

Snake River Watershed – Steering Committee

Meeting Outcomes Summary

Nov. 13, 2023, 9-11 am

Invitees: local SWCD & county staff, BWSR staff

Location: Remote Google Meeting – login details (at the bottom of this agenda)

If you wish to attend in-person at the K-SWCD office, please contact Deanna ahead of the meeting.

Present Remotely: Zach Van Orsdel, Erin Hoxsie (Pine Co, part of the fiscal agent Local Govt. Unit, LGU) Deanna Pomije, Emily Larsen (K SWCD), Barb Peichel, Zach Guttornson, Willow Dean, Janet Smude

Purpose: Discuss project vetting process and review technical questions for consideration, such as cost-share rates. Preparation for 11/27 Partnership Board Meeting.

Please see page 3 below also...

Remote Google Meet login details at the bottom of the agenda.

Agenda Topics:

1. Approve Agenda, Other Items...
2. Update on e-link grant process and contracts for services
Deanna provided an update saying that the grant funds have been requested in e-link with the bulk of the work plan completed there. Will plan to finish the work plan making the grant contract ready for our board chair to sign. Barb suggested possibly sending the grant contract to the chair for signing as the board has approved submitting a watershed grant funds request with BWSR. The grant agreement gets signed electronically.

The draft service contracts have been sent to the full partnership including attorneys with a due date of 11/17 to respond with comments. Deanna will plan to send these out again toward the end of this week, showing any added comments and ask the LGU's with planned implementation roles if they want her to draft up their service contracts. The priority service contracts to get approval on by the board are obviously the fiscal agent and coordinator contracts.

3. Project Vetting (Van Orsdel)
Zach went through a 2nd version of a project ranking sheet with everyone. It now includes a cover sheet summarizing the project and to possibly be used to enter the details into a spreadsheet for future reporting purposes.

On the question of projects coming forward that are not part of the Plan's priority areas, BWSR provided some guidance saying – with some of the new WBIF guidance from this year, that we may need a plan modification if the project isn't in a priority area. At the end of the grant we'll need to answer some assurance measures to verify that most of the completed work were within the Plan's priority areas.

In explaining the ranking the following questions/comments came up:

- Deanna suggested listing the HUC 12 instead of HUC 10 on the front cover to help determine if the project is in a plan's priority area. Zach liked the HUC 10 for easier understanding by the Board.
- Possibly review again the cost-effectiveness categories with point values 1-2 years into the process.

- How to compare restoration vs. protection projects was discussed. Deanna mentioned possibly looking at the SRWMB protection ranking if some of the questions make sense to split the 3rd column to answer different questions specific to restoration or protection projects. We can't compare restoration to protection practices. There are certain action items in the plan that are specific to protection – it may be worth while to run an example of each through the ranking.
- Any planned Sub-Watershed Assessment or outreach project we plan to just discuss at a Steering meeting (without a formal ranking) for any funding potential funding proposal ahead of the P'ship Board meeting.
- On the multiple benefits for groundwater Barb suggested a higher value.
- In the end may plan to seek a soft board approval on this document (pilot) and keep it a fluid working document that we can adjust as we start using it to see how we need to adjust things.

Will plan to summarize some of this on 11/27 for the P'ship board and seek their initial response. Ask them 'what's missing'.

4. LGUs that may want to draft their own Statement of Work to go with their Master Contract
5. Discuss the agenda for the next Partnership Meetings – 11/27/23, after the SRWMB meeting starting at 9 am

Agenda items: 10 am planned start

- a. Approve Meeting Outcomes
- b. Contract for Services, attorney vetted contracts, final draft seeking approval
 - Contract for Services – fiscal agent
 - Contract for Services – coordinator
 - Master Contract
 - Statements of Work:
 1. Project Development
 2. Outreach
 3. Others...
- c. Project Vetting – get the board's 1st response on draft
- d. Approval & signing of the BWSR watershed WBIF grant contract!!
- e. Update on Watershed Program Coordinator hiring process, new
Discussed a request to include watershed staff on the hiring process, even over board members as they will be the ones working closely with this new hire.
- f. Set new date / time for partnership meetings
- g. Others...

