

Semiannual newsletter on company projects, news, and events.

WATERSHED PLANNING

Informing local decisions on a watershed scale

Improving water resources requires a change in mindset, with individuals looking for the opportunity to form collaborative groups that focus on problem solving. Watershed planning encourages diverse groups to assess water resources within the boundaries that water itself creates—regardless of political boundaries.

Through conversations, watersheds, cities, and individuals can begin to nail down what resources are important, what they can do to protect them, and what action needs to be taken to reach shared goals.

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COMMUNITIES LEADING THE CHARGE

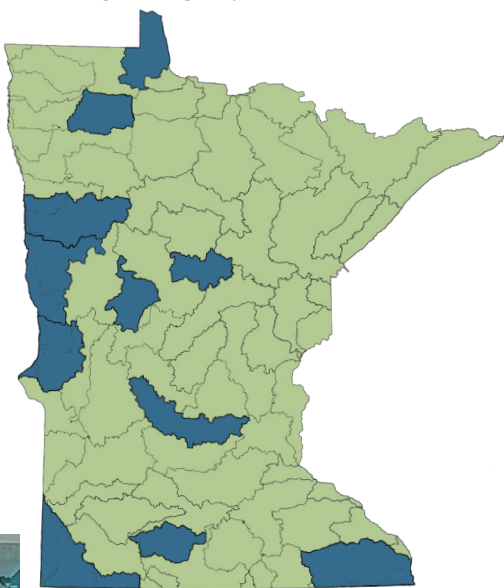
Many local governments across the Midwest are participating in watershed planning processes. Their goal is to engage and empower residents around water resources goals.

ONE WATERSHED, ONE PLAN

In Minnesota, the One Watershed, One Plan (1W1P) program marks a statewide initiative to create comprehensive watershed plans, regardless of traditional county and city boundaries.

Houston Engineering, Inc. (HEI) has been an instrumental innovator with 1W1P, guiding partnership groups through the detailed planning process to create a clear vision for managing resources within their watersheds. Each watershed and local community has different priorities that reflect the history of the watershed,

from soil health to flood mitigation, lake protection to groundwater quality, and more. Through each project, HEI has gained valuable insights to create a tailored, robust plan, reflective of local goals and practical steps to meet those goals. As the program enters its fourth round, HEI's team has supported the following 1W1P groups:



Many planning partnerships are beginning to take the additional step to assess the cost-benefit ratio of conservation practices at a watershed scale. This allows groups to prioritize projects and achieve water quality goals in a more cost-efficient manner.

ADDRESSING WATER QUALITY IN IOWA

HEI's passion for engaging in watershed planning efforts has also brought us into Iowa, where we have been instrumental in developing action plans at the watershed scale for the Middle Cedar Watershed and the City of Dubuque.

HEI has integrated the Prioritize, Target, and Measure Application (PTMApp) with Iowa's Agricultural Conservation Planning Framework (ACPF) tool to smart-target the conservation practices with the most benefit.

This combined approach makes developing a watershed-focused action plan cheaper, faster, and more effective by providing the most cost-effective results based on local stakeholder goals. The process also provides targeted mapping and information that can be used to facilitate conversations with landowners about where conservation might fit on their farms.

Our team is excited to continue these important discussions and refine our methods to find the best solutions for complex water quality challenges.



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“ WATERSHED PLANNING PROVIDES A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO LEVERAGE VALUABLE EXISTING INFORMATION AND THE EXPERTISE OF LOCAL COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO CREATE A GUIDING DOCUMENT THAT IS NOT ONLY SCIENTIFICALLY ROBUST BUT ALSO ROOTED IN THE COMMUNITY AND RESOURCES IT IS DESIGNED TO SERVE. ”
-RACHEL OLM

THE PLANNING PROCESS



ENGAGING THE PUBLIC

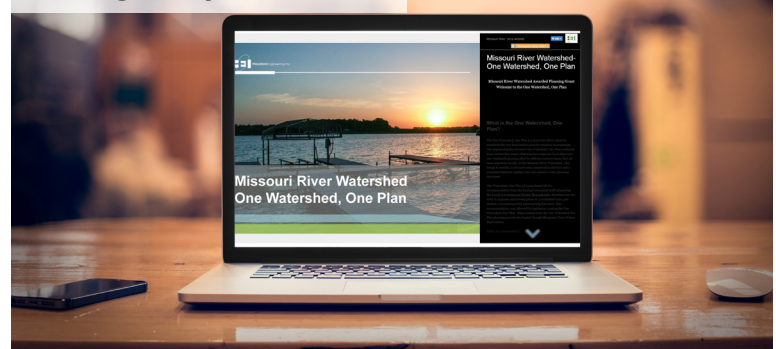
Improving water resources must be a collaborative effort that involves community buy-in and support.

HEI's watershed planning projects involve gaining public input, sharing key data in a way that's easy to understand, and supporting education and outreach efforts to share the importance of water quality goals.

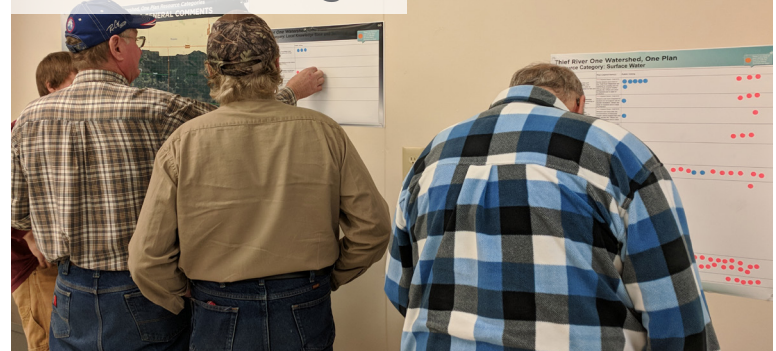


Here are some of our tools used to facilitate public participation:

Story Maps



Resource Voting



Custom Branding

