



The regular meeting of the Becker Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors was held on Wednesday, April 15, 2015 in the Conference Room of the Ag Center Building located at 809 8th Street SE, Detroit Lakes, Minnesota.

Those present were Supervisors Tony Beck, Kathy Stenger, Jerome Flottesmesch, Travis Schauer and Eugene Pavelko. Others present include Becker County Commissioner Barry Nelson, District Administrator Peter Mead, Admin Assistant Jen Wentz, NRCS District Conservationist Ed Musielewicz, District Technician Ed Clem and Shoreland Specialist Marsha Watland.

Call to Order Chairperson Stenger called the meeting to order at 8:08 a.m.

Approval of March Meeting Minutes corrections as noted by board members.

Motion (Flottesmesch, Pavelko) to approve March meeting minutes as corrected. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

Financial Reports and Bills for Approval Peter reviewed the financial reports and bills for April.

Motion (Pavelko, Schauer) to approve March financial reports and bills for April. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

District Reports

District Conservationist – Ed Musielewicz

- Contracting for CSP. We received 36 applications and interviews are completed.
- Red River Basin Initiative has 8 approved contracts including sediment basins and grade stabilizations. Another 7 are pending. Obligating, ranking and scoring will continue thru April 24th.
- We have 12 obligated EQIP contracts which includes 2 Ag waste systems. Almost 80 contract applications have been received with the approval period and process being a hindrance.
- Cathee Pollman is the new NRCS State Conservationist. She begins at the end of April. She's originally from Oklahoma.
- Musielewicz will work with area staff to make sure Ms. Pollman maintains our Ultima position and extends the contract expiring at the end of September.
- Ed reviewed the Memo of Understanding between NRCS and the Soil & Water Conservation District. He pointed out the Civil Rights and EEO supplements that are strictly followed by staff in the office. Our internal and external customers can file a complaint if they feel staff has not followed CR/EEO policy set forth in the MOU. The "And Justice for All" poster provides information for filing a complaint.

District Administrator – Peter Mead

- AIS has been a huge time constraint for Peter and he appreciates the additional assistance from everyone in the office.
- First day into the field season we've already run into problems with vehicle needs. We hope to purchase a more fuel efficient model to supplement our field vehicles.
- Operations have been running smoothly with help from office staff.

- Seasonal technician position through WAE funds has been offered to a previous high school intern of the Districts, Brandon Dahring. He has accepted and is eager to get started.
- Wild Rice meeting attended last week with no major developments or concerns.
- Poling site funding from Buffalo-Red River Watershed District fell through for the large shoreland erosion control project.

Motion (Flottesch, Schauer) to approve administration purchase a vehicle for District use and at a cost of \$12,000 or less. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

Program Reports

WCA, Trees, Structural Practices – Ed Clem

- Tree sales are winding down and we've sold out of several varieties. We've tried to control excess trees this year a bit more than in the past.
- With the Poling site cancellation, we have about 700-800 trees placed back in our inventory.
- With 16,000 trees ordered this year, we have 2,400 left to sell.
- Trees will be delivered next week.
- Digging tile for sediment basins hasn't been productive with frost still evident.
- Gary Villiard and some of the Curt Nelson project will be completed before seeding and will coincide with tree delivery and planting.
- He received a WCA violation yesterday regarding Jon & Son's Disposal Services. Fill will be removed from a small area. This has been a minor issue that will be resolved soon.
- TEP meeting with BWSR and Army Corp of Engineers is raising concerns with the widening of Becker Co Hwy 14. Impacts recorded are being watched more closely than in the past. The state is required to replace those impacts. Counties and townships are required to report the maintenance issues. This becomes expensive. More credits will be used in order to delineate these wetlands. There are approximately 10 sites identified for wetland impacts which have grown from only 3 initially.
- The ball fields near Lake Park and LaBelle Lake involve a wetland issue. A solution with Buffalo-Red River Watershed District seems impossible in regards to restoring the lake by plugging a ditch or natural restoration. Wetland credits in this case offer no benefits to the project. Our office took some shots of the area, but short of moving the ball fields, there's not a practical method of resolving the issues.

