Summary from 13th Minnesota River Congress 11-21-19

Water Storage Initiative Responses

Consideration, discussion and review of elements in a potential water storage bill

Note: Individual Responses (some responses refer to marketing, others to sustainable scientific resource and societal based values)

Consensus priority themes from questions from small groups and over all significantly repeated responses are in bold

1. *What do you feel the important components of a major program created specifically for water storage should include for it to be attractive to landowners? Please list all responses.*

\*Free cover crop seed in order to promote soil health BMP’s like cover crop experimentation and adoption

**\*Flexibility in the types of use for storage areas when dry**

**\*Highly competitive rates of payment equal to or greater than the revenue they would have earned by their current land use (payment for lost crops)** Annual payments vs. lump sum options

**\*Ability to be paid additional dollars for other benefits provided such as public hunting or other programs**

\*Recognition and success stories of individuals and businesses investing in water storage, let landowner know they are making a difference

**\*Provide for professional help with design and engineering**

**\*Property tax reductions or other tax incentives**

\*Support social connections with other landowners that were successful early adopters

\*Something that offers long term multiple values to the landowner

**\*Easy to maintain, long term maintenance provisions**

\*Market and explain how it will positively impact land values

\*Answer the question, what is my commitment?

**\*Include provisions for technical assistance in designing and constructing the site**

\*Legal liability insurance waiver

**\*Flexibility in use of land affected, can use for hunting/fishing**

\*Articulate and quantify water storage values to affected down river communities and landowners

\*Provisions for wetland trading within the basin

**\*Make easy to access the program, no red tape, any landowner can participate small turn around time within application process including clear language for landowner (administratively streamlined)**

**\*Crop easement options (can have crop on dry years)**

\*A priority should be given to areas of the floodplains of the 13 tributaries and main stem of the river. Opportunities still exist and farming landowners will be interested

\*Compel neighbors to participate and cooperate with each other

**\*Extra incentives or priority for large basins to be put back by multiple landowners**

\*Verifiable data collection after establishment of a storage area

**\*Landowner control options of storage area based on payments**

\*If it can’t provide income, should not add to any costs

**\*Priority to areas that can hold the most, get rid of any floodplain dikes that protect farmed floodplain areas**

**\*Totally Voluntary to enroll**

**\*flexible enough to work with other programs**

\*Allow counties to set scoring system for implementation, not a state system of scoring. Allow short- and long-term options

\*Water retention already exists on the land; excessive rain events pond the water on farm fields in the low-lying areas and can take weeks to dry

\*This will be just another program to tell farmers how to manage their land

\*Should include machinery friendly options for landowners

**\*Must be diverse in what its definition of what water storage is**

\*Should be adaptable to the diverse landscape that each individual farm presents

\*Permanent easement of fee title acquisition options available

**\*Local coordination with dollars going directly to implementers and landowners**

**\*Landowner should play a major role in planning**

\*Be prepared to show the science of how it will work

\*incorporates and complements existing drainage system

**\*Include an exit option with payment adjustments**

**\*Needs to respect property rights**

\*Create opportunities for the landowner to help with implementation/construction/creation to lower costs without penalty

\*Perpetual projects should have long term outcomes forecasted

\*Utilize lands already held in easements for temporary storage

1. *What do you feel the important components of a major program created specifically for water storage should include for it to be desirable and relatively easy for those who implement projects. Please list all responses*

\*To be able to use exiting drainage systems to divert water to holding areas and provide financial support to do that

**\*Flexibility: such as allow for what ever practice works for them locally and individually**

**\*Administratively streamlined for implementers (as simple as possible)**

\*Clear methodology (instructions for implementing)

\*Producer/Resource/Technical support use varied and tailored communication mediums; in person on-line

**\*Defined and articulated benefits**

\*Surrounding lands affected by storage area need to be included (buffered from potential standing water)

**\*Unwavering funding source-reliable**

\*Financial incentive for implementing entity

**\*Equally funded among implementers with incentives for benchmarks in volume of reduction accomplishment**

\*Incentives for outside the box proposals

**\*Access to local technical experts**

\*Ability to see an example (GIS maps etc.)

**\*Clearly specified benefits of program to individual site**

\*Ease of finding out information about the program

\*Need advisors not salesmen

**\*Consistent funding for not only projects but also funding for administration, communication, recognition, education, landowner training and ongoing evaluation of program and its outcomes.**

\*A clear and easy way to calculate design parameters. A standard set of plan details (like outlet structures) that are used by all designers, so the contractor doesn’t have to figure out a new way of building them at each place. Something like the Minnesota Stormwater Manual.

\*What is allowable, what is payment, length of contract

\*Partner with wildlife groups

\*Should appeal to all age groups of landowners; older and younger owners do not see things the same

**\*Keep engineering costs down by including landowners in design creation**

**\*Dollars should go directly to SWCD’s, Watershed Districts and other implementers to offer to landowners.**

**\*Allow farming until needed for storage**

\*Create a trading credit program or system specifically for water storage (landowners could add value and use as incentive for municipal effluent issues)

\*No net loss of production for operator

**\*Ability to use lands already held in easement**

\*Articulate financial values to the producer

\*All positive and negative results of water storage area creation for a certain area need to be communicated to landowner

\*Hold workshops on “how to do it”

\*Host demos of successful projects

\*Have fully developed before “roll out” (all questions answered)

\*plenty of money and media coverage

**\*Larger projects priority**

**\*Visual projects priority (can see where on land)**

\*Whenever you have a government mandated program it will be inefficient, complicated and expensive. We don’t need more government involvement.

