



**Mississippi Headwaters Board  
Meeting Agenda  
Cass County Board Room Walker, MN**

**<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88578451615>  
May 26, 2023  
10:00 am**

**10:00 AM**

- **Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance**

**10:05 AM Approve/Amend**

- Agenda
- Consent Agenda – April '23 Minutes & Expenses

**Correspondence**

- BWSR Snapshot Article
- May Press Release
- Conservation Kiosk

**Planning and Zoning (Actions)**

- None

**Action / Discussion Items:**

- Aitkin Economic Development Opportunity- Discussion
- MHHCP Program Update- Discussion
- Morrison SWCD Funding Request- Action
- MHB MN Traditions commissioner content day
- Executive Directors report- Discussion

**Misc:** ☀ Legislature Update (if any) ☀ County Updates

**Meeting Adjourned - Thank you**

**Mtgs:** June 17, 2023 10:00 AM- 2:00 PM- Aitkin Paddle Your Glass Off resourcetaintment event  
June 23, 2023 10:00 AM- Cass County Courthouse, Walker, MN  
July 29, 2023 9:00 AM- Upriver Canoe/Kayak/SUP/Bike Raft Race  
August 2, 2023- Army Corps of Engineers Ribbon Cutting Ceremony  
October 27, 2023- 9:00 AM- MHB Biennial Conference, Breezy Point Resort

**Attachment**

Draft Minutes

Monthly Expenses

Mississippi Headwaters Board

April 28, 2023

Cass County Board Room

322 Laurel St.

Brainerd, MN

Optional interactive technology: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83698379427>

MEETING

MINUTES

Members present by Roll Call: Scott Bruns (Cass), Ted VanKempen (Hubbard), Michael Kearney (Aitkin), Bobby Kasper (Morrison), Cory Smith (Itasca interactive), Dean Newland (Clearwater), and Tim Terrill (Executive Director).

Others Present: Chip Leer (Fishing the Wildside), Mike Hirst (LOTW SWCD), Zach Gutknecht (Beltrami SWCD), Marcel Noyes (Hubbard County)

Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Van Kempen asked if there were any additions to the agenda.

**M/S (Newland/Kasper) to approve of the agenda. Motion carried unanimously.**

Chair Van Kempen asked for approval to the consent agenda. **M/S (Bruns/Smith) to approve of the Consent agenda. Motion carried unanimously.**

**Correspondence**

Tim provided the board with the April press release which provided information to public about the MHB's role in One Watershed One Plan.

**Planning and Zoning**

None

**Action/Discussion:**

1. Keep it Clean & MN Traditions- Tim briefly gave the board and overview of the recreational values in the MHB Comprehensive plan and stated that there is an opportunity for MHB to utilize MN Traditions social media campaign with another program currently being implemented statewide. Tim introduced Zach Gutknecht to the board and he gave a brief powerpoint about the Keep it Clean campaign which demonstrates the increased pressure, trash, and human feces in lakes where ice fishing occurs. Zach said that videos and educational materials have been developed to educate the public about this issue, but they lack a large distribution system to get the word out to the masses. Discussion ensued and Comm. Smith asked if bars or restaurants could get the coasters and information. Zach responded that Keep it Clean provides those resources for payment on a website. Comm. Van Kempen thought it would be helpful to have other lake associations in the MHB area know about this. Zach said that the people could contact him. Comm. Smith asked if there were any fines that can be given for these actions, and Zach said that it is a simple littering ticket. Various other legislative options were

discussed. Zach said other agencies are working collectively together for consistent messaging and he would like to see this implemented as a statewide campaign. He said that MHB is being approached today because of the MN Traditions number of followers in social media and agencies would like to use it as a distribution model. By consensus the board thought it was a good idea and encouraged a contract be brought before the board when the details are worked out so they can make a decision.

2. HR 1657- Tim provided the past history of the potential land exchange between Bowen lodge and the Chippewa National Forest (CNF). Tim said that the first letter of support given was almost two years ago and it was supporting the land exchange. He said that this letter is for the passage of HR 1657 which supports the land exchange. **M/S (Smith/Kasper) to approve of the two letters of support to be sent to the federal committees. Motion carried unanimously.**
3. Program review- Based on board discussion at the personnel committee meeting, Tim provided the board with an update on the progress and timeline of various programs he is working on using a program gantt chart.
4. Whiskey Creek contract approval- Tim provided the board with a map of the Whiskey Creek project that is funded by the LCCMR to give them familiarity with the location of the project. He also asked for them to approve of the contract which will allow the MHB to pass money to the Good Samaritan Society for the remediation of the project site which contains levels of Mercury in the soil. They will be using HR Green for oversight of the project. Discussion ensued about how to word the motion to allow flexibility in the contract for funding disbursement. **M/S (Smith/Van Kempen) to approve of the contract between MHB and Good Samaritan Society with MHB's discretion to modify the disbursement section in article 6.2 as needed. Motion carried unanimously.**
5. Website update- Tim showed a picture of the recreational signage webpage on the MHB website and said it was developed to tell people what the MHB is doing in the area of recreation. Tim said that he modified the webpage for it to be more user friendly and interactive because many people don't know where or how to get to these local accesses because many of these accesses don't have 911 addresses. Locals and out of towners can use the website to find these places where signage is to launch their watercraft. Verbage was changed from "stretch" to "excursion" so it feels more like an event than a place.

