

WEST POLK SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

MINUTES FROM FEBRUARY 20th, 2025, REGULAR BOARD MEETING

The meeting was called to order at 8:15 am by Vice Chair Peterson, at 528 Strander Ave, Crookston, MN.

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call: Pester, Sorenson and Peterson

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

{Motion #21-2025} Motion by Pester and seconded by Sorenson to approve the February 20th, 2025, agenda.

Affirmative: Pester, Sorenson and Peterson

Opposed: None

Motion: Pass

Supervisors Present: Derek Peterson, Vice Chairman
Christian Pester, Treasurer
John Sorenson, PR & I

District Employees Present: Nicole Bernd, District Manager
Aaron Habermehl, District Technician
Morgan Torkelson, District Technician

Others Present: Zach Anderson, NRCS DC

Others Absent: Taylor Farm Bill Biologist II
Chris Cournia, President
Eric McWalter, Secretary

SECRETARY'S:

{Motion #22-2025} Motion by Sorenson and seconded by Pester to approve the minutes with corrections from the regular board meeting held January 19th, 2025.

Affirmative: Pester, Sorenson and Peterson

Opposed: None

Motion: Pass

FINANCIALS REPORT:

{Motion #23-2025} The January financial reports were reviewed. Motion by Sorenson and seconded by Pester to approve the financial reports, subject to audits and revisions.

Affirmative: Pester, Sorenson and Peterson

Opposed: None

Motion: Pass

Bernd is requesting approval to submit a reimbursement in the amount of \$1,809.39 to East Polk SWCD. These expenses were accrued for implementation activities of the FY24 SHR Watershed Based Implementation Fund.

{Motion #24-2024} Motion by Pester and seconded by Sorenson to approve reimbursement to the Sand Hill River Watershed District in the amount of \$1,809.39.

Affirmative: Pester, Sorenson and Peterson

Opposed: None

Motion: Pass

TREASURER’S REPORT:

{Motion #25-2025} Motion by Pester and seconded by Sorenson to approve the treasurer’s report.

Affirmative: Pester, Sorenson and Peterson

Opposed: None

Motion: Pass

24 month CD: Discussion

COST SHARE REPORT:

District Staff is requesting approval for payment of the listed Conservation Contract(s).

Contract#	Practice	Approved Project Cost	Incentive Payment Amount	Technical Approval Authority
CC-24-01	380	\$3,028.85	\$2,271.64	Torkelson
CC-24-02	380	\$2,761.65	\$2,071.24	Torkelson

{Motion #26-2025} Motion by Sorenson and seconded by Pester to approve payment for the listed Conservation Cover Contract(s).

Affirmative: Pester, Sorenson and Peterson

Opposed: None

Motion: Pass

OLD BUSINESS

Soil Health Delivery Grant Phase III/RCPP: West Polk SWCD has opted out at this time.

NEW BUSINESS

Motion to approve the audit letter of engagement for audit services from Peterson Company, LTD in the year ending December 31, 2024.

{Motion #27-2025} Motion by Sorenson and seconded by Pester to approve the letter of engagement.

Affirmative: Pester, Sorenson and Peterson

Opposed: None

Motion: Pass

NACD (National Association of Conservation Districts) Update on Recent Executive Actions: Working Lands Initiative partnership with Walsh County SCD

Motion to approve scholarships for Agriculture Science Degree and Natural Resources Degree each in the amount of \$1,000.00.

{Motion #28-2025} Motion by Pester and seconded by Sorenson to approve the scholarships sponsored by the District in the amount of \$1,000/each.

Affirmative: Pester, Sorenson and Peterson

Opposed: None

Motion: Pass

Motion to approve the resolution to apply for the ENRTF (Environmental Natural Resources Trust Fund) grant application.

{Motion #29-2025} Motion by Pester and seconded by Sorenson to approve the resolution to apply for the ENRTF grant application.

Affirmative: Pester, Sorenson and Peterson

Opposed: None

Motion: Pass

Motion to approve the West Polk SWCD 2025 Guideline of the Use of SWCD Aid Payments.

{Motion #30-2025} Motion by Pester and seconded by Sorenson to approve the 2025 SWCD Aid Resolution.

