



**MINUTES**  
**Strategic Planning Meeting**  
**November 8, 2000**

**Facilitator – Julie Westerlund**

**Recorder – Debbie Anderson**

**Attendees -**

Alison Fong, Minneapolis Environmental Management

Anne Weber, St. Paul Public Works

April Rust, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources - Project WET

Barb Liukkonen, University of Minnesota Extension Service - Water Resources Center

Carolyn Dindorf, Hennepin Conservation District

Charlotte Shover, Dakota County Environmental Education

Cliff Aichinger, Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District

Connie Fortin, Fortin Consulting

Irene Jones, Friends of the Mississippi River

Jay Michels, Minnesota Erosion Control Association

Jeff Ledermann, Minnesota Office of Environmental Assistance

Jerry Spetzman, Minnesota Department of Agriculture

Jim Falvey, Mississippi River Basin Alliance

John Bilotta, Carver County

John Lamb, Minnesota Project

Jon Steadland, Minneapolis Environmental Management

Julie Westerlund, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources - Watershed Protection Initiative

Kevin Bigalke, Lower Minnesota River Watershed District

Lisa Gilliland, Anoka County Parks – Wargo Nature Center

Louise Watson, Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District

Lyndon Torstenson, National Park Service – Mississippi National River and Recreation Area

Maria Olson, Great River Greening

Mary Gullickson, Anoka Conservation District

Michele Hanson, Rice Creek Watershed District

Nichole Ross, City of Bloomington

Pam Davis, St. Croix River Basin

Pauline Langsdorf, Metropolitan Council Environmental Services

Peter Verstegen, United States Army Corps of Engineers

Randy Thoreson, National Park Service – Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program

Roman Rowan, Rivers Council of Minnesota

Ron Struss, Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources

Sage Passi, Eco Education

Shelley Shreffler, St. Paul Neighborhood Energy Consortium

Susan Cairn, Watershed Resources Youth Stewardship Program

Tim Reese, Hennepin Conservation District

Tracy Fallon, Hamline University – Center for Global Environmental Education

Tracy Fredin, Hamline University – Center for Global Environmental Education

9:00 a.m.– **Welcome/Introductions** – Jerry Spetzman, Dept. of Ag.  
Introduced Steering Committee  
Everyone introduced themselves

9:10 a.m.– **What kind of organization have we been?**  
History of WaterShed Partners - Shelley Shreffler

Origins of our group:

The Ever-Changing Mississippi: Qualities, Use, Perception 1993

A workshop/conference for Mississippi River educators. Planned by a group of eleven people from National Park Service (Ron Erickson), Minnesota Historical Society (Dave Wiggins, Thora Carlidge, Tom Shaw), Minnesota DNR (Judy Thomson, Mark Cleveland), Saint Paul Parks and Recreation (Margie Kline), Hennepin Parks (Karen Kobey), Macalester College (Shelley Shreffler), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (John Anfinson), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Hank Schneider). Planning began in 1991. We began by putting together a conference, which we thought only a few people would show up for, however, 130 people attended.

.In 1995, Shelley received a grant for *Summer of the River* event and other public events on the Mississippi River. *Summer of the River: From the Headwaters to the Quad Cities* 1995

The project was designed to raise public awareness of and increase involvement with the Mississippi River. Different public events were implemented in communities from Bemidji to the Quad Cities. The Ever-changing group plus others were convened to plan public events for the Twin Cities. Due to time limitations, we decided to use a “value-added” approach, e.g. incorporate education about the Mississippi River into existing events. Educational displays and activities varied with the venue (e.g. water chemistry, invertebrate identification at Coon Rapids Dam Kid’s Fishing Day; flour milling at St. Anthony Falls). Ron Erickson coined the term “WaterShed” to describe this education tent.

Awakening the Watershed was held in October 1995. River educators from the Upper Mississippi River region convened to look at what everyone was doing and create together collaborative projects.