#### **Executive Director's Report**

1. Tim attended the Aitkin County Rivers and Lakes committee and said he met with Ken Westman, who is the CEO of Riverwood Health, to help plan a Miss. river trip. There is not much detail yet, but Tim would like to see the event happen between Riverwood and public health so that the two groups could meet each other.
2. Tim was asked to be on the Mill Park advisory committee for Little Falls.
3. Tim added the MHB resourcetainment event page to the Great River Road website so that multiple states can learn what to do in the Minnesota Mississippi river.
4. Signage- Tim attended the Mission Township Local Indian Council to seek approval for signage at the Andrusia fishing pier. After talking with the very helpful Council, Tim said he respects the tradition and place of the LLBO, and will not place signage on that site due to a unmarked cemetery being present at the site.
5. An update was given about the various dates and meetings coming up this year.

#### **County & Legislative Updates**

**None**

**M/S (Newland/Kasper) to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously.**

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Ted Van Kempen, Chairman of the Board

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Executive Director Tim Terrill

## April SFY'23 Budget Summary

		YTD spending/rei mbursement	Projected Budget	% of budget spent	
<b>Revenues:</b>	<b>Monthly Amount</b>				<b>Notes</b>
Governor's DNR grant (53290)		\$78,130.91	\$124,000.00	63.01%	non competitive quarterly reimbursement
LSOHC grant (53290)		\$6,444.18	\$9,000.00	71.60%	LSOHC reimbursement
Guidebook sales (58400)		\$100.00	\$200.00	50.00%	reimbursment for Guidebook sales
Enbridge program (58300)			\$12,000.00	0.00%	enbridge reimbursement
Miscell. Other revenue (58300)		\$3,625.00	\$3,600.00	100.69%	AIS reimbursement
MCIT Dividend (58300)		\$156.00	\$83.00	187.95%	MCIT refund
County Support (52990)		\$12,000.00	\$12,000.00	100.00%	8 county support
LCCMR acquisition			\$500.00	0.00%	competitive reimbursement
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$22,325.18</b>	<b>\$36,883.00</b>		
<b>Expenses:</b>	<b>Monthly Amount</b>				<b>Notes</b>
Salaries/Benefits FICA/Med/PERA/LIFE/LTD/Hlth/ WC(61000)	\$ 8,391.56	\$82,515.80	\$105,064.00	78.54%	reimbursed by Gov. DNR grant
MCIT insurance/work comp/liability (61500)		\$2,589.02	\$2,492.00	103.89%	reimbursed by Gov. DNR grant
MHB board Per Diem (62680)		\$1,700.00	\$2,200.00	77.27%	reimbursed by Gov. DNR grant
Hotel/Meals/travel exp. (63340)	\$ 20.35	\$458.53	\$550.00	83.37%	reimbursed by Gov. DNR grant
Commissioner Mileage (62720)	\$ 113.97	\$1,762.14	\$1,600.00	110.13%	reimbursed by Gov. DNR grant
Employee Mileage (63320)	\$ 565.68	\$2,574.47	\$3,000.00	85.82%	reimbursed by Gov. DNR grant
Professional Services (62990)	\$ 3,025.00	\$7,765.00	\$30,000.00	25.88%	CW financial, MPCA kiosk
Office supplies/operations (64090)	\$ 61.75	\$1,480.60	\$1,350.00	109.67%	telephone
Training & Registration Fees (63380)		\$400.00	\$750.00	53.33%	reimbursed by Gov. DNR grant
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 12,178.31</b>	<b>\$101,245.56</b>	<b>\$147,006.00</b>		

Governor's DNR grant is always \$124K every year

LSOHC grant is around \$6K to \$8K every year

\*The total under revenue does not reflect the \$124K because it is a non-competitive grant, and it doesn't always fall in the fiscal year.

