Appendix A
Comments and Responses

A2: Public Scoping Meeting Information
- Agenda
- Minutes
- Public Comments
Date: June 2, 2017

To: Landowners in South Branch Watershed

From: Kevin Ruud, Administrator

Re: Public Meeting Regarding Watershed Planning Effort

Notice of Public Meeting
Monday, June 12, 2017 at 1 p.m.
Felton Community Center
253 6th Street, Felton, MN
South Branch Watershed
Public & Agency Scoping
Wild Rice Watershed District (WRWD)

The WRWD will host a public meeting at the Community Center (253 6th Street) in Felton, MN, Monday, June 12 at 1:00 p.m. This public meeting is for Landowners located within the South Branch Watershed. The WRWD is proceeding as the Local Sponsoring Organization for completion of a NRCS Watershed Planning effort in the South Branch Watershed. The purpose of the meeting is to provide background of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). This information will be used to determine the scope of Watershed Planning activities within the South Branch Watershed. Input may be provided through oral comments at the meeting as well as through completion of a questionnaire. For those unable to attend the meeting, the questionnaire will be made available, along with presentation material from the meeting, at the WRWD web page following the public meeting. The WRWD website is listed below:

http://www.wildricewatershed.org/

Comments forms will be accepted for all for all forms postmarked on or before July 12, 2017. Completed comment forms can be mailed to the WRWD office at:
Wild Rice Watershed District
11 East 5th Avenue
Ada, MN 56510
Background

The Wild Rice Watershed District (WRWD) secured funding through the Red River Retention Authority for Watershed Planning under the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The RCPP funding was made available for watershed planning in the South Branch of the Wild Rice River Sub-Watershed and it is required to follow Public Law 83-566 requirements.

The Watershed Planning must also comply with the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) requirements. Tasks required for the NRCS Watershed Plan generally include: Identifying a Purpose and Need, Developing an Environmental Assessment, Identifying the Affected Environment (resource problems), Developing Alternatives, Identifying Environmental Consequences of the alternatives, determining a Preferred Alternative, and creating an overall Watershed Plan. Public participation will be a vital component throughout the entire planning process, beginning with this public meeting.

Purpose of Today’s Meeting

The initial step in NRCS Watershed Planning, as directed by NEPA, is to allow for input from all interested parties including federal, state, and local agencies and other interested groups or persons. Initial input will be focused on resource concerns in and adjacent to the South Branch of the Wild Rice River Sub-Watershed. In order to gather input on resource concerns, we would request that the attached comment form be completed and provided to the WRWD.

Identified Resource Concerns:

- **Flooding/Flood Damages** (i.e. agricultural effects from delayed planting, prevented planting, crop flood inundation, road damages, culvert/bridge damages, breakout flows, field erosion/deposition, floodplain management, etc.)
- **Water Quality/Erosion and Sedimentation** (water quality, water resources, soil resources, field erosion/deposition, channel erosion/deposition, etc.)
- **Wildlife and Habitat** (Fish and wildlife, wetlands, endangered and threatened species, invasive species, migratory birds, forest resources, etc.)
- **Other**

Please fill out the following information based on your priorities for the South Branch of the Wild Rice River Sub-Watershed.

Comment forms will be accepted for all forms postmarked on or before **July 12, 2017**.

Completed comment forms can be mailed to the WRWD office at:

**Wild Rice Watershed District**
115th Avenue East
Ada, MN 56510

Or via email to nikki@wildricewatershed.org
Name: 

Phone Number: 

Email Address: 

Mailing Address: 

Circle the most appropriate ranking for each concern listed below. Refer to the KEY for definitions of each ranking. Concerns where the degree of concern is not indicated will be considered a zero value (No Concern or Not Relevant).

**KEY:**
- 0 = No Concern or Not Relevant
- 1 = Minimal Concern
- 2 = Minor Concern
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Additional Comments:

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Wild Rice Watershed District

South Branch Sub-Watershed
Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)
Public Scoping Meeting

June 12, 2017
Public Scoping Meeting

OBJECTIVES

1. Overview - PL566 Planning process
2. Solicit Comments on the Resource Concerns
3. Inform Public of Future Steps
Public Scoping Meeting

AGENDA

1. Introduce Study Area
2. Public Law 566 Planning Process Overview
3. Watershed Setting and Methods for Obtaining Resource Concerns
4. Overview of Next Steps
5. Questions/Public Comment Period
Study Area

Wild Rice Watershed - 2080 sq. mi.
South Branch Sub-Watershed - 262 sq. mi.
Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPPP)

- 2014 Farm Bill
- Red River Retention Authority awarded $12M
- RRRA approved 20 Watershed Planning Efforts
  - 14 Minnesota, 6 North Dakota
- WRWD
  - South Branch, Green Meadow, and Moccassin Creek
INITIATE PLANNING
* Discuss purpose and need for project with sponsors/initiate study.

Step 1 - IDENTIFY PROBLEMS, OPPORTUNITIES & CONCERNS
* Identify the need for the proposed action (quantify, extent, magnitude, timing, frequency etc.)

Step 2 - DETERMINE OBJECTIVES
* Write purpose and need statement and write scope of plan-EA/EIS

Step 3 - INVENTORY RESOURCES
* Conduct detailed resource inventories and watershed assessment
* Economics, social effects, Archeological and historic resources
* Engineering/Geology/Support maps
* Document problems

Step 4 - ANALYZE RESOURCE DATA
* Geology, Hydrology & Hydraulics, Cultural, Economics and Social

Step 5 - FORMULATE ALTERNATIVES
* Develop reasonable alternatives, mitigation strategies and costs (Preliminary plans)

Step 6 - EVALUATE ALTERNATIVES
* Env. Resources, Geotechnical, Hydrology & Hydraulics, Economics, Significance of effects, ...

Step 7 - MAKE DECISIONS (EA/EIS, Public Involvement, ...)
RCPP Planning Process - NEPA

RCPP planning process will follow NEPA guidelines

* 40 CFR 1506.6 – Public Involvement
* Primary Goal
  * Ensure all interested and affected parties are aware of the proposed action

(a) "make diligent efforts to involve the public in preparing and implementing their NEPA procedures."
Why RCPP?

COST SHARE BREAKDOWN

70% NRCS

30% LOCAL
General Resource Concern Categories

* Flooding/Flood Damages (i.e. agricultural effects from delayed planting, prevented planting, crop flood inundation, road damages, culvert/bridge damages, breakout flows, field erosion/deposition, floodplain management, etc.)

* Water Quality/Erosion and Sedimentation (water quality, water resources, soil resources, field erosion/deposition, channel erosion/deposition, etc.)

