



Minutes from the July 17, 2023, Board Meeting

The regular monthly board meeting of the Wadena Soil and Water Conservation District was held at 7:30 a.m. in person at the Sheriff's Building at the fairgrounds.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Bruce Juntunen at 7:28 a.m.

Members Present:

Chair: Bruce Juntunen
Vice Chair: Tom Schulz
Secretary: Ken Berg
Treasurer: Brett Dailey
Public Relations: Jerry Kern

Others Present:

County Commissioner: Murlyn Kreklau
NRCS District Conservationist: Ivan Reinke
District Manager: Darren Newville
Assistant District Manager: Anne Oldakowski
Administrative Secretary: Chantal Tougas
District Technician: Mitch Janson

Adopt Agenda: Motion made by Brett Dailey, second by Tom Schulz to adopt the agenda as presented. Opposed: none, motion carried.

Approve Board Meeting Minutes: Motion made by Tom Schulz, second by Ken Berg to approve May Board Meeting Minutes. Opposed: none, motion carried.

Treasurer's Report: Motion made by Brett Dailey, second by Jerry Kern to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented. Opposed: none, motion carried.

Bills Paid and Bills Payable: Motion made by Tom Schulz, second by Brett Dailey to approve the Bills Paid and Bills Payable as presented. Opposed: none, motion carried.

COST SHARE

LCCMR Cost Share:

02-2023; Dailey, Brett; Authorization to approve payment for a forest stewardship plan, with a total cost of \$1,362.00, cost share payment not to exceed \$1,021.50 or 75%, whichever is less in Leaf River Township, section 13. (118 acres, written by Anne) Motion made by Tom Schulz, second by Jerry Kern to approve. Opposed: none, motion carried. *Please note that Brett Dailey abstained from voting.*

The Wadena Soil & Water Conservation District seeks to achieve and maintain the highest quality and quantity of natural resources possible through wise stewardship for now and the future of human and financial means available.

An Equal Opportunity Employer



Redeye WBIF Cost Share:

2023-RE01; Schreiner, Paul; authorization to amend cost share amount for his tree planting. The original cost estimate was \$8,930.00 and final cost was \$9,315.64. The cost share encumbered amount would change from \$6,697.50 to \$7,083.14. In North Germany Township, section 15. Motion made by Tom Schulz, second by Ken Berg to approve. Opposed: none, motion carried.

2023-RE01; Schreiner, Paul; authorization to approve payment for his tree planting, with a total cost of \$9,315.64, cost share payment not to exceed \$7,083.14 or 75%, whichever is less in North Germany Township, section 15. Motion made by Tom Schulz, second by Ken Berg to approve. Opposed: none, motion carried.

State Cost Share:

P22-5742-01; Callahan, Stacy; Authorization to encumber funds for a field windbreak, with a total cost of \$494.07, cost-share payment not to exceed \$370.55 or 75%, whichever is less in Aldrich Township, section 26. Motion made by Ken Berg, second by Jerry Kern to approve.

County Commissioner's Report: The county working on a Housing Tax Abatement Policy for Single & Twin homes. They are also working on the budget process.

7:50 a.m. Mitch Janson left the meeting

District Manager's Report: Presented by Darren Newville.

NRCS District Conservationist's Report: Presented by Ivan Reinke

- EQIP – There are new applications coming in. August 6th is the deadline for the first round. Payment rates and caps looking to increase for new contracts.
- Climate Smart Ag practices – 1 funded this year.
- CSP – Finishing up for obligation.
- Attended the Area VIII Meeting.
- SINEW admin has been helping out.

Other Agency Reports: None.

Forestry Update: There is a meeting in McGregor this Thursday. RIM easements update, DNR update, and Arrowhead Forest Partnership update on the agenda. There is also an optional mining site visit held after the meeting.

TSA 8 Report: All is good.

Meetings/Trainings: None.

The Wadena Soil & Water Conservation District seeks to achieve and maintain the highest quality and quantity of natural resources possible through wise stewardship for now and the future of human and financial means available.

An Equal Opportunity Employer



SWCD Aid Resolution – Motion made by Tom Schulz, second by Jerry Kern to approve the resolution with revisions. Opposed: none, motion carried.

