



### Minutes from the September 18, 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 7:37 a.m.*

**Members Present:** Chair: Bruce Juntunen  
Vice Chair: Tom Schulz (*via teams*)  
Secretary: Ken Berg

**Members Absent:** Treasurer: Brett Dailey  
Public Relations: Jerry Kern

**Others Present:** BWSR BC: Pete Waller  
NRCS District Conservationist: Ivan Reinke  
District Manager: Darren Newville  
Assistant District Manager: Anne Oldakowski  
Administrative Secretary: Chantal Tougas

**Adopt Agenda:** Motion made by Ken Berg, second by Bruce Juntunen to adopt the agenda as presented. Opposed: none, motion carried.

**Approve Board Meeting Minutes:** Motion made by Ken Berg, second by Bruce Juntunen to approve last month's Board Meeting Minutes. Opposed: none, motion carried.

**Treasurer's Report:** Motion made by Ken Berg, second by Bruce Juntunen to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented. Opposed: none, motion carried. It was noted that one of the CD's on the treasurer's report was maturing. Motion made by Ken Berg, second by Bruce Juntunen to approve renewing the CD for 12 months @ 5%. Opposed: none, motion carried. After the meeting Chantal confirmed this, made the renewal, and advised the board as such.

**Bills Paid and Bills Payable:** Motion made by Ken Berg, second by Bruce Juntunen to approve the Bills Paid and Bills Payable as presented. Opposed: none, motion carried.

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Approved 10/16/2023



## COST SHARE

### **LCCMR Cost Share P23-2944:**

04-2023; Gilligan, Ryan; Authorization to approve payment for a forest stewardship plan, with a total cost of \$993.00, cost share payment not to exceed \$744.75 or 75%, whichever is less in Bullard Township, section 7. (77 acres, written by Anne). Motion made by Ken Berg, second by Bruce Juntunen to approve. Opposed: none, motion carried.

05-2023; Anderson, Roger; Authorization to approve payment for a forest stewardship plan, with a total cost of \$1,861.00, cost share payment not to exceed \$1,395.75 or 75%, whichever is less in Bullard Township, section 17. (160 acres, written by consultant). Motion made by Ken Berg, second by Bruce Juntunen to approve. Opposed: none, motion carried.

**County Commissioner's Report:** none, not present.

**District Manager's Report:** Presented by Darren Newville.

**NRCS District Conservationist's Report:** Presented by Ivan Reinke

- EQIP – New applications coming in. Working on putting conservation plans together. October 6, 2023 is the deadline for signups.
- CSP – Certification of practices installed continues. Starting to review contracts for 2023 payments. Payments will start after October 1, 2023.
- Payments are being made to EQIP and RCPP.
- Attended the MN WC Area Forestry meeting in New York Mills. Also attended the Dung Beetle & Pasture Management workshops.
- Area NE meeting will be held September 19-20, 2023, in Grand Rapids.

**Other Agency Reports:** Pete Waller @ BWSR – Pete talked about the legislative changes to the State Cost Share program now the Conservation Contracts Program that will start with FY24 grants. These changes give the SWCD more flexibility in the use of the funds.

**Forestry Update:** Last meeting was in Grand Rapids. Ryan from the Forestry Association gave a presentation. His specialty is remote sensing. The next meeting is in November. An increase in dues will be the topic of discussion.

**TSA 8 Report:** Grant agreement was signed. Funds should be coming in soon.

**Meetings/Trainings:** Motion made by Ken Berg, second by Bruce Juntunen to approve those wanting to attend the Area VIII tour and meeting. Opposed: none, motion carried. Motion made by Ken Berg, second by Bruce Juntunen to approve those wanting to attend BWSR Academy. Opposed: none, motion carried.

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**Public Comments:** A landowner that has been applying for projects with NRCS has complained that SWCD Supervisors are getting special treatment with Cost Share dollars. Staff from NRCS and the SWCD met with the individual and his wife and explained the NRCS ranking and scoring process. He had a better understanding of how there is no room for favoritism by NRCS because of this process.

