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2019 SWCD Activity Summary

Dec. 2019

Outreach Activities:

(2.6 -> 3 Staff)

- Spring Newsletter 2019, sent to 6,488 households (Kelzenberg layout, all staff)
- Pokegama Water Fair – 5th graders, Anne gave an interactive presentation on pollutant runoff / water quality. (LeRoy)
- Kanabec County Fair – COLA-AIS booth, conservation booth (all staff, COLA volunteers)
- ‘Soil Health Field Day’ 9/10/19 host Jon Stevens, Rush City (Pomije, Smetana, NRCS, Ryan Clark MAWQCP)
- Conservation Tour 2019 – 10/28 Kanabec Co. – Had 13 attendees (2 Supervisors, 1 Commissioner, & 1 Snake CAC member) and 6 project locations throughout the county including a Sorenson’s Stream Erosion Stabilization, Reiser’s Lined Waterway Erosion Control Project, Donley’s Shoreland Restoration on Fish Lake, two Manure Pit Closures, a White Pine Planting for Wildlife Habitat, and Prescribed Grazing Practices on Cover Crops at Munstersteiger’s. Many great questions were asked and discussed, seeing first hand some of our recent projects. (Smetana, Pomije)
- Website maintenance - update the website as needed. (LeRoy, Pomije, Mattson)

Civic Organizing Activities: Meetings are held monthly with these groups to test a new approach to policy making the produces the civic infrastructure to organize for the common good, promoting active citizens, transparency and accountability on progress toward common goals. With new staff I’ll be introducing them to these practices and we’ll work to gather progress in meeting our work plan goals.

- ALWACOLT (Ann Lake Watershed Alliance Civic Organizing Leadership Team) – 4 -> 7 people, Monthly we meet to share progress in a coordinated effort to utilize civic organizing standards, principles, disciplines and organizing skills to work toward common water quality goals for the Ann Lake watershed. Some of our specific goals involve a future phosphorus reduction treatment and recently introducing civic organizing practices to the ALWA executive cmte. Pomije has been designated as a non-voting SWCD liaison to the ALWA executive cmte. She will be aiding in using these standards to collaboratively promote active water quality practices within this watershed. We are transitioning into meeting collectively with the ALWA executive cmte. and eventually dissolving the ALWACOLT group over the next few months.
- St. Croix Civic Organizing Leadership Group – 5 people, Monthly we share civic organizing experiences and network toward continued coordinated efforts. Efforts include creating a climate, restructuring existing resources, organizing a base of influence and ensuring sustainability. We focus and track our progress on 6 strategies: weekly meetings with self, one on one meetings with stakeholders, strategic planning, follow good meeting structuring, track outcomes and participation in the larger civic organizing base.

Administrative Responsibilities: (LeRoy, Pomije, Mattson)

- Staff Turnover:
 - Technician: Jacque left 3/15/19 – Nick started 6/24/19
 - Admin.: Anne left 7/5/19 – Jerah started 10/21/19
 - Due to staff turnover this year Pomije filled in on technical work for about 3 months and covered for administrative work for 3.5 months. Additional time was spent and continues in training the new staff. Maggie Kuchenbaker from Mille Lacs SWCD was very helpful in the Adm. transition time and for aiding in training Jerah.

- Pomije created new a format for evaluating job applicants, based on a template and input from County staff. She also created a new point-based system for evaluating applicant's interview process.
- Aided in the QuickBooks Company conversion over to one sole company, with Peterson Co. and Anne taking the lead.
- Rental Space – new lease agreement, negotiation
- Time Tracking
- Quick Books Accounting
- Pay Taxes & Quarterly Invoicing
- Enter time and program expenses into Program Log for Treasurer's Report – monthly
- Grant expense tracking - quarterly
- Grant reporting – January
- Year- End Financials & 2018 Audit with Peterson Co.
- Compile the year-end tax forms: W-3, W-2s and 5498 (HSA form) for staff and supervisors
- File the Federal quarterly 941, employer's tax returns

'One Watershed One Plan' (1W1P) Rum Watershed:

- Rum 1W1P Planning Meetings (Kelzenberg, Smetana) – Our technician has been attending the various Rum 1W1P planning meeting to keep abreast of the progress. It has resulted in BWSR easement funding (RIM) to protect the drinking water source for the Twin Cities, coming from the Rum Watershed area. The easements are meant to protect the forested area to ensure clean drinking water. Have worked to foster planning input from the Lewis Lake Assn. members as well as our policy board representatives (McNally & Belholm).

