

Public Notice
(Official Publication)
NOTICE OF HEARING
Minnesota Statutes § 103D.605

UPPER MINNESOTA RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT
BOARD OF MANAGERS

WHETSTONE RIVER RESTORATION PROJECT

NOTICE HEREBY IS GIVEN that the Upper Minnesota River Watershed District Board of Managers will hold a public hearing at 7:00 p.m., February 23, 2015 at the Ortonville Community Center located at 200 Monroe Avenue, Ortonville, Minnesota 56278, to discuss the Whetstone River Restoration Project.

The Managers of the Upper Minnesota River Watershed District (“District”) desire to undertake the Whetstone River Restoration Project, a basic water management project identified in the District’s watershed management plan. The proposed project will restore the historic hydrologic connection to the Whetstone River, whose old, historic channel joins the Minnesota River, downstream from Big Stone Lake. The project will also reestablish the downstream floodplain and floodplain wetlands along the lower Whetstone River, to the beginning of the Minnesota River. The goal of the proposed project is to restore ecological services by reestablishing perennial flow and increasing base flow to an estimated 9,000 and 7,000 feet of open channel within the Whetstone River and Minnesota River, respectively. In addition, floodplain areas of the Big Stone National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge) will also receive ecological services restoration from increased flows. The portions of the Whetstone River and the Minnesota River being restored are generally located downstream of the Big Stone Dam and upstream of the Highway 75 dam, within western Minnesota. The hydrologic regime within these portions of the Minnesota and Whetstone River became substantially altered when the Whetstone River was diverted into Big Stone Lake to supplement water supply within the lake. The proposed project diverts a portion of the discharge from the Whetstone River entering Big Stone Lake into a segment of the historic Whetstone River channel, upstream of the lake. This historic channel connects to the Minnesota River downstream of the Lake.

Houston Engineering, Inc., the District’s engineer, has completed a preliminary report of the Whetstone River Restoration Project which is on file at the District office located at 211 2nd Street SE, Ortonville, MN 56278 and is subject to public inspection.

The estimated cost of the Project is \$ \$5,000,000. The proposed project is to be funded in part by a grant from the Clean Water Fund. A minimum of twenty-five percent of the project will be paid through bonds from the District. The bonds will be repaid in part by donations from local entities and through an ad valorem tax levy.

All parties interested in the project are to appear before the Managers at the time and place stated above to show why the Mangers should not find that the project will be conducive to public health, promote the general welfare, be in compliance with the watershed management plan and the provisions of Minnesota Statutes chapter 103D, and order that the project be established and the project constructed, with or without modification.

Dated: January 21, 2015

**BY ORDER OF THE BOARD OF MANAGERS
UPPER MINNESOTA RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT**

/s/ Brent Hasslen

Brent Hasslen, President