ACCOUNT DETAIL HISTORY FOR 2023 04 TO 2023 04

ORG YR/PR	OBJECT JNL	PROJ EFF DATE	SRC REF1	REF2	REF3	CHECK #	OB	AMOUNT	NET LEDGER BALANCE	NET BUDGET BALANCE
74830	58300		Miscellaneous	Other	Revenue					
								REVISED BUDGET		.00
								PER 01	-22,750.00	-22,750.00
								PER 02	-187,700.00	-210,450.00
								PER 03	61,825.00	-148,625.00
23/04	1255	04/20/23	GNI 512530	Lisak	49261				-1,000.00	-149,625.00
	iNovah	CASS AIS SUPPORT								
			LEDGER BALANCES --- DEBITS:		61,825.00		CREDITS:	-211,450.00	NET:	-149,625.00
74830	61000		Salaries & Wages - Regular							
								REVISED BUDGET		.00
								PER 01	5,802.46	5,802.46
								PER 02	6,107.35	11,909.81
								PER 03	5,976.54	17,886.35
23/04	430	04/07/23	PRJ PR0407 1230407	1230407	1230407	1230		2,988.27	20,874.62	
	PAY040723	WARRANT=230407	RUN=1 BI-WEEKL							
23/04	1233	04/21/23	PRJ pr0421 1230421	1230421	1230421	1230		2,988.27	23,862.89	
	pay042123	WARRANT=230421	RUN=1 BI-WEEKL							
			LEDGER BALANCES --- DEBITS:		23,862.89		CREDITS:	.00	NET:	23,862.89
74830	61200		Active Insurance							
								REVISED BUDGET		.00
								PER 01	1,792.38	1,792.38
								PER 02	1,793.46	3,585.84
								PER 03	1,668.46	5,254.30
23/04	430	04/07/23	PRJ PR0407 1230407	1230407	1230407	1230		782.75	6,037.05	
	PAY040723	WARRANT=230407	RUN=1 BI-WEEKL							
23/04	1233	04/21/23	PRJ pr0421 1230421	1230421	1230421	1230		760.71	6,797.76	
	pay042123	WARRANT=230421	RUN=1 BI-WEEKL							
			LEDGER BALANCES --- DEBITS:		6,797.76		CREDITS:	.00	NET:	6,797.76
74830	61300		Employee Pension & FICA							
								REVISED BUDGET		.00
								PER 01	837.54	837.54
								PER 02	883.74	1,721.28
								PER 03	867.74	2,589.02
23/04	430	04/07/23	PRJ PR0407 1230407	1230407	1230407	1230		435.78	3,024.80	
	PAY040723	WARRANT=230407	RUN=1 BI-WEEKL							

ACCOUNT DETAIL HISTORY FOR 2023 04 TO 2023 04

ORG YR/PR	OBJECT PROJ JNL EFF DATE	SRC REF1	REF2	REF3	CHECK #	OB	AMOUNT	NET LEDGER BALANCE	NET BUDGET BALANCE
23/04	1233 04/21/23	PRJ pr0421	1230421	1230421	1230		435.78	3,460.58	
	pay042123 WARRANT=230421 RUN=1 BI-WEEKL								
	LEDGER BALANCES --- DEBITS:			3,460.58	CREDITS:		.00	NET:	3,460.58
74830	62100	Telephone			REVISED BUDGET				.00
					PER 01		61.73	61.73	
					PER 02		61.97	123.70	
					PER 03		61.72	185.42	
23/04	655 04/18/23	API 006205		191375	33970		6.75	192.17	
	W C041823 PHONE BILL COUNTY WIDE CONSOLIDATED TELECOM								
23/04	1233 04/21/23	PRJ pr0421	1230421	1230421	1230		55.00	247.17	
	pay042123 WARRANT=230421 RUN=1 BI-WEEKL								
	LEDGER BALANCES --- DEBITS:			247.17	CREDITS:		.00	NET:	247.17
74830	62680	Non-Employee Per Diems			REVISED BUDGET				.00
					PER 01		100.00	100.00	
					PER 02		200.00	300.00	
					PER 03		213.97	513.97	
23/04	511 04/10/23	APM 006980		190323	33840		-113.97	400.00	
	GL CHANGE MHB MEETING MILEAGE ROBERT F. KASPER								
	LEDGER BALANCES --- DEBITS:			513.97	CREDITS:		-113.97	NET:	400.00
74830	62720	Non-Employee Mileage			REVISED BUDGET				.00
					PER 01		104.80	104.80	
					PER 02		203.05	307.85	
					PER 03		229.69	537.54	
23/04	511 04/10/23	APM 006980		190323	33840		113.97	651.51	
	GL CHANGE MHB MEETING MILEAGE ROBERT F. KASPER								
	LEDGER BALANCES --- DEBITS:			651.51	CREDITS:		.00	NET:	651.51
74830	62990	Prof. & Tech. Fee - Other			REVISED BUDGET				.00
					PER 01		9,315.53	9,315.53	
					PER 02		625.00	9,940.53	

