

Snake River Watershed – Steering Committee

Meeting Minutes

March 3 2025, 2:00pm-4:00 pm



Invitees:

Local SWCD & county staff, BWSR staff

Attendance:

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:

Project Approval (2 projects), Review of Budget and funding projects, Project Tracking Google Drive, Member updates

	Topics	Assigned	Time
A	Approve Agenda/ Minutes	Mary KSWCD	5 min
1	Budget Review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review of Funding 2. JPE Meeting Updates on moving funds 	Erin PCo Mary KSWCD	15 min
2	Proposed Projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Windbreak_Iverson 2. Brush Management_Engel 	PSWCD	45 min
3	Current Projects Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Google Drive: Project Tracking Spreadsheet 2. 12 Weeks Goals Check-in/ Progress Reporting 	Mary KSWCD	15 min
4	Policy Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Steering Committee Working Agreement (draft) https://docs.google.com/document/d/1VVcbjRE2ylqhLiDDHtZkFjtxds9UjSAp/edit?usp=drive_link&oid=115886762896760527439&rtpof=true&sd=true 2. Priority Area for Practices (Discussion) 	Mary KSWCD	15 min
5	Partner Updates/ Organizational Feedback: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. LGU Member updates for the Board (Discussion) 	Steering Committee Members	15 min
6	Outreach Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Forestry Outreach Event Planning -Updates- Nick 2. Forestry Mailer-Updates- Nick 3. Shoreline Outreach-Updates- Emily 4. Septics Outreach-Updates- Mary 	Nick Emily Mary	tbd
7	Future Meeting Times April 7, 2025 2:00 PM May 5, 2025 2:00 PM	Mary KSWCD	5 min

AGENDA TOPICS:

a. Prior Meeting Minutes Approval

- i. Minutes 02.03.2025
[Minutes Steering Committee 2.3.2025](#)

b. Approve Agenda

Packet Location:

[Agenda Packet 3.3.2025](#)

Mary Poelman initiated the meeting by addressing the agenda and minutes, confirming the absence of Zach and Paul. Erin Hoxsie reported that the budget is stable, with a deadline for reimbursement requests set for April 15th. The board discussed moving funds for woodland stewardship planning, emphasizing the importance of not moving funds preemptively.

1. Budget Review

Erin Hoxsie provided a budget update and requested updated reimbursement forms by April 15th. She will send out the updated version. The committee deliberated on the potential movement of funds for woodland stewardship planning, agreeing to hold off on any transfers until specific projects are identified, with Barbie Peichel advising caution in this regard.

2. Proposed Projects

Please Submit with Projects:

1. SOW/ funding request
Template SOW
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1S2bv1Ba4Z1doP2_RM2pJchjxGEgcghws/edit?usp=drive_link&oid=115886762896760527439&rtpof=true&sd=true
Template SOW (ReadMe)
https://docs.google.com/document/d/101w_5q-6i8HMQqMlKSuwMK91cEh882Jg/edit?usp=drive_link&oid=115886762896760527439&rtpof=true&sd=true
2. Priority Area Map (within SOW)
3. Project Description/Timeline (within SOW)
4. Ranking Sheet
Template Ranking Sheet
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1sR6nwZQ9PZg2iDjLlgmd2dBavi0leaK1/edit?usp=drive_link&oid=115886762896760527439&rtpof=true&sd=true

Windbreak /Tree Planting Project in Pine County

Nick Foss discussed a tree planting initiative in Pine County that features multiple planting practices, including windbreaks and a reforestation plot. The total cost is approximately \$3,500, with a funding request of over \$2,600. The project is expected to enhance water quality in the Snake River Watershed despite not being in a priority area. Barbie Peichel addressed the need for outreach in priority areas .

*The Steering Committee voted unanimously to move forward with the Windbreak/ Tree Planting project.

Brush Management Project Pine County:

Nick Foss presented details about the brush management project, highlighting its water quality benefits and the challenges of accurately estimating pollution reduction due to the limitations of existing calculators. The project, costing over \$8,600, seeks a 75% cost share.

Buckthorn Control and Long-term Management Strategies

Susan Shaw expressed her concerns about the long-term strategy for buckthorn control, emphasizing the difficulty of managing this invasive species. Nick Foss explained that while buckthorn removal is not explicitly detailed in the plan, the approach involves removing buckthorn and replanting competitive species to restore native cover. Shaw also inquired about the expectations for landowners regarding ongoing management after initial removal and replanting. Nick Foss clarified that the contract requires landowners to repay up to 150% of the project cost over a 10-year period. Susan Shaw raised concerns about landowners' understanding of their commitments, while Nick assured that efforts are made to explain the terms clearly. Mary Poelman highlighted the need for staff to reinforce these elements of the contract and suggested that ongoing education could be beneficial throughout the project duration.

Susan Shaw raised concerns about the effectiveness of buckthorn control efforts, asking for successful examples to alleviate her doubts. David Banta highlighted the challenges of managing buckthorn, noting that mechanical removal alone is insufficient without herbicides. Nick Foss confirmed the landowner's commitment to the project, while also discussing the limited funding opportunities for such initiatives. Barbie Peichel pointed out inconsistencies in grant documentation and emphasized the need for careful handling of landowner information in public records. Jaren Peplinski indicated that he would abstain from voting on this project given the concerns of cost implementing watershed wide and the project being outside of a priority area.

Vote were taken:

KSWCD- abstained

Pine County- Yes

Pine SWCD-Yes

ML SWCD- Yes

Aitkin SWCD- Absent

Aitkin County- Absent

Kanabec County - Absent

Mary Poelman indicated that there were not enough votes to proceed. The committee discussed the implications of abstentions and the need for electronic voting to gather input from absent members. Barbie Peichel suggested clarifying the quorum definition in future meetings. It was decided that this project would be sent out for electronic voting as detailed in the Steering Committee Draft Working Agreement.

3. Current Project Updates

Mary Poelman discussed the development of a project tracking spreadsheet to monitor the status of various projects within the Snake River watershed. She highlighted the need for LGUs to provide links or descriptions of where project files are stored to ensure future accessibility. The spreadsheet will include both active and potential projects, allowing for better management and follow-up.

4. Policy Updates

Mary Poelman provided a draft copy of the Steering Committee working agreement that had been drafted previously. Plan is to have the steering committee vote on this at the beginning of the next meeting.

5. Partner Updates/ Feedback:

Action Items:

- * Erin Hoxsie will update the budget spreadsheet on the shared drive once funds are moved around.
- * Erin Hoxsie will put an updated reimbursement request form in the shared drive and email it to the team.
- * Mary Poelman will ensure that the landowner names are removed from the steering committee notes before posting them online.
- * Mary Poelman will send the project packet out for electronic voting to absent members within one week.

Key Questions:

- * Are there any current budget issues that need to be addressed?
- * What is the expectation for long-term control of buckthorn after removal and replanting?
- * Is there a need for a clearer definition of what constitutes a quorum for voting?

6. Outreach Plan

Didn't discuss updates (ran out of time)

7. Upcoming Meeting Times

Regular scheduled meetings Upcoming

Steering – 1st Monday, 2:00-4:00 pm

April 7, 2025 2:00 PM

May 5, 2025 2:00 PM

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

May 8 2025 1:30 PM

Partnership Board, 4th Monday, 9:30 am

~~March 24, 2025 9:30 am~~ Cancelled

April 28, 2024- 9:30 am - Meeting location is the Kanabec County Jail Training Room