Lyndon Torstenson convened a meeting in December 1995 of people interested in networking and collaborating on Mississippi River education activities and to further define the concept of watershed and non-point source pollution prevention. Many people who participated in the Awakening the Watershed conference attended the meeting. Soon we started calling ourselves WaterShed Partners.

In 1996 a small group of people worked to create a structure for WaterShed Partners. John Lamb facilitated this process. The structure we have now is a result of that work. There was agreement that the “value-added” approach worked and it was time to create our own exhibit. We received funding from the Met Council to create the WaterShed exhibits.

9:25 a.m. – **What is our current structure?** – Tracy Fredin

At this time, we are not an organized entity. Our committees do get the work done and the Steering Committee has a good cross-representation. We are a consensus based governing body without a lot of rules. Some of our committees are: the Education Committee, Water Monitoring Committee, Water Quality Action Campaign, Exhibit Design Committee, Scheduling Committee, Evaluation Committee.

Financing -We have received about \$1 million dollars from Met Council. The WaterShed Partners has received \$100,000, of which \$50,000 was received in grant money for the design of the exhibit and the remaining funds for administering the project. In addition, \$30,000 came from Partners organizations. Our balance now is \$15,000.

Hamline is the fiscal agent for the WaterShed Partners Exhibit. Hamline has a restricted fund and no indirect charge for University. We have received \$200,000 in the past thru BWSR.

From a legal standpoint, the Met Council still owns our organization. Hamline is responsible for the exhibit. U of M contributes small amounts of money to staff WaterShed - \$5,000 for Tracy's work this year. Unrestricted account - funds from water quality support concept but no payments in general.

Question: Liability - ultimately if something happens, is Hamline responsible?  
Discussion incurred.

Question: Who gets the work done for the Partnership now?  
It's committee based. However, we hired Fortin consultants to organize this meeting because none of us had the time to commit.

Question: Can we continue at this rate?  
This is a Sustainability question. We have our Handbook on the web. not paper.

**Just a note of information:** Good news for everyone regarding our event at the State Fair, the DNR has decided we will be in the DNR bldg next year.

### **What kind of organization are we now?**

Shelley: What did we say five years ago about our mission? Does it say what we want it to read and include who we are? Doesn't it say we are an informal organization, to promote public understanding of our mission: [The mission of the WaterShed Partners is to promote a public understanding that inspires people to act to protect water quality in their watershed. This award-winning partnership cooperates through educational projects, networking, and sharing resources](#)

Charlotte: I would like to speak in favor of who we are and our vision and continue to focus on water and outreach. This could be a goal. We still work well as a metro-based organization and we could be a resource for other parts of the state. I support what you have read so far (the mission). We could be a partner for larger areas.

Comment: I have a question about the way the agenda is structured? The agenda doesn't allow us to discuss new concepts that we could include or look at the body of activities we could be involved in.

We would have a different list of to do's for today, if we changed the agenda at this point.

Cliff: I think we should keep the partnership focused on water issues. We are still a volunteer organization and there is nobody like WaterShed Partners.

Irene: Brainstorming is scheduled at the end of the day and I would like to move it up.

Connie: **Main goal of today is:** what type of organization are we? Are we sustainable? Can we continue at our rate? We are growing, how are we going to continue to be sustainable?

Shelley: Being on the Steering Committee, we are sensing that we are at our limits right now. How can we make this group sustainable?

Charlotte: I support the committee's agenda the way it is set up – we can discuss other topics later.

Comment: Do we want to say everything is connected. There are four main goals: 1) to educate, 2) to motivate, 3) to maintain a network of organizations and individuals and, 4) to share information.

Question: Does this describe what we are about? Is this our mission? Agreement that yes, this is our mission.

John: please re-read the mission?

Julie: Re-read mission.

Conference in Denver was very good exposure and our impact is much broader than we originally anticipated.

Shelley: Exhibit goes to State Fair, then we use individually for our watershed areas. Do we want to be focused locally only? What is our responsibility to the metropolitan area?