ACCOUNT DETAIL HISTORY FOR 2023 04 TO 2023 04

ORG YR/PR	OBJECT JNL	PROJ EFF DATE	SRC REF1	REF2	REF3	CHECK #	OB	AMOUNT	NET LEDGER BALANCE	NET BUDGET BALANCE
23/04	437	04/11/23	API 101649		191006	PER 03 1946940		1,745.00	11,685.53	
	W C041123	WEST INVOICE # 3			WEST COMMUNICATIONS			6,905.25	18,590.78	
23/04	564	04/11/23	API 003534		191230	1946990		1,000.00	19,590.78	
	W A041123	CASS SWCD ADDITION TO 2023			CAM FISHING THE WILDSIDE					
23/04	901	04/18/23	API 006007		191782	34018		2,876.84	22,467.62	
	W A041823	TNC INVOICES # 3			THE NATURE					
23/04	901	04/18/23	API 007203		191783	34013		949.34	23,416.96	
	W A041823	HUBBARD SWCD INVOICE #3			HUBBARD COUNTY					
23/04	1526	04/25/23	API 100171		192206	999712131		2,500.00	25,916.96	
	W A042523	MPCA KIOSK			CROW WING SWCD					
23/04	1911	04/30/23	GEN					525.00	26,441.96	
		RECURRING FINANCIAL SERVICE								
LEDGER BALANCES --- DEBITS:					26,441.96	CREDITS:	.00	NET:	26,441.96	
74830	63320	Employee Mileage								
						REVISED BUDGET				.00
						PER 01		395.81	395.81	
						PER 02		310.48	706.29	
						PER 03		621.82	1,328.11	
23/04	1638	04/26/23	GNI					42.31	1,370.42	
	WF OOP	1434-Little Falls High School			TIM TERRILL - OOP -Little Falls High School					
23/04	1638	04/26/23	GNI					29.48	1,399.90	
	WF OOP	1434-Cass SWCD			TIM TERRILL - OOP -Cass SWCD					
23/04	1638	04/26/23	GNI					104.15	1,504.05	
	WF OOP	1434-Deer River High School			TIM TERRILL - OOP -Deer River High School					
23/04	1638	04/26/23	GNI					113.97	1,618.02	
	WF OOP	1434-Drop off signs to DNR Bem			TIM TERRILL - OOP -Drop off signs to DNR Bemidji					
23/04	1638	04/26/23	GNI					101.53	1,719.55	
	WF OOP	1434-Grand Rapids High School			TIM TERRILL - OOP -Grand Rapids High School					
23/04	1638	04/26/23	GNI					68.78	1,788.33	
	WF OOP	1434-monthly meeting			TIM TERRILL - OOP -monthly meeting					
23/04	1638	04/26/23	GNI					105.46	1,893.79	
	WF OOP	1434-Bemidji High School			TIM TERRILL - OOP -Bemidji High School					
LEDGER BALANCES --- DEBITS:					1,893.79	CREDITS:	.00	NET:	1,893.79	

ACCOUNT DETAIL HISTORY FOR 2023 04 TO 2023 04

ORG YR/PR	OBJECT PROJ JNL EFF DATE	SRC REF1	REF2	REF3	CHECK #	OB	AMOUNT	NET LEDGER BALANCE	NET BUDGET BALANCE
74830	63340	Hotel & Meals Travel Expense							
						REVISED BUDGET			.00
						PER 01	7.95	7.95	
						PER 02	10.89	18.84	
						PER 03	9.03	27.87	
23/04	1637 04/26/23	GNI					10.33	38.20	
	BREM PCARD meal after board meeting								
	TIM TERRILL - DAIRY QUEEN #12890 - meal after board meeting								
23/04	1637 04/26/23	GNI					10.02	48.22	
	BREM PCARD meal from bemidji HS								
	TIM TERRILL - BURGER KING #16833 - meal from bemidji H								
	LEDGER BALANCES --- DEBITS:			48.22	CREDITS:		.00	NET:	48.22
	GRAND TOTAL --- DEBITS:			125,742.85	CREDITS:		-211,563.97	NET:	-85,821.12

26 Records printed

\*\* END OF REPORT - Generated by Korie Wiggins \*\*

# Mississippi headwaters protections expand to tributaries, create more linked corridors



Project support came from the Outdoor Heritage Fund, as appropriated by the Minnesota State Legislature.

The Mississippi Headwaters Habitat Corridor Project (MHHCP) — a partnership among conservation organizations, local government units and state agencies focused on creating and expanding contiguous habitat complexes within the eight-county region — has protected about 7,000 acres and 50-plus miles of shoreline since 2016.

MHHCP's goal is to protect fish and wildlife habitat along the first 400 miles of the Mississippi River, its major tributaries, nine headwaters lakes and other high-quality habitat complexes.

This multi-phase headwaters corridor project aims to provide clean water for fish and to safeguard adjacent uplands, which are home to more than 350 species of animals and birds. The river feeds and shelters migratory waterfowl along the Mississippi River Flyway. Additionally, the project enhances

public recreational opportunities, especially for anglers, hunters and people looking to enjoy nature. Preserving the quality of water also protects a source of drinking water for downstream communities including St. Cloud and the Twin Cities.

