

Meeting Minutes

Governor's Council on Minnesota's Coastal Program

Date: 9/29/2021

Minutes prepared by: Marcia Nieman

Location: Hybrid meeting

- Physical meeting location: Cook County Higher Education, 300 West 3rd Street, Grand Marais, MN
- Virtual location: [Microsoft Team meeting link](#)

Approved: January 12, 2022

Attendance

- Governor's Council on Minnesota's Coastal Program Members - Present Physically: Bill Majewski, Barb Liukkonen, Dan Belden, Matthew Brown, Jim Ericson, and Dick Brenner - Present Virtually: Janice Erickson and Don Schreiner.
- Minnesota's Lake Superior Coastal Program Staff Present Physically: Amber Westerbur, Cynthia Poyhonen, and Marcia Nieman - Present Virtually: Clinton Little and Julie McDonnell.

Decisions Made

All votes made using roll call vote.

- MOTION by Liukkonen to accept the September 29, 2021, agenda, Seconded by Brenner. AFFIRMATIVE All. MOTION ADOPTED.
- MOTION by Brown to accept the June 21, 2021 meeting minutes as written, Seconded by Brenner. Discussion included correcting the minutes to include Barb Liukkonen on the Grants Committee. AFFIRMATIVE All with corrections. MOTION ADOPTED.

Agenda

- Call to Order-Roll Call, Adoption of the Agenda, Introduce Microsoft TEAMS meeting platform
- September 2021 STAR Grant Review
- Program Update
- Data Sharing Discussion
- Closing

Meeting Notes

Call to Order

Ms. Erickson called the meeting to order at 1:05 pm. Following in-person and virtual meeting tips and reminders, members and staff checked in to the meeting. Members approved the June 21, 2021 meeting minutes and September 29, 2021 agenda (roll call).

September 2021 STAR Grant Review

Ms. Poyhonen went over the process for the review. She noted that if there is a conflict of interest by anyone the Council will decide the possible course of action: 1) the member can fully participate in discussion and scoring; 2) member can only answer pointed questions asked by others; and 3) member cannot discuss or score that application.

Ms. Erickson facilitated the discussion of the grant applications. Following the discussion of each application, in-person members submitted their scoring forms.

01 – Natural Areas Association, PO Box 17646, Pittsburgh, PA 15235, \$10,000. Conflict of interest: Westerbur. Westerbur is not available for comment (staff do not score). Application discussion.

02 – South St. Louis Soil and Water Conservation District, 215 North 1st Ave. E., Room 301, Duluth, MN 55802, \$10,000. No conflicts of interest. Application discussion.

03 – St. Louis River Alliance, 394 Lake Ave. S., Suite 208, Duluth, MN 55802, \$9,988. No conflicts of interest. Application discussion.

04 – Sugarloaf: The North Shore Stewardship Association, 6008 London Rd., Duluth, MN 55804, \$10,000. No conflicts of interest. Application discussion.

Application	Applicant	Weighted total	Grant Requested	Rank
1	Natural Areas Association	72.00	\$10,000	3
2	South St. Louis Soil and Water Conservation District	74.82	\$10,000	2
3	St. Louis River Alliance	80.64	\$9,988	1
4	Sugarloaf: The North Shore Stewardship Association	63.27	\$10,000	

Program Update

Ms. Westerbur explained the importance of staff and each staff member shared updates on a portion of their work.

- Ms. Poyhonen gave a handout summarizing grant projects selected between July 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021. All told, the program supported six Annual grants and ten STAR grants during the period.
- Mr. Little elaborated on some of the Program’s coastal erosion work and related coastal hazard initiatives. He also highlighted the [“Common Strategy for Smart Great Lakes”](https://glos.org/priorities/smart-great-lakes/), which sets goals for technology collaboration. (<https://glos.org/priorities/smart-great-lakes/>)
- Ms. McDonnell talked about emerging HAB (Harmful Algal Blooms) in Lake Superior. (<https://www.greatlakesnow.org/2021/08/lake-superior-summer-algae-bloom/>)

- Ms. Westerbur shared a status update on the Program’s work (grant-funded and staff-led) to meet performance metrics we agreed to with NOAA. She noted that we are on target to meet or exceed two metrics, and only slightly behind on the third. We have completed seven projects (of 10 by 2023) to reduce damage from or increase public awareness of coastal hazards. The Coastal Program has assisted nine communities (of 15 by 2023) in implementing their sustainable development or polluted runoff plan. We have delivered 41 trainings opportunities (of 45 by 2023) on coastal management issues.

Members shared what is going on in their area:

- Mr. Ericson talked about the new scientific and natural area (SNA) in the Grand Marais area, Icelandite Coastal Fen.
- Mr. Brenner talked about the Nemadji River, and his wish that this would become part of the Coastal Program boundary in the future.
- Mr. Majewski talked about the US Steel Clean-Up, which started last fall. The \$100 million project includes extensive sediment removal and substantial changes to the landscape.
- Ms. Liukkonen talked about the restoration of the *Edna G* and the Two Harbors lighthouse, which is in need of a new bulb. Another concern is land development and the county granting permits for building too close to the water.
- Mr. Brown talked about all of the great things the Cook County Historical Society is doing in and around Artist Point.
- Ms. Erickson feels the Coastal Program is doing great work.

Data Sharing Discussion

Ms. Westerbur explained the amount of public data the council and program are responsible for and the laws we need to comply with to ensure the data remains secure. Members shared their thoughts and perspectives on what is working and what is not in relation to data sharing. There was general agreement that the current process is a little clumsy, but doable; the more you do it the easier it gets. Members asked about alternatives. Staff noted we have some options, such as DNR email, putting documents on a secure FTP site, starting and using a Sharepoint site and using a secure website. All have pros and cons. There was consensus that members like to receive hard copies of all materials.

The council will maintain current processes, and look at supplying a password that will work for multiple rounds.

Closing

Ms. Westerbur acknowledged the meeting accomplishments, reminded in-person council members to complete their reimbursement and evaluation forms, and staff will follow-up with the final grant review results.

Meeting adjourned at 4:11 pm

Next Regular Meeting

Date: November 3, 2021

Time: Tentatively 1:00 – 5:00 pm

Location: St. Louis County (if safe to do so)