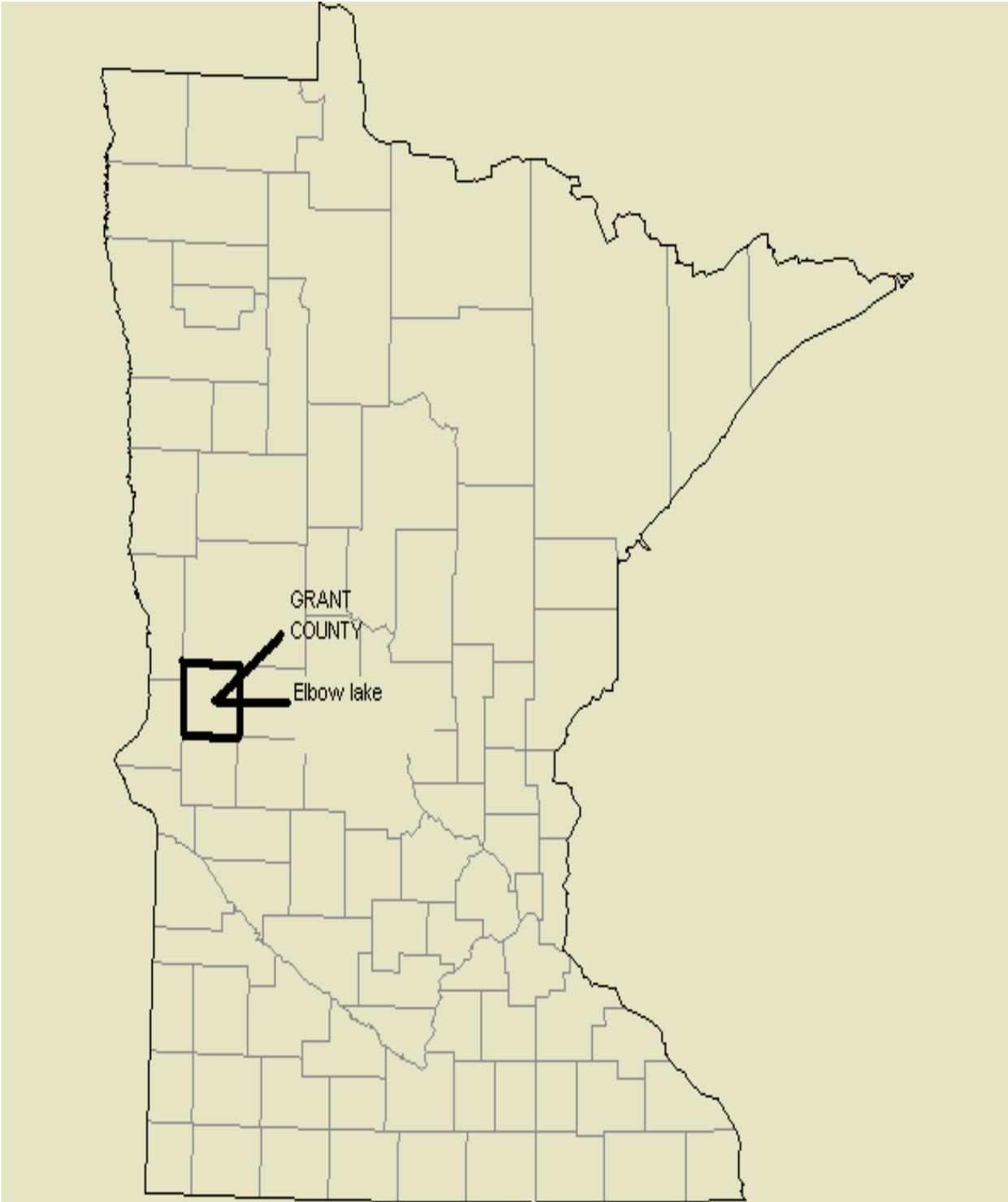


Appendix A

PRIORITY CONCERNS SCOPING DOCUMENT

FOR

GRANT COUNTY
LOCAL WATER MANAGEMENT PLAN



Appendix A

Introduction:

The population of Grant County is listed at 6,289 (2000 Census). The trend of population change shows a 12.3 percent decline in population from 1980 to 2000. However, future trend predictions indicate that the population will rise slightly by 2010 and beyond. Most of this increase is predicted to occur in the eastern tier of townships where the majority of Grant County surface waters are located. Based on the most recent land use data (1990 census of the land) land use in the county continues to remain primarily in agriculture. There are a total of 368,559 acres in the county, broken down to the following land use categories: 4,750 acres (1.3%) of Urban and Rural development, 294,199 acres (79.8%) of cultivated land, 26,975 acres (7.3%) of Pasture/Grassland, 1,578 acres (.4%) of Brush land, 10,305 acres (2.8%) of Forested land, 20,498 acres (5.6%) of Water, 10,117 acres (2.7%) Wetlands, and 137 acres in Gravel pits. Within the cultivated land there has been a significant change from predominantly close grown small grains in 1978 to predominantly row crops such as corn and soybeans in 2004.

