

Big Sandy Area Lakes Watershed Management Project
Annual Meeting July 16, 2016

Attendance: John Cyrus, City of Tamarack; Barb Dahl, Carlton County SWCD Supervisor; Ramona Hooper, McGregor Township; Lindsay Lally, Cromwell; Ray Gurske, Tamarack River Watershed Team; Ken Hallberg, Prairie Lake; Merritt Linzie, Prairie Lake; Scott Lucas, MPCA; Dianne Knoblen, SWHIM; Pat Rath, Lake Minnewawa; Bill Reed, Big Sandy Lake; Barb Peterson, Carlton County; Al Rinta, Tamarack; Carmen Rinta, Tamarack; Kevin Stroom, MPCA; Frank Turnock, Aitkin County SWCD Supervisor; Gary Peterson, Carlton County Commissioner; Janet Smude, Aitkin County SWCD.

The meeting was called to order at 8:45 am. Everyone was welcomed to the meeting. Introductions were made. The meeting agenda was approved, with the addition of the new buffer law, David Pavlak project proposal, and placement of items # 4 and # 5 first. M/S/C Merritt Linzie / Frank Turnock.

4. Election of Officers: The positions of Chairperson and Secretary / Treasurer were scheduled for election. A White Ballot was cast for Barb Dahl for the position of BSALWMP Chairperson. This action carried M/S Frank Turnock / Merritt Linzie. Gary Peterson nominated Pat Rath for the position of Secretary / Treasurer. The motion was approved M/S/C Al Rinta / Bill Reed.

5. Amendments to the BSALWMP By-Laws: Two amendments to the By-Laws were reviewed. Article VI was proposed to be amended to read "These by-laws may be amended at any meeting of the VCC, provided written notice is given to voting members at least thirty (30) days in advance of the meeting at which action is to be taken." Section 2 was proposed to be amended to read " The annual general membership meeting shall be held at the regular meeting date in July." A motion approving these two amendments was made MS/C Pat Rath / Lindsay Lally.

1. Special Presentation: Mississippi River Grand Rapids Unit Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy Update: Kevin Stroom of the MPCA introduced himself and shared information on this WRAPS project. This is a 4 year project. We are currently in year 2. Water quality is being monitored for aquatic life, aquatic recreation, and aquatic consumption. The MPCA is sampling 40 lakes in the watershed. Local partners are sampling 19. The DNR monitors for lake biology, looking for diversity of species. Data will be reviewed in the winter of 2016-2017. The end result will be a TMDL and WRAPS document that outlines protection and restoration steps needed in the watershed. Public input is important for this document to accurately reflect the needs and wants of the local citizens.

The "Zonation" process will be continuing soon. Areas of importance will be refined. The group also discussed beaver dams, impairments, delisting, and the watershed assessment tool on the DNR website. More information on the work done by the MPCA, as well as historic water quality data can be found at www.pca.state.mn.us/water/watersheds. Kevin as thanked for joining the meeting and sharing this information.

2. 2015-2016 Activity Summary: Activities undertaken during the past year were supported by three different grant programs.

The Minnesota Recovers (Flood Recovery) Grant wrapped up in December of 2015. This grant assisted with 6 shoreland restoration/ stabilization projects, 3 on Big Sandy Lake, and one in each of the following locations: Glacier Lake, City of Tamarack, and the Tamarack Sno-Flyers. All of the grant funds were expended.

The BSALWMP also worked on an EPA Section 319 Grant. This grant assisted with several education activities including the Big Sandy Water Institute, Area 3 Envirothon, Lake Association Newsletters, the watershed website, and a watershed wide newsletter. It also supports the Rain Barrel Discount Coupon. Five water quality protection projects were installed using these funds – two on Big Sandy Lake, and one on each of the following lakes: Prairie, Minnewawa, and Round.

The third grant program was an Aquatic Invasive Species Control / Education Grant funded through Aitkin County. In 2015 a grant supported an AIS Information Card and Placemat. In 2016 grant funds purchased floating keychains, tackle sets, and poster lamination.

3. Financial Report: Expenses during the past year totaled \$ 55,412.26 and were from each of the three grant programs mentioned in the activity summary. Funds were used for cost share payments made to landowners, educational activities, and a small amount for technical services and administration provided by the Aitkin County SWCD. The annual financial report was approved as presented.

A financial report for the month of June was also shared. Expenses totaled \$ 7,435.63 and were from the EPA Section 319 Grant and the Aitkin County AIS Grant. The report was approved as presented.

6. Sub Watershed Project Reports:

Sandy Lake: This area had 3.5' of rain on Monday. The lake level is still coming up, and is just over the normal summer pool. Strong winds have been causing severe wave action.

Sandy River: Beaver dams are still a problem on the Sandy River. The river is flowing now, but is out of its banks. Maintenance of the ditch system would allow for better water management in the affected area.

Tamarack River: Ray Gurske distributed 27 packets of information at the Cromwell Summer Fest. The City of Cromwell is no longer managing this event. There was some interest in rain barrels. Letters are being sent to North and South Island Lake residents for public access maintenance.

Prairie Lake / River: There was just under 2' of rain in this area last Monday. Nuisance beaver are also a problem on Prairie Lake. Strong winds are also causing problems on this lake.

SWHIM: Island Lake in Haugen Township is being monitored for total phosphorus and chlorophyll a. This area has also had heavy rains. Lake Minnewawa has come up about a foot in the last week. The Minnewawa Lake Improvement District (LID) has posted their survey results on their website – www.LMLID.org.

7. Review of Potential Cost Share Projects / Available Funding: The group reviewed summaries and cost estimates of 4 potential cost share projects. Cliff Erickson, Prairie Lake: This bluff stabilization project was suggested for a Board of Water and Soil Resources Clean Water Fund Grant Application. This grant can provide more cost share funding than we currently have available, and can cover the needed engineering assistance. A motion was made to pursue this grant funding. M/S/C Merritt Linzie / Frank Turnock.

Three other projects were reviewed and cost share funding approved as noted. M/S/C Merritt Linzie / Frank Turnock. David and Cathy Pavlak, Big Sandy Lake: Water diversions and a rain garden will capture runoff. \$ 794.50, not to exceed 50% of the eligible project costs, was allocated for the project. Art and Marsha Smith, Big Sandy Lake: This project includes a dry creek bed, rain garden, and buffer strips. \$ 1,467, not to exceed 50% of the eligible project costs, was allocated for the project. Mike Ruzek, Big Sandy Lake: This landowner would like to add native trees, shrubs, and forbs to replace those lost to flooding in 2012. \$ 782.90, not to exceed 50% of the total eligible project costs, was allocated for this project.

\$ 658.50 will be moved from the Lakeshore Erosion Management Practices budget to the Rain Garden Cost Share Assistance budget to fund these projects. Janet Smude will work with the MCPA to make this change.

8. Agenda Additions: The group briefly discussed the new Buffer Law. A map of affected areas in the watershed was shared. This is available on the DNR website. Details are still being worked out. More will be shared as the program is finalized.

The next meeting was scheduled for August 10th. It will be held at the Cromwell Park Pavilion, if a meeting room is available. The meeting was adjourned.