

Snake River Watershed – Steering Committee

Meeting Agenda

Sept. 3, 2024, 2:00pm-4:00 pm



Invitees:

Local SWCD & county staff, BWSR staff

Attendance: Barb, Zach, Mara, Erin, Susan, Siena, Janet, Paul, Mike, Jaren, Emily

Location:

In-person meeting at Kanabec SWCD office: 2008 Mahogany St Ste 3 Mora MN 55051

Video call link: <http://meet.google.com/bam-qgik-hjw>

Or dial: (US) +1 502-667-4238 PIN: 479 537 515#

More phone numbers: <https://meet.google.com/tel/bam-qgik-hjw?pin=2761399208395&hs=1>

Purpose:

NEW: Steering member check-in on activities. Steering agreement/by-laws – discuss now or wait. Two proposed projects updates. Outreach – discuss Steering approval process as needed. Discuss cover crop – prevent plant, if allowed.

Regular scheduled meetings:

Steering – starting 9/3, 1st Monday, 2:00-4:00 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)

AGENDA TOPICS:

[Went through introductions for new people in the room,](#)

1. Prior Meeting Minutes Approval
 - Minutes 8.6.2024 (attached)

Discussed procedures for approving minutes and discussed previous approval of projects without quorum. Jaren asked if there were any parliamentary proceedings that needed to be followed in the approval process for this meeting. Discussed that this meeting was attempting to formalize some processes and procedures (bylaws) but that they were waiting for the watershed coordinator to be onboarded. Mara Discussed how the steering committee wants to be transparent and have a papertrail of decisions (Minutes) and that some decisions might be by vote and others through a consent agenda.

2. Approve Agenda, Other Items...

Erin showed people the new budget spreadsheet and its location on the google drive

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1fnOpuJTc2wN1F6r13ZXrwNdClnP0h8KuCvEfeHDpEDU/edit?usp=drive_link

Discussed contents of the spreadsheet and how each project was linked on the contract list tab.

3. Any Project Proposals

a. Pine County SWCD- 2024-12-DF

Paul Swanson SWCD presented a buckthorn removal project and discussed details of the addition of a wildlife planting utilizing seed from MNP (Buckthorn Replacement Seed Mix) practice to restore areas that were impacted by buckthorn invasion and how this project was linked to water quality within the watershed. Barb noted that there was missing the SOW document for review of the project. and that this information should be provided to the Steering Committee at least 1 week prior to the meeting for review. Discussion was had about the requirements (policy) for presenting a project to the steering committee. Group asked that the templates for SOW, Ranking sheet etc be provided through the google drive (assigned- Mary). Barb noted that policy documents can be found on the 1W1P website

Website:

(<https://www.millelacsswcd.org/1w1p/snake-river-one-watershed-one-plan/>) L

Policy Link:

(<https://www.millelacsswcd.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Project-Policies-SRWPP-Final-WBIF-072224.pdf>)

It was noted that this project has a compressed timeline and that work on this project was ideally to begin Sept/October 2024. It was discussed that once documentation was provided this document would be brought forward to the Steering committee for comment/ consideration through email. With one week allowed for comments and approval/rejection by Steering committee members. This was noted that it was expected that members would participate and also noted that this would be an exception to the policy of bringing projects during normal steering committee proceedings due to the compressed timeline of this project.

Take aways:

1. To provide all documents for Steering committee at least 1 week prior to the meeting
2. More frictionless access is needed for process/procedures/policy in bringing projects
 - a. Mara to provide example SOW for projects to be uploaded
3. To provide projects for eligibility determination by BWSR before funding determinations are made

b. Kanabec SWCD – Manure Pit Closure South Fork Groundhouse River

Emily Larsen presented a manure pit closure ranking sheet and discussed project benefits for Water quality. Noted that both Phosphorus and Nitrate reduction numbers were calculated. Recommended that the 10% match be considered based on how large this project was. It was pointed out that the match was presented in the Policy document at 25%. It was noted that NRCS was also participating in this project and that they could provide Match on this project. Mary asked if there was a requirement of Landowner contribution and it was noted that typically it was accepted that the landowner should provide some sort of contribution to the project for more ownership of the practices. Possible policy to clarify

It was discussed that this project also needed to be presented formally to the Steering committee and that a clarification of the processes and procedures was warranted due to high turnover in staff and onboarding of multiple members of the Steering Committee.

Overall impression that this would be a great project once it was more formalized.

