

Appendix E: Subject Matter Expert Input Process Overview

Subject matter experts in areas related to the ENRTF mission were engaged in a multi-stage process. Overall, over 200 subject matter experts were engaged. They represented a broad range of organizations and issue areas, including conservation and environmental organizations, local and state government, and academia. A list of organizations that were engaged in one of the stages described below is included in Appendix F.

Document Scan

In the first stage of the process, a scan was conducted of recent long-term strategic plans of agencies that have environment and natural resources programs or responsibilities, and plans of environmental or conservation organizations. Review of such strategic plans is required by MS 116P.08, Section 3 as part of the ENRTF strategic planning process. This scan resulted in a document, over 30 pages in length, that identified goals, strategies, and issue areas that were found across all of the plans reviewed.

Issue Identification Panels

A group of experts with broad experience across many areas were asked to review the final document scan. These experts were identified by LCCMR staff. This group gathered in-person on one, or more, of three different days in July and August, as Issue Identification Panels. They used the document scan and identified where progress had been made in Minnesota within each of the ENRTF areas, where progress had not been made, what goals should be prioritized for ENRTF funding moving forward, and what strategies could help achieve those goals.

In the second stage of the process, the goals that were identified by the Issue Identification Panels were then shared with additional subject matter experts via two methods described more below. One method was an online survey. The other method was at in-person discussions during the LCCMR Site Visits in September and October.

Subject Matter Expert Survey

The online survey was sent to 434 subject matter experts, who were identified by LCCMR staff and generally included project managers of all ENRTF-funded projects over the last 10 years. The survey administration was open from September 9 through October 14. A total of 189 subject matter experts completed the survey. The survey gave these experts the opportunity to further prioritize the goals developed by the Issue Identification Panels, and to provide ideas for strategies to achieve the prioritized goals.

Survey respondents had expertise across many areas. Respondents could identify expertise in any of the following areas, and many reported expertise in more than one area.

Table 1. Reported expertise among Subject Matter Expert Survey respondents

Expertise areas	Count	Percent of all respondents
Water quality	92	52%
Environmental education	86	48%
Wildlife habitat and management (including birds and pollinators)	74	42%
Climate change	67	38%
Water quantity	63	35%
Outdoor recreation and open spaces	61	34%
Agricultural practices	60	34%
Aquatic habitat and management (including fish and other aquatic species)	50	28%
Energy	31	17%
Other	30	17%
Air quality	11	6%

Group Discussions during Site Visits

At the LCCMR Site Visits, which took place September 11-12 and October 15-16, LCCMR staff invited staff from organizations or programs that were part of the Site Visits, plus other local subject matter experts, to join LCCMR members for small group discussions. At these events, LCCMR staff and members facilitated participants through a process of reviewing cross-cutting issues that emerged during the Issue Identification Panels, to prioritize among goals that cut across multiple areas of the ENRTF mission, and to identify and prioritize strategies that could help achieve those goals.

Prioritization Panel

The feedback received from the subject matter expert survey and the Site Visit discussions were analyzed, and then shared back with experts who participated in the Issue Identification Panels, along with additional subject matter experts identified by LCCMR staff. These experts were invited to an in-person meeting on October 23, 2019, to participate in a final Prioritization Panel. The Prioritization Panel used the feedback from the survey and Site Visit discussions to recommend the highest leverage strategies needed to achieve prioritized goals, and to provide input on how progress toward the goals could be measured.

The ultimate output from the Prioritization Panel, priority goals and strategies, is the content provided in the body of this summary report. The additional following appendices, Appendix G through Appendix L, contain the entire list of goals voted on through the subject matter expert survey, as well as the full list of strategies offered by subject matter experts through the survey.