

Drainage Work Group Meeting Notes

October 8, 2015

12:30 – 3:30 p.m.

Association of Minnesota Counties Building, St. Paul, MN

Attendance

Greg Knopff, Senate Analyst; Jennifer Berquam, AMC; Craig Austinson, Blue Earth Co.; Ron Ringquist, MVA; Jerome Deal, MAWD; Dan Wilkens, RRWMB; Larry Kuseske, MAWD; Michele Ulrich, CCWD; Alan Perish, MFU, MVA; Mark Zabel, MASWCD; Steve Colvin, DNR; Todd Miller, MRCC; Bob Hiivala, Wright Co.; Barb Huberty, LWC; Laura Nehl-Trueman, MnDOT; John Jaschke, BWSR; Jim Sehl, DNR; Doug Busselman, MFB; Tom Loveall, BWSR Brd.; Mark Dittrich, MDA; LeAnn Buck, MASWCD; Ron Harnack, RRWMB; Joe Smentek, MSGA; Warren Formo, MAWRC; Andrea Henderson, MnDOT; Tim Gillette, BWSR; Al Kean, BWSR

Handouts prior to or during the meeting

1. DWG – Meeting Logistics and Agenda for 10-8-15
2. DWG – Meeting Notes for 9-10-15
3. Rice Creek WD / HEI presentation about Runoff-Based Charges for Water Mgmt. Districts
4. IWI presentation about Terrain Analysis and Applications for Drainage Assessments
5. Overview of Red Lake WD Thief River Falls / CD-1 Flood Damage Reduction / Improvement Project, Water Mgmt. District Assessments
6. Save the Date / Call for Presentations, *2015 Drainage Research Forum*, Monday, November 23, 2015, Cabela's, Owatonna, MN
7. Brief Summary of Minnesota Drainage Law and Buffer Strip Provisions, Final Draft, 9-18-15
8. Minnesota Public Drainage Manual Update, Status Summary, 10-7-15
9. Drainage Records Modernization and GIS Database Project, Status Summary, 10-8-15

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 9-10-15 meeting notes

Extra copies of the meeting notes were distributed and corrections or additions requested. No corrections or additions were identified.

Share information about recent and upcoming drainage related events

Copies were distributed of a save the date / call for presentations by Gary Sands, UMN, and Matt Helmers, ISU, for the 2015 *MN-IA Drainage Research Forum* to be held on Monday, Nov. 23 at Cabela's in Owatonna, MN. The *MAWD Drainage Workshop* will be held on Thursday, Dec. 3, 2015 in conjunction with the MAWD Annual Meeting, at the Arrowwood Conference Center, Alexandria, MN. An *International Annual Meeting of the American Society of Agronomy, Crop Science Society of America, Soil Science Society of America and Entomological Society of America* will be held on Nov. 15-18, 2015 at the Minneapolis Convention Center and the agenda includes some drainage and nutrients topics.

Brief Summary of Minnesota Drainage Law and Buffer Strip Provisions

This is a 1-page, 2-sided summary of drainage law prepared by Al Kean in response to a request from legislative staff for a drainage law fact sheet because of the new state buffer law. The DWG had an opportunity to review the summary for any inaccuracies and is OK with the document.

Brief updates regarding the status of projects and DWG Public Waters and Drainage Subgroup

- *Minnesota Public Drainage Manual Update* – Tim Gillette, BWSR Project Mgr., provided a status summary. The contractor continues to work on draft chapter updates and development with Project Advisory Committee (PAC), Chapter Subcommittee input via email. The original schedule has slipped necessitating rescheduling the next PAC meeting. BWSR is coordinating with the contractor to revise the schedule. There was some DWG member concern about time for DWG review of the full update in the schedule. Al K. indicated that the PAC includes several DWG members and the DWG will be kept informed and have opportunity for review and discussion of the draft updated MPDM.
- *Drainage Records Database*, BWSR LCCMR Project – Tim Gillette and Al K. reported that the contractors have coordinated with the Project Advisory Committee and BWSR and are making good progress developing a drainage records database template for use by drainage authorities and others. Some concern about what data the template will and won't include and DWG coordination. The project focus is on hydrographic data about drainage systems (e.g. location, type, dimensions), required buffer strip reporting and now benefited areas. DWG will have opportunity for review.
- *Public Waters and Drainage Subgroup* – Jim Sehl, DNR, reported that the subgroup hasn't met recently, because DNR is still working on a response to the scenarios previously discussed and factors for consideration of public waters permits or DNR permission. Concerns about DNR making decisions without timely DWG subgroup discussion. A subgroup meeting soon was requested.

Runoff-Based Method(s) for Drainage System Assessments

- Al Kean briefly reviewed the Rice Creek Watershed District runoff curve number method presentation in July and the International Water Institute terrain analysis presentation in September. He also provided a summary of a stormwater utility type of method used for a water management district in conjunction with Chapter 103E methods for ag land in the Thief River Falls Flood Damage Reduction and CD-1 Improvement Project by the Red Lake Watershed District.
- The DWG discussed several questions Al posed about expected cost effectiveness, uses, and pros and cons of a runoff-based drainage assessment method as an option in drainage law.
- Much discussion about how a runoff-based method might compare to the current determination of benefits and damages methods for different landscape situations and types of drainage projects (establishment, improvement or repair). It was noted that drainage law requires consideration of costs and benefits for establishment and improvement projects. Both concerns and potential benefits of a runoff-based drainage assessment method were discussed at length.
- Al K. indicated that some prior year CWF Conservation Drainage grant funds had been returned to BWSR and staff is looking into potential use for development of a runoff-based drainage assessments application that could utilize terrain analysis GIS capabilities presented by Chuck Fritz, IWI, at the DWG meeting in September.
- The DWG generally supported further investigation and development of a runoff-based option for drainage system assessments, including both technical method and drainage law considerations in parallel that would come together before the DWG considered associated consensus recommendations.

Next Meeting

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