

Stearns County Ditch 4

- Overview of potential projects and their impact to property owners
- March 23, 2020
- Chad Martini, Land Services Manager
- Stearns County Division of Property Services



Why this presentation is important to you




The purpose of this presentation is to make property owners aware of potential projects related to Stearns County Ditch 04 which could have potential impacts to current and future participants in the drainage system.



This project involves a partnership with Saint Wendel Township regarding township road culverts.



The Stearns County Board of Commissioners acting as the County Ditch 04 Drainage Authority will ultimately decide what projects are or not approved.




All costs for drainage projects will be assessed to property owners in the form of special tax assessments

Presentation goal is to educate property owners about a potential repair project to County Ditch 04



What is a legal drainage system?

- Established by property owner petition
 - Most are very old (early 1900's)
 - Purpose was to drain land for agricultural purposes
 - Once established, Ditch Viewers determined which properties participated in the system
 - Any costs for maintaining a drainage system are paid by those participating property owners through special tax assessments
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What is a ditch repair?

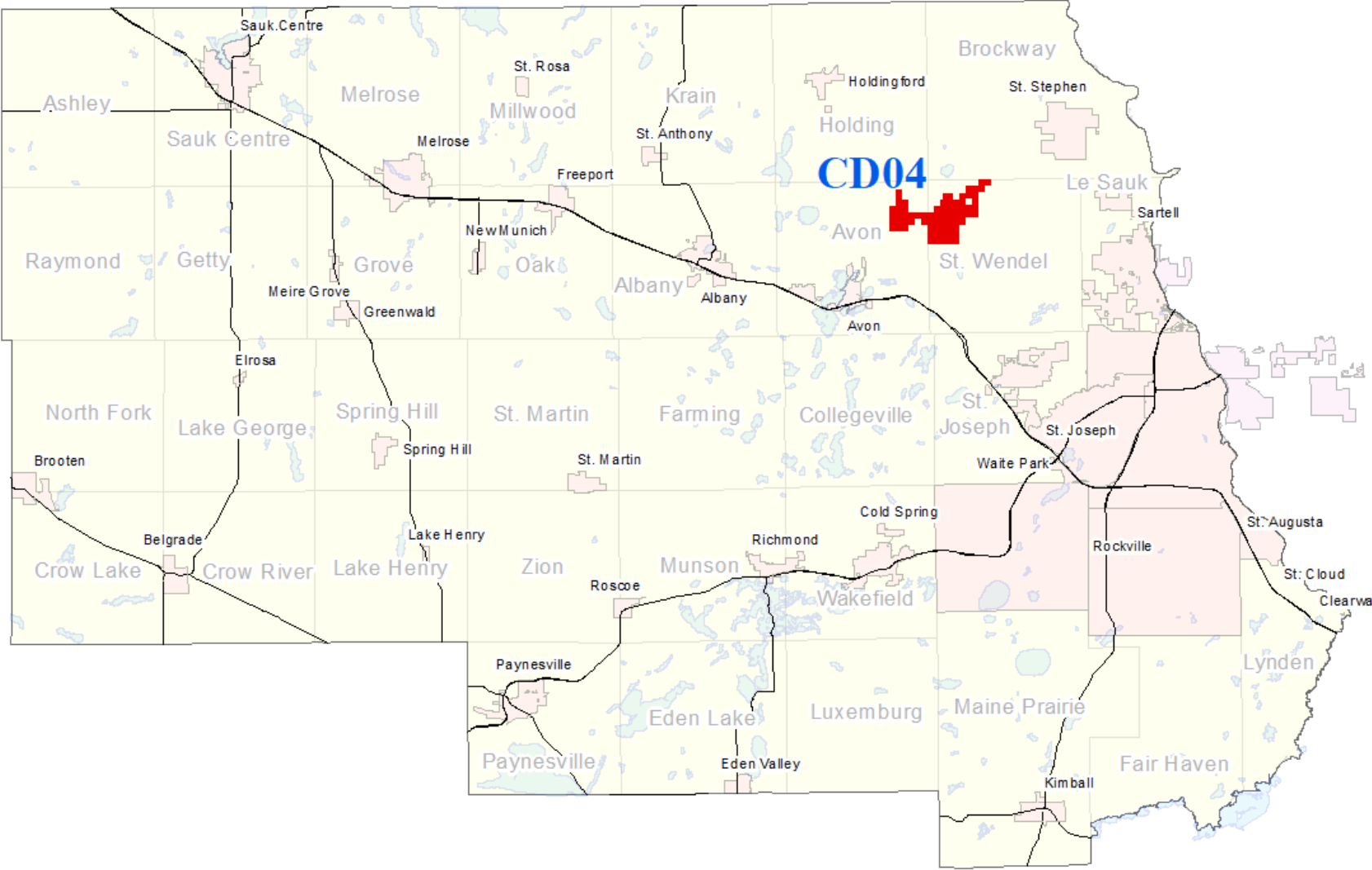
- By law, a ditch repair means digging can only match what was originally constructed or subsequently improved
- The ditch cannot be excavated wider or deeper than originally constructed
- Stearns County has no authority to work in water beyond the limits of the legally established ditch.