* Wildlife and Habitat (Fish and wildlife, wetlands, endangered and threatened species, invasive species, migratory birds, forest resources, etc.)
Public Input/Concern Identification Process

- Resource Concerns Considered
- Local/State/Federal Agency Input
- WRWD Input
- Public Input
# Watershed Planning Timeline

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<th>1-3 Months</th>
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<td>Alternative Screening</td>
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<td>Scope EA</td>
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<td>Preliminary Alternative</td>
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<td>Preliminary Cultural Review</td>
<td>Alternatives</td>
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<td>Detailed Survey, Geotech, Design</td>
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Questions/Comments

Form Completion
Public Input

11 Sth Ave East · Ada MN 56510 · Phone (218) 784-5501 · Fax (218) 784-2459 · www.wildricewatershed.org

Public Meeting/Omemo Queue Comment Form
South Branch of the Wild Rice River
NRCS Watershed Plan
June 12, 2017

Background

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Identified Resource Concerns:

- Flooding/Flood Damage (i.e. agricultural effects from delayed planting, prevented planting, crop yield reductions, road damages, crops/bridge damages, breaching flows, field erosion/deposition, floodplain management, etc.)
- Water Quality/Runoff and Sedimentation (water quality, water resources, soil resources, field erosion/deposition, channel erosion/deposition, etc.)
- Wildlife and Habitat (fish and wildlife, wetlands, endangered and threatened species, invasive species, migratory birds, forest resources, etc.)
- Other

Please fill out the following information based on your priorities for the South Branch of the Wild Rice River Sub-Watershed.

Concerns forms will be accepted for all forms postmarked on or before July 13, 2017.
Completed concern forms can be mailed to the WRWD office at:
Wild Rice Watershed District
11 Sth Ave East
Ada, MN 56510
Or via email to: wildrice@wildricewatershed.org

Name: 
Phone Number: 
Email Address: 
Mailing Address:

Circle the most appropriate ranking for each concern listed below. Refer to the KEV for definitions of each ranking. Concern above the degree of concern is not indicated will be considered a zero value (No Concern or Not Relevant).

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Additional Comments:

Please describe any other concerns or priorities for the South Branch of the Wild Rice River Sub-Watershed.

Please provide any additional comments or feedback regarding the Watershed Planning process.

Or via email to: wildrice@wildricewatershed.org
Identified Resource Concerns:

- **Flooding/Flood Damages** (i.e. agricultural effects from delayed planting, prevented planting, crop flood inundation, road damages, culvert/bridge damages, breakout flows, field erosion/deposition, floodplain management, etc.)

- **Water Quality/Erosion and Sedimentation** (water quality, water resources, soil resources, field erosion/deposition, channel erosion/deposition, etc.)

- **Wildlife and Habitat** (Fish and wildlife, wetlands, endangered and threatened species, invasive species, migratory birds, forest resources, etc.)

- **Other**

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Instructions:

Please indicate the following items (if applicable):
- Your property location
- Specific areas of resource concerns, labeled with the resource concern (i.e. flooding, erosion, etc...)
- Any additional information that may be pertinent to watershed planning

Return completed map along with completed Comment Form to:
Wild Rice Watershed District
11 East 5th Avenue
Ada, MN 56510
Questions
Name: Darlene Wiger, Trustee. I attended the meeting on 6-12-17 at Follen.

Phone Number: 218-233-2474

Email Address: None

Mailing Address: 3433 - 29th St. So. #404 Moorhead, MN 56560

Circle the most appropriate ranking for each concern listed below. Refer to the KEY for definitions of each ranking. Concerns where the degree of concern is not indicated will be considered a zero value (No Concern or Not Relevant).

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**Concerns for Project Scoping:**

- Flooding/Flood Damages
  - No Concern: 0
  - Minimal Concern: 1
  - Moderate Concern: 2
  - Significant Concern: 4
  - Severe Concern: 5

- Water Quality/Erosion and Sedimentation
  - No Concern: 0
  - Minimal Concern: 1
  - Moderate Concern: 2
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  - Severe Concern: 5

- Wildlife and Habitat.... Fish ... and harm for other large animals
  - No Concern: 0
  - Minimal Concern: 1
  - Moderate Concern: 2
  - Significant Concern: 3
  - Severe Concern: 4

- Others (Please describe in comment section) Water
  - No Concern: 0
  - Minimal Concern: 1
  - Moderate Concern: 2
  - Significant Concern: 3
  - Severe Concern: 4

**Additional Comments:** The So. Branch of the Wild Rice runs through a forested area that is separated from farmstead and field land by a daily used trail and some rows of trees and brush. The floods created a larger river through erosion that continues to undercut so that part of the trail had to be made unusable. We were made to give up the trail in part probably 70 years ago. I do not know to what extent the erosion continues, and that is my greatest concern.

Wildlife: Northern Pike fishing was great until the last flood. Now, no fishing at all! I would like to see the fish back.

Water quality changes: I cannot answer about River water. We are planning to participate in the water quality test project that Clay Co. has sent out concerning well water.
Instructions:
Please indicate the following items (if applicable):
- Your property location
- Specific areas of resource concerns, labeled with the resource concern (i.e. flooding, erosion, etc...)
- Any additional information that may be pertinent to watershed planning

Return completed map along with completed Comment Form to:
Wild Rice Watershed District
11 East 9th Avenue
Ada, MN 56510
Name: MARK HARLEYS
Phone Number: 701-261-6374
Email Address: MLHARLEYS24@GMAIL.COM
Mailing Address: PO BOX 37, RIVER FALLS, WI 54022

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**Concerns for Project Scoping:**

- Flooding/Flood Damages
- Water Quality/Erosion and Sedimentation
- Wildlife and Habitat
- Others (Please describe in comment section)

Additional Comments:

- River is cutting the banks through the beach ridge and deposits sedimentation in the flat reaches. The river also expands the north bank in section 35 of Winchester, sending flow north to the watershed back, which then also dilutes into section 27 Winchester. These flows can impact several sections of land since flow are diverted around points, including the city of Crook.
- There are many large sandbar deposits in this portion of the river.
- There are two sharp bends in the river that act as an ice jam, then the river breaks out and runs cross-country.
Circled the most appropriate ranking for each concern listed below. Refer to the KEY for definitions of each ranking. Concerns where the degree of concern is not indicated will be considered a zero value (No Concern or Not Relevant).

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**Additional Comments:**

- Water backing up on Joyce Matson's land in 31 of home. Lack of sea & WRD project in Glen Township that did not provide drainage from more land. After removing existing ditches to make for water containment posts.
Instructions:
Please indicate the following items (if applicable):
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Return completed map along with completed Comment Form to:
Wild Rice Watershed District
11 East 5th Avenue
Ada, MN 56510

Wild Rice Watershed
South Branch Sub-Watershed
NRCS RCPP Watershed Planning
Public Comment Form

Rivers and Streams
South Branch Sub-Watershed
WRWD Boundary
City Limits
Township Boundary
County Boundary

Prepared By:
Houston Engineering Inc.
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Additional Comments:

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Name: Clay County Highway Department  
Phone Number: 218-299-5099  
Email Address: david.overbo@co.clay.mn.us  
Mailing Address: 2951 41 1/2 St So, Moorhead, MN 56569
Name: Ken D Visser
Phone Number: 784-4627
Email Address: kvisser@livelinks.net
Mailing Address: 1392 County Hwy 64, Ada, MI

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- 3 = Moderate Concern
- 4 = Significant Concern
- 5 = Severe Concern

**Concerns for Project Scoping:**

<table>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional Comments:

Silt in County ditches
Silt in Cook+Lihh
Instructions:
Please indicate the following items (if applicable):
• Your property location
• Specific areas of resource concerns, labeled with the resource concern (i.e., flooding, erosion, etc.)
• Any additional information that may be pertinent to watershed planning

Return completed map along with completed Comment Form to:
Wild Rice Watershed District
11 East 6th Avenue
Ada, MN 56510
Watershed Board,

Our board members came up with a few problem areas:

1. Ditch 18 should be completely ditched out.
2. Bigger culverts installed, so better flow when water is high.
3. Some culverts get or are plugged because of beaver or other debris.

