

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

Attendance: Richard Beatty, BSLA; Melanie Bomier, Carlton SWCD; John Cyrus, City of Tamarack; Barb Dahl, Carlton Co. SWCD Supervisor; Bette Deming, Eagle Lake; Jim Deming, Eagle Lake; Jack Hoper, McGregor Township; Ramona Hooper, McGregor Township Supervisor; Dianne Knoblen, SWHIM; Tom Ochocki, Island Lake South; Gary Peterson, Carlton County Commissioner; Al Rinta, Tamarack; 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 2:05 pm. The agenda was approved with the addition of a Horseshoe Lake project proposal. M/S/C Sharon Zelazny / John Cyrus.
2. The February meeting minutes were reviewed and approved as presented. M/S/C Al Rinta / Dianne Knoblen.
3. Financial Report: A report for February 2022 was shared. There were no expenses. The report was approved as presented. M/S/C Carmen Rinta / Dianne Knoblen.

4. Old Business:

4.1. MPCA / EPA Section 319 Small Watershed Focus Program: Work is beginning on this grant that supports a variety of BMPs and education efforts. Projects were presented for review by the committee.

The Pignatello project is located on the west side of Lake Minnewawa. Three relatives each own 53' of shoreline. Their neighbor owns 80' of shoreline. The dry, sandy bank has been undercut by wave and ice action. The 4'-6' vertical bank is eroding into the lake. Stabilization using a coir log at the base of the slope, rock rip rap to armor the bank, and native vegetation is proposed. A motion approving the following cost share amounts was made M. Pignatello, J. Pignatello, and K. Johnson \$ 12,000.75 each. D. Sutcliffe \$ 15,000. M/S/C Bill Zelazny / Al Rinta. Cost share funding is not to exceed 75% of the total project costs.

Joe Bahneman owns property on the south side of Horseshoe Lake. He is experiencing erosion of the soil at the waters edge. 60 feet of shoreline is proposed to be stabilized by placing a coir log at the raw edge. Native plants will be added just behind the coir log. A total of \$ 1,227.50 , not to exceed 75% of the total project costs was allocated to this project M/S/C Carmen Rinta / John Cyrus.

4.2. Cromwell Stormwater Runoff Mgt. Projects: Melanie Bomier and Sharon Zelazny shared that the project will be put out for bids this month. There have been staffing changes with the engineering firm working on the project. This may delay the project timeframe a bit. Construction is still planned for the spring. A specific date for the grand opening was not set. It will be held in the late summer / early fall.

4.3. 2022 AIS Education Grant Application Ideas: Applications for this program are due in early April. Brian Napstad discussed the Bump Boards with Janet earlier. He was not able to find a low cost option. Personalized with our information, would make their cost not feasible. Ideas that the Aitkin SWCD

Green Corp member received from Cass County were shared. They had good response for a sponge that could be used to clean/dry a boat. Brian Napstad had discussed small sponges that expand to full size when water is added. Janet Smude shared a Swedish Dishcloth that was printed with Spiny Water Flea control information. These are very absorbent, can be used for a variety of cleaning needs, and are machine washable. A motion approving including the cost of 1,000 Swedish Dishcloths in the grant application was made M/S/C Frank Turnock / Bill Zelazny. The application will include the following:

- 1,000 Swedish Dishcloths
- Watershed Wide Newsletter Support
- Cromwell 4th Grade Education Day
- Tamarack River Watershed Education Materials

The Enviroscape Model for use with school groups was explored. It was noted that this is not directly related to AIS, and would not be eligible for this grant. Other sources of funding for this will be sought. When needed we may be able to borrow the model that Jim Carlson used in the past.

4.4. Spring Newsletter: The first draft of the spring watershed wide newsletter was shared. Janet Smude and Melanie Bomier have put together the articles. Items in red and yellow are still in question. Changing the color of the second page to green was suggested, as this is suitable for a plant discussion. The Rain Barrel Incentive Program information will be changed to just focus on the benefits of rain barrels (see the later discussion). The mailing list update is nearly complete. Dianne Knobon, Frank Turnock, and Carmen Rinta agreed review the updated newsletter before it goes to the printer.

4.5. Aitkin County Rivers & Lakes Fair: This event is scheduled for Saturday June 18th at Long Lake Conservation Center, near Palisade. Promotion / advertising is being developed. The group was asked if they wanted to have a booth at this event, and be included in the advertising. Carmen and Al Rinta offered to staff an information booth that will share information about water quality improvement projects, AIS, BSALWMP activities and more. Dianne Knobon also offered to volunteer in the food service area of this event.

5. New Business:

5.1. Rain Barrel Incentive Program: Dianne Knobon shared that she has discussed this with Groth Lumber and Ace Hardware. Neither of these stores have the barrels available. She noted that some states have outlawed their use. There are concerns about the water not being potable, and being used for watering vegetables / edible plants. Some stores – Walmart, Lowes, Menards – still sell them, however there is not a local source. Because of this, the program was put on hold and will be revisited in the future.

5.2. Rain Garden Workshop: Melanie Bomier shared that the Carlton SWCD is hosting a Rain Garden Workshop on March 31st in Cloquet. Everyone is welcome to attend this, and response has been good. The group was asked if they wanted to host a workshop in the watershed. Tamarack was suggested as a location since there is a rain garden right on site. A local perspective and history of the rain garden could be shared by Carmen and Al, along with the information Allyssa Alsness could share. Summer was suggested, as the garden would be in bloom. The workshop could be either a part of a regular meeting or an evening stand alone event. Melanie offered to discuss this with Alyssa and see what she would be willing to do.

5.3. Mississippi River Grand Rapids Watershed One Watershed One Plan: Janet Smude shared that this watershed is working together to prepare an application for a One Watershed One Plan Planning Grant. This includes the same area that worked together on the Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies (WRAPS) project a few years ago. It includes portions of Itasca, Aitkin, Carlton, Cass, and St. Louis Counties. This will result in a comprehensive plan that prioritizes work to protect and improve the natural resources in this watershed. Water quality will be a priority. Applications are likely due to the Board of Water and Soil Resources in June. If this project is selected for funding, work would begin in early 2023.

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 this has been a quiet month and there was no new information to share.

6.1.3. Sandy River: Jack Hooper shared that he will be meeting with John Welle, Aitkin County Hwy Engineer, to discuss beaver dam removal and maintenance of County Ditches. An excavator on pontoons has been investigated for removing the dams. Several beaver have been trapped, however they are returning. Area of bank sluffing on the Sandy River (a County Ditch) have been noted. Using a drone to identify areas in need of work was discussed.

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

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

7. Agenda Additions: The recent Talon Metals Public Meeting was discussed. They hope to have the mine operating by 2026. The timeline for permitting and construction was questioned. The need for 450 employees was noted. Concerns about how this will impact the area were shared.

8. The group will meet next on April 13th, 2022, at the Cromwell Park Pavilion, if it is available. The meeting was adjourned at 3:25 pm. M/S Dianne Knoblen / Jack Hooper.