The MHHCP is a partnership among the Mississippi Headwaters Board, the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR), the Trust for Public Land and the soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs) in Aitkin, Beltrami, Cass, Clearwater, Crow Wing, Hubbard, Itasca and Morrison counties. The partners are working to link private lands adjacent to permanently protected public lands — such as county, state, federal or tribal lands — to form contiguous, permanently protected habitat complexes. The headwaters region starts at Itasca State Park and ends at

*The Trust for Public Land created the Indian Jack Lake WMA in the Brainerd lakes area, and then added to it via fee-title acquisitions. The WMA includes about 270 acres of hardwood forest with more than 2 miles of shoreline. It is open to hunting, fishing, wildlife watching and paddling.*  
**Photo Credit:** Andy Richter



**Left:** An abundance of blazing stars attracted pollinators including a regal fritillary. **Photo Credit:** Peter Vogel **Center:** The Morrison SWCD showcased Vogel’s property during the SWCD’s summer 2022 conservation tour, which was timed to coincide with the monarch migration. Vogel said he has seen hundreds of monarchs crossing his property, some of them stopping to rest in the pine trees in the evening. **Photo Credit:** Morrison SWCD **Right:** Large-flowered trillium are among the wildflowers that grow in Vogel’s forest. **Photo Credit:** Peter Vogel

Morrison County’s southern border.

“The program has been extremely successful,” said Paula West, MHHCP project coordinator. “We’ve exceeded our program goals by over two-hundred and fifty percent. We’ve protected over 50 miles of the river so far, since 2016, and we’re moving along on keeping the water clean and habitat safe along the river.”

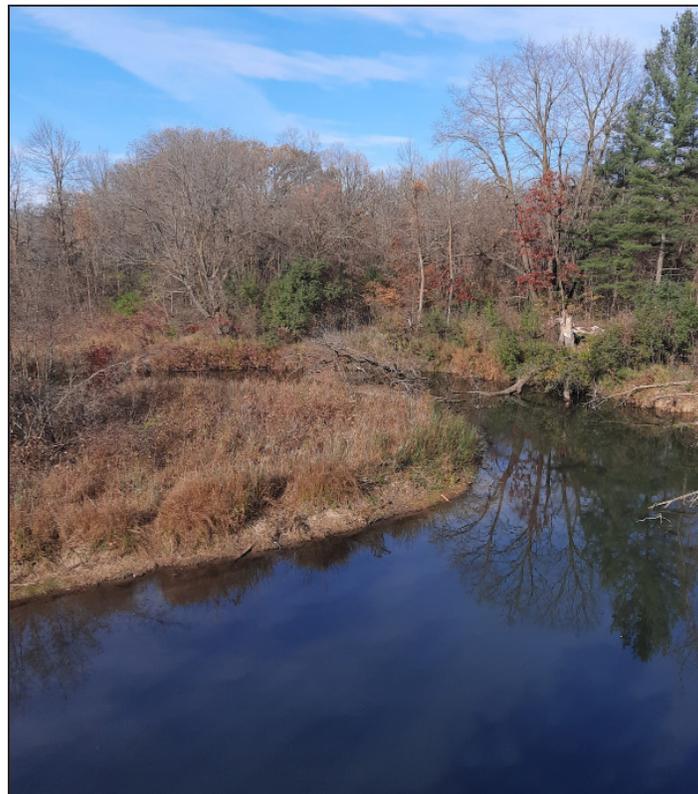
The MHHCP has received \$21.6 million in appropriations from the Outdoor Heritage Fund as recommended by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC) for the first six phases of the project. Nearly \$5.5 million of that money was available to fund [private landowners’ conservation easements](#) within the eight counties.

According to West, all but \$600,000 of that money has been spent or committed through 46 completed easements and seven that are being processed. West said partners planned to submit a request for Phase 7 funding to the LSOHC this month.

MHHCP partners would then present details of that funding request to the LSOHC in late summer. Presentations typically

**“ Many of the native animals depend upon that grassland habitat, and the only way you can make sure that they’re going to be there in the future is if you preserve some area for them to go and feed and reproduce and hang out. ”**

— Peter Vogel, Morrison County landowner



*The Swan River meanders through Vogel’s property, which was enrolled in a RIM easement through the MHHCP. Photo Credit: Morrison SWCD*

occur in August, and the council makes its funding recommendations to the legislature in October. If approved, July 1, 2024, is the earliest those funds

would be available. West said MHHCP partners would use the funds to preserve habitat and protect water quality through conservation easements.

Initially, project partners focused on land conservation bordering the main stem of the Mississippi River. Later, the focus expanded to include the river’s immediate watershed. Now, the partners have branched out even farther to include critical lands, which eventually drain to the river. That approach makes more opportunities for land conservation possible.

