

Little Rock Creek Water Use Conflict – Minnesota DNR

Weekly Stakeholder Meeting Minutes

Date: November 6, 2025
Time: 8:00 AM
Location: Virtual (Microsoft Teams)

Attendees:

- Jason Moeckel – DNR Project Manager
- Glen Champion – DNR Modeler
- Brent Beste – Project Management support and coordination
- Uma Vempati – Kimley-Horn Project Manager
- Hans Holmberg – LimnoTech
- Gary Johnson – University of Idaho
- Wally Parkins – Royal Farms
- Jocelyn Schlichting – Schlichting Farms
- Anna Bregier – Prairie Farms

Minutes:

• Modeling Updates

- LimnoTech provided a process to convert deep infiltration from SWB to Modflow inputs.
- Glen incorporated additional SWB layers to fit the provided template.
- Status: Early-stage Modflow runs; inputs are configured and ready to execute.
- Event translation and SWB soil-water inputs (Open the DOM process)
 - Workflow translates monthly permit volumes into event-based inputs per permit.
 - Generates SWB inputs representing water added to soil.
 - Status: Workflow functioning; poised for use in Modflow runs.
- Modeling updates, diversion calculations, and Sustainable Diversion Limit (SDL)
 - Glen to present model update approach and reanalysis on 11/13 (updated results not yet available). Will explain objectives: improving model fidelity before producing impact results.
 - Updates include extended model period, enhanced crop-specific ET representation, annual crop variability, and rotations to better estimate recharge and potential mitigation impacts.
 - Anticipated stakeholder questions will focus on flow and diversion accuracy.
 - SDL methodology and relationship to reference scenarios to be reiterated.
 - Considering trees as an alternative crop in the reference model; impacts on reference flow and diversion calculations unknown until results are finalized.
 - Aim to have preliminary results by the December 18 meeting, pending review by Limnotech and Gary.
 - Post-model update, DNR will revise the commissioner's order and internal metrics to align with new results.

- **Survey Updates**

- a. Survey data and aerial photo review of irrigation systems
 - Multi-year Google Earth imagery used to review irrigation systems within the zone of irrigation influence.
 - Objective: Identify systems with corner/bender arms and basic characteristics for classification and potential adjustment.
 - Findings: Air-photo-based arm length and variability estimates inform prevalence but are uncertain for precise classification; limited recent system updates observed.
- b. Proposed classification and adjustment approaches for permits
 - Option 1: Two-category adjustment (corner/bender vs. straight systems) using average percent error from metered systems in each category.
 - Option 2: Uniform adjustment factor applied across all permits (building on prior 20% round-one adjustment), then evaluate impact.
 - Emphasis on caution to avoid over-assumption from survey/photo data; flow metering is the most accurate method.
- c. Debate on using a flat across-the-board reduction
 - Suggestion: Apply a flat reduction (e.g., 25%) to reported volumes to gauge model sensitivity before deeper parsing. Percent change direction matters (measured-to-reported vs. reported-to-measured).
 - Agreement: Testing a uniform adjustment is sensible as an initial sensitivity step; prior modeling used a 20% adjustment with noticeable impact on computed diversions and theoretical no-use flows.
- d. Irrigation schedule spreadsheet and baseflow impacts to Little Rock Creek
 - Spreadsheet modeling used capture fractions to assess baseflows at three gauges under different irrigation schedules.
 - Conclusion: Pause further development; await results from updated model inputs before revisiting.

- **Impoundment Areas Discussion**

- a. Outreach to impoundment area property owners
 - Four phone meetings scheduled with landowners (Joe Kuklok, Derek Wawack, Dave Kloss, Don Kloss) to assess willingness to participate in 11/13 panel and gather preliminary info prior to November 13.
 - Objective: peer examples may prompt other stakeholders to offer suitable land.
 - Allocate ~30 minutes for impoundment discussion contingent on engagement outcomes.
 - Derek contacted DNR/team offering land for a potential impoundment; plan to discuss concepts and site specifics.
- b. Contact information shared for Rice Area Sportsman's Club and Ken Warzecha
 - Email: jeffp@sentra-sota.com (verification may be required).
 - Phone: 320-259-2218 (Rice Area Sportsman's Club listing).
 - Company line (Sentra Soda Sheet Metal): 320-252-3992 (alternative)
- c. Stakeholder coordination and impoundment prioritization criteria

