

Big Sandy Area Lakes Watershed Management Project  
Executive Council & Technical Team Meeting Minutes  
February 12, 2020

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

1. The meeting was called to order at 2:05 pm. Introductions were made. The agenda was approved as presented. M/S/C Pat McGinn / Ray Gurske.
2. The January meeting minutes were reviewed and approved as presented. M/S/C Lindsay Lally / Dianne Knoblen.
3. Newsletter support of \$ 800 has been pledged from the Mississippi River Grand Rapids WRAPS project. We are waiting to hear back from Lake Country Power. No written report was shared.
4. Old Business:
  - 4.1. 2020 AIS Education Grant Ideas: The application period for this grant is open. We should request funding (\$1,700) for the spring newsletter. The Cromwell 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Education event may be funded by the Carlton County AIS Prevention program this year. We should know soon if they are able to support this. Cost estimates for items discussed at the previous meeting were shared. Successful items shared in other counties were questioned. Additional ideas should be brought to the next meeting. A decision on the grant application was tabled until the next meeting. M/S/C Frank Turnock / Pat McGinn.
  - 4.2 Spring 2020 Watershed Wide Newsletter: A preliminary draft of the outside of the spring newsletter was shared. This focuses on Aquatic Invasive Species. It was noted that the \$ 100 incentive for docks left out of the water before sale in Aitkin County could be included. Two color options were shared. The group was OK with the green shade, with a lighter shade suggested.

The inside will focus on stormwater management – including the Cromwell project, rain gardens, water quality impacts and more. It was noted that this could also include information on pollinator species and plants.

Funding could be requested through the Aitkin County AIS Education Grant. \$ 800 was received from the Mississippi River Grand Rapids Unit WRAPS project. \$ 800 was requested from Lake Country Power. If secured, these sources should fund printing and postage for the newsletter.
  - 4.3. MPCA / EPA Section 319 Small Watersheds Focus Program: The first step of this program will be to develop a nine-element 319 Focus Grant Workplan in cooperation with the MPCA. The required 9 elements were shared. Some have already been completed through the Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies project. In preparation for the plan development, the group shared their ideas for issues / concerns that need to be in the watershed plan, and their goals for the health of the Big Sandy Lake Watershed.
  - 4.4. Clean Water Fund Grant Application, Cromwell Stormwater Runoff Mgt Projects: Melanie Bomier shared that this application was awarded funding through the Clean Water Fund. The main focus will be design and construction of stormwater management strategies at the Cromwell Park Pavilion. The grant will support rain gardens and a swale to collect water and carry it away from the building. The grant also includes funding for cost share assistance for other rain garden/shoreland stabilization projects, outreach, and education efforts. The

Cromwell project would be a showcase / demonstration project with high educational value. Stormwater will be treated before it reaches the Tamarack River.

Sharon Zelazny shared that they are also working on a DNR grant application that would support recreation at the park. Elements would include traffic control, better defined parking areas, seasonal restrooms, and a potential riverwalk. More details will be available in the future.

Melanie and Sharon were thanked for working on this issue and pursuing the grant funds.

## 5. New Business:

5.1. BSALWMP Website: Janet Smude shared that the Aitkin County Water Planning Task Force has agreed to assist with the cost of our website. The next bill for the website is due at the end of February and will total \$ 285.88. The Aitkin SWCD has been working to update their website and will be changing the hosting company to WordPress. This service only costs \$ 96 per year and can host a more powerful / attractive website. A motion was made to move the BSALWMP website to WordPress as well M/S/C Frank Turnock / Ray Gurske.

The watershed group Facebook page will also be updated to a business / organization page. This will give the BSALWMP a more professional appearance.

## 6. Working Session:

### 6.1. Sub Watershed Project Reports:

6.1.1. SWHIM: Pat McGinn shared information on the dam reconstruction at the outlet of Lake Minnewawa. The original plan was to build the access road over the winter and bring materials to the site. The new design will allow for fish passage into and out of Lake Minnewawa. The level of Lake Minnewawa will not change.

6.1.2. Sandy Lake: Federal funding was awarded for the study of impacts on aquatic communities from the operation of the Big Sandy Lake Dam. The study will improve the operational management of the dam, as well as explore the potential for a fish passage.

6.1.3. Sandy River: Ramona Hooper had nothing new to report for this subwatershed.

6.1.4. Tamarack River: Ray Gurske shared that Tamarack Lake has been quiet. The snow/slush/ice has made access a challenge.

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

7. Agenda Additions: Melanie Bomier was congratulated. Her work and partnership with the Carlton County Highway Department was recognized by both the Association of Minnesota Counties and the Minnesota Erosion Control Association. Their work to identify and evaluate culverts will be a great tool in managing water flow in Carlton County.

It was suggested that Talon Metals be invited to our next meeting in Tamarack. An update from them would be interesting.

8. The next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, March 11th. The meeting will be held at 2:00 pm at the Cromwell Park Pavilion, if it is available. The meeting was adjourned at 3:15 pm. M/S/ Dianne Knoben / Pat McGinn.