

Attendees: Peter Nowak, Fred Madison, Andy Morton, Marty Krueger, Mark Cupp, Brent Bergstrom, Ken Johnson, Dennis Polivka, Kathy Schauf, Don Greenwood, Don Hartung, Residents

Peter Nowak introduced the topic and the process. Krueger introduced members of the local governing committee that advise and work with Nowak of the Nelson Institute to develop a process for exploring solutions to ongoing water related issues in the Spring Green area. The committee is comprised of representatives from the County of Sauk: Marty Krueger, Don Stevens, Brent Bergstrom, Kathy Schauf, the County of Richland: Ann Greenheck, the Town of Spring Green: Dennis Polivka, the State Department of Natural Resources: Ken Johnson, Andy Morton and Local representatives: Don Hartung, Mark Cupp, Don Greenwood, Greg Jewell.

The ground rules for public comment were established.

Nowak presented the results of the work done by the multi-disciplinary efforts of the Nelson Institute. This was synthesized into three ideas for the consideration of the community.

First Idea: Climate change –wetter and more volatile. It was noted that climate change is the biggest contributor to the changing issues that result in flooding. This area is experiencing an increase in precipitation of around 15% since 1950. More extreme rain events have been documented. Probability of extreme rainfall events is increased. Adaptation strategies – a risk / consequence approach to develop infrastructure to lessen the impact of another significant rain event.

Second Idea: Study the feasibility of the formation of a drainage district as a tool for agricultural drainage. There are potential issues and concerns that will need to be addressed in the development of the district. On March 07, 2011 the drainage board will be meeting at the Tri-County Airport, at 1:00 p.m. to begin the process. They will discuss boundaries, drainage, most effective design for future events and greatest benefit to the most citizens.

Third Idea: The role of impoundments. There is a belief that impoundments are the cause of groundwater flooding. It is proposed that this belief be tested by embarking upon a two year study of Bakkens Pond. Community members will be needed to collect data from the test wells. Coordination of the study will need to be discussed so that daily data is collected over a two year period. Volunteers need to be identified if the testing is to occur.

Doing nothing is a significant choice.

Public discussion revolved around the three issues and framed the ideas in the form of questions.

Alan Green: Question on pivots and culverts under Highway 14. Answer: minimal impact.

Bill Mertens: Would like us to focus on things that will work. Asked about the model that was proposed at the last meeting. Answer: Nowak answered that if the model is valid, the extended study will deal with perceptions.

Richard Volk: Questioned water quality and available DNR data regarding the agricultural ditch being proposed. Answer: Nowak indicated that there are potential concerns. They can be addressed as part of a drainage district.

Art Carlson: Has groundwater gone up? Answer: Yes.

Pam Kruschke: Potential for property devaluation? Answer: Literature shows that valuation will increase for agricultural property. A drainage district may also be of benefit to homes as well if it reduces potential for wet basements. Potential issues are litter and access by children and pets.

Don Golembiewski: Are we going to get an update on Big Hollow, and how will the two work together? Answer: 30% of surface water will be captured with the Big Hollow.

Mary Merlie: Confusion over the two drainage structures and looking at them as a whole. Tax bill went up 28% due to cost for Big Hollow? Concern over justification over increase in taxes. Answer: the two will ultimately be linked after the design issues are dealt with. It is unlikely that they can be dealt with separately. Polivka said the tax increases were based on loss of valuation due to flooding, the cost of the new fire station as well as the cost of the flood study which will be paid off this year.

Milton Sprecher: Cost of maintaining the "ditches". Gave historical account of the impacts of dikes in the area.

Don Pulvermacher: Provided background information on flooding. Recommended that a more extensive study of all the impoundments, not just Bakken's Pond, should be undertaken. (Volunteer to monitor).

Kolby Hirth: Frustration over draining of Bakkens Pond. Concern over time and money being spent to prove or disprove theories that are dubious. Answer: Existing science says that there is no way impoundments can cause the flooding by the airport. Bakkens is drained on a regular basis as part of maintenance. We are coinciding the research with the regular maintenance of the pond, so that the discussion can move forward.

Roger Reynolds: Losses can be compensated by the drainage district. There are more ideas that can be explored.

Joel Gaalswyk: If nothing is done a large part of the town becomes a wetland. What is the value of the crops that would not be produced, and what is the value of the farms? What happens to property values if water continues to grow? Answer: Value of viable solution is essential.

Jerry Schmidt: Commented on water pressure. Soil is sand for around 200 feet.

Dave Radel: Growth of wetlands appears to be an ongoing issue. Answer: Yes it is an issue, and groundwater flooding is an issue that will need to be dealt with.

Jane Furchgott: Concern over water going into Bear Creek and what that will do to the volume of water in the creek. Concern over the impact to endangered species. Answer: No decisions on the outlet have been made, that will be part of the design of the project. These are the questions that will be asked and answered as a drainage district is undertaken. The book Wisconsin's Changing Climate: Impacts and Adaptation provides some answers on this topic.

Bill Mertens: Question on soils and ability to move water quicker with strategies like deep till. Answer: Pushing it down is not the answer. Deep till is a short term solution. If the aquifer is full it has nowhere to go.

Roger Reynolds: presented analogies that showed that water volumes are increased. Questioned community board behaviors that will elicit public involvement. Answer: Nowak requested that the drainage board would consider the timing of the meetings of the drainage board to be more convenient for the public to attend.

Dennis Polivka: problem is compounded due the breadth of the watershed, included the hills and runoff.

Alan Green: Water might be an opportunity and not a problem.

Marilyn Van lyke: commented on the harvesting of cattails.

Mary Merlie: collection versus draining. Answer: collection of water in headlands is cost prohibitive.

Don Brander: noted the concern over draws of irrigation systems on the aquifer. Answer: That conflict is still going on in central sands area of the state. When we talk about climate change we are talking about a system that is trying to find a new system of stability (gyroscope example).

Donna Stehling: Work with a number of non-profit groups that do data collection. It is difficult and problematic. You will need a large group and lots of coordination to make it work.