



**Mississippi Headwaters Board  
Meeting Agenda  
Cass County Courthouse. Building  
Walker, MN  
http  
August 23, 2024  
9:00 am**

**9:00 AM**

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

**9:05 AM Approve/Amend**

- Agenda
- Consent Agenda – July '24 Minutes & Expenses

**Correspondence**

- July Press Release
- Paddle & Pint Pictures
- Miss. Water History Paddle
- MPCA Whiskey Creek Article

**Planning and Zoning (Actions)**

- None

**Action / Discussion Items:**

- Program Gantt Chart review- discussion
- Update on County Letter of Support- discussion
- Selecting legislator for legislative increase- discussion
- Executive Directors report-discussion

Misc: Legislature Update (if any), County Updates

**Meeting Adjourned - Thank you**

**Mtgs: September 27, 2024 9:00 AM- MHB Monthly Meeting, Walker, MN**

Mississippi Headwaters Board  
July 19, 2024  
Cass County Board Room Walker, MN  
Optional interactive technology: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86720707547>

MEETING  
MINUTES

Members present: Ted Van Kempen (Hubbard), Craig Gaasvig (Beltrami), Bobby Kasper (Morrison), Cory Smith (Itasca interactive), Dean Newland (Clearwater interactive), Michael Kearney (Aitkin interactive), and Tim Terrill (Executive Director).

Video Interactive Reasons: Commissioners attending interactively is due to scheduling differences.

Others Present: Kevin Turnock, Aitkin Planning & Zoning, Lori and Ed Esler (landowners)

Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Van Kempen asked if there were any additions to the agenda. **M/S (Gassvig/Kasper) to approve of the agenda. Motion carried unanimously.**

**M/S (Kasper/Gaasvig) to approve of the Consent agenda.** Comm. Gaasvig asked that the Power Dam litter issue be added to the agenda. **Motion carried unanimously.**

### Correspondence

1. June Press Release- Tim provided the board with a press release of how the MHB supplied funding to the Crow Wing SWCD to pay for the design of a Best Management Erosion Practice to heal a gully that is emptying into the Mississippi river.

### Planning and Zoning

**A7a24- Ed Esler Variance-** Kevin Turnock from Aitkin County planning and zoning presented the Ed Esler variance to tear down an old home and replace it with a new home along the Mississippi river. Kevin stated that the old home is setback 80' from the OHW, and the new home being built will be setback 85'. Kevin stated that Aitkin County uses the island concept and how FEMA allowed existing homes to still exist in the floodplain, and new structures need to be elevated to an elevation of 1203.7. Discussion ensued and Commissioner Kasper asked if the same septic is being used, and Ed Esler replied in the affirmative. Comm. Van Kempen asked if it was a non-conforming lot and Kevin said it was. **M/S (Kasper/Gaasvig) to approve of the variance. Motion carried unanimously.**

## Action/Discussion:

1. Westcom Contract Approval- Terrill provided the board with a new contract allowing West Communications to be the contractor for the Miss. Headwaters Habitat Corridor Project. Tim stated he met with the contracting committee, and they discussed some changes to the contract. The differences were minor, and Tim stated that the old contract ran for three years, and the new contract would run for one year with the MHB board reviewing it at or before the expiration of the contract to renew. He stated that the deliverable being changed was that instead of allowing West Communications to coordinate and facilitate technical review committee meetings at least two times per year or as needed, the new contract would state to take meeting minutes for the technical review committee and the director could take on that responsibility which would increase MHB reimbursement and allow for more participation in the program than just administration. Finally, Tim said the expired contract was for three years at \$70K and the new contract will be at \$29K for one year based on 311 hours of work per year. Discussion ensued. Comm. Van Kempen said he met with Comm. Barrows before the meeting and discussed making the contract be retroactive in pay to 7/1/24. He also stated that Barrows would like to see it as a three-year contract instead of one year. Another topic of discussion led by Comm. Gaasvig was about rate. Tim said the previous contract was billed at \$85 per hour, and the new contract would be at \$95 per hour. He explained that the money paid to West Communications comes from pass through funding through the LSOHC and explained that he derived his numbers based off a two-year average of time spent on the program. Tim showed the board three years of annual funding, and he said the last year was much higher in the number of hours versus the previous two years. Gaasvig stated that the board needs to have more oversight on the contract dollar amount figure because otherwise it isn't worth having a contract if we don't hold the contractor accountable to the dollar amount figure. He stated that Tim should report to the board quarterly how much West Communication is spending and that if the contract amount is exceeded, then Tim would need to do that work, or it could be brought before the board for an amendment. Comm. Kearney stated that the contract could have a NOT TO EXCEED clause in it to provide for oversight. Tim stated that the contract has similar wording in it. The board stated that the wording in the contract needs to provide the whole dollar amount and the rate and leave out the number of hours. **M/S (Kasper/Gaasvig) to approve of the contract with it being a one-year contract, not to exceed \$29,000 a year, and to make payment retroactive to 7/1/24. Motion carried unanimously.** Regarding process, the board chose to offer the contract to West Communications decide if she accepts, rejects, or suggest changes. If changes are suggested by West Communications, then it would be noted and brought for approval or rejection before the board at the 8/23/24 board meeting in Walker.
2. Partner Negotiation- Tim said he was pleased at the last board meeting that we were able to meet with partners and focus on solving different perceptions regarding program geography. He asked the board to approve of a process by which disagreements in the future could be resolved. He suggested that if there is any disagreement on the county notification and county decision making process, Program Geography, or if a potential decision by partners or technical committee could become political, that Tim would first bring it up to the Chair and discuss the issue. The Chair could decide whether or not to bring it before the entire MHB board or talk with the affected MHB county board member and see how they want to proceed. Discussion ensued and the board agreed with a more county centric process allowing each individual county to make a decision about an acquisition parcel rather than the whole MHB board.
3. County Letter of Support- Tim provided context to the letter and stated that the MHB wanted to increase their biennial contribution from \$248K to \$350K. He stated that an email from DNR assistant

