

Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
February 26, 2007
Holiday Inn St. Paul East

Present: President Ken Pederson, Vice President Steve Sunderland, Area 2 Director Ross Aigner, Area 3 Director Merrill Loy, Area 4 Director Mark Zabel, Secretary Treasurer Area 5 Director Clark Lingbeek, Area 6 Director Kathryn Kelly, Area 7 Director Rudie Spitzer, Area 8 Director Tom Schulz; MASWCD staff LeAnn Buck, Sheila Vanney, Stefanie Martinez; Legislative Affairs Specialist Judy Erickson; Area 5 Co-Director Ian Cunningham; Legislative Committee Chair Marilyn Bernhardson; Fund Development Task Force Chair Scott Hoes; MACDE President Brian Watson, Greg Larson, BWSR and U of M; John Jaschke, BWSR; Bill Hunt, NRCS; Mike Henley, Yoder and Henley Development Resources; Mary Wetter, Wright SWCD Supervisor; Brad Matlack, Carlton SWCD staff; and Jerry Flaschberger, N. St. Louis SWCD Supervisor.

Absent: Area 1 Director Russ Severson.

1. President Pederson called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. and led the board in the pledge of allegiance.
2. Motion by Spitzer, seconded by Loy, to approve today's agenda. Motion carried. Motion by Loy, seconded by Zabel, to approve the January 25, 2007 meeting minutes. Motion carried. Motion made by Schulz that to the extent that written or other reports are available that such copies be attached to the meeting minutes in the future. Motion seconded by Loy. Motion carried with dissenting vote from Spitzer.
3. President's Report – Ken Pederson
 - a. MASWCD 2007-2008 Committee Appointments. Motion by Loy, seconded by Schulz to ratify President Pederson's 2007-08 committee appointments. Motion carried. The board will consider appointments for the Fund Development Task Force based discussion later during this meeting.
 - b. NACD Annual Meeting & MASWCD Resolutions. Pederson and Sunderland reported on the NACD annual meeting in LA. Mower and Dakota SWCDs received NACD District Excellence awards. Pederson noted that some of the themes of the conference included speaking with one voice and every acre counts. NACD President Billy Wilson's term ended and Olin Simms from Wyoming is the new NACD President. The NACD auction generated over \$36,000 and proceeds will be used for NACD's legislative efforts. Minnesota's resolutions were first addressed in NACD committees then brought before the full 52 member board. MASWCD forwarded eight resolutions. MASWCD withdrew three resolutions since they were existing policy or already eligible for NRCS programs. The status of the other 5 resolutions include: CSP contracts passed; EQIP cost recovery failed; remove cropland limitation passed; field borders passed; haying of filter strips was amended to harvesting and failed. Buck submitted a written report to the board on the NACD annual meeting and the various sessions.

- c. NACD Congressional Staff Tour Request. Motion by Zabel, seconded by Spitzer, to provide \$300 to NACD for their congressional tour. Motion carried.
 - d. Pederson referenced MACDE membership and commented that he is an affiliate member. He suggested that other board members may also want to consider becoming affiliate members.
4. Finance Report – Clark Lingbeek
- a. Lingbeek presented the monthly financial report and Pederson accepted subject to annual review. Loy noted concern about paying bank fees. Discussion followed.
 - b. Lingbeek presented an update on dues payments received from the SWCDs.
5. Executive Director’s Report – LeAnn Buck
- a. Watershed Management Audit. Buck discussed and referenced the MASWCD overview document that responded to the audit. She noted that MASWCD has testified regarding the audit before the House. There have been no hearings in the Senate to date.
 - b. MASWCD Priority Issues/Retreat Overview. Buck briefly went over the notes from the retreat and the priority issues identified by the board. Several of these issues are part of the agenda for today’s meeting, and will be part of future board meetings.
 - c. 2006 Resolution Work Plan. Buck distributed a draft action plan for addressing 2006 resolutions for board review and consideration.
 - d. MASWCD Leadership DC Trip. The program will take place March 3-7. Board members Pederson, Kelly, and Zabel will be attending and will have an opportunity to report at the next board meeting. Buck thanked Bill Hunt with NRCS for support of the program.
 - e. District Petition. A public petition was filed that proposed taking part of Ramsey CD and part of northern Dakota SWCD to create a new district. The petition will go before the BWSR board for consideration and merits of the petition.
 - f. Family Forest Conference March Board Meeting. Buck presented information about an upcoming forestry conference sponsored by the Blandin Foundation. This is a follow-up to a May 2006 event. Tom Schulz represented MASWCD during the previous conferences. Outcomes for the upcoming conference will focus on five identified initiatives. Further information will be included at the March board meeting.
6. Conservation Title of 2007 Farm Bill; President’s Proposal – Bill Hunt, NRCS State Conservationist. Hunt presented a copy of the President Bush’s proposal, focusing on Title II - Conservation. The administration’s proposal includes items identified during farm bill forums held across the nation.
7. Overview of Dr. Tilman’s Research on Prairie Grass & Renewable Energy – Greg Larson, BWSR State Soils Specialist. Larson went through a PowerPoint presentation outlining the University of Minnesota research on a mix of prairie grasses for renewable energy and potential impacts for landuse changes and SWCD programs.

