

AITKIN COUNTY SWCD  
307 2<sup>ND</sup> STREET NW, ROOM #216  
AITKIN, MN 56431

Minutes of the Aitkin County Soil & Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors meeting held on Tuesday, February 17, 2026 at the Aitkin County Government Center, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Training Room. Meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. Pledge of Allegiance was said.

Those present were:

Those absent were:

Francis Dierickx, Chair  
Tom Fasteland, Vice Chair  
Bob Janzen, Treasurer  
Franklin Turnock, Secretary  
Dan Gravley, Reporter  
Janet Smude, District Manager  
Lori Nelson, District Secretary

Welcome Brett Arne, MN BWSR Board Conservationist.

Introductions were made.

Additions to the agenda

- Sustainable Farming meeting
- Salo Twp. Beaver Control
- No-Till Drill
- MACDE dues

A motion was made by Dan Gravley and seconded by Bob Janzen to approve the agenda with additions. Approved unanimously.

A motion was made by Frank Turnock and seconded by Tom Fasteland to approve the January 27, 2026 minutes.

Corrections to be made under Election of Officers.

A motion was made by Dan Gravley and seconded by Bob Janzen to nominate Tom Fasteland as Vice Chair. Approved unanimously.

A motion was made by Frank Turnock and seconded by Tom Fasteland to nominate Bob Janzen as Treasurer. Approved unanimously.

A motion was made by Tom Fasteland and seconded by Bob Janzen to nominate Frank Turnock as Secretary. Approved unanimously.

A motion was made by Tom Fasteland and seconded by Dan Gravley to nominate Dan Gravley as Reporter. Approved unanimously.

A motion was made by Dan Gravley and seconded by Tom Fasteland to approve the corrected January 27, 2026 minutes. Approved unanimously.

#### TREASURERS REPORT/DECEMBER 2025

A motion was made by Tom Fasteland and seconded by Bob Janzen accept the amended December 2025 financial statement with audit adjustments and sales tax payable. Approved unanimously.

#### CHECKS WRITTEN

A motion was made by Dan Gravley and seconded by Bob Janzen to approve the checks written. Approved unanimously.

#### AIS DISCUSSION-REVISED AGREEMENT

A motion was made by Tom Fasteland and seconded by Dan Gravley to approve the revised AIS agreement adding \$50 per diem to committee members. Approved unanimously.

#### 2026 AREA III DUES

A motion was made by Frank Turnock and seconded by Bob Janzen to approve payment of \$650 for the 2026 Area III dues. Approved unanimously.

#### NACD DUES

A motion was made by Dan Gravley and seconded by Tom Fasteland to approve payment of \$101 for NACD dues. Approved unanimously.

#### PETERSON COMPANY/2025 AUDIT AGREEMENT

A motion was made by Tom Fasteland and seconded by Dan Gravley to approve Peterson Company 2025 Audit agreement (\$6900 plus \$650 for Brainerd 1W1P). Approved unanimously.

#### BILLS OVER \$3000

#### MORRISON SWCD, BRD 1W1P/\$23318.28

A motion was made by Frank Turnock and seconded by Dan Gravley to approve payment of \$23318.28 to Morrison SWCD. Approved unanimously.

#### TODD SWCD, BRD 1W1P/\$3187.50

A motion was made by Dan Gravley and seconded by Tom Fasteland to approve payment of \$3187.50 to Todd SWCD. Approved unanimously.

#### SUSTAINABLE FARMING MEETING

Frank Turnock attended the Sustainable Farming meeting at the Aitkin Public Library on February 8, 2026. A motion was made by Tom Fasteland and seconded by Bob Janzen to approve Frank Turnock putting this meeting on his voucher. Approved unanimously.

A motion was made by Dan Gravley and seconded by Tom Fasteland to approve payment of \$240 dues to Sustainable Farming. Approved unanimously.

#### PHOTO CONTEST

Photos were submitted to Aitkin SWCD. The SWCD Board received photo packets to vote on. Prizes will be plaques for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> place and pictures will be featured on the website.

#### OUTREACH PLANNING

The staff had a meeting re: ideas for outreach. Veronica went through ideas with the SWCD Board that staff came up with. Sam & Veronica are putting together an upcoming workshop Ag & Forestry.

#### SALO TWP BEAVER CONTROL PROJECT/FRANK & SAM

Discussion of a possible project. Salo Township will send a letter to Aitkin SWCD and Aitkin County Hwy. Dept. to ask for help with the project.

## NO TILL DRILL REPORT

The No-Till Drill was listed for sale \$15,000. MN Native Landscapes offered \$10,000-- can't go higher than \$10,000 and was communicated to MN Native Landscapes that they will need to pick the drill up. Another person asked about it but didn't hear back from them.

A motion was made by Tom Fasteland and seconded by Bob Janzen to accept the offer of \$10,000 from MN Native Landscapes for the no-till drill. Approved unanimously.

A motion was made by Tom Fasteland and seconded by Frank Turnock to approve purchase of a new NoTill Drill from Great Plains, \$42,300. Approved unanimously.

## 2026 LEGISLATIVE EVENT

### SWCD SUPERVISOR ORIENTATION REFRESHER TRAINING

The SWCD Supervisor Orientation Refresher Training will be held on March 27, 2026 in Detroit Lakes.