Julie: We need to stay focused here.

1. Stick to various points on agenda. (Julie will keep us on task and will keep two flip charts)
2. Keep comments focused.
3. If you have comments or ideas on other issues, please write them down on the paper Connie passing out and put your comments in the box after the meeting. They will be incorporated into our report on web page.

### **What do we do well under our current structure?**

1. Get funding
2. Networking
3. Sharing resources
4. Evaluation of effectiveness
5. Name recognition
6. Exhibit
7. Being the seed for other organizations, initiate and feed other partnerships
8. Sense of collegiality, family, fun
9. Eliminate or minimize redundancy of efforts
10. We are open and refreshing
11. Sense of common goals to education on watershed.
12. Maintained and increased membership and stayed motivation
13. Successfully educated people about watersheds
14. Focused well on educational messages and came to agreement and stayed open to new ways to work with messages. Created new projects and kept the vitality of the organization.
15. We are resources for each other, benefiting all of us and we inspire each other
16. Individual ideas can be integrated and spin-off activities, lends regional support and helps with ideas.
17. Bang for our buck! A lot of ideas!
18. Easy access – if we say you are a partner you are a partner
19. Organization is non-threatening, we support each other
20. We are non-political have neutral education and because we are not a formal organization we are looked at a networking organization to share ideas and make what we do possible.
21. Cross traditional boundaries of networking, different kinds of organizations all cross over. A diversity of organizations is represented on the Steering Committee.
22. We have handled conflicts and resolved with trust. - (love nest, group hug)

### **What don't we do well and what needs improvement?**

1. Diversity of funding is needed.
2. Don't feel ownership - how do we help organizations feel ownership?
3. Need to improve how we orient new groups to get simulated into our group internal training.
4. Need coordinator to work full-time - we don't staff well.
5. Organization needs to look at larger picture - opportunity and challenges are geographic. Took a vote on this raising hands. - 15 to 18, are mandated to go outside of metro area. Who needs to focus on water issues only? Whose organizations work beyond water issues? Most!
6. Lack of private sector. We are primarily government agencies.
7. We don't publicize ourselves enough.
8. Lack of organizational diversity. Internal and external.
9. Leadership level needed – diversity.

10. We rely too much on the Steering Committee to get work done - too few people doing work and also subcommittees.
11. Improve check in-and check-out of equipment – use of exhibits is going down.
12. Outreach to other organizations.
13. Don't have well-defined set of criteria regarding which projects to take on.
14. Need to get more city officials involved.
15. Directly inspire our goals.
16. Watershed doesn't get out to many events, doesn't go where there are not members, under-utilized.

**What are our barriers with our current structure?**

1. Steering committee talks about too much work. Our place of work doesn't allow us to work beyond the funding allowances. We can't volunteer beyond - lack of staff.
2. Membership fee? Cities can't contribute.
3. Don't know how organizations can contribute in different ways.
4. Competition for all our work, and audience of people interested and time
5. Lack of understanding of importance of role of education in meeting organization's goals.
6. Agencies don't understand who and what we are.

**Cliff Aichinger: Options for new structure - Presentation**

Structure will make the organization last.  
 Structure will promote trust.

Develop a structure and test it.  
 If it works, write it down and follow it.  
 Give it a change before you tamper with it – be creative with what you already have.  
 If it works, don't fix it.

How do we choose?  
 We can reduce our choices by looking at significant risks.

1. Legal liability
2. Risk of liability in our current or future program
3. Can these risk be absorbed by the users of our products (WaterShed)
4. Fundraising issues
5. Can we keep good fiscal sponsors.
6. Are we likely to hire our own staff?

Explained - Organization Structure Comparison Table.  
*(Couldn't hear Cliff very well)*

Short discussion incurred.

Question: Do we currently have 2 fiscal sponsors?

