

AITKIN COUNTY SWCD
307 2nd STREET NW, ROOM #216
AITKIN, MN 56431

Minutes of the Aitkin County Soil & Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors meeting held on Tuesday, September 16, 2025 at the McGregor Community Center. Meeting was called to order by Francis Dierickx, Vice Chair at 9:00 a.m. Pledge of Allegiance was said.

Those present were:

Those absent were:

Dan Gravley, Chair
Francis Dierickx, Vice Chair
Bob Janzen, Treasurer
Frank Turnock, Secretary
Tom Fasteland, Reporter
Janet Smude, District Manager
Lori Nelson, District Secretary
Sam Seybold, Senior Technician
Veronica Lundquist, Soil Health Specialist/Outreach Specialist
Brian Roulet, Project Coordinator
Ellie Joing, Watershed Mgmt./Wetland Specialist
Tom Gervais, NRCS District Conservationist
Laura Kipf, Pheasants Forever Farm Bill Biologist

Additions to the agenda

-Per diem/mileage
-Cost-Share Amendment/John King

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

A motion was made by Tom Fasteland and seconded by Frank Turnock to approve the August 20, 2025 minutes. Approved unanimously.

A motion was made by Frank Turnock and seconded by Bob Janzen to accept the August financial statement. Approved unanimously.

Dan Gravley arrived.

CHECKS WRITTEN

A motion was made by Dan Gravley and seconded by Frank Turnock to approve checks written. Approved unanimously.

PAID FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE ACT

Discussion. Benefit Innovations works with Met Life and Met Life only works with those that have 30+ employees. Janet has reached out to another company but hasn't heard anything from them.

AREA III MASWCD FALL MEETING

The Area III MASWCD Fall meeting and tour was held Monday, September 8, 2025. Discussion on meeting and tour. Well attended-good meeting and tour.

PROJECT PROPOSAL AMENDMENT, \$8391.25/WEINAND, LAKE MINNEWAWA, BIG SANDY 319

A motion was made by Frank Turnock and seconded by Dan Gravley to approve a cost-share amendment from \$5591.25 to \$8391.25 for Weinand, Lake Minnewawa. Approved unanimously.

PROJECT PROPOSAL AMENDMENT/KING, LONE LAKE, MISS BRD 1W1P

The project end date is October 1, 2025 and would like to change the end date to June 30, 2026.

A motion was made by Dan Gravley and seconded by Tom Fasteland to approve a cost-share amendment for the King/Lone Lake project end date June 30, 2026. Approved unanimously.

BILLS OVER \$3000

TODD SWCD, BRD 1W1P/\$3054.35

A motion was made by Tom Fasteland and seconded by Dan Gravley to approve payment to Todd SWCD in the amount of \$3054.35. Approved unanimously.

TODD SWCD, BRD 1W1P/\$5062.93

A motion was made by Dan Gravley and seconded by Tom Fasteland to approve payment to Todd SWCD in the amount of \$5062.93. Approved unanimously.

TODD SWCD, BRD 1W1P/\$4884.00

A motion was made by Frank Turnock and seconded by Dan Gravley to approve payment to Todd SWCD in the amount of \$4884.00. Approved unanimously.

PER DIEM/MILEAGE

Discussion re: per diem and mileage.

One per diem per day even if more than one meeting in a day. Mileage is covered.

CONSERVATION OF THE YEAR AWARD

Discussion re: Conservation of the Year Award.

Frank suggested Al & Carmen Rinta, Round Lake, north of Tamarack for a MASWCD Conservation of the Year Award and then Big Sandy Lake Watershed if there is a category for an award. The application period for the MASWCD applications for awards is closed for this year. Veronica will look into and see if applications can still be submitted.

A motion was made by Frank Turnock and seconded by Bob Janzen to nominate Al & Carmen Rinta for a MASWCD award and then Big Sandy Lake Association if there is an award they fit under. If too late this year mark on calendar for next July to look into. Approved unanimously.