“The soil and water conservation districts in the eight counties are really the RIM (Reinvest in Minnesota) workhorses for this program,” West said. “These soil and water conservation districts do the easement work, and they have the local relationships with the landowners that are very important. Local people like to talk to local officials, to local professionals.”

Among the local professionals working with landowners on the MHHCP are Morrison SWCD staff members, whose role includes making landowners aware of programs available through the SWCD. Landowner Peter Vogel contacted the Morrison SWCD regarding his property bordering the Swan River, a Mississippi River tributary, in response to the letter he received

about the headwaters project.

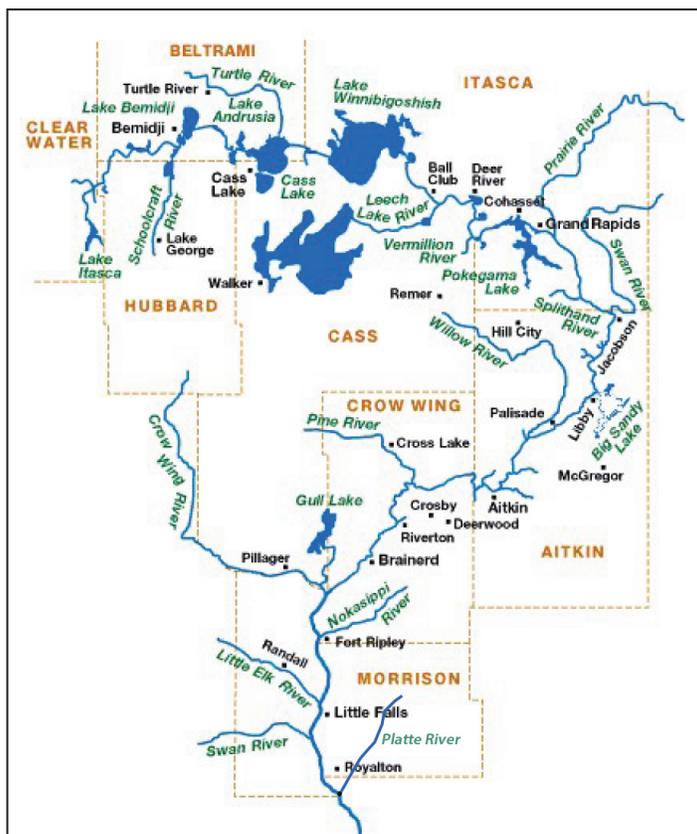
“We got to talking about the MHHCP and the Vogels had a pretty sizable amount of high-quality upland and shore land that they were operating and maintaining for the wildlife, and we thought (the MHHCP) would be a perfect fit,” said Lance Chisholm, Morrison SWCD RIM coordinator and water plan coordinator.

Vogel bought the 80-acre property with his late wife — a biology major with a keen interest in biodiversity — in the mid-1980s and built a house there. When they acquired the property, two fields that had been rented out lay fallow and full of weeds. Neither had been farmed for some time, Vogel said. Vogel guessed the native white pine forest on the southeast portion of the property had not been logged for 80 to 100 years — if ever; the topography made access difficult. The soil there is quite heavy and tends to be wet. Vogel said he thought the white pine forest — with many trees reaching more than 100 feet tall — is located in an old meander of the Swan River. Vogel suspects that the soil has never been disturbed. This low area is full of trillium, hepatica, false Solomon’s seal and other native wildflowers.

The Vogels planted trees and used previous RIM funding to establish a native prairie to provide habitat and food for monarchs and other pollinators. The property also has an oak forest that has not been logged in living memory, and a small cabin built in 1940. Vogel estimates the property includes about 1 mile of riverfront, given the



*The Trust for Public Land is in the process of acquiring and protecting what is known as the Sheep Ranch property — 2,500 acres in Hubbard County that would expand the boundaries of the Paul Bunyan State Forest. The property contains several lakes and rolling hills. Its protection would connect several other public lands, providing critical wildlife corridors, and providing public recreational opportunities including hunting, fishing, hiking and wildlife observation. Photo Credit: Andy Richter*



*The Mississippi headwaters region spans eight counties, starting in Itasca State Park and ending at the southern border of Morrison County. Minneapolis draws about 21 billion gallons of water from the Mississippi River each year, according to data from the city. Map Courtesy of Mississippi Headwaters Board*

Swan River’s winding path.

Vogel placed about 70 acres of the land in an MHHCP easement to protect that shoreline and to help

maintain and enhance the native prairie. The easement, which took about 16 months to complete, was recorded in July 2021.

Vogel, an attorney who specializes in real estate law, is keenly aware of development pressures on rural land.

“You get these little 5-acre parcels carved out because everybody wants 5 acres in the country. Then they mow the whole 5 acres, and you end up with a 5-acre lawn, which is essentially a desert to any wildlife,” Vogel said. “I feel it’s a unique piece of property. It’s a piece of property that I have spent 40 years protecting and developing, and I did not want to see it carved into 5-acre lots. There is a real destruction of habitat, especially the grassland habitat. ... Many of the native animals depend upon that grassland habitat and the only way you can make sure that they’re going to be there in the future is if you preserve some area for them to go and feed and reproduce and hang out.”

