



**TITLE:** VESLEDAHL WETLAND  
LEGAL DRAINAGE ESTABLISHMENT  
LANDOWNER MEETING

**DATE:** MARCH 28, 2024

Attendance: Sand Hill River Watershed District Board Managers: Craig Engelstad and Clayton Bartz. April Swenby - Sand Hill River Watershed District Administrator, Zach Herrmann – District Engineer at Houston Engineering. State agencies in attendance included Dave Weirens – Board of Soil and Water Resources, Rachel Miller – Mn DOT, and Josh Dickerson – Mn DOT. Landowners (via the sign in sheet): Terry Cook, Mike Steunes, Lyle Fuchs, Marvin Gunderson, Fotina Basargin, Dan Espeseth, Travis Fuchs, Ron Locken, Jeff Bratager, Bob Vesledahl, James Iverson, Steve Carlson, Jon Vesledahl, Ben Ystenes, Davey Ystenes, and Kyle Qualley.

Swenby introduced herself and Zach Herrmann as the district engineer.

A presentation was given to those in attendance highlighting the following:

- Drainage opportunities in Vesledahl Wetland Banking area: Mn DOT has changed its position and is now supportive of a legal ditch petition by landowners. A letter written from Mn DOT stating its position was given to all in attendance.
- Vesledahl Project and history of drainage in the area
- Drainage Authority definitions and responsibilities
- Legal procedures for the establishment of legal systems
- Petitioners
- Levy's and payments for legal systems
- Benefits/damages of legal systems
- Maintenance funds
- Roles of the drainage authority
- Funding for establishment
- Potential map of established systems

Paul Engelstad shared his experience as a landowner and petitioner for a drainage system improvement project in the western part of the watershed district. He explained the process of getting the petition, circulating it among the affected landowners, working with the watershed district and the engineer, and dealing with the costs and benefits of the project. He also answered some questions from other participants and gave his perspective on the value of having a legal drainage system.

A landowner asked what was needed to move forward, should landowners choose move forward. Swenby confirmed that the districts role is support to a petitioner. A lead landowner is needed and this process is all landowner driven, not watershed driven.

Swenby encouraged all in attendance to visit the district web-site at [www.sandhillwatershed.org](http://www.sandhillwatershed.org) (Projects >Projects > 18 Vesledahl Wetland Banking) for the recording of the meeting and meeting notes. Her contact information was distributed so that all in attendance could call and ask.