Thank You,

Jeff Bates
Goose Prairie Chair

P.S.
We circled the past problem areas on the map.

RECEIVED
7/17/17
Dear Mr. Swenson:

First, please forgive the hand-written nature of this letter. The Clerk did not get this assignment until the Township meeting the night of July 18th. The records were searched through on the 17th, followed by a committee meeting in Twp, and a return home following the huge storm and a power outage. The power is still off.

The intent with this letter was to include a copy of a letter to the Watershed District from August of 2002 which details concerns about damage in the Twp from the South Branch-Willow River. So when power returns all copies will again possible that will be sent.

Briefly, the Hager Township Board believes it doesn't pay to identify small individual acres, since damage is extensive and widespread. Every landowner along the River has lost land to flooding. Well-established trees, crop land, pasture, appurtenant material, even a combine have been swept away.

In 1979-80, thousands of dollars, with the help of Federal Disaster Assistance Agency, were spent in bridge repairs (look like 2 bridges), culvert replacement, embankment stabilization, and road repairs, etc. This
was after damage from an unexpected 14" rain. Also that event caused the River to cut off an
other culvert directly through one landowner's
property.
In more recent times 1997, 2000, 2007, extensive damage was done by flooding - 8/97 there
was only one route out of Hagen Twp due to all the
rest of bridges and roads were washed out.
With the assistance of FEM A and the State of MN
tons of thousands of dollars have been spent in
repairs.
In 2007 Mr. Clark was given the task of
interviewing residents and landowners re: their
concerns about the River. To a person they all
believed that flooding activity was due to
uninhibited flooding of farm land which
sent waters rapidly at unnaturally to the
River. Until measures are taken to contain
water larger, before it gets to the River, a test stream
that feed the River, the problem will continue to
worsen. Each landowner along the South Branch
would appreciate help in preventing
more erosion of their property. The Hagen Township
Board would appreciate preventative measures
before water reaches the River.

Sincerely,
Angela Heath,
Hagen Township Clerk
P.S. Residents of Hagen Twp are currently increasingly concerned about center pivot irrigation drawing groundwater and taking river water that might at some point affect the water tables at their wells. And because do they have?
along the Wild Rice River South Branch District’s request for response to its 6-10-

ably voiced their concerns to the Hagen Board and its residents are now calling for action. The Watershed District intends to do a feasibility study. The time for study has long passed. The contributing factors to the problem have been identified and need to be dealt with. This letter will state the contributing factors and reasonable plans for their alleviation.

The Watershed District wants to place a dam on the South Branch of the Wild Rice River in Hagen Township. Again, as one voice, the Hagen Board and its residents on the river state emphatically that this plan will not work and will have dire consequences if built.

The Wild Rice South Branch was a peaceful river, a beautiful waterway lined with huge ancient oaks and cottonwoods. Residents who have lived here many decades, state that the river well handled the occasional inordinate rainfalls or heavy runoff of snow melt without changing its course. Newcomers believe this, as it is evident that the river’s high banks and well-established course was able to accommodate a significant rise in water. This is no longer the case. In past decades, and likely for centuries, it would take days before a rise in the river was noticed following a heavy rain. Now the rise occurs within hours. It exceeds the river’s capacity. And the effect is devastating; not only to the property in Hagen Township, but to land in the valley. The primary reason for this dramatic change is ditching.

In the ‘40s the Federal Government paid landowners to drain wetlands to convert them to farm acreage. This started a practice of drainage, installation of culverts, and ditching that allows the water to run off the land at great speed. Not only has the practice been
established, it has advanced to a sophisticated process with scrapers and lasers without respect for consequences or legal limits. The ditches are deeper than legal limits allow and they are done without permits. When permits are requested for bigger and bigger culverts and for more ditching they are granted without consideration for the effects downstream. Again, the effects are devastating - for Hagen residents, the integrity of the Wild Rice South Branch River, the landowners in the Ada and Borup areas and ultimately the people living along the Red River.

1) **The ditching has to stop! And violators need to be prosecuted.**
2) **Wetlands need to be re-established.** Previous ponds and swamp areas need to be turned into reservoirs and if landowners need to be reimbursed to do so, so be it.
3) **Ditches have to be returned to reasonable depths and to have some variation of terrain so that they provide some resistance to the flow of water.** Something as simple as hay bale barriers would slow the water.
4) **Some ditches need to be gated and at times of inordinate rainfall, the gates need to be closed and water held for a few hours until the river has the capacity to bear the flow.**
5) **The best dam system is to use existing roads and reinforce them at strategic points to hold back water, as was done in one spot in Hagen Township.**

*If these measures are not taken, the problem of flooding will only increase.*

In drought years in the future, these measures would also help retain needed moisture.

The cost of flooding has been tremendous in Hagen Township. The bridges and roads in Hagen have been washed out three times in 5 years. The flood of '97, called the flood of the Century, washed out all of the bridges and roads in Hagen. The recent flood exceeded that of '97. It was the worst ever in Hagen Township. Residents watched in horror as

one bridge was totally destroyed, as huge chunks of land were taken in an instant and as

water came out of the banks and raced across land tearing out roads and fields and leaving behind rocks, sand, trees and debris. Nothing like it was seen before.

The costs to Hagen Township for the last 3 floods were significant. They were partly reimbursed with FEMA funds. Helpful to our Township, but the cost is really born by all taxpayers. Now FEMA requests plans for prevention in all frequently flooded areas. Without the Watershed District’s responsible action in this matter, Hagen Township can only helplessly watch as flooding destroys more and more property and we again request assistance from FEMA.

The cost to landowners is incalculable and a nightmare for insurance claims and companies. Most often it is not reimbursed by insurance and the landowner is left in shock looking at the devastated property and wondering how to deal with it. And wondering how much property will be lost in the next flood. Because there will be another one unless action is taken.

Some people downstream, seeing all the trees blocking and putting pressure on bridges in their area, believe that someone should cut down all the trees that are ready to fall into the river. These were not trees that were waiting to fall into the river. These were long
established trees, monstrous oaks and cottonwoods that were living happily far back from the river. With each flooding we all watched in horror as enormous chunks of land 8' to 16' high and 25' to 50' wide were, in one motion, swept from the landscape. The noise of the trees being ripped out, roots and all, is tremendous and frightening and it is sickening to see the previously stately trees bobbing down the river like matchsticks. Residents also watched with horror and amazement as an island of land with trees standing upright was swept downstream. One farmer had a 47' bridge across the river. The river at the same point now is 200' wide. Nothing can stop this once the flooding is in motion. Nothing.

