

Snake Watershed Partnership Meeting Outcomes – April 5, 2024, 9:30am-11:30 am

Location: Kanabec Co. Courthouse or Remote Google Meeting

Board: *Kurt Beckstrom (non-voting) (Mille Lacs SWCD), Kevin Belkholm, Jon Sanford (non-voting) (Kanabec SWCD); Terry Lovgren (Pine Co); Michael Cummins (Pine SWCD), Dan Gravely (Atkin SWCD)
*remote attendees

Staff:

Kanabec SWCD: Deanna Pomije; Pine SWCD: Mara Jade, Josh Tank; Pine Co: Erin Hoxie, Mike Gainor; BWSR:
*Barb Peichel

Cross Lake: Don Duetsch

Purpose for the meeting

Forestry presentation, Approval on buffer & forestry policies

10:10 Roll Call – Belkholm chairing

Belkholm led the group in a round robin with everyone introducing themselves by answering an ice breaker question on a favorite or most unique pet name they’ve had.

*Approval of Agenda

Motion by Lovgren, second by Gravely to approve the agenda as presented.

Affirmative: Belkholm, Cummins, Lovgren, Gravely

Opposed: None

Abstain: None

Motion Passed.

*Approval of the 2/26/24 Outcomes

Motion by Lovgren, second by Gravely to approve the 2/26/24 outcomes as presented.

Affirmative: Belkholm, Cummins, Lovgren, Gravely

Opposed: None

Abstain: None

Motion Passed.

Project Policies – board questions follow-up

Pomije reviewed with the board a memo from the packet to address board questions from the last 2/26 meeting. Questions that were brought up previously were on cost overruns and project bidding processes. Cost overruns are listed in the Master agreements under 1. (c). Compliance with project bidding and the prevailing wage fall under MN Statutes, which all partners individually are responsible to comply. These items are also addressed in the Master agreement on page 8 (a) all applicable contracting laws and page 9 (i) under legal compliance. The board decided no action was needed as these questions are addressed in the Master agreements.

***Proposal – Snake River assessment for projects**
(approving also the SOW)

Jade (Pine SWCD) presented a proposal for a project assessment to be completed on the main stem of the Snake River. This would involve traversing the whole river and assessing the river, looking for potential project sites. This is planned to be completed with a consultant (Freshwater Society) and Pine SWCD staff. From Mora down to the outlet with the St. Croix staff will also be assessing the plan's flooding concerns as well as assessing a 60' bluff potential project site in Pine Co. (If the bluff project were completed; the soil saved on this project alone will meet our 10-year erosion soil saved goal.) The cabin is close to the bluff's edge and is losing 1' per year into the river. Through this assessment meetings are planned with the DNR, TSA and landowners and could also be used as an educational opportunity. Jade is requesting \$10,000 from the engineering grant category to fund this assessment project. The board commented that they believed the cost would run higher given the extra time needed to go down the river with all its' bends. Seeking a bid from the consultant. This item was tabled until our 4/22 meeting.

Forestry presentation

- Forest Stewardship Planning
- Forestry practices

Josh Tank (shared forester Pine/Kanabec SWCD) presented the benefits of Forest Stewardship Planning with landowners within the Snake Watershed. According to our Snake Plan forestry planning is prioritized within 3 areas. (A map was shown of these priority areas.) He also addressed a few questions the board had on Emerald Ash Borer, the now invasive beetle recently identified in Kanabec County.

***Forestry Policy Presentation / Discussion**

Tank reviewed with the board a forest stewardship fact sheet for landowners explaining this cost-share program. He presented a potential proposal of requiring landowners that receive funding for plans to enroll within the Sustainable Forest Incentives Act (SFIA) within the 1st year and also complete 1 plan identified forestry practice within the first 5-years of the plan. The board and staff discussed the pros and cons of this. In the end it was decided to only recommend landowners enroll in SFIA for those that receive plan funding. Tank also reviewed a draft landowner contract between the landowner and partnership for plan funding.

Motion by Lovgren, second by Gravely to approve a forestry policy to offer funding for Forest Stewardship Plans to landowners within the Snake Watershed priority areas. The rate of funding to follow the DNR cost-share rate for Forest Stewardship Plans. No requirements are to be tied to receiving funds on forest plans, only that staff will recommend the enrollment into SFIA for protection purposes.

Affirmative: Belkholm, Cummins, Lovgren, Gravely

Opposed: None

Abstain: None

Motion Passed.

Tank also reviewed options for how to proceed with the procedures of this work. Whether or not a statement of work is needed with a member partner and how to proceed with the landowner contracts for plan funding. Tank, as the watershed forester may be contacting for this work with all or most of the landowners within the watershed. Options were presented as well as written comments from Paul Swanson (Pine SWCD) as he could not attend this meeting. The board and staff discussed how to encumber the funds and simplify this process.

*** Forestry Policy Actions**

Motion by Cummins, second by Gravely to encumber up to \$5,000 for forest stewardship planning to be tracked by Tank with the fiscal agent oversight. No statement of work is needed as the work is being done watershed wide.

Affirmative: Belkholm, Cummins, Lovgren, Gravely

Opposed: None

Abstain: None

Motion Passed.

Motion by Lovgren, second by Gravely to authorize Josh Tank (or successor) to sign landowner contracts for forest stewardship planning within the whole Snake Watershed. The contracts will be backed by the Partnership Board as needed for unusual or non-complaint circumstances.

Affirmative: Belkholm, Cummins, Lovgren, Gravely

Opposed: None

Abstain: None

Motion Passed.

Public Input: none

***2024 Meeting Schedule**

The board agreed to the following meeting schedule for 2024, to be posted on our webpage. The May meeting was moved to June to avoid the Memorial Day conflict.

9:30 am unless otherwise noted

Basement room of the Kanabec Courthouse

April 22, 2024

June 24, 2024

July 22, 2024

Sept. 23, 2024

Nov. 25, 2024

*Adjourn Meeting at 11:40 am

Motion by Cummins, second by Gravely to adjourn meeting at 11:40 am

Affirmative: Belkholm, Cummins, Lovgren, Gravely

Opposed: None

Abstain: None

Motion Passed.

Next Meeting:

April 22, 2024, 9:30 am start

Future Agenda Items:

Review / approve buffer policies

Snake project assessment proposal from Pine SWCD