Need for a Dec. partnership meeting?

Will let the 11/27 partnership meeting decide this – may just set a new date that works with everyone and then call a meeting or not after the next Steering meeting, as we are processing cost-share & practice policies getting ready to implement.

6. Technical questions for discussion, see page 3 below (as time permits)
7. Next proposed Steering Meeting ~~12/11/23~~ as needed, 9:00 am-11:00 pm – agenda ideas

Will plan to schedule the next Steering Meeting with a doodle poll, as the 11th is the MASWCD Convention.

*same date as MASWCD convention?

Future agenda items:

- Reporting collaboration – spreadsheet or spatial option
- Cost share rates (aware of match) or each Party follow their own policy
- Shoreline Restoration – How to stream line work
 - Outreach Workshops, Do-It-Yourself Materials, Demonstration Projects
- Non-structural practice (expand) rates / policies or each Party follow their own policy
- Sub-watershed assessment learning from others (Chisago)

Access to our new Google Drive for sharing Snake Plan data:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1-FlfKVjFepIWnggxNln5gPtg7L1UFv3g?usp=sharing>

Running List of Technical Policy Questions for Consideration:

Question	Options
<p>1. What cost-share rates do we want to offer for any of the following? (Still need to be cognizant of meeting our 10% match, through landowner’s project portion and NRCS.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most BMPs – 75% • Forestry practices - • Those certified thru MAWQCP – <p>A conclusion was discussed to have each LGU decide or follow their own cost-share policy for each practice category. To offer 75% and provide up to 90% for unique circumstances as warranted. Some mentioned what their LGU’s policies were, for example offering more funding for Ag. projects where the landowners do some of the work themselves. Labor can be used as match if documented.</p> <p>We discussed low-income landowners and how to ensure they are a part of our project work. It was suggested that US Rural Development (adjusted gross income requirement) may have guidance on what is considered low-income individuals.</p> <p>May plan to just write up some guidance to follow on this for example to be cognoscente of us meeting the 10% match as a whole on the grant.</p>
<p>2. Non-Structural Practices (cover crops, reduced tillage, perennial plantings)</p>	<p>a) SRWMB & K-SWCD follow the latest NRCS rates</p> <p>b) LSC & Rum watershed has set rates they offer</p>

	After discussion on this it was agreed to follow the Rum Watershed non-structural rates to offer more consistency between watersheds.
- Stopped discussion here -	
3. Funding on Forest Stewardship Plans (many SWCD charging \$9/acre and \$300/plan)	
4. Prescribed Grazing a) Shown reduction #s – conversion from row crop to pasture b) No reduction #s, soil health benefits? – improved pasture only c) Wells (cost ~\$10,000), expensive practice with little environmental gain	a) b) c) fund 50%, no more than \$5,000
5. Nutrient Management Do we also want to fund Comprehensive Nutrient Mgmt. Plans, includes a farmstead assessment pre-planning for feedlot work?	
6. If a practice falls on a priority area line or watershed line, do we fund it?	
7. Buckthorn control (popular) – do we want to require/encourage follow-up planting or another practice (not eligible as stand a alone practice)	
8. Discussion around streamlining ‘Shoreland Restoration Projects’	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use demonstration sites and/or public workshops (or specific to each lake assn.) • Do It Yourself Materials • Others...

Next Steering Meetings, proposed agenda items, list to tackle:

- ✓ Project scoring / ranking matrix – (Zach– copy from the Rum)
- ✓ Milestones for work plan – 1st year focus, large projects
- ✓ Project Tracking / Reporting (ideas from BWSR Academy, Stearns SWCD)
- ✓ How to better streamline shoreland restoration, include TSA (optional later 2023 discussion)
- ✓ Others...

Partnership Board Discussion List for review over time:

- ✓ Contract for Services – Statements of Work for party implementation roles
- ✓ Project Vetting Process
- ✓ Cost-share rates, other technical steering recommendations
- ✓ Etc.