

 **Steering Committee Meeting Minutes**

 **December 22, 2020**

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**Location:** Virtual Zoom Meeting hosted by East Dakota Water Development District

**Time and Date:** 09:00-11:00 Tuesday, December 22nd, 2020

**Attendees:** Barry Berg, Darrel DeBoer, Travis Entenman, Jay Gilbertson, Hannah Grimm, Brett Hennings, Alexa Kruse, Dana Loseke, Jack Majeres, Matt Morlock, Rhonda Nelson, John Parker, Carolyn Rudebusch, Deron Ruesch, Jeremy Schelhaas, Jeremy Sova, Brian Top, Justin Weiland, Dan Wehmeyer, Bob Woerman

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**Meeting called to order at 9:01am by Bob Woerman.**

**Approval of Agenda:**

Addition (Other Business): Pipestone MPCA project, potential Iowa Project

Motion Dana Loseke, seconded Darrell DeBoer, motion carried.

**Approval of September 23rd meeting minutes, no corrections or additions:**

Motion Darrell DeBoer, seconded Carolyn Rudebusch, motion carried.

**NRCS Update by Deron Ruesch:**

Extremely busy fall construction, including…

26.7 acres grassed waterways (19,000+ linear feet, 3.7mi)

34,184ft terraces (6.5mi)

12 Water And Sediment Control Basins (underground outlets/tile; 3.1mi or 16k feet)

1,800 feet livestock pipeline, 5 tanks

EQIP Updates

2021 state allocation for EQIP just hair under $13.9mil

 2021 Resource unit for general EQIP $181,044 2021 VS

 2020 at $38,808, lost 46.7% of funding

 Mainly because a little over $2mil has been taken away from general EQIP fund pool

and put into CIS strategies

 49 EQIP asks (deadline was Dec. 11th), 28 prioritized as a high ranking based on applications,

cannot fund with initial allocation but there is ability to transfer additional funds into pool after

all is said and done.

CSP Updates

 Busy with processing certification and payments

 CSP allocation cut from last year due to NRCS trying to implement CSP in all 50 states

 In previous years about 13 states have handled those dollars, $7.8mil renewal usually but only received $339,000 and therefore only able to fund 2-3/10 applications in first go.

Barry asked, out of 28 high ranking contracts what is the breakdown—Darren said some grazing, terracing, waterways, cover crops, no till conversion, don’t have estimates on all 28 yet. There are more requests than usual for funding.

Shout out to Rick Lehmann, 35-37 yrs in and now retiring, who had done a phenomenal job working with new NRCS technicians on board, instrumental in laying out and certifying all of those different conservation practices they have.

**City of Sioux Falls Update by Barry Berg (updates from Andy and Colin read by Barry):**

3 projects in the works and about to start design on…

 Upper Tuthill rain garden

S Timber Trail rain garden

Covell Ave. W 35th and Duluth infrastructure project

They are going to start implementing some low impact development for flooding to try and treat as much water as possible in SF.

Areas between 28th and 33rd St to incorporate a detention basin

 Start working on design pretty soon, going to be contacting Jeremy Schelhaas to be working with him and DENR as well as SRF NPS funding.

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

**Segment 4 Progress**

Finished transitioning into Segment 4, everything is moving along.

**Surveying**

 13 more producers yet to survey, potentially 200 acres

 Could end up with around 500 acres in SRAM and RAM for 2021 (Project Implementation Proposal is at 300-400 acres/yr as a goal)

**RCPP Update**

 First RCPP being worked on by Brian, most of the report is done, some submission issues

**Working Lands Easement**

 Document is heading to an attorney to make sure there are no glaring issues

 Working on supporting documents like purchase agreement, working agreement with Minnehaha Conservation District and Pheasants Forever.

 This producer had a previous SRAM contract and will have 109.6 acres on Skunk Creek, 27.2 acres cropland for the WLE.

**Other**

Working with a producer in Union county on some Animal Waste Management

Transitioning 120 acres of cropland to rotational grazing system

 At Baltic which is pretty visible off the interstate (old service road that goes around interstate)

 Cool and warm season mixes of seeding has been done

 Tough piece of ground—floods often as of late, but hoping to establish pasture there

 No livestock out there this year, next year plans are to work with fencing, pipeline, development tank, dividing into 4 paddocks, spoke system.

 An opportunity to study and see how it does, not just by us but all partners.

**Current funding for Segment 4; good budget available**

 $9mil currently (cash for financial assistance for BMPs)

 SRF-NPS from City of SF just over $5.5mil

 SRF-NPS from City of Dell Rapids remaining balance around $200,000

 319 is from last asking of $900,000

 RCPP $2mil, when it comes around

**Big Sioux River Project I&E Update by Alexa Kruse:**

Update on I&E

 Talked about presenting at the Big Sioux River Summit, rehashed the presentation given there

 Talked about translating the project from a rural, producer audience to telling the story to urban one.

 Talked about relying heavily on a social media campaign and outdoor activities (expectations as we continue to live with the pandemic)

 Showed two possible logo designs

**Steering Committee Operating Procedures Update by Bob and Barry:**

Have not officially adopted an advisor procedure yet, but Minnehaha will be looking over this at their next board meeting and will take some action.

**State Buffer Initiative Update by Jay Gilbertson:**

DENR Riparian buffer initiative (what is known so far)

 DENR Secretary Hunter Roberts presented at Dec. 8th NPS Task Force meeting—buffers are good, everyone should support this—but details were very limited

 Create “new” cost-share program to pay for riparian buffers, ala “SRAM”

 Changes to existing property tax reduction, SDCL 10-6-31.7, -.8 & -.9

 Details of existing BSRWP Riparian Programs

 In theory you don’t need conventional 1:1 match that RCPP would require, maybe if there was match, you might be at a disadvantage. Commodity groups, cons groups, local governments, water districts, there are still lots of questions about this initiative. $8 an acre savings is not really an incentive. It’s nice, but it’s only really a recognition that something good is taking place.

**FRRCC Water Quality Update by Barry Berg:**

Working on water quality and food waste charge topics that EPA has asked of the committee.

For water quality charge topic, 30 part (difficult) question

 Dealing with transparency from top down EPA, States, Local, breaking down disconnect

 What parts of water quality are important and what needs have to be met

 Trying to figure out something that will work across the states to transfer info from local level up to EPA in a more streamlined way.

 No regionalizing since water issues in SD are different from CO, CA, etc.

 Not just quality, but quantity issues

This work is what new policy is going to be drawn up on—there is not a lot to mention currently but there certainly will be in the future.

**Other Business:**

None to add.

**Adjourn:**

Motion Jay Gilbertson, seconded Justin Weiland, adjourned at 10:25am.