The Wild Rice South Branch runs through an area known as the ridge of old Lake Aggasiz. The ridge holds the rock and boulders brought in eons ago by glaciers. Hagen has many gravel pits in its jurisdiction. We are all familiar with rocks and boulders. Boulders as big as small cars have been swept away by the river and we have heard their fierce rumble as they are carried through our bridges. It takes huge equipment to remove these boulders from gravel pits. The river moves them with ease like they were styrofoam.

One area in Hagen acts as a natural dam for floodwaters. Because of the high bank on one side, low land on the other, and a road intersecting the river this area holds back a tremendous amount of water. But it cannot be contained. The river drops 108' in three miles from road 11 to road 27 in Hagen causing tremendous velocity in river flow. It is not possible to contain such force. When the river at that speed is held back in any way it forces its way elsewhere and churns its way through any barrier to continue its path. When it cannot move through the river channel it flows out of the banks and rushes across the land. It has to. A volume of water 1004' wide by 22' high (or more) falling over 100 feet has an unimaginable force. The bank stabilization project completed in Hagen to hold a “hundred year flood” came through this last flood with overflowing banks, and washed out rip rap. These are reasons we know a dam in Hagen will not work. It is not known how much volume flowed per second in this last flood, but if you were somehow able to hold that flow for even two hours in Hagen Township you would have a catastrophic results. In addition, a dam in Hagen would fill with boulders, rocks, sand and earth and fall in short order.

Ring dikes and bank stabilization projects, while helpful to selected landowners, do nothing to stop the source of the problem. They deal only with its consequences. Water retention and slowing its flow are imperative. The control of the Wild Rice South Branch needs to be done east of the city of Ulen. We think the residents of Ulen agree, when we see the damage that occurred there.

Each time heavy rains are forecast we all wait with apprehension wondering what damage will occur next. The Watershed District needs to make hard decisions and the decisions need to be made now. Action must be taken to resolve this problem.
The Hagen Board and its residents are willing to help with practical solutions. We believe, if we all do our part along the river, the Wild Rice River South Branch will return to being the peaceful river it once was.

Sincerely,

Hazel A. Hutton, Clerk

cc. Township Boards along the Wild Rice River South Branch, FEMA, local media and an atty

Janet E. Green
John Nodel
Susan Nodel
Harley L. Green

Barbara Shaw
Kordio J. Grant
Karen Fenn
Deb Pease
Daniel Braathen

Marilyn H. Green
Diane Green

Jennifer Green
Jean Matson
Joy Green
Terry Wright
Maren Wright

Carolyn
Elaine Haslerud

Kermit Lomas
Andrea Brown

Natalie Kronstad
Nora Brown
October 6, 2002

Hazel Hutton
18221 220th Street North
Ulen, MN 56585

Dear Ms. Hutton:

On behalf of the Wild Rice Watershed District (WRWD) Board of Managers this letter shall serve as a response to your August 2, 2002, letter. Our response is directed to your concerns as a citizen since we understand that the issues raised in your letter are not endorsed by the Hagen Township Board of Supervisors.

Back in January of 2002, Hagen Township residents met with the WRWD Board of Managers to voice concerns over erosion and flood related problems within the township. From that meeting it was decided to have Clay County Water Planning survey residents in Hagen and Ulen Townships to identify the extent of the damages and possible solutions, and it is our understanding that Clay County is in the process of completing the survey. Because the WRWD is responsible for addressing flood damage reduction measures and the Soil and Water Conservation District/Natural Resources Conservation Service are responsible for addressing erosion concerns, you will still need to work with Clay County on your erosion-related damages.

Your letter indicated a desire to get right to work, eliminating planning and/or studies to implement proposed projects. The Board of Managers also wants to begin work as soon as possible, but must proceed under applicable Minnesota law. Before a major project is implemented, the district is required to develop a revised “watershed management plan.”

The various facets of a water management project as identified in the watershed management plan are then submitted to the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (MNBWSR) for its review and comments. The chances of favorable consideration by the MNBWSR are increased with proper planning/studies. Accordingly, such planning/studies become imperative. The preliminary estimate for the first phase of implementing the contemplated flood damage reduction projects is in excess of $56 million. Because of the high cost, federal funding assistance is necessary to implement any such projects and is the reason the Army Corps of Engineers feasibility study is necessary.

Another option property owners have is to petition for projects under Minn. Stat. 103D.701, which would require the necessary signatures on a petition to the watershed district to implement specific project(s), as well as obtaining bonding authority. The considerable estimated cost of flood damage reduction projects makes such a private petition process unlikely.

Your letter indicates that the primary reason for the flooding in Hagen Township is drainage. While the WRWD Board of Managers agrees that drainage is a problem in the township, they also recognize other factors that contribute to potential floods, including, but not limited to, topography, land use, weather patterns, rainfall and size of the watershed. The presence or absence of any of these factors can dramatically change the character of a particular flood.
Public Scoping Meeting/Open House Comment Form

South Branch of the Wild Rice River
NRCS Watershed Plan
June 12, 2017

Background

The Wild Rice Watershed District (WRWD) secured funding through the Red River Retention Authority for Watershed Planning under the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCP), administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The RCPP funding was made available for watershed planning in the South Branch of the Wild Rice River Sub-Watershed and is required to follow Public Law 83-566 requirements.

The Watershed Planning must also comply with the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) requirements. Tasks required for the NRCS Watershed Plan generally include: Identifying a Purpose and Need, Developing an Environmental Assessment, Identifying the Affected Environment (resource problems), Developing Alternatives, Identifying Environmental Consequences of the alternatives, determining a Preferred Alternative, and creating an overall Watershed Plan. Public participation will be a vital component throughout the entire planning process, beginning with this public meeting.

Purpose of Today’s Meeting

The initial step in NRCS Watershed Planning, as directed by NEPA, is to allow for input from all interested parties including federal, state, and local agencies and other interested groups or persons. Initial input will be focused on resource concerns in and adjacent to the South Branch of the Wild Rice River Sub-Watershed. In order to gather input on resource concerns, we would request that the attached comment form be completed and provided to the WRWD.

Identified Resource Concerns:

- **Floodling/Flood Damages** (i.e. agricultural) effects from delayed planting, prevented planting, crop flood inundation, road damages, culvert/bridge damages, breakout flows, field erosion/deposition, floodplain management, etc.)

- **Water Quality/Erosion and Sedimentation** (water quality, water resources, soil resources, field erosion/deposition, channel erosion/deposition, etc.)

- **Wildlife and Habitat** (Fish and wildlife, wetlands, endangered and threatened species, invasive species, migratory birds, forest resources, etc.)

- **Other**

Please fill out the following information based on your priorities for the South Branch of the Wild Rice River Sub-Watershed.

Comment forms will be accepted for all forms postmarked on or before **July 12, 2017**.

Completed comment forms can be mailed to the WRWD office at:

Wild Rice Watershed District
11 5th Avenue East
Ada, MN 56510

Or via email to nikki@wildricewatershed.org
Name: GREG MASTILOER / MnDOT

Phone Number: 218-846-7958

Email Address: GREG.MASTILOER@STATE.MN.US

Mailing Address: 1090 US HWY 10 WEST DAVENPORT MN 52801

Circle the most appropriate ranking for each concern listed below. Refer to the KEY for definitions of each ranking. Concerns where the degree of concern is not indicated will be considered a zero value (No Concern or Not Relevant).