commissioner Bob Meier asked if the county was going to increase their funding as that would be an important point for people to understand. Discussion ensued and Comm. Gaasvig said that he disagrees with the specific dollar amount written in the Letter of Support that would hold counties accountable to past board decisions. He suggested that the wording be changed that if the measure was passed by the legislature, then our county would consider increasing its annual contribution. Comm. Van Kempen said that different counties are more participatory with the MHB than others, and that may be a factor to consider if asking for an increase. He also stated that it isn't a very big request for an increase when dealing with a multi-million dollar budget, but nevertheless consideration should be given to an increase. The board agreed with Comm. Gaasvig statement and asked Tim to change the wording in the Letter of Support.

4. Power Dam discussion- Commissioner Craig Gaasvig brought up that there has been an increase in littering at the power dam site in Beltrami County and he was looking for ideas from the board to help solve the issue. Each year young college students and kids go "tubing" on the Mississippi river during the hot summer months starting just below the Power Dam East of Lake Bemidji and exiting at County Road 8. While it is a great place to recreate, it is creating a littering issue where they launch. It was suggested that maybe MHB recreational signage at a trash receptacle be installed if Power Dam would allow it on their property so the litter could be managed in a proper way. Director Tim Terrill said the system is in place for signage to be installed, and there would just need to be permission from Power dam to allow signage and a trash receptacle to be placed on Power Dam property. Comm. VanKempen said that MHB has a request form, and the county could request funding through that mechanism.

### **Executive Directors Report**

1. Tim stated that since the legislature passed a new tax forfeiture law this year, it has come down to the local level and required counties to sell land that was tax forfeited between 2016 and 2023. Tim received an email from Aitkin County suggesting that this ruling would require a large divestment of land on the Miss. River. Tim provided the land commissioners what the MHB Comprehensive plan states regarding selling of land on the Mississippi river corridor, as it only allows for divestment of public land for certain reasons. Other Land Commissioners weighed in on the issue and stated that there is a need for classification to occur before tax forfeited land could be sold, and there is no time limit on that other than the 2030 expiration. Gaasvig and VanKempen provided information on how their counties are handling the issue. Hubbard is trying to be proactive and work with landowners before it becomes tax forfeit.
2. Tim stated that he attended LaPorte days and had a booth by the SWCD waters testing tent, so he was able to pass out information and phone cases about the MHB.

### **County & Legislative Updates**

None

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

**July SFY'25 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)			\$ 117,800.00	0.00%	non competitive quarterly reimbursement
LSOHC grant (53290)			\$ 8,000.00	0.00%	LSOHC reimbursement
Guidebook sales (58400)			\$ 200.00	0.00%	reimbursement for Guidebook sales
Enbridge program (58300)			\$ 11,000.00	0.00%	enbridge reimbursement
Miscell. Other revenue (58300)			\$ 9,000.00	0.00%	
MCIT Dividend (58300)			\$ 42.00	0.00%	MCIT refund
County Support (52990)			\$ 12,000.00	0.00%	8 county support
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 40,242.00</b>		
<b>Expenses:</b>	<b>Monthly Amount</b>				<b>Notes</b>
Salaries/Benefits FICA/Med/PERA/LIFE/LTD/Hlth/ WC(61000)	\$ 9,001.66	\$ 9,001.66	\$ 120,000.00	7.50%	reimbursed by Gov. DNR grant
MCIT insurance/work comp/liability (61500)			\$ 3,022.00	0.00%	reimbursed by Gov. DNR grant
MHB board Per Diem (62680)	\$ 550.00	\$ 550.00	\$ 3,000.00	18.33%	reimbursed by Gov. DNR grant
Hotel/Meals/travel exp. (63340)	\$ 11.64	\$ 11.64	\$ 500.00	2.33%	reimbursed by Gov. DNR grant
Commissioner Mileage (62720)	\$ 573.52	\$ 573.52	\$ 3,500.00	16.39%	reimbursed by Gov. DNR grant
Employee Mileage (63320)	\$ 155.91	\$ 155.91	\$ 4,500.00	3.46%	reimbursed by Gov. DNR grant
Professional Services (62990)	\$ 550.00	\$ 550.00	\$ 35,000.00	1.57%	CW financial, Water permit
Office supplies/operations (64090)	\$ 61.73	\$ 61.73	\$ 3,000.00	2.06%	telephone
Training & Registration Fees (63380)			\$ 800.00	0.00%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 10,904.46</b>	<b>\$ 10,904.46</b>	<b>\$ 173,322.00</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 2024 07 TO 2024 07