- Draft evaluation criteria for prioritizing impoundment locations along Little Rock Creek: primary soil type (A=1, B=0.5, C/D lower), zone of influence, tributary presence, watershed size.
 - Emphasis on fewer, larger impoundments over many small impoundments.
 - Standardized scoring framework: each criterion scored 0–1; maximum composite score = 5.
 - Heat map visualization created (4–5 maroon, 3–4 red, etc.) to track high-potential parcels.
 - Identified primary owners, parcel acreage, soil type, and watershed parameters to rank outreach priority.
 - Initial positive response from Derek Wawack; meeting scheduled with the Kloss family, and Kuklok Family.
 - Plan to start with high-scoring parcels; if engagement stalls, move to next tier.
- **Stream Augmentation Discussion**
 - a. Wally indicated a smaller group call may be most productive; most stakeholders likely have not engaged deeply with the white paper.
 - b. Plan for Jason and Wally to conduct a focused, smaller discussion to address concerns and scientific rationale.
 - c. White paper available on the website; link to be emailed to Wally.
- **Stakeholder Ideas**
 - a. Beaver management, watershed interactions, and potential spring water transfer
 - Wildlife/fisheries engagement on beaver presence/management and historical management in Buckman Creek–Rice–Skunk Lake area.
 - Cross-watershed transfer concept linked to surplus spring water supporting Little Rock Creek (per prior suggestions by Dean Zimmerman).
 - Wildlife staff concerns about moving water between watersheds due to management objectives.
 - Clarification: concept focuses on surplus spring flows and not worsening low flows in Rice Creek or Skunk Lake.
 - Ongoing evaluation using modeling and engineering concepts.
 - b. Stakeholder coordination on concepts (Dean and Randy)
 - Wally conducted follow-up conversations with Dean and Randy.
 - Plan for Dean and Randy to re-present their concepts for evaluation using modeling and engineering frameworks.
- **November 13 Meeting Agenda and Logistics**
 - a. Logistics and opening: setup prior to 2:00 PM start; Jason to provide context and stage-setting.
 - b. Summer progress recap and stakeholder call outcomes.
 - c. Stream augmentation topic removed from the November 13 agenda; consider December or separate discussion if needed.
 - d. Brent to present survey results. More detailed insights expected by November 13.
 - e. Glen to provide a brief status presentation, highlighting ongoing work and next steps despite limited results.
- **Communications Updates**

- a. Website updates and communication enhancements
 - Web team implementing updates: posting upcoming meetings aligned with GovDelivery announcements; adding stakeholder meeting agendas and notes (UMA); including GovDelivery notices as expandable tabs.
 - Updates expected within the next day or two, pending internal processes.
 - Posting the agenda on the website to proceed quickly once approved.
 - b. GovDelivery and email outreach plan
 - GovDelivery announcement planned for Monday, contingent on agenda finalization; includes link to posted agenda.
 - Immediate GovDelivery/email outreach to existing lists, including permit list contacts not subscribed to GovDelivery.
- **Action Items/Next Steps**
 - a. Glen C. - Prepare brief status presentation for next Thursday summarizing current progress and near-term modeling steps.
 - b. Brent B. - Refine survey and aerial-photo classifications where feasible; prepare updated survey summary slides for the November 13 meeting.
 - c. Remove direct stream augmentation discussion from the November 13 agenda; plan separate focused discussion between Jason and Wally.
 - d. Jason M. - Email the white paper link on stream augmentation to Wally; note website access.
 - e. Glen C. - Prepare clear, concise overview of model updates, crop/ET adjustments, extended period, and SDL/diversion recalculation approach.
 - f. Kimley-Horn - Continue stakeholder outreach to high-scoring impoundment parcels; schedule and conduct meetings with Derek Wawak, Kloss family, Sportsman Club, and others.
 - g. Kimley-Horn - Prepare a 30-minute impoundment discussion segment for November 13, contingent on stakeholder traction; invite willing landowners to share brief remarks.
 - h. Kimley-Horn - Confirm and disseminate corrected meeting dates: December 18 and January 22; propose March 12 for early spring meeting.
 - i. Uma V. and Brent B. - Finalize the meeting agenda by Monday; post to the website once finalized and include the link in the next GovDelivery message.
 - j. Brent B. - Implement website updates (meeting listings, stakeholder agendas and notes, expandable GovDelivery tabs) within the next day or two.
- **Next Bi-Weekly Stakeholder Virtual Meeting**
 - a. November 20, 2025 at 8:00am (Teams)
- **Next Workshop Meetings**
 - a. November 13 – Public Meeting – 2pm to 5pm in Rice, MN
 - b. December 18 – Confirmed
 - c. January 22 – Confirmed
 - d. March 12 – Tentative; not to be published via GovDelivery or public channels yet