

PROJECT TEAM MEETING MINUTES
May 11, 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, Jim Larsen – Houston Engineering, Rolland Gagner – Union Lake/Sarah Improvement District, Don Buckhout – MDNR/Red River Basin Coordinator, Mike Vavricka – MPCA, Dan Grunhovd – Landowner, Les Peterson – US Fish and Wildlife Service, Gary Huberty – DNR Fisheries, Henry Van Offelen - MCEA, Brian Dwight – BWSR, Penny Doty – West Polk SWCD, Jerry Jacobson – Polk County Commissioner, Sheldon Trandem – Union Lake landowner, Wayne Goeken – River Watch, Terry Wolfe – DNR, and Tom Raster – Corp of Engineers.
2. **AGENDA REVIEW:** No new items were added to the agenda.. Wilkens gave an overview of the minutes from the April 13, 2004 meeting. The April 13, 2004 meeting minutes were approved.
3. **FISH PASSAGE:** Wilkens distributed the letter that was given to Congressman Peterson’s office which requested assistance to 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. Larsen expressed concern because the \$200,000 DNR money sunsets next June 2005. Because the best time of year to fix the Texas Crossing is July or August, if the line item does not get approved yet this year we wouldn’t be able to start the project until July 2005 which is after the money sunsets. Huberty said that the project only needs to be encumbered by June 2005, not completed.
4. **UNION LAKE EROSION CONTROL:** Randy Huelskamp, Dave Jones, Adam Woltjer, Wilkens, and two landowners met at the site. They discussed all the options available to correct the problem. Wilkens offered his opinion on the conversations held that day. He said that the NRCS would like to change the land use in the area trying to by using CRP and/or WRP. Wilkens thought the NRCS was leaning towards using 319 money. Huelskamp reported that Woltjer did contact the landowners on the east side and they were not interested in a permanent easement. On the other side of the road, it was reported that the farmer who rents the land was not in favor but the owner of the property would consider it. Cleaning the ditches to help control the sediment was an option discussed.

The cost of Larsen’s Alternative III was discussed. EQIP has not yet been applied for. Huelskamp said that EQIP would probably only help pay for the top structure at 50%. Dwight asked if the watershed would consider helping with the costs and Wilkens said they would consider helping. MPCA 319 money was discussed and it was decided not to depend on that money for help. Vavricka should apply anyway. Vavricka said that money is prioritized by region and by state. He also said that this is not an impaired waters which doesn’t prohibit funding but impaired waters usually gets a higher priority. The East Polk SWCD has set aside \$10,000 for this project. Jerry Jacobson said he would check to see if there is money available from the county. Gagner said that if the LID was not tied up in the lawsuit, they could have possibly contributed \$15,000. The possibility of CREP funding in the future was discussed. Dan Thul suggested finding ways to reduce the cost. He asked if two structures were necessary. Huelskamp asked about raising the road and using that as a sediment basin. We need to find out where the township stands on raising the road.

It was decided to have Larsen work with NRCS to develop Alternative 4. NRCS will try to commit the landowners to change the land use in the upper reaches. NRCS will report there findings at the July meeting.

5. **LAKE SARAH WATERSHED STORAGE:** No action was taken at this time.

6. **SECTION 17 OF SLETTEN:** No action was taken at this time.

7. **GARDEN SLOUGH:** Dan Thul reported that the ditch downstream is public waters and a public waters/dam safety permit will be needed. Wilkens asked Thul if he could foresee any future problems about this issue. Thul said that after the TSAC channel worksheet is completed he would have a better idea.

Grunhovd told the project team that he will need to contact the Ada NRCS office before he can even apply for expansion. He said he will have more time to work with the NRCS office when he is finished in the fields.

The discussion was turned over to Henry Van Offelen who then distributed a sheet which listed the criteria to complete the TSAC Channel Worksheet. He explained to the project team how they should complete the worksheet as they tour the site. He said that this worksheet is designed to show any problem areas with the project in question. A tour of the site was then conducted. At the July Project Team meeting, discussion will be held on Van Offelen's findings.

8. **OTHER BUSINESS:**

Next months meeting: The RRBFDROWG Project Team Workshops will be held in place of our next regular monthly meeting on June 8, 2004 at the Courtyard by Marriot in Moorhead, MN from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. This workshop will teach project team members how to use the information generated by TSAC studies and hear about the project team role in the CREP targeting and application review process. Those who cannot make the June 7, 2004 meeting in Moorhead are invited to attend the same workshop in Thief River Falls at the Best Western Hotel on June 8, 2004. All project team members are expected to attend one of these workshops.

Modeling: Wilkens asked Dwight if the Sand Hill River Watershed District could get reimbursed for the modeling if they completed it now, even though the money isn't available for our district yet. He said that having a model of the district would be helpful in determining solutions for a lot of these problems. Dwight explained that the money to pay for the modeling comes from the FDRWG and is allocated through BWSR. Dwight said he would talk to Ron Harnack about the possibility of a reimbursement contract.

9. **ADJOURN:** Meeting was adjourned after the tour of Garden Slough at about 3:30 p.m. The next meeting will be held July 14, 2004 at the Sand Hill River Watershed District office in Fertile, MN. The June meeting will be replaced by a workshop sponsored by the RRBFDROWG June 8, 2004 at the Courtyard by Marriot in Moorhead, MN from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted:

April Swenby, Administrative Assistant