

# Mississippi Headwaters Board Work Plan

## July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013 to June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2014

This Work Plan is submitted as required by Minnesota Statute 103F.361 to 103F.377 and the DNR. The Work Plan is to be implemented by the joint powers board member counties of Aitkin, Beltrami, Cass, Clearwater, Crow Wing, Hubbard, Itasca and Morrison in conjunction with the attached budget.

### **WORK PLAN:**

The Mississippi Headwaters Board (MHB) participates and provides leadership and staff support to citizens and partners of the Upper 400 mile Mississippi River corridor, as funding permits, in four program areas: **A.** Long Range Planning through administration of the Comprehensive Plan; **B.** Resource Stewardship, River utilization and Best Management Practices implementation; **C.** Public Education, Information and Incentives, and **D.** Administration.

The State has made River Protection a priority, and the Mississippi Headwaters Board stands ready to champion the drive. It is clear that this priority is a long term initiative. The funding necessary to complete the mandate will require tapping into many revenue streams such as General State levy funding, Clean Water Legacy and Lessard Sams to name a few. The Work Plan and Budget outlined here will require effective planning to execute the State's water protection initiatives. This organization is up to the challenge with and through the on-going support of the State, our eight member counties and various local agencies. Below are three key initiatives that the Mississippi Headwaters Board plans to execute, followed by the four program area details as mentioned above (A, B, C and D).

### **2014 INITIATIVES**

#### **I. Executive Director -**

The Mississippi Headwaters Board has determined that an Executive Director is needed to coordinate Upper Mississippi Headwaters activities within the corridor. This position will take the mission and vision of the MHB and work to implement the Comprehensive Plan while coordinating land and water plan activities between the eight headwater counties. Concentration will begin with the prioritization of critical areas and project development along the first 400 mile corridor of the Upper Mississippi as identified through the BWSR 'Prioritizing Conservation Projects Implementation' Grant. This position will serve as a spokesman for the MHB with local, state and federal partners to secure funding to carry out the vision.

- II. Data Augmentation** – The "Prioritizing Conservation Projects Implementation" Grant has identified a number of data gaps along the first 400 mile corridor of the Upper Mississippi River. Filling these gaps would be a high priority and would entail using the available existing data. Through detailed water quality trend analysis of these gap areas, mitigation strategies and priority projects can be identified in cooperation with local efforts.

- III. **Project Identification / Implementation** – Once specific areas along the river corridor have been identified through the data augmentation process, funds can be best directed toward the development and prioritization of projects per the specific recommendation and over-sight of the Executive Director. These may include: Feed Lots & Septics, Restoration and Re-forestation, Impervious, Stormwater, Agricultural practices, Groundwater, Conservation Easements, Land Applications and Water Quality / Monitoring.

## **PROGRAM AREAS**

### **A. Long Range Planning through administration of the Comprehensive Plan (Governance)**

1. Review the existing Plan on an annual basis and update as needed
2. Facilitate at least 2 public hearings in each county on any Plan changes
3. Facilitate communication and cooperation between the counties and other agencies via resolutions of support and cooperative agreement procurement
4. Assist the individual 8 counties in the development of a Water Plan chapter amendment specific to water quality objectives along the first 400-miles of the river corridor
5. Submit reports as required to State and DNR
6. Review and certification of land use actions w/in the first 400 miles of the Mississippi River corridor
7. Prepare and present to the appropriate policy committees of the Minnesota legislature a Biennial report concerning the action of the Board in exercising the authority granted by the legislature under sections 103F.361 to 103F.377

### **B. Encourage Resource Stewardship and Best Management Practices (Working Waters)**

1. Partner with and support entities within the watershed with the potential to impact the values of the River by improved utilization practices via collaborative exchange of water quality report analysis (i.e. GIS and existing data sets)
2. Participate as members, ex-officio members and liaison of lake and river citizen groups
3. Attend various public meetings in support of Source Water and Wellhead Protection Projects in composite SWP areas
4. Continue to encourage new techniques and practices specifically in municipal annexations and townships implementing through regular communication, attendance of meetings and/or involvement in a cities task force
5. Review, certify, and track city/township ordinances as they affect the Mississippi Headwaters corridor, while supporting each in the strategic development and implementation of projects along the river
6. Update and maintain the WEB site to provide public easy to use/find information about the board, area activities and other pertinent regulatory information
7. Create a venue on the MHB WEB site that allows on-line video integration/blogging and citizen forum capabilities
8. Conduct public meetings and training as necessary to afford opportunity to the public to be fully informed of the plan, BMP's and project cost-share opportunities

