

Big Sandy Area Lakes Watershed Management Project
Executive Council & Technical Team Meeting Minutes
August 8, 2018

Attendance: Melanie Bomier, Carlton Co. SWCD; Jim Carlson, Big Sandy Lake; Barb Dahl, Carlton County SWCD Supervisor; Ray Gurske, Tamarack River Watershed Team; Ramona Hooper, McGregor Township Supervisor; Phil Lippo, Cromwell South Island Lake; Pat McGinn, Lake Minnewawa; Gary Peterson, Carlton County Commissioner; Bill Pratt, Aitkin County Commissioner; Bill Reed, Big Sandy Lake; Al Rinta, Tamarack Sno-Flyers; Carmen Rinta, Tamarack Sno-Flyers / Round Lake; Janet Smude, Aitkin County SWCD; Norbert Wollak, Cromwell Island Lake; Sharon Zelazny, Cromwell Island Lake.

1. The meeting was called to order at 2:05 p.m. by Chairperson Barb Dahl. The agenda was approved as presented M/S/C Pat McGinn / Jim Carlson.
2. The July meeting minutes were reviewed and approved as presented. M/S/C Bill Reed / Ramona Hooper.
3. A financial report for the month of July was shared. Expenses totaled \$ 3,257.64 from the EPA 319 Grant. There were no expenses to the AIS Activities Grant. Expenses were related to the Ruzek shoreline revegetation project, coordinator services, water quality monitoring, postage, and photocopies. Adjustments were made to the grant budget to allow for grant funds to be used before the grant expiration date. These changes were noted in red. The report was approved as presented. M/S/C Bill Reed / Ramona Hooper.
4. Old Business:
 - 4.1 2018 Aitkin County AIS Grant Remaining Funding: Carmen Rinta has worked to gather prices for additional AIS Educational items. \$ 872.01 remains to be spent. With this funding we could purchase around 62 tackle boxes, similar to those purchased in the past. Placemats cost 58 cents each. There is still a good supply of floating keychains. 200 Tote bags were given for use at Tamarack Hey Days. The few that remain were available for the Cromwell Harvest Fest or Wild Rice Days. The group decided to wait until the next meeting to decide on purchases.
 - 4.2. Lake Association / Lake Advocate Sharing Session: Melanie Bomier proposed having a successful / active lake association come to the next session and share their strategies for success. Dates in September will be looked into for a second session.
 - 4.3. WRAPS Update: A meeting of the WRAPS Technical Team was held recently. Sub-watersheds making up the Mississippi River Grand Rapids Watershed were reviewed. The Big Sandy Watershed was split into 4 smaller watersheds – the Prairie River in the north, Tamarack River, Big Sandy Lake Outlet, and Sandy River in the south. The Prairie and Sandy River subwatersheds were proposed as medium priority areas. The Tamarack River and Big Sandy Lake Outlets were given a higher priority, mainly because of the impaired lakes and opportunities to improve their water quality. These areas will received greater attention as the restoration and protection plans are developed. The next WRAPS Ambassador meeting is scheduled for September 25th. It will be held at the Blandin Foundation in Grand Rapids. Everyone is welcome to attend. More information will be available as the meeting gets closer.
 - 4.4. Education Efforts: Several education events were discussed. Peat Inc. is willing to host a tour for our next meeting on September 12th. The Cromwell facility was recommended for the tour. We will meet at the Cromwell Park Pavilion for a brief business meeting, and then travel east of Cromwell to the facility. Draft water quality mailings were shared. These were developed for 4 lakes in Carlton County and 4 in Aitkin County. These will be mailed to landowners on the eight lakes along with the county specific zoning information letter reviewed at the last meeting. Thanks was given to Dianne Knoben, Sharon Zelazny, Pat Rath, and Carmen Rinta for reviewing

these letters. The Cromwell Harvest Fest is coming up on September 7th and 8th. Ray Gurske will share the watershed booth and give away a rain barrel. The cost of the booth is \$ 20. Ray Gurske will be reimbursed the registration fee and will use the remaining \$ 19 for additional handouts.

5. New Business:

5.1. EPA Section 319 Grant Completion / Final Expenditures: The EPA Section 319 Grant ends on August 31st. Funds must be spent before that deadline. Remaining funds and activities were reviewed.

A few restoration projects remain to be installed. The Johnston project on the Sandy River will not be installed. The landowner was busy with other projects and was not able to dedicate her time and funds to installing this rain garden. Janet Smude will be reviewing the Beatty and Kelley project sites next week. Summaries of these projects will be sent to the BSALWMP officers for review and approval. A motion authorizing the officers to approve the cost share payments was made. M/S/C Bill Pratt / Jim Carlson.

A small amount of funding remains for public meetings / seminars. A motion approving payment of \$ 45 to the City of Cromwell for use of the Park Pavilion for the upcoming Lake Advocate Sharing Session was approved. M/S/C Pat McGinn / Bill Pratt.

Funding also remains for the watershed tour. Some of this will be spent on transportation. A motion approving payment of \$ 125 to the City of Cromwell for use of the Park Pavilion as a host site for the September tour was made. M/S/C Gary Peterson / Jim Carlson.

The Big Sandy Water Institute is held each summer and costs \$ 16,000 - \$ 18,000 each year. The classes are offered free of charge to youth that attend. A motion approving a donation of \$ 2,455.57 to the Big Sandy Water Institute was made. M/S/C Pat McGinn / Ramona Hooper.

6. Working Session:

6.1. Sub Watershed Project Reports:

6.1.1. SWHIM: Pat McGinn shared that water levels have dropped some on Lake Minnewawa. Weed control has been successful this year. The lake is in fine shape.

6.1.2. Sandy Lake: Jim Carlson reported that water quality still appears to be recovering from the flood in 2012. Secchi disk readings are still down – mainly due to tannins not algae. The USACOE is doing a great job of managing the lake levels. Wake boards / boats are a concern as shorelines are being damaged.

6.1.3. Sandy River: Managing and removing the beaver in this system would benefit the Sandy River.

6.1.4. Tamarack River: Things are in good shape. They are preparing for the Cromwell Harvest Fest.

6.1.5. Prairie Lake / River: No report was shared.

6.2. New Project Submissions: There were no new project submissions.

7. Agenda Additions: The Enbridge Pipeline route was discussed. It has been rerouted to the north of Big Sandy Lake, and through an alternate route in Carlton County. The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission will be reviewing the new route. The Fond Du Lac Band will also review proposed alternate routes and decide if it will be allowed to cross the reservation. It will still cross the Big Sandy Watershed, but there will be less opportunity to pollute Big Sandy Lake, should there be a spill.

8. The next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, September 12th. We will meet at the Cromwell Park Pavilion for a brief business meeting and depart for a tour with Peat Inc. We will return to the Pavilion following the tour. The meeting was adjourned at 3:25 pm. M/S/ Phil Lippo / Bill Reed.