Yes, Hamline and U of M and in past BWSR has contributed grant money. We would want to move to one. One fiscal agent for WaterShed is Hamline.. Then project based grants.

10: 45 **BREAK**

Additional questions for Cliff?

Can you think of good things we are doing that one of these organizational structure types would inhibit?

**What are the most important advantage?**

1. Irene: Protecting our name and money.
2. Is there a sense we are doing well? Will this change with our organized structure?
3. If we change will there be a tendency for people to be less engaged, staff less motivated to do work.

**The Name:**

4. Who would want to use our WaterShed Partners name if we organized?
5. If we have the name protected, the special way we spell, register our name with Secretary of State. Mary: There is another group called Watershed Partners in Minneapolis so we should protect our name, what we are and what we believe in. It may be too late. Would we be registered just in this state? Yes. Copy write would be held with met council (exhibit is copywriter by met council)

**Why Organize:**

6. Who does the work? Is it paid or volunteer work. How does the work get done?
7. Liability – if we want WaterShed Exhibit used more, we have to have liability insurance. We can get insurance for liability. Exhibit is stored in basement of Hemline and we load and unload ourselves. If we get a vehicle for the organization there would be a lot more liability.
8. What would inhibit us from becoming an “organized organization” as far as agencies involvement, etc. We would have to redefine partners.
9. Registered organizations - we are closest to this, .we will still need fiscal sponsor.
10. Theory – one plus in organizing is funding - government grant money. The way funders look for partnerships matters how you frame the grant. LCMR does look at fiscal agents.
11. Additional expense for overhead and organization.
12. We could become a competitor for funding and grants. Reduces competition for same project. (If we incorporate, we would be same group only legal issues would change)
13. If you hire staff, you will lose energy. What is Cliffs recommendation? Cliff: Staffing issue is irrelevant, doesn't affect how organization works. Liability is a critical issue (vehicle) through fiscal formal sponsor or we could establish as an entity and pay insurance ourselves. We don't need to change the way we operate.
14. Shelley: Steering Committee, etc. that are doing bulk of work, this is not sustainable. Comment: Does it necessarily need to be staff or could it the some of the work be contracted out? Shelley: We do need a dedicated person to do administrative work. We don't have a structure right now to do that. Comment: What structure would fit? Shelley: Keeping track of what funding opportunities are available, writing grants,

minutes and sending out - we could do more utilizing the internet. We are great at coming up with more ideas, but how do we implement? (get the work done) It would go more smoothly if we had someone to follow up.

15. Raising money for funding to get work done.
16. Jerry: We need to take the next step and make a small change and include what we would do as an unincorporated association. He does not feel overloaded with work from this group.
17. Pay someone to help, this next step will be the next plateau. Would this be long-term with a position? Someone needs to make sure that the obligations of the grants are met.
18. Jay: Day-to-day operation is one problem and then grants person is another position. It would have to be two different people. We can't get more government contributions for funding of staff. Believes in getting van for WSP.
19. Staffing structure is different from restructuring of organization.
20. Get back to liability and name structure.
21. Name Protection: Another organization with same name can take us to court. Individuals could be held liable. The other organization could prevent us from using this name.
22. Tracy: She believes protecting our name and gets calls all the time inquiring about our organization. We could be doing more marketing and doing more website.
23. If the other organization does have a copy write on the name then we will have to talk about this issue. Also, how well are we known?
24. Charlotte: Form follows function. Steering Committee needs to review the group's comments and then come back and give a recommendation.
25. Something to think about, comments have been made outside our group that our logo looks like a "pro-life" logo.
26. Shelley: Wants to take the fruits of this conversation and discuss with Steering Committee and then to rest of the group.
27. How do we spread the work out?
28. Do our funding sponsors understand that things might change with this organization? Do they have any concerns or recommendations?
29. Building organizations is different from building programs.
30. We have leveraged the met council grants and the funding for the Exhibit subsidizes WaterShed Partners.
31. We are stable. Could anybody else take this on? Are we being really fair to our other programs?
32. Water Resource Center is concerned it will get stuck holding and has concerns regarding staffing for Streamwatering Program.
33. Even getting everyone to commit to the State fair is difficult but work needs to be done..  
**\*\*JAY called Secretary Of State's Office and our name WaterShed Partners is taken...WE NEED A NEW NAME\*\***
34. Funding for vehicle - competitive process doesn't work.

