Third Crop Phosphorus Reduction Effort
Steering Committee Meeting
September 15, 2015

1. Cover Crop Learning Tour
   The Cover Crop Learning Tour was held on September 15, 2015 at the Ackermann farm. During the lunch break, Cover Crop Steering Committee members met. In attendance were Randy Vancura, Loren Clarke, Vern Uit de Flesch, Dorothy Ulbricht, Mike LaMaack, Ruth Putnam, Catherine Wegehaupt, and Jan Voit.

2. Opening
   Introductions were given.

3. Objective Question
   What is one new thing you learned about cover crops?
   • It will take five years to show what they will do.
   • Water filtration.
   • Establishment doesn’t look that good.
   • Pay attention to herbicide used.
   • All of this is new to us, haven’t tried any cover crops yet.

4. Reflective Question
   What is the high point from today’s learning tour?
   • Infiltration (unanimous)

   What is the low point of today’s learning tour?
   • Wind.
   • So many variables in how to manager.
   • Not much talk about costs involved.

5. Interpretive Question
   What do all of the things discussed mean for our committee?
   • More information is needed about costs and programs available to promote cover crops. Profit is important when thinking about using cover crops.
   • Infiltration as a selling point. But, is the infiltration a result of no-till and the whole system or the cover crops?

6. Decisional Question
   What is the next thing we should do as a committee?
   • Tour of cover crop sites after harvest and in the spring. The tour should include farmers. This subject will be discussed with Jerry and Nancy Ackermann to determine willingness and possible dates. Considerable discussion was held regarding how best to reach potential attendees. Texting and emailing are best, but that information is not readily available.
• A local agronomist perspective is necessary. Randy Vancura is an agronomist and serves on the committee. He said that he is somewhat reluctant to recommend widespread usage of cover crops until he knows more about them.

• More information is needed about herbicide products. There are herbicides with residual that affect the crop planted in the spring. Landowners need to have more information and think about this up front, rather than waiting until they are ready to spread the cover crop and then realizing that it may not grow.

• The opportunity to hear from a livestock producer that grazes cover crops. It was suggested to contact Brian Post about his experiences.

• On-farm, real world information. Research plots are good. But having a side-by-side trial of two forty-acre fields would be more beneficial. This could be done through a grant application or possibly as something funded through the Heron Lake Watershed District.

7. **Other**
   Since not all of the committee members were present, a review of the purpose was given. The steering committee is charged with developing recommendations for staff on how to better promote cover crops and for HLWD program(s) or policy on cover crop implementation.

   Discussion was held regarding crop insurance requirements and the Haney soil test.

8. **Adjournment**
   The meeting adjourned at 12:45 p.m.

   Jan Voit
   District Administrator