

Big Sandy Area Lakes Watershed Management Project
Executive Council & Technical Team Meeting Minutes
February 9, 2022

Attendance: Clarence Badger, Cromwell; Richard Beatty, BSLA; Melanie Bomier, Carlton SWCD; John Cyrus, City of Tamarack; Barb Dahl, Carlton Co. SWCD Supervisor; Ramona Hooper, McGregor Township Supervisor; Dianne Knoblen, SWHIM; Lindsay Lally, Cromwell Island Lake; Brian Napstad, Aitkin County; Tom Ochocki, Island Lake South; Carmen Rinta, Round Lake; Janet Smude, Aitkin County SWCD; Frank Turnock, Aitkin County SWCD Supervisor; Bill Zelazny, Island Lake; Sharon Zelazny, Island Lake.

1. The meeting was called to order at 2:03 pm. Introductions were made. The agenda was approved as presented. M/S/C Carmen Rinta / Sharon Zelazny.

2. The January meeting minutes were reviewed and approved as presented. M/S/C Lindsay Lally / Brian Napstad.

3. Financial Report: A report for January 2022 was shared. There were no expenses. The 319 Small Watersheds Focus Grant was added to the budget. The report was approved as presented. M/S/C Frank Turnock / Dick Beatty.

4. Old Business:

4.1. MPCA / EPA Section 319 Small Watershed Focus Program: Janet Smude and Melanie Bomier reported that the Workplan for this grant was approved by the EPA and MPCA, and the grant contract executed. Funding is now available. The grant totals \$ 320,705.50, with a 40% match required. The grant will support a variety of BMPs and education efforts, and will run for four years. Four Objectives are included in the workplan.

Objective 1 - Best Management Practices including agriculture, shoreline management, stormwater management, and forestry.

Objective 2 – Education / Outreach including direct mailings, workshops, lake association support, and watershed wide newsletters.

Objective 3 – Water Quality Monitoring to track the effectiveness of BMPs. This will include annual stream monitoring, 2 years of lake monitoring, and drone/GIS analysis to identify potential project locations.

Objective 4 – Staff Support will cover staff time to implement the previous objectives. The goal of the grant is to restore water quality of impaired lakes and the tamarack river in the focus area.

4.2. Cromwell Stormwater Runoff Mgt. Projects: Melanie Bomier and Sharon Zelazny updated the group on this project. Sharon shared that the project will include increasing the function of the southern ditch, a vegetated swale, rain gardens, a riverwalk, and enhancements to the park. Bids will be let in early March with construction planned for the spring. Construction on HWY 210 through Cromwell will also happen in 2022.

Melanie has continued to work on information signs. The City will help with installation. A local historical group is assisting with wording of signs. Prices / bids are still being investigated.

A grand opening celebration was discussed. August or September was suggested. This would give the plants some time to become established. Benefits of a weekday or weekend were also discussed, as were other community / school events. If a date is set it can be included in the watershed wide newsletter. This would be a nice event to share the work completed at the Pavilion and Park.

4.3. 2022 AIS Education Grant Application Ideas: Applications for this program are being accepted until April. Brian Napstad encouraged the group to be aggressive with a new request, as there are available funds. Ideas for an application were brainstormed and included the following:

- Bump Boards for measuring fish. These are available on Amazon and through Bass Pro Shops. Adding a local message, maybe with a sticker, was mentioned
 - Cromwell School Education Day
 - Enviroscape Model for use with school groups. It was noted that this may not be directly related to AIS. This will be further investigated.
 - A portion of the watershed wide newsletter
- Efforts by other counties were questioned and should be explored. A motion was made to table this discussion until the next meeting M/S/C Frank Turnock / John Cyrus.

4.4. Spring Newsletter: The spring watershed wide newsletter was discussed. Janet Smude is working on the outside which will include information on Lake / Up North Living and Aquatic Invasive Species. Melanie Bomier is working on the inside which will include information on the Cromwell project, shorelines, rain gardens, and septic systems. Dianne Knoblen questioned if we were going to offer an incentive for Rain Barrels this year. She offered to check with Growth Lumber and ACE Hardware and see if they were interested in partnering with us on this effort. The mailing list is being updated, with Aitkin County done and work beginning next on Carlton County. An application for \$ 800 to support this effort was submitted to Lake Country Power.

5. New Business:

5.1. Aitkin County Rivers and Lakes Fair: This event is scheduled for Saturday June 18th, 2022. It will be held at Long Lake Conservation Center, near Palisade. In an effort to reduce the risk of COVID transmission, the event will be outside as much as possible. The group was asked to consider having a booth again this year. Additional information will be shared as it becomes available.

6. Working Session:

6.1. Sub Watershed Project Reports:

6.1.1. SWHIM: No report was shared.

6.1.2. Sandy Lake: Richard Beatty shared that the study of the Impacts of Wake Boats has been completed. Research shows that it takes 600' for a wave created by a wake boat to dissipate. The second part of the study will investigate how this impacts the shoreline.

The study of fish movement through the Libby Dam has shown no evidence of fish going through the dam and out of Big Sandy Lake. Only one fish was shown to go up through the Dam. This information does not support installation of a fish ladder at this site.

Talon Metals is having an open house / public meeting on March 2nd.

6.1.3. Sandy River: No new information was shared.

6.1.4. Tamarack River: Ray Gurske has moved to Hermantown. His leadership will be missed. This group will meet again in the spring.

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

7. There were no agenda additions.

8. The group will meet next on March 9, 2022, at the Tamarack Sno-Flyers Clubhouse. The meeting was adjourned at 3:15 pm. M/S Dianne Knoblen / Richard Beatty.