

PROJECT TEAM MEETING MINUTES

February 10, 2004

1. **ATTENDANCE:** Daniel Wilkens – Sand Hill River Watershed Administrator, April Swenby – Sand Hill River Watershed Administrative Assistant, Jim Larsen – Houston Engineering, Dan Thul – DNR Waters, Jenny Burrack – NRCS, Adam Woltjer – NRCS, Gary Lee – East Polk SWCD, Penny Doty – West Polk SWCD, Gary Huberty – DNR Fisheries, Maynard Pick – Congressman Peterson’s Representative, Randy Huelskamp – NRCS, Mike Vavricka – MPCA, Dan Grunhovd – Landowner, Brian Dwight – BWSR, Les Peterson - US Fish Wildlife Service, and Tom Raster – Corp of Engineers
2. **AGENDA REVIEW:** No new items were added to the agenda. Wilkens gave a review of the minutes. The July 8, 2003 meeting minutes were approved with no changes.

This was the first PT meeting since July 2003. The goal of this meeting was to update progress on potential projects being considered for and/or going through the mediation process. Previously, the SHRWD Board of Managers prioritized those projects as follows:

- #1 – Sand Hill River fish passage
- #2 – Garden Slough
- #3 – Maple Creek diversion (Melvin Slough)
- #4 – Area northeast of Rindahl
- #5 – Section 17 of Sletten Twp
- #6 – Bradley Lake storage
- #7 – Union Lake detention

3. **MEDIATION PURPOSES:** Wilkens distributed a written copy of a speech recently given at the RRWMB conference detailing the mediation process’s strengths and shortfalls. To prepare the report, Wilkens contacted the area watersheds for their opinions and found that the most common complaint was that the board of managers was not involved in the direction of the project team. Wilkens added that Jody Horntvedt’s position as project team facilitator will be ending shortly. Brian Dwight said that he would welcome the opportunity to discuss their perspective on the problems with the mediation process hoping to help the process stay on track. Raster’s opinion on the lack of success with the project team depends on the commitment of the members, the personalities of the members (stating that some members prefer that the process fails), and the lack of direction from the board of managers. Dan Thul concluded by saying it would be most helpful if a member is committed to working together and finding solutions when joining the group.
4. **FISH PASSAGE:** Raster’s updated the project team on the SHR 1135 study/project. In October, Raster sent the PRP (the Preliminary Restoration Plan) to MVD (the Mississippi Valley Division located at Vicksburg, Mississippi) which reviews and approves it. MVD distributed copies to their technical branches looking for policy issues and it came back in December with no comments, which is the first time that has ever happened to Raster's knowledge. However, before MVD would approve the PRP, they needed an updated letter of intent from the sponsor (the SHRWD) to refresh its interest in proceeding. Raster notified Wilkens of that need and provided a draft of such a letter. In January, Wilkens provided the requested letter of intent to Raster, who forwarded it to MVD. Once MVD approves the PRP, they normally would authorize and fund the next step in the Corps' process, which is the Planning and Design Analysis (the PDA, which combines the feasibility report/NEPA documentation and the plans & specifications, i.e., the actual design documents). However, Raster does not know if we will get funding for the PDA because the Corps' Section 1135 program is in a funding crunch. Raster explained to MVD

that the SHRWD does not want to lose \$200,000 in State money that sunsets in June 2005. With the Corps' 75% cost share and the State's \$200,000 factored into the 25% non-Federal share, the SHRWD share could possibly be \$50,000. Dan Thul asked if the State's EAW has been done. Raster said that the environmental review process would be done in the PDA phase and that he would talk to Buckhout about coordinating the PDA and State EAW. Even if money isn't an issue, the timeline is tight; the PDA would need to be completed in about 1 year to issue the construction contract and use the State's \$200,000. When can expenditures be made and still go towards project? Raster said that we expect most of the LERRDs (lands, easements, rights-of-way, relocations, and disposal areas) already is covered as part of the old Corps' channelization project so not much of that money could be spent on LERRDs. Brian Dwight wanted to know if the SHRWD could use the \$200,000 upfront to fix the West Mill and Texas crossings and get credit toward the non-Fed cost share. Raster said that such an arrangement needs a special agreement upfront and that he would look into that possibility. The following table is an outline of what was discussed at this meeting regarding the Fish Passage. Items noted in red are the changes/additions made from the previous project team's meeting.