8. MASWCD Fund Development & Marketing Plan – Mike Henley, Yoder Henley Development Resources. Henley presented an overview of his development and marketing plan. His work on this project began last year, stemming from the efforts of the MASWCD Fund Development Task Force. The mission of the Fund Development Task Force has been to identify outside sources of income for the association, to provide a more diverse list of income sources. Board members provided questions and comments. Motion by Kelly, seconded by Lingbeek, to accept the development and marketing plan. Motion carried. Consensus of board members was for the Executive Committee and the past Task Force Committee Chair Scott Hoese to move forward on implementing the report.
9. BWSR Report – John Jaschke, BWSR Executive Director. Jaschke introduced himself. He has held the BWSR Executive Director position for one month. Jaschke discussed legislation related to drainage ditch buffers, policy changes to the Wetland Conservation Act, increased funding being proposed by the Governor, and the Clean Water Legacy Act funding. Jaschke also spoke about the watershed management audit conducted by the Office of the Legislative Auditor. The audit recommends that BWSR should have greater oversight over local government units including SWCDs. Legislation related to an oversight proposal may be introduced this legislative session.
10. 2006 Legislative Update – Judy Erickson and Marilyn Bernhardson. Erickson and Bernhardson reported on the MASWCD Legislative Platform and other issues relevant to the legislative session. Erickson emphasized that many legislators, committees and staff are new this year. The State’s revenue forecast will be released later this week and will determine the amount of funding for state budgets and legislative committee targets. Erickson reported that the Office of Legislative Auditor report on watershed management is scheduled to have a hearing in the Senate March 1st. Appropriations for Clean Water Legacy Act have not been addressed by either the house or senate yet. Long term funding for Clean Water Legacy and other programs are being considered for a dedicated funding bill in the Senate. The House has yet to address the dedicated funding bills. The Association’s legislative platform includes funding for SWCD general service grants and the Clean Water Legacy Act. These will be the focus for the platform discussions during the MASWCD Day at the Capitol. Other legislation that is being introduced during this session includes a bio-energy reserve program that is modeled after RIM reserve.
11. MACDE Report – Brian Watson, MACDE President. The next MACDE meeting will be held February 28th. Meeting items include setting MACDE’s budget and election of new officers. The MACDE Board is currently planning their annual conference which be held in Stillwater in June. MACDE is planning to offer wetland delineation certification training in conjunction with the conference. Other possible agenda items include training related to Clean Water Legacy Act grants and district visibility. Watson’s term of office as MACDE President will end at the end of this month. Spitzer commended Watson for his work the past few years as the MACDE President. Pederson and Sunderland noted that Dakota SWCD received an award at the NACD convention and congratulated Watson on the success and recognition.
12. Schedule Next Meeting & Adjourn. The next MASWCD Board of Directors meetings will be March 27 and May 22. Meeting adjourned at 6 p.m.