

Governor's Council on Minnesota's Coastal Program Draft Meeting Minutes

Date: 03/15/2024
Minutes prepared by: Marcia Cardone-Mohar
Location: Hybrid Meeting – Teams and In Person at Gooseberry Falls State Park – Two Harbors
Approved: May 29, 2024

Attendance

- Governor's Council on Minnesota's Coastal Program Members: Janice Erickson (Virtual), Peder Otterson (In-person), Bill Majewski (In-Person), Dan Belden (In-Person), Don Schreiner (In-Person), Jim Erickson (In-person), and Erik Peterson (In-person).
- Minnesota's Lake Superior Coastal Program Staff: Amber Westerbur (In-Person), Cynthia Poyhonen (In-Person), Marcia Cardone-Mohar (In-Person), and Julie McDonnell (Virtual).

Decisions Made

- MOTION by Bill Majewski to accept the March 15, 2024, agenda, Seconded by Erik Peterson. AFFIRMATIVE All. MOTION ADOPTED.
- MOTION by Dan Belden to accept the January 18, 2024, meeting minutes as written, Seconded by Don Schreiner. AFFIRMATIVE All. MOTION ADOPTED.
- MOTION by Erik Peterson to adjourn the meeting, Seconded by Bill Majewski. AFFIRMATIVE All. MOTION ADOPTED.

Agenda

- Optional Pre-meeting Activities – Explore Gooseberry Falls State Park
- Lunch/Watch Hamline's new documentary: A Sea Change for Superior
- Welcome/Opening
- Coastal Program Evaluation "Workshop"
- Program Update
- Closing

Meeting Notes

Opening

Meeting called to order by Amber Westerbur, at 1:00 pm.

Janice welcomed everyone with smudging virtually from her home, reflecting on what matters most, Air, Land, and People. Janice conducted an ice breaker: "Top three things that come to mind when you think about water."

Everyone participated and gave their insight when they think about water, which included: Powerful, Fragile, Love, Life, Medicine, Warm, Cold, Wet, Calming, Soothing, Terrifying.

Coastal Program Evaluation “Workshop”

Amber went over the exercises to develop content for the Coastal Program evaluation, which is required from the Governor’s Council, under the Program’s Executive Order.

Highlights include:

In one word, what is your favorite thing about the Coastal Program?

- Education and Learning – earning Five votes
- Trustworthy
- Caring
- Dedicated – earning Two votes
- Protection/Stewardship/Water Protectors – earning Seven votes
- Collegial – earning Two votes
- Inclusiveness
- Professional
- Common Interest
- Variety of backgrounds – earning Two votes
- Consistency
- Wisdom/Indignant – earning Two votes
- TEK (Technological Environmental Knowledge) – earning One vote
- Good
- Happy
- Strong
- Leadership

What is going well with the Coastal Program?

- Stability of staff and members
- Diversity of Expertise and Experience – earning Six votes
- Sensitive to changes; adaptable
- Dedication to Lake Superior/Stewardship – earning One vote
- Good, honest, and positive critiques of applications/effectiveness of grant selection – earning Five votes
- Community acceptance/helping to effect meaningful and positive change up the shore – earning Four votes
- New ranking system is better
- Assistance and availability of staff – earning Four votes
- Enjoy learning history through storytelling, including place and people – earning One vote
- Welcoming to newbies/good energy
- Food is good
- Open minded and learning new things
- Effective teamwork and collaboration/Powerful knowledge exchange – earning Three votes
- Useful
- Strong sense of humor

Where can improvements be made to the Coastal Program

- Better communications about impact and outreach (actively encouraging people to apply for grants.) – earning Seven votes

- Better/different website
- Can we have formal tribal representatives? – earning Five votes
- Lack of appointments – have we had contact with county boards?
- More intentional recruitment for members (personal) – earning Five votes
- Individuals apply but do not hear back about their application
- Virtual meeting not as effective as being in the room
- Additional advocacy of what is happening up here – earning Two votes
- Miss having smaller grants – earning Four votes
- More focus on TEK highly encouraged and not just more points on grant applications – earning Two votes
 - Support traditional medicines (i.e. birch)
 - Doing more with wild rice
- Add the Nemadji River to our boundary

In Summary of the Coastal Program Evaluation Workshop:

After all of the votes were tallied, there were three topics that Council felt most important. Staff then went through those topics with Council:

- What can we do to ensure better communication?
 - 0.5 time staff person or another DNR expert
 - Add more photos to website – different form of website
 - Apply for Coastal Management fellow for communications
 - Better communications by having an event. (i.e. Coastal Conference), for the 25th Anniversary – tabling at various events
- Ideas for more Tribal representation on the Coastal Council
 - Possibly changing the Executive Order to include other Tribes
 - Fond du Lac, Grand Portage, At-Large
- Ideas for more Intentional Recruitment
 - Need someone in the governor’s office to help with recruitment
 - A really good orientation about council and its expectation
 - Longevity means a lot
 - Appointments need to be longer. Two to three years, staggered.
 - The process needs to be better
 - Website needs to be better
 - go outside the DNR
 - add more photos
 - Make re-application to the Council easier
 - Council members need to be the point of contact at the table during conferences/conventions
 - Testimonial and quotes from existing Council members to positive statements too

Program Managers Report

- NOAA has accepted the 2023 Performance Measures report – hit most of the 5-year targets.
- 25th Anniversary of the Coastal Program planning.
 - Thinking on the lines of a year-long celebration of smaller events
- Making progress on developing the cooperative agreement.

Closing

A “brilliant idea” from Don Schreiner and Erik Peterson!

- Use the Limnology Center as a museum/information center/go-to for Lake Superior information.

- Get all of the groups together to tell the Lake Superior story
 - Tribal nations/Sea Grant/Pike/Fish groups, etc.
- Fund a feasibility study
 - Sounds like an idea for the Coastal Program Evaluation letter to the Commissioner.

Janice wrapped up the meeting with wishes of good health and energy – Stay awesome!

The meeting adjourned at 3:55pm.