

Inspection of Dane County Drainage District No. 19 (Middleton)

On June 20, 2019, Wayne Rounds Jr. (member of No. 19), Greg DiMicalli (Town of Middleton Administrator/ Treasure), and Leonard Massie (member of Dane County Drainage Board) toured Dane County Drainage District No. 19. Shortly after the tour began, Jim Hindrichs joined the group.

We began the tour on Low Road. The first stop was the main drain (ditch) at a culvert through the railroad from the Rounds property. The drain was a wide, shallow channel flowing west, and then turning north to the culvert. Debris (tree limbs and dead vegetation) from the major storm last August was scattered in the area. After passing through the railroad, the channel crosses US Highway 14 through a culvert, and then goes northwest around a farm building site, and south back across Highway 14. Woody debris had been removed from the ditch between the railroad and the highway. Jim Hindrichs joined the group and provided transportation because our vehicles were back on Low Road.

The second stop was at a driveway bridge near the west end of the district. The channel was wide and shallow, with a fast flow. Concrete chunks spalled from the bridge were in the channel. The bridge should be replaced. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has refused a permit because the drainage district main ditch is the headwaters of the Black Earth Creek, a major trout stream.

The flooded area north of Highway 14 near the east end of the district (Pleasant View Road) is a major issue. Cropland is flooded, and sump pumps in the Oaks (houses) are running continuously. The flooded area was once part of Lake Middleton.

Several years ago (1970's?), Richard Hinrichs constructed a dike and installed a Parma turbine pump to raise the water level in the ditch so flow would occur through the culverts south across Highway 14 and the railroad. The pump was not operating last Thursday. The Parma pumps are made in Idaho, originally to return surface irrigation water leaving irrigated fields back to the top of the system. Several of the pumps were installed by Charles Slinger and Paul Maly in southern Wisconsin in on-farm drainage systems. Jim Hinrichs said he was going to get the pump operating again. At issue is the cost of operating the pump. The cost of electricity is about \$3,000 per year. Discussion suggested that splitting the cost between the City of Middleton, the Town of Middleton, the subdivision (Oaks), Dane County (Land and Water and Parks), and Jim Hinrichs might be possible. Jim Hinrichs wants one of the municipalities to own the pump.

The District Drain (ditch/channel) on the south side of the railroad needs to be dredged with 4 -6 feet of material removed from the channel for at least ½ mile west along the railroad. Instead of the culvert having a free outfall, the current condition is the culvert underwater. The flow across Highway 14 and through the railroad is greatly restricted. Discussion revealed that there is very little fall (slope) over the ½ mile distance.

Cleaning this section of channel will provide a much improved (greater) flow downstream. There is further reason to clean the channel. Immediately south of the railroad is a large area of land that will be developed. The runoff from the area goes to the north and west. There is the possibility of the

additional runoff reversing the flow from the current flooded area north of Highway 14. The result would be disastrous for the landowners in the district because a much larger area would be flooded.

Wayne Rounds Jr. and I visited the Drain through his property and that of the Black Hawk Ski Club Inc. There be flow going west downstream, but we could not see it. There were downed trees in the channel and algae on the water surface. We simply could not see the water moving. There is spoil pile along some of the ditch that is covered with trees and brush. Clearing the corridors (20-feet measured from the top edge of the ditch) would greatly improve condition. But, the DNR may object because they think water temperatures remain cooler with trees shading the water.

Dane County now owns two properties in the drainage district. One is north of Highway 14 (now partially flooded) and the former Randall Swanson property (Sunnyside Seed Farms). The plans that Dane County has for those lands may not include contributing to maintenance of the main drain of District 19.

In general, the district main drain is in tough shape.