

Snake River Watershed – Steering Committee

Meeting Minutes

July 8, 2024, 9-11 am

Attendees: Deanna Pomije, *Mara Jade, *Paul Swanson, *Mitch Gindele, *Erin Hoxsie, *Janet Smude, *Barb Peichel, *Mike Gainor *remote attendees

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



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 online / phone game?

Agenda Topics:

1. Approve Agenda, Other Items...

Paul requested to discuss proposed forestry practices using WBIF funds. These may be on a case-by-case basis, needing to show a direct water quality benefit.

Proposed Forestry Practices Eligible for SRWPP WBIF

Brush Management 314: This practice can be used for the removal of woody invasive species, with buckthorn being the prominent one. Buckthorn compacts soil and increases the risk of soil erosion. Removal of the buckthorn is a brush management project. WBIF should be considered for these types of projects with the expectation of a practice used to restore native habitat after. Restoring native species will increase soil health, reduce erosion, and increase water infiltration and soil storage capacity. Follow up project practices include; Riparian Forest Buffer 391, Critical Area Planting 342, and Tree and Shrub Establishment 612.

Riparian Forest Buffer 391: Establishing a forested buffer in a riparian area reduces sediment transport to bodies of water, as well as reduces pathogens, chemicals, pesticides, and nutrients to groundwater and surface water. In addition forest buffers can help maintain healthy water temperatures.

Silvopasture 381: Silvopasture may be a difficult practice to apply. But where we can, it can provide soil and water benefits. By properly utilizing livestock with this practice, it can improve the health and productivity of forested habitat. This in turn increases water quality and soil health.

Tree and Shrub Establishment 612: Planting trees and shrubs in recently harvested sites, storm damaged areas, to increase diversity, restore native habitat, or restore acres back to forested land. Any of these reasons will lead to reduction of erosion and reduce nutrients and pollutants in groundwater and runoff to surface water.

Tree and Shrub Site Preparation 490: This practice is used in tandem with Tree and Shrub Establishment 612. A site may need some work done prior to new trees and shrubs being planted. By properly preparing a site, plantings are more successful, which leads to water quality benefits. May also add in tree protection with the planting practice to protect trees against deer and other wildlife damage.

Discussion: The Brush / buckthorn management practice was discussed as eligible if it is part of a replanting plan after control efforts are completed. Without replanting the area can lead to increased erosion. Buckthorn has shallow roots and gives off allelopathic substances to deter other plants in the area. Silvo-pasture would require a specific soil cover, similar to rotational grazing and a grazing plan. Here only certain forest cover types may work with silvo-pasture. Most of these projects would be less than \$20k. Forestry projects to be discussed on a case-by-case basis with the steering committee reviewing them ahead of the P'ship board, as needed. Barb suggested pursuing habitat funds as a first option. Janet mentioned CPL grants. May be able to use DNR funds for some forestry practices as they are available.

2. Any Project Proposals

- a) Pine SWCD – buckthorn removal project, 28 acres in the Lower Snake River sub-watershed

<u>Practice</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>Unit Rate</u>	<u>Total</u>
Small Shrubs	26	Acre	\$184.51	\$4,797.26
Large Shrubs	2	Acre	\$488.71	\$977.42

Project total estimated cost: \$5,774.68

Paul reviewed the above project proposal for buckthorn control. He went through his buckthorn control design project. Deanna mentioned from the ranking sheet that question #1 needs more clarity as 15 pts. is the max. This project is in the floodplain and they are seeking a less than 1% remaining buckthorn after treatment. This is a multi-year contract. It was agreed that he should include a replanting component into this proposal and bring it back to the Steering cmte. In August.

It was discussed and agreed to bring this project back for our Aug. Steering meeting with the addition of replanting as a component to the project.

