

Greater Blue Earth River Basin Alliance Technical Committee
Wednesday, May 24, 2023 – WebEx by Phone or Computer Connection

Present:

Kay Gross
Ashley Brenke
Dan Bartosh
Melanie Krueger
Carrie Schultz
Nathan Harder
Dave Copeland

Representing:

Cottonwood County
Martin SWCD
Jackson SWCD
Brown SWCD
Watonwan SWCD
Cottonwood SWCD
BWSR

Present:

Dave Bucklin
Allison Kletscher
Haley Johnson
Brenda Lageson
Laura Quiring
Herman Bartsch
Anna Fairbanks

Representing:

GBERBA Coordinator
Brown County
Blue Earth SWCD
Freeborn SWCD
Watonwan SWCD
MAWQCP Area 6 Specialist
MN/IA Conservation Corps

Call to Order: GBERBA Technical Committee was called to order by Chair Ashley Brenke at 9:30 a.m.

Introductions

Agenda: Motion by Dan Bartosh, second by Carrie Schultz to approve the agenda with additions. Motion carried, all yes.

Minutes: Motion by Kay Gross, second by Dan Bartosh to approve the April 26, 2023, Technical Committee Meeting minutes. Motion carried, all yes.

INFORMATION ACTION:

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

Robert & Cynthia Hargis 07-06(WBIF-WW-21) Well Decommissioning – 1 no. Cost \$2,035.60 C-S \$1,000.00

Motion by Ashley Brenke, second by Carrie Schultz to approve the GBERBA Cost-Share contract amendment - FY2021 BWSR WBIF-Watonwan Watershed Implementation Grant Agreement (C21-2483) for Hargis (WBIF-WW-21-07-06) Well Decommissioning (increase \$80.50 to \$1,000.00).

Motion carried, all yes.

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

Doug Sieg 83-29(WBIF-WW-21) Well Decommissioning – 1 no. Cost \$1,070.00 C-S \$535.00
Doug Sieg 83-30(WBIF-WW-21) Well Decommissioning – 1 no. Cost \$1,070.00 C-S \$535.00

Motion by Dan Bartosh, second by Carrie Schultz to approve the GBERBA Cost-Share contract final payment - FY2021 BWSR WBIF-Watonwan Watershed Implementation Grant Agreement (C21-2483) for Doug Sieg (WBIF-WW-21-83-29) Well Decommissioning (\$535.00) and Doug Sieg (WBIF-WW-21-83-30) Well Decommissioning (\$535.00).

Motion carried, all yes.

**Review GBERBA Cost-Share Grant Balances
Financial Report**

Watonwan Watershed Implementation Grant

Shoreland Protection Projects

Not opposed to moving cap but would like more information on reductions per project also DNR input on these types of projects. Work on having DNR, TSA on the June Technical Meeting and discuss the 2 projects from Watonwan 1 project from Brown. Also invite the Becker SWCD staff to the June Meeting.

Cover Crop Projects

Two cover crop projects – what do we do if they didn't seed as requested and the germination did not take.

Did not use the plan and didn't make the technical staff aware of the situation. Will work on an amendment for these projects.

Second Round of Funding – Request – August/September

Sixty percent of WBIF grant is encumbered and paid out at this time. The ask for FY24 funding request will be needed before July 2023. Need to get the Steering Team together to discuss next 3 years. BWSR is not sure if extensions will be given.

Second Round of Funding – Purchase – BEAST - \$7,500 – purchasing through this WBIF allocation.

1W1P Le Sueur River Comprehensive Plan

Policy Committee meeting to send on to the 90-day review. Working on the collaboration agreement and all that it entails. BWSR Southern Regional Meeting is being scheduled (July) with formal approval to BWSR Board meeting in August.

Watonwan Drinking Water Protection Grant

Water Testing Event in each Watonwan Watershed County – Summer Activity

MDH Accelerated Implementation Grant: Groundwater Protection Initiative

Groundwater Focus Brochure – Utility Bill Stuffer or Mailing – Month of May

BWSR CWF- GBERBA Soil Health Implementation – Grant 43

Focus on promotion of grant.

