



COUNTY OF STEARNS

PROPERTY SERVICES DIVISION

Land Services

Service Center Rm 2310 • 3301 County Road 138 • Waite Park, MN 56387
320-656-4684 • www.co.stearns.mn.us

September 3, 2021

Name
Address
City, State Zip

RE: Stearns County Ditch 10 Informational Meeting

Dear Name,

My name is Chad Martini, Land Services Manager, and I serve as the Stearns County Drainage Administrator associated with Property Services. I am writing to invite you to an informational meeting regarding Stearns County Ditch 10 (CD10) to be held at the Warner Lake Nature Center at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, September 22, 2021. The purpose of this discussion is to review the CD10 system and what it means to own property in a drainage system.

You are receiving this notification because you own property within this drainage system. It was legally established in 1904, and ditch viewers determined which properties benefitted from its establishment. As a benefitted property owner, you are responsible for paying a share of any costs incurred by the system. Examples of these costs include a ditch inspection, data collection within the ditch, engineering, and, in some cases, a ditch repair needed to return it to its "as constructed" condition.

One issue with many drainage systems is their age. The engineering practices used in 1904 do not translate well in determining today's legal ditch bottom elevation. This element is very important because, by law, a drainage system can only be excavated to its original depth. Current laws regarding wetlands and drainage are much different than they were in the early 1900's and knowing the present-day ditch bottom elevation is essential to being able to aptly manage a drainage system now and in the future.

Another common problem with some drainage systems are roads and field crossings that create obstructions and prevent water from moving through their channels. In 2022, the Stearns County Highway Department is planning to replace three County Road culverts within the CD10 system. To ensure these road culverts are placed at the proper elevation and do not obstruct the flow of water, engineering is needed to determine the ditch elevation profile. Minnesota law calls this engineering process a re-establishment of records. I would like to discuss it with you in more detail, including the cost that would be shared by benefitted CD10 property owners. Because the road authority is responsible for its crossing over CD10, Stearns County Highway pays for the culvert work, but because the Drainage Authority is responsible for work in the ditch, including understanding elevations, that cost is the responsibility of the benefitted property owners.

As part of this dialogue, I would also like to hear from you regarding any concerns about how the ditch functions and serves your needs. This system is very old and may or may not negatively impact your property and other properties in the area. Depending on the input received, I can also address a legal process to abandon a drainage system and leave the maintenance of the ditch in the hands of private property owners if that is a preference. This action may be appropriate if property owners feel the drainage system no longer provides a benefit, but the threshold to successfully abandon a system is quite high.

To facilitate your understanding of CD10 and potential projects, we have created a webpage with information and resources to assist. We encourage you to read this material and review the CD10 Property Owner Presentation available online at:

<https://gis.co.stearns.mn.us/Ditches/CD10/CD10.html>

If you are unable to attend the meeting and/or wish to offer input on this matter privately, please use a short survey to share your thoughts available online at:

<https://arcg.is/1PSj800>

Should you have a need to contact me, feel free to send your questions or concerns via electronic mail at County.Drainage@co.stearns.mn.us, postal mail at the address provided on the letterhead, or call 320-656-3694. I hope to see you on September 22 at the Warner Lake Nature Center or hear from you through the other available communication mediums.

Thank you,

Chad Martini
Land Services Manager

Stearns County Ditch 10

Stearns County Ditch 10 flows from south to north. The ditch is entirely within Lynden Township. All property owners in the shaded area are considered legal benefited property owners within the drainage system. A benefited property owner is responsible for any costs incurred to maintain the ditch. Stearns County is legally obligated to maintain the ditch.



