

Greater Blue Earth River Basin Alliance Technical Committee
Wednesday, May 25, 2022 – WebEx by Phone or Computer Connection

Present:

Ashley Brenke
Kay Gross
Jake Fritz
Melanie Krueger
Dan Bartosh
Rick Moore
Katie Wigen

Representing:

Martin SWCD
GBERBA Coordinator
Blue Earth SWCD
Brown SWCD
Jackson SWCD
DNR-MNIT
DNR

Present:

Dave Bucklin
Brenda Lageson
Laura Quiring
Carrie Schultz
Jill Sackett Eberhart
Shania Keseley

Representing:

GBERBA Coordinator
Freeborn SWCD
Watonwan SWCD
Watonwan SWCD
BWSR
BWSR

Call to Order: GBERBA Technical Committee was called to order by Vice Chair Ashley Brenke the meeting to order at 9:40 am.

Introductions

Agenda: Motion by Jake Fritz, second by Melanie Krueger to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried, all yes

Minutes: Motion by Melanie Krueger, second by Dave Bucklin to approve the April 27, 2022, Technical Committee Meeting minutes. Motion carried, all yes.

INFORMATION ACTION:

GBERBA Cost-Share Contract Approval - FY2021 BWSR WBIF-Watonwan Watershed Implementation Grant Agreement (C21-2483)

Bernetta Hesse 83-17(WBIF-WW-21) Well Decommissioning – 1 no. Cost \$900.00 C-S \$450.00

Motion by Carrie Schultz, second by Jake Fritz to approve the GBERBA Cost-Share contract - FY2021 BWSR WBIF-Watonwan Watershed Implementation Grant Agreement (C21-2483) for Bernetta Hesse (WBIF-WW-21-83-17) (\$450.00) Well Decommissioning. Motion carried, all yes.

GBERBA Approval - FY2021 BWSR WBIF-Watonwan Watershed Implementation Grant Agreement (C21-2483)

Watonwan SWCD 83(WBIF-WW-21) Education-Information – Shoreline Mailing Cost \$106.84
Mailing – 41 landowners and Staff Time – 4.5 hours

Motion by Carrie Schultz, second by Dave Bucklin to approve the FY2021 BWSR WBIF-Watonwan Watershed Implementation Grant Agreement (C21-2483) Education and Information cost for the Watonwan SWCD (Landowner Mailing and Staff Time) totaling \$106.84. Motion carried, all yes.

GBERBA Approval FY2021 BWSR CWF – Watonwan Watershed Drinking Water Protection Grant Agreement (C21-8921)

Cottonwood SWCD 17(CWF-WWDW-21) Promotional Signage – Drinking Water Protection (25) Cost \$343.75
Cottonwood SWCD 17(CWF-WWDW-21) Public Service Announcements (46) Cost \$504.00

Motion by Dave Bucklin, second by Jake Fritz to approve the FY21 BWSR CWF – Watonwan Watershed Drinking Water Protection Grant Agreement (C21-8921) Promotional Signage (\$343.75) and Public Service Announcements (\$504.00). Motion carried, all yes.

Review GBERBA Cost-Share Grant Balances and Financial Report

1W1P Le Sueur River Comprehensive Plan

The policy committee is working through what kind of plan administration we would like for implementation. There are pros and cons to using a collaboration or an entity and members have not come to a consensus yet. The next policy meeting will have this as a main topic. Blue Earth has agreed to help us draft up the wording. The steering team spent a full day working on the implementation table. The table format is organized by practice and then 9 sub-watersheds. Our starting point was the amount of conservation in the watershed in the last ten years plus the anticipated increase in conservation with WBIF. These numbers will change to reflect what is feasible and what the resource goals are. Summary reports from the Midpoint meeting and survey have been put together by WRC and will be reviewed to see if there are any changes suggested by the public.

**Watonwan Watershed Implementation Grant
Education and Outreach – Prairie Ecology Bus Programs (Watonwan SWCD)**

Education Sub-Committee (Vet new ideas, focus education efforts, review materials)

Document on Education Activities through Clean Water Funds.

Outreach – Policy WBIF – FY21 – Should be directly related to the information into the implementation table.

Develop a draft agenda, has topics, targeted audience, citizen network and score your shore.

Education Committee – Kay Gross, Jake Gross, Carrie Schultz, Melanie Krueger (Brown SWCD).

Watowan Drinking Water Protection Grant – Policy Change

MDH Accelerated Implementation Grant: Groundwater Protection Initiative

We have been selected for funding, now working on grant goals.

CFW Soil Health Grant RFP Update

Grant application totaled \$312,100 with \$31,210 for match.