Budget: Motion made by Ken Berg, second by Brett Dailey to approve the budget to be submitted to the county. Opposed: none, motion carried.

Personnel: The U of M Extension position may be offered mid-week. Mitch Janson is taking over Nathan’s position. Nicole has resigned.

MASWCD Awards: Motion made by Brett Dailey, second by Jerry Kern to nominate Central Lakes College for Conservation Cooperator at the Convention in December. Opposed: none, motion carried.

Public Comments: none.

Meeting Adjourned: Motion made at 8:49 a.m.

District Managers Report
July 2023
Submitted by Darren Newville

- **Tree Program** – Staff have been meeting with landowners to provide technical assistance with potential projects for next year.
- **Drill Rental/Custom Seeding/Seed Sales** – Tanner custom seeded a total of 258 acres. We had to replace tires on the rental drill and make repairs to the dew drop seeder. The rental drill was rented by 14 different landowners in June.
- **RIM/CREP/CRP** – Staff continue to work with landowners on submitting applications and attending RIM committee meetings.
- **MAWQCP** – Staff continue to work with producers on the MAWQCP assessment, certifications, endorsements, and cost-share. Both SWCDs have been promoting the program on our social media accounts. Alyson is working with certified producers to present them with their signs and take pictures.
- **MDA NFMP/NMI Project** – Nathan has worked with MDA staff to update them on progress and assisted with the Perham Wellhead LAT.
- **MDA Central Sands** –Anne continues to keep in contact with the lab. We should be receiving an invoice and report on the spring sampling soon.
- **AgBMP Loan Program** – Both offices are answering questions from landowners and lenders on the program and application process. The Otter Tail County funds currently have a \$0 balance. Liz has requested an additional \$65,000 to cover an application we have that is waiting for funds. More funds will become available in October when repayments are made to the state.
- **Irrigation RCPP** – We continue to work with the partners on this project. The committee has planned and scheduled a technical training session on July 17-18 to be held at the CLC Staples campus.
- **MDH Groundwater Grant** – Five nitrate testing clinics are planned in July: WOT Fair on 7/20, EOT Fair on 7/21, Wadena SWCD on 7/25, Becker County Fair on 7/27 and Ottertail City on 7/31. The nitrate testing clinics are being promoted through local newspapers and on partner web and social media sites.
- **Red Eye Watershed** – EOT/Wadena SWCD staff continue to coordinate a culvert inventory and feedlot survey with funds from MPCA. Alyson and Nicole will be working on this. Alyson and Nicole are also working with our NRCS partners on education and outreach for the Bluff/Oak Creek EPA 319 project. Plans are underway to hold a workshop/event in the watershed. We will keep you posted as this develops.

(Surface Water Assessment Grant – SWAG Monitoring)

Don and Alyson have completed 3 rounds of water sampling at 8 locations in the Redeye River Watershed. Samples collected are analyzed for temperature, dissolved oxygen, pH, conductivity, total suspended solids, and e coli bacteria. Lab reports from RMB show elevated e coli levels this spring at various locations.

(LCCMR Tree Planting Pilot Program)

Our local forestry team will meet again on July 27th. Don has developed a service provider directory and is gathering information for the capacity assessment part of the grant. This information will document what forestry work is getting done in the watersheds and help us plan for future needs.

Redeye TAC will meet on July 18th. Project partners will review WBIF grants, provide project updates and consider budget and workplan revisions to meet watershed project needs.

- **Otter Tail River Watershed** – Don has been working with Houston Engineering to develop implementation tracking tools. The planning grant expired on June 30th. Project partners have begun to submit Implementation funding requests. Next scheduled TAC meeting is August 7th.
- **Crow Wing Watershed** – The Steering committee met on June 5th and June 15th to work on planning activities. The steering committee developed a watershed survey that was distributed to LGUs, community stakeholders and the public. The survey was mailed to 15 Newspapers and to 20 special interest groups. It was also posted on several local planning partner websites and social meeting sites. As of June 30th, we received 144 responses to the survey. This survey will be used to help us develop goals and issues statements for the watershed. The next Steering committee meeting will be held on July 3rd.