ORG YR/PR	OBJECT JNL EFF DATE	PROJ SRC REF1	REF2	REF3	CHECK #	OB	AMOUNT	NET LEDGER BALANCE	NET BUDGET BALANCE
74830	53290	Natural Resources							
									REVISED BUDGET .00
					PER 01		-999.88	-999.88	
					PER 02		-42,936.41	-43,936.29	
					PER 05		-29,331.01	-73,267.30	
					PER 06		-12,332.59	-85,599.89	
24/07	1636	07/31/24	GNI				-9,238.75	-94,838.64	
		ST OF MN	MHB HABITAT PROJECT						
		LEDGER BALANCES --- DEBITS:		.00	CREDITS:	-94,838.64	NET:	-94,838.64	
74830	61000	Salaries & Wages - Regular							
									REVISED BUDGET .00
					PER 01		5,976.55	5,976.55	
					PER 02		6,394.92	12,371.47	
					PER 03		6,215.62	18,587.09	
					PER 04		6,215.62	24,802.71	
					PER 05		9,323.41	34,126.12	
					PER 06		6,215.62	40,341.74	
24/07	496	07/12/24	PRJ PR0712 1240712	1240712	1240		3,107.81	43,449.55	
		PAY071224	WARRANT=240712	RUN=1 BI-WEEKL					
24/07	1090	07/26/24	PRJ PR0726 1240726	1240726	1240		3,107.81	46,557.36	
		PAY072624	WARRANT=240726	RUN=1 BI-WEEKL					
		LEDGER BALANCES --- DEBITS:		46,557.36	CREDITS:	.00	NET:	46,557.36	
74830	61200	Active Insurance							
									REVISED BUDGET .00
					PER 01		1,894.86	1,894.86	
					PER 02		1,894.86	3,789.72	
					PER 03		1,895.48	5,685.20	
					PER 04		1,896.72	7,581.92	
					PER 05		1,895.48	9,477.40	
					PER 06		1,895.48	11,372.88	
24/07	496	07/12/24	PRJ PR0712 1240712	1240712	1240		936.41	12,309.29	
		PAY071224	WARRANT=240712	RUN=1 BI-WEEKL					
24/07	1090	07/26/24	PRJ PR0726 1240726	1240726	1240		959.07	13,268.36	
		PAY072624	WARRANT=240726	RUN=1 BI-WEEKL					
		LEDGER BALANCES --- DEBITS:		13,268.36	CREDITS:	.00	NET:	13,268.36	

ACCOUNT DETAIL HISTORY FOR 2024 07 TO 2024 07

ORG YR/PR	OBJECT PROJ JNL EFF DATE	SRC REF1	REF2	REF3	CHECK #	OB	AMOUNT	NET LEDGER BALANCE	NET BUDGET BALANCE	
74830	61300	Employee Pension & FICA								
									REVISED BUDGET .00	
						PER 01	865.81	865.81		
						PER 02	929.18	1,794.99		
						PER 03	896.29	2,691.28		
						PER 04	890.56	3,581.84		
						PER 05	1,361.40	4,943.24		
						PER 06	890.56	5,833.80		
24/07	496 07/12/24	PRJ PR0712	1240712	1240712	1240		445.28	6,279.08		
	PAY071224	WARRANT=240712		RUN=1 BI-WEEKL						
24/07	1090 07/26/24	PRJ PR0726	1240726	1240726	1240		445.28	6,724.36		
	PAY072624	WARRANT=240726		RUN=1 BI-WEEKL						
		LEDGER BALANCES --- DEBITS:	6,724.36	CREDITS:	.00	NET:	6,724.36			
74830	62100	Telephone								
									REVISED BUDGET .00	
						PER 01	61.54	61.54		
						PER 02	61.64	123.18		
						PER 03	61.62	184.80		
						PER 04	61.74	246.54		
						PER 05	61.93	308.47		
						PER 06	62.01	370.48		
24/07	779 07/17/24	API 006205	220627	38468			6.73	377.21		
	W C072324	COUNTY WIDE PHONE BILL		CONSOLIDATED TELECOM						
24/07	1090 07/26/24	PRJ PR0726	1240726	1240726	1240		55.00	432.21		
	PAY072624	WARRANT=240726		RUN=1 BI-WEEKL						
		LEDGER BALANCES --- DEBITS:	432.21	CREDITS:	.00	NET:	432.21			
74830	62680	Non-Employee Per Diems								
									REVISED BUDGET .00	
						PER 01	250.00	250.00		
						PER 02	250.00	500.00		
						PER 03	250.00	750.00		
						PER 04	300.00	1,050.00		
						PER 05	200.00	1,250.00		
24/07	423 07/09/24	API 006980	219635	38395			50.00	1,300.00		
	W A070924	MHB MEETING PER DIEM AND MILEA ROBERT F. KASPER								
24/07	423 07/09/24	API 003356	219636	38370			50.00	1,350.00		
	W A070924	MHB MEETING PER DIEM AND MILEA HUBBARD COUNTY TREAS								
24/07	423 07/09/24	API 006995	219638	1957199			50.00	1,400.00		
	W A070924	MHB MEETING PER DIEM AND MILEA CORY SMITH								

