

BLUE EARTH COUNTY WATER MANAGEMENT PLAN



Technical, Stakeholder and Public Input

Prepared for
Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources
Southern Region Committee Meeting
August 24, 2017

Statutory Requirements

Blue Earth County completed all steps required for updating the water management plan in Minnesota Statutes, Sections 103B.301 to 103B.315.

Notice of plan revision. A notice of plan revision and invitation to submit priority concerns was sent to 34 local government jurisdictions (11 municipalities and 23 townships in the county), the SWCD, nine adjacent counties, and the five state review agencies. (Reference: Minnesota Statute 103B.313)

Public information meeting. A publicly-noticed public meeting was held on February 29, 2016. (Reference: Minnesota Statute 103B.313)

Public hearing. The County Board of Commissioners conducted a public hearing on the water plan on September 13, 2016 and July 18, 2017. There was no public testimony. (Reference: Minnesota Statute 103B.315)

Additional Public and Technical Input

In addition to the steps required by Minnesota Statute 103B, Blue Earth County sought public input, technical assistance and recommendations with a local water plan advisory committee, ad hoc stakeholder and technical committees, local work sessions and internal forums, open house meetings, surveys and online comment forms. There were 57 meetings and four surveys.

The following is a list and description of meetings related to development of the water management plan and planning for wetland management.

Local Water Management Surveys – 4 surveys

Surveys were used to help determine priority water management concerns, wetland functions with the greatest local public value, the most effective strategies and important needs in lake watersheds, and the most effective aquatic invasive species prevention strategies. The following is a list of surveys and dates.

List of Surveys and Dates:

- Water Plan Survey – Fall 2015
 - Wetland Survey – Fall 2015
 - Lake Watershed Survey of Local Officials – May 2017
 - Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Survey – Fall 2015
- Survey results from the Blue Earth County Hazard Mitigation 2013 Update were also used in development of the plan.

Online Comment Form

The water plan public hearing notice included a link to the water management plan on the Blue County website. The water plan website also included a Comment Form box for anyone to submit comments on the water plan. It was available for ten days from the date the public hearing notice was published until the morning of the public hearing.

Water Plan Task Force Meetings – 5 meetings

A water plan task force was assembled to help review priority concerns and plan goals and strategies. Local agency staff also participated in task force meetings and helped draft strategies and actions.

Task Force Members

Eric Anderson, City of Mankato Mayor

Kip Bruender, County Commissioner

Tom Dougan, Madison Lake Association Board

Kris Duncanson, Mapleton area resident, Duncanson Growers

Emily Javens, Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisor
Doug Meixell, Lincoln Township Board of Supervisor, Farmer
Scott Morgan, Mankato Township Board of Supervisors
Will Purvis, County Commissioner
Mike Roll, Crystal Waters Project President, Lake Crystal
Kathy Seys, St. Clair City Administrator
Joe Smentek, Mankato and Blue Earth County Planning Commissions,
Minnesota Soybean Growers

Local Staff who participated in task force meetings also included:
Mankato Township Planner/Clerk, *Dan Fogal*
City of Mankato staff, *Mary Fralish and Pat Hovda*
SWCD staff: *Jerad Bach, Tina Warta and John Billings*
Blue Earth County staff: *Julie Conrad, Scott Salsbury George Leary,*
and Scott Fichtner.

Meeting Dates:

February 29, 2016
July 13, 2016
April 4, 2016
August 23, 2016
August 30, 2016

Open House Meetings – 3 meetings

Water Management Plan Open House

An Open House meeting was held to thank those who participated in the water plan update and wetland planning and offer a last opportunity to comment on the plan.

Participants: Email invitations were sent to 52 people from the following:

- Water Plan Task Force
- Wetland Stakeholder/Technical Committee
- Local, State and Federal agency staff who provided technical assistance with wetland and water planning

Meeting Date: July 11, 2017

Duck Lake, Lake Ballantyne and Madison Lake Open House

An open house meeting was held to answer citizens' questions, identify problem areas and determine strategies to improve water quality in the Duck, Ballantyne and Madison Lake watersheds. Blue Earth County, DNR and MPCA staff answered questions. A consultant interviewed participants and developed lists of problems and solutions for each lake that was used along with a written survey to develop strategies in the Blue Earth County water management plan update and were recommended for the Middle Minnesota WRAPS.

Participants: Meeting invitations were mailed to 320 property owners in Duck and Ballantyne watersheds. Invitations were emailed to Madison Lake Association members. Fifty citizens "signed in" at the meeting.