The first Policy Committee meeting was held on May 31st. The policy committee elected a Chair and Vice Chair, approved the Technical Advisory Committee, reviewed a list of individuals who may potentially serve on the Citizen's Advisory Committee, reviewed draft planning bylaws, provided input on public kickoff meetings and a watershed tour.

The Policy Committee met again on June 28th. The committee approved the Crow Wing 1w1p logo, approved the planning by-laws, and approved a list of citizens to serve on the Citizen's Advisory Committee.

The Technical Advisory Committee held its first meeting on June 15th. The committee heard presentations from some of the state and local partners and conducted a brainstorming exercise on watershed issues. Next TAC meeting is scheduled for August 2nd.

Two public kickoff meetings were held in Nisswa on 6/27 and in Park Rapids on 6/28. A total of 34 people attended these events and provided input on watershed issues.

A watershed tour for Policy Committee and Technical Advisory Committee members is being planned for July 26th.

- **Long Prairie Watershed** – The Steering Committee met on June 2nd and July 7th. The partners reviewed the implementation tracking spreadsheet, planning grant budget, and project requests.
- **Other Watersheds** – Don continues to be involved with the Chippewa, Pomme de Terre, Buffalo-Red, and Mustinka/Bois de Sioux Watersheds, discussing quarterly work and implementation.
- **Irrigation Scheduling Program** – Staff continue to run weekly routes.
- **Shoreland Program** – Staff installed 5 sites across Otter Tail County with the help of the CCM crew. They installed over 5,820 square feet of native grasses and forbs on 5 different lakes. They helped Otter Tail County install a native planting outside their office building. Liz & Pete have been making site visits to potential project sites and will be starting on cost share site inspections in July. Liz is working with Chantal to finish the billing for the last few projects. Staff have also been involved in the monitoring of the construction of a few rip rap projects.
- **Cover Crop Grant** – Staff continue planning for the Soil Health Field Day that will be held August 8 near Deer Creek. 2,400 flyers have been distributed to 5 local Coops and agribusinesses as they have agreed to send them out with their monthly statement mailings. Staff have seeded cover crop plots on the site.
- **Buffer Law** – The EOT SWCD has one landowner that we have not been able to contact on getting a buffer established. We may need to send this one on to the county for their process.
- **Wetland Conservation Act** – Staff continue to take calls and make site visits as needed. We continue to respond when called.
- **Feedlots** – Mitch is continuing to work with a Wadena County producer and MPCA to increase the number of animal units on the site. He is waiting for a manure management plan. He completed the mid-year review and will be going over that with a representative from MPCA soon.
- **County Ag Inspector** – Staff are responding to complaints about weeds. We will continue to work with the township weed inspector and county Hwy Depts on these complaints. A few staff will be attending the County Ag Inspector Annual Meeting and Training this week. Alyson proctored one pesticide test.
- **Engineering Assistance** – Our joint engineering staff have visited sites in both SWCDs over the past month to do inventory and evaluation as well as some surveying. They are also providing support for construction inspections as needed.
- **Extension Educator Position** – Interviews were conducted last week. 3 candidates were interviewed, and a top candidate was selected. The U of MN Extension is working through their HR process to make an offer. We hope to hear later this week about a potential starting date.

- **Education and Outreach** – Staff have been making a better effort to get photos of work being done. Anne, Don, and I met to discuss ed & outreach priorities and we have discussed that with that working group. They have been assigned tasks to complete in the next two weeks.
- **The Otter’s Tail** –Chris LeClair, OTC, and I facilitated another group discussion focused on brainstorming solutions for the issues landowners are having with the channel. We have two more meetings scheduled for July.
- **Otter Tail Dam Modifications:** The contractor moved in and started work on the Big Pine Dam last week. This project will take at least 4 weeks to complete.
- **Administration** – We continue to work on the process of tracking all our grants and agreement financial information. Kristi is inputting project information into eLINK.
- **Training and Meetings** – Staff continue to take training courses as needed to develop their JAA. Training attended includes the following topics: DNR Rip Rap standards, Ag 101 Farm Equipment, plant identification, Forest Plan Writing, and AIS.