

**Meeting Agenda**  
**Bois de Sioux Watershed**  
**North Ottawa Project Team Meeting**  
**January 20, 2023 at 10:00 am**  
**Wendell Community Center**

**Project Team Members**

SWCD Representative	Randy Larson	
Landowners	Dominic Blume	Jordan Schneeberger <b>[Absent]</b>
County Commissioners	Eric Klindt	Bill LaValley
DNR Representatives	Nick Brown	Christine Herwig
Bois de Sioux Watershed District Board Managers	Ben Brutlag	John Kapphahn

**CC:**

Theresa Ebbenga, DNR Regional Director **[Absent]**  
Linda Vavra, BdSWD Board President and Alternate  
Jason Beyer, BdSWD Board Manager and Alternate  
Troy Fridgen, BdSWD Engineer Technician  
Jamie Beyer, BdSWD Administrator

**1. Update of Fall and Winter Operations**

Fall 2022, Fridgen identified several areas with beaver dams. A trapper visited the site and removed 5 beavers. Fridgen was not able to get the farthest south gate completely shut because of mud and sticks lodged in the gate by beavers (between A4 & B4). He intends to use high spring flow to blow clear the gate. Two gates were outfitted with a mechanism that operates gates similar to a boat wench. Staff have not yet developed a tool to benchmark a 5 CFS flow at the outlet. In 2022, a downstream landowner received a DNR water appropriation based on utilization of flow above the 5 CFS measurement, so it is a benchmark that the District should document. Brown stated that it isn't clear to current DNR employees where the 5 CFS benchmark originated, as it does not mimic natural flow.

Kapphahn requested that a backup plan be created when Fridgen is unable to operate the Impoundment. LaValley offered Grant County employee Aaron Beyer. Brutlag and Brown offered to help, also.

Fridgen reported that the road gates did help to keep traffic out of the Impoundment during hunting season. The gates can be used in the spring to keep vehicles off of roads when they are saturated and the potential for damage is high. Discussion was held to keep the road gates open as much as possible, which would require blocking-off the clay maintenance side roads. Brown recommended as much access as possible to A3, as it is a cell of interest to visitors because birds will be using the millet. LaValley stated that because the Impoundment pays Grant County taxes, there is an argument to be made to receive gravel to build-up the Impoundment's main interior access (the North-South gravel road).

Brutlag suggested posts and chain be used.

Kapphahn reported that the Japanese millet was left and no acres were harvested. Harvesting could not be done with a straight combine; would require cutting the crop when it is still green with a swather, and then

following with other equipment. Committee members discussed the very high likelihood that the cell will reseed itself, as it is a high priority that the cell remain covered.

Winter cattail management was discussed; Brown & Herwig anticipate limited benefit to mowing cattails in the winter and believe control of cattail growth in A4 & B4 cells would require quite a bit of effort and resources.

Committee members discussed two options for a weather monitoring station. Committee members discussed baseline needs of rainfall measurements and cameras. Beyer stated that Fridgen made 27 trips to the Impoundment in 2022, so there would be cost savings to offset monitoring costs:

- 1) Davis Weather Station – Estimated costs: \$2,500 for the unit with cell modem; \$300 annual subscription; \$350 annual connection to Weather Underground app
- 2) NDSU NDAWN Weather Station – Estimated costs: \$20,000 for equipment; the advantage is that data collected includes inversion winds and soil temps. Grant County and Grant County Corn and Soybean Growers are currently installing units in various locations.

## 2. Meet with Ag Producer

The producer did not attend. Brown stated that the DNR is curious about the possibility of growing wild rice in the Impoundment; he asked that the interested wild rice producer be invited to the new Project Team meeting.

## 3. DNR Bird Surveys

Herwig presented the results of a shorebird, wading bird, and waterfowl monitoring program implemented by the DNR from Apr – November in 2016 (25 visits) & 2017 (27 visits), and Apr – July in 2018 (19 visits). Migration occurs in the spring and fall, with breeding from mid-May to mid-August. Surveys were completed weekly through the breeding season. Cell land and water cover was also noted with the surveys. Herwig noted that water stays in interior cell borrow pits (which don't appear to drain completely). The borrow pits are being used by wildlife because they provide: shallow water depth, flat grassy side slopes, and plants harboring insects. Overall, the surveys found 29,718 birds across 44 different species; 25% of the birds were found to be mallards. The data found that different species use different cells at different times. Staff did find evidence of breeding, and advised that water level bounce can have a negative effect (rising water will drown existing nests; receding water will leave existing nests stranded). Levies and berms provided grassland bird habitat. Some birds noted by staff are considered unusual, rare, endangered, threatened, and of species of concern. One surprise was finding fish-eating birds present in the Impoundment.

## 4. North Ottawa Brochure

Herwig provided recommendations for the draft brochure. Beyer made notes from the DNR Bird Survey presentation of items to add. A draft interior map and revised brochure will be provided for project team comment. Klindt suggested gas and food symbols be added to the Impoundment location map.

LaValley stated that Grant County can post the brochure on their website.

## 5. 2023 Budget, Plans for 2023

Project Team members and staff discussed the need for:

1. Replace High Use Gates with new wench system (2 Gates = \$7,000)
2. Posts and Chains to block side roads (\$3,000?)
3. Road Gravel (\$5,000? Grant County cost-share?)

4. Tree Removal
5. Weather Station

Committee members noted the number of times the private portapotty blew over in 2022, and requested that the cost and possibility for other accommodations be explored. Larson stated that Mr. Dwight Veldhouse had put together a plan to construct a permanent bathroom on-site. Herwig stated that the DNR has constructed a dedicated and permanent site to reinforce portapotty facilities. Committee members asked that a subcommittee be established to review the options, to include Mr. Veldhouse and Grant County Zoning Official Greg Lillemon.

6. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held March 24<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 am in Wendell. The agenda will include updates on:

- Brochure
- Weather Station
- Restroom
- Wild Rice Producer