Meeting Date: May 18, 2017



Citizens discussing Duck Lake watershed maps at the Duck, Ballantyne and Madison Lake Open House – May 2017

Aquatic Invasive Species Open House

The County conducted an open house meeting to seek ideas and promote local partnerships to help prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species. A written survey was also used to determine the most effective ways to help prevent the spread of AIS. The results were used in a plan for AIS prevention and in the water plan update.

Participants: All lake associations in the county were invited to bring up to ten members. Boat and bait businesses in the county were also invited. There were 30 attendees.

Meeting Date: May 5, 2016

County Board Work Sessions – 2 meetings

The County Board of Commissioners conducts publicly-noticed work sessions nearly every month. There were two work sessions with the County Board regarding the water plan and wetland planning.

Meeting Dates:

July 28, 2015

July 12, 2016

Information Meetings, Work Sessions, and Other Forums – 22 meetings

Lake Shoreland and Zoning Information Meeting – 1 meeting

An information meeting was held with local officials about the importance of the near shore areas for water quality and aquatic life and shoreland zoning ordinances. The DNR and MPCA were the presenters. Using surveys administered at the meeting, strategies for lake protection and improvement were identified for the Middle Minnesota River WRAPS and were incorporated in the Blue Earth County Water Management Plan update.

Participants: 44 elected and appointed officials and staff from the City of Madison Lake, City of Lake Crystal and Blue Earth County were invited (30 of 44 attended). Members of five lake associations were also invited to bring up to ten members.

Meeting Date: May 9, 2017



Groundwater Planning Meeting with the DNR – 1 meeting

DNR staff presented an overview of the *Geologic Atlas of Blue Earth County, Part B*, followed by discussion for its use in water and land use planning. A technical training event for using the plan was held in 2017. The *Geologic Atlas of Blue Earth County, Part B*, was used in the water management plan update.

Participants: Invited participants included staff from the SWCD, City of Mankato Community Development, Public Utilities and Engineering, Blue Earth County Environmental Services and Public Works, Mankato Township, and DNR.

Meeting Date: March 11, 2016

Soil and Water Conservation District – 3 meetings

There were at least three meetings with SWCD staff Jerad Bach, Tina Warta and John Billings, and Blue Earth County staff, Julie Conrad to identify water management concerns and discuss plan development. The SWCD staff were also invited to all task force meetings, all open house events, information meetings and many other meetings as shown in this summary.

Blue Earth County - Drainage Committee – 2 meetings

The Blue Earth County Drainage Committee meets periodically to discuss issues related to ditches managed by 103E. County Environmental Services and SWCD staff attended two meetings to discuss the water management plan update and the buffer law.

Participants:

County Commissioners: *Kip Bruender, Will Purvis, Mark Piepho*

County Administrator: *Bob Meyer*

Taxpayer Services Department Director: *Mike Stalberger*

Drainage Authority staff: *Craig Austinson, Ryan Hiniker*

SWCD Manager: *Jerad Bach (guest)*

Environmental Services Department: *Julie Conrad (guest)*

Meeting Dates:

February 16, 2016

June 13, 2016

Water Management Plan Ad Hoc Drainage Technical Subcommittee – 3 meetings

A team of local staff formed an ad hoc drainage technical committee to discuss updating the drainage section in the water plan and review goals, strategies and actions. County Environmental Services staff also contacted BWSR staff, Al Kean, for technical assistance.

Participants:

Taxpayer Services Department Director: *Mike Stalberger*

Drainage Authority staff: *Craig Austinson, Ryan Hiniker*

SWCD Manager: *Jerad Bach*

Environmental Services Department staff: *Julie Conrad and Scott Salsbury*

Drainage Engineer: *Chuck Brandel, ISG*

Meeting Dates:

May 10, 2016

May 31, 2016

August 5, 2016

City of Mankato - Community Development Department – 3 meetings

Meeting Dates and Participants:

November 24, 2015 – City of Mankato staff *Michael McCarty, Mark Konz, Molly Westman, Kristin Prosinski*, and Blue Earth County staff *Julie Conrad and Scott Salsbury*

December 11, 2015 – City of Mankato staff *Kristin Prosinski* and Blue Earth County staff *Julie Conrad*

December 11, 2015 - City of Mankato staff *Mark Konz* and Blue Earth County staff *Julie Conrad*

City of Mankato - Public Utilities Department – 3 meetings

Meetings with City of Mankato staff, Mary Fralish, Kyle Hinrichs and Pat Hovda and Blue Earth County staff, Julie Conrad, to discuss public water supply wells, nitrates and well sealing concerns in drinking water supply areas both in and outside the city limits.

