

Snake River Watershed – Steering Committee

Meeting Minutes

June 6, 2024, 1-3 pm

Attendees: Deanna Pomije, Emily Larsen, Austin Lee, Conservation Corps; Zach Guttormson, *Barb Pichel, *Mara Jade, *Erin Hoxsie, *Willow Dean, *Janet Smude, *Mike Gainor, *Brian Steffen, NRCS, *Susan Shaw
*Remote attendees (Yes, quorum 5 of 7)

Location: In-person meeting at Kanabec SWCD office: 2008 Mahogany St Ste 3 Mora MN 55051
With a Remote Google Meeting option – login details

Purpose: Discuss project approval process for the Steering Committee. Proposed projects or projects in-development, budget review. Outreach – Meet n Greet

Regular scheduled meetings:

Steering – starting 8/6, 1st Monday, 130 – 330 pm

TAC, as needed 1-2 times/yr. (2nd Thurs. 1:30-4:30 pm)

In 2024 – planning one for late summer / early fall

Partnership Board – 4th Monday, 9:30 am if no SRWMB meeting, (10:30 am, if held after the SRWMB meeting)

Intro. Fun: What is your favorite mythical creature?

Agenda Topics:

1. Approve Agenda, Other Items...
2. Any Project Proposals – projects in development
To come yet – from Kanabec SWCD, Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan seeking funds (for planning and design work) for non-priority area for a proposed beef livestock feedlot runoff control system (seeking partner funds) – Groundhouse River area, part Rum Watershed

Deanna sent our yesterday two project ranking sheet proposals. She was not expecting a vote today on the projects, without the committee getting enough time to review them. Brian from NRCS explained briefly the Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan project proposal. This farmstead is on the Rum / Snake watershed line with the manure pit closure on the Rum side and the feedlot runoff control system on the Snake side. For the Snake watershed this area has priorities for both nutrient management and manure pit closures, under groundwater concerns. It was suggested to do an on-site review or 2' vs. 10' contour line comparison to determine exactly this watershed line.

The 2nd proposal request for watering facility funding/pipeline on a prescribed grazing operation was not discussed. For review at our next Steering meeting.

Budget Review:

Grant Category (QB Acct Name)	Remaining
Admin - WBIF 2024	\$0.00
Edu/Info - WBIF 2024	\$8,100.00
Prog Devel - WBIF 2024	-\$11,000.00
Tech/Eng - WBIF 2024	\$40,000.00
Plan/Assess - WBIF 2024	\$53,118.00
Ag Practices - WBIF 2024	\$80,131.40
Livestock Waste Practices - WBIF 2024	\$30,701.50
Nonstructural Practices - WBIF 2024	\$20,883.60
Shoreline Protection - WBIF 2024	\$157,922.21
Forest Practices - WBIF 2024	\$38,286.60
Groundwater - WBIF 2024	\$1,740.30
Urban Practices - WBIF 2024	\$3,600.90
Wetland Restoration - WBIF 2024	\$17,403.00
SSTS - WBIF 2024	\$70,158.30
	\$511,045.81
	49.88%

A few questions arose in reviewing the above budget, so Erin presented her latest watershed budget, which does not include projects approved at the May Steering meeting that do not have signed SOW contracts as of yet, as the above budget does. To avoid further budget confusion will only show the Pine Co. prepared latest budget at each Steering meeting. Will need to work and ensure SOW contract are completed after the Steering Committee approves all funded project / activities so the budget shows the latest activities.

3. Proposed Forestry Practices using WBIF funds (to come at a future Steering meeting)
4. WBIF Grant Assurance measures
[Assurance Measures for Watershed-based Implementation Funding | MN Board of Water, Soil Resources \(state.mn.us\)](https://www.state.mn.us/water/assurancesummary.html)

5-year PRAP – What does this look like?

BWSR staff and Deanna talked about the WBIF assurance measures expected under watershed funding. The key target for work in the watershed for most projects is between 70-90%. However, it was suggested to aim for 90-100% of our project work to be within the plan’s priority areas. Prioritized, targeted and measurable work.