The Grant Soil and Water Conservation District is the Local Government Unit (LGU) delegated to administer the Local Water Management Plan and to oversee completion of the update. A task force called the Environmental Advisory Council has been formed to guide the LGU and water plan update. The original Comprehensive Local Water Plan was adopted in May of 1990 and it has been updated once since its adoption. An update occurred in 1996 and a two year extension was granted in 2002 to extend the current plan until December 31st 2004.

Priority Concerns:

A number of water resource concerns were submitted to the Grant County Environmental Advisory Council (EAC). Many of these concerns had a common theme which allowed the EAC to arrive at the following priority concerns that will be addressed in the Water Plan Revision.

1. Contaminated runoff from both urban and agricultural land entering surface waters.
2. Excessive runoff water volumes from urban and agricultural land.
3. Management of shoreland areas and surface water use. Specifically, on natural environment lakes, rivers, and sensitive areas on recreational, and general development lakes.

Priority Concerns of Grant County were identified through the following process:

February 2004

February 4th, 2004 the Grant County Board of Commissioners signed a resolution to update the Comprehensive Local Water Plan. A meeting was held with Pete Waller of BWSR to discuss the update process and to receive BWSR input. A mailing with written notice was sent to all 16 townships; mayors of Elbow Lake, Barrett, Herman, Wendell, Hoffman, Ashby and Norcross; all members of the CLWP Environmental Advisory Council/task force committee including representatives from the Bois de Sioux Watershed District, BWSR, Grant County Department of Land Management, MDH, MPCA, DNR, NRCS, FSA, USFWS, Pelican lake Assn, Pomme de Terre Lake Assn., Barrett Lake Assn., Elk Lake Assn., Water planners in Stevens County, Douglas County, Pope County, Wilkin County, Ottertail County and Traverse County. The notice explained the intent to update the water plan, invited all recipients to submit priority concerns and any water and related land resources plans and official controls.

July 2004

An Environmental Advisory Council meeting was held July 1st, 2004 to discuss the timeline and priority concerns

submitted by Townships, Cities, and Agencies. A discussion on the priority concerns of the individual members also occurred at this meeting.

August 2004

A public meeting advertised in the Grant County Herald, Hoffman Tribune, and Herman Review, was held on August 26th, 2004 in Elbow Lake and was attended by seven people. A presentation was given on the background and accomplishments of the current Local Water Management Plan and the need for public input for the update was explained. Those present were encouraged to express issues that they believed to be priority concerns, which should be addressed in the Water Plan Revision.

Results

Public Meetings and written comments from government units and agencies.

Public Meeting August 26th: Some of the relevant topics and priority concerns that the public expressed during the discussion were as follows:

- High water levels and shoreland erosion on Flekkejord and Trisko lakes.
- High water from increased runoff in the Chippewa River.
- Increased demand for development on natural environment lakes and sensitive areas of other lakes, and the need to insure that the current Shoreland Ordinance is adequate to protect these areas.
- The need to educate lakeshore owners in the value of establishing or maintaining natural buffer strips on their property.

Results (continued)

Public Meetings and written comments from government units and agencies.

- The need for possible monetary incentives such as property tax reductions for lakeshore owners who establish or maintain natural buffer strips.
- Water levels on many lakes rise to fast after rain events. Runoff volumes need to be slowed through wetland restoration and the establishment of buffer strips.
- The need for additional buffer strips, not only in cropland areas but also in developed areas.
- The need to remove livestock from lakes and rivers in certain instances.

Written responses were received from the following:

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Division of Fisheries:

Priority concerns listed were:

1. Shoreland development; the increase in proposed and potential subdivisions on natural environment Lakes and on marginal lots on general development and recreational lakes have the potential to have a negative impact on water quality, fish and wildlife habitat and shoreline erosion. The County Shoreland Ordinance should be updated to provide more protection for shoreline areas especially in the shore impact zone. There is a need to better define allowable shoreline alterations, vegetative clearing, and access on undeveloped lots and the land suitability provisions. (*Note: the County Shoreland Ordinance was in the process of being updated as this document was being formulated.*)

2. Surface Water Quality; Recreational and property values depend on water quality and clarity. There is a need to maintain or improve water quality in most of Grant County Lakes through the implementation of BMP'S in the watershed such as filter strips, wetland restorations, sedimentation basins, manure management facilities, and

Individual sewage treatment systems within lakeshore and along tributary waters.

