

DEPARTMENT: Natural Resources

TO: Interested Persons

Date: 3/24/86

FROM: Larry Seymour, Director
Division of Waters

Phone: 296-4810

SUBJECT: DIVISION OF WATERS LONG RANGE PLANNING ACTIVITIES

The Division of Waters has recently initiated a long range planning process to examine the effectiveness of water resources management programs in dealing with current and future water resources problems and issues. This planning effort is particularly appropriate now when we are trying to deal with funding and staffing reductions. This process will identify any problems with our existing programs, identify emerging water resources issues and identify means to prioritize and possibly streamline our current operations.

I am enclosing a copy of the work plan for this long range planning process. You have expressed great interest or concern with water resources problems and issues in the past and I hope that you will take the opportunity to quickly review the work plan and provide any comments or ideas that you may have to improve the process or the anticipated products resulting from the planning process.

The bottom line is that we cannot be all things to all people and produce all desired products and services within the desired timelines. In other words, which of the potential activities will be emphasized over the near, intermediate and long range; which of the potential activities will be eliminated, deferred or streamlined; and at what predetermined cost to the resource, the clientele and the organization?

Thank you for the interest you have expressed in the Division of Waters and I hope that with your assistance this long range planning endeavor will be a success. If you have any questions or comments about this process please feel free to contact me at 296-4810 or Joe Gibson of my staff at 296-2773.

LS/t
Attachment

Department of Natural Resources

Division of Waters

Long Range Planning Process

Work Plan

March, 1986

Introduction

The Department of Natural Resources, Division of Waters has been involved with many water resources planning efforts through a variety of climatic, social and economic conditions over the past twenty years. These efforts range from program plans to initiate shoreland and flood plain development and dam safety programs to strategic framework plans outlining overall policy directions for water resources management in the state and the region. In fact, the Division has been so busy dealing with day-to-day problems and planning efforts initiated by others that we have not taken the time to examine the problems, opportunities and needs that Division of Waters staff have observed in our water resources management activities, except on a very limited basis.

These problems, opportunities and needs begin with the programs that we currently administer, but in some cases extend far beyond our existing programs to situations just appearing on the horizon. It has been said that energy was the issue of the 1970's and that water is the issue of the 1980's, but the 1980's are rapidly coming to a close and there are still only a few solutions in sight and more problems are being identified on a daily basis.

The purpose of this long range planning effort is to identify our current niche in the overall water resources management scheme and to identify what we would like our role to be in five to ten years in the future.

It is particularly appropriate that this examination is occurring at this time. New water resources problems or variations of old problems are affecting more people every day. This is occurring at a time when budget problems at all levels of government are severely restricting our ability to deal with these problems. This planning process should allow us to identify many of our existing problems, identify some of the problems looming on the horizon and identify alternatives for dealing with these different problems.

The Planning Process

The planning process that is proposed for the Division of Waters' Long Range Plan consists of four phases or steps answering the following questions:

1. Where are we?
2. Where do we want to go?
3. What do we have to do to get there?
4. How are we progressing?

This 4-step process was proposed for a departmentwide planning process in 1981. Some progress was made at that time in identifying Division of Waters' programs and issues. This process turned into an organizational effectiveness analysis that did result in some changes to the structure of the Division. Unfortunately the formal planning process stopped at this point.

Even though five years have gone by, much of the program identification and description materials are still quite valid, but the issues identified now are much more sophisticated and detailed because of the greater experience of program personnel.

Because of the amount of information collected in this previous effort, it was decided to build on the earlier effort rather than to initiate a new and probably different effort yielding similar responses. The following pages will describe in detail how each step of the planning process will be accomplished and the types of information or outputs that are expected from each step.

Step 1: Where are we?

In this first step, it is intended to identify and describe the current water resources management programs of the Division, the types of water resources problems that are being addressed and also the problems that are not being or are being inadequately addressed.

Most of the work needed to identify where we are has been completed. Program inventories were completed during 1981 and even though the Division has changed during the intervening time period, most of the programs have remained pretty much unchanged. The program inventories will be reviewed and modified as necessary to reflect current conditions.

An evaluation of how well we are addressing water resources problems and issues will be developed from the Program and Issue Identification Questions that were distributed to Division personnel in December, 1985. The problems and issues identified as a result of this questionnaire are currently being summarized for distribution and review by Division personnel. New information will be incorporated during this review period.

Products:

1. Program Inventory March, 1986
2. Summary of Programs and Issues March, 1986

Step 2: Where do we want to go?

