

## **Murray County Local Water Management Plan Meeting Minutes March 13, 2013**

The Murray County Local Water Management Plan Task Force held a meeting on Wednesday, March 13, 2013, at 9:00 am in Meeting Room B, Murray County Government Building, Slayton, MN.

**Members present:** Jay Takle, Larry Byers, Justin Hoffmann, David Thiner, John Giese, Darrold Peck, Bob Koehler, Dave Kremer, James Jens, Duane Spartz, Paul Posthuma, Jon Bloemendaal, Chris Hansen and Jean Christoffels

**Others present:** Mark Hiles - BWSR

Chris Hansen called the meeting to order at 9:00 am.

### **Agenda #1 Water Plan Update**

Chris noted that the Water Plan Update was completed.

### **Agenda #2 2013 Budget**

\$4,000 is ear-marked for Beaver Creek projects; 50% cost-share up to a maximum of \$2,500 per project. Casey Gillette has talked to Chris about doing rip-rap in the past; nothing formally submitted. Another project may be submitted in the near future.

### **Agenda #3 Grant Projects**

Two very different projects, on Ray Metz's property, are being considered for funding potential; one is estimated to cost \$25,000, whereas the other one could be \$1.7 million. Ray is interested in allowing the projects to be constructed, but doesn't want to be financially responsible for any part of them. Either project has the possibility of receiving approximately \$7,000 from the SWCD and \$2,500 from Water Plan. The County Board also has funds set aside that could be accessed for projects such as these; however, the larger project would be difficult to fund locally, would need grant dollars in order to proceed.

Another potential project is within the Lake Yankton and Shetek Watersheds and would involve cooperation with Lyon County. The cost is larger and would need grant dollars in order to be realized, but could be doable at an estimated cost of \$150,000 to \$175,000. Chris thought multiple projects could be tied together when applying for grants to increase the potential of being awarded funds; smaller projects combined into one application, along with cooperation with other governmental agencies are looked at more favorably.

A question was raised as to whether funds were being used to improve water quality in the most measurable way, or if the money was just being thrown at something that would simply be a drop in the bucket. It was suggested more money should be directed towards the abandonment of wells, especially when building sites are frequently being razed. The concern was that wells in the County are at unsafe nitrate levels. However, through well testing that is done, Duane noted test results from over the years show how nitrate levels vary based on the wetness/dryness of the year and the depth of the well. Also, Chris stated water tests conducted at the Murray County Fair shows approximately 15% of the tests are high in nitrate levels, which could be an indication the majority of wells in the county are under the 10 part per million (ppm) limit.

Rita Lear's project was not funded during the last grant round; Chris will apply again. The SWCD funds would need to be allocated by June, otherwise they get returned to the State. John Giese would like Chris to look at Clean Water Legacy dollars for the larger projects, including the larger project on Ray Metz's property.

**MSP: Duane Spartz, James Jens for Murray County to pursue water retention/restoration projects that would be considered a priority for improving water quality within the county; including making application for grants.**

#### **Agenda #4 Steinman Retention Structure Tour**

The stop-logs are in place and the structure is considered complete. Looking at a possible tour of the site in June after the next Water Plan Meeting.

#### **Agenda #5 Other**

Committee Member submitted news articles were sent with the agendas; these articles emphasize slowing down the water to control and improve water quality.

Mark Hiles, BWSR, commented on the possibility of increased block grant funds in the 2014-2015 years; the Governor is in favor of the increase, will know more at the end of the Legislative Session in May.

The 2012 Block Grant was completed and all projects finalized.

Jon Bloemendaal is working with an individual from the Des Moines River (DMR) Watershed to conduct a Level III Feedlot Inventory within the entire DMR Watershed. The inventory consists of a site inspection and a computer profiling/rating of the feedlot (MN Farm); the rating indicates pollution potential. Once the inventory is complete, the sites with higher ratings for pollution will be looked at for possible assistance with improvements to reduce the pollution problems. Even though the inventory is not complete, there are a couple sites already starting to work on improvements.

Chris and Jon will be conducting pit tile tests on half of the county's feedlot sites in May. Then in late June or early July, Dave Herrig will do the well water tests.

Dave Thiner questioned whether any inspections or monitoring is done to ensure wells are sealed when a building site is bull-dozed. As State Rules were recently changed, Duane pointed out contractors are less likely to push in a well because they are held responsible. Through Water Plan funds, the County has paid out cost-share for 20 to 40 well sealings per year. In an effort to increase awareness of the necessity of properly sealing and abandoning old wells, Chris will put an article in the SWCD Newsletter. Then he and Jon could also run an article in the newspapers that highlights well sealing and proper disposal of household hazardous waste when razing old abandoned building sites.

If Murray County experiences a back-log of well seal applications that exceed the dollar amount the County has available for well sealing, Mark Hiles suggested Chris apply for Clean Water Funds from BWSR; those requests rise to the top and are typically funded, but would require a list of applicants. Approximately 50 wells were sealed in the County in 2012; the process for obtaining cost-share dollars was recently made easier for the landowners.

**Agenda #5 Next Meeting/Adjourn**

The next meeting of the Task Force will be on Wednesday, June 12, 2013, at a time to be determined based on agenda items. Following the meeting, the Committee will tour the Steinman Retention Structure, as well as other potential project sites.

**Meeting was adjourned.**

Respectfully submitted,

Jean M. Christoffels  
Murray County Environmental Services