1W1P Snake Watershed:

- Having gotten our planning grant approved for funding from BWSR our pre-planning activities have begun. Funding on the 1W1P planning grant will not be obligated until the workplan, budget, timeline and Memorandum of Agreement are approved by BWSR. Starting heavily in November, Pomije and other SWCD staff partners have been meeting to finalize the work plan and budget. December will be our 3rd Steering Cmte. meeting. This is very much a collaborative effort with Pomije leading and acting as the coordinator during the whole planning process. Once the planning grant is obligated; she will be reimbursed for her collaboration time, but not time in attending meetings when she is representing Kanabec SWCD.
- Along with the Snake 1W1P pre-planning efforts we (SWCD partners) have simultaneously been meeting to discuss the Snake River Watershed Management Board's (SRWMB) involvement and potential organizational changes to this board through this planning effort. The SRWMB will be a crucial entity going forward after the plan is completed, because we will look to this joint power's board to provide the framework for implementation of the planned water quality activities. This may involve a more dedicated position as a Snake Board Coordinator. Something the Kanabec SWCD should consider in our staffing plans.

Grant Applications / Activity:

- Annual e-link reporting, January (Pomije, Kelzenberg)
- Continue to research options for an Ann Lake Treatment for their high nutrient internal load for possible grant applications in 2020. We have seen some improvements in water quality testing (via. ALWA) this year for Ann Lake and may forgo seeking a treatment at this time. Instead we may continue the focus on water quality conservation practices around the lake, such as education on septic upgrades.

- Application for the BWSR 1W1P Planning Grant for the Snake River Watershed – This involved extensive collaboration with the other 3 County & SWCD’s staff as these partners may choose to have an active (paid) role in this planning process. It included drafting a rough budget (collaborating mostly with Pine SWCD) including the various SWCD costs and an estimate for a hired consultant to write the plan. This application was funded! So now the pre-planning efforts are underway.
- Aided Nancy Lunzer’s on a Sustainable Ag. Research & Education Grant (SARE) – She is a producer raising sheep in the Ogilvie area with an interest in youth education. She has applied for SARE grants in the past; one for on-farm research on buckthorn control. She is proposing a grant to aid in the funding of 3 youth on-farm environmental educational days in 2020. These events are planned for the Ogilvie area youth. We plan to assist in this effort in providing education on soils, pollinators and surface water pollution.

Snake River Project Grant:

- Maintain project grant - budget tracking (Pomije)
- E-link reporting – entry coordination on 4 county partnership grant

Projects Completed in 2019 – CWF Snake Project Grant:

- Larson, Jerry & Mary – Peace twp. Sec 30, SE ¼ of SE ¼; Knife Lake, shoreland native restoration planting, approved \$8,019.75 of \$10,693 estimate, project completed, chosen contractor MN Shoreworks, total final cost \$6,314.19, grant funding \$4,735.64
Estimated Phosphorus Reduction = 1.7 #/year & Soil Saved = 0.1 T/year
- Persson, Blake – South Fork twp. Sec. 2, SW1/4 of NE ¼; manure pit closure, \$25,486.58 approved for funding on \$34,173.08 estimate, chosen contractor Ag. Excavating construction completed, total final cost \$27,885, grant funding \$20,835.75
Estimated Phosphorus reduction = 16,384 #/yr.
- Sorensen, James & Gail – Peace twp., Sec. 2, NE 1/4 of NW 1/4, streambank erosion project, Amendment approved through the SRWMB to pay 75% funding on this project. Chosen contractor, Prairie Restoration. Approved \$20,106.60 based on bids, project completed, total final cost \$26,762.80, grant funding \$20,106.60
Estimated Phosphorus Reduction = 26 #/year & Soil Saved = 31 T/year
- Forest Shores Road – Ann Lake twp. Sec. 35, SW1/4 of SE 1/4; road ditch erosion stabilization project, project completed, chosen contractor, Ron Straka, approval \$3,018.50 (50%) of \$6,037 estimate
Estimated Phosphorus Reduction = 0.4 #/year & Soil Saved = 1.4 T/year
- Falcon St. Road- Ann Lake twp., Sec. 26, SE crn. road ditch erosion stabilization project, project completed, chosen contractor, Ron Straka. Approved \$10,370 (50%) of \$20,740 estimate
Estimated Phosphorus Reduction = 13.6 #/year & Soil Saved = 16 T/year

Total Practice Reductions in 2019: (Kelzenberg, Pomije)

Phosphorus Reduction = 16,425.70 #/Ac./yr.

Sediment Reduction = 48.5 T/Ac./yr.

