

Big Sandy Area Lakes Watershed Management Project  
Executive Council & Technical Team Meeting Minutes  
October 12, 2021

Attendance: Clarence Badger, Tamarack River; Richard Beatty, Big Sandy Lake Association; Joe Beaupre, Prairie Lake; Melanie Bomier, Carlton SWCD; Barb Dahl, Carlton Co. SWCD Supervisor; Ray Gurske, Tamarack River Watershed Team; Ramona Hooper, McGregor Township Supervisor; Dianne Knoblen, SWHIM; Lindsay Lally, Cromwell Island Lake; Patti McPhail, Cromwell; Al Rinta, Tamarack Sno Flyers; Carmen Rinta, Big 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 2:09 pm. The agenda was approved as presented. M/S/C Joe Beaupre / Al Rinta.

Janet Smude and Dick Beatty were both in contact with Water Legacy about joining a meeting to share information. They hoped to combine our two meetings and make just one trip up from the Twin Cities. About 40 people attended the meeting last August at the Minnewawa Sportsmen's Club. Several members attended the recent Talon Metals "meet and greet" event. They shared that they hope to mine in 4 years and are planning for a 77 acre mining and refining facility near Tamarack. The company is working on obtaining required permits now. To have the greatest meeting attendance, a public meeting may be held in the spring. The Aitkin County Lakes and Rivers Association will be approached about partnering on this. Information may be found on the internet. Dick Beatty also has some information/research papers he can share if anyone is interested.

2. The September 2021 meeting minutes were reviewed. Changes to Item 5.1 were suggested. It was noted that this was a meeting organized by Water Legacy. A copper – nickel mine is being discussed for the Tamarack Area. This is not a sulfide mine. There are potential threats to the environment, however new technology and mining practices work to minimize these threats. The minutes were approved with these changes. M/S/C Frank Turnock / Carmen Rinta. The Group was encouraged to keep educating themselves regarding potential mining activity in the watershed.

3. Financial Report: A report for the month of September was shared. There were no expenses. The 2021 Aitkin County AIS Education Grant will end on December 31 2021. The report was approved as presented. M/S/C Al Rinta / Joe Beaupre.

4. Old Business:

4.1. MPCA / EPA Section 319 Small Watershed Focus Program: Janet Smude and Melanie Bomier are working on developing the Workplan for this grant. This is the final step before funding will be received. The grant will total \$ 320,706 with a 40% match required. The group was asked to start keeping track of hours and time spent on projects, as we did in the past. Assistance with determining project types and quantities was requested. The group broke into 5 focus area groups that will be Objectives in the Workplan. Ideas were brainstormed within group, and those were shared.

Agricultural BMPs: This group reviewed types of projects. Cover crops will be added to the list. Partnering with the Northeast Forage and Grassland Council on educational event was suggested.

Education / Outreach Efforts: Ideas included workshops and mailings. Partnerships with Lake Associations will be fostered. The group suggested focusing on rain gardens and rain barrels. Supporting local events like the Aitkin County Rivers and Lakes Fair was mentioned.

Lakeshore BMPs: The need to determine what BMPs would be best for each waterbody was highlighted. Invasive species were a concern. Impacts of fertilizer were noted. The access to North Island Lake was still a concern.

Stormwater BMPs: This group focused on identifying the areas of high need. Studies to narrow down top priorities were suggested. This would allow us to choose the best projects to fund.

Forest Management Planning & BMPs: Taking advantage of other government programs, like the NRCS/USDA was noted. Partnership should be fostered. Integrating water quality management with timber harvest projects (clearcutting) was suggested.

Everyone was thanked for sharing these ideas. They will be very helpful as the workplan is developed.

4.2. Cromwell Stormwater Runoff Mgt. Projects: Melanie Bomier and Sharon Zelazny shared that the Cost Share Contract has been signed for the Cromwell Pavilion project. The final design is in process with construction planned for the spring.

4.3. 2021 AIS Grant Materials – Youth Tackle Boxes: Carmen Rinta reported that she has been working with McGregor Printing & Graphics to obtain the youth tackle boxes. They are supposed to be shipped next week. We have been able to order 169 boxes.

5. New Business: There was no new business to share.

6. Working Session:

6.1. Sub Watershed Project Reports:

6.1.1. SWHIM: Dianne Knoblen shared that there are 4-5 new families on Island Lake. She has spoken with one of them, and hopes to meet the others soon.

A contractor is still being sought for the Minnewawa Lake Outlet project.

6.1.2. Sandy Lake: Dick Beatty reported that the U of M has been working on a Wave Action Study. The report is expected around the first of the year. A Fish Marking Study has been conducted on Big Sandy Lake. Acoustical tags have shown that none of the studied fish have traveled below the dam.

6.1.3. Sandy River: Ramona Hooper stated that McGregor Township is looking for a drone to inspect the Sandy River. This has proven to be a good way to locate beaver dams and document the problems they cause.

6.1.4. Tamarack River: Ray Gurske noted that the Tamarack River is pretty low. Tamarack Lake has had a lot of weed growth this summer.

6.1.5. Prairie Lake / River: Joe Beaupre shared that lake levels are low. There is no water exiting the lake right now, even though recent rains have raised the lake 8". The lake was down 22" last summer. The new bridge over the Prairie River, at the lake outlet, is still being permitted.

7. There were no agenda additions. The group decided to postpone the tour of the stormwater management project on Lippo Lane until next spring / summer.

8. The group will meet next on January 12<sup>th</sup> 2022, unless urgent business comes up. The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 pm. Frank Turnock / Dianne Knoblen.