**KEY:**
- 0 = No Concern or Not Relevant
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**Concerns for Project Scoping:**

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Additional Comments: STREAM BANK EROSION AROUND TH 32 NEAR ULEN.
Instructions:
Please indicate the following items (if applicable):
- Your property location
- Specific areas of resource concerns, labeled with the resource concern (i.e. flooding, erosion, etc.)
- Any additional information that may be pertinent to watershed planning

Return completed map along with completed Comment Form to:
Wild Rice Watershed District
11 East 5th Avenue
Ada, MN 56510
June 20, 2017

RE: South Branch of the Wild Rice River

Dear Township Chair:

The Wild Rice Watershed District (WRWD) secured funding through the Red River Retention Authority for Watershed Planning under the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The RCPP funding was made available for watershed planning in the South Branch of the Wild Rice River Sub-Watershed and it is required to follow Public Law 83-566 requirements.

The Watershed Planning must also comply with the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) requirements. Tasks required for the NRCS Watershed Plan generally include: Identifying a Purpose and Need, Developing an Environmental Assessment, Identifying the Affected Environment (resource problems), Developing Alternatives, Identifying Environmental Consequences of the alternatives, determining a Preferred Alternative, and creating an overall Watershed Plan. Public participation will be a vital component throughout the entire planning process.

We are currently working on gathering information regarding problem areas in the South Branch Sub-Watershed area and would like your input. Attached is a map of your township that lies within the South Branch Sub-Watershed. Please take a few minutes of your time to mark the areas on the map where and what type of damages have occurred over the years. This information will be used to determine the scope of Watershed Planning activities within the South Branch Sub-Watershed. You can return the information using the enclosed envelope, must be postmarked on or before July 12, 2017 to be accepted.

We appreciate your help in this matter. If you have any questions feel free to give us a call at 218-784-5501.

Best Regards,

Nikki Swenson
Nikki Swenson
Administrative Assistant
where water has washed over the grade or washed the road out.
Name: Ken D Visser
Phone Number: 784-4027
Email Address: kvisser@live.com
Mailing Address: 1792 County Hwy C, Ada, MI

Circle the most appropriate ranking for each concern listed below. Refer to the KEY for definitions of each ranking. Concerns where the degree of concern is not indicated will be considered a zero value (No Concern or Not Relevant).

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Concerns for Project Scoping:

- Flooding/Flood Damage
- Water Quality/Erosion and Sedimentation
- Wildlife and Habitat
- Others (Please describe in comment section)

No Concern | Severe Concern
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0 1 2 3 4 5
0 1 2 3 4 5
0 1 2 3 4 5
0 1 2 3 4 5

Additional Comments:

Silt in County ditches
Silt in Codfish
Wild Rice Watershed
South Branch Sub-Watershed
NRCS RCPP Watershed Planning
Public Comment Form

Instructions:
Please indicate the following items (if applicable):
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- Any additional information that may be pertinent to watershed planning

Return completed map along with completed Comment Form to:
Wild Rice Watershed District
11 East 5th Avenue
Ada, MN 56510

Prepared By:
Houston Engineering Inc.
To: Jerry Bents
Cc: Kevin Ruud; Tara Jensen; Nikki Swenson
Subject: South Branch comments

Jerred Jirava called and would like to add these comments as the Riceville Township Chair:

The township would like to see continued encouragement in working with NRCS and letting farmers install retention areas. Possibly helping farmers with part of financial end of installing the retention structures as it benefits more than just the farmer, saves the Township from having to rebuild roads and ditches, if there is money for projects. Retention structures have already helped some areas and they would like to see more of that.

Riceville Township
Jerred Jirava

Nikki Swenson
Administrative Assistant
nikki@wildricewatershed.org
11 5th Avenue East
Ada, MN 56510
218.784.5501
Name: Clay County Highway Department
Phone Number: 218-299-5099
Email Address: david.overbo@co.clay.mn.us
Mailing Address: 2951 41 1/2 St So. Moorhead, MN 56569

Circle the most appropriate ranking for each concern listed below. Refer to the KEY for definitions of each ranking. Concerns where the degree of concern is not indicated will be considered a zero value (No Concern or Not Relevant).

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- Flooding/Flood Damages
  - No Concern: 0
  - Minimal Concern: 1
  - Severe Concern: 5

- Water Quality/Erosion and Sedimentation
  - No Concern: 0
  - Minimal Concern: 1
  - Severe Concern: 5

- Wildlife and Habitat
  - No Concern: 0
  - Minimal Concern: 1
  - Severe Concern: 5

- Others (Please describe in comment section)
  - No Concern: 0
  - Minimal Concern: 1
  - Severe Concern: 5

Additional Comments:

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Mr. Philip Matson  
13531 210th St. N.  
Ulen, MN 56585

Phone Number: 1-218-594-8706

Email Address: ____________________________

Mailing Address: 13531 210th St N  Ulen, MN 56585

Circle the most appropriate ranking for each concern listed below. Refer to the KEY for definitions of each ranking. Concerns where the degree of concern is not indicated will be considered a zero value (No Concern or Not Relevant).

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- Flooding/Flood Damages: ......................................................0 1 2 3 4 5
- Water Quality/Erosion and Sedimentation: ........................................0 1 2 3 4 5
- Wildlife and Habitat: ..............................................................0 1 2 3 4 5
- Others (Please describe in comment section): ........................................0 1 2 3 4 5

Additional Comments: Water backing up on Joyce Matson's

Load in 31 of Home Lake from Sec 4 WRP

Project in Ulen Township that did not provide

drainage from main land after removing existing
ditch to make for water containment pond.

[Signature]
Instructions:
Please indicate the following items (if applicable):
- Your property location
- Specific areas of resource concerns, labeled with the resource concern (i.e. flooding, erosion, etc...)
- Any additional information that may be pertinent to watershed planning

Return completed map along with completed Comment Form to:
Wild Rice Watershed District
11 East 5th Avenue
Ada, MN 56510

---

Wild Rice Watershed
South Branch Sub-Watershed
NRCS RCPP Watershed Planning
Public Comment Form

Rivers and Streams
South Branch Sub-Watershed
WRWD Boundary
City Limits
Township Boundary
County Boundary

Prepared By: Houston Engineering Inc.
Name: Darlene Wiger, Trustee I attended the meeting on 6-12-17 at Fenton.

Phone Number: 218-233-2474

Email Address: None

Mailing Address: 3433 - 28th St. So. #604 Moorhead, MN 56560

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Additional Comments: The So. Branch of the Wild Rice runs through a forested area that is separated from farmstead and fieldland by a daily used trail and some rows of trees and brush. The floods created a larger river through erosion that continues to undercut so that part of the trail had to be made unusable. We were made to give up the trail in part probably 10 yrs. ago. I do not know to what extent the erosion continues, and that is my greatest concern.

Wildlife: Northern Pike fishing was great until the last flood. Now, no fishing at all! I would like to see the fish back.