During this phase, the summary of programs and issues will be utilized to identify selected areas where major change appears to be desired or needed. For some issue areas, there will be general consensus that the programs are working effectively and that no major changes are needed. For other areas, problems will be identified that are not being addressed, issues will have changed since programs were implemented to address them or programs will be identified that are ineffective in resolving problems they were intended to address.

This analysis essentially requires that the objectives for each program be examined to see if the program is meeting its objectives or not. The objectives may or may not be the same as they were when the program was first implemented. Program needs may have changed over time requiring that new objectives be established.

Product:

Document(s) describing program needs and program objectives for selected areas. May, 1986.

Step 3: What do we have to do to get there?

In this step, program modifications will be identified to meet the new program objectives that were identified. This will mean looking at staffing and funding considerations for each program. It will also mean that priorities will have to be set in order for the program staffing and funding needs to fit within

the overall budget and personnel framework of the Division. Alternative methods of meeting the objectives will have to be examined. New program proposals will also have to be analyzed to determine their priority and to determine the effects of program implementation on the staffing and funding for other Division programs.

Product:

Report(s) describing new programs and program changes and the impacts on the overall role of the Division of Waters. July, 1986

Step 4: How are we progressing?

This step consists of a periodic reevaluation of where we are and where we are going. For the purposes of this planning process, this reevaluation should most appropriately be conducted along with the establishment of the biennial budget. This step is essentially a streamlined version of the previous three steps and is used to make minor adjustments in programs and objectives as they are implemented each biennium.

Product:

Biennial Budget Document adjustments Continuing

Conclusion

This planning process is not terribly complex, but some of the issues that will be identified will be and may cause Division staff to have to make some very tough program decisions. In the past, there has been a tendency to whittle away at all of the programs in the Division and this is no longer possible. If programs are going to be modified and new programs added, it will be necessary to make major changes in the way Division programs are operated or additional sources of funding and staffing will have to be identified. This may be a very great challenge since the activities of state government in general, and the Department of Natural Resources, in particular, have been curtailed so severely during recent years.

MINUTES
WATERS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
March 13 & 14, 1986
Holiday Inn/East, St. Paul

Decentralization of Water Appropriation Permits - Sarah and Hedia distributed and discussed a list of options developed by the work group. Several issues were identified: standards need to be set before we can market it to our clientele, complaints are being heard from the Irrigation Association and others, manual needs to be prepared first, we need more time to sell the concept. Hedia noted that the WAU is already operating at their bottom line. The existing backlog is not being addressed and some additional backlog is developing. Transfers and amendments are taking 1-2 months. Sarah will start work on the manual. Hedia said that IAM will seek management changes if decentralization occurs, at least immediately. Gerry Paul resubmitted his earlier proposal.

Local Water Planning - Jim Cooper outlined some of the initiatives being taken by local groups in Region 5 which may affect regional workload. Dave Hills described some of the task forces being formed in Region 3, Dave is ready to assist in local water planning efforts, Jim will participate to the extent possible. Larry has asked Jim to set up a meeting with Arnold Onstad, Marilyn Lundberg and perhaps others interested in SE water planning; Larry has also talked to Marilyn about this.

Area Hydrologist Study - Kent outlined the report from DOER. Individuals can make their appeals to DOER. According to Kitty Widmar, an E & T scale needs to be developed for Hydrologist 2.

Personnel - Region 2 hired Debbie Fisher to replace Betty Christman. Region 5 hired a student worker. Policy and Planning hired Bret Anderson as a part-time Planner I to assist in the numerous planning initiatives now before us.

Drainage Bill Update - Senator DeCramer's bill includes: changes to Water Bank Program, makes some minor changes to Chapter 105, retains Supreme Court decision on definition of repair, state pays all court costs whether we win or lose. The Association of Counties will be studying drainage laws over the summer to possibly introduce a new bill in 1987. We are involved in this. Ron also discussed a bill introduced by Collin Peterson that amends the LID law. Larry noted that Ron did a good job on legislative coordination of these bills.

OHW Rules - Ken reported that the latest draft will be circulated in a week or so.

Shoreland Rules - Steve Prestin joined the group and discussion took place on the areas of Land Dedications, Wetland Protection, Agricultural Controls and Impacts, Rivers Classification System, Sensitive Area Management. Ron is hoping for promulgation by July. Steve and Ron did a good job on identifying the pros/cons for purposes of this discussion.

