

MEMORANDUM
Comfort Lake-Forest Lake Watershed District

To: Board of Managers

Date: April 9, 2019

From: Mike Kinney

Subject: Wetland Banking Scope of Work

Background/Discussion

In 2018, the District performed a preliminary feasibility study for wetland banking consideration within a limited area of the District. With the assistance of Emmons & Olivier Resources (EOR), initial sites that were evaluated include the District's properties in the Comfort Lake subwatershed known as the tax-forfeit parcels, and an adjacent property known as the Banta property, which was recently sold to a new owner. See the August 23 and December 13, 2018 board meeting packets for more information on these items.

The fact remains that wetland bank creation is a high priority for the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) in our area because there are currently no available wetland banking credits in the much larger Wetland Bank Area (WBA) 6. For scale purposes, the WBA 6 is equivalent to the Lower St. Croix River basin. Knowing this, staff worked with the Board to include funding to investigate this further in 2019. As such, we propose to look at the Bone Lake subwatershed for potential wetland bank sites. Information from past studies such as the 2014 Drained Wetland Inventory will be useful in further assessing bank sites in this subwatershed.

The 2019 budget contains \$30,000 in line item 5-420-B (District-Wide) Wetland Restoration/Bank Feasibility Study, with a comment indicating "Initial study of potential sites."

Recommended Action

Proposed Motion: Manager _____ moves to authorize the administrator, on advice of counsel, to enter into an agreement with EOR in accordance with the April 5, 2019 scope of work and in an amount not to exceed \$29,945. Seconded by Manager _____.

Attached: Wetland Bank Feasibility Scope of Work

Project Name	5420-B: Wetland Restoration/Bank Feasibility Study	Date	4-11-2019
To / Contact info	CLFLWD Board of Managers		
Cc / Contact info	Mike Kinney, District Administrator		
From / Contact info	Jason Naber; Jimmy Marty		
Regarding	Wetland Bank Feasibility Scope of Work		

BACKGROUND

This memo is based on the District's interest in developing wetland bank credits within the Bone Lake watershed through a District-owned wetland mitigation bank. The District's Watershed Management Implementation Plan identifies a Wetland Restoration/Bank Feasibility Study for completion in 2019 (5420-B). This work plan outlines the initial steps needed to screen for sites with high potential for wetland banking, and is part of a multi-year implementation plan aimed at restoring wetlands in the District.

Previous work completed by the Chisago SWCD and Washington Conservation District identified and prioritized partially drained wetlands within the District according to potential for water quality improvement and cost. The work previously completed will be used along with additional siting considerations important to wetland banking. The cost of developing a wetland bank includes additional permitting, easement acquisition, and long-term monitoring. Acres of restorable, cultivated upland are extremely valuable to the credit potential of a bank as they are credited at higher percentages than existing wetlands. Additionally, a willing landowner is an absolute requirement to bank establishment and will be critical to site feasibility. This Scope of Services includes an evaluation of previously identified wetlands and additional sites identified via existing GIS data based on banking feasibility.

SCOPE OF SERVICES

EOR will provide the following services for the Wetland Bank Site Identification project.

1. Assessment of Existing Data

This task will evaluate the SWCD-developed dataset and additional existing datasets within the Bone Lake watershed. Additional data will include the Minnesota Restorable Wetlands Inventory (RWI), National Wetlands Inventory (NWI), NRCS soils, and land ownership. The RWI includes completely drained depressional wetlands not mapped by NWI. NWI and soils data will be assessed for partially drained wetlands adjacent to cultivated upland areas with hydric soils, indicating potential for restoration to wetlands. Sites will be further screened using landowner parcel data to exclude sites with complex land ownership.

Deliverables

List of potential sites generated from existing GIS data.

Schedule

April - May 2019

Estimated Hours and Cost

26 hours = \$3,218

2. Preliminary Screening of Identified Sites

EOR will meet with District staff to discuss the sites identified in Task 1. The sites will be preliminarily evaluated according to design and implementation cost. Concept designs will be advanced for up to four sites and assessed for preliminary cost and benefits, including potential acres of restored wetland. Assessment of benefits beyond credit generation will be qualitative. EOR will produce a prioritized list of no more than four sites according to the results of the cost/benefit analysis.

Deliverables

Meeting with District staff; concept design of potential bank sites; prioritized list of sites utilizing preliminary cost/benefit analysis.

Schedule

May 2019

Estimated Hours and Cost

91 hours = \$11,555

Assumptions

At least 1 potential site, but not more than 4 potential sites, are identified to advance to Task 3.

3. Landowner Coordination

EOR will meet with District staff to discuss the sites identified in Task 2 and coordinate with staff on landowner contact. A summary sheet will be developed for each site and include pertinent information to its development as a bank, such as concept design, easement requirements, and project benefits. The summary sheets will be used by the District to facilitate landowner outreach. EOR will compile and evaluate the results of landowner contact and advance to Task 4 if at least one potential site is identified.

Deliverables

Meeting with District staff; summary sheets of site information for District staff to facilitate landowner outreach interest; compiled results of landowner outreach.

Schedule

June 2019

Estimated Hours and Cost

32 hours = \$3,804

Assumptions

At least 1 potential site, but not more than 2 potential sites, are identified to advance to Task 4.

4. Feasibility Analysis

EOR will conduct a full feasibility analysis of up to two high priority sites that have interested landowners. The analysis will include feasibility level design of the site(s). Routine Level 1 (offsite) delineations will be performed for the site(s) to determine existing wetland boundaries and potential for credit generation. The feasibility-level designs and potential for credit generation will be used to finalize a cost/benefit analysis for the potential wetland bank(s). EOR will compile feasibility results into a report and meet with District staff to discuss report results.

Deliverables

Meeting with District staff; feasibility report including: feasibility-level design drawings; routine Level 1 wetland delineations; final list of potential sites including site bios and full cost/benefit analysis of implementation and credit generation.

Schedule

July - August 2019

Estimated Hours and Cost

84 hours = \$10,296

Assumptions

No more than 2 potential sites are identified to advance to Task 5. Preparation of bank application documents are not included at this time.

5. Board Presentation

EOR will prepare a PowerPoint presentation summarizing the results of the feasibility report. EOR will attend a Board meeting to present the results of the feasibility report.

Deliverables

Board presentation.

Schedule

August 2019

Estimated Hours and Cost

8 hours = \$1,072

RECOMMENDED MOTION

We recommend the Board approve a motion to complete a Wetland Bank Feasibility Study at a cost of \$29,945. This information will be used to advance a wetland banking project through the state and federal banking program.