

Chippewa River Watershed Project
Committee Meeting Minutes
September 22, 2004
Benson Fire Hall, Benson, MN

Present: Dennis Ulrich, Southern Minnesota Beet Sugar Cooperative; Kenneth F. Koenen, Chippewa Co Commissioner; Dean Shuck, Kandiyohi Co Commissioner; Tom Cherveney, West Central Tribune; Doug Anderson, Swift Co Commissioner; Roger Rasmussen, Kandiyohi SWCD Supervisor; Mary Oslund, Kandiyohi SWCD; Ryan Kessler, MNDNR Fisheries, Glenwood; Rick Gronseth, Swift SWCD; Emily Wolf, Douglas Co Land & Resource Mgmt; Jerry Johnson, Douglas Co Commissioner; Orvin Gronseth, Swift SWCD Supervisor; Glenn Matejka, Douglas SWCD Supervisor/WesMin RC&D; Jean Diggins, Chippewa SWCD; JoAnn Blomme, Chippewa Co Land & Resource Mgmt; Jennifer Hoffman, Paul Wymar, Kylee Olson, CRWP

Introductions

Kylee called the meeting to order and introductions were made. Kylee made the announcement that snail mail agendas and minutes will no longer be sent out. It is an effort to reduce budget spending, approximately \$400/year. If you have email and are not receiving the notices electronically please let us know. Minutes will also be posted on the website.

In-Kind Contributions: Kylee reminded all partners of the importance of recording and reporting in-kind contributions. In-kind reporting forms were made available. Kylee commended all the elected officials who come regularly to our meetings and for their dedication to the CRWP.

SMBSC Surface Water Protection Plan: Dennis Ulrich of the Southern Minnesota Beet Sugar Co-op was on hand to talk about the new Surface Water Protection Plan (SWPP) that is a component of their discharge permit renewal. The SWPP covers the plant in Renville and the eleven remote piling sites. Most of the practices have been in place for the last few years but the SWPP will formalize the practices and make it an enforceable document. The MPCA, Renville County, CRWP and Hawk Creek Watershed Project have given input and review for the SWPP. A sugar beet is ~75% water when it reaches the plant and this water is used throughout processing. Water leaving the plant is treated at their wastewater treatment plant for BOD and total suspended solids as regulated by their MPCA permit. Biological oxygen demand (BOD) is the amount of oxygen consumed from a water sample over five days. BOD is a way of looking at organic pollution and the threat to aquatic life. The plant's allowable BOD discharge is 25.

The SWPP outlines a series of BMPs that will be employed by SMBSC to reduce environmental impacts from surface water runoff. The SWPP has developed inspection protocols, management directives for dealing with environmental threats, and adequate staff training for carrying out the inspections and directives.

In order to comply with their permit and the SWPP, water samples are taken from the wastewater plant effluent and from locations upstream and downstream from their discharge point into the Ditch 45 (Sacred Heart Creek). Samples are sent to an outside

lab for analysis and monthly discharge reports are to the MPCA are required. Pile sites are inspected monthly with inspections occurring weekly if beets are present. At the first sign of beet deterioration, inspections are increased to daily. The daily environmental operations of the plant have improved since 2001 to try and avoid surface water contamination and fish kills. Monitors are much more careful about not accepting frost damaged beets and following the inspection protocols.

The SWPP does not address individual field runoff. It is hoped that the SMBSC and the watershed projects can continue to work together to address these ends. The Surface Water Protection Plan is very close to completion and the new permit should be issued soon.

2003 Monitoring Results: Paul handed out copies of the 2003 Monitoring Summary. This report can be downloaded from our website www.chippewariver.com

2004 319 Application-Dryweather Creek: The area of Dryweather Creek, Lines Creek and Spring Creek will be the focus of the 319 grant application due on October 8. This is the southern most area of the Chippewa River Watershed and mostly located within Chippewa County. The group was asked for brainstorming ideas. A meeting of Chippewa County partners will also be held to determine specific needs for this area.

CRWP Updates:

The Minnesota River Board met on Monday, September 20th in Chippewa County. They are still in existence, although a number of counties have withdrawn their support. The MRB is still trying to define its role in the basin, one area it is looking at is taxing authority/funds clearinghouse or to be a lobbying effort on behalf of the entire basin. They pledged money to help the MPCA conduct a survey of the watershed residents. The main goal of the survey is to find out residents attitudes toward paying to clean up the Minnesota River. The survey is still in draft form, stay tuned for more information.

Watershed coordinators and staff and various state agency staff working directly in the Minnesota River came together and met in the afternoon following the MRB meeting. The MN River watershed coordinators will continue to meet, share experiences and coordinate activities. They will be meeting next in New Ulm on Wednesday, October 20 at 1:00.

Rob Spitzley left his position as Shakopee Creek Headwaters Project Coordinator to take a position with Stearns County. We were sad to see Rob leave as he did an excellent job in the area. The job was advertised and twenty-two applicants applied. Interviews with seven candidates have been completed and it hopeful that the position will be filled by mid-October.

The next meeting will be Thursday, October 21, 10:15 am, Benson Fire Hall, Benson, MN.