

## **MINUTES OF THE ROSEAU RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT BOARD OF MANAGERS MEETING HELD MARCH 15, 2012**

Chairman Miller opened the meeting at 10:00 a.m. with introductions. In attendance were Managers Haugen and Miller, Administrator Sando, and Administrative Assistant Halstensgard. For others in attendance, see attendance sheet.

Chairman Miller talked about the history of the control structures in Beltrami Island State Forest (BISF) as well as the land management direction the Watershed District and other LGU's want to see taken. Jeff Pelowski spoke about the need to continue flood storage on public lands.

Jim Leach, US Fish & Wildlife Refuge Supervisor, stated that they are not a flood control agency and sited their mandate for land management practices. Mr. Leach stated that they have a plan to plug private drainage ditches in the BISF; however their main management purpose is to protect wildlife. Chairman Miller stated that it is not the Districts intent for the State or Federal Agencies to pay for the rehabilitation of the structures. The District will seek funding through the farm bill and state bonding (FDR); however we do need the cooperation of the Agencies and their personnel.

Val Gravseth, representative from Sen. Franken's office, asked about damages caused by the water coming off of the public lands and if DNR and US Fish & Wildlife are accountable. There was discussion on the responsibilities of all parties.

Manager Haugen spoke about the Beltrami area and retaining water at the headwaters, not for long periods of time but until the drainage systems can handle the water effectively. Manager Haugen also stated that the preservation of wildlife cannot come before the best interest of people. The Watershed has constructed projects on private land and Manager Haugen feels it's time to do some projects on public land.

Chairman Miller stated that if the consensus is moving forward with the Mediation Agreement and Project Team process, it should be noted that the failure of these structures violate the spirit and intent of the Mediation Agreement. Principal 11 specifically states that a natural resource project should not exacerbate flooding. The LGU's feel the DNR and Fish and Wildlife have a responsibility to work with the RRWD to repair or replace the damaged structures. There is a narrow window of opportunity to fund these projects through the proposed retention funding in the new farm bill for the Red River Valley.

Lori Dowling, DNR NW Regional Director, arrived at the meeting at 10:50. Ms. Dowling stated that the DNR, under the current leadership, is in favor of pursuing repair or replacement of structures in BISF and holding water on public land, as long as there is benefit to wildlife. The DNR and US Fish and Wildlife are in concurrence on the objective of reviewing each proposal individually and moving forward with projects that benefit wildlife. Chairman Miller discussed the proposed wildlife benefits.

Ms. Dowling also stated the numerous benefits to wildlife from flood control. During high water events, fish and wildlife die and are displaced as well as damage of corridor habitat and water contamination. Ms. Dowling stated that she would stress to her staff that a "do nothing option" is not an option.

There was discussion on the maintenance issues with water retention areas. Chairman Miller stated that one of the main purposes of holding this water would be to help meet the long term goals for flood damage reduction in the Red River Valley. Those goals include reduce flooding on agricultural land, minimizing damage to infrastructure (roads, bridge, etc.), cities and farmsteads locally, as well as reducing mainstem flows on the Red River. Roseau County Engineer Brian Ketring stated that the water that runs off the public land in the spring, sits on the land in the northwest part of the county for a month and a half. Joint operation of the sites and future maintenance would be worked out in the Operation and Maintenance (O & M) plan for each site. There was continued discussion on what is included in project O&M's.

There was discussion on the permitting processes for agricultural tiling.

Ms. Dowling spoke about the local DNR land managers and the policy makers having different objectives. The political message doesn't always mesh with the scientific data. The directive from Governor Dayton and the DNR director is to be a "good neighbor." Mr. Leach spoke about the adverse impacts of "being a good neighbor."

Both the DNR and US Fish & Wildlife are open to reviewing each site on a case by case basis and suggest moving forward with the project team process. Chairman Miller stated that the local managers don't always know what the effects of a project will be so they default back to the do nothing agenda.

The general consensus from the meeting was that each project would be looked at by the project team on a case by case basis and all agencies will work together for a mutually beneficial outcome.

The group discussed the proposal of plugging of ditches in the BISF and the currently proposed Beaver Township Impoundment. Any benefit would be minimal in the upper reaches as there are limited legal drainage systems. Specific drainage was discussed including the trout stream in the Hay Creek headwaters and the legal ditch near the proposed Beaver Township Impoundment.

There was discussion on the impacts of projects on Tribal Lands. Ms. Dowling stated that the current Tribal Council is willing to do a land exchange. There was discussion on encouraging the Tribe to participate in the project team process.

Ms. Dowling suggested that the Watershed District write a summary of what that they would like to see included in the CCMP and send it to those at the table.

The meeting adjourned at 11:50.

Respectfully submitted,

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LaVerne Voll, Secretary

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Tracy Halstensgard, Administrative Assistant

ROSEAU RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT  
March 15, 2012  
 Roseau River Watershed Office, Roseau, MN

ATTENDANCE SHEET

NAME	ADDRESS	PHONE	E-MAIL
Rob Sands	RRWD		
Floyd Haugen	RRWD		
Val Henderson	Semco Fraxino	218-230-9489	
JEFF POLONSK	City Roseau/Roxon Co.	218-463-3750	
TODD PETERSON	CITY OF ROSEAU	218-463-5003	
BRIAN KETRINIK	ROSEAU COUNTY	463-2063	
Jim Graham	AGASSIZ NWR	218/449-4115	
Jim Leach	U.S. FWS	(612) 713-5406	
Andrew Martin	Semco Klöhche	218-287-2219	
Todd Miller	RRWD	218-689-3717	
Jouak Bowling	MN DNR	218-308-21029	

*If you have a business card, please leave one!!!*