DOW/PCA Involvement in Non-Point Source - Sarah is the DNR representative on the task force chaired by Mike Robertson of PCA. At their next meeting they will be talking about highway salts and highway erosion. Their intent is to develop a state strategy by mid-August. Sarah will pass on more information as it becomes available.

Environmental Review Thresholds - EIS/EAW's do not contain the correct information or if plans have changed. Whole process could be eliminated or reduced per most hydrologists. Also thresholds can - with justification - be changed. There is a move afoot to lower thresholds that should be raised if not eliminated. Bret Anderson, Charlotte Cohn, Lonnie Thomas to provide input on the merits. Gibson will develop a summary and provide it to Joe Kurcinka.

Sand Hill Lake Report - Gerry provided a very comprehensive report and answer prepared for the Joint House/Senate Claims Subcommittee regarding the tort claim of Mr. Richard A. Johnson. Larry reiterated his concern that dams that are in trouble be dealt with right away, even if department-owned.

Hazardous Waste Clean-up - Pat Bloomgren presented a slide show of the clean-up at Duxbury. A new problem may be developing on DNR land in Region 5.

Strategic Planning - Joe Gibson was absent the first day because of EQB Water Quality Task Force meeting of which Larry was not notified in advance. Joe handed out the LCMR Issues and "A Plan for the Plan" (constitutes superior work). Submit any comments to Joe soon. He will be sending out a summary of where we are presently. We then need to determine where we want to go, what do we have to do to get there. Ron is concerned about how we get through the next month - Larry and Joe are concentrating on intermediate 3 years. Sarah worrying about longer term. Note the changes in viewpoint that time has rendered! Joe has done a good job on this.

Office of Planning commented very favorably on our issues (last biennium and this one too). We are among the best in the department according to their statements. We're getting support from other agencies, too.

IJC Meeting - Larry attended a meeting in Windsor, Ontario. Preparing stage damage curves for raising Lake Superior to 603. Is higher than last year at this time. IJC employees say that Duluth is slowly sinking into the lake (0.01' per year).

DOW Publication - Gene showed a brochure put out by Minerals. Submit ideas for a Waters brochure of this type to Gene. Larry is requesting publications assistance from the Freshwater Foundation. Also, please start collecting photos for displays for the '87 session!!

Evaluation of 1985 Waters School - Jim reviewed a summary of the evaluations received. Evaluation sheets are an integral tool for planning future schools - they should be filled out and turned in.

1986 Waters School - Ken Reed and Kent Lokkesmoe are co-chairs. Bids were solicited for a facility. Will be held September 28-October 1. Submit ideas to Ken or Kent.

Training - Some \$ left. Should be used conservatively.

Forestry Planning for Lewiston - Jim is working on this. Plugging the wells in SE Minnesota are one of the issues in the study. Disciplines owning affected lands are to bear costs per Mr. Thorne.

Hydrographics - Ken has received requests for additional gaging stations from watershed districts. We should determine if the data would be beneficial when considering requests. We can do some, but not very many. Ken will start working on changes to Dam Safety rules after OHW rules are completed.

Status of Dam Projects - Lanesboro 90% completed. Devil Track is moving along fine, hoping for construction this summer. Nett Lake - grant agreement finalized, TKDA hired as engineer. Rapidan - some violation problems. Lake Bronson - work to start this spring. Craig did a good job on Bronson and Heron Lake. Kettle River Hydropower Project appears to be unfeasible. Dam still may need to be repaired or removed. Fall Lake was not funded this session.

USCE 205 Projects - Ron will send out a fact sheet.

Shoreland Deficiencies - Ron will send out a status report by April 1st.

Computer Usage - Considerable money could be saved by enhancing our computer capabilities within DOW. Regions without PC's are interested in getting them but funds are short. St. Paul also has a "wish list". Some conservative investment appears likely.

Critical Issues - Some controversial issues still are not being raised to Larry's attention through internal channels. A wetland acquisition matter scheduled for the 4/16 Land Exchange Board is a recent example where the Land Bureau and Governor's Office were pushing for an immediate answer before the Regional Hydrologist, Section Administrator, or Director had been notified of the sensitivity or priority of the issue or what is involved. This type of control is particularly difficult where other DNR units do not adhere to the chain of command (go through the Director) with their service requests. The only rectification in such a case is if the line and staff employees involved impress upon their managerial committee representative the gravity of the situation! Only then it can be surfaced at the appropriate level.

Next Meeting - June 9-11 in Duluth.