

Drainage Work Group Meeting Notes

June 28, 2012

12:30 – 3:30 p.m.

Association of Minnesota Counties Building, St. Paul, MN

Attendance

Ron Harnack, RRWMB; Kyle Skov, BWSR; Craig Austinson, Blue Earth Co.; Rob Sip, MDA; Jerome Deal, MAWD; Ron Ringquist, MVA; Greg Knopff, Senate Analyst; LeAnn Buck, MASWCD; Dan Wilkens, RRWMB; Larry Kuseske, MAWD; Mark Morreim, MNLICA; Nordis Estrem, MNLICA; Larry Gunderson, MPCA; Les Everett, UMN; John Thompson, Faribault Co., MACO; Tom Loveall, BWSR Brd.; Greg Eggers, DNR; Wayne Anderson, MPCA; Ray Bohn, MAWD; Mark Dittrich, MDA; Al Kean, BWSR

Handouts prior to or during meeting:

1. DWG – Meeting Logistics and Agenda for 6-28-12
2. DWG – Meeting Notes for 2-17-12
3. FY 2013 Clean Water Fund, Targeted Drainage Water Management Grants, Background and Grant Allocation Information
4. Conservation Drainage Program, FY 2013 Targeted Drainage Water Management Grants, Eligible Activities
5. DWG – MN Drainage Law Analysis and Evaluation – Summary of Recommended Actions and DWG Discussions, DRAFT, 2-17-12 (reflecting DWG discussions on 2-17-12)

Introductions and agenda overview

All in attendance introduced themselves. Al Kean provided extra copies and an overview of the agenda. It was requested to add an agenda topic regarding Corps of Engineer RGP-002-MN.

Approval of 2-17-12 Meeting Notes

Extra copies of the meeting notes were distributed. Corrections or additions were requested. None were indicated.

Overview and discussion of FY13 Clean Water Fund appropriations for BWSR Conservation Drainage Programs, including targeted Drainage Water Management (DWM) grants and competitive grants

Kyle Skov, BWSR Conservation Drainage Engineer, provided an overview of the Background and Grant Allocation Information document for Targeted Drainage Water Management Grants. In summary, these grants were targeted to LGUs and joint powers groups in areas of the state with substantial 0-2% slope lands, where the LGU is interested in participating and has a history of successful grant implementation, with the intent to enable grant use yet this calendar year for drainage water management. Participating LGUs include: Two Rivers WD; Buffalo-Red River WD; Bois de Sioux WD; Lac Qui Parle and Yellow Medicine SWCDs partnership; Redwood-Cottonwood River Control Area (RCRCA, Co. JPO); Greater Blue Earth River Basin Association (GBERBA, Co. JPO); and partnership of Turtle Creek WD, Cedar River WD and Mower SWCD. Eligible activities include Conservation Activity Plan (CAP) 130 Drainage Water Management Plan, Practice 587 Structure for Water Control, Practice 554 Drainage Water Management Operation (3 yrs. incentive payments), Practice 747 Denitrifying Bioreactor, CAP 104 Nutrient Management Plan, Practice 590 Nutrient Management (3 yrs. incentive payments), and replacement of existing open tile inlets (Practice 606 Subsurface Drain). Ineligible activities include tile, except to replace existing open tile inlets, ditching and ambient water quality monitoring.

The competitive Conservation Drainage Program will include all of the above eligible activities plus Side Inlet Controls, Buffers adjacent to side inlets and tile inlets, and Multipurpose Drainage Management

Planning for public drainage systems. A concern was discussed about avoiding piggybacking of federal and state cost-share that could pay more than 100% of practice costs. Al Kean indicated that while federal funding can be used for the required minimum 25% non-state match, he is not aware of an example of combined state and federal funding paying more than 100% of the cost of an eligible Conservation Drainage Program practice. A question was also asked about eligibility of gravel inlets to replace open tile inlets. Al indicated that dense pattern tile replacing an open tile inlet has the highest trapping efficiency for soil and phosphorus and perforated risers are also quite effective. However, gravel tile inlets are allowed by the Conservation Drainage Program as a replacement for open tile inlets.

Discussion of any other drainage related topics or bills during 2012 Legislative Session

No other drainage related topics or bills were identified.

Presentation and discussion about Red River Basin Technical and Scientific Advisory Committee (BTSAC) Briefing Paper #2, “Water Management Options for Subsurface Drainage”

The BTSAC was formed to advise the Red River Retention Authority and is facilitated by Chuck Fritz, Executive Director, International Water Institute. Al Kean, who serves on the BTSAC, gave a PowerPoint presentation developed by Chuck Fritz and BTSAC members regarding Briefing Paper #2. Key conclusions include a risk of increased flooding at the watershed scale due to increased runoff volume, primarily in the spring and fall, from land with subsurface drainage compared to without. Preferred recommended water management options include controls on subsurface drainage and water storage trading. Other options include on- and off-site storage, culvert sizing and drainage coefficient limitations. The Red River Water Management Board and associated WD administrators are reviewing and discussing these recommendations in the context of coordinating permitting requirements for new pattern tile systems. BTSAC member Jim Solstad, DNR, continues to work on a Gridded Surface and Subsurface Hydrologic Analysis (GSSHA) model to better evaluate watershed scale effects of pattern tiling.

Review of DWG Discussion Points documentation for 2-17-12 meeting regarding Smith Partners LCCMR Report

Al Kean requested any questions or corrections regarding documentation of DWG discussion points for recommendations 3.a. – 3.d. of the Smith Partners Report in the 2-17-12 version of the discussion document. A suggestion was made regarding DWG discussion points for recommendation 3.c. to emphasize channel stability rather than natural geomorphology as more practical and feasible into the future.

Continued discussion of Smith Partners LCCMR Report, “MN Drainage Law Analysis and Evaluation” for Recommendations 4. and 5.

DWG members discussed recommendations 4.a. – 4.d. of the Smith Partners Report. Documentation of discussion points are summarized in an updated Summary of Recommended Actions and DWG Discussion Points for the Smith Partners LCCMR Report.

Corps of Engineers Regional General Permit (RGP-002-MN) regarding drainage on agricultural lands

DWG drainage authority and agricultural representatives expressed significant questions and concerns about the scope and details of the proposed general permit, including applicable federal authority. The original June 18 comment period deadline was extended by the St. Paul District Corps to July 18. Additional comments are anticipated, including a request for extension of the comment period. It was requested that the DWG follow-up on this topic.

Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting would be on Thursday, August 2, 2012.