

PROJECT TEAM MEETING MINUTES

April 14, 2004

1. **ATTENDANCE:** Daniel Wilkens – Sand Hill River Watershed Administrator, April Swenby – Sand Hill River Watershed Administrative Assistant, Roger Hanson – Sand Hill River Watershed District Board Chairman, Randy Huelskamp – NRCS, Dan Thul – DNR Waters, Kevin Scheidecker – RRBC, Adam Woltjer - NRCS, Jenny Burrack – NRCS, Jim Larsen – Houston Engineering, Rolland Gagner – Union Lake/Sarah Improvement District, Dave Jones – NRCS, Roy Holmes – NRCS, Maynard Pick – Congressman Peterson Representative, Don Buckhout – MDNR/Red River Basin Coordinator, Mike Vavricka – MPCA, Dan Grunhovd – Landowner, and Tom Raster – Corp of Engineers.
2. **AGENDA REVIEW:** New agenda items were added – NRCS engineer presentation on NRCS standards and Kevin Scheidecker presentation on CREP. . Wilkens gave an overview of the minutes. The March 9, 2004 meeting minutes were approved.

FISH PASSAGE: Randy Huelskamp asked Dave Jones about the PL566 process as an alternative source of funding for the fish passage project. Jones said that this type of project funding emphasizes flood control and the economic benefits need to outweigh the project costs. Because our project affects mostly agricultural land and not small cities or communities, the PL 566 program would unlikely fund the fish passage project. Jones said if it was approved, although unlikely, after a public hearing process, funding could then be applied for. He said that much of the funding set aside for the PL566 does not tend to go to Minnesota. The main goal of the fish passage is for fish passage, not flood control. The project team agreed that the PL 566 program was deemed not viable as an alternate source of funds.

An e-mail from Tom Raster was distributed to the project team which stated the Mississippi Valley Division, (MVD), approved the Sand Hill River 1135 Preliminary Restoration Plan, (PRP). Our next step is to wait until funding is available. We can move onto the next phase when the money is available. Prior history shows it may take about six months after the Corps FYE which is September 30, 2004.

Conversations were held regarding the state \$200,000 dedicated funding for the fish passage project. Raster suggested adding a line item in a bill directing the Corp to accept the DNR funding as part of the local cost share prior to the project being approved. Pick suggested presenting a letter to Congressman Peterson from the Sand Hill River Watershed District requesting Collin Peterson to add a special provision to a bill that would allow the DNR funds to be expended prior to the signing of a contract with the CORPS and still be counted as the local share of the project.

Sand Hill River Watershed District Board Chairman Hanson questioned accepting the DNR money before Corp funding has been guaranteed. He understood that the DNR is supplying that money based on the total project. If the 1135 proposal should fail, funding to complete the overall project would be difficult, meaning, we may not be able to hold up our end of the bargain to the DNR. Raster doubted that the 1135 would fail because it is a great project. Raster did comment on the West Mill as possibly showing a red flag. He was unsure if the MVD would think that is another parties' responsibility. He did not want to bring attention to that point either. Raster also said that if there is a special provision from congress in the bill, it is a done deal and it will be covered regardless.

The project team asked Maynard Pick when he thought this could possibly be passed. He did not have an answer for them at this time.

Permits for the fish passage project were discussed by the project team. The question is whether we should begin applying for permits so that if congress passes this bill, we can begin construction as soon as possible. Raster said that when Larsen finishes with the specs, the Corp should take a final look at it and Larsen agreed. Raster said he could possibly free up one day to assist. Permits from the DNR & MPCA are needed. Raster said that because the Texas crossing and the crossing west of Fertile would be out of sequence, a Corp permit is also needed. A **Motion** was made by Rolland Gagner requesting the Board of Managers to request that Congressman Peterson assist the district in passage of a line item bill that would protect the state and watershed funding for the Texas crossing and the culvert west of Fertile as part of the local cost share of the fish passage project, **Seconded** by Dan Thul, **Carried**.

UNION LAKE EROSION CONTROL: Property boundary lines were needed to determine potential funding sources. Jim Larsen presented a map with the boundaries. It appears that the upper control structure is in the agricultural program. Larsen asked if MPCA had funding available for this project and Mike Vavricka stated he will research that for the next meeting. He stated that 319 money is a possibility; however, that is a long process.

Jenny Burrack reported her findings on the possibility of the Kresbach land applying for CRP. She thought he may be interested in signing up. He is interested in how it may benefit him. Burrack will continue to discuss the project with the landowner.

