 **BIG SIOUX RIVER PROJECT**

**Steering Committee Meeting Minutes**

**December 7th, 2021**

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**Location:** Sioux Falls Convention Center Room #2, 1201 Northwest Ave, Sioux Falls, SD 57104

**Time and Date:** 09:00-11:00 Tuesday, December 7th, 2021

**Attendees:** Mark Anderson, Barry Berg, Darrel DeBoer, Travis Entenman, Dean Jaycox,Alexa Kruse, John Parker, Jeremy Schelhaas, Gene Thormsgaard, Brian Top, Justin Weiland

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**Meeting called to order at 9:05am by Minnehaha Conservation District Project Sponsor, John Parker.**

**Approval of Agenda:**

Motion Justin Weiland, seconded Darrel DeBoer, motion carried.

**Approval of September 22nd meeting minutes:**

Motion Darrel DeBoer, seconded Dean Jaycox, motion carried.

**City of Sioux Falls Update by Jeremy Schelhaas:**

* City of Sioux Falls is having a meeting in the next room, so Jeremy, who is working with the City, will give the update.
* Both SF Green Projects are underway, Covell Ave. almost complete. $2.2mil left in Sioux Fall’s SRF loans, Dell Rapids has $400k.
* Discussion about Dell Rapids needing to get their next SRF application in. $5.8mil is what they’d be applying for this time. Barry will touch base with Andy from DANR about that.

**Big Sioux River Project Update by Barry Berg:**

SRAM and RAM 2021:

* 2,758 and 352 acres respectively, 85.7mi (since start in 2013)

SRAM and RAM 2022:

* 45 acres and 40 acres respectively

Few interested in Animal Waste Storage, been working with NRCS.

Farm Ranch and Rural Communities Committee (FRRCC) Meetings

Water Quality and Food Waste sub-committees, culminated in mid-November, came up with recommendations for EPA based on the charge questions. One of the main conclusions about water was the differences in needs by region for water quality. How can we regionalize this and make it so that this info gets down to the local level?

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) Meetings

Supplemental agreement was finally approved, first batching deadline December 3rd. 57 EQIP-RCPP applications in the Big Sioux area. Brian is finally able to ask for technical assistance for RCPP, ranking criteria is really important in this situation (deadlines, financial delays). Plans by Feb. 11th, contracts in May, Ag Waste Systems, Grazing Plans, Cover Crops, Terraces. Sit down Barry, JP, Brian--NRCS was looking for a practices list so need to come up with that.

**Big Sioux River Project Website, Social Media, and Outreach Update by Alexa Kruse:**

* Website switch (WordPress 🡪 Wix), SEO is working well on Google, plus we have a Google Business listing. Site traffic has been increasing and looking good. Working on more content for that, FAQs.
* Social Media increases across the board with follows and interactions.
* Outreach included OLLI course with Travis from FBSR. Have secured at least 3 classroom days with teachers in the area. Worked a lot on RCPP postcard planning/printing, hopefully we can send those out in the next batching period.

**Legislative and Non-Point Source Task Force Update by Jay Gilbertson:**

* Jay is absent due to personal conflicts, so we had a discussion involving everyone.
* Just had a meeting yesterday (Dec. 6th) where Hunter Roberts of DANR is pulling for this $3mil Big Sioux RBI to be match for ARPA. Jeremy is not sure where it stands in getting funded. DANR made changes to get more buy-in and keep different groups (GFP, Pheasants Forever) happy, and to get RCPP money, but that has contributed to delays.
* Task Force was online yesterday, Jeremy was there, went well, had 3 projects (Belle Fouche 1.3, Soil Health <200k, and Rocky’s South Central program 500-600k) the first two got full funding, and the 3rd got partial funding since it was added as an amendment.

**Other Business:**

* “Upper Big Sioux coordinator Roger Foote will be retiring this spring. It was being fully funded by the City of Watertown. Jay, Jeremy, Tanner, etc. have been up there trying to figure out what will happen when he leaves. Will the city keep the project? Hire a coordinator? Will someone *else* hire a coordinator? Will the project be swallowed up by a bigger project? We will probably have a bit more information at our next SC meeting.

**Meeting adjourned at 10:18am by Minnehaha Conservation District Project Sponsor, John Parker.**