Water quality changes: I cannot answer about River water. We are planning to participate in the water quality test project that Clay Co. has sent out concerning well water.
Name: **MARK HARLESS**

Phone Number: **701-261-6374**

Email Address: **MLHARLESS29@GMAIL.COM**

Mailing Address: **PO BOX 37 BOXFORD, MA 01925**

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</tbody>
</table>

**Additional Comments:**

RIVER IS CUTTING THE BANKS THROUGH THE BEACH RIDE, AND DEPOSITS SEDIMENTATION IN THE FLAT REACHES BY FLOOD. THE RIVER ALSO ENHANCED THE NORTH BANK IN SECTION 35 OF WINDERMERE, SENDING FLOW NORTH TO THE WATERSHED BACK, WHICH THEN ALSO DRAINED INTO SECTION 27 WINDERMERE. THESE FLOWS CAN IMPACT SEVERAL SECTIONS OF LAND, SINO FLOWS HAVE DREDGED AROUND PEBBLES, INCLUDING THE CITY OF BOXFORD.

**There are many large sandbar deposits in this section of the river.**

**There are two sharp bends in the river that are prone to ice jams.**

**Then the river breaks out and runs cross-country.**
Instructions:
Please indicate the following items (if applicable):
- Your property location
- Specific areas of resource concerns, labeled with the resource concern (i.e. flooding, erosion, etc...)
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Return completed map along with completed Comment Form to:
Wild Rice Watershed District
11 East 5th Avenue
Ada, MN 56510
Public Scoping Meeting/Open House Comment Form
South Branch of the Wild Rice River
NRCS Watershed Plan
June 12, 2017

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11 5th Avenue East
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11 5th Avenue East
Ada, MN 56510

Or via email to nikki@wildricewatershed.org
Name: David Christensen

Phone Number: 218-596-8385

Email Address: 

Mailing Address: 27070 - 190th Ave N. Oakdale, MN 55128

Circle the most appropriate ranking for each concern listed below. Refer to the KEY for definitions of each ranking. Concerns where the degree of concern is not indicated will be considered a zero value (No Concern or Not Relevant).

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South Branch of the Wild Rice River 
NRCS Watershed Plan 
June 12, 2017

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Wild Rice Watershed District  
11 5th Avenue East  
Ada, MN 56510

Or via email to nikki@wildricewatershed.org
Name: Tim Weber

Phone Number: 

Email Address: 

Mailing Address: 

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Additional Comments: Excessive sediment deposit

road flooding
Instructions:
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Ada, MN 56510

Wild Rice Watershed
South Branch Sub-Watershed
NRCS RCPP Watershed Planning
Public Comment Form

- Rivers and Streams
- City Limits
- South Branch Sub-Watershed
- Township Boundary
- WRWD Boundary
- County Boundary

Prepared By:
Houston Engineering Inc.
Name: R. Smith
Phone Number: 701-361-1094
Email Address: RMsmith@GEO.COM
Mailing Address: 26706 190 AVE NW

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Additional Comments: I like the new attitude of the board. Listen to the people first, not shove unwanted project down our throats. Think for listening.
Name: Kenneth MaGon
Phone Number: 218-597-8539
Email Address: 
Mailing Address: 1063 360th S, Twin Valley, MN

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Additional Comments:
Water from WRP Product into section 31 Township
Silt is backing up on my mother land in section 31 Home Lake
Public Scoping Meeting/Open House Comment Form
South Branch of the Wild Rice River
NRCS Watershed Plan
June 12, 2017

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11 5th Avenue East
Ada, MN 56510

Or via email to nikki@wildricewatershed.org
Name: Daryl J. Moore  
Phone Number: 201-221-2335  
Email Address: daryl.mjore@wstate.edu  
Mailing Address: 1007 County Road 144, N.E.  

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Ada, MN 56510

Or via email to gkkir@wildricewatershed.org
Name: **Kelly Schmitz**
Phone Number: **218-596-8857**
Email Address:
Mailing Address: **Ulen, MN 56710 3rd Ave. N**

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Or via email to njkkid@wildricewatershed.org
**Name:** Dean Matson  
**Phone Number:** (218) 494-3492  
**Mailing Address:** 18162 210th St. N. utens, MN 56585

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**Additional Comments:**  
I’ve owned my 80 since 1970.  I’ve watched the river decline year by year. Erosion has been bad and the beautiful river has been changed by precision up stream. Most fish are gone and water quality has changed.
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South Branch Sub-Watershed
NRCS RCPP Watershed Planning
Public Comment Form

Rivers and Streams
City Limits
South Branch Sub-Watershed
Township Boundary
WRWD Boundary
County Boundary

Prepared By:
Houston
Engineering Inc.
Watershed Board,

Our board members came up with a few problem areas.

1. Ditch 18 should be completely ditched out.
2. Bigger culverts installed, so better flow when water is high.
3. Some culverts get or are plugged because of beaver or other debris.

Thank you,
Jeff Bates
Gouge Prairie Chair

P.S.
We circled the past problem areas on the map.
July 12, 2017
RE: SOUTH BRANCH- WILLOW RICE RIVER

Dear Ms Swenson:

First, please forgive the hand-written nature of this letter. The Clerk did not get this assignment until the Twp Board meeting the night of July 10th. Twp records were searched through on the 11th, followed by 2 committee meetings in Twp; and on return home following the huge storm found a power outage. The power is still off.

The intent with this letter was to include a copy of a letter to the Watertown District from August 4, 2002 which details concerns about damage in the Twp from the South Branch-Willow Rice River. So when power returns ad copying it again possible that will be sent.

Briefly the Hoagey Township Board believes it doesn't pay to identify small individual acreage, since damage is extensive and widespread. Every landscape along the River has lost land to flooding. Well established trees, crop land, pasture, aggregate material, even a combine have been swept away.

In 1974-80 thousands of dollars, with the help of Federal Disaster Assistance Agency, were spent in bridge repair (looks like 1 bridge) culvert replacement, embankment stabilization, and road repairs, etc. This
was after damages from an unexpected 14" rain. 
Also that event caused the River to cut off an 
alow as plough directly through one landowner
property.
In more recent time, 1997, 2000, 2007, 
extensive damage was done by flooding - 2007 there
was only one route out of Hagen Twp due to all other
part of bridges and roads were washed out.
With the assistance of F.E.A.R and the State of M.N.
40 of thousands of dollars have been spent in
Replies.
In 2002 the Clerk was given the task of
interviewing residents and landowners re: their
concerns about the River. To a person they all
believed that flooding activity was due to
uninhibited ditching of farm land which
sent water rapidly and unnaturally to the
River. Until measures are taken to contain
Water larger, before it get to the River, a test stream
that feed the river, this problem will continue to
worsen. Each landowner along the South Bank -
Wild Rice River would appreciate help in preventing
more erosion of their property. Re Hagen Township
Board would appreciate prevent measures
before water reaches the River.

Sincerely,

Heidi Heath
Hagen Township Clerk
P.S. Residents of Hagen Town are currently increasingly concerned about center pivot irrigation drawing ground water and taking river water that might at some point affect the water they draw from their wells. What because do they have?
Hagen Township  
18221 220th Street North  
Ulen, MN 56585  

Todd Peterson, Chairman  
Hazel A. Hutton, Clerk

August 2, 2002.

