

Big Sandy Area Lakes Watershed Management Project
Executive Council & Technical Team Meeting Minutes
January 13, 2016

Attendance: Jim Carlson, Big Sandy Lake Association; Barb Dahl, Carlton Co SWCD Supervisor; Carmen Rinta, Tamarack; Ray Gurske, Tamarack River Watershed Team; Dianne Knobon, SWHIM; Merritt Linzie, Prairie Lake Improvement Association; Patti McPhail, Cromwell; Gary Peterson, Carlton County; Janet Smude, Aitkin Co SWCD; Frank Turnock, Aitkin Co. SWCD Supervisor.

1. The meeting was called to order at 2:37 pm. Introductions were made. The agenda was approved with the additions of an update from Kennecott Exploration and Watershed Districts. M/S/C Merritt Linzie /Ray Gurske.

2. The November meeting minutes were reviewed and approved as presented. M/S/C Frank Turnock / Merritt Linzie.

3. A financial report for the months of November and December was shared. Expenses totaled \$ 3,811.74 from the Minnesota Recovers Grant and \$ 1,450 from the Aitkin County AIS Grant. The report was approved as presented. M/S/C Ray Gurske /Patti McPhail.

4. Old Business:

4.1. Aitkin County AIS Grant Application: Placemats have been ordered from McGregor Printing and Graphics. A copy of the placemat was shared. They will be printed when the exact size and paper type are determined. The group decided to go with the smaller / standard size placemat. Carmen Rinta and Mike Kruse from the printer will determine the paper type. Carmen agreed to follow up on this.

4.2. Potential 2016 Aitkin County AIS Grant: The group discussed ideas for Aquatic Invasive Species Education efforts that could be funded through another grant. Ideas included: Specimens of AIS that could be used by high school students, signs, and posters. The locations of the decontamination stations were discussed. One may not be located at Willey's Marine next summer. This will be followed up on for the next meeting. The group was asked to bring potential ideas along to the next meeting.

4.3. Minnesota Recovers Grant Wrap Up: This grant expired at the end of 2015. All funds were spent. Through this grant we were able to assist 21 landowners with projects that restored shorelines damaged by the flooding in 2012. It was a very successful program.

The Gary Hennen project on Big Sandy Lake was left to be installed after our last meeting. Janet Smude shared photographs of the completed project. The exposed soil, that was a concern, was covered with mulch and the native plants added where they were planned to go.

4.4. Upper Mississippi River River (Grand Rapids) WRAPS Update: Janet Smude shared that this project is moving forward. The first year of intensive water quality monitoring has been completed. Some follow up monitoring will be done in 2016. A consultant, Emmons & Oliver Resources (EOR) has been hired to work on analysis of the data, development of TMDLs, and protection strategies. Community input will be needed as this project moves forward.

Fliers for a workshop “Convening Community Conversations That Engage” were shared. These workshops will be held in Grand Rapids on February 4th or 5th. Everyone is invited and encouraged to attend and learn strategies for holding productive meetings that invite dialog among participants.

4.5. Watershed Wide Newsletter: Janet Smude has been working on this newsletter. Documents that were drafted last year will be revised, along with new additions. This will be mailed in the spring.

4.6. Additional Lake Monitoring Grant 2016 – 2017: A workplan and budget request has been developed for monitoring Blackface, Island (Haugen Twp), Glacier, and Sandy River Lakes in 2016 and 2017. John Cyrus’ friend has volunteered to sample Blackface Lake. Dianne Knobens shared that her neighbor will take samples on Island Lake. Sampling is scheduled to begin in May.

5. New Business:

5.1. 2016 Rain Barrel Incentive Program: The group discussed how to make this program more effective in 2016. Better advertising and promotion was highlighted. Demonstration barrels would be helpful. Peters Hardware has closed. Reception from Sathers Hardware was not good. Moving ahead it was decided to just work with Groth Lumber in Wright and increase the incentive to landowners to \$ 40 per rain barrel purchased. A motion supporting these changes and authorizing the purchase of two demonstration barrels was made M/S/C Frank Turnock / Ray Gurske.

5.2. Spring Educational Workshop: There is funding in the 319 Grant for educational workshops. Ideas for using this funding were discussed. A workshop on aquatic plants will be held in Cromwell. This will highlight good plants, bad plants, management strategies, and more. Other suggested topics included rain barrels, rain gardens, native plant species.

5.3. 2016 Governors Fishing Opener: The group expressed the willingness to be involved with the Gov. Fishing Opener, if there is an opportunity. Educational materials could be shared as well as water quality information. Jim Carlson offered to check with the committee that is putting this event together.

5.4. The State of Water Conference: Information was shared on the 2016 State of Water Conference, held in Alexandria on April 14-15. Program tracks will cover AIS, Local Impacts, Species Habitat, and Water Health. A motion was made that the BSALWMP sponsor two members to attend the conference, covering their lodging, mileage, and registration, if the MPCA approves of grant funds being used for this. M/S/C Gary Peterson / Merrit Linzie. Barb Dahl and Patti McPhail expressed an interest in attending.

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

6.1.1. SWHIM: Dianne Knobens noted that folks have begun ice fishing on Island Lake.

6.1.2. Sandy Lake: Jim Carlson is working to increase the number of secchi disk readings / volunteers in 2016. Calcium readings will be taken in the spring, in response to the zebra mussel threat. The McGregor Lions ice fishing house will be put out near Brown’s Point on Big Sandy Lake tomorrow. The lake has been quiet.

6.1.3. Sandy River: No report was shared.

6.1.4. Tamarack River: This Group will not meet again until next spring.

6.1.5. Prairie Lake / River: Merritt Linzie shared that there are two large parcels of undeveloped shoreline on Prairie Lake. One of these was purchased last summer. The new owner plans to reserve it and restrict it from development. This was noted as a good thing for the lake.

6.2.1. New Project Submissions: There were no new project submissions.

7. Agenda Additions: An update from Kennecott Exploration was shared. Their winter exploration program is planned to start soon in Clark and Haugen Townships. Curt Sparks has been discussing the possibility of creating a Watershed District for Big Sandy Lake. This would encompass the entire watershed and have taxing authority. Drawbacks and advantages to this were discussed. There are many steps needed to complete this and much public input that needs to be gathered.

8. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday February 10th at 2:30 pm. It will be held at the Cromwell Park Pavilion, if it is available. The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 pm. M/S Frank Turnock / Ray Gurske.