

MINUTES OF MEETING
DIVERSION AUTHORITY AGRICULTURAL POLICY SUBCOMMITTEE
DAKOTA AG COOPERATIVE
KINDRED, NORTH DAKOTA
MAY 30, 2012

The Diversion Authority Agricultural Policy Subcommittee met on May 30, 2012, at 7:00 p.m. at the office of Dakota Ag Cooperative, Kindred, North Dakota.

Present were those whose names appear on the attached roster.

Rodger Olson called the meeting to order and introductions were made. Mr. Olson said this Subcommittee will provide an excellent forum to discuss agricultural issues relating to the Fargo-Moorhead Area Diversion Project.

Mark Lambrecht provided a handout and reviewed general information on the project.

A map showing flows and inundation areas resulting from various flood events was reviewed. Engineers are looking at increasing the flows through the Fargo-Moorhead area, which would reduce the frequency the project is used. The project would operate at a 10-year event.

Increasing the flows through town would also reduce the risk of summer flooding, which is much more devastating to farming. At 20,000 cfs the water would be at 35' and past floods in June or July were all less than 9,600 cfs. Mark Brodshaug said duration figures would also be important to know. Eric Dodds said estimates have been roughly a week at the highest levels.

The project design is being worked on for Reaches 1-6. Construction could start as soon as next year, depending on authorization from Congress.

It was asked if operation of the project could begin at a higher level than what is being proposed, due to all of the improvements being made in Fargo. Mark Bittner said the combination of making improvements up to the 40' level, along with the Diversion channel, may be more than they can do. Mr. Bittner pointed out that the work being completed now will help reduce use of the project. They also hope to prevent areas from going into the floodplain or having to remove them after the project is built.

Mr. Dodds reviewed typical cross-sections in Reach 1 at the north end of the project. As the design has progressed, the Technical Team is looking at building the berms higher with an access road on top. This would allow 1,000-1,500 acres to stay in production. The government would own the access road. Mr. Bittner said the lower

level of the berm would remain tillable. Stripping and replacing up to 18" of topsoil after construction is completed on the tillable areas would help keep the land productive.

Mr. Brodshaug assumed the project would buy all of the land where spoil is placed and noted that some property owners would want to maintain ownership, while others would like to sell it. John Albrecht said the project design will dictate much of that. The government will only acquire the minimum amount needed for the project. Mr. Brodshaug suggested they investigate whether they could just obtain construction easements so farmers could maintain ownership on the outside levee. Mr. Albrecht said they will receive a right-of-way map when design is completed, then they can get to work on that. When it comes to farmsteads, they try to leave people in their homes, when possible.

Matt Ness asked about drainage for property adjacent to the project. Tyler Odegaard asked about the water level in the channel. They were assured the land would drain better with the project than it does now, up to a 100-year event. Mark Ottis asked how the project will affect drainage when it is not being operated. There would be significant improvement leading to the channel from the west and south. The water in the channel would be lower than ground level, so drainage would be improved. Mr. Bittner said a drain will be constructed along the outside of the channel to an inlet.

Operation of 2-3 drains in the staging and storage area will need to be looked at. The effects of drainage and the timing of getting into the fields will also need to be analyzed.

Discussion moved to the list of items put together by local elevator managers. Dennis Novacek said the timing of flooding and quantifying crop losses will be difficult, as well as long-term effects on property. They also believe a hybrid / rider insurance program will need to be developed, because Federal Crop Insurance would not provide coverage when flooding is caused by man-made efforts. Mr. Ness added that losses can cause land values to decrease. Mr. Odegaard said the difference between crop insurance and reduced yield does not get made up anywhere. Mr. Olson said Jim Nyhof, Dawson Insurance, is looking into it. The Subcommittee could also gather a group of people to work on the matter.

Mr. Brodshaug suggested inviting someone to the next meeting to present information on North Ottawa. The land is owned by the project and rented out, with rents fluctuating according to the situation. Property owners are guaranteed their costs, plus 10%. Mark Askegaard said they do not wish to sell their land.

It was questioned why the Corps of Engineers cannot include retention with the project. Mr. Bittner said there is a parallel track going on to deal with retention. It is part of the solution, but not part of the Corps of Engineers project. Mark Askegaard said every opportunity for retention needs to be explored. Mr. Olson said we know there will be impacts and the group needs to keep discussing the issues and where to go with solutions to those impacts.

Mark Ottis suggested creating benefits for property owners along the channel to off-set the impacts so they are making a benefit, not just a negative. He added that the farmers and landowners are sometimes not the same person. The use of drain tile as a benefit could be considered.

The Subcommittee discussed development of a basis for payment to property owners and concluded payment could be made for a combination of things, including impacts, risk management and ongoing risk.

Some people located in the proposed staging and storage area have asked about re-establishing their farmsteads north of the tieback levee so they are in the protected area and if consideration could be given to re-drawing school district boundaries so they could remain in the same school district.

Mr. Bittner emphasized the importance of keeping the natural floodplain intact, which is positive for Fargo, as well as outlying areas.

The next meeting was tentatively scheduled for June 20, 2012. An Agricultural Policy Subcommittee Charter will be considered at that meeting.

Adjournment

There being no further business to be considered by the Subcommittee, the meeting adjourned without objection.

APPROVED:

Rodger Olson
Chairman

ATTEST:

Carol Harbeke Lewis
Cass County Joint Water Resource District
Secretary-Treasurer

Meeting Sign-Up Sheet

Diversion Authority Agricultural Policy Subcommittee

Office of Dakota Ag Cooperative

Kindred, North Dakota

May 30, 2012

Name	Address / Whom Representing
1 Mark Lambrecht	PMC / AEZS Engr.
2 Mark Bittner	City of Fargo
4 Dennis Nowak	Dakota Ag Cooperative
5 MATT NESS	Farmer / Comstock Area
6 Tyler Odegaard	Farmer / Kindred
7 Scott Nipstad	Farmer / Hickory
8 Mark Birdsham	CCJWRD
9 Pat Favoral	City of Fargo
10 John Albrecht	Corps of Engineers
11 Rodney Olson	Diversion Authority
12 Mark Wiskegaard	Farmer - Comstock
13 Mark O'Hara	Farmer - Kindred
14 Chad Nelski Lewis	Cur County WPDs
15 Eric Dodds	PMC / AEZS
16 Dave Overbo	clay Co. Highway Dept
17 Jon Diegel	PMC / CH2M Hill
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