ACCOUNT DETAIL HISTORY FOR 2024 07 TO 2024 07

ORG YR/PR	OBJECT JNL	PROJ EFF DATE	SRC REF1	REF2	REF3	CHECK #	OB	AMOUNT	NET LEDGER BALANCE	NET BUDGET BALANCE
24/07	423	07/09/24	API 006952		219639		38371	50.00	1,450.00	
	W A070924	MHB MEETING PER DIEM AND MILEA			MICHAEL KEARNEY					
24/07	423	07/09/24	API 002534		219640		38373	50.00	1,500.00	
	W A070924	MHB MEETING PER DIEM			NEWLAND, DEAN					
24/07	960	07/23/24	API 006995		220663		1957528	50.00	1,550.00	
	W A072324	MHB MEETING PER DIEM			CORY SMITH					
24/07	960	07/23/24	API 006952		220664		38523	50.00	1,600.00	
	W A072324	MHB MEETING PER DIEM			MICHAEL KEARNEY					
24/07	960	07/23/24	API 002534		220666		38524	50.00	1,650.00	
	W A072324	MHB MEETING PER DIEM			NEWLAND, DEAN					
24/07	960	07/23/24	API 100532		220668		1957529	50.00	1,700.00	
	W A072324	MHB MEETING PER DIEM			MORRISON COUNTY AUDI					
24/07	960	07/23/24	API 003356		220669		38522	50.00	1,750.00	
	W A072324	MHB MEETING PER DIEM AND MILEA			HUBBARD COUNTY TREAS					
24/07	960	07/23/24	API 003257		220670		38521	50.00	1,800.00	
	W A072324	MHB MEETING PER DIEM AND MILEA			GAASVIG, CRAIG					
LEDGER BALANCES --- DEBITS:					1,800.00	CREDITS:	.00	NET:	1,800.00	
74830	62720	Non-Employee Mileage								
								REVISED BUDGET		.00
								PER 01	391.28	391.28
								PER 02	251.92	643.20
								PER 03	222.44	865.64
								PER 04	300.16	1,165.80
								PER 05	312.22	1,478.02
24/07	423	07/09/24	API 006980		219635		38395	116.58	1,594.60	
	W A070924	MHB MEETING PER DIEM AND MILEA			ROBERT F. KASPER					
24/07	423	07/09/24	API 003356		219636		38370	37.52	1,632.12	
	W A070924	MHB MEETING PER DIEM AND MILEA			HUBBARD COUNTY TREAS					
24/07	423	07/09/24	API 006995		219638		1957199	89.78	1,721.90	
	W A070924	MHB MEETING PER DIEM AND MILEA			CORY SMITH					
24/07	423	07/09/24	API 006952		219639		38371	77.72	1,799.62	
	W A070924	MHB MEETING PER DIEM AND MILEA			MICHAEL KEARNEY					
24/07	960	07/23/24	API 006980		220667		38539	89.78	1,889.40	
	W A072324	MHB MEETING MILEAGE			ROBERT F. KASPER					
24/07	960	07/23/24	API 003356		220669		38522	64.32	1,953.72	
	W A072324	MHB MEETING PER DIEM AND MILEA			HUBBARD COUNTY TREAS					

ACCOUNT DETAIL HISTORY FOR 2024 07 TO 2024 07

ORG YR/PR	OBJECT JNL	PROJ EFF DATE	SRC REF1	REF2	REF3	CHECK #	OB	AMOUNT	NET LEDGER BALANCE	NET BUDGET BALANCE
24/07	960	07/23/24	API 003257		220670	38521		97.82	2,051.54	
	W A072324	MHB MEETING PER DIEM AND MILEA GAASVIG, CRAIG								
	LEDGER BALANCES	---	DEBITS:		2,051.54	CREDITS:		.00	NET:	2,051.54
74830	62990		Prof. & Tech. Fee - Other							
										REVISED BUDGET
										.00
										PER 01
								16,443.40	16,443.40	PER 02
								525.00	16,968.40	PER 03
								525.00	17,493.40	PER 04
								81,377.96	98,871.36	PER 05
								525.00	99,396.36	PER 06
								10,525.00	109,921.36	
24/07	298	07/02/24	API 100373		219304	38298		25.00	109,946.36	
	W A070224	WATER EVENT PERMIT			CROW WING COUNTY SHE					
24/07	298	07/02/24	API 101649		219340	1956988		9,237.75	119,184.11	
	W A070224	WEST INVOICE #3			WEST COMMUNICATIONS					
24/07	627	07/16/24	API 006007		220226	38459		3,570.41	122,754.52	
	W A071624	TNC- INVOICE #4			THE NATURE					
24/07	1732	07/31/24	GEN RECURRING					525.00	123,279.52	
			FINANCIAL SERVICE							
	LEDGER BALANCES	---	DEBITS:		123,279.52	CREDITS:		.00	NET:	123,279.52
74830	63320		Employee Mileage							
										REVISED BUDGET
										.00
										PER 01
								479.54	479.54	PER 02
								367.16	846.70	PER 03
								349.47	1,196.17	PER 04
								363.94	1,560.11	PER 05
								180.36	1,740.47	PER 06
								194.37	1,934.84	
24/07	1094	07/25/24	API 007742		221052	1957655		155.91	2,090.75	
	W OOP0730	June mileage			TIM TERRILL					
	LEDGER BALANCES	---	DEBITS:		2,090.75	CREDITS:		.00	NET:	2,090.75
74830	63340		Hotel & Meals Travel Expense							
										REVISED BUDGET
										.00
										PER 01
								10.68	10.68	PER 03
								11.20	21.88	