**Meeting Adjourned:** Motion made by Ken Berg, second by Bruce Juntunen. Opposed: none, motion carried. Adjourned at 8:28 a.m.

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**District Managers Report**  
**September 2023**  
**Submitted by Darren Newville**

- **Tree Program** – Staff continue to meet with landowners to provide technical assistance with potential projects for next year. Tanner will begin placing our nursery orders in the next couple of weeks.
- **Forest Stewardship Planning:** Anne completed one plan and is working on 2 more. The West Central Landscape Committee met in New York Mills on August 22. Anne assisted with all the planning and logistics for that meeting. Anne attended the Crow Wing Watershed Forest Landscape Stewardship Plan meeting on August 10<sup>th</sup> and provided additional written input for that plan.
- **Drill Rental/Custom Seeding/Seed Sales** – The drill was rented to 3 landowners in August. Tanner is working with landowners to get seed for fall seeding. There have been 9 orders placed. He has two custom seeding jobs scheduled for this fall.
- **RIM/CREP/CRP** – Staff continue working on the CRP contribution agreement writing plans, doing site inspections, and certifying projects. They are also working with landowners on RIM applications at the various stages of the process and doing the required site inspections on easements that need them.
- **MAWQCP** – Staff continue to work with producers on the MAWQCP assessment, certifications, endorsements, and cost-share. Jim has also been working to complete the reviews of previously certified farms as required.
- **MDA NFMP/NMI Project** –Staff assisted MDA with the Perham LAT meeting held on August 20<sup>th</sup>. Nathan and I attended the meeting.
- **AgBMP Loan Program** – Both offices continue to take calls, answer questions, and aid landowners requesting information or loans. Liz worked with the MDA staff on some larger loan applications in Otter Tail County.
- **Irrigation RCPP** – We continue to work with the partners on this project. We also continue to work with MDA and NRCS to refine the reporting. Some of the projects are getting installed and we will be processing the payments soon.
- **Red Eye Watershed** –The TAC met on August 8<sup>th</sup>. The watershed partners provided project updates and discussed the need for a WBIF grant extension. The extension will provide additional time for landowners to complete projects. BWSR informed the watershed partners that FY 25 WBIF funds will increase to \$1,112,800. This is \$406,800 more than our last grant. The increase in funding will help support staff capacity and allow us to complete more projects. Next TAC meeting is Nov 14<sup>th</sup>.
- **SWAG** (Surface Water Assessment Grant) Don and Alyson have completed this year's 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.

- **Oak/Bluff Creek Sub-Watershed** – Staff created and mailed a flier for the upcoming Grazing School that offered a scholarship to producers within those sub-watersheds. Two producers have registered for those scholarships. Staff also mailed an additional targeted letter on the available funding for landowners with parcels within the sub-watershed.
- **Red Eye Culvert Inventory** - Staff have been conducting trial runs of the culvert inventorying in North Germany township. Tanner and Alyson will be doing more field inventorying work in late September when field work slows down. Alyson continues doing the remote mapping portion from the office.
- **LCCMR Tree Planting Pilot Program** Project partners are in the process of sending outreach letters to landowners. Landowner response for tree planting has been limited as the program is restrictive. The program also provides opportunities for landowners to enroll into SFIA and RIM. Don continues to hold bi-monthly calls with BWSR Forester and is providing project updates to partners. The next Local Forestry Committee meeting will be held on October 26<sup>th</sup>.
- **Otter Tail River Watershed** – The TAC met on August 7<sup>th</sup>. The planning grant has been completed and the watershed partners have begun to encumber implementation funds for priority projects. The TAC also reviewed and discussed the possibility of developing a GIS tool to identify and manage impervious surfaces around priority lakes. The tool would help reduce runoff and phosphorus loading to surface waters. The group was informed by BWSR that FY 25 WBIF funding will increase to \$1,507,000. This is approximately \$242,000 more than our last grant. BWSR expects the trend for increased WBIF grant funds to continue. Staff also developed and mailed outreach letters to landowners in the Paul Lake watershed. The letter promotes best management practices to improve priority water and land resources. The next TAC meeting is scheduled for November 6<sup>th</sup>.
- **Crow Wing Watershed** – A TAC meeting was held on August 2<sup>nd</sup>. The watershed partners received an update on the two public kickoff meetings that were held in July, heard presentations from White Earth Nation, DNR, MDH, and MDA. The partners also discussed issue statements and visioning. The TAC will continue to work on prioritizing planning regions, brainstorming emerging issues and visioning over the next couple of months. The next TAC Meeting is scheduled for Sept 6<sup>th</sup>.

