

Swift Coulee / Marshall County Ditch 3 Project Team Meeting
May 4, 2017 1PM
Bremer Bank, Warren, MN

Attendees:

David Nelson and Stuart Nordling (Landowners)
Stephanie Klamm (DNR)
Denise Oakes (MPCA)
Craig Jarnot (USACOE)
Darren Carlson (Marshall County SWCD)
Lon Aune (M.C. Engineer), LeRoy Vonasek (M.C. Commissioner)
Brian Dwight (BWSR)
Laurie Fairchild (USFWS)
Tony Nordby (Houston Engineering)
Danny Omdahl, Brent Silvis, Roger Mischel & Brad Blawat MSTRWD

Brent gave an introduction. There was a brief review of previous meetings, including landowner meetings held on April 20, 2017.

Tony gave a presentation. He showed the draft Purpose & Need. Danny pointed out that Marshall County Ditch 3 (MCD 3) may currently have insufficient capacity, but may have been sufficient at the time it was built.

Lon made the comment that the outlet of MCD 3 may be insufficient. He also indicated that he did not know why the benefited area and drainage area of the system are so different. Lon suggested a historical investigation would be valuable to find out if the drainage pattern above MCD3 changed somehow to now allow for water to go to MCD3.

Stephanie suggested removing coulee instability from the Need Statement as it is not a problem in her view. The DNR has not identified that there is coulee bank failure or erosion. Lon said that channel instability is a problem farther west (within the ditch) and that a widening channel and sedimentation are problems within the coulee.

Tony said that a redetermination of benefits may be an alternative for this project. Brian added that there may be legal issues due to the discrepancy between benefited and drainage areas. He said that this should possibly be addressed before the project progresses. Danny provided a brief explanation of the redetermination of benefits process. Brad pointed out that people on the east end of the drainage area do not want to pay into the system.

Laurie suggested that there should be two Purpose and Need Statements, since there were two systems (MCD3 and the Swift Coulee) with two different situations.

Dave Jones said that the project should look to minimize sediment from the east. He questioned if the source of the sediment had been identified. Darren said that the

SWCD was working with landowners regarding soil erosion, and funding is available for solutions, such as side-water inlets. Danny said that the source of the sediment is fields around the coulee. Danny and Tony suggested that side-water inlets and buffers should be alternatives.

Tony identified some steps that can be taken. The Purpose and Need Statement needs to continue to be developed. More documentation of the problem needs to be obtained. Potentially, borings of the coulee could be taken, since the DNR will likely require them for any proposed alternative. Brian suggested additional terrain analysis and stream power indexing. Dave Jones agreed, suggesting a RUSLE model for sediment delivery be developed.

Dave Jones questioned if there were as-built ditch plans. Lon said some were available. Lon also commented that it was the county's obligation to address unfair benefited areas.

Brian suggested that, for the purpose of funding a project, there was an assessment approach, which would be quicker and less expensive than a redetermination of benefits, but temporary and maybe less defensible.

Stephanie stated that, for any project to move forward, borings and an environmental assessment worksheet would probably be needed.

Dave Nelson made the comment that he pays benefits into the system but water doesn't drain off the field until MCD 3 drains down enough for water to leave his field. Enough water comes from upstream through the coulee to fill MCD 3.

Craig said that the project was off to a good start. More supporting info should be obtained from landowners, modeling should be performed, the current capacity of the ditch should be identified, the Purpose and Need Statement should identify what level of protection (frequency and severity) the project is trying to provide.

David Jones said that a Hydraulic & Hydrologic (H&H) model should be developed, the project should identify the event frequency and severity for which protection is to be provided and maintained, the reduction in sediment should be quantified and a plan should be developed to maintain changes in agricultural practices.

Brian said that the Purpose and Need could be expanded. Natural resource enhancements can be secondary benefits, if the watershed district has identified those as priorities in its ten-year plan.

Craig stated that the underlying issue is damages experienced by landowners, and a suite of alternatives may be needed to address the problems. There should only be one Purpose and Need Statement. Dave Jones agreed that there should only be one statement. He said that benefits should be identified as benefits, not alternatives. He asked how much sediment was accumulated in the coulee. Danny and Tony responded

that there was about four feet west of Highway 75 where the watershed district performed a survey last fall.

Tony suggested that landowners should be consulted to see what the interest is within the sub-watershed about cleaning and/or retention. The Purpose and Need Statement should be revised, adding the comments received from today's meeting. The watershed district board could be asked for their approval for Houston Engineering to perform an existing conditions H&H study of the Swift Coulee/MCD 3 sub-watershed.

Brian suggested that the Flood Damage Reduction and BWSR acceleration grants could possibly be used to help fund some of the planning process.

Darren asked if the culverts had been inventoried. Some of this data could be obtained from the county, DNR and SWCD. Dave Jones agreed that the culvert data is needed, as well as RUSLE modeling to estimate sediment delivery.

Some suggestions of action items made during the meeting:

- All landowner comments compiled onto one map
- Get MCD3 as-built design (from Marshall County)
- Get damages data from FEMA, townships, county, etc.
- Get culvert data from county, DNR, SWCD, etc.
- Work on Purpose and Need Statement
 - NREs
 - Identify level of protection being pursued (severity and frequency)
- Obtain additional documentation of the problem and landowner comments
- Investigate discrepancies between benefited and drainage areas (with Marshall County)
- Modeling (H&H, RUSLE), quantification of sediment load and identification of sediment sources, obtain MSTRWD approval of additional modeling
- Pursue funding (FDR and BWSR, assessment approach, redetermination of benefits)
- Soil borings (assuming availability of funding)
- Environmental Assessment Worksheet per DNR requirements (assuming availability of funding)

Adjourned.