Beyond the habitat protection, Vogel said he was motivated to fulfill the wishes of his late wife, who started the project and whom Vogel said would have wanted to see the land preserved.

As of March 2023, Morrison SWCD had completed seven MHHCP RIM easements, which permanently protected 381 acres and about 5.6 miles of shoreline within the county.

“Soil and water conservation districts are uniquely positioned to build trusting relationships with the landowners. We want the districts to be the first stop for landowners when they’re seeking assistance to address environmental issues or wish to enhance the conservation benefits on their lands,” Chisholm

said. “When an easement is completed, the work doesn’t stop. There’s ongoing maintenance of the lands placed in the easement to ensure that the water quality and habitat benefits are maintained.”

Morrison SWCD staff members conduct yearly RIM easement checkups and work with landowners on maintenance.

Working with the MHHCP partners on easement projects has allowed Morrison SWCD to reach more landowners throughout the county who might be interested in permanent protection, according to SWCD staff. Most of the SWCD’s easement programs lie within a 5-mile radius of Camp Ripley.

The ability to focus on tributaries and their watersheds — instead of solely on lands bordering the Mississippi River,

which is highly developed in Morrison County — gives the Morrison SWCD more opportunities to permanently protect larger tracts of land in areas affecting the Mississippi River.

BWSR administers RIM easements, which remain privately owned.

The Trust for Public Land oversees fee-title acquisitions, another land conservation option in the MHHCP that results in land ownership by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources or the county in which the land is located. Unlike RIM easements, those fee-title lands are open to public hunting and fishing.

One unique aspect of the MHHCP is engaging local governments early in the process. For fee-title acquisitions, West said it is important that county governments are on board.

To ensure plans align with county goals, the Trust for Public Land’s Land Protection Director Bob McGillivray and Mississippi Headwaters Board Executive Director Tim Terrill inform county board members before starting any work on fee-title acquisitions. When they are close to closing on a property, they seek permission from the county board to finish the acquisition.

To date, the Trust for Public Land’s MHHCP efforts have protected 2,365 acres and 7.5 miles of undeveloped shoreline, leveraged grant dollars with \$482,000 in private funding sources, and completed 11 acquisition projects (one Wildlife Management Area [WMA], one WMA addition, one Aquatic Management Area addition, three state forest additions and five county forest additions).

Together, RIM easements

plus fee-title acquisitions have protected 7,000 acres and 50-plus miles of shoreline through the MHHCP. As of March 2023, 3,786 acres of RIM easements had been recorded. Another 1,088 were being processed, meaning BWSR has accepted the application and is now working through the easement process.

West said word of mouth has resulted in some sign-ups.

“Our partner SWCDs do outreach, but landowners talk to each other. So, Landowner A that has an easement talks to the adjacent Landowner B and he says, ‘Look, I got enrolled in this great program, and they’re paying me for what I’m already doing, and I don’t really want to do anything different with my land, so why don’t you get in the program, too,’” West said.



PROTECTING THE FIRST 400 MILES

IMMEDIATE PRESS RELEASE 5/1/23

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### **Mississippi Headwaters Board Approves Funding for Educational Kiosk**

At the March board meeting, the Miss. Headwaters Board (MHB) approved \$2,500 toward the funding of an educational kiosk. Kathy Moore from the MN Pollution Control Agency asked for funding to approve of the kiosk that houses a computer and software which demonstrates the importance of the Miss. River. The software was purchased by the MPCA and they need up to \$5000 to pay for the kiosk hardware. Kathy explained that the kiosk is moveable but they would like to keep it at the Brainerd visitor's center as a sitting location. Comm. Barrows stated that if this would be funded by the MHB, which is comprised of 8 counties, that it should be moved to each county fair during the summer. Comm. Van Kempen said that the SWCD's could use it at their fair booth for the public to view. Moore said that was a workable solution and would develop a calendar with groups to schedule its use. She stated that Crow Wing SWCD, and Crow Wing Lakes and Rivers Association have been approached as well to fund this kiosk, and the funding could be secured in the next month. After further discussion, the board approved of \$2,500 for the purchase of the hardware in hopes that it will educate others about the importance of the Mississippi river .