A Citizen's Advisory Committee met on August 29<sup>th</sup>. The CAC members shared information about themselves and what they think is important in the Crow Wing Watershed. The CAC learned about the 1W1P planning process and spent time brainstorming issues and organized the issues into planning themes. The CAC issues will be shared with the TAC members at their September meeting.

- **Long Prairie Watershed** – The Steering Committee met on August 31<sup>st</sup>. The implementation tracking tool has been completed and is like the one we developed for the Otter Tail River 1W1P. The planning grant has been completed and the group is now encumbering implementation funds for priority projects in the watershed. Next meeting is October 6<sup>th</sup>.
- **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. Tanner and Pete have stepped in to assist as Nathan and Nicole are moving on to other positions. They have been pulling the rain gauges the past few weeks and should be wrapped up by the end of this week.
- **Shoreland Program** – Staff conducted 30 site visits in August and are working on designs. A few of the sites have been sent over to the joint engineering staff to look at. They have also conducted site inspections on 16 previous projects. Liz presented to the Stuart Lake Association which has led to 7 site visits. Liz and Pete have also been working with the OTC COLA to plan a shoreland project tour for September 12. From what I have heard there are about 50 people registered to attend. I was the guest speaker at the Aug. OTC COLA meeting. There were about 30 people in attendance.
- **Feedlots** – Mitch has completed the required number of feedlot inspections for 2023. He will still need to enter the data into the MPCA online program (TEMPO).
- **County Ag Inspector** – Staff are responding to complaints about weeds. There were a few formal notices sent to landowners. Liz is working on contracting an herbicide treatment for one of those sites due to no response from the landowner. The County will assess the costs to the landowner for that treatment.
- **Engineering Assistance** – Our joint engineering staff continue to help support us with projects needing engineering assistance.
- **Extension Educator Position** – I have had several emails back and forth with Sarah Chur. There is a new and improved draft position description and announcement. I do not have any specifics on when the announcement will be published again, but I am hoping it will be soon.
- **Education and Outreach** – Staff have started planning the Wadena SWCD Conservation Days. Sessions will be held in the first week of October. We conducted the September 11<sup>th</sup> tour for the EOT and WOT SWCD Boards, the County Board, and State Legislators. It was a nice day with a great turnout. Everyone who attended seemed to be very engaged and interested in what we are working on. Kristi continues to work with 3Plains on the new Wadena SWCD website and completing the applications for the Conservation Cooperator Awards for each SWCD.

- **Otter Tail Dam Modifications:** The Big Pine Lake dam project is completed. The contractor will be moving to the Rush Lake dam next. I hope the construction starts on that soon.
- **Administration** – Staff continue to do the day-to-day tasks needed to keep the SWCDs running smoothly. Chantal and Kristi continue to work on the process of tracking all our grants and agreement financial information. Kristi is inputting project information into eLINK. Chantal, Anne, & I did a quick review of every grant and where we are with each of them. We met with the Otter Tail County Budget Committee to review our 2024 budget request.
- **Training and Meetings** – Staff continue to take training courses as needed to develop their JAA. Training attended includes the following topics: Conservation Planner Basic Training, Prescribed Fire, Leadership, Soil Health, & the CLC field day.
- **Staffing** – The Personnel Committee conducted interviews on Friday, September 15<sup>th</sup> for the position in Wadena.