Stearns County Ditch 04 runs 5.2 miles and begins at just east of 115th Ave. in St. Wendel township flowing west to an area near Spunk Creek in Avon Township.

County Ditch 04 was legally established as a drainage system in **1898** by petition of property owners.

The Stearns County Board of Commissioners acting as the County Ditch 04 Drainage Authority have a legal responsibility to maintain the ditch.

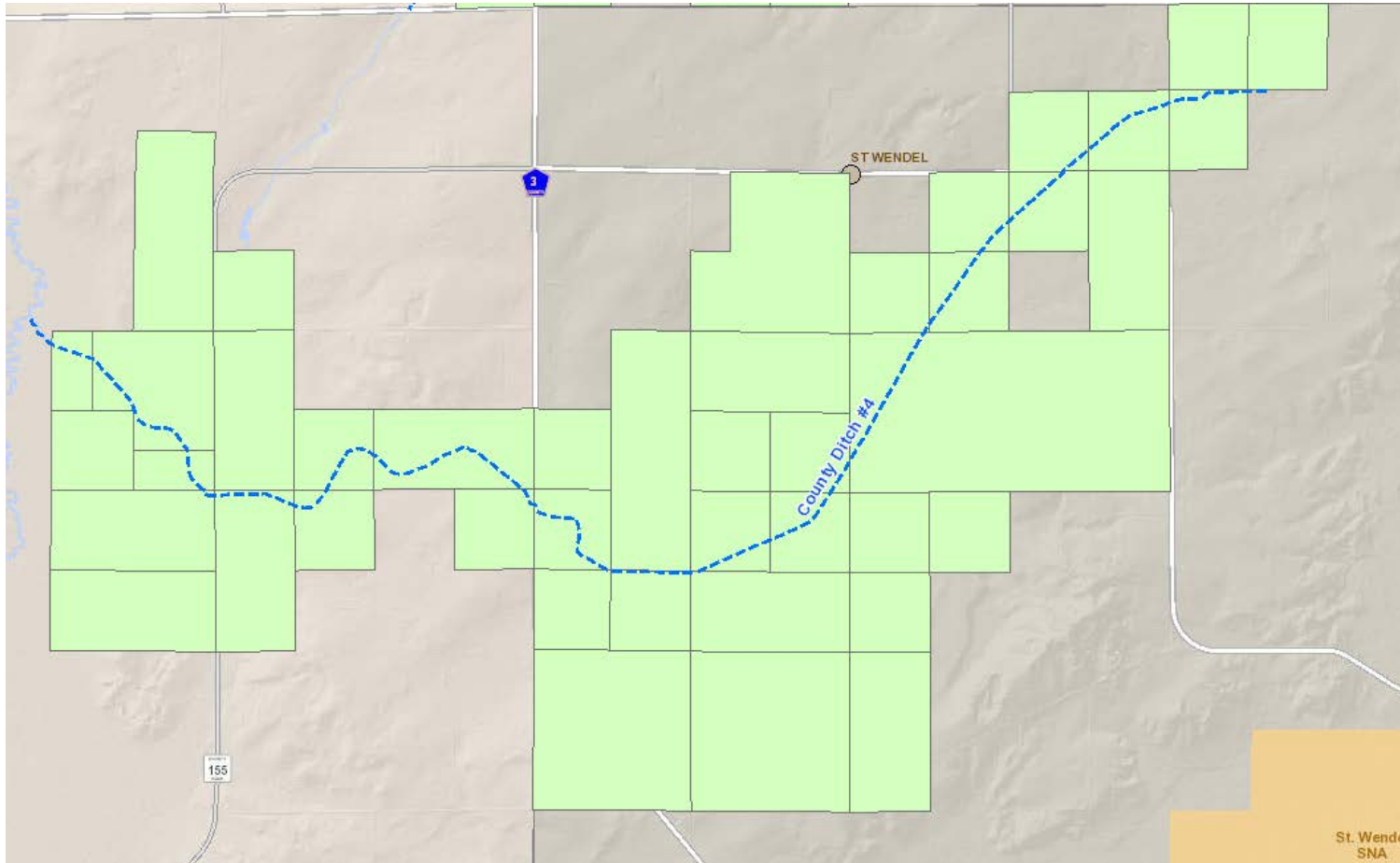


The ditch benefit represents the property that was determined to participate in ditch system in 1898.

