

Greater Blue Earth River Basin Alliance Technical Committee
Wednesday, October 18, 2023 – WebEx by Phone or Computer Connection

Present:

Kay Gross
Ashley Brenke
Melanie Krueger
Brenda Lageson
Eric Miller
Scott Salisbury
Breanna Wagner
Adam Beilke
John Shea

Representing:

Cottonwood County
Martin SWCD
Brown SWCD
Freeborn SWCD
Waseca County
Blue Earth County
Cottonwood SWCD
BWSR
BWSR

Present:

Dave Bucklin
Dan Bartosh
John Lore

Haley Johnson
Anna Fairbanks
Jill Sackett Eberhart
Paul Davis

Representing:

GBERBA Coordinator
Jackson SWCD
DNR

Blue Earth SWCD
MN/IA Conservation Corps
BWSR
MPCA

Call to Order: GBERBA Technical Committee was called to order by Chair Ashley Brenke at 9:04 a.m.

Introductions

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

Minutes: Motion by Dave Bucklin, second by Melanie Krueger to approve the September 20, 2023, 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)

Travis Elg 83-36(WBIF-WW-21) Shoreline Restoration – Conservation Cover Cost \$4,778.25 C-S \$4,061.51

Motion by Dave Bucklin, second by Dan Bartosh to approve the GBERBA Cost-Share Contract Approval - FY2021 BWSR WBIF-Watonwan Watershed Implementation Grant Agreement (C21-2483) Elg for 83-36(WBIF-WW-21) Shoreline Restoration (\$4,061.51).
Motion carried, all yes.

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

Connor Kranz 83-36(WBIF-WW-21) Well Decommissioning – 1 no. Cost \$895.00 C-S \$447.50

Motion by Melanie Krueger, second by Kay Gross to approve the GBERBA Final Payment Approval - FY2021 BWSR WBIF-Watonwan Watershed Implementation Grant Agreement (C21-2483) for Kranz 83-36(WBIF-WW-21) for Well Decommissioning (\$447.50).
Motion carried, all yes.

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

GBERBA Policy Board/Technical Committee Meeting – Friday, November 17

Suggestions Cover Crop Panel Discussion; Tour of Projects in July; Background information on Watonwan CWF accomplishments (photos).

Watonwan Watershed Implementation Grant

Request for Funding

WBIF – 1,136,479 – Review Grant Policy

SSTS Project Eligibility Worksheet

BWSR Narrative Response – Review of each category with discussion. Updated and ready for submission.

Plan Revision – Not at this time

Soil Health Grant

Ability to switch acres (if in DWSMA) and documented by local staff and in folder. Contracts signed by renter and owners (if necessary).

Extension Request (Approved by Executive Board)

BWSR – CRP State Incentive Pilot Program – Watonwan Watershed - \$30,000

Continuous CRP Contracts only; New Contracts only
 High Priorities Lake (7) – Within Lake Watershed
 Connecting Corridors – Within 3 miles DNR/USFWS/CREP/RIM/CRP/Or Other Publicly owned land
 Perch Creek or Upper Watonwan as priority planning regions for habitat establishment
 Administration 10%

Bring a committee together to finalize rates and priority criteria. Ashley Brenke, Watonwan SWCD and Cottonwood SWCD staff.

1W1P Le Sueur River Planning/Implementation – Eric Miller

Official adoption of plans are almost completed by Counties and SWCDs! Putting together implementation policies. Policy meeting on November 15 try to have funding by January 1, 2024. Work plan and budget are close hope to submit soon.

Watonwan Drinking Water Protection Grant

Working to finalize remaining funds with a Water Testing event in each County. Targeted mailing to DWSMA or shallow wells, nitrate/other testing options. Each county can use \$125 for promotional. Looking ad/news release to send out to all six counties.

MDH Accelerated Implementation Grant: Groundwater Protection Initiative

Reimbursement request has been completed for \$10,624.95. Looking to make posters for offices – Testing Well Water.

CWF Soil Health Grant RFP Update

Information/Database for Soil Health Farm Activities – Web Based Platform (Committee).
 Email Nathan Harder and Kay Gross if interested in being a committee member. Committee Mtg on October 30.
 Story map – Kim Musser

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. **MAWQCP HAS ONE MILLION ACRES CERTIFIED WITH 1,400 PRODUCERS STATEWIDE.** That equals nearly 4% of all farm ground in Minnesota. 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.

Watonwan River Watershed - Implementation Grant

Working on second funding request with partners.

As of September 22, we have encumbered or paid for \$607,683.26 with \$92,793.74 remaining.

Breakdown:	Category	Funding Allotted	Remaining	Encumbered	Paid
	Administration	\$120,857	\$20,207.79	\$100,649.21	
	BMPs	\$510,320	\$34,847.12	\$378,855.37	\$96,617.51
	Tech/Eng.	\$10,000	\$9,637.30		\$362.70
	Project Dev.	\$15,000	\$237.31		\$14,762.69
	Inventory/Map.	\$5,000	\$5,000		\$0.00
	Planning/Asses.	\$24,300	\$9,300		\$15,000.00
	Education/Infor.	\$15,000	\$13,564.22		\$1,435.78
	TOTAL	\$700,477	\$92,793.74	\$378,855.37	\$228,827.89
			(13%)	(87%)	

★ 1W1P Le Sueur River Watershed Comprehensive Plan

Eric Miller, Waseca County, is the Day-to-Day Administration and Waseca SWCD is the Fiscal Agent for the Le Sueur 1W1P with the Comprehensive Plan approved and moving forward into the implementation phase.
 CONGRATULATIONS!!!!

Eric has been working, the past several weeks, on reviewing comments from the Steering Team regarding the cost share policy and budget. Our next Steering Team meeting is on October 13th. The Policy Committee will meet in early November to review what we have put together and approve the Fiscal Agent submitting the request to BWSR. Hope to have everything submitted and approved in time to receive funding by the start of the calendar year.

☆ 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. Groundwater banners have been completed – two related to nutrient management and one focusing on groundwater in general. We will get them out as soon as possible to the respective offices. We have requested reimbursement through MDH for \$10,624.95.

☆ BWSR Soil Health Grant

Program start date 11-7-2022. Promotional efforts are now focusing on the available incentives for cover crops, no/strip-till, manure management, and CRP. Bringing together a Soil Health Committee to look at potential educational efforts for GBERBA.

Also will be meeting with Technical Committee to reflect on the grant and how we can implement more contracts for this grant.

☆ BWSR – CRP State Incentive Pilot Program – Watonwan Watershed

Funding has been requested for the Watonwan Watershed (\$30,000) with an end date of December 31, 2025. We will be working on a work plan for this funding. Eligible activities include administration and incentive payment to landowners for Continuous CRP enrollments. No match required. Will be working with watershed members to complete a policy and work plan.

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

Agency Reports:

BWSR – Jill Sackett Eberhart, John Shea, Adam Beilke

Academy next week. NRBG are in Elink; spend FY24 funding first, maybe able to fix end date for FY25. Multi-purpose Drainage grant details are being reviewed with roll-out soon.

DNR – John Lore – Fully staffed now. There are two new Watershed Specialists that will work directly with John in his 32 county area.

MPCA - Paul Davis – Sign up for Civic Engagement Training in New Ulm on November 14.

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

Policy Board/Technical Committee Meeting	Friday, November 17, 2023	9:30 a.m.
Executive Board Meeting	Friday, December 15, 2023	1:00 p.m.

Secretary's signature of approved minutes _____ Date: _____