9. Advocate safe and environmentally conscientious community/public recreational access to and usage of the river corridor
10. Produce literature/publications (i.e. Guide Book) for the on-going education of river stewardship
11. Support the positions of the MHB and perform tasks as required to fulfill the Statute and values of the MHB
12. Cooperation in the study of coordinated management of Headwaters Dams (i.e. ROPE) as a system rather than individual sites in the MHB corridor

**C. Plan Implementation through Public Education, Information and Incentives**  
*(Water Monitoring)*

1. Secure funding for various Mississippi Headwaters River Quality programs
2. Participate and encourage implementation of goals through collaboration on projects in the watershed, specifically the Minnesota Upper Mississippi River Basin
3. Conduct public meetings and training as necessary to afford opportunity to the public to be fully informed of water monitoring opportunities and practices
4. Work with other area organizations/partners on various grants throughout the Upper Mississippi River (i.e. 319 grant) for water monitoring programs

**D. Administration:**

Consistent with the MCIT (Minnesota County Trust Insurance) and other government policies, MHB will administer, coordinate, and communicate efficiently and ethically in the public interest, to provide cost efficient, reliable and courteous public service to the best of its ability. This will be done in compliance with the enabling statute and the Comprehensive Land-use Plan. The MHB computer tools will be used to the maximum potential within the abilities of MHB, taking into consideration that not all constituents in the public sector are computer literate or accessible, and rely on traditional means of communication. Services provided:

1. Provide technical support, staff support, comment, training and review as needed
2. Ensure consistent administered action of minimum standards through zoning procedures and a prioritized methodology for specific river focused objectives
3. Provide review and comment of conditional use projects in the corridor
4. Certify or disapprove variances, ordinances and amendments to zoning ordinances
5. Work with applicants (and/or local zoning personnel) prior to the public hearing in order to improve application quality and compliance
6. Meetings (External Operations)
  - a. MHB will meet monthly or as necessary to review and certify zoning variances, amendments and subdivision from the eight member counties
  - b. Prepare testimony as needed
  - c. Provide a monthly staff report on budget, correspondences, programs and pertinent issues
  - d. MHAC (MHB Advisory Committee) will meet according to the by-laws and as deemed necessary
  - e. Assemble a PRC (Project Review Committee) to assist the board with filtering area zoning/environmental projects for board involvement
  - f. Administer and maintain professional services and contracts as needed

## 7. Internal Operations

- a. The Executive Director with the direction of the MHB will oversee MHB activities in compliance with the Personnel Policy and continue planning process to acquire funding for the position to oversee day to day operations and ensure funding sustainability
  - i. Define duties & obligations
  - ii. Assure 8 county participation with MHB activities
  - iii. Locate/strengthen ties with other River water partners, Legislative agencies and NGU's
  - iv. Formal planning process for continued development of MHB role
  - v. Formulate liaison position on behalf of MHB (i.e. Senator Lessard)
- b. The Administrative Assistant with the direction of the MHB and Executive Director will perform office duties in compliance with the Personnel Policy
  - i. Maintain office and computer network
  - ii. Maintain website and mailing list files
  - iii. Archive old files
  - iv. Address needs in compliance with the MCIT, OSHA and other recommendations
  - v. Maintain financial system and provide:
    - Revenue accounts, invoices, contracts and expenditures
    - Monthly financial reports to the MHB
    - Assistance for audits
    - Prepare annual and FY budget, materials, and requests for each county
    - Coordinate annual budget
- c. Staff Development
  - 1. Continue professional education of staff and be appraised of events affecting staff
  - 2. Fulfill federal, state, local and MHB requirements for employees as discussed in the MHB Personnel Policy