**ACCOUNT DETAIL HISTORY FOR 2024 07 TO 2024 07**

ORG YR/PR	OBJECT JNL	PROJ EFF DATE	SRC REF1	REF2	REF3	CHECK #	OB	AMOUNT	NET LEDGER BALANCE	NET BUDGET BALANCE
						PER 06		11.31	33.19	
24/07	1080	07/24/24	GNI					11.64	44.83	
			BREM PCARD MEAL FOR SUSTAINABILITY FEST							
			TIM TERRILL - MCDONALD'S F2895 - MEAL FOR SUSTAINABILITY FEST							
LEDGER BALANCES --- DEBITS:				44.83	CREDITS:			.00	NET:	44.83
GRAND TOTAL --- DEBITS:				196,248.93	CREDITS:			-94,838.64	NET:	101,410.29

33 Records printed

\*\* END OF REPORT - Generated by Matthew Donley \*\*



PROTECTING THE FIRST 400 MILES

IMMEDIATE PRESS RELEASE 8/1//24

Media Contact

Tim Terrill

218-824-1189

[timt@mississippiheadwaters.org](mailto:timt@mississippiheadwaters.org)

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

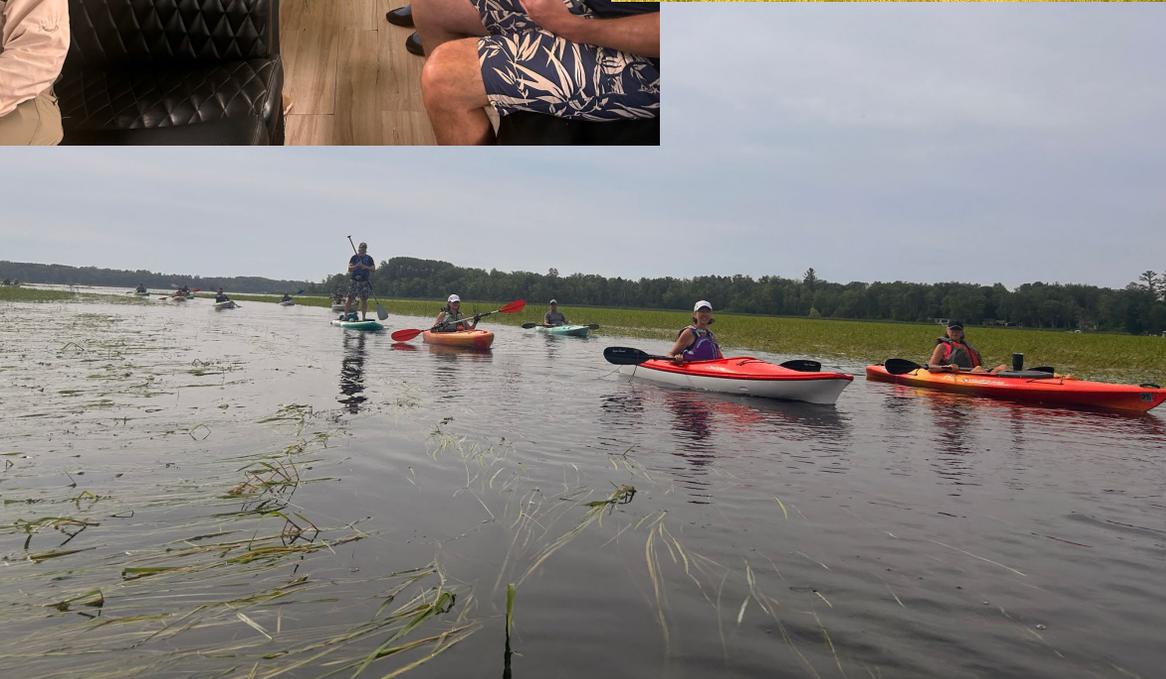
322 Laurel St.

Brainerd, MN 56401

**Mississippi Headwaters Board Hears about Protection of the Mississippi River**

Paula West, MHB contractor for the Miss. Headwaters Habitat Corridor Program (MHHCP) provided a brief update on how the easement and acquisition program are helping to protect water quality and create habitat complexes. West provided the board with a presentation of the MHHCP and accomplishments so far. She informed the board that there are currently 51 RIM easements and 12 Fee Title Acquisitions completed so far totaling 10,736 acres and 57 miles of shoreland permanently protected. She also noted that there are 13 conservation easements in process that amount to 1687 acres and 8 miles of shoreland that will be protected in the future. The board was pleased that partners are working together, and protection of the habitat and water quality in the area is being implemented in a proactive way.