Eligibility Discussion: Barb discussed how projects need to answer the question of 1. Does it meet policy, 2. Is it in our Plan (does it have a water quality benefit)?3. Is it in a Priority Area? 4. Is it in the Work Plan?

Note for the group that decisions were made by the 7 member panel as Mille Lacs county was not involved. and that the SOW

BWSR noted that for the convening of the Partnership any projects brought forward should be a high level of detail in any way to make the project easier to understand such as a short presentation on the practices involved and policy involved for understanding would be good for approval.

4. Members check-in:

(This is your opportunity to provide an update on any Snake WBIF project and outreach activities, including projects in development. Are things on schedule? What do you need to proceed?)

Skipped through this agenda item.

5. Steering Committee – DRAFT Operating Agreements, (now or wait)

a. Review Draft operating Agreements (Attached)

Review of the history of this document. Noted that it was not required but possible desired by the group to clarify things as frustrations with procedures had come up in the past. Especially noted the need for access to documents ahead of time and access and clarity for procedures in moving projects forward.

Discussed Draft needs some reworking before being presented and approved by the committee.

6. Prevent plant cover crops – should we fund this?

- Proposed policy change to allow funding of cover crop plantings in Prevent Plant condition acreage.

7. Outreach Events – How to review with the Steering Committee, with proposed outreach expenses

- BWSR advised to consult with the grant specialists first to confirm proposed scenarios, possibly using RSVP to cut back on food costs.
 - Was this assigned to someone?

It was indicated that food costs can be covered by the watershed funds as an allowed cost (depending on local policy)- to check in the GAM for more information on BWSR policy

Susan indicated the Mille Lacs would be willing to assist with outreach and connect SR with the Rum outreach team.

Susan indicated that the Rum Watershed held a Office Hours meeting Tues @ 830 that might be good for the Watershed coordinator to attend.

Susan was going to create a small resource on cover crops and prevent plant and what it is. Possibly need some resources on forestry practices and manure pit closures as well.

UPDATE–9.4.2024- Mary was chatting with Brian (NRCS) who indicated that there needed to be a declaration of some sort from the FSA to indicate that cover crop could be used in prevent plant and that there might be a double-dipping conflict if folks are receiving payouts for prevent plant (FSA) and cover crop (NRCS) not sure if this includes money coming from SWCD

8. Budget review

- Staff capacity

Mara overview what was maybe needed by the Pine County SWCD for assistance in getting projects out. Including having coordinator help with site visits, Attending Lake Association Meetings, and taking on some of the Admin and application work coming into their office.

- More targeted outreach

Everyone seemed to agree that more targeted outreach should be prioritized and implemented within the watershed

- Engineering with the private sector as needed-Didnt address

- Lake treatment year 2 or 3-[Didnt address](#)

9. 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)

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1i9ViTrdSt6whoVLuk-IgR8vtVZaLXWpd>

- c) Request to have a TAC meeting late summer/early fall
MPCA has news – development of TMDLs

10. Agenda for the next Partnership Meetings – 9/23/24 10:30 am

Agenda items:

Consent agenda – how did we like this from the 7/22 Partnership meeting?

- Approve Agenda, Consent Agenda (w/logo), progress update & Meeting Outcomes
- Financial Update
- Policy Proposals, forestry practices as ready
- Project Proposals
- Contract for Services
 - Statements of Work, as needed
 - Others
- Others...

11. **Next proposed Steering Meeting 10/7/24** (first Mon. of the month),

2–4 pm – agenda ideas:

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

Future agenda items:

- Reporting collaboration – spreadsheet for now or spatial option later
- Sub-watershed assessment learning from others (Chisago)

12. Meeting Evaluation

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

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:

- ✓ Orientation of new members
- ✓ Project Tracking / Reporting (excel spreadsheet)
- ✓ Others...

Partnership Board Discussion List for review over time:

- ✓ MCIT presentation, risk of new entity operations (Jan. 2025)
- ✓ Project Proposals - Contract for Services
 - o Forestry practices - policy
- ✓ Etc.

Current Projects Previously Discussed

Kanabec SWCD

1. Project for pipeline/watering facility as part of a rotational grazing operation in the Lower Groundhouse River, requesting \$5,342 (revised)

Pine SWCD

1. Wetland Restoration Proposal near Cross Lake, partnering with WSFWS. Requesting \$7,200
2. buckthorn removal project now with replanting included, 28 acres in the Lower Snake River sub-watershed
 - *Proposed Forestry Practices using WBIF funds - updates
- 3.