

Heron Lake Watershed District (HLWD) Advisory Committee Meeting

Monday, March 18, 2019 8:00 a.m.

Heron Lake Watershed District office

Heron Lake, MN

ATTENDANCE

Paul Pietz, Larry Janssen, Dave Dieter, Kevin Stevens, Jerry Christopherson, Dave Thiner, Matt Widboom, Jerry Ackermann, Mona Henkels, Julie Lopez, Jim Eigenberg, Jan Voit, and Catherine Wegehaupt

1. Call to Order

Paul Pietz called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the December 18, 2018 HLWD Advisory Committee meeting were reviewed. A motion was made by Mona Henkels and seconded by Dave Dieter to approve the minutes as written. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Discussion Items

Talking Points

Paul Pietz gave an overview of the Talking Points developed at the December 2018 meeting. Discussion was held regarding stewardship, partnering common goals, and keeping it simple.

The cover crop workshop was a good example of getting information to the public. It was suggested to build other education events based on new topics from meetings such as this.

It was proposed that attendees provide names of other individuals that should be invited to future meetings as a means to broaden education avenues. It was suggested that an open house might be an avenue to bring in new ideas and perspectives.

Discussion was held regarding cost-share programs. There may be a new cost-share program in northern Iowa that provides a \$53 per acre incentive for cover crop implementation. Through the new farm bill, there may be a matching program for minimum and strip till implementation, as well as restructure of the Conservation Stewardship Program and increased flexibility in the Conservation Reserve Program.

How to disseminate information to the public is an ongoing challenge. Providing education information regarding mowing, fertilizing, and manure management would be worthwhile.

A question was asked regarding the intent behind overseeing drainage systems. Drainage systems are a major responsibility of the HLWD and take significant time. Landowners inform the drainage authority if the system is not working properly. HLWD Advisory Committee members' roles could be to observe system functions before and after construction, as well as to promote retention ponds, storage areas, and aquifer recharge. Discussion was also held regarding the challenge of pond maintenance, as well as new systems design capacity for storage.

Committee members will provide changes to the talking points by the end of March. Paul Pietz and Jan Voit will incorporate the proposed revisions into the document.

HLWD

Yields, Soils, and Cover Crops Winter Workshop

The Yields, Soils, and Cover Crops Winter Workshop was held on January 25. The event consisted of a keynote speaker, Dan Perkins, Jasper Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD). His sessions covered "Interseeding Covers into Knee High Corn", "Annual Ryegrass – cover crop power house or a problem?" and "Water Quality Impacts from Cover Crops at the Watershed Scale". Jerry Ackermann provided information on his experience relating to cover crop economics. Vendor booths were an addition to this year's event. Vendors included Liepold Farms Precision Ag, LaCrosse Seed, Bryan Biegler strip tilling and Interseeding, Environmental Tillage Systems, Inc. and the conservation partners of SWCD, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the HLWD. Continuing education credits were offered.

QuickBooks

New accounting practices are being implemented.

Heron Lake Waterfowl Working Group

On January 2, 2019, I discussed the charter with Dave Trauba, Brian Nyborg, and Mike Mooney via conference call. Time was spent reviewing the meeting agenda and charter. The first working group meeting was held by conference call on January 24.

On March 7, I participated in the Heron Lake Waterfowl Working Group conference call. Following introductions, I provided an update on the Minnesota Conservation Collaboration grant application and the upcoming EPA Section 319 grant round.

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) Water and Watersheds

On February 6, I traveled to the Northland Arboretum in Baxter. Myron Jesme, Red Lake Watershed District; Phil Larson, Cook Soil and Water Conservation District and Tom Rider, Lutsen Mountain; Beth Hippert, Crow Wing SWCD, and I participated in a panel discussion regarding restoration projects. Each of us gave a PowerPoint presentation. My presentation was about the Fulda Lakes Project. Following the presentations, we answered questions.

Des Moines Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies (WRAPS)

On February 13, Catherine Wegehaupt and I attended the Des Moines WRAPS meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to review the 10-year targets for nitrogen, altered hydrology, phosphorus, connectivity, sediment, bacteria, and habitat. The years to reach the goals were also selected.

Drainage and Waters Conference

On February 14, Gary Ewert and I attended the Rinke Noonan Drainage and Waters Conference. Topics included Redetermination of Benefits and Technology, Funding Multi-Purpose Drainage Management, Reestablishment of Drainage System Records, Department of Natural Resources Repair Guidance, and Case Law and Legislative Updates. It was interesting to note that the importance of incorporating MPDM into 1W1P was mentioned in several presentations.