## **Who will do the work?**

1. In order to be a partner, you as an individual need to contribute and have a sense of ownership. Individual commit to some aspect is needed for the partners to assure work gets done. Set criteria for letting new group into group.
2. Susan: Theory good, but work will still fall on Tracy. We need way to better support our fiscals. In theory a fiscal may not work - what does it really cost to run this organization?
3. Soft money and Hard money - there is a funding difference.
4. Steering committee commitment: To share that load, a possibility might be to think about a mentorship and ask that individual to help them out and get them oriented and they will learn about organization and maybe individual would eventually learn and want to be involved with Steering Committee. We could at least start this process.

12:05: **Lunch**

12:55 – Begin afternoon session.

\*\*Please fill out questionnaires and give to Connie.

## **How can we better work together and accomplish our goals?**

Continued from previous discussion

1. Could we get a block grant to buy people's time. Who would write the grant if we did?  
Answer: those who are getting the money.
2. Who would a grant like that go to?. McKnight Foundation or Caroline Foundation.
3. We could charge a membership fee to belong to WSP. Many are willing to pay something, but let's not require -maybe a hierarchy of levels. Sustaining members could contribute at their levels...Also, commitment to participate in WSP. Get organizations to contribute to memberships not just individual membership, but organization membership. What about scholarships? Fee waiver. We have had pledge letters go out and it takes dollars and time. Mailing or printing costs for 100 letters that go out, maybe five or ten come back. What would it take to get our agencies to commit \$'s. We need to be careful on what impact that will have on classes of membership. Right now we are all on an equal level. There are implications that we need to think about. If we charged \$100.00 per person total \$4,000 – is that going to affect anything regarding what we are doing. It wouldn't change anything. We need to do more asking of organizations for funding. Membership dues do not cover costs. (Sounds like group not in favor of this idea.)
1. What about a fee for use of the Exhibit, car, etc.? Local units of government would like to use Exhibit for events. "Fee for Service". Would Met Council have to be a part of this. No. Does charging people for using product create legal problems?. You could pay to have someone get Exhibit and set it up.

## What would it take to get support from our organizations? (fees for support)

1. Measurable Outcomes. What are we getting for our money, specific measurable results.
2. Personal contact with supervisors; someone from WSP should talk to supervisor. If there is an opportunity to partner on a grant, this might work. Entry place and promotional place for membership.
3. Regarding results: helpful to have something to show like newsletter or something promotional to bring back to supervisors and those who support with grant funding.
4. How about joint supervisor meetings to discuss grant funding; peer pressure
5. County commissioners like awards, let's give pictures and awards to make them look good and they would be more willing to help.
6. Charlotte: we do need projects that we can show off, the benefits are transferable and reach beyond responsibility area.
7. Collaborative projects are great! They would not have happened without WaterShed Partners.
8. Are we trying to justify time on projects or asking for money? Same thing.
9. Invoices are needed. Tracy explained that we can do.
10. Know what the outcomes are expected from that group and be able to rephrase to audience.
11. Has anyone looked into the possibility of formalized education coalition. Look at the funding alliances that could be developed.
12. Would there be a way to do contracting (WSP), could we serve as the contractor? Fee for service. For X dollars this is what we can do. It would take some administration.
13. Communication – provide a service as a group and return back to organizations. Are we serving citizens or organizations?
14. Charlotte: Chamber Of Commerce has stickers: They show this organization is part of this person's world and that they support that. Some kind of marketing – something to show and that it's appropriate to be involved. Only thing missing is year-to-year commitment.
15. Is it appropriate to give a commitment to this group and then just show up? Should we expect that everyone should participate and work? Request a commitment of some kind. Get everybody to give more time. We should have criteria for active membership, laying out expectations what membership should include such as; attend meetings, money, commitment. But not exclude folks if they can't give as much as others. Don't eliminate them from membership, not everyone can give as much time. There is a flow to what everybody is doing.
16. Three things we can do: 1) You agree with mission and goals, 2) attend meetings, and 3) participate in the work of the organization, however you can do that.
17. Jerry: regarding contributions – one of our strengths is we are highly diverse. Everyone should be allowed to contribute as they can. Need to be flexible. We could give special recognition to those working harder, longer hours. Award individual and include mission of partnership on the award. How about an annual celebration? Summer, Potluck.