Shoreland & Ag Inspector – Marsha Watland

- County Ag Inspector funding for local level of noxious weed control was passed through the Senate on Wednesday, April 8th.
- There have been no seed violations to report this spring which is good.
- Gravel pit inspections start the first week in May. In Cormorant Township, there is a gravel pit violation from zoning in regards to Rollag Hills Gravel Pit contracted to Knife River Corporation that mined area outside the gravel pit boundary. There is also a concern in bringing in noxious weeds to a clean area.
- Recreational trails and timber industry concerns – northeastern Becker Co remains a cause for concern and without Marty on staff, Marsha is waiting for her partnership with Natural Resource Management to take hold this year.
- Shoreland program has 17 site evaluations and 15 designs. Five installations have been set with help from the Conservation Corp.

- Water Festival is set for April 28th; she plans to utilize the high school intern for assistance. MDA has given out a number of native plant seeds. A rosette identification demonstration is planned for the festival.
- Community Ed class held in Frazee two evenings on April 23rd and 28th. Marsha will be instructing the public on native garden installations. Landowners should receive a good overview of what our office has to offer.
- She attended the Ice Ridge meeting held in Upper Cormorant in March by area watersheds, DNR, Zoning, etc. Permits are required by Zoning for removal or additions of earth or soil in Becker County. Shoreland ice damage can be repaired for the current year but fixing previous years become a bit more difficult and permitting is required.

Aquatic Invasive Species – Peter Mead

- Peter offered the position of AIS Coordinator to Carl Koenig. He has been a permanent level I and level II AIS inspector for West Otter Tail. He's a local resident and enjoys the outdoors and lakes in our area. He earned his Bachelor's degree in Missoula, MT with an emphasis on Natural Resources Policy.
- 21 applicants for the Level I Inspectors and Level II Decontaminators have been recommended for hire. Level I and Level II training will be held in the courthouse and outside in the parking lot next week.
- Lease updates – Wells Fargo won't accept our insurance policy. We currently use MCIT for all our insurance needs. Barry Nelson recommended possible space options at the County courthouse with the new Planning & Zoning Administrator, Eric Evenson-Marden who has extensive background in AIS.
- He's been fielding many phone calls from lake associations and the public regarding AIS.
- One of the two grant applications for additional AIS funding has been received by the County.
- COLA meeting attended last week laid out the general plans and budget needs for the program.

Adaptive Nitrogen Management and Irrigation Scheduler Program

Aaron Salo & Wade Salo, East Otter Tail SWCD

Irrigation Scheduler Program – Wade distributed materials and reviewed the irrigation scheduler program. It pertains to center pivot irrigation systems only and is based on how much water the crop uses and its water holding capacity. This is set-up to be a second opinion to the irrigation scheduler system. Soil profile holds a certain amount of water, plants require some and weather plays a factor as well. He checks soil moisture in every farmer's field for verification of the program constraints by checking three different locations and searching for the driest area. Afterwards, he offers the farmer a report of his findings. He reviewed the report with supervisors and staff of BSWCD. The report is given once per week, instructing the farmer of the need to water. They also receive a monthly and annual moisture report. This is a useful tool for the DNR as well. Currently, he's assisting one farmer in Becker County. Farmers are instructed to keep a good estimate of rain levels with rain gauge readings taken often. This information is passed onto him and is used in making his reports more accurate.

The fee is \$200 per field with additional fields offering a discount per field. This is paid at the end of the growing season.

He currently covers Wadena, Hubbard and Todd counties. The program has been established to control irrigation costs and to assist farmers with the best methods of ground water use in their fields. He would like to have the support of Becker SWCD to assist our area farmers with this program and its availability. He would be the point of contact with farmers that are interested, with all administrative

duties being handled by him. His contact name and number will be distributed to landowners by our office staff. We could also add his flyer into any District mailings or online advertising.

