

Big Sandy Area Lakes Watershed Management Project
Executive Council & Technical Team Meeting Minutes
April 8, 2015

Attendance: Ray Gurske, Tamarack River Watershed Team; Sharon Zelazny, Island Lake; Pat Rath, Lake Minnewawa; Barbara Dahl, Carlton County SWCD; Frank Turnock, Aitkin County SWCD Supervisor; Gary Peterson, Carlton County; Dianne Knoben, SWHIM/ Island Lake; Mark J. Johnson, Big Sandy Lake; Ramona Hooper, McGregor Township; Patti McPhail, Island Lake; Merritt Linzie, Prairie Lake; Lindsay Lally, Island Lake; Janet Smude, Aitkin Co. SWCD.

1. The meeting was called to order at 2:35 pm. Introductions were made. The agenda was approved with the addition of AIS and Upper Mississippi WRAPP. M/S/C Merritt Linzie/Ray Gurske .
2. The March meeting minutes were reviewed and approved as presented. M/S/C Gary Peterson / Diane Knoben.
3. A financial report for the month of March was shared. Expenses totaled \$ 40,828 and were related to the Laing and Johnson cost share projects, and educational activity support. The report was approved as presented. M/S/C Merritt Linzie / Ray Gurske.
4. Old Business:
 - 4.1. Shoreland Planting Workshop: This workshop is scheduled for Monday, June 29th at the Greifzu residence on Big Sandy Lake. The workshop will include a discussion of flood tolerant plant species, weed control, and site maintenance. Planting will occur in the morning, with a potential boat tour of other project sites in the afternoon. Materials needed for the planting portion were approved last month from the flood recovery grant. The workshop will be led by Shelley Larson from Hayland Woods Nursery, Heather Baird with the Mn DNR, Mary Blickenderfer from the U of M Extension Service, and Janet Smude. Costs for these services are estimated at \$ 262. A motion approving this expenditure from the Section 319 Grant was made M/S/C Mark Johnson / Ray Gurske.
 - 4.2. Aitkin County AIS Activities Grant: Information Card: Drafts of information cards that were developed by Carmen Rinta and Janet Smude. These used the standard AIS Prevention message on the front, and local information on the back. The group discussed the cards, and suggested changes. A motion approving the AIS Information Card, with the suggested changes was made M/S/C Mark Johnson / Merritt Linzie. Workshop: Mary Blickenderfer with the U of M Extension Service has still not agreed to a specific date for this workshop. Janet Smude has contacted Mn Sea Grant regarding this workshop. They are interested in being involved and potentially organizing the entire event. Plans are still to hold this at the McGregor Community Center.
 - 4.3. Rain Barrel Incentive Program: Options for purchasing rain barrels were discussed again, and correspondence regarding this shared. The group discussed offering a \$ 25 coupon off the price of a barrel at local hardware stores. Landowners would be eligible for a maximum of 2 coupons. These would expire by August 15th. A motion approving this program was made M/S/C Frank Turnock / Merritt Linzie. Patti McPhail offered to see if Peters in Cromwell would cooperate with us. Pat Rath will contact Sathers. Dianne Knoben will check with Groth Lumber in Wright. Janet Smude will draft a coupon for review at the next meeting.
5. New Business:
 - 5.1. Potential Cost Share Projects – Policies & Availability: It was noted that we are nearing the end of the Minnesota Recovers Flood Recovery Grant. All funds will be allocated soon. We still have \$ 4,000 in cost share funding for Rain Garden Projects, and \$ 25,000 for Lakeshore Erosion Management Projects. This is through the EPA Section 319 Grant. These funds are offered at a 50% cost share rate. The group agreed that any cost share for rock rip rap projects (when warranted) needs to include a vegetative component. Volunteer labor will continue to be valued at \$

17 per hour. The group questioned if no-mow zones could be covered through this funding. Janet Smude will check on this.

5.2. Watershed Wide Newsletter / Lake Association Newsletter Support: Janet shared that she is working on the watershed wide newsletter. Mailing lists for Carlton and St. Louis counties have been updated. It was suggested that the newsletter include information on the Rain Barrel Incentive Program and dates for workshops. Pat Rath and Merritt Linzie offered to help with editing the workshop.

Financial assistance for lake associations is also available through the EPA Section 319 Grant. A total of \$ 1,000 is available for each of the following groups: Prairie Lake Improvement Association, Lake MInnewawa Association, Big Sandy Lake Association, and the Tamarack River Watershed.

5.3. Section 319 Grant Reimbursement Procedures: The Section 319 Grant also has funding to support SWCD staff time and office materials. Reimbursement procedures were discussed. Mark Johnson made a motion to allow the SWCD to bill the grant directly for requested reimbursements. This was seconded by Merritt Linzie and passed. All reimbursement requests will be within the grant workplan and budget agreement.

6. Working Session: 6.1. Sub Watershed Project Reports:

6.1.1. SWHIM: Lake Association meetings are starting this coming Saturday. The Lake MInnewawa Improvement District will also begin their meetings soon. Ice out is predicted to happen soon on Lake MInnewawa, but not on Island Lake.

6.1.2. Sandy Lake: Mark Johnson has been encouraging the BSLA to keep track of their time spent on water quality activities. This will be needed to document the required match for the EPA Section 319 Grant. May 2nd is the Shamrock Township Clean Up Day. The BSLA continues to educate themselves on prominent water quality issues. Information on mercury in the water was shared.

6.1.3. Sandy River: Beaver control continues to be a concern in this watershed.

6.1.4. Tamarack River: This group met last Monday. They are working to locate a vendor to work on weed control. Pat Rath offered to share information regarding aquatic vegetation management that has been useful on Lake MInnewawa.

6.1.5. Prairie Lake / River: Merritt Linzie reported that the Prairie Lake Improvement Association sends out one newsletter each year to approximately 167 property owners. Extensive sampling on Prairie Lake is planned for this coming summer by the MPCA, and a detailed fish survey planned by the DNR.

6.2. New Project Submissions: Bill Laing, on the Prairie River, will be completing the planting portion of his project this spring. Plans are to add native seed, erosion control fabric, and live stakes (shrub cuttings) above the rock that was installed this winter. The total cost of this portion of the project is \$ 10,000. A motion allocating \$ 3,017.43 in cost share funding from the Minnesota Recovers Grant was made M/S/C Merritt Linzie / Pat Rath.

7. Agenda Additions: Pat Rath shared information about the Local AIS Action Framework that was developed as a result of the Aquatic Invaders Summit. This may be found at the following link <http://mnlakesandrivers.org/>. A great deal of money and effort is being spent on combating AIS. Where do citizens want these efforts to be focused and how should the issue be approached? These are topics being discussed.

Steve Hughes, Aitkin SWCD Supervisor will be asked to join the next meeting and discuss local AIS efforts and the Upper Mississippi River Grand Rapids WRAPP study.

8. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday May 13th at 2:30 pm. It will be held at the Tamarack Sno-Fliers Clubhouse, if the meeting room is available. The meeting was adjourned at 4:37 pm. M/S Frank Turnock / Merritt Linzie.