



BIG SIOUX RIVER PROJECT Steering Committee Meeting Minutes

Time: 9:02 am - 11:37 am, March 17th, 2026

Location: Minnehaha Community Water, Corp., 47381 248th St. Dell Rapids, SD 57022

Attendees: Deron Ruesch, Jeremy Schelhaas, Michelle Burke, Gordon Herber, Tyson Cerkowniak, Jay Gilbertson, Daniel Wehmeyer, Ryan Allen, Emily Oyos, Kurt Pfeifle, Jose Alvarez, Jaelynn Dreckman, Barry Berg

1. **Call to order Minnehaha Conservation District Project Sponsor** - (Called to Order at 9:02AM by Gordon Herber)
2. **Approval of Agenda** - (1st by Jay Gilbertson, 2nd by Gordon Herber, Approved by Gordon Herber)
3. **Approval of December 16th 2025 meeting minutes** - (1st by Jay Gilbertson, 2nd by Gordon Herber, Approved by Gordon Herber)
4. **Big Sioux River Project Segment 4 update (Barry & Jaelynn)** - We are working on signing up more producers for SRAM & RAM. In the process of finishing a couple alternative water projects near the Big Sioux River. We have finished an AWMS for a producer. The final report is a work in progress but have more time to complete because funding for Segment 5 took awhile so Segment 4 was extended to December 31st.
5. **NRCS programs update (Deron Ruesch)** - EQIP has 228 applications. 86 applications have been funded which is 36%. Shelter belt renovations have been big due to the derecho. Strong interest in high tunnels with sub irrigation. The Big Sioux River Unit has the most money in the area. Also want to stress partnerships as we work together to help more producers. Working on 2 AWMS. CRP has a March 20th batching date. Also were a part of the water festival and different activities.
6. **City of Sioux Falls** - About \$1 million dollars for future projects. Roughly \$2 million left in the SRF funds. There are a few clean water projects that may be small coming up to possibly receive more funds. Shannon has also retired.
7. **Dakota Mainstem: Regional water project and where it stands now (Kurt Pfeifle)** - Started in 2022 as a group of water professionals met to talk about rural water. When DM started there were 29 water systems and now there are 57. By 2070 the water needed will be 195 MGD. Lewis



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& Clark will need 95 MGD and the pipe is currently at 60 MGD. The estimated construction cost for this upgrade is \$8.4-10.5 Billion. Federal help will be needed for this project to succeed. There is a feasibility study that will cost \$4-6 million and take 30 months. This is a long term project.

8. **EDWDD: Findings of the PFOS study in the Big Sioux River Basin (Jay Gilbertson)** - 2 years ago PFAS became an important topic and this study was created with the SD school of Mines. Airport was a sure site but unsure of where else would be positive. 30 sites were tested for 40 different kinds of PFAS 15 were detected at every site. Grey detection above watertown. Debating on if to continue testing.
9. **SRAM/RBI Re-Enroll Discussion** - Projects have come to the end of their contract and we have been in discussion on what re-enrolls would look like. The possibility of using different mileage or priority to determine payment amount to encourage them to keep the same practices without the incentive. It is still a work in progress and will be discussed more in the coming months.
10. **Other business**
 - Smithfield Discussion - Looking to move near crooks. The water quality standard is 10 parts per million whereas they were previously at 50 parts per million. The questions remains at the new facility where will the water go and will they stay with the old site or create a new plan?
11. **Adjourn** - (Adjourned by Gordon Herber at 11:27AM)