



Sauk River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan

Policy Committee/Technical Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

August 17th, 2023 – 1:00 p.m.

Sauk River Watershed District Office

In attendance:

TAC: Steve Zeece III, Stephanie Hatzenbihler, Danielle Anderson, Jason Weinerman, Kyle Blazek, Becky Schlorf, Jon Roeschlein

PC: Chuck Uphoff, Bill Becker, Steve Notch, Tom Williamson, D. Gary Reents, Ken Rutten, Randy Neumann, Jerry Rapp

Online: Adam Ossefoort, Jeffrey Weiss, Deja Anton, Brad Wozney

Introductions were held:

Review of previous meeting minutes: Committee requested to edit previous meeting minutes to remove Tom Williamson, who was not present.

Project Updates:

Osakis/Crooked Lakes Watershed Bus Tour:

- Danielle from Douglas SWCD gave an overview of the Osakis and Crooked Lakes area bus tour. This event, targeting ag producers and landowners, will tour conservation easements, erosion control practices, sediment ponds, and wetland restorations. The tour is scheduled for September 7th, leaving from the Nelson Ball Park and 9am, and returning at approximately 3 pm. Lunch is provided, catered by Raapers.

Shoreline Tour:

- Stephanie H from Stearns SWCD gave an overview of the shoreline tour, including projects that have been completed as well as ones that are in the planning process.
- Question from Douglas County commissioner about programs available for pollinator gardens.
 - Stephanie responded that there are numerous programs for different scenarios (shoreline, ag land, etc) administered by Stearns SWCD that could fund a pollinator garden.

Fiscal Agent Report:

- Becky Schlorf, Stearns Environmental Services, provided a verbal overview of the fiscal report.



- Notably, interest accrued is required to be placed back into the grant account. Approximately \$12,000 of interest has been earned over the last year.
- Remaining in the budget is \$629,561.48
- Questions and discussion around variable interest rate.
- Tom Williamson motioned to approve the fiscal Agents quarterly report seconded by Steve Notch, motion carried.
- **CRP Incentive Pilot Program/Fiscal Agent Agreement Proposed Amendment:**
 - Fiscal agent agreement amendment to allow the collaborative to apply for other competitive funding, that could be fiscally managed by another organization other than Stearns ESD.
 - Suggestion modify language in the agreement from “Stearns County” to “Fiscal Agent”. The group agreed.
 - Bill Becker motioned to approve the recommendation that the PC supports the amendment to the Fiscal agent agreement. This amended agreement needs to be signed by the original 5 signing members (Stearns County, Stearns SWCD, Sauk River WD, Douglas SWCD, Todd SWCD) in order to apply for this CRP incentives grant. The other 4 collaborative members are also encouraged to sign this amended fiscal agreement in order to be eligible for these funds. Seconded by Steve Notch. Motion Carried.
 - The group agreed the new Fiscal Agent Agreement is effective once signed by the 5 origin signors. (Stearns County, Stearns SWCD, Sauk River WD, Douglas SWCD, Todd SWCD)

Fiscal Agent Report: (Edits for Amendment)

- Becky Schlorf, Stearns Environmental Services, provided a verbal overview of the fiscal report.
 - Notably, interest accrued is required to be placed back into the grant account. Approximately \$12,000 of interest has been earned since the grant funds were received by Stearns County.
 - Remaining in the budget is \$629,561.48
 - Questions and discussion around variable interest rate.
 - Tom Williamson motioned to approve the Fiscal Agent quarterly report, seconded by Steve Notch, motion carried.
- **CRP Incentive Pilot Program/Fiscal Agent Agreement Proposed Amendment:**
 - The Collaborative Agreement does not allow for more than one fiscal agent and the current Fiscal Agent Agreement is specific to FY2022 WBIF. Fiscal agent agreement amendment to allow the collaborative to apply for other funding.
 - Suggestion modify drafted language in the agreement from “Stearns County” to “Fiscal Agent”. The group agreed.



- Bill Becker motioned to approve the recommendation that the PC supports the amendment to the Fiscal agent agreement. This amended agreement needs to be signed by the original 5 signing members (Stearns County, Stearns SWCD, Sauk River WD, Douglas SWCD, Todd SWCD) in order to **supersede the current agreement and be able to** apply for this CRP incentives grant. The other 4 collaborative members are also encouraged to sign this amended fiscal agreement in order to be eligible for these funds. Seconded by Steve Notch. Motion Carried.
- The group agreed the new Fiscal Agent Agreement is effective once signed by the 5 origin signors. (Stearns County, Stearns SWCD, Sauk River WD, Douglas SWCD, Todd SWCD)
- **CRP Incentive Pilot Program**
 - **I cannot remember: Was there a motion and second to apply for the CRP Incentive funds?**