Affirmative: Pester, Sorenson and Peterson

Opposed: None

Motion: Pass

Letter from Polk County indicating 2025 allocation

Legislative Update email correspondence from BWSR Board Conservationist, Brett Arne

MEETING REPORTS

Attended Meetings/Trainings

HOLIDAY, Dr. Martin Luther King Day,
BWSR Outreach Strategy training, virtual
NRCS/BWSR RCPP meeting, virtual

NRCS/SWCD Communication Pathway meeting, virtual

OFFICE CLOSED

Bernd

Staff

Bernd

Area Technical Team Training meeting, virtual	Bernd
Sand Hill River Watershed Project Team meeting, Fertile	Bernd
Soil Management Summit, Mankato	Torkelson
<i>Upcoming Meetings/Trainings</i>	
CREP III Training, virtual	Staff
North POD Soil Health meeting, Red Lake Falls	Torkelson/Bernd
Glacial Ridge LTT meeting, virtual	Bernd
RLR Planning Group meeting, Thief River Falls	Bernd
Crookston Community Tree Initiative meeting, virtual	Bernd
FDRWG board meeting, Ada	Bernd
North POD board meeting, Mahnomen	Bernd
RRVSCA board meeting, Mahnomen	Pester/Bernd
SWCD/NRCS Communication Pathway meeting, virtual	Bernd

DISTRICT EMPLOYEE'S REPORTS:

Bernd

1W1P:

- RLR1W1P: Planning group is considering purchasing “Kintone” a customizable workplace digital platform to track projects and financials; Planning Group meeting, 02/25/2025 to work on the Implementation Schedule (Section 5) of the Plan Amendment.
 - RLRWBIF Incentive: WP-CCRP-24-04; 31.15 acres for 15 years = \$1,972.50.
- MSTR1W1P: Steering Committee meeting, 02/05/2025; discussed the 2023 WBIF Financials/Timeline (Grant Expires 12/31/25), Well Sealings Update, Ag Practices Update , Swift Coulee/RIM Update, County Ditch 45 Update, CCRP Incentives Program; next Steering Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, 03/05/2025 and Policy Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, 03/12/2025, at 1pm.
- SHR1W1P: Steering Committee meeting 02/12/2025; discussed the project tracking tool MS4; BWSR demonstrated the soil loss estimators PTMApp and the MPCA Pollution Load Estimator; Policy Committee meeting, 02/12/2025; approved items from the last meeting; discussed partnering with the “Keep it Clean” effort and using SHRWBIF on invasive species in lakes. Next Steering Committee along with an Advisory Committee will be scheduled in April.
- WRM1W1P: next Steering Committee meeting, March 4, 2025, and Policy Committee meeting, March 24, 2025.

Other:

ESMC Tree Initiative: together with the planning group will be applying for ENRTF funding to support this initiative. West Polk SWCD would be the grant applicant and grant manager if awarded. Planning group consists of the University of Minnesota, Department of Design, University of Minnesota-Crookston, Agriculture and Natural Resource Department, NW RSDP, and the Crookston Community Housing and EDA.

Submitted/to be submitted: NWRSDP Idea Brief (student support), Red Lake Electric Trust grant application (\$500) and the American Crystal Sugar Company grant request (\$5,000) on behalf of the Agassiz Audubon Center to elevate public awareness of local

wildlife (and related "nature tourism" opportunities) in NW Minnesota by the installation of a webcam(s). If awarded, the district would be the grant manager.

The first SWCD/NRCS Communication Pathway meeting for the northern SWCDs and the NRCS Roseau and Crookston Teams will be April 2nd, 2025, at the McIntosh Community Center.

Pollinator Ambassadors Training through the University of Minnesota

Polk County Commissioner Reese, West Central Region Water District

Motion to approve cost share on the cost of water testing kits through the Pennington SWCD annual well water testing clinic for participants from Polk County.

Example: Nitrates and Bacteria Kit: Total \$30. SWCD provides \$15, the other \$15 from the landowner

Arsenic: Total \$30. SWCD provides \$5, the other \$25 from the landowner.

{Motion #31-2025} Motion by Sorenson and seconded by Pester to approve cost share on the cost of water testing kits.