# Paddle & Pint



# Miss. Water History Excursion



## Former golf course in Baxter becomes new stormwater garden to help the Mississippi



The new stormwater garden in Baxter uses various features to naturally collect and filter water before it drains into the Mississippi River. Photo: MPCA

### MPCA awards Good Samaritan Society for cleaning up mercury-polluted soil

The discovery of mercury contamination on part of the former Pine Meadows Golf Course in Baxter left the land's new owners with a dilemma: The Evangelical Lutheran Good Samaritan Society could choose to do nothing with those 13 acres and let somebody else deal with the pollution. Or the organization could shoulder the \$300,000 cleanup cost and turn the land into an asset for the community.

The society took on the cleanup challenge, resulting in a newly completed \$2.6 million stormwater wetland that will reduce the runoff of pollutants into the Mississippi River. The project also led the MPCA to recognize the society with its Community Conservationist Award.

“This is huge,” says Glenn Skuta, director of the MPCA’s Watershed Division. “Good Samaritan could have just walked away from the project, but they continued on for the good of the river.”

Good Samaritan spent their own money and persevered through a complicated process to help make this very important regional stormwater project a reality. They are a perfect example of working toward the common good, even at their own expense.”

— Glenn Skuta, director, MPCA Watershed Division

### A story about a town

With 30 miles of hiking trails, eight parks, and the 400-acre Northland Arboretum prairie restoration project, Baxter has preserved a rural nature inside its city limits.

“We’re an outdoor, nature city,” says Trevor Walter, Baxter public works director and engineer. “We are not curb-and-gutter streets.”

But Baxter officials still recognized a need to address stormwater. Along Highway 371, about 400 acres of commercial parking lots created mostly impervious surfaces where rainwater would drain into Whiskey Creek and the Mississippi, carrying with it nutrients that could cause eutrophication, or oxygen depletion. This can suffocate fish and disrupt entire ecosystems. It turned out that the area was the second-largest source of nutrients and sediment heading into the upper portion of the Mississippi River: About 60,000 pounds of sediment and 142 pounds of phosphorus entered the Mississippi from the area every year.

“This project isn’t just for the City of Baxter,” says Baxter administrator Brad Chapulis. “It’s the region; it’s the state, for all the people who utilize and cherish the Mississippi River.”

### A decade-long story

Good Samaritan bought the abandoned 80-acre golf course in 2013 with the intention to build senior housing. The same year, the City of Baxter identified 13 acres of the golf course as an ideal stormwater treatment site where artificial wetland ponds could help clean the environment by slowing down running water and giving sediment in that water a chance to settle. Vegetation in and around the ponds could absorb pollutants, particularly nutrients, such as nitrates and phosphates. The long roots of native plants could create channels that let water sink into the soil.



Workers from Minnesota Native Landscapes install an erosion control blanket on the site of a new stormwater treatment wetland in Baxter. Photo: Melissa Barrick, Crow Wing SWCD

In 2020, Good Samaritan appeared poised to sell that portion of the golf course to Baxter for the stormwater wetland project. This is where things could have gone wrong. During the due diligence investigation for the purchase, Baxter officials discovered the land contained mercury contamination, something missed when Good Samaritan bought it. The mercury was a leftover fungicide from outdated methods of golf-course management, applied to the golf course's greens and tee boxes.

Mercury does not break down in the environment. The health effects from being exposed to mercury include damage to the nervous system and kidneys. It can be spread through the air, and when it collects in water, it builds up in fish, posing a risk to people who eat it.

Fixing it wouldn't be cheap.

"Our initial reaction was, 'This is expensive!'" says Joel Fluit, Good Samaritan CFO. "Based off the purchase price, what the City was willing to pay, it would cost us more to remediate than what you get from selling the land."

The requirements for stormwater wetlands are steep. The group could have continued with other construction plans that would have allowed for cheaper remediation methods. And

because the mercury had been applied under the regulation of the Department of Agriculture, the site wasn't eligible for assistance from the MPCA Brownfield Program. Nevertheless, Good Samaritan moved ahead with the sale and had almost 3,000 cubic yards of contaminated soil removed. That's enough to fill 300 dump trucks.

“Good Samaritan spent their own money and persevered through a complicated process to help make this very important regional stormwater project a reality,” Skuta says. “They are a perfect example of working toward the common good, even at their own expense.”

The City worked with the MPCA to get a permit to move the contaminated soil to the Vonco II Waste Campus in Becker, Minnesota. The Mississippi Headwaters Board secured \$150,000 in private funds to help with the cost.



A worker from Minnesota Native Landscapes uses a no-till drill to plant seeds for a new stormwater treatment wetland in Baxter. Photo: Melissa Barrick, Crow Wing SWCD

“There were so many times in this project that it could have just ended,” says Mississippi Headwaters Board Executive Director Tim Terrill. “It was Good Samaritan that saw the community good. It wasn't a money-making venture for them.”