It is these properties that are responsible for all costs incurred by County Ditch 04.

Individual property cost share is determined by Ditch Viewers. The costs are not split equally across all properties.

Examples of costs may be removing beaver dams, inspection, or repairs to the system.



The green areas on this map show the current property making up the ditch benefit and it is those property owners who pay ditch costs through special assessments on their tax bills.

How are Costs distributed?


- Each property owner in the CD 04 Drainage System pays a portion of any costs incurred by the ditch system.
- These costs are factored by using the ditch viewers determination from 1898.
- Individuals do not pay the same amount and the amount of land you own is not part of the calculation.
- A document called the Tabular Lien was created in 1898 and determined what percentage of costs each property pays.
- The idea is that those who have the most benefit from the ditch, pay the most. A general rule, that is not always true, tells us that the closer to the ditch you are, the more you are likely to pay.

The problem

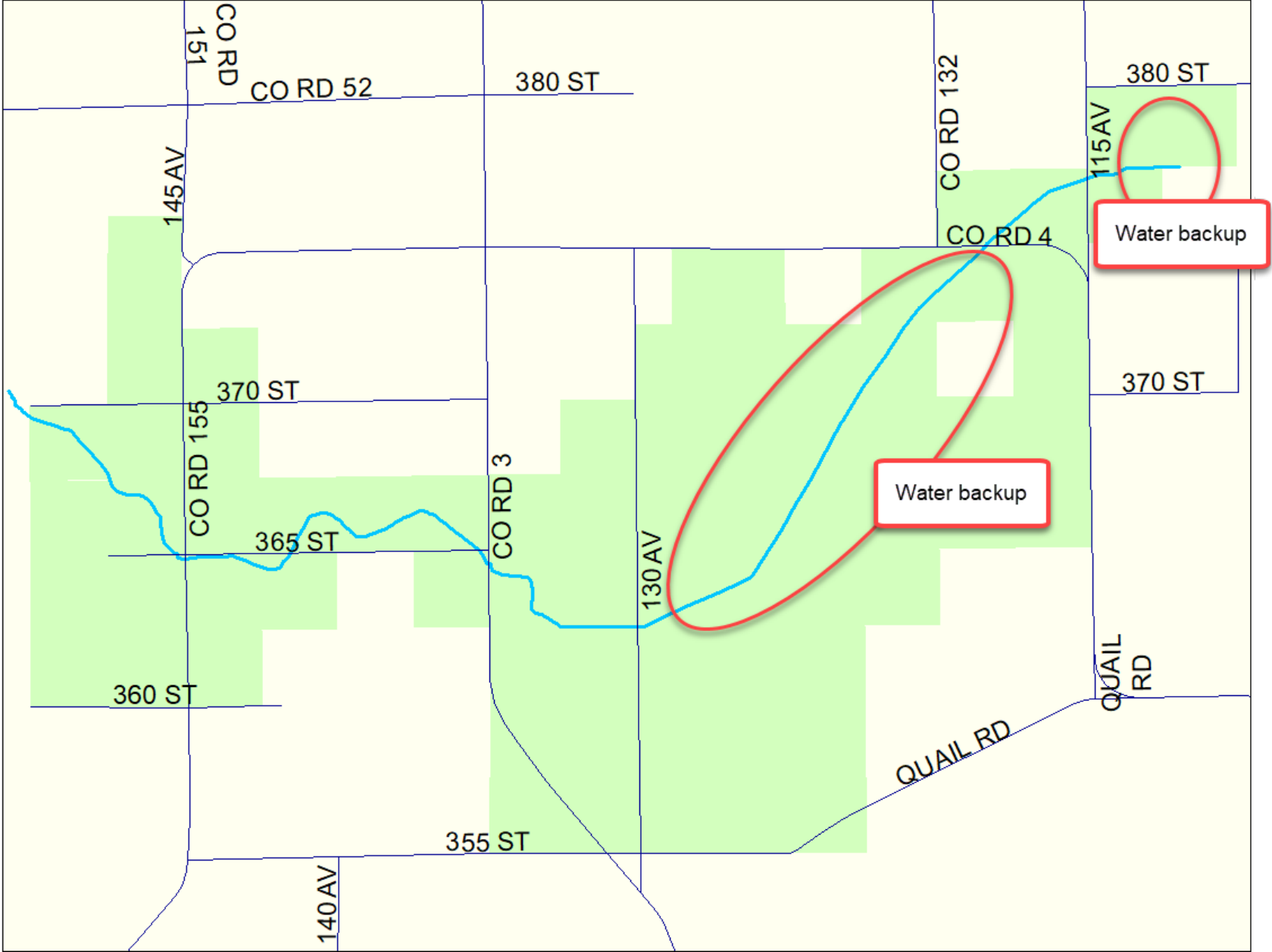
- Property owners who farm have complained for a number of years about water backing up behind road crossings
- Stearns County inspection and engineering data show that two culverts on township roads are seated above the legal ditch bottom and are in fact obstructing CD 04.
- Sediment has accumulated around these two culverts that impede the ability of water to flow.



