

Drainage Work Group Meeting Notes

August 8, 2013

12:30 – 3:30 p.m.

Minnesota Farm Bureau Building, Eagan, MN

Attendance

Tom Loveall, BWSR Brd.; John Thompson, Faribault Co., MACTFO; Craig Austinson, Blue Earth Co.; Mark Morriem, MNLICA; Beth Neuendorf, MnDOT Metro; Greg Knopff, MN Senate Analyst; Andrea Hendrickson, MnDOT; Larry Kuseske, MAWD; Annalee Garletz, AMC; Michelle Ulrich, CCWD; Adam Birr, MN CGA; Greg Eggers, MDNR; Larry Gunderson, MPCA; Les Everett, UMN WRC; Ray Bohn, MAWD; Ron Harnack, RRWMB; Mark Ten Eyck, MCEA; Rob Sip, MDA; Kurt Deter, Rinke-Noonan; Jerome Deal, MAWD; Dan Wilkens, RRWMB; Mark Dittrich, MDA; LeAnn Buck, MASWCD; Brian Fischer, HEI; Tim Gillette, BWSR; Al Kean, BWSR

Handouts prior to or during meeting:

1. DWG – Meeting Logistics and Agenda for 8-8-13
2. DWG – Meeting Notes for 6-13-13
3. Drainage Work Group Prioritized Discussion Topics List, DRAFT, 6-13-13
4. DWG – Section103E.015 Background Summary, 11-5-09

Introductions and agenda overview

All in attendance introduced themselves. Al Kean provided extra copies and an overview of the agenda.

Approval of 6-13-13 Meeting Notes

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

Drainage records modernization and automation:

- Brian Fischer, GIS Specialist, Houston Engineering Inc. (HEI), presented an overview of database software called “DrainageDB” that he and others continue to develop and adapt for drainage system data management.
- An early version was developed for a drainage records modernization project in the Rice Creek Watershed District, which involved a BWSR cost-share grant (2009).
- A custom version is being developed by HEI for Faribault County involving a BWSR Accelerated Implementation Grant. A number of other counties are interested in this drainage records management software.
- DrainageDB is hosted on the Internet. The cost for DrainageDB is estimated to be \$12 - 18K per drainage authority for customization, with an annual subscription cost of \$2.5 - 4K per year.
- HEI developed an app for mobile data entry, such as drainage system inspection information.
- Al K. provided a copy of an LCCMR application that BWSR resubmitted this year to develop a shared drainage records database hosted by MnGeo, involving Brian Fischer and/or other consultants in the development, and requested \$500K for drainage records modernization cost-share. There was substantial discussion about the pros and cons of a central database vs. customized databases managed independently by drainage authorities. Drainage authority representatives seemed to favor independent, custom drainage system databases with some consistency of structure. A question was raised regarding the feasibility of updating the Drainage Records Modernization Guidelines, Sep. 2008, to help promote consistency of GIS databases for drainage system records. Al suggested that a subgroup be formed to look into this topic in more detail. Volunteers included Annalee Garletz, Ray Bohn, Mark Ten Eyck, Rob Sip and Al Kean.

Share information about recent and upcoming events involving drainage topics

- The Red River Basin FDR Work Group has asked its Technical and Scientific Advisory Committee (TSAC) to investigate the best method(s) to use to define existing and potential future wetland functions and values for impoundment projects.
- MASWCD partnered with UMN WRC and Extension to provide a webinar on August 2, 2013 titled “Emerging Conservation Practices and Challenges for Agricultural Drainage”, by Dr. Gary Sands. An archived video of the webinar is available on the MASWCD website.
- The RRWMB and North Dakota Joint Water Management Districts have commissioned the International Water Institute to facilitate a study by Basin Technical and Scientific Advisory Committee (BTSAC) regarding the effects of surface drainage on flood peaks. BTSAC has met twice to date for this study.
- MN Agricultural Water Resource Center – Wetlands and Drainage Seminars, July 30, Jackpot Junction, Morton, MN and July 31, Courtyard by Marriot, Moorhead, MN. Attendance at Jackpot Junction was approximately 120, with substantially less in attendance at Moorhead. Presentations are to be available on the MAWRC website.
- Farmfest 2013, August 6-8, included a panel discussion about managed drainage projects, products, and experience in Minnesota, as well as a presentation entitled “Enhancing Ag Production and Water Quality with Managed Drainage Systems”. The focus at the MDA booth was on protecting water resources, including information about the new Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program, as well as conservation drainage.

Review updated DWG prioritized discussion topics list

Al K. overviewed the list dated 6-13-13, which reflects DWG discussion at the 6-13-13 meeting. It was suggested that the title of the third bullet about HF-1700 be clarified to be more specific and the priority be identified as M-H to better reflect the DWG discussion to date about that topic.

Section 103E.015 Considerations before drainage work is done

- Al K. overviewed the past DWG beginning of discussions of this topic, including a legal history of this section prepared by Greg Knopff, Senate Analyst. It was noted that Subd. 2 was written into statute before Subd. 1. Al also suggested a potential to improve the connection between the multipurpose drainage authorities in Section 103E.011 Drainage Authority Powers and other sections of Chapter 103E, and the multipurpose considerations criteria in Section 103E.015.
- Much discussion without consensus about the reasons for discussing this section and the best ways to enable or promote multiple purposes for drainage management. This included discussion about what should be in the Minnesota Public Drainage Manual (MPDM) vs. Chapter 103E. It was noted that the MPDM is guidance, not rule, and is based on Chapter 103E in regard to requirements.
- Due to time constraints, it was agreed that Al would request DWG member input via email about key reasons for discussing this section and envisioned outcomes of DWG discussions.

Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next DWG meeting will be held on the second Thursday, September 12, 2013 at the Minnesota Farm Bureau.