

Drainage Work Group NOTES

When: Thursday, December 12, 2019 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Where: **Minnesota Farmers Union**
305 Roselawn Ave E #200
St Paul, MN 55117

Attendance:

Tom Gile, BWSR; Al Kean, BWSR; Jermoe Deal, RRWMB; Tim Gillette, ISG; Rita Weaver, BWSR; Leif Fixen, TNC; John Kolb, Rinke Noonan; Tim Dritz, MAWD; March Dittrich, MDA; Emily Javens, MAWD; Allen Wold, BdSWD; Randall Doneen, DNR; Brian Martinson, AMC; Tom Loveall BWSR Board; Dave Weirens, BWSR; Alex Trunnell, MN Corn Growers; Harvey Kruger, HLWD; Jan Voit, HLWD; Cris Skonard; NFCRWD/MAWD; Frazeur, MNLICA; Elise Larson, MCEA;

Handouts prior to/during meeting:

Draft updated Understanding Minnesota Public Drainage Law manual

Introductions and agenda overview

All in attendance introduced themselves. Tom G. provided overview of agenda for the meeting – Tom G.

Share information about recent and upcoming drainage related events – All

- [MAWD](#), Convention and Preconference Drainage Workshop, meeting December 5, Alexandria, MN
- [Minnesota Viewers Association, Training Seminar](#), The Minnesota Viewers' November seminar, November 7th, Jackpot Junction, Morton, MN. (Use of GIS in the viewing process)
- [MASWCD](#) Annual Convention, December 8-10, Bloomington, MN
- RRWMB Drainage Conference, January 27, 2020, Moorhead, MN

DNR Guidance/Reestablishment updates– MAWD/DNR

Areas of potential for agreement had been identified as well as areas of no potential agreement had been identified. AMC/MAWD/RRWB were going to have further discussions among themselves to determine if the areas of potential agreement were worth the effort of continued conversations. These groups were in the middle of busy time of year, so it was uncertain when they would be able to get together to continue that discussion.

DMT updates– Rita Weaver (BWSR)

DMT Met and will be spending some time revisiting their charter/mission statement as they gear up for meetings with new BWSR staff on board.

Understanding Minnesota Public Drainage Law (UMPDL) – Tom Gile (BWSR), Al Kean (BWSR)

When the Minnesota Public Drainage Manual was updated there wasn't sufficient funding to update the UMPDL. Several staff have worked on drafting an updated in recent years, as time permitted. Al Kean is back with BWSR part-time working on completing an update of the UMDPL. DWG members are key reviewers of the draft document. DWG review and discussion should substantially help to advise completion of the updated.

Al Kean provided an overview of the current draft document and identified some key areas under draft. The group discussed timing for review and comment. Ideally comments will be provided before the end of January 2020.

Feb. 10th is a deadline (but still soft) for comments on the draft document. We are trying to ensure adequate time for good stakeholder review and comment and will do what's necessary to help ensure the best final product while keeping the document moving forward.

DWG 2020 topics and conversation – Tom G/ALL

We spent the remaining time in this meeting Discussing/brainstorming on topics that the DWG has interest in pursuing in 2020. This will provide BWSR staff and DWG members an opportunity to begin exploring and developing information which the DWG can “react” to and begin discussing during our 2020 meetings.

Some topics discussed included (In no particular order);

- A) Streamlining opportunities to capitalize on Available funding. Context includes are there ways to move drainage repairs/projects/proceedings more quickly when there are significant external funding sources that present themselves but those funds have relatively short timelines for utilization.
- B) 103E&103D Clarification of rights/obligations when Watershed Districts become drainage authority. Context includes more of a statutory housekeeping.. I.E. “County” change to “Drainage Authority” and “Auditor” to “Auditor or Secretary” to recognize variability in the governing entities structures and titles.
- C) Is there value in perusing an option to allow viewers to assess benefits based on Parcels OR Tracts. Context current language uses 40 acre tract and adding an option to allow use by parcel may create flexibility.
- D) 103E.505 Awarding Construction Contracts revisions. Context potential increase in amount which triggers a requirement to go out for bids. Current amount is \$25,000. Is this amount reasonable/realistic with current project costs?
- E) Drainage Code and One Watershed One Plan. Context, are there changes which could be made to the drainage code which create greater opportunity to incorporate water quality projects connected to implementation of a state approved and locally adopted Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan.
- F) Bonding. Context, several emerging items related to bonding, increasing awareness of bonding process and funding considerations in bonding. Should WDs be able to bond on their own. Local Bonding Capacity etc.

January 9, 2020, DWG meeting canceled.