3. *The need to identify sensitive areas for future protection*; need to identify and catalogue sensitive fish and wildlife habitat. These areas would then be a high priority for protection, acquisition, and enhancement.

Board of Water and Soil Resources (B WSR) Pete Waller:

Priority concerns listed were;

1. *Restoration of drained wetlands*; Utilize drained basin inventory and base strategy for priority restoration sites on functions and values. Utilize existing programs to the greatest extent possible to achieve highest level of function and values.

2. *Development pressures on recreational lakes*; Grant County is no longer on the fringe of recreational development. The lakes portion of the county appears to be experiencing increased development pressure with a potential impact to the natural resources of those areas. Are the county's ordinances prepared to deal with the potential conflict of development pressures and resource protection?

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) Jack Frederick

Priority concerns listed were;

1. *The buffering of surface waters*; Runoff from ag land is the greatest threat to the contamination of surface waters via sedimentation and nutrient enrichment.

2. *Coordination of local water quality programs with TMDL impaired waters.*

3. *Restricting development of natural environment lakes.*

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) Lisa Thorvig:

Priority concerns listed were;

1. *Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL)/ Impaired Waters*; MPCA strongly encourages counties to consider how their local water plans address impaired waters, as identified on the "Final List of Impaired Waters". Areas of the county that should be considered priority waters are the impaired water bodies and reaches of impaired water bodies on this list.

2. *Feedlots and Individual Sewage Treatment Systems (ISTS)*; Recommend the County and MPCA work together to more effectively regulate feedlot operations within the County. Recommend the County adopt the Feedlot Work Plan, cooperate to reconcile feedlot compliance issues, and target worst-case feedlots within sensitive areas. The County should consider helping with establishing local training and workshops to assist in compliance with Minn. R. 7080 for ISTS. Areas for focusing efforts on feedlots and ISTS are those near lakes, streams, wetlands, and impaired waters.

3. *Priority Resource Protection and Planning*; Recommend that the priority concerns of the County Local Water Management Plan, as they relate to water quality issues, are consistent with other local, regional, and statewide resource management documents, activities, goals and objectives. This would include the Red River and Minnesota River Basin Information Documents, the Grant County Comprehensive Plan, and Bois de Sioux Watershed District Plan.

4. *Stormwater Management*; Recommend the County cooperate with MPCA with insuring that the provisions of the General Stormwater Permit for construction activities are met by permittees within the County. By cooperating with regional MPCA staff in educating contractors and ensuring that appropriate best management practices are installed surface water resources within the County will be further protected from sediment during rain events. Shoreland areas and highly erodible areas are a high priority.

Bois de Sioux Watershed District (BDSWD)

Priority concerns listed were;

1. *North Ottawa Sub-watershed*; Actions needed include, restoration of 600 acres of drained basins above the beach ridge providing approximately 1200 acre feet of storage, establishing 1500 acres of buffer strips (some are completed), increase conservation tillage by 15% and inventory culverts.

Minnesota Department of Health:

Priority concerns listed were;

- 1. Recognizing and supporting needs of public water suppliers in their wellhead protection planning programs: plan development, and plan implementation.*
- 2. Recognizing non-community public water supply systems and the inner well management zone (a 200 foot radius around the public water supply well also known as IWMZ) protection needs.*
- 3. Supporting the establishment of monitoring and testing of private wells, conducting testing clinics for nitrate testing and possible testing for arsenic where that is considered a risk potential and developing a county wide program to accurately locate wells that have a construction log to better understand the geology of the area.*

Importance of plan focus on these concerns is because drinking water is important to everyone and is a vital necessity for community health and economic well being. Action needed is to add language in the county water plan to reflect above statements. Local resources are the best way to address local issues. However, the MDH provides a high level of technical assistance support on most drinking water issues. Areas of highest priority will be approved wellhead protection areas (when identified) and a 200 foot radius around all public water supply wells (also know as IWMZ).

