

# Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts

Board Meeting Minutes

April 18, 2000

St. Paul, Minnesota

Attending: President Owen Knutson, Vice President Richard Zupp, Secretary/Treasurer & Area IV Director Scott Hoese, Area I Director Carol Berg, Area II Director Carl Annalora, Area III Director Bob Hoefert, Area V Director Arland Moger, Area VI Director Curt Russell, Area VII Director Clarence Anderson, LeAnn Buck (MASWCD Staff), Sheila Vanney (MASWCD Staff); Advisors: Wayne Zellmer, BWSR; Wayne Edgerton, DNR. Others in attendance: JoAnn Wegman, Olmsted SWCD Supervisor, Mindy Swigert, U of M Extension Service.

Absent: MACDE and NRCS.

1. **Call to order and Pledge of Allegiance** - President Knutson called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. and led the group in the Pledge Of Allegiance.
2. **Approval of Agenda & Minutes**- Hoese moved to approve the agenda. Russell seconded. Motion passed. Hoese moved to approve February and March minutes. Berg seconded. Knutson noted a change to the February minutes. Moger should be added to the list of Minnesota representatives in attendance at the NACD Annual Convention in Colorado Springs, CO. Motion to approve minutes passed with that correction.
3. **Executive Director's Report** - LeAnn Buck
  - a. Buck explained that she will be leaving the board meeting after her report to attend a meeting with Bill Horvath, NACD and other state association executive directors. The meeting will be about Partners for Wildlife grants with US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). NACD has signed an MOU with USFWS that works to establish a framework for cooperation between districts and USFWS
  - b. Buck gave an update on the MASWCD legislative agenda. CREP is currently proposed below the Governor's recommendations in both the House and the Senate. The House does not include administrative dollars for CREP, while the Governor's recommendation does, and the Senate is below the Governor's recommendation. Buck said Senate File 83 was signed into law by the Governor. This bill addressed the soil science licensure exemption, among other wetland concerns. Taxes and feedlots will likely be big issues during the next legislative session.
  - c. Buck reviewed the Upper Mississippi River Basin Conservation Bill. The bill has been proposed by Wisconsin Congressman Ron Kind. It represents a federal push to make management of the basin a priority.
  - d. Buck went over the work that she and Mindy Swigert, U of M Extension Service, have been doing with the Washington DC Leadership Trip. Swigert distributed a draft brochure outlining the agenda for the trip. Annalora moved, Moger seconded, to approve the format and move forward with the program as outlined in the draft brochure. Motion passed.Buck then left the meeting.
4. **Vice President's Report** - Richard Zupp
  - a. Zupp reported that he may be testifying before a U.S. House Committee panel discussion in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Zupp would testify on conservation incentive payments for the 2002 Farm Bill.
  - b. A call for resolutions will be sent out in the near future. Zupp asked all Area Directors to clarify during their resolution discussions at Area meetings that resolutions should state an action required by MASWCD. He also went over the August 25, 1998 board decision that established the resolution committee recommendation listing on all resolutions. A resolution up for vote at the 1999 convention to repeal the resolution committee recommendation from resolutions failed. The board indicated unanimous support for the recommendation being listed on resolutions. Hoefert added that this does not hinder supervisors developing their own opinions

about resolutions. In addition, supervisors can lobby other district (supervisors) for resolutions they feel are important.

**5. President's Report - Owen Knutson**

- a. Knutson briefed the board on his testimony before the U.S. House Ag Subcommittee panel on March 31, 2000 in Mankato. He felt it went well.
- b. Al Kean, BWSR, Bill Hunt, NRCS, Zupp and Knutson all attended the NACD Legislative Conference in Washington DC, March 19-22, 2000. Knutson reported that he made a presentation there on Minnesota's approach to state and national lobbying efforts. The presentation was one of four made by state representatives on their programs. While in DC, the Minnesota delegation visited all 10 Minnesota Congressmen.
- c. Knutson named Zupp as the MASWCD representative to the NRCS State Technical Committee - Conservation Tillage subcommittee.

