

Green Meadow Project Team

Regular Meeting

January 29, 2014

A meeting of the Green Meadow Project Team was held on Wednesday, January 29, 2014, at the Wild Rice Watershed District Office. Project Team Members in attendance included: Curt Johannsen, Wild Rice Watershed District Manager; Duane Erickson, Wild Rice Watershed District Manager; Mike Christiansen, Wild Rice Watershed District Manager; Shawnn Balstad, Natural Resources Conservation Service; Emily Siira, Department of Natural Resources; Tara Mercil, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency; Mark Christianson, Soil and Water Conservation District; Larry Puchalski, US Army Corps of Engineers; Brett Arne, Board of Water and Soil Resources; Steve Bommersbach, Norman County Commissioner; Diane Ista, Landowner; Dave Vilmo, Landowner; Mark Chisholm, Landowner. Others in attendance included: Chuck Fritz, International Water Institute; Henry Van Offelen, Department of Natural Resources; Jerry Bents, Houston Engineering; Kevin Ruud, Wild Rice Watershed District Administrator; Nathan Olson, Department of Natural Resources Fisheries; Jamison Wendel, Red River Fisheries Specialist; Brian Dwight, Board of Water and Soil Resources; Pat Downs, Red River Retention Authority; Jim Courneya, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, and Tara Jensen, Wild Rice Watershed District Bookkeeper.

At 12:00 pm, Fritz began the meeting with introductions followed by a brief review of the first project team meeting and establishing the goals for this second meeting of the Project Team. The following goals were established: approve/finalize the DRAFT Green Meadow Watershed Problem Statement, establish goals, and establish a range of possible alternatives.

Finalize and Approve Problem Statement

Engineer Bents displayed a Green Meadow problem map. Fritz, along with Engineer Bents, asked team members to provide additional information regarding private infrastructure that continually sees damage from flooding issues. Engineer Bents noted problem areas defined by Project Team members and will update the presented map to reflect this information. Fritz asked the Project Team if there were any other known private infrastructure problems that could be defined. Vilmo, Ista, and Chisholm stated that they would like to meet with other landowners to determine if other problem areas could be defined. The general consensus was for the three to meet with their constituents once Bents updated the information on the problem map to reflect areas defined in the Project Team meeting. Fritz asked agency representatives if they knew of any other areas of concern. Siira said that she will check public water work files to determine recent clean outs.

Fritz asked Project Team members to define agricultural land flooding and it was determined that the previous discussion covered agricultural land as well.

Van Offelen presented the Team with information regarding known damages to natural resources within the Green Meadow subwatershed. After reviewing maps it was determined

that areas with opportunities for natural resource projects and growth were contained on the eastern side of the Green Meadow subwatershed. It was determined that the stated problem statement for the natural resources was acceptable, with a correction to the fourth bullet item “Degraded soil health – reduced agricultural productivity and increased runoff and pollution/sedimentation on rivers and streams which stress exiting aquatic biota”. Balstad thought that this was two separate concerns rather than one overall problem.

Upon the review and discussion of the draft problem statement Fritz asked Project Team members if they felt that it correctly captured the essence of the problems within the Green Meadow subwatershed. All members were either in favor of or held a neutral stance in regards to the issue.

Goals

Fritz discussed three levels of goals that can be viewed for the Green Meadow subwatershed – Project Team goals, Watershed goals, and basin goals. The Project Team was informed that they could incorporate goals of the Watershed or Basin if desired but it was not required.

Engineer Bents presented the Red River Basin Commission goals which were established surrounding 13 primary principals following the flooding in 1997. Each watershed within the basin was asked to reduce peak flow by 20% on the mainstream of the Red River. Fritz asked the Project Team if they would like to work towards the basin goals for flood reduction in seeking alternatives. The Project Team acknowledged that a 20% peak flow reduction would not likely be obtained through projects within the subwatershed; however it was determined that it would be reasonable to work towards reducing peak flow by a smaller portion.

Engineer Bents presented the Wild Rice Watershed Goals regarding water quantity, water quality, and natural resources.

- Water Quantity – reduce or alleviate the damage caused by floodwaters, provide rural residence and community protection, reduce flood damages to transportation and public infrastructure, and reduce flooding on the Red River of the North
- Water Quality – maintain or improve water quality of all surface and groundwater resources, improve river and stream water quality, reduce erosion, and reduce sedimentation.
- Natural Resources – improve the condition of natural resources, address high-priority problems, and avoid and minimize adverse natural resource impacts.

Fritz asked the Project Team if they wanted to meet applicable goals set forth by the Watershed District. Balstad stated that by seeking to meet part of the basin goals there will be ancillary benefits to each government authority. It was decided by the Project Team that any alternative that was being sought would not make problems worse downstream and would be consistent with the overall watershed and basin goals. Siira added that the plans would need to be consistent with other local plans from a Department of Natural Resources perspective. Upon determination of the overall goal, Fritz asked the Project Team if they agreed with establishing local goals that would be consistent with overall watershed and basin goals. All members were either in favor of or neutral to this decision.

Local Goals

Fritz explained that in order to define a project, certain local goals must be met prior to finding acceptable strategies.

- Road Damages – A goal of reducing flood damages to transportation and other public infrastructure was set by the Project Team with all members either in favor of or neutral to the decision.
- Public Infrastructure – A goal of reducing the risk of overtopping, failure and flanking of the Green Meadow Dam was set by the Project Team with all members either in favor of or neutral to the decision.
- Private Infrastructure – A decision to group Private Infrastructure and Public Infrastructure together was decided upon by the Project Team.
- Channel and Bank Erosion – A goal of reducing channel bank erosion in sites identified on the problem map was set by the Project Team with all members either in favor of or neutral to the decision.

At this point project team members seemed at a loss asking for assistance developing generic local goals for each area that could be added to and finalized at a later time. The Project Team collectively asked the additional resources team to develop examples of local goals and present them at the next Project Team meeting. Fritz asked the Project Team as a whole if they all agreed that assistance with developing a starting point for local goals which could be customized as needed. All Project Team members were either in favor of or neutral to the decision to have the additional resources team develop a starting point for local goals dependent on the problem areas identified. Balstad offered to develop soil health goals to present at the next meeting.

Strategies and Alternatives

Engineer Bents presented the Project Team with information from Technical Paper 11, which is available in full on the Wild Rice Watershed District Website. This document developed Minnesota Flood Damage Reduction Work Group strategies and defined early, middle, and late areas of runoff in the Red River Basin. Strategies were classified according to their effect on Flood Damage Reduction as a whole dependent on the runoff time zone. Fritz advised the Project Team that they are able to review the document and determine which strategies would be of interest and which would be unacceptable. Van Offelen highlighted the areas that are looked at are reducing flood volume, increasing conveyance capacity, increasing temporary storage, and protection/avoidance.

Following the presentation of the above information a decision was made by the Project Team to convene for the time being, review the information presented and meet at a future time. Administrator Ruud will report the progress of the Project Team to the Board Managers at the next regular meeting. The additional resources team will work to update information that was decided upon today. Each representative will present information presented to their constituents and bring any recommendations to the next meeting.