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Description automatically generated**BIG SIOUX RIVER PROJECT**

**Steering Committee Meeting Minutes**

**March 22nd, 2023**

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**Location:** Dell Rapids City Hall, 302 E 4th St, Dell Rapids, SD 57022

**Time and Date:** 09:00-11:00 Wednesday, March 22nd, 2023

**Attendees:** Barry Berg, McKenzie Blaine, Darrell DeBoer, Elaine Garry, Jay Gilbertson, Tami Jansma, Dean Jaycox, Andy Lacey, Amber Lively, John Parker, Josh Peterson, Jeremy Schelhaas, Casey Wenzlaff, Justin

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**Meeting called to order at 9:03am by Minnehaha Conservation District Project Sponsor, John Parker.**

**New Employees (McKenzie Blaine and Amber Lively)**

**Approval of Agenda:**

Motion John Parker, seconded Dean Jaycox, motion carried with changes.

**Approval of September 28th, 2022 meeting minutes:**

* Darrell had question about the information under NRSC detailing 2,500 contracts and whether this number was correct. Barry corrected the mistake, saying there was 25 contracts total.
* Darrell asked about the BSRP report, specifically for reductions and what reductions mean. Barry explained the Step L program.
* Changes made to the agenda.

Motion John Parker, seconded Dean Jaycox, motion carried.

**NRCS Programs Update by Casey Wenzlaff:**

* NRSC is in the middle of ranking applications that came in for RCPP, with a total of 14 applications and roughly $618k spent.
* There is a renovation project called Act Now which spans from Moody County to Brookings County.
* This Friday is the deadline for carbon smart applications.
* An Ag Waste through RCPP is almost done, just waiting on the engineer.

**City of Sioux Falls Update by Josh Peterson:**

* Couple of new hires in the office: Tyson and Miguel; they came from water rec plant and have great experience.
* Big Sioux River Summit went well and plan to continue to do the summit again into the foreseeable future.
* Tentative date for Big Sioux Clean Up: April 22nd, 2023.
* The city of Sioux Falls is currently partnering with SDSU to design a line channel, hopefully to be constructed this spring. They will monitor it throughout the year.
* E. coli has been identified in a few locations so this filter should help.
* The line channel will be using SRF funds at the cost of a $75,000 contract with SDSU for this project.
* Justin suggested hosting an event to show the project to the community.
* The city of Sioux Falls is also spending the rest of a loan in Tutt Hill Park. The planning team will meet to figure out how to get the rest of money spent by the fall.

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

* The BSRP has worked on RCPP projects for Ag Waste: one in Moody County that is almost done, another is a deep pit barn, and last up in Brookings.
* The BSRP attended the Summit in December, so had to skip previous SCM.
* Project working to revamp SRAM and RAM to even the playing field with RBI and thus, increased the $/acres .
* E. coli is the main contaminant being addressed.
* Payment scale $140-$100 based on location from Sioux Falls. The tributaries of the Big Sioux River are given other price ranges.
* The BSRP is trying to figure out pricing for tributaries of priority streams.
* Currently working on SRAM project in Minnehaha County could be 100 acres .
* Another SRAM project in Moody County is 29 acres and producer has already signed an application.
* Total approximate acres in SRAM right now: 180 acres.
* This fall, BSRP will have a Grazing/SRAM Partnership Field Day – August 23rd from 9am to 3 or 4pm.
* Plans to set up a tent on first SRAM site and will give tours for attendees to see the change over the past ten years.
* There will be three main speakers talking about grazing and water quality.
* Barry will end the event with an open forum for producers to talk about shortfalls, program ideas, and what the producers hope to see.
* Last Friday, Amber and McKenzie put together 52 letters for the producers being invited to the Field Day event .
* Another letter will be sent out in June for producers to RSVP; Goal for attendance = minimum of 40 producers.
* If poor weather or other preventing factor, event will be moved to next day, August 24th.

**Big Sioux River Project Information & Education Update by Amber Lively:**

* Tradeshow booth designed for BSRP to have a greater physical statement.
* Events: Big Sioux River and Sustainability Summit, Soil Health Conference, Women in Science, Sioux Empire Water.
* Amber did presentation in Hartford for 4 groups of roughly 20 7th grade students and talked about watersheds.
* 2,200 students at Sioux Empire Water Festival.
* Lots of work with Field Day preparation.
* Pamphlets made for SRAM and RAM programs to better advertise the project’s offerings.

**RBI, CREP, Coteau Project Update by Jay Gilbertson:**

* RBI (riparian buffer initiative) – attempt to do riparian buffer work from Senate funds on Big Sioux River basin.
* Now buffers and feedlots are offered for initiative .
* Game, Fish, and Parks got $250,000 added to local-match program from EDWDD; funds focused on where the water is currently flowing for CREP.
* Coteau Project: this project is North of the BSRP and includes three different watershed projects: Upper Big Sioux Project, Lake Poinsett Project, and Northeast Watershed Project.
* Looking to replace three experienced people who retired from projects .
* DANR and EDWDD have welded the three projects together which is now being called the Coteau Project which is north of Estelline and goes to North Dakota.
* Successful at hiring a person named Cory from NRCS for the project.
* SDSU interviewed three people for a position doing water research through the extension.

**Other Business:**

* Tami from city of Brandon talked about water cleanup projects.
* Brandon is now a MS4 community and has devoted $500,000 to water quality initiatives.
* City of Brandon has invested $25 million into water treatment plant expansion.
* Andy Lacey made comment about runoff concerns, questioning how producers can be encouraged to focus on rainwater and soil health; suggested tax system to incentivize producers to do better.
* Barry commented on BMPs, such as no-till, and soil health. BSRP is doing its best to encourage BMPs.
* Jay said tax incentives are very unlikely to be established, instead it is a voluntary action and what everybody wants to do; that is why incentive programs exist.
* Jay mentioned potential for expansion with water quality efforts near Lake Madison.

**Motion to adjourn meeting by John Parker, seconded Dean Jaycox, motion carried. Meeting adjourned 10:31am.**