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 920,000 acres and over 1300 certified producers statewide! **That is double the land size in Blue Earth County!** The Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program has endorsements in addition to certification. The endorsements are for soil health, integrated pest management, wildlife, and climate smart.

A new incentive has been approved by the Technical Committee and Executive Board to get landowner referrals from local agronomists and pay an incentive if the referral results in a MAWQCP worksheet completion. Incentive would be \$50/referral and worksheet completion or \$100/referral and certification completion.

★ **Watonwan River Watershed - Implementation Grant**

Working with HEI to update plan appendix T and U, changes sent (4-2023). Request from Technical Committee to purchase MS4Front from HEI at a cost of \$20,700 for reporting purposes (comprehensive plan) changes reflected in below highlighted text.

As of May 19, we have encumbered or paid for \$523,653.14 with \$176,823.86 remaining.

Breakdown:	Category	Funding Allotted	Remaining	Encumbered	Paid
	Administration	\$120,857	\$36,629.71	\$20,700	\$63,527.29
	BMPs	\$510,320	\$89,254.37	\$385,510.22	\$35,555.41
	Tech/Eng.	\$10,000	\$10,000		
	Project Dev.	\$15,000	\$11,790.12		\$3,209.88
	Inventory/Map.	\$5,000	\$5,000		
	Planning/Asses.	\$24,300	\$9,300		\$15,000.00
	Education/Infor.	\$15,000	\$14,849.66		\$150.34
	TOTAL	\$700,477	\$176,823.86	\$406,210.22	\$117,442.92
			(25%)	(75%)	

★ **1W1P Le Sueur River Watershed Comprehensive Plan**

The plan is out for 90-day review by State agencies. Working to schedule a BWSR Regional Southern Meeting with projected recommendation for approval to BWSR Board in August.

★ **CWF 2020 Watonwan Drinking Water Grant**

The Drinking Water Grant is in its final year. The grant deadline is 12/31/2023. We are on target to finish the grant and use all funds available. Will focus on a summer event for water testing (testing will be paid for locally) and the grant will focus on advertising the event.

★ **MDH 2022 Watonwan Groundwater Protection Accelerated Implementation Grant**

State grant funds total \$21,898 with a grant start date of July 15, 2022 and now ending June 28, 2024.

A utility bill stuffer and advertisements (focusing on groundwater) will be completed during the month of May for Drinking Water Week May 7 – 13. Watonwan County has 2,865 residents and Cottonwood County has 845 residents, working with Brown, Blue Earth, Jackson, and Martin on their efforts.

★ **BWSR Soil Health Grant**

Program start date 11-7-2022. Under education, Soil Health Workshops in Heron Lake, and Fairmont (I90) and Owatonna and Sleepy Eye (Hwy14) and a NRCS cover crop training for JAA are complete. Promotional efforts are now focusing on the available incentives for cover crops, no/strip-till, manure management, and CRP.

Staff Report:

Area 6 Certification Specialist – Herman Bartsch – Written Report

Area 5 Certification Specialist – Danielle Evers – Written Report

Conservation Corp Member – Anna Fairbanks – Written Report

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Agency Reports:

BWSR – Dave Copeland – Legislative update with SWCD Aide being approved, Clean Water Council recommendations were approved with more information coming from BWSR soon.

DNR – Katie Wigen – Not in attendance

MPCA - Paul Davis – Not in attendance

DNR-MNIT – Rick Moore – Not in attendance

MSU-WRC – Kim Musser – Not in attendance

The meeting was declared adjourned at 10:55 a.m. by Technical Committee Chair Ashley Brenke.

Upcoming Meetings

Technical Committee Meeting	Wednesday, June 28, 2023	9:30 a.m.
Executive Board Meeting	Friday, June 16, 2023	1:00 p.m.
Policy Board/Technical Committee Meeting	Friday, July 14, 2023	9:30 a.m.

Secretary's signature of approved minutes _____ Date: _____