

## Getchell Creek/CD26 Project Team Meeting Notes

April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021

### Meeting #2

*Attendees: Commissioner Steve Notch, Dennis Fuchs (Stearns SWCD), Shawn West (Stearns County Highway Department), Tom Roelike (Oak Township), Sheldon Myerchin (USFWS), Wyatt Kemper (Freeport), Mike Welle (Landowner), Chuck Uphoff (Stearns SWCD Board Member), Leah Hall (TNC), Kat Prince (MLT), Brad Wozney (BWSR), Nicki Blake-Bradley (DNR), Chris Middendorf (Landowner), Jeff Hoppe (Landowner), Greg Bowles (HEI), Garret Monson (HEI), Bret Zimmerman (HEI), Drew Kessler (HEI), Scott Henderson (SRWD), Jon Roeschlein (SRWD), Sarah Boser (SRWD)*

Drew Kessler with Houston Engineering kicked off the meeting with a brief overview of the plan for the meeting. Bret Zimmermann, also with Houston Engineering, provided a presentation of the Hydrologic and Hydraulic Modeling work he has been doing in the Getchell Creek subwatershed. He provided an overview of the data that was used to calibrate the model, explained the accuracy of the model, and explained how the model will be used to help the group moved forward with selecting projects. He also explained how the model can show which areas in the upstream water are contributing the largest amounts of water during peak flows. A question was asked regarding the goal of the projects and whether the goal was to achieve 0% flow from a particular area upstream. Bret and Drew explained that while we are looking for reductions in the areas with the highest contribution, we are not looking for a flow of 0 coming from any particular location, just looking to manage how quickly the water is coming into the system, giving the system a chance to handle the incoming water more efficiently.

Next Drew provided a presentation recapping what the Getchell Project Team has done so far (recap of meeting 1), and the work that the Houston and SRWD staff have done since then. Several water storage projects (39, 17, 8) are still on the table as landowners have indicated that they are willing to continue talking with staff about installing these projects, even though they have not officially committed to moving forward. These projects will be modeled to determine the impacts that they would have from a water storage perspective, and at that point staff and landowners will determine whether it makes sense to move forward with them. There was some discussion around water storage site 8, and whether the landowner would like to continue discussing this. Staff followed up with the landowner after the meeting and will incorporate feedback into whether this site moves forward to the modeling stage.

Discussion from landowners regarding the impacts of aquatic vegetation in the system. Many of the landowners believe that the aquatic vegetation severely impacts the drainage/flow of the system from May/June (when the water warms up and vegetation begins to grow) through freeze-up in the fall.

SRWD staff will continue to work with DNR on getting a permit to manage the aquatic vegetation. Past permit requests have been denied.

Drew and Sarah Boser (SRWD) gave a summary of some existing grant and donor funding that the SRWD will be able to utilize to help with some stream stabilization work in the lower/downstream end of Getchell Creek/CD26. The work is scheduled for this year. Potential sites and projects were presented, noting that funding would limit how much of the work could be done this year. These projects are being designed to provide near future stabilization to the channel while also setting the stage for future efforts, such as 2-stage ditch. A couple of the landowners reiterated that they would like to see stabilization on the downstream end of Getchell Creek/CD26, along with vegetation management, before any of the water storage projects are pursued.

Next Project Team meeting is planning for late summer/early fall. In the meantime, Houston and SRWD staff will continue collecting the necessary information to keep moving forward. Tonight, SRWD staff will be asking their board to formally request and engineer's report for the stabilization work on the downstream end of Getchell Creek.