To be Completed:	Start:	Finish:	Person(s) Responsible:
Provide profile <i>(reviewing the decisions that brought us to this point)</i>	ASAP to Raster DONE!		SHRWD (Houston engineering) & Roger (history)
Prepare PRP ~ Preliminary Restoration Plan	July 1, 2003	August 2003? DONE!	USACE (Tom Raster) [SHRWD "monitor progress"]
PDA	August 2003	Feb. 2004	USACE (Tom Raster) [SHRWD "monitor progress"]
Fisheries data (species...i.e. lake sturgeon) to inform ERR/EA	ASAP	August 2003 DONE!	MNDNR (Luther Aadlund) to send to Tom Raster
Funding Identified (cost-share [75/25] with USACE and/or MNDNR [\$200,000]) Watershed balance – possible \$50,000		DONE!	SHRWD
NOTE: Ideal to use MNDNR funds during summer 2004			
EAW ~ probably needed based on description from Don Buckhout (July 2003)! Raster will coordinate with Don Buckout.			
When does DNR \$200,000 expire		March 9, 2004	Gary Huberty
Pursue special agreement determining construction on West Mill/Texas Crossing		March 9, 2004	Tom Raster
Permits *DNR Waters? *NPDES Construction Permit~MPCA) *MPCA 401 Water Quality			SHRWD and USACE
Monitoring Plan			
Pre-construction monitoring	Summer 2002		DNR Fisheries and RRV WQ team
Post-construction monitoring			Some funds available from USACE
Start building		Summer 2005	
Project completed		Fall 2005	

Issues / Concerns

Can the project identify habitat units to show cost effectiveness (to justify USACE support)? DONE!
How far up the Red River can we "include" in this discussion around BC ratios? DONE!

- BRADLEY LAKE (LAKE SARAH WATERSHED STORAGE):** The original strategy was to bounce Bradley Lake to meet the goals of improving fish habitat in the lake and provide floodwater storage to protect Lake Sarah. However, at the present time idea of raising the lake has been abandoned.

Therefore, the project was redefined as looking at the Lake Sarah watershed (of which the Bradley Lake sub-watershed is just a small part) and looking for floodwater storage to reduce inflows into Lake Sarah. After discussion, this project would better be described as the Lake Sarah Watershed Storage. It was decided that the SWCD could view various maps and bring forth to the project team possible spots to hold water. The following table outlines the areas of discussion and next months action items of discussion. The areas in red highlight the changes from the previous project team meeting.

NAME OF PROJECT:	Lake Sarah Watershed Storage
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PROJECT OBJECTIVE:	Provide flood control & wetland restoration in upstream area
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GOALS:	1. Flood storage/control to protect Lake Sarah
	2. Improve Water quality

STRATEGIES FOR CONSIDERATION:	1. Discuss potential areas for restoration
	2.
	3.

To be Completed:	Start:	Finish:	Person(s) Responsible:
Conversation with landowners		DONE!	SHRWD
Verify regulations about change in water levels and provide report		July 8, 2003 DONE!	Gary Huberty (will check with Bob Merritt)
Engineering (lake elevations and hydrology...drain-age area and runoff)		Report back July 8, 2003 DONE!	Houston
Determine possible spots to hold water		March 10, 2004	Penny Doty & Gary Lee

6. UNION LAKE DETENTION: This project addresses severe erosion in a narrow draw with the sediment building a delta in Union Lake. Larsen handed out plan and profile views showing two alternatives, each with two runoff retention structures to slow the flow. He also provided spreadsheets with elevation/storage and quantity/cost estimates. Alternative 1 has 13.138 acre ft of storage. Alternative 2 has 11.154 acre feet of storage. The main differences are the dam height and location. They both will hold about .3 inches of runoff from the watershed. This is not a substantial amount of the total runoff. The main purpose of the project is erosion control. Very preliminary cost estimates ranged from to \$80,000 to \$112,000. Dan Thul suggested maybe a third alternative which would combine both of Larsen's alternatives using the upper dam in alternative II and the lower dam in alternative I. Larsen will research that alternative and bring it to the project team next month. The group discussed the need for land treatment measures on the approximately 400-acre upland drainage area to reduce runoff.

Gary Lee informed the project team that the landowners to the best of his knowledge are Donald Kuntz, Bruce Solberg, & Mark Kresbach. Lee also stated that he was told Kresbach applied for CRP but did not qualify. Wilkens added it that it would be a great benefit if CRP could be put into place. Larsen presented two alternatives to the project team. Huelskamp stated that easements would be needed to complete this project. Wilkens replied by saying the landowners are in favor and didn't think acquiring easements would be an issue.

Funding for this project was discussed. The LID, East Polk SWCD (\$10,000), EQUIP, and the Red River Valley Set Aside were a few of the options discussed.

