

Greater Blue Earth River Basin Alliance Technical Committee
Wednesday, January 24, 2024 – WebEx by Phone or Computer Connection

Present:

Kay Gross
Ashley Brenke
Melanie Krueger
Mary Beth Botz
Hailey Olson
Alison Kletcher
Breanna Wagner
Laura Quiring
Jesse Walters
John Shea

Representing:

Cottonwood County
Martin SWCD
Brown SWCD
Brown SWCD
Brown SWCD
Brown County
Cottonwood SWCD
Watowan SWCD
Martin SWCD
BWSR

Present:

Dave Bucklin
Brenda Lageson
Becky Buchholz
Jarin Spence
Carrie Schultz
Nathan Harder
Haley Johnson
Mark Schaetzke
Jill Sackett Eberhart
Kim Musser

Representing:

GBERBA Coordinator
Freeborn SWCD
Cottonwood SWCD
Brown SWCD
Watowan SWCD
Cottonwood SWCD
Blue Earth SWCD
Waseca SWCD
BWSR
MSU-WRC

Call to Order: GBERBA Technical Committee was called to order by Chair Ashley Brenke at 9:40 a.m.

Introductions

Agenda: Motion by Carrie Schultz, second by Dave Bucklin to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried, all yes.

Minutes: Motion by Kay Gross, second by Carrie Schultz to approve the December 15, 2023, Technical Committee Meeting minutes. Motion carried, all yes.

Election of 2024 Officers

Nomination of Ashley Brenke as Chair and Dan Bartosh as Vice Chair.

Motion by Kay Gross, second by Carrie Schultz to cast a unanimous ballot with Ashley Brenke as Chair and Dan Bartosh as Vice Chair. Motion carried, all yes.

INFORMATION ACTION:

GBERBA Cost-Share Contract Approval - FY2024 (2.0) BWSR WBIF-Watowan Watershed Implementation Grant Agreement (C24-0092)

Anthony Kaiser 83-01(WBIF-WW-24) Well Decommissioning – 1 no. Cost \$1,420.00 C-S \$710.00

Motion by Carrie Schultz, second by Dave Bucklin to approve the GBERBA Cost-Share contract - FY2024 (2.0) BWSR WBIF-Watowan Watershed Implementation Grant Agreement (C24-0092) for Anthony Kaiser (WBIF-WW-24-83-01) Well Decommissioning (\$710.00).

Motion carried, all yes.

GBERBA Cost-Share Contract Approval - FY2023 BWSR CWF – Soil Health Grants – GBERBA Soil Health Implementation Grant Agreement (C22-6072)

David Engelbrecht 83-05(CWF-SH-22) CRP Incentive – 0.74 ac.

Incentive \$148.00

Motion by Carrie Schultz, second by Melanie Krueger to approve the for GBERBA Cost-Share Contract Approval - FY2023 BWSR CWF – Soil Health Grants – GBERBA Soil Health Implementation Grant Agreement (C22-6072) David Engelbrecht 83-05(CWF-SH-22) CRP Incentive (\$148.00).

Motion carried, all yes.

GBERBA Payment - FY2021 BWSR WBIF-Watowan Watershed Implementation Grant Agreement (C21-2483)

Western Print Group WBIF-WW-21 Administration – Printing Watershed Plan & Appendix Cost \$3,041.10

ISG WBIF-WW-21 Watowan Co JD 12BW - Planning – Drainage Mgmt – Drone Video Completion Cost \$744.48

Motion by Dave Bucklin, second by Carrie Schultz to approve the GBERBA payment - FY2021 BWSR WBIF-Watowan Watershed Implementation Grant Agreement (C21-2483) for Western Print Group (WBIF-WW-21) Administration (\$3,041.10 Watershed Plans and Appendix) and ISG (WBIF-WW-21) Planning – Drainage Mgmt (JD12BW Watowan County \$744.48).

Motion carried, all yes.

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

Roger Schmiessing 83-33(WBIF-WW-21) Grade Stabilization Cost \$16,280.96 C-S \$13,838.82

Motion by Carrie Schultz, second by Melanie Krueger to approve the GBERBA Cost-Share contract final payment FY2021 BWSR WBIF-Watonwan Watershed Implementation Grant Agreement (C21-2483) for Roger Schmiessing 83-33(WBIF-WW-21) Grade Stabilization (\$13,838.82). Motion carried, all yes.

Review GBERBA Cost-Share Grant Balances
Financial Report
Calendar 2024

Watonwan Watershed Implementation Grant #41

Printed Plans and Appendixes are now available.
Brochures are being printed.
Signage is being reviewed with suggestions coming.
Ranking Sheet Update – Urban Practices - TABLED

Watonwan Watershed Implementation Grant #45

WBIF – 1,136,479 – 50% payment – \$568,239.50 received.
Ranking Sheet Update – Non-Structural Practices – Forestry – Vegetative Management
Add No-till, Strip-Till to practice list – and giving 10 points – so it will be stacking on the ranking sheet.
Committee – work on updating ranking sheet – Nathan Harder, Ashley Brenke, Carrie Schultz, Becky Buchholz

1W1P Le Sueur River Implementation – Eric Miller and Mark Schaezke- Report

Funding request has been approved with staff completing the local cost-share policy. Policy Committee met on January 17th with cost-share policy presented for approval. Workplan is being completed in eLink with submission by the Fiscal Agent. Fiscal sub-agreements going to respective Boards for approval.

