

Wild Rice Watershed District
Bus Tour of the District's Projects
August 31, 2009
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Managers Present:

Dean Spaeth
Greg Holmvik
Joe Spaeth
John Austinson
Mike Christensen

Managers Absent:

Diane Ista
Duane Erickson

Others Present:

Jerry Bents, Houston Engineering
Paul Wannarka, Red River Basin Coordinator, MN DNR
Marijo Vik, Twin Valley Times reporter
Jazmyn Miller, Vik's granddaughter

The bus from Richards Transportation left the watershed office at 8:45 am. Bents and several managers expressed their disappointment that no one from the public (besides Vik and her granddaughter) took the opportunity to tour the sites. It was mentioned that some people might not have come because of grain harvest.

Bents distributed a packet of information to everyone that gave a map of the tour, as well as background, maps, presentations and photos of projects. Bents explained the proposed stops on the tour, which included: Green Meadow Dam, Heiberg Dam, Moccasin Creek Dam, Wild Rice mainstream location, Marsh Creek #3, the Mahnomen drainage project, the Mahnomen Cenex station (to pick up any passengers), Rice Lake Dam/Bridge, Pinehurst Resort (for lunch), Pinehurst shoreline stabilization, Upper and Lower Becker Dams, Sec 14 Hagen On-channel, Heiraas bank stabilization, Borup (to pick up any passengers), various ring dikes, Dalen Coulee, as well as flood control projects in Borup, Perley, Hendrum, Halstad and Shelly if time allowed.

At Green Meadow Dam, Bents pointed out the structures, and explained how the water entered the pool and flowed out of the dam. Bents answered all the managers' questions.

At Heiberg Dam, Moccasin Creek Dam, and Marsh Creek 3 everyone got off the bus and walked to the dam site while Bents explained the structures and their function, as well as the operating plan for Moccasin Creek.

The tour then went past the recently completed Mahnomen West Side drainage project while Bents pointed out its features and benefits to the City of Mahnomen.

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The tour took a 20 minute break at the Mahnomen Cenex station from 10:30 am to 10:50 am, but no new passengers joined the group.

The next stop was the Rice Lake Bridge/Dam, where the group got out and heard an explanation from both Bents and Joe Spaeth concerning the project and how it is operated by the Tribe during their rice gathering season. Wannarka picked a stalk of wild rice and explained how it is harvested and processed.

The group stopped at the approximately noon at the Pinehurst Resort for lunch, but again, no one joined the tour at this point. After lunch, everyone walked across the road to North Twin Lake and met Greg LaVoy, owner of the Pinehurst Resort, who explained the shoreline stabilization on his property.

On the way to the next stop, Bents explained the chronology of Project No. 42, referring to the handout. As the bus approached the Upper Becker Dam site, Bents explained which roads would have to be raised with the dam enhancement and the costs involved.

Duane Erickson met the group at Upper Becker Dam. The group toured the current structure and several "what if" questions were asked of Bents. The questions were based on the comments Erickson and Austinson heard from one of the landowners at the meeting held in Callaway on Aug 24 concerning the location of the dam. Bents said he could provide different scenarios based on modeling and suggested that this should be a topic of discussion for the next regular meeting to bring the whole board up-to-date on the Callaway meeting.

Erickson left the group, which then continued past the Lower Becker Dam and on to the Sec. 14 Hagen on-channel and the Heiraas bank stabilization sites.

At approximately 3:10 pm, the bus came to the City of Borup, but it did not appear that anyone was waiting to join the tour and the bus passed through town and headed toward the Dalen Coulee. Along the way, Bents pointed out several ring dikes and farms which have applied for ring dikes. As the bus passed the Dalen Coulee, Bents referred to the handout.

As the bus headed north on Highway 75, Bents explained what the cities of Perley and Hendrum need as enhancements to the ring dikes around their communities.

It was after 3:30 pm, and the group decided to take Highway 200 back to Ada, forgoing going to Halstad and Shelly. The bus arrived a few minutes before 4:00 pm, where everyone disembarked and left the watershed office in their own vehicles.

In general, conversation between the managers concerned who farmed what land, topography, comments and questions about the projects, and asking "what if" questions of Bents.

Submitted by:

Marijo Vik