Once the mercury was removed, the City of Baxter paid \$479,000 for the land. Since then, the city has raised hills on the flat area to create the slope needed to direct water to the ponds and planted three acres of native prairie grasses, with aquatic plants coming next.

A much bigger story

The wetlands project in Baxter improves conditions for what has become a nationwide issue. The hypoxic area, commonly called the “dead zone,” in the Gulf of Mexico is about 5,827 square miles, roughly the size of Connecticut. Oxygen levels in the region are low enough to kill fish and other marine life, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The Mississippi River watershed covers 22 states and more than 40% of the continental United States. When small communities like Baxter do their part, it makes an impact on the larger stage.

Baxter officials had practical matters in mind, too, as they pursued the project. They knew additional limits were coming for their stormwater discharge. It’s a need that isn’t going away. The Whiskey Creek project was an opportunity for entities to work together and seek grant money, a benefit to the city’s stormwater system. Baxter ended up paying only about one-fourth of the overall cost.

“From an environmental standpoint, how much total suspended solids and phosphorous we could remove just from those 400 acres was very significant,” Chapulis says. “We’re playing a role to preserve the integrity of the Mississippi River.”

A story to be continued

The site will include paved walking trails for the public and will connect to the city trail, which connects to the Paul Bunyan State Trail, a 115-mile route that runs from Crow Wing State Park to Lake Bemidji State Park, the longest of Minnesota’s state trails.

“We’ve tried to preserve the northern woods appeal that everyone looks at our area as quality of life,” Chapulis says.



Canada geese gather beside a new stormwater pond in Baxter. Photo: MPCA

Baxter officials hope to add a kiosk with information about the site development and how it works. Good Samaritan might be a part of that story.

“Without them and their willingness to do so, this project never would have come to fruition,” Walter says. “We are very appreciative that Good Samaritan stepped up to the plate and sold us the land. They did it for the environment, not just the City of Baxter, to leave this world a better place.”

The MPCA’s Community Conservationist Award, which recognizes outstanding accomplishments in implementing conservation practices in a community environment, was presented to Good Samaritan in December at the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts convention.

The Whiskey Creek stormwater project was a collaboration of multiple agencies, including the MPCA, Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources, Minnesota Department of Agriculture, Enbridge, Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (money from the state lottery), Clean Water Land and Legacy Amendment, Clean Water Fund, Crow Wing Soil and Water Conservation District, Mississippi Headwaters Board, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Cities of Baxter and Brainerd, HR Green, and University of Minnesota Extension.

## **Planning and Zoning**

**None**

## **Action/Discussion**

Program Gantt Chart review- discussion  
Update on County Letter of Support- discussion  
Selecting legislator for legislative increase- discussion  
Executive Directors report-discussion







Display Week:

TASK	ASSIGNED TO	PROGRESS	START	END	Aug 12, 2024							Aug 19, 2024							Aug 26, 2024							Sep 2, 2024							Sep 9, 2024							Sep 16, 2024							Sep 23, 2024							Sep 30, 2024													
					12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	1	2	3	4	5	6							
					M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S





## SIMPLE GANTT CHART by Vertex42.com

<https://www.vertex42.com/ExcelTemplates/simple-gantt-chart.html>

### About This Template

This template provides a simple way to create a Gantt chart to help visualize and track your project. Simply enter your tasks and start and end dates - no formulas required. The bars in the Gantt chart represent the duration of the task and are displayed using conditional formatting. Insert new tasks by inserting new rows.

### Guide for Screen Readers

There are 2 worksheets in this workbook.

TimeSheet

About

The instructions for each worksheet are in the A column starting in cell A1 of each worksheet. They are written with hidden text. Each step guides you through the information in that row. Each subsequent step continues in cell A2, A3, and so on, unless otherwise explicitly directed. For example, instruction text might say "continue to cell A6" for the next step.

This hidden text will not print.

To remove these instructions from the worksheet, simply delete column A.

### Additional Help

Click on the link below to visit [vertex42.com](http://vertex42.com) and learn more about how to use this template, such as how to calculate days and work days, create task dependencies, change the colors of the bars, add a scroll bar to make it easier to change the display week, extend the date range displayed in the chart, etc.

[How to Use the Simple Gantt Chart](#)

### More Project Management Templates

Visit [Vertex42.com](http://Vertex42.com) to download other project management templates, including different types of project schedules, Gantt charts, tasks lists, etc.

[Project Management Templates](#)

### About Vertex42

Vertex42.com provides over 300 professionally designed spreadsheet templates for business, home, and education - most of which are free to download. Their collection includes a variety of calendars, planners, and schedules as well as personal finance spreadsheets for budgeting, debt reduction, and loan amortization.

Businesses will find invoices, time sheets, inventory trackers, financial statements, and project planning templates. Teachers and students will find resources such as class schedules, grade books, and attendance sheets. Organize your family life with meal planners, checklists, and exercise logs. Each template is thoroughly researched, refined, and improved over time through feedback from thousands of users.