City of Eagle Lake – 1 meeting in 2016

Meeting to identify and discuss water management concerns with Brad Potter, City Administrator, and Blue Earth County staff Julie Conrad.

City of St. Clair – 1 meeting in 2016

Meeting to identify and discuss water management concerns with City Administrator, Kathy Seys, and Blue Earth County staff, Julie Conrad.

City of Lake Crystal – 1 meeting in 2016

Meeting to identify and discuss water management concerns with City Administrator, Taylor Gronau, and Blue Earth County staff, Julie Conrad.

City of Madison Lake – 1 meeting in 2016

Meeting to identify and discuss water management concerns with Michael Hanson, City Administrator, and Blue Earth County staff, Julie Conrad.

Blue Earth County Public Works/Parks – 1 meeting

Meeting and tour of water quality problem areas (erosion) with Blue Earth County Parks Director, Dean Ehlers, and Julie Conrad.

Blue Earth River Watershed Partners – 1 meeting

Martin, Faribault and Blue Earth counties met to discuss priority water management concerns and the possibility of coordinating the three counties' water management plan updates.

Participants: Faribault County SWCD staff, Michele Stindtman and Brandee Douglas, Martin SWCD staff, Ashley Brenke, and Blue Earth County staff, Julie Conrad.

Meeting Date: April 1, 2016

Blue Earth County Environmental Services Department

Blue Earth County Environmental Services staff were responsible for plan development. Many worked to update sections of the plan related to groundwater, wastewater treatment, feedlots, and wetlands.

Participants:

Julie Conrad, Land Use and Natural Resources Planner

Scott Salisbury, GIS Specialist

Tim Grant, Senior Environmental Health Specialist

George Leary, Land Use Administrator

Jesse Anderson, Environmental Health Specialist

Mike Schulte, Environmental Health/Wetland Specialist



Wetland Planning – 25 meetings

Blue Earth County Wetland Plan Ad hoc Technical/Stakeholder Committee – 8 meetings

Ad hoc stakeholder and technical committees updated the Greenprint priority areas for natural resource protection, enhancement and restoration including wetlands. The committee also recommended criteria for prioritizing and targeting potential sites to provide water storage and nutrient functions important in local watersheds. Technical assistance was also provided by BWSR staff, Al Kean, Stantec and Houston Engineering.

Invited Participants (Includes WCA TEP):

Citizens: *Ken Saffert (retired City of Mankato Engineer), Wayne Krosch (Board Member Minnesota Pheasants- Blue Earth County Chapter), Joe Smentek, (City of Mankato and Blue Earth County Planning Commission member, Minnesota Soybean Growers Public*

Affairs), Henry Quade (retired MSU-Mankato professor and Director of the Water Resources Center), Brett Skilbred (Jordan Sands), Rick Hanna (Hanna and Associates)

DNR: Dan Girolamo (WCA TEP), Joe Stangel, Stein Innvaer, Randy Schindle, Scott Makcenthun

USFWS: Mike Malling, Matt Stasica

MPCA: Paul Davis, Bryan Spindler

City of Mankato: Michael McCarty (WCA TEP), Mark Konz, Molly Westman, Paul Vogel

Blue Earth County: Mike Schulte (WCA TEP), Julie Conrad, Scott Salsbury, Mike Krosch, Dean Ehlers, Tim Grant, Al Forsberg

Local Consultants: Bill Douglass, Bolton and Menk, Nick McCabe, ISG, Travis Fristed, ISG

SWCD: Jerad Bach (WCA TEP)

BWSR: Jeremy Maul (WCA TEP)

Army Corps of Engineers: David Studenski

Meeting Dates:

June 20, 2013

June 27, 2013

October 6, 2015

October 20, 2015

November 3, 2015

November 17, 2015

December 15, 2015

December 29, 2015



Local Wetland Planning Work Sessions – 12 meetings

Meetings and work sessions were used to get input and feedback for wetland planning.

List of Dates and Participants

List does not include more than 25 internal meetings and work sessions with Environmental Services Department staff, Julie Conrad, Scott Salsbury, Tim Grant, Mike Schulte, and Stacey Feser. List does not include Stakeholder/Technical committee meetings listed above.

April 23, 2014 –Wetland Functional Assessment Results Presentation and open house with landowners. Attended by consultant presenter Paul Bockenstadt – Stantec, many landowners and Blue Earth County staff, Stacey Feser, Mike Krosch, Tim Grant, Julie Conrad, Scott Salsbury and Dean Ehlers.

