

# Snake River Watershed Plan Partnership

## JPE Board Meeting

### Meeting Minutes



Feb 24, 2025, 9:30 am-11:00 am

**IN-PERSON**

Alternate Location:

**Kanabec County Jail Meeting Room**  
**100 S. Vine, Mora, MN 55051**

**The meeting room is located on the east side of the building.  
 There is a separate door on the front of the building that  
 goes directly to the meeting room**

**VIRTUAL**

Video call link: <https://meet.google.com/ybi-uzdv-yhz>

Or dial: (US) +1 937-696-9474 PIN: 149 734 749#

More phone numbers: <https://tel.meet/ybi-uzdv-yhz?pin=4021771821790>

### **Board Members**

Aitkin County Board of Commissioners	Travis Leiviska
Aitkin County Soil and Water Conservation District	Dan Gravley
Kanabec County Board of Commissioners	Tom Roeschlein
Kanabec County Soil and Water Conservation District	Kevin Belkholm
Mille Lacs County Soil and Water Conservation District	Robert Hoefert
Pine County Board of Commissioners	Joshua Mohr
Pine County Soil and Water Conservation District	Michael Cummins
Board Secretary/ Watershed Coordinator	Mary Poelman KSWCD
Board Treasurer	Erin Hoxie Pine County

**Purpose:**

Board Officer Selections  
 New Board member Introductions  
 Snake River Watershed Comprehensive Plan Introduction  
 Annual Report 2024  
 Grant Progress Report  
 Current Projects Review

	Topics	Assigned	Time
A1	Call to order/ Pledge of Allegiance		5 min
A2	Attendance		1 min
	Nomination from the Floor (voted on by the board) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chairperson</li> <li>- Vice Chairperson</li> </ul>		20 min
A3	Approve Meeting Agenda/ Minutes  12.30.2024 Meeting Minutes: <a href="https://drive.google.com/file/d/110rQ6cE6vCxpJa0fmtv6Pxmal_x4C1Zm/view?usp=drive_link">https://drive.google.com/file/d/110rQ6cE6vCxpJa0fmtv6Pxmal_x4C1Zm/view?usp=drive_link</a>	Nominated Chair	10 min
<b>Agenda</b>			
1	Members Introductions:	Nominated Chair	5 min
2	Board Orientation 1. Board Onboarding <a href="https://drive.google.com/file/d/16HuKQISAZ_pRtNBq3Iiz5L3yhsQfDh90/view?usp=drive_link">https://drive.google.com/file/d/16HuKQISAZ_pRtNBq3Iiz5L3yhsQfDh90/view?usp=drive_link</a>  2. PPT Presentation Orientation SRWPP	Mary Poelman Watershed Coordinator	30 min
3	Work Planning 1. Annual Reporting <a href="https://drive.google.com/file/d/14umq9BR7aVviJAH0DWXQINP7HuZ3G3JL/view?usp=sharing">https://drive.google.com/file/d/14umq9BR7aVviJAH0DWXQINP7HuZ3G3JL/view?usp=sharing</a>  2. E-Link Grant Reporting <a href="https://drive.google.com/file/d/1LJZM5Km56NV0NUuYkiz11TNtrjfVdU_/view?usp=sharing">https://drive.google.com/file/d/1LJZM5Km56NV0NUuYkiz11TNtrjfVdU_/view?usp=sharing</a>	Mary Poelman Watershed Coordinator	20 min

4	Budget Review 1. Current Grant Expenditures report <a href="https://drive.google.com/file/d/1RMbsD030b8lm4rTpdb/Hud_6AZFA2MoA0/view?usp=drive_link">https://drive.google.com/file/d/1RMbsD030b8lm4rTpdb/Hud_6AZFA2MoA0/view?usp=drive_link</a>	Erin Hoxsie Pine County	15 min
5	Projects ● Review of Current Projects List	Mary Poelman Watershed Coordinator	10 min
B	<b>Consent Agenda (Informational Items)</b>		
6	Invitation: Schedule a time to meet with me for an informal get to know you, your interests in serving on the board, priorities etc. <a href="mailto:mary@kanabecswcd.org">mary@kanabecswcd.org</a> 320-679-1391	Mary Poelman Watershed Coordinator	5 min
7	Next Meeting Time <b>March 24, 2025</b> Kanabec County Courthouse Basement conference room 3 317 Maple Ave E, Mora MN 55051	Mary Poelman Watershed Coordinator	5 min

## Key Questions

Key Questions Addressed during this meeting:

1. What is the procedure for nominating and electing a new chair and vice chair?

Procedure: Coordinator leads the meeting until the elections are held. Coordinator calls for nominations from the floor 3x. Nominations are nominated and seconded by a member of the board. After 3 calls for nominations, any discussion, then a call for a vote. All those in favor of x candidate indicate by saying aye, (tally) all those against the same sign (tally).

Once a chairperson is selected, they will lead the nominations for other positions and the rest of the meeting.