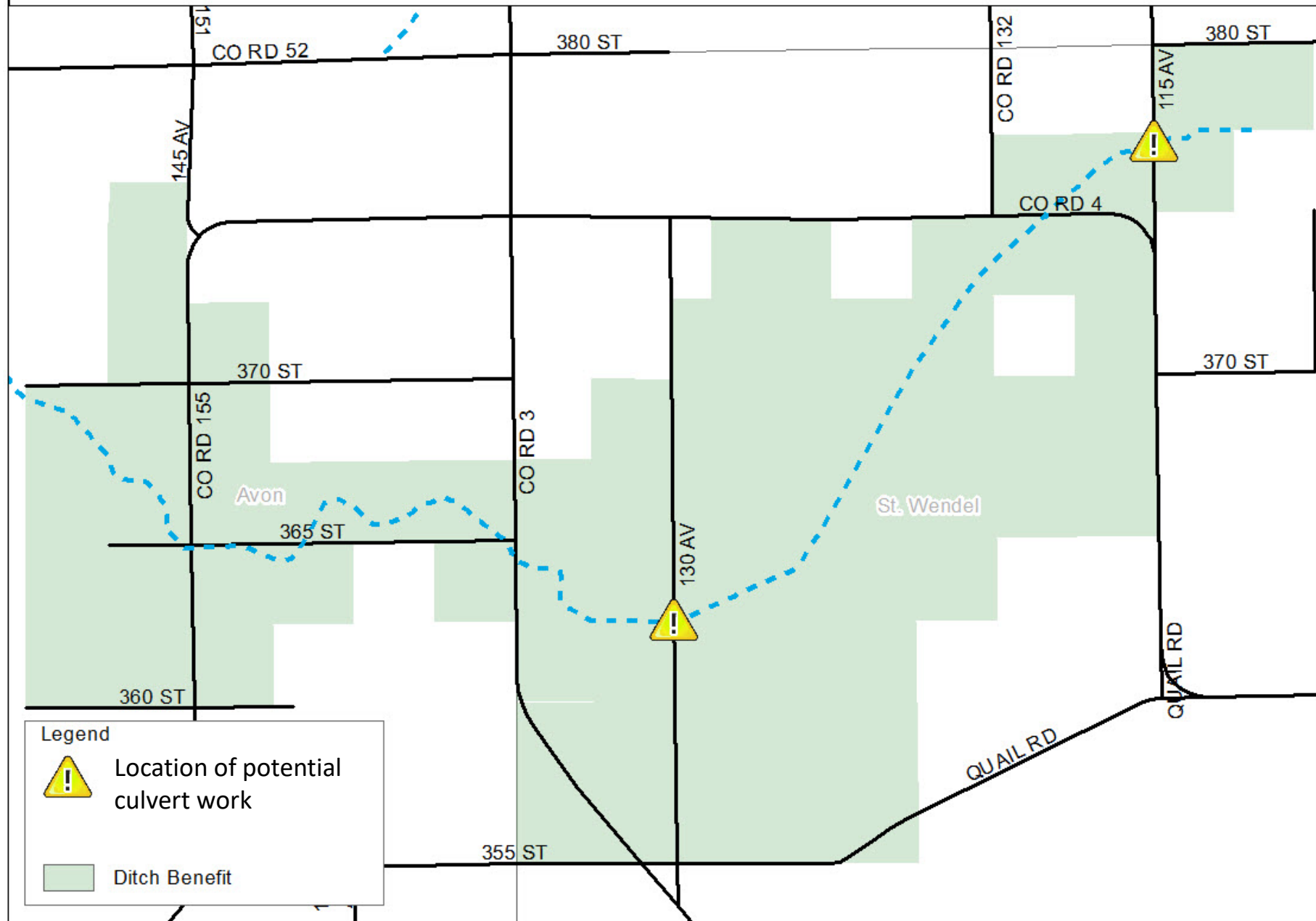
How did we get here?

