

Big Sandy Area Lakes Watershed Management Project  
Executive Council & Technical Team Meeting Minutes  
January 12, 2022

Attendance: Melanie Bomier, Carlton SWCD; Barb Dahl, Carlton Co. SWCD Supervisor; James Deming, Eagle Lake; Ramona Hooper, McGregor Township Supervisor; Dianne Knoben, SWHIM; Lindsay Lally, Cromwell Island Lake; Pat McGinn, Lake Minnewawa; Brian Napstad, Aitkin County; Gary Peterson, Carlton County; Al Rinta, Tamarack Sno Flyers; Carmen Rinta, Round Lake; Janet Smude, Aitkin County SWCD; Frank Turnock, Aitkin County SWCD Supervisor; Sharon Zelazny, Island Lake.

1. The meeting was called to order at 2:10 pm. The agenda was approved as presented. M/S/C Pat McGinn / Lindsay Lally.

2. The October 2021 meeting minutes were reviewed and approved as presented. M/S/C Frank Turnock / Al Rinta.

3. Financial Report: A report for the months of October, November, and December 2021 was shared. AIS Tackle Boxes were purchased. The Aitkin County AIS Grant and the Carlton County AIS program funded this purchase. The report was approved as presented. M/S/C Al Rinta / Frank Turnock.

4. Old Business:

4.1. MPCA / EPA Section 319 Small Watershed Focus Program: Janet Smude and Melanie Bomier reported that they have submitted the Workplan for this grant to the EPA and MPCA for review and approval. Once this is approved, a contract will be entered into with the MPCA and funding will be available. The grant will total \$ 320,706 with a 40% match required. It will operate on a reimbursement basis, with the Aitkin County SWCD paying the invoices / costs, and getting reimbursed by the MPCA. The grant will support a variety of BMPs and education efforts. It will run for four years. Approval is likely to be received by the February meeting.

4.2. Cromwell Stormwater Runoff Mgt. Projects: Melanie Bomier and Sharon Zelazny shared that the Stormwater Management Project for the Cromwell Pavilion has been moving ahead. The design is 90% complete and the engineer working on the project has been great. Construction is planned for the spring. Examples of information signs that could be placed near the project were shared. Everyone was invited to review the signs and share opinions. A general Environmental Quality sign would include a watershed map, and recognition of the watershed group. The quantity of signs will be determined by the budget. Glens Sign DeZine, north of McGregor, was suggested as a local vendor. Vandalism was mentioned as a concern.

Alyssa Alsness, Carlton SWCD, has been working to identify shoreland management projects that could benefit from technical assistance and cost share funding. Two projects for installation of Shoreland Buffers on Eagle Lake were proposed. The Roe project would protect 30 lineal feet of shoreline for a total cost of \$ 420.00. The Solheid project would protect 25 lineal feet of shoreline for a total cost of \$ 2,060.00. These projects were approved as proposed M/S/C Gary Peterson / Pat McGinn. It was noted that these projects resulted from the information cards that were mailed out last year. This communication tool was successful.

4.3. 2021 AIS Grant: This grant ended on December 31<sup>st</sup>. A final report was shared. This grant supported our spring newsletter, the Cromwell/Wright Youth Education Event, a North Island Lake Information Packet and Youth Tackle Packages. A total of \$ 4,486.94 was spent on these activities.

Youth Tackle Packages have been received. They will be shared with the McGregor School ice fishing trip. 40 boxes will be reserved for use with the Cromwell School. Other events where we could share the tackle boxes included Fishing for Kids Events, and the Big Sandy Water Institute.

Brian Napstad shared that there will likely be more grants available in 2022. Ideas for an application were brainstormed and included door hangers / information bags, fish rulers, bump board for measuring fish, and boat plug docks. Efforts by other counties were questioned and should be explored.

## 5. New Business:

5.1. Spring Newsletter: A spring watershed wide newsletter was discussed. The area has seen many new property owners / new full time residents. Reminders and information for these owners should be included. "Lake Living" best management practices and regulations should be clearly highlighted – maybe with bullet points. Tree clearing to provide a view of the lake is a common practice among new owners. Pictures are an important tool for sharing ideas. Janet Smude and Melanie Bomier will begin drafting articles based on this discussion.

Funding can be provided by the 319 grant and the Carlton SWCD CWF grant. Lake Country Power as provided funding the last few years. They should be asked to contribute again.

## 6. Working Session:

### 6.1. Sub Watershed Project Reports:

6.1.1. SWHIM: The project to replace the dam at the outlet of Lake Minnewawa with a weir and rock steps that will allow fish passage received one bid that was significantly higher than budgeted. This bid was rejected and the project will be advertised again, with a more flexible timeline for installation. Hopefully this will allow for local contractors to bid on the project.

6.1.2. Sandy Lake: It was shared that previous members Jim Carlson and Jim Krezowski recently passed away. Their contributions to the BSALWMP and other local efforts were greatly appreciated.

6.1.3. Sandy River: No new information was shared.

6.1.4. Tamarack River: This group will meet again in the spring.

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

7. Talon Metals has entered into an agreement with Tesla to provide them with nickel from the proposed Tamarack mine. This has gained national attention. An Open House is scheduled for March 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Water Legacy provides information regarding potential environmental impacts from the mine on their website. <https://waterlegacy.org>

8. The group will meet next on February 9, 2022, at the Cromwell Park Pavilion if it is available. The meeting was adjourned at 3:10 pm. M/S Carmen Rinta / Dianne Knoben.