

**Meeting Notes
Bois de Sioux Watershed
North Ottawa Project Team Meeting
June 2, 2025 at 1:30 pm
Wendell Community Center**

Project Team Members:

DNR Representatives	Nick Brown	Christine Herwig
Bois de Sioux Watershed District Board Managers	Ben Brutlag	John Kapphahn

Others Present:

Linda Vavra, BdSWD President
James Guler, District Engineer
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 facility is draining north out of Cell C, through the JD #2 gate. Farm cell gates are open a little because they had some water inside them. The gazebo needs some light repairs and stain. A Red River Basin Commission tour is viewing the impoundment on June 4th; Beyer will weedwack and make sure the restroom facilities are clean. Fridgen forecasted upcoming maintenance needs: ditching and scraping in farmed cells, additional stop logs welded. Brown requested that the south cells be left and not flooded, in case there are nesting birds. No bids were received for collection channel haying/weed control; Fridgen will have to find someone local for a \$0 price license.

3. Conservation Volunteer Draft Article

Herwig incorporated comments made by the Project Team to include landowner input, water quality benefits, and ongoing cooperative active management as suggestions for the article. Herwig stated that it can take up to 1 ½ years for an article to be published. Upon motion by Kapphahn, seconded by Brutlag and carried unanimously, authorization was granted to submit the story concept to the Conservation Volunteer magazine.

4. Discussion on Cell A3 Permanent Vegetation Establishment Plan

Fridgen coordinated tillage at \$15/acre per pass, and two passes, to prep Cell A3. The producer offered \$150/acre to plant beans with the restriction that only chemistries without residual effects can be used. Project Team members discussed this would prohibit any preplant treatments, but would permit 2,4-D, RoundUp, Liberty, etc. Upon motion by Kapphahn, seconded by Brown, and carried

unanimously, the offer to plant soybeans at \$150/acre was accepted for Cell A3 for 2025. Team members discussed using soybeans for 2-3 years to suppress weeds and to use rent proceeds from the cell to save for permanent vegetation seed. Team members discussed examining more closely the price quotes for seed mixes, understanding that the seed supply for native plantings can vary greatly from year-to-year. DNR staff recommended an initial planting with less seed diversity, and adding more plant diversity as areas need to be replanted, tailoring replant areas to species that are more successful being planted in the spring and those that are more successful being planted in the fall. Team members agree that this plan is more beneficial than bare topsoil and uncontrolled weed growth.

5. Update on Needs Identified in 2024

District Engineer James Guler presented hydraulic details for the area where JD #12, Lateral 6 intersects with the North Ottawa Collection Channel. Engineering staff documented current flow conditions and drafted the memo presented to understand changes being promoted by a private landowner. Currently, culverts are splitting flow west, via Lateral 6 and North into the Impoundment. Engineering staff stated that the culverts seem to be functioning reasonably, with a culvert weir directing flows at or above a 10-year flood to the Impoundment. Making changes could result in flow changes affecting new neighbors. It was noted that the Collection Channel backs up into the field in Sections 15 and 14. Sending more flow North to the Collection Channel could force a need to change downstream approach culvert sizes. Engineer Guler would like more monitoring information to understand at what precipitation event the weir is being used, especially following a 2-3" rain. There is a 30" culvert that is currently blocked that could be opened to utilize open channel capacity. Brutlag stated that landowners see damage from backflow, where the collection channel is too shallow. Team members agreed that a shared goal is to keep water flow within the berms of the collection channel.