- b) Kanabec SWCD – project to complete a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP) in the Lower Groundhouse River, requesting \$12,216 (part of a future feedlot runoff control system and manure pit closure), watershed boundary Snake / Rum

Deanna reviewed what a CNMP is and that this plan/design is required by NRCS for the proposed future beef barnyard runoff control system and proposed manure pit closure. This farmstead is on the watershed line with the barnyard runoff control system in the Snake watershed and the manure pit closure in the Rum watershed. This was confirmed in the field. The completed CNMP design/plan will show the reduction numbers associated with these practices and contain a plan for both practices going forward to seek funds. May be funded out of our WBIF assessment/plan category funds.

A motion was made by Mara to approve funding this CNMP plan as presented, to be funded out of our assessment/plan grant category for \$12,216. Seconded by Janet. Motion passed.

- c) Kanabec SWCD – project for pipeline/watering facility as part of a rotational grazing operation in the Lower Groundhouse River, requesting ~~\$5,342~~ revised to \$2,309.50.

Deanna reviewed a proposal to fund part of a pipeline/watering facility/heavy use area protection on a newly converted cropland to pasture operation within the Groundhouse River a priority area for SWQual-22 for non-structural grazing component practices. There's a 25# Phosphorus (P) reduction and 13 ton TSS reduction with this land conversion project. Requesting \$2,309.50

A motion was made by Deanna to fund the pipeline/watering facility/heavy use area protection on this cropland to pasture conversion operation for \$2,309.50. Seconded by Mara. Motion passed.

d) Kanabec SWCD – low-income non-compliant septic, requesting \$22,375 (100% funded)

Deanna presented a proposed project for the 100% funding of a low-income septic in Kanabec Co. This project is within the S. Fork of the Groundhouse river priority area for reducing nitrates in groundwater by fixing non-conforming septic systems. There is an associated 4# P reduction and 0.02 ton reduction in TSS. Due to the cost this proposal will need to go to the P'ship Board for approval at their July meeting.

A motion was made by Janet to recommend funding this low-income non-compliant septic at 100% for \$22,375. With approval sought from the P'ship Board at their next meeting. Seconded by Mara. Motion passed.

3. Proposed Forestry Practices using WBIF funds
Discussed previously at the start of the agenda.

4. **Steering Committee – DRAFT Operating Agreements, attached**

At the start of the agenda Mara mentioned that the roles of the Steering Committee are to provide updates on projects and to review/approve projects less than \$20,000 in grant funds sought. As time was short at the end of this meeting; Deanna mentioned briefly for everyone to review for our next meeting the draft Steering Committee working agreement/by-laws. **Please review the bulleted items and select ~9 which you feel are most important or suggest some of your own.** For discussion at our next meeting.

5. Other projects in development...

6. Budget review, see the included end of Qtr. 2 budget – *not discussed*
(brainstorm ideas to increase project spending, limiting factors to progress)

- Staff capacity
- More targeted outreach
- Engineering with the private sector as needed
- Lake treatment year 2 or 3

7. Outreach past / future activities

8. Other Updates:

- a) Other Proposed Updates
- b) Check out our shared drive: the outreach file now contains many example flyers, outreach materials for us to modify and use (thanks to the Rum watershed)
- c) Request to have a TAC meeting late summer/early fall
MPCA has news – development of TMDLs

9. Agenda for the next Partnership Meetings – 7/22/24 10:30 am

Agenda items:

- a. Approve Agenda, Consent Agenda (w/logo), progress update (6/21/24) & 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 – Kanabec SWCD low-income septic
- g. Contract for Services
 - Statements of Work, as needed
 - Others
- h. Others...

10. Next proposed Steering Meeting 8/6/24 (first, first Tues. of the month),

1:30 – 3:30 pm – agenda ideas:

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

Future agenda items:

- Proposed projects
- Projects in development
- Outreach collaboration
- Reporting collaboration – spreadsheet for now or spatial option later
- Sub-watershed assessment learning from others (Chisago)

11. Meeting Evaluation

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

Location of Aug. 6 meeting in 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)
- ✓ Others...

Partnership Board Discussion List for review over time:

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