Minnesota Association of Watershed Administrators (MAWA)

The MAWA met on February 20 at the Capitol Region Watershed District (CRWD) office. Following introductions, Emily Javens, Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts (MAWD) Executive Director gave a legislative report and MAWD update. Kevin Bigalke, Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) and Glenn Skuta, MPCA spoke about integration of 1W1P and WRAPS. MAWD committee membership was discussed. Margaret Johnson, Middle Fork Crow River Watershed District demonstrated the MAWA Sharepoint she is developing. Following lunch, discussion was held regarding a proposed MAWA wage and benefit report, regional

MAWD meetings, and the Clean Water Council/Local Government Roundtable. A tour of the CRWD office was given.

MAWD Legislative Briefing and Reception

On February 20, MAWD gave a presentation on the legislative priorities. An update was given from the Legislative Water Commission. Partner legislation was explained by representatives of the Red River Watershed management Board, Drainage Work Group, Limited Liability for Chloride Applicators, and the Clean Water Fund. State agency budget and policy updates were given by BWSR, MPCA, and DNR.

MAWD Day at the Capitol

Dan Livdahl, Okabena-Ocheda Watershed District; Andy Henschel, Shell Rock River Watershed District and their lobbyist, Judy Erickson; and I met with Senators Weber and Sparks. We had the opportunity to present the MAWD talking points. Specific discussion centered on the need to increase the general operating levy and the project tax levy for all types of grants. Dan Livdahl and I attempted to meet with Representative Hamilton. Unfortunately, he had a meeting at the Capitol that lasted much longer than anticipated and we did not meet.

Manager and Staff Orientation

Manager orientation session was held on March 6 with Mark Bartosh and Jim Buschena. Address, phone, and terms of office have been updated. New grants were added. Once the clothing for Mark arrives, a new photo will be added.

Education Pieces

A grant newsletter was distributed to HLWD Advisory Committee members.

Grant Applications

- Minnesota Conservation Corps. The MCC grant application was submitted on November 26, 2018. If funded, the HLWD intends to stabilize 600 feet of streambank in Nobles County using a cedar revetment method. The HLWD also intends to do maintenance on two restored prairies. Funded.
- Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center. Todd Arnold, University of Minnesota, is drafting a carp research proposal for the Heron Lake watershed. The application deadline is December 21, 2018. The HLWD has been asked to serve as project sponsor and provide inkind time for HLWD staff for grant administration, stakeholder outreach, and meeting organization. Not funded.
- Apprentice Academy Program. Through the Conservation Corps of Minnesota and Iowa, the HLWD and North Heron Lake Game Producers Association (NHLGPA) have an opportunity to hire summer interns. Funded.
- Minnesota Conservation Collaboration. Through the USDA/NRCS, the HLWD and Houston Engineering, Inc. applied for funding for a to hire a person to work with the Prioritize, Target, and Measure Application (PTMApp) to identify project locations and begin implementation. Submitted in February.
- Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) Grant. This grant provides licenses to ESRI Arc Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Desktop Advanced and Desktop at a discounted rate. ArcGIS is used for locating the best areas for BMPs, using Prioritize, Target, and Measure Application (PTMApp), aerial photography, mapping projects, and other GIS and mapping needs. The application was submitted on February 20. Funded.

Public Drainage Systems

Jackson County Ditch (CD) 3

Mediation for CD 3 was held on February 11 in New Ulm. Bruce Sellers, Chuck Brandel, Louis Smith, and I attended. A tentative settlement was reached. Louis Smith presented the proposed settlement during a closed meeting on February 19. The board approved the settlement when the meeting was re-opened.

Jackson County JD 3

The landowner information meeting was held on February 28 at 1 pm in the Heron Lake Senior Citizens' center. I provided an overview of the grants secured for this subwatershed. Chuck Brandel and Jacob Rischmiller presented the draft preliminary engineering report. Landowners had the opportunity to ask questions. Several landowners are interested in adding tile branches and additional storage. Chuck and Jacob will be revising the PER to reflect the potential changes. Bruce Sellers will be contacted regarding the process for adding tile lines and whether there will be a need for additional petitioners. In addition to the 43 landowners, the petitioners' attorney, Bruce Sellers; two Jackson County Commissioners, and one Jackson County staff were in attendance.

Projects 4 and 84-4A

The HLWD received correspondence from the DNR regarding the reestablishment of records for Projects 4 and 84-4A. Jackson County and Chuck Brandel both say that the records are incomplete, regardless of what the DNR is saying. Louis Smith and Chuck Brandel are working on a response to this correspondence.

Drainage Management Meeting

On March 12, the HLWD and Jackson County boards met to discuss drainage management. HLWD Advisory Committee members discussed drainage authority, financing, communication, and duplication of efforts. The HLWD will proceed with writing a policy and procedure manual. Matt Widboom requested that a meeting like that be held in Nobles and Murray Counties.

Jackson County JD 19

On March 11, Chuck Brandel sent a letter and revised plans to the windfarm representatives. A conference call to discuss this situation.

4. Adjourn

Jerry Christopherson made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 a.m. Julie Lopez seconded this. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted

Julie Lopez

Acting Secretary