## Mississippi Headwaters Board

Crow Wing County Land Service Bldg. - 322 Laurel St. Ste. 34- Brainerd, MN 56401

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

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

From: \_\_\_\_\_ County  
To: Mississippi Headwaters Board  
RE: MHB legislative increase

Dear Chair Van Kempen,

\_\_\_\_\_ County realizes that the Mississippi Headwaters Board (MHB) was created as a Joint Powers Board in 1980 to protect the first 400 miles of the Mississippi river. The boards mission is to enhance and protect outstanding and unique natural, scientific, historical, recreational, and cultural values in the first 400 miles of the Mississippi River from its source at Lake Itasca in Clearwater County to the southerly boundary of Morrison County.

Over the past 40 years the MHB has protected their jurisdictional area through a regulatory program that places consistent zoning controls on the first four hundred miles of shoreline on the Mississippi river and Headwaters lakes. This has enabled people to enjoy the wild and scenic values of the Mississippi river while keeping local control in the hands of county commissioners instead of the federal government. We also agree that their voluntary programs like the easement and acquisition program, social media program, and recreational signage on the Mississippi river have contributed to our county's mission while adding value to our area as well.

\_\_\_\_\_ County fully supports the request of the MHB to the legislature for a biennium increase in base funding from \$248,000 to \$350,000 to help fulfill their statutory obligation and continue to allow local control and voluntary programs that promote water quality, habitat, and a vibrant recreational economy. **If this measure was passed by the legislature, then our county would consider increasing its annual contribution to use as a match for this funding.** We would also continue the total eight county in-kind contribution of 1/3<sup>rd</sup> to ½ million dollars of annual contribution as well.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_ County

# Executive Director Report

July - August 2024

## 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. The Whiskey Creek project got accepted as a formal presentation at the Water Resources Conference in St. Paul. The Conference presentation will be October 4<sup>th</sup> at 4:15 pm.
7. Reviewed LLBO DRAFT water quality standards.
8. Sent in LSOHC reimbursement requests.
9. Created ppt. to show before Crow Wing County board and request additional funding contingent upon the legislature raising our base.
10. Updated Monthly Budget Sheet for SFY 2025
11. Created PowerPoints for different counties requesting me to explain reason for increase in MHB county support.
12. Sent sign data to Fishing the Wildside for creation of digital signs.
13. Looked at parcels being submitted by SWCD's and prepared for MHHCP technical committee meeting.

## Meetings & Networking

7/12- Attended Paddle & Pint Resource retention event in Cohasset. Forty people attended with 11 from Cohasset and others from the surrounding area. Notable was a couple from Rochester and St. Louis Missouri. It was well attended for a first event. The city plans to do it next year.

7/17- Rep. Ben Davis called me to talk about a cooling water leak with Boswell in Cohasset. The plant reacted quickly to contain the water, but some of it may have spilled out of the cooling pond and into Blackwater Lake. I told him that it is a heavily regulated business, so if he wants an official report, he should talk with MPCA or DNR.

7/27- Held Mississippi History Water Excursion where 16 people attended to paddle from Lum Park to Kiwanis Park in Brainerd. Many people said they enjoyed the history lesson and the different markers on the river where structures were built.

7/30- Attended Morrison County planning committee meeting and discussed the request to increase county funding in order to get a legislative increase.

7/30- held meeting with Cohasset Parks & Recreation to discuss ways to improve for next year. Some suggestions were to have a sweeper follow behind everyone to make sure everyone is accounted for and have specific shuttle times listed so people won't be late or separated. T shirts could be developed next year.

7/31- Testified before the LCCMR committee and discussed the completion of the Whiskey Creek project. I used the same ppt. from the biennial conference last year which provided them with drone footage of the project.

8/1- Attended Carbon Sequestration Roundtable that was hosted by the Northern Waters Land Trust and reviewed a white paper on possible opportunities to help landowners. Many local professionals were there including DNR, TNC, BWSR, TCF, local landowner, Cass Land Commissioner, and myself, and each gave an account as to their issues with starting a program. The biggest concern is that it wasn't really defined and there are no standards to really follow. Also, the issue of additionality and accountability came up as well. A final consensus was that NRCS needs more data and science before they develop a program, but once the science is established, an RCCP program could be used as a pilot project to see how it would work.

8/7- Hosted MHHCP technical committee meeting with partners and stakeholders. The SWCD's presented parcels to the group, and they decided which parcels to move forward and which ones to follow up on. Approximately \$320K in parcels were approved for funding, but there was potential to allocate approximately \$1.5 M with only \$946K in funding.

8/14- Held meeting with Chip (Fishing the Wildside) and Megan (Visit Grand Rapids) to discuss a one month Great River Road promotion that would promote activities on or near the Mississippi river in Grand Rapids. Four posts would be created and then reviewed by me before posting on MN Traditions, and it would attract another audience to follow MN Traditions. The main point here is that MN Traditions will need to slowly shift from a strict AIS campaign to an AIS campaign and economic development campaign through Miss. River recreation.

8/16- Wrote letter of recommendation to the Itasca SWCD for nominating the City of Coleraine for some MASWCD awards.