

Big Sandy Area Lakes Watershed Management Project
Executive Council & Technical Team Meeting Minutes
February 14, 2018

Attendance: Melanie Bomier, Carlton County SWCD; Jim Carlson, Big Sandy Lake; Ryan Clark, Carlton County SWCD; John Cyrus, City of Tamarack; Barb Dahl, Carlton County SWCD Supervisor; Jack Hooper, McGregor Township; Ramona Hooper, McGregor Township Supervisor; Dianne Knoblen, SWHIM; Lindsay Lally, Cromwell Island Lake; Brenda Nistler, McGregor; Jim Nistler, McGregor; Bill Pratt, Aitkin County Commissioner; Al Rinta, Tamarack Sno-Flyers; Carmen Rinta, Tamarack Sno-Flyers / Round Lake; Janet Smude, Aitkin County SWCD; Frank Turnock, Aitkin County SWCD Supervisor; Bill Zelazny, Cromwell Island Lake.

1. The meeting was called to order at 2:05 m. The agenda was approved as presented. M/S/C Carmen Rinta / Lindsay Lally.
2. Special Presentation: Mn. Ag Water Quality Certification Program: Ryan Clark, Area Certification Specialist for the Mn. Ag Water Quality Certification Program shared information with the group. The Program has been implementing efforts to improve water quality on agricultural lands since 2016. This program has incentives for farmers that sign up for the program, including financial assistance. There is no cost for the farmer. There are nearly 40 certified farms in Ryan's work area. Ryan was thanked for sharing this information with the group.
3. The January meeting minutes were reviewed and approved as presented. M/S/C Bill Pratt / Dianne Knoblen
4. A financial report for the month of January was shared. There were no expenses. The report was approved as presented. M/S/C Al Rinta / Lindsay Lally.
5. Old Business:
 - 5.1. Mississippi River – Grand Rapids WRAPS Ambassador Meeting: Janet Smude reminded the group that this meeting is coming up on Tuesday March 6th, from 1 pm – 3 pm at Long Lake Conservation Center. Everyone is invited to attend.
 - 5.2. 2018 Aitkin County AIS Grant Application: Janet Smude, Carmen Rinta, and Sharon Zelazny drafted an application to this program after the discussion held at the previous meeting. The application requests funds for AIS themed placemats, newsletter content related to AIS, and an AIS education event for the 3rd grade students in Cromwell. The group approved increasing the AIS placemat quantity to 3,000 placemats. These could potentially be used at Community Meals. Janet Smude will adjust the application and submit it for review.
 - 5.3. Spring Newsletter: Janet Smude shared that she has been working on the newsletter. An AIS insert was found, however it applies to an area broader than Minnesota. She is working on modifying this to make it more applicable to our area.

5.4. City of McGregor – Ditch 5 Study: The City of McGregor is moving ahead with this study. The Aitkin County SWCD is able to provide some financial assistance for this effort, but has requested that the City explore options in addition to cleaning out Ditch 5. Area residents shared concerns and history of the area affected by Ditch 5. It is hoped that this study, and any future work, will alleviate flooding / high water concerns for all landowners in the study area.

6. New Business:

6.1. 319 Grant Semi-Annual Report: Janet Smude shared copies of the report that was submitted to the MPCA for the second half of 2017. The Group was thanked for donating their time and energy to make the project a success. Over \$19,000 worth of in-kind contributions was shared during this reporting period.

6.2. Potential 319 Grant Application: The EPA Section 319 Program is accepting applications. Janet Smude has begun drafting an application that would focus on shoreland buffers, rain gardens, and forestry / forest stewardship plans. If awarded the grant period would run from May 2019 – August 2022. There is a \$ 50,000 minimum grant request, with a 40% local match required. A motion approving development and submittal of the application was made. M/S/C Bill Zelazny / Bill Pratt.

6.3. Lake Association / Lake Advocate Sharing Session: One of the items listed when we brainstormed ideas for the coming year was rejuvenating / renewing lake associations. Janet Smude was considering hosting a Lake Association / Lake Advocate Sharing Session. The meeting could focus on what has been successful for various associations, working with media sources, and water quality efforts being undertaken through WRAPS projects. The group supported proceeding with this effort.

7. Working Session:

7.1. Sub Watershed Project Reports:

7.1.1. SWHIM: No report was shared.

7.1.2. Sandy Lake: Jim Carlson shared that the lake has been quiet. There has not been a lot of snowmobile traffic. On March 3rd Big Sandy Lodge is hosting a “Golf on the Ice” event.

7.1.3. Sandy River: Jack Hooper noted that the Sandy River is widening due to erosion of the banks. The township has removed several beaver dams, however beaver remain a problem.

7.1.4. Tamarack River: This group will begin meeting again in the spring.

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

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

8. Agenda Additions: Lindsay Lally shared that students from the Cromwell-Wright School received a blue ribbon at the NE Mn Area Science Fair for their project researching pond life. They will be advancing to the State Science Fair. The group wondered if they would be needing assistance with costs of the trip. Lindsay Lally and Barb Dahl offered to check into this.

9. The next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, March 14th. It will be held at the Cromwell Park Pavilion, if the meeting room is available. The meeting was adjourned at 3:10 pm. M/S/ Dianne Knoben / Bill Zelazny.