## **WrapUp** – on this discussion

Where are the needs right now? Steering Committee will put all of this information together for review. They will identify what the needs are and the specific tasks.

Cliff: Pledge letter will go out again before the end of the year requesting financial support or commitment of time. Find a way to ensure that there is agency level commitment even if staff person leaves. Is Cliff doing this letter? Or maybe someone could help or put out instead. It's difficult to know how you should jump in and help as a new partner. Mentoring would be nice. It would also be nice to know priorities of our organization and committee objectives and how you can participate.

## **What kinds of things do we want to do in the future? Brainstorm ideas.**

1. Would like another media campaign.
2. Lets register our website. It would help name recognition as separate entity.
3. Would like clear strategies.
4. Providing educational services for local municipalities. Phase 2
5. Provisions for 2002 Farm Bill
6. Is there a list of missions for all the organizations? Tracy: 42 organizations have web link with mission statements.
7. Jerry: \*\*Statewide table for WaterShed Partners – taking exhibit around
8. Tracy: Mississippi Watershed – education
9. Research – We need to support our messages and pull together a study group to study phosphorus.
10. Activity: recruit new members.
11. Charlotte: 1) Master Gardener's – we should offer ourselves as a resource to this group, 2) Another survey of residents and, 3) work with Bachmans on educational brochures for fertilizer purchase (they produced signs). Expand the target market.
12. We would be willing to play a heavier role. We are not reaching schools as well as we would like. How can we branch into that role with strength? Something like the River Friendly Program and we could certify them to get them involved.
13. Can we do a campaign with the fertilizer companies @ 50 cents a bag and get our flyers out with the bag? Or environmental coupons for fundraiser?
14. We need something education for children.
15. Continue to make the Shed accessible, display to different groups
16. John: Childrens Water Festival, let's jump on board. It's a wonderful model, sharing ideas.
17. Education to local LGU's about native (noxious weed) ordinance, boulevard gardens, neighborhood wild program.
18. Cultivate out-state links. Seek out other organizations and share information.
19. We should strong arm a few more watershed districts for involvement.
20. Jerry: Phosphorus, legislation – needs help on the outcome after legislature.
21. Tracy: Find a way to be more involved with Mississippi Passport. New person is coming to that program - collaboration for new person to work with us.

22. Charlotte – How about letters of thank you to organizations who have been active partners over the years? It should come from WaterShed Partners not just the Steering Committee.
23. John: How about writing your own letters and let the partners sign it?
24. Ron Struss: Mention Project NEMO (non-point source education from meto officials).

**Criteria for projects – will wait until next discussion.**

Wrap-up – Report will be put together with all this information, including all notes.  
Thank you!

Michelle Hanson – Thank you - Good things why we got together.

Ron Struss – Charlotte is retiring. Presentation to Charlotte! She has accomplished the mission - with planning, partnerships, her enthusiasm spills over and her smartness. She works with people encouraging them to do the right thing. She inspires people with environmental education. She can delegate responsibilities! (Jay)

Charlotte – you have all inspired me.  
Plaque is will be a collectors item if we change our name!

**2:45 Adjourn!**