**6. Finance Report (Action Item) - Scott Hoese**

- a. Hoese gave an update on dues payments not yet received. Six districts have yet to pay. A letter of financial hardship has been received by one of these six. Hoese presented the Finance Committee Recommendation to the board on how to deal with districts experiencing financial hardship. The Finance Committee felt districts should have to justify the hardship beyond a simple claim of financial problems. The board discussed. Annalora suggested the district should also include with the materials they submit, a narrative explaining why they can't or won't pay their dues. Knutson called for a motion approving the recommendation. Annalora and Berg commented that some districts feel the dues are not proportionately fair. Non-payment of dues is not always because of a financial hardship. Annalora said the board needs to address how the dues are calculated and whether it can be changed. Annalora moved that the Finance Committee develop a form letter for districts delinquent in paying dues to include the items 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 of the finance committee recommendation with an explanation for why they have not submitted their dues payment. Hoese seconded. Annalora amended the motion to state that the letter be sent to districts that have not paid and that MASWCD must receive a response 30 days after the letter goes out. Three districts were omitted from the list of recipients. Hoese seconded the amendment. The amended motion passed unanimously. Annalora moved that letters be sent out in accordance with the last motion and that if MASWD does not receive a satisfactory response by the date indicated on the letter, membership with MASWCD will be suspended.
- b. Hoese reported on the 319 Nutrient Management Grant secured by MASWCD. Hoese moved that BWSR shall administer the grant. Annalora seconded. Motion carried.
- c. Hoese presented the Finance Committee report and moved that it be approved subject to audit. Anderson seconded. Motion carried. Hoese reported on the last Finance Committee meeting. They met with MCIT staff to talk about the proposal to include space for MASWCD in the building MCIT is developing.

**7. Old Business - NACD Legislative Fund - Owen Knutson**

Knutson promoted spending \$2,500 out of the MASWCD budget for the NACD legislative fund. The fund is short on money right now. Annalora suggested that staff send a letter to all districts explaining that they can contribute dollars to this fund and that they can provide feedback to their Area Directors, or if they desire to contribute they can send a check directly to MASWCD, which will in turn provide the funds to NACD. Knutson will work with staff on drafting the letter.

**8. MPCA/MDA Dairy Feedlot Inspection MOU - Scott Hoese**

Hoese briefed the board on the MOU. There was a meeting with districts in March which established a core/ad hoc group of districts involved in the discussions. AMC and the county commissioners are opposed to the MOU. The ad hoc group is still working on scheduling a meeting with MPCA and Dept. of Ag. to discuss problems with this top down approach. They will be working to make it more user friendly.

Left for lunch at noon and resumed meeting at 1:05 p.m.

**9. MPCA Integrated Funding System** - Faye Sleeper, Policy & Planning Division, MPCA

Sleeper briefed the board on MPCA's proposal for an Integrated Funding System. MPCA received a grant to look at streamlining the MPCA grant delivery system. They intend to address inefficiencies associated with applicants sending duplicate project proposals to several different grant processes. They also want to make the process less cumbersome, complex and time consuming. MPCA addressed a concern brought up by BWSR staff that if a project was funded by more than one source of funds, would the applicant be required to report to more than one overseeing body? This new system would require only one report. One aim of the integrated funding system is to get better at tying the dollars to the best environmental benefit.

Right now, MPCA is in the process of getting input on the proposed system. May - June they will develop a broader team and invite a district representative to be on the team. MPCA would like to link the funding to assessment and planning activities. They are also considering the concept of "pre-applications" which would mean an applicant submitting a 3-5 page general overview of the proposed project, and then, if approved, a full-blown application. Some funding priorities will be basin specific and some will be statewide. Annalora remarked on his preference for priority and review by region. Sleeper explained that MPCA is considering distributing some 319 block grants to the regional basins (there are 10 basins in the state) and then have the dollars granted out at that level. It is not yet certain whether EPA would allow that.

**10. General Service Grants** - Owen Knutson

Knutson reviewed action taken by the board last year with regard to general service grants. At the June 9, 1999 board meeting in Pipestone, Minnesota, the MASWCD board of directors took the following action:

**It is recommended that one half of the increase in general service funds provided to soil and water conservation districts through the course of the last legislative session be distributed based on the April NRCS Workload Analysis.**

Motion by Carl Annalora to adopt as recommendation to BWSR Board with the understanding that this method pertains to this "round" only and will be revisited in two years. Seconded by Arland Moger. Passed unanimously.

