

Minnesota Watersheds

Events-Education and Summer Tour Committee Meeting

June 28, 2023

Via Zoom

Meeting participants: Region 1 Managers Linda Vavra, Bois de Sioux WD and Gene Tiedemann, Red Lake WD; Region 1 Administrator Mori Maher, Middle-Snake-Tamarac Rivers WD; Region 2 Managers Brad Kramer, Shell Rock River WD and Jeff Gertgen, Middle Fork Crow River WD; Region 2 Administrator Jon Roeschlein, Sauk River WD and Andy Henschel, Shell Rock River WD; Region 3 Manager Rick Sanders; Region 3 Administrator Tina Carstens; and Maddy Bohn and Jan Voit, Minnesota Watersheds

TASK 1. REVIEW THE EDUCATION WORKSHOP, RECEPTION, TOUR OVERVIEW, AND SUMMER TOUR

Discussion was held regarding committee members' experiences as attendees.

Education Workshop

- There was a good, wide variety of topics for all parts of the state. The goal was to have well-rounded education.
- The schedule change allowed for increased attendance.
- The partnerships with private industry presentation gave managers new perspectives to consider.
- During the last 45 minute presentation there was less energy in the room, although attendees were taking notes.
- It would have been beneficial to have a break after the first two presentations, as well as someone designated to introduce the speakers.

Reception

- The reception was informal and included a cash bar and sponsor videos.
- It was good to have outdoor and indoor space for the event.
- There were lots of positive comments about the meal.
- The centerpieces were creative and it was fun for the attendees to have something to take home.

TASK 2. SURVEY RESULTS

Survey results.

- Of the survey respondents, over 40% were first-time attendees.
- Most respondents found the educational workshops valuable.
- The reception was rated above average.
- Most attendees would recommend their colleagues to participate in a future Summer Tour.
- The bus tour was rated 4.8 on a 5 point scale.
- Service received before and during the event was rated very helpful.
- Attendees experience at Wedgewood Cove Golf Course was very positive.
- The overall rating for the Summer Tour was excellent.

Committee discussion

- On Bus A the air conditioning worsened throughout the day.
- The staff at Wedgewood Cover was accommodating and easy to work with. They were helpful in getting the wifi fixed.
- To entice participation, it is necessary to have a consistent schedule.
- Registration rates may be a factor.
- There are many new board members that won't take time off work to attend.

- Administrators should play a bigger role in promoting attendance.
- Advisory committees and volunteers would benefit from attendance.
- The dates conflicted with board meetings.
- The time of year makes it difficult for some people to attend.
- The distance was too great.
- Construction projects are underway and time away from the office wouldn't work.
- No matter when an event is held, there will be conflicts. Perhaps if it was held earlier in the week, Sunday could be used for driving time.
- There is always something happening. Board meetings can be postponed. For farmers, there isn't combining or harvesting, so June is a good time to hold the tour.
- Boards need to set this as a priority and reschedule meetings to accommodate attendance.
- The survey comments were typical and overall, very positive.

TASK 3. PLANNING AHEAD

Discussion was held regarding locations for the next several years.

- Metro Watersheds will discuss the 2024 Summer Tour at their July meeting. The event should be held in the east metro since the last metro tour was on the west side.
- This will be a discussion topic at the MAWA meeting in September.

TASK 4. OPEN FORUM

Discussion was held regarding:

- Whether the event should be open to the public,
- Normally there is no interest outside watershed organizations,
- For future events, reach out to SWCD supervisors and staff, as well as state agencies, non-profits, and cities within the watershed,
- Counties in the Minnesota River Valley should be invited to learn about watersheds,
- Chamber or city staff should be included to build awareness of watershed activities in the local community, and
- The importance of board member attendance to learn what is happening statewide.

Discussion was also held regarding a potential survey of watershed boards to gather input on their educational needs.

Andy Henschel thanked the Minnesota Watersheds board and staff, his staff, and everyone that assisted with the event for the partnership and hard work that went into making the Summer Tour a success.

The meeting concluded at 2:30 p.m.

Meeting notes by Jan Voit