Affirmative: Pester, Sorenson and Peterson

Opposed: None

Motion: Pass

Habermehl

Technician Habermehl Report 02/20/2025

WCA:

- RLWD permits (4, *1 WCA), Tax Forfeiture (0)
- WCA 201 training 02/19/2025.
- Crookston Industrial Park 24-05 (Andover 01): Joint Application received 10/14/2024. NOA issued 10/28/2024. NOD issued 12/11/2024.

CCCS/1W1P:

- well inquiries (5 in process).
- Eng. training TRF 03/09/2025.
- Crookston 18, 24 Michaelson (surveyed/landowner conversation 10/09/2024)- designs received/sent to client 12/11/2024 (met FO 02/05).
- Andover 05 Samuelson (I&E, surveyed)
- Crookston 27 Gasper (I&E, surveyed)
- Bygland 01 Sorenson (I&E, surveyed 11/06/2024)
- Gentilly 14 Langlois (I&E, surveyed)
- Angus 15 Judovsky (I&E, status check).
- Andover 14, 15, 22 Perry (FO 09/13, contacted DNR, onsite contractor + engineer 11/13/2024) -S15 SWI install 11/18/2024- NRCS/client meeting 12/17/2024.
- Fisher 27, 34, 35 Faugstad (contractor?)
- Fanny 04 Radi (DNR PW permit required), Eng. request sent 12/12/2024 Gentilly 05 sinkhole
- Kertsonville 27 (meet again w/Eng.)

Other:

volunteer climatology packets (sent), MN DNR records assist (in progress), CREP III (BWSR training 02/20), RIM inquiries, RRVCSA / Area meetings upcoming, etc.

Torkelson

Technician Report 2/20/2025

Tree Program:

- 19 machine plantings in the works so far
 - Fourteen finalized with deposit paid
- 56 hand plant orders so far - \$13,120.67 gross sales so far

Outreach/Other:

- Steve Kenyon grazing workshop (Hubbard SWCD) 2/12
- Meeting with Gabe Okins on 2/21 WEPS, RUSLE2, training

NRCS DISTRICT CONSERVATIONIST'S REPORT

February 2025 District Conservationist Report

EQIP:

- Fiscal year 2025 Sign Up #1
 - 29 applications ranked
 - 10 applications preapproved (34%)
 - 5 funded via EQIP-CIC
 - 4 funded via RCPPS #2888 (Red Lake Watershed)
 - 1 funded via General Farm Bill Funds
 - Funded practices include two tree plantings, several pollinator plots, forage seeding, cover crop, reduced tillage, nutrient management, pest management, and several grade stabilizations.

CSP:

- All renewal applications funded
- General sign up is closed for FY25
 - 5 applications in Crookston
 - Rank & assessment date March 21st, 2025

CRP:

- West Polk now included for CREP eligibility; staff awaits direction regarding workflow with partners.
- No talk of CRP signs up, likely awaiting a new farm bill.

Misc:

- Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) related funds are currently on pause, it is unclear if they will be released in the future or not, because of this MN NRCS has paused obligation of applications preapproved for IRA funding. Any questions regarding IRA related applications and contracts should be directed to Luke Klawitter at Luke.Klawitter@usda.gov

Submitted by,
Zach Anderson
District Conservationist
Crookston Field Office

Other:

Farm Bill Biologist II
Taylor Leback

CRP/SWCD:

- CRP Outreach in Thief River Watershed
- Status Review

Meetings/Trainings:

- January 16th – 19th Minnesota Pheasants Forever State Convention
- January 29th Successful Outreach Training
- Prescribed Fire Training Online

Presentation:

- January 24th 'Ring-Neck Pheasants: Facts and Life History' at Bemidji's Veterans Home

Upcoming:

- February 20th – CREP Training III
- On Vacation February 15th – March 2nd

CORRESPONDENCE:

Publications:

Minnesota Conservation Volunteer

Sand Hill Watershed District

Board of Water and Soil Resources

Wild Rice Watershed District

Minnesota Counties Intergovernmental Trust

The Crookston Times

Polk County Newsletter

Crookston Watch

The next meeting was scheduled for March 20th, 2025, at 8:00 am.

With no further business, Vice Chair Peterson adjourned the meeting at 10:00 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Secretary

EM\nb