consensus as possible. If this organization wishes to continue then how does it eliminate the status quo and become successful? There are other questions to consider. Does the MRB have more strength as a separate entity, with grass roots support or is it stronger with an affiliation with MSU. Maybe this board needs to dissolve and re-form as a new organization. The Executive Committee is expecting the Full Board to decide where it is heading either by vote or by consensus today.

ATTACHMENT D
Minnesota River Joint Powers Agreement
(Blue Earth County Example)

Minnesota River Basin Joint Powers Agreement

Original Agreement July 12, 1995

Revised March 16, 1998

Further Revised November 15, 1999

Further Revised May 15, 2000

Approved With Revisions July 12, 2000

Section 1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this agreement is the joint exercise of powers by the undersigned counties to promote the orderly water quality improvement and management of the Minnesota River Watershed through information sharing, education, coordination and related support to the member counties by assisting in the implementation and goal achievement of comprehensive water plans which counties may develop and implement in accordance with 103B.311 and 103B.315 of Minnesota Statutes, to-wit:

Subd. 1. County duties. Each county is encouraged to develop and implement a comprehensive water plan. Each county that develops and implements a plan has the duty and authority to:

(1) Prepare and adopt a comprehensive water plan that meets the requirements of this section and section 103B.315;

(2) Review water and related land resources plans and official controls submitted by local units of government to assure consistency with the comprehensive water plan; and

(3) Exercise any and all powers necessary to assure implementation of Comprehensive water plans.

All in accordance with the intent of Section 471.59 of Minnesota Statutes, to wit:

Subd. 1. Agreement. Two or more governmental units, by agreement entered into through action of their governing bodies, may jointly or cooperatively exercise any power, common to the contracting parties or any similar powers, including those which are the same except for the territorial limits within which they may be exercised. The agreement may provide for the exercise of such powers by one or more of the participating governmental units on behalf of the other participating units. The term "governmental unit" as used in this section includes every city, county, town, school district, other political subdivision of this or any adjoining state, and any agency of the state of Minnesota or the United States, and includes any instrumentality of a governmental unit means an instrumentality having independent policy making and appropriating authority.

Section 2 NAME OF ASSOCIATION

The association established herein shall be known as the Minnesota River Basin Joint Powers Board, herein referred to as the "MRBJPB".

Section 3 MEMBERSHIP

The member counties under this agreement are those counties lying within the boundaries of the watersheds of the Minnesota River, namely, Big Stone, Blue Earth, Brown, Carver, Chippewa, Cottonwood, Dakota, Douglas, Faribault, Freeborn, Grant, Hennepin, Jackson, Kandiyohi, Lac Qui Parle, Le Sueur, Lincoln, Lyon, Martin, McLeod, Murray, Nicollet, Pipestone, Pope, Ramsey, Redwood, Renville, Rice, Scott, Sibley, Steele, Stevens, Swift, Traverse, Waseca, Watonwan, Yellow Medicine.

Section 4 EFFECTIVE DATE AND AGREEMENT

This agreement shall take effect and be enforced after the date of execution of the same by the authorized representatives of the governing Boards of the counties included herein.

Section 5 CHANGE OF AGREEMENT

The provisions of this agreement shall remain in effect until and unless amended by all counties of the MRBJPB by unanimous agreement of the membership.

Section 6 FUNDING

PART A. Contributions From Member Counties.

The MRBJPB may accept gifts, grants or loans of money or other property, or in-kind services, from member counties.

Part B. Funding From Outside Sources.

The MRBJPB may apply for and accept gifts, grants or loans of money, other property or assistance from the United States Government, the State of Minnesota, or any person, association or agency for any of its purposes; enter into any agreement in connection therewith; and hold, use and dispose of any such money, other property or assistance in accordance with the terms of the gift, grant, loan or agreement relating thereto.

Section 7 WITHDRAWAL AND TERMINATION

PART A. Withdrawal

Procedure. Any member county may withdraw from this agreement upon the following two conditions: (a) giving 90 days written notice to the chairperson of the Executive Board; and (b) showing that the payment of all amounts due and owing have been paid. Notice shall be a certified copy of a resolution of its board of commissioners declaring its intentions to withdraw from this agreement of a specified date. Upon receipt of the resolution, the chairperson of the Executive Board shall forward a copy of the resolution to each member county. In the event of withdrawal by any member county, this agreement shall remain in full force and effect as to all remaining members.

Effect. Withdrawal by any member county shall not terminate this agreement. Withdrawal shall not act to discharge any liability incurred or chargeable to any member county before the effective

date of withdrawal. Such liability shall continue until discharged by law or agreement. A member county who withdraws shall not be entitled to a refund of funds paid, or forgiveness of funds owed, to the MRBJPB. A withdrawing member county shall not be entitled to the return of any personal property given, granted, leased or loaned by it to the MRBJPB, unless such personal property was given, granted, leased or loaned contingent upon county's membership in MRBJPB.

PART B. Termination.