2. How will the board ensure that all members receive the meeting agenda and minutes in a timely manner?

Watershed coordinator wants to provide information and minutes at least 1 week before the meeting date, either in paper or electronically. Draft Minutes will be posted on the website until they are approved at the next meeting for better accessibility.

3. What are the key responsibilities of the board in overseeing the watershed partnership?

Governance, Oversight, Recruitment of future board members, and Community Outreach

4. What is the timeline for the biennium budget and when do the funds need to be spent?

Biennium Budget for the next round of funding will be open in April 2025 and be available to request funds through May 2026. These would be FY26 funds that would need to be spent by Dec 2028.

Current FY24 funding needs to be spent by December 2026.

5. How will the board ensure that all members are informed about project developments?

Any projects approved by the SC should be presented to the board for informational purposes so that the board stays aware of any and all progress within the watershed.

6. How will the board handle the allocation of funds for different projects?

The board has the ability to move up to \$50,000 dollars within the current work plan without doing a work plan revision, just documenting that the change happened.

The board would like to reserve this right of moving funds for projects that are actually happening as they come up on a project-by-project basis. As projects typically take several months to complete the board envisions that this approval can take place after the fact without holding up the planning progress, but requires clear communication as projects are contracted.

## Snake River Watershed Plan Partnership JPE Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Board Members: Dan Gravley, Tom Roeschlein, Jon Sanford (alternate), Bob Hoefort, Josh Mohr, Micheal Cummins, Mary Poelman, Erin Hoxsie (online) Kevin Belkhom (arrived at 10:04 am)

Other attendees: Jon Sanford, Jaren Peplinski, Nick Foss, Emily Larsen, Zach Guttormson, Susan Shaw, Don Duetch

Online attendees: David Banta, Krista Arne, Paul Swanson

### Agenda Item A2

- Nomination for Chair and Vice Chair from the board

### Action items

- Motion for Josh Mohr to be the CHair of the Snake Watershed Partnership board brought by Roeschlien second by Gravley \*approved
- Motion for Dan Gravley to be the Vice CHair of the Snake Watershed Partnership board brought by Sanford second by Cummins \*approved

## Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Attendance was taken at the meeting, and the first order of business was to elect a new chair and vice chair. Josh Moore was nominated and unanimously elected as chair, while Dan was nominated and also elected as vice chair. The procedure for nominations and voting was discussed, allowing for a relaxed approach to Robert's Rules of Order.

### Agenda Item A3

- \*Unclear whether there was actually a motion or a second to approve this but there was an approval vote
- Tom Roschlien would like paper copies of the meeting packet
- Gravley inquired about the meeting notes for the steering committee meeting
- Request to Upload the draft meeting notes to the website
- Cummins requests that the meeting notes from board meetings and steering committee meetings are posted before the next meetings

There was also a focus on improving the distribution of meeting agendas and minutes in advance to enhance communication among members. The introductions of various participants, including representatives from multiple Soil and Water Conservation Districts, set a collaborative tone for the discussions.

### Agenda Item 1

#### Introduction of Participants

Josh Moore, a Pine County Commissioner, recounted his involvement with the Snake River Watershed One Management initiative and his past efforts to dissolve the joint powers board. Participants introduced themselves, including Michael Cummins from the Pine County Soil and Water Board and Erin Hoxsie from Pine SWCD, who mentioned her fiscal role. Other attendees included representatives from various soil and water conservation districts, highlighting the collaborative nature of the meeting.

### Agenda Item 2-1 /2-2

#### Board Orientation and Partnership Overview

The board orientation emphasized the importance of a living onboarding document that will be updated yearly, containing essential information such as staff contacts and the current budget. The mission and vision statements were reiterated to remind board members of their primary goal: to protect clean water in the watershed area. Additionally, the board's roles in governance, community advocacy, and project engagement were highlighted.

Erin Hoxsie detailed the financial status of the Snake River Watershed Plan, highlighting that the majority of funds are encumbered for administration and project development. She clarified the match requirements, indicating that 10% of the total grant has been spent so far. Hoxsie also mentioned the potential for additional federal funding to meet match requirements for agricultural practices.

Erin Hoxsie shared details about the fiscal information for the Snake River watershed partnership, which is organized in a Google Drive. Mary confirmed that the folder is read-only and accessible to all board members. There was a discussion

about the need for paper copies of the budget breakdown, and concerns were raised regarding access issues for non-Gmail domains

### **Agenda Item 3-1**

MP presented the annual report to the board.

#### **Funding Overview and Implementation Goals**

The funding for the watershed plan comes from the Clean Water Land and Legacy Amendment, which has provided approximately \$729 million for clean water initiatives since 2010. In fiscal year 2024, the allocated amount is \$1,024,471 for the Watershed-Based Implementation Fund, with spending guided by specific policies and a work plan. The plan includes targeted goals for priority water bodies, categorized into Tier 1 and Tier 2 lakes.