Larsen distributed the plan for the requested Alternative III. Larsen suggested changing the name of this project to Union Lake Erosion Control. The floor was turned over to Jones who began by correcting the previous months minutes and said that he did not think the prior plans were overkill. He simply wanted to point out that if funding is to be provided by EQIP, the plan needs to meet NRCS standards, which can be found on NRCS's website. NRCS will need to see information showing they are storing design lifetime sediment storage. Jones said there are two ways to cut off gully heads – put a structure above it or back up water into it. The standard runoff needs to be controlled for a 10 year event and has to be contained for 24 hours. He said there is going to be a lot of sediment controlled. He suggested maybe implementing a lined waterway channel, possibly cable concrete. He said this would need to be verified to see if it meets NRCS standards. Another option might be using a rock mattress to keep the water in the channel and protect against gully erosion. Jones questioned the loss of trees and thought that could cause additional harm. Jones also thought the field east of the highway was a huge contributor to the problem. Huelskamp asked how much of the project could be done using the farm program. Jones informed the project team that each individual landowner needs to be approved for NRCS money.

Larsen said that by following the NRCS standards, the cost estimates could change. Larsen will work with Burrack and Huelskamp to determine sediment loss.

Wilkens thought a key part in solving the problem is to change the land use of the area. Huelskamp suggested implementing a permanent type easement on the property, perhaps WRP.

Raster asked if it would be worthwhile to reshape the whole channel and put in filter and rock rip rap in conjunction with the upland plan with no holding sites. Jones agreed that scenario would be an option. Wilkens said that to make that work, land usage would need to be managed upstream. Wilkens suggested trying to keep this project as simple as possible. He asked Jones if he thought getting NRCS money is probable. Jones responded by saying "If you want NRCS money, meet NRCS standards." Larsen said their standards are self explanatory and that it shouldn't be a problem to assess that possibility.

The goal for funding currently is to obtain 50% EQIP. Landowners need to be willing to sign up for the program. Huelskamp added by saying if that doesn't happen by May, it will have to wait until next years round of funding.

Huelskamp asked about channel work all the way up and down without a structure. Jones thought that may work but Larsen needs to research the NRCS standards.

Vavricka said that 319 money could be a possibility but wouldn't be available until next year. He said this is a 50% cost share and can be done through the watershed, rather than the landowner. The only stipulation is that the landowner cannot obtain more than what the project costs and the local district cannot participate over 100%. Federal funds are limited to 75%. Vavricka will contact Wayne Goeken for the monitoring reports on the lake.

Larsen asked about DNR money. Thul said there is always the FDR program. Thul will check with fisheries and wildlife.

Gagner said that the LID is unable to participate in the funding at this time. The LID lawsuit will determine whether they could contribute in the future.

The following table has been adjusted to summarize the conversations of this months meeting. Highlighted in red are changes/additions from the previous month.

To be Completed:	Start:	Finish:	Person(s) Responsible:
Identify landowners		DONE!	E. Polk SWCD (Gary Lee)
Contact landowners to determine interest			
Information on EQIP and/or WRP, CRP to Kresbach		April 2004 DONE!	E. Polk SWCD (Gary Lee) and Jenny Burrack
Information on LID			Rolland Gagner
Information on Funding			LID
Easements from landowners possible?			
Alternative 3 – more engineering			Jim Larsen
Identify property lines		April 2004 DONE!	Jim Larsen
Check on Challenge Grant/Comprehensive Water Plan and/or RIM		May 2004	Brian Dwight
Dave Jones converse with Jim Larsen		April 2004 DONE!	NRCS & Houston Engineering
Check on Habitat Improvement Program		April 2004 DONE!	Randy Huelskamp
Report 319 funding		May 2004	Mike Vavrika (give info to Larsen before meeting)
Research NRCS standards		May 2004	Jim Larsen
Determine sediment yield		May 2004	Huelskamp, Burrack, Larsen
Check on Permanent easement (WRP)		May 2004	Jenny Burrack
Check with DNR & fisheries for money		May 2004	Dan Thul to check with Terry Wolfe

Check with landowner on East side -		May 2004	Jenny Burrack Rolland Gagner
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LAKE SARAH WATERSHED STORAGE: No action was taken at this time.

3. **SECTION 17 OF SLETTEN:** No action was taken at this time.
4. **GARDEN SLOUGH:** Dan Thul reported that part of this project is protected waters. Thul recommended having Henry Van Offelen, a member of the TSAC group, attend our next meeting and go through the TSAC on channel assessment worksheet that the TSAC group developed to give an early assessment of the pros and cons of an on channel project.

Grunhovd reported that he was unable to contact anyone at NRCS to brainstorm possible future expansion plans, but will continue trying. He hopes to have new information at the next meeting.
5. **CREP REPORT:** Kevin Scheidecker, Red River Basin Commission gave a presentation on the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program. An agreement has been reached at the legislature for bonding and a general agreement on the parameters of the program. Materials attached.
6. **ADJOURN:** Meeting was adjourned at 2:38 PM. The next meeting will be May 11, 2004 at 10:30 am at the Sand Hill River Watershed District office in Fertile, MN.

Minutes respectfully submitted:

April Swenby, Administrative Assistant