

Chippewa River Watershed Project
Committee Meeting Minutes
November 19, 2004
Benson Fire Hall, Benson, MN

Present: Dean Shuck, Kandiyohi Co Commissioner; Roger Rasmussen, Kandiyohi SWCD Supervisor; Mary Oslund, Kandiyohi SWCD; Rick Gronseth, Swift SWCD; Larry Kittelson, Pope Co Commissioner; Jerry Johnson, Douglas Co Commissioner; Glenn Matejka, Douglas SWCD Supervisor/WesMin RC&D; Clinton Schuerman, Swift SWCD Supervisor/Prairie Country RC&; Kenneth Koenen, Chippewa Co. Commissioner; Randy Nelson, Prairie Country RC&D; Jean Diggins, Chippewa SWCD; Charlie Ballou; Lake Villard/Amelia/Leven Sanitary District; Jeffrey Lopez, Chippewa Co Commissioner; Jennifer Hoffman, Paul Wymar, Kylene Olson, CRWP

Introductions

Kylene called the meeting to order and introductions were made.

In-Kind Contributions: Kylene reminded all partners of the importance of recording and reporting in-kind contributions. In-kind reporting forms were made available. Special thanks to Rick Gronseth, Swift SWCD, for doing a great job on in-kind reporting.

Impaired Waters Stakeholder G16 Group Update: Kylene and Jenn attended the Minnesota River Board Annual Meeting in Arlington where a panel of G16 members gave a briefing on the Impaired Waters Stakeholder Process and the upcoming policy legislation. Members of the panel included: Sheryl Corrigan, MPCA; Craig Johnson, League of MN Cities; Nancy Larson, MN Association of Small Cities; Mike Robertson, MN Chamber of Commerce and Chris Radatz, MN Farm Bureau. The G16 members were assembled last year and have been meeting to develop a 2005 legislative proposal. Based on estimations, the annual need for impaired waters is \$270 million. The G16 is proposing a plan that will generate \$80 million with the expectation that the gap can be covered by leveraging federal and private money. The funding proposal is basically to charge \$3/month (\$36/year) to all residents in the state, municipal or rural, in a statewide "Flush Fee." There would be a low income exception and special rules for multi-unit residences and non-residential connections. Dollars would be possibly divided as such: 1/5 assessment, 1/5 TMDL reporting, 3/5 implementation. There are still questions and unresolved details regarding the collection and reimbursement of the fees.

Association of MN Counties: Also giving a presentation at the MRB Annual Meeting was Dennis Fink, AMC President and St. Louis County Commissioner. He gave a 2005 Legislative Policy Position update regarding water quality and wastewater. A sub-committee of the Environment and Natural Resources Policy Committee was formed to develop a policy stance on ISTS. The following key points regarding ISTS will be brought before the members of AMC for 2005 Legislative approval: establishing a state advisory committee on performance based systems; amending state law to require an inspection prior to the transfer of property; developing a better system of inventorying ISTS, and supporting on-going funding to homeowners and counties. The most controversial and hardest sell will most likely be amending state law to require point of sale inspections.

Minnesota Environmental Partnership Legislative Update: Jenn attended a legislative meeting in Willmar on November 12 sponsored by MEP with Sen. Dean Johnson and Rep. Al Junke. MEP will be supporting six main tenets during the 2005 Legislative Session: cleaning up impaired waters (Flush Fee), establishing enforceable mercury reduction targets in MN, protecting local planning and zoning rights, protecting lands from reckless off-road driving, dedicating 2 percent of the general fund for conservation, long-term bonding projects that prioritize clean water and protected

lands. Both Johnson and Junke were receptive but cautious with support towards these initiatives saying that the environmental sector should be even more vocal and hard-hitting during the session.

Watershed Professionals Group/MN River Board: A group of professionals working on the watershed scale throughout the MN River Basin have been meeting monthly to share information and also explore the relationship with the MN River Board. Paul, Kylene, and Jenn have attended these meetings. It was the consensus of this group to send a letter to the MRB requesting that they support the AMCs 2005 Policy Points regarding ISTS, specifically having a uniformed policy regarding property transfer inspections across the basin and state. This letter is currently being refined and will be sent by Loren Engelby, Hawk Creek Watershed who is acting as the group's spokes person.

Updates:

The Conservation Security Program (CSP) was brought up by Jean. Although the Chippewa River Watershed was not selected for participation in 2005, she suggested that the CRWP as well as individual SWCDs, NRCS, etc. need to be promoting it to landowners now. Landowners need to be made aware of eligibility requirements so that they can be ready to participate. CRWP will aid in the promotion through newsletters and the website. If anyone would like help with CSP promotion ideas, feel free to contact Jennifer.

Earth Day Celebration: The Shakopee Creek Headwaters Project in cooperation with the Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center will be holding an open house Earth Day Celebration on Saturday, April 23. 2005 celebrates the 35th Anniversary of Earth Day. Jennifer is member of the planning committee. More details will follow as the date gets closer.

Emily Wolf, Douglas County Water Planner, has left Douglas County to work with the Extension Service at the regional center in Fergus Falls. Good luck to Emily.

Next Meeting: The next meeting will be Friday, December 17, 10:15 am, Benson Fire Hall, Benson, MN. Beginning in 2005, meetings will be held on the second Friday of the month.

Local work group for the East Branch will meet the third Wednesday of the month beginning in 2005. A meeting has been scheduled for January 19, 2005 at the Benson USDA Service Center at 9:30 am. Please bring project applications to this meeting.