

**West Fork Des Moines River Watershed
Total Maximum Daily Load Implementation Project
Semi-Annual Meeting
Wednesday, May 9, 2012**

1. Welcome and Introductions

Jan Voit, Heron Lake Watershed District (HLWD) opened the meeting at 9:30 a.m. Introductions were given. In attendance were Brian Nyborg, Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD); Al Langseth, Kathy Henderscheidt, and Wayne Smith, Nobles County; Ben Crowell, Jackson County; Andy Geiger, Cottonwood County; Randy Markl, Department of Natural Resources; Kay Clark, Cottonwood SWCD; Ross Behrends and Jan Voit, HLWD; Katherine Pekarek-Scott, Brent Riess, and Toby Sunderland, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA); and Don Louwagie

2. Project Overview

Jan Voit gave a project overview. She provided background information regarding the West Fork Des Moines River (WFDNR) Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Report and Implementation Plan. She also provided an update on the Environmental Protection Agency 319 grant application.

The WFDNR TMDL Implementation Project was awarded on October 1, 2011. The major activity in the grant work plan is conducting a Level III Feedlot Inventory in the WFDNR portions of Nobles, Jackson, Murray, and Cottonwood Counties. The grant calls for completing 80 percent of the feedlots in a three-year period. The county feedlot officers' time is being used as match for employing a full-time watershed coordinator to assist with the inventory and to carry out the education tasks in the work plan. The education tasks include a brochure, website, producer workshop in 2013, project updates, and organizing and hosting semi-annual meetings.

The HLWD is the project sponsor. The watershed coordinator will be a HLWD employee. Jan Voit is responsible for grant administration and reporting. To date, the brochure has been drafted, website started, first semi-annual meeting organized and held, and applications have been received for the watershed coordinator position. Interviews will be done on May 14, 2012.

3. Minnesota Feedlot Annual Runoff Model (MinnFARM)

Ben Crowell provided a PowerPoint presentation from the University of Minnesota Extension regarding the MinnFARM computer model. MinnFARM is used to evaluate the runoff from open lot feedlots, uses site specific feedlot data to estimate annual pollutant loading to nearby waters, and utilizes the results to determine if a feedlot is out of regulatory compliance and prioritizes the need for state and federal cost-share assistance for feedlot fixes.

To build the model the program takes into account six locations. Those include the feedlot, possible buffers, end of treatment (property boundary, road ditch, intermittent stream, or water of concern), area 2 (water that runs on to the feedlot), area 3 (water

that runs into the buffer), and water of concern (lake, stream, drainage ditch, wetland, tile intake, or sink hole). The amount of pollutants of any type is determined through the use of the MinnFARM model. The runoff from the six treatment areas is calculated through various formulas in the computer model. The outputs are based on inputs of farm site layout, management, and rainfall data. The output data is only as good as the input data. MinnFARM is only one means of site assessment. There is always a need for use of best professional judgment.

4. Level III Feedlot Inventory

Brent Riess presented information regarding a Level III Feedlot Inventory. There are approximately 26,800 registered feedlots in the State of Minnesota. About 1,200 of those require a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination Permit (NPDES) that is regulated by the MPCA.

MPCA regulates the collection, transportation, storage, processing, and disposal of manure and other livestock waste through Minnesota Statutes 115 and 116 and various rules. The first rules were developed in 1971. There were subsequent updates in 1974, 1978, and 2000.

A Feedlot Inventory Guidebook was developed for county staff that implements feedlot rules. This guidebook explains the difference between a Level I, Level II, and Level III Feedlot Inventory.

A Level I Inventory identifies where a feedlot site is located that contains confined animals, usually by driving past. A Level II Inventory, which is comparable to county feedlot registration data, requires the type and number of animals, proximity to surface water, whether there are open lots or liquid manure storage, and the distance to any wells. A Level III Inventory implements the same requirements as a Level II Inventory and adds the need for a MinnFARM evaluation, manure management plan for sites with more than 300 animal units, and manure application records.

A Level III Feedlot Inventory results in identifying sites with pollution hazards, prioritizing sites by environmental impact, estimating staff time to correct the problems, estimating costs to correct the problems, and is a tool to efficiently use cost-share money.

Brian Nyborg asked a question regarding the progress to date for the inspections. He commented that with the new budget process required by the Board of Water and Soil Resources, the SWCDs and HLWD need to look at budget requests three years in advance. Ben Crowell commented that they are still working on inspections. At this point, the county feedlot officers would only be able to guess at the number of feedlots or the amount of cost-share needed to bring them into compliance.

5. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 10:20 a.m.