



**PROJECT TEAM MEETING MINUTES  
September 12, 2000**

**ATTENDANCE**

Dan Wilkens, Terry Wolfe, Dale Knotek, Wayne Goeken, Rob Goral, Brian Dwight, Maynard Pick, Jon Schneider, and Naomi Jagol.

**UNION LAKE/SARAH UPDATE**

Dale Knotek reported on the status of Union/Lake Sarah. The lake level is decreasing with a gauge reading as of this morning of 8.23 feet. The gauge would read 6.6 feet when the lake is at OHW, which leaves 1.63 feet remaining to be pumped.

Goral inquired whether the lake could reach the OHW by the shut off date of November 1, 2000. Knotek responded that the OHW should be attainable given the rate the lake is currently dropping. Knotek stated that a problem is occurring with the connection channel between Union and Sarah lakes. The channel is plugged on the Union side and, according to Jack Bailey (gauge reader), Lake Sarah is about 8 inches higher than Union Lake but does continue to drop. The contractor has indicated that he would prefer to wait until the level on Union Lake is down before trying to remedy the plugged end of the connecting pipe. Knotek also stated that the electrical engineers from Grand Forks are evaluating the system to handle a power outage. The engineers recommended installing a delay start apparatus to allow the rest of the system to be brought back online before the pump would restart.

The pump has been running 61 days and has been shut down twice to back flush the leaves that plug the pump. Gagner completed moving the dirt that was placed in the wetland. The site was inspected and approved by the September 1, 2000 deadline. Wilkens inquired about the fill that was at the end of the open ditch by Lake Sarah. Knotek responded that the contractor would remove the fill when the outlet pipe is repaired.

Knotek stated that Wayne Goeken has been conducting the water monitoring along with volunteers assisting with boats and transportation. Goeken added that the results would be forwarded to Shelly Hanson, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). Knotek noted that he has been reading the elevations at the diffuser and stated that the wetland has risen .4 of a foot when the pump was turned on and has remained constant at that elevation.

Goral requested Knotek to comment about the USFWS concerns. Knotek stated that Les Peterson had met with the contractor shortly after the last project team meeting and the items of concern were remedied. The USFWS is responsible for the seeding and they have indicated that it could be seeded yet this fall or wait until next spring.

The USFWS permit that expires next fall was discussed. Goral noted his concern relative to the options not being currently evaluated. The following four options were discussed:

- Option A: Leave the diffuser pipe as is.
- Option B: Install a pipe around the USFWS wetland.
- Option C: Pursue the natural outlet from Lake Sarah north.
- Option D: Install a pipe around the USFWS property.

A lengthy discussion occurred regarding the various options. The project team concluded that Options A and B were the only two viable options. The next board meeting of the Lake Improvement District (LID) is scheduled for September 20, 2000 to discuss the project overruns of approximately \$60,000. The LID is considering a loan from Bremer Bank at 7% interest to finance cost overruns.

Goral inquired whether the LID was pursuing the cost analysis of Option B should it be necessary to pursue that option. Knotek responded that due to limited finances, the LID is pursuing Option A.

Goral noted the importance of addressing the extra costs while the issue remains on the forefront. Knotek stated that at the August meeting of the LID, the property owners were informed about the various options. Wilkens stated that Don Hultman, USFWS Regional Director, indicated that the USFWS would base their decisions on good science. Knotek stated that the LID hopes that the water pumped through the wetland would not be a problem. Knotek added that arrangements would be made to address the USFWS study should the need arise.

Knotek discussed conducting a celebration when the lake level reaches the OHW. He stated that the engineers (Widseth, Smith, and Nolting) are willing to provide the refreshments.

### **MAPLE CREEK DISCUSSION**

Goral distributed topographic maps of the Maple Creek area and highlighted three potential areas for wetland restorations. Wilkens stated that the District is concerned with addressing flood control aspects on Maple Creek due to the timing issue of the Polk County Highway No. 41 upgrade scheduled for 2003. Wilkens explained there is a significant need to develop substantial flood storage in the area above the road rebuild project area in order to address flooding concerns of downstream landowners.

Wilkens stated that the project team had toured this area and identified possible wetland restoration sites, but not significant flood storage possibilities. Schneider noted that certain techniques could be used to provide environmental enhancements to dry dams.

Wilkens noted that the scope of the problem area must be identified prior to developing alternative solutions. Dwight stated that most of the Maple Creek area is in private ownership which could provide for small to medium wetland restorations. Schneider added that areas that have been flooded for an extended period of time could be utilized for shorebird habitat.

Dwight inquired about the potential for obtaining permanent easements from landowners. Wilkens responded that he did not anticipate the landowners would be interested in permanent easements.

Schneider discussed programs available through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) that would pay both appraised value of the land and the cost of the restoration. He added that Ducks Unlimited (DU) provides assistance for landowner negotiation.

Goral recognized the District's concern of pursuing flood damage reduction initiatives. He stated that the more water held back in the headwaters area, the less flood storage that would be needed downstream. The project team agreed to request the Board of Managers to authorize preliminary engineering in the Maple Creek area to determine the storage potential.

Dwight referred to the North Ottawa Project of the Bois de Sioux Watershed District (BdSWD). He stated that the BdSWD project team developed a concept paper which included the various components of the projects. It was suggested that Houston Engineering could assist the Sand Hill River Watershed District (SHRWD) project team in preparing a concept paper for the Maple Creek area.

### **FISH PASSAGE**

Following discussion, the project team agreed to request the Board of Managers to authorize engineering at the next regular board meeting to develop cost estimates of what is needed to establish fish passage on the Sand Hill River. The project team determined the following areas should be addressed:

- A) The four drop structures on the USACE Project.
- B) Downstream of the last drop structure to a point west of the county bridge, a distance of 500 to 1000 feet.
- C) The Texas crossing west of Highway No. 9.
- D) The box culverts west of Fertile.

The project team requested that the following issues be addressed by the engineer:

1. The drop structures surveyed to determine how many yards of rock would need to be installed to construct a 5% grade downstream of each structure.
2. Survey downstream of the last drop structure to establish a grade which could then be used to locate the optimum locations to install rock riffles to stop erosion in this area while promoting fish passage. Survey only as high on the bank as the rock would need to be placed.
3. Prepare a hydraulic and hydrology study on the Texas crossing in order to develop a design that would not increase the flow above 2 ft. per second which is considered the maximum by fisheries.
4. The box culverts 1 mile west of Fertile installed two years ago to replace a bridge and were laid with an 8 foot drop. Potential exists for the installation of rock riffles both upstream and downstream to handle the drop in elevation in that area.

Dwight inquired whether a USACE 1135 application could be submitted for this area. Wilkens responded that although this application applies to habitat restorations, funding for federal programs such as this was not available at this time.

Schneider inquired about the costs for preliminary engineering. Wilkens responded that each project team is allowed to receive \$20,000 in reimbursements for preliminary engineering costs from the Flood Damage Reduction Work Group. Schneider offered assistance from DU utilizing a GPS to conduct surveying for future wetland restorations.

### **FUTURE MEETING DATES**

The next meeting is scheduled for November 16, 2000, at the Sand Hill River WD office, Fertile, Minnesota.

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There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:45 p.m.