5. Other Updates:

a) Other Updates

b) Priority Areas – proposal to allow 10% of our WBIF funds for non-priority areas

In discussion was whether to open up 10% of the watershed funding for work outside our priority areas. Part of this discussion was to open up work in Aitkin County, as they are not in most priority areas. In the end it was decided to not do anything now; instead, to wait for a project specific proposal that warrants a change to open up work in non-priority areas.

c) Reminder Qtr. 2 invoices due 6/14 (please include any completed work: billed and unbilled work)

Snake WBIF Quarterly time periods:

Q1: 1/1/24-3/31/24

Q2: 4/1/24-5/31/24

Q3: 6/1/24-9/30/24

Q4: 10/1/24-12/31/24

For our upcoming 6/30 e-link reporting deadline the above varied quarterly invoicing was explained with Q2 being only 2-months and Q3 including 4-months. Deadline for submitting invoices is 6/14. Erin announced her last day with Pine Co. is 6/18.

d) Outreach Proposals - Input:

- Newsletter (Kanabec SWCD) originally estimating ~\$300 – Kanabec Co. alone
“At our last Steering meeting I estimated \$300 for the Snake Watershed to contribute to the distribution of the attached newsletter for its Snake Watershed articles. By sending the newsletter watershed-wide we are more than doubling its distribution, going from 6,670 addresses to 17,400 addresses. The new estimate for this to be sent out watershed wide is \$1500. We still have \$8,100 in this grant category unallocated. Just looking for feedback on this added outreach expense.” -Deanna

Responses:

“Looking at this newsletter, I would find it difficult to support spending SRWPP outreach funds on mailing it to the entire watershed. It’s specific to Kanabec SWCD. When SRWPP does send out a newsletter, my thought is that it should include something relevant to most, if not all, partners, and should have a header with the SRWPP name/acronym and logo on it. Each partner should have the opportunity to have articles included in the newsletter as well.” -Mara

“I agree, watershed wide would be a big expense. I assume this can be posted on the partnership webpage. I believe other watersheds are using newsletter type email managing apps to keep mailing lists. Something that allows people to subscribe electronically and unsubscribe when they no longer find the content of interest.” -Susan

Last month’s committee meeting the committee asked that the Kanabec SWCD newsletter be expanded throughout the Snake Watershed. In discussion on whether to fund the mailing of the Kanabec SWCD newsletter throughout the Snake Watershed – due to the extra added cost and the newsletter including other non-watershed articles it was decided as a consensus not to expand this mailing throughout the watershed.

6. Agenda for the next Partnership Meetings – 6/24/24 10:30 am

It was agreed to not hold a June Partnership Board meeting, as there aren’t enough agenda items to warrant a meeting.

Agenda items:

- a. Approve Agenda, Consent Agenda (w/logo) & Meeting Outcomes
- b. Elections – new chair
- c. MCIT presentation: New entity risks, Open Meeting Law reminder (by-laws)
- d. Financial Update
- e. Policy Proposals, forestry practices as ready
- f. Project Proposals
- g. Contract for Services
 - Statements of Work, as needed
 - Others
- h. Others...

7. Next proposed Steering Meeting 7/8/24 as needed, 9:00 am-11:00 pm – agenda ideas

Discuss when meeting warranted – every month or only when projects/agenda items

Future agenda items:

It was suggested to prepare Steering Committee agreements / bylaws based on previously group agreed upon processes for the group. Deanna will work on this for the next meeting.

- Project proposals
- Outreach collaboration (to include in all meetings)
- Projects in development (to include in all meetings)
- Budget review (to include in all meetings)
- Reporting collaboration – spreadsheet for now or spatial option later
- Sub-watershed assessment learning from others (Chisago)

8. Meeting Evaluation

What worked? What didn't? Suggestions for change?

Location of next meeting, Sandstone?

Let me know how I can help with watershed outreach or project development. I'll have more time for coordination efforts once the District Manager position is filled. -Deanna

Access to our Google Drive for sharing Snake Implementation details:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/OAH_uSPLSkOSqUk9PVA

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

- ✓ Project Tracking / Reporting (excel spreadsheet, ideas from BWSR Academy, Stearns SWCD)
- ✓ Others...

Partnership Board Discussion List for review over time:

- ✓ Project Proposals - Contract for Services
 - Forestry practices - policy
- ✓ Etc.