

# Snake River Watershed – Steering Committee

## Meeting Outcomes

Jan. 8, 2024, 9-11 am

Invitees: local SWCD & county staff, BWSR staff

Location: In-person meeting at Kanabec SWCD office: 2008 Mahogany St Ste 3 Mora MN 55051  
With a Remote Google Meeting option – login details (at the bottom of this agenda)

Purpose: Presentation from the BWSR Grants Compliance Specialist on beginning our WBIF grant. Negotiate proposed project funding (<\$20,000) to start with for each SWCD LGU to contract with the Partnership. Continue discussing the project vetting process and review technical questions for consideration, page 3 below. Preparation for 1/22/24 Partnership Board Meeting.

In Attendance: Deanna Pomije, Emily Larsen, K-SWCD; Zach Guttormson, Barb Peichel\*, Jeannette Austin\*, Teressa Pickar\*, BWSR; Erin Hoxsie, Mike Gainor, Pine Co.; Janet Smude\*, A-SWCD; Willow Dean\*, ML-SWCD  
Remote attendance\*

### Regular scheduled meetings:

Steering – 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday, 9-11 am

TAC, as needed 1-2 x/yr. (2<sup>nd</sup> Thurs. 1:30-4:30 pm)

Partnership Board – 4th Monday, morning, 10:30 am after SRWMB if held or at 9 am if no SRWMB meeting

### **E-mail Meeting Summary:**

Please see the powerpoint presentation that Jeannette Austin (BWSR Grant Compliance Specialist) provided us on Monday. Thank you Jeannette. This was good and showed we are on track on some things and may need to discuss processes on a few other items. Will plan to revisit these at future Steering Committee meetings.

Also attached is a summary of our fiscal work session from 1/3/24, when a few of us met to discuss fiscal management processes. Thanks Mara for summarizing this for us.

We briefly revisited the attached project vetting. We discussed a project naming convention and added a project grant eligibility question. Please let me know if you have thoughts for us initially on what minimum percent to use (through the project ranking) for approving projects for grant funding. Will plan to include this in our 1/22 board discussion.

In preparing for our next P'ship Board meeting (1/22) we asked if the board did in fact approve the proposed \$20,000 project minimum as to when projects would go before the board for review/approval. This was last discussed at our 10/2023 meeting and no there was no formal approval on this. Plan to seek approval on 1/22 for our pilot project approval ranking system as well as other project guidance we've been discussing over the last few months in our Steering committee.

### **Agenda Topics:**

1. Approve Agenda, Other Items...
2. Presentation from the BWSR Grants Compliance Specialist on beginning our WBIF grant
3. Discuss for each SWCD LGU - Statements of Work: Projects, general <\$20,000 – SWCD (will email out a table for consideration by each SWCD)

4. Project Vetting follow up / Technical Implementation Questions for consideration – continued, p. 3  
**Set low ranking number to start with, minimum to pursue as a project**
  
5. Discuss the agenda for the next Partnership Meetings – 1/22/24 ~10:30 am, after the SRWMB meeting starting at 9 am  
Agenda items:
  - a. Approve Meeting Outcomes
  - b. Contract for Services, attorney vetted contracts, final draft seeking approval
    6. Master Contracts:
      - 1) Statements of Work: Project Dev. – Pine SWCD
      - 2) Statements of Work: Reporting – Aitkin SWCD
      - 3) Statements of Work: Outreach, Project Dev. – Mille Lacs SWCD
      - 4) Statements of Work: Projects, general <\$20,000 – Pine SWCD
      - 5) Statements of Work: Projects, general <\$20,000 – Mille Lacs SWCD
      - 6) Statements of Work: Projects, general <\$20,000 – Aitkin SWCD
      - 7) Statements of Work: Outreach, Projects, general <\$20,000 – Kanabec SWCD
      - 8) Others
  - c. Present recommendations for project implementation guidance, seeking input and/or approval (first proposal to board – use flow chart on process for project vetting, summarize process)
  - d. Set new date / time for partnership meetings
  - e. Others...
  
7. Next proposed Steering Meeting 2/12/24 as needed, 9:00 am-11:00 pm – agenda ideas (Possibly no Feb. Steering Mtg.)  
Future agenda items:
  - Outreach collaboration
  - Reporting collaboration – spreadsheet for now or spatial option later
  - Shoreline Restoration – How to stream line work
    - Outreach Workshops, Do-It-Yourself Materials, Demonstration Projects
  - 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-FIfKVjFepIWngxNln5gPtg7L1UFv3g?usp=sharing>



Running List of Technical Policy Questions for Consideration:

**Recommendation on projects <\$20,000: Have the Steering Cmte. review the ranking of each project and vote on funding.**

Question	Options / Comments
<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"> <li>• Most BMPs – 75%</li> <li>• Forestry practices -</li> <li>• Those certified thru MAWQCP –</li> </ul> <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><b>*Follow-up Question</b> – 1x upfront payment on a 3 yr. mgmt. practice (LSC – leaves this at the discretion of ea. LGU)</p>	<p>Recommendation: LSC &amp; Rum watershed has set rates they offer to offer more consistency between watersheds.</p> <p><b>We started here for the 12/18 Meeting:</b></p> <p>During the discussion it was suggested to leave this question of paying the 3 years of payments upfront to the discretion of each LGU, who would have the risk in any non-compliance contract holders.</p>
<p>3. Funding on Forest Stewardship Plans (many SWCD charging \$9/acre and \$300/plan)</p>	<p>Rates set based on DNR rates</p> <p><b>To follow suite with what other watersheds are doing here would be to offer this \$9/acre and \$300/plan for Forest Stewardship Plans cost share rates. These rates would be offered whether or not a SWCD or private sector did the planning work.</b></p>
<p>4. Prescribed Grazing</p> <p>a) Shown reduction #s – conversion from row crop to pasture</p> <p>b) No reduction #s, soil health benefits? – improved pasture only</p>	<p>a-c)</p> <p><b>Suggested to let the ranking do its job. &amp; each LGUs to make these individual calls.</b></p> <p><b>Yes, to offer cost-share funding for all component practices associated with prescribed grazing.</b></p>

c) Wells (cost ~\$10,000), expensive practice with little environmental gain	
5. Nutrient Management Do we also want to fund Comprehensive Nutrient Mgmt. Plans, includes a farmstead assessment pre-planning for feedlot work?	<b>Ok, to offer this cost-share funding</b>
6. If a practice falls on a priority area line or watershed line, do we fund it?	<b>Yes, to offer funding for projects that benefit the watershed even if only part is in the watershed or priority area – may discuss this with neighboring watershed (who is best to take this on given the capacity and funds available)</b>
7. <b>Buckthorn control</b> (popular) – do we want to require/encourage follow-up planting or another practice (not eligible as stand alone practice)	<b>12/18 Meeting Discussion stopped here.</b>
8. Discussion around streamlining ‘Shoreland Restoration Projects’ <u>Initial Priority Lakes:</u> Teir 1: Ann, Fish, Cross, Pokegama Teir 2: Quamba, Knife	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use demonstration sites and/or public workshops (or specific to each lake assn.)</li> <li>• Do It Yourself Materials</li> <li>• Others...</li> </ul>
9. Deed Recording requirement? (maybe projects over \$20,000)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
10. Request bid to hire consultant to develop a ArcGIS layer of our Snake priority areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
11.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>

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

- ✓ Project Tracking / Reporting (excel spreadsheet, ideas from BWSR Academy, Stearns SWCD)
- ✓ How to better streamline shoreland restoration, include TSA (optional 2024 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.