Potential Projects:

- Wolfram / Herder – Peace twp. Sec. 31, SE ¼ of NW ¼, Knife Lake, lakeshore valley erosion control project, design underway, approved \$6,413.25 on \$8,551 estimate, Bids came in high, no time left to revise contract prior to grant ending. Land owners seeking additional funds from other sources (KLID) to contribute to their 25%. Revised design to lower cost.
Estimated Phosphorus Reduction = 106 #/year & Soil Saved = 106 T/year
- Ann River / Fish Lake, along Hwy 65 – This site is mostly along the west side of the HWY 65 Bridge on the North Side of the Fish Lake. This site has significant erosion due to heavy foot traffic, a steep slope, and sparse native vegetation. A site visit consultation was done with TSA (Matias) and DNR Fisheries (Leslie George). Matias (TSA) will put together a preliminary plan and cost estimate. The initial plan will be a Toe-Wood bench and native planting to alleviate the erosion concerns while providing an adequate fishing platform. We will wait for TSA plan prior to getting in contact with MN DOT and pursuing funding sources. The DNR is supportive of the project to provide public fishing opportunity. (lead Smetana, Pomije)
- Smetana continues site visits / outreach for continued projects

Possible State Cost Share Funding:

- Tentis – Fish Lake, repair; Ann River CWF; historic buried rock gully
Tentis' would still like technical assistance even if continued funding isn't available, may look at state cost-share funds to finish this project, cost estimate \$7,784
Estimated Phosphorus Reduction = 3.8 #/year & Soil Saved = 12.8 T/year

Other Projects:

- Shoreline Restoration Promotional Signs – Placed the final 5 shoreline restoration signs on Fish Lake (Hamiel, Donley & Wilcocks), Ann Lake (Smith) and the Snake River (Crawford). Placed as part of the Snake Project Grant.
- County SWCD sign revitalization – installation underway (Smetana, Pomije)

Conservation Technical Assistance: (all staff)

Phone calls, office visits & site visits for various reasons:

Erosion concerns, shoreland restoration assistance, water quality concerns, buckthorn removal – herbicide, dam concerns, wetland policy guidance, tree planting selection, conservation practice education, MAWQCP promotion and assisting producers through certification and promotion of forest stewardship planning, etc.

COLA – AIS (Coalition of Lake Assn. – Aquatic Invasive Species) Activity Coordination: meeting & budget management, \$25,713 spent to date (Kelzenberg, Pomije, Smetana)

Funding for AIS work is solely to prevent the introduction or limit the spread of AIS at all access sites within the County. This is a coordinated effort with lake assn. member through the COLA group, which helps to set policy on utilizing these funds. (funds come from the State via. the County as reimbursements) The Kanabec SWCD Board has oversight on the AIS activities and funds. Coordinated efforts with the COLA group aid us in expanded educational opportunities and outreach on water quality projects, such as shoreland restoration.

Veliger sampling for zebra mussels was completed on Knife and Ann Lakes.

Buffer Technical Assistance & Outreach – focus on Public Waters (Kelzenberg, Smetana)

- Mapping and inventory done using GIS and Buffer tracking tool.
- Conducted road surveys to visually conduct buffer identification.
- Measured buffer for landowner to be in compliance
- Answered questions from people calling or walking into the office

Observation Well Monitoring – conducted at the end of 9 of the 12 months. Takes a minimum of 2 hours to measure the 5 wells in the county. (Kelzenberg, Smetana, Pomije & LeRoy)

Tree Sale: sold 8,875 trees, donated 925 to Ogilvie School

Due to staff turn-over Pomije alone did most of the prep. work for the tree sale.
Our 2019 tree sale resulted in a net profit of \$783, computed by Pomije.

Attend Training – 2.6 -> 3 staff

- Shoreland Restoration Training, Duluth 1/31 (Kelzenberg presented, Pomije)
- Certified Crop Advisor Update 9/11(Pomije, Smetana)
- AIS Behavior Change Design Workshop 10/22 – 10/23 (Smetana)
- District Manager Meeting/Training 11/19 (Pomije)
- MN Active Citizen Initiative (MACI) 11/21
- BWSR Academy 10/29 – 10/31 (all staff)
- On-line Webinar Training
- Workshop on-site Training
- On-the-Job Training (MAWQCP) Smetana with Ryan Clark (Carlton)

Meeting Attendance:

- SWCD Board
- Snake Board, monthly
- Rum 1W1P Planning Meetings (Kelzenberg, Smetana)
- Reinvest in MN, easements 12/3 (Smetana)
- TSA Board (Kelzenberg, Smetana)
- ‘One Watershed One Plan’ pre-planning, Steering Committee (Oct. – Dec.)
- TEP Board – Wetland Conservation Act (Pomije)
- County Board of Commissioners
- Civic Organizing Network Meetings: St. Croix & ALWACOLT (Ann Lake)
- COLA Meetings, every-other month (on the even months) (Kelzenberg, Smetana & Pomije)
- Knife Lake Improvement District / Sportsman’s Club Annual Meeting – attendance regarding the Rosnow streambank site (Pomije)