Focused Efforts in 2023

- **FY24-25 Biennium workplan:**
 - Subject to BWSR Board approval, Sauk partnership will receive \$1,212,865.00 per BWSR representative, B. Wozney. The next BWSR board meeting is scheduled in the days immediately following this PC/TAC meeting. It is possible, though unlikely that BWSR will change this amount. Work has paused on the next biennial workplan until BWSR approves the final budget.
- **Citizen Norms Survey:**
 - Roeschlein gave an overview of the final results of the citizen norms survey. The Education an Outreach Committed contracted with Moore Engineering, sent 5000 surveys to landowners within the watershed, based on the population sizes in each county within the watershed.
 - Survey purpose is to understand the watershed resource knowledge level of the residents.
 - Question about what purpose of gathering age demographics from survey.
 - Answer from Roeschlein and Jason W; to determine where/how to target education and outreach efforts.
 - Concern around inclusion/exclusion of different age demographics.
- **Getchell Creek:**

- Meetings to determine support are complete with landowners along the lower reaches of Getchell Creek, downstream of Getchell Lake. Seven out of nine targeted landowners are in support of the proposal to re-meander and/or two-stage ditch where best-fit.
- Getchell feasibility Study identified upper-reach storage/wetland sites and stream work in the lower reaches.
- The Getchell Creek Project team decided to pursue the lower stream work first, largely driven by landowners.
- Discussion of how storage work in the upper watershed is necessary to gain the positive results we are seeking with reduced sediment and nutrient transportation, and stream stability.
- The SRWD in partnership with Stearns SWCD, with CRP Incentives Pilot Program funding, will work to establish CREP-RIM easements along lower Getchell Creek.
- With the expanded footprint under permanent protection, OHF funds are the proposed funding source for this project, with hearings taking place on 8/30/2023 at the State Capitol. OHF funding has not yet been allocated to this project.
- The goal(s) of the project are to mimic nature to create a stable channel.

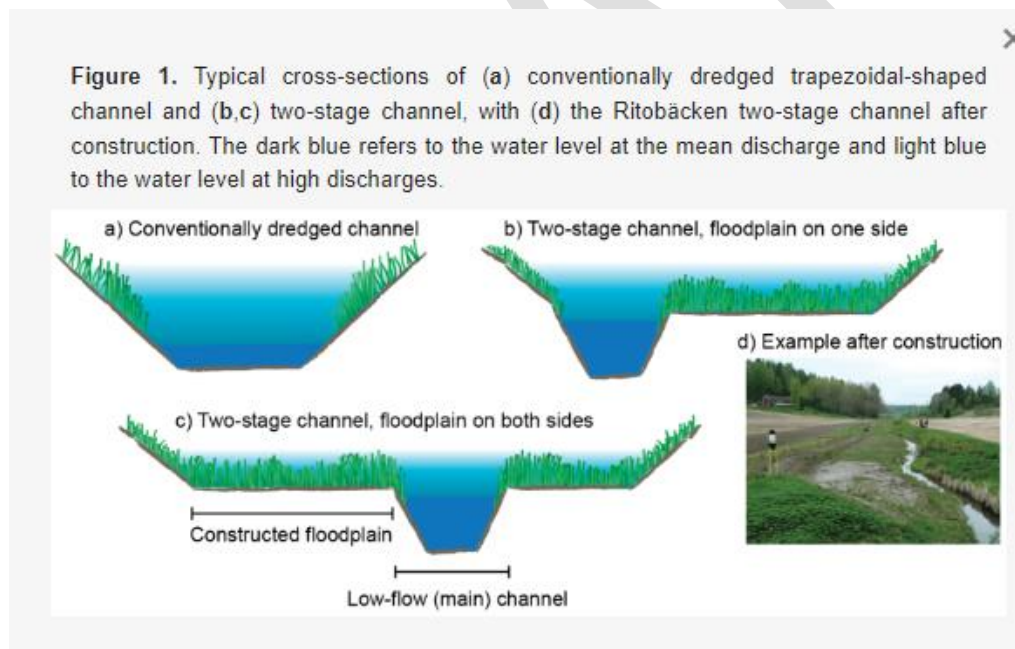


Image Source: Västilä, Kaisa, Sari Väisänen, Jari Koskiaho, Virpi Lehtoranta, Krister Karttunen, Mikko Kuussaari, Juha Järvelä, and Kauko Koikkalainen. 2021. "Agricultural Water Management Using Two-Stage Channels: Performance and Policy Recommendations Based on Northern European Experiences" *Sustainability* 13, no. 16: 9349. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13169349>



- **JD2/Osakis Alternatives Analysis:**
 - Crooked/Hanover Lake is a non-existent lake, drained by the JD2 system
 - Agreements are in place with the United States Army Corp of Engineers. Kick off meeting is scheduled for the Planning Assistance to States program. This study will pinpoint problematic locations of sediment and nutrient transportation and determine the best sites for capital improvements in both the JD2/Crooked Lake sub-watershed and the remaining uplands around Lake Osakis.
 - Questions and Discussion around the cleanout of the JD2 sediment ponds.
 - Discussion around history of Crooked Lake diversion from Long Prairie River to Lake Osakis and the Sauk River.

- **Next Meeting Date:** November 16th, 2023 at 1:00 at the Sauk River Watershed District Office.

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