

PUBLIC TESTIMONY TO BE ENTERED IN THE MINUTES OF THE REGIONAL  
WATERSHED ADVISORY TASK FORCE MEETING OF APRIL 22, 2013 AT  
MITCHELL, S.D.

I, Erling Podoll of Aberdeen, S.D., had intended to be at the above meeting in person, but instead elected to transmit my thoughts in written form for improved perusal by the Task Force members. I will attempt to express my thoughts as succinctly as possible, but if you would wish for me to elaborate on any subject I would be glad to do so.

1. Task Force members should be mindful of the mind-set regarding water management that has prevailed through the ages and has proven to be rather disastrous. Our water and drainage laws and regulations have been written and promulgated by persons unfamiliar with the unintended problems they could produce. The most striking example is the draining of wetlands. Landowners were encouraged to drain these depressions with cost-sharing and free engineering and technical assistance. Now public money is being used to try and rectify the damage this has caused.

2. Persons charged with the responsibility of reconciling water drainage problems should be familiar with the areas involved. In most cases the areas of concern are depressions that normally dry up during the year. This being the case, they are capable of storing run-off water every year. For example seasonal wetlands(very poorly drained soils) dry up at the end of the growing season. Temporary wetlands(poorly drained soils) dry up in the spring. These depressions have served as water storage sites through the centuries. When these depressions are drained the receiving slough, lake or river usually floods or expands beyond its normal margin. Knowing an area of concern, it is quite easy to discern the acre feet of water released for any depression that is drained. Even small inconsequential appearing depressions store considerable acre-feet of water.

3. For some reason trained personnel seem to think that when a depression is drained the initial runoff ends any concern, WHEN THIS IS ACTUALLY THE BEGINNING OF MEANINGFUL PROBLEMS. One has to know that from the drainage date forward ,that any time there is any runoff, a certain volume of water is flowing to a lower elevation that did not reach there historically. Over time this addition of water, usually every year, is bound to have a cumulative effect, that is generally negative at the receiving end CALLED FLOODING.

4. East River South Dakota or the glaciated portion contains 5 to 20 percent wetland soils depending on the physiographic region. Attempting to form a drainage plan or rules for such, means that there has to be a 'safe' place to take the water and not add to an existing water problem area.

5. A cursory view of some recent road inundations in Brown County indicates that public cost ran from 200 to 2500 dollars per acre foot drained. That means that for every acre foot of water drained it cost the taxpayers that much to mitigate the damage caused by the drainage. This does not include other flooded land.

6. This may seem too radical for those not acquainted with the situation, but at this time to ease future problems I recommend that future drain projects be required to submit to a public entity a sum of \$1,000 per acre foot of water released. This money would be set aside to compensate for subsequent drainage damages. This step must be taken to slow down future flood damages. A first step would be to charge North Dakota \$1,000 for every acre foot of water they want to pump into the James River that never reached it before. It's conceivable that that is about what it would cost South Dakota to take care of the extra water.

Signed--