The following table was updated and highlighted in red are the additions/changes made from the previous meeting:

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 landowner			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			Jim Larsen
Alternative sources of funding			Project Team Group

7. **TEA LAKE:** Wilkens asked the project team if anyone knew the history of Tea Lake drainage and the surrounding area. Gary Lee said they could research Tea Lakes drainage area and prepare history report of the lake for next meeting.
8. **SECTION 17 OF SLETTEN:** A general assessment of the area was reviewed determining the project is about flood control. Water quality is not an issue as the area is already in CRP. Water quality does become an issue when the road washes out. It was decided that Wilkens will have the maps that Larsen brought forth at the last project team meeting ready for their review again. Discussion with the landowners will need to take place. It was also decided that the subcommittee assigned for this project will need to meet and be ready to report in the spring. The subcommittee assigned at the previous meeting is as follows: Wilkens, Gordon Sonsteli – Sand Hill River Watershed District Manager, Larry Hanson - USFWS, Gary Lee – SWCD, & Randy Huelskamp – NRCS.
9. **AREA NE OF RINDAHL:** Peterson said that in this area, 93 wetlands have been restored in 2003 which adds 67.33 acre feet of restored wetlands and 101 acre feet of storage. The subcommittee consisting of Wilkens, Les Peterson, Gary Lee, Terry Wolfe, & Jenny Burrack will meet this spring to bring the project team their assessment and a written report to the project team. Larsen will get Jenny Burrack the maps that were distributed at the previous meeting.
10. **GARDEN SLOUGH:** Grunhovd reminded the group about potential PCA issues. The proposed flood pool would virtually eliminate the requisite buffer distance from his farm’s feedlot operation and, thus, foreclose a permit for expansion of his operation. The question is whether occasional storage in a floodwater retention project is subject to the same shoreline regulations that apply to a regular lake. Vavricka said that temporary pools do not change the buffer distance from the stream in question. It was noted that the proposed project wouldn’t affect a pre-existing permit; therefore, Grunhovd could expand his feedlot before we proceed with this project. He guesstimated that it would take 3 years to get a permit. If future expansion occurs, it could possibly affect that permit with MPCA. Grunhovd stated he may eventually like to expand to 300 or 400 head. Many issues were unclear and it was decided that Mike Vavricka will invite Jim Courneya to our next meeting to answer questions. Before the meeting Courneya and Grunhovd are to converse to get exact figures regarding the feedlot. It was agreed to invite Jim Courneya, PCA, to provide insight on this issue.

Brian Dwight gave a report on wetland bounce vs. mitigation. He stated that a wetland functional value assessment for pre and post project needs to be done to determine the wetland impacts as a result of

time, frequency, and duration of bounce. This will help determine mitigation requirements. This process can be started when the engineers report is finished.

Dan Thul will ask Henry Van Offelen to come to a project team meeting in the spring to converse about the TSAC On Channel Storage Worksheet. Dan Thul will also check on protected waters in this area and report to the project team at next month's meeting.

The following is an updated table outlining the project team's discussion on the Garden Slough project. Outlined in red are the changes from the previous meeting.

To be Completed:	Start:	Finish:	Person(s) Responsible:
Develop quad maps (<i>max. storage site elevation, cross-section at dam site, water storage capacity, drainage area</i>)	February 2003	March 2003 DONE!	SHRWD to work with engineer (need landowner permission)
Maps and aerial photos		July 8, 2003 DONE!	Houston Engineering
Report on site evaluation (feedlot regulations)		July 8, 2003 DONE!	MPCA (Jim) and Dan Grunhovd
(shore line location determination)		Sept.15, 2003 DONE!	MPCA
Wetland Bounce vs. mitigation		Sept.30, 2003 DONE!	BWSR/IWG
Jim Courneya's question and answer session		March 10, 2004	Mike Vavrika to invite him
Acquire exact figures regarding feedlots		March 10, 2004	Danny Grunhovd & Jim Courneya
Wetland Functional Value Assessment			
TSAC Channel Worksheet	May 2004		Dan Thul – Henry Van Offelen
Protected water issues?		March 10, 2004	Dan Thul
PT review information available and brainstorm possible strategies			
Do we have a project?			
Initial Survey (<i>based on "possible strategies" conversation at July meeting</i>)			

11. **MAPLE CREEK DIVERSION (MELVIN SLOUGH):** The subcommittee assigned at the previous meeting (Dan Wilkens, Jon Schneider, Terry Wolfe, Penny Doty, & USACE) will meet this spring to assess the area and report to the project team.
12. **WRITTEN REPORTS:** It was decided that all people on the agenda for each meeting will provide written reports in addition to verbal reports to further enhance the effectiveness of each discussion.
13. **ADJOURN:** Meeting was adjourned at 2:45 PM. The next meeting will be March 9, 2004 at 10:30 am at the Sand Hill River Watershed District office in Fertile, MN.

Minutes respectfully submitted:

April Swenby, Administrative Assistant