Irrigation Scheduler Program – Aaron distributed materials on the program that EOT offers which has been in existence since 1995. EOT has received calls from our landowners with interest in this program. The program was developed to help producers and allow them to become environmentally friendly. One weather station has been available in Perham with another 10 added in their network. They are working with MDA to find localized weather data via email and website.

Adaptive Ag program – 2011 brought a CWL grant to develop this concept centered around basal stem stalk corn nitrate test. The focus has been with corn acres only; gathering nitrogen management numbers from producers. It evaluates the total value of all nitrogen used. Late in the season they contract with aerial flight crews along with soils data allowing them to map several areas in the field and looking for deficiencies. Corn moves nitrogen and stores it in the stalk. Residuals left in the stalk are sampled and levels are determined. Ten samples are taken randomly for accuracy which produces 40 stalks from each field which are then numbered, bagged and overnighted for analysis. This offers a measure of sufficiency for stalk nitrate values. Annually, this information is bound and distributed to all that are involved in the program.

They are working with MDA to amend the work plan to include five fields of highly sensitive areas pulling 7-10 images and showing crop growth and thermal imagery for stress identification of crops. They are also working with Encirca Services, Pioneer showing crop growth coupled with weather data to offer nitrogen analysis. This would allow partnering with Pioneers extensive database.

Motion (Flottemesch, Schauer) to approve administration to participate in both of these programs for Becker County residents; allowing our staff to inform producers of the options available. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

Board took a short recess to enjoy a special treat – Conservation Kickoff & Omelet Bar Breakfast as well as celebration of Peter Mead's birthday.

Agreements and Contracts

Hubbard County AIS Inspection Agreement

Peter noted that Hubbard has offered to oversee the inspections in a two lakes area. This will provide DNR inspections on Two Inlets and Straight Lake. This will also include the opportunity for decontamination and inspections in the Park Rapids area.

Motion (Flottemesch, Pavelko) to authorize administration to partner with Hubbard County to offer decontamination and inspections at the two lakes noted above. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

2015 DNR AIS Prevention Grant Agreement

This provides for a \$4,000 grant from DNR which should be available in the coming weeks.

Motion (Beck, Pavelko) to partner in agreement with DNR for the AIS Prevention Grant. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

The following contracts have not been signed by landowners, but based on the completed and approved Plan of Action and contingent upon landowner signatures; they can be approved by our board through clarification from our Board Conservationist.

2014 State Cost Share Contracts for Approval

CS 14-14 Lezlee Franke, Shoreline Stabilization on Toad Lake. Total project cost estimate \$5,450 with state cost-share not to exceed \$2,725.

CS 14-15 Mary Seaberg, Shoreline Stabilization on Sugar Bush Lake. Total project cost estimate \$4,397 with state cost-share not to exceed \$2,199.

2015 State Cost Share Contracts for Approval

CS 15-1 Jennifer Bateman, Shoreline Stabilization on Two Inlets. Total project cost estimate \$3,627 with state cost-share not to exceed \$1,814.

CS 15-2 Jeremy and Sara Jennen, Shoreline Stabilization on Elbow Lake. Total project cost estimate \$7,510 with state cost-share not to exceed \$3,755.

CS 15-3 Jeremy and Sara Jennen, Rain Garden on Elbow Lake. Total project cost estimate \$3,974 with state cost-share not to exceed \$1,987.

The two Ag waste system set asides from 2015 State Cost-Share dollars will not be needed.

Motion (Flottesmesch, Schauer) to approve the above contracts based on the completed Plan of Action and contingent upon landowner signatures. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

2015 Clean Water Legacy Grant Contracts for Approval

CWL-1-WR, Dean Syverson Filter Strips & Incentive. Total project cost estimate \$43,289 with CRP funding of \$29,628 and Clean Water funding not to exceed \$22,319.