Blue Earth River Watershed 1W1P Planning Grant – Ashley Brenke

Notification of plan development and invitation to submit priority issues and plan expectations has been sent out by Nathan Carr. Kick-off meeting is scheduled for Spring of 2024. Planning grant has been received. RFQs from consultants due by January 26.

Watonwan Drinking Water Protection Grant #40

All funds expended, the remaining \$1,831.67 was moved to Administration and paid out. Reporting has been submitted.

MDH Accelerated Implementation Grant #42: Groundwater Protection Initiative

Working on the completion of the Testing Well Water posters.

CWF Soil Health Implementation Grant #43 Update

Contract with MSU-Water Resources Center – Approved for Development by Policy Board.
Deliverables – Handout
Will be County Wide – 10 GBERBA Counties
Second JAA Training Scheduled Windom – February 13 and February 27 Mankato

BWSR – CRP State Incentive Pilot Program Grant #44 – Watonwan Watershed - \$30,000

Presentation of committee findings and recommendations for grant policy and work plan submission.
Motion by Dave Bucklin, second by Carrie Schultz to approve the presented grant ranking policy and authorize completion, request approval by GBERBA Executive Board and work plan submission after approval.
Motion carried, all yes.

Targeting Perch and Upper Watonwan – targeting nutrient reduction and water quality parameters (sediment and phosphorus - conservation cover and grass waterway). Wildlife Action Network was also used lines up with the Prairie Plan. Also using PTM App.
Priority A – Already vetted – meets all the parameters.
Priority B – Criteria for a scoring and ranking sheet – (1) Points to different Priority Regions (2) Wildlife Potential – CREP Wildlife Benefit Shapefile (3) Continuous CRP – Proximity to Shoreland – DNR Public Waters (4) Floodplain (5) Wellhead Protection Areas (6) Hydric Soils (7) HEL/PHEL
Take offers – rank by score – and have a human factor (Cost Benefit) - could be other sensitive sites (fens)
Have our own batching period.

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.

We have signed the contract for 2024-2025 to MDA totaling \$523,116.00. Adriene Matthews has accepted the GBERBA MAWQCP 2024 Conservation Corp position. She will start on January 29.

★ **Watonwan River Watershed - Implementation Grants**

WBIF(21) as of January 12, we have encumbered or paid for \$618,071.56 with \$87,665.04 remaining.

Breakdown:	Category	Funding Allotted	Remaining	Encumbered	Paid
	Administration	\$120,857	\$9,571.91		\$111,385.09
	BMPs	\$515,557.31	\$51,914.79	\$144,658.69	\$318,983.83
	Tech/Eng.	\$5,300	\$4,937.30		\$362.70
	Project Dev.	\$14,762.69	\$0.00		\$14,762.69
	Inventory/Map.	\$0.00	\$0.00		\$0.00
	Planning/Asses.	\$29,000	\$3,000	\$11,000	\$15,000
	Education/Infor.	\$15,000	\$12,981.44		\$2,018.56
	TOTAL	\$700,477	\$87,665.04	\$155,658.69	\$462,412.87
			(12%)		(88%)

WBIF(24) has been approved, work plan and policy completed, and funding acquired. Contracts can now be encumbered for this grant (December 8, 2023 – December 31, 2026) totaling \$1,136,479.

★ **Le Sueur River Watershed Implementation Grant – Eric Muller**

Funding Request was approved for 2024 Le Sueur River Watershed WBIF grant.\$1,355,872 for implementation. Staff have been working on finalizing Local Cost Share Policy. Priority funding designated for areas identified in Plan as Priority Lakes and Streams.

Le Sueur River Policy Advisory Committee meeting on January 17th at 10:00pm the Cost Share Policy will be presented for approval.

Workplan is completed in eLink. Coordinator will complete minor changes to bring it into “compliance” with BWSR guidelines and the workplan will be submitted by Fiscal Agent. Staff have been directed to bring Fiscal Agent Sub-agreement to their respective boards for approval.

★ **Blue Earth Watershed 1W1P Planning Grant – Nathan Carr**

Notification of plan development and invitation to submit priority issues and plan expectations has been sent out by Nathan Carr. Kick-off meeting is scheduled for Spring of 2024.

★ **CWF 2020 Watonwan Drinking Water Grant**

The Drinking Water Grant deadline is 12/31/2023. We have completed the financial part of the grant with all funds used.

★ **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.

We are working on well testing poster boards.

★ **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. **CRP Incentive discussions are ongoing. A committee is working on the potential options.** Policy Board approved entering into a contract with MSU-WRC to help implement our Education/Outreach efforts to landowners throughout the 10-county area.

★ **BWSR – CRP State Incentive Pilot Program – Watonwan Watershed**

Funding requested for the Watonwan Watershed (\$30,000) with an end date of December 31, 2025. Committee is bringing forth recommendations to the January Technical Committee.

Staff Report:

Area 6 Certification Specialist – Herman Bartsch – Written Report

Area 5 Certification Specialist – Danielle Evers – Written Report

Conservation Corp Member – Open

Agency Reports:

BWSR – John Shea – Reporting by February 1 deadline.

DNR – John Lore – Not in attendance

MPCA - Paul Davis – Not in attendance

MSU-WRC – Kim Musser – Soil Health update.

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

Upcoming Meetings

Executive Board Meeting	Friday, February 16, 2024	1:00 p.m.
Technical Committee Meeting	Wednesday, February 28, 2024	9:30 a.m.
Policy Board Meeting	Friday, March 15, 2024	1:00 p.m.

Secretary's signature of approved minutes _____ Date: _____