

Big Sandy Area Lakes Watershed Management Project  
Executive Council & Technical Team Meeting Minutes  
January 8, 2020

Attendance: Clarence Badger, Cromwell; Anna Bosch, MPCA; Jim Carlson, Big Sandy Lake; John Cyrus, City of Tamarack; Barb Dahl, Carlton Co SWCD Supervisor; Ray Gurske, Tamarack River Watershed Team; Ramona Hooper, McGregor Township; Dianne Knoblen, SWHIM; Lindsay Lally, Cromwell; Cathy Larson, Lake Minnewawa LID; Patti McPhail, Island Lake Cromwell; 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; Dan (Ole) Westberg, Lake Minnewawa LID; 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 Carmen Rinta / Jim Carlson.
2. The October meeting minutes were reviewed and approved as presented. M/S/C Al Rinta / Dianne Knoblen.
3. There is currently no funding available to the BSALWMP. Grant requests are being worked on. Hopefully there will be more to report on soon. The report was approved as presented. M/S/C Frank Turnock / Bill Pratt.
4. Guest Presentations: Lake Minnewawa Lake Improvement District, Cathy Larson and Dan Westberg: The Lake Minnewawa Lake Improvement District is a funding vehicle for lake improvement. Property owners on Lake Minnewawa are assessed \$ 65 per year for the LID. This is separate from the Lake Minnewawa Association. The LID has been in existence for 6 years. It took almost three years of petitioning to get it passed. 492 property owners contribute to the LID. This does not include Horseshoe Lake.

Lake Minnewawa is a large lake, but it is shallow and has many weed beds. Funding supports water quality management, which includes not only weed harvesting but also walleye stocking, water quality testing, lakeshore management and other projects that improve water quality. The DNR sets the aquatic vegetation harvesting limits. This process is highly regulated.

Cathy and Dan were thanked for joining the meeting and sharing this information.

5. Old Business:

5.1. Lake Minnewawa Outlet Reconstruction: The Conservation Partners Legacy grant that will fund this dam reconstruction project was received. The contract is being processed, and then the funding will be available. This project will have no effect on the level of Lake Minnewawa. It will allow fish to migrate in and out of the lake during the spawning season.

5.2 Mississippi River – Grand Rapids TMDL and WRAPS Project Updates: Anna Bosch shared that the TMDL and WRAPS Reports for this project have been completed. The documents can be accessed at [www.pca.state.mn.us/water/watersheds/mississippi-river-grand-rapids.com](http://www.pca.state.mn.us/water/watersheds/mississippi-river-grand-rapids.com). Some funding remained in the project contract, so an extension was requested. The project will continue until June 30, 2020. Additional work will focus on ditch abandonment potential, culvert inventory, stormwater management, forestry outreach, and education efforts. The group was thanked for their input in this process.

5.3. MPCA / EPA Section 319 Small Watersheds Focus Program: No information regarding this grant program was received. The first step will be to develop a nine-element 319 Focus Grant Workplan in cooperation with the MPCA. Work on this will likely begin in early 2020.

5.4. Clean Water Fund Grant Application, Cromwell Stormwater Runoff Mgt Projects: An application for this grant program was submitted in September by Melanie Bomier. The application addressed drainage problems at the Cromwell Park. The proposal includes rain gardens and a swale to collect water and carry it away from the building. The request also included funding for a few other rain garden/shoreland stabilization projects. The Cromwell project would be a showcase / demonstration project with high educational value. Competition for the funds is stiff. Funding will be awarded by early January, so we should know by the next meeting of the funds are received.

5.5. Spring 2020 Watershed Wide Newsletter: Ideas for a spring newsletter were shared. A four page newsletter, as was done last year, is proposed. General plans are for the outside to focus on Aquatic Invasive Species and the inside on stormwater management – specifically the Cromwell project.

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. Paper vs. electronic copies were debated. We should give people the option of receiving an email copy. It should also be posted on the watershed web site. Options for saving money, specifically on the postage, should be explored and taken advantage of.

## 6. New Business:

6.1. 2020 AIS Education Grant Ideas: The application period for this grant is open. A listing of previous awards / activities was shared. Ideas were brainstormed. We should request funding (\$1,700) for the spring newsletter and the Cromwell 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Education event. Placemats are not needed. Other ideas included tote bags, double tote bags, fishing hats, and t-shirts. Additional ideas and cost estimates should be brought to the next meeting.

## 7. Working Session:

### 7.1. Sub Watershed Project Reports:

7.1.1. SWHIM: No new information was shared.

7.1.2. Sandy Lake: Jim Carlson shared that the ice on Big Sandy Lake is a big problem. Very little ice fishing is happening. There are a few portables on the lake. Snowmobile traffic is light too. This weather has been hard on businesses.

7.1.3. Sandy River: Ramona Hooper reported that conditions have remained the same along the Sandy River.

7.1.4. Tamarack River: Tamarack Lake has been quiet.

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

8. Agenda Additions: It was noted that snowmobile trails can't be groomed yet. There is still open water in spots. Groomers can't get across swamps.

The Association of Minnesota Counties(AMC) has been working on the issue of beaver control. Significant funding has been spent on beaver control. They support designating someone to work on nuisance control. Legislative support is needed. Beaver problems often result in water problems.

Carmen Rinta shared that Talon Metals is inviting visitors to tour their drilling site. They will be drilling until March.

9. The next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, February 12th. The meeting will be held at 2:00 pm at the Tamarack Sno-Flyers Clubhouse. The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 pm. M/S/ John Cyrus / Dianne Knoben.