

Meeting Agenda
Bois de Sioux Watershed
North Ottawa Project Team Meeting
July 17, 2023 at 9:30 am
Wendell Community Center

Project Team Members

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

CC:

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

1. Comments from the Public (none received)

2. Restroom Update

See the written staff report. Grant County Zoning Administrator Greg Lillemon has confirmed that a permit is not necessary for the concrete pad. Staff had thought the issue of fiber optic had been eliminated because of the cost of electricity, but neighbor Dwight Veldhouse is requesting a solar service quote from Traverse Electric – so staff will wait until this detail is finalized and a possible location for fiber optic internet is determined before having the concrete pad poured.

3. Wild Rice Producer Reactions

DNR representatives support the use of wild rice for a variety of benefits in one cell – benefits discussed include cattail control, habitat and food sources for wildlife. Beyer relayed that Fridgen has been able to store water in the collection channel for late season flooding, despite extreme drought conditions. Brutlag stated that the wild rice producer does use large pumps to move water when needed. Brutlag will encourage the wild rice producer to talk with Fridgen about cell selection. Staff will ask the producer to put together a proposal, to include what prep work is expected. Also, staff will respond to the producer’s requested letter for crop insurance officials. If a proposal is subsequently approved, the Project Team could discuss further whether they would like to pursue research and monitoring funds secured by the Flood Damage Reduction Workgroup.

4. 2023 Operations, Maintenance & Budge

Beyer reported that Commissioner Bill LaValley is overseeing a request for gravel of the impoundment, but is not confident that it will be approved. Beyer reported that water in the collection channel could be used to flood a cell or cells now; Brown stated that releasing water now under hot temperature conditions would result in a loss of moisture to evaporation – he recommended that the water be held to cover mudflats in October, if possible.

5. 2024 Operations, Maintenance & Budget

Project team members discussed the difficulty with management of dry cells that are unfarmed (for eg in 2023, A3). The primary challenge is identifying dense cover that can withstand spring flood conditions. When the

cover is not dense enough or dies following the flood, weeds rapidly fill the entire cell, requiring spray or tillage and mid-season decisions of what to plant as a replacement. This year's drought adds complexity to the decision, along with potential NRE benefits of different plantings. Project team members discussed millet, buckwheat, Italian rye, etc. Brown stated that the DNR does contract with a private entity to plant a wetland prairie mix on DNR land – would it be possible to plant the same mix in an uncultivated cell? Brutlag stated that some sort of grass could be used – seed similar to that used for CRP or a pasture mixture. Weeds could be controlled with mowing or haying. Herwig offered that a late hay/mow date could be used in a hay contract to protect nests. Brutlag offered to collect seed prices.