

Green Meadow Project Team

Regular Meeting
December 17, 2014

A meeting of the Green Meadow Project Team was held on Wednesday, December 17, 2014, at the Wild Rice Watershed District (WRWD) Office. Project Team Members in attendance included: Duane Erickson, WRWD Manager; Mike Christiansen, WRWD Manager; Emily Siira, Department of Natural Resources (DNR); Mark Christianson, Soil and Water Conservation District; Tara Mercil, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency; Larry Puchalski, US Army Corps of Engineers; Dave Vilmo, Landowner; Mark Chisholm, Landowner; Brett Arne, Board of Water and Soil Resources. Others in attendance included: Chuck Fritz, International Water Institute Director; Henry Van Offelen, Department of Natural Resources; Jerry Bents, Houston Engineering; Kevin Ruud, WRWD Administrator; Nathan Olson, DNR; Pat Downs, Red River Retention Authority; and Tara Jensen, WRWD Bookkeeper. Project Team members who were absent included: Curt Johannsen, WRWD Manager; Shawnn Balstad, Natural Resources Conservation Service; Steve Bommersbach, Norman County Commissioner; and Diane Ista, Landowner.

Fritz began the meeting by reviewing the Project Team goals and summarizing the objectives and agenda for this meeting. He also reminded those in attendance of the expectations, ground rules, and roles and responsibilities of the Project Team process.

Fritz continued by reminding the Project Team to keep the goals and objectives in mind when determining which strategy or strategies they would like to present to the Board.

Engineer Bents reviewed ten projects locations and variations that were used in developing the seven strategies for consideration in meeting the goals and objectives of the Project Team. Van Offelen noted that in a previous meeting, the Project Team had eliminated Options 1 and 2 from further consideration because it was determined that they would not meet the goals and objectives set forth. Engineer Bents continued by presenting each option and displaying how the projects contained would affect the hydrographs at both the Green Meadow Dam and the outlet of the Green Meadow Subwatershed.

Fritz continued by displaying how each option and the projects contained within the options would meet various Flood Damage Reduction Goals, Natural Resource Enhancement Goals, and the overall composite goals of the Project Team. A ranking was assigned to each project and option according to how well an array of goals was met by implementing various strategies. From this ranking the additional resources team was able to produce a graph ranking of the options from most ideal to least. Fritz reminded the Project Team that although the rankings will show how well goals and objectives are met from a statistical standpoint, the Project Team must determine which Strategies would best meet the goals and objectives that they established. He also noted that it is not necessary to choose a specific option presented, or just one option to present to the board. They can recommend more than one option if they feel it is necessary.

Fritz asked for comments and suggestions from the Project Team Members. Mercil responded that she does have certain options that she feels are valuable from viewing their ability to meet various goals. Manager Erickson asked if the current Green Meadow Dam dikes would have to be heightened when extending the Dam. Engineer Bents stated that the height of the dikes would be slightly higher whether the Dam was expanded or it was left in the same footprint. He noted that significant construction would be necessary to make the structure sound as well as to allow for gate impoundment.

Fritz noted that along with the primary options that are being considered, various natural resource enhancement projects can be accomplished on a voluntary basis through the Natural Resource Conservation Office to better meet the Natural Resource Enhancement goals set forth. Siira noted that she felt that options that included on channel impoundments should be rated as less favorable, with an off channel impoundment being more favorable. Fritz noted that the impacts would be looked at later in the meeting. The current graphs simply show how well each option meets the goals and objectives set forth in comparison to other projects.

Van Offelen continued the meeting by showing environmental impacts that would occur at each of the ten project sites and how these would affect the seven strategy options that were developed. It was noted that none of the ten sites had major red flags showing that they would be unfeasible, however it was noted that the Upper Green Meadow Site 2 did have slight impacts to stream stability and uplands. Projects were ranked according to environmental impacts and the Project Team reviewed the information. Olson noted that when the scoring on the project locations was completed, the focus was based on habitat rather than permitting issues that may be present.

Fritz continued by detailing the project and option practicability based on a number of factors including land availability, total project cost, acre feet of storage, cost per acre foot of storage, public acceptance, and permitting.

Following a brief lunch break, the Project Team meeting continued with Fritz reminding the Team that at the beginning of the process it was determined that there are problems in the Upper Green Meadow Subwatershed and the problems present were severe enough to warrant action by the Wild Rice Watershed District. The goal of this meeting is to choose an option or options that are presented to the Board. If the Board decides to move forward with the process, Concurrence Point 3 would be completed using the information that is currently being reviewed in determining the option or options for consideration.

Vilmo raised concern surrounding the ability to obtain the property needed for the impoundment sites below the Green Meadow Dam noting that the locations noted would likely cause a direct impact to himself. He noted that he is unsure if the District would be able to pay him enough to get him to consider selling the property needed. Due to concerns presented by Vilmo, the practicability worksheet was adjusted accordingly. Siira assisted with adjusting the potential permitting issues with each project site and Vilmo assisted with adjusting the availability, social acceptance, and potential legal issues associated with each project location.

Puchalski noted that in completing some research there are potentially permitting issues at the site of the current dam, but the extent of the potential issues would require more analysis when the project locations are determined.

Vilmo and Chisholm noted that they would like to see option 5 presented to the Board for consideration. Mercil noted that she would like to see option 6 presented to the Board. Siira noted that due to the similarity between the two the Project Team could present the Board with option 6 and if the gate impoundment below the dam is not possible it would essentially turn into what is currently presented as option 5. While the Project Team is not getting as big of a gain as they could towards meeting the goals and objectives, at least some goals and objectives are still being met by doing something. Vilmo noted that current option 6 could be presented as a two phase project with phase one including the expansion and gating of the current Green Meadow Dam and the sites above the Dam and phase two including the gated impoundment below the Dam that would be dependent on Board and Landowner negotiations.

Manager Christensen asked if the sites that are being viewed for the impoundment below the Dam could potentially still be tillable once the impoundments are drained. Engineer Bents stated that has yet to be determined but is not ruled out. He also noted that the current impoundment site contains approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of a section of land. Its location can vary dependent on land availability.

It was decided that The Green Meadow Project Team recommends that the Wild Rice Watershed Board pursues Project Team "Option 6" in two phases. The first phase, which would be pursued, includes two gated impoundments above the existing Green Meadow Dam and expanding the current Green Meadow dam. The second phase, which would continue to be explored, includes an off channel preferred gated impoundment below the existing Green Meadow dam, and is dependent on practicability, landowner willingness, and the ability to meet the flood damage goals set forth by the Green Meadow Project Team.

All Project Team members were either in favor of or neutral to the recommendation presented.

Fritz concluded the Project Team meeting at 1:34 pm.