

**MEETING NOTES**  
**NORTH CENTER NORTH LINDSTROM CHANNEL**  
**RESTORATION FEASIBILITY TASK FORCE**  
**Tuesday, May 7th, 2013**

*The purpose of the task force is to review the feasibility of possible channel design options and make a recommendation to the County Board of Commissioners.*

The North Center North Lindstrom Channel Restoration Feasibility Task Force met at 1:30 p.m. Tuesday, May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2013 in the Board Room of the Chisago County Government Center with the following Task Force Members present: AnnMarie Brink (Lindstrom Parks), Chris DuBose (Chisago Lakes Township), George McMahon (Chisago County Board of Commissioners), Mike Mergens (Center Lakes Association), Peter J. Grundhoefer (Chisago Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce), Kurt Schneider (Chisago County Environmental Services/Zoning), Gary Schumacher (Chisago Lindstrom Lakes Association), Joe Triplett (Chisago County Highway), and Al Wahlgren (Chisago Lakes Lake Improvement District). Advisors to the Task Force present: Jeff Fertig (Chisago County Wetlands), Kristine Fuge (Chisago County Attorney's Office), Craig Mell (Chisago Soil and Water Conservation District), Chris Klucas (Minnesota Pollution Control Agency), and Craig Wills (Minnesota Department of Natural Resources). Facilitators present: Greg Graske (Emmons & Olivier Resources), Monica Kinny (Chisago Lakes Lake Improvement District), Jay Michels (Emmons & Olivier Resources), Jerry Spetzman (Chisago County Water Resources), and Bruce Messelt (Chisago County Administrator).

The purpose of this meeting is to explore the facts related to the various channel restoration options for the Chain of Lakes; to review five potential options for channel restoration as well as four bridge design options; and to determine what additional information might be needed in order to make a reasoned public judgment about the project.

Joe Triplett, Chisago County Highway Engineer, stated that the Highway 20 Bridge is on the top 10 replacement list for the county. Its replacement will be in place for the next 75 years, so future needs should be projected and accommodated for. The County Highway Department is looking at 2015 as a targeted construction date. The task force needs to assist in choosing a design; specifically, the height of lower bridge deck. Triplett discussed four bridge replacement options. Typically the DNR requires the lowest part of the bridge to be a minimum of 3 feet above Ordinary High Water, (OHW), which is higher than the existing bridge. If a bridge similar to what currently exists was the chosen option, DNR would have to look more closely at the project. For reference, the current Highway 8 Bridge over the channel between North and South Lindstrom Lakes has a 24-foot channel width and is 10 feet above OHW.

The bridge designs provided do not take into consideration any change to the channel; only the bridge structure is getting larger. State contributions in the form of State Bridge Bond money can be quite good, but this project may be outside of that criteria. The county won't know how much of the bridge replacement cost could be provided by these dollars until a plan is submitted. The state may pay for the first 32 feet with Bridge Bond money, of which

only project costs would be covered. Right of way and engineering costs would be added on top. The legislature is looking favorably on these projects right now, and pushing the project out may diminish the opportunity for match money. The county has been paying .32 on the dollar to get bridges replaced in recent years.

As a cost reference, the county is planning to spend about 2 million dollars to replace 4 bridges in the county in 2013. Last year's Kost Dam bridge project cost approximately 1 million dollars.

Greg Graske compared some channel modifications to the various bridge options to give task force members an idea of how boat traffic patterns could be affected. DNR considers the lakes in the project area to be individual basins at times of low water, and one water body at times of high water.

Craig Wills, in a letter to Kristine Fuge, stated that the DNR wishes to maintain or preserve natural flow and existing conditions, and the wetlands need to function substantially the same as they have in the past. A permit will be needed for any work in public waters, and typically a project needs to be sponsored by a governmental unit. All property owners affected by a change in water levels would need to give permission, (riparian rights), for concept designs 1 and 2. Riparian rights would not be needed for options with negligible water level change, around 1/10 of a foot or less. It is not likely that options 1 and 2 would be feasible. The public water wetland is owned by City of Lindstrom and other private parties. Two options would be: the landowners of the lake could agree to the project, or the government could take charge. Either way landowner permission needs to be obtained.

Discussion took place to narrow down and/or eliminate options due to their feasibility.

**Existing conditions:**

Pros: Cost, least environmental impact

Cons: Zero navigation

**Concept Design 1: *Eliminated***

Pros: Most navigable, raise Chisago Lake level

Cons: Not permitted, environmental, (wetland) impact, riparian landowner rights needed

**Concept Design 2: *Eliminated***

Pros: Raise Chisago Lake level, improve navigation, economic development, negligible wetland impacts

Cons: Permitting, riparian landowner rights needed, downstream water quality impacts during low water periods, low water in North Center Lake, timing for obtaining riparian rights vs. when bridge is slated for replacement

**Concept Design 3: *Viable Option***

Pros: No effect on lake levels, no riparian landowner rights necessary, improved navigation

Cons: Cost and maintenance, operational logistics policy, current designs not available, no navigation during low water events, fisheries – may need permits

**Concept Design 4: *Viable Option***

Pros: No environmental, (wetland) impact, minimal cost of channel

Cons: Navigation not improved, cost of project, permitting, channel work

Next Steps: Advocate? Cost? The task force members requested more information about the weir option from Greg Graske. Joe Triplett says he would choose option 1 or 2 if his decision was based solely on vehicle traffic over the bridge, and did not take into consideration boat traffic under the bridge.

The task force was asked to come up with a common vision if price and permitting were not an issue.

George McMahon suggested using the county's Code Red alert system to get a quick survey of area lakeshore owners as to whether or not they want this project to proceed.

For this to take place, survey questions will need to be created.

Next meeting date will be June 25 at 1:30.