

**Meeting Notes
Bois de Sioux Watershed
Advisory Committee Meeting
June 24, 2020 at 9:00 am**

Committee Members

Jay Backer [**Absent**]
Scott Bauer [**Absent**]
Duane Duin [**Absent**]
Dean Frisch [**Absent**]
Doug Jahnke [**Absent**]
Eric Klindt
Tom Monson [**Absent**]

Jared House
Doyle Sperr [**Absent**]
Ron Staples
Mark Summer [**Absent**]
Vernell Wagner [**Absent**]
John Walkup

Also Present:

District Engineer Chad Engels
Engineer Jim Guler
Technician Troy Fridgen
Bois de Sioux Watershed President Linda Vavra
Administrator Jamie Beyer

Attachments: January – May 2020 Meeting Minutes, 2019 Audit, 2019 Annual Report

1. **Call to order**
2. **Introductions**
3. **Policies**

New Red River Water Management (RRWMB) Grant Programs: The RRWMB has enacted two water quality grant programs. The “Base Program” requires minimal application effort and awards are made for \$100,000 to participating watersheds for water quality projects. This spring, the BdSWD was awarded this \$100,000 base grant funding for the improvement of WCD #9/#10. The “Water Quality Competitive Grant Funding” program mirrors the requirements of BWSR’s Clean Water Funding Projects and Practices grant, and the District was awarded \$283,000 towards the expenses of the Phase No. 1 of the Lake Traverse Water Quality Improvement Project.

4. **Permitting**

The District has seen an increase in permit applications for the year-to-date: 2020 – 74 Permits; 2019 - 57 Permits; 2018 - 55 Permits; 2017 - 40 Permits; 2016 – 30 Permits; 2015 - 51 Permits.

5. **Ditch Projects: Improvement of WCD #9/#10**

The contractual substantial completion date expired last fall, but construction continues. Channel excavation is now complete. The contractor will continue to install side inlet culverts, grade, level and seed.

6. **Ditch Projects: Repair of JD #11**

This is a repair project. Construction has begun, and the contractor committed to a Fall 2020 completion date. Traverse County bonded for this project.

7. Ditch Projects: TCD #8/TCD #37/Eldorado Township

Several landowners meetings were held, prior to the pandemic closure. A wide variety of alternatives were evaluated, some placed on the Traverse-Stevens county line, although some were found to worsen downstream conditions. From preliminary findings, there is a need for storage, repairs to TCD #8, and possibly an extension of TCD #8. No landowner petitions have been received. Area landowners are advancing a private drainage project, which may include a shared tile project and/or an open ditch.

8. Ditch Projects: Repair of JD #6

Two virtual landowner meetings were held, and one farm visit, to establish whether landowners continue to support this project. All who participated voiced their support; subsequently, the District authorized Moore Engineering to submit grant applications on behalf of the project.

9. Watershed Projects: Redpath

The District has closed one of the four remaining parcels; two parcels are ready for closing activities and one parcel will require additional time and possibly probate proceedings. Project design is nearly complete. Originally, it was anticipated that design enhancements would be used to achieve pike spawning, resulting in a 75%-25% funding ratio from the State of Minnesota's Flood Damage Reduction program. But, concerns about function and performance resulted in abandoning this feature in the final design. As a result, it is anticipated that the project will qualify for 50%-50% funding, and that more lands will be available for agricultural leases to derive operations and maintenance revenue.

The District submitted an NRCS grant application for \$5,000,000 in funding through a national competitive grant program.

10. Watershed Projects: Lake Traverse Water Quality Improvement Project/TCD #52

The District has completed the necessary hearings, and acquired the required approvals, to implement a watershed management district for this project, which will generate assessments to fund a portion of the \$986,600 cost of construction. Other sources for this project are grants of: \$283,000 from RRWMB; \$336,775 from BWSR; \$300,000 from BdSWD; \$4,500 from Traverse County. Bid advertisement has been approved, and construction could begin this fall, after crops are removed.

11. Watershed Projects: North Ottawa Impoundment

The District has continued to work with EOR to develop revenue generating and natural resource enhancing activities. Their full report is expected in July. District staff have been working with the Regional Director Theresa Ebbenga, and together have established that the District uses agriculture and other activities to cover operation and maintenance costs. The DNR recognizes the need for

revenue and envisions a 10-year plan with cells dedicated to revenue, revenue/NRE enhancements, and NRE's. The farming bid for 2020 was awarded to Greg and Pat Vold Farms, who have expressed interest in pursuing a soil testing program. The District recently approved cattail treatments for Cells A4 and B4, which have developed into a monoculture of cattails, with reduced NRE and FDR capacity.

12. Watershed Projects: Samantha Lake

An agreement has been signed with Grant County to construct a control structure to keep Samantha Lake at or slightly above the Ordinary Highway Water Level. The Grant County Highway Department will coordinate easements and construction, and turn over the project to the District once built. It is anticipated that construction will be completed in 2020.

13. Watershed Projects: Big Lake

An EAW, to drawdown and use Big Lake for temporary flood storage, will be completed Summer 2020. Upon approval by the District, next it will be submitted to the DNR for public comment.

14. Watershed Projects: Doran Creek

Meeting with landowners has been difficult under pandemic restrictions, but it is anticipated that project meetings with Doran Creek landowners will resume in 2020.

15. Buffers

In collaboration with the Wilkin County SWCD, the District offered a cost share program to plant buffers, which were seeded this spring. The District is in the process of collecting permanent easement paperwork for the JD #11 repair project, which included a redetermination and acquisition and installation of the system's buffers (in Traverse and Wilkin Counties). The Buffer Committee met with Grant, Traverse, and Wilkin County SWCD's staff to discuss differences in eligibility for alternative practices, compliance determinations, and offers for technical assistance. The District is collecting more information regarding Grant County compliance.

16. 1W1Plan

Release of a full draft of the plan is expected in July. The Policy Committee and Local Boards will be invited to attend an online presentation of the plan, which will be recorded and be made available to those who are unable to attend. In September, it is expected that the Policy Committee will make a decision on issuing the required 60-day notice for public comment. The Committees are on-schedule to have a plan approved by BWSR before the grant's expiration.

THE NEXT MEETING IS TENTATIVELY SCHEDULED FOR JANUARY 6TH, 2020 AT 9:00 AM