CWL-1-BR, Loren Jetvig Filter Strips & Incentive. Total project cost estimate \$60,737 with CRP funding of \$31,096 and Clean Water funding not to exceed \$29,640.

CWL-3-BR, Bruce Nelson, WASCBS. Total project cost estimate \$20,531 with EQIP funding of \$8,913 and Clean Water funding not to exceed \$9,565.

Motion (Beck, Pavelko) to approve the above noted Buffalo-Red and Wild Rice Clean Water grant project contracts. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

Other

Peter reviewed the grant program and guidelines for the two new 2015 competitive grants: Buffalo-Red River and South Branch Wild Rice. The complete program guidelines are noted below:

Two options are available to landowners/producers for the establishment of perennial vegetative buffers, filter strips or waterways.

1) CRP/CWL Buffer Incentive Program: With a minimum 10 year commitment, the NRCS and FSA will provide an average rental rate of \$129.00/acre on newly enrolled perennial buffers, filter strips and grassed waterways via the CRP and/or EQIP programs.

For eligible projects the SWCD will provide the additional necessary incentive from grant funds to provide a total of \$200.00/acre/yr (from all fund sources) for the implementation and maintenance of these vegetative practices. This incentive will be provided as a lump sum once establishment has been verified in the field. Incentives provided with CWL funds will not exceed \$150.00 an acre, and will be based on the required adequate width as determined by technicians.

2) CWL Working Lands Buffer Incentive Program: With a 10 year commitment producers/landowners not interested in or eligible for federal programs will be eligible for a \$60/acre/yr incentive for the establishment and maintenance of perennial buffers, filter strips or grassed waterways.

This option will allow restricted, delayed haying for management, allowing one cutting after the primary nesting season (May 1st – July 15th) at a minimum 4" cutting height, and require a minimum stubble height of 8" going into winter. This incentive will be provided as a lump sum once establishment has been verified in the field, and will be based on the required adequate width as determined by technicians.

Buffer Establishment:

For both programs full establishment and first year maintenance costs will be covered by the program using all available fund sources. Seed mixes will be specified by the SWCD and/or NRCS, and site preparation/seeding & first year maintenance can be contracted by the SWCD with a preferred vendor. Participants in the CRP program selecting this option will need to assign payments for establishment and first year's maintenance to the SWCD when contracts are signed.

Two levels of Cost-sharing assistance are available for structural erosion control practices.

1) Tier One: For Producers or Landowners implementing all recommended practices, all fund sources will be combined to provide 90% of estimated project costs.

2) Tier Two: Those implementing a majority of prescribed practices shall be eligible for up to 75% cost-sharing (from all fund sources) provided they are meeting tolerable soil loss for the field and can demonstrate a contribution to the overall pollution reduction goals for the project area.

Tolerable soil loss and pollution reduction goals will be evaluated by NRCS and SWCD staff using the Revised Universal Soil Loss Equation, Water Quality Decision Support System, BWSR Pollution reduction calculators and professional field observations.

Motion (Flottemesch, Schauer) to approve the above listed guidelines for the 2015 Competitive Clean Water grants. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

Claire Olson has been granted TAA from Dave Jones with NRCS for water and sediment control basins with a job class 1. She can approve anything that is 10 acres or less drainage area.

Motion (Beck, Flottemesch) to approve the TAA which has been delegated to Claire Olson. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

Board supervisors noted the following comments regarding District apparel – Administration shall amend or change personnel policy to include the updated yearly employee allowance previously noted in the February 2015 minutes. At their discretion, supervisors shall be allowed to purchase one new apparel item per year and at cost to the District. In regards to the new District logo, not previously approved by the board, transitions will take place slowly and based on personal preference.

Being no further business, motion (Beck, Schauer) to adjourn meeting at 10:56 a.m. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

Approved: Gene Pavelko, Becker SWCD Secretary Date: May 20, 2015