- Property owner complaints about the ditch channel and the legal obligation of Stearns County to inspect the ditch have revealed issues.
 - Scheduled Saint Wendel Township road maintenance has made this a cost effective time to address obstructions.
 - May 4, 2021 Board of Commissioners meeting – decision regarding approval of a potential ditch repair.
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Complaints from Property Owners

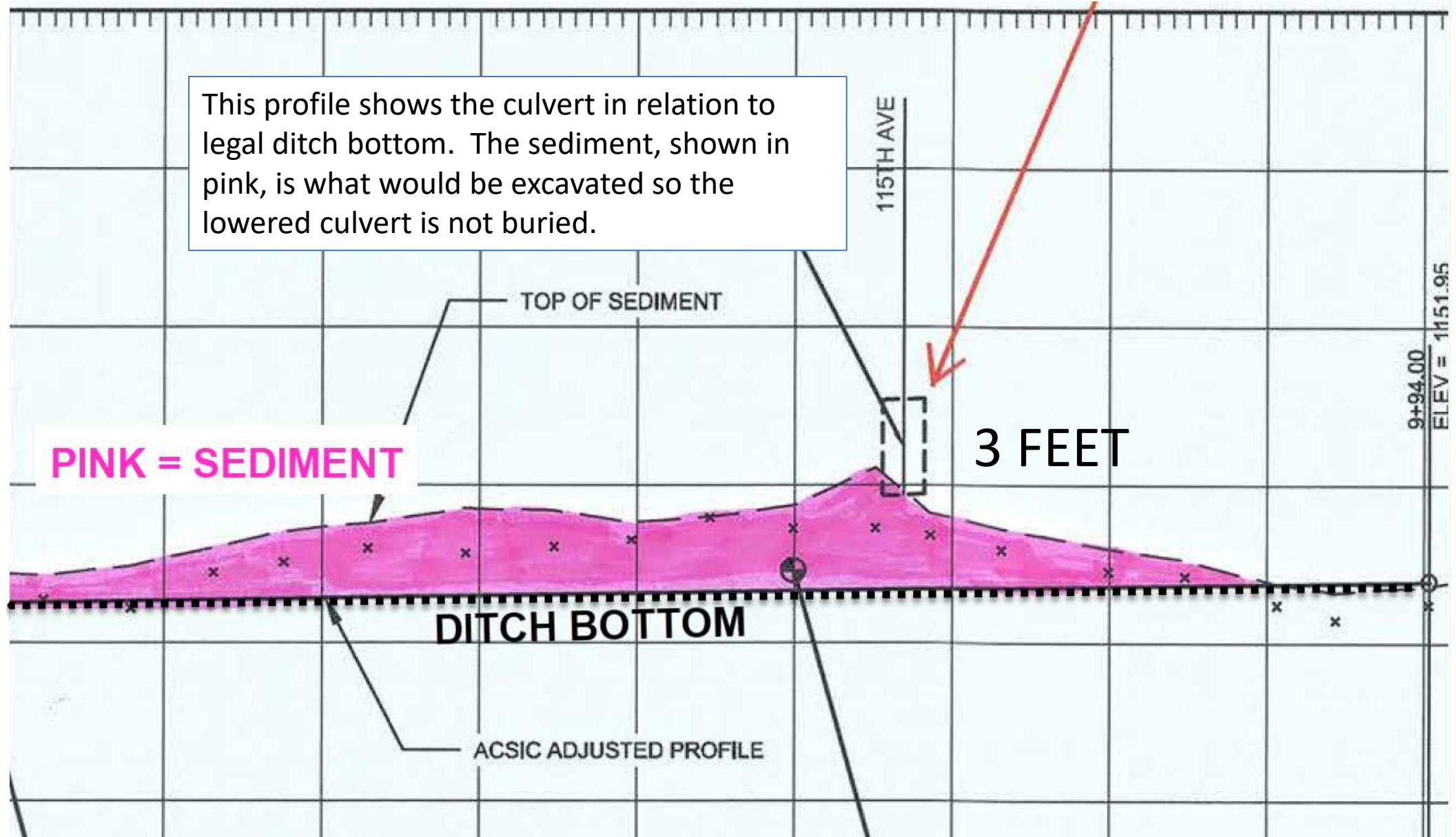


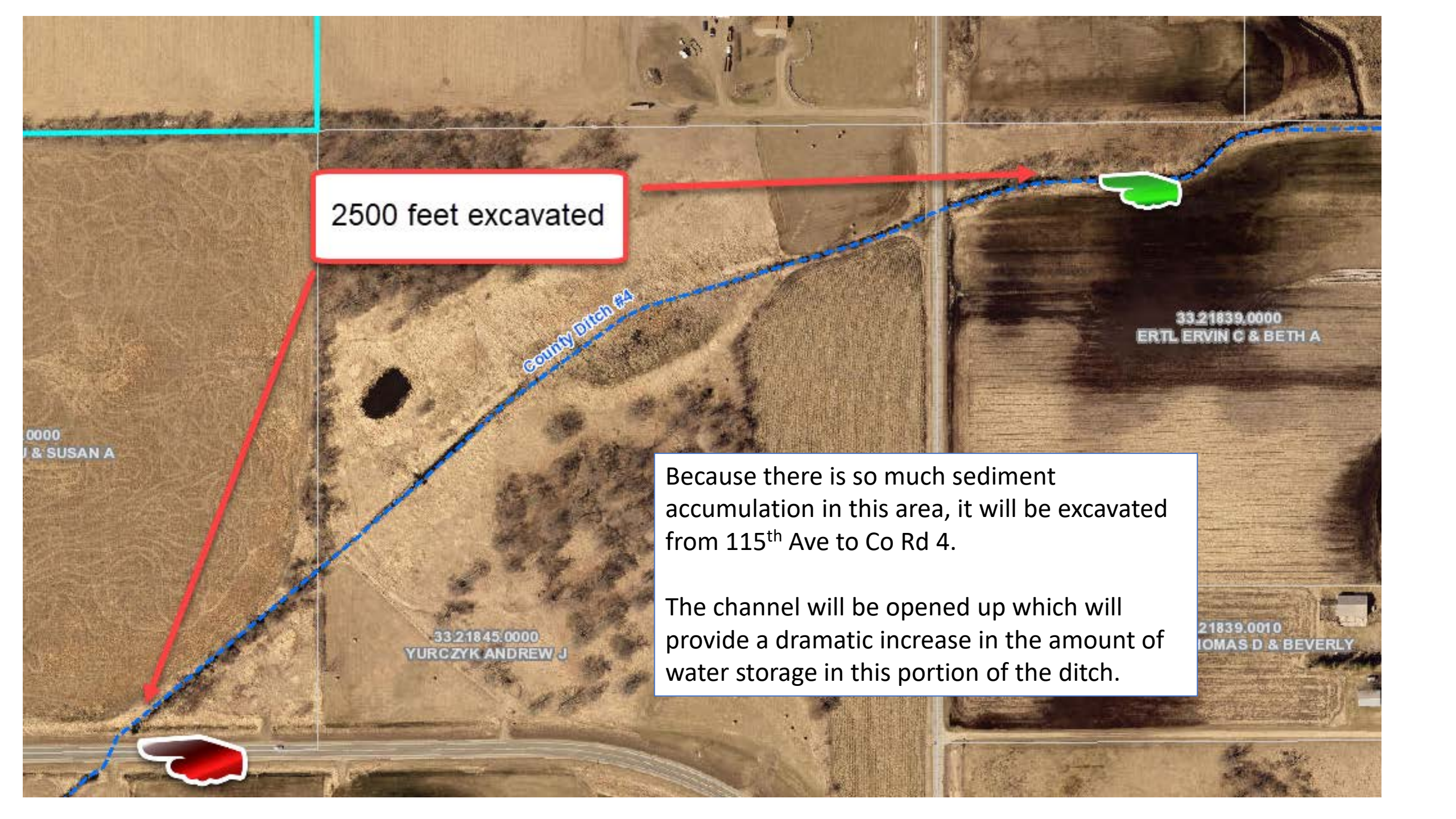
CD 04 Potential Repair Locations



115th Ave

CULVERT AT 115TH Ave





2500 feet excavated

Because there is so much sediment accumulation in this area, it will be excavated from 115th Ave to Co Rd 4.

The channel will be opened up which will provide a dramatic increase in the amount of water storage in this portion of the ditch.

