

Greater Blue Earth River Basin Alliance Technical Committee
Wednesday, September 20, 2023 – WebEx by Phone or Computer Connection

Present:

Kay Gross
Ashley Brenke
Melanie Krueger
Eric Miller
Scott Salsbury
Herman Bartsch
Adam Beilke
John Shea

Representing:

Cottonwood County
Martin SWCD
Brown SWCD
Waseca County
Blue Earth County
MAWQCP Area 6 Specialist
BWSR
BWSR

Present:

Dave Bucklin
Dan Bartosh
Carrie Schultz
Haley Johnson
Anna Fairbanks
Jill Sackett Eberhart
Paul Davis

Representing:

GBERBA Coordinator
Jackson SWCD
Watonwan SWCD
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 Dave Bucklin, second by Carrie Schultz to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried, all yes.

Minutes: Motion by Carrie Schultz, second by Scott Salsbury to approve the August 30, 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)

Trevor Jensen	83-34(WBIF-WW-21)	Well Decommissioning – 1 no.	Cost \$1,327.50	C-S \$663.75
Emily Norland	83-35(WBIF-WW-21)	Conservation Cover–Shoreland–St James Lake	Cost \$8,687.00	C-S \$7,383.95

Motion by Carrie Schultz, second by Dave Bucklin to approve the GBERBA Cost-Share contracts - FY2021 BWSR WBIF-Watonwan Watershed Implementation Grant Agreement (C21-2483) for Jensen (WBIF-WW-21-83-34) well decommissioning (\$663.75) and Norland (WBIF-WW-21-83-35) conservation covers (\$7,383.95).
Motion carried, all yes.

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

Ronald Thiessen	83-13(WBIF-WW-21)	Grass Waterway	Cost \$34,505.50	C-S \$29,329.68
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Motion by Carrie Schultz, second by Dan Bartosh to approve the GBERBA Cost-Share contract final payment - FY2021 BWSR WBIF-Watonwan Watershed Implementation Grant Agreement (C21-2483) for Thiessen (WBIF-WW-21-83-13) grass waterway (\$29,329.68).
Motion carried, all yes.

GBERBA – Cost-Share Contract Final Payment – FY21 - CWF – Watonwan Watershed Drinking Water Protection Grant Agreement (C21-8921)

City of Mountain Lake	17-07(CWF-WWDW-21)	Tree/Shrub Est. – 9 no.	Cost \$900.00	C-S \$750.82
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Motion by Dave Bucklin, second by Carrie Schultz to approve the GBERBA Cost-Share contract final payment - FY21 - CWF – Watonwan Watershed Drinking Water Protection Grant Agreement (C21-8921) for City of Mountain Lake (CWF-WWDW-21-17-07) Tree/Shrub Establishment (\$750.82). Motion carried, all yes.

GBERBA – Grant 42 – MDH – Groundwater Protection Initiative – Watonwan Watershed

GBERBA – Grant 41 - FY2021 BWSR WBIF-Watonwan Watershed Implementation Grant (C21-2483)

Watonwan County	Grant 42-MDH	Administrative Hours – Banners	Cost \$806.52
Watonwan County	Grant 42-MDH	Banner Supplies – Mailing Tubes	Cost \$45.99
Blue Earth SWCD	WBIF-WW-21	Education – Mailing -	Cost \$360.24

Motion by Carrie Schultz, second by Melanie Krueger to approve the payments GBERBA Grant 42 – MDH – Groundwater Protection Initiative – Watonwan Watershed Watonwan County Administration (\$806.52) and Supplies (\$45.99) and FY2021 BWSR WBIF – Watonwan Watershed Implementation Grant (C21-2483) Blue Earth SWCD (360.24) Educational Expenses. Motion carried, all yes.

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

GBERBA Technical Committee Meeting – Wednesday, October 18

Watowan Watershed Implementation Grant

Request for Funding

WBIF – 1,136,479 – Review Grant Policy
 SSTS Project Eligibility Worksheet

Motion by Dave Bucklin, second by Scott Salsbury to approve the BWSR WBIF Request for Funding – Watowan Watershed totaling \$1,136,479 and submit to Policy for approval of submission (with updated changes). Motion carried, all yes.

Posters and Banners completed and distributed.

BWSR – CRP State Incentive Pilot Program – Watowan 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 Watowan as priority planning regions for habitat establishment

Bring a committee together to finalize rates and priority criteria.

1W1P Le Sueur River Planning/Implementation

Official adoption of plans are almost completed by Counties and SWCDs! Putting together implementation policies.

Policy meeting on Friday (22nd) try to have funding by January 1, 2024.

Watowan 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. Define costs.

MDH Accelerated Implementation Grant: Groundwater Protection Initiative

Banners completed and distributed to Watowan Watershed members.

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.

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 990,000 acres and over 1360 certified producers statewide! **The MAWQCP is just shy of ONE MILLION acres certified. 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.

★ Watowan River Watershed - Implementation Grant

Working on second funding request with partners.

As of August 18, we have encumbered or paid for \$562,781.52 with \$137,695.48 remaining.

Breakdown:	Category	Funding Allotted	Remaining	Encumbered	Paid
	Administration	\$120,857	\$30,368.74		\$90,488.26
	BMPs	\$510,320	\$42,231.07	\$371,471.42	\$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	\$13,924.46		\$1,075.54
	TOTAL	\$700,477	\$110,698.88	\$371,471.42	\$218,306.70
			(16%)	(84%)	

GBERBA Technical Committee Meeting

September 20, 2023

☆ 1W1P Le Sueur River Watershed Comprehensive Plan

The plan is out for 90-day review by State agencies. The Plan has full BWSR Board approval after the meeting on August 23- 24.

The Le Sueur group are now working on an implementation policy.

☆ 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.

☆ 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.

☆ 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. BWSR correspondence will be included in the Technical and Policy packets for September.

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 – September 2023 BWSR Update. RCPP application was submitted by BWSR, waiting to see if they can add funding to the Soil Health allocation. Expectation will be that Districts will be the lead, there will be two stage request for funding. First to hire Soil Health Specialists. Second round for District grants. Water storage funding, BWSR also submitted an RCPP proposal, so funding on hold at this time. RIM easements, CREP, and RIM Enhancement Program working on criteria for these programs. 1W1P funding grants, all three watersheds were approved for planning. Plan mid-point assessments on Comprehensive Watershed Plans. Grant agreements – look at expiration dates – some have changed!! Tribal relationships BWSR is making additional efforts in program delivery. EPA waters definition – WCA program take notice. BWSR Academy registration is open. Technical training and certification program for SWCD and NRCS staff. Farm Bill Assistance partnerships is changing, an RFP from Pheasants Forever. Staff transitions in BWSR so a lot of changes.

Clean Water Fund RFP closed, and scoring is taking place at this time. Multipurpose Drainage Mgmt. Grants is looking for an RFP with patching periods.

DNR – Not in Attendance

MPCA - Paul Davis – No Report

MSU-WRC – Kim Musser – Additional information in chat.

The meeting was declared adjourned at 11:55 a.m. by Technical Committee Chair Ashley Brenke.

Upcoming Meetings

Technical Committee Meeting	Wednesday, October 18, 2023	9:00 a.m.
Policy Board Meeting	Friday, September 22, 2023	1:00 p.m.
Executive Board Meeting	Friday, October 13, 2023	1:00 p.m.

Secretary’s signature of approved minutes _____ Date: _____