

Drainage Work Group (DWG) Meeting Notes

July 9, 2026

11:00AM – 2:00PM

MN DOT District 3 – St. Cloud Office and Training Center

3725 12th Street North, St. Cloud, MN 56303

w/ Virtual Online Attendance Option

Attendees (In-person): Tom Gile, Chad Hildebrand, Ron Staples, John Jaschke – BWSR, Myron Jesme, Jan Voit, Jill Crafton – MN Watersheds, Chuck Brandel, Katia Ostermann – ISG, Tony Berg, Brown County, Tim Gieseke – U of MN, Bill Petersen, Rob Sip – RRWMB, Linda Vavra, Allan Wold – BdSWD, Chad Engels – Moore Engineering, Lukas Croaker – Ohnstad Twichell, Andrew Hillman – MCEA, LeAnn Buck – MASWCD, Randell Doneen – MN DNR, Matt Detjen – Wright County, Will Bomier – St. Louis County, Brian Martinson – AMC, Danielle Isaacson – MFV, Hunter Pederson – Farm Bureau, Additional attendees virtually online for attendance.

Agenda

Tom Gile (BWSR) provided an overview of the agenda items and other updates.

Sharing Information about recent and upcoming drainage related events

ISG Drainage Tour (May 20-21) – 90 people attended from 5 different states. Focus on wetlands/stream restorations, projects funded by storage grants.

MN Drainage Inspectors Association Fall Meeting – Tentative August 19-20, 2026. Location: St. Cloud, MN)

BWSR Board / Red Board / MN Watersheds + Joint Tour – August 26, 2026, in Detroit Lakes, MN.

Other Group Updates / Information

Update from Katie Pratt regarding the DWG Assessment – currently in the process of organizing interviews with nine (9) individuals and likely adding more to the schedule. If interested, reach out to Katie Pratt or Tom Gile. Continued discussion will occur at the October DWG meeting.

MNDNR – filled the Drainage Engineer position, Ryan Fleming.

St. Louis County Abandonment Project Overview/Discussion

Presentation by St. Louis County Public Works staff regarding their experience and recently going through the 103E abandonment process. Interested in future discussion about changes to the process.

Stakeholders interested in being part of a subgroup were identified. Tom Gile (BWSR) will continue moving this subject forward.

Conservation Contracts and Drainage Authorities

Tom Gile (BWSR) presented regarding this topic. Tom presented a flowchart to help describe the process in a Yes/No format.

Next Steps:

- Tom Gile will make changes to the flowchart and seeks feedback.
- Discussion about lifespan & record retention clarification
- Clarification regarding differences between how long a drainage authority needs to hold something vs. how long BWSR must hold something.

Road Crossing – Examples & Discussion

Chuck Brandel (ISG) presented on example projects and to explain the complexities that various types of crossings can have as it pertains to 103E drainage projects. Question that came from the presentation –

1. What is the definition of TILE?
2. Does it matter who owns the right-of-way and are there any easements?
3. Prescriptive rights?
4. Is there an opportunity to make changes to the 103E statute language to provide more clarification.

Next Steps:

- MNDOT (Beth / Nick / Jaerd) potential follows up for further discussion and getting MNDOT Drainage Team involved.
- Develop a DWG Subgroup, including but not limited to:
 - MnDOT
 - AMC
 - MN Watersheds
 - Ditch Inspectors
 - Engineers (ISG / Houston)

- BWSR

Next DWG Meeting

Date: Thursday, August 13, 2026

Time: 11:00AM – 2:00PM

Location: MN DOT District 3 - St Cloud Office and Training Center (In-Person) or Microsoft Teams (Virtual)

Adjourn

Actual Time of Adjournment = 1:47 PM