

Drainage Work Group Meeting Notes

August 13, 2015

2:30 – 5:00 p.m.

Verizon Wireless Center, Mankato, MN

Attendance

Jerome Deal, MAWD; Kurt Deter, Rinke-Noonan; Ron Harnack, RRWMB; Ron Mortensen, MADI; Loren Engelby, Kandiyohi Co.; Barb Huberty, LWC; Laura Nehl-Trueeman, MnDOT; Dan Wilkens, RRWMB; Mark Zabel, MASWCD; Mark Ten Eyck, MCEA; Steven Colvin, DNR; Jim Sehl, DNR; Spencer Herbert, MDA; Jill Bathke, MCEA; Wayne Anderson, MPCA; Mark Dittrich, MDA; Michelle Ulrich, CCWD; Larry Kuseske, MAWD; Ray Bohn, MAWD; Randy Kramer, Renville Co.; Craig Austinson, Blue Earth Co.; Tom Loveall, BWSR Brd.; Les Everett, UMN; Ron Ringquist, MVA; Tim Gillette, BWSR; Al Kean, BWSR

Handouts prior to or during meeting

1. DWG – Meeting Logistics and Agenda for 8-13-15
2. DWG – Meeting Notes for 7-9-15
3. BWSR FY16 CWF Multipurpose Drainage Management Grant Program RFP – Final Draft
4. FY16 CWF Multipurpose Drainage Management Grant Program – Background and Summary Information, 8-9-15

Introductions and agenda overview

All in attendance introduced themselves. Al Kean provided extra copies and an overview of the agenda. No additions to the agenda were offered.

Approval of 7-9-15 meeting notes

Extra copies of the meeting notes were distributed and corrections or additions requested. Al K. noted that he may have missed someone in attendance, because the sign-in sheet had not been sent completely around at the meeting. However, no comments, corrections, or additions were identified.

BWSR CWF Multipurpose Drainage Management Grant Program RFP – Final Draft

Al K. provided an overview of comments received from DWG members and others and how BWSR addressed. He indicated that the RFP was reviewed with and approved by the BWSR Grant Programs and Policy Committee on August 10, and the program will be on the BWSR Board meeting agenda for approval on August 27, 2015.

A question was asked about any of the eligible conservation practices fulfilling the alternative practices provision in the new buffer law (Section 103F.48). It was noted that an alternative practices list or scenarios have not yet been defined, but that some of the eligible on-field practices such as grassed waterways, water and sediment control basins and side inlet controls might qualify. It was suggested that local SWCD involvement in tailoring alternative practices would be desirable. It was also noted that some SWCDs might need more Technical Approval Authority for planning, design and construction of some alternative practices.

Drainage Records Modernization Database project update

This LCCMR project is managed by BWSR (Al K., Tim G.) and involves a contract with the MN Geospatial Information Office (MnGeo) and a subcontract with Houston Engineer, Inc. The purpose is to develop a drainage records database template for drainage authorities to use; web-based access through the MN Geospatial Commons managed by MnGeo on their website; and associated update of the Drainage Records Modernization Guidelines, Sep. 2008. A Project Advisory Committee (PAC) has been established, involving some members of the DWG and including drainage inspectors, county auditors

and GIS staff. The PAC has met once and communicated via email. Three Focus Group Meetings were held on July 28-29, 2015 at New Ulm, Shoreview and Barnesville, MN.

Some concern was expressed about the scope of the database. Al K. noted that based on prior DWG discussions about this project, the focus expressed to the LCCMR and Legislature was on hydrographic information about drainage system location, type, dimensions, profile, crossings, etc. It is recognized that drainage records vary substantially regarding what information is available. It was also recommended that the database template be compatible with data and maps for the buffer law. This project is scheduled for completion in June 2016.

Update regarding DWG Public Waters and Drainage Subgroup

Jim Sehl, DNR, and other members of the subgroup in attendance provided an update regarding a subgroup meeting on 8-6-15 at MFB in Eagan, MN.

- Much discussion about public waters inventory and public waters definition, consistency of past and present regulation / implementation, and compatibility for the new buffer law. Concern was expressed about consistency with process previously developed and used for correction of errors on PWI maps and consistency of PWI and Buffer Protection Maps to be developed.
- Jim S. had prepared a number of drainage project scenarios, based on subgroup member recommendations, that were discussed in relation to DNR permitting or permission of drainage projects. The meaning of “substantially affect public waters” in Section 103G.245, Subd. 2.(2) is a key associated topic. DNR intends to define factors used to determine the need for a permit or permission regarding a public drainage project.
- Some discussion about drainage systems with missing records, and use of the relatively new Section 103E.101, Subd. 4a before DNR makes a decision.
- Much discussion about definition of public waters and compatibility of past and future buffer requirements for shoreland, Chapter 103E ditches and via Buffer Protection Maps.
- Next subgroup meeting September 9, 2015 at MFB.

Overview and discussion about how Viewers use technology

Ron Ringquist, Viewer and DWG member, provided an overview of use of electronic information for drainage system viewing and answered questions.

- SSURGO digital Soil Survey data is available online from USDA-NRCS; LiDAR Digital Elevation Model topography for Minnesota is available on the MnGeo website (GeoCommons); parcel data is available to differing extents from counties; high resolution aerial photos are available from the National Agriculture Imagery Program (NAIP) on USDA websites, Google Earth and other sources.
- The Minnesota Viewers Association promotes use of electronic information and methods.
- Ron and his viewer team(s) do substantial electronic work in the office to substantially reduce their work in the field.
- Discussed how drainage authorities (counties and watershed districts) and GIS staff can help provide info to streamline the viewing process. Kandiyohi County and the Lac Qui Parle - Yellow Bank Watershed District reportedly have participated in this type of pre-viewing work. Al K. mentioned that he was making plans for Otter Tail County GIS staff to present an example of what they do in this regard at the September DWG meeting.

Next Meeting

Thursday, September 10, 2015, 12:30 – 3:30 p.m. at Minnesota Farm Bureau building in Eagan, MN.