

Big Sandy Area Lakes Watershed Management Project
Executive Council & Technical Team Meeting Minutes
August 14, 2019

Attendance: Melanie Bomier, Carlton Co SWCD; Jim Carlson, Big Sandy Lake; Barb Dahl, Carlton Co SWCD Supervisor; Ava Guida, Aitkin Co. Guest; Ray Gurske, Tamarack River Watershed Team; Ramona Hooper, McGregor Township; Dianne Knoblen, SWHIM; Lindsay Lally, Cromwell; Gary Peterson, Carlton County Commissioner; Bill Pratt, Aitkin County Commissioner; Al Rinta, Tamarack Sno-Flyers; Carmen Rinta, Tamarack Sno-Flyers; Janet Smude, Aitkin County SWCD; Franklin Turnock, Aitkin County SWCD Supervisor; Bill Zelazny, Cromwell Island Lake; Sharon Zelazny, Island Lake Cromwell.

1. The meeting was called to order at 2:00 pm. Introductions were made. The agenda was approved with the addition of the McGregor Lakes Foundation Annual Fundraiser. M/S/C Sharon Zelazny / Jim Carlson.
2. The May and July meeting minutes were reviewed and approved as presented. M/S/C Frank Turnock / Ray Gurske.
3. A financial report for the month of July was shared. There were no expenses during this period. The report was approved as presented. M/S/C Carmen Rinta / Lindsay Lally.

4. Old Business:

4.1. 2019 Aitkin County AIS Grant Implementation: Work has nearly been completed on this grant. Final Product Distributions: A few Coasters and Boat Plug Docks were reserved for the Cromwell Harvest Fest. They are available, as this event will not be held this year. Options for using them were discussed. Two sportsmen's events are planned in Tamarack this fall. The materials can be distributed at these events. Frank Turnock offered to pick them up in Aitkin and deliver them to Carmen Rinta for distribution. Use of Remaining Grant Funds: Just over \$ 500 remains in this grant account. Ideas for using the funds were discussed. The group agreed to purchase small tackle boxes (as before) that can be shared at the McGregor 4th Graders Ice Fishing outing M/S/C Frank Turnock / Bill Pratt. Carmen Rinta will check with McGregor Printing and Graphics about ordering these.

4.2 Mississippi River – Grand Rapids TMDL and WRAPS Project Updates: Janet Smude shared that the public comment period for the TMDL and WRAPS Report is ending today. Comments will then be taken into consideration and incorporated in the documents where appropriate. The documents can be accessed at www.pca.state.mn.us/water/watersheds/mississippi-river-grand-rapids.com.

5. New Business:

5.1. MPCA / EPA Section 319 Small Watersheds Focus Program: An application for this grant program was submitted by the Aitkin County SWCD on behalf of the Big Sandy Watershed. This program would work to restore water quality in this watershed by focusing funding and staff time to addresses issues over a 10 year period. A subcommittee of the BSALWMP, that included Frank Turnock, Barb Dahl, Pat Rath, Melanie Bomier, and Janet Smude met with an interview committee from the MPCA on July 24th. During the interview, the group highlighted past work by the BSALWMP and the partnership involved in this effort. Selection of approved watersheds will be made in early September. Partners involved with the interview were thanked for donating their time for this effort.

5.2. Potential Clean Water Fund Grant Application: Melanie Bomier and Sharon Zelazny shared that they are working on an application to the Clean Water Fund grant program. The application addresses drainage problems at the Cromwell Park. The city has been working with the DNR on other grant opportunities, but stormwater management is not their focus. The city went ahead and had a preliminary design and cost estimate completed that will address stormwater at the park. Melanie Bomier has been utilizing this as a base for the CWF grant application. The plan includes rain gardens and a swale to collect water and carry it away from the building. The grant could also include funding for a few other rain garden/shoreland stabilization projects. The Cromwell project could be a showcase / demonstration project with high educational value. The group noted that there would be maintenance needed – upkeep would be important. A motion was made to proceed with the grant application M/S/C Dianne Knoblen / Sharon Zelazny. Melanie and Sharon were thanked for working on this project.

5.3. Starry Trek: A “Starry Trek” event is scheduled for August 17th. Participants will learn how to sample for aquatic vegetation, with an emphasis on aquatic invasive species like starry stonewort. Volunteers will meet at the Farm Island Lake Access, receive training and equipment, and then travel to surrounding lakes to sample for AIS. The event begins at 8:30 am and ends at 12:30 pm. Anyone interested in AIS and aquatic vegetation is invited to attend.

6. Working Session:

6.1. Sub Watershed Project Reports:

6.1.1. SWHIM: Dianne Knoblen shared that there are two new homes being built on Island Lake.

6.1.2. Sandy Lake: Jim Carlson shared information on the 1st Annual Warriors on the Water , Veterans fishing event. This was held on Big Sandy Lake on June 10th. Thirty one veterans participated.

Big Sandy Lake has been pretty quiet, with the exception of wake boats. These are becoming more common, and can damage shorelines.

6.1.3. Sandy River: Ramona Hooper reported that the Sandy River is the lowest she has seen in a long time. The water is not moving, and is not clear. There is a lot of blockage from beaver dams.

6.1.4. Tamarack River: Sharon Zelazny shared that they have distributed information bags to property owners on Island Lake. Information of shoreline stewardship and best management practices was included. They noted that donations are being accepted for treatment of the aquatic vegetation choking the public access on North Island Lake.

A photograph of the Cromwell 4th grade students in their AIS / Watershed class t-shirts was shared.

The DNR has been sampling the fish population on North Island Lake. Big walleye were caught, but no small walleye. Also several dogfish. A complete report will be available after the data has been analyzed.

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

7. Agenda Additions: An invitation to the McGregor Lakes Foundation Annual Fundraiser was shared. This will be held at the Curt and Julie Sparks home on Big Sandy Lake, on August 18th. This fundraiser will support the MLAF, an organization that donates 4.5% of their base back to the community each year. Everyone is welcome to attend.

8. The next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, October 9th. The meeting will be held at 2:00 pm at the Tamarack Sno-Flyers Clubhouse. The meeting was adjourned at 3:10 pm. M/S/ Jim Carlson / Bill Pratt.