

Big Sandy Area Lakes Watershed Management Project
Executive Council & Technical Team Meeting Minutes
October 12, 2018

Attendance: Brent Amundson, McGregor Township; Melanie Bomier, Carlton Co. SWCD; Barb Dahl, Carlton County SWCD Supervisor; Ray Gurske, Tamarack River Watershed Team; John C. Hooper, McGregor Township; Ramona Hooper, McGregor Township Supervisor; Dianne Knoblen, SWHIM; Pat McGinn, Lake Minnewawa; Bill Pratt, Aitkin County Commissioner; Pat Rath, Lake Minnewawa; Al Rinta, Tamarack Sno-Flyers; Carmen Rinta, Tamarack Sno-Flyers / Round Lake; Janet Smude, Aitkin County SWCD; Frank Turnock, Aitkin County SWCD Supervisor.

1. The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m. by Chairperson Barb Dahl. The agenda was approved as presented M/S/C Pat McGinn / Pat Rath.
2. The September meeting minutes were reviewed and approved as presented. M/S/C Carmen Rinta / Pat Rath.
3. A financial report for the months of August and September was shared. Expenses totaled \$ 6,725.51 from the EPA Section 319 Grant. These were the final expenses to this grant that ended on August 31st. Total expenses to this grant were \$ 71,765.50. This was 83% of the total grant.

4. Old Business:

4.1. EPA Section 319 Grant Final Report: A final report for the EPA Section 319 grant was completed and submitted to the MPCA. Copies of the report were shared, as was a brief summary. Through this grant we were able to install 4 rain gardens and 10 lakeshore stabilization projects. Thirty-one rain barrels were sold. We hosted 8 public meetings, 13 guest speakers at meetings of the BSALWMP, and 4 watershed tours. The grant funds were used to exceed the majority of the planned work objectives. Pollution reduction estimates for the BMPS far exceeded the predicted results. The group was thanked for all of their assistance with this effort. Implementation of the grant was successful.

4.2. 2018 Aitkin County AIS Grant: Carmen Rinta shared that she was able to order small tackle boxes from McGregor Printing. She was able to order 65 boxes and use up nearly all of the remaining grant funds. It was noted that the McGregor 4th Grade will be ice fishing next winter and the Big Sandy Water Institute will be fishing next summer. The tackle boxes could be given away at these events. Carmen was thanked for taking care of this purchase.

5. New Business:

5.1. Horseshoe Lake Septic System Summary: A portion of the 319 Grant was dedicated to Septic System Inventories. A summary of information for Horseshoe Lake, in Aitkin County, was shared. The Aitkin County Environmental Services Office provided the raw data and the Aitkin County SWCD summarized the information. Records showed 86 parcels of land around the lake. Of these, 59 had septic systems. No systems failed their most recent inspection. The majority

of the parcels were classified as “seasonal”, leading to the assumption of higher usage in the summer months. Soils and their suitability for wastewater treatment were also summarized.

Ideas for future data gathering efforts were discussed. On site visits with landowners were mentioned. Infrared data gathering utilizing drones was also noted as an option.

5.2. Looking Ahead – BSALWMP Priorities: Project partners are watching for opportunities to apply for additional grant funds. The priority list that was compiled last spring will be used as the basis for future requests. The group also discussed the need to increase the knowledge of septic systems and options for wastewater treatment. Low interest loans and community / cluster systems were discussed. The USDA was noted as a source of potential funding.

6. Working Session:

6.1. Sub Watershed Project Reports:

6.1.1. SWHIM: Pat Rath and Pat McGinn shared that they visited the outlet of Lake Minnewawa with the DNR. A redesign of the outlet / dam that would allow fish passage is being proposed. The current dam is fixed level cement. An outlet that would slow the flow and allow fish to travel up steps on the side is being considered. The Lake Minnewawa Improvement District has set aside funds for future Aquatic Invasive Species prevention or treatment.

6.1.2. Sandy Lake: Jim Carlson reported that docks are being removed and residents are preparing for winter. The US Army Corps of Engineers has done a good job of managing lake levels this summer. Secchi readings have averaged 3.5’ – 4’ in depth.

6.1.3. Sandy River: The river is high for this time of year and still rising.

6.1.4. Tamarack River: This group has met for the last time in 2018. Meetings will begin again in the spring.

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

7. Agenda Additions: Curt Sparks, The Big Sandy Lake Association, The Lake Minnewawa LID, Aitkin County Environmental Services, and other partners are working to host a Septic System Management / Private Well Management seminar next May. The University of Minnesota Extension Office will be sharing information. This will be presented as information and assistance, not regulation. More information will be shared as it becomes available.

8. The next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, January 9th, 2019. The meeting was adjourned at 3:25 pm. M/S/ Dianne Knoben / Pat Rath.