

Big Sandy Area Lakes Watershed Management Project
Executive Council & Technical Team Meeting Minutes
March 11, 2015

Attendance: Ray Gurske, Tamarack River Watershed Team; Al Rinta, Tamarack/Round Lake; Barbara Dahl, Carlton County SWCD; Carmen Rinta, Tamarack/Round Lake; Gary Peterson, Carlton County; Dianne Knoblen, SWHIM/ Island Lake; Mark J. Johnson, Big Sandy Lake; Maggie Leach, MPCA; Patti McPhail, Island Lake; J. John Cyrus, City of Tamarack; Lindsay Lally, Cromwell; Janet Smude, Aitkin Co. SWCD; Martin Sauve, Kennecott Exploration; Joni Torgerson, Kennecott Exploration.

1. The meeting was called to order at 2:35 pm. Introductions were made. The agenda was approved with the addition of the Big Sandy Water Institute. M/S/C Patti McPhail/Lindsay Lally .

2. Guest Presentation: Project Update – Kennecott Exploration Company: Joni Torgerson and Martin Sauve from Kennecott Exploration introduced themselves and were welcomed to the meeting. A background summary of the company was shared. They have been in operation for 100+ years, in numerous locations. They began looking at information for the Tamarack area in 1999. They are still drilling in an effort to further define the mineral deposit. Holes are 1,500 to 2,500 feet deep – this depth is challenging. Environmental protection practices are in place. These include mats for crossing wetland areas and containing any potential impacts under drilling rigs. Twenty two sites are part of a baseline monitoring program of surface and groundwater. The company is looking for a mineral deposit that would have long life, large volume, and low cost for extraction. The open door policy of the company was noted, and everyone was invited to visit the headquarters located in Tamarack. Martin and Joni were thanked for joining the meeting and sharing this information.

3. The February meeting minutes were reviewed and approved as presented. M/S/C Carmen Rinta / Ray Gurske.

4. A financial report for the month of February was shared. Expenses totaled \$ 3,700 and were related to the engineering required for the Laing cost share project. The report was approved as presented. M/S/C Carmen Rinta / Ray Gurske.

5. Old Business:

5.1. Section 319 Grant: Workplan: Janet Smude reported that the grant workplan has been approved by the MPCA, and a contract executed. We can begin working on implementation of this grant as of February 27th. Website: Pat Rath has been working to update the website. A summary and photographs of their project was provided by the Rinta's. Pat is working on a summary of his project. Shoreland Planting Workshop: A planting plan and cost estimate have been developed for a shoreland planting workshop at the Bob and Barbara Greifzu property on Big Sandy Lake. This could be funded by a combination of Flood Recovery Funds and 319 Grant Funds. This is proposed to be held on June 29th or June 30th. 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. Cost Share funding of \$ 3,497.51, not to exceed 75% of the total eligible project costs was approved from the Flood Recovery Grant. M/S/C Carmen Rinta / Lindsay Lally. A estimate for the costs of staff to lead the workshop will be shared at the next meeting. Planting Project Maintenance Workshop: Shelley Larson from Hayland Woods Nursery has agreed to lead a maintenance workshop at the Tamarack Sno-Fliers Clubhouse in Tamarack. At this site we will be able to combine classroom learning with a look at plant and weed ID in the rain garden. A date in July has been proposed, but not confirmed yet. The workshop proposed by the U of M Extension Service will be held in Garrison – outside of this watershed area.

5.2. Aitkin County AIS Activities Grant: Information Card: Carmen and Al Rinta shared materials related to Aquatic Invasive Species at the Minnesota Boat Show. Copies of an information card, similar to what we had discussed previously, were distributed. The group discussed purchasing these or adapting it to include our local message. Potential costs and a draft copy will be brought to the next meeting. Workshop: Mary Blickenderfer with the U of M Extension Service has agreed to speak at this workshop. She has suggested that we move the date back. It was her feeling that there would be few examples of plant species available in early May. The Group was flexible on the scheduling, and said to let Mary propose a date that works for her.

5.3. Rain Barrel Incentive Program: Options for purchasing rain barrels were discussed again. Maggie Leach has worked on a similar program with the Crow River Watershed. Their barrels are shipped from Canada at a very affordable price. She offered to get more information. The Group discussed starting small for this year. Grant funds are available to increase the program in 2016 if it works well in 2015. Means of advertising were also discussed. A decision will be made at the next meeting.

6. New Business:

6.1. Cost Share Project Reviews & Payment Approvals: Johnson: Rock has been placed along the shoreline at the Tom & Rita Johnson property on Big Sandy Lake. This is the first phase of their project. Later this spring, native vegetation will be added above the rock and willow wattles will stabilize the remaining unprotected shoreline. A motion approving a partial payment of \$ 978 was made M/S/C Carmen Rinta / Al Rinta. This will come from the Minnesota Recovers Grant. Laing: Construction of the rock rip rap at the Bill Laing project site on the Prairie River has been completed. Photographs of this project were shared. The rock will stabilize the base of this eroding bluff, and hold the sandy bank in place. A motion approving the cost share payment of \$ 36,900 was made M/S/C Mark Johnson / John Cyrus. This payment also comes from the Minnesota Recovers Grant.

6.2. Education Activities Financial Support: Area 3 Envirothon: This competition for High School Students will be held on May 4th at the Cloquet Forestry Center. Students will be tested on their knowledge of forestry, water quality, soils, wildlife, and urban forestry. Cromwell sends teams to this event each year. A motion approving a contribution of \$ 150 from the EPA Section 319 Grant was made M/S/C Lindsay Lally / Patti McPhail. Aitkin County Rivers and Lakes Fair: This event is scheduled for June 20th at the High School in Aitkin. Scheduled programs include Loons by Carrol Henderson, Aquatic Invasive Species Impacts by Tom Jones of the DNR, Wolves of Minnesota by Camp Ripley Staff,

Northwoods Niche by the Audubon Center of the Northwoods, and Lake Bottom Organisms by Long Lake Conservation Center. The Fair also includes displays and booths relating to environmental stewardship and hands-on activities of kids. A motion approving a donation of \$ 300 to the Rivers and Lakes Fair from the EPA Section 319 Grant was made M/S/C John Cyrus / Ray Gurske. The Group also agreed to have a display / booth at this event.

7. Working Session:

7.1. Sub Watershed Project Reports:

7.1.1. SWHIM: No report was shared.

7.1.2. Sandy Lake: Mark Johnson reported that a 5K run around Big Sandy Lake is being planned. The Lake Association will hold their next meeting on Friday.

7.1.3. Sandy River: No report.

7.1.4. Tamarack River: No meetings will be held until spring.

7.1.5. Prairie Lake / River: Merritt Linzie was in touch with Janet Smude. The Prairie Lake Improvement Association is looking forward to sampling planned on their lake for this coming summer by the MPCA, and a detailed fish survey planned by the DNR.

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

8. Agenda Additions: The Big Sandy Water Institute will be held in June and July. They provide low cost environmental education opportunities for kids in the area. The program is coordinated by the McGregor Community Education Office. A motion approving a donation of \$ 2,500 from the EPA Section 319 Grant was made M/S/C Mark Johnson / Al Rinta.

9. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday April 8th at 2:30 pm. It will be held at the Cromwell Park Pavilion, if a meeting room is available. The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 pm.