

Drainage Work Group (DWG) Meeting Notes

August 13, 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 – BWSR, Will Bomier – St. Louis County, Linda Vavra – BdSWD, Additional attendees virtually online for attendance.

Agenda

Tom Gile (BWSR) provided an overview of the agenda items, an update regarding the DWG Assessment and other updates.

Sharing Information about recent and upcoming drainage related events

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.

U of MN Extension Drainage Event, FarmAmerica – August 13, 2026

Other Group Updates / Information

DWG Assessment Update – about twenty (20) interviews have been completed and about five to ten (5-10) are scheduled with individuals. Reminder, if any individual would like to participate and have a meeting, to reach out. Interviews are planned to be completed by end of August and put together a preliminary report with facilitated dialogue at the October 2026 DWG Meeting.

Drainage Authority Initiated Abandonment Legal Overview / Discussion

John Kolb (Rinken Noonan) provided a presentation and discussion regarding the legal overview of gaps / process related to the existing Abandonment process and some concepts for moving forward. John Kolb provided a written memo which explains and provides additional details to help format the information about this topic.

Intention of a Subgroup – to take feedback from the DWG participants and continue to develop the next steps and bring forward a recommendation pertaining to this specific topic.

Goal:

- Come back to the DWG with a couple different thresholds that may trigger the proceedings of an abandonment – where the Drainage Authority have the ability to initiate.
- Lesser than 51% threshold that may not require the Drainage Authority to have the proceedings but still have findings to initiate the proceedings.
- Develop criteria for abandonment to be clearer and more consistent with existing legal language associated by the court or current existing rules and statute.
- Ensure the continued protection of due process for landowners that still require that water conveyance and are utilizing the 103E Drainage System.
- Clean up the overall abandonment process currently within 103E statute.

Next Steps:

- Reconvene the Subgroup for continued discussion.
- Continued discussion at the September DWG meeting with updates and progress.

Quick Overview of MPDM Viewers Section Review

Tom provided a discussion and presented an overview of the approved revision of the Minnesota Public Drainage Manual (MPDM) and keeping the DWG updated on the status and overall process.

Overview:

- Chapter 4 – Viewing and Appraising: checked links to ensure they are working and active. Tom (BWSR) did not identify anything substantial that needed changes to.

Tom mentioned that the Drainage Viewers Association will be brought to a future DWG meeting to discuss additional items.

Mentioned by John Kolb (Rinken Noonan) to look at 103E.805 – removal of property, may be needed to be reviewed and looked at for potential statute changes. Discussion about *substantial land use change that is permanent that cannot utilize or has changed the use of the ditch to be used*. Examples described were perpetual easements, state owned land, land that won't be used for agricultural crop production.

Next DWG Meeting

Date: Thursday, September 10, 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 = 11:52 AM