

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

Attendance: Melanie Bomier, Carlton County SWCD; John Cyrus, City of Tamarack; Barb Dahl, Carlton County SWCD Supervisor; Ray Gurske, Tamarack River Watershed Team; Ramona Hooper, McGregor Township Supervisor; Dianne Knoblen, SWHIM; Mitch Lundeen, SWCD North Region Forester; Pat McGinn, Lake Minnewawa; Bill Pratt, Aitkin County Commissioner; Al Rinta, Tamarack Sno-Flyers; Carmen Rinta, Tamarack Sno-Flyers / Round Lake; Janet Smude, Aitkin County SWCD; Neil Stecker, SWHIM; Frank Turnock, Aitkin County SWCD Supervisor; Sharon Zelazny, Cromwell Island Lake.

1. The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m. by Chairperson Barb Dahl. The agenda was approved with the addition of the Mike Ruzek Contract Amendment. M/S/C Ray Gurske / Pat McGinn.

2. Special Presentation: The Forest and Water Quality Connection, Mitch Lundeen SWCD North Region Forester: Water is the most valuable commodity coming from our forests. Trees are important for protecting water quality and preventing soil erosion. The greater the land use disturbance, the greater the degradation of water quality. In northern Minnesota we are fortunate to have clean lakes already. 81 % of Minnesota's riparian lands are privately owned. Options for protection of these resources should be reviewed and utilized. Methods for keeping forestlands healthy and forested include the Sustainable Forest Incentive Act, Small Acreage Assessments, Forest Stewardship Plans, Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) Certification, and Conservation Easements. Protection of forested lands should be a goal in water quality protection efforts. Mitch was thanked for sharing this information with the group.

3. The February meeting minutes were reviewed and approved as presented. M/S/C Al Rinta / John Cyrus.

4. A financial report for the month of February was shared. There were no expenses. One omission from earlier reports was noted. The Johnston Rain Garden project on the Sandy River was added to the report. The report was approved as presented. M/S/C Pat McGinn / Ray Gurske.

5. Old Business:

5.1 Mississippi River – Grand Rapids WRAPS Ambassador Meeting: Janet Smude shared with the group that this meeting had been cancelled due to bad weather. The meeting was to begin the discussion on priority streams / rivers in the watershed. The group discussed impaired streams in the watershed – including Hasty Brook, the Sandy River, portions of Minnewawa Creek, and portions of the Tamarack River. These streams will likely be noted as priorities. Streams that were in good health and other potential priorities were noted. These included the Tamarack River because of wild rice production, the Prairie River that flows through extensive protected state and county forests, and the Savanna River that flows out of Savanna Portage State Park. The Ambassador group will further refine this list when they meet again.

5.2. 2018 Aitkin County AIS Grant Application: This grant application was submitted after the last meeting. The number of AIS placemats was increased as discussed. A total of \$ 3,684 was requested. We should hear back from the funding committee before the next meeting.

5.3. Spring Newsletter: Janet Smude shared that she has been working on the newsletter. A draft of the AIS insert was shared. It was suggested that information on Emerald Ash Borer be included. The

remainder of the newsletter should be completed soon. Carmen Rinta, Dianne Knobon, and Pat Rath were thanked for assisting with editing / reviewing the newsletter.

5.4. Lake Association / Lake Advocate Sharing Session: Timing of this session was discussed. It was noted that it should be held after school is out in the metro area – mid to late June. Having it on a Friday evening or Saturday morning was suggested. It was decided that we should ask the Lake Associations what would work best for them. Janet Smude will send out a questionnaire to associations in the watershed.

5.5. 319 Grant Application 2019: This grant application was submitted after the last meeting. \$ 62,404 was requested for shoreline buffers, rain gardens, forest stewardship, civic engagement, follow up monitoring, and grant administration. We should hear if the grant request is approved in May.

5.6. Cromwell School State Science Fair Trip: Barb Dahl shared the team of students from Cromwell will be going to the State Science Fair on April 6th. Their information focuses on research completed at the Cromwell School Forest. A motion approving a donation of \$ 100 to assist with their expenses was made. M/S/C Pat McGinn / John Cyrus.

6. New Business:

6.1. Aitkin County Rivers & Lakes Fair 2018: This event is scheduled for Saturday June 16th. Presentations this year will focus on Loons/Swans, and Wolves in Northern Minnesota. John Latimer from KAXE will join the event with information on bogs. The Lake Superior Zoo and Audubon Center of the Northwoods will also be at the event. The group was asked if they were interested in having a booth at the event again. Carmen and Al Rinta noted they were available. The group approved having a booth again this year.

7. Working Session:

7.1. Sub Watershed Project Reports:

7.1.1. SWHIM: No report was shared.

7.1.2. Sandy Lake: No report was shared.

7.1.3. Sandy River: No report was shared.

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

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

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

8. Agenda Additions: The BSALWMP has an existing cost share contract with Mike Ruzek on Big Sandy Lake. He is cooperating with us to add native vegetation and control runoff on his shoreline. Mr. Ruzek is working with Shelley Larson to install this project. Costs have come in higher than expected. An addition to the cost share amount is requested. A motion approving an amended cost share amount of \$ 2,232.44, not to exceed 50% of the total eligible project costs was made. M/S/C Bill Pratt / Carmen Rinta.

Bill Pratt shared brochures / catalogs for Long Lake Conservation Center. Nature / outdoor education activities for all ages are included. Everyone is welcome to attend.

9. The next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, April 11th. It will be held at the Tamarack Sno-Flyers Clubhouse. The meeting was adjourned at 3:10 pm. M/S/ Dianne Knobon / Sharon Zelazny.