

Snake River Watershed – Steering Committee

Meeting Minutes

April 7 2025, 2:00pm-4:00 pm

Invitees:

Local SWCD & county staff, BWSR staff

Attendance: Mary, Nick, Emily, Jaren, Janet, Siena, Krista, David, Barb, Susan

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: Adoption of SC working agreement, policy update, project approval, Micro Planning

	Topics	Assigned	Time
A	Approve Agenda/ Minutes a. Minutes https://drive.google.com/file/d/1DIgSzLnwhFxsrvvxKxoQ-2guboofhuV2Z/view?usp=drive_link b. Agenda https://docs.google.com/document/d/129HDNAVWASV4FOAeOTTYDQEENwM7-Pak/edit?usp=drive_link&oid=115886762896760527439&rtpof=true&sd=true	Coordinator	5 min
1	Budget Review 1. Review of Funding 2. Quarter 1 Invoices Due (4/15/2025)	Erin PCo	5 min
2	Working Agreement: 1. Steering Committee Working Agreement (Adoption) https://docs.google.com/document/d/1VVcbjRE2ylqhLiDDHtZkFjtxds9UjSAp/edit?usp=drive_link&oid=115886762896760527439&rtpof=true&sd=true approved with revisions	Coordinator	10 min
3	Policy Updates: 1. WSP Plan Policy Update (Recommend to Board) https://docs.google.com/document/d/1cYNWSfU04xK_j2e4kogTQoHsYlzlSdEJ/edit?usp=drive_link&oid=115886762896760527439&rtpof=true&sd=true	Paul PSWCD	10 min

4	<p>Projects:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Cross Lake Alum Feasibility Study SOW: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1V4wBD60lpl8qnT21QcoMGNaF5hD2ta/view?usp=drive_link <p>Narrative: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1wmAluPBr-1gHm2jvzfs9bd6vaW1C CedT/view?usp=drive_link</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Parcel Level Monitoring (removed) SOW pumping - for practice 360 Cost sharing - 	1.Paul PSWCD	15 min
5	<p>Planning:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Group Discussion: Staff Capacity and Goal Setting (Please Come Prepared to Discuss) <p>https://docs.google.com/document/d/1uhMXqxNVvl_Cq3aW4RydZ_BveXaliUBB/edit?usp=drive_link&oid=115886762896760527439&rtpof=true&sd=true</p>	Discussion: All Steering Committee Members	60 min
7	<p>Future Meeting Times</p> <p>JPE April 28, 2025 (Kanabec Co Jail Training Room)</p> <p>SC May 5, 2025</p> <p>SC June 2, 2025</p>	Mary KSWCD	1 min

A.Approve Agenda/ Minutes

Mary Poelman opened the meeting by approving the minutes from the last session and discussing updates to the agenda.

-minutes Approved

-KSWCD added section under 4 for discussion of pumping - agenda approved

Budget Review

Erin Indicated there were no updates to the budget from the previous meeting as invoices for Q1 are due on April 15. Erin Hoxsie reported that only \$4,000 remains in project development funds and suggested the need for a statement of work for woodland stewardship plans. The committee agreed that a SOW would be appropriate and better able to track funding. Requested that Pine SWCD be the entity for that SOW.

The committee also discussed the potential transfer of funds from forestry practices to support these plans. Mary to follow up with Erin on Forestry funding and transfer of funds for other projects.

Working Agreement:

Mary Poelman led a review of the working agreement, confirming with voting members that no changes were suggested by Jaren, Krista, Sienna, Janet, or David. She proposed two points for discussion: defining quorum as a simple majority and whether to keep the wording regarding non-project BMPs using the ranking sheet. The group expressed satisfaction with the current practices, and the group removed the latter wording.

Susan Shaw inquired about the practicality of ranking outreach efforts, with Mary Poelman noting that the current ranking sheet may not be well-suited for certain analyses. Barb Peichel proposed sending meeting packets a week in advance to facilitate better preparation, while Mary highlighted mixed feedback on this approach. The group discussed the implications of opening meetings to the public and whether it would subject them to open meeting laws. Other minor changes noted.

Mary Poelman facilitated a vote to approve a working agreement, which received unanimous support from the committee members present.

Policy Updates:

Barb highlighted the ambiguity surrounding the protection program in the forestry policy, suggesting that it should be more clearly defined. Nick Foss mentioned that while they are exceeding protection goals with Woodland Stewardship Plans, it may be necessary to turn away those with less genuine conservation intentions. Janet brought up and the group discussed the timing of decisions in relation to upcoming legislative changes. A decision was made to delay recommendation of this policy until after the State MN had made decisions on the budget.

Projects:

3. Cross Lake Alum Feasibility Study

SOW:

The discussion centered on the Cross-lake feasibility study, which Krista Arne explained aims to assess internal phosphorus loading and the potential for alum treatment. Susan Shaw raised questions about the long-term sustainability of such treatments, to which Barbie Peichel responded, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive understanding of both internal and watershed contributions to phosphorus levels. The study is seen as a preliminary step before further watershed analysis.

“We are recommending as a steering committee that we move this project forward to our policy committee.”

4. SOW pumping - for practice 360 Cost sharing -

Mary Poelman initiated a discussion regarding the Kirby manure pit closure project, emphasizing the importance of including pumping in the cost estimate. Jaren Peplinski admitted it was an oversight not to list pumping as part of the project SOW, and the committee agreed to recommend an update to the policy committee.

The meeting then shifted focus to planning for the next quarter, with Mary encouraging participation to assess current staff capacity and set straightforward goals.

Planning:

2. Group Discussion: Staff Capacity and Goal Setting (Please Come Prepared to Discuss)

Discussion of Staff capacity- ML has 5 staff, KSWCD has 4 , Pine has 5 and Aitkin has 6 staff . Discussion

of various specialties of each staff person with notes that many staff were engaging with other watersheds as well and working towards JAA processes. Susan noted that the Rum was currently occupying most of ML time and that towards the end of 2025 / 2026 would be more able to shift towards Snake. Also mentioned current SOWs that are supporting Project Dev, and Web hosting.

Janet noted that districts that have less experience or need to get projects planned could work with landscaping/ contractors to plan out and implement practices. The private sector could work on shoreland restoration projects for example Prairie Restorations and MNL. That the landowners can contract much of this type of work. Note that we should be sure to use the TSA3 engineers.

Discussion on Ag practices pointed out that the various practices in Ag practices can have a wide range of price tags. up to very expensive. Discussion on Urban water suggested more outreach to municipalities and less installation of rain gardens due to the maintenance of the practice.

Discussion about wetland restoration work noted that Fish and Wildlife Service traditionally had spearheaded wetland restoration projects in Pine county and that this could be a great place for collaboration.

Short term Goals were planned as follows:

Ag Practices: 2 practices

Outreach: Bring in 2 Farmers within the snake (Farmers Led Group)

Outreach : 1 outreach material specific to Ag practices

Woodland Panning- 7 plans written

Forestry Practices- 3 practices planned

Septics- 1 septic planned

Shoreland- 10 Site Visits

Shoreland- 3 contracts