County Ditch #4

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ERTL ERVIN C & BETH A

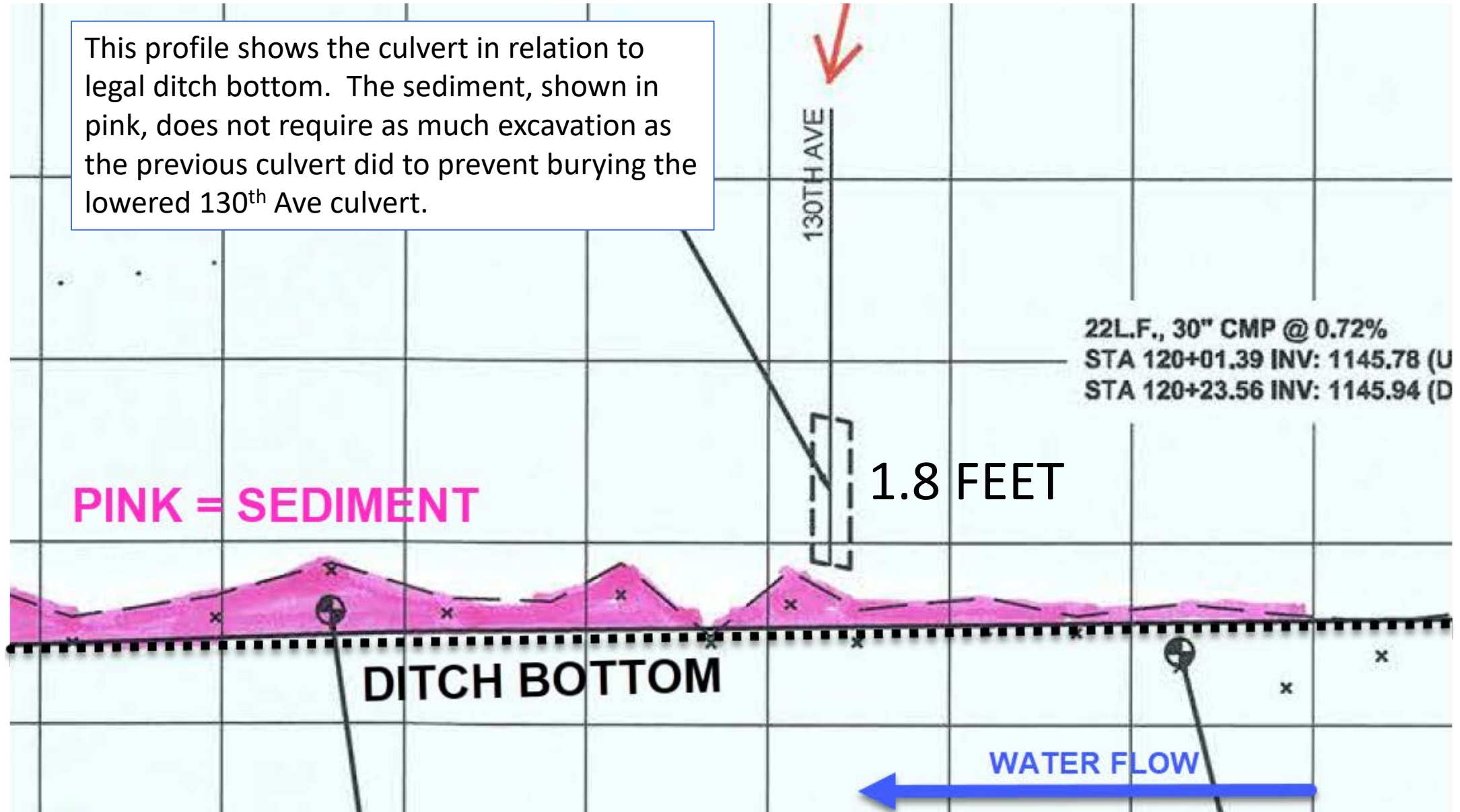
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& SUSAN A

33.21845.0000
YURCZYK ANDREW J

21839.0010
TOMAS D & BEVERLY

130TH Ave

This profile shows the culvert in relation to legal ditch bottom. The sediment, shown in pink, does not require as much excavation as the previous culvert did to prevent burying the lowered 130th Ave culvert.



