

## Notes from Bee/Duck Creek Watershed Meeting

Wednesday, January 15, 2014

10 a.m. at Syttende Mai Hus, Viking Memorial Park, Spring Grove, Minn.

(Notes by Jan Lee Buxengard, Bee/Duck Creek Watershed committee recorder)

In attendance: Bee/Duck Creek Watershed Committee members: Roger Stenhoff – chairman, Jan Lee Buxengard – recorder, Carl Myhre and Arlen Doely; also Dana Kjome – Dist. 5 Houston County Commissioner; Robert Vogel – Rep. Spring Grove City Council; Ron Meiners - Houston County Soil Conservationist with Root River Soil and Water Conservation; Michelle Elliott – Waterloo Creek Watershed planning coordinator/district technician for Allamakee Soil and Water Conservation District; and Bob Joachim – Waterloo Creek Watershed project technician for Allamakee SWCD and Root River SWCD.

Stenhoff opened the meeting by having everyone introduce themselves.

Joachim: retired one year ago from career with NRCS, worked 8 years at Waukon, 8 years at Decorah, 5-6 years at Preston; lives on a small farm northwest of Waukon. Now working as a project technician for Waterloo Creek Watershed Project – for Allamakee and Root River SWCDs. Started July 1, 2013. Working about 2-3 days per week, 60% Minnesota/40% Iowa; to drum up interest and get my name out there and explain to people what we can provide. Will take some time to make progress. Been calling up farmers and reviewing watershed programs; generate general conservation practices; made 44 farmer contacts, 10 new EQIP applications, and 3 more pending.

Need to start capturing this water on the high ground – upper part of the watershed. These farmers don't see the benefit to them. Will try to bring cost share amounts up so wouldn't cost farmers so much. Road structures would be palatable - to look like a pond full. A lot of these structures are going to be a tough sell. Show a commitment of land management. Most of the farmers designed for a ten year storm; need to be looking at higher class of engineers for 100 year storms. Lane Zaffke project estimated cost about \$82,000; Dry structures on Bangs Rd and Zaffke's farmland; Bear Creek good support by Trout Unlimited – mostly stream bank treatment; may have to do less of that if did flood control.

Meiners: it all falls back to money; Trout Unlimited and other wildlife organizations could see the benefit.

Myhre: If don't do something it's going to flood more.

Should be something in between Zaffke's and Gerard's; a perfect, great project would be Zaffke, Allene Buxengard and Gerard; would certainly take the pressure off the Bangs Road. Also possibility at Harlan Johnsrud farm

Joachim: On County #27, road structure of a concrete wall above the box culvert with a draw down pipe doesn't meet our standards.

Such a structure saves wear and tear on the infrastructure of county and township roads.

Vogel: Not as obvious to City of Spring Grove. I see repairable/mitigatable issues. We are a ways away from anything. Run off from Northern Engraving and behind Steve Bergrud's. We just spent \$5 million on Main Street. EDA looking at development on east edge of the city.

If we can, make an appeal to the city to help with that run off.

Most farmers aren't going to be willing to give up productive cropland when the structure doesn't benefit the farmer.

Meiners: the cover crop thing has been going good; a lot more farmers are doing it; push for no-till and soil health; no till and healthy soil can retain water better than a pond.

There's good things happening. If have some of these big structures upland most benefit.

Elliott: Watershed goals: Minnesota side – reduce water flow; Iowa – looking at the livestock contribution, sediment; not as much open cropland as on Minnesota side.

What are we calling at as critical areas to look at? Eroded stream bank, improve livestock waste systems.

We're just open...Nothing's right, nothing's wrong.

Water quality – didn't have funding for sampling last year. Were testing way over EPA standards;

Waterloo Creek only 'high-quality' water in Iowa that is classified as being impaired for bacteria.

Stenhoff: Dumping ground on Bangs Road. An environmental curse; been a dumping ground for ?home invasion? Computers, paint, deer carcasses, etc., Was going to check on this matter and then the flood came and took all the evidence downstream. We have to keep an eye out for this kind of stuff going on and report it.

Elliott: in Iowa, the DNR takes charge of this.

Elliott: send out newsletters and press releases the best way to make Bob's work known. Talk to your neighbor -- they know you better than Bob. They would be a lot more receptive to neighbors.

Meiners: RRSWD new employee started last week – a push again with Bee, Duck, and Crooked Creeks. Doing spot checks and visit with landowners; put articles in local newspapers. (Jan Lee pointed out that a photo with the article draws people's attention.)

Elliott: idea of a field day this summer; get together with landowners; pick out some sites upland, road sites, to get people out on site and talk about what can be done.

Meiners: SWCD could support cost; get together and also have refreshments.

Could have cover crop helicopter guy do presentation; could have Dave Mellick, the lead engineer for Bear Creek structure, give a talk

Elliott: get more ideas for field day and promote it; do later in June; wait until first crop hay is done. Let's get on the ground and drum up some business for Bob.

Meiners: Do more dye tracing to see where sink holes end up.

**Next meeting**: Some of us get together to organize a field day.