#### **\* Budget Overview and Fund Allocation**

#### **Funding Opportunities and County Ditch Management**

Participants discussed various funding opportunities for habitat and water management, particularly from the forestry department. The conversation highlighted the need to demonstrate the water quality benefits of projects, especially in relation to controlling invasive species. Additionally, the complexities of managing county ditches were addressed, noting the legal processes involved.

- Gravley asked for clarification on confirming that forestry practices do have water quality benefits
- Roeschlein inquired about county ditches projects (has concern about judicial ditch one and six near Braham)
  - Susan→county ditch has ditch law tied into them and has to go through that process. Intensive process but definitely an opportunity.
  - Mary→ suggest going to the SWCDs for coordination on those projects
- Zach Comment→ suggests that the decision tree from previous powerpoint is included in the board onboarding practice

#### **Work Plan and Grant Progress Review**

The Conference Room speaker presented an annual report detailing the previous year's projects and financial overview for the Snake River watershed. They highlighted the ability to adjust funding categories within a \$50,000 limit without requiring a work plan revision. The discussion also touched on the upcoming grant application process and the importance of collaboration with the steering committee.

- Gravley inquired if we could just eliminate a category of funding if we didn't use that category
  - Zach→ yes the board can move up to \$50,000 total over the life of the grant without having to get BWSR approval anything over required work plan revision to be approved by BWSR
  - Zach→ 1.04 million available for applications in July for years 26-28 April 30th 2026 is the deadline for fiscal year 26
  - Mary→ a new addition work plan is needed for the 26-28 funding

- Cummins→ is the work plan done by the board or steering committee?
- Mary→ the board gives those recommendations
- Cummins→ is it ok to wait to apply to those grants?
- Zach → You can wait but there is an approval process, recommends late fall of this year 2025

#### **Agenda Item 4**

##### **Fund Allocation and Forestry Stewardship Plans Discussion**

A proposal was made to reallocate \$20,000 from the forestry practices category to the planning and development category to adequately fund forestry stewardship plans. Currently, only \$5,000 is allocated for writing these plans, which is not enough to cover the intended acreage. Nick elaborated on how these stewardship plans help landowners manage their woodlands and access financial incentives through state and county programs. The conversation also touched on the obligations tied to these programs. There was some confusion regarding the need for a motion since the action was not on the agenda. Ultimately, it was agreed that the steering committee has the authority to make these decisions, and the board's role is primarily informational.

##### **Funding Allocation for Well Sealing and Project Management**

The group discussed the need to allocate approximately \$5,700 for sealing five wells, with costs for individual wells varying significantly. It was proposed to transfer these funds from the shoreline category, as it had the most substantial remaining budget, and there was a consensus that current projects would not meet the previously allocated \$160,000 for that category.

##### **Budget Review and Project Funding Discussion**

The conversation highlighted the challenges of managing project budgets, particularly for well sealing initiatives. Participants, including Erin, discussed the need for board approval for expenditures over \$20,000 and the importance of transparency in budget adjustments. There was a consensus on the need to track spending closely and to prioritize project-based funding rather than moving funds retroactively.

Erin asked if the funds that she Mary and Zach had talked about had been moved around

- Mary→ a request to move funds was made to move funds from forestry practices to projects and development for writing forest stewardship plans.
- Nick→ a stewardship plan is when a private landowner asks for a management plan for their property that will include invasive management plantings and other management. Once they have stewardship plans they can apply for SFIA and 2C funding for cost share on those management plans
- There is no obligation to do those management practices and then not develop the land.
- Paul suggests a more in depth forestry conversation at a later date.
- Josh→ is a motion necessary to move the funding?
- Cummins→ informational only
- Well sealing funds moving→ concern that is shouldn't be moved from shoreline because that is the area that most projects would come from
- Zach→ all you need is to document these movements of funds BWSR doesn't need to know about. Moving funds back and forth does not count toward the \$50,000. Can move funds whenever is needed

- Cummins can be retroactive rather than proactive on moving funds and can move funds once we get projects. Does not think it is necessary to move funds before we have projects
- Mary→ staff will know the amount of money that is available to spend, it would be more comfortable on planning
- Mohr→ proactive in regards to the plan, did one project the goal was 5 realized there is not enough funds to complete that goal

**Action:**

- Motion to move \$25,000 from forestry practices to project development brought by Gravley second by Cummins \*approved

## **Project Updates**

The steering committee approved two projects, each costing under \$20,000. The first project aims to address shoreline erosion at Fish Lake, receiving a ranking score of 54%, which places it in the average category. The project involves stabilizing the shoreline and revegetating it with perennials.

## **Project Updates and Funding Discussions**

The group discussed the eligibility criteria for well sealing projects in the watershed, noting that many old wells need to be sealed, especially when new wells are drilled. Two new projects were proposed for the next meeting, including a bush management forestry project. The steering committee is expected to approve most projects under \$20,000, while larger projects will require board approval.

## **Agenda Item 7:**

**No motion to adjourn**