33.21876.0015
JAMES L WINTER TRUST

Excavate enough to tie
grade in

County Ditch #4

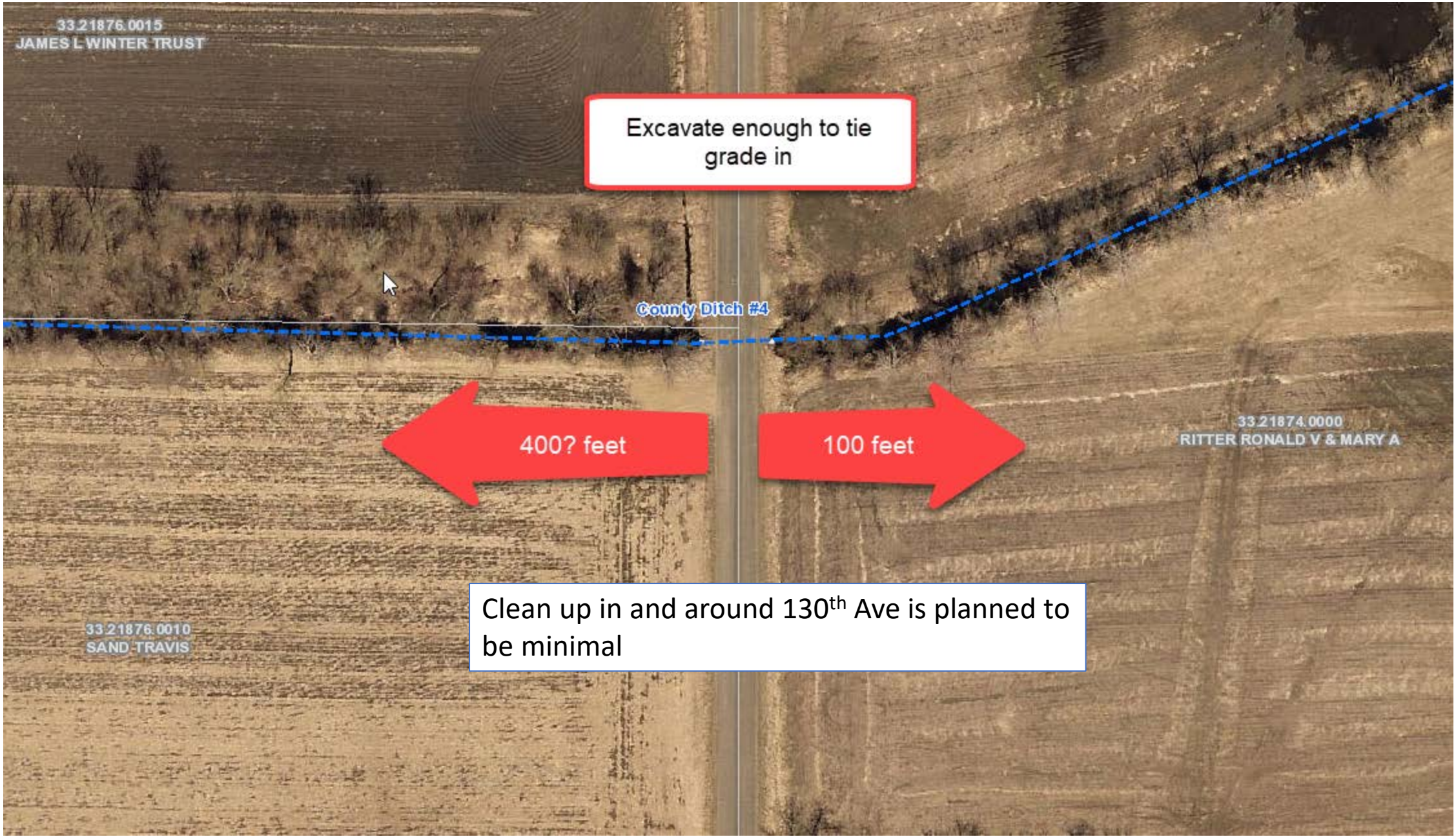
400? feet

100 feet

33.21874.0000
RITTER RONALD V & MARY A

33.21876.0010
SAND TRAVIS

Clean up in and around 130th Ave is planned to
be minimal



Repair to Ditch

- The purpose of the repair is to remove sediment accumulation, so the ditch is in its “as constructed” condition.
- The project area for excavation is about 2,500 feet in length
- Repair is based on estimate of \$5 a linear foot.
- This cost would be paid by the benefited property owners of CD 04 through a multi-year special assessment.

Project Summary

- The next required step is to collect feedback from property owners, finalize culvert plans with St. Wendel Township and present a plan to the Stearns County Board of Commissioners. If approved on May 4, 2021, the project will move forward.
- An approximation of costs:
 - Repair – Based on the currently proposed plan, project estimate is between \$16,000 and \$20,000.
- Approval for wetland impact will also be required through Stearns County Environmental Services.

SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS

Mail to:

Land Services
Stearns County Service Center
3301 County Road 138
Waite Park, MN 56387

E-Mail to:

County.Drainage@co.stearns.mn.us



The Stearns County Commissioners will make a decision about whether to proceed with any projects at a later date



Visit CD 4 project website
https://gis.co.stearns.mn.us/Ditches/CD04/CD04_2021.html



Please share your thoughts by:



Fill out digital survey <https://arcg.is/1rDrOP>



Write a letter or email



Your
Feedback is
Important!

Online Survey for County Ditch 4
proposed projects
<https://arcg.is/1rDrOP>

