

**Meeting Notes
Bois de Sioux Watershed
North Ottawa Project Team Meeting
March 21 at 10:30 am
Wendell Community Center**

Project Team Members

SWCD Representative
Landowners
County Commissioners
DNR Representatives

Randy Larson
Jordan Schneeberger
Eric Klindt
Nick Brown
Tyler Larson
Ben Brutlag
Bill LaValley
Christine Herwig
John Kapphahn

Bois de Sioux Watershed District Board Managers

Lukas Croaker, District Attorney
Troy Fridgen, BdSWD Engineer Technician
Jamie Beyer, BdSWD Administrator

1. Comments from the Public

None presented.

2. Current Operations & Spring Outlook

Fridgen stated that the collection channel is full, with waterflow just going over the weir. Hundreds of bald eagles, geese, and swans are present. Brown stated that there must be rotten fish available for eating, maybe carp. The gates are shut. Fridgen has another camera installed. Moore Engineering staff are finishing a study on a culvert split at the intersection of the collection channel and JD #12 Lateral 6.

3. End of 2024 Income & Expense

Fridgen had some internal cell ditching coordinated at a cost of approx.. \$7,500. Beyer will call to have the portapotty dropped.

4. Feedback on Draft Conservation Volunteer Draft Article

Team members discussed a need to emphasize the balance of the FDR & NRE; the history of repeated flood damages and the active management that takes place today. Project team members supported an article, but wanted additional details, such as the ability to review the article prior to it being published.

5. Discussion on A4 Permanent Vegetation Establishment Plan

T. Larson presented a permanent vegetation plan, and gave information about previous plantings in areas in the region. He stated that perennial mixes will take multiple years to establish completely, and that temporary weed control will be needed, and areas may need to be replanted. Seed collection may be a source for funding. Planting into a drought could compromise success. Deep flooding prior to establishment may also be a risk. R. Larson stated that his vegetation took 5 years for establishment,

and that volunteer trees (Russian olives and cottonwoods) are a management problem. He also stated that the planting does not outcompete Canadian thistle, and that the thistle will require mowing prior to dropping seeds. T. Larson stated that fire and/or animal herd disturbances are needed on the prairie to keep trees and weeds under control. He recommended periodic burns and haying operations to keep tree growth under control. DNR Representatives offered that soybean production could be used to prepare Cell A3 for permanent vegetation planting for 1-2 years, but that a glyphosate-only/products with no residual restriction would be required for 2 years. T. Hanson stated that native planting should be a mix of 30 or more species, and should be drilled before June 15th. Brutlag stated that team members have to balance natural resource enhancement development with the reality that the space is primarily used for flood storage capacity, and that the Operations and Maintenance Agreement does offer options for farming additional cells under restricted scenarios. Team members discussed price quotes received for the recommended seed mix - \$970/acre, and the risk of having to flood the seed before establishment or the risk of having to till the cell at a later date for crop production. Team members discussed farming Cell B3 for three years, end on soybeans, and that weed control is important, as the worst enemy for the native vegetation is other grasses. DNR staff stated that they could work on a letter to acknowledge their support for this effort that acknowledges:

- this is an effort to work towards permanent vegetation and reduce weed growth
- there are many details that need to be worked-out
- it may take the balance of this year to draft a plan
- Cell B3 rents received would be dedicated to a B3 seed fund

The rent restrictions will result in less than market values – in addition to flood risk potential during spring operations. Klindt stated that \$200/acre seed costs are more reasonable, and it would likely cost \$15 - \$20/acre for an SWCD to drill the seed. Brutlag motioned, seconded by Klindt and carried unanimously, to recommend that the District initiate the plan if a DNR letter of support is received.