

Red Lake Watershed District

“Words of Wisdom” FOR THE 10 YEAR OVERALL PLAN

Participants at the “Kick-Off Meeting” [12-18-03] for the Red Lake Watershed District 10-Year Overall Plan Update were asked to share their hopes, fears, and other “words of wisdom” to guide this planning process. Here is their advice...

Hopes

PURPOSE...that the committees do not loose track of the purpose of the overall plan...that we broaden perspectives, develop a comprehensive understanding of the issues, and are proactive rather than reactive

AGREEMENT...there will be agreement (or consensus) between CAC and TAC...that we (CAC and TAC) can agree on a 10 year plan...that we can reconcile personal and professional values...that groups, individuals and agencies will recognize compromise and that compromise will be used

PARTICIPATION...there will be active participation by ALL members...people will buy into the process and not dynamite it, people attend meetings consistently, and there will be active participation in meetings (no lost time retracing old information)

COMMUNICATION...that members bring ideas from others...that individuals will bring back concerns and information...that we get information to outside sources via e-mail or website

BALANCE...keep balance between various competing interests in prioritizing areas of concerns (i.e. ag vs. non ag, urban vs. rural, lgu’s vs. state)...and remember that ALL interests have value

RESPONSIBILITY...be concise...get topics on the table...provide information to base decisions on...no door slamming or chair banging

POSITIVE OUTCOME... hope for clear goals that address concerns of the watershed...a positive outcome for projects and that costs do not exceed benefits and that local people are being heard...ability to significantly contribute on a long term basis.

Fears

That agencies will dominate ideas and discussion...my concern is that this may be totally different from Citizen Advisory Committee point of view or outlook on projects

That agency ideas will dominate discussion and project design (i.e. over emphasizing environmental enhancement over practicality and common sense, and the overlooking of the rights and concerns of landowners where projects are constructed)

Fear that property rights won’t be protected...that we get caught up in the planning process and forget the people as a whole and their constitutional rights

Long term plans...10 years is a long time...need to change the plan as you go or as needed

Turf battles...too many conflicting interests to achieve usable plan

That short term desires will overshadow long term needs

Losing focus on purpose of overall plan

I fear that we'll effectively plan for last year

Too many regulations to construct functional project with low cost/benefit, and achieves desirable project goals [specific to a construction project]

Goals

The planning process needs input from everyone...the end result cannot be agency driven, rather it must reflect the local folk's ideas and solutions to the problem

The TAC and CAC members should identify what and where problems exist in the watershed/sub-watershed before goals are set

Need to come to an agreement on how to protect existing natural resources, restore degraded resources and prevent further degradation of resources

The #1 goal should be flood control issues

Website is a good way to share information broadly...suggestions on how to make effective use of the website (offered by several different individuals) include:

- ü Website includes presentations (from CAC/TAC meetings, open houses, etc.)
- ü Website includes a "comments section" for feedback
- ü Website is related to community
- ü Website is updated often
- ü Access to web at various locations (somehow make information easily available to sub-watershed communities) for those who don't have access at home

Meeting preparation is important...ALL should come prepared...i.e. keep website updated, prepare/review handouts and maps, etc.

Be as un-bureaucratic as possible. Do not overstep your expertise.

Our goal should be to keep in mind concerns of the entire watershed

We need good goals to go by and reach fair results for a project

The goals identified should be achievable and practical

I hope the 10 Year Plan actually considers 200-500 year possibilities

We should set timelines, budgets (estimate), and identify high priority (top 5) sites and solutions

Goal: Deal with it.

Overall Advice

Planning process needs to be uniform or overall consistent across sub-watersheds even though each sub-watershed has separate issues

Be concise. Don't beat around the bush. Be open to those who don't fully understand. Limit acronyms. Explain prior to use. Be open to others ideas...people.... groups.

Cooperation is very important

How will we deal with controversial issues? (i.e. passing water vs. retaining, agendas of participants, flooding emphasis vs. water quality emphasis, etc.)

We need to remember...

1. Anything to do with water tends to be controversial.
2. Water is an important resource for human use and irrigation. If excess floodwaters can be impounded for later use it kind of helps justify the money spent to store water.
3. Downstream flooding causes a lot of damage when there is too much.
4. If #2 and #3 can be coordinated some flood control costs can be partially offset by increased economic activity generated by increased agricultural production which can provide jobs. There is a hug reservoir (Red Lake and a smaller one Clearwater Lake, already there. Other areas could probably be developed. With tiled land becoming more common place, the potential to irrigate that land during dry periods could use up a lot of excess runoff if it could just be impounded in a way that it could be used later for irrigation. Just look at North Dakota and the interest in the Garrison Diversion. Most area crops can use an extra 2-6".

We should try to...

- ü Return natural functions to the landscape where practical
- ü Think long term with low maintenance solutions
- ü Develop broad based understanding of the complicated nature of water management in this watershed
- ü Recognize past solutions that worked and did not work in meeting goals

"We are short lived people with even shorter memories" – my dad, Amos Gust

I wish we knew how many people/letters will be living/working in all the different sub-basins and how much subsurface water they will be using/needng....10+ years from now.

On a light, yet very much serious note...

Raisins in the chocolate cookies are a fear of mine!!!

I fear the Vikes will not choke...I hope we don't