## **Planning and Zoning**

None

## **Action/Discussion**

Aitkin Economic Development Opportunity- Discussion

MHHCP Program Update- Discussion

Morrison SWCD Funding Request- Action

MHB MN Traditions commissioner content day

Executive Directors report- Discussion



## Mississippi Headwaters Board Funding Request Questionnaire

Crow Wing County Land Service Bldg. - 322 Laurel St. - Brainerd, MN 56401

Web Site: [www.mississippiheadwaters.org](http://www.mississippiheadwaters.org)

Below are some questions that the Mississippi Headwaters Board (MHB) requests your organization answer before the MHB board can distribute funds to requesting organizations. Please submit at least 1 month before any funding is needed. **The MHB was created in 1980 to protect the Natural, Recreational, Cultural, Scientific, and Historical values of the Mississippi River.**

1. Tell us about yourself. What is the primary purpose of your organization?

We are the Morrison SWCD and our mission is to provide leadership and direct assistance for conservation management of soil and water. Our office is based out of a USDA Service Center in Little Falls.

2. Tell us how this project will align with one or more of the multiple values listed above, and what you want to accomplish with your project?

We are requesting funds to help partially finance a summer soil health field day that will be held in Sobieski in August 2023. Since 2021 we have been working to build more awareness around the use of cover crops to help prevent soil erosion, preserve ground and surface water quality and to improve soil structure for healthier plants and better water infiltration. We believe this event will align with the mission of the MHB by working to maintain to protect the natural values of the Mississippi River. Since our program was initiated in 2021 we have been targeting farmers who grow crops in sensitive soils and those farmers that have not utilized cover crops in their operations in the past. We also have partnered with local private cooperatives to support a conservation agronomist in the area who can work to bridge the gap between private and public entities to help make cover crops a normalized practice in this area. Last year we hosted this event and had just over 100 producers attend and since then have signed up over 5,000 acres into cover crops. In Morrison County the Mississippi is surrounded by productive agriculture, most of which is used to grow specialty crops like potatoes, kidney beans and peas which are harvested early and have the most opportunity for supporting a successful cover crop. Our office believes that a lot of opportunity to protect the Mississippi and its main tributaries in the lower section of the MHB area is to work with these farmers to improve and incorporate BMPs on their land and as far as agricultural BMPs go, the best way to cover a lot of acres inexpensively is by integrating cover crops into these growers management. Our event hopes to continue a new culture of adoption and innovation in this area and we would appreciate your support. The agenda for the event will be heavy with presentations by local farmers who will share their experiences using cover crops, reduced tillage and nutrient management. We also plan to have equipment on site that is either new or has been retrofitted and a soil pit so attendees can see root structure of an existing cover crop. The event will be hosted at the Sobieski Community Center which abuts and Morrison SWCD Board member who will plant cover crops on his field for the event and maintain an area for tents for the outdoor demonstrations. The community center will be used to serve lunch and is equipped to hold 200 people comfortably.

3. What amount of funding are you requesting, and what will it be used for? Have you requested funds from other sources and are they secured?

We are requesting \$10,000 from MHB but would be happy with any contribution you see fit. Funding would be used primarily for promotion, food and rentals of tents, tables and chairs for the day.

Currently we have funding from:

- Minnesota Department of Agriculture MAWQCP program (\$1,000)
- TruTerra (\$250)
- National Association of Conservation Districts (\$1,000)
- Centra Sota Cooperative (\$1,000)

4. Is this project regional in scope and/or involve any of the MHB member counties (Clearwater, Hubbard, Beltrami, Cass, Itasca, Aitkin, Crow Wing, and Morrison)?

Our event last year did have attendees from Crow Wing and Aitkin Counties. We will be working with surrounding One Watershed One Plan groups this year to advertise the event as soil health is an identified goal in many of your MHB member counties.

5. What type of organization are you (governmental, Nonprofit, etc...)

We are a local unit of government.

# Executive Director Report

April- May 2023

## Personnel, Budget, Administration, Information & Education, Correspondence

1. Reviewed monthly budget.
2. Prepared monthly agenda packet.
3. Sent in monthly expense report.
4. Sent press release to newspapers.
5. Reviewed monthly variances as they are brought forward by counties.
6. Sent out letter to counties asking for \$1,500 for next year's contribution to the MHB.

## Meetings & Networking

1. Attended Brainerd Mississippi 1W1P. Next month there will be a Miss. River chapter.
2. Held meeting with Good Sam, Baxter, and myself to discuss contract to allow \$150K to be transferred to Good Sam for the remediation of the Whiskey Creek project. Good Sam chose to accept the money once the project was completed.
3. Met with Riverwood CEO and Kathy Ryan from Aitkin county and began the process of planning a Miss. river paddle in September 2023.
4. Submitted permit to sheriff's office for Upriver race.
5. Attended EQIP Local Work Group Meeting to discuss resource concerns that the Natural Resources Conservation Service will use to help enroll eligible participants into the EQIP program.
6. Attended Eagle Scout meeting for Zach Roberts who received an Eagle Scout award for his work of installing recreational signage on the Miss. river. I received a ES mentor pin for my coordination of the project.
7. Sent out updates to 200+ recreationalists for the Resourcetainment events happening this summer.
8. Sent out Biennial Conference Save-the Date notice to 236 potential attendees.