

Big Sandy Area Lakes Watershed Management Project
Executive Council & Technical Team Meeting Minutes
January 10, 2018

Attendance: Melanie Bomier, Carlton Co SWCD; Barb Dahl, Carlton Co SWCD Supervisor; Ramona Hooper, McGregor Township; Lindsay Lally, Island Lake; Phil Lippo, South Island Lake; Patti McPhail, Island Lake Cromwell; Gary Peterson, Carlton County Commissioner; Bill Pratt, Aitkin County Commissioner; Pat Rath, Lake Minnewawa; Al Rinta, Tamarack Sno-Flyers; Carmen Rinta, Tamarack Sno-Flyers; Janet Smude, Aitkin County SWCD; Franklin Turnock, Aitkin County SWCD Supervisor; Bill Zelazny, Upper Island Lake; Sharon Zelazny, Island Lake Cromwell.

1. The meeting was called to order at 2:05 pm. Introductions were made. The agenda was approved with a correction to the next meeting date. M/S/C Patti McPhail / Carmen Rinta.

2. The November meeting minutes were reviewed and approved as presented. M/S/C Al Rinta / Pat Rath.

3. A financial report for the months of November and December was shared. Expenses totaled \$ 1,858.43 from the EPA Section 319 Grant. Expenses were related to water quality monitoring and reporting, staff services, and grant administration. The report was approved as presented. M/S/C Lindsay Lally / Pat Rath.

4. Old Business:

4.1. Mississippi River – Grand Rapids WRAPS Ambassador Meeting: This group met in early December and worked on prioritizing lakes in the watershed. A list of lakes in the BSALWMP portion of the Mississippi Grand Rapids watershed was shared. Impaired lakes are given priority status. The group recommended the following lakes be added to the priority list: Round (because of good water quality), Woodbury (because of development potential), Island (Aitkin Co., because of good water quality and active volunteers), and Prairie (because it is barely meeting the water quality standard). The next meeting of this group is scheduled for Tuesday, March 6th at Long Lake Conservation Center near Palisade. Everyone is welcome to attend. Janet Smude, Melanie Bomier, or Anna Bosch, MPCA can be contacted for specific meeting information.

5. New Business:

5.1. 2018 Aitkin County AIS Grant Application: Janet Smude shared that applications are being accepted for the 2018 Aitkin County AIS Activities Grant. Applications are due by March 16, 2018. The group discussed materials remaining from previous grants. There are several keychains and tote bags left. There are also some tackle boxes left. A motion was made to allow Carmen Rinta to distribute these at community events as she sees fit M/S/C Frank Turnock / Gary Peterson.

Ideas for a new application were discussed. These included an educational program for 4th grade students in Cromwell (presentation, coloring contest, t-shirts, pizza party) and placemats. Additional ideas should be brought to the next meeting.

5.2. Spring Newsletter: Ideas for the spring newsletter were discussed. Janet Smude mentioned focusing on shoreland vegetation management, as this was a priority topic among BSALWMP members. A newsletter similar in size to previous newsletters was suggested, with a pullout insert that focused on aquatic vegetation and AIS. Pat Rath and Carmen Rinta agreed to help with editing and development of the newsletter. Diane Knoben will be asked to help as well.

5.3. City of McGregor Request – Ditch 5 Study: A request for financial assistance was received from the City of McGregor for a study of County Ditch 5 Drainage. Janet Smude asked the MPCA about using 319 grant funds for this. We are not able to contribute funds as there is a pollution point source (wastewater treatment ponds) that empties into the County Ditch 5. 319 Grant funds can only be used to abate non-point source pollution. Information on the proposed study was shared in an effort to keep watershed partners informed of activities in the area. Options for addressing the frequency and severity of flooding within the City of McGregor are being sought.

5.4. Wright Bog Horticultural Peat Project Proposal: Premier Horticulture, Inc. is proposing to develop approximately 316 acres of the Wright Bog, north of Wright for horticultural peat extraction. The proposed site would be cleared and ditched, with drained water discharged into the Little Tamarack River. *Sphagnum* moss peat would be collected using the milled peat vacuum harvesting method. Mined areas would be restored back to *Sphagnum*-type moss originating from an adjacent donor site. Melanie Bomier shared information on this potential activity happening in the watershed.

6. Working Session:

6.1. Sub Watershed Project Reports:

6.1.1. SWHIM: Pat Rath shared that Lake Minnewawa is frozen with good ice and little snow cover.

6.1.2. Sandy Lake: No report was shared.

6.1.3. Sandy River: There was nothing new to report in this subwatershed.

6.1.4. Tamarack River: This group is taking a break for the winter will meet again in the spring.

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

6.2. New Project Submissions: There were no new project submissions. The group was reminded that some project funds remain. These need to be spent next summer.

7. Agenda Additions: There were no agenda additions.

8. The next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, February 14th. The meeting will be held from 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm at the Tamarack Sno-Flyers Clubhouse. The meeting was adjourned at 2:55 pm. M/S/ Carmen Rinta / Pat Rath.