SNAKE RIVER REPORT-Dan

No report.

DISTRICT MANAGER REPORT-Janet

- 1W1P updates (Miss Brd. & Miss GR)
- Big Sandy Watershed
- Gathering audit information
- 2026 Health Insurance
- Annual Volunteer Lunch

- Area III Fall meeting
- Water Planning Task Force Fall Tour

SENIOR TECHNICIAN REPORT-Sam

- Buffer update
- Culvert Inventory/Nordland Twp.
- Soil Health Technical Assistance
- Forestry site visits
- Forest Management Plans
- Hill City Buckthorn Project
- Miss GR planning meeting
- Rum Watershed meeting
- No Till Drill

SOIL HEALTH SPECIALIST/OUTREACH SPECIALIST-Veronica

- Soil Health Peer Group, Field Day at Amundson Farm
- Ag Learn
- Applicator License
- Water Planning Tour

PROJECTS

- Potential project for a landowner, wants to wait until next year

COUNTY AG INSPECTOR

- Officially took over Ag Inspector 9/1/25. Talked with landowners who have invasive species on their property about management and how to move forward. Completed the County Ag Inspector Grant for next growing season.

OUTREACH

- Rivers & Lakes Fair, wrap up meeting and will start planning 2026 in October.

OTHER

- SWCD newsletter was sent out in September
- Wrote Knotweed article

- Worked on footage for Bob Karls, shoreline project podcast, Round Lake footage and diversion channel footage
- Wrote an AIS article about Purple Loosestrife
- Facebook posts, website updates and misc. training

PROJECT COORDINATOR-Brian

- AIS Watercraft Inspections-2025 season is completed, end of season picnic was held.
- Decontamination units-options for next season and quotes to present to the Committee at the next AIS meeting. Final inspection numbers for the next AIS meeting as well as the inspector surveys that were handed out.
- Drone, continuing to study for drone license and finished the diversion channel shore inventory
- Grants (AIS education grants, Releaf, CPL, CCFFC, etc.)
- Outreach (Photo contest, Volunteer Lunch)
- Training (Governance & Leadership Summit, Forestry meetings and online webinars).

WATERSHED MANAGEMENT/WETLAND SPECIALIST-Ellie

- Shoreline Visits
- Wetlands (TEP meeting, WCA Training 9/8-9/12/25 in Baxter, Restoration Orders).
- Rivers & Lakes Fair wrap up meeting, Volunteer Lunch, Mille Lacs Watershed Group meeting, Water monitoring samples picked up.

OTHER

- Trainings

NRCS REPORT

- 16 conservation practices were certified as complete in the past month.
- 2026 Conservation Stewardship Program application deadline is October 31, 2025. Currently have only 4 applications.

FARM BILL BIOLOGIST REPORT

- Easement update
- Pheasants Forever State meeting

- Met with DNR to set up a camera on Pheasant Forever land in Kanabec County
- MNL Open House
- ArcGis/Word/Excel outreach
- HerUpland presentations 10/17-10/18/25

TSA 3 REPORT-Tom

No report.

The Forestry Association purchased an Owl Meeting video camera—will be stored at the Aitkin County SWCD and can be used if needed.

Discussion re: speakers etc. for Aitkin County SWCD. A motion was made by Dan Gravley and seconded by Frank Turnock to look into items and prices. Approved unanimously.

The next Aitkin County SWCD Board of Supervisors meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 21, 2025 at 9:00 a.m. at the Aitkin County Government Center, 3rd Floor.

A motion was made by Tom Fasteland and seconded by Dan Gravley to adjourn. Approved unanimously.

Tour of projects (Lake Minnewawa Rain Garden, Big Sandy Shoreline Revegetation Project and Shamrock Township Runoff Management Project) and lunch to follow.

Respectfully submitted,

Franklin Turnock
Secretary