Coordinator Report: Dave Bucklin and Kay Gross

★ MN Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program

Update on progress made in areas 5 and 6 – See Certification Specialist Reports. Over 806,000 acres and over 1155 certified producers statewide! **That is over 1,259 square miles, and equals more than Cottonwood and Watowan counties combined!**

GBERBA has the Area 5 and 6 MAWQCP administrative contract approved through 2023 pending agreement approval. The Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program has launched three new endorsements in addition to 10-year certification a farmer or landowner receives in the program. The endorsements are for soil health, integrated pest management, wildlife and climate smart.

The 2022 MAWQCP Conservation Corps position is still open.

★ 2017 CWF Grant- Multipurpose Drainage Management

Multipurpose Drainage Management - \$301,200: Projects for this Drainage Grant will need to be located in public ditch sheds. **GBERBA member entire counties are eligible.** Priority parameters to identify the eligible ditches. A guidance policy sheet is online.

GBERBA has received a third grant time extension. In addition, GBERBA can pay grant-engineering funds to approved projects even if not constructed prior to grant deadline. BWSR has now approved the extension for the entire grant to April 30, 2022.

THIS GRANT IS NOW COMPLETED – TOTAL GRANT EXPENDED - \$285,633.71

Projects - \$207,120.27 In-Kind - \$91,643.37 T&E - \$37,319.81 Administration - \$41,193.63

★ Watowan River Watershed - Implementation Grant

An additional grant report has been completed and will be updated monthly to reflect the funds remaining to be encumbered, by activity, in the implementation grant. We are gathering information for progress reporting and the State of the Watershed Report which will be available by the Policy Meeting in July.

★ 1W1P Le Sueur River Watershed Comprehensive Plan

The policy committee is working through what kind of plan administration we would like for implementation. There are pros and cons to using a collaboration or an entity and members have not come to a consensus yet. The next policy meeting will have this as a main topic. Blue Earth has agreed to help us draft up the wording. The steering team spent a full day working on the implementation table. The table format is organized by practice and then 9 sub-watersheds. Our starting point was the amount of conservation in the watershed in the last ten years plus the anticipated increase in conservation with WBIF. These numbers will change to reflect what is feasible and what the resource goals are. Summary reports from the Midpoint meeting and survey have been put together by WRC and will be reviewed to see if there are any changes suggested by the public.

★ CWF 2020 Watowan Drinking Water Grant

The grant timeline is 3-25-2021 to 12-31-2023. Grant Policy #40 has been distributed to staff, with project contracts coming in for funding. Twenty-five Drinking Water Area information signs are in. These signs when posted will help educate/remind the public about protecting drinking water. A “Protect your drinking water” public information message is playing for one month on KDOM Radio Windom. The message is available for other radio stations in the Watowan Watershed.

A policy change to incorporate additional practices under Urban Storm Water category has been completed, approved and distributed.

☆ **MDH 2022 Watonwan Groundwater Protection Accelerated Implementation Grant**
MDH is requesting revisions to the proposal with grant award totaling \$18,480.

Staff Report:

Area 6 Certification Specialist – Herman Bartsch – Written Report
Area 5 Certification Specialist – Danielle Evers – Written Report
Conservation Corp Member – No candidates.

Agency Reports:

MPCA - Paul Davis – Not in Attendance

BWSR – Jill Sackett Eberhart – Shaina Keseley - 2022 Legislative Session Outdoor Heritage Omnibus and Signed, Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund and Signed. FY22-23 Soil Health Grant are being reviewed, all funding was not asked for and there could be potentially more funding available. General fund will have no additional funding for Soil Health Funding to Districts (3.5 million available with 2.1 million requested). Capacity funding, local surveys received and reviewed, allowed for the breakdown per SWCD that will be sent out later this year. RFP should be open at the end of June for the FY23 Clean Water Funds.

DNR – Katie Wigen – No Report

DNR-MNIT – Rick Moore – Southern MN River Valley recruiting partners for collaboration on grant request (40% local and 60% federal). Fly over would be in 2023 with resource available in 2024.

MSU-WRC – Kim Musser – Not in Attendance

The meeting was declared adjourned at 11:10 a.m. by Vice Chair Ashley Brenke.

Upcoming Meetings

Technical Committee Meeting	Wednesday, June 22, 2022	9:30 a.m.
Executive Board Meeting	Friday, June 17, 2022	1:00 p.m.
Policy Board/Technical Committee Meeting	Friday, July 15, 2022	9:30 a.m.

Secretary's signature of approved minutes _____ Date: _____