November 25, 2014 – Meeting with DNR Fisheries staff about fish habitat function and wetland planning. Attended by DNR staff, Scott Mackenthun (DNR Fisheries), Taralee Latozke (DNR Fisheries Aquatic Habitat Specialist), and Jamie Schulz (DNR Fisheries GIS Specialist) and Blue Earth County staff, Mike Krosch, Julie Conrad, Scott Salsbury and Stacey Feser.

November 5, 2015 - Meeting to discuss wetland planning and agriculture with Joe Smentek, MN Soybean Growers Director of Public Affairs Attorney and BEC/City of Mankato Planning Commission member, and Blue Earth County staff, Julie Conrad and Scott Salsbury.

November 24, 2015 – Work session with City of Mankato engineering (WCA TEP member) and planning staff to discuss wetland planning and Greenprint. Attended by City of Mankato staff, Mark Konz, Michael McCarty, Molly Westman, and Blue Earth County staff, Julie Conrad and Scott Salsbury.

December 18, 2015 – Meeting with ISG Manager of Environmental Services, Travis Fristad, on wetland plan and WCA flexibility. Attended

by ISG staff, Travis Fristad, and Blue Earth County staff, Julie Conrad and Scott Salisbury.

March 18, 2016 – Work session with City of Mankato planning staff to discuss wetland planning and Greenprint. Attended by City of Mankato staff, Paul Vogel and Mark Konz, and Blue Earth County staff, Scott Salisbury and Julie Conrad.

May 12, 2016 – Meeting with Minnesota Pheasants, Blue Earth County Chapter about wetland planning and Greenprint. Attended by Minnesota Pheasants, Blue Earth County Chapter Board, Blue Earth County staff, Julie Conrad, and Blue Earth County SWCD staff, Jerad Bach.

July 14, 2016 – Work session with City Mankato about Greenprint corridors and wetland management classifications. Attended by City of Mankato staff, Molly Westman and Mark Konz, and Blue Earth County staff, Julie Conrad and Scott Salisbury.

August 10, 2016 - Information Meeting with local farmers about wetland planning and wetland functions. Attended by farmers invited to the meeting, SWCD staff Jerad Bach, and Blue Earth County staff, Julie Conrad and Scott Salisbury.

August 12, 2016 – Work session with City of Mankato planning staff. Attended by City of Mankato staff, Molly Westman and Mark Konz, and Blue Earth County staff, Julie Conrad.

August 17, 2016 – Work session with Blue Earth County Public Works/Highway staff to discuss wetland plan and replacement sites. Attended by Mike Krosch, Scott Salisbury and Julie Conrad.

August 18, 2016 – Work session with City of Mankato Community Development Director, Planning and Engineering staff to discuss wetland plan classification and modifications to WCA. Attended by City of Mankato staff, Paul Vogel, Mark Konz, Michael McCarty and

Molly Westman, and Blue Earth County staff, Julie Conrad and Scott Salisbury.

WCA TEP – 5 meetings

List of Participants and Dates

April 16, 2013 – Blue Earth County WCA TEP Meeting – Discussion of Wetland Plan and functional assessment. Attended by Blue Earth County staff, Stacey Feser, Mike Krosch and Julie Conrad, DNR staff, Leo Getsfried, and BWSR staff, Jeremy Maul.

May 1, 2013 – Meeting with Mankato WCA TEP to discuss wetland plan. Attended by City of Mankato staff, Paul Vogel and Mark Konz. SWCD staff Jerad Bach, and Blue Earth County staff, Julie Conrad and Stacey Feser.

January 3, 2017 – Meeting to discuss wetland plan with BWSR staff: Les Lemm and Jeremy Maul, City of Mankato staff, Mark Konz and Molly Westman, and Blue Earth County staff Scott Fichtner, Tim Grant, Mike Schulte, Scott Salisbury and Julie Conrad.

January 11, 2017 – Joint City of Mankato and Blue Earth County TEP meeting to discuss wetland plan. TEP members attending were: Michael McCarty (City of Mankato), Mike Schulte (Blue Earth County), Jerad Bach (SWCD), Dan Giralomo (DNR), Ken Powell and Jeremy Maul (BWSR). Also attending was: City of Mankato staff, Mark Konz and Molly Westman, and Blue Earth County staff Tim Grant, Scott Salisbury and Julie Conrad.

January 19, 2017 - Joint City of Mankato and Blue Earth County TEP meeting to discuss wetland plan. TEP members attending were: Michael McCarty (City of Mankato), Mike Schulte (Blue Earth County), Jerad Bach (SWCD), Dan Giralomo (DNR), Ken Powell and Jeremy Maul (BWSR). Also attending were: City of Mankato staff, Mark Konz and Molly Westman, and Blue Earth County staff Tim Grant, Scott Salisbury and Julie Conrad.