Jerry A. Bennett, District Administrator  
Wild Rice Watershed District  
11 East 5th Avenue  
Ada, MN 56510

Dear Mr. Bennett:

The Board of Hagen Township and its residents along the Wild Rice River South Branch speak with one voice regarding the Watershed District’s request for response to its 6-10-02 memorandum.

The Hagen Board and its residents have collectively voiced their concerns to the Watershed District in the past. No solution resulted. With the recent damage due to flooding and the immensity of the problem, the Hagen Board and its residents are now calling for action. The Watershed District intends to do a feasibility study. The time for study has long passed. The contributing factors to the problem have been identified and need to be dealt with. This letter will state the contributing factors and reasonable plans for their alleviation.

The Watershed District wants to place a dam on the South Branch of the Wild Rice River in Hagen Township. Again, as one voice, the Hagen Board and its residents on the river state emphatically that this plan will not work and will have dire consequences if built.

The Wild Rice South Branch was a peaceful river, a beautiful waterway lined with huge ancient oaks and cottonwoods. Residents who have lived here many decades, state that the river well handled the occasional inordinate rainfalls or heavy runoff of snow melt without changing its course. Newcomers believe this, as it is evident that the river’s high banks and well-established course was able to accommodate a significant rise in water. This is no longer the case. In past decades, and likely for centuries, it would take days before a rise in the river was noticed following a heavy rain. Now the rise occurs within hours. It exceeds the river’s capacity. And the effect is devastating; not only to the property in Hagen Township, but to land in the valley. The primary reason for this dramatic change is ditching.

In the ‘40s the Federal Government paid landowners to drain wetlands to convert them to farm acreage. This started a practice of drainage, installation of culverts, and ditching that allows the water to run off the land at great speed. Not only has the practice been
established, it has advanced to a sophisticated process with scrapers and lasers without respect for consequences or legal limits. The ditches are deeper than legal limits allow and they are done without permits. When permits are requested for bigger and bigger culverts and for more ditching they are granted without consideration for the effects downstream. Again, the effects are devastating - for Hagen residents, the integrity of the Wild Rice South Branch River, the landowners in the Ada and Borup areas and ultimately the people living along the Red River.

1) The ditching has to stop! And violators need to be prosecuted.
2) Wetlands need to be re-established. Previous ponds and swamp areas need to be turned into reservoirs and if landowners need to be reimbursed to do so, so be it.
3) Ditches have to be returned to reasonable depths and to have some variation of terrain so that they provide some resistance to the flow of water. Something as simple as hay bale barriers would slow the water.
4) Some ditches need to be gated and at times of inordinate rainfall, the gates need to be closed and water held for a few hours until the river has the capacity to bear the flow.
5) The best dam system is to use existing roads and reinforce them at strategic points to hold back water, as was done in one spot in Hagen Township.

If these measures are not taken, the problem of flooding will only increase. In drought years in the future, these measures would also help retain needed moisture.

The cost of flooding has been tremendous in Hagen Township. The bridges and roads in Hagen have been washed out three times in 5 years. The flood of ’97, called the flood of the Century, washed out all of the bridges and roads in Hagen. The recent flood exceeded that of ’97. It was the worst ever in Hagen Township. Residents watched in horror as one bridge was totally destroyed, as huge chunks of land were taken in an instant and as water came out of the banks and raced across land tearing out roads and fields and leaving behind rocks, sand, trees and debris. Nothing like it was seen before.

The costs to Hagen Township for the last 3 floods were significant. They were partly reimbursed with FEMA funds. Helpful to our Township, but the cost is really born by all taxpayers. Now FEMA requests plans for prevention in all frequently flooded areas. Without the Watershed District’s responsible action in this matter, Hagen Township can only helplessly watch as flooding destroys more and more property and we again request assistance from FEMA.

The cost to landowners is incalculable and a nightmare for insurance claims and companies. Most often it is not reimbursed by insurance and the landowner is left in shock looking at the devastated property and wondering how to deal with it. And wondering how much property will be lost in the next flood. Because there will be another one unless action is taken.

Some people downstream, seeing all the trees blocking and putting pressure on bridges in their area, believe that someone should cut down all the trees that are ready to fall into the river. These were not trees that were waiting to fall into the river. These were long
established trees, monstrous oaks and cottonwoods that were living happily far back from
the river. With each flooding we all watched in horror as enormous chunks of land 8' to
16' high and 25' to 50' wide were, in one motion, swept from the landscape. The noise
of the trees being ripped out, roots and all, is tremendous and frightening and it is
sickening to see the previously stately trees bobbing down the river like matchsticks.
Residents also watched with horror and amazement as an island of land with trees
standing upright was swept downstream. One farmer had a 47' bridge across the river.
The river at the same point now is 200' wide. Nothing can stop this once the flooding is
in motion. Nothing.

The Wild Rice South Branch runs through an area known as the ridge of old Lake
Aggasiz. The ridge holds the rock and boulders brought in eons ago by glaciers. Hagen
has many gravel pits in its jurisdiction. We are all familiar with rocks and boulders.
Boulders as big as small cars have been swept away by the river and we have heard their
fierce rumble as they are carried through our bridges. It takes huge equipment to remove
these boulders from gravel pits. The river moves them with ease like they were
styrofoam.

One area in Hagen acts as a natural dam for floodwaters. Because of the high bank on
one side, low land on the other, and a road intersecting the river this area holds back a
tremendous amount of water. But it cannot be contained. The river drops 108' in three
miles from road 11 to road 27 in Hagen causing tremendous velocity in river flow. It is
not possible to contain such force. When the river at that speed is held back in any way it
forces its way elsewhere and churns its way through any barrier to continue its path.
When it cannot move through the river channel it flows out of the banks and rushes
across the land. It has to. A volume of water 100+1 wide by 22' high (or more) falling
over 100 feet has an unimaginable force. The bank stabilization project completed in
Hagen to hold a “hundred year flood” came through this last flood with overflowing
banks, and washed out rip rap. These are reasons we know a dam in Hagen will not
work. It is not known how much volume flowed per second in this last flood, but if you
were somehow able to hold that flow for even two hours in Hagen Township you would
have a catastrophic results. In addition, a dam in Hagen would fill with boulders, rocks,
sand and earth and fail in short order.

Ring diles and bank stabilization projects, while helpful to selected landowners, do
nothing to stop the source of the problem. They deal only with its consequences. Water
retention and slowing its flow are imperative.

The control of the Wild Rice South Branch needs to be done east of the city of Ulen.
We think the residents of Ulen agree, when we see the damage that occurred there.

Each time heavy rains are forecast we all wait with apprehension wondering what damage
will occur next. The Watershed District needs to make hard decisions and the decisions
need to be made now. Action must be taken to resolve this problem.
The Hagen Board and its residents are willing to help with practical solutions. We believe, if we all do our part along the river, the Wild Rice River South Branch will return to being the peaceful river it once was.

