



MIDDLE-SNAKE-TAMARAC RIVERS WATERSHED DISTRICT

Portions of Marshall, Kittson, Polk, Pennington and Roseau Counties

453 N McKinley St
PO Box 154
Warren, MN 56762
Phone 218-745-4741
Fax 218-745-5300
info@mstrwd.org
www.mstrwd.com

Minutes of the Middle-Snake-Tamarac Rivers Watershed District Advisory Board Meeting Bremer Bank, Warren, Minnesota November 21st, 2016

Present were:

Farley Twp: Dean Danielski

Wright Twp: Mark Weber

Warrenton Twp: Robin Johnson, Jim Johnson & David Nelson

Cedar Twp: Virgil Wagner

Vega Twp: Stuart Nordling

Bigwoods Twp: Ken Johnson

Oak Park Twp: Jared Sands

Norman Lindemoen, Eugene Mattson

Marshall County Commissioners: Sharon Bring, LeRoy Vonasek, Rolland Miller

Polk County Commissioners: Don Diedrich

MSTRWD Managers: John Nelson, David Bakke

City of Oslo: Gary Mattson

City of Alvarado: Gary Toren

Houston Engineering: Tony Nordby

MSTRWD Staff: Brent Silvis, Danny Omdahl, Christina Slowinski

The Advisory Board meeting of the Middle Snake Tamarac Rivers Watershed District was held at Bremer Bank in Warren, Minnesota, on November 21, 2016 at 2:00 p.m. The District's Administrator, Brent Silvis, opened the meeting. Introductions were made by the attendees and the members of the Watershed District Board and Staff.

Elections of officers was led by Brent Silvis. Robin Johnson was nominated to serve as Chairman of the meeting. There being no further nominations, a motion was made and seconded to close nominations and elect Robin Johnson by acclamation, which motion carried.

The next order of business was the election of a Secretary. Sharon Bring was nominated to serve as Secretary of the meeting. There being no further nominations, a motion was made and seconded to close nominations and elect Sharon Bring by acclamation, which motion carried.

The next order of business was the reading of the 2015 minutes, presented by Brent Silvis. It was moved by Don Diedrich, seconded by LeRoy Vonasek, and carried to approve the minutes.

The next order of business was the presentation by the District's Administrator, Brent Silvis. The PowerPoint presentation reviewed the history, new staff members, current/completed projects, and future work in the Watershed District.

The presentation made a review of 2016 activities. Less permit applications were received than a typical year. The year was very wet, particularly in the late spring and mid-summer. 27 miles of ditches were cleaned by the District. There has been major sloughing in three sections of JD-75, which the District is attempting to address.

Polk County Ditch 175 was discussed. There have been complaints from landowners due to poor drainage through this ditch. A public meeting has been held regarding an improvement to this ditch. A survey of the ditch has been completed and modeling is being performed.

A total of 55 beavers were harvested this year for which the District paid a bounty. Local landowners asked the District for assistance concerning drainage at the Florian WMA. A meeting was held with landowners October 11, 2016. 35 additional beavers were trapped in the Florian area. A portion of the dam is now open and draining.

About 88 miles of ditches were sprayed by helicopter for cattails. The Watershed District has obtained the Audubon 40-acre parcel and is improving the trails. The long-term goal for the land is to focus on educational programs and obtain outside funding for future projects at the site.

There are many active project teams and a quick update was given on each. The Swift Coulee is being surveyed as part of the Swift Coulee Project Team and a meeting is to be scheduled once the survey is completed. The Middle River Subwatershed / Newfolden Project Team has been having meetings and HDR has completed a feasibility study. Most of the east side of Newfolden is now in the 100 year flood plain. The JD19 and JD14 projects are now receiving funding through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). Additionally, the Oslo Access study, which is funded by a 1:1 match between the state of Minnesota and the state of North Dakota, is moving into phase 2.

Popular topics in the District this past year were grass strips and buffer strips. There are still a number of ditch systems that need grass strips planted. By March of 2017 it should be established as to who will enforce the new buffer law. If no other agency commits to this, then BWSR will enforce. Landowners are advised to go to their Soil and Water Conservation District to learn about the buffer law and inquire about funding for buffer compliance.

Engineer Technician Christina Slowinski has been participating in educational and outreach activities teaching children the purpose of the Watershed District. She has attended events in Marshall County on behalf of grade school children.

Looking to 2017 and beyond, the District will be working on multiple projects. The District is looking into: using social media, updating the website, data management and the use of the 40 acre building site which is the former Eldor & Stella Omdahl property

The District's permit policy and guideline documents will be reviewed and revised. The District will also continue to maintain and develop any current Flood Damage Reduction Project Team projects. Starting January 1, 2017, the Watershed District Board Meetings will be on Mondays at 8:30 a.m.

Following the presentation, questions were posed by various Advisory Board members. A general discussion was carried by these questions and comments:

1. Would there be tree removal this winter? Administrator Silvis responded that the District was working on removal in JD21 and JD28. Clarification of the question was provided; there were concerns about trees in Snake River by Alvarado. Silvis replied that the District has already been in contact with Sentence-To-Serve about having these trees removed.
2. It was remarked that the Red Lake Watershed District was having a meeting related to One Watershed One Plan on November 22, 2016.
3. Could the Florian Swamp be drained to the bottom of culverts? Administrator Silvis replied that this question would be better directed to the DNR and the District was willing to participate in that conversation. Silvis remarked that it was his understanding that the DNR had opened up the beaver dam in the Florian and the water was draining.
4. Is the District going to address the concerns and issues of drain tile? Administrator Silvis replied that the District was aware that increasing violations of permits is a problem and a committee has been established to address this. Jared Sands commented that the District should consider that tile drainage helps control flooding and that ditches need to be maintained.
5. When applying for permits, when do you need to get permits from other agencies? A permit is required from the Watershed District. If it is a county ditch, county approval is also needed. Additionally, depending on the waterway, approval may be needed from the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, the NRCS or the DNR.
6. Administrator Silvis encouraged those present to communicate with the District when they observe drainage problems in the District.

Following the discussion, it was moved, seconded, and carried to hold the next Advisory Board meeting on November 20, 2017 at 1:30 p.m. The next order of action was to receive a motion to adjourn, it was seconded and the vote was unanimous to adjourn the meeting.

Sharon Bring, Secretary

ATTEST:

Robin Johnson, Chairman