This agreement shall terminate upon the occurrence of any one of the following events:

- (1) When necessitated by operation of law or as a result of a decision by a court of competent jurisdiction; or
- (2) When a majority of the member counties agree, by resolution, to terminate the agreement. Termination shall not discharge any liability incurred by the MRBJPB or by the member counties during the term of the agreement. Upon a decision to terminate pursuant to Section 7, Part B, and prior to the effective termination, the MRBJPB shall wind up its business, including the defense and provocation of any claims. Surplus funds held by the MRBJPB shall then be distributed to the member counties in proportion to their Contributions. The MRBJPB shall approve a final report of these activities and affairs prior to the effective date of termination.

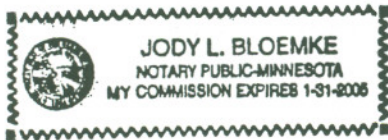
I Colleen Landkamer, Board Chair of Blue Earth, County in Minnesota, do hereby accept the terms of the Joint Powers Agreement of the Minnesota River Basin Joint Powers Board on this 7th day of December 2000.

Colleen Landkamer
Board Chair Signature

12-7-00
Date

Jody A. Bloemke
Notary Signature

12-7-00
Date



ATTACHMENT E
Minnesota River Joint Powers Board Operating By-Laws
(Blue Earth County Example)

OPERATING BY-LAWS MINNESOTA RIVER BASIN JOINT POWERS BOARD

Section 1 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Subd. 1 Membership. The board of directors shall consist of one representative and alternate from each county board of commissioners included in this agreement.

Subd. 2 Qualifications. Each member of the board of directors shall be a member of each respective County Board and shall be appointed by the respective County Board.

Subd 3. Terms. The term of appointment shall be three (3) years, with a maximum of three (3) terms.

Subd. 4 Meetings. The board of directors shall meet at least two (2) times per year, or more often if needed at the location to be set by the Chairperson of the Board, with at least ten (10) days advance notice given to each county. Notice in writing unless circumstances do not permit.

Subd. 5 Quorum. A quorum shall consist of a simple majority of the members of the board of directors.

Subd. 6 Officers. Officers shall consist of a chairperson and vice-chairperson, 2nd vice-chair, secretary and treasurer who will be elected during the first meeting of the board of directors and during the first meeting following January 1 of each year. Officers are elected for one (1) year terms with a maximum of two (2) terms per position. The vice-chairperson shall assume the role of chairperson during temporary absence or disability of the chairperson.

Should the chairperson be succeeded by another appointee during their term of office, the vice-chairperson shall serve as chairperson until the expiration of the chairperson's term. Should both the chairperson and vice-chairperson be succeeded prior to the expiration of their terms in such offices, the second vice-chair would then assume the duties of the chairperson. Should all three positions be succeeded prior to the expiration of their terms in such offices, the board shall re-elect a new chairperson and vice-chairperson and second vice-chair to serve until the following January 1. Should the offices secretary and / or treasurer become vacant due to disability or succession, the board shall by majority vote appoint the successor(s).

The chairperson shall preside at all meetings of the board, if present, and shall perform all other duties and functions usually incumbent upon such an officer and all administrative functions usually assigned to them by the board. The secretary and treasurer shall perform such duties and functions usually incumbent upon such an officer and all other functions assigned to them by the board.

Subd. 7 Executive Board. The executive board herein shall by majority vote, have the power between meetings to implement ministerial, as opposed to policy, decisions. Said executive board members shall consist of the officers listed in subdivision 6, i.e. chairperson, vice-chairperson, 2nd vice-chair, secretary and treasurer. A quorum of the Executive Board shall consist of a simple majority of the members of the Executive Board.

Subd. 8 Procedure. That the MRBJPB shall exercise all powers and authority through an affirmative vote of the majority of its members present at a regular meeting or at a duly held special meeting if a quorum is present.

Subd. 9 Compensation. The MRBJPB Board may pay a per diem and reasonable expenses for official meetings if resources are adequate to do so, as determined by the Board.

Subd. 10 Plan. As soon as practicable after the ratification of this agreement by the parties hereto, the board shall develop and adopt a plan for meeting the purposes outlined in SECTION 1, and shall update this plan as conditions warrant. The MRBJPB shall facilitate implementation of programs to achieve the purposes outlined in SECTION 1.

Subd. 11 Benefits. That if and when any costs are incurred other than administrative costs for any and all projects to be undertaken by said board, said costs shall be apportioned in an equitable manner to the counties benefited, as determined by the MRBJPB, and as ratified by the respective County Board of the affected counties. Any and all insurance costs shall be considered project costs.

Subd. 12 Administrative Budget. That annual administrative budget shall be submitted and approved on annual basis by a majority of the MRBJPB Board, subject to approval and ratification by each County Board to the extent each county is required to provide county funds to said administrative budget.

I Colleen Landkammer, Board Chair of Blue Earth, County in Minnesota, do hereby accept the By-Laws of the Minnesota River Basin Joint Powers Board on this 7th day of December, 2000.

Colleen Landkammer
Board Chair Signature

12-7-00
Date

Jody A. Bloemke
Notary Signature

12-7-00
Date