Minnesota Department of Agriculture

Priority concerns listed were;

- 1. Promoting conservation tillage;* According to Minnesota agricultural statistics, it appears that Grant county plants almost two acres of beans for every acre of corn. Because of that fact, the county may have some crop residue issues. Our suggestion is to encourage adoption of conservation tillage and high residue management systems to reduce soil erosion. The AgBMP loan program is a good avenue for financial assistance for producers interested in conservation tillage.
- 2. Septic upgrades around lakes;* Septic system upgrades will help improve water quality by reducing nutrient inputs. Also, compliant septic systems will reduce the risk of contaminating surface and ground water with human pathogens.
- 3. Grant County is not high on MDA's list of pesticide water quality concerns. However, the county should be aware of the pesticide best management practices available on the MDA web page. Also because of the amount of surface water, especially small wetlands, in grant county it would be good for the county to work with the MDA on promoting the implementation of generic as well as pesticide specific BMP's.*

City of Herman

Priority concerns listed were;

- 1. Big Lake Retention Project;* This project would help with flooding problems in Herman.
- 2. Storm water runoff from city streets;* Funding needs to be available to help cities resolve this problem.
- 3. Niemackl Lakes Improvement Project;* Continue working on filter strips and water retention.

Pomme de Terre Lake Association

Priority concerns listed were;

- 1. Surface water quality.*
- 2. Shoreline erosion and sedimentation*

Lien Township

Priority concerns listed were;

- 1. Potential development on Barrett Lake;* Potential contamination of ground water, and erosion. Hooking up to City of Barrett water and sewage system should be investigated.
- 2. Farming road right of ways;* Grass in the ditches is gone so there is no filtration left in the ditches. Existing ordinances should be enforced or make new ones, Right of ways should be marked.

Lawrence Township

Priority concerns listed were;

1. *High water on Denton slough is damaging township road.*
2. *Mud lake outlet; Road has washed out and been rebuilt several time in recent years.*

North Ottawa Township

Priority concerns listed were;

1. *Wetland restoration; This would reduce downstream flooding and slow down runoff.*

Elk Lake Township

Priority concerns listed were;

1. *Need buffer zones along rivers; seems that the set back on rivers should be the same as lakes since it's the same water and it's all connected.*
2. *Roads built to serve new developments; There should be a knowledgeable inspection as to fill material etc. of these roads.*

Environmental Advisory Council Meeting July 29th, 2004 : Some of the relevant topics and priority concerns expressed by members of the council during the discussion were as follows:

- The need for additional buffer strips.
- The need for additional wetland restorations.
- Concern of shoreline development on natural environment lakes.
- The potential need for surface water use ordinances.
- Flooding of shallow lakes and the subsequent fish and wildlife habitat loss.
- The need for education and promotion of buffer strips with lakeshore owners.
- The need for additional acres utilizing conservation tillage.
- Surface water quality should be the main focus of the Water Plan Revision.

Plans were collected and reviewed from the following:

- Grant SWCD Annual Work Plan 2003 and 2004
- Bois de Sioux Watershed District's Overall Plan – which includes overviews of Local County Water Management Plans and SWCD Plans for Big Stone County, Traverse County, Ottertail County, Stevens County, and Wilkin County.
- Douglas County Draft Comprehensive Local Water Plan.
- Grant County Comprehensive Plan.

Other items important to the selection of priorities for Grant County include:

- Lakes and rivers are a major water resource for habitat and recreation. All goals of contaminated runoff and runoff volume reduction will have a positive effect on water quality and clarity.
- Drainage into a number of lakes and wetlands that do not have outlets has been a cause of major concern in the last decade. This additional runoff has been a factor in shoreline erosion, the destruction of wildlife habitat and damage to infrastructure such as roads.
- Lake eutrophication related to excess nutrients and contaminated runoff into Grant County lakes is a major issue. The Grant Soil and Water Conservation District in cooperation with NRCS and FSA have had good

success in implementing buffer strips on agricultural land, however it was noted by many respondents that additional buffers on agricultural land as well as shore land are still needed.

- Land use in the county is almost exclusively based in agricultural production, and practices to reduce soil erosion have multi-faceted benefits.
- While a majority of the land use in the County is agricultural, Grant County recognizes the potential for urban development in the shoreland areas of the County and if not properly managed the potential negative impacts (storm water runoff, loss of fish and wildlife habitat etc.) from this type of development.

It is not possible to address all existing water management issues in the updated plan. Due to program budget cuts the focus of the work plan has been narrowed. Remaining concerns such as TMDLs,(currently there are no waters in Grant on the impaired list, however it is anticipated that action items implemented to reduce contaminated runoff will at least indirectly address this issue) and wellhead protection will be re-examined for higher prioritization during the next plan update or addressed as unforeseen opportunities arise.