Sincerely,

Hazel A. Hutton, Clerk

cc. Township Boards along the Wild Rice River South Branch, FEMA, local media and an atty

Janet E. Green
John Nodale
Glen Nodale
Harley L. Green

Todd & Ronda Peterson
Marjorie K. Green
Diane Green

Daniel Green

Barbara Shaw
Horton O. Jeff
Karen Fenzig
Deeft Poorett

Daniel Braathen

Jenny Green

Dean Mathen

Joy Green

Toby Wright

Sharon Wright

Elaine Haslend

Herman Lomach

Dondra Brown

Virlt Bramsted

Dane Brown
October 6, 2002

Hazel Hutton
18221 220th Street North
Ulen, MN 56585

Dear Ms. Hutton:

On behalf of the Wild Rice Watershed District (WRWD) Board of Managers this letter shall serve as a response to your August 2, 2002, letter. Our response is directed to your concerns as a citizen since we understand that the issues raised in your letter are not endorsed by the Hagen Township Board of Supervisors.

Back in January of 2002, Hagen Township residents met with the WRWD Board of Managers to voice concerns over erosion and flood related problems within the township. From that meeting it was decided to have Clay County Water Planning survey residents in Hagen and Ulen Townships to identify the extent of the damages and possible solutions, and it is our understanding that Clay County is in the process of completing the survey. Because the WRWD is responsible for addressing flood damage reduction measures and the Soil and Water Conservation District/Natural Resources Conservation Service are responsible for addressing erosion concerns, you will still need to work with Clay County on your erosion-related damages.

Your letter indicated a desire to get right to work, eliminating planning and/or studies to implement proposed projects. The Board of Managers also wants to begin work as soon as possible, but must proceed under applicable Minnesota law. Before a major project is implemented, the district is required to develop a revised “watershed management plan.”

The various facets of a water management project as identified in the watershed management plan are then submitted to the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (MNBWSR) for its review and comments. The chances of favorable consideration by the MNBWSR are increased with proper planning/studies. Accordingly, such planning/studies become imperative. The preliminary estimate for the first phase of implementing the contemplated flood damage reduction projects is in excess of $56 million. Because of the high cost, federal funding assistance is necessary to implement any such projects and is the reason the Army Corps of Engineers feasibility study is necessary.

Another option property owners have is to petition for projects under Minn. Stat. 103D.701, which would require the necessary signatures on a petition to the watershed district to implement specific project(s), as well as obtaining bonding authority. The considerable estimated cost of flood damage reduction projects makes such a private petition process unlikely.

Your letter indicates that the primary reason for the flooding in Hagen Township is drainage. While the WRWD Board of Managers agrees that drainage is a problem in the township, they also recognize other factors that contribute to potential floods, including, but not limited to, topography, land use, weather patterns, rainfall and size of the watershed. The presence or absence of any of these factors can dramatically change the character of a particular flood.
Public Scoping Meeting/Open House Comment Form
South Branch of the Wild Rice River
NRCS Watershed Plan
June 12, 2017

Background

The Wild Rice Watershed District (WRWD) secured funding through the Red River Retention Authority for Watershed Planning under the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The RCPP funding was made available for watershed planning in the South Branch of the Wild Rice River Sub-Watershed and it is required to follow Public Law 83-566 requirements.

The Watershed Planning must also comply with the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) requirements. Tasks required for the NRCS Watershed Plan generally include: Identifying a Purpose and Need, Developing an Environmental Assessment, Identifying the Affected Environment (resource problems), Developing Alternatives, Identifying Environmental Consequences of the alternatives, determining a Preferred Alternative, and creating an overall Watershed Plan. Public participation will be a vital component throughout the entire planning process, beginning with this public meeting.

Purpose of Today’s Meeting

The initial step in NRCS Watershed Planning, as directed by NEPA, is to allow for input from all interested parties including federal, state, and local agencies and other interested groups or persons. Initial input will be focused on resource concerns in and adjacent to the South Branch of the Wild Rice River Sub-Watershed. In order to gather input on resource concerns, we would request that the attached comment form be completed and provided to the WRWD.

Identified Resource Concerns:

- **Flooding/Flood Damages** (i.e. agricultural effects from delayed planting, prevented planting, crop flood inundation, road damages, culvert/bridge damages, breakout flows, field erosion/deposition, floodplain management, etc.)

- **Water Quality/Erosion and Sedimentation** (water quality, water resources, soil resources, field erosion/deposition, channel erosion/deposition, etc.)

- **Wildlife and Habitat** (Fish and wildlife, wetlands, endangered and threatened species, invasive species, migratory birds, forest resources, etc.)

- **Other**

Please fill out the following information based on your priorities for the South Branch of the Wild Rice River Sub-Watershed.

Comment forms will be accepted for all forms postmarked on or before **July 12, 2017**.

Completed comment forms can be mailed to the WRWD office at:

Wild Rice Watershed District
11 5th Avenue East
Ada, MN 56510

Or via email to wildrice@wildricewatershed.org
Name: [Name]

Phone Number: [Phone Number]

Email Address: [Email Address]

Mailing Address: [Mailing Address]

Circle the most appropriate ranking for each concern listed below. Refer to the KEY for definitions of each ranking. Concerns where the degree of concern is not indicated will be considered a zero value (No Concern or Not Relevant).

**KEY:**
- 0 = No Concern or Not Relevant
- 1 = Minimal Concern
- 3 = Moderate Concern
- 4 = Significant Concern
- 5 = Severe Concern

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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional Comments: [Additional Comments]

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Instructions:

Please indicate the following items (if applicable):
- Your property location
- Specific areas of resource concerns, labeled with the resource concern (i.e., flooding, erosion, etc.)
- Any additional information that may be pertinent to watershed planning

Return completed map along with completed Comment Form to:
Wild Rice Watershed District
11 East 5th Avenue
Ada, MN 56510
where water has washed over the grade or washed the road out.
June 20, 2017

RE: South Branch of the Wild Rice River

Dear Township Chair:

The Wild Rice Watershed District (WRWD) secured funding through the Red River Retention Authority for Watershed Planning under the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCP), administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The RCP funding was made available for watershed planning in the South Branch of the Wild Rice River Sub-Watershed and it is required to follow Public Law 83-566 requirements.

The Watershed Planning must also comply with the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) requirements. Tasks required for the NRCS Watershed Plan generally include: Identifying a Purpose and Need, Developing an Environmental Assessment, Identifying the Affected Environment (resource problems), Developing Alternatives, Identifying Environmental Consequences of the alternatives, determining a Preferred Alternative, and creating an overall Watershed Plan. Public participation will be a vital component throughout the entire planning process.

We are currently working on gathering information regarding problem areas in the South Branch Sub-Watershed area and would like your input. Attached is a map of your township that lies within the South Branch Sub-Watershed. Please take a few minutes of your time to mark the areas on the map where and what type of damages have occurred over the years. This information will be used to determine the scope of Watershed Planning activities within the South Branch Sub-Watershed. You can return the information using the enclosed envelope, must be postmarked on or before July 12, 2017 to be accepted.

We appreciate your help in this matter. If you have any questions feel free to give us a call at 218-784-5501.

Best Regards,

Nikki Swenson
Administrative Assistant
Appendix B
Project Maps

A color project map must be prepared to show the location of important project measures and the location and extent of important watershed conditions that will be affected by the works of improvement to be installed. The map must show the location and kind of measures, watershed areas above structures that have floodwater retarding capacity, and benefited areas.