

**Red Lake Watershed District
Pine Lake Area Project Work Team
Meeting Notes
June 17, 2016**

The meeting was convened by Myron Jesme, Administrator, Red Lake Watershed District (RLWD) at 11:00 a.m. The following Project Team members (or their alternates) were present:

Myron Jesme (RLWD)	Theresa Olson (MnDNR)
Nate Dalager (HDR)	Nick Phillips (Clearwater SWCD)
Cory Gieseke (HDR)	Keith Weston (NRCS)
Les Torgerson (RLWD)	Denise Oakes (MPCA)
Terry Sorenson (RLWD)	Matt Fischer (BWSR)
Lee Coe (RLWD)	Tammy Baden (MnDNR)
Dave Rave (MnDNR)	Craig Jarnot (Corps) via telephone
Dan Thul (MnDNR)	Les Roos (Landowner)

Nate Dalager discussed the NRCS funding process and how it relates to the Pine Lake Area Project. Discussion was held on the Informational Meeting to be held on July 12th in Gonvick. Dalager stated that today's meeting is to update the Project Team on activities that have occurred and receive input.

Dalager reviewed the March 11, 2016 meeting minutes.

Dalager noted that since the March meeting, the District continued to meet with the MnDNR and landowners working on retention sites and working through some of the public involvement pieces, and coordination with the MnDNR on Site F.

Dalager stated that Site F also known as the Little Pine Lake WMA is southeast of Pine Lake. A meeting was held with MnDNR staff to discuss how Site F would function as it relates to the project and FDR. Dalager stated that the MnDNR is willing to operate this project area for FDR with certain terms with little or no physical changes to the structure itself. Any changes to the structure would be purely to make it a safer structure for operation. The Site F structure has an emergency spillway and embankment, with a structure that could be drawn down to approximately 1323. There is a 2' wedge/bounce of flood control for about 260 ac.ft. of gated storage, which translates into 1.8" of retention of floodwaters that could be kept out of Pine Lake for a particular event. Dave Rave stated that Tammy Baden started drafting an Operation and Maintenance Agreement. The agreement would need to be reviewed by the DNR Regional Office, but does reflect what was discussed at the meeting. Myron Jesme expressed the use of 1988 datum vs. 1929 datum. Dalager asked Rave about potential June rains, if there was bounce would we be able to operate the structure? Rave responded yes, we could talk about it as they don't want to see flooding downstream. There is a five year term on this the preliminary agreement. Changes could be made by mutual agreement of both parties.

Keith Weston asked what is this doing to Pine Lake as far as our overall purpose and need. Dalager stated that after the July 12 Informational Meeting, we will present a draft Purpose and

Need based on comments from the meeting. Weston asked if the Purpose and Need is for both water quality and quantity. Jesme stated that yes, it really is for both as flooding gives you issues for both purposes. Les Torgerson discussed the immediate issues with controlling flooding on the cabins and water levels getting too low on Pine Lake, along with incorporating the 20% flood retention on the Red Lake River.

Denice Oakes discussed the water quality preliminary assessment for the Clearwater River watershed and Pine Lake area. Oakes noted that it looks like it will not be impaired for aquatic life, it is also not impaired for aquatic recreation. Oakes noted that a meeting will be held next week to look at impairments. Dalager stated that the water quality is quite good and we do not want to make it worse or cause more erosion.

Dalager asked for feedback from Craig Jarnot on permitting for Site F and also asked for advice in narrowing this down for Purpose and Need. Discussion was held on the potential for renovations to the dam and potential for upstream retention. Jarnot stated that we have to look at what is the main problem, how we arrive here and why is it a problem. He further stated that it sounds like to him the main concern is lake levels on Pine Lake. From a Purpose and Need he would look at that as what are the problems there, etc. There can be secondary benefits to a project like water quality. Jarnot recommended that when we start talking Purpose and Need it would be related to Pine Lake water levels with the issues that occur because of the flashiness of the lake. Weston mentioned quantifying the cabins it could protect and shoreline. Jarnot stated the actual statement itself probably could be vague, ie. manage water levels on Pine Lake.

Theresa Olson stated that it may help to break it into two parts, Need and then the Purpose. Start with the need-flooding, lower lake levels, bullet the needs out and then take the need and flip that to a one or two purpose.

Torgerson stated that the overall purpose of this idea is FDR and protecting downstream and other communities. Site F is like the Step 1 of the beginning of this process, are we taking one project at a time or are we looking at the whole thing?

Matt Fischer talked about secondary benefits.

Jarnot stated that we can recognize in the Purpose and Need the benefits downstream and how it will get to reduction at the Red River. When that becomes the main purpose of the project you will open up to a large geographical area for ultimately they can only permit the least practical alternatives. They have to assess all alternatives that would not affect any aquatic resource. We need to identify local issues and then at the same time we can say we are helping with the 20% Flood Reduction on the Red River.

