

Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts  
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes  
March 27, 2007  
Ramsey Conservation District Office, Arden Hills, MN

Present: President Ken Pederson, Vice President Steve Sunderland, Area 1 Director Russ Severson, Area 2 Director Ross Aigner, Area 3 Director Merrill Loy, Area 4 Director Mark Zabel, Secretary Treasurer Area 5 Director Clark Lingbeek, Area 6 Co-Director Bill Hohenstein, Area 7 Director Rudie Spitzer, Area 8 Director Tom Schulz; MASWCD staff LeAnn Buck, Sheila Vanney. Mike Kilgore, Associate Professor, U of M Forest Resources Department; Doug Thomas, BWSR Assistant Director; Ted Lovdahl, Itasca SWCD Supervisor; Frank Turnock, Aitkin SWCD Supervisor.

Absent: Area 6 Director Kathryn Kelly.

1. President Pederson called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and led the board in the pledge of allegiance.
2. Motion by Spitzer, seconded by Severson, to approve today's agenda. Motion carried. Motion by Loy, seconded by Spitzer, to approve the February 26 meeting minutes with changes. Discussion. Motion carried.
3. President's Report – Ken Pederson
  - a. Top 10 quota payments award. Pederson noted that Minnesota is seventh in the nation in NACD quota payments. Minnesota was presented with a plaque noting this "Top 10" recognition at the NACD annual meeting in Los Angeles this past February.
  - b. Sunset Policy for Resolutions. Due to a resolution approved by the membership in 2002, resolutions have been sunseting after four years from adoption. However, this sunseting resolution has now expired, and the question before the board is whether to adopt a policy to continue to sunset resolutions. Discussion took place. Motion by Loy, seconded by Severson to adopt a policy which states: *"It is the policy of MASWCD to sunset resolutions after four years from adoption. Resolutions over two biennia (four years) may no longer be applicable or suitable for MASWCD to pursue, and new or revised legislative actions may be submitted through the resolutions process annually."*
  - c. MASWCD Representative to the Conservation Technical Assistance Committee (CTAC). Lingbeek nominated Sunderland, seconded by Aigner, to continue to serve as MASWCD's representative to this committee facilitated by the Board of Water and Soil Resources.
  - d. NACD Legislative Conference, July 21-24, 2007 in Washington, D.C. This year, the NACD Legislative Conference will be held in the summer instead of spring, in conjunction with the NACD annual board meeting. Pederson, Sunderland and Buck discussed the conference and the hopes that Minnesota will have representatives in attendance beyond the MASWCD President, Vice President and Executive Director. Pederson also commented that not all board members have yet submitted photos of themselves for the MASWCD web site. He also noted that he has been stopping in and visiting SWCD offices across the state as he travels to various meetings.

4. Finance Report – Clark Lingbeek
  - a. Lingbeek presented the monthly financial report and Pederson accepted subject to annual review.
  - b. Lingbeek presented an update on dues hardship requests from the SWCDs based on the Finance Committee’s recommendations.

Motion by Lingbeek, seconded by Zabel, to allow Mille Lacs to pay dues in quarterly payments. Motion carried.

Motion by Schulz that if a district presents a request to pay on an installment basis it would be automatically approved. Discussion and concerns followed. Motion withdrawn.

Motion by Lingbeek, seconded by Zabel, to recognize hardship and approve \$500 dues payments for Beltrami, Carlton and Marshall-Beltrami SWCDs. Motion carried with dissenting vote from Spitzer.

Regarding non-members, i.e. the two districts who have chosen not to be members of MASWCD, the Finance Committee recommends the MASWCD Area Director and President or Vice President attend a board meeting of the Grant and Morrison SWCDs to revisit their non-member status.

The next Finance Committee meeting will be in July when they will start preparing a proposed budget for 2007-2008.
5. MASWCD Leadership Program Update – Washington, D.C. and Federal Policy

Zabel, Pederson, Kelly and Vanney attended the Washington, D.C. session of the MASWCD Leadership Institute earlier in March. Zabel, Pederson and Vanney provided verbal reports and because Kelly could not be at this meeting, she provided a written report for the board to review. Based on feedback from board members and other participants, a positive, engaging learning experience was had by those in attendance.
6. 2007 Farm Bill Conservation Title Position Statement.

Board members reviewed the Association’s April, 2006 policy position statement related to the Conservation Title of the Farm Bill. Motion by Schulz, seconded by Lingbeek, to amend the position statement to include a statement regarding renewable energy, and to reflect the recently approved resolution pertaining to the Conservation Security Program (CSP) program and timely notification to landowners regarding acceptance of proposed contract modifications. Motion carried. The addition related to energy will read: *“Lands used for energy crop production should be compliant with the goals of conservation as indicated in the Conservation Title of the Farm Bill.”*
7. Executive Director’s Report – LeAnn Buck
  - a. Buck provided an update on the 2007 MASWCD Legislative Platform.

