

Notes from Bee and Duck Creek Watershed Meeting

February 12, 2013

9:30 a.m. at Syttende Mai Hus, Viking Memorial Park, Spring Grove

Attendees

Committee Members: Roger Stenhoff, Dan Griffin, Glenn Kinneberg, Kenneth Anderson, Jan Lee Buxengard

Suzy Meneguzzo – Program Coordinator, Hiawatha Valley RC&D Council

Michelle Elliott – Waterloo Creek Watershed Project Coordinator, Allamakee SWCD

Ron Meiners – Root River SWCD

Gary Larson – Houston County NRCS

Roger Stenhoff opened the meeting.

We lost our committee representative from Spring Grove City Council. Contact council about someone to replace Steve Kemp, as he lost his seat during the last election

Roger questioned -- should we start a drive to get another member or two on the committee?

Currently have good representation from all areas of the watershed; if learn of anyone with an interest, invite them on board

Gary Larson – We sent out 2,000 newsletters; got some response; don't know when federal spending package will kick in

Technical part should share between Minnesota and Iowa to get more traditional measures on the books

Few applications received for our watershed

Ron Meiners – landowners interested in establishing watershed district; not enough landowners in the (Bee/Duck Creek watershed) area to generate enough tax.

To generate funds, start with a couple meetings with county commissioners about practice funds; committees have the authority to place advelerum tax on landowners; could be used for landowners' cost; collect and keep for few years/to get a pot of money started; have committee meet with our watershed

EQIP program – 75% targeted dollars to Bee/Duck and Crooked Creek and Root River in biennium budget request

Identify projects and rough estimate of cost; maybe get couple structures per year; that coupled with a federal grand could help fund the cost

The whole driftless area is targeted for conservation projects.

Clean Water grant – apply again; engineering assistance with this/federal match;

We're busy all the time to get projects funded and carried out. Want site-specific areas. Identify several priorities and do so many per year. It looks good when combining funding efforts.

Tom Wiebke has a site; Lane Zaffke and Dick Amundson are also interested

County engineer is on board with a lot of these projects; if they are good projects they'll get funded.

Houston County Comprehensive Water plan being revised. There is a need; need to know willing landowners.

Are creating inventory of smaller structures; clean them out and get working again; regular EQIP funding for these

Old structure sites deteriorated, breached, or pipe is bad, you have gully; these are identifiable concerns

Suzy – Resources and have names of sites

Gary – get failing pond issue info in the newsletter

Roger – lot of ponds built for cattle/water; they are great for control for 20-year storms; look at sediment and water quality

Clean Water grant application for sink holes; cap and seal them; feel will be a successful grant; has a lot of merit to it. A good project for the area; would be beneficial for our Bee/Duck Creek area; touch on fall application of nitrogen.

Dan – regarding sinkholes, approach landowners in an “assistance” way; lots of sinkholes that aren’t identified

Suzy – What is committee willing to do?

Also abandoned well direct access to aquifer; get maps that identify these areas and committee members approach the landowners, asking “are you aware there is help?”; it’s the neighbor’s well as well.

Over 10,000 acres in watershed (Bee/Duck); 83 landowners

Abandoned wells – through planning and zoning departments; Peter Rosendahl pulled well next to a sinkhole; good project to get done

Have inventory of nitrate rates; test wells and see where problem lies

Have a field day??

Have water tested? Lot of people don’t have water tested; don’t know what their water is; County tests for nitrates, also should test for chloroform and bacteria

Land value is a big part of it; a lot of rented ground gets beat up by renters

Newsletter will cover a lot of these issues; education is the key; be willing to step up and do what’s right; also affects your neighbor.

Old abandoned farm wells have shallow depth

Water from deeper wells have different taste/flavor/minerals.

Water plan has information/inventory/direction of ground water flow.

Michelle Elliott – biweekly sampling was finished the end of October 2012; biweekly monitoring will be finished by the end of February 2013

Iowa & Minnesotas’ first watershed protection plan will be submitted in April

319 funds for grants – no request for applications this spring; impairments not currently funded but flood control is funded

shared technician held until budget figured out

Several terraces and ponds planned in IA

Iowa EQIP rates in the 50-60% range; are not as good as Minnesota's

Ron and Gary will try to get the newsletter out by the end of February

Keep lines of communication open

What Minnesota side does is even more credit to getting funding

Do most critical areas; would be the best bet; target high priority ones to get landowners going.

MN/IA DNR identifies "impaired" streams; EPA does not fund "impaired" areas.

Part of WIRB grant to have meeting once a year with landowners

Questions; testimonials; brainstorming; bring people together face-to-face

Emphasis on water quality; update on what's been happening between both states

What's going on; what's available; have a structured agenda with speakers

Between Minnesota and Iowa, are 200+ landowners

Ron - sometimes a tour is good, can see what's done

Dan - lead items abandoned wells and sinkholes - a lot of farms have them; are programs to help

Gary said well sealing is called "well decommissioning"

Lot of landowners would have ownership in this; building sites gone, but well still there

Schedule meeting March 14 or 21 from 10 a.m. to noon

Don't schedule any later in the month as farmers will be getting into spring work.

Providing coffee and rolls/donuts would bring people; no fuss with preparation and clean up like a meal would

Michelle can send out letter; has funds; can use bulk mailing permit when over 200 pieces

Theme "Water Quality" - abandoned wells and sinkholes; failing ponds

Ron, Gary and Roger prioritize/identify most important structure sites.

Meeting concluded at 11:10 a.m.

(Notes by Jan Lee Buxengard, committee recorder)