Knutson reminded the board that this recommendation was adopted by the BWSR board at one of their subsequent board meetings. This recommendation will be adhered to again this year for general service fund distribution, and as the motion states, the policy will be reviewed next year.

**11. 2001 Convention Site, LSF Meetings With Townships, 2001 NACD North Central** - Sheila Vanney

- a. Vanney briefed the board on options for the 2001 convention: date, host and location. Moger volunteered Area V to host the 2001 convention. Vanney informed the board of AMC's change to hold their convention the second week after Thanksgiving. This brings their convention dates into conflict with ours. She asked the board for direction as to whether it was a priority to keep the two conventions from conflicting. Because date was tied to location options, no action was taken. Vanney presented location options. The board discussed and directed Vanney to request a proposal from the Radisson South in Bloomington. A conference call may be needed for the board to take action on this item.
- b. Vanney reported on the living snow fence presentations that were made in conjunction with the annual township short courses held across the state. She went over the history of the practice, the 1998 resolution from Wilkin SWCD seeking cost share funding, and the discussions the MASWCD Forestry Committee has had, making this one of their top priority items.
- c. The North Central Regional meeting of NACD will be in Minnesota in 2001. NACD has submitted a timeline and will contact MASWCD when it is time to start the planning phases.

**12. Future Board Meetings Schedule & Locations** - Owen Knutson

Hoefert moved to establish the June meeting for June 20 in Alexandria. Russell seconded. Motion carried. Annalora moved to establish the July meeting for July 18 in Perham. Hoese seconded. Motion carried. There will

be no August meeting. Hoese moved to establish the September meeting for September 8 in St. Paul. Annalora seconded. Motion carried.

### **13. Partnership Reports**

**DNR** - Wayne Edgerton reported on the legislative session. The timberwolf issue (a plan for getting the wolf delisted from the endangered species list) passed through the House but lost in the Senate by one vote. It was brought to vote again and tied, which still means a loss. The increase in fish and wildlife fees, a percentage of the lottery sales tax, and a percentage of all sales tax are other DNR issues before the legislature. The plan for managing Consolidate Conservation Lands (Con-Con lands) still hasn't had an official hearing. Edgerton suggested kicking-off discussions about the next Farm Bill. He offered to be a part of such discussions.

### **14. Area Director's Reports**

**Area I** Berg reported that the next Area meeting will be hosted by Clearwater SWCD and will be at the Pioneer Village near Itasca State Park.

**Area II** Annalora said he is making some inroads with the removal of SWCDs from the county levy limit. He has talked with Rep. Roxann Dagget, Vice-chair of the House Tax Committee. University of Minnesota and Dept. of Ag. have nutrient management test plots in Staples and have approached SWCDs to see if they might want to be involved. If the project gets EPA Section 319 funds, there is an opportunity for the districts to participate in these 5 year plots. Upcoming Area meetings are July 20 in Wadena and November 16.

**Area III** Hoefert met with JPB 3 in Duluth. The Area III resolutions meeting is set for Friday, June 2 at the Natural Resources Research Institute in Duluth. An Area meeting is also scheduled for September 6-7 at the Long Lake Conservation Center. Aitkin SWCD will host. Hoefert also reported on the MASWCD Forestry Committee.

**Area IV** Hoese reported that they will have an Area meeting the last Monday in June (June 26). At the last meeting they discussed the MPCA and Dept. of Ag. MOU.

**Area V** Moger said that the next Area V meeting will be the third Thursday in June. DM&E Railroad and their proposed expansion project through MN will be an agenda item.

**Area VI** Russell briefed the board on the last Area meeting. It included: a presentation by a DNR Conservation Officer, FSA of McLeod County, Duane Petrowiak and the resolutions process, Marilyn Bernhardson and the legislative process. The next Area meeting will be June 19 at the Waseca Experiment Station. Russell also updated the board on the convention planning process.

**Area VII** Anderson said the next Area meeting will be June 29, hosted by Root River SWCD in Caledonia. They will take a DNR tour of a lock & dam.

**15. Adjourn** - Hoese moved to adjourn the meeting at 3:50 p.m. Russell seconded. Meeting adjourned.