Regarding the bill in the House for General Services Grant allocations – Rep. Rick Hansen has an author’s amendment being introduced to require SWCDs to have web sites in order to receive general service grant allocations. It is not in the Senate language at this point.

7. Executive Director's Report – LeAnn Buck (*continued*)

Rep. Rick Hansen is also introducing a change that would zero out feedlot cost-share and shift the funding into native vegetative buffer cost-share. There are more questions than answers at this point. Again, this action is not mirrored in the Senate. This proposed change does not reflect any addition in funding; it would just be a shift. DNR Forestry has indicated that through the Governor's proposal includes a \$500,000 increase in forest stewardship dollars. Rider language includes BWSR establishing a forestry cost share practices.

Clean Water Legacy appropriations are moving forward. Some of the discussion is tied to dedicated funding.

This is not a bonding year but there is a supplemental bonding bill proposal submitted by the Governor that has been acted on by the legislature. The proposal now in the Senate would provide \$10 million in RIM Reserve and in the House would provide approximately \$8 million.

- b. MASWCD 2007 Goals. Buck briefly went over the goals from the retreat and the priority issues identified by the board. Several of these issues are being addressed at these Association board meetings.
- c. Envirothon & Environmental Education Donation. Regarding MASWCD auction proceeds, motion by Lingbeek, seconded by Spitzer, to accept the recommendation as presented. Motion withdrawn. Motion by Schulz, seconded by Loy, to use the auction proceeds for budgeted items of \$3,000 for the state envirothon and \$2972 for the education committee. Also the current education committee should bring forward a recommendation on how to utilize \$3,228 in auction proceeds for education efforts. They should be made aware that an option is to use the funding within the Association's endowment fund. Motion carried.
- d. Agency Responses to 2006 Resolutions. Buck reviewed the responses received from agencies to date related to resolutions approved by the membership at the December, 2006 annual convention.
- e. Conservation Legacy Council. Buck is serving on the Governor's Council and briefed the board on the issues being addressed and the timeline involved.

*Board recessed for lunch at 12:10 and reconvened at 1:00 p.m.*

9. Family Forest Stewardship: Getting to the Next Million Acres.

Mike Kilgore, U of M Forest Resources Department, went through a PowerPoint presentation on the interest behind enrolling another million acres into forest stewardship plans and interest in enrolling more landowners into the Sustainable Forest Incentives Act (SFIA).

10. SWCD Program Policy Update.

BWSR Assistant Director Doug Thomas presented information and updates on impacts to SWCD programs including the Wetland Conservation Act, the Public Drainage Ditch Buffer issues, the Clean Water Legacy Act, a bill being introduced in the House related to Local Water Management Accountability, and current appropriations proposals in the House and Senate.

11. 2008 Annual Convention Site Selection.

Vaney presented information to the board and discussion followed. Motion by Lingbeek, seconded by Aigner, to select Area 5 as the host of the 2008 annual convention. Motion carried. Motion by Lingbeek, seconded by Aigner, to select Crowne Plaza St. Paul Riverfront (formerly the Radisson Riverfront, where the 2002 event was held) as the location of the 2008 annual convention. Motion carried.

12. Minnesota SWCD Forestry Association Report.

Ted Lovdahl and Frank Turnock presented a request to the board for \$2,000 to help hire a part-time staff person for the Minnesota SWCD Forestry Association. They would like to hire or contract staff for services such as: coordinate a 2007 MASWCD convention booth; coordinate 2007 resolution review and follow up; convene a forestry partners summit to discuss funding opportunities for MNSWCDFAs projects and staffing; coordinate spring 2008 forestry conference with partners; attend Area meetings as requested; write at least one grant for continued support of the position. Board discussion followed.

Motion by Loy, seconded by Hohenstein, to approve matching funds to the MNSWCDFAs not to exceed \$2,000, out of the Conservation Initiatives line-item of the budget which is budgeted at \$1,000. The match would be related to the special contributions being made by individual districts to this particular effort. Further discussion followed. Vote was conducted: three for (Loy, Schulz, Lingbeek); four against (Zabel, Hohenstein, Spitzer, Aigner). Motion failed. Motion by Hohenstein, seconded by Spitzer, to provide \$1,000 to the MNSWCDFAs, out of the Conservation Initiatives line-item of the budget. Discussion. Motion carried with dissenting vote from Zabel. Zabel commented that it is important in the future for the board to establish a policy for how to utilize the Conservation Initiatives fund.

13. Schedule Next Meeting & Adjourn. Next meeting will be May 22. Other tentative future meeting dates include: June 26, no meeting in July, August 28, September 25, and November 7. Meeting adjourned at 3:55 p.m.