

Drainage Work Group Meeting Notes

October 13, 2011

12:30 - 3:30 p.m.

Minnesota Farm Bureau Building, Eagan, MN

Attendance

Craig Austinson, Blue Earth Co.; Larry Gunderson, MPCA; Ron Ringquist, MVA; Bill Becker, LSOHC; Chris Radatz, MFB; Greg Eggers, DNR; Greg Knopff, Senate Analyst; Larry Kuseske, MAWD; Kurt Deter, Rinke-Noonan; Warren Formo, MAWRC; Allan Kuseske, MADI; Alan Perish, MFU, MVA; Jerome Deal, MAWD; Dan Wilkens, RRWMB; Ray Bohn, MAWD; Mark Dittrich, MDA; Mark Zabel, MASWCD; Wayne Anderson, MPCA; Annalee Garletz, AMC; Henry VanOffelen, MCEA; Mike Karbo, Senate ENR Cmte. Adm.; Dave Leuthe, DNR; Al Kean, BWSR

Handouts Prior to or During Meeting:

1. DWG – Meeting Logistics and Agenda for 9-13-11.doc
2. DWG – Meeting Notes for 8-18-11.doc
3. DWG - Smith Partners App A Draft Drainage Legislation 10-9-11.doc
4. DWG - Section 103E015 Background Summary 11-5-09.doc
5. A link was also provided via email to the Smith Partners report on the BWSR website.

Introductions and Agenda Overview

All in attendance introduced themselves. Al Kean provided extra copies and an overview of the agenda. Al also mentioned that BWSR has posted a job opening for a Conservation Drainage Engineer to refill the position that Joel Peterson left last year to teach at UW River Falls. Applications are being accepted through October 30. This position should enable Al to dedicate more time to the DWG.

Approval of 8-18-11 Meeting Notes

Extra copies of the subject meeting notes were distributed. Comments or corrections were requested. None were offered.

Brief Discussion of Recent and Upcoming Drainage Conferences and Forums

The following drainage related forums were mentioned.

- NRCS National Ag Water Management Summit, Oct. 11-12, Bloomington – NRCS Chief Dave White attended. NRCS is promoting drainage water management, particularly in the Midwest. Many well known researchers, as well as agency and stakeholder groups attended. Included field demonstration of controlled subsurface drainage and woodchip bioreactor in Nicollet County.
- UMN Water Resources Conference, Oct. 18-19, St. Paul – Al Kean to present on Multipurpose Drainage; Louis Smith on Drainage Law Analysis and Evaluation.
- Environmental Initiative, Working Together to Achieve Healthy Waters, Nov. 7, SCSU St. Cloud – Focus on state and local government leaders and practitioners what's working dialogue.
- MN-IA Drainage Research Forum, 12th annual – Iowa's turn to host, late November?
- MAWD Drainage Workshop, Dec. 1, Arrowwood, Alexandria – A number of DWG members will present regarding various drainage topics.

Overview of Smith Partners LCCMR Report, Appendix A Excerpts Document

AI facilitated an overview and discussion of each of the first four Smith Partners recommendations, as well as Recommendations 5.b. and 5.c., all of which address drainage issues.

It was noted that Recommendation #1 focuses on providing drainage authorities more tools and resources (authorities, incentives and funding mechanisms) for watershed-based planning, while Recommendation #2 focuses on drainage authority tools and resources for implementation of projects with multiple, integrated purposes. It was noted that the LGU Roundtable member associations (Counties, Watershed Districts and Soil and Water Conservation Districts) are supportive of watershed-based planning, with an emphasis on reducing overlapping planning and plans. There was some discussion about how best to coordinate or accomplish watershed-based planning across political boundaries and at what scale, including what drainage system scale. There was a question about why Recommendation 2.d. (utility-based charge system for drainage system repair) was better than the current repair funding mechanism and why necessary.

There was substantial discussion about, and support for, clarifying key policy issues (i.e. threshold questions or issues) to determine DWG perspectives and consensus on the key issues before trying to find consensus on statute language.

It was recommended and supported that Louis Smith be invited to the next DWG meeting, if available, to help review and discuss the “why” for some of the Smith Partners report recommendations.

Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next DWG meeting would be held on Monday, November 14, 12:30 -3:30 p.m. Because the MFB training rooms are not available that day, Annalee Garletz agreed to check on availability of the AMC Board Room for the meeting and get back to AI Kean. The MCIT building might also be a possibility.