Weston stated that for the 566 effort, we are looking at more local issues/water resources. Dalager noted that the 20% effort is still a vision but it's not something the 404 will measure, the NRCS if you have two large of an area or too general of problem, cumulatively these all can have a goal towards the 20% reduction.

Dalager noted that there is some obvious components of the project, like the dam that is already there. Site F where we would change the Operating Plan and then we have the other sites in the

upper watershed. Dalager stated that the project does not end with Site F. Dalager asked Jarnot if we change the operation of Site F does that require a permit? Jarnot replied that if there is no discharge or dredge material there would be no other impacts or permit required. They would look at impacts to changing the management. He does not see any permitting issues with changing the management of Little Pine Lake WMA-Site F. If the management does not meet your Purpose and Need, and have to look at other sites, they would look at aquatic resources, it makes it more difficult for permitting. Since this is all MnDNR, with MnDNR WACA jurisdiction for Little Pine WMA-Site f.

Weston asked if Site F has bounced the two feet in the past? Rave replied yes it has. It will not change the wetland type. Weston discussed if we are going backwards/sideways because of the funding opportunity for planning and implementation. Weston noted that one of the most critical steps is the Purpose and Need.

Olson stated that we need to remember any phases and connected actions need to be considered. They would all be considered when looking at NEPA which would require an EAW. Dalager reiterated that we are doing an EA.

Dalager questioned if the modification of the Pine Lake Outlet structures does that evoke permitting. We have a precise Purpose and Need, and have connective actions 4-5 components to the project. Would this fall under one permit and some have more challenges? Jarnot stated for a 404 Permit they have a reviewing as one project all the work that would be done to address Pine Lake and water levels is everything that would be done for that would be captured under one permit. Jarnot further stated that if we are looking at downstream erosion we could go either way on it if it does not include a discharge it would not be required, but for the most part one permit. Fischer asked if we can get anything done until the entire planning process is done. Dalager asked if that means we can't operate Site F until the permit is issued for the entire project? Jarnot stated that if it does not include the fill or discharge we would not need a permit. No permit is need for management of a WMA. Olson stated that if we do things separate we may still need to look at an environmental review.

Dalager stated that we almost wrote the Purpose and Need today. Dalager asked who would like to be on the Purpose and Need task force. Weston stated that we will want to wait until after the Information meeting on July 12th. Need to do the scoping process for additional input. We need to document that we had landowners upstream looking for flood storage but they were not big enough sites that would work. Dan Thul stated that we may still want to look at those sites.

Dalager stated that we will be contacting a couple individuals to review the Purpose and Need before it goes to Jarnot. Weston stated that they are working with the Jarnot and the Corps so they don't have totally different processes. As watershed planning, both the NRCS and Corps have Purpose and Need and they want to work closely on it. Jarnot stated that he would be happy to participate in the Purpose and Need discussions. Discussion was held on working behind the scenes on one statement and submit it. Weston stated that he would like to participate.

Olson stated that if the Purpose and Need and the EA would be used for an EAW, she would like to help with it.

Dalager stated that as we wrap up, we need to consider that there may be differing opinions on Pine Lake and what its best natural features are as it relates to; fisheries, wildlife habitat, recreational activities, etc. The MnDNR is going to have an internal meeting about what their goals area. We need to come to a consensus of the goals for Pine Lake above the Purpose and Need. Jesme stated that we will operate Pine Lake to protect fish and wildlife habitat. Rave stated that the question is what does it do to raise the water levels 6". Are the landowners concerned about flooding and too little water? Somewhere along the line the Purpose and Need statement has to have how we are going to address both of those items-too little or too much of water. Jesme stated that most of the low waters are due to no rain and there is nothing we can do about that. Rave discussed what 6" of water could do to harm vegetation. Torgerson questioned if the water levels go up 6" doesn't it provide more environment around the lake? Dalager stated that if we change the dam at Pine Lake and hold water levels higher for water supply reason, does the Purpose and Need have to identify the disagreement with the management is that part of the Purpose and Need or is it part of the consensus? Jarnot thought it could be part of the Purpose and Need, could have dual components and can be included in the statement itself. Dalager asked if the MnDNR could meet internally in the near future to look at this. Rave stated that they can try. It is an area, we the team, does not have consensus.

Badin stated that by adding the 6" of water, it would further move the cattail ring out. The more water on the lake the less vegetation will be in the lake. We take out the vegetation, we will have water quality issues. Dalager stated that we do have long term documentation of what it has been as the lake has already been doing a lot of this. If we raise the operating pool, will it actually change the level of the lake to any degree looking at history is this a big deal or not.