Brett Arne, BWSR Board Conservationist offered to give training over the next few SWCD Board meetings.

### SNAKE RIVER REPORT-DAN

No report.

### DISTRICT MANAGERS REPORT

- 1W1P updates
- Big Sandy Watershed update
- CCFFC Grant update
- Potential cost-share projects planned for 2026, meeting with staff to go over
- Annual Worker's Comp Report for MCIT
- 2025 Payroll Audit MCIT
- Wage & Benefit Survey MACDE

- VEBA balances for 2025 contributions
- Impala has been determined unsafe to drive. Discussion with staff to try and get by with three vehicles.

## SENIOR TECHNICIAN REPORT-SAM

- Riparian buffer update
- Culvert Inventory, Morrison Twp. is completed and will hopefully be able to give it to them at their next meeting.
- Forestry update, continue to work on Forest Stewardship Plans, attended a Forestry Health Clinic in Grand Rapids on February 3, 2026, answered SFIA questions for several landowners and realtors and working on planning a Forestry/Agriculture workshop with Veronica.

## SOIL HEALTH SPECIALIST/OUTREACH SPECIALIST REPORT-VERONICA

### **Soil Health**

#### Outreach

- Webinars on soil health and native plantings
- Writing articles on native plants and benefits to the soil
- Ag/Forestry workshop with Sam

#### Projects

- Talked with landowner about other options if we don't have a drill
- Listed No Till drill on facebook

#### County Ag Inspector

- Attended trainings to further my learning on invasive weeds
- Attended in-person training
- Beginning to plan a training for townships regarding noxious weeds

### **Outreach**

- Rivers & Lakes Fair, continue to plan for 2026
- Created a mailing list of lakeshore owners around Long Lake Conservation Center to invite to the Rivers & Lakes Fair. Postcards will be sent out.

## PROJECT COORDINATOR-BRIAN

- CCFFC reporting, EAB workshop
- CPL Big Pine Lake Fish Passage, waiting for engineers (done but waiting on approval)/DNR Permit
- Keep It Clean reporting
- 2026 Soil Health Grant need to complete the work plan
- Updating SWCD equipment inventory of all SWCD equipment including office equipment
- Diversion channel ready to send landowners letters for potential projects, starting with the top 5
- Snake River areas of concern found on GIS
- Green Corp application, possible intern from Green Corp
- Outreach-AIS page for kids, workshop promoting
- Training webinars and online workshops
- Vehicle maintenance-all vehicles are up-to-date on service (minus the Impala).

## AIS REPORT-BRIAN

- 2026 AIS budget
- Penmac rates will stay the same for 2026, discussed with Penmac the needs for inspectors Level 1 & Level 2
- Lynn Pribbenow will be returning as the lead inspector for 2026 to supervise inspectors
- DNR Program Plan Agreement completed and sent to DNR
- Decontamination units-using one this season, getting info on value and getting quotes for the other two units.
- AIS Inspection equipment inventory
- AIS Committee-New committee structure. Would like to schedule a March meeting
- AIS Education Grants-Subcommittee meeting in March to make determinations on grant allocations
- Training-AIS workshop and webinars

## WATERSHED MGMT/WETLAND SPECIALIST REPORT-ELLIE

### **Shorelines**

- Discussed watershed plans and projected budget/projects for 2026 with SWCD staff

- Followed up with Defenbaugh on Mille Lacs after our last Board meeting letting them know they were approved.
- Morrison culvert for a visit/confirmation with the township
- Site visits on calendar for April 3

## **Wetlands**

- TEP meeting on January 28, discussed three on-going projects

## **Watersheds/Outreach**

- Rivers & Lakes Fair Planning-grant submission, potential booths and food vendor
- Staff outreach meeting where we discussed how we can improve our outreach
- Began planning Lake Association Summit who to invite, timeline and draft flier location date and time
- SWMR (Surface Water Monitoring Request) kickoff meeting to learn more about monitoring and site requests with the MPCA
- Well Screening Clinic near Rice Lake

## **Other**

- Trainings
  - Stearns County Shoreland Workshop
  - Water Stewards monthly check in. This month's focus was watersheds.
  - Lunch time trainings like stream stabilization, local implementors, and pollinators

## **MN BWSR BOARD CONSERVATIONIST REPORT-BRETT**

- Reporting
- Soil Health Delivery Grant
- CWF Grant open until March 25<sup>th</sup>

## **TSA 3 REPORT-TOM**

The TSA meeting was held on January 28, 2026.

- Officers elected
- List of projects being worked on (7 pending Aitkin County)
- Discussion on buying a drone

- Technical Service Training Day (April 21) at Cloquet Forestry Center
- Next meeting is March 26, 2026

## MACDE DUES

A motion was made by Dan Gravley and seconded by Frank Turnock to pay MACDE dues for each employee (\$25 each). Approved unanimously.

Sam discussed Rum River and note taking lead AI and how to proceed with that.

The next SWCD Board of Supervisors meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 17, 2026 at the Aitkin County Government Center, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor at 9:00 a.m.

A motion was made by Dan Gravley and seconded by Bob Janzen to adjourn at 11:05 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Frank Turnock  
Secretary