\*Those that feel water retention is important on the land should invest their money to purchase those fragile acres.

\*Designs must accommodate longer term projected weather patterns

1. *Should this program have public use payment options for landowners? If so, what could they look like?*

\*Additional benefits besides water storage itself should result in additional payments. Options can be chosen by landowner at sign up such as: open to the public during fall or spring hunting season, open year-round, I control access, research purposes only, renewable energy production, pollinator patch, wildlife habitat

\*Any award should depend on usability. Recreation value? Access? location. How many people would use? Concern should be given to human impact on that land by opening to public. Who will manage?

**\* Model it on the successful components of the MNDNR Walk In program. Keep it simple.**

**\* How about landowners could charge public access fees without any impact on funding from state or federal government. That may work as quite an incentive for water storage areas.**

**\*Tax credit of some form**

\*Limited payment for non-motorized hunting

\*Possible payment for educational use only for k-12, college, volunteers to study and do maintenance

**\* Provide for liability exclusion**

\*No, the “buffer bill” was already viewed as for the pheasant hunters, could kill program

\*Yes, free hunting and fishing and give the landowner compensation and tax incentives

**\*No, It complicates the whole program**

\*No, Public access would limit the number interested parties

**\*Yes, but would have to be a good incentive to allow the public**

\* Wetland restoration yes, temporary storage no

**\* Sure, pay a little more if hunting allowed including mushrooms pay a little less if only nature observation allowed. 4 tiers, hunting and fishing, gathering, nature study or not access.**

\*Yes, structure as short term and/or long-term easement. Landowner should be able to charge and control access. If government wants to mandate it may create more problems that it is worth

**\* Yes, if asked to go beyond what is expected of other owners and must include compensation**

**\*Yes, with landowner control**

\*Yes, accommodate some form of privacy

\*Not important

**\*Yes, landowners could be able to sell long term leases to users**

**\*Yes, payments could be based on water holding capacity**

\*Yes, with time restrictions

**\*No, will add to much confusion**

**\*Yes, Tiered payments based on public and private usage. If private only let landowner collect payments, if public allowed the program should pay more up front.**

\*No, landowner might be penalized if public use affects a negative outcome from the project

\* Stewardship not ownership, patterned after the Trust for Public Land; The Nature Conservancy; Land Stewardship Project

\* Yes, If enough funding is available it could include extra payment for public options

**\* No, this already exists in the “walk in” program**

\* If public funds are used to acquire lands with the expectation that the pubic can use those lands it will fail. The reason CREP, RIM, CRP, have worked is because they conserved lands, but did not give the public the right to use them. The landowner could sell the land or lease the land to those who wanted to use it for other non-farming purposes.

1. *Should this program be permanent only or should there be an opt-out set of circumstances clause based on payment*

\*Permanent only

**\*Both**

**\*Both with an opt out but make it simple**

\*Both make it a percentage

\* Yes, but with a certain number of years commitment

\* If you have various year options along with the perpetual you won’t need and opt-out

\* There should be an opt-out with a penalty but emergency and unforeseen conditions for the landowner should be included under certain circumstances

**\* Yes, but based on payments**

**\* Yes, but large projects over a certain size should be made to be perpetual**

\* This program should not be implemented; I hate it when people tell me what to do with my land

\* Be careful because it is too darn easy to get out of CRP

1. *Should eligibility include all methods of water storage in any form.*

**\*Yes, with an emphasis of priority on surface water**

\* Yes, make sure to include saturated buffers and bioreactors as project enhancers that will increase scores accessing program dollars

**\* Yes, it should be well defined and quantifiable**

**\* Yes, all options should be available to request**

\* Yes, the fewer restrictions the better

\* No, only significant amounts of water storage, well defined in the legislation should be eligible. But there should be enough money in the program to pay for all.

\* It is unimaginable to have storage basins created to handle 27 inches of rain in one month during a growing season as seen in recent years

\* No, there is no scientific proof that this will work

\* Yes, but there should be 50% of the money dedicated to basins that provide multiple benefits

**\*Yes, all projects no matter how small should be allowed to participate and it should have enough money to do so. This will allow for less crop sacrifice by each producer and make the program easier to sell as well as have the same ultimate scientific effect on the reduction of run off.**

\* No

\* Gray area

\* Not sure

\* The benefits should outweigh the costs

\* Yes

\* Yes, but be mindful of what the taxpayer is getting

\* Yes, include soil health bmp’s but score surface water areas with multiple benefits for society higher

\* Yes, but have something built into the language that allows for creative solutions that were not yet anticipated

\* No, only highest impacts should be allowed to maximize dollars

**\* Yes, but there should be some minimum standards in place to request inclusion**

\* Any effective storage including such things as pumping water into a large tank and then you can release and allow controlled release in to tile lines later.

**\* No, some methods will provide more storage than others and for longer periods of time.**

\* No, Highest priority should be for restoring those previous non-contributing basins (those locked watersheds with no or minimum outlets)

**\* Yes, create “tiers” of the type and area of storage. Create a menu and apply payments per type**

\* No, all methods are not equal